

**The Painful Truth**  
Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

**AMBASSADOR  
REPORT**

---

The *Ambassador Report* Archive is now complete. All 72 issues have now been posted. This site was launched on March 8, 2000, when the first three selections were uploaded. Since then, we have worked almost daily to scan and proofread the issues and make them available as quickly as possible. Happily, we are able to say that on September 2, 2000, the mission was accomplished.

These pages are dedicated to the memory of John Trechak, the late editor and publisher of *Ambassador Report*. A man of limited means, he nevertheless took on an organization with tens of millions of dollars at its disposal and never flinched. For that, all of those who benefited from his work owe him a debt of gratitude we can never repay. Rest in peace, John Trechak.

-The Archivist

---

The Painful Truth is grateful to The Archivist for his months of devotion to digitizing every one of the Ambassador Reports. On

February 3, 2001, The Archivist turned over the honor and responsibility for publishing the AR on the internet to The Painful Truth. Anyone can, of course, obtain their own hard copies of the AR and convert them to digital format ~~but any copying from this site, which has been watermarked, will not be tolerated.~~

Editor, PT

---

*Please note that Ambassador Report mentions many organizations, addresses, publications and web site addresses which may have changed or which no longer exist. This is especially true in the earlier issues, many of which were published as many as 25 years ago. Our goal is to reproduce Ambassador Report complete and unedited, and, accordingly, we will not delete references to defunct organizations and out of print publications, nor will we research whether addresses have been changed. Please use caution if you try to contact any of the organizations mentioned in Ambassador Report.*

*The following introduction and descriptions were included in the index [John Trechak, the late publisher of Ambassador Report](#), sent out to new subscribers.*

*The Archivist.*

---

---

In 1975 a group of Ambassador College alumni decided it was time that the truth about Herbert W. Armstrong's Ambassador College, *Plain Truth* magazine, Ambassador Foundation, and Worldwide Church of God be made known, especially to those financially supporting those institutions. This small group of alumni formed a publishing association called *Ambassador Review* which in mid-1977 became *Ambassador Report*. Since 1976 the group has produced over 60 highly revealing publications about the Armstrong movement.

The entire *Ambassador Report* collection represents the most thoroughly researched, frank, and shocking series of exposes ever done on the inner workings of what has been called the Armstrong Empire. The *Report* has also reported extensively on the dozens of colorful spin-off groups the Armstrong organization has fostered. The *Ambassador Report* series is exciting, eye opening reading, especially when read in chronological order.

Below is a list of what has been published along with a partial description of the contents of each publication. Keep in mind that issues of the *Report* contain, in addition, other smaller articles, references to sources (including the names and addresses of numerous churches and other organizations), and many readers'

letters that are often equally interesting and informative.

[\*\*Ambassador Review Introductory Letter\*\*](#) - *Ambassador Review's* early 1976 introductory letter stating the association's purposes and goals along with an open letter to Ambassador College (AC) Vice Chairman Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) (9 pages).

[\*\*The Gerringer Letter\*\*](#) - Bob Gerringer's 1975 open letter to Worldwide Church of God (WCG) evangelist Charles Hunting, explaining the theological and ethical reasons why he and his wife Connie left the WCG (28 pages).

[\*\*The 1939 Article: "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?"\*\*](#) - by Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA). Published in 1939, HWA attacks the very organizational methods he later adopted (10 pages).

[\*\*Ambassador Review, June '76 \(AR1\)\*\*](#) - Expose articles on HWA, his many failed prophecies, the WCG's error filled tithing doctrine, AC's nonaccreditation and censorship of student mail, the Ambassador Foundation and the phony Jews controversy, the WCG's Catholic Church parallels, HWA admits he is in love with a woman fifty years younger, "The WCG Talmud," Marion J. McNair's book *Armstrongism Religion or Rip-Off?*, "Profile of a Cult," breakaway organizations, and more. (51 pages, illustrated).

[THE END OF INNOCENCE?](#)

[EXECUTIVE EXODUS](#)

[A TREASURY OF FAMOUS PROPHECIES](#)

[FROM THOSE WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT YOU " 1972", We Present ... A.I.C.F.](#)

[HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG-A Legend In His Own Mind](#)

[AMBASSADOR COLLEGE RESEARCH "PROVES" THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS GOD'S TRUE CHURCH!](#)

[TITHE SPY](#)

[EXECUTIVE ACTION](#)

[ACCREDITATION OR BUST! \(The Wooing of W.A.S.C.\)](#)

[MAIL CENSORSHIP SPARKS STUDENT PROTEST](#)

[WHERE WOULD YOU GO?](#)

[THE TITHING PAPERS](#)

[LETTERS](#)

[HAVE YOU READ... ?](#)

[AMBASSADOR WHISPERS](#)

[WILL AMBASSADOR COLLEGE SURVIVE THE '70's?](#)

[DID I SAY THAT?](#)

[PROFILE OF A CULT](#)

[ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION](#)

[THE CREED OF THE UNHOLY TRINITY](#)

[LATE NEWS](#)

[RESPONSIBLE GIVING: Which Agencies Should You Support?](#)

[THE W.C.G. TALMUD](#)

[ARMSTRONGISM-RELIGION OR RIP-OFF? \(Advertisement\)](#)

[BACK COVER](#)

[\*\*Ambassador Report, 1977 \(AR2\)\*\*](#) - As described by Willmar Thorkelson of the *Minneapolis Star* "It may be the most devastating expose of a religious group ever published." Thirty articles on all facets of the WCG. Includes "In Bed With Garner Ted," "Bobby Fischer Speaks Out," "What the Armstrongs Say About Other Churches," "Home breaking Armstrong Style," "Fleecing the Flock," "Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots," "Modern Moloch Human Sacrifice in the Armstrong Church," "\$2.5 Million Federal Hand out to Armstrong Cult," and much more (90 pages, illustrated).

[About This Issue](#)

[Letters](#)

[Executive Exodus](#)

[The Missing Dimension in Ambassador College-Accreditation](#)

[The Booklets Nobody Wants to Talk About](#)

[What the Armstrongs Say About Other Churches](#)

[Twisted Teachings on Tithing](#)

[Separation of Church and State? \\$2.5 Million Federal Handout to Armstrong Cult](#)

[Computer Snooper](#)

[Financing the Church - An Insider's View](#)

[Intimidation at A.C.-A Case History](#)

[Excerpts From the Tithing Papers](#)

[The Manpower Papers](#)

[Herbert Armstrong - Man on the Move](#)

[The Incredible Story of Mr. Mission Impossible-Ambassador College's Illustrious "Professor" Gotoh](#)

[Southern Exposure](#)

[Garner Ted Armstrong - Son of the Legend](#)

[In Bed With Garner Ted](#)

[Herbert Armstrong "Disproves" the Bible](#)

[Tithing Pays Off!](#)

[The Profligate Son](#)

[Ambassador College's Participation in Jerusalem Dig Ends](#)

[Home-breaking - Armstrong Style](#)

[The Prophecy Game](#)

[Bobby Fischer Speaks Out!](#)

[Fleecing the Flock](#)

[Spying in the Name of God](#)

[Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots](#)

[The Edifice Complex](#)

[Modern Moloch - Human Sacrifice in the Armstrong Church](#)

[The Ten Commandments Revised at Ambassador College](#)

[\*\*Ambassador Report, March '78 \(AR3\)\*\*](#) - The WCG's response to the '77 *Report*, the news media praises the '77 issue, AC picketer Gary Bagley arrested before Gene Kelley show, Bobby Fischer sues the *Report*, power struggle in the WCG, partner of WCG attorney accountant Stanley R. Rader undermines GTA (10 pages).

[Press Reactions](#)

[Ambassador Reactions](#)

[Cornwall's Cynical Comfort](#)

[The Power Struggle](#)

[Ambassador Picketer Arrested](#)

[Chess Champion Becomes Pawn](#)

[Bottom of the Barrel](#)

[Tithe or Else!](#)

[Myrmidons Meet](#)

[College Administrator to Shovel Manure?](#)

[Vista del Arroyo Update](#)

[Grassroots Efforts Effective](#)

[What's Next?](#)

**[AR 4: June '78](#)** - Fischer lawsuit fizzles out with Fischer calling WCG lawyers satanic, Bagley trial is scheduled, Ambassador Report's files stolen in burglary, the anonymous AC Coalition for Student Rights, WCG political in fighting escalates, HWA condemns GTA's "Systematic Theology Project" (6 pages).

**[AR 5: Aug. '78](#)** - GTA ousted after refusing Rader bribe, Church of God International (CGI) formed, WCG owned Everest House's occult books, British newspaper reports on HWA: "Cheeky Church Boss's Royal Boast" (10 pages).

**[AR 6: Sept. '78](#)** - The Pasadena *Star News* writes: "Ex-Jewish Convert May Inherit Church's Wealth," the isolated Tucson homes of HWA and Rader, AC Bricket Wood campus sold, AC Big Sandy campus put up for sale, electronic spying continues at AC (12 pages).

**[AR 7: Jan. '79](#)** - State of California sues WCG, AC is raided by police, "Rhubarb in God's House," Rader testifies in court, court records reveal church leaders' extravagance, their giant bonus checks, church assets and records missing (12 pages).

**[AR 8: March '79](#)** - HWA photographed at medical clinic, anti-government sit ins at AC, pro receivership demonstrators disfellowshipped, WCG battles attorney general in court, Rader sues GTA, church-harassed receiver Judge Weisman resigns, Rader explodes on "Sixty Minutes" (12 pages).

**[AR 9: June '79](#)** - WCG in receivership again, details of Mike Wallace's Rader interview, Dr. Gene Scott and other religious hucksters help Rader, "Want Your Tithes Returned?", "Planning to Sue?", Bagley gets convicted, Dorothy Armstrong challenges Rader, Dr. Herman Hoeh's doctored academic record, the world's most expensive haircut (18 pages)

**[AR 10: Nov. '79](#)** - Rader and Joseph Tkach ordained evangelists, state's law suit continues with scores of revelations in the press, ACLU sides with WCG, Leona McNair files defamation suit against WCG, Wisconsin farmer George McElroy sues to recover farm from WCG, WCG finally gives a financial report, AC weirdoes promote masturbation, WCG evangelist's porno collection, documentary film covers WCG as a cult (13 pages).

**[AR 11: March '80](#)** - State lawsuit update, HWA visits communist China and gives away \$500,000, foundation may devour church, *Plain Truth* (PT) staff purged,

legal battle over severance pay, evangelist Al Portune and others defect from GTA, more breakaway churches, starting your own church with Tom Williams (14 pages).

[AR 12: June '80](#) - Distribution of David R. Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* blocked by WCG lawyers, U.S. Supreme Court denies WCG pleas on state's suit, WCG turns to politicians for help, HWA's new Corporation Sole, new doctrines, more breakaway churches (16 pages).

[AR 13: Sept. '80](#) - Pro WCG Petris bill passed by legislature in Sacramento, Rader's new book *Against the Gates of Hell*, Robinson book released by court, Rader extends peace bid to Attorney General George Deukmejian, WCG related suicides in the news (6 pages).

[AR 14: Dec. '80](#) - Rader out maneuvers State of California, \$1 million WCG offering to Egypt. HWA's salary raised to \$258K per year, WCG hires thief, FBI captures Armstrong fan Joseph Paul Franklin, perversions depicted on Ambassador Auditorium stage, HWA incest allegations not denied, HWA demons, HWA Simon Magus parallels, Dr. Eli S. Chesen's *Religion May Be Hazardous to Your Health* recommended (18 pages).

[AR 15: March '81](#) - GTA close to returning but starts GTA Evangelistic Association, Big Sandy to reopen, Rader in trouble with HWA but gets \$250K bonus because of "inadequate salary," editors quit Quest magazine, WCG gets Council of Elders, McElroy wins suit over farm, Don A. Schanche writes in the *Los Angeles Times* how the rebirth of Islam dates from the 1969 burning of Al Aksa mosque by Dennis Rohen (an Armstrong fan), Paul Benware's new book *Ambassadors of Armstrongism* shows HWA's "original" doctrines were stolen from others, ex-WCGER John Tuit publishes expose book *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, AC alumni Chris and Denise Patton millionaires (20 pages).

[AR 16: July '81](#) - GTA rebuffed, Rader ousted, HWA insinuates Rader stole \$.6 million painting from church, HWA's wife Ramona returns to him, Rader hospitalized, Rader and WCG executive Robert L. Kuhn sue George Lucas over script to "Raiders of the Lost Ark," the strange ministry of Gerald Waterhouse, "The Prophets of the Partial Truth," more HWA false prophecies discovered (16 pages).

[AR 17: Oct.'81](#) - GTA strikes out again with HWA and starts promoting his new novel *Peter's Story*, Rader out of ministry but says he continues to get \$300K per year from Ambassador Foundation, Rader says he will "clean up Hollywood," Robinson suit settled, WCG minister David Albert's dishonest AC alumni survey, HWA's new anti medicine statements (14 pages).

[AR 18: Dec. '81](#) - "Do You Want to Look Like a Whore?" HWA's revived anti makeup doctrine, HWA's personal medical program, book censorship at AC, "The Cult of Armstrong?", Dan'I C. Markam's "Cults and Cultism," how to help

friends and relatives in the WCG (one approach), the near sale of Big Sandy and the mysterious death of F. William Menge, minister Bryce Clark sees WCG's leadership as part of "Babylon" world conspiracy (16 pages).

[AR 19: March '82](#) - Startling allegations by church attorney accountant Jack Kessler, HWA on Petra, Robert Erickson sees Babylon mystery symbolism in Ambassador Auditorium (12 pages).

[AR 20: June '82](#) - HWA files for divorce, WCG lawyer Helge rebukes Kessler, "Plain Truth or Just Plain Trash?", WCG horror cartoonist Basil Wolverton honored, Bob Geringer runs for Congress, same old GTA, Ramona's huge monthly allotment (16 pages).

[AR 21: Sept. '82](#) - HWA and Ramona battle it out, British newspaper reports about HWA: "Kinky Churchman Fools [Prince] Charles," the "Kinky Apostle" meets with Margaret Thatcher (6 pages).

[AR 22: Dec. '82](#) - *Ambassador Report* costs WCG over \$100 million so far.(2 pages).

[AR 23: Jan. '83](#) - "Herbert Armstrong Decrepit!" editor John Trechak's detailed open letter reply to threat from WCG lawyer Allan Browne, WCG in grip of paranoia, Biblical Church of God shakeup, Stan Rader - scapegoat, church pianist Don Ecker murdered (10 pages).

[AR 24: April '83](#) - HWA still "no-show" as divorce battle continues," Executive Exodus Updated" - list of 253 ministers who have resigned from WCG to date, GTA - an HWA victim, son of evangelist Dibar Apartian commits suicide, more lawsuits (10 pages).

[AR 25: July '83](#) - HWA trapped into depositions, controversial WCG lawyer Ralph Helge, Armstrong divorce lawyers lose control of themselves, USC gets big WCG money, ex-WCG minister Richard Gipe's case at U.S. Supreme Court, "The Reunion" in England (10 pages).

[AR 26: Oct. '83](#) - Trial delayed as HWA pays, HWA's tricky answers, criminal charges against Ramona, HWA's tithes come up short, GTA hits Petra fallacy, John Buchner's *Armstrongism Bibliography* completed, "Bobby Fischer - Where Are You?" (12 pages).

[AR 27: April '84](#) - "The Insanity Continues" - more Armstrong divorce case testimony, HWA's shocking marriage arrangement, HWA confesses to incest, Cecil Battles' followers wait for UFOs, former PT writer Gary Alexander in prison (14 pages).

[AR 28: July '84](#) - HWA gets his divorce, First Amendment freedom of religion is

not limitless (important new cases), CGI an improvement over WCG, hymn writer Dwight Armstrong ill, "A Letter From Germany" criticizes HWA's prophecies about Europe, Richard Marson's new report *American and British Israelism Debunked*, Robert C. Williams' *Shofar*, letter from Gary Alexander (12 pages).

[AR 29: Oct. '84](#) - Jury awards Leona McNair \$1.26 million in suit against WCG, measles and rock crises at Orr camp for church kids, Bible Sabbath Association hires Richard Wiedenheft (10 pages).

[AR 30: Dec. '84](#) - "Why Ambassador Report?", "What's Behind the Plain Truth Magazine? And Who is Herbert W. Armstrong?" (overview of PT, HWA, WCG, and AC). Contains list of important books about the WCG to date (4 pages).

[AR 31: March '85](#) - Possible scenarios for a post Armstrong WCG, the influence of Herman L. Hoeh, Dwight Armstrong dies, Ernest L. Martin leaves Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR) and starts Academy for Scriptural Knowledge (ASK), Tom Williams and wife found guilty of defrauding federal government in start a church scheme, *Newsgrams'* funny HWA bumper sticker (10 pages).

[AR 32: June '85](#) - The evolving WCG, devil worship at Petra, Seattle member accused of multiple murders, NY member held in murder of four-year-old daughter, WCG minister David Pack's reign of terror, the missing children of the WCG and the \$120 million lawsuit, exodus of ministers continues, Professor George Geis ousted at AC over book *The Firm Bond*, Dr. Charles Dorothy out of WCG again, GTA still alive, Allan Browne update, letters from AC students, the Kent State anti-WCG flyer, Monte Wolverton returns, alumni news (12 pages).

[AR 33: Oct. '85](#) - HWA's *Mystery of the Ages* published, HWA meets with the Russian ambassador, attacks on PT distribution program, PT Catholic?, Andersons of Minnesota sue WCG for \$6 million, Seattle member convicted of murder, WCG hires PR firm, "PTSD and the Armstrong Church Experience" (key article by Brenda Denzler, highly recommended for those suffering post-WCG emotional stress), investment scam involving ex-WCG minister Richard Plache bilks the faithful, ex-WCGer and "prophet" Larry Johnson in prison, ASK expands, Oregon composer George King, literature of interest (12 pages).

[AR 34: Jan. '86](#) - Herbert Armstrong's sinking ship (with health failing, HWA wants his plane sold, Big Sandy closed, and his *Autobiography* reprinted), an open letter to HWA, Gallup ranks the TV evangelists, Ambassador "accredited," Keith Thomas leaves WCG ministry, WCG killer preaches at his sentencing, John Buchner in America, James Barr's *Beyond Fundamentalism* reviewed by Brenda Denzler, McNair suit update, WCG announces Joseph Tkach will succeed HWA (6 pages).

[AR 35: April '86](#) - HWA goes to his reward - his last days and funeral (with photos), the press waves good-bye, the fast moves of Mr. T, unanswered

questions about HWA's last weeks and death, GTA's reaction, readers' comments on HWA's passing. Aussie bishop slams PT, Richard Sedliacik is drawn into the McNair fray (10 pages).

[AR 36: Aug. '86](#) - The WCG moves on, the new WCG - a church at the crossroads (article by Brenda Denzler), HWA remembered (part one of series by John Trechak reveals how 19th century preacher Henry Ward Beecher, the early American Puritans and Quakers, Benjamin Franklin, French philosopher Henri Bergson, and American author Bruce Barton influenced HWA), GTA becoming more like HWA and praises his father, Robert Hoops and others leave CGI, Ernest Martin splits from wife Joan Marie, FBR update, alumni news (10 pages).

[AR 37: Jan. '87](#) - Tkach turns apostle, the McNair versus WCG war continues - the Sedliaciks harassed and the 9th Circuit's decision, Anglo Israelism discussed (views of Keith Hunt, Clyde Walters, and Gunar Freibergs), Yahweh cultist convicted of murder, materials of interest, groups of interest, mention of groups is not an endorsement, alumni news (10 pages).

[AR 38: April '87](#) - Tkach rewrites HWA's healing doctrine, the TV evangelist was not enough sheep to go around, WCG's telecast rises in ratings, two Washington state WCG teenagers on trial for murder, HWA remembered (part two of series shows how the highly altered new edition of HWA's *Autobiography* Vol.I reveals much about HWA when compared to earlier editions), alumni news, Bob Boyce forms alumni association, the Concordant Publishing Concern, Jim Coram book excerpt (10 pages).

[AR 39: Sept. '87](#) - WCG now bigger than ever, ex-WCG minister Martin Filippello runs wild Elijah ads and predicts HWA will rise in January, William Dankenbring's Triumph Publishing provides WCG with competition, GTA still preaching, Ernest Martin reorganizes, new works on Anglo-Israelism, C. Gary Reid's, series on prophecy, alumni association holds first reunion, Congressman Pickle holds hearings on financial accountability of religious organizations (8 pages).

[AR 40: March '88](#) - Tkach consolidates power and secretly names his successor, HWA still dead as Filippello waits, the California Court of Appeal reverses the McNair decision and orders a new trial, (article provides some legal analysis and criticism), HWA remembered (part three of series analyzes the new Vol.II of HWA's *Autobiography* and shows how the book provides strong evidence of HWA's incestuous relationship with his daughter Dorothy during the early '40s), Bobby Fischer update, the Coronation Stone revisited (article by Bill Moore), more on Anglo Israelism, Charles Hunting's account of the Bricket Wood sale, Charles Hunting on radio. (12 pages).

[AR 41: March '89](#) - Part I of "Joseph W. Tkach - God's New Rep on Planet Earth[?]" (beginning of key John Trechak series gives overview of the new WCG, then compares the official Tkach biography with contradictory new found data regarding Tkach's origins, actual name, true birth date, Chicago childhood, early education, pre-WCG work experience, tough guy image, military record, and his

boast of having gone AWOL during wartime), Tkach reverses HWA's makeup doctrine and gets himself a bigger jet, Tuit rejoins Worldwide, McNair lawsuit takes a bizarre turn - Judge Lavine grants Worldwide summary judgment, Richard Plache in prison, the case of blind man Garnet H. Hill, James D. Tabor's *Genesis 2000* (12 pages).

[AR 42: Sept. '89](#) - Part II of Tkach biography (provides details of Tkach's navy record, IQ and AC education, use of ghostwriters, and details of how he rose in the WCG hierarchy), WCG growth stalls as doctrines shift, David Strickland's *Hope for the Dead*, review of Greg Doudna's book *Showdown at Big Sandy*, the 1989 biblical theology symposium, Tuit leaves Worldwide again (7 pages).

[AR 43: Dec. '89](#) - Part III of Tkach biography (provides details of Tkach's previous association with criminals, his misappropriation of church funds and fencing activities, the other women in his life, his special relationship with "Mrs." Ellen Escat, and Mrs. Tkach's mental problems), WCG income hits \$201 million but audit raises serious questions, more doctrines changed, *The Tithing Fallacy* by Ernest Martin, ministries that can help, Ken Fischer of FBR passes away (10 pages).

[AR 44: June '90](#) - Ambassador's Pasadena campus folds up, Texas campus to seek accreditation, Part IV of Tkach biography (on Tkach's true ethnic background), helping relatives and friends exit the WCG (a key article by John Trechak on mind control and on the right and wrong ways to help a WCG member wake up), new support groups, can Christians be demon possessed? (an article by John Buchner), a new perspective on the afterlife (an article about the "near death experience" written by Robert L. Jackson) (12 pages).

[AR 45: Sept. '90](#) - Stressful times hit the WCG, Pasadena property and Ambassador Auditorium to be sold, Big Sandy accreditation stalled, PT circulation cut back, more doctrines changed (prophecy de-emphasized, interracial marriage okayed, Sabbath watered down, recovering gays welcomed), C.F. Foland and Christian interracial marriage, Ambassador Foundation continues to entertain the wealthy, WCG becoming "new age"?, the WCG's new spirit and style, are you in a cult? (*Media Spotlight's* list of 26 cult characteristics), Part V of Tkach biography (readers' insights regarding Tkach's phony birth date, his salary, etc.), Chris and Denise Patton in prison, more researchers writing about WCG, Richard Nickels' Giving and Sharing ministry, Strickland's *The World's Greatest Hoax*, no tithes to be paid this year? (10 pages).

[AR 46: January '91](#) - No more good news (GN magazine cancelled, telecast cut back, executive musical chairs continues, place of safety in doubt, minister Colin Sutcliff leaves WCG), want your tithes back? - ex-members hope to start class action suit, two views on what makes the WCG tick, Pakozdi-Parker and Gateways Institute, Steven Hassan's *Combating Cult Mind Control* now available in paperback, Sir Anthony Buzzard and Restoration Fellowship, HWA's *1975 in Prophecy*, living with a WCG mate, reunion and support groups, readers' concerns about homosexuality in the WCG's leadership (10 pages).

[AR 47: March '91](#) - Editor Trechak writes on the outlandish ingratitude and self-centeredness of many ex-Worldwidiers (2 pages).

[AR 48: May '91](#) - Tkach changes HWA's "born again" doctrine, WCG and Buddhists, AC forms alumni association, the mystery mailer, minister Plache released from prison, the FBI files on the WCG, the CIA connection to HWA, more readers concerned with homosexuals in WCG ministry, Temple to be rebuilt? (9 pages).

[AR 49: Nov. '91](#) - Part VI of Tkach biography (details the "dumping on outsiders" policy, the "spiritual executions" policy, the "love bashers" policy, vicious home breaking by WCG ministers, the WCG's current "D&R" doctrine, plus details of allegations that many at top of WCG are homosexual), review of *Journey From Eden* (16 pages).

[AR 50: June '92](#) - WCG's decline continues, HWA being de-emphasized, WCG praises Prince Charles, more doctrinal shifts, more allegations of homosexual ministers, Part VII of Tkach biography (leaked documents show excesses of Tkach's personal lifestyle), listings of counter cult organizations, Dankenbring's *Prophecy Flash!* (12 pages).

[AR 51: Oct. '92](#) - Armstrongism being replaced by "Protestant" Tkachism, new WCG audit, "Beyond Tithing" - WCG comes up with new ways to tax members, "Goin' to Guyana," the WCG plan to fool the press, Tkach liberalizes WCG (redefines "apostle," de-emphasizes Ten Commandments, says Christ's return is far off, and pooh-poohs the 7000-year plan), Renehan's revelations, the real Waldensians, the real Chaldeans and Assyrians, British Israelism discoveries, AC granted accreditation candidacy, new expose on Kinsey (10 pages).

[AR 52: June '93](#) - WCG evangelist Roderick Meredith starts Global Church of God, GTA's church becomes more like his father's old church, Tkach working to change WCG's cult image, more doctrinal changes, dismantling of HWA's empire continues, McNair v. Worldwide lawsuit finally ends, comments on the Koresh tragedy (18 pages).

[AR 53: Sept. '93](#) - WCG adopts Trinity doctrine, WCG's prophecy teaching on "modern Israel" is being scuttled, David Pack lists WCG's 154 doctrinal changes and 28 policy changes, Sardis is no longer Sardis, Global Church grows, David Whitaker on the three tithes, Gary Schultz leads secret saucer base expeditions, a reader criticizes Watchman Fellowship, book reviews of *The Making of a Tradition - A Criticism of Orthodox Christian Theology*, *Angels and Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination*, and Bruce Renehan's *Daughter of Babylon - The True History of the Worldwide Church of God* (15 pages).

[AR 54: Feb. '94](#) - WCG de-emphasizes the Bible, WCG cancels HQ's Sabbath services for News Year's Day, Judd Kirk on TV, slavery under the WCG's new

freedom, overview of the WCG's main spin-off groups: Garner Ted Armstrong's CGI, Rod Meredith's GCG, William Dankenbring's TPM, Gerald Flurry's PCG, Raymond Cole's CGE, David J. Smith's CGEA, Fred Coulter's CBCG, Ken Westby's CGE, and many more WCG splinter groups, Linda Stuhlman's WCG Exiting and Support Network is born, (18 pages).

[AR 55: May '94](#) - *World Tomorrow* telecast to be cancelled, WCG adopts new marketing strategies, now lay members will evangelize, changes in WCG's church services format, Waterhouse loosed again, questions about the legal validity of HWA's appointment of Tkach, serious legal questions about the Mt. Pocono land deal, the salaries of Tkach and the WCG ministry revealed, the strange Pogorelich piano competition, Gerald Flurry pleads nolo contendere, Petra in the news, more Armstrongite groups, non-Armstrongite groups popular with ex-Worldwidiers, new support groups, (12 pages).

[AR 56: Oct. '94](#) - Ambassador finally accredited and becomes university, Tkach acknowledges there are true Christians in other denominations, more trinity confusion, evolution doctrine shifts, Dankenbring raises more questions about how HWA died, executive exodus grows, WCG revenues in decline, Wisconsin Dells to be sold, spin-off news, Alan Ruth's paper, ex-Worldwider fascinations (sacred names groups, pro-Jewish groups, anti-Jewish groups, conspiracy theory groups, etc.), "Deprogramming Yourself - The Editor's View" (key article by John Trechak who lists important books to help those exiting WCG), war hero John Weidner passes away, (12 pages).

[AR 57: Jan. '95](#) - *Sabbath in Crisis*; Tkach announces that Sabbath, Holidays, tithing, and unclean meats rules are no longer mandatory; PT changes include Madonna icons, attacks on HWA's gospel; WCG membership dropping; WCG demons; Waco comments; optimist Gary Alexander; the preterists;(10 pages).

[AR 58: April '95](#) - WCG in chaos as revenues plummet, Tkach's Russian Christmas Present, famous Ambassador concert series ending, major church programs discontinued, many leading ministers resign or get fired, Tkach parties, secret WCG bylaws leaked, more chaos coming, Bible knowledge expanding rapidly, conspiracy theories, Gorbachev the beast?, new views on prophecy (12 pages).

[AR 59: June '95](#) - Thousands flee from Tkach, more doctrines are changed but Tkach still will not label HWA a false prophet, David Hulme shocked by changes Tkach says were inspired by Holy Spirit, over one hundred fifty "rebel ministers" resign, the new United Church of God, the new Worldwide Church of Texas, splinters growing, some pack for Petra, some join "political fringe groups", "Mr. Pasadena" remembered, " Executive Exodus Update" (12 pages).

[AR 60: Oct. '95](#) - Tkach Sr. dies of cancer, Tkach Jr. rules WCG, tithing "reinstated", WCG worship services being changed, doctrines on hell and soul being reconsidered, executive exodus grows, AC somehow continues, Dr. Merritt's battles, Sabbath Summit near, church chart available, GTA at it again,

Flurry flakier, Hulme's UCG grows, organizing your church/cult, WCG members go toward esoteric movements, Ernest Mann, David Whitaker, new Waco book, religion in the news highlights (12 pages).

[AR 61: March '96](#) - Tkach Jr. downsizes WCG, HWA's billion dollar mistake, WCG gives okay to Xmas and Easter, WCG's new services and women's ministry, Jr. joins cult fighters, Ron Dart and Texas Whores reject GTA, FBI arrests prophet Lampley, grapevine failing, Dr. Ernest Zimmerman on paranoia and prophecy, obituaries of David R. Robinson and Andrew Trechak Sr. (12 pages)

[AR 62: July '96](#) - *Plain Truth* gets price tag, three evangelists shelved, hopes of WCG gays dashed, new women's ministry, dells feast site becomes "Miracles Center", AU changes, Tkach Jr. basks in praise, David Covington says WCG still cult-like, Meredith attacks conspiracy buffs, GTA porno movie a hit, Rick Ross and CAN bankrupted, Dr. Dorothy dead, calendar confusion, new church crisis brewing, (12 pages).

[AR 63: Sept. '96](#) - Tkach goes ecumenical, will WCG be scuttled?, WCG a dysfunctional family, waiting for superchurch, prophet Lampley sentenced, mystery mailer psychoanalyzed, Earl Williams' woes, Alexander on China and the WCG, changes for British throne and royals, new date set for Christ's return, Mount Sinai found?, God on the Internet, (12 pages).

[AR 64: February '97](#) - Ambassador U. closing, London Theatre a success, Tkach Jr.'s income, WCG asks for volunteer pastors, Sunday worship coming, changes in ministerial rank doctrine, *In Transition* terminated, chaos in UCG and GCG, HWA resurrected!, Ellen Hart's *Oldest Sin*, AR mailings disappear, (6 pages).

[AR 65: May '97](#) - More secrecy at Tkach Co., Flurry wins court battle over HWA book, Easter worship closer, no millennium needed, WCG follows Vatican on evolution, the Vatican-Babylon connection reevaluated, Ohio congregation votes to switch, UCG moving to Cincinnati, Tom Hall passes, Joe Bauer in Las Vegas, Orlin Grabbe in Reno, cult fighters under attack (12 pages)

[AR 66: Sept. '97](#) - Tkach Creates Ambassador Center at Azusa Pacific, a visit with Pastor General Tkach, Aussie member charged with murder, GTA naked on TV, discord in UCG, the splintered Churches of God, WCG no longer welcome in Russia, the Godfather of the United States of Europe, European unity uncertain, James Tabor on Mystery Mountain, Armstrong brewery expands, Bill Gates in Prophecy, AR gets praise in press, (12 pages).

[AR 67: Dec. '97](#) - Sunday worship now allowed, Tkach's *Transformed by Truth* reviewed, WCG's historical revisionism, Tkach reveals HWA stole doctrines, Tkach's "justified lying," Ambassador's huge tape trove, AU-Texas sale near?, Tkach may pocket WCG's hundreds of millions, Aussie murder update, WCG's new emotionalism, Conder dumps NT, Flurry adds to NT, ex-members get

messages from UFO, the very scary House of Yahweh, Mary Horton's messages from the OM god, Clyde Walters passes, UCG split nears, GTA being urged to retire (12 pages)

[AR 68: April '98](#) - CGI boots out GTA, UCG dethrones Hulme, Hulmites depart, McCullough to lead UCG, reporters ejected from conference, a bad news day for Tkach, merchandizing Christ, European unity closer, secular prophecies, HWA incest again confirmed, Shorty Fuessel unemployed, Robert Kuhn and the Original Bible Project (12 pages).

[AR 69: July '98](#) - WCG leaders admit it's all about money, Pope to get Ambassador campus? , UCG fragments again, Flurry now Laodecian, Global's position on War, European unity update, Trechak's "The Secret Church of Conspiracy" Part One, the real Year 2000, Roman Catholicism in transition, Sabbath debate continues, the British Bands, Brinsmead is back! (12 pages).

[AR 70: Oct. '98](#) - Nuns capture Big Sandy--AU to go Catholic, strange real estate deals, Attorney General handcuffed, Tkach's church marketing strategy, strange holy days, GTA pays off masseuse, Dart on the air, more United disunity, Philadelphians fight over HWA writings, Lon Lacy's new church, Part II of "The Secret Church of Conspiracy" (The Jews and Rader), Modern Rome, the Bible code, Denzler gets Ph.D., "proving your favorite prophecy" (12 pages).

[January 21, 1999](#) - Letter announcing the delay in the publication of AR 71 due to John Trechak's illness.

[AR 71: Feb. '99](#) - Pasadena campus to be sold, Christmas adds to WCG income, WCG members cry out for democracy, Meredith disfellowshipped, exotic new churches, the Rev. Moon- George Bush connection, Jerusalemitis (12 pages).

[AR 72: April '99](#) - Tkach plans retirement fund, Underground church talks class action, AU to be Pacem in Terris University, Worldwide minister assists Pope, Meredith's Living Church, Bryce Clark's COG, Clinton in Prophecy?, Part III of "The Secret Church of Conspiracy," WCG gays on the Net, Bobby Fischer's Terrors (12 pages).

[October 7, 1999](#) - Letter from Mary Jones, former publisher of Ambassador Report, announcing the death of John Trechak. Letters of tribute from former publishers Len Zola and Bob Gerringer.

Coming in the next few months - In order to make this site as complete as possible, we plan to post many of the *Plain Truth*, and *Good News* articles mentioned in *Ambassador Report*, as well as much of the correspondence and open letters that circulated widely in the Worldwide Church of God underground. We will also upload many of the sermon and interview tapes in Real Audio format in the months to come.

---

*If you have anything you would like to  
submit to this site, or any comments,  
email me at:  
[CLICK HERE FOR EMAIL ADDRESS.](#)*



[Back to "Painful Truth" menu](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **Ambassador Review Introductory Letter**

*[Disclaimer: The following reproduces the complete text as originally published. Any references to organizations, addresses and literature or tape offers may no longer be valid. This web site has not verified whether the organizations referred to herein still exist, nor have we verified whether the materials offered are still available.]*

### **Ambassador Review**

**P.O. BOX 661 SOUTH PASADENA, CA. 91030**

AMBASSADOR REVIEW is a brand new, frank but exciting publication published by alumni and students of Ambassador College. It will dare to stand up for truth and honesty and report the facts. AMBASSADOR REVIEW has the following purposes:

- It is a forum for assessing the teachings of Ambassador College and their effect on Ambassador College students. In short, it will examine the "Ambassador Experience."
- It is dedicated to prodding the leadership of Ambassador College and of the Worldwide Church of God which supports and controls Ambassador College to change the practices and policies which are bringing discredit to Ambassador College worldwide.
- It is a publication which will bring to light some of Ambassador College's biggest problems which have been too long covered up.
- It will present solutions to Ambassador College's problems and take firm and direct action to initiate drastically needed changes at Ambassador College and in the church which so heavily influences it.

· It is solidly founded in the belief that Ambassador College was built by and continues to exist through the combined efforts and contributions of many selfless, dedicated people. NO ONE MAN CAN TRUTHFULLY SAY, "I am Ambassador College". No one family clan or clique should ever be allowed to monopolize the Ambassador entity.

-2-

The AMBASSADOR REVIEW is a journal by and for the students, alumni, and friends of Ambassador College. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for those who have shared in the "Ambassador Experience". It has grown out of the increasing need for a response to the censored and ideologically-controlled articles found in official Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God publications.

The REVIEW is intended for thinking men and women. It is not designed for those who may, by their own choice, prefer to remain ignorant, intimidated, or amnesiac.

The AMBASSADOR REVIEW intends to communicate more than just opinions. We intend to communicate solutions and work to see that problems are solved. We believe in the essential dignity of man and therefore in a free, open and democratic society - with free, open and democratic institutions. Therefore, we want Ambassador College placed in the hands of responsible people - people who have demonstrated their integrity in both their words and their deeds.

We welcome and encourage literary submissions from our readers regardless of political, religious, or philosophical persuasion. We welcome any articles or letters that will help our voice to stimulate others to pause and ponder the cries of conscience in our pages.

We seek to establish the AMBASSADOR REVIEW as a permanent journal to analyze and review the total "Ambassador Experience", and to help stimulate those of the present Administration to make a complete turnabout from their folly.

Needless to say, the publishers of AMBASSADOR REVIEW are deeply concerned that the institution(s) to which we have all given so much are now showing signs of deterioration.

Consider for a moment: Why a closed Bricket Wood campus? Why a cancelled Imperial schools program? Why the "dismissal" and departure of many of Ambassador's finest faculty and administrators? Why the liquidation of the Ambassador College Press? Were these changes due to "severe shortages in funds", as we were told?

Yet all of these cuts occurred while millions were being spent to finance the A.I.C.F. concert series and Chancellor Armstrong's lavish banquets - a "SECOND GREAT DIMENSION" [emphasis his], as he puts it.

Consider also, how many of Ambassador's most loyal friends have discontinued support of the current administration for reasons of conscience!

The list of these people, which appears in our first edition, is staggering. It is composed entirely of individuals who were not only longstanding leaders, but in most cases ordained ministers. The list includes former Plain Truth editors and writers, staff members of the World Tomorrow

-3-

broadcast, four former evangelists, a chairman of the Department of Theology, three vice presidents of the corporation, a Dean of Students and the brother of the college's founder - Mr. Dwight Armstrong. In addition, we know from personal discussions that many current AC faculty, students, and administrators intend to depart in the near future.

When individuals of such outstanding character and long service are compelled by conscience to withdraw their support of the Armstrongs and resign, we think that our deepest apprehension is confirmed, and the future of Ambassador is imperiled!

The publishers of AMBASSADOR REVIEW intend to make our voices heard by both the Administration and the local community - and will, if necessary, undertake direct mail campaigns to newspaper editors, columnists, and free-lance writers, radio and television producers, civic leaders, foreign embassies, educators and other organizations....

The publishers and editors of the REVIEW, however, always intend to keep the above actions at the highest levels of honesty and integrity.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW's program of direct-action is brought on by our deep concern for those of the future who stand to suffer the same personal grief and dashed hopes which we have "experienced". The mental damage already inflicted upon sincere and trusting individuals cannot go unchallenged. The injustices of the past and the present must be rectified!

And they can be. - With your help!

As an example of the kind of articles you will be reading, we are enclosing a copy of one of the articles already submitted. The article points out major discrepancies in President Garner Ted Armstrong's January 14 address to the student body assembly.

Also in the first issue, you'll read about:

- THE UNCOVERING OF THE SECRET STRATEGY OF A.I.C.F. OPERATIONS
- THE INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY
- THE EXISTENCE OF SWISS BANK ACCOUNTS FOR EXECUTIVES
- SEX SCANDALS
- INTERNATIONAL SMUGGLING
- THE CONTINUED RAPE OF CONTRIBUTORS

Such things have been and are being conducted by administrators and members of the

Board of Trustees still in office at Ambassador College. We intend to publish their names in AMBASSADOR REVIEW.

All of this information has come about as a result of dedicated student and alumni research that finds its way to our mail box daily. The AMBASSADOR REVIEW is interested in stimulating continued improvement in the College and its standards.

-4-

To accomplish this and to restore proper leadership to the college, we need your editorial contribution.

We want to hear of your experiences. AMBASSADOR REVIEW needs your insight, because each of you sees the "Ambassador Experience" from a special viewpoint. As a result, your letter or article can contribute to publishing the real facts. Just one example: In April 1975, Bob Geringer and his wife, Connie, put into writing a list of honest, straightforward questions regarding doctrines, interpretations, sermons, Co-Worker letters and "personal remarks" they had come across from ministers and evangelists during their many years of the "Ambassador Experience". As a result of their letter, many have begun to reevaluate the meanings of their experiences at Ambassador College. The "Geringer letter" is being made available, upon request, as an adjunct of AMBASSADOR REVIEW.

So we, the publishers, hope you see how important just one letter can be to the thousands who may be affected tomorrow by what you are open enough to say today.

If you agree that the AMBASSADOR REVIEW can serve an intelligent purpose in your life, then we warmly welcome your contribution and your subscription.

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO GTA:**

### **WERE PLACHE AND HUNTING PROPERLY ROASTED?**

We wish to congratulate you, President Armstrong, for your brilliant castigation of Richard Plache's pharisaical and oppressive actions while Dean of Students (1968-1972). It truly was a stellar performance. We also wish to laud you for coming to the defense of freedom of speech and religion at Ambassador College, as evidenced in your statement: "We do believe in freedom of religion and freedom of the press and freedom of speech at Ambassador College."

We would like to pose some questions, however. How, Ted, can you praise the virtues of freedom of religion and speech - which have probably never existed at Ambassador College - and at the same time tell the faculty and student church members that if they disobey the Worldwide Church of God's teaching about not associating with

disfellowshipped members and go ahead and attend Plache's meeting to hear his side of the story, they "do so at peril to" themselves? How can you promise freedom out of one side of your mouth and turn around five minutes later and use scare tactics to dissuade students from attending a lecture with which you personally disagree?

After all, when the Apostle Paul was teaching what some thought to be heresy, he was given a chance to address the whole church in Jerusalem (Acts 15). Interestingly enough, he too was addressing the problem of those who would impose the Old Testament legal system on others. This Jerusalem meeting - unlike the recent Pasadena doctrinal meetings - was not carried on behind closed doors before a group of hand-picked loyalists who already had their minds made up.

You, as a "minister", have preached eloquent sermons upholding the Bible. The Bible you quote says to prove all things, and it warns that he who pleads his cause first will seem just (Prov. 18:17). How can we hear both men plead their cause if we are allowed to listen to only one of them? How could we come to a fuller understanding of the issues raised by Mr. Hunting and Mr. Plache when (1) you ridicule their past performances, emotionally denouncing them and all they stand for, and (2) then you proceed to use "church authority" to threaten and intimidate students who wished to honestly and objectively listen to Mr. Hunting's and Mr. Plache's side of the story. Ted, your tactics seem reminiscent of the Hitlerian and Stalinist eras and do NOT belong in a college assembly.

Furthermore, Ted, you conveniently forgot to explain some of the following points:

-- While it is true that the names of Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting were rightly equated with the term "super Pharisee", these two men were mutually

-2-

excelled in advocating yardstick religious practices by Herbert Armstrong, Rod Meredith, Raymond McNair, Ron Dart, Sherwin McMichael, Dibar Apartian, Dean Blackwell, Clint Zimmerman, yourself, etc., ad nauseam. Dormitory and room monitors - ever ready with their evaluation sheets - were prevalent when Jack Elliott was Dean of Students in the early 1960's long before Richard Plache arrived on the scene.

- Wasn't it HWA who personally approved the campus dating rules and designated certain men as approved marriage counsellors, not Richard Plache?

- Wasn't it you, Ted, (along with Mr. Plache) who called students in concerning the breaking of the dating rules in 1970? So, Ted, you did give support to the dating rules. It was HWA who called in several students in 1965 regarding "understandings" and removed the "leading" students from the sermonette list, visiting program, etc. Handholding for students was declared to be sinful and forbidden. This was long before Mr. Plache became Dean.

- Wasn't it HWA who declared the wearing of makeup a sin?

- Wasn't it HWA, not Mr. Plache, who dictated skirt lengths, hair lengths, dress codes and who forbade the wearing of beards, etc.? True, Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting (under Raymond McNair in England) enforced HWA's dictates and clearly spelled them out, but so did you, Ted, and all the rest of the ministry.

- Wasn't it the Church Administration Department, under Mr. Meredith's direction, and the whole ministry who filled out visit cards reporting on attitudes, problems, the sex lives, etc., of members and prospective members? Mr. Plache did not initiate this practice in CAD, though he had a similar system organized to report on students. Ted, you allowed some of these things to continue after you removed Mr. Plache. Why? Weren't you "in charge"?

- Wasn't it the Data Processing Center, under your auspices, Garner Ted, not Mr. Plache, which conducted and still conducts tithe checks on members, employees, men about to be ordained, etc.? For instance, in 1974 Mr. Dart made use of the tithing records of the Big Sandy employees to determine who to lay off during budget cuts. Interestingly, the impartial computer divulged that one Big Sandy evangelist gave no donations or tithes in 1973. (He was not fired, but later received a pay raise.) Why are you not zealously squelching this activity, Ted?

- In 1972 when you were removed from your position, the students were not told all the reasons, and when some possible reasons surfaced, Ted, you condemned this as "grave robbing", stating that "love covers past sins". Yet, you have brought every last skeleton (and invented a few) from Mr. Hunting's and Mr. Plache's closets to the student assembly and paraded them publicly so that all could gawk at them. Doesn't love cover their sins too, or are they different, Ted? It seems their "sins" were based on the WCG's understanding of the Bible and Mr. HWA's college policy, not on some moral or spiritual lapse.

-3-

- When Mr. Hunting and Mr. Plache condemned their former deeds and the pharisaical practices of the church which they supported, they were branded as hypocrites. Since when is repentance "hypocrisy"? Would you also accuse the Apostle Paul of hypocrisy because he left the sect of the Pharisees and repudiated their despicable beliefs and tactics? Why haven't the remaining WCG ministers gone on record, publicly condemning (1) the spying on students and members, (2) the pharisaical, non-Biblical disfellowship policies which deny one freedom of religion, (3) the suppression of our freedom of religion on campus, (4) the checking of people's tithe records and (5) the suppression of doctrinal facts on tithing, holy days, binding and loosing, prophecy, church government, etc.?

- Why, Ted, do you always say the church has a problem with the administration of 2nd and 3rd tithe? For three years the issue has been whether or not any tithing is required of Christians.

- Ted, why didn't you answer the doctrinal questions Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting raised? Why did you only attack and destroy their past record?

- Why did you, Ted, tell us that you and the doctrinal committee were glad to finally get the doctrinal issues down on tape and paper when the committee has had many of the issues documented from two to five years? What ever happened to the mountain of doctrinal information taken down on tape and paper at the May 1974 doctrinal conference? Why have you and HWA consistently both ignored the myriads of doctrinal papers you have received for years and refused to consider or refute the material?

- Why did you, Ted, say there were three days of doctrinal hearings (Dec. 29, 30, 31) when Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting were given only portions of two days to present their views (Dec. 29 and 30)? Why was Mr. Plache fired from the ministry on Monday afternoon before even being given a chance to present his views fully?

- Why were you and HWA not even present Tuesday when Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting spoke? How can you claim to have heard both sides fairly when you did not even attend? How could you attack the beliefs of Mr. Hunting and Mr. Plache in a sermon before the doctrinal meetings got under way? You didn't even know for sure what they believed, Doesn't Solomon say, "He that answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame unto him (Prov. 18:13)?

-4-

- It was not only Mr. Hunting and Mr. Plache who claimed the ability of God to judge attitudes. You, Garner Ted, were always complaining publicly about the "attitudes" of people sitting in the audience whose facial "look" bothered you. It was HWA who constantly equated disagreement with him and his policies with "having a bad attitude" or "being in the bonds of Satan". Ted, why did you say concerning the recent events that "it isn't flesh and blood we fight against"? Are you not judging Plache and Hunting and implying that Satan supports them?

- It was not only Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting who appropriated to themselves the title of "Matchmaker". Loma Armstrong and most of the headquarters and field ministers at one time or another have told lovers to postpone or cancel marriages or tried to match people up. Even the deans and counselors who succeeded Plache have continued this practice to a limited extent - to this very day. Why have you not put a stop to the continued practice of matchmaking if you so detested its practice by Mr. Hunting and Mr. Plache?

- True, Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting fostered some questionable policies. But Ted, in 1971 you wrote a strong letter to Mr. Hunting condemning his pharisaical tendencies, and then you yourself were removed from the ministry at least twice for spiritual and "alleged" moral problems.

- Why, Ted, do so many WCG ministers still live in luxury while the "little ones" go without? Why ask the widows to dig deeper into their pocketbooks when you live in ostentatious luxury and fly in college planes to appear on HEE HAW or go hunting?

- After spending half an hour denouncing and belittling Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting and exaggerating their sins, you, Ted, claimed you don't deal in personalities. If this is not

dealing in personalities, what is?

- Why, Ted, did you attempt to make Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting the sole scapegoats for all the oppressive, dictatorial policies of the college and church? Have you forgotten that all the ministry at one time or another was guilty of the same tactics Mr. Plache and Mr. Hunting are accused of?

There is a grave need for AC speakers to accurately gather and present ALL the facts when speaking before the student body. We are sick and tired of attending forums and sermons and having to hear one-sided, inaccurate, emotionally charged diatribes masquerading under the guise of "education" and "truth". Demagogic harangues have no valid place in an institution of higher learning such as AC. It's high time AC's educational leaders start behaving more like educators and less like politicians and demagogues.

Let us hope that truth, openmindedness, freedom of speech and religion will be allowed to reside and grow at Ambassador College as they do at other institutions of higher learning. Let us hope that we will be given a chance to develop real character and to have freedom of choice as you said your dad has always wished.

By the way, Ted, we have learned that campus phones as well as classrooms have been bugged, off and on, for the last two or three years. Also, one of the "super" deacons in the HQ congregation - Bill Evans - was caught red-handed in the back of his van trying to secretly photograph people attending Dr. Martin's lectures. Garner Ted, we hope that you will, with the same righteous indignation you showed toward Mr. Plache's oppressive practices, put an end to these unethical, gestapo-like tactics. In fact, this deacon should immediately be removed from his position, as was Mr. Plache. Right, Ted? Furthermore, bugging of phones makes it somewhat

-5-

difficult for us to exercise the freedom of speech you so eloquently defended. Those engaged in these illegal and unethical tactics need to be severely reprimanded. How can a Christian take part in these things anyway?

Ted, why are you so fearful that even a few might hear Mr. Plache's side of the story? If our doctrinal "trunk of the tree" is as solid and strong as you and HWA claim, what have you to fear? If you have really proven your teachings once, surely you could prove them again without being afraid of what Mr. Plache or others say. Or is it true, as you admitted during the Pentecost change, that you just accepted what your father taught in many areas and wrote the "proof texts" in your margin without proving them. Could it be that you are using these tactics because you do NOT want your doctrinal "tree" to be examined because you are afraid it is full of holes? Certainly Robert Kuhn and many on the doctrinal committee know that it is - but perhaps they put salary and status before truth.

by THE COMMITTEE FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RELIGION

[Editor's comment: If you would like to hear what the AmbassadorCollege Administration forbade students to hear - Richard Plache's talk before a packed house - you can order a free tape of the meeting by writing:

AMBASSADOR REVIEW  
P.O. Box 661  
South Pasadena, California 91030

We encourage you to talk to graduates and employees as the Coumittee did to get the complete picture of who did what in preceding years at AC. You might be surprised whose closets hold the majority of the skeletons.]

Copyright &COPY; 1976 by AMBASSADOR REVIEW

[Click here to return to the index.](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### The Gerringer Letter

We are sending you the following letter so you may have a fuller understanding of the real issues that caused Messrs. Hunting, Plache and Ord -- as well as 80 other ministers in the last two years -- to resign. This letter was instrumental in causing Mr. Charles Hunting to open his Bible and to begin to read what it *really* says on such doctrines as tithing, healing, holy days, prophecy, church government, etc.

The author of this letter, Bob Gerringer, has had nothing to do with its distribution, but in light of his postscript, it is evident that he would not be averse to it.

But you may wonder: "Why are you sending me this material? I'm just an average, non-scholarly church member. Why me?"

The answer to this question is found in Matt. 18:15-17. Here Jesus explains the general principle that if your brother sins against you, you should go to him privately. If he will not hear you, take two or three and go to him again. Finally if all fails, you should take the matter to the church.

The issues contained in this letter have been taken to the top men over and over, and they have refused to change when shown to be wrong and will not even honestly examine the evidence presented. Then they immediately try to suppress the material humbly presented to them, and they try to discredit those who go to them. This underhandedness we detest. Because these issues have *never* been openly addressed or fairly examined, even though they have been presented to the top leaders in the Worldwide Church of God repeatedly, we are now taking these issues to you, the church member, so you can openmindedly prove the veracity of this research for yourself (I Thes. 5:21)

October 29, 1975

Dear Mr. Hunting,

Contrary to what you may have begun to think, we are alive and well, and we did receive your letter. I just finished this letter to you, but thought I'd better include this cover-page since it was way back on March 5th that you wrote us. I want to apologize very much for taking so long to answer your letter. Actually, by the date on the first page you can see that I began it over six months ago.

It is not out of disrespect or forgotten friendship that you've not heard from me all this time, but rather out of a desire for thoroughness. In your letter you said you wanted to hear from us, and you said, "let me know why you have done what you have done" -- it has been my desire to do justice to that request which has led to hundreds of hours of thought-gathering, researching, writing, and rewriting.

I'm not a very good writer, and in parts I've probably not done the best job of expressing myself, and just as you said typing wasn't your calling, handwriting certainly isn't mine, but sir, please take the time to read this letter in its entirety. And I'll be interested to hear your comments on it, either by letter or in person.

The letter is not as brief as I at first planned, but I will not apologize for the length because that's what it took to tell you why we did what we did. And you'll be glad to know it will not take you nearly as long to read it as it took me to write it!!

[Signed]

Bob

4/19/75

Dear Mr. Hunting,

Thank you very much for your letter. Connie and I really appreciate you thinking about us and taking the time to write us. I must apologize for taking so long to answer your letter. When it arrived we were gone. I arranged it so my new job would begin three weeks after I finished at Ambassador, since I would not be eligible for a vacation until working there for one year.

Actually, the three weeks weren't a vacation -- we traveled north to Modesto to visit my folks; then, to Seattle to see my brother and his wife; then to Spokane to see Connie's

sister, husband, and their two kids; then to Colorado to visit my maternal grandmother, aunts, uncles, etc.; then to Lebanon, Missouri to visit Connie's folks and two sisters; then we came straight home., except for a quick look at the Grand Canyon. We traveled 5700 miles which I think is nearly as many miles as it is from L.A. to London by air (about 6000). We drove through blizzards in Wyo., Cob., and Mo. And Teddy came down with the roseola (a mild type of measles) just before we headed home from Mo. So, it was quite a strenuous trip, but, now that it's over, we're glad we took it. For an eight-month-old baby, Teddy traveled quite well, and our 10-year-old car with 98,000 miles gave us virtually no trouble.

Because of the cold weather, etc., etc., we all had colds when we returned to Pasadena. But I had to start to work, and I had accrued no sick leave, so I had to go every day. But, we have all recovered now.

I am a systems analyst at Kaiser Foundation Medical Care Program. They have hospitals, doctors, clinics, and a group medical coverage plan. They have 28,000 employees in Calif., and *over 10%* of the population of Southern Calif. are enrolled in their Health Plan -- 1.2 million. The work I'm doing is very similar to my job at Ambassador, and there seem to be very good growth opportunities there. It is located on East Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood, and is only 17 miles from our home in Altadena -- it takes 30 minutes to drive there.

Even though it has taken a number of weeks to start this letter to you, I've thought about it nearly every day. I've been jotting down notes to myself whenever I had a thought as to what to say to you, or how to say it.

Connie and I began very intensive and serious study this past July or August (1974). By the time the Feast came, we were reaching a number pf conclusions. A number of times since the Feast I've thought about talking with you. (I'm not sure how many times you've been in Pasadena since then.)

I wanted to talk to you and I didn't want to talk with you; let me explain. I felt closer to you than anyone else on the faculty. Connie and I have always respected you (and Mrs. Hunting) very much. I was extremely pleased when you said you would perform our marriage ceremony -- there was no one else I'd rather have had do it. And, Mr. Hunting, next to my Dad

-2-

and Mom, there is no one I less wanted to disappoint than you. Yet, I knew that if we talked the questions I would ask and the statements I'd make would probably upset and disappoint you. On the other hand, in my enthusiasm and zeal, I really wanted to inform you of what I had learned and concluded, and *why* -- the spiritual, emotional, and mental process we have gone through. So, I'll try to give you a brief synopsis of the things we've recently come to see, and how we came to see them.

Let me first say that my actions have been based solely on theology, and not individual personalities, "rumors", real or imagined sins, etc., etc. You mentioned looking at the

fruits of those who've left the church, And I'll mention this subject later, but the fruits of either those in or out of the church did not influence my conclusions. Over a year ago I became aware of some of the "personal problems or sins" of certain individuals high up in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and yet clear through last July (1974) I would firmly and emphatically defend the WCG and its leadership, though I was aware of certain "problems". Anyway, please don't think we found out about a sin, heard a rumor, believed a slanderous tale, etc., and this caused us to leave Ambassador College, because that just isn't true.

The first time I can remember having a question was in November, 1972. At a Bible Study Mr. HWA announced changes in the tithing doctrine -- AC and WCG employees no longer had to pay third tithe, and ministers had to pay second tithe. What alarmed me was that he didn't quote one scripture or explain, biblically, the reasons we had been wrong and why we were changing. He only referenced certain budgetary reasons such as insufficient excess 2-T, etc. Something I had been taught as being truth from His Word which wasn't to be taken lightly, was casually changed without so much as a verse being read. Interestingly, a couple of months later the decision regarding 2-T being paid by ministers was quietly reversed because of a deluge of complaints from the ministry. I only pondered this event for a short time, then dismissed it, but it did make a small impression I would recall later.

The next time I can recall having certain questions and doubts was almost one year later, right after the Feast in 1973. The Pentecost question was a large issue among some at that time. Mr. HWA was speaking at services, strongly defending a Monday Pentecost, when he said that the day on which Pentecost was to be kept was not a decision for us to consider or make, but "it is the church's responsibility". Of course, he meant the church hierarchy and, more specifically, himself. I immediately thought, the members *are* the church. The church is not a building, and neither is it the top ministers, nor is it Mr. HWA -- it is *all* of us. So here was an issue we were being told didn't concern us -- we should simply do it the way "the church" (Mr. HWA) told us. We were told God will not judge us on this matter, but that those who make the decision are responsible. The simple inference was, *don't* look into it, because if you reach a different conclusion than "the church", you still must do as "the church" says.

Mr. Hunting, Jesus Christ worked awfully hard to remove the need for a physical priesthood; the "vail was rent," and so each Christian has direct access to God. But the approach I've related in the above paragraph re-invents the priesthood and inserts it between God and the Christian.

-3-

Both Paul and HWA have said "Follow me as I follow Christ," or in other words "as I follow the Bible." Yet these words are rendered empty and meaningless when we are told we must leave certain decisions up to "the church," and that if we don't think a decision constitutes "following Christ," we must abide by it anyway, since "it is 'the church's' responsibility."

These statements regarding Pentecost I also dismissed after a short while; although they,

too, made a lasting impression.

Next in my recollection was "the split" which occurred in Feb. and March of 1974. Mr. HWA's letter to all the members, dated [Feb. 25, 1974](#), contained a number of statements which bothered me.

On page two of this letter, he accused the dissenting ministers of one overall thing -- greedily trying to get the tithes into their own pockets. I knew this accusation wasn't true. These ministers were willing to give up their job security, salaries, fleet cars, and in some cases their church-owned homes because of their firm convictions and their unwillingness to compromise with God's Word as they saw it. I'm not discussing at this point the truth or error of what they believed, but simply the point that they didn't have greed and theft in their hearts. (Perhaps one or two out of 40 or 50 were guilty, but Mr. HWA said this was the primary motivation for *all* the dissidents.) Mr. HWA's accusation was a serious one, and he told 50,000+ people. I, of course, assume he honestly felt the accusation to be a correct one. I have never heard him publicly before the membership apologize for making the accusation. It is interesting that the very next sentence in his letter said that the "one who ACCUSES ... is always guilty of the very thing of which he falsely accuses another."

On page 4 Mr. HWA explains why he "did not state the specific details of the personal, emotional problems" of GTA which led to his 1972 "leave of absence." He said he was afraid that the specifics would "SEND THOUSANDS OF BABES IN CHRIST TO A LAKE OF FIRE." Mr. Hunting, this attitude is a large part of what is wrong with the WCG. Mr. HWA (and, I think, much of the ministry) looks at the members as poor, dumb sheep; innocent, helpless, babes who must be sheltered, spoon-fed, kept in the dark, told nothing, never consulted, and guarded strictly lest they fall helplessly away or are defenselessly led astray. This is the way the Catholic Church looked at and treated its laity during the Dark Ages. Though perhaps the motive is good, this modus operandi keeps the masses ignorant and blinded. What happened to God's Holy Spirit? Many of these "babes" are spiritually mature adults, and they should all be begotten with God's "Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." When people are treated like children and animals (sheep), they will act the part, and their minds and God's Spirit will be stifled and smothered. Mr. HWA said on that same page, "The number of lives I might destroy forever ... might be as many as ten thousand." As long as the WCG ministry looks at the members as a gullible, vulnerable mass of people, the members won't learn to stand on their own two Christian feet, and use the Holy Spirit to grow and mature spiritually.

Before an individual becomes a member of the WCG, he is encouraged "to prove all things, hold fast that which is true." The ministry tells him, "Don't believe what we say -- check it out." "If we teach contrary to God's Word, do not follow us." Etc. Unfortunately, the opposite process begins once one is in the WCG. The member is told that "Mr. HWA is closer to God and has more of His Holy Spirit than anyone else, which is the reason

he is the leader of the Church" or "Since Mr. HWA is the leader of God's Church, he

must be closer to God and have more of His Holy Spirit than anyone else." Therefore his opinions (re: scriptural or non-scriptural matters) are more godly than anyone else's can be, so to do as he says must be the course of action which most pleases God. This type of circular reasoning is taught to the members, and is applied to a lesser degree to Mr. GTA, then the evangelists, then the pastors, then the P.E.'s, etc., etc. By the time you get to the lowly laymember, his opinion is worthless, when compared with the hundreds of those who must be closer to God since they have higher positions, or who have higher positions since they are closer to God.

In this way the member is stripped of any confidence in himself or God's Spirit in him. He places Mr. HWA and the rest of the ministry in the position of defining what he must believe -- in place of Jesus Christ and the Bible. The ministry carefully shows the laymembers *how* to prove the beliefs of the WCG from the Bible. The member thinks his belief is firmly grounded in the Bible, but for him to prove it he must rely heavily on the proof-texts and the explanations he has been given. I don't necessarily mean all these beliefs or explanations are incorrect, but the member is being groomed into a spiritually dependent person, and his primary dependency isn't It on Christ. or the Holy Spirit, but on Mr. HWA and the ministry of the WCG.

Our most precious, God-given possession at birth is our mind -- our ability to think independently, to question, to learn. Couple this with the Holy Spirit and we have the most fantastic tool known to man -- a mind begotten with God's Spirit. The approach of the WCG indicates that the laymember needs the Holy Spirit only - to help him overcome "personal problems" and help him accept that which the ministry tells him the Bible says. The Holy Spirit isn't simply to help us agree with the way the WCG explains it. In this way, the "weak of the world" are being made weaker. It doesn't take spiritually strong person to merely accept exactly what the WCG teaches and to obey it strictly. But it Does require strength of character and spirit to question, research, prove, and then abide by your convictions, regardless of what the WCG or anyone else says.

In this way I think the members of the WCG are not being helped. They know what they believe and how to "prove" it. If there is a doctrinal change they are then taught what new thing they should believe and how to "prove" it. But they are not encouraged to draw conclusions on their own, to research through many "worldly" commentaries written by "unconverted" men, to discuss with many the various options. I do not think it can be said that the members of the WCG are allowed, let alone encouraged, without fear of reprisal, to approach with intellectual freedom and honesty and candor any scriptural issue on which Mr. HWA and the "church" have ruled. And of course they would be forbidden from remaining "in the Church" if, based upon the results of their study and convictions, their actions were contrary to the official WCG teachings.

So in these ways and others, Mr. HWA's letter of [Feb. 25, 1974](#), to the membership, was very disturbing to Connie and me.

Continuing the chronological chain of events, DLA, AJP, and many other ministers resigned or were fired, and some 3,000 members quit attending. I was curious as to the reasons these men were quitting, but I did little investigation -- I felt this (the WCG) was God's One True Church and He would take care of the situation. I felt I should obediently follow Mr. HWA (although I didn't totally agree with his tactics).

It was in April, 1974, that Connie and I found out that her parents in Missouri were about to leave the WCG. By phone and letter we immediately encouraged them to stay in the True Church, even though it wasn't perfect. We sincerely felt they'd be making a serious mistake to leave, and if they had left at that time, we would have flown out to discuss it with them.

Next came the May Ministerial Conference. Since I received "The Bulletin," I was allowed to attend all the "plenary sessions," although I attended none of the "workshops." I was very impressed and encouraged. The Armstrong seemed to be sincerely willing to examine any doctrine.

But Mr. HWA still took what seemed to me a less than candid approach. He called our D&R change "new light," "new truth" which God has (finally) shown us. In other words, he subtly blamed our doctrinal error on God. He never once admitted that he had simply been wrong. He never apologized to all the people whose lives and marriages he had ruined. He gave God all the credit for wrecking and destroying thousands of families.

In Mr. HWA's [May 14, 1974](#) letter to all the brethren he said on page 10, "A strong and firm family structure is a basic building block of any happy and stable society." --And yet for years we've been destroying thousands of these "building blocks" of society. Mr. HWA still claims he has never made a major mistake in his guiding of this church, yet I can scarcely think of a more serious and damaging theological blunder as far as the physical, day to day lives of people are concerned.

Continuing in the May 14 letter (page 11): "No matter how much anguish is caused ... God's Church cannot depart from God's Laws or His Truth." In other words, the WCG can't depart from *its interpretation* of what God says on the matter.

Another quote from the same letter: "Brethren, this very experience (the D&R change) ought to teach all that loyalty to God and to His Church must always be placed first, over supposed or real wrongs or personal grievances." Mr. HWA is saying loyalty to the WCG must be placed above loyalty to God's Word! He's saying that it was right for us to obey the WCG's unbiblical and anti-scriptural teaching on D&R all these years, because this is what he terms "loyalty to God's Church." And he says this loyalty must "always be placed first, over supposed or real wrongs or personal grievances;" in other words, loyalty to the dictates of an organization must be placed first over what the Bible really teaches (on the subject of D&R, for instance) if you personally come to see the Bible and the WCG do not agree. Mr. HWA goes on to say (page 11), "God has given those of us who are loyal to Him and His Word the relief we relied on Him to give us." In actual fact, the "relief" has been there for 2,000 years, but it has taken the WCG this long to discover and accept it. And those who were "loyal to Him and His Word" on the subject of D&R needed no relief since they refused to ever submit to the WCG's incorrect teaching in the first place. Yet Mr. HWA would consider those who ten years ago refused to obey the WCG's teachings on D&R, Pentecost, etc. to be disloyal, even though they were being loyal to what God said in His Word.

Another quote, same letter (page 11): "I want all of you to know how happy we are for the answer given by God Himself." Again, this makes it sound like God has been responsible for our wrong teaching, and that now God has decided to clear up the matter (which must make people wonder why it took God so long). Mr. Hunting, the truth is that Mr. HWA and everyone

-6-

else who taught, supported, and accepted (myself included) the disgraceful practice of breaking up marriages is responsible -- but one Being isn't responsible -- God. He had *nothing* to do with the WCG being in error all these years in the matter of D&R. It is a giant "cop-out" to claim the only way out of the doctrinal nightmare called D&R was for God to provide "the relief we relied on Him to give us."

Then Mr. HWA tells how much he and the other ministers appreciate "the faithfulness of those of you who have endured this anguish in order to be obedient to our God." Actually, they were obedient to Mr. HWA and the WCG *rather than* God every time they submitted to a WCG command to break up a happy home. Anytime we obey men rather than God, *He is not* pleased, regardless of the sincerity of the individuals involved. Mr. Hunting, is it ever right to obey Mr. HWA rather than the Eternal? Yet Mr. HWA commends the brethren for doing exactly that, and then labels it faith in and obedience to God. Finally, Mr. HWA says, "Loyalty and faithfulness always pays." And whether he realizes it or not, he is saying that "loyalty and faithfulness" to himself rather than to God (if they differ) "always pays." Why? Mr. HWA feels if he is wrong it is God's fault, and God is responsible to provide "the relief" through "new light," "new truth," "revelation," etc.

I am not questioning the sincerity or dedication of Mr. HWA or anyone else. But back at the time of that Conference, what Mr. HWA was saying and writing was not providing me with the reassurance that God agreed with his approach or attitude.

So all of the things I've been relating to you finally led to perhaps the most important question and a very pivotal issue for any member of the WCG: Is the WCG the True Church? Is it the only True Church? Are True Christians only found in the WCG?

I had not looked into the doctrinal issues facing the WCG. I had not consulted with or read any literature from any of the "dissidents." I felt this would be disloyal to Mr. HWA and God's True Church. If the WCG was the only true church, where else was there to go? why go elsewhere anyway? and since God was totally in charge of the WCG, wouldn't He take care of everything in time and in His own way? and wasn't it showing both a lack of faith and insubordination to question the way the WCG handled things and the way Mr. HWA directed things since that would be identical to questioning God?

But would God be upset at me for studying extensively into both sides of the doctrinal questions? Would God really be upset if I dared to read some of Dr. Martin's literature; many in the WCG said we shouldn't even open a piece of literature written by a "dissident."

When I first began attending the Radio Church of God, I was told this was the true church because we did and taught exactly what the Bible said. Recently the WCG has said we're the true church because we change our teachings when they are wrong.

By July of 1974 the WCG had changed two of its teachings in a short period of time. It was obvious the WCG didn't have the Bible 100% correctly understood. Since there had been errors in the past, there certainly would be errors in the future, so of course, it couldn't be said the WCG was the true church "because we have 100% accurate teachings." So what is it that would make the WCG the only true church? Is there a certain percentage of

-7-

correct doctrines necessary? 99%? 90%? 80%? Are there certain key doctrines which must be understood correctly, whereas others are not as important?

I could more easily explain my conclusion and the reasons for it in person, but it became clear to me that there is *no such thing* as one True Church the way the WCG believes there is -- in other words there is not one true organization. The WCG is *not* the True Church of God.

The one true Church of God certainly does exist, but it has no organizational boundaries. The definition of a Christian, one who is a part of the body of Christ, a member of the Church of God is one who has God's Holy Spirit in him (Rom. 8:9).

The same question with regard to an individual arose in my mind --- must an individual understand a certain percentage of doctrines correctly in order to be a Christian (in order to comprise a part of the true Church of God)? 90%? 80%?

Mr. Hunting, God looks on the heart and the attitude of an individual, not on how much they understand. We cannot draw lines and say a person must agree with a certain view of a certain number of doctrines, or he cannot receive the Spirit of God. People who are illiterate, elderly, blind, deaf, and/or low IQ, etc., can all become Christians. They may understand very few of the Bible's doctrines, but if God finds a receptive heart and attitude, God can give His Holy Spirit and so add another member to the true Church of God.

I concluded the WCG has no corner on truth or Christians. I feel most in the WCG are in the "True Church," but the WCG isn't that "True Church." Neither is any other organization on earth, although many of them also have members of the "True Church" in their organization. The Body of Christ transcends man-made organizational boundaries (such as the WCG) and comprises all whom God has chosen to receive His Spirit.

Mr. HWA feels the WCG is the only True Church. He feels he is an apostle -- God's one direct representative on this earth. But after coming to grips with the "One True Church" issue, I could no longer agree with Mr. HWA on these matters. I came to realize that simply taking the word of Mr. HWA and the WCG would displease God -- I would be

placing them above Him and His Word as the primary molders of my beliefs. Chronologically, I arrived at these conclusions in early August, 1974. It was at this same time that Connie, 3-week-old Teddy, and I took a two-week vacation to Seattle to visit Chuck and Carol.

Chuck and Carol had, completely independent of Connie and I, arrived at these same conclusions, and they had already begun studying *all* sides of the issues. It was at Chuck's home that we first read some of Dr. Martin's literature and listened to his tapes. Many members in Seattle received Dr. Martin's materials, so Chuck originally sent for it so he could study it, then disprove Dr. Martin's teachings to any who raised questions regarding these subjects. However, upon careful analysis, Chuck and Carol were surprised to discover that much of what Dr. Martin said indeed appeared correct, and so they began to study more and more.

-8-

I was very skeptical when Chuck declared Dr. Martin was right on a number of issues where he differed with the WCG, but I knew then I'd really have to confront these issues.

When we returned from the Northwest, I visited Dr. Martin's Foundation for Biblical Research. I discussed a few things with him, then took copies of his writings and tapes. I studied what he had to say on a subject, what the WCG had to say, what the Associated Churches said. The subjects we researched were: Church government, old and new covenant, sabbath, Holy Days, tithing, healing, law and grace, etc. etc., as well as a number of areas of prophecy.

I will not even begin to try to relate my conclusions in these various doctrinal areas. But by the Feast, 1974, we knew it would be our last with the WCG -- the doctrinal gap between them and us was growing with virtually every subject we looked into.

As soon as we returned to Pasadena following the Feast, I began looking for another job. It was about this same time that Chuck and Carol, and Connie's folks quit attending the WCG. Virtually independent of them, we were nevertheless reaching very similar conclusions.

I perhaps reached the depth of my disappointment with the WCG when I read a statement written by Mr. HWA appearing on page 631 of the December 3, 1974, "Bulletin." Its implications are horrendous. He said, "Christ... has BOUND in heaven what His Church, even in unrealized error, has bound in earth." The statement hit me like a lightning bolt. I am enclosing with this letter a copy of my contribution to the "Open Forum" of the "Bulletin." In it I explain why I feel nothing can be further from the truth than the above statement by Mr. HWA. Needless to say, the "Bulletin" would not print my opinion in the Open (?) Forum. Bob Kuhn refused it because it was "too inflammatory."

The WCG cannot afford to openly present both sides of the story, cannot allow its members to read the opinions of those who disagree with Mr. HWA and the official stand of "the church." In the ministerial meeting of March 4, 1974, GTA said he was just trying to hold it together. He and Mr. HWA treat the effect and not the cause of the WCG's

problems. This is why disfellowshipment is such a handy tool for them. New, unapproved, "heretical" ideas and opinions can be stopped by kicking the trouble-maker out of "the church" and then forbidding anyone in "the church" from talking with him.

When it comes to controlling both the actions and minds of people, the WCG has a lot in common with the Catholic Church of the Dark and Middle Ages and the Renaissance. That church used excommunication to rid itself of "heretics." (They used even stronger tactics in the Spanish Inquisition.) Galileo believed and was trying to disseminate facts regarding the earth and the universe. "The church" threatened him with excommunication if he would not recant. Rather than allow people to examine the facts and judge for themselves, the pope felt he had to protect the "babes" of the church from deception, and so shut-up Galileo. He may have even claimed Galileo was in the bonds of Satan" and greedily trying to get a following so he could get their tithes! The Catholic Church had such absolute control over Europe for over 1000 years that it was largely responsible for the Dark Ages. It

-9-

was the "free spirits" and "rebels" against the church who got the world back on the track of progress. There was no dirth of sin during the Dark Ages, but there was complete stagnation in the areas of learning, knowledge, invention -- the only progress was backwards. I feel the members of the WCG are in their own Dark Age.

I'm sure that not everything Galileo believed was accurate, but he should have been able to express his ideas for public evaluation. I definitely do not agree with everything Dr. Martin teaches, but I thank God that at last he can express what he believes and why without fear of reprisal. And I'm equally thankful that I can feel free to study and evaluate for myself what he and everyone else says -- then I can decide and act accordingly.

God does not today have any organization of men ordained to tell others what the Bible says and what God wants them to do. The WCG is inaccurate in many of its teachings -- so I know it isn't commissioned to enforce its beliefs on others.

Wherever there are thinking, questioning, probing, seeking inquisitive curious, independent, intelligent, free people, there will be differences of opinion and interpretation, and I don't mean only regarding obscure, relatively unimportant scriptures dealing with seven thunders or why eagles gather around carcasses. God intended this -- He gave each of us individual minds and He gave us His Word which in parts is anything but perfectly clear. God is concerned with our heart and our attitude, and not with our ability to, like programmed computers, all profess the same point of view on a specified number of doctrines. Individuals can differ significantly in both their beliefs regarding and their application of the scriptures, and yet *all* be brothers in Christ and members of His Body.

But whenever someone who used to be a loyal supporter and member of the WCG begins to believe and teach something different, Mr. HWA declares them to be "in the bonds of Satan." In his letter of [February 25, 1974](#), he makes such statements as: "These deceived ministers (are) allowing Satan to use them," "Satan is the real author," "these Deceived

men (are) now allowing Satan to turn them the wrong way," "this thing is of SATAN." It is one thing for Mr. HWA to disagree with them, but when he dogmatically declares them to be agents of Satan he is making a serious accusation. And when I began to see that many of the things "these deceived ministers" were saying were true and that many of the actions they were taking were the only courses they could follow and still be loyal to God, I began to recall Matt. 12 wherein the Pharisees accused Jesus of acting "by Bellzebub the prince of the devils," although Jesus said His actions were "by the Spirit of God." If God through His Holy Spirit is motivating and guiding certain individuals, He will not look lightly on accusers who claim the Spirit-led individuals are actually motivated by and in the bonds of Satan (see verses 31 and 32).

I would like to quote from The General Catalog of Ambassador College --1973-74: "The entire curriculum in religion and theology is designed from a fresh viewpoint and approach ... (The student is) under continual caution to lay all preconceived ideas and religious bias on the shelf .. All difficult verses are studied not only in relation to other Scriptures, but also in connection with Hebrew and Greek texts, historical and archaeological facts, expositions of commentaries and recognized authorities, and the pro-

-10-

cesses of careful study and specialized research. Students are taught to approach the Bible with openmindedness and with due respect for the results of past research, but accepting only that which is proved true, regardless of previously accepted or universally approved theories or doctrines... Nothing is accepted unless proved, and every student is emphatically encouraged to think for himself in the realization that his salvation is a personal matter between him and God."

Mr. Hunting, the above quote is a misrepresentation of the facts. As students we were not encouraged to think for ourselves. Careful re-evaluation of one's thought system and the admonition "to lay all preconceived ideas and religious bias on the shelf" were urged if one had other than a WCG upbringing. However, once one accepted the WCG theology, all serious, and especially *vocal*, re-evaluation was expected to cease. One is then expected to proxy all "important" re-evaluation to Mr. HWA and, perhaps, Mr. GTA. Dr. Hoeh and others have often made the statement, "We shouldn't try to cross the Red Sea before 'God's Apostle'," -- meaning that, just as the Red Sea wouldn't open up for anyone except Moses and only Moses knew the proper time and method for crossing it, understanding in "important" doctrinal areas will not open up until Mr. HWA puts his mind to it and decides the matter. As one faculty member expressed it, "I've just had to come to accept the fact that we can never grow any faster than the two men at the top."

The selection I quoted from the college catalog is an example of the artfully developed technique used by the WCG and AC to advertise their indoctrination as "education." I realize this is a strong statement, Mr. Hunting, but were we ever encouraged to challenge and question the doctrines of the WCG? Back when I was in AC, suppose that during an OTS class a student had seriously questioned the reasoning behind a "Monday Pentecost." Would such inquisitiveness and openminded re-evaluation have been welcomed? Would the student have been encouraged to continue researching until he satisfied himself with a logical, proven conclusion? Suppose during an Epistles class a student had expressed disagreement with the instructor's explanation of Gal. 4:10?

Suppose the student felt this indicated Paul was opposed to the Galatians observing the Holy Days, and that they were not to be kept by the Christian today? Would the instructor have applauded this student's intellectual curiosity? Would the instructor have encouraged the student to conduct "careful study and specialized research," including the "expositions of commentaries and recognized authorities"? Would the student have been warned to put no more emphasis on what the WCG says than other theologians, but rather to prove it for himself? And would he have been allowed to present to the class his research and his conclusions, regardless of the outcome of his study?

We know what would have happened if a student would have been so daring and bold as to have asked such questions. There would have been gasps of horror in the classroom at his virtually blasphemous statements. The instructor might have taken the time to repeat the WCG's official explanation of the question. If the student seemed unwavering in his point of view, he would have been "called in," "counseled," told not to question "God's Apostle," told God is in charge, told this is the only true church, he must repent and change his attitude, "the doors swing both way," asked if he was really converted, told he was disloyal and would never make it into the field, etc., etc. Am I exaggerating? If so, only slightly. The college catalog's glowing description of intellectual freedom and honesty as an exemplary specimen of higher education is very different than the

-11-

real-life approach taken by AC and the WCG towards those who question and disagree with official church dogma.

Probably no college instructor at AC has ever had to face such a situation, because it is doubtful whether any truly inquisitive, questioning, openminded individuals still actively possess these traits by their third year of college. Almost everything about AC teaches one to accept what he is taught without question. Unquestioning acceptance and unfailing obedience prove ones loyalty to "God's Church." AC is not a "liberal arts college"; it isn't an "educational institution." At most AC is a theological seminary where a person can go to learn what the WCG denomination believes and how to instruct others in those beliefs. I vividly remember attending, in my freshman year, Pasadena Bible Studies conducted by Mr. HWA. He was always getting very upset at people who sent up questions during the Bible Study. If any question only slightly expressed disagreement with him, what he had said, a belief of the WCG, etc. Mr. HWA became very irate. He would scold the questioner for "his attitude," his lack of respect, disloyalty, and so on. Mr. Hunting, I'm not exaggerating. He made it quite clear he does not want to be questioned. He was very defensive and constantly felt the questions to be a challenge to his authority. He made it clear to all of us that he was responsible to no one but God (and the more people who believed that, the more powerful he became). At first it bothered me when he responded so defensively and antagonistically to the honest, open questions sent up by people in the audience. However, as the months went by and I attended many Friday night sessions conducted by Mr. HWA, I began to look at it the way he did. When he chewed someone out because they asked a certain question, I agreed with his appraisal of their "wrong attitude." Slowly my outlook was being warped until I concurred with his belief that no one had the right to seriously challenge or question him or the WCG.

The above is only one example of the WCG intolerance of beliefs contrary to theirs, or

even of those who merely have questions about the church's doctrines. Being a student at AC, and to a lesser extent a laymember in the WCG, is to experience a type of brainwashing. The indoctrination results in a form of mental castration; theologically the individual will not or cannot think for himself. He will blindly accept, believe, and obey whatever Mr. HWA says. He will loyally support and uphold the WCG's castigation of those who question, doubt, or criticize.

Primarily theologically, and oftentimes in many other facets of life, the WCG has turned thinking, reflective, inquisitive, analytical, seeking, free people into a dependent, unconfident, gullible, easily led and manipulated group. Obviously there are a wide range of degrees of how individuals were before entering the WCG and how they are ending up, but I feel the above trend represents the vast majority of cases. II Cor. 10:5 does *not* say, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Mr. HWA and the WCG."

Mr. HWA has done what he has accused so many other churches of doing -- taking one small Biblical point, and making it the central point of a religion. Mr. HWA claims there's only one reason we've been called today -- to get the gospel of the Kingdom to the world as a witness. This extremely limited and incomplete interpretation of the real meaning, intent, and full-

-12-

ness of the gospel is crippling when it comes to understanding the New Testament and what *real* Christianity is all about. Mr. HWA has often said, "Jesus Christ *not* the gospel." Well, He most certainly IS! Christ IS the good news. Paul in I Cor. 15:1-4 sums up the gospel as: "Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... He rose again the third day." Rom. 1:16 says the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation."

I've read Mr. HWA's booklet, "What is the True Gospel." He only quotes five or six of the New Testament scriptures which mention "gospel." Three or four of the quotes serve as his "proof-texts" -- and he proceeds to draw dogmatic conclusions, ignoring both the immediate context and the rest of the New Testament. If he'd examine the other 95 places where "gospel" is mentioned the meaning would be quite clear, although very different. This booklet is typical of the research and "open-mindedness" which has gone into most WCG publications and conclusions. Mr. HWA's concept of the gospel is similar to the blind man who got hold of the elephant's tail and quickly concluded that an elephant resembled a piece of rope.

So, instead of spreading the real gospel, Mr. HWA is delivering *his* gospel message to political figures and dignitaries around the world. It is also interesting to examine the scriptural support for these activities. In the October, 1956, Plain Truth, page 22, Mr. HWA said, "The popular churches of Christendom nearly all take active, vigorous part in the world's affairs and its politics ... They are part and parcel of THIS WORLD, and they serve only THE GOD OF THIS WORLD, Satan the Devil. *They are deceived!* They do not even know they are doing wrong -- they ARE DECEIVED!"

Although God has personally given Mr. HWA no commission, he nevertheless feels that virtually every commission God has ever given is his. Mr. HWA either thinks he is, or is

to do the job given to: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the "watchman," the "inkhorn," the one who "cries aloud and spares not," Elijah to come, a type of John the Baptist, either Joshua or Zerubbabel, one of the two witnesses, an apostle, a "messenger," one who "prepares the way," Hosea, Malachi, Moses (anyone who disdains Mr. HWA's authority or position is immediately compared to Korah), Daniel, Joel, Amos, etc., etc., etc. And, of course, he primarily feels he is to fulfill Matt. 24:14 -- see Rev. 14:6 for the most likely individual to take care of that job.

When I examined Mr. HWA's "US and BC in Prophecy" belief and found it to be not only scripturally and historically unprovable, but untrue, I realized that virtually my entire concept of Bible prophecy was built on sand; not necessarily the what, but certainly the where, when, and to whom.

Mr. R. C. Meredith said that Dr. C. Paul Meredith had "always been a student, and he took careful notes on Mr. Armstrong's prophetic sermons. As time went on, he compared these notes to the events that were taking place -- and to what other preachers had said -- and soon came to realize that Mr. (H.W.) Armstrong was the only one who actually knew what was going to happen BEFORE it happened!" ("The Inside Story of The World Tomorrow Broadcast", p. 12)

-13-

"This is the ONLY Work on earth that really understands ... the specific meaning of present-day world events, and the *exact time schedule of prophecy!*" (IBID, p. 17)

To see how inspired and Godly this supposed "understanding" has been, I would like to quote from just a few of the writings of Mr. HWA and others in the WCG. I would first like to refer to one of the original issues of the *Plain Truth*, June, 1934. On page 3 Mr. HWA has drawn a chronological chart of end-time events." In this chart the "tribulation" is diagrammed as ending in 1936. 1936 is also labeled "End of Age." Immediately thereafter are the "heavenly signs" and then the "Day of the Lord."

Now to quote Mr. HWA in the May/June, 1941 issue of the PT: "Since the last issue ... many things have occurred, every one in accordance with prophecy! ... War events thunder on, rapidly approaching the prophesied climax! ... Hitler now emerges as the "BEAST" of Revelation! ... Bible prophecy ... shows the Roman Axis forces will take Egypt, Suez, Palestine, -- even Gibraltar ... Britain will go down. And, unless we turn as a nation to God ... our beloved United States will have to go under ... We lack space for more detailed comment on specific prophesied events in this number... Without (a spiritual turnaround) we (USA) lack TOTAL Defense, without which we shall never win. We are at the END of the present order. ARMAGEDDON is now just a short way off."

Now to quote Mr. HWA, September/October, 1941 issue of the PT, page 7: "What does Hitler's invasion of Russia mean? What does BIBLE PROPHECY say about it? As usual, there are many ideas. So FEW, it seems, have a right understanding of the Bible and its prophecies (You can say *that* again!) Plain Truth readers *know* world events, *before they occur*. ... Hitler MUST BE THE VICTOR in his present Russian invasion! ... A settlement will be reached, giving Hitler the supplies and resources he must have and

undoubtedly part of Western Siberia. The terms will give Hitler assurance that the Red army is unable to attack him, as Hitler turns his wrecking machine to the British Isles, the United States, and Palestine. Hitler will emerge from this Russian campaign stronger than ever, free to turn the entire might of his forces against Britain -- and AMERICA!"

PT, May, 1950, page 5, HWA: "Most certainly it is easily possible the thing (U.S. of Europe) will be fully developed and ready to strike in *seven years!* Yes, time is running out on us ... One third of our people will die from starvation ... and in the next FEW YEARS!"

PT, Aug., 1952, page 10, HWA: "Thus it has been proved conclusively and beyond doubt, that Hitler did not die -- his body was not there -- HE HAD ESCAPED! ... The next Pope will be a professed miracle worker, as supposed proof that God is using him to order and pacify the world!"

PT, April, 1956, pages 3, 23, 24, H.L. Hoeh: "PLAGUES are coming -- and, according to this prophetic warning, in about two years from now. ... For seven long and frightful years we are going to suffer as never before -- until we are left '*few in number!*' We have about reached our population peak, despite the guesses of our political and industrial planners ... In another ten years for fear of Communist terrorism it won't be safe to live in Asia or in Africa! ... This most important Work will in all probability be completed in 1972! ... The coming Fascist-religious revival of Europe will conquer us within a prophetically indicated 17 years!"

-14-

"1975 in Prophecy, 1956, pages 10, 12, 20, HWA: "Indications of prophecy are that this drought ... will strike *sooner* than 1975 -- probably between 1965 and 1972! ... At the outset of this article I stated that the KEYS that had kept prophetic doors locked and closed from human understanding have now been found -- or, more properly, been *given to us* by God ...

Yes, millions of lukewarm inactive professing Christians will suffer MARTYRDOM -- and that *before* the anticipated push-button leisure-year of 1975 dawns upon us!"

PT, August, 1957, page 5, R.C.Meredith: "We will soon find that hoof-and-mouth disease will spread COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL! These things are *not far off*. They are *here* and NOW! DISEASE EPIDEMICS are prophesied to begin soon! *America*, WAKE UP! After 1965, we are destined to run into increased trouble with the Gentile nations. America and Britain will begin to suffer from trade embargoes ... We will begin to experience the pangs of starvation and of scarcity of goods!"

"A True History of the True Church", 1959, page 27, Hoeh: "God has given His Church -- THIS CHURCH -- *just two* nineteen year cycles ... The first cycle *passed*. Then God suddenly opened the door for the second cycle in January, 1953."

PT, December, 1962, page 42, HLH: "Russia and China Will NOT Split ... Russia and

China are to remain allies!"

PT, Jan., 1963, page 21, HWA: "Somewhere along about seven to ten years from now the REVOLUTION IN THE WEATHER will become a national and international calamity. Drought, epidemics of disease, will reap a mounting harvest of death across North America -- and in Britain. Economic depression will strike ... And the time will be right for the new United Europe to strike!"

PT, June, 1963, page 46, RCM: "This coming, revived Holy Roman Empire which is prophesied to arise in Europe and CONQUER America and Britain within the next ten to twelve years ..."

PT, Mar. 1964, page 48, HLH: "We face a national catastrophe before 1975!"

PT, Nov. 1964, page 32, Eugene Walter: "In the *next few years* it is entirely possible that some of the satellite countries *will* break away from Russia altogether. East Germany could well become reunited with West Germany. Rumania and Hungary are also good candidates to join the West."

PT, May 1965, Page 21, R.F. McNair: "The greatest proof that the 'times of the Gentiles' have not yet ended is the simple fact that the Gentile Arabs are still in possession of the old city of Jerusalem. They will remain in control of this city until the second coming of Christ."

PT, Mar. 1966, page 22, Charles Dorothy: "Hitler *escaped*, probably to Argentina!"

PT, Feb. 1967, page 47, HWA: "The 'Day of the Eternal' ... is going to strike between 5 and 10 years from now!"

-15-

"The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy," 1967, pages XI-XII, HWA: "The events prophesied to strike the American and British peoples in the next four to seven years are SURE! That is why the events of the next four to seven years may prove this to be the most significant book of this century. These colossal world events, shrinking the first two world wars into insignificance, WILL COME, on schedule."

PT, Feb., 1970, page 27, R.F. McNair: "Will Britain ever be admitted to the Common Market? Probably not!"

I have given you about twenty quotes out of about one hundred which I have collected -- predictions made by Mr. HWA and others which did not materialize. The WCG always tries to speak with dogmatic assurity; however in the case of prophecy, their absolute-ism has been quite reckless.

In the [Feb., 1972, Tomorrow's World](#), pages 30-31, Mr. HWA tries to claim they never

really made specific predictions: "It has never been our intention to SET DATES! Yet, in our human zeal and enthusiasm we have a few times come close to it or appeared to.. Yet, in our zeal, we have used 'possible's' and 'probably's' and even appeared to set dates we really didn't intend to set."

Mr. Hunting, I sincerely feel that is an unfair "cop-out." After all, Dr. C. P. Meredith said Mr. HWA "knew what was going to happen BEFORE it happened!" Mr. R. C. Meredith claimed "Truth after truth, prophecy after prophecy has come to be *clearly* REVEALED by Almighty God to His servants in this Work." ("The Inside Story of the World Tomorrow Broadcast", p.17). He also declared that the WCG understood "the *exact time schedule of prophecy!*" Mr. HWA claimed to have been given by God "the KEYS that had kept prophetic doors locked and closed from human understanding" and he claimed on page one of "1975 in Prophecy" that these prophecies were now "crystal clear."

Not only has the WCG set specific dates and placed clear time limits on its prophecies, but time and again it has been in error -- prognosticating that a certain thing will not occur and it does, or that something else will occur which doesn't. Certainly a few of the forecasts have been correct, but when so many are made a few are bound to come to pass.

In that [Feb., 1972 Tomorrow's World](#) editorial Mr. HWA claims that this entire subject is "of MOST MINOR consequence." To get another view on this subject I would like to quote God in Deut. 18:20-22: "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: you shall not be afraid of him."

The WCG specializes in "Self-Fulfilled Prophecy." The News Bureau or writers choose those sections of newspapers, news releases, news magazines, etc. which they believe fulfill prophecy, and then ignore much of what might modify or contradict those selections. Eventually sufficient clippings have been amassed to prove that severe drought, crop failure, upset

-16-

weather conditions, etc. are going to sweep the country next year. But when hoof-and-mouth disease fails to envelop the intended target or when Russia and Red China do indeed split, does the WCG admit error and print retractions? No. They continue to interpret world news. They do not analyze the news, but rather force it to fit into their pre-conceived prophetic super-structure. The WCG often makes conditions seem worse than they really are in an attempt to "help" God fulfill prophecy sooner and according to their interpretation of it.

Soon after Rohan's attempted Mosque burning Mr. HWA began saying that neither he nor anyone else in the WCG had ever proclaimed that a literal temple had to be built in Jerusalem. When I heard him say it, I believed it -- unquestioningly. After all, it would be virtually a sin to question Mr. HWA.

Could Mr. HWA's denials represent a possible credibility problem? situation ethics? expedience? deception? The following quotes helped me decide:

PT, Oct., 1958, page 4, column 31 paragraph 4, HLH: "A temple or sanctuary is yet to be built by the Jews in Jerusalem! ... it shall happen in less than 14 years from now!"

PT, June, 1967, page 2, column 2, paragraph 6, HWA: "There will very soon be a Temple in Jerusalem, with daily sacrifices once again being offered ... They will invade Jerusalem, and take charge of the Temple." Page 4, column 2, paragraph 3, HWA: "So there will have to be a temple there!" Page 5, column 1, paragraph 4, HWA: "So there will be a temple built on the spot of the old temple in Jerusalem." Page 5, column 2, paragraph 4, HWA: "Then Revelation 11 shows *there will be a temple* in Jerusalem."

PT, Mar., 1968, page 8, column 2, paragraph 3, RCM: "... a *religious center and Temple* will be built there (Jerusalem) *within the very next few years!*" Page 41, column 1, paragraph 2, RCM: "The building of a *literal Temple*" and "a great religious leader *making his Headquarters right in that Temple in Jerusalem*" are to be signs that "the END OF this age" is near.

PT, Aug., 1968, page 41, column 2, paragraph 4 GTA: "Bible prophecy specifically states that there WILL BE A TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM." Column 3, paragraph 3, GTA: "This reveals clearly. that the TEMPLE of which these prophecies speak must be a Temple IN JERUSALEM -- on the same site as the one in which Christ spoke; the same site on which Solomon's Temple had stood. This cannot be some *other* "temple" in some other area -- it must be a temple IN JERUSALEM -- or the prophecies of your Bible fail! ... He will SIT IN A TEMPLE OF GOD" -- ON THE TEMPLE SITE -- IN JERUSALEM!"

Why did no one in the WCG speak out against Mr. HWA's denial of the above statements?

The WCG's apocalyptic predictions, of course, are not unique in the field of religion. The Montanists set a date for the return of Christ in the second half of the second century. The Anabaptists predicted the return of Christ in 1533. Prevalent among European Jews was the belief that the Messiah would come in the year 1648. The Millerites expected the second coming of Christ in 1843. The WCG expected to flee in 1972, with the Second Coming in 1975 (Sept.6th, to be exact). And the *same thing* happened when all these dates failed: the delay of the second advent failed to put an end

-17-

to any of these movements; quite to the contrary it gave them new life and vitality. The failure was always followed by greater efforts to expand their work.

Perhaps the most poignant illustration of this is the Jehovah's Witnesses. The JW's have set dates of 1878, 1881, 1914, 1918, 1925, and 1975. I think you would find it interesting and informative to read the article: "Prophetic Failure and Chiliastic Identity: The case of

Jehovah's Witnesses." in the American Journal of Sociology, 1970, pages 926-948. I will not take the time to quote from it here, but the parallels between the JW's and the WCG are unmistakable. There is an incredible similarity between their reaction to repeated prophetic failures and the WCG's.

In Jan., 1972 Mr. HWA claimed the gospel *had* gone to all the world, whereas it had not before that time; many in the WCG felt God had "given the world more time to repent"; Mr. HWA claims God has "delayed the return of Christ: so Mr. HWA can finish witnessing, so he can finish the job God gave him; Mr. HWA claimed that something of divine significance *did happen* on Jan. 7, 1972 -- the greatest door ever opened to the Work -- *Reader's Digest* ads -- thus justifying the long-awaited Jan 7th date, ending the second 19-year time cycle (Mr. HWA has conveniently failed to ever refer back to the Reader's Digest ads "door" because they failed utterly); Mr. HWA pointed out the approval of the auditorium contract as another significant event in Jan., 1972.

These five examples of the WCG's reaction to the failure of its 1972 prediction are very similar to the reactions of the JW's over the years. There are other similarities I won't take time to cite. Suffice it to say that, as the above article described the JW's, the WCG also represents a "case of the process of 'self-fulfilling prophecy'." That is, these two groups fulfill their own prophecies in two methods:

- 1) By interpreting news events to fulfill prophecy, whether the news is doing that or not, and
- 2) By reinterpreting prophecies in terms of their own particular organizational circumstances and activities.

With reference to the first method, I will take one quote from that article about the JW's, page 935: "The most frequently used device has been the selective interpretation of emerging historical events as confirming signs of the approaching end. The group's negative and pessimistic world view sensitized it to perceive virtually every major and minor social disturbance and natural catastrophe as an indicator of the impending collapse of the earthly system." This accurately describes the WCG's News Bureau and most of its writings on current world events.

With reference to the second method, I will again quote from the same paragraph on page 935: "A related device has been the effort to interpret the experience and achievements of the movement itself as confirming signs of the approaching climax and as validation of the sect's conception of itself as an agency of prophetic fulfillment."

To illustrate the second method, I will quote from Mr. HWA's co-worker letter of April 27, 1975, page 3: "Do you realize WHY God has held world events up, delaying the coming of Christ (Matt. 24:48??), of the GREAT TRIBULATION, and the DAY OF THE LORD? ... God is now holding back the world events heading toward the final climax of the GREAT TRIBULATION and the DAY OF THE LORD *u n t i l* we get the message of the KINGDOM OF GOD to the leaders and rulers of East Asia."

So the actions and strategies of the WCG are not new. One of the most meaningful and thought-provoking things I have ever read I completed this past May. The author is Eric Hoffer. The book was first published in 1951. It is called *The True Believer*; its subtitle is "Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements." He begins the "Preface" by saying: "This book deals with some peculiarities common to all mass movements, be they religious movements, social revolutions or nationalist movements."

I strongly urge you to read it. No member, past or present, of the WCG should be without it; on nearly every page I found one or more statements which were applicable to AC and the WCG. His perception and incisiveness were so uncanny, I found it hard to believe that *The True Believer* was written clear back in 1951 and that Mr. Hoffer had no knowledge of Mr. HWA and the WCG at the time.

Because there are a few lengthy quotations I want you to read, I decided to simply send you a copy of *The True Believer*. I will refer to the pages on which they are found, and they will be marked for your easy reference.

Inside the front cover of the book I have listed the pages on which are found the selections which I have marked for you. Of course, I hope you'll read the entire book, but please at least read those I've marked.

Many of the selections I have marked, but especially pages 21-24 describe the type of people, in general, who become ardent members of mass movements. Pages 55-61 discuss how a mass movement wins and holds its followers; in short, this is done through its ability "to foster, perfect and perpetuate a facility for united action and self-sacrifice" (pg. 57).

Pages 75-79 are superb; virtually every sentence is uncanny in its incisive perception into the WCG's approach to doctrine, dogmatism, absolute-ism, heresy, reason, close-mindedness, fanaticism, etc., etc. "Mass movements ... interpose a fact-proof screen between the faithful and the realities of the world. They do this by claiming that the ultimate and absolute truth is already embodied in their doctrine ..." (pg. 75). True believers "refuse to believe any unfavorable report or evidence" about their movement ... It is the true believer's ability to 'shut his eyes and stop his ears' to facts that do not deserve to be either seen or heard which is the source of his unequalled fortitude and constancy" (Pg. 76). Mass movements are "stripping each human entity of its distinctness and autonomy and turning it into an anonymous particle with no will and no judgement of its own. The result is not only a compact and fearless following but also a homogeneous plastic mass that can be kneaded at will" (pg. 79).

Pages 105-110 discuss the qualifications of the leader of a mass movement, and Eric Hoffer's description bears a striking resemblance to Mr. HWA. On these pages he also discusses the subject of obedience. Mass movements are "inculcating and extolling the habit of blind obedience ... All mass movements rank obedience with the highest virtues and put it on a level with faith ... 'Not to reason why' is considered ... the mark of a strong and generous spirit" (Pg. 108). On that same page he quotes Pope Leo XIII as saying that there must be "complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and the Roman Pontiff as to God Himself."

Regarding effective leadership in a mass movement: "There can be no mass movement without some deliberate misrepresentation of facts" (Pg. 107).

-19-

On page 118 he discusses what a mass movement does to its followers: "people raised in the atmosphere of a mass movement are fashioned into incomplete and dependent human beings."

On page 115 "the indispensable devil of every mass movement" is discussed. "It is his voice that speaks through the mouth of the dissenter... If anything goes wrong within the movement, it is his doing."

You can read these and many other quotes I have marked in the book itself, so I will cite only one more. I consider this final quote to be the most profound and important statement made in *The True Believer*. It sums up concisely why I feel that church organizations in general, and the WCG in particular, by their very existence and perpetuation, are missing the entire essence and one of the great meanings of Christianity:

"Collective unity is *NOT* the result of the brotherly love of the faithful *for each other*. The loyalty (love) of the true believer is *to the whole -- the church, party, nation --* and *NOT to his fellow true believer*. *True loyalty* (love) between individuals is possible *ONLY in a loose and relatively free society*. " (Pg. 115, emphasis mine)

And "a loose and relatively free society" the WCG is not!

At the beginning of this letter I affirmed that the actions taken by Connie and I were not the result of individual personalities, dastardly rumors, real or imagined sins, slanderous tales, etc. Yet, we have not been deaf and blind, and when this subject, loosely categorized as "fruits" is examined, it only lends credence to our decision to leave the WCG.

Mr. Hunting, in your letter to us you said: "What about the fruits of those who have left the Church? ... Examine carefully the lives of those who have already left." We know scores of people personally who've left the WCG, and I've run into none of the "very tragic stories" you alluded to. Those we know are Christians exuding the qualities of Gal. 5:22-23. They are *not* in "the bonds of Satan", and have not suddenly displayed the traits described in Gal. 5:19-21. They *are* excited and enthused with the freedom and liberty Paul describes in Gal. 5:1. There has been *nothing* alarming in "the fruits of the scores of people we know well who have left the WCG. And even more exciting is the fact that we have met scores of people who've never been in the WCG, and in most cases have never even heard of it, who are Spirit-begotten Christians and members of the Body of Christ!

You asked me to "examine carefully the lives of those who have already left." Therefore, I am sure you also want me to examine carefully the lives of those who have stayed in the

WCG. This I have done in the case of some of its leaders, and it was a very startling and disappointing exercise.

You asked us: "What about the fruits of those who have left the Church?" Mr. Hunting, what about the fruits of the two top men in the WCG? Do they meet the high standards set by God in I Tim. 3 and Titus 1? I don't think so. (These qualifications are required, not optional; they are not to be treated lightly or applied only when expedient!) Since you are acquainted with this issue of ministerial qualifications and are no doubt aware of the unacceptable "fruits" which I question, I will not go into specific events. But I think it is fair to say that all the facts about the actions

-20-

of the top two men, plus certain behavior by a number of other individuals in the upper echelon of "the Work," would severely shock and stun the essentially naive laity. Unfortunately the WCG must live under a weighty, self-imposed "sword of Damocles."

And yet Mr. HWA claims, without basis, biblical or otherwise, to occupy the office of an apostle and to be the physical head of God's only true Christians on the earth today. II Cor. 11:13 warns of false apostles, and Rev. 2:2 commends those who "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not ..."

I am sure that some who have left the WCG have had problems, have not always produced "good fruit," and since you say there are "some very tragic stories," then I'm sure there are. But there have been some extremely tragic stories -- true ones -- involving far too many of those who are leading and directing various aspects of the WCG. Good or bad fruits do not necessarily either validate or discredit the beliefs held by the bearer, yet when those producing "bad fruits" attempt to govern others with their interpretation of God's Word, then their self-proclaimed authority should not be tolerated.

So, to conclude my comments on "fruits," I don't feel that everyone who left the WCG is a blameless "good guy;" nor do I believe that there are only "bad guys" in the WCG. I do feel, however, that there have been very few "tragic stories" among those who left the WCG, and I think a number of the leaders of the WCG, including the two at the top, have disqualified themselves by their "fruits."

In this letter I have not really addressed most of the major doctrines of the WCG, nor because of the length of this letter will I. However, Connie and I have come to disagree with much of what the WCG teaches.

One key to our new beliefs regarding the Sabbath, Holy Days, grace, new and old covenant, tithing, etc. was acquiring an understanding of the old covenant. When I graduated from AC, I had no real understanding of the old covenant, and why we kept and followed certain things, and ignored others. Much of the Bible became crystal clear when we realized and accepted that the covenant was made with Ancient Israel, and no one else. Also, we saw that God plainly states that the covenant was to be kept in its entirety, completely, and no place in either the New or Old Testaments are Christians told to keep whatever they feel like keeping. Yet, Mr. Hunting, this is what the WCG does!

Please read the covenant to which Israel agreed in Exodus 20-23. How much of that does the WCG obey? I don't mean partially, but exactly as God stated it. The WCG would say that certain portions of the covenant aren't applicable today, or can't be followed because of changed circumstances. However, there is no biblical authority for obeying only part of that covenant. Take Lev. 23 -- where in the NT does it say the Holy Days can be kept apart from the sacrifices which were an integral, if not focal, part of each holy day observance. Why does the WCG, completely arbitrarily, not enforce the blowing of trumpets portion of the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24) , but does enforce the removal of leavening and eating of unleavened bread (lev. 23:6) during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but does not enforce God's command to build *of branches* booths which are to be lived in (Lev. 23:40-42) during the Feast of Tabernacles, does enforce fasting (Lev 23:27, 29, 32) on the Day of Atonement, does

-21-

not enforce the waving of a sheaf of firstfruits during the Days of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:10-11), etc., etc.? There is no biblical authority for such haphazard, fragmented, and selective obedience to God. The entire Day of Atonement observance (as commanded by God in the OT and modified *nowhere* in the NT) revolved around the goat ceremony, and the WCG is kidding (pardon the pun) itself if it thinks it can observe the Day of Atonement, almost totally disregarding God's instructions for said observance, and then claim to be uncompromising in its obedience to God!

But the problems mentioned above are unavoidable when Christians today try to put themselves in a system God never intended for them. If we offend God's laws regarding the Sabbath, Holy Days, tithing, etc., "in one point," we are "guilty of all," and that is exactly what the WCG is doing as long as it professes to obey portions of God's Word which were never intended to be followed today.

Anyway, we have come to research many of the WCG's doctrines, and a close examination shows most of them to be in part, if not completely incorrect. Mr. HWA always claimed that he "let the Bible interpret itself." However, the truth of the matter is that his beliefs and teachings embody a plethora of "private interpretation." I could write hundreds of pages and not do justice to the doctrinal questions which have arisen in my mind in the last year and a half, but that is not my purpose in this letter.

Many people have told me they see problems throughout "the Work," but they continue to be a part of and support it because it's "getting the gospel message to the world." Mr. Hunting, I hope you will look at what Mr. HWA writes and says about "the gospel," and then contrast that to what the New Testament says. Look at the approximately 100 places in the NT where the word "gospel" is found; read the context. Please read Acts 17:3; I Cor. 1:23; 2:2; II Cor. 4:5; Gal. 1:16 -- you will see Paul *emphasized* Christ, and *didn't* merely allude to Him in a way which would prevent embarrassment. When Paul preached Christ, the listeners knew Christ had been preached to them, whereas Mr. HWA prides himself in being able to preach the "gospel" in a way that no one realizes it has been preached. In Rom. 1:16 Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." This year, in the Bulletin, page 293, Mr. HWA says, "One thing has been a serious handicap, and caused me and my touring team NO LITTLE EMBARRASSMENT. We have had to

say that we REPRESENT either Ambassador College, or the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD."

Mr. HWA has frequently quoted Gal. 1:6-9, wherein Paul warns against those who "pervert the gospel *OF CHRIST*" and preach "another gospel." Well, Mr. HWA is a victim of his own quotation -- he indeed perverts the gospel of Christ and preaches another gospel -- the gospel of Herbert Armstrong. The WCG is *not* preaching the gospel of Christ to the world. I think Mr. HWA himself sums it up best on page 15 of the October, 1975, *Good News*: "What we proclaim ... in reality is outside the field of religion." (I also address this subject on pages 11-12 of this letter.)

After beginning to examine many of the WCG's teachings in detail, I began to realize they had their own complex Talmud -- do's and don'ts, many of which were not mentioned in the Bible one way or the other. When Mr. HWA left the Church of God, 7th Day, he did not retain their teachings against dancing, card-playing, movie-going, etc. Yet, over the years the WCG has experienced similarly biblically unfounded rules and regulations.

-22-

Since starting his Church Mr. HWA has been making ex-cathedra pronouncements on everything from music to voting, dating to farming, doctors to hair lengths, investments to pierced ears, holding public offices to skirt lengths, adoption to beards, smoking to jewelry, wigs to pantsuits, medicine to customs of the land, dancing to make-up, types of employment to birthdays, business arrangements to stained-glass windows, sideburns to participation in dramatic productions, sex to nursery rhymes, bikinis to space travel, etc., etc., etc. I do not necessarily take issue with the WCG's teachings on all of the above subjects, but I do take issue with Mr. HWA's belief that he has the authority to enforce his personal, private opinions on thousands of others. Although God is silent on many of the topics mentioned in this paragraph, that does not seem to stop the WCG from speaking for God when the subject arises. Such flagrant examples of "private interpretation" are wrong!

Mr. Hunting, thanks again for taking the time to write us last March, and especially thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule to read my letter. It has taken me over six months to research and write this letter, and it hasn't been easy. I certainly have not intended it to be offensive, but rather to be honest, sincere, and "straight from the shoulder" -- qualities I have long admired in you.

I am more than happy to have spent hundreds of hours of time on this letter, because these are all things I've wanted to tell you. The purpose of this letter was to show you some of the major steps Connie and I went through leading to our decision to resign from my job at AC and leave the WCG. If nothing else, this letter should show you that our actions, though you may not agree with them, were undertaken only after much thought, prayer, and study. We have not taken this matter lightly or casually, but rather we have tried to seriously, logically, and systematically consider all the factors.

Connie and I are very happy, blessed, and excited about the future. We get infinite

enjoyment out of Teddy, and our second child is due in December. We certainly love you and *everyone* in the WCG, including the man most accountable, Mr. HWA. We do not question sincerity -- only God can do that. We have no hate or bitterness towards anyone, although I would not be completely candid if I claimed there wasn't a great deal of disappointment we have experienced in the last year and a half. But the blessings we have received and are receiving far overshadow any negative experiences. By the way, Connie and I have many fond and heartwarming memories of Bricket Wood and the tremendous people we knew there. If we can ever travel to Europe again, we'd love to visit the campus and all of you. (Do you still play basketball?)

Connie and I would really like to see you next time you're in Pasadena. In fact, we bought our home over one and a half years ago and you've never seen it. We'd love to have you up for dinner, so just give us a call next time you're in town. Also, if you choose to answer this letter, I'll strive to answer it much more quickly and with a *great deal* more brevity!

Please give our regards to Chris, Denise, and Charles Freeman.

All our love,  
[Signed]  
Bob & Connie

P.S. A few of our other friends also wonder why we have left the WCG, so rather than writing other letters of this scope, I'll just send them a copy of this one.

[Return to Index.](#)



**The Painful Truth**  
Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

**The 1939 Article:**

## **DID CHRIST Reorganize THE CHURCH?**

*WHICH is the one true church? Here is amazing new light from the Bible, establishing the TRUTH of this important question of Church organization and government. Let us open our minds, and without prejudice, search the Scriptures, whether these things are so!*

Just what is "The Church"? What is its object and purpose -- its real mission?

Is it AN ORGANIZATION, or a spiritual ORGANISM, composed of those saints whose names are written in heaven, and who have, and are led by, the Holy Spirit?

And, granting it is not just some one organization, yet should not the true Church be organized -- and if so, HOW?

Just what is the true BIBLE form of organization and Church government?

A startling new truth now comes to light; thru God's precious Word!

Most of us have ASSUMED one or two central points in this important question -- taken them for granted without investigation. And this careless assumption has led most of us into error. It has left us open to be deceived!

The Bible cautions us to prove ALL THINGS! It is profitable for correction as well as for instruction in righteousness. (The true Christian must be willing at all times to be corrected and chastened -- and must continually seek to GROW in knowledge as well as in grace!)

It is the true remnant people of God who keep the COMMANDMENTS that the Devil is wroth with today. It is us Satan is seeking to deceive. He will deceive even the very elect if POSSIBLE. And it is possible if we are careless, and assume things without careful study of all sides, and ample PROOF from the Scripture. We must be continually ON OUR GUARD, never trusting any man, or even a board or group of men, but God alone, thru His Holy Word!

So let us SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES! Let us begin at the beginning.

The CHURCH, as we know, actually BEGAN at Mount Sinai, in the days of Moses, Acts 7:38.

True, this was the Church under the OLD Covenant, not the New. True, there is a vast difference between the Old and the New -- and part of just what constituted that difference is one of the important things we want now to investigate. We want ALL the facts on the subject.

#### The Church was Married To The Lord!

At Mt. Sinai, God set up AN ORGANIZATION. Make no mistake about that!

In our quest to learn WHETHER God's people should join themselves together in an ORGANIZATION, having CHURCH GOVERNMENT, let us begin by recognizing that in the beginning, at Sinai, God Himself formed His people into an ORGANIZATION, having GOVERNMENT.

At that time God's people -- the only people on earth who were the people of God -- were formed into a NATION. As such, they had LAWS, and GOVERNMENT. They were A KINGDOM. First of all, they formed a civil government. But in this government, God also placed certain church governments, giving them the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Law of Moses. Church and state were inseparable.

In any government, men are placed in authority, with power to GOVERN and to rule. There never was a government without MEN in authority, ruling over others. And, perhaps without exception, there always is, and always was, some ONE MAN who was in actual fact, tho not always in name or title, the real head, or ruler.

As God first organized His people, HE was their HEAD -- their King. But soon the Israelites wanted a MAN to be their king, like the Gentile nations around them. It is IMPOSSIBLE to have ORGANIZATION, or GOVERNMENT, without having a

MAN as the actual and real head, even tho we SAY Christ in heaven is the Head, and continue to try to believe it that way.

A fact that many of us have never noticed is that THE OLD COVENANT WAS A MARRIAGE COMPACT!

When God first set up AN ORGANIZATION on earth, the people who formed this organization were MARRIED to the Lord. It was this MARRIAGE that bound Him and His people together!

In Jeremiah 3:14, the Lord says: "Turn O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU."

### The Lord Divorced His Wife!

The making of the Old Covenant, as recorded in the 24th chapter of Exodus, was the MARRIAGE CEREMONY. If anyone may doubt this, let us merely ask, WHEN, if not here, did the Lord ever enter into a marriage ceremony, joining :Himself and His people together as husband and wife? Where else, in all the Bible, can you find any account of a marriage ceremony?

The MARRIAGE ceremony was the OLD COVENANT CEREMONY! They are one and the same. It was this marriage, then, that established ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT among God's people!

We want to repeat that! We want you to understand it -- for it is of great importance -- it is the KEY FACT upon which the real truth, so long hidden, really hinges! IT WAS THE MARRIAGE THAT FORMED GOD'S PEOPLE INTO AN ORGANIZATION HAVING CHURCH GOVERNMENT!

That being so -- and it IS so, and none can deny it -- then it naturally follows that THE ORGANIZATION and the GOVERNMENT of God's people, at least as ordained and sanctioned by the Lord, EXISTED ONLY AS LONG AS THE MARRIAGE UNION WHICH ESTABLISHED IT!

If the marriage was done away, the ORGANIZATION and the CHURCH GOVERNMENT was at the same time done away! For it was only this marriage relationship which established the organization -- the kingdom -- the government, both civil and ecclesiastical!

When God first proposed the Old Covenant marriage, Exodus 19:5-6, He promised His people that IF -- they would be obedient, as a wife should to her husband, they would become "a kingdom of PRIESTS, and an holy NATION." In other words, a GOVERNMENT of religious character -- a CHURCH GOVERNMENT!

This is repeated in Leviticus 26. There the blessings to accrue for obedience are

enumerated, together with the PUNISHMENT for DISOBEDIENCE! And what was that punishment to be?

Notice it! -- "they that hate you shall REIGN OVER YOU . . . SEVEN TIMES" -- or 2520 years! (verses 14-28).

Look at it, in your own Bible! If Israel, the WIFE, married unto the Lord, proves disobedient, Israel is to LOSE her government! No longer to be AN ORGANIZATION! Enemy nations shall REIGN OVER -- rule over -- the Israelites. Their own government no longer will rule them. No longer will they be an organization of their own.

Thus God threatened to turn the GOVERNMENT -- the ORGANIZATION, if you please, over to the GENTILES for 2520 long years, TAKING ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT AWAY FROM HIS PEOPLE!

Now let us see whether He did that!

Israel, of course, disobeyed.

"And I saw, when for all the causes where by backsliding Israel committed adultery I HAD PUT HER AWAY, AND GIVEN HER A BILL OF DIVORCE," Jeremiah 3:8.

Surely that ought to settle the matter! Israel was DIVORCED! This cut off the GOVERNMENT, the ORGANIZATION, from among God's people, and TURNED IT OVER TO THE GENTILES FOR 2520 LONG YEARS -- until the very present generation! Still other Scriptures PROVE it!

#### Government And Organization Turned Over To Gentiles

Let us follow the story thru the Scriptures. Let us see if the other Scriptures confirm this astounding truth!

Israel sinner first, and was taken captive to Assyria about 721 B.C. But the House of Judah remained, and as long as they did God's true BIBLE FORM OF ORGANIZATION and CHURCH GOVERNMENT continued with them.

But soon Judah was sinning even worse than Israel, and they, too, were taken captive. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captured the Jews, destroyed Jerusalem, moved the Jews to the land of the Chaldeans. Among them was Daniel, the prophet.

Soon after this captivity, Nebuchadnezzar had the dream in which he saw the great metallic image. Of course you are already familiar with this.

Only Daniel could tell the king his dream, and its meaning, as GOD had revealed it to him. But notice a point in its interpretation:

"This is the dream," Daniel said after describing the image, "and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, are a king of king -- in other words, a WORLD RULER -- "for THE GOD OF HEAVEN HATH GIVEN THEE A KINGDOM," verses 36-37.

Note it! GOD gave the kingdom over to him! Now God never makes covenants with GENTILES. God never did, and never will, marry a Gentile people as such, or will, marry a Gentile people as such, or establish them as HIS kingdom, HIS government, HIS organization, HIS Church!

Yet it plainly says, here, that GOD GAVE NEBUCHADNEZZAR A KINGDOM! How? And WHY? Since God could not have established or set up a kingdom in Babylon, among the Gentile Chaldeans, the only way God could have GIVEN Nebuchadnezzar a KINGDOM was to have given OVER to him the Kingdom He already had set up -- the one set up AT SINAI!

Babylon never was the Kingdom, the Government, or the Church of GOD! But Nebuchadnezzar, under God's divine direction TOOK CAPTIVE the people of God's kingdom and church. And so God GAVE OVER TO HIM the KINGDOM -- that is, the GOVERNMENT -- the AUTHORITY to RULE -- which had been set up at Sinai!

Understand it! The AUTHORITY to RULE and to GOVERN was now taken away from the people of God, because of disobedience, and this AUTHORITY was transferred over to NEBUCHADNEZZAR and HIS SUCCESSORS for 2520 years!

#### When The Kingdom is Restored

Now notice the truth revealed in this Gentile Image a little further.

The AUTHORITY TO RULE was not only turned over to Nebuchadnezzar -- not just temporarily -- but it was to continue in the power of his successors 2520 years!

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom . . . and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule OVER ALL THE EARTH," verse 39. Note it! The RULE God had transferred over to Nebuchadnezzar was to continue in the Persian Empire, and the Grecian Empire -- they were to bear RULE over ALL THE EARTH! Yes, and by God's ordination!

Then followed the fourth kingdom of iron -- the ROMAN Empire. In the latter days -- at the end of the 2520 years -- NOW -- in OUR generation today -- this Roman Empire is once more to be restored by a union of ten European Dictators, as

foretold in Revelation 17.

And then what shall happen, at the END of this 2520-year Gentile reign?

"A STONE (Christ) . . . smote the image," -- smashing this Gentile reign into pieces! Yes, CHRIST, at HIS SECOND COMING, is to SMITE it, and end it. What will happen then?

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: . . . but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and IT shall stand forever," verses 34, 44.

Jesus' disciples understood that the KINGDOM, with all authority to GOVERN, whether civil or church government, had been taken away from His people, and turned over to Gentiles. You'll remember how they asked Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). But He did NOT restore it, then, He did NOT bring the government, the organization, the authority to rule, back from the Gentiles to His people! Consequently He did NOT reorganize His people, or establish any government, ecclesiastical or civil, among them! This the New Testament Scriptures, also, abundantly prove!

God had proposed to demonstrate, thru His people, what blessings and prosperity would naturally follow a civilization based upon HIS laws. And ALL the laws hand on that great basic principle of LOVE -- love to God, and love to neighbor. The principle of "GIVE" and of "SERVE", not of "GET" and "ACCUMULATE."

But, when His people Israel would not continue governing themselves according to His laws, based on this great fundamental principle, God turned authority of government over the Gentiles, and gave them 2520 years to DEMONSTRATE, by experience, the fruitage of the Gentile ways of lust.

The 2520 years is now up. The Times of the Gentiles have run their course. And just LOOK at the results of this Babylonish Gentile civilization! Governments are overthrown, and now arming to the truth to destroy on another! Business and industry is bankrupt under the principle of competition and strife and self-gain, want and poverty stalk the land, and millions are in want in the midst of plenty! Society is rotten and immoral, crime, racketeering, vice, gambling, run rampant. Religion is in confusion, torn by strife and division, in the grip of the GENTILE system of injecting ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT into the Church! Truly, in its every phase, our modern civilization is in BABYLON today!

Praise God, JESUS IS SOON COMING! Yes, coming to RESTORE the Kingdom -- the government, the organization, to the TRUE people of God! Coming to DESTROY all this "BABYLON" which has visited such unhappiness to the world! Coming to reign and RULE.

## The 12, The 70, And The 7

But, did not Jesus SET THE CHURCH IN ORDER? Did He not REORGANIZE it again, at His first Coming? Did He not set up a definite "BIBLE FORM OF ORGANIZATION," and establish a definite "CHURCH GOVERNMENT?"

We have always ASSUMED that He did! Yes, we have taken this carelessly for granted! But let us prove THIS point -- let us prove ALL THINGS! Let us search the Scriptures whether this assumption be so!

First, did Christ ever set up an ORGANIZATION, with its boards of HEAD MEN, with authority to GOVERN over the "spiritual affairs," or the "FINANCIAL AFFAIRS" of the Church?

Let us see if we can find such boards, or Scriptures giving them such authority.

True, Jesus did call out TWELVE disciples, who afterward were called "apostles." But WHERE in the Scripture are they called "THE BOARD OF THE TWELVE" -- a term we hear freely used today, under claim of having "the BIBLE form of organization."

WHERE do we read of one of them being appointed as the "CHAIRMAN OF THE TWELVE" or another as the "SECRETARY OF THE TWELVE?" Is THIS Biblical and Scriptural? If so, where is the text?

When Jesus called them, and ordained them, did We give them AUTHORITY TO RULE? Just what did He give them POWER and AUTHORITY to do?

Notice it, in Luke 9:1-2:

"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority" -- for what? To GOVERN? To RULE the Church? Notice carefully! Let us have a BIBLE REASON for all we accept and do! . . . ". . . and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he SENT THEM to" -- He sent them to WHAT? To rule and govern? To have supervision over the spiritual affairs of an organization? Notice it, IN THE BIBLE! . . . . "He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick."

The word "apostle" means "one sent." The definition in Cruden's Concordance is "one sent forth. Used as referring (1) chiefly to one of the 12 disciples of Christ; or (2) to any of various other followers of Christ who did evangelistic work."

An apostle does not mean one IN authority, but one UNDER authority -- one SENT by the authority of another! The only power and authority Jesus ever gave even His original twelve was to heal the sick, and cast out demons. And He SENT them, not to rule, but to PREACH -- not to BEAR authority, but to MINISTER, to serve!

Nowhere in the Scripture do we find the slightest hint that the twelve constituted a higher-up church board, and nowhere were they even given power to rule, or govern, or decide what doctrines the other disciples must believe.

### Were The 12 Continued On?

Is there any Scripture giving plain instruction that the TWELVE were to continue on perpetually as a Church board? There is none!

Yet many have been led honestly to suppose that the apostles were to be continued exactly twelve in number, because a successor was ordained to replace Judas Iscariot. So let us SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES on this point, whether this is so.

What was Jesus' PURPOSE in ordaining twelve disciples? Let the Scripture say:

"And He ordained twelve, THAT THEY SHOULD BE WITH HIM, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils," Mark 3:14.

Not that they should rule the spiritual affairs of an organization. Jesus ordained the twelve in order "that they should BE WITH HIM!"

Now notice WHY He wanted them to be with Him -- and WHY a successor was appointed for Judas!

Judas' successor had to be a man possessing a certain qualification -- because he was "ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection," Acts 1:22.

Notice the necessary qualification. Not ability to govern, nor talent to discern and vote on right doctrine. Look at it in your Bible: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and our among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained TO BE A WITNESS WITH US OF HIS RESURRECTION," Acts 1:21-22.

Do you grasp it? Do you see plainly revealed here the PURPOSE of the twelve?

First, Jesus ordained twelve "that they should be with Him." Later, after His ascension, one of these was replaced. And it had to be ONE WHO HAD BEEN WITH HIM, along with the others, thruout His entire ministry, beginning with the baptism of John!

Why?

"TO BE A WITNESS WITH THEM OF HIS RESURRECTION!"

Search the Scriptures as we may, we cannot find any other purpose for the twelve apostles, except to go out and preach, and heal, and to be WITH Jesus thruout His ministry, in order that they might forever PROVE the TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION!

That was the only reason for the definite number of TWELVE! To suppose that this definite number of twelve was to be continued and perpetuated AFTER THEIR MISSION WAS FULFILLED is absurd!

Is there any statement that others later called "apostles" -- ones SENT to preach - - merely evangelists -- such as Paul, Barnabus, etc., were "one of the twelve?" There is no such statement in the Bible! Rather Paul and Barnabus, after they were called apostles (as in Acts 14:14), went up to Jerusalem UNTO THE APOSTLES, Acts 15:2. And here, at this conference, the Holy Spirit revealed truth TO BE WRITTEN AS PART OF THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES, which were not yet, at that time, complete. Surely no "12 apostles" are authorized by the Scripture to receive such special instruction from the Holy Spirit, to made part of the Holy Scriptures, TODAY! Such an implication is little short of blasphemous!

True, Paul and a few others are called "apostles." But an "apostle" is merely "ONE SENT." If we could find one single Scripture where Paul, or any other than the original twelve, ever were called "ONE OF THE TWELVE", as we freely hear men style themselves today, then we would know the twelve continued on.

**BUT THERE IS NO SUCH SCRIPTURE!**

The words "The twelve" are NEVER used except to refer to the original 12 which companied with Jesus thruout His ministry, to be witnesses of His resurrection!

There is NO SCRIPTURE even hinting that the twelve were continued. On the other hand, every Scriptural indicaion is that THEY WERE NOT. Even the authors of "A History of the True Church" were unable to find any continuance of THE TWELVE in the TRUE Church!

That ought to settle the matter. The Scriptures speak of FALSE apostles, and of "them which SAY they are apostles, and are not, but hast found them LIARS," II Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 2:2. Let us beware being deceived. It is the COMMANDMENT KEEPERS whom the Devil seeks, in these latter days, to deceive!

Let us be sure everything we accept is based on true BIBLE AUTHORITY, and not falsely read INTO the Bible by imputing a meaning to various scattered texts contrary to the plain, obvious intended meaning in ITS SETTING!

How About The Seventy?

Now let us look briefly at the "70."

Did THEY constitute a CHURCH BOARD? Was power to govern, or rule, or act as an advisory board in matters of doctrine or church government? Was THAT the purpose for which Jesus appointed them?

The ONLY PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT where "the seventy" are mentioned is in the 10th chapter of Luke.

Beside the twelve, whom Jesus ordained "that they should be with Him," for "a witness of His resurrection," and whom He sent forth to preach, "the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come," verse 1.

Did they ASSEMBLE -- as a board?

No, they WERE SENT, not together but TWO AND TWO, on a special mission -- preparing for the personal visits of Jesus to these various towns and cities! Instead of assembling as a church board, THEY SEPARATED -- two and two!

What instruction did Jesus give them? Did He vest them with power to RULE, or set them up as an advisory board, or appoint them to be the LEADING elders?

No, He said, "Go your ways . . . and HEAL THE SICK . . . and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come high unto you," verses 3, 9. They were authorized only to heal, cast out demons, and preach! That is all!

They returned from this special mission (verse 17), and Jesus gave them power to tread on serpents and scorpions so nothing should hurt them. And THAT IS THE LAST EVER HEARD OF THEM! Their mission was ended!

Brethren, let us be honest! IF the Lord ever intended them to be a continuous church "BOARD OF THE SEVENTY", do you not honestly think we should find some further mention of "the seventy?" Do you not think we should read of this "board" in the history of "the TRUE Church" -- IF they ever were such a board?

No, the simple truth, when we come to "search the Scriptures WHETHER these things be so," is that they never were a church board, and they ENDED their work and mission before Jesus was crucified!

The fact that in one or two instances Moses selected seventy elders for certain duties of that day, BEFORE God took the government away from Israel and turned it over to the Gentiles -- BEFORE He divorced Israel -- certainly has no connection with the seventy Jesus sent on this special mission.

Were The "Seven" A Financial Board?

And now a brief glimpse at "THE SEVEN."

Were they set up as a FINANCIAL BOARD? Were they appointed to receive and handle the TITHES of the whole world-wide Church? Did they ever supervise the financial affairs of the ministry, hiring and firing ministers, and paying them their salaries, or "allowances?" Were they set over THAT business/

Let us not be deceived, but look at this AT IT IS IN THE BIBLE, honestly!

In the early days of the New Testament Church, the brethren sold their possessions, had all things common, and took care of the PHYSICAL needs of their own widows and orphans.

In the 6th chapter of Acts, we notice in the first verse, the Grecians complained against the Hebrews, because their widows and orphans were being neglected in the daily ministrations of material needs.

Then the twelve -- the ORIGINAL and ONLY twelve of the Bible, ordained to be witnesses of Christ's resurrection, -- called together the disciples and said, "It is not reason that we should leave THE WORD OF GOD, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men . . . whom we may appoint over THIS business," verses 2-3.

They were appointed over BUSINESS -- but what business? Note it IN YOUR BIBLE! The business of WAITING ON TABLES -- of feeding, serving, the MATERIAL needs of the widows and orphans!

And WHY were they appointed? So that the apostles might devote their time to the PREACHING of the Gospel, and the WITNESSING TO THE RESURRECTION, which they were sent to do, INSTEAD OF this business of ministering to the PHYSICAL needs of women!

The business for which the seven were appointed had nothing whatsoever to do with receiving and disbursing tithes for the ministry and preaching of the Word!

We should like to see any text in the New Testament showing that there ever was appointed any BOARD to act as a TREASURY for the tithes of the disciples, and to receive and disburse the money for the whole church! We say such a thing IS UNSCRIPTURAL and unless SCRIPTURE can be produced for it, such a practice ought to be discontinued!

If there is ONE LINE of scripture for such procedure under the New Testament, the editor of The GOOD NEWS agrees to print it in the next issue -- if any can supply it! This is our challenge, and we await replies!

There is not one single HINT in the New Testament of any Church BOARD with authority to rule, to govern, to decide doctrine, or to handle tithes and church finances (the whole church). In a later number we shall devote an article to explaining Acts 15, which certainly sets no such example.

All authority and power to rule is limited solely to each LOCAL congregation. But there is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for any super-government, or organization with authority over the local congregations!

The plain teaching of Jesus is JUST THE CONTRARY! Listen! "Jesus called them unto Him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to RULE over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise AUTHORITY upon them. But so shall it NOT be among you," Mark 10:42.

The AUTHORITY -- the GOVERNMENT -- the RULERSHIP -- was turned over to the Gentiles for 2520 years -- until Christ RESTORES the kingdom at His Second Coming!

#### Where Church Government Originated

How, then, did ORGANIZATION, and the idea of CHURCH GOVERNMENT get into the Church?

It came out of BABYLON! Spiritual BABYLON -- that is, ROME! The same as nearly all other false doctrines of Satan.

In the early 4th Century, Constantine, the Emperor, who officially started SUNDAY observance in the Western world, saw his Empire in danger of disintegrating.

At the time a great controversy was raging among the leaders of Christianity, over Dr. Arius' doctrine concerning the origin of Christ, as opposed to the Trinity doctrine.

We quote from Encyclopedia Britannica, (article, ARIUS):

"This controversy over Arius' doctrine reached even the ears of Constantine. Now sole emperor, he saw in the one catholic church the best means of counteracting the movement in his vast empire toward disintegration, and he at once realized how dangerous dogmatic strife might be to its unity. Constantine had no understanding of the questions at issue . . . He summoned a general council (the Nicene Council) . . . . It was finally decided against Arius. . . . Constantine accepted the decision of the council, and resolved to uphold it."

Thus it was CONSTANTINE -- the "BEAST" -- who injected and introduced into the church the idea of a BOARD to decide doctrine, and to rule.

Thus it was that CONSTANTINE made doctrine, as decided by a higher-up BOARD, the basis of fellowship and unity in the Church!

Jesus never said "By this shall all men KNOW that ye are my disciples -- if ye all speak the same thing the BOARD OF THE TWELVE vote on." That is the policy of some today -- but it is NOT BIBLE POLICY! Jesus said we should be known to be in the true Church IF WE HAVE LOVE one to another! And doctrine has only brought STRIFE!

In the next century, came the PAPACY In full bloom, starting the idea that the CHURCH is an ORGANIZATION having CHURCH GOVERNMENT!

Listen to authentic history! In the Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. 7, page 529, we read:

"The first pope, in the real sense of the word, was Leo I. (440-461 A.D.)" To him the plan of government of the Roman Empire was an obsession. He applied and adapted that form of government to the church, forming the PAPACY.

Myers' Ancient History, says:

The Church "under Leo I, set up, "within the Roman Empire, and ecclesiastical STATE (government) which, in its constitution and its administrative system, was shaping itself upon the IMPERIAL MODEL."

Truly, an IMAGE OF THE BEAST!

Thus was CHURCH GOVERNMENT introduced into the Western world a century after Constantine (the "BEAST" injected the idea of church BOARDS to decide what doctrines the rest of the church must believe. And thus the very PRINCIPLE of CHURCH GOVERNMENT becomes THE IMAGE TO THE BEAST!

The whole thing is FALSE! It is NOT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE! It is part of BABYLON! Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of such an organized church government, submitting to doctrines declared by unscriptural boards as a fellowship test, are IN BABYLON, and actually worshippers of THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST! And God is calling us, HIS people OUT of BABYLON today, before it is too late -- before the PLAGUES fall!

Brethren, let us have the courage to accept the TRUTH, and to COME OUT!

The Purpose Of The Church

Finally, what is the very PURPOSE of the New Testament Church? Is it to BUILD AN ORGANIZATION?

Let us, now, finally understand it.

The first kingdom and government was set up by Nimrod -- the first ancient Babylon (Genesis 10). The Devil is the god of this world, and since Nimrod the kingdoms have built civilizations based upon the Devil's ways of LOVE, of OBEDIENCE, and of GIVE, as defined in GOD'S LAW.

So God formed Abraham's children into AT NATION, giving them HIS LAWS, to show how a nation would be blessed that would build its civilization according to His Commandments. At Mt. Sinai Israel was united to the Lord in MARRIAGE, as HIS GOVERNMENT, both state and church.

But when Israel went after the ways of other nations, breaking the Commandments, God DIVORCED Israel, and gave over the GOVERNMENT, (which included CHURCH GOVERNMENT as well as state) to the Gentile kingdoms symbolized by Daniel's image and the four "beasts." He gave the GOVERNMENT into Gentile hands UNTIL THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, when the government, church and state, shall be RESTORED to Israel!

When Jesus comes with POWER and great glory -- power to RULE, and the SAINTS possess the kingdoms of this world -- He will make a NEW Covenant with Israel and Judah, which NEW Covenant will be the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!

As the Old Covenant MARRIAGE ceremony set up Israel as a NATION, so will the new.

Now TO WHOM will Christ be married, at the Marriage of the Lamb? Notice it, IN YOUR OWN BIBLE -- Revelation 19:7 -- He shall marry HIS WIFE! Note it!!!

Yes, His WIFE whom He divorced. A wife who is divorced is not free to remarry until the death of her husband! And so Christ, Israel's husband, DIED to REDEEM ISRAEL! And now Israel is FREE to marry AGAIN!

And who will the New Covenant be made with? Notice Hebrews 8:8 -- with the same wife He made the first covenant with but later divorced -- ISRAEL!

Then He shall RESTORE the Kingdom to Israel -- both Church government and state. Christ will reign not only as King of kings, but also as LORD OF LORDS -- Church government, as well as state!

Christ's FIRST coming was to REDEEM -- not to restore.

Jesus never set up an organization, nor did He establish any church GOVERNMENT. He did not RE-ORGANIZE the Church!

Instead, He came calling INDIVIDUAL disciples out from among the church organization, sects, and denominations -- out from among the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes -- out from among worldly Gentile organizations and contacts -- He called His saints to be SEPARATE -- to COME OUT!

The very word "ecclesia" from which "Church" is translated, means "called-out ones" as well as "assembly."

The New Testament Church is not a kingdom -- not a church government -- but an assembly of individuals CALLED OUT -- Spirit-filled individuals, and therefore a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not an organization.

The OBJECT of the Church is not to build up an organization, or a movement. Let us see this great purpose clearly.

The CHURCH is Israelitish. Not a Gentile Church just called "Israel." It IS Israel. But those who do not come by faith, and who are disobedient, are CUT OFF, the Israelitish-born, while Gentile converts, thru Christ, are ADOPTED into Israel. Thus, spiritually speaking, Israel IS the CHURCH.

And it is the CHURCH who shall be married to Christ -- Israel REDEEMED by the blood of the Lamb of God!

The CHURCH is God's instrumentality thru which, and in which, He is selecting a people for His name -- gathering OUT of "babylon" -- OUT of worldly ways, worldly organizations, various individuals, -- one here, and one there -- to repentance, faith in Christ, receiving of and being led by the Holy Spirit, thus having HIS LAWS written in their minds and hearts -- living, individually, a life of trial and test, of OVERCOMING, that they may be thus fitted and trained for positions as kings or priests in the KINGDOM OF GOD, after Christ's second coming!

The CHURCH of God shall then become the KINGDOM of God. It is the CHURCH which shall be married to the Lamb, establishing God's GOVERNMENT on earth -- restoring the KINGDOM to Israel!

So THE CHURCH is God's instrumentality for overcoming the FAULT of the Old Covenant. That FAULT was disobedience. The NEW will be made with those in whose minds and hearts GOD'S LAW has been written, by His Holy Spirit! (Hebrews 8:10).

And this MARRIAGE will not be made with some one organization! It is THE INDIVIDUAL SAINTS -- not some organization -- which shall possess the government, and rule (Daniel 7:18; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21, etc.)

His WIFE shall have made herself READY! But how? By a "re-organization", or

some "new movement?" What folly! Read Ephesians 5:25-27. The CHURCH is the collective body of individual saints who are sanctified and CLEANSED by Christ! Let us stop speaking of some organization as "the Church," or "our Church!"

Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be ROOTED UP!" Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church GOVERNMENT, or set men IN AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church.

Any such "plan" was never planted of GOD -- and therefore IT SHALL BE ROOTED UP!

Our fellowship is first with God, and with Christ -- then with each other, and with Christ -- then with each other, in LOVE! The saints, so far as they know one another, are not to forsake assembling together for their mutual edification. For this purpose -- and that all things may be done decently and in order -- the Scriptures give us instruction for ordaining local elders and deacons, in every city -- every local congregation, or Church. But there is no super-organization over and above local congregation IN THE NEW TESTAMENT! And any such "plant" is certain to be ROOTED UP!"

All such organizations and governments came out of BABYLON -- and are today a part of BABYLON!

Brethren, let us have the kind of cooperative FELLOWSHIP, based on LOVE, that was practiced by the early saints, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Let us work together, in unselfish effort to GIVE of the Gospel truth to the world -- to GIVE of the "waters of life" to as many precious souls as we can reach -- to GIVE out the last warning message with great POWER!

But let us drop all effort to BUILD UP A MOVEMENT or AN ORGANIZATION. Let us quit working FOR organizations, and work FOR THE LORD -- and the salvation of souls!

What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION -- which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power -- striving against each other, lining up the brethren on THEIR side, against the other! It is SUCH PREACHERS who have split up and divided our brethren!

God's Word commands us to COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, and be separate. God's last warning is, "COME OUT OF BABYLON!!!"

Organization and church GOVERNMENT has brought us only strife, jealousies, divisions, bitterness! It is not of God, and it can bear no other fruit.

The CHURCH OF GOD needs more of the POWER OF GOD -- more of HIS LOVE -- of HIS HOLY SPIRIT, that the work may now begin to go forth IN MIGHTY POWER! We ought to be ASHAMED of the pitiful, puny, weak, feeble work that has split up and divided brethren, reached but so very FEW with the message, with almost no real conversions! All this, while leaders desiring power to RULE send out misleading, exaggerated, deceiving statements designed to convince tithe-payers that "the work is progressing." What a mockery! What a tragedy! What a pity!

We praise God that many of the more spiritual HAVE COME OUT! Let us obey GOD!

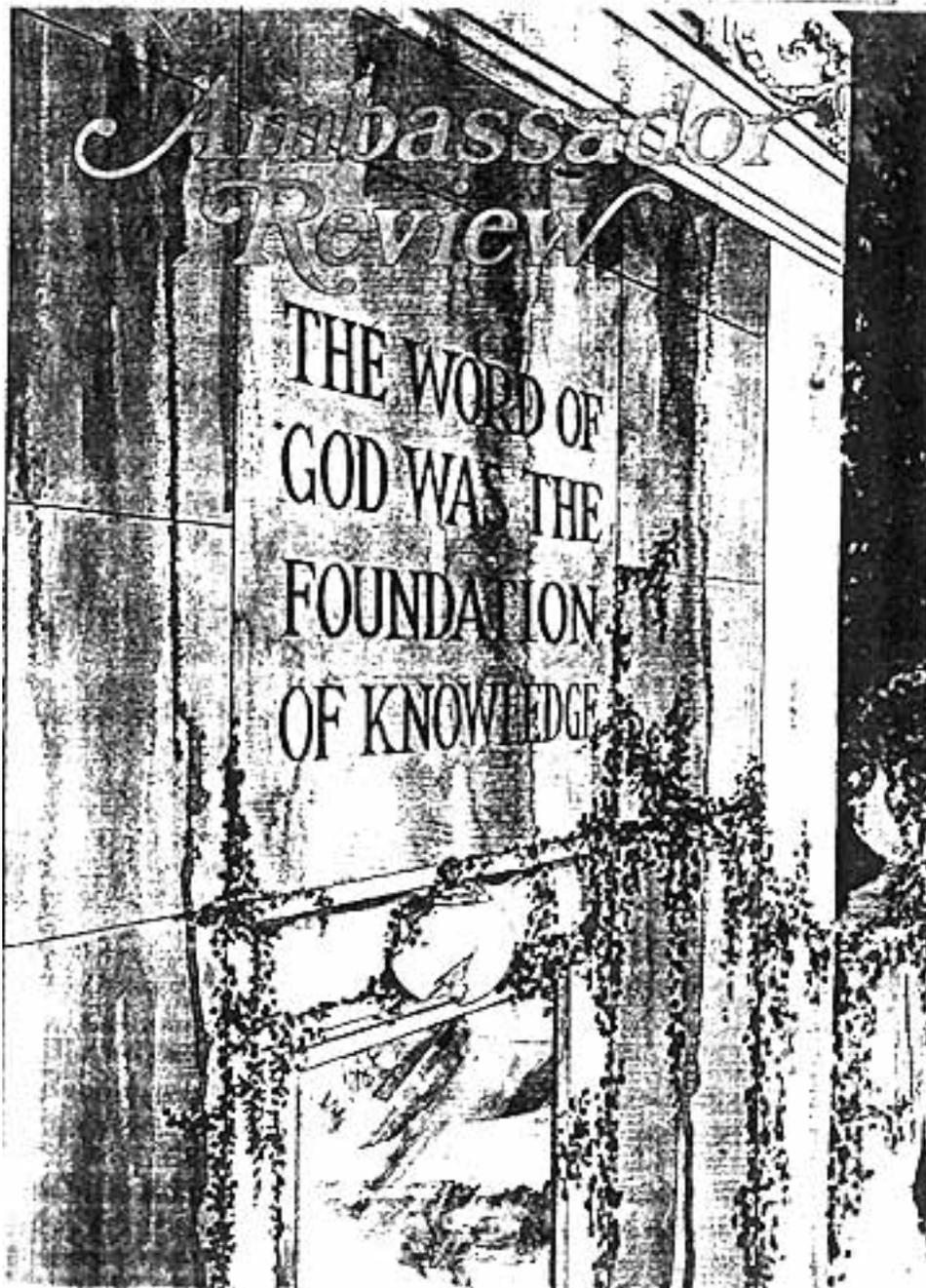
[Click here to return to the index.](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

**Ambassador Review, June '76 (AR1)**



[Note: The webmaster purchased a photocopy of the Ambassador Review from the late John Trechak about 20 years after it was originally published. Ambassador Review was a full color magazine, which, unfortunately, was not available for reproduction.]

# Ambassador Review

June 1976.....Vol. I No. 1

J. Timothy Nugent, Publisher & Editor  
John Trechak, Publisher & Editor  
Leonard W. Zola. Managing Editor  
Gary Reid. Associate Editor  
Margaret D. Zola. Associate Editor  
Mary E. Jones, Copy Editor  
William Hughes, Business Manager

AMBASSADOR REVIEW is a journal by and for students, alumni, and friends of Ambassador College. Its goal is to provide an open forum for those who have shared in the "Ambassador Experience." It has grown out of the increasing need for a response to the censored and ideologically-controlled articles found in official Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God publications.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW has the following purposes:

- It is a forum for assessing the teachings of Ambassador College and their effect on Ambassador College students. In short, it examines the "Ambassador Experience."
- It is dedicated to prodding the leadership of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God which supports and controls Ambassador College to change the practices and policies which are bringing discredit to Ambassador College worldwide.
- It is a publication that brings to light many of Ambassador College's biggest problems which have been too long covered up.
- It presents solutions to Ambassador's problems and will take firm and direct action to initiate drastically needed changes at Ambassador College and in the church which so heavily influences it.
- It is solidly founded in the belief that Ambassador College was built by and continues to exist through the contributions of many selfless, dedicated people. NO ONE MAN CAN TRUTHFULLY SAY, "I AM AMBASSADOR COLLEGE." No one family, clan or clique should ever be allowed to monopolize the Ambassador entity.

The REVIEW is intended for thinking men and women. It is not designed for those who may, by their own choice, prefer to remain ignorant, intimidated, or amnesiac.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW intends to communicate more than just opinions. We intend to communicate solutions and work to see that problems are solved. We believe in the essential dignity of man and therefore in a free, open and democratic society-with free, open and democratic institutions. Therefore, we want Ambassador College placed in the hands of responsible people-people who have demonstrated their integrity in both their words and their deeds.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW intends to make its voice heard by both the Administration

and the local community-and it will, if necessary, undertake direct mail campaigns to newspaper editors, columnists, and free-lance writers, radio and television producers, civic leaders, foreign embassies, educators and other organizations.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW's program of direct-action is brought on by our deep concern for those of the future who stand to suffer the same personal grief and dashed hopes which we have experienced. The mental damage inflicted upon sincere and trusting individuals CANNOT go unchallenged. The injustices of the past and the present must be rectified.

We welcome and encourage literary submissions from our readers regardless of political, religious, or philosophical persuasion. We welcome any articles or letters that will help stimulate others to pause and ponder the cries of conscience in our pages.

We hope you agree that AMBASSADOR REVIEW can serve an intelligent purpose in your life and we warmly welcome your contribution and your subscription.

Address all communications to:  
Ambassador Review  
P.O. Box 661  
South Pasadena, CA 91030

All contents copyright, 1976, Ambassador Review. All rights reserved.



*"...pick for your subject some red-hot controversial topic ... have the courage to actually ATTACK something, give the PLAIN TRUTH about it, open people's eyes about it, and work yourself up to white-hot heat of indignation and emotion, and let it fly ... to start a big controversy . . . find something to attack and expose-something that is wrong. Something that will stir up the people . . . something you can really flay with forceful language  
". publish a high-quality, professional appearing magazine.*

*Herbert W. Armstrong, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG, pages 244, 506.*

*Editor: Thy will be done.*

[Next Article](#)

[Return to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **THE END OF INNOCENCE?**

Is this the beginning of the end for Ambassador College? Is the decline and fall already underway? Has freedom of religion had it at Ambassador? Is the so-called "Ambassador Experience" over? Next year, will the college be headed for a mere depression, or a bankruptcy? And perhaps most important, is truth headed for an increasingly austere life at an institution whose major media is called THE PLAIN TRUTH?

It's hard to be optimistic when you consider that this institution gave us forty years of Pentecost on the wrong day, divorce without remarriage (and that administered in the wrong way), "healing" with nothing to ease the pain, a TOMORROW'S WORLD that no longer exists, and let's not forget, "1972"!

Yes, it is hard to be optimistic. And, if normal conversation can be believed, a majority of people aren't.

None of the "great purposes" seem pertinent anymore. Bricket Wood is gone. Imperial Schools are gone. The Ambassador Press has been sold. The computer department is being phased out. The Ambassador Television Studio is being bartered off. And it doesn't help to be reminded that THE PLAIN TRUTH looks starved for content, while the pages of the once-again-delayed HUMAN POTENTIAL are so bloated with content that it appears to be wallowing in its own valleys, perhaps never to see the arrival of a second edition. Yes, it's hard to be optimistic.

But the problem is not lack of optimism. The problem seems to be the lack of believable *integrity* behind the "new" programs. Integrity no longer seems to be of the same value to the present administration-an administration which has as its highest counsel, Stanley Rader, a man who didn't even attend Ambassador

College.

For the first time within the memories of most of us, Ambassador people are seriously questioning whether the college will survive. As a result, many seem to be caught in an unintended backlash of falling expectations.

Part of the problem may be that so many developments seem to confirm the portent of the negative view. In light of recent attempts of Ambassador administrators to misdirect AMBASSADOR REVIEW material from its rightful owners, it is not difficult to believe those who warn that the administration is not only in error, but *willfully covering up error!*

The notion that "government from the top down" is not of God and therefore not the best government for humans gains plausibility from the premature departure of four of the college's most respected evangelists-three of them vice-presidents. The resignations of scores of former Ambassador administrators convince us that the issues troubling the consciences of these men are real.

The continued rising prominence of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation appears to bear out the credibility of seers who say that Worldwide Church of God contributions are being transferred to a separate foundation under the control of less than "Ambassador quality" people. Reports of the A.I.C.F. spending \$125,000 in one night for a Hollywood movie premier lend substance to the ominous prediction that Ambassador College will not make it much longer if these subsidies continue at the current pace.

The editors of this magazine are prepared to believe the worst-the collusion, the fraud, the shortchange and the clever subterfuge. But we are not prepared to accept *without a fight* the end of individual freedom, the demise of Ambassador College and its replacement by a group of international hustlers who offer fun for a few and oppression for the rest.

The Ambassador entity is at a turning point. It can listen to those who would try to improve it or it can cling to those sacred cows that will destroy it. It's time we realized that our growing-up phase is coming to an end. Many of us leave it reluctantly. It's hard to let go of the precious illusions of our spiritual childhood, the innocence of our infant-like beginnings.

Now we are discovering that certain doctrines and leaders cannot live in control of our lives forever. If this is what's happening, perhaps in time we can make peace with inevitable change, candidly admit the mistakes of the past, settle into a productive and rewarding spiritual maturity and face adulthood with intelligence, not blind allegiance. The end of innocence in this case will be the first step toward wisdom.

**-J. Timothy Nugent**

[Return to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## EXECUTIVE EXODUS

Since 1973 dozens of the leading men and women of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God have left their positions because of frustration, matters of conscience, or/and disgust over doctrinal and organizational problems. The following list enumerates many of those who no longer actively support Ambassador College or the Worldwide Church of God.

### WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRY

#### EVANGELISTS

Raymond Cole  
David Jon Hill  
Charles Hunting  
Marion McNair  
Albert Portune, Sr.

#### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

George Kemnitz  
Walter Sharp  
Ken Westby

#### PASTORS

Garv Arvidson  
Cecil Battles  
Fred Brogaard  
Al Carrozzo  
Bryce Clark  
Arthur Craig  
Dale Hampton  
Dr. Ernest Martin  
Bill McDowell  
Elmer McElroy  
Richard Plache  
Don Prunkard  
Paul Royer  
Paul Zapf

#### PREACHING ELDERS

Larry Bathurst  
Oliver Batte  
Barry Chase  
John Cheetham  
Howard Clark  
James Doak  
Tom Fish  
Carl Fowler  
Dale Haynes  
Keith Hoyt  
Robert Jenness  
Richard Kilbury  
James Malone  
Roger Malone  
Bob McKibben  
John Mitchell  
Wayne Phillips  
Albert Portune, Jr.  
John Portune  
Glenn Purdy  
Wavne Shiflet  
Don Smith  
Mike Weber  
Sebrian Wesley  
Dick Wiedenheft  
Milo Wilcox  
Ernest Williams  
Tom Williams

#### LOCAL ELDERS

Cliff Ackerson  
Terry Anderson  
Randeil Bryson  
Tom Carrozzo  
Joseph Clayton  
James Duke  
John Gambrell  
Bud Garland  
Sam Gillespie  
Rodney Gowan  
Trevor Higgins  
William Hinson  
Hilbert Maasch  
Sylvester Mayhill  
Carl Miller  
Ben Morrison  
Bruce Nedrow  
Gary Pavlo  
Daryl Reedy  
Artie Satterfield  
Don Schwaab  
Frank Simpkins  
Jack Smock  
Eldon Stewart  
Bill Sutton  
Gordon Upshaw  
Ron Upshaw  
Dan White  
Arthur Williams  
Carl Wilmer

#### FACULTY

Frank Cerallo (Imperial)  
Howard Colby (Imperial)  
Richard Elfers  
Dr. Marion Grady  
Ron Long  
Dr. James Napier  
Larry Peterson  
Gary Prather  
Dr. John Price  
James Ribb  
Arlen Shelton  
Dr. Robert Stevens  
Dr. James Tabor  
Dan Truhitte  
Dr. Phil Knight  
Sir Anthony Buzzard  
Berlin Guillory

#### TELEVISION

Mike Allard  
Joseph Bauer  
Peter Baumer  
Nancy Colton  
Steven Gray  
Jim Jensen  
Mike Marian  
Ron Mills  
Don Perriguet  
Doug Taylor  
Jay Vorel

#### EDITORIAL

Gary Alexander  
Amy Bowman  
Cindy Carter  
Neil Colton  
Larry Dalton  
Beth Dalton  
Harry Eisenberg  
Don Faast  
Dick Gagel  
Werner Gerlach  
Robert Gentet  
Orlin Grabbe  
Dieter Heimke  
Mat Janssen  
George Johnson  
John Kilburn  
Paul Kroll  
Betty Lau  
Don Lorton  
Cliff Marcussen  
Jim Morrison  
Robert Neitsch  
Barbara Nestor  
David Ord  
Jim Rector  
Gail Roberts  
Jack Susco  
Mack Taylor  
Charles Vinson  
Bill Whikehart  
Charles Wilkinson

### OTHER PERSONNEL

Karan and Dwight Armstrong  
Clyde Brown, Supervisor of Ambassador College Press Bindery  
Allen Dexter, Assistant Manager, Personal Correspondence Department  
Robert Duskus, Church Attorney  
Ken Fischer, Manager, Mail Processing Terminal Section  
Mike Ghourdjian, Assistant Manager, Data Processing Computer Operations  
Mike Holman, Manager, Data Processing Computer Operations

Keith Hunter, Director, Data Processing  
Roy Hunter, Supervisor, Mail Processing Quality Control  
Bill Laver, Manager, Letter Answering Department, Bricket Wood  
Mrs. Raymond McNair  
Morgan Olsen, Benefits Manager, Personnel Department  
Hod Pomeroy, Investment Consultant, Business Office  
Gary Reid, Manager, Data Processing Systems Development  
Van Robison, Payroll Manager, Business Office  
Mrs. Enrique Ruiz  
Dr. Virgil Riley, College Physician, Pasadena  
Robert Seltzer, Manager, Personnel Department  
Kenneth Storey, Manager, Space Planning, Business Office  
John Walker, Manager, Personnel Department

[Return to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **A TREASURY OF FAMOUS PROPHECIES**

**"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."  
(Deuteronomy 18:22)**

"Where are God's true prophets today? ... This work has been warning America of definite and tremendous events to come for many years!"

"...on THE WORLD TOMORROW broadcast and in this magazine we have dared to unlock the Bible prophecies and apply them to specific nations and events that are now being affected. Do you grasp the significance of this'?"

- PLAIN TRUTH, August 1957, pages 3, 6, R. C. Meredith

"As nearly as we can calculate from the dates of ancient history, the year 1936 will see the END of the Times of the Gentiles.... We may expect the present worldwide depression, time of trouble and fear of war to CONTINUE until the year 1936! ...quickly after that time, we may expect to see the heavenly signs of the sun and moon becoming dark, the stars falling ... which shall be followed by the 'Day of the Lord'"

- PLAIN TRUTH, June-July 1934, page 5, H. W. Armstrong

"Mussolini and the Pope will hatch up an idea between them of setting up a world headquarters at JERUSALEM-and so Mussolini's armies will enter into Palestine (Daniel 11:41), and eventually will capture just half of the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2)."

- PLAIN TRUTH, March 1938, page 8, H. W. Armstrong

MUSSOLINI WILL FIGHT CHRIST!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, January 1939, Page 4, H. W. Armstrong

"Once world war is resumed, it must continue on through the Great Tribulation, the heavenly signs, the plagues of the Day of the Lord, and to the Second Coming of Christ, at the last battle, at ARMAGEDDON!...But this you MAY KNOW! This war will be ended by CHRIST'S RETURN! And war MAY start within six weeks! We are just THAT NEAR Christ's coming!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, August 1939, page 6, H. W. Armstrong

"The Italians will capture both Palestine and Egypt."

- PLAIN TRUTH, August-September 1940. H. W. Armstrong

"Turkey will cause British defeat. But God will rescue and restore the British and cause Turkey utterly to be wiped out."

- PLAIN TRUTH, May-June 1941, page 6, H. W. Armstrong

"PLAIN TRUTH readers know world events, before they occur!...Bible prophecy does indicate that Hitler MUST BE THE VICTOR, in his present Russian invasion!...Hitler will emerge from his Russian campaign stronger than ever, free to turn the entire might of his forces against Britain-and AMERICA!"

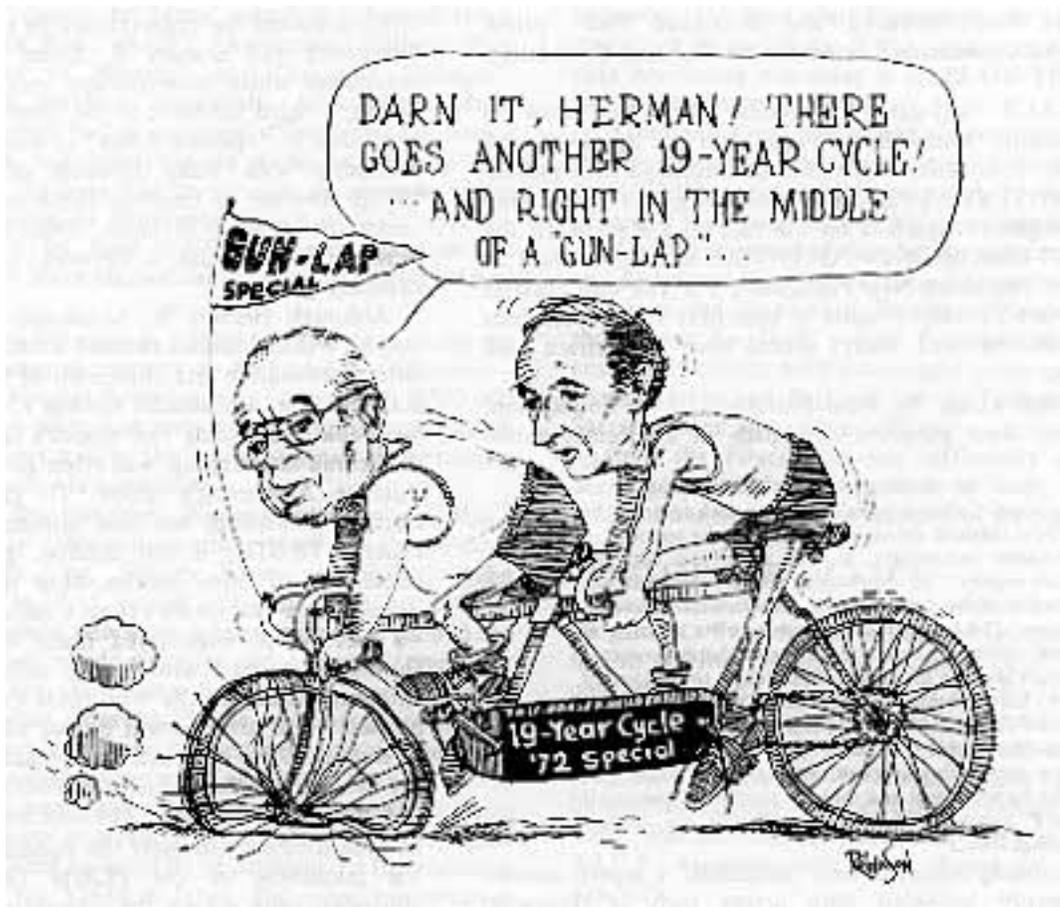
- PLAIN TRUTH, September- October 1941, page 7, H. W. Armstrong

"But Hitler (or his successor if there is one), and the False Prophet shall FIGHT against Christ!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, March-April 1943, page 6, H. W. Armstrong

"Yes, it seems that God is allowing us another 19-year cycle to COMPLETE THE CARRYING OUT OF HIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM TO THIS SICK AND DYING WORLD.... There is a tremendous job to be done in the very short period that lies ahead of us."

- PLAIN TRUTH, June 1953, "Man's Greatest Battle" by R. C. Meredith



"The idea of men climbing around on the outside of their space ships clad in pressurized suits is fantastic in the light of these facts.... Man will not be allowed or permitted to utilize the moon in suicidal warfare! Neither will God allow the moon to become the possession of any nation now struggling for world domination."

- PLAIN TRUTH, May 1954, page 8, Kenneth Hermann

"God prophesies that finally, within the next fifteen years, fully ONE THIRD of our whole population will die of disease and famine."

- PLAIN TRUTH, December 1957, H. W. Armstrong

"God Almighty has spoken through His servants the prophets that He will punish our people for their sins. He will let our own lust cause such droughts, floods, pestilences and famines that we will be totally consumed and carried away captive to other nations as SLAVES WITHIN TWENTY YEARS."

- PLAIN TRUTH, October 1955, page 15, H. L. Hoeh

"...it is the coming dry cycle in the early 1970s that ... ought to frighten us all! By THAT TIME, rural, city and industrial demands WILL HAVE DEPLETED OUR REMAINING UNDERGROUND WATER RESOURCES."

- PLAIN TRUTH, January 1955, "Weather changes Threaten Disaster for USA" by H. L. Hoeh

"Germany's coming Fuhrer-who will lead within probably 13 years from now a 10-nation union in Europe (Revelation 17: 12-13)-is 'the king of the north'! He will 'stretch forth his hand upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape'

(Daniel 11:42)...There is going to be a failing out between Nasser and his German supporters. Nasser's Nazi advisers are yet to turn upon him. GERMANY WILL TAKE OVER THE SUEZ FROM EGYPT. Germany will take over Syria's pipelines, now under Nasser's control."

- PLAIN TRUTH, October 1958. "U. S. and Britain Admit Nazi Underground Behind Arab Crisis." by H. L. Hoeh

"Somewhere along about seven to ten years from now the REVOLUTION IN THE WEATHER will become a national and international calamity. Drought, epidemics of disease, will reap a mounting harvest of death across North America-and in Britain. Economic depression will strike."

- PLAIN TRUTH, January 1963, page 21, H. W. Armstrong

"Our strength further sapped: 1963 shall increase drought and upheavals in the prophesied revolution in the WEATHER pattern. We may have an occasional good year in the weather, but the trend in general will continue until-probably by 1971-1972-it will become an acute disaster, especially to the United States, Canada, Britain and Australia."

- PLAIN TRUTH, January 1964, page 4. H. W. Armstrong

"Frankly, literally dozens of prophesied events indicate that this final revival of the Roman Empire in Europe-and its bestial PERSECUTION of multitudes of Bible-believing Christians will take place within the next seven to ten years of YOUR LIFE!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, February 1965, page 48. R. C. Meredith

"The unification of Germany? Perhaps it will take place sooner than we expect! The unification of ten nations in Europe is certain to be brought about within a very few years."

- PLAIN TRUTH, September 1964, page 20, Ron Kelly

"It is the most interesting date because Bible prophecy indicates that the final attack on the U. S. and Britain by this coming 'Beast Power' could easily be launched perhaps as early as the Spring of 1972-or earlier if this final work of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is cut short."

- PLAIN TRUTH, May 1965, page 44, R. C. Meredith

"That is NOT a message to ancient Israel-but to OUR NATIONS of TODAY. The 'Day of the Eternal'-a time foretold in more than thirty prophecies-is going to strike between 5 and 10 years from now!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, February 1967, page 47, H. W. Armstrong

"Although we do not set exact dates, every indication from the time table of prophecy is that this will take place within the next five to seven years or less!...This revival of Germany's dominant interest and influence in the Middle East, the building of a literal Temple, the eventual takeover of Israel and Egypt by a revived Roman Empire of European nations culminating in a great religious leader making his Headquarters right in that Temple in Jerusalem. This is a definite 'SIGN' to the true believers of God heralding the END of this age!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, March 1968, page 41. R. C. Meredith

"The 6000 years are about up. We may have another three, five, or ten years to go."

- PLAIN TRUTH, November 1968, page 39, H. W. Armstrong

"There will very soon be a Temple in Jerusalem, with daily sacrifices once again being offered.... Jerusalem will be surrounded and captured (Zechariah 14: 1-2) by the Fascist-Nazi armies of the European Empire, already starting to rise now out of the Common Market. They will invade Jerusalem, and take charge of the temple."

- PLAIN TRUTH, June 1967, page 2. H. W. Armstrong

"But your Bible reveals Britain will not be one of the ultimate ten nations that will unite to resurrect the final restoration of this prophesied Roman Empire."

- PLAIN TRUTH, October 1967, H. W. Armstrong

"Will Britain ever be admitted into the Common Market? Probably not!"

- PLAIN TRUTH, February 1970, page 27, Raymond McNair

"We do not set dates!...Yet in our human zeal and enthusiasm for getting this greatest mission on earth done, we have a few times come close to it or appeared to-and that we deeply regret...if we...appear to set a date, I FEEL I DO NOT NEED TO APOLOGIZE!"

- TOMORROW'S WORLD, February 1972, H. W. Armstrong

"If we KNEW of any error still remaining now, we would CHANGE it! If and when we find one in the future, we shall correct it!"

- TOMORROW'S WORLD. February 1972, H. W. Armstrong

"Right now, just prior by probably not more than five to seven years to the coming terrible DAY OF THE LORD, the Living Christ has moved swiftly to OPEN THE ALL-IMPORTANT DOOR THAT HAS BEEN CLOSED SINCE THE DAY OF THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES. After TURNING HIS BACK on Jerusalem ever since 69 A.D....after turning Jerusalem, because of the rebellious transgressions of his people Israel, over to be 'trodden down of the Gentiles', since 69 A. D., ALMIGHTY GOD HAS OPENED TO THE WORLD TOMORROW, EXCLUSIVELY, THE GIGANTIC DOOR OF THE SUPER-POWER RADIO FROM JERUSALEM...further we have signed with the Hashemite Government of Jordan a FIVE-YEAR BINDING CONTRACT, with option to RENEW another five years!...and when the time came, to WHOM did God open up these precious radio facilities? Not to the Roman Catholics-though they have shrines and buildings there! Nor the Protestants! Nor the Coptics, nor the other professing 'Christian' sects. No, He has opened it EXCLUSIVELY, by binding contract with the government of Jordan, to HIS WORK, to which He has called YOU as a Co-Worker! This PROVES which voice on earth today is GOD'S OWN VOICE, through human servants He has called! If you ever had any doubts whatever about where the real WORK OF GOD is, you can be SURE now!"

- CO-WORKER LETTER, April 17, 1967, H. W. Armstrong

"Jerusalem Radio, over which I have a contract with the Jordanian government, was not destroyed.... If indeed the Living Christ wants His message to go, NOW, from Jerusalem, as certain prophecies surely seem to indicate, then NO MAN CAN PREVENT IT! He will give us favor in the eyes of whoever controls that powerful station. If God does not so will, then we surely don't want to broadcast over it."

- TOMORROW'S WORLD, June 1967, page 5, H. W. Armstrong

Editor's Note: Isn't it strange that the Living Christ would lead His prophet to sign a binding five-year contract with the Jordanian government to send His message out from Jerusalem, Jordan, when two days after the first broadcast was to go out (Wednesday, June 7, 1967) there would be no Jerusalem, Jordan? The Six-Day War of June 1967 nullified all the positive declarations he made about Christ being behind this contract with Jordan.

"And the greater pity is that the very ones most deceived are the ones who RESENT having the Scriptures opened to CORRECT them, to REPROVE, and to set them right!"

- TOMORROW'S WORLD, February 1972, H. W. Armstrong

"As of the present I, and a majority of our historians in Ambassador College, and researchers in the School of Theology, feel that it is utterly unsafe to try to set dates in regard to prophesied events."

- TOMORROW'S WORLD, February 1972, H. W. Armstrong

[Return to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



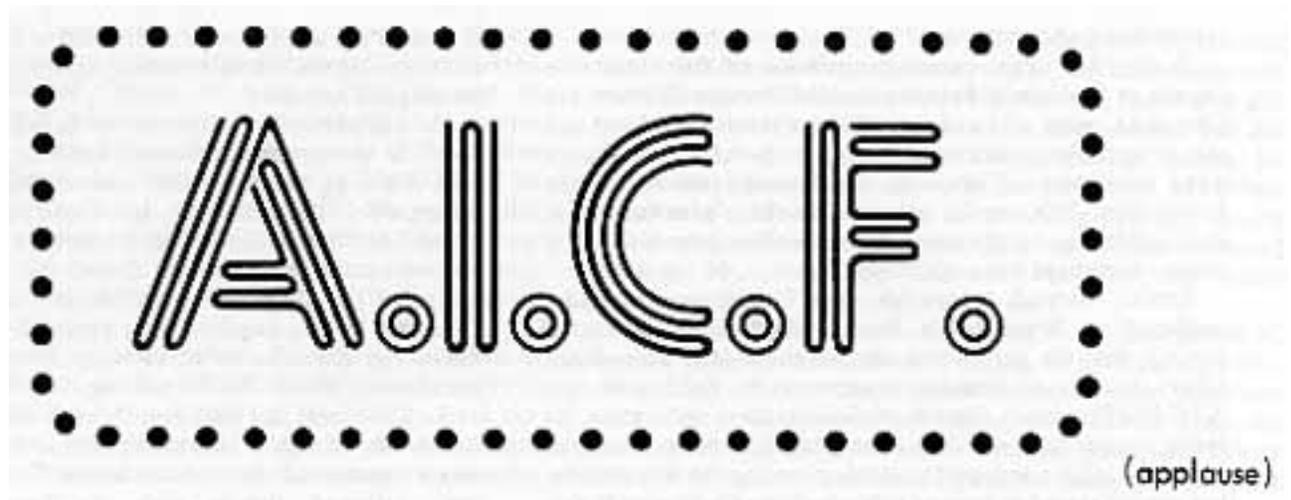
# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:

[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

FROM THOSE WONDERFUL  
PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT YOU  
"1972", We Present...



On March 18, 1975, a star was born. In the appropriately plush setting of Perino's Restaurant in Los Angeles, Stanley R. Rader (Financial Director and Chief Counsel for the Worldwide Church of God), Robert L. Kuhn (Assistant to Rader) and Herbert W. Armstrong (Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God) unveiled and christened their "prima donna"-the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (A. I. C. F.).

The A.I.C.F. -self-slated to become the greatest show on earth-modestly accepted its place next to the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. The founders declared their journal, HUMAN POTENTIAL (as yet unpublished), to be one of the most prestigious magazines on the face of the earth. In the "rehearsal" issue,

HUMAN POTENTIAL announced itself as "The Most Important New Publication For The Last Quarter of The 20th Century"-quite a mouthful from a religious organization that had always prided itself in mustard seed beginnings.

Rader and Kuhn, the main promoters of the Foundation, summarized their purposes and goals in a succinct statement:

"...In establishing the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, we seek to bring the finest cultural events and artists to the greater Los Angeles community, as well as to join with the community in supporting leading charitable, humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations. The Foundation will underwrite all costs of the concerts, thereby enabling all funds generated from the sale of subscription tickets to be donated to participating organizations and institutions. (The foundation itself is being initially funded by the Worldwide Church of God which believes that the performing arts are the highest expression of the human spirit and that the support of charitable and humanitarian activities fulfills its biblical obligations.)"

The founding concepts were incredible: a superb concert series liberally sprinkled with artists such as Horowitz, Menuhin, Sutherland and Pavarotti; *all* box-office proceeds to be donated to charitable and humanitarian causes; and *all* expenses to be borne by an eclectic, fundamentalist sect that for nearly forty years had preached isolation from this present Satanic "world".

Noting all this, Ruth Asheton Taylor, a Los Angeles television reporter, aptly concluded her A.I.C.F. interview with the prophetic remark, "It's almost too good to be true."

This report intends to examine the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation beneath this polished veneer. What were the inner details of its founding? Who are the men who control this operation which draws so heavily upon Worldwide Church of God funding? Who really benefits from the Foundation?

## **PRE-NATIVITY**

To clearly understand the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, one must first look back to past events which spawned the organization. In the late sixties Herbert W. Armstrong and Stanley R. Rader began the international excursions which now occupy most of their time. Osamu Gotoh, a third member of the touring team, proved himself invaluable in "opening doors" to heads of state. Gotoh's close friendship with many Japanese officials, including Prince Mikasa (brother of Emperor Hirohito), enabled them to make important contacts in Japan. These led to invitations to visit other countries, and a network of international contacts naturally grew.

Although Herbert W. Armstrong was a high school drop out, he was introduced to these world leaders as a leader in the field of education and chancellor of three [now two] utopian colleges. The Ambassador College ENVOY, a lavish full-color yearbook showcasing the school's fabulous architecture and manicured

landscaping, was often given to officials in order to enhance Armstrong's image. To gain even more prestige, Herbert Armstrong was also introduced as publisher of the PLAIN TRUTH, a top quality, glossy magazine with a circulation of three million. Most leaders who granted Mr. Armstrong a visit could expect a full-color cover of themselves—a fact which engendered many of the early invitations. During these chats with foreign officials, Armstrong and his entourage discussed the Worldwide Church of God as little as possible. This arrangement proved adequate for several years

But in 1974, doctrinal and organizational disputes rocked the Church structure causing a substantial drop in membership and income. Numerous cut-backs and extensive streamlining became necessary to meet the budgetary crunch. At this time the publishing of the PLAIN TRUTH became a hotly contested issue among the corporate leadership. Garner Ted Armstrong, Herbert's son and heir apparent to the apostolic throne, wanted a complete change from the glossy magazine format to a plain newsprint tabloid which would represent substantial monetary savings to "the Work". His idea was met with stiff opposition by others near the top of the hierarchy but it was adopted, nonetheless.

"Ted's Rag", as the tabloid was appropriately dubbed by its editorial staff, began to present difficulties for the foreign outreach of "the Work", especially in Japan. Osamu Gotoh flatly stated that the Japanese people would not accept a newsprint substitute of a real magazine. Furthermore, Herbert needed an appropriate publication that he could proudly present to government officials overseas.

A second difficulty was developing concurrently in 1974. During this time Armstrong had been stepping up his international odysseys, and his contacts were snowballing. The "doors" were opening as fast as Gotoh and Rader could *arrange* them. As Herbert Armstrong moved up into the diplomatic big leagues, he began assuming additional titles: "Ambassador for World Peace", "Ambassador Without Portfolio", "Builder of Bridges" and "Spiritual Kissinger". Outgrowing his previous credentials, Armstrong candidly admitted in a letter to his ministers: "One thing has been a serious handicap, and caused me and my touring team no little embarrassment. We have had to say that we represent either Ambassador College, or Worldwide Church of God." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, June 3, 1975). It became obvious that H.W.A. needed a more elegant calling card to go with his new hat size.

As if this were not enough, a third problem arose. After the April, 1974 inaugural concerts at Ambassador Auditorium—featuring the Vienna Symphony at a cost of \$500,000 plus—the concert stage had remained silent. As time passed, the "finest concert hall in the world" seemed to be turning into an extravagant white elephant.

In order to solve this triple dilemma caused by the "Rag", Herbert's identity crisis and an empty jewel box, heads came together. Before long, Stanley Rader and Robert Kuhn conceived a plan that would not only help solve these problems, but would also score a massive political coup in the organization. They would

organize and control a completely new entity in the Armstrong Empire—one that would be completely separate from the Church and College in all areas but financing; hence, also facilitating a monolithic consolidation of power around Rader and Kuhn. Since the Church was already funding numerous educational and cultural projects such as the Temple excavation in Jerusalem, anthropological expeditions for King Leopold III of Belgium, the International Cultural Center for Youth in Israel, and other humanitarian projects in Thailand, Nepal, etc., the idea of a cultural foundation which would take these programs under its wing seemed perfect. Herbert Armstrong could now represent a prestigious organization "dedicated to serving humanity worldwide" without suffering any of the old embarrassments caused by representing a small church and college. And in order to allay any lingering feelings the Los Angeles cultural community harbored regarding Armstrong's "incredibly costly, secluded, elitist folly" (LOS ANGELES TIMES CALENDAR, March 10, 1974), Rader and Kuhn envisioned a star-studded concert series intended to put Ambassador Auditorium squarely in the public spotlight.

This "cultural foundation" concept practically sold itself to Herbert Armstrong. The concert series nicely appealed to his obsession of "showing up" the Los Angeles Music Center, and required little persuasion for its adoption. To "sell the 'old man'" on the idea of a new magazine, Robert Kuhn hastily produced a dummy issue which was presented to Herbert for approval. It, too, was enthusiastically accepted since it contained an article by H.W.A. and even borrowed from the title Armstrong was using in his PLAIN TRUTH series, "The Incredible Human Potential".

Rader and Kuhn had scored a major victory in reorganizing the Worldwide corporate structure. A whole new division of "the Work" was created practically overnight. They now possessed their own "empire within an empire".

H.W.A.'s approval of the package represented the final step, and Rader and Kuhn now approached the task of designing the details of the foundation. To placate Armstrong's desire that the "House for God" not be "commercialized", the idea of combining charity with the concert series evolved. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws for the Foundation were filed in Sacramento; it all became "official".

Once the Foundation was sufficiently developed on the drawing-board, the time came to bring the Rader-Kuhn brainchild under the hard scrutiny of its potential supporters.

### **THE SELLING OF THE A.I.C.F.**

Rader and Kuhn were faced with a two-sided marketing assignment. Two distinct groups of prospective contributors had to be "sold" on the idea of the A.I.C.F., its accompanying concert series and the HUMAN POTENTIAL journal. Both "factions" were essential for the Foundation's success. Simply stated, there was the "outside" world and the "inside" world (i.e., those outside the Worldwide Church of God who would be wealthy enough to afford the exorbitant ticket prices; and those who were members of the Church who would pay for all

A.I.C.F. expenses with little chance of ever attending a concert).

A massive promotional campaign was quickly launched to market the concert series to the elite "outside" group. Costly 64-page brochures were produced and mailed to *leading* citizens in the Southland describing the specific artists in each concert series, the onyx auditorium and the various beneficiaries such as United Way, March of Dimes, UNICEF and other smaller charities. Full-page ads began to appear regularly in the LOS ANGELES TIMES and other local papers. Articles followed which explained the "unique" fusing of charity with the performing arts. Paid announcements were broadcast over classical radio stations which led to the A.I.C.F.'s eventual sponsoring of a daily music program on radio station KFAC. The "saturation bombing" of the Los Angeles cultural community had commenced.

During this initial campaign, mention of the Worldwide Church of God was judiciously avoided. Permits filed with the City and County of Los Angeles for the solicitation drives and the information cards accompanying all A.I.C.F. literature listed Ambassador College as the financial source for the Foundation. This seemed ludicrous to those who knew that the College also totally depends on the Church for funds. The cheap camouflage was easily recognized.

Special cocktail receptions were hosted at the Rader residence in Beverly Hills for the key people associated directly with the performing arts and the media. These lavish affairs became a frequent occurrence in 1975, with the A.I.C.F. (Worldwide Church of God) picking up the tab. As inside sources have revealed, these gala affairs more often than not provided no real promotional value for the Foundation, but merely served as ego and status builders for Stanley Rader.

It soon became clear that the announced desire to bring the finest in the performing arts to the "*general*" Los Angeles community rang hollow. In truth, the concert series was designed to cater to those individuals possessing the rank of "General" or higher on the social ladder.

Simultaneous to this "out"-reach, the "in"-reach to the Worldwide Church of God membership progressed with a sales pitch diametrically opposite to that received by the public. While the "outside world" received a promotional blitz totally devoid of religious connotations, the Church members were being fed letters and sermons which announced the A.I.C.F. as "a great new phase of the Work", "a necessary adjunct to this new worldwide dimension of getting Christ's TRUE Gospel to the nations through heads of government." Convincing pipe-dreams designed to further assure members that the A.I.C.F. would benefit the "Work of God" stated that concert box-office proceeds would finance projects previously funded by the Church, and that subscription fees for HUMAN POTENTIAL would cover the expenses of the concert series!

Amazingly, this double-pronged approach seemed to be working. Ticket sales were slow, but that was to be expected until the new concept caught fire among concert goers. Church members accepted the A.I.C.F., the concert series and

HUMAN POTENTIAL-faithfully praying and paying for yet another "arm of God's Work". As long as neither side knew what the other had been "sold", the inaugural season of A.I.C.F. appeared destined for success.

But Murphy's Law prevailed. The dike that separated the two fronts began to leak.

### **SHALOM ENDS HERE**

Realizing that the \$24 million concert hall was owned by the Worldwide Church of God, that all concert expenses were to be absorbed by the Church, and that the Church was also bankrolling HUMAN POTENTIAL, many L.A. citizens began to question the true motivation behind the A.I.C.F. The lofty platitudes published by the Foundation, indeed, seemed "too good to be true".

On August 8, 1975, Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, Director of the West Coast Lubavitch Movement, conducted a news conference at the Los Angeles Press Club, in which he leveled serious charges against the A.I.C.F. This sparked what became labeled "the Jewish controversy". The Foundation's real goal, Rabbi Cunin stated, was the; exploitation of the Jewish community with the ultimate goal of proselyting Jews. He had researched the A.I.C.F. literature distributed within the Worldwide Church of God ranks and discovered the glaring contradiction to what the rest of the community had been told. The statements, "new phase of God's Work" and "taking Christ's Gospel to the world", were clear proof to him that the pabulum about charity and culture merely represented a cosmetic front for religious activities.

He was particularly incensed by the fact that "counterfeit Jews", in the persons of Stanley Rader and Robert Kuhn, had been used to promote the concert series in the Jewish community. Though both are baptized members of the Worldwide Church of God, they had been introduced as Jews in good standing by Yitzhak Sover, who at that time was in charge of the Government Office of Tourism at the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles. Sover provided the entrée enabling Rader and Kuhn to persuade many Jewish organizations to ally themselves with the Foundation.

An additional fact that should prove even more alarming to Worldwide Church of God members is that Robert Kuhn is also a member of the Reform Jewish Temple in Pasadena. It was confirmed directly with the Temple that Kuhn is undeniably a member. How Robert rationalizes his dual membership in an organization that accepts Jesus Christ and in another that rejects Him is anybody's guess.

Rabbi Cunin next waged an all-out campaign alerting the Jewish community to the "danger". With the help of Joseph Cummins, editor of B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER, he was able to fan the sparks into a raging conflagration of controversy throughout the Jewish community.

Three days after Rabbi Cunin's press conference, Russell Chandler, LOS

ANGELES TIMES Religion editor, spread the doubts surrounding the A.I.C.F. to the entire Southland community in an article entitled, "Church Group Looking to Culture to Provide a New Image". Chandler, who maintains extensive files on the Worldwide Church of God and receives copies of all internal and external publications, presented the public with a comprehensive, well researched "look on the inside". Statements from confidential issues of the MINISTERIAL BULLETIN written by the Armstrongs were quoted for all to see. The A.I.C.F. was indicted by its own words as a grandiose scheme to provide a more prestigious facade for the Rader-Armstrong religious corporation.

Under attack from two sides, Rader and Kuhn hastily mapped out new strategies hoping to realign public opinion before any fatal blow was dealt to their fledgling empire.

### **THE CHAMELEON EFFECT**

Like a gilded chameleon, changing colors to match its immediate environment, the A.I.C.F. made swift changes to counter the allegations resulting from Rabbi Cunin's efforts and Chandler's exposé. The immediate concern was to salvage as much support as possible from the Jewish community since it could make or break the concert series.

Letters of clarification and apology were hastily composed by Stanley Rader, Robert Kuhn and C. Wayne Cole (then head of Church Administration) and sent to key Jewish individuals in a futile attempt to calm the turmoil. Statements on "official" church policy regarding proselytizing were emphasized to mollify Rabbi Cunin's allegations of "missionary" activity by the Foundation. The Worldwide Church of God's position was compared to that of traditional Judaism-"not proselytizing, but not turning away a sincere seeker." They neglected to explain why the Church is one of the largest media buyers in the world for its religious program; why in the MINISTERIAL BULLETIN the success of various "personal appearance campaigns" by its evangelists is measured in the number of new people attending Worldwide Church of God services; or why the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God commonly refers to new people requesting their first visit as "prospective members". Wayne Cole also stated in a letter to Rabbi Maurice Lamm that the phrases "doing the Work", "Christ's message" and "spreading the Gospel", were defined by the Worldwide Church of God as "the concept of government and whether man's government can survive without God." Apparently, Mr. Cole recently suffered acute amnesia because in the May, 1976 issue of GOOD NEWS he exclaimed, "God's Church preaches Christ! We preach Him crucified, buried, and resurrected...we preach Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords who will soon arrive to bring all human governments under His rule.... That is our great goal as a Church."

Following the letters, Herbert Armstrong published a two-page disclaimer in the GOOD NEWS (October, 1975) publicly stating the independence of the A.I.C.F. from the Church. Garner Ted Armstrong made similar statements directly contradicting those he had made only two months previous.

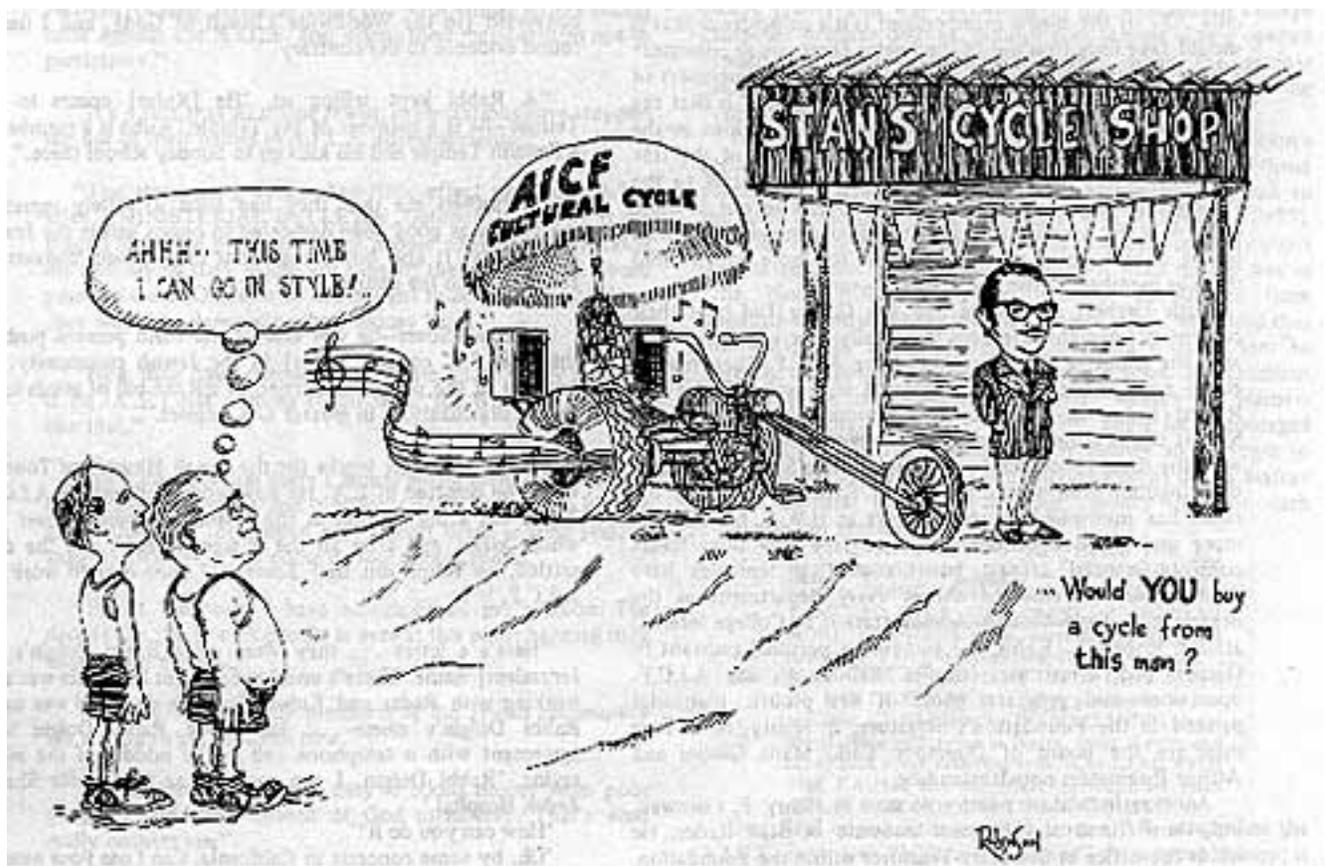
Arthur A. Ferdig, General Manager for HUMAN POTENTIAL and long-time

Managing Editor of the PLAIN TRUTH was chosen as the whipping boy for all the "misunderstandings" within the Jewish community. One of his statements concerning the "new arm of the Work" had been quoted by Rabbi Cunin and Russell Chandler in support of allegations. This gave Rader the opportunity to remark in a radio news spot, "...he is not ordained in the Church, therefore it is very difficult to understand how his article did appear with the comments that it contained....". Stanley Rader really played a long shot hoping that no one would ask why he, an unordained man himself, was acting as spokesman for the Church and Foundation.

Robert Kuhn displayed his protean ability in answering the charge of "image budding" alleged in Chandler's article during an interview on the Hilly Rose radio talk show. By avoiding any reference to Herbert Armstrong's "no little embarrassment" remark, Kuhn sidestepped all the real issues with glib excursions totally off the subject. He flatly denied that the Church was trying to change its image through culture. He stated that the concert series was the fulfillment of Herbert Armstrong's life-long dream of providing concerts to the public and added that the charitable aspect was developed because Mr. Armstrong did not want the Auditorium "commercialized" by outright ticket sales.

Although Rader and Kuhn played down this period of hostile publicity as much as possible, it nevertheless had a devastating effect on the concert box-office when combined with the prohibitive ticket pricing (\$35-\$100). Even the practice of "papering the house" with complimentary tickets did not bring the attendance figures for many performances above the fiasco level. Not until February 1, 1976, halfway through the season, did Rader and Kuhn swallow their pride and publicly announce the lowering of ticket prices to realistic levels-all for "humanitarian" reasons, of course.

Kuhn can be rightfully credited with achieving an uneasy *détente* between the Southland community and the A.I.C.F. He has managed to rearrange the rhetoric of the Foundation and effect the changes necessary to at least get the concert series functioning. And, in spite of the rough terrain the A.I.C.F. has encountered, it is surviving. Any other organization would have been ruined by the monumental expenses and meager revenues that the A.I.C.F. has on its balance sheet. The difference is that the Foundation has the Worldwide Church of God as its financial "lender" and terms of no interest and no payback ever required.



### **WILL THE "REAL" A.I.C.F. PLEASE STAND UP?**

So, what is the real A.I.C.F.? Is it a front for a new move by the Worldwide Church of God to convert Jews as Rabbi Cunin charged? Is it an attempt by the Armstrong's to give their church a cultural face-lift by improving its image in the public eye as Russell Chandler stated? Both have drawn reasonable conclusions from their research, but they are only partially correct. Although the Church can always use more tithe-paying members, the A.I.C.F. approached the Jewish Community primarily to convert Jewish dollars into ticket sales. And the main image-building was intended not for the Church. but for Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader's own self-aggrandizement. Their ever-expanding egos had been constricted by the Church/College image, but the A.I.C.F. enables them to now take their rightful place among the "great" of the world without the Church and College tagging along.

The "real" A.I.C.F. is a grand exercise in pompous duplicity. It permeates the Foundation's advertising, its organizational structure, and even the founding ideals of culture and charity.

Examine the Board of Directors of the Foundation. On the surface, it appears to be comprised of twelve men with a majority of the members having no religious affiliation with the Worldwide Church of God. This seems to corroborate the claims by Rader and Kuhn that the A.I.C.F. is completely independent of the Church. But from inside sources comes the information that not one meeting of the Board has been held so far-at least no meeting that included any member other than Rader, Kuhn and the Armstrongs. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Foundation have conveniently defined a quorum for an A.I.C.F.

Director's meeting to be only 30% of the Board membership! Is it a coincidence that it should take only four out of the twelve Directors to constitute a quorum, and that there are only four who are members of the Worldwide Church of God? The "plain truth" is that the other eight Directors merely assume cameo positions in the organization. Since each is a prominent member of the fine arts community their names obviously lend prestige to the Foundation. Doubly shocking is the fact that several of these eight were not even informed of their Board membership prior to the publishing of the first A.I.C.F. brochure which listed them as members of the Board of Directors.

Both Herbert Armstrong and son Garner Ted have their customary limelight titles, but they really have very little to do with the planning and operation of the A.I.C.F. These honors go to none other than, you guessed it, Stanley Rader and Robert Kuhn. In fact, the most appropriate description for Stan is the "Cardinal Richelieu of the Work". Herbert and Ted wear the royal robes seen by the public while Stan manipulates the kingdom from behind the scenes. Rader's power over the ranks has multiplied in recent years as H.W.A. has become more and more dependent on him. Not only does Rader control financial affairs, but his political tentacles have reached out to embrace almost every department in the organization from Church Administration to College internal affairs. Robert L. Kuhn, the sometimes personal assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong, handles the day to day A.I.C.F. operations and generates most of the prolific platitudes printed in the Foundation's literature. In reality, these four men are the Board of Directors, Carlo Maria Giulini and Arthur Rubinstein notwithstanding.

Another individual worthy of note is Henry F. Cornwall, long-time friend and business associate of Stan Rader. He holds the office of Secretary-Treasurer within the Foundation. His position in the entire Worldwide Church of God empire is even more covert than Rader's, but sources within the organization have revealed that Cornwall wields *incredible* power in the area of fiscal affairs. Cornwall, a Certified Public Accountant, has kept the financial records of the Church and College for years and reportedly acts as the sole "independent" auditor of the corporate conglomerate. From their office suite in Century City, Cornwall and Rader discretely exercise almost absolute control over the purse strings. It is they who authorize the ultra-extravagant expenditures by the A.I.C.F. using Church monies.



AN AFTERNOON WITH RABBI SHLOMO  
CUNIN

West Coast Director of the Chabad  
Lubavitch Movement

(Excerpts from interview: April 20, 1976)

"[Stanley R.] Rader and [Robert L.] Kuhn were presented as two wonderful, fine, Jewish men who are working for this non-sectarian foundation that is going to help mainly Jewish causes."

"Rader and Kuhn presented themselves as full-fledged Jews. This is what they told Joseph Cummins of the B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER; this is what they told everybody, 'They're two fine Jews.' They were introduced as such at lavish cocktail parties organized for Jewish community leaders."

"You see, they had claimed that Rader and Kuhn had never converted [to the Worldwide Church of God], and I finally found evidence to the contrary."

"A Rabbi kept telling us, 'He [Kuhn] comes to my Temple-he is a member of my Temple.' Kuhn is a member of a Reform Temple and his kids go to Sunday school there."

"It bothers me that they had tried to falsely represent themselves as good Jews

"The editor of the MESSENGER, Joseph Jonah Cummins, the oldest, most prestigious, and largest circulation Jewish paper in the West, firmly refused further advertisement from the A.I.C.F. Furthermore, he took a strong editorial position against Jewish involvement with the concerts. This was done after a thorough investigation of the evidence."

"They [A.I.C.F.] spent a fortune, thousands of dollars to pay these papers. Not only that, but for ISRAEL TODAY they paid to print that paper in excess of fifty-thousand copies to be distributed free in Jewish neighborhoods door-to-door. This gave the paper a chance to increase its circulation and at the same time spread the word about the concerts in Jewish homes. This is fact. All these things can be backed up."

[Referring to the statement: "The controversy seems to have been limited to the B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER and only a small segment of fundamentalist Jews." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, October 21, 1975)] -"Obviously the guy who wrote this is badly mistaken, to say the least. He must have read the MESSENGER article (August 22, 1975) which contained letters from the leaders of all three factions which comprise the entire spectrum of Jewry. The heads of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements in the Western United States all came out with strong letters taking issue against the A.I.C.F. and urging their memberships not to participate."

"It's a fact that all major Jewish organizations have stopped the use of their names in A.I.C.F."

dedicated to causes within the Jewish community. It also bothers me that they denied 'converting' Jewish kids to the church."

"Yitzhak Sover-he was one of the main persons pushing this [A.I.C.F. concert series] in the Jewish community. He was one of the people who tried to sell the bill of goods to all Jewish organizations in greater Los Angeles."

"Sover no longer works for the Israeli Ministry of Tourism which he directed in L.A. He now works fulltime for A.I.C.F. There was a big turmoil in the Jewish community over this whole affair, and after all the charges cleared, and the dust settled, we found out that Sover had gone over to work for A.I.C.F."

"Here's a letter ... they were using Rabbi Dolgin's [in Jerusalem] name. There's another fellow in Israel. He was also working with Rader and Kuhn. He is the one who was using Rabbi Dolgin's name...he duped Rabbi Dolgin into agreement with a telephone call in the middle of the night saying, 'Rabbi Dolgin, I can make some money for Shaare Zedek Hospital.'

'How can you do it?'

'Oh, by some concerts in California. Can I use your name?'

'Sure, great.'

This was done without telling him what it was. Then I called Rabbi Dolgin in Israel, and this is the letter he sent. In it he states that his name is in no way involved with A.I.C.F. sponsorship; the government of Israel is not engaged in supporting concerts in Pasadena."

advertisements."

"The statement, 'It has had little effect upon our ticket sales.' (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, October 21, 1976), is the biggest lie there ever was. Many people phoned me, thanking me and saying they would not support the concerts and would pass the word. Others who had bought tickets already, told me they would be demanding their money back."

"Now they have changed their entire image. They now say it [A.I.C.F.] has nothing to do with 'the Work' or anything like that."

"All I know is that there's money being spent. There's a lot of money being spent and obviously nobody wants to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. I don't think anyone realizes their motivation. They come on like sugar daddies."

"Put it this way, I have accomplished my mission. The danger for the Jewish people is over at this point because they know what's what."

"I doubt whether any members of the Jewish community are willing to get involved now."

"What bothers me is that they're taking money from poor people [Worldwide Church of God members]. That's what really bothers me."

"Money talks. That's the whole story."

The "real" sincerity of the Foundation's rhetoric concerning culture and humanitarianism requires a look at the Church's past position on these subjects. This is reasonable since the Worldwide Church of God created and supports the A.I.C.F., and Stan Rader himself has stated quite clearly in the MINISTERIAL

BULLETIN (March 9, 1976) that the A.I.C.F. will support a project "as long as there is nothing about the project that is inconsistent with the basic unalterable, underlying principle of the Church...". Using this statement as a touchstone, the past principles of the Church regarding the "world's" fine arts and charities create serious contradictions with the founding principles of the A.I.C.F.

For many years the Armstrongs and the Worldwide Church of God ministry have attacked this "evil, Satanic world" in publications and sermons. Countless harangues warning members of the necessity of remaining "separate" from the world's influences were preached. In the area of music, not only was rock music maligned, but even the great composers, such as Beethoven, Bach, and Debussy, were often described as being under demonic influence. Drama, another art form to receive the Armstrong taboo, was compared to deceit or an attempt to escape reality and was forbidden on the Ambassador College campuses because anyone indulging in serious acting opened himself to "outside influences". But, when the greener pastures of cultural stardom beckoned to Herbert, the "chameleon effect" again came into play.

Perhaps the most blatant hypocrisy is the Foundation's great concern for supporting outside charities which "do those good works which the Church feels biblically enjoined to support" (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, October 21, 1975). The fact is the Worldwide Church of God had for thirty years dogmatized that the best investment for your money was in "the Work". Members were strongly discouraged from donating to outside humanitarian causes. They were told that the world will always have its poor and a dollar sent to "preach the gospel" produced far more good. An excellent case in point is a "co-worker" letter written by Herbert Armstrong dated February 27, 1970. There he discouraged Church members from sending their money in response to urgent media appeals to aid the starving victims of the Biafran famine. Herbert did not want "his" money spent on such humanitarian ventures:

"THE APPEAL WAS TO TREAT THE EFFECT, NOT THE CAUSE! ... THIS WORK OF GOD is DOING SOMETHING BIG AND IMPORTANT TO STOP THE CAUSE-to PREVENT MORE BIAFRANS from starving.... YOU are having A PART in spreading Christ's Gospel.... Right HERE is the MOST IMPORTANT WORK ON EARTH TODAY.... GIVE generously as you are able.... The way to DO SOMETHING about the starving and dying in Biafra, India, Egypt, and other such areas suffering evils, is to DEAL WITH THE CAUSE, not the effect-to HELP IN THIS GREAT WORK OF THE LIVING CHRIST!"

One final contradiction-while from a P.R. standpoint the may feel "biblically enjoined" to support charity, it certainly does not feel enjoined to follow the biblical principle Christ, Himself, outlined.

"Take care! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, for you then will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give a gift to a beggar, don't shout about it as the hypocrites do-blowing trumpets in the assembly halls and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you in earnestness, they

have received all the reward they will ever get." (Matt. 6:1-2, LIVING NEW TESTAMENT)

When this contradiction was cited to a Church minister at the recent ministerial conference, he exclaimed, "Well, I never thought of it that way before!"

Continuing the discussion of the "real" A.I.C.F.-How has the A.I.C.F. really fared'? Has it fulfilled its stated goals?

One area in which to measure the degree of success is the concert series. The goal of bringing the finest talent was easily achieved since the A.I.C.F. thrives on the motto "money is no object". There was little negotiation in performers' fees. What was demanded was paid, and top dollar was the order of the day in contracting the series. The secondary goal of enticing the *general* Los Angeles populace to attend these concerts was not as successful. That story was related earlier in this article.

### **TAKE YOUR PICK**

(Statements by Worldwide Church of God leadership)

#### **BEFORE JEWISH CONTROVERSY**

H. W. Armstrong:

"Some weeks ago I authorized the formation of a new FOUNDATION-named the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation. It has become a necessary adjunct to this worldwide, dimension of getting Christ's TRUE Gospel to the nations through heads of government...[a] whole new phase of the Work."<sup>1</sup>

"One thing has been a serious handicap and caused me and my touring team no little embarrassment. We have had to say that we represent either Ambassador College, or Worldwide Church of God."<sup>2</sup>

"This new Foundation is giving us great added prestige, credibility, and favor. It is something NO ONE CAN CRITICIZE. It doesn't sound 'religious' !"<sup>3</sup>

S. R. Rader:

"...we must in certain countries use whatever means the government says must be used in order to distribute literature and the like."<sup>4</sup>

#### **AFTER JEWISH CONTROVERSY**

Herbert W. Armstrong:

"But I want to emphasize that the new Ambassador International Cultural Foundation is entirely separate from the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College."<sup>9</sup>

R. L. Kuhn:

"...anyone associated with the inception of the Foundation knows that...any spin-off effect of changing and improving an 'image'...was not even considered originally."<sup>10</sup>

G. T. Armstrong:

"...the brand-new dimension in God's Work, the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, and the new magazine published by the Foundation, HUMAN POTENTIAL!"<sup>5</sup>

"Look at other wonderful new developments within God's Church...Ambassador International Cultural Foundation...."<sup>6</sup>

C. W. Cole:

"...it became obvious and exciting that the ideal valuable link [A.I.C.F.] in God's Work was being accomplished...enthusiastically relate this positive step forward in God's Work to those in the churches you serve."<sup>7</sup>

A. A. Ferdig:

"...two valuable new tools have just been created that will give God's Work more international impetus than ever before-A.I.C.F. and HUMAN POTENTIAL...this new thrust in the Work is definitely FRONT LINE..."<sup>8</sup>

1 MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, June 3, 1975

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Bible Study, March 14, 1975

5 Letter to Worldwide Church of God membership, June 5, 1975

6 Letter to Worldwide Church of God membership, published undated.

7 MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, June 3, 1975

8 Ibid.

G. T. Armstrong:

"By no means should we consider or advertise the Foundation or the magazine which goes along automatically with membership in the Foundation to be a great new branch of 'THE WORK'."<sup>11</sup>

S. R. Rader:

"[Ferdig] is not ordained in the Church, therefore it is very difficult to understand how his [A.I.C.F.] article did appear with the comments that it contained..."<sup>12</sup>

R. L. Kuhn:

"Furthermore, Mr. Ferdig has never been responsible nor authorized to formulate policy or doctrine for the Church or the A.I.C.F."<sup>13</sup>

9 GOOD NEWS, October, 1975, p. 14

10 MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, October 21, 1975

11 MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, August 12, 1975

12 Excerpts from taped radio news spot concerning Jewish controversy.

13 August 7, 1975 letter to Joseph Cummins editor of B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER.

The amount of money received through the solicitation drive would serve as an ideal gauge for the effectiveness of the A.I.S.F.'s humanitarian endeavors. Its goal for this season was \$1.3 million, but at press time full disclosure of the revenues collected by the Foundation have not been reported by Rader or Cornwall. By law, they have until the beginning of July, 1976, to file a complete financial statement with the City and County of Los Angeles. However, an interim statement was filed in November, 1975, indicating receipt of \$310,000. While the Foundation loudly proclaims that 100% of all funds collected go to charity it is not

very specific about *whose* charity. Only \$96,000 of the reported total was distributed to "outside" charities. The remaining \$214,000 benefitted the projects previously funded by the Worldwide Church of God. This amount is nearly 70% of the total receipts reported as of last November. Five months later on January 1, 1976, Robert Kuhn confided to Charles Hunting and Richard Plache over dinner at Chez Paul Restaurant that 85% of the revenues collected go to the Work's "charities" while only 15% of the revenues collected by A.I.C.F. left the organization to be distributed to bona fide outside charities. There's nothing like practicing the old adage, "Charity begins at home".

The third major area to measure the success of the Foundation is the growth of its journal, HUMAN POTENTIAL. Unfortunately, the magazine has been the most lackluster performer in the Rader-Kuhn cultural circus. Now over a year old, HUMAN POTENTIAL is yet to come out as a regular issue, and the entire project has been turned over to J. Walter Thompson, the mammoth ad agency, for the purpose of overhauling the journal's approach. The Thompson people had flatly told Stan that any attempt to market the "rehearsal issue" would be suicide. The present number of subscriptions confirms their assessment—only 15,000 to 20,000 subscriptions have been received, the vast majority being from members of the Worldwide Church of God. Rader and Kuhn had projected a circulation of 100,000 to 300,000 after the first year. No letters explaining the delay in publication have been sent to subscribers. The apparent reason for the "neglect" was voiced in a recent HUMAN POTENTIAL staff meeting: "We don't have to worry, they're Church members."

It should be abundantly evident by now that the "real" Ambassador International Cultural Foundation is the antithesis of its much publicized, idealized front. The A.I.C.F. steering committee of Rader, Cornwall and Kuhn have cared little about the "incredible potential of the human spirit" as they employ basic Machiavellian techniques in managing the Foundation, its public image and the staff. They have succeeded in creating an atmosphere of suspicion, trauma and insecurity within the A.I.C.F. organization. Their goal is to achieve financial self-sufficiency for their Foundation as quickly as possible so that it can operate independently of the Church and its inherent financial fluctuations and doctrinal "brushfires". Of course, should the A.I.C.F. ever need another major infusion of Church capital, that option would be kept open.

The timetable for fiscal independence has been pushed back due to promotional difficulties. Most of the artistic community has been turned off by the "nouveau riche" pomposity with which the A.I.C.F. carries itself. But valuable lessons are being learned, and the Foundation can afford to make mistakes. It has tapped into the \$60 million annual reservoir of the Worldwide Church of God. Exactly how much is being transferred to the A.I.C.F. is next to impossible to confirm since Rader and Cornwall keep the books. The next section will briefly scan some of the more glaring expenditures of the Foundation as it takes the Church on a multi-million dollar sleigh ride.

### **FLEECING THE FLOCK**

In a promotional letter for the A.I.C.F. the following statement appeared: "The

Foundation's conceptual approach is the personification of generosity: everyone gains."-that is everyone but the Worldwide Church of God members who foot the bills.

The Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, in the final analysis, is nothing but a renegade Robin Hood-it steals from the poor to give to the rich. While the average lower-middle class Church member is sacrificing "till it hurts" in response to yet another H.W.A. "crisis letter", his dollars are subsidizing symphonic concerts and champagne receptions for Beverly Hills aristocrats whose savings account interest probably eclipses the annual income of most Church members. This premeditated rape of the contributor by an organization claiming to represent humanitarianism is nothing less than obscene! The tragicomic sham prompted one famous conductor to say he would have no association with the Foundation because the money came from poor people who had no say in its use, and because of the extravagant and unwise expenditure of those funds.

Vladimir Horowitz, tour de force of the entire concert season, performed two recitals for the tidy sum of \$80,000-that works out to be \$333.00 per minute. It was reported that Arthur Rubinstein was more than slightly miffed upon discovering that Horowitz received such an astronomical fee while he had "donated" his recital in exchange for a \$50,000 contribution by the Church to the International Cultural Center for Youth. Another noteworthy artist, Joan Sutherland, received \$10,000 for her performance. Her husband, Richard Bonyng, also received \$10,000 for accompanying her. Most of the other performers were paid on the high end of the scale for normal fees. In some cases, extra remuneration was provided by sending a performer several first class plane tickets-roundtrip from New York or London to Los Angeles when in fact the performer was coming alone and from a point much closer. These extra tickets were easily cashed in. In addition, the A.I.C.F. is by no means limiting itself to sponsoring concerts in Pasadena. Several are being planned for Milwaukee and Washington, D.C.

Live concerts are not the sole beneficiaries of A.I.C.F. monies. The Foundation also heavily supports programming on KFAC, a prominent Los Angeles classical radio station. With the recent addition of "Luncheon at the Music Center" under its sponsorship, A.I.C.F. has become by far the largest sponsor on KFAC, ahead of Pacific Gas Company and General Electric. It now supports 18 plus hours of air time every week. (Rumor has it that Rader and Cornwall have been thinking about purchasing the entire radio station and have made overtures as such to the general manager.)

Probably the single most exorbitant event coming out of the A.I.C.F.-Worldwide Church of God checkbook occurred during the first week in November, 1975. At the Cinerama Dome Theater in Hollywood, the Foundation underwrote the movie premier of "Paper Tiger", starring David Niven. In attendance that night were scores of stars including: Fred Astair, Glen Campbell, Natalie Wood, Robert Wagner, Ann Miller and Dana Andrews. The A.I.C.F. picked up the tab for all tickets to the premier at \$100 each. Rader also donated \$25,000 from A.I.C.F. to

the Motion Picture and Television Actors Relief Fund. Since the packed theater seated 929, Worldwide Church of God tithe payers received a total bill of at least \$17,900, not including the post-premiere supper party at Chasen's. As if this were not enough, Stan also hosted a similar premier for the movie in London.

Lest anyone think Stan Rader only enjoys entertaining on the town, let it be known that he loves to have his friends over to his Beverly Hills home often for catered parties. No need to ask who foots the bill. Stan has developed many acquaintances in the local diplomatic community this way, and the A.I.C.F. is reportedly gaining a reputation among the consular corps as one of the most popular party-givers.

Since Church money is being expended for all these non-church activities, one would assume that financial problems are nonexistent in the Worldwide Church of God. But, to read Herbert Armstrong's letters to the co-workers and members would leave the impression that the Church is continually on the brink of bankruptcy, forever needing to be rescued by another "supreme sacrifice" by the contributors.

Garner Ted Armstrong recently declared that there would be no "sacred cows" in the Work. Any department not directly involved with "getting the Gospel to the world" would be liquidated to "streamline the Work". But while massive cutbacks and widespread terminations are under way, Robert Kuhn and a new A.I.C.F. publicity director are busily planning a "bigger and better" concert series for next season. Either Ted has been unable to locate a sacrificial altar large enough for the "Golden Calf", or he is afraid to lock horns with Stan Rader over the A.I.C.F. Inside sources have disclosed that the latter is the case. Ted and Stan hold roughly equal amounts of power in the organization, and neither wants to risk a head-on confrontation. For the time being each seems content to stay on his side of the corporate line.

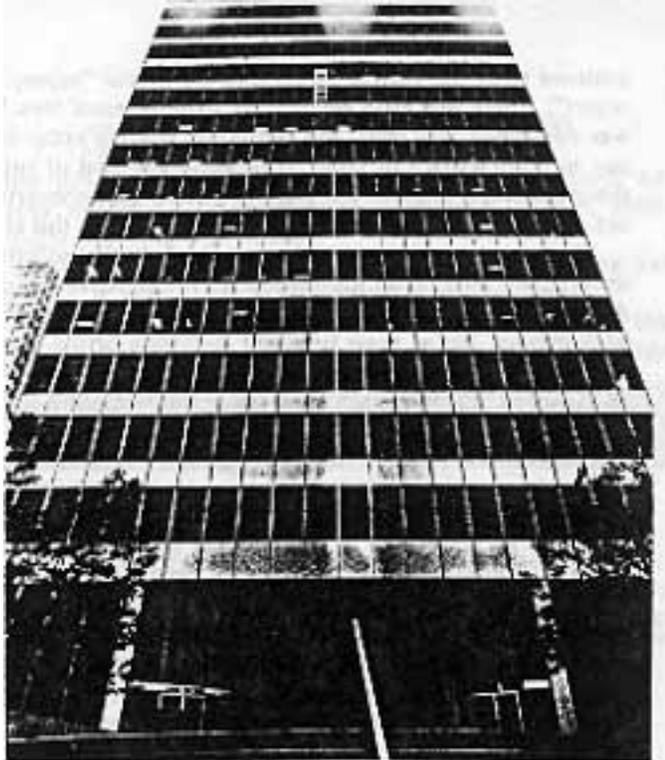
### **STRAIGHT TALK** (To the ministry and tithe-paying membership of the Worldwide Church of God)

Now that you have an outline of what the A.I.C.F. is all about, perhaps you should ask yourself some hard questions. Can you honestly say you do not share in the responsibility for the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation? You are paying for it, and dearly. Your tithes have made it all possible.

"But what can I do", you're probably thinking. "How the money is spent is not my responsibility. *They* will have to answer to God for their actions." You have all the canned rationalizations to fall back upon. But you do have a responsibility to the God you worship, to yourself and to the Armstrongs (if you really have any Christian concern). Your responsibility to God does not end with the signing of your tithe check. You must demand that your contributions be spent on the job of preaching Christ, not Horowitz. Of course, you can always try to convince yourself that *your* dollars are spent to "preach the Gospel" while another person's donations go to support movie premiers and lavish parties for the diplomatic

corps.

Do you seriously believe Stanley Rader, Henry F. Cornwall and Robert L. Kuhn care about your welfare? Not one is ordained, and Cornwall is not even a member of the Worldwide Church of God. Both Rader and Kuhn cloak their membership in the Church-Kuhn is a member of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Rader's main object of worship seems to be himself. Robert Kuhn has reportedly said, "Even if this weren't God's work-where else could you have more fun?" How does it feel to know that these three men are funneling millions of your dollars into their "cultural" empire to be spent as *they* chose?



10100 Santa Monica Boulevard, housing the Century City offices of Stanley Rader and Henry Cornwall-is this the real headquarters for the Worldwide Church of God?

Unless you awake from your fear-induced trance and protest even to the point of withholding your contributions, it is only a matter of time before the Rader-Cornwall-Kuhn cabal achieves its goal of financial self-sufficiency and casts off the Church as a depleted host. Nothing short of a massive "tithe-strike" can stop the A.I.C.F. Ted Armstrong cannot stop it. He is not strong enough corporately or intestinally to oppose *both* Rader and Cornwall; and Herbert is wrapped around Stan's little finger.

It is now up to YOU, the tithe payer, to stop the leeching of the Church! You have only yourself to blame each passing week as yet another part of your family's welfare and sustenance is needlessly sacrificed to provide FUN FOR A FEW!

**-Leonard W. Zola**

[Return to Index](#)

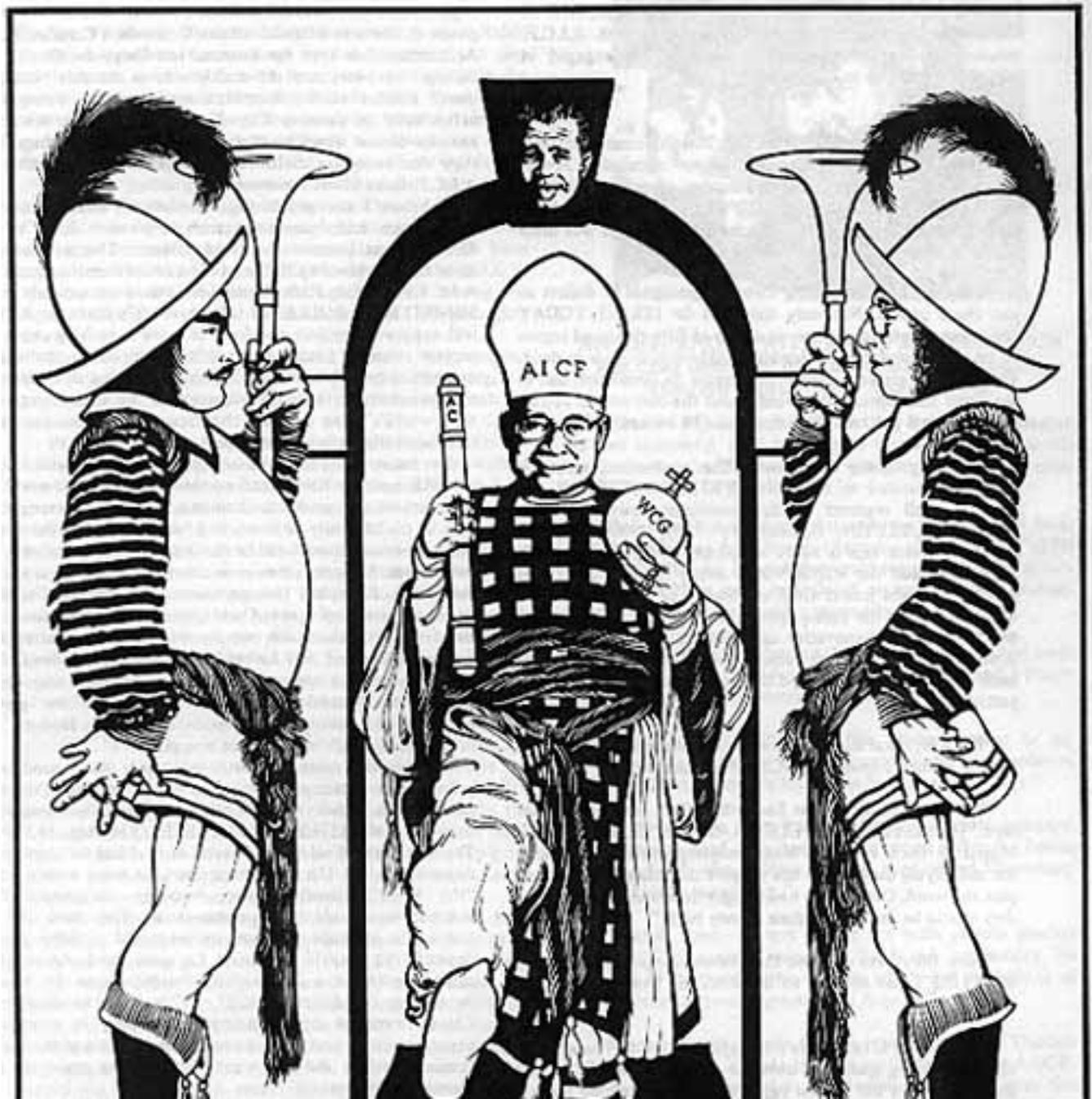
[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT





**"Here I am, seven-and-a-half miles high...." (Jan. 27, 1974)**

**"Once again I am writing from my "office" in my plane, in the air, far above the ground." (June 27, 1974)**

**"Again I'm winging my way, almost eight miles above the Pacific Ocean, toward Tokyo. Yesterday, President Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were flying the presidential plane over approximately the same route." (Nov. 18, 1974)**

**"I'm seven miles high over the Sahara Desert flying to Nairobi...." (May 26, 1975)**

**"I'm flying back to Headquarters on another 'round-the-earth flight, 8½ miles above the Atlantic Ocean." (Dec. 1975)**

**"And here I am...at 43,000 feet (eight miles) above the Atlantic Ocean.... (Jan 21, 1976)**

## **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG**

### **A Legend In His Own Mind**

In the beginning, Herbert W. Armstrong was born in Des Moines, Iowa to parents of "solid Quaker stock" who, Herbert claims, can trace their ancestry back to King David. Given this somewhat spurious claim to royal beginnings, it is easy to understand the fanatical insistence of sovereignty that apparently invaded Herbert the first day of his life.

To fortify his claim to such royal beginnings, Herbert beats his readers over the head time after time with advertising superlatives about his bloodline and experience. His autobiography tells us:

His father had a voice of *unusual* quality.

His brother Dwight had a *special* musical talent for composing.

Herbert married a woman of *superior* intelligence.  
He had training in football, basketball, track and tennis under the *best* coaches.  
He worked with the two *best* advertising men in the country.  
His uncle Frank Armstrong was the *most prominent* advertising man in Iowa.  
Herbert's brother-in-law in Portland was the *leading* architect in that area.  
Herbert was the *originator* of the public opinion poll.

Herbert also claims that his son, Ted, is the *pinacle* of human omniscience.

"I think no man probably has a better grasp of world affairs and their significance. of social conditions, of family life and problems and of human nature. And more, probably no person on earth has a better knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and of Biblical prophecy...."  
(PLAIN TRUTH Subscriber letter, June 5, 1968)

Even when Herbert Armstrong becomes sick, he does it in a superlative manner:

"I entered there [Southern Mississippi Infirmary] with the worst case [of typhoid] in the hospital's history. I was unconscious for two or three days."

And how did Herbert recover? You guessed it:

"I snapped out of it quicker, apparently, than any other case they had ever had..."

And while recovering:

"I was the favorite patient of practically all the nurses." (AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Herbert W. Armstrong, pp. 59, 60.)

There is little doubt that the results of the "worst case of typhoid fever in the infirmary's history" did bear influence upon what was to follow. Eventually Herbert would be claiming:

"Even as Moses, the Apostle Paul and others, in early life, had been specially prepared for the special Mission to which God finally called them, so was I...God revealed Himself to me..."  
(Member letter, March 18, 1974.)

### **UPON THIS PSYCHOSIS I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH**

As a teenager, Herbert flowered into a typical, would-be aristocrat. His writings about this period reveal him to be a grossly over-rated package of self-confidence and cocky conceit, with a burning desire for success. He appears to have been socially inept, enjoying relationships only with those who would feed his demanding ego.

To this day Herbert clearly exemplifies a pattern of personality traits which render him susceptible to an *actual or symptom psychosis* (See Robert Goldenson's THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR: PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY AND MENTAL HEALTH, Published by Doubleday, 1970). His writings are freighted with numerous indications of this psychosis.

His earliest religious experiences are filled with what is known as *grandiose expansiveness*. This symptom develops in many cases of psychosis. It is a state of mind in which the person's attitude of superiority manifests itself through contact with a cosmic person or divine message.

"At the next intersection, the steering wheel of the car automatically turned to the right. I felt the wheel turning. I resisted it. It kept turning right. Instantly I applied all my strength to counteract it, and keep steering straight ahead. My strength was of no avail. Some unseen force was turning that steering wheel *against* all my strength. The car had turned to the right into the street one block east of the home of the cripple....

"Could it possibly be that an angel *forced* the steering wheel to turn me in here? I wondered, somewhat shaken by the experience. I decided I had better stop in at the cripple's home a moment, to be sure." (AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Herbert W. Armstrong, pp. 323, 324.)

Herbert's imaginings of divine intervention include members of his immediate family as well. These accounts, as related by Herbert in his autobiography and sermons include a yarn about his son, Garner Ted, being attacked by a demon in his sleep and several instances of his wife, Loma, being contacted by angels. In one such instance Loma was warned by an angel, "Go to Salem. Go to Salem. Enemies are plotting against your husband." Another experience of Loma's later became, in Herbert's mind, a revelation of his divine commission:

"The first call to God's ministry came while we were living in this single room....

"One night my wife had a dream so vivid and impressive it overwhelmed and shook her tremendously. It was so realistic it seemed more like a vision. For two or three days afterward everything else seemed unreal-as if in a daze-and only this extraordinary dream seemed real.

"In her dream she and I were crossing the wide intersection, a few blocks from our room....

Suddenly there appeared an awesome sight in the sky above. It was a dazzling spectacle-the sky filled with a gigantic solid mass of brilliant stars, shaped like a huge banner....

"As she and I, in her dream, looked upward at the vanishing stars, three large white birds suddenly appeared in the sky between us and the vanishing stars. These great white birds flew directly toward us. As they descended nearer, she perceived that they were angels.

"Then it seemed that, from among these angels in her dream, that Christ descended from among them and stood directly in front of us.... He put His arms around both of us, and we were so happy!...

"Then it seemed He had changed into an angel. I was terribly disappointed at first, until he told me Christ was really coming in a very short time. At that time, we had been going quite regularly to motion-picture theatres. She asked the angel if this was wrong. He replied Christ had important work for us to do, preparing for His coming-there would be no time for 'movies.'...." (AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Herbert W. Armstrong, pp. 207, 208.)

With an imagination like that, there's no need for movies! Indications of *perceptual distortion* (a type of hallucinatory experience which threatens the principal) are visible throughout his writings:

"...I awakened out of a pleasant dream I could not remember. Suddenly, still more asleep than awake, the stark, hideous REALITY crashed through in my mind.

"'NO!' I almost shouted, it CAN'T BE! This can't be real!' God's CHURCH! Oasis of PEACE and HAPPINESS, and JOY in this unhappy, dark and violent world! The only place on earth where GOD'S GOVERNMENT produced these fruits!. Now actually INVADED BY SATAN! 'Oh Eternal God!' Now I was literally shouting beside my bed with up-stretched arms. 'Wake me out of his hideous NIGHTMARE! Wake me out of it!'

"By now I was completely awake. It was no bad dream. Satan was ATTACKING GOD'S

WORK, pulling out all stops as never before, to DESTROY IT, and to destroy many ministers and brethren with it!... I knew I had to LEAP to the job, seeking Christ's guidance, to SAVE THE FLOCK from this vicious attack by Satan.

"Quickly I threw on some clothes and ran downstairs and out to the sidewalk for the morning paper, to see what next...." (Member letter, March 1, 1974).

On scores of other occasions Herbert exemplifies a type of *paranoid projection* often found in psychosis, revealing a complex arrangement of beliefs based on the delusion that the world is coming to an end via a specific format understood exclusively by the "patient".

"... the sudden increase in marches, demonstrations, riots, strikes. MASS VIOLENCE- and assassinations-even threatening to overturn governments of nations is something this world has never seen...." (Co-Worker letter 6/6/68.)

"World events are gaining momentum-speeding rapidly toward the END of this society.... Soon-possibly not more than 3½ more years-IT WILL BE TOO LATE! World events are moving now SO FAST, it appears there may not be more time than that!..." (Co-Worker letter 7/29/68.)

"Probably I have never written you a letter as important as this! First, this morning's news is MORE SERIOUS than most people realize! I tell you soberly, it means we are now right on the very DOORSTEP of the MOST SERIOUS CRISIS and WORLD TROUBLE that has ever happened in all history!" (Co-Worker letter 11/24/68.)

"We do not have much more time to go-perhaps not much more than about 2½ years!" (Co-Worker letter, 4/28/69.)

"...we may have less than two more years...." (Co-Worker letter, 1/29/70.)

"Events leading to the END of this world are now accelerating FASTER AND FASTER! More and more, the governments of nations are TOPPLING!" (Co-Worker letter. 8,129/74.)

"The whole world situation is now darkening. FASTER!" (Co-Worker letter. 7/25/74.)

"Can you believe it? ...another year of world troubles, overthrow of more governments, increasing violence and crime-whisking us rapidly into and through the END time of this present evil world. We now have little time left to finish God's Work." (Co-Worker letter. 1/2/75.)

"This morning...it happened again! Another important government overthrown! Co-Workers, as I said a month ago, time is now really running out on us! NEVER has the world been in a time of world troubles such as we live in now. We are definitely in the END TIME." (Co-Worker letter, 3/25/75.)

"It's time you were becoming ALARMED over the rapidly worsening state of the world you live in. Do not read carelessly over this, as if it were some ordinary thing you'd hardly notice! The FOOLISH will do just that, and they will SUFFER as humanity has never suffered before." (Co-Worker letter, 1/21/76.)

In addition to these special tendencies, psychotic personalities have a number of transition experiences in which they deny the reality of their short-comings by rationalizing into existence the intervention and approval of those whom they see as equals.

"I remember many a happy, blessed, really ENJOYABLE hour spent in the bare kitchens of financially poor people, studying the Bible with them. It seemed as if the angels were there with us-as indeed they were!" (TOMORROW'S WORLD, June 1971, p. 2.)

Throughout his life, Herbert W. Armstrong, seems to be battling a severe and disabling mental illness of organic and emotional origin, characterized by a loss of contact with reality. His personality disorganization appears extreme in its deviation from what most see as normal patterns of thinking, feeling and acting.

Today Herbert is busy policing his flock with *hostile belligerance* that resembles yet another symptom of psychotic disorder. During the course of a sermon it is not at all unusual to hear Herbert inflict verbal abuse upon his followers that would render a drill sergeant silent. The following reprinted article is typical:

"...almost every Festival (Feast of Tabernacles) someone on the grounds will approach one or two members, with an argument, or interpretation of his own of some point or question of Scripture which is contrary to the doctrine of God's OWN CHURCH.

"Usually a crowd begins to gather quickly. It seems many are such "dumb sheep"-so naive and unthinking and ready to be deceived by Satan-that they are ALL EARS at once!... many of you members just can't resist crowding up to hear him!" (SHOULD WE LISTEN TO OTHERS?" Ambassador College, 1960.)

Spurred by feelings of guilt, Herbert's followers have accepted this abuse and helped him rise to unimagined corporate success. This success has made Herbert's mind more certain than ever that he is a legend-singled out, inspired and lead by the very Being who blue-printed the universe. But as is always the problem with psychosis, the individual afflicted with it is seldom the truthful purist his followers would wish him to be.

### **LET'S ASK SOME QUESTIONS**

It is obvious from Herbert's remarks about "dumb sheep" that questions are not always welcome at Ambassador College or in its corporate parent, the Worldwide Church of God.

In a 1974 member letter, Herbert outlined the history of the Universe in nine pages. He began his pronouncements about a time before man's creation or before recorded history. In this scenario, he claims that it was "*questioning*" brought on by "thinking and reasoning" that caused Satan to rebel. And what was the end result of this cerebral activity? -"That UNIVERSAL sin of REBELLION (raising issues, thinking, and reasoning) plunged the whole earth into physical chaos, confusion and utter DARKNESS."

According to Herbert, "questions" not only caused the fall of man, but propelled the nation of Israel into captivity and slavery, caused the disappearance of the early Christian church and, of utmost importance, is the cause of the recent strife within the Worldwide Church of God. According to Herbert, Satan is the prime mover behind man's rebellion against authority and Satan's primary tool is the use of questions.

It does not take much for us to realize, however, that the *real* reason questions are discouraged is not the potential threat to the Supreme Creator or His plan, but the threat to Herbert Armstrong and *his* plan. This plan involves blind obedience to Herbert who, we must remember, is God's apostle whose views are inspired.

### **IS HERBERT ARMSTRONG AN APOSTLE?**

Over the years, students and members of the Worldwide Church of God have been repeatedly admonished to accept Herbert Armstrong as the one and only

Apostle of Jesus Christ. Or at least this is the impression given in Herbert's writings since he neglects to ever contradict, correct or challenge those followers who call him an apostle.

Even the casual student of the Bible ("casual" meaning having nothing more than the ability to read and turn pages) can test Herbert's authenticity of "apostleship" by the following Biblical factors:

- 1) For Herbert to be an apostle, he must have been a witness to Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:22).
- 2) Herbert must have seen Christ personally, as did the Apostle Paul (I Corinthians 9: 1).
- 3) He must have "the signs of an apostle" which are miracles, wonders and mighty deeds (II Corinthians 12:12).

The question to bare in mind at this point is: Can Herbert W. Armstrong show any evidence of these factors in his life?

Additionally, there are indications that the current regal life-style of Herbert Armstrong is seriously at odds with I Corinthians 4:9-13. This passage indicates that apostles of the New Testament (not kings, lords and princes in the Old Testament whose positions as heads of state demanded a regal image) were to: a) show evidence of hunger, thirst and lack of proper clothing; b) be despised, while the lay people can be honored by the world; c) show evidence of being buffeted and having no permanent home in which to live; d) be willing to work with their own hands when required; e) when reviled, always bless their reviler; f) when persecuted, endure it cheerfully; and g) be defamed by people and considered "filth of the world" by those in the world, and the "offscouring of all things unto this day". The latter phrase indicates that the appraisal of disdain by the world and its political leaders, businessmen and educators is a *continuing* assessment. If the Herbert Armstrong you know meets these Biblical requirements then he is an apostle in every sense of the word.

On the other hand, if the Herbert Armstrong you know is the one a) with diamond cufflinks, a private jet, the Czar of Russia's tableware, gold flatware, gold bathroom fixtures in his office, a Rolls Royce, four homes, an executive expense account and handsome salary; b) who said in a letter dated February 25, 1974, "Arriving at Manila . . . I was greeted by a large, white-uniformed band" and stated in an earlier letter dated January 27, 1974, "GOD HAS GIVEN ME GREAT CREDABILITY IN THE EYES OF HEADS OF MANY NATIONS!", then later in that eventful year said, "A Government Highway Patrol car, with flashing red light and siren escorted me everywhere I went for the nine days we were there [Manila].", then, perhaps, we are confronted with one of those "occasional contradictions" which occur when one places the clear evidence of a matter next to the amplified screams thundered from the pulpit and the ballooned print of his writings. These, we might add, are the only things which give Herbert W. Armstrong his claim to apostleship, not Biblical proof. Without his hysterical style, Herbert, is about as apostolically potent as a house plant.

## **IS GOD "BACKING" HERBERT ARMSTRONG?**

Although it may be clear that Herbert is not an apostle, to many in the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College, the fact remains that Herbert is in control. And to them this position of control over the rapid growth and immensity of his organization is synonymous with "backing" from God Almighty. Herbert leaves little doubt in the mind of his readers concerning this "fact":

"He [God] did call and choose me to raise up this present era of His Church, and to be used in proclaiming the true GOSPEL, for the first time in over 18½ centuries TO THE WORLD!  
"You know you have the PROOF by the FRUITS that this IS the very Church the living Christ is guiding and blessing! Is there any doubt-COULD there be-as to WHOM God chose to raise up this WORK, and carry it on?  
"I am the called and chosen servant of the living Jesus Christ." (Member letter, January 31, 1974.)

And what are those so-called "FRUITS" and "PROOF"? That comes in another letter dated March 18, 1974:

"In 1933, He [God] raised up, through my preaching....what was to become the Worldwide Church of God.  
"As in the first century, the Lord ADDED gradually to that number. Meanwhile God's WORK was growing by MULTIPLICATION, 30%, per year, multiplying itself 8 times in 8 years, 64 times in 16 years, and more than 4,000 times in 32 years."

There is absolutely no quarreling with these figures. Just as there is not a shread of "PROOF" in these figures to indicate any backing from a divine source. Surely, if God is identifying His affiliation by the new dimensions opening up to a corporation and by the financial growth it enjoys, then we should all get down on our knees and pay homage to the divine guidance given Standard Oil Corporation over the last forty years.

More importantly, if God is "backing" Herbert Armstrong, why then didn't He back Herbert's prophecies? (see page 6). The above question was answered in the December, 1956 issue of the PLAIN TRUTH, in an article entitled, "Foretold 22 Years Ago!":

"God has raised up this very work to make known to the world His Truth-to carry to the world His prophetic warnings before it is too late!  
"Scripture is full of warnings about false ministers and false prophets. The world is filled with such men and organizations today. 'The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, THEN SHALL THE PROPHET BE KNOWN THAT THE LORD HATH TRULY SENT HIM'-Jerermah 28:9. That is how you can know who is preaching the truth today-when what he says comes to pass."

It is fitting that Herbert's PLAIN TRUTH magazine be the prophet that would decide the method of his own judgment.

## **IS HERBERT ARMSTRONG "INSPIRED"?**

Herbert claims that he carries out God's government through his church. He claims that his God has given his church authority to determine doctrine. As proof

of his authority in matters of church government, Herbert cites his expertise in clearing up problem areas of scripture which are not clear to most Christians. Consequently, Herbert moves in where others dare not tread. This is fair enough, since an establishment of clear directives by inspired research would be enough to satisfy the desire of many who wish a larger degree of harmony in their life with regards to scripture.

At one time the areas of doubt, in Herbert's opinion, were the subjects to which he concluded that 1) women should not wear make-up, and 2) Pentecost should be kept on a Monday.

History proves that in both cases Herbert Armstrong was miserably wrong. Herbert considered the use of make-up a capital sin and personally disfellowshipped both of his daughters for its use. It can now be demonstrated that Herbert's "inspired" research was unnecessarily restrictive of an individual's personal choice and did not provide adults the opportunity to govern themselves in the matter of their cosmetic appearance. Despite a recent reversal of his earlier decision, it remains clear that Herbert is still in control of all doctrinal decisions. But being in control and being right are two different things.

In the second case concerning the celebration of Pentecost on the "right" day, the charge against Herbert's inspirational credibility is far more serious, since it puts *God* on the spot:

"...God gave this festival to His people in order to reveal, and to keep them continually informed....

"As already explained, God's purpose in giving His Church His annual holydays was to keep his children constantly in true understanding of God's great PLAN.

"To accomplish this, God took the yearly material harvest seasons in Palestine as the picture of the spiritual harvest of souls.

"The New Testament Church of God was not founded on Sunday. But it did start on the annual Sabbath-day called "Pentecost"....

"All other holydays or festivals come on definite days of definite months. But Pentecost must be determined by COUNTING. It is very simple and plain. Any child should be able to start numbering from a definite day and count fifty. Yet there are three little simple points which seem to confuse some people so that they observe the wrong day." (PAGAN HOLIDAYS-OR GOD'S HOLYDAYS-WHICH? copyrighted 1957 by Ambassador College.)

And there you have it. Calculating the correct day on which to observe Pentecost is child's play. What greater proof of God's non-inspiration is there than Herbert chaining his followers to celebrating Pentecost on the wrong day? This blunder was perpetuated under Herbert W. Armstrong for forty years!

By his own reasoning, he shows himself "in discord" with God when instructing the reader on the importance of keeping Pentecost on the proper day:

"It is of very grave importance we figure the right day. This day, and this only, is made HOLY by the Eternal Creator. Suppose at the same time the Church of God was founded, the Apostles had miscounted. And 'when the day of Pentecost was fully come' (Acts 2: 1 ) they, instead of being all with one accord in one place were in discord, some having observed the day preceeding, and some waiting until the following day!" (ibidem, p. 14)

If you were in the Worldwide Church of God until 1974, you celebrated Pentecost on the wrong day every year you were in his church. According to Herbert's own reasoning you missed God's legitimate attempt to inspire you as to his New Testament plan for mankind.

### **ARE HERBERT'S CRITICS "SATANIC"?**

If one is to listen to Herbert Armstrong regarding the beliefs of former members there is no question but that "THEY ARE IN THE BONDS OF SATAN", particularly if they publicly disagree with him!

Although he is referring to ministers who have resigned, the following accusations are typical of Herbert's opinion of anyone who has fallen from his graces. In his February 25, 1974, letter to the members of the W.C.G. Herbert states:

"No wonder Satan moved in his subtle, deceptive and diabolical way to influence a few of those who have been God's MINISTERS. They began by "Questioning" this, that and the other doctrine.... SATAN is the real author of this rebellion against God's Work.

"...these deceived ministers [are] allowing Satan to use them.

"This thing is of SATAN...these deceived men [are] now allowing Satan to turn them the wrong way."

Let's assume for the moment that these men are under the influence of Satan. Just for the sake of argument let's say Herbert is talking about two former evangelists and two former pastors: Albert Portune, Charles Hunting, Al Carrozzo and Richard Plache. If these men are as Satanic as Herbert claims them to be, then why is he still paying Al Portune seven hundred and fifty dollars a month? Why did his corporation offer Al Carrozzo \$20,000 a year for the rest of his life if he would keep quiet and stay with the Worldwide Church of God? If Hunting and Plache were so diabolically influenced, why did Herbert allow the offer of a year and a half off from work with full pay at over \$25,000 a year to be made?

It's one thing for Herbert to say these men are doing Satan's work; but it's worse to offer to continue their wages. If they indeed are wicked men, let Satan bankroll his own!

### **TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT**

The cerebral-trauma of the following Armstrong statement is beyond sanity. It is symptomatic of pure psychosis. It is Herbert W. Armstrong at his symptomatic best. It is (spiritually speaking) his way of putting the cart before the horse. This is the accounting method he uses to hide such mistakes as the old make-up doctrine and Monday Pentecost. In short, it's the classic advertising man's way of saying: "Though two wrongs don't make a right-Three do!"

"Christ ... has BOUND in heaven what His Church, even in unrealized error, has bound in earth." (Ministerial Bulletin, re: Pentecost and facial make-up, 12/3/74.)

I don't have to say to you, "Go back and read that statement twice more, then once again and never forget it." Anyone with one eye and no sense should know that it's a cop-out! This intellectual disorder leaves only one authority on earth to decide what is right and that person is:

### **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG- THE ADORED ONE**

Herbert Armstrong is one of the most enthusiastic ignoramuses to use the name of Christ since LaSalle consecrated his government's robbery of the Mississippi Valley with a benediction. It is difficult to interpret Herbert Armstrong's behavior, his writings, his sermons, and make sense of them without some assistance from a psychiatrist. Besides his enthusiasm for power and riches Herbert has an equal enthusiasm for his own image-his image of himself as the adored one, the legend.

While it is possible that some of Herbert's behavior patterns change considerably from time to time, this writer has come to the conclusion, along with several others who knew him intimately, who dined with him repeatedly, traveled with him and loved him, that the man's mental make-up has been marked from the beginning of their experiences with him by a slowly developing, systematic organization of delusions of divine grandure and satanic persecution.

This is not to say that he is necessarily evil in the sight of God. It is meant to indicate that many who know Herbert know his actions to be gross exaggerations of ego tendencies found among normal individuals.

Many agree that Herbert Armstrong tends to be more than slightly suspicious of others and tends to blame others, including Christ, for his failures in prophecy and doctrine. Those who know him have told me that constant failure has fostered within him the belief that he has not been given a "fair shake". Obviously, Herbert could not accept his "uninspired" lot in life and instead of making constructive efforts to change educational and doctrinal error became bitter nursing grievances of fancied injustices.

At some point in his life, these fanciful tendencies became the dominant pattern of his adjustment to the realities which fought against him daily. This makes it easier to understand his hypersensitivity to questions put forth by members, as well as his subsequent hypercriticism of others who would not readily adopt his ideas. It is easier to understand the armor of arrogance and superiority that Herbert has surrounded himself with and why he is totally incapable of admitting any defects or weaknesses within himself. One example of this is his unfounded insistence that he has never made a major mistake in his guiding of the church of God. Unfortunately, these characteristics have intensified with the passing of time.

Several psychological factors appear to be responsible for Herbert's "symptomatic" condition. Considering the "solid Quaker stock" family that Herbert grew up in, it is not difficult to believe that his parents could have been

overbearing, critical and ambitious. As a child, Herbert could have been made to feel that he would not be accepted or loved unless he measured up to something that proved himself superior. Under the impact of this excessive pressure, usually reinforced with punishment, Herbert could have easily become the sullen, resentful and stubborn person that we see him to be in his autobiography and other writings. This pressure could also account for the passage in his autobiography which indicates that he did not get along well with children in his own peer group and favored his playtime with the older boys in his neighborhood. Subsequently, attitudes of superiority and arrogance developed. Instead of becoming friendly and congenial, Herbert became aloof and isolated. This could give us some insight into why Herbert spent so much time in the library and finally ended up dropping out of high school.

Instead of realizing that he was being rejected because of his own attitude, Herbert seemingly became increasingly hostile to the world ("they are all deceived") as well as overly sensitive to unintentional slights. As he grew older and achieved a few successes, he became more aggressive, humorless and domineering. He was constantly finding fault with others ("the world") and demanded more and more recognition for himself-" Brethren ... follow the one you have called GOD'S APOSTLE, whom GOD has chosen and USED these forty years!" (Herbert W. Armstrong: Member letter 2/25/74.)

This outward air of superiority is actually a cover for inward feelings of inadequacy. He betrays his inward doubt through his oversensitivity to criticism and his craving for praise among world leaders and the cultural elite. Every activity is marked by overzealousness: erecting a \$24,000,000 auditorium which seats only 1,250 people, buying gifts of Steuben Crystal, flying the Vienna Symphony to Pasadena for two performances at a cost of \$500,000. Is Herbert trying to make up for his own inadequacies through these pretentious showings of wealth? Whose friendship is he buying-God's?

Instead of looking inward to find the source of his difficulties, he protects himself from intolerable feelings of failure by eventually isolating himself, allowing another (is that you, Stan?) to fend for him, and blaming others for every failure, every problem. When he does emerge, it is usually with aggression on his lips. His aggressive attitudes arouse the anger and resentment of many people, and this in turn feeds the fires of his own hostility. This cycle continues until he loses friend after friend. You know how the story ends.

The fact that administrators are leaving his organization in droves is obvious. The failure of prophecy after prophecy requires no further demonstration. Equally obvious must be the fact that Herbert Armstrong is not inspired or backed by God in any way that differs from the ordinary individual. And it is about as obvious in Pasadena, Texas as it is in Pasadena, California that Herbert W. Armstrong sees himself as the champion of good and his enemies as the incarnates of evil in a manner so grandiose, that it verges on *symptomatic psychosis*. Either that is the case, or we are confronted by contradictions of such a conspicuous order that we absolutely cannot dismiss the possibility that Herbert is a charlatan and that the corporation known as Ambassador College is a rip-off to anyone who hungers for

truth.

Either being the case, I cannot understand why some will still prefer their inspiration from an "office eight and one half miles above the clouds" when life offers more to those with their feet on the ground.

**-J. Timothy Nugent**

[Return to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### AMBASSADOR COLLEGE RESEARCH "PROVES" THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS GOD'S TRUE CHURCH

Many people at one time or another wonder just where the one true church of God really is. Certainly you'd expect a logical God to make the truth plain for all who are honestly seeking Him, wouldn't you? Well, God has-through Ambassador College!

Let's quickly go right back to the beginning and find the trunk of the tree, avoiding the tree with the forbidden fruit on it, of course! You'll find with a little foresight (hindsight is allowed if you're low on foresight) that there are 14 major keys that would enable you to determine beyond any doubt which church is the true church. Fourteen, you know, is an extremely significant number since it's derived from multiplying 7 times 2 or 2 times 7. Fourteen also happens to be the exact number of asses both Deliah and Jezebel owned at one time during their lives. Need I go any further in depth to scientifically prove this obvious verity?

So now let's critically examine the 14 major scientific proofs for the true church. But don't believe what I write just because I write it. Believe it because you see it with your own eyes and especially because it's so true and obvious and because it's downright stupid to believe anything else!

#### **I. IT HAS MAJOR DOCTRINAL TRUTHS**

Obviously and clearly the Catholic Church has doctrinal truths possessed by no other church. Don't all other churches differ from it? Since only one church can be the true one, and others differ, this proves the Catholics alone are right. Does any other church preach the same gospel that the Catholic Church preaches? Of course not! This again logically proves the authenticity of the Catholic Church. Some dissenters have gone out from the Catholic Church-just as it was

prophesied to happen. These detractors (obviously in a rotten attitude and disloyal to the men who brought them into Christianity and to God's truth) claimed the Catholic Church was doctrinally in error. But would God let His church be in error and not correct it? It's God's job to judge His church. If you say you would run the Church differently than the Pope does, this just shows why God chose Pope Paul instead of you to run the Church. Besides, Christ gave the Catholic Church authority to bind and loose-the same authority the apostles possessed. The Pope is simply analogous to the head apostle. Remember, everything Peter said could not be proven from the Old Testament. As Herbert Armstrong so aptly stated on this issue, "Christ has bound in heaven what His Church, even in error, has bound in earth." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, December 3, 1974, p.631)

## **II. CORRECT NAME OF THE TRUE CHURCH**

There are many churches around named after men or doctrines. Christ, however, founded only one true church having a single body of beliefs and a true name. That name is Catholic Church. If you aren't afraid to, check a concordance. You will discover that the word "church" is used exactly 77 times in the New Testament. Here we see again God's number of perfection and completeness, seven, stamped on his true church. Interestingly, the first time this name is used is in Matthew 16:18 where Christ says he's going to build His church on Peter. Some claim the true name is Church of God. Believe it or not, the Catholic Church is often referred to in literature, as far back as the second century A.D., as the Catholic Church of God (with "Catholic," meaning "worldwide," merely being a descriptive adjective).

## **III. IT OBSERVES CORRECT DAYS**

For 1900 years Catholics have known that New Covenant Christians aren't required to keep the feast days ancient Israel kept. However, Catholic leaders have been clearly inspired to select certain New Testament days to foreshadow God's plan of salvation: Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Pentecost (on Sunday), and other meaningful Christian days. The Catholic Church does worship on Sunday instead of Saturday because God led it to bind Sunday on its members since the New Testament Church was founded on a Sunday (on Pentecost, Acts 2). History has proven this decision right, and clearly the Catholic Church has been blessed beyond its wildest dreams after it began worshipping on Sundays. As a Philippine minister, Colin Adair, of the Worldwide Church of God so perfectly stated in regard to a church keeping a sabbath on an unbiblical day: "I personally feel God has over the years made holy the day the Church chose... so that in effect we have not been keeping the wrong day at all! God was in it and the way the Church grew and was blessed all these years surely is additional evidence." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, August 8, 1974, p. 414)

## **IV. GOVERNMENT FROM THE TOP DOWN**

Throughout the whole Old Testament God's system of government was a hierarchy that ruled from the top down. God has always worked through one organized hierarchy. In ancient Israel God had captains over the thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. God does things in order, and He always governs from the top down, not from the bottom up. God does not change (Hebrews

13:8). In the New Testament His true church naturally followed this top-down principle of government by submitting to one top human spiritual leader over other ministers of various ranks. Which church has this godly system of government? The Catholic Church, of course!

## **V. ONE HUMAN HEAD OF THE TRUE CHURCH**

God always works through one human head, no matter how imperfect he may be. In the Old Testament, he used Moses, the judges, and the kings. And shouldn't it be obvious to anyone with even a superficial knowledge of history that the Pope has been the human spiritual leader ever since? Sure the Pope makes mistakes, but not big important ones that would destroy the true church. Maybe the Pope doesn't have all the qualifications that a minister should have, but who does? And anyway it's obvious that God is using him! Just look at the fruits. It's very clear that the Catholic Church has grown bigger than all the other professing Christian churches combined. And remember, all the other churches' ministers are Satan's ministers and while some appear as angels of light, they're just tools in Satan's hands!

## **VI. OPEN DOORS TO BE SET BEFORE THE TRUE CHURCH**

One of the greatest proofs that the Catholic Church is the true church is the open doors set before it. Just in the last decade alone, the Pope has been granted some extraordinary opportunities to preach the true gospel to world leaders. He has visited India, the United States, Portugal, Columbia, and Israel with full approval of the leaders of those nations. He addressed the United Nations and the World Council of Churches. He has contacted many Communist regimes and has even met the head of the Greek Orthodox Church seeking to promote Christian unity. Only God could be opening such gigantic doors!

## **VII. THE POPE IS GOD'S AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE**

What leaders throughout the Christian era have done more for peace than the popes? Why even today Pope Paul has personally pleaded with leaders from all nations to seek peaceful solutions to their problems. World leaders listen to the Pope when they won't listen to anyone else. They always extend a special warmth to him and receive him enthusiastically.

## **VIII. HAPPY, DEDICATED PEOPLE**

The dedication of Catholics worldwide is unquestioned. Look at the fantastic sacrifices nuns and priests make voluntarily just to help others and to stay close to God. Other Christian religions don't have anything to compare with this. Church attendance is much higher among Catholics than among other professing Christians. If they weren't happy people, Catholics just wouldn't attend or contribute, would they?

## **IX. FANTASTIC GROWTH**

Christ is not divided (I Corinthians 1: 13). There is really only one true organized church, and that church, the Catholic Church, has been blessed by tremendous growth. No other church produces fruits like this! All other churches were founded by mere uninspired men who refused to abide by God's government. These collusionists tried to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:29-31)

to form their own groups, which history shows have split and resplit and splintered over and over. For instance, there are dozens of little bickering groups called by some form of the name "Catholic Church of God," all proselytizing among themselves, attacking and condemning each other.

## **X. GREAT FAVOR**

Certainly no church has been blessed as bountifully as has the Catholic Church of God. Look at the worldwide recognition and respect enjoyed by the Church in almost every country on earth. Ambassadors from all the world's nations curry the favor of the Catholic Church. This enables the Catholic Church to have favor in influential leaders' eyes and to print and distribute tons of religious literature in hundreds of languages. At present the Pope doesn't even have to go seeking to get an audience with world leaders. They eagerly come, hat in hand, to see the Pope at his convenience.

## **XI. PHYSICAL BLESSINGS**

The Catholic Church has been blessed with more physical and spiritual riches than all the other false churches combined. It has billions of dollars in reserve. It has art objects of inestimable value. The Vatican's gardens and sculptures are unexcelled anywhere in the world. Catholic rulers control many nations, giving those nations a spiritual stability they wouldn't have with atheistic rulers. The Catholic Church also runs famous colleges and universities worldwide which help impart morals and ethics to an immoral world.

## **XII. HOUSE FOR GOD**

The Catholics were blessed with such tremendous wealth and abundance because of their faith that they were able to erect the magnificent St. Peter's Basilica in honor of the Great God. It's filled with tons and tons of the finest imported Italian marble, silver, gold, and the costliest materials and art objects available anywhere. It is without a doubt the highest quality building in existence. Evangelist Frank Brown echoed the proud thoughts of many a Catholic concerning St. Peter's when he commented, "The overall effect of this beautiful building is very striking... it certainly brings home very forcibly just how much this Work has grown and just how much God has blessed it... It makes it a little easier... to realize a little more how great our God is and how pleased He is that we have been faithful in His Work." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN, April 2, 1974, p. 84).

## **XIII. TIME CYCLES**

The number 19 is extremely significant, as almost all Bible Scholars acknowledge. And interestingly, one hundred nineteen-year time cycles have now elapsed since the Catholic Church began-another stamp of godly approval for its existence.

## **XIV. LENGTH OF EXISTENCE**

The Catholic Church has not been in existence as the true church for a mere 40 years, nor for 400 years, but for over 1900 years it has left its mark on all the world. Interestingly, it has also championed a symbol or "mark"-the cross. In Ezekiel 9:4 God had an angel go through Jerusalem putting a mark on the

foreheads of those Christians who sighed and cried for the abominations committed there. The Hebrew word here rendered "mark" really means a mark in the shape of a cross. Though this twiggly point is significant, it's not a major proof. Let's get back to the basics! Think to yourself: Which church has best stood the test of time? The Catholic Church! Which church has Satan been unable to destroy (Matthew 16:18)? God's one true church-the Catholic Church

**-John Trechak**

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

### **TITHE SPY**

**"We do practice tithing. The first tithe is 10 per cent to carry out God's work- and no one checks up to see if a person pays. It is between the member and God." (Excerpt from December 31, 1973 letter from Garner Ted Armstrong to S. E. Anderson).**

**"Never should the doctrine of tithing or the spirit of giving be used as a CLUB over people's heads, anymore than the doctrine of baptism, the receiving of God's Holy Spirit. or the laying on of hands is used as a club." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN of the Worldwide Church of God, April 8, 1975, pages 179-180, Garner Ted Armstrong).**

**"It is not the policy, as stated in the paper, to excommunicate or disfellowship because a minister may find (and there is no way by which he COULD really find information other than the divulging of it voluntarily by the individual member) that a member has been unfaithful in tithing. This should never be grounds for disfellowship." (MINISTERIAL BULLETIN of the Worldwide Church of God, April 8, 1975, page 180, Garner Ted Armstrong).**

The Worldwide Church of God strictly teaches the doctrine of tithing in an Old Testament sense to support its many-faceted activities. Statements have been made that the administration of the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College corporations do not check the tithing records of its adherents to determine delinquency. Garner Ted Armstrong, President of Ambassador College and Executive Vice-President of the Worldwide Church of God, has personally decried the use of tithe checks in sermons at the Pasadena headquarters on several occasions. Other leading administrators have claimed ignorance of such activities. However, there are growing numbers of people who have felt the sting of accusation that they have been negligent in tithing, an

activity supposedly between the individuals and their God, unmonitored by men. How was such information determined? Is it true that "there is no way by which he (the minister or administrator) could really find information other than the divulging of it voluntarily by the individual member"? What are the real facts? Are these denials in fact the truth, or are they blatant lies to cover up practices that have gone on for years and are still continuing? If tithe checks are indeed practiced, then it means that ordained ministers, evangelists and even "apostles" have seen fit to LIE about their use of highly personal information to advance the financial and corporate posture of Ambassador College and The Worldwide Church of God.

Interviews have been conducted with several former administrators of the Ambassador College Data Processing Center to determine the truth of the matter.

In 1967 Ambassador College purchased its first computer, an IBM System 360 Model 30. Today Ambassador College owns the latest and most sophisticated IBM System 370 Model 158, a computer facility which in hardware components alone is worth close to three million dollars. Although the budget has been reduced significantly, especially in the last few weeks with the termination of about 30% of the staff, the total data processing budget in 1973 was close to two million dollars. The major computer system developed by Ambassador College called "ACTS" consolidated all campus-wide subscriber files such as those formerly maintained separately by the Letter Answering Department, the extensive donation files of the Co-worker Department, Plain Truth, Co-worker and Good News files, etc. into one major computerized file.

All information on a particular subscriber is available for terminal display or for analysis with other subscribers in computer printouts. Every contribution made by a contributor can be viewed on a computer terminal. The date, amount, and type of contribution (i.e. Holy Day offering, Building Fund, Festival Fund or Poor Fund) can be displayed on a terminal for those who have access to the Donation File. Also, some very personal information giving even reasons for disfellowshipping, marital separations and sexual problems may be present on some subscribers' files for viewing to give a letter answerer the background necessary to answer their questions or for information to be sent to field pastors. The creators of this computerized system did not envision the uses it would eventually be put to. They did not know that the computer, especially the file of contributors, would be used in gestapo-like thrusts upon ministers, employees and church members at large.

In an interview with Keith M. Hunter, Director of the Ambassador College Data Processing Center from 1965 through 1973, he related how the concept of computer tithe checks all began:

"In early 1968 Roderick C. Meredith, then head of the U.S. Church Ministry for the Radio Church of God, now the Worldwide Church of God, was taking a tour of the new computer facilities at 55 North Vernon. I briefed him on the system that we were developing and showed him printouts of donation information. His

eyes seemed to widen as he realized the potentialities of such a system. He asked me to look up the donation records of two men who were about to be ordained as deacons. It turned out that one was tithing and one was not (according to R.C.M.). Mr. Meredith immediately set up a policy to be administered through Dan Porter, then head of the Church Administration Department, that all ordinations and elevations in rank would be done subsequent to a tithe check. It is my feeling that this policy has been carried on down to the present day."

It is interesting to note that in February 1968 ministers were instructed from Pasadena headquarters that they should check the private tithing records of the members in their churches if they felt some of their members might not be tithing. The February 26, 1968 ministerial letter informed the ministers about the process which was to be cleared through the Church Administration Department. The ministerial letter of January 28, 1969 emphasized once again that the ministers should check with headquarters to determine the disloyalty of suspected brethren under their charge.

Keith Hunter, who is now the Director of Data Processing for the University of Southern California, related some other interesting points concerning activities in the late 1960's.

"Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, former Dean of Faculty of Ambassador College, used to purchase large numbers of books ostensibly for the Ambassador College Library. The interesting point is that he didn't buy them through the Business Office as a normal budget expenditure. He purchased them using his tithes. In other words, he did not send his tithes in to the central headquarters to be allocated for college and church activities. Rather, he himself decided how his tithes would be used, something totally forbidden for the average church member. At the end of the year he would come down to Hugh Mauck, then head of the Circulation Department, to request an annual receipt of tithes and offerings for the books he had purchased. Obviously, the annual receipt he received did not reflect actual tithes given to the organization. During the late 1960's David Jon Hill assumed responsibility for the Circulation Department and Data Processing. He frequently requested tithe checks through me personally and through Hugh Mauck who at that time had a computer terminal installed in his office."

We asked Keith Hunter who the administrators were who requested tithe checks front him personally:

"Generally the requests I received were delicate, sensitive and highly political. I received requests from Herbert Armstrong, Ronald Dart, Frank Brown, Jon Hill, Al Portune, Al Carrozzo, Leslie McCullough and Dan Porter. The requests generally involved ministers and headquarters personnel, although Leslie McCullough annually requested information concerning Ambassador College, Big Sandy employees. Other tithe checks or donation problems (i.e. I.R.S. investigations) were handled through the Co-worker Department. Some of the types of requests I received were:

1. Frank Brown requested information on Osamu Gotoh, currently director of Herbert W. Armstrong's campaign staff, an enigma to many high level administrators in the work. It turned out that he did not tithe during tire particular two year period (1971-72) and had only one \$10 contribution on his record. Other tithe checks on the same individual always indicated negligible giving.

2. Herbert Armstrong requested a tithe check on all the airplane pilots after the request for large donations and even borrowing for the Work was made.

3. All U.S. Ministers were selected from the computer files and their contribution records were checked in depth during the years 1972-73. One minister in the Midwest that I know personally was given a great deal of problems by the administration over his donation situation.

4. The Visiting Program frequently requested listings of whole church areas, especially around the Pasadena headquarters. The Reno, Nevada church in particular had some scathing sermons accusing members of not tithing, disloyalty etc., after a cursory analysis was made of the church donation records. Those requesting the listings which were technical in nature did not know how to read them and probably made many unwarranted conclusions. No one ever asked for any information on how to read the reports which were not written for administrative purposes but rather for resolving technical data processing problems.

5. On several occasions when Pasadena employees were to be promoted, a tithe check was made to determine loyalty, devotion, etc.

6. Al Portune, former Vice President of Finance for Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God annually requested listings of non-contributing headquarters employees during the years 1971-73.

Interestingly enough, having scanned many of the reports over the years, I've noticed that Herbert Armstrong himself did not tithe in the normal way taught by the church. His donation record reflected only four donations, though large, during one particular year. He did not tithe on each individual paycheck he received as the rest of the church was commanded to do."

How often have Worldwide Church of God members heard of the spiritual perception of their ministry! The discerning of the innermost attitudes of individual Christians was a gift supposedly given in great measure to the ministry. Why then did recourse have to be taken to the computerized donation records of fellow brethren in Christ? Could it have been that the Holy Spirit did not really dwell as fully in some of these self-acclaimed men of God as they led many of us to believe?

Gary Reid, Manager of Systems Development, worked for Keith Hunter for eight years in the Data Processing Center. He is currently Director of Data Processing for Occidental College in Los Angeles. Many of the tithing requests were

channelled through him by Keith Hunter.

"One of the earliest experiences I can remember was when I first began to work in Data Processing in 1967, Dr. Herman Hoeh was trying to get an annual tithe and offering receipt for book purchases he had made during the year. The system of tithing which I had been taught and followed, chiefly as a result of Dr. Hoeh's article on tithing, certainly was at variance with this "liberal" practice. I received many requests from Keith to look into the tithing records of individuals which he had received in turn from Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God officials. On several occasions we said this would be the last time "they" would get us to do it. This approach was one of the many reasons I left the organization and I know it was for Keith as well.

One request I remember very well came directly to me from Ronald Dart, then the newly appointed Chancellor of the Big Sandy campus. At that time in early 1974, Ben Chapman, who replaced Keith Hunter as head of Data Processing, was out of town. The request included a long list of names of Big Sandy employees. We were asked to determine who was tithing and who was not. I don't recall how many were not tithing. It is not easy to determine beyond a shadow of a doubt when their annual salary is not known. I do remember, however, that an evangelist, Dean Blackwell, had given no contributions (as far as the computer was concerned) during 1973. Perhaps he, like Dr. Hoeh, purchased books with his tithes or perhaps he gave his contributions anonymously, so as to escape the watchful eye of the computer."

Another former executive in Data Processing, Mike Holman, was asked about his experiences as Manager of Computer Operations. Mike is now Director of Data Processing with a computer service bureau in Texas.

"After Keith Hunter left I continued to receive requests for tithe checks directly from Al Portune, Frank Brown, and the Visiting Program office. One particular incident stands out in my mind. In mid-1974 I found out that one of my employees was attending meetings of the Foundation of Biblical Research. The "policy" at that time was that anyone attending Dr. Martin's lectures was subject to termination. Ed Campbell, the employee in question, was an excellent employee who was not stirring up any "heresies." I felt we had no grounds for firing him and took the matter to Frank Brown and Robert Kuhn. I mentioned that Ed worked with the member records and that Dr. Martin and others at the meetings were not disfellowshipped according to the computer files. Frank Brown asked to have a list run off the computer of all graduates of Ambassador College and all employees to see who was disfellowshipped and who was not. However, the listing that was run was a standard profile listing and included indicators as to whether each individual had contributed during 1973 and 1974. Immediately I saw a problem as many people in the Editorial Department, including prominent writers for the Plain Truth magazine, had not donated during those years. I took the listing to Jon Hill. He said to run it so that the donation indicators would not appear. Ben Chapman was present with Mr. Hill at the time I showed him the report. Rather than letting the situation pass he ran to Ted Armstrong and alarmed him concerning the many employees at Pasadena who were not tithing.

Ted Armstrong had Ben Chapman install a computer terminal in his office to check out the detailed contributions of employees and ministers. Robert Kuhn, assistant to Ted Armstrong, reviewed the computerized donation listing noting who the non-tithing employees were. I also know that Jon Hill spent an afternoon checking out ministers and others' donations during the crisis of March 1974 in an office in the Mail Processing Department."

A meeting was held in late 1974 in the Television Production Department in which Garner Ted Armstrong stated that there were significant layoffs to be made for budgetary reasons. He stated that these layoffs were not made on the basis of analyzing the tithing records of employees in the Television Department. We know, however, that Robert Kuhn was well aware of employee tithing records and at that time had major involvement in Television. Several employees were personally confronted at this time regarding alleged tithing discrepancies. Many suspect, to this day, that their termination was based solely on the tithe checking process and not on job proficiency.

Late in 1974 Ben Chapman, Director of the Circulation Division, stated to Bill Hughes, an administrative assistant in Data Processing, that there were only three people who could authorize a tithe check. The names of those individuals were not revealed. Ben Chapman also stated that he was doing a tithing check on one individual with that individual's permission. Therefore, as late as 1975 we know that tithe checks were still being performed. However, we do not know who the individuals were who could approve such activity at that time. Could they have been Frank Brown, Wayne Cole and Ted Armstrong himself?

In this article we have presented evidence from the mouths of men who were actually involved that tithe checks were performed with great regularity on the ministry, Pasadena employees, Big Sandy employees, and selected church members throughout the United States. Men at evangelist and "apostolic" rank within the organization authorized these incursions into the private records of individuals of the Worldwide Church of God. A relationship that has been firmly stated from the pulpit of the Worldwide Church of God as being "between God and man" has been subverted repeatedly to determine loyalty to men and to an organization of men. Garner Ted Armstrong has said that he has never requested a tithe check on anyone. This is a blatant lie! He personally authorized Ben Chapman to install a terminal in his office to check out employees and ministers on an individual basis. He may say he personally did not want individual information but he did want overall trends and analyses made and reported.

We ask Ted: "Weren't you in charge?" You knew what was going on. Why didn't you stop this practice? Have you stopped it as of May 1976? It is not at all satisfying to hear you say that you personally did not take part in such activities when you know better and when even your own father, as head of the organization, employed such tactics himself and condoned them in others.

One of the purposes of AMBASSADOR REVIEW is to prod the leadership of Ambassador College and of the Worldwide Church of God to change practices

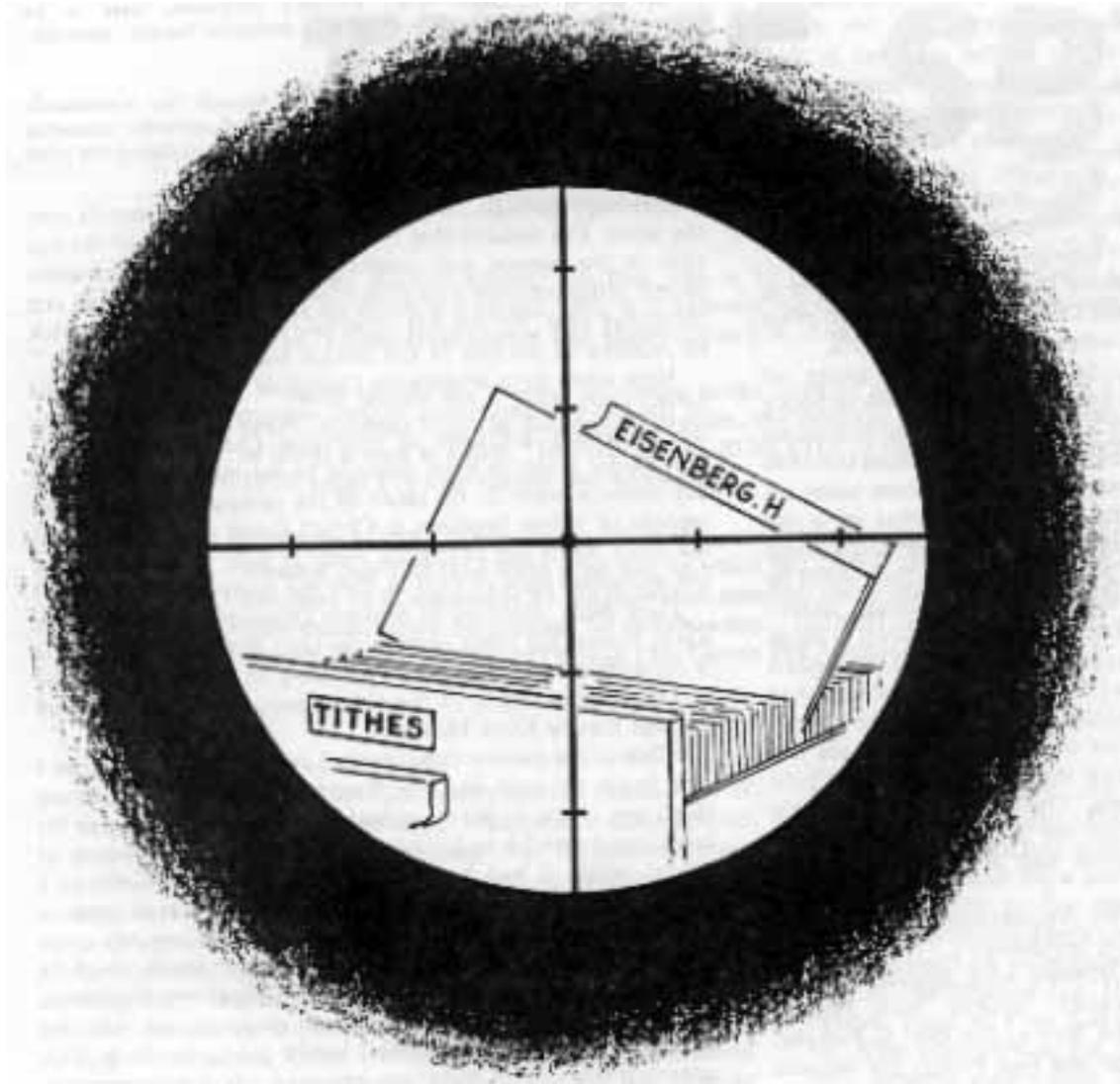
and policies that are discrediting these organizations. Certainly the last eight years of tithing of Worldwide Church members cannot be said to be God's will. Rather, such actions are reminiscent of recent Watergate activities illegally perpetrated on private citizens by the government of the United States. It is time for knowledgeable members and former members to stand up against this heinous tactic. Now that Ronald Dart has finally achieved what seems to have been to some, his ambition of leadership over the U.S. ministry, will he continue his practice, begun in Big Sandy, of resorting to the computer for extra spiritual discernment? Will the computer be used to weed out supposedly disloyal ministers? We caution you ministers reading AMBASSADOR REVIEW to be wary of his activities.

Garner Ted, is fear and oppression really a thing of the past in the Worldwide Church of God?

[Back To Index](#)

[Next Article](#)





## EXECUTIVE ACTION

"Hello. Ted? This is Bob... Remember that tithing re search? I think we're going to have problems with Harry."

Editor: At beautiful, serene Ambassador College a person who is too concerned about truth may suddenly find himself living in a hostile environment. His personal quest for truth may not be regarded as dangerous or heretical as long as his voice is not heard by too many people;

but if he is eloquent, or in a position to influence minds in the Ambassador entity, then his quest for truth will be regarded as a great threat.

After Ambassador College ascended to a position of limited prestige among fundamentalist institutions, and while in the midst of accumulating perhaps the most effective propaganda machinery of all such institutions, there occurred the simultaneous accident of accepting a student who regarded the acknowledgment of truth as paramount.

By the time this happened, Garner Ted Armstrong had become a major industry. The Worldwide Church of God had become Ted's religious arm of global influence and the church's Doctrinal Committee had become an efficient oppressor of truth.

The following account, written by Harry Eisenberg, is an account of *character assassination*. It clearly explains how truth is suppressed inside the Ambassador entity and how the one who discovers it must become silent, giving way to the personal doctrines of those in power, or be removed.

Before his discovery, Harry Eisenberg was an employee of Ambassador College. He is the author of eight major articles published for Ambassador under his by-line, as well as the author of numerous articles written for others or published under no by-line. Here is his story:

Quite by coincidence I am writing this article on the main campus of the University of Maryland. As is the case with virtually every other institution of higher learning, considerable research into both the sciences and humanities has been undertaken here. The purpose of the university is not only to educate students, but to provide new knowledge and answers to questions affecting our society.

Colleges and universities have in fact been the major vehicle for providing society with new knowledge in just about every field. The student, especially the graduate student, is on campus not only to absorb knowledge, but also to make a contribution to the body of knowledge extant in his particular field. To use a familiar phrase, he is expected to give as well as to get!

One would think this principle should hold true for Ambassador College as well. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. This is due to a basic difference between Ambassador College and other institutions of higher learning.

Whereas most universities exist to promote the advancement of knowledge and to pass it on to their students, Ambassador College exists to promulgate to the public the knowledge and values of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. New discoveries and/or contributions to knowledge are often not welcome there. For one thing, such new discoveries are not, generally speaking, in keeping with the primary aim, which is the dissemination of *existing* knowledge. Furthermore, should any new concept uncovered through the research of a faculty member or student conflict even remotely with the views of the founder, such research is utterly unwelcome, as Herbert Armstrong's views are regarded as sacrosanct and inspired.

For example, one student wrote a research paper for an Ambassador theology

class, claiming that the scriptures speak of a spirit in animals as well as a spirit in man. He provided considerable evidence to support his contention. Upon presenting the paper to his instructors, the student was urged to keep his ideas to himself. It seems the spirit in man and the idea that animals differ from man is a pet concept of Mr. Armstrong's, and the theology instructors were afraid to present the Student's findings to him.

The following semester the student was not allowed to register for classes and was expelled from the college. He was charged with the crime of "highbrowing the ministers", whatever that means. The loss was Ambassador's, not the student's.

I was a paid researcher on the staff of Ambassador College for over four years. Generally speaking, my work involved providing "proofs" for the pet concepts and theories held by Mr. Herbert Armstrong and/or his son, Garner Ted. Occasionally, I was successful as in the case of an article entitled "Did Jesus Have Long Hair?" This article attempted to show that there is historical evidence proving that Jesus did not necessarily wear long hair, as he is often pictured today.

My article was widely reprinted and resulted in a personal full-page interview in a major Los Angeles daily. It was one of few articles which have cast Ambassador College in a good light. It was met with complete silence by an administration which feels any publicity should be its own private realm.

In January 1973, I was asked by my supervisor, Brian Knowles, to research the subject of tithing. In particular, Mr. Knowles was interested in learning who paid what to whom and how in ancient Israel.

And so I began a systematic study of the tithing doctrine by listing each Biblical verse which in any way refers to tithing. What followed was a study of commentaries, encyclopedias and various historical sources. The result was inevitable! I came to see that the tithing concept as promulgated by Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God was contrary to both the Old and the New Testaments.

Scripture makes it plain that the right to collect tithes was given to the Levitical priesthood in exchange for their service in the Temple. There is no evidence that this right was ever passed on to the New Testament Church. The Encyclopedias BRITANNICA and AMERICANA both confirm this view when they state the early New Testament Church did not practice tithing, although it was later adopted by the Catholic Church in the Sixth Century A.D.

Upon presenting the research paper to my supervisor, I was treated in a manner reminiscent of Galileo's encounter with the Catholic Church. I was warned that I had better keep my findings and views to myself. Naturally, it was assumed that I had done the paper because I had some kind of axe to grind and was merely out to prove a previously held notion. Research at Ambassador so often has meant

nothing more than finding "proofs" for the "inspired" concepts and ideas of the Armstrongs.

When I was asked to squelch my ideas, I pointed out that that might be difficult as four people had already seen the paper. I was told that if I would keep it down, a doctrinal committee (sic) would eventually consider my findings. Six months went by and about all that the so-called doctrinal committee accomplished can be seen by reading a booklet entitled MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE published briefly by Ambassador College in the summer of 1973.

When I concluded there was no reason why I should keep my paper from others, I proceeded to show it to anyone who inquired about it. Not believing I was the ultimate authority on the subject, I collaborated with a team of some six other Ambassador College researchers on a more in-depth paper on tithing which was completed in December 1973.

As a result of these papers and the fact that I no longer felt a religious compulsion to practice tithing, I was dismissed, without warning, from my job on January 7, 1974. This happened despite the fact that my new supervisor, Dr. Robert Kuhn, acknowledged that I had done outstanding work for him. So much for religious freedom at Ambassador College.

The paper in question was ultimately published with minor modifications by both the Foundation for Biblical Research and the Associated Churches of God. Some open-minded researchers for a newly reconstructed doctrinal committee which was investigating tithing confided to me that any thesis or dissertation from reputable theological institutions that they had the opportunity to examine dealing with the subject in question, tended to agree with my findings.

Finally, in a meeting called to investigate the origin of the papers published by the Foundation and Associated Churches, I was publically slandered by Ambassador President, Garner Ted Armstrong. Armstrong stated, "Now I don't express it as assassination of Harry's character-it is his mind I'm worried about and not his character. I'm not a bit worried about his personal integrity or his personal habits nor his personal sincerity, but I'm not prepared to say he is the most balanced individual mentally, and that I would rely an awful lot on his research."

But he had been relying "an awful lot on his research". Just weeks before, Armstrong had been parroting my findings on his television program seen by millions in the U.S. and Canada. Furthermore, many of these programs were repeated on the air over and over again. On more than one occasion, articles bearing the by-line of Garner Ted Armstrong but researched by me appeared in fire PLAIN TRUTH magazine.

Only when my findings disagreed with Armstrong's private views was my research no longer reliable and the writer fit for ridicule. But such are the risks that anyone takes who might dare disagree with the administration.

## -Harry Eisenberg

Editor: Harry's efforts to obtain the truth about tithing represented a special threat to the Ambassador administration. It is the one threat Ambassador fears the most-the threat of *individual integrity* asserting itself over Ambassador's aristocratic corporate structure.

Consequently, on January 7, 1974, Harry Eisenberg's hopes of a fair hearing for tithing research died by committee. Harry's voice, as well as his research, had to be removed from among the followers.

The Ambassador College Board of Trustees found nothing sinister about Harry's removal. Ministers and students who had liked him apparently found nothing objectionable in his being disfellowshipped. "He was a youth overly exposed to satanic doctrines, demonic thoughts goaded him into an attitude of rebellion. Nothing unusual in that." It ended, however, in his dismissal from an organization to which he had dedicated his life.

The announcement of Harry's termination took less than a few seconds. There was no risk that the doctrinal committee would expose the true reasons for Harry's dismissal, because members of that committee had been a party to it. There was no risk of exposure from members of the Ambassador-controlled media because a few words about the "Ambassador Oasis" from the charismatic Ted Armstrong, and the students would inquire no further. They would not try to digest the indigestible, think the unthinkable, or question Pilate about the removal of a christian.

No, on January 7, 1974, all seemed well. In fact, things seemed better than ever. And, in short time, the people would again be reminded that "God's work is moving ahead stronger than ever."

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### ACCREDITATION OR BUST! (the wooing of W.A.S.C.)

When Ambassador College opened its doors in 1947, it was housed in a single building (now the College library facility) and boasted four students and seventeen instructors. From these fledgling beginnings it has grown to its present enrollment of 690 full-time students and 180 supporting faculty and instructors. For 29 years the College has conferred unaccredited degrees upon its graduates. This lack of accreditation did not present a problem in the College's early years because, for the most part, A.C. was the training ground for the ministry and other positions in the Worldwide (then Radio) Church of God and the College itself. Those graduating from Ambassador College were absorbed into "the Work of God". For over twenty years this was the central reason for the College's existence-to be the "West Point of 'the work'

By the last 1960's a new trend was developing. The Church's economic growth had plateaued, and the institution could no longer guarantee jobs to all its graduates. Today only a few graduates from Ambassador College expect to be employed within the Church-College-Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF) complex. These developments apparently forced the administration to re-evaluate A.C.'s academic position, especially in light of future enrollment. Through what seems to be only a subtle evolution, Ambassador College has changed from a ministerial training school to a church-oriented (nondenominational), liberal arts institution *claiming* a free and open learning environment.

A.C.'s first two attempts to become accredited (in 1967 and again in 1970) were met with stout criticism from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (W.A.S.C.) and accreditation was denied in both cases. After much self-evaluation, Ambassador College again applied for accreditation in 1974. This

attempt was met with less severe criticism, and W.A.S.C. granted A.C. candidacy for possible accreditation in 1976 with the clear stipulation that certain specific criteria be met.

From all *outward* signs it would appear that Ambassador College is *finally* seeking accreditation in earnest. Under the direction of Dr. Michael P. Germano, the members of the Accreditation Steering Committee have been able to make some very encouraging, although limited, progress towards meeting the standards set by W.A.S.C. Dr. Germano and his team have made significant inroads into improving those areas in which they had authority to restructure (e.g., Faculty credentials, curriculum, library). However, the main areas in which W.A.S.C. has prescribed recommendations for restructure are in areas in which Dr. Germano and his administration had *no authority* to make changes. In these areas only the Board of Trustees has the authority to make changes. Because of the Board's reluctance to act upon authority recommendations and the Armstrongs' demagogic reactions to recent challenges to their absolute authority, it is essential that Ambassador's courtship with accreditation be evaluated in its proper perspective. If the College remains satisfied with the *status quo* there is little possibility that it can receive full accreditation.

In a recent sermon Herbert W. Armstrong, Chancellor of Ambassador College, stated that, "The way has been cleared for the accreditation of Ambassador College." (sermon, Ambassador Auditorium, March 6, 1976). By this statement it would seem that no obstacles stand in the way of Ambassador receiving full accreditation, and only the formality of citation remains to finalize the process. President Garner Ted Armstrong has also expressed confidence that the College will receive accreditation: "We're pursuing accreditation and we're going to get it. And we're going to get accreditation not on the basis of changing *inviolable* principles upon which we shall always stand—we're going to get accreditation based upon the *fact* that we are a worthy institution with a top-notch faculty, with a great administration, and with a great student body by and large—with the exception of a few tiny soreheads here and there that don't know what in the world they are doing yet, that are just a bunch of kids who need to grow up." (Bible Study, February 27, 1976). Both Herbert and Ted should be lauded for their optimism, especially in the wake of recent developments.

In a thinly-veiled memorandum dated February 26, 1976, Garner Ted Armstrong lamely "explained" to the faculty of Ambassador College that Dr. Germano's title "...Executive Vice-President" was a stop-gap measure, intending to reflect his function as my chief academic advisor and assistant, and the individual who, on a day to day basis, was involved in the conduct of administrative affairs. I had explained Dr. Germano's function in this capacity during the visit of the team from the Western Association, and we were granted candidacy while Dr. Germano carried the title of Dean." President Armstrong further explained that he fully intends to become more involved in faculty and student activities, "...thus remaining very much an active president, and not an 'absentee'."

He stated that Dr. Germano had been re-appointed to the office of Dean of Faculties, as well as chief academic advisor. The memo also stated that Dr.

Carruthers would be retained as Associate Dean of the Faculties, and Ray Wright was designated as permanent Business Manager for the College. According to President Armstrong, "These alterations in title...will help clear up at least some measure of existing confusion concerning administrative functions...." One may question, however, whether President Armstrong was really acting in the best interest of accreditation and if he were really clearing up confusion concerning administrative functions. This memo is only one example of the inconsistent language often issued from the President's office.

To lend some background to the above situation, one should consider the events surrounding Dr. Germano's change in title. In late January-early February students received bulk mailings of literature critical of administration policies. The literature was immediately labeled "slanderous" and "anti-Ambassador" and obviously caused significant trauma to the administration. In order to quell any disturbance that might ensue from the distribution of this material, a memo entitled "CONSENT TO COLLEGE MAIL PROCEDURE" was issued *demanding* that the students sign a statement of approval of mail censorship. (Although the College has received other "slanderous"- "anti-Ambassador" material in the past, this specific incident occurred as a result of the administration's reaction to the letter introducing AMBASSADOR REVIEW.)

In an attempt to cover their tracks, the authors of this college memo attributed "authorship" to Fred Gilreath, an unfortunate underling in the Office of Communication Services. Mr. Gilreath, however, has denied any knowledge of the memo's existence prior to its official distribution. Instead of quelling a disturbance, the memo created one. An estimated 30-40% of the students refused to give their approval to censorship. This certainly was not your usual tail-between-the-legs A.C. Student Body reaction. The students refused to be harassed as in the past. Helge and Rader sought reasons for this insubordination. It seems that these legal advisors convinced the President that this "rebellion" by the student body had grown out of the environment which had been nurtured by Dr. Germano's administration. So, the President tacitly *demoted* Dr. Germano.

Upon closer scrutiny of Dr. Germano's demotion, it can be discerned that the changes are more than titular. In the course of searching for information on accreditation, AMBASSADOR REVIEW contacted Dr. Germano's office regarding Ambassador College's Self-Study, the W.A.S.C. Handbook for Accreditation, and other related documents. Oddly enough, Dr. Germano's office has not retained jurisdiction over matters regarding accreditation. According to his secretary, this information is now being handled directly by Mr. Stanley Rader. However, when the matter was discussed with Mrs. Upton, Mr. Rader's personal secretary, she was unaware of the whereabouts of this material in Mr. Rader's files.

Dr. Germano's demotion from the helm of the accreditation process should cause great concern within the academic community of the College. Virtually all the painstaking work of restructuring the College to meet the high standards set by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges was done under the direction

of Dr. Germano-usually while President Garner Ted Armstrong was away, "busy" in other areas of "the Work". President Armstrong's lack of concern in "vigorously pursuing accreditation" is demonstrated by the fact that he was only able to stay in town the first day the visiting committee was in Pasadena and then was "forced" to leave because of his "busy pre-planned schedule", although the dates of the visit had been known at least six months in advance. Chancellor Herbert Armstrong was so "vigorously" involved in other endeavors that he was not even present at the Pasadena campus during the W.A.S.C. visit.

The W.A.S.C. visiting committee, realizing that Dr. Germano was the man responsible for the intensive self-scrutiny, noted in their report: "The total effort (i.e., the self-study, evaluation, etc.) was under the direction of a Steering Committee headed by an able and highly respected Dean of the College (i.e., Dean of the Faculty)... Substantial and productive institutional activity had taken place...." (Report of the Evaluation Committee of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges to Ambassador College, October 23, 24, 25, 1974, pp. 1-2). Thus it seems that Ambassador received candidacy in 1974 in spite of President Garner Ted Armstrong and Chancellor Herbert W. Armstrong.

It was in those areas over which Dr. Germano had *no authority* that W.A.S.C. directed the bulk of its recommendations. It is instructive to look at those areas in which the administration continues to stall substantive changes. Five areas will be examined in detail: administrative structure, the Board of Trustees, academic freedom, library facilities and financial independence and stability.

## **I. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

W.A.S.C. called for "A revised administrative structure (which) should make provision for a full-time President, chief executive officer for the College who would not be Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Board.... Such an administrative model, when properly instituted by the Board of Trustees, would reduce the possibility of problems related to conflicts of interest and would help to provide the physical autonomy so essential to the successful operation of a educational institution."

What improvement has the college made in the area? Absolutely none! As of this writing, President Armstrong is still the "Madhatter" of titles, changing hats between President, Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees. His recent action to demote Dr. Germano, in view of W.A.S.C.'s recommendations is a definite advance to the rear. Ted Armstrong would like to foster the belief that since he was President of the College when it received candidacy, it can easily become fully accredited with him in this position. It cannot be stressed enough that Ambassador College did not receive candidacy because of President Armstrong but *in spite* of him. His *only* realistic claim to the office of President of Ambassador College is that he happens to be Chancellor Herbert Armstrong's glib-speaking son.

Garner Ted Armstrong has *no* academic credentials whatsoever that would qualify him for that office. One can find his "credentials" listed in the new 1976-77 Big Sandy CATALOG: "Garner Ted Armstrong, Professor of Theology and

Sociology, B.A. (1956), Ambassador College; M.A. (1960), Ambassador College; Ph.D. (1965), Ambassador College." This type of academic hocus-pocus unfortunately is accepted without question at A.C. "Dr." Herbert Armstrong, himself a high school dropout who never attended college, has only an honorary "doctorate" from the "prestigious" Angeles University of the Philippines. Herbert's assistant, Osamo Gotoh, was granted a full Professorship by A.C. after he had falsified his transcripts from Japan and flunked out of Ambassador College.

Even if President Ted Armstrong's incredible academic deficiencies were nonexistent, he would still be unable to fill the position of President of Ambassador College because of the many demands placed upon his time—both real and contrived. There is a major conflict of interest in that he has so many "interests" that the time he has to devote to each is minimal. He claims to "be very much an *active* President" because he intends to be at more Student Body Forums and sing-a-longs; and yet President Armstrong distains the responsibilities in which a college president must, of necessity, be engaged: "My time is ladden with a lot of unessential executive-type responsibilities, when it should be almost 100% devoted to preaching the gospel of the kingdom as a witness to the world—instead of being burdened with a lot of paper shuffling and telephone answering and problem-solving." (Garner Ted Armstrong, "State of the Work" Speech, March 17, 1976). President Armstrong has neither the qualifications, the time nor the inclination to devote to the position of President of Ambassador College. It is time that the Board of Trustees realizes that the President of Ambassador cannot be President in title only but must be able to devote his *full-time* energies toward that position. A more stable academic environment would ensue and the accreditation of A.C. would most assuredly be viewed more favorably by W.A.S.C.

It seems that President Armstrong would have been wiser had he promoted Dr. Germano to the position of President of Ambassador College and given him the full authority to execute that office rather than "re-appointing" him to the position of Dean of the Faculty.

## **II. STACKED BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

When W.A.S.C. conducted their study of Ambassador College in the fall of 1974, they strongly suggested that the then seven member Board of Trustees "...should be enlarged and should provide for a greater 'mix'." The Evaluation Committee then defined what it meant by "a greater 'mix'":

"The examiners feel that there should be more of a 'mix' in Board composition, even to the extent of allowing, non-Worldwide Church of God representation.... The possible revision of the present administration structure to provide for a full-time President of the College as chief executive officer of the institution, who is neither chairman nor vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees... merits consideration. Such an administrative model, when properly instituted by the Board of Trustees, would reduce the possibility of problems related to conflicts of interest and would help to provide and maintain a campus climate where academic freedom prevails, but it is essential that continued attention be given this vital area." (W.A.S.C. Report, 1974)

The Board of Trustees for the Pasadena campus has been enlarged from a seven to a fifteen member Board, but the complexion of the Board remains very

much the same. None of the changes in Board size or membership substantially alter the political composition of the Board from its 1974 makeup. By their refusal to change the complexion of the Board of Trustees, the Armstrongs are clearly thumbing their noses at W.A.S.C. and are jeopardizing the College's already tenuous academic position.

It must be pointed out, however, that although the current members of the Board of Trustees have been hand-picked by Herbert W. Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, and Stanley R. Rader, they do not have to bow to the whims of the powerful triumvirate. Legally, the structure for assuring accreditation already exists, if those legal rights were only exercised. If those on the Board are truly desirous of accreditation for Ambassador College they must realize their responsibility in the matter and exercise their authority as it exists under law-*even to the point of voting Rader and the Armstrongs off the Board* if they continue to stand in the way of the accreditation process.

If this charade does not stop, the eventual result will be the loss of administrators, faculty members and students.

**Ambassador College, Pasadena Campus (1976)  
Board of Trustees**

Herbert W. Armstrong, Chairman and Chancellor  
Garner Ted Armstrong, Vice-Chairman and President  
Stanley Rader, Secretary and Treasurer  
Shirley Armstrong (Mrs. Garner Ted Armstrong)  
Benjamin Chapman (Armstrong relative)  
Robert L. Kuhn (Administrative Assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong)  
Dibar Apartian (Evangelist)  
C. Wayne Cole (Evangelist)  
Ronald Dart (Evangelist)  
Herman Hoeh (Evangelist)  
Leslie McCullough (Evangelist)  
Harold Jackson (Pastor and only non-white member on Board)  
Michael Germano  
Van Lisman  
Lucy Martin (only non-church member on Board)  
(Editor: The Worldwide Church of God has refused to make the current membership of the church Board of Trustees available to AMBASSADOR REVIEW.)

**Ambassador College (October 1974)  
Board of Trustees**

Herbert W. Armstrong, Chairman  
Garner Ted Armstrong  
Shirley Armstrong (Mrs. Garner Ted Armstrong)  
Ron Dart  
Dibar Apartian  
Ben Chapman  
Herman Hoeh

**Worldwide Church of God (October 1974) Board of Trustees**

Herbert W. Armstrong, Chairman  
Garner Ted Armstrong  
Shirley Armstrong (Mrs. Garner Ted Armstrong)  
Ron Dart  
David J. Hill  
Raymond F. McNair  
Norman Smith

**III. ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The area of academic freedom has also generated considerable comment by the Armstrongs, Stanley Rader and Ralph Helge.

On this subject W.A.S.C. also made some very poignant statements: "A clear policy statement on academic freedom and tenure is essential.... Many faculty

members indicated that academic freedom and tenure do exist and have existed for many years. On the other hand, some faculty expressed reservations about the delay in the policy statement recommended a few years ago, and about the actual existence of academic freedom, particularly in those areas where course content might border upon or involve discussion of theological doctrine or church policy. A clear policy statement emanating from the Trustees seems overdue."

To date, there has been no "clear policy statement on academic freedom and tenure emanating from the Trustees..." Such a clear policy statement could only weaken the ideological control now wielded by the triumvirate. It comes as no surprise that they have refrained from initiating any positive action in this regard.

Negative action towards such a clear policy statement was taken, however. College and church attorney, Ralph Helge, frightened by such a prospective Armstrong power loss, drafted one or two "briefs" outlining the "dire" ramifications which a clear policy statement on academic freedom and tenure could have on Armstrongian authority. This brief(s) was so top secret that it was delivered only to a select few, allowed to be read but *not* copied. All copies were then collected. Because of this top secrecy, it has been impossible to determine the exact contents of the brief(s).

In answer to all of this, President Armstrong has piously thundered, "We DO believe in freedom of speech and freedom of religion and freedom of the press at Ambassador College!"

But what does President Armstrong mean by such platitudes? One of the more clear, yet embarrassing, explanations came from his own lips in a sermon in the Ambassador Auditorium on December 7, 1974. The situation he was commenting upon was a sincere invitation by Ken Long (an Australian student) to President Armstrong to come to his dorm for a get-acquainted rap session with the students:

"...I had a fellow that tried to come to me to get me involved in some big dormitory meeting. And he wanted to -he said, 'So we can get to know ya better.' Uh-ha-ha! Oh-h-h-h what a lie that was! Oh-h, it was funny.... I found out later that he's been going over to listen to Ernest Martin. And he wants to attend his lectures-he kinda buys a lotta that stuff.-Against the Holy Days, he doesn't really think we oughta be keep'n the Holy Days apparently.... See, he didn't *really* want me over there to get to know me better. He wanted me over there to put me on the spot, to ask me a lotta questions-to make me vindicate the Holy Days. Now if he's sitt'n in here today-whoever you are, fella-do me the favor, don't come up to my office. 'Cause I just do not like to kick people out of my office. I mean, I just do not like to do it-it's bad news, you know. People give me a bad reputation for doing things like that. But, I've-I've got an awfully short temper where trickery and deceit and hypocrisy are concerned.... If he's honest, then I don't think I'm going to have any problem with it at all.- But that type of thing. I guess he honestly wants to know, 'Can I stay around here and enjoy the environment and enjoy the College and enjoy the students, and still go over and listen to somebody else's lectures.'" My answer-*Sure* you can!-As long as you keep your mouth shut and don't try to proselyte, and don't tell other people what you think you believe, or try to convince 'em to believe *your* way. Because if you do that, then I'm going to bounce you out of here like a half-inflated basketball, buddy! Now, if you want to keep your mouth shut about it, then that's fine. I would allow a Communist to come to Ambassador College and sit in the classroom and *listen*, and, hopefully be taught. But he's not going to be allowed to preach Communism.... It wouldn't matter from what race, what

nation, from what political point of view, we accept Catholics, Muslims. Buddhists-anybody from any point of view. But they don't come here to teach Catholicism or Buddhism. They come here to *learn*. They come here to open up their minds and to challenge the textbook, and to wonder whether or not the professor is right, and to prove and to check out, and to prove all things to themselves and to hold fast to that which is true. But not to proselyte. Let me give you fellas and girls a guarantee about Ambassador College-we will not allow on the College, people to come here from the military services to deliberately try to proselyte and get you to go join the Marines and the Army and the Navy. We don't have to do that; the government doesn't make us do that so we can guarantee that you aren't going to be coerced and forced to try to run off and join the military service. We won't let members of Satan's organizations-any church you wanna mention.... Now we won't let them come on Ambassador College campus and just enjoy it here and go to the classes and tell you what a great church that is. We are *really* narrow-minded about that. But if any of those people wanted to come here and go to class and listen to what we've got, and just keep his mouth shut-not to try to proselyte and teach other people-well, come on! That's fine! The Church and College are two separate things; we've got to realize that, they really are."

It is blatantly obvious that Ted does not, in fact recognize the Church and the College as two separate entities and that the College can no longer exist for the sole purpose of Church indoctrination. The educational nature of a legitimate College prevents that.

Chancellor Herbert Armstrong further demonstrated that an attitude of genuine self-criticism is not cherished or welcomed at Ambassador College:

"Now if you doubt you're damned! And there are people trying to put doubts in your mind right now! They call it 'questions'. 'We've got the answer to these questions. I'll tell you here are these questions!' and, 'We're not answering these questions!' Brethren, that is SATAN speaking!! Saying 'questions' means DOUBTS!!... They plant doubts. They're going around saying, 'The people have questions.'... But the only questions are the ones these dissenters are planting in their minds. What about it? Are you going to let them plant questions in your mind?" (Herbert Armstrong, Sermon, Ambassador Auditorium, January 10, 1976)

In the "Report on Visit to Ambassador College-April 2, 1970" the W.A.S.C. Commission stated very clearly exactly why the above philosophy -which *to this day* remains the Armstrong's guiding "light" -cannot be allowed to have an ideological stranglehold on a *legitimate* educational institution:

"...The basis of 'truth' for Ambassador and its faculty is whether or not facts, information, or ideas agree with their Biblical interpretation.... Science has 'advanced' by constant self-criticism. Such a direction does not seem to be open for Ambassador faculty, however. This borders on academic dishonesty.... Whether what it is doing is a part of the spectrum of higher education in California or in the nation is a much more difficult determination to make. In some areas of the institution, what goes on is not unlike what goes on in many other institutions that call themselves colleges. In other areas it would be a stretch of the facts to refer to what is happening as traditional higher education. It is in those latter areas that the College appears to have no inclination to make changes, because the changes run counter to the stated philosophy and purposes of the institution."

Again, on January 27, 1971, in their "Letter of Denial of Accreditation to Ambassador College", the Commission re-emphasized the absolute necessity for the existence of the *reality* of academic freedom within the College:

"While the July 15 report states that faculty members are 'expected to question and reevaluate the areas of their competence and of knowledge in general,' the Commission sees such questioning almost exclusively within the parameters of the Ambassador philosophy. The impact of this was noted on the natural and social sciences.... While other church-related educational institutions accredited by this Commission share Ambassador's concern for the development of character, they have been able to establish an acceptable balance between indoctrination and education."

Because of this demonstrable fear of academic freedom, it follows that the idea of forging a clear policy which would offer tenure to faculty members can only be anathema to the Armstrong personality. It has been a long-standing practice by both Armstrongs to terminate any faculty members whom they feel constitute a "threat" to their authority. Recently two members of the Ambassador College Faculty-Gary Prather (Assistant Professor of Music) and Olin Degge (Assistant Professor of Sociology)-have been the hapless victims of the Armstrong paranoia. Because Mr. Prather refused to attend Church services any longer, he was threatened with termination. However, to date he has successfully intimidated the Administration over the issue of religious freedom as protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution and has maintained his appointment.

Olin Degge's case was not such a clear-cut instance of religious discrimination, and he was not so fortunate in retaining his appointment. When contacted, Mr. Degge declined to grant an interview, stating that he felt that his contractual obligation to the College made it necessary for him, to pursue and exhaust certain informal and/or formal channels of appeal within the institution before he could even consider such an interview. He also refused to divulge the name of the Administrator who terminated him, but he did make a brief statement regarding the reasons for his termination:

"I only feel at liberty to share with you the very obscure reasons I was given. I was told that an irreversible decision had been made to not renew my contract for the 1976-77 school year due to the fact that I had an extreme 'credibility problem' at high Administrative levels-where I am perceived to have a very independent, complex personality and be 'difficult' to get to know, with a 'makeup' supposedly 'difficult to determine'. I was informed that this had nothing to do with my teaching ability or record-which had not even been consulted. I have my own theories about the reasons for my 'extreme credibility problem', but I don't feel I am at liberty to elaborate at this point in time."

These examples, again, demonstrate that the present Administration at "higher levels" is not interested in following those guidelines set forth either by themselves or by W.A.S.C. The Rader/Armstrong power structure seems bent on playing Russian Roulette with Ambassador College's future accreditation.

#### **IV. LIBRARY FACILITIES**

A small, but vital, point was made by W.A.S.C. in regard to the College library collection: "The library needs strengthening, both in terms of numbers of holdings and the quality and distribution of titles." Dr. Richard Walther, Director of Library Services, has made valiant efforts to meet these recommendations on little more than a shoestring budget. It seems that in preparation for next year's visit by W.A.S.C. the Administration would be pumping funds into strengthening the still weak Ambassador College Library. But, once again priorities are not correctly

ordered. While the library struggles to meet the standards set forth by W.A.S.C. thousands of dollars are being spent to build new tennis courts, at the expense of academic excellence.

## **V. FINANCIAL STABILITY**

Last, but not least, it is necessary to evaluate the financial stability of the institution. Regarding this area W.A.S.C. commented: "There is a critical need for a careful analysis of working capital... the institution is very heavily leveraged in terms of fixed assets and is greatly dependent upon the maintenance of an ongoing cash flow. Liquidity is obviously at a very low point and, as such, financial flexibility does not exist. W.A.S.C. easily discerned the lack of financial autonomy within the College institution and the potentially fatal weakness of the College's reliance on the uncontrollable and capricious financial support of the Church.

At the time that he demoted Dr. Germano (Memorandum, February 27, 1976), President Armstrong glowingly announced the appointment of Mr. Ray Wright to the position of Chief Financial Officer of the College. Supposedly Mr. Wright would guide all affairs dealing with financial matters for the College-an attempt to persuade W.A.S.C. that the College and Church have two separate financial bases. Closer scrutiny reveals that the College is still directly dependent on the Church organization for financial support. Stanley Rader has retained his positions of Vice-President of Financial Affairs for the Church and Secretary and Treasurer on the College Board of Trustees, and he is still Ray Wright's superior as outlined by an interesting memo dated March 2, 1976 and directed to all employees:

"Department listings under Financial Affairs should read:  
Vice President, Stanley R. Rader...5191  
Secretary, Lelah Upton.....5194  
Assistant Vice Pres., Raymond Wright...5193  
Secretary, Cheryl Hoffman....5193  
Henry Cornwall.....5196  
Secretary, [not legible] Upton.....5471

Added under Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF) should be:  
Sec.-Treasurer, Henry Cornwall...5196  
Operations Mgr., Raymond Wright...5193"

No financial autonomy was promoted by President Armstrong's appointment of Mr. Wright as chief financial officer of the College; Stanley Rader maintains control over the financial interests of both the College and Church. The College remains very much dependent on the Church for its financial support and is constructively controlled by it.

The possibility of an extreme identity crisis between Church and College has not been avoided. Is the College merely an arm of the Church which can be jettisoned at the flick of a "financial crisis"? Would the Church close the College in lieu of the more important matters of reaching the world with a last "end-time message"? In a sermon given on March 13, 1976, Garner Ted Armstrong states

that he might do just that:

"Well, I look around now and I find that there are people whose names I have never even heard of before who are BIGGER IN RADIO AND TELEVISION THAN WE ARE!-far bigger. People whose names you wouldn't have known two to three years ago, who were absolute 'nobodies' in the religious field, have almost overnight... grown to greater capacity in the number of people they are reaching than is this Work. And I am going to turn that around NO MATTER WHAT IT COSTS! -*Whether it costs a College*, whether it costs whatever-we are not going to be satisfied in this Work with being number seven... or even with being number two. The job that we have got to do of warning and being a witness to the entirety of this world has got to be a number one job!"

Curiously, he seems to retract these words later in this same sermon:

"I've been saying to everybody, 'We ought to be building Colleges not closing them down, and starting schools not shutting them down, and going on dozens and hundreds of radio stations not cutting them back,' and that's precisely what I want to do...."

Notice, early in the sermon he raised the very strong possibility of closing the College in order to achieve his goals of making the Work number one. Then in a mixture of retraction and subterfuge he attempted to persuade his audience what they heard is not what he meant at all. It seems though, that he did mean that he would go to any means to forward his pursuit of 1,000 radio stations and hundreds of televisions stations, whatever the cost, because he added the qualifier:

"...but, we must not be afraid and I must not be afraid to look a sacred cow right in the face and to call it a sacred cow.... Things which become appendages, which in a sense hang on the Work and drain it of its strength are going to have to be changed and revitalized and we're going to have to streamline and sharpen the spearpoint right [not legible] of the main thrust of the Work.... We're going to make it our goal to be on 1,000 radio stations, not 240... hundreds of television stations not 30 or 40...."

The College remains in appendage of the Church which can be closed, sliced or ditched at the whim of the Armstrongs. As such, accreditation of the College could be little more than a bad joke.

### **...OR BUST?**

Obviously, the basic philosophical changes that would give Ambassador a run at accreditation have not been made. Although Dr. Germano and his team made significant strides toward achieving accreditation and a more independent education environment grew from these efforts, there were some who were unable to cope under the pressure of honest, open, truth-seeking scrutiny. When the Armstrongs speak of "earnestly desiring accreditation", "vigorously pursuing accreditation", etc., they actually mean that they are seeking the privileges of accredited status while avoiding as many of the responsibilities and prices of it as possible. Unless the appropriate changes which would foster a truly open, healthy academic environment (i.e., Trustee independence; Administrative independence; academic freedom and tenure; a full-time, qualified President; economic independence) are made, Ambassador College can never hope to operate as a legitimate educational institution.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges exists for the express purpose of critically exposing "educational" charlatanism. The issue is simply one of truth in advertising. All who desire the accreditation of Ambassador College should be aware that W.A.S.C. will see through the barrage of flack coming from the mouths of those in high places and will tell those responsible to either fulfill the requirements or shut up. When this occurs, though, the Armstrongs will doubtlessly throw their supreme tantrum and close the College in the same way a small child, who in conflict with a parent over a toy breaks the toy rather than give it up.

All concerned with the accreditation of Ambassador College should be both determined and committed to stopping this perennial, ulcer-generating instability to which the Administration, Faculty and Student Body are continually subjected. The only certain manner by which it will end is the neutralization and detoxification of the power now held by H.W.A., G.T.A. and S.R.R.-preferably by their resignation. Regretably, it is highly unlikely that this will ever voluntarily take place. But, channels do exist that could extremely minimize their power. An internal avenue would be for the Board of Trustees to exercise the clout which it legally possesses to see that their power is either severely diminished and controlled, or altogether eliminated. In fact, if the Board were so disposed, it could give the triumvirate their walking papers in its next quorum meeting by taking a majority vote. Such action is highly unlikely, however, because the other twelve members of the Board have never learned to exercise thinking independent of the three.

Another means of ensuring accreditation would be by alerting W.A.S.C. regarding the power held by Rader and both Armstrongs. In this way pressure can be exerted on the Board of Trustees to enact those policies which will guarantee the accreditation of Ambassador College for the right reasons. No one man or small group of men should claim to be Ambassador College-anyone who has sacrificed time and money for the sake of the institution has a right in determining the future of the college they helped to build.

Let your voice be heard. Don't let Ambassador lose this chance for accreditation. Write to: WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Mills College, Oakland, California 94613. AMBASSADOR REVIEW would appreciate receiving a copy of your letter so that it can continue to monitor Ambassador College's progress toward full accreditation.

**-Margaret D. Zola**

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



**The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:

**hwarmstrong.com**

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

## **MAIL CENSORSHIP SPARKS STUDENT PROTEST**

The third week of February, 1976, witnessed another milestone in Ambassador College history: it's first student protest. The object of their outrage was nothing less than the officially-sanctioned censorship of personal mail.



Early in February, 50 introductory letters from AMBASSADOR REVIEW were sent to specific students living on the Ambassador College campus. One week later a phone survey by the REVIEW revealed that not one of the students had received his letter. After this discovery was made, the AMBASSADOR REVIEW staff sent out a second set of letters, at the same time notifying the Pasadena Postmaster of the mailing. Fortunately, this time the mail was not "lost". Unfortunately, however, the college mail clerk did not distribute the individually addressed envelopes. Instead, acting on orders, she placed notes in the student mail-boxes informing the students that their mail was being held for them. When they requested it, the clerk "encouraged" many not to accept the material. Some were upset enough by this

procedural error" to voice complaints with Dean Oehlman. Other students mailed the envelopes back unopened.

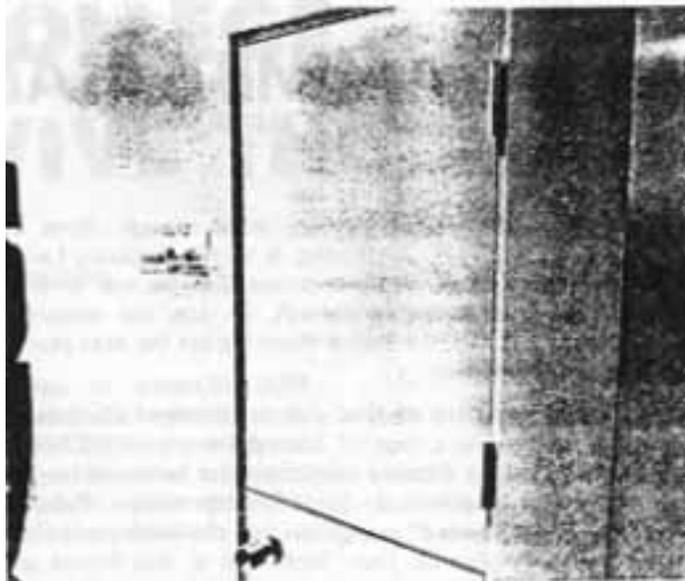
The college administration, seeking to protect the ideological insulation of the campus, then decided to take action against any future influx of "dangerous" mail. On February 1-3 the college legal department issued a memo to all students requiring their signature on a legal document, entitled "Consent to college mail procedure". This would give the administration the right to prohibit the delivery of any "material deemed objectionable by the college"; the memo continued, "the same shall be collected, returned to sender, or otherwise disposed of."

The reaction came immediately. An estimated 300 students refused to sign the document. It was sent back to Dean Oehlman's office by the score, some with

indignant comments and also a swastika or two! Even the PORTFOLIO, the official newspaper of the college, posted a copy of the memo on its office bulletin board with mocking additions made to the contents.

On February 26, having to postpone his trip to Egypt, President Garner Ted Armstrong conducted a lengthy meeting with the student council. The following day, after being briefed on the entire situation, he issued a personal memo to all students. This memo set up a temporary arrangement in which no mail would be censored, with the exception that "objectionable" material would remain in a common receptacle accessible to all who were willing to "dig for it". He also stated that a long term solution to "the problem" would be individual, numbered, private boxes. This arrangement seemed to most to be fair and a strained tranquility was restored. But, with predictable Armstrong form, Ted donned his ministerial cap and in a Sabbath sermon the next day verbally flogged the students in the name of Jesus Christ and assured them that they did have freedom at Ambassador College ... the freedom to pack their bags and leave anytime they want.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW contacted KABC-TV about the situation. On March 11 AMBASSADOR REVIEW publishers, John Trechak and Tim Nugent were interviewed on television by Wayne Satz of KABC-Channel 7 Eyewitness News. Ambassador officials, however, refused to comment. Then, after a week of persistent phone calls by KABC, Stan Rader came forward for the cameras. He refused to allow any students to be interviewed by newsmen and categorically denied all charges.



A few days later, when Mr. Nugent personally contacted Stan Rader, in an attempt to ensure delivery of all AMBASSADOR REVIEW material, he was informed that he would not be allowed on campus to talk to any students about their mail.

The latest incident in this bizarre chain of events was the erection of a nine-foot-high wall around the student mail-boxes. Students now have access to their mail only at certain restricted times during the day and then only under the watchful eye of the postal clerk, in keeping with the new international flavor of "the Work", Ambassador College can now boast of its own "Berlin Wall".



[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **WHERE WOULD YOU GO?**

**"To be in possession of an absolute truth is to have a net of familiarity spread over the whole of eternity. There are no surprises and no unknowns. All questions have already been answered, all decisions made, all eventualities foreseen.... An active mass movement rejects the present and centers its interests on the future. It is from this attitude that it derives its strength, for it can proceed recklessly with the present-with the health, wealth and lives of its followers."**

*THE TRUE BELIEVER, by Eric Hoffer, Harper and Row publishers*

Does the Worldwide Church of God really have a "net of familiarity spread over the whole of eternity"? Does it possess the answers to all questions? Has it foreseen the outcome of all events or prophecies? Events of the last five years have shaken the faith and confidence of many in the "absolute truth" expounded by the Worldwide Church of God. Even Garner Ted Armstrong, the spokesman of the organization on radio and television, stated in an interview with Joseph Hopkins, author of *THE ARMSTRONG EMPIRE\**:

"It's (British-Israelism) not essential to salvation. It hasn't been proven to my satisfaction that the ten lost tribes relocated in specific places in northern Europe. It certainly is not a necessary doctrine."

In answer to a question regarding Herbert Armstrong's one true church dogma, Garner Ted replied:

"I don't believe that either, except for the invisible church, the Body of Christ. But it is definitely not necessary to belong to the Worldwide Church of God in order to be saved."

In answer to another question regarding the Sunday-mark of the Beast doctrine, Garner Ted, admitting that the doctrine had been taught in the early history of the Worldwide Church, declared:

"I haven't taught this for at least twenty years. In fact, as long as I have been in the Work this doctrine hasn't appeared in the literature." For those who possess Lesson 30 of the AMBASSADOR COLLEGE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE, copyrighted 1967, we ask you to refer to pages 9 and 15 to determine the validity of Garner Ted Armstrong's denial.

In addition to these statements from the Executive Vice-President of the Worldwide Church of God, add the Pentecost change, the 1972 miscalculation, the Healing change (not yet published for the church), the Divorce and Remarriage decision and the watering down and/or elimination of many other peripheral teachings, doctrines, superstitions, etc. and we can hardly say that the Worldwide Church possesses the "net over eternity". Rather, the doctrinal net is ripping if not already completely in tatters.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW presents "another side of the story" on a number of issues of interest to those who are in one way or another associated with Ambassador College or the Worldwide Church of God. It is not our primary purpose, however, to address theological issues. Therefore, you may ask, "Where can I go to get another side of the story on the many doctrinal questions which have arisen in the Worldwide Church of God?"

We are providing you with a partial list of the groups to whom many are looking for "another side of the story."

Foundation for Biblical Research  
P. O. Box 928  
Pasadena, California 91102

The F. B. R. was founded by Ernest Martin, former chairman of the Theology Department at Ambassador College in Pasadena; Kenneth Storey, former director of space planning for Ambassador College; and Gary Arvidson, former manager of the Church Administration Department of the Worldwide Church of God. The Foundation distributes booklets, articles, cassette tapes and a monthly newsletter.

World Insight  
P.O. Box 35  
Pasadena, CA 91102

This is a new nondenominational organization founded by Gary Arvidson, Kenneth Storey, Richard Plache and Gary Reid. They are presently working on the first issue of a new magazine called INSIGHT. This publication will contain articles about Christian living, the ministry of reconciliation, prophecy, world

news, psychology and related subjects.

Foundation for Biblical Research  
4 Rue Echille Robelti  
91170 viry  
Chatillon, France

Philippe Sandron, a former minister in the Worldwide Church of God, is director of the F.B.R. in France. The Foundation distributes articles and cassette tapes in the French language.

Associated Churches of God  
The Clark Building  
Columbia, Maryland 21044

The Associated Churches are directed by Kenneth Westby, former Washington, D. C. district superintendent, and George Kemnitz, former Chicago District Superintendent, of the Worldwide Church of God.

Twentieth Century Church of God  
P. O. Box 129  
Vacaville, California 95688

This group is directed by Al Carrozzo, former Pasadena Visiting Program director and assistant superintendent of Ministers for the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Carrozzo publishes a monthly newsletter for those on his mailing list.

Church of God, The Eternal  
P. O. Box 775  
Eugene, Oregon 97401

Raymond Cole, former Worldwide Church evangelist and one of the original four Ambassador College students in 1947, pastors this church in association with several former pastors of the Worldwide Church.

The Church of God  
P. O. Box 247  
Cleveland, Ohio 44121

Carl O'Beirn, former pastor in. the Worldwide Church, directs this group.

Church of God, Seventh Day  
P. O. Box 2370  
Denver, Colorado 80201

Herbert Armstrong left this group when he decided to form his own church. They possess a great deal of doctrinal material as well as information concerning the

origins of the Radio Church of God (now Worldwide Church of God) which differs in crucial areas from the account of Herbert Armstrong in his Autobiography.

Seventh Day Baptist Church  
General Conference Headquarters  
510 Watchung Ave.  
Plainfield, New Jersey 07061

This church, whose origins go back to the early 1800s, has over the years attracted many former Worldwide Church members. It has literature available as well as congregations throughout the United States.

Church of God Seventh Era  
P. O. Box A-1  
Cabot, Arkansas 72033

Decidedly esoteric in nature, this group is headed by Larry Gilbert Johnson, a former Worldwide Church member.

Religion in the News  
Suite 330  
Stahlman Building  
Nashville, Tennessee 37201

Founded and directed by William Hinson, a former Worldwide Church minister, this organization publishes and distributes literature concerning the Worldwide Church of God.

Concordant Publishing Concern  
15570 W. Knochaven Dr.  
Canyon Country, California 91351

The Concordant Publishing Concern was founded by A. E. Knoch in the early 1900s. It publishes a bimonthly magazine called UNSEARCHABLE RICHES along with many books on subjects such as "The Problem of Evil", "God's Eonian Purpose" and "The Reconciliation of All". Their publications have become quite popular with many former Worldwide Church members.

AMBASSADOR REVIEW is not necessarily endorsing any of these groups, nor are any of these groups necessarily endorsing AMBASSADOR REVIEW. None asked to be listed. There are certainly many issues on which these organizations disagree. Yet, we feel it is important that you consider all sides of every issue. Each will be happy to explain its particular point of view; you may find there are many more sides to certain questions than you expected.

*"It is the true believer's ability 'to shut his eyes and stop his ears' to facts that do not deserve to be either seen or heard which is the source of his unequalled*

*fortitude and constancy. He cannot be frightened by danger nor disheartened by obstacles nor baffled by contradictions because he denies their existence. "*

*THE TRUE BELIEVER by Eric Hoffer, Harper and Row publisher*

**-Robert Geringer and Gary Reid**

*\*THE ARMSTRONG EMPIRE, by Joseph Hopkins, is published by the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502 (\$4.50).*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### THE TITHING PAPERS

*Editor: AMBASSADOR REVIEW does not intend to take a position on controversial theological issues. We are, however, publishing this thoroughly researched, theological article because of the insight it gives into the inner workings of the W.C.G. and Ambassador College.*

For more than three years the Armstrongs and their evangelists have been deluged with over 40 research papers demonstrating that a Christian is NOT required, by the Bible, to give God a tenth of his gross (or net) monetary income. Many ministers, top headquarters administrators and department heads have come to understand the biblical theology of tithing and admit privately that the church has no proof or authority for requiring a tithe on monetary income. Unfortunately, the W.C.G. leaders have time and again refused to refute the new facts that have come to light, and they attempt to silence those who would spotlight their futile attempts to cover up this important new data. The W.C.G. leaders are guilty of "grave procedural errors" in dealing with the numerous papers on tithing. Even today they falsely claim the only questions about tithing are "administrative," not doctrinal.

But why this article? Jesus said that when a number of people go to a brother, tell him his fault, and he still refuses to hear those people, then those people should take the matter directly to the church (Matt. 18:15-17; see also Acts 15:4,6 22-3). You who comprise the Church of God are seeing this long overlooked biblical principle put into practice before your very eyes. When you read the following facts distilled from the scores of papers presented to the W.C.G. Doctrinal Committee, you'll see how simple it is to understand tithing. You'll see information that has been suppressed and hidden from widows who can ill afford to tithe-vital information that has been withheld from thousands of members who are barely able to properly feed and clothe their families while paying over two-tenths of their income to the W.C.G. The following facts have

been "held back" (Rom. 1:18) by W.C.G. leaders who seem to lack the faith to really believe that God rewards those who honestly seek him (read Heb. 11:6). Don't take my word for it, read on and do your own research.

### **I. GENESIS 14:18-24.** Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils from war.

Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils taken in battle (Heb. 7:4), but Abraham refused to keep the rest of them.

Abraham had not labored at any occupation to produce the goods he acquired in battle.

The Bible never shows Israel tithing on spoils of war. See Num. 31:9, 27-29 and find out what part of the spoils the Israelite soldiers gave God.

Nowhere does scripture ever say that Abraham was commanded to give Melchizedek a tenth of anything.

Abraham was the father of the faithful. If the fact that he gave a tenth of the spoils makes tithing obligatory for Christians, then the fact that he participated in battle means Christians can fight in war and probably should in order to be able to tithe on spoils as did Abraham. But nowhere does the Bible state that the personal actions of Abraham-or Joseph or Jeremiah-must be faithfully practiced by a Christian today.

### **II. GENESIS 28:20-22.** Jacob vowed to give a tenth to God.

Nowhere does scripture say Jacob was required to tithe or give a tenth of his goods to God.

Nowhere does scripture state that tithing was a law in Jacob's day.

Jacob made a personal vow to give God a tenth of all his goods if and on the condition that God would be with him and bless him.

### **III. LEVITICUS 27:30-33.** Israel was required by the old covenant law to tithe on agricultural produce and livestock.

The Israelites were commanded to tithe solely on every tenth animal and on farming produce (Lev. 27:30-33).

Israel was never commanded to tithe on fish, milk, wool, or the money made from selling pottery, horses, carvings, furniture, books, clothes, construction work, etc.

Only the Levites could accept the Israelites' tithes (Num. 18:21). The Levites then had to give a tenth of the tithes they received to the priests. (Read Num. 18:26-

21 8 in the Jewish translation.)

The priests didn't tithe.

The Israelites sent their tithes to the tabernacle or Temple (Deut. 12:5-6, 11 ). Every third year in a seven year cycle it appears that they retained their tithes in their cities for use by the poor, widows, strangers, Levites, etc. (Deut. 14:28-29). (See Jewish reference sources.)

Only landowners who were ranchers and/or farmers were commanded to tithe by the law of Moses (Lev. 27:30-33).

Every seventh year was a sabbatical year. No tithes were permissible in that year. (See under "tithe" in THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, vol. 12, p. 151.)

The tithes were tithes only from the land of Palestine. The produce of Gentile lands was considered impure until certain rabbis allowed the tithes of a few Gentile lands to be accepted because so many Jews dwelled there. (See JUDAISM by George Moore, vol. II, pp. 70-71 and THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH by Alfred Edersheim, vol. I. p. 9, et. al.)

**IV. MALACHI 3:6-12.** Malachi commands native Israelites of his day to tithe.

Malachi is writing to the Jewish nation returned from captivity (sons of Jacob-verse 6) in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah.

He is not addressing Christians today; verses 6-12 are not an end-time prophecy.

Again, the tithe Malachi is discussing is agricultural in nature. It was stored in a Temple storehouse (II Chron. 31:4-12; Neh. 10:38).

**V. THE NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY** was supported solely by freewill offerings.

Christ told the Pharisees and scribes to tithe (Mat. 23:23). They were still under the Mosaic law at that time, the Temple still stood, and the Levites still ministered at the Temple. The Christian dispensation had not yet begun.

The scribes and Pharisees were said to be tithing on mint, cummin, and anise—all agricultural in nature.

The apostles couldn't receive tithes because they weren't Levites serving at the Temple. Most were Jewish. Jesus himself was Jewish (Heb. 7:12-14) and couldn't accept tithes or he would have broken the law.

Jesus, the ministry, and the needy were supported and assisted by freewill

offerings from church members not by tithes. (No doubt some gave 50% of their monetary income and others less than 1%. See Mat. 6:25-34; Luke 10:4-8; Acts 4:32-35, 20:33-35; II Cor. 8:2-15; 9:6-12; 11:8-9; I John 3:17-18.)

The N.T. ministry is NOT the Melchizedek priesthood, nor does Heb. 7 say it is.

Jesus is the only member of the "Melchizedek priesthood" (Heb. 7:24).

The change in the law (Heb. 7:12) refers to the priesthood being changed, not tithing being transferred to the New Testament ministry.

The fact that Heb. 7 mentions that Abraham tithed to Melchizedek does not prove that a Christian should tithe. This example was cited to illustrate the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

I Cor. 9 shows that a minister has a right to earn a living from preaching the gospel, but it never says he can take tithes or demand a tenth of one's net or gross monetary income.

THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA admits that tithing was first forced on Christians by the Council of Macon's decision in 585.

Nowhere does the Bible, Jesus, or the apostles tell a Christian to tithe.

A man is worse than an infidel if he doesn't provide for his family or relatives. (See I Tim. 5:8.)

Many W.C.G. ministers have admitted and written papers stating that in a number of cases it proved to be impossible for a head of a household to give one tenth of his gross monetary income and yet properly feed, clothe, and shelter his family, as well as accumulate a small savings for emergencies.

God never required a tithe on monetary income anywhere in the Bible.

Jesus told the Pharisees in Mat. 22:21 to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." This statement was made to Pharisees, not to Christians. Jesus did not say this meant that the Pharisee should tithe, nor did Jesus by taking a coin somehow imply a monetary tithe, because the law with which he was very familiar never required any such thing.

## **VI. TITHING & CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

Nowhere does the Bible say the church has the right to take an Old Testament law, delete part of it, reword it, twist it, and then require a Christian to keep the "new, improved" law.

Since the N.T. shows that the N.T. ministry was supported by freewill, voluntary offerings, the church has absolutely no right or authority to require Christians to give a tenth of their monetary income.

The church has no right to bind on members a rule or "law" that is in contradiction to God's Word.

If a church can change God's laws around and change N.T. church practices, then the Catholic church would also have the right to institute Easter, worship on Sunday, etc. Either God's Word is the authority for tithing, or it isn't. If it isn't, then the church, by commanding monetary tithing, is following the commandments of men and perhaps worshipping God in vain.

The authority to bind and loose was given only to Peter and the original apostles-not to the church down to the end of the age. See Matt. 16: 16-19. And they had only the power to bind what had already been bound in heaven (see the William's translation and the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE for the best overall rendering of these verses).

**VII. VALUABLE SOURCES.** Please refer to some of the following works on the subject of "tithes".

THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA  
NEW CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA  
THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA  
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JEWISH RELIGION  
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS (Hastings)  
UNGER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY  
JUDAISM, vol. II, pp. 70-71 by George F. Moore

Almost all of the preceding facts were taken from the over 40 papers on tithing turned in to the top leaders of the W.C.G. during the last three years. As of May 1976, the W.C.G. leadership has still utterly refused either to openly acknowledge the existence of these facts or to disprove them. The recent tithing booklet was put out in spite of the fact that many of the members of the doctrinal committee didn't agree with its contents. Since H.W.A. & G.T.A. have constantly preached to T.V. and radio audiences to not just believe them, but to compare what they say with their Bibles, surely they wouldn't object to your examining the veracity of the objections to tithing which the W.C.G.'s top scholars have raised during the past two years-or would they?

**-William Hughes**

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



**The Painful Truth**  
Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

**AMBASSADOR  
REPORT**

---

**LETTERS**

Gentlemen:

This letter will introduce ourselves as general counsel for Ambassador College.

We have received material published by you under the name and style of "Ambassador Review." Representations have also been brought to our attention which lead to the impression that you are representing the student body, faculty, and alumni of Ambassador College.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that by virtue of said representations and the use of the name, "Ambassador" in your publication, that confusion is likely to arise in the eyes of the public giving the misimpression that you are affiliated with Ambassador College and acting as an authorized representative of one of its instrumentalities.

Therefore, we hereby demand that you cease and desist using the name "Ambassador" in your material and from representing in any way, either directly or indirectly, that you represent Ambassador College's student body, alumni or faculty. Further, that you cease and desist from in any way, either directly or indirectly, indicating or holding out that you are an agency of or represent Ambassador College.

We would appreciate hearing from you promptly regarding your intentions in this regard.

Respectfully yours,

Ralph K. Helge  
for Rader, Helge & Gerson  
Attorneys at Law

Dear Ralph:

It's good to see that the boys at Rader, et al., attorneys at law, have a sense of humor. Your demand that we cease and desist using the name "Ambassador" brought a roar of laughter from all of us here at AMBASSADOR REVIEW. We are certain that it was humor you had in mind when you inserted that demand, and consequently, we will not take offense at it nor accuse anyone on your staff of a sandbox mentality. After all, we appreciate a good laugh, and so as not to appear stingy with a good joke (and we know one when we see one ), we shared the guffaw, with the following firms who also have and use the name "Ambassador":

- 1) Ambassador Magazine (Trans World Airlines)
- 2) Ambassador Apartments
- 3) Ambassador Convalescent Hospital
- 4) Ambassador Hotel
- 5) Ambassador Inns of America
- 6) Ambassador Motel
- 7) Ambassador Rentals
- 8) Ambassador Van and Storage
- 9) Ambassadors for Christ

We feel that our use of the name "Ambassador" has a similar parallel to your use of the name and style "Church of God", a corporation which we understand you also represent, and which supports Ambassador College, Inc. In this specific case, the qualifier "Worldwide" has been added to "Church of God". In our case, we added the qualifier "Review". We are sure that this clear parallel will not tax the legal intellect of anyone on your staff. And as evidence of our firm position in defense of our use of the name "Ambassador", we refer you to the Pasadena Telephone Directory. Look under the "A"'s first, until you come to "Ambassador"; we think that perhaps an explanation will dawn upon you.

By the way, Ralph, by what authority do you demand anything of us? We're just curious. You see, we're wondering if you think that we cannot deliver abundant supportive evidence to back everything we say. We have hundreds of pieces of mail. They are from Ambassador College alumni. We have the input from students at Ambassador College. We have faculty from your college who also provide input. None of them, however, hold out that they are speaking for Ambassador College, Inc. Rather, they are speaking for themselves, to others, about the "Ambassador Experience".

It should be clear to you or anyone else that we do not hold out, nor purport to speak for all students, alumni or faculty of Ambassador College, Inc., and since the last thing on earth we would want would be for someone to receive the

misimpression that we are all instrumentality of Ambassador College, Inc., we will be happy to exercise the following affirmative action to offset your unsupported claim of possible confusion in the public eye.

It should be added that we are assured from all sides that your claim (unsupported) of "confusion" does not exist in the public mind. However, we are quite willing to "go the extra mile" in this matter-for your peace of mind. Even though there will be personal expense involved on our part, we will contact any and all individuals you make known to us who have registered a complaint with your office in support of your claim and who were contacted by AMBASSADOR REVIEW through the mail. We will be happy to commit whatever time required to examine any evidence you would care to submit to us in support of your claims which might demonstrate that we have inured to our benefit any tangible property or good will otherwise intended for Ambassador College , Inc.

In addition, we are open and intend always to remain receptive to any suggestions you might outline which would clear up any possibility of any misimpressions-if they exist. In the meantime, we want you to feel free to recite or publish the following disclaimer as your discession dictates.

#### DISCLAIMER OF AFFILIATION

It has been brought to the attention of AMBASSADOR REVIEW by gentlemen representing themselves as general counsel for Ambassador College, Inc., that it is their impression that the name and style of AMBASSADOR REVIEW could lead to confusion in the eyes of the public and give the misimpression that we are affiliated with Ambassador College and acting as an authorized representative of one of its instrumentalities. So as to avoid any confusion and to clear up any possible misimpression that we are affiliated with Ambassador College, Inc., or acting as an authorized representative of one of its instrumentalities, we are issuing the following disclaimer:

AMBASSADOR REVIEW is NOT AFFILIATED in any way with Ambassador College Incorporated, and does not hold out or intend to indicate, either directly or indirectly, that it is an agency of or representative of Ambassador College Incorporated or of its instrumentalities.

Further, AMBASSADOR REVIEW does not hold out or indicate either directly or indirectly, that it is acting as an agent of any principals such as students, faculty or alumni for the purpose of binding upon said principals any statements or actions which are not authorized by the principal.

If we can be of any further assistance in this matter, please contact us.

Best regards,

John Trechak, J. Timothy Nugent

P.S. As a publishing enterprise we must presume that all uncopyrighted, unsolicited material is being submitted for publication. Thank you for your submission.

To the seekers of the real "Plain Truth", Greetings,

I received a copy of your AMBASSADOR REVIEW and I was really thrilled. Please put me on your subscription list. It is about time the whole truth about the "Ambassador Experience" be brought to light. I too was a true believer for many years and it nearly ruined my whole family.

As an exmember of the W.C.G. and a "super deacon", security chief, etc., I too know how much harm and damage the W.C.G. and its phony leadership has done to thousands of people. I can only thank God that He has allowed the mind and conscience that He gave me to function again, and never again will I allow myself to be taken over by any organization or man.

P.S. Should you run into any legal difficulties I would be glad to back you and even testify as to my "Ambassador Experience" (gestapo like tactics, phone bugging, etc., etc., we really did it all).

New Jersey

Could you please put me on your mailing list for the forthcoming AMBASSADOR REVIEW and any other literature? Thank you. If possible, could you please send the REVIEW in a plain wrapper? You know what might happen to it!

Student, A.C. Pasadena

I read the "Gerringer letter" and the one Richard Plache wrote in resignation. These finally got me off my duff and into much research which really opened my mind. Thank you kindly!

Washington

We do not accept this offer and are sending it back. We don't even want it in our garbage. If Mr. GTA and HWA are wrong in their authority, God will remove and/or punish them without our help or ours. If they are not wrong-remember what happened to Korah?

Manitoba, Canada

*Editor: We'll take our chances.*

I would like to mention that I think it is commendable in the way you are handling your manner of "exposing" the truth. The truth will prevail in the end without mud slinging and I think you are on the right track. It is so easy to get mad at the rotten system, especially when you know both sides and you've been through what some of us have.

California

I would like to see an article on how pressure could be applied to get the Armstrong program off the public air waves.

*Editor: We're working on it.*

California

We were disfellowshipped August 2, before three church gatherings comprising approximately 1000 people because we were reading Dr. Martin's literature. We were asked not to read Dr. Martin's writings because all it would do is confuse us. It was very embarrassing. All my friends refused to fellowship with my family and I since that time but we are over the hump now and the sailing is easy. Let me say that I am very happy to be "confused" by Dr. Martin.

Michigan

As a W.C.G. "regurgitee" and X.C. alumnus (Big Sandy, 1973) news of sanity greatly interests me. News that the college's administration now seeks to censor student mail as a measure against the currency of AMBASSADOR REVIEW also fascinates me. Hopefully you will support the natural reaction such intolerant tyranny will excite in the student body. I should be pleased to help you with a contribution of money to that end. In my last college year, a little outside support of good sense would have been exceptionally welcome.

California

I am going to tell you people the same as I have told the "Biblical Research Group", the "Associated Group", and another knot-head group: TAKE MY NAME OFF YOUR MAILING LIST. Your letters are unwanted and unsolicited! As for your group, I do not want to read the DIRT you want to distribute. This is certainly NOT true Christianity. Leaving God's Church or Ambassador College is your business. But leave us alone.

Any future letters will be dropped into the "Round File" unopened. Word is being spread here warning each other about your AMBASSADOR REVIEW and most are destroying it unopened. Your cooperation will be appreciated. I read very little of your literature and it made me sick to think former students, etc., could be so vicious. This is NOT God's way. It is Satan's way. I want no part of it or in it. Spreading this garbage makes your group as guilty of wrong doing as the people

you are claiming to expose-if indeed what you say is true. I look to God to be my judge and I allow every other human the same privilege.

## Maryland

We have been in the church about 14 years but for about two years we have had questions about a lot of things. If you start asking questions they tell you you are on Satan's wave length, but we started reading our Bibles and have seen so many wrongs in this church. About two months ago we quit supporting it and that is when we got to looking into things ourselves. We were in ... and ... had the tapes on Galations by David Ord. It really was good and so was Dr. Martin's on the New Covenant-I couldn't believe what I was hearing? Everything was so plain. I could see why they didn't want us to see or listen to Dr. Martin. They knew when you once did, then your eyes would be open.

## Ohio

I appreciate what you are trying to do. I came into the W.C.G. in 1962 and had to get a divorce and sell my home and tithe and give offerings. I wasn't working and was taking care of my mother who is 98 years old now. I remember in 1969 when they said they were going broke and I drew out \$1000 from the bank to send them, and, of course, there were the threats of the "lake of fire". I caught you on Channel 7 the other night on the 6 o'clock News.

## California

My wife and I APPLAUD your efforts to get at the truth-which will be excruciating, since you are dealing with that farce, "Ambassador College," and its affiliate, "The Worldwide Church of the Watergate".

I was a W.C.G. minister for 11½ years, terminated last October because I upheld the Bible and Christ. They wanted Herbert and Ted. We felt that was "no bargain".

My gold, AC ring was discarded three years ago, and I am thoroughly ASHAMED of my past affiliation with that pseudo-college. Now, I fall back on my B.A. from Washington and Jefferson College (accredited).

We wish you well, but you're dealing with the lowest of scoundrels, men who are apeishly carnal, totally unconverted and subtly devious who are out to get members ONLY for the "income", and to maintain a high-flying life style.

G.T.A. laments that there are those "out there" who are WAITING for the Organization to crumble. That's ME! And, what's more. I'm PRAYING about it.

The Armstrongs are ENEMIES of mankind, especially Christian mankind!

D.L. Prunkard, Minnesota

Will you please place me on your mailing list? I want to obtain all the current (and all other) information possible about the cult known as the Worldwide Church of God. I was once ensnared by this foul organization of heretical embezzlers and our dear son has been a pitiful slave to these manipulators for ten years. Unless this bunch of charlatans is exposed to the light of day, he and many more thousands of the pathetic brainwashed victims of these cultists will remain zombies ail the days of their wasted lives.

Mississippi

You folks are taking on quite a task. I'm sure you know that only a steady, long-term effort willll bring about the goal of turning Ambassador College into a true institution of higher education rather than a base of operations for a medieval-thinking demagogue.

Many of the ideals of the college are highly commendable, but truly in its present form it is nothing but a front.

Hard work on all our parts collectively could bring about some great changes. I've noticed this-change at Ambassador has nearly always come as the direct result of pressure from without. Again, we applaud your efforts and hope we can be of help!

Texas

My husband and I want to commend you on your efforts and especially on your GUTS. We are thankful that there are people like you who cannot, and will not be intimidated or bought off. May you succeed!

Virginia

I was very interested to read of the plans to publish a journal which will provide the medium for open discussion not only of problems concerning A.C. but also possible solutions. It is encouraging to see that there are some who are concerned enough about A.C. to do more than just hope against hope for reforms that are long, long over due. I do hope that many of us who have sweated, prayed, and sacrificed or in whatever way participated in the "Ambassador Experience" will not be willing to write it all off as a lost cause.

Missouri

I am particularly sympathetic to your cause although at this time I think it is futile. Many of the thinking people have already left the Armstrongs and have started to do something worthwhile. Your belief in freedom of thought for Ambassador is a novel idea, but impossible for the institution with the Armstrongs still signing paychecks. The theology of the institution must be re-evaluated (re-evaluated

nothing, it needs to be rejected!) before any significant change can occur. It looks as though the first issue is a smear campaign and I hope the second issue hits more on issues and suggestions. For what H.W.A. and G.T.A. have done to so many people they deserve all the bad press they get, but I doubt even public pressure would cause the "Apostle of God" and his henchmen to change. I have no interest to rejoin the church, but I would enjoy and support a publication that would... (censored)... or at least bring some things up. Good luck!

Iowa

For five years I was a member of the W.C.G. There I met my future wife. Upon getting married we were "red-tapped", marked and booted from the church. After a year of marriage under the fear of the soon coming end of the age, we separated and went back to the W.C.G. When John Mitchell and Bill Sutton, ministers in Shreveport, LA, resigned... we have been together happily ever since.

Louisiana

...showed me your letter about AMBASSADOR REVIEW yesterday. I couldn't believe it! Congratulations and I hope you can maintain the standards in future issues. I would be delighted to distribute the publication in England for you if you so desire. We could use perhaps a hundred copies initially.

England

I think you should do an article about how to get the Armstrong program stopped. A lot of stations would not carry it if they knew how much harm it does. Also, tell your readers they can complain to the Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, Washington D.C. 20002.

California

The sample article concerning GTA is pretty direct and incisive. Perhaps this type of forceful approach may be just the thing to shake those people to their senses. Too long have trusting people just bowed their heads and numbly accepted whatever the Armstrong clique dictated.

Malaysia

We spent 24½ years with "the organization" and know what it is. We've hoped someone could and would expose it so people in the future won't be taken in and maybe ruin their lives as so many lives have been ruined.

Oregon

At my age of 80 years, and inflation and high cost of living you cannot expect

much from me in support because I don't have it to give. My eyesight has failed me and arthritis has me crippled at times so I can't do little odd jobs to bring in money to pay for extras. Nebraska law won't let me drive any conveyance that is motor powered, so when I go to church I have to catch a ride with others....

Nebraska

*Editor. Thank you for your support but we are returning your contribution. It is our policy not to accept contributions from the retired-elderly or those who are in serious financial need.*

I have been very disappointed by Mr. Albert Portune, the evangelist. I always thought he was a sincere and good man. He must know all the facts of what was going on in the organization all those years. Why hasn't he spoken out since he left? He did a little for a short time, and then he stopped. Is there any truth in the story that the Armstrongs are paying him \$750 a month for "retirement"?

California

*Editor: Yes.*

Things aren't what they used to be! I feel something is really wrong and would ask that, if you will, please forward to me any news, happenings, tapes, literature regarding changes, etc.

Australia

When I was transferred from my pastorate in the Carolinas to Pasadena in 1971, no one would have been able to convince me that I would, of my own volition, sever all ties with the Worldwide Church of God three years later. I was extremely loyal in supporting that organization.

At headquarters I learned how things really were. As department head of Church Administration, I learned a great deal about people, methods of operation and about the gross doctrinal errors which had been covered up for years. My last position as administrative assistant to the Vice-President of Church Administration was during the time when a number of ministers were attempting to help the organization bring about badly needed reform. We were told and the members were told that anyone who questioned "the boss" was "of the devil"!

Their unwillingness to change left resignation as my only recourse. Since then, a few changes have occurred in the Worldwide Church of God in some doctrinal areas; but change has only occurred as a result of great *external* pressure, and then only after there were many casualties strewn along the way. Changes have *not* occurred as many had hoped by "working within the organization."

I would like to ask the active and solid members of the Worldwide Church of God

if they know what their leaders *really* believe about church doctrine and the organization's methods. The Hunting-Plache-Ord incident was only the tip of a still existing iceberg. If the members only knew what many of their ministers in the field were really thinking! So many feel trapped because they see Bible truths but don't know what to do about them.

I personally know of a number of ministers who would like to "make the break" but don't know how they could earn a living. Isn't this a tragedy-when "the shepherds" grovel in fear and become the very thing they have preached against and despised for years-mere hirelings!

Change only occurs through pressure. I wish each member could ask as many ministers as possible what they believed in specifics, about certain doctrines. The questions should be pointed, not allowing those men to dodge behind "well, the church teaches....". These ministers should be challenged to speak their own convictions and not hide behind "the church".

It is my personal hope and prayer that the Worldwide Church will make the changes it needs and that this could lead to reconciliation for all of us. I would like to see a general conference of all ministers-both those in "good standing" as well as those who have resigned, been terminated, fired, disgraced or "eased out". I hope that such a conference would involve all, in one assembly but not behind closed doors as was the case with Mssrs. Plache, Hunting and Ord. It should be open to the members in the Church. The precedent for this was set in Jerusalem many years ago by the apostolic fathers (see Acts 15:3, 4, 12, 13, 22 and 23). I really wonder, however, if this will ever be possible.

Gary Arvidson  
World Insight P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102

I read your Journal (introductory letter) with a great degree of interest and feel compelled to answer. I am a former member of the Worldwide Church of God and a former writer for the GOOD NEWS and Booklet Department at Ambassador College.

It is my opinion that neither the church nor the college is even qualified to be called a viable Christian organization. It never has been. It has consistently violated virtually every principle of Christ and the New Testament. Its doctrinal approach and its teachings are in almost every instance in opposition to what is revealed in the Bible. The actions of the leadership have distinctly demonstrated widespread corruption, hypocrisy, non-Biblical and unchristian practices, immorality and illegality. My experience has clearly shown me that there is absolutely nothing in this organization which has contributed in any substantive way to the Christian community.

It is apparent to me that Herbert Armstrong is a proud, vain, stubborn egoist who must have his way or else. He has been remarkably successful in using the blinding, fearful elements of religion to obtain what he failed to accomplish in any

other way-power over people coupled with riches, influence and position possessed by only a handful of the grandest nobles of the human race. He is going out in style at the expense of thousands of dumb sheep (no criticism intended toward the membership personally) who have sacrificed their lives and souls to support the ambitious aspirations of this modern-day religious tyrant.

The fact that the Worldwide Church of God's doctrinal position is in opposition to much of what the New Testament reveals must really go without saying. On such matters as tithing, clean and unclean meats, sabbath, holy days, attitude toward the rest of the world, approach to grace, extreme legalism, concept of the true church, healing, etc., I feel that the W.C.G. had been and still is in error.

Of course, what hurts even more are the past church stands on child rearing, divorce and remarriage, and the aforementioned subject of healing. The W.C.G. and Herbert Armstrong in particular have chosen in their overwhelming audacity to speak authoritatively on matters which God refused to comment. Mr. Armstrong has established a Hitlerian society and his henchmen have probed into the private lives of the laity with such indiscretion that it is appalling. It is truly incredible that it is still being tolerated. But it is a certain truth that as long as one remains a supporter of the organization it is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to really see the W.C.G. in its true light. Members of the W.C.G. tend to reason in vicious circles-to doubt or question Mr. Armstrong is to doubt the apostle of God and that is tantamount to doubting God Himself and that brings the individual back to where he started with nothing resolved. This type of thinking has created probably the most confused, frustrated laity of any church organization in the world today.

The Worldwide Church has curiously never published any type of religious creed or a list of its beliefs or tenets of faith. This has been a cause of concern on the part of many other religious leaders throughout the country. We often discussed the possibility of doing so when I worked at the college, but nothing was ever done. H.W.A. and G.T.A. often used to make comments that they would never argue religion with anyone, that it wasn't right or worth the effort. I now can better understand why they constantly refused to publish any definition of the basic beliefs or publicly debate the issues with their detractors. The simple fact of the matter is that the position of the W.C.G. on many, many points of doctrine would literally be torn to shreds by Biblical scholars. The immature and incorrect approach of the W.C.G. can easily be exposed and refuted. That is primarily why everything done at the college is usually done secretly. In fact, the entire church is and always has been a closed society. No relationships are permitted outside the church, be they business, marital, social, what have you. In case of sickness, the average member was to look not to anyone in the "world", but to the church minister. No outsiders were to attend services (I understand that this has been relaxed somewhat, though I would doubt that it has been implemented to any great extent). In order to become a member, one was forced to endure extensive questioning of his past life, sexual conduct, marital history, etc. Then he was carefully watched to see how he performed. just how deeply involved he really was before he could be baptized into the church. The views of outsiders on child rearing were constantly put down, and the worst possible methods were

taught by the church. The child, like the parent was being taught by the W.C.G. to grow up without having the chance to make meaningful choices in his life. Everything was automatic, everything was forced, everything was tightly controlled.

Herbert Armstrong's personal distrust of the membership and for that matter most of the ministry led to iron-fisted domination by this religious dictator, who in his indescribable vanity would state proudly that God had never allowed him to make any major mistakes. I have determined that mistakes and errors were just about all Herbert Armstrong ever made, and the resulting damage may be untold. I have heard him stand up before the congregation and berate and rebuke and criticize and castigate the members for not supporting him, for letting down in offerings, for not praying and studying enough, while he would often state that he was sacrificing more than any of them. One would have to be dreaming the ultimate dream to even imagine any area in which H.W.A. sacrificed at all. While he constantly wrote pleading letters to the already financially-overburdened membership begging for more and more money to bail out the work, he somehow managed to increase his expenditures for as luxurious a lifestyle as the world's richest elite enjoy.

I utterly repudiate the leadership of the Worldwide Church and I reject the teachings and attitudes and approaches of the organization as well. I regret that the best years of my life were wasted in the service of this false prophet, that I gave up every opportunity, every ambition, every cent of money, every ounce of energy, every second of time to further the immoral cause of Herbert Armstrong, and Garner Ted Armstrong is no better than his father. He is a slick, glib salesman, without any evidence of the Spirit of God. He is a hypocrite of the first order, and a man whom I feel has betrayed his own conscience to order to gain the inheritance of leadership from his father.

James B. Rector  
Arkansas

Here is an offering to aid you in your work of telling it like it is! More power to you. I was "jailed" for 13 years in "the Empire" and gave them over \$15,000 in tithes. I thought Rockefeller had the worst conspiracy going! The H.W.A./G.T.A./Rader/Kuhn mess is a close second! I am spreading your material to those that should know of your work. Please send me a copy of H.W.A.'s article "Did Christ Reorganize the Church".

Washington

It is music to the ear to hear people asking questions and getting answers, coming to conclusions, and stepping out on faith for truth. We have been so gullible and God has had to show us "error" with evidence we just couldn't overlook. I proved Mr. Armstrong wrong from every source available, and what a way to deceive people! Most of us were so busy studying what was prepared and preached to us we didn't research other areas until God showed us how corrupt

the whole system had become. Anything that will help to wake people out of this folly of taking from the mouths of babes and making a *few* rich is a step in the right direction.

I would like the 1939 article and to receive the AMBASSADOR REVIEW. Did you know anyone in the Cleveland area found having this article will be disfellowshipped without reservation or review by Mr. Sargeant? This article must be dynamite!

Ohio

After reading the 1939 GOOD NEWS article you sent me, I wrote its author the following letter. I think your readers may find it interesting.

Dear Mr. Herbert Armstrong:

It was with interest and, I must admit, a considerable degree of amazement that I read your 1939 GOOD NEWS article, entitled, "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?".

For a man who heads a superstructure of an organization; one who embodies the very essence of autocratic rule and unilateral legislation; one who at the slightest challenge of his "apostolic aughority" reacts with purple veined indignation and all-consuming wrath-for such a man to write a flat denunciation of Church government on the grounds that it is "satanic" and unscriptural, that, Mr. Armstrong, must rank among the marvels of our century.

On the other hand, if one understands the particular situation and the circumstances which prompted you to write this article the matter appears to be somewhat less perplexing. From your contemporaries in the Church of God back in Oregon it has been related that your attitude toward Church government at the time stemmed from your own unwillingness to submit to the authority of the then "one and only true Church of God" on the face of this earth, and your article was your way of justifying your rebellion against those over you.

According to Elder Straub of the Oregon Church of God, who received his credentials as a minister the same time you did, the reason for your breaking away from the "Body of Christ" was not only as you claim, over doctrinal matters, but mainly on account of your stubborn refusal to submit to Church authority; the main issue being your unwillingness to render account of the tithe-movies you collected.

That this is the truth, Mr. Armstrong, becomes very apparent when reading your vociferous denunciation of government and boards who aim to have authority to "govern over the spiritual and FINANCIAL AFFAIRS of the Church". The fact that you left "spiritual" in lower case but saw fit to put the financial aspect in bold caps more than points to your real problem at the time.

Your article was subtitled: "Here is amazing new light from the Bible, establishing the TRUTH of this important question of Church organization and government" (emphasis yours). You then went on to caution your readers to prove all things (from the Bible!) because a "careless assumption" (namely that autocratic Church government and authority was Biblical!) had left them open to be "deceived". You proceed by inviting them to "search the Scriptures" with you.

I must admit, Mr. Armstrong, you did a thoroughly convincing job of proving from THE BIBLE that Church government and authority indeed is unscriptural and you rightly labeled such practice as being one of the deceptions of "Babylon, the mother of harlots" of which you urged your readers to "come out".

You said, "We should like to see any text in the New Testament showing that there ever was appointed any BOARD to act as a TREASURY for the tithes of the disciples, and to receive and disburse the money for the whole church! We say such a thing is UNSCRIPTURAL and unless SCRIPTURE can be produced for it, such a practice ought to be discontinued!" A little bit further down you state: "Jesus never organized, or re-organized His Church! There is NO SCRIPTURE for it!" (emphasis yours throughout).

Church government you call the "image of the Beast" and continue to say, "The whole thing is FALSE! It is NOT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE! It is part of BABYLON! Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of such an organized church government, submitting to doctrines declared by unscriptural boards as a fellowship test, are IN BABYLON, and are actually worshippers of THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST! And God is calling us, HIS people OUT of BABYLON today, before it is too late-before the PLAGUES fall!"

You, Mr. Armstrong, quote Jesus as saying. "Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be ROOTED UP. Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church GOVERNMENT, or set men IN AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church."

Our fellowship, you claim is with God and Christ, and then with each other, in Love. There is, according to you, "no super-organization over and above local congregations IN THE NEW TESTAMENT", and again you state with your usual fervor, "Any such 'plant' is certain to be ROOTED UP!"

As the reason for your being opposed to hierarchical Church government you state the evils of an authoritarian system. You say, "What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION-which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power-striving against each other, lining up the brethren on THEIR side, against the other!" "Organization and church GOVERNMENT has brought us only strife, jealousies, divisions, bitterness! It is not of God, and it can bear no other fruit."

Could it be that the "spirit of prophecy" moved you to write those words at the

time, Mr. Armstrong? Looking at the mess you have created over the years in both congregations and the ministry I cannot but concur with your conclusions. Your organization and Church Government with Popish "ex-cathedra" pontification has certainly brought you strife, jealousies, divisions, and bitterness. It would seem, Mr. Armstrong, that for once a prophecy of yours came true. Your prophetic batting-average over the years has been between poor and very poor: but this time you hit the bull's eye.

You have convinced me, Mr. Armstrong! And even if I weren't, how can I possibly disagree with the Bible which you so profusely quoted to support your conclusion? After all: God's Word yesterday, today, and forever. Isn't that what you keep claiming? Obviously, God's Word hasn't changed: you have. And it would be most interesting for the readership of AMBASSADOR REVIEW to see how you explain this one away.

You invited reader's comments in your article, asking for Scriptural proof that would support Church Organization and Government. You said, "If there is ONE LINE of scripture for such procedure under the New Testament, the editor of the GOOD NEWS agrees to print it in the next issue-if any can supply it! This is our challenge, and we await replies!"

Well, I am sorry Mr. Armstrong; there is NO proof to the contrary and I have to confess that I am unable to take you up on your challenge. You have done a superb job proving your point beyond the shadow of a doubt. However, since you are still Editor-in-Chief of the GOOD NEWS we shall be looking forward with eager anticipation to see your Scriptural support for your Super-Super Organization in the next issue of the G.N.

Good luck.

P.S. With regard to your poor batting average of prophesying over the years, permit me a rethorical question: How many times can one prophesy falsely before one becomes a false prophet?

California

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth** Brought to you by: **hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

### **HAVE YOU READ...?**

**ARMSTRONGISM'S 300 ERRORS EXPOSED (\$4.95)**

by Stanley E. Anderson, Th.D.

1300 Tyler Lane

Elgin, Illinois 60120

Published by Church Growth Publications

P.O. Box 90361

Nashville, Tenn. 37209

**IS HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG GOD'S PROPHET?**

(free pamphlet)

Published by:

Facts of Our Faith

P.O. Box 1134

Hawthorne, California 90250

**ELMER GANTRY (\$1.25, soft cover)**

by Sinclair Lewis

Published by:

Signet Classics

The New American Library, Inc.

P.O. Box 999

Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621

**THE CHRISTIAN AGNOSTIC (\$3.50)**

by Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead

Published by:

Abingdon Press

201 8th Avenue, South

Nashville, Tenn. 37202

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **AMBASSADOR WHISPERS**

Evangelist Raymond McNair, with consent from Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong, is quietly divorcing Leona, his wife of 21 years. He now claims that she was never really converted. Interestingly enough, he was the minister who baptized her in 1954 before marrying her the next year! They have three children.

Worldwide Church of God director for the United States, C. Wayne Cole, on a tour of Australia was notified by Robert Kuhn over long distance telephone that he would be going on a two-month sabbatical-due to health reasons. Thus, one of the last "concerned" evangelists has now been phased out and replaced by Ronald Dart. Word has it that Wayne may be offered the Canadian directorship-if he decides to remain.

Evangelist David Jon Hill has moved to Washington. Reliable sources indicate that he is selling Amway products while looking for permanent employment in Seattle. He has some property in Sequim which he may be selling to finance a home purchase. Although he has stated that he will be ministering part time (receiving half salary), others indicate that that will not be a major source of income for long.

Is Robert Kuhn bailing out? We understand Robert has partially succumbed to an offer of taking over the vice-presidency of a garment manufacturing firm in New York. Is that why certain men recently let go by the organization in Data Processing have been flown back to New York for interviews? Is Robert already establishing a new organization with former Ambassador personnel? If so, it's going to be very difficult for Stan Rader. He won't have anyone left to help him answer doctrinal questions asked by the press.

Maintaining one's standard of living is a major concern of many contemplating

leaving "the Work." Many are now preparing for their ultimate exodus:

Dr. Charles Dorothy is continuing his Master's Program at Fuller Theological Seminary.

David Antion is working toward his Master's Degree in Counselling at Cal. State.

Gunnar Freibergs is working toward his Doctor's Degree.

Several other ministers who are completely turned-off with the modus-operandi of the Armstrongs are seeking refuge in various business ventures to prepare for their departures.

Stan Rader- Evangelist? Don't discount this possibility. Many feel he aspires to the ministry. We are convinced he would not start off as a ministerial trainee or local elder. Such an ordination would serve to further the ambitions which his baptism a year ago began to reveal. If and when such an event occurs, it would further add mystery to the question of Herbert Armstrong's ultimate successor. The two contenders would both be evangelists-one Mr. Armstrong's son and the other his constant companion and top advisor, who is considered by many to be the most powerful man in "the Work." Perhaps this historic event will take place this year.

The Playboy Corporation is currently doing research into the Armstrong empire. An expose on Ted Armstrong and Ambassador College is now slated to appear in Playboy's publication, OUI magazine sometime this summer.

Garner Ted Armstrong's recent television performance on "Hee Haw" prompted one entertainment critic to remark, "Now I know how bleak the future of the unskilled really must be." The performance inspired one former fan to design a bumper sticker which reads "Garner Ted Armstrong: Hee Haw, Hee Haw, Hee Haw." Mr. Armstrong's crooning debut was probably not helped by the fact that while taping the show a marshall served him with the papers for a \$5 million lawsuit, being brought against him by William Hinson.

The \$5 million Hinson lawsuit was filed in Tennessee against Garner Ted Armstrong and Tony Hammer. It will not be the last lawsuit against the Armstrong organization. There are at least three others in preparation-one, a \$50 million class action suit, will soon be filed against the entire organization.

Charges by former Worldwide Church of God minister, Al Carrozzo, that Ambassador College officials are making use of Swiss bank accounts has not been met with much skepticism from former church officials. Mr. Carrozzo has sent AMBASSADOR REVIEW a copy of a 1974 Ambassador Telex to the Union Bank of Switzerland. The telex initiated a contract for one million Swiss francs.

Predictions by certain insiders that Dr. Hoeh will be the next evangelist to retire seems to gain plausibility by the fact that he is no longer maintaining an on-campus office. Many feel that as developer of the 19-year time cycle theory, Dr. Hoeh's credibility as a Bible scholar was permanently destroyed by the 1972

prophecy debacle.

An investigation by the United States Customs Department into the activities of one member of Herbert Armstrong's foreign campaign staff has proven very upsetting to a number of people at Ambassador. One Pasadena artist even reported giving this individual a \$3,000 painting to sell in Japan on commission and now one year after its sale has still not received his money. One college faculty member interviewed by a government investigator would not divulge any information to us but only said, "Mr. Armstrong should be more careful in choosing the people that plan his tours. It's a shame that things like that are going on at Ambassador."

A number of former Armstrong followers are currently working on books about their experiences with Armstrongism. Marion McNair's book is due to be published this summer. William Hinson's is scheduled for release in September. Other books being written include two novels and a screenplay.

Stanley Rader's March 15 comment on ABC-TV news that he imagines that PENTHOUSE magazine is read at Ambassador College is not surprising considering the fact that Ambassador College president, Ted Armstrong, has more than once, been seen reading PLAYBOY in a Pasadena barbershop.

In the September 9, 1975 Ministerial Bulletin, Garner Ted Armstrong stated that 10 out of every 12 Worldwide Church of God children leave the church upon gaining independence from their parents.

Ambassador College's application to the United States government to acquire a \$2.5 million piece of surplus federal property at no cost has met with opposition from many Ambassador College alumni who charge that the college should not be eligible because of religious discrimination. The property being applied for is the Vista Del Arroyo building in Pasadena. We have been informed by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare that due to a letter from Ambassador Review to President Ford, the application is now being carefully reevaluated. The key men in the decision now are: 1.) Mr. A.B. Pace, General Services Administration, 525 Market St., San Francisco, California 94105 and 2.) Mr. Charles Fuller, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 100 McAllister Street, San Francisco, California 941020

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



**The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:

**hwarmstrong.com**

---

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

## **AMBASSADOR COLLEGE... WILL IT SURVIVE THE '70's?**

by Garner Ted Armstrong

**Editor: On March 15 the publishers of AMBASSADOR REVIEW offered Garner Ted Armstrong the opportunity to write a 1,500 word article for the REVIEW on the subject of Ambassador's chances for survival or on any other subject he wished to write about. We promised to have a place reserved in the REVIEW for his article. Here is what he submitted:**

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### DID I SAY THAT?

On April 12, 1976 an AMBASSADOR REVIEW correspondent contacted the Ambassador College re-recording facility to request a copy of a sermon given publicly by Garner Ted Armstrong on February 29, 1975.

The, facility secretary informed our correspondent that he would need the permission of a minister before she could process his request.

Our man then contacted by phone the assistant to Ronald Dart, Steve Martin. Mr. Martin hesitated considerably over the phone, apparently unable to reach a decision. When informed that the tape was being requested by AMBASSADOR REVIEW in an attempt to clarify several points of contradiction, Mr. Martin replied, "That's a shitty thing to do." (It is interesting to note that the only word of questionable usage that appears in our magazine has come from the mouth of a Worldwide Church of God minister.)

Unable to convey the fairness of our request over that type of protest, our correspondent had no choice but to terminate his end of the telephone conversation. *Our* re-recording facility informs us that copies of this tape-recorded conversation may be made available to the public if an apology does not reach our offended correspondent soon!

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **PROFILE OF A CULT**

Los Angeles television station KTTV has investigated a number of cult groups on its news program ON TARGET. These have included: The Children of God, Krishna Consciousness, Love Israel Family, Sun Myung Moon, The Alamo Foundation and others.

Researcher-newsman, Larry Attebery, who does the series, says it is remarkable how divergent cults, with different teachings, leaders, dieties, rites and customs are so often identical in the psychological techniques and indoctrination methods they employ. He told AMBASSADOR REVIEW that he has observed four characteristics found in almost all cults:

#### **1) ISOLATION**

Cults encourage separation from non-member family and friends. Converts are told by their leaders that the "outside world" is evil and that they should not associate with it. They are discouraged from "contaminating themselves" by delving into other philosophies or religions.

#### **2) NON-THINKING**

No questions or thoughts against a cult are tolerated by its leaders and members. Self-hypnosis, meditations, chanting, constant use of slogans, repetition of key phrases and special prayer routines are some of the methods used to stop conscious, constructive thinking. Many cults encourage constant activity for members so that they do not even have the time to think or question.

#### **3) ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE**

Cult members are taught to accept all orders from their superiors. In some groups even lying and stealing can thus be justified. According to Mr. Attebery, "All actions are justified in the name of God, because the group is God's tool, and

all outsiders 'serve the devil'."

#### **4) GIVING EVERYTHING**

Cults encourage unrestrained, indiscriminate giving to the group's leadership. It is not unusual for a cult to coerce new members into giving *all* their money and possessions. It sometimes even includes signing over one's legal rights (especially inheritances).

For those interested in obtaining information on various cults we recommend that you write to:

Citizens Freedom Foundation  
P.O. Box 256  
Chula Vista, California 92012

The C.F.F. (William M. Rambur, President) is an organization of concerned citizens, many of whom are former cult members, who are dedicated to exposing cults and supporting legal action against such groups. It is also lobbying for legislation designed to protect the public from the abuses of religious or pseudo-religious charlatanism. Its March 1976 newsbulletin lists 31 cult groups which it is investigating. The Worldwide Church of God is one of them.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

Those interested in obtaining the articles of incorporation for Ambassador College, the Worldwide Church of God or any of its Subsidiary corporations may do so by writing:

The Secretary of State (of California)  
111 Capitol Mall, Room 412  
Sacramento, California 95814

The cost for this service varies depending upon the number of copies desired and the size of the documents to be duplicated. They recommend that you send an open ended check with a "not to exceed \$12.00" limit.

The church and college do not make these documents available to their members or the general public.

[\(To see the Articles, go to the History Page on this site.\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### THE CREED OF THE UNHOLY TRINITY

"Thou shalt discretely worship Herbert, Ted and Stan all the days of thy sojourn in their beautiful garden which they have created with thy tithes. And thou shalt not cross them or say any manner of truth against them openly for *their* sake. And if thou wilt close thine eyes, stop thine ears, button thy mouth and dig deeply into thy pocket when thou hearest the oft recurring and hallowed words 'FINANCIAL CRISIS', 'OPEN DOOR' and 'GUN LAP' then thou hast truly become a dumb sheep, and thou wilt be able to explain away all the mysteries of why thou dost allow thy Trinity of Herbert, Ted and Stan to fleece thee cheerfully as thou dost. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is *their* reward. By sacrificing thy mind, thy will and especially thy money, thy Trinity and Evangelists do indulge themselves in all the sins that thou, a dumb sheep, hast been forbidden on every Sabbath day."

**-Author Unknown**

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **LATE NEWS**

Worldwide Church of God Pastor General, Herbert W. Armstrong, 85, recently told a number of senior college students at his home that he would not be marrying again even though he was in love. Mr. Armstrong has, during the past few years, been seen in the company of Ramona Martin and many have speculated that they would eventually marry. Mr. Armstrong told the students that both his son, Garner Ted, and his legal counsel, Stanley Rader, have strongly urged him not to remarry as marrying Ms. Martin, a woman approximately 50 years younger than he is, would only lead to much undesirable publicity for the church.

Dr. Charles V. Dorothy, Professor of Theology at Ambassador College, Pasadena and former Dean of Faculty at Ambassador College, Big Sandy, has been relieved of his faculty position by President Garner Ted Armstrong, in spite of his being a tenured Professor. In his Old Testament Survey course, he is to be replaced by that renowned Old Testament scholar and theologian, Ben Chapman. Mr. Chapman received his B.A. from Ambassador College, is a member of the Board of Trustees, a member of the Armstrong family, and is a defunct Data Processing department head.

As one can easily see from a survey of Ben's academic credentials, President Armstrong made a "wise" move in upgrading the Pasadena Faculty. This is another encouraging example of President Armstrong's program of "vigorously pursuing accreditation." Evidently, Ted has also been equally excited about vigorously pursuing doctrinal research, since he also scrapped the entire Theological Research Project under Dr. Dorothy's direction. We are certain that both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and, especially, next year's Old Testament Survey students will be absolutely thrilled by the "progressive steps" which President Armstrong has taken!

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **RESPONSIBLE GIVING:**

### **WHICH AGENCIES SHOULD YOU SUPPORT?**

One purpose of simpler living is to free resources for sharing with others. But how can you be sure the money you give is being handled responsibly and for the purpose you intend? The following questions should offer some guidelines on choosing reputable organizations to receive your support.

1. Are the charity's purposes and goals worthwhile, and ones that you want to support?
2. Are they duplicating the ministries of your own denomination or of other respected organizations?
3. Are the executive staff and board members capable persons of known integrity? Is the board paid? (It shouldn't be.)
4. How much money actually goes to its ministry and how much to fund-raising and administration? (A reasonable range is 10-25 percent for fund-raising and administrative costs, but watch out for euphemisms in financial reports that may hide excessive expenditures in the wrong areas.)
5. Is the organization audited annually by an independent CPA firm, and are they willing to identify the firm?
6. Are the promotion efforts and reputation above reproach? (If you aren't sure, a call to the Better Business Bureau or a charity licensing bureau may help.)

7. Have they been offended by my honest questions'?

*From THEOLOGY NEWS AND NOTES (published by the Alumni Association of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena), Oct. 1975, p. 19. Reprinted by permission*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### THE W.C.G. TALMUD

*Editor: With all the changes that have taken place in the Worldwide Church of God in the last few years it is becoming increasingly difficult for members to know exactly what their church teaches. Until about three years ago most members knew the traditions of their church. Now, many are not so sure what they are.*

*The following list of do's and don't's was compiled by Ambassador graduate, Robert Gerringer. It represents some of the customs and traditions of the Worldwide Church of God up until about 1973. We're sure it will bring back a few memories. The editors are not, of course, necessarily recommending or endorsing any of the following:*

Do not use medicines or drugs. Never wear sideburns below the middle of the ear, or comb your hair over the forehead. Never dance without holding your partner and don't wiggle your hips. Never listen to hard rock music. Do not contribute to charities (Easter Seals, March of Dimes, etc.). Women should wear skirts long enough to at least touch the top of the knee. Women must wear their hair long enough to cover the nape of the neck. Never vote in any elections. Never join a political party. Avoid doctors and hospitals. Never receive a blood transfusion. Do not donate blood. Never serve in the military in any capacity. Never celebrate Christmas, Easter, New Year's, Halloween, Valentines Day, St. Patrick's Day, or April Fool's. Celebrate Thanksgiving. Do not have more than two drinks a night. Don't be a teetotaler. Never wear make-up. Men should never wear a toupee or wig. Women can only wear wigs if they are bald. Never color your hair. Women should not wear pants (except for sports activities). Never ever smoke anything. Pray at least 30 minutes a day. Study your Bible at least thirty minutes a day. Fast and meditate regularly. Never join or remain a member of a "worldly" club (Elks, Lions, Kiwanis, etc.). Watch only movies rated G and occasionally PG. Do not observe Mother's Day in England (Mother's Day is OK in America). Do not earn a living as a policeman, judge, fireman, physician, elected

official (except Mayor of Big Sandy), astronaut, gambler, concert musician, actor or ballet dancer. Never have a picture of "Christ", "God", "angels" or "saints." Women should not go braless. Women should not take "the Pill" or have an abortion. Do not allow your children to join the boy scouts or girl scouts. Children should not play "pretend" games. Women should not wear Tampons. Always take notes during church services. Never call a minister "Reverend." Never bring the "unconverted" to services without the minister's permission, this includes close relatives such as an unconverted mate and children over 16. Never co-sign for a loan. Do not wear heart shaped lockets. Beware of classical music written by demon inspired composers. Never serve on a jury. Never sign over your body for scientific study. Do not read the writings of philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Do not vote for or initiate a labor strike. Going to night clubs is allowed, in moderation. Do not have organ music in church. Men should not wear pink or flowery shirts. Children should not be allowed to read fairy tales or nursery rhymes. Single people should date widely. Never date a non-Worldwide Church of God member. Never neck on a date. If engaged, a good-night kiss is permissible, if not prolonged. Never hold hands unless married or engaged. When married, have sex only in the two approved positions; never kiss below the neck (pre-1960's), never kiss below the waist (pre-1975). Dentists are OK. Novocain is OK. Antibiotics are not OK. Immunizations are not OK. Only unmarried women should be employed. Never date or marry outside your race. The races should be segregated whenever possible. Men should not wear beards. Do not eat maraschino cherries. Never get a tattoo. Avoid "Protestant type" hymns. Minimize contact with non-believers. Use olive oil and wine on sores. For weddings, use only the Herbert Armstrong approved ceremony. Card playing is OK. Never listen to "soul music". Have only a graveside service at funerals. Never wear or own a crucifix. Never sign a letter "in Jesus' Name" unless you are a minister. Church buildings should not have steeples or stained glass windows. Never build or own an obelisk. Never celebrate birthdays. Don't go into partnerships in business. Never say "God bless you" when someone sneezes (in fact, never say "God bless you"). Always buy "quality". Strive to become "cultured". Do not break an engagement to be married. Always get a minister's advice before making any important decisions (changing a job, marrying, selling your home, etc.). Never go along with new styles or trends until at least 50% of the public has adopted them. Never be a leader in setting styles or trends. Never support or attend the services of any Catholic or Protestant church. (The Catholic Church is the "great whore" of Revelation. It is Satan's church and Protestant churches are its children.) Do not listen to preachers who teach contrary to the W.C.G. doctrines. Do not practice vegetarianism. Do not have your body cremated. Women should not wear two-piece bathing suits and especially not bikinis. Men should not wear tight bathing suits (in England only). Do not engage in sky diving (before David Armstrong's interest in same). Never chew tobacco. Do not speculate in stocks or bonds. Never ever use "unnatural" farming methods (chemical fertilizers, pesticides, etc.). Never act in, direct, produce or write a drama. Never hypnotize anyone or be hypnotized. Do not celebrate the 4th of July (pre-1965). Do not adopt children. Do not have your ears pierced. Make ample use of corporal punishment in rearing children. Do not use euphemisms such as gosh, darn or gee. Do not create or own "modern" art. Sex on Friday night is OK for married people. Never go to a psychiatrist.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



**The Painful Truth**  
Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

## **ARMSTRONGISM-RELIGION OR RIP-OFF?**

by **Marion J. McNair**

This three-part volume is a thoroughly documented expose of the modus operandi of the Armstrong religion. The author, Marion J. McNair, is eminently qualified for the task of analyzing this sect as he has been associated with the Armstrong organization for over thirty years. Mr. McNair first attended Ambassador College as one of its pioneer students in 1948 and was eventually ordained to the rank of Evangelist. During the last seventeen years he has been a part of the administrative ranks of the organization at its headquarters in Pasadena.

In Part I, Mr. McNair analyzes the subtle psychological approach used to entice unsuspecting individuals into "the Work." He discusses the "Armstrong commission" and how exorbitant expenditures are rationalized and justified with minimal accountability to contributors. Complete profiles are given of Garner Ted and Herbert Armstrong along with all the top men who helped build the Armstrong empire. For this and other parts of the volume, the author collaborated with a professional psychologist who provides considerable insight into the soul of the Armstrong philosophy and approach.

Part II analyzes the early beginnings of the organization showing the real conflict in Herbert Armstrong's relationship with the Oregon Church of God. You will find that they pleaded with him to study in open discussions his "heresies" in the areas of British-Israelism, prophecy, and holy days, but that he continually refused such overtures. You will be astounded to discover that Armstrong was finally fired from the ministry because of his mishandling of finances and his total disregard for church authority. His move to California was forced upon him by his

continual prophesy failures and the desertion of most of his church. He thus achieved a new base of operations, one unfamiliar with his massive prophecy debacles. It was this new base which became Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God.

Part III reveals the details of the 1973-74 organizational split, a split which is still continuing. You will see the entire episode from behind the scenes, showing the true concerns of the Armstrongs during the crisis.

This important book succeeds in exposing the totalitarianism of the Armstrong regime. It reaches beyond the facade and reveals what the Armstrong "Rip-off" is and how it works.

For details on how to obtain your copy of this important book write to:

Marion J. McNair  
P. O. Box 928  
Eustis, Florida 32726

[Back to Index](#)

[Back Cover](#)



**The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:

**hwarmstrong.com**

---

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---



*Ambassador*

# *Ambassador Review is...*

While **GARNER TED ARMSTRONG** *watches the world,*

*WHO's WATCHING GARNER TED?...*

*Ambassador Review is...*

*in our **NEXT ISSUE!***

[Next Issue \(AR2\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:

[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

Separation  
of Church and State  
\$2.5 Million Federal Handout  
to Armstrong Cult —See Page 16—

### BOBBY FISCHER SPEAKS! OUT!



Exclusive  
Interview  
His 15 Years In  
Armstrongism

—See Page 54—

"And greetings suckers  
around the world...."



### IN BED *with* GARNER TED —See Page 36—

America's Playboy  
Preacher



# AMBASSADOR REPORT

Publishers: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard W. Zola, Margaret D. Zola

Editors: Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard W. Zola, Margaret D. Zola

Contributing Editors: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Perry Prescott, Gary Reid, Roy P. Silverman

Art Director: Joseph Sebastian

Consulting Editor: Robert L. Jackson

Editorial Research: Joseph Franklin, Peter F. McNeil, David K. Sheppard

Editorial Assistants: Lois Lane, Karen Magnuson, Gordon M. Marwik

Business Manager: Bill Hughes

Canadian Circulation Director: Gary Reid

AMBASSADOR REPORT is published by and for alumni, students, faculty, and friends of Ambassador College. It has grown out of the increasing need for a response to the misinformation contained in many official Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God publications.

AMBASSADOR REPORT has the following purposes:

- o It assesses the foundational philosophies of Ambassador College and their effect on Ambassador College students. In short, it examines the "Ambassador Experience."
- o It brings to light many of Ambassador College's biggest problems which have been too long covered up.
- o It presents solutions to Ambassador College's problems and encourages drastically needed changes at Ambassador College and, to a degree, in the church which directly influences it.
- o It is dedicated to prodding the leadership of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God which supports and controls it, to change the practices and policies which are bringing worldwide discredit to Ambassador College.

We welcome and encourage suggestions from our readers regardless of political, religious, or philosophical persuasion, and we warmly welcome all contributions to our efforts.

Address all communication to:

AMBASSADOR REPORT  
P.O. BOX 4068  
PASADENA, CA 91106

Copyright 1977 Ambassador Report. All rights reserved.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### About This Issue

Garner Ted Armstrong and his unique gospel have, in recent years, been the subject of articles appearing in numerous publications, including *Time*, *Harper's*, *Penthouse*, *Christianity Today*, *Coronet*, *People*, *Esquire*, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. That he should be the subject of so many articles is not surprising. He is an articulate, authoritative-sounding, colorful personality whose dynamic voice is heard daily by millions. What is surprising, however, is that, until now, no publication has ever told the *whole* Garner Ted Armstrong story.

In this issue of *Ambassador Report* are three articles which deal directly with this well-known radio and television evangelist. What emerges clearly from these three articles is a portrait of a man who is not only strikingly different from his calculated public image but who lives a life which is at total variance with the message he preaches. The dichotomy is so great that one is tempted to believe that here, in Garner Ted, the hypocrisy of Sinclair Lewis' Elmer Gantry is actually surpassed. His portrait would be a burlesque if it were not so pathetically factual. It is when we see in the lives of thousands the tragic consequences of the Armstrong operation that we realize the true character of the portrait.

There may be some who will argue that Garner Ted's sex life is his own business and that we should therefore not expose his immorality. Frankly, we would prefer that Garner Ted's sex life be his own business. But he has made it our business by setting himself up as God's personal representative and telling you, me, and the rest of this world how we should live our lives. While taking the public's money as a "minister of Jesus Christ" and using the public airwaves to preach the Ten Commandments and repentance, he leads a life that is the very antithesis of all Christian virtue. The way he lives his life shows all of us he really doesn't believe his own message. Our goal is not to decry his humanity but to

expose his hypocrisy and by doing so spare others the consequences we and thousands of others have suffered as a result of putting our trust in him.

The many letters we have received in the past year testify to the bitter fruit of the Armstrong cult. We have reprinted a number of these in our Letters section. Also, in this issue we are printing a number of articles which expose the real effects of and the true spirit behind the Armstrong organization. Besides a highly informative, exclusive interview with Bobby Fischer are articles which document the Worldwide Church of God's misuse of charity monies, the Armstrongs' reluctance to meet the requirements of accreditation, the unethical transfer of corporate funds to the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, the intimidation of contributors through the misuse of computer information, the secret monitoring of college classrooms, and the real story behind the Worldwide Church of God's many doctrinal changes.

We, of course, cannot deny that there is a positive side to Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God. A tour of Ambassador's campus (the last remaining one) will reveal not only beautiful grounds but also some fine, enthusiastic students. A visit to a Worldwide Church of God service will reveal friendly, smiling faces. One can even find numerous individuals who will attest that in one way or another they have actually profited physically, financially, or spiritually from certain of the Armstrong teachings.

We're thankful that one can find a positive side to the "Ambassador Experience." We believe this issue will show, however, that that positive side has, over the years, been grossly exaggerated by the Armstrongs and that the vast negative side with its many tragic facets has been swept under the carpet by the Armstrong organization.

We hoped to accomplish more than simply exposing Ambassador College's negative side. It has been our desire to prod Ambassador's leadership into making those changes which we believe are vital to its survival. For over fifteen months we attempted to arrange a meeting with President Armstrong to present and discuss several positive affirmative-action proposals. It seems, however, that every time we attempted to contact him, President Armstrong was either "in a meeting" or simply "not in." Our phone calls to him were never returned. Our numerous letters to him were never answered. On two occasions we contacted the college's CPA and chief counsel, Stanley Rader, and asked that he relay to Mr. Armstrong our request for a meeting. Mr. Armstrong never responded.

I personally contacted Jim Thornhill, Ted Armstrong's closest friend, and asked him to relay to Ted our request for a meeting. He assured me he would pass the message on, but Mr. Armstrong never responded. We contacted Ralph Helge, legal counsel for the Worldwide Church of God, and asked him to mention to President Armstrong that we would like to meet with him. He assured us that the message would be delivered. Still Mr. Armstrong did not respond. We called the managing editor of *The Plain Truth*. He expressed doubt that the meeting we were requesting could be arranged, but he agreed to deliver the message. Again, there was no response.

We had been willing to meet with President Armstrong at any time and under any circumstances. The meeting could have been structured as a formal debate before the Pasadena student body, it could have been a friendly question and answer session before the Pasadena church congregation, or simply an informal chat over lunch. We didn't care. We simply wanted to present what we feel are some of the solutions to Ambassador's survival problem. Of course, we also hoped to give Ted Armstrong the opportunity to tell his side of the story regarding the many charges against him of serious personal misconduct. This, he has repeatedly refused to do.

In *Ambassador Review* (*Ambassador Report's* predecessor), the question was asked: Will Ambassador College survive the '70s? After another year of observing the college's inability to legitimize itself, its Board of Trustees' unwillingness to execute their responsibilities, and its administration's unresponsiveness to the real needs of the students or the problems of its alumni, our answer to that question is "No, it probably will not survive." And, if the attitude and character of its President, Garner Ted Armstrong, is indicative of the spirit which permeates it, then we would further add: "Ambassador College *should* not survive."

It is our hope that *Ambassador Report* will awaken many of those who are financially supporting Ambassador College into realizing exactly what it is they are supporting. Those of us who have gone to the Armstrong well and drunk of it know that its waters are not only bitter but poisonous. For us, the production of this report has been mentally and emotionally therapeutic. We only hope and pray that this issue's contents will spare others the expense, pain, and futility of the "Ambassador Experience."

-John Trechak

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### Letters

The following excerpts and condensations represent only a small portion of the letters we received during the past year. The original copies are on file with the Report. The names of the correspondents have been omitted to protect their privacy. A number of letters refer to *Ambassador Review*, the predecessor of *Ambassador Report*. They are included because of their relevance to this publication.

#### The Cover Set the Theme

The cover set the theme - the roaring lion devouring the innocent ones, trampling Christ under foot, and there can be no doubt you've told it the way it is. Hope you boys and girls are wearing your bulletproof vests. They wouldn't even need John 16:2 for an excuse!

Australia

I certainly enjoyed the first edition of *Ambassador Review* and am looking forward to receiving the second edition with great anticipation. Prior to receiving the first edition, I had done considerable personal research on the Pasadena situation, and 80% to 90% of the material contained was no surprise to me and fully corroborated my findings. The remainder of the material contained was shocking, to say the least, but through continued interim research it has also proven to be factual.

Arizona

After working at Ambassador College and supporting it with close to 26% of my income for over 15 years, I must say that while I love the people there, there is less and less regard for the truth at Ambassador College. Expediency reigns

supreme in the college and the church that supports it....

No college can long exist to serve the public which attempts to hide and suppress truth in a Hitlerian fashion. No college that muzzles faculty members as does Ambassador College can be recapturing true values. Please, *Ambassador Review*, I beg you as a [WCG] member in good standing to do all you can to help wake up or remove the leaders at Ambassador who are ruining Ambassador College. Please do all you can to help make it a shining light to the community - an institution dedicated to serving mankind.

California

Although I am quite loyal to the WCG, I nonetheless find your magazine of interest. This is mainly because I am in the habit of thinking for myself.

I really felt compelled to send a letter to WASC [Western Association of Schools and Colleges]. I am a senior here at AC [Ambassador College] and I care a great deal about this school. The church and the college are my life - not just a passing thing.

Although I detect a bit of bitterness in the June 1976 *Ambassador Review*, I still consider it a worthy contribution in stimulating the Worldwide Church. If only you had remained members! [Editor's Note: Many on the *Report* staff are members.] This church needs all the thinking people it can get. Like any loyal member, I am concerned with building, not tearing down the institution. And I personally feel that academic and religious freedom would be a step in the right direction. I look forward to your next issue. Thank you for an interesting magazine.

Ambassador College Student,  
California

*Editor: Readers may wish to write WASC at the following address: Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Sr. Colleges, Mills College, Oakland, CA 94613.*

We have, within the last few days, been handed a copy of the *Ambassador Review*. WOW! After reading it, we are sick to realize how misguided we've been all these years.

We have talked to two ministers and have been deeply hurt by their lack of concern for our "salvation." They refused to help us with our questions. One said we were crazy, that we were only looking for a way out, which is not true. They have both warned us to keep our mouths SHUT.

Florida

I can't tell you how happy I am that someone is doing something about the

Armstrong's. I have been a member of the WCG for the last 24 years, and I regret every nickel I ever gave them.

Florida

I feel badly because I worked for a man-god for over 10 years. Five of those years I was a local elder. I finally got my mind back. I found I didn't need the flying tit - you didn't put me on your list of those who have left mother Herbert!

It has been said you check your brain at the door when you go into Worldwide. This I believe.

Washington, D.C.

We were baptized members of the WCG since 1953, and for 22 years we devoted our whole lives to it. I was a deacon and sacrificed family, time and money to the point of losing my health and nearly lost my home before my closest friend left the church and had us listen to a couple of Dr. Martin's tapes. We cut ourselves free just two weeks after signing a "loyalty to the Armstrong" list. It was just like coming out of a dark dungeon into the light.

Oregon

*Editor. Readers may wish to write to Dr. Ernest Martin at the following address: Foundation for Biblical Research, P. O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102. Phone (213) 793-1144.*

There was an article in the first issue of *Ambassador Review* which shocked me very much. As I understood the letter and paragraphs in the magazine, the purpose was to point out and help clear up wrong practices and thus help it (the college) keep going. It was not shown that it was to support another religious sect, and the article about the Catholic Church being the right and only one was entirely out of line, I thought. I hope nothing like it will be in future issues.

Montana

*Editor: A few have written to us saying they were confused by the article you refer to. The author attempted to demonstrate that if Herbert Armstrong's arguments for proving the Worldwide Church of God is the one true church are taken seriously, they would much more logically point to the Roman Catholic church as the true church than to the WCG. The article was written in a satirical manner to point out the discrepancies in the WCG's reasoning.*

Well, some of your information did not prove too factual, like that about D. J. Hill, did it? Also there is a rumor going around that Messrs. Portune and Plache are coming back into the fold. It would be nice to be kept up to date.

Canada

*Editor: You're right. In fact, Mr. Trevor Higgins wrote informing us that he is still in the WCG. Our apologies to him for accidentally including his name in the "Executive Exodus" list in our 1976 issue.*

*As for the names you mentioned and others that have come to our attention, let us explain. We have discovered that in many cases it is virtually impossible to know whether some individuals are in or out of the WCG. For instance, in 1976 Richard Plache not only resigned from the WCG, but he also condemned it openly in the Los Angeles Times and began working for the Foundation for Biblical Research. Now, we hear he is again attending WCG Sabbath services, although apparently he is not on their payroll or preaching. We find this all a bit confusing as he also occasionally attends Sunday services at a local Protestant church. We're not criticizing him for any of this. We're simply pointing out that it is difficult to know whether some are actively supporting the Armstrong cult or not.*

*Al Portune has told us he is not planning to return to the Armstrong sect, church rumors and announcements notwithstanding.*

*Jon Hill has repeatedly by public conduct and private comment indicated that he is no longer an Armstrong "true believer." Yet, his name still appears in The Plain Truth staff box, and we have no reason to believe he is not being paid for his services.*

*In this issue we have updated the "Executive Exodus," adding a few names we previously neglected and deleting any which were in any way questionable.*

### **Lost House and Job**

I became ensnared in the Armstrong spider web in 1964 and became one of the leading men in the local church, and I still can't believe all the double standards of the leadership in their empire.

The nine years of life in the WCG were the most miserable years in my life, also the most costly. Money wise, tithes cost me about \$10,000. I also lost my new home because I couldn't pay Armstrong and make house payments too. So I blindly followed the teachings of the Armstrongs and lost my home. I also lost my job that I had been in for 10½ years because of all the time I had to be absent because of the commands of the church. My family and I lived in poverty for the rest of the time we were in the church. I finally started asking questions and couldn't get any answers from the church in 1971 and made my escape in 1973. Life has been getting better every day since.

England

After spending 15 years and over \$25,000 in donations, we are grateful to have retained our sanity, our marriage, and close relations with our children and family. Not all ex-members were so fortunate....

Washington

I have been reading the literature you sent me. I admire the stand you are taking. Keep it up. You may never know just how many you have helped. It really hurts to think that the money you so carefully scraped up and sent in [to the WCG] was used so uselessly. Many times I went without necessities "just to help the church." Now I am in my eightieth year, and if they knew I was reading your literature, they would disfellowship me without mercy.

Canada

My wife and I were involved for about 8 years with the Worldwide Church of God and during this time sent them \$100 to \$150 per month. We are now trying to extricate ourselves from the large debt incurred doing this and feel any small amount we are able to send to try and correct the terrible burden so many people suffer under would be a right and proper thing to do

Washington

### **Costs a Lot to Run a Church**

I would like to tell you of just one of my experiences with the WCG. About two years ago when I found out about the Armstrongs and read about tithing, I quit tithing but continued to give freewill offerings. The minister who had just moved here from Atlanta (Mr. Wooten) found out I was no longer tithing (obviously from a computer readout) and told me in no uncertain terms that since I was not tithing I should not occupy a seat [in church] . He said it costs a lot of money to run a church. This, after I had contributed over \$50,000 in the 12 years I was in the WCG. Not only this, but all literature from the WCG (*Plain Truth*, etc.) was immediately stopped.

Arkansas

I am 84 years old and I am a cripple, walking with two canes. I fell off a house roof onto a cement pavement, breaking and damaging my right hip. I have been rather emotional in regards to the church. I had built up a nest egg for my retirement. Armstrong had me believing that the end was near and he made appeal after appeal for funds for the work of God. I kept giving him extra each time, a thousand or two each time, until my savings were gone. I had 720 shares of Tsoro Oil stock which was a fast growing company. I was pretty well fixed for my retirement. I signed this over to the Worldwide Church to be used in God's work.

Knowing what I know now, I think you will find this stock in Armstrong's or Rader's portfolio. I never even received thanks for it. There was no receipt, only papers for me to sign and send back. I know I have been a sucker, for I have given the Worldwide Church over \$50,000.

## Pennsylvania

The following are my notes taken on a sermon given by Mr. John Pruner, pastor of the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, church on November 13, 1971. Although we were subsequently asked to destroy our sermon notes, this was one set I felt I had to keep. Mr. Pruner made it very clear that we, as church members, did not have to contribute offerings strictly according to the percentages given in the sermon, but it was strongly suggested by headquarters that we do:

### "Am I Handling My Finances God's Way?"

#### A. What does God Require From My Income?

1. First tithe - 10% of gross income --Lev. 27:30.
2. Second tithe - 10% of gross income - Deut. 12:5. Never borrow.
3. Third tithe - 10% of gross income - Deut. 26:12-15.
4. Regular offerings - should be 3% of gross income - Mal. 3:8.
5. Holy Day Offerings - should be 4% of gross income -- Deut. 16:16
6. Emergency Fund - send this directly to headquarters (no percentage given) - Deut. 15.
7. Fourth Year Fruit From Trees - Lev. 19:23, 25.
8. Firstfruits - Deut. 18:3-5. Don't give firstfruits to ministers, but estimate the value and send the money to headquarters.
9. Firstborn Male of Cattle - send money to headquarters.
10. Firstborn child - buy back with an offering sent to headquarters.

#### B. What Should We Voluntarily Contribute to God's Work?

1. Building Fund - 4% of gross income
2. Tithe of Tithe - 10% of second tithe
3. Loans to the Work
4. Gifts to the church
5. Special Emergency Gifts when the Work is in trouble
6. Library Fund
7. Recreational Fund
8. Spokesman Club Dues
9. Social Fund

## Pennsylvania

A friend received his *Ambassador Review* copy and let us read it. It's great! Hope it does some good. We thought we had so many friends in the WCG, but you guessed it, we didn't. Herbert W. Armstrong managed in 11 years to get all the money he could get out of us. So now in retirement we have no nest egg, only a lot of regrets. But I think now we've discovered we have a Savior, and it isn't HWA!

## Missouri

In the beginning of "AICF" [Ambassador International Cultural Foundation] , I donated \$750.00, which included a subscription to *Human Potential*. Also, there were requests for donations to support "Personal Campaigns" by headquarters in the Jacksonville area. To this I donated \$300.00. As you know, neither the *Human Potential* magazine or the Jacksonville campaigns became a reality. The above are two of many such rip-offs.

## Florida

I was captivated by the Armstrongs' broadcasts in 1959 and came to believe their claim that they were the one and only true church of God. At their insistence, I resigned my Air Force Reserve majority commission and pension rights, and later gave up my job with the Navy at a missile plant because the church frowned on work in the armament industry. This entailed loss of civil service pension rights. I leased 80 acres of land, went to work farming for a living, and gave myself over completely to serving one who led me to believe he was a true apostle of God. I served diligently and was later made a deacon in the local church.

In 1972 in a private conversation with a newly assigned minister, Bruce Vance, I mentioned that among other lesser doctrinal errors, they were keeping the Feast of Pentecost on the wrong day - that it should be on Sunday instead of Monday. He disfellowshipped me on the spot and later "marked" me to keep others from having any contact with me. No considerations whatever were made for my sacrifices for the church and many years of faithful service. He just completely cut me off. At no time had I ever been disrespectful or incorrect in my contact with him. When the church itself, a couple of years later, admitted their error and changed the day of observing Pentecost, they never came to apologize or to ask me back.

## Mississippi

### **Nearly a Suicide**

Our son nearly committed suicide three times, and we finally were forced to help him get some help through the state mental health department. He had been an honor student, selected for the National Honor Society, in music, an officer in several high school clubs, winner of speech and other contests in 4-H clubs, etc. He ranked in the 99 percentile on college aptitude tests, and he won a full scholarship to an Oklahoma university where he went for one year.

Our son gave up the fully paid scholarship to go to Ambassador College to learn "true knowledge." He was the first member of our family to be a member of the WCG, and he felt they were sincere in their seeking truth.

He had an inheritance to use for college purposes or vocational training. The

ministers told him he had to pay 10% of it as a tithe to the church. Another 10% was to be used for church conventions (feasts), and another 10% every three years had to be paid out of his inheritance for third tithes. I objected, for the money was not income, increase from labor or investments. The money was a gift/inheritance to be used for educational or vocational needs.... But they told my son to give it and he gave it.

What did the minister tell me as a result of my bringing the question to him and disagreeing with his instruction? He said I was the same as being in defiance to God himself, and that we needed to do what the ministers said, right or wrong, because Herbert W. Armstrong set the rules and he was God's only personal representative speaking the truth in this age since the original apostles. They told me I had never had an answered prayer and never heard any truth until I had come to the WCG. (Now we were beginning to hear what the WCG really taught which they refused to tell us before we started to go to their church.) They taught that it was our duty to follow the instructions of the ministry, regardless if it was right or wrong. The duty of the laymember was to obey and not question, and the responsibility of God was to remove the man from office if he was teaching wrong. We were told if we went contrary to what they said, we would lose our only chance at eternal life and burn in hell because now was our chance to have salvation, for they were the only true church and the only true ministers following Jesus Christ.

At first our son was happy to be in [Ambassador] College. It was sort of a big family all loving one another and feeling superior to the "ignorant blind" who did not know all those super things. He became arrogant. When he had problems, he would call home to discuss them, but when the "ministers or seniors" would tell him different answers, he naturally followed their counsel. He was being taught that he knew nothing right from his childhood training and that all his former education was wrong. He was told that nothing he had learned through his earlier years could be right because he had not been a member of the WCG and his parents had not been members. He had gone to a "harlot church" where no truth could have been gotten.

So our son rejected all the Bible he had (previously) heard read, especially from the New Testament, and when trials started coming two years later he had nothing to lean upon, having rejected all he had before he went to AC at age 19.... Mental confusion, mental disillusionment was the result!

Ambassador College, we found, was not interested in developing the true potential of the students, except as they could serve the needs of the WCG. When they found out his talents were not such as to serve the church, they asked him to leave after two years to do something else or go to some other college. But his credit hours did not fit into any of his previously chosen fields (and wouldn't have been accepted at any other college anyway), and now his college money was almost gone.

Having no education or vocational training to get a decent job, having all his money used on first, second, and third tithes, he had nothing left to start over on.

Also, at that time, if you did not "make it into the ministry," you were considered a failure and "lost your chance" at really amounting to anything. An inferiority complex ensued, and he became more and more a mental case.

They also taught that a man should hate himself, consider himself as dung!... Our son tried several things, but one blank wall came to another blank wall and one mental/emotional attitude led to another until he came to a complete dead end, suicidal, no hope situation in his own mind... Our son had a third mental breakdown before he could start upward to restoration. He hopes in a few more years to be back to where he was before he went to Ambassador College.

the mother of an Ambassador College student  
(state not for publication)

My two eldest sons are both members of the Armstrong group, and the first literature you sent out was confiscated by them. Perhaps they informed you not to send any more. That is not so. Enclosed is \$20. Please send the first material again and any that you have published since. Our family has suffered much because of this cult, and our eldest boy suffered mental and emotional derangement for two years. He was in torment and depression constantly, and we are still paying off the hospital bills. However, he did not leave the group. Our second son has started down the same trail, but our two youngest sons have seen what happened to their brothers and are very wary. What we can't understand is why they can't realize what they are doing to their lives. They seem to be totally brainwashed. Is there some way we can help them?

Minnesota

What really got the ball rolling for me was a book my wife brought home after she started back to work in mid-November of last year. In fact there were three of them. I had always thought that the identification of the United States and Great Britain was a sign that Herbert W. was a prophet, since I had always had a question in my mind about the greatness of these countries, which had to have a biblical explanation. That fateful night, she came in with Allen's *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* (1902), Rutherford's *Britain-Israel* and another by Gayer - all of which predated Armstrong. Then I knew he was a liar and a thief as well, since he did not footnote a single reference....

Louisiana

### **Separated Five Years**

My husband and I were separated by the church for about five years from January 1961 to the winter of 1966. It was then decided we were married after all. Our separation caused a great financial hardship on us and necessitated my seeking employment at the age of 54. My husband's health was not good, and he suffered a heart injury around the fall of 1965. They [the WCG] let me nurse him, but as soon as he was on his feet I had to leave. At first I was allowed to be his housekeeper but later this was changed because "it caused a stumbling block to

others." This separation caused severe mental and physical problems which are still with us to some degree. We are slowly overcoming the fear with which we were brainwashed from 1952 to 1974.

In 1971 my husband went on social security, and the minister said we had to tithe on the checks. It was the last half year of our "Third Tithe" year, and it took all of his monthly social security check to meet the three tithes. Living on my salary alone meant we borrowed money and while at it we borrowed \$300 extra to send in to headquarters when the call came from there asking for help - beg, borrow (and they should have added "steal") whatever we could. We sold some property and tithed on it, though it was sold at a loss and the money used to purchase it had already been tithed on. My husband took a cash retirement settlement, from the state instead of getting monthly checks. Reason? 1972 - only the church needed money. He also tithed on this cash settlement, though it had already been tithed on each month he was working. Altogether, we gave about \$30,000 to the Armstrong syndicate.

Incidentally, we did not leave the organization for any of the above reasons, but because when we stopped "taking their word for it" and really studied the Bible, we found so much error in their doctrines. After questioning some subjects, word came back to us that people in the church were being warned, "Steer clear of the .....s. They are on shaky ground." Even the deacons and deaconess (with whom I had been close) turned their backs on us before and after services and would give no explanation when I asked why. Our Bible says Christ is love, and such treatment was entirely unscriptural. This was the final straw and we left.

## California

As a direct result of the erroneous "Divorce and Remarriage" edict of the perfect, prestigious, prescient Pasadena prophet, Herbert W. Armstrong, I lived (?) alone from 1963 onward. Though divorced, I could not remarry. This momentous decision was given me personally by Raymond C. Cole and James L. Friddle, at that time two of HWA's top men.

Later, to add insult to injury, in the fall of 1964, I was ordered by James L. Lichtenstein, then HWA's personal rep. in our area, to quit my job. I was a civil servant at the local Air Force base. I did so, thus walking away from a well-paying job and security, giving up fifteen years of creditable Federal Civil Service, a liberal sick and annual leave system, and a good retirement. HWA's Worldwide Church of God justified this edict by stating that members' employment with any phase of the Department of Defense conflicted with their policy that no one was to serve their country in the military service. This was also expected to "avoid trouble for the church" in the future.

In the ensuing years I first worked for a fellow WCG member as a farmhand for 2½ years and at various part-time or seasonal low-paying jobs. Now I am at the age where when I approach a prospective employer, hat and application in hand, they very subtly reach for the 11-foot pole.

In retrospect, I personally learned two things of great value in my thirteen years as a member of the WCG: (1) How to live poor. (2) Why one should never bend over for any individual or group.

Washington

What has always disturbed me about Armstrongism is the way children were treated. I can still hear their pitiful cries as they were abused by their own parents. Future zombies, mental and physical wrecks, sadists and criminals are bound to come out of it. I was in Pasadena only nine months and I believe I went into shock almost immediately.

The first week I was there, in 1969, a young man and an older man who had to leave their wives committed suicide.

Washington

When my son was about 14 or 15 years old, I was invited to one of the Ladies' evenings of the Spokesmen's Club, and Mr. Robin Jones was the minister there. He came to me just before we went home and told me to tell my son Paul to get his hair cut. Actually, it wasn't long, just slightly longer at the back.... I told Mr. Jones that Paul said if he had it any shorter they would laugh at him at school. Do you know what Mr. Jones said to me? He said if he did not have it cut, my son, as young as he was, was to be thrown out of his home! I was really upset and worried.... I thank God that I didn't do as that so-called minister of God told me to do.

You see... I lost my husband when Paul was 6½ years old, and I can tell you he was bewildered and very uncertain and worried about losing me as I was all he had left.

Dr. Martin helped us both through a very difficult time in our lives, and I owe much to his kindness to us.

England

The minister was elated that we asked him to come visit us. We had a son who was attending Ambassador College and felt they were a sincere group of people.... Many of my questions the minister evaded. He said we'd learn the answers later....

The first thing the minister did was ask if we were a divorce-and-remarriage situation. I had been, 20 years before, married to another man who had been a fornicator and left me and our three children.

The minister said that since I'd been remarried... he would have to know all the

exact pre-divorce details. Because, if certain things were true, then before my husband and I could be baptised, we would have to separate.

The minister said I must come in for a conference to tell my story and that I must have someone that could testify that the facts were true. MY husband was very enraged that the ministers would put me through this ordeal. I had to go back and tell them everything that happened 25 years or so before.... they quizzed me about all the extremely personal morbid details. Finally they decided that my husband and I did not have to get a divorce to be in the church. But I had to get a man who could confirm my testimony to write what he knew.... He was a "friend" of my ex-husband who had run around with him from early childhood and knew all his past activities.

My husband and I, married around 20 years or so at that time, were one of the lucky ones, as were our children. But the grief and sorrow of some who had been forced to divorce because of some foolish childhood marriage was always around.... The children were torn from parents who loved them and who loved one another. These distraught people would talk to me again and again. I could sympathize because it almost happened to us! I did not think it was scriptural. It seemed a cruel misinterpretation of the Scriptures. But I tried not to judge what they were doing because at that time I was still in ignorance....

Another example was... a nice lady with two children. She said her husband had briefly been married (about a month) to a girl when very young.... Because of this they were told they had to separate and no longer be man and wife.... the children were shifted between husband and wife. At church, the ministers recommended that they merely talk to one another and try to avoid this as much as possible because it would only hurt them worse.

Eventually this woman moved to another town with the children to try to make the separation more endurable. They suggested that the woman try to find another husband, but the man was forever barred from remarrying as long as his first wife lived....

Later, in 1974, the WCG changed the policy and decided to no longer do this. But it was too late for those that had been forced to divorce and marry someone else.

Kansas

Just received *Ambassador Review* and it's just great. I wish it had been in existence before we ever heard of "god Armstrong." I'm sure my life would have been so different. To obey "god Armstrong" has cost me my health and has caused disharmony with my husband (where-to-fore we had a very happy marriage - but now it's almost hell). Also, my family has disowned me.

I used to listen to Garner Ted Armstrong speak of his happy marriage and "How to Have a Happy Marriage" until I was almost green with envy. And then one of Armstrong's ex-ministers told me that Shirley (GTA's wife) had attempted suicide

at least twice, because of her unhappy marriage and GTA's adultery. I can't for the life of me see how GTA and HWA can lie down at night and go to sleep knowing how they have conned the people out of so much, not to mention the deception. My heart aches for them with grief.

Texas

We were members of the WCG and dropped out five years ago because I didn't agree with their teachings. My husband and I fought like dogs and cats over it. They told my husband he might just have to put me away. Shortly after that we left the WCG and have learned much since....

Washington

I was a member of the WCG from February 1968 until December 1975. Today I am separated from my wife, and she has my youngest daughter and I have the three oldest children. She was baptized at the same time I was, and she blames "The Organization" for our separation and for wrecking our children's lives as well as our own.

I feel the biggest problem was that I gave a large amount of tithes and offerings, which in turn kept us at a poor level of living for seven years. Since I left "the Church," I have almost doubled my income and do not pay tithes and have a better life except for the longing and pain I have to go through because my wife of 18 years is no longer with us.

Canada

### **Takes Action**

In early December I called on the manager of radio station WGL, the oldest station in Ft. Wayne. I had a talk with him and accused the WCG of taking money under false pretenses. I also left him my copy of *Ambassador Review*. I have since learned that their contract with the Worldwide Church has been canceled. Would you please send me an additional copy of *Ambassador Review*? I will personally call upon the manager of another radio station carrying the GTA broadcast and also leave a copy of *Ambassador Review* with him....

Indiana

I am fighting for the lives of these pitiful victims of this vicious cult and remember that four of the slaves are my children and grandchildren whom I love dearly.... I am aiding the Citizens Freedom Foundation and the Committee Engaged in Freeing Minds in their struggle to expose all the cults (right now the emphasis is on "Rev." Moon). However, as soon as they finish Moon off (and even now they are listing the WCG as a cult to be exposed), they will start on the others.

Mississippi

*Editor: Readers who wish to write to these two organizations should write to: Citizens Freedom Foundation, Box 256, Chula Vista, CA 92012; and Ad Hoc National Committee Engaged in Freeing Minds, Box 5084, Arlington, TX 76011.*

### **What Made Us Do It?**

Even literature critical of the WCG unsettles, embarrasses, reminds me too much. From my point of view the "Ambassador experience" was a debacle, and my loud counsel to all of you who are expending the present portion of your very finite lifespans pursuing it is, Stop.

While an expose of the Armstrong operation's malfeasance will probably serve the end of reducing the number of their loyal adherents, a survey of the "Ambassador experience" surely ought not to scant consideration of the broad philosophical and psychological curiosities inherent in it. My correspondence with fellow apostates from the WCG frequently revolves around the question: What made us do it?

Indeed, not the least disturbing rumination on the "experience" is that we had or have the proclivity to it. A basic lack of reasonable humility (giving us the sense of God's scrutiny), a fear of error (leading to a surrender of personal autonomy), and a disgusting dilettantism and lack of patience, among many other things, brought us to affiliate with this man whose character is like ours in kind but different in degree by several orders of magnitude. Perhaps it is the fact that we see in Herbert Armstrong a caricature of ourselves that leads us, one fine day, to recoil from him.

I should be pleased if you would publish this as it speaks to a need to examine not just Armstrong but the climate in which he thrives - it examines the "cause rather than the effect," so to speak....

Your editorial policy on the matter seems obscure, but I have nothing to fear from exposure of these views in association with my name.

R. Stephen Estes, "B.A."  
A.C., Big Sandy, Texas (1973)

After twelve years of the WCG. I'm left financially drained, spiritually empty.... my home broken up by divorce, and alienated from my former friends. Can such an organization be of God? I think not and pray the day of reckoning may soon come for the Armstrongs.

Iowa

I just received your letter and was very happy with the news of the forthcoming, larger issue of *Ambassador Review*. Exposing the corruption of the WCG is not a pleasant nor an easy task (especially since many or perhaps most of its members will refuse to believe the truth about their so-called "Mother"), but

surely it is a necessary one. The Administration led by the Armstrongs is great in coverup and in "telling it like it isn't." I noticed recently there has been an increased effort to encourage - inspire - or otherwise induce members to tithe and contribute more generously. Letters were solicited to show the blessings of tithing. Circular reasoning is called upon to "prove" their point. When a tithe payer is blessed, it is attributed to tithing. When a tithe payer is not blessed, it is blamed on a bad attitude or lack of faith. For fourteen years, my family and I faithfully paid our tithes: First, Second, Third [tithes] , Tithe of a Tithe, gave offerings to the point of sacrifice, borrowed money to give when requested and our attitude was only the desire to give more, if possible, for the "Work." But where were the blessings? I lost jobs to keep "holy days," forfeited a career, and nearly "gave" myself and family into bankruptcy. The blessings surely must have been spirit and invisible, as we never saw them.

Members of the WCG call their beliefs "The Truth." We called the WCG "the True Church" and Mr. Herbert Armstrong was called "God's apostle." It was painful to learn that the WCG was not true, not a church, and not of God, at least not any more so than any other group or organization which may have made similar claims. We who left the WCG were accused of "abandoning ship," but the truth is, and Worldwide members should be made aware, that the Armstrongs and the hierarchial administration abandoned them long ago. The Bible was replaced by church literature and Armstrong (or Headquarters) interpretation, the apostles were replaced by HWA, and the church, the work, and great commission were elevated in priority and importance above even God Himself.

When "coming in" to the Worldwide Church, most of us felt the intense desire to share with all our loved ones what we thought to be a wonderful new truth. Now we who have been privileged to have been released from the bondage of the Worldwide Corruption (WCG) have the same intense desire to share a new and better truth with our Worldwide family and friends. Our aim is to help, not hurt, and forgive rather than condemn. I would sincerely urge all Worldwide Church members to carefully consider the evidence presented in *Ambassador Review* and to not be afraid to ask questions and demand answers. I am reminded of the words of scripture that say, My (God's) people are destroyed for lack of knowledge and were willingly ignorant (not knowing). To question the Armstrong system is not synonymous with questioning God. May we all have hearts responsive to God, eyes open to His true light, and ears that yearn for the pure expression of the very mind of God and always on guard against the deceit of men.

Missouri

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### Executive Exodus

Since 1973 dozens of the leading men and women of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God have left their positions because of frustration, matters of conscience, or/and disgust over doctrinal and organizational problems. The following list enumerates many former AC/WCG leaders who no longer actively support Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God.

#### WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRY

#### EMPLOYEES OF A.C. AND W.C.G

<b>Evangelists</b>	Barry Chase	<b>Local Elders</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	Bruce Clausen	Werner Gerlach
Raymond Cole	John Cheetham	Cliff Ackerson	Sir Anthony Buzzard	Nancy Cotton	Orlin Grabbe
Charles Hunting	Howard Clark	Terry Anderson	Frank Cerallo	Steve Gray	Garry Haggerty
Marion McNair	Kerry Daniels	Randell Bryson	Howard Colby	Jim Jensen	Marg Halford
Albert Portune Sr.	James Doak	Joseph Clayton	Olin Degge	Mary E. Jones	Dieter Heimke
	Tom Fish	John Gambrell	Richard Elfers	Mike Marlan	Mat Janssen
<b>Regional Directors</b>	Carl Fowler	Bud Garland	Dr. Vern Farrow	Ron Mills	George Johnson

George Kemnitz	Dale Haynes	Ted Gerringe	Dr. Marion Grady	Don Perriguet	John Kilburn
Walter Sharp	Keith Hoyt	Sam Gillespie	Berlin Guillory	Doug Taylor	Paul Kroll
Ken Westby	Robert Jenness	Rodney Gowan	Dr. Phil Knight	Jay Vorel	Betty Lau
	John Khouri	Clement Hendrickson	Ron Long	Len Zola	Don Lorton
<b>Pastors</b>	Richard Kilbury	William Hinson	Dr. James Napier		Cliff Marcussen
Gary Arvidson	Carl Koellner	Mel Jennings	Larry Peterson	<b>Editorial</b>	Bob McGuinness
Cecil Battles	James Malone	Russell Johnson	Gary Prather	Gary Alexander	Jim Morrison
Fred Boyce	Roger Malone	Hilbert Maasch	Dr. John Price	Amy Bowman	Robert Neitsch
Fred Brogaard	Kerry McGuinness	Sylvester Mayhill	James Ribb	Cindy Carter	Barbara Nestor
A1 Carrozzo	Bob McKibben	Carl Miller	Arlen Shelton	Donnajean Clausen	David Ord
Bryce Clark	John Mitchell	Ben Morrison	Dr. Robert Stevens	Neil Colton	Mary Jo Payne
Arthur Craig	Billy Nettles	Bruce Nedrow	Dr. James Tabor	Beth Dalton	Jim Rector
Tom Hall	Wayne Phillips	Charles Nichol	Dan Truhitte	Larry Dalton	Gail Roberts
Dr. Ernest Martin	Al Portune Jr.	Martin Nichol		Harry Eisenberg	Bill Schuler
Bill McDowell	John Portune	Gary Pavlo	<b>Television</b>	Don Faast	Jack Susco
Elmer McElroy	Glenn Purdy	Enrique Ruiz	Mike Allard	Sue Flesher	Mack Taylor
John Pruner	Daryl Reedy	Artie Satterfield	Joe Bauer	Dick Gagel	Charles Vinson
Don Prunkard	Wayne Shiflet	Don Schwaab	Kathy Baumer	Raouf el-Gammel	Bill Whitehart
Paul Royer	Don Smith	Jack Smock	Peter Baumer	Robert Gentet	Charles Wilkinson
Mark Salyer	Mel Turner	Eldon Stewart			
Paul Zapf	Sebrian Wesley	Bill Sutton			
	Dick Wiedenheft	Gordon Upshaw			
<b>Preaching Elders</b>	Milo Wilcox	Ron Upshaw			
Larry Bathurst	Ernest Williams				
Oliver Batte	Tom Williams	Arthur Williams			
Arch Bradley		Carl Wilmer			
		Richard Zimmerman			

#### **SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL**

Clyde Brown, supervisor of Ambassador College Press bindery

Olin Degge, director of TV Research

Allen Dexter, assistant manager, Personal Correspondence Dept

Robert Duskus, church attorney

Ken Fischer, manager, Marl Processing, Terminal Section

Mike Ghourdjian, assistant manager, Data Processing Computer Operations  
Mike Holman, manager, Data Processing Computer Operations  
Keith Hunter, director, Data Processing  
Roy Hunter, supervisor, Mail Processing Quality Control  
Bill Laver, manager, Letter Answering Dept., Bricket Wood  
Morgan Olsen, benefits manager, Personnel Dept  
Hod Pomeroy, investment consultant, Business Office  
Gary Reid, manager, Data Processing Systems Development  
Dr. Virgil Riley, Ambassador College physician  
Van Robison, payroll manager, Business Office  
Robert Seltzer, manager, Personnel Dept.  
Kenneth Storey, manager, Space Planning, Business Office  
John Walker, manager, Personnel Dept

**OTHER PERSONNEL**

Dwight and Karan Armstrong  
Ms. Leona McNair  
Ms. Enrique Ruiz

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### The Missing Dimension In Ambassador College- ACCREDITATION

Ambassador College (AC) has once again failed to receive regional accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). WASC did extend candidacy for another two years, but, although this was encouraging, this extension should not be regarded as a guarantee of imminent accreditation. When Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) founded AC, he said he was establishing it for a definite and far-reaching purpose and promised to maintain standards on a high level "to insure full accreditation before the graduation of the first senior class" (*Ambassador College Catalog*, 1947-48). Twenty years later in 1968 AC was still looking forward to the possibility of becoming accredited. In 1976, Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), president of the college, declared optimistically, "We're pursuing accreditation, and we believe we're going to get it" (Bible Study, Feb. 27, 1976). Later that same year HWA informed his congregation that "the way had been cleared for the accreditation of Ambassador College" (sermon, Mar. 6, 1976). But in June 1977, almost 30 years since HWA had founded AC, WASC again voted to deny accreditation to Ambassador.

To most students, faculty, and administrators this came as a crushing blow. Many were banking on the idea that the college was for all practical purposes accredited. AC had been transformed from a ministerial training school to a real academic community. Many felt that AC's stature had progressed to the point that WASC should have, at the very least, granted provisional accreditation to the school. For what reasons then was AC denied accreditation? Were the problems that caused the denial academic in nature or blatant continuation of strong-armed administrative practices? It is important that these reasons be discussed so one can understand why AC has consistently missed the goal of accreditation.

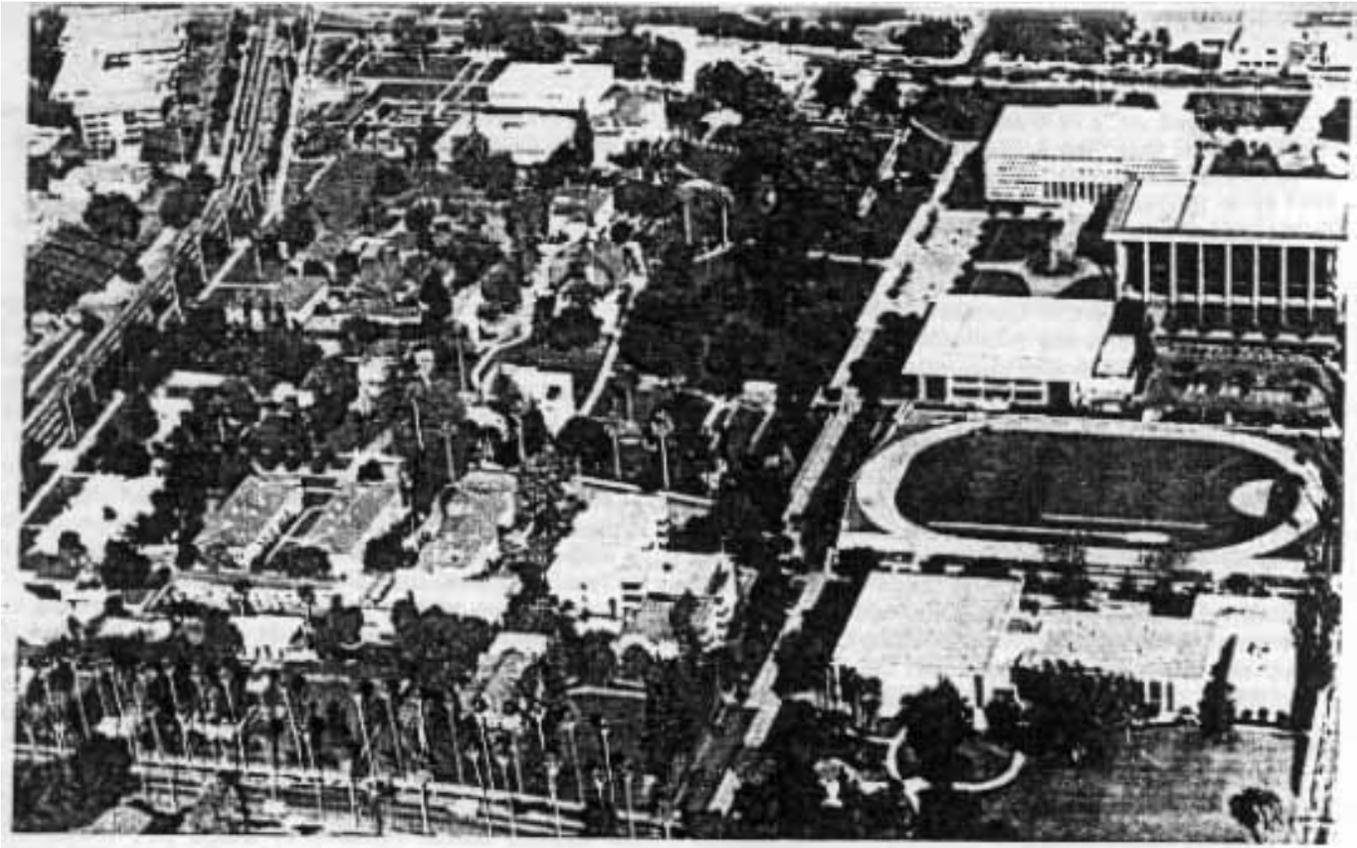
It must be noted that AC was not denied accreditation because of one or two picky points. In its letter of denial to the college WASC listed no fewer than 13

recommendations that would have to be implemented before the college could become accredited:

- Plans for alleviating space problems in the library and elsewhere, and provisions for employment of additional fulltime faculty should be given high priority.
- Without abridging the present supportive relationship between Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God, a complete separation of church and college must be established and maintained. This would also make possible financial reporting more in line with standard college practices.
- Since several persons hold major roles in both the church and college, unusual care must be taken to avoid the conflict of interest which such dual responsibilities can generate.
- Each department should assess its capabilities and limitations so that plans for the future are in harmony with an institutional commitment to carefully controlled growth.
- The proportion of the budget devoted to physical plant and support services should be reviewed so a more equitable relationship with the academic program can be established.
- A program to help members of the board of trustees understand their duties should begin immediately and should be a continuing and explicit effort.
- The executive committee of the trustees should have its role, including authority and composition, developed and assigned by the full board.
- Faculty involvement in such areas as budget development and handbook revision should be sought out and formalized.
- Administrative relationships and titles need to be stabilized and a comprehensive management study undertaken.
- Procedures for involving students in campus government need to be reviewed, and help for students should be as responsive as possible to actual student needs.
- Course sequence needs to be made more realistic, and facility equipment in the joint sciences should be upgraded substantially.
- A conscious effort needs to be undertaken to insure that able and dedicated women on the faculty are appointed to committees concerned with full college policies.
- Steps should be taken as soon as possible to see that the campus is prepared for an OSHA (occupational safety) inspection.

One should notice that well over half of these points deal with difficulties at the administrative level-most of which WASC had warned the college about time and again. Because the Armstrongs are bent on maintaining the political status quo and have only implemented minimal cosmetic changes, one might seriously ask if Ambassador will ever be recognized as a legitimate four-year college.

WASC did say, however, that AC's academic posture is moving closer toward "the mainstream of private higher education." Many administrators, members of the faculty, and students have worked arduously formulating a curriculum, structuring course outlines, and generating reports for the various committees and task forces. But all their efforts will be in vain if they do not confront these administrative problems.



### **Aerial view of Ambassador College's opulent Pasadena Campus**

Six major areas were covered in WASC's evaluation report of its March 21-24, 1977 visit. For the sake of clarity and continuity these same areas of study will form the basic outline for this article. It must be determined whether Ambassador College is actively and seriously seeking accreditation or merely mounting another monumental snow job with the hope of pawning off more cosmetic changes as genuine compliance to WASC's recommendations.

**I. Administration.** On the surface AC has undergone substantial administrative changes since WASC's 1974 visit. Foremost of these was the appointment of a new president. (At the time of the 1974 evaluation, Herbert Armstrong held the dual titles of chancellor and president of the college; currently Garner Ted Armstrong is president of the college.) In addition, AC's Board of Trustees has again been reconstructed by the Armstrongs. (The board has been enlarged from seven to fifteen members.) But important changes were still being made as late as mid-March of 1977, less than two weeks before the site visit. WASC noted this and stated that although the ability to change quickly was impressive, "rapid change can also suggest that administration is not taken very seriously [and]... that precise relationships and clearly defined areas of responsibility simply do not exist" ( *WASC Evaluation Report*, 1977).

This lack of clearly defined administrative responsibility exists because of the authoritarian governing policies practiced by the Armstrongs and their lackeys in both the Worldwide Church of God and AC. Because of the absence of a working system of checks and balances at AC, changes can be-and often are-made rapidly without evaluation. This authoritarian approach to administration has no place in an academic institution. If Ambassador is truly desirous of accreditation, it must make a sincere effort

to separate itself from this heavy-handed practice of "church government." If the new Board of Trustees will take its rightful position in the area of governance of Ambassador College, it is more than likely that these problems can be solved.

But what about the Board of Trustees? Is it a viable working body or an extension of the Armstrong authority machine?

Since 1974 the physical complexion of the board has changed substantially. When the evaluation committee visited the college in October 1974, there were seven members on the board. Six of them were ministers (HWA, GTA, Ron Dart, Dibar Apartian, Ben Chapman, and Herman Hoeh). The sole nonminister on the board was Shirley (Mrs. Garner Ted) Armstrong. At that time the examiners recommended that the board should be enlarged and that "...there should be more of a 'mix' in Board composition, even to the extent of allowing non-Worldwide Church of God representation..." (*WASC Evaluation Report*, 1974). Subsequent to that suggestion the board was enlarged to fifteen-eight new members were appointed and took their places by the original seven. None of these changes in size or membership substantially altered the political composition of the board, however. This basic structure existed until mid-March of 1977.

Just prior to this year's evaluation committee visit, AC officials decided to comply more strictly with WASC's 1974 recommendations. In the interest of disclaiming the practice of nepotism and possible accusations of conflict of interest (especially in the case where a board member was also a college administrator or if a person was a member of both the college and church board) and in order to provide for a greater "mix," the composition of the membership was changed. AC's *1976 Institutional Self-Study Report* (p. 98) boasted that "the Board has been expanded to fifteen members from varying backgrounds."

It is interesting to note that the majority of these "members from varying backgrounds" are or have been high-ranking church officials who receive some kind of monetary remuneration (either salary or retirement) from the college or the WCG. Current members of the board are Herbert W. Armstrong (chancellor of the college, pastor general, and self-proclaimed apostle of the church), Stanley R. Rader (vice-president for financial affairs; his firm audits the books for the college and church), Frank Brown (minister), Jack Elliott (retired), David Jon Hill (semiretired evangelist), Brian Knowles (minister and managing editor of *The Plain Truth*), Jack Martin (employee), Raymond McNair (evangelist), Richard Rice (minister), Harold Treybig (minister), Dibar Apartian (evangelist), C. Wayne Cole (evangelist and head of the Canadian ministry), Harold Jackson (minister and head of the black African "Work"), Elbert Atlas (minister), and Van Lisman (optometrist and laymember of the WCG). All are members of the Worldwide Church of God. (WASC's recommendation of allowing non-Worldwide Church representation was evidently ignored.) Although these men (there are no women on the board) may in fact come from varying backgrounds, it is hard to see how one could consider that this change has altered the situation significantly. Because of their close relationship with the WCG, their ability to operate independently from the church must be questioned.

On March 15, 1977, several days prior to the WASC visit, a board meeting was called. This meeting was designed to belatedly instruct the board members about their responsibilities and functions. Ralph Helge (attorney for AC and the man instrumental in drawing up the most recent *Ambassador College Handbook*, as well as much of the "new" board's policy and procedure) lectured to the new and continuing members about the parameters of their authority. In summary the material outlined by Helge stated that

board members must be members of the WCG in good standing; the board is empowered to nominate and elect its own members; its primary responsibility is the setting of general policies; and it has delegated authority to the president to implement them. All administrative officers are answerable to the board, including the president. If these indications are accepted on face value, one would assume the Board of Trustees is finally in a position of authority and capable of instituting changes that will assure the accreditation of the college. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Just before the adjournment of the March 15 board meeting, President Armstrong interjected the following disclaimer.

"In case anyone has the slightest little idea, 'Well my, doesn't this look like we're putting in a totally different system of government?' let me *assure* you, let me *assure* you that the... government of God, from the top down-meaning my father in his position and me in mine-will be secure, and there is no diminution or dissolution of church government" (Board of Trustees meeting, Mar. 15, 1977).

President Armstrong made it perfectly clear that he expected no power struggle or exercise of power on their part. In essence the Armstrongs have established another "rubber stamp" Board of Trustees.

More evidence that shows President Armstrong feels he is above the board's authority rather than under it is found in a statement he made in his "Personal" in the July 18, 1977, issue of the *Worldwide News*:

"...A search for qualified lay-membership representation on the board is under way, and I am evaluating a number of dossiers submitted for presentation to the board at an early time...."

According to the official organizational report submitted by AC to WASC just previous to the evaluation committee's visit, the president is appointed by and is subject to the board. Since this is the case, what authority does GTA have in reviewing these dossiers in preparation for presentation to the board? Rather, this should be the function of the board itself. Either this is a classic example of the tail wagging the dog (in which case the board should remind the president with regard to the proper chain of authority), or it is a blatant confirmation that the Board of Trustees is the sham it always has been.

In essence, what is being exhibited here is nothing more than unabashed double-talk. It is no wonder, then, that WASC noted some confusion among faculty members as to "what is expected or allowed them in matters of college governance generally, or even in academic planning" (*WASC Evaluation Report, 1977*). Although AC does have a statement (of sorts) on academic freedom and responsibility (which was drawn up by the college's legal department without faculty consultation or input), it is ambiguous and confusing, to say the least, and must be categorized as more of the same-unadulterated doubletalk. The statement that was printed in the *Ambassador College Handbook* in section 4.2 follows:

"Academic freedom shall be understood to mean that the faculty member is encouraged in the pursuit of knowledge and truth within the area of his instruction and is expected to teach different viewpoints about secular knowledge."

Without an exact definition of what is meant by "secular" knowledge this statement is meaningless. On the surface "secular" knowledge could be interpreted as meaning anything not religious. This would be the most likely interpretation for a person to chose

if uninitiated to the WCG's special approach to education. The WCG does not accept "secular" knowledge of and by itself because it claims all knowledge has its spiritual dimension. All knowledge must be evaluated from a particular spiritual perspective. Unless one views all knowledge in line with the established view of those in charge (i.e., HWA and GTA), then he is accused of being out of line with the teachings of the church and dealt with accordingly.

Under no circumstances could AC's statement on academic freedom be defined as strong and definitive. In fact, because of the limitations within the statement, it does not even conform to the current interpretation of academic freedom by the American Association of University Professors who stated:

"If a limitations clause at a church-related institution leads to elimination of the basic expressions of academic freedom, the institution has lost its credibility as a member of the academic community" (*AAUP Bulletin*, Vol. 61 [Spring 1975], p. 57).

Ambassador College must clear up the confusion regarding the policy or rather the lack of a policy on academic freedom. A refusal to do so may result in a loss of key faculty members as well as continued denial of accreditation.

In a recent move to comply with WASC's suggestion that AC should become separate from the WCG in financial affairs, President Armstrong appointed Dr. James Stark (who was chairman of AC's Business and Economics Departments) to replace Ray Wright (who held the position of business manager for Ambassador College, the church, and AICF) in the position of business manager for Ambassador College. But this is just a small step. WASC emphasized that much remained to be done before the college could present a "truly convincing" picture of financial accountability. Foremost among their criticisms was the intertwining of assets between church and college. They also stated that AC "would benefit substantially from a very comprehensive management study, including a thorough audit, by a nationally recognized firm" (*WASC Evaluation Report*, 1977). The institution's financial records are currently audited by the accounting firm of Rader, Cornwall, and Kessler (a clear example of conflict of interest, since Rader is a member of the college Board of Trustees and holds other major positions within the institution). If Ambassador desires to become and remain accredited, it really has no choice "but to demonstrate that the college is a distinct entity from the Church."

The overlapping of church governance with the administration of the college has no place in Ambassador-especially if AC truly expects to become accredited. The Board of Trustees should exercise the power that is rightfully theirs and institute the changes needed to clear the way for full regional accreditation. (It is highly unlikely that this will ever take place, however, because 13 of the 15 board members are payed by either the church or the college-Garner Ted signs the checks.) If the Armstrongs continue to thwart the decentralization of administrative power, WASC will be forced to again deny AC accreditation.

**II. Physical Facilities and Equipment.** Only brief comment is necessary for this category. It goes without saying that the campus grounds are beautiful and create an environment of serenity. A major drawback confronting the college, however, is the severe shortage of space and in many instances equipment. The evaluation committee summed up its feelings in this area by stating:

"The cost of maintaining such a magnificent campus needs to be scrutinized carefully, however, so that

the College cannot be justly accused of being more interested in how a program is accommodated than in the program itself. A lovely facade is no substitute for a solid, if plain, academic effort" (*WASC Evaluation Report, 1977*).

**III. Library and Other Learning Resources.** Since WASC's 1974 visit, AC's Library and Learning Resources Department has grown and developed into a more important and viable resource in the academic community.

Currently this department is housed within five buildings. WASC considered the scattered physical locations and inadequate storage facilities a major liability in this area and suggested that housing this department under one roof would alleviate these problems plus speed up the process of converting to a single classification system. (The library is in the process of changing from the Dewey Decimal System to the Library of Congress System.) Also, foremost among WASC's suggestions was that AC should increase the library's budget to enable it to hire three or four full-time staff members and that the current budget for library material be continued with annual increments for inflation.

For the most part these suggestions seem straight forward and will not cause undue hardship on AC to implement-that is, if AC is granted ownership of the Vista del Arroyo Hotel property and there is no shortage of funds.

It must be pointed out, however, that AC's library is another example of administrative lethargy. Although in many ways the library has made tremendous strides in overcoming blatant inadequacies, overall the facilities are still inadequate to meet the needs of the students and faculty of AC.

These points were glossed over and in some cases completely deleted from AC's official *1976 Institutional Self-Study Report*, which was prepared specifically for WASC. In fact, the administration will again have to stand accused of trying to snow the evaluation committee. The original report submitted by the special student-faculty task force that studied the library and the other learning resources was deceptively altered by upline administrative officials. What AC published in the self-study report and what the student-faculty task force actually wrote were two different things.

For example, under the heading "Student Questionnaire Results," the library task force reported:

"Students strongly indicated that the study facilities of the A.C. Library are inadequate. Two hundred ninety-three (63 percent) responded that they spend less than 10 percent of their study time in the Library. One hundred thirty-five responded that the Library is too congested, and 59 reported that too much noise is a problem. Fifty-eight stated that better study areas are needed" (p. 8).

When the report of the library task force was published by AC's administrators in the self-study, all that they allowed to be retained from the original report was the following:

"Students indicated that there were not enough study stations" (p. 76).

Another case in point was the section on the appraisal of facilities. Notice what the original student-faculty committee reported in their task force report:

"Results of the March 1976 surveys conducted by the Library and Learning Resources Task Force indicate that students and faculty of Ambassador College find library facilities *inadequate* for their present needs" (Library Task Force Report, pp. 10-11).

Now notice how the text of the task-force report was radically altered by the administration. The self-study reported just the opposite:

"Results of surveys indicate that students and faculty of Ambassador College find library facilities *adequate* for their present needs" (1976 Institutional Self-Study Report, p. 78).

In this same appraisal section under the category of "Funding" a similar altering is found. First, notice the original evaluation of the task force:

"Collection deficiencies have arisen because funds for library development have not been commensurate with the rapid growth of the curriculum. Since the 1973-74 academic year, 264 new courses have been introduced into the curriculum. While there have been modest increases for current journal subscriptions and reference materials, course-related book expenditures have remained essentially at the 1972 level.... Because 264 new courses have been introduced since 1973-74, appropriation of between \$198,000 and \$211,000 beyond the normal operating budget should have been made. Unfortunately, these funds have not been made available; therefore, library development has not kept pace with the rapid growth of the curriculum" (Task Force Library Report, pp. 14-15).

Now read how AC's leaders tried to cover up the library's real problems by publishing statements diametrically opposite to what the task force found and reported:

*"Certain collection deficiencies resulted because funds for library development have been limited. However, a special \$25,000 appropriation for library development was included in the 1976-77 budget. The proportion of institutional expenditures for library operations is in line with the 1975 Standards for College Libraries. Special funding such as the \$25,000 appropriation should help to overcome any long-term collection deficiencies"* (1976 Institutional Self-Study Report, p. 80).

These changes did not constitute a minor rewording here and there, but were underhanded attempts by those at high administrative levels to create a better picture than actually existed by (1) distorting the facts and (2) withholding negative information found in AC task-forces reports. One wonders how AC can claim to be a character-building institution if its leaders are guilty of such deception. Obviously those in control at AC are more interested in the cosmetic appearance of AC than in its inner strength or weakness. Rather than appropriate enough money for the library, they chose instead to build four tennis courts, to contribute \$250,000 to build a playground in Jerusalem, and to pour six million dollars into *Quest/77*.

**IV. Educational Programs.** Ambassador College offers a broad range of majors for such a small college. On the surface it appears to be a well-rounded program. In terms of facilities and the logistics of implementing these programs in certain areas, there needs to be a greater coordination. While solving these difficulties is of major importance and will take some time, they are for the most part growing pains which will disappear with the development of the faculty and a careful analysis of each program.

**V. Instructional Staff.** Since the fall of 1974, the faculty of Ambassador College has increased in size from 72 to 132 (1976 Institutional Self-Study Report, Table 11, p. 52). Academically the faculty composition has provided the strength that has allowed the college to reach its current level of academic professionalism. A major weakness that

must be confronted, however, is that many are only part-time personnel and cannot devote full attention to the needs of a growing institution.

A problem that the college may be facing in the future, however, is the loss of key personnel-especially those who are not members of WCG. In light of the problems concerning academic freedom and tenure, plus the question of whether or not AC is making strides to solve its administrative problems, some instructors are reevaluating their professional careers and are wondering if they are not just wasting their efforts because of the lack of commitment on the part of the Armstrong administration to allow the necessary changes. Unless AC administrators quit their foot-dragging, Ambassador may stand to lose more than a few instructors. Without a strong faculty AC cannot expect to be accredited.

**VI. Student Activities.** The college offers a wide range of student support services that are, for the most part, controlled by the administration. Student body officers are handpicked and appointed by the administration rather than elected in a general student body election. WASC even suggested that the college should "study the feasibility of selecting student body officers through elections rather than appointment by the administration" (*WASC Evaluation Report, 1977*). President Armstrong has made it perfectly clear, however, on several occasions that "democracy will not flourish at Ambassador College."

Since such doctrinal teachings of the church pervade even the area of student government, it isn't surprising to find that freedom of speech is also in short supply. Censorship of the *Portfolio*, AC's student newspaper, is an example of this. Any subject which is considered too controversial will be summarily axed from an issue. If an article or editorial disagrees with some administrative policy, the same thing happens. This past spring one of the *Portfolio* staff reporters wrote an article criticizing the extravagance of a particular party and dance that happened to be President Armstrong's brainchild. Needless to say, his article was never printed. But to top that off, President Armstrong called the student into his office for a conference. The student was threatened with dismissal and loss of a scholarship. This kind of action can only be detrimental to the college as a whole.

If students subject themselves to this kind of action, they are only kidding themselves. With the obvious lack of practice of academic freedom for the students, it seems unlikely that the institution will be accredited in the near future.

**Conclusion.** In the past four years Ambassador College has experienced tremendous academic growth-which can be attributed to the maturity and dedication of the faculty and some members of the administrative staff. Ambassador has been transformed from a vocational training center for the Worldwide Church of God into an institution of higher learning. It has come of age and must separate itself from the Worldwide Church of God and its government.

So far, the Armstrongs' selfish desire to maintain their rigid control over the institution-even to its detriment-has prevented it from becoming accredited. But while the Armstrongs must bear the main responsibility for AC's inability to achieve accreditation, the other administrators, faculty, and especially board members who claim their hands are tied in the matter will also be held accountable because of their silence. For by their silence they in essence condone the chicanery.

Students who have been lured to AC by the siren song of the finest this and the finest that, who have listened to the hollow promises of imminent accreditation, and who have wasted their money and time on a practically invalid degree are the real victims. Many who have gone back to pursue higher degrees at other colleges found that they were forced to backtrack-sometimes for four years before they could continue into a Master's or Ph.D. program. A few have been more fortunate and have only had to pick up a few credits in core courses to pursue their desired degree. But no one needs the problems associated with an unaccredited degree.

In the final analysis it boils down to this: Unless AC's Board of Trustees makes a definite decision in the next few months to honestly alleviate the Armstrong authoritarian stranglehold on them, it is more than likely that accreditation will continue to be Ambassador's missing dimension in education.

*-Margaret D. Zola*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### The Booklets Nobody Wants to Talk About

Since its inception in 1947, Ambassador College (AC), in conjunction with the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), has published dozens of religiously oriented booklets on a vast number of intriguing subjects. These unique booklets, most of which claimed to bring some "new truth" to light, were primarily responsible for bringing thousands of sincere people into the doctrinal embrace of the WCG. Hundreds of teenagers, including many with previous college experience, decided to attend AC because they had been convinced by AC's booklets that AC disseminated knowledge no other college in the world taught or even knew of.

In the last few years many of the key booklets that built AC and the WCG have been discontinued-more often than not due to flagrant error-or rewritten and drastically watered down. AC personnel and WCG members were never told why these booklets were dropped or heavily revised. However, *Ambassador Report* feels the AC student and the WCG member are entitled to know the reasons, which are stated in the following obituaries:

**The Proof of the Bible**-For years this booklet, along with *Does God Exist?*, was thoroughly read and studied by all aspiring to become a baptized member of the WCG. Any person who counselled for baptism used to be asked if he believed in and had proved the Bible was definitely God's word. Those who hadn't read AC's booklet on the subject had a difficult time answering the minister's questions.

Yet in 1972, this fundamental booklet was mysteriously discontinued. The reason? In it Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) dogmatically declared that skeptics could disprove the Bible and God's very existence if they would go to the Mideast

and construct even a small city on the site of New Tyre. In 1969 it was brought to the attention of AC theologians that the area of ancient Tyre was covered by the buildings of Sur and had been for many decades. If you desire to know more about this booklet's glaring inconsistencies, read the accompanying article titled "Herbert Armstrong 'Disproves' the Bible."

**1975 in Prophecy**-Of all HWA's booklets, this one is perhaps the most shocking and terrifying one he ever authored. It attempted to graphically portray the terrifying events prophesied in the Bible that he felt would befall mankind between the time he wrote (in the mid-fifties) and Christ's return-which HWA and the WCG felt would occur in 1975, if not before.

Each passage in the booklet seemed designed to strike fear into the reader and cause him to "get right with God" quickly-HWA's way, of course. Notice some of the things he declared:

"Most Europeans are becoming distrustful of the United States.... They are thinking more and more about the coming United States of Europe! We Americans, with the British, gave them the idea .... They are going to unite against us!... The stage is all set! All that's lacking now is the strong leader-the coming Fuehrer! ... Probably Germany will lead and dominate the coming United States of Europe" (p. 4).

"That Nazi organization went underground! Their plans for coming back have been proceeding, under cover, since 1945! Already Nazis are in many key positions-in German industry-in German education-in the new German army!.. But this time the Nazis... plan to head and dominate a United States of Europe.... they plan to strike their first blow... on the centers of American industry!... You'll find this prophesied in Daniel 2 and 7, and more specifically in the 17th chapter of Revelation" (pp. 5-7) (HWA's excessive emphasis removed throughout).

On pages 11, 12, and 13 are pictures of extreme flooding and drought in the U.S. accompanied by alarming statements like this:

"While modern science and industry strive to prepare for us a push-button leisure-luxury-world by 1975, United States Assistant Weather Chief I. R. Tannahill warns us unofficially to really fear 'the big drought of 1975.' But the indications of prophecy are that this drought will be even more devastating than he foresees, and that it will strike sooner than 1975-probably between 1965 and 1972!" (p. 10.)

As the booklet progresses, HWA reiterates that "the German-dominated European combine will blast our [U.S.] cities and industrial centers with hydrogen bombs" (p. 14). He adds: "And so now God is about to punish!... It's later than you think!" (p. 18.) Then HWA boasts that "these prophecies are as certain as tomorrow's sun" and proceeds to prophesy: "Millions of lukewarm inactive professing Christians will suffer martyrdom-and that before the anticipated push-button leisure-year of 1975 dawns upon us!" (p. 20.)

To provoke even greater consternation in the reader's mind and to create a sense of urgency, he concludes: "You have been warned!... You can take this lightly, let it slip from your mind.... If you do, you have now read your fate-and I say to you on authority of God Almighty that it is absolutely sure!" (p. 31.)

As history has shown, HWA's "inspired" warnings supposedly based on divine authority were nothing but the apocalyptic ravings and vain imaginations of a misled, self-styled prophet claiming the authority of God Almighty. But one doesn't need to fear HWA or his predictions anymore when he claims to speak with God's authority, according to Deuteronomy 18:22: "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him" (RSV).

By 1969 AC officials decided it would be wise to remove the booklet from public scrutiny, realizing HWA's predictions didn't appear to be panning out. The booklet's obvious anti-German bias was proving to be an acute and continuing embarrassment to the Armstrongs as they began courting European and German leaders. Furthermore, the booklet set dates for specific events, and these dates appeared to be inaccurate even then.

Though the booklet suffered from a terminal case of typographical diarrhea-HWA's excessive use of italicized and capitalized words used to stress the extreme "importance" of his "inspired" message-the gruesome illustrations were considered by AC officials to be even more distasteful. In view of these liabilities, the booklet was quietly sentenced to death and killed.

If you haven't yet read this booklet, *Ambassador Report* urges you to. We can promise you it'll open your eyes! But whatever you do, you have been warned!

**Divorce and Remarriage**-How often HWA crowed that only the WCG, of all the world's churches, was fulfilling the last verse of Malachi: turning the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. A few thinkers long had trouble squaring the boast with statements in this booklet that forced any couple to split apart and live separately if either member had a living former mate and wanted to become a WCG member and inherit eternal life.

In late 1973 AC published HWA's revised edition, incorporating the same adamant stand as the 1953 version but adding a few more erroneous proofs. Because of the controversy that had already been aroused, HWA sent the manuscript to the press, insisting no one be allowed to see it and completely bypassing the normal editorial channels. When the finished booklet appeared, the controversy intensified. During the time of the WCG's split in early 1974, the booklet was withdrawn by HWA at the urging of Al Portune, Robert Kuhn, and Stan Rader to avert an even bigger crisis.

At the WCG's ministerial conference in mid-1974, a complete reversal of the previous merciless D&R policy was announced by both Armstrongs. It was heralded as a revelation from God. (Actually, Garner Ted Armstrong [G TA] later confessed in 1976 that he had known this "new truth" on D&R for over 6 years. Also WCG members had previously shown WCG ministers several books that contained essentially what the Armstrongs now claimed was new revelation.) A hastily thrown together study paper was handed to the assembled ministers a

few days later. This paper faced for the first time the long-ignored "Pauline permission" of I Corinthians 7 which recognized the validity of divorces obtained by an unconverted person.

For months afterward WCG officials attempted to write a new booklet on the subject, but they were unable to come to a consensus on what the booklet should say and afraid to bring their efforts to HWA's attention. So today, the WCG has no booklet available to the general public explaining its beliefs on divorce and remarriage. More shocking still, in practice, almost anybody who desires is now able to divorce and remarry-with the WCG's blessing.

But sad to say, HWA has offered no real apologies for the thousands of lives that his false and carelessly written teachings on divorce have ruined-not a word of regret for cruelly ripping apart happily married couples that were legitimately married in God's sight. Rather HWA praised his followers for remaining loyal to him and obeying his teachings rather than the Bible's.

**A True History of the True Church**-This booklet by Herman Hoeh, produced by AC in 1959, audaciously proclaimed that the WCG was God's only true church on earth today and attempted without success to prove it by quoting historical material out of context and trying to fit it into HWA's erroneous understanding of 19-year time cycles, history, and church eras-a colossal church error which even GTA admitted publicly. Most of the booklet's historical facts were actually lifted from A History of the True Church, a totally unscholarly work by A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, published in 1936.

A few years ago the WCG booklet quietly dropped out of sight, though long-time members everywhere are still under the assumption that the teachings of the booklet are sound and that the booklet proved its erroneous premise: that a single, true, organized, continuous church group, culminating in the WCG, has included all true Christians of all ages, pastored and taught by ministers from an unbroken line of ordinations.

Recently, when quizzed about his father's "one true church" doctrine, GTA confessed to Joseph Hopkins: "I don't believe that, either... except for the invisible church, the Body of Christ. But it is definitely not necessary to belong to the Worldwide Church of God in order to be saved" (The Armstrong Empire, 1974, p. 246).

**Does God Heal Today?**-This booklet, published by AC in 1952, was killed in 1968 because the WCG feared law suits and bad publicity as a result of the booklet's statements urging total reliance on God-to the exclusion of medical authorities-for healing. Meanwhile, WCG brethren still depended on its teachings for divine healing, and many died tragic, heart-rending deaths having complete faith in the booklet, unaware that (1) the WCG was scared to print what they believed was God's truth for fear of civil authorities and (2) that the booklet's teachings were not biblically correct.

During times that local authorities might become involved because of nontreatment of a serious illness of a member or a member's child, ministers were strictly commanded to "keep the church [meaning the Armstrongs] out of trouble," even if it meant going to hospitals or doctors. But there was seemingly little concern for the unnecessary sufferings of the people involved. A former WCG deacon from New Jersey relates a sad story that further illustrates this point:

"...concerning the WCG policy on healing. Many people suffered needlessly while headquarters personnel took care of themselves. I recall one very grave incident where a young girl was suffering from appendicitis. Many prayers were said for her by members, and visits were made by the ministry for anointing and counseling. In a serious situation like this the counseling would also include a warning that if the child were to die (which she did, it ruptured) to be prepared with a story for the authorities so as not to get the church involved. The church was to be protected at all costs (even lying)."

In the years following the booklet's withdrawal, several top AC officials and/or their wives had "repair surgery." News of this "lack of faith" spread quickly on the WCG grapevine, unsettling WCG members who were still being taught that they should depend totally on God for healing, not medical science. By 1973 a number of WCG ministers began seriously questioning the validity of the healing doctrine in view of the fact that so many members who depended on the booklet's teachings were suffering unduly or dying. They called for meetings to resolve the questions, but nothing came of their pleas.

In 1974 the WCG ministry was told that people could go to doctors and that they didn't have to depend upon God to heal them unless they had the faith. The WCG gave no biblical reason for this sudden drastic shift in policy, and many ministers and members felt this was heresy. (Eventually this new, radical interpretation helped provoke turmoil and a split in the WCG's British churches.) In 1974 David Antion and Paul Flatt were put in charge of drafting a new doctrinal paper on healing. When they presented their study paper to a large group of ministers, it was given a favorable reception, but it was soon swept under the carpet (like most doctrinal research was) because it raised serious questions with the WCG's old booklet on the subject, which HWA still believes was inspired and correct, and because HWA was in the process of completing a revision of the old booklet without considering any of the new research papers.

**Truth About Makeup**-The makeup issue threatened to split the WCG in the 1950s until HWA ruled in 1955 that it was a sin for a Christian woman to wear makeup. HWA's own daughter refused to submit to his decision and was promptly excommunicated from the WCG. In 1958 Garner Ted Armstrong wrote that "it was God the Father and Jesus Christ who made the decision on make-up! They revealed to their human servants the plain truth on the subject..." (*The Good News*, Jan. 1958, p. 7).

To HWA, it was of paramount importance for people everywhere to heed what he felt were God's feelings about makeup. Hence he authored a booklet on the

subject, based on a Jan. 1957 *Good News* article and published by AC in 1964 and 1968. The booklet lashed out at anyone who would dare be caught wearing the slightest touch of makeup:

"In every single case where painting the face is mentioned in your Bible, God labels the woman a whore!... How does God label you?" (p. 20.)

"It may be difficult, at first, for many women to realize that makeup on the face is actually one of those things that is an abomination in the sight of God-that its use is a sin-a violation of God's Law..." (p. 23).

"...God's people must be cleaned up!... This thing of painting the face is now labeled by Jesus Christ as a sin! It is a transgression of God's Law..." (pp. 26-27).

"... most women will say: 'I wear it to look nice'-or 'to avoid offense.' They say it in words that sound harmless. But God knows your hearts better than you do-and he knows that the heart of women... is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.'... To whom does this woman wish to 'look nice'?-to God? No, for to God she looks like a painted artificial prostitute!" (pp. 42-43.)

"My own mother very emphatically declared that no lipstick ever touched her lips-a fact in which she took great satisfaction" (p. 18).

To stress the importance of avoiding makeup, HWA concludes in his booklet:

"God tells us what is sin, and He tells us that this vain use of facial makeup is sin!... the penalty for this sin is death for eternity in a Lake of fire!" (p. 44.)

HWA's makeup ruling proved to be a major stumbling block to women wishing to enter the WCG. One college girl confessed: "I cried when I found out I had to give up makeup because I looked so ugly without it. Later two women in the church came up to me and said I ought to be anointed [for healing] because of the way the skin on my face looked. This made me feel even more ugly and inferior, but gradually I learned to accept my appearance, though from time to time people made belittling remarks about it."

AC coeds were often embarrassed when showing visiting women around campus because invariably they asked: "Why don't you AC girls wear makeup?" What was the AC girl to say to her painted guests: "We don't wear makeup because God says only whores wear it"?

In the years following the makeup decision, several tried to convince the Armstrongs that their makeup doctrine was nonsensical and unbiblical. But they were brushed aside as heretics. After all, GTA had said the makeup ruling was made by "God the Father and Jesus Christ."

But in the early 1970s more and more people exerted pressure to have the booklet removed. They finally succeeded, and it was formally discontinued when the Oct. 23, 1974 ministerial bulletin declared wearing makeup okay after

researchers had proved that, without exception, the "proofs" in the booklet were arrived at by using scriptures out of context and reading meanings into the scriptures that weren't intended. Though HWA's explanation of one of the scriptures was influenced by an erroneous translation quoted and accepted by Adam Clarke's commentary, HWA quoted two other commentaries and proceeded to leave out parts of their explanations that contradicted his preconceived conclusions. Had his research been more carefully done and had he consulted modern reference sources, he would not have reached the absurd conclusion he did.

In spite of the fact that HWA finally killed the makeup booklet, he never apologized for blaspheming God's name by claiming God looked at women who wore makeup as whores, nor did he apologize for wresting the scriptures to make it appear that wearing makeup was a capital sin.

**The Mark of the Beast and Who Is the Beast?**-These two booklets were copyrighted by AC in 1952 and 1960 respectively. Both were based more on specious reasoning than fact. In both booklets, HWA took basic Protestant and/or 19th-century Adventist interpretations and reshaped them to fit his own ideas by extracting isolated historical events out of their context and fitting them into highly symbolic prophecies. It is obvious to the student of history that the author has a bad and unscholarly habit of conveniently overlooking parts of history that contradict his prophetic theories.

In late 1969, AC's Chancellor Herbert Armstrong began meeting such European leaders as King Leopold of Belgium and Franz Josef Strauss of Germany, both Catholics. Since the booklets not only called the Catholic church the great whore of Revelation 17 and spoke very disparagingly of it, claiming it would again soon martyr those who opposed it and those who refused to worship on Sunday, but also predicted that a United States of Europe composed of 10 nations would fight Christ, the booklet threatened to become an acute embarrassment to HWA and to the WCG's German office and churches; therefore, it had to be discontinued.

**Compendium of World History**-Believing "the modern reconstruction of ancient history without God is almost 100% erroneous" (vol. I, p. 20) and that "that modern interpretation of world history stands in open conflict with Scripture" (vol. I, p. 1), "evangelist" Herman L. Hoeh decided to write a world history from the Bible's perspective and thus show modern historians the proper way to approach and write history. Hoeh received his doctor's degree in theology from AC upon completing volume I of his compendium and his doctor of philosophy degree from AC after writing volume II-although there was no one at AC even remotely qualified to evaluate his dissertations.

Volume I carried copyright dates of 1963, 1963-65, 1966, 1967, 1969, and 1970, while volume II had dates of 1963, 1966, and 1969. Each revision was invariably followed by a long list of errata.

For over a decade students at AC were compelled to study the haphazardly

written "compendium" to pass AC's dreaded world history class. In late 1973, students heaved a giant sigh of relief upon learning they wouldn't have to wade through the undocumented assumptions, the convoluted reasoning, and the long king lists and genealogies which clutter the pages of the compendium. Soon, the compendium even disappeared from AC's bookstore. But many were bewildered. Why was "the world's greatest history book" by "the world's greatest historian" (according to HWA) suddenly unavailable?

Gradually those who checked around discovered that the compendium contained flagrant errors in chronology and in the reconstruction of history. The reason? Hoeh based his book on his own private biblical interpretation which was colored by HWA's British-Israel theories. Though being unschooled in Semitic and other ancient languages, having had few if any history classes at an accredited college under a qualified history professor, and never having specialized in any specific area, he felt his biblical knowledge and understanding more than compensated for his deficiencies in other areas.

As he compiled historical data for his book, he ignored or discarded facts that didn't fit snugly into his biblical framework and the historical-philosophical interpretations of HWA. Sometimes he had to quote sources out of context or simply invent evidence to amass proof for a particular point, but he overcame any qualms he may have had about this, feeling God was revealing previously hidden truth to him as he researched. But students who checked the original sources were often aghast at his shoddy if not dishonest scholarship.

In any case Hoeh's two-volume compendium is now out of print and no longer used in AC history classes. Indeed it is difficult to find any scholar-even inside the WCG-who is willing to defend "the world's greatest history book."

**Military Service and War**-This 72-page booklet was published in 1967 by AC to assist male WCG members and AC students evade the draft and decide why they should become conscientious objectors. This booklet was not offered to the public, and it was dropped as the Vietnam war was ending.

**The Truth About Masonry**-Published in 1961 by AC, the masonry booklet was authored by AC's former dean of students and psychology instructor Jack R. Elliott, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for his M.A. from AC. The booklet was written to inform WCG members of the evils of masonry and is no longer being sent out.

It claimed "membership in the Masonic Lodge, as much as membership in any of the [religious] denominations, is incompatible with obedience and service to God" (p. 43). It asserted that Masonry's "oaths are antisciptural and that its secrecy is likewise contradictory to the Bible and pagan in origin" (p. 16). In a stinging indictment against Masons everywhere, Elliott declared that Masons "do not promote God's rule, but ignore it and set themselves up as the wise leaders... feigning benevolence by giving charity to the orphans and widows, while they privately endeavor to build their own prosperity" (p. 40). This booklet was mainly

circulated internally in the WCG lest its public image be tarnished, in accord with its normal practice of portraying itself one way to the public and another way to its supporters.

**The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy**-This AC production (which is still in print), long one of the most heavily requested and intriguing booklets ever written by HWA, was originally a series in *The Plain Truth* which was edited into a 26-page booklet in 1954. Its main teachings were simply a patent paraphrase in many places of Rev. J. H. Allen's 377-page book, *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* (1902).

In 1967 HWA's 1954 version was enlarged to include 226 pages. This mammoth edition was extensively revised again in 1972 because it set dates for the fall of the U.S. and Britain that didn't materialize and because of gross historical and biblical errors. Recently Dr. Hoeh "doctored" the 1972 version, surgically excising 75% of the material out of it. Because of challenges that could not (or would not) be answered honestly, he removed all the historical "proof" (actually, there never was any proof) and 75% of the biblical "evidence."

Gone is the older version's whole section on Jeremiah's commission, the planting of the throne in Ireland, and the accounts of Tea-Tephi and the lia-fail stone. Several members of the former doctrinal committee-HWA recently disbanded the committee-state that the basic tenets of the booklet are unprovable, either from the Bible or from history. GTA has even expressed in an interview with Joseph M. Hopkins that belief in British-Israelism is "not essential to salvation. It hasn't been proven to my satisfaction," he confessed, "that the Ten Lost Tribes relocated in specific places in northern Europe. It certainly is not a *necessary doctrine*" (*The Armstrong Empire*, 1974, p. 245).

**Still Other Problem Booklets.** One by one the key booklets that set AC and the WCG apart as unique are being phased out, never to be heard from again. AC's booklets on pollution and the feminist movement no longer exist. AC's booklet based on GTA's interview with Franz Josef Strauss, *Is the United States of Europe Coming Soon?*, was quietly dropped. (When Strauss visited AC in early 1970, AC officials were so worried Strauss might see the booklet-what did AC have to hide?-that they instructed students to remove the recently published booklet from their dormitory bookshelves and hide it until Strauss left.) *Who Will Rule Space?* has been shot down and killed. Most of AC's editors privately acknowledge that AC's booklets on evolution are in grave need of revision due to their simplistic and often completely unscientific "scientific" claims.

The booklet entitled *Tithing*, written by John Schroeder (GTA's ghost writer) and Brian Knowles and edited by GTA to replace *Ending Your Financial Worries*, offered no convincing biblical reasons why a Christian should tithe and is basically a waste of paper. When HWA read the new booklet, he became boiling mad, yelling that all the "proofs" had been omitted. Though a number of the leading WCG ministers do not even believe in tithing, none dared tell him his "proofs" were only misapplied scriptures quoted out of context and blended with a large amount of wishful thinking. His plain truth about tithing was just plain

error.

A number of AC's booklets were discontinued not only because of factual error but also because it seems the Armstrongs were afraid some of their worldly contacts would notice what they were preaching and judge them to be lunatics. For instance, *God Speaks Out on the New Morality* was killed and reemerged as *The Missing Dimension in Sex*, partly because the former booklet stated that Simon Magus was the Peter who founded the Catholic Church and that the Catholic church was responsible for the Western world's belief that sex was evil and inherently unclean. HWA still believed this to be true-though research can never show Simon Magus founded the Catholic church-but HWA was developing a friendship with King Leopold of Belgium at the time and didn't want Leopold to find out what he preached about the Catholic church because Leopold was a staunch Catholic.

For more than two decades HWA has preached and written that an Israelitish U.S. and Britain would be destroyed by a revitalized, ten-nation U.S. of Europe dominated by the Satan-influenced Roman Catholic church and led by the Germans whom he claims are the modern descendants of the Assyrians. But when he began meeting world leaders and developing friendships with them, he stopped writing about the Catholic church in prophecy and Germany being modern Assyria.

Why do HWA and GTA shrink back when it comes time to tell world leaders how they should live their lives and what is prophesied in the Bible? The New Testament ministers bravely proclaimed God's truth to world leaders without flattery and equivocation (Acts 24-26, I Thes. 2:1-6).

Why does *The Plain Truth* no longer contain prophetic teaching but has page after page of glowing accounts of HWA's (and Rader's) personal overseas exploits and insipid, shallow, ministry-of-tourism-type travelogues by Gene Hogberg? Why hasn't HWA told his followers about the major errors in the booklets that have been quietly discontinued?

These are questions you ought to strongly consider before financially supporting Herbert Armstrong's gospel-preaching efforts and before reorienting your life to conform to the teachings found in Herbert Armstrong's publications.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth** Brought to you by: **hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **What the Armstrongs Say About Other Churches**

**"I began to see that the real message of the Bible is not known or understood... by the churches that call themselves Christian. I began to see that... the blood of Christ is not the trunk of the tree. That is not the main point" (Herbert Armstrong, Ministerial Conference, May 1976).**

For the entire length of their ministry, Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong have insisted that they absolutely do not believe in proselyting. Yet they have built the Worldwide Church of God by spending a huge portion of their time attacking other Christian churches, attempting to discredit them, and cleverly influencing their members to defect to the Armstrong brand of Christianity. For instance, in a sermon before over a thousand people on July 24, 1976, Herbert Armstrong declared:

"The gospel had not been preached until God raised me up to preach it. People say, 'Who does that Armstrong think he is?' Am I bragging? Am I boasting? No, I'm just saying a fact. That gospel you never heard from any preacher except one from this church. You never heard it from Billy Graham. You never heard it from any Protestant preacher. You never heard it from any Catholic priest."

A month later, on August 28, 1976, he self-righteously asserted in another sermon:

"I had to learn that the churches do not get their religion out of the Bible. They get it out of their own mind. They get it by twisting the Bible."

In a co-worker letter dated November 19, 1976, Herbert Armstrong made an incredibly vain and postposterous statement:

"It is true that Baptists, fundamental Methodists, and other Protestant denominations, do teach some things as we do-but they have the branches and twigs of the tree-not one of them has the real trunk of the tree-with its main branches. In other words, not one of them knows what spiritual salvation really is, what the kingdom of God (Christ's whole Gospel) really is, why God put humanity here on earth: what is our real ultimate human potential, or how we shall reach it."

On another occasion, Herbert blasted the Lutherans for preaching Christ to the world (as did the apostles):

"One of the floats in the Rose Festival Parade was 'the Lutheran Hour preaching Christ to the world,' not preaching the gospel of the kingdom, [but] preaching Christ! Deceiving the world! That's what they do. It's not the gospel! It's the person. They believe on him. They say, 'Believe on Christ and you shall be saved.' Those who believed on him in the 8th chapter of John were crying out for his blood. They wanted to see him killed. That's the way it's been today and that's been what's been preached. That's not the gospel... .No one is preaching the gospel to the world or has done it in 18½ centuries but this Work" (Jan. 3, 1974).

Herbert Armstrong has long viewed himself as God's special representative to warn the world of its sins and impending doom unless it repents. He feels he is directing the "greatest Work in 1900 years on earth!" (Co-worker letter, Aug. 19, 1976, p. 5.) He feels no one else alive but him is proclaiming the "true gospel to the world today-or has done so since the first century" (co-worker letter, Jan. 27, 1974, p. 6).

His controversial son, Garner Ted, also parrots the same self-righteous message:

"There is only ONE Church on the face of this earth that has been consistently... preaching the ONE true gospel of the Kingdom of God, telling you exactly what these times mean! There is only ONE Church that has dared to tell you in definite, specific, point-by-point, detailed order the events that are yet to occur.... Where is that ONE Church Jesus built? It is where the work of that Church is being done! And THIS WORK that you are reading of right now-that you hear over *The World Tomorrow*-this work is the only genuine work that is carrying out Jesus' very commission just as He said it would be doing!... God forbids you ever to join in with the worship of counterfeit church bodies..." ("Should You Join a Church?", reprint article No. 570, pp. 3-4).

Herbert Armstrong believes he heads the one true church of God (The Worldwide Church of God) on earth today and that all other churches are, according to his own words, "the Devil's churches":

"Satan is the god of this world. Now his chief church we know as the Roman Catholic church. And we know how she's represented in the 17th chapter, the book of Revelation-[as] Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots. Who are the harlots? All the Protestant churches" (May 7, 1974).

Herbert Armstrong's letter answering department echoed the same biased thought in letter No. 937:

"The tribe of Dan settled primarily in Southern Ireland (as proven in Mr. Armstrong's booklet, 'The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy').... Today, the tribe of Dan is still given to idolatry following the traditions of their ancestors. They are, as a nation, an integral part of the false mystery system God labels as 'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT' in Revelation 17:5. This is a great false church, a worldly church.... Notice in Revelation 2:20 this same false church is likened to that wicked 'woman Jezebel.'... God says He will smite her children with death because they have known the 'depths of Satan' (Verses 23-24). Jezebel's children, then, are those who have been taught at an early age her abominable idolatries and filthinesses (Rev. 2:20) and are deep in her doctrine (Verse 24). This woman Jezebel symbolizes the Roman Catholic Church. Most Danites (Irish) are members of this false church from birth, attending her schools, festivals and idolatrous religious worship services ....

"Since the nation of Ireland, the modern Danites, are in the 'depths of Satan' and do not know God's true way.... "

At the Jan. 1972 ministerial conference in Pasadena, Garner Ted attacked Rex Humbard:

"My father said to me one time after watching the Rex Humbard television program: '...You know, Ted, these people are saying some of the things that sometimes I think we ought to be saying.'... I think the man's a fake from the word go. But nevertheless he is a complete, unabashed, unashamed, unafraid fake. He comes right out with statements about God and about Christ and about conversion and about salvation...."

*Ambassador Report* would like to go on record against these holier-than-thou, malicious diatribes directed at other sincere Christians. How can a minister claim to represent God and yet expend his energy trying to discredit other Christians? Granted, all Christians and their churches have flaws-but so do the Armstrongs and their church.

One of the most obvious themes of the Bible is love-especially in the New Testament. Jesus declared emphatically to his disciples that all men would be able to recognize his true disciples by their love *for each other* (John 13:35). We hope the Armstrongs and their church will quit wasting time and money attempting to discredit other churches and proselyte their members. Before Herbert Armstrong and his church judge another church to be a church of Satan, they should thoroughly examine their own teachings-many of which they have already had to admit were in gross error-lest they themselves be found worshipping God in vain by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



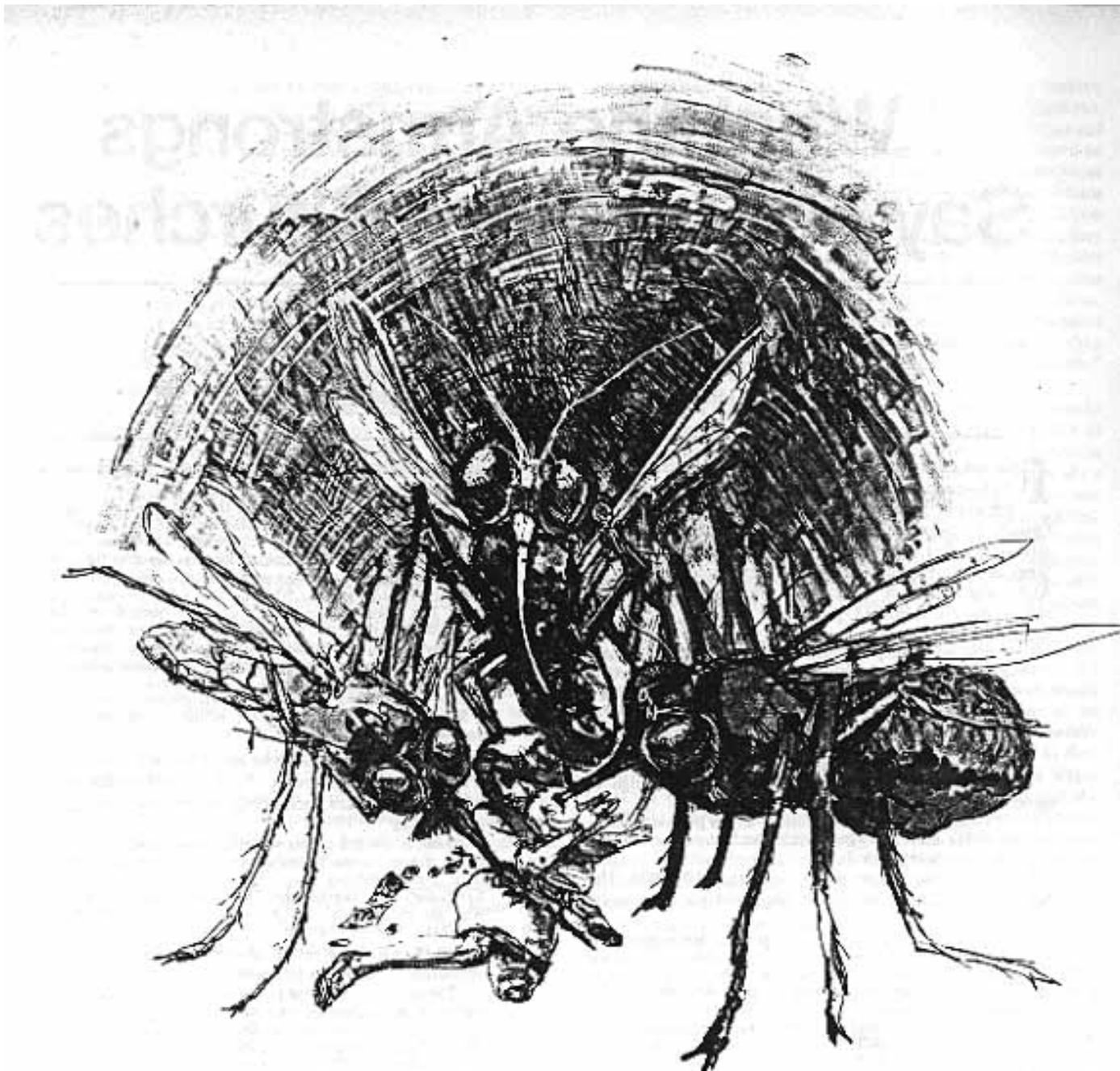
# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:

[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### TWISTED TEACHINGS ON TITHING





**The Worldwide Church of God, like a monstrous predatory creature, sucks its members' financial lifeblood by twisting the Bible's teachings on tithing to extort money from them.**

The *Ambassador Report* staff asked several Worldwide Church of God (WCG) members if they believed in paying tithes, and each one responded assertively, "Of course I believe in tithing!" We then inquired how they defined "tithing," and each one, in essence, replied, "Tithing, according to the Bible, means giving a tenth of one's salary to the church."

What these members don't realize is that they are not following the biblical laws on tithing, and they never have been! Though the WCG has long claimed to follow every word of the Bible literally, it has completely ignored the Bible's laws and instructions on tithing and has instead substituted an unworkable, unbiblical maze of rules designed mainly by Herbert Armstrong. Herbert's method of tithing resembles the Bible's about as closely as Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) resembles Christmas. Let's look for a moment at how terribly the WCG has twisted the Bible's teachings on tithing.

**Tithing in the Old Testament.** God related to Moses precisely how he wanted the Israelites to tithe, and Moses recorded God's instructions in Leviticus 27:30-32:

"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's.... If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. And all the tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsmen's staff, shall be holy to the Lord" (RSV).

It is obvious from the above passage that God commanded the Israelites to tithe on (1) agricultural produce and (2) every tenth animal of their flocks and herds. Nowhere here or anywhere else in the Bible does God ever state that an Israelite or, for that matter, a Christian should tithe on anything else. God never told the Israelites or Christians to tithe on their monetary wages-and these people weren't all farmers by any means. He never commanded them to give a tithe of all the fish they caught or of all the copper they mined, nor did he require they give a tenth of the money they received from selling pottery, chariots, sandals, garments, etc. In fact, even *The Jewish Encyclopedia* and *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion* (under "Tithes") state that the Israelites tithed only on agricultural produce and livestock.

Jewish reference sources point out that every seventh year was a sabbatical year and no tithing was permissible therein. (See *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Tithe," p. 151.) It's a shame the Worldwide Church of God doesn't adhere to this aspect of the biblical tithing law.

**Recipients of the Tithe.** The Bible clearly delineates who was authorized to receive the tithes of the people in Numbers 18:21, 24:

"To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service... in the tent of meeting.... therefore I have said of them [the Levites] that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel" (RSV).

The Levites, however, didn't retain all of the tenth for themselves, but gave a tenth of their tithe to the priests who attended the altar (Num. 18:25-32). The priests didn't tithe at all.

It is important to note that the tithe was given only to the Levites who were serving at the tabernacle (or later the Temple). That's why Moses instructed the Israelites to bring their tithes to the place where God had placed his name (Shiloh and later Jerusalem):

"But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name... thither you shall go, and thither you shall bring your... tithes and the offering that you present" (Deut. 12:5-6, RSV).

Nowhere in the Old or New Testaments is anybody but the Levites authorized to take the tithes of the people. Nowhere are Christian ministers given the right to demand or accept tithes. Jesus or Paul could not have accepted tithes from the church as they were not Levites. Of course, the Gentiles Paul preached to weren't in the habit of tithing anyway since God never required Gentiles to tithe in the first place, but only Israelites. (In fact the produce of Gentile lands was considered impure until certain rabbis allowed the tithes of a few Gentile lands to be accepted because so many Jews dwelt there.)

Even in Nehemiah and Malachi's day the Israelites were still commanded to bring their tithes to the Levites who placed them in the Temple's storehouse (Nehemiah 10:35, 37, 38):

"We obligate ourselves to bring... to the Levites the tithes from our ground, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes.... the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers, to the storehouse" (RSV).

The Israelites were often forgetful of their tithing obligation (Neh. 13:10-12), so Malachi also admonished the "sons of Jacob" (Mal. 3:6) to "bring the full tithes into the [Temple] storehouse, that there may be food in my house [the Temple in Jerusalem]" (Mal. 3:10, RSV).

The preceding facts on tithing in the Old Testament were condensed from a large number of papers submitted to the doctrinal committee, including the papers authored by David Antion, Harry Eisenberg, Don Abraham, Lester Grabbe, Allan de Jager, Garry de Jager, and Brian Knowles. The well-supported conclusions of these papers were basically ignored by the Armstrongs and were quietly relegated to archival files or trash cans and forgotten.

**Tithing in the Christian Church.** Contrary to the assumption of some, the early Christian church and ministry were not supported by tithes but by freewill offerings. Many Christians pooled their goods and shared their possessions equally (Acts 4:32-37). There was no "third tithe" collected for the poor-as in the WCG-but rather the apostles urged each Christian to give according to his means (II Cor. 8:2-15; 9:6-12; I John 3:17-18).

It was the Catholic church that instituted tithing in the Christian church. Notice this admission in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XIV, pp. 174-175:

"The early Church had no tithing system. The tithes of the Old Testament were regarded as abrogated by the law of Christ.... But as the Church expanded and its material needs grew more numerous and complex, it became necessary to adopt a definite rule to which people could be held either by a sense of moral obligation or by a precept of positive law. The tithing of the Old Law provided an obvious model, and it began to be taught.... The Council of Macon in 585 ordered payment of tithes and threatened excommunication to those who refused to comply."

Interestingly the Worldwide Church of God brands almost all of the Catholic church's additions to the early Christian religion-Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc.-as utterly unbiblical, but when it comes to tithing, the WCG eagerly leaps onto the Catholic bandwagon and even goes far beyond the Catholic church by adding a second and a third tithe.

Of course, the WCG's system of tithing doesn't even resemble the Bible's. And nowhere does the Bible say the church has the right to take Old Testament laws-such as those on tithing-delete part of them, reword them, twist them, and then require a Christian to keep the "new, improved" laws. (Besides, the Armstrongs have always stressed that their followers should believe them *only* if what they say is in the Bible.)

The preceding facts on tithing in the Christian church were taken from several lengthy research papers submitted to the WCG doctrinal committee by Harry Eisenberg, Richard Davey, Lawson Briggs, Don Abraham, Garry de Jager, Allan de Jager, and the managing editor of *The Plain Truth*, Brian Knowles. Yet their findings were all but ignored by the Armstrongs. When the WCG's tithing study paper (dated Sept. 24, 1974) emerged, these comprehensive papers were not included. Rather only a few selected papers were reprinted for the ministry to examine, and several of these papers were altered so as to obscure or hide the authors' original conclusions.

**Tithing's Detrimental Effects on People.** The WCG's tithing doctrine isn't a quaint, harmless philosophy by any means. Thousands of people will attest to that-though those people are never quoted in WCG publications. *Ambassador Report* has heard numerous heart-rending stories about how families gave thousands of dollars to the WCG in tithes and as a result were left destitute at retirement. In England and Australia, many WCG members are unable to afford to eat meat more than once a week, according to WCG ministers themselves-all due to the WCG's oppressive multiple tithing system. It has been reported that a number of members have even had to skip meals every week to pay their tithes.

One former member wrote that after seven years of tithing, "we were never really financially blessed. In fact it will take awhile to get out from under the pressure of accumulated bills caused by tithing and ignoring pressing responsibilities."

But what is so diabolical about the WCG's *unbiblical* tithing system-which demands a first tithe be paid on one's income, a second tithe be saved from one's income for use only at WCG festivals, and a third tithe be paid every three years-is that widows and those who can ill afford to give up to 30% of their gross income each year are coerced into allocating their hard-earned money to the WCG through fear and intimidation. In the past the WCG has preached that any member who refused to pay tithes would be cast alive into the lake of fire. Notice one blatant instance where Garner Ted Armstrong, in a Feb. 7, 1977, letter to the WCG members, resorted to similar scare tactics to extort money:

"Some have even begun to STEAL directly from God!... They have forgotten that they are not 'giving' God His tithe, since it is not theirs to 'give!' . . . It is INIQUITY which means SIN, to steal God's tithe!"

In a recorded sermon originally given on Nov. 6, 1976, and later played in most WCG services worldwide, Ted stressed that "failing to tithe nets death." In the April 8, 1975, issue of the WCG's ministerial bulletin, Garner Ted attempted to make those who were lax in tithing feel as though they had all but committed the unpardonable sin:

"I cannot IMAGINE any person claiming to be 'converted'... claiming to be a 'Christian,' yet having an attitude of resentfulness and rebellion toward giving God His prior claim [10%] over our own incomes" (p. 179).

At the May 1976 ministerial conference Garner Ted urged the ministers to "use [in sermons] some of the statistics" he had given them "about the rapid decline in third tithe-meaning the poor fund, the poor tithe" to cause the church members to feel guilty about not paying third tithe. He admonished them to "preach those scriptures [on aiding the poor and on third tithe]

fearlessly and remind people that that [paying third tithe] is an absolute obligation that can keep them out of the kingdom more quickly than practically anything else if they neglect it-that you can lose salvation through neglect of the poor just about more quickly than any other way."

It's refreshing to learn that the Armstrongs are beginning to show some "concern" for the plight of the poor in the church by urging the members to give more to this fund. (The purpose of the third tithe fund is to help the fatherless, the widows, and the needy-at least that's what members have been told.) It's sad to say, but the third tithe fund would be many millions of dollars larger than it presently is if the Armstrongs hadn't secretly authorized using its funds to buy jet fuel, to furnish and redecorate high-ranking ministers' homes, and to pay ministers' salaries. Somehow using this third tithe "poor fund" for these things-when there's not enough money to help the needy church widows-seems like a "Robin Hood in reverse"-robbing the poor to give to the rich.

The Worldwide Church of God constantly tries to imply, based on Malachi 3, that one who does not give a tenth of his monetary income is somehow "robbing God." But since God never gave the Christian ministry the right to collect a tenth of anything-be it monetary income or agricultural produce-the church that demands a tithe of its members is in reality "robbing" its members, as God looks at it.

The WCG ministry seems to lack the faith in God to believe that he will reward those who seek him (Heb. 11:6) and supply the finances the ministry needs-so the ministry has instituted a man-made, unbiblical tithing system that takes a much greater portion of a person's income than did God's Levitical system, which didn't require a tithe be paid on a person's monetary income or a tithe be paid every seventh year. The WCG's lack of faith in God certainly is displeasing to God, as is the manner in which it twists the scriptures to try to support the tithing doctrine. Could it be that the WCG ministers are worshipping God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men? (Mark 7:7.)

**WCG Ignores Truth About Tithing.** The preceding facts on tithing were taken from over 40 bulky papers advocating Christians do not have to tithe that were submitted to the top leaders of the Worldwide Church of God since late 1973. Regrettably, the WCG leadership has still utterly refused either to openly acknowledge the existence of the facts in these papers or to refute them. In July 1975, however, the WCG did publish a revised booklet on tithing entitled *Tithing*. Though touted as a "complete, well-researched" booklet by Garner Ted Armstrong in a July 21, 1975, letter, it is little more than a rambling discourse on the mind of God, the merits of Christian giving, and the needs of the Worldwide Church of God, coupled with a complex maze of *unbiblical*, man-made rules to aid people in determining what to tithe on.

In spite of this well-publicized booklet, the WCG's income continued to plummet as thousands quit tithing. In April 1977, in the midst of another deep financial crisis, the WCG unveiled yet another long-winded booklet on tithing-*Your Best Investment*- written by John Schroeder and Ted Armstrong. The authors lash out at Christians who would salt away a portion of their money for a future emergency, rather than giving every extra penny to the WCG. While this is terrible financial advice to give a church member, this advice, if followed, will certainly help the WCG end its financial worries.

As expected, the booklet supplies no scriptural proof that Christians should tithe, though it is replete with gross overgeneralizations, excessive usage of italics and exclamation marks, hollow rhetoric, and intimidating statements such as "it is *iniquity*, which means *sin*, to steal God's tithe!" (p. 36.)

The authors admit "Christ... *did not specifically deal* with the tithing law anywhere in the Sermon on the Mount. And it is not dealt with specifically and pointedly anywhere else in the New Testament" (pp. 52-53). Yet the authors somehow conclude that since tithing wasn't specifically abrogated by the New Testament, it is still in force. Now if the old covenant tithing laws given to ancient Israel are still in force, so are all the other Mosaic laws not specifically rescinded. But the WCG ignores 90% of the Mosaic law and doesn't even come close to adhering to the law's clear instructions concerning tithing. To get around this obvious discrepancy, the WCG declares that since it is the true church, it has the right to determine "the modern application and expansion of the Old Testament principles and laws" (p. 53). Of course, the authors conveniently forget to mention that the WCG has long condemned other churches-especially the Catholic church-for giving biblical laws "modern applications," while ignoring the plain commands of scripture.

In fact, neither this newest tithing booklet nor the older one advocate following the *Bible's* guidelines for tithing or for supporting the Christian ministry, but rather both advocate following the Worldwide Church of God's own set of guidelines. Still, the final choice belongs to the WCG member. He can follow God's plain commands or the commandments of men!

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

*If you are interested in obtaining in-depth research material on the subject of tithing, Ambassador Report would like to recommend that you request The Tithing Question from The Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102. This free, educational booklet is the edited version of the first tithing paper submitted to the WCG in 1973.*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



**The Painful Truth**  
Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---



**Separation of Church and State?**

**\$2.5 Million Federal Handout to  
Armstrong Cult**

After nearly two years of review, the Federal government through its General Services Administration and Department of Health, Education and Welfare,

appears poised to "sell" a choice parcel of real estate to Ambassador College for *no more* than 20% of its assessed value. The market value of this prime property is conservatively estimated at \$2½ million.

The property in question is the historical, seven-story Vista Del Arroyo Hotel and nineteen surrounding buildings. They stand on 15.3 acres of scenic Pasadena landscape overlooking the picturesque Arroyo Seco.

The Vista property dates back to 1882, when a popular boarding house catering to wealthy families was located there. Later, the hotel was built on the site. During World War II, the hotel was taken over by the armed services and used as a military hospital. After the war it was used by various Federal agencies before being declared surplus property in November 1975.

An administrative services act passed by Congress in 1949 provides for disposal of such public properties at "100 per cent public benefit allowance." Federal agencies have first choice, but if no government agency has need of a property then cities, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions are able to put in a request. If no one in the above categories steps forward, the facility would be placed on the open market and sold to the highest bidder.

As it turned out, no other Federal agency desired the Vista property, and Ambassador College was the only educational institution expressing interest. Ambassador then took all steps necessary to secure the 80% discount given to educational institutions that qualify. An additional 20% discount would be allowed should the college become accredited.

Ambassador officials say they plan to use the building for a library, health center with hospital wards, general offices, studios and classrooms for the arts.

Initially the property transfer had smooth sailing, and it appeared the transaction would be concluded by April of 1976. However, stiff opposition arose from many concerned Pasadena citizens and civic-minded groups. Mounds of evidence were presented at the Federal and local level documenting much of the controversy that has been the trademark of the Armstrongs and their church and college. Among the charges documented were lack of academic and religious freedom, absence of democratic procedures, and the official policy of forbidding college students and church members from voting or any other "contacts with the governments of this world." The Worldwide Church of God also strongly discourages any of its members from becoming involved with the military services in either a combatant or noncombatant role.

Some examples of the denial of basic human rights at Ambassador College are:

"You can stay at Ambassador College as long as you keep your mouth shut... and don't tell other people what you think you believe, or try to convince them to believe *your* way. Because if you do that, then I'm going to bounce you out of here like a half-inflated basketball, buddy!" (Garner Ted Armstrong, sermon to AC students and faculty, Dec. 7, 1974.)

"I am... thankful that democracy will not flourish at Ambassador College" (GTA, sermon to AC students and faculty, Feb. 28, 1976).

"I tell you there are too many of us that are trying to see how close we can get to this world, how close can we get to Satan's way and still get into the Kingdom of God. So now I hear sermons from this pulpit that now we can vote! That is not Christ's way! What made a whore out of mother Rome? It was her contacts with the governments of this world!" (Herbert Armstrong, sermon to AC students and faculty, July 24, 1976.)

Affidavits were filed with HEW in San Francisco by numerous former students and employees of Ambassador College documenting their expulsion or dismissal from AC due to religious and/or racial discrimination. Dr. Roderick C. Meredith, evangelist and top official in the WCG, reflected the long-held church position on race with these comments before an Ambassador College congregation on August 9, 1975:

"But you know this is the land of Manasseh. [This identification is based upon the church's belief in the Anglo-Israel racial theory.] Now our Negro members, and other members, whether they be Oriental, or Mexican, or whatever, understand that... and if Mexico City had an Englishman for a mayor it would seem just a little bit odd... and if Peking had... a Belgian for a mayor, that would seem just a little bit odd, and something might be a little wrong there. But we have a black mayor, here in Los Angeles... I'm not reflecting on him at all. I'm just showing you what has happened. The mayor of our capital, Washington, D.C., is a black man, and the police chief is also, and most of the other leading men in the city, because the white people have actually fled the whole capital. And when foreign people come to the nation's capital... they are surrounded by people who are not Manassites... That's not a blessing, that is a curse!" [See page 25 of this issue for more of AC's racist commentary. Also read "The Real Cause of the Race Crisis" by Herbert Armstrong, *The Plain Truth*, Oct. 1963.]

These statements and actions by AC officials are clearly in violation of the intent and purpose of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It does appear that the Federal Government and the men directly responsible for the proper disposal of the Arroyo Vista property are suffering from an acute case of bureaucratic myopia. Or is it chronic, since they have spent two entire years at taxpayers' expense prolonging what should have been an efficient investigation and subsequent decision. It was reported to this publication that Mr. Charles Fuller, HEW official in San Francisco, is one of the chief proponents of Ambassador receiving the property, an assessment we would tend to support based on his cool reception of a group of us who presented documentation at his San Francisco office. In addition, there is evidence that Stan Rader's carefully cultivated friends in Washington are working overtime to facilitate this giveaway.

Since AC and the WCG first applied for the Vista Del Arroyo, we have held the opinion that even if they were qualified to receive what had been bought and maintained with public tax dollars, the full market value should be paid-not an 80% discount as it presently stands-especially since the Armstrong theo-political machine takes in capital at the rate of over \$1 million per week. (In 1975 total income was \$66.5 million compared with Billy Graham's \$30 million.)

This proposed handout is an issue that should enrage any taxpayer whether he's familiar with the Worldwide Church of God or not.

Contact: Mr. Charles Fuller, Office of Federal Property Assistance, HEW, 100 McAllister St., San Francisco, CA 94102, and Mr. A.B. Pace, Director, Real Property Division, GSA, Mail Section 41, 525 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94105.

*-Leonard W. Zola*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### COMPUTER SNOOPER

It's no secret that Israel as a nation was required to tithe under the old covenant, just as it's no secret that the Israelites were commanded to tithe *only* on farming produce and on every tenth animal of their herd or flock (Leviticus 27:30-34). For instance, if an Israelite shepherd had eighteen sheep in his flock, only the tenth animal would be holy to the Lord. In such a case the "tithe" would merely be 1/18 or 5.6%-not a straight 10%. Israel was never commanded to tithe on wool, milk, fish, or the profit resulting from manual labor such as the making of clothes or pottery or the building of homes.

It's important for the reader to understand that Jesus himself in his profession as a carpenter was not required to tithe on the profits he made. Yet the Worldwide Church of God, through carefully calculated inference, would have its members falsely believe otherwise. Why?

Simply stated, the WCG must teach a doctrine of tithing to support its many-faceted corporate activities and its leaders' opulent life-styles. These extravagant activities embrace lavish concerts in California and Wisconsin, executive trips on church-financed jets to Rhodesia, Acapulco, Tokyo, and Paris, and a \$6 million literary panacea called *Quest/77*. Ten personal homes of the Armstrongs are now supported by the tithepayers, in addition to over ten automobiles.

**Pay and Pray.** Herbert Armstrong, the self-styled, 85-year-old "apostle" of the WCG, dogmatically insists that the only reason a person is called to his church is to support him in his personal efforts of bringing the "one and only true gospel" to world leaders:

"For one great purpose you were called....That is: to get Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom of God proclaimed as a witness to all nations...."

"For forty years in this Work the doors to these nations were closed to us... But now, at last, God is opening the doors in several... big-population nations...

"You and I were called now, in this age, for the purpose of getting the true Gospel to these nations. Except for that purpose, we would not have been called now!

"God's Church is proclaiming to the whole world the very Gospel God sent to mankind by Jesus Christ-and no one else is, or has, for 18½ centuries. Your part in that Work is the only reason you were called to conversion NOW....

"I rejoice in great gratitude to God that you are all solidly behind me in this great present phase of God's Work... The income is making a good start up since January 1st. Pray earnestly that it will continue." (Member letter, 2/11/74, pp. 2, 3, 9.)

The financial support "solidly behind" Herbert comes from members who are commanded to pay a first tithe on their income, a tithe of their second tithe (second tithe is saved yearly by each member to attend WCG conventions), a third tithe every third year, plus liberal offerings for special emergencies, building construction, etc.

Over the years, the Armstrongs and their chief assistants realized that many members slacked off on their donations and tithes when faced with desires for material goods or financial hardships. (Most members who didn't have financial hardships when they entered the church ended up mired deeply in debt after a few years of giving close to 30% of their income to the Armstrongs.) For years, the WCG leaders had no quick way to check up on how much each member or minister was giving so they could keep a prod on those who were becoming lax in this regard. But all their worries along this line ended when Ambassador College purchased a sophisticated computer.

**Ambassador College Enters the Computer Age.** In 1967 Ambassador College purchased its first computer, an IBM System 360 Model 30. Today, 10 years later, the South Pasadena Avenue facility houses a \$3 million IBM System 370 Model 158. Although there have been significant staff reductions in the last three years, the annual data processing budget still is close to \$1¼ million. A major computer system called "ACTS" consolidated all campus-wide subscriber files into one major computerized file of information. All information relative to a particular subscriber became available for computer terminal display or for analysis with other subscribers in computer printouts. Every contribution made by a supporter can be viewed on a computer terminal. The date, amount, and type of contribution (i.e., holy day offering, building fund, festival fund, poor fund) are all available on a computer terminal for perusal. Also, some very personal information giving even reasons for disfellowship, marital separation, and sexual problems are present on some subscriber's files.

The creators of this computerized system envisioned it to be a tool to provide service to others; however, the Worldwide Church of God hierarchy, putting their trust in things of men and not in God, has used the system to pry into the private lives of individuals and to make conclusions about people and their spiritual lives

based solely on partial physical evidence.

Garner Ted Armstrong wrote S. E. Anderson, a prolific writer on the subject of Armstrongism:

"We *do* practice tithing. The first tithe is 10 per cent to carry out God's Work-and no one checks up to see if a person pays. It is between the member and God" (12/31/73, p. 7).

In the April 8, 1975, ministerial bulletin of the Worldwide Church of God, Garner Ted makes the following striking statement:

"NEVER should the doctrine of tithing or the spirit of giving be used as a CLUB over people's heads, anymore than the doctrine of baptism, the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, or the laying on of hands is used as a club.... It is not the policy, as is stated in the paper, to excommunicate or disfellowship because a minister may find (and there is no way by which he COULD really find information other than the divulging of it voluntarily by the individual member) that a member has been unfaithful in tithing. This should never be grounds for disfellowship" (pp. 179-180).

Beautiful words coming from Garner Ted, but what does Ted mean when he writes that there is no way to find out the information about whether or not a member is tithing? He and almost every minister who read that statement knew it was a lie! Wasn't Ted aware of his Sept. 11, 1973, statement naming "delinquent co-workers" as part of the reason the WCG's income was not increasing at the rate he had hoped for? How did he know if a co-worker was "delinquent" or not unless someone had checked the co-worker's donation record?

**Computer Tithe Checks.** In an interview with Keith M. Hunter, director of the Ambassador College Data Processing Center from 1965 through 1973, he related how the concept of computer tithe checks all began:

"In early 1968 Roderick C. Meredith, then head of the U.S. church ministry for the Radio Church of God, now the Worldwide Church of God, was taking a tour of the new computer facilities at 55 North Vernon. I briefed him on the system that we were developing and showed him some printouts of donation information. His eyes seemed to widen as he realized the potentialities of such a system. He asked me to look up the donation records of two men who were about to be ordained as deacons. It turned out that one was tithing and one was not (according to Meredith). Mr. Meredith immediately set up a policy to be administered through Dan Porter, then head of the Church Administration Department, that all ordinations and elevations in rank would be done subsequent to a tithe check."

Some may question the integrity of Keith Hunter's statement and cry "sour grapes" or "that's just his opinion." However, the diamond-hard data of official documentation from the Church Administration Department bearing the signature of Roderick C. Meredith makes clear the painful truth that the WCG *endorsed* spying on its members' donation records. (As Rod Meredith himself would say about the following statement, "Get the point, fellas!")

"Should any minister have good reason to *suspect* that a member is not tithing because of financial reverses, continual indebtedness, failure to find and hold a good job, etc., he may request that a strictly confidential check be made by the 360 Computer on the member's tithing record. This should be done through the Church Administration Department here at Headquarters. Frankly, fellow ministers, we have good reason to suspect that *many* of our "members" are NOT paying a full tithe! *Without* becoming snoopy or "picky," keep your eyes open to this *probability* and all of you try to bring a strong sermon on God's *command* to tithe if you have not done so recently. Collectively, this may result in multiple thousands of additional dollars for God's Work!" (Ministerial letter, 3/1/68, p. 5.)

The Worldwide Church of God, through a supposedly "God ordained" ministry, openly sanctioned suspicion of the entire flock under its charge. That is a fact that can no longer be charged off to "sour grapes." Notice further evidence of "tithe spying" in another document from the same superintendent, signed, "Your brother in Christ":

"Also, we are beginning to look into the tithing situation. Up until we had our computer, it was very slow and difficult to check the tithing record of brethren. We still *do not* intend to do this all the time and try to 'catch' people at all as some denominations apparently do. But, in order to *help them fulfill their responsibilities*, we are going to make *spot checks* in certain Church areas from time to time." (Ministerial letter, 1/28/69, p 6.)

Some have condoned the practice of computer "tithe spying" with the argument that major corporations do checks on potential employees before hiring them. They argue further that even major leaders in government are asked to divulge their financial holdings before they are approved for certain positions. However, there is a wide gulf of difference between the tithe spying covertly authorized by Rod Meredith and carried out secretly on unsuspecting members and the actions accepted by the government or business organizations-who are accountable to the public. First of all, these employee "checks" are known by the prospective employee. Secondly, an employee's religious donations are never the basis of any decision regarding employment or promotion. And third, the amount or consistency of an individual's donations is not the basis for dismissal from employment, as is practiced by the Worldwide Church of God, Inc.

Fully knowing better, Meredith adjusted to a brief pang of conscience in authorizing the covert procedure by saying that "other denominations apparently do the same things." No proof, of course. But since Meredith feels, like other top WCG administrators, that all other churches are of Satan, then certainly some of them must stoop to such heinous tactics. However, the reader should be assured that the "true church of God" does not intend to spy on its members "*all* the time... to try to 'catch' people," according to Rod Meredith's words. No, in true Christian benevolence, the Worldwide Church of God spies on its members and employees to help them "fulfill their responsibilities," as Meredith explains.

Notice a further quote from the same document:

"In making a few of these [tithe checks] already we have been SHOCKED to find that even some of our LEADING MEN-those recommended for the Visiting Program Training Class [at that time, the all-important step for the local church man to reach the ministry] -*were not tithing at all!* Most of them, of course, were tithing, but many, even of this group, were giving very *sparingly* in offerings and to the Building Fund." (p. 6.)

History shows that those men whose donation records sank too low were removed from the Visiting Program Training Class and never managed to qualify for the ministry. Some of these men even found themselves cut from the Ambassador College payroll at the first convenient "layoff."

Keith M. Hunter, who is currently director of Data Processing for the University of Southern California, related some very interesting information concerning other administrators who personally requested tithe checks from him:

"Generally the requests I received were delicate, sensitive, and highly political. I received requests from Herbert Armstrong, Ronald Dart, Frank Brown, David Jon Hill, Albert Portune, A1 Carrozzo, Leslie McCullough, and Dan Porter. The requests generally involved ministers and headquarters personnel. Leslie McCullough followed the headquarters example, annually requesting tithe information concerning Ambassador College, Big Sandy employees. Some of the requests I received were:

"(1) Frank Brown requested information on Osamu Gotoh to determine his level of contributions during a particular two-year period (1971-72). It turned out that he had only one \$10 contribution on his record. Other tithe checks on the same individual always indicated negligible giving.

"(2) After the requests for large donations and even borrowing for the 'work' were made, Herbert Armstrong requested a tithe check on all the airplane pilots to determine if they had responded.

"(3) All U.S. ministers were selected from the computer files and their contribution records were checked in-depth during the years 1972-73. One minister in the Midwest that I knew personally was given a great deal of problems by the administration over his donation situation.

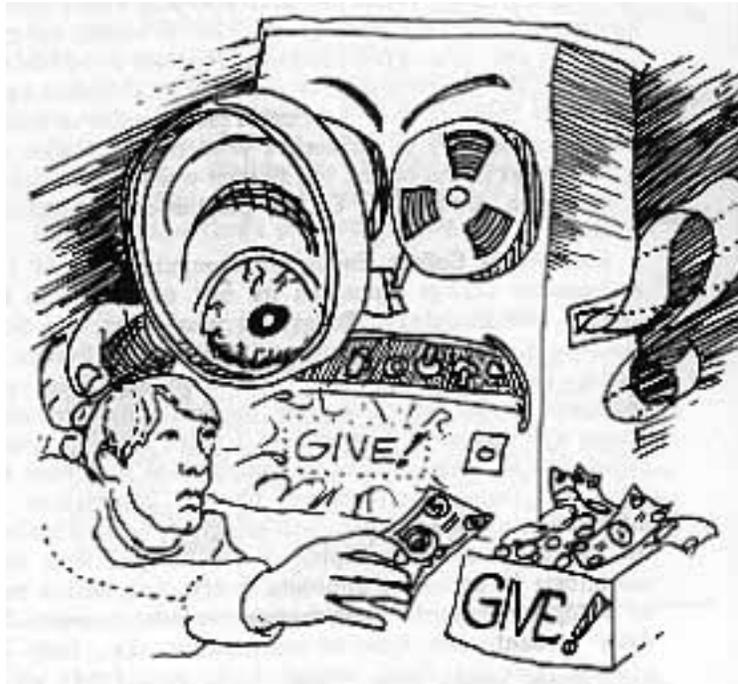
"(4) On several occasions when Pasadena employees were to be promoted, a tithe check was made to determine loyalty, devotion, etc.

"(5) A1 Portune, former vice-president of finance for Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church, annually requested listings of noncontributing headquarters employees.

"(6) The Visiting Program frequently requested listings of whole church areas around the Pasadena headquarters area. The Reno, Nevada, church had some scathing sermons accusing members of not tithing, disloyalty, etc., after a cursory analysis was made of the church donation record. Those requesting the listings, which were technical in nature, did not know how to read them and probably made many unsubstantiated conclusions.

"In addition, having scanned many of these reports before giving them out, I've noticed that Herbert Armstrong himself did not tithe in the normal way taught by the church. In one particular year his donation record contained only four donations. He did not tithe on each

paycheck as the rest of the church was commanded to do."



**What Can Be Done.** In this article, we have presented evidence from Ambassador College data processing supervisors who were actually ordered to carry out tithe checks via the computer. We have also presented irrefutable documentation that the Worldwide Church of God ministry was aware of and participated in these clandestine thrusts into the personal, private lives of members of the same brotherhood.

*Ambassador Report* would like to go on record condemning the WCG's unethical, gestapo-like practice of prying into members' donation records while publicly giving the impression that a person's name and any other facts gathered on him will be kept strictly confidential. We detest the practice of using a person's donation record to determine which employees to lay off-especially since (1) giving a specific amount of money to Ambassador College and/or the WCG is NOT a requirement for employment there and (2) this method is discriminatory in that it is used selectively against church members but not against nonmember employees or friends or relatives of the WCG leaders.

It's time for knowledgeable members, employees, and former members to stand up and speak out with one voice against this heinous practice. It's also time for members, if approached by a nosy Ambassador College official or WCG minister and asked about their donation record-as several have been-to forcefully reply: "My donation record is none of your... business" and end the conversation right there. After all, *you*, the member, pay his salary!

-Gary Reid

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### Financing the Church -An Insiders View

*In the last three years, almost 100 ministers of the Worldwide Church of God declared that the WCG's tithing system is immoral and unscriptural. These men either resigned or were forced out of the WCG. Some wondered why they didn't just stay in the church, accept a pay raise, and keep their ideas to themselves. They explained that as a minister of Jesus Christ, they had a responsibility to God to teach the whole truth to their flock, and if they were no longer allowed to teach what the Bible said on a subject, such as tithing, their consciences wouldn't allow them to remain silent-especially when they knew about the terrible suffering poor members underwent due to practicing tithing.*

*Nevertheless, about a dozen of the highest paid WCG leaders decided they could remain within the church, continue to claim to be a representative of Jesus Christ, and teach the church's doctrine of tithing-even though they have all privately admitted that it is totally without biblical support.*

*Because of the large number of WCG members worldwide that have been adversely affected by the current "commanded-tithing" misinformation (see our Letters section), Ambassador Report has taken the position that members have a right to know any information submitted to the doctrinal committee that could clarify any misimpressions about what the Bible says on tithing and that could relieve any unnecessary financial hardships.*

*The doctrinal committee has received over 40 papers on tithing from prominent and respected WCG ministers, writers, and researchers. One of these people in particular occupies a position of respected prominence, and as such might be looked upon by many individuals as a promulgator of issues of public importance.*

*He is Brian Knowles, the managing editor of The Plain Truth-a magazine purporting to be "an educational service."*

*Ambassador Report feels that the public in general and WCG members in particular are entitled to read a fair representation of his researched, expressed, and written comments on the subject of tithing. We do not impute any positive or negative value to his conduct or performance as a Christian, a corporate official, or a human being but feel the weight of his corporate perspective and his humanitarian judgment ought to be brought to bear upon the subject of tithing for the benefit of the general public. Therefore, Ambassador Report would like to present several papers and memos on tithing authored by this individual. This will allow members for the first time the right to determine the extent to which the Armstrongs have suppressed the doctrinal committee's freedom to speak out and publish the true nature of their findings on tithing. We ask each member to personally compare and contrast the following material with the church's most recent booklet, Your Best Investment. (The following material written by Brian Knowles has been edited for spelling and punctuation and the italics have been removed, but his wording remains unchanged.)*

## **THE DOCTRINAL COMMITTEE**

Regarding the subject of tithing: I think the doctrinal committee has utterly lost its way. In fact I don't think they ever found it to the first place. GTA pretty well put the kibash on any objective study on the subject. I think his mind is made up, the doctrine (the basic part of it) is obviously an untouchable sacred cow. I see a sign hanging around the tithing principle which says, "Do Not Disturb!"

I'm convinced that at least 2 or possibly 3 other major doctrinal subjects will fall into the same category: (1) the commission. (Actually, the whole basis for our prophetic teaching is included in this.) (2) Church government. (I think changes can be made below the Armstrong level only.) (3) The covenants.

Once the subject of the covenants breaks wide open I'm afraid we're in for real trouble. This to me is the biggest single priority that exists right now. It deals with the basis of our entire set of practices and beliefs-at least the ones that make us unique.... If the "truth" about the covenants is unveiled to our membership, our entire ship could sink. And I'm sure it will eventually.... I'm afraid our doctrinal and theological house is built upon subjective sand and the winds are beginning to howl with ever increasing intensity.

I have personally given up on the doctrinal committee. When I show up it is only to take notes. It is obvious that Dr. Hoeh and other right-wingers question my attitude, thinking, and right to contribute.... The Game Plan now seems to be "don't rock the boat anymore. Let's not make any more changes for awhile. We've done enough. Let's stabilize what's left and get on with the job of preaching the Gospel according to Ezekiel and Elijah (to come)." I think Dr. Hoeh and others have very effectively neutralized the effectiveness of the doctrinal committee for now. Lester Grabbe is the one voice of reason who is still able to

make contributions-and only because of his devastatingly accurate scholarship.

The doctrinal committee deck is being stacked in the same way Nixon loaded the Supreme Court.... Objectivity and honesty have fallen in the streets, and we grope at noonday as in the night. It is now an exercise in futility with all changes being token and minimal The idea is to get back to the winning game of the early and middle 60s.

I agree... that we are likely to continue to lose people from the ministry and the laity unless we are suddenly taken with a massive dose of honesty and repentance....

I'm convinced we lack faith in God to provide for the needs of preaching the Gospel-and we lack confidence in the loyalty of our membership to support it. We have never admitted that the Holy Spirit can collectively lead the entire church into anything. It must always be "from the top down" and by authority. We have a form of godliness but....

## **TITHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**Christ Upheld Levitical Tithing Law.** Matt. 23:23-(a) upholds Levitical tithing law which would prohibit Christ or the apostles from taking tithes since they were not Levites. (b) Confirms that this law was agricultural (mint, anise, and cummin) and not monetary.

Christ came-not to do away with the commandments-but to maintain them (Matt. 5:11-19). This would include the Levitical tithing law since the temple was still standing for 29 years after Christ's death and all during the establishment of the NT [New Testament] church. If the Jewish NT Christians had been tithing to both the Levites and the apostles, it could have cost them up to 60%+ of their incomes (according to our reasoning!). (cf. Lev. 27:30-34; Matt. 5:17-19; Matt. 23:23.)

Matt. 22:16-21-The money (taxes) was rendered unto Caesar and the agricultural tithe to the Levites as God's representative.

Like the Pharisees, we have placed greater emphasis on tithing than on the weightier matters of the law!

**Did Jesus Teach Apostles to Take Tithes?** If he [Jesus] had, he would have been violating the same law he himself had upheld. The apostles were not Levites. (Matthews' name-Levi-is no proof he was a Levite, as many non-Levitical Jews have that name.) Jesus was of Judah. For Christ and/or the apostles to take tithes-especially while the Levitical system was still functioning (up to 70 A.D.)-would have been to violate Numbers 19.

**Christ Set Up a Different System for Financing the New Testament Church.** Luke 10:3-16, Matt. 10:9-10, Matt. 6:25-34 are said to show the system Jesus

established for the support of His New Testament Church. Essentially, this means living off whatever the people give of their own free will. Under this system, the ministry would rely on faith for sustenance while preaching the gospel. They would not be forced to become corporate executives in order to support a vast financial empire.

Under our system the finances come before the preaching of the gospel. With "Christ's" NT system the gospel was first preached-the sustenance came later.

Acts 4:32-35 shows how the activities of the Pentecost and Jerusalem gathering period were financed. People sold houses and lands and donated funds which the other less fortunate people-not the apostles-shared. No tithe is mentioned here. They were not coerced to contribute. Rather, they saw where God was working and responded.

Acts 5:1-11. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira had nothing to do with tithing. They were punished only for lying.

**Paul's Teaching.** Paul upheld the Levitical tithing law. He said "...the sons of Levi... have [present tense] a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law..." (Heb. 7:5). This was about 64 A.D. or later-long after the NT Church had begun.

Paul taught another way of financing the New Testament ministry: Acts 20:28-35 (v. 35-weak = "needy" -Moffatt; "poor"-Rien).

Paul did not take tithes of the Ephesians. He was not a Levite. It would have been against the law for him to do so. He worked with his own hands, supporting not only himself, but also "them that were with me" (v. 34).

In other cases he accepted support from "other churches," but not the Corinthians (II Cor. 11:8).

If tithing were a NT law, then Paul would have been causing them to sin when he didn't accept it. He would have been spiritually negligent if he did not teach tithing. He would have caused them to be "cursed with a curse" for not tithing!

II Cor. 11:9-The Levitical tithing system was never called a "burden"-none of God's laws were burdensome. Yet Paul said it would have been burdensome to the Corinthians to support Paul financially.

**I Corinthians 9.** If we take this chapter to prove NT tithing, we are reading into it what is not there. Tithing is not referred to. Paul did show that he was entitled to material support-but that he was not seeking it (v. 15). If tithing were the subject, why then didn't Paul refer to the tithing law in Leviticus or Numbers instead of to Deut. 25:4 about the ox treading the corn? Because the tithing law referred only to the Levites-v. 13.

V. 14-What "the Lord ordained" is found in Matt. 10, Luke 10, and Luke 12-trusting God in faith for whatever voluntary support was offered.

**Did Early NT Church Tithe?** The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: "The early Church had no tithing system... it was not that no need for supporting the Church existed or was recognized. but rather that other means appeared to suffice" (art. "Tithe"). This is confirmed by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*-11th edition-and the *Americana*.

**Is Hebrews 7 "The Tithing Chapter"?** This chapter allegedly confirms that the tithing law was transferred to apply (once again) to the Melchisedec Priesthood of which Christ is the representative-thus necessitating payment to his ministers.

The real subject of the chapter, however, is the superiority of Christ's priesthood over that of the Levites. The subject of tithing is merely one of several examples to show the superiority of Christ's function over the Levitical system.

In verse 9 we are told, "Levi... paid tithes in Abraham...." Why didn't he pay them himself if the law of tithing was in force prior to Lev. 27?

The "change in the law" referred to in verse 12 has nothing to do with tithes being paid to the apostles or the New Testament Church.

The only "commandment" referred to in this chapter is that of Levitical tithing and that commandment is said to be "disannulled" (set aside) in verse 18. All commandments concerning the Levitical priesthood are set aside today since it is not functioning.

While Mormonism teaches that its ministry is the Melchisedec priesthood, the 7th chapter of Hebrews plainly states that Christ himself is the only priest after that order. (See Joseph Smith's work, *The Pearl of Great Price*.)

Even if we were to tithe today according to the Levitical law, it would still not be a monetary tithe.

When tithing was finally introduced into the Catholic Church long after the first century, it was in the form of a voluntary offering.

By the Synod of Macon (585) it [tithing] became compulsory under threat of excommunication. Civil authorities were used as enforcers. Later, tithing was ended as a law with the French Revolution. (See *New Catholic Encyclopedia* article "Tithe.")

There was no law in the Old or the New Testament which ever required a monetary tithe of one's income. The concept of a monetary tithe is not of God. It was man-ordained because Church leaders could not trust God in faith for

support and did not wish to place themselves at the mercy of the people for sustenance.

**What If Everyone Tithed?** If everyone tithed every time money changed hands (in buying and selling), any given sum of money would be tithed on not once, but many times over. Finally, those who received tithes-if they chose not to spend money-could end up with all the money in circulation. The economy would collapse. Take an \$800 salary and see how many times it is tithed on ....

On the other hand, under God's Levitical system, something was only tithed on once (twice-to High Priest?). A person with nine head of cattle could not tithe until he had ten. The system never impoverished anyone.

Our tithing system, on the other hand, can and does impoverish some people (especially middle class and below). It insures that certain people will never be able to save up enough money to make a major purchase-if their earning power is below a certain level. Witness Australia.

We are beginning to parallel the Catholic Church in which the Popes and Cardinals lived in lavish splendor while many of the people were suffering deep poverty and want.

**Does the Church Have Authority to Make Tithing a Law?** Matt. 16:19 regarding "binding and loosing" is offered as a proof that we do. This contradicts Deut. 4:2 about adding to the Word of God, however, Matt. 16:19 in the KJV is a mistranslation. Williams' [translation of the Bible] has it right: "Whatsoever you forbid on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven."

**Other Negative Aspects.** We should not be sending money to sustain foreign office and college workers at a level better than the local people. "Ambassador College Quality" can be offensive to local people who are struggling for economic survival. We should live at the standard of the society among which we are working. Are we exporting American luxury or the Gospel of Christ?

In the meantime, we are forcing some (many?) church members to live at a standard below the neighborhood in which they live. (Their gross may be the same or even higher-but their net is less.)

Many P.T.'s [*Plain Truths*] are wasted-are actually reduced to level of "junk mail." Fancy equipment is purchased and never used. Whole departments [at headquarters] are in chaos with constant redefining of roles, layoffs, changes, etc. Our efficiency is almost nil.

Oral Roberts and Billy Graham are able to have a far greater impact on society with budgets about a third the size of ours.

If we dropped the man-devised monetary tithing system, we would be forced to draw closer to God, develop greater efficiency and true economy, [and] be less arrogant with the people. We might even see the signs God promised would accompany the preaching of the gospel. God would provide our material needs.

"Second" and "Third" tithes are also misunderstood in their Old Testament usage and don't apply today anyway since the whole system stands or falls on the first tithe.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

After studying the issues of tithing (all three [tithes]) for some time, I think we may draw certain conclusions which provide a basis for understanding and decision making in this area. Perhaps these points will succinctly summarize the real issues:

(1) As Dr. Hoeh pointed out on one occasion, we still have needs. The ministry and the preaching of the Gospel still have need to be financed somehow. There is a need to finance the annual festivals. We still have the poor and the widows with us and always will, as Christ said. They still need financial help. The Church must arrive at some system of taking care of these three primary needs.

(2) We have no biblical evidence that the Old Testament tithing system was practiced by first-century Christians. There is no New Testament instruction regarding tithing (tenthing).

(3) We know that the Levitical tithing system was still in force until at least 70 A.D. The Church began in 31 A.D. Are we to believe that a double system of tithing was being practiced during those 29 years?

(4) Hebrews 7 does not appear to enjoin tithing on modern Christians. The "change in law" seems to refer to the whole administration rather than to the specific command regarding tithing. The subject of tithing is introduced in this section as an analogy (as D&R in Romans 7) to show the superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood (of which Christ is the only representative) over that of the Levites. The subject of whether Christians should tithe is not under discussion here.

(5) I Corinthians 9 does not mention tithing specifically. Nor is tithing the subject under discussion. If tithing were being discussed, Paul would have quoted the law of tithing from the Torah. Instead he quoted Deut. 25:4 regarding not muzzling the ox that treadeth the corn ....

The subject here is the support of the ministry. It refers to the physical sustenance of the ministry on a personal level (i.e., Paul, Peter, and the other apostles). It does not have-even in principle-anything to do with the financing of a globe-girdling, gospel-preaching corporation. It defines no fixed or minimum

percentage. To suggest that I Corinthians 9 teaches tithing or to say it gives us the authority to command the membership to tithe is to distort it far beyond its original meaning and intent.

(6) If tithing was (and is) a divine law enjoined on New Testament Christians, then Paul was grossly negligent in not teaching it. He would have caused people to be cursed financially according to our present understanding (based on Mal. 3). Yet Paul received support only from the Philippian Church (Phil 4:15), and even then he merely spoke of "giving and receiving"-not tithing.

(7) The Church does not have the authority to add to the laws of God. The Pharisees did so and bound "heavy burdens grievous to be borne," Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Matt. 23:4. We should be silent where the Bible is silent, speak where it plainly speaks, and be vague where it is vague. We dare not go beyond the Bible and add many laws based on "expediency."

(8) The principle of the New Testament is simple, cheerful giving based on personal volition. God loves a cheerful giver. Where your treasure is there will your heart be also. It is more blessed to give... etc., etc.

(9) What, then, may the Church do without going beyond the authority of God's revealed word?

We could ask our members-encourage them-to support the Work (i.e., the Corporation) to the extent of 10% of their income, or more, if they feel they can afford it. We should not command or demand the tithe, but we can encourage people to use it as a basic minimum by which the Work can anticipate a reliable and consistent support of its membership.

This would provide a stable figure upon which the corporation could tentatively budget. WE SHOULD IN NO WAY PENALIZE A PERSON WHO DOES NOT-FOR WHATEVER REASON-TITHE. It is not a divine law for New Testament Christians.

Tithing thus becomes a matter of faith-a voluntary act based on the person's willingness to support the preaching of Christ's own Gospel.

(10) We might consider the principle of statements of intention regarding first tithe as a means of budget projection.

(11) THE ANNUAL HOLY DAYS:

The principal reason for traveling to Jerusalem in the Old Testament was the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Each Holy Day was connected with a sacrifice.

Today, there is no real reason for long pilgrimages to distant Festival sites. We have no temple, no sacrifices. The main reason to keep the Festivals today is to

understand the Plan of God.

This can be done in local areas just as the spring festivals are kept. We will lose nothing of the meaning of the days if we keep them in local church areas.

The Fall Festival could be observed by keeping the first and the eighth days as Sabbaths with AM and PM services on which we could ask for an offering. (Technically, however, only three offerings were required under the Old Testament system. We take up seven- cf. Deut. 16:16).

The remaining days could be regular work days with services held each evening in local halls.

This would have several advantages. The people would hear just as much preaching. They would not have to save a second tithe of their income to attend annual Festivals. They would not lose time (and sometimes jobs) from work. Their income would not be interrupted. They would not have the sometimes impossible logistics of long treks across the country to distant Festival sites in dilapidated autos, with sick children, accidents, etc. We would not have to have congested Festival sites, taxing facilities to their limit, all across the country. (The Feast sites have become large, unwieldy and unpleasant for many people, especially those with large families. The Feast is often an ordeal instead of a joyful occasion. Of course there are others who find it a pleasant break from routine, and probably most look forward to it.)

Under this system, people would have considerably more money they could (in many cases) put into the financing of the first commission! This could mean a considerable increase in income for the Work as a whole! The money would be going where it is most needed instead of down a rathole. It would protect hundreds of jobs (lost annually by Feast attendance). This would mean fewer unemployed people in the Church, and that in turn would help the income.

The Feast days would still be observed and the meaning would not be lost-but the cost would be cut down drastically. It would ease an enormous burden off the shoulders of the people. The income of the Work could increase as a result!

Note: We have no indication (exception: Paul) that the New Testament Church traveled great distances to observe the Feast days. Almost nothing is said of the Feast of Tabernacles in the New Testament at all!

People could be encouraged to keep a savings account for the Festivals. This would amount to whatever their particular needs were. They could save for offerings, special dinners at fine restaurants, gifts for their children, etc. They could share this with widows and others. The ministers would also save this money, preventing a double standard from occurring. It would be no fixed amount

....

Third tithe could be abandoned and replaced by a major Emergency Fund. The needs of this fund-i.e., specific financial goals-could be made known to the membership annually. (This could be run somewhat like the Red Feather campaigns in which a "thermometer" graph is used to show how far from the goal we are, etc.) At the end of the year, members could receive a report showing what was accomplished by the fund. Thus the needs of widows, orphans and other emergencies could be taken care of without the need to levy a "tithe" on the people.

If all of the above is rejected for political, philosophical, or financial reasons, I think any "tithe" that is asked of the people should be on the net. I think the simplest way to define the net is "taxable income."

Summary: The above recommendations would theoretically not hurt the Work in any way. They could improve the financial picture overall-both for the corporation and for individual Church members.

They are in harmony with biblical revelation. They add nothing to the Bible and take nothing from it. They are within the legitimate bounds of Church authority. They solve the exegetical problems connected with tithing in the New Testament. They do not in any way jeopardize the knowledge of God's Plan of Salvation as illustrated through the annual Holy Days. They still take care of the needs of the people. They might improve the financial picture for the Work as a whole since they free up more personal money among the Church membership.

I sincerely hope such measures can be adopted by the Church.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### Intimidation at Ambassador College-A Case History

Shortly before leaving my position as Director of Research for the Garner Ted Armstrong television program, I was given the responsibility of gathering all the research material I could find on the subject of "tithing" for Dr. Charles Dorothy's Doctrinal Research Team. In the process of completing this assignment, two things occurred which began to cause the administration to reevaluate my unquestioning loyalty to the Armstrongs.

(1) Mike Holman, a supervisor in the Data Processing Department, quietly informed me that he had been directed to run *another* extensive tithing check on church and college employees. A person's tithing record was being used as an index of his loyalty to the Armstrongs and of his "conversion to Christ."

We had always been solemnly assured, in sermons and church literature on "tithing," that the records of one's donations were inviolate and confidential-that giving was something deeply personal between an individual and God.

My wife and I had learned, approximately eight months before this event, that the tithing records were exploited for numerous purposes. We decided at that point that we were not going to allow ourselves to be the willing recipients of this kind of invasion of privacy, so we sent in our tithes and offerings in such a way as not to show up on the computer. It was also at this time that we began to donate a portion of our tithes and offerings to charitable causes. Anyway, the net effect was that Mike Holman's computer printout showed no record of our tithes or donations.



**During a May 31, 1977, interview on CBC radio, Robert Kuhn, executive assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong, was asked this question: "Does the church keep tabs on who does and who does not contribute?" Kuhn answered: "No, in no way is that tabulated or analyzed by a person and sent to a minister. In no way has that ever been done to the membership .... Nobody will ever check and has ever checked on ... the**

**membership's tithing record."**

(2) During this same "tithe-check" period, Robert Kuhn informed me that he was under intense administrative pressure to terminate Harry Eisenberg, one of my employees, because he was not tithing and had been doing some "talking" to others about his research on tithing. Harry was one of Robert's close friends, and Robert was asking me to structure some type of "budgetary layoff" in my department so he could discreetly get rid of Harry without a hassle. I told Robert that I would not fabricate a reason to terminate Harry because he was a highly competent employee who had done excellent work for me. Robert called me at least twice a week during the next month begging, urging, demanding, and pleading that I terminate Harry for him because the administrative pressure on him was getting so intense. My basic response to him was that *he* was my up-line supervisor and *he* would have to be responsible for terminating Harry if it was going to happen because I was going to stand in his way. I felt that the responsibility I had to protect my employees from this type of institutional harassment offset my organizational responsibility to simply click my heels and obey orders. I also told Robert that I had discussed Harry's situation with the current managing editor of *The Plain Truth* (Harry's former supervisor), who had originally asked Harry to research the subject of tithing, and it was our mutual feeling that tithing was a personal thing between an individual and God-not a criteria of employment and something to be related to tangible job skills. Robert said he personally agreed, but he was being forced to get rid of Harry-the pressure was just too intense. Finally, Robert terminated Harry over my objection and the "Reason for Termination" blank read, "budgetary cutback and layoff," which had become the standard official cosmetic statement for religious layoffs on personnel records. If you wish to read Harry's own story, see *Ambassador Review*, June 1976, "Executive Action," p. 22.

-Olin Degge

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **Excerpts From the Tithing papers**

Since Harry Eisenberg first submitted his controversial paper on tithing in mid-1973, the Worldwide Church of God's doctrinal committee has received close to 50 papers and memos on the subject of tithing. The vast majority of these papers were zealously kept out of general circulation because they showed conclusively that the WCG's tithing doctrine was full of specious reasoning and misapplied scriptures.

Below are the conclusions from three papers on tithing submitted to the doctrinal committee that the WCG ministers and members were never shown. The first excerpt is taken from "Is Tithing a Principle We Should Follow?" (written in March 1974):

"God will abundantly bless any church that steps out in faith and depends upon him for spiritual and monetary support, but he is not pleased with those who try to extort money on his behalf by causing people to live in fear of retaliation or of being disfellowshipped if they don't give a minimal fixed amount to his church. Ministers who are serving God need not fear he will forsake them or their church and refuse to provide their daily bread! If he cares for the lilies of the field and for the birds of the air, how much more shall he care for his own children!"

The second excerpt is taken from the paper "I Corinthians 9 and Tithing," written in July 1974 by a member of Ambassador College's theology department:

"Alternative #3 is personally one which I do not want to face up to. It is somewhat frightening to think of going to a 'volunteer' system after we have relied on a tithing doctrine for a good portion of our income for so long. On the other hand, if it is decided that the New Testament does not teach or presuppose tithing, I frankly think this is the most responsible alternative. To try to teach a 'principle of tithing' from a general philosophy and Old Testament examples has its drawbacks. No one doubts everything belongs to God. But if clear examples or commands cannot be found in the New Testament, we would have serious problems of consistency in claiming to be the New Testament Church which Christ founded, based on the Bible with the

revelation of God incomplete apart from the New Testament.

"The New Testament cannot be understood apart from its Old Testament background. The Old Testament is as fully inspired as the New. But if we judge tithing purely on the Old Testament, what in the world are we going to do about sewing fringes on our garments (Deut. 22:12)?"

The third excerpt is the conclusion to the paper "Christian Tithing," written in August 1974:

"Without imputing motives or implying that no one has honestly faced the entire issue, I want to urge that everyone face the issue honestly. We must ask ourselves these questions:

"1. Is it possible we don't want to admit that the pastors of the Associated Churches of God were right and in consequence tend to blind ourselves to the Bible facts about tithing?

"2. Is it possible that we don't have the faith to believe God will support the Work in the style to which *He* wishes it to be accustomed without a tithe *law* imposed on the people?

"3. Is it possible that we don't want to admit that years ago 'we' were 'sold a bill of goods' so to speak, and did *not* as we have prided ourselves really PROVE the doctrines we accepted?"

[Back to Index](#)

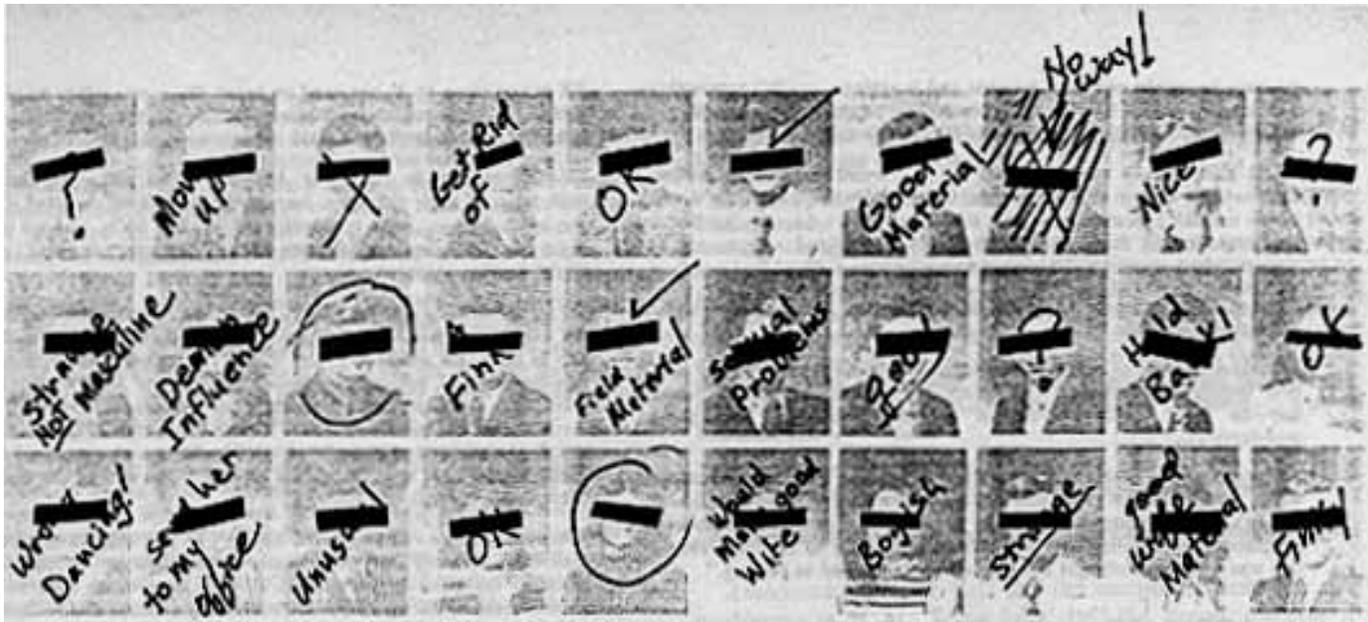
[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT



## THE MANPOWER PAPERS

In 1961 at the behest of the Armstrongs a "manpower committee" comprising 15 of the leading men of Ambassador College (AC) was formed. The noble purpose of this committee was to evaluate AC students-especially male students-and determine whether or not to employ them at AC or in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) upon graduation. The Manpower Committee, however, quickly degenerated into a high-level gossip session in which a group of corporate misfits combined to destroy the reputation of numerous students whose only offense may have been intellectual resistance to the doctrinal intimidation and personal prejudices of AC/WCG officials while attending to their formal education.

Before any discussion of a student began, his picture was projected onto a screen. Then, as the members of this "spiritual jury" stared at the student's image, each one

of them divulged information - often given to them confidentially in private counseling sessions - gathered on the student. This information often included a student's background, racial and genetic heritage, sex and dating problems, attitudes, and physique, in addition to biased personal assessments of a student's potential worth to the organization.

Below *Ambassador Report* is reprinting a number of statements made in these manpower meetings that aptly illustrate the mentality of the Ambassador College administration in the 1960s. Little if any concrete evidence for the allegations, innuendoes, or rumors in the following quotations was ever formally submitted, probably because it never existed. All students were tried in absentia and never given a chance to reply to the biased information disseminated in these meetings that sullied their reputations. Yet the essence of what was said in these meetings was carefully typed and distributed to several leading men at AC in Pasadena, the vice-chancellor of AC's Texas campus, and AC's Personnel Office. (In order to protect the identity and reputation of the students mentioned in the following statements, we will refer to all male students as "X" and to all females students as "Y." We have gone to great lengths to delete anything that we felt could lead to the identification of a student.)

## **RACIST COMMENTS**

"Like most Negroes he is reserved, timid, and not as warm and spontaneous as he could be.... Most of our Negro leaders are partially white and don't have the normal dull mind of the average Negro."

"X has a lot of ego. He is a Jew, and a Jew feeds upon applause, people appreciating him, living in the limelight, being a performer, so they are hard to convert-but once converted Jews can be the best instrument in God's hands there is."

"Mr. Meredith feels a lot of this apparent haughtiness and cockiness is the results of the English class distinction bred in him.... The English people tend to be that way.... The English do this naturally."

"He is converted, yet like most Germans, is hard to love.... It is most imperative that we all get to know him."

## **COMMENTS ON SEX PROBLEMS**

"He has had a sex problem since he was ten or twelve years of age; and since he came to college he has been able to overcome it several months at a time, but continually lapses back into it."

"He is all but a practicing homosexual, has a masturbation problem, and apparently is only here to protect himself from the draft."

"He is starry-eyed, has a glassy stare when speaking, is hard to listen to because of his poor eye contact-this may be a result of excessive masturbation in the past."

"X was disfellowshipped from the Church several years ago because of homosexual problems."

"She comes from a mother dominated home, a pragmatic home, and she needs a 'he man' to solve her problems."

"Y has an excellent I.Q. of 123, but is neurotic.... She is unbalanced, she has sex problems and has masturbated from the time she was about 12 years of age.... She had an affair with a man in the... Church. She doesn't fit here, she is a wrong influence. She shows definite deep influence from demons."

"She acts like a lesbian, but is not-her fear and dislike for men is a result of demon influence as well as the result of an affair she had with a man that discussed her with men. She and her family have consulted spirits in the past...."

"He often looks glassy eyed, is washed out, enervated, which is unusual because he works out with weights and is athletic.... It's interesting-he gave an Attack Speech this morning on masturbation-people tend to attack most vociferously the very thing they are fighting."

"And although we would not say he is a weird personality, he has a few, weird, creepy characteristics. Dr. Hoeh wondered if he doesn't have mental sexual problems, that he may be an intellectual homosexual, not that he's ever physically committed such an act, but does he think about [it] ? We need to sound him out and find out."

"Y has had dating problems with the fellows, a strong sex drive, a record of instability..."

"He does confess to mentally fornicating with our girls every day of his life. Before he came into the church he used to masturbate twice a day-he is a sexual pervert in his mind. He has had demon problems...."

"X was also discussed as a possible man for the Sermonette List, but when we found he was also guilty of necking (though done very lightly), he was rejected from the Sermonette List.... Mr. Apartian had talked to X before and will talk to him again to find out whether this was a quick goodnight kiss or could be classified as petting."

## **MARRIAGE MANIPULATION**

"Mr. Smith said whoever counsels them in the final outcome should certainly write her father and tell him we will do all we can to discourage her marriage if he wants us to.... After further discussion we all feel best to advise them to throw cold water on it...."

"Mr. Meredith has already counselled him to postpone any engagement plans, primarily because Mrs. Armstrong was horrified when she heard about them."

"The Manpower Committee saw no objections to a marriage sometime in June."

"Mr. Hill said X had counselled him about marrying Y.... Dr. Hoeh did not feel, however, that she should tie herself down to him-she is a terrific girl, should be a Minister's wife...."

"Mr. Armstrong just recently made an ironclad rule that any Senior who wants to marry a Freshman is automatically out of college and if he doesn't take that in a right attitude is out of the Church."

"X and Y were making marriage plans when advised to put it in God's hands, break off the wedding plans, and wait until a later date.... it is doubtful she can be sure she and X are actually in love."

"Mr. Portune said he called the engagement between X and Y off-that he did not believe X was stable enough or ready for marriage."

"Mr. Elliott brought up the problem of Senior men speaking for Freshmen girls a few weeks after they have arrived on campus.... We are not bringing girls to Ambassador College to marry Senior students after only being here a month or two-we are bringing them here to train them to be wives and mothers, which should mean at least two years at Ambassador College."

"X was going steadily with Y until Dr. Hoeh counselled him to consider marrying a Russian.... Mr. Portune brought out, however, that he had counselled them and told them that they could not get married for a year and a half after graduation and they both know that they cannot get married.... These students need to learn that unless God is with them they have no business getting married in the first place.... Let's give them the test, make them... quit running from one minister to the next... and wait the year and a half after graduation as Mr. Portune told them to do in the first place.... Take the emphasis off sex and marriage and get it on the desire to seek the Kingdom of God."

"Y and X are in love, but they were told they must not get married until the Feast of Tabernacles, 196- [1½ years after this was written]. This will be quite a trial on both of them."

"He has effeminate tendencies and is definitely a fringer. We need to tell him we don't want to live his life, but we advise him not to get married-that the marriage will not work...."

"Now Y is over there and she is getting romantically involved with a weak student named X. His stock is weak. If we were cattle raisers we would not begin to allow such mating to take place. Breeding is very important."

"X is too close to Y, we need to break them up-either he goes or she goes. He is too polished, he needs Texas [Ambassador College's Texas campus), he needs to get a little manure under his fingernails...."

"He is interested in Y.... Mr. Apartian mentioned being disappointed with both of their attitudes, because he told them to break it off-but she loves him.... She is sanctimonious, like he is, and we only have eight years left anyhow [8 years till 1975, the year the WCG predicted Christ would return]."

"Mr. Portune... says he [X]... is a clod... a clown in the eyes of the other students, a prolific eater-eats everything in sight. X is only \$15 in debt. He wants to marry Y. She... comes from good stock, is a nice-looking girl, beautifully shaped, and is only \$438 in debt. Mr. Hill [said X]... has an odd approach, hasn't produced, and can't identify himself with the problems. He is like an unemotional fish and needs to attack something and get stirred up. Mr. Blackwell wondered then if it might not be best to... separate he and Y for awhile... and let him know this is it-sink or swim."

"Dr. Zimmerman... counseled him... to put cold water on his plans with Y.... During the past summer he was sent to... look for work, primarily to separate he and Y.... He later came back to ask Dr. Zimmerman to ask again for approval to get married. Dr. Zimmerman told him again to throw cold water on it.... X felt he could.... Dr. Zimmerman doesn't feel any consideration should be given him toward marriage, that he should be told again to put cold water on it. Mr. Meredith said he should be told not to even think about marriage for one or two years at least"

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

"X is odd, he came to talk to Mr. Meredith about his inability to sweat in prayer, after Mr. Meredith's sermon on really putting your heart and all your being into prayer...."

"X was told he must lose five pounds a month."

"X is also odd, finky, but has a good mind.... He has been too steeped in music...."

"He was recently given a lie detector's test which shows him to be a liar and a thief, but since the test is not infallible, and he staunchly maintains his innocence, we cannot be sure that he is a thief and liar. The lie detector records only conscious thought, however, and he was grilled for more than eight hours...."

"X is... very hard to get to know-there is always a question in our minds as to what is going on in his mind."

"X... has had a perpetual health problem (constipation)."

"Y is weird; she is not normal; she is extremely neurotic. We wouldn't be surprised if she didn't someday try to destroy herself...."

"Some of the students just had a big party at which they played questionable music, with a wrong beat, drank too many beers, got involved in the wrong kind of dancing...."

"Mr. Meredith, when reading about the wretched background he [X] came from, added that X's mother and father get in real "knock-down-and-drag-out" fights, get involved in sexual perversion, and have a wretched relationship. She has a Pentecostal background."

"Mr. [Ted] Armstrong read the resume for X and the comments made at previous Man-Power Meetings-with the comment that X is an 'ass.'... Being an ass is no condemnation, it is far better to be an ass than to be effeminate, a weakling, or a problem."

"Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong opened the meeting.... Mr. Armstrong further stressed the need for pooling our information from both colleges [Ambassador College's campuses in Pasadena and in Big Sandy] by receiving their [man-power] notes for graduating seniors and supplying them with ours."

"Mr. Armstrong could see no reason why they should not get married. His future is already mapped out for him."

"He is somewhat boyish... having been reared without a man in the house, and has taken on many womanish ways-although we don't feel he is effeminate."

"After the previous Man-Power comments were read on X, it was brought out that he is a product of his environment. Richard Plache said his father is extremely odd, a character, is self-righteous, egotistical, and is a constant problem. Like his father, he goes to bed at night wanting to die.... he has a clinging, fishy handshake, showing complete lack of strength, character, etc.... Mr. Meredith explained the need for all of us, as Man Power Committee members, to get beneath the veneer of these men and fully know their problems...."

"Mr. Meredith... said... he is dull.... Richard Plache added... that... X's parents have the same slow, dull, sluggish ways In fact, he has a younger brother who is far worse than he is-is much more buffoonish , duller, and has almost no life or spark at all. Mr. Portune feels... we could send him out for a trial as a warm body... to the minister and assist the minister in some of the routine visits."

"Mr. Armstrong read the previous evaluations of X which included comments on his family background.... He is in love with Y and they eventually want to get married. Mr. Armstrong found it a little hard to understand a mutual attraction between them.... He is sincere and he assures us he really loves Y and that there is a mutual physical attraction as well as the intellectual. Most of us might not find her attractive because of her thick wrists and ankles and blocky build...."

"Mr. Armstrong said the Admissions Committee needs to be more strict and forceful in turning down people who have physical handicaps"

"Y is not a very pretty girl, she is not a great intellect, but she will make someone a very fine wife."

"Neither Mr. Armstrong nor Mr. Meredith feel that this is the right girl for X; she is a

peasant-type girl, is slightly dumb and immature."

"Mr. Hill... says there are no problems except for a few effeminate flareups now and then, a womanish tendency, but he does have good dignity, a good mind...."

"He is a liar, a fink, a queer, and has lost job after job."

"X has a self-righteous attitude. He... has a semirebellious attitude... is another one of those whom we cannot seem to get to know."

"He continues to show disrespect for authority, talks disparagingly of the leaders of the work over the breakfast table... has many signs of hidden rebellion. His children are constantly on the spanking list at school.... He is a dirty player, fouls others continually."

"X appears to have a bad attitude some, or most of the time. The whole attitude of that family has never been too good."

"We need to get to know X and jar him into cooperation...."

"X is weak, effeminate, unable to rule his house and unable to master his marital problems"

"He is slow, dull, unable to think, and is all but completely lacking in zeal."

"X is a hard worker, but he doesn't seem to know his own mind."

"She had a breakdown in Mr. Buzzard's class the other day-she couldn't stop crying. We don't want 'odd' people-people obviously demon influenced. We should not hesitate to kick her out at the end of this semester, unless there is a drastic change."

"He is not emotionally unstable as girls normally are, nevertheless, he does have an emotional problem."

"X is still somewhat girlish, although not queer; he lacks the strong masculine quality. He has a weak voice like Richard Nixon...."

"He did finally come to talk to Mr. Elliott, he told about kissing in the bedroom, where another student saw him, but he didn't tell everything. He went behind the science class building, behind Mr. Meredith's house, and fondled her breasts, etc., and she is the one who told this to Mr. Elliott."

"Mr. Ted Armstrong said there are still security leaks in our manpower committee that must be stopped. Word got back to X that we had discussed him in a recent manpower meeting, but what he heard was 5th or 6th hand, perverted, warped, and only a small percent correct."

"Unless he goes into the field [ministry], the draft may snatch him up. Someway we need to legally classify him as doing ministerial work of some nature. Mr. Hill classified X as an assistant to him, dealing with theological responsibilities, as a ministerial assistant, and he was reclassified without any problem. He suggests we write the same kind of letter he did to the draft board.... "

"X took Y, W, V, Z, and the girls signed out to go to the Student Dance. Instead they went to a football game, and when it didn't prove exciting enough they went to a park and played touch football themselves. Some other people joined the party... and they wound up going to the sister's house of one of the people they met and staying till 2:30 in the morning dancing and drinking. When they brought the girls back they were fearful of getting caught so they dropped the girls off on Orange Grove Boulevard. The girls cut through the Orange Grove Manor property and signed in-but they falsified their time.... His father is cocky, conceited, has constant financial problems... is often bothered with demons, etc."

"...the sewage of X's activity continues to flow through to us He is one of the worst scum who has ever walked across this campus"

*Ambassador Report* feels that the manpower mentality still predominates at AC. Some have cited the discontinuation of the comprehensive Manpower Committee in 1970 as a sign that all is now well. However, a memorandum from the committee's chairman, Gainer Ted Armstrong, indicates that there is still cause for concern:

"...it will be no handicap whatever for various departments to obtain useful information about prospective employees, or for a smaller group to make requests concerning prospective ministerial assistants...." (Memorandum to All Committee Members, Manpower, Jan. 8, 1970.)

Most of the men who made the assessments and final decisions in manpower meetings are still college administrators, student counselors, department heads, or policymakers for the general student body. They still advise and counsel students, becoming familiar with each student's most intimate problems. Yet the mentality of many of these men remains basically unchanged to this day. It is painfully obvious from their sermons and articles that their positions of prejudice and disregard for students' rights still exist, public pronouncements to the contrary. The reason these harmful prejudices still exist is because the mentality of "ministerial privilege" has never been significantly discouraged nor discontinued from private practice among Ambassador executives.

*Ambassador Report* feels that student and public awareness of AC's disregard for its students' rights is imperative in order to discourage further abuse by members of the administration. Also, we encourage all AC students to be aware that what they reveal to AC counselors and/or WCG ministers may one day be used against them or passed on to others.

A reliable source inside AC has informed us that one administrator currently secretly records his counselings with students and church members and later has the conversations typed by his secretary for future reference. In light of this report, we feel the need to notify all AC students of their legal right to complete confidentiality in matters of spiritual guidance and their right not to have their personal problems and

identities divulged to AC or WCG officials for reasons of employment or *any* reason whatsoever.

California law clearly states that under no circumstance is a minister allowed to divulge or otherwise disseminate information supplied to him by an individual seeking spiritual guidance. Confidentiality is implied, and *any* breach of this confidence (especially for reasons of discrimination in employment) is prosecutable under the law.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### HERBERT ARMSTRONG - MAN ON THE MOVE

Every month *Signature* magazine, published by Diners Club Inc., features the story of a man considered to have been unusually successful in the world of business. Since Herbert Armstrong felt he, too, was a man of unusual success "in the world of mammon" (p. 9 of his autobiography, 1973 edition), that he had "training and specialized experience such as comes to few men" (p. 273 of his autobiography, 1967 edition), and that he had made the equivalent of "\$25,000 a year or more" before he was 30 (*ibid.*, p. 281), we in turn felt compelled to give Herbert Armstrong his day in court by featuring him as this month's "Man on the Move."

We pick up Herbert's story at the height of his "28 fat years" when his income supposedly topped today's equivalent of \$35,000 (p. 261 of his autobiography, 1973 edition). (A few years later, he upped the figure to \$70,000, and in the May 1977 *Plain Truth* on page 3 he claimed his early salary was equal to \$150,000 today.) What follows is an amazing summary of Herbert Armstrong's "success story" as presented in *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, 1967 edition:

**1917:** At the height of his self-confessed affluency, Herbert decided to marry Loma Dillon. He moved into a furnished apartment rented from a family away on vacation and lived there six weeks (p. 199). Upon return of this family, he rented another apartment from yet another vacationing couple for a month. Then he rented a single bedroom of another apartment with dining room and kitchen privileges. Loma by this time was pregnant (p. 209). About Thanksgiving 1917 he moved into a single room of an apartment on a subrent basis (p. 212).

**1918:** With an alleged income of \$22,000 (p. 221), he rented a house in Indianola, Iowa. But after three months he moved back to Chicago where he

rented a room from a family with an apartment (p. 217). During this time and the next few years, he "did not work more than four or five days a month" (p. 221). In November he felt he could finally lease a full apartment (p. 255) but decided instead to rent an old house filled with furniture from his father-in-law. He shared this house with another couple for six months.

**1919:** He moved into the hotel in Maywood for a few weeks, then into a furnished house on Fourth Street.

**1920:** He moved into a new apartment, his first since his marriage (p. 226). Late that year depression wiped out his business. Everything he touched "turned to failure" (p. 234). At this juncture in his life, his "28 fat years" came to an end; now his 28 years of poverty began (p. 235).

**1922:** He had to give up his apartment. His piano was repossessed because he could no longer keep up the payments (p. 239). Loma and her two daughters were sent back to live at his father-in-law's farm. Herbert hung around night clubs and started drinking (p. 240). Next, he moved into a single room. After being three weeks behind on the rent, he moved into a second-rate hotel on Chicago's north side. Finally even this grew too expensive, and he sought refuge at his father-in-law's farm. He proved unable to help him very much due to lack of experience. He spent most of the fall and winter resting and recuperating.

**1923:** After resting, he decided to find something to do (p. 257), but he soon bogged down again. He had to borrow \$200 from his dad. He started a laundry advertising business in Vancouver (p. 278), envisioning an income of up to \$500,000 per annum (p. 280). But then "the bottom fell out" again. He made \$50 a month, but this wasn't enough to support his family (p. 281).

**1926:** He worked 30 minutes each week, having nothing but "time" on his hands (pp. 284, 290). He spent all his time studying religion at the Portland Public Library. He "spent a solid six months of virtual night-and-day, seven-day-a-week study" (p. 295). He finally admitted he was a failure, but he found joy in defeat (pp. 296, 300).

**1927:** He was reduced to real poverty, often going hungry (p. 320). His study of the Bible became a passion (p. 330) that lasted 3½ years, night and day (p. 343), while his family almost starved.

**1928:** He fell behind in paying rent, and his electricity was shut off because he didn't pay his bills. One time his children were crying from hunger, and all he had for food was macaroni, which he boiled by using torn-up magazines for fuel. At this time he even lacked the salt to season the macaroni with (p. 355). He worked 30 minutes a week for \$50 a month, but that wasn't enough to pay his rent or keep his family "fed and alive." He rejected a job offer of \$8,000, explaining that he "worked in spurts" and went into a "slump for a week or a month" during which he could accomplish little or nothing (p. 359). Instead he took a local survey job that paid the exact amount he needed to prevent his being

evicted (p. 361).

**1929:** He moved into a house in Portland. Soon he had another crisis of hunger and desperate need (pp. 361-62). He accepted a job offer to throw two truckloads of wood into someone's basement for pay. While piling the wood, he winced every time a person passed by because he felt so ashamed at being seen doing menial work. He thought people would think he was a "down-and-out bum." He says that working with his hands was a humbling experience (p. 363). Later that year he peddled "miracle clay," hoping to make his million (p. 364), but the stock market crashed, and he couldn't get the financing he needed to start a business (pp. 367-68). He felt selling clay was the only means to keep his family alive. A neighbor had to help him out with food (p. 369).

**1930:** He hit rock bottom financially (p. 369). When his wife was due to give birth, he hadn't paid his previous hospital bill, and the hospital would not admit Loma (p. 370). He prayed for firewood, food, money, and a winter topcoat (p. 373). His parents brought him food and fuel, his brother bought him a coat (p. 375), and Loma's mother's last will provided the exact amount of money he needed (p. 374). At one time Loma didn't have enough to eat and couldn't nurse her baby. Herbert's credit was not good in any store (pp. 378-79). He peddled aluminum utensils from door to door (p. 381). His father had to pay his house rent for him (p. 383). He obtained a car from his dad (p. 384) and moved in with his parents in Salem (p. 384).

**1931:** He was still dependent on aluminum utensil sales. He felt he couldn't employ high-pressure methods as a Christian and hence couldn't make the big money others made. He earned just enough money to keep his family from starving (pp. 393-94). He moved into a house in Salem (p. 397). Here he earned \$20 per week working as an evangelist (p. 409), but his salary was cut off, and he had to return to advertising for 15 months (p. 429).

**1933:** He returned to the religion business (p. 445), moving to Astoria. He was rehired as a minister at \$3 per week (p. 458). Although he was "required to live another 14 years in the barest and most modest financial circumstances," he never had to go hungry again after that time (p. 454).

This then is the "success story" of a man who, according to his own words, "had been unusually successful in the world of mammon." He was a man truly on the "move"-from apartment to apartment during the time he claimed he was making the equivalent of anywhere between \$22,000 and \$150,000 in today's money. He was a man who moved from job to job, from one failure to another-until he struck it rich in religion in the 1950s. During his so-called fat years, he admittedly worked no more than four or five days a month. When his "lean years" struck, he often worked only 30 minutes a week. He studied the Bible while his family languished in poverty. The only account of his doing physical work for pay is presented by him as a humiliating experience that made him feel like a "down-and-out bum." (What is so humiliating about physical work?)

Those who have known Herbert Armstrong, including members of his own family, contend that the reason he experienced poverty was simply due to the fact that he was lazy and unwilling to do physical work. They claim that he had a life-long reputation as a moocher and a leech. His account in his autobiography certainly seems to lend support to this conclusion.

Things began to move in Herbert's direction only after he embarked on the business of religion after breaking away from what he claimed was "God's true church" in Oregon.

**At the Pinnacle of "Success."** None can gainsay the fact that Herbert Armstrong has been an astounding success at building a fundamentalist church organization from the ground up to where the church's annual income exceeds \$60 million-a figure that is at least double what Billy Graham's organization takes in.

Now Herbert is no longer forced to move from apartment to apartment as a pauper, depending on relatives for handouts. He owns five luxurious homes as richly furnished as any you would find in Beverly Hills. He has confided to several students that his Pasadena home at 210 South Orange Grove alone is worth at least \$500,000. (While most of Herbert's "property" is in the name of the church or college for tax purposes, he still has complete control over it.) Just recently he married again, moving into a magnificent home in Tucson, Arizona. He made this expensive move during a terrible financial crisis in his church that resulted in the closure of Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, and the laying off of dozens of long-time employees. Many wondered why Herbert didn't set the example of sacrifice for the church members in this crisis by liquidating some of his personal assets. Instead, while asking all the church members to dig deeper into their pocketbooks, Herbert was busy flying back and forth between Tucson and Pasadena in his private jet establishing his fifth home. Informed sources from the church's business office claim that Herbert's spending sprees over the last few months have been largely responsible for bringing his church to the brink of financial collapse.

**The Secret of Herbert's "Success."** It hasn't been his managerial skill or his business acumen that has vaulted his church into its prominent role among fundamentalist sects. Indeed, for years his church and colleges have been among the most inefficiently managed organizations anywhere-according to hundreds of present and former employees. No, the secret of his financial success lies in his adoption of a tithing doctrine that requires members to give between 20% and 30% of their annual income to his church. True, his claims of having a unique understanding of the Bible and of Bible prophecy attracted the tithepayers, but now, even though his prophecies have been discredited and he has been forced to make radical doctrinal changes on divorce and remarriage and Pentecost, his church is still rolling in money, compared to other churches-all due to his tithing doctrine.

**Still on the Move.** In the last nine years, Herbert has been on the move more than at any other period in his 85 years. Due to his jet aircraft, he has been able

to move from one Hilton hotel suite to another throughout Southeast Asia as he calls on dictator after dictator. But while Herbert has been away, the mice have been at play. During his travels-when he should have been home mending fences and settling doctrinal disputes-two costly blowups rocked his church, causing him to lose thousands of tithe-paying members. (One came in 1974, and the other was in England in 1976.)

At the rate Herbert and his son are consuming church funds and losing members, it appears possible that Herbert will make yet another giant move: into bankruptcy.

Now that he is reaching the end of his road, he can look with pride on the magnificent buildings he has built and the money his organization has wasted. In these things he is truly a success. But when it comes to giving people the happiness, success, prosperity, and peace of mind he promised them, he has been largely unsuccessful-as this issue shows. His false biblical teachings have caused suicides, bankruptcies, and hundreds of premature deaths. They have broken up thousands of happy marriages, wrecking the lives of all involved. His teachings on tithing have kept tens of thousands of members hovering around the poverty level. In many cases, it is too late for him to undo the harm he has caused by his recklessly researched teachings-even if he were to decide to attempt to right the wrongs he has caused. So in his final years he will have to overlook a rich life of failure and prepare for his ultimate move-out of the picture!

*-Perry Prescott*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



**The Painful Truth**  
Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

# **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

## **THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF MR. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE - AMBASSADOR COLLEGE'S ILLUSTRIOUS "PROFESSOR" GOTOH**

After a comet-like rise to power and prestige in the Worldwide Church of God, Osamu Gotoh, the one-time "Mr. Mission Impossible"-who, as if by magic, opened the doors to oriental palaces for Herbert Armstrong-suddenly seems to have disappeared from the Ambassador College scene. A peculiar pall of silence seems to have enshrouded the former glory of Nippon's shining star.

Because of "Professor" Gotoh's extensive travels with Chancellor Armstrong to Asian capitals, Ambassador College employees used to jokingly quip: "Nobody knoweth where Gotoh goeth." Now people are openly wondering what's become of him, especially because Herbert Armstrong has often expressed how valuable Gotoh is to the church: "I couldn't do the job of getting the gospel to the world without him!" (Bible study, Pasadena, Mar. 14, 1975.)

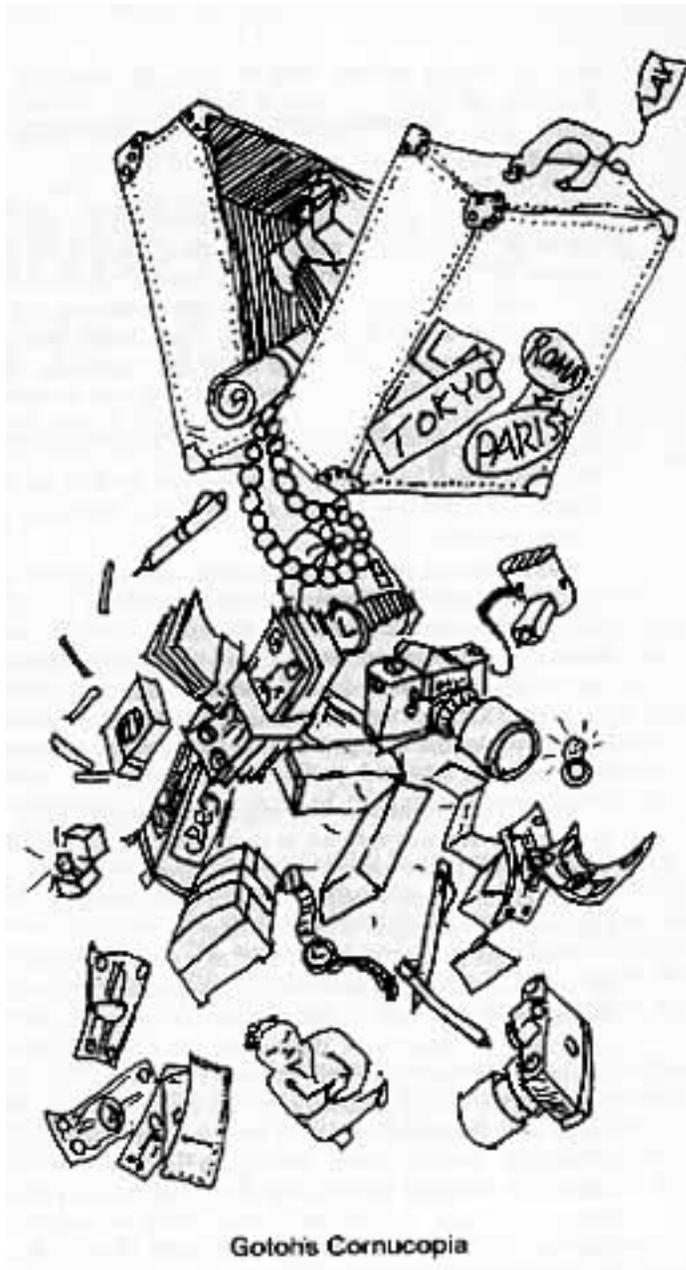
**Osamu Gotoh's Rise to Power.** Osamu Gotoh heard of Ambassador College (AC) in 1966 through a close friend who had enrolled at AC's British campus, according to Herbert Armstrong in a Dec. 29, 1970, co-worker letter. Attracted by the obvious display of opulence at AC's Pasadena campus, Gotoh came and offered his services as a translator, at the same time expressing a desire to obtain a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from AC. His credentials at that time were that of "Rev.," even though nobody to this day knows where he got his ministerial

training and which denomination ordained him. It seems he was a self-styled "Rev.," performing as an itinerant preacher on an obscure Japanese-language radio station on the West Coast.

The Department of Justice and Immigration conducted an investigation on Gotoh a few years ago and, according to one of their agents (name on file with the staff ), Gotoh was a one-time Tokyo taxicab driver who later became engaged in religion. It was speculated that Gotoh made his initial high-level contacts in Japan way back then, right inside his taxi while driving adventurous dignitaries to where the "action" was in town.

Gotoh enrolled at AC in the fall of 1966 as a freshman. He somehow managed to avoid the customary entrance exam and set out on his academic career. After a faltering first semester with an abundance of Cs which, according to his instructors, were rather "flattering," he finally bombed out at the end of the next semester and had to be dropped for academic inability in the summer of 1967. During the course of the year's work, the "Rev." managed to draw an F in an elementary Bible course. (Gotoh's transcript is on file with the staff .) To enable Gotoh to save face, AC officials permitted him to withdraw, which he did.

Later that year, Gotoh emerged as the head of a newly created Japanese department with the academic rank of "instructor," even though the previous semester he had been dropped for academic incompetence. He now claimed that he did not really need to go on at AC since he held the equivalent of a Master's of Theology. He further explained that the reason he didn't possess the proper academic credentials was because General MacArthur ruled that postwar Japan could not confer degrees.



Gotoh's Cornucopia

Japan's Ministry of Education emphatically denied this in an official letter. The reason Gotoh didn't have an academic degree was simply due to his not having had an education that warranted such a degree. Gotoh submitted an undated transcript to AC that showed he had attended Aoyama Gakuin. AC wrote to Aoyama Gakuin for his official transcript and discovered that the transcript Gotoh had submitted to AC had been forged, the grades had been "jacked up," and that he had attended there only one year (from 1947 to 1948). In a letter dated Oct. 7, 1970, the Ministry of Education pointed out that the reason Aoyama Gakuin didn't confer degrees was that "before 1949 Aoyama Gakuin was classified as 'Senmon-Gakko,' neither a university nor a college, [and] Senmon-Gakko could not give academic degrees."

This cock-and-bull story

about an "equivalent" degree and MacArthur's ruling was swallowed by AC's administration. Herman Hoeh, then dean of faculty, dutifully listed Gotoh as having an M.Th. in the college bulletin, but he was forced to withdraw it the following year after an inquiring third party demanded documentation of this pretentious claim.

In the academic year 1968-69, Gotoh was quickly elevated in rank from instructor to assistant professor and then to associate professor, and soon Gotoh began introducing himself as "Professor Gotoh."

Beginning in 1969 Gotoh began arranging meetings with Asian heads of state for Herbert Armstrong. Herbert thought these meetings arranged by Gotoh were little short of miraculous, and he felt God must be working with and through Gotoh to perform the feat of getting him audiences with Asian leaders. (Little did Herbert realize, but every day of the year heads of state are granting interviews to editors and reporters-and one can hardly say God intervenes to bring this about. When

leaders learned that Herbert would give them expensive gifts, write glowing accounts of their nation, and print their photograph on the front cover of his magazine *The Plain Truth*, an internationally circulated, full-color magazine, it was no wonder that these leaders were willing to grant a 30-minute interview to Herbert and have their picture taken with Herbert, Rader, and company.)

To reward Mr. Mission Impossible for his loyalty and success in furthering Herbert's gospel and to enhance Gotoh's image in the eyes of world leaders, Herbert elevated him to the highest academic rank possible: full professor. Herbert himself made the announcement and told the congregation that from now on Gotoh is to be referred to as "professor." And, in order to lend more prestige to Gotoh's office, Herbert ordered the formation of an Asian Studies Department, even though there were neither the faculty members nor the students interested in such a program to warrant such a move. There were any number of genuine Ph.D.'s at the college at the time, and yet not one of them was accorded the title "professor." Gotoh occupies a lone spot in the history of AC-having no academic credentials and being an AC flunk-out but having been a "professor" nonetheless.

In a Dec. 29, 1970, letter to his supporters, Herbert introduced Osamu Gotoh as the man responsible for introducing him to Prince Mikasa, brother of Japan's emperor. He explained the miraculous way God had brought Gotoh to AC and how the WCG's Japanese work would get off the ground the following July 1-all due to the efforts of Osamu Gotoh, Mr. Mission Impossible.

**The Beginning of the End for Gotoh.** As Gotoh's overseas trips-both with and without Herbert Armstrong-grew longer, more frequent, and more expensive, he came under close scrutiny by several top AC/WCG officials. It was reported by reliable sources that Gotoh was taking "God's Work" for a ride. An AC Financial Affairs official reported that Gotoh had a lavish expense account which eventually exceeded \$100,000. This account was strongly suspected of having paid for more than just his business expenses. A listing of his American Express (credit card) charges, billed to the WCG, shows the accusations are not all contrived. A few of his billings were: (1) \$6,703.31 in July 1974, (2) \$5,957.45 for Aug. 16, 1974, and (3) \$8,239.91 for Aug. 22, 1974. Charged to his credit card were purchases from Gucci, Hermes, and other exclusive shops, from jewelry shops in Thailand and Hong Kong, from camera shops in Tokyo and Germany, and from Dunhill in London.

As opposition to Gotoh and his activities increased, so did Herbert Armstrong's unmitigated praise of Gotoh:

"...Oh, Mr. Gotoh. And there's a man-don't sell him short! Some people have tried to strike at me by belittling Mr. Gotoh. And when you strike at him and say derogatory things about him, you're striking at me. I couldn't do the job of getting the gospel to the world without him!! He is a very important phase of it. And he's a very effective man.

"Come to me with your criticism of Mr. Gotoh. Don't go to someone else-I dare you!! Come to me! Mr. Gotoh predicts ONE THOUSAND baptized members after one year of the "Japanese

Work." And we're just getting it lined up, ready to really go now. It's going to get off the ground very soon.... The Work is going forward as it never did before. Believe me!" (Pasadena Bible study, Mar. 14, 1975.)

Those high AC officials who got to Herbert with criticism of Gotoh's activities were quickly brushed aside by such comments from Herbert as: "I don't care what kind of person he is, and I don't want to hear. All I know is that God is using Gotoh to help me preach the gospel." At the 1975 Tucson Feast of Tabernacles site, thousands of WCG members received a tongue-lashing from an irate Herbert for spreading rumors about "Professor" Gotoh, who was said to be engaged in international smuggling. Herbert not only gave Osamu an unequivocal vote of complete confidence, but he also held him up as a paragon of honesty and integrity out of whose book church members could take a few pages-not knowing that earlier on June 6, 1975, Gotoh was apprehended at the L.A. International Airport carrying a substantial undeclared amount of jewelry. This information came from the Department of the Treasury in San Pedro, Calif., which commissioned an agent to compile a case against Gotoh. According to an official spokesman of the government agency, Gotoh, if tried by a jury and convicted of the crime, could have received up to five years in jail and a \$50,000 fine.

Gotoh, by this time, had left the United States. The agent in charge told the editors at that time that they "had a case but no body." The agent felt that with the material in their possession the District Attorney could be convinced that Gotoh was not just a small, one-time offender but a big enough fish to warrant a large-scale investigation.

Unfortunately the case never went past the D.A.'s office. Some high government official intervened and squelched any further efforts to bring Gotoh to trial. After this incident, Gotoh resigned his chairmanship over the Asian Studies Dept. and his position on AC's faculty. Soon his lavishly decorated office was dismantled. According to reliable sources another official in the administration confiscated a hoard of jewelry, watches, cameras, and radio equipment. On top of it all, the business office allegedly cancelled Gotoh's executive privileges, his expense account, and his credit cards.

At last report, Gotoh is still on the payroll of Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (sponsored by the WCG), drawing a \$23,000 salary. But nobody seems to know for sure what he is doing and where he is. He is now free to enter and leave the U.S., as the Department of the Treasury is no longer after him. Their spokesman, however, admitted that the department had been under "pressure from above" to lay off Gotoh. He would not elaborate any further.

Now in *The Plain Truth* and in WCG sermons and co-worker letters there is no mention of the illustrious "Professor" Gotoh-the man Herbert Armstrong called "the miracle of God" a few years ago. The light of Nippon's shining star has waned to where it is but a faint flicker.

No one knows whether Osamu Gotoh will play any future role in the Worldwide

Church of God and Ambassador College or not. We leave the speculating up to the reader. But we want our readers to remember that Gotoh is the man of whom Herbert wrote: "...this man from Japan has been converted and baptized! He not only believes in Jesus, the Christ, he BELIEVES CHRIST..." (co-worker letter, Dec. 29, 1970, p. 2).

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:

[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---



Holly Ruiz was married for 18 years to Enrique Ruiz, director of the Mexico City office of the Worldwide Church of God. In 1975, she left the Worldwide Church of God and was divorced. She now lives in South Pasadena with her two children and works as a secretary. The following interview reveals a great deal about the inner workings of the Worldwide Church of God and the life-style of its leaders.

**MARY E. JONES:** Ms. Ruiz, I'm holding a rather unusual letter in my hand. It's dated April 14, 1975, it's on Ambassador College stationery, and it's from Garner Ted Armstrong to you. One passage that is of interest is a statement of Ted's that

says, "I admired and respected you as Enrique's wife. Holly, never did I entertain any idea, God knows, of any sort, concerning you and me." Now what is it in your estimation that took place that would cause Garner Ted Armstrong to write such a statement? Tell us, if you would, the background of this letter?

**RUIZ:** Evidently, Enrique confronted Garner Ted about some statements I had made about money Ted had given me.

**JONES:** How much money had Ted given you?

**RUIZ:** Well, Ted gave me money on many different occasions. For instance, the first time he showed any special concern for me was in 1968 when my husband and I were sent to Mexico. Garner Ted told me in his car that he had given Enrique \$1,000 for me. He told me, "That money's for you, Holly, to do anything you want with. You can redecorate your kitchen or whatever, but the money is for you."

This was when Ted told me that he wanted me to have a house with at least five bathrooms-it had to be a very big house. At this time, and later, he gave me the impression that he was very concerned for my welfare to the extent that he was willing to spend whatever money necessary to make me happy. Ted even told me, "Holly, I can fly down any time you need me. It would only take three hours."

All the time we were in Mexico, we lived up to Ted's hopes by never living in homes with less than "five or six bathrooms." The homes had servants' quarters and were beautifully furnished. One such home (we'd had three different ones), Herbert Armstrong simply raved about. He loved the opulence and would talk about it often saying that it was the most beautiful house he'd ever seen. That was the one with the beautiful garden where we had seven or eight peacocks roaming the grounds.

**JONES:** Where did the money come from that allowed you to live in such luxury?

**RUIZ:** I don't really know. Enrique took care of things like that. I remember one time when Enrique wanted to buy \$1,000 worth of dining room furniture, he asked Garner Ted for the money. Well, Ted told him to simply take it out of Third Tithe funds. [Editor: WCG members were led to believe that the Third Tithe Fund was used solely to help widows, orphans, and the poor.]

**JONES:** Was the whole house furnished with Third Tithe funds?

**RUIZ:** I believe so.

**JONES:** Were there other ways in which Ted showed special concern for you?

**RUIZ:** Yes, at one time there were letters sent out to ministers saying that none of them were to bring their wives to a ministerial conference in Pasadena

because the expense would be too great. But Enrique received a telegram from Garner Ted saying, "Your wife is invited" and that he [Ted] would pay for it. In fact, this happened year after year, and every trip we took to a conference cost a minimum of \$700. This included expensive hotels, dinners, etc. Other ministers' wives weren't allowed to go along at church expense. We even took our children, and for others this was never allowed. At times we'd spend a week or more getting to the conferences-taking small vacations for ourselves-and the WCG paid for them. We'd also spend a lot of time going to the Feast of Tabernacles every year. The church also paid for this.

**JONES:** Were other ministers allowed to take vacations of this nature?

**RUIZ:** Oh no. In fact, one field minister told me that they would have to be with the organization ten years before they were allowed to take a vacation. The only vacation they received was when they went to the Feast of Tabernacles.

**JONES:** What about top executives in the church? Did you know of any of them taking vacations paid for by the church?

**RUIZ:** There were quite a few who took trips to Acapulco. Herbert Armstrong would come down occasionally. Whenever he would come down, we'd hold large dinners in the finest hotels for him. Everything was very expensive. For instance, we ordered three bottles of Dom Perignon champagne every night. During the day some of us would spend our time water skiing.

**JONES:** Then these trips were in no way connected with church business but were purely for pleasure?

**RUIZ:** Yes.

**JONES:** Was anyone else involved in the Acapulco trips?

**RUIZ:** Yes, any time Herbert was there his entourage would also be there. This usually included Rader [the organization's attorney] and his family, Herbert's daughter (Beverly Gott), the pilots, his chauffeur, and other members of his staff. I remember one time when Herbert Armstrong spent five days just waiting for a phone call from Osamu Gotoh. Other executives such as Raymond McNair, Ronald Dart, Rod Meredith, David Antion, and Richard Plache would also come to Acapulco.

They were all on expense accounts and never paid for anything, including gas, restaurants, and hotel accommodations. Everything was paid for by the church.

There were two occasions when Beverly Gott came down to Mexico on vacation, and Herbert asked us to watch over her. One time she spent two weeks with us, and we were given over \$500 by Herbert to show her around. Another time Herbert asked us to go with her to Puerto Vallarta where we spent a great deal of

church money just showing her around.

**JONES:** Was there anything about these trips that involved the church or church business?

**RUIZ:** No, we just went along to keep her company.

**JONES:** Is Beverly Gott a member of the Worldwide Church of God?

**RUIZ:** No, I believe she was disfellowshipped years ago.

**JONES:** Did you ever travel anywhere else with one of the Armstrongs?

**RUIZ:** Yes. There were other times when I traveled with Herbert Armstrong. Once I went with him to New York City in his private jet. I also took several car trips with him in his limousine. One was to Lion Country Safari near Anaheim, California. Also, there was the time that Garner Ted took my husband and I to Mexico in his private jet when we first moved there in 1968.

**JONES:** Were any of these trips on the Church's sabbath?

**RUIZ:** Oh, yes. I remember going to Cuernavaca with Herbert. Nothing was mentioned about the Bible, or the fact that it was the sabbath. We went to restaurants as usual, drank, etc. Of course, Herbert Armstrong never talked about the Bible. All he ever talked about was himself-it seems that's all he ever talks about. He likes to extol his riches and how everyone has to look up to him. One story he would repeat over and over again was about his brother once loaning him an overcoat when Herbert didn't have any money and how he's now the one who gives his brother money.

**JONES:** Did any of these trips ever include laymembers of the church?

**RUIZ:** No. We [indicating her husband, herself, and the Armstrongs] never mingled with laymembers or went anywhere with them. And after leaving church services everyone seemed relieved. Everyone behaved very differently after they left church services. It was as if they were putting up a facade for the church members. After services we would go out to dinner and drink and be ourselves.

**JONES:** Have you ever seen either of the Armstrongs drunk in public?

**RUIZ:** Both of them. I've never seen Herbert Armstrong sober after 8:00 at night. I used to notice this when I stayed in his home during conferences and on trips. He would fall asleep in his chair, and Rader would have to take him to bed. His daughter once told me never to call Herbert after 8:00 because he was always in a stupor by then.

As for Ted, he was always getting drunk, and when he was drunk, he was more carousing. Often he would bring his guitar to nightclubs and sing.

**JONES:** Did Herbert ever behave immorally?

**RUIZ:** Not like Ted, but he used to talk about sex a lot. In fact he was often obsessed with sex. He told me once that he knew more about sex than anyone else. A few years ago Herbert told me that he had a crush on a young Philippine girl. He brought her over from the Philippines and set her up in a really nice apartment. However, when he found out that she had another boyfriend, he sent her back. He also had a crush on one of his young secretaries. He wanted to marry her, but Ted wouldn't allow it.

**JONES:** When were some of the other times that Ted gave you money?

**RUIZ:** In late 1974, I was thinking about leaving my husband, so I drove up to Pasadena from Mexico to discuss it with Ted. Well, he was in a week-long conference at the time so I took a vacation to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, and Zion National Park. When I got back to Pasadena, I asked him to reimburse me for the \$500 I'd spent on the vacation. He joked with me about spending so much money, but he told me he would have it delivered to me that same night.

**JONES:** Did he deliver it himself?

**RUIZ:** No, he had an employee deliver it to me that night at Mrs. Gott's house where I was staying.

Actually, I'd probably spent more like \$1,000 on this vacation. I had driven to Pasadena from Mexico in a car the church provided for us and had spent a lot of money getting there, but I only asked Ted for \$500 of it back.

At any rate, after I asked Ted for the money, we talked about the problems I was having with my husband and that I had been thinking about leaving him. At this time, Ted offered to send Enrique and me "anywhere in the world if it'd make me happy." He also offered to send us on another vacation, anywhere we wanted to go.

**JONES:** "Another vacation"-had he sent you on one previously?

**RUIZ:** Yes. In either late '73 or early '74, I can't remember which, Ted sent us to Europe and the Mideast on a "fact-finding" tour. We traveled all over Europe-all at the expense of the church-although we really did nothing in connection with the church.

**JONES:** So did you go back to your husband after that?

**RUIZ:** At that time, I decided to go back to him, but I finally left him for good in 1975. At that point, I decided that since Ted had given me money in the past I would ask him to help me with finances since I had no family in the area and no job and had been with the church for a number of years. He gave me over \$1,000, and I was surprised at how easily he gave it to me. He seemed to love to give me money. I suppose it gave him a feeling of power and wealth. Herbert also gave me \$200 to fly back to Mexico to collect my belongings.

**JONES:** Did you discuss leaving your husband with Ted? How did he feel about it?

**RUIZ:** I went to Ted after I broke up with my husband, not only to get help financially but also because I was concerned about the effect our separation would have on the church members in Mexico. Ted told me not to worry about that and that he understood how I felt. He explained that he too had had similar problems, but that his father had forced him to remain married and that he didn't feel it was fair. He told me that he had taken off with one of his stewardesses to Colorado. Then he asked me if I'd ever committed adultery at all, and I said no and that I didn't intend to. He seemed rather taken aback by that statement. I suppose he was leading into something, but I cut him off. This upset him, and he said that he just thought it would be possible that I had [committed adultery]. He said that he felt it would be typical because of his own frustrations and miserable condition. Earlier he told me he had had to cancel a conference in order to see me, and I said I was sorry to have bothered him. He made some comment about having ministers around all the time but that he didn't always have me.

**JONES:** In other words he made it very clear that he was available to you?

**RUIZ:** Yes.

**JONES:** After this did your husband also leave the employment of the church?

**RUIZ:** Yes, along with a substantial amount of "severance pay"

**JONES:** How much severance pay did he receive?

**RUIZ:** \$19,000. Why my husband received so much has always been a question in my mind. Either it was because Ted was embarrassed by the circumstances of my going back and telling Enrique about the money I'd received in the past and the way Ted behaved around me or it was because of the so-called contacts for the work that Enrique told me he was making.

**JONES:** What type of contacts was he referring to?

**RUIZ:** Well, Enrique was spending a lot of time finding out where to contact show girls and strip-tease artists. One time he was trying to contact La Tigress, a very rich and famous strip-tease artist in Mexico. I asked him why, and he said that

she could be another important contact for "the work."

After I left my husband, I told Ted about this, but he didn't seem at all surprised. I also told him that Enrique was spending up to three days a week at the horse races, and Ted just laughed.

**JONES:** You told Garner Ted Armstrong, vice-president of the Worldwide Church of God, that one of his top executives was making overtures to notorious strip-tease artists and claiming that they would be useful contacts for the work of Jesus Christ, and Garner Ted Armstrong said what?

**RUIZ:** He only laughed and said, "I don't know why, but I just like that guy."

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



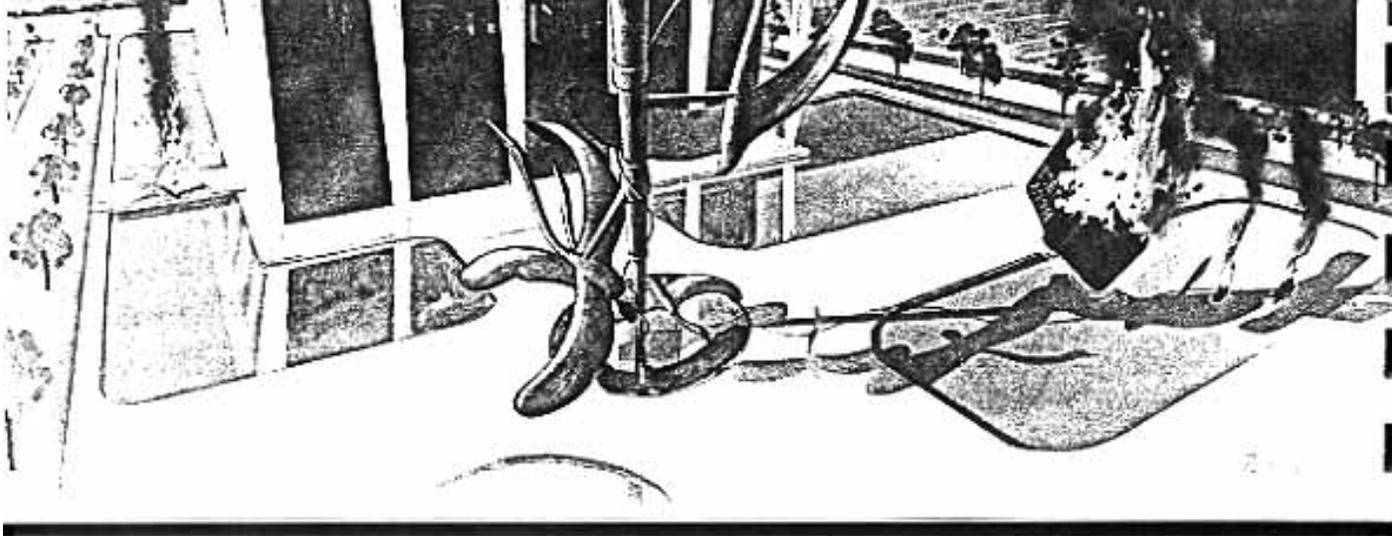
# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:

[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT





*Garner Ted Armstrong, bigger-than-life TV and radio evangelist, offers absolute answers to a world full of confusing and difficult questions. He offers free advice, free literature and assurance that his way of life is Christ's way of life. His Madison Avenue approach to religion has made him one of the most successful in the business of mail-order salvation.*

*But while being one of the most successful, Ted Armstrong is also one of the most controversial. In early 1972, Herbert W. Armstrong (Ted's legendary father; founder, pastor general and self-proclaimed apostle of God's "only true church ") was forced to put Ted out of his church and wrote that Ted was "in the bonds of Satan." However, during all this Ted's "problem" was never specifically defined, and all rumors regarding his alleged sexual impropriety and excessive life-style were staunchly denied. For six long months Ted's golden voice was not heard on the church's radio broadcast, and no new television programs were filmed. Although old broadcasts of HWA were aired across the country the church's income plummeted. The old legend did not have the drawing power of his son. Shortly thereafter, a fully "repentant" GTA was reinstated into his father's church with all of his former rights and privileges.*

*Most adherents to the religious teachings of HWA and GTA dismiss the allegations of GTA's sexual misconduct as vicious rumors spawned by Satan in an attempt to thwart the work of God. Others find it interesting and even sensational, but might ask why should anyone delve into a man's personal life and expose what he does in private. Still others will take the attitude of "What does it prove, anyway?"*

*Perhaps in different circumstances these arguments might be valid, but because Garner Ted Armstrong has presented himself as a shining light, a messenger of truth, and a preacher of purity, it is important to know if he is truly what he says or merely a Master showman. Does he practice what he preaches? Does he apply the same standards in his own life that he (as a self-styled representative of God) requires from others?*

*This article intends to profile Ted Armstrong and will give an insight into the man and how he operates. It is not intended to be a bitter diatribe against him, but rather an examination of the facts to determine if he, in the flesh, is equal to the illusion created by his media image.*

Garner Ted Armstrong was born on February 9, 1930, in Portland, Oregon - the fourth and youngest child of Herbert and Loma Armstrong. According to his father, "Ted... was born as a result of an almost incredible miracle of healing only three weeks before his birth!" (*The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, p. 377, 1967 edition). The miracle? Loma had been "healed" of her anemic condition which had been aggravated by the family's poor diet. Her healing or recovery was helped by a few nourishing meals provided by Herbert's parents (*Ibid.*, p. 374). Herbert attributed this to "an almost incredible miracle" and dedicated his newborn son to God "for Him to use as He had need" (*Ibid.*, p. 377).

The years 1930-33 were lean ones for the Armstrongs. Herbert began his public ministry in late 1930 but preached only occasionally. He continued doing odd jobs to support his family until early 1933.

During this time HWA's work had taken him to Astoria, Oregon, but his wife and children remained in Salem. Early in July 1932, Ted became seriously ill with pneumonia, and Herbert rushed home to anoint the child. Not only did Ted have pneumonia but "...he had been, to that time [he was all of 2 years and 5 months], dumb-unable to talk... He would point to whatever he wanted... grunting 'Ugh! Ugh!'" (*Ibid.*, p. 449). Sometime between the age of six months and a year, Ted had fallen out of his crib and had landed on his head. Herbert and Loma had attributed his inability to speak to this fall. When Herbert anointed Ted, he not only asked God to heal his son's pneumonia, but also asked God to restore Ted's power of speech. Supposedly Ted recovered immediately and began to say a few words by the next day. Again Herbert claimed a great miracle and commented about it in his autobiography.

"Words have been pouring like a torrent out of his mouth ever since.... God gave him his voice by an unusual divine miracle" (p. 450).

According to HWA, had it not been for this miracle, we could never hear Garner Ted's voice today.

In late February 1933 (Ted had just turned three), Herbert became the minister of a small group known as the Church of God, Oregon Conference. From this time on HWA launched himself into his ministry with fervor. Not only was he ministering to the small church in Salem, but in October 1933, he made his first radio broadcast. Several months later, in early 1934, the first *Plain Truth* magazine (at that time a simple mimeographed paper) was published.

So Ted's formative years were spent in the fledgling years of his father's evangelical work. Both of his parents were extremely busy and had very little time to spend with their children.

Still, Herbert expected strict obedience to his authority and often punished his children severely if he caught them disobeying one of his directives. At a very early age Ted developed an inordinate fear of his father which he carried with him most of his life. Evidently, Herbert didn't realize this until late 1971, as he explained to a group of ministers in Pasadena.

"But Ted and I had the most frank talk we have ever had about... a month or five weeks ago over in Big Sandy [Texas]. It took up most of the morning. And Ted began clear back to the time he was a little boy. He said, 'Dad, all my life I've been afraid of you, and I've tried to avoid you.'

"Why Ted, I didn't know that,' [I replied]. It hadn't been apparent.... And Ted, from the time he was a little boy, got to thinking I was unfair and cruel, and he learned... not to fear me in the way he should-the way we should fear God but to be actually frightened-physical fear. And I never knew that until four or five weeks ago" (Herbert Armstrong, Ministerial Conference, January 1972).

Ted graduated from high school in Eugene, Oregon, in 1947. This same year Herbert decided to move his religious headquarters to Pasadena, California, to take advantage of the broadcasting facilities available in the area. Ted moved to California with the rest of his family.

Eventually the fear of his father and the embarrassment of his religion turned to loathing. In a fit of rebellion, Ted left home and joined the U.S. Navy in May of 1948, to escape his father's authority. He enlisted for three years, but a compulsory wartime extension lengthened his hitch an extra year. In early 1952, he received an honorable discharge and returned to Pasadena.

Although Ted did not immediately accept his father's religious philosophies, he was not adverse to working in his father's mail processing office. Before long he was elevated to the position of

office manager. In the fall of 1952, he enrolled at Ambassador College.

In December of that same year Ted accompanied his parents to Gladewater, Texas. While HWA was finalizing a land transaction with Roy Hammer, Ted was busy "courting" Hammer's daughter, Shirley. After the land deal had been finalized, the Armstrongs returned to Pasadena. Shortly thereafter, the Armstrongs made a hasty trip back to Texas to arrange Ted and Shirley's marriage. They were married on March 8, 1953. In September of that same year, Herbert announced in church that God had performed another great miracle. Ted and Shirley were the proud parents of a healthy, "premature" baby boy. (Several ministers who were around at the time have related the embarrassment they felt concerning this especially in light of the fact that this six month "premie" was a 7 lb. fully-developed baby.)

Ted continued his studies at AC. Before the end of the spring, 1953, term he underwent a "spiritual conversion" and was baptized as a member of his father's church. He continued as office manager during his college career and began to carve his niche in the microcosm of his father's religious organization. In January 1955, Ted was ordained to the ministry.

Ted quickly started climbing to the top of his father's organization. He began writing articles for the *Good News* and *Plain Truth* magazines. He also shared the "World Tomorrow" microphone with his father, his brother Richard and two other ministers-Roderick C. Meredith and Herman Hoeh. Before long his golden voice and glib manner of speech forced the other speakers to devote their energies elsewhere. No one could match Ted's charisma and media appeal.

Although Ted had his own style, his message was the same as those who had come before him. And often especially in regard to prophecy-his conclusions and analysis were either falacious or inaccurate. For example, he preached for years that according to Bible prophecy Great Britain would never be allowed into the European Common Market. His written prophecies were no more accurate. Notice:

"Two years ago, Mr. Herman Hoeh showed in this magazine how God's word prophesied disease epidemics would strike the United States in two short years! Those epidemics are beginning now! And they will grow much worse! God prophesies that finally, within the next fifteen years, fully one third of our whole population will die of disease and famine!" (*The Plain Truth*, Dec. 1957, p. 23.)

About a year later, in an article entitled "Nationwide Epidemics Are Spreading," he placed great prophetic significance on a story about a child who had died from an attack by fire ants.

"No light '*interesting*' news item, this-but a real, down to earth PLAGUE that is growing WORSE AND WORSE!... Jesus said certain specific things HAD TO HAPPEN *prior* to the 'end of the age'" (*The Plain Truth*, Nov. 1958, p. 4).

But like the prediction that the WCG would "flee to a place of safety" in 1972 and many other inaccurate and false prophecies, these worldwide plagues and epidemics also failed to materialize as Garner Ted said they would.



*Garner Ted - in early '50's.*

By January 1958, Ted was being recognized as a leader in the organization. His father appointed him vice-president of both the college and the church. In late summer 1958 after his brother Richard died as a result of injuries sustained in a tragic auto accident-Ted was given more responsibility. But much of Ted's new authority was in name only. He still lived in the shadow of his father and several others who held responsible positions. His inability to operate independently from his father and others in command continued to plague him for years.

For approximately ten years this power structure (HWA as president and GTA as vice-president) remained fairly constant. As well as his executive duties, Ted taught a few college courses, carried on as one of the two voices of the "World Tomorrow" broadcast, wrote numerous articles and booklets and acquired his M.A. and Ph.D. from Ambassador College. By the late 1960s the organization had begun to expand its media coverage, and Ted took on the added responsibility of making a weekly television show.

Then in 1968, HWA drastically altered the organization's hierarchy by appointing seven additional vice-presidents. At the same time he made Ted executive vice-president. Ted, however, had no real authority over the other vice-presidents because Herbert had given them direct access to his office-they could by-pass Ted whenever they deemed it necessary (which was often). Still, at least on the surface, the status quo was maintained until the summer of 1971.

**Ted's Problem.** By this time, word of Ted's sexual improprieties had begun to filter through the ministry. For at least a year, Ted had been having an affair with his stewardess. Of course, this was not his first affair-Ted had had numerous adulterous relationships with many other women-but this relationship was different. Herbert could not dismiss it as another one of Ted's passing flirtations. Ted was ready to leave his wife.

"I went in to my father and went 'blah' and had a great big written thing and told him I was getting a divorce and that I was leaving and that this was going to happen. And when I left, I left with a trailer full of my goods and never intended to come back..." (GTA Pasadena ministerial meeting. March 7, 1974, tape 2, side 2, ref. 6454).

Herbert Armstrong could not afford to ignore this attitude, especially in light of the church's doctrines on divorce (see the article "Home-Breaking-Armstrong Style"). Ted had determined that he was no longer bound to his wife and was free to marry another.

"...I had already in my own mind convinced myself I wasn't even bound to my wife... I was in my mind divorcing her. I left with a trailer full of clothing and a stupid little girl..." (GTA, Big Sandy ministerial meeting, March 4,

1974, tape 5, side 2, ref. #052).

In July of 1971, Herbert was forced to relieve Ted of his duties and send him on a leave of absence, ostensibly for "health reasons" (see article "Profligate Son"). In a letter dated September 26, 1971, Herbert informed the church membership that Ted would not be speaking during the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles. However, Ted prevailed upon his father to let him speak. According to schedule, Ted spoke to members gathered at feast sites in Big Sandy, Mt. Pocono, Jekyll Island and Squaw Valley.

During Ted's stay in Squaw Valley, his "problem" reared its head again. After preaching a stirring sermon, Ted took off to spend the night with his stewardess. The next day he flew to his next stop in Penticton, but word had already gotten out to his father and the other executives. They intercepted him there. Ted was again relieved of his executive duties. In a letter to the church, Herbert covered up Ted's adultery once again, and stated that he had sent Ted on a much needed vacation.

This charade continued for several months. Ted did take an extended vacation, but by January 1972, he had returned to Pasadena and participated in a ministerial conference. His return was short lived.

On the night of January 30, 1972, HWA, Stan Rader (legal counsel for the organization), and several leading evangelists confronted Ted in his home about his affairs with his stewardess and others. On that night, it became painfully obvious to those present that Garner Ted had been using his natural glibness for a lot more than just sermons and broadcasts. On that night, Garner Ted Armstrong acknowledged that he was involved in extensive, extra-marital sexual conquests. Finally HWA was forced to disfellowship his son and send him into exile.

At this time, Herbert forced Ted to end his longstanding relationship with the woman who had been his stewardess. Ted and Shirley were sent to Ted's A-frame in Colorado in an effort to get them to put their lives back together. Ted's stewardess was transferred, under an assumed name, to work in the WCG's New Zealand office.

Again Herbert Armstrong was forced to offer an explanation to the church. In a letter to the ministry which was read to all church members-Herbert stated that Ted had a "personal emotional problem" and was in the "bonds of Satan." Herbert stated that he had been forced to put Ted out of the church, and that he had taken away his ministerial authority. Ted could be allowed back into the church but never as a minister. No word was said about his adultery.

**Qualifications.** Shortly after this, Herbert Armstrong commissioned David L. Antion (WCG evangelist and GTA's brother-in-law) to research and write a paper regarding the biblical qualifications of a minister. In a nine-page memo dated April 24, 1972, Antion argued the question of whether or not a man can "sin as to *disqualify* himself from the ministry even though he might repent and be reinstated in the Church as a member" (*Antion Qualifications Memorandum*, p. 1). Antion then listed the character requirements of a minister of the Church of God.

"Timothy 3:1-7....'A bishop must be blameless.' The word 'blameless' means 'irreproachable' or 'above reproach.' The *Amplified Version* says, 'Must give no grounds for accusation but must be above reproach.' The Phillips translation says, 'Must be of blameless reputation.'

"Here is what the *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* has to say about this word. It literally means 'that he cannot be laid hold of, hence, not open to censure, irreproachable.'

"There is an entirely different Greek word used in Titus 1:67. It is also translated 'blameless' but it has a slightly different meaning. It 'signifies that which cannot be called to account, i.e., with nothing laid to one's charge (as a result of public investigation). It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation

against a person. This is to be the case with elders.' (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 131.)

"Hence a minister must give *no cause-nor can a reason for accusation be found in his conduct.*

"The reason for this qualification is important. A minister represents the Church. If his conduct can be attacked-if his life and character are liable to investigation and accusation through misconduct-the whole Church of God can be accused!"

On page three he also stated:

*"Though a minister does not get his authority from the people-he still must have a good report of the people. And it should be as much a good report from the outside as it is within the church when it comes to his sincerity, integrity, and moral life...."*

*"It is made clear that there is an active devil. He is waiting for the Church to appoint a man to the office of the ministry whose reputation is questionable.... The only defense here is that a man be chosen who is ABOVE REPROACH-one with a good report from without-honest, moral, faithful, etc ."*

*"These qualifications are not some lofty set of standards.... they are the minimal character requirements for God's ministers.... it is insistent and imperative that God's ministers have these as the minimum requirements." [The report then cited and expounded over 20 scriptural references.]*

Antion concluded his paper, touching briefly on the case of King David, and showed that the issue was qualifications, not whether or not a man repented and was forgiven.

"David did commit adultery. Though God winked at his taking a number of wives which he married and to whom he performed all the functions of a husband-support, children. conjugal dues-his greatest sin was the taking of the wife of Uriah and the murder of not only Uriah but of several men along with him. In the light of this colossal sin many of us ask, 'How can David be a man of God-a man after God's own heart?'

"But here is what we know from the scriptures. First, David did repent bitterly of this sin - i.e., he never did it again! Second, he repented permanently the first time it was brought to his attention by a true servant of God. He did not argue or excuse himself in anyway or justify his sin by new doctrine or any other excuse....

"God's servants are His human leaders of the people. Their example of leadership, their character, their lives should be of the highest qualifications. If the leaders fall below what is expected even of their followers then disrespect ensues-loss of confidence occurs-people look for other more sterling leadership.

"To date in the Church of God-no minister has ever been restored to office who has disqualified himself and was once removed from it. This list includes [ministers' names deleted]....

"The same basic principle has applied generally to deacons....

"Again, the question is not one of repentance and forgiveness. It is a question of qualification and what the word of God says about returning to the highest office of all-the ministry of Jesus Christ" (Ibid.. pp. 8 and 9).

**Crisis Management.** Of course, Herbert decided to ignore the evidence presented by David Antion because that was not what he wanted to hear. He needed a way to solve the crisis in "the Work." 1972 had not started off well, and it was progressively getting worse. When the church didn't "flee" to a place of safety many members lost their apocalyptic zeal. Then Ted was banished soon after, leaving many in a state of confusion and low morale. Also, because Ted was "out of the church," he was no longer making broadcasts. All this added up to a significant drop in income. Herbert needed Ted back in order to get "the Work" back on its financial feet.

In late May 1972 (only one month after David Antion had submitted his paper on qualifications), Herbert met with Ted. Several days later (June 7, 1972) Albert Portune, Sr., David Antion, Ron Dart and Stan Rader accompanied Herbert back to the A-frame in Colorado and discussed the situation with Ted. The men returned to Pasadena, and the board voted to reinstate Ted in the church and allowed him to make broadcasts once again. Soon after this meeting, he was awarded full reinstatement to the ministry, and he returned to his former executive duties.

After all the problems, how did they manage to ignore the issue of Ted's qualifications? Easy—Herbert asserted that his son was above the pronouncements of scripture. Albert Portune explained the situation at a meeting in Kansas City several years later.

"But let me tell you what the answer is to that and what Mr. Herbert Armstrong has legislated.... Ted is above the scripture. These are his [HWA's] words. I sat there and lived through them. Ted was divinely called. He [HWA] proves that by the fact that Ted could not speak for two years and was given a voice... that Ted has these gifts and all of these other factors... therefore Ted is above the scripture. We can't judge Ted like we judge any other minister. We can't judge Ted by Timothy and Titus. You have to judge Ted only by divine calling. Then he has vague references to vague scriptures back to Hosea..." (Kansas City meeting, Sept. 22, 1974, tape 3, side I, ref. #066).

So, Ted was reinstated to his former positions with all the rights and privileges thereof. For several months it appeared that everything was back to normal.

**Cat's Out of the Bag.** The cover-up, however, had not been complete. By the fall of 1973, many field ministers were aware of Ted's adulterous behavior. Although most remained silent on the matter, a few considered it a matter of conscience to tell their congregations. John Mitchell, minister of the Shreveport, Louisiana church, started the ball rolling over the Thanksgiving weekend in late November 1973. That situation was momentarily smoothed over, but by early 1974, practically the whole ministry was in an uproar.

Not only were there questions regarding Ted's qualifications, but other doctrinal issues were coming to the fore. Among these were divorce and remarriage, healing, tithing, binding and loosing and some administrative problems. Suddenly the ministry wanted immediate answers from headquarters. Most were unhappy about the lack of communication coming from Pasadena, and were concerned about the extent of Ted's problem and the ensuing cover-up.

**The Meeting in Richmond.** In February 1974, Albert Portune, Sr. and David Antion flew to Richmond, Virginia to meet with many of the ministers in the eastern United States. After a brief discussion about their feelings on the matter, Antion and Portune spent several hours laboriously answering ministers' questions. At this meeting most wanted the rumors about Ted verified or denied. They were not vindictive. They just wanted to know.

One minister asked that Antion and Portune discuss the personal problems Ted was having.

"Not because as a human being I think it's important but because, unfortunately for him, his personal problems have caused a lot of other people personal problems... Now it has been rumored that he committed adultery... Would you say that was true?" (Richmond ministerial meeting, tape 2, side I, ref. #170.)

Both Antion and Portune answered in the affirmative (tape 2, side I, ref. #175).

The minister then asked:

"He [GTA] had admitted apparently to certain of the evangelists and regional directors in private that he had illicit relations with one individual. The rumors have hit at an all-time high of 200. Now what is the balance?" (Tape 2, side 1, ref. #182.)

Al Portune, Sr. replied to the ministers:

"...I don't know how many times, I just don't know. But whether it's 25 or whether it's 225, I don't know. Somewhere between those two points" (tape 2, side 1, ref. # 198).

The minister still wanted to make sure and asked:

"Didn't he [GTA] state, himself, to the evangelists that it [Ted's sexual misconduct] was 200 times?" (Tape 2, side 1, ref. #201.)

This time David Antion fielded the question:

"I don't remember that-I personally don't remember the number. He [Ted] just said that there've been dozens of times or, you know, many times, or some big figure. I know it impressed us all with the fact that he could remember dates and places and situations and so on.

"I would say here that a lot of it was not outright adultery a lot of it was flirtation, a lot of it was necking, making a pass and so forth....

"He needs to feel attractive. He likes to know that he's handsome. He likes to know the girls will go for him and all that. And I think there's a psychological need, personally, when I analyze it, rather than just a great need for just sex, you know" (tape 2, side 1, ref. #210).

At this same ministerial meeting A1 Portune, Sr. was asked another pointed question concerning Garner Ted's life-style:

"I'd like to know: Is it an absolute fact that it's [Garner Ted's sexual misconduct] continued over about a 19- or approximately 20-year period on a somewhat regular basis as various affairs and so on have happened? Without naming names... an evangelist... said that he understands there have been 38 different women that he [Ted] had involved himself with?" (Tape 2, side 1, ref. #351.)

Al Portune's frank response was:

"It's probably true. I've been very, very close to Ted on a friendly, person-to-person basis for many years. I worked for him as his personal assistant way back when. And he has told me things about his life before marriage when he was in the service, and I think that's where it really began, and in his own words he said, to me he said, 'it has continued and it has never stopped'-meaning up to the time when he was having his problem. So it is over all the period of his adult life" (Albert Portune, Richmond ministerial meetings, tape 2, side 1, ref. #356).

Portune and Antion also discussed the circumstances surrounding Ted's reinstatement to the ministry in 1972 and the meeting at the A-frame in Colorado in early June of that year. One minister specifically asked if repentance was talked about.

Albert Portune answered:

"He [Ted] sat there in that chair. He called himself every dirty name that he could think of.... He constantly does that. He still does that today....

"The subject of repentance in that way-in the sense that he was conscious of the need for being sorry and the fact that he was evidencing to me from tears and through reproachments to himself and not being worthy to so much as lift up his eyes....

"All he could think about was just that empty microphone back there, and because of his dirty rotten sins he wasn't there doing his job... if God would just give him the chance and that type of thing.... That was the context of his repentance" (tape 2, side 1, ref. #240).

David Antion interjected at this point:

"Of course, one of our problems was that we went out to Colorado totally cold. There was not a word on the plane. Not-and I'm telling you-not a word as to what we would say when we got there. There was no stated purpose. In fact, I really didn't quite know why we were going....

"Mr. Armstrong didn't say what we were going for. We got over there and were supposed to talk to GTA. I assumed... we're going to go out, and Mr. Armstrong is going to start talking to GTA, and he's going to start asking him some questions... 'Ted, how's your marriage? Are you really repentant? Are you sorry that you did this? Are you sorry the way you've acted? What do you have to say for yourself?'

"That kind of thing did not happen. We kind of talked around, and it was obvious by GTA's mannerisms that he was meek and he was... conciliatory and he was humble....

"We started talking about the work, and he started talking about himself-thinking about the empty microphone.... Then he said, 'Well, how are things?', and I think Al said something about 'Well, things aren't very good with the work. Things are pretty bad.'...

"Then Ted said, 'Well, how's the broadcasting going?'... Well, the mail was down... Mr. Portune said, 'Well, I think you need to come back... I think you're the man God has anointed to do it.'

"And then GTA started crying, and he said that he wanted to be back so bad.... He made all kinds of promises.... It was a moving situation.

"Mr. Armstrong was taken by it... and I mean to tell you, within two hours from that point Mr. Armstrong was saying, 'Ted, when can you come back?' Stan Rader said, 'We can get daily television.' We started saying, 'We can get campaigns, we can get advertising.' And that's the way it was.

"Mr. Armstrong said, 'How soon can you come back?' and GTA was ready to come back....

"Ron Dart said, 'Oh, that's great, now we can get going.' Then everybody started talking....

"I thought, 'Wait a second, wait a second, wait a second.' I had already turned the qualifications memo in. Mr. Armstrong must have read it... " (tape 2, side 1, ref. #250-297; ref. #339).

**Peyton Place.** In late March 1974, a very disillusioned David Antion wrote a personal letter to Ted Armstrong. Below is a portion of Antion's letter. (Letters of the alphabet have been substituted for some of the names.)

"March 29, 1974

"Dear Ted,

" . You were right when you said it just about killed me to find out about the things that happened in '71= 72. I didn't want to know. I knew nothing up until that time. I didn't go searching or asking.

"In August of 1971, S told M about the situation with G.... When I heard what was happening, I went straight to the study-fell on my knees and bawled like a baby.

"I knew nothing else at the time. Not until November or December of 1971 did I find out about anything more than G. It was Jon Hill who first told me that there were other girls. He seemed quite surprised that I didn't know this. In fact, he was quite shocked that I should be shocked.

"Then it was Rod Meredith who implied to me about others and seemed to be hinting at M being one of them.

"I went home and in conversation with M asked her if you [Ted] had ever made passes at her. It was shattering. But it was in the past-before M and I were engaged-and had been repented of.

"During those months there was the usual witch hunt of those who kept bringing up more and more names and incidents. I know it hurt [evangelist's name withheld] too for I saw him break down and cry when he heard. Then in February or March-perhaps April-of 1972, when everything seemed to be over, J and... [her husband] came to California for a visit...

"One night when I came home from work, M started telling me about what J had told her. J told how she thought you [Ted] were in love with her. She [J] told about the passes you made at her and said she felt she was in love with you also. In fact it was J who first spotted and became suspicious of your relationship with G at SEP [Summer Education Program]. J went into quite a bit of detail with M and from what I gather seemed to enjoy doing so....

"J was thinking recently. M told her about what happened in the past during M's college days. J was surprised at that. Then M shattered J who was thinking you were in love with her. M told her that you did not love her any more than you loved the others. This, according to M, really seemed to infuriate J who seemed to want to believe that she was special."

Ted was infuriated by the letter. How could Antion have had the audacity to put this down in writing? Ted ordered Dave to destroy his copy, which he did. However, in his rage, Ted carelessly left his copy on his desk at the television studio long enough for an enterprising employee to make a copy.

Soon after, David Antion began to assume a low-profile existence at the college. He maintains his ministerial status and teaches a few classes at AC, but he judiciously avoids certain issues like qualifications for the ministry because it is economically expedient for him to remain on the Armstrong payroll, drive his Mercedes, and live in a quarter-million dollar home that church tithes built.

**Sweet Irony.** There can be no denying that Ted's personal problem-so long hidden from public view-is adultery. Ted has even admitted this himself.

"I know of about five or six or eight or ten [WCG ministers] who have committed adultery.... You want some leveling done here today? I am not the first case!" (Big Sandy ministerial meeting, March 4, 1974, tape 5, side 1, ref. #082.)

He flagrantly broke the WCG's doctrine on sexual conduct; yet he still had the gall to stand up and preach highly volatile sermons against our "decadent society," wife swapping, adultery, etc. And while he so dogmatically enforced "God's laws" regarding sex, and quietly stood by while hundreds of happy marriages were broken up due to "spiritual adultery" (see the article "Home-Breaking-Armstrong Style"), Ted was out doing the real thing with WCG ministers' wives, AC coeds, his secretaries, etc. This is tragic behavior for anyone, but inexcusable for a man who claims to be a minister of Jesus Christ.

**So What?** Evidently, the criteria used to judge Ted's performance as a minister and church member is not the same as that used for the rest of the church and ministry. Obviously, if Ted were any other than the son of Herbert W. Armstrong, he would have been disfellowshipped and publicly marked long ago.

Unfortunately, sincere, trusting people continue to listen to this hypocrite. They do not listen to him because they have refuted David Antion's research on biblical qualifications for the ministry, or because they have tested those who say they are apostles and are not (Rev. 2:2). They listen because he is Garner Ted Armstrong, son of the legendary apostle of God's "only true church." To question his authority borders on blasphemy. Some people desperately cling to such illusions. In the real world though, illusions are not enough, and while Garner Ted Armstrong could be anybody's Hollywood matinee idol, he is not qualified to be anyone's minister.

*-Margaret D. Zola*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)

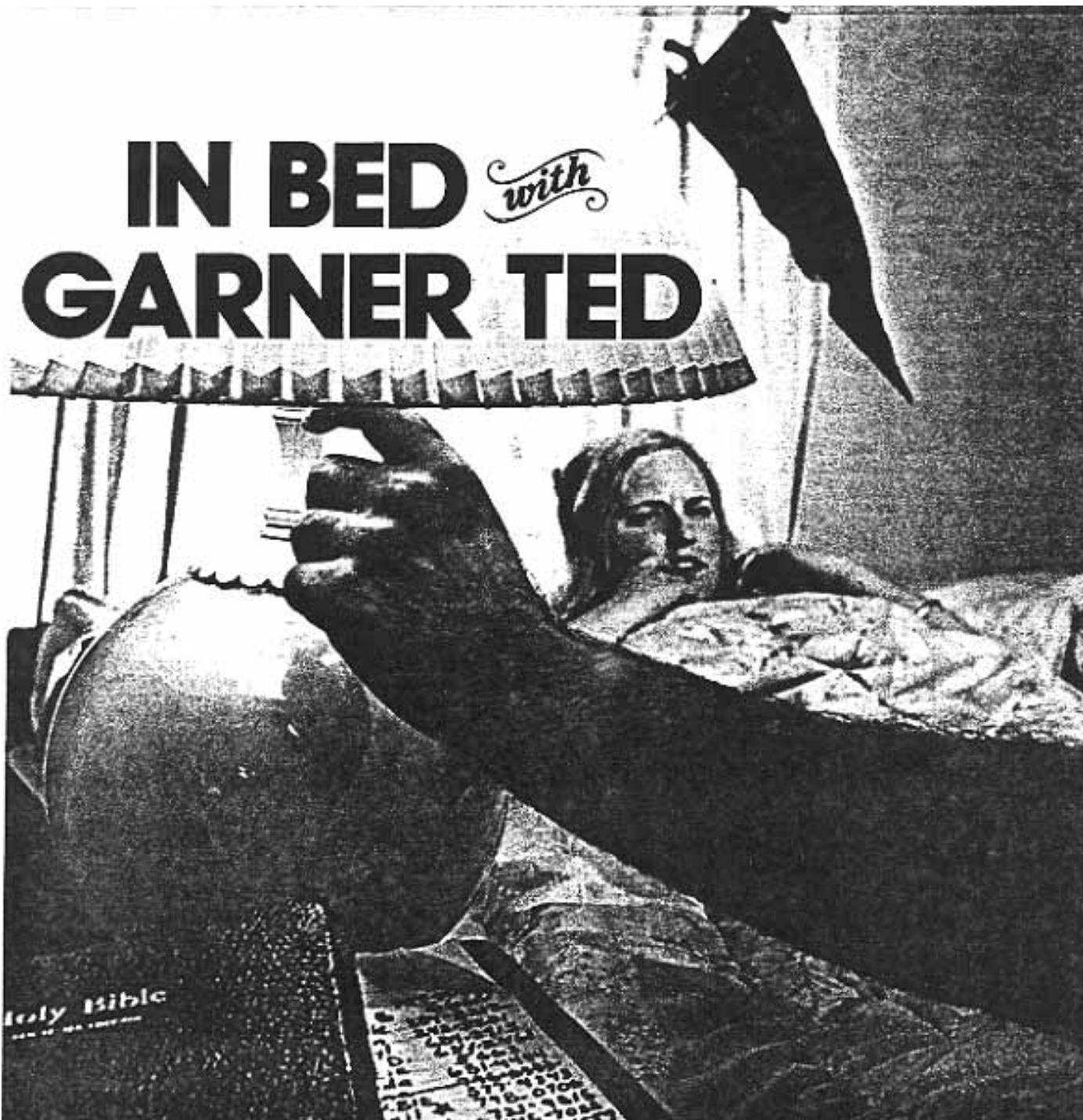


# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### IN BED *with* GARNER TED





---

**"I know of about five or six or eight or ten [Worldwide Church of God ministers] who have committed adultery and who upon repentance have been allowed back. You want some leveling done here today? I am not the FIRST CASE!"**

**-GARNER TED ARMSTRONG**

---

On March 4, 1974, at Big Sandy, Texas, evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong met with approximately 70 ministers of the Worldwide Church of God. It was during this meeting that Garner Ted admitted:

"A man in the ministry committed adultery... I talked to him in great sympathy... and he was totally repentant... I know of about five or six or eight or ten who have committed adultery and who upon repentance have been allowed back. You want some leveling done here today? I am not the first case!" (Big Sandy ministerial meeting, March 4, 1974, tape 5, side 1, ref. #082).

Later in that same meeting (tape 5, side 2, ref. #052), a WCG minister, Robert McKibben, respectfully asked Garner Ted the following questions:

**MC KIBBEN:** "Well, let me ask you Mr. Armstrong point blank. Have there been young girls that you have..."

**GARNER TED:** [Interrupting] "Absolutely not!"

**MC KIBBEN:** "When I say young girls, I'm talking about college students."

**GARNER TED:** "No!"

**MC KIBBEN:** "Employees?"

**GARNER TED:** "No, no one else of any size, shape, race, color, creed, religion, or age!"

**MC KIBBEN:** "So you're saying, then, that you have not committed adultery?"

**GARNER TED:** "That's right. I have been accused of things like that behind my back that have come to me from other sources that are just incredulous...."

**MC KIBBEN:** "Well, the information that I had was that you had committed adultery."

**GARNER TED:** "Way back before I was out, but in a completely different way than you think, or anybody else thinks... I was beside myself. I had already in my own mind convinced myself I wasn't even bound to my wife Shirley. I was in my mind divorcing her. I left with a trailer full of clothing and a stupid little girl...."

During the Big Sandy meeting, Ted attempted to create the impression that if it could be interpreted that he had committed adultery, it had only happened once with "a stupid little girl" when he was in a disturbed frame of mind. This, of course, was outright deception. The following interview, in conjunction with the articles "Garner Ted Armstrong-Son of the Legend" and "The Profligate Son," proves conclusively that Ted, indeed, committed adultery, and that it was not just once with just one silly little girl.

"In Bed with Garner Ted" is an interview with one of the women who had an affair with Garner Ted Armstrong. Her story is not the only one told to us, but is probably the most graphic in detailing Ted's techniques of seduction. She and her husband consented to relate the story with the hope that it might help people to realize the kind of man Garner Ted Armstrong is. Her identity has been withheld to preserve the integrity and harmony enjoyed by her family.

**AMBASSADOR REPORT:** How did you first personally come into contact with Ted Armstrong?

**RESPONDENT:** I was told by the student body president that I had to see Garner Ted Armstrong. It was almost as if the student body president had a list of certain girls who wouldn't be allowed to be baptized without counseling with Garner Ted. He didn't tell me why, just that I had to see Ted first. So I made the appointment and went into his office. I remember him sitting there looking among the papers. He didn't even look up, as if to say, "I know who you are. You're nothing." I just stood there waiting and finally he said, "Oh, yes, there you are," so he started telling me, "I hear you want to be baptized," and I said, "Yes." From that point forward, I didn't say anything. He started telling me how I was one of those vain freshman girls and how I probably had everything I wanted and he knew that I had been "Miss This" and "Miss That" in high school and things weren't that way at Ambassador College. We all had to repent of our past lives and humble ourselves. Otherwise, if we hadn't repented, they [the ministry] wouldn't baptize us at all.

He said I had a horrible walk-that I probably had seen some movie star walk that way and so I had spent a lot of time working on it... and I had to stop that. By this time, I think I started crying, and it gradually got worse. I wasn't crying out loud, just sobbing, and then at the end, he said, "Is there anything you want to say?" But I couldn't say anything because I was too scared and upset and really disgusted with myself because I believed him-I believed everything he said. So, I just shook my head "No," and he said, "Well, when you feel like you have repented and you feel like counseling about these problems or faults, then you can call for another appointment."

\*\*\*\*\*

I called for another appointment and Ted's secretary said to meet him in the library on Saturday morning. He was completely different this time-all happy and smiles.... He asked me if I had repented and if I felt I was ready for baptism, and I said, "Yes," I felt like it, but I didn't know for sure. I was really depending on him to tell me if I was ready or not. And he said, "Okay, you can be baptized this afternoon in a group.... I don't think he ever mentioned the Bible or scriptures either time. I know he didn't have a Bible with him.

**REPORT:** After your baptism into the Worldwide Church of God what was your next encounter with Ted?

**RESPONDENT:** I really had very rare contact with him. I baby-sat once [for him] when I was a junior or senior. Then he drove me home, but that was about it, other than just seeing him in church and saying a few words here and there.

---

### "...we headed toward my girlfriend's bed:"

---

**REPORT:** During that period of time did he ever indicate to you that you were in any way special to him?

**RESPONDENT:** No, not during college.

**REPORT:** What about later on?

**RESPONDENT:** Let's see. It was pretty soon after graduation.... After graduation, I went to work full time at the Letter Answering Dept., and I was working as a typist with the stenorette machine answering letters.... We were all under Dr. Zimmerman at the time.

One day Dr. Zimmerman called me in and said that Garner Ted wanted to know if I wanted to be transferred to Imperial [Schools]. I could tell that he [Dr. Zimmerman] really didn't want me to go. I said that if that's where I was needed most, I would be happy to go, although I was happy there. He said, "Well, just say the word, and you can stay." I didn't feel like I should stay. I really, you know, felt like I might be doing more there (at the WCG's Imperial Schools), so anyway, I was transferred.

A few months later, I noticed that every time Ted would call, I felt that he was very businesslike, and I would get his call right through to whomever it was he was wanting to talk to. But then time went by and he would spend a little more time just passing the time of day and teasing me about Texas or saying something...the way Texans talk.

At the school banquet at the end of the year, I started getting the feeling that he was sort of singling me out. I thought this over in my mind. One night in particular, I was going along with another couple of teachers and his [Ted's] wife and everyone was having a real great time. We were telling a lot of jokes. Everyone was real happy, and I felt that Ted kept looking at me. I thought maybe he wondered if I was happy or not because all the ministers were sort of concerned about the other girls who were single. Each minister sort of had his own little pet

girl. And I wasn't anyone's pet, I felt, at the time.

But anyway, after the banquet, we were going to the car and Ted asked this teacher that I was with if he and his wife were going right home or if they were going somewhere, and he said, "No, they didn't have any plans," so Ted said, "Why don't you come on out with us to this restaurant." I never even heard him say so, but I got the feeling that Ted definitely wanted me to come, so the teacher said, "Yes, how about going over there with the other group?" I said okay.

We were sitting around sort of a round bar, and I was sitting by (names deleted) on the one side. There were some more teachers, the Lochners, and Ted and Shirley [Garner Ted's wife] on the other side.

I think in all these little get-togethers, Ted was always, naturally, the leader. He would do all the singing, and we would sort of chime in with him.

At that stage that was the first time it really hit me that there was definitely something there. I don't remember him looking at anyone else, and he was always saying, "Would you like another drink?" and sort of looking out for me. So after going home that night, I was still wondering, and I thought it was really funny that he was looking at *me*, because *he* had everything, and it's just really fun for *him*, but it wasn't too much fun for me thinking, "Is he serious or not?"

\*\*\*\*\*

Another place I came to know him much better was around the basketball court because it was all very homey and buddy-buddy.... Ted started the basketball program. Some of the faculty members were really quite good at it, but Ted wasn't. He really wanted to be, so the faculty members really went out of their way to accept him in the group because they respected him tremendously, and they felt if they could help him, I'm sure, they felt there would be ways he could help them also.

Every Friday afternoon there would be basketball. All the girls would go out, and sometimes they would be cheerleading. Since I was Dr. Lochner's secretary, I kept the score book and the clock and everything. And every time Ted would do something like make a goal or whatever, you could tell he just really wanted everyone to know. The girls would always let him know they thought he was really great, and he would come over and say, "How did I do?" I would tell him how many points he made, and he would say, "Wow, I'm getting better, aren't I?" or "I played a lousy game today," or whatever. So you know everyone never disagreed or said, "You are a lousy player," or "What are you doing out there?" No one would consider saying that.

He never really got that good, but you began to look at him more like a human. It's like someone who is a friend. I think that is sort of how it (our relationship) started. He was a friend, and if you needed something, you felt a little more apt to go to him and he would listen to you instead of looking down on you and your problem.

After the game, they would have me go and get beer, and they would have the beer afterward or go over to the office and have the beer. Occasionally he would say, "Boy, I wish I had a secretary like you," and I thought, "Well, I'd love to be [your secretary], you know, get a better job, or be moved up," but I never did say anything.

\*\*\*\*\*

At times he would be gone out of town for a few weeks, and then he would come back and call up and start all over again, talking or telling me about his trip or something. So finally one day he called. This was just a week before graduation....

I had been out of college 2 years at this time. He called late in the afternoon when I was usually through for the day. Normally everyone went home early on Friday, but that particular Friday, a lot of parents came in. I had a lot of people and students to take care of, and I was really busy and he wanted to talk. It was very rare of him to try to keep me on the line because there were phones all over the office where you can push a button and hear what was going on. But he never really talked that long. This day I could tell he wanted to talk, and I said, "I really can't because I've got a lot of people here." He said, "Okay, I'll call back in a few minutes. Maybe everything will be cleared up because I want to talk to you about something."

---

### **"He wanted my promise that I would never tell Father."**

---

I always had the guilt feeling of what have I done, you know, I'm really going to be corrected! So he called back, and I was still busy, but he said, "Go in the back room" because he was familiar with the whole building. "Go in the back room and we can talk back there," he said. All the teachers had gone home. There wasn't anyone around who might listen in, but I am not sure if he knew that or not, but he might have guessed it.

So I went back, and I was all set for something really bad, and then he said, "I just want to talk awhile and see what you think of me as a man, as a person, and how I"-I think he said-"how I compare with the other men" because he asked me who I felt was really the type of man I knew there that I really respected. I said, "Well, I really respect Mr. Lochner. I really think he has a lot of character, he is fair, and I haven't seen anything wrong with him, as far as his doing anything wrong. I also think a lot of Mike.... I mentioned those two to him as the two all-around men who I could respect. Then he was sort of silent, just kind of waiting, and I said, "You know, I think that you are probably better than they are because you have so much going for you, ability"-but I don't remember if that is exactly what I said. But he replied, "Oh, you do?" just like he was waiting for that. And then he said, "You know, that really makes me feel good. I don't know if you should tell me that or not because it really does something to me." I said, "Well, you asked me so I told you," and he said, "Well, that is what I wanted to hear." I said, "Well, I guess I'd better get back. There are still a lot of people here."

I felt that is what he wanted me to say. That was the end of it so I went back up front. That was Friday. When I was told this, it made me feel like everything was tying together.... I was sure that he was interested in me as a person because my sister and I had invited [names deleted] over for dinner that night and... [one of them] mentioned how when Ted had driven by while going home that he was wondering how far I had to walk, indicating he was concerned about me. I thought if he is telling other people about me or mentioning me to someone else in his family, that must really mean something-but it really doesn't mean a thing, looking back on it.

On Sunday, I went to the office. I went to the office almost every Sunday, I believe, just to do this and that because my desk was usually a mess. It's such a mad house during the week. I straightened it up or graded papers or something like that. My girlfriend would usually go with me, but this weekend, she was out of town visiting her parents because she was a teacher. And so this Sunday I was grading papers, and there were a few teachers there-a few of the men. We would usually have coffee or tea with each other, and they would be going back and

forth from the classroom on their various projects. I remember hearing the phone ringing. I answered it and it was Garner Ted. He said, "You're working today, huh?" I said, "Well, not really. There are a few things I need to get done that I can't do during the week." And he said, "You shouldn't be working today." And I said, "Well, I usually do on Sunday."

Later, he called again, but this time he said, "How would you like to come up for a drink?" I said, "Oh, I don't think I should." And he said, "Well, it will probably do you good. There is nothing wrong with it. Just come on up." Ted said it like it was ridiculous to think anything otherwise, like it was maybe an invitation that wouldn't be extended again. Possibly that is what he wanted to convey. I don't know for sure, but I decided it wouldn't hurt anything; so I went up. I didn't feel comfortable....

But I went up and I remember I was sort of shaky because I thought anytime you do something extracurricular with a married man, even letting him take you to the store, there is always that something that might go wrong, you know. There might be something there that would come up, and you would have to decide if you want to go right or left. And I think I knew then, down deep, although I couldn't really say it at the time, but I must have because... I have always been the type that would feel rather guilty when doing something that was wrong, even before [becoming a member of the] Worldwide [Church of God]. I think I was that type.... I went in and I was surprised-very surprised at the way he was dressed, because I had never seen him dress sloppy my whole life except one time when I was a freshman.... I had never seen him anything but neat before except one time years ago. And I got the feeling that he didn't care so much how he looked, and that it smelled... like he had been drinking. I don't know how heavily, but I know definitely that his breath was very alcoholic. His breath was sort of a mixture with I don't know what else. I don't think it was cigarette smoke, but it was almost like it was, that and alcohol....

That should have sent me running, but anyway, he was sitting behind the desk, and he had a real sort of far-away gaze in his eyes. He didn't look alert like he usually did. When I came in, he just looked at me for awhile, and then he pulled out the drawer and started getting out two glasses and a bottle of something.

At that time, I never drank anything but beer. Beer was even new for me when I came into the Worldwide Church. And I said I didn't care for anything. It was really awkward, really, because I didn't want to drink and so he didn't say anything. There was no light conversation like there had been over the phone all those other times and he wasn't bubbly, but he came around the desk and... he came over and put his arms around me. I was sort of by the door frame, and he sort of held me there, not forcefully, but just, anyway, then he started kissing me and that's when I got this breath. He hadn't shaved, I guess, since the day before Church, the previous day which was Saturday, and his beard was scratchy. My mind couldn't focus on a thing, and I thought, "Let me out of here." It was like he was a little bit drunk or something. Cause if he had been drinking it was probably that, and yet, I was sort of in a "trance" because of the newness or whatever. He stayed there five or ten minutes. Then he maneuvered me over to the couch (I wouldn't say pushed, but encouraged me) and then he kept on kissing me, but I wasn't ready to give in to him, so I pushed him off and went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror at myself.

I remember looking and sort of getting second thoughts and naturally, he was... so he got the glasses of whatever it was and brought one. At that time, I guess I felt the need of it because I took a swallow of it, and it was very strong. Then he stood behind me and I think he was trying to reassure me and possibly trying to influence me not to turn away. All this time, there wasn't much conversation. It was mainly, I guess, two minds, one mind against the other. So I kept thinking. I was trying to get something going conversational-wise, and I said, "Oh, you'd better get going to the basketball game. The men are already down on the court," because they were warming up when I came by. And he said, "Oh, that's right," and that did get his mind back on

a talking plane. Then he said, "I guess I'd better change and go down pretty soon, and I guess I'd better shave."... Anyway, then he followed me out to the elevator with more kissing. I got in and went down to the office and around to the basketball court, not on the court itself, but on the bench, away from the court, and just sat there and watched the men.

---

## **"Delicious! Delicious!" - G.T.A**

---

All this time, I was trying to think. Yet my mind wouldn't cooperate, and I couldn't get myself really on a path. I wanted to follow a definite path because I knew that there was a right way to go and a wrong way. And I remember thinking-wanting God to lead me-and yet I knew there was no way He was going to come down and do it for me.

So I went back to my car and back to the apartment and sat there and thought. Then I was in a "trance," and there were many things I should have been doing, but I didn't. I just sat there for a long time until the phone rang and it was him.

It was about four in the afternoon.... He mentioned, "I guess you are surprised that I know your phone number." I said, "No, I'm not really." Then he said, "What are you doing?" and he was much more like he had been previously on the phone. It was like he was over whatever he was going through there in the office. He was very personable over the phone. He mentioned that he would really like to see me and talk to me and that he guessed he couldn't.

I said, "Well, my girlfriend is out of town." Then I thought, "Well, there goes my out. I told him she's gone." He said, "Oh, well maybe I could come over." I was going to be there and, like I said, like a fool, I told him the address and everything and how I was upstairs and made it very easy for him.

He said he would probably be there that night around 7:30 or 8 he thought. Eight o'clock came and he didn't show up, so I really thought he wasn't coming. Then he called and said he was in a restaurant, the service was very slow, and he would be late in getting there but for me to go down to the corner and get a beer and do something until he could get there.

This shows how people will do things. I didn't want a beer. I didn't want to walk down there. It was a very muggy night. It was foggy and misty and, in fact, I think I took an umbrella and a raincoat. It was rather wet, not the type of night you want to be walking alone.... But that late at night, I walked down to the corner and bought a beer or two, and I don't think I even drank one, but anyway, I had been back to the apartment about only 30 minutes when he came.

Over the phone he was very warm, but these two times I was with him the conversation wasn't what you would call normal. I can't remember saying, "Well, you are finally here." I'm not the type to say that anyway, but I can't remember him saying anything like "Well, I am finally here" either.

It was almost like in one swoop, one entrance, one motion that he was over with his arms around me and unzipping my dress. It all seems very cold and hard-hearted now to think about it, like he was thinking, "Well, we only have so much time. I have to get in and get out."

But anyway, I was still under his spell so I know he put his arms around me, and he kissed me

a few times, but it was while he was unzipping my dress. Then he turned me around, oh, I don't know, but anyway, we went into the bedroom.

It was a very small apartment but the bedroom was fairly good size. Anyway, we headed toward... my girlfriend's bed. We sat down there and he started taking my dress off. When he got my dress off, I said, "This is my girlfriend's bed, and that is my bed over there." And it was really like the conversation was almost stifled. He started undressing, and I finished undressing myself. He started it and I finished it.

Then he... pulled out-I guess there are a lot of words for it-a prophylactic, and I said, "Oh, no, I don't want you to use that." And he said, "It is the safest. It is the only thing that really works. It is the only way." And I said, "Yes, but I would like to have a baby." He said, "Oh, no! You think you do, but you really don't. It would be much worse for you to have a baby than not to."

I thought at the time this was goofing my life up so much I couldn't recover later. It was almost as if everyone would know what I had done, because I knew what I was doing, and what I would have done after it was over. And I guess I would be living my life alone and it would be so much better to have a baby even if it was better to not have anything. And yet, he was definitely not going to let me do that, so I gave up and so.... And at various times, he would say, "Delicious, delicious!" and I thought at the time, "Well, I guess it is good that he feels that way even though.... You know it's funny. A woman needs so much more than that, and you would have thought he would have known. Oh, at that point, after intercourse, he went right to the bathroom to clean up and wash it down and all. He was in there several minutes, and I just felt drained.... so I didn't even dress, but he came right back into the bedroom.... He knew exactly what he was going to do and that was getting dressed to prepare to leave.

**REPORT:** Did Garner Ted say he loved you or express any affection?

**RESPONDENT:** No, in fact he dressed, he was completely dressed, and I thought, "Well, I guess I ought to get my clothes back on." Then after he got through putting on his tie and everything, he sat on my roommate's bed. I was still sitting on my bed, and I thought, "Now is when we can have our little conference."

Then he said, "Now the first thing I want to say is that I don't ever want you to tell your father about this." I said, "Well, I don't plan to." I wouldn't have told him in a million years. I mean now I might if he were still alive.... The first thing that he wanted to really get my promise on was that I would not ever tell my father. That's why I think it's possible maybe at this stage he had had dealings with fathers and he knew his biggest problem might be with the father of an unmarried girl. And then after this, he said, "You know, I can't leave my boys," so evidently he had already thought that I was thinking that maybe he thought my next statement was going to be "Can we leave," you know, "Can you leave your family and come with me?" which I hadn't even bothered to consider. And I said, "Well, I'm not even thinking of such a thing."

---

**"Hey, how about taking a shower together?" - G.T.A.**

---

I really expected him to mention not to go to his father and not go to his wife or not to go to some person, but no other person was even brought into the picture, just my dad, and that he [Ted] couldn't leave his boys.... [Later] he said, "Now it's sort of scary-this other minister was shot just a few days or weeks ago because he was in a motel room with a girl who wasn't his

wife." I said, "Yeah, it is."...

Well, that was the only conversation. I think he felt he got his point across and got my promise not to tell my father.... I did say something. He probably knew I had one request. The only thing I said was, "Can we go somewhere together and have a drink or something?" In other words, it seemed so abrupt for him to leave. I wanted him to stay, I guess, because it would make me feel better-cleaner or something, I don't know, and he said, "Oh, no, there are so many people who know us... that I just couldn't take a chance." I don't know if he said "I'd better be going" or what, but we had gone to the living room, I remember, and when he got ready to go, I know I must have been looking very downcast because that is what I was feeling, and he just reached over and got hold of my hand and sort of shook it like "everything is going to be okay." Then he went out the door... and he flew.

The next few days were some of the most miserable of my whole life. I felt so alone. I thought that at least he would call me and encourage me not to go to pieces and tell me to get my life back together even though we had made a mistake. I just expected that sort of thing, but he didn't call and I didn't call anybody.

I feel pretty positive it was on a Wednesday that I decided to stay after school and write a letter. I wrote a long letter. I guess it was very emotional, and I went over to his car... and just dropped it in on the front seat and went on home.

The next morning about ten he called and said, "Why did you do such a stupid thing to write that letter?"

I said, "To me it wasn't stupid!" He said, "I want to see you right away. Come on up to my office." And I said, "Oh, okay." I was feeling a little bit on the belligerent side toward him by this time because I felt if he didn't care about me then I really shouldn't care about him. Yet I was sort of warning him, if I remember correctly, in that letter that if I didn't hear from him, I was going to have to talk to somebody. When I came up to his office, I don't remember having to wait. I just walked on in and said, "Hi" and went on by. At first he was very, very disgusted with me-oh, very, and sort of treated me as if I had done a very foolish thing.

He said, "It was very dangerous and foolish for you to leave that letter there because Al Portune could have walked by and seen the letter, and he reads my mail and he feels free to read things." Anyway, [he said it as if]...one of the most horrible things that could happen to him would be for Al Portune to read that and find out what had been going on. So I said, "Okay, I won't write any more letters, but I just felt like I had to talk to someone, and I still feel that way." He said, "Well, you can talk to me anytime. I am right here. I want you to call me, but don't talk to anyone else, just call me."

And there was still kind of a disgusted tone in his voice. I didn't argue or say anything, just sort of waited, and then he looked at me and said, "You know, I really have wondered if you aren't demon possessed." And I said, "Well, I can assure you, I am not!" I knew I wasn't and I think he could see I wasn't even going to budge. I wasn't going to doubt myself along that line, and he said, "No, I guess you are not."

And then, looking back, this was his next approach and the one that worked. He said, "You know, after reading that letter, I drove down to the Rose Bowl and read every word and tore it up into little tiny pieces so that no one could ever put it together again, and my boys were all in the back seat." It was like I was really dragging them down too, because I wrote the letter and Ted had to go through all that with them. He continued, "You know, after reading that letter, in one way it did me good because it really hit me what I had done-and I went into my bathroom and I got on my hands and knees and repented. I even vomited, I was so sick of myself."... He

kept saying he was sick of himself that he could do such a thing.

And I thought, "Well, that's great, because I ought to repent too of doing it and, hopefully, I won't ever do that again." That really got through to me because I really believed him then and that that was the course to take too.... I felt that Ted was being truthful. [I thought] he had really repented and if God forgave him, who was I, and I knew that I needed forgiveness too. I guess that's one thing that everybody feels. You know what you have done in the past, and you know how it feels in your heart when you can forgive. Well, he-was so convincing....

That was pretty much the end of that interview, and he just encouraged me if I had anything on my mind or a problem to call him, which I never did because I was just used to him calling me, not me calling him. I didn't like to go through secretaries and that kind of stuff. I don't think he ever gave me a private number, no he never did. So I was on my own again....

\*\*\*\*\*

I was around him quite a bit the following summer [working for the WCG's Summer Education Program]. I felt some responsibility to not get into a situation where that [sexual relations with Ted] would ever happen again and to stay far enough away from him that "he" would be safe. It sounds crazy, but that's the way I was.... There was a bathroom and shower and all that stuff [at the Summer Education Program], and there was an outer office that the secretary would use. I worked there and Ted would just be casually in the office.... I don't think he really did anything there, but he was in there one day. He had ridden a horse to the back door and left it outside and came on in and had done a few things, and I went in. He asked me if I was enjoying everything and how it was going and just things about the summer program. I don't think he worked up to it especially, but he suddenly said, "Hey, how about taking a shower together?" Looking back, it was like he had the liberty to ask me that because of what we had done.

I said, "No, I don't think so. I'd better not do anything like that." He just looked like "I guess you don't want to do something like that," so I just turned around and left the office. I didn't stay around any longer....

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### Herbert Armstrong "Disproves" the Bible

In 1958, in the Ambassador College Publication *The Proof of the Bible*, Herbert W. Armstrong thundered authoritatively "Here is how you can *disprove* the Bible and the very existence of God-if there is no God, and IF the Bible is not inspired! *Just go over and build a small city on the site of New Tyre ....* Now there is nothing to prevent them [skeptics] from building a city there on the site of New Tyre, *except that the Bible they scoff at says they CAN'T!*" (p. 20, emphasis HWA's.)

Today, as HWA says, skeptics and atheists are unable to build a city on the site of New Tyre-but not because some mysterious, unseen hand grabs them by a lock of their hair and throws them into the sea every time they try. They are unable to build a city there because the city of Sur (population 15,000) has been resting unobtrusively on the precise location of ancient Tyre since 1766 (*Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. X, p. 620). In fact, when HWA himself visited Tyre in 1973, he was forced to admit that "there were quite a number of new high-rise buildings [there]. But, no more are to be built-and by government order, the new structures are to be dismantled and carted off" (*The Plain Truth*, Jan. 1974, p. 17). But the very fact that modern Sur exists on the site of ancient Tyre-whether these high-rise buildings had been erected or not-means, according to HWA, that the Bible has been disproved and that God must cease to exist.

Now God is not about to commit suicide to make HWA's fallacious reporting look good. HWA is just going to have to suffer the consequences of his foot-in-mouth disease.

**HWA's Fallacies Concerning Tyre.** HWA came to his erroneous conclusions because his research into Tyre's history was careless and faulty and his biblical exegesis was inaccurate. If he hadn't tried to force his interpretation of Ezekiel 26 to fit the historical records, he would not have made such a blunder.

He read in Ezekiel 26 that Tyre's walls would be broken down and its stones, timber, and soil cast into the sea (vs. 12). He read that Tyre would become a bare rock (vs. 14) and would no longer be inhabited (vs. 19-21). But the historical account said no such thing. What was he to do? He noticed that the people of New Tyre had constructed a sea wall that had reclaimed some land from the sea, so he falsely concluded *all* of New Tyre was built in this lowland area. Hence he confidently wrote that "Alexander the Great, after demolishing the buildings of New Tyre, demolished this huge sea wall which had reclaimed the lowland space on which the actual city of New Tyre had been built.... God turned the ocean upon the city, and the deep waters cover it to this very day. New Tyre has remained from that day to this like the top of a rock!" (p. 19.)

**What History Says.** HWA did not succeed in reconciling Ezekiel's prophecy about Tyre with the historical record. History states that Alexander scraped most of Old Tyre into the sea, but much of New (insular) Tyre, though burned in the siege, was left intact. Rather than destroy the city completely, Alexander peopled it with new colonists and appointed a new king over Tyre. The city revived so rapidly that 18 years later it had the strength to hold out for 15 months against one of Alexander's former generals (Nina Jidejian, *Tyre Through the Ages*, Beirut, 1969, pp. 80-81).

History further declares that in the Roman period Tyre's "population overflowed its bounds and occupied a strip of the opposite mainland including the ancient Palaetyrus" (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, p. 5, 226).

HWA tries futilely to assert that the complete site of ancient insular Tyre was inundated by the sea when Alexander demolished the sea wall that had reclaimed some lowland space and that the subsequent revivals of Tyre were not built on the actual site of New Tyre. Some have noticed the remains of a wall and a few columns just offshore from modern Sur and felt perhaps a sunken city lay beneath the blue waters of the Mediterranean, but aerial photography and diving observations by a French team in 1934-36 showed beyond doubt that the walls were the breakwater of the Egyptian harbor, not a section of a submerged city. There is simply no submerged city lying off the shores of insular Tyre.

Both Roman Tyre and modern Sur are located on top of the site of the biblical Tyre. Notice what S. W. Matthews, writing in *National Geographic*, Aug. 1974, p. 165, stated: "...today the Phoenicians' Tyre lies buried beneath these paving stones and columns of a Roman metropolis. Only a small dig reaches down to the lost world of the Phoenicians." And where do the Roman ruins lie? They lie under the city of Sur and to the south of it.

It appears that many of Ezekiel's statements in chapter 26 were more poetic than

literal. Certainly ancient Tyre's might has vanished, the city has been devastated by armies that covered the city like the waves of the sea, and the original inhabitants are no more. Perhaps Isaiah 23: 13-18 coupled with Ezekiel 26 indicates that Tyre would be destroyed only temporarily or perhaps the prophecies of Ezekiel 26 remain yet to be fulfilled. But in any case the statements of Ezekiel 26 were never intended as "proof scriptures" for the existence of God.

**HWA's Fallacies Concerning Babylon.** Not only did HWA make himself look like a fool with his specious statements about Tyre, but he put his foot into his Mouth again when he attempted to explain the prophecies against Babylon. He quoted Isaiah 13:19-22 which describes a Babylon that "shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." Isaiah further states that at an unspecified time in the future Babylon shall not be inhabited nor shall Arabs pitch their tents there, but wild beasts shall lie there. Based on these dire pronouncements, HWA dogmatically asserted that Babylon "is absolutely uninhabited today." He further added that "Babylon, like Tyre, defies the skeptic to rebuild its site. God declares, through the pages of the Bible, that it CANNOT be done!" (p. 38.)

HWA even mentions how he made a cursory visit to the site of Babylon, talked with the caretaker of the museum there, and came away satisfied that the prophecy had been fulfilled. Again, however, his sloppy research proved to be his undoing.

It was brought to the attention of AC's theologians that HWA's statements about Babylon were incorrect for several reasons: (1) Three villages exist inside the central walls of the ancient city. (2) A military camp sits inside the central walls. (3) A modern hotel stands next to the museum with a permanent staff of at least 18. (4) Some Arabs do pitch their tents in Babylon. (5) A few businessmen from the nearby city of Hilla have permanent homes in Babylon. (6) The area has many domesticated animals, but no wild ones.

**The Booklet Killed.** When the ministers at AC realized the extent of the errors in *The Proof of the Bible* concerning Tyre and Babylon, they decided the booklet had to go and gingerly notified HWA through an unsigned memo written by David Jon Hill. HWA exploded, as expected, but was mollified when assured that it wasn't his fault but the fault of the Seventh-day Adventists' book *Prophecy Speaks*, from which much of HWA's booklet was purportedly derived.

So on Oct. 31, 1972, Hill wrote in an interoffice memo: "The booklet 'Proof of the Bible' has been killed by HWA. Please destroy existing stock." But the remaining booklets were not destroyed. Orlin Grabbe, former AC instructor in Old Testament Survey, explained why in a widely circulated letter: "50,000 copies still on hand were still sent out, because having recently advertised the booklet, it was decided it would be unwise to disappoint and thus antagonize the customers! (Obviously, a great regard for truth, huh?)" In fact an editorial staff member was told by the pastor of one of the WCG's European churches that the booklet should continue to be sent out with all its errors because it did such a good job bringing people into the WCG. One wonders if God is getting so desperate to get members that he has to resort to deception!

**Can a Few Prophecies Prove the Bible Is Inspired?** Now *The Proof of the Bible* lies discredited and buried, but does this prevent HWA from boasting how he "proved the Bible"? Oh no! Has HWA told the WCG membership of the booklet's fallacies or made a retraction? Of course not! That would tarnish the image of infallibility he has so carefully cultivated. Meanwhile many WCG members go on smugly but ignorantly feeling they alone, of all Christians, have literally *proved* that every word of the Bible is inspired. Neither HWA nor they ever stopped long enough to ask themselves a simple question: Can one prove the accuracy and validity of every event and statement in the Bible simply by showing that five or six prophecies in the Bible have come to pass?

The answer should be obvious. Plainly it was asinine in the first place to even think that one could prove the whole Bible simply by showing a few prophecies out of hundreds came to pass. It's a shame such nonsense as *The Proof of the Bible* was ever published by Ambassador College and pawned off as inspired truth!

[Back to Index](#)

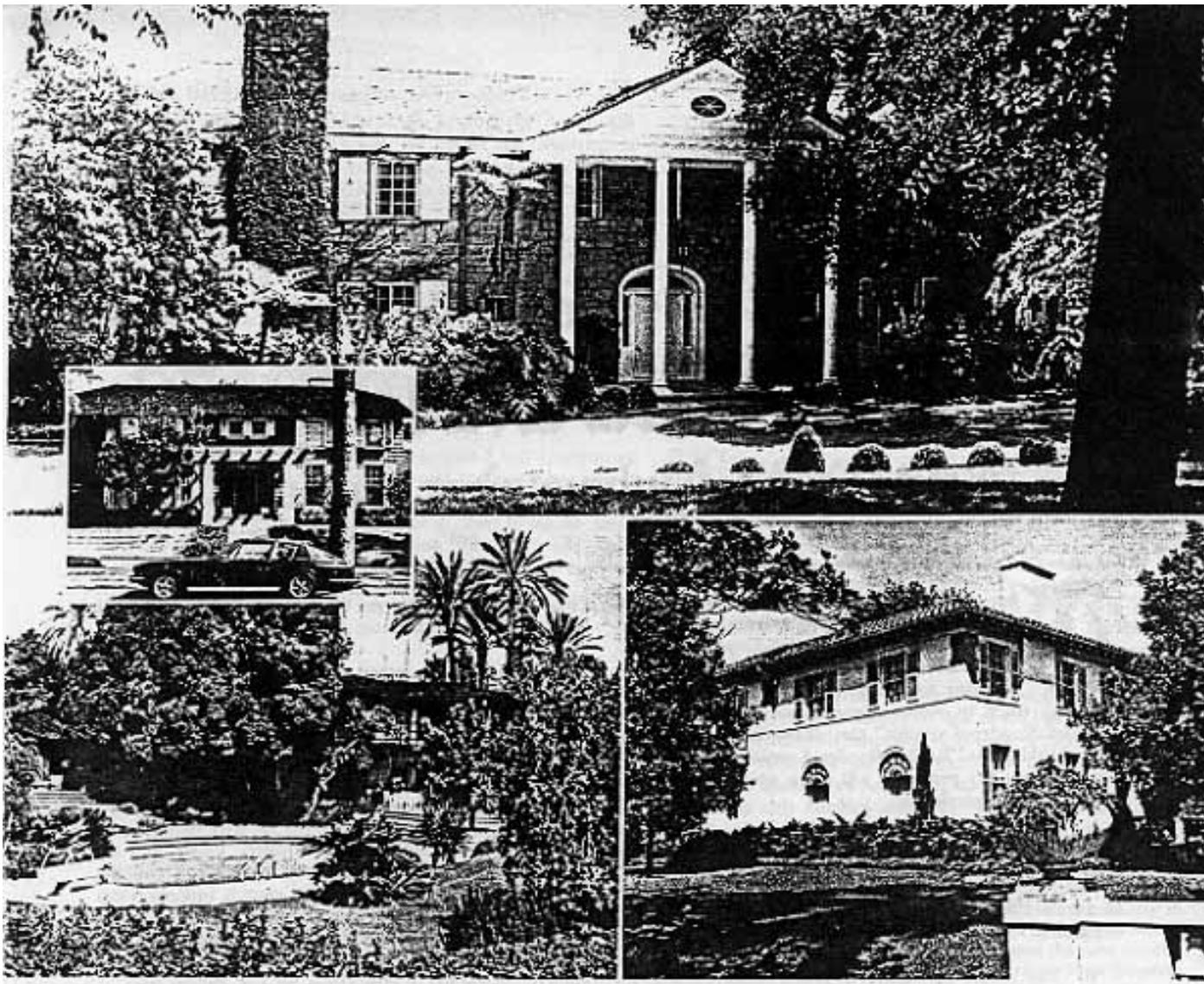
[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT



Top: **STANLEY R. RADER RESIDENCE** (general counsel and vice-president for financial affairs), 840 Loma Vista, Beverly Hills, CA.

Inset: **ROBERT L. KUHN RESIDENCE** (assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong), 357 Waverly Drive, Pasadena, CA.

Lower left: **GARNER TED ARMSTRONG RESIDENCE**, 312 Waverly Drive, Pasadena, CA.

Lower right: **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG RESIDENCE**, 210 South Orange Grove, Pasadena, CA.

# TITHING PAYS OFF!

"Tithing pays off!" says Herbert Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Obviously, to those receiving tithes, it does, as the above photos show.

While the Armstrong's Plain Truth magazine publishes articles about the deterioration of world conditions, the nearness of Armageddon, and worldwide famine (complete with photos of starving Biafran children), the leaders of the WCG are enjoying the sumptuous life-style of indulgent potentates while many of their supporters are on the borderline of poverty. As Herbert Armstrong has often said to friends, "Do you know of any king who lives like this?"

See our article "Fleecing the Flock" for details of the Armstrong money-making techniques.

Top: **STANLEY R. RADER RESIDENCE** (general counsel and vice-president for financial affairs), 840 Loma Vista, Beverly Hills, CA.

Stan and his wife Natalie reside at this little bungalow, one block north-of Sunset Boulevard. The estate is on 2.49 acres of prime, astronomically priced Beverly Hills property. As one would expect, it has all the amenities any other Beverly Hills Taj Mahal might have-tennis courts, statue-studded Roman swimming pool, saunas, projection rooms, guest house, etc. The Worldwide Church of God owned the estate for several years and kept it well-furnished, decorated, and maintained for the Raders, who occupied it on a life trust-estate basis with property in the church's name. But on January 10, 1972, it was signed over to Stan and Natalie as a joint tenancy with right of survivorship.

Should anyone be interested in a more detailed look at the property, contact the Mike Silverman Realty Agency in Beverly Hills. An appointment could be arranged to view the estate since Rader has listed the house for sale at \$2,000,000. (Bets are now being taken on whether Stan will tithe on the net or the gross amount of profit he stands to make.)

Inset: **ROBERT L. KUHN RESIDENCE** (assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong), 357 Waverly Drive, Pasadena, CA.

With his Jensen-Interceptor parked out front, Robert lives in the home formerly occupied by Roderick Meredith, past director of the entire WCG ministry. Although the exterior appears plain, it is anything but that inside. Situated on 0.8 acres, it has 7,000 square feet in floor area. Most interesting is the report that Robert bought the home just a few years ago, with some help from his millionaire father, for approximately \$90,000 cash. This occurred during a cash flow problem in the church and was heralded by the Armstrongs as a generous offer (generous to whom?). In November 1968 a \$70,000 remodeling job was done on the home, and this year his tax assessment is on the low side, \$197,600. One Pasadena real estate broker estimates the current market value at \$325,000. One might say that Robert got himself a bargain-compliments of the tithe-paying church brethren.

Lower left: **GARNER TED ARMSTRONG RESIDENCE**, 312 Waverly Drive, Pasadena, CA.

Situated on 1.3 acres of luxuriantly landscaped property, Ted's sprawling two-story contemporary home appears nearly hidden by the lush foliage of this little Garden of Eden. The tax assessors lumped this lot with Ron Dart's (current head of the church's ministry) home when assigning the assessed value since Ambassador College is legal owner of both. Total assessment was \$560,000 for both lots. Taking the percentage that Ted occupies, one can approximate his home's tax assessment at \$398,000. It must be remembered these figures are not market values, which generally are significantly higher. Also, the market value would reflect heavily the liberal use of imported woods and stone throughout the house.

Lower right: **HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG RESIDENCE**, 210 South Orange Grove, Pasadena, CA.

Just one of HWA's five personal homes, this one is situated along Pasadena's "millionaire's row" on South Orange Grove Boulevard. A modest two-story mansion of approximately 7,200 square feet, it is lavishly appointed throughout. Just across the street, a similarly sized estate in a run-down, "fixer-upper" condition is listed for sale at \$425,000. So, it is anybody's guess what this immaculately maintained property would bring in today's market.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### THE PROFLIGATE SON

"Al, let's get one thing straight! I'm a no good, fornicating, adulterating son of a bitch!" These highly emotional words initiated a private conversation between Garner Ted Armstrong and me at 10:05 a.m. on Wednesday, May 16, 1973, in the seclusion of his television studio office. This was not the first or the only time Ted ever admitted that he was an adulterer. In spite of repeated public denials, Ted has privately admitted that he has been guilty of flagrant, continuous adultery and fornication for almost a quarter of a century-as a church member, an executive, and an evangelist!

I first learned of Ted's licentious activities in 1965. At that time it came to light that a Worldwide Church of God minister was committing adultery with two coeds who worked with him. Upon being discovered, he claimed that if Garner Ted could commit adultery and get away with it, then he could too. Herbert Armstrong didn't buy that excuse for one minute and promptly fired the minister, disfellowshipping and publicly marking him. Quickly, the whole sordid affair was swept under the rug, while Ted came out lily-white.

By this time I was becoming suspicious of Ted's activities. Upon further investigation, I found that Ted was supposedly involved with a girl who was "out to get him." Ted had simply weakened under pressure, I was assured, and finally succumbed to her aggressive advances. This time it was again easy for me to give him the benefit of the doubt, so I rationalized that he had slipped once, under great duress. Reasoning that he was in reality human, I tried to dismiss and forget the whole distasteful situation.

**Ted's Problem Surfaces Again.** In 1967, when the upset husband of one of Ted's victims informed me that his wife had had sexual relations with the handsome radio evangelist, I listened incredulously. I thought it had to be sour grapes or perhaps professional jealousy that motivated this allegation. But when the husband heatedly insisted that his complaint was true, I began looking further into the matter and finally went to Ted and talked to him personally. Ted openly and readily admitted to me that he had conducted an affair with this girl, but he exclaimed that the girl had repeatedly pursued him by showing off her shapely legs, flaunting her exciting body suggestively, and giving him the overt "come on" until in desperation and weakness he gave in. Ted expressed that he hoped his father (Herbert Armstrong) didn't have to be advised of this because this knowledge would "break his heart." (Little did I know then that his father had been aware of his son's adulterous affairs

since the early 1950s, but his father had chosen to ignore that side of Ted's character. In fact, Herbert often refers to Ted before church audiences and remarks, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.")



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Al Carrozzo became a baptized member of the Worldwide Church of God in 1956 and was soon ordained as a deacon. In 1961 he sold his profitable plumbing contracting business and came to Ambassador College in Pasadena. He was ordained to the ministry and was eventually elevated to the rank of pastor. Later he was appointed regional director over the western half of the WCG's U.S. ministry and churches. At the same time he was director of the counseling and guidance office in Pasadena, district superintendent of the headquarters district, and director of the housing office. He also served as an instructor at Ambassador College, teaching the epistles of Paul. On Nov. 13, 1973, after giving over \$60,000 to the WCG, he severed his relationship with Ambassador College and the WCG, declaring: "I cannot compromise with the Word of God!" Al Carrozzo will soon write a book on the Armstrong church. If you would like more information on this book or other related subjects, you may write to him at P.O. Box 129, Vacaville, CA 95688.*

Ted then elaborated to me in his defense that he felt he was specially "called" to preach his father's gospel. He declared that he must preach against adultery in others, even though he, himself, was personally guilty. "Put me behind bars, slip my food to me, keep me in solitary confinement," he said dramatically, "but put a microphone in front of me because I must preach this message to the whole world!" Once again I wrongly concluded that Ted had slipped under "emotional pressure." Sadly I walked away and tried to forget it.

Later it dawned on me that Ted is a sterling actor, a powerful persuader—one who can make you feel guilty for even approaching a delicate subject. One Worldwide Church evangelist summed it up succinctly: "Ted can charm the rattle off a snake." Unfortunately, he charms people too. Glib as an orator and possessing awesome mental dexterity, Ted can change black into white, turn silk into wool, and refine sin into baseless allegations and rumor.

It wasn't until a few years later that I learned of his continuous sexual exploits over more than 20 years, both on and off Ambassador College's Pasadena campus.

**The Plot Thickens.** Ted's problem surfaced again in mid-1971 when Al Portune Sr., then vice-president of financial affairs for the church and college, regretfully informed me of a serious problem in the "Work." He exclaimed that this problem "could destroy the Work!" This was the beginning of the unfolding of an almost unbelievable series of events. It is indeed a telling commentary that the Armstrongs were able to keep this problem hidden so long from the eyes of the public.

By July 1971 Herbert Armstrong could no longer contain Ted's promiscuity nor hide it from certain top administrators. It was then that Herbert decided to send Ted on a leave of absence. When Ted returned in about two months, Herbert was evidently not satisfied with Ted's repentance, so he once again exiled his son. Members of the church, however, were led to believe that Ted had been removed for health reasons. Notice how cleverly Herbert words the letter announcing Ted's dismissal:

"My son, Garner Ted, has been doing the jobs of five or six high-executive-caliber men. He does a half-hour radio broadcast daily-seven days a week, a half-hour telecast every week, besides meeting many speaking engagements... traveling over much of the world for important radio and television interviews... writing articles, doing an immense amount of study, research... and lately he has been taking about 95% of my executive duties as President of the colleges and the Church.

"He is forced to go at high tension-drive!-drive!-drive! Some three or four weeks ago, he said to one of our Deputy Chancellors that if he had the audacity, temerity, or nerve, he would ask me if he might take a leave of absence for a few weeks, for complete relaxation..." (member letter, Sept. 26, 1971, pp. 1-2).



"And you know the one thing Christ couldn't abide was a hypocrite" (GTA, sermon. November 6, 1976).

Herbert prepared the church members for Ted's imminent absence while distorting or overlooking the real reasons for Ted's exile. The letter continued (page 2):

"Plans had been made for him [Ted] to speak at every U.S. and Canada Feast site again this year. I decided it was just too much high pressure, and we cancelled out these engagements. I want him to take possibly a couple months of complete relaxation from such high-paced and strenuous activities...."

The reader should note that "pressure" was given as the cause for relieving Ted of his strenuous duties, when, in fact, the ministerial uproar over Ted's whoremongering and arrogant life-style was responsible.

Shortly after the letter had been mailed out, Ted convinced his father to allow him to speak at the Worldwide Church of God's (WCG) Feast of Tabernacles after all. Ted then proceeded to preach to the church members gathered at Big Sandy, Mt. Pocono, and Jekyll Island and then flew over to Squaw Valley where I was preaching.

**What the World Needs Now Is Love, Sweet Love.** I sat enraptured with thousands of other church members in the Squaw Valley arena as Ted preached a very persuasive sermon entitled "What the World Needs Now Is Love, Sweet Love." He was indeed preaching his "commissioned" gospel. Little did all of us realize that this powerful orator would spend the entirety of that very night with an Ambassador College stewardess in a Tahoe cabin loaned by a WCG member.

Garner Ted was "found out" and his father was notified. Herbert and a few fellow ministers immediately flew to Penticton-Ted's next stop-and there intercepted Ted, forbidding him to continue his festival preaching circuit. On October 9, 1971, Herbert relieved Ted of his executive duties and responsibilities at Ambassador College and in the Worldwide Church of God. In the hopes of covering up Ted's problem, Herbert again informed the gullible church membership in an October 14, 1971, letter that the young Armstrong was overworked and needed relaxation:

"A short time ago I sent a general letter to the Church membership explaining the serious need for Garner Ted Armstrong to be allowed a leave of absence by reason of ill health-not physical, but frayed nerves and excessive high tension which has built up over a period of years due to the heavy and crushing responsibilities of his office.

"After starting his leave of absence, he felt he would be up to making the circuit of the Festival sites. He felt the imperative duty to speak at these sites. I agreed. But after Squaw Valley, his fourth site, tensions had built up until his nerves were at razor-edge, and he could not continue."

Herbert's last statement is especially deceptive. Informed sources have pointed out that he knew perfectly well why he was forced to intercept Ted at Penticton. His purpose was to prevent Ted's continuing his circuit of preaching at the Feast sites. Yet he writes that Ted's "nerves were at razor-edge, and he could not continue." This was a deliberate lie!

**Ted and the Masseuse.** Shortly thereafter Ted was sent to Hawaii with his wife and two close friends. The male friend was instructed to watch Ted every single second. He did pretty much, only losing the defrocked profligate son for a couple of hours. That was all Ted needed to become "involved" again. While Ted was still in Hawaii, the Ambassador College mail receiving department in Pasadena received a letter from a woman who managed a massage parlor in Hawaii. The letter explained that there was a young masseuse in her employ who had been trying to come out of a life of sin because of watching Garner Ted on TV. This madam related that the young masseuse had been

horrified into nightmarish disillusionment when she recognized Ted in the massage parlor. Now, the madam wrote, the masseuse was extremely distraught from witnessing the suave religionist there, especially upon learning of his whole purpose for being there.

I heard about this incriminating letter from Rod Meredith, a WCG evangelist, and tried to gain access to a copy, but evidently Herbert had it intercepted and continued the cover-up. Pressure began to mount, however, and Herbert was finally forced to send Ted into indefinite exile in Colorado. In another two months or so, Ted was again brought back. But once again, Ted's adulterous affairs were discovered, and again Herbert Armstrong was forced to take action.

**The Confrontation.** On January 30, 1972, he and a few select men went over to Ted's home. Around 10:30 p.m., Garner Ted came home from a Los Angeles Laker basketball game and was stunned to find his father, most of the headquarters leadership, and Stan Rader waiting in his living room. Upon learning the purpose of their visit, he flew into a reactionary rage during which he openly admitted he had had illicit sexual relations with some 200 women-and that was his "conservative estimate"-during his two decades of association with his father's church. Among his consorts were literally dozens of youthful, wide-eyed coeds, plus several who became executive or ministerial wives. On this occasion Ted was given an official letter of disfellowship.

Upon disclosure of the shocking magnitude of Ted's adulterous activities, top personnel at Ambassador College rushed home to interrogate their spouses. Many a disillusionment yet lingers with them to this day.

This drastic action by Herbert Armstrong came after Ted had been forgiven on several occasions. But it seemed that every time Ted repented, he repeated his immoral activities until they were again uncovered. Actually this repent-repeat-reprimand cycle had been going on for years.

During the January 30, 1972, confrontation with his father and the leading ministers, Ted also confessed to having an intimate sexual relationship with an Ambassador College stewardess. His relationship with her allegedly began in the summer of 1970. In a private conversation I had with Ted on May 16, 1973, Ted admitted to me that his affair with this girl had begun in Jerusalem, but he denied that it was merely a "look, lust, and grab" affair. (He did admit he had had numerous affairs that were of the "look, lust, and grab" variety.) He asserted that with this girl it was different. He stated that she became very special because he was experiencing emotional "lows" during this time. One day, he explained, when he stood sobbing at the memorial to the 6 million victims of Nazi persecution, she put her hand on his shoulder to "comfort" him. And that was the start of their relationship. Their clandestine, adulterous affair continued until the problem was brought to the attention of Herbert Armstrong in the summer of 1971. Instead of removing Ted from the ministry for good-as he had done with other ministers guilty of adultery-he precipitated a vast cover-up, much like former President Nixon attempted. There is one major difference though: Herbert had been covering up Ted's sexual looseness since the early 1950s.

It was in the early 1950s that Garner Ted earned his reputation as a lady's man while in the U.S. Navy based in San Diego. He confided his conquests to several others in the WCG ministry, including myself. On the Ambassador College campus, Ted, no doubt, found a change of pace from his previous duties, but as for his character makeup, only the uniform seemed to change.

I was stunned to learn the gross extensiveness of Ted's sexual looseness, but, as a result

of the events on January 30, 1972, when Herbert Armstrong disfellowshipped his son, I honestly felt Herbert was "dealing with the problem." Rather than being discouraged, I was somehow reassured that Herbert hadn't spared even his own son, but had dealt strongly with adultery within the ministry of Jesus Christ.

**Ted in Exile.** During Ted's exile at the Colorado A-frame, Dave Antion, a WCG evangelist, was commissioned by Herbert Armstrong to write a paper about the qualifications for Christ's ministry. Antion's thoroughly researched paper left no doubt that, in accordance with numerous biblical injunctions, Garner Ted Armstrong had irrefutably and permanently disqualified himself from ever again assuming the position of minister of Jesus Christ.

At the time, the leading ministers and I all thought Herbert really wanted to know about Ted's qualifications, but later we found out he was trying to learn all the main arguments against his son's return so he could persuasively refute them. Herbert forwarded Antion's paper to Ted, who promptly dismissed it, claiming the biblical arguments didn't apply to him because he had been "called to preach the gospel from his mother's womb." This defense, then, turned out to be Herbert's argument in favor of Ted's return to full status and authority, in spite of Herbert's earlier pronouncement that Ted, even if returned, would not occupy ministerial office.

**Garner Ted Reinstated.** In late May 1972, Herbert met with his son privately for 7 hours, and on June 7, Herbert Armstrong, Al Portune Sr., Dave Antion, Ron Dart, and Stan Rader flew to Ted's Colorado retreat to see if Ted seemed to be repentant enough to be allowed to resume his duties. Ted put on a convincing emotional display of typical Ted Armstrong repentance. Besides, most of those present were convinced that Garner Ted had to return. Too much time had already elapsed, causing the organization's income to plummet by the millions. Ted's hands had been dutifully slapped, and ministerial outrage had begun to show signs of assuaging.

So on June 8, Herbert's "womb-sanctified" son was reinstated in the WCG, restored to an elevated position (in spite of an earlier promise from Herbert Armstrong that this would never happen). Once again, Ted was allowed to make radio and television broadcasts purporting to be a minister of Jesus Christ. Just 42 days later, on July 20, 1972, Ted was totally reinstated to his full evangelist rank in the ministry, he was placed back on both college and church boards, and he was named executive vice-president of the Worldwide Church of God. This was done in spite of ministerial disapproval among a few high-ranking holdouts and without any public announcement at all.

Herbert's quick reinstatement of Ted after 20 years of adultery was in marked contrast to his handling of a former WCG minister in 1968. This man's sin? He committed a single act of adultery! For this sin he was fired from his job, removed from the ministry, disfellowshipped from the WCG, and his sin of adultery was detailed in a special assembly for all employees and students at Ambassador College.

**Year of Revelation.** During this time I maintained a wait-and-see attitude. It was difficult to make myself believe that the two men I respected most—Garner Ted and Herbert Armstrong—were total frauds! It was even more difficult for me to believe that Herbert was less than 100% sincere and honest. However, on May 22, 1973, at 1 p.m., Ted left me with no doubts as to his father's real motivation, intentions, and modus operandi. In a private, three-hour meeting in his office, Ted told me he specifically disagreed with his father on many issues, including doctrine. He explained that his dad desperately wanted to be accepted by the world, and that was the reason he was traveling around the world continuously, seeking the favor and audience of world leaders.

Ted admitted that he had seen his father "stone drunk" on dozens of occasions. He stated that his father had told him that he (Herbert) would do anything to keep the "Work" afloat-including lying, stealing, and bribery. I was shocked, of course, but later I personally saw Herbert "stoned" on several occasions and caught him in numerous lies. I began to see those lies in his member and co-worker letters, and these lies have continued to this very day.

The year 1973 was one of revelation for me. I learned of Ted's profound and long-enduring sexual activities, Herbert's total cover-up, corruption at the highest level in the WCG, Herbert's pleasure blasts around the world under the guise of preaching the true gospel, squandering of vast sums of money on extravagant art treasures, exploitation of gullible and hard-pressed people, gross doctrinal error, and suppression of human beings-mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Yes 1973 proved to me that dishonesty was a way of life with Ted and his father, and that way of life hasn't changed to this very day.

**Garner Ted's "Repentance."** Has Garner Ted changed? Did he really repent? One thing is sure: Ted "repented" many, many times. He has been called "the professional repenter." He can cry on cue.

Upon returning in mid-1972, Ted was supposed to state publicly that he had sinned against God and his wife. He promised to make it plain just what his sin involved. He had agreed at the meeting with his father and several ministers in the little A-frame in Colorado on June 7, 1972, that he would return and "come clean." It just never happened. On June 14, 1972, I wrote in my diary: "GTA returned to Pasadena, today, for the first time since January 31. NO immediate signs of repentance." On June 26, I wrote that I had just talked to Robert Kuhn on the phone and that he had stated that an evangelist's wife told him one of Ted's assistants was "fronting" for Ted at Brookside Winery. "She knows because Ted came out of a back room with a girl on his arm."

Since then, Ted has been seen in Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, and Reno gambling and drinking. He continues his playboy life-style on his frequent plane trips. His sarcastic harangues and doctrinal duplicity are invariably followed up with administrative tyranny. The crush-all-rumor approach, merciless terminations, and condemning diatribes have become administrative trademarks of Garner Ted Armstrong. His emotional overreactions, impetuous responses, and "shoot from the hip" modus operandi are all blunt testimonials of his continued lack of any real repentance.

When I resigned from the Worldwide Church of God ministry in 1973, it was my sincere desire-and it still is-that Garner Ted Armstrong would repent. When questioned by the press then, I even refused to divulge the full extent of Ted's immorality in hopes that he would repent. I now know, however, that unless these sins are exposed thousands will continue to put their trust, not in God, but in Herbert Armstrong and his profligate son.

*-Al Carrozzo*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **Ambassador College's Participation In Jerusalem Dig Ends**

Israeli archaeologists announced on Dec. 8, 1976, that they had completed their excavation at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount (*Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 9, 1976, part I, p. 16). The excavation was begun in Feb. 1968 by Hebrew University and the Israel Exploration Society, under the direction of Dr. Benyamin Mazar.

Ambassador College joined the dig in Dec. 1968, primarily due to the efforts of Drs. Ernest Martin and Herman Hoeh. Herbert W. Armstrong, in his typically modest fashion, proclaimed the dig "the most important archaeological excavation of our time" (co-worker letter, Dec. 10, 1968, p. 2) and committed over \$100,000 per year to it.

Later in a Dec. 10, 1968, letter, HWA boasted that the excavation was "one of the most important scientific projects under way anywhere on earth today." He stated that "it will mean great prestige and recognition of Ambassador College." On page 3, HWA explained a new aspect of his commission:

... I did not realize until recently we were also commissioned to... clean up the filth and rubble in that area that was the original Jerusalem and City of David.... Why is that important? Because Christ has said he will yet choose Jerusalem.... His throne will be there.... Jesus is to sit on David's throne! Where was David's throne? It was on this very spot where we are now cleaning up and hauling off the rubble of century after century of accumulation! ...So there is a physical preparing, as well as [a] spiritual, in preparing the way for Messiah's coming! Further. God says we are to shout, with amplified power, to the cities of Judah the glad Message that the Messiah is soon coming. This [participation in the excavation] is leading to the opportunity to do this (Isaiah 40:1-11)" (HWA's emphasis removed throughout).

Now that the excavations adjacent to the south and west sides of the Temple

Mount have been terminated, it is obvious that the excavation didn't accomplish what HWA claimed was one of its paramount objectives: cleaning the rubble off the site of David's throne. However, nowhere does the Bible say any such preposterous thing had to occur before Christ could return, though it does refer to a great earthquake striking the city before his return. The excavation was not located at the site of David's throne anyway, as Dr. Martin and Professor Mazar repeatedly told HWA. The site of David's throne is 200 yards south of the dig area.

Also, HWA had hoped his financing of the excavation coupled with his political contacts in Israel would buy him favor with the Israeli government who could grant him air time over Radio Jerusalem to preach his gospel to the Jews. But this dream never materialized either.

Thus after 8 years and over \$1,500,000 spent on the excavation and the Ambassador College students who took part in it, another of HWA's grandiose projects has failed to yield the stupendous results he predicted.

[Back to Index](#)

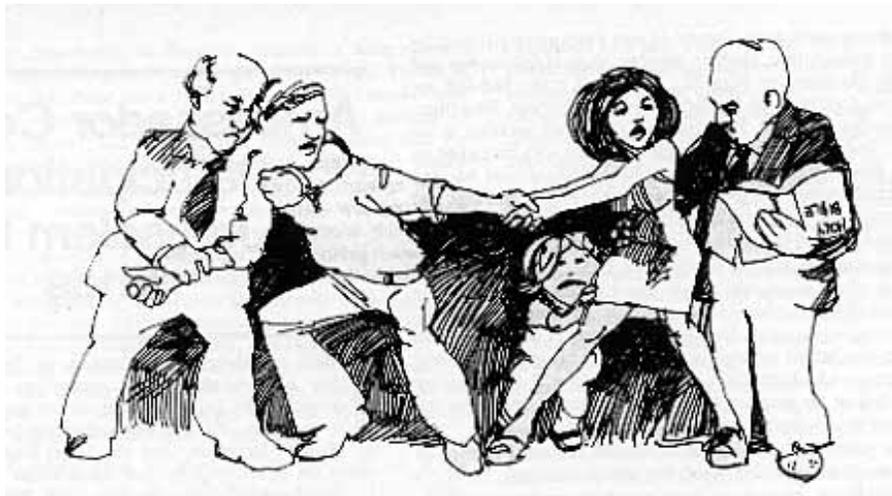
[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT



### Home-breaking - Armstrong Style

Dean and Laurie (not their real names) were a happily married couple the day they began listening to the "World Tomorrow" broadcast. Through repeatedly hearing the Armstrong message and then reading the Armstrong follow-up literature, they became convinced that the Armstrongs were honest and preaching "the truth." After deciding to become members of the Armstrong church, they wrote and asked to be baptized by the Armstrong ministry. They found, however, that before they could be granted church membership, they had to answer some very personal questions regarding their marital relationship.

**Grueling Grilling.** The interrogation they received from the ministerial counseling team got as direct as any police inquiry. With Dean at her side, Laurie had to unravel the facts surrounding her teenage "love life," courtship, and ultimate marriage to another man whom she had been married to for a short time before she met and married Dean. Though it was an extremely difficult, unbelievably embarrassing experience for her to recall her past, the ministers pursued into the delicate, the tender, the private-all in the name of God! The episode was as difficult for Dean to hear as it was for Laurie to relate.

Pointed ministerial questioning took up the entire evening. Obviously, Dean and Laurie were on the defensive, parrying darts of interrogation to which they were totally unaccustomed. Laurie had to go back and recall the sexual activities of her young life, revealing, in elaborate detail, delicate intimacies with other men. All of the better-forgotten past was dredged up for notes, comment, and ministerial judgment. The whole affair was prefaced by the ministerial warning not to shade the truth.

Over and over the whole story had to be repeated for clarity's sake, for proper emphasis, and to assure the certainty of the most important points. The couple was told that if they were thorough enough and accurate enough this ordeal would not have to be repeated. After all this the ministers conducted a complete and final summation, which, supposedly, put the whole matter in proper perspective.

Finally, it ended. The ministers counseled briefly with one another, nodded agreement, and gave their

determination: "Laurie is 'bound' to her first husband." The decision was almost impossible to take. But, they were assured, God's judgment would prevail in the hearts of the converted. So before Dean and Laurie could be baptized into what they considered to be God's true church, they had to separate. They were told they were "living in sin" and that their only child was the product of an "adulterous union." It was decided that Laurie was to keep possession of their little boy and Dean was to move away. To refuse would have meant disallowance of baptism, church attendance, and fellowship. No greater decision had ever entered their lives.

Under the prevailing pressure and the implications of spiritual intimidation (the Great Tribulation, Gehenna fire, lost salvation, etc.), Dean and Laurie decided to separate and divorce, since Dean would be allowed to remarry. Armstrong doctrine considered that Dean had never yet been "legally" married. The one stipulation: Dean had to remarry within the Worldwide Church of God. Laurie was to remain unmarried for the remainder of her life, or as long as her first husband (unseen for years) remained alive. Strangely, it would have been perfectly right and proper, according to WCG teaching at that time, for Laurie to attempt to break up her first husband's current marriage and remarry him-in spite of their feelings for one another and in spite of the children involved. But to marry another would be sin, and to remain with Dean would likewise be sin.

Dean never remarried but remained single for five long years in abject agony, longing to be with his loving wife and child. The disillusionment and depression was awesome. Laurie was in constant misery, at times hoping that her first husband would meet with a fatal accident which would free her to reunite with Dean. The trauma continued until one day, five years later, a minister of the Worldwide Church of God discovered that a "slight" error in judgment had been made in their case and that they were "bound" to each other after all. The Worldwide Church of God offered no apology for its meddling interference, no regret for inflicted heartache and time lost, and no compassionate empathy over the error which forced them to live apart, in mental and emotional agony.

Nothing but their love for each other had preserved them until the Armstrongs' church government got around to quite matter of factly "correcting" the organizational mistake. Though together again, their relationship was damaged. Their marital lives were besmirched and sullied by the false teachings of a man-Herbert Armstrong-who loudly claims divine inspiration as "God's lone apostle today."

**Case History Number Two: John and Joan.** I shall never forget the case of John and Joan (not their real names). It was considered a borderline case and the local minister was unable to make a decision. As the district superintendent of the area I was called in to finalize a decision. After much deliberation and the arduous grilling of each individual, I had to decide that based on the doctrinal pronouncements of Herbert W. Armstrong, John was "bound" to a previous mate and that the present relationship was organizationally untenable.

John and Joan were a very attractive young couple with two lovely children. More than anything else, they wanted to become members of "God's true church." They were convinced that the Worldwide Church of God was that true church, so when I told them that, according to the church's teaching, they would have to separate, they limply acquiesced, but in deep sorrow. The agony of that moment haunts me to this very day. I can still visualize the young, vulnerable couple sobbing in each other's arms as their two children looked on in bewilderment and then joined their mommy and daddy in a prolonged crying session that seemed like it would last forever.

They decided to separate in order to join the church. Their lives were ruined, the family was shattered, the children were disoriented, and a loving foursome ended up in shambles. I imagine the damage is still running its course for all four of them. The Armstrong empire, however, keeps right on going, amassing its power and wealth without a worry or personal concern whatsoever for the lives of those it has injured down through the years.

**Case History Number Three.** I recall a case where a young man had been in the Armed Services during World War II and learned that he was about to be sent overseas. Fearing that he might not return, he hastily married the first girl that came along. They lived together all of three days before he left the country. During his three-year duty overseas, his young wife decided not to wait around and began dating others. The young serviceman ultimately received the traditional "Dear John" letter, and that was the last he ever heard from her.

Years later, when he decided to join the WCG, Herbert Armstrong's "theology" ruled that his first marriage was a "binding" one, and the now middle-aged man became obligated to live out the remainder of his life alone.

**Case History Number Four: Buck Taylor.** It was in the late 1960s that the now deceased Buck Taylor began to attend church, fully convinced that the Worldwide Church of God was the divine instrument of God on earth. He and his wife had both been married previously, and they now had three young children. Again, because of the Armstrongs' organizational structure for handling divorce and remarriage cases, I followed through on my official responsibilities. We put the couple through the "grueling-grilling" drama in the style dictated by the Church Administration Department. Both Buck and his wife had to unravel their past sex lives, going back many years, to the complete satisfaction of our question sheets. Things that each party had never known about the other were brought out in explicit detail. Discontent soon reigned, and the rapport they had once had was successfully broken.

They were told to separate in order to obey God, which they did, in the midst of the greatest emotional trauma of their lives. Buck went on to gain church membership, living alone.

Many years later, in early 1973, after he had thoroughly studied the subject of divorce from the Bible's perspective, Buck rewrote his own case history with new understanding. He hoped to get an impartial review before the ministry, claiming that he had definitely defrauded his first wife, according to Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. He felt these scriptures proved his first marriage could never have been a "binding" one in the eyes of God, though the WCG had ruled otherwise. With great confidence he pursued his investigation, but the ministry-showing no concern for his suffering-was disinterested in resurrecting the matter. Finally, he was forced to write a personal letter to Herbert W. Armstrong, appealing for an "audience" and hearing in the light of his new understanding. When summoned into the "awesome" presence of his church leader, he naively felt privileged and believed it was for an objective review of his case history.

It wasn't so, nor was it ever intended as such. In typical "kangaroo-court" style, Armstrong began his accustomed tirade against Buck's prebaptism sins, the need to "keep Israel's camp clean," and Korah-like rebellion against God's constituted church authority. The "dressing down" didn't take long, but it was effective. Not only was his case history completely ignored and disparaged, but without even understanding why, Buck Taylor was mercilessly "disfellowshipped" and banished from the Worldwide Church of God.

That very evening, Friday, April 13, 1973, Herbert W. Armstrong formally and arrogantly "marked" Buck Taylor from the pulpit before the Pasadena congregation, publicly revealing the sins committed by Buck long before his baptism. Buck was never the same. Totally disillusioned, depressed, discouraged, and despairing, he was broken as he had never been before.

Buck later became so disturbed over this vicious breach of privacy and trust that he filed an \$11 million suit against Herbert Armstrong and the WCG. But before a decision was reached in the case Buck died from a heart attack brought on by the stress of the whole affair.

These four cases are by no means isolated instances. At Herbert Armstrong's Pasadena headquarters descriptive records of each and every visit and counseling are filed. There are thousands of such case histories on file. Pages and pages of information covering multitudinous questions had to be written up and sometimes taped to satisfy the Armstrongs' hierarchical line of divorce and remarriage judges. Since many eyes were to see the private disclosures of the intimate relations of various divorced individuals and their mates, they had to be formal, clear, perfectly typed, and have plenty of descriptive elaboration. There had to be many copies, meticulously exact and with enough amplification that a stranger 3,000 miles away, reading it for the first time, would be able to arrive at an Armstrong-like decision. Once typed, copies were sent to "headquarters," the area district superintendent, and various others.

Unquestionably, divorce and remarriage investigations and writeups were the most grueling, enervating task for the Armstrong ministry-the most time-consuming, wearying, and embarrassing. Many months, if not years, were needed for some decisions. One such report consumed fourteen typewritten, single-spaced pages, as taken from a battery of cassette tapes. And that particular writeup had to do with only one prior marriage. Multiple marriage cases usually required several separate sessions, each lasting several hours.

As an executive working directly in the Church Administration Department, I gained from the records an intimate overview of the complexity, agony, and intimidation extant throughout the Armstrong empire. In fact, in the Pasadena church district alone we ministers were personally working with no less than 300 victims of Herbert Armstrong's divorce doctrine.

But what was the cause of all this suffering?

**The Original Teaching.** The Worldwide Church's original doctrine on divorce was found in Herbert Armstrong's booklet *Divorce and Remarriage*. In the booklet and in sermons Herbert Armstrong proclaimed that once a marriage had been "bound" it could never be "unbound." For the Worldwide Church of God there was no such thing as divorce, either approved or allowed in the Bible. "You can look from one end of the Bible to the other," he would rave, "and you won't find any such thing as divorce." According to him there were simply no circumstances in which two people might divorce and eventually wind up matrimonially yoked to somebody else. There was, however, one small "loophole" in the doctrine. That loophole was centered around a statement Jesus made concerning "fornication" (*porneia* in the original Greek). In Matthew 19:9 and 5:32, Jesus said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for *fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (KJV).

To Armstrong this statement showed that premarital sex was the *only* reason for two mates to "divorce." And this "divorce" was considered to be an annulment, even if the parties had been married for 60 years. Armstrong said

the English word "fornication" had to refer to a sexual act committed prior to marriage. His explanation was that if an unmarried person had had sex relations *prior* to the wedding ceremony, he or she was obligated before God to explain the circumstances to the prospective mate. If such explanation was not forthcoming and it could be determined that the "injured" mate would have rejected the marriage in the first place, then the marriage was not considered "bound," but rather was considered to have been a fraud. The couple was said to have been living in an unyoked, unblesed, unapproved state for all their marital years. To Armstrong, God had never been in the marriage, the wedding ceremony had been a sham, and their marital lives had been fraudulent.

If one mate learned of premarital sex by the other mate *after* marriage, then the injured mate was obligated either to "put away" the other mate immediately or else to forgive him and remain with him. If a rejecting decision was not immediately forthcoming, Armstrong contended, then the marriage became binding in God's eyes. There could then be no disunion (outside of death), regardless of any subsequent circumstances.

**First Doctrinal Committee.** As a result of unrest in the church, a doctrinal committee was formed in early 1972, of which I was a member. I began to question this "sacred cow" doctrine. We began discussing the Greek word *porneia* which had been translated as "fornication" in the King James version. We learned through reputable scholars that *porneia* actually meant "sexual immorality" or "unchastity" and was translated as such in many New Testament versions of the Bible. *Porneia* included fornication, adultery, whoremongering, homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality, perversion, and the like. It could in no way be restricted to Armstrong's lone definition of premarital sex.

This was a revolutionary discovery. It meant that divorce and remarriage was acceptable if one of the two mates had been previously guilty of, or was presently practicing, any one of the many forms of sexual immorality while married—not just "premarital sex" as Herbert claimed. Many of us were overjoyed at this revelation because this meant the church now could allow many couples that the church had previously split up to live together after all as husband and wife.

As the doctrinal committee began to unveil its findings and other new insights into established biblical truths, some Pasadena loyalists stealthily reported our discoveries to Herbert Armstrong, who, upon learning what was happening, summarily disbanded the committee. From the pulpit he shouted that he would research the entire divorce and remarriage doctrine and write a new, more up-to-date booklet, summarizing his inspired conclusions. From the erstwhile doctrinal committee he selected a few members who had unflinchingly supported his time-honored viewpoint to help research the issue.

The summer of 1973 evidenced many sermons built around his studies and the amassing of his manuscript. Vehement denunciations against "modernism," "liberalism," and "licentiousness" provided appropriate flak to dispel the hapless and disinterested church member from doing any personal research. Grave and fiery warnings went out against any Worldwide Church minister who would arrogantly quest after "new truth" that God could only dispense from the "top down." Headquarters evangelists dutifully warned against lay-member and ministerial arrogation of doctrinal duties and responsibilities beyond their range of knowledge. The strongarm word was: "lay off."

Herbert Armstrong personally warned all of his ministers at each of the Feast of Tabernacles sites (fall 1973) that they were not to delve into, study, research or discuss church doctrine among themselves. Questions were being engendered, and questions, he said, were of the Devil. Elders were to perform their headquarters-oriented duties and disseminate only what had been taught them at Ambassador College. At the Feast of Trumpets' services in Pasadena, Garner Ted Armstrong told ministers not to discuss or entertain doctrinal questions. "Any minister who dares to bring up such doctrinal issues," he bellowed wildly, "will be defrocked before the week is out." Later, in Pasadena, Herbert Armstrong announced that the "committee" was unanimous in its conclusions—there being only one person with "very minor objections." With his past interpretation forcibly sustained, divorce and remarriage became a closed issue, and anyone who disagreed with him was said to have disagreed with God and should "get out." Such was the openness, the Christian attitude, the spirit of joy, and the atmosphere of love around Ambassador College during the last half of 1973.

**New Booklet.** In October, the completed divorce and remarriage manuscript was secretly sent to press, avoiding all normal editing channels. By early November the new booklet, *Marriage and Divorce*, was finally released. In it Herbert Armstrong took a doctrinal position with which no recognized Bible scholar in the world today agrees. The real essence of this booklet's argument can be found on page 35:

"The Church of God for 40 years has said it [*porneia*] refers to an illicit sex act committed PRIOR to being bound in marriage...."

What authority other than "the church" did Herbert quote to substantiate or prove his personal concept of marital fraud? Absolutely none. He simply stated with self-proclaimed authority, "The Church has maintained that, the husband having been unaware of it [illicit sex by his mate] until after the marriage ceremony...a fraud was committed. And God, knowing of this fraud DID NOT BIND them" (p. 35).

In Herbert's mind he had been right all along, and his old foundational divorce and remarriage booklet was vindicated. He bellowed from the pulpit, "God would not allow his apostle to be wrong on such an important issue for over forty years." Here finally was the inspired truth God had revealed and this, Herbert W. Armstrong promised, would never be altered. And he admonished with growling gravity, "If any of you don't like it, or won't accept it, you can get out!"

On November 13, 1973, I resigned from my church position as a direct result of this booklet. In a private conversation with Garner Ted Armstrong and Robert Kuhn on November 27, 1973, I made it abundantly clear how I felt about the New Testament concept versus Herbert Armstrong's concept of divorce and remarriage. Ted said that he had known for over ten years that his father's teaching on the subject was wrong. He had even approached his father about his own marriage (at one time he had believed he was not bound to his wife), but his father's strong arm prevailed.

For over ten years Ted had continued to preach and teach his father's errant view on divorce, despite the fact that he knew it was in error and had already destroyed hundreds of church families. In all probability Ted would still be teaching it today had his father not been coerced into making drastic changes in the doctrine.

**History Making 1974.** In early 1974 pressure began to mount regarding many doctrines of the church. Divorce and remarriage was at the top of the list. Over 40 ministers and thousands of members left during the first three months. It became alarmingly apparent to the Pasadena leadership that unless something dramatic was done several thousand more members and ministers would leave the church and income would begin to drop dramatically.

Yielding to pleas from several top executives, Herbert Armstrong quietly and surreptitiously discontinued publishing the much touted and publicized booklet (*Marriage and Divorce*). All remaining copies were recalled at headquarters, and the work which purported to represent God's final authority and official church doctrine on divorce was no more. The booklet that was conceived of, nurtured, and given birth to by Herbert was officially canned. At this point, however, the doctrine still remained unchanged.

Because of the uproar over several church doctrines including divorce and remarriage, Herbert Armstrong finally called a special worldwide conference in Pasadena in May 1974. Traditionally all ministerial conferences were held in January, but because there was such discontent in the ministry and membership, Herbert was prevailed upon to call this special May conference, which he opened by suddenly changing his life-long position on divorce and remarriage.

Only days before the conference opened Dr. Herman L. Hoeh had introduced to Herbert the "new pivotal understanding" that God does not "bind" all marriages. This was the "key" to the limited doctrinal change. Herbert, however, continued to stubbornly cling to his old definition of *porneia* for nearly two additional years.

There had been no new special committee formed to research the traumatic subject. Outside scholarship had not been invited, nor was it wanted. The Foundation for Biblical Research, a research group founded in 1973 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, former head of Ambassador College's department of theology, had already published a booklet entitled *Marriage and the Bible* months before, and both Armstrongs proudly claimed that neither had read its contents. Ironically Dr. Martin's booklet discusses the Worldwide Church's new "key" in the first five pages. Asking for no discussion on the matter, Armstrong simply sat in his special (papal?) chair inside his own lavish auditorium and announced the gargantuan change as though the damages of the past had been inflicted by someone else and he had been called in at the last minute to "straighten things out." It was as though his only responsibility had been to transmit "inspired" truth from God and that he had never had an active part in formulating any of the original doctrine. The WCG's merciless, erroneous policy on divorce and remarriage ended within one-half hour from the commencement of the conference.

Though decidedly in the dark for the most part, his ministry readily and dutifully accepted his revelatory pontification, perhaps because they knew that any such change would inevitably free thousands who had been living in, were living in, and would have to live in bondage under Armstrong's original doctrine.

Let me state emphatically from personal, firsthand experience of over 18 years in that organization that there would have been no change whatsoever on divorce and remarriage or any other doctrine of that church if there had not been profound and extensive pressure on the Armstrongs to alter it. Any considerable loss of ministers and members meant a loss of money, and it is money which makes their organization go round. It was their obsessive fear of mass defections and resultant lost tithes which brought about the doctrinal change in divorce and remarriage and nothing else!

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE COMMENTS

"I have never read Bob Sarrett's paper on divorce and remarriage. I refused to read it because I wanted to look my father in the eye and say, 'Dad, I never ever read his paper.' And I don't have great big agonizing questions on the subject [of divorce and remarriage] at all!"

Garner Ted Armstrong  
Ministerial Conference, 1/4/74

[Editor: Robert Sarrett, a WCG layman, wrote Herbert Armstrong a letter in 1974 mentioning a number of doctrinal points that he had written up and numerous others he would like to write up. In the nine-page letter he refers to a lengthy letter he wrote to the WCG's Letter Answering Dept. on May 7, 1967. This letter recommended several changes in the church's divorce and remarriage policy. Sarrett's comments are a telling commentary on the church's openmindedness toward doctrinal research.]

"...[My letter on divorce and remarriage] was done through official channels and in the right attitude. It was dated May 7, 1967.... What I said in that early letter, seven years ago, especially about I Cor. 7, was EXACTLY the same thing as was proclaimed from the pulpit by you and your son.... But the sad problem has been a horrible communications breakdown. I was constantly suspected of demonism, intellectual vanity, lying, or what have you by the ministry back in those days.... Mr. Armstrong, in reality, the honest and simple truth about D&R has been in the Body [of Christ] for at least seven years.... But because of the emotions involved, the refusal to grant recognition that someone could question Church doctrine and still be sincere and loyal, and the resultant breakdown in vertical communications, it has taken seven long years to get it solved.... As is so common with the things that I write, nobody ever responds to me personally and goes over with me the things presented, especially if they disagree.... If they had sat down with me... some of these problems might be years behind us."

Robert Sarrett  
Letter, 5/30/74

"Nobody is denying that there are people out here that are practically close to suicide because of divorce and remarriage situations."

Garner Ted Armstrong  
Ministerial Meeting, 3/7/74

"You know, I knew the truth about *porneia* over six years ago, and it was formally and finally approved last week by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. And I have never preached it or taught it or exacerbated it or tried to divide the Work over it in the history of all that time."

Garner Ted Armstrong  
Sermon in England, 1/17/76

As it is, Herbert Armstrong has never publicly admitted his personal error, apologized for the anguish he caused, made restitution to the injured parties, or offered compensation of any kind. It just isn't built into his life-style or character to do so. Herbert felt he shouldn't be blamed for teaching gross error on divorce and remarriage because God never brought the errors to his attention. Instead of apologizing for breaking up happy marriages, Herbert praised those who steadfastly followed his erroneous teachings and condemned those who dropped by the wayside to follow the truth. Obedience is the greatest virtue in the Worldwide Church of God-especially when the church teaches error, because it then becomes a "spiritual trial" that members are obligated to endure:

"Brethren, this very experience ought to teach all that loyalty to God and to His Church must always be placed first, over supposed or real wrongs or personal grievances.... I want all of you to know...how much I and all loyal ministers appreciate deeply from the heart the faithfulness of those of you who have endured this anguish in order to be obedient to our God" (Herbert Armstrong, member letter, May 14, 1974, page 11).

This is a typical example of the twisted, perverted, and destructive pontification of Herbert W. Armstrong. Instead of using his own name, he substitutes God's. He had been responsible for inflicting anguish, grief, and heartache upon thousands of trusting victims, and yet he had the unmitigated audacity to proclaim that they were right to follow him when he was wrong, even though the apostle Peter declared, "We ought to obey *God* rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Herbert feels that loyalty to him must be placed first over real wrongs. Even when his teachings are destructively in error he believes members must endure personal anguish in order to be obedient to him. To do otherwise is "rebellion," and in the Worldwide Church of God rebellion is the most cardinal sin of all.

**The "New, Improved" Doctrine.** The Worldwide Church of God membership was led to believe that the "new, improved" divorce and remarriage doctrine announced at the May 1974 conference was at last accurate and conclusive. Not so! The definition of *porneia* went totally undiscussed at the May conference because everyone knew that Herbert would not alter his view on its meaning. In fact, Herbert still felt he was right about *porneia* and that the scholars were completely wrong in their explanations of God's laws on divorce and remarriage:

"First, we all had to consider that we cannot accept any of the arguments so far advanced by others trying to use reason or to research in meanings of the Greek and the Hebrew language and all of the arguments which are merely human reasoning to try to prove something that is not in the Bible. I went through all of that, and I had to reject it because it was twisting of the word of God. Not

one thing that had come out could be accepted. A book was circulated here written by a minister who admitted he was trying to find a way to get around the thing of marriage and divorce, and he never could. But he reasoned his way out of it. Usually they put most of their argument on the Greek word *porneia*. Now I'm here to tell you the Greek word *porneia* as Jesus used it in Matthew 5 and 19 means 'fornication'-a sex act committed before marriage.... Any marriage bound by this church-God has bound it. It's bound for life, just like we've always said."

At this time Garner Ted outwardly appeared to agree with his father on the meaning of *porneia*. On the last day of the conference Ted answered written questions regarding the subject of divorce and remarriage in the auditorium. When he came to the question "What is the meaning of *porneia*?", he responded, not with the truth as he knew it, but with the cryptic remark "Look it up." Ted had known what *porneia* meant for years and, had he spoken up years before, he might have prevented untold suffering and anguish in the lives of thousands of innocent people. But unlike the ministers of the New Testament, he felt it was better to teach errors and lies and let thousands of marriages be broken up than to upset his father by recommending a change in the church's divorce and remarriage doctrine. In the 1976 ministerial conference, Ted openly prided himself over the fact that, when faced with the choice of teaching what he knew the Bible said about divorce and perpetuating false doctrine, he chose the latter.

"And I knew literally years before the decision was ever made what the real full meaning of the word *porneia* was! I had studied it on my own. No one heard me making any attacks against the church, against my father, or writing contrary material. What I wrote is still in my file in private."

It's amazing a person could actually be proud of having kept the truth about a Bible doctrine hidden for years- especially when knowledge of that truth could have prevented so much misery in people's lives. I suppose if one wishes to know exactly what Ted really believes about the Bible, that person should read the papers buried in his files- because after reading the statement by Ted quoted above, one can never be sure he really believes what he preaches.

It wasn't until January 1976 that Herbert conceded privately that he was wrong on the meaning of *porneia* and that the scholars had been right all along. Nevertheless he has made no official statement to the church correcting the false teaching he perpetuated at the May 1974 ministerial conference.

**Church Teaching Today.** To be as objective and fair as possible, I recently contacted a prominent Worldwide Church scholar to learn firsthand about the WCG's current teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage. After a three-hour interview, the scholar admitted that he honestly didn't know what the official teaching of the church was on divorce. He said there were many ideas, theories, and feelings afloat, but not enough unanimity to foster a concise booklet to replace Herbert Armstrong's 1973 absurdity. However, I was able to gain the following general conclusions while in Pasadena:

- (1) *Porneia* now means "sexual unchastity," and this is grounds for divorce and remarriage.
- (2) Desertion by a mate (I Cor. 7) is grounds for divorce and remarriage.
- (3) Departure of an unbelieving mate (I Cor. 7) is grounds for divorce and remarriage.
- (4) Fraud or premarital sex constitutes grounds for divorce and remarriage.

Ironically much of this is similar to Guy Duty's book, *Divorce and Remarriage: A Christian View*. This book was much criticized from the pulpit during the summer of 1973. As it turned out, Guy Duty really did have the Christian view, whereas Herbert Armstrong was forced to alter his "inspired position." Without so much as an apology or regret, the Worldwide Church of God's view on divorce and remarriage is now similar to that which Guy Duty arrived at decades ago. One wonders if Duty's book is still banned on the Ambassador College campus as it was in 1973.

**A New View.** Very recently Herbert W. Armstrong, age 85, remarried in Tucson, Arizona. His new wife, the former Mrs. Ramona Martin, is 38. She has been married previously and her former husband is still alive. Evidently Mr. Armstrong has forgotten his two noted works on the subject of divorce.

With Herbert and Ramona there was no ministerial interrogation, no delicately private revelations, no clerical intimidation, no reviewings of any divorce and remarriage booklet, no prohibitions against cohabitation, no threatenings about Korah's rebellion, no demands for separation, no visiting cards, and no divorce and remarriage writeup. These things were for the "other guy." And after all, times do change, don't they?

-Al Carrozzo

*Editor: Space did not permit the author to go into all of the theological arguments surrounding divorce and remarriage in this particular article. Those who are interested in these matters may write to Al Carrozzo, The 20th Century Church of God, Box 129, Vacaville, California 95688.*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### THE PROPHECY GAME

Everywhere we turn today it seems we are beset by self-proclaimed "prophets" trying to make a profit by predicting the future for us. We can read our daily horoscope in the local newspaper, consult a palm reader in our area, read what the ten leading psychics predict will befall Liz Taylor, or tune in to radio evangelists proclaiming what the Bible foretells for the future. Most of these prognosticators do well to have a prophetic batting average as high as .200. Looked at another way, these seers are wrong more than 80% of the time! It's no wonder these "prophets" fare so poorly, according to Roderick Meredith, for only *one* organization on earth today is being used by God and only that one fully understands prophecy:

"The popular, denominationally supported evangelists often make statements like this: 'I believe that God may use Russia to punish America for her sins.' Or, 'It now seems likely that World War III may come within five years.'... They use the words 'may,' 'could,' or 'might.'... The truth of the matter is that they dare not be specific about the future because they just do not know what the Bible says is going to happen! But on 'The World Tomorrow' broadcast and in this magazine we have dared to unlock the Bible prophecies and apply them to specific nations and events that are now being affected.

"There is no other church or work on the face of this earth that either understands or dares to proclaim these vital warnings!... This is the very Work of God!... You are now being warned!" (*The Plain Truth*, Roderick Meredith, Aug. 1957, p. 6.)

This is quite a claim and, in the interest of truth, bears further investigation. Is God speaking through Worldwide Church of God (WCG) ministers and its founder Herbert Armstrong? Do they understand Bible prophecy and what will occur in the future? The fairest way to find the answers to these questions is to examine some of their most significant predictions over the last 40 years. First, let's look at some of Herbert's earliest predictions (the excessive capitalization and italicization of words have been deleted in all quotes in this article to facilitate typesetting and readability):

"...the year 1936 will see the end of the Times of the Gentiles.... we may expect the present worldwide depression, time of trouble and fear of war to continue until the year 1936!... quickly

after that time, we may expect to see the heavenly signs of the sun and moon becoming dark, the stars falling.... which shall be followed by the 'Day of the Lord.'" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, June-July 1934, p. 5.)

"Mussolini and the pope will hatch up an idea between [them] of setting up a world headquarters at Jerusalem-and so Mussolini's armies will enter into Palestine (Daniel 11:41), and eventually will capture just half of the city of Jerusalem! (Zechariah 14:2)." (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, March 1938, p. 8.)

"Mussolini will fight Christ!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Jan. 1939, p. 4.)

"Once world war is resumed, it must continue on thru the great Tribulation, the heavenly signs, the plagues of the Day of the Lord, and to the Second Coming of Christ, at the last battle, at Armageddon!... But this you may know! This war will be ended by Christ's return! And war may start within six weeks! We are just that near Christ's coming!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Aug. 1939, p. 6.)

"The Italians will capture both Palestine and Egypt." (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Aug.-Sept. 1940.)

"God has decreed that Joseph-Great Britain and the United States-are to utterly consume and annihilate the Turks from off the earth!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Nov.-Dec. 1940, p. 7.)

"It is part of God's prophesied plan that Britain shall be invaded and conquered ...." (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Nov.-Dec. 1940.)

"Bible prophecy does indicate that Hitler must be the victor in his present Russian invasion!... Hitler will emerge from this Russian campaign stronger than ever, free to turn the entire might of his forces against Britain-and America!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Sept.-Oct. 1941, p. 7.)

"But Hitler (or his successor if there is one), and the False Prophet shall fight against Christ!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, March-April 1943, p. 6.)

So far, as is obvious, Herbert Armstrong struck out every time he came up to bat in the 1930s and early 1940s, but his prophetic batting average for the 30s and 40s was not quite zero as he correctly predicted that Germany would "rise again," as did other news analysts. But Herbert's failures in the first 19 years of his ministry didn't bother Herman Hoeh who, like Herbert, felt that God had changed his mind about sending Christ back to earth in the 1940s, thus giving Herbert's church more time to warn the world:

"Yes, it seems that God is allowing us another 19-year cycle to complete the carrying of his gospel of the kingdom to this sick and dying world.... There is a tremendous job to be done in the very short period that lies ahead of us." (*The Plain Truth*, Herman Hoeh, June 1953, p. 13.)

In the 1950s Roderick Meredith, Herman Hoeh, and Garner Ted Armstrong began to assist Herbert in proclaiming his prophetic witness to the world. Believing the Great Tribulation would start in 1972, instead of around 1936 as Herbert had previously prophesied, they busied themselves with the task of writing new and terrifying doomsday prophecies based on Herbert's somewhat shaky understanding of Bible prophecy:

"God Almighty has spoken through His servants the prophets that He will punish our people for their sins. He will let our own lust cause such droughts, floods, pestilences and famines that we will be totally consumed and carried away captive to other nations as slaves within twenty years." (*The Plain Truth*, Herman Hoeh, Oct. 1955, p. 16.)

"Plagues are coming-and, according to this prophetic warning, in about two years from now! Our cattle have already suffered from the drought. Soon we shall find that the hoof-and-mouth disease will spread out of control! Rabid foxes, squirrels, muskrats will attack our children. For seven long and frightful years, we are going to suffer as never before-until we be left 'few in number.'..."

"This seven years of national trouble takes us-if the dates which appear so definitely indicated by these prophecies are correct-from 1965 to 1972!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herman Hoeh, April 1956, p. 22.)

"Two years ago, Mr. Herman Hoeh showed in this magazine how God's word prophesied disease epidemics would strike the United States in two short years! Those epidemics are beginning now! And they will grow much worse! God prophesies that finally, within the next fifteen years, fully one third of our whole population will die of disease and famine!" (*The Plain Truth*, Garner Ted Armstrong, Dec. 1957, p. 23.)

"Germany's coming Führer-who will lead within probably 13 years from now a 10-nation union in Europe (Rev. 17:12-13)-is 'the king of the north.' He will 'stretch forth his hand upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape' (Dan. 11:42). There is going to be a falling out between Nasser and his German supporters. Nasser's Nazi advisers are yet to turn upon him. Germany will take over the Suez from Egypt. Germany will take over Syria's oil pipelines, now under Nasser's control." (*The Plain Truth*, Herman Hoeh, Oct. 1958, p. 4.)

In 1959, Rod Meredith once again humbly assured Plain Truth readers that his church alone was accurately predicting the future:

"We have been daring, as no other church on earth, to proclaim definite, specific prophetic events to occur-and they have been happening!... For the specific prophesied events which this Church alone proclaims will soon be demonstrated as a physical reality! There will be no reasoning or argument about this. You will see and feel these things happen!" (*The Plain Truth*, Rod Meredith, June 1959, p. 32.)

As the years ticked by, Herbert and his followers sensed Christ's return was nigh, and they redoubled their efforts to shout their prophetic message to the whole world with more power and conviction than ever:

"All of these internal troubles, combined with the rapid rise to power of a frightening huge combine in Europe, are going to spell out great disaster for the United States and Britain in the '60's.... It is going to happen! No amount of reasoning, 'spiritualizing away,' arguing, doubting, scoffing, or disbelieving is going to change it! Almighty God, in His inviolate Word, thunders from His great throne in the universe that these very prophecies are going to come to pass!" (*The Plain Truth*, Ted Armstrong, Mar. 1960, p. 10.)

"In Joel 1, in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 and John 13-in Revelation 6, and in other prophecies, a revolution in the weather-leading to unprecedented famine by around 1970-72 is prophesied. In its wake is prophesied frightful disease epidemics! A third of the people of the U.S. and British Commonwealth nations will die of this scourge." (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Feb. 1962, pp. 5, 7.)

"The unification of Germany? Perhaps it will take place sooner than we expect! The unification of

ten nations in Europe is certain to be brought about within a very few years." (*The Plain Truth*, Ron Kelly, Sept. 1964, p. 20.)

"Frankly, literally dozens of prophesied events indicate that this final revival of the Roman Empire in Europe-and its bestial persecution of multitudes of Bible-believing Christians-will take place within the next seven to ten years of your life!" (*The Plain Truth*, Rod Meredith, Feb. 1965, p. 48.)

"Bible prophecy indicates that the final attack on the U.S. and Britain by this coming 'Beast' power could easily be launched perhaps as early as the spring of 1972-or earlier ...." (*The Plain Truth*, Rod Meredith, May 1965, p. 45. )

"The 'Day of the Eternal'-a time foretold in more than thirty prophecies-is going to strike between 5 and 10 years from now!... I am not writing foolishly, but very soberly, on authority of the living Christ!" (*The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong, Feb. 1967, p. 47.)

"It doesn't take an understanding of certain 'Bible doctrine,' or necessary agreement with it, to admit to yourself candidly that what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was faithfully proclaiming back before, during and right at the close of World War II, and what he and others who have since come to join him in this great work of God have been proclaiming day in and day out ever since-is actually happening before your very eyes!" (*The Plain Truth*, Ted Armstrong, Nov. 1962, p. 21.)

Everything in 1967 seemed to Herbert Armstrong to be on schedule, prophetically speaking, except that God hadn't allowed him to warn the nation of Israel. Suddenly that opportunity appeared:

"Right now, just prior by not more than five to seven years, to the coming terrible Day of the Lord, the living Christ has moved swiftly to open the all-important door that has been closed since the days of the original apostles!

"...Almighty God has opened to The World Tomorrow [broadcast], exclusively, the gigantic door of superpower radio from Jerusalem!... We have signed with the Hashemite Government of Jordan, a five year binding contract...." (Co-worker letter, Herbert Armstrong, April 17, 1967, pp. 3-4.)

To Herbert this was a sign from God that God was truly working through him and no other church:

"And when this time came, to whom did God open up these precious radio facilities? Not to Roman Catholics... nor the Protestants! Nor the Coptics.... No, He has opened it exclusively, by binding contract with the Government of Jordan, to His Work.... This proves which voice on earth today is God's own voice.... If you ever had any doubts whatever about where the real Work of God is, you ought to be sure now!" (*Ibid.*, p. 6.)

Just as Herbert was making ready to do his first broadcast over Radio Jerusalem, the Six-Day War broke out and the Israelis captured the radio station, making Herbert's contract to broadcast on the station worthless. It seemed strange that the living Christ would lead his apostle to sign a contract with the Jordanian government to send his message out from Jerusalem, Jordan, when Christ knew that East Jerusalem would soon fall to the Israelis. But the WCG leaders were so busy preaching their prophetic message that they never paused to consider whether or not God had just delivered a stunning rebuke to their apostle. Soon afterward Garner Ted Armstrong was proclaiming over the airwaves that a temple would be built in the next few years in Jerusalem and Britain would not join the Common Market. *The Plain Truth* carried these predictions:

"There will very soon be a Temple in Jerusalem, with daily sacrifices once again being offered.... Jerusalem will be surrounded and captured...by the Fascist-Nazi armies of the European Empire, already starting to rise now out of the Common Market." (Herbert Armstrong, June 1967, p. 2.)

"Will Britain ever be admitted into the Common Market? Probably not!" (Raymond McNair, Feb. 1970, p. 27.)

Even though the casual observer may have felt the WCG's prophecies were little more than hot air, he couldn't pass final judgment on their accuracy until 1972 had come and gone-since most of the WCG's prophecies hinged around 1972. Well, 1972 was about five years ago, and now it's obvious to any who will look at the facts that Herbert and his church do not understand prophecy and never have been inspired by God to understand it. But has this fact caused Herbert to hang his head in disgrace and humbly apologize for misleading people in God's name? No it hasn't. Instead he feels he is above apology:

"We do not set dates!... Yet in our human zeal and enthusiasm for getting this greatest mission on earth done, we have a few times come close to it or appeared to-and that we deeply regret...if we...appear to set a date, I feel I do not need to apologize!" (*Tomorrow's World*, Herbert Armstrong, Feb. 1972, p. 31.)

One would think after one gigantic prophetic failure after another during a span of over 40 years that Herbert Armstrong would throw in the towel and give up trying to foretell the future-or at least buy a new Steuben "crystal ball." Instead of that, he is doing the same thing he did in the late 1940s and early 1950s-moving his erroneous predictions forward two or more decades into the future and claiming they will occur at that time:

"During this generation-within 60 to 90 years or less-from 1927-Christ will come again ...." (Co-worker letter, Jan. 20, 1977, p. 4.)



A moving scene from one of Herbert Armstrong's testimonial dinners. These dinners are an integral part of Herbert's mission of warning world leaders of the prophesied, soon-coming holocaust. The above dinner, held in

Thailand, obviously yielded "much fruit!"

So now Herbert would have us believe Christ will return between 1987 and 2017- since Christ didn't make it in the late 30s, in the early 40s, or in 1975, as Herbert had previously prophesied.

The WCG's prophetic blunders ought to generate certain questions in a perceptive mind: How could Herbert Armstrong and his ministers be God's only true ministers and yet be incorrect in their predictions more often than Jeane Dixon or other famous psychics? Why has almost everything that Herbert and his church have predicted since 1934 been way off base? A *Plain Truth* writer was inspired to record the answer over 20 years ago:

"But who today understands what the prophets foretold? Why, only the ministers today whose word comes to pass!-those who are appointed and guided by God to preach the truth! Those whose utterances do not come to pass have not spoken the prophecies truly. We give you here the record of what we have been proclaiming for the past 2 years-a message which no other voices, to our knowledge, have been proclaiming.... But what we have been warning you about is happening!-precisely as we have stated.... This is how you can know that our work is not of men but of God!" (Dec. 1956, p. 3.)

**Looking at the Fruits.** The leading WCG ministers attempt to rationalize their ridiculous prophecies with half-thought-out quips like "a few wrong predictions never hurt anybody" or "we were just trying to fulfill our commission in Matthew 24:14 to preach a witness to the world." (Evidently many have never realized Matthew 24:14 is a prophecy, not a commission to the church.) Speaking in a ministerial conference in January 1974, Ted Armstrong was also at first reluctant to admit that the church's false predictions had caused serious problems for anybody:

"[We prophesied in] fifteen years the U.S.A. will no longer be a nation, and 15 years has come and gone. Was that a mistake or not" ? Yes! But why get violently emotional about it? We were utterly sincere at the time it was said! We all believed it, and furthermore that kind of copy never caused anybody to lose out on salvation, or drop out of church, or make a wrong move in their personal lives, or to throw the word of God to the ground...."

Only moments later Ted all but contradicted himself by offering justifiable reasons for a person to "get violently emotional" about a prophecy that failed. He began to name a few of the "wrong moves" that had been made in personal lives:

"But '72 was the date that, you know, everything hinged on that. Nobody saved any money, nobody bought any property, nobody thought about laying up for his children's children.... We [thought we] were all going to flee or be taken away to a place of safety and everything would be left behind so [we thought]: "Why put any roots down?"

So even Ted begrudgingly admits false prophecies do cause harm in people's lives. Some WCG members, believing the "end of the world" was coming between 1972 and 1975-as the church had prophesied so often-postponed needed dental work. Others decided not to buy homes, while still others sold theirs and gave a portion of the cash they received to the church. Some young people decided not to go to college but took jobs instead to earn money for the church, hoping to thereby help Herbert fulfill the prophecy found in Matthew 24:14. Many gave their savings to the church and even borrowed money in response to Herbert's pleas to help his church

avert another financial crisis-especially after being told Christ was coming soon and their money would be worthless then. Now some of these people are almost penniless, but the church says, "I never knew you."

To God, prophesying falsely is not a light matter. The Bible carries dozens of warnings from God for Christians to watch out for false prophets who "through covetousness" with "feigned words" shall "make merchandise" of them (II Peter 2:3, KJV). (The RSV renders it: "In their greed they will exploit you with false words.")

How could one recognize a false prophet? "You will know them by their fruits," Christ answers (Matt. 7:16, RSV). Continuing the analogy Christ explains, "A good tree is incapable of producing bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit" (Phillips translation). What do you think Christ would say about the WCG's false prophecies in view of Matthew 7? To those WCG ministers who remain unrepentant he will declare: "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7: 23, KJV).

*-Bill Hughes*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:

**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

### **BOBBY FISCHER SPEAKS OUT!**

---

"Fischer does not merely outplay opponents; he leaves them bodily and mentally glutted.... Fisher himself speaks of the exultant instant in which he feels the 'ego of the other player crumbling.' "



-George Steiner, Fields of Force

---

"Fischer is... the strongest player in the world. In fact, the strongest player who ever lived."

-Larry Evans, U.S. International Grandmaster

---

Bobby Fischer is the undisputed "psych-out" champion in the world of chess. On this cerebral battlefield, he has crushed many an ego with his ferocious, relentless attack coupled with his steely-cold logic and near perfect strategy.

Bobby was born in Chicago on May 9, 1943, but grew up in Brooklyn, New York. On his sixth birthday, he received a gift of destiny from his sister Joan-a chess set. Since that time, little else interested Bobby, who played chess for hours every day. Consequently, his knowledge and skill grew enormously.

In 1956 he won the junior chess championship of the United States at the age of thirteen. The next year he won the prestigious U.S. championship. He continued his meteoric rise, and in 1958, he placed fifth in the interzonal tournament at Portoroz, Yugoslavia, thus qualifying at fifteen years of age as the youngest International Grandmaster ever.

He spent the next decade preparing for the chance to gain the title he coveted most: world champion. In 1972, on the island of Iceland, Bobby finally got his shot at the crown. There he single-handedly took on the entire state subsidized Soviet chess machine and became world champion, defeating Boris Spassky in a grueling match. Several years later, Bobby unfortunately forfeited the title back to a Russian, Anatoly Karpov, over a dispute regarding international tournament rules. However, Bobby still has amassed far more FICA tournament points than any other player in history, thus qualifying Bobby as one of the greatest chess minds of all time.

But as well-known as Bobby's chess history is to the general public, precious little has been reported on his long association with the Worldwide Church of God. Bobby's immersion in the "Ambassador experience" for over ten years has proven to be his greatest battle of mind and ego.

In this rare interview, Bobby Fischer describes in his own words his relationship with Armstrongism and explains how even he, the "psych-out king," was able to be out psyched and manipulated by the Armstrongs through long-term exposure to subtle religious mind-control techniques. The interview itself was conducted by several staff members at various locations in the Pasadena area over the course of several weeks. What proved more effective than a formal question-and-answer format was a loose discussion style that fit Bobby's personality better. The following are the most valuable excerpts, organized under various topic headings.

## **WHY BOBBY CAME TO US**

**LEN ZOLA:** Bobby, how did you first come across our publication, and after several years of not making any statements to the media, why have you chosen to share your thoughts and perspectives regarding the Worldwide Church of God with us?

**BOBBY FISCHER:** I was walking by Bungalow News store in Pasadena, and a copy of *Ambassador Review* [the predecessor of *Ambassador Report*] was in the window. I'm really glad you guys put out that magazine. You really put a lot of work into it. I was coming around anyway, but that sped it up. It might have taken me another year or two to get where I am.

I didn't even want to give an interview in a sense, because my privacy is very important to me. But I feel that it is my duty to help out people, to help even one person. I just worry about the people in the Armstrong organization and those who may come into it. Why should they have to suffer because we rationalized that we didn't want to do anything?

---

**"I'm not interested in getting my money back. I just want to make sure that nobody gets ripped off mentally."**

---

I called you up about this. I hardly know you guys, but I want to help you. I think your publication is going to reach the people I want to reach. I really think that people should have information to make intelligent choices. I believe this.

Really my story is no different than that of any other jerk that was sucked into the organization. The only difference would be that I, Bobby Fischer, was saying it, and people would be more interested because of my name, my veracity, and the fact that I gave a lot of money.

However, I want to emphasize that I'm not trying to destroy the college or the Armstrongs. I know the Bible says, "Vengeance is God's." I'm not trying to "get" those guys. And I'm not interested in getting my money back. I'm trying to protect others. I just want to make sure that nobody gets ripped off mentally. That's the most important thing. I am not necessarily backing the whole magazine, but I'm using it because it is a good forum to get my views across.

## **INITIAL CONTACT WITH WORLDWIDE CHURCH**

**LEN ZOLA:** Was it in 1962 or around then that you said you first became involved with the Worldwide Church of God? Did you flip the radio to the Worldwide Church of God's radio broadcast by accident?

**FISCHER:** I had some personal problems, and I started listening to a lot of radio ministers. I listened every Sunday all day, flipping the dial up and back. So, I heard just about every guy on Sunday. And then I heard Mr. Armstrong, and I

said, "Ah, God has finally shown me the one, I guess. This guy really has power. authority. He doesn't talk like the other guys. He really knows his stuff!"

When I started listening, it was to Herbert Armstrong mostly. Then Herbert and his son were alternating every day for awhile. One day it was Herbert, and one day it was Ted. Then it was Herbert just on Sundays. And eventually, Herbert was just phased out.

Well, I kind of split my life into two pieces. One was where my chess career lies. There, I kept my sanity, so to speak, and my logic. And the other was my religious life. I tried to apply what I learned in the church to my chess career too. But I still was studying chess. I wasn't just "trusting in God" to give me the moves.

## **WHAT TITHING HAS DONE FOR ME**

**ZOLA:** As you continued to listen to the WCG's "World Tomorrow" broadcast, did you begin sending donations?

**FISCHER:** I never gave any money to a work or any church. I didn't believe in that stuff. But I got a whole bunch of literature from Armstrong. I felt guilty after awhile about getting so much. I was getting *The Plain Truth* for a couple of years. I had written for every last piece of literature I had ever heard him offering. Finally, I sent him five bucks or something. Then I got a co-worker letter. And then later on I sent them maybe \$20. And then I remember in late 1963 I was in some tournament, and I said, "I'll send the whole tenth." It was a really big decision.

**BILL HUGHES:** In 1972 when they got that money from you [\$61,200], did they discuss what proportion they ought to receive?

**FISCHER:** No, no. I wanted to do it. I was enthusiastic!

**HUGHES:** What was it that you won in that chess tournament?

**FISCHER:** I don't know exactly. It was about \$160,000, plus I received a lot of royalties. I made about \$200,000 that year.

**HUGHES:** Well, didn't you donate more than 10% of your winnings?

**FISCHER:** Yeah! Well, I told them that I wanted to give them a double tithe. Whatever it was, I wanted to do it the very right way, whatever that was. I did it on the gross amount. They cleaned my pockets out frankly. I have some money left, but not that much. I've got some assets. It's amazing they didn't get everything. Now my only income is a few royalty checks from my books. I was really very foolish, but I thought I was doing what I had to do. When I sent those checks off, I really didn't have the slightest qualms, no regrets, not the slightest. I

don't really regret it that much, to tell you the truth, even now.

Now that I think about it, I never heard Armstrong once say, "Well, that's nice Bobby that you want to help us, but don't forget your family. Help them too." The Armstrongs never once said that.

You know, I didn't improve my living standard one bit either. It wasn't like I just didn't help my mom. I didn't do anything for myself either. You know I don't even have a car. About the only luxury I got was quite a few \$400 suits. I got ten maybe. But still what I'm saying is that that is still not a lot of money spent on me considering all the money I made. It wasn't like I was living high on the hog and neglecting my mom, but she's living real poor in a crummy apartment in England. She doesn't even have a bathroom. I just saw her a few months ago. I have to help my mom now. She's an old woman. She could soon be gone and here I was giving money so that Rader and these guys can have their parties in Beverly Hills. This whole thing is so sick.

## **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ARMSTRONGISM**

Church members shouldn't let themselves be confused. They begin not trusting in their own judgment, and then they're finished. That's a terrible, terrible thing. First, they get conducted in with a nice sweet program, no money, everything free, free, free. And then they get sucked in, and suddenly a few lies get mixed in. They are told that their human nature is wicked and these nice people who gave them all these things wouldn't be lying to them, would they? And then I think once you start distrusting your own mind you're finished. From there you just get more and more confused. Once you think that your own mind is not your friend any more-your own conscience and your own mind is not your friend-then I think you are on your way to insanity. You have been stripped bare. All your defenses are gone. You must trust Armstrongism, his ministers, doctrines, and organization. Otherwise you're going in the wrong direction, and you know where that leads.

Herbert Armstrong claims to be freeing you from the world's churches, freeing you from all the trash you've heard all your life. He's freeing you, and finally you're coming to know the truth that will set you free, free, free, and the next thing you know you are really a zombie. You are completely under the power of Armstrongism. Good luck... you're going to need it.

---

**"...once you start distrusting your own mind, you're finished."**

---

This idea of Herbert's that you can't trust your own thoughts-that's the key doctrine that I think has to be blasted out. I would say that if there's one thing that is the whole essence of Armstrongism, that's it. That's how he screws up your mind. That's how he hangs on to people.

I have to discuss some of the things Herbert has done to me-how he screwed up my mind-just to let people know that this is for real, because if anybody tried to live by the letter of the law... it was me. I truly tried to be obedient. The more I tried, the more crazy I became. The pressure he puts on you! You can't do this, you can't do that, you can't tell your friends this, you can't see unconverted people, you can't eat this, you can't eat that, on the sabbath you have to rest, you have to listen to the radio program every day, you have to study the correspondence course... and then you're supposed to pray....

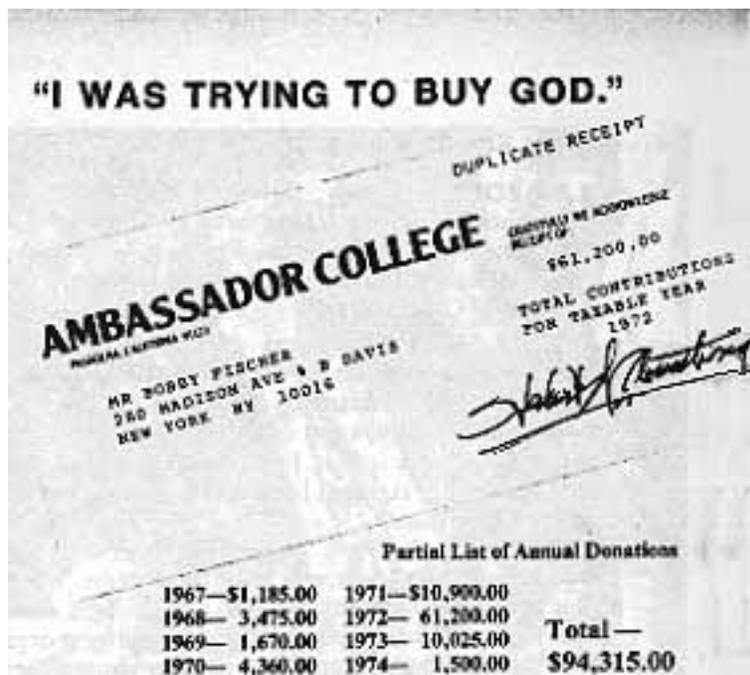
---

**"They'll never come up with a better con than this."**

---

I can remember times coming home from a chess club at four in the morning when I was half asleep and half dead and forcing myself to pray an hour and study [the Bible] an hour. You know, I was half out of my head-stoned almost.

And every time you try to think a sane thought you think it's of the devil. They keep pushing that thing. They keep pushing about this tremendous struggle that goes on between God and the devil. And the devil keeps injecting his thoughts into your mind. They really got you coming and going. I don't think that they will ever come up with one better than this. They'll never come up with a better con than this. They are playing with people's lives like toys.



## PROPHETIC FOLLIES

The real proof for me was those [false] prophecies. Everybody has a different way of looking at it, but to me that shows he [Armstrong] is an outright huckster.

Like the Bible says, when a prophet makes prophecies that don't come true, then that guy is not of God and you don't have to be afraid of him. Yet church members are afraid of him [HWA]. And he's failed umpteen times. This guy, Armstrong, in terms of religion, is the world's biggest loser.

[Next Fischer spoke about Herbert Armstrong's prophetic failures during and after World War II.] Okay, he could have made those mistakes, and I'd let them go. But he made mistakes again in 1950, 1952—the same trap over and over again. And he was dead wrong—100% wrong. He blew it all, and he pulled it again and again and again and again. And here I was in the sixties reading this stuff sincerely and believing it. And I should have known that it was all just a pack of lies. He was just playing with me. Lie after lie, letter after letter.

---

**"Either God is a masochist and likes to be made a fool of, or else Herbert Armstrong is a false prophet."**

---

But I was really upset in 1972 when Herbert Armstrong refused to apologize. He

could have just apologized and said, "I became overly enthusiastic. I wanted Christ to return so badly. Everything seemed to fit. Please excuse me. I won't do that again."

I thought, "This doesn't seem right. I gave all my money. Everybody has been telling me this [1972 would be the date the WCG would flee to a place of safety] for years. And now, he's half-denying he ever said it when I remember him saying it a hundred times. And then on top of it, he won't even apologize for saying it." When you put it all together, it's hard to accept his sincerity. That's the problem.

And what convinces me even more that I'm right is when I talk to Dr. Robert Kuhn and a few others. When I talk to him, he has no answers. When you press him about these prophecies, he says, "Well, Herbert thought he was right."

And I said, "Yeah, he thought he was right. I can accept that the first time. What about the second time?" Kuhn replied, "Well, he thought he was right. He convinced himself he was right."



**"Once I quit tithing, my mind started to clear up."**

"Okay, what about the third time?"

"No, he convinced himself."

I said, "How many times did he convince himself? You mean he never once thought, 'Well, I've been wrong all these times. Maybe I'd better go back and

reanalyze the whole thing from A to Z?"

"No, he didn't. He was so convinced."

I said, "I can't accept that, Robert. That blows my mind that a guy can make a hundred prophecies and think he's right every time and be sincere every time. That is impossible. And that's utterly impossible unless he's insane!"

This is a joke. If you talk about fulfillment of prophecy, he's a fulfillment of Elmer Gantry. If Elmer Gantry was the Elijah, Herbert's the "Christ" of religious hucksters. There is no way he could truly be God's prophet. Either God is a masochist and likes to be made a fool of or else Herbert Armstrong is a false prophet.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE WCG MINISTRY**

Basically, I don't want people to do anything rash because they think God is smiling down when they talk to a minister. That's the thing people have to be disabused of. It makes me sick to think these two-bit salesmen are running around pretending they're God, and people buy it. And I shudder to think how they're ruining lives. They don't even think. Ministers just speak what they've been taught.

My main concern though is that people don't get ripped off by these local ministers. To me this is the most vicious thing. The people hear new ideas and they want to obey God, so they listen to these guys, and their lives are ruined. These guys will ruin your life in five minutes flat. They'll tell you to move. They'll tell you to change jobs. They'll tell you not to have an operation. They'll tell you to marry this person. And people do it.

And if you ask questions or say something derogatory, they'll hit you back and insult you right away. Like I once said to this minister, "I think GTA is obnoxious." He replied, "I think you're obnoxious." They're fast on their feet.

## **FISCHER ON HERBERT ARMSTRONG**

Herbert Armstrong has a way with words. You know, he seems so sincere. He has all the right principles: dedication, hard work, perseverance, never giving up. He's dogged; he's persistent.

You know, from reading his stuff and listening to his sermons, you'd think he was very interested in God. But when you meet him personally, there is nothing there at all.

I find Armstrong to be an egomaniac. He sitteth in the temple of God saying great things as if he were God. He apparently wants to leave his permanent mark on all he comes in contact with and can bring into submission. He is simply a mad

man who would love to rule the world.

---

## **"Herbert Armstrong keeps encouraging people to give up everything for the kingdom, but why doesn't he set the example himself"**

---

I was looking through some of his old co-worker letters-so phony, you know. He talks about this world and how evil it is and all, but actually he's really of this world with all these high-pressure sales tactics. That's exactly the stuff he talks about-the stuff he was doing as a kid that he supposedly outgrew. For example, he continuously tries to frighten and panic you in his coworker letters about the supposed imminent end of the world-so that you will empty your bank account before him. Articles in old *Plain Truths* tell you that you haven't much time to develop character to prepare for Christ's return-to take the last train to sanity by joining Armstrongism. The idea is constantly drummed into your head that you must obey God=Armstrongism before it's too late. You must decide now. Time is running out .... This kind of super high-pressure salesmanship leads people to make rash decisions, based on fear, often made against their better judgment. This is the very essence of Armstrongism (i.e., fear, panic, guilt).

He is even more advanced than Madison Avenue because he is willing to give you his literature indefinitely almost, whereas the Madison Avenue people kind of want that quick return. He is much more insidious because he's combining the most powerful and evil techniques of everybody .... This guy is voracious. He never quits on you. He wants you. You can turn against him completely and he would still want you back. He'd still want your mind. He never gives up on getting your mind.

Oh, man, he keeps encouraging people to give up everything for the kingdom, but why doesn't he set the example himself? He plays on your emotions. That is what he does. He pretends that he is trying to get away from that. That's what "the world" does. They play on your emotions and weaknesses, but he plays on them the worst. There is no depth at all in his spiritual approach.

People have committed suicide under the tremendous barrage of Armstrongism's subtly induced feelings of self-hate and hopelessness for this life.... Like he tells you to be interested in the next life, but he's interested, in this life very much.

Really, people are just getting one side of this whole story all the time from Herbert Armstrong. He's so convincing, you know. I don't think anybody has a

more convincing style than he. This Armstrong-I was thinking if you had to think of one word to describe this guy, if you could only use one word, I would use "dangerous."

The only thing that refutes his style is true facts-hard facts.

[Next Bobby tells what it was like taking a tour of Ambassador College campus with Herbert Armstrong and one of Herbert's old friends.] Herbert was with this old man, and he [Herbert] must have said the same thing about ten times. He said, "I've done all right, haven't I, Cliff?" And he said, "Oh, yes, you've done fine, Herbert. This is a beautiful college you've got here. And this beautiful land is beautifully kept up."

And Herbert replied, "Well, I see that everything is kept up. I see to it personally that all this property is kept up." "Well, Herbert, you've really done fine." So we walked awhile longer. And then Herbert stopped again, saying, "I've done all right, haven't I?" So the other man repeated, "Yes, you've done great. You really have." And then it would start all over again a little later. And I thought, "What the hell is going on here? Man, have I gone ...? I gave my money to this? I must be nuts. I can't believe this!"



**"I've done all right, haven't I, Cliff?"**

Herbert Armstrong remarked to Clifford DePuy (January 2, 1973). DePuy was publisher of a trade journal and employed Herbert Armstrong as an advertising salesman from 1915 to 1922.

---

## **FISCHER ON GARNER TED ARMSTRONG**

I've tried to carry out what Garner Ted says to its logical conclusion. You know, it never seems to form. He carries things to a point but not to a conclusion. If you go to the conclusion with all this stuff, it comes out bad. By the time you've thought enough to come up with a good answer, he's on about 18 other subjects

already. He gives you a very obvious kind of snow job.

Now I understand. I never understood how it could be that Herbert Armstrong seemingly had so much love and compassion and his son seemed so selfish and nasty. They're just the same people. They just have a different way of doing it, you know. Well, Herbert wrecked his son. I can see how that old man could ruin his son. I think GTA is just a massive inferiority complex.

**ZOLA:** Did you ask Herbert what was Ted's sin? And did he or did he not tell you it was adultery?

**FISCHER:** No, I didn't want to insult him. Why, did you hear that we had a conversation?

**ZOLA:** Yes.

**FISCHER:** I met Herbert in the Hall of Administration, and he started to talk to me about his airplane and flying. And then he started going off on some wild tangents that may be significant. Then, it meant nothing to me. He was talking about stewardesses on the airplanes and how one of them was tempting Ted. I didn't know what he was talking about. I thought it was raving stuff, because I had no idea what he was talking about. I was wondering why he was telling me this. But he didn't admit anything.

See, I wasn't at that stage trying to find the loose brick. I wanted to believe. I feel that if Ted had done something 3 years ago, and nobody knew about it, it would be cruel to bring it up.

But this is different. This is a way of life, apparently from what I'm starting to hear. I'm sure if there's all that smoke there's plenty of fire. Now if a guy is that calloused to make it a way of life, I don't see how his feelings are going to be that hurt. Anybody in the spotlight preaching purity while doing all this on the side has to know it's going to come out. He has to know that, or maybe he's nuts, right? But it is a shame. You would think that if Ted is rational, he could pull himself together and could see himself. But he is not rational apparently.

What if I was coming on the air every day for 20 years telling people: "Don't play chess" and then I ran home and played chess every day? I don't know how he does it. It's too much!

## **WHAT CHURCH BRETHERN MEAN TO ME**

I like church people. I don't really feel these are bad people. But Herbert has exercised this power and authority over the church people for years. He knows that no matter what he says, they keep coming back for more. Have you noticed the people around the college and church? They are all very immature. Everybody, no matter how young or old, stays immature. And they get back so

little for all that they give. Here in Pasadena, the employees do all right because they are on the receiving end of donations from all the people in the rest of the country. But "out there" the local church people get nothing back-except bad advice and co-worker letters.

I'm not even going to say that all the doctrines of the church are necessarily bad and that members should reject everything. That is not my point. My point is that they should be thinking for themselves.

In the Eric Hoffer book, *True Believer*, the greatest danger to an authoritarian organization like the WCG is when the authority is relaxed a bit-they ease up on the people a bit. Then, the true believers begin to lose their fear. Most people are sheep, and they need the support of others. With enough people like us, the people will see they are not alone. Then it can be just like an avalanche.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Well, I know what Armstrong is going to say [in reaction to this interview]. He'll say, "His [chess] career is finished. He's bitter." Or, "He's disturbed. He was a fringer. He was never with us."

It's all so sad, though. It's very tragic because it's just the opposite of what we got into it for.

Anyway, I can't imagine anybody not having their minds cleared after reading your publication. Our mind is all we've got. Not that it won't lead us astray sometimes, but we still have to analyze things out within ourselves.

Your conscience-God gave you that conscience. He had to give you protection from this evil world. He gave us our minds. We can think!

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### FLEECING THE FLOCK



It was February 18, 1970. A small group of ministerial students were spending an evening with Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Those of us who had been invited were given a glimpse of a life-style which in today's world only a very few are able to afford. At his home, a small mansion on Pasadena's South Orange Grove Boulevard (once nicknamed "millionaire row"), we were surrounded by rare antiques, expensive paintings, and Steuben crystal. The carpets were luxuriant; a Steinway grand stood in the corner of the drawing room.

The gourmet cuisine served at dinner was excellent as were the European wines—all four of them. We had been shown a large number of expensive paintings and *objets d'art* and, as was his custom, Herbert would relate what he paid for each and what they were now worth. That theme carried over into the conversation at dinner. Then, as the servants began to clear the table, he turned to one of the guests and said, "What do you think all of these beautiful things on the table are worth?" Of course, none of us had even the slightest idea. And so, he was able to proudly proclaim, "Over \$125,000!"

He was quick to point out, however, that art objects of this quality were so rare that they were in fact "priceless." The sculptured, foot-high, solid-gold saltcellars were, for instance, the only known copies of those once owned by Louis XIV. (They had been specially made for Herbert by Harrod's of London.) The crystal goblets were identical to those found on Queen Elizabeth's table. The supremely crafted cutlery was of solid gold. The tablecloth was made of the finest Belgian lace. The gold-covered china was of the finest craftsmanship and formerly belonged to Czar Nicholas II of Russia.

As we sat there sipping our four different wines and eating off the czar's china, I couldn't help but think of the incredible contrast all this presented to the meager existence of so many members of Herbert's church—the very ones who were, through their tithes and offerings, making all this possible. I had personally known many Worldwide Church of God laymembers who were barely able to keep their families fed, let alone properly clothed, because of the large amounts they felt compelled to contribute to the Armstrong organization.

Ironically, just five days after the above occasion, one such beleaguered church member, a dedicated employee of the organization, wrote his minister and outlined the tragic financial straits he had come to as a result of obeying the church's teachings. The following excerpt, though a bit lengthy, shows in detail the type of deprivation inflicted on many who have come under the influence of the Armstrong organization and its teachings:

1. Automobile: The automobile is unsafe to drive.

A. The brakes are in poor shape; sometimes they lock the right or left front wheel, and to unlock it one must back up. This happens while driving.

B. The engine is too heavy for the front suspension, and I am in fear of the front suspension collapsing.

C. The exhaust system is leaky and fills the auto with oil smoke and fumes while driving.

This automobile must be replaced. I risk my family's life every time we drive in it; I had Mr. Schreiber check it, and he said to replace it this year before the Feast.

## 2. Clothing

A. My wife has *no* underwear, has had none for a year or more. She has only one brassiere and one slip and both are in very sad shape, ripped up, etc. She has no nylons and only one pair of socks.

B. She only has one good dress and with constant wear it is going fast. She has only one pair of shoes, and they are one size too big. When she stands in them, there is a one-half inch gap at the heel, she only has one coat, and it is all ripped up inside. My wife needs clothing badly.

## 3. Clothing

A. My clothing is in sad shape also, but better than my wife's. I have only one suit I can wear. It is a summer suit I got from used clothing, and when the seams go, I will have none. I have no pants I can wear anywhere. If it were not for the uniforms at work, I would have none at all; to change clothes I have a choice-a uniform from work, my suit, or one pair of levis with holes in them. My shoes need repairing. My socks are all full of holes at the heels; I do have three or four sets of underwear that are good.

B. My children's clothes: If it were not for used clothing, they would have none. We do good to keep them in shoes as they need them. Their feet already have corns because of the wrong shoes in the past; we are finding that used clothing is not able to supply their present needs. They are growing to a size that is not available. There is no money available to go to a Thrift Shop.

## 4. Our Furniture

A. Most of what we have will be usable for some time, but some items need replacing.

B. The bed my wife and I sleep in is 23 years old, and we are continually being cut by springs coming through the mattress. I woke up one night with a spring stuck *into* my thigh and had to lift myself straight up off of it. We cut out an average of one or two springs a week; I feel it is also a cause of my constant back problems, but I have no money to replace the bed.

C. We have only two dressers for seven people and this is not enough; because of this we keep the children's clothes in cardboard boxes in the closets. The rest I feel we can get by with.

## 5. Entertainment

We rarely go any place through the year except to the Feast [of Tabernacles]. I have taken my wife out to dinner once in the past five years. I don't recall that I have ever taken my children any place except at the Feast of Tabernacles. We have gone to the zoo with the children once since being in the Church and that is 10 years or so.

## 6. Medical/Dental

My wife needs dental work badly. We owe Dr. Howell \$35.00 now, but we don't

have any money to pay him. My children have never had a dental or eye checkup and they need it. I need glasses. I went to the eye doctor two years ago and was told this but no money. I also need some dental work, but mine is small.

## 7. Imperial Schools

We owe Imperial [the Worldwide Church of God's now defunct private schools, offering grades 1 through 12] \$577.20, and it will take \$65.00 per month to pay them off by next school year. We are currently paying \$40.00 when we have it. We will have another child in school next year, plus our three.

## Summary

I am sorry to be a burden to this work, but I do have a large family to feed; my children eat like adults, and they do wear clothes. If we lived on a ranch in Arizona, we could probably live cheaper, but we live in Los Angeles and there are just more expenses here. I am not demanding. I am only showing you my condition as it is. I will get by as long as I can, but we are getting close to the end of our rope. *Please advise me!!*

This poor member's dedication and "good attitude" cannot be denied. But he shouldn't have been surprised by his poverty. Not when you consider that he was giving away nearly 40% of his net income in first tithe, second tithe, third tithe, regular offerings, holy-day offerings, special emergency offerings, church emergency loans, building fund contributions, and Spokesman Club dues! And this doesn't include the income he lost by passing up employment opportunities to keep the Old Testament sabbath and holy days, as the Worldwide Church of God teaches.

The Armstrong organization has always been quick to publish letters from individuals claiming all kinds of financial success ("blessings"), divine intervention, and good luck that supposedly resulted directly from obedience to the church's teachings concerning tithing. However, letters such as the one we have quoted above somehow never made it into print. In our Letters section in this issue we have included a number of letters that describe some of those cases the Armstrong neglected to mention.

**This Is the Life!** The \$60,000,000 per year tax-free income that the Armstrongs are able to garner and that they exclusively control attests to the effectiveness of their methods. As Herbert has often stated, "Tithing pays off!" One of his editorials was once titled, "This Is the Life!-Real Abundant Living!" True, for the one receiving the tithes tithing does pay off. But life has been a lot less abundant for thousands of those who have diligently applied Herbert's tithing laws as found in his booklet *Ending Your Financial Worries* (often jokingly referred to by some WCG higher-ups as "Ending Our Financial Worries").

The Armstrong tithing doctrine with its related church practices and policies is a study in fallacious reasoning. (See the article "Twisted Teachings on Tithing" for further information.) But it is when we see how this contributed money is spent that we begin to realize we are dealing with something worse than just biblical misinterpretation.

For example, let's look at what Armstrong calls "third tithe." Most WCG ministers teach that this tithe is to be paid on one's income during every third year in a cycle of seven. (Some WCG ministers, including Garner Ted Armstrong, teach that it should simply be paid every third year.) For each of those third years the laymember is instructed to send 10% of his gross income (from each paycheck) to headquarters. Unlike the first and second tithes-which are calculated on all income each year (from each paycheck) and which are used respectively for the general operation of the church and the keeping of the feast days-third tithe is supposed to be used *solely* to help the destitute.

Notice these statements by Albert J. Portune, formerly the WCG vice-president for financial affairs:

"Why did God command a third tithe anyway? God instituted the third tithe for a very real and important use. Without it many in God's Church would go hungry and homeless ... In God's Church today, just as it has been in all ages, there are the widows, fatherless, strangers. -God anticipated the needs of the widows, fatherless and sojourners... Therefore God has commanded a third tithe for the support of the stranger, the fatherless and the widow who have no visible means of support." (*The Good News*, Nov. 1962, p. 7.)

In a February 1970 *Good News* article entitled "How You Can Receive an Extra Blessing!" Frank Brown, the assistant to the church's financial vice-president, wrote basically the same thing but mentioned in passing (p. 12) that third tithe funds were at times used "for the incidental needs of the Levite." (He was using the term "Levite" to refer to the church's ministry.) However, he went on to say:

"There are no spongers or malingerers taking advantage of a huge expensive bureaucracy! All those who benefit are genuinely in need.... Third tithe help does *not* go to the lazy, idle, shiftless or able-bodied who are perfectly capable of working."

The reader would logically infer from the above statements that third tithe funds would go *exclusively* to members really in need. He might deduce that third tithe funds would also occasionally go for a small payment to poor and unemployed ministers for food or rent. It all sounds very nice until one discovers how much of that money in the third tithe fund was siphoned off for other uses of which 99.9% of the members were totally unaware.

I have before me a large stack of approved and signed Ambassador College requisitions supplied to *Ambassador Report* by one of our sources. Space does not permit me to quote all of these. Here, summarized, are just a handful of those from the one year previous to Frank Brown's article:

Date	P.O. #	Recipient	Description	Amount
1969	20904	D. Apartian	Furniture, carpets,	\$22,000
1-29-69	18634	Ron Dart	Appliances, Drapery	\$5,000

7-10-69	20123	Ron Dart	All furnishings, interior and exterior, wall coverings, etc.	\$40,000
11-3-69	22124	R. Plache	Furnishings, upholstery, drapes, carpets, and misc	\$25,000
1-21-70	23367	D. Antion	All furnishings, interior and exterior, wall coverings, etc.	\$40,000

All of this money came from the church's third tithe account, and it is so stated on each requisition. It's anybody's guess as to what justification was used for taking money supposedly designated for "the widow and the fatherless" and using that to increase the equity of corporation-owned homes valued at between \$100,000 and \$300,000. The ministers living in those homes were already earning over \$20,000 annually, had expense accounts, company cars, and paid only token rent.

On two occasions in 1974 a tape recorder caught Garner Ted Armstrong actually admitting to fellow ministers that third tithe funds were being used for purposes other than the sustenance of the widows and orphans of the church. Notice:

"...it is true that massive segments of third tithe as it built up in the balances of this work were used both for ministerial homes and for ministerial salaries." (Garner Ted Armstrong, ministerial conference, Jan. 3, 1974.)

"But you know it [third tithe] is still being used for your salaries. It's still being used for church homes." (Garner Ted Armstrong, ministerial conference, May 7, 1974.)

That was in 1974. Informed sources have indicated to us that there has been no change in these practices. For instance, third tithe funds were recently used in providing furnishings for Herbert Armstrong's Tucson home (his fifth home).

**Feeding the Falcon.** Ministerial salaries and homes are not the only items third tithe funds are used for. Though never revealed to Worldwide Church of God laymembers, the third tithe account (now called "the poor fund") has been used to defray the high cost of maintaining and operating several private aircraft—primarily Herbert Armstrong's \$3.5 million Gruman Gulfstream II and Ted Armstrong's \$2.5 million Fanjet Falcon.

*Ambassador Report* has in its possession a tape recording of Garner Ted Armstrong discussing the third tithe fund and admitting:

"In the neighborhood of 10 years ago the policy was placed into effect... payments for the original Falcon C model were aided or helped by that fund." (Garner Ted Armstrong, ministerial conference, May 1976.)

This was in stark contrast to what he had stated at the ministerial conference on January 3, 1974:

"How many of you think that the Falcon is being paid for out of third tithe? It's a lie. The Falcon's never been put on third tithe. It got out that third tithe was being used for the Falcon. It's an absolute lie."

Third tithe funds were used for the jets, but who authorized it? According to one Ted Armstrong statement, it was Albert J. Portune. According to Albert J. Portune, it was Herbert W. Armstrong. In February 1974 evangelist David Antion commented on this at a meeting in Richmond, Virginia:

"...about that time Al [Portune] had a conscience problem and he just went to Mr. [Herbert] Armstrong and said, 'Do we have to use third tithe? That doesn't look good. It's bad. It's not right to use the third tithe fund to fly jets and pay for all that fuel.'"

**A Gift Is a Gift.** While the "poor fund" monies are being used for decorating ministers' homes and paying their salaries, many long-time members who have contributed heavily to the church find that the church has little desire to help them when they are really in need. The *Los Angeles Times* carried a story in its Orange County section on May 14, 1977, that shows this quite clearly. The article titled "Church Gets Home, Public Her Bills" was written by *Times* staff writer Thomas Fortune. Notice these excerpts:

"Because Hazel Hall signed over the title to her home as a gift to her church, the public has ended up paying for the 83-year-old woman's care at a convalescent hospital here. The bill, picked up by Medi-Cal and Medi-care, is running about \$700 more per month than her Social Security income. Mrs. Hall's house in Costa Mesa could be sold for \$37,500 to \$40,000. Money from the sale could pay for several years of convalescent care for Mrs. Hall, who is immobilized by a stroke and won't be returning home. But the home cannot be sold. It is a lifetime estate, to be inherited upon Mrs. Hall's death by the Worldwide Church of God. The church holds hundreds of such lifetime estates, signed over for the most part by elderly people...."

"Not long before her stroke, Mrs. Hall received a letter that began: 'Greetings again from the legal office of God's work.' The letter said that her will, deeding the house to the church, was in safekeeping in her file. It asked her to fill out an inventory list and return it in an enclosed, stamped envelope so it could be placed with her will. Items listed were jewelry, bank accounts, stocks and bonds and other valuables...."

"Audrey Etchison, Mrs. Hall's 54-year-old daughter, says she does not think it is right that the church should get the property, yet not accept responsibility for her mother's medical and convalescent bills. 'My mother is not a charity case. She has this home. She should not be the state's charity. She should be the church's charity,' she maintains. Mrs. Etchison said she has tried to bypass the church's legal department and make 'a moral plea' to Garner Ted Armstrong. But by the church's accounting 'a gift is a gift.' Randell Dick, personal aide to Armstrong, says, 'There can be no strings attached that would violate Mrs. Hall's trust. Otherwise, we would be setting up our own insurance company and go broke.'"

Mr. Randy Dick is wrong-very wrong. Mrs. Hall's "trust" is being violated. On page 14 of the earliest edition of *Ending Your Financial Worries*, for years the church's official booklet on tithing, Herbert Armstrong wrote:

"...a third tithe was commanded. It used to be set aside in every walled city, 'within thy gates' (Deut. 26:12), for the 'widow, the fatherless, and the stranger'-as a kind of insurance program."

Nowhere in this booklet does it say that third tithe funds were to be used for the ministry. Herbert said, "It is altogether different from the first tithe" (p. 14) and is "a kind of *insurance* program." That is also the way I have personally heard it described from the pulpit by dozens of WCG ministers. Mrs. Hall, an 83-year-old

invalid widow who gave all she owned to the church, should have been eligible for monetary assistance from the WCG, but as she and thousands of others have discovered, it didn't work out the way the church promised it would.

**Setting the Example.** Earlier in this article, I referred to certain purchase orders from 1969-1970. It is interesting that during this same period of time when "poor fund" monies were being used to lavishly outfit certain ministers' homes, Herbert Armstrong was writing letters to the church members bemoaning "the work's" financial plight. I have compared the co-worker letters of 1969-70 with authorized requisitions, receipts, and other financial records from the same period. If "the work" was really experiencing a lowered income, you wouldn't have known it from the way Herbert was spending money. For instance, on page 2 of a letter to his fellow "co-workers" dated December 9, 1969, he wrote:

"If ever we needed large sums-into five figures and more... it is right now!"

On January 2, 1970, he purchased a pair of "Marbo Antique Rock Crystal Candelabra" for his Pasadena home. They cost \$6,090.00. Then in his March 30, 1970, letter to church members (pp. 1-2) he wrote:

"I ask of all who can and are willing.... go to your local bank and borrow whatever you are able-\$100 to \$1,000.... And you should not obligate yourself to monthly payments except what you will be able to pay over and above tithes and offerings for the Work ... For this is serious-the most serious crisis since 1947 and 1948."

The very next day, March 31, 1970, he purchased a "pair of French porcelain vases" for \$2,079.00.

In a letter to his "co-workers" dated January 29, 1969 Herbert Armstrong encouraged all those who had loaned money to the church to turn those loans into outright donations. To encourage all to do this he claimed to be setting an example:

"...I myself had several thousand dollars on the books as a loan.... I have just given the entire amount as a donation, and I shall not try to deduct it on my income tax, but keep on contributing up to 30% out of my income. I have paid income tax on all that money-and now I will sacrifice any tax advantage in donating it, because that way I can put more money into the Work.

"As it is today, I do not own any property-not even an automobile. What, then, if some unexpected emergency should come along, that would need this sum of several thousand dollars I am donating? I have thought of that, of course. The answer is, I have a God to trust, and I shall rely on Him!"

I have in my hands a photostat copy of an Ambassador College computer printout titled "Worldwide Church of God Listeners Loan Report, Dec. 1971." After Herbert W. Armstrong's name we find this information: Status Loan Number 49; Type of Loan-AD; Repayment Date-12/31/71; Repayment check number-Miscellaneous; Amount of Repayment-\$50,334.54. Apparently, by 1971 Herbert no longer felt it wise to "rely on Him." Maybe he can explain this in a future co-worker letter.

This money-making technique of supposedly "setting an example" has been used often by the Armstrongs. Ted Armstrong recently even used it on his own church executives. In his letter to the church dated April 27, 1977, Garner Ted announced that there would be a 10% across-the-board salary cut for church executives because of financial problems in "the work." He explained that he was taking the lead by cutting his own salary 15%. He neglected to mention, as we have learned from a reliable source, that just a few days previous he had nearly doubled his own television department salary (just one salary he receives).

Of course, when you consider that the Armstrongs have exclusive control of a \$60,000,000 per year, tax-free income, any discussion by them of voluntary salary cuts or personal sacrifice for "the work" is completely ridiculous. As one proverb attributed to Stanley Rader says, "What really counts is not what you own but what you control." It makes little difference what the size of Herbert's salary is when you consider that he has an unlimited expense account. It makes no difference whatever that he owns no automobile. He has a chauffeur plus exclusive use of a Rolls Royce and numerous Cadillac limousines.

Herbert also has a very substantial art collection. It is so large, in fact, that for years he has been unable to find the space necessary to display it all. Some pieces are on loan to friends and subordinates. For instance, at one time evangelist Roderick Meredith had \$70,000 worth of Herbert's painting hanging in his home. Much of his collection is simply warehoused. Obviously, Herbert would prefer that the public remain ignorant of his art-buying obsession.

A few years ago, unknown to Herbert, the church's business office assigned a photographer to photograph and catalog Herbert's collection for insurance purposes. Quite by accident, Herbert came upon the man as he was shooting the stored artwork. Herbert flew into a rage and summarily fired him. Having personally wandered through one of Herbert's art storage rooms and observed the still attached prices, I am convinced that estimates of his collection being worth \$500,000 are much too low. The fact that all of this may not be legally in his name matters little. It has been purchased at his pleasure, and it is all under his control. What it adds up to is that Herbert is a very wealthy man-at church expense.

The same applies to Ted. He makes an obnoxious practice of mentioning how much pressure he is under and how much emotional stress he endures for "God's work." Those who have worked with the man, however, know that this is utter nonsense. He lives a life-style that would be the envy of any wealthy sportsman or millionaire superstar. He has, for instance, the exclusive use of any of ten cars. According to one source, he owned 15 until very recently, but, alas, austerity measures at Ambassador College prompted him to cut back. He has reserved for his personal use at least five homes. The private jet he flies, a Fanjet Falcon (by the time you read this he will have taken possession of a newer jet that is now on order), is theoretically not his personal property, but that makes little difference. The jet is more of a personal toy than it is an evangelical tool.

During the summer of 1973, I worked as an instructor at the WCG summer camp in northern Minnesota. I can vividly recall how each week Garner Ted would pass

through from California. He was not at all involved in teaching, counseling, or the administration of the camp, nor did he normally give sermons or lecture to the campers. The purpose of the trips was purely for pleasure. Each Thursday or Friday Ted and his guests would fly up from California in his jet. From Orr, Minnesota, they would fly a smaller plane north into Canada to Ted's private fishing camp. On Monday, they would come through Orr again on their way back to California. Now, who do you think paid for all of this?

If you'd really like to find out, you won't get much help from the church's business office. Once while still a tithe-paying WCG member, I called the church's accounting office to obtain some general information about the church's income and expenditures. I was repeatedly transferred and stalled. Finally, I was connected to the legal department. They informed me that the church did not make available the information I was requesting to the public or to individual laymembers.

**The Accountants.** The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, which is to accountants the equivalent of what the American Medical Association is to physicians, has a very clear rule regarding the absolute necessity of independence in its members. Article 1, section 1.01 of the AICPA's "Code of Professional Ethics" states:

"Neither a member or associate, nor a firm of which he is a partner, shall express an opinion on financial statements of any enterprise unless he and his firm are in fact independent with respect to such enterprise.

"Independence is not susceptible of precise definition, but is an expression of the professional integrity of the individual. A member or associate, before expressing his opinion on financial statements, has the responsibility of assessing his relationships with an enterprise to determine whether, in the circumstances, he might expect his opinion to be considered independent, objective and unbiased by one who had knowledge of all the facts.

"A member or associate will be considered not independent, for example, with respect to any enterprise if he, or one of his partners, (a) during the period of his professional engagement or at the time of expressing his opinion, had, or was committed to acquire, any direct financial interest or material indirect financial interest in the enterprise, or (b) during the period of his professional engagement, at the time of expressing his opinion or during the period covered by the financial statements, was connected with the enterprise as a promoter, underwriter, voting trustee, director, officer or key employee.... The word 'director' is not intended to apply to a connection in such a capacity with a charitable, religious, civic or other similar type of nonprofit organization when the duties performed in such a capacity are such as to make it clear that the member or associate can express an independent opinion on the financial statements."

The Armstrong organization's books are audited by the firm of Cornwall, Rader, and Kessler, Certified Public Accountants. It is my opinion that this firm lacks the required independence to be able to audit the Armstrong corporations' books in an unbiased manner, and therefore all statements made by them concerning these corporations should be highly suspect.

Henry Cornwall is the treasurer of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation. Stanley Rader has for years been receiving fees and salaries for his

work as an Ambassador College instructor, chief legal counsel to the Armstrongs, an executive for the *World Tomorrow's* advertising agency, and, of late, as AICF director and *Plain Truth* associate publisher. Numerous attorneys have commented to us that it is amazing Rader has not yet been challenged in the courts on grounds of "conflict of interest." In one year alone he received, along with his partner Cornwall, \$76,000 in accounting fees plus \$55,900 as the organizations' general counsel. What he was also receiving for his other responsibilities we don't know.

We do know, however, that Stan Rader has been receiving numerous "special benefits" from Ambassador College. For instance, besides an unlimited expense account, he has servants whose salaries are paid for by the church. In that stack of approved requisitions discussed earlier are thousands of dollars worth dealing with redecorating a residence at 840 Loma Vista, Beverly Hills, California. That is Stan Rader's Beverly Hills home. One requisition for "all vinyls and carpeting for the Rader Residence" and "cleaning of draperies in the breakfast room and the family room" alone totals \$5,553.88. Stamped across this requisition in bold print is the word EMERGENCY. We hope the Raders were able to weather that crisis. We can imagine how difficult it would be for them not to have their draperies in perfect condition.

Another questionable area surrounding Rader involves ownership of the college's aircraft. We have on tape this comment by Stan Rader concerning the church's jets:

"Actually I am a one-third owner of the aircraft which had been leased to the college, and the college is paying a very fair price for them." (Stan Rader, ministerial meeting, Pasadena, March 7, 1974.)

Why he should own approximately \$2 million worth of what was believed to be the church's assets is a question we'd like him to answer.

**Where Has All the Money Gone?** Unfortunately, Stan Rader is just the tip of a very ugly iceberg. A far more important area of ethical impropriety revolves around the question of what has become of those assets accumulated through the many years of repeated Armstrong appeals for money. Those of us who have contributed to the Armstrong organization were led to believe that our contributions were to be used for one specific purpose-namely, the spreading of the gospel. Implied, inferred, and often stated in those appeals was the concept that in order to get that gospel out the WCG needed to purchase presses, broadcasting equipment, school buildings, college facilities, church buildings, convention sites, and a summer camp. What has become of all those assets purchased "to get the gospel out"? Over 80% have been sold or are up for sale. What's become of all the resulting money?

Ted, in recent appeals, indicated that there was to be a greatly expanded radio and television outreach. However, a glance at the church's radio and television log shows the Armstrong program is now on fewer, not more, stations. Some of the money, of course, has gone to purchase and furnish the new Tucson homes of Herbert Armstrong, Ted Armstrong, and Stan Rader. And, ironically, as *The Plain Truth* magazine is dwindling in circulation, frequency of publication, size, and

quality, Herbert Armstrong, according to *New York Magazine*, has invested \$6 million of church funds into a corporation publishing *Quest/77* magazine.

A quick perusal of any issue of *Quest/77* clearly reveals that its worldly tone, use of outright profanity, message of man's hope lying in himself, and humanistic philosophy are all diametrically opposite to everything Herbert Armstrong and his son ever preached or claimed to believe in. *Quest/77* may be an informative and entertaining publication of high quality and wit, but the fact remains that it was founded with funds that were contributed by sincere and trusting Christians who were led to believe that those contributions were to be used for something very different. It's the same as contributing money to the Cancer Society and discovering later that the money was used to finance a cigarette factory.

Considering that during the last few years the WCG income has actually been dropping a bit, it's possible the Armstrongs are getting tired of the religion racket and are just moving on to greener fields. Whatever the case, they have raped the church and through the fear of hell fire, Armageddon, and "the end" are financially bleeding its members dry. I am reminded of the scriptural analogy: "the church is the body of Christ." If that is so, at the hands of the Armstrongs the church is experiencing a reenactment of the crucifixion.

It's time the leaders of the WCG be called into accountability. The WCG membership must demand that the WCG open its books to an audit by CPAs who have no connection with the organization. This is essential to regain the trust and loyalty of all the members. Surely if everything is in order, the church officials have nothing to fear or to hide. If this is not done, contributors should simply withhold their tithes and offerings in protest until this is done.

Maybe those who are still supporting the Armstrongs will wake up. But then again, maybe Herbert was right all along when he once pointed at his congregation and said, "You people are all dumb sheep!"

*-John Trechak*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### SPYING IN THE NAME OF GOD

The Worldwide Church of God's (WCG) rise from country-bumpkin church to eminence as a super-media cult is a fascinating financial success story. Starting in 1934 with a handful of backwoods country folk and barely enough money to subsist on, Herbert Armstrong proceeded to build a powerful fundamentalist church that garners more money per year than Billy Graham's and Oral Roberts' organizations combined.

In the early years the going was rough and the rewards few and far between. Herbert's efforts to build a large, stable church met one defeat after another, according to his autobiography. As soon as he gathered a group of followers in a city and turned his evangelizing efforts to another area, the first group fell apart. When he turned a group over to another minister whom he supposed he could trust, he claimed the minister suddenly became disloyal to him and turned the members of the group against him.

Partly because of these frustrations, Herbert decided to found a college to train men for the ministry who would remain loyal to him and his church. He reasoned that if he took young, impressionable minds and taught them the Bible according to his viewpoint, they would believe exactly like him, remain loyal to him, and enthusiastically assist him in proclaiming his unique gospel message. He was absolutely right.

During the 1950s his college-Ambassador College (AC)-produced a number of young, zealous, unswervingly loyal assistants made over into his image who adopted his teachings unquestioningly on practically everything. These men began to share Herbert's dreams and preach his message with fervency, but they were also haunted by his main fear: that of having loyal, *tithe-paying* church members-in whom they had invested time and money-leave the church over doctrines or follow some other religious leader or a disaffected member.

As AC and the local churches fathered by Herbert grew, the WCG leaders realized that they must never allow questioning of the church's basic doctrines and policies or criticism of the Armstrongs and the ministry, lest the church be split into small warring factions, as had happened several times in the early history of Herbert's church. Thus they attempted to cow the members into submission to their authority with intimidating statements that went something like: "To doubt is to be damned"; "Questioning doctrines is of the Devil"; "If you don't obey God's true servants and his apostle Herbert Armstrong, you will eventually be thrown into hell fire and burned up for all eternity!"

Still the WCG leadership realized that all members couldn't be intimidated by words. The leadership sensed it had to also possess the ability to detect and take effective action against any who dared threaten the corporate entity. So, feeling a need to preserve Herbert's church at all costs-but lacking a basic appreciation of their fellow man-the WCG leaders initiated a variety of malignant spying practices throughout the church and Ambassador College to insure that they would keep absolute control of the lives and minds of the AC students, faculty members, and church members. These methods, without exception, work at cross purposes with man's inalienable rights while showing little love for those unsuspecting people subjected to them.

**Keeping Tabs on Fellow Students.** When new students first set foot on the campus of Ambassador College-called "God's College"-they were embarking on an experience that was destined to change their beliefs, their values, and even their appearance. They were to be made over in the Armstrong image. The 1968-69 *Student Handbook*, describes what AC intended to do to the student:

"You are about to embark upon a most important phase of your life. At Ambassador College you will *become conditioned* for a new profession and a *new social behavior* to correspond to that profession" (p. 11, emphasis ours).

The WCG leaders weren't kidding when they wrote about reconditioning each student. The college officials in the 1950s and 60s took it upon themselves to manage every aspect of a student's life. They told Joe and Jane Student when to get up in the morning, how to make their beds, how long to pray, how to dress, whom they could date, how many times per year they could date an individual, which social functions they must attend, and when to go to bed. College officials did their level best to get to know each and every student: what was going on in each student's mind, what his deepest problems and hangups were, his past sex problems, etc.

But the college administrators didn't stop with this. They went so far as to encourage AC students and employees to spy and report on each other, especially if someone deviated even slightly from the strict policies of the WCG, which controls AC. They also appointed dormitory monitors to keep a watchful eye on the students. The monitors filled out and submitted special cards to the dean's office on students' attitudes, social life, prayer habits, spiritual condition, and study habits. The *Student Handbook* (1968-69) discussed a monitor's

responsibilities:

"Each dormitory is staffed with a House Monitor, a Monitor for each floor or apartment, and assistants in each room.... These students are dedicated to the ideals of the college and to serving you.... It is your responsibility as a Monitor to get to know ALL the students; to help and encourage them insofar as you are qualified, and be able to refer them to the proper channel for guidance; to see that the students are obeying college rules... to write a weekly report which is due at the Dean of Students' Office at 8:00 A.M. every Monday; to check sign out cards and record violations; to turn in special monitor reports on individuals who have significant problems or who have made special progress. (p. 52).

AC administrators required female students to sign out and sign in when they left their dorm and returned. They had to list their destination and the name of their male escort. The administration publicly claimed these cards were filled out only so a student could be found in case of an emergency. Yet the cards were eventually turned in to the dean's office for evaluation, enabling the college to keep tabs on who dated who and how often. If a student insisted on ignoring AC's dating rules, he could be dismissed for displaying a "bad attitude" and for failing to obey God's "servants."

College students and employees, as well as WCG members, were encouraged in college forums and assemblies to divulge their deepest problems to WCG ministers, who often doubled as AC administrators. Those who didn't get the hint to voluntarily become a "known quantity" to the administration were sometimes called in, often because other students had reported them for such "sins" as listening to rock music, holding hands with the opposite sex, sleeping too late, not dating enough, or perhaps for not attending Friday night Bible study at the college.

When students counseled for baptism, they were encouraged-often by two ministers at a time-to reveal their innermost sins or problems to the ministry. Hesitancy to reveal everything (headquarters ministers often already had copies of local ministers' "visit cards" loaded with information on the individual) was invariably met with a psychological assault against the individual's personality. The attack always focused on the individual's declared or undeclared "vanity," and information already in the files was introduced in a roundabout manner so as to make the minister appear almost omniscient. The student quickly became a "known quantity" to the administration. Facts gleaned in these counseling sessions were committed to memory and often reduced to writing, only to emerge again in "manpower meetings."

**AC's Manpower Committee.** As the student body burgeoned, it became tougher for the college directors to get to know each student. So a "manpower committee" was instituted in 1961 to discuss graduating students' merits and demerits to enable the AC/WCG leaders to decide whom to employ. These meetings allowed 15 to 30 college faculty members and department heads to assemble and discuss intimate, confidential material that each one of them had garnered on individual students from counseling sessions, dorm reports, etc. Often the characteristics that seemed to carry the most weight were a person's dating habits, nationality, physique, past emotional or sexual problems, or the

"spiritual" condition of his family. (Be sure to read "The Manpower Papers.")

What was said about a student in manpower meetings often determined whether or not he would be hired by the WCG or AC. Many a student was denied the job he had his heart set on because of certain evidence that was uncovered from his past life and discussed in these meetings. In the late 1960s, however, those who survived the close scrutiny of the manpower committee had to face yet another test.

**Lie Detector Tests.** In late 1968 some money and a few other items were stolen from AC's men's dormitories. The following week, in a sermon and later in a student assembly, Herbert Armstrong sternly commanded the guilty party to step forward, pronouncing a curse on any guilty person who didn't. Not a soul dared.

Obviously infuriated that no one would confess, Herbert Armstrong authorized administering a lie detector test to all of AC's male students. An AC graduate recounted his gruesome experience:

"Each student was notified when to come over to the second floor of what is now the Library Annex for his examination. One day I received a note in my mailbox informing me I had to take the exam the following day at 3 p.m. The thought went racing through my mind: 'If I flunk the test, I'll be kicked out of God's college, and I'm innocent. Psychologists say the lie detector test is accurate only 85% to 90% of the time. What if it is wrong and says I'm guilty?' I tried to put those thoughts out of my mind, but I was still nervous. At last 3 p.m. arrived, and I stepped into the building on time-anxious to get it over with. Because the testing was behind schedule, however, I had to wait another 30 minutes, and I sweated every minute of it.

"Finally a security guard summoned me into the examination room. I was seated in a chair and had devices attached to me. I felt like I was being put into the electric chair to be executed. I was asked a set of questions over and over for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, it was over. Still shaken, I went back to my dorm thanking God that the machine had told the truth. This was one of the most humiliating experiences of my life. It was as though I was guilty until proven innocent."

Unfortunately, some were never proven innocent. One barrel-chested weightlifter type failed the polygraph exam three times. This person did not fail because he was lying or because he had stolen anything. He failed because he had extremely high blood pressure, and the trauma of the test only exacerbated his bona fide medical condition. Nonetheless, he was never given a position of "responsible" employment by the church or college, in spite of the fact that he had given many thousands of dollars in tithes and offerings. Extreme as this abuse may sound, another individual was actually expelled from college after taking the lie detector test. Notice what was written about him in the "manpower notes" taken at manpower meetings:

"He was recently given a lie detector's test which shows him to be a liar and a thief, but since the test is not infallible, and he staunchly maintains his innocence, we cannot be sure that he is a thief and liar. The lie detector only records conscious thought, however, and *he was grilled for more than eight hours...*" (vol. III, p. 68, emphasis ours).

Shortly after his dismissal from the WCG and AC, the former Dean of Students (who presided over the 1968-69 polygraph period) related that hidden cameras were employed during this time. He mentioned that video tape equipment caught students smoking cigarettes and even masturbating. Two-way mirrors were utilized at the institution to catch students "stealing" milk and beer. Special identifying dyes that would not show up on one's hands until a few minutes after contact with the object that was coated with the dye were also used in student surveillance.

**Keeping Tabs on Church Members.** The WCG officials applied their "big brother" tactics not only at AC but also in their churches worldwide via Ambassador College trained ministers inculcated with a dorm-monitor mentality. Ministers were instructed, primarily by Rod Meredith, to visit each and every church member regularly and check up on their "spiritual" condition and their family lives. David Jon Hill, in a visiting program meeting on Dec. 16, 1962, explained how a minister should prepare to visit a WCG member:

"Plan the procedure of your visit before you arrive at your destination. Discuss with your second man a little of the background-what you know about the problems of the household, etc."

Following a visit with a member or prospective member, the minister was required to fill out a "visit card" on each household or person he visited and mail it to AC in Pasadena for filing. Rod Meredith went so far as to tell prospective ministerial trainees in a 1970 speech class that they should never visit a member and then go to their car and fill out a visit card on the member in front of his home, but rather they should drive out of sight around the corner before filling out the card. Notice Meredith's explicit instructions to ministers regarding how to report a visit:

"Enclosed is a supply of the new Visiting Cards.... Ideally, the cards should be filled out *immediately* after the visit in your car. Perhaps down the street and around the corner.... Think carefully and describe the *highlights* of the visit, the *problems* and *attitudes*.... If *deep problems* and *complications* arise, you may wish to *type* an additional 'Problem Report' on any one person or family occasionally.... Normally *two carbons* of these should be made and sent to Headquarters- one for us and one for the District Superintendent..." (ministerial letter, 12/24/65, pp. 2-3).

Surprisingly, the normally staid, placid WCG membership became extremely irritated by constant ministerial "pry and spy" visits. The visits raised such a furor that a four-page article by Garner Ted Armstrong was written to all members rebuking-you guessed it-the *members* for their attitudes, not the ministry. The article, titled "The Visiting Program... or Gestapo... Which?" opened with the question, "Are Christ's servants on the Visiting Program brethren, or spies? Are they sent to 'check up' on you, to 'watch' you-or to serve and help you?" (*The Good News*, May 1964, p. 3.) Garner Ted admitted that some families would not answer the door when WCG ministers dropped by and others were "secretive with the men on the Visiting Program." He confessed that disrespect for the visiting program was a "serious problem" and asked the members what they had to hide-all but implying that the ministers were indeed searching for something.

**Deacons Spied Too.** The AC graduates that became ordained WCG ministers took the "watchdog" attitude that permeated AC with them into local churches all over the world. They bequeathed this heinous "watch your brother" system to the deacons under them. One New Jersey deacon, a long-time WCG member, explained how deacons were used for spying:

"A few years after becoming a member of the Worldwide Church of God I was ordained a deacon. At the time I thought it was about the greatest event of my life, but sad to say I found out in later years that it only drove me deeper into a very misguided and somewhat corrupt organization.

"...Shortly after my ordination I was informally told by my minister and some of the local elders that part of my responsibility was to keep them informed about the behavior of the members that I came in contact with. My minister directly told me that I and other deacons were his eyes and ears since he could not possibly keep in contact with all of his people all of the time.

"Some of the things we were to watch out for were bad attitudes, lack of study and prayer, not keeping the Sabbath or for that matter any disagreement with Worldwide Church policies or doctrines. One of the worst offenses anyone could commit was to bad-mouth a minister or anyone in authority, especially Herbert W. or Garner Ted Armstrong.

"Many of the local elders and deacons would carry a notebook and jot down anything they saw that was not in accordance with WCG teachings. This information was then passed on to the minister for his evaluation and action.

"My wife was also told by a local elder that as a deacon's wife she also should circulate about the congregation and if per chance anything was picked up along these lines to let her husband know about it...

"With the information that I gathered and passed on via telephone or verbally, I myself caused many a visit to be paid on members by a minister or local elder... As you no doubt know, attendance of members at services was checked each week by us, and if some were delinquent too often, a visit was made by a minister....

"It was not uncommon for a husband or wife to turn his or her spouse in for some infringement of church policy or doctrine, and if the crime was bad enough, a visit from a Minister would follow....

"I was guilty of many of the things mentioned, and I can only say that I look back in disgust and regret to what I had allowed myself and family to become. I only hope that those I affected will forgive me even if they don't know I prayerfully asked for forgiveness...."

**The Spying Methods Change.** In the early 1970s, to save money, the WCG ministry was instructed to visit people only if they requested it. Garner Ted Armstrong discontinued the manpower meetings because " 'the manpower' committee meetings have become more and more a waste of time for the majority of those attending, and only partially useful in practical placement of personnel." He explained that "it will be no handicap whatever for various departments to obtain useful information about prospective employees...." Garner Ted also announced that he had had the Dean's extensive file of student dorm report cards burned, and he banned the dorm report-card system. In addition he

threw the AC coeds a sop when he stated that a woman didn't have to report who her male escort was on the dorm sign-out cards.

Just when the casual AC observer began to think AC's nosy, "I am my brother's keeper whether he likes it or not" attitude was mellowing, the AC directors, unknown to outsiders, were already busily utilizing new, more sophisticated methods of monitoring the behavior of their unsuspecting students and brethren.

**Tithe Checks.** In early 1968 Rod Meredith toured AC's new data processing center. Discovering to his pleasant surprise that the computer listed every contribution donated by an individual, he ordered Dan Porter from that day forward to check the tithe and donation records of all prospective ministers and of all ministers due to be elevated in rank. The ministry was notified of this new policy in a March 1, 1968, ministerial letter from Rod Meredith.

AC's computer soon proved to be everyone's favorite new toy. Though it didn't address the ministers with the "Mister" they were accustomed to, it gave them something the holy spirit never did-insight into the real attitudes of the "dumb sheep" (HWA's term for the WCG members) that they "watched" over.

As time passed, the ministry consulted their new-found crystal ball more and more frequently. The tithing records of whole church areas were subsequently checked via the computer.

**Curtailment of Freedom of Speech and Religion at AC.** Freedom of speech and religion has always been restricted at AC. While a student can belong to another church, he is quickly reported by the "system" if he discusses personal beliefs that differ with those of the WCG. Some have even been kicked out of college for talking too frequently about their beliefs.

In late 1973 and early 1974, college officials and members actively spied on the private lives of AC employees and WCG members. One official memorandum (document AR-147) reported that "on Sunday cars with Ambassador College parking stickers were seen parked at Dr. Martin's [a former AC faculty member] home." Then the memo stated the name of one person whose car was parked there. The memorandum also stated that "films were taken by a member in San Marino... of people entering [the] YMCA [for a religious meeting]. We should be getting duplicates of film later on."

In mid-1974, Jim Reed, a member of AC's data processing department, went to a religious meeting not sanctioned by AC. Spies reported it, and the next day he discovered a note attached to his apartment door. The note was from his supervisor, telling him not to bother reporting for work the next day. Several other AC employees and students were dismissed for religious beliefs they espoused or for attending non-WCG religious meetings. Numerous affidavits to this effect are currently on file with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in San Francisco and can be summoned under the Freedom of Information Act by interested parties.

An affidavit on file with the General Services Administration in San Francisco (dated May 12, 1976) delineates an eyewitness account verifying spying by church officials:

"It was then that... a 'close aide' of Garner Ted Armstrong was dispatched with the knowledge and approval of G. T. Armstrong to see if I or any other AC employees were attending Dr. Martin's lectures. On February 8, 1975... [the aide] parked his van across the street from the lecture hall. Then a photographer in the back went to work. He peaked out through curtains covering the side window, and began snapping picture after picture of those entering the lecture hall. My wife, young son, and I... passed directly in front of the camera. On other occasions, both before and after the above incident... [the aide] and various accomplices 'staked out' Dr. Martin's lectures."

Several AC/WCG employees and ministers even related to this writer that they strongly suspected their phones were being bugged. They have good reason to suspect it. According to the U.S. Attorney General's office, "eavesdropping" on telephone conversations is not illegal, since it implies the consent of one of the parties of the conversation and/or the owner of the phone. Ambassador College, as registered owner of the institution's pervasive Centrex system, has implied consent to eavesdrop on any conversation on any phone paid for by the college- and that includes all the Centrex phones in the homes of college and church executives. Technically this practice-if the college should choose to employ it-is beyond prosecution.

*Ambassador Report* has also discovered that both Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong have electronic eavesdropping devices in their fourth-floor office suites that enable them to secretly listen in on classroom lectures. More than one faculty member has been dismissed from the college under somewhat questionable rationale. The verification of such a listening device lends credence to the worst of suspicions.

**The Ministerial Masters.** Both the Armstrongs live their lives in continual danger-the danger of discovery. Any unplanned emergence of the truth about their personal lives and practices could severely cripple their capacity to generate more financial resources. They have never minimized the danger of this possibility and are continually on guard to protect their own manufactured facade, as well as their church's. The fact that the Armstrongs and their hierarchy are accountable to individual members-who in many cases have given their life's savings to the church-is viciously contested and constantly downplayed by the Worldwide Church of God, Inc. There is, however, little danger that the members would attempt to expose their shenanigans to the national press because members are basically unaware of how the church is run and what the personal lives of its leaders are like.

The Armstrongs do fear, though, that high-ranking executives who know "what's going on" will quit in disgust and leak "negative information" to the press-as several have already done. Anticipating this eventuality, the Armstrongs have initiated executive spying.

**The Spy Orders.** *Ambassador Report* has in its possession documents that absolutely verify the use of covert spying by members of the WCG administration against other top executives of that same organization. The first paragraph of one such document, AR-531, makes it clear that Garner Ted personally ordered the probing:

"Mr. GTA asked me to inquire of ministers attending the Cincinnati campaign concerning the recent regional meetings held in Cincinnati and Richmond. The following is the result.... The meetings were conducted by David Antion and Ed Smith... Several said they felt that there was a 'powerful spirit' working in the meetings. The following statements are reported to have been made by DAVID L. ANTION during the meetings on Monday, February 25: 1. The church governmental structure is all wrong...."

The informant went on to note telephone calls, classify the nature of these calls, and even the manner in which information was introduced in the meetings, carefully detailing inferences, implications, and emotional content. The report went on to monitor another meeting, noting and recording the names of those present and the length of the meeting. The report was terminated after a similar analysis of a third meeting.

A second report that was given to our staff, AR-313, is in the handwriting of a ranking executive/evangelist of the WCG. The executive recorded a large amount of defamatory information on a fellow evangelist in the church and submitted it personally to Herbert Armstrong. It begins:

"Dear Mr. Armstrong,

"X and others have recently brought to my attention certain information (facts) which is of such a nature that it must be brought to your and Mr. Ted Armstrong's immediate attention.... we would be derelict in our duty if we didn't inform you of the material in this report without further delay...."

The exhaustive, 19-page report claimed to present "incriminating" quotes from the mouth of a certain disliked evangelist and included testimony of over two dozen other executives. Every single one of the statements was levied against this minister behind his back! (Which scripture in the Bible justifies this treacherous treatment? Is this the way Christ intended his ministers to behave toward one another?) Almost no attempt was made to establish the context of the evangelist's purported statements. Not only was the report biased, but the man was not given a chance to answer the charges against him-or even told that charges against him existed. The report even described his affection toward his children in a negative tone. It went on to accuse him of assaulting an individual at a sports event and in general took every opportunity to attack the man's motives for certain internal judgments he had made on his job.

In promoting surreptitious monitoring of its executives, the institution is behaving like a shark that turns on its tail and begins to devour itself.

Thousands of loyal members have been forced out of the church by the

suffocating Armstrong belief that God gave them the sole right to supervise and limit the flow of ideas into the minds of their members. The Armstrongs have on many occasions censored the views their students and members can be exposed to-especially concerning Bible doctrines. They feel they should choose the persons or groups their followers should associate with. In doing this they do not present themselves as the servants they purport to be ("minister" means "servant" in the New Testament). Instead they present themselves as ministerial masters. Anyone who opposes or differs with them is said to be against God and for Satan, and immediately the organization moves to rid itself of that individual-no matter how much he has given to the organization in time, service, and money. Such individuals are expendable pawns in a chess game to be used or sacrificed according to the Armstrongs' whims.

The Armstrongs have played the corporate game well, succeeding where most fail. In fact, there has been nothing in the confines of organized religion they have been unable to accomplish-so long as they were not asked to love their fellow man. In that respect, however, they have failed miserably.

It's a disgrace that the Armstrongs and certain leaders in the WCG have passed themselves off as God's humble servants and preached about loyalty, love, and service while they were engaged in spying on church members, monitoring their lives, prying into their secret sins, and gossiping about, recording, and filing juicy tidbits they uncovered.

The Worldwide Church of God would be a refreshingly different church if its leading ministers would adhere to one biblical statement they seem to forget while spying on their employees and members: "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14). But those who ignore that verse had better heed the following one: "But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another."

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### HERBERT ARMSTRONG'S RELIGIOUS ROOTS

During the Ministerial Conference in May 1974, Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) applied Paul's statement from Galatians 1:11-12 to himself- "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Then Herbert added: "I say the same thing, brethren!" Not wanting to be outdone by Paul, Herbert claimed that he too learned "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He went on to say, "I was not converted as the result of the teaching or preaching of any man."

In a sermon on July 24, 1976, he declared, "I came to the truth in a way I know of no other church leader. I know of no other minister who ever came to it by himself through the leading of God in that way."

**The Origin of Herbert's Unique Doctrines.** The truth is, however, that many of the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God were plagiarized from other religious leaders and were not "revealed" personally to Herbert by God, as he claims. Consider for a moment that a SeventhDay Adventist publication, *Prophecy Speaks*, was reprinted almost verbatim with many of its gross inaccuracies in Herbert Armstrong's *Proof of the Bible* booklet. (Read the article "Herbert Armstrong 'Disproves' the Bible" for further information.)

Much of the material in HWA's book, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* (copyright 1967), was extracted nearly verbatim from John H. Allen's book *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* (written in 1902). Rather than give Allen the credit he deserved, HWA claimed God had revealed to him the "master key" that unlocks the meaning of the Bible's prophecies. He stated that this special key was "the identity of the United States and the British nations" (*The United States and British Commonwealth in*

*Prophecy*, 1967, p. 8). However, the British Israelism theory, which taught essentially the same thing as HWA wrote in his book, had been in existence at least 50 years before Herbert ever came on the scene.

On at least two occasions different Ambassador College employees have discovered boxes in Herbert's basement containing magazines entitled *The Remnant of Israel*, as well as a great deal of other related religious material. All this material was published by G. G. Rupert (1847-1922) of Britton, Oklahoma. When we compare Rupert's beliefs with Herbert's, we find them to be identical in many respects. (This subject was researched for the WCG in a paper written by Richard C. Nickels in 1972.) Some of the teachings that Rupert and Herbert Armstrong both advocate are: tithing, observing the sabbath and the holy days of Leviticus 23, keeping the Ten Commandments, observing the Passover on Nisan 14, church eras, a form of British Israelism, the correct name of God's church is "Church of God," man doesn't have an immortal soul, Christians shouldn't observe Christmas and Easter, the holy days foreshadow God's plan, anointing and laying hands on the sick, sending anointed cloths to the sick, avoiding any military service, not voting, not electing church officers or ministers, there is only one true church, not eating unclean meats, the end is near, and singing psalms rather than the traditional Protestant hymns. (See *The Remnant of Israel* by G. G. Rupert, April 1919, June 1919, Sept. 1921; also see *Is There a True Church Organization* by G. G. Rupert, written in 1919.)

The significance of this discovery is that it shows Herbert's main beliefs were not uniquely revealed to him by God but were simply taken from other ministers and publications and pawned off as his own unique, divinely revealed teachings.

At the May 1974 Ministerial Conference Herbert Armstrong continued to perpetuate the idea that all his beliefs came directly from God: "I did not go to any minister, to any seminary, to any religious school, to any religious denomination, any man or group of men, but I was taught by God in his Book." The truth is that HWA ripped off the research and teachings of others and palmed them off as his own, and then even had the audacity to claim that God had something to do with it!

Adolf Hitler stated in *Mein Kampf*: "The great masses of the people... will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one." Herbert had duped many with his "big lie" regarding the origin of the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God.

**Herbert and His Association With the Church of God.** A second "big lie" that Herbert tells is that he was never a member of the Church of God groups with whom he associated: "For some years I worked in cooperation with the Church of God.... I never joined them-never became one of their members" (member letter, May 2, 1974, p. 2).

Research, however, has once again shown that accuracy is not one of Herbert's strong points. David M. Kauer, secretary-treasurer of the Church of God (7th day), Denver office, stated in a letter to B. R. Guillory dated March 19, 1974, that

"Mr. Armstrong was a minister of the Church of God (7th Day)." John Kiesz, long-time minister of the Church of God (7th Day) and associate of HWA till 1945, stated in material mailed from Stanberry, Missouri, on March 26, 1973, that "Brother Armstrong... received his credentials from the Salem [West Virginia] group about the fall of 1934. I was one of the officers of the Salem Church of God at that time." Carlo E. Rasmussen of the Church of God (7th Day), Salem, West Virginia, office stated in a letter to P. Boehnhardt, dated February 27, 1973, that "Mr. Herbert Armstrong was a member of this Church of God and was even one of the Seventy Prophets until he departed on his theory of British Israelism, which he preaches today. The other officers in the Church studied this teaching for one whole year and concluded it could not be proven through the Scripture."

The following quote is from a letter written by HWA to the Salem Church of God on January 29, 1934, just three weeks *after* his true church had supposedly begun: "I hasten to follow your suggestion, and enclose herewith my acceptance of the ministry of one of the Seventy." The acceptance states:

"I am anxious to begin on the ministry... in the one body, and am determined... to live and teach the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, as found in the Holy Scriptures, and as outlined in the Constitution of the Church of God.... Will you please record this my acceptance, and have credentials issued to me...."

Note that HWA acknowledged that they were "the one body."

In a letter to Salem, West Virginia, dated August 15, 1934, HWA affirmed that his views were "in harmony and accord" with their "40 Points of Doctrine" and that his teaching was "not out of harmony with that of the other ministers of the church."

Well, one lie leads to another. Herbert now says: "I was not a member of this Salem organization, nor did they pay me any salary" (member letter, May 2, 1974, p. 4).

Elder Straub, one of Armstrong's fellow ministers in the Church of God who now lives in Lodi, California, was contacted by telephone in early 1974 by Martin Lieber. Here's what Elder Straub said on the subject:

"Just the other day... when I talked to Brother Helms I said, 'Why he [HWA] claimed he never took any money from the organization.' He [Helms] said, 'Oh, that's a big fib.... Everything he ever got never got to any place else but him-he hung on to it pretty tightly.'"

Elder Straub continued, referring to a confrontation with Herbert in 1935:

"When he [HWA] said that he never received that money, Elder Haber [the treasurer] went to his briefcase and he got a check, over \$500. It was over \$500 which was cancelled by Herbert. He said, 'Herbert, what is this here? You never received any money from the organization? What is this here?'... That was too convincing, I mean, that was an open falsehood."

Chris W. Royer of the Church of God (7th Day), Salem, West Virginia, office

stated in a letter to Bill Hughes, dated July 22, 1976, that "it is time consuming to go through old records. However, in our ledger we find that Mr. Armstrong received pay as late as March 1937."

Yet Herbert recklessly declared:

"I received no salary or remuneration of any kind from either the Salem or Stanberry organization....' The story that I went out from them... is 100% false! I was never even a member of them" (member letter. May 2, 1974, p. 4).

Herbert *did* leave the Church of God, but why? Did he have a genuine conscience problem over a doctrinal point? Officially, "it was basically his teaching on British Israel and the observance of the Feast Days which led to his separation [in 1938] from the church" (Kauer letter, March 19, 1974). At the Ministerial Conference in May 1974 HWA claimed that he didn't leave the Church of God because of doctrinal reasons but because he merely got so busy that he "just didn't have time to work with them anymore."

In an April 1939 *Good News* article (p. 7) he justified his leaving the Church of God and starting his own work by declaring:

"Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church government, or set men in authority over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church."

Now that HWA's church organization has grown large and wealthy, he has disavowed his 1939 statements.

So by Herbert's own admission, he "fell away" from what he stated was the one true church of God. Remember, HWA said the Philadelphia era began in August 1933 (*The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, p. 492), and yet on January 29, 1934, he affirmed in writing that the Salem Church of God was "the one body"-God's one true church.

Here, perhaps are the real reasons why HWA left the Church of God as put forth by some of his fellow ministers:

**John Kiesz:** "The real reason seems to have been because of his uncooperative attitude.... Nobody can work with him."

**Brother Helms:** "Herbert wouldn't study.... Herbert was always the big man and everybody else was the little man."

**Elder Haber:** "He [HWA] said that he didn't have to pay any attention to anybody."

**Elder Straub:** "Here was the point. We put him on the radio. It was the church.... But he wasn't willing to study with the ministers, and what the Church of God was teaching.... There was no way of reasoning with the man.... He had his way, he ordered the people...."

In 1935 the ministers offered him a study [of British Israelism], to sit together and study it out; they wanted to know. And he flatly denied and said, 'There will be no study. I'm going to preach what I think should be preached.' He's definitely an independent man that takes nothing from nobody.... He won't listen to any reasoning. What he says just goes. How can one man be so sure?"

It is obvious, then, from history and from the mouths of several different individuals that HWA did not receive his teachings from God by revelation and that he was both a member and minister of the Church of God-which he called the true church and which he left.

*-Robert Gerringer*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### THE EDIFICE COMPLEX



#### **ARMSTRONG ANNOUNCES NEW CAMPUS BUILDING**

*Herbert Armstrong has wanted to build a new church headquarters building for several years and recently discussed plans with his architects for another fabulous building on the Ambassador College campus. In fact, he tried to make an announcement of these plans in a recent co-worker letter. Unfortunately, Ted Armstrong and Robert Kuhn excised Herbert's announcement because finances were tight and with Ted putting the finishing touches on an emergency letter asking for more money, it would look bad for Herbert to be planning a new*

*building. Nevertheless, inside sources report the desire for this "last erection" remains a strong passion in Herbert's heart. Whether he will ever get his wish remains to be seen. In the meantime, after studying literally hundreds of Herbert's famous co-worker letters, we of the Ambassador Report staff believe we can capture the spirit of that glorious yet future co-worker letter in which Herbert makes the grand announcement.*

DEAREST CO-WORKERS in the Gr-r-r-eatest Work on Earth:

Here I am flying at 55,666 feet above Africa on my way to visit Uganda's president, Idi Amin. As I type, mother Earth is making her last dying revolutions around the sun, and the end time we have lived in since 1934 is drawing closer to the end. As I sit here stupefied in these dizzying times sipping sherry, I KNOW as never before that we are running down the *home stretch* of the gun lap to victory. Why just a year ago the governments I visited were toppling right after I left them. Now they're failing even BEFORE I can get there to give them MY wonderful GOSPEL-the good news of the get/give principle.

Brethren, it's now obvious that the four horsemen of the apocalypse are beginning their prophesied ride. Just yesterday I learned the jelly bean crop in Alberta has been virtually wiped out by a virulent venereal disease prevalent among boll weevils. Groups of Communist Eskimo guerrillas are running rampant in Alaska. Our respected News Bureau informs me that there have been 12 cases of swine flu in the U.S., and 12 is a complete number, the number of beginnings-and this IS just the beginning of sorrow. One-third of Americans are prophesied to perish in horrible disease epidemics, and they are beginning. You HAVE BEEN WARNED! Yet skeptics sneer at my prophecies, claiming they never come to pass. But co-workers, to doubt is to be DAMNED!

Now for some great news-another NEW *giant step forward* for the Work. I can now announce that the auditorium was not my LAST erection! Co-workers, I am the organ through which the Great Creator is reproducing himself. God's Work never stops growing! I plan to erect another fabulous building that will compare favorably with our auditorium, the greatest building in all the world! This new erection will rival the Great Pyramid in design excellence, the British Parliament in stateliness, the Pussycat Theater in drawing crowds, Versailles Palace in cost, and the Watergate Hotel in notoriety. It will be a 19-story skyscraper (in honor of the holy time cycle, on which this Work is based) to house our 1,500-volume library and Dr. Hymen Haywire's rare book collection.

We have *diligently* searched the scriptures and sources that agree with my way of thinking to determine how to design this edifice. Our doctrinal committee members voted unanimously for my plan-it was really God's plan because I have God's mind. (It's true 15 of them resigned, but for health reasons only.) We agreed that the whole structure should be designed on the principle of church government-the biggest and MOST important on TOP and the dumb sheep holding up the bottom. (The Bible does call you sheep, brethren, and with good reason.) Hence each story of the building will be shaped like a fat, giant square. The top one will represent me and be the biggest, and as you get closer to the

bottom, each square will progressively get smaller. The whole erection will rest on a revolving solid gold turntable donated by the widows of the Pasadena church. The turntable will make one revolution every 7 hours (7 is a biblical number of perfection), stopping to rest on the 7th day-unless I'm entertaining foreign dignitaries.

The first-story walls will be composed of solid Steuben crystal. As people enter the structure, they will see a 12-foot-high statue of me in Steuben crystal-donated free of charge in recognition of my purchasing \$1,000,000 worth of Steuben crystal. There will be a giant opening in the middle of the first 7 stories in which palm trees and imported African climbing vines will grow. My dear friend, President Kenyatta of Kenya, promised to ship me hundreds of live African birds to fly in the building's center section, which will have a mammoth jewel-incrusted chandelier with 10,000 lights hanging from the ceiling.

Each floor will house specific departments. On the first levels will be editorial offices, janitorial storage areas, and a huge room to house bird feed for the African birds. On the 8th floor will be a mahogany sauna room for key AC officials and WCG pastors.

Lately, I've noticed many of our top men here at HQ are spending their whole afternoon away either at lunch or at the handball courts. To keep them nearby when I need them, the new edifice will house a plush restaurant designed in Corinthian architectural style. It'll be called the Red Light House and will serve my two favorite delicacies: chopped Italian Carrozoh and Roast Martin Supreme. On the floor below the restaurant we will construct several air-conditioned handball courts complete with a ministerial-faculty locker room furnished in typically *austere* AC style-a Hama-skin carpet, famous ancient Grecian art works, and the finest imported African ivory urinals and pink onyx shower floors. This will put real quality and character where it's MOST NEEDED in the Work. Co-workers I know some will accuse me of extravagance because of this. But believe me, it's extremely important that I impress foreign dignitaries with AC's emphasis on culture rather than on its immaculate lawns. Remember, though, God's way is *quality*-NOT extravagance!

The 13th floor will be reserved for Mr. Saintly Raider, my only counsel, to decorate as he pleases-since he owns 51% of the building.

The offices of Garner Stud Headstrong will adorn the spacious 18th floor. He will be served by a comely secretarial staff providing full services. Stud's office will come complete with a bed in case he, as the second most important man in the world after me, has to work late into the night rehearsing for Hee Haw or planning hunting and fishing expeditions.

Atop the 19th floor above my office will be a special heliport so Ambassador executives can be ferried to and from the airport where their respective jets are hangared.

This new structure will be dubbed the Indira Gandhi Memorial Library. I've met her several times on my round-the-world gospel-preaching flings. She ran her nation so much like I run AC and the Worldly Church of God-like God's government-that I chose to honor her in this way. The library, by the way, will be housed in the basement. (There was no other place for it once space was allocated for the restaurant, handball courts, and the executive office suites.)

To pay for this \$100,000,000 structure, I'm reinstating the doctrinal committee with explicit orders to find biblical proof for a 4th, 5th, and 6th tithe. Personally, I feel the book of Lamentations will provide the solid scriptural proof I want.

This marvelous library building will further accent AC's long-time stress on academic excellence. While the college's academic division has gone unaccredited for the 29th year in a row, the college's landscape engineering division again won the award for the most ostentatiously landscaped college in the world. AC is the only college in the world with a 10 to 1 gardener to student ratio. That's one of the many unique advantages AC offers over other pagan colleges that only teach one how to earn a living. But with this new building, people won't come to AC just to sniff the flowers. They'll come to seek knowledge.

To properly dedicate this grand structure, I'm budgeting \$1,000,000 to fly the premier orchestra of Southeast Asia-the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra and Marching Band-over for a dedication concert. It's true the construction crews will have to WORK on the sabbath and the holy days to finish the building on time, but God didn't object when we did this to finish the auditorium on time for Vienna's second-best orchestra.

Now for a *serious* matter. You co-workers have been letting down in prayer because the income is only up 25%. What do you think my airplane runs on-peanut butter, honey, and pickles? As Malachi surely meant to say, "Not by might nor by power nor by my spirit, but by MANDATORY TITHING! Will a man ROB God's Apostle?" Brethren and co-workers, you've got to sacrifice MORE! Give me your money while it still has value. Go without food twice a week instead of once a week, as you are presently doing. Remember, you were called to support *me*. Without your money, it is impossible for me to please God. This Work can do nothing without the almighty dollar. Some have thought God would be displeased if they starved their families to support my Work. I think NOT! You all KNOW I think not!

I want to again stress that my trips are not for personal pleasure or aggrandizement. They ARE bearing fruit! I have converted 7 people in Japan in the last 8 years of conducting personal testimonials-and 7 is a perfect number. As a result of making new acquaintances with world leaders on these trips, I've found a buyer for the Big Sandy campus-which we can't afford anymore due to the spiraling cost of jet fuel. One of my "Japanese sons" will buy the campus for \$50,000, and I'm selling before he lowers the offer. By the way, I have put Saintly Raider over the Work's money now that he's been baptized. He has assured me repeatedly that he'll TAKE CARE of me!

I have a new booklet to offer-the MOST IMPORTANT SINCE THE BIBLE was written. It's *The Missing Dimension Unveiled at Last!* This book is loaded with dogmatism, dozens of statistical surveys from 19th-century works, doomsday sketches, and pictures of me and Raider- everything but strong biblical truth. We just can't AFFORD to mention the Bible in this booklet lest we offend the world leaders I hobnob with. Though none of the apostles preached the gospel like this, remember, God IS leading me. This booklet is absolutely free of charge-we couldn't sell it if we wanted to. But don't forget that God loves a cheerful *tithe payer*.

I have just walked through two more closed doors. I can see an Unseen Hand in this in spite of my eyesight. Huge Heftner has asked to meet me and my son Garner Stud, who is now the Vice-Editor-in-Chief of *The Blind Truth*. Heftner wants to use my unique explanation of *cause* and EFFECT as the basis for a new series of articles on sex, which is aptly being titled "Open Wide for the Worldwide." So we will reach 20 million *Plowboy* readers with the true gospel-news about cause and effect. I intend to run full-page ads in *Plowboy* offering a new booklet, *Just What Do You Mean ... Only Two Positions for Sex?* In this monumental booklet, I reveal for the first time in human history what the Third Position is and why it's utterly pagan.

But Satan is angry. He's out to get me and my son Stud. Remember 3 things: (1) No one who kept faithfully giving 30% of his income to this Work has ever left. (2) No one who has kept his heart in the Work has ever allowed the truth to influence him to leave. (3) Everybody who attempts to put his personal relationship with God and obedience to him ahead of this GREAT WORK-and God's government on earth-always ends up leaving sooner or later. So hold fast to the faith I once delivered you. Don't forget, God binds in heaven what my church-even in unrealized error-has bound on earth!

Brethren, I'm deeply concerned for your well-being. Nothing else is on my mind-except the delights of marriage. So keep praying and PAYING, and you'll be blessed.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



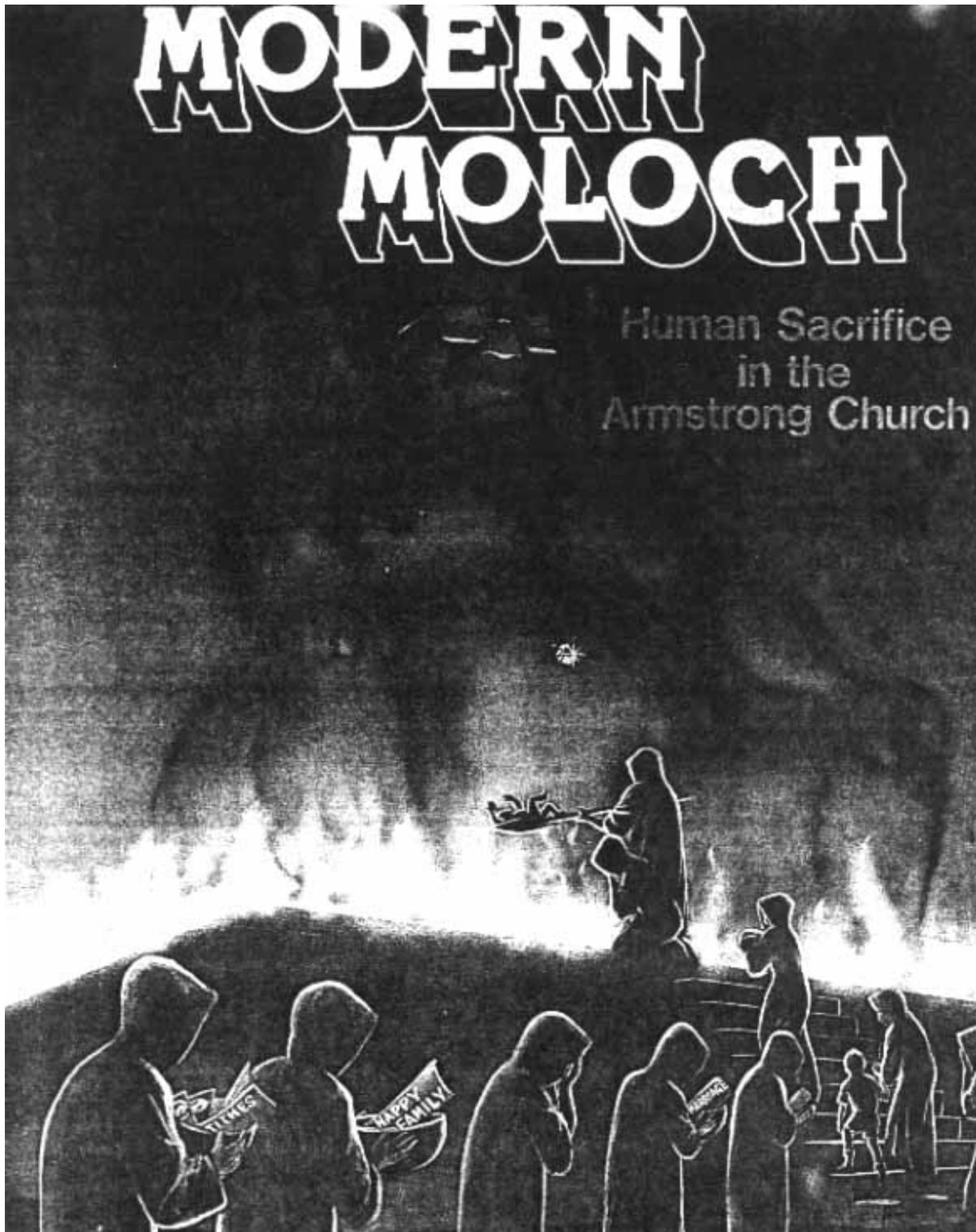
# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

# MODERN MODERN MOLOCH

Human Sacrifice  
in the  
Armstrong Church





"So the child is a vegetable and can't move anything except her eyes and is lying there when she could have had a normal life. It's too late. You can't go back and change that. Now, does God lay that at the door of the entire church? Is that Mr. Herbert Armstrong's fault?" (Garner Ted Armstrong, ministerial meeting, March 7, 1974.)

The preceding tragedy occurred after a young couple with a very sick child decided, based on the Worldwide Church of God's teaching and their minister's advice, to abandon confidence in modern medical science and instead "trust in God." The consequences of that decision were, as Garner Ted indicated, not only tragic but quite permanent. Unfortunately, the case is not an isolated one.

I recently asked a former high-ranking minister of the Worldwide Church of God if he knew personally of any cases of church members dying as a result of the Armstrong healing doctrine. This is what he told me:

"Yes, absolutely. Many. I can specifically recall one case that plagues me even yet and that's ---'s little boy, five years old, who had spinal meningitis. Dr. McReynolds, the Seventh-day Adventist doctor who worked with the church, was advising them to take the child to the hospital and try a new treatment that was 90% to 100% effective. The people asked me what they should do, and I kept saying, 'Read the booklet [Herbert Armstrong's healing booklet], follow God, and have faith.' So they did. They remained faithful to the doctrine of the church. I didn't tell them to do it, but I sure encouraged them. And the little boy died. I remember it so well because it was such a tragic incident, and Dr. McReynolds was so angry. He just flailed at me and said, 'That's just an absolute waste of human life, and there's no reason for it,' and he just let me have it.

"I know of literally scores or hundreds of cases like this. There's no way to determine the exact number of people who were affected. We're talking about a forty-year period. I think thousands actually died over the years as a result of this doctrine."

**Faith, Physicians, and Monkey Pus.** As with so many other doctrines of the Worldwide Church of God, the healing doctrine's official codification took the form of a booklet written by the church's founder Herbert W. Armstrong. Titled *Does God Heal Today?*, the 21-page publication (copyrighted in 1952) was distributed through Ambassador College, the church's educational arm, for almost 20 years.

Herbert Armstrong answered his booklet's title question by saying that God never changes. He healed in the past, and he heals today. Unfortunately, his booklet went much further than simply extolling God's love and omnipotence. The fanatical nature of his teachings can be easily seen in the booklet's subheads: "God the Only Real Physician," "Scripture Labels Other Modes of Healing Idolatry," "Medicine Condemned as Idolatry," "The Pagan Origin of Medicine."

Strangely, according to Herbert Armstrong's way of thinking, modern medicine should play virtually no part in healing the sick. He claimed the real purpose of physicians was "to prevent sickness, not heal after you are sick!" (*Does God Heal Today?*, p. 15.) Further, he taught that trusting in medical science is a sin!

"We take the broken bread unworthily if, and when, we take it at communion service and then put our trust in doctors and medicines, instead of in Christ—thus putting another god before Him!" (p. 14; the excessive usage of capitalized and italicized words in WCG literature is omitted from the quotes used in this article.)

What then was the sick Christian to do? Herbert's answer is found on page 19:

"Here's God's instruction to you, today, if you are ill. If we are to live by every Word of God, we should obey this Scripture. God does not say call your family physician. Instead, notice:

"'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil...!' (Jas. 5:14-15).

"He does not say, call the doctors and let them give medicines and drugs, and God will cause the medicines and drugs and dope to cure you. Yet that seems to be the way many professing Christians believe, because it's what they practice.

"Instead God says call God's ministers. And let them pray, anointing with oil...."

But what if that alone didn't work? The little booklet answered that one too:

"Don't pay any attention to how you feel, or what you see, after you have called upon God for healing. Just know you are to have it-

and that's that!" (p. 20.)

Sadly, for many who followed this advice to the letter, the results were exactly "that's that"-they died. (In fact, Herbert Armstrong's own wife and son Dick died, preferring to forgo normal medical attention and instead trust God for healing.) Some, of course, were "healed." But many who did survive a serious illness without medical assistance did so with much needless pain and suffering.

To the suffering Christians who were tempted to call a physician, Herbert, in another booklet titled *What Is Faith?*, offered this advice:

"Your healing, God has promised, shall be according to your faith. Faith is trusting God to do that which He has not yet done. After the healing is completed, you no longer need to exercise faith.... but your faith must remain firm and steadfast, and patient, regardless of what you see or feel, until God actually heals you, as He has promised to do....

"The instant you yield to the devil's influence over your human nature and render a verdict that God will not do what He promised just because He has not done it yet-that moment you make God out a liar-you lose all faith in God; and you thereupon break your part of the agreement, which is to have faith and keep on having faith, and trusting God, and relying upon Him, until He performs what He promised..." (pp. 12-13).

Herbert Armstrong's writings constituted official doctrine to the Worldwide Church of God. But he was not the only church writer to teach on this subject. One typical article that appeared on the subject of healing was "The Origin of Medical Science" by Donald G. Wofford, a member of the news department of Ambassador College. It was published in the October 1959 issue of *The Good News*, then a church magazine for baptized members. The article was also distributed during the next ten years as a reprint for those requesting it.

The author of this article found great significance in the fact that ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome had physicians who in many cases used techniques somewhat similar to modern methods (i.e., drugs and surgery). He also attempted to connect the practices of modern-day doctors with the techniques of ancient idol-worshipping physicians:

"Baalzebub, the god of medicine, was the 'god of dung' or the 'god of filth.' Ancient physicians guided by their god Baalzebub used filth to try to prevent or cure disease, just as today doctors inject people with polio vaccine made from monkey pus.... Haven't most of you had pus and other filth put into your systems in the form of diphtheria, tetanus, smallpox, polio or other 'shots'?

"Baalzebub was called by various names in various parts of the world. In ancient Greece he was known as Aesculapius and 'appeared in the form of a serpent'-a type of Satan!... Even in ancient times men believed God worked through the doctors with their knives and drugs. But they did not realize that this was not the true God of the universe, but it was 'the god of this world' (II Cor. 4:4), Satan the Devil. He appeared as a serpent in the garden of Eden and deceived Eve into taking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Yes, Satan the Devil is the founder and perpetrator of modern medical science!" (p. 6.)

The article concluded with a sobering warning:

"...(Rev. 21:7-8). The word here translated 'sorcerers' comes from the Greek pharmakeus which means one who prepares or administers drugs-'a druggist' or 'a pharmacist' or a 'poisoner.'... Drugs are poisons and every 'poisoner' is going to end up in the lake of fire unless he repents.

"Either we trust God to heal our diseases... or trust in medical science-which won't help us and which God terms 'sorcery,' 'witchcraft' and 'idolatry'-and suffer agony now and an excruciating death-the second death in the lake of fire" (p. 8).

The Wofford article was not an isolated example of this type of writing, nor was it in any way considered heresy by the Armstrong organization. Its sentiments were in complete harmony with Herbert Armstrong's healing booklet. The same fanaticism on medicine and healing was disseminated for years in other articles, sermons, letters, and especially in private counseling by WCG ministers.

For instance, notice the following quotes, all taken from articles written by WCG ministers:

"You can go to doctors for your healing if you want to-the Church of God advises you that this is not the way to be healed. It is just not within the power of another human being to forgive your sin and heal your body!" (David Jon Hill, *The Good News*, Aug. 1964, p. 8.)

"Jesus conferred this power on His Apostles and they continued-after His death-to heal in this same miraculous way. Throngs of people were raised up whole and sound because of the divine intervention of God. Those who asked in faith were healed!

"The ministry of God has the very same power today.... You can have faith God will heal you! But You May Die! (Clint C. Zimmerman, *The Good News*, Feb. 1965, p. 3.)

"To rely on any foods, supplements, medicines, drugs, knives, or even on fasting, for healing (and none of these can, ever have, or ever will heal!) is to break the commandment against idolatry!" (Garner Ted Armstrong, The Good News, June 1964, pp. 4, 22.)

Obviously, to church members the doctrine of healing had many ramifications. Members, for instance, often saw no need in carrying health insurance. Parents often refused to have their children vaccinated for school. (Just recently during a severe measles outbreak among children in the Los Angeles area, many WCG parents refused to allow their children to be immunized against measles.) Church members would not contribute to the March of Dimes, the Heart Fund, or the Red Cross because they felt these organizations used "the devil's way" of medicine. Many members even went so far as to refuse X-ray checkups or Novocain when getting dental work performed. Ironically, dental work itself was okay-one of the many inconsistencies in the church's practice of the doctrine. At one time, members were even advised that they shouldn't take aspirin-because it was a drug-but members were often encouraged by certain ministers to take vitamins to solve their health problems.

The doctrine also had a profound effect on those converts who happened to earn their living in any facet of the medical profession. In almost all cases, for instance, registered nurses employed by hospitals were required to quit their jobs and find other employment before they could be baptized. The same applied to medical technicians, pharmacists, and, as one 1964 official church directive shows, to all hospital employees including janitors and gardeners! Physicians who joined the church could continue to practice, but only in a limited way since surgery and drugs were taboo. A number of physicians did join the church over the years and some were actually employed by it to function in a limited capacity. I personally heard Garner Ted Armstrong on a number of occasions smugly comment that when members of the press asked him if he believed in doctors he would reply, "Sure I believe in doctors. We even have a number on the church's payroll." He of course, would neglect to mention the large number of prohibitions placed on doctors by the church.

Recently, one informant provided me with photostat copies of numerous "visit cards" that the Worldwide Church of God has on file. (At my request, the names of the interviewees were removed to protect their privacy.) "Visit cards" were the reports ministers filled out after counseling with church members and potential members. I have seen a number which clearly indicate that ministers, on many occasions, attempted to offer medical advice that only a doctor would be qualified to give. Instances of spiritual intimidation are also evident on these cards. For example, before me I have copies of visit cards one minister filled out after counseling sessions with a prospective member in 1970. The minister wrote this after his first session with the individual:

"Has a severe asthmatic condition. Attitude toward church and healing very good, but dependent on daily use of medication to forestall attacks. Very difficult situation."

The prospective member was advised to make a study of faith and healing. After the second visit the minister wrote:

"Counseled for baptism. Advised to wait pending outcome of decision on asthmatic drugs."

After the third visit he reported:

"Making excellent progress toward getting rid of asthmatic drugs. Has taken no shots in several weeks. Approved for baptism."

**Watching Out for the D.A.** By continuing to embrace its bizarre healing doctrine, the Armstrong organization exposed itself to both serious legal difficulties and notoriety. Secrecy, therefore, enshrouded the church's belief in healing. Ministers were continually admonished by headquarters to use great care in the handling of medical problems.

The church's legal department helped prepare a list of instructions given to ministers in the late 1960s to help them handle these problems. In many ways the list of instructions, titled "How to Deal With Health and Medical Problems," amounted to nothing more than a crash course in how to lie effectively. The following excerpts shed a great deal of light on the methods used by the Armstrong organization in keeping both legal authorities and the news media ignorant of what was really occurring:

**"I. Advising on Health Problems.** Caution must always be exercised in advising on a person's health problems, lest you be found to be practicing medicine.... If a person practices medicine without a license, and the patient should die, the wrongdoer could be prosecuted for manslaughter or murder! Now you can see why extreme caution must be exercised in advising brethren in God's Church concerning their health problems...

**"II. How Prosecution Begins in Case of Death.** ...As this type of case is not so well known as the obvious type of crime such as murder or robbery, there is always the possibility that he [the D.A.] might choose not to prosecute. This is the type of circumstance where a 'contact' is invaluable. The prosecutor might easily be persuaded by a friend to drop the matter so long as the newspapers

have not made major news of it....

## "Just Take Out the Tubes"

### letters on healing

In our files are numerous letters which document the disastrous consequences of one of the most regrettable aspects of the "Ambassador Experience"-the Armstrong doctrine of divine healing. The following excerpts and condensations represent only a few of those letters.

...my wife became very ill with chronic ulcerated colitis. After she had lost considerable amounts of blood, the local deacon granted us permission to take her to the hospital for transfusions. Well, she was there about two months and the minister told me on the sly one evening at the Spokesman's Club meeting that he'd just take out the tubes, stop all medications, and accept the resurrection, that is, just let her die. This was after I had told him about the prognosis by the attending doctor: She either had to have immediate surgery or she'd die.

I never told my wife at the time about what the minister had said and she went ahead with the operation. It was just a matter of time before she made a successful recovery ....

I fell into disfavor as a consequence of the operation and was badmouthed in [church] services. But I just ignored it and accepted what they had to dish out.

Louisiana

It seemed that all too many members were constantly on the alert to spot someone faltering in their faith or committing some sort of unchristian act, like taking an aspirin. This brings a very sore point to mind concerning WCG policy on healing. Many people suffered needlessly while headquarters personnel took care of themselves. I recall one very grave incident where a young girl was suffering from appendicitis. Many prayers were said for her by members and visits were made by the ministry for anointing and counseling. In a serious situation like this the counseling would also include a warning that if the child were to die (which she did, it ruptured) to be prepared with a story for the authorities so as not to get the church involved. The church was to be protected at all costs (even lying). I can remember getting a sermon about just this type of situation. I also remember riding with a local elder to visit someone who was sick at the feast. The elder was telling me about how sick his daughter was and that he had prepared a story for the local authorities should she die. (She didn't in this case.)

former Deacon New Jersey

...If you saw a doctor, took medicine, entered a hospital or had surgery, Your name was not mentioned in church and hence you got no prayers or sympathy. I desperately needed prayers and visits from those I thought to be Christian people. If you had a kink in your back and were not able to attend services for a week or so, it was played up big as a bad illness from the pulpit, you were anointed [by the minister], and lo and behold the next sabbath you were there smiling and healed

Illinois

Regarding divine healing, we were admonished to trust in God, and well we should, but when our first son was sick near death, the local minister told us to take him in to a hospital. Apparently now our faith in God didn't matter, only how it would look for the WCG (actual local minister's comment) if our son died. We took him to the hospital and he lived. Maybe God in his mercy was trying to show us then that these people from the WCG only "healed the hurt of my people slightly," as it says in Jeremiah 6:14....

Canada

...I have almost lost my eye sight. I needed surgery but didn't have it done because we were told it wasn't right while the Armstrongs did what they pleased... I have personally known people [in the WCG] who have let their children die when they could have taken them to a doctor and saved them.

California

I have read a copy of Ambassador Review which was brought over by Mr. Charles Hunting while on a visit he had with a group of us. Being one of the many who suffered through the wrong decisions made by the ministers in the WCG resulting in the untimely death of my wife at the age of 34 years and my having to give up employment to attend to my two children then aged 1 and 4 years, I am glad to know that there are people who are courageous enough to publish the facts concerning the WCG.

Northern Ireland

One thing about Ambassador College: If you want to feel guilty, filled with dread, negative, superstitious, and generally fearful, then to be under their administration is the answer.

I almost died twice because of their fanatical nonbiblical teachings on healing. Once with appendicitis. This occurred not long after being told that it would be idolatry and a compromise of my faith to seek the help of a medical professional, and if I weakened or didn't rely on God for healing I would

suffer eternal death. The second occurrence was when I injured myself lifting and acquired a hernia. I sought the ministry three or four times during a period of 6½ years and repeatedly was told that to have an operation was out of the question, due to the fact that God could intervene.

England

On entering the WCG I was told we did not need health insurance as "faith in God was our insurance." My husband became disabled in 1972 and consequently instead of being eligible for free coverage until death, we are currently paying \$69.50 per month for same.

Washington

After nearly 14 years in the WCG and another year with a similar group, I am left financially and physically broken. But I accept the responsibility for it since I allowed myself to be mesmerized by the Armstrongs and later by R. C. Cole.... What is there left to say? Of course my family and I went through certain traumas. We watched a person [in the WCG] waste to death rather than go to a physician. Another young person died of appendicitis rather than going to see a doctor. I sit here in continual pain and hemorrhaging because years ago I was "afraid" to visit a physician, and today I can't afford it.

But are we so different from any of the others, many of whom have suffered even worse?

Oregon

**"III. Suggestions for Avoiding Prosecution...** Don't say anything!... Don't mention divine healing.... If legal circumstances or wisdom demands that you answer, then be succinct and discreet.... If the investigator should know something about anointing with oil, there is no need to assume that he knows that the practice of medicine is held in disrepute. It might be good to draw an analogy to the Catholic Church, and the fact that, 'We, as they, anoint with oil.'...

"Do not mention faith healing under any circumstances.... Deny any knowledge that the ailment was serious. Or if this cannot be done, then: (a) Place the time when the seriousness first became apparent as close to the time of death as possible. (b) Take the shortest period of time possible for the length of illness. (c) If the question of a doctor should arise, it might be met with, 'If I had any idea that she was that sick and that a doctor could have healed her, I certainly would have called him immediately.'

"Befriend a doctor with at least an affinity for our religious beliefs.... a doctor might recommend some course of medical treatment that he feels would absolutely save the person's life, but which we would consider absolutely inimical to God's law. If the person died, then the doctor would be a powerful witness for the prosecution not only to prove gross neglect but Proximate cause as well. Also, unless the doctor held an affinity for our religious beliefs, he could contact the District Attorney if the patient was a minor and request that a court-appointed guardian be named. The court could then take custody of the child, and the guardian consent to such a course of medical treatment... When rejecting medical service or drugs, predicate the refusal on the the grounds of risk or potential adverse results.... If the matter is serious enough and the particular doctor sees no possibility of adverse effect but only 100 percent success, then the patient or parent can merely state they would like to obtain further consultation and advice on the. subject...

"During the steps when an illness becomes serious, keep as many people out of the house as possible. Do not tell outsiders about the seriousness of an illness or your belief in divine healing. The more people that have knowledge of the subject, or are present during the final stages, the more potential adverse witnesses you have. Only one antagonistic person, with a sufficient amount of first-hand knowledge, can furnish enough testimony upon which to pass a successful prosecution....

"Do not attend an informal, requested hearing at the District Attorney's office, unless unusual circumstances dictate otherwise. A strong general rule is that a parent should never go to the office of the District Attorney to discuss such a case.... In one case the prosecutor admitted that he could never have tried the case without the statements given by the mother. After the child had died, she stopped in his office, at his request, and told him everything about the case. She even signed a statement to that effect. She also made statements to certain officials in the Coroner's office. They proved certain facts that he could not have proven otherwise.

"Don't involve the church.... When brought into contact with medical men, be friendly, but firm. Be careful not to mention the Bible, religion, or the Church of God.

**"IV. What to Do in Case of an Untimely Death.** When there is an untimely death in the Church with overtones of divine healing having been relied upon, prompt action is necessary in order to avoid prosecution and bad publicity... the local minister should immediately contact Headquarters by telephone and notify us of the circumstances... After receiving this information, either Mr. Rader or Mr. Helge [WCG attorneys] can consult with the local minister by telephone, and ascertain if there is potential criminal liability or bad publicity for the church member, the minister or the church."

Around 1968, to further conceal from the public its position on medicine, the Worldwide Church of God began to cease offering the *Does God Heal Today?* booklet on the church's "World Tomorrow" broadcast. For a time, if a listener were to somehow find out about the booklet, it was sent, but before long even this practice was discontinued. Eventually, those who requested it were simply informed that it was "out of print." Those of us who were ministerial students at Ambassador College in 1970, however, were still able to get copies of it from the college press, as were field ministers.

The booklet may have been declared "out of print," but the doctrine it taught was most certainly still in effect. A

late 1969 letter to the entire United States ministry written by Roderick Meredith, then director of Church Administration, contained this statement:

"Many, many others have serious cases of cancer or are afflicted with other serious ailments. And, as I mentioned recently, this seems to be a growing trend in the Church. Although the booklet on healing in its present form has been cancelled, we should continue to preach this doctrine to the converted members of God's Church with earnestness and fervency!"

**An Exercise in Doublethink.** With few exceptions the Worldwide Church's ministry continued to preach and privately teach the healing doctrine exactly as Herbert Armstrong always had. The absence of a written doctrinal statement, however, did have an effect on members. Some began to study the subject on their own, and a number of "true believers" began to wonder whether the Armstrongs were not in fact watering down their healing doctrine.

The doubts increased when, in early 1970, Herbert Armstrong admitted that Roderick C. Meredith, the director of Church Administration, had recently undergone surgery to repair a detached retina. To many believers this seemed inconsistent with official church doctrine, and Meredith spent no small amount of time attempting to explain away the incongruity. He claimed repeatedly that it was only "repair surgery" that had been performed and that he had not looked to the medical profession for healing. In a letter to the church's ministry, dated March 9, 1970, he wrote:

"We knew God could, of course, heal the eye. But Mr. Armstrong felt that in this case it involved something we could do and probably should do under the present circumstances. Therefore, I arranged to get the best specialist available through a special eye institute attached to UCLA and had this repair surgery performed..." (p. 7).

Then on April 8, 1970, he wrote this regarding his eye operation and how the ministers should explain it to church members:

"In explaining this matter, there are two principles to stress: first, we should never cut into the body in order to cut out part of the temple of God's Holy Spirit-that is, remove part of the liver, appendix, etc. Secondly, we are not to operate in order to 'heal' a disease of any sort" (p. 8).

Church members could not help but be totally confused. When, for instance, would one have surgery performed where the goal was not healing? And, how many types of surgery are not in reality for repair purposes? Church headquarters offered no concrete answers. Nor did Herbert Armstrong offer a change of doctrine to his church. By 1973, however, he did come to believe that the old booklet needed to be redone.

**The Promise of More to Come.** At the ministerial conference of January 1973 a tape recorder caught Herbert Armstrong making these statements:

"We have a booklet on healing that we have called in and stopped circulating.... The information that's contained [in the healing booklet] is all right. I haven't read it for years and years, but I don't think I'm wrong about that. I think the information it has is all right. But it isn't properly written..."

"I have no doubt in my mind that what is called medical science today has merely come on down to our time. It's the same old ancient thing that came out of paganism. It is not something that our God has supplied and heals through. It is something that the God of this world, Satan, has supplied, and he's got his little emblem doubly on their [the medical profession's] insignia-the two snakes..."

"I don't think we ought to put in writing, for example, that any member in such a job [as registered nurse] ought to give it up, because some reporter would get hold of that-he could make something of it. But we can privately tell our people things like that. ..."

"And while we have been practicing healing and we've had some miraculous examples of healing, for every one of those, I don't know whether there have been 10 or 100 others where we have not had it. Now there is one thing that we do not do and we can't do and this is to just come out and say in any way that would be open or public-and you have to be careful about even saying this in one of our own church services because it may be more public than you realize-that we forbid people to go to a doctor or to take medicine."

Herbert W. Armstrong worked on the new booklet for the entirety of 1973. Then on January 3, 1974, he declared:

"I have the booklet on healing almost complete, and it goes a little more thoroughly into these things than the other edition. The doctrine hasn't changed one iota. We have to clarify a lot of things about when do you go to a doctor and when don't you and a few things like that... don't go around doubting and thinking that maybe the church is wrong. Too many have been doing that, and you who do are the servants of Satan."

Herbert simply refused to believe that he could have been wrong for so many years on the healing doctrine and

other doctrines such as divorce and remarriage. It was this attitude of obstinateness with regard to doctrinal change which more than anything else brought about the church crisis of February 1974 when dozens of ministers and thousands of laymembers defected from the Worldwide Church of God to form the Associated Churches of God.

During the special ministerial conference of May 1974, the impression was given that a clarification of the church's healing doctrine would soon be made following a period of research. Then, in the September 23, 1974, issue of the church's ministerial bulletin, there appeared an article on healing by Herman L. Hoeh, a headquarters evangelist and for years a right-hand man to Herbert Armstrong. To the casual observer unfamiliar with the Armstrong organization's public relations methods, the article appears vague but innocuous. A casual reading might even leave one with the misimpression that the church had changed its decades-old position on medicine. The first half of the two-page article titled "Healing: Teaching and Administration" mentions a number of modern medical tools: X-rays, antibiotics, insulin, digitalis, and open heart surgery. None were actually condemned, yet none were clearly approved within the context of the church's teachings as found in *Does God Heal Today?*

Possibly what is most significant about the article is not what it said but what it didn't say. Only two months before, in July 1974, the Foundation for Biblical Research had published its 39-page booklet *Healing, Medicine, Physicians*. The booklet, written by the former head of Ambassador College's department of theology Dr. Ernest L. Martin, thoroughly debunked all the essential points of the Armstrong healing doctrine and took a sensible position on the subject, not unlike that held by the vast majority of Christians today.

The booklet was published and read by literally thousands of members and former members of the Worldwide Church of God. Yet Dr. Hoeh's article did not even mention it, nor did he refute its arguments. And, nowhere did he admit that the church's teachings as found in *Does God Heal Today?* were unfounded, biblically incorrect, or dangerous to the life and health of any who take them seriously. It is also important to realize that nowhere in his article did Herman Hoeh instruct the ministry to actually encourage laymembers who are ill to seek competent medical assistance. Instead, midway through the article we find these statements:

"God, who made everything, designed the interaction of chemicals in the human body to support life; but the most educated men are mere babes in understanding these interactions. How much better and easier to trust God for divine healing than to rely on the limitations of human skills. Perhaps more than anything else, healing expresses the deeply personal relationship between an individual and his God...."

"Mr. Armstrong points out that the individual's faith and the minister's faith are paramount in how far one trusts God, or how far one entrusts himself to men with their varying degree of skills and knowledge (p. 495)."

The tone of these statements is obviously less fanatical than what is found in the "out-of-print" healing booklet; yet the meaning is not at all different. While possibly giving some in the general public the illusion that the church was changing its position on medicine, the article not only put up a smokescreen around the essence of the Armstrong doctrine, but it also totally ignored the arguments of those who were most effectively assailing it.

Interestingly, the editor's comment at the head of the article and the article's concluding paragraph promised further clarification in the form of a new booklet by Herbert Armstrong:

"Editor's Note: A new booklet on healing, written by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, is scheduled to go to press some time after the Feast of Tabernacles. ..."

"The new booklet is a great step forward. All ministers will be sent advance copies."

The promised booklet was never distributed. In fact, it never even came off the press. The reason? A few leading WCG officials, according to informed sources, collaborated to keep the booklet manuscript in limbo, lest it become another embarrassing liability.

Almost two years later during the ministerial conference in May 1976 a "Statement on Healing" was issued to those attending. The brief, typed statement was less than half the size of Dr. Hoeh's short 1974 article. It was never published in any official church publication and has not been made available to laymembers in printed form. Though more liberal in tone than anything ever printed before on the subject, it in no way repudiated the contents of *Does God Heal Today?* Significantly, it contained no indication of having been authorized by the church's founder and Pastor General, Herbert W. Armstrong. He was not present at the conference when the statement was expounded, and there is good reason to believe that not only was he unaware of its contents but that he would also have disapproved of its tone had he read it.

In the July 1977 issue of *The Plain Truth*, Herbert Armstrong wrote an article, actually Part I of a series, entitled

"The Plain Truth About Healing." It contains no mention of his original booklet on the subject, the doctrinal disputes of the last few years, or the "Statement on Healing" of 1976. It does not mention the 1% to 10% success rate the church has had by practicing divine healing, nor does it mention the story of the little girl who was crippled as a result of her parents' confidence in Herbert's teaching. Instead, of all things, the article contains Herbert Armstrong's interpretation of Christian history from 27 to 100 A.D. He concludes the article by promising to get back on the track in future installments and discuss healing. We are also promised a booklet (sound familiar?). A number of individuals who are privy to the contents of the series' manuscript have informed us that the series offers little promise of doctrinal reform or clarifications. Barring a church crisis in the next few months, the series will prove to be nothing more than a vague rehash of the old healing doctrine, carefully edited to avoid notoriety and legal difficulties.

With only a few exceptions, virtually no one at the church's Pasadena headquarters now denies himself or his family needed medical attention in favor of divine healing. Yet, many laymembers worldwide, for want of a clear directive from their "apostolic" leader, do deny themselves and their families needed medical attention and are still clinging to the church's established healing doctrine, as it was taught them. Today, few if any Worldwide Church executives and ministers would publicly acknowledge belief in the official Armstrong healing doctrine as found in *Does God Heal Today?* Yet, the church's Pastor General has refused to openly acknowledge the errors of the doctrine or clarify the church's present position by publishing a clear, authorized doctrinal statement. That is very regrettable.

The amount of damage already done by the Armstrong healing doctrine is immense. There is, of course, no way for us to know exactly what WCG ministers are teaching today in private. We do, however, continue to hear reports of individuals still putting their faith in Herbert Armstrong's erroneous doctrine. Very recently, there was a case in Washington where a woman who was a Worldwide Church of God member died as a result of denying herself competent medical attention.

**What Should Be Done.** *Ambassador Report*, would like to see the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God discontinue its perpetuation of anti-medical bias, superstition, administration secrecy, and biblical misunderstanding. The Armstrong church is trying to give the general public the impression that it is a truly modern, rational, and humanitarian organization that has rejected the fanaticism and foolishness of its past. If that is the case, then why doesn't it immediately make public a detailed, clear, printed statement of the church's doctrine of healing, fully authorized by the church's Pastor General? Why doesn't it publicly repudiate the errors in its old booklet, *Does God Heal Today?*, and explain clearly which of the booklet's statements are accurate or inaccurate and why?

Ambassador College has in its computer files the names of many thousands who were sent copies of *Does God Heal Today?* We propose that each individual who has received that booklet, as well as every living church member and former member, be informed through an official letter that that booklet contains statements that have resulted in biblical misunderstanding and advice that, when practiced, has often proven not only harmful but fatal.

We further propose that every effort be made to locate those who have suffered as a result of the organization's healing doctrine. In many cases no apology could possibly be adequate to those who have suffered as a result of following the church's teachings and advice. Yet, we feel that an apology is an appropriate place to begin. We would then like to see the Worldwide Church of God offer medical assistance and financial compensation wherever appropriate.

Finally, we suggest that the Worldwide Church of God reassess its priorities with regard to the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation's dispersal of church funds to organizations such as the March of Dimes, the American Cancer Society, and the United Way. These organizations do wonderful work and perform much needed services. However, charity should begin at home. For years, the Worldwide Church of God condemned these organizations as being "part of the world" and encouraged its members not to contribute to these organizations but instead give their money to "God's work." Thousands did just that. While denying themselves and their families medical services, health insurance plans, and savings for medical emergencies, they contributed and sacrificed to the point of self-deprivation so that "God's work" could survive its repeated financial crises. Now many of these same people need medical assistance but do not have the means because of the financial sacrifices they made over the years. For the AICF to attempt to improve the church's image by dispensing church funds to the charities the church formerly condemned and at the same time ignore the plight of so many of those who for years supported the organization is nothing less than a mockery of the most fundamental teachings of Christ.

Maybe it is too much to expect an organization to change after 40 years of calloused disregard for the welfare of its members. But I believe it is time that the Armstrong organization be less concerned with its public image and more concerned with serving its people in the true Christian spirit.

*-John Trechak*

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### The **TEN COMMANDMENTS** Revised At Ambassador College

The Armstrongs and their myrmidons have spared no effort to inform people that they believe in and uphold the Ten Commandments. However, they never state which version they're referring to. There is the King James version that they teach to church members and students and the "Reviled Slandered version" they themselves practice. We are publishing the "Reviled Slandered version" so Ambassador College (AC) personnel will know which set of rules their leaders are playing by:

- I. You shall have no other gods before the Lord-but the doctrines of Herbert Armstrong demand equal time. For it is written in Herbert's booklets that only those who put Herbert's "Work" first in their lives will inherit the Kingdom.
- II. You shall not make a graven image-unless it enhances the beauty of AC's campus. Once you have made a sculpted image, you can't bow down to it. Bootlicking, however, is not idolatry and is perhaps advisable at AC as long as you don't literally drop to your knees.
- III. You shall not take God's name in vain or misuse it-unless done in *Quest/77-* though it's all right to attach God's name to unbiblical prophecies and to doctrines for which there is no proof.
- IV. Remember the sabbath to keep it holy. The seventh day is the day you must attend church services even if a ding-a-ling is preaching. But remember, *you* can't work on that day, nor can your manservant, though it was okay to permit Gentile construction firms to erect the Ambassador Auditorium and the Student

Center on the sabbath. It's okay to let outside promoters use the campus on the sabbath both to seat people and to park cars for the Rose Parade-so long as you're cut in on the profits. Also, it's fine for apostles to fly on the sabbath and to give lavish banquets for Asian dictators on that day.

**V.** Honor your father and mother, though starving parents are no shame to a person whose tithes honor Herbert first.

**VI.** You shall not kill, but shafting, lateraling, and character assassination are fine-if done for the good of Herbert's "Work."

**VII.** You shall not commit adultery unless you are pastor-ranked or higher. Adultery by low echelon ministers and laymen should be revealed to church administration and recorded and filed, but adultery by pastors or evangelists must be covered up for the "good of the church."

**VIII.** You shall not steal, but it is ethical to employ fear to extort money from people who can't really afford to give. It's all right to tell people they must tithe or they will end up in the lake of fire-especially if "God's apostle" needs the money-even though the New Testament clearly shows Christians did not tithe to the church.

**IX.** You shall not bear false witness, but to cover up an apostle's or an evangelist's incompetence, it's permissible to slant facts, quote only sources that agree with you, or tell people only as much as you want them to know while indicating you are divulging all the pertinent details.

**X.** You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's, including his wife, but if she consents, that's her husband's problem.

**New Commandment:** You shall love your neighbor as yourself-especially if he has something on you.

[Next Issue \(AR3\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

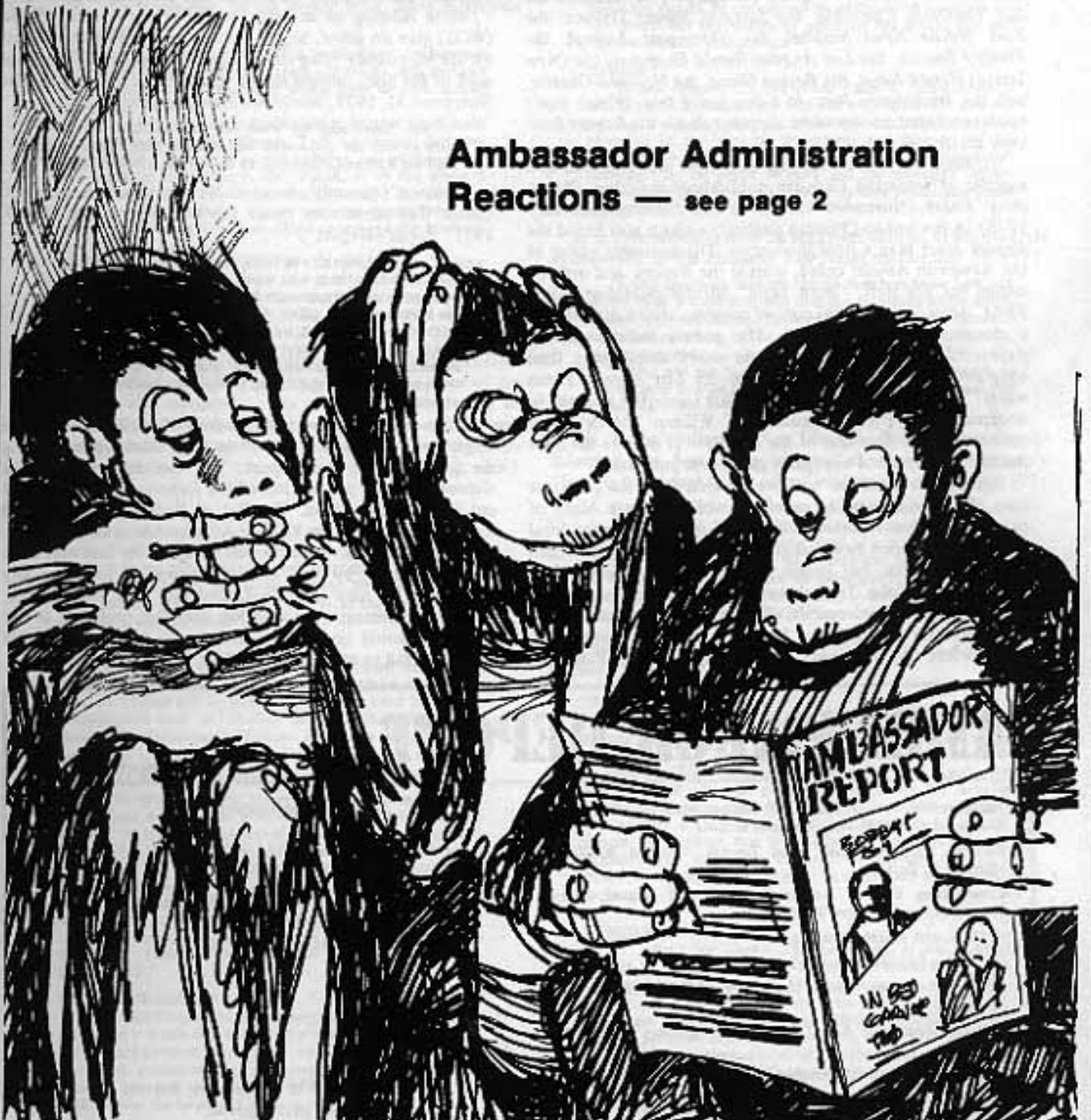
Brought to you by:

[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

MARCH-APRIL 1978

**Ambassador Administration  
Reactions — see page 2**





# AMBASSADOR REPORT

**March-April 1978**

Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard W. Zola, Margaret D. Zola

Editors: Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard W. Zola, Margaret D. Zola

Contributing Editors: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Perry Prescott, Gary Reid, Roy P. Silverman

Art Director: Joseph Sebastian

Consulting Editor: Robert L. Jackson

Editorial Research: Joseph Franklin, Peter F. McNeil, David K. Sheppard

Editorial Assistants: Lois Lane, Karen Magnuson, Gordon M. Marwik

Business Manager: Bill Hughes

Canadian Circulation Director: Gary Reid

Address all communication to:

AMBASSADOR REPORT

P.O. BOX 4068

PASADENA, CA 91106

Copyright &COPY; 1978 Ambassador Report.

All rights reserved.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### Press Reactions

The American press's reaction to our last issue of *Ambassador Report* was both enthusiastic and encouraging. It is impossible for us to know exactly how many newspapers have carried stories about Ambassador Report, but we suspect the number is around two hundred or more. We do know that articles very favorable to us (and not so favorable to the Armstrong-Rader group) have recently appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Pasadena Star News*, the *Minneapolis Star*, the *Denver Post*, the *New York Times*, the *National Examiner*, the *Idaho Statesman*, the *San Antonio News*, the *Atlanta Journal*, the *Houston Post*, the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, the *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, the *Shreveport Journal*, the *Tri-City Herald*, the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, the (New Jersey) *Herald News*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Montreal Gazette*, and the *Washington Post*, to name just a few. (Please don't hesitate to send us any news clippings about the *Report* from your area.)

Excellent reviews of our last issue have also appeared in a number of respected Christian publications including *Christianity Today* (November 18, 1977) and *Eternity* (February 1978). A few not-so-Christian publications have also found the *Report* more than a little interesting. The managing editor of the *American Atheist* called, praised the *Report*, and ordered copies for his staff. "Born again" *Hustler* publisher, Larry Flynt, wrote us a personal note of congratulations and ordered a dozen copies for friends. The press's feelings toward *Ambassador Report* have been in many cases more than congratulatory. Russell Chandler of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "*Ambassador Report* is the first concerted attempt to document many of the accusations." Willmar Thorkelson of the *Minneapolis Star* said of the *Report*, "It may be the most devastating expose of a religious group ever published."

Besides the attention we have received from the press, we have also been

avored by excellent media coverage. Many of our readers have reported hearing about the *Report* on local radio and television news programs. Some stations even called us and broadcast our phone interviews. Co-publishers Bob Geringer and John Trechak have appeared on a number of radio talk shows and on NBC-TV's "Odyssey" program. Bob Geringer and Co-publisher Len Zola were even invited to speak before the Unitarian Church's congregation in Pasadena.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Issue](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **Ambassador Reactions**

Ambassador College's official reaction to the last issue of *Ambassador Report* was both predictable and pathetic. Within days after it was mailed, Stanley Rader, attorney for Ambassador College, began parroting the traditional denials. He told the *Los Angeles Times* that the information contained in the 92-page issue was "without foundation in fact." To the *Pasadena Star News* he said that it was "total, total falsehood." Although not referring directly to *Ambassador Report*, *The Worldwide News* quoted AC attorney, Ralph Helge, as saying "certain dissident alumni and former church members are spreading wild, false, and unlawful information."

While labeling us as liars, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) gave no proof, logical defense, or specifics about what we are supposedly lying about. Significantly, the WCG has not sued us for libel, despite claims that they are planning to. The November 21, 1977, *Worldwide News* reported:

"Mr. Rader said the Work and all individuals connected with it who are disparaged will exercise their rights, as did Paul his Roman Citizenship, to the fullest extent of the law."

Rader isn't the only one who's threatened us with a lawsuit. Garner Ted Armstrong made this comment in the Nov. 7, 1977 "Pastor's Report":

"...[the Work] will take] appropriate legal action in the future, so that those who would seek to destroy this Work by such nefarious schemes can finally bear the full responsibility for their actions.... The Work and all individuals connected with it are disparaged by the *Report* and will exercise their rights... to the fullest extent of the law, choosing their defendants, their actions, their issues and their forums to redress the wrongs and to punish the irresponsible who would attack God's work."

In November, Rader told the *New York Times* and *Time* magazine that

Ambassador College (AC) would soon be suing the publishers of the *Report*. Yet, five full months have elapsed since the publication of the *Report*, and we have still not been sued for libel. The fact is, Rader knows that legal action against us by the WCG or AC would be suicidal for him, AC, and the WCG. Rader is well aware of the fact that once sued we would, by law, have the power to subpoena any documents we need to defend ourselves. As a result of this, vastly more damaging information than that contained in our last issue would be proven and become public record. We would not fail to publish our findings.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

### Cornwall's Cynical Comfort

Although Ted Armstrong and Stanley Rader are afraid to specifically address the issues raised in the *Report*, one individual is to be commended for his courage—Henry Cornwall, the secretary/treasurer of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation and director of the Worldwide Advertising Agency. He has probably done more for promotion of the *Report* among the ministry of the WCG than anyone else.

Cornwall published a newsletter to the WCG ministry that he called the *Media File*. In the second issue, dated November 1977, he opened with:

"... I was unaware that the publication *Ambassador Report* was going to hit the streets and create such demand on my time that I practically would have to push almost everything else aside.

"I have been advised by Dr. Robert Kuhn that Mr. Ronald Dart has advised Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong that the *Ambassador Report* is of no consequence and no concern to the brethren, the ministry, the Church, or to the world. I take exception to that comment... because I am on the firing line and although I have not yet heard from the ministry I know at least how vitally concerned the brethren and the world are.

"I have therefore decided in this personal to address myself to *Ambassador Report* and give you [the ministry] the answers.... I must mention that before I spoke with anyone I consulted with Mr. Rader.... He helped me to formulate some of the answers. . . ."

In this issue Cornwall does indeed address the *Report*. Not only was he kind enough to print a picture of the cover of the AR, but he also reprinted a copy of the letter we sent to all radio and television station managers giving our address and telephone number. He went on to discuss a number of articles in our publication. The following are his comments about specific articles:

## **BOBBY FISCHER SPEAKS OUT**

"Mr. Stanley Rader is now moving on the offensive on Bobby Fischer's behalf to redress the wrongs [?] that he has suffered in the publication of comments defamatory of him [?] and the Church. Mr. Rader and Mr. Helge are donating their services [while on church salary] as they donate their services to others in need. "

## **ACCREDITATION**

"The article on accreditation contains many defamatory and false statements.... It is Mr. Rader's opinion at this time that the College will be accredited after the next visit of the accreditation team in February now that these false issues have been eliminated." [Editor: It is now March. Is AC accredited?]

## **FEDERAL HANDOUT-VISTA DEL ARROYO PURCHASE**

"In my opinion no one has ever seriously considered that the College would be so independent that it would not be directly or indirectly influenced by the Church. It has been stated by both Mr. Ted Armstrong and Mr. Herbert Armstrong that the Church will continue to support the College only as long as it operates in a manner consistent with the fundamental values of the Church, and the College would never accept the Vista property or any governmental help if it meant abandoning any such values even for one moment." (Editor: This is why the college is not accredited!]

## **PROFESSOR GOTOH**

"Professor Gotoh was in fact stopped by Customs in June 1975, and it is true that at that time various items of personal jewelry and personal property... were seized.... Mr. Gotoh was never prosecuted nor convicted of any crime and his personal property was returned to him. In my opinion, the entire article can be judged in the same light.

"Moreover, Mr. Gotoh has not been employed by the Church or College for some years, although his services have been used overseas as an independent contractor....

"In light of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's illness and a variety of other factors, Mr. Gotoh's visibility will be less and less in the future and he has already been advised of this."

## **HOME-BREAKING**

"...you should know that Mr. Rader successfully defended the earlier [divorce and remarriage] doctrine as it existed at the time in 1968 in the highest court of the State of Ohio. Subsequently, as you all know, in 1974 the doctrine was modified in that the Church jurisdiction was narrowed."

## **FLEECING THE FLOCK-TITHING PAYS OFF**

"...I do not mean to suggest that there would not be some argument that could be made, even in the Church, that the Armstrongs could get along without airplanes-and the airplanes should be considered in setting forth priorities for the Work-but the setting of priorities has always lain and still lies with the Armstrongs."

## HOMES

"In my opinion... his [Stan Rader's] home today is worth about \$3 million and cost him only \$450,000. But is it not right, and shouldn't a professional with a high degree of expertise in the area of investment and finance use his knowledge for his own benefit as well as that of his clients? Shouldn't he be proud to have had the foresight to buy [from the WCG] so cheaply property that would appreciate so much?"

It is interesting to note Rader's own defense of his life-style as reported in the *Pasadena Star News* on October 29, 1977:

"Rader maintains that the church members know how and where their leaders live, and that the mansions which house Garner Ted Armstrong, Herbert Armstrong, Rader himself, and other ministers of the church, are owned by the church, and represented no personal amassing of wealth.

" 'Why not ask the archbishop of the Catholic church in Los Angeles how he lives,' Rader said. 'What some people call luxurious, other people don't.'"

To Rader's dismay Rev. Joseph Pollard immediately informed the *Star News* of the Los Angeles Archbishop's life-style in a letter to the editor published November 5, 1977:

"Stanley Rader . . . seems to defend the fact that he and other officials of these institutions live in mansions.... The Archbishop, Cardinal Manning, lives in a three-room apartment at the Priests' House on Second and Main in the Skid Row area. His life-style, like his living quarters, is a model of Christian simplicity and a witnessing to Gospel values which his clergy and people admire and appreciate."

Now let's return to Cornwall's comments on *Ambassador Report*:

## SPYING IN THE NAME OF GOD

"There has been some question about use of the computer to 'spy' and 'keep tab' on members. You should know better than anyone that until very recently there would be no truth in such an allegation at all because policy was exactly the opposite, and although policy is still exactly the same in respect to brethren there was a slight change with respect to the ministry when it was discovered in an indirect manner almost by accident that some ministers were not tithing." [Editor: The computer cannot "accidentally" reveal a minister's tithing record. It must be specifically programmed to do so.]

## IN BED WITH TED

"...about Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong, as that concern related to alleged events of 1971-72 or earlier, [this] was addressed by the Church in 1972 in accordance with official Church policy and in accordance with official administrative procedure. These matters were officially regarded by the Church as closed as of December 1973, when Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong was restored to all of his offices after his return in June 1972 from a six-month leave of absence."

Despite Mr. Rader's alleged approval of Cornwall's comments in the *Media File*, Garner Ted wasn't so appreciative. In a December 8, 1977, letter to the ministry,

GTA made these comments:

"I was quite disturbed over the nature of the second so-called 'Media Report,' [sic] since I had told Henry very frankly I was dissatisfied with the entire idea, and mentioned to him that it had been without any prior consideration on my part, and totally without authorization....

"I am positive Mr. Cornwall will comply with my wishes as set forth in my letter, but should he not, and intend to persist in the publication of the so-called 'Media Report' [sic] for any purposes of his own; then I am instructing all of you pastors and/or associate pastors of churches to return any future mailings from the Worldwide Advertising Agency....

"It is not for the Worldwide Advertising Agency, in an agency/client relationship, headed by a non-baptised, nonmember of the Worldwide Church of God to address itself to the most hypersensitive issues involving recent scurrilous attacks against the leadership in the church, church policies, church doctrines, and Ambassador College....

"Personally, I could not help but be incensed at the second edition, most specifically, since, to me, it seemed to only unwittingly recreate unnecessary redundancy, and even proliferation of scurrilous material in an attempt to answer or defend against such material and ... tends to keep the 'pot stirred up,' and therefore to give cynical comfort to the enemies of the church and the college."

To Cornwall, GTA had this to say in a December 8, 1977, letter:

"As you know, I expressed casual disappointment and disagreement with your so-called 'Media Report,' [sic] following its initial number.... With the publication of the second number, I now feel it incumbent upon me to explain to you what must be *ironclad policy*.

"I request and require that you cease publication and distribution of the 'Media Report' forthwith....

"In order to satisfy your new found need to issue media reports... I will require that your office provide me with a monthly brief on any and all pertinent data which you feel would be significant and of use to me...."

Needless to say, after the publication of Cornwall's *third Media File*, Garner Ted Armstrong was outraged and fired Cornwall and terminated the Worldwide Advertising Agency's contract. A recent issue of the *Worldwide News* shows the appointment of Dick Janik of Ed Libov Assoc., Inc. in Cornwall's old position.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

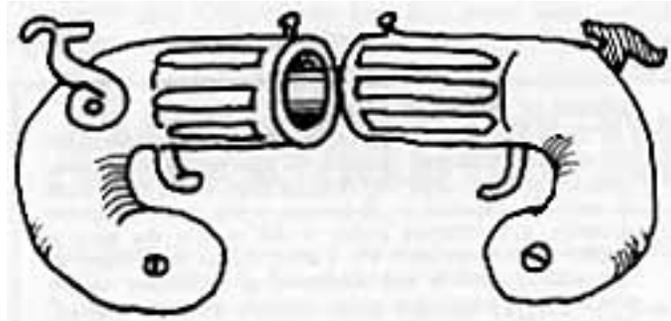
Brought to you by:

**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---



### The Power Struggle

Cornwall isn't the only one to lose his job since the publication of *Ambassador Report*. In the November 14, 1977, *Pastor's Report* the WCG made this surprise announcement:

"After consultation with Stanley R. Rader... and Ray Wright, Business Manager for the Church, Garner Armstrong notified Osamu Gotoh that the Worldwide Church of God would no longer require his services as Consultant for International Affairs... during the past two years [Gotoh] has spent the greater part of his time in Japan other parts of the world where he has been rendering services to the church in connection with Mr. Herbert Armstrong's overseas visits and campaigns..."

The most startling announcement, however, was predicted by Publishers Gerringer and Trechak in the *Los Angeles Times* (12/22/77):

"A power struggle reportedly is building within the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College because of the age and ill health of Herbert W. Armstrong...."

"Stanley R. Rader, general counsel for the church-college, denied any struggle, but a group of

former church members say that persons close to Armstrong are aligning themselves with Rader while others are siding with Armstrong's son, Garner Ted, 47.

"Two of the former church members, Robert Geringer and John Trechak, say that the struggle is reflected in letters that the younger Armstrong wrote to ministers of the church and to Henry F. Cornwall, an associate of Rader's and head of Worldwide Advertising Inc., which handles advertising for the Armstrong organizations. There also have been strong exchanges between Cornwall and Ronald Dart, one of Garner Ted Armstrong's top aides....

"Geringer said there has been talk for months within the Armstrong organizations about how the forces are lining up on Rader and Garner Ted Armstrong's sides. Geringer and Trechak point to *Media File*, a publication started last month by Cornwall's advertising corporation and distributed within the organizations, as evidence of the growing split Cornwall is a close associate of Rader....

"But in his report [*Media File*], Cornwall also accused Dart of 'doing everything possible to destroy my reputation at headquarters and outside of headquarters.' Cornwall threatened to sue Dart if he did not receive an apology. But Cornwall told The Times that he met last week with Garner Ted and Dart and 'resolved all differences' with Dart....

"Rader said there is no foundation to reports of a power struggle.... Rader said he and the elder Armstrong and Garner Ted 'have always worked closely together.'

"However, Geringer and Trechak said it is 'common knowledge and has been for years that Garner Ted and Rader do not get along.'

"Over the years, Rader, 47, has been a constant companion of the elder Armstrong, accompanying him on most of his world trips.

"Garner Ted's confidants; on the other hand, are Dart and Robert Kuhn... ."

The *Pasadena Star News* (1/28/78) carried the final announcement:  
"Ambassador Director Resigns."

"Stanley R. Rader, for many years the chief spokesman for Pasadena's Ambassador College and its parent organization, the Worldwide Church of God, has resigned as an officer and director of both the church and college.

"He will become senior consultant to the church and remain personal advisor to Herbert W. Armstrong, famed radio evangelist who founded both the church and the college, said Armstrong in a news release....

"The resignation follows lingering rumors in the church and college community of a power struggle between Rader and Garner Ted Armstrong, son of the founder, since a heart attack idled the elder Armstrong some five months ago....

"Rader, for more than two decades the close personal advisor of Herbert Armstrong, discounted rumors that there is a power struggle between himself and Garner Ted Armstrong....

"There is no rift,' he said. 'But that doesn't mean that Mr. Herbert Armstrong and I, or Mr.

Garner Ted Armstrong and 1, don't have differences of opinion.'

"The resignation was not forced, Rader said, and was not an attempt to remove him from a position of authority or power base.

"I would not like to have control of the organization,' Rader said. 'I have never thought of it. That has not been my calling. Whoever leads the work must be involved in the spiritual aspect rather than the so-called secular side,' Rader continued. 'That's where the leadership must come from. If there were a struggle for power, you would have to look to a different element for the source.'

"Of the immense wealth of the organization, Rader said, 'If anyone had that in mind to control, that person would have to be characterized as morally and spiritually reprehensible....'"

[Back to Index](#)

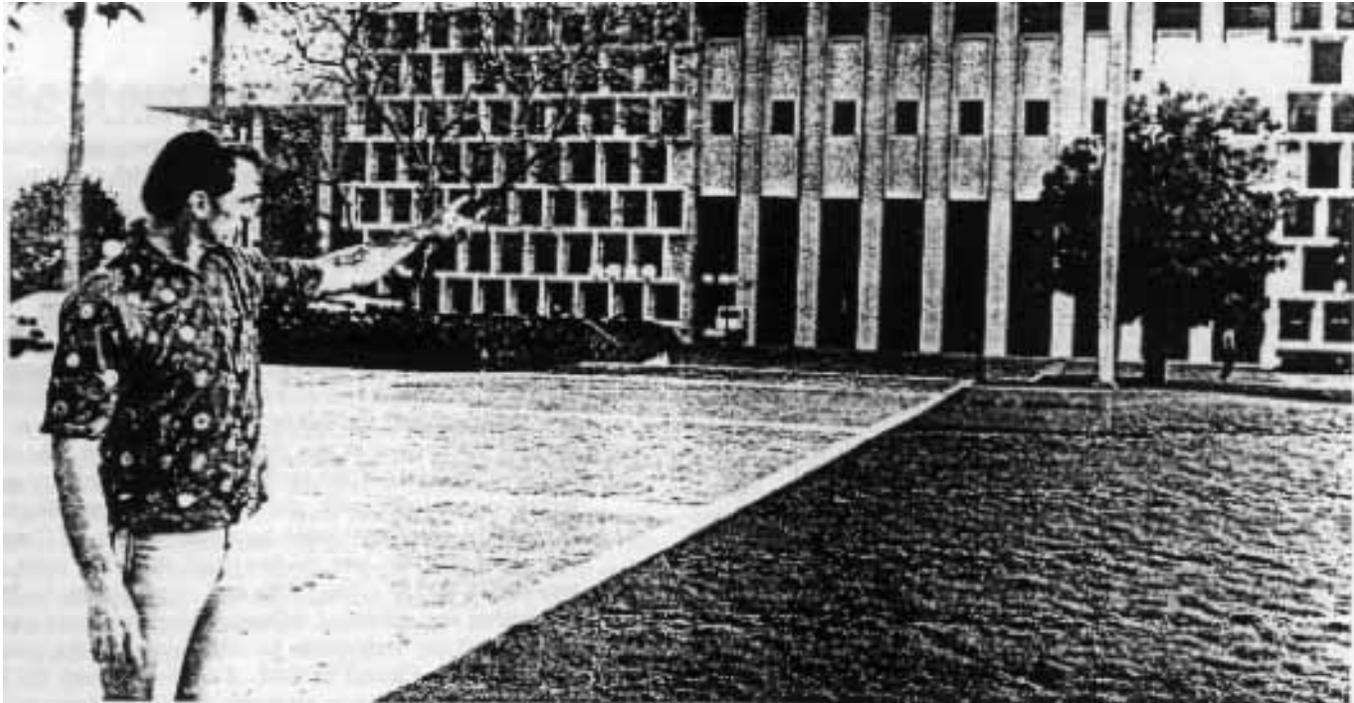
[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT



An angry Gary Bagley points to the problem. He says Garner Ted Armstrong committed adultery with his wife. Bagley picketed the AmbassadorCollege administration building, but his sign was confiscated by the police.

## Ambassador Picketer Arrested

On Monday, December 12, 1977, the AR staff, as well as the rest of Pasadena, became aware that Ambassador College was being picketed. That morning Gary Bagley (44), a current member of the WCG, began demonstrating in front of the college's Hall of Administration. He was carrying a large sign that read: "Garner Ted Armstrong Is an Adulterer, If Not, Sue Me." Reactions to Bagley's picketing differed greatly. A number of AC students and employees approached him and told him he was a liar. His response, however, thoroughly disarmed these critics: "My wife's one

of the women Garner Ted has had an affair with."

A number of Pasadena citizens reacted by encouraging Bagley. Two "little old ladies from Pasadena" crossed the street to tell him they always suspected "hanky-panky" behind the expensive outer facade of Ambassador College. People drove by and honked in support, others yelled "right-on." Many, who never had the misfortune to be associated with the WCG, stopped their cars and discussed the allegations with Bagley. One AC employee told him, "If it wasn't for my job, I'd be out here helping you." Many other employees responded favorably.

A few, however, were more than a little naive. One minister's wife was furious and approached Bagley, but left in tears when she became convinced his charges were true. Over 100 students questioned him, primarily regarding GTA and his ministerial qualifications. He claims that at least 75% walked away satisfied with his scriptural explanation.

After two days of picketing, a couple of supporters were helping him march. The *Los Angeles Times* interviewed and photographed him. GTA had to drive around him when he came to work. The biggest worry for AC, however, was the attention he would receive from the guests at the "Gene Kelley special" that was to be taped (for commercial purposes) in the "House of God" later that week.

When the picketing first began, AC attorneys had maneuvered legally, but failed to get him off the street because Bagley was complying with all city ordinances regarding the conducting of a public demonstration. After a few days, however, AC's attorneys were able to formulate a legal stratagem to force him off the street before he attracted more attention. On Thursday, December 15, only a few hours before the \$25- to \$100-a-seat audience was to arrive for the "Gene Kelley special," two men approached Bagley. They represented themselves as Ralph Helge's assistants and began to discuss monetary restitution as a solution to his grievance with the WCG. He rejected their offer, but after a few minutes of talking they announced they were actually undercover policemen and they arrested him for attempted extortion. Thus, due to close cooperation between AC and the city of Pasadena, an embarrassment for both was averted, and no one picketed the "Gene Kelley special."

Why had Gary Bagley picketed AC? His story is as pathetic as that of thousands of others. He was a divorce and remarriage (D&R) case. During his first six years in the WCG, he was not allowed by the church to date or marry. When he was finally allowed to marry, his new wife confided that she had had an affair with evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong. For years the Bagleys hid this fact, thinking that his affair was GTA's one mistake. It wasn't until about a year ago that they discovered that that affair wasn't GTA's only slip, but was only one episode in a lifelong chain of sexual conquests. The shock and suffering that resulted from this discovery prompted Bagley to "go to his brother" to seek restitution for the wrongs the organization had perpetrated in his life. So he gave Attorney Helge "a message to that effect" for GTA. When GTA ignored Bagley's request, he then decided to "take the problem to the church" (Matt. 18:15-17) by way of his sign, since no other presentation to the church would be allowed.

Mr. Bagley's trial is set for March 28, but no one seriously believes he will be convicted of anything. Few even believe the case will ever get to trial. In the

meantime, however, the picketing has been effectively stopped and another WCG victim who is trying to get justice is being harassed by the Armstrong organization.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---



### Chess Champion Becomes Pawn

On December 18, 1977, *Ambassador Report* was served with a \$3.2 million lawsuit prepared by Ralph Helge of Rader, Helge, and Harms-attorneys for the WCG. The suit, filed on behalf of former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, alleges intrusion of privacy, public disclosure of private facts, fraud and deceit, mental and emotional distress, appropriation for commercial use, and more.

Not only are the allegations without foundation, but the plaintiff's attorneys have offered no evidence whatsoever to prove their accusations. Some of the charges are actually quite ridiculous. For instance, the suit alleges "invasion of privacy," yet it was Bobby Fischer himself who first contacted the staff of *Ambassador Report*. It was he who voluntarily brought to us copies of all his tithe and offering receipts. And, it was Bobby who once even suggested that we include a phone number with his interview so that people who were interested in personally talking with him could call, leave their name and number, and have him return the

call.

The request for \$3.2 million in damages borders on the ludicrous, especially considering *Ambassador Report's* financial position. But, of course, money is not the real goal of the suit. Paragraph 62 of the complaint alleges that Bobby Fischer has no complete or adequate remedy at law since the *Report* is without money to pay damages to him and that "unless restrained by order and injunction of this court, the defendants have been and intend to continue publishing, selling, distributing and otherwise marketing said *Ambassador Report*...." In a nutshell, the intent of the suit filed on behalf of Bobby Fischer by Armstrong's attorneys is to put *Ambassador Report* out of business, once and for all.

In recent weeks certain facts have come to us from sources within the Armstrong organization that clearly reveal that Bobby Fischer is being "used" by the Armstrongs and their associates "to get *Ambassador Report*." The *Report* has caused the church monetary setbacks. So, it is in their interest to see the *Report* stopped or at least harassed. The following statement made by one WCG official and quoted to us by an inside source confirms that: "We can't touch them on 29 of their articles, but we'll get them through Fischer!"

But where does Bobby Fischer personally fit into the picture? Whose side is he really on? That is difficult to determine, but one thing for certain is that he is now a different Bobby Fischer than the one who came voluntarily to us in January of 1977, vehemently denouncing the leadership and tactics of the Worldwide Church of God.

Additional reports coming to us regarding Bobby's whereabouts and relationship with the WCG seem to paint a bizarre picture of mental manipulation and direct control by the Armstrong hierarchy. In 1972, after defeating Boris Spassky for the world chess crown, Fischer disappeared from the international limelight. At the invitation of WCG officials, he came to Pasadena. He was put up in a luxury apartment owned by the WCG, wined and dined by church officials, chauffeured in a church-owned limousine, and flown to exotic places with Herbert Armstrong in the church's private jet. The fact that Bobby donated \$61,200 to the WCG that year may, have had something to do with the royal treatment he received. However, a comment made by a top-ranking WCG evangelist and overheard by one of our staff reveals a more sinister reason. He said in effect: "We had to get Bobby to Pasadena and within our sphere of influence where we could watch him and control any statements he might make to the press about the Worldwide Church of God. A co-worker with the kind of media attention he was attracting could be damaging to the work of God if unmonitored statements concerning us were errantly made to the press."

Since 1972, Fischer has continually maintained residence with several high-ranking WCG officials and their families. He presently resides with a pastor-ranked minister who heads an orientation and reeducation program apparently designed to help the WCG field ministry adjust to the many recent changes within the Armstrong organization. We have learned that this official threatened to throw Fischer out of his home when he discovered that *Ambassador Report* was

publishing an interview with the chess champion.

Another clue in this unraveling case is the anxiety Bobby began to express at the conclusion of his meetings with us. He became suspicious of people following him and of certain people finding out that he was talking with us. Then, as abruptly as he came to us, he disappeared without leaving a hint as to where or how we could safely contact him. We did not hear from him again until after the *Report* had been printed-eight months later!

We can only speculate on the pressures that have been brought to bear on Bobby. The entire mental transition that has apparently occurred within Fischer is remarkably similar to a mental condition called "floating," a word coined by cult deprogrammers. It describes a state of mind in which a cult member becomes disenchanted with his religious regime and is unsure about what to do next with his life. It is a time when a person vacillates between "lives"-when he is most likely to recognize that his religious dreams have been shattered but subconsciously longs for the security of the life within the cult. More often than not, the cult, with its highly structured life-style and specific demands on members, offers the "easier" answer to questions about life and how to continue living. Cult leaders are often very adept at applying subtle pressures to a "floating" member to get him back under their control. We feel this is exactly what occurred to Bobby Fischer and that he is now back under the influence of the Worldwide Church of God.

Presently, this legal harassment continues to be a considerable drain on us, not only financially but in the time and effort being diverted away from the main task at hand. However, we are confident that this WCG-fomented lawsuit will be recognized by the court as groundless, intended solely to harass, and will be dismissed in a matter of weeks.

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **Bottom of the Barrel**

In a December 24, 1977, sermon in Pasadena, WCG pastor Richard Rice bemoaned the worsening reputation of the WCG worldwide. He began by stating: "The reputation [of the WCG] at this point in time isn't that bright, frankly." He admitted part of his cause for concern was due to a recent series of articles released by the Associated Press wire service concerning several U.S. religious groups. (These AP articles on the groups headed by Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Garner Ted Armstrong, and Reverend Ike appeared November 25, 1977.)

Confiding in his congregation, Rice commented that all the other religious groups "came out pretty good and unscathed, for the most part." But the Worldwide Church of God, he said, "didn't fare quite so well. As a matter of fact, we came out about the last on the bottom of the list, the bottom of the barrel. The reputation of God's church around the earth right now, and especially in America and Canada, isn't quite that pure and quite that pleasant."

Is it any wonder?

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### Tithe or Else!

Late last year Ambassador College's attorney Stanley Rader told Associated Press that "tithing is purely voluntary" in the Worldwide Church of God. (See AP news release for Friday, December 9, 1977.) Rader conveniently forgot to mention the pressure tactics AC and the WCG employ to ensure that faithful members will continue "voluntarily" tithing. One example: sending letters to AC employees urging them to authorize the church to deduct their tithes and offerings from their paychecks. Many employees, enraged at Ted's not-too-subtle hint, ripped the letter to shreds and ignored the message.

Undaunted, Garner Ted sent a new "Policy Statement on Tithing" to "all employees" on January 3, 1978. In it he commented:

"It always has been the policy... that the Worldwide Church of God does not run general 'tithing checks' by means of its computer data on the general laity."

Somehow GTA failed to remember that tithe checks have been run on whole church areas since 1968. Read "Computer Snooper" in our last issue.

"However," Ted continues, "such a blanket guarantee is not given to employees of the College, A.I.C.F., and/or the Church, whose salaries derive directly from the tithe-paying constituency of the Church. In fact, such information may be important to departmental managers in determining merit increases from time to time, and/or bonuses for service...."

Ted concluded with the admission that he "had assumed this policy was being practiced de facto"-which is what *Ambassador Report* revealed in its last issue.

Some employees, interviewed by *Ambassador Report*, stated that they thought Ted was getting desperate because one-half of the employees at AC have

stopped tithing. They said, a little fearfully perhaps, that they felt-at least hoped-Ted was bluffing, but that they still wouldn't tithing no matter what he threatened to do.

*Ambassador Report* wonders when Ted is going to institute computer "prayer checks" and require all employees to report their prayer time to the data processing department. But even if Ted does this, we expect Stan Rader will assure the press that "Prayer is voluntary-just like tithing."

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

### **Myrmidons Meet**

The annual ministerial conference of the Worldwide Church of God took place as usual in January at the church's "House of God" in Pasadena. The highlight of the conference apparently was the spectacle of Garner Ted Armstrong hugging Stanley Rader, Stanley Rader hugging Herbert Armstrong, Herbert Armstrong hugging Garner Ted Armstrong, and all three hugging each other to the standing ovation of the over one thousand assembled ministers and ministers' wives. Very touching. But what was actually accomplished at the conference? Apparently very little, except that Garner Ted further solidified his position.

As Herbert Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God, grows more feeble, losing touch with the organization he fathered, his son is slowly consolidating his power as the new spiritual "head" of the WCG. Garner Ted Armstrong, for years known as "Playboy Ted," appears to be finally realizing the gravity of his new spiritual role in the WCG. In his younger years he resisted and tried to undo his father's strict authoritarian rules, but no more. With age comes "wisdom." He appears to have finally discerned that to retain control of his flock he must give his sheep a little room to graze while being careful not to let them think for themselves or roam at will.

Armed with this new understanding, Ted told the ministry at the January 1978 conference exactly what they must believe and teach to remain in the employ of the church. To each WCG minister Ted dispensed the "Systematic Theology Project," a 400-page packet of documents detailing the church's stance on each of its doctrines. The ministers were not asked whether they agreed with it or not, nor were they given the option of editing or revising any of its pages. They were simply told to either preach these doctrines or get out!

The presentation of the tithing doctrine was representative of the tone of the "Systematic Theology Project" and of the whole conference. In the section on

tithing, one scripture after another was wrested from its context, and one weak argument followed another. But the section concluded on a dogmatic note with the statement that "the responsibility of whether and how tithing should be applied and administered today must, in the final analysis, rest solely with the Church" (p. 11). Of course, by "church" it is meant not the actual "church" but the Armstrongs. It is interesting to note that now the organization-primarily Garner Ted-is the final authority on how tithing should be applied-not the Bible. This teaching was a total about-face from the organization's May 1976 statement: "The Church policy on tithing administration is that the individual must make his own decisions in all these matters, before his God . . . rather than have the Church detail the specifics" ("Statement on Faith and Financial Responsibility," p. 2). Could it be that the organization's falling income influenced the recent change?

The "Systematic Theology Project" did have one bright spot, however. The WCG finally admitted officially that it was not a sin for its members to go to hospitals and doctors-as the last issue of *Ambassador Report* had challenged its leaders to admit. We were glad to see the church respond to one of the changes we urged it to make.

Still, in the long run, it is painfully evident that Ted is determined to stick with the strict, old-time religion that his father had so successfully sold for over 40 years-no matter what the Bible says. And as for those people who have been devastated by the church's erroneous doctrine on healing and other doctrinal deceptions such as "D and R" and mandatory tithing, Garner Ted has, in effect, said: "Frankly, I don't give a damn!

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### College Administrator to Shovel Manure?

An informed source in the college administration revealed that more than one hundred students have left Ambassador College since the beginning of the fall 1977 semester and that a number dropped out at the semester break to attend local California universities-which are accredited and generally have much lower tuition costs. In the past Herbert Armstrong crowed loudly about how students forsook other colleges to attend AC. Now, however, students are forsaking AC for the accredited curriculum of Pasadena City College, California State University, U.C.L.A., and other respected institutions.

Increasingly, AC students have become upset with the hypocrisy of AC's officials who claim they know God's way of life but practice a life-style alien to that which they teach. Others complain about a lack of freedom to express their thoughts on even non-controversial issues and say that there is a lack of academic freedom at AC. But most of all, students are perplexed by the college administration's fickleness in charting AC's future. The administration claims to be actively pursuing accreditation while regularly talking of possibly closing down the Pasadena campus or moving AC to Texas-a move which would squash any chance AC has of achieving accreditation in the near future. Though it now appears that common sense may prevail and AC will probably remain in Pasadena, the faith of many a student in AC's "infallible" leadership remains shaken.

Several students have voiced concern over President Armstrong's stated intention "to cut more than \$1 million out of the present academic budget" (sermon, December 10, 1977). Those who wish to see the college accredited were further alarmed when Ted indicated in the same sermon that he'd like to cut

several faculty members who "teach various things that I do not think are necessary to get into the kingdom of God, and so therefore God's money isn't going to support it." This is a blatant abridgment of academic freedom and again strongly shows Ted is not overly serious about really attaining accreditation and living up to the responsibilities that would accompany it.

In the midst of all this confusion and lack of direction, some students are apparently making their voice heard. They have formed the Ambassador College "Coalition for Student Rights." On a flyer they passed out they called for nonmandatory forum attendance, the right to elect their own student body officers (student body officers are presently appointed by the dean), and the right to choose the clothing style and hair style of their own preference. They also voiced objections to AC administration censorship of *The Portfolio* (AC's student newspaper). The flyer pointed out that the student body has no control of the student body fund-which consists of money earned by the student body for student activities. One student claimed that the student body earned about \$15,000 ushering and selling programs and refreshments at the 1977 Super Bowl football game but that the students were never told where the money they earned went.

Evidently the "Coalition for Student Rights," though remaining anonymous to avoid expulsion from AC, has sent out other flyers and attempted to contact President Garner Ted Armstrong and evangelist Ron Kelley. In a December 10, 1977, sermon, Garner Ted Armstrong mentioned that they "told Mr. Kelley that he ought to go back to Texas and shovel manure." Ted, obviously perturbed that any student would dare challenge the authority of an AC administrator, said, "My response to that is, 'That's his job here, and as soon as he identifies the manure, out it goes.' " We just hope and pray Ron Kelley will somehow be given the ability to recognize manure when he sees it, and we recommend he start right at the top of the organization.

For years AC administrators, when confronted with a problem or student objection, have solved the problem by expelling or disciplining the person who brought the problem to their attention. We feel President Armstrong should look into the issues raised by the "Coalition for Student Rights" and work with all members of the student body to resolve the problems rather than expel more students. Wouldn't this be the intelligent, Christian approach?

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

### **Vista del Arroyo Update**

Since our article exposing the proposed \$2.5 million federal handout of the Vista del Arroyo property to the Armstrong cult, several significant things have occurred. Sufficient outrage by taxpayers was generated, resulting in a reported influx of mail and phone calls to various U.S. senators, congressional representatives, and other government officials. This heat was transferred predictably to those HEW and GSA bureaucrats responsible for the proposed property giveaway.

After more than two years of attempting to analyze and decide on the transfer, they apparently could not now just change their original position and openly reject Ambassador College's application on the basis of damaging information made available to them two years ago. After all, what would their superiors think of their competency or lack of it? How could they save face? If the transfer was allowed, however, a taxpayers' lawsuit challenging the transfer was sure to come and sure to bring a lot of publicity.

A simple, uncomplicated solution was found: Offer Ambassador College the property with a clause written into the contract stating that the property could never be used for religious purposes. That would take care of the separation of church and state question and also allow the Armstrongs to accept or decline the offer without causing any embarrassment to the federal government.

Ambassador College's reaction to all this was best summed up by comments Garner Ted Armstrong made in a sermon to students and faculty on December 10, 1977:

"I had a lengthy telex from Mr. Helge, of which I can divulge a portion to you. There is a paragraph, a very lengthy paragraph, in the letter which really does turn over-if we wish to walk in and to accept it sometime in the middle of the month of December-the Vista del Arroyo

property to Ambassador College.

"But unfortunately there is already a suit under way on the basis of that same deadly paragraph from some organization which is arguing in the courts that some theological institution has utilized properties granted by HEW for religious purposes.

"Now, I have to say that here we are looking at the acquisition of a very large and beautiful building, and as I said in the 'Personal,' if God opens that door we will walk through it-if we are convinced it is God who is doing it and God wants that building for Ambassador College.

"But the federal government never gave anything to anybody, except our enemies abroad. Our enemies abroad receive money with no strings attached.... But there is not one dime of government money that goes into any domestic source whatsoever that is not followed by petty bureaucrats working at what they think is underpay for their skills who are going to very closely supervise that government money; and where government money goes, government controls follow. . . .

"Now the paragraph in [the contract from] HEW says that any such properties may not be used for religious purposes ... All we've got to do is play little games and pretend to HEW that we're not a religiously oriented college, that we're just a secular college, which we are not and never will be. And then we just accept this thing in cagey little language or other and then walk into it, and then all we need is just one dissident student-and I notice we've got a lot of those anymore, both inside and outside where all the rest of the inside ones belong. All we need is one such person to write his deadly letter, or start his little publication, or start his little movement, and we've got a giant lawsuit from the federal government to kick us out of the Vista del Arroyo.

"Now, he [Ralph Helge] is dealing with the HEW attorneys both in San Francisco and in Washington, D.C., on that particular paragraph, and he's opened negotiations for its possible redraft. Now if and when it can be redrafted to where there is no such danger, then we'll look at it from that point of view....

"I will not walk into that building over there with government strings attached that say we cannot use it to house our theological library, to have a Bible study, or something of that nature, and to be vulnerable to some young thugs [he means us!] coming down here and starting some lawsuit just deliberately in order to cause us as many problems as they can. I just don't want to take that on. I'd rather just say, 'Forget it!'"

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### Grassroots Efforts Effective

We have received a large number of letters from many of you asking what you can do to assist us. Needless to say, we appreciate your enthusiasm, and we would like to encourage everyone who wants to join the fight in publicizing the Armstrong fraud. We feel that much can be accomplished by individuals working at the local level.

For instance, many have written us about how they have approached friends, neighbors, and WCG members and told them about *Ambassador Report*. Most responded favorably, but some were very hostile, assuming the *Report* was nothing but undocumented accusations. However, when these same people were handed a copy of our last issue and shown how carefully written and well-researched it really was, most promised to read it and consider the "other side of the story." So tell your friends about the *Report*, but be sure to show them a copy of our October 1977 issue, or purchase one to give to them.

A more enterprising ex-member not only told friends about the Report, but he also contacted the news media in his area. He told a surprised reporter of a major newspaper about his experiences in the WCG and offered the reporter a copy of our publication. One thing led to another, and within a few days the paper published a major story on the Armstrong cult and *Ambassador Report*. Our friend didn't stop there, however. He went to a local TV station, urged them to read the *Report* and asked them to decide whether dropping the "Garner Ted Armstrong" program would not be in the best interests of their viewers. Within three weeks, the station dropped the program entirely.

The following excerpts from letters show further how effective your action at the local level can be:

I wanted to let you know of a recent development locally. Recently I had the opportunity to spend an hour-and-a-half talking with one of the talkmasters who is on a Dayton talk radio station. Some of our friends who live in Dayton had heard this man talk about having received *Ambassador Report* and having stayed up until two or three in the morning reading it. He has been in Dayton for about 7 to 8 years, and when my wife and I were still true believers in Herbert's church, this man was considered to be an enemy of "the work." He was always commenting against the church on his program.

I called from my job in Dayton and talked with this man off the air. I encouraged him to expose the cult as much as possible and offered to talk to him personally and give him some additional information beyond what he had read in the *Report*. He was interested in talking to me, and it worked out for me to go down to his home, an unusual happening.

Just two days ago my wife talked to a friend who heard this man refer to my visit with him. He said on the air that he had gone against his usual policy and allowed someone to come to his home who had been a member of the WCG. He said that the church was worse than he had imagined.

This man plans to call Al Carrozzo and have him on the talk show via phone. He also indicated he'd like to do the same with someone on the *Report* staff.

Ohio

We appreciated the chance to visit with you [co-publishers Len and Marg Zola] when you were in Pittsburgh. The more we become involved in trying to expose the WCG on a local level, the more we appreciate your efforts. We are writing letters and sending AR's to major networks. Also, on a local level to radio stations.

Also, would it be possible for you to put us in contact with others who might want to write letters, possibly some in Minneapolis? If letters come to major networks from all parts of the country, it will be more effective.

If it is not too much of an imposition, we feel that if someone were to act as an information "clearing house" to enhance and concentrate the effort of our group and others throughout the country, our thrust would be much more effective in exposing the organization. We feel your group could be the nucleus of such an effort. You can be assured of our continued support

Pennsylvania

Here in California, one woman is calling the owners of halls in which WCG church services are held. She is telling them about the organization, her experiences in it, and showing them a copy of our publication. Another ex-member "advertised" *Ambassador Report* by placing flyers that gave details about our magazine and our address on WCG members' cars during sabbath services. In Washington state, another person interested in helping the cause talked to local newspaper reporters, and this resulted in a story about the WCG and AR.

Newsmen of the press/media are constantly looking for interesting stories. If you really want to do something about the Armstrongs, contact your local reporters. Show them an AR; tell them about your experiences. Also, if you have an

interesting story to tell about your experiences in the WCG, write or type us a letter about it. We'd be happy to print it. (Of course, we will keep your name confidential unless you specify otherwise.)

Another thing you can do is contact Ambassador College via its toll-free number (1) (800) 423-4444 (operational except in California, Alaska, and Hawaii). Let its officials know your inner feelings about their conduct and policies. If you want to see certain practices changed at Ambassador College, speak up! Tell them!

[Back to Index](#)

[Next Article](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

### What's Next?

All of the free publicity we have received has helped us to reach many more people than we could have otherwise. We believe, however, that there is still much that we can do. It is not enough for us to reach just the WCG membership. We also want to reach as much of the general public as possible. After all, that is where the constant flow of new Armstrong victims comes from.

We are now running ads for *Ambassador Report's* 92-page issue in a number of publications including *Spotlight*, *Universal Life*, and *Eternity*. We have also begun a direct mail advertising campaign. Flyers, advertising the *Report's* last issue, have been sent to over 500 religious publications and 700 religious libraries across the United States. We have sent flyers to over 9,000 professors of religious subjects-that's just about every professor of religion in the United States! We have also begun to send out one to three thousand flyers per week to the pastors of church congregations across the nation. A mailing list (on computer) for the pastors of all the churches in the United States has been made available to us. There are over 125,000 of them, and, if possible, we will reach each one of them this year with at least a flyer. It could mean that by the end of this year many millions of Christians around the nation are going to know what the Armstrong cult is all about and are going to be able to thwart its attempts to sucker more hapless victims into its fold.

We intend to accomplish all this and more during the next few months, but what we actually do accomplish will be directly proportionate to the interest and financial assistance you, our readers, give us. In the *Pastor's Report*, Garner Ted wrote: "The so-called *Ambassador Report* ... is being published... for the sole purpose of making money for themselves and harming the Work." Contrary to what Garner Ted Armstrong says and what some people think, *Ambassador Report* is not a money-making venture. True, we have been forced to put a price of \$5.95 on our last 92-page issue, but that was necessary for three reasons: (1)

In order to get the *Report* into people's hands we found it necessary to advertise, and that costs money. (2) Hundreds of people were requesting our last issue for themselves and friends but were not helping us to defray its costs, and (3) the legal harassment we are under from Rader and Company (via Bobby Fischer) is costing us a great deal of money to fight.

We hope all of you will realize that we are small-we don't even have an office but operate out of our homes. We are poor. We still owe thousands of dollars, including a substantial amount to our printer for our last printing. And, we are not making a profit. In fact, not one of us has received one cent in wages or salary for the many thousands of hours we have worked on this project.

We think *Ambassador Report* is accomplishing a great deal. It is making it increasingly difficult for the Armstrongs to rob people of their tithes and offerings. And, as our mail shows, many WCG members are rejecting the Armstrongs after reading the *Report*.

We want to continue our work. There is a lot more that we can accomplish, but that will require your help. We hope you will generously continue your financial support of *Ambassador Report*.

For those of you who are financially supporting the *Report*, we would like to again offer a reprint of the incredible 1939 *Good News* article by Herbert W. Armstrong entitled, "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?" In this article, which is no longer available from AC or the WCG, Herbert Armstrong shows how the Bible condemns autocratic church government (obviously, he's changed his tune since then). If you don't already have a copy, ask for one. You'll find it interesting reading.

[Next Issue \(AR4\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR 4 June 6, 1978**

Dear Friends:

We had hoped to send you another full *Ambassador Report* by now, but unfortunately our financial situation has made it impossible to publish a May/June issue. Nevertheless, we thought you'd like to know bit about what's been happening. Here are some of the latest developments.

The Bobby Fischer lawsuit has, for all practical purposes, died. Mr. Fischer has refused to testify against the *Report*, disobeying a court order to appear for questioning. As press coverage of the case increased- all negative to the WCG- and as Bobby's cooperation with his attorneys declined, Rader and Helge's plan to stop the *Report* via Fischer exploded in their faces. They attempted to bail out by persuading the court to grant them permission to drop Fischer as a client. This "double-cross" apparently convinced Bobby that he indeed was being "used."

Fischer lashed back in a letter he recently distributed to AC employees and WCG members. In it, he accused the Rader-Helge law firm of lying and conspiring against his best legal interests. Bobby also contended that Rader and Helge were taking their orders from a "Satanical Secret World Government."

In response to Fischer's letter, the *Pasadena Star News*, April 5, quoted Ralph Helge as saying: "If Fischer is making a very wide distribution of this letter, we are forced, compelled and pushed into protecting our reputations from damages. If the distribution is broad, we may determine that we have to take action against him."

It's quite an ironic twist that the men who ran to Fischer's aid and "donated" their legal services would now threaten legal action against their former client.

Regarding the Gary Bagley trial, we have very little of real substance yet to

report. You will recall that on December 15, just before the taping of the Gene Kelley Special in "God's House," Gary Bagley was arrested on trumped-up extortion charges while picketing Ambassador College with a sign that stated Garner Ted Armstrong is an adulterer. (Mr. Bagley's wife had been one of Ted's victims.) The arrest put an end to Bagley's picketing and spared Rader's AICF and the city of Pasadena no small degree of embarrassment.

Outraged by the arrest, Mr. Bagley was eager for the opportunity to prove his innocence. When plea bargaining was suggested he refused all offers ("Innocent men don't bargain!"). Then when he enthusiastically appeared in court March 28, as scheduled, he was shocked to discover that the Judge was postponing the trial to May 22. It would have been rescheduled to an earlier date, but WCG attorney Helge claimed that that would have interfered with his spring vacation. (WCG officials are *a/ways* on vacation, it seems.)

Then on May 22 the trial was again postponed to June 9 because the judge needed more time to consider lengthy arguments by Helge that the subpoenas of Herbert W. Armstrong, Stanley Rader, Roderick Meredith, Dibar Apartian, and David Antion should be quashed on grounds of religious freedom and privacy. All five, plus Helge, had been served subpoenas the previous week by AR publishers Bob Geringer and Len Zola. Marshals have repeatedly attempted to locate Garner Ted Armstrong to subpoena him also, but he is nowhere to be found and has apparently left the state. Maybe he's on vacation too.

Just hours after being served, Stanley Rader and Herbert Armstrong were back in Arizona and now claim that they are no longer legal residents of California and therefore will not appear in court. Herbert Armstrong also claims that he has no information of relevance to the case. Yet, oddly, his name appears as one of those bringing the charges against the defendant!

What will transpire on June 9 is anyone's guess, but whatever happens it appears that the organization's plan to stop Bagley's picketing has backfired. As one Armstrong official said privately, "We *can't* drop the charges now. If we do, Bagley will sue the pants off of us for false arrest!"

He's right.

You'll be reading about this trial in the papers, so as HWA used to say- "Watch!"

Some of you have asked about rumors that we had been burglarized. Yes, it's true. The apartment door of Bill Hughes, our business manager, was found kicked in one evening and the apartment completely ransacked. The contents of every drawer, every box, and every closet had been emptied onto the floor.

Strangely, nothing of purely monetary value was taken. A color television, a stereo, and cash were untouched. The only items missing were *Ambassador Report* research documents and about 200 related tape recordings. Fortunately, we had duplicate copies of everything safely stored elsewhere. In spite of the fact

that it's been months since the break-in, the Pasadena Police Department has turned up no concrete evidence in the case. We, however, know who was responsible for the break-in.

By now, many of you will have heard that Ambassador College has officially closed its doors as a four-year liberal arts college. Here are some of the incredible details:

In November 1977, a small group of students formed the AC Coalition for Student Rights, an activist group, demanding immediate compliance with accreditation standards and increased student rights at AC. In handbills passed around campus, they accused President Garner Ted Armstrong and his administration of stalling on implementing the academic and administrative changes necessary for accreditation. GTA publicly lashed out at this group, ridiculing and condemning their proposals. A February 6, 1978, *Ambassador Portfolio* editorial belittled the coalition.

On February 11, GTA preached a scathing sermon about one of the most "important" issues in Christianity- men's hair and sideburn length. Referring to AC's male students, he stated, "I may be willing to say that if 50% of the ear lobe is visible behind some of these curly locks, that I might be satisfied with that." The Coalition for Student Rights responded immediately by distributing more leaflets on campus. They wrote: "Mature Christians should be concerned with the weightier matters of the law- love, justice, mercy, truth- like the apostles. Only immature Christians cling to pharisaical dress codes, hair length and sideburn standards, etc." They accused the *Portfolio* of misrepresenting the coalition's goals and reminded everyone that the *Portfolio* was censored by the college's administration.

By this time it was obvious from GTA's speeches that he was extremely angered that students would dare challenge his pontifical authority and imply his orders were not an exact reflection of God's mind. In a letter to administrative personnel dated March 10, 1978, Ted passionately- but not too accurately- described conditions at AC. He wrote: "Ambassador College is at a crossroads. Deep seated emotions boil up within various dissident elements.... An anonymous 'student coalition' makes obnoxious demands; theft is prevalent; violence against students; an attempted rape; burglaries and the like sully each academic year. Entirely too many of our young men seem determined to appear slovenly, as sloppy as they possibly can, with ugly unsightly wisps of teenage facial hair...." (Perhaps these "surly young thugs," as Ted referred to them, couldn't afford new clothes after paying AC's high tuition costs and 20% of their income to the WCG in tithes.) Ted went on to say, "We are still actively pursuing regional accreditation." (The fact is, if Garner Ted had pursued accreditation with the same vigor he had pursued women over the years, Ambassador would have been accredited long ago!)

Two weeks later it was announced that AC would not accept the Vista del Arroyo Hotel property from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare afterall. This was a major victory for *Ambassador Report*, as for two years we had fought

AC's bid for the right to acquire this property. Interviewed by the *Pasadena Star News*, Rader readily admitted the reason for the last-minute decision. He said, "Essentially, we did not want to buy a lawsuit. That's what it comes down to."

For once, Rader made a truthful public statement. *Ambassador Report* had prepared for and was about to begin legal action to block the transfer just as the announcement was made. But that announcement wasn't the last one.

On April 7, Garner Ted dropped his biggest bomb by announcing that AC would leave Pasadena for good and move to Big Sandy. Pandemonium reigned. Students sat stunned. A few rejoiced; many cried. The faculty, as a whole was enraged, especially when they found that the college's board of trustees had not even been consulted by GTA before the announcement. Many were whispering that Ted, exhausted by the Coalition's pursuit, had finally blown a fuse. Others felt this was just one more indication Ted was actively trying to destroy his father's work. (Ted had previously closed the Big Sandy and Bricket Wood campuses, Ambassador Press, Imperial Schools; killed the *Good News* magazine; demoted and exiled most of the evangelists who supported his father; and watered down many of his dad's doctrinal teachings. Meanwhile certain faculty members scurried down to Big Sandy, hoping to grab the best homes available before their fellow teachers arrived. Many instructors were cursing the fact that just one year ago they had been forced to sell their Big Sandy homes and transfer to Pasadena. Now they would have to sell their Pasadena homes and move back to the "sticks."

And what was Ted's brilliant reason for moving to Big Sandy one year after closing the Big Sandy campus? "We will solve once and for all our identity problem. We can say, 'There is the church in Pasadena. And in Texas there is the college.'" As usual, this was just so much B.S.

Within days hundreds of flyers dotted AC's campus, again compliments of the Coalition for Student Rights. Their leaflet, entitled "Are You Fed Up With Administrative B.S.?" opened with the statement: "In a November 29, 1946, *Co-Workers' Bulletin*, HWA promised that AC would 'soon' be accredited. In 1968, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, GTA promised that full accreditation was just around the corner, and that he was actively seeking it! How long will this propagandist treadmill of empty promises continue?" The worst, however, was yet to come.

Herbert Armstrong, huffing, puffing and behaving like a wounded, enraged bull, came roaring back onto the scene. Though everyone had assumed he had one foot in the coffin, he appeared as strong as ever and was on the warpath. HWA stripped Ted of his executive powers and announced he was reassuming total control of AC and the WCG. On May 11, another bombshell was dropped when HWA announced that AC would indeed close its doors for good. Many faculty and students openly voiced their bitterness, frustration, confusion, and anger, while a number, still in a state of shock at seeing AC flushed down the drain, exhibited quiet resignation at the closure, claiming it was probably God's will. But Bob Gerringer, in a CBS-TV news interview, said the college was just a "political

football being tossed around" in the Rader-GTA power struggle.

Then to add insult to injury, in a May 21, 1978, letter to the church, HWA blasted his wayward son, accusing him of not agreeing of with THE WAY in which Christ was building the college and the Work through me." He added: "You began changing WAYS and personnel over to your WAY.... You kept many things from me." With his son totally disgraced, HWA announced that Stanley Rader, who had been ousted by GTA in a power struggle only a few months before, was being reappointed to the boards of directors of the church and college. After all this, would you believe Rader had the audacity to deny that there was a power struggle taking place? He did! (*L.A. Times*, May 13, 1978.)

But this was not the end. Unbelievably, HWA, who many claim is becoming increasingly senile and easily swayed by whomever he happens to be with, reinstated his son Ted as the church's gospel spokesman. This occurred just days after he had declared Ted a virtual Judas for going totally contrary to Christ's way. (An informed source mentioned that Ted had been removed because of excessive gambling losses in Las Vegas but that Ted convinced his dad to reinstate him after describing some of *Rader's* personal activities.)

With total confusion prevalent at headquarters, doctrinal chaos is breaking out in the church like measles. On March 11, Herman Hoeh, long considered HWA's "doctrinal oracle," proclaimed that a new study paper by Robert Kuhn (a "converted" Jew) and Lester Grabbe (Ph.D. in theology, Claremont University) had been accepted by GTA as new truth. Their paper proved HWA was wrong concerning the date the Jews kept the passover. Hoeh told his congregation that Herbert had not been allowed to see this paper because he had a weak heart and the excitement that could be caused by reading such a paper- which HWA would consider heresy- would overwhelm his weak heart. Hoeh called the new teaching "a revelation that God has given" and remarked that from now on HWA would mainly function as "a father figure." As far as we know, HWA is still unaware of this paper and Hoeh's conclusions. However, reliable sources indicated that HWA just recently condemned the mammoth Kuhn-Grabbe-GTA "Systematic Theology Project" that GTA had given to the whole ministry in January as the official codification of all WCG doctrine.

The chaos at "headquarters" is not the WCG's only problem. The Melbourne, Australia, church is reportedly in turmoil, and most of the members of both the Belgium church and a Toronto-area church recently defected. And while neglecting to mention how many had dropped out, GTA admitted that in 1977 less than 1,000 men, women and children were added to the church's attendance rolls. In January, 1978, only 20 were added. WCG growth has virtually stopped!

Now just as we go to press, Rader has announced that AC *will*, after all, open again in the fall, but only as a one-year "Bible school," offering an unaccredited and worthless 30-unit certificate in Armstrong theology. One surviving faculty member said the certificate would be worth about as much as the degree the Wizard of Oz gave the scarecrow. As a sure indication of the anticipated quality of education, Rader said he will personally teach a course in ethics! AC will also

have a two- or three-year graduate school of theology for those interested in a career in this rapidly disintegrating religious fraud.

The AC administration turned a deaf ear to students who had pleaded with the college to allow them to complete their degrees. However when WCG officials discovered that closing AC would make it impossible to obtain a tax writeoff on AC's buildings the decision was made to let an amputated version of AC remain. Meanwhile, the college is again, apparently, negotiating with the Morman Chruch, hoping to sell the Big Sandy campus to that organization. Of course, it goes without saying that the Armstrongs' latest idiocies have completely destroyed Ambassador's chances of *ever* being accredited.

It had been our hope that somehow Ambassador College would be transformed into a legitimate institution. Nevertheless we suspected all along that the Armstrongs were quite willing to destroy the college rather than see it wrested from their control. You will recall that on the cover of our very first issue (the *Review*) we even asked the question: "Ambassador College- will it survive?"

It is obvious to us now that Ambassador cannot be legitimized. It is also obvious that the majority of ministers and members still in the WCG are brainwashed beyond human hope. We'd like to help them, but we aren't naive, nor are we ignorant of Christ's admonition: "Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:19)

What, then, would we like to accomplish? Two things: (1) the complete exposing of the Armstrong cult to the general public, and (2) the liquidation of *all* Armstrong organization properties through litigation (being prepared now) with the resulting funds distributed to the victims of Armstrongism. Whether or not the AR will be able to continue on to these goals, however, remains to be seen.

As of right now, *Ambassador Report* is well over \$7,000 in debt. To many, this would be a trifling amount, but in our position it is a substantial burden. Unless we can find a way to eliminate that financial barrier, it will be impossible for us to publish another issue of *Ambassador Report*. No matter what happens, we will, of course, continue to send what literature we've already published to those requesting it. We will also attempt to find *other* means to disseminate to the public the information accumulated in our files. But unless we substantially reduce our liabilities, we will simply not be able to continue publishing new *Reports*.

It is also becoming increasingly obvious to us that even if a way can be found for us to continue publishing, we will have to limit our mailings only to those who have, during 1978, assisted us financially.

There are quite a few who have been more than generous in financially supporting our efforts. To those people we can only express our sincere gratitude. (We wish we could do so to each of you personally.) But frankly, the

majority of those on our mailing list have not so much as sent us a note of thanks.

We are not complaining! Most who have gone through the "Ambassador experience" want nothing more than to simply forget the whole thing. They sympathize with our efforts but apparently don't want to be reminded of the past. We understand completely. And that is one more reason we will not be sending future AR's to anyone unless they specifically request that we do so.

We intend to continue our efforts to expose the Armstrong cult, but for the good of our families and ourselves we must put a limit on our own degree of sacrifice. Unless the financial means can be found, the AR will no longer serve as the vehicle for disseminating the results of our investigations. We do sincerely hope, though, that we will be able to continue publishing the *Report*.

To those of you who have helped us in the past and to those of you who are helping us now, our sincere thanks.

On behalf of the Publishers,  
John Trechak

[Next Issue \(AR5\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR 5 August 21, 1978

Dear Friends:

With Garner Ted Armstrong's departure from his dad's church, all hell has broken loose in the "Worldly" Church of God (WCG)-the church that claims to be the "one and only organization telling world leaders the way to world peace." As we reported in our last newsletter, Herbert Armstrong-who for the last ten years has been wining and dining kings and tyrants-finally found out that his son had been slowly and subtly dismantling "God's Work" while he was off in Southeast Asia. Enraged, Herbert stripped his son of all executive authority, but as our last news letter went to press, we learned that Herbert's golden-throated son had somehow talked his way back into his dad's favor. At that time it looked as if Garner Ted the "professional repenter" had won another bout with his dad. But since we mailed our last letter, an incredible series of events has unfolded.

On June 13 it was announced that Ted had been commanded to take a six-month leave of absence. He was accused by Stan Rader, Herbert's lawyer, of taking God out of the work. What really irked Herbert, though, was that Ted was taking *him* "out of the work." (One GTA offense: using "Garner Ted Armstrong Productions" in place of "Worldwide Church of God" on corporate letterheads.)

### Time Magazine Carries the Story

By this time, the power struggle for control of the WCG had become national news. On June 19, *Time* magazine, quoting Rader and *Ambassador Report*, came out with a provocative article on the "byzantine power struggle" between Ted and Rader. During this time acrimonious letters were flying back and forth and heated discussions were taking place behind the scenes between the proud old warrior and his rebellious playboy son.

Finally, in an eight-page letter to members and co-workers dated June 28,

Herbert, breathing out fire like a wounded dragon, condemned his son's recent actions, revealing how he had long "covered up" his "son's sins and mistakes." He admitted, just as *Ambassador Report* had claimed, that he had been "a respecter of persons" and that he had protected his son "to the detriment and harm it has brought to God's Church and Ambassador College!" But Herbert justified this unbiblical favoritism by saying that "love covers." He should really acquaint himself with the apostle Paul's command to Timothy concerning sinning elders: "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all..." (1 Tim. 5:20, RSV). When it came to other ministers' sins, Herbert has often publicly brought out all the sordid details to his congregation. But when his own son committed adultery-over and over again, Herbert suddenly invented this shallow "love covers" argument. In fact, even to this day Herbert refuses to admit that his son was an adulterer, claiming his faults were drinking, gambling, and rebellion against apostolic authority. If Herbert had heeded the words of Ephesians 5:11- "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (RSV)- the church would have been a lot better off.

In the June 28 letter referred to above Herbert asserted that Ted "has subtly been destroying me.... He sent me by special personal messenger the day before yesterday a seven-page single-spaced typed letter literally breathing out 'threatenings and slaughter,... the most hostile embittered father-dishonoring letter I could imagine-except under Satan's inspiration."

Ted, claiming his dad was being subtly manipulated by Stan Rader and the church's right-wing evangelists and realizing his dad's heart was hardened against him, had taken the unpardonable step of going to the news media with his side of the story. In an AP wire service article, Ted "predicted a downfall of the religious empire because of its leaders' lavish spending habits and poor financial management." In a June 26 *Los Angeles Times* article he charged that the church was "shot through with fear. People are fearful to say what they know, fearful to talk to each other, fearful their phones are bugged, and fearful of their jobs." You know, that's exactly what we pointed out in our 1977 issue of *Ambassador Report*. Ted also admitted that "the church has been forced by inflation and extravagant expenditures to borrow money to meet its payroll." These comments caused Herbert to blow an apostolic fuse. He disfellowshipped and exiled his dazed son, claiming "his entire attitude the past weeks and months has certainly indicated the impossibility of leading him again to repentance."



Garner Ted Armstrong's furniture was removed from his Pasadena home by movers. He's now living near Tyler, Texas.

### *Garner Ted Strikes Back*

For one month Ted disappeared from the public spotlight amid speculation that he was preparing to put on a new act of repentance for his dad. But suddenly, without warning, Ted attacked. In a rambling apologetic nine-page letter to all WCG ministers dated July 25, Ted announced the formation of the Church of God, International. We understand its board is composed of Ted, his wife Shirl, and his brother-in-law Guy Carnes. To divert suspicion that he was writing the letter simply to draw WCG ministers into his camp, he claimed he composed his letter because "there are those who are interpreting my silence as tacit admission of some 'guilt' of some sort.... Now, I must write a partial reply...."

To gain sympathy from his readers, he began by saying, "I have recently received a letter from Mr. Rader, offering me a \$50,000 (before taxes) salary per year, for retirement.... In the letter, he goes into great, legal detail about my remaining silent about certain confidential information I have concerning the work. Further, he offers me the free-rent use of the Tahoe Cabin. However, it is stated that this 'retirement' salary and the access to the cabin may be terminated at any time 'with or without cause.'... I utterly reject all such offers, and all such strings attached.... Such offer is tantamount to taking God's tithes ... and paying me not to preach the gospel with those tithes!"

We fail to see why Ted was so upset with Rader's generous offer. Being second in command in the WCG, Ted himself had engineered and/or approved such "deals" with a number of former high-ranking WCG officials who "knew too much." Ted never before griped that these "unearned gratuities" were a waste of God's tithes. Why now?

On page 3 Ted reveals that the WCG has denied him his mail marked "personal," "confidential," or "private," and Ted encloses his June 12 letter to Pasadena Postmaster K. Wilson as proof. Amazingly enough, it was Ted who tried to prevent Ambassador College students from receiving their mail back in February 1976. (See "Mail Censorship Sparks Student Protest," *Ambassador Review*, June 1976, p. 28.)

Next, Ted bewails the fact that he was being denied his "Justly deserved and honestly earned severance pay." But for years it was his own policy to not give severance pay to ministers who went to the press with the church's dirty linen! Obviously he doesn't feel guilty pocketing tithe money sent to his dad while plotting to form his own church.

Ted also objected to the manner in which he was disfellowshipped and marked "with character-destroying innuendo." But when Milo Wilcox, a WCG minister for almost 9 years, was suspended, disfellowshipped, and marked on the sabbath all because of a mere rumor, Ted never condemned this as unethical. In fact, when Milo demanded an apology, Ted had him fired. Perhaps Ted has forgotten the role he played in cruelly and mercilessly disfellowshipping and marking Ernest Martin, Al Carrozzo, Ken Westby, George Kemnitz, Jim Morrison, Richard Plache, and dozens of others. Ted, however, thinking his motives and actions are righteous and pure declares, "Though I have been 'marked'...I bear it gladly.... I can only believe that God is moving to allow this to happen so that His perfect purpose and will be made known. I believe He is tired of the mindless, confusing, constant change; tired of corporate inertia; tired of the strength-sapping drain of huge imponderable expenses constantly depriving the main part of His commission from being done."

With his usual hallucinatory braggadocio Ted wrote: "I have never been merely a paid voice; an alter-ego; an employee. Never was I proclaiming the message of some man- I was no mere hireling, paid a wage to speak what others told me to speak; I was, specially equipped; formed, tempered, tried and tested, shaped and created...." He went on to state: "From henceforth, I will bow my knees to no man." Of course, by this Ted doesn't mean that *you* should feel this way. After all, if everyone did Ted wouldn't have a church at all. Would he?

In closing Ted rejoices that he no longer has to associate with the hypocritical bootlickers who surrounded him in Pasadena. He angrily writes, "Some of these men didn't have the courage to come to me, face to face, and voice their complaints-but my father has admitted they had been coming to him for about one solid year, behind my back, to get rid of me." Maybe Herbert is guilty of judgment based only on hearsay and gossip but Garner Ted's finally getting a taste of his own medicine.

### Herbert Armstrong Explodes

On July 31, Herbert retaliated by launching a stinging attack against his son whom he said he loves "above all people on earth." He accused Ted of raising "a

hand against his father" and attempting "to draw away disciples" (*Pastor's Report*, p. 1). One of Herbert's charges was that Ted's radio and TV programs were becoming secular. Herbert conveniently forgot how it was he-not Ted-who introduced the secular approach not only on "The World Tomorrow" broadcast but in *The Plain Truth*.

Warning his hirelings, Herbert wrote: "I know many of those former ministers [who have forsaken the WCG] have had to take jobs working with their hands to earn a living. That is justice!" The statement reveals much about Herbert's attitude toward money, work and religion. Of course he neglected to point out that many of those who have left the Armstrong ministry and gone into honest work are now earning two or three times what they did as his hirelings.

In a letter to Ted included in the *Pastor's Report*, Herbert told Ted: "You completely overstepped the authority I delegated to you." Then Herbert explained how, when he was under authority, he "took criticism" and "took orders." This argument didn't convince Ted for one moment that his actions were wrong for Ted was well aware of how his dad had left the Church of God back in the 1930s and started his own church after refusing to cooperate with the other Church of God ministers and constantly undermining their authority. (For complete documentation of this, read "Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots," *Ambassador Report*, 1977 issue.)

Herbert also tried to cow Ted into submission by referring to himself as "God's anointed" (p. 3). But Ted knows this is only so much religious rhetoric. Herbert was ordained, not by another Church of God minister but by lay members of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, 1973 edition, pp. 365-66). Ted also knows that Herbert didn't receive some special baptism from God or even from a Church of God minister. Herbert himself admits a Baptist minister baptized him (*The Good News*, August 1969, p. 4).

Following Herbert's diatribe was a long-winded letter by "Mr. Loyalty," C. Wayne Cole. His letter is, in fact much more logical than Herbert's, and he zeros right in on Ted's Achilles' heel- his own statements. He quotes Ted as saying during the January 1978 Ministerial Conference: "If I leave this Work-don't follow me. I know the lesson of Absalom.... The quickest way for me to destroy myself is to attack my father.... I have said publicly to the area coordinators if I cannot write a deep lesson of loyalty to my own father... how could I ever expect loyalty on down the line " (p. 9).

When you get right down to it, Garner Ted is guilty of doing the very thing he has condemned vociferously for years. Rader, who is an expert in this area, rightly called Ted a "hypocrite," saying that all Ted "is trying to do is lead people away to follow him" (*Pasadena Star-News*, July 31, 1978). When a member of the press asked Ted, "Do you intend to compete with him [Herbert] and draw members away from his church?" Ted replied with a self-contradiction: "Of course not. That's not my purpose at all. He left me no choice. I think he knew that I would have to continue to speak and to preach" (*Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, August

6, 1978).

But what caused Ted to do the unthinkable and split off from his dad? Perhaps his comment in the *Herald Examiner* (August 6) answers the question: "My father is a very strong, self-willed man. He was trying to spank his boy (now 48 years old), and this time his boy just wasn't going to be spanked. He always starts out his talks that he was called when I was 3, and in his mind I think he thinks I am 3."

### GTA- Sheep Rustler

No matter what Ted says, it's obvious to all that he is trying to lure away his father's sheep. In a July 31 letter to the entire membership of the WCG Ted not only attempts to counter the allegations made against him but attacks some of the bedrock doctrines of his father's church. Here are a few excerpts:

I did not start *Quest*... I never even bought a subscription. I spoke out strongly against demon art in the magazine; against taking God's name in vain in its pages, pictures of naked architects on the cover, and other things which I felt were not in the interests of the Church.

My father wanted accreditation from the beginning-but on his own terms.... he still chooses to equate accreditation with "secularism" or "satanism," and will not change his mind. Of course, accreditation is merely the insuring by professional educators that Ambassador is actually giving its students what it says it is giving them; only trying to determine whether the substance of real education is there, as well as the form; only striving to insure that real academic excellence is maintained-so students aren't "ripped off" by shallow, non-professional educational practices.

He said, toward the end, that we "didn't have enough money" to conduct "colleges," but then went into detail about giving away money to a King in Thailand, to educate ignorant hill farmers to quit growing pot, and start growing vegetables, instead.

My father's new governmental ideas are not Biblical, at all. There were many times in history, and there is predicted to be a time in the future when there is more than one man of equal rank in God's work!

Check Hebrews 3:1, and find out who in the Bible, exclusively, is ever called "God's Apostle!" Paul calls himself "an Apostle" or "the Apostle of Christ"-but only Jesus Christ Himself is called "God's Apostle!" I am embarrassed for my father for all the many powerful statements of the assertion of authority!

The Gospel is much, much more than just "an announcement." Read I Corinthians 15:1-6 and see! Its primary focus is on Jesus Christ and "him crucified"-and on the fact of His life, teaching, example, death, burial, and resurrection," as well as the fact that He is the soon-coming King and world-ruler. I intend preaching it all as God so wills and inspires.

Pray for my father, that he can see Satan's wiles at work right around him.... I believe Jesus Christ wants to see some humility, and some service, and some kindness, and some meekness, for a change, and is growing tired of seeing all the claims of great office, power, authority and hearing shouting, angry messages which produce fear.

If you would like to read Ted's letter in its entertaining entirety, why not write Garner Ted requesting your own *FREE* copy. His address is: P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710.

The psychological technique used in Ted's letter is almost a carbon copy of Herbert's 1939 Good News article which justified his defiance of "church government" in breaking away from the Church of God, 7th Day. It's certainly ironic justice that Ted should use the identical break-away defense that his father used when he drew away members and their tithes in 1939.

For those readers who have not read the "39 article," we strongly recommend that you write to us for a free copy. It's an excellent item to give to friends or acquaintances still in the Armstrong cult because it's Pope Herbert's own "inspired" words.

### Ted's New Church

Garner Ted's new church is picking up steam rapidly. A week ago he announced to a new congregation of 75 in Tyler that his church was making over \$2,000 a day from donations and that he had a good response to his first radio broadcast. He intends to go on new stations immediately. One individual who was present at the first service of Ted's church told us Ted looked like a new man-happy, relaxed, fulfilled. The same individual also visited the Big Sandy church where Herbert was preaching that very sabbath and said Herbert looked grim and bitter.

The church members in Pasadena are noticeably discouraged because, with Brian Knowles, Dave Antion, and Garner Ted-the church's most fluent speakers-now removed from the sermon schedule, they know they will be subjected weekly to the long-winded, unimaginative harangues of the right-wing ministers. Church attendance has already plummeted, and with Ted's magic voice gone, it is expected to drop even further. The WCG's donor income (as opposed to co-worker income) has also dropped drastically, and WCG officials are frantically selling off assets to obtain cash. Stan Rader told the *Los Angeles Times* (August 5), however, that the WCG "is more stable how than it has been at any time in

the past 10 years." One source says that, contrary to Rader's rosy statements, the WCG may already be in receivership but that this is being kept secret from the members by the church and its bank. We are investigating this and hope to give you more details in a future *Report*.

One ex-member made an interesting observation concerning the present father-son power struggle. He reflected: "You know, it's interesting how Herbert has said for so long that it was his commission to turn the hearts of children to their fathers (Malachi 4:6), and yet Herbert has never been able to win the esteem and affection of his own son." Several in fact have asked us what caused Herbert, knowing the charismatic drawing power of his son, to treat his son so harshly and alienate him. On NBC's "Tomorrow" program hosted by Tom Snyder (July 28) Stanley Rader hinted that it was the publicity surrounding Ted's "emotional problem" (adultery) which was responsible for his removal from office. But what apparently incensed Herbert above all was Ted's refusal to submit to his apostolic authority in every detail and Ted's comment to the *Los Angeles Times* that "it is my belief that before long all that will be left of the Armstrong empire will be the AICF and *Quest* magazine."

Herbert, stung by Ted's penetrating logic, replied: "He [Ted] has spread the point blank lie that Mr. Rader is now actually heading the Church and Work. Brethren, I brand that as a Satan lie!... I have given the direct order to Mr. Rader to sell or dispose of the magazine *Quest/78* as soon as possible."



## The Fate of *Quest/78* and Everest House

Nevertheless, *Quest/78* is *not* going to be sold-at least not for six months or a year, if ever, according to Rader. Roger Lippross, a top WCG publishing official, commented at a July 12 meeting at Ambassador's press that Rader has put *Quest* under his personal control in the AICF. Guess that shows who's really the boss once and for all!

Not only does Rader have increased control over *Quest*, but now he has quietly placed the WCG's new publishing venture, Everest House, under the AICF. Almost nobody in the WCG, though, is aware of what the Everest House publishes and who founded it. Even its catalogue is kept out of church members' reach, lest they learn what it is publishing. Stan Rader gave birth to it and hired its present operating head, Lew Gillenson, in 1977. Everest House shares office space with *Quest/78* in Pasadena and New York City. Informed sources stated that the New York office suite, located at 1133 Avenue of the Americas, costs \$18,000 per month for rent alone and that additional office space has been acquired.

The fall 1978 Everest House catalogue offers 22 books for sale, a number of which run completely counter to the WCG's long-time teachings. (Keep in mind that the WCG is subsidizing Everest House with tithe money from its members.) For instance, *Dark Dimensions-a Celebration of the Occult*, advertised on page 1 of the catalogue, has accounts of homosexual acts, a brutal mutilation, sadism, sex perversion, and paints the occult in a very favorable light. Then there's the book *Strange Seed*, described as "a contemporary novel of unutterable terror," as well as the books *How to Make Your Own Knives* and *Living Jewish*, something you'd never suspect a Christian organization would subsidize. The LTR Money Book is billed as "the personal finance guide for every kind of living together relationship." It includes practical financial advice for heterosexual and gay couples and contains instructions' for gays who desire to marry or divorce. *Zen Running*, the last book listed, discusses how to let your mind go, through the use of Zen.

On July 12, Roger Lippross said that Everest House and *Quest/78* are dismissing all their WCG employees and will accept no new ones because the church members get too emotionally involved and this causes problems and bad publicity. What he is really saying is this: Church members become disgusted and enraged when they see the trash and anti-church material Everest House and *Quest/78* publish. So all the art work, layouts, jacket designs, copy editing, and typesetting previously done by WCG employees in Pasadena will soon be done undercover in New York-out of sight from the prying eyes of "emotional" church members whose tithes are helping to foot the bill.

## Termites Get Revenge at AC Library

Not only have there been disconcerting upheavals in the church recently, but Ambassador College (AC) has been having monumental problems of its own in,

of all places, its library. AC's main library building has been a health hazard since April 27 when exterminators used the toxic pesticide lindane to exterminate termites there. The fumes permeated the whole building, and soon 16 of the 18 employees there became ill. Several quit, and most of the others, refusing to see a doctor because of the church's teaching on divine healing, prayed to God for help. Eleven weeks later, the college administration made a half-hearted attempt to alleviate the problem by installing charcoal air filters throughout the three-story building, but typical of ACs "high regard" for the well-being of its employees, AC officials didn't replace the charcoal in the system soon enough-it would have cost money- and soon afterward many of the library employees in the main building became ill again. A number of the library's patrons also complained of getting headaches after being exposed to the library's atmosphere. One employee was checked for nerve damage, and many reported headaches, chest pains, dizziness, respiratory problems, and unusual exhaustion. A noted toxicologist and an industrial hygienist confided that all the exposed staff members will now have an increased sensitivity to the DDT family of pesticides because lindane is a cumulative poison that resides in body fat permanently.

Now the main library building, housing everything but the periodicals and the termites, is closed until the problem is remedied. However, the building was not closed because of AC's concern for its employees' welfare. It was shut down because the employees refused to work inside the building.

This is not the tragedy it would seem, though, because the college's chancellor, Herbert Armstrong, in the June 26, 1978, *Pastor's Report*, just condemned the "leaven of intellectualism" that "was coming in and gripping the college." He vowed that he was "going to root that out of Ambassador College." Since the library is a silo of "intellectualism," it is expected that the library's value will be downplayed in the future and that students will be encouraged to seek truth solely from Herbert's writings, not from the library's extensive collection of religious reference material.

### A Load of Nonsense

As many of you know, Herbert Armstrong recently boasted in a May 21, 1978 co-worker letter that he was to co-host a charity function with Queen Elizabeth. Suspecting that something was amiss, we wrote Her Majesty and expressed our dismay that such a collaboration was to take place. *Ambassador Report* also wrote to the British Home Office, the BBC, and the *News of the World* newspaper. We were not alone. Other concerned individuals also wrote Her Majesty and voiced their concern for her reputation. There was little to be worried over, however. The following transcript of a July 2 BBC broadcast tells the story:

Broadcaster: Over the years we've carried out a number of reports on the activities of an organization known as the Worldwide Church of God, a multi-million dollar American concern, run by a millionaire called Herbert Armstrong and his playboy son Garner Ted Armstrong. Through its magazines *Plain Truth* and *Quest*, the church actually seeks members who are prepared to stomp up

three-tenths of their income. Well, recently the Worldwide Church of God has been in some state of array. Its star preacher Garner Ted no less, once suspended for immoral conduct, has been suspended again. Members have apparently been leaving in droves and in California there's now an organization called the Anti-Worldwide Church of God. Meanwhile over here members have been receiving an extraordinary letter from millionaire Herbert Armstrong himself. Ted Harrison reports:

"God's great work to the whole world," writes Herbert Armstrong, "is, truly, going ahead now as never before with a new start. July 8 I am scheduled," writes Herbert, "to co-host an important premiere of a charity motion picture to raise funds for the handicapped children in Britain. Queen Elizabeth II has promised to co-host this premiere and banquet- and in the event she is unable to be present, either Prince Charles (the next King) or Prince Philip will be there." Quite an accolade for Herbert Armstrong and his church it would seem. But the plain truth of the matter is Herbert Armstrong's claim is a load of nonsense. Buckingham Palace has no knowledge of such an occasion. The Queen, in fact, has a day off on July 9, no premieres or banquets in the diary of any kind. And Prince Charles will be in Aldershot. The only charity we could find which had planned to have a film premiere on July 8 was the Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, but the premiere has been postponed, and the only dealings they've ever had with the Armstrong organization was three years ago when they had to complain to Herbert for using the charity's name without permission and inaccurately in one of his publications. I twice telephoned Herbert Armstrong in California to ask him about his extraordinary claim, but on both occasions I was told he was unavailable. So to cast some light on the matter I went to see a former member of the church and a man who knew Herbert Armstrong well, Sir Anthony Buzzard. He told me that one of Herbert Armstrong's main ambitions was to meet top people around the world.

Sir Anthony Buzzard: He felt that if he could do that he would have preached the gospel to the nations through getting at their leaders and after that has been done it was his firm belief that the end of the world would come. I'm sure that to meet Her Majesty the Queen would be his ultimate ambition. He's always had a great love of England, and he would look upon the Queen as being a direct descendant of King David because he believes, or believed certainly when I knew him, that England and America are the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, and therefore to meet the direct descendant of David would be the highest privilege I think he could conceive of.

A July 2, 1978, *News of the World* article by John Clare said this:

## Cheeky Church Boss's Royal Boast

The cheeky leader of a religious sect told his followers he would be hosting a film premiere with the Queen this week. He said that if she would not come, Prince Charles or Prince Philip would share the honours with him.

But Buckingham Palace has never heard of the man-86-year-old Herbert Armstrong, head of the California-based Worldwide Church of God. And the Queen will not even be at Thursday's premiere in London of the adventure film, "The Wild Geese," starring Roger Moore and Richard Harris. The guest of honour will be the Duchess of Kent.

Yet in a newsletter to his 65,000 members, Mr. Armstrong announced: "I am scheduled to co-host an important premiere to raise funds for handicapped children. Queen Elizabeth II has promised to co-host."

A spokesman for Evan Lloyd, producer of "The Wild Geese," said: "Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Rader have been invited to attend the premiere as representatives of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, a charity of which Mr. Armstrong is chairman of. We know nothing about the Worldwide Church of God. It was originally hoped that the Queen or Prince Philip would attend the premiere, but there was never any question of either Mr. Armstrong or Mr. Rader co-hosting the event. They are just ordinary guests and would be treated in the normal way."

### The WCG's Future?

With all the problems besetting the WCG, people are asking in private what will happen when Herbert passes away. We say, "Watch Stan Rader!" He will control the AICF, and informed sources say the majority on the church board is now composed of Rader supporters. If this is the case, Stan Rader (with the board) would legally be in control of the church and the college with all their assets. And who knows? Perhaps on his death bed Herbert will ordain Rader as the church's next apostle.

### AR Update

We had hoped to give you an update on the Bagley situation, but Mr. Bagley's trial has again been postponed. The trial is now scheduled for some time in November. We will give you information on this trial and other legal activities regarding the Armstrongs as soon as they occur.

For those who would like more information on Bobby Fischer, we recommend

reading "The Pawn Who Should Be King" by John Trechak. It appeared in the August 14 issue of *New West* magazine. Copies may be obtained for \$1.50 by writing to: *New West*, 9665 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California 90212.

Some have wondered if it's still possible to obtain copies of the large 92-page, illustrated issue of *Ambassador Report* we published in 1977. Yes, it is. And for those of you who are supporting our efforts we would be happy to send copies at the discounted price of \$3.95 each, including postage. Also, if any of you are interested in obtaining bulk shipments for resale or free distribution, please contact us, and we'll be happy to work out an appropriate arrangement.

The recent upheavals that have rocked Armstrong's empire have prompted many letters to the AR from confused and upset WCG members asking for help. Many members are now, at long last, squarely facing the same reality that we all have had to face—that we've been suckered by a bunch of con-artists. Here's one letter typical of the many being received:

I am a confused member of the Worldwide Church of God and I need help very badly. Please tell me, what is going on at headquarters? Who is right? Is it Herbert Armstrong or his son Garner Ted? Is Mr. Herbert Armstrong really in his right mind or is Stanley Rader dominating him? Maybe none of them are right, I just don't know anymore! I only know that I am going out of my mind, my family is being destroyed.

Please help me. I must know the truth. Is Mr. Armstrong an apostle or a fake? Yesterday I talked to my minister (Jim Tuck, Huntsville church) about all this mess. I asked him if it was true about Mr. Armstrong getting a \$200,000 a year salary and all he could think to say was "don't you think he's worth it?" He also tried to scare me with gehenna fire if I did not support Mr. Armstrong.

After receiving the AR and related newsletters, this particular individual contacted us again to thank us for all the eye-opening and liberating information. He related that it was the means by which he and his family were able to break the mental and spiritual stranglehold the cult had had on them. In addition, he did make a final contact with his former minister, Mr. Tuck, regarding the AR. Tongue-tied for any refutation of the facts, Tuck's final pronouncement was, "Well, if you believe the *Ambassador Report*, there's nothing more I can do for you."

We feel the WCG ministry has done quite enough to their members, and it's certainly gratifying to the AR staff as we're sure it also must be for our supporters to know that more and more people are being freed from the Armstrong cult through all of our combined efforts.

To those of you who responded to our last letter, our warmest thanks. Though we're still operating "in the red," your help has made it possible for us to continue publishing. We hope none of you mind the "newsletter format," but we think it still gets the facts out. Again, thanks to all of you.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

Ambassador Report is published bimonthly as finances allow.

Publisher-Editors are Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola, and Margaret Zola.

[Next Issue \(AR6\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR6 September/October 1978

Dear Friends:

The one-time euphoric mood that used to permeate the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College has turned to one of pessimism and gloom. Ministers and campus personnel are increasingly wondering: What will become of the Worldwide Church of God-and its millions of dollars of assets-when Herbert Armstrong meets his Maker? Will Stan Rader become the church's new Messiah and Ramona (Herbert's wife) the church's new Queen Mother? Will Rader and the church board call Al Portune Sr. back into service, or will a fanatical right-wing coalition of evangelists wrest control of the church and take it back to the way it was in the fifties? These questions are increasingly being asked by worried members and curious outsiders. Even the prestigious *Time* magazine, in a June 19, 1978, article, asked: "Who will eventually succeed the aged and ailing Apostle Herbert?" Then *Time* replied: "Recent convert Rader appears all-powerful, but he is not a minister and has numerous enemies." Other media sources are all but declaring Stan Rader the heir apparent.

### "Ex-Jewish Convert May Inherit Church's Wealth"

The above headline, although no revelation to AR readers, is shocking in that it appeared as a front-page headline along with Stanley Rader's 6" x 6" picture in the October 12, 1978, evening edition of the Pasadena *Star-News*, as well as nationwide in other Knight-Ridder newspapers. Here are some perceptive statements from that article:

"Four months after the ouster of TV evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong, the troubled Worldwide Church of God has a new crown prince-a formerly Jewish lawyer-accountant who could inherit the rich religious empire of Armstrong's father. Stanley Rader, smooth-talking adviser to ailing 86-year-old church patriarch Herbert Armstrong, has emerged as victor in an apparent power struggle that pitted father against son, with Rader in the middle.... Rader compares the father-son schism of Herbert and Garner Ted to the biblical story of David and Absalom: 'The son wanted to destroy everything the father had built Where Ted made his crucial mistake,' he says, 'was he tried to run me down in the eyes of his father and that tipped his hand.'"

One of Rader's most shocking comments was the following remark:

"Mr. Armstrong has said publicly very often that I am a son in whom he is well-pleased.... The only other one he ever said that about was Ted Armstrong."

The article concludes with the following comments:

"Mr. Rader is very clearly the victor in what was a power struggle,' Garner Ted says. 'He moved into my office, into my desk; his secretary sits where mine sat.' On Rader's desk is a portrait of the grandfatherly Herbert Armstrong with the inscription: 'I was shooting the moon on you.'"

### Herbert Lashes Out at His Son "With Love"

Herbert has launched another bitter tirade against his wayward son Garner Ted, all the while claiming he loves Ted "as David loved Absalom" (co-worker letter, September 25, 1978, p. 4). He accuses Ted of being "on a campaign of vilification against his father, and worse, against God's church.... to destroy his father and God's church and craftily win over the people's tithes to him!" He rambles on, stating, "My son is now holding 'Personal Appearance' meetings

in strategic centers where he hopes to attract God's people, not the world.... He is no longer a man whose word may be believed...."

Rader told the *Tucson Citizen* (August 22, 1978) that if Ted "were interested in doing the work of God, he would never have been put out of the church." Ted retorted: "I'm doing the very same thing that paid Stan Rader's salary for more than 20 years. He [Rader] is welcome to his opinions, but what he said and the other charges he's brought against me are befuddling, bamboozling, and utterly impossible."

Later Ted admitted that former friends of his in the ministry were suspicious of Rader and that Rader's relationship with Herbert "got so close that the older Armstrong wanted to make Rader a minister the very same day he was baptized into the church. That was absolutely unheard of."

*Note: At this point in the article appeared two photographs of the Armstrong and Rader homes. Unfortunately, we had only a photocopy of this issue of AR to work with. The photographs in the photocopy were of such poor quality that they were unusable. If you have an original of this issue and can loan it to us, or if you can scan the photographs and send them to us in digitized form, please contact us at [youngambassador@altavista.com](mailto:youngambassador@altavista.com) -The Archivist*

Tucson-area desert hideouts of Herbert Armstrong (left) and Stan Rader (right).

Indeed Rader and Herbert have been constant companions the last few years. Both men are residents of Tucson, Arizona. Herbert lives in a \$160,000-plus home at 7845 Calle de la Escarpa on Tucson's far northeast side, while Rader resides at 8101 North Como in the Tucson National Estates on the city's northwest side. Rader has functioned lately as Herbert's mouthpiece, as Herbert seems afraid to meet with the press. When a reporter and a photographer from the *Tucson Citizen* called on Herbert, "they were greeted by an entourage of aides, including his chauffeur and dog trainer, who shield the elderly church leader.... Moments later the assistant, who turned out to be Rader, opened the door and said it was 'impossible for virtually anyone outside the church's upper echelons to talk to Armstrong'" (*Tucson Citizen*, August 22, 1978, p. 1).

When asked why Herbert remains so inaccessible, Rader declared, "His relationship with the church is identical to that of the pope's to worldwide Catholicism." Of course, Rader neglected to mention that the pope isn't afraid to meet with the press and does so often.

Rader later went on to tell the reporter that Ted "was secularizing the broadcasts." Yet a minute later Rader, referring to *Quest/78*, conceded that the WCG publishes "the finest secular magazine in the country, though we *might* be interested in selling it because many members don't feel it's related to what we're doing." What does Rader mean "*might* be interested in selling it"? Has he forgotten that Herbert declared: "I have given the direct order to Mr. Rader to sell or dispose of the magazine *Quest/78* as soon as possible" (member letter, June 28, 1978, p. 7)?

Herbert too has charged bitterly that Garner Ted had secularized the church's radio and TV programs (*Pastor's Report*, July 31, 1978). This accusation was the biggest joke we've ever been asked to swallow. Anybody who has sat through Herbert's long-winded sermons in the late sixties and early seventies knows it was *he* who secularized both the broadcast and *The Plain Truth*-all because he felt nonreligious people wouldn't go for a religious format. Evangelist Raymond F. McNair's notes from the 1966 ministerial conference (January 9-19) show positively that, way before Ted came into dominance in his dad's church, Herbert approved secularizing not only the church's radio broadcast but also had the word "Bible" removed from the heading on every page of the "Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course." Note how McNair recorded Herbert's comments:

Mr. Armstrong mentioned the big problem we have with the broadcast--tailoring it to suit the right audience. We could not get on some of the big U.S. stations if we are "religious." Now the format of the broadcast includes (1) world news, (2) human interest stories about human problems, (3) Bible significance and connection between these, especially relative to Bible prophecy. The average person doesn't have an interest in spiritual things and will not listen to a radio talk which is "religious."

Mr. Armstrong said he thought it would be better not to put the word "Bible" on the correspondence course. He also stated that it would be good to use the name of "Ambassador College" (instead of

It should also be noted that Herbert's testimonial dinners in Southeast Asia are almost totally secular, devoid of any mention of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Jesus' blood, his resurrection, and the need for men to repent of their sins and obey God. Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, "Every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but who ever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33, RSV). Could it be that all along Herbert has been ashamed to mention his professed Lord and Master Jesus Christ before kings and presidents? Does Herbert really value the friendship of world leaders more than the approval of God (see James 4:4)?

### A Rising Star Named Garner Ted

While Herbert's church is decreasing in power and wealth, Garner Ted has astounded everyone with his rapid rise to public prominence once again. The October 7, 1978, *Los Angeles Times* announced that he is now broadcasting on eight stations and is forming congregations in Fort Worth and Oklahoma City. Ted even has a surprising amount of secret support on AC's campus. In the past weeks his followers have dropped hundreds of leaflets around campus giving his new address.

We are also pleased to report that Ted has announced a "full financial disclosure" policy for his new church. He said church organizations must follow the highest code of business ethics and also demand responsible directorships. He asserted that his church's board of directors will include lay members not employed by his church. In addition his church will have an annual outside audit by persons NOT connected with or employed by his church to avoid conflict of interest-something his dad's church has long been criticized for.

From the looks of it, Ted-now that he is out from under the heavy heel of his dad-is pursuing a much more open-minded course and is a lot less pharisaical than his dad. If he can learn to work with others and delegate authority-things his dad never did well-his star could rise higher than his dad's ever rose. Already Ted is saying that-he hopes to bring \$10 million to Tyler, Texas-his headquarters-within a year. WCG ministers McDowell and Dart joined him, as did Al Portune Jr. If Ted's income continues to rise and the WCG's income continues its downward slide, look for several dozen WCG ministers to abandon ship and try to ingratiate themselves with Garner Ted.

### A Tale of Two Tabernacles

This year's "Feast of the Jews" had a decidedly bipartisan spirit. As Herbert "Stronger-Than-Ever" Armstrong "visited" most of his festival sites via videotape recordings, Garner Ted Armstrong held services in his palm booths on Jekyll Island, Georgia.

At St. Petersburg, Florida (one of the three sites Herbert did visit personally), he gave a rather brief sermon after being helped by others to his easy chair on the stage. Most of his speech was a sarcastic harangue about Ted: "I hear Garner Ted is having himself a little feast up at Jekyll Island. Around 17 people! Ha! Ha!" Actually Herbert's remarks were made either in ignorance or in jealousy since Ted actually had 520 paying customers at his beach party. (Herbert drew nowhere near that many people at his first feast site at Belknap Springs a few decades ago.) In addition Ted outclassed his dad in per capita "take" at the offering tables. On the first offering, Ted's total collection was \$12,000 or \$23 per person average.

On the trivial side, Ted's devotees had a new songbook to sing from. Ted is using a collection of what he himself had called in past times "old, blasphemous Protestant hymns." But in classical, pharisaical form, he ordered his congregation to pen out all offensive words, such as "cross."

### Income Up in WCG?

In a September 25, 1978, letter to members and co-workers, Herbert Armstrong declared emphatically: "The income is UP!... The business office announced Tuesday the Church owes less than any time in many years." Herbert, however, neglected to mention the liquidation of some major property assets. As usual, he neglected to state whether the income was up for one week, one quarter, or one year. Garner Ted, on the other hand, indicated to a reporter from the *Tucson Citizen* that income for the WCG "was down 17 to 20 percent and attendance also was down" (August 22, 1978).

But what is the income really like? In a September 25, 1978, *Good News*, "Treasurer's Report" Stan Rader revealed in a statement of income and expenditures that the church took in \$67,161,300 in 1977, but spent \$1,259,200 (or 1.87%) more than they received as revenue. That's bad enough! But what was really disturbing was that Rader's report was merely "excerpted" from the [WCG's] financial statements, which are prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and fairly represent the results of operations for the calendar year ending December

31, 1977." We would like to ask: Why didn't the WCG just print the approved income statement and balance sheet in the first place? What does the church have to hide? We hear that the "excerpted" revenue and expense categories printed in the *Good News* were altered somewhat and "simplified" from the church's audited financial statements. We feel that any organization in the business of preaching ethics and morals to others ought to set the highest possible standard for its own conduct-especially when that organization has come under repeated fire for alleged financial improprieties. The WCC often quotes the scripture: "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thes. 5:22, KJV). If the church leaders sincerely wish to practice what they preach, the only course of action for them to pursue is to print an uncensored, unedited balance sheet and income statement right away.

Rader's report is so deficient, however, that it offers no indication that about \$2.4 million is spent yearly on mortgage payments for the auditorium. There is no category listing expenditures for the AICF, though \$3.4 million was spent for *Quest/78* magazine. (Sources indicate that direct AICF-*Quest* expenses came to over \$6 million in 1977 alone and that when overhead and indirect expenses are counted, the total rises to between \$8 million and \$9 million.)

Another indication that the church's income is plummeting is found in the June 19, 1978, *Good News*. On page 3 the church admits it has lost 10,000 members from 1972 through 1977 with an accompanying estimated donation loss of \$22 million. Knowledgeable sources stated unequivocally that both figures are on the low side, claiming the church has lost closer to 15,000 members and \$45 million in donations. With Garner Ted's new church busy grabbing up WCG members and with Herbert's totally ineffective radio and TV programs, it is expected that the WCG's income situation will continue to worsen in the immediate future-even though the selling off of church assets may keep the income artificially high for awhile.

#### Bricket Wood Campus Sold for Almost Nothing

Since the closing of Ambassador College's campus in Bricket Wood, England, WCG officials have been desperately trying to sell that facility to shore up the organization's wobbly financial status. Rumors were that they had courted offers from Arab oil sheiks to Great Britain's Football (soccer) Association. Now, finally, the campus has been sold for a pittance of what it was actually worth.

The *Hertfordshire Advertiser*, a local St. Albans-Bricket Wood paper, reported the sale on September 29, 1978. Speaking of the campus, it reported: "It has been bought by the Central Electricity Generating Board for use as a... college for a figure close to the 2-million-pound [about \$4 million] asking price.... The board has bought the whole of the college, which covers about 130,000 square feet, together with the sports and recreational facilities, 50 acres of grounds, and an adjoining 140-acre farm." In a *Daily Mail* article, appearing September 28, 1978, British writer Peter Cliff adds that the campus deal also included an "Olympic-size swimming pool; a running track; tennis and squash courts; a gymnasium that converts into a lecture theatre... and ten cottages."

Further details were disclosed in the *Hertfordshire Advertiser*: The Board intends to use the college "for management training courses lasting between three days and three weeks to teach new techniques to all levels of management.... The Board intends to sell the farm at some time in the future. It expects to move in about a year's time after existing dormitories have been converted into study bedrooms for about 130 people." The Board also hopes to be able to share the college's sports facilities with the local community. A spokesman for the Board said: "We think we have got good value for [our] money because it would have cost us substantially more for a purpose-built establishment." The (London) *Daily Mail*, with a circulation of 1.8 million, had this to say:

"Ambitious young executives will soon be learning how to run power stations in the delightful rural surroundings of the former stately home at Bricket Wood.... And after stressful days they will presumably be able to relax in saunas, jog a mile or two and work off managerial paunches on the full-size football pitch.

"The place was wanted as a training college because the Board's present one at Buston, Derbyshire, is considered too cramped. It's also inconvenient for London. The premises in Hertfordshire are not yet ready. Thousands of pounds will be spent converting dormitory accommodations into individual bedrooms. But that is no problem to an industry which showed a record 298 million pound profit over the past year....

"Ambassador College, as it now is, started life early this century as the country residence of East Indian merchant, Sir David Yule, a former director of the Midland Bank. In the Sixties it was sold to an obscure religious sect."

To many former Bricket Wood students, it sounds as if the WCG gave the campus and its property away for less than half of what it must have actually been worth. But at least now the grounds and facilities will be put to a more productive use. Remember how Herbert used to rejoicingly shout that "the sun has SET on the British Empire"? How justly ironic it is that, as the sun sets on Herbert's little empire, the British have taken over one of his last major

overseas outposts.

### "Satan" Given "God's College" in Texas

Accountant-lawyer Stanley Rader announced on Halloween (October 31) that a cruel "trick" was going to be played on long-time supporters of the WCG. He gave a special "treat" to what WCG members would consider to be one of Satan's churches when he announced that the church's largest piece of property-the Big Sandy campus-was being sold to F. William Menge of Lynchberg, Virginia, who is buying the property for the James Robison Evangelistic Association (Pasadena *Star-News*, November 3, 1978, p. 15). Rader claims the 1,600-acre wooded preserve in east Texas will be liquidated for a price of slightly more than \$10 million. This sale will serve to fill the WCG's depleted coffers and help alleviate a chronic cash-flow problem. But now that the Big Sandy campus has been sold, the church will have one less large asset to sell next time a financial crisis hits the church-and with Herbert running the church and stepping out blindly on faith, the church has a crisis about every three months. (Of course Rader has assured everyone that there is no financial crisis. And once the church pockets the \$10 million, he will be right-at least for three or four months.)

### WCG in Turmoil in Australia

There are signs that the WCG is in deep trouble in Australia, and a storm may be brewing on the horizon. A former deacon of 19 years said that the three Melbourne churches had lost between 40 and 50 members in the last few months, as well as one minister, three deacons, and one deaconness. When asked why he had left, the deacon commented that, during an overseas trip, he had learned about corruption and mismanagement at the top in the WCG. He explained: "The statements of Jesus Christ that you would know false prophets by their fruits and that you do not gather good fruit off a corrupt tree are completely ignored by the Worldwide Church of God members. The fruits of the organization have only recently been revealed to many of us. So much that has happened has been carefully covered up and hidden from us in Australia" (*New Life*, August 17, 1978, p. 6).

*New Life* also reported on Garner Ted's departure from the WCG and discussed the 1977 edition of *Ambassador Report*. The writer described it as "a scathing attack on the Armstrong organization," "one of the most vicious attacks ever made on a religious cult," and "an almost unbelievable journalistic tirade."

Another Australian source writes that people in the Australian churches are "unsettled" and "tithing contributions have decreased." He reveals that "ministers are not happy with the current situation" and that he thinks "things will continue to deteriorate." He tells us that the Associates Exposing Pseudo Religious Cults recently demonstrated at one of the Plain Truth lectures, and the demonstration was shown on the TV news. In fact the WCG has been featured in a negative light twice on TV in Victoria in the last few months. Ex-WCG members are circulating a small newsletter in Australia. (Their address is P.O. Box 193, Caulfield East 3145.)

We would like to urge all of our readers, especially in countries outside the U.S., to send us news clippings about the WCG in their areas. In this way we can keep our 8,000 readers worldwide better informed about happenings in the WCG.

### Spying Continues at AC

Academic eavesdropping is once again in vogue at Ambassador College. In the article "Spying in the Name of God" (*Ambassador Report*, 1977) we reported that Chancellor Herbert Armstrong had an electronic eavesdropping device in his fourth-floor office that enabled him to listen in secretly on most class lectures at Ambassador College. After we exposed this crude invasion of privacy, several disturbed faculty members disconnected the listening devices found in the ceilings of the classrooms. But now, with Herbert back on the campus scene, he has seen to it that the spy devices are in good working order, according to faculty sources.

*Note: At this point in the article appeared three photographs of the listening equipment in Herbert Armstrong's office. Unfortunately, we had only a photocopy of this issue of AR to work with. The photographs in the photocopy were of such poor quality that they were unusable. If you have an original of this issue and can loan it to us, or if you can scan the photographs and send them to us in digitized form, please contact us at [youngambassador@altavista.com](mailto:youngambassador@altavista.com) -The Archivist*

An enterprising employee, however, has managed to do a little counter-espionage of his own by snapping three pictures of the spy device in Herbert's office with the lion himself present. As you can see from the first photo, there are two phone-like pieces of equipment directly behind Herbert's desk on the left side of the picture. As the photographer moves in closer, we can distinguish that one of the devices is a telephone and the other resembles a phone but isn't. A third

photo zooms in even closer to the push-button listening device and gives us a peek at the classroom numbers on each of the buttons. The S numbers are rooms in the Science Hall (Academic Center), the F numbers are rooms in the Fine Arts Hall, and the A numbers are rooms in Ambassador Hall. In the last few years, the numbers on the classroom doors have been altered so that they no longer coincide with the numbers on Herbert's listening device, but that won't prevent Herbert's itching ears from hearing anything that transpires in the classrooms. In fact, with this device, he should even be able to overhear the innocent church mice chattering about church gossip.

### The Case of the Poisoned Library

As we reported in our last newsletter, AC's main library building has been a health hazard ever since termite exterminators used the pesticide lindane there in April. The building was finally closed because the library employees refused to work in its poisoned atmosphere, but it was reopened in mid-August. On September 5, however, it was again closed because the staff once again became too sick to work in its environment. (Even the wife of evangelist Rod Meredith complained that she had experienced difficulty breathing along with burning eyes after about ten minutes in the building.)

In desperation the library staff moved the card catalog out of the contaminated building to the Library Annex, but in a short time the employees began to feel ill just working around the card catalog, so the catalog, like "an accursed thing," was quickly returned to the morgue-like main building.

Ambassador College officials, becoming alarmed over the situation (after six months), have finally hired Dr. Mark L. Carlson of the Department of Community and Environmental Medicine of the University of California (Irvine) to examine the library employees affected by the lindane. This move may have been precipitated by our last newsletter and the death of Allen Manteufel (43), a WCG elder. It was widely rumored that Manteufel had spent many hours studying in the library during the last few months and had been affected by the lindane. The *Good News* reported that he "complained of an inability to breathe"-a symptom experienced by many of the library employees-and was rushed to a hospital "where he went into shock with a collapsed kidney and liver" (September 25, 1978, p. 16). However, to date there has been NO medical evidence that his death was caused by lindane poisoning. Nevertheless, we urge all affected library personnel to seek the proper medical attention now before another tragedy occurs.

### News You Might Have Missed

It seems that the Rader gang has played what can only be termed a cruel practical joke on Garner Ted by legally reserving the name "The Church of God, International" in 48 states. (GTA already had reserved the name in Texas and California.) Garner Ted is contemplating filing a complaint against Rader, Helge, et al., in Georgia on the alleged grounds that Herbert's signature was forged on the document reserving the "International Church" name. Ted feels it was a feminine hand that signed for Herbert. In addition, Rader and Helge have sent a letter threatening possible litigation to a Los Angeles radio station for allowing Ted's new programs to be broadcast. This cheap-bluff technique is a favorite ploy of a law firm of the caliber of Rader, Helge, et al. Nevertheless, Ted has asked in a letter to his brethren to "please pray that God will keep these doors open before me, and let the programs go out, that Satan will not 'get an advantage of us,' or hinder us in any way!" Now that we know Satan is working for-and against both sides, everyone can breathe easier.

\* \* \* \* \*

As WCG income continues to drop and as defections increase, morale is worsening at headquarters. A guarded source reports that at a recent dinner attended by the Robert Kuhn's, David Jon Hill's, Wayne Cole's, and David Antion's, the main topic of conversation was "what happens when this thing folds up?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Herbert Armstrong is constantly crowing about the archaeological "dig" "the Work" is sponsoring in Jerusalem. In a May 21, 1978, co-worker letter, Herbert declared that "the AICF... is preparing the very SITE of the THRONE on which Christ will sit at His coming." It would really be tragic, Herbert would have his gullible supporters believe, if Christ didn't have the AICF frantically helping him locate and tidy up the site of his throne. As the Apostle tells it, the archaeological community of Israel is beside itself with gratitude for Ambassador's invaluable contribution to Middle Eastern archaeology.

Surprisingly, however, *The Jerusalem Post* (August 29, 1978) doesn't even mention Herbert's "great" contribution. The *Post* explains that "the excavation is sponsored by the Hebrew University, the Israel Exploration Society and the Jerusalem Foundation, and is being financed primarily by a group of South Africans headed by Mendel Kaplan."

\* \* \* \* \*

In Herbert's latest brethren letter (September 25, 1978) he manages to surpass his previous antics. (Remember his fantasy about Queen Elizabeth?) He now claims that he has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his accomplishments in furthering world peace—even though his organization has been torn by bitter dissent and strife for years and even though he is at war with his son Ted. Unfortunately Begin and Sadat edged out Herbert in the final balloting. Undaunted by this setback, Herbert is now proclaiming on the inside cover of his new book, *The Incredible Human Potential*, that this volume of old, rehashed *Plain Truth* articles is "the most important book since the Bible!" He claims "the greatest superlatives could not do justice to its magnificent message." Will anybody dispute Herbert's claim on next year's Nobel Prize for Literature? Well, Herbert admits with a sigh in his letter that it is impossible for a "man of God" to win the Nobel Prize.

\* \* \* \* \*

We were recently privileged to read one of the finest essays ever written about Herbert Armstrong. It is entitled "The Requirements for Being an Apostle of Jesus Christ." It is by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, the former Dean of the School of Theology of Ambassador College. A free copy of this essay may be obtained by writing to:

Dr. Ernest Martin, Director  
Foundation for Biblical Research  
P.O. Box 928  
Pasadena, California 91102  
Phone: (213) 793-1144

Under the auspices of the Foundation, Dr. Martin has published a large number of excellent theological booklets (and lectures on cassette tape) dealing with the many fallacies of Armstrongism. We recommend them highly. Many of our readers write to us with questions of a purely theological nature. Though we'd like to help, we personally feel that we are unqualified to answer many of these technical questions about the Bible. We strongly recommend that you contact those who are qualified in that area. Dr. Martin is one such individual. We hope our readers will avail themselves of the Foundation's excellent services.

\* \* \* \* \*

Just as we go to press we've learned that Stan Rader's protege, Ray Wright, has been removed as the WCG's head of finance because of alleged improprieties. We plan to investigate the matter and report on it further in a future newsletter.

#### Ambassador Report Popular on Campus

Herbert loves to bray incessantly about how effective and interesting his writing is, but he holds other journalists' writing in utter contempt: "When they write, nobody pays any attention to what they write" (*Pastor's Report*, September 18, 1978). Well lately people have eagerly been lining up to read a certain newsletter in departments all over campus. This newsletter, however, isn't Herbert's-but *Ambassador Report*. Several of our on-campus supporters spread a few newsletters around campus, and employees were fighting over the few available letters just to get a peek, all the while pretending to disapprove of our letter's revelations. We are tickled that campus employees recognize the informative writing present in our letter, so unlike the long-winded, repetitive diatribes replete with typographical diarrhea that characterize Herbert's constipated and uninformed writings.

One employee commented that our newsletter was like a light shining in darkness. Another shook his head in disbelief, wondering how we seemed to have our finger on the pulse of church and campus activities and how we seemed to know so much "inside" information. Still another felt we were guilty of "twisting the truth accurately." (We wonder how one could twist anything and still do it accurately?) People on campus aren't the only ones reading our newsletters. Here are a few of the comments from our readers worldwide: (Our readers' names are not divulged, in respect for their privacy, unless they specifically authorize the use of their names.)

#### Letters

*It was very nice to hear from you again so soon. So much better than waiting for the annual Report.*

*The "newsletter format" is great. You needn't be apologetic about it. It's doing what you want it to do—getting the facts out-and getting them out to the people you're trying to help and who need this information now, at a crucial time in their lives.*

*We waited many months for the first issue of the Report's predecessor, Ambassador Review, at a time when we were filled with fear and guilt over our disenchantment with God's "true church" and its "anointed" hierarchy. We hope you will continue to publish the newsletter. There is a real need for it.*

*-California*

*I received your updated newsletter and was simply overwhelmed by its contents. If only I could get others to listen with an open mind and get them to see that the "Armstrong cult" is nothing but an organization that's out to rip them off- how much better off they would be, especially financially but also mentally.*

*A lady I know gave the local library in Gladewater, Texas, a copy of your 1977 Ambassador Report, and the librarian had so many calls for it that she ordered another copy from you. The librarian had the copies out where people could see them, and it got back to the Armstrong outfit. Two big shots from the WCG came down there and demanded that the librarian get rid of those magazines immediately. She said, "Well, this is still supposed to be a free country where we still have freedom of speech and religion, and I'm not going to dispose of them." So they left very upset.*

*-Texas*

*I am very grateful and appreciate very much what your staff has been doing to expose this Worldwide Church of God, Armstrong. His boat here is now beginning to shake and rock. Someday we hope it will sink.*

*I have just been disfellowshipped and marked last month, only a week ahead of GTA's excommunication. I was able to save my best friend from the bondage of Armstrongism through your publication. The local Pastor did his best in a three-hour marathon "dialogue" with my friend on doctrinal issues, to no avail. He simply lost too more sheep in his flock (my friend and his wife). Soon there will be more. Let's keep up the good work.*

*-Philippines*

*I am just one of the many confused members of the WCG. If you dare ask a question of the minister, you get one of three basic answers: (1) You were never really converted, (2) You are rebellious, (3) An implied: You are too dumb to understand. I know this because I "did dare" and did get treated this way; I did not get an answer to my question.*

*-Missouri*

*I received your publication, Ambassador Report, only three days ago through a now disfellowshipped member. I feel I cannot resist writing and letting you know how much light it has thrown on me. I have been a member of the WCG for seven years, and I reluctantly admit to being conned. For four of those seven years I lived in poverty because 20% of my gross pay went in the usual tithes. During those years I had three children and a wife to support. I worked nine hours per week overtime, neglecting my family life as a result. After I had paid rent and necessary bills, my wife fed us on \$8 per week. I ran up bills to clothe us. These bills could not be paid because of tithing, and I almost finished up in court for nonpayment. My wife who is also a member is not a demanding woman and never complained. The pressure went on and on until I stopped three years ago. I have not tithed since then. In that three years I have provided adequately for my family and built a home, and all this time my wife thought I had been tithing until I told her yesterday. I have lived a lie feeling guilty all these years. What a fool I was. I have worshipped HWA and GTA for 12 years, but now I have awakened to their deception.*

*-New Zealand*

*Your type of expose of the facts was very necessary to shock most of us into facing facts and quitting. But when we quit, along with the blessed relief, there was also a great vacuum. You realized this in your first edition and printed places to contact people still interested in church. The biggest tragedy of the Armstrong mess is when people quit them, they blame God for it all and no longer want anything to do with Him. Maybe you could also mention to upset people who don't know where to turn that there are two excellent Bible cassette programs they can join. These people will send a catalog of speakers on hundreds of subjects, and you can study in your own home to get your mind straight before you "try" another church. We were brainwashed into believing that all other churches are wrong and are Satan's churches and maybe some are afraid to try them.*

*They have tapes such as: "The Marks of a Cult" (#581-BRE), "Armstrongism-Worldwide Church of God" (#906-MAW). These are very revealing.*

*Tapes are offered free by these two companies: Faith Bible Media, Inc., P.O. Box 140, Sterling, VA 22170 and Bible Believers Cassettes Inc., 130 North Spring Street, Springdale, AK 72764.*

-California

Besides Ambassador Report, are there any other writings on the Armstrong cult that you could recommend?

-Washington

Editor: Yes. One book we highly regard is *Armstrongism: Religion or Ripoff* by Marion J. McNair. This well-documented 339-page book sells for \$7.95 hardbound and \$4.95 softbound. Copies may be obtained by writing to Marion J. McNair, P.O. Box 398, Mt. Dora, Florida 32757.

A friend of mine read a published letter by a pro-GTA "Committee of Twelve" group which contained some startling information on Stanley Rader's personal activities. Do you know where I can get a copy?

-California

Editor: We understand it is being distributed by GTA supporter Larry Gilbert Johnson, 108 East Fox Street, Beebe, Arkansas 72012.

On September 30, 1978 I went to a meeting in Hackensack, New Jersey, where GTA spoke to about 60 to 80 people. He spoke for about two hours, then had a question and answer session.

One question he was asked was: "What is your salary going to be in your new church?" He said, "\$28,500" and made a comment about Ramona Martin being paid \$36,000 per year.

He also mentioned that "it was costing \$11 million to finance the ministry yearly," when he was in the WCG and that it is now costing "\$14 million," which he claims "blows his mind."

He was asked a question concerning Stan Rader. Ted claims that when HWA was about to "baptize" Stan, HWA wanted to put him into the ministry. Ted said, "I was against this because he couldn't speak" and a few other reasons. He also said that he had sent a letter to that effect to HWA but that it never got to him. Instead Ted claim Rader got hold of the letter and never said anything to GTA at HWA about it but kept it to himself.

New York

Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. Are you all of a sudden so perfect you can try to discredit Mr. Armstrong and GTA? So you feel they've sinned. That's not for you to decide-or for that matter any of us. God says, "Judge no man." In other words keep you views to yourself-we weren't born yesterday.

The "truth" is supposed to be freely given. "Freely you have been given." Why are you charging for the [1977] Ambassador Report?

Anonymous, Canada

Editor: Because, unlike the garbage put out by Apostle Armstrong, *Ambassador Report* is worth something! Even if your interpretation of Matthew 10:8 were correct-and it isn't-it would still not apply to our endeavor, as our purpose is journalistic, not evangelistic.

However, if you still believe your interpretation of Matthew 10:8 is correct, we suggest you write to Herbert Armstrong and ask him why his new book, *The Incredible Human Potential* (being published by Everest House), is to be sold in bookstores for \$8.95.

As for "Judging": If you are referring to Matthew 7:1, read on to verse 2. We consider it perfectly fair for others to judge us by our own criteria. We don't fear that. Maybe you also ought to read Matthew 7:15-23 about how to determine if a person is a false prophet. Matthew says, "You will know them by their fruits." We ask you: How can a church member determine who is of God and who isn't unless he first looks at the fruits and then makes a "judgment"? *Ambassador Report* is simply showing the world the bitter fruits of Armstrongism. We also believe, as did the apostle Paul (Eph. 5:11, RSV), that false apostles, like roaches, are best controlled by exposure to glaring light.

Concerning your last letter, I culled some interesting statements regarding "secularization" of The Plain Truth from

WCG letters and publications.

Then:

*"This new policy was inaugurated in July 1968. At that time, we changed the editorial format of The Plain Truth. It became secular in appearance and language." -HWA, co-worker letter, March 27, 1970.*

*"The Plain Truth is a secular, not a religious publication." -HWA, co-worker letter, November 19, 1969.*

Now:

*"I am deeply sad to say the same spirit of carnal secular intellectualism that infiltrated God's college has also infiltrated his magazine." -HWA, Good News, September 11, 1978.*

*"God has brought me back from death because his Plain Truth had gone secular- God had been virtually booted out the window." -HWA, Good News, September 11, 1978.*

*It should be obvious who is really responsible for "secularizing" The Plain Truth when it's expedient and then de-"secularizing" it again.*

*-New Jersey*

*I went for two days to the recent Feast of Tabernacles. There was a film about the AICF with a Mr. C. W. Cole in it. Those people were taking photographs of HWA every time his picture appeared. They are worshipping a god-yes their god HWA.*

*-South Carolina*

*I did not request your newsletter It came to me unsolicited. It is obscene! Do not send me anymore letters! Furthermore do not send any more at any future date! Take me off your mailing list permanently! Note your records accordingly, because if you ever send any more literature I will report you to the United States Postal authorities since there are anti-obscenity laws that do protect me from receiving, obscene literature!*

*-Missouri*

Editor: Our records show that our last newsletter was sent to you at the request of a concerned friend of yours. We, of course, will comply with your request but question your use of the word "obscene." We make every effort to use good taste in what we publish. Unfortunately because the actions of those we report on are often obscene, maintenance of tasteful style does become a real challenge. However, we are amazed that as a WCG supporter you would be so concerned about obscenity. Note the following letter:

*You neglected to mention in the Report about that abominable Quest/78 printing an insane piece of "intellectual" fiction about some "Inventor" who fornicated with a female swine, had a hippie mistress then midwife the delivery of his "son," plus many other disgusting things, and ended up with God being dead and his eyeballs decaying in his rotting corpse. This, plus the Vince Lombardi article with its gratuitous use of blasphemy and obscenities, was strange indeed for a "quality" magazine published by "God's only true church"! I was later solicited for renewal of a cancelled subscription with promises of articles by ... and ... one a female pornographer and the other a homosexual!*

*-Arizona*

*At present I am going through an evaluation process. With all the trying circumstances over the last few months one's head is left spinning. I was wondering if you would be able to send me a copy of...*

*-WCG Pastor*

*Hopefully Herbie's Great Pasadena Money Machine will eventually disintegrate, thus freeing many people from their financial, spiritual, and physical slavery to it and him. Please continue your valuable contribution to sanity.*

-Washington

*Your letter gave me great hope and kept me from losing my mind, and it helped my husband too.*

-Georgia

The above comment came from a mother whose children turned their back on her in their "dedication" to Herbert Armstrong. Unfortunately it's a situation even some of us have been guilty of creating when we were in the brainwashed state due to Herbert's teachings. How identical this case is to that mentioned by Jesus in Mark 7:7-13!

It is most rewarding for us to know that our efforts are encouraging and helping so many victims of the Armstrong fraud. We thank all who are helping to make our publication possible.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

*Ambassador Report* is published bimonthly as finances allow.

Publisher-Editors are:

Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

[Next Issue \(AR7\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR7 January 21, 1979

Dear Friends:

As most of you have undoubtedly heard, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) is in the midst of its greatest crisis ever. Because of the complexity of the situation, we decided to delay our November-December issue until now. We have been following the momentous events of the last few weeks very closely. Here is what has transpired:

### The Lawsuit

Since Garner Ted Armstrong's expulsion from the WCG, many members of the church have become increasingly concerned over the rapid liquidation of church and college properties at a time when the WCG has claimed record-high income. Many deeply committed members of the church have been heartbroken to see college properties and church festival sites put up for sale while millions of tithed dollars are diverted to the costly world tours of Herbert Armstrong, the secular Everest House Publishing Company, *Quest* magazine, and other Ambassador International Cultural Foundation projects.

In late 1978 a handful of concerned WCG members obtained legal counsel about the matter and were put in contact with Hillel Chodos, a distinguished Beverly Hills attorney noted for his expertise in litigating major corporate fraud cases. A legal brief was prepared and presented to the attorney general of California. (Coincidentally, *Ambassador Report*, completely unaware that any of this was occurring, also contacted the attorney general's office expressing concern over the same matters.)

The attorney general, working in close cooperation with Mr. Chodos, took immediate action. A civil suit was prepared listing the following plaintiffs: Earl and Shirley Timmons of Altadena, California, John and Paula Tuit of New Jersey, Ronald Quinlan of Staten Island, New York, and David Morgan of Pasadena, California. Also listed as a plaintiff are the People of California because monies contributed to nonprofit corporations are, by statute, deemed monies held in public trust and therefore subject to monitoring by the attorney general on behalf of the people.

Listed as defendants are: the Worldwide Church of God Inc., Ambassador College Inc., the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation Inc., Herbert W. Armstrong, Stanley Rader, Ralph Helge, Henry Cornwall, Robert Kuhn, Ray Wright, Osamu Gotoh, plus five firms with ties to certain of these individuals: Worldwide Advertising Inc., Wilshire Travel Inc., Gateway Publishing Inc., Environmental Plastics Inc., of Dallas, Texas, and the accounting firm of Rader, Cornwall, and Kessler.

Among the charges of the suit are the following: (1) that Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader have siphoned off ("pilfered") millions of dollars of church funds annually for their personal use, (2) that there has been a failure to provide an adequate accounting of the church's financial position as required by state laws governing charitable institutions, (3) that there has been a refusal to hold regular meetings of the corporations or to allow voting on matters affecting the governance of the organizations, (4) that there has been improper co-mingling of funds among the church, college, and foundation, (5) that there has been a liquidation of church-owned properties "on a massive scale," including about 50 parcels in Southern California, (6) that written records of financial dealings have been removed from the church's Pasadena office, shredded, and destroyed.

The suit does *not* ask for any monetary damages for the plaintiffs but calls for an accounting of all funds and financial transactions, especially of Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader. The suit also calls for the replacement of the trustees of the nonprofit corporations.

### The "Raid"

On Tuesday, January 2, Judge Jerry Pacht of the Superior Court of Los Angeles issued a temporary restraining order placing the assets and financial records of the church and related corporations under the control of a receiver, retired Judge Steven Weisman. This was done (on an ex parte motion) because it was feared that church financial records might be destroyed or church assets liquidated before a full hearing could be held. The fears of the attorney general's staff were to later prove well-founded.

The following morning (January 3), armed with the court order, Judge Weisman, deputies of the attorney general, various state law enforcement officers, and a contingent from the Pasadena Police Department swooped down upon the Worldwide Church of God's Pasadena headquarters. Administrative offices and vaults containing property records and bank accounts were cordoned off. State security officers were posted at key points to prevent records from being removed. Also seized were financial records from the Rader accounting firm in Century City.

The swift action by the attorney general put the Armstrong organization in total confusion. Some workers even locked themselves in their offices. Stan Rader was called away from a game of tennis to be informed of the raid by a phone call from Ellis LaRavia. Rader then called Mr. Gary Gittler, one of his lawyers. Gittler went to the college and, while refusing to identify exactly who he was working for, attempted to convince Judge Weisman that the court order was somehow legally deficient. Weisman disagreed, and the operation continued.

Realizing the magnitude of the crisis, C. Wayne Cole, director of the church's ministry, flew to Tucson with church leaders David Antion, Herman Hoeh and Ray Wright to confer with Herbert Armstrong. For once Herbert acquiesced to good judgment and appointed Cole his Acting Executive Director for the duration of the crisis and pledged total cooperation with the investigation. Herbert then issued a signed press release announcing Cole's appointment. Judge Weisman concurred with Cole's appointment and was hopeful that order was about to be restored to the chaotic situation.

Unfortunately, less than 24 hours later Armstrong removed Cole from his new position and declared, "I will not submit to the state." This dramatic change of attitude came after Stan Rader made a phone call to Herbert on Thursday saying Weisman had fired him as head of the church. (Weisman has denied ever saying any such thing. Indeed, he is not authorized to interfere in ecclesiastical matters.) The charge put Rader—who was to have been displaced by Cole—back in control and along with him Ralph Helge, Ellis LaRavia, Raymond McNair, and Roderick Meredith.

#### Rhubarb in "God's House"

The following morning, the new regime asserted its authority by calling a meeting of church and college employees in the "House for God." Speakers included Rod Meredith and Raymond McNair, who said, "We have the opportunity to shake and move this nation more than has ever been done." Raved McNair, "When the government of God comes to this earth, it will not be a democracy." As the meeting of about 1,500 persons neared conclusion, Wayne Cole attempted to take the podium to tell his side of the story, but a phalanx of Meredith supporters blocked his path. The lights went up, loud music began playing, and the microphone was quickly dismantled as Meredith grabbed Cole's arm and threatened to call the police. Cole backed away only after supporters of Meredith and himself engaged in a shoving match during which two of Cole's men were punched. The Cole group retreated, flinging charges of "outrage" and "travesty" as they left.

Judge Weisman who was present was appalled at the spectacle and vainly tried to convince those present that they were violating their own scriptural belief that chaos should be avoided. Weisman, an elderly, mild-mannered man who walks haltingly because of the after-effects of polio, wanted to reason with them. He tried to explain that although he would have liked Cole as the executive officer in the receivership proceedings, Herbert Armstrong was still the spiritual head of the church. He told a group of elders: "We are not adversaries. I am here as a neutral party to supervise an investigation of expenditures of charitable funds. We're all working toward a common goal. I don't know if there has been a siphoning off of funds; I hope there is nothing wrong, but you are entitled to know."

To all of us at *Ambassador Report* it is obvious that Judge Weisman is doing his very best to protect the church's assets in a very difficult situation. Earlier in the week after repeated noncooperation from Rader's staff, Weisman confronted Virginia Kineston, Rader's secretary, with the question, "Are you personally loyal to the church or to Mr. Rader?" When she answered "Mr. Rader," Weisman fired her. Other employees who were also asked that question but were unable to decide where their loyalties lay were suspended from their jobs for one week (with pay) and told to make up their minds. Said Weisman: "I wanted people loyal to the church here."

When Wayne Cole fled the raucous meeting at the college auditorium, he was followed out of the building by 25 ministers from across the country who had come to Pasadena for a regional directors meeting. Cole's demotion (and later disfellowship) was a major disappointment to the moderate wing of the ministry. Said one perceptive elder: "Cole was the church's last hope."

#### Sabbath Court Battle

Late afternoon on Friday the battle shifted to the downtown Los Angeles County courthouse where the head of Rader's legal defense team, Allan Browne, attempted to show that the receivership was causing the church irreparable harm and

should be lifted. The stifling courtroom was packed to overflowing with bus loads of Ambassador College students, employees, and church members who had been encouraged to attend to demonstrate their "support for Mr. Armstrong." The only witness in the four-hour hearing was Judge Weisman who testified that since the moment he arrived on campus Wednesday, he had met with obstruction and had been thwarted in his efforts to obtain church documents for protection during the investigation. He also testified he closed off access to the church's Swiss bank account.

Hillel Chodos pleaded with presiding Judge Vernon Foster not to lift the receivership, saying it would take Rader only 20 minutes and a pack of matches to do away with crucial evidence. The most dramatic moment came when Chodos presented some of the evidence discovered in only two days of investigation: a shredding machine from Rader's office and the executive payroll checkbook for the church (found at the Worldwide Advertising Agency's offices in Century City). Checks drawn in just the last few days before "the raid" included one to Herbert Armstrong for \$40,000; one to Natalie Rader for \$1,144; one to Rader's secretary, Virginia Kineston, for \$2,500 (marked "bonus"); and checks to Rader for \$2,400, \$4,940, and one for \$35,000 marked "bonus."

Although Judge Foster modified the receivership somewhat by ordering Weisman, for the next week, not to interfere in the normal day-to-day operation of the church, he absolutely refused to remove the receiver. The proceedings ended at 8:30-well past Friday sunset.

### The Propaganda Barrage

The following day, the Pasadena congregation of the WCG was treated (subjected) to a three-and-a-half-hour Sabbath service consisting of a Dean Wilson sermonette, a legal report from Ellis LaRavia, and a sermon from Roderick Meredith who said: "We are in a war. Let's see if we are faithful warriors." Meredith then proceeded to announce the disfellowship of Wayne Cole, David Antion, Robert Kuhn, and Ben Chapman. (We understand these four "cooperated" with the court-ordered receiver.)

All of this was then followed by sermons from, of all people, the church's lawyers, Stanley Rader and Ralph Helge, who castigated the judges and courts as being agents of Satan. Rader accused Wayne Cole of being the equivalent of a Nazi collaborator and also had this to say about the future of the church: "We are going to have a ministry that's not divided. We are going to have church government as it was here up until about ten years ago. And we are all going to know what the doctrines are, and we are all going to agree."

Just hours later campus hostilities escalated to a direct face-to-face confrontation between state security officers assigned to guard church financial records and Ambassador College security officers who, under orders from Meredith, attempted to enter the college administration building and change locks. The Pasadena Police Department was notified, and the following morning the State Department of Justice assigned 20 additional armed security officers to protect the church's records.

The next day Rader tried to whitewash the episode by claiming to the press that Meredith's raiders were simply trying to go about their normal business (on Saturday night?). Said Rader, "my people were turned away. They were denied access to their offices.... We don't work a 40-hour week. How do you think this organization could be so successful if we only worked 40 hours? It's successful because we have gifted, inspired, indefatigable workers for God." When asked if he classified himself in that category, he replied "yes."

Monday morning brought no letup to the campus hostilities and confusion. Rader arrived at Ambassador College, along with his chauffeur John Kineston and Ralph Helge, to find a full contingent of news reporters and cameramen awaiting him. Rader appeared shocked to discover his office suite locked to prevent the removal of records. A four-hour meeting between the Rader gang and the receiver ended in a stalemate, whereupon Rader's attorney Allan Browne petitioned Judge Foster once more. Foster ordered that Rader be allowed access to his office and to church records but only in the presence of Judge Weisman, the receiver. Foster made every effort to see that the church's operations continue as usual. However, he also saw the importance of maintaining the receivership.

### The "Media Event" Begins

On Wednesday, January 10, hearings began as scheduled in Los Angeles Superior Court to determine if the temporary receivership would continue. For days previous to this the entire *Ambassador Report* staff had mobilized to alert the press and media to what was transpiring. Among those who covered the hearings were representatives from *Time* magazine, the *Los Angeles Times*, ABC-TV, NBC-TV, CBS-TV, KTTV, KFWB News Radio, National Public Radio, City News Service, and Associated Press. *Newsweek* asked John Trechak of *Ambassador Report* to cover the hearings for them.

The same morning the hearings began, the *Los Angeles Times* carried a story by Bert Mann and Michael Seiler that was a major scoop. The *Times* was able to obtain a church financial document for the 1975-1976 fiscal year that was later to be submitted as evidence. Here is an excerpt from the *Times* article:

"The 1975-1976 fiscal document shows the church spent \$1.7 million on travel, lodging and public relations, including expensive meals and gifts for what church officials claim was the courting of foreign dignitaries.

"The lion's share of the money expended was spent by Osamu Gotoh, said to be a former Tokyo cab driver who at that time was the coordinator of church activities in many countries. Gotoh's services were dispensed with after Armstrong had the heart attack in 1977 that curtailed his travel. But other substantial portions were spent by Armstrong and Rader.

"Among the items listed were:

"-\$564.15 for June 25 and June 28, 1975, meals at Perino's. Only Gotoh's name is listed under the heading 'Purpose of Payment' on the document.

"-\$38,494.81 owed Trans World Airlines by Gotoh for a globe-girdling trip in August that took him to many of the world's major capitals, including Paris, London, Rome, Geneva, Tel Aviv and Tokyo, with side trips to Addis Ababa and Nairobi.

"-\$2,902.03 to cover costs at the Beverly Wilshire for guests described only as 'Senator Bunsei Sato' and 'Japanese senators.' These same visitors also rung up a \$2,588.60 bill at a West Los Angeles limousine service, which the church covered.

"-A bill for \$5,739.27 described only as an American Express card bill for Gotoh at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.

"-A bill to cover Gotoh's Diner's Club card bill of \$1,519.75 for Gotoh in a Japanese night club.

"-Another American Express bill to Gotoh for \$6,325.40 to cover expenditure described only as 'hotel bill-Switzerland.'

"-Three bills from Perino's covering an unknown number of meals totaling \$2,304.40.

"-Bills from the Hilton Hotel-Jerusalem, paid by Rader on his Diner's Club card, totaling \$10,131.11. The bills are all dated Feb. 25, 1976, but no details are given.

"-A Steuben Glass bill of \$12,402 described as '1 Moses, 1 Pyramidon, 1 Excaliber, 3 Pillal of the Griffin.' No other description is given nor are the recipients of the gifts stated.

"-\$26.12 for 'Golf balls for King Leopold.'

"-A July 9, 1975, bill from Gucci in Paris for \$1,162.10. No explanation given on document.

"-Three Aug. 27, 1975, bills, from Gucci, Beverly Hills, paid by Gotoh's credit cards, totalling \$1,215.82. No further details.

"-A December 23, 1975, bill on Gotoh's Diner's Club for purchases from Christian Dior, Paris, of \$645.46.

"-Another Gotoh bill, charged to his Diner's Club card, for \$2,124.24 on Dec. 18, 1975, for a purchase, details unknown, from Siberian Fur Store, Kowloon, Hong Kong."

The article went on to quote Rader's excuses for the expenditures. Also reported was Allan Browne's confirmation that the church did indeed have a Swiss bank account and gold bullion. But said Browne: "Is there anything wrong with that? Is this the beginning of the state telling the Pope what kinds of robes he can wear or that he should not live in such splendor in the Vatican?"

#### \$150 per Hour

Wednesday's hearing opened with Hillel Chodos voicing a strong objection to church funds being used to pay Rader's lawyers. Sixty thousand dollars had been paid out the previous night to Allan Browne's firm and another law firm as advance payment for legal fees. Judge Julius Title expressed utter amazement at the large number of lawyers Rader had representing him in the case. Besides Ralph Helge and his associates, there were two other law firms with large staffs for each. Title ordered the defense attorneys to return a good portion of the amount they had received. Money for services already rendered (at a rate of \$150 per hour per lawyer) was allowed, but advance retainer fees are improper in

cases involving money in a trust, said Title. Further, he ordered that half of the fees already earned be paid by Rader and the other defendants and not by the church. He also ordered that no further legal fees for individuals be paid for by the church.

Early in the proceedings Judge Title denied defense attorney Allan Browne's motion to end the receivership based on constitutional law. Browne has claimed repeatedly that the receivership and related investigations interfere with his clients' freedom of religion. Judge Title (as had Judges Pacht and Foster earlier) did not see a First Amendment violation. Nor was Title moved by Browne's assertion that the United California Bank had called in \$1.3 million in demand notes owed by the church and that "a million dollars worth of [WCG] checks have been bouncing...."

### Rader Takes the Stand

Thursday's court session was the most revealing to date. Stanley Rader was put on the witness stand to answer questions about his financial dealings with the church. Rader testified that under the terms of the employment contract he has with the church, he gets \$200,000 per year plus expenses. He also admitted that under the agreement he would receive \$100,000 per year plus expenses to the year 2003 even if he stepped down as adviser to Herbert Armstrong. Here is an excerpt from the Los Angeles Herald Examiner of January 12, 1979, which gives details of the financial benefits Rader has received from his associations with the church as obtained from his testimony:

"-The church financed his purchase of a \$300,000 Beverly Hills home in 1972 which Rader sold last year for \$1.8 million. He said he pocketed the profits.

"-The church paid most of the taxes on Rader's home. Asked why, he said, 'that would take a long theological explanation.'

"-The church recently bought Rader a \$150,000 house in Tucson, Arizona, so he could be near the 86-year-old Armstrong, who now lives there following a major heart attack last year. It also paid for all the furnishings.

"-Rader's law firm has been the only legal counsel used by the church for many years. The amount of its reimbursement was not brought out.

"-An accounting firm in which Rader has been an associate does all of the church's books.

"-Rader set up a corporation to buy airplanes and lease them to the church in an arrangement through which the church paid the full price of the airplanes and Rader's firm made a profit.

"-Rader organized an advertising firm known as Worldwide Advertising, which handled all advertising, radio and television shows put on by the church. Rader recently stepped out of that firm.

"Rader's answers at first were hesitant and convoluted. Superior Court Judge Julius M. Title at one point instructed him: 'Mr. Rader, I think it would be helpful if you would listen to the questions-you are a lawyer-and respond to the questions.'

"Hillel Chodos, the attorney for the plaintiffs, sought to show that Rader has exercised complete legal control over matters which involve his self interest. He suggested that Rader has given misinformation to Armstrong to keep him from hiring independent counsel, and from knowing the true nature of the current investigation."

It was while Rader was on the witness stand that his counsel Allan Browne introduced into evidence and showed a ten-minute promotional film prepared by the church. It was entitled "Herbert W. Armstrong-Ambassador of Peace." Unlike Stanley Rader who sat transfixed at the edge of his chair in the witness box as he watched his leader prancing about on the screen to symphonic strains, the press was duly unimpressed, perhaps even embarrassed. Ironically, the film has "God's Ambassador" declaring: "People are concerned about *self*-what they can accumulate. That is the cause of *all* the world's problems!" (This is one Armstrong teaching *Ambassador Report* agrees with. In fact, we're convinced that Herbert Armstrong himself is living proof of the statement's veracity.)

### Conflicting Testimony

Rader was only the first witness. Jack Kessler of the accounting firm of Rader, Cornwall, and Kessler was next. We now quote from the Los Angeles Times of January 12. (We do so because some may believe we are prejudiced and are perhaps fabricating these quotes. For those who have doubts, please write to the newspapers quoted and purchase a copy of the issues from which the excerpts are taken.)

"William Kessler, a certified public accountant and lawyer active in the accounting company, was asked by the attorney representing both Rader and the church if Rader benefited in any way from the firm.

"No...he's not a partner or an employee,' Kessler said.

"Kessler said he and the other partners merely 'bought' the company from Rader, not for money but for 'an exchange of promises.'

"We promised him to service his clients (primarily the church, Ambassador College and Ambassador International Cultural Foundation) to the best of our abilities... and he promised us not to compete with us and that we could use his name.'

"What, if any, profits Rader has made from the four companies remained unclear as the hearing adjourned late Thursday afternoon."

The next witness to take the stand was Virginia Kineston, Rader's secretary. Here is how Anne Sutherland of the Pasadena *Star-News* (January 12) described her testimony:

"...Virginia Kineston, Rader's personal secretary, testified about the events of the first day of the receivership, when retired Judge Steven Weisman arrived on the campus.

"She described the receiver's arrival as 'A swarm of people came in. Our office was under siege.'

"Mrs. Kineston's clipped, tersely worded testimony was in direct opposition to that given in court last week by Weisman, who testified about the difficulties he had faced in attempting to take control of the church documents.

"Mrs. Kineston, attired in a shimmering emerald green dress, said that Weisman fired her without ever asking her about her loyalties, and also said that Armstrong and Rader 'were out.'

"Judge Weisman had earlier testified that after encountering difficulty in securing control of documents, he asked Mrs. Kineston if her loyalties lay with the church or with Rader. When she replied 'with Mr. Rader,' he terminated her. (She was reinstated two days later, after Weisman, attorneys and church officials worked out some of the logistics of the limited receivership.)

"Mrs. Kineston also denied shredding any material the day that Weisman arrived, adding that she did not know if anyone else had used the shredder. She said the office shredding machine was regularly used to dispose of other materials, such as the time that someone sent some pornographic mail to the offices. 'Of course I've used the shredder,' she snapped when questioned by Chodos."

John Kineston, her husband, was the next witness. We again quote Ms. Sutherland's account:

"One of the more dramatic conflicts in testimony presented in court concerned John Kineston, Rader's aide and chauffeur, who allegedly removed documents from Rader's office after the receivership was imposed Jan. 3, which Kineston referred to as 'the day of the raid.'

"Kineston vehemently denied the allegations. He said that he took no church records and did not drive in a Cadillac limousine to Burbank airport, where the church's jets are kept. He also denied being near the campus transportation building or the data processing building, where financial records are kept.

"During the period in question I most assuredly, definitely never went near the building,' Kineston testified....

"But the next witness to take the stand told a different story, causing a flurry of note-passing and conferring among the defense attorneys and defendants Rader and church counsel Ralph Helge, who sat a few feet behind their four attorneys.

"Chester Roberson, a church member who has worked for the church as a gardener and mechanic for the past 25 years, said that he saw Kineston come to the transportation building the afternoon of Jan. 3, carrying something in his hands.

"Chodos showed Roberson some accounting ledgers, and asked the mechanic if the objects in Kineston's

hands resembled such items. 'Yes,' replied Roberson in a direct manner that contrasted the articulate manner of Rader's colleagues.

"Roberson testified that he then heard Kineston decline to have gasoline pumped into the car, saying that he was afraid that he would be seen leaving for Burbank.

"Roberson also said that he saw Kineston enter the data processing building late Saturday night. After witnessing this, he added, he and David Morgan, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, reported the incident to a nearby policeman.

"After scoring a point that caused obvious consternation in the defense camp, Chodos also appeared stunned when one of his witnesses, secretary April Cowan, testified that although Kineston did appear in the transportation building, he was not driving a Cadillac.

"Chodos asked the young woman if she had conferred with Helge, and when she replied that she had, he ended his questioning....

"Willis John Bicket, accounting manager, was called to the stand by defense attorney Allan Browne to describe the effect the receivership has had on the daily operations of the corporations.

"Bicket, who, like other church supporters maintained eye contact with Rader while testifying, said: 'We are in a crippled condition.'"

### The 99.9% Victory

Friday, January 12, was the third day of the hearing. No further testimony was heard as each side was allowed only 30 minutes to present their closing arguments. Allan Browne, the lawyer for the defense, spoke first. He reiterated previous arguments he had made stating the only action acceptable to his side would be the termination of the receivership.

Hillel Chodos then very eloquently summed up the arguments for the Attorney General's side. (Space does not permit us to run the entirety of his comments in this letter. Perhaps we can in the future.) Chodos argued that in the church's literature the tithes are said to be God's money, but that in court the church's leaders claimed it was theirs to do with as they wished. Chodos said the members contributed the money for a specific purpose, namely God's work, not for the personal pleasure and profit of the trustees of the funds. He castigated Rader for his conduct as the church's general counsel, saying: "He has millions of dollars that must be disgorged [and returned to the church]." Said Chodos of Rader's conduct: "It's the most extraordinary thing I've encountered in all my years of litigation!"

Receiver Weisman spoke briefly to the court, telling how his duties as receiver had been continually obstructed and asking that he be given greater control to carry out his responsibilities. Said Weisman, "I am the lone voice in the foxhole at the front lines."

Judge Title's detailed ruling on the matter brought shock to many of Rader's followers who were sitting in the courtroom. Title ordered the receivership to continue pending trial on the civil charges leveled by the state. Until then (probably four to six months or more) the receiver should "possess," "supervise" and "monitor" all church assets and records. The receiver was instructed not to interfere in ecclesiastical matters but does have extensive powers to hire and fire. The only exceptions to the latter being Herbert Armstrong and Rader, who cannot be removed without Title's permission. Of course in that case they could still function ecclesiastically (presumably, however, without pay).

In making his decision Judge Title said that the evidence of misappropriation of funds was a "cause for concern." He commented that "astonishing amounts of money have been expended by Armstrong, Rader and others" and that the matter would have to be open for examination at the time of trial. Title also expressed concern that the church's administration was a "one-man operation" in spite of the fact that it is filed with the state as a charitable, nonprofit corporation supposedly having a board of trustees. He said evidence suggested that in recent years Herbert Armstrong's "one-man operation" had become, with Rader, a "two-man operation" and that with Herbert Armstrong's advancing age and poor health "perhaps it is a one-man operation again." Title also expressed concern over Rader's involvement in several financial transactions, including his aircraft-leasing firm that leases jets to the church, the purchase and sale of his Beverly Hills' home, and his employment contract with the church that gives him \$200,000 per year plus an apparently unlimited expense account. Said Title, "I question the legality of his present employment with the church."

*Note: At this point in the article appeared two photographs of Hillel Chodos and Stanley Rader. Unfortunately, we had only a photocopy of this issue of AR to work with. The photographs in the photocopy were of such poor quality that they were unusable. If you have an original of this issue and can loan it to us, or if you can scan the photographs and send them to us in digitized form, please contact us at [youngambassador@altavista.com](mailto:youngambassador@altavista.com) -The Archivist*

Hillel Chodos answering questions for the press (left) and Stanley Rader outside of courtroom (right).

After the hearing Allan Browne, Rader's lawyer, said he would appeal the decision immediately. Rader, however, was silent for the first time since the receivership began and when questioned by the press as to whether he would now cooperate simply said "no comment." *Ambassador Report* asked Hillel Chodos to assess the results of the hearing. Said Chodos: "We won. We got 99.9% of what we wanted."

### Herbert Fights Back

Of course, throughout all of this, Herbert remains out of state in Tucson where he cannot be subpoenaed by the attorney general of California. But Herbert hasn't just been sitting on his hands! Oh no. He's been up to his old tricks.

On January 7, three days *before* the January 10 hearing even began, Herbert wrote a letter to the church. Here is one excerpt:

"Our Great God is still on His throne! God has given his Work a TREMENDOUS VICTORY against the most MONSTROUS conspiracy and attack Satan ever launched against God's Work!

"I want here to give you the true inside story. You've probably read of the outrageous false charges against myself and Mr. Stanley R. Rader in 8-column front-page banner headlines, or heard it on TV news. But we were vindicated in the court, the conspiracy actually triggered by Satan broken. And God's Work SURGES ON!" (Emphasis his throughout.)

Herbert then went on to equate the attorney general's actions with a Satanic attack upon the church when in fact the legal action was brought to *protect* the church from having its assets liquidated. Herbert continues:

"But when this suit came for a hearing in court, Friday afternoon, January 5th, GOD GAVE US THE VICTORY. Although our records were seized, NO EVIDENCE of any wrongdoing had appeared."

Nonsense! There was much evidence of wrongdoing, and as a result the judge refused to lift the receivership. Here is another quote from Herbert's letter:

"Last Wednesday we had the astonishing situation of Christ's Apostle having been *put out of* God's Church under color of authority of the State government, and Wayne Cole made the HEAD OF THE CHURCH by the state civil government!"

Ridiculous! Herbert was never removed by anyone. The state has no authority to remove him from his ecclesiastical position as spiritual head of the church and never attempted to do so. That was very clearly stated by Judge Foster on Friday, January 5, and reiterated later by Judge Title on January 13. In fact, it was Herbert himself who put Cole in charge of the church (under himself, of course) on January 3. And Herbert wrote and signed a press release announcing that appointment. We even have a copy of it in our files.

Herbert's January 7 letter is absolutely outrageous, but for sheer insanity one would have to look far and wide to find the equal of his letter to the church dated January 14, 1979. Comparing the attorney general's action of protecting church assets to Herod's attempt at murdering the infant Jesus, Armstrong wrote that charges of "lavish spending" etc. were a "monstrous lie." He then continued:

"Now the State of California has appointed a Receiver, whose pay and expenses for his supporting staff are to run much higher than either mine or Mr. Rader's ever did, and who is using GOD'S TITHE MONEY TO PAY PROSECUTION EXPENSES AND TO DESTROY GOD'S CHURCH!

"MONEY SENT TO THE USUAL ADDRESS will be used by a Receiver appointed by the State.

"The State has seized and tied up all our Church funds. So send a special offering to me, personally, for our legal defense and to save the Work-to Herbert W. Armstrong, c/o General Delivery, Tucson, Arizona, 85731."

The fact is the receiver's budget is quite limited and is being used to perform many business functions that Armstrong and Rader should have themselves been performing all along. For instance the receiver's staff is now doing an audit of the church's finances to ascertain exactly what is the true financial state of the church. Another expense which Judge Weisman has incurred is in the area of security. He has found it necessary to hire extra security people to protect church records because of the continuous obstruction he has encountered from the Rader-Meredith gang. These expenses would have been far lower had there been cooperation. As for Herbert's charge that tithe money is being used to pay for someone's prosecution, the fact is there have been no indictments yet, but maybe Herbert has had a vision. The attorney general's people are, of course, on government payroll, not on church salary.

At the end of the letter Herbert had this to say:

"I have to ask you to SACRIFICE AS NEVER BEFORE. Send the most generous offerings it is possible for you to send to defend God's Work.

"And please state in your letter, in your own words, that this money is YOUR ENDORSEMENT OF MY APOSTLESHIP, AND THE MONEY IS TO BE USED FOR DEFENDING GOD'S WORK AS I, Christ's Apostle, deem best.

"CONTINUE TO SEND, for the defense of God's Work as generously as possible, even at sacrifice, to the address below until I notify you otherwise-and make it payable to ME, PERSONALLY .... SACRIFICE AS NEVER BEFORE!"

The above letter was secretly run off the press in the early morning hours of Monday, January 15. However, a conscientious insider passed on word of the letter and Judge Weisman was able to stop the mailing of about 60,000 of the 85,000 letters. As the embargoed letters sat waiting at the Pasadena Post Office, Judge Title backed up Weisman's action, saying Herbert's letter was a direct violation of his court order.

It's not hard to see why. Herbert's letter is a perfect example of the very type of conduct he is charged with in the lawsuit (i.e., using church resources to obtain money for personal use). Judge Title had even specifically ruled that church funds were not to be used to pay for the legal defense of any individuals. If church members do as the letter suggests, Herbert will collect vast sum of money while the Worldwide Church of God, already financially drained, will go into bankruptcy. This is exactly what the receiver's installation was aimed at preventing. Judge Weisman's action was a wise and necessary one. But again his orders were circumvented. Some letters were secretly distributed and many church members around the country received calls from ministers and deacons who read them the letter on the phone. In the last few days we've heard stories of members selling personal property and sending what amounts they could obtain to Herbert in Tucson.

Hillel Chodos called Herbert's letter "inflammatory" and said it was "unfortunate" that he had taken this course. Said Chodos: "It certainly isn't cooperation. It has always been our belief that the members of the church are fine people and law abiding... and that they would be eager to see the affairs of the church brought into proper order and that all rumors that aren't true are finally quashed. We would hope that all members will be eager to cooperate, but we can't protect people from their own foolishness."

And foolishness it certainly is when professing Christians so quickly throw out all reason, even ignoring the very scriptures they have for years professed to believe. For instance, look at I Peter 2:13-15:

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God..." (KJV).

Now let's look at another passage often quoted in past years by Herbert Armstrong, Romans 13:1-4:

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer" (RSV).

In addition to these scriptures, also look at Isaiah 59, Matthew 5:25-26, 39-40, John 3:19-21, Isaiah 5:20, and Proverbs

18:13, 17. Obviously, neither obedience to constituted authority nor reason, tolerance, or compliance with scriptural admonition prevail in the Armstrong organization today.

### Federal Court Hearing

Tuesday morning (January 16), as two dozen church members picketed and prayed outside the federal courthouse, attorneys for Rader asked U.S. District Court Judge Robert Firth to declare unconstitutional the Los Angeles Superior Court decision which had put the church's earthly affairs into Judge Weisman's hands. They also asked Firth to award the church \$700 million in damages for the court's action. But in the first hearing on this matter Judge Firth refused to remove the receiver, saying that the state court judges had sufficient reason to impose a receivership. Said Firth: "It is obvious at this stage that it would be foolish to intrude the federal court into the proceedings taking place in state courts." He also said that "Judge Title and others over there have arrived at a conclusion-Judge Title apparently after a three-day hearing. I just don't have quite the degree of ego to interfere." His later comments also revealed skepticism as to the merits of Rader's \$700 million lawsuit against the state. (The argument will continue in federal court on January 29.)

The hearing was not without its colorful moments. Allan Browne attempted to defend Herbert Armstrong, saying: "The press is crucifying him! He's cut off. He can't communicate!" (Perhaps Mr. Browne could solve the problem by asking Herbert to come back to California.) Browne also raved: "The beaches of Normandy look pale to what's going on here." But Browne's histrionics were no match for the clear logic of Chodos who said that the attorney general never intended to interfere with communications between the spiritual leader and his followers. But the money involved in the letter was under the protection of the state. Chodos' words brought a chorus of groans from the courthouse audience packed with Rader supporters. But Judge Firth, irritated by the vocal demonstration, said: "One more outburst and this courtroom is going to be cleared."

On Tuesday the WCG also filed a written appeal of Judge Title's decision with the state Court of Appeal, but that court may take many days or weeks to decide if it will even consider the matter. Knowledgeable observers say it is unlikely that the state Court of Appeal will overturn the rulings of the Superior Court.

### Church Records, Assets Missing?

With each new defeat in the courts it appears that the pro-Rader forces at Ambassador are becoming more desperate to hold together the rapidly disintegrating Armstrong empire. Rumors of break-ins and theft at church headquarters are rampant and apparently not unfounded. On Friday, January 19, a spokesman for Judge Weisman told the *Los Angeles Times* that security at the church's headquarters had broken down and vital assets, including gold bullion and coins, expensive paintings, and computer tapes containing financial information may be missing.

A. Sheridan Atkinson, chief operating officer for Weisman, said he was "getting no cooperation" from church leaders in his attempts to locate church assets. Weisman has also found it necessary to fire one outside private security firm and replace it with another in what were described as "some weird circumstances." "All I can tell you for sure is that we've had our armed guard security system violated two or three times this week," said Atkinson. He said that in one instance his auditors entered a headquarters vault Tuesday night to check the computer tapes stored there against an inventory list. The vault, however, was left unguarded for several hours early Wednesday morning when a guard left his post. A check later in the morning indicated two missing tapes that apparently contained a summary of the church's financial interests and a membership list. He said that church personnel later gave him two tapes, but he had no way of knowing if they were the same two tapes taken out. Atkinson told the *Times* that he fears-but cannot prove-that the gold, paintings, and computer tapes were removed from church headquarters and spirited away to church-owned property in Arizona. Atkinson said the reason he had doubts as to what occurred is because church employees are slowing down his work. He implied that those with information valuable to his investigation were being close-mouthed about what they know.

*Ambassador Report* has learned that not only are employees who cooperate with the receiver being ostracized but some have also been suspended or fired for refusing to obey superiors who've instructed them to disobey the court's orders. Apparently some have even been threatened with violence. Rader has also beefed up security forces at the church's headquarters with numerous burly but untrained church members to "guard the property." The only real purpose of this "goon squad" is to intimidate those who wish to cooperate with Judge Weisman. Indeed, it's a madhouse on campus. Wild accusations are flying all over, and employees are running to the right-wing leaders urging them to fire fellow employees who are not as fanatical as they are. The mood seems somewhat reminiscent of the purges in communist China. The only difference is that this is taking place at the headquarters of the "true" church of God. Said one minister concerning the campus pandemonium: "I'm staying away from the Armstrong campus. Those men have killing in their eyes."

### Time to Flee?

Herbert Armstrong has called a ministerial conference for Monday, January 22. It will be held in Tucson, Arizona, where he is out of reach of the California attorney general. What will transpire is anybody's guess. Rumors are rampant, however, that the WCG will abandon its California operation and move its headquarters elsewhere-probably to Arizona. Some church officials are even talking of moving everything to another country-perhaps Israel.

Tonight (January 21), as we go to press, we have learned that Stanley Rader has announced at a press conference earlier today that the church's entire operations will indeed be moved out of state immediately. He also predicted that within one week no money would be flowing into the coffers of the Worldwide Church of God. Whether or not Herbert Armstrong has authorized this incredible decision, or is even aware of it, remains to be seen. One thing is certain however. Unless the WCG's employees and members begin cooperating with Judge Weisman and his staff, the Worldwide Church of God's operations will not be revived and its income will virtually cease. Bankruptcy will be right around the corner.

Church members, as usual, are not being told the whole story. *The Worldwide News*, most members' only source of information on the lawsuit, is slanted, incomplete, and inaccurate on many of the key details of the suit and the court hearings. *The Worldwide News* (January 15, 1979) published different news clippings, trying to appear as objective as possible, but what the members aren't aware of is that a number of the most incriminating articles on the church were not reprinted. The articles that were reprinted omitted numerous statements that put Rader and the church in a bad light, and the editors didn't even have the honesty to indicate these omissions with ellipsis points. But evidently the church's top officials don't wish the truth to come to light. Notice Rader's self-professed method of dealing with accusations against the church: "I, too, cannot understand why, upon hearing any of the flagrant rumors, which have been recently brought to my attention, you [ministers] cannot simply respond to others, 'That is not true!'" (*The Worldwide News*, Jan. 15, 1979, p. 2.) (The answer to this is simple, Stan. Maybe some still believe lying is a sin, and when they hear rumors that are true, they have great difficulty saying, "That is not true.")

To add to the confusion, members are being told by their ministers and by Herbert that the church is being unfairly "persecuted" and that "Satan is attacking." Members don't have access to all the facts, and consequently many are going to send their hard-earned dollars not to the WCG but to Herbert personally. These sincere and dedicated people will not realize that by doing so they will not only be throwing away their money but will be destroying the very church they love. If any of our readers have friends in the WCG that they wish to help, we offer this suggestion. Send them a copy of this newsletter along with a note encouraging them to read it and get *all* the facts. (Reproductions of this newsletter can be made very easily by simply taking the issue to any photocopy service. Most charge about 5¢ per page for copies.)

Meanwhile, Garner Ted Armstrong, Herbert's son, isn't rejoicing over the recent chain of events, but he isn't keeping silent either. Ted finds it incredibly ironic that the Attorney general is having to step in and do the very thing he recommended to his father last year-put the church finances in order. Ted told the Pasadena *Star-News* on January 6: "I tried to tell my dad. I was overruled." Ted also stated that he complained to his dad of the involvements of Rader in outside corporations that were doing business with the college and church and warned his dad that such should not be permitted. "When I found out there were five or seven or eleven corporations Rader was involved with, to my mind, it was a simple matter of conflict of interest," Ted explained. "That is why I went beating a steady path to Tucson [where his dad lives]. I pleaded with dad, 'Please, 'we've just got to get rid of this sort of thing.'"

*Ambassador Report* will continue to monitor the events in Pasadena, and we'll report to you as soon as we are able. We have been absolutely swamped with work-corresponding with and providing information to various government agencies, providing background information and leads to the press and media, talking to disenchanted and confused WCG members, ministers, etc. We hope you'll forgive us for not being as regular with our newsletters as we should. Thanks again to all of you who are making our publication possible.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published bimonthly as finances allow.

Publisher-Editors are:

Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

[Next Issue \(AR8\)](#)  
[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR8 March 14, 1979 (Jan.-Feb. Issue)**

Dear Friends:

So much has transpired in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) during the last few weeks that many are understandably having difficulty making sense of the news reports coming out of Pasadena. In this newsletter we hope to bring you up-to-date on what has occurred and shed some light on the chaos surrounding the WCG and Ambassador College. We begin where our last newsletter left off.

### Atrocities and Alibis

On January 21, as our last issue went to press, Stanley Rader announced that because of the court-appointed receivership placed on his organization, the WCG would move its headquarters out of California to a "safe haven." Exactly where that would be was not stated, but Rader hinted that he and Herbert Armstrong might begin traveling continuously "to fulfill missionary responsibilities." Said Rader of Pasadena, "There'll be no fresh money coming here." Rader railed against what he described as "atrocities" perpetrated by the receiver, retired Judge Steven Weisman. Rader complained: "It's impossible for us to conduct business as usual."

Rader claimed it was necessary for the headquarters of the church to be moved because the Ambassador College property had been "desecrated" by the receiver's smoking on the premises, by his allowing disfellowshipped members to enter campus property, and by his auditors working on the sabbath. He explained that when the desecration is cleansed, the church would reclaim its Pasadena property. One can only speculate as to where this new doctrine of building desecration and sanctification came from. In coming up with these alibis Rader conveniently forgot that the concert series in "God's House" brings many smokers on campus who regularly light up. He was never upset over that, it seems. Rader also conveniently forgot that Herbert condoned construction workers laboring on the sabbath and holy days to build "God's House" (the Ambassador Auditorium).



Herbert Armstrong leaving a Tucson medical clinic on Jan. 11.

And Herbert never thought it wrong to have disfellowshipped members trod on the "holy ground" before. We all remember, for instance, how Herbert's disfellowshipped daughter Beverly was not only allowed to attend church services but was put on the church's payroll to serve as a hostess on Herbert's "missionary" jaunts.

The next day marked the beginning of the church's annual ministerial conference. Though normally held in Pasadena, this year's conference was held in Tucson, Arizona, where Herbert Armstrong is out of reach of California subpoenas. On the opening day of the four-day conference the 550 attending WCG ministers and their wives heard Apostle Herbert deny all allegations against him, claiming the charges were brought only because the world hates Jesus Christ. He did not answer the charges of the suit in any detail nor offer any real evidence to back up his claim of innocence. What then was the cause of the church's legal difficulties? According to Herbert, it was Garner Ted Armstrong who "spearheaded" the attack after being "brainwashed" by dissidents. He offered no proof of this either.

#### Sit-in and Lock-out

While Herbert's colorful Tucson performance was interesting, the really big news of the day was occurring in Pasadena where approximately 2,500 men, women, and children of the WCG staged a sit-in at Ambassador College. (Remember when the church condemned such behavior as "demon"-strations? In fact the January 1964 *Plain Truth* and a 1973 reprint article (#860) entitled "The Christian Attitude-Respect Government Authority" said the following: "Those who refuse to submit to authority...shall receive to themselves damnation.... That's the penalty for any who resist constituted authority. That's the awful judgment God renders on those who incite civil strife, or who create incidents by so-called 'Peaceful demonstrations' or 'sit-ins'....")

Although Rader later said the demonstration was spontaneous and not ordered by him, *Ambassador Report* was told by many church members that they had received phone calls the previous night from church officials telling them to be there and, if possible, to bring their children. This happened in spite of the fact that Rader had that same day stated he thought there would be "physical conflict." Apparently the safety and welfare of their children was secondary as many WCG parents kept their children out of school and brought even little toddlers to the demonstration. One veteran newsman commented that in all his years of covering the local news it was the first time he had ever seen parents use their children in such a way.

The sit-in brought more legal conflict. In court that morning Judge Title ordered Rader's attorney Allan Browne to

tell the demonstrators to disperse and allow the receiver to carry out his responsibilities. Said Title, "All the things going on out there [in Pasadena] are not coincidental and accidental. It doesn't appear that by coincidence thousands of people would converge on this campus.... There has been a determined effort to frustrate the orders of this court." Title told Browne that if he did not advise the church members to disperse, he would order deputy sheriffs to the scene. Browne, however, told Title, "I can't guarantee it." To which Title responded, "I think Mr. Rader can guarantee it."

### The "Ecclesiastical Service"

In spite of all this, Tuesday saw no letup in the obstructionist tactics. The sit-in continued, and the receiver and his auditors were still locked out of the administration building. Now, however, church leaders cautioned the demonstrators that the sit-in must assume the atmosphere of a worship service. Explained one church leader, "We want the meeting to be ecclesiastical.... Apparently, it's our only defense." Church members put up signs saying their demonstration was an "ecclesiastical service," they sang hymns, and listened to the piped-in voice of their apostle speaking from Tucson. Declared Herbert, "Being subject to the laws doesn't always mean to obey them. I wonder if people aren't going to have to go to jail." This brought applause from his flock in the Hall of Administration. Earlier Herbert stated that he would be willing to go to jail himself if it was necessary. However, he has yet to return to California where this boast can be put to the test.

The over-crowded conditions in the administration building caused concern on the part of the Pasadena Fire Department. When the fire department arrived to investigate the possible violation of fire-safety regulations, a fire marshal was told that those engaged in the sit-in could easily exit in case of fire. The Report learned, however, that not only were the doors locked but two-by-fours had been put through some door handles, and some locks had had toothpicks jammed into them to prohibit unlocking. Fortunately, there was no fire.

*Ambassador Report* Publishers Len Zola, Bob Geringer, and John Trechak were at the scene for much of the three days of the Ambassador sit-in but were unable to get inside the administration building to witness firsthand the activities of those occupying the building. Some reporters, however, were able to gain entry. Here is an excerpt from a remarkable article by Richard Jenkins and David Willman that appeared in the January 24, 1979, Pasadena *Star-News*:



Signs at the locked front entrance of the Hall of Administration. (All photos are by *Ambassador Report* unless otherwise noted.)



Receiver Steven Weisman (center) on his way back to court. The man on the right is newsman Pat O'Brien of TV station KNXT (CBS).



A. Sheridan Atkinson (second from right) confers with members of his staff after being denied access to the Hall of Administration.



As loyal followers of Herbert Armstrong listened to his piped-in voice during the sit-in, fire department vehicles arrived at the scene. A Pasadena Fire Department officer (right photo) was told that demonstrators inside the building would have no difficulty exiting in case of fire.



On the third day of the sit-in sheriff's deputies and Pasadena police officers were mobilized in a nearby park. Fortunately, they were not needed.

"On the first floor, the atmosphere was reserved-some who had arrived during the night slept, while children played tag amidst the grown-ups. Many read Scriptures or attentively listened to taped statements from church leaders - including Herbert W. Armstrong himself....

"Meanwhile, in the fourth-floor nerve center of Armstrong's \$80 million church complex, a small cadre of church officers continued to map their struggle against a state investigation into the finances of the embattled church.

"The men and their secretaries, inside the church's posh executive offices, shifted from looks of concern to bursts of confidence. But Armstrong and his top aide-Stanley R. Rader-were not present. In Rader's absence, his massive desk was occupied by a man in his 20s who wore a tailored three-piece suit.

"'We'll occupy the (college) buildings... one at a time,' proclaimed one of the men.

"Earlier the same man, pointing to vaults standing empty and file drawers with no files in an adjacent room, maintained that it took church officials three days to figure out the combinations to the vault locks. Many of the vaults had been off-limits to the church since the state attorney general's office sealed off the ornate facility when the court-ordered receivership began Jan. 3.

"But the official added that the vaults had not been used to contain anything of value. 'We never did use those cabinets or the safe,' he said.

"He then said that the membership list on the church computer system - used to store confidential information - had been scrambled. He added that the scrambling had been carried out to prevent retired Judge Steven Weisman-the court-appointed receiver of the church's financial affairs-from obtaining the full list of contributors to the church.

"A half-dozen other church officials seated around the room were discussing plans to oust Weisman and his forces from another Ambassador building.

"Another of the young men entered the office and reported that personnel hired by Judge Weisman, assumed to have occupied the church's press services building, had not left the building.

"'Perhaps someone could get in there posing as a vendor or something,' someone suggested.

"'Those people never leave the building,' the first man complained.

"'They have to sooner or later,' the other replied.

"Moments later, a secretary rushed into the room to announce that 'reliable sources' had indicated that the press services building, assumed to be under Weisman's control, was actually vacant.

"The reaction was both swift and triumphant. One of the men hurriedly gathered a small crew and headed off to bar the doors from the inside with wire and boards.

"'It's like a battle,' a young church officer had explained, prior to the latest skirmish."

Tuesday afternoon attorneys for both sides were once again back in court. Before the hearing Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Tapper told the press, "I don't seek mass arrests." He added that he only wanted the doors unlocked at Ambassador and the unobstructed continuation of the investigation. Judge Title ruled that the receiver and his staff be escorted and protected by sheriff's deputies in order to carry out their duties. The court order allowed the members to continue their sit-in and demonstration unhampered as long as they did not interfere with the business of the receiver and his aides. Title's order came over objections by church attorney Allan Browne who said he feared a repetition of the tragic events at Kent State."



The above photo appeared in a recent edition of *The Chronicle*. It had this caption: "The three-day sit-in by members of the Worldwide Church of God never reached a confrontation or violent stage. Here, Robert Geringer and Len Zola (far right), co-publishers of the *Ambassador Report*, are told to leave campus, by other church members. Geringer and Zola, although long critical of the Church and its practices, have never been disfellowshipped, they say, with either the required visit from a minister or a letter. They didn't leave." Within days of this incident, co-publishers Bob Geringer, Bill Hughes, John Trechak, and Len and Margaret Zola received disfellowship letters from Roderick Meredith. However, the intimidating letters are being ignored as the procedures outlined in article 3, section 3, of the church's articles of incorporation were not adhered to, making the disfellowships null and void. In fact, in like manner virtually all disfellowships of the last 20 years are invalid.

#### Billy Clubs and a Bible

At 8 a.m. Wednesday morning A. Sheridan Atkinson, the chief operating officer for Weisman, was escorted to the administration building by two uniformed sheriff's deputies and a plainclothes officer. The doors of the main entrance of the building were barred by timbers thrust through their perpendicular door handles. An adjacent smaller door had had its inside and outside handles removed. At the rear entrance a deputy accompanying Atkinson attempted to unlock the doors but was unable to. Door handles there had also been removed to prevent Atkinson's entry. Then as the estimated 1,000 members inside the building (there were an estimated 2,000 elsewhere on campus) sang "Onward Christian Soldiers" and other hymns, church deacon Wayne Pyle, who was standing guard outside the door, began arguing vehemently with Atkinson. Yelled Pyle, "If you want to come in, you're going to have to break the door down.... You will have to arrest us.... You are our enemy but we'll pray for you - we'll pray for God to take care of you. "

In front of the assembled newsmen and TV cameras, Atkinson tried to reason with Pyle, explaining that he too was a Christian and believed in moderation in all things. He gave no command to break down the door. Instead he held up not only a copy of Judge Title's court order but an open Bible and said calmly, "I believe in the same God they do." But, he said, "They ought to read the 13th chapter of Romans," referring to Paul's admonition that Christians be subject to civil authority. Atkinson also told Pyle that he agreed that we ought to obey God rather than run but explained, "We're not here to interfere with spiritual matters." Pyle, however, remained adamant while Atkinson, declining to use his full authority, "turned the other cheek!" and walked away to discuss the situation further with his staff.

It is interesting that Stanley Rader, who was on campus that morning was not present during the Atkinson confrontation. It is also noteworthy that after Atkinson left, church loyalists in the auditorium heard a message broadcast by Herbert from Tucson in which he recounted how the apostle Peter had been put in jail. Then Herbert added, "Many of you may have to be subjected to the same thing." All this, of course, happened while he remained safe in Tucson.

At this point the receiver could have used force to gain entry to the building. In fact, that possibility was contemplated as nearly 200 riot-equipped deputies and Pasadena police officers were assembled at a nearby park awaiting the command to move in. But Weisman was reluctant to take such drastic action. The spectre of breaking into a building where people were singing hymns and arresting women and children was not his wish. He sent

word to Rader, saying, "I have so much respect for religious freedom and the right not to be interfered with that I would like to work out something that respects your religious freedom." Rader finally agreed to meet with Weisman at Allan Browne's office in Los Angeles, and by 3 p.m. a compromise, of sorts, was reached.

About an hour later the demonstrating church loyalists were shocked to see Rader entering the administration building with Weisman, who accompanied him to the executive suite. Obvious to all was the fact that Rader was giving the receiver access to the building. A short while later as Weisman quietly left the Hall of Administration Rader spoke to the weary group: "There is no peace. There is still a war. Not until we get the attorney general punched out and the receiver punched out will there be peace. We're still in a state of all-out war. We've been invaded by an army of the state of California. There were 250 armed members of the sheriff's force ready to break down the doors"

Cheers greeted Rader's rhetoric, but many were apparently confused as to what had been accomplished. Jackie Knowles of the Pasadena *Star-News* wrote (1/25/79): "Only Stanley R. Rader was smiling broadly. Worldwide Church of God members who had been camped out for two nights at the church headquarters in Pasadena looked numb and confused after Rader finally escorted a court-appointed receiver into the building Wednesday afternoon. 'The whole idea was to keep out the receiver,' said one of the organizers of the sit-in, Wayne Pyle, with unhappiness written across his drawn face."

Ms. Knowles also quoted another member overheard saying to his minister, "'Why are you so happy if the receiver is still here?'" Indeed, the only concession Weisman had made was that he would move his office from the Hall of Administration to the nearby press facilities building where the church computer is located and where records are stored. Rader acknowledged that many members did not like the results of the sit-in and wanted to demonstrate their faith by being arrested.

By the next day, however, the demonstrators were gone. Dick Lloyd of the *Star-News* (1/26/79) wrote of what the scene was like once they left: "Magazines were askew, blankets lay strewn about, toys were scattered, chairs stood in disarray, lint covered the carpets, fingerprints tarnished once shiny windows, extension cords rested in agonizing contours across the floor. The blackboard still voiced a lecturer's message on endurance now for the later joys in 'The World Tomorrow.'... Dolls, cups, clothing, wrinkled newspapers and a myriad of other articles added to the disorder." Dick Lloyd also interviewed Deacon Wayne Pyle, who said he was "really bewildered. The whole point of being here was to keep the receiver out, and they let him in." In retrospect, however, he self-righteously thought the whole episode "made the state look like a fool."

#### Meredith and Company

Meanwhile, while all of this was occurring, a number of announcements were made at the Tucson conference that demonstrated the strength and solidarity of the conservative wing of the church's hierarchy. For instance, the new director of pastoral administration (worldwide) is Roderick Meredith, an arch-myrmidon noted for his almost lemming-like loyalty to Herbert Armstrong. A Meredith protege, Dennis Luker, ordained an evangelist at the conference, is now assistant director of pastoral administration. (Meredith and Luker both held almost identical positions in the pre-1972 era.) The new deputy chancellor of Ambassador College is Raymond McNair, perhaps appointed to this position because of Herbert Armstrong's recent admonitions against the leaven of intellectualism. Acting as administrative assistant to Meredith and Laker is Wilbur Berg. Burk McNair, also ordained an evangelist in Tucson, is now the headquarters area coordinator. Returning to his role as roving evangelist is Gerald Waterhouse (a.k.a., "Mr. Millennium"), long noted for his long-winded, almost hallucinogenic discourses detailing the Armstrongian World Tomorrow.

At the conference Herbert Armstrong decreed that the keeping of birthdays and voting in elections were both again taboo. (For a short time during Garner Ted's era these "sins" had been allowed.) There has also been talk of changing other church doctrines back to what they were in the heyday of the church, but there were no official announcements that this will occur. Even if some old-time doctrines such as Monday Pentecost are resurrected, it is highly unlikely that the old doctrines prohibiting medical treatment and the remarriage of divorced persons would be reinstated, considering Herbert's constant reliance now on medication and his present marriage to a formerly divorced woman. We also doubt that the old makeup doctrine will be reinstated. In a recent *Star-News* article by Dick Lloyd it was pointed out that Mrs. Ramona Armstrong paints her toenails.

Nevertheless, the church's latest ministerial appointments indicate that the WCG is indeed returning to the hard-nosed Armstrong conservatism of the past.

#### Whose Side Is God On, Anyway?

Some ministers believe that if the church could only go backward to the way it was, it would somehow be rescued

from its current plight. But one sees little evidence that God is intervening on the WCG's behalf now that the hated "liberals" have been kicked out and the church has taken a more conservative turn.

For instance, while Armstrong loyalists jammed the church's Pasadena headquarters for the three-day sit-in, an attempt was made to form a new church corporation in Arizona with Stan Rader and Herbert Armstrong as its two top directors. On January 24, Nicki Chayet, an attorney for the Arizona Corporations Commission, stated that corporation papers for "the Philadelphia Church of God," as it was to be called, had been filed with her office. (She said the first set of papers came in the mail Monday, January 22 (the day after the press conference in which Rader said he had no idea where the church's "safe haven" would be). However, among the questions left unanswered on the application forms was one requiring disclosure of whether any officer or director of the proposed corporation had been involved with a corporation placed in receivership in recent years. Also left unanswered on the form were questions pertaining to the proposed corporation's fiscal year and business address. The application was rejected.

On January 25, after nearly seven days of deliberation, three Los Angeles-based justices of the California Second District Court of Appeal denied a request from Worldwide Church attorneys to remove the receivership on the church. The church's petition was denied without explanation.

The same day, after being briefed on the case for two hours by Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Tapper, California Attorney General George Deukmejian said that the investigation of the WCG would proceed with no change of direction. The next day, Deukmejian reiterated his position saying that it is the duty of his office to see to it that charitable, tax-exempt funds are spent as prescribed in a nonprofit organization's articles of incorporation. He said the fact that seven judges had upheld the state's actions indicated that they were legal and warranted. But at a news conference the same day Rader blasted Deukmejian for not coming to his aid and said he was "going to make the attorney general eat those words." When asked why he thought the attorney general's office brought the charges, Rader said this concerning his former USC classmate, Deputy Attorney General Tapper (are you ready for this?): "We were in the same class. I was at the top and he was an also-ran.... He is out to get me!"

#### Atkinson Resigns

Rader's legal maneuverings have netted him no real victories so far, but he has not been without his moments of hope. On January 26, Sheridan Atkinson resigned as Weisman's top aide. Atkinson, the CPA who was the receiver's chief operating officer, said he was unhappy with the way the investigation was proceeding. (While at the college he claimed his phones had been tapped, and under the terms of the compromise agreement of Jan. 24 church financial records were not adequately protected.) On the other hand, Weisman apparently regarded Atkinson as not sufficiently sensitive to certain problems and too explosive. Atkinson said that because of his reputation for getting things done and as an internationally recognized Christian leader, Rader wanted him ousted as chief operating officer, implying that his removal may have been part of the Jan. 24 compromise between Weisman and Rader. Nevertheless, Atkinson commented, "I only want the best for this church. I am willing to be sacrificed as a symbol of government if it will help." Atkinson was replaced by his assistant Lowell H. Duggan. The firm now doing the audit is that of Peat, Marwick and Mitchell, one of the nation's most respected accounting firms and one noted for its expertise in investigations of this type.

On Monday, Jan. 29, Rader's lawyers were again back in court. U.S. District Court Judge Robert Firth heard arguments by Allan Browne that the federal court should intervene and remove the receiver appointed by the state court because, claimed Browne, the church's religious freedoms were being violated. Browne said the receivership's control over the church is as outrageous as telling the Pope that his robes should be synthetic rather than silk.

But Hillel Chodos declared, "I resent the comparison to the Catholic Church. The bishop of Rome doesn't transfer Castle Giddalfo into his own name and then pocket the profits." He went on to say that Rader and his colleagues may have a right to use church funds to entertain at Perino's 'but not to claim tax deductions on such things, transferring a greater tax burden to the rest of the public. Arguing that the constitutional rights argument was trumped up only to thwart the receiver, Chodos remarked, "You cannot perpetrate fraud in the name of religion and then wrap yourself in the flag and call out the name of the First Amendment." Browne's position, said Chodos, was the equivalent of saying, "If a man comes into court and says 'stealing is my religion,' there's nothing you can do about it." The two-hour hearing ended with Judge Firth taking the matter under submission.

#### Garner Ted Sued

The same day this hearing took place, attorneys Jack Kessler and Robert Palazzo filed a lawsuit against Garner Ted Armstrong on behalf of Stanley Rader. The suit claims that Garner Ted slandered Rader by accusing him of a conflict of interest when Ted made statements urging an independent audit of the WCG's finances. For this, Rader

is asking a total of \$551 million in damages. A few days later, the accounting firm of Rader, Cornwall, Kessler, and Palazzo filed another lawsuit against Garner Ted. This one is also a slander suit and asks for \$13 million in damages. However, Garner Ted told *Ambassador Report* co-publisher, Robert Gerringer, that on March 1 a judge threw out both suits as legally deficient.

### Weisman Gets Support

On the afternoon of Jan. 29 approximately 100 Worldwide Church of God members and ex-members gathered near the Ambassador Press Facilities building in Pasadena to show their support of Judge Weisman and to speak to reporters. The rapid mobilization of about 20 burly Ambassador security guards in front of the employees' entrance and the closing of the gate leading to the entrance made it quite clear that the group would not be allowed to see Weisman. Fortunately the pro-receiver group received only threats from the guards. However, the attitude of the security force was most evident. As a delivery truck backed up near the waiting group, one guard yelled out: "Run 'em over!" Perhaps the nearness of officers from the Pasadena Police Department prevented an "accident."

Nevertheless, despite all the threats, the group waited patiently on the sidewalk until the press and media people arrived. When they did, Howard Clarke, a WCG minister recently disfellowshipped after 25 years of service, read an emotion-filled statement of support for Judge Weisman and the Attorney General.

Said Clarke, "The state is not trying to take over the church. The church is not under attack, and the members of the church aren't under attack. No money has gone unnecessarily to the state. It is a phony issue [this issue] of church and state confrontation. What is being asked is a full accounting before the law. We above all as Christians should be open and above board. Why, if there is nothing to hide, should there be all this obstruction?"

Clarke said there were many members of the church who were supportive of the suit but who were unable to voice their feelings for fear of being disfellowshipped or worse. He stated, "There have been threats, and I know that during this situation there have been some that had to have police protection." This sentiment was later echoed by Dave Morgan and Shirley Timmons, two litigants in the suit who said they were told "...if we could get the six of you [all of the litigants] up against a wall and shoot you, we would." (That's a fine Christian attitude!) Dave Morgan said he was even threatened during one of the early court hearings.



Rader didn't stop to say hello.



Disfellowshipped minister Howard Clarke made an

emotion-filled statement to reporters in support of the actions of the state.

(Incidentally, *Ambassador Report* has also received its share of threats too.)

Another member who spoke to the press was Mrs. Jean Myers, who said: "There are a lot of people in the church who would like the church cleaned up. This conspiracy at the top is unholy and ungodly, and we just want it stopped." Mrs. Myers said she still tithes "so that the gospel can go out." But of Herbert Armstrong's international ventures she lamented, "They go to the heads of nations, and instead of preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he gives them this thing about giving and getting and wines and dines them, and they don't teach Christ. They deny Christ!"

Hillel Chodos showed up briefly for the meeting and spoke to some of the members. He said he was glad to see the group's support because, he facetiously added, he was "tired of being the only agent of Satan in this matter." However, there was no levity in his voice when he stated, "By virtue of all this maneuvering to send money to Arizona, he [Rader] is creating financial problems to the church that will make it difficult to pay widows and orphans, but he will pay himself."

During the press conference, Rader appeared briefly in a chauffeur-driven car but declined to get out of the car to speak to the assembled reporters. Instead, he appeared later on a news telecast stating that the church members who had participated in the news conference would be disfellowshipped upon identification.

### The Paper War

The next week saw more delays in the court's scheduled hearings on the WCG suit. WCG attorneys claimed that Judge Title was prejudiced against their position because of his long friendship with the receiver, retired Judge Steven Weisman. The claim resulted in Title not being able to preside further over the case until this challenge was heard. Chodos, who is a member of the California Commission on Judicial Performance, responded to the accusation against Title, saying, "It's the kind of thing an attorney ought never do unless he has an extreme case. The ground of bias alleged against Judge Title is a cheap shot." This was especially true, he said, because Browne waved any objection to Title when at the beginning of the proceeding he was told by Title that Weisman was a long-time friend.

Nevertheless, attorneys for both sides met, ostensibly to decide on a judge to hear the challenge against Title. But when they could reach no agreement, the matter went to the chairman of the state Judicial Council, Supreme Court Chief Justice Rose Bird who decided that the challenge against Title would be reviewed by Orange County Superior Court Judge George Francis. He in turn considered arguments submitted by both sides and ruled on Feb. 5 that Title would stay.

The challenge to Title is a good example of the type of delaying legal tactics used by the Rader-Browne axis. Their objection to Title had as little merit as their drummed-up "state persecuting church" argument (which Chodos referred to as "a kind of first-year law school tactic"). It's gotten them little if any results while costing the church a fortune. But according to Rader this is necessary to keep the investigators from reviewing financial records that he says will prove him innocent. The argument doesn't go very far before it falls on its face. However, the constant legal maneuvering and obstructions have had some effect.

### Weisman Resigns

On Feb. 6 receiver Steven Weisman told Judge Title that he had had enough. He said the difficulties he was being faced with and the stress it was putting on his health were forcing him to resign. "I'm doing this with regret," he said. "I've never backed off from a job in my life. But I don't need this harassment, this obstruction of what ought to be an orderly job."

Judge Weisman has received strong support from many members of the Worldwide Church of God and alumni of Ambassador College. For instance, only a week before, Weisman told one reporter that letters of support were flooding into his office. But much of what Weisman has been subjected to by this Christian organization has been agonizing for the man. Rader must take much of the blame for this. He has repeatedly urged noncooperation, has repeatedly belittled Weisman, and on at least one occasion even made fun of his polio affliction, comparing him to crippled Chester of "Gunsmoke." Said Rader, "You know, all of us can use a cane as a prop." *Ambassador Report* believes that insulting judges is not just un-Christian, it's stupid. But Rader apparently feels differently because, like a little kid who hasn't been taught not to pull down his pants in public, he even had his comments on Weisman published in the Feb. 19 *Worldwide News*.

Weisman is not the only person who has come under Rader's fire. Rader has been before the TV cameras almost daily attacking the attorney general, his subordinates, judges, and attorney Hillel Chodos, whose name he repeatedly mispronounces as "Chomos." One of our sources insists that this slip of the tongue is actually Rader's way of insulting Mr. Chodos. We, however, believe that Mr. Rader would not stoop to that type of thing and that, in fact, the habit, like his somewhat lilting cadence, is nothing more than some type of speech impediment. Yet we do wonder why, if this is the case, the mispronouncing of Mr. Chodos' name is repeatedly transliterated as "Chomos" in the *Worldwide News*.

Speaking of funny papers, remember Herbert's boast of co-hosting a benefit with the Queen of England? And the one about being nominated for a Nobel Prize? Well, the *Worldwide News* reported that Rader is considering running for attorney general of California. Oh, well, moving right along,...

### The Paper War Escalates

On Feb. 6 legal maneuvering by Browne continued. An attempt was again made to take the receivership issue out of Title's court to another. Commented Title, "Very candidly, you've failed on your motion to disqualify me, and now you're trying to do it through the back door." The matter went to Presiding Judge David Eagleson who ruled that while ordinary matters of law would be referred to regular pretrial civil courts as in other civil cases, all matters directly or indirectly involving the receiver and his duties would be heard by Judge Title.

On Feb. 9 Rader's lawyers, Allan Browne, Allan Cooper, Allan Gabriel, and George Scheavelli, went before the state's Second District Court of Appeal asking for an immediate stay of Title's receivership order. That attempt, like others before, failed. However, the one thing accomplished by these time-consuming maneuvers was the repeated delaying of a hearing to decide whether or not Stanley Rader would be removed by the court from his position as the church corporation's acting executive head. Such an action was contemplated because of Rader's obstinate refusal to cooperate with the court-appointed receiver. The hearing on this motion may yet materialize.

On Feb. 13 Allan Browne was again back in Title's court, arguing that the receivership should be lifted. He suggested that a bond could be posted by the church to protect the church's assets while an appeal of the receivership was made. But Deputy Attorney General Tapper argued vigorously against such a move. So did the receiver, Steven Weisman, who temporarily remained in his position pending a decision on his replacement. Stated Weisman, "I want to respond to Mr. Browne's lack of knowledge to what's going on out there. It was only this morning that we had our mail service restored. There is no cooperation out there yet. We get our mail directly from the post office because they're opening our mail." Title told Browne to draft a proposal of a system whereby church documents could be protected without a receiver. In the meantime the receivership was to continue.

On Feb. 20, the WCG had another setback. A group of WCG loyalists who call themselves the Committee for Defense of Religious Freedom had petitioned the court to allow them to enter the legal war that was raging. Richard Osborn, the attorney for the group, said that the church's hierarchy was not in a position to protect the rights of the members because it lacked credibility in the eyes of the court. Osborn said the group's action was done independent of the church and was not being financed by it. (Osborn told the *Star-News*, however, that his first contact with church members came when he was called by Rader to the Ambassador campus during the big January demonstration.)

Nevertheless, the committee's attempt failed. Judge Robert Weil didn't feel additional defendants were necessary. Osborn had argued that his clients should be allowed to become separately represented parties to the suit because the issues involved were church and not corporate problems. But Judge Weil disagreed, saying, "The church is doing business as a corporation; that is valid and uncontested. So it submits itself to the rules - including the enforcement by the attorney general - of the rules of a charitable trust."

The next day, attorneys Allan Browne and Hillel Chodos were again in debate before Judge Title. Testimony was heard from several witnesses including Lowell Duggan, the receiver's chief operating officer, who told of the continued obstruction to his work. He said his requests for information concerning corporate aircraft, real estate transactions, and other financial dealings had been denied. Several witnesses testified that financial documents asked for by auditors or Employees of the receiver were "screened" by church attorneys if it was suspected that they might be "ecclesiastical." Chodos, however, said that "99% of the so-called ecclesiastical records are really the sensitive ones" that church leaders did not want to divulge.



On Feb. 13 as attorneys for both sides again debated the receivership issue, loyal followers of Herbert Armstrong demonstrated outside the court building. The photo on the right shows Rader's lawyer Allan Browne (far right) talking to the demonstrators.

The hearing left Judge Title convinced that the receivership was singly not working. Over strong objections by Chodos, Judge Title decided that he would in one week issue an order lifting the receivership. Church members were elated. Rader, however, wasn't thrilled. For weeks he had claimed that had there been no receiver he would have gladly turned over all records. He had claimed he had nothing to hide and was only fighting the receivership on principle. Now, Title said he would remove the receiver and give the WCG "one final opportunity to show good faith." But, Title made it very clear that the order would be contingent on alternative plans for the continuance of the investigation. He warned that if the removal of the receiver didn't produce the results he hoped for, it would be reinstated. March 1 was the date set for the next hearing on the matter.

#### No Bodies?

The following morning Rader held another of his frequent news conferences. He announced that he and the Worldwide Church would cooperate fully with the continuing audit of the church's finances. Now that was news!

But only hours later the war was back on again! That afternoon members of the receiver's staff and auditors attempted to close out the office of the receiver as was instructed by Judge Title only the day before. Someone alerted the Ambassador security department. Within minutes about a dozen men arrived to block the receiver's staff from loading audit records into the back of a car. Weisman's secretary feared violence and called the Pasadena police. Several officers were immediately dispatched to the scene. The confrontation ended when, in the interest of peace, the receiver's staff moved the boxes back into the building. After numerous telephone discussions between Judge Title, Steven Weisman, and the church's attorneys, Allan Browne agreed to allow the accountants' work papers to be removed. During the discussions Stan Rader and Ralph Helge arrived on the scene in a black Cadillac limousine. Helge was overheard saying to his men with a laugh, "Where are all the bodies? You haven't done your job if there are no bodies."

At Rader's news conference earlier that day Rader said that those who had initiated the legal action against the church would be punished, making reference to the church's \$700 million federal suit against the California attorney general's office. A few hours later, Rader's prophecy notwithstanding, U.S. District Court Judge Robert Firth said that a judgment in the church's favor in that case would "create unnecessary state-federal friction" and the suit was thrown out.

#### Title's Injunction

On March 1, as scheduled, Judge Julius Title decided that the receivership which had been on the church since Jan. 3 would be dissolved. This meant that the church's business affairs would again be under the control and direction of its religious leaders. But those church loyalists who hoped that this would stop the investigation of the church were badly disappointed. First of all, the investigation of the church would continue under the auspices of the attorney general's office. Second, the dissolution of the receivership would technically not occur until Title signed an injunctive order that was to be drafted. And that would not occur until Weisman (in supposedly about 12 days) completed his report to the court. Title made it very clear that his injunctive order would both prohibit the sale of church properties and fixed assets unless 30 days notice was given to the attorney general and that the attorney general's auditors would be given access to all the financial records they needed.

Over strong protects by Browne, Title said the attorney general's investigators "are entitled to look at whatever they want to - for a full and complete audit." Included in this is access to a computer terminal and copy machines. Browne howled in protest: "They're asking to get into every internal financial document the church has had in 20 years." But Hillel Chodos countered by saying, "No independent accounting of church monies has ever been made.... The people have a right to an accounting of every penny." Title ordered that the identities of church members be kept confidential in the audit. But, said Title, all monetary matters were within the purview of the attorney general's audit. He also stipulated that henceforth church officials were required to turn over financial documents within five hours of their being requested by the auditors. He made it clear that the church was getting "one final opportunity" to cooperate. Said Title, "The hallmark test is... reasonable, cooperative, and nondisruptive conduct."

Within hours of the hearing Rader was hinting that, as before, he would not cooperate. A few days later Rader openly told reporters he would definitely not cooperate with the court-ordered audit of the church's books. When asked by reporters why he had previously said he would cooperate if the receivership was lifted, Rader said he had changed his mind.

The legal war was again on. On Monday, March 5, Rader filed a \$13 million lawsuit against Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Tapper and attorney Hillel Chodos. Totally unperturbed, Chodos told the *Star-News*: "This complaint will be given the attention it deserves."

The next day, Rader's lawyers were at it again, this time before Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Thomas T. Johnson. They argued that the state had no legal grounds to file a suit and requested that the judge find the state attorney general's complaint legally insufficient. Judge Johnson took the church's motion for a demurrer under submission. Informed observers do not believe such tactics will prove beneficial to the church however. Church lawyers have been unsuccessful before three superior court judges, a federal judge, a state appellate court three-judge panel, and the state supreme court.

#### Receivership Resurrected?

March 12 was to have been the day that the receivership officially ended. But Judge Title had warned that Rader and the WCG must first prove itself with good conduct. They flunked the test. Judge Title stated, "Very candidly, the incredible resistance of the defendants to this audit has to raise a reasonable question in one's mind. It has to make a reasonable mind suspect that perhaps someone out there doesn't want that audit." Title appointed a new receiver, David Ray, a 49-year-old Beverly Hills lawyer and CPA with 15 years experience as a receiver. However, Title said he would allow the WCG to post a \$1 million bond that would allow a stay of the order while church attorneys appealed the decision.

Rader immediately set about to raise the money for the bond. But as of this morning (March 14) the bond has not been posted. We were told only last evening that church members were being called and asked to immediately contribute \$10 or more for the bond. In the mean time WCG loyalists are again engaged in a "spontaneous" sit-in at Ambassador College, vowing to keep out the new receiver. Yesterday (March 13) WCG employees were asked to forgo a paycheck or two to help the organization through its present financial difficulties. (Rader said he too would sacrifice a portion of his pay to the church!)

We find it amusing that through all of this *Quest* magazine has yet to be jettisoned and the AICF concert series continues on.

#### The Big Sandy Scandal

One of the reasons a receivership was imposed on the Worldwide Church of God was because it was believed that there were improprieties in the sale of the Big Sandy property, which was to have been transferred in early January of this year. As we reported in our last issue Judge Title could find no impropriety in that transaction and ordered that the sale be allowed to be completed. A series of strange events then followed. With Rader's apparent approval, a group of church members from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, filed a class-action lawsuit that sought to keep the proceeds of the sale of the Big Sandy campus in escrow until the litigation with the state of California reached completion. U.S. District Court Judge William Steger in Tyler, Texas, issued an ex parte temporary restraining order in accordance with their wish. The order would have effectively prevented money from the sale going to the Pasadena church headquarters under the receiver's control.

But as it turned out there was no sale! The deal never went through, and the circumstances surrounding the entire matter leave many questions unanswered. We do know that the church failed to deposit with the escrow company the documents and records needed to show clear title to the Property. As a result of this, southern evangelist William Menge, who had planned to purchase the property, bowed out of the deal.

However, according to Menge's attorney Hodge Dolle Jr., Menge has since been unable to recover over \$500,000 he already paid out for the property. That money was not paid through escrow as is normally the case but directly to church leaders! Why was this done? According to Dolle, "It was good faith money required by the church. It was make or break on that point." Dolle said they had no luck in retrieving the money from the church officials, and they were preparing to sue for the return of the money. Rader has not commented on the matter.

### Garner Ted on the Move Again

We don't wish to take much space in this issue to comment on Garner Ted's activities of late. Those of you who are interested in what he is up to can write to his new organization (P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710) for his monthly publication. However, we'd briefly like to mention that Garner Ted's new free booklet "The True Church - Is It Organized?" is most interesting. We think it starts with a number of erroneous assumptions and ends with some even more erroneous conclusions. However, it also has some good information, and we think it's well worth reading, especially from the standpoint of seeing just how much Garner Ted has changed on the "true church" doctrine. We're waiting with bated breath to see how his father responds to the charges against him found in this new booklet.

### "60 Minutes" Does It to Rader

For the last two years or so it seems that not a week has gone by that we didn't receive at least one or two letters from readers suggesting we contact the producers of "60 Minutes," the popular CBS Sunday night TV program. Well, some time ago we did. Until now we have not been able to divulge that we have indeed had extensive contact with producer Norman Gorin and his staff. They asked that that fact be kept secret until now. "60 Minutes" is doing at least one segment on the WCG, and if it hasn't already aired by the time you read this, it will very shortly.

We haven't seen the script or a tape of the program, but Allan Maraynes, the researcher for the program, told us it was a real winner. Stanley Rader was "courted" for months by the "60 Minutes" people and was so confident he could "use them" that he was even quoted as saying he had *them* in the palms of his hands. Well, it didn't work out that way. *Ambassador Report* and others had provided "60 Minutes" with extensive documentation of Rader's activities. In over three hours of being interviewed on camera Rader said some remarkable things. But the capstone of the interview came when Mike Wallace produced a tape recording of Herbert Armstrong saying he would, in effect, like to get rid of Rader because Rader was trying to take over the church. (We have learned that the tape was made during a discussion between Herbert and Wayne Cole sometime on or around January 1 of this year.) Rader flew into a rage and had Mike Wallace and his crew evicted. (It'll all be shown on the program.)

Rader then went to a pre-scheduled news conference where, almost completely ignoring the whole purpose of the conference, he railed against the press. Describing the interview with Mike Wallace as "one of the most heinous experiences" of his life, Rader said the tape recording of Herbert's voice was obtained illegally and that he was going to take legal action against CBS. He never once denied that the tape was authentic, however.

Rader's conduct at the conference was nothing less than outrageous. When Pat O'Brian, a newsman with the local CBS affiliate, tried to ask a question of Rader, Stan refused to answer because the newsman was with a station that carried "60 Minutes." Rader yelled, "The press is the press! They can't be trusted and they're irresponsible!" Rader then threw his pencil, grabbed up some papers, and while mumbling invective, stormed out of the room in a fury.

### Comic Strip Friends

During the last few months a comic strip called "The Wizard of Id" has achieved immense popularity in certain WCG circles. Some people see uncanny similarities between the characters in the strip and some individuals they know. The Parker and Hart strip is available in paperback at most fine bookstores. Here is an appropriate example:



### Meredith the Sage

Before we forget! Recently an Ambassador College faculty member showed us an article he found in the September 1964 *Plain Truth* condemning civil disobedience. Its author was Roderick C. Meredith, the WCG's current director of pastoral administration. The advice he gave then is most apropos for WCG ministers now. Here is an excerpt we thought was remarkable:

"In his second epistle, the Apostle Peter warned that in our day there would be false teachers creeping in to lead the people into rebellion against constituted authority. He stated: 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction' (II Pet. 2:1).

"In verse 10, Peter described the attitude of these self-appointed leaders: 'But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.'...

"It is the responsibility of every true minister of Christ to preach submission to law and constituted authority. Most of all, everyone should be taught wholehearted obedience to the laws and ways of the Great God who rules over the kingdoms of men.

"The extent to which modern preachers are failing to carry out this responsibility demonstrates the extent to which they are false ministers...."

### You Can Fool Some of the People...

It is becoming increasingly evident that both Rader and Herbert believe the entire American public "just fell off a turnip truck." The WCG is now running expensive full-page ads in major U.S. newspapers in an attempt to marshal public opinion against the California attorney general. One such ad appeared in the Los Angeles Times on March 13. The banner of the ad read, "Attorney General Declares: All Church Assets And Records Are Public Property." Of course, that is totally ridiculous. The ad, which bears the signature of Herbert Armstrong, goes on to insinuate that the state intends to take over all churches and that the WCG is only the first on their list. Writes ad-man Armstrong: "This intention of the State to claim public ownership of all Church property, was, prior to that date [Jan. 2], kept a secret from the public." Herbert goes on to say that the WCG is fighting the state, not just to protect itself, but on behalf of all churches and individuals who believe in freedom of religion and in the separation of church and state.

Remember how Herbert used to rave that in his millennium there would be no separation of church and state? How there would be no freedom of religion? How true Christians today should not be involved in political matters? How all churches other than the WCG were "Satan's churches"? Well now, in this ad, Herbert writes:

"All Americans must be committed to the preservation of the integrity of our religious institutions and the freedom to exercise our religious rights.

"How can you help-what can you as an individual do?"

"Let everyone know that you as an American will not stand by and allow our freedoms to be so callously subverted. Contact your church pastor, write your congressman, write your senator, contact the media and let your views be known!"

Actually, this is not bad advice. Many of you have written to us asking if there is something you can do. Yes there is. Make your views known. We think the best place to write is to the attorney general of California. Don't write to the receiver, the auditors or the deputy attorney general. They have little time to read, let alone answer, mail. However, we believe letters to the state attorney general's office will make a difference. Here is the address: The Honorable, George Deukmejian; Attorney General of California; 555 Capitol Mall, Suite 350; Sacramento, CA 95814.

To those of you helping to make this publication possible, our sincere thanks.

The Publishers

---

*Ambassador Report* is published bimonthly as finances allow. Publisher-Editors are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trecbak, Leonard Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

[Next Issue \(AR9\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR9 June 1, 1979

Dear Friends:

This issue of *Ambassador Report* is our May-June issue. Our financial situation made it impossible to send out a March-April *Report* but this issue should cover the most pertinent developments of the last few months. To all of you who have written us, we'd like to express our thanks for your support and encouragement. We are sorry that we are not able to write all of you personally, but our limited resources make that impossible. We hope you will understand.

### Receivership Update

In our last newsletter we reported that Judge Title of the Los Angeles Superior Court had reinstated a receiver over the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and its affiliated corporations. We also reported that Judge Title allowed the WCG to post a \$1 million bond in lieu of the receiver for the duration of the time the church appealed his decision.

Rather than use corporate funds to post the bond, Stanley Rader appealed to WCG members to pledge their individual resources as sureties for the bond. In response to urgent telephone calls, members converged on the church's Pasadena headquarters to sign affidavits attesting to their individual net worth and guaranteeing that they would come up with the amount of their pledge, as Rader put it, "should they ever be called upon."

Judge Title ruled that he would allow individual sureties to be pledged, but if that were the option the church chose, the sureties would have to total \$2 million. This did not deter the dedicated followers. Not only did heads of households sign, but also spouses and children. Each member was asked to pledge \$3,000 -- although smaller pledges were allowed. In fact many pledged considerably more. One family pledged \$9,000, another \$69,000. Assets pledged included savings

accounts, checking accounts, jewelry, automobiles, acreage, and houses. Ironically, Rader did not put up any of his own property as surety. He said that certain state laws prohibited him from doing so.

On March 16, over objections by the state attorney general's office, Judge Title accepted the individual sureties, and the receivership was stayed pending appeals. Since then the California Supreme Court has denied two petitions by the church that sought to overturn Judge Title's decision to reinstate the receiver. The WCG is now appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court. If and when the court will rule on the case is anyone's guess.

In the meantime, the state attorney general has intensified the charges against the church in amendments to the original suit brought against the church. One of the added charges is that funds were transferred from the church's nonprofit corporate entities to profit-making entities owned or controlled by church officials. This should not be difficult to prove. For instance, the December 19, 1978, *Pastor's Report* carried an article by Stan Rader and Ralph Helge admitting this very thing:

"These are the facts: Ted Armstrong, when he was serving in the office of Executive Vice President of the Church and President of the College, was the direct overseer of God's money. He authorized a member of his staff, Mr. Raymond L. Wright, to misuse monies that the faithful members of God's family had contributed. And, so none of you will doubt, we have that written authorization in our possession.

"Ted Armstrong authorized Mr. Wright to pay secretly, out of Church funds, God's money to a private corporation owned by Mr. Wright and Robert Kuhn in Texas. Ted Armstrong's act of authorizing such payment of Church funds laid the foundation and permitted a greater misuse of God's tithe money in subsequent months.

"In spite of the clandestine procedures involved, the scheme was uncovered during an audit by Mr. Jack Kessler, and others on the internal auditing staff.

"But there is good news in the final analysis. The experience has served to prove the effectiveness of God's auditing procedures...."

Then in a related matter, the January 8, 1979, issue of the *Pastor's Report* (p. 26) contained this information from Stan Rader:

"Ted Armstrong was less than candid when he revealed details about his own salary to the press. To set the record straight, in 1977, his earnings as reflected by his W-2 forms issued by the Church and the College were \$174,645.78. As of January 1, 1978 his base salary was \$150,000 per annum. (In addition to his use of three homes - in Big Sandy, Pasadena, and Tahoe - plus the cost of \$750,000 per annum for use of the Falcon Fanjet and an unlimited expense account for him and his associates.)

"Several other members of his staff or very directly under his supervision were also very highly paid. Robert Kuhn was paid in 1977, \$107,969.22 and

in 1978 \$83,702.36. Ray Wright was paid in 1977, \$1of,969.22 and in 1978 \$122,728.8l...."

One can only wonder where Rader was when all of this was occurring. The attorney general's investigators are undoubtedly wondering the same thing.

### Rader Meets His Match: Mike Wallace

After he disposed of Garner Ted in 1978, Stan Rader began swaggering around like he owned the world. After all, he was the right-hand man of "God's Apostle." Even the court action brought by the California attorney general's office did little to stem Rader's arrogance. When he heard Mike Wallace of the top-rated "60 Minutes" CBS TV program was hot on his trail, that should have sobered him up a little. But it had the opposite effect. Rader, viewing himself as righteous David - the defender of the faith - was determined to "slay" the Philistine giant Mike Wallace, who represented the "big bad press" that always supposedly distorted facts about the church.

Upon meeting Mike Wallace, Rader turned on his charm. and gave him the royal treatment, determined to "use" Wallace to tell the church's (i.e., Rader's) side of the story on national television. At this time evangelist Raymond McNair was recommending "60 Minutes" to his students as one of the top programs on TV - a first-class news documentary. Meanwhile, word was circulating, that Rader was even hoping to turn *The Plain Truth* into a news magazine TV format similar to "60 Minutes" and that Rader hoped to lure Mike Wallace onto his staff to host the program.

Finally after Rader's long courtship, Wallace popped the long-awaited question, asking Rader if he would consent to an on-camera interview to tell his side of the story. Sensing imminent victory, Rader graciously agreed. At last, Rader evidently thought, he could put to rest all the rumors and charges against him and the church. Meanwhile, though, Wallace's professional staff did their homework. They conducted an extensive fact-finding hunt, interviewing everybody who had any relevant material on Rader and the WCG. Soon they had compiled briefcases full of vital information plus over 90 hours of film footage. Wallace digested the key information and proceeded into battle with Rader before the TV cameras. Rader seemed surprised at Wallace's preparation and tried to act undaunted, but he begrudgingly gave ground before Wallace's onslaught.

After Wallace pulled everything out of Rader that he wanted, he pulled the plug on Rader. Here's what happened in the final minutes of the interview:

Wallace told Rader: "Just a little while ago you were the bete noire [a person strongly detested] of Herbert Armstrong. Did you know that?" Rader: "I?" Wallace: "Yes." Rader: "When was this?" Wallace: "Oh, early January." Rader's reply: "No." Wallace: "Don't you believe it?" Rader: "Positive" Then Wallace offered to quote Herbert saying that Rader was trying to put himself into the

leader's shoes. Rader replied in disbelief that he didn't think Herbert ever said that.

Next Wallace read a portion of a letter Herbert was drafting to send to Stan Rader. Rader still didn't believe Wallace could possibly possess such a letter from Herbert. Now Wallace played his trump card by offering to play a tape of Herbert reading the letter. (The tape recording Wallace played was a portion of two telephone conversations with Herbert that a source had recorded surreptitiously before "60 Minutes" began their investigation of Rader and the WCG.) In the letter Herbert asked Rader to step down from any church posts that might put him in line as successor to Armstrong. As Wallace played the tape, beads of sweat were visible on Rader's forehead. He tried to appear calm but looked slightly shaken. He was doing a slow burn. Finally Rader exploded, his voice cracking: "Now I say you've acquired this by illegal means. I intend to have my attorneys today not only sue you if you use this.... Mike, look, I think you'd better scrap everything because you're on my list. Okay? You're never going to live it down, Mike, I guarantee it.... you're contemptible.... I'd like you to get out of here, immediately! Then Rader stormed out of the room and went down to a press conference where he acted like a raving maniac, accusing the press of distorting the true facts.

The "60 Minutes" program about Rader and the WCG aired on April 15, 1979 - Easter Sunday. Rader had originally hoped to use the program to resurrect his and the church's badly tarnished image, but it turned out to be his crucifixion. As the segment of the program about Rader drew to a close, Wallace remarked that Rader is "currently under investigation by the Criminal Investigation Division of Internal Revenue for alleged tax evasion."

Following the interview, Rader and the church objected to Wallace using what they called "illegal tapes." The following week, "60 Minutes" dropped another bombshell as Morley Safer read letters commenting on the previous week's program. He quoted a letter from a WCG member objecting to the "illegal tapes," then said: "While we were playing those tapes for Mr. Rader, he was taping us with a mike under Mike's chair. He didn't know that we knew, but now he does. We've got the tapes!" (So does *Ambassador Report*.)

In an April 16 letter to brethren and coworkers, Herbert complained bitterly that "60 Minutes" had "used only a small portion of that interview on the air - just the portions they felt would make the church of the living God look bad." Then, Herbert claimed, "I do reproduce for you here the beginning of the taped interview, and I have left off when the conversation got into private personalities. Following is the real essence of the television interview between Stanly R. Rader and Mike Wallace...." But what Herbert wrote was not the "real essence" of the interview, but carefully edited excerpts from the first 20 minutes of the three-hour interview. So Herbert was doing the kind of deceitful editing he accused "60 Minutes" of doing.

The full three-hour tape of the interview is a shocking revelation about the inner workings of the WCG. When the Hawaiian WCG members heard a copy of the

tape, over 90% quit the church in disgust. We hear that many more members worldwide left the church upon hearing copies of the tape - and remember, the tape being circulated came from Rader's "secret" tape recording, not from CBS.

During this crisis in the WCG, Rader's attempts at generating favorable publicity have all fallen flat on their face. Now Rader is even having difficulty coaxing newsmen to attend his often-called news conferences. One news-service official told the Report: "Rader's trying to use us to arouse public opinion in his favor. He wants his case to be tried in the papers instead of the courts. We're just not interested in giving him free publicity. Besides, he's been downright nasty to the press."

Politicians too seem reluctant to come to Rader's assistance. A recent telegram from Rader to California's Governor Jerry Brown asking for the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate the state attorney general brought no response. What prompted the telegram was the fact that during depositions Rader "discovered that the attorney general has in his files voluminous, stolen documents containing detailed accountings of all church activities for the past 27 years." But Governor Brown did not provide Rader the relief he sought. In fact, Brown has apparently ignored the whole thing.

### Birds of a Feather...

Rader's attempts to woo the public, though mostly futile, have resulted in at least one odd alliance. HWA has for years branded all churches other than his own as being "Satan's churches." However, Stanley Rader, along with Ralph Helge, recently appeared on the "Festival of Faith," a controversial religious television program hosted by media-minister Gene Scott. (In Los Angeles, "Festival of Faith" is televised almost around the clock on Scott's own station, KHOF, channel 30.) Scott, a former financial consultant to Oral Roberts, is himself under investigation by both the state attorney general and the FCC over financial dealings. Rader, of course, had nothing but kind words for Scott as both pledged their mutual support in fighting the attorney general.

It is interesting that a frequent guest on Scott's program is his own legal advisor, the prominent lawyer, Edward L. Masry, who also is now under investigation by the attorney general in connection with *another* religious organization he represents, Morningland Church of Long Beach, California. In that investigation, the attorney general has alleged that Masry was involved in what, in effect, is described as a \$10,000 bribe from Morningland to former Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally to set up a legislative subcommittee to investigate the "harassment" of Morningland and the now infamous People's Temple.

Incidentally - for those unfamiliar with Morningland - this group, which has thousands of followers, was originally begun by a man named Donato, the late self-styled "Christ avatar for the Aquarian Age." His original name was Daniel Mario Sperato, and before getting into commercial religion he worked as an art and crafts director for the North Branch Boys Club of Long Beach. He died in

1976 of a heart attack; yet his followers insist that he "returned to his rightful throne beside our Holy Father." Sri Patricia, who was one of the nine women "gopis" Donato appointed before his death, is now the directress of Morningland. She teaches that Donato is now hovering 25 miles above the earth "in a spaceship."

In describing Morningland's doctrines, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Russell Chandler wrote, "Morningland concepts are amalgamated by vocabulary from Eastern religions, Scientology, popular metaphysics, 'Star Trek' and 'Star Wars.'" Morningland also has some remarkable similarities to the Worldwide Church of God. One is a large number of excommunicated members who claim that they have been "ripped off." Some disillusioned members have called for an investigation of the church, claiming its leaders practice mind control, break up marriages, and lure children away from home. Some deaths have been attributed to the church's belief in faith healing. Not unlike Rader and HWA, lawyer Masry and leader Sri Patricia claim the charges against their church are nothing more than accusations "trumped up" by disgruntled dissidents.

Whatever the case, in a recent raid on Masry's office, state investigators discovered that Masry had a dossier on California's current Lieutenant Governor, Mike Curb, a close friend of Ronald Reagan and formerly a producer for such prominent entertainers as Debbie Boone and the Osmonds. The dossier's potential significance was noted by many reporters. A front-page article on this matter in the Pasadena *Star-News* carried this headline: "New Expose Threatens Curb's Political Future." The whole Morningland-Masry-Scott matter is raising a lot of eyebrows in California. One cannot but wonder why Rader has allowed himself to become an ally of their camp. It is especially remarkable considering it was the attorney general's investigation of Scott's activities that prompted certain individuals (including us) to ask the attorney general to investigate the Worldwide Church of God in 1978.

### Want Your Tithes Returned?

We recently received a letter from an elderly couple who wrote, "During the ten years we were members of the WCG we sent in \$36,000 in tithes and offerings. We sure would be happy if we could recover any of that money." The letter is typical of many we have received. A lot of people feel they were "ripped off" by Armstrong and company. A few, who have now come to realize the disparity between their own sacrificing and the regal lifestyle of Herbert Armstrong, have thought that perhaps a sincere letter to the church, telling of their own needs and of their disillusionment would somehow result in their contributions being returned. Here is an excerpt from a Ralph Helge reply to one such letter:

"Now, with regard to the return of contributions, the law does not permit or require a charitable, nonprofit organization to return donations. Any such law or policy would clearly render the benevolent operation of charitable institutions impossible.

"The organization, as a nonprofit corporation, receives and holds all

contributions in public trust to be disbursed only in accordance with and furtherance of its corporate purposes. It, therefore, cannot give funds away in violation of this trust. Further, any contributions which you have made have already been expended in furtherance of the corporate purposes, and they cannot now justifiably give you monies which others have donated for a different purpose....

"We are sorry to know that you are undergoing such bad physical problems at the present time and can only sympathize with you and pray that God's Kingdom will soon come so that we may all be relieved of those fleshly weaknesses that plague even the strongest of men."

You will notice that in his answer Ralph Helge uses the exact contention the state attorney general has used as a basis for the investigation of the church. In regards to that investigation Helge has repeatedly asserted the exact opposite of what he wrote in the above letter, namely, that monies donated to the WCG are not "held in public trust."

### Planning to Sue?

It is exactly this type of two-faced arrogance that has led many to believe that the only way to get justice is through legal action. Increasingly, we are being asked by former WCG members whether or not we think they should sue the Worldwide Church of God. Their general argument, paraphrased, goes something like this: "When we were in the church, we received letters from Herbert asking for money. We were told that the church was in dire need. Now we find out it really wasn't. We were led to believe that the leaders of the church were sacrificing just as we were for 'the work.' Now we are reading in the newspapers that they didn't. We were told that Mr. Armstrong was on foreign trips trying to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom. Now we are finding out he was not so much as even mentioning the name of Jesus on these trips. When GTA was put out of the church, we were told that the rumors of misconduct on his part were not true. He only 'needed a rest.' Now we find out that that too was a lie. Had we been told the truth, we would never have given that money. We were lied to, defrauded, and robbed!"

There are also those who feel they were irreparably damaged when certain WCG ministers coerced them into leaving a mate because of the church's now admittedly erroneous divorce and remarriage (D and R) doctrine. Others saw mates, children, or parents suffer and, die after they were coerced into denying a sick loved-one medical attention because of the "healing doctrine" (also now admittedly erroneous). Still others are irate because they were unjustly disfellowshipped. After being "marked" and ostracized from friends, they have discovered that this was-all done in contradiction to the procedures as outlined in the church's own Articles of Incorporation.

It's clear to us that *many* have been treated unjustly and severely wronged. But we have been very reluctant to advise people to seek a solution in the courts. There are a number of reasons for this. One is the exorbitant costs involved. Not only can good lawyers be very expensive, but a court fight can last years, and the cost in terms of time, energy, and aggravation can easily be so high as to

make a victory almost worthless.

A second reason is that the WCG, with its legal staff and financial resources, can put up a formidable opposition. One has only to read our last two newsletters to see this clearly. Whereas a typical plaintiff may have to struggle to raise \$5,000 or \$10,000 for a lawyer's initial retainer fee, the WCG, in many cases, would not think twice about spending \$100,000 in legal fees to keep a key witness such as HWA or Rader from testifying.

A third reason we have been reluctant to suggest litigation is that, in spite of the fact that people have been wronged, it is one thing to have been victimized and another thing entirely to be able to prove it in court. Then there are other problems, such as the statute of limitations, First Amendment protection for churches, and the possibility of unprovable perjury by fanatic Armstrong loyalists.

Nevertheless, we do know of people who have sued the WCG over various matters and have gotten out-of-court settlements. It should also be pointed out that with all the legal activity currently surrounding the WCG, a great deal of information is being made public (via court testimony and depositions) that until now would have been virtually inaccessible to the average anti-WCG litigant.

If you are one of those who feels compelled to wage a legal battle, may we suggest that you (1) prepare properly by reading a few books on the subject of litigation and our legal system in general, (2) choose a lawyer carefully by shopping around, and (3) contact us about your plans. We've had some experience in this area, and we may be able to provide you with information of value. However, please don't ask us to tell you whether to sue or not. We cannot make your decisions for you.

We've mentioned in the past that some individuals have contemplated initiating class-action lawsuits against the WCG and its leaders. We know, for instance, of two separate class-action suits that have been prepared. However, they have not been filed, and we have been unable to learn what will become of them. Perhaps their future hinges upon the results of the state's current civil suit. Some of you have written us asking that we notify you should these develop. We would, of course, be happy to, if not personally, then at least through our publication. But this would really be unnecessary because if you should happen to be in that class on whose behalf a class-action suit is initiated, the law requires that you be notified.

At one time we ourselves hoped that a way could be found for those who had been victimized by the church to somehow be at least partially compensated. In fact, we've toyed with the idea of initiating legal action ourselves and have discussed the idea of compensation with a number of prominent attorneys. However, we've come to see that this is an unreasonable goal for two reasons: (1) The costs involved would be astronomical. As it is, the Report operates on a shoe-string budget, and we have no intention of going on a major fund-raising campaign. Nor do we believe our readers could even supply the funds. Most

have already been financially bled white by the Armstrong cult. (2) Considering the incredibly large number of Armstrong victims in existence and the decreasing size of WCG assets, even a total victory in the courts might prove, from a dollar and cents point of view, very hollow indeed.

However, there is one other possibility of which all of you should be aware. The current lawsuit against the WCG has as one of its objectives the reorganization of the boards of trustees of the WCG, Ambassador College, and AICF. The state has clearly stated that it wants to bar Rader, Ralph Helge, and many if not all of the current board members from serving again because of the abuse of these offices.

How, then, would the new trustees be chosen? We haven't heard anything definitive on this from the attorney general. However, Rader asserts that the state wants to initiate democratic procedures in the selection of board members. If this is the case (and we have no reason to doubt it), then an amazing situation could easily develop. Because so many individuals have been disfellowshipped through improper procedures during the last five years and because so many WCG members on the WCG's computer list are in reality not loyal to the church's current hierarchy, it could easily turn out that a majority of those voting in such an election could elect trustees who could either dismantle the "Armstrong empire" or redirect the use of its assets toward purposes in keeping with the desires and needs of those who contributed financially to its formation. We're not "holding our breath," but the possibility does exist that in the event new trustees are elected something may be able to be done for the many victims of Armstrongism.

### The Bagley Trial Finally Ends

One year ago *Ambassador Report* carried a story about Gary Bagley, a WCG member who was arrested and charged with attempted extortion after picketing Ambassador College. After more than a year of delays, Bagley's trial took place in March, and a jury of 10 women and 2 men rendered a guilty verdict. Sentencing was set for April 15. In a report to the court, Bagley's parole officer, citing Bagley's cooperation, general character, and lack of a criminal record, recommended in lieu of incarceration that he merely be fined \$350 for his indiscretion. Concerned that Bagley might continue harassing the church, Judge Daniel Fletcher instead gave him a suspended sentence for his misdemeanor and warned that the suspension would be removed if he continued to harass church leaders. Judge Fletcher admonished the defendant that if he has grievances against the church, the proper recourse would be to pursue a remedy through a civil suit and not through other means. After the proceeding Bagley told the press that he was thankful that he would not have to spend time in the county jail but was still convinced that he was really innocent. Nevertheless, he said he had no intention of disobeying the court's order.

Thus culminated one of the oddest trials ever to involve the WCG. *Ambassador Report* covered the proceedings in their entirety. Our limited space does not permit us to relay to you all that occurred. (The transcript of the trial alone could fill a very large book.) But we still do want to share with you a number of

observations we made in regard to this case.

The first point of interest is that in the fourteen months preceding the trial Bagley's attorney Richard Andrews subpoenaed Herbert Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, Stanley Rader, Roderick Meredith, David Antion, Albert Portune, and Dibar Apartian. Andrews wanted their testimony to prove the extent to which information about Garner Ted Armstrong's private life was known (a major point of contention in Bagley's defense). Not one of these men ever testified. Meredith, Antion, and Apartian were excused from having to testify when Helge submitted statements from them saying they knew nothing that might have relevance to the case. Garner Ted's attorneys argued successfully in a Texas court and prevented his being required to testify in California. Similarly, Herbert Armstrong and Stan Rader, claiming Arizona residency, were successful in Arizona courts. Albert Portune, on more than one occasion, told Andrews he would testify, but on the morning the trial began, Portune was represented by Ambassador College attorneys who were able to successfully block his subpoena.

The second area of particular interest surrounds the main piece of evidence submitted by the prosecution, a tape recording of a phone conversation between Bagley and the church's lawyer Ralph Helge. In the conversation Bagley told Helge of how the church had ruined his life. He talked of the six years he was forced to live alone because he was a "D and R" case. He told Helge he wanted "restitution" for the damage done to his life. The remuneration that he felt to be adequate was "not a million dollars" but \$30,000 for each of the 6 years the church said he had to remain unmarried.

One remarkable thing about this tape is the fact that it was recorded with Bagley's permission. Helge actually asked him if he could tape the whole thing, and Bagley not only cheerfully consented but cooperated in a microphone test - strange conduct for someone supposedly trying to make an extortion attempt. Even more remarkable is the fact that at no time during the conversation did lawyer Helge protest in any way whatsoever that what Bagley was suggesting might be illegal or even unethical. In fact, the impression one gets very distinctly is that Helge just wanted to get the facts straight and was going to discuss it all with Garner Ted Armstrong. Ironically, according to his own testimony, Helge never discussed this matter with Garner Ted, only with Stanley Rader and Robert Kuhn.

In his talk with Helge, Bagley told the lawyer that if the church would not be willing to make the restitution he was asking for, he would make public certain information he had regarding Garner Ted Armstrong. After the conversation, Bagley heard nothing from Helge or Garner Ted Armstrong and did not pursue the matter for six weeks. But then, in mid-December 1977 a frustrated and irate Gary Bagley appeared in front of Ambassador College with a sign which stated "Garner Ted Armstrong is an adulterer...." Four days later, shortly before the taping of a "Gene Kelley Special" in the "House for God," Bagley was arrested by two undercover Pasadena police officers who claimed they were working for Helge. (A tape of this conversation was also played in court.)

In the months that followed, Bagley refused all plea-bargaining offers from the district attorney's office, saying, "I'm innocent and I want this to go to court!"

During the trial Bagley was questioned as to why he hadn't sued the church rather than demand "restitution" as he did. Bagley explained that the church taught that it was wrong to go to "heathen courts" over a matter involving a fellow Christian.

(Apparently, in 1977 he still considered the leaders of the WCG to be Christians.) He cited Matt. 18:15-17 as the reason he had contacted Helge and later the church members via his sign. (Some years ago when one ex-WCG member sued the church for damages, Helge testified in that civil case that the ex-member should not be entitled to damages because he had not conformed to the church's doctrine of asking for a "hearing" but instead went to the world's courts.)

At the Bagley trial, when questioned about the church's doctrine in this area, Helge testified that if Bagley wanted a "hearing" on the matter, he should not have or gone about it the way that he did (of course, Helge neglected to tell this to Bagley during their phone conversation). According to Helge, all a member has to do, if he's been wronged, is to ask a minister for a hearing. Only a few days after Helge gave this testimony Bagley attempted once more to put the church to the test. Just prior to a sabbath service, Bagley approached the presiding minister at the WCG's Pasadena headquarters church. He told the minister he wanted a hearing. Not only was his request denied, he was told he could not attend the services and was ordered to leave the property. Then according to eyewitnesses, Bagley got down on his knees and pleaded with the minister to grant him a hearing. To this, the minister responded, "You could stand on your head and we wouldn't give you a hearing" So much for Helge's claim.

*Ambassador Report* asked Bagley's attorney what he felt about the trial and the jury is decision. Andrews told us, "I know the jury voted in accordance with their conscience. But this case was a highly complex one involving very unusual circumstances. I think they missed something. I'm personally convinced that Mr. Bagley never intended to do anything illegal. If that were the case, why did he let Helge tape record his conversation asking for restitution?"

Andrews continued:

"The average juror or man on the street has little idea of what brainwashing can do to a person. Since getting involved with this case, I've been amazed at how much people can suffer at the hands of supposedly religious people. In Gary's case there were 6 years of living in celibacy, poverty, and mental anguish. When he finally realized how he had been used by these men who he thought were God's representatives, it was shattering! He wanted things straightened out. He may not have gone about it the best way - that's not surprising considering the mental state he was in - but he was trying to get justice, not commit a crime. I'm really disappointed the jury couldn't see that. Perhaps a different jury from a different community would have voted differently.

"Of course, we're going to appeal. It'll probably take a year or so, but I think that verdict is going to be thrown out."

And what does Bagley feel now? He told the *Report*, "I really had hoped that the church leaders would see the damage that they've done to my life and grant me a proper hearing and restitution.... I still believe in God, but I sure don't have much confidence anymore in organized religion."

There is one more observation that needs to be made. Before Bagley's sentencing, Deputy District Attorney Aaron Stovitz angrily asserted that Bagley had indeed carried out his threat to expose the Worldwide Church of God and Garner Ted Armstrong's sins by means of the trial itself. Keeping in mind that it was Stovitz who brought the charges against Bagley (at Helge's initiation), and obviously not the defendant himself, it is ironic that the trial did bring out an incredible amount of testimony about the WCG and its leaders. Among those who testified about the church were Bob Gerring of *Ambassador Report* and Ernest L. Martin, director of the Foundation for Biblical Research, who testified as to the cult-like character of the WCG.

The court also heard sworn testimony from Jim Morrison and former WCG-minister Al Carrozzo. Both detailed the extent of Garner Ted Armstrong's promiscuity while a minister in the Worldwide Church of God. Much of their testimony was reported in detail by the press. There is, of course, no need to go into all of this again, but we should point out that the testimony given under oath by Messrs. Morrison and Carrozzo did totally corroborate the information regarding Garner Ted Armstrong which was published in our 1977 *Ambassador Report*.

### On the Air With GTA

A number of our readers have written asking our opinion of Garner Ted Armstrong's new religious organization. Perhaps the following will give some idea of how we feel.

On November 28, 1978, Garner Ted Armstrong was interviewed via telephone on Roy Foxe's hour-long radio talk program, which is aired over station KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When the program went on the air, Mr. Foxe informed Ted that he was sharing the microphone (also via telephone) with Len Zola and Bob Gerring of *Ambassador Report*. Garner Ted - much happier and more relaxed since leaving the war-torn environment of Ambassador College - seemed unperturbed.

The interview was rather lengthy, but some comments are worth printing. Below are some of the more choice remarks. (Because Ted spoke about 75% of the time, more space has been devoted to his comments than to those of *Ambassador Report* publishers Zola and Gerring.)

FOXE: Ted, you once before left or were thrown out of the Worldwide Church of God, and you came back to the fold. Do you envision a time that that might conceivably happen again?

TED: Not unless Stanley Rader were to utterly resign and my father, himself, were perhaps to think of following suit, and I could have a great big huge broom and a great big hose under a hundred pounds pressure and sweep and clean the whole mess out from top to bottom.

FOXE: There had been talk, as with the Jim Jones cult, of the Worldwide Church moving to another place, and Worldwide Church members at times when they were parting would say, "See you in Petra."

TED: Yes, this was prior to 1972. I began fighting against that as early as 1966. And I still have the tape and the sermon notes of my preaching against the idea and then being bitterly rebuked by my father that same afternoon....

FOXE: I heard you preached against your father's high standard of living, yet you have lived a pretty nice lifestyle yourself.

TED: Two of my personal friends have said my smoking heel prints are clearly visible up and down the mall where I have been dragged unwillingly into one monstrous financial misdecision after another.... I always had a sense of apprehension beginning clear back in the 1950s that the opulence and the extravagance would someday come home to roost. And I feel that it has. I feel that it was all through the 1970s. And that is why I myself have said so often that the people of the church should not be asked to sacrifice unless the leaders are themselves willing to sacrifice.... In the last two and a half years, I struggled very hard to try to prevent my father's marriage to a woman several years younger than my own wife. And I just felt that the church could not stand any more of this type of thing. I felt that it exposed a very human, let's say fleshly, Herbert W. Armstrong that I felt really should not be done.... My ouster finally did occur in about late May of this year. And frankly now that I'm all away on the other side of the tunnel and kind of looking back, it is really a whole lot happier world out here .... I've got to keep doing what I'm doing. Now so far God has blessed it.... My father just recently turned his back on 48 years of teaching and turned completely around and even used the Catholic word the "primacy of Peter," and in his desire to take the complete, sole, total authority for binding and loosing all doctrines, he has thrown to the winds 48 years of understanding to the contrary. I'm afraid I cannot go along with that.

FOXE: Would you like to make a comment on either Len Zola or Bob Gerrerger before I bring them on the air?

TED: I don't believe I know the former one. I'm sure I must have met him. Bob, I've not known well, but I've known and I knew his grandparents .... I did finally see an *Ambassador Report* - the last one, I believe [Ted is referring to the Sept.-Oct. 1978 newsletter], which I found to be quite interesting. And there were quite a number of things, a couple of few little minor things - errors - that I wish I could have corrected, but nevertheless *Ambassador Report* was quite intriguing, quite interesting. The first one that I'd seen.

ZOLA: I'd like to explain who we are. *Ambassador Report* is a group that we formed about 2½ years ago. About 15 people who had been students, graduates of Ambassador College, and also employees in sensitive areas - saw an incredible amount of corruption.... Garner Ted Armstrong, who claims now that he also saw that corruption for years, did nothing about it.... What

we did upon seeing a lot of these things and finally realizing that we'd been conned was to form a group and publish what we had. It was not a matter of a bitter diatribe.... It was just a matter of throwing out the information so that people could make their own decisions after they had received the whole story.... If anything could categorize Garner Ted's previous statements, it would be that he has an incredible sense of a chameleon syndrome. He can change his comments to fit any environment he happens to be in at that particular moment. He made comments about us - the fact that he had only seen our magazine recently and that there were a few minor mistakes. We've got a *Pastor's Report* letter that he sent out to the ministry when he was, indeed, on top where he called our entire magazine "essentially untrue," whatever that means.... It is just interesting how there's just a few "minor mistakes" now, but yet while we were approaching him, he would not even listen to us, would not even accept an invitation. We sent him a formal letter to get together. He just said that if he would have had a chance, he could have corrected a few mistakes.... Well, we gave him so much opportunity, and he totally neglected us.

FOXE: Garner Ted, what about the discrepancy that is being suggested here?

TED: I really, honestly, and this is honestly true, don't remember that, but if I said it, I must have said it, and I'm sure that the content of it was described to me very likely by either Robert Kuhn or someone else. And that's perhaps unfortunate. What I alluded to just now my wife showed me a few days ago.... The most important thing in there [the newsletter] that I thought was a very great contribution... was [the discussion of] a great discrepancy between what my father is saying now concerning my alleged secularization of the Work and his own rather lengthy explanations about him desiring that I speak in more secular tones.... I didn't in all honesty read the first several copies of *Ambassador Report*. I didn't do so because I had been told that it was quite an attack on myself, and I just frankly am so sickened by that type of thing that it would have bothered my sleep. It would have tortured my thoughts. I simply did not want to subject myself to it.... Now I do understand... that there has been an embezzlement of \$200,000 plus [from the Worldwide Church of God].... But how can I prove anything one way or the other if the organization itself will not charge this man with what did occur. I do not really honestly believe that my father is anything other than a very sincere man, but a man who has been very human, for he has made many mistakes - whose appetites most especially with regard for opulence, for finery, for the gilded edge, and so on led him into making, what I feel, are very serious mistakes.... When my father made me the executive vice-president of the church in 1973, I said in a very emotion-laden talk before him... that I had not only seen the infamous report ["Employee Frustrations at Headquarters"] that was presented to him by... Mr. Al Carrozzo, but I said, "Dad I want you to know what you're getting." I said, "If you are going to appoint me as the executive vice-president I want you to know that I happen to agree with every word that is in that report."

FOXE: What do you think is the possibility that Garner Ted is laying it on the line and the new leaf is a trustworthy one?

BOB: One has to just sit and wait and see whether or not Garner Ted will follow through. We appreciate his new policy of openness with his church.... A lot of comparisons have been made to Jonestown and the problems there.... there was an incredible discrepancy between the lifestyles of the people leading Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God and

the lifestyles that were preached and taught to the individual. The same is true for the People's Temple members. I'm not saying that their lifestyles were the same, but there was a discrepancy. That is why *Ambassador Report* had to come out. I know that we printed some things that were sensitive to Ted, himself, and to many others. These were not meant as personal attacks, but they were the only way that the lay members and the little people could find out really how the top people lived.

### Herbert's Broadcasts Ineffective

While Garner Ted's church is apparently growing by leaps and bounds, the WCG is experiencing a constant hemorrhage of members and ministers. WCG ministers are engaged in a mad scramble to enter the "noncareer ministry" - which means they can receive thousands of dollars in severance pay, remain in the good graces of the church, and begin seeking employment other than the WCG ministry. A number of ministers view the present WCG management structure as "intolerable" and "a reign of terror." Church attendance was down 3,000 at the feast of unleavened bread. Another disturbing fact facing the church is that Herbert's new radio programs are pulling in little mail and seem totally ineffective. Reliable sources indicate that the cost of getting new responses from listeners to Herbert's program has risen to several hundred dollars per response. When Garner Ted did the broadcast, stations were dropped when it cost more than \$30 per new response. The situation has prompted Ed Libov and Associates to drop "The World Tomorrow," and thus Worldwide Advertising is again the agency buying air time for the church.

We have learned that Ted is being besieged by requests from radio stations to give them his religious program. It seems they want Ted's program as a substitute for Herbert's insipid broadcast which is hurting station ratings.

---

# Armstrong's daughter challenges Stanley Rader

Last night I heard the newscast on TV with shocked disbelief. To think that Stan Rader could ask people to turn their homes over to the church! First it's give up some pay checks and now it's give their homes!

I would like to challenge Stan to be the first one to dip into that sacrificial pot - then if he has to forfeit on the bond his house can go too!

Stan Rader owns three houses and a stable of horses. (Stan-Wal Ranch in Tucson, Arizona). Most of the people he is asking to sacrifice either rent or live from paycheck to paycheck, meanwhile trying to pay three tithes and eke out an existence to be able to own one house! How many drive a Mazaratti plus a Mercedes Benz sport model and a limo? I think it's high time the sacrifice came from the top - and I am referring to Stan Rader.

Why is Stan so dead set against the audit of the books by the state? Eventually they are going to do it anyway and, if there is nothing to hide, why all this grandstanding? Every delay, every time he goes to court for an appeal it costs the church more money. (Nearly one half million dollars for just

**Dorothy Armstrong Mattson, the author of this letter is one of Herbert Armstrong's two daughters. In addition to the better known son, Garner Ted Armstrong, there was one other son, Richard, also a minister, who died in an auto accident at the age of 29 in 1958.**

two months' fees to attorney Brown). Now we have this latest grandstand play - the bond! And if and when the terms are broken and it is forfeit?

Can't anyone who is unafraid to speak out see what is happening? The church is being drained totally and not too slowly - but surely going toward bankruptcy - and for what purpose?

If in January, when the receivership was ordered, the books had been opened, the audit might have been nearly over by now. All the costs of the many appeals, the loss of credibility and the damage to attorney general at no time tried to tell anyone what is going on - they only wanted to see the books.

Why so scared? If there are things in the records that show misappropriation

of monies sent in, then it should be known and dealt with accordingly.

Instead, the lifetime work of my father, that beautiful campus, even my father's credibility is fast disappearing. The notoriety makes me ashamed.

Dad is no longer a young man - he is over there in Tucson in such seclusion he only gets the slant of news that is handed him by the adviser he trusts. Any other person who tries to give a whole picture is branded as a conspirator who is trying to do him harm. It hurts us, his real family, but what can we do? We can't protect him for if we try we will be labeled as "conspirators."

It will be a year next month since I've been able to have contact with Dad - yet when I last saw him everything was fine between us. Now I hear that Dad has been told that I am against him, that I hate him!

The last message by Wayne Cole (before he was axed), Bud Meredith, and Myrtle Stone, I've worried and stewed about Dad's welfare and health. There was a time late last summer and autumn that I even wondered if he were dead and we weren't being told. I couldn't reach him. I couldn't get his

## Other voices

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 1979

A-9

phone number and some of those writings, so anything that was being sent out did not have his inimitable style.

I was brought up to believe that God is Love. For the past nine months every publication I have seen has been a scolding, scathing denunciation of either my brother or of the church. What has this to do with preaching the Gospel? Dad is not here. He doesn't know all sides of the picture. Are you people who claim to be such dedicated church members going to stand by and do nothing all the while life work of the man you all claim to love goes down in bitter grief?

Are you going to stand by and even see his memory ruined with all this needless notoriety?

If there is nothing to hide why spend all your life savings "protesting too much?"

I know that you live in fear of losing your jobs if you stand up and be counted, but if you don't how long do you think your jobs will last? You can't be paid by a bankrupt corporation!

While all you thinking members cover in fear of your jobs, the church is being bled white by mounting court costs that were needless in the first place and now some of you blissful martyrs will no doubt give up your homes, not one of you

will stop to ask, "Why only the rank and file are asked to sacrifice?"

The day the campus has to be sold to pay for a continuing notorious and needless squabble and you are all homeless and jobless and the life work of the man you all love is gone, perhaps in hindsight and sorrow you will look back and the light will dawn at last.

This is the most ridiculous and needless thing I can think of. Why don't you say, "Forget the bond. Open the books." Demand the books to be opened. You are a church. If you are without spot or blemish what are you afraid of?

Please wake up before it's too late. I am so weary of seeing our family name being dragged through a fiasco. I just had to say something. If you really love my father put a stop to this three-ring circus.

I am not a church member, as you all so proudly know, but the church, through my family, has always been a large part of my life and I am a most ashamed and concerned daughter who must finally speak out in horror and shock at this latest fiasco.

**DOTTIE MATTERSON**  
La Canada

## Armstrong's daughter challenges Stanley Rader

Last night I heard the newscast on TV with shocked disbelief. To think that Stan Rader could ask people to turn their homes over to the church! First it's give UP some pay checks and now it's give, their homes.!

I would like to challenge Stan to be the first one to dip into that sacrificial pot - then if he has to forfeit on the bond his house can go too!

Stan Rader owns three houses and a stable of horses. (Stan-Wal Ranch in Tucson, Arizona). Most of the people he is asking to sacrifice either rent or live from paycheck to paycheck, meanwhile trying to pay three tithes and eke out an existence to be able to own one house! How many drive a Mazaratti plus a Mercedes Benz sport model and a limo? I think it's high time the sacrifice came from the top - and I am referring to Stan Rader.

Why is Stan so dead set against the audit of the books by the state? Eventually they are going to do it anyway and, if there is nothing to hide, why all this grandstanding? Every delay, every time he goes to court for an appeal it costs the church more money. (Nearly one half million dollars for just two months' fees to attorney Brown).

**Dorothy Armstrong Mattson, the author of this letter is one of Herbert Armstrong's two daughters. In addition to the better known son, Garner Ted Armstrong, there was one other son, Richard, also a minister, who died in an auto accident at the age of 29 in 1958.**

Now we have this latest grandstand play - the bond! And if and when the terms are broken and it is forfeit?

Can't anyone who is unafraid to speak out see what is happening? The church is being drained totally and not too slowly - but surely going toward bankruptcy and for what purpose?

If in January, when the receivership was ordered, the books had been opened, the audit might have been nearly over by now. All the costs of the many appeals, the loss of credibility and the damage to reputation could have been avoided. The attorney general at no time tried to tell anyone what to preach - they only wanted to see the books.

Why so seared? If there are things in the records that show misappropriation of monies sent in, then it should be known and dealt with accordingly.

Instead, the lifetime work of my father, that beautiful campus, even my father's credibility is fast disappearing.

The notoriety makes me ashamed.

Dad is no longer a young man - he is over there in Tucson in such seclusion he only gets the slant of news that is handed him by the advisor he trusts. Any other person who tries to give a whole picture is branded as a conspirator who is trying to do him harm. It hurts us, his real family, but what can we do? We can't protect him for if we try we will be labeled as "conspirators."

It will be a year next month since I've been able to have contact with Dad - yet when I last saw him everything was fine between us. Now I hear that Dad has been told that I am against him, that I hate him!

I've sent messages by Wayne Cole (before he was axed), Rod Meredith, and Myrtle Horn. I've worried and stewed about Dad's welfare and health. There was a time late last summer and autumn that I even wondered if he were dead and we weren't being told. I couldn't reach him. I couldn't get his phone number and some of those writings, so scathing, that were being sent out did not have his inimitable style.

I was brought up to believe that God is Love. For the past nine months every publication I have seen has been a searing, scathing denouncement of either my brother or of the courts. What has this to do with preaching the Gospel?

Dad is not here. He doesn't know all sides of the picture. Are you people who claim to be such dedicated church members going to stand by and do nothing till the whole life work of the man you all claim to love goes down in bitter gall?

Are you going to stand by and even see his memory ruined with all this needless notoriety?

If there is nothing to hide why spend all your life savings "protesting too much?"

I know that you live in fear of losing your jobs if you stand up and be counted, but if you don't how long do you think your jobs will last? You can't be paid by a bankrupt corporation!

While all you thinking members cower in fear of your jobs, the church is being bled white by mounting court costs that were needless in the first place and now some of you blissful martyrs will no doubt give up your homes, not one of you sit-ins stop to ask, "Why only the rank-and-file are asked to sacrifice?"

The day the campus has to be sold to pay for a continuing notorious and needless squabble and you are all homeless and jobless and the life work of the man you all love is gone, perhaps

in hindsight and sorrow you will look back and the light will dawn at last.

This is the most ridiculous and needless thing I can think of. Why don't you say, "Forget the bond. Open the books." Demand the books to be opened. You are a church. If you are without spot or blemish what are you afraid of?

Please wake up before its too late. I am so weary of seeing our family name being dragged through a fiasco, I just had to say something. If you really love my father put a stop to this three-ring circus.

I am not a church member, as you all no doubt know, but the church, through my family, has always been a large part of my life and I am a most ashamed and concerned daughter who must finally speak out in horror and shock at this latest fiasco.

DOTTIE MATTSON  
La Canada

---

The above letter appeared in the Pasadena *Star-News*, March 18. Those of you who haven't yet seen it will find it very revealing. We certainly did. Since its publication, Garner Ted Armstrong has stated that he too is unable to reach his father, even by phone. This, combined with the fact that HWA's recent articles appear to be ghost-written, has led many to speculate as to Herbert Armstrong's true circumstances and health, both physical and mental.

---

### Has Anybody Seen Herman Hoeh Lately?

Church oracle. Prophet. Pseudohistorian. Evangelist. Instructor. Nutritionist. Book collector. Editor. Counselor. Politician. Propagandist. Could this describe anyone but the one and only Herman L. Hoeh? The most gifted and versatile of the ministers, Herman was considered a dynamo of energy for 20 years. During his tenure he served as managing editor of *The Plain Truth*, senior editor of *The Good News*, dean of faculty, college instructor, vice-president of academic affairs, coordinator of the correspondence course, writer, archaeologist, minister, etc. When the church needed "proof" for some new teaching, Herman found it buried in some obscure scripture or in an ancient German chronicle. When Herbert needed historical and biblical support for a Monday Pentecost, Herman dug it up and then eloquently defended it dam to his last drop of blood, accusing supporters of a Sunday Pentecost of being tools of the devil. But when the word was circulated that Herbert might accept a Sunday Pentecost, chameleon Herman appeared almost instantly with detailed and convincing pro-Sunday arguments. In fact, he was one of the ones who recommended that the facts be presented to Herbert as "previously undiscovered new truth." It would have been suicidal to have told Herbert what he told several friends - that he had originally felt that Pentecost was on Sunday in the early 1950s. He also dared not explain

to Herbert that the "newly revealed" facts had been available in other theological works all along and that Herbert had simply ignored them or never looked for them. (Actually for 13 years the church had Dr. Ernest L. Martin's lengthy paper proving Pentecost was on Sunday, but the leading ministers chose to ignore his facts at Hoeh's urging.)

But of late, Herman seems to have all but disappeared from the scene - even though the "right wing" is back in power. Why? It appears Herman made a rare political error. He chose to give a long sermon on March 11, 1978, in support of a new study paper which had been authored mainly by Lester Grabbe and Dr. Robert Kuhn. Their paper proved convincingly that Herbert was wrong concerning the date the Jews kept the passover. He made another blunder by calling this new finding "a revelation that God has given," while admitting it had been kept from Herbert because he had a weak heart. He also remarked that he felt Herbert would now function mainly as "a father figure." Unfortunately for Herman, a tape of this sermon was leaked back to Herbert. To say Herbert became furious as a wounded grizzly bear would be a gross understatement. Sources say Herbert wanted to fire Herman on the spot but was persuaded not to. Nevertheless, Herman has not been chosen to fill any key faculty or administrative position since Garner Ted was kicked out. This has left Herman with little more to do than preach a weekly sermon and play with his photo collection. Hoeh had "doctored" one thing too many.

For years Hoeh had had a knack for altering the right thing at the right time. He received his doctorate from AC after compiling a mishmash of chronologies and king lists into a compendium of world history. Students were awed by his convoluted wording and circular reasoning, never suspecting that he was quoting sources out of context and altering the authors' intended meaning. Each of his yearly revisions was proclaimed as "new truth," even though they contradicted the previous year's "new truth."

But Herman was apparently dissatisfied with altering mere historical facts and tried his hand at "doctoring" information of a more challenging nature. On September 17, 1965, while Dean of Faculty, Herman sent a note on his official stationery to a clerk in the Registrar's Office asking that his academic record be amended. He wrote:

"Please register me for the following:

Jan. 1963	5of Hist. of Ed.: Cath. Philosophy	3
	507 Hist. of Ed.: Early Jewish School	3
	508 Hist. of Ed.: Philosophy and the N.T.	3
	799 Dissertation Research	6

Add to Fall 1962 606 Seminar in Hist. of Ed. 2 and cut back  
604 Sam. Ed. Cl. from 3 to 2 units in the business office."

In conclusion he said that this would give him extra units which would look good. Needless to say, these courses were not taught at Ambassador in 1963. On this same note, Mrs ----- wrote, "entered 9-20-65" and "OK, will go thru next week" and signed her initials. Of course, nobody cared one way or the other. Most Ambassador College courses were worthless everywhere else but Ambassador College anyway, since AC was unaccredited. So Hoeh had nothing to gain.

In 1974, when it came time to defend the church's erroneous tithing doctrine, Hoeh's "doctoring" services were once again in great demand. We have in our possession an inch-thick folder filled with tithing papers submitted by various church ministers. These papers were sent out to the whole church ministry under the title "Study Paper on Tithing" (September 24, 1974) - but not before Hoeh had made the papers palatable to the church leadership. To one paper he added a lengthy conclusion that differed significantly from the author's original conclusion. He rewrote another paper, radically altered the conclusions of several others, and added numerous paragraphs of propaganda to the remaining ones. After altering the final paragraph of one of the papers, he caused the concluding sentence to read: "Never has there been such a restoration of truth since biblical times" (p. 63). Restoration?? Truth?? "Distortion" would have been a better choice of words!

### The World's Most Expensive Haircut

The Worldwide Church has had one desperate financial crisis after another for the last ten years, the chief reason being Herbert Armstrong's profligate spending habits. Herbert has long been an advocate of short, well-groomed hair for church males, and he always keeps his snow-white hair looking immaculate. But what most members are unaware of is that he may be receiving the world's most expensive haircut. It has come to light that Herbert has often had Ambassador College's barber fly to Tucson, Arizona from Pasadena - just to cut his hair. (It costs \$130 to fly his barber round trip from Los Angeles via Continental Airlines - assuming the barber flies coach and not first class.)

We learned that on one occasion Herbert ordered his barber to fly all the way to Tucson on Friday, but at the last minute he had to cancel his haircut. So what did he do? He had the barber spend the weekend in Tucson - at the church's expense until Herbert was free. That haircut alone must have cost the church a minimum of \$200, not to mention the fact that the barber had to cancel all his appointments at Ambassador College while waiting for Herbert. No wonder some students on campus are letting their hair grow longer than ever before.

## Letters From Our Readers

Editor: We frequently receive criticism from readers who feel that by mentioning certain authors, churches, or organizations we are somehow giving our endorsement to everything they do. In the past we have commented favorably on the books of such authors as Joseph Hopkins, Marion McNair and Ernest L. Martin. The reason for this is that not only have these men put out intelligent, well-researched material, but as far as we know they haven't started cults, used psychological coercion to get contributions, interfered in the lives of their readers, or been theologically dogmatic. We also know that their efforts have helped many people to live better lives.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of everyone whose name and address has appeared in *Ambassador Report*. For instance, in one of our issues, we gave the address of one individual who was making a certain item available to the public. Since then we received a number of complaints from readers saying that they have discovered that this individual claims to be one of the two witnesses of Revelation, practices polygamy, and has incorporated sex rituals into the religion he practices with his closest followers.

Obviously, we don't advocate this type of behavior, nor do we believe that this kook is one of the two witnesses. However, we do feel that much of what he has published is of real "value" because it shows quite clearly just how wacky some people can get with religion. So please remember that even though we may not say so each time, we are not advocating that our readers believe everything put out by every group we mention in our newsletters. If there is one thing the "Ambassador experience" should have taught all of us, it is the importance of discernment. With that in mind, we have a number of really interesting letters we want to share with you. As before, for privacy reasons, names of correspondents are not listed unless they have given us specific permission to do so.

### Rader Must Certainly Know

*Stan Rader must be a fairly competent lawyer. As such, he must certainly know that accepting a tax-exempt status from the government automatically invites the government to become a financial partner of the church and specifically carries a financial disclosure responsibility. He shouldn't need the Supreme Court to tell him this. All he has to do is refuse tax-exempt status. Otherwise, all he has to do is show where the money is going.*

-NORTH CAROLINA

*I don't know if this advice came from Armstrong, himself, or from the local minister, but...*

*Each member has been advised to mite multiple letters (if possible about 25 each) and mail them to their senators and representatives, using different names on each letter. I don't know if they were to forge real names or use fictitious ones. I understand this is what the Jones cult members were told to do, also. Anyway, the purpose of the letters is to try to stop the government from investigating the church, claiming the Worldwide Church of God is a GOOD church and is being "persecuted." The members are doing this all right. My grandson told me, yesterday, that his mother and another member had two typewriters, and were both very busy writing these letters. He didn't know about the use of real names, but they were using different names. I understood him to say they planned to mail these letters from different localities.*

**-OKLAHOMA**

*...with inflation, we're really feeling the pinch because of the church rakeoff now. It was a nuisance before, but now it makes the difference between eating and not eating at the end of the month. The kids complain outright that they're hungry, but TRY to sway a true fanatic!*

**-WIFE OF A WCG MEMBER**

*Thank you! If only I had read the Ambassador Report when it first came out, I would have been a little richer and a whole lot wiser. Now with all the rumblings coming from Pasadena, it's like watching the Titanic sink.... This is amazing. I think this would make a great book and a fascinating movie if anyone would put forth the effort.*

*I just checked with the Secretary of State of Georgia, Corp. Dept., and found that "Pope Herbert" qualified in Georgia, November 30, 1978, as a Utah corporation d/b/a Church of God, International, Inc. with legal offices at 11768 Hogan Road, Sandy, Utah 84070. Herbert W. Armstrong, 300 West Green St., Pasadena, CA is listed as the President. Are you aware of this? In effect, he now heads up two different Church organizations. Certified copies of Georgia Incorporation are available at \$4.00 from the Secretary of State, 225 Peachtree St., Suite 600, Corporation Dept., Atlanta, GA 30303, Attn.: Carol Fuller.*

**-GEORGIA**

*The CIA?*

*Are you acquainted with the "I.D.E.A.L. Society" (Individually Designed Ethically Aware Lifestytes) of P.O. Box 38191, Houston, Texas 77088? It appears they think Rader and HWA are tied up with the CIA. Do you have any knowledge of possible substantiation for their accusations?*

-WASHINGTON

Editor: We have absolutely no evidence that Herbert Armstrong or Stanley Rader are involved in any CIA activities. Nor do we have any hard evidence that either is a member of any secret society or conspiratorial organization. However, there are many who feel otherwise.

*I go to services in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin a.m. Church. Last month we were told we would have slides and a sermon on the early covenant of the Bible. We had a Mark Kaplan (a former student studying to be a rabbi, who ended up at Ambassador College) narrating about the Jews . The slides were on a reel which consisted of maps of Jewish treks, homelands, dress, etc. The second reel was mostly pictures of early Jews, Karl Marx, Trotsky, Disraeli, Einstein, the [Jerusalem] dig, the new park [in Jerusalem], the wailing wall, etc.*

*After this junk was shown, I noticed my heart was pounding. I was scared then, and the fear hasn't left me. I'm sorry I didn't write to you immediately, as the facts would be clearer.... I haven't been able to get that sabbath out of my mind. Were we being brainwashed in case of Armstrong's demise and a Rader takeover? I wish I had the answer.*

-WISCONSIN

*Having had many years of "experience" in the Worldwide Church of God - from the time when it was a "respected" organization to the present time when its credibility has all but vanished - I have frequently pondered the causes for the effects we see in the church today. Recently I read a fascinating book titled Fourth Reich of the Rich by Des Griffin who, I understand, is a member of the WCG. In this book the author reveals and historically documents the existence of a top secret organization known as the Illuminati. Their declared objectives include the discrediting and then the destruction of Christianity. Their ultimate goal is the establishment of a One-World Government.*

*According to evidence taken from the archives of the British Museum in London and presented in chapter eleven of Fourth Reich, the Illuminati infiltrates churches and other groups with "agentur" or "special advisors" and, over a period of time, destroys their effectiveness. In light of the staggering changes that have taken place in the WCG in recent years it may be a valid question to ask: "Has the Worldwide church of God been taken over by an agent of the Luciferian Illuminati?"*

*Copies of this thought-provoking, and educational book may be purchased for \$5.00 plus 70¢ postage from Emissary Publications, P.O. Box 642, South Pasadena, CA 91030.*

-TIM SARGEANT, OREGON

*Years ago when Herbert Armstrong began raising money for his "House of God," contributors were given the impression that there were certain parallels between it and the Temple of Solomon (its interior color scheme, its use of gold, marble, and other expensive materials, etc.). We were, however, not told that the auditorium would in fact, have much in common with masonry and paganism. For instance, like the wicked men of Ezek. 8:16, WCG members at headquarters face east when they worship, not west as did the righteous worshippers at the Temple and its predecessor the Tabernacle!*

*Did you ever notice that, architecturally, the auditorium is really a large black box with a white top as is the Islamic Kaaba? The auditorium's seven steps to the stage and the dedication at its entrance ("to the Great God") are only two of many Masonic counterparts which have astounded those familiar with Masonry. It is interesting that years ago the WCG published a booklet exposing Masonry and its occult symbolism. But the booklet is no longer available from the church! I am presently working on a research paper entitled "Armstrongism: A Prolegomena to Masonic and Pagan Parallels." It will be completed shortly.*

*-CALIFORNIA*

#### Ambassador Report Brings Results

*All of your efforts are truly bringing results! Had the reports come sooner, my family could have been saved. Happy to say, my ex-wife is now an ex-member after reading your reports. (Heaven only knows I tried.)*

*-WISCONSIN*

*Nine years ago, when I was starting to give tithes to Ambassador College, my parents tried very hard to change my mind and have me join some other religion instead of the Worldwide Church of God. They told me that the Armstrongs were taking money from all the poor people and living like kings. It is strange how all that heat had helped me stay in the church.*

*Since that time I had given up a good-paying job, gone on welfare, refused other good-paying jobs because of the holy days, and avoided family celebrations because they were "pagan." In return, what I received were "brothers and sisters" I didn't care for, sermons and lectures that I've heard over and over again, and reading how happy Mr. Armstrong was visiting all the brethren in his jet.*

*I stopped tithing this summer when I realized that I wasn't receiving the blessings of Malachi 2:10. Also, I really wouldn't want to help someone live the kind of life I went through. And learning that Herbert W. Armstrong takes a \$200,000 salary from the church was the last straw.*

*A friend told me that the church has a policy in which any member who reads Ambassador Report is automatically excommunicated. I told my mother this, and*

*she said, "Send for the magazine right away!"*

*-NEW YORK*

*We were in that organization 18 years. We never knew what it was to have a joint of meat, or plenty of good food, or enjoyment. My wife worked until she was 67 years of age, to enable us to keep up with the tithes. It is a great relief to be free of this burden.*

*-ENGLAND*

*Received my copy of Ambassador Report several days ago. It was difficult to lay down until I had finished it from cover to cover. I felt at one time the WCG was the true church. Although not participating for some 4 to 5 years now, I still had a nagging feeling that maybe I was turning my back on God's one true church. Now that feeling is gone. It is such a relief to have my suspicions confirmed overwhelmingly with facts.*

*-PENNSYLVANIA*

*We Get "Hate Mail" Too!*

*A friend of mine gave me a copy of the garbage Report it is the Devil's work and anyone that has a right mind will think so. I don't know why God hasn't stopped you guys long ago but we will just wait and see. Your garbage is a direct persecution against God, and you will be called to Judgment.*

*Your Ambassador Garbage Report will never destroy God's true church. I did not read all the dirty work in the report. What I did read made me sick. It's all a bunch of lies! If you want to cause so much trouble why don't you go to Iran or Russia and see how long you would last. May God have mercy on you, the Ambassador Report garbage editors.*

*-ANONYMOUS, OHIO*

*Just had the profound revulsion of opening my mailbox and discovering your "literature." I just can't imagine the emptiness one's life must consist of such that dwelling on evil, negativism and the carrion of life situations, like so many vultures, is the one object of their efforts. If you're going to send this trash out - at least print it on toilet paper so I can get some use from it.*

*-BRISCOE ELLIOTT  
MINISTER, WCG*

*\$50,000 Poorer*

*Because of our association with the WCG, we are about \$50,000 poorer. I guess that's just a drop in a bucket to Stan Rader, who can write himself out a bonus check for \$35,000, or to HWA; but it is still a lot of money to us. I know people in the WCG who gave up decent homes and moved into cheap places in order to be faithful in paying third tithes. Many gave up life insurance policies, did without dental work didn't buy glasses that were needed., and many other things. And the children suffered the Most.*

*Thanks to your staff for sending me the Ambassador Report last. year. We are now much better off. We didn't know how unhappy our family was while we were in the church. Financial blessings never came to us for being faithful in tithing. It seemed that the more we grossed, the less we had left. And always it was our children that had to do without something, so that we could afford the extra expenses incurred so that we could attend services (50 miles one way) or additional activities, Bible study, etc.*

*I also remember attending the funeral of a beautiful little girl that died because her mother was "faithful." The little girl had a bad cold that went into pneumonia. The family was very poor and didn't have much heat in the house, but the minister never went to see her so he didn't know what the conditions of the family were. The minister sent anointed cloths to the child. After several weeks when the child was much worse, the minister's wife told the mother that she would be allowed to take the child to a hospital to be placed under an oxygen tent but that she couldn't have penicillin. When the child was nearly dead, the father (who was not in the church) and mother wrapped her up and started for the hospital. When they arrived, the mother told the doctor that she thought it was too late. It was, and the doctor was kind enough to write it up as if she died just as she arrived at the hospital. Then the mother kept from showing any sadness at all because she believed that it was God's plan to keep the child from suffering later on. I never could buy that idea.*

*-INDIANA*

#### *Was Not Allowed to Join*

*Thank you so much for the wonderful newsletter. I just passed my 82nd birthday, and that newsletter was a wonderful gift. As with all your reports, this will be shared with many of my friends, former members of the WCG.*

*Before my wife passed away she was a member of the Armstrong organization for 8 years . I became a member four years later. They would not accept me as I was a Star Route mail carrier and naturally Saturday was my heaviest mail day, and I was under contract. Of course, I wanted to join, so after four years I was given an OK by the Post Office department that I could transfer my contract to my daughter-in-law, and they would release me from the contract. I had two routes that paid exceptionally well, and all the time my wife was a member I paid them my tithes, but for the over three years she was in, I was not allowed to attend any services. After my route would be completed on Saturday, I would*

*drive to the church to pick my wife up, but had to wait outside. Finally they did let me come in near the end of the service and attend their functions and dances. I remember one time I attended one of their dinners, and I was quite ill. My wife asked the elder if they would pray for me. They refused because I was not a member. She finally talked to the minister and pleaded with him to anoint me. after some time he finally told the elder to pray for me. To think I had to give up a good contract to join that church!*

**-OREGON**

### *Father Was Right, Afterall*

*My husband isn't fond of a lot of reading, so I decided to read the Ambassador Report cover to cover, plus the three newsletters you sent. I just finished everything, which took about 4 to 5 days. I have been in the WCG for 19 years since I was 10 years old. My husband has been in since 1965, and last sabbath was our last!...*

*If my father knew what's happened in our family in the last couple of months, he'd turn over in his grave. He died a year ago last March, and we actually began seeing things were amiss in the WCG at that time. Our eyes eventually got wide open in June of this (past) year.*

*My family (dad, mom, me, and two younger brothers ) came into the church in 1959. After 15 months, my dad (who I see now was 19 years ahead of us) could see something was wrong and got out. He was what you'd call "hostile," but for good reason. I well remember the time he had to wait in line to ask the minister after church if it was okay for our cow to be vaccinated. He also knew the tithing thing was all haywire and the no-doctors policy was not right.*

*As a result of his "attitude," my parents had to separate and a few years later divorced. My father's life was ruined. He had lived through the depression, had no father as a boy, and had lived in orphanages because his mother had to find work. He had had a hard life. At age 32, he married a lovely woman who fulfilled all his needs to be loved. They had a good marriage. He idolized us kids and gave us the love he never got as a boy. He was "the best" daddy. We were a very happy family.*

*But from about 1960 on, it was hell. Our lives were drastically changed, and my daddy (whom I loved dearly), got the worst deal of us all. His lovely family was split and never was the same again. All his dreams were shattered. He and my mom had only been married 14 years (the happiest years of his entire life), and his family was his life. He took to the bottle and was an extreme alcoholic when he died last year.*

*It rips me apart to think of the agony that man went through for 17 long years and then to die as he did. He taught me more in dying than ever before, regrettably. But we learned so much after he died about what his side of the story was. As*

*kids, we were led to think of him as the "bad guy." How I wish he were alive today so I could talk to him. I know he would rejoice that his wife (my mom) has quit and my two brothers and us as well.*

*-MISSOURI*

*Thank you so much for sending me that Ambassador Report of January 21st. I wish to let you know that the report of last June been making the rounds for months now and has opened the eyes of many in this vicinity and has prevented some 15 people from joining the WCG and has resulted in 14 others leaving the church.*

*-SASKATOON, CANADA*

*Since Armstrong is also active in this country [Germany], and practically no news coverage like in your country is available on this subject here, I have so far devoted two issues of a small information paper I am circulating to this very subject, mainly translating from your articles.*

*-DIETER HEIMKE  
GLATZER WEG 3  
D-4403 SENDEN  
WEST GERMANY*

*Bless you for encouraging photocopying of your newsletter! It shows you aren't in this to make money. I hope you survive, and I thank you for putting me on the mailing list.*

*-CALIFORNIA*

Editor: We've heard of many individuals and groups who have taken on the burden of copying and distributing our newsletters, For instance, there is a very dedicated group in Australia that has been distributing the *Report* and other anticult literature extensively in that country. We're very happy that they can do this as the high postage rates to Australia make it very difficult for us to effectively cover that part of the world. For those "down under" who may be interested, their addresses are: P.O. Box 193, East Caulfield, Vic. 3145, and the Association Exposing Pseudo-Religious Cults, P.O. Box 430, Mt. Waverly, Vic., Australia. The following is a comment from one of the fine individuals in the Australian group:

*I ask, why do members of the WCG think that a few ex-members are prepared to do this, at cost to themselves?... If we were working in Satan's interests, wouldn't we be happier to leave our money in our pockets and leave the members of the WCG believing anything they are told? We would go our own way without any thought or concern for the members of the WCG. But no! We know the suffering,*

*lost jobs, financial struggles, anxieties, double standards, isolation from family, and have learnt the spiritual deceit that makes all the former of no value to either us, our children, or in the eyes of Christ. Personally we feel that the biggest stumbling block for the members is to admit they have been deceived and that those who have left, whom they disfellowshipped at a man's command, whom they called "led astray" by Satan's influence, etc., were right after all and proved themselves to be discerners of the truth and stronger in character. After all, it does take character to leave the WCG because you know members will no longer associate with you and there will be a lot of "character assassination" behind your back. You know you'll need to find a whole new life and that relatives that you isolated yourself from, by way of false religious teachings and values, won't be so quick, in all probability, to welcome you into their fold. And I've heard members say they felt physically exhausted and even sick in the stomach when the where horrible truth came to them. However, all have claimed a feeling of exaltation and well-being once the truth is faced and accepted.*

**-AUSTRALIA**

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation to all of you for your continued interest in our newsletter. Your letters of encouragement have really been our inspiration in keeping the *Report* alive. To all of you, our sincere thanks.

**THE PUBLISHERS**

---

*Ambassador Report* is published bimonthly as finances allow. Publisher-Editors are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

[Next Issue \(AR10\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR10 November 19, 1979**

Dear Friends:

During the last six months, we who live in the Los Angeles metropolitan area have been treated to weekly and often daily newspaper accounts of the continuing chaos in the Rader-Armstrong church. Many of you who do not live in Southern California are probably unaware of much of what has transpired since our last newsletter. So here is a brief rundown of the most significant happenings since we last wrote to you.

### Rader Ordained

The big news was really not much of a surprise. We predicted it in 1976, in our very first issue: Stan Rader was ordained an evangelist. The well-executed sequence of events went as follows:

First Roderick C. Meredith was removed as director of the WCG's ministry. Then all WCG evangelists were stripped of their rank. The hierarchical structure of the ministry was reorganized with Joseph Tkach, a preaching elder, and Kevin Dean, formerly a steward on the church airplane, elevated to top positions under HWA. (Both Tkach and Dean are proven Rader loyalists.) The board of trustees was purged of anti-Rader trustees (Meredith and Luker). (Raymond McNair remained, as he is now in the Rader camp.)

In his September 20 co-worker letter, Herbert Armstrong hinted that his life might soon be coming to an end (an amazing admission for HWA). Within days, it was announced that Rader had been ordained an evangelist along with Joseph Tkach and Ellis LaRavia, a staunch Rader supporter who was at one time in charge of the landscaping department. Kevin Dean was ordained a local elder. Since then, Leroy Neff, another proven Rader loyalist, has also been elevated to evangelist rank. The Rader ordination shocked many WCG ministers. A few, including Fred Coulter, have resigned over it.

Is Stanley Rader qualified to be an evangelist? Most WCC ministers privately concede that Rader is virtually a biblical illiterate. A few months ago one newsman asked Rader if he would begin to obey the Lord (Mark 6:8) and go forth with neither scrip or money in his purse. Rader, misinterpreting both the question and the scripture, answered that the church was wealthy and did not have to worry about money. Recently, one writer asked him if the church intended to follow Jesus' admonition to "turn the other cheek" with regard to the attorney general's suit. Rader answered that the Bible also taught "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." During the sermon at this year's Feast of Tabernacles,

Rader is reputed to have asked the congregation to turn to "the book of Nebuchadnezzar" and then, of course, could not find the nonexistent book in his own Bible. We suspect the story is apocryphal, but the fact that it is told repeatedly by WCG ministers shows their attitude toward Rader's ministerial credentials.

As we go to press, we have learned that Roderick Meredith has been given a six month "leave of absence" in Hawaii. Few believe he will ever return to any significant position in the WCG. Perhaps he will not return at all.

### The Paper War Continues

The state of California's lawsuit against the Worldwide Church of God continues to be mired in pre-trial maneuverings. A trial date has yet to be set and, as of this writing, Stanley Rader has yet to complete his deposition as ordered by the attorney general. Here is a synopsis of the main lawsuit-related incidents of the last six months.

May 23: The state Commission on Judicial Performance announced that it had investigated Judge Jerry Pacht's handling of the state's case against the church and had dismissed all allegations of impropriety against him. Rader had charged that Judge Pacht and the attorney general had acted improperly by not giving the church four hours' notice of the hearing that resulted in the state's action against the WCG. The commission, however, replied: "After carefully examining all facets of the complaint, the commission concluded that allegations of improper conduct are unwarranted and without foundation." Both Judge Jerry Pacht and attorney Hillel Chodos, who represents the plaintiffs against the church, are members of the commission. For this reason, said Jack Frankel, executive officer of the commission, the group went to special lengths in their two-month investigation. Also, neither Pacht nor Chodos took any part in the investigation of the complaint.

June 6: A lengthy article by Russell Chandler appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, which revealed that as long as seven years before the attorney general filed the suit against the WCG, some officials within the church were alarmed about the organization's lax, accounting procedures, lavish spending, and other financial practices. The article was based on internal WCG documents "made available to the *Times*." One document was a by William Tate, who was a WCG member, a CPA, and a former vice-president of the Xerox Corporation. Another authored by James Johnson, a CPA who was an employee of both the college and the Rader-Cornwall accounting firm, stated: "I am shocked at the material misrepresentations we have made in regard to our reporting to the body of Christ [the church], not to mention creditors and other third parties who have been defrauded." Other memos quoted were by financial adviser Hod Pomeroy, financial vice-president Ray Wright, and church accountant Jack Kessler.

June 11: The attorney general's office announced it was not going forward with challenges to sureties posted by WCG members in March for the purpose of avoiding the imposition of a receivership on the church. Deputy Attorney General Lauren Brainard said the attorney general's office withdrew its objection to the sureties as it did not wish to occupy one or two months of court time on the relatively unimportant aspect of the case. Also, said Brainard, it was highly unlikely that the state would attempt to take possession of the posted sureties in the event that church assets became improperly depleted.

July 4: In a special Fourth of July address to the church, Stanley Rader declared: "Events of the last few days have conclusively demonstrated that state officials have lied, cheated, and stolen in furtherance of their crazed assertion of raw power, and have violated every constitutional guarantee of religious freedom in the process. Last Friday, we received, pursuant to a court order, a list of 819 documents belonging to the church which the state has in its possession. These documents were stolen from the church by the state and/or others...."

July 6: Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Thomas Johnson heard arguments on why/why not Herbert Armstrong should appear for a deposition. Allan Browne, attorney for the church, argued that Armstrong could provide written answers to questions rather than sworn oral testimony at a deposition. Part of Browne's argument was that Armstrong was in failing health. But Deputy State Attorney General Jams Cordi said that "the defendants have blown hot and cold on Armstrong's physical condition." The attorney general has asserted all along that Herbert Armstrong is not in good health and therefore not fully in control of the church.

July 14: The Pasadena *Star-News* reported that the National Council of Churches was coming to the defense of the WCG by volunteering an amicus curiae brief to the California Supreme Court. (The WGG has not refused the NCC's assistance in spite of the fact that the WCG has-over the years condemned the NCC as being "Satanic.")

August 2: The Pasadena *Star-News* reported that the WCG had filed a lawsuit against Earl and Shirley Timmons, two plaintiffs in the suit against the WCG, charging that they had wrongful possession of "confidential and ecclesiastical" church reports and documents. But Shirley Timmons explained: "When I was subpoenaed for my deposition, they wanted all my documents, and Mr. Chodos got it denied by a judge. It [the new suit] is just another method of harassment. I could give them a copy and there would be many left. I got a copy of a copy. The materials they want are what everybody has. I really believe it is harassment."

August 8: Superior Court Judge Thomas T. Johnson ruled that Rader would have to resume his deposition August 27. (Rader has yet to appear for this deposition, as he has repeatedly won delays through appeals.) In doing so the judge was not sympathetic with arguments that Rader should not give a deposition because his testimony might serve as a basis for possible future criminal proceedings by the state. Rader's attorney Ellis Horvitz argued that Rader should not be compelled to answer pre-trial questions posed by the attorney general because, in his opinion, Rader undoubtedly will not answer on the basis of the Fifth Amendment and because the state is searching for information on which to base criminal proceedings. Judge Johnson also denied the motion of attorney Ralph Helge that he and accountant Henry Cornwall not be required to give depositions.

August 30: Superior Court judge Thomas Johnson took under submission arguments concerning the attorney general's request for certain church financial documents. Though the hearing was a rather routine one, the WCG bused hundreds of supporters to the court building, where they staged a demonstration. (This has been the case at virtually every hearing so far. Not only do the demonstrators carry signs, but on one such occasion a number wore 1776-type revolutionary uniforms complete with drums and muskets!)

September 4: The WCG filed a suit in Pasadena Superior court seeking to prohibit individuals who are no longer affiliated with the church from turning over church documents to the attorney general.

September 5: Judge Johnson ruled in favor of the attorney general by requiring the church and others to turn over all requested documents.

September 18: A spokesperson for the American Civil Liberties Union said the ACLU was opposed to the state of California's action against the WCG. Ms. Nina Krout, assistant legal director for the ACLU Washington office said that the state of California in effect "established a religion" when it took control of assets and the management of the WCG. Also supporting this contention of the ACLU is Americans United, the Alliance for Preservation of Religious Liberty, the Institute for the Study of American Religion, and the Berkeley Area Interfaith Council. Ironically, it wasn't long ago that leading WCG ministers and Herbert Armstrong himself condemned the ACLU as being a "communist front." Now the WCG seems quite pleased with their support.

September 22: Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Thomas Johnson refused to grant a church request that Rader's deposition again be postponed. The deposition was scheduled for October 22. During the hearing, church lawyer Ralph Helge vociferously objected to Deputy Attorney General Jim Cordi's characterization of Rader's world travels as 'business trips.' Helge argued that Rader was "preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ," not "conducting business." Judge Johnson, however, ended the heated exchange by reminding the attorneys that such remarks were not desired by the court.

October 1: The U. S. Supreme Court, without comment, refused to hear an appeal by the Worldwide Church of God, which attempted to get a ruling that tactics used by the state of California against the church represented a violation of First Amendment rights.

October 10: Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Norman Dowds upheld the California attorney general's right to investigate the WCG's financial affairs. The decision came in response to a suit filed in April by a group of WCG members who argued it was unconstitutional to use taxpayers' money to investigate a church. Judge Dowds held that the challenged Corporations Code section clearly empowers the attorney general (without getting into questions of doctrine) to see how nonprofit corporations are complying with the trusts they set up. The judge quoted a 1939 U.S. Supreme Court decision: "Nothing we have said is intended even remotely to imply that, under the cloak of religion, persons may with impunity, commit frauds upon the public.... Even the exercise of religion may be at some slight inconvenience in order that the state may protect its citizens from injury."

October 11: The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the WCG had filed a \$5 million lawsuit against three former WCG officials - David L. Antion, C. Wayne Cole, and Robert Kuhn - and their attorney, Mitchell Levy. The suit claim that between 1974 and 1978 the three church officials confiscated nearly 300 private memos and documents belonging to the church and that since May 21, 1979, the papers have been in their attorney's possession. The suit asks that the documents be returned and that the court award \$5 million in punitive and exemplary damages and costs.

The *Times* also reported that another suit was filed by the WCG against C. Wayne Cole and his wife. The suit alleges that the church had loaned the Coles \$30,000 toward the purchase of their Glendora, California, home, but that the Coles had failed to sign a promissory note and second deed of trust as they had promised to do. The suit claims that on January 8, Mrs. Cole filed a homestead declaration on the property. The church is seeking to have the homestead made subject off the alleged debt.

October 15: The U.S. Supreme Court, without comment, left intact a California Court ruling that Stanley Rader must submit to questioning. Rader had claimed that to do so would violate his and his church's First Amendment rights.

October 18: The Pasadena *Star-News* carried a story that quoted Rader as saying, "I would never cite the Fifth Amendment. " In April, Rader had given testimony in a deposition, but on the second day of questioning he declined to answer more questions when Deputy Attorney General Lauren Brainard advised him of his right to remain silent. Months of legal haggling followed, resulting in Rader being ordered by the court to resume the depositions.

Brainard said Rader is not a criminal defendant at this time and that at the April deposition he had been advised "that he had the right to refuse to answer any question that may tend to incriminate him.... It was my understanding at the time that he was clearly invoking the Fifth Amendment right of a criminal defendant to remain silent." Brainard stated that during the April questioning, Rader "virtually answered no questions."

October 22: Rader was to have appeared for a resumption of his deposition. Instead, a broadly

smiling Rader announced to followers picketing the attorney general's Los Angeles office that he had just won another delay. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had intervened at the last minute to, in effect, allow more time for all of Rader's other appeals to be heard before resuming questioning. In describing the scene outside the attorney general's office, the Pasadena *Star-News* reported, "As he has on similar occasions, he [Rader] responded with his familiar greeting, 'God is on his throne. He has heard our prayers.'"

Rader currently has before the courts at least five petitions. These petitions seek to block the deposition of Herbert Armstrong; appeal a court order to produce documents for the state; seek to enjoin the state from using church documents obtained by third parties; seek to dismiss actions against church attorney Ralph Helge and accountant Henry Cornwall; seek to overturn a superior court order preventing Rader's attorneys from taking depositions from former church members whose information led to the state's suit against the church leaders. If all the appeals fail, will Rader answer the questions put to him? Rader's attorney, Allan Browne replied, "Yes, if they are proper questions."

Deputy Attorney General Brainard summed up the state's position on this when he said, "We want to ask Rader about the use of the assets of the church, college, and foundation. We want to determine to what extent he has personally benefited from his association with these charities and the extent to which that benefit was authorized or revealed to the board of directors and members of these organizations. A person in a fiduciary capacity with these organizations has an obligation to account for his use of these assets."

November 13: The *Los Angeles Times* reported that a total of 15 different religious and civil rights groups have so far come to support the WCG in its fight against the state. Included among the 15 are the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the Unification Church of Rev. Moon.

### More Lawsuits

The attorney general's suit is far from being the WCG's only legal problem. A \$70 million libel suit against the Armstrong organization was filed in July by Leona A. McNair. Mrs. McNair is the former wife of Raymond McNair, the deputy chancellor of Ambassador College. According to the suit, the charges center around remarks made about her in the church's Pastor's Report.

*Ambassador Report* contacted Mrs. McNair requesting details of the suit but was told that she has been deeply hurt by the allegedly libelous statements made against her and does not wish to give the matter further publicity.

The WCG's lawyers, it seems, are on their way to becoming experts in libel cases. The WCG is involved in a number both as defendant and plaintiff. For instance, earlier this year the WCG initiated a libel suit against the *London Free Press* of Ontario, Canada; Kenneth Browning, a former WCG member; and George Manassas, a former WCG minister. The suit resulted from a series of articles about the church in the *London Free Press*. The WCG officially discontinued the suit in May. Ken Brown told the *Report*, "Their accusations were ludicrous - like something out of *National Lampoon*. We viewed the whole thing as harassment by the church, intended simply to make us 'eat legal fees.' They dropped the matter as soon as they saw we were willing to put up a fight."

The WCG has also brought a suit against the Pasadena *Star-News*. Our friends at the paper tell us that the suit has had a "chilling effect" on their coverage of WCG stories.

The following article appeared September 5 in the Regional News Section of the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, *Leader-Telegram*. We thought you'd find it interesting.

---

# Barron farmer wins latest fight to recover church 'donation'

By Tim Zgonina  
Leader-Telegram staff

**BARRON** — What do people expect when they join a church?

George McElroy was looking for the "true church" when he became a member of the Worldwide Church of God nearly 10 years ago. What he found has left him wishing he'd never heard of the organization.

McElroy, 65, lives on a 160-acre farm in the town of Maple Grove south of Barron. He was divorced almost 20 years ago, and although he has three children, he lives alone.

## Other churches

McElroy was affiliated with the Pentecostal and Lutheran denominations in the past, but was not a regular churchgoer and got most of his religious experience personally from his

There, he said, church members were told they could bequeath their property to the church or its training school for ministers, Ambassador College in Pasadena, Calif. "These guys are really schooled in public speaking. They can make your hair stand on end," he said.

McElroy said he talked with a church legal representative there, and on Nov. 1, 1969, made out a will disinheriting his own descendants and leaving all his property to the college. Later, on Dec. 15, 1969, he signed a quitclaim deed giving his land to the college but reserving his own right to live on the farm.

McElroy said he inferred that to be saved in the coming destruction, he had to tithe. When the time passed, McElroy began reconsidering the church, especially its tithing laws.

He explained that church members who lived in cities were

## Barron farmer wins latest fight to recover church donation

By Tim Zgonina  
Leader-Telegram staff

**BARRON** - What do people expect when they join a church?

George McElroy was looking for the "true church" when he became a member of the Worldwide Church of God nearly 10 years ago. What he found has left him-wishing he'd never heard of the organization.

McElroy, 65, lives on a 160-acre farm in the town of Maple Grove south of Barron. He was divorced almost 20 years ago, and although he has three children, he lives alone.

## Other churches

McElroy was affiliated with the Pentecostal and Lutheran denominations in the past, but was not a regular churchgoer and got most of his religious experience personally from his Bible.

Then, in 1963, he began listening to nighttime broadcasts of "The World Tomorrow" from stations in Little Rock, Ark., and Waterloo, Iowa.

McElroy said he was impressed with what he heard and began corresponding with church officials. "That's what I was looking for, what was the true church," he said.

McElroy said the church's founder, Herbert Armstrong, "had more information than anyone. He was answering my questions." But, McElroy added that now he feels, at the same time, the church "was programming my mind. We were told if we disobeyed Herbert Armstrong, it was like disobeying God."

McElroy was sent the church's magazine, "The Plain Truth," and subsequently, pamphlets and booklets containing the church's views on current issues and the fate of the world.

That was in the beginning, he said. Before he and the church were through, McElroy said, he was led to believe American society would crumble in 1972 and that to secure safety, he should tithe to the church. McElroy ended up deeding his entire farm and all his property, donating some \$8,000 in cash and delivering several head of livestock to church officials.

That wasn't what he expected when he tuned in those first radio broadcasts, he said.

What he was looking for was an organization in which he could study the Bible.

### **Could learn bible**

"I decided here was a place that I could learn about the Bible and it's not going to cost me anything," McElroy said.

So he signed up for a correspondence Bible study program and sent for literature the church printed on religion, ethics and other topics.

Things became more complicated.

"They have answers for everything," he said. "If you ask about their doctrine, they send you more pamphlets."

The mailings, Bible course and church convocations he attended dealt largely with tithing laws, McElroy said, and church members were told the importance of contributing to the church. "I wanted to be in the inner circle, pleasing to God," he noted. Money was not directly solicited, but he said of the church, "They program your mind and get out of the Bible what they want to get out of it."

McElroy said he was led to believe the Bible forecasted the destruction of the United States in January 1972. "They used the Bible to form and shape our minds that this whole thing was going belly up."

McElroy said the church preached the United States would be overrun by Germany, and that in turn, the Soviet Union would dominate the world. The faithful of the church would be given a place of safety at Petra in Jordan, and later, would return to claim the world for God.

### **Attends church retreat**

Then, he said, he attended the church's religious retreat, called the Feast of Tabernacles, in Missouri in 1969.

There, he said, church members were told they could bequeath their property to the church or its training school for ministers, Ambassador College in Pasadena, Calif. "These guys are really schooled in public speaking. They can make your hair stand on end," he said.

McElroy said he talked with a church legal representative there, and on Nov. 1, 1969, made out a will disinheriting his own descendants and leaving all his property to the college. Later, on Dec. 15, 1969, he signed a quitclaim deed giving his land to the college but reserving his own right to live on the farm.

McElroy said he inferred that to be saved in the coming destruction, he had to tithe. When the time passed, McElroy began reconsidering the church, especially its tithing laws.

He explained that church members who lived in cities were required to tithe 10 percent of their gross income to the church, while farmers were to give 10 percent of their net income, but also the first born of their livestock. In addition, another 10 percent was to be set aside by everyone for expenses at the annual Feast of Tabernacles and whatever money remained unspent was to be turned over to the church. Another 10 percent was to be donated every three years for other funds.

### **Couldn't get ahead**

"You can never get ahead being in a church like that, and they told us we could never get ahead if we didn't," he said.

McElroy said he tithed some \$8,000 over the years of his association with the church. He also gave three beef cattle which he was told to raise and fatten and then butcher before turning over to church officials.

He said he complied with the tithing laws until one day, he heard a passage of the Bible pertaining to tithing read, and he understood it to mean farmers were only to donate 10 percent of their first-born stock, not all of them.

### **Sought explanation**

McElroy said he asked a church minister for an explanation, but was not given an answer about the two different interpretations. "That's what pulled the trigger," he said.

So in 1972, McElroy asked for his land and money back, claiming he had been told when he signed the deed he could change his mind and reclaim his property.

The church refused, and in December of that year, removed him from membership.

Nothing happened until June 1978, when McElroy complained he had been misled into deeding his property to the college and church, that undue influence - in the teachings of the church and its pamphlets - had been used against him, and that he had been led to believe he could cancel the agreement conveying his property to the church.

The case came to trial in Barron County Circuit Court in August and a jury did find that undue influence had been used by the church to obtain McElroy's property.

### **Claims understanding**

The church argued McElroy knew what he was doing and understood the agreement when he deeded over his land, and that too much time had passed for the claim to be valid. Church attorneys also claimed First Amendment protection.

The court has yet to decide how the property will be disposed. McElroy's attorney said the church could yet appeal the decision.

Meanwhile, McElroy is still living on his farm, and he still maintains his faith in the Bible, although his he is disenchanted with the church.

### Charges manipulation

"They weren't ambassadors of God. They were just out here trying to manipulate people," he said. The Worldwide Church of God is a California corporation, founded in 1947. Before that, since 1934, it was called the Radio Church of God. Ambassador College was founded In 1947.

Church attorneys were not available for comment.

---

This news item appeared in the Charleston *Gazette*, September 15. It reminds us of something Jesus said (Matt. 23:14, K.J.V.): "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses... therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

---

**Courts Kept Estate From Rev. Armstrong**

Two years ago, West Virginia courts prevented "The World Tomorrow" radio-TV empire from inheriting the home and money of four aged, senile sisters who had lived together 20 years.

Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God appealed to the state Supreme Court in 1977, but lost. His petition said:



The four old sisters lived in a Follansbee house they had bought with "a brown paper bag containing \$16,920 in cash." One sister also put \$23,400 in a Chester savings account, jointly in the name of a niece as survivor.

The elderly foursome all died in a three-year period. One had written a will leaving everything to the youngest sister for her lifetime, then to the Armstrong revival ministry.

After the final sister died, the Bible prophecy sect claimed the home and the savings account. Nieces and nephews resisted, saying the four old women had lived together in a common trust, so one's will couldn't give away the assets of all four.

A Brooke County trial jury gave the inheritance to the nieces and nephews. Armstrong's appeal to the high court was rejected.

### Courts Kept Estate From Rev. Armstrong

Two years ago, West Virginia courts prevented "The World Tomorrow" radio-TV empire from inheriting the home and money of four aged, senile sisters who had lived together 20 years.

Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God appealed to the state Supreme Court in 1977, but lost. His petition said:

The four old sisters lived in a Follansbee house they had bought with "a brown paper bag containing \$16,920 in cash." One sister also put \$23,400 in a Chester savings account, jointly in the name of a niece as survivor.

The elderly foursome all died in a three-year period. One had written a will leaving everything to the youngest sister for her lifetime, then to the Armstrong revival ministry.

After the final sister died, the Bible prophecy sect claimed the home and the savings account. Nieces and nephews resisted, saying the four old women had lived together in a common trust, so one's will couldn't give away the assets of all four.

A Brooke County trial jury gave the inheritance to the nieces and nephews. Armstrong's appeal to the high court was rejected.

---

Before leaving the subject of lawsuits, we'd like to bring your attention to this Associated Press article which appeared in many U.S. newspapers August 16:

---

**Scientology church loses suit**

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A jury awarded more than \$2 million in damages Wednesday to a 22-year-old woman who claimed the Church of Scientology defrauded her by failing to fulfill promises of improving her life.

The jury deliberated 18 hours over two days before reaching its unanimous decision.

In her suit, Julie C. Titchbourne of Portland alleged she suffered emotional distress as a result of her experience with the church in 1975-76.

She had sought \$2 million in punitive damages, \$500,000 for alleged anguish and suffering and \$3,000 reimbursement for course fees.

After the jury award, Mrs. Titchbourne said she planned to use part of the money to study engineering in college.

Named as defendants were the Church of Scientology of Portland; the Scientology Mission of Davis in Portland; and the Delphian Foundation, an organization the church says is separate although staffed by scientologists.

The jury ruled the defendants committed fraud, awarding Mrs. Titchbourne punitive damages of \$1.9 million and compensatory damages of \$153,000.

In a statement, the church criticized the decision, saying: "This decision is a blow to all of those who cherish the right to practice their religion free from the harassment of psychiatrists and de-programmers who have appointed themselves self-styled inquisitors."

Earlier, Circuit Court Judge Robert P. Jones said nine jurors would have to agree to make an award.

He told the jurors that if they decided the church's promises were of a religious nature, and sincerely advertised as such, the church is protected by the state and federal constitutions. He said such protection prevents challenging the truth or falsity of a religious belief. Mrs. Titchbourne claimed the church courses she took failed to live up to promises to help her with her college classwork, develop her creativity and raise her IQ test scores.

### Scientology church lose's suit

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) - A jury awarded more than \$2 million in damages Wednesday to a 22-year-old woman who claimed the Church of Scientology defrauded her by failing to fulfill promises of improving her life.

The jury deliberated 18 hours over two days before reaching its unanimous decision.

In her suit, Julie C. Titchbourne of Portland alleged she suffered emotional distress as a result of her experience with the church in 1975-76.

She had sought \$2 million in punitive damages, \$500,000 for alleged anguish and suffering and \$3,000 reimbursement for course fees.

After the jury award, Mrs. Titchbourne said she planned to use part of the money to study engineering in college.

Named as defendants were the Church of Scientology of Portland; the Scientology Mission of Davis in Portland; and the Delphian Foundation, an organization the church says is separate although staffed by scientologists.

The jury ruled the defendants committed fraud, awarding Mrs. Titchbourne punitive damages of \$1.9 million and compensatory damages of \$153,000.

In a statement, the church criticized the decision, saying: "This decision is a blow to all of those who cherish the right to practice their religion free from the harassment of psychiatrists and deprogrammers who have appointed themselves self-styled inquisitors."

Earlier, Circuit Court Judge Robert P. Jones said nine jurors would have to agree to make an award.

He told the jurors that if they decided the church's promises were of a religious nature, and sincerely advertised as such, the church is protected by the state and federal constitutions. He said such protection prevents challenging the truth or falsity of a religious belief. Mrs. Titchbourne claimed the church courses she took failed to live up to promises to help her with her college classwork, develop her creativity and raise her IQ test scores.

---

### WCG Financial Report Released

For the first time in its turbulent 46-year history, the WCG has published its audited financial report complete with footnotes (*The Worldwide News*, Sept. 10, 1979). The financial report was compiled by the internationally respected firm of Arthur Andersen & Co. Though Treasurer Stanley Rader admitted that only "selected footnote information" was included (why wasn't everything included?), nevertheless it appears to represent an honest effort by the church to show the public how church money is spent. We sincerely hope Stan Rader makes this a yearly occurrence, because for years the WCG's public financial disclosures have been vague, sporadic, incomplete, and misleading.

Before discussing some of the salient material contained in the WCG's just published 1978 financial report, we would like to lead up to it by detailing what few things the church has disclosed in past years concerning its finances.

For decades it was Herbert Armstrong's practice to deluge members with miscellaneous bits and pieces of irrelevant and often contradictory financial data at Bible studies and sabbath services. And once a year at the Feast of Tabernacles he read excerpts from the church's financial statements after commanding members not to write anything down. But in spite of his seeming candor, he never gave the trusting membership any professionally audited financial statements to examine. Those were considered top secret - none of the members' business!

But in the late 1960s and early 1970s, news of extravagant spending and misuse of church funds by the church leadership began to surface. In 1974, stung by charges of financial hanky-panky from leading ministers who left the church, the WCG published its income statement-for the first time in its history (*The Worldwide News*, March 18, 1974). However, the customary balance sheet and statement of changes in financial position were omitted, and almost all of the footnotes were strangely missing.

Meanwhile, almost monthly Herbert begged members and coworkers to send generous offerings to the church. By 1976 there were rumors that the church was in serious financial difficulty. Stan Rader, then the WCG's vice-president for financial affairs and chief adviser, immediately denied the persistent rumors. He told the Pasadena *Star-News* on March 14, 1976 that "the college and church are not in financial difficulty.... the church is stronger than ever before in terms of its human, financial and physical resources...." Yet, paradoxically, the very next day, March 15, Herbert Armstrong wrote an urgent letter to his supporters:

"I had to take you co-workers and brethren into my confidence and tell you we are close to one of those occasional financial crises.... I have to lay the problem frankly and candidly before you and ask you for SPECIAL efforts and for a VERY SPECIAL financial SACRIFICE for God's Work - a special and generous offering ABOVE regular tithes and offerings" (emphasis HWA's).

It was constant contradictions like this that caused everything Herbert Armstrong and Stan Rader said concerning church finances to be suspect.

It was not until 1978 that the WCG again published any detailed financial information. In June it published the percentage increase in donations from 1950 to 1977 (*The Good News*, June 19, 1978). In September it printed a 1977 income statement (*The Good News*, Sept. 25, 1978), but we explained in a newsletter that we questioned its accuracy because (1) Rader said the figures printed were "excerpted from the financial statements" and (2) certain WCG accountants told us privately that the categories and figures were combined, juggled, and/or renamed to cover up certain church expenditures.

In October, the WCG printed some confusing first-quarter figures (*The Good News*, Oct. 9, 1978) to counteract claims by Garner Ted Armstrong's church that WCG income had taken a nose-dive. (These claims later proved to be valid.) In November, the 1977 balance sheet was reprinted (*The Good News*, Nov. 6, 1978). Now, before we discuss the 1978 financial report, we would like to piece together the church-college-AICF net income figures taken (as printed) from the above-quoted sources:

For the Year Ended Dec. 31	Net Income	Expenses	Net Gain	Net Loss
1972	\$54,262,700	\$48,450,400	\$5,802,300 ---	
1973	55,988,500	55,555,100	433,400 ---	
1977	67,161,300	68,420,500 ---		\$1,259,200
1978	63,467,000	68,394,000 ---		4,927,000*

\*One inside source has predicted to the Report that, unless the WCG can finally sell its Big Sandy, Texas, properties or other major assets, its net loss for 1979 may be as high as \$8 million.

From the above table one can see rather plainly that in 1978 the church-college-AICF combined spent \$4,927,000 more than it made in net income. But why? Why is the church which once boasted that its income increased 30% every year now faced with deficit spending? The 1978 financial report reveals one key reason for this shortfall of funds: *Quest* magazine and Everest House Publishers! The income statement shows that *Quest/78* magazine and Everest House Publishers produced \$3,870,000 in revenues but consumed an incredible \$7,826,000 in expenses! That means that of the organization's \$4.9 million income deficit, \$3.9 million is directly attributable to *Quest/78* magazine and Everest House Publishers. And guess what? Herbert Armstrong admits in a member letter (Nov. 22, 1978) that the church will have to subsidize *Quest* to the tune of \$1,410,000 in 1979, \$903,000 in 1980, and \$95,000 in 1981. He hopes *Quest* will show a modest \$334,000 profit in 1982 (if the church isn't bankrupt by then).

## The Contribution of *Quest* and Everest House

But what have *Quest* and Everest House Publishers done for the Worldwide Church of God? Herbert Armstrong brags that "*Quest* is now recognized as the very TOP magazine in QUALITY in this country" and that "it is now beginning to add considerable prestige to the Worldwide Church of God" (Nov. 22, 1978). But has *Quest* advanced the "one true gospel message" Herbert alone claims to preach? No, not at all: His gospel message is not even allowed in the pages of *Quest*, nor are articles by him. In fact, *Quest's* philosophy is diametrically opposite to that of Herbert's magazine, *The Plain Truth* According to Robert Shnayerson, *Quest's* editor, *Quest* is "a new magazine for closet optimists, people who suspect the world is NOT going to hell." While *Quest* "takes a sophisticated stand against fashionable despair and disengagements" and trumpets man's excellence, *The Plain Truth* concentrates on showing how has failed, why the end is near, and why Christ must rescue a dying and corrupt world. While *Quest* discusses "new life-styles," *The Plain Truth* says the Christian life-style is the only way. In fact *The Plain Truth* stresses the Ten Commandments, whereas *Quest* took God's name in vain in its first issue. Now we have heard that *Quest* is sponsoring a lottery. Yet Herbert Armstrong wrote in his booklet *Pagan Holidays -or God's Holy Days--Which?* (a standard church publication for 22 years) that "lotteries and gambling are of the devil" (p. 43).

Everest House's first contributions weren't much better. Its first books contained accounts of homosexual acts, the occult, sadism, sex perversion, how to let your mind go via the use of Zen, financial advice for gay couples, etc. ad nauseam. (See our Aug. 22, 1978 newsletter.)

## Other Revelations from the 1978 Financial Report

The footnotes of the 1978 financial report provide a wealth of information on the financial dealings of the top WCG corporate officers. Footnote 6 reveals that the "church entered into an agreement to lease a jet aircraft from Mid-Atlantic Leasing Co. through Excelsior Investment Corp., both of which are partnerships in which Mr. Rader held a one-third interest. Total payments made to Excelsior Investment Corp. over the 8½-year term of the lease were \$4,785,000, representing principal payments of \$3,113,000 and interest of \$1,672,000.... The aircraft is included in the combined balance sheet at a cost of \$3,808,000, less depreciation of \$1,537,000." Later in the same footnote, we discovered: "Since 1969, the Church and the Foundation have retained the services of Worldwide Advertising, Inc., an entity in which Henry F. Cornwall...has a substantial beneficial interest."

Footnote 7 explains that "on July 30, 1976, the Church entered into an employment agreement with Mr. Armstrong. The agreement has a duration of seven years and provides Mr. Armstrong with an annual basic compensation of \$200,000." Mr. Rader is said to have also received a similar 7-year agreement in 1976 worth \$175,000/year. "The agreement also provided that, at the completion of the seven-year employment period or Mr. Armstrong's total disability or retirement, Mr. Rader will become a consultant to the Church for a 20-year period at an annual salary of \$100,000."

Now you, the reader, can guess why Herbert Armstrong resisted making the church college financial report available to church members' curious eyes in previous years. However, had he done so, he might have diffused much of the distrust that developed over the years due to his secretiveness.

The 1978 income statement showed that the organization made \$607,000 on performing arts and cultural events but spent \$1,598,000 for support of these events. Also, of the 1978 expenditures, 19.2% went for evangelism, media, publishing, and editorial; 11.4% went to *Quest* and Everest House; and only 8.2% went for academic and student services. The fact that more than a tithe of the church's money went for *Quest* and Everest House makes one wonder what Rader's and HWA's true priorities really are.

## Quest and Kennedy

Aside from the admitted fact that *Quest* is costing the WCG a lot of money, one can only speculate as to what its real purpose is. A recent issue, for instance, featured an article on politician Ted Kennedy. *Quest* received numerous letters criticizing the Ted Kennedy piece, including one which said, "Teddy's quests are stale and the antithesis of what your magazine seems to be about."

In the July-August issue the editor of *Quest* responded to such criticism by writing, "Senator Kennedy appeared on our May cover because the article inside was entitled 'Playing Politics, Democratic-Style,' and in that particular game he is generally considered the No. 1 player. Some readers feel that *Quest/79* should avoid politicians, but the editors believe that quests for political power fit into the magazine's focus on achievement...." Maybe someone should send the editors of *Quest* a copy of Herbert Armstrong's frequently published article., "How Would Jesus Vote for President?" (Herbert Armstrong teaches that it is a sin to vote.)

## Hang in There, Herbert!

Is Herbert Armstrong senile? Is he in control of his faculties? The answer to these questions is hinted at in Herbert's own writings. For instance, in the June 18, 1979, *Pastor's Report* HWA wrote, "In all this world's history God has never started an important Work, or Special Activity through a chosen human, and then, after that Special accomplishment is well-advanced, allowed His chosen human leader to be overthrown by Satan - or in any way to turn false! Yet those promoted high *within* that Work or special activity for God, *have* been allowed to turn false, against God's chosen leader" (emphasis his).

In the same article (pp. 2-3) he goes on to say that some ministers were in serious danger of becoming the "Laodicean era" of God's church; yet he claim "they are yielding completely to Satan's will!" We ask, how can God's churches be led by Satan?

On page four, he discusses his younger years. Oblivious to the fact that he was a high-school dropout, Herbert writes, "I had not neglected education and did possess the equivalent of post graduate degrees."

He then goes on to discuss his alleged "conversion," saying, "I did not 'put on' any new sanctimonious appearance, I was just natural - myself...." But wait a minute! Didn't Paul write in Rm. 13:14 that the convert should "put on" Jesus Christ? And didn't the apostle Paul also write in I Cor. 2:14 that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them..."?

On page 5 Herbert, defending Stanley Rader, writes, "*WHY*, I ask *again*, *WHY* do some ministers and even some brethren lay members, think EVIL of Stanley Rader? Could it be because he *is* 'worldly-wise' and therefore able to give the Work a help none of us can give?" Yet the apostle James wrote, "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!" (James 4:4).

It should be obvious to everyone that Herbert is slipping, but perhaps these mental lapses are not entirely his am fault. Not long ago, in a phone call to *Ambassador Report*, Garner Ted revealed to us that his father was taking many drugs. He described them as very potent petrochemical-based pharmaceuticals which he said he had even helped administer before his departure. All drugs have side effects. Many cloud the mind. Perhaps this is the reason behind the many odd statements emanating with HWA's signature or by-line.

## GTA Productions Update

We recently talked to minister Ledru Woodbury who, not long ago, left the WCG, taking approximately 60 members with him. Some of these people formed their own church and incorporated under the name Church of God of Fruita. Mr. Woodbury, who has been retained as the group's minister (at no salary, incidentally), approached the Church of God International (COGI) with the idea of merging with them. He quickly became disillusioned, however, when he was informed that to do so, the church he ministered to would have to divest itself of its autonomy. Mr. Woodbury told us, "I was very disappointed. It [COGI] is already just a Garner Ted production. In another few years it will be another Worldwide Church of God."

Mr. Woodbury is now ministering to a number of small, sabbatarian congregations in Colorado, and he tells us he has a taped sermon program for those who are interested in his ministry. His address is: 1241 Twenty Road, Fruita, Colorado 81521.

The comment about Ted's COGI becoming another WCG is something we've heard from a number who've attended GTA's services. It doesn't surprise us. Ted has repeatedly stated that he's preaching the same things now that he always has. With GTA again doing television programs, it shouldn't take him long to build up another following.

One thing he is doing differently than in the past is recognizing that there may be Christians in churches other than his own. He has even responded favorably to overtures from the Church of God, Seventh Day (which Herbert calls the "Sardis" church). That church ran an interview with GTA in its magazine, *The Bible Advocate*, in March. It was rather enlightening. Copies of that free magazine can be obtained by writing to *The Bible Advocate*, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, Colorado 80233.

One final GTA item. A few months ago one of our readers wrote us: "Someone who knows GTA well told me that you wrote him a letter of apology for various things written about him in your magazine. If this is true I would like to have a copy of the letter...."

The story is not true. Why should we apologize? We've been very careful to publish only the truth. The one who should apologize is Garner Ted, for the part he played in devastating thousands of lives. If we printed lies, he should have had the guts to take us to court.

### What in the World?!

Before Garner Ted Armstrong was banished from the WCG there were some in the church who felt once he was gone, the WCG would somehow be morally purified. But now, many are complaining to us that this has not happened. For instance, one headquarters minister we know has tape recorded his conversations with members about their sex lives. He even has typed transcripts on file. Why this is necessary we don't know.

Another headquarters minister collects pornographic photographs. This was thoroughly investigated by the *Report* and through an unusual set of circumstances we were actually able to see some of his extensive collection. It includes obscene photos of naked women - some were of church women whose faces we recognized - and naked men and young boys in homosexual-type poses. We can only wonder how this minister, known for his conservative moral views, obtained photos of naked women who attend his church. We can also only wonder what his interest is in photos of naked boys.

Homosexuality is, of course, not a rare thing in this world. Yet we were somewhat surprised when a Christian man wrote to us recently saying that his local WCG ministers gave a sex questionnaire to his congregation's teenagers (boys and girls, aged 12 to 19). Among the questions was one which asked if the youngsters wanted to hear about homosexuality. The man who wrote us, believing that the subject of sex is best confined to the home, has since left the WCG in disgust.

## The Weirdos

While on the subject of aberrations, we would like to comment on a remarkable phenomenon occurring with increased regularity. The WCG has always had its "colorful" characters. Yet during the last year or so it seem it has attracted a disproportionate number of individuals who can, at best, be described as coming from society's lunatic fringe. This is not to imply that the WCG intentionally desires this. Indeed, HWA would, himself, undoubtedly be on the warpath if he knew fully about the situation. But still, one can only wonder about some of "the crazies" loose at headquarters.

For instance, there is hardly a week that goes by that some WCG member or employee doesn't call us saying he or she has found some fanatical flyer, letter, or pamphlet on his desk at work or in his mailbox. These seem to come from a variety of individuals, committees, and groups with different axes to grind.

Some are pro-Ted and anti-Rader. Some are pro-HWA and anti-Rader. Some are pro-Rader/HWA and anti-Ted, and on and on they go. Most, unfortunately, have one thing in common; they are anonymous. Perhaps some fear they will be fired if they reveal their authorship. More likely the author(s) have enough sense left to realize they will be netted and institutionalized, if detected.

One strange flyer was signed by a group calling itself "Masturbators Anonymous." The (satirical?) headline read, "Masturbating Your Way to Radiant Health." (The flyer claimed to be an advertisement for a publication with that title.) The flyer began "As we all know, there are seven laws to radiant health, a good sex life, being one of those divine, immutable laws. But you can't experience a scintillating sex life without understanding the plain truth about masturbation!!" The flyer then goes on to discuss the publication's contents: "Did God create masturbation for man - not the animals? Why don't animals have hands?... Were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed for masturbating on the sabbath? Can you masturbate with a bad attitude and still be blessed on the sabbath? If it can be shown from the Bible that masturbation is not work but pleasure, then is it OK to do it on Saturday?"

Then there were two ads which appeared in the June 8 Pasadena *Star-News*:

"Personal to the Worldwide Church of God: The prophets of old could have more than one wife. If it was not adultery then, why is it adultery now? God does not change... or does he?  
[signed] The desire of women, 666."

"To the Worldwide Church of God: The beast is HERE which has two horns like a lamb and speaks like a dragon. Who can know the secret of the image but the god that women love?"

If any of our readers can make sense out of any of this, please tell us. We certainly can't figure it out.

## Trials, Tragedies, and Tithes

Much of what is now occurring in the WCG is very tragic. The chaos is apparently causing many to lose their mental balance. We have received numerous letters telling of divorces, wife-beatings, mate abandonment, and child kidnappings in families where the church's problems have caused severe domestic stress. Unfortunately, some WCG ministers have been either unqualified or unwilling to properly minister to families (by advocating tolerance, kindness, etc.) where one mate is not a WCG member.

Another tragedy is that the WCG's current financial difficulties have prompted some of its more

fanatical ministers to offer financial advice to members, which, when applied, will leave many poor people even poorer. Mandatory tithing is once again being vigorously taught as required for salvation ("Non-tithing is stealing," writes HWA). Some WCG employees have even been "leaned on" to pay "back tithes." One such employee was *Plain Truth* managing editor Brian Knowles, who received a phone call from Rader's secretary, Virginia Kineston, after missing two tithe payments. He paid up promptly. Ironically, Brian had an article recently in *The Plain Truth* titled, "Is Yours A Fear Religion?"

### Where Are They Now?

Readers regularly write us asking, What happened to Al Carozzo, the minister who "blew the whistle" on Garner Ted in 1973? Mr. Carozzo, who wrote two important articles for the Report in 1977, is a very successful building contractor and lives with his wife and family in Vacaville, California.

Mr. Carozzo, a sabbatarian, still spends a good deal of time in counseling those with spiritual problem and occasionally gives sermons. We recently contacted him and discovered that he is now involved in much more than only business and religious matters.

He told us, "I've become alarmed at the accelerated rate Americans are losing personal freedoms. It seems that free enterprise is constantly being bombarded by so called 'liberal elements' in society. If the trend continues, I personally feel our children and grandchildren will be living in a closed society with little or no freedom. Our country is great because our founding fathers were men of integrity who developed a system of government intended to provide freedom for men and women of integrity. I think freedom and responsibility go together."

Mr. Carozzo went on to say that he feels American family life is disintegrating, the welfare system is growing out of control, and government is much too large. To promulgate what he believes are the solutions to these problems, he intends to found an organization, tentatively called "The Liberty Foundation." He has plans to begin a 15-minute radio program and eventually start a college. He has put together a paper entitled "The Goals and Purposes of the Liberty Foundation." Those who are interested may contact Mr. Carozzo by writing to him at P.O. Box 129, Vacaville, CA 95688.

Another individual many ask about is ex-WCG minister Richard Plache. Like a number of former Worldwidars, Mr. Plache is now a charismatic Christian. He is often a guest speaker at various churches around the country, and he writes for *World Insight*, a charismatic publication edited by Ken Storey.

*World Insight* has a number of ex-WCG members on its staff. Tom Hall, formerly with Ambassador's television department and now a professional radio announcer in Los Angeles, is a contributor. Gary Alexander, once one of *The Plain Truth's* most prolific writers, is also a contributor. David Ord, a WCG minister in England until 1975, is assistant editor.

One very unusual publication put out by *World Insight* is a booklet called "The Worldwide Church of God in Prophecy." *World Insight's* address is P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102.

### Documentary Film

In August of this year, the publishers of *Ambassador Report* were invited to the premier showing of a remarkable documentary film. Produced by a group of very talented and zealous Christians, the documentary, "Cult Explosion," is well worth seeing. It contains interviews with former members of many cults with commentary by experts in religion and psychology.

Among the interviewees were a number of former Armstrongites: Mr. & Mrs. Gary Alexander, Suzy Hunter (the daughter of Mrs. Karan Armstrong) and her husband Keith Hunter (now an executive with Full Gospel Christian Businessmen's Fellowship International). Mrs. Hunter not only appeared in this film, but has been an eloquent anti-Armstrongism spokesperson on television. Here is what Stan Rader said on television about Mrs. Hunter's new-found love of God and disenchantment with Armstrongism:

"I see her turning her back on a heritage that maybe has made her good, if she is any good at all. I'd say the heritage that she has received here is what has made her good, that part of her that is good. We're all made up of good and bad. I'd say, the good part is what she got here and the bad part she picked up from someplace else."

For those who are interested, the 55-minute film can be rented from Creative Ministries, 925 Sherlock Drive, Burbank, CA 91501.

### Looking for a Church?

Probably the most frequently asked question put to us by disenchanted WGG members is: "Where should I go to church?" Although some of us have attended services with a variety of different churches since leaving Worldwide, none of the Report's publishers are members of a denomination or church group at this time. But everyone has different needs. Churches can provide people with a sense of community, an opportunity for fellowship, new friends, educational opportunities and often meaningful worship services. Many individuals who have joined main-stream churches after leaving the WCG tell us they are very happy with what they've found.

Without advocating any one group and, as always, without trying to give our "endorsement" to anyone, we would like to mention some literature that may prove helpful to anyone searching for a religious affiliation.

As all of you know, often in the past we've mentioned the Foundation for Biblical Research (P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102). That organization has published an article entitled "The Biblical Principles of Fellowship." If you're facing the question of where to worship, it may prove useful. (Incidentally, the Foundation has also published a new booklet called *The Tithing Fallacy*, which is having a tremendous impact on many in the WCG.)

Another organization that has helped present and former Worldwidiers is the Concordant Publishing Concern (15570 W. Knochaven Road, Canyon County, CA 91351). They publish a wide variety of books and booklets on the Bible and have been of tremendous help to many of us. Concordant's spokesman, Dean Hough, told us that they have a free, introductory packet of material available to those who request it. It comes with a complete catalog and price list of all their literature.

Of course, not everyone wants to be a part of a church organization. We received a little tract entitled, "What Do You Mean... Nondenominational?" which put forth some very good arguments for nondenominationality. We are not offering the tract, but it had this return address on it: The Church of S.W. Denver, 9800 West Wesley Court, Lakewood, Colorado. Perhaps they can supply copies.

Some months ago, ex-WCG minister Richard Forkun sent us a research paper he wrote that thoroughly debunked many of Herbert Armstrong's most cherished anti-Christian dogmas. It covers such subjects as Sunday-keeping, Christmas observance, Christian fellowship, etc. Mr. Forkun asked us to publish it, feeling it could be of real help to many burdened by the dogmas fostered by the WCG. We agreed that the paper was, at least, interesting and perhaps of potential value to many. We

have decided, however, not to run it as an article in the Report because of its length and because we thought it beyond the scope of our purpose.

Nevertheless, because some of you may be in need of help in this area, we will send a copy of the five-page paper to anyone requesting it. We do ask, however, that you send 50¢ per requested copy to cover photocopying and postage, as we do not believe it proper to apply *Report* funds toward non-*Report* projects.

### Self-education

Over the years we have mentioned a number of books of special interest to WCG and ex-WCG members. These have included William Hinson's *Broadway to Armageddon*, Marion McNair's *Armstrongism: Religion or Rip-off?* and the sociological classic *The True Believer* by Eric Hoffer. Here are three other books we think many can benefit from:

1. *All God's Children* by Carroll Stoner and Jo Anne Parke. Chilton published the hardback, and Penguin has now published a paperback edition. Although it does not deal specifically with Worldwide, it is the best book we know of for helping concerned friends and relatives of cult members. It is well-documented and offers much sound advice for dealing reasonably with the cult member who will not listen to reason.

2. *Religion may Be Hazardous to Your Health* by Eli S. Chesen, M.D. The hardcover edition was published by Peter H. Wyden, Inc.; the paperback edition is by Collier Books. This book does not attack religion but offers "a psychiatric guide to the uses and abuses of God, prayer, and the church or synagogue." This book is now out of print and finding a copy may take some work. But the effort will be worth it

3. *The Art of Clear Thinking* by Rudolf Flesch is a psychology classic. A paperback edition is published by Barnes and Noble. Of special value is chapter 9, "How Not to Be Bamboozled" (something everyone needs to read before following Herbert Armstrong). Chapter 5 and 6 on language and translation are especially valuable for those who study the Bible.

### Been Watching TV Lately?

Some of our readers have been calling us, wondering if one of us perhaps had something to do with certain fictional television shows they've seen of late. The answer is yes, but please don't ask us for details.

There have been a few shows on lately that we hope you've seen. If not, catch them when they are rerun. Here they are: "Mode of Death" (written by Abrey Solomon and Steve Greenburg, based on a story by Deborah Klugman) on "Quincy"; "Charlatan" (by Michael Vitters) on "Lou Grant," and "The Miracle Man" (by Robert James) which has already been rerun once on "Hawaii Five-O." All relate to religious rip-offs. Also, there will be a feature movie called "Religion" coming out in the near future. Produced by Norman Lear and starring Martin Mull and Fred Willard, this comedy will be one which ex-Worldwidiers will find particularly entertaining

Before closing, we would like to apologize for not getting out a newsletter since June 1, but we've been very busy. We would have liked to maintain our bimonthly status, but that has not been possible because of our personal responsibilities. For this reason, we have changed our publishing schedule over to a quarterly plan. This should help us in being more consistent.

Some have written us recently, asking if they had been dropped from our mailing list. No, our policy

is to send the *Report* to whoever requests it. However, we do appreciate your financial support in getting the *Report* published. Incidentally, all funds we receive go only toward the *Report*. None are used in starting private lawsuits or for contributions to religious organizations of any kind. Every newsletter we have ever put out, including this one, has left us "in the red." It has only been through your generosity that we have been able to repeatedly get back "in the black" and continue publishing.

To all those who've helped, our thanks. And before we forget, our season's greetings and New Year's best wishes to all of you.

Sincerely,

THE PUBLISHERS

---

*Ambassador Report* is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola.  
Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR11\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR11 March 24, 1980

Dear Friends:

After many months of legal maneuvering, Stanley Rader exhausted all postponement appeals and was required to appear at a deposition on February 21. The deposition, however, proved unproductive. Rader, who was accompanied by a battery of lawyers, answered practically no questions. He then refused to appear for a continuation of the proceedings the following morning. He also failed to produce the documents he was ordered to produce before or at the deposition.

According to Lauren Brainard, the deputy attorney general now in charge of the case, the Attorney General's office will now attempt to get a contempt-of-court ruling against Rader.

As for the state's lawsuit against the WCG, some experts are now predicting that with the pre-trial delays that are still being thrown up, it is quite likely the case will not go to trial until 1981.

### THE WCG WINS A FEW

Numerous Worldwide Church of God (WCG) ministers have repeatedly insinuated that the state of California's actions against the church constitute a persecution by a conspiratorial group of men in government. It is therefore noteworthy that the state has not won all its legal battles.

For instance, a lawsuit by the state against the Rader, Cornwall, Kessler, Palazzo accounting firm was dismissed recently in Los Angeles Superior Court for failure to show sufficient cause of action against the firm. The suit was dismissed "with prejudice," meaning the state cannot again bring the suit against the accounting firm.

The WCG, in a sense, also won a victory in the U.S. Supreme Court where, on December

10, the court ruled in favor of WCG member Thomas Byars in a case involving holy-day observance. Since joining the WCG, school-teacher Byars has taken a number of days off from work each year to observe the church's feasts. The school system attempted to dismiss Mr. Byars over his absences, but Mr. Byars fought back in the courts. The Supreme Court decision added weight to former court rulings that have defined the 1964 Civil Rights Act and an important 1972 amendment to that law.

### HERBERT ARMSTRONG VISITS COMMUNIST CHINA

During early December of 1979 Herbert Armstrong, like thousands of American tourists before him, visited Communist China. But unlike other tourists, he unloaded gifts worth a reported \$500,000 and gave three short speeches.

In one speech to top Chinese officials he said: "I'm tremendously impressed with what I have seen [in China]. Here I've seen, in what parts I have seen already, three-fourths [sic] or one-fourth of the whole world's population as far as I can see living now at peace. But the other three-fourths of the world is living in a state of turbulence,. and of fear, and of trouble, and full of evils. "

He then went on to say: "...the only hope of the world will be in a single one-world government with one military force and one government over all the nations on earth." The speech contained no reference to Jesus Christ, repentance, or the Bible.

Garner Ted Armstrong, obviously alluding to his father's China trip, wrote in his January 16 *Now* publication: "What a pity the Chinese people cannot be warned by a true servant of Jesus Christ not to become involved in an alliance against Israel-not to send their forces into the Mideast!"

During the China trip Stanley Rader also gave a speech. According to the December 6 Pasadena *Star-News*, Rader's topic was U.S. Constitutional law. The *Star-News* printed this excerpt from evangelist Rader's address: "The first amendment is in its most elemental terms a right to revolt, not just as an individual, but with group political force."

It is ironic that on December 6, the day the Armstrong party left China, the Chinese government "ordered the closure of Beijing's [Peking's] poster-filled 'Democracy Wall,' the main public forum for free expression in China, on the grounds that it had become 'an anarchistic phenomenon'" (*Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1979).

### HERBERT ARMSTRONG EXPOSED!

After Garner Ted Armstrong was banished from the WCG in 1978 for "conduct unbecoming a minister, " he remarked on one occasion, "Whatever I've been guilty of, my father's been guilty of in spades!" He didn't publicly give any details, and many thought the oft-quoted, cryptic remark to be a rather poor attempt at self-justification.

It now appears, however, that for once, Garner Ted was telling the truth. An extensive expose soon to be published paints Herbert Armstrong in as unfavorable a light as

anything ever written about his son. The book is *Herbert Armstrong and Get Versus Give* by David Robinson, a highly respected former WCG minister and longtime confidant of Herbert Armstrong.

We understand that in spite of a certain sympathy on Robinson's part toward Garner Ted Armstrong ("When you realize the full magnitude of Herbert Armstrong's personal moral problems, it's no wonder Ted developed some of the weaknesses that he did."), Robinson has turned a deaf ear to repeated requests from GTA's wife, Shirley, that he not publish this expose. Robinson told the *Report*, "I don't care what anyone says or what anyone threatens. I may not be a great writer, but what I've written is 100% true, and this story needs to be told."

We hope that the whole story will be told and that between now and its publishing date nothing will be omitted. We've seen a copy of the book's manuscript and some sections are, quite frankly, very shocking. We will have more to say about it in future *Reports*. Those who would like to obtain a copy of the book can do so by writing to: John Hadden Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135.

The cost per copy is \$10.00, including postage. The book should be available by the end of April. We were told that only a limited number are being printed so it would perhaps be advisable to order early if you are really interested.

#### A REMARKABLE ARTICLE GIVES NEW INSIGHTS

During the last two years there have been a number of really fine articles on the WCG published in some of our nation's top publications. We recently saw one that we thought was especially noteworthy. It appeared in the March issue of *The Atlantic* and was entitled "Father, Son and Mammon: How Evangelism Pays." The author is William C. Martin, who teaches at Rice University.

The article covers much of what we've reported on in the last three years (the author is on our mailing list). It does also, however, offer a number of additional insights. For instance:

"What almost no one, including Garner Ted, recognized was that, should the church cease to exist, its assets, now worth an estimated \$80 million, could be transferred into a non-profit foundation matching AICF's description. Such a transfer was made possible by a 1968 amendment to the church's Articles of Incorporation. According to the document, signed by Herbert W. Armstrong and Albert Portune, then secretary of the WCG, the board of directors and 5051 members of the church met at 363 Grove Street in Pasadena and voted in favor of the amendment in question. But Herbert Armstrong has never permitted voting on any matter pertaining to the church, the building at 363 Grove Street will hold no more than 400 people, and Portune, in a television interview, declared that no such meeting occurred. When I asked Rader about the document, he explained that 'it was probably a sabbath and each minister in the area read the proposed amendment to the members at the service that day, and since there was no voice of dissent, they were recorded as affirmative votes.' Reference to a foundation, he said, was just 'legal boilerplate.' That may have been the case when the document was written, but when I have shown it to present and former church members, they have grasped its implications immediately. I am confident they have not been entirely lost on Stanley Rader" (pp. 60-61).

"In fact, Mr. Armstrong's travels do not appear to have reaped much of a harvest. Rather, he seems to be playing a kind of religious tag; if he has his picture taken with a nation's leader, he somehow imagines he has preached the gospel to yet another land of lost and dying sinners. Garner Ted is particularly skeptical about the efficacy of this aspect of his father's apostolate. 'Never in the history of human endeavor,' he says, 'has so much money been spent by so few for so little. Those trips are just glorified autograph-hunting tours - window-dressing, like AICF and *Quest*. My father has gone on and on about the great good these trips were doing, but it might come down to a thousand dollars a word for some lecture on the "Seven Laws of Success" to the Civitan Club of New Delhi or the Rotarians of Nairobi. Dad has boasted about how he does not mention the name of Jesus Christ on these visits. If that is the case, why bother?'" (p. 63.)

"Though my sample was neither large nor scientifically selected, my conversations with a dozen or so present and former ministers of the WCG confirm the picture of them as thoroughly compromised men. One, who came to my hotel room late at night to avoid being seen in my company, said of himself and his colleagues, 'We have lost our health, our wealth, our self-respect, our courage, our manhood. Armstrong didn't think it all out and say, 'These are the moves I'll make and these are the stops I'll pull,' but one thing led to another and this is the result.'

"By surrendering their autonomy so completely, these men and women have not only vandalized the image of God in themselves but have almost certainly diminished their capacity to cope effectively with the inevitable loss of their leader" (pp. 64-65).

"What does Herbert Armstrong want? A year ago, he told Wayne Cole he wanted to appoint a board of directors that would take control after his death, working as an administrative team until a clear leader emerged. Though susceptible of deteriorating into a power struggle, this approach would probably have the best chance of accomplishing, in a more or less orderly fashion, what Max Weber called 'the routinization of charisma.' In fact, however, the elder Armstrong has moved in precisely the opposite direction, restructuring the ministry to transform what was once an elaborate hierarchy into a system in which each local minister is answerable directly to, and only to, Herbert W. Armstrong, Pastor General. As has been his custom for almost half a century, he legitimates the arrangement by proclaiming it to be the purest form of the Government of God. Those who continue to regard Mr. Armstrong as God's Only Apostle for our Time will accept his claim and follow him to the end. But when the end comes, as it must, the WCG is certain to experience devastating trauma" (P. 65).

For those who would like to see the entire article, we recommend that you check first with your local public library. If they don't have it, you can order a copy for \$1.50 from *The Atlantic*, Subscription Dept., 8 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116.

### CHURCH'S FINANCIAL POWER ERODING

Herbert Armstrong still boasts how his "work" is growing: "This is a truly great worldwide work! The Work is booming!" (letter to brethren and co-workers, Jan. 23, 1980.) But he's also not bashful about continually pleading for more money: "We must now be willing to sacrifice till it hurts!" (*Ibid.*) The fact is Herbert's work is actually sliding backward at an ever increasing pace!

In our November 19, 1979, newsletter, we included an analysis of the latest audited financial reports of the WCG, AC, and the AICF for the year ended Dec. 31, 1978 (*The Worldwide News*, Sept. 10, 1979). We reported that they took in \$63,467,000 but spent \$68,394,000—a 7.8% deficit. But what we didn't reveal was that their income's purchasing power since Jan. 1, 1973, has suffered a steep and serious decline. In 1978 they garnered \$63,467,000, but that amount was worth only \$39,087,864 in 1972 U.S. dollars.

In 1972, they pulled in \$54,262,700 (*The Worldwide News*, Mar. 18, 1974). This 1972 income is actually 38.8% higher than their 1978 income adjusted back to 1972 dollars.

Another startling fact: They would have taken in \$86,470,097 in 1978 had their 1972 income just stayed even with inflation—that is, if their real growth rate (after being adjusted for inflation) remained right at zero, they should still have grossed \$86,470,097. But they didn't. Their income was only \$63,467,000.

Indeed, this long-term drop in revenue is a reflection of deep problems in the Armstrong organization: declining membership and/or members giving a smaller percentage of their disposable income than before. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. real weekly take-home pay (adjusted for inflation) up through the-year 1978 was higher than it was in 1967. This means that, in general, each WCG member's take-home pay should have increased at about the same rate as did inflation. Therefore, even with no increase in membership, the Armstrong organization's 1972 income should have increased at the same rate as inflation and topped \$86,000,000 at the end of 1978. But it didn't. It fell almost 30% short of this level.

	<u>In 1972 \$</u>	<u>In 1978 \$</u>
1972 receipts = \$54,262,700	\$54,262,700	\$86,470,097
1978 receipts = \$63,467,000	\$39,087,864	\$63,467,000

(Calculations based on consumer price index data from U.S. Dept. of Labor and on compound interest and present value tables.)

Not only is diminished purchasing power crippling the Armstrong group's attempts to recruit new members, but other electronic media preachers are seizing an increasing share of the lucrative U.S. religious market. The incomes of these apostles of the airwaves are fast gaining ground on the WCG's large income. For instance, *Los Angeles Times* religious writer Russell Chandler estimates that in 1979 Oral Roberts grossed \$60 million, Pat Robertson (700 Club) \$58 million, Jim Bakker (PTL Club) \$51 million, Jerry Falwell \$50 million, Billy Graham Assn. \$30 million, Rex Humbard \$25 million, and Jimmy Swaggart \$20 million (Feb. 25, 1980, p. 3). And remember, many of these evangelistic organizations do not even have local congregation ministers being supported through their budgets. In other words, their media impact is far greater than the WCG's.

For decades Herbert claimed his work had grown at 30% per year and bragged that this was proof positive that God was backing his evangelistic efforts fully. But his work's real purchasing power over the last six years has plummeted by more than 30%. Does this mean - by his method of reasoning - that God has withdrawn his blessing from Herbert and forsaken Herbert's work?

It seem likely that Herbert's church lost even more ground in 1979 and will report less than \$60 million gross income-largely due to the massive lawsuit pending against the church and the unstemmed tide of ministerial and member defections.

### PLAIN TRUTH STAFF PURGED

For more than a year it had been rumored that many of the members of the editorial department - specifically *The Plain Truth* staff-were closet dissidents. It was alleged that they were committing the unpardonable sins of not tithing and not attending sabbath services. To make matters worse, *The Plain Truth* was headed by Managing Editor Brian Knowles, who had written a paper disproving the WCG'S sacrosanct tithing doctrine. So it was no surprise when, after years of plotting, the WCG's right-wing succeeded in getting Brian Knowles axed, along with his entire staff. The news came around Thanksgiving, 1979. (Ironically the *PT* had previously been purged just before Thanksgiving in 1974 and 1976.) Herman Hoeh is once again the senior editor, and Dexter Faulkner has been given the title of managing editor. Gone are Brian Knowles, Lawson Briggs, Bob Ginskey, Ron Beideck, Pam (Antion) Hart, and Linda Martens. (Greg Smith resigned before the purge, and George Ritter, Carole Ritter, and Paul Graunke all resigned earlier in the year.) But there are still a few more closet liberals in hiding, and their time will come sooner or later. Interestingly enough, almost 85% of those who ever worked for the editorial department have become "dissidents." The reason is obvious: If you are truly qualified to analyze, edit, and write - and if you have a conscience - you will also be sensitive to the gaping holes in Armstrong theology and the gross hypocrisy that permeates the church hierarchy.

### MORE LEGAL BATTLES

WCG officials informed the departing *Plain Truth* staff members that they would not be receiving severance pay - which, according to published church policy, was one week's pay for each year worked. Lawson Briggs, Ron Beideck, and Bob Ginskey complained about this arbitrary and discriminatory treatment to the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. The church, after being challenged by the state labor commissioner, initially, agreed to pay half of the amount claimed by Lawson Briggs and the full amount claimed by Ron Beideck and Bob Ginskey, although the church denied it had any legal obligation to give departing employees severance pay unless it deemed the person spiritually deserving.

In addition, Ginskey, Briggs, and Beideck, along with Dan Cafourek (an accountant) Ted Gould (a minister and longtime WCG/AC personnel director), George Myers (a carpenter), and others are taking legal action against the church to obtain their annuity pay. (In June 1978, Ted Gould alleges that the church initiated an annuity program to make cash payments to laid-off employees who had put in 10 years of service to the church/college but who were not at retirement age. Later in 1978 the standard was lowered to seven years of employment.) Their legal action is still pending.

It will be interesting to see the outcome of these various claims against the WCG over severance pay, retirement pay, etc. Many WCG/AC employees have been laid off in the

last few years and especially in the last few months. If all of these individuals were to be paid the severance pay and retirement benefits many believe they are entitled to, it could perhaps amount to more than a million dollars.

It's no wonder then that just six days after Messrs. Gould, Beideck, Ginskey, and Briggs filed their initial complaints, Herbert Armstrong issued this declaration, "To All Department Managers and All Employees:"

"As of this date, I am suspending all employment, compensation, and benefit policies contained in the Employee Relations Policy Manual, pending study of same. These were all proposed without my knowledge or authority,

"The same applies to all Employee Benefit Manuals.

"These policies were never authorized or approved by me or the Board of Directors, and were only discovered by me today. No one has ever been authorized to set policies in either the Church or College except myself and the Board of Directors."

This unilateral declaration has, of course, proven very unpopular with many WCG employees. WCG employees let go now will apparently not be eligible for the same benefits as those kicked out of "God's Work" before Herbert's unilateral declaration. Of course those individuals will not mind as they will have been allowed to serve "the Apostle" a little longer. (Ha!)

### MORE CHURCHES

The Worldwide Church of God, which itself is the result of a splitoff from the Church of God, Seventh Day, has seen a number of its leading ministers and members leave and form competing "churches of God": Church of God (Shreveport Conference) - John Mitchell; the 20th Century Church of God - Al Carozzo; the Associated Churches of God - Westby and Kemnitz; the Church of God, The Eternal - Raymond Cole; the Church of God - Carl O'Beirn; the Church of God Seventh Era - Larry Gilbert Johnson; the Church of God, International - Garner Ted Armstrong; etc. (All of these churches cling to the biblically unprovable doctrine that the name of a Christian church must have the words "church of God" in its name.) Now there are a few more "churches of God."

One is the Biblical Church of God, founded by former WCG minister Fred Coulter (Box 744, Monterey, CA 93940). He offers interested individuals a cassette tape ministry and a magazine named *The Bible Answers*. His contributing editors consisted of: Lawson Briggs (former WCG editor and writer, and a WCG/AC employee for 25 years), Carl Franklin (former WCG minister), Jean Franklin, George Johnson (former *Plain Truth* and *Good News* writer), and Velma Johnson.

Another apparently new Church of God is the Church of God, Kelowna, P.O. Box 2362, Station R, Kelowna, BC, Canada, V1X 6A5. We're not sure who heads this group, but we have seen some of the literature they publish. We found one piece, dealing with Herbert Armstrong's early religious credentials, particularly interesting.

Another newly formed church is The Family Church of God, 3124 Yukon Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626. This congregation of about 45 members is headed by former WCG minister Rick Gipe. They do not have literature available, but Mr. Gipe tells us that anyone in his area who wishes to fellowship with this group or counsel with him may do so by calling him at 714-926-6417.

Incidentally, Mr. Gipe told us he is another ex-WCG employee who is involved in a legal battle with the WCG over thousands of dollars worth of annuity benefits and severance pay. Like the similar cases covered earlier, this one could have important ramifications for many former WCG ministers and other employees.

Another church we were recently made aware of is the United Church of God, P.O. Box 45, Lake Winola, PA 18615. This Sabbatarian church is headed by former WCG minister (left in 1974) Richard Wiedenheft and publishes *Focus on Truth*, a monthly theological newsletter. Mr. Wiedenheft recently wrote to us and sent along an extensive catalog of sermons on cassette available from the United Cassette Library, P.O. Box 1413, Scranton, PA 18501. These two organizations have ties with the Association for Christian Fellowship, formerly the Associated Churches of God.

### STARTING YOUR OWN CHURCH

With the WCG's disintegration causing such a proliferation of new churches, it was only a matter of time before some ex-Worldwidiers started an organization offering just about everyone the opportunity of starting their own church.

Yes, that's right! You too can be ordained and have your very own church (and obtain the many tax-exemption benefits claimed by those in the "ministry"). "It's easy," says Tom Williams, former WCG minister, former Associated Churches of God minister, former insurance and diet-plan salesman, and now president of Liberty Ministries International (LMI).

LMI offers seminars and literature about their program and publishes *Liberty Line*, a quarterly edited by Gary Alexander. As many of you probably know, Mr. Alexander was formerly a contributor to *The Plain Truth* and his name currently appears as a contributor in the staff boxes of both Ken Storey's *World Insight* and Garner Ted Armstrong's *Twentieth Century Watch*. *Liberty Line's* subscription price is \$12 per year (\$15 in Canada, \$18 foreign), and their address is P.O. Box 11105, Richmond, VA 23230.

Quite a number of former WCG members have already signed up with LMI and started their own church. But one individual who was wooed by the LMI group told us: "I just don't think it's worth the \$3,000 they wanted me to fork over. After all, Kerby Hensley's Universal Life Church, Inc. of Modesto [601 Third St., Modesto, CA 95351] will ordain anyone a minister for \$2. And for \$5 they will ordain you an abbe, abbot, arch-priest, deacon, arch-deacon, bishop, cardinal, elder, friar, guru, dadji or lam, etc. For an additional \$25 they will give you a church charter. Hensley doesn't offer all the legal advice IM does, but Hensley does have a longer record of avoiding successful prosecution by the IRS.

Hensley does not require that you have a degree in theology to be ordained, but he can provide that too. For \$20 you can obtain a Doctor of Divinity degree. Or, for \$100 you can obtain a Ph.D. in religion-but for this degree you must pass an exam consisting of twenty true-false questions. This degree, by the way, is fully accredited by the International Accrediting Association (another Hensley organization, of course).

A lengthy article in the March 13 *Los Angeles Times* (Section V) reported there are many organizations now offering quick ordinations and advice on how to start your own church. Of course, there are numerous tax advantages for those who do so. The IRS, however, warns that to be a legitimate church in their eyes the organization cannot be operated to further the private interests of its founder or of other individuals. It is because of this very point that the IRS has been investigating the WCG during the past year.

### THE INSTITUTE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Not every minister who leaves the WCG starts a church. For instance, Howard Clark (see our March 14, 1979, issue) has gone on to help found and is now president of an organization called the Institute for the Preservation of the American Family.

Clark told the *Report*: "We're a small, struggling organization, but we're not another WCG-spinoff scam. We're dedicated to serving real people who have real problems. We have board members with no previous Armstrong ties, and we have enlisted the aid of numerous highly educated, certified and licensed professionals. The institute is properly incorporated and contributions to us are tax deductible."

The institute's services include personal counselling, aptitude testing, vocational guidance, alcohol abuse rehabilitation, and assistance for battered wives and chronic teenage offenders. Another service involves personal help for the handicapped and catastrophically afflicted. As many of you know, Clark himself has had thirty years of personal experience in this area due to a devastating spinal cord injury received in the Korean war.

Over the years we've known Mr. Clark to be an individual of warmth and compassion who has sincerely attempted to apply Christianity, not just preach it. If any of our readers would like to know more about this institute or if any have a problem (especially one related to WCG-withdrawal), Mr. Clark can be contacted by phone at 916-534-9943 or by writing to the Institute for the Preservation of the American Family, P.O. Box 1214, Paradise, CA 95965.

### GTA DEFECTIONS

The Garner Ted Armstrong Organization has had some major defections in the last few months. First there was Albert J. Portune, who decided to separate from that group after being denied a place on CGI's doctrinal committee. He was not given a position on the committee, apparently because some of his doctrinal beliefs were considered "too Dr. Ernest Martinish."

Within the last two months Jack Martin, who had been the CGI's publications director, was fired. That was followed by Allan Heath, the CGI's publications editor, and C. Wayne Cole, the CGI's director of ministerial administration, both resigning. According to a CGI spokesman, all three left over the issue of church "governance." Ronald Dart, now clearly GTA's right-hand man, has stated he now expects and hopes GTA will begin to exercise greater "leadership" in the church.

Other recent CGI defections include David Bierer, Gordon Muir, and John Tuit - who you may recall was one of the original six plaintiffs in the state of California suit against the WCG.

Mr. Tuit wrote us explaining how he was quite disillusioned with Garner Ted Armstrong and how he and a small group in New Jersey hope to establish a local "Church of God" congregation in that state. Mr. Tuit believes very strongly that local congregations should maintain their autonomy but hopes that some sort of dialogue can be established between the many "churches of God" that have left the Armstrong autocracies. He hopes that such cooperation could result in a joint evangelistic effort via the media. Any who wish to contact Mr. Tuit may do so by calling him at 201-431-5276 or by writing to: John Tuit, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold, NJ 07728.

The CGI defections of the last few months have had an important effect on the GTA organization - its income has suffered a severe drop. Many in the CGI are withholding their tithes until such times as they can have more confidence in GTA. Another CGI income factor is the strong disagreement among many CGI ministers as to whether "tithing" is a required biblical law. According to Allan Heath, the biggest problem facing the CGI is the widespread reading of Dr. Martin's literature, especially *The Tithing Fallacy* booklet. It will be interesting to see what the CGI's doctrinal committee, now headed by David Antion (GTA's brother-in-law), finally decides on tithing and other doctrinal matters.

The CGI's problems have caused many of its top men to wonder how long it will be before Teddy cries his way back to Papa. Herbert has written that he has dreamed of Ted repenting and coming back to the fold. Ted, also, has had the subject of reconciliation with the WCG on his mind. In his February 12 member letter GTA wrote:

"Reconciliation would be unthinkable under the present [WCG] regime, in any case - and, further, if any talk of 'reconciliation' should ever be joined, one of the first requirements would have to be the *blanket* understanding that each member of the Church of God, International, would *automatically* be welcomed back as a member in good standing of any such merger, or reconciliation! Thousands of brethren have speculated about 'Ted returning to his father, and leaving us high and dry.' That simply will never happen!"

Another fear among CGI members is that GTA will tire of the restraints put on him by the CGI's board of trustees and will then leave the CGI, taking its top contributors to form a more autocratic organization. It very likely would be called "The Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association." The idea has apparently already been considered.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

David Ord, whose name still appears in the staff box of *World Insight* (P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102; see our last issue), has moved to Illinois where he is now assistant editor of a religious publication called *Union Life* (656 Taft Ave., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137). Although Mr. Ord's association with *World Insight* continues, Richard Plache seems to be taking on a greater share of the writing for that publication.

We found a recent *World Insight* letter by Mr. Plache rather remarkable. In it, on the subject of self-righteousness, Plache writes:

"One might ask, 'What's so bad about doing good - even if it is humanly motivated and accomplished solely by human effort?' It is only by understanding the answer to this question that we can really come to see why human goodness is, in reality, the worst possible expression of sin or lawlessness."

We find this concept a little difficult to comprehend, but in the same letter Mr. Plache does admit:

"One might say that I have become a God-Watcher' - just hanging around to see what God is going to do next. He always seems to have some new and unexpected trick 'up His sleeve.' Never try to second guess Him. If your experience is anything like mine, you are probably batting .000."

The WCG's February 25 *Worldwide News* contained a list of ministers officially disfellowshipped by the WCG in recent months. We have reported a number of these already, but we thought you'd like to see the entire list anyway. Here it is: Charles Barrett, David Bierer, Bobby Boyce, Henry Buck, Rod Carnes, Lor Chamberlain, Fred Coulter, Hollis Crotts, Brent Curtis, Richard Gipe, John Hammer, Robert Hoops, Joe Horchak, Bronson James, Charles Oehlman, John Ouvrier, George Panteleeff, Ted Phillips, Bill Porter, Jack Pyle, Ray Pyle, David Robinson, and Doug Taylor.

Authur Mokarow, formerly a popular minister and executive in the WCG, is now only a nominal WCG member. He was terminated by the church after it became clear he was not a Rader loyalist. Mr. Mokarow is now in the process of moving to Palm Springs where he has his own local television talk show. The program is called "Tapping Your Potential."

Dr. Charles V. Dorothy, considered one of the WCG's top minds, has been dropped from the WCG payroll and is now seeking employment outside the Armstrong sphere of influence. He has not been disfellowshipped, however, nor have his ministerial credentials been revoked. His wife, Dr. Jo Anne Dorothy, received her chiropractic credentials some months ago and is now practicing in the Pasadena area.

Roderick C. Meredith, in exile in Hawaii (see our last newsletter), says he hopes he will be allowed to return to Pasadena soon. ("There are strong forces at work in the church," he commented to one member.) Those who would like to contact him may write to him at 927 Hahaione St., Honolulu, HI 96825 or call 808-395-5095. He says he has been ordered not to speak to fellow ministers. But nothing was ever mentioned about not talking to WCG members and others, so that's okay.

## A CLARIFICATION

In our last issue we reported how "all WCG evangelists were stripped of their rank. " This is true, but we should clarify what was meant.

The evangelists were not stripped of their titles. All are still called "evangelists." But in a series of directives, Herbert Armstrong ordered that all ministers are now directly responsible to him and to him only. For instance, the preaching elders are not to take orders from the pastors who are not to take orders from the evangelists. In other words there is no church hierarchy, but only one boss, supposedly.

Does this mean then that ministerial titles will henceforth refer to ministerial function? Apostle Herbert says no. His interpretation of Ephesians 4:11 still does not include anything so obvious. What then does "evangelist" mean? And how do ministers report directly to HWA? Don't they still have to go through Stanley Rader to get to him? Perhaps HWA or evangelist Rader will clarify these points in the future.

## TOM LAMPITT

Just as we went to press with our last issue we were very saddened to learn of the death of Mr. Tom Lampitt of Hertfordshire, England. Mr. Lampitt, a well-known figure in British civil aviation, was killed last September 26 when a Super King Air he was flying crashed in Nantes, France.

When Ambassador's Bricket Wood campus was sold, Mr. Lampitt, an ex-WCG member, worked hard to get the money refunded to the many poor people in Britain who had contributed to the college. (We understand a few did eventually receive something back.) Mr. Lampitt also helped *Ambassador Report* on a number of occasions and was the one most responsible for our first *Ambassador Report* being distributed in Britain. Our sincere, though belated, condolences to his widow Barbara, his two children, and his many close friends in Britain.

## LETTERS

*...We have information from the State of Minnesota that contributions and tithes sent to Tucson, to Herbert Armstrong personally, are not tax deductible. We wonder how Herbie or Stanley are getting around this. It was announced in church that they were tax deductible.*

*-Minnesota*

Editor: Obviously, gifts given to private individuals are not tax deductible. It will be interesting to see how the WCG handles this matter. We understand the IRS is keeping a close eye on the situation.

*Is Herbert Armstrong in great fear of Stanley Rader? The word is "blackmail." From what GTA said in Portland on 3/24/79, from what CWC [C. Wayne Cole] said on 6/23/79*

*in Portland, and from what CWC and GTA said on the tapes of 5/19/79 "My Side of the Story," the message is food and clear that HWA is being blackmailed by S. Rader. Hence his strange behavior. Can you confirm this?...*

*C. Wayne Cole's message of 5/19/79 "My Side of the Story" is obtainable through The Church of God, International, Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710. The message is on cassette tapes (2). GTA's remarks at the end are quite interesting. He speaks of his father's great fear of S. Rader.*

*-Oregon*

Editor: We have no proof whatsoever of any blackmail activities by Mr. Rader. Mr. Rader himself has characterized such Garner Ted Armstrong statements as "complete nonsense."

*[I recently saw] Garner Ted's financial statements published in the Nov.-Dec. 1979 Internews. Last year at the beginning of the Church of God, International, he published his salary. This year he has all of the salaries in one lump sum so no one knows how much he makes, plus he has executive entertainment, ministerial expense, and personal allowances. Plus the members loaned him money, interest free, for an engine for his airplane, or rather he took the liberty to borrow the money.*

*As a former member, no answer was given when asked why Mr. Al Portune left International. Neither did anyone know why Garner Ted's secretary quit.*

*-Illinois*

*In a previous Report one reader's letter mentioned "I.D.E.A.L." of Houston, Texas (P.O. Box 38191) with a reference to Rader and HWA being tied to the CIA. I wrote to the address but the letter was returned -- "not here." Do you know where "I.D.E.A.L." can be contacted and what they represent?*

*-England*

Editor: We were once shown a tract put out by this organization but have no information as to what has become of it.

*For your information I enclose a copy of a letter I received from the publisher of the book, Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright, written in 1902 by J. H. Allen. This is the book that survived 18 editions, is still in print, and was apparently plagiarized by Herbert Armstrong in order to write his U.S. and British Commonwealth in Prophecy.*

*-New York*

Editor: We are not promulgators of or believers in the British-Israel theory. However, for those who may be interested in this subject, *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* may be obtained for \$5 from: Destiny Publishers, 43 Grove St., Merrimac, Mass. 01860.

*What really got me started to wise up was your Ambassador Report. I'd sure love to thank the person who paid for my issue and who had my name put on your mailing list.*

*I stopped attending services in April 1979, and it wasn't three weeks till they'd removed my name from their [mailing list for] letters, magazines, etc.... After 16 years of running here and there and sending Herbert and Garner Stud over \$25,000, it's all over but the memories - lots of good ones - but also lots of scars and mental battering from those warped jerks they call ministers.*

*-Pennsylvania*

*Listen up,*

*I don't know how I got on your mailing list, but I want off. I cannot think of anyone any lower than you people. Anyone who devotes his life to hate and trying to destroy another person is so small that he can hardly be noticed. I don't appreciate what you are doing. Take my name off your list.*

*-WCG minister*

Editor: This letter is typical of many we have received from WCG ministers whom we have sent literature to at the behest of some of our concerned readers. When a reader requests that we send a WCG minister our publication, and always when a check is enclosed to cover the expenses, we feel obligated to send the requested literature. However, the above letter is very typical of the attitude of those ministers still in the church.

Our advice? Forget them! This may sound cold, even heartless, but these men are there because they want to be. The ministers in the WCG know about the *Report*, and they know how to get it. So, to those readers who may be concerned for the spiritual welfare of some former minister, all we can say is you are wasting your time. Forget them.

Let's face it. If most of these men were to stand up and preach what they know to be true, they'd be fired. And then what would they do? Very few have occupational skills outside of the religious field. And, of course, most of them really enjoy the adoration they receive from their sheep.

We'll continue to help any WCG minister who asks our assistance. But we suspect that the really conscientious ones, the ones with guts, have already left. So as for the "ministers" that remain, we'd prefer not to waste our time.

*Thanks for putting me on the mailing list for Ambassador Report. It is incredible the events transpiring in the WCG and all the off-shoots of the parent organization.*

*I sincerely believe one must remove from the spirit of these organizations before clarity*

*and sanity returns. The spiritual, financial, and moral corruption at every level of these organizations has reinforced my conviction that my wife and I did the right thing in withdrawing from all of them.*

*As long as money talks (and I'm sure it always will) and as long as people are so willing to continue to pour money into the coffers, there will always be those ministers who are witting to take the bucks .*

*-Former WCG minister*

*I enjoy your Report very much. However, I am wondering why in all the material I have read, I never have heard it mentioned how much alcohol was consumed and how many wild parties were given, and how people were urged to drink in the WCG. I knew many people who were alcoholics when I left the church. Any comment?*

*-Florida*

Editor: You're right. Alcoholism is a major problem in the WCG and even among many who have left. Obviously the WCG does not preach that excessive drinking is okay. But that problem is still very prevalent in that organization.

One Pasadena-area doctor who treats many WCG people has commented that hypoglycemia - an illness often associated with alcohol abuse - is a malady so common among his WCG patients as to be of almost epidemic proportions. Perhaps the reason for this is because the WCG's overall world view is so pessimistic and its doctrines are so stifling that, for relief, members turn to the one vice most tolerated by the church's ministry. In the WCG you can get disfellowshipped very quickly for asking certain Bible questions, but rarely for having "one too many."

There are many excellent books available on the subject of alcoholism. One we have found interesting is *Find Your Natural High* by John A. Marshall and published by Happy Eye Enterprises, 1460 Grandview, Glendale, CA 91201. The cost is \$5.95 plus 59¢ postage.

An excellent book on the subject of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar or hyperinsulinism) and on health in general is *Body, Mind and Sugar* by E. M. Abrahamson, published by Avon. Copies can be obtained from Publishers Central Bureau, Dept. 017, One Champion Avenue, Avenel, New Jersey 07131. The price is \$2.95 plus \$1.95 for shipping.

*Gerald Waterhouse spoke here a couple weeks ago. He sounded to me like a maniac ranting and raving long and loud. Has he been saying the same thing for 25 years? About Petra? His mind is Petra-fied!*

*-Missouri*

*Our minister... has told some [married] couples in our... church to stop sleeping together. One member hasn't slept with his unconverted wife for three years on this advice. The*

*Bible says this is fraud one to another. The Bible says no man shall put asunder a married couple. No wonder there is so much divorce, adultery, and wife swapping in -----'s area. He can't possibly be a minister of Jesus Christ.*

*The marriage in question is on the verge of divorce, an attempt has been made to kidnap the child, and the wife has had her life threatened by WCG friends of her husband. Her only fault is not being interested in the WCG.*

*-New York State*

Editor: We have been receiving many letters lately from WCG members attesting to the incredible stresses put on their lives by the troubles in the church and in particular by WCG ministerial involvement in their lives. Divorce in the WCG is rampant. we have read numerous letters from separated parents who have had their children kidnapped by estranged mates who are members of the church. There have even been a number of homicides in church families, apparently resulting from quarrels over church-related matters. One individual recently wrote that when she and her husband left the WCG, they received threatening phone calls and both narrowly escaped separate attempts on their lives.

One cannot help but ask: What are the fruits of this church?

*When I asked the minister to "memberize" me to the WCG, he asked me if I planned to continue with my nursing program. I said yes and he asked me if I would work on the Sabbath. I said yes and he told me as a member of the WCG I wouldn't be allowed to do so. I told him that the Bible says it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath and Jesus healed on the Sabbath and that what I did on the Sabbath was between me and God. Then he told me that to listen to GTA on the radio was no different than having the devil over for dinner and I'd have to stop. I told him it was none of his business. He told me with my attitude he couldn't let me join the WCG. I told him with his attitude I wouldn't want to. I don't like being hustled and bullied.*

*-California*

*I was so glad to receive the Ambassador Report.... I am one of Armstrong's first converts. Armstrong stayed with Elmer Fisher and with my husband and me at the time he started to preach at the Firbutte school and at the Jeans school.*

*I caught on to what he was doing after he moved to Pasadena. I quit sending him money so one of his ministers took me off the mailing list.... I can't see why so many stick with him.*

*-Oregon*

*I sent in over \$40,000 [to the WCG] and now I find myself cut off from the church (I guess because I quit tithing to them).*

*-Kentucky*

*I think you're foolish for trying to destroy God's church, but I'd like to find all the answers for myself. Please send me your publication Ambassador Report.*

*-Illinois*

*We were totally in the dark prior to January [1979]. Then we began to see that something was wrong. I had refused in the past to even look at your publication. The leaders in the WCG had me thinking that I was opening myself up for demon possession if I looked at your work. Whew! Have I come out of the dark ages!*

*-Iowa*

*This past week a friend of ours showed us a 1977 issue of Ambassador Report. It was like having a giant puzzle falling into place all at once! After reading through the articles, we were both heart-sick to learn of the pain and suffering so many well-meaning brethren have experienced by being a part of the "true church of God!" Sadly, we lost a child in our family by not taking him to the hospital as we should have done.*

*-Australia*

*I received your long and interesting newsletter last week. It was a revealing, accurate account of the latest. We know since we have been receiving the Pasadena Star-News for seven months. We have a pile of clippings!...*

*My wife came close to dying several times while in the WCG because of their healing practices which meant no drugs, not even aspirin. Since she's a diabetic, insulin (a hormone, not a drug) is required. Some ministers told her that she should not take insulin. Also some members. It was a matter of faith, they said. On the annual day of atonement, she didn't eat or drink and consequently ended up in the hospital. Finally one compassionate minister told her that she should drink juices on that day. He didn't know what to think, mentioning that some people were exempt from fasts. This minister told my wife, after he recovered from his surprise of her going without food and insulin on Atonement day, that God is love. Truly, that sums up many good things. (By the way, this fine minister was later forced to resign after many months of harassment by members and perhaps higher-ups in the WCG.)*

*Again thanks for your help. We hope to recover some of the money lost to this cult organization. Perhaps indirectly we may have because my wife was notified that she won \$1,000 in a sweepstakes.... We feel free to do things. We are happier these days since leaving Armstrongism. We hope some of our former friends (they won't have anything to do with us) will soon see the light, for Christ is the only way.*

*You are welcome to print this letter in your newsletter and have permission to publish our names.*

*-Mr. & Mrs. Phil Strandvold,  
Sheffield, Alabama*

*Sometime ago I sent you a note requesting my name be removed from your mailing list. I realize now this was a mistake. Even though I do not care for some of the news, I know I must be informed. We cannot live with our heads in the sand!*

*-California*

*As you know, I have been photocopying the AR and distributing it through newspaper advertisements, etc. The response has been most encouraging. We have formed an association called: Association for Religious Research, P.O. Box 23, Cleveland, 4163, Queensland, Australia.*

*The purpose of our organization is to make information on the WCG controversy available to the interested public.*

Editor: If any of our readers wish to make photocopies of our *Ambassador Report* newsletter for distribution, we hope you will feel free to do so. Our limited resources do not make it possible for us to print and distribute as many as we would like. Those who make copies and distribute them (to WCG members especially) are performing a real service. We've received many letters from thankful individuals who've written how much their lives have been helped as a result of receiving an *Ambassador Report* copy from some unknown sender.

### LATE NEWS

On March 8, the Pasadena *Star-News* carried a news item "Worldwide Church Gets New Support" by Dan Meyers in Washington, D.C. Here are a few important excerpts:

"The National Council of the Churches of Christ, representing 32 religious groups followed by 40 million Americans, has joined a Supreme Court battle on the side of the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God. At issue, according to a 'friend of the court' brief filed Friday, are 'not just the rights of the Worldwide Church of God and its members... but those of every religious body and every American...."

"The Worldwide Church of God has lost attempts in lower courts to block the state from obtaining its records. Its Supreme Court appeal was filed Monday.... Attorney Laurence Tribe, who represents the Worldwide Church of God, said that the appeal for a Supreme Court review of the state's demand for the church's papers is the last legal recourse the church has to keep its records private .....

Then on March 20 this Associated Press article appeared:

"A group of religious leaders, representing major Protestant and Jewish organizations, backed legislation Wednesday to repeal a new law giving the state attorney general power to inspect church records. The churchmen were backed by Brent Barnhart, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union.

"At a Capitol news conference, the group announced support for SB1493 introduced by Sen. Nicholas Petris, D-Oakland, which would repeal a law effective since Jan. 1 giving the state attorney general power to examine church records when he determines there are 'reasonable grounds.' The new law was part of a massive rewrite of the statute concerning non-profit corporations, which was passed by the Legislature last year with the backing of the State Bar. Bernhart said the provision about church inspections attracted little notice.

"It was under the former law that records of the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God were placed in receivership by the Los Angeles Superior Court in January 1979 in a state investigation of alleged misuse of church funds by church leaders. The church has the case before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals claiming an unconstitutional violation of freedom of religion.

"The attorney general brought suit against the church and church leaders, claiming church funds are a charitable trust governed by state law and which the attorney general must protect. It is not certain whether the new state law or its repeal would have an effect on the state's case against the Worldwide Church of God since the attorney general's action was based on the former law."

We will monitor this development and *Report* on it in future issues.

Our thanks to all of you who are helping to make possible our continued publishing.

Sincerely yours,

The Publishers

---

*Ambassador Report* is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola. Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR12\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR12 June 30, 1980

Dear Friends:

During the last three months there have been a number of important developments in the State of California versus Worldwide Church of God (WCG) legal battle. But the most important WCG-related events have been transpiring in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

### COURT ORDER DELAYS [ROBINSON BOOK](#)

In our last newsletter we reported that former WCG minister David Robinson had written and would soon publish a book about Herbert W. Armstrong. After numerous delays, the book finally went to press with the title *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*.

Robinson hoped all advance orders would be mailed out by the end of the first week in June. But just after the copies were bound and boxed, Robinson was served with a temporary restraining order, issued by Tulsa District Judge William W. Means, prohibiting distribution of the book. The order came after two members of the WCG - minister Sherwin McMichael and Rader associate Henry Cornwall (just recently baptized) - filed a \$2 million suit against Robinson, John Hadden Publishers, and printer Interstate Book Manufacturing Company of Missouri.

Their suit, filed June 2, contends that the book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, contains "certain allegations concerning intimate details of the personal lives of plaintiffs and, in particular, plaintiffs' religious practices within the church and vis-a-vis the church's founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. Both the allegations which are true and those which are totally false were intended to, and did, intrude - in a manner highly offensive to a reasonable person - on the private affairs and religious beliefs of plaintiffs.... Said allegations were intended to, and did, seriously jeopardize the free exercise of religion by plaintiffs, by Herbert W. Armstrong, and by other church ministers and members. Said allegations are not of legitimate concern to the public."

Robinson told the *Report*, "I'm absolutely convinced Stanley Rader is behind the suit. This is one book the current WCG leadership would do almost anything to stop. I also know, for a fact, that Ralph Helge has been in close contact with Keith Ellison, the Tulsa lawyer representing Cornwall and McMichael."

Stan Rader told the *Pasadena Star-News* (June 10, 1980, p. 3) that he had "nothing to do with it at all." Yet, lawyer Ellison would not deny that he had been in contact with Ralph Helge, the WCG lawyer and Rader associate. Rader, when asked if the church was financing the suit against Robinson, said "not to my knowledge." But when Helge was asked the same question, he refused to deny the charge, saying, "I don't want to comment on that."

It is ironic that while Rader has, for over a year, attacked the California attorney general and Judge Jerry Pacht for initiating the state's lawsuit through an ex parte motion without notice, the temporary restraining order against Robinson was obtained in exactly the same way. Robinson told us, "They obtained this order through an ex parte hearing without notice. There was no good reason in this case for such an action. It is clearly unconstitutional prior restraint and tramples my rights to freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Furthermore, the order hurts others besides me. Many in Worldwide would not be giving their money to Herbert Armstrong and following him down the broad path to destruction if they had access to the information in my book."



Author David R. Robinson.

The evidence the plaintiffs provided in obtaining the temporary restraining order consisted of an advertisement letter Robinson had sent out (see p. 3) and a copy of rough drafts for two chapters of the book (originally numbered chapters 16 and 21), which Robinson had distributed to friends. Based on this limited material, the plaintiffs were able to obtain the order prohibiting the defendants "from publishing or causing to be published any of the previously published material in chapters 16 and 21 of [\*Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web\*](#) or any heretofore unpublished material from said book" (emphasis ours).

Robinson, more than a little upset over the order, told us that "Judge Means has put the courts in an incredible position. The order, in effect, says I cannot write or publish anything about a wide variety of subjects - many theological - because my book, which neither he nor the plaintiffs have yet seen, may somehow possibly interfere with Cornwall, McMichael, or Herbert Armstrong practicing their religion! I can hardly believe something like this can even occur in the United States."

Many legal experts agree.

William Hinkle, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union told the *Tulsa Tribune* (June 14) that the ACLU was coming to Robinson's assistance "because we have a special interest in the First Amendment and because this is a totally unprecedented case of a suppression of a book. All this complaint alleges is that it talks about their religion."

Another attorney who has joined in Robinson's defense is former University of Tulsa law school dean Bruce Peterson who called the restraining order "tragic." He told the *Tulsa Tribune* (June 14, p. 1): "What happened was this. Jim Kincaid, who is from a law firm with a prestigious name in town, goes over there to District Court and gets Means to sign it. It's too bad that in state courts - I say this of Means and all the others over there at District Court - that they issue temporary restraining orders all the time that are overly broad and too general. I can cite you numerous cases like this. They [church leaders] are pouring money into this thing like you wouldn't believe. That law firm over there has five people working full-time generating motions .... I don't care if what is in this book is true or not true or libelous or not libelous - that is another issue. I don't believe in prior restraint. Damn it, he [Robinson] has a right to write his book!"

The legal actions against Robinson have especially infuriated many who have ordered the Robinson book and are waiting patiently to receive their copies. Some have told us that they have written letters or are intending to write letters of protest to the WCG's lawyers in Tulsa and the judge presiding over the case. Some have stated they plan to phone and protest personally. The judge who will preside over the case is The Honorable Richard Comfort, District Court of Tulsa County, 500 South Denver, Tulsa, OK 74103. The law firm representing the WCG's side is Conner, Winters, Ballaine, Barry and McGowen; 2400 First National Tower, Tulsa, OK 74103 (tel. 918-586-5683). Copies of such letters can also be submitted to the "letters to the editor" section of an appropriate newspaper such as the *Tulsa Tribune*, P.O. Box 1770, Tulsa, OK 74102.

Some who have ordered Robinson's book have also written letters of protest to Interstate Book Manufacturing Co., 3416 E. 23rd St., Kansas City, MO 64127 (tel. 816-483-5524 and 913-764-5600). Although this firm is located outside the jurisdiction of the Tulsa court, since the initiation of the suit they have cooperated with the plaintiffs and are refusing to release Robinson's shipment of books. Five thousand completed copies are sitting boxed in their warehouse while hundreds of people who have ordered the books are kept waiting.

Robinson told the *Report*, "I've been very moved by the many individuals who have encouraged me in the battle. I'm especially appreciative of the patience of those who've ordered the book. I don't intend to let them down. And I'm still taking orders for the book. Once it is out, the church will probably find some new way of blocking it again. They have the resources to keep this in the courts for years. But as for those who have ordered the book and are ordering it now, I know God will see to it that they get their copies somehow."

Robinson refused to elaborate, saying only "the court of God will prevail over the courts of man. The truth cannot be stopped." Robinson's battle with the WCG has inspired one newspaper to liken the situation to David versus Goliath. Indeed, one (not totally unexpected) benefit of the suit is a great deal of free publicity. Many news organizations have taken an active interest in this unusual case and in Robinson's book.

-

Below: Part of the "evidence" submitted in the Robinson lawsuit - an advertising letter signed by the author.

---

David Robinson  
5006 So. Hudson  
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135

Dear Friend,

I have been heavily involved with the Worldwide Church of God since 1949. My first fifteen years were spent as a layman and the next fifteen as a minister, administrator, counselor, lecturer, security chief and co-ordinator. Those duties brought me into close contact with the men who held the organization together, most of whom are either excommunicated or relegated to positions of dishonor within that church.

The realization that something was seriously wrong within the church came to me gradually, over a period of some years. Until rather recently I thought Mr. Armstrong would correct matters when he became fully aware of the seriousness of the problems. I suppose, in retrospect, that was a very naive position to take. But unfortunately it is the position still taken by thousands to this very day. I finally had to face the fact that things began to go wrong about the time Loma Armstrong died. Her influence was in alignment with the Law of God. With her passing another influence moved into the ascendancy which pandered to Mr. Armstrong's innate worldliness.

My approach, when I began to understand what was happening, was to do what I could within the organization in the hope that the organization itself could be saved. I believed that God would use it in a special way after cleaning it up. The result was excommunication by the one who calls himself an apostle!

When that happened I began to write of those experiences. Those papers were read by friends who encouraged me to continue until I had a whole book. While I have no professional writing experience I do find that straightforward presentation of truth (the plain truth) has a power all its own! This is so even when truth is stranger than fiction! So I began what has proven a rather difficult task.

First, I had not wanted to write such a book as I considered there were several others better qualified than I and that one of them should proceed with the necessary task. But while most recognized the need, not one of them would do it now. Several spoke of a later book. But it seemed imperative that it be done soon. Time was of the essence.

Secondly, I was in that difficult transition period between jobs. I found myself at nearly sixty years of age without employment, and without medical insurance for either myself or my wife as we had relied on the church. There was no paycheck, and no help from the institution which I had served for three decades. There was none of the termination pay most Americans have come to expect even from the corporations of "this world." There was the added realization that the church's refusal to pay social security for its employees was now a major drawback at my age. So, there wasn't much time to write. I had to sandwich this work in between other duties.

I firmly believe, based on long experience, that Herbert Armstrong is interested only in sex, money, and power, has nothing but contempt for his followers, and is leading astray those who put their trust in him.

My book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, explains *why*. It shows the *real* Herbert Armstrong - the one few WCG members have been allowed to see. It shows why the WCG is in its present crisis, why doctrines are being changed. It shows the incredible influence Stanley Rader has over Herbert Armstrong and why no man has been able to stop his rise to power. It also reveals incredible secrets known by virtually all the WCG's ministry which, until now, have been kept hidden from the church's membership.

If you or members of your family belong to the WCG, this book will prove invaluable in helping you make important decisions about the church. Those who have read advance copies of the book have commented how they found it not only interesting, but at times, absolutely

shocking. Others have stated that the book has given them a completely new and profound insight into the WCG and the turmoil now surrounding it. I am sure you will find it to be worth many times its price.

To order your copy, send \$10.00 (check or money order) for each book to:

JOHN HADDEN PUBLISHERS  
P.O. Box 35981  
Tulsa, OK 74135

Orders will be mailed out in a few weeks. Only a limited number are now being printed. So to be sure of getting your copy, order now.

Sincerely,  
[signed] David Robinson

P.S. All orders will be handled confidentially.

When it is released, the Robinson book will undoubtedly cause more controversy about the WCG than ever before. The book contains 268 pages plus appendixes and has these chapter titles: (1) Idealism Versus Reality, (2) Until the Return of Christ, (3) The Cover-up, (4) Religious Hypocrisy - a Special Vice, (5) Control - the Name of the Game, (6) Sex and the Single Apostle, (7) HWA's Marriage and Illness, (8) Garner Ted's Ouster, (9) HWA Adopts the Primacy of Peter Heresy, (10) The Little Big Man, (11) HWA's Embarrassment With Christ, (12) The Jewish Connection and the Rise of Stanley Rader, (13) Conversations and Confrontations With Stanley Rader, (14) Conspiracy and Chaos, (15) Stabbed in the Back, (16) Roderick Meredith - the Broken Reed, (17) Raymond McNair - Loyal Buffie, (18) Gerald Waterhouse - the Longwinded Prophet of Petra, (19) Face to Face With HWA, and (20) Incest!

According to the Pasadena *Star-News* (June 10, 1980), lawyer Ellison, referring to the possible effect the book could have on Armstrong and plaintiffs, said, "The book quite well could destroy their reputations as contributing members of society...." Considering the WCG's vast powers of communication via the print and electronic media, we wonder how a few hundred, or even a few thousand, copies of a book could accomplish this if the contents were not true. Lawyer Ellison claims the Robinson book contains both true and false allegations. We at the Report certainly hope that during the course of the trial he will clarify *which* statements are false and *which* statements are true. Because contrary to one assertion in his suit, *the public does want to know*.

As for the accuracy of the claims in his book, Robinson told the *Report*, "I knew, when I decided to write the book, that by doing so I would be in some danger. Many told me that if I tried to get the book out even my life would be in danger. I didn't expect the Rader organization's influence to extend to the Oklahoma courts. But they are pouring a lot of money into this case. Before it's all over they may even try to shut me up by putting me in jail. That may be the price I'll have to pay for speaking the truth. But that's the point. This book is 100% true.

"Herbert Armstrong is claiming it is not. But there's an easy way to find out who is telling the truth and who is lying. I challenge both Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader to come forth and submit to a polygraph test as to the veracity of my statements in the book. I'll agree to do the same and to have the results published. It would be an easy way to find out who's telling the truth and who is lying!"

#### U. S. SUPREME COURT AGAIN DENIES WCG'S PLEAS

As you may have heard, on June 2 the U. S. Supreme Court decided to let California state officials proceed with their investigations of the WCG. Without comment, the court refused the WCG's pleas that it study whether the state attorney general violated the church's First Amendment rights. Not one member of the court voted in favor of the church. It was the third time the church had asked the court to intervene in the case and the third time the court had refused.



George Deukmejian, attorney general of California.

Representing the WCG before the Supreme Court was Harvard University law professor Laurence H. Tribe. In papers filed with the court he contended that the state action would "seriously erode the constitutional protection of all citizens." A number of organizations sided with the WCG and filed friend-of-the-court briefs with the court. These groups included: the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S., the Synagogue Council of America, the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and others. Lawyers for the attorney general, however, contended that the lawsuit against the WCG was merely intended to correct "alleged fraudulent diversion of assets" by church leaders.

The court's action removed the last hope the WCG had of legally blocking a broad series of legal discovery orders requiring the church's leaders to turn over a wealth of information about the church organization and its finances, as well as submit to depositions.

California Deputy Attorney General James Cordi said that the order the court had permitted to be enforced would provide "most of the information we need to try the case."

In a brief to the court, state attorney general George Deukmejian argued that normally, directors or trustees of a charitable trust can go to court to seek remedies for a suspected fraud. But in this case the directors and trustees are "the very persons accused of wrongdoing." He wrote that to allow church officials to use freedom of religion arguments to stop the state's investigation would, in effect, "legitimize fraud in the name of religion."

After the Supreme Court decision, Deukmejian said the court's decision underscored the propriety of the state's case. He pointed out that the church has been denied relief in 16 different petitions to the California Court of Appeals and 11 separate petitions to the California Supreme Court. He said, "It is obvious that these courts, which represent virtually the entire court system in the United States, believe that the issues raised by this litigation are issues in which the public, through the attorney general, has a legitimate public interest." He went on to attack Rader for what he termed refusal to deal with the real issues and for "raising the spectre of government interference in religion. The issues in this litigation are not religious.... Self-dealing and fraud are the issues," he said. (*Star-News*, June 3, 1980.)

#### DEPOSITION TIMETABLES SET BY JUDGE

On June 4, two days after the Supreme Court decision, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Robert Weil announced a timetable within which WCG leaders would be required to appear for depositions. Herbert W. Armstrong must appear for questioning in Tucson on November 6. Attorney Laurence Tribe claimed that Armstrong health, age, and schedule prohibited him from appearing before December 3. But Judge Weil, referring to Armstrong's planned trip to England, Egypt, and Poland this summer declared, "If his age permits him to make these long and arduous journeys, he should be able to sit for a deposition. Mr. Armstrong's deposition has been pending for the last year and a half; it is not a shot from out of the blue!"

Judge Weil also set the dates for the following depositions: Wayne Cole, Oct. 6; David Antion, Oct. 14; Robert Kuhn, Oct.

21; Henry Cornwall, Nov. 5; and Ralph Helge, Nov. 12.

Earlier this year, Helge had attempted to have his name removed as a defendant in the case by producing a series of affidavits from numerous church members and ministers attesting that he had no knowledge of or part in any alleged wrongdoing. But on April 25 Judge Weil refused the request. In arguing against the Helge request, Lauren Brainard disputed Helge's claim that he was not a bonafide officer of the church, college, and foundation.

Brainard said, "An accounting is needed from the charitable corporations and individual defendants because they have been, and are, siphoning off and diverting to their own use and benefit assets of the church, college and foundation on a massive scale. All acts were done with the knowledge and complicity of all individual defendants, and each individual defendant is liable for the breaches of his co-trustees" (*Star-News*, April 29, 1980).

Judge Weil's June 4 order also included deadlines for the handing over to the attorney general of documents presently held by some of the defendants.

Apparently, based on the April 18 *Pastor General's Report* (p. 4), those documents include the minutes of church board meetings going back 20 to 30 years. Those minutes should prove very interesting. One former board member told us that over the years there were numerous minutes written up for board meetings that never occurred. Once the board members have given their depositions, it will be revealing for their testimony to be compared with the written record of the official minutes.

### POLITICIANS MAY SAVE WCG

While the WCG has lost fight after fight in the courts, it may succeed in stopping the California attorney general's investigation through the state legislature. On May 15, the California State Senate passed the Petris Bill (SP 1493) by a vote of 21 to 1. The bill states: "Except as the attorney general is empowered to act in the enforcement of the criminal laws of this state... [he]... shall have no powers with respect to religious corporations." Had this proposed law been in force 18 months ago, it would have been impossible for the California attorney general to have taken action against the WCG as it did in January 1979.

Although the bill still has to pass the State Assembly and be signed by Governor Jerry Brown before it becomes law, its chances for passage are very good. The bill, authored by state Senator Nicholas Petris (Democrat, Oakland), would not go into effect until June 1981 even if passed. However, some observers believe passage of the bill could deal a serious blow to the state attorney general's suit against the WCG.

A June 17 *Los Angeles Times* article by Russell Chandler and Lois Timnick stated, "If it becomes law, the bill could have a negative impact on pending cases [such as the State of California versus Worldwide] even before it goes into effect. That would happen if the courts interpret it to mean that the Legislature's intent is to bar the attorney general from authority in religious areas. None of the major investigations of church groups by the state attorney general, however, was launched under the law the Petris bill seeks to alter." (The three groups being investigated are Gene Scott's Faith Center Church, the Synanon Foundation, and the WCG.)

As one would suspect, the WCG is lobbying for passage of the bill. Ralph Helge has been in Sacramento talking to politicians. WCG minister Joe Kotora has led a demonstration of WCG members at the State Capitol. (Other religious groups also participated, and the WCG members passed out copies of the church's "State vs. Church" reprint.) Harvard lawyer Laurence Tribe, who represents the WCG, has addressed the California Assembly's Judiciary Committee. Others backing the bill include Catholic, Protestant, and cult groups.

Opposition to the bill is coming mainly from Jewish groups, cult fighters, and deputy attorneys general. Legal experts opposed to the bill say the bill, if passed, will severely limit the powers of the state attorney general in investigations of any organizations claiming to be religious. And it will prohibit the attorney general from seeking corrective actions - such as the return of monies misappropriated - in civil fraud cases involving religious organizations.

Those opposed to the Petris bill should voice their opinion by writing to Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814, or by calling his office at 916-445-2841.

### THE CORPORATION SOLE

On April 25 employees of the WCG received an important memorandum from "The Executive Office." It informed them: "Your employment with the Worldwide Church of God, a California corporation, is hereby terminated effective today. The paycheck you will receive on May 1, 1980, represents payment in full through today of all wages and salary due you from Worldwide Church of God, a California corporation .... We wish to thank you for your past service and wish you every success in the future."

But along with the above memorandum came a letter signed by Herbert W. Armstrong. The letter was, in effect, an offer of employment by a *new* organization called "Herbert W. Armstrong, The Apostle of the Worldwide Church of God and his successors, a corporation sole." In order to obtain employment with this new organization, the offeree was required to sign a statement agreeing to a list of employment requirements. Some of these include:

\*A provision giving the corporation sole "the right in its discretion to assign you at any time to different duties."

\*A provision allowing for termination without notice with two weeks' pay.

\*A termination clause which says, "If your employment with the corporation sole is terminated, with or without cause, whether voluntary or involuntary, for any reason, you will not be entitled to severance pay, pension, annuity, or other termination benefits of any kind."

\*"Your ongoing employment is strictly conditioned on your loyalty and continuing adherence to all rules and regulations of the corporation sole and conduct consistent with and in accordance with the doctrines, teachings, and beliefs of the church."

\*"Your employment is full-time, so you shall devote your entire productive time, ability, and attention to the business of the corporation sole and shall not directly or indirectly render your services to any other person or organization, for compensation or otherwise, without written consent."

\*"You shall hold in the strictest confidence any trade secret or other information relating to the affairs of the corporation sole or the church, especially (but not limited to) membership lists and corporation books and records. Upon termination you shall return all such information to the corporation sole, along with any copies or duplicates thereof, as well as all other property of the corporation sole in your possession or control."

\*"To dispel any uncertainty arising because of the difficulty in determining at this time what rights if any accrue to you as a result of your termination by Worldwide Church of God, a California corporation, and your employment by the corporation sole, the corporation sole requires as a condition to your employment that you look solely to the corporation sole and its written policies as described herein and as defined in its employee handbook for your rights upon your illness, disability, death, termination (whether voluntary or involuntary), or upon the occurrence of other conditions or events specified in the handbook. Therefore, in consideration for the offer of employment to you by the corporation sole, you agree, by your signed acceptance below, that you release and discharge Worldwide Church of God, a California corporation, from any claims or causes of action you now have or may have in the future, or that any person claiming through you may have, created by or arising out of your employment or termination of employment with Worldwide ...."

The agreement requires the signature, not only of the employee, but of the employee's spouse.

The given address of the new organization is P.O. Box 431, Tucson, Arizona 85702. But according to a *Los Angeles Times* article by Russell Chandler (May 7, 1980), the new organization is a Colorado corporation. That article stated:

"The new entity, qualified to do business in California, is a corporation sole. That means, according to a lawyer familiar with the Worldwide Church lawsuits pending in state and federal courts, that church patriarch-founder Herbert W. Armstrong, 87, 'is the total authority.'

"He embodies all the assets of the corporation,' the lawyer said. According to corporation law, a corporation sole (often used as the incorporating means for Roman Catholic dioceses) need not have directors or trustees nor take votes before acting....

"Jack Kessler, an attorney spokesman for the Worldwide Church, said Armstrong had been considering moving the church corporation out of California since state prosecutors began investigating church finances in early 1979.

"Other states, Kessler said, have 'more favorable trust laws.'"

Not all WCG employees are going along with the new agreement. Five members of the WCG television studio have refused to sign the new contract saying it was "too restrictive."

Some recently fired WCG employees are saying they're now glad they were let go when they were. They were able to get more in severance pay, annuity pay, etc., than those who've stayed on.

#### A NEW DOCTRINE

Herbert Armstrong's name is the central part of his new organization's title. Yet many long-time WCG members will recall how HWA once strongly condemned numerous church groups for including in their legal names the names of their founders.

Herbert Armstrong insisted that the name of the true church is "Church of God" and that this name is one of the proofs or signs associated with the true church of Jesus Christ. He often pointed out that the designation "Worldwide," like "Radio" in earlier years, was only added to the church's proper biblical name as a legal requirement, the name "Church of God" already having been legally claimed by another corporation. (See reprint letter #953, *Good News* Sept. 1963, p. 5, etc.)

But now it appears that this doctrine, like others before, is being changed. On the George Putnam KIEV radio talkshow of June 12, 1980, Stan Rader made these comments:

"...at all times since 31 A.D. there have been members of the Worldwide Church of God some place on the surface of this earth.

"Worldwide Church of God is a spiritual body. It's a spiritual organism, whereas the Worldwide Church of God, Incorporated, is a California corporation carrying on some of the temporal affairs of the church."

### ANOTHER NEW DOCTRINE

Many Ambassador graduates can recall a time when Herbert Armstrong taught that the churches of this world are "of Satan" and that God's church should have nothing to do with them. Yet now we see the WCG cooperating with other church groups in fighting the attorney general of California, even demonstrating with other groups against that HWA formerly referred to as "constituted authority."

In the April 18, 1980, *Pastor's Report* there appeared this statement: "This morning, Mr. Rader accompanied Mayor Kollek [of Jerusalem] on a *courtesy call* to the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox church" (emphasis ours).

On June 25, Stanley Rader appeared on Dr. Gene Scott's "Festival of Faith" television program. It wasn't the first time Rader has appeared on that preacher's program (see our June 1, 1979 issue). But this time, some WCG listeners were shocked to hear that WCG funds would be used to help promote the Scott program in return for a WCG documentary being aired on Scott's stations.

Obviously, Herbert Armstrong's admonition to avoid the churches of "this world" either no longer applies or has been greatly modified.

### AND ANOTHER...

For almost fifty years Herbert Armstrong taught that it was *wrong* for a Christian to vote and take part in politics. In his article "How Would Jesus Vote for President?" - published every four years in *The Plain Truth* from Oct. 1948 through Oct. 1964 and distributed as reprint #232 - Herbert wrote that the great Mother Church (he called the Catholic church the Great Whore of Revelation 17) and her daughter churches (the Protestant churches, he claimed) "formed an illicit union with the governments of this world - entered into this world's politics - took an active part in its affairs! Thus she [the Catholic church] committed spiritual 'fornication' - illicit union prior to marriage.... The popular churches of Christendom nearly all take part in this world's affairs and its politics.... They are deceived: They do not even know they are doing wrong!"

And what does Herbert claim Jesus would do? "He would be too busy proclaiming the good news of His own coming world-ruling kingdom, and the way of salvation, to take part whatsoever in the politics of this present evil world...." But now Herbert, evangelist Rader, and WCG ministers and members are actively lobbying the California legislature and demonstrating in Sacramento. They have even enlisted the aid of the Catholic church - Herbert called it the "great counterfeit church" - and its Protestant "harlot daughters" in their fight. Does Herbert now believe God is so weak that he (Herbert) must solicit help from organizations he has long branded as Satan's churches? Or has he completely lost faith in God? Whatever his reasoning, Herbert has obviously altered one of his church's oldest doctrines.

### WHERE WILL IT ALL LEAD?

At this juncture it is difficult to predict what will transpire in the WCG in the next few months. The following quote from page 11 of the April 18 *Pastor's Report* is, however, very enlightening:

"Mr. Helge cautioned that we've also got to have something else in mind.... Hebrews 11... also tells us that when we're persecuted in one city to go to another. Is that time here now?"

"Mr. Helge then admonished us to not lose faith in our leaders, or the Church because of this lawsuit. Nor should we lose faith in God if arrests and indictments should come forth. He stressed that he was not saying that this was going to happen, but if it does, we should not be too good to experience the same treatment the apostle Paul endured.

"...I'm telling you it's going to take a miracle from God to have it end peaceable. We're going to be peaceable but... [ellipses theirs] this really is the first opponent...."

".there's a bill now in the state legislature that hopefully is going to take away his [the attorney general of California] civil power to persecute [sic] churches (our lawsuit is a civil one),' Mr. Helge reminded the audience. But he may simply take his charges and categorize them as 'criminal' as he has already done in other cases."

The above seems to indicate that the WCG, or at least its leaders, plan to flee California or even the U.S. if the state should file criminal charges or if the civil suit progresses beyond a certain point.

In his book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* David Robinson devotes a chapter to WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse and the WCG's latest pronouncements on Petra. Robinson says Waterhouse has resurrected the old Petra theory and has been on tour preaching it to WCG audiences. Robinson points out that many WCG members believe the "time to flee" is near and they will be encouraged to sell all they own to support the church's "great escape." He sees such a possible exodus as inevitably leading to tragic consequences.

Stanley Rader has denied that the church's Petra doctrine can be compared to the Jim Jones Guyana tragedy. But on George Putnam's June 12 radio broadcast Rader said:

"We do believe that when you're persecuted in one place you flee to another - because the Bible tells you that. And we also know that if the Constitution of the United States should be declared a nullity as a result of this action by the state of California, then in order to continue our work of fulfilling the great commission we're going to have to do so from a place where we are free to do so.... So naturally if we are unable to operate here freely in order to spread the gospel, we'll go elsewhere. But also we have a belief which comes right from the Bible - it's all laid out for anyone that wants to read it, in the Book of Revelation which is a much disregarded book of the Bible unfortunately - that in the end time those chosen few will be saved from what otherwise would be worldwide destruction. So we have contemplated over a long period of time, and speculated.... We just believe that when that end time comes we will be saved. And rather than going someplace for a James Jones Guyana ending it will be to be saved while everyone else, unfortunately, will be destroyed."

Herbert Armstrong, too, is preaching the "place of safety" doctrine. The lead article in the June 16 *Worldwide News* had an HWA article with this headline, "Completion of Work Near???" That article contained this statement:

"...our great commission will be virtually completed. Quickly the Laodicean church will rise up. It will go through the GREAT TRIBULATION. We shall be taken (by flight) to a place of protection for 3½ years, till the coming of Christ.

"I have rechecked Revelation 3:10 again and from the original Greek it definitely refers to our being taken to a place of safety from the Great Tribulation."

David Robinson points out that within the last year, Gerald Waterhouse has preached that the WCG would purchase a fleet of DC-10s to fly the WCG to the Middle East. (Apparently, God will provide "11-inch angels to cover the 10-inch cracks.") Now, however, one top WCG minister is privately saying the "place of safety" may not be in Jordan, after all, but a place in Argentina.

Herbert Armstrong's article is all the more interesting considering its immediate proximity to another article with his by-line. Immediately beneath the June 16 *Worldwide News* lead article was one entitled "Satan Intensifies Persecution." While not mentioning Robinson by name, the article craftily attempts to head off charges brought by Robinson's book:

"Actually Satan tried this in the attempt to have the state political government take over running of the church. Both Mr. Stanley Rader and I were falsely accused (but not in the lawsuit) of siphoning off (stealing) millions of dollars every year. We did not need to dignify those monstrous lies with even a denial. [huh?]

"But now Satan is coming at us in a more subtle and even more outrageous and scurrilous accusation, implying personal immorality and sins.

"Neither shall we dignify these infamous accusations and rumors with a denial.

"Adolph Hitler is reported to have said that if you tell a little lie it may not be believed, but if you tell an outrageously enormous and impossible lie it will be believed."

HWA's reference to Adolph Hitler and his "big lie" concept is most remarkable. In *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, author Robinson, quoting Armstrong family members, claims that Herbert Armstrong has been an avid student of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

HWA has claimed that men are always guilty of that which they accuse others of. Obviously, that theory is not universally true. However, perhaps that supposition was developed by HWA out of personal introspection.

## ARCH-CRIMINALS OF THE CENTURY?

On the George Putman radio program referred to above, Stan Rader made light of some of the accusations levied against him. We found one Rader statement particularly amusing:

"ABC, on national television, accused me and Mr. Armstrong of stealing \$70 million and maybe more. We've been accused in court of having siphoned and pilfered up to \$45 million and maybe more.... And that would make Mr. Armstrong and me two of the arch-criminals of this century. There have not been any financial scandals [before] where anyone has been accused of stealing \$70 million or \$45 million."

## "SIXTY MINUTES" DOES IT TO RADER AGAIN

On June 8, "Sixty Minutes," the nation's number one television program, reran the "God and Mammon" segment it did on the WCG. We hope those of you who missed it when it aired on April 15, 1979, were able to see it this time.

The rerun did not prove very popular with the WCG's leadership. Just a few days after it aired, the WCG took out fullpage ads in leading U.S. newspapers to present an open letter to Mike Wallace, denegrating his journalistic ethics. (A full-page ad in the *New York Times*, one of the newspapers the church ran ads in, costs over \$16,000.) The ad was signed Herbert W. Armstrong, but its somewhat amateurish style has prompted some to wonder if the former ad man was really its author.

For instance, its headline read "Why, Mike Wallace, on 60 Minutes did you not tell the plain truth?" The ad continued addressing Wallace in the second person until the end where, oddly, the author(s?) ask Mike Wallace, "If you want more information, write to us: The Worldwide Church of God...."

Another oddity was the blunt use of religious phraseology. For instance, "...our primary motivation, which is SPIRITUAL, proclaiming the TRUE Gospel message of Jesus Christ to the world and to our baptized members... this present nearly half-century-old succession of the true church of God was raised up and has grown on living faith in God and in Jesus Christ our Savior...." Very religious language for a man who avoids the name Jesus Christ when dealing with the world's leaders and who has often boasted of his skill in appearing "worldly" when dealing with "the world." But then again, maybe it is not so strange considering Herbert Armstrong's multi-personalited nature.

Many WCG watchers are convinced this anti-like Wallace ad was inspired by Stan Rader, toward whom the "God and Mammon" documentary was most unflattering (did the camera lie?). Many believe the real reason for Rader's running battle with Wallace stems from the fact that Wallace's annual salary is more than two-and-a-half times that of Rader's. Of course, such jealousy is not possible, because Mr. Rader is now "converted."

Incidentally, we at the *Report* couldn't help but chuckle when we read: "You made us look wealthy by saying our financial income is greater than that of Billy Graham or Oral Roberts combined. Whether true or false, I respectfully point out that we are a CHURCH. They are merely evangelistic and broadcasting crusades - though the latter also operates a minor university. [Editor - this "minor" university in Tulsa has a respected law school, dental school, medical school, huge hospital, championship basketball team, and is accredited.]

"Why did you not tell the No. 1 TV-watching audience in America that we are a CHURCH of long [sic] standing? That the No. 1 allocation on our annual budget is the ministerial payroll ...."

Longtime observers of the WCG will probably notice that this important clarification of the WCG's size and status was first presented in *Ambassador Report's* March 24, 1980, issue (see pp. 3 & 4, especially p. 4, para. 4). After thirty years, Herbert Armstrong, who used to boast about the sun never setting on his work, about being bigger than Billy and Oral, etc.- finally realizes his truly small size and status, as we pointed out a few weeks earlier in the Report.

The coincidence gave us a chuckle.

## THE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

The full-page ads attacking Mike Wallace have not been the WCGs only recent newspaper foray. During the last few months the WCG has had a major ad campaign going which has utilized numerous full-page ads in many of the nation's largest and most prestigious newspapers. The headlines have included:

"Churches outlawed in U.S.S.R. Don't say it can't happen here!! 80 million Americans fight back:"

In this ad Herbert Armstrong tries to imply that the WCG is a group of dedicated patriots fighting off the encroachment of fanatical communists in our midst.

"8.3 million Americans versus California's Attorney General-Who do you think is right?"

Of course, there are no 83 million Americans versus the California attorney general. Other than \$150-an-hour attorneys hired to defend the WCG, the Rader organization would have difficulty finding even one million knuckleheads who are convinced the Attorney General has acted improperly.

Representatives of church organizations labeled "Satan's churches" by Herbert Armstrong *have* come to the WCG's defense. And these organizations do together, perhaps, have a total of 83 million people on their church rolls. But to assume all of these 83 million people are backing the WCG's position is to reduce the aggregate intelligence quotients of these groups to that of the WCG's membership - a very unreasonable assumption. A more rational analysis would conclude that many upstanding, religious Americans contribute to organizations headed by pseudo-politicians out of step with the good sense and Christian ideals of their constituents.

"Corruption in government did not end with Watergate."

The headline of this ad, signed by Stanley Rader (a signature sure to intrigue graphologists everywhere), has a particularly odd ring to it considering (1) Rader's close ties with the Nixon Administration and (2) the fact that since 1975 A1 Carozzo has likened the WCG's coverups to Watergate, and, (3) more recently, David Robinson has drawn attention to significant parallels between the WCG's scandals and the Watergate tragedy.

"The First Amendment ...Fair Prey for Ambitious Politicians???"

This ad contained the following:

"What about you? What matters to you? Your religion? Your politics? Your sex? Your sexual preference?..."

We won't comment any further on this one.

All of these ads are remarkable. They constitute an odd blend of fallacy and hyperbole. But for sheer outlandishness none tops the one we saw in the June 23 *Los Angeles Times*. The headline read:

"The Worldwide Church of God offers \$100,000 REWARD!"

Space does not permit us to quote all of this wacky ad. Those who wish to obtain a full copy can probably do so by writing to "God's headquarters" in Pasadena. But the thrust of this ad's offer is that the WCG will pay \$100,000 to persons providing the WCG with "evidence" that, in essence, shows that the California Attorney General initiated his lawsuit based on "false or misleading information."

But the ad says, "All these allegations [against the WCG] have been either disproved or refuted by positive evidence. The attorney general has furnished no evidence to the contrary, leading to the conclusion that he therefore acted either on the basis of no information whatever or on the basis of false information." But if that is the case, then what need is there for more "evidence"?

That is only one self-contradiction found in the ad.

The self-contradictory hodgepodge ad has been interpreted by many as an attempt by the WCG leadership to bribe takers into "creating" evidence to be used against the attorney general. (Of course, this is not the case as Herbert Armstrong, Stanley Rader, and associates are all converted men, and Mr. Rader is also an upstanding attorney.)

Some who read the ad asked: If a conscientious citizen really had such information, would he not already have come forward without the incentive of monetary gain? And if a man only came forward for the \$100,000, would he not be a dishonorable man? And therefore would his testimony not be worthless? These people seem to believe that the reward offer is only another attempt at delaying the trial. Of course, HWA and Stanley would not stoop to such tactics. After all, they are converted men. But then, what is the real purpose behind their \$100,000 offer?

#### DOCUMENTARY PUTS EGG ON TV STATION'S FACE

As if the WCG's newspaper ads were not bad enough, the WCG has also produced a one-hour documentary (if that is the

correct word) about its running battle with the California attorney general. The program aired in southern California over KCOP-TV on January 16 of this year. But then after receiving letters from Judge Jerry Pacht, Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Tapper, Hillel and Raphael Chodos, and ex-judge Stephen Weisman, that station found itself in the embarrassing position of having to air a five-minute retraction a minimum of 12 times in as many days. The retraction stated:

"In January 1979 the Worldwide Church of God was named in a suit brought by the state of California charging its leaders with siphoning off millions of dollars for their benefit. The action demanded an accounting and brought the appointment of a receiver for the temporary protection of the church property and records.

"On Wednesday, January 16, 1980, channel 13 broadcast a program produced by and presenting the views of the Worldwide Church of God titled 'The First Amendment: Church v. State.' In that program certain statements were made regarding actions and motives of Attorney General George Deukmejian, Deputy Attorney General Lawrence R. Tapper, and Los Angeles attorneys Hillel Chodos and Raphael Chodos in connection with their prosecution of the lawsuit.

"The broadcast also questioned the propriety of the appointment of a receiver by Los Angeles Superior Judge Jerry Pacht in a proceeding conducted without prior notice to the church.

"Because of the serious nature of some of the statements and characterizations made in that broadcast, KCOP has undertaken an investigation of the events discussed in the program. We have reviewed numerous documents, met with the attorneys and a representative of the church and the advertising agency for the church in order to obtain documentary support for those charges. Although we're not equipped to determine the merits of the case, this investigation has lead us to the following conclusions:

"This station is convinced that the lawsuit against the Worldwide Church of God is not a sham and that it has not been conducted for improper purposes. We similarly conclude that the January 2, 1979, hearing in Judge Pacht's chambers which resulted in the Judge's appointing a temporary receiver to administer the church's financial affairs was proper. Although prior notice of a hearing is usually required, California law permits a judge to hear a motion for temporary relief without notice to the defendants in emergency situations.

"It was also suggested in the church's broadcast that Judge Pacht appointed the receiver at the hearing without having paid sufficient attention to the crucial documents submitted at the hearing. The court transcript of the hearing shows that Judge Pacht indicated that he had read the complaint, the written legal arguments, the sworn declarations of the individuals who initiated the suit, and some of the supporting financial data before appointing former Judge Weisman to take possession of church assets.

"It is noteworthy that the California Commission on Judicial Performance, a body charged with overseeing the conduct of judges, determined unequivocally that Judge Pacht conducted the hearing properly. The proceedings in the judge's chambers were recorded by a certified court reporter and a transcript of these proceedings has been available to the public since very shortly after the hearing concluded. We know of no evidence that supports the church's assertion that the judge or any other person suppressed the transcript.

"Channel 13 is further convinced that attorneys Hillel Chodos and Raphael Chodos, Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Tapper, and the court-appointed receiver, former Judge Stephen Weisman, were not motivated to and had no intention to take over the property of the church for their own gain as was suggested in the church program.

"None of these gentlemen performed any action that was illegal or unethical or inconsistent with the apparently lawful order of Judge Pacht appointing a receiver.

"The statements in the church's program to the effect that the state had no evidence on which to base a lawsuit and that it never expected to uncover any are not well founded. We have not attempted to determine which party is correct about the ultimate merits of the case. As happens in most lawsuits each side disputes the credibility and the motives of the other; however, the correctness of the appointment of the receiver has been the subject of several appeals to higher courts, including the United States Supreme Court, and none of these courts has reversed any of the orders imposing or confirming the receivership. The courts have, apparently, decided that there is indeed evidence to support the actions taken on behalf of the state.

"We have also found no reason to believe that the attorney general of California or the state's attorneys acted with questionable motives or bad faith, lied to the public or to the church, or improperly came into possession of church documents as was suggested in the church program.

"We have found no evidence, and none has been presented us, that impunes the integrity of these individuals. In conclusion we want to acknowledge that the issues in the lawsuit are quite involved and important. Understandably emotions are high. However, we are satisfied that there is no reason to question or suspect the motives, integrity or good faith of the attorneys who have brought the case, or of the court officers who have participated in the proceedings.

"Channel 13 played no part in the production of the program and the views expressed in it were exclusively those of the Worldwide Church of God. We extend our sincere apology to George Deukmejian, Hillel Chodos, Raphael Chodos, Lawrence Tapper, Judge Jerry Pacht, and Stephen Weisman and regret any harm that the broadcast may have caused them. Thank you."

Anyone who watched the WCC-produced documentary should have immediately realized they were being subjected to pure

propaganda. The background music alone indicated that. Almost every time church officials appeared, they were accompanied by orchestral strains transporting the viewer to Shangri-la. But when state officials were shown, the viewer was musically dragged off to the emperor's dungeons of ancient Rome or to Dr. Frankenstein's lab. One wondered what horror flick some of the latter music was lifted from. The informational content of the one-hour "documentary" was likewise no less one-sided and inaccurate. Nevertheless, the inflammatory "documentary" was produced very professionally, and one can only speculate as to how many people were influenced by its content.

## NEW CHURCHES

In our last issue we mentioned a number of new churches, including The Church of God, Kelowna. Soon after that issue was published, we received a very cordial phone call from the head of that group, Mr. Hans Norel, a successful Canadian businessman and former WCG member. Mr. Norel told us, "Many people who become aware of the problems in Worldwide wind up very discouraged and confused. We try to encourage people not to throw out the baby with the bath water. We try to help people spiritually through Christian fellowship and in some cases, even physically. If any of your readers are in need of encouragement or assistance we'd like to help. They can write to us at P.O. Box 2362, Station R, Kelowna, BC, Canada, V1X 6A5 or call us at 604-765-6638."

Since our last issue, we've been made aware of a number of other church groups that have ministers or significant numbers of members from the WCG. For those who are interested, here they are:

Church of God, Sonoma  
(Paul Royer)  
2163 Meadowbrook St.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Tel: 707-542-7777

Fountain of Life Fellowship  
(James L. Porter)  
Valley Center, KS 67147  
Tel: 316-755-0576

Great Lakes Society for Biblical Research  
(John Cheetam)  
P.O. Box 63  
Jenison, MI 49428  
Tel: 616-669-1271

Baltimore Church of God  
(Dan Porter)  
1129 Saffell Road  
Rt. 2, Box 25C  
Reisterstown, MD 21136  
Tel: 301-833-8860

Association for Christian Development  
formerly the Associated Churches of God  
(Ken Westby & George Kemnitz)  
Box 10903  
Winslow, WA 98110

The above groups are listed for your information. Please recall that we do not give endorsements to any groups.

## LETTERS

*Your recent comments about Liberty Ministries International were appreciated, even though some people thought you were being sarcastic and cutting toward us. I have learned one very important lesson in life, and that is to respect the right of others to disagree with me. I feel no personal need to have others agree with my viewpoints, neither do I feel any pressure to agree with their beliefs.*

*The very core of Liberty Ministries is "individualism" and the "dignity of difference." It is our sincere goal in life to help each individual to realize more of his or her own abilities and talents. Far too many people and their organizations use peer pressure or emotional black-mail in an attempt to force conformity. We have made and are making a dedicated effort to help*

*each individual feel proud about his different, unique philosophies in life.*

*Another point I would like to make about your article is that we did not build Liberty Ministries art a "spinoff" from the Worldwide Church of God. In fact, less than two percent of our members were ever associated with Worldwide. We have not built on someone else's foundation. We have not established doctrines or a church government which even remotely resemble the WCG.*

*Furthermore, I harbor no animosity or hard feelings about any aspect of my association with Worldwide. I feel it was a fabulous opportunity - it just wasn't the total answer. I appreciate the Bible knowledge I received, the speech training, the privilege to make good and fasting friends, the opportunity to learn to live at ease with all people everywhere, and on and on. Sure, the organization had shortcomings, but don't they all? Frankly, if most of the members of Worldwide hadn't been there, they would have been in some worse cult, and there are plenty of them around!*

*In closing, again, I thank you for mentioning LMI and your offer to publish out response. We are a team of dedicated individuals, seeking Godly solutions to the problems of the world. We are trying to help people identify that itch they have been unable to scratch. The first year of LMI saw fabulous success, and a change in many lives. I wish you and your whole staff God's richest blessings. May you use your tremendous talents to build, not just tear down. Remember, it's growth and positive results that count.*

*-Thomas K. Williams  
Liberty Ministries International  
P.O. Box 11105  
Richmond, VA 23230  
Tel: 804-747-6030*

*I took forward to reading the Report whenever it comes into my home. After reading the latest issue, I feel compelled to write and comment on some of the things brought out in it.*

*It is unfortunate that so many feel they must go out and begin churches of their own. You repoted on several who had done this. It seems to me that they may be making the same mistake that HWA made many years ago. He had a disagreement with those around him so his answer was to form his own group. Now we are witnesses to the tragedy which has unfolded as a result of that decision. Of course, others may have different motives for starting up their own organization, and I sincerely hope they do indeed have good motives in so doing.*

*Many of us, myself included, have run around trying to find "truth" - trying to seek out those who preached the most "truth." We had to be certain that Scripture was being taught correctly. I recall that the Pharisees took this point of view also. They knew Scripture so well that they missed what it was trying to tell them. John 5:39-40, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (NIV)*

*We can be so concerned with "working out our own salvation" that we miss what it's really all about - building a personal relationship with Jesus Christ - becoming a disciple of his rather than a follower of some theological idea or interpretation.*

*I would be the first to admit that the churches dotting our country are not perfect. There is not a church that I have visited that I couldn't "disagree" with about something. But that's not the point. Could that church strengthen my relationship with Jesus Christ? Could it show me how I could be move dike Him? That is what counts, the way I see it. There are many churches around to which the answers to the above would be "yes."*

*Let us be honest and ask ourselves: Who are we really following?*

*-Richard Forkun  
Ontario, Canada*

*I received your AR today. It is like turning on a light after being in the dark with The Worldwide News. Thanks so much to the person who sent in my name. Things fit together now. I had heard of you but was afraid to request it for myself as I had been told it was all lies and Satan's last effort to destroy the church. But I've been told the truth by you. Thank you for your efforts. I've found much help from the Church of God, 7th Day. Their address is: Bible Advocate Press, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233.*

*For a church ,that, according to HWA, was near death, they have so many teachings that we thought only HWA knew. They are wonderfully helpful, Christian people with a sincere love and desire to serve instead of get. They will send a series of documents on request showing how HWA was a members of their church. It is very enlightening.*

-Kansas

*Keep yours garbage to yourselves. I'm tired of carrying your trash to the dump (which isn't a low enough place for the filth you axe spreading).*

*Why don't you do yourselves a favor and close your mouths and still yours fingers. You'll have less to repent of that way!*

*As to your comment that if the ministers left in God's work were to preach what they know to be true, they'd be fired - it's preposterous. We know what is going on and are 100% behind Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. What he is doing is right and positive and what you are doing is wrong and totally negative.*

-Glen Doig  
WCG Minister  
Anchorage, Alaska

*To date I have had you mail the Report to 32 people in our local church. One sabbath out minister announced that many people were receiving it, and that someone was trying to "break up the church!" He does not know that Mr. Armstrong has already done that.*

*Keep up yours good work to warn people.*

-WCG member

*"...I feel certain the whole thing will fall apart sooner or later, and I am tithing quite a bit to Mr. Raymond Cole as he still believes in Monday Pentecost as I do too. I did not worship with the brethren on Sunday last year nor do I plan to this year. But don't tell HWA or Rader. My minister excused me and I appreciate it.*

-WCG member

Editor: Mr. Raymond Cole is the pastor of The Church of God, The Eternal, P.O. Box 775, Eugene, OR 97401.

*Since leaving the WCG a year ago, I have been affiliated with GTA. However, when I head in your last Report that Al Portune (my main reason for supporting GTA) had been denied a place on the Board and had left, I felt this was too much. And when I head Jack Martin was fired and Wayne Cole had resigned - that was definitely too much.*

*Apparently GTA isn't too willing to let his members know that these men are out, because in their literature or communiques, which I still receive, not a word has been mentioned. Thanks for reporting on this.*

-Canada

*I can believe what yours reports say - I've been a coworker with HWA for 15 years, and I've come to realize he is no longer the man I thought he was. I want to keep informed.*

-Ohio

*A short time ago I lost my darling husband. But thank God for people like you who are striving to get the truth to so many. Because of you and others like you I have gotten through the past months so much better. Thank you.*

-Tennessee

*For years I thought you were our enemies, but the light finally shown through and we discovered who our real enemies are. We thank God for this revelation.*

-California

We regularly receive letters from individuals who criticize the *Report* as being very negative. These individuals have a point. (Of course, some complain that the Bible too is negative, exposing too many of the sins of its central figures.) Much, if not most, of what we report on is very negative. Frankly, we wish that were not so. We really do wish that we could report some

really good news, for once, about Herbert Armstrong, the WCG, and Ambassador College. But unfortunately, today there just isn't much positive to report regarding the Armstrong organization.

We certainly hope none of our readers make the *Report* the central part of their life. There are so many positive, beautiful, and uplifting things to be enjoyed in life. We certainly hope all of you are living, or at least approaching, the kind of good life all of us really want.

On the other hand, there is an appropriate time, reason for, and balanced way to study the negative or less inspiring side of life. And there is an appropriate place for expose journalism and advocacy. We receive many letters from individuals who've been greatly helped by our efforts. We appreciate their kind words and want all who've supported our efforts to know our united efforts have *really* helped thousands of people.

Sincerely yours,

The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola. Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR13\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR13 September 21, 1980

Dear Friends:

Since our last issue, the California attorney general has actively continued building his case against the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) leadership. On August 1, after 18 months of non-cooperation, Evangelist Stanley Rader finally acceded to questioning.

### RADER'S DEPOSITION

The 143 questions asked by deputies of Attorney General George Deukmejian centered around Rader's personal finances in relation to the church. During questioning Rader admitted that he did receive income from Mid-Atlantic Leasing, which leased aircraft to the church. He also admitted receiving income from Worldwide Advertising, Inc., a company that purchases air time for the Armstrong broadcasts and in which Rader is part owner. But when asked if the church paid for redecorating his Beverly Hills home, Rader's answer was "no." (Compare this to p. 63 of "Fleecing the Flock" in our large 1977 *Ambassador Report*.)

While many WCG documents requested by the attorney general have been turned over, many have not. The WCG had been given until September 3 to turn over all documents requested by the state investigators, but numerous documents have been withheld. Among those documents unreleased are minutes of church and college board meetings. Church attorney Allan Browne has openly stated that those papers will not be turned over.

### PETRIS BILL PASSED

On Aug. 26, the California State Senate gave final approval to the Petris bill, SB1493 (see our last newsletter). The new law will greatly restrict future investigations by the state attorney general of groups claiming to be religious. The bill's passage is a major defeat for many anti-cult groups who opposed the bill. Attorney General Deukmejian also strongly opposed the bill and says that although his office still retains the power to prosecute criminal fraud, the new law may effectively strip his office of the power to recover money improperly received or misapplied by church officials. However, four amendments were added to the bill that were not supported by the WCG: (1) the bill's implementation is delayed until June 1, 1981, (2) a provision was added saying that courts should consider financial restitution upon criminal conviction of any individual, (3) the attorney general is allowed to "make inquiry" concerning funds solicited from the general public for specific purposes, and (4) destruction or unauthorized changing of financial records was made punishable under the California penal code.

In addition to the Petris bill, the California state legislature has also passed SB1632, a bill sponsored by State Senator H. L. Richardson of Arcadia. This new law will prohibit the state Franchise Tax Board from removing nonprofit status from church organizations involved in politics or that spend substantial amounts of time "carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation." Some have speculated that the WCG's recent lobbying efforts in Sacramento would cost them their nonprofit status. Obviously this will not now be the case.

Governor Brown's office has indicated that the governor has no intention of vetoing either the Richardson or the Petris bills, and so both will have passed officially by the end of September. However, the Petris bill does not take

effect until June, 1981. Some legal experts had speculated that passage of the Petris bill could possibly have an adverse effect on the current investigation of the WCG. But one deputy attorney general has stated privately that his office is now confident the new law will not be a factor in the state's case against the WCG's leadership.

It is interesting that while both the Richardson and Petris bills passed the legislature, the politicians in Sacramento were again unable this year (they've had since 1976) to pass an antismog auto inspection law. And this is in spite of the fact that California is the state with the worst air pollution problems in the nation. That failure will cost California an estimated \$850 million in federal funds for highways and sewage system construction, not to mention possible respiratory-health problems for thousands of Californians. Earlier in the year this same legislature was even unable to come up with a state budget, and so for weeks state employees wondered if their paychecks would bounce. Yet, somehow, this legislature found the time to pass both the Petris and Richardson bills.

Perhaps that is because in this election year, the politicians do not want to offend large church denominations with their large blocs of voters. But it should also be remembered that the WCG has carried on a massive lobbying campaign both in Sacramento and via the media.

## TWO BOOKS

Part of that media campaign has been Stanley Rader's new book, *Against the Gates of Hell* (\$12.00, published by Everest House), which supposedly tells the story of "persecution" of the WCG by the state of California and Stanley's battles to protect the flock. The book, which seems multi-author ghost written because of its fluctuating styles, comes complete with background biographical information and photos of Stanley, Herbert, etc. The reviews that we've seen have correctly labeled this book a biased, obviously propagandistic effort. Not surprisingly, bookstores report it is selling very poorly.

It will be interesting to compare the Rader book with another book soon to be published - *The Truth Shall Make You Free* by John Tuit (\$8.00, including postage, available from John Tuit, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold, NJ 07728). Mr. Tuit, one of the original plaintiffs in the state's suit against the WCG, tells us his book covers, in detail, the history of the state's lawsuit up to the present time. It will be available by early November.

## ROBINSON BOOK RELEASED

Those of you who have ordered David Robinson's book Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web should have received your copies by now.

We reported in our last issue how two WCG members, Sherwin McMichael and Henry Cornwall, were attempting to stop distribution of the Robinson book and how through a temporary restraining order they were, for a time, successful. Robinson tried to get the matter into federal court. But he suffered a devastating defeat when U.S. District Judge James O. Ellison ruled that Robinson's arguments were "frivolous" and that Robinson's lawyer had tried to move the suit from state to federal court in "bad faith." Robinson was ordered to pay \$352 in court costs and \$6,000 in legal fees to the lawyers of McMichael and Cornwall. Said Robinson at the time, "I don't know what I'm going to do now. This is just unbelievable! I can't believe this is happening in this country." But even though he lacked funds, Robinson didn't lack faith. He fought on.

Back in the state court system, the case was put under the jurisdiction of Judge Richard Comfort. On July 18 he granted a request by Robinson's new attorneys that the plaintiffs post a \$25,000 bond to cover legal expenses in the event the order barring the book was dissolved.

It was at this point that the plaintiffs' attorney, James Kincaid claimed that the plaintiffs were not really attempting to stop the Robinson book but only wanted a "prepublication review." He said, "We ask that there be a review of the publication by the judge to the extent that if confidential information is divulged, that information be deleted." But James Sturdivant, one of Robinson's attorneys, angrily responded that pre-publication review "is the Harvard word for censorship" (*The Tulsa Tribune*, July 18, 1980). (Kincaid is a graduate of Harvard, as is Laurence Tribe, who represents the WCG against the state of California.)

On Monday, July 21, the first day of the hearing, Comfort's Tulsa County courtroom remained open to the press although Comfort had earlier indicated he might close it to protect the plaintiffs' privacy. But on Monday, despite repeated objections from Kincaid - and a 10-minute recess during which Comfort considered a motion to close the

hearing - the judge ruled he saw no compelling reason to oust the public and the press which jammed the hearing.

During the hearing, which lasted from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., plaintiffs McMichael and Cornwall claimed, under oath, that an unwritten code of confidentiality between ministers existed and that it would be breached if Robinson were allowed to distribute his book. But under cross examination, McMichael, whom Sturdivant referred to as the "church gossip," admitted he never had any conversation with Robinson about their discussions remaining private. "It never occurred to me," said McMichael. McMichael also admitted that he was asked by the church "executive officers" to become a party to the lawsuit. Both Cornwall and McMichael admitted, under questioning by Sturdivant, that the WCG was paying their expenses to and from Tulsa (*The Tulsa Tribune*, July 22, 1980).

Cornwall, speaking with a noticeable French accent (perhaps this is why Herbert Armstrong often refers to his constant companion as "Frenchy"), stated, "My church has taught me that the only one who could judge me is Jesus Christ. If you do not retain the confidentiality of these discussions, it would be disastrous because you would be depriving the flock of its shepherds."

But four ex-WCG members - C. Wayne Cole, Ron Dart, Guy Carnes, and Benny Sharp - testified that they knew of no formal bond of confidence or implied confidentiality contract while they were members of the WCG.

The next day, at 9:30 a.m., Judge Comfort announced his decision. The temporary, restraining order blocking distribution of the Robinson book was to be lifted. But, Comfort stayed the order to allow an appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Full implementation of the stay required the plaintiffs to post a \$400,000 bond by noon the next day to cover any legal expenses incurred by Robinson should their appeal fail. By noon of the next day the plaintiffs had still not posted the required amount, and the temporary restraining order was finally lifted.

Judge Comfort was apparently very pleased that the matter was finally out of his court. He told reporters that the case may have been the toughest in his seven-year judgeship. Said Comfort, "The reading material in this case was equivalent to a full semester of reading in law school. The portions of the book plaintiffs wanted stricken alone required four hours of reading Monday night." The case itself may prove historic. As one Robinson attorney pointed out ten days before the book was released, "This case is already making legal history, because this is the longest a book not involved in national security has ever been restrained."

A jubilant David Robinson took possession of his book shipment and immediately began filling orders. Robinson, who pastors the Tulsa Church of God, International (in contact with, but separately incorporated from the Garner Ted Armstrong group), told the Report, "We've gone through some rough times lately, but I had faith in the rightness of our position. I feel we've done the honorable thing in every way. And because of it, we have enjoyed remarkable favor within the community of Tulsa. They never were able to show during the hearings that there was a single untruth in the book. Overall, I guess the church's attack on us was a blessing in disguise. We've certainly gotten a lot of free publicity due to their harassment. Really when you think about it, they did a very stupid thing in starting their lawsuit."

Although Robinson's book has finally been released, Robinson's legal fight with the WCG is not over. The temporary restraining order against him has been lifted, but the lawsuit is still pending. And while McMichael and Cornwall would apparently prefer not to continue their battle, Robinson has taken the offensive and countersued both of them, Herbert Armstrong, Stan Rader, and Ralph Helge for \$50 million, alleging they have "maliciously abused and harassed him" and deprived him of his rights to freedom of speech and religion.

*Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* (\$10.00, John Hadden Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135) is the most revealing expose to come out on the WCG since our large 1977 *Ambassador Report*. We find it significant that Herbert Armstrong has yet to deny the many shocking allegations made against him in this book. Our limited space in this issue prohibits us from doing a lengthy review or running quotes as we had planned. But we do recommend the book highly to all who've had an association with the Worldwide Church of God.

### TRAGEDIES IN THE NEWS

We were very sorry to hear of the drug overdose suicide of Mrs. Penny Walker on July 10. Mrs. Walker, wife of Larry Walker, the WCG's minister in Eugene, Oregon, was reportedly distraught over current events and church prophecies. She left behind two children and was pregnant at the time of her death.

Another recent tragedy was the suicide death of former baseball player Danny Thomas. Readers may remember that Thomas became a national figure with the Milwaukee Brewers in 1977 when his religion and career came into conflict and the story made the nation's sports pages. As a member of the WCG, Thomas refused to play ball from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The media called him "The Sunset Kid."

## Rader seems to extend peace bid to Deukmejian

By DICK LLOYD

Staff Writer

Stanley R. Rader, under investigation for alleged misuse of assets of the Worldwide Church of God, seemed to extend an olive branch to the attorney general Tuesday in what appears an invitation to end the lawsuit without a trial.

The beleaguered church treasurer announced he will not succeed radio and television evangelist Herbert W. Armstrong as head of the church, and he will resign all church offices and enter private law practice as soon as the lawsuit is ended.

At the same time, Rader revealed he no longer has a contract with the church and does not have a contract that will pay him salary or benefits beyond the lifespan of Armstrong as he previously held. He does retain a contract for personal service to Armstrong, however, Rader said.

Rader did not indicate what his present salary is under the new arrangement. Under the previous contract, which is part of the attorney general's investigation, Rader was paid \$200,000 per year and was guaranteed that in the event of Armstrong's death, disability or retirement Rader would continue to receive \$100,000 per year until the year 2003 as a consultant.

Rader discounted sentiment that his action is an effort to appease the attorney general, but he challenged the state to drop the lawsuit nevertheless.

"All he (Attorney General George Deukmejian) has to do is say, 'I drop the suit against everyone, and see what happens...'"

end, then I am more than willing to return to private practice," Rader said.

"If (the attorney general) questions my good faith concerning this issue, he can put it to the test by simply dropping all his lawsuits against everybody with prejudice, then see what happens."

But as long as the lawsuit remains in effect, Rader said, he will continue to fight the attorney general until he is "on bended knee." Rader acknowledged that the lawsuit could continue for as long as six or eight years and in that event he will continue to remain in his present capacity for that length of time.

Rather than extending an olive branch, Rader said he made the announcement to dispel rumors and innuendos that he plans to take over as head of the church and that his defense against the state lawsuit is a personal effort to protect his income.

His determination to defend against the lawsuit has made his motives suspect in the eyes of some, he said.

"There are those who believe I am self-serving or personally ambitious. But they are wrong. The only thing I want for myself is a return to private life. I welcome the light because I believe it is a good fight. With all my heart and soul I believe in the rightness of our cause."

"Under no circumstances will I succeed Mr. Armstrong as head of the Worldwide Church of God under Jesus Christ," Rader told a press conference.

He acknowledged that some members of the church also expect him to succeed Armstrong, but that "is not remotely possible."

## Rader seems to extend peace bid to Deukmejian

By DICK LLOYD

Staff Writer

Stanley R. Rader, under investigation for alleged misuse of assets of the Worldwide Church of God, seemed to extend an olive branch to the attorney general Tuesday in what appears an invitation to end the lawsuit without a trial.

The beleaguered church treasurer announced he will not succeed radio and television evangelist Herbert W. Armstrong as head of the church, and he will resign all church offices and enter private law practice as soon as the lawsuit is ended.

At the same time, Rader revealed he no longer has a contract with the church and does not have a contract that will pay him salary or benefits beyond the lifespan of Armstrong as he previously held. He does retain a contract for personal service to Armstrong, however, Rader said.

Rader did not indicate what his present salary is under the new arrangement. Under the previous contract, which is part of the attorney general's investigation, Rader was paid \$200,000 per year and was guaranteed that in the event of Armstrong's death, disability or retirement Rader would continue to receive \$100,000 per year until the year 2003 as a consultant.

Rader discounted sentiment that his action is an effort to appease the attorney general, but he challenged the state to drop the lawsuit nevertheless:

"All he (Attorney General George Deukmejian) has to do is say, 'I drop the suit against everyone, and see what happens...'"

"If the lawsuit were to come to an earlier end, then I am more than willing to return to private practice," Rader said.

"If (the attorney general) questions my good faith concerning this issue, he can put it to the test by simply dropping all his lawsuits against everybody with prejudice, then see what happens."

But as long as the lawsuit remains in effect, Rader said, he will continue to fight the attorney general until he is "on bended knee." Rader acknowledged that the lawsuit could continue for as long as six or eight years and in that event he will continue to remain in his present capacity for that length of time.

Rather than extending an olive branch, Rader said he made the announcement to dispel rumors and innuendos that he plans to take over as head of the church and that his defense against the state lawsuit is a personal effort to protect his income.

His determination to defend against the lawsuit has made his motives suspect in the eyes of some, he said.

"There are those who believe I am self-serving or personally ambitious. But they are wrong. The only thing I want for myself is a return to private life. I continue the fight because I believe it is a good fight. With all my heart and soul I believe in the rightness of our cause."

"Under no circumstances will I succeed Mr. Armstrong as head of the Worldwide Church of God under Jesus Christ," Rader told a press conference.

He acknowledged that some members of the church also expect him to succeed Armstrong, but that "is not remotely possible."

"I am not even worthy," he said. "I am not qualified to serve Christ in that way. It is not my calling to serve Christ in that way. It is not my desire to succeed Mr. Armstrong, and most important, I do not believe it is God's will that I do so." Rader said.

Asked if anyone is being groomed to succeed Armstrong, Rader said no, although he said there are many ministers in the church who are able. The fact is, he said, he expects Armstrong to continue in his work until Christ returns to the earth.

"I do not expect anyone will succeed Mr. Armstrong," Rader said. "The living God has charged him with a great commission to fulfill and I believe he will complete that work. God has never taken a man before his work was done."

Rader said he will never leave the church, but he will resign his paid positions and his ministry. Several months ago he was ordained a minister and evangelist in the church.

Upon returning to private life, he said, he hopes to devote the remainder of his working life to public service, "perhaps in a governmental capacity."

Rader said he does not anticipate the return of Armstrong's son, Garner Ted Armstrong, to lead the church.

It is believed that Armstrong's removal of his son from the church precipitated the lawsuit that charges Rader, the elder Armstrong and others with siphoning millions of dollars of church funds into personal use.

---

The above article appeared in the *Pasadena Star News*, Wednesday, September 10. As you read it, keep in mind:

- (1) If the attorney general drops his lawsuit "with prejudice," the suit could not be reopened.
- (2) If Rader fulfilled his end of the above "deal," it would still not result in the return of monies allegedly siphoned off from the church.
- (3) Rader's "promises" are only as good as a politician's pre-election promises. He could legally change his mind or perhaps "God" will reveal a different course later on.
- (4) Rader's claim that he will not succeed HWA as head of the WCG is pointless because, as we pointed out in our last issue, the Worldwide Church of God Inc. is no longer HWA's legal power base. The new "corporation sole" is. Even Rader admits that he does now have a contract with HWA. So the lack of a contract with Worldwide is of no significance -although, undoubtedly, many church members will be duped into thinking it is.
- (5) Note that Rader speculates on his entering "governmental" public service after resigning from the ministry.

According to a friend, it was around that time that his emotional problems began. Soon afterward, he quit baseball. Troubles seemed to increase for Danny until this year when he was having serious psychiatric, career, and legal troubles.

A close friend told a reporter: "He was a super guy, but he just snapped. He just couldn't handle the pressure.... Danny was sick. You wouldn't believe how sick he was... His mind just wasn't functioning right. And he used to be so sharp, his mind just clicked all the time.... When he died he had no respect for himself whatsoever. It looked like Danny had just given up."

Thomas, 28, left behind his wife Judy - his college sweetheart - and three children, Renee 7, Seth 3, and Annie 5 months.

#### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Evangelist Roderick C. Meredith has been allowed to return from his exile in Hawaii and is now permitted to teach classes at Ambassador College again. His name has been returned to the staff box of *The Plain Truth* but only as a "senior writer," along with Jeff Calkins, Keith Stump, etc. Insiders say it is unlikely he will ever again be allowed a position of real responsibility in the church hierarchy. Said one long-time friend, "They've emasculated him."

One name you do not see in *The Plain Truth* staff box any longer is that of evangelist David Jon Hill. He refused to

sign the new mandatory employment agreement and is no longer an employee of the Armstrong organization. Another minister who refused to sign the new contract was Bruce Vance, who has now left the Armstrong church.

Walter H. Scull, of New Jersey, a WCG local elder for 10 years, recently wrote to us: "Please add my name to the list of ex-elders of the WCG. I left. When I came into the church in 1965, I thought that HWA was either an authentic man of God or the biggest con man there ever was. I then believed the former, but now am convinced of the latter. Please keep up the good work of exposing this fraud."

Former WCG minister Richard Plache is now pastor of the First Christian Church of National City, California. Interestingly, this church is denominationally related to the one in which he was a minister before his sojourn in Armstrongism. For those who are interested, Plache's church publishes a small weekly newsletter called the *National City Harbor Light* (1800 E. 17th St., Box 296, National City, CA 92050). It contains synopses of Mr. Plache's Sunday sermons.

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Mrs. Ledru (Shirley) Woodbury. Mr. Woodbury, pastor of the Church of God of Fruita, Colorado (1241 Twenty Rd., Fruita, CO 81521, see our Nov. 1979 newsletter) wrote to us, telling us the sad news. He also mentioned that his group would be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in Denver this fall and that: "many local autonomy groups are springing up all across the country like popcorn. The shepherd is smitten, and the sheep are being scattered. You may have to add another page to your publication if you list them all."

#### DR. MARTIN NOT A SCHOLAR

At a WCG board meeting in December 1971, Dr. Ernest L. Martin explained to those assembled why that church's 19-year-time-cycle prophecy was erroneous and would fail. For the most part, the group listened attentively. The 19-year-time-cycle idea was based on astronomical data, so he quoted Jeremiah 10:2: "...be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them." Herbert Armstrong became furious and angrily denounced him. On that and other occasions HWA has pooh poohed Dr. Martin's studies by saying Martin is simply "not a scholar."

So it should be of no surprise to any of us that Ernest Martin's work is now gaining recognition from internationally renowned scientists and historians. His work on dating the birth of Jesus Christ has been the subject of very favorable reviews by leading scholars and was recently the topic of three important gatherings of leaders in the scientific community.

Isn't it ironic that Herbert Armstrong, who has claimed to be bringing the true gospel to the world, has actually brought not only confusion to his church but given religion in general a notorious reputation. Yet Martin, who does not even wish to evangelize, has, in fact, brought the Bible - with increased credibility - to many influential scholars who would otherwise not have given it much serious attention. We think the contrast is noteworthy.

Space does not permit us to go into detail hereon Dr. Martin's work. But the Foundation for Biblical Research (P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102) has literature explaining Dr. Martin's research on this subject and its recent reception by scholars. Incidentally, the Foundation also publishes numerous free booklets of interest to those studying the Bible. We have received hundreds of letters over the years from people who have commented on how they've benefited from the Foundation's literature.

#### OUR SHORT ISSUE

We regret that this issue of *Ambassador Report* must be so brief. We have quite a bit of important information we'd like to disseminate, but our financial situation has made it impossible to publish our usual lengthy newsletter.

During the last few months, contributions to our publication efforts have fallen off dramatically. Undoubtedly, our nation's economy is partly the reason. But perhaps we have not done enough to make known our needs. We hate to ask for your assistance each issue or to always include return envelopes with every newsletter. But by not doing so, many apparently suspect we are "rich and increased with goods." We are not. We have again had to go in the red to get out even this small issue.

We do think there is both a real need for and an interest in *Ambassador Report*. During the last three months we have had more requests for the Report than ever before: so many, in fact, that we have had to have second printings

of both of our last two newsletters and still we have not been financially able to fill all requests.

Perhaps the answer is to put a price on the *Report*, but we'd prefer not to. By operating the way we have, the *Report* has gone to many more WCG members, relatives of members, news people, churches, colleges, and former members than would have been the case had we only sent issues to contributors.

But still, it does take money to publish. We do hope those of you who appreciate our work will continue to support our efforts.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola. Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR14\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR14 Dec. 1, 1980

Dear Friends:

Most of you will have already heard that with just a few days to go before Herbert Armstrong's scheduled deposition, the attorney general of California dropped his lawsuit against the Worldwide Church of God. Some readers have written us that their local newspapers covered this story only briefly, so here is a recap of what happened:

### RADER OUTMANEUVERS CALIFORNIA

In our last newsletter we wrote how the so-called Petris bill (SB1493) - intended to limit the state attorney general's power in investigations of religious corporations had been passed by the California legislature and had gone to Governor Brown's desk for signing. Based on comments from sources in the attorney general's office, we were confident the bill would not have any effect on the state's lawsuit against Rader and company.

We were wrong. And so were many legal experts in California - including many of the legislators who helped pass the bill and who had stated it would not effect pending cases. Even after the Petris bill passed, a number of prominent attorneys expressed the opinion that the Petris law was probably unconstitutional anyway because (1) it takes away certain powers granted the state attorney general by the state's constitution, and (2) it grants religious nonprofit corporations special privileges not granted nonprofit organizations in general, thereby violating the principle of church-state separation. The majority of the attorney general's deputies were themselves confident the suit would continue on to a successful conclusion, especially considering the large amount of work that had already been done on the case.

Nevertheless, on Oct. 14, California Attorney General George Deukmejian announced that he was dropping his case against the Worldwide Church of God's leadership. Ironically, Deukmejian's announcement came just hours after the U.S. Supreme Court once again refused to hear arguments by the WCG's lawyers that state prosecutors acted unconstitutionally in their seizure of church records.

That afternoon, a jubilant Stanley Rader, returning to the Los Angeles area after a trip to northern California, was met at the airport by a throng of wildly cheering followers who were ecstatic over the news. The next day, at a press conference, Rader stated, "Mr. Armstrong and I and the church as a whole feel that in the state legislature and in the governor's office we have been vindicated legally and morally." Rader actually heaped praise on Deukmejian for "moral courage" and for being "a man of his word." He also praised the state legislature, which he described as the guardian of the public against excesses of the judiciary.

It is interesting that just a few days before, Rader had stated to the Pasadena *Star-News*:

"If the attorney general were an honorable man, it [the lawsuit] would come to an end. But the attorney general is not an honorable man. He is not bound by the constitution. So I don't think he will drop the case. He hasn't proved to me that he can deal with the truth" (Oct. 2, 1980).

But Deukmejian did drop the case and with that Rader's tune has changed. Since then, the WCG has run full-page ads in California newspapers praising Deukmejian as "a man of his word."

### WHY THE CASE WAS DROPPED

When Deukmejian announced on Oct. 14 that the state's suit against Worldwide was being dropped, the reason given was that the Petris law has curtailed his power to the point that the suit could never be brought to a successful end. Under the law, he said, the attorney general will be able to prosecute for fraud only. He cannot recover money improperly received or misapplied by church officials. He felt that the case against the WCG's leadership could not be completed before June 1 when the Petris law officially goes into effect. Thus continuing the suit would only mean wasting money on a suit that would have to be discontinued on that date.

Deukmejian's explanation seems logical enough, but many have not taken it at face value. One theory is that state officials feared another Jonestown tragedy if the suit continued. With so much talk in the WCG about fleeing to Petra, such a theory makes at least a little sense.

Some have seen international conspiracy overtones to Deukmejian's decision. Of course, anything is possible, but we have not seen any real evidence to support this theory.

Another theory - one widely held by numerous individuals knowledgeable of California politics - is that because Deukmejian hopes to run for governor of California in 1982, he could not politically afford a continuance of the constant media bombardment he has received from Rader in the last two years. That onslaught of negative publicity has included almost weekly full-page ads in the state's biggest newspapers attacking Deukmejian personally as a persecutor of religion. Had the state's lawsuit continued, very likely the ads would have continued also - and probably with increased regularity and harshness as 1982 approached. Keep in mind that Deukmejian not only dropped the suit against the WCG but investigations of eleven other groups including Eugene Scott's Faith Center and the Synanon Foundation. Remember, too, that the Petris bill had been supported by many of the largest religious organizations in the state. Deukmejian was perhaps passing the buck a little, but he still showed some awareness of public opinion when he said on Oct. 14: "7b pursue these cases would be contrary to the most recent expression of public policy by the legislature and the governor."

Then there are those who believe the Petris bill gave Deukmejian a convenient excuse to bow out of some cases he never relished in the first place. After all, he really inherited the WCG case from his predecessor, state attorney general Evelle Younger. And being a conservative Republican, one would suspect his political philosophy might include minimal involvement of government in the affairs of all organizations, especially religious ones.

Considering the many crime problems in California today and the state's current budget limitations, one could put forth numerous arguments why the state should not waste its limited time and resources trying to straighten out an organization such as the WCG. Nevertheless, there are many who have been very disappointed by the Deukmejian decision. Many newspaper and electronic media editorials have lambasted both the Petris law and Deukmejian's decision. And already there are a significant number of prominent citizens calling for a revision of the Petris law and the resumption of the lawsuits and investigations dropped by Deukmejian.

Mr. John Tuit, one of the originators of the WCG lawsuit, is very disappointed, but not surprised, that the suit was dropped. In an interview with the Pasadena Star-News (Oct. 16, 1980), Mr. Tuit said of the investigation:

"A lot of good has come from this. It brought the entire operation of the church into the open. The conduct of the leadership was so contrary to the teachings of the church. They have now put out their most detailed financial statement ever. Salaries are now open.... It lets members decide if they want their leaders to make \$300,000 a year, which was not the case before.... Spiritually, the church remains a colossal fraud. And that is an area the attorney general never had any authority to deal with and wouldn't anyway...."

"I share the same concerns of others that the ultimate effect of the Petris bill will make California a haven for all kinds of charlatans to use religion as a cover for financial rip-off schemes. And if there is a backlash to that, I would feel that a backlash could be truly repressive to religions."

Tuit is not the only one who feels the Petris bill will have disastrous consequences. Tony Cimarusti, an assistant to Deukmejian, said: "Our feeling is that it (the Petris bill) will leave people unprotected from any religious organization which may wish to rip off the people. We have opposed it on those grounds in the public interest."

Hillel Chodos, who served as a member of the State Commission on Judicial Performance, said: "The bill-would permit anyone to just call himself a religious corporation, and in effect, whatever financial transactions he had with that corporation and donations would be exempt from investigation or supervision by anyone. I think that is bad for religion and bad for the public.... For mainline churches to think they can take billions from the public and not account for it is really offensive" (Pasadena StarNews, Sept. 28, 1980).

The Petris law sharply limits the California attorney general's authority to investigate religious organizations. The new law takes away the attorney general's right to investigate tax-exempt religious organizations for misuse of funds or internal civil fraud. His office will now only be able to prosecute tax-exempt religious organizations charged with criminal violations. Under the Petris law the attorney general could investigate a church that solicits money from the public for one purpose and uses it for something else. But no suits would be allowed for investigating improper uses of internal church funds, either for personal benefit or for activities not related to church functions. (One immediately senses the gargantuan semantical problems inherent in this ill-conceived law.) Only members of the governing body of a church can now bring legal action for internal civil fraud. In hierarchical churches, such as the Catholic church, the Mormon church, Synanon, and the Worldwide Church of God, members would not have standing to sue for misuse of money by church directors. Such suits, however, could be filed by congregational churches whose members have voting rights within their church. Deukmejian's chief legislative lobbyist, Rod Blonien, says that as a result "suits against hierarchical churches for wrongfully diverting church funds would be virtually impossible, since directors are unlikely to sue themselves" (Pasadena Star-News, Sept. 20, 1980).

#### WHAT NOW?

So is this the end of the WCG's legal battles? Stanley Rader says no. He says he plans to continue his nationwide advertising campaign and to settle a few scores. Using biblical text to justify retribution and claiming he wanted vindication, not vengeance, Rader said lawsuits will be launched against some. They will include Judge Jerry Pacht, who Rader says accused him "of having found Jesus Christ, money, and salvation at the same time." Hillel Chodos still faces a continuing lawsuit by Rader, who charges him with personal slander. And although the WCG plans to drop its \$1 billion lawsuit against the State of California, it is still refusing to comply with a court decision to pay the fees charged by the court appointed receiver.

In our last newsletter we mentioned the likelihood of the so-called Richardson bill (SB1632) becoming law. That law would have prohibited state tax officials from stripping a church of its tax-exempt status for being involved in political activities. Surprisingly, that

bill was vetoed by Governor Brown. Does that mean that the WCG might find itself losing its nonprofit corporate status? Not likely. Legal experts say the state has no desire to tangle with the WCG in the near future if it can help it.

What about criminal charges? For two years, the air has been thick with rumors of supposedly soon-to-come indictments against WCG leaders. Here again, nothing is likely to occur. The amount of material collected by the attorney general's office is massive. Yet, the deputies of the Attorney General have stated privately they have no confidence whatsoever that they would get a conviction against Rader, HWA, or anyone else in the WCG for anything because to do so they must prove criminal intent, and that is difficult to do.

What all this means is this: With the exception of a few lawsuits, the WCG's leadership is now free and clear of any major legal problems. You might remember how just a few weeks ago Rader publicly promised Deukmejian that if the state's suit was dropped, he would resign from his executive position with the WCG and from the ministry and go into private (legal) practice. So will Rader now resign his position as promised? That question was put to him at a news conference. Rader's reply: "As soon as all the dust has settled, I would like to return to a more private life.... And when my reputation is returned to me. [But] that could take years" (*Star-News*, Oct. 16, 1980).

#### \$1,000,000 OFFERING TO EGYPT

Within days of the attorney general's Oct. 14 announcement, Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader were in the Middle East for meetings with Prime Minister Begin of Israel and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. During the discussions with Sadat, Herbert Armstrong pledged to contribute \$1 million of church funds to the nation of Egypt. The Pasadena *Star-News* wrote on Nov. 14:

"Herbert W. Armstrong, pastor general of the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, and his chief deputy Stanley R. Rader Tuesday pledged \$1 million to President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and presented the president with an initial \$100,000 contribution.

"The million-dollar pledge was made during a televised conference between Armstrong, Rader and Sadat at the Giza Residential [sic] Palace this week. Their talk concerned Middle East problems and will be aired around the United States in a special televised program at a later date.

"During the discussion, Armstrong was invited by Sadat to join with him in the Mt. Sinai World Peace Project. Armstrong and Rader held an audience with Prime Minister Begin of Israel the preceding day."

The *Los Angeles Times* reported (Nov. 22, 1980) that the \$1 million would go toward the construction of a \$60 million "tri-faith religious complex" consisting of a church, mosque, and synagogue.

One WCG member commented, "I thought the Bible tells us to come out of Egypt, not to go back to Egypt with offerings!" Nevertheless, the vast majority of WCG members are apparently genuinely pleased with this church announcement, even though using church funds to build a religious complex seems contrary to long-standing church policy and practice of not supporting or dealing with other religious groups, which have been branded as "false churches" and "of the devil."

#### THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS-ONE CHEER FOR RADER

The annual financial report for the WCG, AC, and the AICF is now public record, and the 8-page report (done by the reputable accounting firm of Arthur Andersen & Co.) is top quality and very professionally presented. We must admit we were pleasantly surprised that Treasurer Stan Rader printed the whole report with all the footnotes - just as large U.S. corporations are required to do by law. We want to commend and congratulate him for doing so. For years we have urged the WCG to reveal its financial reports in a professional format without editing, combining, and/or deleting huge portions, and we finally got our wish. We are happy to see the WCG and Stan Rader in the forefront of U.S. churches in revealing their financial inner workings publicly. (We have long advocated that all churches claiming to represent God should be more than happy to publish their audited financial statements because (1) they claim to be godly and hence should have nothing to hide, and (2) they solicit contributions from the public and hence should be publicly accountable.)

We have long felt the WCG should regularly produce an accurate report of its current finances. Once this is done, it becomes each member's responsibility to decide whether or not he or she wishes to continue supporting it. But if no financial reports are available, the member is severely hampered in making this key decision.

Now for a few comments on the 1978-79 financial statements. In 1979 total current assets rose 27.3%, while current liabilities increased by only 15.2%. The current portion of long-term debt fell by 13.4%. The chief reason for these favorable percentages was that 1979 revenue (receipts) exceeded expenses by \$674,000, or by 1%. (In 1978 expenses outpaced revenues by a whopping \$4.9 million, or 7.8%.)

*Quest* magazine and Everest House Publishers, however, continue to be a drain on church revenues. Though *Quest*/Everest House took in 32% more revenue (\$5.1 million in 1979 vs. \$3.9 million in 1978), they spent 21% more money (\$9.4 million in 1979 vs. \$7.8 million in 1978) for a deficit of \$4.3 million. ("Management and general" expenses aren't included in this category, or the deficit would be even larger.) Furthermore, revenue from performing arts rose 44% (\$607,000 to \$875,000), but expenses for performing arts also rose from \$1.6 million to \$1.72 million (up 8%), which means the church is now spending almost twice as much money for the performing arts as the arts are producing in revenue. But management costs for the AICF declined 42% (\$1.24 million to \$0.72 million), showing that a genuine attempt is being made to cut soaring AICF costs.

The AICF's costs, however, have been out of control since its inception in 1975. What is significant is that the AICF gave a total of \$1,093,000 in "grants and charitable support" for the years of 1978-79. In view of the fact that the New Testament church was

commanded to help the poor and needy, it seems noble of the AICF to give over \$1 million to charity. But when you examine the financial data behind this \$1 million charitable "gift," a far different picture emerges and you realize the WCG is playing tricks with figures. Here's what's actually happening:

In 1978-79, according to the "Annual Financial Report," the AICF, the church's charity arm, spent \$23.6 million for *Quest*, Everest House, the performing arts, "grants and charitable support," and "management and general," but these activities produced only \$10.7 million in revenues. To cover this massive cost overrun, the church had to give the AICF a cash infusion of \$12.2 million from money already donated as charity to the church in the first place. So when all was said and done, it cost the church almost \$12 million in charity funds to enable the AICF to donate \$1 million to charity. That would be like spending \$12 million at the race track betting on horses and coming home with \$1 million left out of the \$12 million and exclaiming, "Hey, everybody, look: I won \$1 million at the track:" (By contrast, the Los Angeles March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation spent just \$16.3% of its revenue in fiscal 1979-80 for expenses, with 83.7% of the honey raised going to the people in need.)

Some wonder why the church doesn't just shut down the AICF and give the \$12 million directly to charity. But, of course, we realize that the church puts a higher value on the prestige and publicity generated by the AICF and *Quest* than it puts on charitable donations.

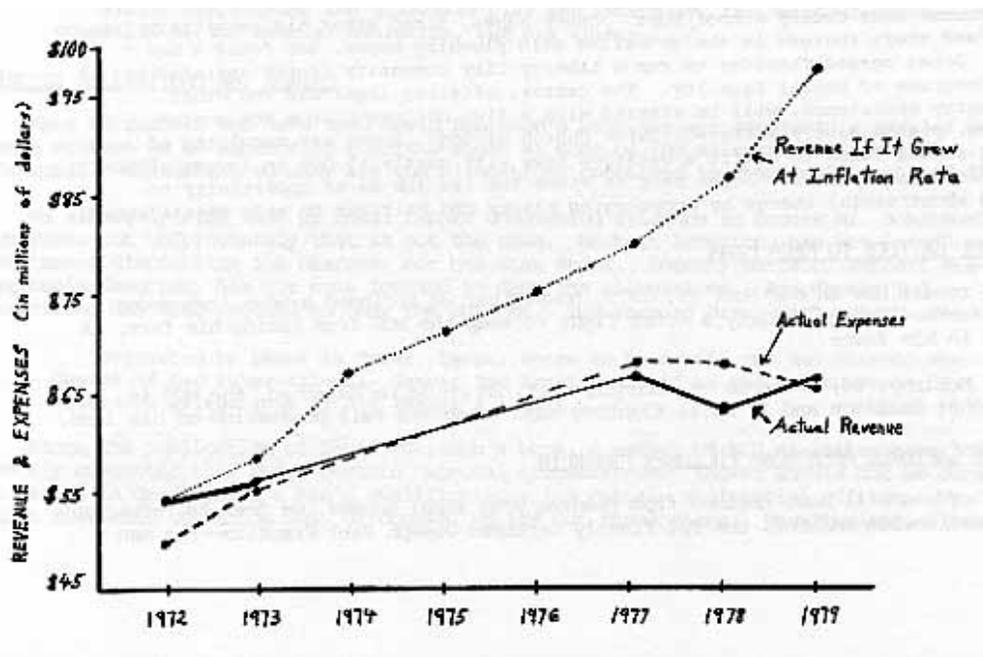
There are some interesting tidbits buried in the extensive footnotes that should be noticed: Note 4b states that "85 percent of all contributions to the Church were received by the Corporations Sole." Note 5a reveals that equipment, furnishings, and art items worth \$329,000 are "maintained in both owned and non-owned private homes (principally Mr. Armstrong's)." Note 5a also mentions that the prospective buyer of the Big Sandy, Texas, campus was unable to come up with the funds to complete the transaction, and so the WCG kept the \$500,000 security deposit posted by the buyer. If the WCG had not counted the \$500,000 as revenue in 1979, its revenue would have been that much lower.

Note 8 made this comment on the State of California's lawsuit against the WCG: "In the opinion of special counsel, the likelihood of the relief sought by the State of California being granted and sustained on appeal in a final judgment and having a material adverse effect upon the operations of the Church, College, and Foundation is remote." Note 8a points out that the organization has "been named as defendants in various other lawsuits, some of which involve claims for substantial damages," but "in the opinion of management and in-house counsel, such lawsuits are either without merit or the liability for any recovery in excess of insurance coverage is remote." Note 8b declares that Herbert Armstrong's salary over the next 7 years was raised from \$200,000/yr. to \$258,000/yr., a 29% raise. In addition to this salary, he receives "a parsonage allowance, the use of an automobile, the payment of corporate expenses incurred, and certain lifetime survivor benefits." It is stated that in addition to his \$200,000 salary in 1978 and 1979, he received \$106,000 and \$179,000. Rader, we discover, was given an extra \$162,000 above his \$200,000 1979 salary, and he obtained a \$20,000 raise for the next 7 years to \$220,000/yr.

Footnote 10 reveals that the church has no pension plan but is presently providing benefits "on a discretionary, case-by-case basis" to "selected former employees at a cost of \$309,000 and \$294,000 for the years ended December 31, 1979 and 1978." We would hope the church would change this arbitrary and discriminatory payment system into a fair and legitimate pension system that serves all its employees' needs.

#### CHURCH'S FINANCIAL POWER ERODING

Even though the church's finances in 1979 ended up in the black for the first time in three years, the church's yearly income is still not keeping pace with the inflation rate. This means that its real purchasing power is slowly eroding, and with a slow loss of purchasing power comes a corresponding loss of ability to influence the public and market its product (the Armstrong religion). The graph below illustrates the ruinous effect of inflation on the WCG. Notice that in 1972, the WCG took in \$54.3 million.



This became \$56.0 million in 1973, \$67.2 million in 1977, \$63.5 million in 1978, and \$66.4 million in 1979 - see solid line on graph (data for 1974, 1975, and 1976 was never made public by the WCG). The dotted line shows how much revenue the WCG would have taken in if its income in 1972 had grown at the same rate as the rate of inflation. The dashed lines indicate church expenses, which in 1977 and 1978 were in excess of revenues. So the graph makes it plain that, even though the WCG had a 1% increase in revenue over 1978, it must obtain a far greater percentage increase in revenue than 1% if it is to keep up with inflation. As the graph shows, had the WCG's revenues been keeping pace with inflation since 1972, they would have been \$98.6 million in 1979 instead of only \$66.4 million.

One reason the WCG's revenues are not growing at a faster rate is found in Note 2 of the Annual Financial Report. It states that the number of co-workers (nonmembers who contribute at least twice during a six-month period) supporting the WCG declined from 36,000 in 1978 to 30,000 in 1979, a 16.7% drop, and that donors (other nonmember contributors) declined from 90,000 in 1978 to 60,000 in 1979, a 33.3% drop. These figures indicate that the WCG's future growth will be severely hampered unless this trend is reversed because new tithe-paying members are usually drawn from the available pool of donors and co-workers, and this pool is rapidly declining.

#### MEASLES OUTBREAK CAUSED BY WCG MEMBERS

In late August, newspapers around the country carried the following Associated Press report:

N.Y. County Measles Outbreak Tied to Religious Sect Members

"ATLANTA- A measles outbreak in Erie County, N.Y., last spring and summer was caused mainly by members of a religious sect who were not vaccinated, public health authorities said Friday.

"The national Center for Disease Control said 39 of 112 patients who were stricken with the disease from March through June were members of the group.

"Dr. Richard Judelsohn, communicable disease control officer for Erie County, said in a telephone interview at Buffalo that the 39 were members of the Worldwide Church of God in West Seneca, a Buffalo suburb."

Of course, as long-time AR readers know, Herbert Armstrong and his entourage have gotten vaccinated whenever foreign travel laws required them to do so, even though members were, for years, admonished to avoid vaccinations because the practice was Satanic and because the vaccines were nothing but "monkey pus" and "other filth" (*The Good News*, Oct. 1959, p. 6).

#### WCG HIRES THIEF?

The *St. Petersburg Times* reported on September 6:

Jones Finds A New Job

"Former Dade County School Supt. Johnny Jones, fired after his conviction on grand theft charges in the so-called gold plumbing caper, has found a new job. Jones agreed Thursday to run a Liberty City community center operated by the Congress of Racial Equality. The center, offering legal aid and other community assistance, will be started with a \$100,000 grant from the conservative, predominantly white Worldwide Church of God. Jones was convicted of using school funds to outfit a vacation home with nearly \$9,000 in luxury plumbing, some gold-plated. Jones said he views the new job as an opportunity to bring about social change by encouraging blacks and Haitians to help themselves."

## FARMER STILL BATTLES TO KEEP FARM

You may recall how in our Nov. 19, 1979, newsletter we included a news item about Wisconsin farmer George McElroy's court fight to keep the WCG from taking his farm. A jury voted in his favor.

But Mr. McElroy, 66, wrote to us recently that, as could be expected, the WCG is appealing that decision and is still fighting hard to obtain full possession of his land.

## FBI FINALLY CAPTURES ARMSTRONG FOLLOWER FRANKLIN

As many of you will have noticed from reading your local papers, on Oct. 28, after an extensive nationwide manhunt, the FBI finally captured Joseph Paul Franklin-the man sought for the attempted murder of civil riots activist Vernon Jordan and for the alleged murder of eight black men and two white women.

What many may not have realized is that Franklin is an Armstrong follower. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on Oct. 7 (Part I, page 5):

"The man sought in the sniper slayings of eight black men and two white women had fantasies about being a motorcycle gang member, crying spells and headaches and physically abused her during a brief marriage, his former wife told the *Times* Monday.

"Bobbie Louise, now 29, asked that her last name not be used. She said that Joseph Paul Franklin - then James Clayton Vaughan Jr. - sometimes stood rigidly before a mirror, giving a 'Heil, Hitler' salute and posing in boots, blue jeans and denim vest with a swastika insignie, a heavy chain fastened to his belt.

"...an aunt in Mobile had told the *Times* in an interview that Franklin said he had become a follower of evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong in 1969, one year after Bobbie and her husband were divorced.

"'That just goes to show you how easily led he was,' Bobbie said. 'He never talked about religion around me. A church was the last thing I would have expected him to join. But now it looks like he was anxious to belong to *anything*.'"

## AMBASSADOR AUDITORIUM PRESENTS...

The Ambassador Auditorium is a beautiful building, and some of the performances that take place there are undoubtedly of the finest quality. But sometimes even music critics wonder at some of the goings on there. For instance here is an excerpt from a *Los Angeles Times* (Oct. 19, 1980) review of a Martha Graham Dancers performance at Ambassador Auditorium (otherwise known as the "House for God"):

"The novelty of the evening took the quasi-deja-vu form of 'Judith,' a recent reworking of a solo first devised by Graham in 1950 (to music of William Schuman) and revised in 1962 (score then by Mordecai Seter). The current incarnation, much expanded, utilizes the familiar erotic-symbolic-primal sculptures of Isamu Noguchi, the gently otherworldly music of Edgar Varese ('Integrales,' 'Offrandes,' 'Octandre') and some dazzling cloaks and body drapes by the ubiquitous Halston.

"It also employs Peggy Lyman in a torturous, often successful Graham imitation as the biblical heroine who first seduces, then destroys the Assyrian warrior Holofernes. There is much artful crouching and contorting and jumping here, most of it symmetrical and meticulously ordered and theatrically mechanical. Lyman broods and stalks imposingly. Wingerd provides a nice naked (well, nearly naked) heroic foil. Judith Garay is raped picturesquely by the intruding warriors. (All this in the cultural home of the Worldwide Church of God!) [The preceding sentence with exclamation point is the reviewer's, not ours.]

"Still, one watches the elaborate play and interplay, the cerebral-sexual competition, the angular athletics, and one thinks ...."

## INCEST ALLEGATIONS NOT DENIED

Many AR readers who have read David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* have written to us expressing absolute shock at some of the allegations it contains. Especially disturbing to many are the allegations contained in chapter 20 entitled "Incest."

We sincerely wish that we could report uncovering evidence to negate Mr. Robinson's charges, but unfortunately that is not the case. Herbert Armstrong has not issued any statement discounting the charges, nor has Stan Rader. Dorothy Mattson, Herbert Armstrong's daughter, has not come forward to deny the allegations. And Garner Ted Armstrong has also refused to deny the charges. The *Toronto Star*, Sept. 20 (p. F4) wrote:

"Contacted by phone in Tyler, Texas, where he heads his own new church, the Church of God International, Garner Ted Armstrong said he had 'no comment' regarding allegations of his father's incest ...."

Since the publication of David Robinson's book, a number of WCG ministers have privately commented that under certain "special circumstances" incest should not be considered a factor in determining a man's qualifications for certain ministerial offices. We find this difficult to fathom but, of course, we are not theologians. Nevertheless, since the publication of Robinson's book, one AR reader thoroughly researched the subject of father-daughter incest and discovered - not surprisingly - that the vast majority of psychiatrists and psychologists today still believe that incest is a sexual aberration with serious psychological consequences for all concerned.

One journal article on the subject was particularly enlightening. Titled "Sexual Abuse of Children: A Clinical Spectrum," the paper appeared in the April 1978 *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. The authors, Roland Summit, M.D., and JoAnn Kryso, M.S.W., begin by writing:

"This paper suggests that incest has been underestimated as a significant determinant of emotional disturbance, and that misuse of sexuality between parents and children can have detrimental consequences that parallel those resulting from other forms of child abuse. The spectrum of parent-child sexuality is classified into ten categories as a guide to the diagnosis, management, and prognosis of sexually abusive behavior."

The paper goes on to medically categorize ten types of incest. Two types are of particular significance:

"7. Imperious Incest

"This category represents a fusion of elements from the ideological, rustic, and misogynous categories. These men set themselves up as emperors in their household domain. They plan out an incredible caricature of the male chauvinist role, requiring wife and daughters to perform acts of sexual fealty. One man, who initiated three daughters into his service, even constructed a throne for himself. The domestic grandiosity seems to compensate for an otherwise mediocre achievement level; such men tend to be displaced from rustic backgrounds, with poor education and few job skills. They may be highly religious, expressing rigid, fundamentalist Christian doctrines and quoting Scriptures to justify their domestic role.

"One such man entered into a sexual relationship with his nine-year-old daughter while functioning as a fundamentalist minister. The mother, an extremely passive woman who made no decisions for herself, refused to intervene, despite repeated entreaties from the girl and an older sister..." (pp. 245-46).

"10. Perverse Incest

"This last category is called 'perverse' or 'pornographic' in the absence of any better superlatives to describe kinky, unfettered lechery. These cases become more bizarre, more frankly erotic, more flagrantly manipulative and destructive than those in earlier categories....

"This group is called pornographic because of an apparent need to go beyond limits of socially acceptable sexual practice to explore whatever is most forbidden, with incest representing the ultimate taboo. Furthermore, the participants may want to record their achievements and to see themselves putting the fantasies into action; diaries, secret confessions, and Polaroid photographs seem to heighten their excitement. We are not suggesting that outside pornography creates the abuses, but rather that the abusers seem caught up in creating their own pornography" (p. 247).

Our AR reader summed up the findings of her research on incest (done as part of a university degree program) with the following statement:

"Each father-daughter incestuous relationship appears to be caused by its own unique mixture of variables determined by the father role and/or mother role and/or daughter role. In general this incest is a symptom of family dysfunction. Yet no matter what the role of the mother or daughter, the father is the one who finally chooses the erotic daughter relationship. He sets the sexual limits and chooses whether to cross over the barrier and commit incest."

### HERBERT ARMSTRONG DEMONS?

One of our readers recently showed us a copy of a book entitled *Demolishing the Hosts of Hell*. Its author is Win Worley, pastor of the Hegewisch Baptist Church of Highland, Indiana. Pastor Worley is a fundamentalist Baptist preacher who takes very literally the Bible's statements on demons. Further, he is looked to by many fundamentalist Christians as a leading exorcist, who claims to have exorcised demons from hundreds of tormented individuals.

We at the *Report* are not theologians nor have any of us had any experience in the area of demonology. So we do not wish to pass any kind of judgment on Pastor Worley's ministry. However, we did find one section of his book particularly interesting. On page 51 the author writes:

"I will list below some of the demons who have named themselves in the deliverance ministry. It is a frustrating job to attempt to classify the spirits and I was forced to make rather arbitrary placements.

"The names listed were actually given by the demons at the time of deliverances. As strange as they may sound, they are the culprits and describe their work. Perhaps the list will help the reader appreciate more fully the thoroughness with which Satan has infiltrated every area of our personalities, our lives and even our thought life."

The author then goes on to list hundreds of names he claims were given by demons in identifying themselves as he cast them out. Among the names listed - "Herbert Armstrong" (p. 54) .

We're frankly not sure of what significance (if any) this is, but we did find it amusing. For those who might wish to follow up on this, Pastor Worley's books are published by Hegewisch Baptist Church, P.O. Box 626, Lansing, Illinois 60438.

### IS HERBERT ARMSTRONG IN PROPHECY?

Is Herbert Armstrong actually mentioned in biblical prophecy? We don't think so. In fact, none of the Report's publishers have in recent years believed Herbert Armstrong to be anything but a crafty religious huckster.

Our readers, however, do not all hold that opinion. For instance one reader writes:

*"In a lot of ways I think you guys at Ambassador Report are doing a good job, but in one way you're missing the boat on a really big stony. That is, Herbert Armstrong as prophet. No I don't think he is of God, but I'm convinced he is a prophet - an important one.*

*"You'll probably think I'm nuts, but a careful study of prophecy has convinced me that HWA or his successor may very well be the False Prophet of Revelation. Here's why:*

*"The idea - preached by numerous Protestant denominations for years - that a United States of Europe is the Beast of Revelation is ridiculous. The Beast of Revelation is clearly a world-ruling empire, ruled from Jerusalem by a false Messiah. That's why the Bible talks of an Antichrist. 'Anti' doesn't just mean 'against.' It also means 'in front of' or 'in place of.' Check your concordances and Bible dictionaries.*

*"Now ask yourself, how will the Antichrist pull off his deception? Sure, he may do miracles and be a great leader. But don't forget there are millions of Christians in the world who know about prophecy (at least a little). And there are probably hundreds of millions of copies of the Bible in existence. The Antichrist will have to be far more clever than Herbert Armstrong claims he will be in at least two major areas.*

*"First of all, he could not possibly be as openly pagan as HWA paints him. After all, who would he fool? Half the world knows that the Messiah will enforce the weekly Sabbath and annual Holy Days. Indeed, even scholars who are not Christians or Jews know this is what the Bible teaches. The Antichrist would logically go along with much of this in order to carry out his deception. Any leader who would try to set up the kind of pagan-Gentile kingdom HWA claims he will set up will not be believed. Even with supernatural powers he would not be believed. For evidence of this consider the movies Omen, Damien: Omen II, and The Final Conflict (to be released next year). Obviously, even the 'worldly' individuals who make such movies would not be deceived by HWA's Antichrist. These movie makers are convinced that supernatural power do not of themselves prove a man is of God.*

*"Secondly, it's important to remember that the world right now is looking on prophecy to be fulfilled. It's no longer the uncouth subject it once was. Even among 'jet-setters,' Hollywood types, and politicians prophecy is discussed. Now ask yourself - how could the Antichrist fool the entire world into thinking he was the returned Messiah unless there was first a phony Beast? Everyone knows the Beast will reign before the Messiah returns. Obviously for the Antichrist to pull off his charade he (on his spokesman-the False Prophet) will have to be able to point to something and say that was the Beast.*

*"Now that brings us to HWA. Yes, there very possibly will be a ten-nation United States of Europe. Maybe the Pope will have a part in it. So what? That still won't be the Beast of Revelation! Some will teach it is, however, and that will be significant. Now who has done more to popularize the false notion that the Beast is going to be a Holy Roman Empire or a United States of Europe? Sure, there's Hal Lindsey whose Late Great Planet Earth also has pushed this notion, but not the way HWA has. Nor has Lindsey had the contacts with world leaders that Herbert Armstrong has....*

*"If you want to understand this subject better, you should read Ernest Martin's October 1980 Commentator. In it he wrote an excellent article called 'The Antichrist in Prophecy.' I don't agree with Martin on a lot of things, but when I read this article on prophecy, I had to agree with him on this subject."*

Editor: We called Dr. Martin and asked him if he believed that Herbert Armstrong is the False Prophet of Revelation. He told us he did not and for a number of reasons. First, he feels HWA is too old. He will not likely still be around to see that prophecy fulfilled. Second, Martin does not believe that the Jews could be led to believe that HWA is the endtime Elijah. (Martin feels that the Israelis will be deceived into mistaking the False Prophet of Revelation for the endtime Elijah.) Nevertheless, Martin does feel that several important parallels do exist between Armstrongism and the work of the False Prophet.

Will a successor to Herbert Armstrong have a part to play in the coming great apostasy? Martin refuses to make any predictions on this. But there are those who strongly suspect this will be the case. Of course, while we do not have a crystal ball that would reveal what future role Herbert may play as a prophet, we have documented the fact that almost 100% of his prophecies, dating back to 1934, have failed. But he keeps trying to make something come to pass, in spite of his miserable record. The Aug. 25, 1980, *Worldwide News* (p. 1) quoted Herbert telling children at the church's Summer Educational Program: "Perhaps it [the Kingdom of God] will begin in about three to five years from now or less. Because we're very, very close to it right now." (The phrase in brackets "the Kingdom of God" was part of the *Worldwide News* quote and is not our comment.)

#### HERBERT ARMSTRONG AND SIMON MAGUS

Not many believe that Herbert Armstrong is the False Prophet mentioned by John in Revelation. But more and more former WCG members, and even some current members, seem to have reached the conclusion that Herbert Armstrong is, and has been for some time, the central problem of the WCG. For instance, one paper (anonymous) being circulated in church circles equates Herbert Armstrong with

Simon Magus. While this paper does not necessarily represent the views of all the publishers of the *Report*, and although it is somewhat theological, it does contain some points of interest. It is reproduced on pp. 11-12 of this newsletter.

## WHERE THEY NOW

Evangelist *Les McCullough*, who at one time held the position of vice-chancellor of Ambassador College in Big Sandy, head of the church's International Division, and head of the Canadian churches, has now been sent to pastor the Cincinnati, Ohio East church. (The WCG has four churches in Cincinnati, and he is over only one of them.) One minister remarked, "Giving up his expense accounts and going to pastor the Cincinnati church after being one of the most powerful men in the church is like being exiled to Siberia. Come to think about it, I don't believe he has ever had to pastor a church before either."

Evangelist *Dean Wilson*, formerly head of the Canadian and Australian churches, recently met a similar fate. While he was visiting Pasadena from Australia, evidently an elder or elders from Australia called Evangelist Tkach at WCG headquarters and informed Tkach that Wilson was allegedly not supporting Stan Rader and was not cracking down on "liberals" in Australia. Wilson was informed in writing that he had 24 hours to leave Pasadena. He was also told he had been transferred to the Portland, Oregon, church and to leave the keys to his Australian house at headquarters. He was informed that his belongings would be packed and sent to him but that he was not to set foot into Australia. Wilson obeyed!

## **Herbert W. Armstrong - 20th-Century Apostle or 20th-Century Simon Magus?**

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, the "apostle" of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), has often criticized the Christian churches of today (all churches other than his own) as being "pagan." Over the years he has given numerous sermons and authored many articles pointing out parallels between various Christian traditions and ancient pagan practices.

Ironically, however, a careful scrutiny of the WCG reveals amazing parallels between the Armstrong church and paganism — some far more damning than those pointed out by Mr. Herbert Armstrong of other churches.

The most serious of these parallels concerns the WCG's system of organization — the pyramid or hierarchical form of government. For although this system of government was used by ancient Israel (remember God, himself, was manifestly at the top of that hierarchy initiated to bring order to an unconverted and rebellious nation), this type of government was clearly condemned

God's Word commands us to **COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, and be separate.** God's last warning is, **"COME OUT OF BABYLON!!"**

But now Mr. Armstrong is holding back and suppressing this plain truth (Rom. 1:18). This amazing 1939 article has even been removed from the Ambassador College library lest students or members learn these shocking facts!

II Cor. 4:4 tells us that this world's god is the devil. How does the devil rule his domain? Is it not through this very Babylonish system? Is it not through causing people to give over their minds to rulers who are, in turn, inspired and led by Satan?

The despots of the ancient world demanded total obedience and loyalty from their subjects, and in time demanded total worship. History suggests that Nimrod,

## **Herbert W. Armstrong -**

## **20th-Century Apostle or 20th-Century Simon Magus?**

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, the "apostle" of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), has often criticized the Christian churches of today (all churches other than his own) as being "pagan." Over the years he has given numerous sermons and authored many articles pointing out parallels between various Christian traditions and ancient pagan practices.

Ironically, however, a careful scrutiny of the WCG reveals amazing parallels between the Armstrong church and paganism - some far more damning than those pointed out by Mr. Herbert Armstrong of other churches.

The most serious of these parallels concerns the WCG's system of organization - the pyramid or hierarchical form of government. For although this system of government was used by ancient Israel (remember God, himself, was manifestly at the top of that hierarchy initiated to bring order to an unconverted and rebellious nation), this type of government was clearly condemned by Jesus as an unacceptable method of organizing his church (Luke 22:25-26). And no wonder. One has only to study the histories of ancient civilizations to see that this Babylonish form of government was *the* governmental system of the ancient pagan world.

What obviously makes this system so anathema to true Christianity is that it is by its very nature a type of idolatry. For it puts a man *in place* of God. Men begin to look to the human head instead of to God. Recall that Peter insisted a Christian "ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But carnal men tend to grant loyalty to the human leader and follow his teachings, even when those teachings contradict God's Word. This is the very essence of what the Bible refers to as "Babylon." Yet not only has Mr. Armstrong adopted this pagan concept, he has taken it about as far as did the rulers of the ancient pagan world.

In the Worldwide Church of God's ministerial bulletin of 12/3/74, p. 631, Mr. Herbert Armstrong stated, concerning the church's false doctrines of divorce and remarriage, makeup, and Pentecost, that Christ (through Mr. Armstrong) "has bound in heaven what His Church, even in unrealized error, has bound in earth." It is difficult to believe that the God who wants to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (Malachi 4:6) supported Mr.

Armstrong as he needlessly destroyed thousands of families for 40 years through an admittedly erroneous (according to Mr. Armstrong) divorce doctrine. The apostle Paul says Christians should be followers of him *only* as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11 :1). Yet the pagan rulers of Satan's Babylonish system have always proclaimed in so many words: "Follow me even as God follows me and legally binds what I say!"

Even Mr. Armstrong at one time acknowledged that the Babylonish form of church government is wrong Notice what he wrote about church organization in the April 1939 *Good News* (pp. 6-7 ):

How, then, did ORGANIZATION, and the idea of CHURCH GOVERNMENT get into the Church? It came out of BABYLON! Spiritual BABYLON - that is, ROME!... Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of such an organized church government . . . are IN BABYLON, and actually worshippers of THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST! And God is calling us, HIS people OUT of BABYLON today, before it is too late before the PLAGUES fall!...

Jesus never set up an organization, nor did He establish any church GOVERNMENT. He did not RE-ORGANIZE the Church!... The object of the Church is not to build up an organization, or a movement....

Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church GOVERNMENT, or set men IN AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church....

What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION - which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power....

God's Word commands us to COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, and be separate. God's last warning is, "COME OUT OF BABYLON!!!"

But now Mr. Armstrong is holding back and suppressing this plain truth ( Rom. 1:18 ). This amazing 1939 article has even been removed from the Ambassador College library lest students or members learn these shocking facts!

II Cor. 4:4 tells us that this world's god is the devil. How does the devil rule his domain? Is it not through this very Babylonish system? Is it not through causing people to give over their minds to rulers who are, in turn, inspired and led by Satan?

The despots of the ancient world demanded total obedience and loyalty from their subjects, and in time demanded total worship. History suggests that Nimrod, the founder of Babylon (Gen. 10:8-10), was deified on his death thus establishing the foundation of the Babylonish religions of the whole of the ancient pagan world. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, putting himself in place of God, was guilty of this. Alexander the Great was declared a god. Many of the emperors of ancient Rome declared themselves gods.

Now what do we see happening in the WCG? Mr. Herbert Armstrong has gone from being one of the ministers of the "true church" to being an apostle to being the *only* apostle of the twentieth century. In *The Plain Truth* he proclaimed that his writings on the purpose of life were the most important writings since the holy Bible. Recently, some Worldwide ministers, ignoring the third commandment and New Testament teaching (Heb. 3:1), have begun referring to Mr. Armstrong as the *Holy* Apostle, thus giving to him a title that now properly belongs only to Jesus Christ. These ministers have apparently forgotten that to call any mortal man "holy" is actually blasphemy!

How long will it be before Mr. Herbert Armstrong is openly declared a god or something similar? Will he be deified on his death? Will his writings be all but made holy scripture by his successor? Only time will tell. But now Mr. Herbert Armstrong is telling friends that he has already been resurrected! (See Chapter 19 of David Robinson's book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*.) The followers of Nimrod claimed this very thing of their dead hero. Thus was born the myth that became the foundation of the leading religions of the ancient world.

But even without the outright deification of Mr. Herbert Armstrong, actual idolatry has already taken hold in the WCG. Already WCG members "worship" Mr. Herbert Armstrong by putting his commands above those of God and his Word. Although they seem blinded to their own sycophantic behavior, it is, nevertheless, worship of a man and therefore idolatry!

Mr. Herbert Armstrong has always been quick to condemn other churches as being pagan. But they have not been alone in his condemnation. The Masons and their ceremonies have also been the target of his theological attacks. Until the late sixties, when it was mysteriously withdrawn from circulation, the Armstrong church published a booklet entitled *The Truth About Masonry*, which condemned Masonry's ceremonies as being clearly of pagan origin and Satanic. And over the years many WCG ministers have pointed out the mystic pagan foundations of modern Masonry. Yet here again, a careful study of Armstrongism today reveals amazing parallels with the symbology of Masonry and paganism. For instance, some have pointed out these similarities between the \$24 million "House for God" ( Ambassador Auditorium) and Masonry/paganism:

- The auditorium seats are arranged so WCG members, like the wicked men of Ezek. 8:16, face due east when they worship, not west as did the righteous worshippers at God's Temple and its predecessor the Tabernacle.
- Architecturally the auditorium is really similar to a large black box (God's Temple wasn't black) with a white top, as is the Islamic Kaaba. (For an explanation of the significance of this, see *Freemasonry - An Interpretation* by Martin L. Wagner.)
- The auditorium's 7 steps leading up to the stage and the wording of the auditorium's dedication plaque are two auditorium features that have Masonic counterparts.

It is significant that the ancient pagan religions all had lavishly adorned houses of worship, while 40 years of New Testament history shows that Christians never built houses of worship. Indeed Stephen at his martyrdom was quoted as saying: "The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48 ). And every beginning theology student should know why - because God dwells in each Christian, who is likened to a holy temple (I Cor. 3:16). Those who pour millions of dollars into luxuriously furnished, gold-gilded houses of worship (like the pagans) instead of using the money to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ are following pure paganism - not the Christianity of the New Testament.

The worshippers of Mr. Herbert Armstrong may reason that these similarities - if they are even aware of them - have no relevance to the modern world. Or they may argue that these parallels are just coincidences. But the question that should be asked is: "Who inspired these pagan parallels?" God? No, obviously not, for Malachi 3:6 quotes God saying, "I change not!" Perhaps the answer is in Ephesians 6:12, where the Bible warns us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world - against wicked spirits in high places.

There are signs associated with God's church (Mk. 16:17-18; John 13:35), and there are signs associated with the god of this world. We must be able to discern the difference. We are told by scripture to test the spirits to determine which are which (I John 4:1), because "many false prophets are gone out into the world." This is not always an easy matter. Matthew 24:24 tells us that in the end time only the very elect will be able to withstand the strong deceptions of false prophets. Many sincere and dedicated people will be deceived - even many who call Jesus "Lord" (Matt. 7:21-23).

This should not surprise us. What is happening to the Worldwide Church of God is not very different from something that occurred in the early New Testament church. In Acts 8 we read of a religious leader known as Simon Magus. From what the Bible tells us and from what we can discover from historical records, an absolutely remarkable portrait emerges of this individual. Notice these main points:

- (1) His followers were absolutely convinced he was doing the work of God (Acts 8:10). And thus Simon's followers were undoubtedly convinced they too were doing "God's Work."
- (2) He did great works (Acts 8:10).
- (3) He claimed great authority (Acts 8:9). Some historians say he claimed to be an apostle.
- (4) His apostasy lasted a long time (Acts 8:11).
- (5) He "bewitched" the people. Today we might use the word "hypnotized" or say "he was able to sway them easily" (Acts 8:9). He evidently was a dynamic leader, and very likely a thoroughly convincing speaker who gave no inkling of insincerity.
- (6) He had been baptized properly by a leading evangelist of the true church (Acts 8:13).
- (7) He was a Samaritan (Acts 8:5,9). Samaritans were Gentiles who lived in the area of Palestine. They claimed to be "God's people"; they used the Old Testament scriptures and kept many of its laws.
- (8) He was preoccupied with money, and this preoccupation even extended to the spiritual area (Acts 8:20).
- (9) He was "in the bond of iniquity" ("bound with his own sin" - Phillips) (Acts 8:23).
- (10) He was well-acquainted with scripture and in contact with God's true church. In fact, according to Clementine Homilies, he had been a disciple of John the Baptist. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, article "Simon Magus.")
- (11) He traveled extensively and went to world capitals. "At a later time Simon seems to have journeyed to Rome in the company of a Tyrian (of Tyre, a Gentile city, recall Ezek. 28) ex-prostitute named Helen, who he claimed was his First Thought through whom he himself created the universe . . ." (*Ibid*). Obviously, he began to experience delusions of grandeur.
- (12) ". . . later Christian writers such as Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphaneus treat him as the originator of Gnosticism" (*Ibid*). Gnosticism is considered by many scholars as the first major heresy of the early New Testament church.
- (13) Some scholars believe that it was the activities of Simon that precipitated the terrible persecution of Christians by Nero.
- (14) According to one legend, Simon died while trying to fake a crucifixion and resurrection of himself. He seems to have begun to believe he was a god.

In past years Simon Magus was often the subject of sermons and articles by leading WCG ministers. Mr. Herbert Armstrong claimed Simon's Samaritan religion had its origins in Babylon and that Simon was possessed of the devil, who used him to found a major worldwide apostasy. Today, however, Mr. Herbert Armstrong no longer seems very interested in preaching on that subject in much detail. Perhaps it is because so many strong parallels exist between Simon Magus and Mr. Herbert Armstrong. For instance, ex-WCG minister Richard Forkun has written, "The WCG is a modern version of the Gnosticism of the first and second centuries A.D. The Gnostics put knowledge above faith. Their concepts of God, man, salvation, etc. were incredibly contrived similarly the WCG." In studying the Bible's account of Simon Magus, let us recall that it has relevance for us today. What is recorded about this man is in the Bible for a purpose (I Cor. 10-11).

Like many pagan potentates, Mr. Armstrong has long been waited on by servants and lives in expensive homes studded with expensive artwork and finery - all while many of his loyal subjects barely make ends meet after paying all their tithes and offerings to him. When his church was provided millions of dollars in the late sixties and early seventies that could have been used to persuade the Western world to turn back to its God, Mr. Armstrong wasted the money on concerts, jet planes, paintings, jewelry, banquets, lavish gifts to pagan despots, and expensive homes staffed with servants. Paul worked with his own hands as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3) to avoid the claim that he was living off Christ's money, lest he offend someone weak in the faith (I Cor. 9:11-12,18). The apostles, instead of flattering the Roman leaders and giving banquets in their honor (I Thes. 2:4-6), told them of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection (Acts 5:27-32; Acts 24-28, etc.).

Mr. Herbert Armstrong, far from being a holy apostle, is following the way of Simon Magus, who preached a different gospel than the "gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:7). Mr. Armstrong, like Simon Magus, is ashamed of bluntly telling world leaders that they ought to discard their pagan religious superstitions, repent of their sins, and accept Jesus as their Lord and Master. According to his son Garner Ted Armstrong, Mr. Herbert Armstrong's "gospel-preaching" tours are nothing more than expensive autograph-hunting binges and picture-taking ceremonies with the rulers of this world's Babylonish system.

And while Mr. Herbert Armstrong's life has become one giant ego trip, what has become of the church? Doctrines come and go like the wind. Scandal after scandal is revealed. Former ministers level accusations of the most serious sort, charging bizarre sex acts, incest, adultery, and other unspeakable perversions. Church funds are used to publish occult literature under the Everest House name, homosexuals perform in "God's House," etc. Why? Is it because we are seeing Romans 1:21-28 being fulfilled before our very eyes?

And what of the many dedicated, Bible-believing individuals who have been thrust out of the church in the last few years? Is this a reenactment of what happened in the early New Testament Church (III John 9-10) where false apostles loved to have preeminence among the brethren and cast out of the church those who were loyal to God?

It should be obvious to all true Christians that the Worldwide Church of God has become a part of "Babylon." To his children still in "Babylon" God declares (Rev. 18:4): "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Will you obey God's clear command? The choice is up to you!

*Sherwin McMichael*, the church's star witness at the recent hearings over Dave Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, was pastoring the Washington, D.C. church. Recently he reported 70 to 80 "demon cases" in his church area and called headquarters for help. Reportedly, several headquarters ministers scurried back to Washington, D.C., to try to determine why McMichael's area was being overrun with demons. Now as we go to press we hear that Sherwin (who has long alleged that Stan Rader has a demon) has been dismissed and accused of being demon possessed. We have no way of knowing whether any of these allegations are true and have always felt that Mr. McMichael was simply a typical WCG minister.

*Dr. Robert Kuhn* has moved to New York City where he works in his dad's garment business. *Ben Chapman* is working for the Kuhn business setting up computer services and systems organization at a high salary. *Lois Chapman*, a daughter-in-law of Herbert Armstrong, has a computer services business. Word has it she's doing very well and is driving a Cadillac El Dorado.

*Dave Antion* is still in Pasadena pursuing his doctorate in educational psychology at USC and doing some marriage counseling. Word has it that Antion preaches at the Church of God, International at Arcadia where he volunteers his preaching services, as he is not on Garner Ted Armstrong's payroll. *Les Stocker* is employed as director of development for the Braille Institute in Los Angeles. *Bob Oberlander* also works at the Braille Institute as director of educational services for the blind. Evidently neither Stocker nor Oberlander attend the WCG at present. *Ed Smith* is out of the ministry in Cincinnati but still attends services. *Paul Flatt* works for a Denver corporation in Orlando, Florida. *Dennis* and *Jack Pyle* have received awards as outstanding insurance salesmen and are not part of the WCG anymore. *Dale Hampton* is vice-president of Hamma Oil in Oklahoma City. *Ray Kosanke*, formerly a *Plain Truth* correspondent in Brussels, Belgium, has landed a top job with Atlantic Richfield.

In a surprise move, *Stan Watts* left the ministry and moved up to Canada to work with his father-in-law. *Art Mokarow* is now in business for himself, attempting to market a TV program on various issues, mainly marriage and family services. *Elbert Atlas* has left the ministry and is working for Occidental Life Insurance Co. in Los Angeles. *John Reedy*, a son-in-law of Dave Robinson, left the ministry and has established a growing landscaping business in Tyler, Texas. *Bobby Boyce*, a former minister, is in the contracting business in Longview, Texas, with his brothers. *Wayne Cole* works as a publisher's representative, lives in Tyler, Texas, and is not affiliated with any church at present.

*Jim Lacour* is doing well in real estate in the Pasadena area. *Dorothy Lacour* is working at USC in the administration for continuing education. *Dr. Mike Germano* just obtained his J.D. degree and is now an attorney at law. He is also in the administration of West Coast University in Orange County. *Jo Ann Dorothy* is now Dr. Dorothy as she received her degree in chiropractic. *Jan Freibergs* is working in holistic health care in Pasadena, while *Gunar Freibergs* works for the Los Angeles City College system as a professor of history.

Former editor and minister *Brian Knowles* worked for the GTA church for a couple of weeks but now is doing freelance writing and editing for several corporations in the LA area. *Carole Ritter* now works as a writer for ARCO (Atlantic Richfield). *Lawson Briggs*, former WCG writer-editor, is working for an engineering firm in Alhambra and doing cost engineering. *Jim Lea*, former *Plain Truth* editor, received his master's in Business Administration and is presently working for *Business Week* magazine. *Bob Ginskey*, former WCG writer-editor, is selling real estate in northern California and is quite successful we hear. *Ron Beideck*, former assistant managing editor of *The Plain Truth*, is working for a computer typesetting firm in LA. *George Warner* is a manager in the Personnel Dept. at Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena.

A reader recently wrote:

*"Some years ago, when minister Al Carrozzo 'blew the whistle' on Garner Ted Armstrong and left the WCG, some WCG ministers said that God had put Carrozzo under a curse. They intimated he would soon wind up in poverty and his family would desert him. They said he already had cancer.*

*"Some curse! I recently heard that Carrozzo's family is together, healthy and happy, his business is thriving, he is a prominent and influential member of his community, he is completely healed of cancer, and to top it off, he is now a bona*

*fide millionaire. Is this all true?"*

Editor: We understand it is.

We at Ambassador Report are pleased to hear of the above success stories and wish all of these people well, regardless of whether or not they are associated with the WCG. We would hope that the Worldwide Church would also one day acknowledge the success stories of all its former employees who helped build the church and Ambassador College, rather than trying to downplay their successes and pretending as though they have ceased to exist.

#### NEW GROUPS (& GROUPS NEW TO US)

Since our last issue, we have received a number of complaints from readers who feel we should not mention certain groups or individuals in our newsletters. For instance we received a few letters condemning us for mentioning Sabbath-keeping churches. We received a few condemning us for mentioning Dr. Martin's Foundation for Biblical Research. One writer was displeased because in mentioning Mr. Plache's ministry he was convinced we were advocating Sunday keeping.

Frankly, we are not really followers of any of the groups we have ever mentioned. If we were, we'd be members or working for them. But that does not mean that we can't learn from these various organizations. Obviously there are certain groups we feel closer to. But we've tried hard to at least mention every group that's appeared on the scene with ties to Worldwide. We do this for a number of reasons: (1) It helps readers to renew old friendships or make new ones. (2) It gives readers the opportunity to "compare notes." Virtually every group publishes literature of some type. People with philosophical or theological interests can compare various points of view. (3) It helps us all to see more clearly where the WCG and the Church of God movement (if that's the right word) are headed. But, again, mentioning anyone does not mean we endorse everything they do or teach. In fact, sometimes just the opposite is the case.

So with that in mind, here are some organizations we've recently been made aware of. We're sorry we can't devote more space to each one.

The United Church of God  
4500 Warwick Blvd.  
Kansas City, MO 64111

This group sent us a press release, dated Sept. 8, 1980. We found this statement interesting:

*"After years of membership with Herbert W. Armstrong and the troubled Worldwide Church of God (Pasadena, California), and then recently after disappointment with Garner Ted Armstrong and the Church of God, International (Tyler, TX), former members of both organizations officially independently incorporated in Kansas City as the United Church of God..."*

*"Pastor Richard Prince (816-233-8628, Rt. 2, Box 43A, Wathena, KS 66090) serves not only United, but also an identical group in St. Joseph, Missouri, which has incorporated as the St. Joseph Church of God.*

*"Becoming independently incorporated appears to [be] becoming a national trend among former Worldwide Church of God members. Cities in which independent congregations have also surfaced include Portland, OR; Monterey, CA; Tulsa, OK; Longview, TX; and, St. Louis, MO."*

Our readers should not confuse the Kansas City-based United Church of God with the United Church of God in Lake Winola, Pennsylvania, pastored by Richard Wiedenheft. Wiedenheft's church (P.O. Box 45, Lake Winola, PA 18625) publishes *Focus on Truth* and has an extensive sermon cassette library available.

Servants of Messiah  
P.O. Box 779  
Sampan, CM 96950 U.S.A.

Publishes: A theological newsletter called *Age-Ending*.

\*\*\*\*\*

Church of God (Seventh Day)  
(John M. Ouvrier, Pastor)  
P.O. Box 100  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734  
Phone: 808-262-0008

\*\*\*\*\*

Church of God (Seventh Day)  
P.O. Box 170  
Seven Hills, N.S.W. 2147  
Australia

\*\*\*\*\*

Rising Star Publications  
(Tony and Bertha Badillo)  
3122 Jerome  
Dallas, Texas 75223

Publishes:

*Found: The Laodicean Church Today?*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Christian Examiner*  
(free periodical edited by  
ex-WCG member Bill Bunks)  
2650 West, 3360 South  
West Valley, UT 84119  
Phone: 801-966-5320

\*\*\*\*\*

*New Beginnings*  
Yahweh the Almighty Covenant  
One of Israel  
P.O. Box 228  
Waynesville, NC 28786

\*\*\*\*\*

Alexander's Monthly Economic Newsletter  
(AMEN)  
Gary Alexander, Editor  
Box 54  
Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111

\*\*\*\*\*

Assemblies of the Called Out Ones of  
"Yah," Inc.  
231 Cedar Street  
Jackson, TN 38301

\*\*\*\*\*

*News Keys*  
P.O. Box 12092  
Austin, TX 78711

(A free quarterly newsletter published  
by the Assemblies of Yahshua. Their  
fall issue contained an article by Charles  
Dodge entitled "True History of the World-  
wide Church of God.")

\*\*\*\*\*

*"I am a former members of the Worldwide Church of God. I, like many others, was hurt and discouraged when I discovered the truth about the Armstrongs. But I continued my search and effort to do God's will.... I have discovered a church that I have really benefited from and I would like to share it with others. The Christadelphians...."*

[signed]  
Tom Carpenter  
Rt. 2, Box 19  
Quinton, VA 2 3141

\*\*\*\*\*

*"We do not belong to or attend any of the split-off groups and don't intend to. We agree partially with Dr. Martin, mostly with regard to personal salvation and freedom in Christ. But there are still many of us who feel God's laws are good. But we feel WCG is dead wrong in its interpretation of those laws. We have found the Identity ministry to be the link in putting God's laws in their proper perspective with regard to the individual and with regard to their application to civil government. The result is the freedom Dr. Martin teaches for the individual, but not to be left out is the perfect harmony of God's laws for the nation. [Emphasis theirs.]*

*"For those out there who are caught in the middle of Dr. Martin's teachings and yet still believe God's laws are righteous, and yet feel WCG is wrong, please write to some of our Identity friends for some real comforting and informative answers. They were the solution for answering many of our questions.*

*"There are several Identity pastors I could give the addresses of, but to conserve on space for the AR, I'll give you the one we heard first and really related to the best:*

*America's Promise  
P.O. Box 5334  
Phoenix, AZ 85010"*

\*\*\*\*\*

*"We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your fine work. It has been very helpful to us and so many others.*

*"Most ex-cultists go through a deprogramming very much like a junkie on a de-tox program. Many WCG people need this, and you've been the closest thing to that.. So please don't be so quick to disband your work - it may be needed long after the collapse of Petra or whatever.*

*"I was associated with the WCG since 1959, baptized in 1971, enlightened in 1974, and disfellowshipped recently for conducting home Bible studies without pontiffic approval. We've since incorporated our own church, the Abunda Life Church of God. We conduct home Bible studies the first and third Saturday of each month and will be putting out a newsletter soon called "The Abunda Life." Most of those who attend are patients of my naturopathy practice and other ex-church members, but some ex-WCG members do attend and it is growing in a spirit and numbers.*

*"This is the route I suggested to the Associated Church some years ago, that it not base the church on a group of malcontents, but rather start over. Then if those who were turned off want to attend, great! At least they'll have people to fellowship [with] besides other malcontents."*

*Dr. Robert H. Sorge, N.D.  
The Naturopath Clinic  
2 Worthington Avenue  
Spring Lake, NJ 07762*

#### GARNER TED'S WOES

Garner Ted Armstrong is finding out that running his own church is not as simple as it might have appeared. His Church of God, International (CGI) took off like a rocket when it was founded in mid 1978, but of late the rapid growth in Ted's church has fizzled out. One indicator of CGI's stagnation has been the attendance at his Feast of Tabernacles. In 1978, 500 attended. Attendance shot up to 2,300 in 1979, but fell back sharply to 1,400 in 1980. Ted is having growing pains for several reasons: (1) Many of his members, having left the WCG, are exercising their mental muscles more frequently than they did in Worldwide. (2) Many of Ted's members have read and agreed with Dr. Ernest Martin's tithing booklet and have stopped sending Ted their tithes. (3) A number of churches in the Church of God, International decided Ted wasn't giving them enough local autonomy, so they incorporated separately, keeping most of their members' donations in the local area. It is obvious that unless Ted can attract less independently minded members or come up with a more effective way to market his brand of Armstrongism, he will find achieving any real long-term growth very difficult.

Another reason for GTA's problems is David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*. Though mainly about Herbert Armstrong, Robinson's book does reveal much about Garner Ted that many of his followers have, until recently, failed to acknowledge. The Robinson book was a big factor in the defection of several of Ted's members, including Dave Sandland, GTA's representative in Australia. Mr. Sandland wrote to CGI members in Australia:

*"Due to a number of reasons, most of which are private, I will no longer - at least not at the moment - be handling any CGI mail through here in Sydney. I therefore suggest you write direct to Tyler, Texas (Box 2525) with literature requests, questions or comments.*

*"I certainly continue to support the CGI in any Christian endeavour they undertake - just as I support any Church in similar endeavours. But I feel the need for separation from all the problems of the past - problems sickeningly outlined in David Robinson's shattering book The Tangled Web....*

*"I personally intend on giving whatever service I can to the Church of God, 7th Day - especially the group operating out of Adelaide."*

Incidentally, former GTA sidekick Jim Thornhill has been terminated from the WCG but has not been hired by the GTA organization. Instead, he has teamed up with Dr. Lochner and Lochner's son-in-law, Dave Harris, who are involved in a business scheme dealing with the retrieval and sale of precious metals.

### JOHN TUIT BOOK

John Tuit was one of the former members of the WCG who was instrumental in bringing about the State of California's lawsuit against the WCG's leadership. Readers who would like to know more about what led up to that legal battle will find his new book very informative. It's titled *The Truth Shall Make You Free*. It is published by The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold Township, New Jersey 07728. Copies are \$8 each, including postage (\$10 for overseas orders). The book is in the press now and is due for release by the end of December.

We have glanced through an advance copy of the book and found sections quite interesting. The chapters dealing with the actual lawsuit are the most informative, giving an insight into how the suit actually began and much of the intrigue of those days. Tuit relates a number of incidents that show the psychological makeup of men such as Robert Kuhn, Ray Wright, Jack Martin, and others. The chapter on Dr. Lochner and his tapes will prove interesting to all who've wondered why Lochner hasn't made "the Lochner tapes" public. Not surprisingly, there are new allegations of sexual misconduct and perversion. We also found most interesting the fact, as related by Robert Kuhn, that one of Stan Rader's daughters was a White House staff member during the Nixon administration.

The book progresses to a chapter on "Satan's Master Conspiracy," in which the author implies that the current leadership of the WCG is part of an important international conspiracy. Although we find this idea very widespread today, we wish more evidence was presented to adequately prove this theory.

Mr. Tuit does not hide the fact that he does agree on many doctrinal issues with Herbert Armstrong (sabbath, holy days, etc.). And not all of the book is new material. About one-third or more contains material well covered in previous issues of Ambassador Report and other publications. Nevertheless, readers who want to know more about the California versus WCG lawsuit and the intrigue that surrounded it will find this an informative book.

### RELIGION MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH

Some time back we mentioned a book we believe could be of help to many of our readers - *Religion May Be Hazardous to Your Health* by Eli S. Chesen, M.D. This book is a psychiatric guide to the uses and abuses of religion. We've strongly recommended it in the past because, from the letters we receive, it's obvious many people are suffering psychological problems due to their involvement with various religious groups.

Unfortunately, in mentioning the book we incorrectly stated it was out of print: One reader wrote to us that it is not out of print but can be obtained by writing to the publisher - Macmillan Publishing Co., Riverside, New Jersey 08075. The paperback (#08443) sells for \$1.50, but we assume there is a postage fee (75¢?) added to that.

### SNAPPING

Another book many readers may find useful is *Snapping* by Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman. John Clark, associate clinical professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, wrote: "*Snapping* is by far the best and most scientific treatment of the cult problem yet published. For the scientist, politician, clergy or parent, it is valuable and wonderfully readable."

We've heard this book mentioned quite a bit during the last two years, but it was only after quite a few of our readers recommended it to us that we went out and got a copy. We found it very informative and recommend it strongly to anyone with friends or relatives in any cult. The book deals with cult-induced personality change and the methods used by cult leaders to control the minds of their followers. In the U.S. the paperback sells for \$4.95 and is available at most large bookstores. It is published by Dell Publishing Co., 1 Dag Hanmarskjold Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

### DOING RESEARCH ON THE WCG?

As many longtime Herbert Armstrong followers are aware, as recently as eight years ago it was quite difficult to obtain

accurate and unbiased information about Herbert Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God. Except for official church publications, there just wasn't much information available on Armstrongism. But beginning in the midseventies that started to change. With more and more media attention on the WCG, both the quantity and quality of information available have improved.

Now virtually anyone who wants the facts on the WCG can get them - if he or she puts out the effort. Representatives of numerous public, university, and seminary libraries have written us, telling of the collections of Armstrong-related literature they have assembled. (For instance Iowa Linda University in Riverside, California, has an extensive collection.)

A number of religious reference works also now include information on Armstrongism. One excellent source is *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* by J. Gordon Melton (McGrath Publishing Co., Wilmington, North Carolina). It contains excellent material on "Churches Which Began With William Miller Sabbath-Keeping Churches," "The Church of God Movement," and "The Sacred Name Movement." Although it contains some slight inaccuracies, we have found this a fascinating work and recommend it to anyone doing research on Armstrongism, its historical roots, and related church movements. Many Armstrong followers will find that the information it contains will give them a new perspective as to their church's place among American religions.

#### AN IMPORTANT BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the last few years so much has been written about Herbert Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, Stanley Rader, their churches, etc., that it is no small task to locate pertinent information when doing a research paper, article, or whatever on these subjects. That is why we are pleased to announce an extensive bibliography soon to be published by Mr. John Nugent of Laguna Beach, CA (no relation to the Tim Nugent of our 1975 Ambassador Review). Mr. Nugent has never been a Worldwide member, but has followed the church's activities for some time. Two years ago he began compiling a list of reference sources about the WCG as part of a research project for a comparative religion class at California State University, Fullerton. But from that point the project has mushroomed into becoming a major publication.

His bibliography is titled: *A Comprehensive Bibliography and Guide to Information on Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God*. It will be published by February 1981 and will cover well over 250 pages of indexed (but not annotated) articles, books, reports, newsletters, legal documents, advertisements, book reviews, resignation letters, correspondences, and research papers on Armstrongism. It will also contain a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of groups that have broken from the WCG. The cost per copy is \$20 including postage. The author has asked us to point out that he is not publishing this as a way to make a living. The \$20 will just cover publishing and postage costs.

The average reader of Ambassador Report will probably not have any need of such a reference work, as during our publication's existence we have been pretty thorough in mentioning all the major articles and books that have appeared on Armstrongism as well as the names and addresses of all the breakaway groups that have emerged. However, we have seen portions of the bibliography, and we strongly recommend it to all those doing any kind of serious research on the WCG or related organizations.

Incidentally, Mr. Nugent did mention to us that he is trying to be as thorough as possible in compiling this bibliography. If anyone has a church group or publication they would like to see included in the bibliography, he would appreciate a letter giving details so he can include that information in his publication. But please do so immediately as he is getting close to his press deadline.

The address to write to for ordering copies or for giving information is: John Nugent, 2855 Rounsevel Terrace, Laguna Beach, CA 92651, phone: 714-494-9396.

\*\*\*\*\*

Well, that's all we have room for (and all we can afford to publish) this issue. Our thanks to all who contributed recently to the Report making this issue possible.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

*Ambassador Report* is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola. Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR15\)](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR15 March 31, 1981**

Dear Friends:

With the State of California versus Worldwide Church of God (WCG) lawsuit now completely over, many are asking where does the WCG go from here? That is no easy question to answer. For now that the state attorney general is no longer pursuing WCG leaders, there is more in fighting and confusion in the WCG hierarchy than ever before.

### GTA Returns - Almost

While many thought that Stanley Rader's "victory" over the State of California guaranteed his total control over the WCG's future, a three-month chain of events indicates that his influence on Herbert Armstrong is waning and that Garner Ted Armstrong's return to the WCG may be imminent. Here briefly is an outline of recent WCG events:

January 4 - Rader announced he would step down as church treasurer, effective July 1. While still remaining as head of AICF and personal advisor to Herbert Armstrong, Rader said: "Under no circumstances would I ever be the pastor general of our church" (Pasadena *Star-News*, Jan. 5, 1981).

January 8 - The Los Angeles Times carried a full-page ad bearing Stanley Rader's photo and signature. The ad, which reiterated Stanley's January 4 announcement, carried the headline: "The Attorney General Kept His Word. Now I Will Keep Mine." Ironically, that same edition of the Times also carried an article which began: "Attorney Gen. George Deukmejian took a major step Wednesday toward running for governor in 1982 by disclosing he will appoint an exploratory campaign committee and hold a \$500-a-plate fund raiser in march...."

January 20 - Herbert Armstrong, in a letter to co-workers, wrote (p.3):

"Satan knows how short time is. He is now striking at destroying THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE. I cannot reveal to you at the moment what Satan is up to now, BUT IT IS BIG, and we all need to be FASTING AND PRAYING as never before that God will restrain Satan."

It would be interesting to know how Herbert obtained the inside scoop on Satan's plans. Nevertheless, this statement, plus certain others made in letters to WCG ministers, has led to a flurry of speculation. While some discounted the whole matter as just another fund raising scheme, others thought, (1) HWA's corporation sole is in deep trouble with the IRS, (2) HWA is in failing health - possibly even has cancer - and knows his time is short, (3) the percent of new converts is down due to the totally insipid telecasts HWA has produced of late, or (4) there are serious troubles in the HWA household. While none of these theories are beyond possibility, we frankly have not been able to substantiate any of them.

Incidentally, long-time WCG members may find one statement in the January co-worker letter (p.1) of particular interest:

"During the late sixties, certain indications led me to envision the possibility - never the certainty - that the Work of the Philadelphia era of the Church might be completed by the first week in January, 1972. Never did I remotely believe that could be the time of Christ's return; the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord and other prophesied events had to occur after completion of our Work proclaiming Gospel Message, Law of God, repentance and fact of coming Kingdom of God. Nor did I set 1972 as definite date but only a possible date for completion of our commission."

The letter ends with: "We are launched on the greatest PUSH FORWARD ever, PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!"

January 31 - The Pastor General's Report to the ministry of the WCG opened with a "long overdue acknowledgment" by Herbert Armstrong. This short, one-third-page tribute was to Virginia Kineston, Stanley Rader's secretary, whom Garner Ted Armstrong claims is the true top administrator of the WCG. Insiders claim the tribute was done in response to ministerial criticism of Mrs. Kineston, especially in regard to her close relationship with Rader aide Jack Bicket. Wrote Armstrong, in her defense, "I know her to be a woman of highest moral and ethical integrity and professional in her abilities." The odd article was interpreted by many knowledgeable Armstrong followers as in indication of new stresses in the power structure.

The short HWA article was followed by a Stanley Rader article entitled "Christ's Apostle in the Philippines." It began with "Christ's Apostle will be leaving Manila today..." and after numerous references to "Christ's Apostle," ended with, "Yes, Christ's Apostle has certainly begun 1981 with a running start -1981 should be the biggest year yet in the history of the Work."

February 24 - The Pasadena *Star-News*, in an article entitled "Banished Garner Ted Armstrong May Return," quoted Stanley Rader (who "leaked" the story to the *Star-News*) as saying Ted could be back within a month "if there is proper repentance."

Dick Lloyd, the reporter covering the story, revealed deep insight into the inner workings of the WCG when he wrote:

"If Rader's acknowledgement of a possible return is a strange twist after months of vilifying the son, it is a routine experience in the church, which has played yo-yo for years with programs and personalities...."

Later on in the article, Lloyd stated:

"There is widespread speculation in the church that Garner Ted Armstrong, 48, is coming back, Rader said, taking pains not to discourage it and seemingly opening the door for an inquiry."

But when Lloyd contacted GTA about the matter, GTA said, "I don't know a thing about it." Nevertheless Ted told the reporter he didn't rule out the possibility of returning to the WCG. GTA said it all depended on how the offer was made and by whom. (We have learned that Stan Rader has tried repeatedly to contact GTA by phone, but Ted has rudely refused both to speak to him or to return the calls.) GTA told Lloyd he would not be the one making the overtures toward reconciliation and that he would not talk to go-betweens.

Two days later, Garner Ted was in the Pasadena area - to tape a segment for a CBS news broadcast, he claimed. And Herbert Armstrong, who had not made a public appearance in California in two years, was also in Pasadena. Ironically, however, their paths evidently did not cross. Each hoped the other would initiate a reconciliation call but neither could muster the required degree of humility.

HWA, who had secretly summoned 250 WCG ministers to Pasadena from around the world, was not able to make the announcement he had wished to make that GTA had repented and would return. Instead, he announced to the assembled clergymen that Stanley Rader's resignation as church treasurer would take effect Sunday, March 1, and not on July 1 as previously announced. Armstrong praised Rader for being a "mastermind" and for being of great service to the church. Said HWA, "I feel that Mr. Rader's salary is grossly inadequate for these extraordinary services" (Pasadena *Star-News*, Feb. 26). To rectify the situation, HWA announced he was presenting Mr. Rader with a bonus - \$250,000 net.

The next day Garner Ted Armstrong, back in Tyler, was furious. The *Tyler-Telegraph* (February 27) carried these GTA comments:

"'He [Rader] resigned from a nonexistent post in a non-existent corporation,' Ted Armstrong said. 'They fired every individual on the payroll list of Worldwide Church of God and rehired them all through Herbert W. Armstrong Corp. Sole, based in Tucson, Ariz.'"

"In what the younger Armstrong called a 'snow job,' all the Worldwide Church assets were transferred to the new corporation sole.

"'He steps down from nothing, he loses no power, because all the power is

concentrated in my father and in corp. sole,' Armstrong charged.

"Ted Armstrong added that as long as Rader remains legal adviser to the church, head of the auditing agency, owner of the advertising agency that handles all church accounts, and right-hand man of Herbert Armstrong, he is a church power.

"The ousted Armstrong said he was dumbfounded to read in the newspaper Thursday morning that Rader had been granted a \$250,000 bonus on his 'retirement,' what Armstrong called an 'astronomical bonus on top of his breathtaking salary.'

"I have a letter here from my father to the church constituency urging them to 'sacrifice as never before' because the church was in dire need of money,' Armstrong said. 'In fact, he said if the constituency experiences any tax break this year, to send that in to the church.'

"Armstrong said he found it odd that such a large bonus was handed to Rader when the church was 'screaming for money.'"

### Big Sandy To Reopen

The same day Herbert Armstrong spoke to the assembled ministers in Pasadena, Virginia Kineston, Rader's secretary, confirmed to the news media that rumors of Big Sandy reopening were true. The Texas campus of Ambassador College, closed since 1977, will reopen in September as a junior college with an enrollment of 100 new freshmen and 75 transfer students from Pasadena.

The decision, announced a few days earlier to church leaders by Herbert Armstrong, contradicted earlier statements made by Stanley Rader. As recently as August, Rader has stated that the Big Sandy Ambassador College campus would never reopen. The new dean of faculty of the Big Sandy campus will be Pastor Don Ward. Ironically, it was Garner Ted's appointment of Dr. Ward to that same position three years ago that was cited by HWA then as one of the central mistakes requiring his son's demotion. In addition to Ward, the Mar. 16, 1981, *Worldwide News* mentioned that Evangelist Leon Walker will be deputy chancellor, while Ron Kelly will again be dean of students. One source feels that the opening of Big Sandy may be one of the inducements to lure Garner Ted back, as the Big Sandy campus was Ted's favorite.

### Rader's Power Waning?

While Stanley Rader remains an advisor to HWA, in recent weeks his influence on HWA has diminished considerably. For instance, Henry Cornwall, Rader's long-time associate, is no longer making HWA his full-time concern. For two years he has personally monitored HWA's activities in Tucson, but now he has been replaced as Armstrong's day-to-day aide by long-time WCG minister Bob Fahey. One Tucson source points out that HWA has also become suspicious of his wife Ramona's loyalties, believing she may be overly biased toward Stanley Rader's points of view. A separation would not surprise anyone. In fact, as we go to press, Herbert Armstrong has apparently been spotted residing in his old Pasadena residence. Ramona Armstrong, however, was not seen in Pasadena.

## Editors Quit Quest Magazine

Since its inception four years ago, *Quest* magazine has been both a major drain on WCG finances and a cause of disgruntlement among many WCG members who often found its editorial content offensive. During that four years, however, church leaders often distanced themselves from *Quest's* editorial content by claiming they had no control over what went into that publication. Now, however, that tune has changed.

The January 12 issue of both *Time* and *Newsweek* reported the resignation of *Quest's* editor Robert Shnayerson and his five top staff members. *Newsweek* reported:

"The first open sign of the upheaval came when the 88-year-old Armstrong took out a crusading full-page newspaper ad, of the kind he publishes from time to time. This one, in the Wall Street Journal, addressed the Arab-Israeli crisis under a typically high-voltage headline (A Voice Cries Out ... Peace Out of Conflict??). But at the end of the ad, he struck a different note. 'I suggest,' he wrote, 'you read my cover story in *Quest*/81... on the Middle East controversy, its origin and President Sadat's planned World Peace Center.'

"For the *Quest* editors, the Journal ad signaled defeat in a battle that had begun early last month, when the magazine received an unsolicited 3,000-word article in the mail. According to Shnayerson, the article was an idiosyncratic account of the origins of strife in the Middle East, which also lavished praise on Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's proposed peace center at the base of Mount Sinai. Riddled with exclamation points and written in a hortatory style, it was the kind of piece, Shnayerson says, that he would have rejected routinely - except that its author happened to be Armstrong.

"To head off a showdown, Shnayerson wrote to Armstrong's chief aide, Stanley R. Rader, arguing that such articles would cast *Quest* as 'a house organ for a church' rather than as a general-interest magazine. 'Traditional national advertisers won't touch church magazines,' said Shnayerson, whose letter to Rader emphasized how assiduously he and the advertising staff had worked to convince Madison Avenue that *Quest* is a sophisticated, strictly secular publication. Such an 'abrupt jettisoning of editorial standards,' cautioned Shnayerson, would result in 'a critical loss of revenue.' For a time, Shnayerson says, there seemed to be a chance of compromise, with Armstrong's article to be replaced by a straight journalistic account of the peace-center project. But that hope was dashed by the Armstrong ad."

Contacted by *Newsweek*, poolside at a Manila hotel, Rader contradicted earlier official statements, saying: "There is no such thing as the editor's autonomy... Mr. Shnayerson is not under any contract other than as a paid editor working under control." In other words, Rader has been responsible for *Quest's* editorial content all along.

At the time-the *Newsweek* article appeared, few realized it, but it was an indication that HWA was reasserting his authority and that Stan Rader's influence on the Armstrong empire was in decline. As we go to press, we have just heard that plans are in the works for a discontinuance of financial support for *Quest*. Without the church's subsidies, *Quest* magazine - a Rader pet project - will be doomed.

## HWA Establishes Council of Elders

With HWA approaching 89 (July 31) and Rader's star fading fast, the question again surfaces: Who will succeed Herbert Armstrong? While Herbert has for years bragged that he was appointed by Jesus Christ and not some committee, and while numerous WCG preachers have been teaching that HWA would live until Christ returns, Herbert Armstrong has now designated a committee to choose his successor at his death.

The panel's existence was made public shortly after it became clear that Garner Ted Armstrong would not reinstate himself in the WCG through proper repentance. According to Stan Rader (*Pasadena Star-News*, Feb. 28), the membership of the committee will not remain constant but currently includes Raymond McNair, Dean Blackwell, Joe Tkach, Ellis LaRavia, and Dibar Apartian. Many in the WCG regard the committee formation as a final blow to any possibility Stan Rader may have had of becoming the official head of the WCG upon Herbert Armstrong's death.

One might suspect that the newly formed council of elders would appoint one of their own upon HWA's demise. But as one looks down the list of its members, one finds not one individual with the intelligence, administrative ability, or charisma demanded by such a position.

However, there are a number of individuals who aspire to the position who are not members of the council. For instance, there is Roderick Meredith. Highly ambitious, he was for years considered the number three man in the WCG. In fact, he himself considered himself number five "in the universe" (humbly, after God the Father, Jesus Christ, HWA, and GTA). While not on the new council of elders, he is still quite popular with many so-called "right-wingers," a group well-represented on the council. He has recently been boning up on his broadcasting skills for what he speculates is his inevitable takeover of the "World Tomorrow" microphone.

Another name that should not be overlooked is that of Gerald Waterhouse. While viewed as an outright kook by some fellow ministers, Waterhouse is perceived by many church members as currently the WCG's most powerful preacher. Loud, long-winded, and almost hypnotic to some, Waterhouse has gained a devoted following in the WCG with his calls for blind devotion to HWA. Yet questions persist about his mental balance. Here are quotes from some of his more memorable sermons of the past two years:

"No one can disagree with HWA and be right in God's eyes: No one:"

"HWA's office is the most vital office on the face of the earth by far..."

"This is the Work of God...and he will always work through HWA without exception...God will work through no other. God will keep HWA alive up to 3½ days of Jesus Christ's return. You can rest assured of that. If HWA needs another 900 years, God has proven he can give it ....God could keep HWA alive a million, a billion years in the flesh, did you know that?... God has given absolute promises in regard to HWA ....We are called to be on HWA's team ....Everyone called in this age is called to be on HWA's team."

"We will be so locked-in to Christ through his apostle that we will go and

do...whatever Christ leads the apostle to lead us in.... The prophecy of HWA as far as being a messenger is absolute. It shows he will live to Christ's coming.... He will die 3½ days before, and that's for a purpose too...."

"You don't die for something unless you believe it. So when they finally are convinced of Christ's authority through HWA and realize their future is at stake, then they have something to die for ....They've got to or else.... Everyone that has ever rebelled against HWA can make it [salvation] on the condition that he come back to acknowledge the power and authority through HWA...and dies testifying he will support...."

### GTA Still at It

After all is said and done, we won't be surprised if Garner Ted returns to head the WCG. As this is being written, we have heard that he is planning a call to his father to discuss a possible reconciliation.

The March 8 *Tyler Courier-Time-Telegraph* carried an article on GTA. The GTA quotes it contained show a GTA that hasn't really changed all that much. Here are a few excerpts:

"My father may have made some wrong decisions along the way ...but I believe he is utterly dedicated and sincere in his religious convictions.'

"God gave me a gift, an ability ....' They can turn that camera and light on and, with any subject out of the Bible, I can do a bang-up, ad-lib job for 30 minutes without a note.'

"After they got rid of me, I became the whipping boy for everything that happened to that institution...' his son said. 'Then they began to get a little dirty about it - unpleasant and scurrilous innuendos. It was very sad. I would not get down in the gutter with them and I won't do it now.'

"Here I'm preaching the same thing. It's the same person, the same personality, the same voice, the same Bible, the same marks in my Bible, the same old notes sometimes."

In our March 24, 1980, newsletter we predicted (p.8) GTA would start an evangelistic association. That has now come to pass. It's called, "The Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association." It's not difficult to see why this was started. In his Jan. 30 co-worker letter GTA warns his followers:

"As a caution, in my letter explaining the need for *separate* television funds, I mentioned I certainly hoped people would not take money from the normal income for the *church* and simply earmark the *same* tithes and offerings they were sending *anyhow*, but for a different *purpose*.

"However, the reports I have been given for the past several weeks have strongly indicated that many may have done just that: The income in these last few weeks has begun to slide *dramatically* for the work of the church!

"I'm sure all of you know we are running a very tight ship indeed, that there simply is no such thing as 'fat' in our lean, tough, small and hardworking organization!

"When we are forced with making *cuts* we are cutting into the *lean*; right into the flesh and bone of the operation, *not* into any excess 'fat.'"

Of course, the "excess fat" does not include his own salary. He recently gave himself a raise - he's making over \$60,000 a year now. And, of course, there's an expense account. And let's not forget his three sons are on the payroll too.

But while GTA is getting by financially, he's not without some difficulties. In the CGI church newspaper for December 1980 GTA wrote an article entitled "Members Avert Tragedy." It concerned the arrest of a young man shortly after a GTA personal appearance in Chicago. According to the article, the recent church schism had caused the young man personal problems and he was contemplating the murder of an ex-girlfriend and suicide, but not before assassinating Garner Ted Armstrong to help the WCG and the CGI "get back together."

### The WCG in the News

We should point out that during December, January, February, and March the WCG has been in the news media almost constantly. Limited space does not permit more than a passing reference to some of these "splashes."

But for the record, the Dec. 29, 1980, issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* had an interesting article on the WCG by Bohdan Hodiak entitled "Church Executive Savors Victory Over California." This article gave an overview of the WCG's recent history. It ended with: "'We know this is the end time,' Rader said, giving the world about a dozen more years. His financial contract with the WCG, however, runs until 2003."

The January 6 and January 10 Pasadena *Star-News* carried articles about an Anne Truelove (a.k.a. Margaret Wilson) who, for days, waited in front of Ambassador College with a "message from God." On Jan. 3, she apparently strode up to the Ambassador auditorium podium after sabbath services to ask if she could see Mr. Armstrong. She was immediately disfellowshipped by minister Robin Webber. She then began her vigil.

The Feb. 23 issue of *Time* magazine carried an article on the WCG, nothing new, just a short summary of the WCG's recent problems.

During this time the WCG has also been running full-page ads in *The Wall Street Journal* (in an attempt too convert the stock brokers of the world?). One bizarre ad we found particularly amusing appeared in the Feb. 23 issue. Signed by HWA, the long, three-sentence headline read: "A Voice Cries Out: The Executive with Rose-Colored Glasses. He was a bit ahead of his time. Still, things will be far more rosy than he sees them now:" Some Garner Ted followers wondered if HWA had Stan Rader in mind when he wrote this ad.

On March 2 the WCG officially dropped its \$800 million lawsuit against the State of California. The action officially brought to a close the more than two years of litigation that commenced Jan. 2, 1979, when the attorney general brought his lawsuit against the WCG's leadership. Rader, in making the announcement, said the WCG did not want to be perceived by the public as an aggressor, nor did the church want to spend vast sums on further litigation.

### McElroy Wins

In past issues we mentioned Wisconsin farmer George McElroy's legal battle with the WCG. We are happy to report that that battle is finally over and that Mr. McElroy will be keeping his farm. We think you may find the following AP news item of interest.

"A Barron County farmer, 'blinded by programming' of a California church, won appellate court approval Tuesday of his attempt to recover a farm he gave to the organization. The church insisted its First Amendment rights were being violated, but the 3rd District Court of Appeals said a church, like 'every other person and corporation, is obliged to obey the law relating to undue influence.'

"George D. McElroy, 67, said he gave his \$14,000 farm in 1969 to Ambassador College of the Worldwide Church of God and the World Tomorrow....McElroy...won a Circuit Court case for return of the farm, plus more than \$7,000 in other contributions. The church appealed.

"McElroy's testimony was sufficient to allow a reasonable jury to find by clear, satisfactory and convincing evidence that the deed was the product of undue influence by the church,' the three-man appellate court said. The court was told that McElroy, troubled by a divorce, 'was looking for meaning in life' when he heard the church's broadcasts and began reading its literature.

"He said he was persuaded to reduce his herd of dairy cows by more than 50 percent, was convinced the world would end in 1972, and donated his farm through a deed prepared by the church. The case's documents include a letter from a church attorney which begins: 'Greetings once again from the legal office of God's work.'"

### The WCG in History

Unknown to most people in the Western world is the fact that there are significant stirrings among the world's 800 million Muslims. While many today are aware of Arab-Israeli tensions, OPEC, and the problems in Iran, most Westerners are not aware of the growing unity of the Islamic peoples and the significance this has for the future of the entire world.

In the February 1 issue of the Los Angeles Times there appeared in the Opinion section a remarkable article by Don A. Schanche entitled "Islam Reborn." Mr. Schanche explains in detail how Islam is on the move in dramatic ways and how the Islamic world is growing increasingly more united. In explaining the history of this vast international religious-political movement, Mr. Schanche wrote:

"The Islamic conference, for example, was born in a worldwide surge of Muslim outrage over the August, 1969, burning of Jerusalem's Al Aksa mosque, third holiest shrine in Islam after Mecca and Medina, by a deranged Australian Jew, who many Muslims believed was a pawn in a Zionist plot.

"The call to gather in Rabat, Morocco, to unify and do something to redress the outrage drew only 25 of the more than 40 nations in the world with Muslim majorities. With only one cause to unite them, the kings and presidents talked for only a day and issued a call for the restoration of Arab sovereignty over Jerusalem and other territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Then they adjourned. The meeting and the newly founded organization were all but ignored by the rest of the world....

"Last week, with its membership now grown to 42, but attendance weakened by the suspension of Egypt and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan and the pointed absence of Iran and Libya, the Islamic conference went a long way toward achieving its long-sought goal of power in unity."

It is worth remembering that the individual responsible for the 1969 Al Aksa mosque burning was Dennis Rohen, a *Plain Truth* reader and Armstrong co-worker, who had at that time and later on sought to become a baptized member of the WCG. Herbert Armstrong acknowledged (*The Plain Truth*, Oct. 1969, pp.1,47) that Rohm was a *Plain Truth* subscriber and was taking the WCG's Bible Correspondence Course, but he failed to mention that Rohen admitted he was attempting to hasten the fulfillment of HWA's prophecy that another great Temple would soon adorn the sight of the old Temple - which was where Al Aksa mosque was situated. Interestingly, thereafter, HWA insisted neither he nor the WCG had ever said a new Temple would be rebuilt. But that doesn't nullify the fact that the church did indeed teach that doctrine (see *The Plain Truth*, June 1967, p.1; March 1968, p.8).

### Suffer Not Little Children to Be Brainwashed

With so many children of WCG families leaving the WCG as soon as they obtain majority, it's no wonder that the Armstrong church's leadership has decided to make an extra effort to get a hold on the minds and tithes of these potential converts. Leading the way is a new WCG periodical called *Youth 81*. The first edition appeared in January and featured a portrait of Herbert Armstrong on the cover.

The editorial direction of the new magazine is perhaps best exemplified in a crossword puzzle found on page 13 of the first issue. Here are the clues to some of the blanks the little kiddies were asked to fill in: (1) "Complete name of 'Mr. HWA,'" (2) "Year in which Mr. Armstrong was born - spell out, " (3) "Day of month on which Mr. Armstrong was born - spell out," (4) "State in which Mr. Armstrong was born," (5) "At age 18 Mr. Armstrong learned he had aptitude in this field," (6) "At age 18, Mr. Armstrong earned this reputation," (7) "First name of Mr. Armstrong's maternal great grandfather," (8) "Mr. Armstrong's parents' religion," (9) "Mr. Armstrong learned he also had aptitude in this field," (10) "Month in which Mr. Armstrong was born," (11) "City of Mr. Armstrong's birth," (12) "Mr. Armstrong was told he would become a Philadelphia\_\_\_\_," (13) "On Mr. Armstrong's first advertising job, this is what he was assigned to write - two words," (14) "First name of Mr. Armstrong's uncle, who guided Mr. Armstrong's career the first 11 years," (15) "Another word for rules," (16) "Name of king of England to whom Mr.

Armstrong can trace lineage," etc. We found it significant how much Armstrong-centered (as opposed to God-centered) the new publication was.

### Lennon's Music-A Loud Squawk

Since our last newsletter came out, we have all been saddened to hear of the murder of singer-songwriter John Lennon. But not surprisingly Herbert Armstrong had a different view. In his front-page article, "How the Beatles Changed the Culture of the Western World" (*The Worldwide News*, Dec. 22, 1980), Herbert had this to say about Lennon's music: "I had never thought of it as music, but a loud raucous SQUAWK and SCREAM with a fast beat - just an irritating noise.... I have heard roosters make a loud raucous squawk when being captured for a Sunday dinner when I was a boy," Herbert craned, "but I just never had been 'educated' to call that 'music.'" One paragraph later Herbert begs his readers to "please bear with me in my ignorance."

We can't remember a single squawk or scream in "Michelle" or "Yesterday" - two of Lennon's most famous songs. But Herbert writes as though Lennon's music was all noise.

Further on Herbert writes of Lennon:

"Of the Beatles, Lennon seemed to be the 'brains.' ...he was influenced by Eastern psychedelic and demon influences. His voice was the most gritty, raucous and hard, angry, driving and determined of the group. Yet he became like mild putty in the hands of his Japanese wife. In later years he became the househusband, tending the child and house duties while the dominating wife supervised investments and business matters. In his search for something that would satisfy his troubled mind, he went into things mystic and psychedelic - not realizing they were Satan influenced."

Toward the end of his article, Herbert declares that Lennon was "leading a misguided humanity further into Satan's way of life" and that Lennon's killer himself was possibly demon possessed.

While such views are considered decidedly wacky by most people, those who know Herbert have come to realize that all his adversaries are called "Satan-inspired" or "demon possessed." Even those who simply disagree are accused of having "demon influence." Amusingly, though, Herbert's critics (as well as WCG ministers, surprisingly) are claiming Herbert often behaves much like those in the Bible who were said to be possessed.

Certainly, HWA's attack on the assassinated composer has done little to bolster church confidence in Herbert's mental balance. Even Garner Ted Armstrong found his father's diatribe too much to bear. While not mentioning his father by name, in an article entitled "What Is God's Kind of Music?" (*The International News*, Jan.-Feb. 1981), GTA assailed his father's dogmatic view on music and then went on to express sympathy for the family of the fallen composer. Aiming an obvious barb at his dad's worship of classical music, Ted wrote:

"When I hear some of the songs John Lennon and others of the Beatles wrote in various arrangements, especially some of their best works played by symphony

orchestras, I have to admit that such music is... far more enjoyable than almost anything ever written by Debussy or Bach."

### Armstrong's Doctrines Unique?

Lately there has been a spate of articles in such publications as *Time* and the *Los Angeles Times* accusing Seventh-day Adventist prophetess Ellen G. White of plagiarism in compiling 53 volumes of religious writings. We find that amusing because we have reported in past ARs how Herbert Armstrong is guilty of this very vice himself. One of his oldest and most heavily advertised booklets, *The Proof of the Bible*, was taken, in part, from a much earlier Adventist publication, *Prophecy Speaks!*, which, by the way, contained certain biblical and archaeological inaccuracies that Herbert gullibly accepted without challenge. To this day he has never acknowledged his booklet's errors concerning prophecies about Tyre and Babylon. Evangelist Herman Hoeh, realizing the stupidity of some of the booklet's historical claims, took it upon himself in the Dec. 1980 *Good News* to point out some of the fallacies in Herbert's arguments.

Hoeh declared that the prophecy about Tyre, a modern-day Lebanese city, "is not the challenge to the skeptic we assumed. It is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ..." (p.39). Hoeh, in an uncharacteristic display of humility, admitted: "I was wrong" (p.5). But very wisely, he never once says Herbert was wrong. Nevertheless, we heard that an enraged Herbert had the magazine recalled two weeks after it had been mailed to subscribers.

After listening to Herbert and skimming through his rambling writings, one cannot help but notice that he claims many of his doctrines are revelations from God - "unique truths" revealed to God's "true church." But what unsuspecting members haven't realized is that most of Herbert's "new" truths were taught in essentially the same form by other church groups decades before Herbert decided to become a man of the cloth.

Recently another book on the Armstrong movement came to our attention: *Ambassadors of Armstrongism* by Paul N. Benware. One of the most scholarly books on Armstrongism we've seen - it has 15 pages of footnotes and a 7-page bibliography - this book spends almost a whole chapter illustrating how several of Herbert's "unique concepts" were being taught by other religious groups long before Herbert became a minister.

Author Benware explains that "Herbert Armstrong was affiliated for several years with the Church of God (Seventh-day), which is an offshoot of Seventh-day Adventism. The influence of Adventism is readily apparent by comparing quotations from Armstrong's writings and those of Adventist writers, and Mr. Armstrong himself admits studying much of their literature" (see *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, 1967, p.338).

In chapter 2 Benware documents the similarity of the teachings of Herbert Armstrong to those of the Seventh-day Adventists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and the Church of God movement. Here are some of the major areas of similarity he discusses:

Seventh-day Adventists: sabbath keeping, Sunday observance is the mark of the beast, keeping the Ten Commandments is necessary for salvation, the moral and

ceremonial laws are different, man is mortal and has no soul, immortality is conditional, the new birth is connected with the resurrection, et al.

Jehovah's Witnesses: the trinity is pagan, the holy spirit is a force, Jesus rose in a spiritual body, the wicked will be annihilated, et al.

Mormons: the deity is the ultimate goal for men and men will eventually join the Godhead, the Fall was planned by God, the true church has been lost since the apostles' day, the name "Elohim" shows a plurality of Gods, et al.

The Church of God movement: the idea of "church of God" being the true name of the church, the insistence that Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday and rose on a Saturday, sabbath keeping, the declaration that certain holidays (Christmas, Easter, etc.) are pagan and should not be observed by Christians, both organizations had a pamphlet entitled "Has Time Been Lost?", et al.

Benware points out, as the AR has on several occasions, that Herbert's teachings on the U.S. and British Commonwealth in prophecy are not unique to him but were copied wholesale from J. H. Allen's book, *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* (first published in 1902), and British-Israelism theory, which flourished in the 1800s.

It is Benware's conclusion that the WCG's system of teachings is "eclectic" because the church "has evidently borrowed, incorporated and revised doctrines from others and brought them into its system. It cannot legitimately say that it holds the key to the truth of the Scriptures, while at the same time holding too the identical teachings of other groups.... This is especially true when the other systems were on the religious scene years before the founding of the Worldwide Church of God" (p.26).

For those interested in obtaining a copy of this book, write to Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 817, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865. The price, which includes postage, is \$3.20-NJ residents should add 5 percent sales tax.

### Tuit Book Finally Out

John Tuit has informed us that, after numerous delays, his book *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (\$8.00, The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold Township, NJ 07728) has finally rolled off the press and will be mailed out this week. Mr. Tuit was one of the initiators of the State of California versus Worldwide lawsuit, and his book covers that lawsuit in some detail.

The Tuit book also reviews a bit of Garner Ted Armstrong's past - a fact that has not delighted the GTA organization. Benny Sharp, a GTA aide, angrily told Tuit: "Just because Ted went out and \_\_\_\_\_ed a few girls, you don't have to bring all that up again:"

But Tuit believes Ted's past history is relevant today. When GTA was thrown out of the WCG in 1978, Tuit was one of those who thought that GTA had really changed, and he hoped the CGI would be set up differently than the HWA church, but it didn't turn out that way. Tuit spent some time visiting the Tyler organization and came away very disillusioned. Says Tuit, "I just didn't like the moral climate. The constant dirty jokes and

smutty attitudes really bothered me. Also it's become increasingly obvious that the CGI is GTA-centered. I had hoped it would be Christ-centered."

Tuit isn't the only one who's been disappointed by the GTA organization. One former ministerial assistant told us recently how he paid a visit to GTA's Tyler headquarters on Dec. 31. He was surprised to discover a New Year's Eve party in progress. GTA aide Ron Dart, however, explained to him that it wasn't really a New Year's Eve celebration (which the church calls "pagan") but a "year-end party" which was necessary to avoid offending the CGI's numerous unconverted employees.

### Robinson Fights On

David Robinson, author of *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* and former WCG minister, is still locked in a costly lawsuit over his book. According to Robinson, "HWA continues to use the court system - and appeals - to seek a reversal of the order which permitted us [he and his wife] to distribute the book. What can he prove if he wins? Nothing. All he can do is inflict oppressive financial strain in order to reap vengeance," especially since "thousands of copies of the book are now in the hands of the public." To continue the legal battle, Robinson wrote a letter to those who had purchased his book, asking for contributions to help him pay a \$22,000 bill for legal fees.

### New Groups and Groups New to Us

The Church of God Evangelistic  
Association  
(David J. Smith, President)  
P.O. Box 1053  
Maryland Heights, ND 63043  
Phone: 314-576-4103

\*\*\*\*\*

Church of God  
P.O. Box 184  
Augusta, KS 67010  
Phone: 316-775-2307

\*\*\*\*\*

Assemblies of Yahweh  
Bethel, PA 19507

\*\*\*\*\*

Motivation Ministries International  
P.O. Box 35451  
Tulsa, OK 74135

Phone: 918-494-3024  
Ken Johnston, president

(Mr. Johnston offers "free literature on the subject of motivation and success principles as taught in the scriptures.")

\*\*\*\*\*

Church of God (7th Day) of Eugene  
1340 E Street  
Springfield, OR  
(Marion A. Cox, Elder)

\*\*\*\*\*

"The Singing Evangelists"  
John and Katherine Kiesz  
820 Woodlawn Avenue  
Canon City, CO 81212

(Elder Kiesz is a long-time member of the Church of God (7th Day). During the '30s he was an editor for *The Bible Advocate* and knew Herbert Armstrong personally. He has recorded a cassette tape telling of the early history of Herbert Armstrong.)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Where Are They Now?

We are always receiving letters asking us where former well-known headquarters employees of the Armstrong organization have gone and how they are faring. As we have reported, most are doing extremely well - showing a creativity and hidden talent that the Armstrong organization refused to tap. Herbert believed in a strict authoritarian style of management, refusing to delegate any real authority to the yes men with whom he surrounded himself. Rather than developing incisive thinkers and challenging his subordinates to surpass his accomplishments, he encouraged just the opposite by his frequent temper tantrums, layoffs, and firings. Little did he know what a wealth of talent lay waiting to be tapped in his organization if he would only have changed his medieval managerial style.

Take former Ambassador biblical archaeological instructor *Chris Patton* and his wife *Denise*. Their success story was written up in none other than *The Wall Street Journal* (March 5, 1981, p.15). The article describes how they bought and sold their first home for a tidy profit and had the foresight to realize there was still lots of money to be made in

real estate. So in 1979 they entered the market in earnest. Since then they have parlayed their real estate transactions and Denise's design business "into a cluster of enterprises from renovation to property management. Real estate has made them wealthy (though they decline to specify their assets)." They do admit that they bought \$3 million in residential income property, all of which was financed in a series of no-money-down deals.

Chris and Denise own everything from slums to luxury areas, and they expect their holdings to appreciate at 10% to 15% this year. Their specialty has become buying "problem property" and restoring it. In one of their most speculative deals, the *Journal* reports, "the Pattons ventured into the ghetto of south-central Los Angeles and bought the site of the fiery 1974 shootout between Los Angeles police and the so-called Symbionese Liberation Army, which had kidnapped heiress Patricia Hearst." This site included seven adjacent houses and one burned-out foundation. "The houses were indescribably filthy," Denise was quoted as saying, "with roaches and rats." But their persistence and hard work in renovating them paid off handsomely, and they realized a net appreciation of about \$75,000 and are now earning 12% interest on a mortgage in that amount provided for the new owner.

Chris and Denise Patton aren't the only former Armstrong employees who have achieved success since leaving the employment of the Worldwide Church of God/Ambassador College. We are happy to report that former evangelist *Charles Hunting* was recently married to an English lady and is working in real-estate development in Florida. *Jerry Horton*, a former supervisor in the Pasadena radio studio, is managing a Denny's restaurant in Orange County (California). *George Johnson*, who used to write for the editorial department, is pastoring a Church of God (Seventh-day) congregation in Michigan. *Kathy Zimmermann*, who worked in the registrar's office and continuing education, is about to receive her master's degree in computer science and is now a project manager at Security Pacific bank.

The following individuals are employed as cost engineers in Alhambra: *Jerry Baker*, former section head of co-worker and subscriber development in the personal correspondence department; *Wayne Antion*, former member of the theology department and PT staff; *Stan Suchocki*, one-time elder and member of the personal correspondence department; *Paul Knedel*, former PT writer and news bureau staff member; *John Heskett*, one-time mail processing center supervisor.

*Tom Rogers*, once an auditor for Rader, Cornwall, Kessler, and Palazzo and an employee of the French department and CAD, is a CPA in San Jose, California. *Barbara Saye*, onetime secretary to Richard Rice, is working for Parsons Constructors Inc. as secretary to a project manager. *Joe Bohannon*, who was the Weekly Comments editor in the mail-processing center, is employed as a production coordinator with a manufacturing company in Burbank. *Glenn Parker*, once budget director for the Armstrong organization and business manager for *Quest* magazine, is a management trainee for 7-Eleven Food Stores in Texas. *Cheryl Graunke*, former executive secretary for Robert Kuhn and Garner Ted Armstrong, is an administrative assistant for a wealthy investor who is chairman of the board of five companies, including Standard Wire & Cable; Stainless Steel Products; and Bell, Riddell, Inc. (makers of pro football and motorcycle helmets).

*Gary Reid*, former manager of systems development in the data-processing department, is the systems manager at a Toronto, Canada, bank. *Howard Clark*, former WCG pastor and AC faculty member, is president of an organization called Institute for the Preservation of the American Family. His group helps the handicapped and offers counseling, aptitude testing, vocational rehabilitation, and alcohol abuse rehabilitation. He says his non-profit organization presently has many more requests for services than funds available to pay for them. He can be reached at P.O. Box 1214, Paradise, CA 95969. *Mike Kneebone*, former WCG minister, is working as a supervisor for Maritime Life Assurance (the Canadian subsidiary of John Hancock) at the head office in Halifax, Nova Scotia. *Keith Crouch*, who was a minister and faculty member, is the manager of Don Ricardo's restaurant in the Santa Anita Fashion Park in Arcadia, California.

*Peter Grieder*, who did accounting work for the French department, is now the director of the International Division of Denny's restaurants. Presently, he is traveling virtually all over the world setting up Denny's branches. Former minister *Milo Wilcox* now has received his doctor of chiropractic.

One former Ambassador College instructor-administrator we are often asked about is *Joe Bauer*. Readers will remember Joe as the MC of many GTA personal appearances, the director of many "World Tomorrow" telecasts, the founder of the Ambassador College big band, and one of the early administrators of the AICF concert series.

Since leaving the employment of the Armstrong organization Joe has continued working in the entertainment-communications field and with considerable success. In the last few years, he has produced television programs, produced and directed a critically acclaimed revival of "South Pacific," managed singer Debbie Roberts (of the Liberace show), and was a top executive with Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. He is currently senior vice president of a Las Vegas entertainment network.

*Dr. Ernest Martin*, director of the Foundation for Biblical Research in Pasadena, has recently received worldwide acclaim for his research on the date of Jesus' birth and the star of Bethlehem. According to the Pasadena *Star-News*, he "has melded astronomy, secular history, and biblical research to provide what he believes is astounding new credibility to the New Testament narratives of the Nativity by writers of the synoptic gospels Luke and Matthew" (Dec. 11, 1980). Martin's theories explain what the star of Bethlehem was and when it appeared, that the Magi bearing gifts was not a fable, and that Jesus was born sometime in the 3-2 B.C. period, not in 7-5 B.C. as believed by scholars for centuries. Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, the University of Arizona, and the University of Nebraska changed their Christmas programs to reflect Martin's new findings, as did about 25 other planetariums in the U.S., Germany, and Greece. Scores of others are considering a shift. Martin's research is available in a revised book titled *The Birth of Christ Recalculated*, which sells for \$9.95 (this includes postage).

### Letters

*I was very disappointed to learn Gov. Brown had signed the Petris bill into law. If he is that misinformed, all I can say is I'm thankful he didn't get a chance to be President of*

*the United States.*

*-Ohio*

*In light of the recent "victory," when the attorney general dropped the suit against the WCG, it may be asked whether the church is better off with Rader at its helm or forced from his post. Naturally, most church members, who do not enjoy a reputation of perceptive foresight or love for facing problems squarely, "think" with their emotions and greatly rejoice that "God" has once again delivered them. But delivered them from what or into what? That's the question. For the moment, the church has a few days of calm. But its leadership is one that feeds on crises. This church would soon collapse if there was not some real or fictitious problem to be battled. The next crisis will surely come, so stay tuned.*

*-California*

*I haven't been to services since last February, and the only interest shown in my behalf was one phone call (long distance) from the minister - all that bunch in interested in is money! I haven't received The Plain Truth, Worldwide News, or Good News since early summer, and when I write to inquire I do not receive a reply.*

*-Idaho*

*We were disfellowshipped from the WCG about two years ago, due mostly to speaking against Stan Rader. We resigned from the WCG about three months ago because we weren't getting answers to questions on doctrine - mostly on Galatians. Thank you for all the informative material. Many former questions have been answered.*

*-Florida*

*My wife and I are ex-members. We left the WCG two years ago because we made people angry by asking too many questions they wouldn't and couldn't answer. The people treated us coldly because we couldn't agree with many church teachings, and when we used scripture from the Bible in our questions, this made them very angry.*

*-Ohio*

*When will their ministers stop and ask themselves this one question: If there is only one mediator between God and man (that mediator is Jesus Christ) and if every minister who has a following is in reality a mediator, who are they a mediator for? They can't be for God because God has only one mediator.*

*-Minnesota*

*I've read all of your literature and I thank you for sharing your thoughts and beliefs with me and others. But no I don't need on want your AR anymore. I made a decision 16 years ago to follow what I believe is God's way, being taught through those whom I believe are*

*teaching basic God-ordained truths.*

*The men, some of them (handsome, smooth-as-butter speakers) have come and gone, and we are still alive, growing, and going strong. So until someone else comes along that can, will, and does preach God's world as effectively as the Worldwide Church of God ministry, then I'm going to stay right where I'm at. Because I think this is it! And if I'm wrong, then God help those who are more wrong. And may God the Lord reward you according to your works.*

*-Ohio*

*Your people had better not even send me anything in the U.S. mail again. How dare you put my name on your mailing list without my permission. I want to know how you had access to my name and address. I am mailing the report dated June 20, 1980, and the envelope which is post marked August 22, 1980, to Mr. Ralph Helge, and I hope he can find out how you have access to my name. I want my name removed immediately. I promise you I will take action if you ever again send me so much as a greeting card.*

*-Montana*

*Please remove my name from your list of receivers of your slanderous reports against the Church of which I am part of the body and against Jesus Christ, who is the Head. For surely you know when you attack those anointed to lead the flock, you personally attack Jesus who anointed them. And why, oh why, do you think that I would be interested in hearing all the slime you have accused me of as a member of the WCG? It does make me even more aware and assured this is the True Church of God, for Jesus said if they persecute Him, they would most certainly persecute us. When you accusers were called into God's Church at one time, did you conjure up a report on the church you left to become a part of God's church? You are a living example of how "hate" can pervert one's mind when we do not "forgive" what we take personal offense to. If you came into the church believing Mr. Herbert Armstrong was a perfect man and not entitled to any human errors, you planted your seed erroneously in the first place, for surely you have learned through Scriptures we are and there are no perfect ones, only Creator God is perfection.*

*You evidently did not see the "goal" we attain for and placed the vanities of men's achievements above God's. The very fact that you have our address suggests you would bend to false ways and roads to vent your hate and lies against God's chosen. God said through His apostles the enemies of His Church would come from within and His warnings concentrate against those within us who would falsely accuse us and your report concurs this.*

*-Washington*

*Yes. I want your report but want to criticize you for giving a former minister of 30 years association with "the organization" so much space for advertising his book. He ought to hang his head in shame for having known "all these things" and kept his mouth shut "all these years - as have most ministers. Yes. I want to see this outfit exposed, stripped, and*

*go begging as do most former ministers who "knew all the answers."*

*-Oregon*

Editor: If your letter refers to Dave Robinson, then I believe you are somewhat in error. Robinson, according to his book, did not know of the extreme excesses in the life of HWA until quite late in his ministry. It was not long afterward that he left the WCG and pursued a course of action that has opened the eyes of perhaps thousands at great cost to himself and his family. We are not members of Robinson's Tulsa church, nor are we advocating that our readers adopt his personal philosophy or religion. But let's give credit where credit is due. *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* is an eye-opening book that will undoubtedly help many people.

*Basically, I just wanted to let your readers who might be interested know what happened to yet another WCG minister who "disappeared" without a trace. After presenting several controversial research papers, one that I felt pretty well demolished the church's OT basis for three tithes, I was summarily visited twice by \_\_\_\_\_ and told that all my findings were wrong and that if I didn't adapt the things that I'd been taught in AC, they might have to dismiss me from the ministry. This happened just before the Feast of Tabernacles in 1979. After taking \_\_\_\_\_ to the airport after his first visit, I decided it was time to get out of this group. They weren't interested in seriously examining anything different from what HWA had erroneously taught for decades. I didn't tell \_\_\_\_\_ that I was going to quit until January 1980. In the meantime, I began doing more research into other fundamental church teachings and trying as subtly as possible to try to help the members in \_\_\_\_\_ to begin to use their heads. As can be expected, most didn't, though a few did. I wasn't supporting HWA or Stan Rader. I was teaching there wasn't a place of safety - fact I pointed out that the Bible doesn't even mention Petra once by name, let alone that it is some place to escape tribulation.*

*It was my intention to stay with the WCG until they could send out a replacement in the spring. I had long ago decided that there was little point in "dropping the bomb" on a church congregation. WCG people are simply not capable of handling that kind of information all of a sudden. I decided to simply concentrate on helping them to learn how to do fundamental Bible research for themselves, how to look things up, how to ask questions. In short, how to think! I don't know if my program will ever bear any fruit or not. Perhaps I should have simply "dropped the bomb" on them, but I'd seen that approach tried before with not a lot of success. And then, too, I felt if people are going to leave the WCG, they should do it for the right reasons. They should do it because they have proven that HWA's theology is wrong, not necessarily because of the personalities involved. After all, anywhere you go in human society you're going to find similar excesses, and pretty soon we'll all become so cynical life won't be worth living anymore.*

*Anyway, by the spring of 1980, the arch-conservative members and elders in \_\_\_\_\_ had had enough. I had told \_\_\_\_\_ that I was going to resign and had at the same time informed my local elders, giving them a copy of my resignation statement, which really said very little as to the real nature of why I was quitting (remember this was in early January 1980). I sent \_\_\_\_\_ a copy, besides having read it to him over the phone. I told him later that winter that I would probably read my statement on the last holy day of Unleavened Bread, which would be only a little over a month before they had planned to*

send my replacement. But in the fear that riddles the organization internally, \_\_\_\_\_ and the others weren't going to take any chances with me. Sunday afternoon, the day before the last holy day of Unleavened Bread, \_\_\_\_\_ called and said he was in town and that as of that minute I was relieved of my duties. They would continue to pay my salary until the end of May (they actually ended up paying me a lump sum). \_\_\_\_\_ offered me the chance to read my statement the following day, but not have any other part of the service. The next day I showed up by myself, handed my statement to one of the elders, and gave them "all my church supplies and ordination papers. I told \_\_\_\_\_ who showed up a few minutes later that I had no intention of being around to read my statement, that he could do with it what he wanted, but my family and I were taking a few days vacation. He warned me that should I try to influence the people against HWA, I wouldn't receive the severance pay they had promised. He need not have worried, I had done all I could to lay the foundation for those people to use their minds if they wanted to. And besides, I felt that as long as I maintained a good relationship with the members, I could be of help perhaps later if they needed me, rather than burning "all my bridges and embittering a tot of fine, but sadly naive people.

So, here we are back in my hometown trying to start a couple of different businesses. We aren't millionaires yet, nor do we have any desire to be. It isn't easy for us financially but we really aren't too worried. Few if any businesses are easy to start and keep growing. We are happy and do not in any way regret our decision to leave the WCG. We appreciate Ernest Martin's literature. He helped us make the transition back to normal society. We aren't affiliated with any church nor do we have any desire to be. White still in \_\_\_\_\_, after being axed, a former WCGer now with Garner Ted offered me the chance to speak to their group, but I refused. Like you, I feel Ted isn't anything but a warmed over version of his dad. I was never really comfortable as a paid minister anyway and had no desire to continue to live off the efforts of others.

In conclusion, my only wish is that my fellow colleagues will also have the courage to look into what they've been fostering off onto people and stand up for the truth . And you can add my name to your list as expunged WCG ministers. Thankfully, my wife and I woke up when we did.

-Former WCG minister

I attended the WCG from 1969 to 1976 and went to Ambassador College and got one semester's worth of their "experience," which I might add was quite enough. I decided that I had better start questioning a bit what I had so gullibly swallowed as the "truth." It has taken me four yeas to free my mind from all that ridiculous dogma. I feel that I truly see the light as I'm just beginning to understand what the New Testament is all about. I hope your organization truly flourishes and if it ever saves just one person from becoming ensnared in the WCG trap, then it has truly been a success.

-Maine

Keep up the good work! The AR is our only contact with what is going on down there in California. If it wasn't for the AR, we would still be believing HWA. You are very much in demand!!

*-Canada*

*If the ministry of the WCG had only shown a small amount of the consideration for the people that you have, Ambassador College would have been worthwhile.*

*-Washington*

*Were it not for you, we would be wide open to WCG propaganda. I don't know how to thank you for the amazing enlightenment you have provided of which I must admit, there is no other source.*

*-New Zealand*

*Perhaps yours is the lone voice in the wilderness of the WCG, striving to wake up the sincere, innocent, and self-sacrificing people who believe they are doing God's work. But, we have all been so saturated in the doctrines of this falsely so-called "true church of God," that only God himself can extricate us and show us our peril. What can we do, besides praying, to help them? Member simply do not want to listen to anything against Mr. HWA, nor do they want to read Ambassador Report. It frightens them....*

*You see, I've known about your paper for two-and-a-half years. At first, I regarded it as "poison." Now, I know you've realized the facts and have only wanted to help members of the WCG to escape the false teachings and other subtle traps. I want you to know that the wit and humor in young articles really, but really, helps us to keep our balance, as the sad facts are laid open! Thank you so very much for all your help and your honest information. It takes men with courage to do what you are doing!*

*-Canada*

*Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ sure gets the word out to present members of the cult as well as to those who have left and are still aching from the scam. Your newsletter, he tells me, helps them a lot.*

*-Washington*

*Wonderful job - keep it up! I've kept everything you sent and invite friends and fellow law students to read it.*

*-Student, Loyola Law School, California*

*We have two adopted children the church said [adopting them] would be a sin. (Dave Albert waxed long on this one. The "family expert" is now divorced I understand.) I have a beautiful home near Santa Cruz, and getting out of Herbert's swill was the best thing I ever did.*

*-California*

*In January I relinquished my membership in the WCG and since then have been totally ostracized by my supposed "friends" of many years. Since I have multiple sclerosis and, as you may or may not know, deep emotional traumas can worsen the condition, that is exactly what has happened. Never, never will I ever again put myself in a position where any man (other than possibly my husband) can tell me whom I can befriend, or when and how I must drop them! It's amazing what irreparable damage this has done to my health.*

*-Tennessee*

*I now stand denounced, disfellowshipped, and marked. This was done Sept. 6, 1980, but I stopped going June 28, 1980, and sent Mr. McMichael a letter withdrawing on August 1, 1980. Strange how they can put you out of the WCG after you have left and formally resigned.*

*-Virginia*

Editor: Mr. McMichael has himself recently been disfellowshipped and accused by HWA of being "demon influenced."

*I have in fear of repercussions failed to bring up a point of interest concerning the situation at WCG. I still wish to remain anonymous. Several years ago I attempted to leave my real estate and personal belongings to WCG, but in reading the fine print I found that after 20 years from the date of signing my property became the property of the WCG. Being a young man I felt that I would still need the property after that date.*

*I was advised by the legal department that it was a technicality required by the State of California. Needless to say I rejected the whole thing, and I am sorry to say I destroyed the copy of the will. I find it hard to believe that California would require this and could not under normal circumstances wait until death to obtain title of the property.*

*-Colorado*

*Are you people checking The Worldwide News? The incredible baloney printed about HWA being so poor, one would out of pity almost send him money for food. I believe that was in the July 14, 1980, Worldwide News. Now the August 25 issue's financial report shows that he rewards himself with about \$450,000 per year. Absolutely mind boggling! Yet they are able to keep going and going!*

*-Minnesota*

*I wish to thank you sincerely for all the help you have given me through these past years. You may never know how many you have helped up here as I had many others read your reports. After so many years of hearing about the Armstrong cult, I have grown weary of hearing his name and feel liberated to be out of his clutches. I think it would help me to forget that traumatic experience by not getting your reports any more. Therefore with a grateful heart again I say thank you to you all and hope you can save others with your*

*work. So far you have done wonders. May God bless you all and your work also.*

*-Canada*

*The more we see of this vicious cult, the more heartsick we are and grateful for the "60 Minutes" exposure! Out oldest daughter's little boy was hit by a truck, and she way harassed night and day by their minister who said it was her bad attitude that caused their terrible tragedy!*

*-Florida*

*My husband has been in Herbert Armstrong's group for nine yeas now, and we have recently separated because of the difficulties it has caused in raising our children.*

*-Colorado*

*Congratulations to the Ambassador Report for your valuable service to those of us who want to know the facts. It is quite obvious now that the "official" WCG version of recent events bears little or no resemblance to the truth.... Speaking of church government, since this term is the rationale for imposing the Government of God upon the church membership, I thought it might be instructive to point out some of HWA's own previous teachings in this regard. For any of those dedicated members who view Mr. Armstrong's writings as approaching infallibility, they shoudt be willing to scrutinize these doctrines more closely before they are willing to sacrifice their possessions, families, and possibly even lives to the cause.*

*Perhaps many of the WCG members do not realize that when HWA was doing the "work" in Oregon, his concept of government was 180 degrees away from the authoritarian regime that is in control today. Now many people might say, "So what? Herbert has come across new truth in the meantime." If he comes across new truth, then where did the "old truth" come from? Which truth is the real truth? I ask these questions especially since he has made statements like the following from the February 1972 Tomorrow's World, p.3: "I was not taught by man. But I way taught as was Paul, by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

*Now we would not want to accuse Mr. Armstrong as he did the big established churches and denominations in that article when he said: "They do teach certain errors which they are afraid to confess, for fear they would lose members." But we should hold him to his word when he went on to say: "If we knew of any error still remaining, now, we would change it! If and when we find one in the future, we shall correct it."*

*There is no doubt that church government is the regimen used to keep people in line in the Worldwide Church of God. The concept has become so ingrained that I have actually listened to a minister tell his congregation that the major theme of the Bible is government. My only question is, if this is so, why do we find in an exhaustive concordance the word "government" mentioned only about five times while the word "love" is mentioned literally hundreds of times. Well, so much for the facts. The WCG*

*doesn't seem to allow things such as these to interfere with their grandiose plans.*

*Recently a February 1939 issue of the Good News came into my hands. This was one written by HWA when he was operating in Eugene, Oregon. The entire issue was devoted to the subject of church government. When I began to read it, I could hardly believe my eyes. When you make an explicit comparison between the statements of Armstrong in this 1939 Good News and what he has promulgated in the years since, there are some truly astounding conclusions you can draw about the credibility of the man as a religious leader of any type of integrity....*

*To better illustrate the issue, I will intersperse quotations from an article by HWA entitled "Just What Is the Church," which appeared the July-August 1970 issue of Tomorrow's World with corresponding quotations from the February 1939 Good News for comparison.... In order to delineate what comes from what, HWA-39 means that the quotation comes from the Good News article and HWA-70 means the quotation comes from the Tomorrow's World article. The comparison goes as follows:*

*HWA-70: "But did Christ, the Head of the Church, ORGANIZE that Church? Does it have a definite form of organization? Indeed He did - and indeed it has!" [Emphasis HWA's throughout.]*

*HWA-39: "Jesus never set up an organization, nor did He establish any Church GOVERNMENT. "*

*HWA-70: "Putting all New Testament passages together, the Administrative offices, in order of rank and authority under Christ, were: 1st, apostles: 2nd, evangelists...."*

*HWA-39: "An Apostle does not mean one IN authority, but one under authority... nowhere in the Scripture do we find the slightest hint that the twelve constituted a higher-up church board, and nowhere were they ever given any power to rule, or govern, or decide what doctrines the other disciples must believe."*

*HWA-70: "God's government is government from the top down."*

*HWA-39: "Our Heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any Church GOVERNMENT, or set man IN AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the NEW Testament Church. Any such 'plan' was never planted of God... and therefore IT SHALL BE ROOTED UP."*

*HWA-70: "Now I have shown that the true Church of God is... composed of all who have and are being led by the Holy Spirit of God abiding in them. Yet the Church is organized."*

*HWA-39: "Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of an organized church government, submitting to doctrines declared... are in BABYLON. "*

*HWA-70: "The resurrected, eternally living Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. The*

*very fact the Church has a Head implies organization."*

*HWA-39: "It is IMPOSSIBLE to have ORGANIZATION, or GOVERNMENT, without having a MAN as the actual and real head, even though we say Christ in heaven is the Head, and continue to try to believe it that way."*

*HWA-70: "But it is a BIG, WORLDWIDE WORK. If every individual in it goes out alone, independently, trying to carry out the entire divine commission in whatever way he sees fit, we shall have confusion."*

*HWA-39: "What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION... which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power... striving against each other, lining up the brethren on their side, against the other."*

*HWA-70: "I have... been called... to follow Christ as He leads and directs, and witness to the true light. Hundreds of millions have now HEARD, SEEN, or READ."*

*HWA-39: "Leaders desiring power to RULE send out misleading, exaggerated, deceiving statements designed to convince the tithe-payers that 'The Work is progressing.' What a tragedy. What a pity."*

*Now I can only ask, after an examination of the above statements by HWA, can anyone be a better prophet of what Herbert Armstrong has become than Armstrong himself? It must be quite obvious why very few if any of his original converts in Oregon are still around.*

*-State withheld*

*Keep up the good work. Your letters are very encouraging. It is telling it like it is! It is not a pretty picture, but it is true. I know! My husband has been a member of Armstrong's so-called church for 12 years. He is deeply hooked. Other than a miracle of God, I cannot see him coming out of this. His whole personality has completely changed. He is no longer the "happy-go-lucky" guy I married 28 years ago.*

*His mail from "Big Daddy in Tucson" becomes more demanding for more money and it is being giving without any thought for family. Crazy phone calls with "one word" conversations. They try to keep them so busy that there is no time for a family life especially if it is with a non-member. I pray that God will intervene soon and expose them (to my husband) for what they are.*

*-Signed: "Fearful"*

*Would it be at all possible to obtain another copy of the last issue of Ambassador Report? I made the foolish mistake of showing my wife (who is a devout follower of the Rader-Armstrong group) an article in same. Needless to say, the results were catastrophic.*

*Unfortunately, all or most of the people remaining in the Rader-Armstrong "church" are too ignorant, narrow-minded, or brainwashed to accept and/or acknowledge the plain*

*truth.*

*You have my permission to print all or part of this letter in the Report if you so wish, provided that my name and address are deleted. I suspect that the pastor of the local church may have access to your publication, and I wouldn't care to have what's left of my marriage and family life jeopardized any further.*

*-State Withheld*

*One attorney has said that often when federal judges are appointed, they become "God." Certainly it seems that some of the WCG leaders become "God" or attempt to play "God," which seems to be in violation of one of the ten commandments, which they advocate keeping. This is past history or is it present history?*

*The church ministers have been quick to give financial and business advice that has been disastrous to many, including myself. Often they have no financial or business experiences or training.*

*-Colorado*

*The local church is really cracking down on its members to fill out their cards giving the church all information as to what property they own, if it's clear, if mortgaged how much is still owed, and how much money they have in banks or savings. Looks like they are preparing their trip to Petra.*

*-Colorado*

*Since I wrote you some time ago and told you of the decline of this family because my husband is in the WCG, things have become even worse because of the heavy tithing. We have a son who has cerebral palsy and has been in a private school for the handicapped for 17 years. My husband has stopped paying the tuition and our son will be sent home May 1. We live in an old pre-Civil war house because my husband doesn't want to indebt himself definitely to anything that will take money from tithes. This means I must leave my job and not have money for any health care I need or dental care. I am 59 years old and will have to take care of our son at home since he is totally handicapped.*

*My husband seems bent on totally subjugating me. He hates the freedom I have by earning my own money and not being tied up by the rules of WCG. You may wonder why I don't leave him - if I did our son would suffer.*

*Reading the AR, [I saw] the letter about the husband not having sexual relations with his unconverted wife A few years ago my husband told me we could have a good marriage without sex. Not to brag, but I am a very good looking women, and we had a very deep loving life before he joined the WCG. I've met with his minister a number of times, but he plays a cool game. As long as my husband gives over \$2,000 a year to HWA, I'm the loser. He pretends to counsel, but nothing comes of it. Also remember that over \$2,000 goes into the bank for second tithe, and part of that goes to HWA also.*

*Of course, I know my husband is trapped. If he ever leaves the church at my insistence, is forced out or gets out on his own, he'll be destroyed. He'll have nothing to live for. He has given over \$35,000 to HWA in twelve years . He lost his job as a top salesman with an industrial company. He now does carpentry work with a group in his church so he can take off all his holy days, etc. We had owned a good deal of stock with Leggett and Myers. He was induced to sell it, at a loss, because it was considered gambling and it was also a whiskey and cigarette stock. However, he sent HWA a huge tithe on the proceeds. Also, all our other stock was sold in the same manner. Referring to "drinking," he and his friends drink constantly - are always getting together at any excuse to eat and drink.*

*My husband is a descendant of... We may ask ourselves what weakness caused my husband to throw out the fine traditions in the family and choose a debasing life.*

*-Wife of WCG member*

Editor: Although permission was given to publish the name of this letter's author, we have not because we do not wish to do anything to enflame an already difficult marriage. We are especially saddened, however, at the utter callousness and ineptitude shown by the WCG clergy in handling situations such as this. Unfortunately, many letters that we have received show that the above situation is far from unique.

*I think your readers would be interested in an article I saw some time ago. It appeared in Full Gospel Business Men's VOICE (November 1979). The cover article was titled "Turmoil - the Farrell Moughan Story." I think your readers would find Mr. Moughan's story (he is from Oxford, England) of interest because it is about how he left the WCG and found Jesus Christ. It's a very moving story. Copies can be obtained from: FGBMFI, Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.*

*-California*

*I hope you will pass along to your reading audience [the name of a]... book entitled Armstrongism, The Worldwide Church of God Examined in the Light of Scripture by Dr. Robert L. Sumner. This may be obtained from The Biblical Evangelism Press, Brownsbury, IN 46112, hardbound edition for \$7.95 plus 81¢ postage. It is advertised as fully documented, with 424 pages.*

*-California*

*May I suggest you get a hold of a paperback entitled Pawns in the Game by William G. Carr, Angriss Press, Box 2726, Hollywood, CA 90028. It really gives a very fine perspective regarding Stan Rader and the WCG as a microcosm of a world strategy.*

*-Australia*

*I would really like to contribute more for the purpose of advertising if you would*

*establish such a fund. If your readership numbers 1,000, \$6 to \$7 apiece would buy a full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times, as uncle Herbert is doing. I really believe your readers would contribute toward it if they could see the result.... You people must be a secret to most Worldwide members.*

*-California*

Editor: Thank you for your suggestion. But (1) a full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, or Washington Post would cost about \$15,000 and (2) based on the difficulty we presently have of just keeping the AR going financially, we do not remotely believe we could raise even \$7,000 for an ad. Thanks again, however, for the suggestion.

*I regret I am unable to contribute more to expenses of the distribution of the AR. Unfortunately, we are at present facing bankruptcy, and every dollar is vital to us right now. Much of our present circumstances can be attributed to our years in the WCG, their archaic laws, and heavy financial demands and ill advice by one of their ministers who was totally inexperienced in the field of business, but who had "God's" authority to advise, even on a legal disagreement between two parties.*

*In the past we were able to make copies of the AR for distribution, but we have had to sell all our printing equipment.*

*Members of the WCG in Australia have been told by Gerald Waterhouse, by way of tape, that even if HWA took all their tithes, put them in a wheelbarrow, wheeled it to the center of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and set a match to it that that would not matter, they must still be loyal to him and other leaders. What was that about being a good steward? Obviously, it is all now evident that money is easy come, easy go in the WCG. If members go along with the above instructions, it is adequate proof that they are indeed effectively brainwashed.*

*-Australia*

*Sorry I have not been able to send money right along, but I am now finally on Social Security at \$147 a month. My husband has hardly opened up his little shop anymore as he has had very little to do. He cannot get his Social Security as yet, as he is a little younger than I am. I would be happy to help more if I could... for the newsletters... mean so much to us. I hope that before long I will find one in out mailbox. Your report said you would be mailing them quarterly if you had the money. I sure do hope that those that can afford to help you financially have made this possible. I am so anxious to know what is now happening concerning the Armstrongs. They had an awful scare a while back. My daughter-in-law's mother, who does not belong to the church, as her husband and daughter does, told me that they were planning on all leaving because of the trouble the church was in, going into hiding. She was so upset and said she didn't want to go but would be left all alone without her family. She didn't know where they were going but said it might turn out like the Jim Jones cult. Well I called my kids. My son said they might have to go into hiding but would say no more.... I sometimes wonder if out heartache will ever end because of that cult.*

*-Georgia*

*You have graciously been tending me the AR even though I have been unable to support your work with any large sums of money. I earn a small salary and because of my financial contributions to the WCG for almost 15 years I find myself with virtually no bank account (actually about \$40) and prospects of retiring early due to ill health on a small pension. I have just spent 15 days in the hospital undergoing surgery and looking forward to 4 to 6 weeks recovery at home. There is further surgery yet to come.*

*-A blind subscriber from Canada*

*Just a quick letter to let you know about a situation faced by at least a certain percentage of ex-WCG members . I'm speaking of that faced by single, unmarried (including divorced and widowed) ex-members who may not be all that happy about their marital (or at least dating) status. Since leaving the church, they are now fairly widely scattered and contact between them for the purpose of dating, parties, etc. is quite limited. Many may find it quite difficult dating or trying to build any sort of meaningful relationship with "ordinary" persons in their general area unacquainted and generally unsympathetic with their religious and philosophical views (i.e., sabbaths, holy days, diet restrictions, Christmas, Easter, etc.) which they may still hold.*

*The situation for singles (except perhaps in larger churches) was never really that good in the WCG. The church constantly accents marriage and the family and also marrying someone especially compatible. Yet within most church areas there were very few singles to date and the chances of finding someone especially compatible thus usually slim.*

*I approached the church about a dating referral system to help compatible members find each others, but of course, they weren't interested. Remember, it's government from the top down - the "dumb sheep" don't know anything, even those with college degrees or who are professionals! The old "Pen Pal" section of The Worldwide News (now propaganda) was at least a step in the right direction, but of course they discontinued it.*

*I would therefore like to offer the following service to those AR readers who may fall in this category. They may write to me giving their names and addressees and perhaps telling something about themselves if they wish. I will then try to set up some sort of referral system, perhaps even a small newsletter if response is great enough to at least let singles know about the whereabouts of each other. Any comments or suggestions they may have are welcome also. I would appreciate any small donation they may wish to include to help offset any postage or printing costs I may run into, at least if they can send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.*

*-Robert A. Shaffer  
Ex-WW Singles  
8460 Marsh Road  
Algonac, MI 48001*

*In an effort to call attention to further research material, I should like to point out the book How to Organize and Manage Your Own Religious Cult, by Duke McCoy,*

*published by Loompanics Limited, P.O. Box 264, Mason, Michigan 48854, copyright 1980. Despite the publishing date, it would seem that the Armstrongs have followed the instructions to a letter.*

*In addition, the Sabbath Handbook Directory published by the Sabbath Association, Fairview, OK, over the years has given historical data and doctrinal beliefs of a number of organizations with similar or almost identical beliefs of the WCG. The above church has more space in the latest directory than other groups. However, it, as far as I know, has never called attention to the existence of the directory.*

*-Colorado*

Editor: *Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups*, publisher: The Bible Sabbath Association, Rt. 1 Box 197, Fairview, OK 73737, tel: 405-227-4496.

*How involved are Rader and HWA with Teddy Kollek, mayor of Jerusalem? I note in the Freeman Digest, Jan. 1979, p. 95, that Teddy Kollek is a special adviser to the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. Pasadena's Judge Shirley Hufstедler also is connected with the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. She is a trustee, and she befriended Rader in his recent battle with the California courts.*

*Aspen is where the world's elite go for advanced seminars in global planning for the future of humanity, you know.*

*-Illinois*

Editor: Teddy Kollek has for years been a close friend of HWA and Rader.

*Like so many others, I became hooked on the Armstrong line years ago when I read the old booklets on prophecy that contained drawings by the late Basil Wolverton. I understood Mr. Wolverton was one of the first ministers ordained by Herbert Armstrong, and his name appears on the church's earliest incorporation papers. That is why I was so surprised to learn that Mr. Wolverton was also once involved with another religious group, one of the most bizarre ever to come out of California, the racist Holy City cult led by "Father" William Riker and "Mother" Lucille Riker. I discovered this in the book New World Utopias by Paul Kagan (Penguin Books 3903).*

*The Riker cult is one of the weirdest and most scandalous I have ever read about. You can imagine my shock when I read on p. 114 of Kagan's book that Basil G. Wolverton illustrated Riker's literature. In fact, on p.109 there is a photo of one page from a booklet put out by Riker. And right there is a Wolverton illustration that later appeared in Herbert Armstrong's booklets. I also noted there are many similarities between Herbert Armstrong and William Riker and between their teachings.*

*-California*

Editor: The late Basil Wolverton also did illustrations for science fiction comic books

during the '30s and for *Mad* magazine during the '50s. He was a very talented and original artist and, you are right, his artwork did influence many into getting involved with the Armstrong organization.

*Has anyone noticed the big drop in radio stations airing Herbert Armstrong? From 217 U.S. stations in May 1971 to 99 in Jan. 1979 to 51 in Oct. 1979. The Dec. 1980 Plain Truth listed only 58 stations. WCG TV stations dropped from 92 U.S. outlets in May 1977 to 59 in Jan. 1979 to 52 in Dec. 1980.*

-Georgia

Editor: You're right "The World Tomorrow" is in deep trouble. Unless the WCG can lure GTA back as its spokesman, that trend will probably continue.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our thanks to all those who helped make this issue possible.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola.  
Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR16\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR16 July 15, 1981

Dear Friends:

Our apologies to all of you for the lateness of this newsletter. But we have simply been unable to get this second-quarter issue out on time. We have received quite a few letters asking about the many incredible rumors now circulating in church circles about the Armstrongs, Stan Rader, and their internecine squabbles. Here is a brief rundown on what has been happening:

### GTA REBUFFED

Unknown at the time to many of his followers, Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), in late spring of this year, wrote to his father in an attempt at reconciliation. The letter was delivered to Herbert Armstrong (HWA) by Ted's sister, Dorothy Mattson, who has hoped for a reconciliation of the divided Armstrong clan. (One can only speculate as to her true motivations in this. It is interesting that although GTA avails himself of his sister's assistance, he has privately referred to both his sisters - Dorothy and Beverly - as "totally unconverted.")

It was GTA's hope that a reconciliation with his father could be worked out. To his dismay, however, no such result was forthcoming. Herbert, on a number of occasions, revealed the contents of GTA's private letter to church congregations. Then, to add insult, HWA wrote GTA a personal letter vilifying him and pointing out how he had to put him out of the church three times in past years for his "physical sins." (In the past these sins were described to the public as "spiritual.") Devastated by his father's cold response, Ted contacted the NBC-TV network's Tom Snyder talk show. He was scheduled to be interviewed, July 8, and many GTA followers hoped Ted had finally learned his lesson and would stop trying to get back into the WCG. Many hoped he would finally publicly make the accusations he has for months been making privately about his father, namely, that HWA is guilty of incest and would be "certified insane" by almost any psychiatrist in the country.

But true to form, GTA cancelled out of his appearance on the Tom Snyder show. Some have accused him of again going back to his soft pedaling in an attempt to get back into the WCG. Others feel he just doesn't have the guts to speak out on his father's sins.

What many do not realize, however, is just how close GTA came to being asked back into the WCG. Some insiders have stated that HWA was, in fact, quite pleased to receive Ted's letter. But being the sly politician that he is, HWA did not just simply state his desire to see Ted readmitted to the WCG. Instead, he took the matter to the WCG's council of elders to test the waters. It was there that Herbert discovered that anti-GTA feelings now run very deep in the WCG and that bringing Ted back at this juncture could again not only divide the WCG, but cause a widespread revolt by the church's ministry. While privately hoping for and planning on Ted's eventual return (Herbert has recently contacted Ted's wife through relative Buck Hammer and has had a lengthy phone conversation with her), HWA has had no choice but to swim with the tide and adopt a publicly anti-Ted stance.

It is a humiliation GTA will not easily forget. To some of his closest friends, Ted has been quite open about his desire to return to the WCG to "get vindicated," get on "more TV stations," and "get a plane again." But the council of elders knows that if Ted does return, it could well mean curtains for them. Some of those almost sure to be demoted, if not let go altogether, include Roderick Meredith, Raymond McNair, Bob Fahey, Dibar Apartian, and Herman Hoeh. Virtually every area of the church and college would see a major shakeup. Naturally, those in charge have a lot to lose and little to gain if Ted returns.

### STANLEY'S WOES

Garner Ted Armstrong isn't the only one having trouble with Herbert Armstrong and the council of elders. *Plain Truth* (PT) readers will notice that Evangelist Stanley Rader's name has been removed from the staff box of the PT, and he no longer has a regular column in that publication. His presence is now also lacking in the *Worldwide News*.

*Quest* magazine, for years a pet project of Stan's, has finally been put up for sale. An ad appeared recently in the *Wall Street Journal*

announcing the availability for sale of that magazine, and Herbert has been actively seeking buyers. There are real doubts, however, whether that magazine can be sold. It has been a money loser from the start. And what is really being put up for sale is a lot of liabilities (for instance, unearned subscriptions) and precious few assets (*Quest* does not have its own building or press). What then can a prospective buyer expect to buy? The name *Quest*? Herbert may find that the only way to sell *Quest* is to literally pay someone to take it off his hands.

The *Quest* situation is just one of Stan Rader's recent disappointments. As we go to press, we have learned that Herbert Armstrong is searching for a way to remove Stan Rader as head of AICF. Not only that, there have been discussions among council of elders members as to whether Stan Rader should be disfellowshipped. While HWA insists that "Stan has been contained," some close to Herbert believe that only with Stan disfellowshipped will the church be safe from what many view as his evil influence on HWA. What seems to be lacking is a way to perform the disfellowshippment without causing embarrassment to HWA. Some are suggesting that possible reasons for the action could be Stan's irregular attendance at Sabbath services, his alleged nonconventional tithing practices, and his reluctance to depend on divine healing during illness. But whatever excuse is chosen, it should be obvious to all that the real motivation behind such an action is the incredible jealousy and fear many have of Stan's prodigious talents.

Whatever their true motivations, it appears that Herbert is being swayed by the anti-Rader sentiments of those now surrounding him. HWA has increasingly been making caustic comments about Stanley. When daughter Dorothy recently asked HWA for a loan, HWA (according to Dorothy) responded that he is now broke, owing the IRS \$100,000 in back taxes. HWA unfairly put the blame for his back taxes on Stan, his accountant and counselor.

But what has apparently infuriated Herbert the most is his belief that Stan has been in some sort of scheme with his wife Ramona to have him committed to a nursing home. Herbert has told a number of his associates that he has heard a tape recording (surreptitiously taped) of a conversation between his wife Ramona and Stanley, in which the idea of committing Herbert was discussed. Of course, in all fairness to Mr. Rader, it should be pointed out that HWA is almost 89 and ailing, and such an idea may very well have been contemplated for HWA's own welfare. It should also be remembered that even though HWA is apparently convinced of this "collusion" against him, it would not be impossible for someone his age and in his condition to be imagining things. For instance, some insiders have commented that HWA increasingly seem to be suffering from some type of hallucinatory problem. He is known to suffer from bizzare night visions such as of the devil being in his house, and he has been known to wake up from his sleep screaming wildly.

One news reporter mentioned to us how, when questioned, Stanley would not clearly refute the story of the nursing home discussion. But with all of the above problems in mind, we thought it best to write to Kevin Dean - once a trusted Rader aide and now the reputed bearer of the Rader-Ramona tape - and ask for a copy of it along with a statement on the circumstances in which it was obtained. Unfortunately, after two months, Mr. Dean has still not responded in any way to our request.

### RAMONA RETURNS

It was the tape-recorded conversation that was apparently the cause of the temporary separation between HWA and Ramona mentioned in our last newsletter. (The possibility of being committed to an Arizona nursing home is also one reason HWA, on Ralph Helge's legal advice, has thought it best not to return to Arizona.) For a time, the rumors surrounding the Armstrongs' separation were flying so thick and fast in Pasadena that we thought it best to write directly to Ramona Armstrong to request an interview. Unfortunately, she has not responded at all to our letter and has passed up one more opportunity to discount the accusations being made by both GTA and numerous ministers still in the WCG. It is interesting that not only have numerous ministers been commenting on her in private but a number of WCG ministers have announced from the pulpit that HWA was about to divorce Ramona. (Some used the words marriage "annulment.") At least one (without giving specifics) referred to "unfaithfulness" as the cause.

But while WCG ministers were making their announcements, the Armstrongs made other plans. Ramona has since rejoined Herbert, has accompanied him on trips, and now all talk of a divorce must be viewed as nothing more than wishful thinking on the part of the anti-Rader forces in the church's hierarchy.

### RADER HOSPITALIZED

Not surprisingly, while much of the above chaos at headquarters was at its peak, Stan Rader was not present to guide the church's apostle through the troubled times. Instead, he was in communist China for a lengthy visit, talking to some of that country's leaders as a representative of HWA. In June, Stan returned to Southern California to attend his son's graduation from USC Law School. (His son Stephen graduated first in his class and will be working as a law clerk for 9th Circuit Federal Judge J. Clifford Wallace.)

The reception Stan received upon his return to California was not what he expected. In the short time that he was gone, he went from being a hero lauded for his "extraordinary service to the church" to being talked of as almost an outcast. Much of the blame for this must go to Herbert Armstrong. Herbert has been telling his lieutenants that Stan is no longer "his" lawyer. Instead says Herbert, "Ralph Helge is *my* lawyer." Stan was ordered earlier to vacate his campus office, which he promptly did. But, claims Herbert to friends, when the office was vacated, a \$600,000 painting became missing - insinuating, without proof, that somehow Mr. Rader was responsible. The few Rader loyalists still on campus insist that HWA should follow the biblical admonition of Matt. 18:15 and talk over his differences privately with Mr. Rader and not make wild accusations. The HWA-Rader rift is not a unique situation.

Many who have served HWA faithfully over the years have found themselves rewarded in a similar fashion.

Considering all that HWA has been putting him through, it is not surprising that Rader's health is suffering. On June 29 Stanley was admitted to Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena for treatment of two ulcers. According to Rader's publicist, Jim Mahoney of the Mahoney-Wasserman and Associates public relations firm, Rader did not undergo surgery but was suffering from "massive hemorrhaging" due to two stomach ulcers.

Rader was released from the hospital June 30. Unfortunately, Stan's hospital stay was not all it could have been. Stanley mentioned to one friend how disappointed he was when Herbert Armstrong neither paid him a visit nor phoned, but merely sent a bouquet of flowers with a card. The card contained no word of sympathy, no phrase of encouragement - simply the name Herbert Armstrong. Of all the bouquets he received, said Stanley sadly, Herbert's was "the first to die."

While Rader's rapid recovery could easily have been due to a miracle, many of his critics charged that his illness was not all that serious. Further, his use of a PR firm made some suspect the whole incident was merely a publicity stunt done to upstage Herbert Armstrong. We believe this accusation is unfounded. Stan has been suffering from an ulcer condition for some time, and individuals close to him have stated that he has looked very ill for weeks. We at the *Report*, of course, are very glad to hear of his speedy recovery and wish him continued good health.

### RADER'S RAIDERS?

Just one week after Stan Rader was released from Huntington Memorial Hospital, he was again making headlines nationwide, this time because of a movie.

"Raiders of the lost Ark" is one of this summer's most financially successful movies, grossing over \$46 million in its first 24 days of release. Its executive producers are George Lucas (who did "Star Wars") and Howard Kazanjian. It was produced by Frank Marshall, directed by Steven Spielberg (who did "Jaws"), with screenplay credits going to Lawrence Kasdan. The original idea for "The Raiders" was said to have come from a collaboration between Philip Kaufman and George Lucas. But now Stanley Rader has come forward and claimed that the idea was originally his and Robert Kuhn's and that Lucas and company stole their idea to make "The Raiders of the lost Ark."

Rader is now suing (naturally). He describes his suit as "the biggest lawsuit of its kind in motion-picture history" (naturally). The suit alleges willful and malicious breach of contract, misappropriation of a literary title, deprivation of screen credit, and emotional distress. Named as plaintiffs are Stan Rader, Robert Kuhn, Henry Cornwall, and Farland I. Myers, senior vice-president of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency in Hollywood.

Ironically, not too long ago Kuhn and Rader were at each other's throats. During the California attorney general's investigation of the WCG, Kuhn cooperated extensively with the so-called dissidents who were attempting to remove both Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader from church leadership (see chapt. 11 of John Tuit's book). Kuhn was disfellowshipped in 1979 and has not been reinstated in the church since. Yet now Stan Rader and Kuhn are united together in their lawsuit. This, in spite of the church doctrine prohibiting the "yoking together" of the converted and the unconverted in a business proposition and the doctrine prohibiting even social contact with the disfellowshipped. Apparently, these doctrines do not apply when millions of dollars are at stake.

At a July 8 news conference called by Rader, the CPA-lawyer-evangelist did not attempt to dispel the rumor that he was the principal author of the story in question, but merely admitted that he did have some assistance from "a young archaeologist by the name of Dr. Robert Kuhn." On the other hand, the Rader-Kuhn suit does give Kuhn the primary creative credit for their version of the "Ark" tale. The Pasadena *Star-News* (July 8) wrote:

"According to the scenario alleged by the plaintiffs, Kuhn began work more than 10 years ago on 'a fictionalized account of the 20th Century discovery of the lost Ark of the Covenant.' By early 1977, his efforts had yielded a screenplay, in which Rader reputedly was given partial interest in exchange for his promise that he would work to find an outlet for its distribution.

"In turn, the suit asserts, Rader assigned interests in his share to Cornwall and Myers for their help in marketing the work. Myers allegedly then began discussions of the screenplay with Ben Benjamin, an artists' agent for International Creative Management whose clients include Sir Laurence Olivier, Jacqueline Bisset and Burt Lancaster.

"After confirming the 'enormous commercial potential' of the work, according to the suit, Benjamin purportedly urged Kuhn to turn the screenplay into a novel because it would give the unknown Kuhn 'greater negotiating strength.' Shortly after receipt of Kuhn's novelization two years later, it is alleged, Benjamin said there was no interest in its development.

"The suit claims that at that time, Lucas, Spielberg or LucasFilm, Ltd., had access to all literary properties submitted to Benjamin and ICM. Those defendants, it asserts, and others later involved with the 'Raiders' film, misappropriated Kuhn's 'ideas, sequences, characterizations, plot elements and subject matter' and are being unjustly enriched at his and the other defendants' expense."

The defendants have all denied the allegations. Paramount and ICM told the *Los Angeles Times* the charges are false. Lucas' Los Angeles lawyer, Thomas Pollock, called the allegations "ridiculous." A spokesman for LucasFilm, Ltd., told the *Los Angeles Times*

(July 9, 1981, part 2, p. 1), "We know very well that 'Raiders' is an original story idea by Lucas and Kaufman. There is no doubt in our minds about that. If someone came up with an idea independently, that is pure coincidence, but we don't even think they came up with the idea."

Ben Benjamin - who, incidentally, being an agent would have gotten a substantial percentage of Kuhn's fees had he sold Kuhn's screenplay for him - told the *Star-News* that he did recall seeing a story "outline" once from Kuhn, but never a novel. In denying the lawsuit's allegations, Benjamin further stated that he did not personally know Spielberg or Lucas and that he did not even know what Lucas looked like.

There is, apparently, some similarity between the movie "Raiders" and Kuhn's screenplay. According to the July 9 *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*:

"Allegedly, Kuhn's hero is an American archaeologist, a 40-year-old university professor, who is 'something of a rogue,' and the primary female character is his 'lost love,' whom he hasn't seen for a decade. In 'Raiders,' Harrison Ford plays Indiana Jones, a dashing professor of archaeology, who seeks out a former girlfriend, played by Karen Allen, to assist him in his search for the Ark."

But if newspaper reports are to be believed, it is not this similarity that has Kuhn and Rader upset. It is the admitted differences between the movie and their screenplay. (Plagiarism is not one of the charges in their suit.) According to the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* (July 9, p. B3):

"Charging that the blockbuster adventure movie is spiritually bankrupt, Rader said that if his suit is successful, he will establish a non-profit organization to refurbish the tarnished image of the Ark of the Covenant, the missing chest that according to biblical lore contains the broken tablets of the Ten Commandments...."

"Charging that the hit movie is 'a parody of our material designed primarily to exploit the public at this time,' Rader said that if his suit is successful, 'we feel that a very substantial portion of the profits from the film must be contributed by us to a non-profit organization which will make every effort to undo the damage that this film has done and continues to do to minds of young people everywhere.'

"In their 29-page complaint, the plaintiffs further argued: 'Because (the) defendants have distributed their entertaining but shallow version to a broad segment of the public, plaintiff Kuhn's efforts have been frivolously pre-empted. Because the Ark had indeed been lost in the public's mind as well as in history, the first exposure of the Ark, including the place and manner in which it was found and opened, the use to which it was put and its spiritual overtones, stamps an indelible imprint on indiscriminating minds, a mental image almost impossible to alter.'

"Any subsequent efforts to present to the public at large a biblically accurate version, such as had been created by plaintiff Kuhn, will be severely impaired,' the complaint continues. 'It is as if plaintiff Kuhn had composed a biblically based choral work (such as a Psalm set to newly composed popular music) and before its premiere, its leitmotiv had been appropriated for a catchy jingle and used to promote the leading candy or soda pop in a national, saturation media blitz.'"

It is interesting that Rader's suit attempts to link Kuhn's admittedly fictional screenplay to biblical truth. Yet note what the *Examiner* wrote about Kuhn's plot:

"As described in the complaint, Kuhn's 'Ark' differs from 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' in several respects: Kuhn's tale was intended as a religiously inspiring story that told of the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem in the '80s, during the midst of the apocalyptic battles pitting Russians and neo-Nazis against a combined army of Israelis, Arabs and Americans. In 'Raiders,' the Ark is unearthed in Egypt in 1936 by an American racing against the Nazis."

But wait a minute! This is not what Herbert Armstrong teaches! HWA teaches that a united Europe - not Germany and Russia - will war against the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Libyans, while also conquering the U.S. and Britain. (See "Middle East in Prophecy," reprint #550, 1972, and "Bible Correspondence Course" #36, 1965 for the details.) Russia will be supposedly watching on the sidelines. HWA (and virtually all Christianity) says *Christ* - not the Old Testament Ark - intervenes to save humanity. The Rader-Kuhn screenplay is supposed to express biblical truth; yet their interpretation of prophecy is very, very different from that of their religious mentor, apostle Herbert Armstrong. It is also very different from that of the vast majority of Christian churches.

In addition, reasonable men cannot help but ask: "If the Rader-Kuhn screenplay is indeed noticeably different than the Lucas movie, as Rader claims it is, what exactly is the legal basis for their claim? Do Lucas and Spielberg not have the right to fictionalize, just a Kuhn and Rader say they have done?"

Rader's lawsuit and statements clearly imply that the Lucas film sullied his and Kuhn's interpretation of prophecy. Yet, does not the Rader-Kuhn screenplay sully Herbert Armstrong's interpretation of prophecy?

What is the real reason behind this lawsuit? Significantly, the *Examiner* wrote:

"W. Jack Kessler, an attorney for Rader, raised the possibility that Rader might consider a pretrial settlement. (Traditionally movie companies insure themselves against suits claiming copyright infringement, and often, the merits of the case notwithstanding, an insurance company will propose a pretrial settlement rather than defend the suit in court.)"

"Explaining that a pretrial settlement 'would be just as much vindication in some respects' as winning the suit, Kessler added, 'obviously there will be sequels and an important part of any pretrial settlement might be participation in the sequels.'"

In other words, while Rader claims Lucas' movie has "tarnished the image of the Ark of the Covenant" and has caused great harm to many people, his legal associate, Kessler, says they would be quite happy to share in the profits from the movie and its sequels.

Perhaps the most succinct statement on the lawsuit came from Thomas Pollock, an attorney for Lucas. He said, "Every time you have a successful movie, there'll be people who come forward who claim it's theirs. As far as I'm concerned, they're insects coming out of the woodwork."

### WATERHOUSE TN THE NEWS

A couple of months ago, one of our readers sent us a copy of an opinion piece that appeared in the *Toronto Star* on April 4. Written by religion editor Tom Harper, it was titled, "Mindless faith-a golden calf for lazy multitudes." Aside from the fact that it is one of the best thought-out articles on religion that we've seen in a long time, we found it particularly interesting because it was inspired by WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse.

Apparently, someone sent Harper tape recordings of a number of Gerald Waterhouse sermons. Waterhouse - now, generally regarded as the WCG's number one preacher - has been quoted in our pages before, so we will not dwell on the contents of his aberrant sermons. However, we think you'll find these excerpts from Harper's piece of interest:

Blaise Pascal once wrote: "The heart has its reasons which reason knows not of."

Pascal, a French theologian and mathematician (1623 to 1662), knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are aspects of reality, dimensions of this fantastic cosmos, which are apprehended in other ways than by pure reason alone.

But, in his religious insight and convictions he never for one moment committed the error (nor even contemplated it) which is the hallmark of much of the popular religion of our day.

I refer to what can only be called "the flight from reason" - the denigration of the proper use of one's mind and the erection in its place of a false god, a blind, unquestioning "faith."

The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) insists that true love of God or, to use a more modern term, "the Ground of all Being," must be "with all one's mind and heart and strength." St. Paul speaks of having a "reason for the hope that is in you."

**All-out attack.** Yet, you only have to spend one Sunday morning in front of your television set to realize that much of what passes for religious truth today is not only an insult to intelligence, it bases its claims on an all-out attack on intellect and the educated mind.

What is most alarming about this is the extent to which people, confused or lonely, or lacking either a sense of meaning or of belonging, eagerly assent. Too weary - or too lazy - to wrestle with doubts or obvious complexities, they throw themselves willy-nilly into the sect, cult or "ism" which seems most likely (according to its claims) to give the quickest answer to their needs.

What is wanted, it seems, is sheer magic, not the demand for the total involvement of every human faculty....

But, this week's mail brought an even clearer example of the anti-rationalism now at work under the guise of faith. A source in the United States provided *The Star* with more than half a dozen tapes of sermons by Gerald Waterhouse, the leading preacher in Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God.

**Direct quotes.** Here are some direct quotes from Waterhouse sermons preached to vast gatherings of the faithful in Abilene:

"I hope none of you are intellectuals. I hope you are dumb, dumb enough to believe in God's church... intellectuality always reasons around God's plan of government.

"Using your reason to question Herbert W. Armstrong is disobedience. To reason is to fall into Satan's trap. Don't follow your feelings either; be obedient"...

The Waterhouse tapes supply an answer to the question of how it is a man who has been as thoroughly discredited as HWA has been can still take out full page advertisements in Toronto newspapers, be heard on approximately 100 radio stations in Canada - not to mention his TV appearances - and keep at least a committed core of his shrinking flock.

Waterhouse alludes time and time again to his leader's current difficulties, but his tone is bullying and his message one of unqualified threat. To question HWA is to rebel against God: and, rebellion against God means "burning forever in the lake of fire."

Thus he thunders: "God still backs Herbert Armstrong. I don't care if he's 99 percent wrong on a point, God always backs His government: He backs it right or wrong."

**Murmur of agreement.** Instead of shouts of protest from the audience at such an arrant flight from reason, you can actually hear murmurs of agreement.

Waterhouse goes further: "Criticism of HWA and of Stanley Rader is 'criticism of Jesus Christ and the Plan for the end times. It's the closest thing to the unpardonable sin' ..."

Surely if tapes such as these, not to mention videotapes of a dozen other current cult leaders and TV pop-religion superstars, are kept in a time capsule and opened by our descendants a century from now they will wonder what kind of Middle Ages mentality was rampant.

The 1980s may go down in history books of the future as the totally inexplicable Age of Unreason.

During the last decade, no area of the WCG has experienced more personnel changes than the editorial of *The Plain Truth* (PT). While for a number of years drawing some of the best minds in the WCG, the PT has never been able to hold onto its most talented people. The church's constantly changing doctrines and policies, political infighting, firings, resignations, and reorganizations have resulted in a PT many journalists routinely describe privately as "a rag." No wonder one major library journal now classifies the PT under the indexing designation of "mysticism. Considering the PT's sinking standards, that designation is probably an overly kind one.

Recently, Ambassador Report was given an opinion paper dealing with the PT's editorial policies and research methods. The paper is the result of a joint effort by a number of former PT editors, some with 10 to 25 years of membership in the WCG. All have first-hand knowledge of the facts presented.

We found the paper fascinating. Rather than redo it as an AR article, we've decided to run it as is. We think readers will find it gives an in-depth look at the real, behind-the-scenes *Plain Truth*. We welcome any comments our readers might have concerning this paper presented on pages 7-10.

**The Prophets of the Partial Truth**

For over 30 years *Plain Truth* readers have marveled at how the PT speaks authoritatively on every subject from prophecy, science, education, child rearing, nutrition, and agriculture to history, politics, psychology, and economics. Many believe that the PT writers not only understand the Bible but also are highly qualified experts in their respective fields.

Printed on glossy paper and filled with dazzling color photos and artwork, the PT is one of the Worldwide Church of God's (WCG) main instruments for preaching to the world. Yet members and the general public know virtually nothing about the qualifications and backgrounds of its writers and researchers.

Before an intelligent reader agrees with the dogmatic pronouncements of any publication—such as the PT—purporting to give the reader the truth on a subject, he should ask certain basic questions:

the arguments for and against the church's tithing doctrine. And recently, documented evidence that he falsified a portion of his own academic record appeared. (See *Ambassador Report*, 6-1-79, p. 12.)

The latest reports suggest that old Herman is now moving very carefully and keeping a low profile, hoping he will not repeat his political blunder of 1978 when he began to move in the direction of Garner Ted Armstrong's theological views. It nearly cost him position and membership in the WCG when Herbert Armstrong learned that Hoeh had criticized his teachings on the Passover and had dared to imply that HWA would probably best function as a "father figure."

*Dexter Faulkner*, an Ambassador graduate, one-time News Bureau employee, and former PT correspondent in Washington, D.C., is the PT's titular managing editor. Until 1975 he was essentially a PT nonentity. Even

## The Prophets of the Partial Truth

For over 30 years *Plain Truth* readers have marveled at how the PT speaks authoritatively on every subject from prophecy, science, education, child rearing, nutrition, and agriculture to history, politics, psychology, and economics. Many believe that the PT writers not only understand the Bible but also are highly qualified experts in their respective fields.

Printed on glossy paper and filled with dazzling color photos and artwork, the PT is one of the Worldwide Church of God's (WCG) main instruments for preaching to the world. Yet members and the general public know virtually nothing about the qualifications and backgrounds of its writers and researchers. Before an intelligent reader agrees with the dogmatic pronouncements of any publication - such as the PT - purporting to give the reader the truth on a subject, he should ask certain basic questions:

- Who is writing?
- Does he (or she) know what he is writing about?
- What are his credentials?

- Are his opinions based on careful study along with observation and experience, or have they been hastily and carelessly formed?
- Is the author a specialist in his field, or is he a generalist or self-appointed expert who loves to give advice in every field?
- What are his or her motives for writing what he writes-to sincerely record personal beliefs and observations or to parrot the party line in the party journal?

We feel it is necessary to answer these basic questions regarding the PT prophets - the men who authoritatively purport to have answers to almost every problem in the present and who claim to be able to predict the future. There are three reasons why we feel this is important to do: First, numerous specialists in their fields have stated that PT writers are often careless and uncritical in their use of materials and overhasty in jumping to unwarranted conclusions. Second, many PT readers have told us that the PT's solutions - when put into practice - have proved disastrous and ruined lives. And lastly, it can be documented that almost none of the PT's prophecies and predictions have ever materialized.

## The Personalities

To understand what the PT really is, let us first look at some of the personalities behind the bylines. The quasi- editor-in-chief (called "senior editor for copy") is once again the nearly forgotten Evangelist *Herman Hoeh*, a product of unaccredited Ambassador College (AC). He used to be (and the past tense is intended) the key oracle in the WCG. Nobody could rival him in effectively neutralizing political and intellectual opponents, in working round the clock for days on end, in masterfully manipulating Herbert Armstrong (HWA), and, above all, in finding or fabricating sources to "prove" HWA's doctrines

Hoeh's infallible reputation, however, began to evaporate some years ago when it was learned that he had purchased a large number of books - ostensibly for the AC Library - with his personal tithe money in the late 1960s. At the end of the year Hoeh asked for an annual tithe and offering receipt for book purchases made that year. For members to decide how to use their own tithes was contrary to Hoeh's own articles on tithing, in which he preached that one must give his tithes to God's church to avoid being under a curse.

Then it came to light that obvious plagiarisms and historical fabrications in his obscure two-volume work, the *Compendium of World History*, had caused him to quietly drop it from circulation. (He had received his two doctorate degrees for writing the two volumes.) Next it was discovered that he had radically altered several church doctrinal committee research papers included in the *Study Paper on Tithing*, which was sent out to the whole WCG ministry as an objective look at the arguments for and against the church's tithing doctrine. And recently, documented evidence that he falsified a portion of his own academic record appeared (See *Ambassador Report*, 6-1-79, p. 12.)

The latest reports suggest that old Herman is now moving very carefully and keeping a low profile, hoping he will not repeat his political blunder of 1978 when he began to move in the direction of Garner Ted Armstrong's theological views. It nearly cost him position and membership in the WCG when Herbert Armstrong learned that Hoeh had criticized his teachings on the Passover and had dared to imply that HWA would probably best function as a "father figure."

*Dexter Faulkner*, an Ambassador graduate, one-time News Bureau employee, and former PT correspondent in Washington, D.C., is the PT's titular managing editor. Until 1975 he was essentially a PT nonentity. Even though he was given the title of correspondent, he had difficulty getting anything published during the years he served as a correspondent. But Dexter is perhaps the most politically astute person in the whole editorial department, and he has captured both Herbert Armstrong's and Stan Rader's attention by being unquestionably loyal and saying the right thing at the right time - no mean feat, considering the politically charged environment at WCG headquarters.

Dexter is popular with the church leadership because he knows when to salute and snap out a firm "Yes, sir!" and because he's not an intellectual. His nonintellectuality was once aptly demonstrated in former Managing Editor Brian Knowles' office. Brian was explaining a point that Dexter was having trouble grasping. When the point finally registered, Dexter lept to his feet, plopped himself enthusiastically on the edge of Brian's desk, slapped his hand down hard on the desk top, and exclaimed: "You've just raped my mind! You MADE me think!!"

Hoeh and Faulkner regularly receive articles on a vast array of subjects from three Ambassador-educated writers who have only unaccredited degrees: Evangelist Raymond McNair, Evangelist Rod Meredith, and Clayton Steep, former editorial assistant and proofreader for the French-language PT. However, the key responsibility for article research rests with the News Bureau, which has a vast number of filing cabinets filled with news items cut out of various news sources. But here we face a disturbing and depressing picture.

News Editor *Gene Hogberg*, possessing only Ambassador College's unaccredited theology degree, is neither professionally trained nor educated to run a news office. Nevertheless, with his revelations from WCG theology and his obsession that the U.S. and Britain are modern Israel (in Bible prophecy), he has pronounced himself an instant expert on history, political science, and international relations. He particularly enjoys vacationing in European countries for a few days around the time of the WCG's Feast of Tabernacles, sampling the local cuisine, and then coming home triumphantly to tell his readers the "plain truth" about those nations and their problems. But his main fixation is Germany where, for years, he has been trying to show Herbert's prophecies being fulfilled- especially those about the Beast of Revelation 13.

Herbert Armstrong believed since the late 1960s that Franz Joseph Strauss would very likely one day ascend to the German Chancellorship or beyond and that in this capacity would become the future "Beast" of Revelation, whom Herbert says will make war on the U.S. and, with the help of his Western European allies, will destroy the U.S. in a nuclear war. Understandably, every four years when the West Germans elect a Chancellor, emotions run high in the News Bureau. Last year was no exception when Hogberg again devoted special coverage to the candidacy of Strauss, subtly hinting he might win this time. But alas, God again proved the PT prophets wrong; Strauss lost. But then there's always the next election.

Gene Hogberg commands a quartet of unqualified and ill-prepared, but highly paid, news "analysts." Mostly Ambassador College educated, they work and think in a cozy environment of dogmatism, bias, and distortion, beset from year to year by perpetual power struggles between the various

ideological factions within the church.

Two longtime News Bureau writers are Keith Stump and Don Schroeder, both noncontroversial, likable, Ambassador College-educated researcher-writers who churn out article after article on such diverse topics as venereal disease, children's toys, the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, the rock of Gibraltar, pollution, the U.S. navy's strength, and evolution. Their articles all parrot the conservative right-wing fundamentalist Armstrong ideology so expertly that it's difficult to tell whether they or the senior Armstrong wrote the articles.

Perhaps the most talented and qualified writer in editorial is an aspiring young law student at the Roman Catholic Church's Loyola University, *Jeff Calkins*, who holds an accredited master's degree in political science from California State University, Los Angeles. (All this in spite of Herbert Armstrong's orders that AC graduates should not seek advanced degrees at the "world's" institutions - see *The Worldwide News*, 5/18/81, 1, p. 3.) His contributions cover matters of great prophetic importance such as weather conditions and movie reviews, but he feels qualified to write in almost every field of human knowledge: finance, education, science, history, city planning, and others. An independent intellectual, a rarity in the church after it purged itself of almost all of its intellectuals, he has let it be known that he admires church attorney Stan Rader's manipulative skills. His admiration was rewarded when he was picked to co-author articles with Stan during the church's legal fight with the State of California.

Despite his advanced academic training and abstruse use of the English language, he still adheres to the church's arbitrary and primitive scissor-and-clipping mentality of news reporting. Ever since he had more articles published in one issue of the PT than did Herbert Armstrong, rumors have persisted that certain Rader supporters considered having Jeff replace Hogberg as head news editor, since Hogberg is viewed as a closet Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) loyalist. However, if GTA returns to the fold, Jeff could be out for so openly cozying up to Rader. But by then he may have his law degree.

A longtime contributor to PT research is deacon *Werner Jebens*, former member of the defunct German department. His main responsibility is clipping anything from classified ads in the local newspapers to European news articles in kinky soft-porn publications shipped in from West Germany. Many wonder why News Bureau funds are expended for such low-class German soft-porn magazines such as *Quick* and *Neue Revue*. When German news quotes are used in the PT, they are usually lifted from more reputable publications, such as *Der Spiegel*. Hence a good deal of money is wasted on journalistic material that never comes to bear except in personal fantasies. For years PT writers and certain executive personnel regularly dropped by to sneak a look at the News Bureau's collection of sex magazines and clippings of nude couples posing in various erotic positions, but this material has now been hidden.

## The Prophecies

Considering the broad range of subjects covered in the PT, it is no exaggeration to say it would take a very large book to properly cover all of the inadequacies found in that publication. So for now, let us look at just one problem area - the PT's articles on Bible prophecy, and specifically those centering on modern Germany. It is a well-documented fact that HWA has been an embarrassing failure as a prophet for almost 50 years. When he began preaching in the early 1930s, he uncritically adopted the popular apocalyptic notions widespread among the country folk with whom he associated in the Pacific Northwest. It was from the development and embellishment of such sentiments that he began to attribute to various nations - such as Germany - a role in imminent prophesied end-time events. Between 1934 and 1941, he began preaching a basic end-time prophetic framework that he still adheres to today with minor modifications. It includes the following aspects:

- (1) Pestilence, drought, famine, weather upsets, and war will afflict the earth with increasing intensity.
- (2) There will be a revival of the Holy Roman Empire, consisting of 10 powerful European dictators who give their armed power to the "Beast," who is a devil-controlled super strongman-emperor.
- (3) The pope will be the catalyst behind the formation of a modern Catholic Roman Empire.
- (4) Britain and the U.S. - who constitute the main part of modern-day Israel - will be invaded and conquered by the Beast power unless they repent and turn to God. (It is HWA's main duty to warn these two nations of their fate.)

To illustrate how each of the aspects of his prophetic framework were occurring day by day, HWA hunted through the news sources of his day, selecting all the apocalyptic - sounding quotes that tended to support his "inspired" prophetic framework. These quotes were coupled with scriptures to give his readers the "true" prophetic understanding of world events. Here are some of the results of his inspired research, excerpted from *The Plain Truth*:

\*The flu epidemic at the time of World War I was "the worst pestilence in history"; 10 million died in Russia recently in "the most colossal famine the world ever saw" - "All these (Mat. 24:8) are the beginning of sorrows" (June-July 1934, p. 4).

\*"We have been in the Tribulation since 1929 in the United States and since 1928 in Europe" (June-July 1934, p. 4).

\*The present time of trouble will continue "until the year 1936." "And at, or quickly after that time, we may expect to see the heavenly signs of the sun and moon becoming dark, the stars falling - and... the sign of the coming of the Son of man in heaven" (June-July 1934, p. 5).

Here we have "God's apostle" claiming to be giving the world God's last warning message just before Christ's coming, and yet "God's apostle" evidently didn't even know what the Great Tribulation was and that it was not occurring between 1928 and 1936. If he can't discern the difference between hard times and the Great Tribulation - a time prophesied to be so bad that all mankind would perish if Jesus didn't intervene - how can he

claim to be God's "Watchman" who warns the world of coming end-time events? Here are a few more of HWA's predictions:

\*This year, 1935, is destined to witness an event foretold in the Bible 2,400 years ago: "the great drought." The year 1935 is destined to see the final fulfillment of "God's great army of a nation of bugs" prophesied in Joel 1:4,6-7. The "time of God's wrath-the last plagues-is at hand" (March 1935, pp. 1-2).

\*"The present time of trouble and distress will continue until the Resurrection" (March 1935, p. 7).

\*Mussolini is the "beast" (Feb. 1938, p. 3).

\*Zechariah 8:10 foretold a time when there would be "no hire for man or beast." This description of the great Depression was prophesied to occur just before Jesus' second coming. "Never before has there been unemployment to match that since 1929" (Mar. 1938, p. 3). [HWA was basing these conclusions on the premise that 1929 marked the beginning of the Great Tribulation.]

\*"More millionaires committed suicide between 1929 and 1934 than in all previous years combined!" This was prophesied in James 5:1-8 (Mar. 1938, p. 6).

\*Soon "France will be induced to bury the hatchet with Germany and join a new kind of alliance purporting to guarantee permanent peace in Europe" (Mar. 1938, p. 6). [In this March 1938 PT article HWA prophesied that Germany and France were on the verge of forming a new alliance; yet by June 1940 France had been buried by a German blitzkrieg, much to HWA's consternation-Editor.]

\*Bible prophecy shows that the Catholic Church, through its pope, "must officially rule over this coming Empire," but Mussolini and the 10 dictators shall eventually destroy the church (Mar. 1938, p. 8).

\*"Mussolini's soon-appearing reborn Roman Empire is the 'beast' power, and Mussolini undoubtedly is the 'beast'!" Revelation 17 shows the Beast will be associated with a great fallen church called a "whore" - the Catholic church (Jan. 1939, p. 3).

\*"Many have thought Hitler is proving to be the number one man in Europe," but Mussolini will finally emerge "as number one man over all!" (Jan. 1939, p. 4.)

\*Mussolini will capture Egypt, conquer one half of Jerusalem, and fight Christ at his second coming (Jan. 1939, p. 4).

\*"It appears certain, from these prophecies, that Benito Mussolini is the...'BEAST' of Rev. 19:19-20..." (Feb. 1939, P. 1).

\*"Britain shall be invaded and conquered." "Turkey will cause British defeat. But God will rescue and restore the British and cause Turkey utterly to be wiped out" (Nov. - Dec. 1940, pp. 2, 7).

\*"Bible prophecy does indicate that Hitler must be a victor in his present Russian invasion!" Then Hitler will be "free to turn the entire might of his forces against Britain - and America!" (Sept.- Oct. 1941, p. 7.)

\*"Unless America quickly wakes up, repents, turns to God... the punishment we are already suffering... shall continue until there is invasion, defeat - and utter slavery!" (Mar.- Apr. 1942, p. 11.)

Of course, you know the rest of the story: America did NOT "wake up" or "repent," as HWA defined waking up and repenting, but instead America emerged from World War II as the richest, most powerful nation the world has ever known. But that fact didn't stop HWA from implying God had postponed all his prophecies so HWA's "Work of God" could warn the whole world. (Since God must have known that HWA's "Work" only covered part of the U.S. at this time, one wonders how God could have been so "forgetful" as to have almost allowed Armageddon to occur before having HWA's church warn the whole world. As it was, HWA would have us believe, God had to stop the whole sequence of end-time events and postpone them for a half century because he forgot that HWA hadn't warned the world with his radio broadcasts.)

In 1947 HWA founded Ambassador College and got young impressionable students to help him clip news stories that lent credence to his mangled prophetic framework. He, at that time, decided that Germany, not Italy, would be the leader of the ten-nation Beast/Roman Empire and that the Germans were the modern-day Assyrians, who were supposedly prophesied to invade and conquer Israel - which, to HWA, means the U.S. & Britain, not the Israelis. (HWA originally said the people of "Gomer" were the modern - day Germans-PT June-July 1934, p. 6 - but Herman Hoeh assured HWA that Germany was Assyria.) HWA even offered the public a booklet, *Germany in Prophecy*, but the booklet was never published. Why? Because, as Hoeh privately admitted, its main contention was not supported by the historical evidence. Publicly, however, Hoeh claimed all the evidence was in German documents that hadn't been translated into English. (German minister Frank Schnee, meanwhile, was telling his congregations that all the evidence was in English documents.)

By the 1960s, however, proof that Germany was Assyria seemed almost irrelevant anyway, because the News Bureau was churning out a stream of "News Reports" and articles about hidden Nazis clandestinely plotting a third world war. Now taking for granted that a German leader would be the "Beast," the PT and News Bureau wrote dozens of articles and reports on German industrial might, Hitler being alive and hiding in South America (this idea was taken from Police Gazette), Nazis working underground, the right-wing German political party (the NPD), how Germans yearned for a strong-man leader, and how Franz Joseph Strauss, head of one of Germany's four main political parties, could be the coming man of the hour, etc. Between 1963 and 1969 alone, the WCG published 9 major articles on Strauss, HWA confided that he thought it likely that Strauss would be the "Beast," and he persuaded Strauss to visit Ambassador College in 1969.

Now, twelve years later, the News Bureau and PT staff writers are still trying to bend reality to prove HWA's German fantasies right. Still, Hogberg, Hoeh, and the others have yet to furnish a clear reason - backed up by documentation - why they insist on picking on Germany and on Strauss in particular.

Aside from numerous theological problems, there are many other gaping holes in HWA's theories about a German strongman "Beast" uniting ten European nations and suddenly destroying the U.S. and Britain through a surprise nuclear attack. First, any such German leader would have to contend with a mountain of constitutional restrictions and legal and bureaucratic red tape if he wanted to unite Europe's armies under his control. This could not happen overnight by any means. Second, he would have to obtain control of nuclear weapons - which the Germans do not have. He could attempt to steal nuclear weapons from the American forces in Germany, but even that wouldn't help because each U.S. nuclear warhead has been provided with half a dozen security locks to prevent unauthorized field commanders from activating the weapons. These security locks respond only to commands beamed in by satellite, and the mother keys are in the hands of the Pentagon (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI, *Tactical Nuclear Weapons: European Perspectives*, 1978, p. 129). A fair representation of the reality involving the seizure of nuclear weapons in Europe should include this kind of "news behind the news."

But, to continue the fantasy, suppose the German "Beast" does do the impossible and activates the warheads. He would still have to figure out a way to deliver them - no easy task since the Germans and Europeans have no intercontinental ballistic missiles or long-range bombers capable of reaching the U.S. And even with an all-out effort to develop such capabilities, which the U.S. and Britain would never allow, it would take many years for this to become operational. Of course, while all of this complex maneuvering is occurring, the News Bureau must assume Britain, the Soviet Union, and the U.S. - with its spy satellites - are sitting by in idle amusement, taking bets on whether the Germans will try to knock out Washington, D.C. or New York first and perhaps Moscow or London second. Perhaps the Germans could convince France to fire its nuclear-tipped missiles at the U.S. from its nuclear submarines, but since France's nuclear subs are outnumbered 5 to 1 by the U.S. fleet, France would itself risk getting blown off the map by the greatly superior U.S. fleet or by U.S. bombers and missiles, not to mention the Soviet missiles. So we see that HWA's and the News Bureau's scenario cannot occur.

Of course, if God suddenly unleashes 50 massive earthquakes and 50 volcanoes against the U.S. and Britain and strikes half their people with the black plague, you would have a different set of circumstances. But if the News Bureau really expects that such supernatural events will allow a German-led United States of Europe to conquer the U.S. and Britain without tempting the Russians to respond, why bother covering each German election in detail, the Pope's every move, the Europeans' belated attempts to unite their governments, economies, and currencies, etc.? If God or some all-powerful Devil is going to interfere supernaturally, there is no reason (other than keeping the tithe-payers perpetually perturbed) to monitor each of these news occurrences to try to show prophecy somehow inching forward year by year to ultimate fulfillment.

To simply say a German strongman will somehow obtain nuclear warheads overnight or by a miracle is to really prove nothing. The opposite - that it could not happen - is an equally valid view that ought to be given the same consideration in PT articles. At the very least, intellectual honesty would require a juxtaposition of the real circumstances with WCG prophetic expectations. Then the reader could decide how credible or vague the implications of the PT articles really were.

In the last few years, the News Bureau has toyed with the idea that the European Beast might be Otto von Habsburg, a member of the Habsburg dynasty. But this would mean that the "Beast" would be an Israelite, not an Assyrian, because the Habsburgs are Swiss in origin (H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, 1971, p. 661). They originally came from the German-speaking two-thirds of Switzerland that Hoeh has said was not descended from the Assyrians but from the Israelite tribe of Gad.

### **The Underlying Problems**

The PT prophets have made a living by bending and/or ignoring the plain facts that threaten to dissolve their prophetic scheme. But it's inexcusable for anyone writing on European affairs to omit the type of facts and details pointed out in preceding paragraphs.

It is the News Bureau's very method of "research" that prompts the PT's one-sided reporting. The News Bureau personnel comb through *U.S. News & World Report*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, several newspapers, a number of highly regarded U.S. and foreign magazines, AP, UPI, and Reuters news-wire releases, and a few obscure sources, randomly selecting and clipping stories that tend to buttress church teachings and HWA's prophetic framework. From these carefully chosen clippings, they pen articles supposedly showing that world events are progressing as HWA's prophetic scheme predicted they would. Yet there is really no clear empirical step-by-step chain of news events that can be causally linked to HWA's prophetic pronouncements. Even as HWA misunderstood when the Great Tribulation was, so the PT prophets are grasping at straws by trying to tack random U.S. and European news events onto HWA's prophetic skeleton.

Throughout the pages of the PT, the old adage that "a little learning is a dangerous thing" is aptly demonstrated. The world order is vastly more complex than a group of intellectually dishonest fanatics make it out to be. But they are only following the style of their leader HWA, who dropped out of Des Moines high school in 1910 and learned how to write clever advertisements for a living. Unfortunately, Hoeh, Hogberg, Calkins, and Co. have adopted HWA's sensationalized style and simplistic methods of research, and like HWA, they almost never acknowledge any of the sources for the ideas they routinely plagiarize. Nevertheless, they are less dogmatic than HWA, and they now refrain from writing feature stories on rabid squirrels or collecting reams of material on U.S. fire ants taking over the nation - as some PT writers did in the 1950s and 1960s.

We would not object, per se, to the PT prophets telling readers to watch Germany, Strauss, Otto von Habsburg, or anyone else for that matter. However, if the PT writers were honest, they would take an objective and intellectually open approach. In order to do this, they and the WCG leadership would have to begin to do basic critical research in several areas:

(1) They must show by some valid method of research which of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation have both a historical and modern fulfillment This has never really been done.

(2) If certain prophecies are shown to have a modern fulfillment, they then must present convincing documentation to construct a new prophetic framework to replace HWA's discredited one.

(3) They must do honest and credible research to irrevocably establish the identity of Assyria, Israel, and Babylon when mentioned in prophecies of the Bible.

If the PT prophets and WCG ministry solved these issues, then they could honestly state that they were writing about Germany, for example, because they had documented proof that Germany was Assyria and that the Bible prophecies of Daniel and Revelation were referring specifically to 20th-century Germany.

Today, however, the WCG's prophetic understanding is in chaos. HWA's old basic prophetic framework - the basis of all the PT articles coming out today - has not been printed and distributed by the church for many years, so even longtime members only vaguely understand why the PT constantly picks on Germany, Strauss, and the Common Market, etc., instead of, say, Iraq, Greece, or Syria and their leaders. (The church's prophetic beliefs were set forth in detail in *Who Is the Beast?* - discontinued just before Strauss visited AC in 1969 - and in the older version of the Bible Correspondence Course, numbers 31 and 32.)

### **How Can the PT Change?**

The prophecy errors outlined above are merely one area of PT inadequacy. The PT's editors must begin to realize that when they palm themselves off as instant experts on marriage problems, agriculture, education, child psychology, finance, politics, health, nutrition, science, moral issues, etc., they have an obligation to the public to have their facts straight. They are not just discussing idle abstract theories that harm no one. They are instructing human beings in vital areas that can and do change many aspects of their lives. In the past, hastily conceived articles on these subjects have cost people their health, wealth, marriages, businesses, financial stability, occupations, and in some cases their lives. Those who don the mantle of "PT prophet" must, therefore, begin to take their responsibility seriously by:

- presenting all sides of the issues raised
- doing unbiased research
- consulting, quoting, and acknowledging more credible sources
- stating who they are and what their qualifications are for writing on a specific subject
- becoming more knowledgeable in the area in which they choose to write
- avoiding the temptation to write as "experts" on every subject under the sun
- refraining from speaking for or in the name of God when presenting their own ideas, biases, conclusions, or the party line.

If the PT prophets would follow these reasonable guidelines, then, and only then, would they begin to give their readers something resembling the plain truth.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

*Tony Hammer*, former WCG pastor and brother-in-law of Garner Ted, is a personnel manager for a Dallas-based corporation. We hear former WCG pastor *Art Mocarow* has a TV program in Palm Springs, Calif., and does sales training and consulting work. *Elbert Atlas*, another one-time WCG pastor, is in management with Occidental Life Insurance Co. He was recently nominated by the insurance industry for a minority achievement award.

After 16 years in the WCG, including three as a deacon and eleven as a full-time minister, *Ken R. Kneebone* of New Brunswick, Canada, is now with the international firm of Robert McAlpine Ltd. in the Maritimes. He works as a senior estimator involved with cost-control management at an \$80 million potash mining operation.

*Al Knauf*, formerly the chairman of the Department of Natural Sciences and math at Ambassador College in Big Sandy, is now the Dallas Schools' Program Specialist in Field Ecology at the Dallas Museum of Natural History. He also teaches a special advanced course in ecology for talented high school seniors. Mr. Knauf recently wrote of his work: "We use the entire state as our laboratory - studying the oceans, mountains, forests, and deserts as part of the instructional program. It's great to be free of all that oppression and turmoil and doing a job that's so enjoyable. The 'world' still has some fine, intelligent, moral, and responsible young people. I can testify to that."

*Dan Truhitte*, a featured singer with Garner Ted Armstrong's personal appearance tours in the early '70s, has had nothing to do with the Armstrongs for over seven years now. An extremely talented singer-dancer-actor, Truhitte has performed in numerous films, off-Broadway shows, and nightclub acts, and some years ago was a principal in MGM's "Hallelujah Hollywood" show in Las Vegas. The Los Angeles Times reported on April 26 that Mr. Truhitte "today produces dinner theater programs and runs a voice academy in Sacramento, where he grew up."

### NEW GROUPS AND GROUPS NEW TO US

Jesus Loves the Lost

2601 Northwood Avenue  
P.O. Box 707  
Easton, PA 18042  
215-258-8657, 205-258-1583

\*\*\*\*\*

Union Life Ministries  
P.O. Box 2877  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

This organization publishes a free bimonthly Christian magazine called *Union Life*. Their July-August issue contains an article by Richard Plache, former WCG pastor.

\*\*\*\*\*

In our last newsletter we mentioned the Church of God of Augusta, P.O. Box 184, Augusta, Kansas 67010. Evangelist Patrick Laham of that church has since written to us asking that we mention that his church publishes a booklet entitled "Is Herbert W. Armstrong God's Prophet?" The booklet points up many of the prophetic failures of HWA and company. Evangelist Laham said that copies will be sent free to all who request them. Also, that church's new phone numbers are: 316-775-6054 and 316-775-7911.

\*\*\*\*\*

In May of this year we received a very cordial letter from Mr. James McBride of the Church of God International organization in Britain (P.O. Box 2525, Lincoln, England) . Here is an excerpt from that letter we believe you will find as enlightening as we did:

*So far our operation is minuscule, but we are slowly getting things moving. Our relationship with Tyler is very loose - in fact the Board of Trustees is entirely English, our main attachment being the Tyler literature.*

*WCG has an iron grip on the 1,800 or so membership in U.K., though it's very much contained in a velvet glove. Yet there's a constant drain of members - e.g., Chris Carpenter, Peter Butler (U.K. PT editor), Gordon Graham (press manager), Dan Medlicott, various deacons, etc. Their [the WCG] income, I gather, is well maintained, but little of it seems to go into evangelistic effort. I know, too, of several rather shaky top people. However, the majority who quit just don't want anything that has the remotest Armstrong connections!*

*Our main thrust is towards new people, and we're preparing an ad campaign following the launch of a newsletter. We are standing firm on salvation by grace - untrammelled by legalism, yet taking a stand on festivals, Sabbath, and our main traditional teachings (on soul, eschatology, creationism, etc.) as part of a general way of life and teaching - something that a Christian grows toward with time. We also stand on local autonomy and see ourselves (at Lincoln) as co-ordinators and perhaps, initially, as guides and as exercising leadership in a Christian way.*

*But we have a long way to go - as they say, "nowhere to go but up"! But with 55 million in a sardine can there's a lot of scope. I'm convinced most "active Christians" are simply in need of education in Bible teaching and are not hand-in-hand with Satan! This we will try to supply by our ads, newsletter, and talks to church groups.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*There are a group of about 15 of us who meet each 2-4 Sabbaths for study and help and supper afterwards. We share your mailings. They keep us current. We would not go back to WCG as it is now. We have grown so. The teachings of Heb. 5 and Heb. 6:1 etc. tell us they teach milk and basic things, and we need to leave these 6 or 7 doctrines after the foundation is laid to go on to maturity (meat).*

*Little Rock, Ark.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*We left the church at Colorado Springs in 1978 with about 20 other disillusioned members . We now have a church pastored by Jack Hines, the Church of God of Colorado Springs. We still believe in the truths once preached by Mr. Armstrong and are going on from there.*

*Colorado Springs, Co*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Whatever became of Larry Gilbert Johnson's Laodicean Era "Congregation of Yah" after his move to Beebe, Arkansas?*

*Houston, Texas*

The last we heard, this group was close to bankruptcy. But we have not heard anything else for almost a year now. Frankly, we have not made a real effort to follow the antics of the so-called Laodicean Era church. Reports occasionally reach us as to the bizarre rituals practiced by this cult. We have also heard reports of violence associated with their headquarters group, and we have been contacted by representatives of police organizations in two states asking for information on them. Mr. Johnson and his wives have put out newsletters he describes as "war bulletins," but we really do not want to encourage anyone to get on their mailing list.

\*\*\*\*\*

In our March 24, 1980, newsletter we mentioned a church organization called Liberty Ministries International, founded by Tom Williams, a former WCG minister. One of our readers sent us a newsclipping from The Richmond News Leader of May 20, 1981. Here is an excerpt from that article:

A federal grand jury is investigating a company here that allegedly is selling materials that the firm contends will enable taxpayers to get tax breaks by becoming ministers of their own religions.

The company, Liberty Ministries International Inc. with offices at 8629 Mayland Drive. was incorporated in October 1979 by Thomas K. Williams, Linda S. Williams and William M. Morris, according to State Corporation Commission records.

Williams, the president of the company, refused last month to discuss the investigation. He said he believed the company is being harassed by Internal Revenue Service agents but cut off further questioning by saying his attorneys had advised him not to talk to reporters.

Sources with some knowledge of the investigation said authorities have information that the company might have sold as many as 2,000 of its tax "packages."

A Richmond woman said she joined the organization briefly after she learned of it when "somebody said something to somebody else."

She dropped out of the organization last year and was reluctant to discuss details of her involvement. However, the woman, who asked that her name not be used, gave a general description of how two of the tax plans worked.

After making a \$3,000 "donation" to Liberty Ministries, the company provided basic tax advice, financial counseling and books that can be purchased in many bookstores, she said.

In one of the plans, she was told she could get the tax breaks by organizing a church. She would take a "vow of poverty" and turn over all her assets to her "church."

Although she would control the assets as a director of the church and live much as she had before she formed it, she could deduct all her personal expenses from her taxable income because the expenses would go for a religious or charitable purpose.

Another plan was based on a tax law provision that permits taxpayers to contribute up to 50 percent of their income for religious or charitable purposes and deduct that amount from their taxable income.

In this case, the charitable purpose would be operation of the home as a church.

One person who with his wife set up such a church encountered additional problems when IRS agents went to this home in the 7800 block Hermitage Road to question the couple about it.

## LETTERS

*As a former member of the Worldwide Church of God, I am always eager to get your report of some more of the strange antics of Herbert and Stan. I have been giving half-hearted support to Garner Ted and his CGI for the past year. In your latest Report, you stated that GTA had increased his salary up to \$60,000.00. I have just received a membership letter from Ron Dart saying that your story was not even "fragmented" from a partial truth but was "made from whole cloth." Money and the misuse of it was a major reason for me leaving the WCG, so this is a rather important point with me. May I ask you to comment on:*

*(1) Where did you get your information?*

*(2) Do you still stand by your story that it is in fact true?*

*I've found your information to be pretty accurate in the past, yet it's hard for me to believe Ron Dart to be a liar.*

*-Illinois*

Editor: We too would not want to think Ron Dart is lying, nor do we believe he is. Ironically, however, our source of information on GTA's increased income was a CGI representative who insisted the information came directly from Ron Dart!

While no one from CGI has contacted us about a retraction (we have always been willing to run retractions on any statement in the AR shown to be in error), we have been informed that Ron Dart claims GTA's salary is still only \$42,000 per year.

Since we would not want to believe either Mr. Dart or our CGI source is lying, could it be our source did not hear Mr. Dart correctly, or that Mr. Dart did not clearly explain what he meant? Or could it be that GTA now gets a separate income in addition to the regular \$42,000 (plus perquisites) he receives from CGI? Perhaps he gets a second salary from the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association?

We frankly don't know. But it is interesting that the GTA Evangelistic Association is separately incorporated from, and legally independent of, CGI. And the GTA Evangelistic Association has only three trustees: Garner Ted Armstrong, Benny L. Sharp, and Ron Dart. At least that is the information given us by the Texas Secretary of State's office. If any of our readers would like to obtain a copy of the Articles of Incorporation, they should write to the Secretary of State of Texas, P.O. Box 13701, Austin, TX, 78711. Or call directly: (512) 475-3551.

*I was shocked to hear from a friend that he read in a book how Roderick Meredith, the Armstrong minister, believes it's okay to regularly take a teenage daughter's panties off and beat her. This sounds very abnormal. Is this true?*

*-California*

Editor: That allegation is made on p. 208 of *The Truth Shall Make You Free* by John Tuit (\$8 postpaid from The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold Township, NJ 07728). We don't know what Mr. Meredith's position is these days, but for many years he strongly advocated corporal punishment as a child-rearing method.

*I think you should tell your readers about Emissary Publications, run by Des and Karen Griffin [Anderson; she graduated from A.C. in 1965]. They have a mail-order book business, offering some 150 books and tapes on subjects ranging from history and economics to politics and secret societies. Some of the titles offered are reprints of rare historical books.*

*Des Griffin has written two marvelous books outlining world history, explaining who's running the "show" from behind the scenes: Fourth Reich of the Rich is \$6 and Descent into Slavery? is \$7. Both have received Worldwide acclaim. They also offer a free catalog.*

*Here is what Mr. Griffin said in a 1979 letter about his business: "Emissary Publications was formed to meet a need - the need to make people aware of what is really happening on the world scene, and WHY! We don't have an 'axe to grind.' Our sole aim is to give readers the opportunity to see an over-all view of world affairs.... We are uncompromisingly opposed to all those forces of evil - whether they be government agencies, private corporations or foundations, secret societies, Church organizations or deluded individuals - who seek the overthrow of our nation and its absorption into a hybrid socialist blob euphemistically called THE NEW WORLD ORDER. We are dedicated to a diligent, unswerving search for new truth and understanding about the world in which we live."*

*I think Emissary Publications has a lot to offer. The address is P.O. Box 642, South Pasadena, CA 91030. Phone (213) 794-3400.*

*-Texas*

*Have you noted that HWA, white voting himself (in a "ja" type vote approval situation) and Rader another salary raise, plus a \$250,000 bonus for Rader also asked his "dumb sheep" to sacrifice, tighten their belts, and send more money. Apparently, these two gents couldn't make ends meet on their previous salaries and expense accounts.*

*Quest/81's March and April issues, as seen on newsstands, have ads for Easter eggs from Czechoslovakia and for Easter hams, while one may also learn Tendai Buddhism and read about "Yoga and Prayer," as advertised respectively by Tendai Buddhist Information Center and "Christian Classics."*

*-Arizona*

*The members here in the Washington, D.C., church have no idea at all as to what's going on out west in Pasadena and Tucson. Surely the distance involved must have a dampening effect on any "shock waves" caused by the upheavals which keep occurring month after month. Oh, by the way, Sherwin McMichael's wife Beverly still attends services here as of two weeks ago, that I know of*

*so he's still around here in the area doing what I can't tell you.*

*I'd like for all AR readers to know there is a ministry that I am involved with personally that ministers to those who are involved in the cults and the occult. They have tracts and tapes on most of the major cults and occult groups. The WCG has been added to their list recently. One tape available that should be very helpful is entitled "Can a Christian Have a Demon?" Price \$3. To obtain tracts and tapes, or for any other questions you may have, write: Don and Phyl Tobias, Greater Love Ministries, Box 2008, Falls church VA 22042.*

*-Washington, D.C.*

*Because of Armstrongism and religious terrorism that is extant in this day and age, a fellow co-worker recently spent a few months in a mental institution. Please continue your efforts. It promotes mental health.*

*-AR reader*

*My wife and I returned to England after being in Australia for three and one-half years. My wife was still attending the WCG meetings in Australia, though I had left some six years ago, but I'd attend occasionally with my wife. However, since returning to England there's been a great "purge" out there. That is, those not 100 percent behind HWA are to be disfellowshipped. As we're planning to return to Australia soon, it means I certainly won't be able to attend or my wife as she's not a baptized member (though she's happy to attend because of her friends in the WCG) and believes much as I do. Quite a few have been disfellowshipped as a consequence, but I don't know who they are as yet.*

*-Keith & Susan (Delabut) Holmes  
39 Garrison Lane  
Chessington, Surrey, England KT9 2LJ*

Editor: The following is a copy of a letter one *Plain Truth* reader recently sent to Garner Ted Armstrong. We frankly get a kick out of the way the Armstrong's have, for years, made musical tastes a litmus test for measuring righteousness and mental balance. Nevertheless, the subject is one which apparently raises the blood pressure of just about everyone.

Incidentally readers might find it interesting to know that Dwight Armstrong, the WCG's hymn composer and HWA's brother, is an ardent admirer of the compositions of both J. S. Bach and Debussy.

*Dear Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong,*

*We read your comment in The International News, Jan.-Feb. 1981 as reported by Ambassador Report) on HWA's diatribe against John Lennon. Your father's remarks are indeed tasteless and perhaps nothing more than an expression of his boundless jealousy of Lennon's worldwide recognition. To HWA's intellectual rubbish, John Lennon answers in these Lyrics:*

*"He's just a nowhere-man, sitting in a nowhere-land, making lots of nowhere-plans - for nobody." What could be more descriptive of HWA's alienation, frustration, and desperation?*

*That the Beatles' music in orchestral form is enjoyable is well-perceived. However, when you say that the works of Debussy or Bach could not stand a comparison, we trust that such a statement was not inspired by knowledge. We challenge you to specifically name any one of their works unfit for comparison, and explain why.*

*Such a general, untested, or unchallenged remark may be suitable for a sermon in church where no questions are asked. In the real world, in contrast, such a remark only serves to perpetuate a tradition of loose and thoughtless statements that have come to haunt both you and your father in the last several years.*

*-California*

*Keep up the good work. My husband and I are an ex-deacon and deaconess of 20 years in the church who left two years ago. Our two married daughters are still devoted followers, and we worry about their safety, our grand-children's safety, as well as their husbands'. We feel sad when we read your closing letters because we know from experience it's only too true. Normally I don't write "letters to the editor" but just wanted you to know you are appreciated. Keep printing - more often if possible.*

*-Illinois*

*I am still a member of the WCG, but I'm not a "blind sheep." I work at the college (AC), and although I love my job, I see the rank corruption which surrounds this place at all times. I believe it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, "Every organization a simply a shadow of its leader." How true. How true. As long as HWA continues his life of hypocrisy, this place will reflect that lack of character which he maintains. And it's so sad because with such unbelievable facilities, all the wonderful people I've worked with over the years and all the untapped talent I've seen pass this way, we could have a thriving organization if there was a little more*

sanity reflected in the leadership. But of course, we must remember that it's "worldly" to learn how to run an organization properly.

-AC employee

*I have been intending for years to write to you and thank you for the great service you have done in exposing the "great work" of fleeing the flock centered in Pasadena. I was a dedicated member of the WCG for eighteen years and a Local Local Church Elder (not in "our" employ) for the last fourteen of those years. Actually I was a Loco Local Elder (not in "our" good graces) the last five of those years.*

*In the Santa Barbara church both local elders and three of the four deacons quit the church. Of course these voids were filled quickly with new souls willing to sell their own mothers for a little "authority."*

*In the past I have always read my friend's copy of the AR, but when this issue came I just realized how valuable and enjoyable it is. And now I wish to support your efforts hoping you can continue the AR so that the "Plain Truth" may be available to those who care to know it.*

*Also after investing eighteen years of my youth and the usual amount of tithes and offerings in the outfit, I would like to, shall we say, check up on my investment once in a while. I don't feel that a few good laughs is too much to ask in return for that size investment.*

-California

*It is amazing how fast one can be deprogrammed with a bit of the right information. For over a decade my life was almost totally controlled by ideas that came from the mind of a psychotic old man who claimed to be God's only apostle for this era. Preposterous! I still blush to think how ignorant and naive we all were and many still are. Eric Hoffer's book, The True Believer, should be required reading.*

*It is strange to ponder that last year's only apostle and the elect's hope for the future - the one going to save them from the horrors to come - has this year turned out to be public enemy #1. I can now see us as being very scared, docile children being led through a haze of one of the grimmest of fairy tales. (The old troll waiting at the end of the road in the cave with his ruling clothes on.) The whole thing is a nightmare.*

*I received my copy of David Robinson's book. I thought he gave a most complete profile of the intellectual con man.*

-West Virginia

*Thanks for telling me about Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web. I have the book. It is unreal to think one man can do so much harm in the name of Jesus. Because of Armstrong God has never had his hand on this cult and never will.*

-Tennessee

*Thanks again for your report. There is comfort in knowing I'm not alone in this experience. I find the reports and letters helpful after 12 years in the WCG. I decided to read all the "dissident reports," books, etc., to prove to myself and try to understand why so many ministers, educated at Ambassador, and all the others had left what I really believed was the only true church of God.*

*I feel so sick at heart that I was helping to support that system now. As soon as "word got out" that I had the Robinson book and the Ambassador Report (which my sister had sent me), well anyway I might as well have been in Siberia with the plague - my so-called friends of the past years just vanished over night.*

*The only good from this experience has been to be exposed to some of Dr. Martin's teachings and hopefully to direct my thoughts to Christ and not Headquarters and HWA. It's a shame the Tuit book couldn't have had more attention and been published earlier. Anyway thanks and keep up the reporting.*

-Oklahoma

*So glad you are still publishing your newsletter in spite of your financial difficulties. Thanks to your hard work we are now living life as God meant it to be lived in fellowship with all mankind.*

-California

*[News] of former members is always interesting. I, too, have been greatly blessed. From being almost broke when I left I now own and operate a 20-unit apartment complex and have bought my own home. Blessings upon blessings flow to us when we are free*

*from bondage and have God for our partner - free to worship Him in the true spirit to serve mankind with love.*

*-Texas*

*Since leaving the WCG, we haven't been financially stable. It has taken us all this time (approximately one year) to gather our senses. I don't know about anyone else that has left the WCG, but speaking for myself, I have had to go through quite a lot emotionally, mentally, and physically. But I am not sorry because I have a lot more love, a lot more understanding, and a lot more faith. I am sorry for those who are struggling in and out of the WCG and will do anything I can to help.*

*-California*

#### LATE NEWS

July 19: Just as we were about to finish typing this newsletter, we learned that HWA and GTA, through a new exchange of letters, have evidently ironed out most of their personal differences. A number of public statements in sermons and articles will now be made alternately by the two to prepare their followers for the planned reunion of their two church organizations.

Herbert Armstrong is already saying that some of the accusations leveled against Ted in the last three years were false. Of course, as in past years, HWA is not admitting he lied but is claiming he was led astray by lieutenants who gave him false information about Ted. One guess as to who HWA's new fall guy will turn out to be.

\*\*\*\*\*

One final note. Recent increases in printing costs, postage, etc., combined with an increased number of subscription requests and a drop in contributions, have put the AR in a bit of a squeeze. We had been planning to skip our third quarter issue and simply put out one in December. However, if events continue to develop in the above story, we will try to put out at least a short newsletter in September.

Our thanks to those of you who have assisted us financially and to those who have sent us news clippings and other information for use in the Report. Your assistance does make this publication possible.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola.  
Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR17\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

October 22, 1981

Dear Friends:

This third quarter *Ambassador Report* was to have come out in late September. But as in the past, we have simply been unable to get our newsletter out on time. Nevertheless, at Ambassador College a great deal has been happening which, we believe, you'll want to know about. Here's the latest.

### GTA STRIKES OUT

In our last newsletter we mentioned how Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) was attempting to have Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) brought back into the WCG fold. Just as we were going to press with that issue of the *Report*, the *Worldwide News* (July 13, 1981) was being distributed to WCG members. It contained a remarkably uncharacteristic article by Herbert Armstrong entitled "I Confess Wrong - Can You?"

In that article HWA actually admitted making numerous errors regarding the disfellowshipping of his son Garner Ted in 1978. Wrote HWA:

"When I find I have sinned, I confess that to God, not to people. But when there comes to my attention an unintended error - a mistake - which has involved people, then I must admit that error and correct it before the people involved.

"That has happened in the case of my disfellowshipment letter to my son, Garner Ted Armstrong."

That article, plus numerous pro-Ted comments by HWA in sermons, left GTA confident of a triumphant return to the WCG in the near future. Ted actually began telling friends that he would be back in the WCG within a few weeks. And Stan Rader - to the shock of many WCG members - even commented on one radio talk show that HWA and GTA were already in contact with each other. Other sources have also confirmed this.

Their contact even involved a top-secret letter sent this summer by GTA to his father who was temporarily staying at Orr, Minnesota. The letter contained statements which were to have been used by HWA to convince the WCG membership that Ted had indeed repented (again). One of those quotable quotes said in effect, "If I had it all to do over again, Dad, I wouldn't have left."

But the reconciliation was still not to be. For although HWA was making it quite clear that he wanted Ted back, those around HWA made it quite clear they did not.

While in times past HWA could simply express his will and have total agreement from his subordinates, this is apparently no longer the case - at least in regard to the GTA matter. HWA has been surprised to discover that, his desires notwithstanding, no one else in the church's hierarchy wants to see Ted return. No one!

Of the men now on the "Advisory Council of Elders" as of the Aug. 10 Worldwide News (twelve: Dibar Apartian, Dean Blackwell, Robert Fahey, Ellis LaRavia, Raymond McNair, Leroy Neff, Joe Tkach, Herman Hoeh, Roderick Meredith, Norman Smith, Harold Jackson, and Leon Walker, plus Ralph Helge, legal advisor), there is not one really in favor of seeing Ted return. In fact, with the exception of HWA, we have not been able to find even one minister in the entire WCG who is all that interested in having Ted return. A number, have even indicated that they would resign from the ministry should Ted be reinstated.

Perhaps had Ted been more discreet in his approach to the situation, his return could have been implemented. But he seems to have played into the hands of his opponents. For one thing, before a reconciliation to HWA was even made official, Ted was telling some how he was going to fire and retire a number of "enemies" upon his return. The "hit list" included numerous GTA critics such as Roderick Meredith and Gerald Waterhouse and even some old friends such as Leslie McCullough. Then, Ted also commented to a few that on his return he - and not his father- would be in charge of things.

Those statements found their way back to the Council of Elders who were only too happy to relay them to HWA. HWA, in turn, has again changed his mind about Ted and is saying it is obvious now that his son has not yet really repented.

A recent meeting in Big Sandy between HWA and Ted's son Mark yielded no positive results, and now both HWA and GTA are saying a reconciliation is not possible. As HWA gets older, the Council of Elders will continue to grow in influence. Should HWA die or become incapacitated, it is legally empowered to choose his successor. In all likelihood that will be Roderick C. Meredith.

### GTA STARTS NEW BUSINESS

With hope for a reconciliation with his father fading, Garner Ted Armstrong is faced with the challenge of trying to develop his organization during a time when inflation and recession fears are causing many nonprofit organizations real financial headaches. It is therefore not surprising that GTA is putting greater emphasis on mandatory tithing - especially since many of his members have done Bible research and concluded that

Christians are not required by God to tithe. For instance, the July issue of *The International News* contained a huge article by Ted Armstrong on the subject of tithing. Here's one quote (p. 11, emphasis theirs):

"The... Church of God reconfirms and reemphasizes its adherence to the basic principle of tithing as established and exemplified in God's Word. The Church teaches the giving of tithes because it is the law of God. Consequently, the withholding of one's tithes, which violates that law, IS A SIN."

But tithe payments are not GTA's only revenue source. We noticed, for instance, that the same issue of *The International News* had an advertisement offering video cassette tapes of GTA programs for \$25 each and an eight-part audio cassette album for "the low price of \$29.95." The ad was placed by The Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association, which readers will recall is separately incorporated from the Church of God, International.

Then on page 5 of the same publication there appeared an almost full-page ad announcing "*Peter's Story*," a novel by Garner Ted Armstrong. You can order that one for \$12.95 plus \$1.50 postage.

The ad said: "*Peter's Story* is a novelization of the big fisherman's tempestuous years with Jesus, faithful to the original text, yet with sufficient additional material that it should be viewed more as a novel than a history. "

The ad for the book was placed by Emerald Enterprises, Tyler, Texas. According to the fictitious names records of the Smith County courthouse in Texas, Emerald Enterprises is owned by Garner Ted Armstrong.

### HWA STILL GOING STRONG

While GTA struggles to keep his organization afloat by selling novels and video tapes of himself, his father continues to amaze both his followers and his critics by being incredibly active at age 89. Recent issues of *The Worldwide News* show Herbert jetting with his entourage (usually includes his nurse Ruth Nestor and his executive assistant Bob Fahey) to speak before large congregations in Canada, Australia, Britain, Germany, and all across the U.S.

Some have wondered if HWA does not perhaps view the current string of speaking engagements as a kind of farewell tour. During his commencement address to the graduating seniors in Pasadena this year, he actually commented that it might be his last commencement address. Others feel the effort is being made in order to hold together a church that has been badly hurt by the infighting of the last decade.

While HWA does continue to amaze just about everyone, we have noticed that he is not changing his "winning game" marketing methods. Recent co-worker letters sound almost like reruns of those from 20 years ago. (Sometimes they are.) Notice, for instance, this excerpt from his July 14 co-worker letter (emphasis his):

"As of the first of this month the income financially for the Work in the U.S. was up some 22 percent - growing once again, after a 12-year drop, toward a 30 percent increase. But in the last 30 days - since we entered the summer months - there has been a significant DROP. Now the month to date shows an increase of only 13.5 percent, and the past five or six weeks has brought the year-to-date increase down to 18.7 percent. THAT IS ALARMING!

"We have been adding very powerful and leading TV stations, and plan to add more. BUT UNLESS OUR BRETHREN WILL SACRIFICE FURTHER, THAT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE. We were, 30 days ago, in the best financial condition ever in the Work. Right now as I write, the situation is ALARMING! I have to ask you to PRAY earnestly, and to sacrifice for the most important operation and activity on earth!"

### STANLEY RADER UPDATE

The July 20 *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* contained this item in Jeff Silverman's page 2 column:

"RADER OF THE LOST INFLUENCE. Things are moving along quite cozily between state Attorney General George Deukmejian and Stanley Rader. (You know Stan. He's the Worldwide Church of God's Herbert Armstrong's right hand. He's also suing all the folks behind "Raiders of the Lost Ark" for zillions.) Well. Though Stanley's officially stepped down from his church honchoship, he just told KMPC's Mr. Tough Guy Chuck Ashman he still carries home \$300,000 a year as 1) exec veep of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation and 2) personal adviser to The House of Herb. And that's not even The Fun Part. *This is*: Two years ago, Deukemjian and Rader were hooked in the throes of legal woes over the alleged misappropriation of \$70 million of church funds for personal use. The suit disappeared when a new state law prohibiting the attorney general from suing church leaders was passed. Now brace. Rader told Ashman he'll back The Duke's Republican bid for the governorship with Major Funds. Says Rader, 'Deukmejian's a man of integrity and common sense. He dropped the lawsuit against us.' Oh."

Stanley Rader has riot just "stepped dam from his church honchoship." He's been pushed off. Herbert Armstrong has been privately bragging to associates that Stanley has been "effectively contained." On Sept. 15, the *Pasadena Star-News* reported:

"Stanley R. Rader ... has been removed from ministerial functions in the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God, and no longer represents the church in any official function.... If he is no longer a minister, Rader said he has not been informed. In any case, the position was one of rank only, he said, and did not entail his performing ministerial functions. 'Not to my knowledge am I no longer a minister,' Rader said. 'I have been advised that I am not an evangelist, which is a matter of rank rather than function.'"

Whatever way Rader wants to describe it, he is no longer ordained. Rader does continue to receive a salary of about \$200,000 per year (plus perqs) from the church. Supposedly this is for his "consulting" services. However, Ellis LaRavia, who has taken over many of Rader's AICF duties, told the *Star-News* that Rader does very little consulting. "It is very insignificant at this point," said LaRavia. Also, the termination point of Rader's contract has been cut back to 1987. It originally extended to the year 2003.

Rader has not been officially disfellowshipped, but some insiders are saying there has been a "de facto" disfellowshipping. Herbert Armstrong has been telling ministers that Rader is not really converted and that they should not have dealings with him. Not only that, virtually all of Stan's closest associates in the church have been disfellowshipped. That includes Henry Cornwall, Jack Bicket, Joe Kitora, John Kineston, and Jack Kessler.

None of those disfellowshipped seem very pleased by the action. And in fact, like thousands of others improperly and unfairly put out of the church in the last decade, they too may have good reason to believe they are being railroaded. Lawyer/CPA Jack Kessler and accountant Henry Cornwall have been particularly upset by their banishment and have indicated they don't intend to take the abuse lying down. We would not be surprised to see Stanley Rader come to their legal assistance.

The Sept. 15 *Star-News* article had this interesting conclusion:

"Rader said there is no truth to claims that he was removed because he had proposed that Armstrong, now 89-years-old, be placed in an institution. Rader said, however, that he had advised Armstrong to change his operations to prevent anyone from placing the church under a conservatorship because of his condition.

"A new state law, Rader said, strengthened the ability of members of the board of directors, or even relatives, to put Armstrong's operations under conservatorship. 'They all might have standing over his person,' Rader said.

"Armstrong refused his advice, Rader said. Armstrong has moved from his Tucson home to one in Pasadena. His wife Ramona remains in Tucson."

#### RADER TO CLEAN UP HOLLYWOOD?

While Stanley Rader does have his critics and there are perhaps a number of somewhat negative observations that can be made about him, there is one positive comment about Stanley that can be made without fear of contradiction - he never ceases to entertain.

Take, for instance, the Aug. 25 issue of *The Hollywood Reporter*. For those readers who are not familiar with it, *The Hollywood Reporter* is a slick daily trade publication, serving the needs of the Hollywood movie industry. Like *Daily Variety*, its readers are mostly film distributors, movie producers, directors and actors.

A typical issue has articles dealing with ticket sales figures on new hit movies, costs of movies now in production, and Hollywood gossip columns. A large percentage of its advertising is placed by talent agencies trying to get parts for new talent. For instance, a typical ad will feature a picture of a sexy starlet with her name and the name of her agent. But in the Aug. 25 issue of *The Hollywood Reporter* something new was seen. That issue had a full-page ad containing a photo of Stanley Rader at a microphone. The accompanying text simply read "Stanley R. Rader of The Ark of the Covenant."

No wonder some readers were shocked. What did it mean? Was Stanley trying to get a

movie role? Was he trying to convert Hollywood? Was he claiming to be Yahveh? We still don't know, but we'll be the first to admit it - Stanley *is* entertaining.

Another example: On Aug. 13 Stan appeared on NBC's "Tommorw" show with Tom Snyder (the show that GTA cancelled out on). It was another remarkable performance for Stan Rader. Here are a few excerpts from the interview which followed a puppet show act:

RADER: [talking about Robert Kuhn and himself] In 1968 we began to dig in Jerusalem and from that time forward, Kuhn and I knew that eventually there would be a very good chance that we would discover the Ark of the Covenant. And by 1976, he decided that it might be a good idea to anticipate that by writing a screenplay or a screen treatment. I encouraged him to do so. We were very, very close....

SNYDER: Who is Stanley Rader? Is he a man who is concerned about ecumenism and the preachings of the Lord? At one time you were described as the heir apparent to Herbert Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God. Now Stanley Rader is involved in a lawsuit involving a major motion picture which has grossed over \$100 million so far. Who is Stanley Rader? Is he jumping from one thing to another, trying to attach his name to get great controversy and possibly achieve a profit for himself? Is he a man who is avenging the word of God? Who is Stanley Rader?

RADER: Very, very good question.

SNYDER: It's an excellent question, believe me.

RADER: And I was afraid you were going to ask me that.

SNYDER: Yeah.

RADER: Uh, basically, I'm the same person I was when we met three years ago.

SNYDER: Well that could go either way you know.

RADER: I'm a member of the church. I'm a minister.... [Snyder, appearing somewhat suspicious, then questioned Rader on his "motivation in life." Rader talked of starting a nonprofit organization to restore the image of the Ark, supposedly cheapened by movie producer Lucas and company. But when pressed further by Snyder, Rader admitted he did want to make money from the lawsuit.)

SNYDER: Are you more interested in seeing legal and moral justice done or making some money on this? I have problems finding your motivations Stanley - only because of the past.

RADER: Well, one's motivations can always be mixed. I naturally want to recover what's ours. I also would like to see that the industry in Hollywood is cleaned up. There's a lot going on in Hollywood that you know and I know goes on, that I am now in a position - because of the lawsuit - to focus on. And if I can protect other writers who have been in essence ripped-off by the system, I will have accomplished something. I won't change the whole system any more than Ralph Nader, when he

took on General Motors, was able to change everything in the automobile industry, but we all know that it's different today than it was then...."

The discussion continued on in a similar fashion until Snyder had to break for a commerial. He tried to make a few transitional comments but became tougue-tied as the words just wouldn't come out right. Chuckling, he turned to Rader and said: "You nuke me crazy Stanley."

### ROBINSON SUIT SETTLED

Since the appearance of David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* (\$10, from John Haddem Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135), many of you have written to us about how shocking it was to discover what Herbert Armstrong's private life is really like. As many of you are aware, Herbert Armstrong never sued David Robinson over the book, nor did any other Armstrong family members sue. However, as we reported in past newsletters, Robinson was burdened by a noisome suit brought, with Armstrong's approval, by two Armstrong employees, Henry Cornwall and Sherwin McMichael (both now disfellowshipped).

Now we are very pleased to announce that that legal battle has finally cone to a close. Here is Mr. Robinson's letter to us explaining what happened:

"For those interested in our problem with Herbert Armstrong here in Tulsa I am pleased to report that Worldwide got out its checkbook about a month ago and settled. And yes, in court the plaintiffs finally had to admit the church was behind the suit! Their check was for \$25,000. One would have to conclude that God was not with them here in Tulsa. He did not want them trampling all over the truth and the basic rights of others in order to cover their sins, which are as scarlet! What Herbert Armstrong did in secret was shouted from the housetops. Also, I am sure, based on what is now happening, that there will be much, much more. The stench is so great that there simply has to be another, and much bigger, explosion.

"I would also like to say that those who helped us with our legal expenses really saved the day and enabled us to continue until Herbert Armstrong had enough. Almost \$8,000 came in from several hundred very helpful people, for which we are very thankful. When these two sums were combined, the total just barely paid our legal expenses. Good lawyers come high, but poor lawyers come even higher. I had both.

"Approximately 6,000 copies of *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* have gone out to interested people, and when the income and expenses are tallied too they just about balance out. (Many copies were sold wholesale to stores, and several hundred were sent free in special cases.) So, while the operation didn't end up costing us anything except much time and effort, it didn't make us anything either. Not that we expected it to. But copies were sent to governments, ambassadors, and influential people all over the world. Hundreds of libraries now stock this vital book. We took the time and money to fully inform the media powers that be, both by letter and by phone. They now know. Of course, the *Ambassador Report* has done so much for so many years to furnish the necessary, the very necessary, information to those who should know. I myself am really a late comer onto the field, but because of this effort, the world now knows the real Herbert Armstrong, and he can no longer hide behind his false image.

"The truth is that this man is so profligate, so practiced a liar, so evil that he can only be a direct servant of Satan the devil. He operates in the name of God to serve his own wicked self, just as he took his own teenage daughter and abused her for 10 years, in the name of God! Many of his ministers know this and privately say so. He has brought great shame on the name of God and on true religion."

### JOHN TUIT CONTINUES CRUSADE

With WCG members soon to converge on the Cape Cod area of Massachusetts for the Feast of Tabernacles, WOCB radio personality Dave Damkoehler invited WCG minister Jim Franks to appear on his radio talk show. Franks accepted, but when he was told that author John Tuit would also appear, he cancelled out saying, "I won't even be in the same room with Tuit!"

Damkoehler then called WCG headquarters in Pasadena asking if they could provide a replacement for Franks or even an on-the-air telephone caller to respond to Tuit's radio comments. The WCG declined the offer.

On Oct. 12, Tuit showed up at the station only to discover that Damkoehler had fielded five hours worth of phone calls from local businessmen trying to get the station to cancel the Tuit interview. It seem that minister Franks had gone to certain leaders of the local business community and threatened to keep the WCG out of the Cape Cod area the following year if WOCB gave Tuit any air time.

Damkoehler politely ignored the advice given by the callers and went ahead with the Tuit interview. Afterward, Tuit went over to the auditorium where the WCG was making ready for the upcoming Feast services and left a copy of his book for Franks. It was inscribed, "To Jim Franks - who should not have feared to meet me face to face."

It is no secret that Tuit has been critical of many of the organizational and business practices of the WCG. But ironically, Tuit does believe in many of the fundamental doctrines of the WCG. A glowing review in the Sept. 1981 issue of *The Bible Advocate* made mention of this very fact. Yet while Tuit feels a strong affinity for both the WCG's doctrines and its people, its ministry will simply not give him the time of day. Nor will they tolerate members who read his book. Yet some are reading it.

John Tuit called us recently and said he is continuing to actively promote his Armstrong expose *The Truth shall Make You Free* (\$8 per copy from The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold, NJ 07728). His promotional efforts include mailing out flyers to thousands of WCG members describing his book's contents in detail.

Mr. Tuit told us that he is getting a fairly good response from flyers mailed to church members. If you have friends in the WCG that you would like to help, here is an excellent opportunity. Simply type or print clearly their names and addresses on a piece of paper and mail your list to John Tuit at the above address. He said he will mail every individual a flyer as soon as possible.

### BREAKING CONTINUES

Over the years we have heard of hundreds of families broken up due to the erroneous teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong. Then some years ago when the WCG finally changed its so-called "divorce and remarriage" doctrine, we assumed the WCG ministry would stop meddling in marriages and discontinue the practice of encouraging some individuals to leave their spouses. Unfortunately, we were mistaken.

During the last few months we have discovered that some WCG ministers are indeed at it again. Now, however, a previous marriage is not the excuse used for breaking up homes. Lack of faith in Herbert Armstrong seem to be the grounds some ministers are using to justify the encouragement of divorce. The following letter is typical:

"My story is as sad as any you might have heard of. My wife of 20 years has divorced me because I am not a WCG member and do not think the world will end in 1982 or 1989. A member since 1965, she had said she would give it [the WCG] up if the world did not end by 1973, as was so widely indicated back in those days. But of course when 1974 rolled around HWA said: 'I never said that.' You know the story better than I.

"My problem is I have daughters (18, 16 and 11) and a 13-year-old son who believe in the WCG and HWA simply because I allowed their mother to take them with her to church. As you also know, they simply will not read Robinson's or Tuit's books or your AR because they are forbidden to do so. I am searching for some soft-sell information that will plant the seed of desire to search for the truth. So if you know of anything and have the time to do so, please inform me of it.

"I have hopes of someday getting my wife back and pray that she might one day see the truth too. HWA can't live forever, and maybe if GTA does come back, he'll get things back on his liberal track and off HWA's new tightening-up policy. May the true God in heaven watch over us and guide us. I need some help so please do help if you can. Keep the Report coming, even if you must shorten the pages."

AR Reader

While all WCG ministers are not guilty in this regard, there are clearly a number of them around the U.S. who, in their zeal to serve Herbert Armstrong, have adopted policies that even Herbert himself might not condone. This has happened because Herbert - distrusting those around him - is attempting to administer the field ministry without the aid of the kind of administrative hierarchy the church has had in times past.

HWA's current church management theory is that all ministers should be responsible directly to him, without the benefit of intermediaries (not unlike the New Testament doctrine of no intermediaries between the spirit-led Christian and Christ - I Tim. 2:5). But while this new concept of human government espoused by HWA (and contrary to the general idea found in Ex. 18:13-26) sounds good to some, from a human organizational point of view it has been a dismal failure.

Some WCG ministers are now saying that, while the past administrations of Rod Meredith, Wayne Cole, and David Antion may have had their shortcomings, there was at least a national church policy on most administrative problems and a proper chain of

administrative authority to turn to to resolve questions of policy.

Now, however, there is not even that. At age 89, HWA is obviously not capable of handling even a handful of the many problems besetting the field ministry. With no adequate organizational structure or written policy to turn to for guidance, many ministers are simply "doing their own thing."

In some cases the results of that independence have not been all that bad, but in a number of situations, especially where the local yokel is willing even to break up homes in an effort to assert his own will, the results have been disastrous.

We regularly receive letters from individuals asking for advice on how to save a marriage being interferred with by the WCG. Unfortunately, while we want to help and while we do want to do all we can to assist, we are not experts in solving this kind of problem. We are not professional marriage counselors. Who then should such individuals turn to?

First of all, of course, there are professional marriage counselors that may be of assistance. Your phone book probably lists a few. Then, if a minister is indeed guilty of breaking up the home, there may be grounds for an alienation of affection lawsuit, and the services of a good lawyer may prove necessary. Again, check your phone book.

But while both of these may prove of some use, there may still be a major problem in getting proper advice. Unless they have had extensive dealings with the WCG in the past, many professionals will not be able to give the kind of advice that will bring satisfactory results in reasonable time.

With that in mind, it might be wise for those in this predicament to contact some of the WCG ministers that have resigned in the last few years. Their knowledge of church doctrine, church policies, and personalities may prove invaluable. We've heard of a number of individuals who were able to save their marriages through the help given by such men as Al Carrozzo, (P.O. Box 129, Vacaville, CA 95688), Howard Clark (Rt. 1, Box 230B, Oroville, CA 95965), and David Robinson (see p. 5).

Another former WCG minister who may be able to help is David Antion. Mr. Antion is related by marriage to the Armstrong family and was formerly a top WCG official, so he knows both the church's doctrines and its personalities. He also has an (accredited) master's degree in marriage counseling, is close to obtaining his doctorate in educational psychology from USC, and is licensed by the state of California as a marriage counselor. He can be contacted by writing to: David Antion, 311 Waverly Dr., Pasadena, CA 91105.

### CALL THAT A SURVEY?

The form letter from Ambassador College's David Albert began nicely enough:

"We would like to know more about you and your fellow Ambassador College graduates! For sometime now the faculty and administration have wanted more information about Ambassador College graduates, such as how they fare in world

vocations and careers after graduation. What are they doing for a living? What are they earning? And what are they doing in their local congregations by way of service to the Church?

"The enclosed, strictly anonymous, one-page questionnaire has been carefully designed to give us the answers to those questions - and to be as simple and easy for you to fill out as possible. And, the answers to those questions will help us to build an even better Ambassador College for the future."

The accompanying small questionnaire asked the usual demographic-type questions regarding age, sex, marital status, education level, occupation, yearly income, etc. The survey then went on to ask a number of questions designed to rate various Ambassador College factors - academic experience, vocational training, etc. - with regard to their value to the individual after graduation.

While the survey questions could have been improved a bit, overall we thought the idea of doing such a survey was very commendable. After all, what better way to improve Ambassador College than to ask its graduates to give their reflections and suggestions? A very meritorious idea indeed, we thought. Until, that is, we discovered the survey was not sent to all Ambassador College graduates, but only to those still in the good graces of Herbert W. Armstrong!

For instance, not one of the publishers of *Ambassador Report* received the survey questionnaire. Not that that matters, because our opinions are made quite available in our newsletters, which we know, for a fact, are read by virtually every Ambassador College administrator, WCG evangelist, and *Plain Truth* editor. But scores of other alumni say they too did not receive the survey questionnaire.

Now we ask: Is this any way to conduct an objective poll? What if president Ronald Reagan were to conduct a survey of Americans to ascertain his degree of support in the United States, but in doing so excluded all Democrats from the survey? Would that be fair? Would that be intelligent? Or would his results be highly biased?

Dave Albert's own letter says:

"To be most effective and accurate, we need a very high percentage of responses to this survey, so please do give us your responses as soon as possible."

We'd like to ask Dave Albert: Did you really want to see an "effective and accurate" survey? Or, come June are *Plain Truth* readers going to be treated again to the annual Ambassador College recruitment article, this time complete with the results from the latest "scientific survey" of satisfied Ambassador College graduates?

If that will be the case, we hope you'll pardon our skepticism when we read that 97 percent of all AC graduates praise their AC degrees, 98 percent are thrilled with their career opportunities, 99 percent are experiencing "real abundant living," and only one alumni married couple ever got divorced ("because they didn't follow Mr. Armstrong's advice - but soon they way be reconciled anyway").

## HWA ON EDUCATION

Every so often we come across a statement in WCG literature that clearly reflects that organization's nature. On page one of the Aug. 10, 1981, issue of *The Worldwide News*, we came across an article by Robert E. Fahey concerning Herbert Armstrong's recent trip to Britain. In describing HWA's address to a group of high-school-aged youngsters at the church's SEP summer camp, Fahey wrote:

"He said he could not recommend the universities of this world. The main thing wrong in the world today is education. The institutions of higher learning are teaching people the wrong way.

"He said man needs three kinds of knowledge; how to deal with things, how to deal with people and how to relate to God. The schools can teach how to deal with things - that is fine. But universities attempt to teach how to deal with people - psychology is an example. But they know nothing of the spirit in man and how attitudes are formed. Therefore their knowledge is wrong.

"He added that we had men who have finished Ambassador, understood God's Word, and then went to these outside universities. And they have gone off - possibly for all eternity. He said he could not recommend law, medicine, and the social sciences."

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Robert Shnayerson, never a WCG member, but formerly the editor of *Quest* magazine, is now the editor and publisher of a new magazine called *Technology*, "The Magazine of Applied Science." Subscription information can be had by writing to: Technology, 2200 Central Avenue, Boulder, CO 80301.

Jim Doak, former WCG minister, recently wrote that he and his wife are now living in Tulsa and doing well. One business venture he is involved in is marketing Pro-Vita Corp. nutritional products. He mentioned that, for a \$5 processing fee, he will send an application form and a packet of information to anyone interested in starting a nutrition products distribution business. His address is: J & B Christian Enterprises, P.O.Box 9737, Tulsa, OK 74107.

Jack Martin, formerly an Ambassador College and AICF executive, is now the president and publisher of *Texas Business* magazine, a leading business journal based in Dallas. Jack was recently surprised by a phone call from WCG evangelist Frank Brown, the minister who had disfellowshipped him from the WCG. Ironically, though Jack had not heard from him for some time, Evangelist Brown wanted to know if Jack might have a job opening in the near future.

Harry Eisenberg - one-time PT and GN writer, author of several TV scripts for the Garner Ted Armstrong program, and the person who did the shocking biblical research in 1973 that disproved the WCG's tithing doctrine, causing repercussions throughout the church - spent two weeks in the Pasadena area in August. Now residing near Bethlehem, Israel, he flew out to Los Angeles to discuss with Twentieth-Century Fox executives a film script he had recently written and submitted to them. In Israel now Harry is testing his

entrepreneurial abilities by setting up his own business while doing free-lance writing. While engaged in these activities, he was one of a number of Israelis who founded Atzma'ut, a new political movement for an economically independent Israel. The movement feels Israel should institute a "free enterprise system with government restrictions reduced to a minimum. " Atzma'ut also calls for Israel to adopt a "bill of rights... to guarantee and protect the rights and freedom of the individual from arbitrary government action."

## NEW GROUPS AND GROUPS NEW TO US

It's too bad religious organizations in general aren't completely open with their financial expenditures. Wycliffe Translators (translate the Bible into small, tribal languages) recently published their expenditures, showing a full 80 percent went to the targeted work of translation and publishing. Interestingly, the founder insists on a democratic organization at meetings and in administration. He mostly sits and listens. (By the way, "governments" is the seventh-listed gift of the Holy Spirit noted by Paul; if he listed the gifts in order of importance, government is not the most important thing on God's mind, as Mr. Armstrong has claimed; at least within the church.)

AR Reader, Oregon

Editor: The address for the nondenominational Wycliffe Bible Translators is Huntington Beach, CA 92648.

Seventh Day Singles Association  
8460 Marsh Road  
Algonac, MI 48001

Robert E. Erickson Ministries  
7882 16th Street, #A  
Westminster, CA 92683

\*\*\*\*\*

General Council of the Churches  
of God, 7th Day  
302 E. Gruber Ave.  
Meridian, Idaho 83642  
208-888-3380

The British Israel World Federation  
2nd Floor, Toga House  
117 York Street  
Sydney, Australia 2000

\*\*\*\*\*

New Beginnings  
P.O. Box 228  
Waynesville, NC 28786

The Catholic Church of God  
"Teaching New Testament Judaism"  
810 E. Walnut  
Pasadena, CA 91101

\*\*\*\*\*

New Life  
Rt 1, Box 424  
Henryetta, OK 74437

The Christian Church of God  
1008 W. 7th Street  
Amarillo, TX 79101  
806-372-2101

## *Letters*

*All friends in Britain are welcome to read current and past issues of Ambassador Report and other literature relating to recent incredible events in the Worldwide Church and at Ambassador College. Please contact: R.M. Kachere, 50 Rosemary Ave., London, England N.3.*

*-England*

*I can always count on your report to bring moments of hilarity into my otherwise dull and monotonous life. Where else could I read about the formation of yet another church of God? What next? The Apocalyptic Last-Chance-Ever Universal Free Life Unified Church of God in Mission, Kansas, perhaps? Believing, of course, in all tenets of the WCG, but without guidance from the Great Helmsman, HWA, now in discredit.*

*And then there is the question of GTA's income. Is it the \$42,000 of record (with perqs) or the whispered \$60,000? And would the extra \$18,000 grant him a greater, or lesser, amount of "the spirit?" The extra \$78,000 would of course flow from GTA's humble flock.*

*To top it off, there's a further discussion of musical taste in the WCG, past and present. Come on folks, it's only logical that GTA would disdain Bach and Debussy. What else can he expected from someone the highlight of whose musical life was to croon (if that is the proper word) on the "Hee Haw" television show?*

*And finally, Gerald Waterhouse. Can he still be sputtering forth on the significance of the name "Armstrong, " the great city of Petra, and the numbers 7, 21, 19 and 666? I'll bet*

*the members still bring air cushions to his sermons, or if they forget, will make sure they do for the next sermon.*

*-New Jersey*

Editor: Concerning Waterhouse, yes, he's still at it. And your cushion suggestion is a very good one. Some of Gerald's most recent sermons have clocked in at 4½-hours duration. A popular theme espoused by him these days is that GTA is still Joshua in prophecy but that he can't return to the WCG yet for "he is still wearing filthy garments."

*Thanks so much for the last Report. Our minister at Worldwide is now making Rader the fall guy for all church ills. He says it takes years to prove one's conversion and HWA knew all along Stan was never converted, but HWA did it [baptized him] for the church's sake.*

*After reading the Report we asked him questions he couldn't answer. He just got mad and said we were in a bad attitude. There are still people in Worldwide who think Rader is a "good" guy. We went along with GTA for a while but found him up to old tricks. After 20 years in WCG, we're sticking around to see what happens next, so please don't use my name in your publication. If it wasn't for the AR we wouldn't know anything. Thanks for taking a stand for the truth. By the way, HWA at an Ozark ministerial meeting said he never knew a converted Jew.*

*-Kansas*

Editor. Does that also include Jesus Christ?

*Your latest issue mentioned Larry Johnson and the congregation of Yah. Since I have been in contact with them since late 1977, I thought you would be interested in knowing that they are still intact in Phoenix, AZ. They are just barely hanging on but are continuing their research in various doctrinal and biblical areas. I have tried to assist them in their research by sending various newspapers, books, special reports and publications, etc. There are only the four adults and the children.*

*I have enclosed the last newsletter (#25) for your information. You haven't heard from them for two reasons; lack of money and the poor health of Mr. Johnson. I personally am not aware of any bizarre rituals practiced by them, though I am a fair distance from their location. I would be interested in any information you have about them. The reports of violence were explained in newsletter #23 as being caused by the KKK and witchcraft groups being near their location.*

*As far as I know, the police in Arkansas have realized who was really behind it. I can find only one newsletter (# 23) described as a "War Bulletin, " That was based on the lot or plummet which has since proved to be not 100 percent accurate yet. That newsletter did say "if" the lot is true then Mr. Johnson, as a witness, would have started his mission Sept. 23, 1979. The enclosed newsletter #25 should give you a good idea of what he has been doing and his plans for the future. I think you will find several areas where you will*

*agree with him. Take special note of the addresses at the end. Your comments about Mr. Johnson were all very negative, which is not surprising since I don't believe you have ever tried to get Mr. Johnson's viewpoints. In the interest of fairness, would you take this into consideration.*

*-Canada*

Editor: Thank you for telling us about Mr. Johnson's latest activities. It is appreciated. However, based on what we've read in some of his mailouts, what we have been told by some who've left his group and especially what we have observed in face-to-face encounters with "Witness" Johnson, we stand by what we've written.

You seem to feel that our use of the word "bizarre" is inappropriate. Yet look carefully at the contents of the newsletter you sent us (published 8/11/80) by Johnson's Congregation of Yah - now apparently named L.I.B.R.A. or the Laodicean Biblical Research Association. On page two we found the following:

"We raise guinea pigs, and several of them represent people or groups that we and Yahveh have dealt with over the last several years. What happens to these guinea pigs individually we feel indicates prophetically the fate of the individual or group they represent. Go ahead and laugh; you would no doubt have laughed at Isaiah lying naked on his side building toy dirt forts and calling them the siege of Jerusalem. At any rate, we took three adult males representing Tom Drake-Kuhn, Nagele-Rader and Andy Korsun-the WCG ministry to try and sell them when we went down to Beebe or Little Rock recently. The temperature was about 109 degrees and even though the Blazer was air- conditioned (rather poorly), the Drake guinea pig dropped dead of heat prostration before an hour was up. As I held the dead guinea pig I was shocked to see the other two were also in bad shape. We watched in helpless horror as the Rader pig went through convulsion after convulsion before dying. We finally arrived at my mother's house and managed to keep the third animal alive. However, this animal, representing the WCG ministry, had weakened its heart and died the next day from the shock of the ordeal. Like I said, if I'm not a real prophet...."

Maybe we should not refer to this type of practice as "bizarre," because it is really not all that unique. In fact, according to many anthropologists this type of divination has been practiced by thousands of witch doctors and medicine men in primitive tribes around the globe for thousands of years. Sir James Frazer labeled this type of sorcery Homoeopathic Magic. A very thorough explanation of it (and the falacious reasoning upon which it is based) can be found in chapter three of his classic work, *The Golden Bough*.

*We had been members of this cult for 10 years and are out about three years now. We were warned about the consequences of leaving - that everything goes downhill when you leave the WCG- but since then my husband has received a promotion at work, we have a nice checking account, our home is paid off, we have a brand new car paid off and numerous other items of furniture that we needed or wanted ("material things").*

*We are more content now that we are not ruled by man, but God himself. Religion truly is slavery. We also had a reunion, much needed, with his brother - a much needed trip which we could not afford while in the WCG.*

-Wisconsin

*One matter saddens me deeply. I often read success stories of individuals who have broken free from the WCG and then found themselves able to employ their creative abilities in rebuilding their lives. You continue to cite cases where this is true. However I wonder if it occurs to you that there may be numerous ex-WCG converts whose experience in the church was such that they are scarred for life, and this in ways which prevent them from finding the success that others have found. I would not like you to think that I regret reading success stories, out of an envious heart or other such negative attitude. It is simply that when an experience such as WCG succeeds in scarring a person, particularly one with various abilities, life becomes very trying and frustrating.*

*I am one such individual I cannot pursue my career... owing to a continued deep depression, now 11 years since I broke free from the WCG. And on the domestic level, I have, for the same reason, failed in two marriages and find it hard to relate to anyone.*

*I'm sure I'm not unique in this respect. As for the success stories, I am happy to learn that God is blessing such people so abundantly, but please remember the people who have suffered gross mental and emotional damage as a result of being in "God's only true church."*

-A Reader

Editor. Yes, we really do enjoy running comments from readers who are doing well and are happy. But we are not trying to leave the impression that simply leaving the WCG solves all problems. Just as joining the Armstrong church is no panacea, neither is leaving it a panacea.

We have observed over the years that most people who leave Worldwide do go through a period of adjustment. While for some that adjustment is brief and relatively painless, for others it can be long and extremely difficult. We've noticed that most people, after being out for a few years, finally settle down psychologically. Many report that once they "got their head together" they felt at peace with God, with society and with themselves. Most have then been able to concentrate on career, family and other worthwhile pursuits with satisfying results.

Nevertheless, as your letter indicates, some never seem to fully recover from their contact with Armstrongism. Our files are filled with hundreds of letters from individuals who've paid very dearly for the "Ambassador experience." Yet, without belittling the extent of those tragedies, let us recognize the fact that we do live in a world of incredible fear, ignorance, superstition and suffering - especially suffering. And when we compare our experience with those of the rest of mankind, we should realize that for all the craziness of Armstrongism and seeming futility of the "Ambassador experience," our experience in many ways is not all that unique. Is not this world filled with tragedy, disappointment, misdirection and deception?

Yet there are those who survive - not just in the flesh, but in spirit. The whys and hows of this subject are very complex. Indeed, does this theme not make up a great portion of the

world's greatest literature? And are not these matters the subject of great debates in theology, philosophy and psychology?

A quick browse through most any bookstore will reveal an absolutely incredible number of books coming out constantly that deal with achieving sound mental health, success and happiness. From time to time we have recommended a few that we have found helpful. Of course, we do not presume (as some organizations do) to have all the answers to everyone's problems. But let us mention one article we came across that we suspect may be particularly helpful. It is entitled "The Search for Happiness" and can be obtained free (as are all their very worthwhile newsletters) by writing: The Royal Bank of Canada, Monthly Letter, P.O. Box 6001, Station A, Montreal, P.Q. H3C 3A9 Canada.

*I would definitely like to continue receiving your Report which is very informative and well written. It's nice to know what's really going on in that church. The tithes are really making it rough.*

*-Minnesota*

Editor. If tithing is really beginning to hurt, may we suggest that you read "The Tithing Fallacy" by Ernest Martin. Thousands have benefited from getting this booklet, and for anyone who has been a part of the WCG it should be "must reading." A free copy can be ordered from the Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102.

*Our personal heartbreak right now is our 24-year-old son who is still in WCG and will not call or come over since that last front page article by HWA on not fellowshiping. It wasn't so bad until that article and now we can't see and enjoy our grandchildren (one is a new baby girl). I have to really work at it to keep from becoming very bitter against that bitter, egotistical old man (HWA). How blind we were for 20 years!*

*-Oregon*

Editor: HWA constantly emphasizes the importance of keeping the Ten Commandments, especially the sabbath command. But the one right after that says, "Honor your father and your mother." This seems to be a forgotten commandment in the WCG. Your son should read Mark 7:6-13 (that is, if the WCG will let him).

*Dear Friends:*

*And I mean that very sincerely, you are friends to a lot of people. My life has been so much happier since I've been released from slavery. I do wish I had more to donate to the good cause. My children are still in the WCG and won't listen to anything. I must remember I was also as blind. My son has completely disowned me and my daughter is not as warm as she used to be.*

*They claim to obey the 10 commandments, but my son has turned against me because I tried to tell him what I had learned. I was about 66 or 67 when I left the WCG and he doesn't know or care if I have enough to live on. But is this Christianity? Not in my book,*

*nor God's. Fortunately, I can still work and have a job with a senior citizen center which I love.*

*-Nebraska*

*The activities and self-promotion of Herbert W. Armstrong seems to parallel those of Oral Roberts as reported by Jerry Sholes in Give Me That Prime Time Religion. In reading that book, one would think, in most instances, that only the names have been changed. The motives, the ego drives, the ego trips, personal vanity, drive for individual wealth, unreliability in accounting for tithes and offerings, lack of love or concern for church members and most employees of the church or its subsidiaries, remains the same.*

*It is an insult to the founder of Christianity that these activities are called Christian.*

*-Mel J. Bradley  
Colorado*

*Thanks be to God for allowing your efforts to continue during these past years. You are performing a yeoman-like service in keeping your readers informed.*

*I was disfellowshipped from the WCG on 7/14/81. This was after being thoroughly "brainwashed" as far as biblical matters are concerned. I never have surrendered the portion of my mind that deals with Godly logic, reasoning and common sense. I was "brainwashed" because I was a biblical illiterate and fell under the sway of Armstrongism. But now, God has allowed me to read and understand the Bible for myself as I continue to grow.*

*Being able to read and understand that "book of books" is the basic reason for my disfellowshipment. The WCG, however, will say I was disfellowshipped because of my failure to recognize "church government."*

*I attended my first WCG service on 7/19/69 and was baptized by that church on 9/14/69. Through the years I have contributed about \$25,000 in tithes and offerings to them. I also have contributed a plethora of questions addressed to the WCG. I have received very few if any answers to the more important of those questions.*

*I am so sorry I didn't know the "plain truth" about tithing before I contributed so much money to Mr. Armstrong's organization. However I feel as though I have had a 12 year education concerning the religion of men. That education is invaluable to me now. Tithing was one of the latest points I learned the truth about. I stopped tithing almost a year-and-a-half before being disfellowshipped.*

*I hope what I am about to write will be of some interest to you. I have rock solid proof that the WCG is still observing Pentecost on the wrong day. Part of that proof is in the form of a hand-written letter mailed to me from Mr. Herman L. Hoeh. Mr. Hoeh made the "mistake" of answering some of my questions truthfully and in writing. I don't believe N. T. Gentile Christians have to observe those Holy Days. I am not dealing with the question*

*of whether they should or should not at this time. Only with the question of which is the correct day to observe Pentecost on, if one observes it.*

*From some time before being disfellowshipped, I sent Ministerial Services a variety of documentation proving a point about the subject of Pentecost. Neither Sunday nor Monday is the correct day. I proved that point to those ministers at Ministerial Services. Mr. Hoeh was finally goaded into answering me in writing. His letter admitted those findings on Pentecost were correct. However, he advised me to observe it on the same day as the WCG does, even though he knew they were wrong. He also wrote that I could observe Pentecost on the correct day privately at home if I chose to do so.*

*With a minimal of research anyone with some degree of common sense can prove the truth about Pentecost. I believe if the WCG members were told the truth about Pentecost some of them would accept that truth.*

*Pentecost is only the tip of the iceberg. The WCG is wrong on dozens of issues. Before being disfellowshipped, I asked my local minister, Mr. Abner Washington, to give me the opportunity to prove some of those issues to the WCG ministry. Mr. Washington stated to me that "we can't have that." He then disfellowshipped me.*

*Mr. Washington, exemplifying the fear and paranoia the church has exhibited over the issue of Pentecost then made a strange move. What was that strange move? Why, he also disfellowshipped my 18-year-old daughter Angela. I say he "disfellowshipped her" advisedly, because while she did attend services, she has never been a baptized member of the WCG. It's hard to fathom how Mr Washington could "disfellowship" someone who is not a member of the church. Her crime? She is "guilty" of also knowing the truth about Pentecost. Her "disfellowshipment" was clearly an attempt to keep a lid on any mentioning of Pentecost by her to WCG members.*

*To the more adventurous WCG members who are not afraid of being disfellowshipped, I suggest this: Ask Ministerial Services what relationship does Pentecost have to Sivan 6 or Shavuot or Shabuoth? To the more timid and docile WCG members I write this: Please don't let your ministers know you have so much as even heard the words Sivan 6. Why? Because you might be disfellowshipped as I was. On second thought being disfellowshipped from the WCG is a blessing in disguise.*

*The hierarchy of AC and the WCG enjoys a vast representation both through their own publications and also through the media. AR offers a vehicle to us whereby an alternate point of view may be expressed. Please put me on your mailing list. I think AR richly deserves our support, in whatever form, in its spartan efforts to bring about necessary changes. Please continue to expose both AC and also the WCG's own "Apostle," the "Apostle" Herpe. Whoops!!! Please pardon my faux pas. That is, please expose the WCG's own "Apostle," the "Apostle" Herbie.*

*-Warren L. Bailey  
P.O. Box 78641  
Los Angeles, CA 90016*

*I'm sick and tired of you people constantly harping on Stanley Rader. I think he has not only been a great help to Mr. Armstrong, but has done all of us a world of good. We need him! And I think he would make a tremendous head of the Church if God chooses to take Mr. Armstrong before the end of the age. Who else would be as qualified?*

*I'm glad you mentioned his illness, because for some reason not too many people knew about it. I'd like to send Mr. Rader a get-well card but I don't want any of his enemies in the Church to get it. Do you have his address?*

*-California*

Editor: It's 360 Waverly, Pasadena, CA 91105.

*I left the WCG in Sept 1979. went to the CGI Feast in San Antonio, Texas, got really excited about the "new beginning" and sadly watched it all deteriorate into another Armstrong re-run with a new name. I want nothing to do with the Armstrongs now, but I want to keep abreast of current events because I still have some family members in the cult. I am thinking of conducting public meetings in various churches in my local area to educate people about cults and how to avoid them. If you have any advice on this activity, I would appreciate it very much.*

*-North Dakota*

Editor: Contact The Citizens Freedom Foundation, P.O. Box 7000-89, Redondo Beach, CA 90277 (213-540-2642). They might be able to offer a suggestion or two.

*Actually I could not see how it could be possible for HWA and GTA to ever get together again as your report stated would happen. They and their separate groups have done so much to destroy each other I thought it would be the height of folly and foolishness due to the further division it would cause, but now I suspect it may be just what will happen. It appears obvious that God Almighty is quite displeased with this church and may allow or cause just those things that will bring further division and disintegration. Whereas, the WCG has always discouraged people from reasoning (though God stated in Isaiah 7:78, "Come let us reason together), it would appear God is taking their reason from them. I'm more and more sure now that they will continue to make all the wrong decisions.*

*-California*

*I like to hear of what minister has been fired, resigned and where they are as I know a lot of them.*

*However, when I read that you said Garner Ted was making \$60,000 a year I didn't believe that one bit. I feel you are misinformed on this matter as I know they don't have too much money to carry the work and Ted has had to do without an awful lot. Anyone with any sense at all should know that if he had that much money he would have a nice big beautiful car instead of owning a stupid little Toyota. I don't make much money a year and I have a much better car than that. I happen to own a Dodge Aspen which I*

*would like to see Ted have. Whoever gave you that information is lying that is for sure.*

*The rumours go around also that he is going back with his Dad which is not one bit true. It must be very embarrassing to him that his Dad has become so corrupt (thanks to Rader). They taught us and taught us well, however that sort of thing happened way back in Bible days when men got corrupt and God rejected them.*

*Please try and get the true facts from the right source before printing it as it does cause a lot of trouble and some people are stupid enough to swallow all they hear.*

*-Ontario, Canada*

Editor: During the Carter Administration, a number of the President's top advisors drove Pintos. California Governor Jerry Brown's official car is a light blue Plymouth Satellite. And, according to the *Los Angeles Times* ("View," July 28, 1981), Queen Elizabeth, when not being chauffeured to official functions, often drives a "little green Vauxhall station wagon."

As for Garner Ted's alleged poverty, this writer recalls seeing a beautifully maintained classic Model A Ford (ever price one?) on a Pasadena street a couple of years ago with the license plate prominently displaying the letters "GTA." We pulled along side and asked the driver if he had purchased the car from Garner Ted Armstrong. "Oh no," he said, "it's still his. I'm just taking care of it till he moves back to Pasadena." This occurred the same week that Ted was sending out letters telling of his sacrifices on behalf of his new church. At the time, you may recall, he even claimed some of his checks were bouncing.

*After nearly 20 years in the WCG and being out now for about 2½ years, I simply can't understand how I ever got involved with the Armstrong characters. We need to pray for them both. They need all the help they can get.*

*-Kentucky*

*Thank you has to be the first thing I say to you. I was a WCG dupe and had given 16 years of my life, plus some \$26,000 to cult leader Armstrong.*

*It was because of your efforts, plus those of Dr. Martin, Marion McNair, Dave Robinson, John Tuit and a few others that now I am beginning to get my mind straightened out. I really don't believe I will ever be the same, nor will any of those who have been smitten by that dreaded mind-bending organization.*

*But now I feel that your efforts provide a desperately needed service to help its in the deprogramming process.*

*-Florida*

*Thank you so much for the latest report. I am still right in the middle of this WCG and*

*GTA situation. Being in my ripe old age with children and grandchildren and many friends so deeply involved, all I can do is thank God that he gives me spirit and a sound and inquisitive mind to help me keep my sanity and control my tongue, so they won't have me committed to keep me from upsetting the apple cart.*

*I have a host of friends that are of the same mind, so we manage to have fellowship and help one another. Also tapes and literature from ministers we can learn from and grow in grace and knowledge to full maturity as real Christians help.*

*You have been a real help to a great number of us here in this area. Keep it up if possible. Maybe soon something will happen to free all those caught up in this web.*

*-Texas*

*Mere words cannot express my gratitude for your courageous publications. Just why I waited until recent months to write for your reports cannot be explained, except that we were always encouraged in WCG services to stay away from anyone else's publications and/or broadcasts and taped messages.*

*Your magazine Ambassador Report (1977) deserves some kind of journalistic and/or editorial reward for form and content. "If I were a rich man," to quote a Broadway tune, this magazine would be placed in the hands of every member or prospective member of the WCG.*

*I stopped attending the... congregation on Jan. 12, when the local pastor resigned to (get ready for this) further his education. He was replaced by a dingaling of his equal... My financial support to the WCG was discontinued approximately two years prior to the time I discontinued attending meetings, but I kept going and knowing all the time that something deeply disturbing inside was wrong and that the flock was being fleeced. The local yokel kept speaking on every subject except the problems in Pasadena.*

*Many of the lay-members would become irate if anyone was ever critical of the great HiaWathA. A close friend of mine has reached such deep lows of mental anguish over the diabolical mess that he is surely alienating his family and facing financial disaster and a possible jail sentence for some of his actions as a result of being unable to accept the status quo as rotten, and continually attending WCG services.*

*May I, here and now, propose an "Armstrong Anonymous" organization and at the same time be the first of its possible thousands of members. The only criteria for membership into my AA will be to simply stand in front of another human being, in whom you have been self-righteous before, and say: "I was wrong about the Armstrongs." If no one is handily available, a good hand mirror will do. No fees or meetings ever.*

*Many good people are continuing to follow the Armstrongs because their stubborn pride will not allow them to withdraw, and like me, they have been so dogmatic toward friends and relatives about their religious beliefs, now it seems impossible to drop out. My uncle told me as much as 20 years ago*

*that anyone who followed an organizational dictator was courting disaster.*

*I followed the WCG broadcast and studied AC material for 10 years before I ever counseled with a minister. After baptism and entrance into the WCG, I was constantly suspicious of church affairs in Pasadena and elsewhere. There was something about the Armstrongs that just never seemed to be right, and it always irritated me when the minister talked more about the Armstrongs than God in almost any given sermon.*

*-Arkansas*

*I too have suffered much despair, personal loss, financial strains, and alienation from my husband as a result of his becoming an ardent WCG co-worker and member. After a year of struggling with trying to expose this devious cult by all the means that I knew how (counseling at Christian Research Institute, psychiatric evaluations, several talks and discussions with my family aware of the nature of this group, and emotional appeals of trying to keep family together), I have almost given up on our young marriage of only four years now. I was forced to file for divorce a year ago as my husband was more intent on tithing 20 percent of his salary than making the house payments and everyday bills. Being the mother of a young two-year-old and pregnant with the second child to whom no savings were being planned, I left to the protection and support of my loving family who felt appalled at my husband's new-found beliefs which condemn our entire family's long-held Christian ideals... so after seeing the WCG's beliefs and practices, a united, solid, and secure family life was no longer possible.*

*Anyhow, I still have not signed final papers on the divorce as I wish a final attempt at rescuing this poor, misguided, and confused husband of mine. I have read much on deprogrammings, voluntary and forced, and I feel a confrontation with the real truth given by former Armstrong followers can retrieve ----'s heart back to family where it belongs, not to a cult leader who merely is taking advantage of his misunderstandings and weaknesses. If you know of anyone brave and loving enough to aid me in helping my husband see his grave error, please tell me.*

*-California*

*I wish to express my thanks and appreciation for the service you perform. I only wish you could publish the AR more often. Physically, I am handicapped and financially I am poor, but thanks to God and people like you that truly care, I have been spiritually blessed!*

*-Ohio*

*Thanks for your efforts. After more than three years, my wife (a WCG member) finally read a copy for herself. Persistence has paid off! One can easily predict a massive fragmentation of WCG that will far exceed anything in the past. Your efforts and many others will help thousands cope with the trauma.*

## ON THE TRACK AND OFF HIS NOODLE

We were absolutely appalled by what we have just read in the latest (Oct.-Nov. 1981) issue of *The Good News*. In an article by Herbert Armstrong, titled "Are We Back on the Track?- When We Lack Faith?", HWA laments the fact that youngsters at the church's summer educational camp "habitually demand [sic] a doctor for every little thing. It seems they have been taught at home to rely on doctors rather than God.... I was shocked."

HWA insists emphatically that "drugs can't heal and always have side effects, which are often harmful." He asks if some of the church brethren aren't "going to Baal-zebul, the god of Ekron," for healing, piously pointing out that King Ahaziah of Israel was allowed by God to die because Ahaziah showed a lack of faith by consulting with Baal-zebul instead of God. In conclusion he asks if "some of you brethren rear your children relying on Baal-zebul in the form of the doctors of our day?"

This article would be hilariously comical if it were not for its very serious implications. Here we have "God's Apostle," considered by the church as spiritually closer to God than any mortal, telling parents that they lack faith if they allow their children to seek medical assistance when injured or ill. Yet HWA himself relies almost exclusively on doctors, drugs, and medicines to cure his infirmities and has done so habitually for, at least, the last several years. He has allowed himself to be literally pumped full of drugs to prolong his life. On Jan. 11, 1979, a newspaper cameraman photographed HWA leaving a Tucson medical clinic where he was receiving medical assistance. At his Tucson home he had a licensed medic living day and night with him.

In November of 1978, Garner Ted Armstrong personally told AR publishers Bob Geringer and Len Zola that after his father's heart attack, HWA's Tucson home had been turned into a "virtual intensive care unit." Ted also described how he had witnessed his father taking numerous drugs. According to GTA, the number was absolutely astonishing. They were not health-food-type supplements either but "hard-core pharmaceuticals," the type "produced from petrochemicals." And even today, HWA relies on medication and travels with a professional nurse (*Worldwide News*, Aug. 10, 1981).

It is absolutely the height of hypocrisy for HWA to tell people they lack faith in God if they consult a doctor while he himself is availing himself of their services. (HWA even allowed Evangelist Rod Meredith, HWA's probably successor, to have what was termed "repair surgery" on his eye in the late '60s.) It is indeed lamentable that HWA is "shocked" at children seeking a doctor's advice but thinks nothing of doing the very thing he condemns. No wonder members are consulting doctors: HWA's actions speak louder than words!

## LATE NEWS

With the Feast of Tabernacles about to begin, we purposely held up this already overdue

issue in case the feast brought any major announcements. Although it had been rumored for weeks that there were major announcements to be made, there were none made worth mentioning. Feast-goers report that HWA remained in Pasadena, and sermons, as a whole, were very lackluster. One individual commented to us, "It was the most boring feast ever."

Nevertheless, one item of interest: "The place of safety" doctrinal theory (the WCG's answer to the rapture, but with the emphasis on saving the physical, of course) is again making the rounds in church circles. In fact, some WCG ministers are teaching that the end is just about here. While hedging their bet somewhat by saying it might be in 1989, they are claiming it will very likely be in 1982. HWA, however, is apparently having second thoughts about Petra being the place of safety. We'll try to have more on this next time. Our limited funds won't allow this newsletter to get any longer.

Our warmest thanks to all of you who are helping to make *Ambassador Report* possible.

Sincerely,  
THE PUBLISHERS

---

*Ambassador Report* is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola. Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR18\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

December 31, 1981

### "DO YOU WANT TO LOOK LIKE A WHORE?"

Well, he's at it again. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the apostle of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and president of Ambassador College, has announced that he is again changing his church's doctrine on makeup. Yes, the WCG's doctrine on makeup has been reversed back to what it was a decade ago. (Then HWA taught that a woman who wore makeup looked "like a painted artificial prostitute" to God - *Truth About Makeup*, p. 43.) The wearing of makeup is once again a sin. Not surprisingly, after changing the doctrine, HWA confided to one associate that, while he couldn't prove everything in black and white, he had the mind of God and the makeup change was in the best interests of the church.

Page one of the Nov. 16, 1981, issue of *The Worldwide News* carried this headline: "How subtly Satan used MAKEUP to start the Church off the track." In that article HWA claims that the church has been led astray by Satan influencing the women of his church. Writes HWA:

"...But how did the people of the living God get off the track? How did the whole world first get off the track?

"Was mother Eve, the very first woman - a direct creation of God - insincerely evil? Did she have evil motives and intentions?

"No, Eve was DECEIVED!" (Emphasis his.)

But, according to HWA, the women in the WCG were not the only ones deceived. Certain "intellectuals" had also been led astray. Among those castigated by HWA for being "intellectual" were Wayne Cole and, unfathomably, Garner Ted Armstrong (don't laugh!) Writes HWA:

"In my absence [late 1974] my brief statement appeared with my signature under it.

What I never knew until now was that, after my signature, Wayne Cole, then director of Pastoral Administration, added a few pages giving the new liberal watered-down reasoning, changing the truth of God.

"Satan masterminded this in such a manner that it all appeared under my signature, as if I fully approved all that followed my signature - when in fact I never saw it until the day before yesterday. It was subtly handled and kept from me.

"I did not, and never would have approved of what Mr. Cole, without my knowledge, published under my signature."

Not surprisingly, Wayne Cole has adamantly denied these allegations. We think Cole is telling the truth. It is pretty difficult to believe that HWA was ignorant of the church's doctrinal change on makeup back in the '70s. After all, his own wife, Ramona, has regularly worn makeup since her marriage to HWA in 1977. Didn't he ever notice? Dick Lloyd, a reporter for the Pasadena *Star-News*, noticed. In an early 1979 article he even commented about her painted toes when reporting how, on a visit to Tucson, she had greeted him, none to cordially at HWA's door. It has even been reported by a ministerial source that one former HWA aide - a male-also occasionally enjoyed wearing red nail polish. It stretches our imagination to the limit to believe that in 1974 HWA was incapable of comprehending what he was reading when he approved the new makeup doctrine - especially since he claims God's constant guidance. Of course, if God deserts him off and on and allows Satan to set church doctrine on occasion - as HWA seems to be asking us to believe - then how do we know whether God or Satan is behind this latest doctrinal change?

The conclusion of HWA's lengthy *Worldwide News* article contains the following statements:

"My mother and grandmothers did not wear makeup - nor did your greatgrandmothers of the same era. How did it get into our mid-and-latter-20th century society? FROM PROSTITUTES!

"They argue it was done anciently in the world. But that was not God's world. Our women have COPIED THE PROSTITUTES!...

"Satan used human reason and makeup and WOMEN to start the ball of liberalism away from God and toward sin to rolling in the Church beginning October, 1974.... Christ is [now] getting us back on the track!"

While Herbert's decision on makeup is being obeyed by many WCG members, it is not a universally popular one. Some top ministers, including Roderick Meredith, have commented that it is a big mistake. Meredith was so perturbed over the change that he went to see Evangelist Tkach, urging that he and the Council of Elders confront HWA over the matter. Realizing the folly of questioning HWA, Tkach replied that he would not be party to such a suicidal maneuver. Rebuking Meredith he said bluntly, "Haven't you learned anything from your exile to Hawaii, Rod?" (Rod was given a six-month "leave of absence" in Hawaii in late 1979 for thinking independently.)

Evangelist Raymond McNair was also unhappy over the ruling, as was his wife, who

reportedly wears rather heavy makeup. In fact, we hear that none of the present evangelists are thrilled with the new makeup doctrine. One high-ranking evangelist's wife refused to attend the Rose Parade Queen's breakfast rather than be seen at a public function without her makeup on.

One pastor's wife defiantly wore makeup to Sabbath services the week after HWA's new edict became "God's law" once again. She was immediately reported, and her husband was called on the carpet. The following week she appeared in church without a trace of makeup, but she was seen wearing it downtown during the week. And her's is not an isolated case. We hear a number of ministers' wives and many members view the makeup doctrine as a ruling made by a senile old fuddy-duddy, and they still wear it everywhere but to church and church functions. In fact, ministers are already beginning to interpret away HWA's makeup ruling by saying, "HWA meant to wear it a little lighter," or "he means don't wear it to church."

Some have speculated that HWA knows Ramona will not obey his makeup, edict and that the makeup change was only instituted to create a reason to divorce Ramona, who is still living in Tucson, we hear.

While there are undoubtedly a few other WCG clergy who enthusiastically support the new ruling, its chief supporter has been Bob Fahey, until recently HWA's executive assistant. His unwavering loyalty to HWA did not go unnoticed by the apostle. On Oct. 24, he was ordained a evangelist, and HWA reportedly said that upon his death no one could possibly be as qualified to properly lead the church as Bob Fahey . The statement did not thrill Rod Meredith's supporters. Since then, however, Fahey has fallen from grace. In a power struggle, he was removed from the executive assistant position and will now be merely assisting minister Frank McCrady in the New York area. He has also been demoted to "preaching elder" rank. (Oh how the mighty art fallen!)

While the question of makeup may be considered inconsequential to most normal people, it is no small matter to HWA. In his Nov. 16, 1981, article he stated:

"But by this maneuver of Satan, the people of God's church started off the track....  
For watering down of God's truth on healing, the Sabbath, many more vital doctrines followed in its wake."

Ironically, this is exactly the kind of thing that was claimed by men such as Raymond Cole and Paul Royer when they left Armstrong's church in the mid-'70s to form their own churches. Now that HWA has echoed their views - namely, that the WCG's (so-called) God-given truths have been watered down by the "liberals" - will he invite them back into the fold? Not likely.

Said one long-time Armstrong observer, "For the last few months the matter of Herbert's incest sins were becoming a major topic of discussion in church circles. By changing the makeup doctrine, Herbert has made the church feel very guilty, thus getting their minds off his own very sinful past. Politically speaking, the doctrinal change was a brilliant move."

To many observers the makeup change suggests that the WCG will be in for more doctrinal changes in the near future. Perhaps HWA will change his Pentecost and divorce doctrines back to his pre-1974 teachings too, making the liberals the scapegoat again. It will be interesting to see just how far back in time HWA will lead his followers.

### GETTING THE BEST IN MEDICAL HELP

In our last newsletter we pointed out how HWA has lately been warning his followers against relying on physicians in times of illness. You'll recall we quoted the Oct.-Nov. issue of the *Good News* in which HWA wrote how going to doctors was analogous to "going to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron." Shortly after our newsletter was mailed, one of our readers sent us a clipping from the September 1981 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*. In that magazine's "Medical Mailbox" column (p. 123) there appeared a photograph of HWA wearing a hospital robe and talking to actor Hugh O'Brien and Dr. Kenneth Cooper. The photo was taken at Dr. Cooper's Aerobics Center medical clinic, in Dallas where HWA and O'Brien were undergoing testing. (Dr. Cooper is the physician who developed the aerobics system of physical fitness. He is also the medical consultant to, and frequent guest on, the "700 Club" religious TV program.)

Armstrong officials report that HWA is continuing to take drugs regularly. He depends on drugs to put him to sleep and drugs to wake him up. He has confided to several that he feels a little guilty consuming all these drugs in view of his teachings on divine healing, but he justifies it by saying some unnamed "they" make him take the drugs. Interestingly, one of his nurses (a church member) was replaced for trying to keep certain drugs from him. Insiders claim she was substituting sugar pills or placebos for aspirin and other pills he was constantly gulping. But HWA insisted on getting the "real thing."

Besides consulting with Dr. Cooper, other medical experts HWA has been seeing recently include a leading Pasadena podiatrist. When it comes to his personal medical problems, HWA gets the very best advice possible. It's good to see that at least one individual in the WCG has the good sense not to take too seriously HWA's proscription against seeking medical advice. But it is sad to see him reject the sound advice of those professionals, especially when their advice is in line with Biblical injunctions for moderation.

### HIDE THOSE BOOKS!

The real direction the WCG is now taking is appallingly evident in a memo recently sent to "All Ambassador College Faculty Members" by Raymond F. McNair. Evangelist McNair, now apparently the college's official book censor and grand inquisitor wrote:

"Recently, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong directed that certain books which had previously been stocked by the Paper Egret [the Ambassador College bookstore] be removed and no longer sold at the college bookstore.

"Pursuant to Mr. Armstrong's directive, Messrs. LaRavia, Tkach and I checked over the books at the Paper Egret to remove any books which we felt should no longer be sold in accordance with Mr. Armstrong's instructions. Accordingly, we are having those books

related to psychology, including all self-help books, removed. And we are also removing all books which are heavily tainted with this world's theology. Also, those books which have to do with marriage and the family, husband-and-wife-relations books, childrearing books, etc. will no longer be on the book shelves at the Paper Egret.

"The college bookstore will, however, continue to sell several different translations of the Bible, concordances, dictionaries, history books, etc. And the Paper Egret will, of course, continue to sell various supplies - notebooks, pens, pencils, paper, etc.

"If any faculty member feels he or she needs to recommend a particular book for reading by the students (a book not carried by the Paper Egret) then he or she should first request that such a book be made available at the college bookstore. But how should you go about requesting that the Paper Egret stock such a book?

"Just type up and send to my office a written request, stating 1) the name of the books, 2) describe what the book is all about - i.e. what it contains that makes it desirable, 3) and mention how many such books you would like the Paper Egret to make available to the students. Such requests should be checked through my office before being passed on to the Paper Egret for procurement. They will not be displayed on the shelves in the college bookstore, but will only be made available to students upon request.

"If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact me and I shall be happy to further clarify."

### THE CULT OF ARMSTRONG?

Is the 'Worldwide Church of God a cult? That is a question we hear quite often. And frankly, it's one we don't have too much trouble answering. First of all, what is a "cult"? For many years, most dictionaries generally defined "cult" as "an organized system of religion." In actual use, however, this term had a somewhat negative connotation. For instance, in history books we would often read of the "cult of Apollo" or the "cult of Diana." Rarely would the word "cult" ever be used when referring to Christianity in general or its denominations.

During the last ten years, and especially since the Jonestown tragedy, the use of the word "cult" has become more frequent. At the same time, the term has become both more pejorative and more clearly defined in its modern usage.

As we pointed out in our very first publication, *Ambassador Review* (June 1976, p. 36), a "cult" - as the word is now often used - has at least four major characteristics:

1. It encourages *isolation* - both intellectual and social.
2. It encourages *non-thinking*.
3. It encourages absolute *obedience* to a leader who either claims to be God or a representative of God.

4. it encourages *excessive giving* of, not only money and possessions, but also time, energy and other human resources.

With the above four-point definition, readers will perhaps see why we view the WCG as a "cult." But the WCG is not alone in possessing these characteristics. In fact, the number of religious organizations having these characteristics is clearly on the increase. And the havoc being wrecked in the lives of millions is being documented increasingly by psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists and other professionals now very concerned about the problem.

Two such professionals are Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, researchers specializing in the study of mind control and the cults. You may recall that they are the authors of the cult expose book *Snapping*. Since the publication of that book, their research has continued. Some of the results of that research have now appeared in a remarkable article in the January 1982 issue of *Science Digest* magazine.

Their article is entitled "Information. Disease: Have Cults Created a New Mental Illness?" This article is highly recommended for anyone who has left the WCG and suffers from any type of emotional problem. (Check your library for a copy. If it doesn't have that publication, you may try writing to *Science Digest*, 224 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019.)

Conway and Siegelman surveyed 400 former cult members from 48 different cults. They "found that nearly one in five experienced some lasting health problem and two-thirds experienced long-term emotional difficulties." Those mental and emotional effects include "floating" in and out of altered states, nightmares, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions, violent outbursts and suicidal tendencies. In some cases, former cult members even feared they had lost the ability to think!

The authors make a number of remarkable observations. For instance:

"...our research showed what appeared to be a direct relationship between the number of hours spent per week in cult ritual and indoctrination and the number of long-term effects. In addition, we found a similar correlation between hours per week spent in ritual and indoctrination and the reported length of rehabilitation time. Put simply: our findings appear to confirm that the psychological trauma cults inflict upon their members is directly related to the amount of time spent in indoctrination and mind-control rituals" (p. 90).

"For most people, the term cult conjures up images of arcane, secretive societies whose members hold bizarre beliefs and swear allegiance to a living guru or self-proclaimed messiah. We found something like this to be the case in most of the major cults. But we were surprised to find that the majority of cult groups, including many we had never heard of before, were fundamentalist Christian sects apparently employing sophisticated mind-control techniques. Thirty of the 48 cults we surveyed emerged out of this traditional branch of Christianity.... They also rated higher than all cults except Scientology in combined long-term effects and average rehabilitation time (19 months)" (p. 92).

While their article does not mention the WCG by name, Conway and Siegelman, in a recent visit with *Report* publishers Len and Margaret Zola, agreed that the WCG does indeed have most, if not all, the earmarks of being a "cult."

### A RECOMMENDED SERIES OF ARTICLES

During the last few years, *Ambassador Report* has recommended a number of books and articles on the subject of Armstrongism and cults in general. We have done so because we believe they can be of real help to not only those in the WCG, but those who have left and desire a better understanding of cult phenomena and perhaps themselves. One reader recently sent us photocopies of a seven-part series of articles entitled "Cults and Cultism," which appeared earlier this year in an Oregon newspaper. The series was written by Dan'l C. Markham, a former pastor and newspaper editor who is currently a counselor for Spiritual Counterfeits Project in Berkeley, California, a Christian ministry dedicated to aiding those affected by cults.

We wish to bring this series of articles to your attention because, quite frankly, it is one of the very finest that we have ever seen on the subject. There are a number of reasons for this assessment. Markham is, first of all, not simply a well-read and experienced expert on the subject, but one who has the courage to speak out bluntly on the truly sinister nature of cults. Yet he shows a great deal of compassion for those victimized by cults. He writes:

"We must never forget that while a cult may appear to be an evil, elitist, separatist, intolerant and abusive entity, that very entity is made of real people such as ourselves who have genuine needs and sincere reasons for belonging. They often have high ideals and admirable goals. Such people must be approached and treated with wisdom and truth, but also with sensitivity, compassion and understanding.

"Our goal as Christians, parents, ministers, educators, professional people, friends and relatives, should not only be to expose cults, but to help eliminate the root causes.

"You see, we can repeat one of man's greatest failures by just pointing the finger and saying 'that's bad,' never thinking we (each of us) might personally be responsible in some way. You may be surprised to find in the following dissertations that our own philosophies, religious beliefs and attitudes or lack of them may contribute to the environment that creates cults."

In part four, Markham writes about the telltale signs of a cult:

"...a cult is any group with an elitist and unique cause and view of itself and others, who to promote their sole cause consciously and unconsciously abuse God-given personal rights and freedoms. Abuse is the key determining factor, which can mean theological, spiritual, physiological and social abuses....

"There are numerous sociological indicators and patterns, which identify a group as being potentially cultic. A knowledge of a few of these indicators will assist in uncovering such a group:

"1. Leaders who claim a special, exclusive ministry, revelation or position of authority from God.

"2. A belief that the group is the only true church, or maintains a critical stance regarding established Christianity while consistently praising and exalting its own leaders and ministry.

"3. Use of intimidation by warning that members who leave the group will go to hell or suffer some other calamity.

"4. The requirement that members give substantial portions of their income to the group or leaders.

"5. Emphasis on loyalty to the church resulting in almost total absorption of one's life into its activities.

"6. The ministries of the group and individual members are inseparable from the ministry of the leaders.

"7. Control by the leadership of the private lives of group members.

"8. The discouraging of dissent and any questioning of the leader's teachings or directives. Criticism, even if constructive, is redefined as rebellion. Emphasis on authority, obedience and submission is vigilantly maintained.

"9. Demonstrations of loyalty to the leader and to the group are expected.

"10. Attempts to leave the group or reveal embarrassing facts about the group are met with threats. Refugees of the group are faced with confrontations by cult adherents who encourage or coerce them back into the group's control."

Does any of this sound familiar? If you've been in the WCG, it will. But remarkably, Markham did not write this with the WCG specifically in mind. The fact is, most cults are very similar in the psychologically manipulative techniques their leaders employ.

In Part V the author discusses the abuses inflicted on the cult member:

"The effects of cults on the individual can be devastating - psychologically, socially, and even physically. In briefly reviewing some of the commonly agreed upon cultic indicators (abuses), perhaps we can begin to grasp at least in a basic way the wounds inflicted on the individual by a cult:

"1. Loss of individuality - a groupiness mentality.

"2. Abuse of intimacy: relationships with friends, relatives, between parents and children, and even spouses, are broken or seriously hindered.

"3. Abuse of money: heavy and even threatening demands with peer group pressure drain off large portions of one's income, causing financial neglect of self and family.

"4. Isolating people with a 'we versus them' mentality. Often relatives, the world, established Christianity, governments, secular education and the press become evil enemies.

"5. Abuse of time and energy: the cult soon controls and uses a majority or nearly all of one's time and energy, resulting in a constant state of exhaustion.

"6. Breaking of the will so adherents unquestionably submit to the demands and control of the group's leadership.

"This repugnant list of destructive abuses could go on and on. The results, i.e., personality changes, loss of identity, paranoia, and social disorientation, are too numerous for a complete list."

While many WCG members would undoubtedly assert that the above does not pertain to their church, literally thousands of letters received by *Ambassador Report* in the last five years indicate that these are exactly the kinds of fruit the WCG has produced in the lives of many thousands of members. But these effects are not always perceived immediately. In fact, some ex-members report that it was only four, five, or more years after leaving Worldwide that they came to fully appreciate how devastating the church had been to their lives.

We regret that we are not able to reprint the entirety of Dan'l Markham's "Cults and Cultisms" series because it is absolutely filled with remarkable insights into the cult phenomenon. The seven-part series is a bit lengthy for our small newsletter, and our finances don't allow us to extend this issue to that degree. We have, however contacted author Markham, and he has agreed to send photocopies of the series to those requesting it. His purpose is not to make a profit in this (nor do we get a "cut" on this or any other literature we recommend), but to cover his copying, postage, and handling expenses, he asks that requests be accompanied by \$2.50 for each copy desired. His address is: Dan'l C. Markham, P.O. Box 339, Ocean Park, Washington 98640. If you are looking for greater understanding about the nature of cults, why people join them, or their effects, then you will find this series of articles invaluable. We cannot recommend it too highly.

#### HOW TO HELP WCG FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

We regularly receive letters from concerned readers asking for advice on how to get a friend or loved one out of the WCG. Unfortunately, we are rarely able to provide fool-proof answers for this type of situation.

First of all, we have learned from experience that simply exposing a member to the facts will not necessarily help. For instance, with each *Ambassador Report* mailing we try to send out as many issues as financially possible to current WCG ministers and members whose addresses are given to us by friends. In response, we always receive a few letters of thanks for the free issues and a few letters asking for more information. Over the years, quite a few have been greatly helped this way. But sadly, the majority in this category never respond. Or if they do, it is often by mailing back ripped up issues along with angry letters denouncing our "Satanic" lies. (They "know" these are lies because their minister

has told them so.) Many readers have experienced similar responses when confronting WCG member-friends, or relatives with a *Report*, a copy of the Tuit book, or other literature.

Another reason why we are usually unable to help "get someone out" is that we really do believe people have a right to believe what they want. You can show a WCG member a copy of the *Report* or a copy of the Robinson book or some other Armstrong expose, but if they choose not to consider the information, that is their privilege. The situation will not be improved by being condemning, unfriendly, or obnoxious. (And let's face it, most of the people in the WCG are very fine, sincere people.)

We recently received a letter from former WCG member Christine Lieber of Geneva, Switzerland. It contains some excellent advice for anyone with friends or relatives in the Armstrong church. Here are her suggestions on the subject:

"My husband Martin came out of the WCG months before I did, so I've been on both sides of the issue. From my experience IN when he was OUT, I can say:

"1. You cannot force anyone to see something they don't want to see. If they don't respond after your first burst of information on the sins, the wrong doctrines, and swill, then the more you pound the tighter they cling to the church. For four months Martin pounded me with information about Pentecost, tithing, and GTA's sins (he didn't know of Herbert's at the time). I told him he could blow my brains out before I would be disloyal to the church. So don't try to force them. In one sense it is cruel. For the poor brainwashed zombie that you are trying to help is not in control of his mind, and he thinks he is doing God a service by worshipping Herbert and obeying the church. Leave them alone until they are ready.

"2. Relax and be nice to them. They will come around when the time is right. You cannot force a mind. My attitude changed completely once Martin began to be kind and speak to me again. As long as he was angry, however justified, I had my 'proof' he was in a bad spirit and that he had a bad attitude. He certainly could not be telling me the truth. Don't give Armstrong's words fuel by your actions.

"3. It is difficult if not impossible to get WCG members to read material from those the church labels as 'Satanic.' Challenge the person to take a subject, go through the Bible, and write out *every* verse. Taking them *in* context and taking *all* of them, they can easily see the truth on almost any subject for themselves, which is an exciting experience. For some reason I had a tiny question on whether the church could be wrong on the [meaning of the] gospel. I took the word and wrote out all the scriptures in the Bible. When I finished this task, I was out of the concentration camp. I never went back to a service. But it is essential that it is done alone with the Bible, not the PT, 40 booklets, or 20 sermon notes. It is so easy to understand the Bible, if you go to it alone. In fact, when you do this you realize what an idiot you had to make yourself to even believe what Herbert said about the Bible."

## STANLEY WHO?

As we all know, in the communist world history is rewritten every few years. As regimes pass from the scene, statues of displaced leaders (Stalin is a good example) are removed from public view, squares and buildings bearing their names are renamed, and references

to their accomplishments are deleted from textbooks. In the free world - where even disgraced leaders such as Richard Nixon still command frequent media attention - such make-believe interpretations of historical fact are viewed with more than a little ridicule. That is why we find it so amusing that the WCG has adopted an approach identical to that of the communist world - at least as regards recent church history and Stanley Rader.

The WCG won a minor legal victory in mid-December when the Second District Court of Appeals of California denied attorney Hillel Chodos (remember him?) the \$100,000 he was demanding from the WCG corporation as legal fees for suing its leaders. The decision was not surprising considering Chodos never really won his case against the WCG.

What was surprising, however (but then again, maybe not), was the way the WCG reported this victory. On page 4 of the Dec. 14 *Worldwide News*, there appeared a short article by evangelist Ellis LaRavia, the WCG's press secretary, reporting the church's legal victory. On the same page there also appeared another article reporting the victory. That article was by Ralph Helge. He wrote: "As counsel for the Worldwide Church Of God, we are extremely pleased to advise you of a recent decision that pertains to the case. . . ." Then Helge, in commenting on the church's more than two-year legal battle with the state, went on to thank and praise (in this order) 1. Herbert W. Armstrong, 2. God, and 3. "the principal associate counsel" Allan Browne of Ervin, Cohen & Jessup; Ellis Horvitz of Horvitz & Greines; and Laurence Tribe, professor of law, Harvard University. Helge made no mention whatever of his former law partner and mentor Stanley Rader. Neither did LaRavia in his article. Neither did any church spokesman in comments to the press. Yet a mere 10 months ago Herbert Armstrong praised Stanley as the "mastermind" behind the WCG's victory over the California attorney general. Apparently, in the minds of Helge, LaRavia and certain other top WCG leaders, Stanley Rader has simply ceased to exist.

### THE MENGE MYSTERY

*Penthouse* magazine is not the kind of magazine to which we would normally refer readers, but an *Ambassador Report* subscriber recently brought to our attention a *Penthouse* article which we found extremely revealing. The thoroughly researched, lengthy article appeared in the November 1981 issue of that publication (p. 63) and was written by L. J. Davis and Ernest Volkman. While the article was ostensibly about religion superstar Jerry Falwell, it really dealt more thoroughly with the affairs of F. William Menge.

Menge was described by *Penthouse* as a "confidence man and convicted tax evader, sometime associate of known drug smugglers. A former Falwell ministry board member and adviser." But Falwell was not Menge's only preacher contact. Among his other religious contacts were evangelist James Robison, Pat Robertson of the "700 Club," and TV evangelist Kenneth Copeland. Other contacts included Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and top officials in Israel. But what we find most intriguing about Menge is his near acquisition of Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas. Here is what *Penthouse* wrote (p. 186) about that episode:

"Menge and [Menge associate, TV stuntman Jerry] Spicer - who had formed his own

Lynchburg company, Exodus Tours - traveled to Israel. Just what happened there is a little confusing. According to an account provided for *Penthouse* by Spicer, Menge made contact with two Israeli gangsters who had connections with the Miami mob, but Spicer does not say what the nature of the contact was, only that he 'exposed' it.

"As usual, Menge was thinking big. He opened negotiations with El Al Airlines to move thousands of Christian tourists. He negotiated with others to purchase planes, perhaps even a small airline. It had the earmarks of turning into Menge's biggest scam yet, but there are indications that it was much worse and much stranger than that. 'It all comes around now to what all these airplanes were really going to be used for,' Spicer told *Penthouse*. Spicer is very cautious when speaking on the subject, but he will add one thing more. 'With the airstrip,' he says, 'Christian City would be a multibillion-dollar deal.'

"Spicer is talking about Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Tex., a campus and 5,200-foot airstrip that Menge was negotiating to purchase from the Worldwide Church of God for \$10.6 million. It was Menge's plan to build a Christian city there - first, it was rumored, for Jerry Falwell, then for James Robison, and finally for the fundamentalist Brother Lester Roloff, who gave Menge \$500,000 that he never saw again. (On the other hand, Roloff is reported to have raised \$6 million during his unsuccessful campaign to buy the campus. If so, he is hardly in a position to kick.)

"In the end, with his empire collapsing, Menge couldn't swing the deal, and it fell through, but it is not without its features of interest. Menge first stirred serious law enforcement interest when vans were used to transport marijuana and his known associates turned out to be more than a little crooked. Menge made contact with criminals in Israel, and he allegedly had other contacts in Colombia, prime source of much of the world's cannabis. He was trying to buy some airplanes, and Spicer hints that they were not for the tour business. (Recently published reports have indicated that the mob is moving a portion of its marijuana and brown Mexican heroin operations from Florida to Texas. Big Sandy is midway between Dallas, a lucrative market, and Baton Rouge, a big mob town in a big mob state. In the back of Menge's mind was undoubtedly some use of the 5,200-foot airstrip at Ambassador College. A Christian City would be a splendid, perhaps impenetrable, cover for a major smuggling venture. Although nothing can be stated with any certainty, Spicer is entirely correct when he says that it could be a multi-billion-dollar deal.)"

As bizarre as it may at first sound, *Penthouse's* speculation on Menge's plans for the Big Sandy campus are well-founded. Recent newspaper articles have also alleged that Tyler, Texas (right near Big Sandy), has within the last few years become a major drug smuggling center. Some experts say that because of Tyler's proximity to the bayous of Louisiana, Tyler could soon become almost as important in drug smuggling operations as Miami and Tucson are at the present time.

The *Penthouse* story raises a number of interesting questions that could be put to Menge. Unfortunately, Menge can no longer answer those questions, for on Sept. 6, 1980, he was killed in a macabre accident. According to the *Penthouse* article:

"At about 1:30 p.m. that day, Menge decided to mow a field of grass adjacent to his bankrupt estate in Forest, Va., a suburb of Lynchburg. The reason, it is said, was that he planned to take his children to a picnic there, although people in Lynchburg remember that his children did not appear to have been home. Further, it was snake-and-chigger season in Virginia, and Menge possessed a perfectly adequate swimming pool and picnic area much closer to his house.

"His blood was later found to contain an alcoholic content of .02 percent, not unusual in itself except that Menge was not a drinking man and was not in the habit of keeping alcohol around the house.

"The instrument he chose for the task was a rotary mower called a bush hog. A wicked piece of machinery, it is towed along behind the tractor and is powered by its drive shaft. As Menge drove around the field, according to the official report, one or more of the wheels of the tractor and a blade of the bush hog are supposed to have struck some old utility poles concealed in the grass, causing Menge to bounce into the air. As he did so, the spring that supported the tractor seat is supposed to have fallen out. Menge is then supposed to have fallen back onto the springless seat and tumbled over backward without getting his feet tangled in the pedals or steering wheel, which he is also supposed to have stopped holding. Menge is then supposed to have fallen to the earth, where the bush hog ran over him, severing his left hand and right forearm, shattering and virtually severing his right leg, and fracturing his skull.

"People fall under bush hogs with depressing frequency - like many farm implements, they are not things to fool around with - but Menge's death is an unquiet one. When the tractor was found, stalled in the field, it was in high gear. A tractor in high gear will not cut a field very well, and there are many fields a tractor in high gear cannot cut at all.

"This is not to say that Menge was murdered, but there are enough unanswered questions and curious circumstances to render the official version of his death very nearly inoperable. For reasons that have never been explained, two FBI agents briefly investigated the Menge death, although there was no discernible federal jurisdiction. The FBI refuses to discuss why the agents were there."

The unwitnessed accident occurred just days after Menge was quoted as saying that he was going to "tell all" and that people were "going to go to jail." It has not been proven what he meant by those statements.

Nor has it been determined whatever became of all the money he swindled. At his death Menge was supposedly broke, but *Penthouse* asserts that during the last few years of his life he swindled over \$9 million. Included among the many individuals, banks, ministers, and churches he conned is at least one Armstrong follower. According to the June 23, 1981, issue of *The Record* (of Hackensack, New Jersey): "Buck Hammer, Herbert Armstrong's son-in-law, says he's out \$20,000 after investing in an invention Menge was promoting that would recycle garbage into mulch."

One person who Menge was not able to con, however, was Stan Rader. You will recall (Ambassador Report, March 1979, p. 13) that when Menge tried to purchase the Big Sandy campus in 1978-79, he lost his \$500,000 deposit when he was unable to come up with the balance on the deal. As the \$500,000 was contractually nonrefundable, the WCG (or persons associated with it) made an easy half-million while Menge's associate, Brother Lester Roloff, took the loss.

The *Penthouse* article ended with this interesting observation:

"Among others, his funeral was attended by Jerry Falwell and Mrs. Falwell. However, Falwell did not deliver a eulogy. That task was reserved for the Reverend James Robison, the same Texas evangelist whom Menge had called before his death. He did not mention what, if anything, Menge had told him."

### IS HERBERT ARMSTRONG BEING USED?

Is Herbert Armstrong being used? Is he a tool in the hands of some group of internationally influential kingmakers? Is he unknowingly fulfilling a major role in some grand international conspiracy? Is he in effect being manipulated by some group of communists, Zionists, international bankers, the Trilateral Commission, the Mafia, the Catholic church, the Masons, and/or the Illuminati?

To the sophisticated reader, such questions may seem a bit over dramatic, perhaps lending an air of cosmic importance to the Armstrong church that it does not deserve. Yet, those are exactly the kinds of questions being asked increasingly by both WCG members and long-time WCG observers. Many of those asking such questions have been particularly suspicious of Stanley Rader, considering him to be some sort of an agent that infiltrated the WCG.

Some have even drawn a comparison between Stanley and Dr. Alberto Rivera of "The Crusaders." For those unfamiliar with them, "The Crusaders" are a comicbook series published by Christian fundamentalist J. T. Chick (P. O. Box 662, Chino, CA 91710). The most controversial of the series are "Alberto" and "Double Cross," two issues which claim to be "based on a true story." The hero of these two issues is Alberto Rivera, a Spaniard now in the U.S., who claim to have been a member of the Jesuit order of the Catholic church before he "surrendered his life to Jesus Christ." He claims that the Jesuits trained and sent him to Latin America where he infiltrated numerous Christian groups known for their anti-Catholic teachings. He claims he was but one of many such infiltrators the Jesuits have used and still use to bring about the moral decay and theological disintegration of numerous Christian churches around the world.

The Chick comics make colorful reading and many of the facts presented are accurate. However, much of the most controversial elements of the stories are not easily verifiable, and recent articles in the *Los Angeles Times* (Jan. 26, 1981; Oct. 27, 1981) have raised some serious questions about the reliability of the information found in the Chick series. Numerous Christian bookstores have refused to carry them, and the Canadian government has attempted to stifle their distribution in Canada. Nevertheless, some WCG and former WCG members continue to see amazing parallels between Stan Rader and the Alberto of preconversion days. Some insist that Stan Rader has been used to lead an unsuspecting HWA into spiritual Egypt.

In all honesty, we at the *Report* - although respecting many of those putting forth these ideas - are not convinced of their theory for two reasons: (1) We don't believe HWA has been an innocent duped into anything and (2) We have seen absolutely no hard evidence of Stanley being a part of any international conspiracy activities whatsoever. We don't think Rader has been anything other than a very sharp CPA/lawyer earning a good salary for performing exactly the services his client asked for.

But that does not mean that we are convinced HWA is not being used by others. He very well may be. And he may not even realize it. No matter. There is an unconscious side to all of us. Very few, if any of us, are fully aware of all of our own motivations at any one time. HWA is no exception.

We were recently sent a cassette tape of a sermon by Bryce Clark of The Church Of God, The Eternal (P.O. Box 775, Eugene, OR 97401). Entitled "Babylon," this sermon, more than any other source - printed or taped - seems to sum up the suspicions and fears of those who believe HWA has been led into fulfilling a very sinister function in world affairs.

While we are not members of Clark's denomination and do not necessarily agree with all his conclusions, we do feel he has made a number of very cogent observations. For instance, he very correctly points out that while HWA does canvass the earth talking about a coming world government, by failing to mention Jesus Christ and omitting to specify what he means in any detail, he really does become guilty of preaching "another gospel." For when he merely uses such ambiguous phrases as "a strong hand from someplace," he really conveys different things to different people. To a communist such a phrase could easily mean a world revolt by the proletariat. To an international financier it may mean the world's top bankers working together toward the goal of a one-world currency system. To certain Zionists, it may imply the domination of Palestine by the armies of the state of Israel - believed by some to be the fulfillment of the prophesied Messiah (viewed merely as metaphor). To a religious Iranian, such a phrase would probably be interpreted as the advancement of the reign of the Ayatollah Khomeini. One can also see how such a phrase as "the principle of give and get" could just as easily have any number of interpretations. For instance, to a Communist it could possibly mean the obliteration of all property rights.

Whatever it is world leaders believe HWA is saying, it should be apparent to all that most - whether communist, Zionist, Moslem, Protestant, or Catholic - like what he is saying.

The Dec. 14 issue of the *Worldwide News* reported:

"During a 16-day trip to Europe and the Middle East, Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong met with such dignitaries as Israeli President Yitzhak Navon, Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Jihan Sadat (widow of slain Egyptian President Anwar Sadat), Abdel Kader Hatem, director of the National Councils in Egypt, King Leopold III, former king of Belgium, and Franz Josef Strauss, head of West Germany's Christian Democratic Union."

In the photos accompanying the article there was no sight of former traveling companion Stan Rader. He was not on the trip. (One source told us that Osamu Gotoh is once again HWA's advance man for these junkets.) During HWA's talk with Franz Josef Strauss, the German politician mentioned a recent meeting with Soviet Premier Brezhnev. HWA asked Strauss what he thought of a meeting between Brezhnev and himself. Strauss did not feel such a meeting would be advisable.

Finally, in his Nov. 27 letter to *Plain Truth* subscribers we found this little tidbit:

"A week ago yesterday, Thursday, Nov. 19, I had a personal meeting with President Yitzhak Navon of Israel in Jerusalem, and the night before I was guest of honor at a banquet hosted by Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem. Present also were former Mayor John Lindsay of New York City, and Jacob Rothschild of London."

One can only ask: What is it that HWA is giving in return for such honors?

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Even though his lawsuit with Worldwide is now over, we haven't heard the last from author David Robinson. The *Tulsa World* (Oct. 23, 1981) reported that he is now writing a novel based on his experiences in the Worldwide Church of God. Robinson told us that the novel form will allow him to indulge in a bit of speculation on HWA and his associates - something which would have been inappropriate in his nonfiction *Tangled Web* book.

John Portune, former WCG pastor, college instructor, and writer, is now part owner of an electronics manufacturing business in Pasadena. His firm manufactures microcomputer-based industrial controls.

Enrique Ruiz, former head of the Mexican office of the WCG, has remarried and is residing in Pasadena. His new wife was known as Draga during her previous career as a nightclub entertainer in Mexico. We hear Enrique is now working in the jewelry business.

### NEW GROUPS AND GROUPS NEW TO US

Spiritual Counterfeits Project  
P.O. Box 2418  
Berkeley, CA 94702

This is an evangelical Christian organization specializing in helping those involved with cults. They offer a free introductory packet of information and a catalog listing studies they have published on various cult groups.

\*\*\*\*\*

Truth Fellowship, Inc.  
P.O. Box 138  
Clifton Park, NY 12065

Through this organization, ex-WCG and ex-CGI minister David Bierer offers a monthly newsletter and cassette tapes on biblical subjects.

\*\*\*\*\*

America's Promise Radio  
Lord's Covenant Church, Inc.  
P.O. Box 5334  
Phoenix, AZ 85010

This organization distributes books, pamphlets, and a 40-minute movie propounding the Anglo-Israel theory.

\*\*\*\*\*

Truth Line, TSL Publishing House  
P.O. Box 18122, Cleveland Hts., OH 44118

This organization wrote us:

*"Because of the arrogant and racist atmosphere present in the WCG, a few members decided to find out the source of these terrible attitudes increasing in 'God's Church.' They were led to do research on Anglo or British-Israelism and their findings were shocking.*

*"After discovering the real origins and many errors of British-Israelism they published their findings in an 18-page newsletter entitled Truth Line. "Because of the distribution of the Truth Line, these people were 'marked' and ridiculed for publicly disagreeing with Herbert W. Armstrong regardless of the truth of the articles.*

*"You can learn for yourself the startling origins and errors of British-Israelism (the belief that only the white peoples of the United States, Britain, and certain parts of Europe are the 'ten lost tribes of Israel') by ordering your free copy of the Truth Line."*

This group is considering the idea of putting out a newsletter as a means of communication between the many small Sabbatarian groups now in existence. They are also considering the possibility of organizing a Feast of Tabernacles in the Pennsylvania area in 1982.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Mount Zion Reporter  
P.O. Box 10184  
Jerusalem 91101 Israel

This monthly news and evangelistic magazine was founded many years ago by Sabbatarians A. N. and Effie Dugger. It is still published regularly. (A. N. Dugger and HWA were associates in the 1930s.)

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Some of my friends and I are trying to show the evils of Herbert W. Armstrong and his church's teachings. We have two tapes which we offer for \$3 each or both for \$5. We are sorry we have to charge for them, but we are unable to send them free as we are retired and living on pensions. Tape #1: Herbert W. Armstrong and His Teachings by Elder William Davey Bence, D.D. and Tape #2: The Worldwide Church of God by Deacon Gary Clem (also The Most Asked Questions About the Churches of Mt. Armstrong)."*

*Dr. William Davey Bence  
1500 South Fern St., Apt. #528  
Arlington, VA 22202*

\*\*\*\*\*

*"I have been receiving the AR through indirect channels for quite some time. I would like you now to add my name to your official mailing list.*

*"You have listed many spin-off organizations in your publication; however, I think that you have overlooked a more intelligent, positive answer in line with the 20th century. I refer to the philosophy of Humanism.*

*"I draw your attention to the article, 'Humanism - Antidote for the Cults,' in the November, 1980, issue of The Churchman. I, too, like the author 'launched myself out on a journey of discovery.... Humanism, for me, became a "healing balm" or an antidote for the psychic damage done by the cult experience.'*

*"Your readers may write to the following publications and organizations:*

*American Humanist Association  
7 Harwood Drive  
Amherst, NY 14226*

*Fellowship of Religious Humanists  
Box 278  
Yellow Springs, OH 45387*

*The American Ethical Union  
2 West 64th Street  
New York, NY 10023*

*The Churchman  
1074 23rd Ave. North*

*St. Petersburg, FL 33704*

*"I will continue to enjoy your publication, but I will probably be more busy trying to change the world to a more humanistic, livable place than to worry much about these creeps and their twisted theology and world view.*

*"Humanism is a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and according to the methods of reason and democracy (Corliss Lamont).' I am pleased to report that ethical actions can have other bases than belief in the supernatural retribution of an avenging god.*

*"By the way, I am forming a Humanist Club on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles. Your views on the damaging effects of cults on mind and personality would be welcome as a program topic."*

*Larry A. Taylor  
2364 Lomeli Lane  
La Verne, CA 91750*

Editor: *The Churchman* article "Humanism - Antidote for the Cults," referred to above, was written by Brian Knowles, formerly the managing editor of *The Plain Truth*. We, frankly, found the article very simulating reading and would have liked to have reproduced it in the *Report*. When contacted, however, Knowles told us that in the two years since he wrote the piece, his views have changed somewhat and today he would write a little differently on the subject. We have therefore agreed not to republish the article even though we did find it most interesting.

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Since leaving WCG, we have learned of many different groups and beliefs, some we liked and some not. There is a man in Los Angeles who has a simple workable solution whereby you can get your head back on straight after a trauma such as we experienced in WCG. And not only that, but in any stressful situation where emotional reactions lead to depression and disillusionment. For a free information packet write: Foundation of Human Understanding, P.O. Box 34036, Los Angeles, CA 90034."*

*AR Reader, Missouri*

\*\*\*\*\*

IMPORTANT!

While we are enthusiastic about some publications and organizations mentioned in the

*Report*, we do list numerous groups with which we have very little, if any, philosophical agreement. We do so because we believe our readers want to know about more than just our personal views. We're convinced this is a healthy approach. After all, we can all learn from others - even from those with whom we disagree. So if some group is listed in our newsletter which you feel isn't all it should be, please remember: Simply being listed or quoted does not constitute any type of blanket endorsement.

### Letters

*Please extend my thanks to the many people who sent me names and addresses [of WCG members]. I can't thank some of them directly, as several lists were sent anonymously. It will be a few more weeks before I will complete all mailing of flyers to the several hundred names which I received.*

*-John Tuit*

*11 Laurel Court, Freehold, NJ 07728*

*Thanks again for another report. I think there is a similarity in what we feel when we get the Report as to what alcoholics feel when they go to AA. A bond exists between those who have all gone through the same thing. It would be interesting to see a list of all ministers and elders who have left or were put out. Here in the Kelowna church in the last year or so two ministers are out: Dan Banham and Vern Erickson. In the neighboring church in Penticton a few years ago Des Burke left and is now a minister in Ted's church, and of course we have heard of others in Canada that we know have left. It might be interesting news for people who are still in the church and have no idea that these ministers are out. One member in this area said, "Why are the members not even told what's going on?" Thanks again.*

*-Canada*

*I would like to point out an error in your latest Ambassador Report in an item referring to Frank Brown. Although I was not the source of your information (I wonder who was), I feel sure the blame for this error will be laid at my door. You have apparently written that Frank Brown called up Jack Martin (whose disfellowshipment and marking he had formerly announced) to see about a job. This is not true. He called Jack on the phone - much to Jack's amazement - but made no reference to a job. He did say they might get together the next time he was in that area. None of us know precisely why this call was made. I have suggested to Jack and several others that maybe it was an attempt to lay the groundwork for a future job possibility. That's all that can be said.*

*My purpose in bringing the call to the attention of some people was to use it as an example of the hypocrisy of a typical evangelist. Somehow the story has gotten to you in an embellished fashion. I hope you will correct it.*

*Of further interest regarding this incident are two fanciful explanations for this call given me by [WCG minister] Paul Suckling: 1. that Jack requested the call to be made (not true), 2. that it was an attempt to see about some sort of reconciliation to the WCG (not even discussed). In any event, an error has been made and I am sure you would wish to*

*correct it.*

*-Dr. Gordon Muir, New Jersey*

Editor: Thank you for setting us straight on this matter.

*Regarding a letter in the March 1981 copy of Ambassador Report, there was a statement that Basil Wolverton was once involved with the Riker cult. Not true. I recently spoke to Honor, and she said she checked all of Basil's early correspondence (he kept everything) and there was nothing in his files. Pictures are sometimes used without the artist's approval.*

*-California*

Editor: We have looked into this matter and have verified that Paul Kagan's book *New World Utopias* does indeed state that Basil Wolverton illustrated some of Riker's literature. The Kagan book also does show one piece of Riker literature containing an illustration undoubtedly done by Basil Wolverton.

Nevertheless, your point is well taken. Considering "Father" Riker's notorious reputation, it is quite possible the illustrations were used without the artist's permission. Thank you for taking the time to point this out.. And please pass on our best regards to Mrs. Wolverton and her family.

*One thing I'd like to ask you about is if you have any names and addresses of women whose husbands are members of the WCG (and the wife is not) that you would be allowed to give out. My husband is involved with the group, and I would love to talk with someone else in my position and find out how they cope with all there strange beliefs in their home. There's no one here in Birmingham (or at least I don't know of an one). Some of your printed letters indicated other women in my situation. As they say, "Misery loves company."*

*-Alabama*

Editor: Unless a subscriber gives us permission to pass on his or her name and address, it is our policy not to give out that information. However, if a reader would like to have their name and address passed on to someone, such as the above individual, we would be happy to forward that information.

*While having a look at the most recent issue of Ambassador Report I've received so far I was very pleased to see that a reader has written in, mentioning something about Dr. Robert Sumner's exhaustive book on the Worldwide Church of God entitled, Armstrongism: The Worldwide Church of God Examined in the Searching Light of Scripture. I, for one, would like to go on record as highly recommending that aforementioned book to anyone who is still a WCG member, their friends and relatives, and anyone interested in reading what may very well come to be viewed as the definitive book on Armstrongism, its weird tenets, and the baneful influence it exerts on its*

members.

*Dr. Sumner's book deals with pre-1973 WCG doctrines and practices, and it first appeared in 1974. While there have been quite a few minor (and a few major) changes within the WCG since 1973, the book itself is, basically speaking, amazingly accurate in its description of the history, tenets, and practices of the WCG, and I wouldn't hesitate one moment in recommending it. However, the address your reader gave you is no longer valid. Copies of Sumner's book (\$7.95 plus 15 percent for postage and handling) may be gotten through: Sword of the Lord Publishers P.O. Box 1099, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.*

*-Montreal, Canada*

*Would you believe yet another book exposing Herbert's error? Probably no book will excel Paul's book to the Galatians. But I have just completed Martin Luther's "Commentary on Galatians " and find it well worthwhile for you to list it for your readership. It probably can be purchased in most religious bookstores. Also, I have just received my copy of Armstrong's Church of God by Salem Kirban. Out of print till just recently, it has been updated to Oct. 1981. This 55-page book may be obtained for \$4.95 plus postage and shipping (\$1.50) by writing to Salem Kirban, Kent Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006. He has also written other books on other cults of interest.*

*-California*

*I have a friend who has been mailing me copies of Ambassador Report since I came out of the WCG about three years ago. It has been of much assistance in helping me overcome the trauma which most go through. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.*

*I left because there were so many holes in their doctrines, which did not match biblical scripture. When I approached a minister with a question, I never got an answer. They always fell back on the "old saw" that HWA is the Apostle, and like the Pope, infallible. Having come out of the Catholic Church back in the '50s, I wasn't buying infallibility.*

*The frightening part is that I probably would have still been a member if they had not made me a deacon. As a deacon, I started giving sermonettes, and shortly thereafter split sermons. (I think I was being groomed to be a local elder.) The awesome responsibility of giving sermons led me to intense Bible study. It was then that I stopped studying to the foregone conclusions that their Bible lessons and sermons led one to. I began having doubts about tithing, church eras, 19-year time cycles, setting dates, etc. I could not get Nelson Haas minister in Flint, Michigan) to sit down with me and review scripture that seemed to go counter to the organization. He kept feeding me principles such as HWA being God's Apostle. After working myself into stomach ulcers, I finally decided that it was time to get out.*

*For a long time I prayed about being "in a bad attitude" and all the other garbage that puts one on a guilt trip. Dr. Martin's literature helped, and others who had left shortly after I did were of much assistance. I keep telling myself that I no longer have any ties to the organization, but like many others, for 14 years the church was the most important thing in my life. I made, what I thought, were friends. I miss some of them very much,*

*even though they think they serve God by cutting me off.*

*I'm finally completely deprogrammed, and am enjoying physical and mental health, and studying with an open mind. It's wonderful! I really don't know why I'm still interested in what's going on in that "snake-pit," but put me on your mailing list.*

*-Michigan*

*Oh, how good it is to be able to sit back and laugh at the comic opera of Armstrong and company. Thanks for bringing us such amusing entertainment. I am, of course, being a little tongue-in-cheek about the contents of the latest AR. Amidst all the politics, two-facedness, intrigues, hypocrisy, self-righteousness, unscholarliness, distortions, and narrow-mindedness that are characteristic of the WCG mentality are a whole lot of sincere, but sadly naive, people, many of whom I count as friends, though they must surely feel my wife, my family and I are doomed "possibly for all eternity." The tragedy of the WCG is that so many fine people have permitted themselves to believe that an organization like the WCG reflects "true Christianity." I am constantly struck by the astounding parallels between the attitude of the New Testament Pharisees and the more militant members of the WCG. Isn't it amazing we could read about those people, of ages long ago and never (unless we make that fateful step of questioning "Headquarters") see ourselves?*

*Anyway, now that Judy and I have gone through our "year of adjustment" I feel ready to let people know what's become of us. if you think your readership would be interested here's where we are now.*

*Judy and I graduated from AC (England) in 1970, 1969 respectively. (Judy a the sister of WCG minister Roger Foster.) I was a ministerial assistant in Harrisburg, PA, then a minister in Bluefield, W. Va. from 1972-1977. A minister in Champaign, IL from 1978-1980. I finally resigned for theological and professional reasons and moved to Omaha, NE (my hometown). I currently run my own commercial window cleaning and maintenance business. Since leaving the WCG, I've lost 15 pounds and feel great. I also have a hobby that I've turned into a business called Aviation Oils, whereby I do oil paintings of private airplanes. I'm also involved in several solar energy projects and am a member of Nebraska Solar Energy Society. We are not presently affiliated with any church - for obvious reasons.*

*I'd like to see a list and, if possible, brief resumes similar to the above for any of the rest of the fellows who have quit. In the meantime, keep up the good work. We all really appreciate it.*

*Bill Moore  
P.O. Box 14414,  
Omaha NB 68124*

Editor: During the last three months we have received quite a few letters from subscribers telling us of their experiences in the WCG. Most, if not all, were very interesting accounts that we would have liked to have published in the Letters section. Our apologies

to those whose letters we have had to omit for lack of space. We, nevertheless, did enjoy reading them and hope readers will continue to share experiences with us and keep us informed of WCG-related events in their local areas.

### LATE NEWS

Just as we are about to take this issue to press, we have learned of a number of interesting developments. Ambassador College is rife with rumors that Ramona Armstrong is about to sue, or has already sued, Herbert Armstrong for divorce. (We would like to get a statement from Ramona on this, but as yet we have been unable to reach her.)

HWA is again experiencing attacks of angina pectoris and is taking nitroglycerin pills, a commonly prescribed medication for that condition. Garner Ted, apparently concerned about his father's health, has once more written to him. But HWA, refusing to correspond directly with his son, has merely responded by a communication to Ted's wife. What was conveyed is not known.

In the meantime, the WCG's council of elders has become more riddled with internal bickering than ever before, as a number of former church employees are threatening to make public new allegations of serious misconduct by members of that board. In fact, we have learned that at least two former HWA associates are now writing books about the church's hierarchy. Those authors are claiming their revelations will shock even the publishers of *Ambassador Report*. (Not likely.)

We will try to find out what we can and report on these stories in our next issue. Until then, our thanks to all of you who are helping to make *Ambassador Report* possible.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola. Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR19\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR19 March 31, 1982

### NEW ALLEGATIONS HIT ARMSTRONG

More than one year after the California state attorney general discontinued his investigation of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), new evidence has come forth indicating that not only were law enforcement officials then on the right track, but that corruption within the church hierarchy is now greater than ever before.

The allegations are contained in a 14-page letter, dated Dec. 30, 1981, written to the church's board of directors and council of elders by W. Jack Kessler, an ex-auditor for the church. Kessler, who is an Ambassador College graduate, CPA, and lawyer, had his contract to do accounting for the church terminated last summer during a purge of suspected Rader loyalists. He was disfellowshipped on Sept. 9, 1981, for ostensibly - according to Ellis LaRavia - refusing to turn over certain information.

Many of you may have read of the "Kessler letter" in news reports. The *Los Angeles Times* (March 11, 1982), the *Pasadena Star-News* (March 12 and 14), and many other news organizations have run articles on the subject because of copies distributed to the press by *Ambassador Report* and its friends. Even though it means getting "scooped," we have, since our publication's inception in the mid-70s, tried to cooperate extensively with the news media by making all our information and documentation readily available to the press. We think this is one more way we can serve both our readers and those still in the church.

While the coverage by the news media has been excellent, we think you might find it valuable if we excerpt the Kessler letter more extensively. We are not presenting the letter in its entirety, however, because frankly about one-half of it is just plain boring. Almost all of what we are omitting is nothing more than convoluted reasoning and scripturally based justifications for the threat of some unspecified legal action. Nevertheless, much of the letter is of interest. After a four-paragraph introduction Kessler writes:

The human condition is such that it would shock probably only just a few to learn of the moral depravity that is reported commonly among you. Although others, such as Dave Robinson and Floyd Lochner, apparently thought that it might work to their advantage to report Mr. Armstrong's admission (which he's made to several) that he had engaged repeatedly in incestuous intercourse with his daughter during the first 10 years of his ministry, as well as more recent, self-confessed sexual perversity, such attacks have been weathered, and I know that both you and the membership have steered yourselves against potential adverse publicity, if any, that such revelations could bring. After all, Christ did say that they that are whole don't need a physician, and he came to call not the righteous but the sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:12-13). I mention this to you for a couple of reasons. First, because some have tried to use such information in an illegitimate way in the past, and because some of you assume that anyone in possession of such knowledge may try to do so in the future (perhaps because some of you would like to think that you could use it as some kind of leverage even now), I want to draw at the outset a clear distinction between that and the approach of this letter. Second, even though by mentioning the more notorious of the scandals, some could accuse me of using it nonetheless, I feel that its mention and dismissal as an issue precludes anyone from using it in the future or from construing my actions as being overshadowed by some implied threat of its later disclosure. The particular facts are a matter of fairly wide public dissemination in any event, so their mention here should defuse any remaining power some feel that their disclosure could bring.

The issue of morality takes on its true significance when it is not a mere weakness of the flesh, but when, coupled with blatant hypocrisy, it is used for political advantage. At the beginning of this year two people responded to a vicious smear campaign that had been launched by Mr. Kevin Dean. Mr. Dean apparently had forsaken Christ to become a disciple of Segretti and Krogh. Showing tremendous energy, if not ingenuity, he (with the assistance of his brother and fellow

minister Aaron) purchased an extensive cache of electronic surveillance equipment in Hong Kong and Tokyo, organized a burglary squad, which included the campus locksmith, and set out to discredit any who stood in the way of his rise to power. If he couldn't dig up any dirt he could always invent it. (Aaron admitted to his being especially anxious to go to work on Mr. Rod Meredith's phone lines.) I suppose that such antics are par for the course in large, centrally managed organizations, but it shocked some of their early targets. For those of you who are not as familiar with the mundane details of these covert operations, you might check with fellow board members Tkach, LaRavia, McNair, or Walker. It would not be a good idea to reread the coverup under Mr. Armstrong's signature in the Pastor General's report (ironically referring to Watergate as if that scandal concerned the actual burglaries rather than the web of falsehoods), unless you wish to be disillusioned by fairly clumsy fabrication.

Mr. Dean's activities are instructive not for their intrinsic evil, but for the reaction their disclosure received. This brings us closer to the heart of why I am writing to you. When Mr. John Kineston and Mr. Joseph Kotora approached Mr. Herbert Armstrong and told him of Mr. Dean's activities, and defended themselves against false accusations that Mr. Dean had made against them to Mr. Armstrong, he reacted in a way that is by now probably all too familiar to most of you. First, he told them he knew that everything that they had said in their defense was entirely true and he knew them to be men of truth. Second, he told them that they would be given the chance to face their accusers and that he would "clean up this stinkpot" as soon as he returned to Pasadena. Third, he saw to it that Messrs. Kineston and Kotora were fired and disfellowshipped before such a confrontation could ever take place. (This result, you see, promotes unity and harmony among the evildoers within the Church and only sacrifices a few innocent lives in the process.) And fourth, Mr. Armstrong made sure that you all saw and heard, once again, how futile it is to be a whistle-blower in this church ....

Mr. Armstrong is somewhat of a tragic figure. He is a man to whom a great calling has been given and through whom marvelous insight has been revealed. He is also a man motivated by strong passions, and is perhaps one of the most naturally selfish men to have walked this earth, ever. That he has been able to control his desires and egocentrism to an appreciable degree shows some measure of his tremendous will, and only God can judge to what extent he has overcome more than the rest of us, as well he may have. He is also an uneducated man, though he has proved more than any that this does not have to be a handicap; indeed, in his case it may be to his advantage to stick close to the source of his inspiration without trying to refine his understanding in the light of disparate thoughts. But there is a liability implicit in this background, and that is ignorance of the workings of the world, coupled with a disdain for the regulatory milieu in which the Church must survive. Christ didn't urge his disciples to needlessly insult Caesar, indeed, it is a distinct disadvantage to be neither wise nor harmless (Cf. Matt. 10:16). It will be easy enough to attract persecution simply by being righteous. It makes no sense to invite it for all the wrong reasons.

As long as Mr. Armstrong and the Church receive competent advice on legal matters, however, the potential exposure can be minimized. But Mr. Armstrong's advisors not only have to be knowledgeable, they must also be candid, forthright, and vigorous in curbing any of his untoward desires that run afoul of the laws of the land. Because of the tremendous power that his office has within the hierarchy, and because of the attitude of unquestioning obedience that is preached to all subordinates, and also because of the imbedded notion discussed above that he is accountable only to God, Mr. Armstrong is capable of causing considerable problems both for himself and for the Church. And he will do this damage without the benefit of competent counsel if everyone apprehends that he may be feeling a little too much like the queen of hearts on the day that they venture forth to advise.

There have been only two individuals of any consequence whom God has called to fulfill the role that has now devolved upon you. Loma Armstrong and Stan Rader were the only persistent, loving, voices of restraint. Sadly, both are now silenced. With no effective governor, it is only a matter of time before grave damage is done.

I feel a particularly acute sense of need to see some discipline reimposed. For the past 10 years, in one way or another, I had been used by the Church to help it develop a system of internal controls so that abuses could not overrun the system. Unfortunately, no system of controls, whether they be financial, administrative, or otherwise, can be any more sound than the people who maintain the system. And every control is capable of being overridden by top management, even more so in the Worldwide Church of God. Having seen each of the key financial personnel wrongly fired or banished in the past 12 months, and replaced by people, who have neither the competence, the wisdom, nor the guts to keep the system intact, there appears little hope for the Church to reform its ways.

Mr. Willis J. Bicket, the former assistant secretary-treasurer, was asked by Mr. Armstrong to violate the system "as a test" on the day after Mr. Rader's replacement had been announced. From an outsider's viewpoint he passed the test; that is, he refused to break the established controls without a direct command from Mr. Armstrong after a chance to confront him in a face-to-face meeting wherein he could explain his actions. But Mr. Armstrong was clearly of the opinion that he had failed. Mr. Bicket was immediately removed from his position and sent to be on the faculty of the Church's junior college in Big Sandy, Texas. He was later threatened (in writing) with immediate termination if he did not sign a false representation letter to Arthur Andersen & Co. to show that he was thereby on Mr. Armstrong's "team." In fairness to Mr. Neff, who signed the threat, I hasten to point out that Mr. Neff later claims not to have known that Mr. Bicket considered the representations to be false, and blames his alleged confusion on the resignation of the auditing firm's manager who was to have responded to Mr. Bicket's reservations some months earlier. Mr. Bicket was terminated shortly thereafter.

The specific financial abuses that have plagued the Church in the past were bred in just such a climate of intimidation. What is to prevent the same scheme that Mr. Ray Wright used to embezzle over a quarter of a million dollars from being used again? Who is left in the organization, other than Mr. Wright (who is now back in the financial affairs office, without having repaid the funds), who knows how he pulled it off and who would recognize it again? Who will prevent the Church from getting involved in another \$50,000.00 kickback scheme to a Mexican bank when it sells another jet aircraft, other than the same legal office who so poorly monitored the first sale? Who will tell Mr. Dennis Stauffer this

time that a scheme is more than just ill-advised whereby corporate officers are able to purchase monetized silver and gold bullion from the Church at its cost through the use of fraudulent book entries to show that the investments were purchased on behalf of the officer (through the extension of free credit) when prices have risen and on behalf of the Church's own account, or that of its employee benefit fund trust, when prices fall?

Each of you should remember the letter I wrote to the entire board exactly four years ago today. (If you were not a board member at the time of the January 1978 meeting when Mr. Rader read it into the record, and when he handed each member a personal copy, you must have reviewed by now the minutes from that meeting. At least I have to assume that none would ever undertake to accept a nomination to board membership without reviewing what had gone before.) On that occasion I found it my duty to forewarn the Church of material weaknesses in its internal controls. (See Statement on Auditing Standards No. 20, Required Communication of Material Weaknesses in Internal Accounting Control, AICPA.) I had approached Mr. Rader with the problems, the roots of which he had been trying valiantly to dig out for years, and he said that there were two things to be done. He reminded me of my professional duty to inform the board in writing, and he felt that because sufficient corrective action was unlikely to be forthcoming, he must resign from the board. It's all in the minutes of that meeting, including a sort of valedictory address by Mr. Rader warning of the consequences of continued misallocation of economic resources.

When Mr. Rader resigned for the last time, in part because he felt ineffective in (or just plain tired of) urging Mr. Armstrong to behave rationally, he received assurances from Mr. Armstrong that the job of cleaning up the Church would proceed apace. Mr. Armstrong told Mr. Rader that I would be asked to become the new treasurer and that "Jack and Jack" (referring to Mr. Bicket and myself, as well as to a famous carriage horse racing team from Mr. Armstrong's childhood) would be given a free hand to continue the job at hand. Mr. Rader even persuaded me to forego other opportunities so that my services would be available in an amount adequate to the task on a "first-call" basis. My offer to Messrs. Neff, Fahey, and Armstrong to inform them of the bases I was covering, after my services were terminated abruptly, has gone unanswered. The abuses that were in the process of being corrected in the aftermath of the attorney general's lawsuit, therefore, remain unreformed. All of them to my knowledge relate to the inurement of the earnings of the Church to Mr. Armstrong, members of his family, and close personal aides. Before its discovery, the use of Church coffers as a sort of personal piggy bank for instant credit (always interest-free) or outright appropriation had grown to outrageous proportions through constant circumvention of the system by Mr. Armstrong and his family. We hoped to reconcile the problem within the Church, and out of the cold light of the U.S. attorney's office, and then to recover the funds and thereby prevent a scandal. I feel particularly motivated in at least one respect to see this corrected because I prepared Mr. Armstrong's tax returns for years without knowing that he was consistently falsifying his expense account, abusing the trust funds of the Church, and misusing Church assets for his own benefit on a relatively large scale. I also represented the Church in its successful defense in 1980-81 of its exempt status before the National Office of the Internal Revenue Service, a status that later facts may prove to have been improvidently granted.

It is ironic that the attorney general, having only part of the story, focused upon a series of highly visible transactions between the Church and Mr. Rader, all of which were in fact proper, and missed the real problem which was Mr. Armstrong. I have never known Mr. Rader to have ever abused his trust. To his and my chagrin, however, neither of us had ever pieced together the entire picture of Mr. Armstrong's abuse, and were on the verge of solving the puzzle with Mr. Bicket's assistance when we were all drummed out of the corps. It is only in my belated abandonment of any hope in realizing a discreet dialogue with the proper Church officials, or in seeing some evidence that the errors would be corrected, that I take the more direct steps implicit in the writing of this letter. Recent activities, discussed four paragraphs hence, also prompt this action.

So that there is no misunderstanding, let me be rather more specific about these particular allegations. I can only skim the surface, but you are sitting on all of the documentation and can research the facts for yourselves if you have the collective competence to know where to look. (Some of you need look no further than the end of your nose.) The ultimate facts are as I stated in the paragraph before last. Some of the specific instances are discussed here and, by way of illustration, in the two attachments to this letter. (I apologize for adding to the length of this letter by including attachments, and I realize that there are many, many other attachments that you may find of even greater interest, but then again, you already have custody of all of the source documents. These particular attachments are not notable, merely illustrative.) Some of you know that Mr. Armstrong takes with him on each trip in his aircraft \$10,000 in cash for which he does not account, which is not treated as compensation, and which is used for his personal pleasure or given to his private nurses as "fun money" or else given to his wife. When such funds are insufficient to satisfy each of his desires, he has had additional funds wired under false pretexts from the Church to pay for such things as a \$30,000 rental payment for a yacht in Monte Carlo. (Some of you may recall how that he later complained that Mr. Rader - who was not there - either "forced" Mr. Armstrong and his wife to do it or else that Mr. Rader had made the arrangements himself. Competent testimony will prove otherwise. Members of his family use corporate credit cards for personal use on a persistent basis, without any present ability or apparent intention to repay, and he uses actual handwritten checks drawn on the corporate accounts. His household staff includes a full-time cook, who is probably an appropriate requisite, but she is paid rather handsomely by most standards in that he takes out a corporate check to give her a little bonus every so often. Last year her total cash remuneration from the Church, excluding the value of interest-free loans, a company car, meals, and other perks, was in excess of \$50,000.00. Since he requires no approval for the issuance of bonus compensation to himself, he does not hesitate to increase his own pay when the need appears to present itself. Often, he is quite vocal about it: He recently shocked Frank Mariani (President Reagan's tailor) by loudly complaining for all to hear that with taxes so high he was going to have to give himself a bonus of \$100,000.00 just to pay for his clothes. Last year Mr. Armstrong's compensation, at least that which went through the payroll system, was in excess of \$500,000.00. (I believe it was around \$563,000.00, but that figure may include Mrs. Armstrong's salary.) I am informed that he keeps on his person cashier's checks or certificates of deposit in his name in amounts ranging into six figures so that he can, as he once expressed, get out of the country if the attorney general ever comes after him. He had wanted to place \$1,000,000.00 in noninterest-bearing cashier's checks payable to him so that he and the Church would be "protected" in such an eventuality. Of course

you know that his daughter Beverly has a lifetime contract for "personal services" with the written proviso that she take orders only from her father and is relieved of providing any services at all upon his death. In point of fact, she renders no services whatsoever. Her compensation is more generous than that which Cardinal Cody is alleged to have given his friend, and it includes the use of an exquisitely furnished home in La Canada at a guaranteed monthly rental of \$250.00 for life. The use of the Grumman Gulfstream II jet aircraft for personal pleasure, whether it be a trip to London for the sole purpose of purchasing a specially made prosthetic dildo (which he carries in a Hermes pouch), or just a trip from Tucson to Jurgensen's in Pasadena for groceries, is another area of concern. Speaking in Mr. Armstrong's defense, his actions may have been unthinking, uninformed, or just plain stupid. But I do not understand why you don't seem to think of them as problems.

Even if Mr. Armstrong is not culpable in the criminal sense, his example is all too readily followed by others who must be said to know better. I am told that the illustrious Mr. Dean aforementioned felt that he too could stock his private larder from Jurgensen's to the tune of between \$700.00 to \$ 1,000.00 per month until someone questioned why Mr. Armstrong's Pasadena household expenses were so large when only his Pasadena housekeeper was in residence. When your taste regularly runs to wine that costs \$80.00 per bottle, it can be expensive. Mr. Dean may learn that it is even more expensive to brag to others about getting it for "free." According to Mr. Robin Webber, Mr. Joseph Tkach apparently felt justified in giving himself from a trust fund he controlled a little advance of \$5,000.00 as a "needy Church member" to take advantage of a special investment in unregistered securities then illegally being pedaled (against the advice of counsel) by the Dean brothers. In some cases, Mr. Armstrong encouraged others to join in the fun of having treasure troves from Harrod's of London maintained in their homes so that his own conscience could more easily be assuaged.

Perhaps I should also say a few words in defense of my colleagues at Arthur Andersen & Co., who will be as embarrassed as I am that these things happened under our collective nose. They relied, as they were entitled, on numerous representations both from management and from myself, which now appear to have been based on incomplete information. I did tell them everything I knew at the time, but our collective knowledge proved insufficient in the face of Mr. Armstrong's unreliability. Even the work we did together, cleaning up the festival department, for example, may now be undone. I understand that once again it is becoming routine for people such as Mr. Dwight Viehe to take a two-week trip to a tropical isle (with his wife) to make sure that the hall that the local minister recommends that the Church rent for the Feast of Tabernacles is the right size. One would think that the policy of turning such aspects of festival administration over to local Church pastors has been totally abandoned for a more "workable" policy as was extant in the "good old days." I am somewhat surprised, however, that even in light of the admonitions of SAS No. 16 (particularly the section on integrity of management) the firm would not be more careful in getting appropriate representations. Their last examination was concluded without Mr. Rader's representation letter, even though he had served as the chief financial officer during the year in question and remained an executive vice-president of one of the entities (whose chief financial officer was not even approached for a representation letter). Moreover, Mr. Rader had indicated to the engagement manager that he could not sign a version of the representation letter that was initially forwarded to him because it was inaccurate. In that context, it is all the more curious why they never got back to him. It is also unfortunate that they have allowed the client to backslide on Mr. Rader's promise to the brethren that full financial disclosure would be made annually in the Church newspaper by reprinting the audited financials. Even though in the recent appellate court hearing leading to the notable vindication of our battle with the attorney general Mr. Helge "missed himself" by assuring the justices that the Church did so publish its financial affairs, the candor befitting an officer of the court should have led him to divulge that such assurances were no longer true and that the Church no longer intends to disclose any of its financial affairs to its members. (Since this paragraph is supposed to be in defense of the auditors, I should say that I haven't seen their opinion letter for 1980, and I'm sure that it must contain a scope limitation qualification for not being permitted by Mr. Neff to interview or obtain representations from departed management. They are under no obligation to insist on the lifting of such restrictions, although they undoubtedly notified each of you that management had so encumbered their engagement.)

How far the Church leaders have backslid during 1981 can only be guessed. I understand that Mr. Armstrong currently is taking increased advantage of his position without any effective restraint, and, sadly, in a way that discloses more, rather than less, personal culpability. Earlier this month he is said to have forced the Church to purchase a residence from his daughter Dorothy for a price that appears to be particularly generous. When the housing market is slow, it is nice to have a rich father, or failing that, a father who controls a rich corporation whose trustees are paid to look the other way. Showing some pang of conscience (or evidence of mens rea), he is also said to have grudgingly exclaimed at the time the orders were given that this transaction may well "wreck the Church" if it is ever uncovered, but he wanted to do it anyway. And as a matter of trifling significance in the larger scheme of things, but one that may not universally be so regarded, the G-II was sent to Tucson earlier this month to deliver a personal letter. Much better service than the post office, and much cheaper than federal express, if you discount the rental value of the G-II and its crew and supplies and fuel. (For a point of reference, you might ask J.B. Nethercutt how much Merle Norman Cosmetics gets for their G-II when it is idle. (Hint: For the price of each hour of usage you could buy a nice car.) You might also consider how the government treated Mr. Nixon's personal use of Air Force One when his personal tax return was audited in the aftermath of Watergate.)

I trust I have given some indication of what I'm complaining about. I cite the few specific instances that I do, not to single them out as being particularly noteworthy, but to help you to comprehend that I am not passing on idle gossip and hearsay. I have been careful to ensure that my factual bases are sound, and you should realize that if God wanted to choose someone to serve as an instrument of reform, few have received better training within the Church than I have. Whether I am adequate to the task may be another question, but I have been prepared as no other could have been ....

I would also like to return, for just a moment, to that which a court cannot easily correct: the evils I alluded to at the outset of this letter. Truly the real problems in the Church are not just financial. They are just symptomatic of the disease.

That is why your collective dereliction of duty as directors and elders is so abominable. The unfortunate state of affairs with Mr. Armstrong and his family could have been prevented. It did not need to rub off on impressionable young men like the Dean boys. When a scatterbrained issue like whether women should be allowed to groom themselves modestly in a way not inconsistent with Biblical teaching is mistakenly presented, you who are strong should not be so cowardly as to not speak up. I have difficulty believing that a man of the supposed stature of a Rod Meredith could allow a Joe Tkach to dissuade him from standing firmly for truth on the issue (not that the issue is that important, and at this point it might as well be left alone). I'm saddened that I cannot take the time to discuss these matters further; just to introduce the subject properly would easily treble the length of this letter. I do not think, however, that it should take much searching of your consciences (I speak to those who have them) to see that if you have never counselled Mr. Armstrong adequately on the mundane affairs of the work because you thought it presumptuous, you have probably done an even worse job of speaking up forcefully on matters of doctrine (especially as applied). For one small morsel of food for thought, why is it that people can be disfellowshipped for no reason that is explained to them, and no effort whatsoever is made to reconcile the lost brother? Does 2 Cor. 2:7 mean anything to you? How about Luke 15? Also, how is it that you allow Mr. Armstrong to approve abortions for "special circumstances" without reconciling this with the Church's public position (not to mention the sacred Word of Truth)? How many more murders shall we encourage before those of you who are supposed to be shepherds realize that there is some duty to protect a flock from wolves, from the type described in the second chapter of 2 Peter, or in Jude?....

I cannot take the time to outline for you the specific steps that I will be taking as soon as I am able. Suffice it to say that short of a miraculous coming to your senses there remains little that you can now do to rectify the situation other than prepare to cooperate fully. You have sat on my letter dated October 26, 1981, to Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher for altogether too long for me even to feel that an additional five business days would be of any use. (For those of you who haven't been given a copy of even that communication, you may consider such treatment when you make your future plans for retention of the legal services you all require. I cannot believe that such a firm as Gibson would not have made sure that each of you received a copy, unless they were given deceitful assurances by Helge that he would take it upon himself to look out after your welfare. For any of you who have placed your trust in that man, may God have mercy on your souls. Such a son of perdition will soon be exposed.)

If you don't feel as I do that you are under some duty to help put the Church on the right course, then you have no business accepting the accolade of board membership. There have been only three board members who have resigned in the past for concerns such as I express here: Albert Portune, David Antion, and Stan Rader. Whatever other faults each of those men may have had or yet has, they did have some inkling of what decency requires. If you are willing neither to act nor to resign, then someone else will see to it that the proper steps are taken. You have personal liability in this matter gentlemen. I suggest that you govern yourselves accordingly.

Very truly yours,  
W. Jack Kessler

Exactly what type of action Kessler plans to take remains unclear. The attorney general's office has again stated that, because of the Petris law, it will not reopen its civil case against the WCG's leaders. It has also refused to comment on whether or not any kind of criminal charges will ever be filed. The IRS has shown an interest in the Kessler charges, but the church has successfully warded off that agency's probes before.

While the council of elders has, for months, talked about Kessler's threats, none seem to take them seriously enough to take appropriate action. Herbert, himself, has taken the matter quite seriously, however. He has been privately lambasting Kessler while claiming the letter was masterminded by someone else. Privately on at least one occasion he has stated that GTA is behind it, but most of the time (even from the pulpit) he accuses Stan Rader of being the "mastermind" behind the threat. To accuse Ted is, of course, ridiculous, and while Stan Rader is a long-time associate and friend of Kessler's, we've seen no evidence whatsoever that Stan is the real author or instigator behind Kessler's letter. It is interesting that in commenting to the press about the Kessler charges, Rader has actually been quite defensive of HWA's conduct.

As for official public statements, the WCG has refused to issue any type of point-by-point rebuttal of Kessler's allegations. According to Leroy Neff, the church's lawyers have warned the elders to say as little as possible on the matter. But what is perhaps most interesting is not the advice given but who is giving it. As noted by Kessler in his letter, the law firm now representing the WCG is the powerful firm of Gibson, Dunn, and Crutcher. Author David Robinson pointed out to us:

"In my many years of association with Herbert Armstrong and the church, I noticed that a certain modus operandi would always be established by Herbert and then be adhered to in solving all similar problems. When the church was hit with the big lawsuit in 1979, the modus operandi was very clear. It was to hire big law firms and to press for a *political* solution to their dilemma. The church did not cooperate with the attorney general, nor did it open its books. Instead, through its political contacts, it sought and won a change in the law. [Editor: The *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* has reported that the church is now a contributor to the campaign fund of state attorney general Deukmejian, who wants to be governor of California.]

"Now what do we see with the Kessler situation? The church has a problem which involves the IRS. It hires a big law

firm, but not just any big law firm. It hires Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher - a law firm with strong ties to the White House. They even have an office two blocks away. It is the same firm in which the present U.S. Attorney General William French Smith was a partner. I'm not accusing anyone of any kind of illegal activity. I have no evidence of that. But I wouldn't be surprised if HWA tried to get his new lawyers to use their influence and contacts to bring an end to the new IRS investigation. That kind of thing has happened many, many times in U.S. history."

Concerning Kessler personally, it is, of course, nice that he has come forth with the facts as he sees them. But as the *Los Angeles Times* intimated, why didn't he come forward with what he knew during the state attorney general's investigation? Why wait so long? Did getting kicked off the gravy train have something to do with his suddenly putting on a white hat?

But more important, how accurate are Kessler's charges? He has told reporters that he stands 100 percent behind what he has written. Our own sources tell us he is pretty much telling the truth. The WCG has refused to refute the allegations point by point. It is interesting, however, that Leroy Neff (in Big Sandy, Texas) did state that while Kessler's letter did contain some errors (two misplaced commas would make this statement accurate), it also contained some truth. We ask Mr. Neff how much of it is true? Ninety-nine percent? Hopefully, in the near future, the church will make public the financial documents that could once and for all clear away the black cloud of distrust that hangs over its worldly dealings. But even more significant than the accusations of financial wrongdoing, Kessler's letter paints a picture of an organization continuing on a moral toboggan slide.

As pointed out in previous issues of *Ambassador Report*, there has never been a real denial of the now well-known incest allegations. We were aware that before Garner Ted Armstrong was booted out of the WCG, he did, on at least one occasion, personally confront his father about the matter. A third party who overheard the highly charged conversation has reported how Garner Ted, in no uncertain terms, directly charged his father, yelling: "You f----- my sister!!!" Herbert, suddenly aware that his son at last saw him for what he really is, could only softly admit: "Well - there have been times in my life when I've gotten far away from God."

In the almost four years since then, Herbert has made less and less of an attempt to hide this facet of his early ministry. Now, we understand, he has actually confessed this part of his past to many of the church's council of elders. But sadly, he is still unwilling to take any responsibility for his past behavior. He has simply placed the blame on his late wife, Loma.

Ministers such as Leroy Neff are now making a point in sermons to cover up HWA's vile past by alluding to alleged inadequacies in the character of HWA's deceased wife. One part of Neff's approach is to ask the congregation: "Which one of you is willing to cast the first stone?" While a typical WCG audience may find such a misuse of scripture overpowering, we would advise Apostle Armstrong not to adopt that as his only defense. Before some audiences we know of, such a challenge would quickly empty every rock pile in sight.

### TIME AGAIN TO FLEE?

With Herbert's sins more and more being accepted by both the WCG's ministry and membership, it should come as no surprise that morality problems are increasing at headquarters. One leading figure in the church is so open about his own affairs that he has been dubbed "the new Garner Ted." Another top minister was recently found to be committing adultery. He was secretly disfellowshipped - for one day. One young Armstrong aide has seduced two different women in the fourth-floor board room, yet remains on staff. And on and on it goes.

But while the moral slide is depressing, what is perhaps most disturbing about the current climate is an increasing church paranoia and growing fixation on the "flee to Petra" idea. Numerous ministers are now teaching that the WCG will flee the country by 1984. (Recall, however, that similar predictions did not work out too well for 1972, 1975, 1979, 1981, etc.) Gerald Waterhouse, long the Petra heresy's chief proponent, has become increasingly possessed by Petra in recent years, so much so that he recently told a fellow WCG minister that God has already chosen "the Petra teaching team." It will, according to Waterhouse, consist of evangelists Herman Hoeh, Dean Blackwell, Raymond McNair, and of course Gerald Waterhouse, who naturally will be in charge. This type of idiocy would perhaps have been quite amusing some years ago. But in this post-Jonestown era, all talk of the church fleeing to a foreign refuge should not just be taken as a joke.

While both the Bible and tradition mention the torture murders of, not only Jesus, but most of the apostles and many other followers of Christ, and while history tells of millions of Christians murdered throughout the centuries, HWA seems, to know that nothing gets his followers into a giving mood better than talk of saving the flesh. The idea of fleeing to a "place of safety" appeals very strongly to the insecure and fearful.

We don't see HWA's lifestyle fitting in too well atop the waterless crags of Jordan's Petra region, so we prefer to think he tolerates such talk because it brings in the dollars from his hysterical sheep. With the threat of nuclear war increasingly on the minds of people and in the news, it was no surprise for us to see in the December 1981 *Plain Truth* an HWA editorial entitled "There Is a Way of Escape."

But while we would prefer to think HWA is simply using the Petra fixation as a money-making tool (and church income is indeed way up) , we have very little confidence in the mental stability of HWA or those around him. In his Feb. 25, 1982, letter to members and co-workers, HWA writes:

"I hope to arrange for the use of Petra as a possible refuge or place of safety during the Great Tribulation, when I see King Hussein. Pray about this, please."

We can only hope that Herbert does not really take such statements too seriously. The Middle East, being what it is, should be the last place on earth where one would want to be in time of war.

### NEW MAKEUP INFO

In our last issue we reported how the Worldwide Church of God has adopted a new anti-makeup doctrine. Since then, Garner Ted Armstrong has published an exceptional rebuttal to Herbert Armstrong's new doctrinal stance. The article, found on pages 6 and 7 of the March 1982 issue of *The International News* (Box 2525, Tyler, TX 75710) shows conclusively that HWA's recent accusations against Garner Ted Armstrong and Wayne Cole are totally without foundation and that HWA personally did indeed knowingly authorize the WCG's 1974 makeup liberalization. Ted is enraged at his dad's hypocrisy in the whole affair, saying that HWA's wife Loma (Ted's mother) wore makeup on special occasions and that she was not a whore by any means!

It is interesting that not only did the WCG allow makeup for eight years but through its Everest House publishing firm actually promoted makeup use. Listed in the 1981 Everest House catalog are such books as *Peter Shen's Make-up for Success* and *Plastic Surgery for Men*. Incidentally, along with numerous books by Herbert Armstrong, that same catalog listed these titles by other authors: *Mario Badescu's Skin Care Program for Men*, *To Elvis With Love*, *Zen Running*, *Living Jewish*, *The Surrogate Mother*, *My Savage Muse*, *Alien Intelligence*, *How to Make Your Own Knives*, *Guns and How They Work*, *They Call Me Assassin*, *Inside Russian Medicine*, *In Search Of*, *Dark Dimensions*, *How Many Things Can You Do in the Nude?*, and of course Stan Rader's *Against the Gates of Hell*. (Everest House's catalog-address is: P.O. Box 978, Edison, NJ 08817.)

Returning to the subject of makeup, we understand that HWA's wife Ramona has, for now, decided not to sue for divorce. In fact, she is being an obedient wife and has, to Herbert's surprise, discontinued the use of makeup. But Herbert, still unhappy with her, has been loudly complaining to friends that he is "unequally yoked" to Ramona.

### MYSTERY RELIGION CONNECTIONS?

We keep getting letters from students of comparative religion who see parallels between aspects of Armstrongism and the pagan mysteries. For instance, former Armstrong church member Robert Erickson (452 E. Harris Ave., Raymondville, TX 78580) put out a newsletter recently containing this observation (p. 22):

"The next time you're in the WCG auditorium, go down to the bottom lobby floor where the public restrooms are. You'll find the rug is a rich kingly royal purple color; and in the exact center of the lobby is a very huge PAGAN SUNBURST woven right into the rug and having large pointed spears of light, representing TRUTH, radiating out in every direction. Now look close and you'll very clearly see that circling around each and every shaft of light (TRUTH) is a large spiraling serpent.... There are many more symbolic mystery things built into the campus, like the large reflecting sunburst pool of water with an OBELISK directly centered out front and cleverly disguised as a support for four... egrets. Egrets, say some Bible dictionaries, denote presence. Don't forget the large cement walkway pagan 'CROSS' made by the sidewalks and the lake. It is interesting to note that years ago we first learned about Babylon symbology from the WCG's copied work of Hislop's *Two Babylons!!* There is a new work out now called *Babylon Mystery Religion, Ancient and Modern*, by Ralph Woodrow. If you have one handy, open it to page 41 and compare the striking similarities. Be sure to read the whole chapter. It is time to ask yourself now just who's house and for which god is it anyway? It's a fair question, especially since scripture says that now the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as said the prophet (Acts 7:48). And the second witness of scripture says, 'God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands' (Acts 17:24)."

### CHURCH INCOME SKYROCKETS

Between 1972 and Dec. 31, 1979, the Armstrong organization lost about 30 percent of its purchasing power (adjusted for inflation), and its income was stagnating. But now things are different. The Feb. 15, 1982, issue of *The Worldwide News* revealed that the WCG, Ambassador College in Pasadena and Big Sandy, and the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation took in a record-breaking \$108,358,000 in 1981, up 19.98 percent over the \$90,312,000 figure quoted for 1980. These figures, however, were listed in a disappointingly brief and incomplete income statement, which was unaudited. According to church treasurer Leroy Neff, the figures were unaudited (1) because "the 1981 audit, which is in process, will not be completed for several months" and (2) because these figures represent worldwide totals that make it "necessary for one auditing firm to audit all offices" - which, of course, hasn't been done.

The Armstrong organization reported income receipts of \$66,397,000 for 1979 and \$63,467,000 for 1978, according to the audit by Arthur Andersen & Co., but these figures did not include any revenue from the church's foreign offices as do the 1980-81 figures, making a comparison between the 1978-79 and 1980-81 figures impossible. Nevertheless, it appears that HWA's decision to drop *Quest* magazine and the secular approach of *The Plain Truth* and the "World Tomorrow" broadcast and to return to a hard-sell, preachy, doomsday emphasis with a generous sprinkling of misused biblical quotes is paying rich dividends. We hear the church's mailing offices are swamped with requests for *Who Is the Beast?* and *The United States & British Commonwealth in Prophecy* - two booklets that really grab a new reader's attention but that are chocked full of biblical and historical inaccuracies.

### FROM THE GRAPEVINE

\*Some employees at Ambassador College are getting uptight about the increased fanaticism at the church's headquarters. An emotional prayer for "God's Apostle" was even offered before a recent Ambassador College basketball game.

\*Since the removal of Bob Fahey as executive assistant to Herbert Armstrong, most of the executive assistant responsibilities have been taken over by Aaron Dean, although he did not inherit Fahey's title. However, insiders report that the main influence over Aaron is not Herbert but his brother Kevin Dean. (That influence even extends somewhat to evangelists Joe Tkach and Ellis LaRavia.) Some have now begun referring to the Dean brothers as "The Two Witnesses."

\*Herbert Armstrong's writings are finally getting the attention they deserve. In the March 1982 issue of *Playboy* ("The Family Jewels," p. 188), Herbert was quoted as an authority on testicles.

\*Don't be surprised if Garner Ted Armstrong winds up suing his father in the near future. GTA is still miffed that the WCG refused to honor the contract he had with that church. GTA claim they owe him back pay.

\*Jeff Calkins, former PT writer, and Lester Grabbe, former member of the theology department and Greek instructor at Ambassador College, are no longer employed by the Armstrong organization. They were two of the last "intellectuals" left in the organization, which has been taken over by the right wing of the church.

### A COINCIDENCE?

Over the years, many Bible scholars and religious experts have asserted that Armstrongism is essentially an eclectic religion whose doctrines came from a combination of sources including British-Israel organizations, the Seventh-day Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Some individuals, for instance, believe that HWA got his own "disfellowship" (the term is not found in the Bible) doctrine, not from scripture, but from the Jehovah's Witnesses. Because of the many JW-WCG similarities revealed, we believe you will find the following article quite remarkable. It is by religion writer John Dart and appeared in the Jan. 30, 1982, Los Angeles Times, Part II, page 4:

# Defectors Feel 'Witness' Wrath

## Critics Say Baptism Rise Gives False Picture of Growth

*My Avon lady just became a Jehovah's Witness. That may not mean much to you, but it saves me one more trip to the door.*

-George Carlin, comedian

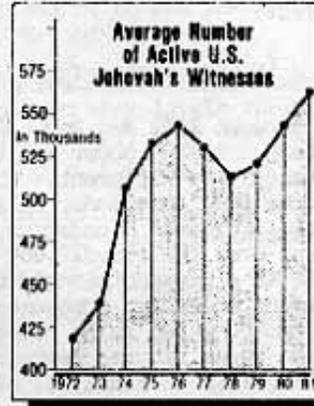
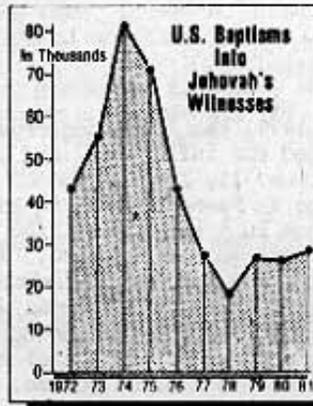
By JOHN DART  
Times Religion Writer

From a doorway perspective, Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be solidly convinced of their organization's distinctive Bible interpretations and of the looming horror of Armageddon.

Substantial numbers of Witnesses do develop doubts and leave, however.

Although the numbers of baptisms and door-to-door proselytizers are on a steady climb, critics contend that the active membership should be much higher than it is. The critics estimate that as many as 1 million Witnesses have become inactive or disaffected in the last decade.

Enough defectors have criticized the Witnesses' Watchtower Society



Los Angeles Times

Baptisms and membership rolls are climbing among Jehovah's Witnesses after falling when the 1975 Armageddon prediction proved false. But dissenters say the figures do not give a true picture.

behavior rules and over his private, but less-than-orthodox, discussions

872 new members worldwide in the year ending Aug. 31, 1974. Nearly

# Defectors Feel 'Witness' Wrath

## Critics Say Baptism Rise Gives False Picture of Growth

*My Avon lady just became a Jehovah's Witness. That may not mean much to you, but it saves me one more trip to the door.*

-George Carlin, comedian

By JOHN DART  
Times Religion Writer

From a doorway perspective, Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be solidly convinced of their organization's distinctive Bible interpretations and of the looming horror of Armageddon.

Substantial numbers of Witnesses do develop doubts and leave, however.

Although the numbers of baptisms and door-to-door proselytizers are on a steady climb, critics contend that the active membership should be much higher than it is. The critics estimate that as many as 1 million Witnesses have become inactive or disaffected in the last decade.

Enough defectors have criticized the Witnesses' Watchtower Society publicly in the last year to prompt the Brooklyn-based leaders to try, in effect, to clasp hands over the ears of its active 2.2 million members.

### Silent Treatment Urged

The Sept. 15 Watchtower magazine told members that anyone who has written a letter of resignation should be shunned as if he had been "disfellowshipped," or expelled.

Previously, only those who entered military service or politics (both forbidden by Witness teachings) were put in the same clan as those formally disfellowshipped by local Kingdom Hall committees and given the silent treatment.

Watchtower officials say most disfellowship actions have been prompted by immoral behavior and are in keeping with the Apostle Paul's admonitions in I Corinthians 5:11-13.

"This Is a hardening, a tightening, of our policy," confirmed William Van De Wall, a headquarters spokesman for the Watchtower Society. Denying any great membership losses, Van De Wall said the new directive was to counteract "disgruntled" ex- members.

The new policy was given as cause for the disciplining late last year of one of the best-known Witnesses to leave the Watchtower Society in recent years - Raymond Franz, co-author of a standard Witness reference book, "Aid to Bible Understanding."

### **Resigned Under Pressure**

Franz, nephew of the Watchtower Society's 88-year-old president, Frederick Franz, was asked to end his nine years on the organization's Governing Body in May, 1980. Several sources said his resignation under pressure followed tensions over Raymond Franz's questioning of the Witnesses' alleged "legalistic" attention to numerous personal and personal behavior rules and over his private, but less-than-orthodox, discussions of Witness theology.

Raymond Franz declined news media interviews in the interim and shared his changing biblical views with but a few close friends, sources close to Franz said.

After 40 year's service as a Witness, Franz, now 59, was given part-time work and a place to park his trailer home by another Witness, Peter Gregerson of Gadsden, Ala., board chairman of Warehouse Groceries.

Gregerson resigned, reportedly under pressure, from the organization early last year, however. Disfellowshipping proceedings were started last fall against Franz, because he was seen eating with his employer-landlord in a restaurant.

Copies of correspondence between Franz and the Gadsden elders, obtained by The Times, show that Franz protested to no avail that he was seen associating with a resigned ex-member before the new rule was announced in mid-September. Franz's first "accuser" was Dan Gregerson, brother of Peter.

"Unless one believes in ex-post-facto laws," Franz wrote in December, "his testimony would hardly seem relevant.

### **Bible Reference Asked**

"I assure you that if you will help me to see from the Scriptures that the act of eating with Peter Gregerson is a sin, I will humbly repent of such sin before God," he wrote.

Both Franz and Gregerson were said to have re-evaluated certain Witness teachings after they had chances to research or study the Bible on their own.

The failure of a predicted Armageddon to usher in a 1,000-year new era in 1975 took its toll on many members, as indicated by the meticulously kept figures in the Watchtower Society's yearbooks.

Witnesses baptized a record 297,872 new members worldwide in the year ending Aug. 31, 1974. Nearly the same number were baptized in the next 12 months. But by the winter of 1974-75, Witness officials were already backing down on their calculations that 6,000 years of human history would be reached in the fall of 1975 and presumably usher in Christ's kingdom.

Baptisms hit a low mark in 1978 with 95,062 worldwide and 20,491 in the United States. That was also the low mark for active members. 2,086,697 worldwide and 513,673 in the United States.

Charges by disaffected members of immorality gone unpunished and cover-ups by some congregational elders arise occasionally from the rather insular world of Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **Effect of '75 Studied**

But, as Peter Gregerson observed, most Witnesses are less likely to become disturbed over such charges as they are about the possibility that Watchtower leaders could justifiably be called "false prophets."

Gregerson was one of nearly 50 selected elders brought to the Brooklyn headquarters, called Bethel ("House of God"), in 1976 to discuss the fallout from the erroneous 1975 prediction. He indicated that the leadership was more prone to blame members jumping to conclusions rather than any mistake or miscalculation on its part.

Ex-member critics point to another prophecy problem. The year 1914, once thought to be the end of the ordinary world, was later designated as the beginning of the end. Applying Jesus' words as reported in Matthew's 24th chapter, the Witnesses are saying that the generation living in 1914 would not pass away before the last day's tribulations would beset the Earth.

Increasing numbers of people who were old enough to be aware of world events in 1914 (the start of World War 1) are dying off - though the last of them may live into the 21st Century.

"This (prediction) does not panic us," Van De Wall said in defending the Watchtower Society position. "This talk attracts people more than it repels them."

#### NEW GROUPS AND GROUPS NEW TO US

"The Shofar"  
P. O. Box 20023  
Phoenix, AZ 85036

Published by a small group of former WCG members, this new newsletter "is intended to expose the errors of Herbert W. Armstrong & Co." It is essentially a doctrinal publication which attempts to deal with the biblical errors taught by Armstrong.

\*\*\*\*\*

*"I came out of the WCG in 1976. Many friends still remain in there who will not hear. We stil love and pray for them in the faith assurance that God's purpose will prevail.*

*"A small group here in St. Louis meets each week continuing in service to out Lord. We'd be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to contact us."*

*-Donald W. Langley*

Concordant Scripture Ministries  
2304 Wesford Drive  
Maryland Heights, MD 63043  
314-878-3256

\*\*\*\*\*

Sabbath Church of God  
907 Clanton Avenue  
Tampa, FL 33603  
813-238-8384

This group meets on Saturdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The current pastor is Dr. Don E . Ward (not the Dr. Ward of Big Sandy, TX).

\*\*\*\*\*

Of the many Sabbath-keeping church groups that have been mentioned in the *Report* over the years (and there have been scores), we have noticed that very few have maintained any kind of a significant growth rate. This observation is not intended to slight anyone. We are not disparaging the sincerity of these churches or the accuracy of what these groups teach. We are simply pointing out that of the church groups that have formed from WCG ex-members, very few have had real membership growth over the years.

Even GTA's Church of God, International seems to be only holding even in size. While we noticed in a recent CGI publication that Garner Ted's organization is building a fine new headquarters building, our sources in Tyler say that actual church growth has been somewhat disappointing.

There is, however, one church that has had almost spectacular growth in the last few years. That is the Biblical Church

of God, coordinated by former WCG minister Fred R. Coulter. We suspect that much of that growth is a direct result of the enthusiasm of its director and the openness the organization has as a whole.

Mr. Coulter called us a number of times recently to tell us about his organization. He also sent us a large package of doctrinal booklets that very clearly explain their position on all major doctrines and on church organization. Essentially, this church seems to maintain most of the doctrinal positions of the WCG with a few modifications. It does, however, have a significantly different church administration and organizational structure, having dropped the hierarchical despotism of the Armstrongs.

As you know, the *Report* is not a Sabbatarian religious group. We do, however, receive many letters from individuals who, while fed up with Herbert Armstrong, still believe many or all of his church's doctrines to be correct. Those individuals may find Mr. Coulter's magazine and other literature of interest. Also, of interest is his radio broadcast, "Bible Answers," aired daily on a number of stations around the nation. The address to write to for information is:

The Biblical Church of God  
Box 744, Monterey, CA 93940

\*\*\*\*\*

Speaking of radio broadcasts, we were very happy to learn that Dr. Ernest L. Martin is now on radio with a program called "Biblical Commentary." On a recent visit to the Foundation for Biblical Research, we listened to a tape of one of his new broadcasts and were very impressed by what we heard. A number of individuals with training in the broadcasting field have commented that, even content aside, Martin's tapes are already not only as professional as Garner Ted Armstrong's but even rival the very best done by Herbert Armstrong in his prime. The Foundation has placed the program on only one station (WNDA in Huntsville, Alabama, at 7 a.m. Sundays) as an experiment, but we suspect the program will be a success and will later expand to other stations. In anticipation of that growth and because the FBR is expanding into book publishing, Gary Arvidson is back on the Foundation's staff. We hope he'll be doing some writing in the future as some of the research he has done in the last few years is quite remarkable.

Another project that the Foundation is engaged in will, we believe, be of great value to thousands, regardless of their denominational affiliations. Dr. Martin is currently writing a book on a subject he has researched for many years. The book, titled *The Original Bible-Its Design and Development*, will be available in about three months. Those of us who had the privilege of studying under Dr. Martin at Ambassador College can attest to what an incredibly interesting subject this is. For those who do not already have the Foundation's address, it is: Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102.

## **Letters**

*I thoroughly enjoyed the rundown on makeup. (I'd been about to ask if you could fill me in on why so many church women suddenly looked pale and splotchy, but you'd anticipated me.) I don't, however, agree with you that the question of makeup "may be considered inconsequential to most normal people." That's certainly not true for women, especially younger ones. Even applied lightly, makeup can make a profound difference in the way a woman looks and feels about herself. The WCG females I've seen lately look awful, especially on dress occasions when all those drab, blemished faces look so horribly out of sync with attractive outfits and hairstyles. It seems to me this latest edict of Herbie Strongarm is of tremendous significance; it's such a frightening example of Jonestownism" - unquestioning obedience, especially since it involves such an intensely sensitive issue as personal appearance. I can't even fathom the mentality of someone who'd cave in to a crazy old man's whim to the extent that she'd be willing to go about looking like death warmed over. Let's hope this latest piece of crackpotism interferes with recruitment!*

*-California*

*In your last issue you commented on HWA's continued meetings with world leaders and in particular a banquet hosted by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek. You went on to say, "One can only ask: What is it that HWA is giving in return for such honors?" I would guess what he is giving is oodles of WCG money. HWA is a businessman from way back and I believe he knows the meaning of a good investment. What he is investing in is his own credibility.*

*The "Power of Positive Thinking" is hardly the WCG religious angle. Bible prophecy is. In a world of future shock with coups, counter-coups, revolutions and assorted upheavals on nightly TV, HWA claims to have the answers as well as a "place of safety" for those concerned with saving their hides, physically (and perhaps spiritually too, but especially physically). "Watch world events" to see how right he is, HWA tells his followers. And what greater way to boost his*

*credibility in the eyes of his followers than for the latter to see him "right in there" with major political leaders? Why it would be like seeing Howard Cosell in uniform and playing right tackle on the LA Rams' line.*

*Generally, HWA meets with dictators, who are not as accountable to their people and less subject to media scrutiny. (Birds of a feather, no doubt) Considering the Israel-orientation of so much of Bible prophecy, a special effort is obviously made as regards this country. Wittingly or unwittingly, Israeli leaders who consent to meet with him are bolstering his image at the expense of the poor dupes (Jew and non-Jew alike) who will take the whole thing seriously enough to bow before the image.*

*As for Teddy Kollek, who seems to figure so prominently in these affairs, I can only conclude the character of some people doesn't change very much over the years. In the 1940s, when the Jewish people emerged from the horrors of the holocaust determined to create a state of their own, Teddy Kollek served as a paid informant for the British, whose job it was to rat on the underground fighters struggling for the freedom of their own people. In the end one can indeed tell people by the company they keep.*

*-Jerusalem, Israel*

*One interesting thing about Herbert is that he always compares himself to the original apostles. However, he is just the diametrical opposite. Take for instance the early apostles who approached the temple at the gate called Beautiful where they met a man begging for alms. The Apostles said, "Silver and gold have we none, but we have something better." Herbert, however, would have said "Silver and gold have I plenty, but you're under a curse for not tithing to me. That's why you're here begging. I get, you give - thats my principle."*

*-John W. Halbert  
1003 E. Harry St  
Tempe, AZ 85281*

*The other day I spied The Plain Truth in an Omaha library branch and was told by a naive librarian that it was "donated " She didn't seem to care about my many objections. Another librarian finally told me there was a committee that had the job of overseeing materials that the library displayed. As it turned out one brief call is all it took to do the job. A gentleman was surprised and a bit angry that the PT was even in the library. He said many people had tried different approaches at getting the magazine in the library, but they were always told an emphatic no! It seems that that branch and every other one in the area, have been subjected to a well-organized campaign at getting the PT before the unwary public. He told me he is going to look into the matter citywide.*

*If your readers are the least "fired up" about this, all they have to do is visit their local libraries and check the periodical index. If they find the PT they should talk to the people in charge of selecting material. There is usually a committee for that purpose. If words aren't enough, parade a copy of Tuit's and/or Robinson's book before the librarians. Also if someone could afford it donating a copy of the above books to their local library would be a good idea and might supply the public with information they didn't have a chance to see.*

*-Nebraska*

*I would like to obtain the names and addresses of as many AR readers as possible here in Michigan, especially those who are former WCG members. The purpose is to compile a list which I will make available to all whose names are on it so that all AR readers and former WCG members that are interested can contact each other here in Michigan for the purposes of discussions, fellowship, renewing old acquaintances, etc. There are probably a lot of readers who were former friends or acquaintances in WCG that would now enjoy contacting each other. Therefore, I invite all AR readers here in Michigan who are interested to send me their name and address and a starped, self-addressed envelope so I can send them a copy of the list as soon as it's ready. Please write in right away so the list can be compiled and mailed out as quickly as possible. Perhaps other AR readers in other states could do something similar.*

*-Bob Shaffer  
8460 Marsh Road  
Algonac, MI 48001*

*Thank you for the last two reports. Sorry to be so long with my thanks and small contribution. This Report helps me to keep up with what's going on and helps me to maintain a sense of balance and to keep a 40-year marriage going. Your writings and information on cults is helpful. When one is married to a person in WCG you can see the sapping of the individual, you can see them fading in their personality and awareness of what is going on around them and one can*

*only try to do right by them as with any sickness. The strain is great and I have to keep my wits about me all the time and it's knowing folks like yourselves, who really care, that makes it just a little easier.*

*-Maine*

*Reading some of your letters the other day I found I have similar problems to many others in the states. I am divorced. I have three children and I am not yet remarried as I want to wait for God to provide the right one in due time, or open my ex-husband's eyes and get him out of the WCG. Which, given this, I think we have a chance to make a go of it. I will not describe all the problems their (WCG) teachings cause to someone of a rather unstable mind. I'm sure you can imagine.*

*My ex-husband is a great believer in authority, especially when it comes to HWA. When HWA gives the word to go to big P [Petra], he will up and go. Now in order for a quiet, peaceful life to ensue, I let him take our kids to the Feast of Tabernacles every year. If I did not do that, I think he would run off with them (to save diem from the tribulation).*

*I heard yesterday that a minister, David Stirk, had told people recently from the pulpit that they will probably be told to go to big P from the Feast of Tabernacles and should accordingly take enough money to Tabernacles to cover the transportation costs to big P. Of course, my ex-husband would have an ideal chance here to take the kids to big P to save them from the big T [tribulation]! He could be out of Great Britain before I knew it! So you can help me by keeping tabs on what goes on within the WCG. Could you possibly let me know as soon as the slightest hint of HWA giving the word for big P comes?....*

*The WCG press over here is changing hands soon. The WCG leadership will be moving into offices in Boreham Wood (from Bricket [bright light] Wood to Bore 'em, Wood). A friend of mine in the Luton WCG committed suicide about a year ago while still attending. I know the WCG was putting pressure on her over a domestic situation at the time. But I left before then so I don't know exact details. It's so tragic. They are so heartless.*

*-England*

Editor. Thank you for the information on the church in Britain. As for the big Petra exodus, if such a tragedy was clearly imminent, you can be sure we would not only alert our readers immediately, but we would make the situation known to all our contacts in the news media. We really do not believe, however, that such an exodus will take place in the near future, no matter what David Stirk, Gerald Waterhouse, or any other clown says. If there is any fleeing to be done, it will probably be by Herbert Armstrong and his closest aides because of a subpoena or arrest warrant. The "place of safety" would probably be a hacienda in Costa Rica or Argentina or a yacht in Monte Carlo bay. As for the rest of the church joining him, that's very unlikely as HWA's lifestyle requires the members to be hard at work, sending in their tithes, not huddled in desert caves.

*I thank you for sending me your Report. Please continue to do so. I have been in the WCG for almost five years and it almost cost me my life! Last year I confessed to the minister that I smoked and couldn't overcome this "sin," "and he told me I would be put out of the church. I took it for granted that he meant right away so I tried suicide. Thank God I didn't succeed, and still I didn't stop going. I was so sure that if I wasn't in the church I would lose salvation. I still haven't stopped going, but I'm willing to examine the other side. I have come to believe my eternal life depends on God and not the WCG. If there are any other women who have come out of the church that you could give my address to, you have my permission. I know I will need all the support I can get! Thank you again.*

*-AR Reader*

*I thank God daily I'm out of that cult. I left in 1978. I went from an attempted suicide to an unbelievable peace I had never known before. I was in WCG for 20 years, but "I'm free at last."*

*-California*

Editor: During the last three months, we have received numerous reports of suicides and attempted suicides by WCG members. Unfortunately, WCG ministers seem generally unqualified to properly counsel individuals suffering from severe depression and other disorders. We strongly urge all suffering from such problems to seek competent professional help.

*Until recently I was a member of the WCG. I inadvertently stumbled onto a copy of David Robinson's book Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web and read it. It answered a lot of questions my wife and I have had for several years. When I*

*questioned the local minister about it, he really got mad, and before I knew what was happening, he told my wife and I that unless we both had absolute trust, faith, and loyalty to HWA and accepted everything he said without question and not listen or repeat anything bad about HWA that we could not come back to church. I told him, I would follow HWA as I could see he was following Christ; but I just couldn't have blind faith in anyone who was human because humans can make mistakes. That wasn't good enough so we are out.*

*We had just recently moved here to Kentucky and didn't know anyone hardly at all. All we had heard in sermons for the last year was "obedience to the government of God in the church." The ministers even came out and said everyone should try to find out what other church members were doing and what they thought about things and then come tell the ministers! All this really sounds like something from Nazi Germany or Communist Russia, and I am worried for the people that are still "inside the church." I know a few other people who are also scared that something bad is about to happen.*

*-Kentucky*

*Regarding the cultish aspects of the WCG, one ex-minister said that the people who are affected least in an adverse way are those who never bought the entire package, having had some reservations. I guess I was in that category because I haven't been affected except in category number four, the "we vs. they" mentality. And I grew out of that gradually. I used to think there was something wrong with me because I wasn't like the other WCG members in many ways. Actually, for many reasons, I still hold membership in the organization, one reason being that I can reach people on the inside where outsiders cannot. I am attempting to turn people on to Jesus Christ and not to try to get them to change organizations. When one starts looking to the right source, the rest takes care of itself. Peripheral doctrines and organizational boundaries pale into insignificance when one has put on the new man created in the likeness of Jesus.*

*The most likely prospects for accepting help are those who are having real crises in their lives, who have not been provided by the WCG with the tools to deal with them. You might find the enclosed letters... interesting in this regard. It shows that the concept of living joined to Jesus is the real key to contact with God and everything else, including overcoming trials. You probably can guess who the evangelist mentioned is. The top minister mentioned in the letter to... is Mr. Armstrong. The ministers and writers mean well, but because they do not understand this basic key, their approach to problem solving is 90 percent carnal, or worldly. It is no wonder so many are unable to overcome sin.*

*-Pasadena, California*

Editor: While we are convinced the WCG is a true "cult" built around Herbert Armstrong, there are, nevertheless, quite a few WCG members who still maintain their individuality, being unwilling to simply accept "the party line" on everything. We are very pleased that many such individuals not only read *Ambassador Report*, but readily share their observations and viewpoints with us.

*I have been unable to locate a copy of Mr. Marion McNair's book entitled Armstrongism-Religion or Ripoff. If you can help me locate a copy of this book I will be most appreciative and grateful.*

*-Oregon*

Editor: Marion McNair's book, which came out about five or six years ago, is still a valuable work for those researching the history of Armstrongism. Unfortunately, it is almost out of print. We are told that Mr. McNair has only a few copies available at \$6.00 each, including postage. His mailing address is: Marion McNair, P.O. Box 398, Mt. Dora, FL 32757.

*I am writing to you to say I enjoy very much receiving your newsletters and definitely your publications are not only helpful in removing the veil from the eyes of members of the WCG, but is also a continuing source of information to them once they leave the organization. Also, in some cases, a psychological tranquilizer for those mentally upset by the experience.*

*It is extremely difficult for me to understand why more members have not left the WCG when one considers all that has been revealed about the corruption of its leadership over the past several years. But in spite of that I deeply feel that those of us that have left the psychological prison of HWA should take every opportunity to continue to expose the "master of deceit" not only to his members but also to the general public.*

*My family and I were members of the WCG for 12 years. Eight of those years I served (labored on the Sabbath) as a deacon. The veil over our eyes was removed in lightning-like fashion. In a two week period after an intense study of the "Law" in the Bible, we attended our last sabbath service on April 1st (April Fools' Day), 1978. Since leaving I, along*

*with a former minister and a deacon of the Pittsburgh church, have taken advantage of opportunities to reveal the truth about HWA to the public. In early 1979, we were interviewed by a local newspaper which has a significant coverage of five counties in the Pittsburgh area. It was a front page story which included pictures of us and the ministers of the Pittsburgh church who were also interviewed (separate from us). Many of us have written "Letters to the Editor" on many occasions to local Pittsburgh newspapers.*

*About a year ago Stanley Rader was interviewed on a local radio talkshow. Three weeks later two of us were interviewed on the same station in rebuttal to Rader. The interview included phone calls by listeners, lasted two hours, and was very successful.*

*I urge former members of the WCG to take every opportunity to reveal the real plain truth about HWA and the WCG as we have done in our area.*

*-George Kuhns, Pennsylvania*

*Thank you for the material I've already received. We have sent in a lot of money to HWA since 1932, but no more.*

*-Arkansas*

We'll have to end this newsletter here. This issue has already gotten far too long considering our finances this quarter. We'll do our best to get out a bigger issue in late June or July. Our thanks to all of you who are still helping us.

Sincerely,  
The Publishers

---

Ambassador Report is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola.  
Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR20\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

A

**R 20 June 30, 1982**

### NO FOOL LIKE AN OLD FOOL

It's been over two months since newspapers around the country reported that Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) has filed for divorce. Many of you have seen those reports, but for the benefit of those who haven't, here is a brief outline of those happenings.

On April 17 in the "Public Records" section of *The Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson), there appeared, in very small print, this brief announcement under "Petitions for marriage dissolution: ARMSTRONG, Herbert W. and Ramona."

The WCG's members at first were not told a thing about it. But a news reporter in Tucson saw the announcement and before long the story was making headlines. It wasn't until after the newspapers carried the story that the WCG admitted anything to the church membership. Nevertheless, the May issue of *The Plain Truth* should have tipped them off as to what was coming. That issue contained an article by HWA entitled "GOD HATES DIVORCE Yet He Divorced His Own Wife! WHY?" It contained this interesting statement (p. 4):

"But even where only one partner is at fault, it can put both through this tragic wringer of human anguish. I quote a specific case history in point.

"It's a case of an aged personage who loved a beautiful young woman and proposed marriage. He offered her a considerably increased life-style and many advantages - even to make her the FIRST LADY of all the earth - for this personage was GOD. And all the earth was his!"

The article goes on to quote numerous Old Testament scriptures on how the nation of Israel disobeyed God, committed adultery, and how God divorced her. It is interesting that in this article HWA used many of the arguments that had been used by the critics of his divorce/remarriage doctrine in the sixties and early seventies - arguments that HWA

rejected at that time.

Many reporters and WCG observers have been quick to see the irony in his filing for divorce. HWA had, for decades, showed no mercy to those living in unhappy marriages. Divorce was strictly forbidden by the WCG - even to the extent that many members previously divorced and remarried were required by the WCG to dissolve their present marriages. But by the mid-seventies, HWA, a widower, was lonely. He began dating Ramona Martin, who became a frequent member of the Armstrong entourage. Eyewitness members of Armstrong's jet-set evangelistic team have reported that the Herbert-Ramona relationship then was anything but platonic. Herbert wanted to get married, but Ramona was a divorcee with a son by her previous marriage, her "ex" was still alive and evangelist Rod Meredith had once ruled that she could not remarry because of those circumstances.

What to do? What to do?

In 1976, a year or more after the Ramona-Herbert trysts began, Herbert Armstrong decreed that God had shown him "new doctrinal truth." From henceforth the WCG would accept "new converts in whatever marital state they enter the Church.... A previously divorced person who has entered fellowship is free to remarry within the church" (*Los Angeles Times*, 4/22/82, p. 12, part II). Then about a year after this change, HWA married Ramona. Although he had (for over two years) advised his father against the marriage, Garner Ted Armstrong himself performed the marriage ceremony. But GTA has never been able to fully accept his father's new wife. In fact, some of those sympathetic to Ramona feel he played a part in sabotaging the marriage. Ever since he became convinced that his father wanted to marry Ramona, Garner Ted had been relentless in behind-her-back attacks on her reputation. Many ministers were more than a little embarrassed at Ted's snide remarks - many of which dealt with extremely intimate details of a sexual nature. Many openly wondered how Ted could possibly have come into such information and what his true motivations were in divulging what he did.

Those close to Ted, however, feel his distrust of Ramona was quite justified. Many observers are convinced she was more loyal to Stan Rader than to HWA. And as we reported in a previous issue, it was a secret tape recording of a Stan Rader-Ramona conversation taped by the Dean brothers that was responsible for the sacking of Stan Rader. Insiders claim that it was also that tape recording that was responsible for the Herbert-Ramona marriage going sour.

Whatever the full story (which we'll probably never hear), with the newspapers beating HWA to the punch, he was finally forced to admit the divorce petition in a letter to his co-workers. Buried in a co-worker letter (dated April 21, 1982) dealing mainly with nuclear war, Herbert informed his followers:

"It has been determined by events, facts and fruits that I am not spiritually bound by God and only by man's law of this world.

"Circumstances now render it ill-advised that I condone the continuation of the legal marriage, both from the Church point of view and of my own....

"God HATES divorce. So do I. I have gone to every effort to prevent this...

"This determination SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A PRECEDENT TO ENCOURAGE OR JUSTIFY OTHER DIVORCES IN THE CHURCH." [Emphasis his.]

The press (*Los Angeles Times*, April 22; the *Pasadena Star-News*, April 22 and April 28; the *Globe*, June 1, etc.) has been quick to point out the dichotomies in HWA's statements. When one considers the statements HWA has made over the years, it's difficult not to be a bit cynical. In a letter to the "brethren of God's Church," April 18, 1977, HWA wrote about Ramona:

"And God now has graciously provided the wife to be constantly at my side - a woman truly led by God's Holy Spirit. We have given the matter much time, to be sure it has grown into true love and like-minded rapport, as well as definitely sure it is God's will."

In the July 1977 *Plain Truth* HWA wrote about Ramona:

"And I shall never be able to thank God enough for selecting her and sending her to me and causing the very real and deep love that has grown in each of us for the other. God knew the help I needed by my side to accomplish His Work for the remainder of my life - for both of our lives...."

No wonder that when the press first found out about the divorce, church spokesmen had very little to say to them except that HWA's reasons for the divorce were "very biblical." But while the church's ministers were stymied for a logical comment and while HWA danced through the Old Testament prophets trying to justify his divorce, it was humorous to read Dick Lloyd's April 28 article in the *Pasadena Star-News*. In it he quoted I Cor. 7:10-16, which states that "the husband should not divorce his wife." One would think most WCG members would begin to question who is "witnessing" to whom. Not so. While a few wondered at HWA's divorce action, the vast majority of WCG members seem to see no problem with it at all. As long-time member Wayne Pyle told the *Star-News*: "There is no question in our mind that Mr. Armstrong is the apostle of Jesus Christ . He is our leader." (Editor: For more HWA divorce information see "Late New" at the end of this issue.)

#### HERBERT ARMSTRONG HONORED

We found this paragraph in the April 12, 1982, issue of *The Worldwide News* in an article entitled "HWA meets officials in Europe, Middle East- (p. 1):

"Sabbath morning, April 3, Mr. Armstrong was visited by His Beatitude Deodoros, the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem. The patriarch conferred one of the oldest orders in the world on the pastor general, who was the 131st recipient in the 1,546 years [sic] of the order. It was founded by the Roman emperor Constantine I in A.D. 336."

No further details were given.

The June 7, 1982, *Worldwide News* reported (p. 1) that HWA attended the May 22 Vladimir Horowitz piano recital in London. While there, HWA was introduced to Prince Charles. They spoke for only one minute, but afterward HWA was reintroduced to the Prince of Wales, and they chatted for a bit longer. *The Worldwide News* says that the second introduction was initiated by two men: Klaus Moser, chairman of the Royal Opera House, and "Jacob Rothschild, a prominent member of the Rothschild family in England. The same article (paragraph one) stated that HWA will be meeting with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. That meeting is tentatively scheduled for mid-summer.

While HWA was able to meet with many highly influential leaders on his recent trip to Europe and the Middle East, he was disappointed that Jordan's King Hussein cancelled out on a previously hoped-for meeting. We understand the king cancelled the meeting shortly after receiving in the mail a copy of David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*.

### RALPH HELGE REBUKES JACK KESSLER

In our last issue we ran a substantial portion of a letter written by Jack Kessler to the WCG's council of elders. Since the publication of Kessler's letter, the WCG has responded, in a limited way, to some of Kessler's accusations. We have been disappointed that the WCG has not been able to offer denials to the more serious accusations made by Kessler. But we are not surprised to discover there were evidently some facts omitted by Kessler in his letter. The WCG's side of the story has been put forth by Mr. Ralph Helge in the April 1-2 issue of *The Worldwide News* (page 3). Mr. Helge, for many years one of HWA's most devoted followers, has finally had that loyalty recognized and has, since Stan Rader's removal, taken over as chief legal counsel for HWA. We have no reason to believe he fabricated these statements he has made on behalf of the church. In all fairness to the WCG, we think it's important to also present their side in the Kessler dispute. Here is a key excerpt from Mr. Helge's article:

The very day that another person's resignation was demanded, [we assume Rader is meant here] that other person unilaterally signed a contract with the accounting firm of Kessler & Kessler, one Kessler of which was the author of the "leaked" letter. The other Kessler is his wife.

The contract provided that Mr. Kessler was to serve as a consultant in the furnishing of advice in the area of accounting with the Church, for a period of five years, at the tune of \$12,500 per month. An additional sum was to be paid should the demands of the Church upon his unique expertise become too taxing.

Apparently it was felt that the auditing and accounting services of Arthur Andersen, one of the world's largest accounting firms, was either not capable of handling the task, or it was necessary to have Mr. Kessler's continued involvement for other reasons.

The contract was immediately delivered to the Accounting Department with instructions to commence issuing checks to the Kessler firm. Two such checks were issued. Once the Church investigation uncovered the Kessler contract, the checks were ordered stopped. Mr. Kessler was advised that the Church did not consider the

contract binding upon it and refused to honor the same.

The newspaper reports that Mr. Kessler does not know why he was excommunicated and suggested it might be because of his "friendship with Mr. [Stanley R.] Rader" or because of his "unwillingness to lie about Stanley Rader." Mr. Kessler omits his accusing the Church of "treachery" because it refused to honor the five-year contract.

It appears now that the decision not to honor his contract was not only legally and financially sound but providential. For now we must ask the question, if the Church had honored it, would some other person be accusing the Church today of "bribery" to prevent the leaking of accusations in the "leaked" letter?

Further, it seems appropriate to comment here that the Church did not and does not have to request lies from anyone. The Church does not need to deal in lies. The Church is only interested in attempting to document the actual facts so as to defend itself from the false accusations of its accusers.

One of the first areas of inquiry with Arthur Andersen was to seek their advice as to the appropriateness of financial expenditures between the Church and the Ambassador Foundation. The commencement of the inquiry must have touched a nerve because promptly a fiery telex was received from Mr. Kessler.

As of March 1, 1982, he certainly felt there was no basis for the "leaked" letter accusations because he stated:

"The question was asked whether they thought there was any impropriety in the Church's giving funding to the foundation in order for the foundation to carry on its activities... to me it's embarrassing for Church officials to wonder aloud whether we're committing some major fraud of this nature. There was no need to ask Arthur Andersen what they thought since they have just given us completely unqualified opinions two years in a row."

It is surprising he now chooses to ignore the exonerating effect of Arthur Andersen's two years of "unqualified opinions."

The Church's investigation also uncovered a matter that caused it grave concern. It uncovered the existence of two corporations in Nevada that had ostensible legal authority to appoint a successor to Mr. Armstrong in the event of his inability to govern the Church.

Neither Mr. Armstrong, nor the ministers whom he looked to for aid in spiritually guiding the Church, nor I, who served as house counsel for the Church for years, had any knowledge of these two corporations. There has been absolutely no satisfactory documented legal evidence that any of such persons would have had any legal control whatsoever of these corporations.

Mr. Kessler was one of the attorneys who created these corporations and who was named as a director of one of them. The other directors were people in his office who were not members of the Church. Only after the many demand letters by the Church upon Mr. Kessler or his associates, attempting to effectuate the immediate dissolution of these corporations, and only after many dilatory responses, and only after the preparation of the pleadings by the Church of a lawsuit to force their dissolution, were documents received from Mr. Kessler's office that permitted the

dissolution of the two corporations without the need of filing a lawsuit.

### **Recovering property**

Demands were then made to commence recovering of all corporate moneys, records and property from Mr. Kessler and some of the former officials and employees. An accounting was requested from Mr. Kessler for Church moneys that were in his possession.

In due time a statement was received from one of Mr. Kessler's firms, which sought to account for \$150,000 of the funds that had come into his possession on behalf of the Church. After deducting expenditures on behalf of the Church, including a claim for attorney's fees in the sum of \$28,562.50, he conceded there was \$13.82 due the Church.

It was necessary that another demand go out to him asking for a breakdown of the services justifying said fee.

A demand was also made that the thousands of dollars of law books the Church had purchased and that were in the library in the Century City office should be returned to the Church.

Mr. Kessler responded, castigating Mr. Armstrong for even suggesting that they should be returned. He contended that a former official of the Church had a right to have the books remain there, under his contract, so he could furnish advice if and when he was called upon to do so.

The Church considers this as a totally untenable excuse. As of this date the books have still not been returned.

A demand for an accounting was also made against the assistant of one of the persons whose resignation was demanded. The demand was for an accounting for expense money during a trip overseas. It was in the approximate sum of \$43,000.

Response then came from the assistant that if he was not reinstated to the Church, reinstated to the position previously held by him, given full back salary, an apology made by Church officials, etc., etc., that he would disclose a rumor of a confidential nature.

Upon refusal to be intimidated, a second demand for an accounting was sent. A letter was then received from Mr. Kessler saying that he was representing the assistant. He then demanded after serving as auditor of the Church's books for eight years, the right to look at the Church's books. He claimed the assistant could easily account for the money, but as of this date no accounting has been seen, much less return of any of the moneys....

Is it possible that some of the motives behind the "leaked" letter are to engender such harassment that former dismissed personnel would be, along with Mr. Kessler, drafted back into the ranks of the Church with its financial blessings?

Could it be possible that a motive would be to create an ostensible furor of problems? A furor so great it would prove beyond a doubt that the Church could only

have achieved its present position of power and prestige due to the acumen of some of the formerly discharged persons?...

---

## **Still the Same Ol' GTA**

Tune in to one of Garner Ted Armstrong's telecasts and you'll agree he's changed very little in the last few years. Perhaps that is one reason why so many of those who followed Ted out of the WCG no longer are willing to be his "dumb sheep." GTA's Church of God, International, is having significant defections to the Church of God (7th Day), the Biblical Church of God, and other Sabbatarian churches.

In a recent letter to his followers Ted dropped the price of his book *Peter's Story* from \$14.45 to \$9.95. He claimed this was being done because of a lack of storage space at the CGI's large new corporate headquarters building in Tyler. The fact is Ted is stuck with too many unsold and unsellable copies of his book. *Peter's Story* is admittedly a novel. Ted's fans, it seems, are more interested in learning about the Bible than in reading fiction - even if authored by the former religion superstar.

Ever since we've known GTA, we've been amazed at his knack for alienating people. Here are two letters we received from readers who've left the GTA church, along with correspondence they received from GTA himself. We think you'll find them enlightening:

*"Dear Ambassador Report:*

*"I recently left Garner Ted's CGI organization. Around that time I sent Ted a letter explaining why I was leaving - Ted's public drunkenness and enjoying a huge salary while people were sacrificing time and money for his support. After writing that letter I left and shortly after joined the 7th-Day Church of God.*

*"Well, imagine my surprise when I got a letter from Ted threatening me with legal action. I don't know why he feels so endangered by what I said. I guess he wanted to scare me into submission. But everything I told him can be found in the Tuit and Robinson hooks and in the personal testimonies of former WCG and CGI members. I don't know why he threatened me unless he's just blowing off hot air.*

*"I read in Hinson's Broadway to Armageddon Armstrong expose that Ted and his dad would send out threatening letters to intimidate people who were fighting them over health care for children of church members (when one mate wasn't a member and another was, etc.). This letter proves that Ted is following in his father's footsteps. Like father, like son.*

*...People should know how vicious this man can be. We should know the truth about our so-called religious leaders so we may support men who are truthful and sincere. "*

*-Illinois*

(Reply from GTA.)

"Mr. -----:

*"Your letter sickened me and, humanly, I must admit it also made me quite angry.*

*"However, upon reflection, I feel I should be sad, rather than angered, for you are only hurting yourself and your wife by avidly devouring, and then swallowing wholesale, false rumors.*

*"I honestly do not remember exactly what the question was on the talk show to which you referred in St Louis - but I do specifically remember the exact nature of all of the 'difficulties' back in 1971-72. I also still have in my possession the original articles that appeared in Time magazine, the letters from my father, and between my father and myself. Never did one word pass between us, nor were any such 'confessions' made either privately, before the church, or before the public media back about 11 or 12 years ago.*

*"You seem to feel that it is incumbent upon a man of God to go about through his life continually telling people how 'guilty' he is for alleged 'sins' in the past. If this is your criterion - I hope you find some human being, somewhere, whom you can follow in good conscience.*

*"Your information on my salary is absolutely wrong! I take no salary from the Evangelistic Association. Your salary figures are more than \$10,000 higher than my annual salary! I make no apology for my present salary, which is still less than I was promised by Stanley Rader to 'keep my mouth shut' if I would merely receive their \$50,000 salary per year, say nothing to the press, or the church. My father's current salary is \$563,000 per year, by the way.*

*"Whoever said I was seen 'staggering out of a bar' in Tyler is an unregenerate, unmitigated, deliberate liar! I would be exceedingly happy to call such a person so to his face, or, if you would care to identify the individual, and I can determine that such a statement was made in the presence of at least two persons, I will instruct my attorneys both in California and here in Tyler to institute proceedings against such an individual, or individuals, immediately.*

*"The allegation that 'drugs were sold' in the place is utterly ridiculous. If you, as a so-called Christian (and your letter your conclusions, your willingness to listen to rumor, swallow them wholesale and then attack someone as a result are anything but Christian), were to avoid all places where 'drugs are sold' you would never again be able to frequent any restaurants that had bars or lounges in connection, hotels, bus stations, department stores, cafeterias, or public street corners!*

*"I presume you buy your groceries in a modern grocery store or supermarket. What horrible connections I could make about your character by starting rumors about the fact that you and your wife trade for your groceries where 'pornography is sold'! (How scandalous!)*

*'Frankly, Mr. - - - - - I do not want your support.*

*"You do not judge me - but Almighty God IS JUDGING YOU! He is judging you every day, and He certainly judges your spirit and your attitude for willingly swallowing malicious and slanderous gossip, assuming it is true, and then deliberately attacking someone without even identifying your source!*

*"The only 'support' I wish is from those individuals who voluntarily have submitted their lives to Almighty God, who know that in Jesus Christ is complete and total forgiveness for all sins, past and present who are concerned about doing the work of God and utterly abhor the malicious milieu of gossip, slander false accusation posturings, vicious rumor, character assassination and evil surmisings that is the stock in trade of those individuals who give their minds over to demonic influences and satanic attitudes.*

*"If you intend spreading these malicious rumors any further, and I hear that you have said so orally or in writing, please regard this letter as putting you on notice that you are responsible for every word you say about the character of another individual Please do not feel you am somehow immune, for you are not."*

*-Garner Ted Armrstrong*

Another reader wrote us:

*"After receiving back copies of the Report I thought that a letter I wrote to GTA back in May 1981, and his answer to me might be of interest to your readers.... I think you will quickly see the techniques he uses to put the guilt on the other person instead of himself. I wrote that letter at the urging of our local CGI minister. Obviously he had heard that GTA was trying to get back into the WCG, too. Ironically, I had been praying fervently for God to show me the real GTA, what he was really like. I got my answer! It didn't seem to matter to him that I was trying to support the gospel on a bring-home pay of \$543.00 a month [needed] to support my ill husband and myself. He just felt sorry for himself because he couldn't get along on \$42,500 [a year] Incidentally, the \$47,000 that I mentioned in my letter came from my minister. He had told me that because of others asking him about the \$60,000 that you had written in the Report. He had asked GTA himself how much his salary was, and that is what GTA told him. I think GTA got a lot of flack about the raise and backed down on it. In no way do I think he will tell the truth about it. His attitude toward the peons that support him comes out plainly in his letter. Consequently, we no longer support him or his work."*

*-Texas*

(Following is a letter to GTA from the above.)

*"Dear Ted,*

*"Recently a lot has been in the papers and other publications concerning your return to*

*Worldwide. I have also met some WCG members at the grocery store, and they seem to think you are secretly negotiating with your father to return to their group. I realize you have denied that such is true, but you have denied things before which later turned out to be true.*

*"In view of that, I would like to say if you do return it will be proof that you were never sincere in saying that you established CGI because you wanted to get the gospel out to the world but in fact you did it for the glory and the power of being before the public again. What will they offer you that will cause you to swallow your pride and crawl back? Your own TV broadcasts, a huge salary again or your own plane? How long are you going to be a yo-yo on HWA's string? You ought to let them join us/you instead. Personally, I think it would be a very dumb thing to return.*

*"My feelings, and the feelings of the brethren that I have heard, are that you will have to go back alone. We did not follow you out and we will not follow you back. We don't have to have an Armstrong lead us! As I remember none of the apostles were called Armstrong.*

*"I also heard that you had given yourself another raise (the Board may have voted for it but you accepted it didn't you?). \$47,000 is a very good salary for two people, since your sons are also on the payroll and you can't count them as dependents. If this were a profit-making business, I would say you deserved that much, but since it comes from monies donated for the preaching of the gospel, I think there ought to be a limit set for salaries of the ministry. Salaries ought not to be tied to increase in income to the Church. It isn't fair to raise your salaries when the income goes up while writing letters to the members telling them that the income is low. Why should I sacrifice and do without to bring up the income of the church when you turn around and take it out again by increasing your salaries? I might as well keep it for myself! We are not sending in our tithes and offerings so you can increase your salaries. One of the most effective ministers you have is not even on salary and yet his area is increasing greatly. We want the increase in income to go toward preaching the Gospel, not for higher salaries.*

*"I am afraid for you, Garner Ted that you are truly your father's son. You accuse us of not being removed far enough from the WCG, when it is you who has not gotten away from that type of thinking. We are not trying to build another Worldwide, or an empire for the ministry. We just want to fulfill our commission of getting the Gospel out to the world. We will do that whether you stay or leave. God is not dependent on you for that.*

*"On the broadcasts you spend too much time on mundane subjects that have nothing to do with the Gospel. There's too much politics. Look how much time you devoted to 'gun control,' and how little of the time on the Bible, Those comments are for news commentators, not for a minister on paid-for broadcasts. I agree with what you said, but it should not have been on the broadcasts. We've got too many politicians and news commentators already. The people who like to hear your comments on controversial subjects are not the type to become a member of the church.*

*"I know you hate to get this type of letter, but as long as you are a minister and in the public eye, you are going to have to get used to it. You are in the same position as any*

*other public figure. You can't have the privacy a regular citizen has. As long as you are getting donations from the public, what you do is their business, especially as a minister. You can't have your cake and eat it too, as the saying goes. As long as I am a member of God's Church, I'm going to be a 'thorn in your side' so you might as well learn to love me. Remember, 'the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy.'"*

(Reply from GTA.)

*"Dear Ms. - - - ,*

*"Your quotation about 'the wounds of a friend' I take very seriously. I hope you are ready to be severely wounded.*

*"Your first paragraph largely began by calling me a liar. I find the entire tone of your letter to be completely unchristian, and a clear violation of the principles of Jesus Christ in the sermon on the mount - smashing to bits the principles found in I Corinthians 13 where love 'believes the best.'*

*"Your comments concerning crawling back and having 'my own plane' are almost beneath contempt and not worthy of comment. Your comment concerning none of the apostles called 'Armstrong' is completely uncalled for, and unnecessary. I have never called myself an apostle, am utterly unable to do a thing about my name, and hereby tell you that I will not commit suicide in order to give you a moment of satisfaction.*

*"I don't care whether you have heard about my giving myself 'another raise' or not - what you heard is clearly wrong. All of the rest of the statements concerning your sacrificing and the redundant comments about tithes and offerings are utterly ludicrous in the light of the fact that I have not had a raise in more than two years. If and when I receive one, it will be without apology to you or others like you. Your comments on the broadcasts are rejected. For you to take issue with my comments concerning gun control in the wake of an attempted assassination of the President of the United States are trite, small-minded and utterly beside the point. Jesus Christ of Nazareth would have been criticized very severely by yourself for daring to speak about such mundane things as the weather, quaint stories, parables and analogies, accidents, or simple human affairs.*

*"I disagree with you entirely that I am a 'public figure.' I am not elected by the public, nor am I paid by the public. I can and will have the same privacy you have, and I insist upon it. Your comment that 'as long as you are getting donations from the public, what you do is their business' is utterly superfluous. Very few 'in the public' send money to this work. Largely, we are supported by the tithes and offerings of those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and believe that we are preaching the gospel as effectively as possible. If you do not believe that, I would strongly suggest you do whatever you intend doing about it, but do not delude yourself for one moment that you have cast yourself in the role of some perpetual 'thorn in my side' who may freely attack malign, condemn, persecute and criticize.*

*"You simply do not know what you are talking about. Your letter shows not one iota of true humility, brought about by constant closeness to God and continual prayer. Rather it*

*shows carnal-minded leapings to conclusions, quickness to condemn eagerness to criticize, and a sardonic attitude of contemptuousness toward me personally, [that] one would expect to find among feminists, or emanating from the likes of Madeline Murray O'Hare. May the Eternal God clean up and straighten out your mind. It is people like you who make me wrestle and agonize within myself and in prayer with God over why I am doing what I am doing - why I didn't take the offer made to me of a salary which today would have been \$300,000, instead of earning a salary of \$42,500 (that's right!) which is still several thousand dollars less than Stanley Rader promised me merely to keep my mouth shut. Believe me, if the majority of the members and supporters of the Church of God, International felt as you do, it would be taken by myself as the clearest indication that I should have done just that.*

*"Inflation robs my wife and me just as it robs you. I have had only one 'cost of living increase' in the nearly three years of doing this new beginning in God's work. As a practical matter of fact, I have never had a 'raise,' since the increase did not even keep me even with inflation for that one year. Presumably, you would demand that I have a small or moderate salary, and that that salary is not increased for the next ten, fifteen or twenty years, meaning that my personal living standard that of my wife would go in an ever downward spiral until we were living at the poverty level.*

*"I know you would violently disagree with the sacred word of the Eternal God who says very clearly that those who labor in the word are worthy of double remuneration! But that is your problem between yourself and God, not my problem."*

*Garner Ted Armstrong*

One can't really quibble with GTA's argument about inflation. But with regard to his remark about deserving "double remuneration," one must ask, "Double what remuneration?" Two times the minimum wage? Two times a corporation president's salary? Paul didn't say, but in his day it probably meant an extra pair of sandals and an extra basket of food a week. Actually the term "double remuneration" is GTA's own pet translation of I Tim. 5:17. *The Englishman's Greek New Testament*, the translators of the KJV, the RSV, the NASB, and Beck's version say an elder should be considered worthy of "double honor." Moffatt's version says "worthy of ample remuneration," while Williams' version says "elders who do their duties well should be considered as deserving twice the salary they get." However, to avoid the charge of profiting from the church, the apostle Paul labored as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3) so he would not be "chargeable" to his congregation (I Thes. 2:9; 1 Cor. 9:11-12). But be that as it may, we frankly have no gripes about GTA's salary. What we do find remarkable, however, is GTA's contemptuous attitude toward his followers.

When dealing with any statement made by Garner Ted Armstrong, we have found from experience that one has to be not only aware of his proclivities for exaggeration and intimidation but also aware of his frequent distortion of facts. For instance, take the \$300,000-offer story. We've heard it before, and we don't believe a word of it. Anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of the broadcasting industry knows that you couldn't find one broadcasting executive anywhere who, in his right mind, would offer GTA that kind of money for any extended period of time. GTA likes to fantasize he's another Dan Rather, Johnny Carson, or Paul Harvey, but deep down he also knows that any job in the

secular media would deprive him of his fans - his badly needed vanity fix. Take away the Armstrong junkies from GTA and he becomes an empty shell, as pathetic as any burned-out, aging rock star or over-the-hill nightclub comic. Recall GTA's embarrassing 1976 performance on "Hee Haw" (hee haw, hee haw)?

Another example of his dishonesty: While it is evident that GTA is not a "public official" (and let us be thankful for that), he is very clearly a "public figure." What other conclusion could one come to about an individual who buys time on radio and television nationally to talk, as though an authority, on every conceivable area of human life?

Paul P. Ashley in *Say It Safely*, a law book dealing with libel and privacy laws, wrote (p. 83):

"A well-known college football coach accused of bribery and a retired army general who had taken prominent controversial positions regarding segregation were each found by the Supreme Court to be public figures. Other persons held to come within the rule included nonincumbent candidates for public office, a captain in a sheriff's office, the chairman of a political party, a judicial candidate, a labor leader, and a Nobel prize winner. By engaging in public discussion of controversial matters, these individuals all became 'public figures' and their ability to recover damages in a defamation action was limited by the *Times* rule...."

It is not difficult to understand why the courts have ruled as they have on defining what a "public figure" is. After all, those with access to the media (politicians, talk show hosts, news commentators, sports stars, TV preachers, etc.) exercise great power to influence people and have much opportunity to defend themselves against their critics (just one reason why so many privacy rulings do not apply to them). Many also have great power to raise money from the public. The law recognizes their position is different from that of the average private citizen. If Ted wanted all the privacy privileges that go with being a private citizen, he should have taken himself off radio and television.

As for GTA's claim that his contributions are not part of "the public," where does he think his contributors come from? The moon? Perhaps his nonsensical assertion is nothing more than a Freudian slip revealing an attitude. After all, "dumb sheep" aren't really fully human, are they?

As for GTA's suicide comment, neither the lady in question nor anyone else we know of has suggested he take any such action. Yet the idea of suicide has crept into GTA's correspondence and sermons more and more for at least 12 years now, and once, more than 10 years ago, he wrote a "suicide note," of which we have a copy. GTA's followers would do well to ask themselves, "What kind of man is this that we follow?"

And incidentally, Ted is still quietly trying to reestablish himself with the WCG. Just a few weeks ago, in an attempt at ingratiating himself with his father, he sent HWA a package. Tyler insiders say it contained documents that put Stan Rader in a negative light. The peace offering, however, seems to have had little effect on HWA, who still wants Ted's will broken completely before he is allowed back into the WCG's hierarchy.

---

## Something You Can Do

We frequently receive letters from readers asking what they can do to help make the real story known about Herbert Armstrong and his organization. Frankly, we don't try to encourage people to spend excessive time or money fighting Armstrongism. Nevertheless, a little concern for others and a little effort - when intelligently directed - often goes a long way toward waking up those mesmerized by the mirage on the Armstrong desert. In our letters section this month, as in the past there are some excellent suggestions along this line. But here is a suggestion we think is particularly worthwhile.

Dave Robinson, the author of *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, recently called us with an offer concerning his book. The Robinson book is one of the most shocking, eye-opening exposes ever done on Herbert Armstrong. It is well documented with first person, eyewitness accounts. The book currently sells for \$10 each when ordered directly from John Hadden publishers. But Robinson says he would like to get copies into the hands of many more people. He, therefore, is making this offer:

If readers will send him \$1.50 per copy ordered (i.e., \$3 for two copies), to cover postage and handling, he will send up to two copies of his book to each public or institutional library of your choice. Of course, when ordering be sure to include the correct name(s) and address(es) of the libraries you wish to receive the books.

We think this is an excellent way to help others get the whole story on HWA - and at very little cost. The address to write to is: John Hadden Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135.

---

# "Plain Truth" - or Just "Plain Trash"?

For almost five decades *The Plain Truth* (PT) magazine has been under Herbert Armstrong's direction. During that time, the magazine has switched from a preachy, flee-from-the-wrath-soon-to-come format to a quasi-secular, right-wing fundamentalist news commentary format with articles having heavy moralizing overtones.

But throughout all the decades one PT subject has gone essentially unaltered: Herbert's prophesied chain of events to occur before Christ's second coming. All his prophecies hinge on a new Roman Empire arising, consisting of ten nations, headed by an Italian or German nazi-fascist leader, and dominated by the Catholic church.

For 50 years his readers have waited expectantly for his awesome prophecies to come to pass, and for 50 years they have waited in vain. President Reagan is begging the American public to allow at least 2 years for his economic policies to begin working,

while in contrast, Herbert has had half a century and is still telling his followers to wait longer. You can therefore imagine our surprise when we read the following in the Feb. 1982 PT:

"Since 1934... *The Plain Truth*, under the editorship of Herbert W. Armstrong, has announced in advance many of the major developments of our time - years in advance of their actual fulfillment. Our guide has been the pages of Bible prophecy" (p. 26).

Keith Stump, the author of that preposterous statement, apparently has overlooked these incredible prophecies made by Herbert in the PT:

- Soon after 1936 will come the heavenly signs and the day of the Lord (June-July '34, p. 5).
- The Great Tribulation started in 1929 (June-July '34, p. 4).
- Mussolini is the beast (Feb. '38, p. 3).
- France and Germany will soon form a new alliance to guarantee peace in Europe (Mar. '38, p. 6).
- Mussolini's armies will enter into Palestine and capture half of Jerusalem (Mar. '38, p. 8).
- Mussolini will emerge as the # 1 leader over Hilter (Jan. '39, p. 4).
- War leading to Christ's return may start in six weeks (Aug. '39, p. 6).
- The U.S. and Britain will soon be invaded and conquered (Nov.-Dec. '40, p. 7).
- Hitler will be the victor in the Russian invasion (Sept.-Oct. '41, p. 7).
- Plagues are coming in about 2 years. "Rabid foxes, squirrels, muskrats will attack our children" (Apr. '56, p. 22).

Imagine our amusement when we discovered that old-timer Rod Meredith had also recently insisted that Herbert's prophecies were accurate and that "throughout the war [World War II], one voice made sense out of it all.... Herbert W. Armstrong" (PT, Dec. 1980, p. 28). From the above excerpts of Herbert's prophecies, could any rational person claim Herbert's predictions "made sense"? But Meredith continues:

"Mr. Armstrong's message is unique. No one else has been used of God to unveil and preach these prophecies to the world in the way Herbert Armstrong has.... But he and he alone - backed up by this worldwide Work that God has used him to establish - has made plain the specific big events involving Britain, the United States, Western Europe, the Middle East... ."

As shown above, Herbert's predictions and great insight have been plain all right - plain garbage! But Meredith keeps right on writing without even flinching, referring to Herbert as an "obviously dedicated and balanced man of God." But if Herbert was indeed a man of God, why did God pull the plug on him, so to speak, and allow all of his major prophecies to fail? In other words, can a good tree - symbolizing a true prophet in Christ's analogy - bear "evil" fruit (Matt 7:15-23)?

Meredith proceeds to point out several examples where Herbert supposedly made accurate predictions over the last 50 years. Let's look at a few of Meredith's examples. First he says Herbert correctly foretold that Russia and China would not conquer the U.S., nor would "the Arab nations either." The Arab nations? What? They can't even defeat little Israel. But let's be honest and give credit where credit is due. Herbert is right so far. Of course Meredith conveniently forgot to remind his readers that Herbert had said

in the PT that a 10-nation European power bloc under Hitler-Mussolini would conquer and destroy Britain and America in the early 1940s (Nov.-Dec. '40, pp. 2, 7; Sept.- Oct. '41, p. 7; Mar-Apr. '42, p. 11; etc.). Having already said it would be a European power bloc, obviously he couldn't turn around and say Russia and China would attack Britain and the U.S. So though (at least so far) Russia and China haven't attacked the U.S., his major prophecy about the destruction of the Anglo-Saxon people has simply failed to occur.

According to Meredith and Stump, Herbert has more successful prophecies to crow about. They say Herbert foretold that "the German nation would emerge, phoenix-like, from the ashes of defeat to become a major economic - and ultimately military - power in the Western world.... Post-war history has shown who was right!"

It wasn't Herbert!

Of course there are now two German nations, and only West Germany is a major world economic power. But neither one of them could be considered a major military power in the same league with the US., U.S.S.R., Britain, China, or France because neither Germany possesses any nuclear capability. (WCG writers always seem to overlook these "minor" points.) Even though the West German economic miracle is well-known, it was easily foreseen due to the traditional German characteristics of diligent work and a strong will to survive and due to the generous help the Germans received under the Marshall Plan. Stump and Meredith never bother to tell their readers this, nor do they mention the rest of Herbert's prophecy about the Germans. Not only did everything he said about Germany from 1934 through 1944 fail miserably, but his post-war predictions about a revived nazi-fascist Germany leading a 10-nation European power bloc that would attack and destroy Britain and the U.S. "as early as the spring of 1972" also utterly failed to materialize (PT, Oct.'58, p. 4; Feb.'62, pp. 5,7; Sept.'64, p. 20; May' 65, p. 45; June' 67, p. 2; etc.). So we see that the central core of his prediction failed even though West Germany did rise to economic prominence.

But when you get right down to it, it should have been obvious that this would happen. Why? All the major world powers except for the U.S. had been ravaged by World War II. Beginning in 1945, they all began rebuilding at the same time. Which nations would you have logically picked to become economic giants? Chile? El Salvador? Cuba? Greece? Turkey? Burma? Egypt? Poland? Liberia? Of course not. If you had much of a background in history and economics, you'd have picked France, Britain, Germany, the U.S.S.R., Japan, perhaps China, Canada, or Switzerland. So it didn't necessitate any great surprising revelation from God to cause Herbert to make a general statement that Germany would be a future major economic power. After all, Germany had a highly sophisticated intelligentsia, advanced technological and economic know-how, and a skilled labor force imbued with the Protestant work ethic - not to mention a favorable climate, access to the sea, a strategic location, and adequate natural resources.

Let's look at another HWA prophecy. Stump reports that Herbert wrote that the U.N. "never will be able to give the world any permanent world peace." How much of a "divine revelation" would it have taken to come to that conclusion? Since history shows that war is one of the commonest human experiences, even without Herbert's divine crystal ball it would have been only logical that the U.N. would fail to bring permanent

world peace. In fact, that was what many U.N. critics predicted. By the Korean war, it should have been obvious to all.

The PT has, "virtually from its inception, alerted its readers to the growing importance of the Middle East, the focal point of Bible prophecy," writes Stump. The PT has been correct about this broad trend - and so have most other Christian religions that bothered to talk about prophecy. But when Herbert got into specifics about the Mideast, he prognosticated that Mussolini would capture Egypt, conquer one half of Jerusalem and fight Christ at his second coming (Jan. '39, p. 4). He said Turkey would help cause Britain's defeat in World War II but that God would cause Turkey to be wiped out (Nov.-Dec. '40, p. 2,7). In the June '67 PT (P. 2) he claimed "there will very soon be a Temple in Jerusalem...." Not one of these events occurred!

Further, Herbert didn't foresee the infighting between the Shiite and Sunni Moslems. He never predicted the present-day role of Syria, the Palestine Liberation Organization, or Libya's Qadhafi. He didn't forecast Saudi Arabia's oil wealth and worldwide influence, the role of OPEC, or Sadat's unprecedented trip to Jerusalem. So we see Herbert actually missed all the significant Mideast events and was wrong on all the major trends he claimed to foresee. So what if he "alerted" his readers to watch the Mideast?

Next Stump declares that the PT has long warned there would "eventually come a time of increasing upset weather patterns, drought of unprecedented magnitude, floods, earthquakes, and famines." What he neglects to remind his readers is that for decades the PT has spotlighted major worldwide weather calamities to prove God was unleashing his wrath against a sinful world. But the fact that the PT can point to a major weather calamity ever so often proves nothing of the kind. We challenge Stump to show us a single year since Adam and Eve when there were not several major hurricanes, droughts, famines, floods, or earthquakes somewhere in the world. The PT's shocking "Prophetic revelations" are akin to predicting that the sun will rise and set once a day and then claiming great insight for having said so.

Every year the U.S. has dozens of hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and areas affected by drought. But for years the PT writers have appeared to be ignorant of this and have tried to prove the end of the world was near by focusing on several major weather upsets that hit the U.S. The PT gave full-color coverage to - get this now - a tornado in Jonesboro, Arkansas (July '68), hurricane Beulah (Nov. '67), floods in the northern U.S. (June '69), hurricane Camille (Oct. '69), etc. The PT would have its audience believe that these were specific weather upsets sent by God to punish Americans for their sins, but in reality major weather upsets have been occurring regularly in the U.S. and the rest of the whole world throughout recorded history.

But again Stump neglected to mention (poor research or deliberate distortion?) that Herbert's weather predictions always said that major upsets would lead to "a revolution in the weather - leading to unprecedented famine by around 1970-72" (Feb. '62, pp. 5, 7). So when Stump implies Herbert's weather predictions have been fulfilled simply by the occurrence of bad hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, or floods, he is quoting Herbert's errant prophecies out of context. All one has to do is look at what those prophecies actually stated, and you will see they clearly have failed.

We could add several more examples of these distortions of fact that attempt to prove Herbert right, but we have shown beyond any reasonable doubt that when it comes to understanding the big events and main trends in world events, Herbert has missed the boat every time. Even major news analysts - without any alleged guidance from God - have hit the mark more often than Herbert. Yet the further off Herbert's predictions are, the more loudly the PT writers boast about his alleged successes.

Dishonesty and half-truths have no place in journalism, much less in a Christian-professing magazine purporting to be published by God's true church. Yet these characteristics have been trademarks of *The Plain Truth* for almost 50 years.

Another problem with the PT that we feel impelled to speak out against is the way the PT writers select certain events that seem to support their doomsday predictions and then play them up big. But when it becomes obvious that a selected event is not leading to a fulfillment of their prophecy, they omit any further mention of it so as not to shake the confidence of their tithepayers. For instance, the PT writers kept hinting that Hitler was still alive, in hiding, and might come back to lead a re-nazified German nation once again (Apr. '65, p. 7; May '65, p. 5). They kept pointing out how the Nazis went underground after World War II and were poised for a comeback soon (Mar. '62, p. 22; June '66, p. 17, etc.). Starting with the June 1966 issue and continuing through the Sept 1969 issue, the PT ran at least 7 articles about the NPD (a small German political party), hinting strongly that its success was evidence of soon-to-be-revived naziism in Germany that would once again take over Germany and destroy the U.S. and Britain. Today these issues are dead issues in the PT. Even Ambassador College news bureau researcher Werner Jebens, a German himself and an expert on naziism, thinks the church's Germany prophecies are total bunk, and he has said so to a number of people. But do you see any apologies in the PT for defaming the German people? No. In fact, HWA still teaches that Germany will destroy the U.S. and Britain in the near future. But where is the evidence?

*Ambassador Report* publishers Len and Margaret Zola recently returned from a business trip to Europe during which they spent considerable time in West Germany. They report: "During our stay in Germany we saw really no evidence of any kind of militaristic anti-American trends. Of course there are those who would like to see Germany become a nuclear-free zone. And many are concerned about the threat of nuclear war in Europe. But many more are staunchly pro-American. The reason is simple. U.S. presence in Germany saves that nation a great deal of money in defense expenditures and protects it from attack by the U.S.S.R. We were in Bonn, Düsseldorf, Cologne, at the University of Heidelberg, and in Bavaria. Whether talking to businessmen, professional people, students, blue-collar workers, or soldiers there was no doubt in our minds that the American presence in Germany is not only tolerated but welcomed. As for any neo-Nazi movement or massive arms buildup for an attack on the US., as HWA teaches-the idea is preposterous."

But Stump's defense of Herbert's amazing prophetic insight continues. For years the PT proclaimed that a "United Europe," consisting of a 10-nation alliance, "would yet coalesce into a single unified power." Since 1957, when the Common Market was formed, the PT proclaimed this would be the likely start of the alliance of the 10 kings of Revelation that would destroy the British and American nations by 1972 (Oct '58, p. 4; Feb. '67, p. 47, etc.). Now there are 10 Economic Community (EC) nations, but they are

far from politically united, they have not destroyed the U.S., the pope is not guiding these 10 nations, and - note this - the EC ediface of unity is showing major cracks, something we bet you won't read big headlines about in the PT.

Don Cook, writing from Brussels, Belgium, for the *L.A. Times*, in an article titled "On 25th Birthday, EEC Finds Little to Celebrate," reports that "the European Economic Community has reached the 25th anniversary of its founding treaty beset by deadlocks, difficulties and a growing sense of political and economic atrophy - a time of hand-wringing, not bell-ringing." His gloomy assessment of the situation speaks of the EEC "being mired in the quicksands of national positions and problems that seem to make decisions impossible." He reminds his readers that Gaston Thorn, president of the EEC commission, has warned that the leaders cannot go on much longer failing to match deeds with words without sliding into "irreversible decline" toward economic protectionism and independent national policies.

If anyone doubts that *The Plain Truth* did indeed publish the nonsensical predictions we have quoted throughout this article, please do not write to us for copies of the originals. (We are not in the business of distributing Herbert Armstrong's literature.) Instead, write to *The Plain Truth* or to the Ambassador College library, asking for copies of the issues or photocopies of the articles referred to. After all, if *The Plain Truth* has really been as accurate as Keith Stump and Roderick Meredith claim, they should welcome your request.

Of course many who were around the WCG for the last two or three decades need no such proof. Even Garner Ted Armstrong - who, incidentally, still clings expectantly to some of his father's ill-conceived prophecies - has been forced to admit many of his father's predictions have not panned out. Here is what GTA wrote in *The International News*, April 1982:

"For more than 27 years, I have been shouting a warning to the nations of the world that a *coming United States of Europe*, led by a powerful, rearmed GERMANY is going to *shock* the people of the United States and the rest of the world!

"In hundreds of radio broadcasts, dozens of telecasts, many, many articles and booklets, I have continued to hammer away on the same theme.

"Two decades ago I thought the reunification of Germany, the dissolution of NATO, a rapid return to despotism and *militarism* in the European nations and a deep economic sickness striking the United States were *much nearer* than they really were.

"By 1966 I was trying to warn the peoples of God's church NOT to believe in '19-year time cycles,' and loudly proclaimed, during a Holy Day service in Bricket Wood, England, that God was perfectly able to protect His church *wherever they were*, rather than spiriting them away to some desert wilderness.

"From 1966 onward, I kept warning the church repeatedly NOT to 'depend on 1972.'

"The fateful month of *January*, 1972, came and went with absolutely *nothing* happening!"

But prophetic debacles are not something merely in *The Plain Truth's* past. In the June-July 1982 PT, there appeared this analysis of the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands (p. 43):

"With the forcible takeover of the Falklands [by Argentina] we may be witnessing a key turning point in the fortunes of the descendants of Joseph [Britain, to HWA] in relation to the opposing powers! We are heading into the 'time of Jacob's trouble' (Jer. 30:7)."

In a P.S. to his April 21, 1982, letter to his followers, HWA wrote (and emphasis is his):

"DON'T BE SURPRISED IF THE BRITISH FLEET IS DESTROYED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS! Gibraltar will come next, and already is in danger."

How do HWA and the PT get away, year after year, with such inane predictions, shoddy reporting, and total distortion of the facts? One reason is that many people are too lazy to check up on Herbert's 50-year record. Another answer is found in a Hitlerian principle Herbert has obviously adopted: If you tell a big enough lie often enough, some people will believe it. And so we expect that the PT will continue touting Herbert's prophetic nonsense, and its gullible readers will continue to feel superbly educated and informed for having drunk deeply of his amazing revelations.

Herbert claim to seek for enlightenment and wisdom - plain truth. But he made up his mind 50 years ago on what the Bible prophecies meant, and he refuses to reconsider his original premises, no matter how ridiculous they are shown to be. Indeed philosopher/writer Elbert Hubbard, whom Herbert used to read regularly (see Herbert's autobiography, pp. 86-89, 1973 edition), tells both Herbert and the PT what their problem really is: "The recipe for perpetual ignorance is: Be satisfied with your opinions and content with your knowledge."

As for those who read the so-called *Plain Truth*, the Bible gives this advice (Deut. 18:22 RSV): "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him."

---

### **Basil Wolverton's Creativity Honored**

Fans of *Plain Truth* illustrator Basil Wolverton will be pleased to know that the June 1982 issue of *Epic Illustrated* ("The Marvel Magazine of Fantasy & Science-Fiction") contained an excellent article on the late artist's life and work. Accompanying the biographical article by Ron Goulart were numerous Wolverton illustrations from "Spacehawk," "Planet of Terror," "Gateway to Horror," "They Crawl by Night," "The Eye of Doom," "The End of the World," "The Brain-Bats of Venus," and other comics Mr. Wolverton created. We even noticed one end-of-the-world illustration copyrighted "Ambassador Press." The issue can be ordered from Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue

South, New York, NY 10016. The price is \$2.50.

### **You Need More Money?**

Ambassador College employees in Pasadena were recently astonished by the latest crackdown on their privacy. College official Ellis LaRavia sent a memo to all Pasadena faculty members and employees demanding complete information on any "outside employment" they may have. The first question stated: "Please indicate if you ever do any work (for which you are compensated in any way) other than for the Church, College, or Foundation." The memo then required the recipients to give full details as to number of hours per month, regularity of work, name of employer, etc. Another question was: "Briefly state the reasons why you must do outside work (e.g., Do you need more money, and if so, why?)."

### **New Groups and Groups New to Us**

*"In Fairview Oklahoma, four Sabbath-keeping groups met together each Sabbath during April 1982. These four groups - Church of God, International; Church of God -7th Day (Denver); Biblical Church of God; and Believer's Faith Fellowship - have ignored differences and are promoting unity, harmony, and love between the brethren. A minister from one of the groups speaks each week so all can take turns. Meetings have been so successful that these combined meetings will continue indefinitely. Members are enthusiastic and are learning more of God's way of life from each other. Brethren say it is more of an incentive to attend each week on a regular basis and enjoy the new closeness we are all experiencing with one another...."*

*(Signed)*

*John Trescott*

*The Church of God Evangelistic Assn.*

*(Oklahoma Chapter)*

*P.O. Box 722*

*Anadarko, OK 73005*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Verdict*

*P.O. Box 1311*

*Fallbrook, CA 92028*

*Verdict* is a theological journal. We wish to draw your attention to their June 1981 issue (Vol. 4, No. 4) subtitled "Sabbatarianism Re-Examined." Anyone interested in the subject of Sabbath keeping will find this an interesting, if not highly valuable, publication. The bibliography alone is very enlightening. The cost of this 70-page issue is \$1.00.

\*\*\*\*\*

American Bible Society

1865 Broadway  
New York, NY 10023

Those interested in the Bible, but not in denominations, may find this organization of interest. They offer a catalog of Bibles and Bible literature for sale.

### **Co-Publisher Gerringer Runs for Congress**

Bob Gerringer, a co-publisher of *Ambassador Report*, is a candidate for the United States House of Representatives from California's 22nd Congressional District. Bob - who is a data processing manager for a large retailing chain and is married with two children - will be on the November ballot in the Pasadena-area district as a Libertarian.

The Libertarian Party (L.P.) is America's third largest, and its presidential candidate Ed Clark was on the ballot in every state and the District of Columbia in 1980. This had never before been achieved by a third party candidate. Although 2 or 3 percent of the vote is the most Bob can realistically hope for, his reasons for running are three-fold: (1) to help get voters used to seeing Libertarians on the ballot alongside the two major parties; (2) to create a greater awareness of, and hopefully acceptance for, Libertarian principles in his district through speaking engagements and media coverage; and (3) to provide a real alternative for voters since he believes the two major U.S. political parties are virtually the same. The L.P. advocates that government get out of peoples' private, personal, and economic lives. Bob proposes extensive cutbacks in government spending and a \$600 billion federal budget, which is almost \$300 billion less than that just passed by Congress. Interestingly, Bob's brother Steve is the L.P. Congressional candidate from central California.

Of course, *Ambassador Report* is no more inclined to endorse a political persuasion than a religious one. However, for those who might like to have more information about the Libertarian Party, send \$1.00 to: Gerringer for Congress, 1468 Coolidge Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104. Tax deductible contributions to Bob's campaign are, of course, also accepted. (But please do not send L.P. mail to the *Ambassador Report* address.)

Finally, Bob says repealment of the 16th Amendment (income tax) will be a major issue in his campaign. "My feelings regarding income tax and the United States government are similar to my feelings regarding tithing and the Worldwide Church of God."

### **John Tuit Starts Newsletter**

John Tuit, author of the Armstrong expose *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, is still actively distributing his book, but is concerned now with much more than just the Armstrong church. He reports that the Catholic church is currently involved in a project he believes has the potential for great evil and may have prophetic significance. Whether or not one agrees with Mr. Tuit's prophetic outlook or speculations, it is difficult not to find the subject of his research very interesting. Here is an excerpt from an article which appeared in the *Asbury Park Press* (New Jersey) March 12, 1982. The article was titled "Computer used to promote peace," and was written by Rose Ananthanayagam.

"SPRING LAKE - A clergyman has a plan to harness the information-gathering powers of the computer to promote world peace. Brother Austin David Carroll, a member of the Christian Brothers, plans to program a computer with 'simulation models' of how political leaders and groups think. The model will be based on information provided by international authorities in politics and the professions.

"Carroll hopes to refine the computer to the point where it will be used as a tool in mediating international or internal disputes, before they turn into wars. Like King Solomon, who asked God for wisdom over all other gifts, Carroll has faith in the power of 'good information' to lead enemies to peace. And the Roman Catholic Church has faith in Carroll's ideas.

"CARDINAL TERENCE Cooke of New York has appointed Carroll as head of the Pope John Paul II Center for Prayer and Study for Peace, St Clair and Ocean avenues.

"The computer at the center would eliminate the need for shuttle diplomacy by nimble-tongued negotiators by revealing, at the push of a button, the outcome of positions taken by opposing parties.

"It would do so by three-way satellite and television hookups with the Spring Lake center, replacing the bargaining table and touchy confrontations. Carroll believes that disputing parties of whatever ideology would negotiate better with the help of this impartial information.

"The center itself was formed only recently. Cardinal Cooke finally gave Carroll the go-ahead for the program last September after a continuing correspondence between the two that began in 1972.

"CARDINAL COOKE announced the formation of the center at a Feb. 10 United Nations concert at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Carroll is currently trying to decide which brand of microcomputer to order. The machines will have stand-alone capabilities, but will also be adaptable to hookups with the New York archdiocese's computer in Yonkers, as well as with leading publications and the Library of Congress, he said.

"Carroll hopes to employ what the business world calls 'the Delphi technique, with his consultants....

"And visiting consultants will be able to take terminal hookups back with them, so they can continuously update and fine-tune Carroll's 'simulation models' in light of political developments abroad, Carroll said.

"ALL INFORMATION would be quantified for processing and storage in the computer. The master computer would be housed in the basement of the white stucco mansion, once considered for use by President Nixon as the summer White House. The house is now owned by the Military Vicarate, of which Cardinal Cooke is head.

"As the centers title indicates, prayer is also part of the strategy for world peace. The Rev. Joseph Ariano, a formerly U.S. Air Force chaplain who served in Vietnam, wants to establish an international, non-denominational prayer network. The goal would be to have a prayer service for peace celebrated somewhere in the world every hour....

"First of all Carroll plans to involve the 'one percent of people who determine peace' in the world. He notes how other approaches, such as the peace centers, have had no access to real power. The center's board of advisers will include politically influential people from many countries and ideologies. Nearly all those people he has approached are enthusiastic about the idea, he said.

"CARROLL DECLINED to name any names, saying that it would put pressure on those still undecided. However, Cardinal Cooke will release a list of the 19 to 25 advisers in a few months, he said.

"Another strength of the center would be both its Catholicity and its catholicity (universality). The Roman Catholic Church, as an internationally prevalent faith, would be especially suited to administer the computer as an impartial third-party...."

Tuit believes that this project is not getting adequate media attention. (And we have not seen the story covered by any major news organization.) He is therefore putting out a newsletter on the subject called the *Truth Alert*. It will be published on an irregular basis, with the first issue to be mailed out very shortly. The free newsletter will be sent automatically to all those who have ordered a copy of his book. Anyone else who wishes a free copy can simply write to: The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold Township, NJ 07728.

## **Mindlessness**

Did you ever get the feeling that many of those hooked on the WCG (and on some of the other cults) are where they are simply because they don't think. If you have, then you have become aware of a phenomenon many psychologists refer to, quite appropriately, as "mindlessness."

Psychologist and researcher Ellen J. Langer in *Psychology Today* (April 1982, "Automated Lives," p. 60) wrote:

"In an extensive series of continuing experiments, my colleagues and I have found that mindlessness occurs in many more situations and is much more pervasive in our lives than people realize. Indeed, it may be a fundamental aspect of human behavior. We have found that mindlessness can be self-damaging, especially in new situations to which people apply information they unknowingly had accepted in an unthinking way."

\*\*\*\*\*

A recent ad for *Fortune* magazine showed a well-dressed business executive behind his desk. All was very proper, except his head was replaced by that of a woolly sheep. The caption read, "If you stick with the herd, you could end up as a lamb chop." Something to think about.

## **Letters**

*In the newsletter you mentioned HWA's impending divorce, perhaps because his wife took to wearing lipstick! In his latest Plain Truth or Good News (I am not sure which, as I quickly read and disposed of them), HWA headlined an article to the effect that "God Hates Divorce Yet He Divorced His Own Wife"! Well, this was a shockeroo to me. As I contemplated the psychological "brainwashing" behind it, I proceeded to read the article. HWA started out by comparing an "aged personage" with a "beautiful woman," and in the early paragraphs one wonders, "Oh, is HWA going to come out with a reason for a personal divorce?" Instead, the paragraphs rambled on and on with ample references to every nook and cranny of the Bible showing how God Himself (the "aged personage) had to divorce a recalcitrant Israel!*

*Initially I thought to myself, "How insane to even print such a ridiculous article. It is an obviously self-serving article, implying that if God could get divorced - well, there is a great apostle we know about who also must get divorced. Nothing wrong about that then. What trickery, what sham!! It sickens me to think about the docile deceived, blindly believing minds that will accept this article as a bona fide reason for HWA's divorce. (After all they can blow the dust off their Bibles and open their eyes and grasp the truth from the biblical quotations that are alluded to and know that HWA's action is the correct one.)*

*I would appreciate it if one of the Ambassador Report editors could critique some of the material in HWA's article and point out the fallacious, twisted references which HWA presents. I have ascertained that when HWA refers to God as an "aged personage" the notion is false! From my knowledge of God, He is timeless - He is not bound by time, so how can He be called an "aged personage"? Am I right or wrong?*

*-New Jersey*

Editor: An even cursory study of HWA's writings and public statements reveals that he often confuses personal opinions with divine edict (i.e., "I have the mind of God!"). In his book *Ego and Archetype*, psychologist Edward Edinger explains that this is a common symptom of mental illness. It is also a characteristic that has been found in many of the world's most notorious pathological criminals, sex offenders, cult leaders, and political dictators.

*Of course, don't so many of us wish we could be refunded the tithes and offerings given in sincerity to the Church of Armstrong that could now be used to rebuild shattered lives and help support such worthwhile functions as your newsletter and some groups listed in it.*

*My "brainwashing" in the "true church" began over 20 years ago while I was still in my early teens. My most formative years were dedicated and wasted to "God's Self-Appointed Apostle," as we were programmed to expect to go to Petra in 1972. Back then, we were admonished to ignore such mundane things as higher education (I was an honor graduate from school but was advised not to bother going to a university, except to apply for Ambassador College), [to ignore] establishing long-term credit or obtaining insurance, and urged to forget about marriage if the girl wasn't in the church, even if she did really love me, etc.*

*Such things as strict obedience to God's ministers and the giving of tithes (always before taxes) and offerings were always expounded. Sometimes the ministers would reveal "new sins" on such weighty matters as chewing bubble gum, drinking coffee, listening to Beatle records, wearing fleur-de-lis and hearts, kissing one's fiancée for longer than four seconds once a day, growing beards, as well as the old stand-bys of telling us that segregation was "God's way" and going to other churches or listening to other religious points of view were tantamount to abominations that could cost us salvation.*

*And "God's Church" was always facing a financial crisis.*

*In some ways, after years, I am still recovering from the almost total mind control the WCG tried to indoctrinate me with. I can only look back at a lost youth and young adulthood wasted financially and emotionally on a false prophet and hypocrite as well.*

*I can recall a special person I could have shared a lifetime with, and all was destroyed mostly through WCG influence. I remember people who died because they refused medical help out of fear. (It seems to me that would make the Armstrongs at least indirectly responsible for the deaths of some people who could have been saved - isn't that called "manslaughter" in some places?)*

*It's still taken me years to try to fully recover from the brainwashing techniques, the fear and paranoia, the isolation and confusion that was instilled in me at such an impressionable age. A friend of mine that went in to the WCG in the '60s has been in mental institutions because of her experience. Sometimes I wonder if my mother's untimely death at age 47 may not have been partly caused by the aggravations the WCG helped to produce in my family (my mother wasn't in the church). At the time I wouldn't listen to anyone's logic that wasn't church sanctioned.*

*I could go on and on, but I know you see similar stories in the hundreds of letters you must receive. And I'm still sure there is a loving Creator who knows all this and will lead us to his real truth in his own way and time.*

*-Virginia*

*We recently had a minister from Michigan visit our church area. He spoke on the matter of sins unrepented of - specifically smoking. He said he began to realize that he had been lax in not "helping" people overcome that sin, or else in telling them that if they couldn't overcome it, they could leave the church. When I read the letter from the woman who tried to take her life because the minister said he would kick her out of the church if she didn't quit smoking, I wonder if she was one of the ones he was "helping"? I thank God that my sins do not smell or have such obvious outward signs, or I would have been out long ago for sins I have trouble overcoming! More to the point, I thank God that he is not like that minister!...*

*We feel like the man whose letter closely followed this woman's. We can reach more people if we attend WCG services than if we don't, that is, if and when people ever seem*

*to need reaching. We like to believe, and indeed do believe, that we are becoming more adept at handling this two-edged sword called the Word of God. Due to its sharpness, one must be careful how one waves it around people like those in the WCG. The objective is to help people open up to the world of thinking - not to cut their heads off.*

*The WCG recently "screwed" three sets of friends of ours - all loyal members of the church. One couple was told that the reason they weren't prospering was because they weren't tithing on the money they borrowed from the bank to live on (they are farmers). The husband of another couple - a young couple with two small boys - got polio and is now a quadriplegic. People in the church told them it happened because they didn't have faith in God, but vaccinated their children. Almost no one in the church helped them either with morale or financially, but the "worldly" people he had worked with raised \$6,000 for them and did babysitting, gardening, and canning for them while they were in the hospital for over 5 months. Not only that but when the funds started running out and they applied for third tithe assistance from the WCG, they were told they couldn't have any because he had not worked for "the Work." The third couple was a D&R [divorce & remarriage] case, where his ex-wife had custody of their girl. She remarried and now wants him to relinquish parental rights to the child, so her new husband can adopt her. The mother's minister threatened to kick the old husband out of the church if he didn't do as the minister told him, which was to give up his rights. The other minister in the area backed up the first joker with these sage words, "Moses made a lot of unpopular decisions in his day, too." I guess we can be thankful that we have not yet run afoul of the system, but I doubt it would hurt us as much as it has these other people, because we know what the system really is like, and they didn't.*

*Oh, a thought on the whole issue of whether the church will ever get the word to flee to Petra. You say that you think not, because then Herbert's financial base will be desolate. You are thereby counting on Herbert's main and lifelong concern being financial. It may be that Herbert will at some point believe it necessary to flee to Petra, simply because he views himself as some sort of semi-divine personage. It would be a matter of credibility - perhaps akin to megalomania. In short it comes down to a question of whether his self-concept is financial or prophetic. If he sees himself as a great prophet of God, then he may feel he has to try to pull off the great escape. Is he first greedy and second paranoid? Or is he first and foremost paranoid and second greedy?*

*Gee, if my minister could see this now! Ah, well. We take our chances with the truth, don't we?*

*-Kansas*

*I've lost so many friends through religion - not only due to the WCG, but other religions down through the years. My husband is 82. I'm 78. The years we wasted and the money we have poured down the drain! Now we are not able to do much of anything. We are not able to help others as we wish.*

*-Missouri*

*We are just finding our way out of the Armstrong church. After serving it for 18 years, we*

*are ready to retire with no money. ----- has given us all the old Reports from you, and I must say we never got the truth told to us in church.*

*-Canada*

*Did any of you happen (by chance) to see Herbert on his TV program when he "interviewed" Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak? I accidentally did! I was appalled at how very embarrassed Mubarak appeared to be. All Herbert did was say in a rambling way: We want peace, you want peace, the world wants peace, ad nauseam. All Mubarak did was to shake his head in agreement as this treacherous a old Armstrong handed him the check! Well rehearsed! Herbert told Mubarak that this \$100,000 check was to be followed by another \$100,000 each year for a total of 10 years! That this would add up to \$1,000,000! This figure was repeated several times and old HWA even had the audacity to say "from me to you for peace." What a witness. A personal gift from one leader to another, or so it was made to appear. No mention of the many people who are actually going hungry to give their money to God. What a pitiful travesty. Isn't this the perfect picture of a religious cult in action? Then, Herbert asked Mubarak for a good picture to feature on "our" umpteen worldwide magazines dedicated to peace. Then some more ramblings about the way the world uses "get" when old Armstrong believes so strongly that the right way is "give"! And this very procedure goes on, no doubt for every interview he gets! Oh, oh, I shouldn't use that word - that's the way of the evil world!*

*-Former WCG member from the Southeast*

*I support the Church of God, International, and I know you have nothing good to say about GTA. I think he is doing the best he can with all the flak he's getting, being unfortunate enough to inherit many of his father's bad traits. I am sure he repented fully for whatever he did previous to 1975. God called me through his and his father's writings and broadcasts, and since his father fumed against him for no reason, rejecting a true minister of God, I left the WCG. Since there is no other that is proclaiming the true gospel in an effective way, I stick with GTA. His radio and TV voice is unique. (I had in former years rejected all other denominations.)*

*I want to keep getting your Report because I want to find out immediately if and when they (the WCG) are leaving the country. We have a life estate which they get upon our death. In the meantime, we get the interest. So in order to prevent them from drawing the principal from the bank to take with them, I want to get a court order to prevent it You probably don't have time, but if you hear they are leaving, a collect call to me would be appreciated.*

*-Arizona*

*Editor: Don't let them take away what's yours. You should consider seeing a lawyer. Other people have used the courts to turn around life estate assignments so that the WCG can't inherit what they gained through religious coercion.*

*My estranged husband has been a member of the WCG for ten years. He is eagerly working out his divorce plans as I simply can't afford to divorce him. The cheating of the*

*ministers on the top has definitely filtered down to the lay members, as he plays around at the Feast of Tabernacles. In fact I'm not invited to his yearly vacations, as it cramps his style. He even invited our teenage daughter on one of his dates with a married California woman whose husband isn't in the church.*

*With the "love of God" flowing from him, he tried to run over me twice with his one-ton truck a few weeks ago and has described in detail his desire to push me off a 200-foot cliff nearby and how he would enjoy it We won't be married much longer.*

*-New Mexico*

*Since David Robinson's book Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web appeared, there has been much discussion in the church about the allegation that Mr. Herbert Armstrong committed incest with his daughter Dorothy. According to Garner Ted Armstrong, when he discovered in 1980 that David Robinson's book was to include the chapter on incest he called his younger sister Dorothy and told her about it. According to Garner Ted, the very first thing she said was, "Does Robinson's book mention Carole Ann?" That was the name of the child she had that died many years ago. I have been told by those in the church at the time that that poor infant had made medical history by being born with internal organs outside of her body. Though she survived infancy due to much assistance from modern medical science, she suffered from a heart condition and died at the age of 17. Mr. Herbert Armstrong at the time expressed great sorrow and referred to her as "his favorite" from the pulpit. Just the other day I ran across a picture of Carole Ann in the Nov. 1966 Plain Truth (p. 42). She bore a striking resemblance to Mr. Herbert Armstrong.*

*When I look closely at the Armstrong family history - Ted's incredible philandering, his wife's attempted suicide in the early 70s, Ted's two deaf-and-dumb sons, at least one of Ted's children being stillborn, Mr. Herbert Armstrong's incest the needless death of his first wife Loma from fasting, the untimely death of his eldest son Richard in an auto accident, his pending divorce from Ramona, his separation from his daughters in the sixties and seventies, his alienation from his brother Dwight his present hostility toward his son Garner Ted, and abandonment by many of his long-time friends - I can't help but suspect that this family is a family under a gigantic curse from God. I couldn't help but recall that in Exodus 20:5 God says He will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. I was intrigued by this often overlooked statement and did some further research. This statement was mentioned once again in Numbers 14:18, but God says He will remove the curse from the son in Ezekiel 18:19- 24, providing the son begin to do that which is lawful and right and keep all My statutes and turn from his sins. What is so sad is that so often innocent children suffer from the sins and perversions of their parents. But the beautiful thing is that Jesus will forgive those who turn from their wicked ways.*

*King David had to learn this the hard way. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged to have her husband slain (II Samuel 11 & 12). David repented bitterly, but God said that the sword would never depart from his house because of this greivous sin, and the child born of his adultery died. God took his wives and gave them to David's neighbors because, as God says, "Thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun" (II Sam. 12.12).*

*I would like to ask you two questions: Was Dorothy's child (Carole Ann) actually Mr. Armstrong's (as a father)? The reason I ask this is that in the Nov. '66 PT Mr. Armstrong wrote. "A chain of providential circumstances climaxed in her birth." Later he called her "my little princess." Some of Garner Ted's recent private comments have made me wonder. And have you ever tried to get Dorothy's side of the incest story?*

*-Texas*

Editor. The answer to question one is: We don't know. But we are told the tragic birth occurred some time after her marriage to Vern Mattson, to whom she is still married. The answer to the second question is: We have tried more than once, but our letters have gone unanswered. Our offer to her, nevertheless, remains the same: We will publish any statement she wishes to make.

*Sometime in the future (in a few months) we ("we" includes wife) hope to publish a tithing paper that will disagree with everybody about tithing! Who's "everybody"? Armstrong, Dart, Martin, Southern Baptists, Adventists, Methodists, etc., etc. - everybody who tithes and everybody who doesn't tithe! No that's weird (Or is it spelled wierd?) Isn't it? Well, strange anyway. Would you settle for unusual?*

*Really, we believe our book will be the most comprehensive book ever written on tithing "since the Bible" (as HWA might write), and it will be entitled Tithing: God's Command or Man's Demand -Which?*

*-Tony Badillo  
3122 Jerome  
Dallas, TX 75223*

*You want people out of the cults? You talk as though the only cult was the billion-dollar rebellion from the Church of God, 7th Day by the petty pope of Pasadena. During the second century in Rome all religions were cults except the one supported by the government. The Church of Christ is a cult to me. The Methodists too started as a cult. Constantine forced the Druid religion on the Romans with another name, so Europe is enslaved with it to this day. To be free of cults people must learn the reliability of the geological timetable that man has been on earth one or two million years, and that the Bible shows itself unreliable. Then the dependent mind may go for Pyramidology as an ex-WCG, ex-Yahwehist has.*

*There is something beyond understanding about the human mind. This writer threw out copies of 144 Self- Contradictions of the Bible in 1963 and now wishes to have a copy. During 12 years with it I never studied it enough not to be hooked by Herbie. Four years ago Ted's behavior caused a study of Yahwehism. Then Health Research Books started a more basic search for knowledge.*

*-Arkansas*

Editor: Health Research Books (Box 70, Mokelumne Hill, CA 95245) has a huge catalog of rare, strange, and out-of-print books on not only health subjects but on religion and philosophy. Some of the titles are: *The Bible Is an Irish Book*, *The Unknown Life of Christ*, *Was Jesus Influenced by Buddhism?*, *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors (Christianity Before Christ)*, etc. Many of the titles are fascinating, and probably many of the books contain valuable information. However, even though we are not theologians or historians, a quick perusal of a few of the books offered convinces us that at least some of them should be considered highly suspect as to accuracy.

*My wife and I came out of the WCG about 1978 and are concerned about the many past acquaintances left behind. So we would be glad to correspond or fellowship with any who should feel the need. We do occasionally fellowship with the Church of God at Kingsport (about 25 people), most of them ex-WCG members. It's so good to be around sympathetic people who suffered with us.*

*-James R. Grubb  
Rt 1 Box 31  
Crockett VA 24323*

*For all of you out there who have been lying awake nights asking yourself the question, "What ever happened to Clyde Walters, and is there life after Ambassador College?" and for all the rest who are asking, "Who is this guy?" Here's the answer.*

*As we all remember, Clyde graduated from Ambassador at Pasadena in 1971. He then worked in AC data processing for two years. Then came the Big Layoff. Clyde remained unemployed for over a year, and then worked at Fedco in Pasadena for two years. Then he became a mailman, and is presently working on the Great American Screenplay in his spare time.*

*"Wow, what a lucky guy! But wait, that doesn't answer all our questions, such as: (1) Is he still as crazy as ever, (2) Did the jerk ever get married, (3) What about the Church, (4) Does he eat pork chops, (5) Does he have sideburns, (6) Does he watch TV on Saturdays, (7) Is he a Libertarian or a Communist, (8) And what about Amway?"*

*OK, OK! There's more. The answers to your questions are: (1) self-evident (2) almost-once, (3) separated, (4) to date, 3 pork chops, (5) none, (6) too busy working, (7) Middle of the Road-Easy Listening, (8) been a member since 1976, but nonpredatory.*

*Seriously, though, I'll get to the real reason why I'm writing. For me the Ambassador experience was overall very pleasant. The people that I met there, went to school with, and lived with in the dorms made it so. I still hold fond memories of the friendships formed there. The people were great but as time was to tell, the leadership was wrong. Contrary to what we had always been told, when the leaders were shown that they were in error, they refused to admit their mistakes and change. All those wasted years being blind and following the blind!*

*In the life after Ambassador it was extremely hard for me to face up to the fact that I had been so sure of something and someone and had been so wrong. I guess I tried to punish*

*myself for being so gullible, for I became very sarcastic and more and more dependent on alcohol. Maybe I thought it was an impossible task to wade through all the tradition that surrounds Christianity, while staying out of the clutches of the religious conmen, to finally get to the answers of the basic questions of life. I was sick to death of being conned!*

*I can still remember sitting and drinking a six-pack by myself and thinking if I could only meet one real Christian before I die. I was so turned off! I was tired of the regular channels and all the lies. I was looking for life's answers at the bottom of a bottle- but I always came up empty. It still seems a miracle to me that I could ever quit drinking.*

*Fortunately in my sober moments I was reading voraciously. I think I've read some of every philosophy, discipline, religion, and sect that's been published, and oh yes, that includes every offshoot that came out of Worldwide It was all so empty and so depressing.*

*Only one of my many investigations panned out and that's the one I want to tell you about. The Concordant Publishing Concern of Saugus, California, was the only source claiming to be seeking the truth from the Bible that didn't get off into organization-worship, or man-following, or tithing, or law-keeping, or tradition, or positive thinking philosophy, or humanism, or fairy tales. Most of the Christian religions claim to be based on the Bible, as we all too well know, but the publications of Concordant are the only ones I've found that meet the test. By the way, in the '30s Concordant published an article titled "Refuse the Refuse" which is the best proof of the errors in British-Israelism that I've ever seen.*

*I found out about Concordant through Ambassador Report. Thanks! I'm glad I took the time to investigate.*

*I've read most of the publications listed in the Concordant catalog, and I've found them all exceptional. The book *The Problem of Evil* and the booklet *"The Place of Humanity in God's Purpose"* are good places to start.*

*But whether you contact Concordant or not keep searching in some positive way. It's worth the effort (Matt. 7:7). Shalom,*

*-Clyde Walters  
Pasadena, CA*

Editor. The folks at Concordant told us that they have quite a few former WCG members on their mailing list. And they do offer a free introductory packet of information, which is quite interesting. Their address is: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 W. Knochaven Dr., Canyon Country, CA 91351.

*I am a recovering alcoholic The attitudes of the WCG ministers forced me to be dishonest with myself and others about my hidden problem. After all, weren't we supposed to be perfect? WCG thinking was an enormous hindrance to seeking help, especially since it*

*would have to come from outside the church - unthinkable. People with emotional problems can, and do, easily get caught up with alcohol. I can give this advise to those who feel trapped by a drinking problem:*

*1) Recognize the problem exists and be honest with yourself.*

*2) Chuck the moral intimidation and condemnation felt in the WCG.*

*3) Seek help through Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and, if necessary, a treatment facility.*

*If you don't know where to get started, look in the phone book under AA's listing. Too frightened? We all were, but sobriety is worth it.*

*-Minnesota*

Editor. Alcohol abuse is not a problem unique to the WCG, nor does the WCG really condone it (for instance, the May 1982, issue of *The Plain Truth* devoted considerable space to the subject, and some of the articles were really excellent). Nevertheless, a number of WCG doctrines, the conduct of some top ministers, and the general cult environment of the WCG pushes many into alcohol addiction of one type or another. The problem is common to many current and former WCG members.

If you are one of those with an alcohol problem, you may wish to contact one of the many alcohol abuse organizations listed in your phone book. Not only are there private organizations such as AA offering help, but many city and county governments have free, medically sound, assistance programs. If you yourself do not have a problem, but have friends or relatives who have an alcohol problem, you may wish to contact Al-Anon Family Groups (P.O. Box 182, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159). They have a number of excellent pamphlets on the subject and a national advisory program for friends and relatives of alcoholics.

*I presented a large supermarket with a copy of Ambassador Report and they immediately removed their free display rack for The Plain Truth. Hopefully, other ex-church members will come forward with ideas to get the attention of the Armstrong cult and bring them to their senses.*

*-Arkansas*

*Received your March 31 Report which was very informative. The letter from an AR reader in Nebraska confirmed my suspicions on the WCG's modus operandi for Plain Truth distribution and placing HWA's books in local libraries around the world. WCG members are supplying the addresses of all public waiting-room-type establishments in their local areas for free PT subscriptions to those establishments and are placing HWA's books in local libraries.*

*As I read this letter, the puzzle came together. Over a period of the last several months I have noticed the PT in the barber shop, dentist's office, hospital lobby, courthouse lobby,*

*doctor's office, and library. This struck me as odd since my ex-wife was the only WCG member in our small town. Now I understand why my wife was copying addresses from the local Chamber of Commerce directory. Inquiries at the barbershop, dentist office and library indicate that the PT "just started coming in the mail."*

*AR readers can really do service to the world by pointing out to establishments getting the PT exactly what it represents and encourage them to request the subscription be stopped.*

*-Mississippi*

*One of the letters you printed last issue mentioned how Plain Truth magazines were being foisted off on the public in Nebraska via the Omaha library. Here in Texas, it's much worse! You see PT magazines everywhere. In dentist waiting rooms, barber shops, and in self-serve news racks on the street and at airports. It's very depressing. At first I tried talking to those allowing the displays, racks, or free issues. But then I got a better idea.*

*Now if I see a PT rack, I simply "borrow" a bunch (after all, they are offered free to the public). But I don't discard them. I take them home and in very small but legible print I write within the issue something like: "For the plain truth about The Plain Truth and Herbert Armstrong write to Ambassador Report P.O. Box 4068, Pasadena, CA 91106. Send \$5.00 and ask for a couple of sample copies. It will open your eyes!" I write something like that in each issue, but on a different page in each. I don't want the WCG to be able to find my special issues too easily. I then take the magazines and put them back in the street racks or whatever. Sometimes I forget to mention the \$5.00. I hope you don't mind.*

*-Texas*

Editor No we don't mind at all. In fact we send out hundreds of free copies of the AR with each printing. Thanks for telling us of your hobby. It explains some of the strange mail we've been getting.

*A friend recently gave us a copy of the December 31 Ambassador Report. Naturally, while a minister of the WCG, I always considered AR a scandalous rag. Since resigning from employment with WCG in June 1979, however, my perspective has changed considerably. I would like to have you send "the rag" on a regular basis. I fully understand why you fellows and gals began this endeavor and feel a good deal like you seem to in wanting to make amends for having encouraged and perhaps entrenched a few souls in the HWA cult. It is gratifying to see that so many have been able to find their way out of the religious maze that HWA has erected. Our hope is that many more will be able to escape as well.*

*-Iowa*

---

## LATE NEWS

Attorneys for Ramona Armstrong have filed a response to HWA's April 16 petition for dissolution of marriage. The papers filed in Pima County Superior Court (Arizona) contain a number of points of interest. We quote:

"As to the allegations contained in Paragraph 6 of the Petition [by HWA], Respondent [Ramona] specifically alleges that the Respondent believes that the marriage is not irretrievably broken and that there is a reasonable probability of reconciliation.

"As and for her separate and affirmative defense, Respondent [Ramona] alleges that she is morally and personally opposed to divorce or dissolution in any form; that these moral beliefs were commonly held by both parties prior to the marriage with the Petitioner [HWA]. Further that Petitioner and Respondent discussed and agreed between themselves that they would not thereafter petition for dissolution.

"As and for her further allegation, Respondent alleges that she is without sufficient funds to support herself and to employ counsel in the prosecution of this litigation, and that the Petitioner is physically and economically capable and earns more than sufficient income with which to pay for Respondent's temporary spousal maintenance, attorney's fees and costs and expenses of this litigation."

In her counterpetition, Ramona alleges that Herbert "has refused to cohabit with" her and "has refused to converse on a personal or direct basis." She alleges that she was employed by the WCG from 1962 onward, but that HWA was responsible for her termination in December 1981. She claims HWA:

"...has effectively terminated her employability and restrained and prohibited future earning capacity with her employer Worldwide Church of God and others by virtue of his acts.

"That Petitioner has denied and prohibited Respondent from claiming or collecting any unemployment benefits under the laws of any State, and from claiming or collection of any termination benefits, pension or retirement benefits, as a result of her termination.

"That as a result of the acts and instructions of Petitioner from corporations, organizations and businesses that he has absolute control over and the resultant termination of employment of the Petitioner in December 1981, Respondent has no income since that time and is unable to support herself; that as a result thereof, it is necessary that Petitioner pay temporary spousal maintenance for purposes of preservation of assets, payment of living expenses and bills, etc. in a sum of not less than \$8,000.00 per month."

In a "Stipulation and Order" by the court, filed June 24, Ramona was granted \$1,800 *per month* "for partial temporary spousal maintenance," *in addition to* (maximum) payments of:

\$785.00 per month for house payments  
\$200.00 per month for residence upkeep

\$250.00 per month for yard work  
\$166.67 per month for house insurance and taxes  
\$450.00 per month for water, electricity, and gas  
\$75.00 per month for telephone  
\$20.00 per month for garbage pickup  
\$589.00 per month for leasing a Mercedes SL 450 automobile  
\$200.00 per month for auto insurance on the Mercedes  
\$25.00 per month for license plates for the Mercedes  
\$90.00 per month for the boarding of three horses  
\$125.00 per month for insurance on selected items of jewelry (she had requested \$889.25 per month or \$10,671 per year "Insurance on Jewelry and Furs.")  
\$8.00 per month for storage of jewelry and furs  
\$300.00 per month for travel and entertainment expenses  
\$10,000.00 for attorney's fees

No wonder HWA has told friends he fears his divorce may cost him everything he owns.

\*\*\*\*\*

We'll have more news for you in our next issue. Until then, our best wishes and thanks to all of you who are supporting our efforts.

Sincerely yours,  
THE PUBLISHERS

---

*Ambassador Report* is published quarterly as finances allow. Publishers are: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Leonard Zola and Margaret Zola.  
Editor: John Trechak.

---

[Next Issue \(AR21\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR 21 September 30, 1982

### Herbert and Ramona Battle It Out

In our last newsletter, we reported that Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), president of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), had filed for dissolution of his marriage. That divorce action against his wife Ramona is rapidly becoming one of Tucson, Arizona's biggest lawsuits as both sides engage in a mammoth paper war. Allegations continue to pour out from both sides, with Ramona refusing to answer many questions and Herbert's lawyers claiming he is too senile and sick to appear in Arizona to answer questions. But by brandishing copies of WCG publications showing HWA's recent worldwide travels and lengthy speeches, Ramona's attorneys (she is represented by the firm of Ettinger and Deckter, not by Stanley Rader, as some are alleging) were able to convince Judge Lillian Fisher that HWA is indeed well enough to appear. He has been ordered to give a deposition even if a physician's presence is needed, and a hearing to set a trial date is scheduled for Nov. 8.

In the meantime, in a separate action, WCG attorneys have filed a suit against Ramona in the U.S. district court in Tucson (Pasadena *Star-News*, Sept. 3, 1982). They allege she has over \$400,000 worth of church property in her possession that she refuses to return. The property, they claim, is owned by the church and was intended solely to furnish HWA's Tucson residence. (Another one of those little special benefits HWA gives himself above salary.) Church attorneys freely admit the furnishings in question are not those of HWA's Pasadena residence (it is separately furnished, also by the church), nor does the property include the Tucson home itself or personal items such as over \$490,000 worth of jewelry HWA has admitted he's given her.

Now, just as we go to press, we have learned that Ramona has retaliated by filing a countersuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against HWA, plus church lawyer Ralph Helge and Armstrong aides Ellis LaRavia, Joe Tkach, Aaron Dean, Kevin Dean, Leroy Neff, Larry Neff, Robert Seelig, and several Armstrong religious corporations. Ramona has charged the defendants with breach of a marriage-employment contract, fraud, and loss of a guaranteed \$50,000 annual income and survivor's benefits. Besides restitution, she is asking \$6 million in punitive damages. HWA was served the papers on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). That day, before his Pasadena congregation, he declared that "God's church" is now facing one of its greatest crises ever.

Ramona's countersuit makes interesting reading. For instance, she alleges that HWA and other defendants asked her to become HWA's secretary and traveling companion in 1974. (Some readers may recall that on page 96 of William Hinson's 1977 book, *Broadway to Armageddon*, ex-WCG official Al Carrozzo was quoted as saying: "Yes, it is true that Herbert Armstrong got a girl pregnant. She was sent to Arizona in a type of exile. This is the same woman Herbert Armstrong was going to marry.") Shortly after becoming his traveling companion, Ramona claims, HWA and other defendants asked her to marry HWA as part of a plan to bolster HWA's image. She refused on the grounds of their great age difference - he was about 83 and she about 35. But, she says, the defendants "persisted in their efforts which they fortified with inducements of purported lifetime financial and other benefits if she would relent."

In her countersuit Ramona alleges that HWA has created the numerous religious organizations he heads as shields for his personal assets. She alleges that those corporations are "alter egos of Armstrong" and that he has full personal control of them and uses them to hide his assets from the public and from her. She further alleges that the eight individual co-defendants listed have conspired in a power struggle to gain control of those assets when Armstrong dies, and in doing so have deprived her of her contractual benefits. She says they were able to do this by "deceitfully persuading" HWA that others - including herself, HWA's son Ted, and lawyer Stan Rader - were planning to "seize power" from him. But the sweeping allegations found in her suit and the claim that HWA had once agreed to leave her his "entire estate" upon his death have led some church members to fear that perhaps Ramona and certain associates are indeed trying to seize control of major portions of the WCG's assets.

And then there are those church members who naively wonder why Herbert and Ramona do not simply get together and apply the marriage-saving advice found in "When the Kissing Begins to Stop...", an article in the Sept.-Oct. issue of Armstrong's own *Plain Truth* magazine. Oh well.

### "Apostle Kinky" Meets Maggie

In our last issue we reported that Herbert Armstrong was to meet this summer with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher ("Maggie" to some in the British press). A number of our readers attempted to inform the British government of the possible embarrassing



Armstrong, who controls his church's income of over £50 million a year, has been accused of taking millions for himself.

He has a private let nicknamed The Flying Whorehouse and is said to take part in various perversions.

His meeting with Mrs. Thatcher went ahead despite warnings to British Government officials from U.S.-based former members of the church.

As he flew home to his headquarters in Pasadena, California, former sect members lashed the decision to let him into No. 10.

"We were numb with disbelief" said David Robinson, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who once held a post in the church.

"Armstrong virtually bought himself audiences with the British Prime Minister and the heir to the throne.

Another ex-member, John Tuit, who has written a book about Armstrong, said: "He's a fraud. I contacted the British embassy in Washington to warn them.

"He has stolen funds meant for the propagation of the Gospel.

### CONMAN

He buys air time on radio stations throughout the U.S and brings in a fortune from donations. This meeting with Margaret Thatcher is going to send his donations through the roof."

And Professor Joseph Hopkins, of Westminster College, Pennsylvania, who has studied the church's affairs said: "I'm surprised Mrs Thatcher fell for him. He's nothing more than a conman."

A Downing Street spokesman insisted: "The audience with the Prime Minister lasted only a few minutes. It wouldn't have been granted if he hadn't been a benefactor."

And a Buckingham Palace spokesman added: "Prince Charles met a number of people at the Royal Opera benefit concert at the Festival Hall. He probably wouldn't have known who Mr. Armstrong was."

The money Armstrong gave to help the Opera House came from his followers, who have to pay a tenth of their salaries into the church.

In Britain alone, the organisation pulled in more than £1½ million last year from donations and legacies.

Of that £1,150,000 went out again in operating costs, according to figures lodged with the Charities Commission.

American lawyer Jack Kessler, who audited the church's books, claimed he knew of "a catalogue of abuses" of funds.

These included Armstrong flying to Rumania for sex therapy lessons and taking his jet to London to buy a sex toy.

---

News of the World, August 8, 1982

### **Anguish of brother in kinky man's sect**

A FORMER member of a bizarre religious cult has told how his brother committed suicide after joining the Worldwide Church of God.

Michael Keane blew his brains out with a shotgun just months after being baptised by the American-based sect.

"He was under tremendous pressure from the church," said 32-year-old Brian Keane, of Watford, Herts.

"He was having problems trying to follow the strict rules."

Mr Keane claimed another cult disciple killed herself and three others made tragic suicide bids.

"One tried to do it by cutting off his manhood," he said.

" Luckily he was saved - but he has since left the sect."

## Dictator

Last week we disclosed that sect chief Herbert Armstrong, 89, had "bought" introductions to Prince Charles and Premier Margaret Thatcher by making a £106,000 gift to the Royal Opera House.

Mr Keane, a member of the church for 13 years, claimed Armstrong was a dictator to the followers.

"He told members they would die in the Biblical Lake of Fire if they divorced, married anyone with an age difference of more than four years, received medication or gave their children birthday presents," he added.

A doctor has revealed that another woman member of the sect died of heart failure because she obeyed the cult's ban on medical care.

Yet Armstrong was receiving expensive treatment for the same condition.

Dr Gordon Muir now practising in the U.S., said: "Eventually I tried a last minute effort to save her. But it was too late.

"I was incensed to discover later Mr Armstrong was being treated with the same drugs."

### Plain Truth Expands, Church Grows

Many of the world's largest-circulation newspapers and magazines have done devastating exposes on HWA and his corporations, but that doesn't seem to faze his followers. The WCG's own newspaper, *The Worldwide News*, announced in its Sept 13 issue that the church's evangelistic magazine *The Plain Truth* now has a circulation of 5,130,000 (of that total 2,117,172 were newsstand copies).

With *The Plain Truth*'s circulation growing so rapidly, it comes as no surprise that the WCG's membership is also growing. Writing in the August 6, 1982 issue of *Christianity Today*, Joseph Hopkins reports that WCG membership is growing at the rate of 1,000 new members a year. In the last two-and-a-half years, ninety-five new congregations have been added, with total WCG membership now at 70,680. Non-member contributors number 144,000, with a claimed 100,000 "new people" writing in per month.

The same article reports that the rival Church of God, International (founded by HWA's son Garner Ted Armstrong) is shrinking in both membership and income. HWA has been telling associates he wants GTA to return to the WCG, and that with so many defectors from Ted's organization, he is confident it is only a matter of time before Ted "comes to his senses" and returns.

---

&COPY;1982 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow.

John Trechak, Editor

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Connie Gerringer, Circulation Manager

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

### Petra Update

HWA's July 16 letter to WCG members and co-workers contained this comment (emphasis his):

"Incidentally, I know many of you seem to have your hearts set on going very soon to Petra as 'the place of safety' during the soon-coming Great Tribulation. Well, *GET YOUR MINDS OFF PETRA*. Brethren, I HAVE NEVER said that Petra definitely is the place of protection where God will take us. I HOPE IT IS NOT! One reason it *could* be the place is that it is a place NOBODY ELSE WOULD WANT TO GO. It would be the most UNpleasant, UNcomfortable, miserable place you could go! There is nothing to be desired there. But, just in case, God HAS miraculously given me very gracious favor in the eyes of King Hussein and also his brother, the Crown Prince. They are very friendly to me personally. And through the Ambassador Foundation, I am keeping up a very close assistance and cooperation with a Jordan school for retarded children, a project carried on by Princess Sarvath, wife of the Crown Prince - even to the extent of planning to send some trained Ambassador College personnel to be stationed there to help train teachers for this school, and otherwise help expand its operations. It is a very worthy cause, and the King and the people of Jordan do appreciate what we are doing to cooperate with them in this."

### Still Pro-Israel

In the last few years HWA has gotten the WCG involved in projects in Egypt, Iraq, and now Jordan. Yet it is quite clear that, in terms of the Jew-Arab conflict, the Armstrong organization remains decidedly pro-Israeli in outlook.

In the August 30 issue of *The Worldwide News* (p. 3), Ambassador College news bureau chief Gene Hogberg lamented the U.S. press's supposedly anti-Israeli coverage of Israel's recent invasion of Lebanon and the latest breakdown in U.S.-Israeli relations. Perhaps his lament results from reality again having a way of going contrary to Herbert Armstrong's prophecies. In the end time (this is the end time, Herbert declares), HWA's prophecies call for the U.S. and Britain (Manasseh and Ephraim to HWA) to be allied with Israel (Judah), not

allied with the rest of the world against the Jewish state.

In that article/commentary, after a quote from the Economist (which quoted Deuteronomy "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them"), Hogberg writes:

#### **"Finish the job**

"Yes, the 'Christian' Western world, largely ignoring the history, examples and admonitions of the Old Testament, influenced by the teachings of the great false church and infected with worldly humanistic concepts, cannot fathom the depth of the no-compromise struggle that the state of Israel is engaged in with a foe that vows to fight on despite its setback in Lebanon."

The mid-September massacre of hundreds of unarmed men, women and children in Israeli-occupied Beirut by right-wing militiamen (like Hogberg, also professing "Christians") should give encouragement to Hogberg. After all, there are still plenty of people in the world who think just like he does, and if given half a chance would like nothing better than to "finish the job."

One final comment on Hogberg. Remember Herbert Armstrong's ill-fated prophecies about the Falkland Islands (see our June 30, 1982, issue, p. 9) and Hogberg's recent *Plain Truth* statement that Britain was "heading into the time of Jacob's trouble"? Well, in another flip flop, Hogberg writes (WN, July 5, p. 2): "One day the British will discover that God quite possibly gave them this victory [in the Falkland war], because he has a work to do in modern day Ephraim [Britain]...."

#### **What Happened to Stan Rader?**

We continue to receive requests for information about Stan Rader, whose reputation among many WCG members seems to remain untarnished. Very briefly, from knowledgeable sources we have learned that Rader is living in semiretirement in Pasadena. He has no executive or administrative responsibilities for the WCG, Ambassador College, or the AICF. He is now classified as a "nonactive" member ("he doesn't attend"). In our March 31, 1981, issue we reported how Herbert Armstrong had given Rader a net \$250,000 bonus for special services to the church. The Aug. 6, 1982 issue of *Christianity Today* reported that that bonus was actually \$750,000 before taxes, and that Rader continues to receive a salary of over \$200,000 per year. While Herbert Armstrong currently avails himself of Rader's services little (if at all), Rader receives his salary in return for his remaining a "consultant" to HWA. Said one friend, "These days Mr. Rader is playing a lot of tennis."

#### **AICF Rolls On**

While Stan Rader relaxes in the California sun, enjoying the good life, the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF), which he started, continues under the direction of Ellis LaRavia, formerly head of the gardeners at Ambassador College. The AICF has announced its talent lineup for the 1982-83 concert season. The new schedule includes appearances by some of the world's greatest orchestras, ballet troupes, and opera companies. Roger Wagner, James Galway, Andres Segovia, Janet Baker, Leontyne Price, and Andre Watts are just a few of the famous artists scheduled. Among the "pop" artists who will appear in "God's House" are Victor Borge, Marcel Marceau, Peter Nero, Henry Mancini, Benny Goodman, the Vienna Choir Boys, and the Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars.

#### **Steve Allen on Cults**

In past issues we have recommended a number of books on the subject of cults, mind control, and deprogramming. We have now come across another book that we believe could be of real help to many. It is by writer-entertainer Steve Allen and is entitled *Beloved Son* (\$12.95 hardback, published by Bobbs-Merrill).

Mr. Allen's son Brian is a leading member of a religious communal group called Love Israel. In *Beloved Son* Mr. Allen details Brian's involvement with that cult and the ongoing father-son relationship he has maintained. It is a well-written, often entertaining, thought-provoking account of a very personal part of the entertainer's life.

There are excellent analyses of a number of major theological-philosophical problems, as well as chapters devoted to some of the more colorful of today's religious movements. Most significant, however, the author clearly shows the importance of keeping lines of communication open when a loved one joins a cult. We highly recommend this book to anyone who has had a friend or relative join the WCG or any other difficult-to-understand religious movement.

#### **Cults in the News and in the Movies**

Religious cults are more and more coming under the scrutiny of the government and the press. Reverend Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church, was recently convicted in New York of tax fraud. And cults in general are getting so much attention that, according to Stanley Cath, professor of psychiatry at Tufts University, cults are more and more "going underground" - trying to get out of the limelight and establish a formal organization" (*U.S. News & World Report*, July 5, 1982).

There is now even a feature film devoted to the cult phenomenon. It is entitled "Split Image." Directed by Ted Kotcheff, with an excellent cast, starring Michael O'Keefe, Karen Allen, Brian Dennehy, and Peter Fonda, the script by Scott Spencer deals with a young man's cult programming and eventual deprogramming. Some Ambassador College alumni who have seen it say it has some significant parallels to their own experiences with Armstrongism.

## Musical Chairs Anyone?

Herbert Armstrong continues his practice of keeping subordinates off balance by playing executive musical chairs. The deputy chancellor of Ambassador's Big Sandy campus, Leon Walker, has been replaced by Leslie McCullough, one-time Big Sandy deputy chancellor and, of late, pastor of the WCG's Cincinnati congregations. Walker, who will now devote more time to the church's Spanish-language work, ostensibly asked for the demotion for health reasons (*The Worldwide News*, August 16).

Other recent Armstrong reassignments include Big Sandy dean of faculty Donald Ward and evangelist Ron Kelly, both shuffled to teaching jobs in Pasadena. Dr. Ward's position will now be filled by San Francisco minister Larry Salyer. Evangelist Burk McNair has been transferred out of Houston to pastor the Big Sandy and Tyler congregations. Long-time Big Sandy campus employee Buck Hammer has been retired, apparently for being a Hammer. (He is the brother-in-law of Garner Ted Armstrong and David Antion, both of whom left the WCG.) And Ambassador journalism instructor John Robinson has been terminated for being the son of anti-WCG author David Robinson. John is now teaching journalism at a state college in Tyler, Texas.

## Tidbits

The July 5 issue of *The Worldwide News* announced that the liquidation of *Quest/81* magazine has finally been completed. The publication of that magazine was finally terminated and its subscription liabilities met by subscription transfers to other magazines.

\* \* \*

According to Joseph Hopkins, writing in the August 6 issue of *Christianity Today*, the men on HWA's council of elders each receive yearly salaries of between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per year. That figure is exclusive of numerous special financial benefits they also receive.

\* \* \*

The mid-October issue (#62) of *Cornerstone* magazine will contain an article on the WCG written by Eric Pement. Mr. Pement told us that *Ambassador Report* readers, who would like a free copy of that issue, may obtain one by writing to: *Cornerstone*, 4707 N. Malden, Chicago, IL 60640.

\* \* \*

As we predicted in our March 30 newsletter, Jack Kessler's threats against the WCG's leadership have come to nothing. No legal action has yet been initiated by Kessler, nor have his allegations resulted in any new governmental investigations of his former employers.

\* \* \*

Herbert Armstrong is learning that it is one thing to declare a new doctrine and quite another for it to be accepted by the women in the WCG. Some Pasadena members complain that there is wholesale disobedience to HWA's no makeup decree, with "painted-up wives of many top ministers leading the pack."

\* \* \*

Evangelist Roderick Meredith, often named as a likely successor to Herbert Armstrong, appears to have again fallen out of favor with the head of his church. Friends say Armstrong has become aware of Meredith's recent disenchantment with his worldly life-style and personal morals. Not surprisingly, HWA has not granted Meredith the position of authority some church members feel he deserves.

Instead, HWA has delegated more and more responsibility to evangelist Ellis LaRavia, who is now being referred to as a possible successor to HWA. LaRavia has expanded his influence by controlling the physical plant at Pasadena, by controlling all of AICF, by becoming the church's spokesman (official press secretary), and by having certain employees loyal to him installed in key positions at Big Sandy. LaRavia travels regularly with HWA, thus increasing his visibility. Said one insider, "Ellis seems to think he can run the organization better than Mr. Armstrong. He should definitely be watched."

\* \* \*

Garner Ted Armstrong's Church of God, International (P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, TX 75710) recently published a new booklet by Ronald Dart entitled *The Christian Woman*. It contains an excellent rebuttal to Herbert Armstrong's latest anti-makeup doctrine. The booklet's cover photo is of the late Loma D. Armstrong.

\* \* \*

Hillel Chodos, one of the key lawyers for the California attorney general in the state's 1979 lawsuit against the WCG, was again in the headlines recently. He has been representing the wealthy Bloomingdale family in the lawsuit filed against it by Vicki Morgan, mistress (at \$18,000 per month) to the late Alfred Bloomingdale, one of Ronald Reagan's advisors and, according to Morgan, a sex pervert who

enjoyed beating women.

Laurence H. Tribe, the famous lawyer who represented the WCG before the U.S. Supreme Court during the California vs. WCG suit, has also been in the news. He has been representing Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the Korean cult leader whose followers believe he is the Messiah.

\* \* \*

While teaching at Ambassador College and writing for WCG publications, Lester Grabbe was not only able to earn an accredited doctorate in theology, but had many articles published in respected (non-WCG) theological journals. In spite of this, he was terminated from his Ambassador College positions, apparently for being viewed as "too intellectual," and a potential "liberal." Since then he has been added to the faculty of the University of Hull in England, where he will lecture on the Old Testament. Tragically, Ambassador College students have again been denied a qualified and respected professor because of internal politics.

\* \* \*

Former WCG ministers Ben Chapman and David Antion have resigned from the doctrinal committee of the Church of God, International because of busy schedules. Antion, besides doing marriage counseling, pastoring a congregation, and working on a Ph.D. in educational psychology, is continuing with a lawsuit against the WCG. His wife, Molly, has a successful beauty consulting business, while their son, Steven, has returned to UCLA after a year of study in England. Steven is a pre-law history major.

Antion's Arcadia, California, congregation recently sponsored a successful series of lectures for the general public on the subject of "coping with single life." Antion has also authored two successful cassette tape programs entitled "Communication: Key to Sexual Fulfillment in Marriage," and "I'm an OK Person." Those who would like information on these excellent programs may write to: Dave Antion, 311 Waverly Drive, Pasadena, CA 91105.

\* \* \*

Former WCG minister Bill Moore (see the letter section of our Dec. 31, 1981 issue), through his company "Windward Productions" and in association with United Cable Television in the Omaha, Nebraska area, is producing a weekly television program called "Innovative Living." Bill wrote us saying he'd like to hear from AR readers who have an interest in "alternate energy, which includes everything from aquaculture to zonolite, and especially electric cars, earth homes, homesteading, solar greenhouses, alcohol fuels, solar collectors, etc." He says he would appreciate news clippings, articles, publications, as well as names, addresses, and phone numbers of people involved in such projects. Bill's address is: "Innovative Living," P.O. Box 14414, Omaha, NE 68124.

## **Letters**

*I am compiling a catalogue of ex-WCG members' names, phone numbers, and addresses for the purpose of providing a pen-friends/fellowship bureau. We, all of us, at times think: "I wonder what ever happened to old so-and-so." Now is your opportunity to find out! Would readers of the AR, here in Great Britain, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope, together with any personal information they care to send me and the dates they were interred in the WCG, etc.? The catalogue will be sent out in approximately one to two months (depending upon the response). So write soon. (Replies from those now in U. S.A., Australia, New Zealand, etc. are welcome, too.) Write to: Peter Griffiths, 6 Congmore Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3DY England. Telephone. 021-779-2723 or 021-745-6613.*

*-England*

*I sometimes wish Ambassador Report would be a bit more discriminating as to which religious groups it mentions. I was disappointed to see your uncritical review of one particular publication which, quite frankly, contains much theological error right out of Herbert Armstrong's teachings. If you had read it carefully, you would have discovered that, like Armstrong, its author is convinced Europe will be the "Beast" of Revelation and that the symbolic "woman" of Revelation is the Catholic church. That author is not alone in this error, as most fundamentalist Protestant denominations seem to believe this too. Many groups point to the seven mountains mentioned in Rev. 17:9 as proof that Revelation is talking about Rome because that city was founded on, or among, seven hills. What is often overlooked, however, is that many other cities are associated with seven hills. Among those are Athens, Istanbul, Jerusalem, and even Cincinnati, Ohio! In the days of Martin Luther, Catholic theologian Peter Bungus wrote a 700-page hook "proving" that the 666 of Revelation was equal to the name Martin Luther. Luther, in turn, interpreted 666 as a forecast of the duration of the Papal regime and rejoiced in his erroneous assumption that it was soon to end. Erroneous theories, such as these, have multiplied ever since.*

*But what does the Bible really say? Rev. 17:18 identifies the symbolic woman as "a great city." Which one? Not Rome, but Jerusalem! Compare Rev. 14:8 with Rev. 11:8, and see Daniel 11:45. It makes it very clear.*

*Let me also draw your attention to the August 23 issue of U.S. News & World Report. That respected magazine reported that the Italian government is investigating the Vatican's financial dealings (there is no Petris law in Italy), the Italian government is considering major changes in the 1929 treaty on Italian-Vatican relations, and the Vatican has a \$29 million deficit (one publication said it is near bankruptcy). Then there is the growing chasm between Catholic conservatives and liberals, which many experts believe will destroy what's left of that church. U.S. News even mentioned that 1,800 Vatican employees are seeking larger pay hikes and are threatening to strike.*

*I think you owe it to your readers to bring out these facts. Instead of mentioning so many groups which are following in Herbie's footsteps, I wish you'd mention the Foundation for Biblical Research (P. O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102). Their newsletter for September had an excellent article entitled "The Counterfeit Ten Nations." Those who are keeping their eyes on Europe, Rome, and the Pope might be surprised at how much they could learn from it.*

*-Washington*

Editor. We have mentioned the FBR in the past, and we have found many of their articles absolutely first-rate. For instance, Ken Fischer's article "My Quest for the Truth," and Ernest Martin's article "Which is the Best Christian Denomination?" in the August *Commentator* were two of the most thought-provoking we've read in a long time.

Nevertheless, we do think our policy of mentioning many groups is a wise one. While many of our readers are interested in theological matters, Ambassador Report is not a theological journal. Nor do we consider ourselves theologians. That being the case, we feel it best that readers should have access to many points of view, and not just those of one religious group or those of just the publishers of the *Report*. After all, "he who states his case first seems right; until the other comes and examines him (Prov. 18:17, RSV).

*Herbert Armstrong continues to preach that if you send him your tithes God will bless you. Yet until you come out of his organization, you may not realize that these blessings have not materialized as he promised. On the other hand, I know many who have left the WCG that have been financially blessed. In my own case, my income has nearly doubled since leaving. I am currently involved in the distribution of health and physical fitness products, and I am looking for people that can help me expand my business nationally (no monetary investment required). If any of your readers are interested they can write to me for information. My address is: Health & Wealth Associates, P. O. Box 3789, Greensburg, PA 75607.*

*-Robert Kuhns*

*After reading the last issue of Ambassador Report, I thought you might be interested in this example of Mr. Armstrong not always telling "the plain truth." I am referring to Herbert's claim in his booklet United States & Britain in Prophecy that there is a notice beside the Coronation Stone in Westminster Abbey which labels it "Jacob's Pillar Stone." I was suspicious about this claim as one would think such important evidence would not be illegible.*

*About 10 years ago now I wrote to Westminster Abbey to inquire if such a notice existed. I am enclosing a copy of the reply from the Keeper of Muniments. I sent a copy of this letter to Ambassador College and asked them to please explain. Ten years later I am still waiting for a reply. I have noticed that the lie is still being perpetuated in the new edition.*

*-Australia*

Editor. The following is the letter referred to above.

*Dear Madam,*

*Thank you for your letter of 24th July about the Coronation Stone.*

*There certainly is not at present any notice describing the Stone as "Jacob's Pillar-Stone," nor can I find anyone here who can recall that there ever was such a notice. I have had several letters recently asking just the same question, and I am rather curious to know what has prompted it.*

*The Stone has been examined by a succession of geologists and all agree that it is a sandstone. Professor A. C. Ramsay writing in 1865 (Stanley's Memorials of Westminster Abbey, 2nd edn., p. 566) states that "the rocks round Bethel... according to all credible reports... are formed of strata of limestone."*

*Professor C. F. Davidson, of H. M. Geological Survey, at the time of George VI's Coronation, contributed an article on the Stone to Crown and Empire (Times Publishing Company, 1937). pp. 126-7. In it he stated that from the chemical composition of samples of the Stone, as compared with other rocks, "the Coronation Stone is seen to agree most closely in lithology with sandstones of Lower Old Red Sandstone age from Scotland. These rocks are well developed in the neighbourhood of Perth and Dundee, and there are several natural exposures close to Scone itself. Specimens obtained from these areas frequently carry pebbles of porphyrite or andesite, some of which are petrographically identical with the one from the Coronation Stone. One or two similar pebbles, about the size of a pea, may be seen in the stone at Westminster... The whole balance of evidence, therefore, is in favour of the stone having been quarried somewhere in the east of Perthshire or in southern Angus, probably not far from the ancient seat of the Pictish monarchy at Scone.*

*-N. H. MacMichael  
Keeper of the Muniments  
Westminster Abbey*

*In answer to the letter sent in on GTA and his continual drunkenness, I do not agree with that writer, as in the first place, when does Ted*

*have time to drink with all he has to do? I don't know how he has time to drink even a little, as he has so much reading to do, and writing booklets plus getting sermons ready.*

*If he was getting drunk so much, his brain certainly would not function as well as it does. He is so brilliant and needs a sharp mind in order to be able to do all the things he does. He is constantly on the go. His sermons are priceless. I get them all the time. He has a lot of vital knowledge stored up in his head that amazes me. I only wish I had the memory he has.*

*Secondly, I am sure Ron Dart and others would not stay with him if he was always getting drunk. I don't blame Ted one bit for being angry about this. I have a friend that drinks quite a bit when we go out with him, and he has been accused of getting drunk also, but never has (even though he can drink a lot more than Ted, I am sure). However, one has only to have a couple of drinks and others accuse him of drinking too much, which is none of their business. I know if anyone lied about me I also would be very angry and tempted to put my fist down their throat, but I wouldn't of course.*

*It would be nice if people would put their noses into their Bible instead of continually finding fault with others and trying to stir up trouble. Some day God will do all the judging, not us. Even though there is a lot of corruption in the WCG, there are a lot of good Christians there and I visit a few of them from time to time. Some people really have an ax to grind. If one can repent we should forgive him as Christ does.*

*-Ontario, Canada*

*Please tell me how I can receive copies of the Ambassador Report at my home. I am coming out of the WCG, because I don't feel there is very much love in an organization that has so much "get" in it. I was a baptized member for 10 years, and during that time I have gradually seen one thing after another that just doesn't seem to be the way Christ would have His church conducted. So much confusion!*

*-Pennsylvania*

*Please continue sending me the Report. I'm a 30-year member of the WCG clan, but thank God and Jesus Christ I finally have found my way out by much study, prayers, and your help. So please don't let me down. I still want to keep up with Satan's tricks.*

*-Big Sandy, Texas*

*Keep your presses going. We "poor, dumb sheep" are gaining much knowledge and find it most comforting to read we aren't alone in getting our brains unscrambled. I've been out of the WCG since '78, but I am finding it a very slow process in undoing the WCG's brainwashing. But God is so real, so close, so patient, and so loving, and I am so free! May God continue to open the eyes of others still in slavery. Thanks for your help.*

*-Ontario, California*

Editor: Many are finding that HWA was correct in one important teaching. It often does take as much time and effort to undo miseducation as it takes to gain true education.

---

Dear Readers:

Our apologies for the shortness of this newsletter. Frankly, our last three issues were not only longer than our finances allowed, but in our zeal to help current WCG members, we printed and distributed more free copies than we should have. At the same time, contributions to the *Report* have fallen off. (Many have written to us telling how they would like to help, but cannot because of unemployment and other problems.)

We will try to bring our next newsletter back up to size. In the meantime, our special thanks to those who did remember us this quarter. Without your help, even this short issue would not have been possible.

With warmest regards,  
John Trechak, Editor

[Next Issue \(AR22\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR22 December 15, 1982

Dear Friend:

As we approach the end of another calendar year, we wish to thank you for your continued support of *Ambassador Report*. It is because of the encouragement and help we receive from people such as yourself that we are able to continue publishing our newsletter and the facts about Herbert Armstrong and his corporations.

Over the years, many have taken the time to write us expressing how much the *Report* has meant in their lives. But occasionally we are asked, "How much is *Ambassador Report* really accomplishing?" That's not an unfair question, and perhaps it's one you'd enjoy seeing answered.

As you may know, *Ambassador Report* (originally called *Ambassador Review*) was started in early 1976 when a group of Pasadena-area Ambassador College alumni decided it was time someone revealed to the supporters of Ambassador College and to the general public exactly what was going on at that institution. We put out annual publications in 1976 and 1977, and since 1978, four newsletters per year. (We are now working on our fourth quarter issue, and you should have it in a few weeks.)

While we have not kept precise statistics on circulation, we do know that since 1976 we have filled literature requests for well over 10,000 different WCG-affiliated individuals. In addition, we have sent our publications to thousands of other WCG members at the request of readers. While ours may not sound like a very large circulation, we know that the average *Report* copy is read, not just by the individual subscriber, but by friends and relatives as well. And we have heard that many readers make photocopies of the *Report* for distribution in their local areas. For instance, we have been told that one AR subscriber in Australia, for a time, made 1,000 photocopies of each newsletter we sent, for distribution in that country. So we know *Ambassador Report* is getting around.

We also know that the *Report* has had a real impact on the size of the WCG's

membership and income. Our experience has been that 95% of those WCG members requesting literature from us leave that church within one or two years. That doesn't mean that we are the only cause for their leaving, for many are forced to leave because of strong doctrinal convictions or because they can't shake the "nasty" habit of asking questions. Nevertheless, our mail clearly indicates that the *Report* has played a major role in the large exodus of Christians from the WCG in the last six years.

That exodus has cost Herbert Armstrong dearly. Had those individuals not been extricated their sojourn in the wasteland of Armstrongism may have continued anywhere from one to twenty, or more, years. (We recently received a letter from an individual who left after forty years with Herbert.) It is therefore not illogical to assume that the average AR reader, who as left that organization, has been spared perhaps ten years of misdirection. According to the WCG's own statistics, the average WCG member contributes over \$1,000 per year to the Armstrong "work." Many give much more. Therefore, one reasonable estimate is that *Ambassador Report* has already cost Herbert Armstrong over \$100,000,000 (10,000 *Report* readers x 10 years average membership x \$1,000 per year).

Actually, that is a very conservative estimate for a number of reasons: (1) As mentioned above, our publications are read by many more than just our actual subscribers. (2) The information published goes beyond just the readers (as through personal letters and by word of mouth). And (3) the *Report* is used extensively as a reference source by authors and journalists who have, in turn, disseminated our information in their own writings. Occasionally some of our readers complain that the news media does not give adequate coverage to the WCG. That maybe so, but what many may not realize is that if it were not for our efforts in keeping the press constantly informed, there would be much less information available in the media.

That is why we feel it is so important to distribute the *Report* to a maximum number of individuals with control of, or access to, the media. Let's take our last issue as an example. Aside from our regular subscribers and hundreds of current WCG members and Ambassador students sent complimentary copies, here are just a few of those to whom we sent our last issue: the editors of over 100 of the nation's top magazines; over 175 of the country's leading news commentators and columnists, including Paul Harvey, Jack Anderson, Ann Landers, and Abigail Van Buren; the mayors, city directors, city managers, police chiefs, and leading citizens of both Tyler, Texas, and Pasadena, California; Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley; California Governor Jerry Brown; California Governor-elect George Deukmejian (remember him?); Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek; and top officials in the government of Jordan. We even sent copies to entertainer-celebrities Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Chet Atkins, Lucille Ball, and Jimmy Stewart (all of whom have had some contact or association with the Armstrong organizations in the past), and to Johnny Carson, to whom we suggested Herbert Armstrong as a most appropriate subject for his famous comedy routines. We also sent copies of our last issue - along with back issues, supporting documents, and personal letters - to princess Lillian of Brussels (wife of King Leopold), Madame Imelda Marcos (First lady of the Philippines) and Franz Jose Strauss (the Bavarian politician). We thought all of them would appreciate knowing a little more about Herbert Armstrong and a little more about how they personally are being used.

While it is not our first priority, the distribution of the AR to the media is, we believe, an important service, and in the new year we hope to expand that part of our circulation. Perhaps with a bit of luck we will also be able to again campaign to have the Armstrong broadcasts and telecasts removed from some stations, as we have done in the past. Unfortunately, that type of campaign takes a great deal of time and money. That is why we have not, so far, been able to do more in that area.

You may have noticed that our last issue of the *Report* was the shortest in some time. We had been hoping to bring our newsletter back up to about twelve pages. But after much analysis and with publishing experts, we have decided to opt for the shorter six-page size - at least for awhile. That is due, not just to the recessionary economy and our reluctance to pressure readers into bigger contributions, but because we believe it will really make for a bigger impact in the long run. A careful look at our last issue will reveal that its six pages really contained the equivalent copy of about nine pages of many of our previous issues. That is because we are now typesetting (in smaller type) rather than simply typing our newsletters, as in the past. We are also making a greater effort to prune down our writing style. Thus the new issues will not be as lightweight in content as they might first appear.

While two or three readers wrote that they missed the bigger size, a few thought the shorter issue was not only easier to read, but more important, was easier to photocopy for friends. Of course, by cutting down the overall size of our newsletter we hope to save considerably on printing and postage costs. If the savings turns out as significant as we hope, we will not only put out more copies of each issue for wider distribution, but perhaps we will also be able to put out a few special mid-quarter issues of the *Report* as important stories develop.

Another area into which we may be able to expand is advertising. We have already begun to run classified ads in some areas of the country where our newsletter is still relatively unknown. Here is the ad we have been putting in some newspapers:

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG followers: Find out the plain truth about the inner workings of the Worldwide Church of God. Read Ambassador Report. Sample copies \$2. Write: Ambassador Report, P.O. Box 4068, Pasadena, CA 91106.

To those who respond, we send the current issue of the *Report* plus one or two back issues and a note explaining that they may subscribe simply by asking. The \$2, by the way, is not a get-rich device. It is mainly intended to discourage those with no real interest in the Armstrong church from flooding our mailbox with requests for something for nothing. However, the \$2 is still low enough that anyone with a real interest in getting the facts on HWA can still do so and the money received does help to partially offset advertising costs.

We do feel that running such ads will help us reach people in those church areas where we have very few subscribers. In case some of you would like to see this ad run in your local newspaper, feel free to place it yourself (under "Notices," "Religious," "Publications," etc.). Or for those who wish to become even more personally involved, the above ad can be run minus the end part, beginning "Sample copy..." That part can be replaced with "For information call (your phone number)." You might be surprised at

how many friends you can gain by passing on information about *Ambassador Report* and about your own experiences in the WCG.

We know that most readers would probably prefer not to get personally involved to this extent. But if you'd like to help us, there are a few simple things you can do: (1) If you have information on the WCG in your local area, drop us a short note and tell us. (2) We don't make a practice of giving out names from our mailing list, but sometimes we get requests for such information from people leaving the WCG. Many are simply looking for people with whom they can share experiences. If you'd like to help such people or correspond with them, write us. We'll make a note of it, and if the opportunity arises, we'll pass on your name (or pass on theirs to you). (3) If you know of people who can benefit from the *Report*, show them a copy. If you're always showing them your copies, suggest they subscribe. Or send us their names and addresses, and we'll mail them a copy along with a note explaining that they can receive the *Report* regularly just by asking. A little effort can go a long way in helping others make a real improvement in their lives.

Once again, thank you for helping us this past year. It is much appreciated, not just by us here in Pasadena, but by thousands around the world who are benefiting personally from the information published in *Ambassador Report*.

I know that most of our readers do not keep Christmas or New Year's, at least not in a religious sense. But like us, most of you will (hopefully) be getting time off for the holidays to be with your families. From all of us at the *Report*, a happy and We holiday season and the very best of everything in the coming new year.

With warmest regards,  
John Trechak

[Next Issue \(AR23\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR23 January, 1983

### Court Documents Reveal: **Herbert Armstrong Decrepit!**

In the September 30, 1982 issue of *Ambassador Report* we gave a brief update on the Tucson, Arizona divorce action filed against Ramona Armstrong by lawyers for Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the president of Ambassador College and founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Seven weeks after that issue appeared, we found in our mailbox a rather curious oddity that we must share with you:

November 17, 1982

Gentlemen:

Our office represents Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God in various litigation, including the marital dissolution action between Ramona Armstrong and Herbert W. Armstrong. The September 30, 1982 issue of the *Ambassador Report* has recently come to my attention, and said publication has misquoted and distorted my legal position regarding the deposition of Mr Armstrong in the marital dissolution proceeding. Your mischaracterization is obviously defamatory to me and my law firm.

At no time have Mr Armstrong's "lawyers claim[ed] he is too senile and sick to appear in Arizona to answer questions," as inaccurately reported in your Report. Never has there been any representation or intonation by me that Mr. Armstrong is senile, or in any way mentally impaired. Your inaccurate report impunes my integrity, is disruptive of my professional relationship with the Church, and is clearly defamatory.

In order to mitigate damages, we hereby request, and this will constitute a formal demand, that you immediately publish in your Report an apology and an admission that your previously published statements were false and incorrect. Additionally, demand is hereby made that you provide to me the name and address of each individual who constitutes the "source of information" upon which you predicated such statement, as well as a description of any documentation upon which you purportedly relied.

Very truly yours,  
Allan Browne  
Ervin, Cohen & Jessup  
Ninth Floor, 9401 Wilshire Blvd  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

*Here is Editor John Trechak's reply:*

Dear Allan:

Notwithstanding the fact that *Ambassador Report's* staff box clearly indicates myself as editor, and notwithstanding the fact that the same staff box gives honorary mention to the names of three women, your letter of November 17 begins with "Gentlemen." Whatever the reason for your inappropriate salutation, I have taken it upon myself to personally answer your letter, as not only did I write the fifteen words you have objected to, but as the editor of *Ambassador Report* I take full responsibility for the entirety of this publication's editorial content. Frankly, I would have preferred to answer your objections in a private correspondence. In fact, had you returned my call of November 22, I would have done so over the phone. But considering your written request - excuse me, your "formal demand" - that I respond in a public manner, I will hereby comply.

First off, let me just say I really do believe that not only you, but the readers of the *Report* are entitled to an apology. The matter of your legal position - and more importantly Mr. Armstrong's present condition - were really not given the coverage they deserved. Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I hope this response will make up for that oversight. But as to whether or not I have "misquoted" you or "distorted" your legal position - well, that is an entirely different matter. Let's look at the facts.

On April 16, 1982, Herbert W. Armstrong - or perhaps I should say lawyers claiming to represent Herbert W. Armstrong (because I have yet to see real evidence that Mr. Armstrong is fully aware of what is occurring in Tucson) filed for dissolution of his marriage in Superior Court of Pima County, Arizona. Although valid subpoenas were served, by mid-September Mr. Armstrong had not yet appeared for even one hearing or deposition. (And as of this writing, he still has not.)

On September 20, 1982, with the parties not present, a hearing took place before Judge Lillian Fisher. Here is how the court's minute entry describes that proceeding: "Hearing re petitioner's motion for protective order prohibiting the taking of depositions of Herbert W. Armstrong." The minute entry of the court clearly shows that the principal lawyer representing Herbert W. Armstrong "asks the Court to take judicial notice of the frailties

of a person who has achieved the age of ninety (90)."

Now this may come as a surprise, Allan, but the Tucson court records say that that lawyer was you! Those records also show that September 20 was not the first or the last time you went to court to argue that your client is both very old and in very frail condition. Don't you remember all the evidence you submitted to buttress your arguments? Well, as your letter demands that I present my sources and documentation, let's review a little more of the court record.

One piece of evidence you submitted was an affidavit from Melvin R. Olinger, Mr. Armstrong's chauffeur. Here is an excerpt from that affidavit:

"I have firsthand personal knowledge of the facts herein stated and could... testify... if called as a witness.

"I am employed by the Worldwide Church of God as Chauffeur to the Pastor General of the Church, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. I have held this position since April, 1970. As a result, I spend many hours with Mr. Armstrong.

"Mr. Armstrong suffered heart failure in August, 1977. Since that time, I have been present on many occasions when he has suffered chest pains and other discomfort. He presently receives certain medications at three regular times a day. When he is away from his home, at the office or when I am accompanying him, I personally am responsible for

---

&COPY;1983 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow.

John Trechak, Editor

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Connie Gerringer, Circulation Manager

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

reminding and assisting him in taking said medications. Sometimes, it has been necessary to even interrupt board or other important meetings for this purpose.

"In addition to his regular medication, Mr. Armstrong also carries with him nitroglycerine capsules which he uses in case he comes under stress or feels pain in his chest or arm. He knows that if he feels such pain, he must take some nitroglycerine and rest until the pain subsides.

"On September 18, 1982, during a sermon to the church, Mr. Armstrong raised his voice, gestured actively and spoke with a great deal of energy in regard to certain things he was saying. Afterward, he indicated that he was suffering some discomfort. He had to rest and receive some additional nitroglycerine before I was able to drive

him home.

"The foregoing happens virtually any time Mr. Armstrong gets into a stressful or emotional situation, or even if he has more than a certain amount of physical exercise. For example, he is normally able to walk around the reflecting pool by his house (about 50 yards) one time, and then must sit down and rest, or his legs will buckle.

"In recent times, Mr. Armstrong has often had difficulty sleeping and, as a result, seldom feels physically strong and mentally alert enough to accomplish many of his normal tasks until the afternoon. I am personally amazed that Mr. Armstrong is able to accomplish everything he does in view of the physical problems he has.... From my observation, Mr. Armstrong has learned to pace himself as long as he is in his own environment, so that he stays within his strength. If he did not, he could well have another heart attack."

Then, there was the letter from John H. Wineinger, M.D. of the Thomas-Davis Clinic, P.C. Here is an excerpt from his statement to the court:

"I have been treating Mr. Armstrong, who will be 90 on 31 July, 1982. I have been his physician since April of 1977. On August 15, 1977, the patient came into my office after having completed a trip, which I understand was related to his work with his church, the Worldwide Church of God, and he had had what apparently, retrospectively, was an acute myocardial infarction and congestive heart failure, and was treated in Tokyo, Japan, and had been having a shortness of breath for about six days prior to that visit in August. On examination that day, he had distended neck veins, basilar rales in his chest, an irregular heartbeat, and some peripheral edema. It was my diagnostic impression that he had congestive heart failure incident to myocardial infarction, and I have been treating him since that time both by visiting him in his home and by having him visit in the office.

"Over the ensuing years, by following a dietary program and taking medication to control blood pressure and improve the contractile ability of his heart, he has been able to return to his work as a minister and head of the Worldwide Church of God. In this regard, he has been able to travel in an aircraft and go about his church duties without any evident stress that I am aware of, or that he has given me any history of...

"Knowing that there is a total difference between the physical activity involved in flying and in preaching, as compared to the emotional stress involved in court action, it would be my feeling that being subjected to the cross-examination and interrogation involved in this procedure could very well have a detrimental and adverse effect upon Mr. Armstrong's health and could result in cardiac arrhythmias which could potentially be fatal. It would, therefore, be my recommendation that Mr. Armstrong not be compelled to appear in any of these planned legal proceedings and, if at all possible, that any questions directed to him be put in writing so that he could answer them at his leisure rather than under a high-pressure situation."

And then there was (and this one's my favorite, Allan) the affidavit by Lawrence M. Omasta. Here is an excerpt (and remember *you* introduced all of this):

"I am employed by the Worldwide Church of God as the Department Manager of Media Services Radio and Television. In this capacity, I have supervision and control over the production, televising and editing of the World Tomorrow television

program on which Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong is the main speaker.

"Because the World Tomorrow television program is regularly aired weekly, we attempt to make at least one new telecast each week. The schedule for producing such telecasts, however, is largely dependent upon Mr. Armstrong's personal well-being. Because Mr. Armstrong is 90 years old and has certain infirmities connected with age and the fact that he had major heart failure five years ago, our production schedule must necessarily be extremely flexible.

"As a result of the foregoing, we have no set time for making programs. It depends upon Mr. Armstrong, how he feels at any particular time, and, to a large extent, his drive, energy and determination. Mr. Armstrong comes to the studio depending on just when he feels up to it.

"On many occasions, we have started to video tape a program only to have Mr. Armstrong stop and state that he is unable to finish, that he just doesn't have the energy or sharpness of mind to do so, or that he otherwise doesn't feel up to it.

"One factor which I believe is very helpful to Mr. Armstrong in making telecasts is that this is in our own studios, the environment is familiar and one in which he has total cooperation, he is very comfortable, there are no outsiders there, and only church-member employees and people he has worked with over the years are present. This creates the best possible environment for us to be able to start when he wants, to quit whenever he feels the need not to go on, or to make the different segments at his pace in accordance with how he personally feels.

"The programs as they appear on television are not made straight through. Mr. Armstrong will sometimes stop right in the middle to do a retake of a particular section because of certain physical problems on his part. Those parts are edited accordingly. On one occasion several months ago, Mr. Armstrong began to have shortness of breath during a taping and we have [sic] to call for oxygen to be brought for him. Most programs involve 30 to 40 minutes of actual video tape and most sessions run from 45 to 50 minutes total time from the beginning of the taping until everything that will be used in that program is completed. The actual video tape time used on any program is about 28 minutes with about 2 to 12 minutes being edited out as a result of the foregoing mentioned problems.

"Many times I have been notified by Mr. Armstrong's personal assistant that Mr. Armstrong is working on his notes for a television program, and that I should expect him to come to the television studio at a particular time for the taping of the program, only to have Mr. Armstrong not show up. I have then subsequently been advised that he simply did not feel up to making a program. I often keep a full crew on standby during lunch hour, and sometimes even into the evening on the possibility that Mr. Armstrong will be able to come in and make a program. Recently, Mr. Armstrong came in at 5:20 p.m. on a Friday afternoon for a program taping.

"Some people have observed certain programs of Mr. Armstrong overseas where he spoke to various important groups and leaders and appeared to speak very powerfully. These programs, of course, have been edited to take the best portions. In addition, some of the appearances of Mr. Armstrong where he spoke to various groups have not been shown, even though they were video taped. The reason is because Mr. Armstrong's tiredness and infirmities were apparent in the video tape. On one recent case in Cebu City, Phillipines [sic], his appearance had been advertised, the hall had been rented and advance preparations had been made. However, Mr. Armstrong simply had to cancel out because he did not feel well."

According to an Aaron Dean affidavit you submitted on another occasion, HWA is blind in one eye, has impaired vision in the other, and wears a hearing aid in each ear. And according to the three affidavits quoted above, Allan, your client can't walk more than fifty yards without his knees buckling, has to take drugs at least three times a day, sometimes requires oxygen, "seldom feels... mentally alert enough to accomplish many of his normal tasks until the afternoon," "on many occasions" can't continue speaking into a microphone because "he doesn't have the... sharpness of mind to do so," and if he's simply asked a few direct questions there's a good chance he will fall over dead. Whew! You know you've convinced me. Mr. Armstrong is sick!

And Judge Fisher thought so too, because, even though she somehow felt it necessary for the patient, I mean Petitioner, to show up at some point in the litigation, she ruled that he would be allowed to have not only his lifesaving oxygen readily available, but a physician to assist him through the life-threatening ordeal of answering questions. I think you did a pretty fair job of proving your point, Allan. You didn't get into the matter of his memory lapses (as far back as the late sixties Mr. Armstrong complained of this problem, in the pulpit, before thousands), nor did you mention his not infrequent irrational and highly emotional temper outbursts (even I had the misfortune of witnessing one of these at his home in 1970, and it was pathetic), nor the prosthetic dildo (written about by his accountant Jack Kessler), nor the recently rumored cancer of the left breast, nor the long-rumored colostomy (oh Allan, please tell us it isn't so). Nevertheless, I still think that, while you may not have used those exact words, you still did a pretty fair job via the affidavits of proving HWA is "senile and sick."

And yet in your letter to me it appears you now claim that such was not your legal position. What then was your legal position? Was it that Herbert is not ninety years old? Was it that he does not indeed have serious health problems? If that is the case, then why the continual emphasis in the courtroom on his frailty, infirmities, and old age? And why those affidavits? Let's face it Allan, your Nov. 17 letter to *Ambassador Report* isn't just vague. Those portions having any specificity whatsoever are anomalous, while the rest might well be described as acutely incoherent. You write that you have been "misquoted" somehow (para. 1). Yet in the fifteen words of mine that you've objected to, neither you nor anyone else is quoted (" ") at all. You write that your integrity has been impugned (para. 2). Yet in those fifteen words no one's integrity was so much as even hinted at. You write that you and your firm have been defamed (para. 1 & 2). Yet, not only were you and your firm never named, in those fifteen words not so much as a negative innuendo was even cast on anyone. Nor did I in any manner whatsoever even address the problem of HWA's psyche, let alone say you argued that Herbert is mentally impaired.

I do believe most reasonable people would deduce from the Omasta and Olinger affidavits you filed that your legal position might indeed have been that Mr. Armstrong is mentally impaired in some way. And when you consider Herbert's background of deviant behavior (the publicly long-alleged incest, London sex toy jaunt, "flog log," etc.), his belief that he is an apostle, and his reoccurring hysterical pronouncements that within a few months certain Western European countries will destroy the United States in a nuclear attack, I doubt we would have much difficulty finding respected psychiatrists who would diagnose your client as being "mentally impaired." (Such a diagnosis would appropriately be considered well-founded and indicative of professional competence.)

But I did not represent *your* legal position as such.

That brings us to the semantics of the phrase "senile and sick," which as best as I can make out from your letter, seems to be your pivotal point of contention. But why that should be so is an enigma to me. Could it be that you are not sure what those words actually mean? "Sick" is a pretty common word, and I just can't believe that's where your problem lies. But, I'll admit, the word "senile" is a little longer, and perhaps that was where you stumbled. So just in case you haven't already researched this yourself, here is the definition of "senile" as given in a number of leading dictionaries:

*The American Heritage Dictionary:*

senile: adj. 1. Pertaining to, characteristic of, or proceeding from old age. 2. Exhibiting senility. 3. Geol. worn away nearly to the base level, as at the end of an erosion cycle.

*Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary:*

senile: adj. 1. Pertaining to, proceeding from, or characteristic of old age. 2. Infirm; weak; doting.

*Webster's Concise Family Dictionary:*

senile: adj. 1. OLD, AGED.

*Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary:*

senile: Pertaining to or characteristic of old age.

But, maybe to your legal mind, these dictionaries aren't sufficiently erudite or authoritative. If that's the case, consult the most respected, scholarly, authoritative, unabridged-in-any-way, tomes of:

*The Oxford Dictionary:*

senile: adj. 1. Belonging to, suited for or incident to old age. Now only of diseases, etc.: Peculiar to the aged. 2. Exhibiting the weakness of old age. 3. Phys. Geo. Approaching the end of a cycle of erosion.

I don't see anything inherently pejorative there. Do you? With various publishers there are subtle variations to the basic definition. But the central idea remains that the word "senile" has to do essentially with the aging process and secondarily with the normal weakening associated with old age. Undoubtedly, one can find some dictionaries that will give, as a concomitant or derivative of that secondary factor of weakened physical condition, a tertiary concomitant of weakened mental faculties. That is not surprising because the mental faculties are dependent upon the brain, a physical organ as subject to the aging process as the rest of the body.

But it would be untenable to conclude from this that the word "senile" is the equivalent of "mentally impaired." It is not. Nor is it the equivalent of "senile dementia" (also called "senile psychosis" and "dementia senilus"). That is a psychiatric term that often crops up in legal proceedings dealing with conservatorship (and it's a term you might find useful in the future). While it includes the word "senile" as an adjective, "senile psychosis" has a very specific meaning, and one different from "senile."

If any further proof is required, check Maloy's *Medical Dictionary for Lawyers*. In the edition I have, "senile" is defined simply as "of, or pertaining to, old age." That's all it says. And even if you look up "senility" (a different, but related word), the only meaning given is (and the emphasis is mine): "Old age or its infirmities. Feebleness of body and mind that *sometimes* accompanies old age." How could anything be plainer?

Frankly, when you consider (1) your persistent emphasis on Mr. Armstrong's ninety years, (2) your continuous emphasis on his infirmities and frail condition, and (3) the affidavits that you submitted, what one word could more accurately describe the way you have characterized Mr. Armstrong than the word "senile"? I personally don't know of any.

All in all, Allan, your Nov. 17 letter to *Ambassador Report* raises quite a number of questions, foremost of which is: Why in the world would you ever write a letter like that?

I'm sure you are a very bright, competent and highly ethical attorney. But I wouldn't be surprised that there might be some individuals, who, if they received such a letter, would conclude that they were being confronted by one of those habitual-intimidator smart-ass types so prevalent in your profession. (Have you ever seen where lawyers rank in opinion polls rating public confidence in the professions?) Some might perhaps conclude - from your letter's lack of legitimate grievance or substantiation and its general tone - that such a letter was intended solely to annoy, intimidate, harass, inflict anxiety, or intimate a forthcoming nuisance lawsuit of a frivolous nature that would use the court system to harass and to inflict a chilling effect on the First Amendment rights of the recipient.

I prefer, however, not to draw such hasty conclusions. I know how Mr. Stanley Rader, an honored lawyer and evangelist, personally chose you to assist him in his "brilliant" (to quote your client) defense of the WCG in 1979-80. And I have great respect for your law firm.

Pardon me if I digress a little, but I also recall hearing your distinguished late senior partner John Ervin some years ago at the Philosophical Research Society (PRS) in Los Angeles. Dr. Ervin lectured on the Great Mother goddess. And I was amazed at his vast knowledge of religions, psychology, and the occult. (Described by a close friend as "something of a mystic," Dr. Ervin was for many years the vice-president of the PRS and a disciple of astrologer-occultist Manly P. Hall, who remains the society's president.) Dr. Ervin was also ordained to the ministry of the Church of People and was a local pastor of the United Methodist Church. Regarding his love for Jesus, in 1981 he wrote:

"Although Jesus Christ is and has been all my life the central figure and reason for my being, I am devoting all the time I presently can muster to supporting and improving the United Nations, which I regard as the logical extension of what Jesus was teaching."

Even though Dr. Ervin was a graduate of Harvard, an acclaimed expert in international law, a federal tax expert, and, I am told, a counsellor to U.S. presidents, the strengthening of the United Nations remained his great personal goal. In 1978 he was awarded the United Nations Peace Medal. A comment from a letter eulogizing Dr. Ervin written by

Robert Muller, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, perhaps best summarizes the life of this great man: "He was an endless fount of ideas, inspiration, and true illuminations."

So you see, Allan, I not only prefer to think the very best of you personally, I have great respect for your lawfirm and am only too happy to acknowledge its influential position in the scheme of things.

But the question still remains - why the letter?

You apparently didn't intend it merely for a laugh, as I first suspected. Because when I called your office to share the joke with you (I used to think I could always spot a good one), your secretary - the one who said you'd be in court all morning, not the one who earlier in the day said you were out of state for the week - confirmed that the letter was indeed "authentic" - intended to be taken at face value. You wouldn't believe the shock!

Could it be you really weren't aware of all that was happening in court on September 20 or during some of those other proceedings? Well, I suppose that can happen. (Have you seen the Schick clinic commercial with that lawyer who admits that for some time he couldn't keep his attention on what was transpiring during trials because his mind was always on cigarettes?)

Or perhaps, you were aware of what was transpiring on Sept. 20, but since then you've forgotten. That, too, can happen to anyone. In the above, I've quoted a number of court documents of which you should have kept copies. Yet your letter's demand for identification of my sources and "documentation" implies you may not have made copies of these court documents, or that your copies were misfiled or simply lost. If that is the case, drop me a note and I'll send you duplicates of my set.

But back to some of those questions raised by your letter. For instance you write: "Our office represents Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God in various litigation." It's an interesting statement in light of Mrs. Ramona Armstrong's claim, in her California suit, that the Worldwide Church of God corporation is nothing more than essentially an "alter ego" of Herbert Armstrong, set up to personally benefit him financially. I'm sure there is nothing illegal about you simultaneously representing both Herbert W. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God corporation. And I'm sure that as a lawyer you can put forth some kind of justification for doing so. I did notice, however, that Ethical Consideration 5-18 of the Code of Professional Responsibility provides:

"A lawyer employed or retained by a corporation or similar entity owes his allegiance to the entity and not to a stockholder, director, officer, employee, representative, or other person connected with the entity. In advising the entity, a lawyer should keep paramount its interests and his professional judgment should not be influenced by the personal desires of any person or organization."

From my layman's point of view, I find it difficult to see how equal representation can be given to both entities simultaneously. (And you may recall, the State brought up a similar point during the State of California versus Worldwide Church of God lawsuit in 1979.)

Do the personal interests of Herbert W. Armstrong coincide perfectly with the interests of the Worldwide Church of God corporation?

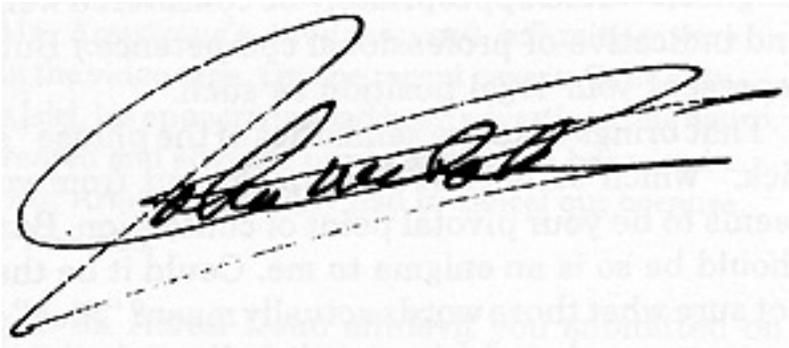
For instance, you have advocated in a number of cases that Mr. Armstrong not be required to give a deposition. For the sake of argument, let us assume that such was indeed in his own best interest. Isn't it still possible that such was not in the best interest of the Worldwide Church of God corporation? Isn't it also conceivable that at some time in the future - if any of the litigation now in progress brings results disappointing to any of the trustees - that some conscientious board member (let's say Rod Meredith or Raymond McNair, as an example) might question whether your representation was preferential to one client entity over another? Along those lines, have you ever advocated to the board that, because of the responsibility they have to those of us who have contributed to the church, they should obtain legal counsel independent of the influence exercised by house counsel? Of course, if the personal interests of Herbert W. Armstrong do indeed coincide with those of the Worldwide Church of God corporation, then there's no problem in this regard. But that would seem to imply that Mrs. Ramona Armstrong's claim is true.

I know that I've put forth a number of questions that may appear to be rhetorical. They are not. I would not only enjoy seeing your answers to them, but, assuming you could put together something concise and a bit more coherent than your letter of Nov. 17, would love to print your answers right here in *Ambassador Report*. Not only I, but all the readers of this publication, no doubt, look forward to your next submission.

I'm sorry that my response to your letter has had to be so brief. I will make up for it, you can be sure, when, in the next issue of this newsletter I will cover some of the other evidence you and your associates have submitted about Mr. Armstrong.

In the meantime, thank you for doing your part for *Ambassador Report*.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Trechak", written over a light gray background.

John Trechak

### **HWA's Active Schedule**

Spend a few hours reading through the testimony and evidence presented by HWA's

lawyers in Tucson, and a very clear picture emerges of a sick and senile individual tottering on the brink of oblivion. But glancing through some of the latest issues of *The Worldwide News* (WN) gives a very different impression.

The Oct. 18, 1982 issue of the WN reported how, during the Feast of Tabernacles, HWA spoke live to over 110,000 followers "all over the United States, Hawaii, Alaska, England and ... even in New Zealand." The feat was accomplished via transmissions over three satellites. The Nov. 1 issue of the WN showed a picture of HWA conversing "with Ariawongsagatayana, the 18th Supreme Patriarch of Thai Buddhism." According to the article:

"The meeting, the first between the supreme patriarch and the pastor general, took place in Mr. Armstrong's executive office on the fourth floor of the campus Hall of Administration."

The meeting was described as "warm and friendly."

The Nov. 15 WN reported that HWA was in Bermuda where he met with several of the island's leaders, and the Nov. 29 issue reported HWA in the Netherlands, the Republic of South Africa, and Kenya, where he had a meeting with President Moi. In Kenya, HWA gave President Moi a Steuben crystal depicting a king-fisher bird. In describing that meeting evangelist Frank Brown wrote:

"Since the end of British colonial rule in 1963, Kenya has flourished as one of the more progressive countries in Africa mainly because of the charismatic leadership of the late Mr. Kenyatta. Mr. Armstrong counts Mr. Kenyatta as one of the greatest statesmen in recent years.... President Moi's overall philosophy is called in Swahili *nyayo*, which roughly means 'following in the footsteps' of Jomo Kenyatta."

HWA's respect for Jomo Kenyatta is interesting in light of the fact that Kenyatta was a chief instigator of the Mau Mau rebellion of the early '50s - an uprising famous for its savagery and terrorism. Kenyatta went on to become the first president of Kenya in 1964. In 1969 he outlawed all opposition parties.

The Dec. 13 WN reported HWA in Greece, where he addressed the Athens Rotary Club, and in Spain, where he spoke to King Juan Carlos I. The Dec. 27 WN reported HWA in Jamaica, where he spoke to government officials.

But HWA doesn't just travel a lot. HWA has *arrived* - and just how much is evident from a Daniel Cariaga review which appeared in the Oct. 29 *Los Angeles Times*, part VI, p. 1. The review covered the return of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (acclaimed the world's greatest) to the Los Angeles area - more specifically to Ambassador Auditorium. Wrote Cariaga:

"How the world has changed, one kept calculating Wednesday night, in the 26 years since the Berlin Philharmonic last played here.

"Forget space travel, emerging nations, est and the Cambridge diet; think how Mayor Tom Bradley, Jane Wyman, Herbert W. Armstrong, even you and I, have changed,

in that small corridor of history between Nov. 18, 1956, and today....

"Still, the huge coloristic palette from which Karajan and his Berliners drew all these sounds, loud and soft, has to impress. Some in that large audience - which included, by the way, not only Bradley, Wyman, and Armstrong, but also other celebrities from various contemporary worlds - even reveled in them."

Yes, Herbert is a celebrity. And no wonder. For whatever negative side there may be to his theology or personal morals, one cannot help but respect at least two of his attributes: (1) his political astuteness, which rivals Machiavelli's, and (2) his skills as a communicator, which rival those of the greatest advertising men of all time. Because of those two attributes, it is not always easy to obtain accurate data on HWA. Herbert knows how to create an image; he knows how to erect a facade. He's done it for years, and he's good at it. For instance, if you saw the November 15 issue of *The Worldwide News*, you may have noticed his article (p. 5) "What Are the Secrets of My Youthful Vitality, Energy, Drive and Long Life?" Of course, to most people just the idea of an ailing ninety-year old describing himself as "youthful" brings guffaws. But not so with the typical Worldwider. To them, HWA's statements are the gospel truth.

But HWA can't take all the credit for his success. Court documents show that HWA's medical doctors deserve some of the credit. As we've pointed out frequently over the years, no matter how many times HWA tells his followers that God doesn't want them to rely on medical science (after all, why waste potential tithes on your, or your family's, health?), when HWA gets ill, he gets the very best in medical assistance.

And let's not forget HWA's lawyers. Jesus was very blunt with the lawyers of his day (Luke 11:45-46, RSV):

"One of the lawyers answered him, 'Teacher, in saying this you reproach us also.'

"And he said, 'Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.' "

Herbert, on the other hand, *surrounds* himself with lawyers! First of all there's Stanley Rader, who received a reported \$750,000 bonus in 1981, and - by his own admission - gets well over \$200,000 per year as a consultant. (Yet Herbert Armstrong hasn't the sense to ask Mr. Rader's advice. Sources in the church have told us that HWA simply refuses to talk to Mr. Rader!) Then there is Mr. Ralph Helge and his legal staff. And the Tucson law firm of Wolfe & Ostapuk. And the law firm of Miller & Pitt. And the Beverly Hills law firm of Ervin, Cohen & Jessup, with its 41 partners plus associates. And sometimes the law firm of Gibson, Dunn, & Crutcher with its well over 300 lawyers (one of the most powerful firms in the country). So HWA has not only the best in medical assistance but the very best in legal assistance.

What has all this legal help accomplished? For Herbert, personally, a great deal. But not much, if anything, for those true believers who faithfully send in their tithes and offerings to "God's Work." Many believe that, while HWA has been spared the "ordeal" of answering questions, his followers have been denied the real story of what has been happening to their contributions. And thanks to the lawyers surrounding HWA the full

story may never be known.

In an affidavit dated October 20, Ramona Armstrong made this statement:

"I am making this Affidavit to explain for the Court how my husband has ALWAYS avoided the taking of his deposition in approximately 18 different litigations that I know about through the years I have known him. It is my personal observation that he has always successfully prevented his deposition from being taken through the intentional avoidance techniques that I shall describe below. He has NEVER had his deposition taken in any of the multitude of legal suits to which he and his corporations have been parties. His deposition has been sought in many, many legal actions, but he has successfully avoided his examination in every one of them. I know these things from my personal observation, except to the extent that they are qualified below.

"In a Tucson court case, in about 1978, a process server started to hand my husband a Subpoena for his deposition while he was at the Tucson Convention Center on business. His lawyer who was standing next to him grabbed the Subpoena out of the process server's hands and threw it to the floor. He immediately had a multitude of employees surround my husband so that he could not be reached, and then they rushed him and myself to our waiting limousine, and whisked us to our Tucson home. During the ride he told me again for approximately the 7th or 8th time that he had NEVER given, and WOULDN'T give, a deposition. The next day, although my husband was then and continues to be extremely active and agile both physically and mentally, they took him to a Tucson doctor to try to establish that he wasn't able 'health wise' to give his deposition. Then, he remained secluded in our house for a number of days during which he would not go to the door, take telephone calls until they were first screened by others, etc., for the stated purpose of avoiding the deposition process.

"In connection with the same case, I was present in Pasadena, California when Herbert and I had just left the stage in the Ambassador Auditorium after he had talked nonstop in an emotional and highly charged and physically active manner for an hour and a half. As we left the stage by the side door to the Auditorium and were about to step into our limousine, process service was again attempted upon him. His lawyer pushed the server aside, again, shoved us into the limousine, and we sped away to our Pasadena residence. I do not presently recall if this incident happened before or after the Tucson attempted service, but in any event Herbert said, again, that he had never given a deposition and wouldn't give one.

"The first time I became aware of my husband's custom of avoiding his deposition was in 1975 when we were overseas on one of our many trips, I believe the location being Paris, France. At that time, I was not Herbert's wife, but was his secretary. We were having dinner in a group. I was seated next to my husband while he was discussing with his advisers the prolongation of our trip in order that he might avoid having to testify in a deposition (possibly a trial, but I believe a deposition) which would occur otherwise. Our plans were to return to Pasadena within a day or two of the dinner meeting, but it was then decided, instead, that we would extend our trip an additional two weeks solely for the purpose mentioned. So, we then traveled in our Gulf Stream II jet to Rome. He killed the time with sightseeing, shopping, and some work at his typewriter. As soon as he received word that the time for the proceeding had passed, he gave the orders for us all to return to Pasadena.

"Herbert and his advisors tried to avoid my knowing of the details of these matters, but I personally overheard similar discussions and was personally present on a

number of overseas trips that were intentionally prolonged solely to avoid Herbert having to testify by deposition in legal cases. I do not remember the specifics of what countries we were in, the dates, etc., but this was a rather frequent occurrence during the years that I was travelling with him and his advisors.

"When the California Attorney General placed his Church enterprise in receivership, I overheard my husband tell an associate, 'We can move the headquarters to Canada, or Mexico, or anywhere else in the world, so I won't have to appear.' I believe that the State of California was trying to Subpoena him for testimony or deposition and that this is what had prompted his statement. In point of fact, he DID move the entire financial operation to Tucson, Arizona so as to avoid the California procedures. I know this of my own personal knowledge and observation because of the things he said in my presence. It was during this same proceeding that he told our pilot and co-pilot to move our Gulf Stream II out of California 'immediately' [it was hangered at Burbank Airport], and within just a few hours they flew it to Las Vegas, Nevada where it was kept until the receivership was dismissed. My husband paid for the housing of the pilot and co-pilot in a Las Vegas hotel during the whole time. During this same time period it was discussed in my presence in our house in Tucson, many times, by my husband and his associates, how 'fortunate' it was that he and I had purchased our house in Tucson rather than in Palm Springs, California where he had wanted to live [I wanted to live in Tucson and he had promised me before our marriage that I could live in Tucson].

"In summary, I want the court to recognize that my husband's litigation life has paralleled that of Howard Hughes. He is surrounded by his associates, including employed security forces, who he retains to isolate him from litigation processes. He will take any step regardless of expense or effort to avoid giving a deposition. He has boasted to me repeatedly that he has NEVER given his deposition ANYWHERE, and that he 'NEVER will.' Although, he did have a heart attack in 1977, he still, to this very hour, is traveling nation-wide performing in exactly the same manner and with the same vigorousness as he always did before his 1977 heart attack. I saw him on his television show just last Sunday, and he looks exactly the same as he always has year in and year out, healthwise. His sermon was delivered in exactly the same emotionally charged and fervent manner as it always has been and it was obvious that he was suffering not in the least. There has been no change in his physical appearance or abilities as I have observed them to be myself most recently from what they were when I first started traveling with him in 1974. My husband is toying with this Court as he has toyed with courts from both here at home and abroad. He and his associates are trying to take from me what was promised me if I would do what they wanted me to. Now, they are trying desperately to keep him from giving the evidence that is needed for me to defend against the divorce suit he has instituted."

But what is it that Herbert Armstrong is trying to hide? Perhaps it has something to do with accounts at thirteen banks mentioned briefly in the court records. Here are the names of those thirteen banks: (1) Union de Banques Suisses, Switzerland, (2) Bank of Switzerland, New York, (3) Chemical Bank, New York, (4) City Bank, New York, (5) Republic Bank of New York, (6) First National Bank of Chicago, (7) Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, (8) Chase Manhattan Bank, London, (9) Kredit Bank Zurich, Switzerland, (10) Kredit Suisse Zurich, Switzerland, (11) National Westminster Bank, London, (12) Shanghai-Hong Kong Bank, and (13) the Arizona Bank.

It is ironic that had Herbert obeyed Jesus' simple teaching in the Beatitudes against putting away one's wife (Matt. 5:32, Mark 10:11), His admonition to seek reconciliation rather than legal remedies (Matt. 5:25-26), and His admonition to be cooperative when sued (Matt. 5:40), Herbert could have avoided his current legal entanglements. After all,

Jesus' message was "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you" (Matt. 5:44). Yet here we have "God's Apostle" putting away the wife he said God gave him and fighting the courts, while his wife Ramona claims she wants to save their marriage. Strange, isn't it?

### **WCG in the Grip of Paranoia**

Hardly a day goes by in which we don't receive at least one or two letters from concerned relations of Worldwidiers who are worried that their Armstrong-following loved ones are about to flee the country in some lemming-like panic. Members are being told ever more frequently that the church will probably "flee in 1983" and that many members will be left behind to endure the Great Tribulation because they are not contributing enough. Some have been told to get their passports ready. At least one minister has warned his congregation they should have no pregnancies this year because of the likelihood of their "fleeing." Jan. 3 was set aside as a fast day for the WCG - with members listening to an HWA tape about the Anti-Christ - because the church is heading into the time of its greatest crisis.

Of course, the key to understanding such statements lies in an understanding of Herbert's mind. A study of HWA's writings and personal history clearly shows that his mind is egocentric (and some would no doubt be more specific and say "phallicentric"). When HWA says "the church" will flee, he's talking mostly about *himself*. Oh yes, he'll need a few of his servants and a few top myrmidons around to keep the facade in tact. But he's still talking mainly about himself. As we've pointed out before, no matter where he flees to, he'll still require plenty of tithes to maintain his lifestyle, and that means his followers have to stay behind, on their jobs, sending in their money to "headquarters" (wherever that might move to).

The same egocentricity applies to HWA's statements about time running out. Well, maybe it is - for Herbert (and he has "great wrath, because he knoweth his time is short"). Incidentally, here in southern California, popular sportscaster Jim Healy is apparently making good use of an HWA cliché on his afternoon KLAC program. Often when Healy's program needs to wrap up or close a segment he switches on a tape recording of Herbert screaming something like "Time is running out! Time is running out!" It's absolutely hilarious!

### **Stan Rader - Scapegoat**

At no time is the WCG's paranoia more apparent than when the name of Stanley Rader is mentioned. We keep getting reports from around the country of WCG ministers launching into attacks on Mr. Rader. Many are apparently convinced Stanley Rader is somehow behind Ramona Armstrong's lawsuit in California (see our Sept. 30 issue). We, however, have not seen one bit of evidence to substantiate such an allegation. Nor is Mr. Rader representing Mrs. Armstrong in any lawsuit that we know of. Perhaps one reason Mr. Rader is being made a scapegoat for the WCG's problems is that in 1981 during his last few months as Herbert W. Armstrong's chief advisor, he was increasingly critical of the conduct of a number of HWA's assistants. A letter written from Japan by Stanley Rader to HWA has recently been leaked to various members of

the WCG, who in turn passed on a copy to us. The letter shows the kind of problems Mr. Rader was up against in 1981:

February 1, 1981  
Tokyo

"I know how terribly shocking and indeed sickening the revelations of the last month have been for you. I know how terribly disappointed you are about Kevin and Aaron Dean. I am equally disappointed, of course, about the Dean boys because I have been their champion, have urged them upon you, and have treated them as would a father his own sons.

"All this has merely been more evidence for us that Satan will not ease up. He knows only too well that the time remaining for him is short. The prophecies of Revelation 20 verse 1 are nearly at hand.

"As I have stated in earlier memoranda, I tried my very best to keep the entire sordid affair from reaching you particularly prior to or during the Manila campaign. I urged Kevin to repent of his horrible sins against the Living God, his Church, and Christ's Apostle. I told him that as far as I was concerned, it would be a closed matter if he had truly repented. I urged him to make amends to those upon whom he had inflicted so much harm - your wife, your sister-in-law, Mrs. Kineston, John Kineston, Joe Kotora, and various and sundry persons.

"Unfortunately, as you learned, he did not repent. Rather he decided to utilize the same evil techniques of lying, inventing and maligning in a desperate effort to preserve his position.

"You were, of course, too wise and too experienced for him. As usual, you let out just enough rope and gave him ample opportunity to hang himself. It was really the Wayne Cole situation all over again, and as we now know, both Ellis and Joe Tkach were very closely in league with Wayne Cole anyway. By the time others came forward with their incontrovertible evidence of the sordid and abominable activities you already knew the whole truth.

"I do know how fearful you are that the entirety of the ministry may well be besmirched if the Church or the public should learn of these transgressions. But I fear more that a cover-up at this time would be the worse of the two evils. Too many people are acutely aware of the situation at all levels in Pasadena - amongst the brethren in the area and even outside the Pasadena Church. They are watching carefully to see how you will handle this situation. They are already asking aloud: 'Will he try to cover up again?'

"Many are aware, and painfully so, of the double standard that you have permitted for the ministry in sexual matters. The members indicated that they will not tolerate such a double standard any longer. For ministers to commit adultery with married women, to seduce virgin Church members, to commit adultery and attempt adultery with unconverted but married and dedicated Church employees, to use 'anointing of the sick' as a deceit to enter their beds and bodies - these things are despicable and abominations.

The ministry must be held to a higher standard - the highest standard possible.

"Christ will forgive a minister after repentance (He has paid their penalty with his blood), but once the minister has shown himself as unfit for the ministry - once he has revealed himself as not abiding by God's laws and the standards set forth in I Timothy for a minister, from an organizational standpoint there must be a change which others will interpret as a correction.

"Newspapers in the area have probably already received word of the scandal. It is essential, as you know, to take the remedial steps that you have in mind before the story breaks over our heads. We cannot lie to the press, can we? We must maintain our credibility. I agree with your plan to discipline the Dean boys by sending them to the field under mature Pastors. This will give us the opportunity to salvage them, if possible, and to let the public know that whatever problems we may have had, they were Church matters, subject to Church jurisdiction and that we had no further comment for the press.

"Aaron Dean, of course, was primarily responsible for spreading false and salacious rumors concerning your own wife. Furthermore his lying about his university training in the field of accounting was obviously transparent to you at the time.

"Mr. Kotor's revelations, however, about Aaron's financial dealings which cost Church members in excess of \$50,000 clearly revealed Aaron's motivation - to make money. Let us not forget that this whole series of financial dealings took place during the crisis when he should have been occupied as never before with Church affairs.

"Perhaps the listening in on your telephone conversations as described so dramatically by Dr. Kessler is really not so surprising after the Wayne Cole experience of 1978 when your telephone conversations were illegally taped. I am certain that it is simply a question of time before other taped conversations of yours appear. The only question is whether they will be heard this time on '60 Minutes' or some other program.

"With respect to Joe Tkach, I recommended him. Although I did know about his connection with Mr. and Mrs. Timmons (two of the relators in the lawsuit), I did not find out the full details concerning his illegal fencing activities until they surfaced recently while we were preparing our civil rights case. He is obviously not the man I recommended to you and I apologize for my error in judgment.

"Ellis, of course, admitted that he lied to you about his visit to my wife and Virginia in September. As to his other involvement, it was perhaps primarily one of trying to keep Joe, Kevin and Aaron from being discovered for what they were and what they were doing. It was important for them to try to discredit your wife because they knew she was aware of their activities for some time.

"As usual, the Living God intervened and once again we averted another master blow of Satan. We must continue, however, to be vigilant as he will give us no surcease. He knows his number is up unless he can destroy God's Church.

"I do feel a sense of regret, however, that in the process you and Henry quarrelled. Henry is reserved and a 'babe in Christ,' but he is very resolute and forthright when he does speak and act. The few intemperate comments you made to others (comments which you say you did not mean) did get back to Henry from various reliable witnesses and, simply stated, his feelings were hurt. Perhaps you will find a way to restore your prior working relationship. Certainly your apology to him did much to make that possible.

"As for me, you are again right when you say that July 1 is somewhat in the distance and even if my resignation should remain effective, nothing would really be changed. We shall of course discuss this later.

"Joe Kitora, as you have suggested, might well be a good assistant for you in place of Henry but not necessarily in Tucson. He has his family in Pasadena and may not want to move unless you insist.

"In any event, we have completed the most successful campaign yet and you are now even more able to cope with the problems that we will necessarily encounter as we strive together to complete this Great Work."

With love in Jesus' name,  
Stanley R. Rader

We would have liked to have gotten Mr. Rader to comment on this letter, but he has refused. (In fact, we understand Mr. Rader refuses to make any public statements about HWA or the WCG.) However, Mr. Rader has not denied the authenticity of this letter. The *Report* also wrote to Joe Tkach and the Dean brothers asking them to comment on this letter. They too have refused to comment in any way. We did learn, however, that Mr. HWA did punish the Dean brothers in 1981 for the infractions mentioned in this letter. Their punishment was banishment for a few weeks to a Palm Springs hotel (all expenses paid).

### **Never Lost a Case?**

Have you ever heard the myth that the WCG has never lost a court case? It's one that's been told repeatedly to WCG members over the years. Those who've bothered to check up on the facts, however, have discovered that, like a lot of other WCG fairy tales, it just isn't so. Here is an excerpt from an article that appeared in *The Atlanta Constitution* on Oct. 5, 1982.

"The [U.S. Supreme] court also let stand a decision dismissing a lawsuit seeking the transfer of a house in Fitzgerald to religiously affiliated Ambassador College.

"The owner of the home executed a deed that provided for the home in Ben Hill County to go to the college at her death. However, her daughter contested the deed saying her mother suffered from mental incapacity. The college's refusal to supply certain information about its finances caused the state courts to rule in the daughter's favor. The college, which trains ministers for the Worldwide Church of God, then sued in federal court to have the home returned to the school but lost."

## **Ralph Helge an Evangelist?**

Don't be surprised if lawyer Ralph Helge is ordained an evangelist in 1983. One long-time WCG observer told us: "Helge is probably the church's most important employee, he's extremely loyal to Mr. Armstrong, and a good speaker. All he lacks is ordination. That may come this year. Don't forget, Stan Rader also rose to the evangelist rank all at once."

Helge's loyalty to HWA is so great that recently he even phoned Garner Ted Armstrong in Tyler in an attempt at reconciling GTA to his father. Sources in Tyler say that during the lengthy conversation Helge told GTA he needed to show greater respect for his father. Ted's reply was reportedly that he does show his father respect but there are limits. After all, he told Helge, "he s----ed my sister for ten years!" We do not know what Helge's reply was to that.

## **Tidbits**

WCG members at this past year's Feast of Tabernacles were given a number of special printed instructions. For instance, there was to be no tape recording of sermons. There was to be no applause:

"... for special music, sermonettes or sermons. However, spontaneous applause for announcements of inspiring developments in the Work, special intervention or miracles from God, or a special appearance by Mr. Herbert Armstrong would be appropriate and fitting."

And of course:

"All checks must be made payable to Herbert W. Armstrong or Herbert W. Armstrong, a Corporation Sole."

\* \* \*

Apostle Armstrong has recently been angry at television preacher Gene Scott. Apparently Scott has adopted HWA's British-Israelism doctrine without giving any credit to HWA.

\* \* \*

"True Christianity is not merely a set of beliefs. It is not joining a church. It is not something to be practiced one day a week or at odd intervals."

-Clayton Steep, in the January 1983 Plain Truth

## **Biblical Church of God Shakeup**

In November, the Biblical Church of God (BCG) announced the resignation of its leading spokesman, Fred Coulter. It appears that the board of directors of that church felt Mr.

Coulter was centralizing too much power in himself and so the board asserted its authority and asked for his resignation. Some have pointed out that the WCG's legal authority also rests with its board, but that those men, in contrast to the BCG's board, have either never understood their legal responsibility and powers, or have simply lacked the character to stand up to Herbert Armstrong.

We do not have firsthand knowledge of the details of the BCG shakeup. Those who may require more information should write to the parties involved (The Biblical Church of God, P. O. Box 1510, Hollister, CA 95023; Fred Coutler, P.O. Box 1245, Hollister, CA 95023). Over the last few years, we have found Mr. Coulter to be a very personable individual and a good friend of the *Report*. And we wish him the best of luck in the future. So, too, the BCG, which we hope will be able to resolve whatever difficulties it may be having at this time.

### **Ambassador Alumni News**

Remember when Herbert Armstrong could honestly boast that he was the biggest tithe-payer in the WCG. Well, apparently no more. Sources in Texas say that that honor now goes to Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Gentry of Big Sandy, Texas. In 1975 Mrs. Gentry decided to try her hand at needlework and created "Sue and Sam," rag dolls which she and her husband began to mass produce and sell. Since then their family business has expanded to include a restaurant, gift shop, and a newspaper. Business has boomed to such an extent that now they have 125 employees and must make extensive use of an IBM computer to process orders. Their success story was reported in the September 13 issue of *Computer World*

\* \* \*

Larry Goodman, former pilot on the Falcon for HWA and later a pilot at the Big Sandy campus for six years, is now a national recruiter for Sales Consultants of Nashville, Tennessee. He recruits sales and sales management personnel for Fortune 500 companies nationwide.

\* \* \*

The October 26, 1982 issue of *Globe* reported that Dr. Robert Kuhn is now a professor at New York University's Graduate School of Business. He lectures on corporate strategy.

\* \* \*

Former WCG writer Bob Gentet is now living in Kansas. He recently got his M.S. degree in geology and is looking for work in that field or in teaching.

\* \* \*

We are saddened to report the death on October 10 of Donald Ecker, who until the last few years, was a member of the Ambassador College music department. Mr. Ecker, previous to teaching at the Pasadena campus, was a music instructor and accompanist at

the Bricket Wood campus in England. His death resulted from head injuries caused by being beaten with a baseball bat during the course of a robbery at his Pasadena home. A television set was reported stolen, and a number of suspects have been arrested and charged with the crime. Many Ambassador alumni, including the editor of this publication, will remember Mr. Ecker as not only a very fine piano instructor but as a kind man who was very devoted to his church. We extend our sympathies to his family and friends.

### **Groups of Interest**

We were recently informed that Gordon R. Terblanche, a long-time WCG minister in South Africa has broken away from the Armstrong organization and is ministering to a group of over fifty in that country. He may be contacted by writing: Gordon R. Terblanche, P.O. Box 20321, Alkantrant 0005, Rep. of South Africa.

\* \* \*

A new sabbath-keeping group, composed mainly of former WCG members, has formed in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. More information may be had by writing: David Erman, 825 Firestone, Richardson, Texas 75080.

\* \* \*

The British-Israelism theory is not one that we are particularly enthusiastic about. But for those readers who may be interested in this area of study, there are two organizations that put out materials on this subject: The Covenant People's Advocates, P.O. Box 68, Velma, Oklahoma 73091; and New Beginnings, P.O. Box 228, Waynesville, North Carolina 28786. The latter also puts out material on the "conspiracy of illuminism."

\* \* \*

F.R.E.E., 1807 Columbus Ave., Waco, Texas 76710 - This organization puts out information about the influence of the Council on Foreign Affairs and the Trilateral Commission on U.S. government policy. One flyer, containing a list of top government and business leaders who are members of the two organizations, is particularly informative.

### **Literature of Interest**

*The Shofar* (P.O. Box 20023, Phoenix, AZ 85036) - a free newsletter edited by Robert C. Williams. Mainly doctrinal in content, the current issue asks the question: "Are you better off today, spiritually, than you were a year ago?" Also, occasionally has news about the WCG.

*Divorce & Remarriage - What Does the Bible Really Say?* by Ralph Edward Woodrow - one of the very best works we've seen on the subject. Contains a great deal of enlightening information on Biblical interpretation. Highly recommended. Price \$3.95.

Available at Christian bookstores or write: Ralph Woodrow, P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502.

*World Insight* (P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102), a newsletter edited by Ken Storey, has come out with a November 1982 issue after some months of non-publication. That issue's lead article is "Are You Fulfilling God's Law" by David Ord. Mr. Ord's first wife, Jan, also writes articles on Christian living. The Jan.-Feb. 1982 issue of *Union Life* (P.O. Box 2877, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137) contained an article about the breakup of her marriage entitled "The Alternative to Divorce."

*The Broadway to Armageddon* - a 234-page expose of the WCG, which first appeared in 1977, is still available. The price is \$7.95 postpaid. Write the author: William B. Hinson, 8240 Spruce Land, Powell, TN 37849.

## ***Letters***

*On pages 2-3 of the September 30 issue you wrote: 'With The Plain Truth's circulation growing so rapidly, it comes as no surprise that the WCG's membership is also growing. Writing in the August 6, 1982 issue of Christianity Today, Joseph Hopkins reports that the WCG's membership is growing at the rate of 1,000 new members a year. " My question is: Where is it growing? It is not growing in Chicago, New York New Jersey, Houston, Miami St Petersburg, Wheeling, Hampton, Norfolk, Pittshurgh, or Philadelphia! I know people in those areas and they tell me that the growth there is about zero. In fact the minister in Pittsburg said the people are leaving the church...*

*In many areas there are no jobs available, and the church members are hit hard because they will not work on Saturday. Some have had their lights and gas turned off and some are losing their furniture...*

*The church members cannot support their families, let alone Herbert Armstrong. One member was taken to court for not supporting his family. The judge told him if he sent Herbert Armstrong any more money he would go to jail for not supporting his family...*

*The ninety-five new congregations you mentioned on page 2 were not all for new members. Many members were becoming upset because they had so far to travel to services, and the price of gasoline is so high. So to make things easier, smaller churches were set up closer to where members live.*

*-Pennsylvania*

Editor. We suspect you are right In the future we will be more careful not to accept official WCG statements at face value. We should have known better.

*Well, the break has been made. On June 10, I was disfellowshipped because I had doubts about the need to keep the Sabbath as a means of salvation. We had anticipated that if our true feelings concerning law and grace (or at least our true doubts) were to become known, we'd be kicked out so we had written a general letter to our 10 or so friends in the*

*local church, telling them goodbye. We had never talked about any of our doubts to anyone, so we knew that our departure would come as quite a surprise to them. To be honest, we sent the minister a copy of the letter. My husband's name was in the letter though I signed it myself. I sent it out just as soon as the minister had left, before he could "mark" us from the pulpit so that our friends wouldn't read our letter. Our minister called on June 11 and asked my husband if he felt the way I did since his name was in the letter. My husband said that he had some questions that he needed to work out, and the minister said he'd just disfellowship him, too. And of course, he had to mark me, since I had signed the letter.*

*One friend called to find out what had happened. As for the rest one has let us know that they think it best if we discontinue our close friendship, one would like to visit with me still, but is afraid of being "found out," and the others we haven't heard from, nor do we expect to. We feel better and better about it all every day, but I myself do have some days when I wake up from dreaming about friends I have left behind, and I feel depressed - a great sense of loss. We've had a number of ex-church members call and congratulate us on our return to sanity.*

*I've thought at various times about others' stories, in coming out of the Church, and mentioned to several people that I have had thoughts of writing a book about peoples' experiences, and have been surprised at the positive reception others have given that idea. I would appreciate the input of some of the AR readers. Would a book about the WCG/AC experience be a good idea? What is your own story (or the story of someone you were close to) in the WCG/AC? How did you come out and how was it handled? What did the experience do to you emotionally, spiritually? What have you gained? What have you lost? How would you help someone just beginning to "make the break"? What would you say to someone just beginning to read the PT, order the GN, and take the Correspondence Course? In short how can we who have come out help those who will come out after us - or those who are just going in? Thank you for your help.*

*-Brenda Denzler  
600 Old Main  
Newton, KS 67114*

Editor. Over the years we have run many letters from former WCG members telling of their experiences. Unfortunately, space limitations have forced us to omit many very interesting letters. We would therefore like to encourage readers to put their experiences on paper and send them to Mrs. Denzler. A book composed of such letters would make a real contribution to the lives of many. However, based on our own experiences with letters, let us make a few suggestions: (1) write very legibly, or better yet, type your story, (2) don't just send the first thing that comes into your mind. Once you've written your story, let it rest a while, get others to make suggestions, and then do at least one rewrite to perfect your work, and (3) if at all possible, give permission to have your name published. Mrs. Denzler said she would consider keeping author's names confidential, but some identification would perhaps give the reader more confidence that he is reading truth, not fiction. We wish Mrs. Denzler the very best in this project.

*Try a little harder than the last letter. [I] would like a REPORT, not gossip and hearsay!*

*-Oregon*

*Please take our name off your mailing list. We don't know what misguided person gave it to you in the first place. If we had wanted "dung" in the house we would go to a farm and get the real thing. We certainly don't want it arriving in the mail!*

*-Indiana*

*I am preparing a thesis for a higher degree on religious cults - specifically the relationship between mass media propaganda (eg., Plain Truth, etc) and maintenance of cult membership (e.g., WCG) and find your material most helpful. It would be very helpful to my research to receive input from former WCG members in Australia. My objective is not to expose the Armstrong church as much as to understand the processes which lead up to membership and then maintain it. In addition, I may be able to assist those who are contemplating withdrawing from the WCG. This is a Christian ministry as a service of love to my Worldwide brethren. Interested persons should write to P.O. Box 170, Gordon N.S.W. Australia 2072.*

*-John Buchner  
Australia*

*My family and I are amazed at the wealth of information in your expose of the self-exalted ones at Worldwide. However, our contact here in ... is infrequent so could you add our name to your mailing list? Our copies will be read by many other families. When my brother was leaving the WCG he told them he wanted all the facts and to hear both sides of everything, not just what they at Pasadena wanted them to hear. He was told he was like Eve - she wanted to know it all too. Jeff Booth, a former minister, wanted some answers too and met with HWA. The great "Apostle" said to him: "How dare you question me? When you question me you question Jesus Christ!" (How about that?) When asked about the Pentecost fiasco he said God had bound his mistake in heaven for 40 years. Jeff said no, Mr. Armstrong, God doesn't bind errors. (It's no surprise that he was fired four times before the meeting was over.) Here's another dandy. When asked why he didn't give credit to all who had helped him, Mr. Armstrong screamed "No, no, it was all done through me, me. I was in charge! I gave you and everyone else everything on a silver platter. "He flew into a rage when J.H. Allen and G. G. Rupert were mentioned. He also told Jeff he was a nothing, a nobody, unteachable, unconverted, etc. This meeting took place in 1980 so it's really ancient history. At present Jeff and a group of former Worldwide people are meeting together in Amarillo, independent of any organization.*

*-An AR Reader*

*In the fall of 1980 you ran in Ambassador Report the news of the death of Shirley [Woodbury], my first wife. Lola Crain - a former WCG member whose maiden name was Lading - saw one of your Ambassador Reports from a friend, and she wrote me a sympathy letter. Lola's husband, James (Gene) Crain, had died at about the same time my wife Shirley had died. Since she asked me to drop by if I was ever in Kansas City and since she was still at that time in the WCG, I went by. She now is Mrs. Lola Woodbury, so thanks from us both for your help!*

*-Lee Woodbury  
Fruita, Colorado*

*Kindly send me on a regular basis your publication Ambassador Report. I would be grateful if you could send me as many back copies as possible. I may not be able to pay or contribute anything to your paper because there is no foreign exchange in Guyana. We are not allowed to send out money from this country which is totally bankrupt. We don't even get basic foodstuffs to buy.*

*I am a longtime member of WCG. It's totally disgusting to see and hear what is going on here in Guyana in the church. Sometimes I wonder if we are heading for another Jim Jones "brew." Members are not thinking. They are not even proving all things as the Bible says.*

*-Guyana, South America*

### **Late News**

On January 11, the Arizona Supreme Court refused to overturn a lower court order directing Herbert W. Armstrong to return to Tucson to testify in his divorce suit. HWA's lawyer, Allan Browne, claimed that requiring HWA to give testimony might prove fatal. Ramona Armstrong's attorneys, however, have given their assurance that HWA would be merely required to answer questions, "not required to sing and dance." Allan Browne told the court that HWA had planned to make a trip to China, but the court felt that if he can go to China, he can go to Tucson.

In the meantime, because of alleged harassment at her Tucson residence and the fear of violence, Ramona has left Arizona and is living somewhere in Nevada. There is now talk of having HWA extradited from California to compel his appearance in Tucson for testimony.

---

Again, it seems, we've put together an issue that is longer than originally planned and longer than we can afford. We suspect, however, that our readers will find the information in this issue both interesting and valuable. So we're going ahead on faith. Our thanks to all of you who are still with us in this endeavor.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR24\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR24 April, 1983

### HWA - Still "No Show"

In our January 1983 issue we reported that Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the founder of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and Ambassador College, had been ordered by the Arizona Supreme Court to appear for a deposition in regard to the divorce suit he has initiated against his wife Ramona. But as of this writing, that deposition has yet to be taken.

While Armstrong's attorneys have argued that HWA's physical condition could not tolerate the stress of a deposition, during January and February HWA traveled widely in the Far East. During that period he met with King Bhumibol of Thailand, President Marcos of the Philippines, and Prime Minister Nakasone of Japan. All three leaders gave him awards and honors. After months of haggling, HWA's attorneys and Tucson attorney Louis Deckter, who represents Ramona, reached what appeared to be an agreement as to when and where HWA's deposition would be taken. It was to take place on February 25 in Allan Browne's Beverly Hills office.

On that date, as agreed, HWA made his appearance. But the planned questioning by Deckter never took place. Deckter, because Arizona law requires an Arizona-licensed court reporter, brought along an Arizona-licensed court reporter. But Browne, in a devilishly clever move, had his own California-licensed court reporter brought in and insisted that his reporter be used. With HWA sitting on the sidelines, the "lawyers engaged in scuffling and exchanged obscenities" (*The Arizona Republic*, March 19). Then, over strong objections by Deckter, Browne proceeded with his own questioning of HWA. Browne later said, "I asked him questions which disproves her [Ramona's] case entirely." Within a few days, Judge Robert Hooker ordered Herbert to appear in Tucson, March 21, to answer questions.

But before that could happen, lawyers representing HWA were back in court trying to get Judge Hooker disqualified. At a March 14 hearing before Judge G. Thomas Meehan, attorney David Wolfe claimed that Judge Hooker showed bias against HWA's lawyer

Ralph Helge, a key witness in the case, by referring to him with the Spanish slang word "chingadero." (On the surface, it appeared to us that this was not such an implausible argument as one of Helge's colleagues has referred to Helge as "the most confused and confusing individual I have ever known.") However, quoting from *The Arizona Daily Star* of March 15:

"Judge G. Thomas Meehan denied the motion, but not before several other profanities were aired in lawyers' efforts to find an appropriate English definition of the word. Hooker testified that his use of the word didn't refer to Helge, wasn't meant to offend him and was merely a nonprofane Southwestern slang term....

"Mrs. Armstrong says Helge witnessed the consummation of the prenuptial agreements. Helge joined in the action yesterday in asking Meehan to disqualify Hooker from the case. In a related matter, Helge is attempting to prevent Jack A. Ettinger and Louis L. Deckter, Mrs. Armstrong's attorneys, from subpoenaing church records. Hooker has not yet ruled on that.

"Hooker made the controversial remark when he learned that Helge had drafted a legal document related to the appeal of a previous ruling in the case. He said that Helge 'means trouble' and then used 'chingadero' in a subsequent phrase. 'I think it's obvious from the context that he's saying I'm not a very nice fellow,' Helge said to Meehan. Donna Alcantara, chief court interpreter, testified that the term can have numerous definitions, depending on how it was used. Among them are 'screwed up' and a similar more profane phrase. What Hooker meant is obscured more because his use was incorrect grammatically, she said. However, the term generally refers to things, not persons.

"Hooker, when called to testify, said his use of the term didn't refer to Helge but to the fact that a lawyer who is not an attorney of record in the divorce suit had drafted the document. Hooker said the case has been slowed and complicated by bad feelings and a lack of communication between lawyers on each side, and that Helge's intrusion into the legal matters is 'made to order for messing things up.' He translated his use of 'chingadero' as Southwestern slang for 'screw it up, foul it up, mess it up' He also said Armstrong's lawyers laughed when he used the term.

"In denying the motion, Meehan ruled that Helge had no standing to ask for Hooker's disqualification and that Wolfe had failed to prove that Hooker had shown bias toward either of the Armstrongs."

After that rebuff, church attorneys then attempted to have Judge Hooker's order blocked by going over his head to Lawrence Howard, chief judge of the Arizona State Court of Appeals (on March 17), and then to Chief Justice William A. Holohan of the Arizona Supreme Court (on March 18). Both judges backed up Hooker's order that HWA appear on March 21. But on March 21 Herbert still did not appear! David Wolfe, one of HWA's lawyers, claimed that he was in Jerusalem where he had developed "another heart-related health problem" (Pasadena *StarNews*, March 22). A few days later HWA flew back to Pasadena where he started to preside over the headquarters church's Passover service. Not far into the service, however, he asked one of his subordinates to take charge as he told the congregation he was too weak to continue. The next day, the suspicions of many were fueled when HWA showed up for services and gave a one-and-a-half-hour-long sermon.

As of this writing, the Armstrong divorce trial is still scheduled to begin April 25. But

there may very well be a trial postponement. Church lawyers have brought theft charges against Ramona and have gotten an indictment against her, although she has not yet been arrested. And while Judge Hooker has again ordered HWA to appear in Tucson for questioning (on April 19), HWA's lawyers, for the third time, are attempting to get Judge Hooker disqualified.

One lawyer who has been following the Armstrong case said, "To the casual observer it may seem that Herbert's attorneys are putting one over on the Arizona judges. But I really suspect the judges are simply giving Herbert all the rope he needs to hang himself." That hanging may well be in the form of a huge award for Ramona. In the meantime, we are likely to witness quite a few more "chingaderos."

---

&COPY; 1983 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow.  
John Trechak, Editor, Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor Connie Gerringer, Circulation Manager  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

## **The Sinking Ship**

*A WCG member recently told me that his "local elder," subsequent to his visit to AC on "refresher," informed him that the ministers were shown films on WW II concentration camps in order to impress on them the horrors of the soon-coming Great Tribulation. The message being passed around, privately, is that WCG members should expect the "end of the Work" by mid-year, presumably because of a more precise calculation of their prophetic timetable - but, coincidentally, also due to HWA's persecution by the courts. Could you provide a comment on this situation?*

*-Australia*

Editor. We would love to check this out directly with an official WCG spokesperson. But they are apparently too frightened to communicate with us in any way. Our mail indicates, however, that your information is correct. Note the following:

*For Dec. 11 Herbert Armstrong sent a tape to each church to be played to the members. He said in the tape that the tribulation is near and most of the members would have to go through it because they were not obedient to him (sending money in). The money coming in to the WCG is low...*

*Here is the latest figure of how many church members there still are in the WCG and how many have left. Don Lawson, the minister of the Pittsburgh church, announced on Jan. 22 that 24,000 people have left the church while 52,000 remain as of this date. Now there are sermons on unity and zeal.*

*-Pennsylvania*

*I understand that the "Petra doctrine" was forcefully promoted by Gerald Waterhouse at the Feast of Tabernacles in Malta. Apparently it's the tribulation for those who are unfaithful to HWA - no matter what! One man, on hearing him for the first time in 15 years or so, was made almost physically ill. The jackboot is still worn by the ministry here, with big grown men and women in fear for their spiritual lives. GTA continues to be the bogeyman!*

*-England*

*We have just been told by Mr. HWA that the world is soon coming to an end. I have the feeling that this might be a diversionary tactic due to the huge [divorce] settlement Ramona wants. My husband believes every word that he says and therefore is very burdened with all of this.*

*-AR Subscriber*

Editor: Prov. 28:1 says: "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion" (RSV).

### **Executive Exodus Updated**

With thousands of members continuing the exodus out of the WCG, it is not surprising that many ministers have also been leaving the church's ministry. Many readers have asked that we update the "Executive Exodus" list found in our 92-page 1977 issue. We have found that very difficult to do, however, because the WCG has just not made that information readily available to us and appears to be somewhat secretive about who is, or is not, still a minister. Nevertheless, we have attempted to bring the "Executive Exodus," at least as far as ordained men, up to date.

The following list does not include nonordained personnel such as Robert Kuhn, Joe Bauer, Gary Prather, Bill Evans, Jim Thornhill, Herbert's brother Dwight Armstrong, etc. who have left the Armstrong organization. Nor does the list contain the name of Don Wineinger, who committed suicide after killing his wife in 1978, nor the names of a few such as Charles Dorothy, who left the WCG ministry and church, only to return later to employment by the college. Two or three names that appear on the list are men who may occasionally attend WCG services, even though they have resigned from the ministry or been removed for one reason or another. The list will undoubtedly require numerous additions and perhaps a deletion or two to be completely accurate. We will try to correct any such problems (including inaccurate spellings) in future issues.

WCG historians will note that of the 253 names listed below, about six left the WCG ministry before 1972. About forty left in 1974, and another forty or fifty left by 1977. The remainder (of the 253 names listed below) have left since HWA started putting the church "back on the track" by adopting the "Primacy of Peter" doctrine and declaring

himself "*The Apostle*." As you know, it's often the men closest to the throne, so to speak, who know what's really going on in an organization and aren't deceived by the organization's propaganda. So the number of top men leaving in an organization is often an accurate indicator of the organization's health. Interestingly, 8 of the original 16 evangelists listed in the Nov. 26, 1973 *Worldwide News* have defected from the WCG, as have 7 of the 11 U.S. Area Coordinators listed in the June 1976 *Worldwide News* special supplement. In total, it appears about 20% of all WCG-ordained ministers are no longer working for the WCG - quite an indictment of the current WCG leadership. Here then is the updated ministerial "Executive Exodus" list:

Don Abraham, Cliff Ackerson, Dennis Adams, Richard Aitkins, Mike Allamby, Bruce Anderson, Leif Anderson, Terry Anderson, David Antion, Garner Ted Armstrong, Gary Arvidson, Elbert Atlas, Charles Barrett, Jim Barrett, Larry Bathurst, Oliver Batte, Cecil Battles, Dan Biedler, John Biedler, David Bierer, Lowell Blackwell, Martin Bode, Chuck Boehme, Jeff Booth, Etienne Bourdin, Bob Boyce, Fred Boyce, Larry Boyts, Arch Bradley, Fred Brogaard, Frank Bruce, Randell Bryson, Harry Buck, Desmond Burke, Eugene Burke, Glenn Burzenski, Rod Carries, Chris Carpenter, Al Carrozzo, Loren Chamberlain, Ben Chapman, Barry Chase, John Cheetham, Bryce Clark, Howard Clark, Joseph Clayton, Harold Clement, C. Wayne Cole, Raymond Cole, Harold Cormany, Fred Coulter, Virgil Cox, Arthur Craig, Gerald Crosswell, Hollis Crotts, Keith Crouch, Brent Curtis, Kerry Daniels, Ronald Dart, Leroy Dawson, Don Deakins, Chuck Dickerson, James Doak, Ken Farrow, Tom Fish, Paul Flatt, Richard Forkun, Carl Fowler, Al Foy, Carl Franklin, Wayne Freeman, Gunar Freibergs, Chris French, Carl Fritz, John Gambrell, Bud Garland, Ted Geringer, Sam Gillespie, Richard Gipe, Roger Gipe, Bill Glover, Pat Glynn, Ted Gould, Rodney Gowan, Ray Grubb, Carl Gustafson, Tom Hall, Buck Hammer, Tony Hammer, Dale Hampton, Tom Harrison, Dale Haynes, Clement Hendrickson, David Jon Hill, William Hinson, Bob Hoops, Joe Horchak, Keith Hoyt, Art Hulet, John Hull, Charles Hunting, Paul Hunting, Elliot Hurwitt, Colin Jackson, Bronson James, Earl Janes, Ray Jantzen, Robert Jenness, Mel Jennings, Russell Johnson, John Judy, Mike Justus, Tom Justus, George Kemnitz, Bruce Kent, John Khouri, Richard Kilbury, Ken Kneebone, Mike Kneebone, Paul Kneebone, Brian Knowles, Carl Koellner, Jim Kunz, Bob Lay, Helmut Levsen, Wayne Luginbill, Kevin Lulham, Hilbert Maasch, Herbert Magoon, Jim Malone, Roger Malone, Allen Manteufel, Ernest Martin, Jack Martin, Steve Martin, Ted Mattson, Sylvester Mayhill, Bill McDowell, Elmer McElroy, Kerry McGuinness, Bob McKibben, Sherwin McMichael, Marion McNair, Ron McNeil, Paul Meek, George Menassas, Carl Miller, Elliott Miller, Larry Miller, Bob Mitchell, John Mitchell, Julius Mize, Art Mokarow, Bill Moore, Tony Morrell, Ben Morrison, Bruce Nedrow, Billy Nettles, Charles Nichol, Martin Nichol, James Nirschl, Carl O'Beim, Bob Oberlander, Dave Odor, Charles Oehlman, David Ord, John Ouvrier, Jack Pakozdi, George Panteleeff, Gary Pavlo, Ted Phillips, Wayne Phillips, John Pinkston, Richard Plache, Reg Platt, Les Pope, Bill Porter, Gary Porter, Albert Portune Sr., Albert Portune Jr., John Portune, Richard Prince, John Pruner, Don Prunkard, Glenn Purdy, Dennis Pyle, Jack Pyle, Ray Pyle, Stan Rader, Jim Redus, Daryl Reedy, John Reedy, Dennis Roberts, David Robinson, John Robinson, Mark Robinson, Bob Roufs, Paul Royer, Enrique Ruiz, Mark Salyer, Don Samples, Artie Satterfield, Dale Schurter, Don Schwaab, Charles Scott, Walter Scull, Ivan Sell, Walter Sharp, Wayne Shiflet, Paul Shumway, Adrian Smith, Don Smith, Ed Smith, Larry Smith, Jack Smock, Tom Steinback, Dave Stevenson, Eldon Stewart, Les Stocker, John Strain, Ken Stranberg, Stan Suchocki, Bill Sutton, Carl Tarver, Doug Taylor, Gordon Terblanche, Ted Tupper, Mel Turner, Gordon Upshaw, Ron Upshaw,

Bruce Vance, E.B. Vance, Larry Van Zant, Harry Walker Sr., Harry Walker Jr., Darryll Watson, Stan Watts, Sebrian Wesley, Ken Westby, Peter Whitting, Dick Wiedenheft, Milo Wilcox, Arthur Williams, Ernest Williams, Tom Williams, Virgil Williams, Carl Wilmer, Ledru Woodbury, Lyndel Wornat, Jim Young, Paul Zapf, Richard Zimmerman.

### **Garner Ted Armstrong - an Insight**

The January 8, 1983 issue of *The Houston Chronicle* (p. 25) contained an excellent in-depth interview of Garner Ted Armstrong by Burke Watson. It's the most insightful piece we've seen on GTA in some time. Here are a few excerpts:

"The 52-year-old son of Herbert W. Armstrong says there is virtually no direct communication between them. He portrays his father, who is 90, as a victim of manipulation by his own underlings. He also warns of a major power struggle that he believes is brewing within the elder Armstrong's widespread organization among those who wish to succeed him. 'He would be so outraged at that suggestion, he'd go crazy' Ted Armstrong said recently from the Tyler headquarters of Church of God International, which he founded in 1978. 'And yet I definitely do feel that he is a victim of those surrounding him.'

"Armstrong said his father's empire, based in Pasadena, Calif., has become too large and complex for its founder to make all of the major decisions and keep up with daily affairs. 'He voices that privately to my sisters and brothers [in-law?] all the time,' he said. 'Obviously, there are hundreds of things going on in an organizational structure that large, of which he knows nothing.'...

"My feeling is that since my dad has not chosen to appoint a successor - but has left it up to a ministerial board of some sort to decide who his successor would be he has created a scenario for another round of political infighting and grasping for power, and that the transition is going to be perhaps quite rocky and maybe even ugly,' he said....

"To ask Armstrong about the state of his father's church is to invite second-hand tales of sinister people and activities almost like those of a cult, but he stops short of calling it that. Still, he relates stories such as that of a WCG pastor and his wife barging into the home of a married couple in their congregation, searching through bureau drawers for cosmetics and berating them on matters of cleanliness and discipline. 'We had a family call us and describe that very event,' he said. 'I don't think my dad knows that's happening. I think his policies allow that to happen, but I don't think he knows about it.'

"Armstrong said the Worldwide Church of God is still healthy, but only as long as his father is. He said he believes his father still has command of his mental faculties, although his advanced age is taking its predictable toll physically. His father suffered from congestive heart failure, he said, in the late 1970s....

"The only news of his father that Garner Ted gets is passed to him either through family members or close observers of the WCG. 'It's funny, you know,' Armstrong said. 'I don't know what's going on in his mind. Just the other day he had a family dinner, to which both my sisters went, and their children, and twice before they started dinner he looked down and said, "I wish Ted were here." He doesn't contact me. He's making those statements continually, and every few months a rumor will run rampant through the WCG that I'm about to be back with him, but never any

communication from him.'

"Even if his father invited him back into the WCG, Armstrong said, there would have to be extensive talks about how the newer church would mesh with the old. 'It should not be assumed that he would make such a call,' he said. 'He won't. If he were to make such a call, the words "come back" would be at great issue. If he said, "Ted, I would like to talk to you" or "Ted, come to see me" you know, I'd be on the next plane. But the idea of abandoning something that has put down some pretty permanent roots, and is an ongoing, viable corporation, is absolutely unthinkable. I think there would have to be some serious talk about a very smooth method. I could see a scenario where the WCG would use the services of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association as its evangelistic arm.' But there would remain the question of compatibility between the two organizations. Armstrong said that, after he left the WCG, it took a 'screeching, 90-degree turn to the right.'...

"Power, ultimately, means getting some other human being to do what you want him to do,' Armstrong said. 'And money is power. But power for the sheer sake of power, over people's lives, is a goal in a lot of people's minds.'"

One Ambassador College alumnus wrote:

*When Herbert Armstrong finally kicks the bucket, who will be the man to step into his size fourteen, or whatever, shoes? Will it be Ellis ("the Playboy") LaRavia? Or "Buffie" McNair? Or will it be Rod ("of mine anger") Meredith - the one-time Golden Gloves champ who now seems to pack as much spiritual punch as a Sunset Boulevard pimp? Or "The King of Petra" Gerald Waterhouse? Or will it be Joe ("the Mad Russian") Tkach? Or perhaps the wire-tapping, pistolpacking Dean boys? Frankly, I don't care! When I look at the charlatans and dimwits "The Apostle" has surrounded himself with, I say it's time to bring back Garner Ted!*

*Ted has his faults, and I don't doubt for a moment the stories the Report has done on him in the past. Nor do I believe he would be a perfect leader. But of those names thrown about as possible successors to HWA, he is the only one who I believe could save the situation.*

*I say this not as a CGI member - I am not. Nor am I a WCG member. I left years ago and have no desire to rejoin. But I am an Ambassador College graduate, and as silly as it may sound to some, I still have a warm spot in my heart both for that institution and for the people I knew there. Unless Ted returns, I am convinced Ambassador College will not survive, let alone improve. The clowns that will be left after HWA dies will destroy it.*

*Just compare the utter paranoia that now grips the WCG with the atmosphere in the CGI. I know many non-CGI Ambassador alumni who have visited Ted in Tyler and found him very cordial. But if you've left the WCG, just try visiting Ambassador! Or try getting a subscription to The Worldwide News if you're not a WCG member. (The CGI even sends their newspaper to some noncontributors.) Or try visiting a WCG service if you've been disfellowshipped. Contrast that with the fact that even Ambassador Report's publishers were welcome at the CGI's sabbath service in Arcadia, Calif. when Ted was out there a few years ago. I'm even told that CGI members are not threatened with expulsion if they read literature from Ernest Martin or the Report. Just let a WCG member try that one!*

*For all his problems, I think GTA has got to be given credit for leading his organization in a far more healthy manner than his father has led his own. But even more important, Ted has proven himself in one absolutely crucial test of character flunked by each and every one of his father's current subordinates - Ted has had the guts to stand up to him.*

*Yes, I say bring back GTA What do you think about this?*

*-California*

Editor. You've brought up some interesting points. Within the last few years both David Antion and David Robinson (both of whom have essentially maintained their independence from CGI since leaving Worldwide) have pointed out to us that GTA has been HWA's number one victim. Considering how many have lost their families and lives by following HWA, that may be a bit of an exaggeration. But we are convinced that GTA *has* been one of HWA's victims.

Indeed, when one realizes the moral climate and psychological pressures to which he was subjected as a child, it is not difficult to see how some of Ted's weaknesses developed. The current situation is most ironic in that from 1972 onward, when GTA's sins were in the public spotlight continually, Ted knew of his father's horrendously immoral past but said nothing. Yet in 1978, when HWA threw Ted out of the WCG, HWA claimed Ted was insubordinate! When you consider how much Ted's been subjected to, you have to give him credit for his restraint and for being able to find the means whereby he can still show his father any respect whatsoever, which he does.

As for GTA coming back. Well, we think that like the nation of ancient Israel, the WCG and Ambassador College would be better off without a king. (Read the 8th chapter of I Samuel.) But the members of that church demand that a king rule over them. With that as a given, you may well be right. Those folks would probably be better off under GTA than under the fanatics that now surround and influence HWA. But Ted's return may never take place. GTA was in California for the week of Feb. 20 when HWA arrived back in the United States. HWA was informed that Ted was in town. Did he want to talk to his son? "No," the elder Armstrong said, "the time is not right."

Apparently, one obstacle remains for the time to be right. The whole WCG kingdom would be Ted's if he would do but one thing - "fall down and worship" HWA. Much to his credit, Ted has refused to do this - even as Jesus, in Matt. 4:8-9, refused to fall down and worship the devil. It has been five years since GTA has talked to his father face to face. Ted has told friends that ever since that last occasion - when he told his father he knew of his horrendous 10 years of incest sins - he has had the strange feeling they would never again see each other. Perhaps that's one Garner Ted Armstrong prophecy that will come true.

### **More Lawsuits**

The WCG's continuing war with Ramona Armstrong is not its only legal worry. Leona McNair's lawsuit is progressing through discovery. (She is being represented by the Los

Angeles firm of Greene, O'Reilly, Agnew & Broillet.) Recently Gary Bagley brought a suit against the WCG in regard to his 1979 extortion conviction, believing that HWA, who refused to appear at the trial, withheld relevant information. The case was thrown out on a demurrer, but his attorney, Richard Andrews of San Bernardino, says they are considering an appeal.

Then there is John Halbert, a former WCG member, who alleges the WCG is using certain government property around the U.S. for church services. He claims that this is in violation of federal law (see *Brandon v. Board of Education of Guilderland*, 487 F. Supp. 1219 (1980)). He has obtained the assistance of the ACLU and asks that any readers with information to help further corroborate his position contact him by writing to: John Halbert, 1003 E. Harry St., Tempe, Arizona 85281.

Of even more interest, especially to Ambassador College alumni, is a letter we received from Mr. Ed Holdren of Austin, Texas, who was a student at Ambassador College, Big Sandy, from 1966 to 1969. Like many others who have gone to Ambassador College, he has discovered that there is really no substitute for an accredited degree obtained from a legitimate educational institution. Mr. Holdren wrote us:

*Last summer I decided to return to college. I contacted the University of Texas here in Austin to see if there was a chance that they would now accept my Ambassador College hours. The Registrar was quick to inform me that UT still refuses to accept AC hours. He did say, however, that if AC was accredited now, he would accept most of my hours.*

*I anxiously contacted the State Coordinating Board to see if AC had finally obtained accreditation. A Dr. Stanton Calvert told me that he and a team of officials had just recently (in May '82) traveled to Big Sandy to resume ongoing talks on ACs accreditation. The state officials were quite dismayed when AC suddenly and flatly admitted they no longer want, nor are seeking, accreditation. Ambassador College broke its promise, then admitted it!*

Mr. Holdren's experience is no different than that of thousands of other Ambassador College alumni who were repeatedly told by college administrators that AC was on the way toward getting fully accredited. Those same alumni later were chagrined to discover that the college's administration was not willing to fulfill accreditation requirements or simply changed its mind. The college's position on seeking accreditation has flip-flopped so many times over the years it is difficult to believe the college's board was ever sincere in any of its pro-accreditation statements.

Holdren believes he and many other alumni have been wronged, and he is looking for a legal remedy to the situation. He has already obtained the services of a top attorney, but he says he could use the assistance of other Ambassador College alumni, faculty, and students in building a thorough case. If you wish to help, if you have information of relevance, or if you'd simply like to wish him good luck, he may be contacted by writing: Mr. Ed Holdren, 4412 Dovehill Drive, Austin, Texas 78744.

**Emmett Hocter - Super Activist**

Of the many anti-Armstrong activists we have known over the years, few have equaled the zeal of Emmett Hocter (16403 Main St., La Platte, Nebraska 68123). Hocter, a former WCG member, has an MA degree in history, has written an expose on the history of Omaha's annexation of South Omaha, and is currently working on a novel with certain WCG overtones. In years past he also wrote a number of interesting papers about the WCG. (Many of these have, unfortunately, been lost. So if any of you have copies, Mr. Hocter would appreciate hearing from you.)

But Mr. Hocter's activism does not end with his writing. For years he has pressured radio and TV stations in the Midwest to drop the Armstrong program. But, he says, "I've come to see that stations care very little about the effects their programs have on the public. They are primarily interested in making money. So unless a legal threat exists, or a massive campaign with economic portent, stations don't really mind doing business with the Armstrongs."

In recent months Hocter has shifted his emphasis away from pressuring stations and has focused on informing church groups of the dangers of Armstrongism. He has already contacted almost 200 churches in the Omaha, Nebraska area. Says Hocter, "I just get out the phone book and go down the list of churches in the Yellow Pages. I simply call the pastor of the church and ask him if he knows much about Herbert Armstrong. I then proceed to tell him of my experiences. I've found that the more 'liberal' churches tend to be less interested. But some of the more fundamentalist denominations, such as the Baptists, Church of Christ, and Assemblies of God, are fertile ground. Their pastors are usually quite concerned about the cult problem. Many not only ask for copies of *Ambassador Report* but promise to inform their congregations about what I've told them."

## **Tidbits**

We are sorry to report the suicide-death of Phillip Apartian, son of Evangelist Dibar Apartian, the head of the WCG's French-language operations. Phillip killed himself on the front lawn of a Pasadena home March 31 after apparently calling the police. As the police arrived on the scene, he shot himself in the chest with a 12-gauge shotgun. Friends say the nineteen-year-old had been suffering from depression.

\* \* \*

For many years the one characteristic separating the WCG from other major cults seemed to be that its main proselytizing thrust was not aimed at children. Now that may be changing. The March 7 *Worldwide News* announced that the WCG's magazine *Youth 83* goes to 100,000 young subscribers, 75% of whom are not affiliated in any way with the WCG. According to its managing editor, Dexter Faulkner, "Mr. Armstrong has always visualized the magazine as a junior *Plain Truth*."

\* \* \*

The March 21 *Worldwide News* announced that the government of Czechoslovakia has again granted the WCG permission to hold Feast of Tabernacles activities in the city of

Brno. While that country's government is communist and therefore pro-atheistic, it obviously does not mind putting ideology aside when it results in bringing in badly needed Western currency. Besides, in the May 1983 *Plain Truth* magazine, a glowing article about life in Czechoslovakia was published. Ironically, it is the Catholic Church that is being persecuted now in that country (*Los Angeles Times*, April 7, p.2).

\* \* \*

Readers who got our large 1977 issue will recall how we led the battle to prevent the WCG from appropriating, without cost, the \$2.5 million Vista Del Arroyo federal building in Pasadena. Shortly thereafter the WCG dropped its request for the property and the federal government instead decided to turn over the building to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The controversy surrounding the property continues, however. In a major article by Claire Spiegel, the *Los Angeles Times* (March 28, p.1) reported that with \$10 million appropriated by Congress (under somewhat unusual circumstances) for the rehabilitation of the building, only one justice has agreed to make use of the facility. The other justices are refusing to move in, with some claiming the appropriation was a terrible waste of taxpayers' money. The acquisition of the building and the appropriation drive was spearheaded by Judge Richard Chambers of Tucson, Arizona, who appears to be at the center of the controversy.

\* \* \*

Nevada State Senator Bill Hernstadt has come up with a creative solution to the cult-explosion problem. On Feb. 3 he introduced a bill in the Nevada legislature that would allow civil actions against cults which failed to make good on promises of inner peace and other psychological benefits after demanding contributions. The bill - which would force cult organizers to pay triple damages if found guilty - is not likely to pass (*Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Feb. 5). Could you imagine what would happen if politicians were also held legally responsible to make good on promises?

\* \* \*

Just days before Herbert Armstrong arrived in the Philippines for a meeting with President Marcos, the President's wife, Imelda, was embroiled in a controversy with the Catholic Church. It seems that Mrs. Marcos was the organizer of an international film festival in Manila which, according to Catholic authorities, featured uncensored torrid sex films. On January 28 Mrs. Marcos sloughed off the criticism by saying, "I am sorry that cheap pornography has affected some fragile senses, but this is just part of growing up."

\* \* \*

With former evangelist and CPA Stan Rader no longer acting as church treasurer, the WCG has reverted back to its old bad habit of releasing unaudited, incomplete, and overly abbreviated financial statements - though treasurer Leroy Neff does promise that Arthur Andersen & Co. will provide a combined worldwide audit of the entire "Work" for 1982. In the Feb. 21, 1983 *Worldwide News* it was revealed that the church/college worldwide took in \$117.5 million and spent \$116.1 million, with receipts up 10.2% and

expenditures up 14.4%. However, the percentage change figures given in the table don't match those stated in the accompanying article, and the 1981 figures include only grants to the AICF, which makes it impossible to compare these numbers with those given last year by the WCG.

All considered, it is not difficult to see why the WCG is not among those charitable and religious groups listed in the semi-annual listing of major charities put out by the Council of Better Business Bureaus (1515 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22209). That list is called "Give But Give Wisely" and is available for \$1.00. Also of interest are that organization's free publications: "Tips for Charitable Giving" and "CBBB Standards for Charitable Solicitations."

\* \* \*

While all divorces are, in a sense, very tragic, the Armstrong divorce suit is having one positive result. Many are beginning to see that Herbert Armstrong is not all that he claims. Many Bible students wonder, for instance, why HWA does not simply follow the admonition given by Jesus in Luke 12:11-12. After all, while the true apostles did not bribe their way in to see judges, magistrates, and kings, neither did they hire lawyers to get them out of such appearances.

Of course, neither do we read of them suing their wives for divorce. Isn't it ironic that Garner Ted Armstrong, for all his personal problems, is still married to "the wife of his youth" while HWA, the self-vaunted "conservative" has not only (according to such authorities as Dave Robinson) embraced the most libertine conduct (geisha girls, oral sex, masturbation, dildos, etc.), but is now attempting to put away the wife he once said God gave him. Not surprisingly, many are shocked by his conduct. Ron Dart, of the CGI, seemed to echo the attitude of many when he recently stated that he just can't see himself ever going back to the WCG because Herbert Armstrong "has gotten far, far too liberal."

### **Groups of Interest**

*The ministers have been pressuring members to increase their offerings to help Mr. HWA - even to sending in their small change. Are there any other churches that observe all the Holy Days and the Sabbath, other than the WCG or CGI?*

*-Colorado*

Editor: Yes. For a listing of quite a few, see the Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups, published by The Bible Sabbath Association, Fairview, Oklahoma 73737.

\* \* \*

Mr. Dean Hough, of the Concordant Publishing Concern, recently informed us that his organization has formed a fellowship group called the "Saviour of All Fellowship." Supporters of universal reconciliation, who would like information about the fellowship, its newsletter, or its proposed membership directory, should write to: Saviour of All

Fellowship, P.O. Box 2056, Canyon County, CA 91351.

\* \* \*

*I know that in the AR you list religiously oriented groups that the readers might find to be of interest. There is one that I have found to be of value: The Society of Jewish Science, 825 Round Swamp Rd, Old Bethpage, NY 11804. I would especially recommend their book Peace of Mind (\$6 postpaid).*

*-Harry Eisenberg, New York City*

\* \* \*

Mr. Fred Coulter, disassociated from the Biblical Church of God as of last November, has now formed another church called The Christian Biblical Church of God. The address is P.O. Box 1245, Hollister, CA 95023.

\* \* \*

Every so often we get letters from readers asking the whereabouts of Larry Gilbert Johnson, the founder of L.I.B.R.A. and the Congregation of Yah. We have never been too enthusiastic about Mr. Johnson's ministry, so we really haven't made much of an effort to follow his career. But we have been informed by Mr. Michael Grifone, one of his associates, that L.I.B.R.A. is now headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, where Mr. Johnson is currently researching in the area of astrology and reincarnation. He has also, apparently, produced a new solar calendar. Mr. Grifone has been critical of our anti-polygamy comments and the way we covered Johnson's use of guinea pigs in what he calls "living prophecies" (*Ambassador Report*, Oct. '81, p. 10). Mr. Grifone feels we distorted Johnson's position by quoting out of context, and he has offered to supply the entire newsletter quoted to anyone requesting it. His address is: Michael Grifone, P.O. Box 274, Station A, Ottawa, K1N 8V2, Canada.

\* \* \*

One *Ambassador Report* reader, who was seriously disappointed by his association with one religious group mentioned in *Ambassador Report*, wrote us: "I feel that if you print names of groups that, in effect, cause a certain number to respond and maybe get 'taken' by them, you should also print letters that give a warning."

Another reader wrote: "I have always enjoyed reading your literature, but I've wished that you would be a little more careful about leading people to spin-offs. By publishing names of new groups starting up, former WCG members are going to turn to them instead of the Christian churches and Christian ministers who are knowledgeable of the cults."

Very briefly, (1) we are not "members" of any of the groups we have mentioned, (2) groups are mentioned because many find their mere existence of interest, and (3) some organizations, such as the FBR, have much of value to offer. Certain other groups we've

mentioned could well be described as plain wacky. But even some of those have at least something of interest to offer, and (4) we do not have the resources nor the inclination to do significant research on groups other than the WCG. After all, as implied by the title of this publication (and as alumni of that institution), Ambassador College (and its supporting church) is where our editorial focus lies. If, after leaving the WCG, you have joined another group and again were disappointed by a cult-like situation, perhaps you should ask yourself what it is exactly that you are searching for. Besides, if we published only information in line with our own viewpoints, how valuable would the AR be? Wouldn't we become as propagandistic as *The Plain Truth* magazine?

### **An Important Bibliography**

In our Dec. 1, 1980 issue we reported that Mr. John Nugent of Laguna Beach, California was compiling an extensive bibliography of information about the WCG. Unfortunately, that bibliography was never completed as Mr. Nugent found the task to be far more taxing than anticipated. However, we are now very happy to report that such a bibliography is soon to be completed by Mr. John Buchner, a researcher in Australia.

Mr. Buchner is compiling an extensive bibliography about the WCG as part of the requirements for a higher degree. His bibliography, which incorporates Mr. Nugent's previous work, will be completed by mid-year and will be made available to the public in book form. This bibliography should prove an invaluable tool for anyone doing serious research on Herbert Armstrong, the WCG, and related groups. The price of each copy will be \$10.00 (U.S.) postpaid. Those interested should write to: Mr. John Buchner, P.O. Box 170, Gordon, N.S.W. 2072, Australia.

Please keep in mind that it will be a few months before the book comes off the press and is mailed. Readers may also find the following request by Mr. Buchner of interest:

*I am collecting a research library of all materials produced by the Armstrongs. A later project is to produce a comprehensive index to the Plain Truth, Good News, etc. from 1934 to 1983. This would form the basis of a content analysis for over 50 years. My speciality in mass communication involves the analysis of audio-visual and print materials in connection with societal and ideological issues, as well as theology. My files are complete from 1964 onwards, with a small number of earlier issues. I probably will commence this project in 1984. My request is that you bear in mind this project and alert any colleagues who may be able to contribute material or partial indexes already attempted.*

### **Literature of Interest**

"An Analysis of Garner Ted Armstrong's *The Real Jesus*" by Robert Paul Howard: This is a thorough, scholarly, and well-documented research paper. As this work was not intended for mass commercial distribution, but to fulfill academic requirements (Mr. Howard is working toward a master's degree in religion), only a limited number of copies are being made available to the public. A copy of this 69-page work can be obtained for \$5.00, including postage, by writing to: Robert Paul Howard, 171 Cleves Ave., Cleves, Ohio 45002.

\* \* \*

The TSL Publishing House is planning to send an open letter to HWA. They ask that we "print a request in the AR, that some of the readers may send us names of friends, loved ones, or others in the WCG so that we may send them the open letter." Write to: TSL Publishing House, P.O. Box 18122, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118.

\* \* \*

*Teamwork* - a new religious newsletter published by the Banfield Church of God, 6975 Murray Rd., Jackson, Mississippi 49201.

\* \* \*

*When Your Money Fails... The 666 System Is Here* by Mary Stewart Relfe - This book, which draws connections between the Beast of Revelation and modern banking, the multinationals, and the rise of the computer, is popular among many Christian fundamentalist groups. (We've also noticed that certain WCG breakoffs have appropriated this book's teachings, without giving their source any credit.) It is \$4.95 at Christian bookstores, and \$6.50 when ordered from Ministries, Inc., P.O. Box 4038, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

\* \* \*

"Is Nisan 15th the First Day of Unleavened Bread?" by Glenn Young - this paper has been making the rounds in WCG circles and got the author booted out of that church. The paper is available for \$1.00 by writing to the author at Rt. 1, Box 298B, Glenwood, Ark. 71943.

\* \* \*

WCG followers in Australia may be interested in knowing that the WCG has filed quite a few revealing documents (financial statements, incorporation papers, etc.) with the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, 21 Turbot St., Brisbane 4001. The documents are available for public inspection.

\* \* \*

"Are You in a Cult?" - in this excellent little article author Albert James Dager shows 26 characteristics of a cult. The WCG has 25 of them and is pretty close to having all 26. We strongly recommend this article for anyone having any association with the WCG. It is available free by writing to: Media Spotlight, P.O. Box 1288, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

\* \* \*

One of our readers, Mr. Jonathan Ross (1362 Kingfisher, No. 16, Sunnyvale, CA 94087) has informed us that he is doing a good deal of research on the early history of the "Adventist Family" of churches (sabbatarian groups). He has free literature available for AR readers interested in this subject. One paper he sent us, called "The Church of God History and the Second Advent Movement," is quite interesting.

\* \* \*

David Robinson, the author of *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, has asked that we remind readers he is still sending his book to libraries. As a result, many WCG members are finding out the truth about HWA. If you would like to help in this project, send \$1.50 per book to help cover postage and handling (up to two books will be sent to each library) and the name and address of each library to which the book(s) should be sent. Write to: David Robinson, c/o John Hadden Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135.

Mr. Robinson told us, "It's inevitable that when HWA dies he will be exposed for what he really is. Nothing will remain hidden; those following him now will eventually see the true Herbert Armstrong. In the meantime, let's make the facts available to all who will listen."

\* \* \*

*Focus Journal*, 207 E. 85th Street, Suite 450, New York, NY 10028 - this is a new quarterly periodical by and for former cult members. It is \$15 per year (\$20 overseas). They are looking for articles by former cult members.

\* \* \*

The Citizen's Freedom Foundation (National Office, P.O. Box 86, Hannacroix, New York 12087) is one of the leading anti-cult organizations in the country. They put out a monthly newsletter (\$15 per year, \$20 overseas). Their March 1983 issue had an excellent article about the Worldwide Church of God written by Brenda Denzler.

### **Denzler's Project Continues**

*Many thanks to you for running my letter in the last issue of the AR. I have received a number of interesting responses, some offers of financial assistance, and some rather unusual responses as well. One person, however, suggested I make an official questionnaire for people to respond to. This seems a good idea to me and will perhaps help those who are inclined to respond to know just what to say. In fact if someone isn't fond of writing, I would welcome cassette taped responses to the questions I pose on the questionnaire. This short letter is to encourage all those who are giving some thought to responding to write to me for a questionnaire. This is not necessary, but perhaps will stimulate thought or give it a form that is easier to write down or speak. I would appreciate receiving a stamped, self-addressed envelope with requests.*

*Brenda Denzler*

*600 Old Main  
Newton, KS 67114*

Editor: Some years ago two of *Ambassador Report's* editors were having lunch at the Salt Shaker restaurant in Pasadena when a news reporter for one of the area's major papers walked up and asked if he could join them. When he sat down, he made an unforgettable comment. He said, "You know, it's kind of funny, but some of the very nicest people I have ever known are people who were members of the Worldwide Church of God" - and left. His comment was the result of years of experience covering the WCG in the Pasadena area. His comment echoes our own feelings.

Over the years the Report has received many hundreds, if not thousands, of letters telling remarkable stories about the WCG and of personal tragedy and triumphs. A fellow writer who recently visited us read a few letters we had recently received and commented, "You get some of the world's most interesting mail." That's true. But sadly, many of these letters cannot be printed because of the space and financial limitations we are under.

That is why we hope that many of you will help Mrs. Denzler with her project (see our last issue for more details). She is an excellent writer and has the required enthusiasm to finish the project. We believe her book will help many people.

## ***Letters***

*Your work is truly important For all the large churches in our nation and the billions they collect for their physical structures, work such as yours is sadly neglected. To bring to light evil and corruption is a basic scriptural assignment (Matt. 24:4).*

*It seems from reading the letters that a large number of those you disabuse of Armstrongism turn to a sort of wishy-washy humanism. Tell me, if you can, what happens (in a religious sense, that is) to those in the WCG who have left because of your revelations. Do they join a mainstream church, a fundamentalist church, or no church?*

*-Minneapolis*

Editor: We have been asked this question many times, but we really cannot give a precise or documented answer. However, from our mail and what we've observed in Pasadena, it seems that most who leave the WCG do not go back into mainstream religion. About a third that leave join another Sabbatarian church such as the CGI. About a third seem to become de facto agnostics, that is, they maintain no formalized set of religious beliefs. (This does not necessarily mean they have adopted some type of "wicked" outlook, as many in this category still seem to be quite upright in lifestyle. Also, this may be only a temporary phase, as many later seem to regain an interest in theological questions.) And the remaining third seem to be best categorized as "non-denominational" Christians. This latter category would include those who support organizations such as the Foundation for Biblical Research or the Concordant Publishing Concern. Of the thousands who have left the WCG, we've heard of only three who have rejoined the Catholic Church, one or two the Jewish faith, one has become a Methodist, one a Presbyterian, two Congregationalist, and four or five have turned to Eastern religions. We have heard of only about three or

four who have aligned themselves with the Humanist movement. These figures are, of course, only very approximate estimations, but they should give you some idea as to what former WCG people believe now.

*Since resigning from Herbie's personal church, I have had the privilege to actually begin to comprehend scripture, at least somewhat. However, I think we must give Herbie credit for being an excellent salesman, and even creating salesmen in his own image. For such are false teachers, and no marvel, even Satan himself is transformed into a false "light" messenger. A messenger is one sent forth, just as an apostle is one sent forth, as Herbie is so fond of laying on the "brethren."*

*I realize that to be able to report Herbert's apparent human faults (of which I was once taught that he had none) is totally correct for you to do, in light of II Thes. 3:6. However, "cattle" cannot read and seldom ever understand what scripture plainly states. I was at one time "cattle" and lived in fear absolute, not of God's word, but Herbie and his "Levite kingdom, " who feed his flock every Saturday. They all look hollow-eyed, at times. I have often wondered about that. I met Ted once, and he looked hollow-eyed too. Jon Hill stalked around like "big daddy" at one of Herbert's "holy day" meetings and mentioned that the "holy" men had to cut their lunch break short to discuss "your marital problems," you clods. Well, some clods don't have those problems now, especially some who committed suicide.*

*If only Herbert and his "Levites" didn't close the minds of their believers! Those believers have so much "faith" in his trashy writings and teachings, it now seems absolutely unbelievable to me. There is only one way Herbie is able to do it. He is preaching for god, all right, but it is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1.3). Paul is quite clear on the matter, as to who the god of this world really is. I am not casting stones, I am only repeating what Holy Writ can and does tell us.*

*I must admit: I found your address by "accident" in a magazine article on a newsstand and it was not the "blind truth." Personally, I don't care what Herbert says or even does. I do care, however, for the "sheep" and "cattle" he rides upon. How you are able to read and listen and find out what you write about without vomiting (maybe you do) is a mystery. I mean, how much can your stomach take of Herbie's lifestyle?*

*If someone wants to live as he evidently does, that's OK, but even Caesar gave his subjects some freedom to read things other than what he, Caesar, penned. How could we, who are free of Herbert and his kingdom, have been so stupid? (just read Eph. 6:12-13.)*

*I actually pity Herbert and his teachers. I really do. They crucify Christ in all their sermons and stupid writings, especially in their baptizings (I Cor. 1: 17). I did not intend to get into scripture in this letter, but Herbert uses it at every whim or "bright light" that pops into his totally deceived mind. Let us give him credit though. He truly is a fantastic "salesman."*

*-Oscar Murray, Ohio*

Editor. You aren't the only one who has commented on Herbert's sales ability.

Advertising man George J. Abrams praised HWA's advertising abilities in his book *How I Made A Million Dollars With Ideas* (p. 186).

*My husband who belongs to the WCG has been out of work for six weeks. He draws a \$90.00 per week unemployment check, and \$30.00 of that goes to HWA, the widows' fund, and the vacation fund, so my \$118.00 check is all I have, which doesn't cover much.*

*-Indiana*

*I am not much into scripture quoting. This tithing business, however, deserves some attention. It is such a universally perpetrated con, and I have never come across anyone exposing it. Do you know of anyone who has dealt with this, especially the "proof texts"? I have not as yet been able to respond adequately to those who question me. Perhaps the reason was that I was responding to people who receive tithes and are inherently somewhat closed minded! I feel somewhat negative about paying such a large amount of money without knowing a little more about the product.*

*-Florida*

Editor: We have repeatedly recommended *The Tithing Fallacy* put out (free of charge) by The Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102. We have seen only one paper that ever attempted to refute their booklet - an unpublished paper by Ron Dart of the pro-tithing Church of God, International. (With all due respect to Mr. Dart, we did not feel his paper substantiated his position.) We're still convinced that *The Tithing Fallacy* is the best, most thoroughly researched work we've ever seen on that subject, and we strongly recommend it.

*Whatever happened to Mr. Sherwin McMichael? He was a minister when I first entered the church about 16 years ago. I can't believe how that man dominated our lives - even to the point of deciding who we were to live with. I was a single girl at the time and didn't want to share my apartment with a particular girl, but was told that if I didn't they'd kick me out of the church. The year spent trying to cope was a disaster and I ended up moving out - with Mr. McMichael's permission of course. Thank God those days are over.*

*-Minnesota*

Editor. Mr. McMichael has been thrown out of the WCG (they claimed he had a problem with "demons"). We understand he is now working as a salesman. We heard that, disillusioned with HWA he recently told another exminister. "Herbert Armstrong really fooled us, didn't he?"

*I was fascinated by your mention of HWA's prosthetic dildo! I'm afraid I'm rather naive and don't know what one is, but don't you think that a prophetic dildo would be more to the point?*

Editor. For an in-depth explanation of prosthetics, see the "California Living" section of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Jan. 9, 1983, p. 11 or a detailed, medically up-to-date

sex manual that discusses mechanical solutions to male erectile difficulties.

*It was brought to my attention that you have publications concerning an evil organization called the "Worldwide Church of God" of Herbert W. Armstrong. I have been married to my wife for 20 years. Over the last two years she has become involved with this organization, which is turning our peaceful life into hell.*

*-England*

*My lovely wife (a most faithful Christian) was baptized into HWA's cult in 1960. Well, they just booted her out for asking too many questions! I'm so mad I can spit! Send me everything you can and put me on your mailing list please.*

*-California*

*God forgive that lying, conniving, little monster who has so grossly misrepresented God's great truth and has caused indescribable heartache and suffering to so many little people! A dear sweet friend of mine has been totally blind for four years because she believed she could not take her insulin! And she is still in the WCG. The only peace I have now about the organization and all of its leaders is to believe that God is allowing it and them to go their mile and finally He surely will deal with all the evil being perpetrated under the guise of "the truth."*

*-Canada*

*I praise and thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for your newsletters and John Tuit's book for being a big part in bringing my oldest son out of the WCG. He is still struggling, but I feel sure that our Lord has everything under control. God bless each of you for your endless efforts in bringing out the truths about WCG and Herbert Armstrong.*

*My son has been disfellowshipped for marrying a very wonderful girl whom our Lord sent at just the right time. (In January 1982 his first wife was killed in a train-auto accident) This fine, young woman, an old love from high school and college came in and helped with the three young children. Did the WCG people come to the rescue? No! The minister had the gall to ask my son how much insurance he had on his deceased wife. He never asked him if he needed help with the children or if he needed funds - nothing.*

*-Wisconsin*

*We left many behind whom we had considered friends - some of whom know better than to believe what they are being taught. It seems they prefer to believe a lie. Others are quite sincere and believe anything they are told even if the "truth" changes from week to week.*

*-Australia*

Editor: You might be interested in reading II Thes. 2:11.

*I've tried The Plain Truth. Now I want the real truth. Please do not use my name as I have relatives in top positions in the WCG.*

*-Texas*

*Although many fine people do attend the WCG and keep on supporting it, it's all sort of crazy - like people hooked on alcohol, tobacco, and tranquilizers.*

*- Minnesota*

*I received your letter some days ago and was pleased that your efforts are alerting so many to the awfulness of this predatory barbarian to whom they have given too much, too long and too often. I wonder about the future of those in this cult and the damage which will be done to their minds with the constant bombardment of archaic habits and retarding influences.*

*It is a curious thing the control one man can exercise over others to the extent of whether they go in or go out, whether or what they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, whether in thought or action, they do it all to the glory of, in this case, Mr. H. It is distressing to recall I was once a devout member - now it all seems terribly alien and imbecilic.*

*I also wonder what the end of all this will be. What is the answer to this complex experience? What you are doing at the AR has helped me and others tremendously. So stay the course!*

*-West Virginia*

*Keep up the good work. I guess if I would have had cancer and been cured I would still want to keep up the current goings on in the field of cancer research. It's the same with Herbert and his organization. I have been cured of this cancer called Herbert W. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God, but I still want to keep abreast of the latest goings on in the field of their tragic endeavors in modern religion, for better or worse.*

*-Texas*

*Mr. Trechak, I have been told that, besides being a writer, you have had some experience in the music field. So I wonder if you could answer the following: (1) It is rumored in church circles that Led Zepplin's "Stairway to Heaven" was originally conceived of by someone with parents in the WCG and that it is a put-down of the church. Have you heard this? (2) Elton John's "Border Song" seems to be about people leaving the WCG. Is it? (3) A friend told me that Garner Ted Armstrong has formed a band called "The Bozo Band " My friend says they sing funny. Do you have any details on this?*

*-California*

Editor. (1) I've heard the "Stairway to Heaven" story many times, but have never seen any evidence that it is true. By the way, radio station executives claim that "Stairway to Heaven" is the country's most requested song. (2) "Border Song" does have some funny WCG parallels, but I don't think that was intentional. The words are by Bernie Taupin, who was never a WCG member. (3) What your friend probably heard was "Intro Outro" by The Bonzo Dog Band, a popular British rock group of the late '60s. That song parodies a number of famous personalities, including GTA, who was well-known in Britain at that time. Regardless of false rumors apparently spread by certain WCG ministers who claim Ted is planning to go into show business, GTA has not formed a group called "The Bozo Band" - at least as far as we know.

*I always enjoy your publications. As you well know, I am in constant need of prolonged belly laughing. Your chronicle on the misadventures of Herbert and his merry men (and women) fulfills that need in every way. I guess there's no one quite like old Herbert. He, on a positive note, makes an insane world seem very sane indeed.*

*-Joe Nazarini, California*

Editor: Mr. Nazarini, after graduating from Ambassador, going through a painful divorce, and making the break from the WCG, spent time in Africa with the Peace Corp, earned an accredited Master's degree, has remarried, and currently works as a director for a retirement home, besides teaching at California State University in Los Angeles. He has also said, "If I didn't laugh, I'd cry" - something we, too, try to remember.

*Your reply to Allan Browne was a delight to read! With all your smarts, how in ---- did you ever get mixed up with the WCG in the first place?*

*-California*

Editor: I was once very young and foolish. I am also reminded of this scene from the movie *Casablanca*:

RENAULT (Claude Rains): And what in Heaven's name brought you to Casablanca?

RICK (Humphrey Bogart): My health. I came to Casablanca for the waters.

RENAULT: Waters? What waters? We are in the desert.

RICK: I was misinformed.

*I have never before written to an obscure publication which exposes an obscure religious cult, so I hope I get my 20 cents' (the price of the stamp) worth.*

*"Brilliant" is a much-too-common word - even more common than "sick" or "senile" - but brilliant is the word that to me seems apt regarding your reply to the legal firm representing Herbert W. Armstrong and/or (are they one and the same?) the Worldwide Church of God. Don't let this go to your head, because pride goes before obnoxiousness, but I felt it was almost as good as Elijah mocking the prophets of Baal. (I want you to know I am behind you 100 percent, but don't print my name because I don't want to take a chance of being awakened suddenly late at night.)*

*The world does seem rife (that's a snub-nosed rifle or a female mate of one) with lawyers with nothing more to do than chase ambulances or file harassment or nuisance lawsuits on behalf of self-proclaimed apostles. Perhaps they would spend more time defending the fatherless and the widow, if only it paid more.*

*However, I do not believe: (a) The only good lawyer is a dead lawyer. (b) If all legal briefs were thrown into the ocean, it would be so much better for people and so much worse for the fish. It just seems that way!*

*I'm sure there are good and bad in all professions (except maybe the world's oldest). Please forgive my cynicism. It only happens to me during a full moon. When I read about HWA meeting with Ariawongsgatayana, "the 18th Supreme Patriarch of Thai Buddhism," I thought I was reading Mad magazine!*

*Far be it from me to criticize such a high-quality publication as the AR but I would like to point out one very minor mistake. On page 6 (January 1983 issue), next to last paragraph, the sentence appears: "Oh yes, he'll need a few of his servants and a few top myrmidons around to keep the facade in tact." This sentence should have been followed with [sic] to indicate your error, or better yet "in tact" (two words) should have been "intact" (one word), which is correct. I know these things because I used to be Asst. Managing Editor of the Plain Truth. (But I've repented! You'll notice in this letter I've used no words in CAPS and only a few in italics! I still have a problem with exclamation marks at the end of sentences, though!)*

*If you have a booklet entitled, 'Just What Do You Mean ... Myrmidons?' I could use a few. Mynnidons, that is, not booklets.*

*I know you don't need my recommendation, but I do want to thank you and your staff for their work, effort and research in producing the AR over the years. I'm sure you have helped many people. You've done good for somebody from New Jersey! Your work probably will never be completed. Religious fanatics, too sincere and too trusting, are ever with us. It seems part of the human condition. I'm sure much more mercy will be extended to the deceived (the deceives?) than to the deceivers. Enough preaching. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and in general a big ruckus (paraphrase of the Revised Republican version).*

*I will write to you again as soon as I can soak the cancellation marks out of some more stamps, and never end a preposition with a sentence.*

*-Anonymous and Forgotten  
(like everyone else who worked on the PT staff)*

*P. S. Did you know that the digits in your box number (4068) add up to 18? 18 can be divided by three sixes. Did I say three sixes? 666!*

Editor: 4068 is also evenly divisible by 1, 2,3, 4,9, and 12, but we try not to let it go to our heads.

*It will be interesting to see how the Herbert versus Ramona Armstrong legal battle turns out and whether Herbert Armstrong will present himself for the deposition. It is understandable that he is so reluctant to appear, as it would be a situation where he is not the almighty authority or the magnanimous benefactor, and this would make him feel like a fish out of water. Imagine God's apostle being questioned in this manner! Herbert Armstrong has virtually required some of his followers to commit acts of civil disobedience which would result in their imprisonment, yet he won't even appear in a court of law concerning a matter which he himself has initiated.*

*-Australia*

Editor: There are undoubtedly many questions HWA would not want to answer. But his unbounded arrogance may very well be the main reason he is being so uncooperative with the courts. One respected evangelist who has personally known HWA for well over twenty years described him to us this way: "Mr. Armstrong is the most lawless human being you will ever encounter. He has absolutely utter contempt for all constituted authority and law. He may preach humility, respect for law and obedience to authority, but that's for the other guy. He makes the rules; he doesn't obey them. He is completely self-centered, a law unto himself." What a total contrast to the example set by Jesus and his true apostles!

*I am always very touched by the Letters section of your Report. It's always so sad to read the horrible things that people have had to endure because of one disgusting, old man. I also find myself growing happy at the same time because I realize that these people have escaped from that environment and built happier lives.*

*My mother was in the WCG for 12 years and Ambassador Report helped her find out the truth about that organization. She, like many others, took the original Report to church and started asking too many unanswerable questions of her minister. She was quickly kicked out.*

*Unfortunately, the experience was a very shattering one for her (as it is for many people). Although it's been eight years, sometimes I wonder if she has yet recovered from the experience of losing friends and self-esteem which comes from finding out the truth about HWA and the WCG.*

*Self-esteem is a very important ingredient not only in leaving the church, but also in becoming a member. It has been commented on so often that WCG members aren't stupid and in fact they're very nice, intelligent people - so how did they get trapped? I believe that many of them have so little confidence in themselves, so little self-esteem that they allow themselves to be manipulated by a "father" figure who tells them what's right and totally directs their lives for them (at the same time telling them that they're learning how to direct their lives - thus saving face).*

*It's very important for ex-WCGers to look at themselves and understand that they're "OK" They can run their own lives and can have a personal relationship with God. God created all of us and must love us enough to care about each one of us for our own sakes.*

*I see so many ex-WCGers who become cynical and bitter, instead of trying to build their lives anew and become better and happier people. It's just as easy to try to look at the good things in life and concentrate on them as it is to look at the bad all the time.*

*One thing that helps is to understand that you weren't the only person deceived by Herbert. And in that way the AR is very important. Many seem to say that the AR is too negative. But I don't see it that way. I see Ambassador Report as a positive force to help people understand that others have gone through what they also have gone through. Others have made mistakes, and others have rebuilt their lives and made them better than ever before. And even more than that, the AR has helped people escape suicide, illness, and even death by helping them leave the WCG. For this I know many thousands thank you as I do.*

*-California*

\* \* \*

### **Should We Continue Publishing?**

Our thanks to all of you who, taking a suggestion made in our Dec. 15 letter, placed ads in newspapers to help promote *Ambassador Report*. Unfortunately, many found they could place the ads with their local paper only if they omitted any request to send money to cover our costs. Thus, as we feared, we have been swamped with requests for back issues of the *Report*, but we have had very few send in anything to cover the expenses involved. This has really drained us of resources. So, at least for now, we would prefer that readers not continue to promote free giveaways. We simply cannot afford it.

In the more than seven years we have been publishing we have sent the *Report* to thousands who have never sent us a penny., Many subscribers have written us saying they've appreciated our work so much that someday they hoped they could send in a contribution. Well, this might be a good time to do it. We are really struggling to stay afloat.

This issue will not be our last, if we can help it. But we have been forced to ask ourselves, should we continue publishing? Is this kind of sacrifice on our part really worth it? We think the next few months will provide some interesting news to report. We do hope we will be able to continue on.

- JT

[Next Issue \(AR25\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

July, 1983

### Herbert Armstrong Trapped

Lately things have not been going too well for Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the founder of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and president of Ambassador College. As we reported in past issues, ever since the 90-year-old "Apostle of the Twentieth Century" began divorce proceedings against Ramona, his 44-year-old estranged wife, his many lawyers have not lacked for work. But all of Armstrong's lawyers have availed him very little in the last three months, as virtually every court decision has gone against him.

On April 8, Superior Court Judge J. Richard Hannah in Tucson rejected a third attempt by Armstrong's attorneys to disqualify Judge Robert J. Hooker from hearing the Armstrong divorce case. Hooker had previously ordered Armstrong, after many months of delays, to appear for a deposition on April 19. HWA finally appeared in Tucson for questioning, but in a two-hour session declined to answer most of the questions put to him. The next day, Judge Hooker ordered HWA to answer all deposition questions about his financial ties with his church and about his relationship with his estranged wife. The HWA deposition continued on into a second week before it was completed.

The transcripts of HWA's Tucson deposition have not yet been made public, but the experience apparently shook up HWA considerably. Allan Browne complained that during the questioning HWA was so upset that, while his nurse was standing by with oxygen, he had "to take nitroglycerin at least a half-dozen times."

The Armstrong deposition will undoubtedly provide information that church observers have sought for some time. But the questioning of HWA was not without limitations. Said Browne, "Her [Ramona's] lawyer tried to get into personal relations prior to marriage. But the judge said any intimate details were not to be disclosed" (*Pasadena Star-News*, April 23, 1983). While only fair, that ruling has disappointed some WCG members and former members who had hoped that the new disclosures would include details of the premarital relationship between HWA and Ramona. Since the mid-seventies there have been those at the church's headquarters in Pasadena who have claimed that prior to her

marriage to HWA, Ramona had conceived an illegitimate child by the church leader. (Marion McNair alluded to this in his 1977 book on Armstrongism.) One church employee has claimed to have seen the child's birth certificate. And some have claimed that the child was born handicapped and put into an institution in Italy. We have yet to see any proof that this widespread rumor is true. And when we asked one of Ramona's lawyers about an AP story (April 20) that mentioned HWA's "support of a disabled daughter," we were told tersely: "There were no children of the marriage."

Nevertheless, the Armstrong divorce suit is resulting in much information being made public. So far, we personally have read through over 3,000 pages of court documents in the case (we quote the more interesting sections below), and we fully expect that before the trial is over there will be many thousands more pages of information. Clearly, this is something HWA did not want to happen. From the court record, notice this exchange during the deposition of Ramona Armstrong (she is the witness, Deckter is her lawyer, and Maltz represents HWA):

MR. DECKTER: In the category of persons, dissidents, contacting you for purposes of using information or the litigation against either the church or Mr. Armstrong?

MR. MALTZ: Right.

A [Ramona] It's always been no comment.

Q [Maltz] Okay. And would that be the same answer with respect to reporters and members of the media who have tried to contact you?

A To this point, yes.

Q When you say to this point, do I detect -

MR. DECKTER: Do not answer the question whatever it is.

Q - an intention or contemplation that you are going to go public with what transpires in this case?

MR. DECKTER: Do not answer the question.

THE WITNESS: I decline to answer that question.

MR. MALTZ: Okay.

MR. DECKTER: It's a subject of compromise and settlement.

MR. MALTZ: It's also called other things.

MR. DECKTER: No, it isn't....

Q You are saying under oath that you don't know that there are any people out there

who would like to delve into these proceedings for the sole purpose of embarrassing Mr. Armstrong and/or the Worldwide Church of God?

A You would have to ask those people out there.

Q But weren't these dissidents and disaffected people a fact of life for you and Mr. Armstrong when you were living together?

MR. DECKTER: Mr. Maltz, I am going to object to the form of the question. You are asking: One, are there people who would be interested, and by the same token you are asking would it be for the sole purpose of hurting someone. We have told you that the legitimate press has made inquiry. There is probably a newsworthy aspect both to this divorce and to the information they would like. And people may just want to know the truth about this church and Mr. Armstrong....

Yes, many want to know the facts! Especially many who have, for years, been sending money to the church. After all, it's even their money that will pay for much (if not all) of the massive legal costs in this divorce. In a sworn statement about HWA's expenses, signed by Aaron Dean, we find this suspicious footnote regarding HWA's attorney fees paid to date:

Undetermined liability to Worldwide Church of God for attorney fees and costs advanced pursuant to religious corporation indemnification statute...

One can only wonder who it was that persuaded HWA to seek a divorce from Ramona. For it is obvious HWA never expected her to put up the fight that she has. Apparently, he thought she would simply acquiesce to his wishes and sort of disappear into the Arizona desert to live in solitude, never to be heard from again. Notice this excerpt from a statement by HWA's attorneys:

On April 16, 1982, Herbert W. Armstrong, as petitioner, filed a "Petition for Dissolution of Marriage" against Ramona Armstrong,

---

&COPY;1983 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow.  
John Trechak, Editor Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor Connie Geringer, Circulation Manager  
Founding Publishers:  
Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

respondent, seeking a judicial decree dissolving the marriage of the parties on the ground that it was irretrievably broken. Mr. Armstrong further alleged that "there are no agreements between the parties regarding a division of the community, joint tenancy, or other property held in common, nor as to spousal maintenance" and, therefore, it was requested that the court equitably distribute the parties' commonly held property. (Petition, Para. 4)

Notwithstanding the simplicity of Mr. Armstrong's Petition, on April 23, 1982, Ramona Armstrong filed a "Response, Counterpetition, and Petition for Order to Show Cause" wherein she alleged, *inter alia*, that she and Mr. Armstrong had entered into various oral agreements prior to their marriage regarding financial benefits to be awarded her in consideration of her agreement to enter into the marriage....

Ramona Armstrong's utilization of these alleged "promises" and "agreements" as an extortion attempt ... is demonstrated by conduct undertaken and apparently authorized by her with respect to her attempt to relitigate these issues in the Los Angeles Superior Court. Thus, Jack C. Warner, Esq., her counsel in that proceeding had, on two separate occasions subsequent to the filing and service of the complaint, sent to Mr. Armstrong unsolicited Western Union telegrams requesting a private meeting "to discuss the immediate settlement of the captioned litigation in a manner that is... economically feasible to you...." In his second telegram dated October 1, 1982, Mr. Warner apparently sought to coerce such a settlement by threatening adverse publicity....

It is thus difficult to conceive of a more improper motive for attempting to assert these promises as a basis for a financial "pay-off" than that expressed by Ramona Armstrong's own counsel. Her motive is clear - generate, or threaten to generate, as much adverse, inflammatory publicity as possible in the hope that Mr. Armstrong will settle the dissolution proceeding in a manner which is financially beneficial to her. Indeed, this intent is further confirmed by Ramona Armstrong's refusal to authorize her counsel to stipulate that all depositions and court files in the instant proceeding be sealed....

Yes, if HWA would have his way, these proceedings would be done in secret. Fortunately, that has not been allowed. The two telegrams mentioned above are most interesting. *Ambassador Report* has been able to obtain copies of both. Here are their contents:

(9/24/82)

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

I do not know if you have been given a copy of the complaint served on Mr. Tkach at his home Wednesday evening, and upon you and the rest of the defendants at 300 West Green on Thursday, and upon Mr. Helge at his office.

Nevertheless, it is my desire to meet with you personally, just yourself and myself on neutral territory, to discuss the immediate settlement of the captioned litigation in a manner that is both economically feasible to you and fair to Mrs. Armstrong.

Both Mrs. Armstrong as well as other litigants have told me that your advisors have sealed you off in a fashion that does not allow you to obtain a correct picture of the problems with which you were confronted. They say that the facts are "pre-massaged" before they reach you so that your decisions and responses to them are the product of a distorted picture.

To avoid any such possibility, a one-on-one meeting by the two of us would, I think, prove most fruitful. I think there would be a good chance that positive solutions could result that would relieve you from what must be very heavy burdens.

I would appreciate a telephone call from you immediately upon your receipt of this message in order that we might set up an immediate meeting and possibly resolve the existing litigation so that you can get on with more productive matters. I'm sure you will wish to tape record any telephone conversations, as will I, so that neither of us will ever be misconstrued. On the other hand, I would expect that you would not wish any of our face-to-face discussion to be recorded or used by anybody at any time for any purpose, in litigation or otherwise, since the same will be for the purposes of compromise and settlement only. If you are in agreement, we can make a telephone record of that fact, also.

I'm sending duplicate copies of this telegram to your cook and your chauffeur with a request that they be delivered to you personally so that I know that the same will have reached you and not have been mislaid or diverted by others.

I'm prepared to meet with you Sunday or Monday, and I imagine that it would be of assistance to you if it was possible that all matters could be wrapped up before you get deeply involved in the Feasts next week.

I would appreciate a phone jingle from you personally, even if you wish the litigation pursued, so that I'm confident that you've received this invitation. Thank you.

-Jack Warner

---

(9/30/82-10/1/82)

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

The trouble with written epistles is that they never go away. There are too many of them floating around already that are proving to your extreme disadvantage. Their eternal existence prevents a problem from being quietly put to rest and forgotten forever. What happens is that such writings are always resurrected by others in aid of their causes in the future. Rather, I would like you to view firsthand what has already been caused to happen to you and your work over your purported signature and that of Mr. Helge's, as secretary, in the different state corporation filing offices. I feel certain you are unaware that recent amendments have stripped you of your power "in the event of his inability to act," whatever that means. I'm more than willing to come to 210 [S. Orange Grove Ave.] or have lunch with you at Perino's in order that we might examine your signatures and view these things together.

A personal interview of Mrs. Armstrong has been promised Mr. Russ Chandler immediately upon his return from vacation in a few days. We are also entering into negotiations for the worldwide pocketbook rights to Mrs. Armstrong's story and a 7-part TV miniseries. The recent letter to the editor in *Playboy* magazine and the lengthy article in the *LA Daily Journal* have opened up the commercial feasibility of an in-depth *Playboy* interview and the sale of her film rights.

Mrs. Armstrong is being forced to these unfortunate lengths by her financial plight. She does not look forward to the public disclosure of her most intimate personal life, but her present circumstances leave her no real choice as she had no other source of future financial security. Equally regretful to her is the prospect that her first person accounts will also destroy your credibility, good name, and life's work. The details of the opulent lifestyle to which she was introduced, internal maneuverings for power,

corporate and tax machinations, personal habits, lifetime contracts for associates and family members, gifts and grants to others, extravagant salary schedules, etc. are truly stranger than fiction. Yet, their real world truth is proved all too frequently by indisputable written documentation.

The work's financial erosion has certainly already begun. The evaporation of its income can only accelerate. I personally viewed the rapid demise of A. A. Allen's empire through a similar chain of events - the failure to quickly and quietly put to rest personal domestic problems, coupled with the behind-the-scenes jockeying for power by certain advisors. Unless these things are settled promptly, boldly and quietly, they will just as surely destroy your work as they did his.

This is because I cannot ethically communicate directly with you after their appearance. Certain of your advisors might wish to discourage your having the information your eye should see. Thus, time is of the essence. Please meet with me somewhere immediately.

Very truly yours,  
Jack C. Warner

Of course some of these comments raise a host of questions. If Warner's assessment is based on valid evidence, it would appear that there is indeed a battle raging for control of the WCG's assets and that very shortly they may be taken out from under HWA's control by the very men with whom he has surrounded himself.

At the same time, it is clear that Ramona, herself, is making a bid for control of much (if not all) of those assets. In our Sept. 30, 1982, issue we reported that Ramona had launched a lawsuit in California against the WCG and the key men surrounding HWA. Since then, those defendants have launched their own suit against Ramona in U.S. District Court in Arizona. Ramona has responded to that suit with counterclaims. In her Answer, Counterclaim, and Third-Party Complaint filed in Arizona in that legal battle (which is separate from her divorce proceeding), there are a number of statements made that show, not only her expectations, but the incredible intrigue going on in the WCG hierarchy. Here are a few excerpts:

RAMONA ARMSTRONG alleges that Plaintiff WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD and the reputed assignor corporations are not operated as genuine bona fide corporations, and she alleges that such corporate forms should be disregarded as the same are in fact the alter egos of HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG who has created, perpetuated, maintained, operated, controlled and dominated, as corporate guises to shield his own personal business endeavors, and that it would be inequitable to observe such corporate forms in this action.... Defendant alleges that the individually named Defendants, whatever their relationship to Mr. Armstrong's corporate entity might be, are but a rubber stamp for his orders and directions, and that they possess and exercise no independent decision-making power of their own as is required by the law of true bona fide corporate directors.

...Defendant admits that her husband claims numerous different titles, including those of "chancellor" and "president" of the property known as "Ambassador College," which property he uses as the headquarters for his evangelical business. Defendant is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to which of her husband's many different business or personal bank accounts he may have used to pay for her household furnishings, or whether any of his business

entities may have made any assignment to any other such entity, and she therefore denies such allegations.

Defendant is without specific knowledge or information concerning the exact number of her husband's "congregations," "ordained ministers," contributors, or church goers, but she does know that they are far fewer than he habitually claims....

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG has been engaged for many years in allegedly nonprofit religious business enterprises carried on under several different names and under the guise of many different separate corporations organized in numerous states of the union. These corporations, Third-Party Defendants Black and White Corporations 1-150, and Counterdefendant Worldwide Church of God, were created, perpetuated and maintained, and have been operated, controlled and dominated, by him for the purpose of clothing in a corporate guise his own personal business activities. He has and continues to utilize these corporate forms to shield from the public, his followers, and his wife, the wealth he has accumulated through the years and which he continues to freely use, spend and enjoy for his personal benefit in whatever manner he may desire. He is and has been utilizing such corporate forms sued herein as a means to perpetuate fraud, injustice and inequity against the Plaintiff by accumulating his wealth thereunder and having the full personal use, control, and enjoyment thereof, while at the same time ostensibly avoiding the creation of a marital estate. There is such a unity of interest between Herbert W. Armstrong and the corporate Counterdefendant and Third-Party Defendants that the fiction of the separate existence thereof should in justice and equity be disregarded....

Herbert W. Armstrong and Worldwide Church of God entered into a pre-marital agreement with her, which agreement was thereafter ratified, confirmed and executed, both in writing and by the conduct of the parties, that in consideration of the marriage of Ramona Armstrong to Herbert W. Armstrong they would make her financially secure, would purchase for her a home and furniture in Tucson, Arizona where she desired to live and raise her son, would enable her to live in such locality, would guarantee to her life-time employment at a salary of \$50,000.00 per year in the same fashion as they had allegedly done for one of the daughters of Herbert W. Armstrong and for his previous wife, would cause Ramona Armstrong to receive a \$25,000.00 per annum life-time benefit upon her husband's death, disability or retirement, would see to it that his entire estate would be left to her upon his death, would provide her with a standard of living equal to what Herbert W. Armstrong had always enjoyed, and, that she would never be deprived of such things by divorce or otherwise.... and they reportedly caused to be prepared and executed the Will of Herbert W. Armstrong, leaving to Ramona Armstrong all of his property upon his death....

In pursuit of their goal, the Counterdefendants and Third-Party Defendants have solicited from the public and alleged "church-members" donations of money and property amounting to many millions of dollars during the course of the marriage, and which they specifically requested the donors thereof to pay directly to Herbert W. Armstrong and not to Counterdefendant Worldwide Church of God. It is the belief of Ramona Armstrong that her husband caused such vast sums to be deposited to numerous different bank accounts in many different names located in many different parts of the United States and the world to make difficult the ascertainment of the true extent of his estate and of his marital community....

By such means they have attempted to establish legal control over the assets comprising the separate and community estates of Herbert W. Armstrong. They have done this so that they might continue to utilize and enjoy the same for themselves, both during his lifetime and upon his death, in violation of the contract rights and

expectancies of Ramona Armstrong described in the First Claim for Relief contained herein. In quest of their goal they have persuaded him to amend over his signature, but probably without his real knowledge, understanding or consent, the Articles of Incorporation of his multiple corporations, which entities have identical, overlapping or confusingly similar names, and which amendments have one thing in common, to wit: they all contemplate the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, the dissolution of his corporations or the control of them by the Counterdefendants and Mr. Armstrong's co-Third-Party Defendants and the devolution of his assets and property to the designee of such persons in such a manner as will benefit the individual Counterdefendants and Third-Party Defendants personally and deprive Ramona Armstrong of her rightful share thereof.

So, in essence, we see Ramona is claiming that HWA is using all of his various corporations to deposit the millions of dollars sent directly to him - money which Ramona feels should be part hers after HWA divorces her. An important part of Ramona's case centers around the marriage and divorce teachings of HWA himself. Notice this exchange during the deposition of Ramona Armstrong:

Q (By Mr. Maltz, HWA's lawyer) Other than those three areas of writings that your attorney just mentioned, does there exist any written evidence of an alleged agreement between you and Mr. Armstrong not to divorce each other?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Was the agreement not to divorce in full force and effect in your mind at the time of your marriage?

A Yes, it was.

Q Therefore, it's a safe conclusion that it was made prior to the marriage?

A Yes.

Q How much prior to the marriage was the agreement not to divorce made?

A From the very first that he asked me to marry him.

Q When was that?

A It was three years prior to the marriage.

Q And what did he say to you and what did you say to him by way of promises which amounts in your belief to an agreement never to divorce?

A That marriage is binding, not to be dissolved.

Q This is what he said to you?

A That's what we both said to each other. He was my spiritual leader as well as my future husband.

Q Would you have married him if he had not said to you that he believed that marriage was binding and not to be dissolved?

A No, I would not have.

Q What if anything did you promise him in return?

A That I in turn would not divorce him.

Q As best you can recollect, what were his precise words on the question of marriage being binding and not dissolved? What did he say to you as best and precisely as you can quote him?

A To be precise you would have to read through the literature that he has written to the membership and in all of his publications because that was exactly the same thing he said to me verbally.

Q Well, what is your recollection without looking through all the literature, because I can't do it now, of what he said to you, the precise words?

A That marriage is a holy thing; that it is binding in heaven as well as on earth and that when the agreement is made, then it is not to be dissolved.

### **Ralph Helge - The Controversial Counsel**

The Armstrong divorce case, as we have shown in past issues, has been beset by delay after delay. And some of the excuses used to hold up the litigation have been nothing short of ludicrous. For instance, at one point HWA's lawyers - without giving a reason - petitioned the judge to force Ramona Armstrong to change her name. Ramona's lawyers responded:

It is respondent's belief that this request is made solely for the purpose of adding to the mountainous accumulation of pleadings and other assorted papers which have characterized this proceeding. Perhaps it is petitioner's intention to bury respondent's counsel under this mountainous pile of papers. Respondent's counsel asks this court to admonish petitioner's counsel for making such ludicrous requests and to allow the respondent to proceed in this litigation so that we can some time in the near future see an end to this litigation.

The care with which Judge Hooker has handled such matters can be seen from the following exchange, taken from the court records:

COURT: The petitioner [HWA] filed a motion under... A.R.S. 25-325(C) for an order of this Court that the respondent's former name [Ramona Martin] be restored to her. I don't recall having seen an opposition. Was there an opposition filed, and does the respondent oppose it?

MR. DECKTER: The respondent [Ramona] opposes it, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I looked at the Rule. I didn't find any authority for it at all, not under the statute. As I recall, 25-325(D) states that upon request, a wife whose marriage is dissolved or declared invalid, Court shall order her maiden name or a former name restored specifically limited to upon request by a wife. Let me check. It's been amended, and subsection (C) now states: Upon request by a party - by a party at anytime prior to the signing of the decree of dissolution or annulment by the Court, the Court shall order that party's requested former name be restored. So, again, I think it limits it to a request being made by the party who wants their former name restored, and I would imagine that that amendment was done to eliminate specifically only request by a wife, 'cause it's common now that many, uh, men also assume or take a part - take as part of their name a wife's name, and this gives them latitude to do that, but it requires under the rule that that request may be - may - that that request be made by the party whose former name is sought to be restored.

Anybody else want to be heard on that?

MR. WOLFE: Perhaps one matter, and that is that Mr. Armstrong is out of the country as of last week and will be out of the country for a month.

THE COURT: I don't care, the order stands. I expect him to be back. We're going to get this matter litigated, and we're going to do it no longer at the parties' convenience in this matter, so far as I have any control over it, which may very well be limited, but the matter's going to get done, and it's going to get litigated, and it's going to get tried as expeditiously as possible, without any further extraneous delays, which means I have to continue to assert myself in the case more vigorously than I have, and it'll be ordered that the motion filed on February 8, 1983, requesting that Ramona Armstrong's former name be restored, that motion having been filed by petitioner [HWA], is denied.

Another reason for the delays is a certain confusion that seems to have injected itself into the matter as regards who is actually in charge of representing whom on HWA's side. The Arizona law firm of Wolfe and Ostapuk are supposedly the chief lawyers representing HWA in the divorce. Yet Allan Browne, of the California firm of Ervin, Cohen, and Jessup, has been doing most of the speaking in court on behalf of HWA. But to further complicate matters, HWA's personal lawyer, Ralph Helge - who is not a party to the suit and is not a lawyer of record in this litigation, but is a witness in the case - has apparently interjected himself into every facet of the proceedings. (Recall that Helge is listed as one of the defendants in Ramona Armstrong's countersuit against the WCG corporation. She claims he has been part of a conspiracy to gain control of the WCG's assets through his influence over the aging HWA.)

Note the following exchanges taken from the court records (the first one was referred to in our last issue):

(March 7)

MR. ETTINGER: ...we stipulated to \$50,000 being the bond - being the amount of the bond. When he showed me the bond, immediately, he said that Mr. Helge had prepared it and wanted certain wording in it, and one was that it must be heard -

THE COURT: That was a mistake right there. I could have told you there would have been problems the minute you mentioned his name, he's gonna do something to chingadero.

(March 15)

MR. OSTAPUK: Actually, Judge, I wasn't present at -

THE COURT: - you're obviously a competent counsel, and your firm is what's been commonly referred to as the lead firm, whatever that means, in the case, although I have my suspicions as to who really is lead counsel in the case, who is making the decisions....

WOLFE: ...that Mr. Armstrong and his personal counsel at this point do not choose to take advantage or accept that ruling as far as this case is concerned at this point, I don't know.

THE COURT: By whom are you referring to as his personal counsel?

MR. WOLFE: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: Mr. Helge?

MR. WOLFE: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: Like I say, he's interjected himself into the case pretty extensively....

But, amazingly, while Helge has intertwined himself with every facet of this divorce case, he has made every effort to absent himself when he himself was subpoenaed. But Judge Hooker was not impressed by Helge's arguments. Notice this March 15 ruling by Hooker:

With regard to the motion to quash the subpoena duces tecum of Mr. Helge, which has heretofore been argued and taken under advisement, it's ordered denying that motion. I note, in that respect, that Mr. Helge has been present at many hearings and has participated in those hearings. The one thing that I do note is that he continually consults with counsel in hearings and passes notes to counsel. I note that he participated in the litigation of this matter and has specifically caused matters to be filed in this case specifically, but not limited to, the matter regarding the supersedeas bond; he has been present at depositions; that as it has been indicated by counsel of record in this case, on February 25, 1983, Mr. Helge was being associated as counsel of record for the purpose of deposition of Mr. Armstrong only, and that as alleged in matters filed in this Court and testimony that he is a material witness in the case, and there has been testimony in regard to this litigation that he is not only the attorney for the Worldwide Church of God, but also the attorney for Mr. Armstrong. It's my feeling that Mr. Helge has inextricably intertwined himself and his client, Worldwide Church of God, in this litigation.

True to form, a few days later Helge sent the following letter to William E. Druke, the Presiding Judge of Pima County Superior Court:

Dear Judge Druke:

This will introduce myself as the person who appeared specially in order to file a Motion to Quash a purported appearance and a pre-emptory disqualification under Rule 42(f)1. The court administrator set the Motion for hearing on April 25, 1983.

On Tuesday, March 23, 1983, I received, through my office, a phone call from the Honorable Judge Hooker's clerk or secretary to the effect that he had changed the date of hearing on the Motion to Quash to March 25, and apparently also set it for hearing before himself.

Apparently Judge Hooker overlooked my application under 42(f)1 although it was attached to my Motion to Quash. Am I correct in assuming that you will advise him that he was without jurisdiction to change the date of hearing or to hear the Motion to Quash and will advise the parties as to the recommended court? It is my understanding that under rule 42(f)1(F) the matter is to be assigned to another Judge for hearing.

Regretably Messrs. Ettinger and Deckter have stated, in the past, that they would not stipulate as to any matters. Therefore, pursuant to Rule 42(f)1(F) I hereby tender to you and the attorneys for the parties the following names of Judges to whom I feel the matter could be assigned. It is my understanding that these men have a good reputation in the community for judicial demeanor. Also I feel they would be impartial and lack any bias or prejudice in regards to any of the parties. They are:

Judge Richard N. Royston, Division 7  
Judge Robert O. Royston, Division 3  
Commissioner William N. Sherrill, Division B

Any one of them would be acceptable to me and the order of their names is purely alphabetical.

Thank you for any consideration you may give this matter.

- Ralph Helge

In response, Judge Druke ordered:

The court having received a letter from Mr. Ralph K. Helge regarding his Notice of Change of Judge filed pursuant to Civil Rule 42(f), and,

The court having reviewed the file and finding that Mr. Helge is not a party in the lawsuit, but is a witness subpoenaed to appear in the matter, and,

The court having reviewed Civil Rule 42(f) and finding that it is limited to parties, and is not, therefore, available to witnesses, such as Mr. Helge,

IT IS ORDERED denying Mr. Helge's Notice of Change of Judge and the matters set for hearing before Judge Hooker on 28 March 1983 shall proceed as scheduled.

But why would Helge go to such lengths to avoid being deposed in a case in which he has so obviously enmeshed himself? Recall that Helge was served with a subpoena duces tecum, a subpoena requiring him to bring certain documents. In this case, those documents include financial records. With that in mind, note the following statements made by Ramona's attorneys:

Mr. Helge has been present at nearly all of the hearings and motions in the matter of *Armstrong v. Armstrong*, and there is no reason to believe that he will not be present for future hearings and motions. Therefore, his contention that he is being "put out" by having to come to Tucson for his deposition is without merit. While his contentions that he is in fact a domiciliary and resident of the State of California might be true, he was served in Arizona and should be required to abide by that proper service of process. To require the respondent to apply California law in the State of Arizona would not only be improper but it would require respondent's counsel to deny the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the Arizona Courts.

As to Mr. Helge's contention that respondent's counsel might make inquiry into the ownership of the funds [funds Helge claims are the church's, not HWA's] deposited into checking account number 1303-2693 at the Valley National Bank of Arizona, this is also without merit. The Valley National Bank of Arizona custodian of records, Ms. Donna Porter, was deposed by respondent's counsel. Ms. Porter was asked specifically whether that particular account was a trust account, a business account, a corporation account, and she answered that they were not. Further, she was asked if that particular account was a personal checking account to Herbert W. Armstrong, and she stated that yes, in fact, it was.

It is Mr. Helge's assertion that the funds in that account are funds belonging to the Worldwide Church of God....

In attempting to get out of being deposed, Helge resorted, in part, to arguments revolving around First Amendment religious guarantees. Helge has resorted to similar arguments many times in the past in many different cases. One almost gets the impression that Helge feels the WCG can do anything it wants simply because it is a religious corporation. And that everyone else's rights are secondary to the WCG's rights because it is somehow specially protected by the First Amendment. Yet, in the past the courts have not upheld Helge's unique interpretation of the First Amendment. Ramona's lawyers quoted the important decision in the case of *Ambassador College v. Goetzke*:

In affirming the District Court, the Court of Appeals showed why Ambassador College's assertion that submitting to the discovery would violate their freedom of association guaranteed under the United States Constitution was invalid. The court distinguished cases where First Amendment freedoms were found to be in danger of violation or impinged in some way. All such cases involved the government as a party. In *Ambassador College V. Goetzke*, supra, as in the case before the Court, there is no governmental body that is a party to the suit.

In finding that discovery was proper as to matters upon which the interrogatories were trying to delve, the Court cited *General Counsel on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church v. Superior Court of California, County of San Diego*, 439 U.S. 1355 (1978). There it was stated that freedom of association and freedom of religion arguments were not applicable to purely secular disputes between third parties and a particular defendant. Further, the Court pointed out that in order to raise a claim of First Amendment rights, there must be some sort of a "chilling" effect which could result. The court stated that the information was relevant as it could lead to information regarding whether the Worldwide Church of God had engaged in a pattern of improper conduct. It was concluded that the information would not have the effect of "chilling" membership in the church.

In light of the ruling in *Ambassador College v. Goetzke*, supra, Mr. Helge's argument that respondent would be violating the First Amendment rights of himself and his

client, the Worldwide Church of God, is clearly and wholly without merit. Any information which respondent seeks would not "chill" the membership of the church and, in any event, the only result in Mr. Helge's disclosing the information respondent seeks would be the possibility that there is some improper conduct on the part of the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Helge cannot avoid the taking of his deposition merely by trying to cloak his desire in the guise of an inappropriate claim of Constitutional guarantees and rights.

## **The Beverly Hills Episode**

In our last issue, dated April 1983, we reported briefly on the Feb. 25 fiasco that took place at Allan Browne's Beverly Hills office. Because of the many rumors extant in church circles regarding Ralph Helge, some have asked that we provide more details of that encounter. Here is a brief excerpt, from the court records, of the confrontation that took place that day. Unfortunately, due to space limitations we have had to delete most of the dialog, but the essentials of the bitter dispute can be readily seen. (Recall that Ettinger and Deckter represent Ramona, and Browne represents HWA. Mr. Erwin was the court reporter brought in from Arizona.) We begin midway into the fracas:

MR. DECKTER: Separately, it should be noted and that only in the case of Armstrong versus Armstrong has there been a stipulation filed in Superior Court in Arizona to take the deposition of Mr. Armstrong here in California.

There was no stipulation that it be taken under the California Rules of Civil Procedure, under the California Civil Code or under California law.

We have to comply with Arizona law for the use of this deposition in Arizona. We have not filed any objection to the form, manner or means of taking this deposition in Arizona. We have no right to object to the use of Mr. Erwin nor does Mr. Armstrong.

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, I think we both stated our positions and as I have said, I would like not to have the whole morning used up by colloquy. We do not stipulate to Mr. Erwin. We made our position clear on that. Without prejudice to the rights of either party, I suggest that we go forward.

MR. DECKTER: Let's call Judge Hooker.

MR. BROWNE: No, Judge Hooker does not control this proceeding in California....

MR. ETTINGER: We will take the deposition in Tucson. We will get an order of the Court.

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, let's not argue that.

MR. ETTINGER: We did this as a courtesy. We did not have to do this. The Arizona Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals has ruled that he had to appear for deposition in Tucson.

MR. HELGE: Okay -

MR. ETTINGER: Mr. Helge, you are not even attorney of record now.

MR. BROWNE: Just a minute. Don't shout It's not necessary.

MR. ETTINGER: I know. I know it's not necessary. But it appears to me that no matter what is stipulated - and by the way, lead counsel is not present at this deposition, Mr. Wolfe, who is the lead counsel, at this deposition. Make a record of that, that he was not present and at this deposition.

MR. BROWNE: Shall we go on to the point - I do want to deal with the production of documents.

MR. ETTINGER: Are we going to continue the deposition based on Arizona law?

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, I don't want to argue. Do you want to take the deposition of Mr. Armstrong or not?

MR. ETTINGER: Pursuant to Arizona rules.

MR. BROWNE: My reporter is not going to leave. Now, do you want to call off the deposition or do you want -

MR. ETTINGER: I'm not calling - we are ready to proceed. It's you that have not complied with the rules. You have not filed an objection to this reporter timely. You have never - the stipulation was an Arizona stipulation. It was to be done pursuant to Arizona rules, not California rules.

But it's typical of your delay.

MR. DECKTER: I suggest -

MR. ETTINGER: Why don't you read Rule 28?

MR. DECKTER: If you're going to make an objection to Mr. Erwin taking this deposition, make it orally before Judge Hooker, now -

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, just listen to me.

MR. DECKTER: Let's call Hooker. Call Hooker.

MR. BROWNE: My counsel - my certified, shorthand reporter will not leave the room. Now, do you want to take the deposition or not?

MR. DECKTER: I want to contact Hooker now.

MR. BROWNE: Call him.

MR. ETTINGER: Let's get Judge Hooker.

MR. DECKTER: Call him.

MR. BROWNE: Call him. Use that phone over there. If you can get him on the line.

MR. DECKTER: How do we get your front desk?

MR. BROWNE: What? Just dial nine and then just one.

MR. ETTINGER: All right.

MR. BROWNE: And call the Court.

MR. DECKTER: We don't have the number right here unless you have the -

MR. ETTINGER: Do you have an Arizona - Okay. Let's get long distance.

(Discussion off the record)

MR. ETTINGER: And, Mr. Helge, you sent me those letters saying that we were interfering with the privacy of the Church. You asshole.

MR. HELGE: Just a minute! You will not talk to me like that, and if you do I'll knock you on your ass!

MR. ETTINGER: Just try it!

(A scuffle ensued in the room)

MR. BROWNE: Jack, stop it. My God! Conduct yourself.

MR. ETTINGER: You keep writing me letters like that -

MR. BROWNE: Jack, let's - don't talk to Mr. Helge and he won't talk to you. Come on. This is ridiculous. Act like a professional person.

MR. ETTINGER: I am a professional.

MR. BROWNE: Don't talk to Ralph Helge and he won't talk to you. Okay. Let's go.

(Messrs. Browne and Helge leave the room)

The letter Ettinger was referring to was one of a number Helge wrote to Ettinger threatening him with a lawsuit. (Apparently lawyers get just as upset as the rest of us when they receive intimidating letters from other lawyers.) Here is the way Helge later tried to explain away his un-Christian conduct to Judge Hooker:

Before Mr. Armstrong entered the room, the attorneys had agreed to go off the

record. Jack Ettinger was strutting up and down beside the table. He kept taunting me as to whether or not I had commenced a lawsuit against him. He began to use vile language describing the letters I had written him on the Church's behalf hoping to restrain him from invading its privacy and committing other constitutional transgressions. I advised him that I was contemplating and preparing such a lawsuit on my client's behalf.

Before long Browne was back in the room, saying he wanted to bring in HWA (who was in the next room) and get on with the deposition. But before they could go ahead, Helge again interjected his presence, causing Ramona's lawyers to again state their objections:

MR. DECKTER: At this time we would note the presence of Mr. Ralph K. Helge in the room.

Whether it has been made a matter of record or not prior to this time with our reporters being active, we've been informed by Mr. Browne that he proposes to have not only two reporters but further that he wishes the presence of Mr. Ralph K. Helge at the time and during the course of the deposition of Mr. Armstrong.

As previously noted, in several of the depositions which have taken place at the offices of Miller & Pitt in Tucson, Arizona, a record has been made that Mr. Helge has been designated both orally and by responses to interrogatories and further by subpoena duces tecum in the Arizona matter that Mr. Helge is and remains a material witness in the action of Armstrong versus. Armstrong; that on several occasions Mr. Helge has been requested that if he so desired he could enter an appearance as an attorney of record.

We have been informed that Mr. Browne wishes to create a new kind of attorney, that is, a special appearance for purposes of deposition only and that he proposes that Mr. Helge personally be so designated.

I am not familiar with any statute, rule or procedure that allows for a special appearance by an attorney or by a party, other than for jurisdictional purposes on specific kinds of civil motions.

The designated hitter or the designation as a special appearance for deposition only appears to be in violation of the previous notice both to Mr. Browne, Mr. Maltz and Mr. Wolfe, the remaining attorneys of record. That the rule, that is, the Civil Rule, noting the exclusion of witnesses from deposition has been specifically invoked as to Mr. Helge so that he would remain outside the presence of witnesses' testimony, so that his testimony and recollections would be his alone and not as refreshed or as contradicted by other witnesses in this matter.

To now especially designate him for purposes of a single deposition would appear to be a clear violation and a purposeful impediment to the taking of the deposition of Mr. Armstrong now being thrown up by Mr. Browne.

As Mr. Browne is aware, Mr. Helge not only had been noticed as a witness and has been requested [on] numerous occasions to enter a general appearance as an attorney of record if that was his desire; but further was subpoenaed while present in Pima County, oh, some month ago or better, that on his own and in proper subpoena which was heard before Judge Hooker several weeks ago, not as an attorney for Mr. Armstrong, not as an attorney of record in this matter but as an individual who was

appearing simply on behalf of the Worldwide Church of God.

Specifically, and on numerous occasions, Mr. Helge has made statements on those behalf and has filed both affidavits and declarations in the case of Armstrong versus Armstrong specifically disclaiming representation of Mr. Armstrong and appearing solely as an interested person on behalf of the Worldwide Church of God.

The heated arguing then resumed with Ettinger and Deckter storming out of the building in protest. Then, with opposing counsel not present for cross examination, Browne (as reported in our last issue) brought in HWA. Here is the court record of what then transpired:

Q (BROWNE) Mr. Armstrong, I am going to ask you a few questions, just so that the record is clear as far as we are concerned, even though the other lawyers have left, and this way we will have your testimony under oath and we can present it to the judge, or some other court at a future time if it becomes necessary.

Let me ask you a few of these questions, if I may.

First of all, at any time prior to the marriage or during the marriage with Ramona Armstrong, did you ever tell her or promise her, in words or in substance, that when you died you would leave your entire estate to her? Did you ever make a promise to her like that?

A No, I did not make such a promise. No.

Q Did you ever make any promise to Ramona Armstrong, either prior to the marriage or during the marriage, that if you were to become disabled or died, you or the church would give her, for the rest of her life, \$25,000 a year?

A Definitely not.

Q Did you at any time prior to the marriage or during the marriage make a promise to her that she would have a lifetime employment contract with you or the church for \$50,000 a year for the rest of her life?

A Absolutely not.

Q Did you ever make a promise to Ramona Armstrong, prior to the marriage or during the marriage, that you would never divorce her?

A No. I did not.

Q Prior to the marriage or during the marriage, did you ever promise Ramona Armstrong that the house in Tucson and all the furnishings would belong to her and her alone?

A I did not, definitely.

Q Mr. Armstrong, can you tell me whether you believe that the marriage is

irretrievably broken at this point?

A Legally it is, yes. It is already spiritually broken.

Q Fine. There are irreconcilable differences at this point between yourself and Ramona?

A There are.

Q Mr. Armstrong, is there any reasonable prospect of reconciliation at this point?

A Absolutely none.

MR. BROWNE: I have no further questions at this time. Let us transcribe the deposition and provide it to Mr. Armstrong.

It is noteworthy that HWA has lost all recollection of the WCG's official marriage ceremony - a marriage ceremony which not only condemned divorce, but even categorically denied God could allow a legitimate marriage to be dissolved. And, ironically, it was not only HWA who often officiated at weddings using that ceremony, it was HWA who authored it! We wonder if HWA's lawyer will attempt to excuse this lapse of memory because of some type of senility problem.

At the pseudo-deposition in Beverly Hills, HWA had it easy. But in the more than one week of questioning he was later subjected to in Tucson, Herbert found out what it was like to be really grilled. In a letter to the WCG membership, dated April 24, 1983, HWA wrote:

For the past week I have been in Tucson, Arizona, in an inquisition, legally called a deposition. It is becoming evident that the case is being turned into another legal battle aimed to destroy the Church of the living God....

Brethren, God has been with me this week. We're not really struggling against PEOPLE - whether lawyers or what - but against the spiritual POWERS of darkness and evil - Satan and his demons - the invisible actual rulers of this world....

Sacrifice for the Work as never before....

Then in the "P.S. - IMPORTANT NOTICE" he directed his followers to discontinue sending contributions to his Arizona address. Perhaps anticipating major losses in the Arizona courts, Armstrong's big money-processing operations have been moved across the state lines back to California, where HWA has instructed his followers to send their tithes. Of course, the checks are still not to be made out to the Worldwide Church of God, but to - you guessed it - Herbert W. Armstrong, personally.

As of this writing, the Armstrong divorce case is scheduled to go to trial July 18. We suspect it will not be a short trial. We have notified many of our friends in the news media of the trial date, and there should be reasonably good coverage of the event. And,

of course, assuming the trial is completed by then, our next issue will cover the trial, in-depth.

## **USC Strokes HWA for Church Bucks**

While his lawyers have been fighting in Arizona to thwart his estranged wife from dismantling his financial empire and image, HWA has been happily pursuing his usual ego-expansion trips. The April 5 *Worldwide News* (WN) reported that HWA had returned from a 13-day trip to the Middle East, where officials in Jordan received his special attention. The May 30 WN reported HWA in Oxford, England. According to that publication, "The Ambassador Foundation sponsors the Mainland China Fellowship, held by Zhao Renwei, an economist from the People's Republic of China." While in England, HWA met with Leopold de Rothschild, Edmond de Rothschild, and other British leaders and royalty. This is not a difficult thing to do if you spread a little money around. For instance AP reported that in June over "500 wealthy Americans attended the champagne supper and ball during a four-day visit designed to raise money for two of Prince Charles' pet projects...."

But for sheer absurdity, it would be difficult to beat the April 18 WN report of HWA receiving honors at the University of Southern California's Law Center. The WN article began:

In a ceremony to establish the Herbert W. Armstrong Professorship of Constitutional Law, James H. Zumberge, president of the University of Southern California, and Scott H. Bice, dean of the USC Law Center, honored Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong, March 31.

In the ceremony, which also included the establishment of another professorship for the Law Center, Dr. Zumberge lauded the pastor general. "Peoples throughout the nation, indeed throughout the entire world, are familiar with the ministry and accomplishments of Herbert W. Armstrong," Dr. Zumberge began. "Mr. Armstrong is well-known to many as an... ambassador of world peace," the university president continued. "He has met privately with such leaders as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India, Presidents Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan, and the king of Thailand, all in an effort to further world peace and religious liberty. Mr. Armstrong has long admired the commitment to religious liberty evidenced by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution," the president said. "And he has been an outspoken defender of constitutional liberty. Thus when the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation agreed to fund a professorship in Mr. Armstrong's honor, it was Mr. Armstrong's personal wish that the professorship be in constitutional law."

Present at the ceremony were "U.S. Federal judges, attorneys and law scholars from the USC Law Center." But while HWA was giving away more of his church's money to obtain yet another ego stroke, some were absolutely flabbergasted at USC's fling with HWA. One such critic is author David Robinson, who quickly dispatched the following open letter to the president and trustees of USC:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The April 18th issue of *The Worldwide News*, official organ of Herbert Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God, has extensive coverage of the March 31st ceremonies at USC announcing the new Herbert W. Armstrong Professorship of Constitutional Law. There is a large picture of you, President Zumberge, together with Herbert Armstrong. There are three paragraphs of quotes from your speech which lauded Armstrong in the customary manner of those who receive huge sums of money from his treasury. But I am wondering, ladies and gentlemen, if you were fully informed of Herbert Armstrong's history before concluding negotiations for the honor you have conferred upon him.

I know nothing of the others for whom professorships have been named in the past. But assuming they are honorable people, I do wonder if you have been fair to them to associate Herbert Armstrong with them in such a manner. The burden of this name and its association, I expect, will become heavier and heavier to bear.

Herbert Armstrong has been remarkably clever at erecting a beautiful facade, but behind that false front lies a very ugly reality. For instance, his well-publicized court case, which broke into the news in 1979, was never settled in the courts. Rather, Armstrong sought and obtained passage of a bill in the California legislature which emasculated the laws operating against him. He obtained a political solution to a legal matter. Is this consistent with the principles of constitutional law? And while he was advocating strict observance of the principles of the First Amendment in California, he took the exact opposite position in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in another highly publicized case. Here, Armstrong tried with his might to muzzle the press to prevent publishing of important facts about himself. He had his lawyers go all out to stop publication of the book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, even to using prior restraint! This move failed, but not for lack of money or effort on his part.

Herbert Armstrong is known to many as a man who is a law unto himself. Supporting evidence is included with this letter. It seems to many of us who know him best, and I know what I am talking about after thirty years with this "whited sepulchre," that Armstrong and constitutional law mix about as well as oil and water. He is for such law as long as that law does not get in his way. But when it does, it is the law which must give way - not Herbert Armstrong!

Further evidence of the nature of this man is the designation he assigns to universities such as your own when he speaks to his followers. To them, he explains that all schools, except his own little college in Pasadena, are instruments of Satan the devil and are of this present evil world. (One can but wonder, if he believes what he preaches, why he would want to be memorialized in your institution.) To him the Catholic Church is the prime instrument of Satan, and others, such as the Methodist Church, are daughters of Rome and slated for utter destruction when the wrath of God falls. He holds out the same fate for the United States Constitution and our whole nation. As a matter of fact, he prophesied during World War II that Hitler would win and conquer Britain and America. He preached this doctrine until the war was almost over. One can but wonder how many additional lives were lost in our war effort because of this poison injected into the minds of thousands.

It is because of fear-inducing doctrines he teaches that people send him over a hundred million dollars a year. Thousands of his faithful are people poorly positioned in life - pensioners, widows, and the underemployed. He teaches that without paying him their money they will be denied the hereafter, and as a result, money flows to him in a torrent. He calls this "God's money!"

I do not know how strong your school of medicine is at USC, but it might be worth knowing that Herbert Armstrong has taught his followers for many years that use of

medicine is totally wrong and is a trick of the devil to destroy men's faith in God and his healing. Many people have suffered and died in his church in an attempt to follow his ideas in this matter. Might there not be a dichotomy here as well? I personally have seen some of those people needlessly die under the most awful conditions.

Another of the messy loose ends in the Armstrong organization is his teaching to his followers that they must be prepared to leave the country en masse at a signal from him. The destination is a desert region called Petra in the southwest corner of the kingdom of Jordan, where they are to await the return of Christ. Thousands of his followers are to this very day anxiously awaiting his signal for the exodus. He even encourages his most ardent ministers to proclaim him The Apostle, Moses, Elijah, Zerubbabel, John the Baptist, and the principal of the two witnesses of Revelation, all rolled into one. Also, his ministers have been encouraged to preach that he will never die, even though he is 90 years old (yet if appearance counts, he ages as do other men). While we are living in an era when moral turpitude seems to be a phrase from the past, nevertheless, Herbert Armstrong's conduct in this area is legendary. Included in the legend is even a ten-year incestuous relationship with his younger daughter.

Armstrong himself is wont to say, "Where there is so much smoke there has to be some fire." The truth is that a bonfire is raging. After he is gone, who is going to continue the defense of his name? Will it be those now surrounding him who have all suffered many indignities at his hand? Will they do as the successors of Stalin did when their feared and hated leader died - revile him before the world? What then of your Herbert W. Armstrong Professorship?

Sincerely,  
David Robinson

We can't help but be amused every time we hear that HWA has bought himself another honor under the guise of giving to charity - especially in light of Jesus' profound teachings in the Beatitudes. Notice Jesus' immortal words:

Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you (Matt. 6:2-4, RSV).

As HWA schemes to amass the accolades of kings and dignitaries, he forgets the words of the apostles James and John, which he quoted frequently in the decades before the 1970s:

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4:4, RSV).

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him (I John 2:15), RSV).

**Supreme Court Rules Against WCG - Again**

On April 18, the U. S. Supreme Court upheld a California appellate court ruling which said that a trial court should inquire into WCG doctrines and apply those doctrines relevant to a case involving former WCG minister Richard Gipe. In 1979, because of doctrinal differences, Gipe was fired from his position as minister of a Garden Grove, California congregation. The WCG then denied Gipe his \$3,269 severance pay because he refused to turn over certain property the headquarters organization claimed as its own. Gipe filed a complaint with the California Labor Commission, which granted him the \$3,269. But subsequently, a state trial judge ruled that the courts should not have become involved in the dispute. Gipe appealed that decision and won a reversal. Then the California Supreme Court and the U. S. Supreme Court both rebuffed the WCG's attempts at reversing the California appellate court's ruling. As usual, Ralph Helge saw the decision as another violation of the WCG's First Amendment rights.

## **The "Reunion"**

Of the many groups we have reported on over the years, there have been few as interesting as the Reunion, a new organization based in Britain. Composed of former members of the WCG in that country, this organization was formed as a means for ex-WCG members to maintain contact with old friends and as a means of helping others who are troubled in the WCG.

The Reunion had its first meeting on April 2, 1983, at the International Students House in London. In attendance were 21 delegates, who decided upon a set of goals and policies for the new organization. The points agreed upon were: (1) That the Reunion will be purely social with no religious preaching whatsoever; (2) That its main purpose will be to provide a communications network - as a tool for fellowship, friendship, good works, helping friends and WCG members in crisis, etc.; (3) It was decided that, in order to help facilitate the above, the Reunion would attempt to maintain a continuously updated directory of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of ex-WCG members; (4) Reunion meetings would be organized as often as desired by the members; (5) The chairman is to be Mae Kachere, who will also edit *Reunion News*, the group's quarterly newsletter; (6) The Reunion's next gathering will be in September; and (7) Peter Griffiths will serve as the organization's communications secretary.

One of Mr. Griffiths' responsibilities will be the compilation of the directory of ex-WCG members. He would appreciate hearing from any who wish to be listed, and he would also like the names and addresses of any former WCG members you may know of. Mr. Griffiths would like nothing better than to be flooded with names and addresses, and he says that if he could locate an inexpensive, small computer, he would consider purchasing one to help expedite the directory project.

We believe the Reunion has the potential of accomplishing much good. And we not only wish them the best of luck, but would love to see similar groups organized in other parts of the world. If any readers would be interested in forming their own "reunion" let us know and we will mention it in the *Report*. In the meantime, contact this British organization as they may well have a suggestion or two.

Of their April meeting in London, Mr. Griffiths writes, "There was a wonderful atmosphere of friendliness and unity amongst the people who had all been through the same experience." The next Reunion meeting will take place in Bedford, England on

September 17, 1983. Those wishing more information or a copy of the quarterly *Reunion News* should write (and it might be a good idea to include a dollar or so to cover return postage): Mr. Peter N. Griffiths, 190 Tythe Barn Lane, Whitlocks End, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 1PF, England.

### **Exodus Additions**

Since publishing the updated ministerial Executive Exodus list in our last issue, a few readers have written us that we omitted a few names. Durrell Brown, Eli Hofer, Bob Porter, and Burt Wyland should have been on the list. We expect that during the next year or so many more will be making their exit from the WCG. We would appreciate it if readers would inform us of any Executive Exodus additions as they occur.

### **Attention: Big Sandy Alumni**

In our last issue we reported on Ed Holdren's desire to get a legal solution to the problem of Ambassador College's renegeing on promises of achieving accreditation. Since that issue Mr. Holdren has informed us that he is expanding his lawsuit to include co-plaintiffs. Mr. Holdren is trying to locate 200 Big Sandy alumni to join his suit. He writes:

It would be what's called a "class action lawsuit." It would take a bare minimum of 200 [Big Sandy] alumni to qualify as a class action, and each person would need to chip in \$25. This would be the \$5,000 the law firm needs just to cover travel, depositions, research and general clerical expenses. From that point, they agree to work on a percent-of-the-take basis. By the way, I will keep the money in a separate bank account and make available any and all accounting of the funds dispersed upon request of those who join. If I can't enlist enough people to qualify for a class action suit, we could try a different avenue, or I would just return to the donors the amount they donated, minus any expenses I just had to pay the lawyers.

Those interested should write to: Mr. Ed Holdren, 4412 Dovehill Drive, Austin, Texas 78744.

### **GTA Article Demolishes HWA**

HWA's malevolent treatment of his son, Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), has apparently taken an even nastier turn, with HWA now refusing to communicate with members of Ted's family. In April, HWA's servants even refused to accept a registered letter to HWA from Shirl, Ted's wife. While some speculate that HWA is being "shielded" by those around him, we suspect HWA knows full well of the treatment being given GTA. Perhaps *The International News* for March had something to do with the latest escalation in the feud. In that issue's lead article, "Did Peter Have the Primacy?", GTA absolutely blasted HWA's claim to being the church's "chief apostle." Not only that, GTA, very pointedly, went on to observe:

Never did Jesus indicate His true church was to become a powerful, influential, *politically oriented organization* which would become *part of this world*; having concourse with this world's government and governmental leaders, becoming a large,

visible church, capable of influencing legislation, wielding political power through numbers and financial resources!

## **Groups of Interest**

Fellowship for the Restoration of Biblical Faith  
Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061 (U.S.A.)

(In England: c/o John Cunningham, 91 Hughenden Rd., Marshalswick, St. Albans, Herts., England.)

This organization puts out theological study papers by Anthony F. Buzzard. Mr. Buzzard, who currently lectures in theology at Oregon Bible College, has a degree from Oxford, has done work in theology at Jerusalem and London universities, and is a former member of the WCG. Bible students may wish to request his "Introducing the Restoration Fellowship" letter, which outlines his background, the fellowship's goals, and the study papers that are now available to the public.

\* \* \*

I am attending Rainbow Fellowship Church of God in Huntington Beach. We are currently considering a church in the San Gabriel Valley area. We occasionally hold Bible studies here in my home. If anyone would be interested in attending a Seventh Day Pentecostal Assembly, please let me know. I also have an on-going rest home and a Bible ministry here in Pasadena. I have spoken in a number of churches for my business and find a real need and desire to know and be informed about Herbert Armstrong and his danger.

For your information, the Seventh Day Church of God, P.O. Box 804, Caldwell, ID 83605, holds a Feast of Tabernacles near Tacoma, Washington. We have attended before and find it very enjoyable. The camp is operated on a free-will offering basis.

Also the Seventh Day Pentecostal Assn. Camp will be held in Turner, Ore. the first week in August. Contact Elder Billy Watts, 214 "D" St., Springfield, OR 97477. This camp is also supported by freewill offering. The grounds and quarters are kind of Spartan, but there are a lot of good fellowship meetings. Last year I met a number of people who knew Mr. Armstrong back in the 20s and 30s. Don't let anyone tell you he just went bad in recent years. According to them, he had a temper and ego problem all along. But his wife was a restraining factor.

-Paul Carothers  
Christian Casualty Insurance Agency, Inc.  
1241 North Lake Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91106

## ***Letters***

*Regarding your article on page ten of last month's report on "Should We Continue*

*Publishing?" I say INDEED! The April issue is a very fine report about a sad situation that's allowed to continue. I had been duped by HWA and the WCG from 1966 to 1982. I increasingly became "fed up" with the half information that they gave in "announcements" and with the contradictory interpretations on scriptures. One "pastor" would say that a scripture means thus and such. I in turn made a notation in my Bible, and lo and behold a few years later another "minister" would say something entirely different about the same scripture! When I queried the "minister," afterwards he would either say he never heard the other meaning or he would say, "That is new to me."*

*I did not like or care for it when HWA, a cantankerous octogenarian curmudgeon, married Ramona Martin, a young spring chicken - RIDICULOUS! Even more ridiculous was the divorce! Why? Because HWA has preached against divorce for over fifty years. Then he has the audacity to write in the April 1982 Co-Worker letter.- "This determination SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A PRECEDENT TO ENCOURAGE OR JUSTIFY OTHER DIVORCES IN THE CHURCH." In other words, do as I say, NOT as I do. A wedding "spiritually bound" by God five years ago ended upon the rocks. That was when I quit the WCG.*

*-Manitoba, Canada*

*I thought you might be interested in the following item that appeared on May 12 in a Gladewater, Texas paper:*

Gladewater High School's 1983 graduating class will be the last one to hold Commencement at old Bear Stadium. After that it will be put in mothballs until such time as the school board makes a decision concerning its future.

School administrative officials were deluged with telephone calls of protest Tuesday morning after it was announced that plans were being made to hold Commencement at Ambassador College. The plans were changed.

*-Texas*

*I have a question for you concerning the Worldwide Church of God, which I have been attending for twelve years. Why, all of a sudden, were tape recordings prohibited at services?*

*-Pennsylvania*

Editor: Our guess is that HWA does not want anyone to be able to document what is being said in services.

*Because of makeup I was recently put into a "nonmember" category, which means that I have never been converted and do not have God's Holy Spirit according to the WCG minister in.... But I can attend with my husband as long as I wear absolutely "no makeup."*

*-Texas*

*The church recently cancelled its Women's Club program without giving a logical explanation. Do you know the reason?*

*-California*

Editor: Not really. Our guess is that this is just another way for the "Apostle" to punish those "rebellious" women who might want to wear makeup.

*I wish I could have come in contact with Ambassador Report years ago. My wife and I would almost surely still be together. It's too late for us, but perhaps others can still be saved. Keep up the good work.*

*-New York*

*Thanks again for all your investigative work on the WCG and Mr. Armstrong. I was "snowed" by HWA for more than 20 years, starting at age 13, but God delivered me from HWA's clutches before I went insane. That's no exaggeration. I did suffer a series of mental breakdowns which were, in part, due to the Armstrong cult.*

*-AR Reader*

*...bleak for us was the news in your latest Report about the suicide death of Phillip Apartian, who had been suffering from depression. Although we didn't personally know Phillip, we can't help thinking about our own son, age 24, who still is very much with the WCG and who likewise has been suffering from depression. His depression has driven him to two suicide attempts in the last two years! The first time was after taking "vivren" (not sure of the spelling), a caffeine-type stimulant, and some form of alcohol, we believe, wine. He ended up at Harbor General Hospital for treatment. The most recent attempt was after consuming sleeping pills and "Southern Comfort." This put him in U. C. Irvine Medical Center for detoxification and psychiatric evaluation. After the first attempt, he refused psychiatric counseling on any extended basis - we feel due to the WCG cult influence. After the last attempt, a psychiatrist from U. C. Irvine ended up calling for background information, and our son was told by his local minister that any further suicide attempts would result in disfellowship for a period of at least six months!*

*My wife and I definitely feel that the WCG has not helped our son to become a better person or an upstanding citizen of good character, but has instead introduced him to alcohol (the hard stuff - not beer), to wayward lifestyles, and to poor hygiene habits.*

*When our son left home in 1979 after completing one year at Ambassador College, he told us he was leaving "Egypt" and going to his "promised land" to live with his "fellow brethren in the Lord" where he could become a "whole person" and develop to his "full potential." He further stated that he would then be unincumbered by me, the "Pharaoh," and could become much more zealous in the furthering of "The Great Work." As my wife and I view it, our son has in reality "gone to the dogs!" His health, car, clothes and other personal effects are all in a very degenerate, rundown condition, due to, in large*

*measure, his sacrificial tithing to Pasadena, which undoubtedly is now helping to pay for attorneys' fees and other legal expenses for both Herbert and Ramona!*

*-California*

*Though late in responding, I would like to say that your latest Report has been the most incisive yet. I can understand that you wish to set this aside and get on with your lives, but I would like to see you continue your work until at least that time when the WCG changes its leadership. If you find that you cannot continue with the burden, then I would like to say thank you for making a difference.*

*-Pennsylvania*

Yes, we would like to get on with our lives. And we look forward to the day when we can put all of this behind us.

Nevertheless, it does look like the WCG is in for some really major upheavals in the next year or so. And many - especially those with loved ones in the WCG - have written us that the Report is their only source of accurate information as to what is happening in that organization. We are going to do our best to continue getting out the facts on Herbert Armstrong.

We thank all of you who wrote in the last three months to encourage us. And we especially thank those who, knowing of our needs, contributed a little extra to our efforts. Without your help this issue would not have been possible.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR26\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR26 October 1983**

### **Trial Delayed as Herbert Pays**

There is an old Jewish curse that goes something like this: "May your life be filled with lawyers!" Anyone who has had much contact with the legal profession will fully understand the unending conflict, semantical contortions, mental convolutions, exasperations, and almost locust-plague-like devastation evoked by that malediction. The inference of the phrase is a state of existence some would not wish on even their worst enemies. Yet, amazingly, it is a state Herbert W. Armstrong has brought upon himself.

It is now one and a half years since Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the 91-year-old founder of the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College, filed for divorce from his 44-year-old wife, Ramona. Since then, so many lawyers have been drawn into the case one almost needs a scorecard to keep track of who is representing whom. And the legal expenses are rumored to have already gone over the one million dollar mark.

Numerous trial dates have been set, only to have been later put back further because of continuing legal maneuverings. Presently, the trial is set to begin November 7, but it is quite likely the trial will not get under way before December. Judge Hooker, who currently presides over the case, will be replaced by another judge, as he plans to retire from the bench on October 15.

WCG lawyer Ralph Helge, a witness in the case, has been at the center of a number of delay-producing motions. Since January he repeatedly refused to comply with demands by Ramona's attorneys that he appear for a deposition. He finally did appear, but only after Ramona's lawyers threatened contempt of court proceedings. And even then, he refused to answer a number of important questions. Not surprisingly, Helge, himself a lawyer, has thought it wise to obtain legal advice for himself. He is now personally represented by the law firm of Molloy, Jones, Donahue, Trachta, Childers and Mallamo.

Another individual who has refused to appear is a Mr. Wetzell Wallace ("Wally")

McKinney. Court records indicate that he is an unemployed, close friend of Ramona and that she is now living with him and his two children somewhere in Nevada.

## **The Slippery Eel**

No matter what negative impression one may have of the legal profession in general, we really must respect the lawyers who are up against HWA, because getting the truth out of HWA is about as difficult as holding on to a slippery eel. Here is just one example. As in most civil cases, interrogatories were submitted to HWA. Interrogatory No. 1.D asked the question:

Please describe your educational background, including college, trade schools, degrees, and vocational training. If you are in the process of receiving training/education, please explain and give expected date of completion.

Here is Herbert's answer.

Chancellor and President of Ambassador College, Pasadena, California and Big Sandy, Texas, campuses.

Of course HWA does hold those titles. But his response did not answer the question that was asked! An honest answer would have been: "Dropped out of high school in junior year. Received an honorary degree from a Filipino institution after giving an expensive gift to accused political assassin and dictator Ferdinand Marcos."

HWA's answers cannot be trusted. And apparently neither can his promises. In our June 1982 issue we reported on the "Stipulation and Order" of June 24 ordering HWA to provide Ramona with funds for temporary spousal maintenance and various utility payments. Court documents reveal that by October of 1982, Ramona's lawyers were back in court claiming:

That petitioner [HWA] has failed to abide by the signed Stipulation and Order by failing to either pay certain of the expenses on the dates due or failing to pay the expenses at all of such items, including, but not limited to, the water bill, expenses for landscaping, the phone bill, etc.

Surely "God's Apostle" has not forgotten Paul's admonition in I Timothy 5:8 that "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Could it be that HWA does not have the money to pay his bills? Not likely. In with the thousands of pages of court documents now on file in the divorce case are copies of HWA's employment contracts with the Worldwide Church and the Corporation Sole. HWA's 14-page Employment, Disability and Retirement Agreement with the WCG was signed August 1, 1976. Page one contains this modest claim:

Employee [HWA] is the founder, President and Chairman of Employer [WCG]. Since the organization of Employer and its related entities, which include Ambassador College and the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, both of which are headquartered in Pasadena, California, Employee has served as the senior

executive of each of them. Employee has unselfishly devoted his lifetime to ensuring the success and good image of Employer throughout the world in its support of worthy humanitarian purposes. Employee's services and contributions to Employer and its related entities have far exceeded anything that Employer expected or had the right to expect.

In return for his services this is what HWA's contract granted him:

*Salary.* For all his services as Chairman of the Board and President of Employer, Employee shall receive a salary of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) per year. Each year during the Employment Period, Employee's annual salary shall be payable in at least twelve (12) equal consecutive monthly installments.

*Expenses:* Employer shall pay for all expenses incurred by or on behalf of Employee in performing as the Chairman of the Board and President of Employer, including but not limited to all travel, lodging, entertainment and meal expenses. Recognizing that Employee will be traveling around the world meeting with many dignitaries, including Heads of States, in all cases Employee shall be provided with first-class accommodations at Employer's expense. All out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Employee in the performance of his duties as the Chairman of the Board

---

&COPY;1983 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow.  
John Trechak, Editor Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor Connie Geringer, Circulation Manager  
Founding Publishers: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Lon Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

and President of Employer shall be promptly reimbursed by Employer to Employee within thirty (30) days after Employee's incurrence thereof.

*Fringe Benefits:* Vacations, sick leaves, employee group insurance and other fringe benefits for Employee shall be in accordance with Employer's personnel policies governing its senior executives, and if no such policies have been adopted, as Employer may authorize from time to time, such authorization not to be unreasonably withheld.

*Automobile:* Each year during the Employment Period, Employer shall provide to Employee, by purchase, lease or otherwise, (at Employer's expense), a limousine with chauffeur to be used in the performance of the Employee's duties as the Chairman of the Board and President of Employer. Said limousine shall be a late model, not older than three (3) years.

The seven-year contract continues on, giving HWA protection against being fired, full compensation for partial disability or total disability, retirement benefits, retention of his titles, use of airplane, attorneys' fees in case of lawsuits, etc. The contract was signed by Herbert W. Armstrong (Employee), and by Garner Ted Armstrong and Stanley R. Rader for Worldwide Church of God (Employer).

Of particular interest in this divorce case is a section on page nine of the contract that provides HWA's spouse \$25,000 per year in the event of his death. That is something HWA claims he never promised Ramona. Recall from our last issue (page 7) this question put to HWA under oath:

Did you ever make any promise to Ramona Armstrong either prior to the marriage or during the marriage, that if you were to become disabled or died, you or the church would give her, for the rest of her life, \$25,000 a year?

[Answer by HWA]: Definitely not.

Yet HWA's 1976 contract clearly states that on his death his "spouse" would receive \$25,000 per year. Not only that, but in an amendment to his contract dated July 1, 1977, that provision is clarified:

In the event that Armstrong's spouse, Ramona Louise Armstrong, survives him, then upon Armstrong's death his spouse shall be entitled to an annual benefit of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) during each year that said spouse survives Armstrong, which amount shall be payable in at least twelve (12) equal consecutive monthly installments during each such year. Said annual benefits shall commence on the date of death of Armstrong and terminate on the date of death of Armstrong's spouse.

But that's not all. The amendment then goes on to amplify the provision to include survivors' benefits for "Richard Dale Martin, Armstrong's stepson" and "Zella Crittenden, Armstrong's mother-in-law" (Ramona's mother). The amendment is signed by Herbert, W. Armstrong (Employee) and by Stanley R. Rader and Herbert Armstrong again for Worldwide Church of God (Employer). The amendment also contained one odd - in fact, for HWA, extremely odd - provision. HWA gave himself a cut in salary. It was lowered from \$200,000 per year way down to \$195,000 per year. No reason was given, but some have pointed out that \$200,000 per year divided by 12 installments gave HWA a very "beastly" monthly paycheck of \$16,666.66.

Whatever the case, by 1980 HWA was entangled in the State of California suit and decided he wanted a new contract. That Employment Agreement, well-larded with ecclesiastical verbage and filed in, of all places, Wyoming, begins thusly:

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into effective April 25, 1980, by and between Herbert W. Armstrong The Apostle of the Worldwide Church of God, and his successors, a corporation sole (hereinafter referred to as "Employer"), a Wyoming corporation sole, and Herbert W. Armstrong (hereinafter referred to as "Employee"). This Agreement is made with reference to the following facts:

A. Employee had previously made and entered into on July 30, 1976, an Employment, Disability and Retirement Agreement, which Agreement shall be referred to herein as the "1976 Agreement." The 1976 Agreement was made and entered into between Employee and Worldwide Church of God, a California corporation, which entity shall hereinafter be referred to as the "California corporation." The Worldwide Church of God (hereinafter referred to as the "Church") is not a corporation, although it has formed various corporations and other

legal entities in many nations around the world. The Church is a worldwide spiritual organism, the Body of Christ. Although Employee has performed valuable services for each of the several entities through which the Church has conducted its temporal affairs. Employee heretofore has been compensated by the California corporation according to the terms and provisions of the 1976 Agreement.

The Church has requested, and the California corporation and Employee have agreed, that the 1976 Agreement be terminated. Such termination was effected by an Agreement of Termination dated April 25, 1980.

Employee's performance under the 1976 Agreement both to the Church as well as to the California corporation was exemplary in every respect. In addition to the recitals contained in the 1976 Agreement which are incorporated herein by this reference, the following facts are important recitals to this Agreement: Employee has kept God's Word and not denied His Name and has held fast to the teachings which he received of Jesus Christ. He has been faithful in putting God's Work back on the track and preparing the Church to be the Bride of Christ, that it may be presented to Him holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The fruits of Employee's labours confirm that he has been called to be an Apostle, not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. Employee received the precious truth of the Gospel not of man, neither was he taught it after man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing recitals and of the mutual promises, covenants, and agreements contained herein, the parties hereto agree as follows:

The seven-year contract then goes on to give HWA raise:

Employer shall pay Employee a salary of not less than Twenty-One Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-Five and Fffty- Eight Hundredths Dollars (\$21,535.58) per month, payable in equal, biweekly installments each and every month during the term thereof.

That brought HWA's salary up to \$258,426.96 per year. The contract also gave him the generous expense allowance, car, plane, attorney fees protection, etc. contained in the 1976 contract. There was also the same provision for survivor's benefits for HWA's spouse. The contract was signed by HWA (employee) and by Stanley Rader and HWA (employer). We wonder, though, why a man allegedly so close to God Almighty would put his faith in lawyers and contracts to provide for him, rather than in God. We don't recall Moses, Elijah, Jesus, or any of the apostles demanding an employment contract.

### **Is HWA in the "Real World"?**

It may seem like a strange question at first, but some are beginning to wonder if HWA knows what is going on around him. The following is an excerpt from an "Opposition to Motion for Summary Judgment" filed June 8 by Ramona's lawyers:

There is other evidence which casts a serious doubt as to whether the marriage is truly irretrievably broken as the petitioner alleges. Respondent believes that since the separation of the parties Mr. Armstrong has been isolated and shielded from communications with the respondent to such a degree that he does not fully

understand or comprehend what has occurred since that separation. It is respondent's belief that the attempts made by her for reconciliation prior to the filing of the petition for dissolution were intercepted and kept from the petitioner to inhibit and prevent any reconciliation.

For this fact the respondent [Ramona] asks the court to review the following testimony taken from the deposition of the petitioner Herbert W. Armstrong on April 25, 1983.

Q [Deckter] My question is following that, that is, in December or January -

A [HWA] Uh-huh.

Q December '81, January '82, were you informed of Ramona's willingness -

A No, I was not.

Q - to accompany you on other trips?

A No, I was not, definitely.

Q Would it surprise you, Sir, that there were written communications intended to be communicated to you -

A It certainly would.

Q - of her willingness to accompany you on trips?

A I saw no such communication.

See also the testimony of Herbert W. Armstrong taken on April 26, 1983.

Q Do you know if between January and March, 1982, Ramona attempted to communicate with you on a direct basis? I'm asking if he knows.

Mr. Brown: But attempted to communicate makes the question vague and ambiguous.

Mr. Deckter: He said he didn't talk to her personally or receive any personal communication.

The Witness: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Deckter: I asked if he was aware -

The Witness: No communication whatsoever. And I know of no attempt at any communication whatsoever. I tried to contact her. I didn't know what had happened to her, after she wouldn't go on that trip, and that's now more than a year-and-a-half ago. This thing's been dragging ever since. I wish we could get it over with.

Q (By Mr. Deckter): I'm talking about the period January through April, January 1st, 1982 to the time of the filing of your petition for dissolution in this matter. Are you aware of any attempts on Ramona's part to directly communicate with you?

A Let's see, I don't remember the dates. The only thing would have been a telegram that she sent to me telling me to leave her alone, she wouldn't live with me, and she wanted to be alone and didn't want to be with me.

In view of this testimony, the court is asked to review the letter attached as Respondent's Exhibit C. Exhibit C is a letter sent from Respondent's counsel to Petitioner's counsel. The testimony by Petitioner casts doubt as to whether he received the information contained in the correspondence.

The petitioner's isolation from events concerning his possible reconciliation with Ramona Armstrong is not the only evidence that persons close to him have attempted to shield him from the "real world." During questioning at his deposition concerning payment of his attorneys' fees certain statements were made which show how real his isolation is. The court is directed to the following testimony excerpted from Mr. Armstrong's deposition, taken on April 18, 1983.

Q Who is paying your attorneys' fees?

A I haven't been billed yet. I have no idea.

Q To no one?

A I don't have the money to pay the kind of attorneys' fees that are mounting up.

Q So no one has come to you and said we will loan you "X" number of dollars to pay your attorneys' fees.

A No.

Q You haven't talked to anyone and said -

A No.

Q - would you take care of them for me?

A No.

Q So if hundreds of thousands of dollars of money have been paid for your personal attorneys' fees in this matter, you don't know anything about it?

Mr. Browne: He's asking if you know.

Mr. Deckter: Let me ask my questions. Confer in private.

Mr. Browne: I don't want to confer in private at this point.

Mr. Deckter: Then -

Mr. Browne: I just - Mr. Armstrong, if you know specifically the information about the attorneys' fees, you can testify to it. If somebody else is taking care of that for you then -

Mr. Deckter: Don't instruct the witness on what to testify.

Mr. Browne: I'm just -

Mr. Deckter: You are.

The Witness: I've not been billed attorneys' fees, and I don't know anything about it. I presume they will be billed to me. That's all. Now, I'm just informing you gentlemen who like attorneys' fees so well, I don't have the money to pay it.

### **Someone Is Going to Pay**

HWA may claim he is too poor to pay for the divorce he initiated, but court documents show that he has made several hundred thousand dollars a year for the past several years, he has many foreign bank accounts, and he owns considerable wealth. On top of that, as we have shown, virtually all his living expenses are paid for by the church. Ironically, not only are HWA's lawyers making money on this case, HWA is paying for Ramona's lawyers as well! Ramona's lawyers recently petitioned the court for more money from Herbert.

That the respondent [Ramona] is without adequate funds with which to compensate her attorneys. That due to the time and expenses necessary to adequately prepare and litigate this action, not less than \$300,000.00 will be needed for additional reasonable temporary attorneys' fees, plus an additional sum of \$50,000.00 for incurred expenses and projected costs and expenses.

That an additional reasonable sum for temporary attorneys' fees in an amount of not less than \$300,000.00 is necessary for the following reasons:

- a) Petitioner [HWA] is represented by four (4) separate law firms consisting of in excess of 50 attorneys in Tucson, Arizona alone, as well as the constant presence of another firm, Helge & Associates. In addition thereto, petitioner is represented by several law firms in the State of California;
- b) That to date over 361 pleadings have been filed, offered, responded to, etc. herein. In addition, approximately 20 depositions have been taken and are continuing at present;
- c) There have been 11 special actions filed and one (1) appeal to the Supreme Court.

Judge Hooker granted them a "finding of fact" of legal fees of \$200,000 and an award for partial fees of \$100,000. This over the \$43,000 HWA was already forced to pay them.

Their total bill will undoubtedly go far higher before the case is over. And don't forget, this is just one firm. Ramona has separate firms representing her in her suit against Worldwide in California (and Arizona) and in her criminal case in Tucson.

### **A Nasty Business**

HWA is discovering just how expensive a divorce can be. It can also be a very nasty business. For instance, notice this line of questioning at one HWA deposition:

Q Isn't it true, air, that you required of Ramona Martin that she be sterilized prior to your marriage?

A Definitely not.

Q And that -

A Definitely not.

Q And that in order to obtain her consent to get that operation performed, Ramona wanted you present at the operation?

A Definitely not. I never made any such requirement.

Q Do you remember discussing that particular matter with Mr. David Robinson?

A No, I certainly do not.

Q Do you recall, sir, when we talked about Amy Bowman before? Do you remember we talked about Amy Bowman who was a secretary to your secretary at some time before 19 -

A She was an assistant to my secretary.

Q Do you remember, sir, I asked you if you had a romantic relationship with Amy Bowman?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question...

According to Ramona, she was sterilized in 1976 at HWA's insistence. (Robinson, in his book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, recounts how HWA admitted this very thing to him in 1976.) You will recall, however, that HWA and Ramona did not wed until April of 1977. Yes indeed, HWA's divorce trial may provide some interesting bits of information on "The Apostle."

A look at the list of witnesses Ramona's lawyers hope to have testify hints at the nature of the forthcoming trial. Along with various WCG officials, accountants, and bank officers are these probable witnesses: Jack Kessler, John Kenniston, Henry Cornwall, Rona Martin, Stanley Rader, David Dahlgran, Nikki Rader, Dr. Floyd Lochner, Melvin

Olinger, Myrtle Horn, Dorothy Mattson, David Robinson, Jim Johnson, Layla Upton, Amy Bowman, Helen Styles, Ilene McManis, Virginia Kenniston, Jerry Wylie, Ken Hopke, Bill Stacey, Dorothy Moore, Wes White, Hillel Chodos, and Judge Weisman. Some of those listed have already thought it wise to obtain legal representation.

## **New Criminal Charges Against Ramona**

On September 12 Associated Press ran this story on the wire:

A Pima County (Arizona) Superior Court judge has ordered Herbert W. Armstrong, pastor general of the Worldwide Church of God, to make himself available for an interview with the lawyer representing his estranged wife on perjury and theft charges. Judge J. Richard Hannah issued the order Monday at the request of Tucson lawyer Alex Gaynes, who represents Ramona Armstrong, and told the prosecutor to arrange the interview within the next three weeks. The interview may be held in California, where Armstrong resides near the church headquarters in Pasadena.

Gaynes wants to question Armstrong, 91, about what he knows of the handling of gold flatware, the property Mrs. Armstrong, 44, allegedly stole. Chief Deputy County Attorney Victor Wild said after Monday's hearing that he had talked to Armstrong's lawyers and they had offered two possible dates for the interview and were working on a third....

The divorce case is fiercely contested, and community property is estimated by some to be in the millions of dollars. It took months of legal wrangling before Armstrong came to Tucson to give a deposition to his wife's lawyers in the divorce case earlier this year, and Gaynes said "of course" Monday when asked if he expected further problems in setting up an interview with Armstrong.

Mrs. Armstrong was indicted March 29 on single counts of perjury and theft, stemming from her alleged mishandling of the flatware, purportedly belonging to the church's Ambassador College in Pasadena, and statements she made about it at a hearing in the divorce case. The theft charge was ordered dismissed in early summer because of interference by a prosecutor in grand jury deliberations. But the grand jury reindicted her Aug. 17 on a similar theft charge and added a charge of trafficking in stolen property.

Mrs. Armstrong's son by a previous marriage, Richard Dale Martin, who lived with the Armstrongs, also was indicted Aug. 17, according to a court record. But the file on his case remains confidential, usual practice when the person indicted has not been served. In an apparent reference to the son, Wild said in court Monday that Mrs. Armstrong had a "codefendant" who was indicted on similar charges.

Gaynes meanwhile said he will argue for dismissal of the theft and trafficking charges against Mrs. Armstrong on grounds that the prosecution waited too long to refile them. Gaynes has been critical of the prosecution of Mrs. Armstrong, saying that it resulted from information provided by Armstrong's lawyers.

What exactly these missing "gold flatware" are we don't know. But we did notice something interesting in the court record. HWA has had Pinkerton agents guarding his Tucson home around the clock at a cost of over \$5,000 per month. In spite of this, Ralph Helge, in November 1982 wrote to an insurance company making a claim on allegedly

stolen property. Helge described that property this way:

A pair of sterling silver George III wine coolers by Paul Storr, London, 1796. They were purchased in February 1978 for \$21,200.00.

An antique English gilt sterling silver centerpiece, by Paul Storr, London, 1808/09. It is a hemispherical bowl with a banding of Greek-key designs flanked by beadmoldings and three finely detailed masks of the god Bacchus, wearing a sunburst tiara. The bowl rests on three Sphinx supports, each ending on a claw foot, and connected by a decorated stretcher. The whole is mounted on a molded tre-foil base, decorated with winged ornaments, or three shell feet.

Students of ancient history will recall that Bacchus was the Greek god of wine, drunkenness, and sexual excess. He is identified with the god Dionysus, who was worshipped with orgiastic rites. Throughout the Bible (II Kings 10 for instance) there are numerous admonitions that such graven or molten images be destroyed. One can only wonder then why "God's Apostle" would spend many thousands of dollars of church funds to surround himself with such openly pagan depictions - especially when he forbids his church members from observing Christmas and Easter because of their pagan origins.

### **HWA Unaware of His Church's Divorce Policy???**

One of the last things most WCG members ever remotely expected Herbert to do was to file for divorce from Ramona, the woman who, according to Herbert, was specially selected and provided by God to be his wife (*The Plain Truth*, July 1977; Member Letter, 4/18/77). After all, as God's "apostle," Herbert (1) had said uncountable times that "marriage is a sacred, God-plane relationship," (2) had authored dozens of PT and GN articles and three booklets (*Divorce and Remarriage*, *Why Marriage! Soon Obsolete?*, and *Marriage and Divorce*) on divorce, the purpose of marriage, and how to achieve marital happiness, (3) had condemned divorce as a "colossal national sin" (*Divorce and Remarriage*, 1953, p.1), and (4) had for over 40 years cruelly refused to permit church members to remarry if they had been previously divorced.

But if some were shocked that Herbert would file for divorce, many were stunned beyond belief that, when asked by attorney Browne during a Feb. 25, 1983 deposition if he had ever made a promise to Ramona Armstrong that he would never divorce her, Herbert replied: "No. I did not."

What kind of answer is that? Has Herbert totally forgotten his wedding vows? He should remember them well because he wrote them and commanded that his wedding "ceremony should be read 'as is' for all marriages between members in the Western world." One of our supporters, when he asked a church official if he could alter the wording of the WCG's official ceremony for his marriage, was curtly informed that the wording was written by Herbert, inspired by God, and NO, it would be considered heresy to alter it. But evidently Herbert has forgotten one of its key sections:

And you are *commanded*, on the authority of the Eternal God, *not* to separate or marry another so long as you both shall live! This marriage, by authority of the Supreme Court of Heaven, is inexorably *binding*, until broken by death! (Emphasis

HWA's throughout.)

So Herbert wrote that not only was a married person not to divorce and remarry, but he/she was not even to *separate*. Why? Because the marriage was inexorably bound until broken by death. The vows continue:

Since Marriage is a divine institution, and we are asking the living GOD to join you as husband and wife, it is fitting that each of you should faithfully *promise before God* to accept the sacred Marriage covenant according to the divinely ordained conditions imposed by Almighty God.

Do you, then [his first name] FAITHFULLY PROMISE AND COVENANT WITH God, in the presence of these witnesses, to take [her FULL name] to be your lawful wedded wife, to cleave to her unto death, to love her, cherish her, honor her, and provide for her? [His answer.]

Has Herbert forgotten his sacred marriage vows before Almighty God? If not, how can he truthfully say under oath that he never promised Ramona not to divorce her?

### **Church's Worldwide Audited Financial Report**

The WCG published an audited worldwide financial statement for the first time in its 50-year history (*Worldwide News*, 6/27/83). The financial report was examined by the internationally respected firm of Arthur Andersen & Co. As Herbert Armstrong correctly pointed out, the church is "not required by law to publish this report."

The report revealed that the WCG and affiliated organizations (including AC and the AICF) took in \$120,904,000 in 1982 and spent \$116,097,000, leaving \$4,807,000 in support and revenue over expenses - a healthy sign. Based on unaudited worldwide figures for 1981 (see WN, 2/15/82), revenue rose 11.6 percent and expenses rose 12.4 percent, which meant the church's income increased faster than inflation.

While the notes to the combined financial statements held some interesting tidbits, evidently church officials closely scrutinized the final wording this time, so there was no mention of Herbert's huge salary and other embarrassing material as there was in Arthur Andersen's 1978-79 audit of church books. It appears Herbert and his entourage spent close to \$3 million in 1982, though much of the \$22.6 million labeled "Management and general" could have been used for his picture-taking visits with world leaders. Strangely, no note explains this mysterious figure, which equals 19.5 percent of total expenditures.

Note 3 shows the church spent about \$4 million for travel expenses and \$4 million for professional fees, much of which may represent legal fees. Note 4 lists aircraft owned by the church costing \$3.8 million, fine arts (probably art objects) costing \$2.1 million, and library books costing only \$1.1 million. This gives a rough idea of the importance the WCG attaches to academics. The church's aircraft "is scheduled to be modified in 1986 for an anticipated approximate cost of \$3,400,000." Note 7 reveals that the church "is currently providing benefits to certain former employees of approximately \$580,000 annually." We suspect some of these former employees are either dissident ministers who have promised not to portray the church in unfavorable light to the news media or

Armstrong relatives. Note 8 confirms that the church has dumped *Quest* magazine and Everest House Publishers, a smart move, as these publications published material at variance with the church's beliefs.

### **Herbert's Tithes Come Up Short**

It's been some time since HWA could lay claim to being the WCG's biggest financial contributor. But just how small a contributor he is has shocked WCG members in Pasadena who obtained copies of HWA's 1980 income tax returns. Those documents show that in 1980 HWA gave himself and his wife an income of \$387,755, paid federal taxes of \$147,545, and deducted only \$37,427 (or just over 9.5 percent) as church contributions. That from the man who teaches that Christians must pay first tithe, second tithe, third tithe, building fund offerings, holy day offerings, and regularly exhorts his followers to "sacrifice as never before!" Also we note that Ramona listed her occupation as "secretary" and was given a salary of \$38,308.08 from the WCG - quite a nice salary for secretarial services.

### **USC Responds to Robinson Letter**

In our last issue we reported how the University of Southern California had established a professorship in constitutional law in the name of Herbert W. Armstrong. We also ran an open letter to the President and Trustees of USC written by author David Robinson protesting the honor given HWA. Scott H. Bice, the dean of USC's Law Center, answered Robinson with a letter which later became the standard reply to others who also wrote, protesting the USC-HWA collaboration. We thought you might find Dean Bice's letter of interest:

Dear Mr. Robinson:

President Zumberge has asked me to respond to your letter of June 13, 1983, concerning the Armstrong Professorship.

As you know, the professorship was established by a grant from the Ambassador Foundation to the Law Center. At the Foundation's request, the professorship was named for the Chairman and Founder of the Foundation. It is customary to name professorships for the institution or persons who provide the funds to establish the professorship's endowment.

Mr. Armstrong's career, like the careers of many other noteworthy persons, has of course not been free from controversy. We take the occasion of the establishment of a professorship to mark the undeniable contributions of the person for whom the chair is named. Mr. Armstrong is a recognized religious leader and philanthropist.

Sincerely,  
Scott H. Bice  
Dean

### **Will the Real Beast Please Stand Up?**

For quite a few years HWA was placing his bets on German politician Franz Josef Strauss to become "the Beast" dictator of Herbert's prophesied United Europe. With Strauss having failed repeatedly to become even Chancellor of West Germany, HWA is apparently searching about for a new person who could be the "future European dictator" to embellish his prophetic theories. And he has apparently found him.

He is Dr. Otto von Habsburg, head of the 700-year-old House of Habsburg, which ruled the Holy Roman Empire in the dynasty prior to Napoleon, and one of the most prestigious royal families in Europe.

So writes Herbert in his July 24 letter to the brethren. He described Habsburg this way:

He very probably has a more clear grasp of international affairs than any man today. He is author of the famous book *The Social Order of Tomorrow*, giving a design for reunification of Europe startlingly close to the biblical description of this prophesied resurrected Europe to occur just prior to the Second Coming of Christ. I had long wanted to meet Otto von Habsburg personally.

And meet him he did. HWA invited him to speak at Ambassador College in July and then flew him to Washington, D.C., in the church's G-II jet.

### **GTA Hits the Petra Fallacy**

Of all the beliefs held by the WCG there is probably none that worries relatives and friends of WCG members more than the "flee to Petra" idea. (Petra is in the Jordanian desert east of Israel.) We regularly receive letters from concerned individuals who know someone who has adopted this belief. Many are concerned that their WCG friend or relative may be led into another Jonestown situation or into some similar tragedy.

The "Petra escape" is still believed strongly by many in WCG circles in spite of the fact that there have been numerous articles and sermons debunking the whole idea. The latest article to appear that debunks the fallacy is by none other than Garner Ted Armstrong. Titled "Where Is Your 'Place of Safety'?", it appeared in the June-July issue of *The International News* (P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, TX 75710). We actually found the article quite good in many respects and in particular found the following excerpts noteworthy:

For years, many ministers have taught FALSELY that Almighty God will use *physical punishment*; the GREAT TRIBULATION, *martyrdom* and torture before death as the final means of *expiating guilt*, the final manner in which God will *cleanse unrighteousness*, and bring about brokenhearted REPENTANCE in recalcitrant, unyielding or "Laodicean" (lukewarm) people!

Ask yourself the following question: "*Is that why* Stephen died?"...

Should a rational, *sane*, humble minister of Jesus Christ be encouraging people to think about a physical, geographical location on this earth; telling them, laughingly, that, since hundreds died in a fiery crash of a DC-10, and the fleet of DC-10s was subsequently grounded, God will very likely provide that grounded fleet of DC-10s to take them to

faraway PETRA? Is God *amused* by references to the failed "10-inch bolt" being replaced by a "10-inch *angel*"?

No, the Eternal God in heaven above is not amused by irresponsible blatherings or sick humor...

The point which should finally occur to *anyone* is that, while Petra, or any other wilderness place featuring sheer rock walls and caves is *completely obsolete* as a "place of safety" in the face of modern weapons and methods of warfare, *God's protection* will NEVER be *obsolete*!

## **Tidbits**

Worldwide Church of God members are as preoccupied as ever, it seems, with the idea of fleeing into the Jordanian desert to await the end of the world. But such ideas have not deterred the church-sponsored AICF from scheduling a spectacular 1983-84 concert season at Ambassador Auditorium (formerly referred to as "The House for God"). Their lineup of stars includes: The Vienna Philharmonic with Leonard Bernstein, Mirella Freni, James Galway, the Amadeus Quartet, Horacio Gutierrez, the National Symphony Orchestra with Mstislav Rostropovich, Nathan Milstein, Kiri Te Kanawa, Ravi Shankar, Bella Davidovich, Jessye Norman, the Beaux Arts Trio, Oscar Shumsky, the Guarneri String Quartet, Lucia Popp, Hermann Prey, Jorge Bolet, the Ballet Nacional Espanol, Mel Torme, the New England Ragtim Ensemble, the Canadian Brass, Richard Stoltzman, Nathaniel Rosen, Christopher Hogwood, the Danish National Orchestra, Sixten Ehrling, the Polish Chamber Orchestra, Claude Bollig, Herbie Mann, the Lucnica Czechoslovak Folk Ballet, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, Julian Bream, Benny Goodman, I Musici, the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company, Zamfir, Kathleen Battle, I Solisti di Zagreb, the Juilliard String Quartet, Martti Talvela, Jakob Gimpel, George Shearing, Montserrat Caballe, Andres Segovia, and many more.

We wondered if the WCG was paying taxes on the money they made from the concert series, but, after investigation we found that the concerts were losing money. That means that the church is subsidizing concerts for the rich under the guise of giving to charity.

\* \* \*

Author John Tuit (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*) is apparently not the only writer in his family. His wife, Paula, is now a reporter with *The New Transcript*, a Freehold, New Jersey newspaper. Incidentally, John tells us he still has copies of his book available for \$8.00 each. His address is: The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold Township, NJ 07728.

\* \* \*

The WCG recently disfellowshipped its number one tithe payer, Jerry Gentry of Big Sandy, Texas (see our January '83 issue). Gentry apparently became too interested in the ministry of former WCG minister Cecil Battles (P.O. Box 867, Grants Pass, OR 97526).

We have heard that Battles has developed quite a following among current WCG members, many of whom regard him as some type of special prophet or shaman. We contacted Mr. Battles to ask a few questions about his ministry, but for some strange reason he was extremely reluctant to give any information whatsoever about his activities.

\* \* \*

Ellis LaRavia, the vice-president of the Ambassador Foundation and the man many feel will head the WCG on HWA's demise, has been making important inroads for himself in the Pasadena community. He is currently vicepresident of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and likely to become its next president. He has even been mentioned as a possible candidate for Mayor of Pasadena.

\* \* \*

Herbert Armstrong may consider himself the most important religious figure-in the world today, but there are those who would not even rank him close to such an honor. The World Christian Encyclopedia, a 1,010-page comprehensive survey of contemporary Christianity published in 1982, lists 490 of the world's most important Christian leaders in its Who's Who section. The name Herbert W. Armstrong does not appear.

### **Armstrongism Bibliography Completed**

We are very pleased to announce that after considerable time and effort, John Buchner has completed his "Armstrongism Bibliography," and it is now available to the public. Although others have attempted and completed similar bibliographies in the past, Buchner's is by far the most extensive, thorough, and useful. Even we at *Ambassador Report*, after thumbing through this work, were amazed at the vast amount of material that has been published about Armstrongism.

Part one of the 124-page bibliography includes a listing of all known books on Armstrongism (eleven!), related book reviews, books with sections or chapters on Armstrong (33), booklets and tracts, academic theses and papers, audio-visual materials, papers written by insiders, papers written by others, documents, letters, magazine articles, newspaper articles, reference materials, and spin-off organizations. Part two lists materials produced by the WCG, part three materials produced by 13 "related organizations" (i.e., Foundation for Biblical Research, Biblical Church of God, Church of God International, The Shofar, etc.). Part four lists a huge amount of additional materials (including all issues of *Ambassador Report* to April 1983).

For anyone doing serious research on the Worldwide Church of God or related organizations, the Buchner bibliography will prove absolutely invaluable. Mr. Buchner has informed us that sometime in the distant future he may update this work. So if any omissions are noted, he would appreciate being informed. However, we suspect there will be very few. This is a very thorough bibliography and a major contribution to the study of the Armstrongism phenomenon. Those interested in obtaining a copy of this bibliography should send their requests along with \$10.00 (U.S.) to: J.L.F. Buchner, P.O. Box 170,

Gordon, N.S.W. 2072, Australia.

## **Exodus Continues**

*Dear John:*

*It gave me considerable pleasure to read several of your recent reports. It was not until about a year ago, after serving as a Local Elder for seven years, that I finally realized what a total liar HWA had become. With that revelation I walked out of Sabbath services and flushed it behind me. Hope you and your family are well, I still retain fond memories of our college experience.*

*-Lawson O. Price*

Editor. And the best to you Lawson; I too retain some very fond memories of our Ambassador College days.

\* \* \*

*In the July issue you quoted Mr Durrel Brown as a defected minister. Mr. Brown is [a relative]. He is very much with WCG. He did not leave the ministry. He just hasn't been reassigned for personal reasons that have nothing to do with his standing in the church. I'd appreciate it if you would print this correction.*

Editor: Our apologies to Mr. Brown.

## **Bobby Fischer - Where Are You?**

Long-time readers of *Ambassador Report* will recall that in our large 1977 edition we ran an interview with world chess champion Bobby Fischer. While never actually a baptized member of the WCG, Fischer had been an Armstrong follower for some years. The interview centered on his involvement with the WCG and helped thousands of readers to better understand the "Ambassador Experience."

Since then many have written to us asking what has become of the chess champion. But until recently, we've had little idea. For over five years now Fischer has shunned, not only the press, but most of his old friends. Nevertheless, the *Los Angeles Times* has been able to uncover a good deal of information on the chess champ. In an article by Bella Stumbo, the *Times* on August 4 reported on Fischer in considerable detail. Here are a few excerpts:

It is the sort of yarn, complete with lurid rumors and wild clues, to rival the tale of Howard Hughes. Turning his back on fame and a multimillion-dollar fortune, former world chess champion Bobby Fischer dropped out of sight nearly 10 years ago. Reporters, attorneys, bill collectors, fans and other assorted sleuths have been on his trail ever since. In vain. Fischer left almost no trace.

But, in chess circles, the legend of Bobby Fischer, generally considered the greatest chess mind of all time, remains passionately alive. Wherever two or more serious chess players are gathered, the latest Fischer gossip will be routinely exchanged, his greatest moves reverently replayed - and, inevitably, the wistful, wishful question will arise: Will Fischer... ever play chess in public again?

Generally speaking, nobody thinks so....

According to former friends and others in a position to know, his current lifestyle is unorthodox, not to say bizarre: He uses an alias, he doesn't drive, he has no phone, almost no money and only one remaining friend, a Pasadena matron, who allegedly censors his mail, pays his rent and is the only person who always knows where he lives. He reportedly has spent the last decade living in the basement of her comfortable hillside home, in assorted cheap Pasadena apartments and, occasionally, in fleabag hotels in downtown Los Angeles.

Secretive to the point of paranoia, Fischer, a bachelor, does not date for fear of treachery, and he has angrily cut off his handful of former chess friends, one by one, because, they say, they made the mistake of discussing him, however superficially, with the press. Fischer reportedly still suspects that he may be under Soviet surveillance and possibly the object of a KGB assassination attempt. It is a concern that he has nursed ever since his triumph over Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union in 1972....

According to Cerritos Junior High School history teacher Ron Gross, 47, the last of Fischer's old friends to see him (on a fishing trip to Mexico more than a year ago this summer), Fischer's day is (or was) most recently divided among three obsessions: physical fitness, chess and a political philosophy which holds that the world is run by a secret world government controlled by Jews and centered in Moscow.

He goes to bed at dawn, sleeps until noon, then works out, either in a gym or in his apartment, according to Gross. His apartment is littered with chess books, bags of fresh oranges, vitamin jars and a wide array of Indian herbal medicines. Fischer carries a stash of these health aides (and sometimes a juice squeezer too) with him wherever he goes. He distrusts doctors and, consequently, refuses to have three large, hairy moles on his face removed....

Fischer's political theories now apparently fascinate him even more than chess. According to published reports, he has been spotted, in his trench coat disguise, skulking through a public parking lot in Pasadena at night, distributing leaflets he wrote, warning against the "Hidden Hand of a Satanic Secret World Government." "Bobby's so right-wing he's fascist," Gross said. Fischer's political Bible is an anti-semitic tome called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," he has a prized selection of Hitler pictures, regularly refers to Jews as "kikes" and "Jew-bastards," and has an only slightly higher opinion of blacks, according to Gross.

But Fischer, whose mother is Jewish, accepts Jews on an individual basis, adds Gross, Jewish himself: "Bobby says we're all victims of the conspiracy." Seemingly torn between embarrassment and pride, Gross said he chauffeured Fischer to Nazi-oriented bookstores....

The article goes on to report that Fischer's closest friend (some would say business manager) is Claudia Mokarow, wife of former WCG minister Art Mokarow. Fischer is apparently aiming on a writing career now. He is learning to type and is planning both a

novel and a book on his political theories. In fact, Fischer's writing career is already under way. He has written and published a 14-page pamphlet about his 1981 arrest by the Pasadena police. The unusual (and fairly well written) work is titled: "I was Tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse!" It is available for \$1.50 (including postage) by writing to Bobby Fischer (the World Chess Champion), P.O. Box 50307, Pasadena, CA 91105-0307.

### **Literature of Interest**

Editor" The October 1983 issue of *The Plain Truth* magazine has a "Personal From Herbert W. Armstrong" entitled "Here's Your Best Assurance of Holding a Job." Long-time HWA followers and WCG employees will not be surprised to learn that the method advocated is tithing to HWA. With that in mind, we thought you'd find the following letter of interest:

*I recently read a good book put out by Le Tourneau Christian College of Longview, Texas. It is the biography of its founder R. G. Le Tourneau. I highly recommend it to 4R readers.... it should enlighten some of those inside that cult who read AR. Le Tourneau was a manufacturer of heavy earth-moving equipment and oil-drilling platforms sometime around the '30s to the late '60s in Longview, Texas. He was a self-made multi-millionaire who owed all his good fortune to God. The best part is not only did he tithe his income, but made an about face.- 10 percent to himself 90 percent to the Lord (mostly to a local church and foreign missions). The theology mentioned in the book is quite different from HWA's. It mentions such "worldly" ideas as Sunday church meetings, Sunday school, Christmas, etc. Great book, very inspirational. The title is Mover of Men & Mountains and is available by mail (paperback) from Le Tourneau College Bookstore, P.O. Box 7001, Longview, Texas 75607 (postage paid: \$3.75).*

*Also there is another good book that might still be available entitled A Bucket of Finger Lickins. It is the story of Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame and how at the age of 65 years he promised to tithe to God's work if God would give him success in his chicken business. He gave his tithe to his local church in Kentucky (named Angel Tabernacle) and again it mentions those "worldly" ideas such as Sunday church going, Sunday schools and Christmas. If still available, the address is Starburst Co., P. O. Box 4123, Lancaster, PA 17604.*

*These two books lead me to believe that HWA followers might be tithing to the wrong church. I haven't heard of any millionaires coming out of WCG. They may as well be giving it to the local laundromat, for all the good it has done any of them.*

*-Joseph Nasta  
Oceanside NY*

\* \* \*

*When I wrote to an address mentioned in your Report some time ago, I received a huge packet (postage was \$2.00) of literature - most all of it from Jehovah's Witnesses. I had only wanted more information on the 7th-Day Church of God - that is what the AR had mentioned. Now wasn't this a sneaky way for the Jehovah's Witnesses to get their*

*literature to others? There was only one small pamphlet about the 7th-Day Church and that was all critical. Then to kind of smooth things over, I guess, there was one sentence in the packet that said "keep reading the Ambassador Report" or something to that effect. Have you received any other complaints?*

*-Florida*

Editor. Yes. We had no idea JW literature was going to be involved. For your information, the JW church is in the midst of considerable controversy. A number of JW "dissidents" have formed a group that puts out a newsletter called *Notes for Bible Students* (658 Highline Drive, E. Wenatchee, WA 98801). We got a kick out of their number 24 issue that told of the chaos in the JW sect. It so, closely parallels the WCG's recent history.

\* \* \*

*Thank you for your interest concerning my book on personal development. As yet the book is not published but the manuscript is complete, and of the 22 chapters I am waiting for the final three chapters to come back from the editor.*

*The book will be entitled Living and Winning or Making Life Work. In manuscript form it is about 270 pages with 22 chapters.*

*The book's purpose is to show people how to build a stable identity and realistic self-esteem with the realities of the ups and downs of life. I do not know as yet what the book will sell for but hope to have it out by fall or winter.*

*If anyone would like me to put them on a list to be notified when it is out, please have them write me.*

*Art Mocarow  
P.O. Box 50171  
Pasadena, CA 91705*

\* \* \*

*Where does one get Paul Haecker's book Ten Years in the Religion of Herbert W. Armstrong. I have looked several places with no luck. Can you help on that one?*

*-California*

Editor. Sorry, the last we heard Mr. Haecker has moved to parts unknown.

\* \* \*

*I would be interested to know if you have ever heard of an organization called "HALT"*

(Suite 319, 201 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002)? It's an organization of Americans for Legal Reform.

-California

Editor. Not only have we heard of them, we fully support their goals. The American legal system is very, very badly in need of reform. And by the way, HALT publishes a number of excellent legal self-help pamphlets for its members. They are worth many times over the organization's membership fee. The organization is worth looking into.

\* \* \*

*I do not consider myself a devoted "follower" of Ernest Martin (or of any other man, for that matter), but his Foundation for Biblical Research puts out some very fine research papers. The July issue of the FBR's Commentator had an article entitled "The Abuse of Fellowship." I wish every individual in the WCG, CGI, BCG, etc. would read that article. There is far too much needless division in Christianity today. Thank you for mentioning that organization in the Report.*

-California

Editor. We feel just as you do. We have no desire to ever again be blind followers of any religious group or individual. However, we have learned much from Dr. Martin and his associates. We are particularly looking forward to his new book on *The Original Bible Restored*. So many millions look to the Bible as "the Work of God" for guidance and inspiration; yet so very few have even the slightest idea of how it came to be. We understand his new book, to be published this winter, will shed much light on that important subject. And if their new *Commentator* "The Place of the Crucifixion" is a foretaste of what's to come in this new book then it should be quite remarkable. For those who don't already have the Foundation's address, it is: P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102.

### **The Wacky World of "We"-ligion**

We live in a crazy world. No matter what area of human endeavor we look at we can find some pretty ludicrous goings on. Look at politics, law, medicine, finance, the arts, or any other field and it is very easy to find numerous examples of almost unbelievable absurdities. But for sheer wackiness nothing can even come close to the world of religion.

About a year ago we had Reverend Moon marrying 4,150 of his followers in a ceremony in New York's Madison Square Garden. Of that occasion Doyle McManus of the *Los Angeles Times* (July 2, 1982) wrote:

Members of the church believe that God speaks through Moon, and when the 62-year-old evangelist arranges a marriage between two of his followers, his selection is viewed as an act of divine inspiration.

Moon also requires a couple to remain celibate for 3½ years after their engagement, whether they are married or not. A few of the 4,150 Moonies wed Thursday had been engaged for the minimum 3½ years, but most had not, church officials said; they will live apart until the church decides it is time for their marriages to be consummated.

Then there's Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority. He was big in the news for a while but has now fallen on hard times. He has asked all those on his computer list for \$100 to help him out of his current crisis. He says his church will be conducting a round-the-clock prayer vigil until the end of the fiscal year. This writer recently saw Falwell on a late-night news talkshow declaring himself unequivocally to be a "Zionist." Perhaps that has turned off some of his supporters.

Falwell isn't the only TV preacher having money problems. Oral Roberts has apparently been having financial woes too. Not long ago he wrote a letter to his followers quoting "the Lord" whom Roberts claimed had given him a lengthy message to be passed on to his followers. The key part of the message from "the Lord" was that they were to send Roberts \$20 per month for 12 months. Roberts' letter began:

"It is later than you think."

"When are you and your partners going to obey Me?"

That is the statement and the question I heard the Lord speak to me late one afternoon several weeks ago. It was only the beginning of a conversation between the Lord and me that lasted for seven hours ... and is still continuing.

It was only about two years ago that Roberts claimed he had a vision of "a 900-foot-tall Jesus" standing over his university's medical complex. That story apparently generated millions of dollars in contributions. The latest one should do just as well.

It is interesting that Roberts' letter to his contributors is very similar to the co-worker letters of HWA even in such details as extensive use of words in large capital letters and underlining. In fact, some have claimed that Roberts got his idea for starting a college from following HWA's successful career and that his "seed faith" contribution system was modeled after HWA's tithing doctrine.

Whatever the case, funding is not Roberts' only problem. Recall Patti Roberts, Oral's daughter-in-law, who used to sing on his telecasts? Well, the May 1983 issue of *Contemporary Christian Music* contained an article about Patti with this interesting information:

Patti describes her life as a television personality for one of the most powerful and influential evangelists in modern Christianity. "We all lived together in the compound," she says. "Richard and I were the all-American couple, tied to a glamorous image that we did our best to live up to. That shining couple that millions of people knew was built at the expense of our home and marriage. The ministry was everything and came before the family, the children, our own relationship.

In the end, the dream simply fell apart, exposing the decade-long nightmare that Patti Roberts was living. "I had deep problems with Oral's teaching," she says with unflinching directness. "That made me a misfit." It was Roberts' controversial fund

raising doctrine of Seed Faith that Patti questioned, eventually confronting both her husband and father-in-law with her doubts about its scriptural and moral basis. The rest was swift expulsion from the Roberts organization, divorce, and the shattering end to her sheltered and privileged life. "Richard went to his father to ask permission for the divorce," she reveals. "Then he came to me...."

"A lot of people loved Richard and Patti," she explains, "and those people never got an explanation of what happened. One day I was there, the next day I just ceased to exist. They even destroyed all the film footage with me in it. They just erased Patti Roberts. I felt I owed something to the people who had known and loved me."

She has now written a book on her experiences. It is titled *From Ashes to Gold*.

Patti's story of banishment reminds us of what HWA did to his own son, Garner Ted, and to his daughters and relatives - and all this in the name of "Christian love." Another religious leader recently in the news is Tony Alamo. The June 13 issue of *People* carried an eye-opening article on his group. Alamo, it seems, is not just the head of a religion (many would say "cult"), but he "fancies himself a country-gospel star and records on his own label." He hobnobs with many famous names in the country music world and has made a fortune, not only in religion, but through many businesses owned by his "Alamo Foundation." To quote the *People* article (June 13, 1983, pp. 29-34):

Tony's big secret: All these businesses are staffed by free labor - Alamo followers, who consider themselves "volunteers," doing God's work. There are several hundred hard-core Alamoites around the country, who devote their lives to enriching the foundation with their labor and to nonstop "witnessing" - that is, handing out Tony's paranoid screeds and trying to convert nonbelievers. Tony claims he saves "tens of thousands of souls a month." His message is an old one: His is the only true church and his followers the only true believers. He talks to God but not to this magazine.

His followers subsist on a diet of grim sermons and hard work, while Tony travels by Cadillac limo from his mansion (with heart-shaped pool) in the Arkansas compound to luxurious homes in Saugus, Calif. and Nashville.

But Tony Alamo is also having his problems. First of all there are those who have left his organization that claim they were "brainwashed by several well-known methods: sleep deprivation, poor nutrition, constant ranting about foundation enemies, isolation from society, and forced labor." And there are allegations that the Alamo Foundation has been involved in an unethical child adoption scheme. Here in the Pasadena area Alamoites have been distributing flyers urging unwed pregnant women not to have an abortion, but instead to turn over their children to the Alamo Foundation. Many are wondering what has become of the infants Alamo has obtained in this way.

Just as strange are the prayer shifts for Susan Alamo, Tony's deceased wife and co-founder of the Alamo organization. Her embalmed body rests inside a darkened prayer room in a "mansion atop a remote, guarded ridge in rural Arkansas.... patiently awaiting resurrection. The cult leader has been dead more than a year. Encouraged by Susan's husband, Tony, her followers kneel by the coffin in two-hour shifts, 24-hours a day, every day, to pray for Susan's return." They may have a long wait.

Well, we could go on, but you get the idea. There are a lot of strange happenings going on in the world of religion. So much so that one could well do a regular magazine devoted just to that subject. And, in fact, it appears that someone has. A group of very clever Christian writers put out a bimonthly magazine called *The Wittenburg Door*. This is not your typical Christian magazine, but a very witty, hardhitting, often tongue-in-cheek, thought-provoking publication that dishes out the kind of treatment a lot of religionists deserve. Copies are \$2.00 each; yearly subscriptions \$12.00. The address is: Wittenburg Door, 1224 Greenfield Dr., El Cajon, CA 92021. One warning thought: If you think *Ambassador Report* is cynical, then *The Wittenburg Door* is definitely not for you.

### **Whatever a Man Sows, That Shall He Reap**

We have maintained contact with thousands of ex-Worldwidiers over the last seven years, and we can say quite a few of them would like to see Herbert Armstrong punished for his sins against his church and mankind. One person, though, has actually made Herbert pay a thousand times over for his contempt of God and mankind. One person has all but destroyed Herbert's life, image, peace of mind, and "infallibility." That person is none other than Herbert Armstrong himself. Herbert apparently thinks he is somehow above God's laws - that somehow, by being "God's Apostle," he can flout the basic laws of human decency without paying the consequences. He apparently thinks he can preach one set of morals for his congregation and practice another in private. But no matter how clever he is in cultivating the image of being a wise spiritual patriarch, he still pays the penalty for wrongdoing just like the rest of us mortals. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption (Gal. 6:7-8, RSV quoted throughout).

And, sure enough, as we look back over the last several years, Herbert has been reaping exactly what he sowed though unseen to most. If you read the Beatitudes in Matthew, chapters 5-7, which contain the basic teachings of Christianity, you will see how cause and effect is at work in Herbert's life. Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers" and "blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:9, 7). But Herbert's pride and stubbornness led to several unnecessary splits in the WCG, and he has okayed the ruthless expulsion of thousands of members and some 260 ministers, including many loyal, longtime friends such as Raymond and Wayne Cole, Albert Portune, Dave Antion, Charles Hunting, David Robinson, Ron Dart, and even his own son Garner Ted. Now we hear report after report from insiders who say Herbert has hardly a single trusted close friend left in the church and is surrounded by parasitic sycophants on all sides plotting to divide up his empire the minute his coffin lid slams shut. Due to his own actions he is hounded by the press and surrounded by bodyguards to keep disgruntled ex-members from serving him with more lawsuits. The lawyers are eating away at his vitals. Is it any wonder why?

While Herbert spends millions of dollars on lawyers' fees, right there in his own Bible is the legal advice he really needs. That advice comes from none other than Jesus Christ:

Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest

your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny (Matt. 5:25-26).

If anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well (Matt. 5:40).

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matt. 5:44).

Somehow, Herbert has assumed these verses wouldn't apply to him if he built up a huge church legal department and spent millions of dollars on lawyers to prevent those whom he had wronged from obtaining justice. Settle with his brother? "Absolutely not! It's a sign of weakness." Love his enemies? "No, sue the bastards!" Listen to their grievances and settle peaceably with them? "No, blackball them and cut them to pieces! I'm God's Apostle!" Result? Herbert, just like Jesus said would happen, is now trapped like a helpless little fly in a giant web of endless lawsuits. The judges and his 50 lawyers tell him when to come and go, and the lawyers on both sides are cleaning out his pockets, while certain trusted "friends" plot to have him declared insane.

Further on in Matt. 6:19, Jesus stated:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Anybody who knows Herbert knows he lives in luxury. We remember being invited over to his mansion one evening as seniors at Ambassador College. His house resembled a showroom, with every room filled with art treasures. We remember him bragging after dinner how we were eating dessert from solid gold bowls with solid gold spoons once owned by the Czar of Russia. All this seemed a bit incongruous for one claiming to be a humble servant of Jesus Christ, but little did we know such gold plates would one day ensnare him. And sure enough, recently we noticed in the Pasadena *Star-News* (9/14/83) that Herbert claims Ramona has stolen "gold flatware" from him and he has turned to the courts to recover them. So instead of spending his time serving the church, his time is occupied plotting strategy with his unconverted lawyers - for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

In Matt. 7:12, Jesus advised:

So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

In 1968 a lower-ranking WCG minister was discovered to have committed adultery. When Herbert discovered this, he showed no mercy. Instead, he not only fired the man, he called an assembly of all college students and employees and reiterated all the details. At many times other people who fell out of his favor were similarly blackballed and slandered in ministerial letters and publications. But later, Matt. 7:12 came back to haunt Herbert. For *Time* and many other respected publications worldwide revealed what his hypocritical lifestyle is really like. Some publications have revealed how he committed incest with his daughter and have dragged his name through the mud and exposed him as a crooked old fool. So instead of being respected in the world as an ambassador for world

peace (an image he spent millions cultivating) he's ridiculed in the press as a bizarre old cult leader who lives high on the hog.

For decades he practically forbade church members from going to doctors for medical treatment, telling them they should trust God for healing. Drugs, he said, were of the Devil. Vaccines were "monkey pus" and should be avoided. In private, however, he put his faith in medical science, seeking out the doctors and secretly taking their drugs. Now he's totally dependent on them. He preached to others that drunkenness was a sin, but indulged himself anyway. His own son and many others have reported seeing him drunk on many occasions. Now we hear Herbert has liver problems caused by alcohol. For years Herbert has decried sabbath-breaking as a grievous sin. Yet he partied and traveled on the sabbath thousands of miles, entertaining world leaders. Today, however, none of those leaders are converted and none have offered to help him fight off his lawsuits. Now on the sabbath he's afraid to even stay and fellowship with his congregation, and he has to leave services early via the backdoor with his bodyguards, hoping to avoid being shot at or served with yet another legal summons.

Luke wrote: "For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38). If only Herbert had heeded that verse, his life and the lives of thousands of his members would have been much more joyous. But Herbert is reaping just what he sowed.

We hope our readers will take the above, not as an occasion to rejoice, but as a lesson that no matter who we are, wrongdoing, injustice, hypocrisy, and stubborn pride pay bitter dividends in the long run. It is our sincere hope Herbert will yet see the error of his ways before he dies, repent, and seek to right at least some of the wrongs and heartaches he has caused for many thousands of innocent people. Even now, if he would but humble himself, he would be exalted - perhaps not in the eyes of this world's dictators, bankers, lawyers and such - but certainly in the eyes of his own family, and in the eyes of those who have sincerely loved him and wished that he could have indeed been a true "man of God."

## ***Letters***

*WCG people in this church area are being told directly in sermons that "the church will tell you only what you need to know. " That is a direct quote. The people here are propagandized to an almost unbelievable degree.*

*-Los Angeles, California*

*After being a member of the WCG for 15 years, my husband and I were told by the minister in Birmingham, Alabama, not to return to church because we wouldn't tell him how we found out about the Armstrong divorce. It seems we found out about it before he did in January 1982. He had informed us that headquarters ordered him to hush up "the rumor because it just wasn't true." A few weeks later the letter from HWA arrived telling us how he had (again) been deceived by Satan.*

*-Alabama*

*Money, money, money, it seems, is all the church is all about any more. I could not help but continually think about Paul's statement in I Tim. 6:10 while reading the Report - "for the love of money is the root of all evil...." The second part is equally interesting: "which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." This statement "says it all" for the WCG these days.*

*-California*

*Thank you for your continuing work in publishing the Report. I would like to make a comment about your December 1982 letter and the fact that "most of the readers do not keep Christmas."*

*It is a sad thing that HWA has robbed people of one of the most joyous occasions of the year by instilling in them the false concept of Christmas being pagan. Sure, Christmas is overcommercialized; however, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. December 25 or not, Christmas depicts the coming to earth of our Saviour - something we should be thankful for. As far as origins go, educated people know it was Martin Luther who first brought a fir tree indoors and decorated it - not Nimrod, Baal, or whoever. Santa Claus goes back to the Bishop of Smyrna in the 4th Century A. D. - not some sorcerer or devil worshipper. Seriously, folks, let's discard the Scrooge in us and break the mental bondage to HWA and his insidious teachings. Christ came to liberate us from sin, from ourselves, and from men who would lead us astray. Can we not honor and rejoice in the fact that He did so?*

*-(Former WCG minister) Richard Forkun  
Markham, Ontario, Canada*

*I recently got a temporary job as a hospital orderly, and a lady there told me she is a member of the WCG. The strange thing is she is allowed to work on the Sabbath and Holy Days. She smokes and said her minister told her it was a sin if in her mind she thought it was a sin. Sounds like Pauline theology from an Armstrongite! She wears makeup and although she believes in divine healing she goes to doctors. I wonder if "headquarters" doesn't know what is going on, or is this a new liberal WCG?*

*- AR Reader*

*Editor: WCG doctrines in practice now vary considerably from congregation to congregation. It all seems to depend on the minister in charge. Some are quick to disfellowship members for as little as having a certain kind of haircut, while others seem to literally tolerate just about anything. However, there is one doctrine they all unite behind. Members must "bend the knee" to Ol' Herbert.*

*Your Report has confirmed the views some of us have formulated over the past year or two. We have no quarrel with the maintenance of spiritual discipline - in Christ. However, it was, we believe a sine qua non that those who presume to act on behalf of God and his law must themselves also be bound by ethics and governed by laws which should be commensurate in every respect to the dignity of the great cause they serve.*

*We did not find this concomitancy between personal behaviour and administration practices of the lofty ones in the WCG hierarchy locally or abroad We stood up for principle and found ourselves the despised ecclesiastical dispossessed fighting against the inflexible ethos of a fear-induced unity that achieved a gigantic, but dubious, if not sinister, goal.*

*That fear-induced unity bred a myopic obedience, an intolerance, and an absolute refusal to believe that truth can also be disseminated to and through others, and an acceptance [of the fallacy] that leaders know best and are never to be questioned. That unity, God forbid, may ultimately lead to the unquestioning lifting of the poisoned cup.*

*The ugly story is the same from America to Africa, from Pasadena to Perth, from New York to New Zealand. For the great spirit that moves within the WCG - the spirit of bondage promising freedom, the spirit of corruption promising purity, the spirit of oppression promising safety, is the common opiate - nay the universal message broadcasted over the airwaves from that master broadcaster of intrigue, double-dealing and misinformata, presiding over that ecclesiastical cacophony in 300 West Green Street. We shudder as we agonise over our loved ones! Keep up the informative Report. The saga may soon reach its pre-orchestrated but unexpected dissonant cadenza and final death rumble.*

*-Gordon R. Terblanche, Public Speaking Institute of South Africa  
P.O. Box 20321, Alkantrant, 0005, Rep. of South Africa*

*I am an ex-WCG member, but often meet with and work with current WCG members. Recently I was asked this question: "Why don't you come back to the true church? All you have to do is say you're sorry!" My reaction was to ask, "Sorry for what? And to whom? God or a Chief Apostle?" And then I remembered my last phone conversation with WCG minister Larry Grider.*

*At the end of a long and tiring debate, he asked me whether I could accept Herbert Armstrong as God's Chief Apostle "without question now." Of course my sane answer had to be "NO!" Then when he disfellowshipped and marked both my wife and me, I asked him, "What do you think we are Larry? Christians?" To which he replied, "Yes, I personally think both you and your wife are Christians and you have God's Holy Spirit. But I have a job to do, and I must do it." No more need be said!*

*-Canada*

*A few weeks ago I met a member of the church and she greeted me with a hug even though she had been told not to associate with exmembers. She talked freely about HWA and then asked if I knew about Ambassador Report. She gets your publication but can't let anyone at church know about it. She commented, "You know everything if you read Ambassador Report." She doesn't tithe anymore, but she is still ready to flee to Petra.*

*-AR Reader*

*After three years I finally got the nerve to give all my back issues of your publication to my daughter, a WCG member for twelve years. I just got word she has resigned from the church. I guess maybe Ambassador Report did the trick. Keep up the good work.*

*-Texas*

*I always feel bad when I send off my small contribution because for this small amount I receive back so much help from your Report. I pray you can continue sending it out.*

*I left the WCG in 1978. and as you know, doctors were "a no no." I became very ill in the sixties and was told by the minister that I could only have a physical exam. This I did and was informed by the physician that I needed immediate surgery. I did not have the surgery, and through the years my condition became worse. My husband had to retire in 1978 because of his heart, but as a veteran he gets medical assistance plus Medicare. However, I'm left out in the cold as far as Medicare goes; I have ten years to go before I will be eligible for help.*

*If I had the money, I would honestly be tempted to sue the WCG for what they have done to me. My condition has become such that I have had to quit my job, and I must spend several hours per day lying on a heating pad Believe me, I'm trying very hard to overcome my resentments and turn my life completely over to Almighty God. I wonder how many more "dumb sheep" have permanent body ailments because of the Armstrong church.*

*-Mrs. Mary White  
Ontario, California*

Editor. Quite a few. And many have died prematurely from following the fanatical advice of WCG ministers. We are not saying there have not been documented cases of healing through faith. Nor are we saying that the medical profession should be worshipped. Like the legal profession, it too has its serious problems. Indeed, if one reads books such as *Confessions of a Medical Heretic* by Robert Mendelsohn M.D., one can easily see the importance of being vigilant in dealing with doctors. Nevertheless, too many WCG ministers have, through their own ignorance, or through the infliction of guilt, and spiritual intimidation, encouraged members to shun various proven medical techniques that could have been of immense value in alleviating pain and improving the quality of life.

\* \* \*

If Herbert Armstrong really believed it is more blessed to give than to receive, the above situation would give him the golden opportunity to prove it He could simply contact Mrs. White and offer her whatever assistance she needs. But Herbert and his church use the lame excuse that she is no longer a WCG member to write her off and forget she ever existed. The tithes she gave and the charitable acts she performed while in the church are quickly forgotten. The conduct of Herbert and his church in heart-rending cases like these stinks to high heaven! It shouldn't matter what doctrines Mrs. White may or may not believe. She was hurt by church advice, and the church ought to willingly help right that

wrong.

Remember the story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37? A traveler was robbed and beaten and left to die. Along came a "righteous" Levite and a priest. Both glanced at the wounded traveler and quickly passed by, probably thinking: "This man is not a fellow priest (or Levite) or someone important. It would neither increase my fame or fortune - no one would even notice - so why waste my time helping." But along came a lowly Samaritan. When he saw the man bleeding and dying, he didn't first inquire which doctrines he believed, if he tithed regularly, if he was in good standing with his synagogue (or church), if his wife wore makeup, etc. - major considerations before the WCG will help you - but he simply opened his heart and pocketbook, took pity on the man, and gave him medical treatment.

In most civilized countries, if you purchase a product and are injured using it due to a defective design, the company owes you monetary restitution. Any legitimate church likewise ought to willingly restore you to your former condition if you are injured due to following its advice. That's only basic Christian love. But the WCG has for so long helped only its own members, and even then, begrudgingly. The thousands of WCG members who left because of conscience or were booted out over such picky doctrines as hair length, wearing makeup, not giving enough money to the church, asking questions the minister didn't like, etc. are left in the gutter to bleed and die - just as the priest and Levite left the traveler to die. Words cannot express the anger, sorrow, and frustration we at the *Report* feel when we receive letters like the above. Herbert can spare \$200,000 for London's Royal Opera or \$10,000 for a gift to an Asian dictator like President Marcos, but evidently he can't spare even 50 cents for a sympathy card for the many Mrs. Whites out there.

Oh sure, the WCG gives to "charity." While many former members live in pain and poverty, the church opens wide its hand in front of the cameras to subsidize string quartets, famous entertainers, Red Chinese economists, the USC Law Center, archaeological digs, Asian dictators, pet projects, plays, etc. Funny, but we never noticed the New Testament apostles supporting these types of activities with church funds. We don't remember Paul presenting Nero with silver busts of the Caesars, sponsoring "cultural" events for the Roman upper class, or supporting Roman entertainers with church tithes. We never read of the apostles sponsoring banquets to honor the Roman emperors or senators. They instead preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to them and urged them to repent of their wicked ways. But wine and dine them on the contributions of the poor faithful? Never!

Sadly, Mrs. White is not some unusual case. Over the years we have received many hundreds of such letters. They continue to pour in every week. Some we publish, but most do not wish their story to be made public. Yet for every letter we receive there are dozens or even hundreds more in similar circumstances. The sad fact is Herbert and his band of myrmidons have destroyed the health, careers, marriages, and lives of thousands.

*Ambassador Report* has attempted to warn all who will listen of the bitter fruit of "the Ambassador experience." We wish we could do more, but we are only a small group of individuals with very little power. Not only are we very limited financially, we are limited in time.

Most AR readers have little idea of the huge amount of time we must spend weekly in answering mail, assisting the news media, and counselling and encouraging those who have no one else to turn to for help. In what can only be described as a personal Christian ministry, the Gerringers, the Zolas, and other Ambassador College graduates affiliated with the *Report* spend untold hours helping those hurt by, and cut off from, the WCG. They have so regularly opened up their homes to those in need of shelter and help that we have often kidded the Gerringers and the Zolas that they should have been in the hotel business.

Because of the principle found in Matthew 6:1-4, there are those who would prefer that their good deeds not be made public. But the fact remains, there are Ambassador graduates who have implimented many of the Christian virtues learned while obtaining their theology degrees. Nevertheless, no matter how much we try to help those burned and burned out by the "Ambassador experience," the real responsibility for the many tragedies rests with the Armstrong organization. With an income of \$10,000,000 per month, you would think they could set aside just one percent of that amount - say \$ 100,000 a month - to help the many Mrs. Whites out there.

Perhaps the best suggestion we could offer is that we all pray the WCG finally gets a repentant change of heart and begins to do something to help the many "little people" around the world whom they have so callously used, abused, and discarded.

- JT

[Next Issue \(AR27\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

**AR27 April, 1984**

Editor's Note: Many readers have wondered if we stopped publishing because our regularly scheduled January issue never appeared. Unfortunately, due to illness on the staff and scheduling problems we were unable to put out an issue for the first quarter. Please be assured that we will not discontinue operations without notifying you. Nor do we ever take any subscribers off our mailing list without first sending a renewal letter.

One other thought: We hope this issue will not prove offensive to any readers. Some of the language of the lawyers quoted is, at times, unpleasant, as are many of the details we have uncovered about Herbert Armstrong's private life. As much as we would prefer the truth to be otherwise, we feel it best that the facts be presented without alteration. However, if you prefer not to read of lawyers reviling each other or of Herbert Armstrong's private life, then we would suggest you skip over the first few pages.

### **The Insanity Continues**

On April 16, 1982, through his lawyers, Herbert W. Armstrong, the 91-year-old founder of the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College, filed for divorce against Ramona, his 45-year-old wife.

Since then the legal maneuverings by both sides have been extensive and continuous. Numerous trial dates have been set, only to be later postponed. At present, the proceeding is scheduled to begin April 25, with the judge having set aside five full weeks for the Armstrong divorce trial.

The legal expenses incurred so far by Armstrong's organization are, of course, astronomical. Estimates of just how much the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) has spent on the suit range from a conservative one million dollars to well over five million. Ramona has stated that she would have once seriously considered an out-of-court settlement for half that amount. No wonder many members of the Tucson bar and judiciary are beginning to raise eyebrows at what is transpiring.

To fully appreciate how completely ludicrous, how totally insane, this whole divorce case really is, one has but to read the court record. The editor of this publication has read over 3,000 pages of court documents filed in the case in just the three months following our last issue.

It takes little imagination to visualize the incredible waste of court time (and taxpayers' money) being caused by this ongoing Armstrong spectacle. Judge William Sherrill, who has now replaced the retired Judge Hooker, was undoubtedly thinking of this when, on November 9, he issued the following order:

This action was filed over one year ago and there are now 28 or 29 file folders containing pleadings, motions and exhibits to said pleadings or motions. Some files contain only one or two motions.

On November 7th and 8th, 1983, attorneys for petitioner filed two motions. These two motions, with attached exhibits, are a stack of paper 3/4ths of an inch thick. Respondent, on November 8, 1983, filed a reply to a motion of petitioner, the reply was 3/8ths of an inch thick.

THE COURT FINDS the above is typical and is a waste of space, is redundant and contrary to the concept that pleadings (Rule 3 of ARCP) shall be simple, concise and direct and that motions (Rule IV, Uniform Rules of Practice) "...shall be accompanied by a memorandum indicating as a minimum the precise legal points, statutes and authorities relied upon, citing the specific portions or pages thereof...."

If either counsel expects the Court to fully read each and every page of each and every motion and exhibit, they are misguided.

The Court believes that if counsel are unable to write a motion and argument in ten (10) pages or less, including exhibits, they have failed to analyze the problem or failed to take sufficient time to write it out concisely. These failures should not burden the Court.

While those companies that sell copy machines, papers, and supplies might well applaud counsel in this case, the Court does not.

IT IS ORDERED that no motion, brief or reply exceeding ten (10) pages, including exhibits and attachments, will be set for hearing or considered by the Court unless special permission has first been granted.

The Armstrong divorce trial has been delayed not just because of the excessive paperwork and verbosity. Herbert Armstrong (HWA), who initiated the suit in the first place, and his lawyers have used just about every trick in the book in attempting to withhold information. Here is one example taken from but one HWA deposition, in which Deckter, Ramona's lawyer, is asking about and showing copies of certain extremely large checks - up to \$50,000 - made out to and endorsed by HWA:

MR. DECKTER: This is the production of your account, Mr. Armstrong.

THE WITNESS (HWA): I don't see any such thing there. It makes no difference.

Q Sir, I am going to ask you to take a look -

A I don't - I never saw them. I never handled them. I never - my signature is not on any of them. It never came to my attention. It's the first time I've seen it.

Q Isn't it true, sir, that you wrote out personal checks on this account that were converted into cashier's checks on each and every one of these checks?

MR. BROWNE (HWA's lawyer): I don't understand the question. It's vague and ambiguous.

THE WITNESS: As far as I understand the question, I don't remember anything of the kind at all.

MR. BROWNE: All right.

MR. DECKTER: You wrote out numerous checks -

A I won't say that it's true. And I don't know that it was at all.

Q You have to let me ask my question, sir. Isn't it true, sir, that you wrote out numerous checks out of that account, endorsed numerous checks from that account, at least a dozen or so of them as reflected in the exhibits before you?

A I do not believe so.

Q Converted to cashier's checks?

A No, I do not believe so. I do not remember that....

It is amazing how HWA's memory has gone blank at key moments. Here are more examples:

---

&COPY;1984 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly as finances allow.  
John Trechak, Editor Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor Connie Geringer, Circulation  
Manager  
Founding Publishers: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len  
Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

MR. DECKTER: Didn't you cause an additional \$10,000 to be forwarded to your brother after he lost or misplaced the first \$10,000 that you had sent to him?

MR. BROWNE: I am going to object.

THE WITNESS: I never heard of anything like that in my life.

MR. BROWNE: I object.

THE WITNESS: It's all news to me. I don't know anything about that.

MR. BROWNE: I object to the question as being constitutionally impermissible as previously defined, not relevant and not material. Any payments that are made by the church are not going to be inquired into -

THE WITNESS: That's right.

MR. BROWNE: - in this proceeding. If you want to ask whether Mr. Armstrong personally sent some of his own money to anyone, that we would allow you to go into. But not church finances. So please don't answer any questions, Mr. Armstrong, in that area.

MR. DECKTER: Did you cause \$10,000 to be sent to your brother for a down payment on his house?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question. It's been asked and answered and answered.

MR. DECKTER: Do you not have information, sir, that that \$10,000 was then taken by your brother's wife and she absconded with it?

MR. BROWNE: Objection.

MR. DECKTER: Well, do you know whether or not his wife absconded with it?

A I do not, no.

Q And that after you received that information that you caused an additional \$10,000 to be sent to him for the purchase of a home?

A I have no recollection of such thing whatsoever. I don't know.

Q Are you saying it is untrue or you have no current recollection, sir?

MR. BROWNE: He's answered.

THE WITNESS: I answered you.

MR. DECKTER: Are you saying, sir -

A I said, I do not remember and I don't know.

Q Do you recall telling Mr. David Robinson in May of 1974, at Big Sandy, that you had been having a romance with Amy, a church employee, that you believed to be approximately 25 years old at that time?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question as being irrelevant and immaterial, instruct the witness not to answer it. What's the relevancy, counsel?

Q (By Mr. Deckter) Do you accept that instruction?

A On the advice of my counsel I won't answer. Some of these things I would like to answer, but I know your legal, well, methods. And I think you know my opinion of them. I don't approve of such methods at all .... there was no romantic relationship whatsoever, but there was sort of a grandfather and granddaughter affection, nothing more, and nothing more ever happened.

MR. DECKTER: That is not the question that was submitted to the witness.

MR. BROWNE: I will object to the question, that it's irrelevant and immaterial.

THE WITNESS: The whole question is designed to put me in a wrong light, and it is not true.

MR. BROWNE: State your question, Mr. Deckter. Go on, what's the question?

THE WITNESS: The whole thing is an attempt to defame me.

MR. BROWNE: I understand that.

THE WITNESS: And defame my character, and it is not true. There was never anything in any manner, shape or form wrong. The relationship with this Amy Bowman. I had even forgotten her name.

MR. BROWNE: All right.

Q (By Mr. Deckter) The question is, sir, isn't it true that in May of '74, at Big Sandy, you had a conversation with Mr. David Robinson and during the course of that conversation you discussed your romance and romantic relationship with Amy Bowman, a person who you believed to be 25 years old at that time?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question, that it's irrelevant and immaterial. But you may answer it. Did you tell that to Mr. Robinson?

THE WITNESS: I don't remember the conversation at all, but there never was any romantic relationship with Amy Bowman.

HWA may not remember the conversation, but David Robinson certainly does. A detailed account appears on page 67 of his book. As for Ms. Bowman, she has stated that HWA tried to fondle her breasts, but that she objected. Soon afterward she was

transferred from being one of his secretaries to a position in the editorial department. The above objections by Armstrong's lawyer Browne were not isolated occurrences. During the HWA depositions Browne again and again and again instructed his client not to answer questions put to him. Note this exchange:

Q Who is Lucy Martin?

A Lucy Martin is the former head of the department of music of Ambassador College.

Q Was she a church member?

A No.

Q What was her salary while working for Ambassador College?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being constitutionally impermissible as previously defined, irrelevant, immaterial and I would instruct you not to answer that question, Mr. Armstrong. It's a matter of privacy.

THE WITNESS: On my attorney's advice I will not answer.

MR. DECKTER: Did she receive bonuses?

MR. BROWNE: Same objection, same instruction.

MR. DECKTER: Did she receive gifts?

MR. BROWNE: Same objections. From whom are you asking about gifts now? Are you talking about the church or from Mr. Armstrong?

MR. DECKTER: Presentation of furniture and other remunerations.

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, will you get the question on the record?

MR. DECKTER: That's the question.

MR. BROWNE: By from whom?

MR. DECKTER: From Ambassador College and/or Worldwide or whoever her employer was that had previously provided her with use of furniture.

MR. BROWNE: All right. To that question I will object as being constitutionally impermissible and irrelevant and immaterial and instruct the witness not to answer.

MR. DECKTER: Will you answer the question, sir?

A I will not answer then.

Here are a few more excerpts from the HWA depositions:

Q Who is Velma Van der Veer?

A Van der Veer, she is the former head of the Home Ec. Department of Ambassador College.

Q What was her salary?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question. Are you asking what was her salary paid by Ambassador?

MR. DECKTER: Sure.

MR. BROWNE: All right, object to the question as being irrelevant, immaterial and constitutionally impermissible and I instruct you not to answer.

THE WITNESS: I will not answer.

Q (By Mr. Deckter) Was Ms. Van der Veer also given a lifetime contract?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question. You're asking about a lifetime contract from the church or the college?

MR. DECKTER: Yes.

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question as being constitutionally impermissible, irrelevant, immaterial and instruct you not to answer.... Let's take a five-minute break. We've been going at this for more than an hour and a half...

Q Mr. Armstrong, what has been the source of support of Beverly Lucille Mattson since 1975 or 1976? I'm sorry, Beverly Lucille Gott [HWA's elder daughter].

A I think she's on retirement by contract made out by Stanley R. Rader.

Q Contract. Does she have a contract of employment with Worldwide or Ambassador or one of the various entities?

A I think so.

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question as constitutionally impermissible and not relevant or material. But you may answer the question.

THE WITNESS: I think so, yes....

Q Isn't it true, sir, you got her a lifetime contract?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question as being vague and ambiguous, constitutionally....

Q How many church loans to members of your family have you caused to be made, sir?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being irrelevant, immaterial, constitutionally impermissible and instruct the witness not to answer.

THE WITNESS: On the advice of my attorney, I refuse to answer.

MR. DECKTER: How many loans to relatives by the church have you caused to be forgiven?

MR. BROWNE: Object to the question as being constitutionally impermissible as previously defined and irrelevant and immaterial and instruct the witness not to answer....

Q Do you recall, sir, is that correct, the residence on Como Drive was Mr. Rader's residence and was furnished with, quote, church furniture prior to your stay this time?

MR. BROWNE: Object to as being immaterial and irrelevant and constitutionally impermissible since it deals with Mr. Rader's relationship with the church and has no bearing here and I instruct you not to answer.

THE WITNESS: All right. I will not answer then.

MR. DECKTER: Isn't it true, sir, that you caused a gift to be made of all the furniture in the Como residence to Mr. Rader upon his retirement or resignation from Worldwide?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to....

THE WITNESS: No, on my attorney's advice I refuse to answer....

MR. DECKTER: How many employees of the Worldwide Church of God have you caused a gift of furniture to be made to?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being constitutionally impermissible, irrelevant, immaterial and instruct the witness not to answer. And, again, the constitutional and impermissibility as previously defined -

THE WITNESS: On the advice of my attorney I refuse to answer....

Q Sir, are you familiar with a corporation named Southwest Business Systems?

A Named what?

MR. BROWNE: Southwest Business Systems.

THE WITNESS: I believe that is used for the mail processing office here.

MR. DECKTER: Sir, when you talk about mail processing, does that include money or checks?

MR. BROWNE: Objection, what is the relevancy of that?

MR. DECKTER: We have the account at Valley National Bank and I want to know if that office was used at all with those funds. That's one of the areas that I would like to inquire into.

MR. BROWNE: I don't understand, the office used for those funds? I don't know what you mean.

MR. DECKTER: That's what I will find out. I mean there are checks sent to someplace, maybe Pasadena, then physically brought to Tucson. Then Tucson does some sort of division of those checks and funds.

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being constitutionally impermissible, irrelevant and immaterial. If you know, you can answer. I don't know if you know that.

THE WITNESS: What is the question again?

(Question read)

MR. BROWNE: The question is also vague and ambiguous.

THE WITNESS: The mail processing department includes many things.

MR. DECKTER: Okay. As far as Southwest Business Systems in Tucson, it is a mail processing -

A That is a part of it. That's a division of it, yes. It's all under Mr. Rice.

Q Okay. Are you saying when that's a division of it, are you saying that it does include the handling of cash and/or checks here in Tucson?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as constitutionally impermissible, vague and ambiguous, irrelevant and immaterial.

THE WITNESS: I don't see the connection. I don't know why I should answer.

MR. BROWNE: I will instruct you not to answer. There's no materiality there....

Q (By Mr. Deckter) Sir, have you authorized the transfer of cash from any country in the world to Switzerland, cash? These are not checks or anything. Letter transfers of funds, or anything like that?

MR. BROWNE: You may answer only insofar as it pertains to you personally, and not as pastor general of the Worldwide Church of God.

THE WITNESS: Personally, I have not, no.

Q (By Mr. Deckter) And as pastor general

A Not to my knowledge, ever.

Q And as pastor general?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being constitutionally impermissible, irrelevant, and immaterial, vague and ambiguous, and instruct you not to answer.

Q (By Mr. Deckter) Do you accept the instruction, sir?

A I do. I don't remember of any such thing anyway.

Q Sir, are you familiar with the corporation incorporated in the State of Colorado by the name of Herbert W. Armstrong, the Apostle of the Church of God and His Successors, a corporation sole?

A There were a number of these corporations in different states, filed by my attorneys.

Q Do you know if you sit as an officer or director of that corporation?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being constitutionally impermissible.

THE WITNESS: I refuse to answer that.

Hour after hour, Browne objected to question after question put to HWA. Here are a few more of the questions that Herbert, on his lawyer's advice, refused to answer:

Q Is that your testimony, that everything you do in your life ultimately has a purpose to further the church?

Q Isn't it true, sir, that that's the basis for your testimony when you say that money was used for the church in that you are asserting that everything you do and that everything that is spent is spent on behalf of the church?

Q Sir, was there a change in the rules of divorce in 1976, with regard to - or before - with regard to a divorce between two persons who were both members of the church at the time of the requested divorce?

Q Sir, have you caused a sum of \$350,000 to be paid to the University of Southern California?

And HWA refused to answer dozens more! At no time did Herbert clarify adequately his financial relationship to his many church corporations, give a reason for large financial payments and gifts to numerous women and relatives, dispel the persistent rumors of Swiss bank accounts, or counter Ramona's key arguments about the WCG being a cover for HWA's personal financial schemes. The questions left unanswered may very well reveal more about the true HWA than those he answered. And yet counsel Allan Browne persisted in advising his client to be silent on a vast array of pertinent subjects.

Browne's objections became so predictable that even HWA fell victim to their almost hypnotic cadence:

Q Isn't it true, sir, that her only purpose of attendance with you in '75 and '76 was solely as a result of your personal and romantic relationship with Ramona?

MR. BROWNE: Objection to the question. It's vague. It's ambiguous. It's irrelevant, immaterial and constitutionally impermissible; it's argumentative as well.

MR. DECKTER: Go ahead.

MR. BROWNE: Can you answer the question?

THE WITNESS: No, I refuse to answer on my attorney's advice.

MR. DECKTER: Your attorney did not instruct you not to answer it.

MR. BROWNE: I will instruct him not to answer.

The incessant objections also proved a bit too much for Ramona's attorney, Louis Deckter, who on at least one occasion could not contain his frustration with Browne.

MR. DECKTER: Did you cause Garner Ted to be terminated from any position with any of the Worldwide corporations?

MR. BROWNE: Would you repeat that question, please?

(Question read)

MR. BROWNE: Same instruction, same objection as to the previous question.

THE WITNESS: Yeah, I think that would be entirely an ecclesiastical matter, yes. I refuse to answer.

MR. DECKTER: Did you allow or permit Garner Ted to take with him the furniture from his church residence in quotes at the time of his termination?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to unless you lay a foundation as to what furniture.

MR. DECKTER: You're fucking nuts. How can I lay a foundation?

MR. BROWNE: What did you call him?

MR. DECKTER: How can I lay a foundation?

There were some questions even Allan Browne could not find an objection to, but even in those cases Ramona's lawyers had to pry the truth out of HWA. Notice this excerpt:

Q Tell me about your formal education, sir.

A Well, when I was 18 years old I found a book in the public library titled *Choosing a Vocation*.

Q I think we are getting off the track, sir.

A Pardon?

Q Excuse me, I want to know about your formal education, sir. Did you attend high school.

A Yes.

Q Did you graduate from high school?

A No, I did not.

Q What year did you terminate high school?

A After three years.

Q Did you even obtain a GED, a general equivalency diploma?

A No. I have honorary PhD's, however.

Q Have you ever attended an accredited college or university?

A No, I have not

Q Have you obtained -

A As a student I have not. I have -

Q I don't mean have you visited at one or maybe having spoke at a school or something like that.

A I just recently spoke before top people in the law school of the University of Southern California.

Q Yes, sir.

A In the presence of the president of the university.

Q What I am asking, though, is if you attended as a student.

A No.

Q Or have received any degrees for work actually performed there?

A I have received an education but not that type.

### **Ramona's Deposition Gets Nasty**

One of the more interesting documents we have come across is the transcript of a Ramona Armstrong deposition that was supposed to be dealing with her ability to pay legal fees. Present were Jack Ettinger, one of her divorce lawyers; Alex Baynes, her lawyer in the pending criminal case (see our last newsletter); David Wolfe, one of HWA's lawyers; and, of course, Allan Browne. We quote from midway into a dispute between Browne and Ettinger:

MR. BROWNE: I think he can answer my questions without -

MR. ETTINGER: You said I am - on the record. I am not talking to her off the report. I'm not off the record. Everything I have said is for the record.

MR. BROWNE: As of this moment you are not but there were periods of time -

MR. ETTINGER: No, there were no periods. Only in your mind there were periods of time, Allan.

MR. BROWNE: No.

MR. ETTINGER: Go ahead, tell him.

MR. BROWNE: No, I think that is not true.

MR. ETTINGER: You have just got to fight over nothing.

MR. BROWNE: I don't want to attack you.

MR. ETTINGER: Yes, you do. Go ahead. Next.

MR. BROWNE: Keep your voice down and we will get along better.

MR. ETTINGER: Look, I will start smoking you out of this room if you want to play like that. I am courteous to you. I don't smoke in the room with you. I don't know what else you want. As usual you want everything your way.

Go ahead, answer.

MR. BROWNE: Please.

THE WITNESS: Excuse me, what was the question again?

MR. BROWNE: Who are these friends you are living with?

A Cliff and Maria McKinney....

[Editor. Here we delete five pages of rambling questions about her previous traveling agendas and further arguing between lawyers.]

Q Did you drive in from Las Vegas for this deposition?

A No.

Q Flew in?

A No.

Q How did you arrive?

A I drove, but I didn't drive in from Las Vegas.

Q Where did you drive from?

A Originally Las Vegas. But I drove in from Phoenix and I spent the night in Phoenix.

Q And who drove the Mercedes and who drove the Oldsmobile?

MR. GAYNES: Don't answer it.

MR. ETTINGER: It's obvious we are going to have to seek a protective order and he's not going into the issues. He just wants to harass you like he always does.

THE WITNESS: I know.

MR. ETTINGER: It's on the record. So he won't get down to the issue of your ability or any funds that you may have in order to pay attorneys' fees. He just wants to harass you.

Let the record so show. Go on with your questions.

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, I'm not going to argue with you because I don't want to waste valuable time.

MR. ETTINGER: You always waste valuable time.

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, don't interrupt me. Let me finish. I let you make your claims. Let me state mine and we will get on with it.

MR. ETTINGER: She answered the question.

MR. BROWNE: I am not attempting to harass the witness.

MR. ETTINGER: You are.

MR. BROWNE: Don't argue with me. Let me just get it for the record.

MR. ETTINGER: The questioning itself will determine whether it's harassment, not what I say or what you say. So why don't we get on with the damn questions.

MR. BROWNE: The harassment is your interruption. That's continuous.

MR. ETTINGER: No, my things are not continuous. It's your questions that require interruption because you won't get down to the issue of her ability to pay and what she's using the money for.

MR. BROWNE: What you are trying to do is interrupt my flow of questioning.

MR. ETTINGER: No, I'm not trying to interrupt anything.

MR. BROWNE: And try and knock my questioning off balance.

MR. ETTINGER: It's impossible to do that because you are going to go on more tediously for days and hours no matter what anybody does or says to you. Okay. Go ahead...

Q Now, after March 1983 when you and Jeff and Mr. Wally McKinney left your sister, where did you go from there?

MR. GAYNES: Let me tell you how I feel about that. I am representing her in a criminal case and I'm not really in this divorce case. But what I came here for was because there's been a request for attorneys' fees. She's receiving \$1,800 a month I understand from Mr. Armstrong on a Court order. She's asking \$300,000 in attorneys' fees. If she paid away \$1,800 a month, every single penny of it, in attorneys' fees it wouldn't matter because it would take her one thousand 66 months or a total of 88 years to be able to pay that amount of attorneys' fees. You are now asking questions about driving, about incidental expenditures and it's my suspicion that you are trying to get far more than just asking her questions about what her present income is and ability to pay. And because she has a Fifth Amendment right, I am asking her not to answer any more of those questions.

MR. BROWNE: Fifth Amendment right?

MR. GAYNES: Right. What you are doing is you are going into things that the county attorney is going into and looking at. They are continuing to investigate her. You are trying to find out where she's going, where she's been, who she's been with, which is part of their ongoing investigation and I'm not going to let her jeopardize herself like that unless you specifically are asking her about things that directly have to do with how in heaven's name she's going to pay \$300,000 in attorneys' fees and whether or not that \$300,000 in attorneys' fees is reasonable.

MR. BROWNE: You are instructing her not to answer that question?

MR. GAYNES: The last question you asked concerning who is living where, where she went, what car, who she was with, anything that has to do with things that are not directly in relevance to the issue of how she's going to pay \$300,000 of attorneys' fees and whether those attorneys' fees are reasonable, I cannot let her answer it because you are getting into things that are afield with obvious attempts to aid the prosecutor.

MR. BROWNE: We have reason to believe that she has enormous funds of money available for the payment of attorneys' fees as well as support and I am intending to ask her where she's living so that I can find out how much she's paying and where she's getting the money to pay for it. Now, the question of where she's going is simply foundational to find out where she went after that so I can find out where she lived, who paid the rent and where she's got the money for it. And this is a series of questions dealing with her lifestyle. And it also goes to the issue of credibility in this case. So those are the points I have asked.

MR. GAYNES: If your claim is that she has enormous funds, which she has denied in previous depositions, she has stated for the record it has not changed and if you are asking for enormous funds of money available elsewhere, then all you are trying to do is aid the prosecutor. I am going to tell her not to answer anything else....

MR. ETTINGER: Ask her questions. Don't ask me any more questions. If you are going to play games with me -

MR. BROWNE: I am not playing games.

MR. ETTINGER: I said get off the record and I will tell you what I told David. It's not part of the report on my - I am not being deposed. You want to depose me don't you? I'm not going to be deposed. You asked me a question and I am telling you. Typical Hollywood, Beverly Hills shit you are pulling. Ask her the questions. Don't ask me any questions anymore. Just like - why have you needed my records today? I'm not being deposed. She doesn't know what is on my records. All she knows is what she knows. That's why I don't trust you or anybody in Beverly Hills.

MR. WOLFE: What day would you like to be deposed?

MR. ETTINGER: You name it and notice me and we will get it set, David.

MR. WOLFE: All right.

MR. ETTINGER: Because you can't do anything with you people off the record and I know [what] I've heard took place and I know you don't tell me the truth when I ask you a question. You want it on the record. Fine.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Ettinger -

MR. ETTINGER: Ask. Will you get on with her deposition. I am so tired of listening to you Beverly Hills lawyers who are - and I am so tired of it and you want proposals and nothing ever comes back. I'm not proposing anything. We are going all the way through with the press. They are going to be at the trial. They are going to be here about the motions being taken I think by your Church. They are going to hear everything and that's - I think that's the way it should be no matter what the cause is. I think that's the way it has to be handled. Otherwise this case is never going to be settled because you like to play games in Hollywood. You like professional games in Hollywood. You don't want to settle anything. You want to try this, milk the Church. I guess you've spent a half a million dollars... to lawyers in this divorce case and you will milk the Church until they cannot stand it any longer.

MR. BROWNE: We had a settlement made.

MR. ETTINGER: You had no settlement. We have never had a settlement, Mr. Browne. You people are low.

MR. BROWNE: Lower your voice.

MR. ETTINGER: I am not going to lower my voice. You have a cigarette.

MR. BROWNE: Okay. Continue yelling.

MR. ETTINGER: You know you are going to milk the Church just like they milked the public. Wait until I get on the trial and the press is there. They will have a ball with this goddamn Church. And I want you to - and this is all part of the record. They are going to have a ball. Right. They are going to have a ball with the Church because they do know they are not honest with the public.

MR. BROWNE: Why aren't we honest with the public?

MR. ETTINGER: Browne, ask this lady questions. You know why. You've been there, Counsel, for many years.

MR. BROWNE: Are you telling me that I am acting dishonestly?

MR. ETTINGER: I never said that at all about you.

MR. BROWNE: Okay.

MR. ETTINGER: You are not the Church are you unless you tell me you are. Don't ask me any more questions because they upset me. I have a very low threshold for you Beverly Hills lawyers. Go ahead with your questions of Mrs. Armstrong....

Q Have you had any conversations with Mr. Gaynes about how he would be compensated for appearing here today in this divorce action?

MR. ETTINGER: Do not answer that question on the grounds that I instruct you, that it is typical Beverly Hills tactics to ask you these questions when Mr. Gaynes came here today and told you he is not here representing her in the divorce action. He is here to protect her rights in a criminal action that is pending that was instituted by the Worldwide Church of God [and] I wonder how many criminals are in that church myself. So, besides that, do not answer the question.

MR. BROWNE: I just want to indicate that my silence is only because I will not give Mr. Ettinger the satisfaction of being provoked into acting like a child. He is using very unprofessional language and I will not respond to it.

MR. ETTINGER: I am using the proper response to the type of questions you are asking. And, you know, you can ask that question properly without getting involved in the criminal action which we are not here on today.

MR. BROWNE: I refuse to get involved in an insulting match because I don't want to drop down to your level.

MR. ETTINGER: That's fine. I wouldn't want to drop down to your level.

MR. BROWNE: You will not provoke me. So you can say anything you want. You can call me a thief. You can call me anything you want.

MR. ETTINGER: I haven't called you a thief.

MR. BROWNE: Anything you want, anything you want.

MR. ETTINGER: I say your tactics are not, do not behoove the type of deposition we are taking on the question of attorneys' fees.

MR. BROWNE: Anything you say will not provoke me.

MR. ETTINGER: Fine.

MR. BROWNE: So you can get red in the face and raise your voice.

MR. ETTINGER: I love it. I'm having a great time here.

MR. BROWNE: All right. That's fine.

MR. ETTINGER: You better-.... finish the questions so the Court can make one ruling.

MR. BROWNE: I cannot go forward under the restrictions that you've placed upon me.

MR. ETTINGER: I haven't placed any restrictions upon you. The Court ordered you to go into the issue. The Court has ordered you to go into the issue of the temporary attorneys' fees, period. You have attempted to go into many issues, including pending criminal charges which you have instigated through your church, other types of matters.

MR. BROWNE: Counsel, I'm not going to sit here and have you make all sorts of misstatements.

MR. ETTINGER: I am not making misstatements.

MR. BROWNE: They are misstatements, purposely calculated to provoke me.

MR. ETTINGER: No, you cannot be provoked. How can you be provoked?

MR. BROWNE: I refuse to listen to it. The deposition is adjourned until another date.

You may have noticed that in the above Browne is claiming Ramona "has enormous funds of money available." Then not long afterwards Browne claimed in a legal document:

Mr. Armstrong does not have the personal financial capability to comply with the September 16, 1983 Order of this Court, the Honorable Robert J. Hooker, requiring that Mr. Armstrong "pay to respondent's attorneys forthwith \$100,000.00 as and for temporary attorneys' fees."

It will be very difficult to find a more preposterous pair of statements anywhere.

### **More Crazyiness**

The Armstrong divorce trial has been postponed repeatedly, but it is only a matter of time

before the entire mess becomes very public. Going through the court records, one finds an amazing number of remarkable statements. One document filed recently by Ramona's lawyer states:

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG comes to this Court seeking equitable relief with unclean hands and while he is in pari delicto in that he has failed to maintain and keep the property in proper repair as required, he has failed to pay the court ordered interim attorneys' fees award, he has refused to allow RAMONA ARMSTRONG access to the house without great difficulty, and he has allowed his guards to hassle his wife when she wanted to use her house, all contrary to the spirit and letter of this court's Order of November 5, 1982.

Then, there is a mysterious sealed document dated Dec. 14, 1983 (and from Ettinger and Deckter) with this warning on the outside:

THIS ENVELOPE IS NOT TO BE OPENED NOR THE CONTENTS DISCLOSED WITHOUT COURT ORDER.

Here's another oddity. HWA's lawyers entered into the court record a 12/17/81 correspondence by HWA to Ramona. Here is a key quote (emphasis his):

I wrote you that Satan desires to destroy you, next to me. But GOD ALMIGHTY has called you to be His number one woman on earth - the FIRST LADY of His Church, and all the Church, ministers, laymen, men and women, SINCERELY WANT you to be their FIRST LADY - simply by being one of them, and being my wife. That is a RESPONSIBILITY you simply don't dare reject or neglect.

Another unusual document submitted by HWA's lawyers is a copy of a March 1, 1981 Agreement between HWA and the WCG that ostensibly cancelled HWA's previous contract with the WCG. The agreement seems to paint Stanley R. Radar as some sort of culprit behind the previous contract. But a careful scrutiny of the new agreement reveals this key sentence:

NOW THEREFORE, FOR A GOOD AND VALUABLE CONSIDERATION IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

What that "good and valuable consideration" consists of is not stated. Is it \$1 million a year? \$2 million? \$20 million in a Swiss bank account? We don't know - yet.

We do believe, however, that so much information may eventually emerge from the HWA divorce trial that it could fill a very large book. And apparently it will. Lawyer Ettinger, who is fighting tooth and nail to get HWA to pay him the legal fees ordered by the court, has had to turn to other means to get paid for his services. He has informed HWA's lawyers that he now has a contract with Doubleday to write a book on the WCG and the upcoming trial.

### **How Not to Have a Happy Marriage**

Should the Armstrong case ever go to trial, the lawyers for Herbert will undoubtedly

attempt to portray their client as a dedicated man of God and their opposition's client as a "fallen woman." Herbert's lawyers have introduced into the court record various private correspondences between Ramona and a friend, Wally McKinney (no relation to Jack McKinney, an aide to WCG lawyer Helge).

Included among those correspondences (and bear in mind, not only have HWA's lawyers not yet established their authenticity, but Judge Sherrill has indicated he will not allow them to be introduced as evidence at the trial) are a Christmas card from Ramona to Wally, a novelty card from Wally to Ramona (with the punch line "...it makes me feel horny!"), and a number of affectionate short letters from Ramona to Wally written while, it is claimed, she was abroad on tour with HWA.

Assuming the letters are authentic, they raise an interesting question. How did HWA's lawyers gain possession of them? With over \$5,000 per month being spent by HWA on Pinkerton agents, one might suppose super-sleuthing was responsible. However, a careful look at the "evidence" leads us to suspect that that may not have been the case. For if one thing comes through in the letters, their postmarks, return addresses, etc., it is that no great effort, if any, was expended to conceal the Ramona-Wally friendship from HWA! And herein lies a remarkable insight into the true nature of "the Apostle."

Longtime readers of *Ambassador Report* know how Herbert's intimate relationship with Ramona predated their marriage by a number of years. In recent months Ramona has admitted to friends that she and Herbert maintained a sexual relationship for three full years prior to their marriage. At some point along the way Ramona had some misgivings and so asked Herbert what he would do if he discovered some man in the church was involved in a nonmarital sexual relationship with one of the church women. He answered that he would immediately disfellowship them both. "But," questioned Ramona, "isn't what we are doing also wrong?" To her surprise Herbert said, "No." When she asked why, Herbert explained, "Because I am an Apostle!"

We can only speculate on how fast her disillusionment with HWA progressed. Those who have read *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* by David Robinson (still in print and available for \$10.00 postpaid from John Hadden Publishers, Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135) are aware of HWA's lifelong preoccupation with masturbation and his keeping of a log book in which he has recorded the dates of these episodes. Enough WCG ministers became aware of this oddity that the little book became widely known in the ministry as HWA's "flog log." Not only did HWA discuss this activity with male friends, but while "courting" Ramona he actually told her this lifelong habit was the reason it would be necessary for her to submit to his sexual advances. In other words, if she didn't give in, he would have to again "flog away."

Not only that, he went on to explain to her the details of this personal passion. He told her Brylcreem, the once-popular American hair dressing, was his favorite body lubricant. "Because," he explained, "it most closely approximates the fluids of the female vagina."

Ramona was undoubtedly more than a little surprised by HWA's revelations, especially since he had condemned masturbation as a terrible sin in his widely circulated sex manual. Nevertheless in 1977 Ramona and her spiritual leader were finally married. For a

time, it seems, there was marital bliss. But in 1978 HWA suffered a massive heart attack, and it was after that experience that HWA, unhappy with his increasing inability to perform sexually, decided to fly to Romania where, at a famous "youth clinic," he received "shots" (presumably hormone injections) intended to rejuvenate his sagging sex life.

According to Dr. Floyd Lochner, who was HWA's personal trainer and present on the trip (as was Henry Cornwall, who served as an interpreter), HWA proved an uncooperative patient at the clinic and the results were not satisfactory.

HWA then heard of a sex clinic in London, England, and after a considerable effort on Lochner's part, was able to gain admittance. There Herbert was fitted with a ring-like device which HWA's former accountant Jack Kessler has described as "a specially made prosthetic dildo (which he carries in a Hermes pouch)."

Unfortunately for Herbert, this device also did not prove satisfactory. He then began to discuss the possibility of a prosthetic implant. Developed by Dr. F. Brantley Scott at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, this contraption consists of a fluid reservoir placed in the lower abdomen, two inflatable cylinders placed in the penis, and a pump which is placed in the scrotum. HWA, however, never got around to having the implant.

One former Armstrong secretary has stated, "It would be very difficult to imagine any man more obsessed with his own penis than Mr. Armstrong." Nevertheless, it appears that HWA's lifelong fear of surgery prevailed and after much anguish he decided to instead resign himself to what he felt would be a sexually inadequate future. According to certain sources close to the Armstrongs, it was at that juncture that HWA made what can only be described as a very "man-of-the-world" proposition. He told Ramona that because of their great difference in age and because of his sexual dysfunction, he knew she would enjoy dating other men. This, he said, he would allow her to do, but on one condition - that she be "discreet." In other words, it would be okay as long as the church members did not find out about it! One can only speculate as to what Ramona's feelings were at that point. After all, such arrangements were not even hinted at in Herbert's two booklets on Christian marriage or in his book *The Missing Dimension in Sex*. Nevertheless, it would not be long before Ramona would receive even bigger surprises from "God's Holy Apostle."

### **HWA Confesses to Incest!**

Many readers will recall that when David Robinson's book appeared in 1980 it contained numerous allegations shocking to even some of HWA's longtime critics. No accusation was more startling than that found in the book's last chapter. There Robinson charged that HWA had maintained an intimate sexual relationship with the younger of his two daughters for a period of approximately one decade beginning in the early 1930s.

The Armstrong organization, through surrogates, attempted to use the courts to block distribution of the Robinson book, but failed miserably (*Ambassador Report*, Sept. 1980). It is most remarkable, however, that in attempting to stop distribution of the Robinson book, never once was it asserted that the incest allegation was untrue. Nor did Dorothy

Mattson, HWA's younger daughter, ever come forth to deny the incest story (and she has repeatedly refused to respond to queries from the *Report* regarding the matter). In spite of all this, it seems there are still some who prefer to believe that the incest story was fabricated. Let us briefly review the facts.

In 1971 Garner Ted Armstrong paid a visit to his younger sister Dorothy. He had long been suspicious of the kind of relationship his father and sister maintained during his youth. They chatted over a few drinks and then Ted told her bluntly of his suspicions. She did more than admit the allegations. With candor she related detail after shocking detail.

For a number of years GTA kept the information to himself. But Dorothy did not. She divulged the same information to many others including David Antion (GTA's brother-in-law) and Lois Chapman (who had been married to the late Richard Armstrong, Ted's older brother).

Dorothy's story as related to Ted and others was that Herbert had begun fondling and heavy petting her in 1933 when she was thirteen years old - around the same time that HWA now claims God was using him to found the modern era of the only true church. But he did not begin to go "all the way" with her until three years later. One day Dorothy returned home from a date with a young bank teller to inform her father that she had just been "half-raped." To her surprise, Herbert was actually "elated" over the news. Herbert decided it was time to show her how it was really done. From then on Herbert went "all the way." The year was 1936; Dorothy was 16 years old. Strangely, Dorothy has claimed that Herbert later went on to become a good friend of the bank teller.

The incestuous relationship went on for years, but it was apparently not mutually enjoyable. Dorothy has related to friends how on one occasion in a hotel room she so strongly protested Herbert's abuse that the manager knocked on the door and asked what the reason was for all the noise. Herbert was quick to inform him that his "young bride" was a bit uncooperative due to inexperience. Satisfied with the alibi the manager left. Dorothy has claimed that Herbert then overpowered her, and after tying her to the bed and gagging her, proceeded to rape her. It's a pity Herbert neglected to include this incident in his book *God Speaks Out on the New Morality*.

During those years, besides taking her on supposedly church or ministry-related business trips, it was not uncommon for Herbert to take Dorothy out dancing on Friday nights. On one such occasion she asked him if he ever worried that one of his church members would see them. He told her no, because, in effect, they were too stupid to be out dancing on Friday night and that he had them well-trained (in keeping the Friday sunset to Saturday sunset Sabbath).

These incidents were but a part of the awful truth Dorothy related to Garner Ted and others. In spite of church upheavals, arguments with his father, personal emotional problems and considerable notoriety about his own sins, Ted said nothing about his father's shameful past. Not until 1978.

That year, during a heated argument between GTA and his father, HWA threatened to "destroy" Ted through making public certain information about his personal life. But Ted

responded in kind saying he could destroy HWA with the information he had. Ted charged his father in no uncertain terms, yelling: "You fucked my sister!" Herbert, shocked at Ted's knowledge of the incestuous relationship, could only reply, "Well there have been times in my life when I have gotten far away from God." The conversation - overheard by GTA associate Benny Sharp - was the last face to face meeting between the two men. And Ted has since related how the hateful look he saw in his father's eye made him suspect they would never see each other again.

As was covered in great detail in our 1977 issue, during the early '70s Garner Ted Armstrong became highly infatuated with an Ambassador College coed. The resulting affair caused great confusion in the higher echelons of the WCG. Former WCG evangelist David Antion recalls how, at the time, he discussed the problem with HWA. Antion was for years perplexed by the almost Freudian analysis offered. HWA told Antion that Ted was simply fantasizing the younger woman as being his own daughter. The statement made no sense to Antion until years later. (As an aside, it is interesting how Ramona has claimed that HWA has been, over the years, very jealous of GTA's supposed sexual prowess.)

The last meeting between GTA and his father in 1978 was not the only time HWA confessed to the incest allegation. In 1980 Henry Cornwall, then an aide to HWA, read the Robinson book soon after it appeared and asked HWA directly if the chapter on incest was accurate. HWA told him it was. He then instructed Cornwall that his wife Ramona was not to see the book or learn of the incest story. Unfortunately for Herbert, Ramona already had a copy of the book and was in the next room listening to the Cornwall-HWA discussion. Shortly thereafter, she too confronted HWA about the incest allegation. And once again, Herbert admitted it was true, but begged and pleaded with Ramona not to let this fact get in the way of their marriage. The cause of the problem, he said, had been Loma, his first wife. Considering the perversity of Herbert's past, is it any wonder Ramona's love would begin to wane?

One can only speculate on how much Herbert's first wife Loma knew of what had transpired for ten years between her husband and her younger daughter. but some individuals who were then close to the Armstrong family did notice that toward the end of her life Loma was not on good speaking terms with Dorothy and that during the last year or so of her life she appeared to have lost almost all will to live. She died in 1967 after an illness that many say could have been cured by medical science, had she availed herself of that help. It is interesting to note also that HWA's great preoccupation with world touring began right around that time.

Ramona has reported to friends how the Robinson allegations preoccupied HWA's mind for a considerable period. She has also reported seeing a typed statement intended for Dorothy's signature. It stated that she (Dorothy) had never had a sexual relationship with her father. The document was, and we'd be willing to bet still is, unsigned. Dorothy undoubtedly knows that to sign such a statement would prove financially costly, removing any leverage she still possesses over her father. (On a recent trip to Big Sandy, Texas, HWA was quoted as saying his daughters show him very little affection and care only for his money.)

Dorothy has stated that her sexual relationship with her father continued into the early

forties. In 1943 Herbert officiated at the ceremony in which Dorothy was married to Vern Mattson, who soon afterward was to serve overseas in the U.S. Marines. We have no information that the incestuous relationship continued beyond that point. However, Dorothy has related to friends how, around the time of her engagement, Herbert told her that her marriage need not put an end to their own special relationship.

Shortly after Vern's discharge from the military, Herbert was able to provide him with employment within his growing organization. Although Dorothy drifted away from her father's church by around 1951, Vern continued his association. He was the organization's business manager before the Albert Portune era.

What caused him to leave the Armstrong corporation? Was it then that he discovered the awful truth about his wife and father-in-law? The following quote taken from the transcript of one HWA deposition provides a clue (Ramona's lawyer is asking about Dorothy's house being sold to the WCG):

Q Did she sell it to the church?

MR. BROWNE: Objected to as being irrelevant and immaterial and constitutionally impermissible. Transactions between third parties and the church are none of anyone's business in this particular case and instruct you not to answer.

THE WITNESS: I refuse to answer.

MR. DECKTER: Okay. Where did you provide her with living accommodations?

A I provided her with living accommodations ever since, on and off ever since - Now, wait a minute until I think of the year. Let's see, I don't know. Began back in the 1950s, ever since Vern Mattson resigned from being business manager of the church.

Before leaving the subject, one other desposition excerpt is worth quoting. Ramona's lawyer was asking HWA some background questions concerning his health.

Q And do you suffer from any other diseases or chronic problems other than what we've discussed?

A Not that I know of.... I have had difficulty sleeping for the last, oh, let me see, ever since 1933.

That was the year HWA began abusing his own daughter. Is it any wonder he hasn't slept well since?

## **Worldwide News**

The Worldwide Church of God - aptly called the Armstrong Adoration Society (A.A.S.) by some - is not only still dedicated to maintaining its idol's lifestyle, but is embellishing it even further. The customized Gulfstream II (G-II) that Herbert jets around in is

apparently not swank enough for the super jet-setter. The Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation has developed a new jet, the G-III, which sells for about \$13.5 million (*The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 20, 1983, p. 17). The Gulfstream Corporation, which is taking orders for the new jet, loaned one to Herbert for his recent trip to New Zealand - just so he could get the feel of the new model.

\* \* \*

HWA's *Plain Truth* magazine, which recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, now has a circulation of over 6.6 million. The church's theological publication, *The Good News*, is up to over 207,000 copies (186,000 go to non-WCG members, according to the Dec. 5, 1983 *Worldwide News*). The Nov. 21, 1983 issue of the *Worldwide News* reported that the WCG will have a fall feast site in the city of Nanjing in communist China.

\* \* \*

The WCG is again getting some new doctrines from its leader. In his booklet *Your Awesome Future - How Religion Deceives You*, HWA writes (p. 27): "These scriptures indicate we shall impart life to billions of dead planets, as life has been imparted to this earth." The WCG ministry is also now teaching that its members and their children constitute the 144,000 of the book of Revelation.

\* \* \*

In the WCG, some things never change. Notice these two HWA co-worker letter quotes. First, from his Oct 18, 1983 letter.

"I am writing from London. Have had meetings with important key leaders here and in Europe, and obtained confidential information of crucial world events soon to occur. I feel God will move swiftly soon to make a short work preparatory to Christ's coming. It won't be long now!"

Then in his Dec. 18, 1983 letter (emphasis his):

"Brethren and co-workers, these are the most momentous days of earth's history. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS FROM NOW ON! Our ALL should be dedicated to GOD'S USE, to warn as many millions as we may.

"I was interrupted in the midst of writing this letter, by our treasurer, Mr. Leroy Neff. Income has suddenly dropped down during the past six weeks - people apparently are spending money on Xmas gifts.... Need I say to you God's Work NEEDS YOUR PRAYERS? - and a GREAT SUDDEN SACRIFICE IN FINANCIAL OFFERINGS?..."

## **GTA Burns Bridges**

Since the day Garner Ted Armstrong was booted out of the WCG in 1978, there has been speculation - often well- founded - that it was just a matter of time before he would

return. In recent months, however, it has become quite evident that no such reconciliation will occur. GTA's Nov. 21, 1983 letter to his followers was his strongest statement ever against his father's organization. Here are a few key excerpts:

"*Many* have been spreading the rumor that 'Ted will be going back into the Worldwide Church of God one of these days.' (I was executive vice-president of the Worldwide Church of God, and its chief spokesman on 'The World Tomorrow' radio and television programs for over twenty years.)

"Continually, we hear of such rumors; perhaps you are one of those who has believed that I will be 'going back' into the other church one of these days.

"However, my father has *made it plain* to his closest aides and most trusted friends that THIS IS IMPOSSEBLE! *Why*, then, do thousands of members of the Worldwide Church continue to believe 'Ted is coming back' when HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG DOES NOT BELIEVE IT?

"Actually, my father has made such an occurrence *impossible* as he continues to WIDEN and WIDEN great DIFFERENCES - continues to DEPART farther and farther from the *body of truth* he had taught for the previous forty years!...

"Now, I realize there are *great departures* being made in doctrine by the parent organization, and that more and more significant *differences* are being erected all the time....

"I have known, from my early twenties, that Almighty God caused my birth by a miracle. My father and mother *told me so* dozens of times; my father has explained how, following special *prayer*, God gave me my voice and speech by a *miracle*.

"For these past twenty-eight years, since Jesus Christ placed me in His ministry, I have known Almighty God intended me to fulfill my life's calling - that of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God TO THE WORLD!...

"But I *cannot agree* with the Catholic doctrine of 'the primacy of Peter!' I cannot agree that leaders in the church can avail themselves of professional medical attention and deny it to the laymembers! I cannot agree with the brutalization and exploitation of the women of God's church! I cannot agree that the church should be kept on tenterhooks, expecting to 'flee' at any moment when the *major prophecies* of Christ had not yet been fulfilled! I cannot agree that the 144,000 represents the CHURCH!

"I *cannot agree* that I should preach before Gentile leaders in the name of 'Allah,' or tell them about a 'strong hand from someplace'!..."

### **Waiting for UFO's**

Last Oct. 24 Garner Ted Armstrong sent out to his followers a letter containing this somewhat amusing story:

Recently, in a small community just to the north of us, we learned of one of the most bizarre incidents involving these false predictions of which we have heard in a long time. A would-be prophet has a number of gullible followers believing that between a set date and *this Christmas* [1983] they will be "taken up" by "UFO's"! The UFO's are, allegedly the "ships of Tarshish" mentioned in the Bible. The scenario, according to this would-be seer, is that they will be taken up to a space platform to undergo a process of "purification" and then on up to heaven, to return at some time later and *rule the world!*

All of this would be hilariously funny and merely another example of ludicrous buffoonery were it not for the fact that it has seriously affected the lives of a number, including at least one *multimillionaire* who has allegedly divested himself of all of his properties and wealth (for the "spiritual leader" of the group has apparently urged such) and is confidently waiting to be met by a UFO!

The millionaire Ted was referring to is former WCG writer Jerry Gentry and the head of the religious group, former WCG minister Cecil Battles. It appears Battles has gained something of a devoted following for his work which he refers to as the "Song in the Night." Believing the UFOs would arrive around Christmas time to take them away, many quit their jobs and decided to refrain from sex (with their mates) as a means of spiritual preparation.

Of course, nothing happened at Christmas time, so the date for the UFOs to arrive was pushed forward to January. When January didn't pan out, the date was pushed forward a few more months. Battles' followers use the WCG hymn book at song services and have added Purim to their list of must-keep days. Members of "The Song" - many of them former WCG members - send their tithes to Battles. Ironically, Battles claims he tithes to Herbert Armstrong, whom he refers to as "the good man of the house" of Matthew 24:43 who suffered his house to be broken up.

Some people never learn.

### **Alexander Does Prison Time**

It is rare that the AR publishes a detailed account of the recent life of a former WCG member, but we think recounting some of the events of Gary Alexander's life after leaving the WCG will prove not only interesting but instructive to our readers. Gary entered Ambassador College in Pasadena in 1963, where he distinguished himself as a student. After graduation he began writing for *The Plain Truth* and quickly rose to a position of responsibility. He began questioning the church's doctrines in the early seventies, becoming known to close friends as a "liberal."

In Feb. 1976 he left the church and took a job at the University of Southern California (USC) Computing Center as a documentation analyst. His first step out of the church seemed well-executed compared to most WCG employees who got themselves fired before they contemplated getting another job. But after working 3 years at USC and after having received a 10 percent pay raise, he quit to work "for far less money and far fewer benefits at the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International [FGBMFI]," he explained in his newsletter AMEN. Why? "I did it for reasons of conscience because I

thought the Charismatic renewal, represented by FGBMFI, was the fullness of the Gospel.... Dumb? Yes! I quickly found out that the politics and hypocrisy of the Full Gospel people exceeded that of Ambassador College, and I begged my associates at USC to take me back, which they did, at lower pay."

Just when it seemed that Gary had "seen the light," he got side-tracked again. Tom Williams - former WCG pastor, insurance salesman, diet-plan (Slender Now) salesman, and now president of Liberty Ministries International (LMI) - contacted him from Virginia and asked him to get involved with LMI, which for \$3,000 would ordain you, help you set up your own church, and help you obtain the many tax exemptions available to ordained ministers. Lured by high wages, financial and tax advantages, and what he thought was an opportunity to express himself religiously without control by others, he jumped at the chance in Sept. 1979. (See AR, 3/24/80, p. 6).

Gary wrote: "My work for LMI included: (1) two Liberty Line magazines, (2) an unpublished book manuscript, *America's First Freedom: The Religious Roots of Our Republic*, and (3) much of the Minister's Manual, the portions dealing with scriptures and philosophy. In addition, I contributed to the promotional brochures, but most of that material was written by Tom and Linda Williams or Bill Morris." Soon, however, disillusionment with LMI set in due to hypocritical conduct by LMI members and their use of church funds, so he left LMI, but he still wasn't paying all his taxes. He claims that even after leaving LMI in late 1980, he was "still under the charismatic influence of Tom Williams until spring 1981," at which time he "sought independent tax counsel" and found he'd "misunderstood the tax codes."

Unfortunately, all this knowledge came too late for Gary because he was accused of income tax fraud (a felony). In late 1981 he testified before a grand jury, paid back taxes with penalties and interest, and agreed to testify against Tom Williams' alleged key co-conspirators. As Gary wrote, "It was that or face 10 years in jail... I was able to plea-bargain down to a misdemeanor... This is a slap on the wrist compared to Tom and Linda Williams, who face 137 years (each) and \$407,000 in fines if convicted on all 64 counts they face."

According to the *Richmond News Leader* (12/8/83), federal tax authorities filed charges against Gary Alexander, former WCG minister Douglas B. Taylor of Florence, Kentucky, and Tom Boody of Howell, N.J. for "allegedly conspiring with others to defraud the federal government of taxes." Gary pleaded guilty in Federal court in Dec. 1983 and luckily was sentenced to only 30 days in a Louisiana prison. He has served his sentence, has been released and has resumed his job as managing editor of *Wealth* magazine, a new publication advocating buying hard assets and put out by right-wing goldbug James Blanchard III.

Those who know Gary know he's talented, hardworking, and creative. Our readers may be wondering at this point how such an analytical and gifted writer could be so easily sucked into what Gary admitted was a tax-dodge scam. In one of his *AMEN* newsletters he wrote: "I've always been intelligent, but I've never been smart. My IQ has been tested three times at above 150, but a high IQ is much like being 7-feet tall. It's an accident of birth... and it can easily be a bigger liability than an asset." So Gary had a high IQ but fell for a tax-dodge scam. How? Why? Perhaps because he thought with his heart, not his

head. Perhaps because tax exemptions and big money were more enticing than common sense. But probably because he was too trusting. He commented about Tom Williams, the person who talked him into the home-ministry scheme: "Tom Williams became my 'mentor' at college, and he has always been able to manipulate my weaker personality by his dominant leadership. He helped me in practical matters, such as dating and social life, while I helped him with his schoolwork.... Tom called me ... promoting the concept of LMI. He flew me back to Richmond June 10 and made me a vague offer to work for him at 'double the take-home pay,' without spelling out any details. He told me that he had discovered methods for reducing taxable income to zero."

Perhaps one of the main reasons both Williams and Alexander got in trouble with the home-ministries scheme was that neither of them had had any formal education in the technical fields of tax accounting, law, or finance. If they had, possibly they would have saved both themselves and their investors - who by the way each paid \$3,000 for their advice - a lot of worry, tax penalties, and wasted time.

Gary's prison experience was insightfully detailed in a recent issue of his newsletter *AMEN* (Alexander's Monthly Economic Newsletter). For further information write: *AMEN*, P.O. Box 1727, Metairie, Louisiana 70001.

### **Ambassador Alumni News**

"The Reunion," a British group made up of former WCG members, reported in their last newsletter that they will be having another get-together on May 19. Those considering attending or those who may like copies of their excellent newsletter should write to: Mr. P. Griffiths (secretary), 190 Tythebarn Lane, Whitlocks End, Shirley, Solihull, W. Midlands, England.

\* \* \*

Former *Plain Truth* managing editor Brian Knowles recently married the former Lorraine Rapp and has become the managing editor of *World Insight*, the publication founded by Ken Storey. Their address is: P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102.

\* \* \*

Former WCG evangelist Charles Hunting is now with Albustan United Enterprises Company, Ltd., in Saudi Arabia. He travels extensively evaluating projects in international property development.

\* \* \*

*I have been out of Worldwide since 1972, but still enjoy following WCG events. However, there is life after Worldwide! It's possible to incorporate the experience positively and go on just as you have done and are helping others to do. I am studying to be a chiropractor and enjoy life a lot these days.*

-Gaie Feuerstein  
California

\* \* \*

As some of you may have already heard, Howard Clark, the former WCG minister and Ambassador College instructor, suffered a massive heart attack in January. After six weeks in intensive care, he is now slowly improving. Doctors have speculated that the problem had its origin in the stress Clark experienced years ago while in the WCG.

In spite of his physical difficulties and mounting medical bills, Clark's well-known wit remains intact. Over the phone he quipped: "When old Herbert had his heart attack a few years ago, they had to massage his heart at one point to get him revived. Not long afterward he started claiming to friends that he had been 'resurrected!' Well, I'm one up on him. When my heart stopped, they needed to use the paddles to get it started again. If I was still in Worldwide, Herbert would probably take me on tour as another resurrection case."

Howard asked us to thank the many friends who sent him get-well cards. Any who wish to drop him a note may write to him at: 3998 Yellow Wood Rd., Oroville, CA 95965.

### **Buchner Updates Bibliography**

John Buchner of Australia has informed us that his *Armstrongism Bibliography* is now in its second printing and has been expanded. Copies are available for a contribution of \$10 each (postage included). Those who ordered the original version and wish to obtain the new section may obtain the supplement for \$4.

Buchner is also preparing a new study on the WCG which he recently wrote us about:

*A thesis (and subsequent hook) is being prepared that researches the link between the Worldwide Church's media propaganda and its membership. This study will be both scholarly and fair. It is necessary to send questionnaires to former members. The greater number of responses, the more reliable will be the results of the study. The respondent's name will not be recorded. Interested people are urged to forward their names and addresses as soon as possible to John Buchner, P. O. Box 170, Gordon N. S. W. 2072, Australia.*

### **Literature of Interest**

*Tithing (God's Command or Man's Demand - Which?)* by Tony Badillo, Xavier Publications, 3122 Jerome, Dallas, TX 75223. 102 pages, spiral bound. \$8.50 plus \$1.00 postage. Texas residents add 5% sales tax.

In the last few years a number of excellent papers have been written showing the many flaws in Herbert Armstrong's tithing doctrine. Mr. Badillo's study, however, is the most thorough one that we know of available in print. It is filled with many insights into the

subject, giving even those not too well versed in the Bible an understanding of the whole tithing subject. This study may prove of particular value to relatives of those under the Armstrong tithing program.

\* \* \*

"Three Open Letters to Herbert W. Armstrong"  
by Maurice Johnson

Available from: Sound Words, Box 4202 1, Los Angeles, CA 90042.

\* \* \*

*The New Testament Church of God and It's Organization* by Keith Hunt, a minister of the Biblical Church of God (Canada). Available for \$5.00 by writing the author at: Box 964, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 7N1, Canada.

\* \* \*

Some time ago Garner Ted Armstrong appeared on the John Ankerberg TV show in Chattanooga. John Buchner tells us transcripts of the entire five segments are available for \$6.00 by writing: John Ankerberg, P.O. Box 8977, Chattanooga, TN 37411.

\* \* \*

*I draw your attention to the character of "Henry Armitage" in the novel, Lucifer's Hammer by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle.*

*Henry Armitage is obviously modeled on Herbert Armstrong.*

*-Larry Taylor, California*

\* \* \*

*Shortly after my husband and I left HWA's organization we bought a book called 30 Years a Watch Tower Slave by William J. Schnell. The inner workings of the Jehovah's Witness group is much like HWA's. Good reading for anyone interested in their group.*

*-AR reader*

\* \* \*

Author John Tuit (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*) has informed us that he can supply copies of Herbert and Ramona Armstrong's 1980 Arizona state and federal income tax forms. Interested individuals should send \$1.00 per copy (to cover photocopying and

postage) to The Truth Foundation, 11 Laurel Court, Freehold Township, New Jersey 07728.

\* \* \*

A few weeks ago we received a flyer from Mr. D. C. Hall of the True Didache ["doctrine"] of the Worldwide Church of God, an organization in Oroville, California. Mr. Hall will soon publish a book titled *God's Scenario*. According to Mr. Hall, "The Bible maintains all religions are false and deceptive. This includes every known sect on earth." Topics to be covered in his book include: "why church doctrines are meaningless; why the breasts of the male show a primordial androgynous creation, proving man originally created bisexual; why and how all mankind to be saved," etc.

The publication order price is \$7.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling per copy. For more details write to: Mr. D. C. Hall, P.O. Box 2077, Oroville, CA 95965.

\* \* \*

One of our readers, Mr. Leon J. Lyell of Australia, recently sent us a copy of an article he had published in *Signs of the Times*, a Seventh-Day Adventist magazine. It is entitled "The Seventh-Day Men." Mr. Lyell wrote us:

*The article is based on studies I made while still in the WCG. While I am now not in that Church, nor any other, I still have an interest in religious history and am following up the themes outlined in that article. It is surprising to discover that there is a wealth of information about Sabbath keepers in seventeenth-century England which has not been sifted through by the normal historians and which has been "misused" as it were by the Sabbath-keeping churches.*

*Many Sabbath-keeping churches would have us believe that all through history there has been "One Truth Church, " by which they mean one organization, which held the same doctrines as "our denomination " - whichever one that may be. The truth is quite different and much more interesting and instructive.*

*If after reading the article you feel it may be worth the consideration of AR readers, I would be happy to send them a copy. I would be grateful if any interested persons would include \$7.00 to cover postage and copying.*

*In addition I am considering starting a newsletter that would concern itself with "Sabbath history" and be mainly concerned with uncovering those Sabbath-keeping groups and individuals pre-William Miller. Ultimately, if the idea takes off, I would hope it could cover the period from A.D. 31 to the present.*

*The contents of the magazine/newsletter would be historically accurate (rather than denominationally oriented) articles and reproductions of books and pamphlets written by long-forgotten Sabbath keepers.*

*At this stage I would simply like to see if there is sufficient interest to make the venture worthwhile.*

*-Leon J. Lyell  
35 Scott Grove  
Kingsbury 3083  
Victoria, Australia*

\* \* \*

*The other day I had occasion to come upon this item in Books in Print, 1983-84 edition: Herbert Armstrong and His WCG: An Exposure and an Indictment by John Bowden, 64 pages, 1982, paperback, \$3.00. Write: American Atheist, Box 2117, Austin, TX 78768-2117.*

*-West Virginia*

\* \* \*

Important! We remind our readers that the various groups and literature mentioned in the *Report* are presented for informational purposes only. Their mention in this newsletter should not necessarily be construed as any kind of endorsement of all the views they espouse.

## ***Letters***

*I am writing to inquire just what has happened in the WCG divorce case.... The ministers here have announced from the pulpit on two or three occasions that HWA and the church were awarded everything he had asked for and the matter had been settled very satisfactorily for the church as well. When some of the members asked questions for further information, they were told it was none of their business.*

*These ministers are still preaching Petra and the goat dens, urging all to be preparing to leave at once on HWA's call. He has ordered a new plane to be built to his specifications and to be delivered in April, so they say, to help carry those deemed worthy.*

*-Colorado*

*I'm motivated to write you at last - hoping you're still publishing - after hearing a rumor through current church members that certain members are being or have been chosen to flee with HWA in the spring, around Passover, to Jerusalem for awhile, then to another place in the Middle East for some time, and finally to Petra. During this period of time, these members have been told, via letters from certain ministers who have not been named, that HWA will be both deaf and blind. However, he will be one of the witnesses - as will GTA. GTA is supposed to be aware of this plan and is in on it, but he hasn't officially been reunited with his father or the WCG (and won't until later). These members (and I assume others) have already sold*

*their property and relocated to a temporary home in anticipation of the planned flight. They have been told that not all members will be chosen to flee, and those chosen ones may invite those close to them to go with them even though they (the invitees) are nonmembers. They must only agree to obey church rules. These members have received no letters from HWA - only from ministers.*

*My husband and I are quite concerned about this development since we both have several family members who are still loyal to HWA and the church.*

*-Virginia*

Editor. These wacky rumors about Petra persist and persist. The part about GTA is obviously not true. What the origin of this nonsense is we're not sure, but with WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse still loose, any kind of WCG hallucination is possible.

*I was visiting with the only remaining WCG member that I know of in this immediate area last fall. He was very concerned that he might lose his farm soon because of his financial situation. He has to pay \$20,000 a year in interest expense right off the top before he can do anything else. He had to put in a walk-around irrigation system three years ago when an estate was settled. The first year he had what would be a good dry-land crop (the irrigation system was installed too late in the season to start out as an irrigated crop at the beginning) but not very good for irrigated. The second year a heavy hail storm ruined his crop. It stopped just before it got to my crops. This year it was drought and bugs that couldn't be killed that severely damaged his crop. It would seem that tithing to HWA doesn't help him much.*

*In my own case I have noticed that I'm doing far better financially than when I was tithing to HWA. If this had happened when I was tithing to him, I would have thought I was being blessed for tithing. I don't know what the future holds, but I can't help but think that, with the conditions that have been extant in this country the last few years, I would be in lots worse shape financially now if I had continued tithing to HWA. This same thing seems to be true of other former members that I have talked to.*

*- Nebraska*

*On December 1982 I requested an AR and sent a \$5 cash donation to cover cost. Not long after that I began to receive money out of the blue (various unexpected sources) - about \$700 plus. What I am trying to say is that in all the years I paid tithes to HWA (six years), nothing out of the ordinary ever came my way. It was quite the opposite. My life became a tragedy. You would not believe the disasters that came on me. I am grateful I did not make much more than about \$16,000 per year during my HWA experience. I also would like to state that I am a single person in my late 30s. At the time I did not have any bad habits to speak of. I lived with relatives and my expenses were minimal. I often found it hard to believe how a man with a family could pay three tithes to the WCG and get by. Prior to the WCG I was able to save money and had that to fall back on. But then later, after paying my gross tithe, sometimes I could just barely make it to work.*

*-New York*

*Thank you for your literature. I have been out of the WCG four years due to my own observations, mostly to do with doctrine. However, I was also appalled at the fear which gripped the members - the way that even fairly well-educated people were afraid to act upon their own initiative, even in small matters to do with everyday living.*

*This fear I believe is partly brought about by the persistent instilling of unbiblical attitudes towards the Devil. I remember Francis Bergen's sermon "The Roaring Lion" (around 1975) assuring everyone of the necessity to "stay with the herd - the church - keep within the security and protection of the church."*

*This kind of teaching plus the continual thundering about "the god of this world" brainwashes people to believe that Satan is more powerful than Christ, with the only protection being the WCG.*

*Again, when teaching about the mind, the will of God, and/or obedience, the whole thing would be injected with the insinuation that one could never trust one's own mind - one's own God-given common sense. They encouraged everyone to put their trust in the ministers and HWA instead of trusting in Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

*WCG minds are closed against the fact that the gospel is much more than announcing the return of Christ (which Armstrong only usually brings up when demanding more money).*

*Indeed HWA seemed to me to be more concerned - even obsessed - with the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent than he ever was with the gospel. And this is craftily engineered to equate with any disobedience towards himself or his organization.*

*-England*

*I'm a student at Kent State University in Ohio and am concerned about the WCG influence on our campus. On January 31, 1984, the WCG is sending Mr. Bill Jahns to talk to students.*

*-Ohio*

Editor: Considering that on your campus there is a WCG organization called "Readers of the Plain Truth, Kent Student Organization" you should be concerned.

*For many years we were another example of the "doing what we were told" bunch. This blindness on our part caused my husband to quit a good job (it was in a defense part of Tenn. Eastman) and give up a good salary, a good bonus every year, all life insurance policies, hospitalization (full coverage), etc. You know the story. This was at an age too late to build up any place else. So now we are living on social security alone. Fortunately, we own our home. When we finally realized that no man can save us and refused to "bow the knee to HWA" we were disfellowshipped and marked. The only reason we were given was that we had to be totally obedient to Herbert. Neither God's*

*nor Christ's name was mentioned. We quit "cold turkey" before we were disfellowshipped. Thankfully, we realized it was to God that we owed our allegiance.*

*-Virginia*

*After viewing the movie "Return of the Jedi" I was struck by the similarities between Herbert Armstrong and the evil Jabba the Hut. Jabba, whose huge jowls shook like jello with every evil laugh, even had a sail barge (flying whorehouse?) complete with dancing women. The only thing lacking from Jabba's lair was a piece of Steuben crystal (are you listening Herbert?).*

*-Missouri*

*I did not decide [to leave the WCG] on the spur of the moment. But it all jelled one Sabbath when a so-called minister stood up and said, "On the night much to he remembered you will be meeting in the brethren's homes. We don't want anyone teaching or talking about God's work or the Bible because there wouldn't be a qualified minister there."*

*And my brain said, 'WHAT?! That is it I have had it. What kind of brainless idiots does he think he is talking to?' And I left that day - I never said a word to anyone - and have never returned and I never will.*

*That remark was the summation of all I had read and heard. The proverbial last shoe was dropped.*

*I have not had one person other than the local minister after three weeks call to inquire why I left. They are flat-out scared to ask or they might leave themselves. I find it very sad and very disappointing.*

*-Ohio*

*Every time I sit down to read the AR I find myself fascinated reading about what's happened to people who left Worldwide. Some seem to have really gotten it all together and are the model of success, but a surprising number seem to be repeating the same mistakes they made when they joined Worldwide. By that I mean that they are looking for simple solutions to life's major problems and they seem to latch on to anyone with a glib argument without first spending the time to read widely in religion, psychology, philosophy, etc. If those people had done their homework properly in the first place, they would never have joined Worldwide. Yet, after making that mistake once, many invariably end up putting total faith and a lot of money into some new organization headed by an ex-Worldwide minister who, the day before he left the WCG, was teaching total error, but now is a fountain of wisdom and inspiration. It makes no sense. I'm not saying an ex-Worldwider shouldn't seek to join other groups - just that he should sample several, read widely, and be extremely slow to commit his hard-earned money to any group. Otherwise, he may end up once again penniless and bitterly disillusioned.*

*-California*

*This is my first correspondence with your organization. I have been a member of the Worldwide Church of God for the past eight years now, and as you probably know, what I'm doing is taboo as far as the church is concerned.*

*As a prospective member, I was encouraged to prove, to my own satisfaction, the truth of the Bible, but as a member I am told not to lean to my own understanding but to follow without question the dictates of Herbert W. Armstrong. The hierarchy does not permit a free discussion of biblical ideas openly among its members. This disturbs me. I feel I've been manipulated, and I sense more and more an atmosphere of fear and intimidation directed at the ranks by the church leaders. Things are happening in this church that the members are simply not privy to. That's why I've written to you. I'd like to have some answers.*

*-California*

*In the April 1983 issue you have listed in the "Executive Exodus updated" the name of Peter Whitting. I rang Peter to inform him of this and he said he would not be contacting you himself in order to deny the allegation. In fact Peter is a minister in a church in Victoria, so would you please set the matter right in your next edition.*

*Peter was among those suspended out here in 1980 during the big upheaval that took place around July and was reduced in rank as it were to co-pastoring a church. Later, however, he was restored to his full status. Even though I am no longer a member, I hold him in very high regard. The church would be a happier place if there were more like him.*

*-Australia*

Editor It was not an "allegation." However, we want to be accurate. If Whitting is not ashamed to be called an HWA rep, we'll be only too happy to warn the public.

*Concerning what happens to former WCG members. I am a Sunday school teacher (adult class) in the First United Methodist Church. My wife sings in the choir. She was a WCG member for over 20 years. We are both former AC students. We both visited the minister [of our current church] and explained that we had no desire to become members and that we would understand completely if he wanted us to discontinue our active role in church activities. He responded that he was very happy to have the contributions we make of attendance and participation. The people are wonderful and we find the experience very helpful. Most importantly we feel free to worship and believe as we see fit and to openly disagree. The Methodist Book of Discipline strongly encourages everyone to continually pursue a deeper understanding of and a personal relationship to God.*

*The point is, there are many fine, respectable, organizations already in existence where people can contribute to the welfare of others and also worship God in a very personal way.*

*After reading much literature, we still appreciate the job you are doing and highly respect the material published by Ernest Martin, that is more because of the attitude in which it is presented, rather than because of the positions taken.*

*WCG members have a valuable experience to share with others when they leave the WCG. By all means they should actively seek out existing churches where they can contribute to the spiritual well-being of the community in which they live.*

*-Louis and Sandy Gaskins  
-North Carolina*

*My interest in the WCG is for my younger brother who has been involved with them since he was 13 years old. He has given them everything he has ever made as far as money and has been convinced that he is not able to own anything. He is now 31 years old and lives with Dad and Mom.*

*-Oregon*

*At the present time I wish to be taken off your mailing list. My circumstances are such that I am no longer a member of the WCG, but my husband is. And of course he is very upset if I receive outside literature. I am trying to hold my marriage together and feel for the time being it is best to stop the literature.*

*Thank you for your time and information through the Report. I hope I can receive the AR again in the future. I can only pray and hope God will open my husband's eyes to what the truth really is.*

*-Michigan*

*It appears to me that the young have the most to lose when HWA "gets" them. Not only are they financially crippled, but they are socially crippled, sexually denied, and curtailed from any healthy meaningful interaction with the opposite sex. What a crime and what a tragedy.*

*-Massachusetts*

*Please keep the Report coming. We try to get some passed around but the people [in the church] were warned not to read anything. They are told they are welcoming Satan into their home.*

*I would love for you to do some checking on all the beatings and paddlings the young ones got. I agree with Jack Martin: The child-rearing booklet was a disaster. I did not have any little ones, but I saw beautiful little children ruined. Those little fellows go to school and order their little school friends around and they get into trouble. They are bossy like their parents.*

*-AR Reader*

Editor: According to Armstrong family member David Antion, now a Ph.D. in educational psychology, Herbert was treated very harshly and beaten frequently during childhood. This mistreatment very likely was a major formative factor in his own development.

*Thanks for the AR. It is a link to life. It must be hard to continually publish, but believe me it is needed. We believed, and we believed so hard. It isn't easy to put it behind us and forget. I know of no one who doesn't continue to think and remember it all. We were a family - brothers and sisters and who can put one's family out of mind. Never! I'm always wondering where this person is or how that one is doing. More than 10 years have passed since I left and I've had many heartaches in that time. Still I wonder and think. It is such a shame it couldn't have been as we thought.*

*When something is wrong, you let it go. You put it behind you. Yet, it will be a part of us until we pass on.*

*I still want to know what is happening to my beloved brothers and sisters. Ambassador Report is that link with that life. Keep it alive.*

*-Maryland*

*The Denver minister has repeatedly told the members here that the second tithe is God's money and cannot be spent for anything but travel to and from the Feasts and housing and meals. All that remains must be sent to Pasadena. If anyone fails to do so, they are under God's curse. No one should use it as an additional contribution or to help some other person to attend. But my Bible says it is for my use for anything my heart desires.*

*Keep up your good work as many of us rely on you for true reporting on what this cult is doing to its members. Many are as sold as the Jim Jones gang and would drink poison if HWA said to drink it. This minister claims all your reports are lies and not to believe anything they may hear.*

*-Colorado*

*My wife, who was disfellowshipped November 1982 after 22 years as a WCG member, now wishes I had sent for your AR from its inception. Our own 27-year-old son and my wife's brother [top WCG official] are still in the WCG. It's disgusting how they either ignore or talk down to my wife. They brag about their refusal to watch, read, or listen to any point of view other than Armstrong's as force-fed by his Gestapo ministers. They revel in their ignorance.*

*When my wife first began to listen to Armstrong in 1957 and began receiving his literature, I spotted him for a greedy charlatan so, from the sidelines as an "unconverted" mate with my "worthless" opinions, I watched the flipflops, destroyed families, and*

*confused youth parade by over the years. My wife and I are so relieved she's free of that Satanic bondage. And, yes, she is still a faithful Christian.*

*-California*

*You are continuing to do fantastic work in exposing the Armstrong hoax and other cultists. Please don't stop now. AR is a ministry of its own and has, without a doubt prevented many people from knowing the pain we have experienced as members of WCG (now ex-members).*

*-Arkansas*

\* \* \*

Our thanks to all who continue to support our efforts.

- JT

[Next Issue \(AR28\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR28 July 1984

### "God's Apostle" Gets a Divorce

For over two years Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the 91-year-old, self-proclaimed Apostle of the Worldwide Church of God and President of Ambassador College, battled in the courts to divorce Ramona, his 45-year-old wife. On May 11 he got his wish. In Tucson, Arizona, Judge William Sherrill approved an out-of-court settlement reached by the parties, thereby dissolving the Apostle's seven-year marriage. Through the settlement HWA was able to escape what would have been a lengthy and highly publicized divorce trial.

The trial had been scheduled to begin on April 25. During the month preceding that date there was a flurry of pre-trial motions and depositions. In their pursuit of legal business, WCG lawyers even ignored WCG holy days in scheduling their activities. For instance Ramona found herself at a court hearing on April 23, the last day of Unleavened Bread. The presence of WCG lawyer Ralph Helge was presumably excused by an "ox in the ditch."

As before, a review of the statements made at various depositions reveals a great deal about the true nature of the Armstrong organization. An excellent example of this is the deposition of Virginia Kineston. Ms. Kineston, an intelligent, articulate woman of somewhat dominating personality, was, for a number of years, an executive secretary to church attorney Stanley Rader. Her power in the organization was considerable - especially during the State of California vs. Worldwide Church lawsuit. With HWA in Tucson and Rader occupied with the lawsuit, Kineston found herself taking on so many top administrative and executive functions that she earned a reputation as the WCG's real boss. In fact, the WCG ministry's unhappiness over this state of affairs was a major factor in Rader's downfall. While Rader, according to some, seemed to enjoy having the WCG's macho ministers subservient to his secretary, the ministers by and large were not amused and made their feelings known to HWA. Whatever the case, for a time Ms. Kineston wielded considerable authority over the church. Oddly enough, however, Kineston admitted during her deposition that she was not a WCG member, having *left* the church in

1975.

Ms. Kineston readily acknowledged, based on personal observation, that church funds had regularly gone for gifts for HWA, Rader and their friends and relatives. The WCG's accounting methods - incredibly lax by normal accounting standards - were explained in considerable detail by Ms. Kineston. She further corroborated that the church's jet had often been used for personal and frivolous purposes. For instance she testified:

"The G-II was used to take food and club soda to Tucson because Rona Martin, the housekeeper, didn't believe anyone sold club soda except Jurgenson's [a Los Angeles gourmet food store]."

We will not bore readers with further details of her testimony as we have covered these matters in previous issues. However, one comment she made deserves repetition. When asked what her opinion of Herbert Armstrong was, she stated she hated and despised him. When asked why, she replied:

"Well, it gets into the core of his personality. I think the man is a liar, a thief, and a pervert, and I have absolutely no use for him."

This, from a lady who has observed his conduct over many years. Had the Armstrong case actually gone to trial, statements such as the above would certainly have made their way into the newspapers.

It's no wonder then that as the trial drew near, the WCG's lawyers grew increasingly concerned over the impending wave of publicity. Herbert's lawyers even went so far as to ask Judge Sherrill for a protective order that would have effectively barred the press from obtaining key records in the case. *Shofar* editor Robert C. Williams, authors David Robinson and John Tuit, and *Ambassador Report* editor John Trechak all wrote letters to Judge Sherrill objecting to the issuance of any such order. Judge Sherrill refused to grant the protective order.

On April 25, as the Tucson news media waited, Ramona Armstrong arrived at the Tucson court building. Accompanying Ramona were an Iroquois medicine man and two Indian associates who gave Ramona a good-luck amulet. (Ramona's father was a registered member of the Cherokee nation, making Ramona part American Indian. This is just one fact among many that Herbert insisted she keep secret from the WCG membership because HWA's marriage to her would be viewed as an interracial marriage, and church policy forbade such marriages.) Later, the medicine man went before the TV cameras to ask all Indians watching to pray that their "sister" receive a fair settlement.

Inside the court building Judge Sherrill was informed that both sides had reached a tentative agreement in principle. Judge Sherrill then recessed the proceedings for a day in order to give the lawyers a chance to draw up a written tentative agreement. According to *The Arizona Republic* (April 26, page B 1), that afternoon Herbert held a three-minute news conference "in the garage of a Tucson area residence." He told reporters, "I am very pleased that this matter has come to a mutually satisfactory agreement.... There will be no trial."

The following afternoon, after a whole day of legal wrangling, the attorneys for both parties presented Judge Sherrill with a tentative agreement for a divorce settlement. With an oxygen tank kept nearby, Herbert Armstrong was assisted to the witness stand after signing the agreement. Without looking at his estranged wife, Herbert answered a few routine questions put to him by lawyer Allan Browne. Judge Sherrill then scheduled a May 10 hearing at which the agreement was to be fully ratified.

But when May 10 arrived, Judge Sherrill discovered that there was still no final agreement. The hitch was that the criminal charges against Ramona for allegedly stealing gold flatware from the church had not yet been dropped. The dropping of the criminal charges had been a key point in the tentative agreement.

Judge Sherrill, noticeably angry over the new snafu, ordered that the trial would begin Friday. He ruled that the testimony could include details of the church's finances. But he agreed to limit testimony on Herbert's sexual conduct. According to *The Los Angeles Times* (May 12, Part 1, p. 14):

---

&COPY;1984 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service.

John Trechak, Editor& Publisher Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

"In the divorce proceedings, Armstrong's lawyers had sought to limit evidence of a sexual nature, but his wife's attorneys said it was crucial because the church leader alleged that Mrs. Armstrong had breached an agreement of love and fidelity. Lawrence Deckter, Mrs. Armstrong's lawyer, said the testimony would explain an 'understanding' the couple reached about Armstrong's 'prior incestuous conduct with his daughter for many years.'"

Herbert was quickly summoned back to Tucson as attorneys for both sides attempted to solve the settlement problem. The attorneys asked Superior Court Judge Richard Hannah to persuade Deputy County Attorney Kenneth Peasley to at least agree to a plea bargain. But Hannah told the lawyers they had no role in the criminal case and that the deadline for a plea bargain had passed anyway. But Alex Gaynes, Ramona's lawyer in the criminal case, remained optimistic. By Friday, May 11, the problem was solved. Peasley agreed to dismiss the criminal action on condition that Browne provide an affidavit stating that "a trial would be stressful to Mr. Armstrong and might be very injurious to his health," that restitution has been made for the missing gold flatware, and that the victim "has no desire to prosecute in the matter because of restitution." So the last hitch in the agreement was overcome.

On Friday, May 11, the lawyers for both parties informed Judge Sherrill that they had a completed agreement. Judge Sherrill then dissolved the seven-year-old marriage. Ramona had her maiden name, Martin, restored by the court to celebrate the end of her marriage.

Herbert flew back to Pasadena. And Allan Browne, displaying an ignorance of not only scripture, but his client's teachings as well, sounded ever more like Stanley Rader when he told the press, "Mr. Armstrong will now return to doing what he does best, and that is proclaiming the gospel to members of his church."

How much did Ramona get? No one is saying. Part of the very detailed settlement is that no one disclose it's terms. Some newspaper accounts pointed out that Ramona had sought to be awarded "the couple's former house in Tucson, half of a \$5 million bank account, \$150,000 a year in spousal maintenance and other assets." But later:

"The *Tucson Citizen* reported that the settlement provided for Ramona Armstrong to receive a total of \$300,000, of which \$150,000 was to go to her attorneys. The newspaper said her legal bill is at least \$350,000. In addition, it said, she will receive the couple's luxury Tucson home - but be responsible for a monthly \$785 payment on its estimated \$90,000 mortgage - and two cars, in addition to personal belongings, jewels and furs" (*Arizona Republic*, May 12, 1984).

Friends close to Ramona have hinted that she got nowhere near what she hoped for. It is also clear to us that whatever she did get was not in a lump sum. Undoubtedly the settlement provides that she be paid in installments and that such payments will cease if she discloses any details of the agreement or certain facts pertaining to her marriage to Herbert. Since her divorce, Ramona has declined interviews with the press and has refused to answer all questions put to her by *Ambassador Report*.

How were HWA's lawyers able to get Ramona to forgo a trial and instead agree to such a small settlement? It appears there were a number of factors. First of all, it is important to realize that the WCG's financial resources make it able to "pay up front" for dozens of high-powered lawyers and to indulge in large scale "paper wars." Ramona's lawyers were not only working on contingency, but were so swamped with paper work by the opposition they were unable to do business as usual. The situation drained them financially. The strategy used by the WCG lawyers was effective too in inflicting great physical stress on the opposition. Ramona's divorce lawyers, Jack Ettinger and Larry Deckter, both have serious personal health problems that were greatly exacerbated by the stress of the case.

Attorney Jack Warner, who represented Ramona in her California suit against the WCG (an action separate from the divorce) ran up a legal bill of over \$335,000. As Warner did not become a party to the out-of-court settlement and since Ramona lacked the resources to even make payments on the bill, the amount remains outstanding. The "paper war" in the California case was intense, and when Warner's health began to fail, he asked the court to release him from his responsibilities. When Warner left the case, Ramona was unable to find any lawyer willing to take up that battle. With no lawyer willing to fight on, Ramona's California lawsuit was as good as lost. Thus, even if she could have won the divorce, losses from the California case could have eaten up whatever she won in the divorce suit.

A second, related, factor is that Worldwide's lawyers were not only able, but were also clearly planning to delay for many years the payment of any monies won in the divorce by continuous appeals. Ramona's legal bills would have mounted, but she would have

been unable to touch a penny of what she would have won.

A third factor was the impending criminal case. While it is unlikely that she or her son Richard would ever have had to serve prison time, the possibility of being found guilty in that case was a real fear.

A fourth factor was that had the divorce trial actually gotten started, HWA and his myrmidons would have probably "stonewalled." This had already occurred during HWA's depositions, in which he refused to answer hundreds of important questions because of vague "constitutional protections." The inability to get straight answers left Ramona so frustrated that on April 23 she went personally to HWA's Pasadena home, barged in, and confronted him over what was transpiring. HWA unabashedly told her that when the trial started he would absolutely deny all of her allegations. He said that he would say that he never recalled admitting to incest or any other sexual deviation. Nor did he recall ever promising to remain married to her for life.

The realities of the situation were such that Ramona felt forced to settle out of court. After two full years of legal warfare, she longed for a normal life. Friends say that, although she has been left with hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid legal bills, she has found great comfort in the loyalty of her friend Wally McKinney. Ramona met McKinney, an articulate, suave Tucson businessman, some years ago at a time when she was so despondent over her marriage to Herbert that she was actually contemplating suicide. McKinney helped her through the crisis and has remained a devoted friend ever since. They intend to marry in the near future.

### **Armstrong Divorce Documents**

One more comment about the divorce case. Thanks to Herbert Armstrong filing for divorce (we often wonder who should be given credit for putting this idea in his head), an absolutely vast amount of sworn testimony about the WCG, HWA, etc. is now available to lawyers and accredited news reporters in need of this information. The county court in Tucson has a microfilm department that makes court records available at relatively little cost (compared to usually expensive photocopies). The complete case is on 102 Microfiche plates with over 100 pages of legal documents on each plate. The court charges 50 cents per plate. The case number for the Armstrong divorce is: D0040771. Lawyers and news organization researchers in need of these official court records should write (on letterhead) to: Clerk of the Superior Court, 111 West Congress, Tucson, Arizona 85701 (Attention: Correspondence, R. Gerald, Microx Department).

### **McNair Trial Begins**

Herbert Armstrong's divorce problems may be over, but the WCG's legal problems haven't gone away. As of this writing, the Leona McNair vs. Worldwide libel and slander trial is under way. In the suit filed in 1979 Leona McNair claims that certain WCG leaders, including her ex-husband evangelist Raymond McNair, conspired to defame her and that Raymond's brother-in-law, evangelist Roderick Meredith, did so in both spoken and written statements made in 1979.

In 1976 Raymond McNair became the first WCG minister ever to divorce his wife. There were three children by the marriage and Raymond has since remarried. In the statements made by Meredith in 1979, the evangelist accused Mrs. McNair of being responsible for the breakup of the marriage. The case (number NEC 27381) should provide further insights into the WCG's divorce doctrine, which changed abruptly around 1975, just in time for HWA to marry a divorcee and for Raymond McNair to pull off the first ministerial divorce. Leona McNair's attorney, Antony Stuart (of the Los Angeles lawfirm of Greene, O'Riely, Agnew and Broillett) says he expects the trial to last about a month.

### **Legal Solutions - Without Lawsuits**

Anyone who has followed the WCG's activities for the last five years knows it would be quite difficult to find a more litigious or lawsuit-prone organization anywhere. With the possible exception of the U.S. federal government, no one loves to spend money on lawyers more than Herbert Armstrong and his myrmidons. Our sources indicate Herbert's church probably spent about as much on lawyers over the last several years as it spent for the poor, widows, and orphans.

That is why we were so amused (not shocked, not disgusted, just amused) to read recently in the *Los Angeles Times* (San Gabriel section) that the WCG is funding an organization called the Community Dispute Resolution Center. For a fee of only \$5, individuals having a dispute with someone can come to the Center and explain their problems. The Center then attempts to persuade the other party to come in. Through fact finding, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, the Center attempts to solve the dispute quickly, without litigation. The Center's services are available to everyone, regardless of religious affiliation, income, or place of residence. A number of prominent Pasadena-area lawyers and judges serve on its board of directors. The WCG currently provides the Center with \$65,000 to \$70,000 per year, with that figure likely to rise to \$150,000 per year in the future.

We think the concept behind the Center is a good one. But we ask: Why doesn't the WCG simply use the Center, or something like it, to solve its *own* legal disputes - instead of spending millions on lawyers every time it has a legal problem?

### **Religion and the Courts**

In virtually every lawsuit the WCG has ever been involved in, it has invoked First Amendment privileges regarding its practices and its refusals to answer certain questions. Lawyers representing the Armstrong corporations give the distinct impression that because the Armstrong corporations are in the religion business they are exempt from some of the legal responsibilities placed on other individuals and businesses. The attitude is not unique to the Armstrong organizations, but is found in many organizations involved in religious activities.

More and more, however, U.S. courts are ruling that those religious freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution are not limitless. A number of recent court decisions should give WCG ministers something to think about.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, on March 15 a jury awarded a \$390,000 judgment against a church whose ministers denounced a woman for the "sin of fornication." The church's ministers had followed the teaching of their denomination, the Church of Christ, that sinners be exposed from the pulpit and be denied fellowship with the church's membership. Said one Church of Christ minister after the jury's decision, "That probably will teach us all a lesson.... There may have been a more diplomatic way of going about it" (*Pasadena Star-News*, March 18, 1984, p. A5).

The April 16, 1984 issue of *Time* magazine, in an article (p. 42) which mentioned the Worldwide Church of God by name, covered a subject that every WCG parent would do well to ponder very carefully. The subject was how the legal system is responding to cases of parents denying their children medical help because of religious beliefs. According to *Time*, "State courts have routinely intervened against the antimedicine doctrines of some religious groups in ordering treatment for the children of church members when death is imminent. Now states are beginning to bring charges of neglect or abuse against parents who endanger their children's lives by adhering to religious teachings." In one case quoted by *Time*, a religious couple was charged with involuntary manslaughter in the death of their 16-year-old son, who died after days of agony from an untreated ruptured appendix.

On June 22 in Vermont 130 armed state troopers and social workers went to 20 homes of members of a religious cult. With search warrants they gained entry to the houses and then led away 112 children for a day of medical observation. The families - members of the Church of Island Pond - had long been accused of severely beating their children. The group's founder, ex-carnival barker Elbert Eugene Spriggs, teaches that children should be disciplined regularly with wooden rods. One church leader, Charles Eddie Wiseman, faces charges that he beat one 13-year-old members for seven hours. *The Los Angeles Times* (July 10, 1984, p. 10) quoted Wiseman as saying, "Even little babies have a fallen nature... and need to be disciplined. We are going to raise a lost generation of children... unless they are properly disciplined and properly spanked.... I have no question you can crush the will and spirit of a child."

The sect, which has many doctrinal similarities to the WCG, has an intense dislike for the press and feels it is being "persecuted." The June 22 raid may have been unusual, but it was not unique. In Michigan in 1983 state officials took 66 children away from their parents who were members of the House of Judah cult. One mother in that cult was convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the death of her 12-year-old son.

Another legal decision that should be making WCG officials nervous is the June 28 California Appeals Court ruling that ministers can be sued for "clergy malpractice." The important decision came in regard to a 1980 lawsuit filed by Maria and Walter J. Nally of Tujunga, California. The suit alleges that their son's 1980 suicide came about after counseling with Rev. John F. MacArthur, Jr., pastor of a Sun Valley church. Both the pastor and the church are named as defendants. In making the precedent-setting decision Justice Vincent S. Dalsimer wrote:

"...The free exercise clause of the First Amendment does not license intentional infliction of emotional distress in the name of religion and cannot shield defendants from liability for wrongful death caused by such conduct."

From the facts presented, Judge Dalsimer wrote that it could be inferred that the defendants:

"Recklessly caused such persons extreme emotional distress through their counseling methods if those persons did not measure up to the pastor's religious ideals."

Sound familiar?

### **We Beg Your Pardon**

*Ambassador Report* always takes great care that the information presented is accurate. Nevertheless, in our last issue there was one minor inaccuracy that we wish to correct. HWA's Romania and London trips did not take place in 1978 as reported on p. 7. Those trips took place around 1976, a few months before his marriage to Ramona. Knowledgeable sources say that the physical problem we described was, according to HWA's own admission, due to his many years of excessive alcohol consumption.

We also neglected to mention an important point in the incest story. HWA was able to exert great coercion over his daughter, not just because he was her father or physically stronger, but because he repeatedly claimed "God gave you to me."

### **Child Abuse in the News**

Incest is not a pretty subject. Unfortunately, because the problem is so widespread, in recent months it has been in the news more than ever. We do not want to cover the problem in detail in this issue. However, in recent months we have been absolutely appalled to learn of a number of cases of incest in the WCG where for some reason the ministry, though informed of the problem, seemed to turn a deaf ear. It is difficult to believe that the church's ministry does not understand what a terrible crime this really is! They should read Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:11-21.

In the May 1984 issue of *Psychology Today* there appeared an excellent article by Elizabeth Stark entitled "The Unspeakable Family Secret: Fear and shame have forced almost 15 million victims of incest to suffer in silence." The article contained these insightful statements (p. 42):

"Father-daughter incest, which accounts for 75 percent of the reported cases, is generally considered to be the most harmful. The betrayal of a child by someone she should be able to unconditionally trust and depend on almost always leads to serious emotional problems: low self-esteem, guilt, isolation, mistrust of men, problems with intimacy, sexual precociousness, drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity, even suicide. 'There is no way that a parent can have sex with a child and not exploit them,' Giarretto [Henry Giarretto, psychologist and founder of the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program in Santa Clara, Calif.] says....

"Incest happens at all economic levels, in families that appear completely normal to outsiders. They are often socially isolated, and what little outside social life exists is controlled by the father, usually a strong, patriarchal figure. The wife tends to be

financially and emotionally dependent on her husband and often has less education.

"Ninety percent of incestuous fathers suffer from some type of mental disturbance, according to a recent study done by Karen Kirkland and Chris Bauer...."

Another magazine that covered the subject of incest recently was *Newsweek* (May 14, 1984). That issue contained this remarkable statement (p. 32):

"In a 1981 study, Harvard Medical School psychiatrist Dr. Judith Herman concluded that the most striking similarities among incestuous families were the father's tendency to tyrannize and the mother's fear of questioning his absolute authority...."

Unfortunately, the description given by Dr. Herman not only fits that of the Armstrong family over the years, but it also accurately describes the kind of family organization Herbert has tried to inspire in his followers.

If any of our readers suspect there is an incest problem in their own family, we suggest that your local WCG minister be avoided, as in most cases he will not be qualified to handle this serious problem. A good place to start is to read the two articles quoted above. Then seek assistance from competent, trained professionals - those who recognize incest as the terrible sin it really is and who have the training to properly deal with it.

### **WCG News in Brief**

Recent WCG publications reveal that the WCG's quest for image continues unabated. The July-August issue of *The Plain Truth* featured the Olympic Games. Page one showed HWA shaking hands with U.S. high-jumper Dwight Stones. The magazine's center spread of photos showed Olympic athletes training at Ambassador College under the watchful eye of AC instructor Harry Sneider, now a U.S. Olympic team coach. Nowhere mentioned is the fact that the modern Olympic games have their origin with the ancient Greeks whose Olympics were held in honor of their gods. Author John Tuit pointed out to us, "It's interesting that the church is told Easter and Christmas should not be kept because of their pagan origins, but the pagan- religion origin of the Olympics doesn't seem to deter Herbert Armstrong from getting involved. The double standard is very obvious."

Double standards and all, however, HWA continues to accumulate the worldly accolades he's always desired. The June 18 issue of *The Worldwide News* showed HWA chatting with Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone, the July 2 issue showed him with Austrian President Rudolf Kirchschlaeger, and the June 4 issue showed HWA at the White House with Mrs. Reagan and a Chinese children's choir called "The Young Ambassadors."

How HWA gets to be photographed with the world's rich and famous is no secret. In his March 21 letter to his church, HWA wrote (emphasis his):

"We are comparatively small in membership, compared to large traditional churches, yet a VERY GREAT AND REAL P O W E R in the world!... It is only by God's tithing system that we can be such a tremendous power in the world.... The need for TITHE and OFFERING laborers was never greater."

## Evaluation of Church Financial Picture

Throughout the fifties and sixties the WCG's membership shot up rapidly, while its income grew at roughly 25 percent per year. Since the mid-1970s, the church's income and membership growth have been relatively flat, with its income not even keeping up with inflation. The church's worldwide audited financial report, compiled by the prestigious accounting firm of Arthur Andersen & Co., revealed that church membership for both 1982 and 1983 remained at about 75,000 (*The Worldwide News*, June 4, 1984, pp. 5-7; June 27, 1983, pp. 5-7), which is only 7 percent or 5,000 members higher than reported in 1979. This low growth doesn't look quite so bad when compared to the decline in membership among the mainline U.S. churches since 1973: United Methodist Church - down 8 percent; Presbyterian Church - down 15 percent; Lutheran Church - down 3 percent; Episcopal Church - down 4 percent. However, when compared to the Seventh-day Adventists with 623,563 members (up 34 percent since 1973), the Mormons with 3,593,000 members (up 40 percent since 1973), or the Assemblies of God with 1,879,182 members (up 71 percent since 1973), the WCG seems to be doing poorly (*U. S. News & World Report*, April 30, 1984, p. 82).

The recent Arthur Andersen audit reported that the Armstrong organization worldwide had a total of \$132,182,000 in support and revenue in 1983, up 9.3 percent over the 1982 figure, whereas total expenses rose 9.0 percent to \$126,489,000. The financial statements and accompanying notes showed that the organization owned aircraft worth \$9.6 million and library books worth \$1.2 million. It had travel and related expenses of \$3.7 million, professional and performing artist fees of \$5 million, and some mysteriously unnamed "Other" expenses of \$8.3 million.

While showing two years of comparative financial details and being as complete and well-written as most corporate financial reports, the report still deliberately omitted categories of interest, such as the church expense for executive compensation and legal fees. The report does mention that the church gives out interest-free loans to members - which we learned in the divorce-trial depositions often go to key executives - and that the church-college provides \$560,000 in benefits to certain select former employees, though the organizations lack formal retirement plans for their employees.

But just how accurate and useful are corporate financial reports issued by the major U.S. CPA firms? We discussed this subject with an accounting professor of a major Southern California university and with a former auditor of Arthur Andersen & Co. and found the following: While an audited financial statement from a CPA firm can give the general public confidence that the financial statements of a firm are done according to generally accepted accounting principles, this doesn't mean that if several CPA firms were given the same set of corporate books they would arrive at the same bottom-line figures. In fact, their results in certain areas might vary as much as plus or minus 30 percent. This doesn't mean anyone is actually "cheating," but CPAs can make use of a wide range of estimates, inventory costing methods, depreciation methods, tax credits, etc., as well as deciding which of various categories and formats to present to the public - all of which can cause great variability among financial reports. Also, never forget that an "independent" CPA firm is hired by the organization whose books it is auditing and it maintains a confidentiality similar to an attorney-client relationship. If that CPA firm insists on

presenting the financial data in such a way that is not deemed in the best interests of the organization that hired it, the CPA firm will be replaced with a more cooperative CPA firm. So while all CPA firms are "independent" of the firms they audit, they aren't nearly as independent from them as, say, the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) is - the difference being that a business can't fire the IRS if it disagrees with its findings.

Furthermore, just because a firm such as Arthur Andersen & Co. audits a church's books, that doesn't mean that it has given its moral approval for the way the church spends its money. It is Arthur Andersen's job to account for the church's expenses and make sure they are presented according to generally accepted accounting principles, but it is not Arthur Andersen's job to comment or rule on whether the church should pay money to HWA's relatives and women friends, whether the church ought to hire lawyers and spend millions of dollars fighting members and ex- members, whether "hush money" should be paid to disfellowshipped ex-ministers under the guise of retirement benefits, whether HWA should have an expense account and what he should use it for, etc. These issues are outside the realm of an audit.

We hope this explanation of the significance and limitations of audited financial statements will aid WCG members and the general public in understanding just what an audited financial report can and can't be relied on for.

A financial report is not the best place to determine whether the WCG is spending its funds for its stated purpose or for practices that would be frowned on by most members if they knew what was occurring. A person trying to decide whether or not to tithe to the WCG based on the church's spending habits will have to rely on his own observations and the news media to determine the propriety of the church's expenditures, because neither the church nor Arthur Andersen is going to come out and say HWA spent x number of dollars at a sex rejuvenation clinic in Romania or that he spent \$5 million on lawyers to divorce his wife, etc.

We feel it's the responsibility of every Christian to do all in his power to make sure his church is spending his money the way Christ would want it spent. If his church is not doing so, he or she should demand to know why and cease giving immediately.

### **Dwight Armstrong III**

Dwight Armstrong, the younger brother of Herbert Armstrong and for years the WCG's only officially recognized hymn composer, was listed in our 1976 and 1977 issues as among those who were no longer actively supporting the Worldwide Church. That assessment was an accurate one, having been based on frank discussions between Dwight and *Ambassador Report* editor John Trechak in 1974. It appears, however, that in later years Dwight reestablished his relationship with Herbert. In his April 1 letter to his church HWA wrote:

"I recently visited my brother, Dwight, who composed all of the music in our Church hymnals except for three or four songs we felt worthy of being included. He has devoted the last 35 years of his life to composing the music of these hymns for us....

"I found him in the last stages of cancer in the bone structure, going through the marrow of the bones. He is a little discouraged, not realizing what a real success his life has been, and with the mortgage on his home still not paid off as he faces the end of his life. He is not expected to live much longer.... He will be 80, if he survives until September 15....

"We have had no experience or precedent to know how one with such musical talent should be compensated for his years of faithful labor, but because of IRS restrictions over us by the government, and the fact he is my brother, I feel he has never been properly rewarded for his efforts. However, if some of you brethren do feel you would like him to know how much his beautiful music has meant to your Christian life, and would care to just write him a few words of appreciation, I know that would brighten the few remaining days he probably has in his life.

"Write to his local pastor, Richard Parker, 5540 34th St., Loop NE, Tacoma, WA 98422."

The comments by HWA have caused many to wonder. Of course everyone is saddened to hear of Dwight's illness. But why the obvious suggestion to send money to the ailing hymnist? The church has supported him comfortably for many years, and besides, his brother Herbert probably makes at least \$300,000 per year and could afford to help Dwight himself. If he is dying from cancer (and we don't question that he is), why would Dwight be worrying about an unpaid mortgage? Does he plan to take the home with him? And why the odd comment about no precedent for compensating a composer? Thousands of composers get paid regularly for their work. Why not just pay Dwight as other composers are paid? And what are those mysterious "IRS restrictions"?

Knowledgeable sources inform us that HWA has had serious difficulties with the IRS in recent years (remember: the IRS does not make such matters public) and that he has gotten a bit paranoid over his financial affairs. Others, however, note the date of the letter and speculate that it was just one insensitive April Fool's joke on the WCG membership.

### **New Lyrics for Hymnal?**

While Dwight Armstrong has for years been the only one officially commissioned to write hymns for the WCG, there are others, apparently, who would like a chance at contributing to the WCG hymnal. Karen Griffin of Pasadena, California, told us, "When you consider the new doctrines in the church, it would be appropriate to update some of the hymns to reflect the church's new teachings and attitudes." She has already redone a number of WCG hymns. One that we found particularly entertaining was her rewording of "It Is Well With My Soul." Here is her new version:

#### **It Is Well With My Soul**

Yea, Her-ber-t, my preach-er, di-rect-eth my way,  
And all of my life doth con-trol.

What-ev-er my lot, Herb hath taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul... (Chorus)

My life and my will did I give--with-out tho't,

My wealth, not in part, but the whole.  
I've giv'n to the Work, and I bear it no more.  
Yea, tis so, I have sold Herb my soul... (Chorus)

Though no more Ra-mo-na, though tri-als ga-lore,  
Let this blest as-sur-ance con-trol.  
Though Herb has me tith-ing my to-tal es-tate,  
He hath said this is good for my soul... (Chorus)

And Oh! haste the day when the gun lap shall be run.  
The church off to Pe-tra will go.  
Then Her-bert shall flee. Oh! I hope he takes me!  
So I say it is well with my soul ... (Chorus)

- Karen Griffin

Incidentally, Karen and her husband, author Des Griffin, distribute a wide selection of books dealing with political conspiracies, cults, the WCG, etc. Those interested in obtaining a catalog of their offerings should write to: Emissary Publications, P.O. Box 642, South Pasadena, CA 91030.

### **GTA - Problems and Insights**

We continue to receive letters from members of Garner Ted Armstrong's Church of God, International (CGI). Quite a few have written us saying CGI represents a vast improvement over the WCG in terms of more humane organization and more reasonable doctrinal positions. Nevertheless, it appears that GTA's past sins continue to haunt him. In a March 5 letter to his readers GTA wrote:

"As you know, we had hoped we were going to be admitted on one of the major 'religious' networks a few months ago. They turned thumbs down on my program!"

GTA's past is something many refuse to forget. But his father's past has caused some to turn their backs on all organized religion. In a May 3 letter to his readers GTA writes of those who

"...became so hurt and angered - so 'turned off' at their physical leaders that they simply gave up.... They do not make these accusations at Almighty God, or Jesus Christ! Rather they make the accusations at their former *human leadership!* If you have had such thoughts, then I want to highly recommend to you a taped sermon by Mr. Ronald L. Dart entitled 'Beyond Disillusionment!' I am offering it now because it was one of the most widely acclaimed sermons Mr. Dart has given in the past several years!"

Some of our readers who've heard the tape say it is worth a listen (the address, for those who are interested, is: P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, Texas 75710).

The same May 3 letter by GTA also offers the public a booklet that sets forth the "over-all parameters" of CGI's doctrines. We haven't seen the booklet and suspect we would not agree with all of CGI's doctrines. However, we can only commend GTA for putting his

church's teachings "up front." That is something the WCG still refuses to do. Finally, in regard to GTA, we point out with some pleasure how he increasingly is speaking out on the problems in the WCG. In a May 23 letter to his "fellow laborers" Ted quoted a letter he received from an unnamed WCG member. We reprint the entire letter here because it offers a remarkable insight into the present-day WCG:

"Dear Mr. Armstrong, I have received several pieces of your literature and your newspaper 'The International News' the past few months. I want you to know that they are literally a lifesaver.

"I am a member of WCG and have been for nearly nine years. I just can't believe what is going on in the church now. It scares me to death and makes me sick. (I am especially afraid for the women.)

"I have heard and put up with (out of extreme intimidation and fear tactics from ministers) a lot of strange happenings in 'God's church' the past four to five years. I've suspected there's 'something rotten in Denmark,' but stuck my head in the sand out of fear of losing my eternal life.

"I feel so depressed and hopeless I don't know what to do - and see others the same way - plus animosity being aroused between husbands and wives (paranoia), then I ask myself: 'If this is God's church, why is everyone so paranoid, fearful, afraid to talk to their ministers?'

"The past two to three years I have dreaded going to church and have been trying to psyche myself into a 'positive attitude' - but the fear tactics, etc., get worse every week and now I hate going to church, I tremble with fear through every sermon. We're told that practically none of us will make it into the kingdom, etc.

"For example, this past Sabbath, our minister told us there were a lot of LIARS in the congregation, HYPOCRITES, etc. Then, of course, as usual, he started in on women - made a nasty remark about our 'gossipy natures,' told us we were defying God if we had any of that 'colored dirt' [makeup] (powder) in our house ('God has spoken on this issue. How long will you defy God?!'), made fun of some of the older women because they had put a rinse on their hair to take away the ugly yellow color (I wonder who he thinks they're trying to seduce?), etc.

"Then he tore into the men for not keeping us under submission. Called them wimps, etc., if they 'allowed' their wives to watch soap operas (I hate soap operas, but that's my concern, not his or my husband's if I wanted to watch them - which I don't!). Told them they should check their wives' things for makeup, powder, nail polish, etc. - and 'in effect' (he didn't say this, but insinuated it) - either throw out the wife or the powder!

"He praised certain women in the congregation for 'reporting' (Heil Minister!) to him that certain other women were still wearing makeup to work, etc.

"He ranted and raved at everyone for wasting his time for wanting counseling for stupid things. (He's a very sarcastic man.) I know that many times people have counseled [with] him for something they thought was in a private conversation - expecting him to be discreet, etc., when lo and behold the very next Sabbath he would be in the pulpit mimicking them and making fun of their 'problem.' He wasn't concerned about their problem or them - just *outraged* that they *had* the problem and

'bothered' him with it. (He's a frustrated comedian and will do anything for a laugh - even at the expense of someone already hurting.)

"There are some things I would like to counsel with him about (especially about most of us losing eternal life), but wouldn't *dare*. He gets mad if we don't understand. I just don't understand the man's attitude. He seems to like ridiculing us and putting us down and exercising his 'authority' - especially women.

"I have come to see that many people are staying in the church out of pure fear (including me - it could mean a divorce from my member husband). They are told that if they talk to any 'ex-members,' read any of your literature or *anything* against HWA - *even if it's the truth*, it will 'pollute' our minds and we will lose eternal life. Mr. Waterhouse (I'm sure you already know) does nothing but travel all over the world and preach HWA - there's no way to 'make it' unless you go through HWA. If you even 'question' *anything* he says, you are being REBELLIOUS against 'God's anointed' and you will be cast into the lake of fire! (I heard one minister say he doubted if we would make it into the kingdom if we read *Time* magazine - because they're 'anti God's apostle'!)

"Any piece of your literature or anyone's not flattering to HWA is to be *burned* or turned in to the minister. We are *not* to read it or we will be put out of the church by God Himself. God will not TOLERATE blasphemy against 'His' apostle.

"I wanted to find out where you were for years, read your literature, etc., but was scared to death to even think it. (I'm still scared - not very brave. Is God going to 'get me' for writing to you? I don't know.) Things are getting so paranoid at church, though, I don't know what else to do. Besides, I'm a woman and I'm not going to make it anyway. Right?!

"I just wish there was some way you could reach the rest of WCG members - they've been told CGI is to be avoided like the plague or God will 'get' them." (signed)  
"Beaten Down"

## **The Paranoid Prophet of the Song**

In previous issues we mentioned how former WCG minister Cecil Battles had formed a church called "the Song" and how his followers had quit their jobs to wait for UFOs (or more accurately, "fiery chariots") to take them away. One of our readers who had joined "the Song" was fortunate enough to escape its influence. He (or she) has written us this update on the CBC (Cecil Battles' Church):

"Cecil Battles seems to have become paranoid. He rants and raves! He demands complete and total obedience as though he were God. His sermons are hours long. The group sings literally for hours - sometimes half the WCG song book at one time. You know, of course, that they have all quit their jobs. One of the latest is that they are to stay close to home, as God may soon speak to them and tell them the chariots are coming.

"They mail out copies of his 'prayers' and their 'prayers' must be patterned after Cecil's 'words.' He tolerates no questions, no opinions (except his own, of course, as they are 'God's') and no discussions....

"Cecil does not converse as a normal person with others. If you do not 'parrot' his 'words' back to him, he walks away. He has no patience with normal conversation, only 'the words' as the group calls them.

"He has set so many dates for the coming of 'God's chariots' that any normal thinking person would wake up and 'smell the smoke.' But his followers just lap up each excuse like honey. (It's their fault anyway; they are not 'pure' yet.) I have seen them sit in front of him with adoration on their faces. He says his last 'failure' datewise was predicted in scripture! Where?

"It seemed to us like 'something' is guiding him! He uses no notes, flips from one end of the Bible to the other with amazing memory. Says he does no preparation; only speaks what is given him when he starts to preach, and speak he does, for hours, with no notes; most sentences have no end, no punctuation. They seem to mesmerize his people. You would have to see it. It is unbelievable....

"They will do anything he says. Fast days and days, sing for days at a time, quit jobs, quit sex, not marry, cut off family and friends, take children out of school, pack up and move to Oregon if he said to, no TV, no pleasure, no eating out, do away with all pictures of pigs, frogs, mice, etc., no medicine, no doctors. All they do is listen to his tapes over and over. This is not exaggerated.... He teaches them to hate us who have left the group and not to think much more of anyone else outside the group. They who once were ostracized by the WCG are now treating others even worse.

## **A Letter From Germany**

Editor: We received the following letter from a German student some time ago. While it is a bit lengthy we feel it does offer some remarkable insights into both the WCG and current European conditions.

Gentlemen:

I am a student at a German university studying American literature. Over the years I have become acquainted with the publications of the Worldwide Church of God by reading my parents' issues of *Klar und Wahr* and the older *Die Reine Wahrheit*. But it was not until I started reading the English *Plain Truth* that I discovered how cynically racist and bigoted Mr. Armstrong and his main mouthpiece on Germany, Mr. Gene Hogberg, are. When I met with long-time friends in the German branch of the WCG, I was given some older editions of *Ambassador Report* and found that many of its revelations paralleled my own thinking. After intense discussions with my friends, I decided to write to you and express my views on the WCG and its "prophecies" on Germany.

It is a clever act of deception when Mr. Armstrong tells the American and English readers of the *Plain Truth* (PT) how prone to aggression the Germans are supposed to be, while carefully deleting the same ideas from *Klar und Wahr*. For example, much to my astonishment, I learned from an English-language WCG booklet (never printed in German) that I descended from the ancient Assyrians of 2,500 years ago. Mr. Armstrong shows great scholarship here. Considering that 100 generations have since come and gone and Europe has been a melting pot of many migrating peoples and tribes, could all that have happened without racial intermingling? Then I was horrified to learn that we Germans (West and/or East?) are supposed to attack and conquer the U.K. and the U.S. and that we are "known" for our bestiality, ruthlessness and cruelty. Finally, I was told that I am a member of the coming "Beast power" of the Apocalypse to be guided by the Pope. This is especially remarkable in light of the fact that we had Martin Luther and the Reformation here. So before we Germans militarize and unite Europe to attack everyone in sight, let me comment on prophets Armstrong and Hogberg.

I have met Mr. Hogberg personally and hence have a good idea how he arrives at his ghastly nonsense. He obtains his information by staying mostly at expensive hotels where he converses with fellow Americans, English-speaking Germans, or one of his PT cohorts. Mr. Hogberg's knowledge of German goes no further than the crude construction of a phrase. He knows practically no German history or German political philosophy, nor does he have a sense of understanding of the German national psychology. Furthermore, he has no journalistic connections or accreditation. In order to be credible, any journalist or scholar has to have contacts at our major newspapers, universities, or at the *Allersbach Insitut für Demoskopie* that gauges public opinion. But Mr. Hogberg gains his impressions on a typical wine-and-dine-trip through the country. His surface impressions, which he palms off as "prophetic insights" in the pages of the PT, could be offered by any tourist travelling through our country.

Like Mr. Hogberg, Mr. Armstrong has a warped view of Germany. He evidently lifted many of his ideas on Germany from vicious anti-German propaganda dating back to World War I. Mr. Armstrong was by no means the only one inspired by this trash. For example, some American presidents can be shown to have been attracted by Armstrong- type anti-Germanism. For instance, in one book by Louis Nizer, *What to Do With Germany?* (Chicago, 1941), the reader is presented with these "revelations" on Germany:

"Was Nazism a coincidence or the fulfillment of age-old German dreams, philosophically and systematically inculcated into German consciousness for centuries? [p. 17]... the evil conduct of... Nazi leaders fits well into the characteristic pattern of bestiality [p. 18]... Those who appeal to this basest instinct of the German people are instantly assured the most devoted following [p. 29].... theirs is a German conspiracy against world peace [p. 30].... The war lust of the German people is composed not only of a philosophy for conquest, but of a race theory to justify it" (p. 39).

Anyone who has even casually browsed through the WCG literature against Germany will notice startling similarities. Mr. Armstrong adopted these ideas, probably more consciously than unconsciously, and sold them as prophecy. Naturally, the pseudoscientific character of his writings would appeal to his simpleminded fellow "prophets" and followers. Anything that reeks of conspiracy, of quick and easy answers to complex political or social problems, appeals to these "illiterates."

Nizer could have been used as a source for the "prophecies" on Germany that Mr. Armstrong states in his book *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. Again notice Nizer's thoughts:

"For example, in 1900, the book *Grossdeutschland und Mitteleuropa um das Jahr 1950* [author unknown] foresaw the triumphant day [*der Tag*] as falling in 1950: 'All Germans have united, Holland enters the German union; in Belgium, the Flemings grow in power and because the French element causes increasing trouble, Germany is obliged to intervene.... Maybe the French will fight, in which case all Belgium will be annexed and incorporated in the German World Empire... (p. 47).

"In *Germania Triumphans* (Berlin, 1895) he [author unknown] writes: '...the United States, declining to give way, the German, Italian, and French navies mobilize and set sail for America. The American navy is destroyed. On land, the German armies made short work of the American mercenaries. Under the brilliant leadership of the German Leader, the Germans were everywhere victorious.... The British navy was destroyed. Invaded, the English offered but a half-hearted resistance. The German and Italian soldiers seized London. England and America were defeated'" (pp. 47-48).

More remarkable than the similarities of Nizer's scenario to that outlined in Mr. Armstrong's booklets is the fact that Franklin D. Roosevelt had Nizer's book distributed among his Cabinet. Eisenhower bought 100,000 copies and sent them to his officers, who had to write reaction papers on it before they occupied

Germany in 1945 (*Current Biography* 1955, p. 450).

Nizer's book is one of a long line of anti-German writings, such as *Germany Must Perish* (1941), *Germany Is Our Problem* (1945), or *No More Germanies, No More German Wars* (1944). Toward the end of the war, and for many years afterward, a flood of books on the revival of Nazi-Germany were printed. Again, scores of volumes on that topic were produced, such as *Germany Will Try Again* (1944); *The Hidden Enemy: The German Threat to Post-War Peace* (1949); *The Nazis Go Underground* (1944), and many more.

From this it becomes evident that Mr. Armstrong's prophecies about Germany and the Nazis rising again was nurtured by a popular vein of journalistic sentiments. Mr. Hogberg simply copied Mr. Armstrong's views and took the rubbish for divine truth. I would go so far as to state that Mr. Hogberg may yet use Nizer's quotes and attempt to sell them to his PT audience as "newly discovered truth," regardless of the fact that these writings are known and hopelessly absurd.

All told, Mr. Armstrong put out articles and pamphlets that reflected the racist and political ideas of British-Israelism, that the Anglo-Saxons were destined to a racial and political supremacy in the world. There is no doubt that this view of Anglo-Saxon imperialism is the centerpiece of Mr. Hogberg's world view. It helps very little in the exchange of ideas between Germans and Americans. Mr. Armstrong is not building bridges between nations; he is tearing existing ones down. Many bad feelings are created by this ill-conceived, base, and ludicrous evangelism.

But Germans also do a disservice to their culture when they participate in the production of the PT propaganda on the staff of *Klar und Wahr* and the American PT. It is that kind of attitude of mindless loyalty that resulted in the Hitler mess. Germans tolerating the published Armstrong nonsense judge themselves since they know what they are doing to their own country under the disguise of "preaching the gospel."

I reject the false PT allegations against Germany, the illconceived, misconstrued, deliberately twisted, fabricated, racially colored statements and articles by Mr. Armstrong and his "prophets." It is not knowledge that inspires their utterances. Rather, it is a premeditated scheme to financially bind the Armstrong church members to a fear and punishment image the "aggressor" Germany. While the church can boast that it has the "truth" on Germany, as the potential Beast power, the members will gladly donate money. In this way, they provide themselves with the illusion of knowing the future, while in the meantime Mr. Armstrong receives a steady lucrative income.

The WCG propaganda that identifies Germany with the devil, evil, or sin has long passed the stages of openminded discussion and has reached the level of theological dogma. Once such propaganda reaches into the grey realms of human emotion, where concepts such as "sin" or "evil" are formed, a conscious, rational dissection of the various themes ("evil Germany") is for the Armstrong follower no longer possible.

Regarding "evil" Germany, it is still a far safer place than the United States, whose crime, immorality (even an apostle's divorce is possible), and intellectual decay is well represented in the Armstrong church.

Mr. Armstrong also claims that anti-Americanism in Germany will lead to a revival of militarism. This is laughable. Actually today in my country anti-Americanism means anti-militarism. The current German desire to engage in a military adventure is about as real as Mr. Armstrong's desire to live according to what he preaches. We perceive America as a source of conflict, and we worry that our country may be drawn into a war between the Russians and the Americans, which is the last thing we want because it could destroy us who are caught in the middle. More troops and missiles mean more of a chance that we will be in a war contrary to our wishes. In addition, 95 percent of our college graduates refuse to do military service. These absent young people would be the leaders in the present, and any

future, German army.

The anti-Americanism among the young is paralleled by a trend toward neutrality and reduced military commitment among the intellectual elite. That is evident in their writings, and it involves Strauss, who insists on honoring treaties with the U.S. and the Russians. This same Strauss also wants a veto power over use of American nuclear weapons, even though Mr. Hogberg depicts him as the possible European strongman.

Mr. Hogberg and the PT also hardly ever mention the fact that West Germany has a constitution, the Basic Law, that permits only specific powers to be in the hands of the parties, the Chancellor, the states, or the armed forces. Contrary to the Armstrong church, we do have a system of checks and balances. It is impossible that anyone German, the good Strauss as the prime example, will hold power in the absolute way of an Armstrong. There is no other item that so renders the Armstrong statements void as the fact that the Germans have a constitutional system guaranteeing basic individual and collective rights. In all the Armstrong publications that I have seen, there is only scant or incidental reference to the German Basic Law. If Mr. Hogberg wishes to ignore the realities of our constitutional law, then he is only showing that he never departed from his starting point, the war propaganda, that advocated that Germans were incapable of having a rule of law. Again Mr. Hogberg demonstrates his dreadfully inadequate knowledge of the post-war situation in Germany.

There are a few more items that refute the Armstrong rubbish on my country. They concern the rules of neo-Nazis. The West German government (not to mention East Berlin) has systematically and unflinchingly suppressed any such revival of neo-Nazi parties. For example, the Socialist Reichs Party was declared unconstitutional already in 1949. The German Reichs Party, along with the German Communist Party, met a similar fate. In 1953, the German Free Corps was banned, and the Ludendorff-Circle was handed over to the courts in 1961.

Certainly, there are ideological supporters of Hitler in my country and yours today, just as there are Armstrong followers, even after all the real revelations about him in *Ambassador Report*. Furthermore, don't forget, the Nazis are legal in the United States, but not in my country. Hitler freaks have no constitutional protection in West Germany, in contrast to American Nazis in the United States who enjoy such constitutional privileges. Hitlerites also have no political clout to make themselves heard in West Germany. All that appears in support of, or like a revival of, Nazism is swiftly prosecuted here.

Finally, our armed forces are strictly limited in their activities by the Basic Law, the NATO treaties, and the occupational statute ending the military occupation in 1955. Our Bundeswehr is not even permitted to have a clearly identified picture of an enemy, a fact that is probably beyond Mr. Hogberg's horizon to comprehend.

I ask, are these the marks of a nation that according to Mr. Armstrong and his chief parrot Mr. Hogberg will militarize Europe and attack the United States? Do the "prophecies" by Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Hogberg ever relate to such empirical reality as outlined above? Only ignorant dimwits could accept their pseudo-prophetic sayings without linking them to any historical and political reality. The foregoing facts fly in the face of Mr. Hogberg's "analysis" of my country. He never has understood, nor apparently will he ever understand, what makes Germany work. He simply has no educational and intellectual background to do so. Mr. Hogberg's and Mr. Armstrong's "prophecies" or "analyses" of my country are just borrowed opinions, and these opinions are impressionistic, ill-conceived, shallow, and inconclusive.

The writings of these people who turn out such plain trash resemble more the deranged concoctions that spring from the broodings and contortions of uneducated, neurotic, and psychotic brains. Nonetheless, these great "revealers of truth" are still desperately trying to build a prophetic monument unto themselves by trying to tell their readers of events in the future, as in the case of Germany as the "Beast power." But they have only adopted this "knowledge" from the popular press, and using the Germans as a scapegoat is nothing but propaganda, as I have shown in this letter. It is then not likely that Mr.

Armstrong or Mr. Hogberg will succeed in going down in history as prophets.

What is certain, however, is the fact that their utterances have no relevance. We can all rest easier because we do not have to be concerned about some simpletons who advertise themselves as revealers of divine truth on Germany - "truth" obtained in propagandistic publications. Such people are not prophets, but charlatans.

- AR reader in Germany

### **Faulhaber: Germany in Prophecy**

One of our Canadian readers, A. Marvin Faulhaber, has sent us copies of two books he has written that may be of interest to some of our readers. One is entitled *Germany in Prophecy*. This work goes into "where Herbie went wrong" on prophecy. The second book is a 61-page reference book titled *The How Much Do You Love Your Child? Resource Book for Parents*. This book provides a wide variety of suggestions on child rearing as well as numerous addresses where one may obtain information valuable to parents. The books sell for \$10 each. Postage is \$1 for North America, \$3 elsewhere.

Mr. Faulhaber has also written that he hopes to produce a directory of WCG "splinter groups" and establish some type of "recovery network" of individuals and groups who were once affiliated with Worldwide but who would now like to assist in "deprogramming" current WCG members through counseling and friendship. The "recovery network" would also aid former WCG members in overcoming "the personality disorders caused by the hard sell and pressure tactics of the WCG," according to Faulhaber.

Those interested in any of the above should write to: A. Marvin Faulhaber, P. O. Box 3223, Mission, B. C., Canada.

### **Badillo Expands Services**

In our last issue we reported on Tony Badillo's excellent book on tithing. Since then, Mr. Badillo has expanded his ministry to include an interesting newsletter called *Newsgrams*. We particularly enjoyed its cartoons about HWA. Also worth mentioning are a number of articles by Badillo "exposing HWA's nonsense." They are listed on page 7 of his May newsletter. Those interested in obtaining *Newsgrams* should write to: Church of God Within, P.O. Box 11074, Dallas, TX 75223.

### **Richard Marson's New Report**

Some years ago, former WCG member Richard Marson wrote a book entitled the *Marson Report Concerning Herbert W. Armstrong*. Marson has now issued an updated version of that book. The new title is *American and British Israelism Debunked*. The price is \$5.95. Marson also publishes other religion-related material including *Reality Report*, a newsletter published every other month except July. The newsletter, which has an \$18 per year subscription price, is "dedicated to halting religious abuse through education." For more information write: *Reality Report*, 2442 Northwest Market Street, Suite 193,

Seattle, WA 98107.

## **Richard C. Nickels: Giving and Sharing**

Richard C. Nickels recently sent us the following announcement:

"*Giving and Sharing* is an international nonprofit mail-order religious bookstore. It began in 1978 partly as a protest against religious organizations who 'preach for hire.' We distribute Bibles and religious books and articles on a donation basis.

"Many former Worldwide Church of God members have enjoyed reading two of our books: (1) *A History of the Seventh Day Church of God* (397 pages, \$8 suggested donation), which reveals the origins of the church Herbert Armstrong became a part of; (2) *The Remnant of Israel* (32 pages, \$1 suggested donation), which traces the history of G. G. Rupert (1847-1922) and shows the amazing doctrinal similarities between this minister and Herbert Armstrong.

"Whether you are interested in Church of God history or just want to obtain good religious reading material without high cost, you are encouraged to write for a free catalog and details to: Giving and Sharing, 1606 Taylor, Sheridan, WY 82801."

## **Brenda Denzler Update**

It's been some time since we reported that Brenda Denzler of Kansas was working on a book composed of the stories of many who had joined and later left the WCG. Many have wondered what became of her project. Here's what Brenda recently wrote us:

"I returned full time to college last fall and have done very well. Besides taking a full academic load, I have been working part-time and am also a full-time parent. So as you can see, there's never a dull moment. That is why the book project is not as far along as it might otherwise be.... This summer I will have about 8 weeks with no classes, only work. During that time, I hope to be able to jell the material that I have been sent. Some of it is truly excellent! Writing [about the experiences people have shared] itself becomes hard for me, as I tend to experience rises in blood pressure, lumps in throat, clenched fists, teary eyes, etc."

We know the feeling Brenda, but if you can finish your book, it will be of help to many. Those who may wish to write down their WCG experiences and send them to Ms. Denzler should write to: Brenda Denzler, 917 S. Walnut, Newton, KS 67114.

## **Robert Williams: The Shofar**

*The Shofar* newsletter, put out by Robert C. Williams, has a new address. It is: P.O. Box 7399, Phoenix, AZ 85011. Mr. Williams has been extremely cooperative with the *Report* over the last few years, and we wish to publicly express our thanks to him for his kind help in covering the Armstrong divorce case in Tucson.

By the way, in his May 1984 issue of *The Shofar*, Williams correctly pointed out that Ambassador Report does not attack the theology of the WCG. While it is true that we

have, over the years, pointed out a number of anomalies within the WCG's dogma structure, we really have not made it a goal to "attack" the center core doctrines taught by HWA. We hope readers realize, however, that we do not mean to imply HWA's teachings are without flaw! It is beyond our means to turn the AR into a true theological journal. Nevertheless, it should be obvious by all the addresses for religious groups and publications run in the *Report* that we encourage our readers to very carefully reexamine the teachings of HWA. Those who do will be in for quite a few surprises.

All too often we hear of AR readers who say: "OK, so you proved that the church's leadership is guilty of hypocrisy, adultery, perversions, incest, perjury, idolatry, embezzlement, drunkenness, fraud, lying, stealing, vanity, intimidation, spying, and a few other things. So what? We're still in God's church because we have God's truth." To such individuals we can only say a la Joan Rivers, "Oh grow up!" Does a good tree produce evil fruit?

### **Other Literature of Interest**

"When Does a Minister Become Disqualified From the Ministry?" by Keith Hunt: This 7-page paper is available for free by writing: Keith Hunt, P.O. Box 964, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7N1, Canada.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Herbert W. Armstrong: He May Not Be Insane, But He Sure Is Crazy" by Emmett Hctor: This 3-page paper is available for \$1 by writing to the author at 16403 Main Street, La Platte, NE 68123.

In this paper long-time anti-WCG activist Emmett Hctor forcefully puts forward the theory that HWA is a classic-case psychopath. Hctor's theory is based on chapter 7:6 of Dr. Eric Berne's book *A Layman's Guide to Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis*, published in paperback by Ballantine Books (\$3 from Ballantine Mail Sales, Dept. LG, 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 10022).

Also available from Hctor is a 10-page paper entitled "Ten Years After Armstrongism: A Philosophy Not for Everyone." In this paper, available for \$2, Hctor details his exodus out of, not only the WCG, but out of all Christianity and tells why he has now embraced the teachings of Frederick Nietzsche and Allan Watts.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Religious Empire*, by Dr. Martin A. Larson and Rev. C. Stanley Lowell: This book came out in 1976, but is still very valuable to those desiring to understand the relationship between church and state in the United States. The book lists for \$10, but can be obtained for \$6 if ordered directly from: Dr. Martin A. Larson, P.O. Box 15059, Phoenix, AZ 85060. Of particular interest to us was the authors' description of "corporation sole" (p. 25), since Herbert Armstrong now runs the WCG through a corporation sole:

"In nearly half of the states, what is known as a *Corporation Sole* is a legal entity, which, though never mentioned in the Internal Revenue Code, is a reality of great importance. As such, a bishop, acting as if he were the embodiment of his corporation - and even the pastor of a parish church - is permitted to hold in his own name unlimited assets in the form of real estate, cash, stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc. A special feature of this arrangement is that, since each successor to the office is invested automatically with all those riches, no deeds or other instruments are necessary to effect a transfer of ownership.

"What the bishop does with this property, especially the revenue, no one except himself is in a position to know. He is not required to make any report to the priests under him, to the laymen in his diocese, to his fellow-bishops, or to any legal authority. If he actually owns all these worldly goods, he may be a billionaire; if he does not, it must be substantively owned by a superior such as the Vatican or the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The laymen who have contributed everything have neither any ownership in, nor control over, this vast accumulation of material wealth."

## **Help For The Blind**

*Have you had any requests on behalf of the blind or sight-impaired for Ambassador Report on tape? If no such service exists and the number of requests is not too great, I would be willing to put Ambassador Report on cassette and distribute copies to those in need on an "at cost" basis.*

*-Dennis R. Sivert  
P.O. Box 51  
Ft. Branch, IN 47648*

Editor: We are not financially able to provide a cassette program for the blind. However, those in need of such help should contact Mr. Sivert to see if something can be worked out.

## **A Letter From Gary Alexander**

*I received your highly informative April edition today, and I thank you for making a fair and unbiased report on my recent 30-day prison sentence. The author captured a very important lesson from all this: the importance of thinking for oneself and doing independent homework before running after another "cause. " His reference to my current employer, Jim Blanchard, as a "right-wing gold bug " was an implication that I may be making the same mistake again. I don't think so, but I'll let that pass.*

*The major point which I would like to make, and I feel your author missed, is that Liberty Ministries (LMI) was practicing on a small-potatoes, amateurish level what Herbert W. Armstrong has practiced on a massive level for more than 50 years: indulging private tastes under the mask of church funds. In fact, your April edition gave 6 pages of court testimony, partly to that effect, that Herbert wrote \$50,000 checks "to himself. " That's basically what some of the LMI people did, only with \$500 instead. We were taught to write checks to cash and call them "church expenses" on the memo portion of the check. You have proven that Herbert Armstrong did the same thing, but in the millions. How*

*else can you account for his lifestyle on a \$200,000 salary?*

*There are many sub-points to make from this experience. Herbert has not served one hour in prison, and probably never will. Doug Taylor [former WCG minister] and I each served 30 days of a one-year sentence, with 3-years probation. We were amateurish, could not afford Herbert's "fancy Beverly Hills lawyers" (to use Mr Ettinger's colorful terms) to cover our tracks, and did not have the "appearance of religion" - you know, fleecing the public, begging for money, preaching hell-fire to believers while living a heavenly lifestyle, misquoting scriptures. We only held on to our own money (not begging for money of the 'poor sheep')... illegally to be sure, but still more ethical than taking other people's money.*

*Note from my enclosed April edition of "AMEN" (not a religious newsletter, folks, but an acronym for Alexander's Monthly Economic Newsletter) that I have assembled my pre-prison and post-prison diary into a 50-page single-spaced document which is available for the cost of duplication and postage (I'm a non-profit and non-prophet organization), at \$6, from Box 1727, Metairie, LA 70001. I believe the prison experience was the most memorable event of my life, even eclipsing "The Ambassador Experience" we all shared. (Heck, I'll send the diary for free to any of my old college friends.)*

*In it, I make some discoveries about myself which are at odds with your author's analysis, i.e., I don't regret the crime I committed, don't regret falling under the influence of powerful "mentors" like the Armstrongs or the Williamses, cherishing greatly the lessons which could only be learned through the crucible of those precise experiences. Libertarianism teaches "buyer beware" on the economic and social level and I believe it applies to the philosophical and religious level too. I can't blame HWA or TKW for misleading me, when I was the "buyer" of their package of lies. Ambassador Report is a much-needed "consumer's advocate" for past, present, and future sheep, but I hope you don't believe the "truth shall set them free," when so few of us were really interested in the truth about The Truth while we were in it. And, for me anyway, it took a few more aborted Crusades before I outgrew the need for a Big Daddy to dispense truth.*

*-Gary Alexander*

## **Alumni News**

**John Tuit**, author of *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, has sold his New Jersey manufacturing firm and has purchased a sawmill in the Catskill Mountains of New York. He told us he and his family are very happy in their new rural environment. His new address is: John Tuit, 17 W. End. Ave., Stamford, NY 12167.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Roy G. Stout**, a student at AC Pasadena during 1967-1969, is now an attorney specializing in immigration. His office address is: Roy G. Stout, 311 South Spring Street, Penthouse Suite, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Eugene I. Smyda**, formerly the *Plain Truth's* chief photographer, retired two years ago and is now living in Panama City, Florida, where he once had a studio and camera-repair business. He is again a member of the Florida State Pistol Team and attended the National Matches the past two years. He was with the team when they won the Nationals in 1965, the same year he entered the WCG. While Mr. Smyda is glad to be out of the WCG, he is saddened that his ex-wife and four children are still members and will not communicate with him.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Andrew Voth**, AC Pasadena class of 1970 and former instructor at Ambassador and Imperial Schools, is now Cultural Arts Supervisor for the city of Oxnard, California. He wrote us: "My fourteen years at AC serve me well in the political spectrum of municipal and county government - the advanced guerrilla techniques learned there catch opponents every time! At least one can reason with them in a logical manner - unlike attempting to communicate with someone such as, say, Raymond McSnare - or whateverhisnamewas."

\* \* \* \* \*

**Gary Murphy**, AC Pasadena class of 1973 and former instructor at Imperial Schools, is now principal of Inspiration Addition School in Miami, Arizona, where he lives with his wife Norma and two sons. On May 11 Gary graduated from Arizona State University with a doctorate in education. (The editor of this newsletter, however, best remembers Gary as a great canoe partner on a Minnesota wilderness fishing trip we took in 1972.)

\* \* \* \* \*

**Kathy Kruger**, AC Pasadena 1970, and **Pat Boehnhard**, AC Pasadena 1971, wrote us a few weeks ago. Kathy moved to Minneapolis in 1974 with her two daughters, Shawna and Bethany, studied art for a time, completed a degree in Human Services, and now earns a living doing technical drawings. Pat was planning to do graduate work in women's studies until the university she applied to decided to check AC's credentials. She went to cheffing school instead and now manages the kitchen of "the biggest, richest, smartest, and most-spoiled sorority at the University of Minnesota." Pat and Kathy said they'd love to hear from old friends. They can be reached by writing to: 3844 Blaisdell S., Minneapolis, MN 55409.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Bill Moore**, AC Bricket Wood class of 1969, wrote us the following:

"I wish you would mention in the AR that 'Innovative Living,' which I wrote to you about a couple of years ago, is a potential TV series, not a church. I keep getting letters from people asking if we keep the Sabbath, holy days, etc. I am not in the religion business...."

"My family and I are getting along fine. We finally - after four years - feel free of the mental shackles of the WCG. My family is well adjusted, the kids are doing wonderful in school, and we feel a real part of the community. I have numerous business and personal contacts throughout Omaha. I was even able to coproduce and host this past winter a 12-episode TV series on personal money management called "The Subject Is Money" and cable-cast to over 79,000 households in the Omaha area. A pilot children's television series which I created and co-wrote with a writer from Hollywood has been shot, and the producer will be talking to the networks about it next month. (Keep your fingers crossed, but don't hold your breath - right?) Disney and Nicklelodeon have already called back to say they want to see the half-hour pilot. So, things are really looking up for us out here in far away Omaha."

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Reunion**, the British group of ex-Worldwidiers that meets semiannually, is planning their next get-together for Sept. 22. Those interested in participating or those interested in obtaining their highly informative newsletter should write to: Mr. P. Griffiths, 190 Tythe Barn Lane, Whitlocks End, Shirley, Solihull, W. Midlands, England.

## ***Letters***

*Just got your April edition and thought that at long last I would sit down and write the letter I've been meaning to write for the last few years. I graduated from AC in 1973, after serving as Portfolio editor and Plain Truth staff writer. I basically grew up in WCG, a more-or-less typical "Church kid." I'm not too sure what's typical about that kind of upbringing, but that's another story.*

*I first became disillusioned with Worldwide when I sat in the Auditorium as a student in January 1972 and listened to various ministers including HWA lie about their promises of the end of the work/world in '72. (It only took me another 7 years to split. I'm a slow learner.) I left Pasadena for a job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C., in July 1973. In October 1973 Chris Heap and I were married in Pasadena. We now have two daughters, Erin (4) and Heather (8 mo.).*

*In 1976 we moved to Portland, Oregon, where I went to work as a public information officer with the U.S. Forest Service. In 1979 we were expelled from WCG by the infamous Dan Fricke over a dispute involving his right to determine who could sit at our dinner table. YOU coordinators aren't supposed to backtalk pastors, but, what the heck, I always was a slow learner. I have to say, throwing us out was the biggest and possibly only favor WCG ever did for us. But we should be grateful for the good, no matter where it's found.*

*In 1980 we moved to Durango, Colorado, where I took my present job as public information officer for the San Juan National Forest. Life (and success) is not only possible, but much sweeter, after WCG.*

*This brief travelogue is presented in the hope that any of our friends might get in touch with us if they live in or pass through this area. My basic philosophy now is that "Religion is slavery: Christianity is freedom." Chris is active in Foursquare Gospel Church, a moderately charismatic and highly Christian group that others might want to*

*investigate if they are seeking a group of believers without conditions.*

*Please print our name and address - we'd love to see some of our old friends.*

*-Dennis (& Chris) Neill  
2935 W. Third Ave.  
Durango, CO 81301*

*Ambassador Report has really helped me and so many others to recognize that it is HWA and his gang that are "nuts" - not us.*

*I was recently forced out of the WCG after 12 years of loyalty and service, some in ministerial capacities. In my final discussion with the local pastor I asked him, "If you tell me white is black and black is white, do I have to believe it in order to stay in this church?" He replied without hesitation, "Yes!" He also accused me of disbelieving that the WCG was the only Work of God on earth today. I confessed to that accusation and then handed him my letter of resignation.*

*I hope all of us who have had the WCG experience can overlook the bitter parts and treasure the good times and friendships we have enjoyed. There has been good in many cases. But the utopian Wonderful World Tomorrow will never exist inside the decadent and deceptive organizations of the world today.*

*-Steve Ross (class of '76), Oregon*

*Starting at about 17½ I was an Armstrong slave for over 11 long years. I am now in psychotherapy partly as a result of the cult's influence. I had some personal problems before, but Armstrong's group only made them a good deal worse.*

*-Texas*

*I came out of it in 1968, but only because I was not happy and I did not come across a single happy person at any time. The minister was cold and uncaring and was always bawling someone out from the pulpit, so you know the place was full of tattletales. It got so I was afraid to go to church at all for fear I would say or do the wrong thing. I also got fed up with being bugged all the time by the crises.*

*-West Virginia*

*I understand you have another issue out updating Herbert's long saga of empty visions and ghastly revelations, plus the latest on his divorce. Imagine an Apostle getting a divorce. I wouldn't know an Apostle if I saw him on the street, but it should be interesting reading about one getting divorced. I would be much pleased if you could send me a copy.*

*How great it feels to no longer be a slave to this unbelievable farce. It is probably one of the worse predicaments that could befall a human being. The hapless victim is cleverly*

*inducted into something that has nothing to do with how things really are. He becomes a member with the status of something like a mindless worker bee. Before long the member cannot distinguish friend from foe, something intelligent from something stupid - and indeed will do the silliest of things on command from the manipulator. The member will fanatically adhere to the charlatan and his lie. A fact means nothing to a member victim because he has lost his imagination and logic.*

*I can say these things because I was a former member, which gives me some experience along with many years observation of other victims.*

*-West Virginia*

*Although I can't give out any names, there's at least one farmer in this area who is having a dickens of a time getting back the farm which he signed over the "them." At that time, they were prophesying an end to all things and advised people to sign over property, etc. to the church. Too bad people didn't have the sense to know that if "the end" was at hand, why should "they" want all that property?*

*-North Dakota*

*I am a widow on social security in low-cost housing, but I gave my life and blood and heart and tears to that organization - unbelievable! What's left of my life is nothing but sorrow, and nothing will ever be the same.*

*-Oregon*

*I am a victim of systemic lupus, which I had for several years while in the Worldwide Church. It was not diagnosed until a serious attack hit me, and I could not get up from my bed. I went through a terrible trauma in the Worldwide Church, as I was torn between the need for medical attention and the fear of losing my salvation if I obtained it. As a result of Mr. Armstrong's false teaching forbidding members to obtain help from doctors, hospitals, or medications many died. I am now suffering from crippled hands, joints fused in toes, 40 percent kidney function, a heart murmur, heart-valve damage, an ulcer, and numerous other effects caused by the lupus. Many of these problems could have been avoided if I had sought medical assistance at the onset of the illness.*

*I left the Worldwide Church around 1972 as a direct result of the trauma I was put through in the aftermath of a hospitalization which was brought about when my fellow office workers became concerned when I called in that I was ill and after three weeks heard nothing more from me. They found me in a coma and rushed me to the hospital when the systemic lupus was diagnosed.*

*The life expectancy of this illness at that time was eight years. The doctors who handled my case at the hospital told my office worker friends that it would be a miracle if I lived through the coming weekend. My blood count had dropped so low that they could not find a pulse, so they ordered blood transfusions immediately: but my veins had begun collapsing, and they could not find one to take the blood. I remember waking up and*

*seeing the doctor and two nurses over me very much concerned about the situation. The doctor found a place in my leg and the vein held up and it was very close, but blood started flowing through my body again in a surge of warmth I shall never forget. It was life coming into me. I found out later that some of my office worker friends had donated the blood that kept me alive! But believe it or not, I still clung to the idea these were Satan's agents, although my "faith" in Armstrong's teachings had almost cost me my life.*

*In the meantime my fellow workers had told the doctor that I belonged to a church where they didn't go to the doctor for treatment, take medicine, etc. and that's why they found me near death. Do you know that so-called agent of Satan really cared whether I lived or died! He took time out of his busy schedule to come into my room when I had gained some strength to tell me he thought he knew why I was near death. He talked to me about my beliefs and told me he believed in God too: but that God did not intend for me to lie down on a bed, receive no care, and just quietly die to please him. He said God loved and cared about people, and he did not want to see me stay in a church listening to teachings that would "kill me." At first I rejected what he said, thinking he was an instrument of Satan trying to cause me to question Mr. Armstrong and the church doctrine. I was so brainwashed!*

*It has since been revealed that Mr. Armstrong himself has been seen seeing doctors for his heart condition. He went to a clinic in [Tucson] for [treatments] and a picture was taken of him while leaving said clinic, which I have seen. He takes medication regularly and has had nurses and doctors in attendance at his home after his heart attack.*

*Well, I began to think about what the doctor had said to me and what my fellow office workers had done for me. I realized those people and my doctor really cared about what happened to me. Over the prior two years I had experienced much sickness and didn't know what was wrong with me and was afraid to go to a doctor for fear of losing my salvation. I was anointed numerous times by the ministers, but only grew worse. I was told by them that I must be sinning or I must be in a bad attitude. My fellow church members would ask me how I was and I was told not to lie by all the sermons I had heard, so I would say I was weak and tired and did not feel well. Several ladies were quick to tell me it was all in my head and that people did not want to hear about all my problems and that I should say I feel fine. In fact, many of those ladies - when I returned to church after being in the hospital near death - came up to me and began to berate me for having blood transfusions. They didn't even care that I had gone through the near-death trauma as well as mental and spiritual anguish, and God had granted me life. I began to balance out the attitudes of my fellow office workers and the doctor. The office workers, I found out later, had given the blood that revived me. Do you know what I found? The love of God! That love was in the doctor and the fellow office workers, but it was not to be found in the Worldwide Church. God had at last freed me from the bondage of that cult.*

*May God have mercy on those poor deceived people still in that organization! They do not know what manner of man they are serving. He has proven himself over and over to be liar, a false prophet, a hypocrite and an instrument of Satan used to deceive and destroy trusting people who were not well-grounded in the scriptures.*

*-California*

*I shudder to think what it is going to do mentally and emotionally to my husband when this [church] falls. He is so dedicated and so sold that at this point he would die for HWA! The WCG members have sold their souls to the devil - at times I feel like this after 32 years married to a man who needs this. Ask any ex-member, any outside spouse, any parent with a child involved, and their "gut" feelings will all be the same: "pure helplessness" to the situation. We want to do something, but what? We want to tell others, but when we do it sounds so bizarre that they look at you like you are going off the deep end. And then we hear this statement "He is such a good nice person; let him alone, he's not hurting anything or anyone." That statement makes me "throw up." I agree he is a good and nice person, or I would not have married him. But not hurting anyone or anything? Wrong!*

*It does hurt families, spouses, friends, relationships, etc. It separates and isolates in all of the above areas. It does hurt at birthdays, Christmas, and even on weekends. Friends become church members only, all saying the same phrases, using the same choice words, and having the same thought patterns. It's like associating with robots. When I drop my husband off for church service on Saturdays, the men all seem to be cut out of the same mold: dark suit, white shirt, tie, and vest, and hanging from their right hand is the same design of briefcase. Young men, old men, all the same. HWA sure has found a way with people. Before my husband joined the cult, he was very casual and relaxed in everything he did. Now it's not "Hi," it's "Good evening!" All actions and conversation are very formal. The looks are the same, but the precious personality and fun-loving fellow are gone.*

*-Minnesota*

Editor: Many people who have seen the sci-fi movie "The Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (both 1956 and 1978 versions) have commented on how that movie seems to symbolically portray the very thing you've mentioned - the loss of personality and free agency in individuals who join the WCG and certain other movements. Unfortunately, just like the movie's characters whose minds were taken over by the "pods," once an individual gets "locked into" the Armstrong ideology, there is very little that can be done to help them escape.

Nevertheless, the situation is not hopeless. In recent months we have been amazed at how many long-time WCG members have written to us asking for issues of the *Report*. It seems that HWA's divorce and the WCG's attempt at covering up the details have made many question their church's teachings and leadership.

*Your ministry is one of warning and crying aloud about the evils of the WCG. We will soon make an effect on people. So hang in there.*

*-Pennsylvania*

*Please don't quit your efforts until HWA is in hell (the grave). Your work is most important in the religious community of the U.S., and more. You have dogged the trail of the biggest cultist in the world, and you have done it with style and grace.*

-Arkansas

---

We are doing all we can to help those in need of the truth about Herbert Armstrong and his movement. If you feel we are performing a worthwhile service, *please* make an effort to support *Ambassador Report*. We don't ask our readers to send us their tithes and offerings or to "sacrifice for the Work." But, the fact is, if we are to continue helping those hurt by Armstrongism, we need your help.

Our warmest thanks to those of you who really do care.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR29\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR29 October 1984**

### **Leona McNair Awarded \$1.26 Million**

It took five years of exhausting pre-trial discovery, mountainous paperwork and endless legal maneuvering followed by a grueling seven-week trial. But in the end, it was all worth it for Leona McNair. On August 23, a Pasadena, California, jury awarded her \$1,260,000 in her libel and slander suit against the Worldwide Church of God.

The trial was a complicated one with testimony that was often contradictory. Yet the jury was intensely attentive throughout, and in the end, the truth became evident to all.

Leona McNair joined the Worldwide (then Radio) Church of God in 1954. A year later she married the man who had baptized her - evangelist Raymond McNair. Court testimony (including Raymond McNair's) revealed that she had been a faithful, obedient wife and devoted mother. While the marriage was not without stresses, Leona attempted to stifle all critical thoughts until 1973. That year Raymond, who had been in charge of the church's operations in Britain, was transferred back to the United States to assume a position at the church's Ambassador College headquarters in Pasadena. What the McNairs discovered when they arrived was a church headquarters fraught with doctrinal divisions, political infighting, and sex scandals.

To all of this, Raymond turned a blind eye, remaining faithful to his mentor, church founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA). Leona's patience with the church's leadership, however, rapidly waned. Her high intelligence (Dr. McKelligott would later testify that her 143 IQ is equaled by only three in a thousand) and strong religious values conflicted with the role she was expected to play. She told Raymond she could no longer continue to support him in what she viewed as the perpetration of a giant fraud. She stopped attending Worldwide Church of God (WCG) services in 1974 and occasionally attended lectures given by such ex-WCG ministers as Dr. Ernest L. Martin.



When the trial ended, Judge Olson told the jury they had renewed his faith in the jury system.

Leona's disillusionment with Herbert Armstrong and her desire for religious freedom were intolerable to Raymond, and he made his feelings known. According to testimony by Leona, in 1975 her husband told her, "I am going to crush you until you are totally dependent on me!" (In court Raymond denied ever making this threat. However, third parties have confirmed hearing Raymond say the equivalent.) Raymond cut Leona off from access to their joint bank accounts, badgered her into giving back jewelry he had given her and then sold them, refused to give her adequate money for groceries, and moved into separate sleeping quarters. Leona also soon began to notice that many WCG friends would no longer have anything to do with her.

Communication between Leona and Raymond became increasingly strained. But in spite of this, Leona - concerned for the welfare of her children - put aside all thought of divorce or separation. Raymond, on the other hand, had different ideas. According to Leona's court testimony, and corroborated by her daughter, on a number of occasions Raymond took her to the door, opened it and yelled, "You're not paying the bills here. Get out!" The reason for this behavior was inexplicable to Leona until later when she realized that, although the WCG had for four decades prohibited all divorce, around 1974 church leaders began to discuss the possibility of allowing divorce for members *deserted* by nonmembers. Leona's suspicions were confirmed when Mrs. Nancy Tate, one of her close friends, told her how the wife of one WCG evangelist had confided, "If we could just get Leona to leave the house, *we could get her on desertion.*" Before long, Raymond made his intentions perfectly clear. He flat out told her he would divorce her when the time was right.

The relationship was now a traumatic one, but Leona still had no intention of deserting her family. Nor was she lingering on for (what Allan Browne would later claim in court) a "free ride." She started attending college again in 1974 to reestablish her nursing credentials. And when those were obtained in 1975 she found work at a local hospital. But then, a few weeks later in June, Raymond McNair did something no WCG evangelist had ever done. He filed for divorce.

With the exception of a handful of top leaders of the church, almost the entire WCG ministry was absolutely shocked. For decades, the church had taught that divorce was a great evil. The church's official marriage ceremony even stated explicitly that any divorce granted by the governments of man is "null and void" before God. Yet here was a prominent, high-ranking minister - known to have required dozens of divorced and remarried individuals to separate and live celibate or face excommunication - who was divorcing his wife of 21 years. Even more shocking to many was the fact that it was being done with the approval (and many felt, encouragement) of Pastor General Herbert Armstrong!

---

&COPY;1984 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service.  
John Trechak, Editor & Publisher Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

The divorce became final by September 1976. Not long afterward, Raymond remarried; other Worldwide ministers, too, got divorces and remarried; and Herbert Armstrong, himself, married a divorcee. Within a few years, divorce became an accepted practice in the Armstrong church.

In the meantime, Leona remained unmarried and pursued her nursing career. Her daughter Ruth drifted away from Worldwide soon after Leona did. But her son Bruce remained in Worldwide. And her son Joe - after living with his mother for two years after the divorce - went to Ambassador College in 1979 and is now a church member and employee.

After her divorce Leona led a quiet life in Pasadena. But underneath the reserved exterior was a woman deeply hurt by the "Ambassador experience." Perhaps for that reason - and because she still had friends and relatives in the WCG - she continued to follow the antics of the Armstrong church, especially through the pages of *Ambassador Report*. The years of subservience to the Armstrong patriarchy and later the shunning by many friends and relatives in the WCG had taken their toll. But at least she was free of the Armstrong organization's oppressions. Or so she thought, until one day in June 1979 when someone showed her the June 25, 1979 issue of the *Pastor's Report*, an official WCG publication. It contained an article by Roderick C. Meredith, then the director of the WCG ministry. In it, he castigated Leona as having been the cause of the McNair marriage breakup three years earlier. In an attempt at justifying Raymond McNair's 1976 divorce and subsequent remarriage, Meredith described Leona as being a family deserter:

"A classic example of this [marital desertion] would be Mr. Raymond McNair's situation. His wife *refused* to be a wife to him for over two years - to sleep with him, cook for him, or even civilly communicate with him in a decent manner. Rather, she had *left* God's Church and was actually FIGHTING God's Church and Mr. McNair, turning his children against him and literally *cursing* him to his face. Finally, upon advice of Mr. Armstrong and Ted Armstrong, he was finally forced to make legal the already existing FACT that she had *deserted him* and was no longer his wife in *any way whatsoever*."

Unknown to Leona then, but later discovered, was the fact that six months earlier Meredith had also made similar statements in public. In early January of 1979 the state of California had brought a civil suit against the leaders of the WCG. HWA, distrusting the "liberal" wing of the church, put right-winger Meredith in charge of the WCG's entire ministry. At an emergency ministerial conference held in Tucson, Arizona, it was announced that such "liberal" practices as voting in elections and keeping birthdays would again be taboo in the church. Then, on the last day of the conference, Meredith, for some reason, felt it necessary to spend five minutes attacking Leona before 1,000 WCG ministers and wives. In court, a tape recording would reveal how Meredith, in strident tones had exclaimed:



Jury foreman Ignacio Gracia: "Here we won't condone these things.... They were driving a knife in her heart."

"...his [Raymond's] first wife [Leona] had left the Church and was virtually cursing him, cursing Mr. Armstrong, with curse words, spitting literally in people's faces and as hateful as a human being could be. And God does tell us and the whole Church of God decided long before this ever came up with Mr. McNair back in I Corinthians 7:15, 'But if the unbelieving depart' - and I tell you before God and Christ, she sure departed. I mean she departed so far that she is one of the major enemies of God's Church in Southern California and remains so to this day and has been working actively and ferociously with the *Ambassador Review*. [She] tried to call me personally and get me to give them an interview here a year or so ago which I would not do. And everyone else that attends their meetings, attended Dr. Martin's meetings, fighting us, and fighting us actively. And 'if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage' ...and we've come to realize that what God has bound he can unbind. That's part of our understanding on divorce and remarriage which the whole Church came to back in 1974. And so after about two solid years of living without a wife and a virtual hell on earth Mr. McNair was encouraged by Mr. Armstrong and by Garner Ted Armstrong, and this is not a matter of a secret because he told me that he'd done that with Raymond and he told others - Ted Armstrong, that is, and Mr. Armstrong. Both encouraged Raymond to put her away and divorce her since she was just simply wanting to keep him on the string and get a free ride while she cursed him and would not have anything to do with him. There was not even a way of saying hello in a friendly way, living in opposite ends of the house and an armed truce or an armed hell, and the way to do [it] was to put her away and do what I Corinthians 7:15 said on the advice of the two top men in God's work. And so he had done that after about a year and a half, or whatever, and finally, also, several months later, married his present wife. And he is not married to anyone else but his present wife according to the understanding God's Church came to back in 1974. Thank you very much."

Former WCG minister Richard Gipe confirmed in court that some of these comments were interpreted by ministers to mean that Leona was "demon possessed." Seeing the Meredith comments about her in the *Pastor's Report* proved to be a crushing experience to Leona. Realizing that Meredith's poisonous untruths would be read by many hundreds of her long-time friends, and possibly her sons, she felt devastated.

Known to very few was the fact that her many years of Armstrong-church oppression had, in the past, resulted in numerous psychological problems - fear of heights, traffic, and closed spaces - as well as physical ailments. After her divorce from Raymond and separation from the WCG, her mental and physical condition improved greatly. But after reading the Meredith attack on her in June of 1979, the old phobias and ailments quickly reappeared - and with much greater severity. She sought medical treatment.

Wisely, she also sought legal advice. (Dr. Gottlieb would later testify in court how, from the standpoint of psychological therapy, this was one of the best things she could have done.) Within days, Pasadena lawyer Judith Taylor filed a multi-million dollar defamation suit on her behalf. Later, Pasadena attorney John T. Tate Jr. took over the case. But by 1981, Tate, who was bombarded with expenses and legal paper from Armstrong's lawyers, logically decided to obtain help from a law firm with greater financial resources. The Los Angeles law firm of Greene, O'Reilly, Broillet, Paul, Simon, McMillan, Wheeler, & Rosenberg - a successful partnership with an established record, especially in the area of product liability - was "associated in" on the case. The firm,

which has a reputation for aggressively representing the "little guy" against big corporations, assigned the brunt of the workload to one of their newer associates, Antony Stuart, a 30-year-old graduate of Loyola Law School.



Allan Browne listens to Ralph Helge (left) and Roderick Meredith (pointing).

Stuart's task was formidable. Worldwide, as usual, spared no expense in fighting the opposition. Named as defendants in the suit were evangelist Roderick C. Meredith, his brother-in-law evangelist Raymond McNair, and the Worldwide Church of God. Lawyers representing the church were WCG attorney Ralph Helge and Los Angeles attorney Bruce Armstrong (no relation to the WCG Armstrongs). Representing Meredith and McNair was Beverly Hills lawyer Allan Browne, who turned out to be the chief spokesman for the defense.

### **The Trial Begins**

After more than two weeks selecting the seven man, five woman jury, opening statements began on July 18. Stuart carefully outlined his position, telling the jury that in 1979 the Worldwide Church was in a crisis and that his client was victimized as an "example to the rest of the church that dissidents were not going to be tolerated." Six months later, Stuart said, Meredith again attacked her, this time in print in the church's *Pastor's Report*.

Allan Browne, in his opening statement, defended the Meredith diatribes claiming they had been necessary to instruct the WCG's ministry on the changes in the WCG's divorce policies and that Meredith's statements could not possibly have caused the plaintiff any problems. Browne characterized Leona as a woman who "could not accept the step down from the position of first lady of Europe." (Long-time WCG members should, of course, know what nonsense this is, as the "first lady" title was never applied to any woman in the church with the exception of HWA's ex-wife Ramona, whom HWA used to call the "first lady of the church.") Of the McNair marriage, Browne said, "She berated [Raymond] and called him spineless." According to Browne, the Meredith statements about Leona were insulting, but not slanderous - the self-contradiction of which was evident to all, including the Pasadena *Star-News*, whose article on the trial the next day (July 20) was headlined "Not Slanderous?"

The WCG could not claim the defamatory statements had not been made. Leona had a copy of the *Pastor's Report* and a tape recording of Meredith's January 1979 speech. Instead, the defense took the position that the statements were true, privileged, and made without malice or reckless disregard of the truth. In attempting to buttress their claims, the WCG lawyers called the following witnesses: WCG ministers Rod Meredith, Raymond McNair, Dennis Luker, Ron Kelly, Ron Laughland, Vernon Hargrove, and Les McColm; Meredith's sons, Jim and Mike; church employees Joe McNair, Lee Pettijohn, Ron Nelson and Charles Buschmann; church members Anne Elliott, Joyce Howe, Marie Docken and Alan Maggio; and physician Creighton Horton. (With the exception of Dr. Horton, all were either on the church's payroll or had some close association with the WCG.)

Besides Leona McNair, witnesses called by the plaintiff's side were: psychiatrist Dr. David Gottlieb; psychologist Dr. J. W. McKelligott; Leona's daughter Ruth McNair-Knasin; former Ambassador College instructor William Damm; former WCG ministers Robert Hoops, Richard Gipe and David Robinson; Leona's son Bruce McNair; former WCG member Robert Bosch; and *Ambassador Report* editor John Trechak.

### Contradictions

The over four weeks of testimony produced an astonishing number of contradictions. For instance, Robert Bosch testified how WCG minister Les McColm had once told him Dr. Ernest Martin was put out of the WCG for being "caught in bed" with Leona McNair. (Both Leona McNair and Ernest Martin flatly deny this.) But on the witness stand, McColm claimed he never made this statement.

Leona's daughter, Ruth McNair-Knasin, saddened to have to appear as a witness in the battle between her parents, told the court that, while she loved her father, it was simply not true that her mother cursed or spat or behaved in a non-Christian manner. She said Leona had been a very loving and devoted mother. Yet, when Leona's son Joe McNair - now a WCG employee - took the stand, the jury heard a totally different story. Joe not only painted Leona as having been a negligent parent and family deserter, he fully supported the statements made by Meredith.

To hear her son Joe attack her so vehemently in court - and ironically, on what was her birthday - was heartbreaking for Leona. Back on the stand, however, she lamented his new state of mind, saying Joe had never spoken to her in that manner before. She was very concerned for him and was aware of the high incidence of mental illness in the Worldwide Church. What the jury saw and heard was just "not the real Joe." She was concerned that he had "snapped." Then, over objections by lawyer Browne, she produced letters written by both her sons, thanking her for the love and concern she had always shown and for providing so well for them over the years.

One of the hopes of the defense seemed to be to show that the *Pastor's Report* was sent exclusively to ministers in the church. But former Ambassador College physical education instructor Bill Damm testified how, along with other AC instructors, he too had received the *Pastor's Report*. During a deposition Damm was asked by church lawyers if the title *Pastor's Report* didn't imply that that publication was intended only for pastors. But Damm pointed out how by that reasoning the *Pastor General's Report* (the current title of the *Pastor's Report*) would logically be intended only for the Pastor General. He was also asked if it wasn't true that during the course of his employment at Ambassador College he may have taught church doctrines. No, he told them, it never came up in his swimming classes. Damm told us he thought the attempt to turn his swimming instructor position into that of minister was a little silly. If he had been a minister, he told us, he should have been receiving more pay, second-title assistance, a leased car, and a housing allowance. "But who knows," he told us kiddingly, "maybe they owe me some money."

One of the contentions of the defendants was that Meredith's 1979 conference comments on Leona had been made only to the ministers and wives in Tucson and that the conference that day had not been "piped" in to Pasadena as had the Tucson proceedings earlier in the week. Leona was convinced, however, that the entire conference - including the attack on her - had been broadcast to the church members assembled in Pasadena for the so-called "sit ins" of January 1979. To prove his contention, Browne called to the stand Alan Maggio, a WCG member who had been present for all the "piped-in" messages heard during the "sit in" period (see our March, 1979 issue).

Maggio testified he had not heard anything at that time about the McNair divorce, and if he had he would have noted it in his notebook. When Stuart, on cross examination, discovered that Maggio just happened to bring his church notebook with him to court, Stuart asked if he could look through it. Maggio agreed to the request saying, "I have nothing to hide." Then Browne chimed in, "We have nothing to hide." The massive notebook was brought forward and with Browne and Maggio looking over his shoulder, Stuart turned to the pages on the conference. There in front of Stuart were Maggio's handwritten notes on the subject of divorce and remarriage. When Stuart started to read the notes aloud, Browne objected and Stuart replied, "Mr. Browne, I thought you had nothing to hide!" With the entire courtroom alive with giggles, Browne, as usual, asked for a side-bar (out of ear-shot of the jury) conference with the judge.

*Ambassador Report* editor John Trechak testified how Leona had been a friend for many years and how she had,

on occasion, financially assisted the publication. However, contrary to what the WCG was claiming, she was never one of its publishers, editors or writers. Earlier during Trechak's two depositions, church lawyers attempted to delve into such unrelated matters as who *Ambassador Report's* sources were. But Trechak, quoting sections of the Constitution of the state of California, declined to provide that information.

During the trial, Browne produced photographs of what he claimed was a 1979 anti-WCG "demonstration" at headquarters in Pasadena. Leona was in the photographs. However, jurors would later notice that she was not carrying a sign or even saying anything. She was simply standing on the sidewalk listening to what was actually a news conference given by certain WCG members sympathetic to the state of California's 1979 lawsuit against the church's top leaders.

Another contradiction during the trial concerned the WCG practices of disfellowshipping and marking. Raymond McNair claimed that "marking" simply meant "notification" that a member had been disfellowshipped. Former WCG minister David Robinson, however, characterized "marking" as being analogous to "branding" - an accurate description of the WCG teaching some would now apparently prefer to forget. In fact, there was much that Raymond McNair could not remember. Said one observer, "I've never heard anyone with a more selective memory."

### **Meredith's Counseling**

Meredith's testimony, less rambling than Raymond McNair's - but equally self-justifying - was particularly remarkable in its portrayal of the WCG as one big happy family. Meredith went to some length in describing the close friendship that had supposedly once existed between the McNairs and himself. But Ruth McNair-Knasin, when asked about the matter, said she didn't believe true friendship ever really existed between Meredith and her father. She described their relationship as one that would quickly evaporate were it perceived as getting in the way of "the Work." (In case some WCG member doubts the accuracy of her assessment, just ask yourself: When was the last time Raymond or Rod said a kind word to, or a kind word about, their old "friends" Raymond Cole, Charles Hunting, C. Wayne Cole, Ernest Martin, Al Portune, Ron Dart, Garner Ted Armstrong, or the other 200-plus ministers who've left Worldwide since 1974?)

The WCG may be one big happy family to Meredith, but Leona on the stand recalled how one evening in 1960 Raymond let Meredith into their home and announced, to her astonishment, that he had been invited in to "counsel" her. What followed, according to Leona, was four-and-one-half hours of railing accusation, authoritative preaching, sex-life interrogation, and high-decibel, humiliating verbal abuse from Meredith. Her problem? She was not a submissive enough wife and two ministers (unnamed) had found fault with her. She needed to obey his dictates because he (Meredith) was "God's number three man on earth" and would very likely remain in authority over her for all eternity! She needed to learn true submission! (Those who have seen Bryon Forbes' movie "The Stepford Wives" - referred to by Ruth McNair-Knasin in her testimony - will understand what Meredith was apparently aiming at.)

The 4½ hours of harangue left Leona - then 2½ months pregnant - in utter shock. She began shaking and hyperventilating. While Raymond slept well that night, she sobbed all night. The next morning found her still trembling. According to her court testimony, it was then that her nervous disorders began. In court Raymond claimed that Leona never had any emotional problems during their years in England. But a letter he wrote to her in 1975 specifically referred to her "emotional hangups." And Ruth testified how around 1970 her father had asked for her support in the event that he would find it necessary to have her mother committed.

On the stand, Meredith gave a very different picture of what happened. He described the 4½-hour session as nothing more than a friendly discussion lasting about an hour or so. Meredith's benevolent persona, however, stands in stark contrast to his reputation as a psychologically intimidating and harsh authoritarian in the performance of ministerial duties.

On the witness stand, former WCG minister Robert Hoops (now a minister with the Church of God, International) described Meredith's past directorship of the WCG as extremely oppressive. Even sabbaticals, on which WCG ministers were brought to Pasadena for a period of refresher training, were harrowing due to the interrogations ministers were subjected to by headquarters superiors.

During a deposition and later with us privately, Hoops described how, when Meredith once counseled his wife, Meredith made such insensitive and unwarranted accusations against him that his wife cried for a week. When he found out later what had been said about him, he became so depressed he was almost suicidal. Said Hoops, "When you have really committed your life to the church and believe the ministry represents God, a harsh assessment of you by a superior can literally create severe emotional trauma." On the stand, Hoops was asked by Stuart for his opinion of Meredith. But Judge Olson disallowed the question. Later, however, Hoops was quite candid with us about his assessment of Meredith's character.

"Meredith is a liar," said Hoops. "But that isn't surprising when you consider how big a liar he works for." Sadly, Hoops' opinion of Meredith is shared by many ministers who served under him in years past.

Another former WCG minister told us that after a Meredith "counseling" session with his wife, she became so totally depressed he emphatically ordered her never to discuss anything privately with Meredith again. He explained, "Rod has the ability to somehow dig into a person's mind in such a way as to make them feel utterly guilt ridden and despondent. He seems to revel in this strange power to bring someone down psychologically." The same man also told us how once on a walk with Meredith, Roderick turned to him and said, "You may not realize it, but in all the universe, I'm number five, and you're number such and such." To us, at least, Leona's testimony was quite credible.

On August 20 and 21, the lawyers for both sides presented their closing arguments. As Browne would later point out, "You will never find a case where there are such opposite points of view." (It was one of the few Browne assertions with which we totally agree.) The conflict in the testimony of the two sides was truly remarkable.

### **Closing Arguments**

Stuart's closing argument to the jury was quiet, controlled, well-reasoned, and effective. Point by point he clarified his case and dissected his opponents' contentions. The church, he said, was not justified in publicly attacking Leona. She was no longer a member, and even if their allegations were true, there was no reason for the WCG ministers to have the information Meredith disseminated. But what Meredith had spread about Leona was not true. If it had been, why would she bring a lawsuit and risk certain exposure?

Stuart admonished the jury to recall carefully what they had seen. He reminded them of how the WCG witnesses all seemed to parrot the same story and even seemed to look the same. He reminded them how Raymond's answers were so long and evasive that the path he beat around the bush had become a trench. He recalled how Meredith's sons seemed to know more about the McNair marriage than Raymond did, how the McNair sons did not seem able to look at their mother in court, but how Ruth had looked Raymond right in the eye when she testified.

Stuart wasn't afraid to use theological sources to clarify his position. He quoted Thomas Aquinas on the law of man and the law of God, and James 3:1, which in the New American Bible translation reads: "Not many of you should become teachers my brothers; you should realize that those of us who do so will be called to the stricter account." He suggested to the jury that a fair award might be \$10.5 million. He told them, "The Worldwide Church of God is finally being brought to justice for conduct it feels it can do with impunity. Let religions - whether small cults or large denominations - know that that kind of conduct will not be tolerated!"

Browne then had the opportunity to present his closing argument. After a sanctimonious anecdote about a piece of wisdom he had once gained from an elder lawyer, Browne departed down a path of reasoning some lawyers might have cleverly used on behalf of the plaintiff. Having earlier adopted the defense of privilege, Browne went on to point out that the WCG's divorce laws had been "liberalized," and Raymond had remarried in 1977. He readily admitted Raymond's WCG colleagues had wondered: How can someone who is questionable in his practice [lifestyle] come back into such a high position? And how could Raymond still have been living in the house [with Leona] after suing for divorce on grounds of desertion? Good questions, those. But while they must have been intended to show why it was therefore justifiable to attack Leona in public, the rhetorical questions were not flattering to Raymond. In fact, the whole line of argument seemed only to provide listeners with a possible motive behind the Meredith defamation of Leona.

Throughout the trial Browne had attempted to portray Leona as a despicable woman. Now he developed that theme with almost total abandon. With Leona sitting quietly nearby, Browne exaggerated, distorted, contorted, and otherwise mutilated fact after testified fact. With poorly feigned indignation, he sarcastically claimed Leona was not the reserved lady they had seen before them for seven weeks, but was, in fact, the leader of a "band of vigilantes" hell-bent on destroying an innocent church. "Money," accused Browne, "is more important to her than human relationships. She fights at the drop of a hat!"

But Browne's combative performance was strained - he even dropped his large tripod chart once and his pointing stick twice - and his histrionics proved counterproductive. Not only did two jurors openly chuckle at his chutzpah, fellow attorney Bruce Armstrong sounded genuinely embarrassed when he began his closing arguments after Browne finished. Armstrong told the jury that lawyers in closing statements sometimes get carried away. He reminded the jury that they should base their verdict on the testimony, not the emotional rhetoric of any of the lawyers. Then, perhaps sensing the inevitability of their decision, he went on to ask the jury to ponder just how much money the plaintiff was really asking. He made a few technical observations and concluded with an obfuscating Ben Franklin quote.

In his final rebuttal comments to the jury, Stuart likened the WCG to a giant octopus - when it is threatened it puts up a giant cloud to conceal the truth. In fact, the WCG lawyers had done exactly what he had earlier predicted they would do. They continued to attack and defame Leona just as Meredith had done in 1979. The jury had heard over four weeks of testimony and two days of closing arguments. It was now up to them to decide who was telling the truth.

### **The Verdict**

On the morning of August 22 Judge Robert Olson gave the jury their final instructions and they went into deliberation. On the afternoon of August 23 they reached a verdict. The jury had been asked to answer 13 questions. They handed their answers to Judge Olson, who read them to himself before the hushed courtroom. After what seemed an eternity to some, he asked the court clerk to read aloud the 13-point verdict.

Were the Roderick Meredith statements about Leona McNair made at the 1979 minister's conference privileged? No. Were they true? No. Were the Pastor's Report statements about Leona McNair privileged? No. Were they true? No. In making the statements in the Pastor's Report, did any defendant intentionally cause, by extreme and outrageous conduct, severe emotional distress to the plaintiff, or act with reckless disregard of the probability of causing emotional distress to the plaintiff? Yes. Did the plaintiff suffer severe emotional distress as a proximate result of the conduct of the defendants? Yes. Were any of the defendants' wrongful acts done pursuant to a conspiracy to either libel, slander, or intentionally cause, by extreme and outrageous conduct, severe emotional distress to the plaintiff? Yes. Was the plaintiff damaged as a result of the wrongful act or acts? Yes. Do you find in favor of the plaintiff and against Raymond McNair and the Worldwide Church of God? Yes. Do you find in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendants Roderick C. Meredith and the Worldwide Church of God? Yes. Do you find in favor of the plaintiff and against the Worldwide Church of God? Yes. What do you find to be the total amount of compensatory damages? \$260,000. If you find that the defendants acted with actual malice and if you find that punitive damages are justified, what do you find to be the total amount of punitive or exemplary damages? \$1,000,000.

As that amount was read, Leona McNair and Antony Stuart became all smiles. In the audience, John T. Tate Jr., who had done so much of the early work on the case, was jubilant, as was Bruce Broillet, one of the partners in the winning law firm (and who, incidentally, was recently voted Trial Lawyer of the Year by the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association). At the announcement of the award, Broillet sprung from his chair, gave a passing bear hug to AR editor Trechak, and flew out the courtroom door to call his downtown Los Angeles office. There would be a victory party there that night.

The defendants were not so enthusiastic. Raymond looked dazed; Rod glowered at the jurors. And Browne, to the guffaws of the entire jury, did what he had done dozens and dozens of times during the trial. He asked the judge for a conference at the side bar. In California, civil cases require only a majority of nine jurors for a verdict. Browne wanted each of the jurors polled individually on each of the 13 points to see how each had voted. His request was granted, but the polling didn't give him much to cheer about. The jury had voted unanimously on all points with only two exceptions. One juror did not feel Leona's distress was "severe" within the definition provided by the court's instructions to the jury. And one juror refused to go along with the \$1

million punitive award. He insisted it should have been \$15 million.



After the trial, Browne asked the jurors for the reasoning behind their verdict.

The trial ended with the jury expressing praise to the judge for the way he had conducted the trial, and the judge, obviously pleased with the way the trial had gone, expressed his thanks to the jury. They had truly done an outstanding job.

### **The Jurors Explain**

As soon as the proceedings were closed, the press and lawyers rushed to the jury for their comments on the trial. (For some reason, Raymond and Roderick did not wish to talk to any of the jurors, and Meredith told the news photographers, "No photos!" - a command they promptly disobeyed.) What were the key reasons for the jury's decision? Surprisingly, it was evidence and testimony presented by the defense. One juror mentioned an article written by HWA on the subject of the divorce and remarriage doctrine changes. It had been introduced by Browne and company to show how there was great interest in the church on that subject. But when the jurors perused the article, they noticed that HWA had nowhere mentioned individual divorce cases by name. Why then, they reasoned, if the church's leader could explain the divorce doctrine change without getting into specific cases, did Meredith have to go into the McNair case in detail? And why did he not bring up other cases by name?

What led the jury to believe there was a conspiracy? The jurors seemed to have little difficulty coming to a conclusion on this point. One pointed out how Raymond himself had admitted being in the audience when Meredith verbally attacked Leona in January 1979. He was in a position to know that Meredith's statements were untrue, yet he did nothing to correct the false impressions created. In spite of the fact that he had almost six months until Meredith again went after Leona in the *Pastor's Report*, he did nothing to set the record straight about his former wife.

Another factor in the jury's unanimous decision appears to have been Browne himself. More than one juror admitted to being totally turned off by his over-reaching and harsh treatment of Leona and other witnesses who, for the most part, were completely candid and cooperative.

But the biggest factor in the jury's verdict proved to be the testimony of Leona's sons, and particularly Joe McNair, who had been called by Browne. Juror after juror admitted that witnessing the young man mercilessly berate his own mother was proof-positive that Worldwide had caused Leona the greatest sadness a mother could

know. Jury foreman Ignacio Gracia, a city councilman and former vice-mayor of South El Monte, California, said listening to Joe's testimony was very sad. He explained, "This has to be the greatest emotional distress any parent can feel. She lost her family."

Mr. Gracia went on to make a revealing summary of how the jury felt:

"We wanted to send a message to other churches that you can't do this to people - ruin their lives just because you are a church or big organization. Here we won't condone these goings on. The award was not the issue. We wanted to vindicate Mrs. McNair. They were driving a knife in her heart."

Listening to the jury's comments, one got the impression that the award could easily have gone much higher. For instance, the jury never got to hear Herbert Armstrong testify because Judge Olson excluded him as a defendant - a decision Stuart is appealing. Nor did the jury get to hear from three key witnesses Stuart had planned to call, but who, under suspicious circumstances, at the last moment declined to appear. Nor was Stuart allowed to enter into evidence a 1969 letter by Meredith to the WCG ministry. In it, Meredith, in graphic detail, delved into the emotional and sexual relationship of two of his employees - identified by name - who had become romantically involved, contrary to the dictates of the church. The letter, which Stuart felt showed a parallel to Meredith's later attack on Leona, was denied as evidence by Judge Olson, because he felt it was so inflammatory as to be offensive.

After the trial, the church's lawyers said little to the press except that they planned to appeal. So far, however, that threat has seemed a bit limp. In mid-October Judge Olson turned down their request for a new trial. A request that Leona's award be cut back - because, according to Browne, paying the \$1.26 million would bankrupt his clients - was also denied. Not only that, Olson granted Stuart his request that the church be required to pay Leona an additional \$20,000 to cover the court costs and other related expenses she incurred during the past five years. But lest any WCG tithe payer think Leona McNair is greedily out to devour the tithes and offerings of "the faithful," keep in mind that just weeks before in a pre-trial hearing Leona had offered to settle out of court for less than one-fourth of the jury's award (an amount that surely would have been far less than the total bill for the church's lawyers). Of course, money is never a real concern to Herbert Armstrong or his lawyers. We understand HWA has even said recently he will give Browne a \$2 million bonus if he can just find a way to beat Leona through an appeal.



One of the jurors gives "a piece of her mind" to lawyers Browne, Helge, and Bruce Armstrong.



By the trial's end, Stuart (center, gesturing) had earned the respect of all. Here he discusses a legal point with members of the jury. Directly behind him are some of Helge's legal team. Listening in (upper right) is AR editor John Trechak.

In the meantime, Meredith is apparently blaming his problems on some kind of *Ambassador Report* "conspiracy" (*Los Angeles Times*, San Gabriel Valley section, Aug. 30). He just cannot seem to admit that he did something wrong. Yet, Stan Rader, the church's attorney at the time, knew full well in 1979 just how serious Meredith's mistake was. Shortly after the June 25, 1979 *Pastor's Report* was mailed out, Rader's secretary, Virginia Kineston, showed him the Meredith comments on Leona. Rader was stunned. From then on Rader insisted Ms. Kineston check all Meredith writings for legal problems before they went to press. Meredith was stuck with a reputation for executive recklessness, and it was only a few weeks later that he was removed as director of the WCG's ministry. Yet five years later, he apparently still doesn't think he did anything wrong.

The trial overall had been a tense and often bitter one, but it was not without its humorous side. There was Stuart, before the final arrival of the jury, holding up a stethoscope from Leona's satchel and telling friends in the audience, "Just in case it's heart attack time!" There was the rumor that Browne, in closed chambers, had seriously protested the "endless stream" of homemade cookies Leona allegedly provided court personnel for their coffee breaks. And then there was the day when the entire jury showed up wearing matching blue T-shirts that read: "I love being on Judge Olson's case."

But the most hilarious aspect of the trial was the distinct ambience of the match-up itself. At the plaintiff's table was Leona with one attorney. Opposite them, at the defendants' table, was super weasel Allan Browne. To Browne's right was the pugnacious Bruce Armstrong. To Browne's left, and always facing the jury was Ralph Helge, virtually mute for the entire trial, but always looking like some grand inquisitor sucking on sour grapes. Behind the three defense lawyers sat Raymond McNair and Roderick Meredith, feverishly taking notes on yellow pads like a couple of newly baptized church members at a WCG sabbath service. Behind the two dark-suited evangelists was an assortment of lawyers and pseudo-lawyers from Helge's office, there to lend research assistance, moral support, and, it seems, to discourage interested WCG members from attending.

In the end, however, all that heavy WCG artillery proved useless. Dick Lloyd, writing in *The Weekly* (of Pasadena, Aug. 30) observed:

"But it was a particularly sweet victory for Stuart who took on the giants, and alone in the courtroom filled with church attorneys, beat the best, like a David against Goliath."

A careful look at the defense strategy chosen by the church's lawyers might suggest Lloyd was a bit generous to "the giants." Nevertheless, Antony Stuart - who, in a few days, would be married and leave on a honeymoon - deserved every accolade he received. So did John Tate. And so did Leona McNair, who, no matter how difficult the circumstance or vindictive the opposition, persevered on to finally get her day in court. As she told news reporters afterward, "Justice had to be served."

## **The End of the Work?**

Some things about the WCG never seem to change. In late July the WCG went through one of its periodic rock-and-roll crises, an almost annual occurrence for the last twenty years. On July 30 HWA sent a "special announcement" to all WCG congregations around the world: "I have been deeply grieved, shocked and embarrassed to have positive evidence brought to me that totally unacceptable music has been continually played all day long over the local [church summer camp] radio station KSEP at Orr, Minnesota." HWA was immediately flown to Minnesota to "audition the music" and talk to personnel at the camp. Within a day, the crisis was resolved. On August 1 HWA sent a message to all the ministers in the WCG. HWA assured them that from now on he would personally "be responsible for selecting music that is good popular music."

The music crisis was not the only problem at Orr this summer. The camp made the newspapers (*Des Moines Register*, Aug. 19) when a measles outbreak resulted in state officials stepping in to vaccinate those who felt vaccines were okay and quarantining the 56 who did not, a scenario that repeated itself a few weeks later at Ambassador College in Pasadena.

Music is very important to HWA. In Pasadena, at the "House for God," the church-subsidized concert series is going stronger than ever. But simultaneously at the church's headquarters there have been some layoffs, some pay cuts, and even difficulty meeting payroll. The reason for the financial problems? HWA has a new jet - a customized G-III worth well over \$10 million. He's traveling in style, but what about that "great commission" he used to talk about?

*The Worldwide News* of Sept. 24 announced that Herbert Armstrong's radio program "The World Tomorrow" would be discontinued in the United States, effective by mid-October. The official reason given was that radio was no longer an efficient medium like television. Of course, the truth is HWA, now in his nineties, is not nearly as effective as he was thirty years ago. His television performances plodding and visually ghastly - are barely saved by editing and extensive use of film clips. In case you haven't noticed, his head wobbles almost uncontrollably from side to side, looking as if it might fall off, if he's not careful, and many times he appears to be trying to get agreement from his viewers while shaking his head "no" from side to side. As one insider told us, "It's only a matter of time before the television program will be taken off the air too."

Just weeks ago, HWA admitted to a WCG congregation that his one "good eye" is now so weak he can only dimly make out the shapes of people in front of him and that he cannot read even large type. The sight of HWA being led about by assistant Aaron Dean has inspired pity in more than a few. And many are wondering how HWA can have any idea of the contents of various documents put before him for his signature. Still he's afraid to hand the reins of power over to a more capable person.

Along with HWA's increasing physical debilitations has come a growing inability to really lead his organization. While official publications portray the church organization as unified and well-managed, the real situation is one of fear and disarray. Department heads complain of a lack of corporate direction and morale (and moral) problems abound as many, having become disillusioned with HWA and those around him, admit privately they are staying on simply for the money.

HWA is not totally unaware of the bleakness of the situation. He has talked privately of personally "fleeing" to Switzerland - a nation known for its secretive banks, good medical facilities and (if you've seen the November-December *Plain Truth*) hugh fallout shelters. He has also talked of designating a successor (possibly Joe Tkach). And not only is HWA saying the end of "the Work" may be near, he privately told one group dining at his Pasadena home recently, "I think the Work may already be over." Those who watched him in need of help in locating the food on his plate think he may be right. Said one minister to his Pasadena congregation, "We need to pray that God will send us a leader."

## **Stanley Rader Update**

With the exception of Herbert Armstrong himself, no WCG official of the last seven years has been more controversial than attorney-accountant-evangelist Stanley Rader. Even today, three years after HWA removed him from his executive position, many still suspect he holds significant power in the WCG. The truth is just the opposite.

On August 23 *Ambassador Report* phoned Mr. Rader. He explained that not only is he not involved with the Armstrong organization at present, but there is little likelihood he will ever again be in the future. In 1981, shortly after HWA ousted him, Rader was hospitalized with a severely ulcerated and hemorrhaging stomach. He survived the life-threatening crises, but the condition - probably caused by the years of high tension in the WCG and excessive coffee consumption - is ever present. Today Rader must maintain a strict, bland diet and avoid nervous tension at all cost. He spends little time at his Century City office and none at Ambassador College. Rader did say, however, that he deeply appreciated the many cards and letters he received during his convalescence, and he asked us to express his thanks to all those who took the time to express their concern.

## **Two Studies from Gene Justice**

Among the many non-mainstream beliefs held by the WCG, Israel identity and Sabbath-keeping are especially prominent. During the last ten years, a number of writers have shown serious flaws to exist in these two teachings. Now, former WCG member Gene Justice of Birmingham, Alabama, is making available two new studies on these subjects.

*The Israel Identity Syndrome*, written by Justice, is an 80-page booklet available for a donation of \$4. "The Sabbath for the People of God" is a 20-page research paper written by Gene Justice, Jerry Horton, Leona McNair, and Pearl Schultz. In this paper, available for a donation of \$1.50, the authors have tried to present and build on new ideas and cover the old ground only as necessary. Justice asked us to point out that these publications were not produced for the purpose of making a profit. The suggested donations are intended only to cover the large printing and postage costs involved in this Christian-service project. We've read both works and we strongly recommend them for anyone in the WCG or anyone with relatives still in that denomination. To order these studies, write to Gene Justice, P.O. Box 60344, Pasadena, CA 91106-6344.

## **Bible Sabbath Association Hires Wiedenheft**

*Ambassador Report* regularly receives letters from former WCG members searching for another Sabbath-keeping church. We recommend that such individuals contact The Bible Sabbath Association, Route 1, Box 197, Fairview, Oklahoma 73737. This organization publishes a seventh-day Sabbath-keeping church directory and a monthly magazine called *The Sabbath Sentinel*.

Their September issue announced that the association has hired Richard Wiedenheft as a public relations coordinator. Wiedenheft graduated from Ambassador College, Pasadena in 1967; received an MBA from the University of Scranton in 1978; and lives with his wife Darlene and two children in Pennsylvania. Those who wish to contact him may write: Mr. Richard Wiedenheft, R.F.D. 1, Box 475, Falls, PA 18615.

## **A Thank You from the Clarks**

*Beverly and I would like to express our sincerest thanks and deepest appreciation for the hundreds of letters, cards, and phone calls we received from friends both out of and still in the WCG during my recent heart attack hospitalization and subsequent recovery. We were overwhelmed by the kindness shown from so many. Words could never adequately express our gratitude to all those who generously shared concern, offered encouragement, and extended love. Your messages were more than helpful in seeing us both through some pretty rough times.*

*-Howard and Beverly Clark*

## **Letters**

*Having read my first Ambassador Report, I read with interest the letter from the WCG members in Los Angeles who stated that the people in the Los Angeles church area are being told directly in sermons that they are told only what they need to know. I am a member in ---- and ditto! The churches are the very last to know what is going on. We are the "dumb sheep" and all we are told is what happens as reported in the newspaper and only then if headquarters wants to stress the point that we are not to read the news accounts, ask questions, doubt,*

etc.

*I've been in the church [over 20 years]. I've seen it all, but never as clearly as in your quarterly report. In church we don't hear truth, just coverups, lies, and propaganda. I learned a long, long time ago to keep my thoughts to myself. Or I could be faced with strict and severe "counseling for a bad attitude" or immediate excommunication for "not honoring God's Chief Apostle without question" or, as I feel - bowing down before Herbert.*

*I have known about your report for years, but didn't write for fear of anyone at church finding out - ha! Many in our area are kept in the know by ex-members. I'd rather have my news hot off the press - the Ambassador Report press.*

-WCG member

*I wish you people who have attended Ambassador College and know the inside of its Satanic organization could come up with something that would so shock these Satan-brainwashed members that they would no longer be so bound. They are constantly told not*  
continued to page 10

# The PLAIN TRUTH

A magazine of understanding

VOL. XXI, NUMBER 2

February, 1956

## U.S.A. Riding to Total Collapse in 20 Short Years!

**Here are the naked FACTS that ought to astonish  
and shock you into immediate action.**

**by Herbert W. Armstrong**

**Y**OU'RE GOING to be shocked to read what goes on *undercover* in the United States. Five major vices threaten the *total collapse* of our country inside of 20 years. The handwriting is on the wall of America, now!

### Lifting the LID Off Vice

Five major vices are combining to bring America to *total collapse*, to a fall greater than that of ancient Rome, because we are now *more WEALTHY, more POWERFUL* than ancient Rome—and the bigger they come, the harder they fall.

Now I use the word "undercover" paradoxically. These gigantic fatal vices are *not* hidden, actually, and yet, we don't see them, because we don't recognize them for what they are. We are totally *oblivious* to what they are *doing* to us.

First, what was it, specifically, that caused the fall of ancient Rome?

The acknowledged authority on the

time we wake up and take a look at them.

### The Number ONE Vice

FIRST, there was the rapid INCREASE IN DIVORCE, homes being broken up. Look at America today! Here are the actual figures: In 1890 there was one divorce for every 18 marriages. But the divorce rate began to rise. Twenty years later, by 1910, we were having one divorce to every eleven marriages. By 1930, the divorce rate in America had risen to one in every six; and by 1945, this tragedy of divorce had skyrocketed to *one divorce out of every THREE AND ONE-HALF MARRIAGES!* That was the year that the war ended, and a lot of hasty marriages ended the same year.

Since, the rate has leveled off in a fairly constant one in every four, with more divorces, of course, in the metropolitan areas. In some, it's at least one

perous; and people sought leisure, less work, more play, idleness, and as they shirked work, they began looking to the government to provide. Today, we call it doles, relief, pensions, and government aid. When any nation begins to look to its government to provide, that nation is on a greased toboggan-slide to decay and to oblivion. It brought about the fall of Rome. It brought about the fall of proud Babylon long before. *And it's bringing about the fall of America today.*

**NOW, LOOK AT US TODAY!** Like Rome, we've grown fat and prosperous and lazy. We Americans are rolling in money. We have more money than any people ever had. Money has come *SO EASY!* Too many of us are trying to get it the easy way with less work. Business is raising prices. Labour demands shorter hours, more pay.

Yes, we've grown prosperous and

see them, because we don't recognize them for what they are. We are totally *oblivious* to what they are *doing* to us.

First, what was it, specifically, that caused the fall of ancient Rome?

The acknowledged authority on the history of that period is Edward Gibbon, the famous historian of 165 years ago. His famous textbook, *The Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire*, is the standard recognized authority. Gibbon lists five chief reasons for the fall of Rome. You probably never read them, but you would think he was writing a description of America *today*, if you did.

These five specific causes for the fall of Rome are the five outstanding characteristics of American life today. It's

year that the war ended, and a lot of hasty marriages ended the same year.

Since, the rate has leveled off in a fairly constant one in every four, with more divorces, of course, in the metropolitan areas. In some, it's at least one in three.

Do you realize that the HOME is the very foundation of any society, and when our homes are being broken up, the very foundation is crumbling away beneath us. *The United States is going the way of ancient Rome.*

#### What TAXES Are Doing to YOU

SECOND, just before Rome collapsed, there was a rapid INCREASE IN TAXES. Rome had grown fat and pros-

perous, we think there money than any people ever had. Money has come SO EASY! Too many of us are trying to get it the easy way with less work. Business is raising prices. Labour demands shorter hours, more pay.

Yes, we've grown prosperous and lazy. We've started on the way of ancient Rome, seeking government aid, relief, pensions. We're looking to the *government* to take care of us, and just like that of ancient Rome, our government has grown TOO BIG, and we've had a *rapid increase in taxes.*

#### What Are the Facts?

Brace yourself for a shock. How much money do you suppose it cost to run the United States government, through *all*

---

One of our readers sent us a copy of the February, 1956 *Plain Truth*. We thought you might find the cover page as interesting as we did. In the lead article, HWA predicted the fall of the USA by 1976 because of (1) increases in divorce, (2) high taxes, (3) "the mad craze for pleasure," (4) the buildup of armaments, and (5) "the decay of religion." Wrote HWA, "Religion [in ancient Rome, paralleled to the USA] was becoming more *popular*, but fading into a *mere form*, losing touch with life and with God, becoming *impotent* to guide the people."

*to read or listen to anything not sent out by the church. I know several people who came home from the festival so upset and depressed they want to die. The ministers continue to prey on single women and widows, telling them to turn all their cash and property over to the church. This also applies to elderly widowers. They tell older men who cannot attend the feast because of sick wives or children that they are headed for the lake of fire unless they leave them and attend.*

*I thank God every day that my husband and I came to our senses when we did and got out. Oh, what a weight was lifted from our shoulders when we were no longer bound by them. We would do anything we possibly could to awaken these people.*

-AR Reader

*Once again the Report covered a lot of evil fruit that HWA and the WCG are reaping. If the many fine people still in the WCG would study the 23rd chapter of Matthew as they studied the 24th, surely some would come to the conclusion that Matthew 23 is a "shoe" that fits HWA!*

*Verse 3: "for they say, and do not" - after 50 years of teaching against divorce, what did HWA do?*

*Verse 4: "For they bind heavy burdens" - the fallacious tithing doctrine. "The TENTH shall be holy unto the Lord," not the first three as HWA falsely claims.*

*Verse 7: "...and to be called by men, Apostle, Apostle." HWA does not even have the signs of an apostle which are miracles, wonders, and mighty deeds (II Cor. 12:12). He has corrupt deeds, some of which are covered in your reports.*

*Verse 25: "...but within they are full of extortion and excess." Again the multiple tithing system is a classic example of this! The "end up in the lake of fire if you don't tithe threat" is the worst form of psychological extortion I can think of. A Grumman Gulfstream III jet would nicely fall under the term "excess." There are many other relevant points in Matthew 23. Read it.*

-Canada

*I am not, nor have I ever been, a member of the WCG, but I wish to relate my encounter with one of their ministers. I made the ultimate mistake of requesting a visit from a WCG minister during a period of illness and depression. This minister, or more correctly stated - "zombie" - who came to my home as a representative of*

*"God's only true church" was so unperceptive, unresponsive, and apathetic that it made it extremely difficult to ask him questions, let alone expect consolation from him.*

*In fact, this minister even refused to discuss some of my questions, especially those dealing with Catholic prophecy. When I mentioned recent bereavements in my family, including my mother, he did not utter one word of condolence. He acted more like a stern schoolmaster, whose patience was steadily growing thin and I could sense that he did not want to become personally involved with me.*

*At the close of his visit the minister asked me in a very authoritative tone of voice if I believed that the WCG was the true Church of Jesus Christ. When I answered with a positive reply, I was then invited to attend Sabbath services. This harsh treatment left me deeply embittered and disillusioned with what I thought was my last resource for guidance during a distressful time. Where was the Christian love and the concern for my spiritual welfare that I was so faithfully promised in their church literature? I have been a listener to "The World Tomorrow" and a subscriber to the Plain Truth for many years, and more recently a "gratefully acknowledged" financial contributor, but this was not the church I had envisioned, and I now harbor much misgivings about it*

*My heartfelt thanks to you. The AR has been a valuable source of information for me; and after doing research on the WCG, I now know that HWA does not have the sole monopoly on biblical truth.*

*-Iowa*

*I almost married a man "in the [Worldwide] church." Instead, I followed my heart and married a Catholic (the beginning of my downfall, so they told me). We've been happily married almost 10 years, and I thank God that He gave him to me.*

*-AR Reader*

*I wish to comment on "GTA - Problems and Insights" in your last issue. It is true that GTA was turned down by one of the religious networks. However, he asked the church to pray that a better opening would come and it did. In fact, two opened up. He is on the SPN Satellite System and also the Nashville Network. He is getting a very good response from both these networks. I feel you should print the good about him as well as the bad.*

*I feel GTA is trying to do what is right. The past should be forgotten as long as he is trying to go straight. I am sure he is being watched closely by those in his congregation and others. It would certainly be to his complete disadvantage if he went back to his old ways and I do not think he would get another chance. After all doesn't Jesus come to forgive our sins and forget them when we repent and change?*

*I went to the Feast of Tabernacles last year with the CGI and it was as different from the WCG as night from day. The people were the warmest, happiest, and friendliest group of people I have ever been around. The ministers were also friendly, helpful and mingled with the people. There was no Gestapo looking over our shoulders or tattling on us and overall it was the happiest, most joyous Feast I have ever attended.*

*-Wheeling, WV*

*Editor: You may have a point. We keep getting letters from CGI members telling us what an improvement it is over the WCG. There definitely are some very positive things that can be said about that organization. Frankly, if the WCG's leaders had any sense they'd be on bended knee asking Ted to come back. But, of course, they won't. After all, they've got their "Apostle."*

*Thank you for your outstanding publication. My husband and I exited WCG a few years after our graduation from Big Sandy in 1972. My father, a WCG member for over 20 years, recently died. But, a year before his death, thanks in part to the AR, Dad was able to extricate himself and the remainder of my family from Armstrong's bonds. That fact is my greatest source of comfort!*

*-Florida*

*I want to thank you for the work you are doing in spreading the plain truth about HWA and the good news that there is a way of escape from the WCG cult. Keep up the good work!*

*-Louisiana*

---

Thank you for the kind letters. We appreciate your support and encouragement. This issue was to have had a few more pages, but besides the fact that it's well past midnight and we're exhausted, we're at press deadline. So, we'll have to save the rest 'till next time. Our warmest regards to all of you.  
- J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR30\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR30 December, 1984**

### **Why Ambassador Report?**

*Ambassador Report* is published by and for alumni, students, faculty, and friends of Ambassador College. It has grown out of the increasing need for a response to the misinformation contained in many official Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God publications.

*Ambassador Report* has the following purposes:

- It assesses the foundational philosophies of Ambassador College and their effect on Ambassador College students. In short, it examines the "Ambassador Experience."
- It brings to light many of Ambassador College's biggest problems that have been too long covered up.
- It presents solutions to Ambassador College's problems and encourages drastically needed changes at Ambassador College and, to a degree, in the church that directly influences it.
- It is dedicated to prodding the leadership of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God, which supports and controls it, to change the practices and policies that are bringing worldwide discredit to Ambassador College.

We welcome and encourage suggestions from our readers regardless of political, religious, or philosophical persuasion, and we warmly welcome all contributions to our efforts.

Long-time readers of *Ambassador Report* will recall that the above statement appeared at the beginning of our earliest issues. It outlined our purpose then and outlines our purpose now. *Ambassador Report* is a nondenominational Christian service. While we do provide information about a number of religious organizations, it is not our goal to encourage readers to join or support any particular sect or group. However, if you are in any way associated with Ambassador College or the Worldwide Church of God, we believe we can provide you with valuable information, often available nowhere else.

## **Our New Address**

Please take note that *Ambassador Report* has a new mailing address: P.O. Box 60068, Pasadena, CA 91106. Mail sent to our old box number (4068) will still reach us, as our new box number is still at the same post office (zip 91106). For the convenience of our postal clerks, however, please send all mail for *Ambassador Report* to our new box number.

## **Our Mailing List**

The *Ambassador Report* mailing list is not available for sale or rental. Unless we are given permission by a reader to do so, we will not divulge the name of any subscriber. It is our policy that no one should be added to our mailing list unless he or she personally requests a subscription. We do not want the *Report* sent repeatedly to those who don't care to receive it. However, as we want our services to be known by all who may benefit, we will send our flyer (starts next page) to individuals whose names and addresses are supplied to us. If you have friends or relatives who may benefit from the *Report*, send us their names and addresses. We'll send them an introductory flyer and/or sample *Report*. Of course, your name will be kept strictly confidential.

## **Our Subscription Policy**

We believe *Ambassador Report* has provided and continues to provide a valuable service. It is, nevertheless, a fact that we have never published an issue that did not leave us owing money. It is only because of the generosity of our readers that we have, each time, been able to pay off enough of our debts to warrant further publishing. While such limitations have perhaps encouraged our humility, we wish we could do more - especially in the area of advertising - to make our publications better known to those who really need them.

We have given serious thought to putting a \$20 or \$30 per year subscription price or suggested donation on the *Report*. If *each* of our readers contributed that much per year, we could actually expand our efforts to include a bit of promotion and advertising. Unfortunately, such a plan would undoubtedly discourage some from giving more, while at the same time, hundreds of our poorer readers would simply not be able to continue to subscribe. It would probably shock you to realize how many of our readers are living below the poverty line, not just because of retirement on fixed incomes, but because of years of being bled white by the Armstrong organization. For that reason (and for a number of other business and legal considerations) we do not want to put a subscription price on the *Report*.

However, as a means of conserving our very limited financial resources, we have decided on one policy change. We will no longer provide free photocopies of back issues to the hundreds who yearly request them. We had done so for quite some time. However, increasingly this service is proving too costly. Beginning in 1985, we will require a donation (see the last page of this issue) before supplying photocopies of back issues. We will, however, continue to provide a copy of our most recent issue and our new flyer (which begins on the next page) free of charge to all who ask our help. We don't think

this is an unreasonable policy, and we hope long-time readers will appreciate why it is necessary.

## **Our New Flyer**

Over the years, many former WCG members have written asking us to publish some type of hand-out that could be used to warn others about Armstrongism. What has been needed is some type of article or flyer short enough to be economically photocopied, yet large enough to adequately explain what the Armstrong church is really all about.

Well, we have finally been able to put together something we hope will fill that need. Following this article is a three-page flyer that we believe our readers can easily photocopy and use to advantage. It explains in a concise manner the real facts about *The Plain Truth* magazine, Herbert Armstrong, and his Worldwide Church of God. It then lists all the *Ambassador Report* literature published to date, along with a brief description of each, plus other organizations and literature of value in understanding the Armstrong phenomenon. Those who wish to personally provide others with the facts on the WCG (and help *Ambassador Report* at the same time) will find this a valuable tool.

---

&COPY;1985 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service.

John Trechak, Editor& Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

# **What's Behind *The Plain Truth* Magazine? And Who Is Herbert W. Armstrong?**

If you live in the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain, or Western Europe, you have probably seen, during the last few years, one magazine that has been turning up on newsstands, in shops, and in waiting rooms with ever increasing frequency. It's called *The Plain Truth*. And with a circulation of over seven million, it's one of the fastest growing magazines in the world today.

You may have noticed how the free, full-color *Plain Truth* reports on world trends, seems to promote traditional family values, and offers readers generous amounts of free literature. You may also be aware that *The Plain Truth* is published by a church called the Worldwide Church of God (WCG). What you probably don't know, however, is that *The Plain Truth* is the WCG's primary tool for gaining new converts. And you are also

probably unaware of what the WCG really does teach. That's because the WCG goes to some lengths to conceal many of its beliefs from all, except those who have been systematically led through their indoctrination program that only begins with *The Plain Truth*.

## **What Is the Worldwide Church of God?**

The Worldwide Church of God (originally named the Radio Church of God) was founded in the early 1930s by former advertising man Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA). Today the WCG has a membership of approximately 75,000. The church is headquartered in Pasadena, California, and in 1984 took in over \$130 million. The church has its own college - Ambassador College (AC, unaccredited) - with campuses in Pasadena, California, and Big Sandy, Texas (near Dallas). The church also funds an organization called the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, which funnels church money to a number of cultural projects and supports a concert series as a means of enhancing the WCG's public image. Besides *The Plain Truth* and numerous booklets, the WCG also publishes *The Good News*, a more doctrinally open magazine for contributors, and the *Worldwide News*, a newspaper strictly for initiated WCG members.

## **The WCG's Doctrines**

"The gospel had not been preached until God raised me up to preach it.... That gospel you never heard from any preacher except one from this church. You never heard it from Billy Graham. You never heard it from any Protestant preacher. You never heard it from any Catholic priest."

- Herbert W. Armstrong, sermon, July 24, 1976

Here, in brief, are the WCG's most important doctrines and practices: Herbert W. Armstrong is revered by the WCG members as "God's Holy Apostle." HWA claims that he is the only one (along with his ministers) who has preached the true Gospel in 1900 years. The WCG is "the only true church," all others are taught to be of Satan (WCG: *A True History of the True Church*). The United States and British Commonwealth are the true Israel of Bible prophecy and will soon (the predicted date has been reset a number of times) be destroyed by a resurrected Holy Roman Empire (HWA: *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*). Those in the WCG will be miraculously spared (HWA: "There Is a Way of Escape"). WCG members must give 10% of their gross income to the WCG, use another 10% for keeping the church's feasts, give an additional 10% every third year, and make "freewill offerings" besides (HWA: *Ending Your Financial Worries*). Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Halloween, and birthdays are all pagan and are not to be observed. The WCG observes the Saturday sabbath and the Old Testament feast days (WCG: *Pagan Holidays -Or God's Holy Days - Which?* and HWA: *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*). According to HWA, Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday and rose on a Saturday (HWA: *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday*). The Old Testament dietary laws are to be observed (HWA: "Is All Animal Flesh Good Food?"). Women are not to wear makeup (HWA: *Truth About Makeup*). Husbands are to "rule over" their wives. Corporal punishment of children is encouraged. WCG members may divorce nonmember mates. It's okay to drink alcohol. Generally, the WCG is anti-medicine and pro-faith healing (*The Good News*, Oct.-Nov. '81). The local WCG congregations usually meet in rented halls. The phone numbers of WCG ministers are

almost always unlisted. WCG members are not to serve in the military or to vote in elections (HWA: "How Would Jesus Vote for President?"). WCG members must put their church above all else in their lives - including family and friends. The WCG's organization is strictly hierarchical. WCG members who openly question church doctrines or church leadership are "disfellowshipped" (excommunicated and shunned). The WCG is non-trinitarian and teaches that man's purpose is to eventually become God (HWA: *Why Were You Born?*).

### **What Is Ambassador College?**

Founded by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1947, Ambassador College, with campuses in California and Texas, has in the past published much of the WCG's literature. The bulk of the WCG's wealth is in the college's name, and the church's world headquarters are located on its California campus. After almost forty years of existence, the college is still unaccredited. While the college is often made to appear autonomous, it is actually completely controlled by the church and can be accurately described as merely an extension of the WCG.

### **"Apostle" Herbert W. Armstrong**

HWA was born in 1892 to parents of Quaker faith. He was a high school drop out and for many years thereafter, an advertising man (*The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*). According to *The Good News* (Aug. 1969, p. 4), he was baptized by a Baptist preacher, and he was ordained by lay members of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God (*Autobiography*, pp. 365-366). He was never a seminary or Bible college student. He founded the Radio (later renamed Worldwide) Church of God in 1934. He plagiarized writings of the Seventh-Day Adventists, the British Israel movement, and other religious groups and claimed "his" new writings were "revealed truth from God" (AR2, p. 48). In the late 1930s, the Church of God (7th Day) - which had been paying HWA a salary - cut him off for insubordination and teaching heresies. He left Oregon for California in the 1940s (according to some Armstrongologists, because his many failed prophecies and lifestyle had caught up with him in Oregon). He founded Ambassador College in 1947 to train young people to assist him in his work.

By about 1970, "The World Tomorrow" - a radio and television program done by HWA and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong - was one of the biggest buyers of air time in the world. Until the early 1970s HWA taught against divorce, even to the point of requiring new WCG converts who had previously divorced and remarried to separate from their current mates and live celibate. But in 1974 he changed the WCG's divorce doctrine to allow divorce (other doctrines have also been changed over the years as circumstances required). In 1977 HWA married Ramona Martin, a divorcee more than forty years his junior and a secretary he had "dated" for three years prior to their marriage. In 1978 HWA, in an organizational power struggle, disfellowshipped his son Garner Ted Armstrong, who then started his own church - The Church of God, International, in Tyler, Texas. They have not had any dealings with each other since then.

HWA's extravagant lifestyle is well-known. He has his own customized, private jet with personal crew and servants. A few years ago, he had five expensive homes filled with

rare works of art. His accountant, Jack Kessler, wrote in 1981 that HWA gave himself a salary of \$500,000 per year. He has a number of Swiss bank accounts. HWA regularly mingles with the rich and powerful. These have included: Jacob Rothschild of England; King Leopold of Belgium; Marcos of the Philippines; Sadat and Mubarak of Egypt; Meir, Dayan, Begin, etc. of Israel; seven prime ministers and the emperor of Japan; Strauss of West Germany; Otto von Hapsburg of Austria; and numerous leaders behind the Iron Curtain.

In 1984, after three years of court battles and millions in lawyers' fees, HWA divorced his wife. In recent years, it has been revealed that HWA has had a long history of sexual perversion and that for 10 years he had maintained a sexual relationship with his youngest daughter (Robinson, ARs 14, 21, 27, 28, etc.). In spite of all this, the Armstrong church continues to gain new members and grow in power and influence (*Christianity Today*, Oct 19, 1984, p. 51).

### **Ambassador Report Publications**

In 1975 a small group of ex-WCG Ambassador College alumni decided it was time that the truth about Armstrong's Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God be made known, especially to those financially supporting those organizations. This small group of alumni formed an organization called *Ambassador Review* (now called *Ambassador Report*, P.O. Box 60068, Pasadena, California 91106). Since 1976 they have produced over 30 highly revealing publications about the Armstrong movement.

The entire *Ambassador Report* collection represents, undoubtedly, the most thoroughly researched, frank, and shocking look at the inner-workings of Herbert Armstrong's corporations and related groups. The series is exciting, eye-opening reading, especially if read in chronological order. With the exception of the most recent issues, the entire series is officially out-of-print. However, for a reasonable donation (used to help finance further publishing - for details see below), you may obtain quality black and white photocopies of any and all back issues that may be needed. Here in chronological order is a list of what has been published along with a *partial* description of the contents of each issue. Keep in mind that most issues contain, in addition, many smaller articles and numerous testimonial letters that are often equally interesting:

**[AR Intro](#)**: *Ambassador Review's* early 1976 introductory letter and the article "An Open Letter to GTA: Was Richard Plache Properly Roasted?" (9 pages).

**["The Gerringer Letter"](#)**: Bob Gerringer's 1975 open letter to WCG evangelist Charles Hunting, explaining why he and his wife Connie left the WCG (28 pages).

**["The '39 Article"](#)**: "Did Christ Reorganize the Church" by HWA. Published in 1939, the article attacks the very organizational methods HWA later adopted (10 pages).

**[AR 1](#)**: *Ambassador Review*, June '76. Expose articles on HWA, his failed prophecies, WCG tithing, AC's nonrecognition and mail censorship, the AICF, "The WCG Talmud," etc. (51 pages, illustrated).

**[AR 2](#)**: *Ambassador Report*, 1977. As described by one leading newspaper - "It may be the most devastating expose of a religious group ever published." 30 articles on all facets of the WCG. Includes: "In Bed With Garner Ted," "Bobby Fischer Speaks Out," "What the Armstrongs Say About Other Churches," "Home-breaking - Armstrong Style," "Fleecing the Flock," "Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots," "Modern Moloch - Human Sacrifice in the Armstrong Church," and much more (90 pages, illustrated, originally in color, now only b/w photocopies available).

**[AR 3](#)**: *Ambassador Report*, March-April '78. Articles on the WCG's response to the 1977 issue, AC

picketer arrested, Bobby Fischer sues the Report, power struggle in WCG (10 pages).

(Note: the following *Ambassador Report* issues are all in 8½x14 inch newsletter format.)

[AR 4](#): June '78. Fischer lawsuit fizzles out, Bagley trial is scheduled, *Ambassador Report's* files are stolen, AC Coalition for Student Rights, WCG political infighting (6 pages).

[AR 5](#): Aug. '78. GTA ousted, Church of God International formed, Everest House's occult books, "Cheeky Church Boss' Royal Boast" (10 pages).

[AR 6](#): Sept.-Oct.'78. "Ex-Jewish Convert May Inherit Church's Wealth," Tucson homes of HWA and WCG attorney- accountant Rader, AC Bricket Wood campus sold, AC Big Sandy campus up for sale, spying continues at AC Pasadena (12 pages).

[AR 7](#): Jan. '79. State of California sues WCG, AC is raided "Rhubarb in God's House," Rader testifies (12 pages).

[AR 8](#): March '79. HWA at medical clinic, sit-ins at AC, WCG battles state in court, Rader on "Sixty Minutes" (15 pages).

[AR 9](#): June '79. Receivership update, details of Rader's Mike Wallace interview, "Want Your Tithes Returned?", "Planning to Sue?", Bagley trial ends (18 pages).

[AR 10](#): Nov. '79. Rader ordained, state's lawsuit continues, Wisconsin farmer fights to recover farm from WCG, WCG financial report, "The Weirdos," documentary film mentions WCG, self-education (13 pages).

[AR 11](#): March '80. State lawsuit update, HWA visits Communist China, *Plain Truth* staff purged, severance pay legal fight, more churches, starting your own church (14 pages).

[AR 12](#): June '80. Distribution of Robinson book blocked by WCG, U.S. Supreme Court denies WCG pleas, WCG turns to politicians for help, the Corporate Sole, new doctrines (16 pages).

[AR 13](#): Sept. '80. Petris Bill passed in Sacramento, Robinson book released, Rader extends peace bid to Attorney General Deukmejian, WCG tragedies in the news (6 pages).

[AR 14](#): Dec. '80. Rader outmaneuvers California, \$1 million offering to Egypt, WCG hires thief, perversions depicted on Ambassador stage, HWA incest allegations riot denied, HWA demons, HWA-Simon Magus parallels (18 pages).

[AR 15](#): March '81. GTA almost returns, Big Sandy to reopen, editors quit *Quest* magazine, the Council of Elders founded, Tuit book published (20 pages).

[AR 16](#): July '81. GTA rebuffed, Rader ousted, Ramona Armstrong returns to HWA, Rader hospitalized, Rader and Kuhn sue George Lucas over "Raiders of the Lost Ark," Gerald Waterhouse, "The Prophets of the Partial Truth" (16 pages).

[AR 17](#): Oct. '81. GTA strikes out, GTA starts new business, Rader to "clean up Hollywood," Robinson suit settled, the phony survey, HWA off his noodle - his new anti-medicine statements (14 pages).

[AR 18](#): Dec. '81. "Do You Want to Look Like a Whore?" HWA's revived anti-makeup doctrine, HWA's personal medical program, AC book censorship, "The Cult of Armstrong?", Markam's cult paper, how to help friends and relatives in WCG, the Menge mystery (16 pages).

[AR 19](#): March '82. New allegations by church accountant Jack Kessler, HWA on Petra, WCG's mystery religion connections (12 pages).

[AR 20](#): June '82. HWA files for divorce, WCG lawyer Helge rebukes Kessler, "*Plain Truth* - or Just Plain Trash?", Basil Wolverton honored, same old GTA (16 pages).

[AR 21](#): Sept. '82. HWA & Ramona battle it out, "Apostle Kinky" meets Margaret Thatcher, "Kinky Churchman Fools [Prince] Charles" (6 pages).

[AR 22](#): Dec. '82. "How much is *Ambassador Report* accomplishing?" (2 pages).

[AR 23](#): Jan. '83. HWA decrepit - AR editor John Trechak's response to letter from WCG lawyer Allan Browne, WCG paranoia, Stan Rader - scapegoat (10 pages).

[AR 24](#): April '83. HWA still "no-show" as divorce battle continues, "Executive Exodus Updated" - list of 253 ministers who have left WCG, "GTA - an Insight" (10 pages).

[AR 25](#): July '83. HWA trapped into depositions, controversial lawyer Helge, USC gets WCG money, "The Reunion" (10 pages).

[AR 26](#): Oct. '83. Trial delayed as HWA pays, HWA's tricky answers, criminal charges against Ramona, HWA's tithes come up short, "Bobby Fischer - Where Are You?" (12 pages).

[AR 27](#): April '84. More Armstrong divorce-case testimony, HWA's shocking marriage arrangement,

"HWA Confesses to Incest!", Cecil Battles' followers wait for UFOs, Gary Alexander in prison (14 pages).

[AR 28](#): July '84. HWA gets his divorce, religion and the courts, GTA - problems and insights, Dwight Armstrong ill, "A Letter from Germany" (12 pages).

[AR 29](#): Oct. '84. Ex-WCG member Leona McNair is awarded \$1.26 million in suit against WCG, "The End of the Work?" (10 pages).

[AR 30](#): Dec. '84. "Why *Ambassador Report*?" and this flyer (4 pages).

High quality b/w photocopies of the above issues are available by writing to the publisher. AR 2 is available for a donation of \$15, AR 1 for a donation of \$10, "The Gerring Letter" for a donation of \$5, AR 22 for a donation of \$1, and AR 30 is free. All other publications listed above are available for a donation of \$2.50 *each*. Write:

**Ambassador Report**  
**P.O. Box 60068**  
**Pasadena, CA 91106**

As of this writing (Dec. 1984), *Ambassador Report* newsletters are still being published quarterly. Those interested in subscribing should write to the above address. There is no charge to be put on the mailing list. Keep in mind, however, that the AR relies on the contributions of its readers to continue publishing.

\* \* \*

The *Ambassador Report* collection represents the most thorough and extensive source of information on the Armstrong movement. Nevertheless, in the last decade a number of excellent books have also appeared on the subject. Here are the most important:

*Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* by David Robinson, 1980, 285 pages, \$8, John Hadden Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135.

*Armstrongism: Religion or Rip-Off?* by Marion J. McNair, 1977, 339 pages, out-of-print, but quality facsimile editions are available for \$20 from Emissary Publications, P.O. Box 642, South Pasadena, CA 91030.

*The Armstrong Empire* by Joseph Hopkins, 1974, 304 pages, out-of-print, but quality facsimile editions are available for \$20 from Emissary Publications (above).

*The Truth Shall Make You Free* by John Tuit, 1981, 307 pages, \$8, The Truth Foundation, 17 W. End Ave., Stamford, NY 12167.

*Armstrongism Bibliography* by J. L. F. Buchner, 1984, 130 pages. This is a listing of virtually all books, sections of books, articles, news reports, pamphlets, etc. about, by, and related to HWA, the WCG, and its offshoots. \$10 (plus \$2 for the 1984 supplement) from J. L. F. Buchner, P.O. Box 108, Milperra, N.S.W. 2214 Australia.

\* \* \*

In addition to the above, a number of organizations publish materials that challenge the more extreme of Armstrong's doctrines. The most important of these organizations are: Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 499, Pasadena, CA 91102; World Insight Magazine, P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102; Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 W. Knochaven Dr., Canyon Country, CA 91351; The Church of God Within, P.O. Box 11074, Dallas, TX 75223; Reality Report Press, 2442 N.W. Market St., Suite 193, Seattle, WA 98107; and Reunion News, 190 Tythe Barn Lane, Whitlocks End, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B901PF, England. Write to them for details.

\* \* \*

"He who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him" (Prov. 18:17, RSV).

"Beware of false prophets.... You will know them by their fruits.... Every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matt. 7:15-18, RSV).

"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Eph. 5:11, RSV).

[Next Issue \(AR31\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR31 March, 1985

### The WCG - a Future After Herbert Armstrong?

Of the many questions regularly put to us by our readers, the most often recurring is: What will become of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and Ambassador College once founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) passes away? Here is the way one of our readers recently put it:

One of the most interesting questions concerning the WCG is will it be able to function after Herbert Armstrong's death. I left the church about a year ago, and up until that time, Mr. Armstrong was still intent on being around for the second coming. From what I've read and heard, HWA seems to be a man so self-possessed and contemptuous of the membership that I wonder if he will ever make provisions for an orderly transfer of power once he passes on.

Will his empire, his church, be left to myrmidon scavengers who will pocket as much loot as possible and scatter the members to the four winds? Has Mr. Armstrong done anything to insure the continuance of his church either through naming a successor or by setting down some sort of legal directives? Are there still warring factions in the hierarchy and who might they be? Is Stanley Rader still lurking in the shadows?

As tenacious as Mr. Armstrong is, I don't see him living much longer and this certainty isn't lost on his underlings who stand to reap a fair portion of the spoils. And there's about a hundred thousand well-conditioned minds out there just eager to pledge their allegiance and their pocketbook to an influential leader.

I wonder if you might comment on the state of affairs in the church right now, as well as present a few scenarios concerning its future.

Of course, none of us can know with certainty exactly what will transpire. And we do not pretend to be prophets. But from having observed the Armstrong organization closely for almost two decades, we think we can put forth a number of often-discussed scenarios, along with some suggestions as to their probability. Remember, we are dealing here with speculation. With that in mind, let us look at some of the possibilities.

### **Scenario No. 1:** *Before HWA dies, he names a successor, and at his death (or incapacitation) there is an orderly transfer of power to one man.*

This is the scenario preferred by the majority of Armstrong true believers ("the sheep," as HWA refers to them). But while HWA has talked privately of possibly naming a successor, he has not actually done it, nor do we think he will. To do so would be "out of character" for this incredibly egocentric human being. If HWA were to name a successor, would not the younger man be the one looked to for leadership in the organization? And would not the designated successor take over the limelight in which HWA so loves to bask? HWA has refused to let either Stanley Rader, for many years his closest advisor, or Garner Ted Armstrong, his own son, have any chance at inheriting his empire. That being the case, why should we think he'd leave it all to any other individual?

Egocentricity of this magnitude is not as rare as some might think. Among those leaders in history who did not appoint a successor for an orderly transfer of power were Stalin, Lenin, Mussolini, and Idi Amin. Today, Kadafi and Khomeini appear to be following the same path.

For some time after Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) left the WCG in 1978, we felt there was a good chance he would reach some kind of reconciliation with his father to again become the heir apparent of the WCG. This possibility has become increasingly unlikely, however. Not only did GTA start his own church, but he has spoken out against changes in WCG doctrine (especially the WCG's adoption of the "Primacy of Peter" teaching of the Roman Catholics), has revealed many of his father's most heinous sins, and has become a symbol of anti-WCG "rebellion." We would not expect the WCG Board of Directors to choose a disloyal "renegade" like GTA to be their leader any more than we would expect the Soviet Politburo to choose a Soviet defector to be the

Soviet Premier.

Not only that, since leaving the WCG, GTA has done nothing to ingratiate himself with those around HWA, the ones who really run the WCG. As a result (and, of course, because of the damage done to his image by the scandals of the early seventies) GTA has virtually no support among top men in the WCG.

Some have suspected that in spite of all this GTA would still be lured back into the WCG organization by its big bucks. But those close to him say he is much happier now than he ever was in the WCG and that the price HWA has set for his reentry into Worldwide - humiliating public repentance and the renunciation of his new organization and loyal supporters - is too high a price to pay for something he really doesn't value that much anyway.

In our opinion, Scenario No. 1, with GTA or anyone else as successor designee, is not too likely to occur.

**Scenario No. 2:** *HWA does not appoint a successor, but at his death (or incapacitation) a strong leader, in the style of HWA, emerges from among his top executives.*

Among some of the ministers in the WCG, this seems to be the great hope. More realistic individuals, however, have serious doubts that this scenario will materialize.

HWA has maintained his dominance in the church's hierarchy not simply through his mastery of Machiavellian methods, but through truly superior skills in such areas as marketing, advertising, self-promotion, organizational structuring, and personal communication. And not only has he had far greater experience in "the world" than his subordinates, he is, after all, the founder of the WCG.

But when we look at those who might be considered within striking distance of the WCG's top spot, what do we find? Essentially, company men - individuals who achieved their positions through loyalty to their benefactor, not through any truly outstanding creativity, innovation, intellectual brilliance, superior formal education, great courage, or particularly great sacrifice. While there are one or two who are superior to the others in some respects (and we'll get to this later), there is not one so clearly ahead of the others in all the important leadership criteria as to make him an inevitable successor who could rule in the same dominating style of HWA.

---

&COPY;1985 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service.

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

It is important to keep in mind that those in important positions around HWA are there because of HWA. But once HWA is gone, whatever leader might emerge as chairman of the board or president will attain and maintain such a position only through the recognition and support of his peers (who will also be able to quickly withdraw that recognition and support). It is inevitable, therefore, that any successor to HWA will simply not have the same authority HWA has had. While Scenario No. 2 is attractive to some, to us it appears very unlikely.

**Scenario No. 3:** *HWA dies, the WCG membership is stunned to realize that God is not "preserving Mr. Armstrong until Christ's return," they come to see they have been worshipping a mere mortal, and the WCG disintegrates.*

A lot of people outside the WCG, perhaps out of hope, believe this one. We don't. Mormonism survived the death of Brigham Young. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church survived the passing of Ellen G. White. The Christian Scientist religion survived the mortality of Mary Baker Eddy.

A study of the history of American religious movements shows that while charismatic leadership is often an important ingredient in their birth and early development, there are often factors of greater importance to their survival. At least three should be recognized.

(Readers will, we hope, excuse the use of secular business parallels, but the WCG, like other religious organizations, is not only a religion, but also a business. WCG executive Ray Wright, in a sermon, recently emphasized the concept that the WCG is "a business." If anyone doubts that religions are "sold" to a market, see *Positioning - the Battle for Your Mind* by Al Ries and Jack Trout, a marketing textbook published by McGraw-Hill. Note particularly the chapter on marketing the Catholic Church.)

The primary factor in the survival of any religious movement is the existence of the market itself. In the case of the WCG, we have in its members a distinct "market" (a group of people willing to give money in trade for something). What this market *wants* is to *believe* (the kind of theology or ideology HWA has provided) and to *experience* (the kind of affirmation of faith and sense of belonging provided by church membership). When HWA dies, the market he fed will still survive.

A second factor is the *product* provided. In the case of Worldwide, the product traded is both the unique Armstrong theology and the experience of membership in the WCG. When HWA dies, there may be some modifications of both WCG theology and experience, but the essentials of the product will remain.

A third factor is the existence of well-organized administration and distribution systems. WCG propaganda notwithstanding, HWA has for some years now functioned in little more than a figurehead capacity. While it is true that he retains the power of removing and replacing department heads, with perhaps only one or two exceptions, the actual choices made make little difference to the overall effectiveness of the organization. For instance, it makes little difference overall which WCG personality heads the mail processing department or directs the Ambassador Foundation. The function of those offices and their significance in the WCG structure remain unchanged. At HWA's death, although personnel changes will undoubtedly occur, the administration and distribution systems will still remain intact. (While there is some overlap, administration would include the financial, accounting, legal, data processing, and facilities management functions. Distribution would include the field ministry, the foreign offices and publishing - especially circulation. The "product" that is being distributed includes both goods and services.)

"But," some may ask, "who will do the telecast?" It's an interesting question, but perhaps an irrelevant one. Anyone who has seen any of HWA's recent telecasts cannot doubt that they are already no longer an essential membership growth factor. And indeed, the WCG's marketing strategists have clearly anticipated this problem and effectively countered it by placing ever greater emphasis on their print media distribution methods. *The Plain Truth* news racks popping up everywhere attest to this new direction.

While it is true a charismatic speaker selling the WCG line over the airwaves would add an important marketing dimension - and such a man would undoubtedly gain stature in the WCG's political structure - such an individual probably does not exist in the WCG, and such a marketing method is really not essential. In other words, the WCG no longer needs a broadcast or a telecast to survive. For evidence, look at the Jehovah's Witnesses. They have neither a charismatic leader at the present time, nor an electronic media outreach. Yet, through their print media and "personal selling" methods, they survive, in spite of many failed prophecies and considerable bad press. Similarly, we suspect the WCG, too, will survive.

*Scenario No. 4: HWA dies without naming a successor. Three or more of his lieutenants (very likely evangelists Joe Tkach, Ellis LaRavia, and Rod Meredith) "battle" for control. Some members side with each, many leave the WCG with them or join other groups, and the WCG splits into a few parts.*

Not without some justification, this scenario has many believers both in and out of the WCG. At HWA's death there will be some WCG members (perhaps even as many as 20%) who will be shocked into leaving. We believe a fair number of these will drift toward Garner Ted Armstrong's organization because of the Armstrong name. Some current WCG ministers have already indicated an intention to do so. But keep in mind that while Garner Ted Armstrong offers a theology similar to the WCG's, there are important differences. GTA emphasizes freedom over structure, liberalism over conservatism, tolerance over condemnation, efficiency over opulence, participation over exclusion. And his organization, by its smaller size and smaller resources, provides a religious experience markedly different from WCG membership.

Those "escapees" who do not align with GTA will join other groups or none at all. However, based on the basic marketing principles discussed under Scenario No. 3, we believe that on HWA's death, the *majority* of current WCG members will remain in the WCG. The WCG has not only survived, but has actually grown a little, in spite of the mass defections of 1974, the ouster of Garner Ted Armstrong, the 1979 State of California lawsuit, the removal of Stanley Rader, and the divorce and moral discrediting of its founder. It will take much more than the death of HWA to shake the faith of most WCG members today.

As for Tkach, LaRavia, and Meredith "battling" for control - well, those who know them say they are ambitious. Nevertheless, this is where Scenario No. 4 breaks down.

The WCG is not just a group of individuals. It is a *legal* entity - the Worldwide Church of God, Incorporated. And that corporation has engendered a number of other corporations, including Ambassador College, which at present retains most of the church's assets. Now the key point is this: Those corporate entities with their assets are legally under the control of the boards of trustees of those corporations. And at HWA's death (if not sooner, should they care to exercise their power) those board members *will be in charge*.

Who are on those boards? Frankly, we're not completely sure. The WCG has never been too open about that information, and while the makeup of the boards is occasionally made public, board membership can and often does change. Nevertheless, we can venture an educated guess as to who is probably on at this time.

Based on the most recent Ambassador College (Pasadena) catalog, the board of trustees for Ambassador College, California, is

composed of WCG ministers HWA, Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, Ellis LaRavia, Raymond McNair, Leroy Neff, and Richard Rice. As best as we can tell, the board of trustees for Ambassador College, Texas, is probably made up of the same individuals (we would appreciate hearing from anyone with information on this). As for the board of trustees of the WCG, over the years HWA has changed its makeup many times, often without informing those removed or added. However, those insiders we talked to seem to believe that the WCG's board is now the equivalent of the WCG's Council of Elders: HWA, Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, Ellis LaRavia, Raymond McNair, Leroy Neff, Richard Rice, Joe Tkach, Dibar Apartian, Leon Walker, Norman Smith, Harold Jackson, Dean Blackwell, Roderick Meredith, and church attorney Ralph Helge (the only nonordained man on the board).

At HWA's death these boards of trustees will have legal control of these corporate entities and assets. Undoubtedly, among these men there will be internal bickering, squabbles, factions, politicking, charges of heresy, accusation of ministerial disqualification, and perhaps even a bit of blackmail. Nevermind. In the end, *self-survival will dictate*, and in order to keep the source of their power and income intact, there will be enough compromises and deals made to insure that a majority will be formed. It is this majority that will choose their chairmen of the boards, their operating officers and their key policies. It is this *majority* and their chairmen (likely to be the same man for both church and college corporations) that will be *legally in charge*.

As for the minority, they will either "knuckle under" - and they should find that easy, as they've all been doing it for many years - or they will just not be there any more. For it is a very easy thing for the majority on a board to remove minority members, find cause to fire them from their executive positions (or transfer them to the Philippines), even disfellowship them from the church, change the locks on their office doors, and, if necessary, ask the local police to escort them off the grounds. In anticipation for the day of "finding cause," a few, we understand, are *already* keeping dossiers on the others!

But how much chance would these minority members - even if united - have at striking out on their own to take away part of the WCG market? Frankly, *not much*.

First of all, even *if* (and this is a very big "if") the minority members were united and coordinated (very unlikely), obtained in advance a copy of the church mailing list of members and donors (absolutely essential), did considerable study on their legal options, propaganda warfare, and possible corporate power plays (again, very unlikely considering the intellectual level of this bunch), and had the good sense to obtain top-flight legal counseling and strategic counseling (the names of Robert Kuhn and George Geis come to mind on the latter), the minority would still lack for adequate financial resources. And that is essential. It takes money - and lots of it - to produce the quantities of literature and broadcasts necessary to draw a large following. And in a propaganda war, all other factors being relatively equal, victory will go to the side best able to monopolize the attention of the market. Any minority group (or groups) breaking off from the WCG's vast resources is just not going to have viable financial strength.

A good example of this is the Church of God, International (CGI). When Garner Ted Armstrong left the WCG to start that organization, he had quite a lot going for him - a dedicated group of co-workers, an established ideology, a fairly good executive assistance team, good broadcasting skills, and the ability to write prodigious quantities of church literature. Yet seven years after its birth, CGI is still very small and scattered and in no major way poses a threat to the WCG. The fact is, CGI never had the financial resources to really take on the WCG. Neither will any newly disenfranchised minority from the WCG board.

This assessment of the need for financial resources may well be one shared by most of the WCG's board members already, because these men have shown themselves to be individuals who, while not astutely knowledgeable of finance, are still acutely cognizant of the importance of money. And this leads us to an important reason why any minority-of-the-board group will very likely not even attempt a serious challenge to the majority's control of the market.

The top men of the WCG (i.e., the board members and top executives) are now receiving yearly remuneration of about \$75,000, plus perks. That's a lot of money for a bunch of guys who don't even have accredited BAs. That is a higher annual salary than received by many partners in Wall Street law firms and more than is earned by four-star generals in the U.S. Army. How many of these men would risk losing all that on an attempt at starting another WCG spinoff with little chance of survival?

Scenario No. 4, while having some intelligent elements, will just not fully materialize. We believe the WCG, while in for more turbulence, will survive. But what kind of organization will it be?

## **Our Projection (Scenario No. 5)**

With HWA gone, of course, the WCG will have to be different. HWA is unique, and no one will be able to equal him in either authority or style. Yet once he leaves, don't look for earth-shaking changes in either doctrine or organizational policies - at least not for a while. The goose that lays the golden eggs must keep all her feathers.

*As now*, there will be a sharing of executive responsibilities. By virtue of its very size, the WCG organization requires this. Whether or not certain individuals continue to hold the executive positions they now have will be determined by the controlling majority, not by one man's fiat. Yet even now, this is pretty much the case in the WCG. Many of the decisions supposedly made by HWA today are actually arrived at by a consensus of his top administrators, who then sell HWA on their ideas for his royal stamp of approval. The perceptive reader will realize that the WCG has already been moving from a type of tyranny (selfish rule by one

man) to a type of oligarchy (selfish rule by a few), and with HWA's death, the transition may well be completed. Yet there will still be someone who will preside over the controlling board(s). Who will that chairman be?

Obviously, no one (including us) can know with certainty. But by process of elimination, we will make our best guess.

We can immediately eliminate from our list of potential chairmen Dean Blackwell, Raymond McNair, Leroy Neff, and Harold Jackson. They are viewed by their peers as intellectual lightweights. We can eliminate Richard Rice and Leon Walker as they are relative newcomers to the higher echelons. Joe Tkach, another lightweight, also bears the onus of being indiscreet about his personal life, as well as overbearing in his administration of the WCG ministry (he is currently the WCG ministry's top administrator). He maintains his current administrative position solely at the pleasure of Aaron Dean, HWA's personal aide. Thus Tkach is not a true contender.

Ralph Helge can immediately be removed from the contender's list, as he is unordained. Dibar Apartian, the French- language evangelist, can be eliminated because of his alien birth and manner (the WCG is, after all, a predominantly American religious group). Roderick Meredith, although ambitious, has little support on the WCG board. His years of harsh rule over the WCG ministry have left him with few important supporters for any major power role. Thus his name can be eliminated. Ellis LaRavia, also ambitious, has a professional style and a successful administrative history in the WCG. However, his contribution to the WCG has been in peripheral areas - physical plant and AICF - not in church administration or in the proselytizing "commission." He lacks any major support and thus can also be eliminated from our list.

Evangelist Norman Smith - tall, likable, moral, masculine (he was even a western U.S. marksmanship champion), and intelligent - in many Christian organizations would be a logical choice for any top leadership position. Not in the WCG, however. He is not only distant from "where the action is" (he is by choice a minister in San Diego), but he lacks both political instinct and the desire to dominate. We can eliminate his name from the list of contenders.

That brings us down to one name.

## **Herman L. Hoeh**

At first glance, Dr. Herman L. Hoeh (pronounced "hay," not "hooee") may be dismissed by some as unlikely to chair any post-Armstrong leadership council. While an interesting speaker, Hoeh is not a dynamic one and has no real broadcasting experience. By no means can he be described as a charismatic leader along the lines of Herbert Armstrong. Nor can he be described as "macho" - a style sought after by some WCG ministers at the time Garner Ted Armstrong was considered the heir-apparent and therefore the one to emulate. Nevertheless, there are at least fourteen reasons why we believe Herman Hoeh will eventually be the chairman of any post-Armstrong, WCG board of trustees:

(1) His loyalty to the WCG is unquestioned.

(2) His WCG tenure is as long as any other WCG leader, with the exception of HWA himself. Hoeh was among the very first Ambassador College graduates and among the very first to be ordained by Herbert Armstrong.

(3) Hoeh does not present a threat to the legacy of Herbert Armstrong. Unlike some of his colleagues, Hoeh would probably not attempt to tear down Armstrong's image after his death. Hoeh played an important part in the development of HWA's image, having been among the first, if not the first, to call HWA "God's Apostle," in the 1950s. HWA, himself, may well already consider Hoeh as the one most likely to be the faithful "keeper of the flame."

(4) He has had wide experience in all major facets of the Armstrong organization - as evangelist, editor of the Plain Truth and Bible Correspondence Course, writer, advisor to HWA, doctrinal committee chairman, college professor, and college administrator.

(5) After HWA, Hoeh is the WCG's leading ideologist. During the 1950s, especially, he played an important role in helping HWA formulate important WCG doctrines. He understands the theology of Armstrong, its strengths and its weaknesses, and has a strong vision of what the WCG should be.

(6) As a propagandist, Hoeh is equalled by none in the organization except HWA himself. He is sensitive to semantics and is a talented editor, having no close rival in the church. In a new era of print media predominance, he would be indispensable to the organization.

(7) Among his WCG peers, he is clearly the most intelligent and the best read.

(8) Hoeh knows how to handle money. As a result, his years in the WCG have left him more than just financially "comfortable." He doesn't go for flashy cars, big parties, booze, or loose women. He is known for his thrift and would probably make a highly efficient corporate money manager.

(9) He is dignified and cultured. As one former Hoeh associate told us, "You'll never see Dr. Hoeh in a honkytonk bar. He is one of the few Worldwide ministers capable of entertaining royalty or heads of state without making a fool of himself."

(10) He has both a shrewd sense of timing and perseverance. Those who have worked with him say these qualities, as much as any others, have helped him to survive the organizational purges that resulted in the departures of Albert Portune, David Antion, Raymond Cole, C. Wayne Cole, Charles Hunting, Stanley Rader, Garner Ted Armstrong, and many others.

(11) While having adroitly cultivated the image of an ideological Armstrong "conservative," those who really know him say Hoeh is a flexible pragmatist - a "liberal." He is quite capable of appearing as "all things to all men" - no small trick and a prerequisite for success in WCG politics.

(12) He is discreet. Whatever skeletons there may be in his closet, Hoeh keeps them securely out of sight. As the previously quoted former Hoeh associate put it, "You will never see Dr. Hoeh holding a secretary's hand in public or trying to pick up AC coeds." More importantly, he is highly discreet about the sins of his associates. Whereas some top WCG executives have used privileged information to assault, both privately and publicly, the reputations (and thus political standing) of their colleagues, Hoeh has gained a reputation as one who tolerantly turns his back on the foibles of friend and foe. Consequently,

(13) he has few real enemies (unusual in an organization filled with sharks), and -

(14) he has many friends. It is these friends, perceiving Hoeh as not only the best man available, but also the *one most likely to protect their own interests*, who, we believe, will choose him to chair any leadership group left when HWA leaves the scene.

So with all of the above in mind, what level of probability would we assign to each of the various scenarios we have discussed? Here are our approximate evaluations of each:

**Scenario No. 1** (*Before his death, HWA appoints a successor, and at HWA's death, or incapacitation, there is an orderly transfer of power to one man - GTA or someone else.*) . . . . . 12% probability.

**Scenario No. 2** (*HWA does not appoint a successor, but at his death, or incapacitation, a strong leader, in the style of HWA, emerges from among his top executives.*) . . . . . 6% probability.

**Scenario No. 3** (*HWA dies, the WCG membership is stunned to realize that God is not "preserving Mr. Armstrong until Christ's return, " they come to see they have been worshipping a mere mortal, and the WCG disintegrates.*) . . . . . less than 3 % probability.

**Scenario No. 4** (*HWA dies without naming a successor. Three or more of his lieutenants - very likely evangelists Joe Tkach, Ellis LaRavia, and Rod Meredith - "battle" for control. Some members side with each, many leave the WCG with them or join other groups, and the WCG splits into a few parts.*) . . . . . 9% probability.

**Our Projection - Scenario No. 5** (*HWA dies without naming a successor. No HWA-like strongman emerges after his death, but the organization becomes a type of oligarchy with Herman L. Hoeh being the initial chairman of the ruling group.*) . . . . . more than 50% probability.

As for the remaining 20% (of the total 100%), let's just say that with the WCG, anything is possible. The WCG has enough naive, duplicitous, fanatical, and irrational individuals in its hierarchy that during the stress of a transition period, we might well see a truly unexpected - even bizarre - sequence of events. Time will tell.

## WCG Update

Any rational individual who follows the WCG for a time cannot help but wonder about what goes on in the heads of those still enamored of Herbert Armstrong. Even Herman Hoeh is reputed to have once said, "In the Bible, God calls the church 'a peculiar people.' Actually, sometimes they're *very* peculiar." Here are a few brief news items on the WCG which reveal a little of that organization's current climate:

At the end of January, the WCG held its third international regional directors' conference. With Joe Tkach, director of the Ministerial Services department, moderating, the WCG's twelve regional directors presented their reports to the conference. The twelve regional directors are Colin Adair, Canada; Guy Ames, Philippines; Dibar Apartian, French Department; Stan Bass, Caribbean; Peter Nathan, New Zealand and the South Pacific; Carn Catherwood, Italian Department; Bram de Bree, Netherlands; Roy McCarthy, South Africa; Robert Morton, Australia and Asia; Frank Brown, Britain, Scandinavia, East Africa, West Africa, the Middle East; Frank Schnee, West Germany; and Leon Walker, Spanish Department.

The directors were apparently hoping for some major announcement about who would succeed HWA. Instead, HWA only spoke

very briefly on how the WCG's regional offices are like the spokes of a wheel attached to a hub - WCG headquarters (HWA) - but that this wheel has no rim! The point intended was that regional directors should look only to headquarters, not to each other. (We wonder if it ever dawned on these "regional directors" that a rimless "wheel" - one having only a hub and spokes - will never roll anywhere or function in any normal way. Indeed, is not such a circleless "wheel" really a self-contradiction?) Some complained that HWA spent most of the conference sleeping in the front row as the directors gave their reports. (Actually, can we blame him?)

\* \* \*

Over the years HWA has chosen a number of individuals as most likely to become his "Beast of Revelation": Mussolini, Hitler, Tito, F. J. Strauss, Otto von Hapsburg, etc. Now, believe it or not, HWA is pointing at someone else. This time it's a mysterious Jewish Rabbi-politician. In his January 14 letter to his followers, HWA wrote:

"A recent incident occurred which could presage critical world-shaping events for this year 1985, Late one night less than two weeks ago, three Jewish rabbis from Jerusalem called on me. They professed to be on a mission of grave importance that could trigger crucial events leading quickly to the coming of Christ and the end of the world.

"One of these rabbis is a member of the Israeli Knesset, Israel's national Congress. They explained the divided condition politically in the Knesset, and although the ultraorthodox Jews which these men represent are in the minority, they do hold the balance of power. One of them, who seemed to be their leader, hopes to maneuver things to make himself Prime Minister. He claims to be a physicist of distinction and showed photographs of himself with President Ronald Reagan, Konstantin Chernenko of the Soviet Union, and Deng Xiaoping, leader of China. He explained plans to build the third Temple at Jerusalem. He said his group of ultraorthodox Jews had been studying the New Testament. He said (and I have since verified the truth of this) that these Jews expected a pre-Messiah to come almost immediately prior to the coming of the Messiah or Christ, and that he himself is that pre-Messiah or 'ante-Christ' as he termed it. He insisted it is necessary that I help him politically become the Israeli Prime Minister. They seemed to know all about me personally.

"I kept trying to pry out of him how and where they proposed to build the temple prior to Christ's Second Coming. I think it best not now to divulge his astonishing answer.

"At 2 a.m. they left. I gave them my very definite answer. I cannot in any manner join him in politics. The rabbis left rather downhearted. I have checked and this man is in fact who he claims to be. My real appraisal I will not now state."

\* \* \*

HWA's February 25 letter to his church and co-workers opened with this Jean Dixon-like prophecy:

"A drastic, world shaking turn of events may occur unexpectedly this year. This is the 'Fortieth Year' and historically the 40th year has been the year of a drastic turn in national and world events."

HWA goes on to explain that WWII ended forty years ago and that he still expects a U.S. of Europe to materialize, but -

"For some reason God has been holding back the fulfillment of this prophecy - BUT IT IS CERTAIN TO OCCUR! [Emphasis is his, of course.] Could this 40th year be the year that will bring it about?"

### **Dwight Armstrong**

Dwight Leslie Armstrong, 80, the official hymn composer of the Worldwide Church of God and brother of church founder Herbert Armstrong, died of cancer on November 17 (*Pastor General's Report*, 11-21-84). His Sequim, Washington funeral was attended by his wife Karen, his twin sister Mary Lucile Edmonson of Portland, many WCG ministers, and his nephew Garner Ted Armstrong. HWA did not attend - apparently because he had heard, in advance, that his son Ted would be there.

### **Martin Leaves FBR, Heads ASK**

Of the dozens of WCG spinoff groups, few, if any, have had the impact of the Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR). Begun in 1974, the FBR has played an important part in helping thousands of former WCG members see through many WCG fallacies and gain a better understanding of the Bible. It has never been *Ambassador Report's* position that the FBR possessed all knowledge or has been beyond error. Nevertheless, the FBR has clearly helped many gain insight into the theological literature central to Christianity.

Perhaps because we mentioned the FBR so often in years past, many have written us lately asking for the "inside scoop" on what has been transpiring in that organization in the last few months. In late December Ernest L. Martin, who had been the FBR's president for ten years, sent a letter to the top contributors of the FBR (most noncontributors were apparently ignored) stating that he had been "fired" by the FBR board and was starting a new organization. Almost simultaneously, the FBR sent out a letter stating that Martin had been removed as FBR president, but remained on the board and would continue researching and writing for the FBR. Then the FBR came out with a rebuttal to Martin's letter and Martin came out with a second letter and cassette tape on the situation. Needless to say, many FBR supporters have been more than a little dismayed by the obvious discord.

Over the years, Martin's writings have so monopolized the pages of FBR publications that some have apparently assumed that the FBR was both founded and run by Martin alone. Actually, for some years now, Ken Fischer, as office manager, has been responsible for most of the day-to-day management of the FBR. And as for the organization's beginning, it was actually ex-WCG minister Gary Arvidson and ex-Ambassador College administrator Ken Storey who conceived the idea of starting an organization that could serve as an open forum for discussing and publishing theological research papers. It was Ken Storey's donation of his personal savings that provided the required start-up capital. Arvidson and Storey asked Martin to join them, and in 1974 those three men were the FBR's first board of trustees.

Perhaps due to his former prominence in the WCG, Martin was elected the FBR's first president. By 1976, the FBR board had expanded to seven, with the addition of Vic Orn, Ken Fischer, Gary Reid, and John Cheetham. But disagreements over FBR goals saw Ken Storey, then office manager and secretary-treasurer of the FBR, at odds with Martin. In a 4 to 3 vote engineered by Martin (with Martin, Orn, Cheetham, and Fischer voting against Storey, Arvidson, and Reid), Storey was removed from the board. In 1978, Arvidson, feeling out of step with Martin and not desiring to stand in the way of harmony, resigned from the board. In 1979, Cheetham, unhappy over the way Martin approached the ideas of others, also resigned from the board. Martin was left firmly in control. So much so that in 1980, Vic Orn, a long-time friend of Martin - perhaps believing Fischer to be unquestioningly loyal to Martin and Canadian Gary Reid to be living too far away to make a difference - resigned from the board (with his wife remaining as bookkeeper until last December), stating in a letter to Martin that he was confident Martin's leadership position was secure. And so it was - until 1983, when Fischer and Reid began to have serious second thoughts about Martin.

For ten years, Martin dominated the FBR, but not without criticism. While recognized as having a creative theological mind, knowledge of history, strong writing and speaking skills, and, of late, the attention of certain scholars around the world, there are many Bible students who have complained that Martin's theology unwisely downplays the importance of Christian fellowship and New Testament ritual, overemphasizes the doctrine of "imputation" (that the Christian gains righteousness simply through belief in Christ), has yet to adequately mesh the doctrine of divine judgment with his confidence in "universal reconciliation," and virtually ignores the problems of applied Christian ethics. His interpretations of biblical prophecy have not gained wide support, and there are those who say Martin is not always consistent. For instance, Martin's January tape contained this statement:

"Most people have a misconception of the Worldwide Church of God, in my view. I don't think it's a dictatorship at all. Some people say it is, but I don't think it is. The thing is - you are free, or anyone is free, to leave that organization at any time."

Yet Martin for many years openly bristled at Herbert Armstrong's unilateral style, calling him "that little Napoleon," and even put out a booklet (*Church Government and Church Organization*) that condemned autocratic church government in no uncertain terms.

Then there was this statement on his tape:

"The Holy Spirit can be taken from people. I'm not saying that anyone that I know has had the Holy Spirit taken from him or her. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying it's possible."

Yet there are those who recall that not long ago Martin was teaching that scripturally it was not possible. Here's another interesting quote from the January tape:

"Christ Jesus came from the Father and he was changed from spirit into flesh.... He became flesh and, I'll tell you, that flesh wasn't wicked. That flesh was holy."

But some of Martin's readers recall how, in 1982, Martin wrote an article entitled "Was Jesus Ever Sick?" in which he stated (p. 4), "Isaiah 53 definitely indicates that Christ was prophesied to be sickly while he was in the flesh. The New Testament certainly backs up this conclusion." Some have asked, "How does Martin's picture of a physically imperfect Jesus square with this new 'holy flesh' idea?"

An even bigger problem concerns Martin's privately stated views that there is no adequate evidence for a universal Noachian Flood and that early Bible chronology is "idealized" and not to be taken as literal historical fact. Many reputable scholars would, of course, agree with him. But some who've read his articles over the years feel that such views are completely inconsistent with the key premise that underlies all of Martin's writings - the same premise which *supposedly* underlies most Christian fundamentalist religions, namely that the Christian Bible is the revealed "Word of God," and as such is *inerrant* and to be taken *literally*.

It is noteworthy that during the last two years, some of Martin's harshest critics have been his own FBR associates. One Foundation employee, who preferred not to be named, told us, "I'm not saying that Doc's writings are all bad. Most of his early FBR work was really good. In fact, we plan to still distribute most of those expositions and booklets. But in my opinion, for the last year or two, Doc [Martin] has been more interested in sensationalism and the acclaim of so-called scholars than in careful research."

There is virtually no past or present FBR researcher that we know of that does not have theological differences with Martin. Some believe Martin is now often overreaching in attempts at buttressing untenable positions. As an example of this, Leona McNair points to Martin's new theory that Jesus and the two thieves were crucified on an almond tree.

Some who've worked with Martin during the last two years say that he had become completely unwilling to allow the FBR to publish any theological material that did not support his own views. For instance, for some time, Ken Fischer, Gary Arvidson, and others have felt that certain biblical passages (Rom. 8:35-39, 11 Cor. 5:1-8, Phil. 1:23, Ps. 139:7-8, etc.) seem to indicate that the "mortality of the soul" doctrine held by Martin, the WCG, and other groups is possibly flawed and should be reexamined. But Martin adamantly refused to allow his view on the subject to be questioned in any FBR publication.

Ironically, it was Martin's own teachings on "universal reconciliation" that led Fischer and Arvidson into such areas of inquiry now labeled by Martin as "anti-Christian." Neither Arvidson nor Fischer believe in any type of eastern reincarnation (where the dead are reborn as animals in repeated future lives), yet both seem to feel that some divine system of resurrection and spiritual growth may be the answer to the problem of harmonizing the doctrines of judgment and universal reconciliation. It is interesting that theologian, A. E. Knoch, whose writings influenced Martin, was able to produce an answer to the apparent dilemma (see Knoch, *The Problem of Evil and the Judgments of God*), and Origen, the third-century Christian writer often referred to by Martin in years past, taught universal reconciliation and the immortality of the soul (see Sahakian, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 86-88).

Regarding his book *The Original Bible Restored*, Martin's opinion that New Testament canonization was completed by the Apostle John has been challenged by writer Gene Justice, who, in a paper submitted to the FBR, presented evidence that canonization may very well have been completed by Peter. Under Martin, the FBR never published the Gene Justice paper. Nor would Martin allow other papers - often well-researched and well-written - to be published if they didn't support his own teachings.

Gary Arvidson told us, "The Foundation had become a one-man show. It just wasn't living up to its stated purpose, which is research without dogmatism. 'Dogmatism' - people need to look that word up and see what it really means. Unfortunately, Ernest seemed to think the Foundation was meant solely as a platform for his own ideas."

One Foundation employee said, "Ever since Ernest started getting attention from certain scholars, he seemed to demand more and more respect from those around him. When he didn't get the type of unquestioning adoration he desired, we were subjected to hours-long self-aggrandizing lectures on the importance and greatness of his work. When he was on a roll, we couldn't even answer the phone without him being insulted. Frankly, I wondered about the man's balance."

Martin finally got to where he was requiring FBR employees to pledge their loyalty to him. To back up this requirement, he told of how, during his years in Worldwide, he knew much of what HWA taught was in error, but that out of loyalty to his employer he did not openly teach what he knew to be true. In the same way, he wanted them to keep their ideas to themselves. Needless to say, such reasoning did little to impress employees who had long ago turned their backs on Herbert Armstrong.

Complaints of runaway egotism were aired by *every* FBR employee and associate we talked to. Further, many complained that Martin rarely, if ever, gave adequate recognition to those who contributed significantly to many of his "discoveries." This criticism gains plausibility from the fact that Martin's writings contain short or nonexistent bibliographies, few footnote citations, and no real acknowledgments.

But FBR writer Rudy Dykstra is even harsher in his criticism of Martin's methods. Dykstra claims that in a number of articles Martin authored, he actually added words to biblical quotations to produce evidence for positions otherwise unjustifiable.

Martin's editorial policies were clearly a major factor in his departure. But another factor may have been money management. Board members Fischer and Reid admit privately that they were unhappy with the way the FBR's financial resources were being managed. Both seem to feel Martin spent too much, took too many perks (we understand Martin even demanded the FBR pay his cable TV bills and his wife's *Cosmo* subscription), and gave himself unjustified and unauthorized "loans" and "bonuses." Fischer and Reid were also unhappy over the fact that Martin copyrighted - under his own name - certain books written while on FBR salary and then demanded royalties on their publication. Then, at one point, Martin even started requiring that FBR donors pay an extra \$12 if they wanted his autograph on requested books!

Since the FBR shake-up in December, there have been many wild rumors about Martin and the FBR. Not surprising, many of these rumors are untrue. For instance, some have believed that Martin was removed because of a drinking problem. Not so. While Martin has openly discussed his having had an alcohol addiction problem for many years, at the urging of family and friends, he committed himself for over two weeks to Raleigh Hills Hospital in 1984. Since then he has strictly abstained. Not only did his associates at the FBR encourage him in his battle, the FBR and its insurance company paid the \$10,000 Raleigh Hills bill. So drinking was not a factor.

Nor was Martin's local "ladies' man" reputation a factor - at least not officially. Board members Fischer and Reid say the subject never came up at the December board meeting. Nonetheless, it is a fact that in recent years a string of female FBR supporters and employees (some married) have complained of sexual harassment and of "being used" by Martin. It's difficult to believe this did not contribute to his decline in stature as a Christian leader within the group.

By December 1984, board members Fischer and Reid had lost all confidence in Martin. The editorial policy disagreements, the financial management problems, and perhaps other factors all contributed to his removal from the FBR presidency. It may not have come as the total surprise Martin now claims it was. For weeks before the board meeting's scheduled date, Martin had consulted

with a lawyer specializing in nonprofit corporate law. And (WCG Apostleship contenders pay attention!) two weeks before the scheduled December 13 board meeting, Martin secretly removed the mailing list files from the FBR's Pasadena office, and not until well after that meeting, by which time he had copied the needed information, did he respond to office manager Ken Fischer's demand that he return the files to the office. Thus after his removal from the FBR presidency, he was able to use the stealthily gained information to set up his new organization.

At the December 13 meeting, Reid and Fischer had indicated to Martin that they hoped he would continue with the FBR, on salary, researching and writing at his pleasure. However, Martin's December 24 letter to the FBR's top donors changed everything. Fischer and Reid were stunned by what they felt were Martin's gross inaccuracies and bad faith. Martin refused their demand that he publish a retraction and apology. On February 2, the FBR "accepted Martin's resignation" from the board, and Howard Clark was added to the board and made vice-president (Reid preferred not to continue as vice-president because of residing so far from California. Also, at the earlier December 13 meeting, Fischer and Reid voted to add Arvidson and Dykstra to the board, so there are now five members.)

Just as Martin probably anticipated his break with the FBR, Ken Fischer and others had anticipated that Martin would start a new organization. For over a year, Martin had been indicating that he was tired of writing for the ex-WCG set and wanted to start his own publishing venture, perhaps to be named Elmhurst (after his initials ELM). So while much of what Martin wrote in his December 24 letter irritated his fellow board members, his new business plan did not come as a total surprise. In fact, at the December 13 meeting Fischer and Reid, attempting to show Christian generosity, had actually indicated to Martin their willingness to help him start his own publishing firm. It was the way Martin later went about it that actually upset them.

Martin's new organization is called Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, or ASK. From the articles of incorporation filed with the State of California, it appears that ASK has only one board member - Ernest L. Martin. Perhaps that is why, on his taped message, he exults, "I am not subjecting myself to man in any way! And that's one of the reasons why I am grateful that I am no longer a part of FBR."

His ASK articles of incorporation state:

"The specific purposes of this corporation are to operate a church; to research and establish doctrine and prophecies as revealed in the Holy Scriptures; and to disseminate this information by publications, seminars, and meetings."

On his taped message, Martin says:

"I don't have a commission like [the apostles and prophets] did. But I am on a mission of my own - a mission to see the gospel restored as best as it can be at the end of this age.... We are not interested in raising up fellowship groups around the world. I do not have time for that."

In his second letter to his followers, Martin explained that a major part of his new "mission" would be to produce a new version of the Bible, to be called "the Manuscript Version of the Scriptures." He writes, "This is the 'Elijahan task' that this world needs at this time."

To begin work on his new mission, Martin has set up his headquarters in Hemet, California, the home of Joan Marie, his new wife (his first wife Helen divorced him in 1981). Hemet is more than 80 miles from Fuller Seminary's library and over 100 miles from UCLA's library where Martin supposedly does much of his research. Yet, apparently Joan Marie prefers to remain in Hemet. So it is in Hemet that Martin, with his son Sam, his new wife, and his mother-in-law, will begin the great "Elijahan task." Incidentally, they have already produced their first booklet. Its subject is the "sacred names." Joan Marie was once involved with Jacob Meyer's sacred names movement, which may have something to do with Martin's new interest in the subject. Their address is: ASK, P.O. Box 1863, Hemet, CA 92343.

And what of the FBR? Can it last?

Howard Clark, the FBR's new vice-president, said, "I'm going to do what I can to help it survive. The Foundation can continue to help a lot of people learn important lessons, mature, and become Christians better able to stand on their own two feet."

But will good intentions alone keep the FBR alive? Fischer, the FBR's new president, realizing many will not support an organization lacking a central hero figure, has retained a new Christian accounting firm and has cut back FBR expenditures to the bare bone. He anticipated correctly; FBR contributions have plummeted. Nevertheless, he is not only determined to keep the Foundation going - even working out of his garage if need be - but he has already accomplished something Martin never could, or perhaps, never would.

In the last six weeks, Fischer has been able to rally virtually every thinker rebuffed during the Martin years and gain their support. Some of those who have indicated a renewed interest in the FBR are David Ord (now pursuing a master's degree in theology), former *Plain Truth* editor Brian Knowles, Sir. Antony Buzzard, writers Gene Justice, Leona McNair, Gary Arvidson, Ken Storey, and broadcaster Tom Hall. Fischer has also been able to line up a number of never-WCG-associated scholars, who could provide a vital new dimension to FBR research.

But will all this save the FBR? After all, a lot of people have become very attached to Martin's style. One of our own readers wrote us, "The Foundation without Ernest Martin is like the New Testament without Jesus Christ." But in February, Gary Reid told us:

"I don't think a Christian educational organization should be run as one man's personal business or ego trip. There are enough Herbert Armstrongs in the world already. When Ken Fischer and I realized Doc could no longer remain as Foundation president we knew it wouldn't be easy. And we knew that removing him might mean the end of the Foundation. But we take our responsibilities as Foundation trustees very seriously, as do our three new board members. Those FBR purposes that we have in print are exactly what we are upholding.

"Maybe if we had acted earlier, the situation would not have gotten so out of hand, but it did. Whether or not the Foundation lasts - well, we'll just have to see. I guess it will all depend on what our readers really want."

After his February 2 "resignation," Martin retained control of his company car, two FBR computers and other property, and demanded \$10,000 cash as "royalties," from the FBR. He threatened to sue if his demands were not met, refused arbitration, and lawyers for both sides were unable to reach an agreement. Now, just as we are about to go to press, we have learned that Martin and the FBR, without the assistance of their lawyers, have signed an agreement. As severance, Martin has gotten about \$18,000 in FBR assets, including his company car, two computers, his desk and chair, a printer, a typewriter, and a large stock of books. This is somewhat less than the \$25,000 in severance Martin got from the WCG in 1973 (in return for a promise not to openly criticize them for five years), but with his new settlement, his ASK is on its way. According to Ken Fischer, "We didn't want to fight with Doc. We just wanted to do the Christian thing."

### Tom Williams Found Guilty

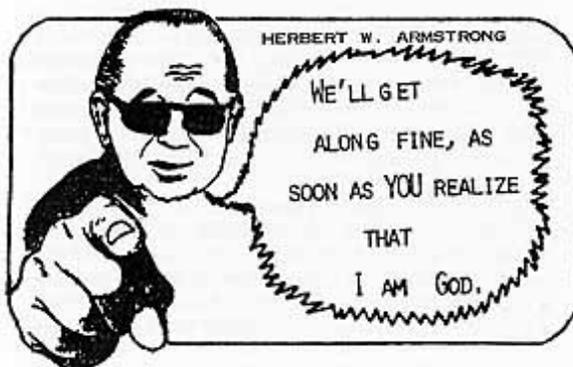
In our March, 1980 issue (p. 6) we reported how former WCG minister Tom Williams had started Liberty Ministries International (LMI), an organization that offered those willing to pay \$3,000 an opportunity to start their own local church. (And we pointed out how the IRS frowned on individuals starting churches solely for tax-benefit purposes.)

On October 19, 1984, a Richmond, Virginia jury found Tom Williams and his wife Linda each guilty of one count of conspiring to defraud the federal government and 30 counts of tax and postal violations. Robert M. Jacobs, an associate of theirs, was found guilty of one count of conspiracy and four counts of tax violations.

The government charged that LMI, started in 1979, was a pyramid-type scheme that sold in-home ministries to people around the country for purposes of gaining tax exemptions and deductions to which they were not entitled. Testifying on behalf of the government were William M. Morris, Douglas B. Taylor, Gary L. Alexander, Thomas J. Boody, and Keith Hunter, all of whom had been involved with LMI, and all of whom - with the exception of Hunter - have now served short prison sentences. The three defendants did not testify.

On November 29, Judge D. Dortch Warriner sentenced Tom Williams, 39, to five years in prison and fined him \$20,000. Linda Williams, the mother of two, was sentenced to 18 months in prison and fined \$10,000. Jacobs was sentenced to three months and fined \$10,000. In addition, all three will be required to pay the \$46,107 the government says it spent in prosecuting the case, and after prison, each will face three years of probation. The sentences could have been far higher. Judge Warriner declined to sentence Tom Williams on 29 of the counts on which he was convicted and declined to sentence Linda Williams on 30 counts. Had he done so, they could have faced more than 100 years in prison and \$200,000 in fines.

Attorneys for the defendants said they planned to appeal. And with good reason. At a November 15 hearing, Judge Warriner, while convinced the defendants' rights had not been violated, stated quite emphatically that the government prosecutors had handled much of the case in a highly improper manner. While refusing to throw out the case, he invited the defense attorneys to take his ruling to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In spite of the prosecution's faults, however, at the November 29 sentencing, Warriner made it plain that he believed the defendants were, indeed, guilty. (*The Richmond News Leader*, Oct. 20, Nov. 16, Nov. 30.) It should be interesting to see how the 4th U.S. Circuit Court rules on the case.



We seem to be living in the age of bumper stickers. Now Herbert Armstrong has had one dedicated to him, and it succinctly captures his unique message! The peel-and-stick decal (at left) is now appearing on car bumpers (and Plain Truth news racks) around the country. The decals are available for FREE by writing to: Newsgrams, P.O. Box 11074, Dallas, TX 75223.

## Letters

*My sympathies to the woman from Minnesota who wrote (AR, July 1984, p. 12) concerning the pain of living with a hardcore WCG husband. I have one of those too, and, like her, I feel like screaming at people who admonish me to get off the back of this "good, nice person" who "isn't hurting anything or anyone."*

*Isn't he? How do you explain the hundreds - perhaps thousands - of divorces directly attributable to a mate's membership in the WCG? Is that why "The Church" has actually had to hold classes on dealing with the violently unhappy reactions of "unconverted" spouses?*

*What uninformed observers don't realize is that the WCG is not simply a belief system, but an alarmingly rigid cult whose strange practices and excessive demands - temporal, monetary, and cultural - can leave a marriage in shambles when one partner buys into it.*

*If you happen to be unlucky enough to have a husband in Armstrongism, it's as if a third party - who from now on calls all the shots - has suddenly been introduced into the marriage. Life becomes thoroughly abnormalized, with hardly any aspect left unaffected.*

*For starters, you find yourself alone a good deal as your husband begins to put in long hours on sabbaths, services, "feasts," "holy days," Bible studies, potlucks, meetings, special events, rehearsals, whatnot. (You can kiss weekends and vacations goodbye for the same reasons unless you agree to attend services with him and "vacation" only at feast sites.)*

*Your social life begins to disappear. He won't attend traditional holiday parties, and hostesses are put off by his dietary taboos on other occasions as well. Your best friends gradually slip away, and invitations dwindle to nothing. His time is too limited, his practices too restrictive, the marital tension too evident. Eventually (as the woman from Minnesota noted) only WCG members remain friends - which for the nonmember spouse amounts to being forced to fraternize with the enemy or have no social life at all. Many WCGers are pleasant enough personally, but there's still pain in associating with them; no matter how you slice it, they're still my husband's compatriots and supporters in a pursuit that brings me great grief. On top of this, I'm just plain uncomfortable in their presence because I can't understand them. What kind of people are these that they can't see through that unsavory old man [HWA] and his ripoff cult?*

*Add to all of this your worry about being widowed because of the WCG's anti-medicine stance. If you have children, you stew over their welfare as well: What if he refuses THEM needed treatment in your absence? Your pre-WCG family observances - birthdays and holidays - become empty and depressing, exactly as if you had divorced. The joy goes out of celebrating when the husband and father is absent, even if the absence is in attitude rather than physical presence. Family relationships suffer irreparably - little remains to share and discuss when his time is so limited and so many activities are prescribed. After awhile a cloud of resentment permeates every thing. On top of all this, there is the tremendous financial drain - something the woman from Minnesota didn't even mention, surprisingly. There is also the matter of having to cope with the pinchpenny attitudes engendered by these huge donations. Is it "not hurting anyone" to give away thousands while your family does without? Is it being a "good Christian" to let your home become ramshackle and tumbledown because you're too busy with church activities to maintain it?*

*Probably worst of all is the sheer FRUSTRATION of watching an otherwise intelligent man check his fine mind at the door and embrace an organization run by someone as totally despicable as HWA. Virginia Kineston (AR, July 1984, p. 7) put it well when she referred to him as "a liar, a thief and a pervert." Are the members utterly blind that they go on swallowing his incestuous past, his hypocrisies, his failed prophecies? What about his constant tacky money-grubbing, his egomania, his lavish living, his changing of the rules to suit himself? How can they remain unmoved at the sight of all the suicides, broken homes, and custody cases that trail after him? Why don't they question his pose as an expert on child rearing when he abused his daughter for years and his grown children despise him? What do all the broken families that were "D & R" victims have to say about his marrying and then divorcing a divorcee himself? The sickening list goes on and on.*

*Not hurting anything or anyone? I think of my own years of loneliness, alienation, grief, pain, worry, and financial loss and my customary compassion deserts me. I'll be out celebrating on the day Herbert Armstrong dies.*

*You have my permission to print this, but PLEASE sign it:*

*-Name and state withheld by request."*

*When I married I knew nothing of the [WCG] cult. We had religious discussions before marriage, but everything about the WCG was kept secret from me by my husband and his parents. All I knew was that he used to be Baptist. After a month or two of marriage these strange magazines and booklets started appearing everywhere, in his mom's house especially. I started hearing lectures on pork at first, but I still did not realize the magnitude of involvement there. Then our first Christmas together - normally a very special one for couples - I found this correspondence to Ambassador College....*

*My husband finally admitted in a heated discussion that their beliefs were kept from me (or I should say their rules and regulations). That Christmas he did not want a Christmas tree and he informed me he was getting back to his religion. My first married Christmas away from home and family only to find this out! I wanted an All-American family and the whole nine yards. But the WCG has put a strain on every relationship in my life.*

*However, I've never been one to take anything lying down so I've done what I can to help the situation. That means trying to show him a Christian has the fruits of the spirit in life: joy, love, etc. There is no joy in his.*

*I have written the Plain Truth and let them know my disfavor. I would do almost anything short of doing bodily harm to Mr. Armstrong to erase this mess out of our lives. I have found you can't be too nice dealing with these people. In the last two years I have done a fair amount of study. Let me make a few observations: (1) I feel the WCG attracts people with a low self-esteem in certain areas such as relationships with the opposite sex. (2) It draws people that need a lot of structure in their lives, and they become robot-like. (3) I believe it perpetuates a desire to control others - especially women.*

*Mr. Armstrong definitely has a hang up on women. He appears to draw women with little self-esteem and perhaps those that view other women in threatening ways. I believe WCG men are taught that women are to be viewed in a very limited capacity - almost as if they should not be liked for their unique personalities and character but only as a means to an end (objects).*

*WCG people become hostile at the slightest question or remark. It sickens me and hurts me in the deepest sense to see the older people, with so little left in life, taken advantage of and then made to feel so bad about themselves.*

*I don't want to loose my husband. Through it all I love him and want his mind to become unclouded. However, I would fight against this at all odds. I only hope that God will help him where no one else can.*

*-Alabama*

*My husband joined the WCG in 1972. It grossly affected our previously happy marriage and caused termination of same in 1982. I felt that after the October Report I just had to respond. I could identify so well with Leona McNair and her plight. The antics mentioned in that story are identical to what my ex-husband did. They must have had the same advice. I also took a nursing refresher course and am supporting myself and my children in this way. My ex-husband pays no support - despite a court settlement that agreed to same. He has just returned from keeping the feast in China.*

*-Canada*

*I read with a great deal of interest the report of Leona McNair's experience with WCG. As a former "true believer," I can identify with her anguish and rejoice in her triumph. It impresses me that her first action was to seek her own healing, then, presumably, fight a legal battle not only for her own vindication but for the good of others who might suffer as she had.*

*There seems to be a message here for women. Regardless of a woman's state of faith when she leaves WCG (or any cult), she needs to acknowledge the special suffering of a woman and at the same time recognize that bitterness will get her nowhere. Open-eyed forgiveness, psychological and/or spiritual healing, and great wisdom in charting her course are needed.*

*Many of your female readers have no doubt experienced some of these problems: how to deal with a woman's supposedly weak and super-emotional nature; how to determine that one is or is not demon-possessed (this seems funny now, but when one's self-confidence is at an all time low the accusation can be traumatizing); how to compensate for over-zealous child discipline; when to obey and when not to obey; when and how to pursue a career; when to speak up and when to be silent; when to stay and when to leave, and how to deal with divorce. All of these issues are related to the universal problems of loneliness, defining one's concept of God, sorting through one's faith (if indeed, any faith is salvageable), and finding one's own strengths as well as help from God and others.*

*These topics have been of much concern to me through the years since I left WCG. Women's advocates seem polarized. A woman must either submit totally or repudiate God, men and family and fight militantly. There has got to be a middle ground. I believe Leona McNair found it.*

*I would like to hear from women who have dealt with these and other particularly female-oriented cult problems, especially from those who feel, as I do, that through it all, God has come closer.*

*-Bobette Pestana  
10111 North Ashley Street  
Tampa, FL 33612*

*Some old proverbial cliches run through your mind when you are finally delivered from Herbert's "planned truth"! You know the sort: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," "If you don't use your mind someone (or something) else will," and "A fool and his money are soon parted."...*

*Through the "cloudy dust" in the days of yesteryear, one repeatedly failed to notice the spiritual vortex in which we were drowning. It was "service, service, service." Keep 'em so busy that they don't have time to think for themselves. Yes, all we had time to do, as we kept sinking into this "slime" up to our mouths, was to quietly urge others, "Don't make waves, don't make waves."*

*Yep! Just like "lambs to slaughter" we prostrated ourselves before the "Golden Altar of Mammon." We just sat there, very obediently and dull-wittedly, while from "the top-down" we were being butchered with the sharply honed knife of "psychological menticide" (brainwashing). The most heinous type of "work" was being performed - spiritual lobotomy. Think about it. It was mind control, mass obedience. Oh, the pharisees did a "work" all right, and unfortunately still do!...*

*Matthew 24:24 never had so much meaning for me as it does today after realizing that I had been "letting" someone else use my mind. I've got it back now and I'm trying to catch up on 20 years of time that didn't stand still while I did. A lot has happened. There's lots to read and my eyes are 20 years older. What's that saying? Oh, yeah, "We get too soon old and too late smart." Well, still, better late than never!*

*-Maryland*

*I walked out of Herbert's church in October 1978. I have never been back. My two sons and a daughter are still in Herbert's church and they will not let me talk to them about Herbert or even about a death in our family. My mother died in 1981 at the age of 91 and they would not even let me talk to them about it. They just said, "Do not call us anymore!"*

*-Tennessee*

*My wife has been a member of the Armstrong cult for over 15 years and with each passing year the strain has gone from bad to worse. I have four children and it is their future I am deeply worried about. My wife may be divorcing me within the next few months and has already stated that she will demand full and total custody and control of our children. My wife has already informed me that after divorcing me she hopes to remarry within six months. I am told that this is quite normal and is [now] part of the active support given [by the WCG] in such cases.*

*-England*

*Thanks for your concern and the copious material you sent. I've contacted [the people you recommended] and I'm sure they will be able to help. It's hard to imagine the utter despair one goes through in my position, but I'm now convinced that I'm not walking this path alone. The thought of losing my children [through divorce] to a woman (my wife) who has been so indoctrinated by the WCG as to be nothing more than an automaton has produced such an anger and a will to persevere that I'm confident we will win.*

*Adults who are lead away into the hallucinations of HWA are sad enough, but at least they had the will and mind to make their own decisions. The children are the ultimate losers. They never had the chance to decide for themselves and are often doomed by the terrible mistakes of others.*

*Whatever the outcome of my own legal case (judges have been known to rule contrary to evidence before) you can be assured that the fight against the tyrannical WCG has gained a lifelong compatriot.*

*-New York*

*Dear Mr. Trechak:*

*Our names seem to indicate some ethnic relationship. Although I was born in the USA my parents were from overseas (Russian and Ukrainian by background). Most of my 40 years as a Christian minister has been in Baptist churches (although I've also pastored Presbyterian and Methodist churches). I was also president of Czechoslovak Baptist Convention (USA & Canada) for several years as well as editor of the English magazine of the Russian-Ukrainian Baptists in the USA.*

*It seems to me that former WCGers are in three groups: (1) Those disillusioned and offended and are now atheists; (2) the various splinter groups off the WCG who still hold most of the teachings of HWA (GTA and Battles would be examples of this); (3) those who have come out completely and are now with Christian groups like Baptist, Assembly of God, Methodist, etc.*

*I know your "policy" is not to present theology, but I thought your closing comment (paragraph) on page 9 of the July issue on Robert Williams was terrific and hits the nail square on the head. In my opinion all cults are soft on salvation and the doctrine of Christ (these two in particular and often the doctrine of the holy spirit).*

*Yours is excellent work. I have contacted some of the former WCG groups for their literature because you give full addresses. I commend you for doing thorough work. Thank you again.*

-John E. Karenko, Minister  
First United Baptist Church  
604 North Franklin  
Staunton, IL 62088

Editor: You're very perceptive. The editor's parents are from Czechoslovakia. And yes, your analysis of what becomes of former WCG members is also accurate.

*On December 2, I tuned in to HWA's program an "The Plain Truth about Christmas." He was talking about the money that people spend on Christmas gifts. (This, of course, is the money that he wants.) The program was copyrighted 1981. I only watch the HWA shows to catch copyright dates at the end. They all seem to be old tapes made in Tucson even if there is a 1984 copyright date on them. Many of them have 1982 or 1983 copyright dates, but the current issue of The Plain Truth is dubbed in at the end. This is trickery and deceit. I have also noticed the head wobbling you mentioned. If this man needs help in locating even the food on his dinner plate, he could hardly be making new TV programs. So I am convinced that it is only a matter of time before the TV program will be off the air. The faithful church members will probably think that it is "the famine of the Word."*

-Manitoba, Canada

*Thanks for your continuing efforts to clear the air with true information. I would like to bring another subject to your attention. I recently spoke to Dee and Carl O'Beirn and I commented that they at least got out of WCG with their money. In 1970, Carl (a former WCG minister) was called to Pasadena before the board and expunged from the organization. The meeting concerned doctrinal questions he had raised about the calendar and law based on lunar timing. After this episode there came forth from the WCG ministers a "story" that Carl was leaving the WCG because he had inherited about \$80,000 from his family. False! Now what possesses those WCG ministers to say things like that? As usual, a smoke screen to cover the real issue. All Carl got was a humble taken severance check and a quick pick-up of the company car!*

-California

Editor: We don't know what possesses them.

*You have made a good move in creating a flyer on Armstrong. I also feel that it is good to ask those who believe in what you are doing to support the work financially. People need to be exhorted in a proper way, and this includes giving. Please continue to be creative in getting the facts out.*

-Kansas

*You are keeping us well informed on what's going on with Armstrong and his lost tribe. I hope they wake up before its too late. If they are still going to Petra, look out.*

-Kansas

*Hope you will be able to afford more advertising in the most effective areas. Christ stated that we should take heed in the end time that no man deceive us and that many would be doing so. Seems the AR is one group that has taken heed.*

-California

*Thank you again for making this information available. It is like a lifeline to the drowning person.*

-Texas

---

That's it for this issue. We're not only over budget, we're out of space. Our thanks to all of you who are with us. - JT

[Next Issue \(AR32\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR32 June, 1985

### The Evolving Worldwide Church of God

For many years, self-proclaimed "Apostle" Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) has claimed that his "Work," as performed through his Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and Ambassador College, is the great end-time ministry warning the world of its sins and heralding "the Wonderful World Tomorrow." HWA has claimed that by following his spiritual lead, his followers would find financial security, good health, happy marriages, obedient children, freedom from mental illness, and complete success. (See *Ending Your Financial Worries*, *Does God Heal Today?*, *How to Have a Happy Marriage*, and *The Seven Laws of Success* - all published by the WCG.)

Today a great many WCG members who rely exclusively on their local WCG minister's "official line" and on official WCG publications such as the *Worldwide News* (WN) and the *Good News* seem genuinely convinced that HWA's promises are being fulfilled. But increasingly, it seems, there are members who are privately expressing disappointment with the results of following their "Apostle." Ever more frequently *Ambassador Report* is receiving letters from current WCG members and employees (usually writing in confidence or even anonymously) telling us that in spite of their pro-WCG religious beliefs and love for their church, they are alarmed and frustrated by numerous negative trends within the WCG today.

While many of these individuals are not in complete agreement with *Ambassador Report* editorial opinion, they tell us that they see the *Report* as the only means available whereby they can vent their frustrations and in some small way perhaps improve their church, without getting themselves fired or disfellowshipped. Some within the Armstrong organization are courageous enough to repeatedly pass on to the *Report* revealing church documents, internal organizational correspondence, and tape recordings of sermons and meetings to substantiate their assertions. (For this we are most grateful. And to all cooperating in this way, we remind you *Ambassador Report* NEVER reveals its confidential sources.)

But what are these negative trends some members and ministers find so disturbing? What follows is not the result of a scientific survey. (If the WCG would cooperate, we'd love to do one. But the WCG's self-induced isolation prohibits any such attempt.) Nevertheless, based on hundreds of letters we have received from current members and relatives of current members, as well as inside information passed on to us by current WCG employees, we have been able to isolate the following distinct trends within the evolving Worldwide Church of God.

(1) **Increasing Materialism.** Many long-time WCG members say the WCG of today is a world apart from the humble Radio Church of God of three decades ago. In years past, they point out, the ministry acknowledged that their church was small and of little power. Today, however, it is not uncommon for WCG ministers at headquarters to openly boast of the WCG's great wealth, power, influence, and big-business characteristics. The Ambassador Auditorium concert series and the many philanthropic projects of

the Ambassador Foundation are an increasing source of pride to many ministers and members.

The productions at Ambassador Auditorium are noteworthy. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (June 9, "Television Times" section, P. 8), a number of television stations in southern California (and probably around the country) recently aired:

"Symphonie Fantastique" - "A Conductor's View." Maestro Riccardo Muti and director Kirk Browning visualize Berlioz' masterpiece for this concert taped at Pasadena's Ambassador Auditorium.

Music lovers may recall that Berlioz' famous "Symphonie Fantastique" depicts the delusions of a man who takes opium. He "imagines he has killed his loved one and is led to execution [movement four]. Finally [in movement five] he dreams that he is present at the witches' sabbath, which includes a parody of the *Dies irae* [part of the Catholic requiem mass]" (*The New College Encyclopedia of Music*, 1960, p. 638). Once such music was shunned entirely by the WCG. Today, such productions are broadcast from the "House for God" and are a source of great pride to the WCG.

In March, Queen Sirikit of Thailand was Herbert Armstrong's guest in the United States. With an entourage and security force said to have numbered over forty-five, she toured through New York, Palm Beach, and Los Angeles. In each city she presented a show of Thai art objects said to be valued at over \$140 million. The April 1, 1985 *Worldwide News* featured the Queen's visit and detailed how she stayed at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel (where even a small suite for two costs \$450 per day); how in the "Church's white Cadillac limousine, the Queen and Mr. Armstrong were driven across West Los Angeles with an official police motorcade escort"; how the Queen was given a formal dinner at the Auditorium with many local politicians attending; how the Queen's visit made all the papers; how the WCG is financing a project in Thailand that "provides training classes in traditional Thai craftsmanship and vocational skills for peasant farmers and people from Thai hilltribes"; and how "church members viewed the ornate [some called it 'pagan'] Thai exhibit on the Sabbath, as the Hall of Administration was opened for a special Church viewing after morning and afternoon Sabbath services."

One topic the article carefully avoided was how much it all cost the WCG. The cost of the Queen's visit - apparently paid for entirely by WCG funds - is rumored to have exceeded \$4 million. We wrote church treasurer Leroy Neff inquiring whether this was so, but he has refused to comment.

The increasing materialism of the WCG's leadership is not just a headquarters phenomenon, but is also a growing characteristic of much of the WCG's field ministry. And there are definite reasons for the trend.

Today, "full-time" WCG clergymen in the field (that is, away from headquarters) receive yearly salaries (including housing allowance) of about \$15,000-\$20,000 at the local elder rank; about \$25,000 at the preaching elder rank; about \$30,000-\$35,000 at the pastor rank; and about \$40,000 and up when in regional supervisory positions. Most get the use of a recent-model company car with gas expenses paid by their employer. WCG clergymen don't pay second or third tithes, but receive an additional 10% for personal church-feast expenses, and some have been known to receive third tithe "assistance."

---

&COPY; 1985 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

Those knowledgeable about the WCG ministry say that this current level of remuneration is clearly higher than what most WCG ministers could achieve if they were to enter the secular job market - an assessment

that probably explains why so many are willing to ignore the hypocrisies of their superiors in Pasadena. Many people would find such a level of remuneration quite adequate, especially considering that many WCG ministers work less than twenty hours per week and headquarters supervision of their activities is almost nonexistent compared to that of certain previous church administrations. Yet many WCG ministers today are clearly dissatisfied with their employment compensation package.

The church's insurance coverage for its ministers provides meager protection; and there is *no pension plan* for the WCG's ministry. Nor are WCG ministers eligible to receive Social Security benefits upon retirement. As the WCG's many over 50-year-old ministers approach retirement age, more and more are concerned about their future. But the biggest cause of WCG ministerial dissatisfaction is the fact that at any moment, with very little or no cause, they can be summarily fired. And getting fired means only two weeks' severance pay and a quick repossession of the company car. Thus, very few are willing to openly complain about anything, let alone reveal how they really feel about Herbert Armstrong or their superiors in Pasadena.

Instead, without informing their superiors or their flocks, quite a few have simply gotten themselves parttime or even full-time second jobs. (And it would probably shock some to discover how many WCG ministers' wives are currently employed secretly outside the home.) Consequently, the average WCG minister today is spending less time visiting or counselling and even less time preparing sermons. More than a few have not had time for serious Bible study in years.

While HWA continues to exhort his followers to "sacrifice as never before," a look at the lifestyles and values of the WCG's leadership reveals a high and increasing level of materialism in the ministry (compare this to Micah 3:11). Of course, considering the affluent standard set by HWA, this should surprise no one.

Nevertheless, HWA claimed in his April 25 letter to the WCG membership that the WCG ministry is "much overworked." Then in his April 30 letter he wrote; "Those ministers are swamped..." To solve the problem HWA wants to add 100 new ministers to the church payroll. (Unmentioned is the fact that Ambassador College graduates unhired by the WCG have great difficulty finding employment. The large number of unemployed or underemployed Ambassador graduates in the Pasadena area is no small embarrassment to college officials.) Naturally, HWA writes that his plan will require an increase in contributions from his followers.

(2) **Strange Sermons.** WCG members believe that their religion is based on the Bible. Scriptural references are found in almost all WCG magazine articles, and it is rare to hear a WCG sermon or sermonette that is not laden with scriptural quotations. Nevertheless, the WCG is more and more becoming a church that stresses its own manmade *traditions* rather than biblical revelation. "Don't believe me, believe the Bible!" - often said by HWA on radio in years past, is never said to WCG members today. And members are often warned by their pastors not to discuss the Bible among themselves unless a WCG minister is present to guide them. To encourage such dependence, HWA's ministers resort to scripture bending that often produces sermons that can be described, at the very least, as *strange*.

For instance, WCG evangelist Dean Blackwell, speaking at Ambassador Auditorium on July 28, 1984, attempted to characterize his ideal church member by expounding upon a misquotation of Phil. 2:22, where Paul wrote of Timothy's loyalty:

As a child to a father he has served me in the Gospel. That's the way he is. He's just like a child. He's yielding and pliable and humble. And you can tell him the moon is yellow cheese, you know, and he's just gullible and, uhhh, yielding and humble and pliable and believing.

It is obvious how Blackwell read his views into the verse when you read the original King James quote: "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."

Blackwell then went on to expound on II Cor. 8:5. Again, notice the twist:

This they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us - have people ever done that? If you're an independent Christian you only do the first, you give yourself to the Lord. Now those are the people we've lost more of than anybody else - independent Christians who just follow Christ. They don't follow any man! Well that's contrary to the Bible over and over. The Apostle Paul and other ministers said follow us, follow [our] faith, follow [our] example of work.

Actually, what Paul wrote was, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1, RSV). And notice these Bible quotes (again from the RSV): "Cursed is the man who trusts in man" (Jer. 17:5). "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). "Test everything; hold fast what is good" (I Thes. 5:21). "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me" (Hosea 4:6). "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Mark 7:7).

The Bereans were praised for "examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11). While, no doubt, the early Christians were exhorted to respect their elders and imitate their *righteous* conduct, Jesus made it plain that his disciples were not to *rule* over their brethren as the Gentile despots of that day did (Luke 22:25-26). And when the commands of those in authority conflict with those of God, the early apostles taught, "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Today's WCG preachers, it seems, prefer to ignore these once-taught fundamentals.

**(3) Widening of the Double Standard.** The WCG's double standard has perhaps existed from the very beginning of HWA's career in religion. But the disparity between what HWA preaches and how HWA lives is becoming increasingly wider and more evident to many.

For instance, some are aware how HWA, while teaching strict Sabbath observance, never denied himself the pleasure of watching TV sports on the Sabbath. And some are aware how a few years ago Robert Fahey, then HWA's personal assistant, discovered HWA drinking a cup of coffee on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). When Fahey expressed shock at his boss' blatant disregard of church doctrine, HWA offhandedly said he had never personally taught that it was wrong to drink liquids on that solemn fast day. It was others, he said, who had started that tradition in Worldwide. Some remember, too, how years ago HWA admitted in a Bible Study how at his first dinner engagement with King Leopold of Belgium, he believed the entree served was pork, a food prohibited by WCG doctrine. So, not to offend his host, HWA explained, he simply chewed the meat, but did not swallow - until, that is, he was told that the entree was veal.

Those knowledgeable of the man can recount dozens of such vignettes about HWA's double standard. But now, apparently, some WCG leaders grumble privately about increasingly flagrant disregard for church teachings by HWA and those closest to him. One complaint is that HWA often skips Sabbath services for no reason. So do HWA assistants such as Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Dean and Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Dean. Their critics contend that if they are healthy enough to fly around the world for meetings with oriental despots, they are healthy enough to sit in Sabbath services when in Pasadena.

Another criticism has been voiced regarding this year's "Night to Be Much Observed," an annual church feast, which according to WCG doctrine symbolizes both ancient Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the Christian's separation from the present evil world. This year HWA did not keep this feast (the evening of April 5) with just brethren of the church. Instead, HWA dined with Jehan Sadat, widow of the late president of Egypt. Some of HWA's critics in the WCG say this was a clear violation of his church's teachings (in fact HWA's own teachings) regarding this feast day.

Unfortunately, while some ministers complain privately of HWA's double standard, many others use his hypocrisy as an excuse for their own sins. For instance, a fair number are aware of the fact that on foreign trips HWA has offered certain members of his entourage the services of whores, paid for at church expense. Such standards of morality set by HWA's conduct have not encouraged those around him to "recapture true values."

**(4) Sinking Moral Standards.** This trend is unmistakably clear in the flow of information coming to *Ambassador Report*: stories of WCG families cursed by marital infidelity and wife beatings, headquarters

administrators philandering with secretaries, field ministers fornicating with women during counselling sessions, WCG executives keeping mistresses, church members suing for divorce with WCG ministerial encouragement, stories of bizarre sex practices and homosexual tendencies among certain church leaders, and even rumors of child molestation at Imperial Schools and at the church's summer camp in Minnesota!

Much of the information we continue to receive on these matters is quite detailed. Apparently, some believe we would revel in publicly detailing every WCG leader's personal life. We would not - even if all concerned were clearly public figures. Nevertheless, this trend is real. Even evangelist Rod Meredith has admitted from the pulpit that this is a growing problem in the church.

But what is the cause? Could it be that this decline in morality within the WCG is somehow related to the fact that the WCG is led by an "Apostle" that has divorced his wife, makes excuses for ten years of incest with his daughter, and refuses to speak to his only son and his son's sons, while all the while claiming he is "turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers"?

What Armstrong and his cohorts are actually accomplishing is quite the opposite. In the last few years we have seen the WCG ministry often actively promoting divorce. When one mate in a marriage is a WCG member and the other is a nonmember, it is not unusual for the WCG ministry to encourage the member mate to divorce. This is quite often the case where the nonmember mate is a man who believes he should be the family leader. If he attempts to dissuade his wife (and children) from full WCG participation, the WCG ministry will often pressure the wife to divorce her husband. We know of some cases where the WCG has even provided such women with legal advice and financial assistance to sustain the legal warfare against their husbands. In one such divorce and child custody suit being fought at the present time, the prolonged legal warfare has actually brought the husband to the point of bankruptcy.

**(5) Increasing Fear and Isolation.** On March 30, WCG members at Ambassador Auditorium listened as WCG ministerial director Joseph Tkach began a sermon supposedly on "forgiveness." But what that audience was subjected to for the next hour and a quarter was actually a rapid fire, high intensity, apathophobic-theophobic caterwaul. According to Tkach:

...they're going to persecute us. And what we went through in 1979 is sandbox by comparison. Are we thinking in terms of suffering? Not only the suffering that Christ went through himself, but the suffering that we ourselves are going to have to go through as we perform the job to which God has called us to accomplish. And believe me, we are going to suffer!

Tkach's paranoid view of the WCG's future is, unfortunately, not unique. Every Sabbath scores of WCG congregations around the world are subjected to similar bone-chilling prophecies of future self-martyrdom.

What confusion! For decades the WCG published an article entitled "There Is a Way of Escape" and taught that it was the "Philadelphia era" of God's Church - the church mentioned in Rev. 3:7-12 - that was to be "spared the hour of temptation" (see Hoeh: *A True History of the True Church*). Yet now Tkach and others are prophesying that the WCG will undoubtedly be going through terrible trials much like those they have said the end-time Laodicean church would suffer. Ironically, the Worldwide and Laodicean churches share yet another similarity. Their attitude is: "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing." But God warns them that they are "wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked" and sternly commands them to "repent" (Rev. 3:14-19).

Paul wrote that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). He explained to Timothy that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). Yet today, very clearly, the followers of Herbert Armstrong are increasingly filled with fear. That fear takes many forms: fear of persecution, fear of "the world," fear of the government, fear of the news media, fear of other churches, fear of criticism, fear of contact with "dissidents," fear of college accreditation, fear of unapproved books, fear of unapproved thoughts, fear of "intellectualism," fear of thinking, and fear of people who think.

This high level of fear is producing not only a diminished capacity for logical reasoning but a diminished

capacity for loving. And it is leading to an intellectual isolation that leaves many WCG members living in an "alternate reality" - a kind of make-believe world. This, in turn, often leads to serious consequences.

(6) **Increasing Mental Problems.** This should not surprise us. Orwell wrote of "double think," and James wrote of the instability of the double-minded (James 1:8). The dichotomies of increasing materialism in practice alongside the ever present calls for greater sacrifice, the ever widening double standards, the increasing and often blatant disregard of traditional moral values by pastors who regularly exhort their flocks to almost unattainably high standards of conduct, and rampant fears are taking a toll on the minds of a great many in the WCG. These ministers seem to have somehow deluded themselves into believing they can secretly adopt a lifestyle emphasizing what the Bible refers to as "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21), but Paul admonishes such people: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7, RSV).

If the Bible is taken as a guide, the solution to the mental problems and fears of many church members would seem to be for them to stop living a lie - stop practicing a double standard - and to put real love back into their lives, because "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (I John 4:18).

Recently, *Ambassador Report* received a copy of a startling open letter to HWA and his Council of Elders. The letter is unsigned, but from what our best sources tell us, it is, nevertheless, very accurate. The letter listed over a dozen top WCG officials who either have severe psychological problems personally, or whose wives or children are so afflicted. We have since learned that a number of these individuals have sought the help of psychologists and psychiatrists. Some are now in therapy and a few have even required hospitalization. (We do not feel it is appropriate to give names here, as it is not our intention to embarrass those requiring help.) Unfortunately (as if these individuals did not have enough trouble), some WCG ministers, apparently threatened by the fact that some in their flock would seek "outside" counseling, have made a point of attacking psychologists and psychiatrists from the pulpit. For instance, in a January 19 sermon in Pasadena, WCG evangelist Roderick Meredith attacked mental health professionals, saying that such counsellors liked to "play God." The comment prompted *Ambassador Report* editor John Trechak - who read a transcript of the sermon - to send Meredith the following letter:

Dear Dr. Meredith:

There was much in your Jan. 19 Sabbath sermon that I found interesting. Specifically, while you made it clear adultery is a widespread problem at headquarters, many church employees write me that, in reality, the ministry is increasingly turning its back on the extra-marital affairs of church employees, especially *top* ministers. For instance, during the last year I have received many letters... which more than hint that the moral atmosphere at WCG has sunk to a very low level. If this is indeed true, and it seems to be, it is very sad.

Why then the attack on psychologists and psychiatrists? I am regularly contacted by church members desperately in need of help with their emotional problems. Who can they turn to? The WCG ministry? They've lost confidence in the ministry! And the answer why is very simple: How the ministry *lives* speaks much louder than what the ministry says.

The members who write to me often need professional help. The upstanding, dedicated counsellors I recommend to them do not tell them to turn their backs on God or their church. Virtually always their advice (given in *complete confidence*, something not offered by the ministry) is to adopt modes of behavior (i.e., rationality, love for others, faithfulness, moderation, etc.) that the ministry itself should be advocating.

I disagree with you. As a whole, these professionals are *not* "playing God." But can the same be said for you and your colleagues?

What you have done is made some fear to obtain the kind of counselling they desperately need. The terrible tragedies (the murders) that took place this past year in the church areas of Dave Pack and Dennis Luker - ironically, both proteges of yours - reflect, I fear, the kind of fruit your misguided position will continue to bear. Dr. Meredith, is that really what you want?

Sincerely,  
John Trechak

Meredith is not the only WCG minister who has pressured members not to seek professional help with their psychological problems. Attacks on psychologists and psychiatrists have been a recurring theme in many WCG sermons at church headquarters and elsewhere. Even the WCG's lawyers have gotten into the act.

On May 10, WCG attorney Ralph Helge sent a memorandum to hundreds of WCG employees demanding that they inform him whether or not they, their family, or even anyone they know had ever counselled with a particular Pasadena psychologist. Ostensibly the information was somehow needed in regard to a New York divorce case in which the doctor had testified. But many interpreted the memorandum as a highly offensive intrusion into their private lives, intended only to dissuade them from obtaining help with personal problems.

The bullying, insensitive, intrusive, offensive, deceptive and unsolicited form letter had this legalese stamped on at the head:

This document constitutes a confidential communication between attorney and client and represents an attorney's work papers. It is confidential in nature and should not be duplicated. Disclosure to any third person is prohibited except by obtaining written permission of a duly authorized corporate official by affixing the signature of said official and name of the third party.

How would you feel if Herbert Armstrong's personal lawyer sent you such a letter?

(7) **Petra - Again!** Petra, an ancient ruined city in the rugged desert of southwest Jordan, has for decades held a special fascination for members of the WCG. By piecing together a number of disparate scriptural quotations (Rev. 3:10, Isa. 16:1-5, Isa. 26:20-21, Isa. 33:15-16, Zeph. 2:3, and Prov. 14:26) the majority of WCG members came to hold the belief that one day they (along with unconverted mates and children) would be miraculously swept off to a "place of safety" - most likely Petra - while the world anguishes in "the Great Tribulation" to take place before the return of Christ.

While the WCG has never published a definitive explanation of this widely held belief, this prophetic theory has been widely promulgated in WCG circles through sermons, Ambassador College lectures, a few Petra-related articles in church publications, and most especially through the sermons of the long-winded, wandering star of the WCG, evangelist Gerald Waterhouse.

In recent years, however, a few statements appearing in WCG publications have led some, including *Ambassador Report*, to conclude that the WCG was abandoning its Petra teachings. Now, however, it is apparent to us that such statements by the WCG were intended only to deceive some in the general public and that the WCG membership is still encouraged to hold on to the Petra doctrine. Earlier this year we talked to an Ambassador College graduate who had recently spent time assisting a WCG minister in the Pasadena area. We were startled to learn that the idea of fleeing to Petra is more popular than ever in the WCG. He told us:

The Petra teaching is very much alive. Most ministers do not teach it as absolutely certain that Petra will be the "place of safety," but the idea conveyed is that it is 90% certain Petra will be the place. Gerald Waterhouse, of course, teaches it as though it were clearly prophesied in the Bible, and he is more popular among the brethren than ever before. Occasionally he mentions Petra by name but usually he talks about a "place of final training." Nevertheless, everyone in the church seems convinced that that is Petra in Jordan.



How would you like to spend 3 1/2 years getting your "final training" in this place? This photo of Petra was taken by Morris Burnham and is from the Steven L. Ross collection.

According to the *Worldwide News* (March 18, p. 12), evangelist Gerald Waterhouse is now on his ninth tour of WCG congregations around the world. Again the "Prophet of Petra" is "going to and fro on the earth."

One can only wonder about the mental state of a people desirous of fleeing to Petra. The hot days and cold nights of its inhospitable desert climate, the meager water resources, the lack of sanitation facilities, and the barren landscape devoid of fuel for heating or cooking should turn away the reasonable. But not only that, the region is said to be occasionally subjected to cloud bursts that can bring nine-foot-high walls of water down the region's narrow canyons in flash floods of awesome power. If thousands of Armstrong followers were camped in this "place of safety" during such a flood, many would undoubtedly perish. One can only wonder, too, how the Arabs of the region would react to thousands of pro-Israeli, Sabbath-keeping, mostly American religious fanatics setting up a little colony in their midst. Would this really be a "place of safety"? It is interesting that at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D., the early Christians fled - but not south to Petra. Instead, they fled north to Pella.

### **Devil Worship at Petra**

One of our readers (Emmett C. Hoctor, 3723 W St., Omaha, NE 68107) has done extensive research on the Petra teaching of the WCG. He wrote us:

Petra has been called the "Red Rose City of the Dead." Petra, or Sela, was a city where every type of devil worship thrived. Child sacrifice was so prevalent that there were altars on what was called "the high place" where conduits six inches wide were needed to carry away the stream of human blood.

I have just finished reading a remarkable book about Petra: *The Sarcophagus of an Ancient Civilization* (Petra, Edom, and the Edomites) by George L. Robinson. It was published in 1930 by the Macmillan Company, New York. The ancient temples and peoples of Petra are detailed. The place is defensible but not totally. Robinson gives references where the Jews captured and forced 10,000 men to jump to their death off the steep cliffs.

Incidentally, I would like to hear from anyone who knows the citation of the *National Geographic* article Loma Armstrong used as the basis for the Petra theory.

Those interested in the Petra doctrine or those who may have relatives or friends hooked on the idea will benefit from an article recently published by the Foundation for Biblical Research. It is titled "Where Is Your Place of Safety?" Written by former WCG member Steven L. Ross, the article is one of the best ever done to disprove the WCG's Petra theory. The article is available for free by writing to the FBR, P.O. Box 499, Pasadena, CA 91102. Mr. Ross has informed us that he also has a lecture-slide show presentation available on Petra, as well as a number of Bible research papers. His large work - *The Christian and the*

*Feast Days* - is also available in bound manuscript form for \$10.00 by writing directly to: Steven L. Ross, P. O. Box 434, Beaverton, OR 97075.

### **Seattle Member Accused of Multiple Murders**

On January 9, King County, Washington prosecutors filed two charges of first-degree murder and two charges of first-degree attempted murder against Charles E. Harris, a 35-year-old unemployed Vietnam veteran and WCG member.

According to an affidavit filed by King County prosecutor Al Matthews (as reported in the *Seattle Journal-American*, Jan. 10, 1985, p. A2), the alleged crimes took place shortly after midnight on Sunday, January 6. That night Seattle attorney John Weston and friends Patricia Tobis and Susan Marie Dietsch returned to Tobis' Eastgate home after dinner. Upon their arrival they found Harris present with his former girlfriend, Brenda James, who had been babysitting Tobis' two children. Home owner Tobis considered asking Harris to leave but decided, instead, to allow them to continue a discussion of their personal "problems" in private. Later, however, upon hearing a gunshot, Tobis went to investigate and, according to prosecutor Matthews, she was shot in the chest. Tobis claims Harris remarked, "two down, one to go" as he proceeded to make his way through the home. Weston was then shot in the chest. And finally Dietsch was shot. Prosecutors claim that Harris was attempting to eliminate all potential witnesses.

Weston and Tobis were both hospitalized with severe wounds, but survived; Tobis' two children, in their bedroom during the shootings, were unhurt. Brenda James, 29, and Susan Marie Dietsch, 33, however, both died.

Harris and James were both members of the Worldwide Church of God, according to prosecutor Matthews. They had planned to get married, but James called off the plans because of "religious problems." Harris is black and James was white. The WCG has for decades generally refused to allow interracial marriage. In recent years, however, for public relations reasons the church has avoided making such doctrines clear. Friends of Harris say his regular fellowship with white WCG members made him lose any sense of racial distinction from other members and the sudden realization of the WCG's actual racial teachings may have caused him to "snap."

Nevertheless, this is not the first time Harris has been charged with committing a violent crime. Over a decade ago Harris was charged in the 1970 slaying of his estranged wife. Although he confessed to that crime, he was found innocent by reason of insanity and was committed to a mental hospital for two years. He is now again in a mental hospital undergoing psychiatric observation. His trial is set to begin in July - if he is found mentally competent to stand trial. His defense is being handled by the Public Defender's office of Seattle.

Even though the WCG ministry has distanced itself from Harris since January, friends say Harris still considers himself loyal to the WCG.

### **Armstrong Follower Held In Murder of Daughter**

On Sept. 20, 1984, Armstrong follower Lois Marie Elliott of North Tonawanda, New York was charged with second-degree murder. Police say that before dawn that day, the 36-year-old woman stabbed her four-year-old daughter to death in the child's bed, knifed herself in the chest, in an apparent suicide attempt, and then telephoned police, saying, "I killed her." Officers dispatched to the scene discovered the pajama-clad body of the little girl, Roxanne Elizabeth, in her own bed. She had already died from multiple stab wounds, mostly to the chest. Mrs. Elliott was found nearby bleeding from a wound to her own chest. (*The Buffalo News*, Sept. 20, 1984, p. 1 and Sept. 21, p. C- 5.)

Elliott was divorced from her WCG-member husband Frederick R. Elliott of Kenmore, New York, and had been living with her widowed mother Olive Baldassara. Mrs. Baldassara was home the night of the tragedy, but was apparently asleep in another room during the attack.

Investigators say that Elliott had telephoned police the previous evening claiming her ex-husband had sexually abused their daughter. But police have since concluded that there are "no facts to support that allegation." After Elliott was treated at a hospital and released into police custody, she told investigators she had "committed a sin that would carry on through her bloodline" and that her daughter had "committed an unpardonable sin and didn't pray enough."

Neighbors described Elliott as a reclusive "religious fanatic" who rarely allowed her daughter outdoors to play. Church acquaintances told us that although Elliott had been disfellowshipped from the WCG, she had remained faithful to church teachings and had desired to be reinstated in the church. Reinstatement was not forthcoming, however, because she had been labeled as having a "demon problem." One of Elliott's church friends said, "I don't think Pack [Dave Pack, a WCG minister in the Buffalo, New York area] ever encouraged her to get psychiatric help. And if he really thought she had demons, why didn't he just cast them out, like in the Bible?"

Another acquaintance said, "We could sense Lois had a problem, but her church experience and her marriage problems didn't help her. Then after she was disfellowshipped she seemed to get worse. She really needed help."

Niagara County First Assistant District Attorney Stephen P. Shierling told the *Report* he fully intends to prosecute Elliott on the murder charge. But Elliott's attorney, James Perry of North Tonawanda told us that his client has been declared mentally incompetent to assist in her own defense, has been committed to a state mental hospital for treatment, and that there is no way to know if she will ever recover sufficiently to be able to stand trial.

Whatever the legal outcome, the fact remains that a pretty little four-year-old girl is dead. Neighbors told reporters how Roxanne's father had visited the little girl at least twice each week and how happy she always seemed to be when he arrived. The *Buffalo News* story of Sept. 21 had this ending:

Although neighbors Thursday said that they never saw the little girl playing outside, her father, Mr. Elliott, talked about her energy and her precociousness. She loved to dance and draw and could name all the states, he said.

"She had a mind like you wouldn't believe," he told *The News*. "She was like a little adult, a little Shirley Temple. She was so vivacious." Mr. Elliott then politely declined any further comment, and broke down in tears.

### **David Pack's Reign of Terror**

On the night of Roxanne Elliott's death, one of the last people - probably the very last one - Lois Elliott phoned before the tragedy was WCG minister David Pack, pastor of the Buffalo (North), New York congregation.. Exactly what was said, we don't know. At least not yet. That information may well come out should Lois Elliott ever recover sufficiently to stand trial. What is remarkable, however, is how often Pack's name seems to appear in conjunction with tragedies in the WCG. For a number of years now, no WCG minister's name has appeared more often in letters written to the *Report* complaining of ministerial abuse.

Pack, a burly 6-foot, 5-inch Ambassador College graduate known locally for his authoritarian style, has so incensed some in his flock that a group have circulated an open letter detailing his abuses and have called for his removal. The letter describes Pack's ministerial leadership as a "Reign of Terror." On the cover page, addressed to WCG headquarters leaders, they wrote: "David's power-crazed quest to totally dominate the mind, body, and spirit of church members has not been done in a corner and has been done clearly in view of all to see at headquarters in Pasadena."

On the following 13 pages of their letter the allegations about Pack read like a horror story. The authors contend that Pack constantly intimidates members, uses threats and mind-control methods, is given to extreme emotional outbursts, is highly political, believes in winning at all cost, has disfellowshipped

members for trivial faults, prescribes diets while "playing M.D.," insists on being addressed as *Mr.* Pack, enjoys wearing skimpy, skin-tight shorts to sporting events, has actually worn a wolf costume to church socials, enjoys putting down women, and told one married woman with children, "It would be better for you to shack up one night with a man than wear makeup."

The letter quotes Pack as having said, "Everyone who has challenged me has either died, been seriously injured or has been eliminated from the work." And, "God backs me even if I am wrong."

On page 7 the authors made this statement to Pack (emphasis ours):

Doesn't it bother you that while you were in charge of the Rochester and Syracuse area there were three suicides? One can only wonder why they chose to kill themselves while you were their main advisor in the area. Perhaps you suggested to one or more of them that they would in no way make it into the Kingdom of God.... A statement such as, "You are no longer in the body of Christ," could have caused one to give up and kill himself.

The above quote was written well before the Elliott family tragedy. Some who knew little Roxanne and her mother Lois Elliott wonder if it might have been a prophecy.

### **The Missing Children of the WCG And the \$120 Million Lawsuit**

On Aug. 24, 1984 *The Edmonton Journal*, of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, carried a story about a WCG-related parent-child problem similar in some ways to others we've heard of over the years. What was different about this story, however, was the young age of the child involved. According to the article, a Mrs. Carol Dillingham of Winterburn, Alberta, claims her daughter, Lori Ann, first became interested in the WCG at age 14. By age 16, the mother says her daughter was "talked into quitting school" and "left home to become a member of the church." Mrs. Dillingham alleges that as a result of the stress induced by the situation, her husband suffered a stroke and that when Lori Ann was contacted and informed of this, she told her mother, "That's too bad Mom, that's your problem." The Dillinghams have bluntly accused the WCG of "stealing" their daughter. Nevertheless, they at least know their daughter is alive and have some idea where she is. Other parents who have collided with the WCG over their children have not been as lucky.

In 1979, *Ambassador Report* was contacted by Dr. Galal Badr, a college professor at George Mason University in Virginia. Badr told us how he had been married to a WCG member, had gone through a divorce, and had been granted custody of their young daughter Abigail. Badr told us, however, that his daughter and his ex-wife, Marianna (a one-time school teacher from Philadelphia, maiden name - Dowhan) had disappeared, and a WCG minister, who hinted he knew of their whereabouts, had told him, "If you don't cooperate, you'll never see your daughter again." Badr refused to "cooperate" and true to the minister's prediction, he has not seen or heard from his daughter (or ex-wife) since then. Abigail would now be 12 years old.

In late 1979, Dr. Badr wrote to WCG headquarters asking their assistance in locating his missing daughter. It was some time before he even received a response. Finally on July 3, 1980, WCG lawyer Ralph Helge wrote Dr. Badr that "the Church" would not intervene in his case because, "Any other position would demand that the Church become an investigator and fact finder in thousands of cases.

Did Helge really mean there were *thousands* of such cases of missing children related to the WCG? Five years ago we simply assumed his comment was hyperbole. Now we are not so sure. Increasingly, it seems, we are hearing of parents claiming the WCG has come between them and their children and sometimes that they cannot even locate their children.

Perhaps such stories should not surprise us for in recent years the WCG, through its *Youth 85* magazine and other programs, has been attempting to proselytize the very young. But just how far can a "church" go in driving a wedge between parent and child - especially when the latter is a minor? It appears that that may well be a question for the courts to decide.

The WCG is among the defendants listed in a lawsuit filed by an ex-WCG, Washington state mother who alleges she has suffered the loss of a normal parental relationship with her child and great emotional distress due to the negligence of the defendants in that suit. Besides the WCG, those defendants include: the State of Washington, the Department of Social and Health Services, two John Doe attorneys, Herbert W. Armstrong (corporation sole of Nevada), and a single man - a WCG member, address unknown - whom we will refer to by the pseudonym "Mr. B." We will refer to the plaintiff mother as "Mrs. P."

In the suit (case number 83 2 02833 2 in the Superior Court of Pierce County), the mother alleges that:

Prior to 1976 the minor child [her son] had exhibited exceptional and outstanding scholastic records at his school and maintained a loving and close relationship with his natural mother [Mrs. P].

In about 1976, when the minor child was eleven years old, defendant [Mr. B] began a relationship of oppression and seduction, all designed to alienate and destroy the affections between mother and child and instead to create an unhealthy, improper and illegal relationship between himself and the minor child.

On or about February, 1982, because the mother and child relationship was worsening, the mother [Mrs. P] sought assistance from Pierce County law enforcement agencies....

Immediately thereafter, the Department of Social and Health Services intervened and through gross negligence allowed the minor child to be transported out of Washington to reside with [Mr. B], never to be seen again.

Through the gross negligence of the Department of Social and Health Services by its agents, officers and employees, the mother [Mrs. P] was unlawfully and improperly and without due process deprived of not only the temporary care, custody and control of her minor child, but also to the permanent relationship and love of her minor child....

Although the minor child and defendant [Mr. B] met through the auspices of defendant Worldwide Church of God, as the relationship became more and more injurious for the young boy, the defendant Worldwide Church of God assisted the natural mother in trying to terminate the relationship, but later the defendant church refused to disclose the whereabouts of defendant [Mr. B] when it was advised that [Mr. B] was harboring illegally the minor child....

The aforementioned acts and omissions of the defendants, jointly and severally, has caused (1) substantial interference with the mother and child relationship; (2) alienation of affections; (3) has gone beyond all possible bounds of decency and should be regarded as atrocious and utterly intolerable in a civilized community and thus, the tort of outrage should be applied; (4) has been a civil conspiracy; (5) interference and destruction of the mother's civil and constitutional rights as guaranteed by the first, ninth, tenth and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution....

The above quote is taken from the Amended Complaint filed June 18, 1984. Earlier, in an affidavit filed May 7, 1984, the attorney for the mother clarified the allegation of negligence against the WCG:

Because [Mrs. P] was a member of the church and because now the church is claiming she still is a member of the church, the church owed a duty to [Mrs. P] when she went to the various ministers and asked assistance in counseling between herself, her son and [Mr. B]. The duty owed is reasonable care by a counselor....

In the same document the mother's lawyer states that the WCG was not cooperating in supplying answers to questions at depositions in spite of the seriousness of the allegations. The plaintiff's lawyer wrote:

The law is clear that any entity, whether it is a person or a corporation, is subject to a cause of action for the interference of the parent-child relationship....

At the very least, the deposition of the three [WCG] ministers [Luker, Dahlgren, and Goethals] disclose their knowledge of allegations by [Mrs. P] as follows: (1) of improper conduct between the boy and [Mr.

B] who were members; (2) the ministers' agreement to assist [Mrs. P] in separating [Mr. B] from the boy, (3) in fact the ministers' contact with [Mr. B] to curtail the relationship; (4) the ministers' failure to terminate or modify the relationship between the boy and [Mr. B]; (5) the church's knowledge that [Mr. B] had no right to the boy but insisted on encouraging [Mr. B] to keep the boy; and (6) in keeping the boy's whereabouts from everyone, law enforcement authorities as well as [Mrs. P].

On April 22, the Supreme Court of Washington denied a WCG motion for discretionary review of a lower court's denial of a WCG motion for summary judgment against [Mrs. P]. What that means is that the WCG remains a defendant in the case. The court was:

mindful of and sympathetic to the underlying constitutional rights asserted by the Church. The court did not believe those rights to absolutely preclude the existence of any duty, however. It concluded instead that the Constitution might allow recognition of a limited duty to disclose information, particularly in a situation involving a minor.

This case should prove very interesting. The mother is asking \$20 million in damages for the severing of the normal parent-child relationship and for emotional distress, another \$ 100 million for punitive damages, plus attorneys' fees and costs. The trial should begin around March, 1986. The plaintiffs lawyer is Mr. Terry E. Lumsden of the lawfirm of Billett, Comfort & Rosenow, Tacoma Mall Office Building, Suite 301, Tacoma, WA 98409 (phone 206-473-0725).

### **The Exodus Continues**

The exodus from the WCG ministry and administration is continuing. Those exiting the WCG ministry in recent months have included: Daniel Botha (pastor of the Pretoria and Pietersburg, South Africa congregations), Charles Ranchie (pastor of the Penticton and Kelowna, British Columbia congregations), Dan White (pastor of the Helena, Butte, and Great Falls, Montana congregations), James Lichtenstein (Nashville and Murfreesboro, Tennessee), William Cowan Jr. (Tennessee), Charles Crane (Bluefield, WV), Bill Freeland (Liberal, Kansas), James Wells (Topeka, Kansas), Carlton Greene (Pasadena, California), and George Geis (Pasadena, California).

### **Geis Ousted Over *The Firm Bond***

At the end of 1984 there appeared on the shelves of Vroman's bookstore in Pasadena a new book of major interest to some in the WCG hierarchy. *The Firm Bond (Linking Meaning and Mission in Business and Religion)* by Robert L. Kuhn and George T. Geis, and published by Praeger, explores "the ways in which business could adopt the techniques and outlooks that enable some religious groups to obtain an unparalleled degree of commitment from their adherents." (Quotes are from their book and book jacket.)

The authors analyze the problem of commitment - both corporate and personal - and suggest ways in which commitment is either built or broken. To buttress their arguments they rely heavily on anecdotes. It was these anecdotes, apparently, that caused rumblings at WCG headquarters in Pasadena. For while the book nowhere mentions the WCG by name, both Kuhn and Geis have had a long relationship with the Armstrong organization, and many saw in their pseudonymous examples the WCG with all its corporate and human failings.

Within a few weeks of the book's appearance Geis was forced to resign from his Ambassador College position and the WCG ministry. It was the WCG's loss. Geis was one of the few Ambassador College faculty members possessing truly outstanding academic credentials.

Besides a B.A. in theology from Ambassador College, Geis received a B.S. in mathematics (summa cum laude) from Purdue University, a Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Southern California, and an M.B.A. from the Graduate School of Management at UCLA, where he is also a Postdoctoral Scholar. He is currently "Research Coordinator at the Center for Human Research Management, Institute of Industrial Relations, the University of California at Los Angeles."

Kuhn's credentials are equally impressive. Besides a B.A. in theology from Ambassador College, Kuhn holds a B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) in human biology from Johns Hopkins University; a Ph.D. in neurophysiology from the Department of Anatomy and Brain Research Institute of the University of California at Los Angeles; and an M.S. (Sloan Fellow) in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was also a research affiliate in psychology. He is the author of a number of books on management and currently holds positions with the University of Texas and New York University. He has been disassociated from the WCG and Ambassador College since the late seventies.

Over the years, the WCG and Ambassador College have been able to draw many men of intellect and talent. Unfortunately, the Armstrong organization has rarely been able to hold on to those same individuals. It would be difficult to find another organization with such a pronounced "brain drain" problem. Those running the Armstrong organization might do well to ponder the lessons found in *The Firm Bond*.

### **Dr. Charles Dorothy Out Again**

During the State of California versus WCG lawsuit turmoil of 1979, church attorney Stanley Rader produced a loyalty pledge all WCG employees were expected to sign. One who refused to sign the pledge was Dr. Charles V. Dorothy, a respected and popular WCG minister and Ambassador College professor. That defiance did not get him disfellowshipped, but it did cost him his job. (Evangelist David Jon Hill also refused to sign and was similarly cut off.) Since then Dorothy has pursued an accredited Ph.D. in religion at Claremont College in southern California, one of the nation's leading institutions in that field. Then recently, he was able to obtain research work at Ambassador College on a contract-work basis. Again, however, Dorothy ran into problems. Some of his research led to theological conclusions unacceptable to his superiors, and they once more told him good-bye. So the Ambassador College brain drain continues.

Dr. Dorothy is currently writing for the newsletter of the Association for Christian Development (P.O. Box 445, Rolling Bay, WA 98061). He is also engaged to be married to Camilla Terhune, sister of Ken Westby, the Association's president. Incidentally, we found Dr. Dorothy's recent series of articles on "the law" of the Bible most enlightening and we recommend them to those interested in biblical studies.

### **GTA Alive!**

On June 7, the "news" spread like wildfire through the offices and corridors of WCG headquarters in Pasadena. At least one major department head called a meeting of his employees to make the announcement. Within minutes WCG members were being phoned across the nation to relay the "news." Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) had just been "killed in a plane crash!" By mid-day the story had reached WCG members from coast to coast. Hundreds waited near their radios and TVs for a news bulletin. It never came.

There was no plane crash; GTA was alive and well in Tyler, Texas. Who started the rumor? No one knows. But more than a few suspect the story germinated from the wishful thinking of some of GTA's old "friends" in the WCG.

### **Allan Browne Makes His Move**

Since 1979, high-priced Beverly Hills attorney Allan Browne has been the WCG's most prominent trial lawyer. How much WCG money Browne has already put into his lawfirms' coffers is not yet known, but it is undoubtedly many millions. Browne's continued representation of Worldwide caused more than one lawyer to wonder how long it would be before Browne left Ervin, Cohen and Jessup, the firm in which he had been a partner for many years. After all, with the WCG as a regular client, Browne is a "rainmaker." Why share all that WCG loot with so many partners?

Now Browne may not have to. He has formed his own lawfirm: Browne and Woods, with offices at 2040 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067 (telephone: 213-274-7100). While Browne is not yet a member of the WCG (he is Jewish), he has been able to provide Worldwide with the kind of lawyering

Herbert Armstrong likes. Good luck Allan.

### **Ambassador Students Respond**

Being Ambassador College alumni ourselves, we always enjoy reading letters from current AC students. In recent months, it seems, more and more Ambassador students in Pasadena have been reading the Report. Here are three letters, each with a different viewpoint, from Ambassador students who read our March issue and were inspired to write to us.

Your speculations about Mr. Armstrong's successor show great insight, but they are incomplete in excluding the college area. You don't honestly believe that Dr. Hoeh would tolerate the frantic appeals of Mr. McNair, do you? Incident after incident, no matter how trivial, has been an excuse for Mr. McNair to run to Mr. Armstrong for help to cover himself. Your scenarios should have foreseen that Mr. McNair has already purchased his ticket to some "small but important church" that needs his help in getting truly behind Mr. Armstrong.

Surely you knew that his right hand club, Mr. Albrecht, loves to be let loose on the students to put into effect drastic measures that make Mr. McNair's scare tactics very pleasant by comparison. Mr. Albrecht wants to prove that he deserves a higher position, and he will get it too. You see, this has to take place because there are too many new leaders at all levels. Mr. Ames is too much of a politician not to use his silent, pushy loyalty and an influential brother-in-law to raise himself to the office of Deputy Chancellor. You should have added one more scenario: Mr. Albrecht will become Mean on [Dean of?] the Faculty under Deputy Chancellor Ames and his present job will be executed by Dr. "let's not go for outside degrees" Albert, who recently completed his own outside degrees with Mr. Armstrong's approval, and in *psychology* no less.

In this way we will have an administration made up of a man without kids over other people's kids, a divorced man doing marriage counselling, and an ascending Dean who is an outright opportunist and a very poor actor.

I, therefore, have two questions for you. Do you think we will be any worse off than we are now if we don't graduate in the meantime? And, at the rate at which the College is becoming ultra conservative, will a balance ever be achieved between the rank liberalism of the late '70s and the ever increasing conservatism that Mr. McNair is resurrecting from his notorious old Bricket Wood days? At least we can be thankful that such extremes have, to an extent, been eliminated in both the individual faculty members and in the Church administration.

Hopefully yours,  
AC Student

Editor: We weren't aware that the problem of extremism had been eliminated anywhere in the Armstrong organization. If it has, that's nice. However, your scenario on the college, which seems quite plausible, would indicate little has changed at the college.

Regarding your question on graduating, as Ambassador alumni who have gone on to pursue accredited degrees, we cannot in good conscience recommend that anyone apply to Ambassador at this time. The institution simply has too many deficiencies in personnel and policy, and we don't believe significant improvement is likely to occur within the next few years. Even Dr. Hoeh encouraged his own children to go elsewhere for their college educations.

Should you leave? A degree from AC is *perhaps* better than no degree at all. But will your time and expense worth the results? Only you can answer that.

It's high time you received a real *Ambassador Report* from a student who is proud to study at God's own College and respects "intellectual lightweights" with "unaccredited B.A. degrees" earning "\$75,000 plus perks."

In evaluating a speech, the speaker's use of logic is very important. The same with your last issue. But it has a long way to go before it reaches an acceptable stage.

Mr. Armstrong enunciated the Primacy of Peter not because he wanted us to think of him as the highest authority on the face of the earth, but because the doctrine is correct in the first place. If the correctness of this doctrine strengthens his unique position under the Father and the Son no amount of human reasoning will undermine his calling and mission. Obviously, you have no objections to the doctrine itself otherwise you would have mentioned them. But since you accept it you are reasoning against God himself.

You come down on top executives as "company men" with unaccredited degrees, lacking creativity, innovativeness, brilliance and education, yet receiving \$75,000 plus perks. I will not argue with your figures because you seem to have access to the facts. But you fail to see that these men have simply been spared the exposure to this world's educational system started by the pagan Greek philosopher Plato. They've missed the garbage of philosophy, the immortality of the soul, and sexual perversions which God condemns outright.

Because these men were anchored in the Word of God they were tested and proven in the fire of persecution. Mr. McNair did not allow marital problems to stand in his way and Mr. Meredith willingly accepted exile to Hawaii knowing that God was able to bring him back at the right time. If Mr. Meredith had filled his head with accredited nonsense he would have been blown totally off course and we would have been deprived of his wonderful example of dogged determination and his unrelenting sense of duty that make him a foremost leader here at Headquarters and a virtual powerhouse. Can these men's qualifications be measured by accreditation or by a few thousand dollars a year?

It's about time you understood that only Ambassador lays the foundations of true education. No paganism, drugs, smoking, drunkenness, fornication or adultery, vain philosophies, evolution or human reasoning, but a piece of heaven in the midst of a sick and perverted world.

Here God is very active in our lives. The constant and watchful eye of Mr. Albrecht reminds us students that God is watching us in exactly the same way. And sitting at the feet of "intellectual lightweights" who have not been polluted by the world inspires us too to nip intellectualism in the bud for true spirituality. It may sound strange to the world that students are willing to pay ten percent of their student income toward the salaries of executives making \$75,000 plus perks. But this teaches us to trust God and not temporary material goods. But physical blessings can later be poured on us too after we have proved ourselves faithful in little things as these men have done.

Nothing would please me more than signing this letter. But I am prevented by two things. Firstly, I cannot take the credit for pointing up your faulty reasoning. The credit goes to the men who gave us students a solid foundation in Fundamentals and Doctrines and valuable guidance in correct reasoning in speech after speech. Secondly, I would not like to encourage lower classmen to be in touch with you since they would lack the necessary discernment. The College would disapprove of it anyway.

You must not think that I'm controlled by others. I believe that the decisions of those over us are right and for our good, but I also believe that I had to say this for your own good and to exonerate men I deeply love, respect, and owe so much to.

A Concerned Student

Editor: Your assertions regarding Plato raise a number questions, not the least of which is: Have you ever really read Plato - at least *The Republic*, *The Apology of Socrates*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, and *The Symposium*? Sure, Plato had more than a few erroneous ideas. No one has ever claimed that Plato's dialogues are the "Word of God." But within their pages one can find much that is thought provoking and enlightening - especially to the *serious* Bible student. Hellenic thought, especially Platonic, had literally saturated the world in which Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples lived. Plato's works offer us an invaluable insight into that world. That being the case, why would a college (especially one emphasizing theology) ever discourage students from gaining such knowledge? The fact is, at Ambassador, Plato is used as a convenient "straw man." Carefully compare what Plato actually wrote to what some AC professors claim he wrote and you may be in for a surprise.

As for the "Primacy of Peter" doctrine - we don't believe it! And neither did the WCG ministry until around 1978 when church attorney Stan Rader, a long-time student of Roman Catholic history, encouraged HWA to adopt that Catholic doctrine. The "Primacy of Peter" was clearly disproven years before in Ambassador

College Personal Correspondence Department reprint number 980, copyrighted in 1970. That reprint expounded sound theology the WCG has since discarded. If you can locate a copy of that article, read it. You may discover that your time at Ambassador has so far given you as little understanding of the Bible as it has of Plato.

Your comment about no "fornication or adultery" at Ambassador drew a chuckle here. Ten years of *Ambassador Report* documenting the opposite indicates a little naivete on your part.

As for "powerhouse" Meredith, thank you for reminding us of his terrible "persecution." Being sent to Hawaii at church expense and while on church salary must have been horrible. Surely one day his Hawaiian "exile" will be included in an appendix to *Fox's Book of Martyrs*.

I am grateful to *Ambassador Report* for forcing me to examine the myth I have been living as a student at Ambassador College. The truth is difficult to swallow at times, yet we should be glad to have it.

I was shocked out of my boots to discover that the reports from students reading your publication were in fact true. I mean the reports that Joe McNair had actually stood up in court and testified against his own mother. I used to insist that this had to be a foul rumor started by you to discredit an evangelist, leader of the faculty, and an evangelist's son, leader of the students.

Now there are no ifs and buts about this matter. He did actually do that even though the Bible pronounces the death penalty for showing disrespect to parents. So it dawned on me for the first time through the *Ambassador Report* that at Ambassador College the Bible and true values are tools to be used on others. However, when the going gets tough personally, even the evangelists put away their wives, marry new ones, and have their sons testify against their parents.

Even though I sought counsel on this, I quickly sensed it was a mistake on my part and talked about other matters instead. You just don't go to the dean of students with big questions such as this and expect to be understood. Might makes right and one must soon come to terms with this fact.

The second event that shook my confidence concerns Mr. McNair Sr. In my college experience I have had the misfortune to be under two McNairs - as if God wanted to insure that I got the point. Mr. McNair Sr. made a sudden midstream change in our senior Bible class this year. The first semester in that class was tying together everything we had learned and was leading us to believe that there was still some value to the Ambassador experience. The semester ended with a climatic expounding of the doctrine of faith in the clearest and most encouraging way that impressed on us the conviction that all major doctrines were worth studying in depth. The next thing we knew the professor was removed and a new one appointed for the second semester. No comment or explanation was offered about the swift and mysterious change, only a forum in which Mr. McNair said that it was not our place to question administrative decisions.

So the class is being "taught" by a man who knows nothing about the subject and is honest enough to admit it. In fact any one of us in the class is more qualified to teach it since we had one semester under a lecturer who knew his stuff and answered our questions with clarity and patience. Now we are back to memorizing scriptures, learning names of world leaders and virtually going back to where we were in our first year. We are also using a textbook which even the new professor admits is hopelessly wrong in many places. He was told to use it and he has to in spite of the comments he made in class against it. Here then, as in the case of Mr. McNair's forum, the policy of Ambassador College is: "It's for us to decide, and for you to listen and obey. Don't question. Don't even ask. Just do what we tell you and if you take it all in a good attitude you will be used by God."

This is exactly what I'm doing now. Having come this far it is better to finish Ambassador College with a piece of paper in my hand than without one. After graduation I would like to ask if I can join your staff so that others can hear about the Ambassador experience.

I am sure your readers would value a firsthand account of the methods implemented from the top down in what is more and more coming to resemble a fully developed police state. I have been here only four years. The strides in this direction, however, have become unmistakably clearer with each passing year.

I pity those who kneel down on a daily basis and give thanks to God for an atrocity such as this. So keep

up the good work.

[signed] "Awaiting Justice in Jerusalem"

---

## Worldwide at Kent State

Dale Hartshorn of Kent, Ohio was never a WCG member. He's just a Christian who studies the Bible and feels very strongly that the WCG does not represent true Christianity. So when he discovered last year that a minister of the Armstrong church was coming to speak at the campus of Kent State University, where his wife is a student, he felt compelled to take action. At his own expense he put together an advertisement (shown below) expressing his views and had it published in the campus newspaper.

When Armstrong representative William Jahns arrived on campus to speak, Hartshorn was waiting. Jahns presented a ten minute film on the greatness of Herbert W. Armstrong. He then spoke on a number of subjects: Bible prophecy, the "end times," the "lost tribes," our modern holidays, etc. When he was done, Hartshorn - who had researched the WCG - stood up and said he wanted Jahns to answer a few questions about the misuse of church funds, sexual immorality, excommunications, and false prophecies of the WCG. Jahns then said he would not be taking any questions and quickly left.

**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD**  
**Publishers of**  
**The PLAIN TRUTH**

**TAKE A CLOSE LOOK**  
**AT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING**

***FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF!! DON'T BE DECEIVED***

<b>Herbert W. Armstrong</b> <b>Their Founder and Editor-in-Chief Says:</b>	<b>The Bible* Says:</b> <b>*New American Standard</b>
1) "You are setting out on a training to become creator - to become God!" - Herbert W. Armstrong, <b>WHY WERE YOU BORN</b> . "The ultimate creation of man - to become GOD - necessitated the development of godly CHARACTER within him." (The PLAIN TRUTH, Feb. 1964.)	1) " ' You are my witnesses,' declares the Lord, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.' " (Isaiah 43:10)
2) "Salvation, then, is a process! But how 'the god of this world' would blind your eyes to that! He tries to deceive you into thinking all there is to it is just 'accepting Christ' - with 'no works' - and presto-change, you're pronounced 'saved.' " - Herbert W. Armstrong, <b>WHY WERE YOU BORN</b> .	2) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;" (Romans 10:9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8-9)
3) In 1967 Armstrong wrote, "...we are to have soon such drought and famine, that disease epidemics will follow, taking millions of lives...that condition is coming! And I do not mean in 400 years - nor in 40 years - but in the very next FOUR or FIVE! (1972)" H. W. Armstrong, <b>The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy</b> (not in new edition).	3) "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) " 'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' " (Deuteronomy 18:20)

Look For These and Other Books at Your Bookstore:  
**The Kingdom of the Cults** - Walter Martin, Bethany House  
**Understanding the Cults** - Josh McDowell/Don Stewart, Here's Life Publishers  
**Larson's Book of Cults** - Bob Larson, Tyndale

For more information write: D. Hartshorn, 825 Allerton, Kent, Ohio 44240

**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD**  
**Publishers of**  
**The PLAIN TRUTH**

**TAKE A CLOSE LOOK**  
**AT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING**

**FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF!! DON'T BE DECEIVED**

**Herbert W. Armstrong Their Founder and Editor-In-Chief Says:**

1) "You are setting out on a training to become creator - to become God!" - Herbert W. Armstrong, **WHY WERE YOU BORN**. "The ultimate creation of man - to become GOD - necessitated the development of godly CHARACTER within him." (The PLAIN TRUTH, Feb. 1984.)

2) "Salvation, then, is a process! But how 'the god of this world' would blind your eyes to that! He tries to deceive you into thinking all there is to it is just 'accepting Christ'- with 'no works' - and presto-change, you're pronounced 'saved.'" - Herbert W. Armstrong, **WHY WERE YOU BORN**.

3) In 1967 Armstrong wrote, "...we are to have soon such drought and famine, that disease epidemics will follow, taking millions of lives.... that condition is coming! And I do not mean in 400 years - nor in 40 years - but in the very next FOUR or FIVE! (1972)" H. W. Armstrong, **The United States and British Commonwealth In Prophecy** (not in new edition).

The Bible\* Says:

\*New American Standard

1) "'You are my witnesses,' declares the Lord, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.'" (Isaiah 43:10)

2) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;" (Romans 10:9)  
"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."  
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

3) "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

"'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'" (Deuteronomy 18:20)

Look For These and Other Books at Your Bookstore:

**The Kingdom of the Cults** - Waiter Martin, Bethany House

**Understanding the Cults** - Josh McDowell/Don Stewart, Here's Life Publishers

**Larson's Book of Cults** - Bob Larson, Tyndale

## **Wolverton Has Returned**

Monte Wolverton (AC Pasadena 1970), after a long absence from Pasadena and WCG employment, has returned to WCG headquarters to take over as Art Director of the *Plain Truth*. Wolverton, one of the most creative individuals ever to have graduated from Ambassador, will undoubtedly have an effect on that publication's circulation. Some have already noticed that the photography, illustrations, and graphics of recent editions of the *Plain Truth* have had a distinctly more focused and energetic quality.

Long-time Armstrong observers will recognize the Wolverton name. Monte's father was the late Basil Wolverton, one of the very first men ordained by HWA and, interestingly, a world-famous cartoonist. It was Basil Wolverton's terrifying illustrations in HWA's *1975 in Prophecy* that played a major part in prodding thousands into joining HWA's church in the sixties. *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* (Vol. 2, p. 705) has an excellent write-up on Basil Wolverton. Here is an excerpt:

Although Wolverton had no formal art training, he soon became one of the most respected and innovative creators in the comic book field. His work was so off-beat, intricate and personalized, *Life* magazine's editors once called his material work from "the spaghetti and meatball school of design"; many underground cartoonists cite Wolverton as a profound influence on their style.... His early scripts were violent and brutal; retribution being substituted for justice. Spacehawk, an interplanetary crimefighter, was more likely to kill a captured criminal rather than bind him over for proper punishment. Artistically, the feature showcased Wolverton's creative genius. Although some of the work was crude and cramped, it showed brilliant flashes of Wolverton's unequalled effective story-telling....

## **Alumni News**

Brenda Denzler (nee Reser, AC Big Sandy 1971-74) is now an undergraduate majoring in religion at Wichita State University. Ms. Denzler was recently awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to participate in the Religion in a Democratic Society program at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She was also recently granted a scholarship from the Department of Religion and was named a 1985 Emory Linquist Scholar at WSU. We talked to Brenda in June and were told that although her book on the experiences of former WCG members is progressing slowly, she still plans to complete the project within the next few years.

\* \* \*

We have been saddened to learn of the death of ex-WCG minister Bruce Vance (AC Bricket Wood 1968), who was killed in a car crash on January 6. In recent years, Bruce was owner and manager of a drug store in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is survived by his wife Amy, two sons, and a daughter.

\* \* \*

Editor: On May 18, 1985, Ted Gerringer, 69, passed away at his home in Modesto. With his wife Ruth at his side, Mr. Gerringer, the father of *Ambassador Report* co-founder Bob Gerringer, succumbed to fast-moving stomach cancer, first detected less than three months ago. In memory of his father, Bob Gerringer has written the following remembrance.

## **A Tribute**

I have never before experienced the death of a close family member. It may be that only time can bring acceptance of the fact that my father is gone. In the meantime, while mourning and grieving his death, I celebrate his life and the special way it inspired his family and friends.

Dad was born in Colorado on Feb. 28, 1916. During and after his high school years he farmed with his dad, and, in 1942, married Ruth Canterbury, my mother. He saw active duty during World War II as a bombardier in Europe, after which he returned to farming. With the outbreak of the Korean War, however, he returned to active duty to serve his country. After that conflict ended, he remained in the Air Force Reserve and our family moved to San Diego, California.

His parents began listening to HWA on the radio in the early forties and joined HWA's church in the early fifties. Dad and Mom, however, did not join the WCG until 1962. Soon after joining the WCG, Dad requested a discharge from the Air Force because the church prohibited its members from being in the military. He had served over 19 years, had risen to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and lacked only about ten monthly reserve meetings of reaching the required 20 years for retirement. Dad's integrity would not allow him to compromise his faith in the teachings of the WCG, and thus he lost all the retirement benefits for which he had worked so hard.

It was only two years earlier, in 1960, that Dad made a career change from small business owner to salesman. He became a "lubricants advisor" for Texas Refinery Corp. (TRC), and we moved to Modesto, Ca., situated in the middle of his company-assigned territory. He then began selling TRC's heavy-duty lubricants, oils, greases, and industrial cleaners to farmers, truckers, loggers, etc. At the start, he had no established customers, no experience, six mouths to feed, and, by 1964, three tithes to pay. For many years, things were financially tight, but Dad had an abundance of courage and tenacity.

In 1975, life changed dramatically for Dad and Mom. That year, they left the WCG. Ironically, this occurred only one month after he was ordained a local elder. Dad was very disappointed to learn that much of the WCG leadership did not exercise the same integrity it demanded of the laity. Nevertheless, he did not leave because of their immoral and unethical behavior. It was doctrinal reexamination that convinced both Mom and Dad that they had to leave the Armstrong church.

There were a few years of transition, but during the last eight years of his life, Dad was totally at peace with himself and God. He developed a strong belief that the plan of salvation was universal in scope and that *all* humankind would eventually be reconciled to God. Dad's approach to the Bible was basically as taught by the Concordant Publishing Concern. His belief in the resurrection was a source of strength for both him and his family at the end.

By 1985, Dad had been with TRC a quarter of a century and was one of their most experienced and successful professionals. He was loved and respected by both coworker and client (many of whom he had served for over 20 years). Dad had said he was going to start "slowing down" in 1986 when he turned 70, but he never planned on retiring.

Over 150 people paid their respects to my father at the funeral where my brothers, sister and I (Chuck, 34; Steve, 28; Diane, 24; and myself, 36) each said a few words. Diane told of Dad's strong religious convictions and his fine example of faith. Steve told of Dad's active and vibrant lifestyle, including his passion for tennis, which he played until the last few months, and square dancing, which Dad and Mom last did on Valentine's Day. Chuck told of Dad's uncompromising integrity. I told of the courage and tenacity which were so much a part of his personal and professional successes.

Dad and Mom were still very much in love after nearly 43 years of marriage. They raised a very close and tight-knit family. In addition to Mom and the four kids, Dad is survived by his mother Lillian, 92, two brothers, one sister, and four grandchildren.

My brothers, sister, and I are thankful to our Mom for marrying the man she did and for being his loving partner all these years. We will miss him unendingly, but we are thankful and proud, very proud, to be the children of Ted Gerringer.

-Bob Gerringer

## **Letters**

*I have read with fascination of the continuing saga of the WCG and noted the interest of so many in its rather aberrant history. I wondered if some post-WCG experiences would be of any help to your readers. Realizing there is probably nothing as discredited as an ex-WCG evangelist, maybe the following information would still help atone for some of the horrendous mistakes of the past.*

*Most of us were intrigued by the WCG message - we were searching for truth and a purpose to this complex existence in a veritable minefield of competing theologies. Many became disillusioned at the WCG leadership. Some, like myself at the obvious error in its inconsistent semi-Mosaic approach to God. In spite of having spent 25 years in a futile pursuit of truth, I determined never to close my mind nor to reject or accept a concept until it could be proved or disproved. The search has proven most rewarding. Once you start checking up on some of these self-appointed gurus, the results are startling.*

*The error in HWA's theology is now obvious - attractive alternatives were sometimes very inviting but careful checking showed just a different set of flaws. The idea that it didn't make much difference what you believed as long as you loved God and your fellow man seemed to place too high a value on ignorance and error. It also was a concept that flew directly in the face of the admonition to return to the faith once delivered to the Church and the very explicit statement of Christ himself when He said that God seeks for those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. If we agree on the spirit, why not on the truth?*

*In the interest of brevity - a long continuing search and a renewed acquaintanceship with Sir Anthony Buzzard, ex- Ambassador College lecturer in languages, has led to some invaluable theological insights. A number of men have been researching the writings of some of the world's outstanding biblical scholars who are both historians and linguists. Their primary interest was to discover what Christ and the early biblical writers really meant in the context of the setting and language of their day. Much of what they discovered contradicted their own previously held ideas and are in opposition to much of what is being taught today.*

*The compilation of this research is available to any of us and we can evaluate the information ourselves. I have, and I strongly recommend, yes urge, all your readers to avail themselves of this careful research to get a side of the story that very few have had the opportunity of hearing. I am confident an openminded approach to this research will prove most rewarding. For information write Anthony Buzzard, P. O. Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061.*

*-Charles F. Hunting  
Vero Beach, FL*

*I have given upon the hope that things would come to a head when HWA passes away - now I figure he's never going to die as even the devil won't have him!*

*-Canada*

## **Late News**

A "Special Edition" of *The Worldwide News*, dated June 24, 1985, has just appeared. It is devoted entirely to one lengthy article entitled "Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God." The author credited is Herbert W. Armstrong, but the prevailing supposition of insiders (and based on internal evidence, well-founded) is that the article was ghost-written by Herman L. Hoeh with assistance from Armstrong aide Aaron Dean. The article, which is generally an attack on the church's "liberals" of the '70s (a popular "straw man" of today's WCG), contains a number of interesting statements:

From that time [1981, when HWA returned to Pasadena from Tucson] the TV program has produced steady growth, until today we are the second in the world in the religious category, with over 300 TV stations worldwide.

Not true. "The World Tomorrow" is not even in the top ten.

In 1978, after my "resurrection" from total heart failure, I had to completely close Ambassador College at Pasadena, starting all over again, as in 1947, with one freshman class.

At least they put "resurrection" in quotes. Finally, the end of the lengthy piece had these statements, obviously, the real message of this "Special Edition":

A final personal word. In a few days I will be 93 years of age. For some years now, there have been some, like vultures, waiting for me to die. They would like to come back and take over the leadership of the Church in my stead. I have been deeply concerned about this, but in no sense worried. This is the Church of God, not of any man. Jesus Christ is the living Head of this Church. I am not.

And Jesus Christ will never receive any of those who have gone out to draw a following after themselves to come back and lead God's Church into Satan's liberalism. It would be no longer God's Church, even as Ambassador College was no longer God's college, and Christ had to start it all over again through me with one freshman class.

When I have, even rarely, mentioned my concern in this category, the response of members has always been the belief that God will keep me alive. I hope that He will, and I do try to take every care of my health and physical condition, but whether God keeps me alive 10 more years, or only 10 more minutes is entirely in God's hands. Brethren, put your faith in Christ and the living God and not in me. If Christ should remove me, He will direct the Advisory Council of Elders to select one of them to continue leading you until the coming of Jesus Christ in power and in glory....

As we indicated in our March issue, HWA will not allow his son Garner Ted to return to leadership in the WCG, he has not chosen a successor, and at his death the WCG's Council of Elders will be in charge of that organization.

On May 17, commencement was held at Ambassador College in Pasadena. College founder Herbert W. Armstrong was unable to give the commencement address. The man chosen for that honor was "Mr." (as he now prefers to be called) Herman L. Hoeh.

---

### **Please Remember Us!**

This issue of *Ambassador Report* represents less than half of what we had hoped to publish. Frankly, we are being overwhelmed by the amount of information - especially from lawsuits - coming out on the WCG. We just don't have the financial resources to do the kind of extensive reporting we wish we could. We hope all of you will remember that you are an important part of *Ambassador Report*. Without your help we could not continue publishing. Our thanks to all of you who are supporting our efforts.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR33\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR33 October, 1985

### WCG News in Brief

Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the self-appointed Apostle of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and founder of Ambassador College (AC), continues to lead those organizations despite his 93 years. He also continues to inspire those organizations to levels of deception ever more outrageous.

The WCG has in recent months been running an ad in *Broadcasting*, a trade magazine for electronic media executives. The ad states:

We Don't Ask for Contributions. People know what to expect from The World Tomorrow. And they know we don't expect anything back. On The World Tomorrow, we've never solicited contributions. Neither have we used television to make converts. Or take sides politically. And we never will. What we do is deliver a message, a message that makes sense. The Bible message, rightly understood. That's why The World Tomorrow is one of the top rated religious programs in the United States.

Those who read *Ambassador Report* know that, while the above ad may make sense to someone hoodwinked by Armstrong's cosmology, in reality there is not one honest statement in that ad.

\* \* \*

The August 5 issue of *The Worldwide News* announced that HWA's latest book has come off the presses. It's titled *Mystery of the Ages*. While this book purports to answer all of the great questions inherent in human existence, some theologians who have purused the book say it is absolutely loaded with theological error and is nothing more than a rehash of old Armstrong theology. Nevertheless, we understand that some WCG members are already looking on the book (being sold in bookstores for \$12.95) as some type of extension to the Holy Bible.

\* \* \*

During the last decade, as reported on by numerous articles in official WCG publications, HWA has maintained a close relationship with the communist government in China. Now, apparently, he hopes to do the same with the communist government of Russia. In July, HWA was in San Francisco for the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. In his July 25 letter to his followers HWA described how, while there, he met with the Russian ambassador:

The Ambassador from the Soviet Union spoke to me twice and said I am too hard on the Soviet Union on the air, although he admitted I was not as hard on them as other TV evangelists, and invited me to visit the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

The Sept. 6 edition of the *Ambassador Portfolio* (an official Ambassador College publication) reported that HWA has given final approval to Ambassador Foundation participation in developing and operating a school in Sri Lanka (off India's southern coast). The project is named the Armstrong-Disanayake Educational Trust. According to the article, last November Sri Lanka president Jayewardene "personally asked" HWA to begin a project there. The article states:

In early June the [Ambassador] Foundation sent David Baker, an Ambassador graduate, and Trent Meisner, an Ambassador senior, to Sri Lanka to teach English to Buddhist monks at the temple in Mt. Lavinia, a city near Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

\* \* \*

The Sept. 6 *Ambassador Portfolio* also reported that:

Ambassador College isn't shaking hands - again. Because two cases of scabies in the local church area have been tentatively confirmed, the College administration has asked students to avoid shaking hands. The 1983 outbreak of scabies is still vivid in the minds of faculty and many returning students, so the administration has taken steps to prevent a similar outbreak this fall.

Scabies is a highly contagious skin disease caused by the parasite *Sarcoptes scabiei*, a small mite that burrows into the skin and lays eggs. In ancient times this disease was known as "the itch." It is mentioned in Deut. 28:27 as one of the curses that would strike the Israelites for disobedience.

### **WCG's Plain Truth Distribution Program Attacked**

"There's some of those \*@&ç¶ Plain Truth magazines. You take a couple of free samples, tear them to shreds, and I'll go talk to the store manager about removing the PT racks from his premises!" Increasingly we are hearing similar expressions of anger from indignant ex-members all over the world and from concerned members of the public who

don't want their loved ones to fall under the Armstrong cult's spell.

Here in southern California, several ex-members confided to us that they watched in dismay as their neighborhoods were blanketed with PT stands, each containing up to 130 magazines. Explaining that their lives and families had been ruined by the hypocritical teachings of Herbert Armstrong and that it was the PT that was one of his primary vehicles for hooking new converts, these zealots said they were determined to rid their cities of PTs. To accomplish this, they went around to store owners, told them the plain truth about the Armstrong cult, and urged them to have all PTs removed from their stores. To date most of the PT newsstands in the greater Pasadena area have been removed by startled church officials. One person wrote us anonymously that he had gladly taken 3,500 free PTs in the last year and destroyed them.

Another former member, tired of having been pushed around by the Armstrong organizations for years, was flying in the U.S. Northwest on Horizon Air when all of a sudden she spied that hated symbol of Armstrongism, a PT, in her plane's magazine rack. Furious, she complained to the stewardess and then wrote a strong complaint to the airline's president. A few weeks later she saw that her efforts had been rewarded when she received the following letter:

---

&COPY;1985 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

With reference to the magazine, *The Plain Truth*, we do NOT subscribe to it nor do we endorse the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, California. The magazine was surely placed there by another passenger, and we have reviewed this matter with the department involved, and I can assure you that any of the magazines that may show up on our aircraft will be removed by our grooming personnel. Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Carmel Campbell  
Manager, Consumer Services

Another one of our readers, who resides in the Spokane, Washington area, informed us that he noticed the PT displayed in Tidyman's Warehouse Foods. Determined to have the PTs removed, he wrote Tidyman's owner, explaining that the PT "is perhaps the chief tool" used by the WCG to lead the "unwary, religiously curious into their quite destructive religious trap - membership in the Worldwide Church of God.... As a successful businessman, I'm reasonably certain you would not wittingly promulgate the propaganda of this greedy religious cult." And his efforts paid off. Owner Jim Tidyman wrote:

I have been out of town and just returned and read your letter concerning the free magazine that we are allowing to be distributed in our stores. I agree with you that this organization preys on the elderly and ignorant and I don't want the distribution in our outlets. I have asked that our supervisors check this out and get rid of the publication. Thank you for writing to me so that I could correct the problem.

The U.S. is not the only country where people are fighting the inroads of the Worldwide Church of God and the PT. Phillip Adams, writing in the July 16, 1985 issue of *The Bulletin* (p. 66), a leading Australian periodical, commented:

I particularly enjoyed the paradox of Herbert W. telling his followers to despatch their few remaining dollars immediately. IMMEDIATELY, as the world was about to end. While on the other [hand], he was forever building larger mansions and buying bigger jets.

These days, the radio network in Australia has finally contracted, although Herbert W. buys a significant amount of television time. Now the main method of recruiting is through *Plain Truth*, a journal with a similar appearance to *The Bulletin* or *Time*. And for reasons I fail to comprehend, this noxious journal, this malignant magazine, this un-Australian, anti-Christian rip-off is being enthusiastically marketed by the federal government....

By any standards, *Plain Truth* is the spearhead of a most sinister organisation.... Where you will see this exploitative rag is on special display stands on some of the most conspicuous pieces of Commonwealth real estate. If you're an air traveller, you simply cannot avoid the special display stands at airports. In Melbourne and Sydney, the magazines have a way of getting into the Flight Deck and Golden Wing lounges, where businessmen pick them up, presuming them to be conventional news magazines. They are, after all, well camouflaged....

Each year, millions of TAA and Ansett passengers are exposed to the misnamed *Plain Truth*, which carries as much objective information as Pravda. It is inevitable that a percentage of passengers are persuaded to repatriate huge amounts of their income to one of the most notorious of evangelical entrepreneurs.

In a democracy, in a free society, you are perfectly entitled to believe grotesque nonsense and to give your money away to confidence tricksters. The freedom to be a fool is protected along with freedom of speech, assembly and belief. But I find it hard to accept that this purveyor of paranoia, this pick-pocket from Pasadena, should wear our coat of arms.

Near Toronto, Canada, Ruby Beale, a Markland Woods resident, spotted *Plain Truth* magazines on the shelves of her local IGA store. Incensed, she contacted store manager Al Muir and vowed to take her shopping elsewhere unless the offensive PTs were removed. Muir told Mrs. Beale that, just as she has a right to say what she thinks, the person who makes the PT has rights, and he initially refused to remove the PTs, no doubt partly because his store was being paid a \$20 monthly rental fee by the WCG. (Reported in the *Etobicoke Guardian*, May 1, 1985.) Mrs. Beale wrote us that "this rack has now been removed, plus 3 others, to my knowledge."

Mrs. Beale was not the only person willing to stand up and be counted in the Etobicoke

area. The *Etobicoke Guardian* (7/24/85) reported:

An Etobicoke variety store has refused to carry *The Plain Truth* magazine after a resident complained the publication was a subtle recruiting device for the Worldwide Church of God. The store, located at the Martin Grove Road and Burnhamthorpe intersection, received a complaint and forfeited the rental fee for the free magazine, confirmed Kay Neun. Neun was about to approach the store owner herself when she discovered another Etobicoke resident complained first.

"I had friends become involved with the Worldwide Church of God 20 years ago, and it was a very divisive thing. It became very distressing because it cut off our fellowship", said Neun.

The article went on to quote former WCG minister Richard Forkun, who remarked that the PT "looks legitimate but the danger is that it is really a very subtle recruitment. Eventually, if you are interested, you will get a call, a visit and eventually be invited to the meetings. It was my job to follow up on these subscribers."

Forkun's comments provoked an angry response from the WCG's Toronto pastor, Neil Earle, who denied recruiting was the purpose of the PT.

In the July 3, 1985 issue (p. 6) of the *Etobicoke Guardian* Pastor Earle had published in the newspaper's Public Forum section a long letter explaining the PT. In it he wrote the following:

...we are not in the recruiting business. I suppose one could say there is no evidence for my statement, but our advertising agency in the United States recently ran an ad in the May 13 Broadcasting magazine with the title: We're Not Looking for Followers. Does any other group categorized as a cult or sect take this position in public?

The answer, of course, is no. Most churches - unlike the WCG - avoid cutting down other Christian churches in public, and the churches that do advertise are more honest than the WCG in that they do not say "we're not looking for followers." Who does Pastor Earle think he's kidding? If the WCG is not looking for members, why does the church sponsor lectures for PT readers, sponsor evangelistic campaigns in major cities worldwide, offer tons of free religious literature to the public, print Bible correspondence courses, telecast religious TV programs, and offer toll free phone numbers? If they weren't looking for followers, they would stick to informative secular articles and make no attempt to interest their readers in the church's doctrinal teachings.

Pastor Earle continued his letter by referring to *Ambassador Report's* 1977 article, "Fleecing the Flock," which discussed financial irregularities in the WCG. He, of course, submitted no examples of errors the AR had made in that or any other article but simply said: "We direct people with any questions concerning our finances to our auditors, Arthur Andersen. The Worldwide Church of God is regularly audited by this reputable firm, and nothing in the manner of the charges made against us was ever found."

Comments like the above show that Pastor Earle is willingly ignorant, incredibly naive,

or just plain careless with the facts. Perhaps he is unaware of the fact that Arthur Andersen & Co.'s first audit covered the WCG's 1978 financial statements (*The Worldwide News*, 9-10-79), while the AR's main articles about church finances appeared in Oct. 1977 - before Arthur Andersen's accounting firm was hired - so their audit didn't even cover the time period our articles discussed. Second, they were hired to audit the financial statements of the Worldwide Church and Ambassador College. Auditing financial statements does NOT include passing moral judgment on Herbert Armstrong's spending habits. If Pastor Earle had bothered to read our 1977 article, he would have seen that we objected bitterly to the hypocritical and unethical spending habits of the Armstrongs and their top cohorts. We did NOT charge them with anything criminal or illegal.

Arthur Andersen's auditors were solely concerned as to whether the church financial statements presented fairly the financial position of the WCG, the results of operations, and the changes in financial position in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. (See the AR's lengthy article on this subject in our July 1984 issue, p. 4.) When Pastor Earle commented that "we direct people with any questions concerning our finances to our auditors, Arthur Andersen," he seemed unaware that the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants' Rules of Professional Conduct (sect. 301) prohibit a CPA from disclosing confidential client information except with the consent of the client. When Pastor Earle claims "nothing in the manner of the charges made against us was ever found," he again is unaware that "the CPA is usually not competent to determine if an act is illegal or likely to discover such an act" (*The Complete CPA Examination Review - Auditing*, 1984, p. 66). Furthermore, if a CPA discovers an illegal act while auditing a client's books, the "illegal act should be reported to a high enough level of management to take remedial action.... The CPA has no obligation to notify third parties" (*ibid.*). Indeed if he notified third parties or the general public, it would violate the rule of confidentiality.

Finally, it's important to remember that even big-name accounting firms are far from infallible. According to the April 1, 1985 issue of *Business Week*, since 1980 the nation's largest accounting firm, Arthur Andersen (the WCG's auditors), paid out over \$137.1 million in settlement of audit-related lawsuits. That's more than seven times the amount any other CPA firm has had to pay in settlement of such suits.

In all fairness to Pastor Earle, if any readers want to get his side of the story, they should write him at 149 Shaughnessy Blvd., Millondale, Ontario, Canada M2J 1J7 or call him in Canada at (416) 495-9419.

### **Plain Truth Not Catholic**

Worldwide Church members have been so anxious to get stores to give away PTs that, in New York, some have told store owners that the PT is a good Catholic publication. It became such a problem that the Western New York Catholic newspaper had to run an article titled "Plain Truth Not Catholic" in its Sept. 1985 issue, p. 20.

### **WCG Hit With New Lawsuit**

In mid-June newspapers around the country carried an AP story telling of yet another lawsuit against the WCG:

A Lowry, Minn., couple has filed a \$6 million suit in federal court to recover farmland they said they gave to the Worldwide Church of God after church representatives told them the world was coming to an end.

The suit by Gilman and Gladys Anderson says the couple gave 160 acres to Ambassador College, an agent of the church, in 1969 after they were told they wouldn't need the land because the world was coming to an end. The college and the church have home offices in Pasadena, Calif. The Andersons ended their affiliation with the church in 1984.

"The Worldwide Church of God, through its agents, made numerous fraudulent misrepresentations to (the Andersons) that (they) were living in the end of times and that (the Andersons) would soon have to leave their property and flee for their lives to a place of safety in Petra, Jordan," the suit says.

The lawsuit says the Andersons were told in 1966 that they had a maximum of six years left, that Germany would destroy the United States by 1975 and that "there would be famine so bad that people would eat their own children."

The Andersons "were told that there would be no future for them and they should give all their property to the church," the suit says. "In reliance upon said misrepresentations, (the Andersons) transferred their farmland to Ambassador College in 1969."

Earle Reese, spokesman for the legal department of Worldwide Church of God said the church could not return property in cases such as Anderson's. "This nor any other church could ever exist under such terms," Reese said. "People can't make gifts and then change their mind."

Ambassador College made an offer a few years ago to sell the property back to Anderson at no interest rate and on an installment payment plan, but Anderson did not respond Reese said.

Anderson said he became familiar with the church by hearing Herbert W. Armstrong preach on radio. "It (the end of the world) isn't as close as he has been telling us," Anderson said. "He has been doing that for his own benefit; it's a scare tactic." Anderson said he gave half his property to the church after ministers recommended that not all the land be turned over.

The Andersons are asking \$1 million for the lost farmland, its income and economic opportunity and contributions made to the church, \$1 million in actual damages, and \$4 million in punitive damages.

The Andersons are being represented by attorney Elton Kuderer of the Erickson lawfirm, P.O. Box 571, Fairmont, MN 56031-0571.

**WCG Member Convicted of Murder**

On August 26, a Seattle jury of five men and seven women found WCG member Charles E. Harris (see our June, 1985 issue) guilty of two murders and two attempted murders. Harris will be officially sentenced on October 15, but legal experts say that hearing will be a mere formality, with Harris, by statute, now required to receive life imprisonment without possibility of parole. (The prosecution did not ask for the death penalty.)

During the trial Dr. Joan Hampson, a psychiatrist, testified that Harris suffers from a mental condition and was driven insane by pressure from the WCG. But the jury did not find Harris' insanity plea convincing. It did not help his case when prosecutors revealed that since 1976 Harris has been legally married to Elsa Bowen, a Canadian woman whom he had once choked when she decided to separate from him (Harris killed his first wife in 1970). During the trial Harris did not take the stand.

The most dramatic testimony came when surviving victim Patricia Tobis tearfully described how Harris had gone through her home cold-bloodedly shooting his victims. Harris, himself, broke down in tears during her testimony. The attack by Harris left Tobis, a mother of two-year-old twin girls, paralyzed from the waist down and subject to constant pain.

Seattle-area newspapers reported extensively on the trial and a number of articles spotlighted the WCG (*Seattle Times*, Aug. 23 and 31). One of those who testified under subpoena at the trial was former WCG minister Kenneth Westby, now with the Association for Christian Development. Westby described the WCG as a "cult" and later told the press he feels the WCG leaders treat their members "like nerds" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Aug. 31, p. A6).

### **WCG Hires PR Firm**

The above *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article mentioned that when reporters attempted to get local WCG pastors to talk about their church, the ministers:

referred questions to a Los Angeles public relations firm that works for the Pasadena-based church. At church request, questions were submitted in advance and answered in writing. In a nine-page response, Joseph W. Tkach, the church's director of ministerial services, denied that his church forbids interracial marriage or marriages to nonchurch members. He called charges that the church controls its members "positively preposterous!"

We understand that the WCG's new public relations representatives are The Hannaford Company/West, Inc. with regional offices at 523 W. Sixth St., Suite 224, Los Angeles, CA 90014 (phone 213-622-1000). The WCG account executive is Peter S. Pande.

Apparently in the WCG I Peter 3:15, like so many other ignored Bible verses, is no longer of any relevance.

\* \* \*

Editor: Brenda Denzler, a former WCG member and Ambassador College alumnus now

studying at Wichita State University, has been working on a book about the experiences of people who have entered and exited the WCG. Recently, while in California, Brenda visited *Ambassador Report* and made a number of comments that perked our ears. She told us:

Many people don't realize what a profound experience Worldwide Church membership can be, or how difficult it can be to leave once in that group. Joining and leaving Worldwide is not like joining and leaving the Methodist Church or some other mainstream denomination. For many, leaving the WCG can be just as painful as the membership itself.

Brenda told us that over the previous six months she has studied the phenomenon known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the psychological illness so closely identified with veterans of the Vietnam War. She pointed out that psychologists are more and more realizing that the symptoms of PTSD have been present in some veterans of other wars and also in other individuals who have gone through high stress or highly disorienting (though nonmilitary) experiences. Former members of certain religious cults, in particular, have been known to have symptoms remarkably similar to PTSD.

*Ambassador Report* has noticed over the years that some who have been a part of the Armstrong cult and then left have been able to readapt to the real world quite quickly and with little apparent difficulty. Such individuals are, however, a small minority. Many more experience fairly substantial difficulty at readjustment, at least for a few years, and a noticeable percentage experience very significant difficulty in readjustment. Sadly, it is quite evident to us that some never fully recover. Recognition of this fact is important, especially to those with relatives or friends "still in." The truth is, for many people the "Ambassador or Worldwide experience" is mind-bending, and "coming out" can be extremely traumatic.

We think Ms. Denzler's observations on the subject are potentially very significant, and we asked her to do a short article on the subject for the *Report*. We welcome any comments our readers may have on the subject. And Ms. Denzler has asked us to remind all of you that she still wishes to hear from former WCG members who will share their experiences with her for possible inclusion in her upcoming book. For more details send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Brenda Denzler, P.O. Box 1005, Newton, KS 67114.

### **PTSD and the Armstrong Church Experience** by Brenda Denzler

For those of us who have been members of the Worldwide Church of God, leaving it, like entering it, happens in different ways. Some are disfellowshipped and leave kicking and screaming. Some, like my father, "wake up" during a sermon and wonder, "What am I doing here?" then promptly grab their Bibles and leave forever.

While the methods of leaving tend to fall into one of two categories (willing and unwilling), the methods of facing and dealing with the Worldwide experience vary widely. Some mourn the loss of hopes, friendships, and an entire way of looking at and responding to the world. Others quickly form new religious and/or social attachments, as

if the experience of Worldwide was inconsequential to them. Some become frank materialists after their soul-searing experiences in Worldwide. Others maintain many of the same beliefs and lifestyles that were embraced upon entering Worldwide.

No matter how we react, we all have as part of our past the WCG. And whether or not we admit it, it continues to affect our lives in the present. The question is, to what extent is our WCG involvement still coloring our present lives? Do we recognize WCG-related difficulties for what they are, or do we ignore them - by attributing them to our own personal and moral weakness or by giving Satan undue credit? Even when we do realize that current problems stem from our time and experiences in Worldwide, what do we do about it? What *can* we do about it?

To gain an insight into our own difficulties, I believe we can learn much by looking at the adjustment problems that have been faced by one group of individuals in our society that have been forced to come to grips with their own disillusioning and traumatic past. I am referring to the veterans of the Vietnam War.

It is estimated by some authorities that more than 500,000 veterans suffer from significant life adjustment problems stemming from their service in Vietnam. The problems that these veterans report sound surprisingly like the problems often encountered by former members of religious cults such as the WCG. Psychologists and counselors working with the vets say that the various difficulties are often aspects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD for short. The similarities between vets' adjustment problems and the problems faced by many former WCG members are striking.

Some victims of the disorder find it impossible to form or to maintain intimate relationships. There may be frequent marriage and divorce - or avoidance of intimate relationships altogether.

PTSD sufferers may become "action junkies" in an effort to duplicate intense experiences, such as combat. Through racing, skydiving or other high-risk pursuits, the vet may tempt death repeatedly.

In some cases, PTSD sufferers are overtly suicidal. In other cases, suicides are mistakenly classified as freak auto accidents instead of being recognized as bona fide suicides.

Often vets with PTSD will have flashbacks to their war experiences prompted by a chance sight, smell, or sound. They will momentarily re-live a part of their tour in Vietnam and react to the feelings and sensations generated by the flashback.

Vets with PTSD often have trouble holding a job. They may hold several jobs over a period of a few years or may willingly take and keep a job for which they are vastly overqualified, avoiding the field of their training altogether. These veterans may feel irrationally inadequate as professionals.

PTSD sufferers may withdraw from groups and activities that formerly interested them, seeming to prefer instead a life of isolation. Alcohol and drug-related problems are not

uncommon and may mask other symptoms of PTSD.

The chief symptom of PTSD is "sealing-over" or "stuffing" - not coming to terms with what happened and what the personal consequences have been. PTSD leads to an over-controlling of the emotions for the sake of psychological survival. For Vietnam veterans, the tools for survival were learned in Vietnam and are still used in their everyday lives, though having outlived their usefulness.

A part of the difficulty for the men and women who served in Vietnam lay in the difference between what their society had promised them upon reaching adulthood and what they actually found as they came of age in the war zone. According to Denver Mills, team leader for the Veteran's Outreach Center in Santa Barbara, California, the Vietnam generation was a "chosen generation," used to having and expecting the best: the best education, the best living standards, the best health care. The opportunities seemed virtually unlimited.

Service in Vietnam produced rapid and profound disillusionment because of the conduct of the war and the management of personnel. Personal survival became the bottom line. Anything that might tend to make a soldier vulnerable had to be controlled.

According to Ron Rogers of the Wichita, Kansas, Veteran's Outreach Center, PTSD, under labels such as "battle fatigue" and "shell shock," has been around for a long time. What is new is its frequency and severity in Vietnam-era veterans. The average age of a serviceman in World War II was 27. The average age of a serviceman in Vietnam was 19. Around age 18-21, says Rogers, important psychological development occurs in a maturing phase leading into adulthood. At this time, ideas and values form concerning the nature of the world and what it takes to live in it. The stresses of a situation like Vietnam, imposed almost constantly for a year on young men and women, caused their evolving perceptions to be skewed along lines that may have been suitable for Vietnam, but could not work well in civilian life. Some vets had trouble making the transition from Vietnam to "normal" society again.

There was no time for the returning serviceman to internally process the images and meanings of Vietnam for himself or herself - no decompressing period. Soldiers were flown from gunfire and booby-traps back into living rooms in Hometown, U.S.A., within hours. They experienced *culture shock in returning* to civilian life.

Once again, survival for the veteran meant sealing over their experiences and their feelings. Many veterans learned to keep quiet about their service in Vietnam, or to lie about it. Some claim, "I went to Canada for the war."

The primary form of treatment for PTSD among veterans is the rap group. Veterans share their experiences about Vietnam and learn to feel again - expressing the emotions they once had to repress. Breakthrough is often so intense that it may involve uncontrolled sobbing, sometimes even for several days on end, followed by a surge of creative self-expression.

Often PTSD generates a religious crisis for the sufferer. One popular saying among vets is that John Wayne and Jesus Christ died in Vietnam. Veterans' beliefs about God were

often profoundly altered by their war experiences, and during the healing process, the Transcendent [God and the quest for religious meaning] is usually confronted. The rap group itself functions like a religious community, offering the veterans a place and a rationale for confession, forgiveness, and cleansing of the past, and for understanding communication with people whose similar experiences help to create bonds of support and affection.

### **PTSD in Former Worldwidiers**

If you have read this far and failed to see yourself in the description of Vietnam veteran PTSD sufferers, you may not be afflicted with the disorder. If you have seen yourself, you still may not be afflicted. PTSD is rapidly becoming the latest psychological label fad. In reality, any one of the symptoms of PTSD may be caused by a variety of other psychological difficulties.

Nevertheless, PTSD is not necessarily exclusive to veterans of wars. Other life experiences may lead to symptoms of PTSD. Victims of child abuse may develop the distorted view of the world and its requirements that is a key feature of PTSD. Members of religious cults like the Worldwide Church of God may also develop personality disorders that resemble PTSD.

D. was a teenager when he learned about the Worldwide Church of God by listening to "the World Tomorrow" broadcast. He became involved in the activities of his local church "as far as I was allowed. But I was never baptized, despite repeated requests. I asked too many questions." After four years, he became sufficiently disillusioned with the WCG to break his association with the organization. He says he is "not recovered, except I'm a whole lot less gullible and trusting. It is remarkable how coming out 13 years ago is still so emotionally vivid, as though it were last month. All I can say is I suffer a lot of severe depression. I still feel like the WCG experience only happened yesterday. I have had two broken marriages, one wrecked courtship, have this week lost my job (for the umpteenth time). Frankly, I can't wait till I'm off this planet - it holds no more illusions which have not been shattered."

A. was the mother of three young children when she and her husband joined the WCG in 1970. "It was a strain to live up to everything. By the third year in it I had a terrible breakdown at the Feast of Tabernacles. It had taken a long time building up and many years to recover. I developed a phobia of 'people' that I still have to a degree, even now, ten years after the breakdown. And I saw other women have identical breakdowns. I still hardly leave the house or go into crowded rooms, so my life is almost a ruin.... We were shattered when we came out. Everything we'd believed in, everything we had done was all for nothing. Words cannot describe the experience... 1970-1976. Not long if you say it quickly. But so much harm was done in that time to my children. Wasted years... most of all my oldest three children. Five years is a big chunk of a child's life. Those short years almost destroyed me. They did destroy my two oldest sons. The oldest is in prison - cannot cope with life outside. The second oldest must have been stronger; she coped quite well. The third one can't cope with life either. When we came out, it was too late for them to regain much of what they had missed as little children. But thankfully it wasn't worse. Other people saw their loved ones *die*."

Just as Vietnam veterans may become "action junkies," former members of the WCG often become "movement junkies" - obsessed with obscure religious movements or other kinds of groups, continuing their quest for "The Truth" and/or for the satisfaction of considering themselves "in the know" within another self-described "select" group. Such individuals view the mainstream social and religious institutions with continuing distrust, scorning the very real strength and benefit that might be found in a careful and rational acceptance of those institutions, however flawed. One former member writes:

"Psychologists themselves (all I ever knew), and ministers (ha!) - those guys? Who wants those devil's advice? They're the ones who need it."

Another writes, "We welcomed the 'comfort' of Jehovah's Witnesses. At the time we would never have withstood the 'transition' without them. We were like members until last year when we realized the danger of a repetition of the WCG. Fortunately, we never took that fated step of baptism. Now I thank God we realized just in time.... Now I can say, 'That's it. No more churches.' We pray and read the Bible every day. We accept Dr. Martin's literature still and are Christians. But we don't need churches."

Other former members of the WCG have established their own churches, literature, and tract ministries, etc. Many of these are virtually unknown and show every indication of remaining so. Others have achieved varying degrees of notoriety, mostly among former WCG members, but have a tendency to dissension and schism. Their participants part company and continue to pursue "The Truth" that has eluded them once again, or the sense of cosmic purpose which they originally felt during their time in the WCG.

Some former members, such as D., experience a series of failed relationships. Others suffer from depression and thoughts of suicide. One man I know was involuntarily committed to a mental hospital after his exit from WCG. It may be impossible to know how many successful suicides have been brought about by stress disorder directly related to the victims' time in the Worldwide church.

Former members of WCG may find it difficult to return to interests and projects that had been important to them before involvement in Worldwide. Old religious affiliations are often difficult to resume.

Several former members have experienced flashbacks to their WCG days. More than two years after my exiting WCG, I was listening to a representative from a small seminary describe his campus, the graduate program there, and the students. Although he didn't realize the effect he was having on me, I became more and more agitated as he described his seminary in words and phrases almost identical to those used to describe Ambassador College. After some minutes of this, I burst into wracking sobs, totally embarrassing myself and totally surprising the representative. Before this incident, I had thought myself quite "cured" of the effects of my time in the WCG and AC. In talking with other former members, I find that such experiences are not uncommon.

If the effects of an experience like Worldwide on adults can be severe, the effects on children may be much more profound. A., whose story appeared above, attributes two of her sons' legal difficulties to the years that the family spent in WCG. Children have not only one authority imposing itself upon them (as the WCG is the sole authority over adult

members), but they also have the authority of their parents, whose attitudes toward and treatment of children may be greatly affected by doctrines and directives from the WCG. Thus, children may doubly be victims of the damaging aspects of involvement in the WCG.

Steady employment is a problem for some former members of the Worldwide Church of God, such as D., whose story appeared earlier. One former member, a professional man, lives as an itinerant, either unable or unwilling to hold a job. Other former members of the WCG have given up their careers for a life of isolation and anonymity.

Some former WCG members seem to sense a healthy need for contact with other former members. One WCG "rap group" I know of began meeting yearly in 1975. Early topics for discussion always revolved around organizational and doctrinal questions arising from the participants' common WCG background, and a lively correspondence moved between the participants throughout the year. As the meetings developed over the years, obvious interest and involvement in the WCG appeared to wane. The participants themselves claimed to have "gotten over" their WCG concerns. As the interest of some members of the group turned to other causes and movements, the cohesion of the entire group seemed to fade. There have been no group meetings for two years.

Several weeks ago, however, I had an opportunity to meet another group of former members of the Worldwide Church of God who have maintained a very close friendship for over ten years. "Oh, we usually don't even talk about the WCG," said one person soon after I had arrived. Perhaps it was just my being there that night, but the church was almost the sole topic of conversation, either explicitly or implicitly, for the next nine hours. As I think about it, that shouldn't have surprised me. Knowing that these people have maintained their friendship for many years since their involvement with Worldwide should have indicated to me that, on some level, the church is a very important tie binding them together. In some ways, I suspect that they function like a Vietnam veterans' rap group, offering each other the support and understanding that feels most authentic when a common past is shared among the members.

Despite the problems often reported after association with the WCG, some people do claim to come out of it with healthy, intact personalities, exhibiting no unusual adjustment difficulties, just as not all Vietnam veterans suffer from PTSD. Often though, the people unaffected seem to be those who were not deeply committed or who were in for only a short period of time. One man even says that he remains in Worldwide in order to bring more people to Jesus. He believes that many people in WCG need help, and that the only way to reach them is from within, not from outside the organization. He plans to remain in Worldwide as long as he is permitted. Interestingly, his decision to remain does not spring solely from his mission. He confesses that he would be a "spiritual misfit" in any other group.

My experience and my knowledge of others' experiences lead me to believe that many people who leave Worldwide would benefit from some form of "rap group" or other therapy. In fact, the formation of circles of friends with common WCG backgrounds seems to be a natural response to the WCG/AC experience. Witness the two groups described above or the work of the Reunion News in England. But some people may require more than a congenial atmosphere of understanding friends in order to come to

terms with their WCG experiences. For many of these people, counseling with a psychologist who appreciates the special problems of involvement in a group such as Worldwide may be essential.

PTSD is a recognized malady among Vietnam veterans. Its status as a recognized disorder in victims of other kinds of trauma and stress is less accepted. Victims of the Holocaust, survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb blasts, Vietnam veterans, and former cultists often share many of the same signs and symptoms of personality disorder. In the case of former Worldwidiers, perhaps only the victims themselves will be able to awaken the mental health community to the reality of their problems and their problems' relationship to their experiences in the Armstrong cult.

### **Investment Scam Bilks the Faithful**

In late 1982 a Nevada-based commodities arbitrage trading firm called Elmas Trading Corp. was conceived. Operated by President James Attarian and VP Don Smith, both former Seventh-day Adventist engineers, Elmas Corp. attracted several former WCG members as sales consultants, one being ex-WCG pastor Richard Plache.

Plache - none can deny - is a super salesman, a captivating speaker. Standing about 6 ft. 6 in. tall, he carries an air of authority and respect the moment he enters a room. Mixing well in a crowd, he knows how to make you feel both welcome and special. Conducting sales lectures is his forte. Brimming with confidence, he began one of his Elmas Corp. sales presentations by telling the audience how Jesus Christ had led him, after numerous business failures, to a sales job that was making him - and could make them - rich as long as they just had faith in God. He excitedly explained how two men, both brilliant former engineers and God-fearing Christians, had a spectacular computer program that did currency and commodity arbitrage. ("Arbitrage" refers to a buying of stocks, commodities, etc. in one market and selling them at a profit in another market.) Waving a commission check for \$100,000 that he had earned in the last few weeks, he urged his listeners (1) to put all their savings into the operation and earn a guaranteed 36% to 46% a year in interest and (2) to earn a fat 10 % commission by bringing other friends into the deal. (He claimed Elmas Trading Corp. actually was earning 120% a year on investors' money.)

Though incorporated in, of all places, Reno, Nevada, Elmas Trading Corp., his listeners were told, had a special hookup with a giant computer in a San Francisco brokerage house, which enabled Elmas to manage the investment portfolio for an unnamed offshore entity. When asked who the brokerage firm was that was willing to rent its computer and why that firm didn't engage in the same type of arbitrage as Elmas Corp., Plache replied that Elmas was keeping it a secret so people wouldn't bother the brokerage house and that the brokerage house was too big and inefficient to profit from the scheme itself. Perceptive listeners saw a giant red flag waved in front of their face when they heard the preceding lame excuses, but the faithful were told: "Don't take my word for it! You go and pray about it, and if God gives you a good feeling about this opportunity, contact me then." And sure enough, the faithful prayed, they came to believe, and they emptied their pocketbooks into Plache's hands. One source said Plache took in \$13 million over the next two and one-half years. Some gave Elmas Corp. as much as a quarter of a million dollars - feeling in their hearts God was behind it. And the "miracle" that people were so

eager to invest confirmed to Plache, according to one friend, that truly God must be behind his sales successes.

Plache impressed the uninitiated by sprinkling his talk with dozens of unfamiliar financial terms and drew graphs and charts to make his point. To some it all sounded so believable, and who wouldn't want to make a *guaranteed* annual return of 36% to 46%! He even told of how he hoped to use the wealth God was granting him to form Christian groups around the country and that he felt he had been called by God to personally minister to the deceived WCG ministry (a minister to minister to the ministry).

While many who heard his sales pitch were captivated, we know of at least five people who voiced serious reservations about the whole scheme to Plache. One person spent days researching arbitrage in the library, concluding he could not in good conscience become an Elmas salesman, and he presented his research to Plache, but Plache simply ignored it. Why? Plache felt God was behind him and his product, so research or expert opinions on the subject became irrelevant.

Unfortunately for Elmas Trading Corp. investors (many of them Seventh-day Adventists), their strong faith was not strong enough to make a bad idea turn out profitable, as *Forbes* magazine reported on p. 40 in its May 20, 1985 issue:

A cluster of related companies, including Nevada-based Elmas Trading Corp. and Republic Overseas Bank, Ltd., are presently under investigation for a phony arbitrage deal and violation of state banking laws.... How much is left? No one is sure. Bank accounts are frozen. Apparently most of the suckers didn't understand what they were investing in but felt comfortable being in the company of so many coreligionists. The old Judas goat syndrome.

The former head of Elmas? He has been a salesman in a tax shelter fraud based in Arizona. Information about the company? *Forbes* tried calling another of the principals at home and got his answering machine. The recorded message: "[We] are away from the phone right now, but our two guards are always here, and they are armed to the teeth, if you know what I mean."

The *Wall Street Journal* in a feature article titled "Religion and Loyal Investors Play Big Role in Alleged Trading Fraud" (9-20-85 issue, p. 25) reported that 4,700 people from 41 states invested more than \$70 million in Elmas Trading Corp. and that the Securities and Exchange Commission and other government officials persuaded Federal Judge Edward Reed to put Elmas Corp. into receivership last May for allegedly "defrauding its investors" and "operating what amounted to an illegal pyramid scheme."

Specifically, the SEC, which filed a civil suit charging Elmas with selling unregistered securities and with three counts of fraud, contended that investors were paid dividends not from commodities trading profits but from money subsequently put up by other investors.... According to Elmas's own records, court documents assert, only \$8 million of the more than \$70 million the firm collected from investors was ever placed in commodities trading accounts. According to the receiver, much of the rest of it was pooled into accounts in Republic Overseas Bank Ltd., a bank Elmas set up in the Marshall Islands.

Some of that money, in turn, was lent to individuals and other companies linked to

Elmas, and some of it disappeared, the receiver says in court documents. Consequently, the SEC charged, "the ability of Elmas... to pay such returns [36% or higher] was dependent on the influx of new investors' funds."

We know of several former WCG members (none associated with *Ambassador Report*, thankfully) who will end up losing a substantial amount of money (including Richard Plache, whom we hear has over \$300,000 tied up in Elmas) and others who stand to lose most of their life savings. Elmas owner Attarian, who in earlier meetings had assured investors that God was the chairman of the board of Elmas Corp., had to admit to faithful investors in a Jan. 1985 meeting that there was only "enough liquidity to give back 50% of investors' money." But now Richard Shaffer, the Elmas receiver, is saying investors may get back only 25% of their money. This is bad news for Elmas Corp.'s salesmen/consultants. We have in our possession a letter from a Gary Ringen of the Elmas Recovery Association that shows the seriousness of the situation. Below are several excerpts:

In the opinion of several attorneys who specialize in securities law, you as a Consultant bear two main areas of potential liability: (1) civil, (2) criminal....

Your clients are entitled to sue you for all principal plus interest lost. According to Richard Shaffer, Receiver, the receivership estate has every intention of initiating legal action to recover all finders' fees and consultants' fees paid to you as a consultant, plus your principal deposits and related earnings!...

Knowingly or unknowingly, if you sold, recommended, referred, etc. the Elmas program, you may have already violated federal securities laws which are classified as felonies. The felonies are punishable by fines and/or imprisonment.... Even if jail time is waived, you would be classified as a convicted felon serving a probationary period, which would be a matter of public record. Such a result would bar you from holding any securities or other professional license, procuring bonding, and, perhaps more importantly, obtaining most types of future employment.

In spite of these serious developments, mentioned above, our attorneys advise us that the majority of consultants have a legally defensible position with a good chance of winning.... Even if you have already hired your own attorney and/or understand the serious and far-reaching legal implications presented here, you are strongly urged to attend this special legal seminar [referred to in the letter].

How could so many sincere Christians be suckered into such an obvious Ponzi scheme, especially the ex-WCG members who had just gotten out of a religious scam perpetrated by the WCG? Greed certainly played a part, because everybody would like to find an easy way to get rich.

Lack of having had formal financial training was a major handicap to most, because anyone having such a background would immediately become very suspicious upon hearing someone promise you a *guaranteed* 36% to 46% return on your money every year. In fact *Forbes* magazine's annual mutual fund survey (Sept. 16, 1985) showed that out of over 700 U.S. funds, only one returned more than 30% a year over the last 9 years (Fidelity's "Magellan" fund returned 33.3%). Indeed the average U.S. mutual stock fund had an annual average return over the last 9 years of just 15.2%. And Salomon Brothers, Inc., considering the performance of bonds, stocks, old masters, U.S. coins, Treasury

Bills, Chinese ceramics, housing, diamonds, oil, stamps, U.S. farmland, foreign exchange, gold, and silver, said that the number one investment (stocks) in the U.S. over the last 5-year period (ended 6/1/85) produced a compounded annual return of just 15.2%. Over 10 years, the number one investment was U.S. coins, averaging 20.4% annual return. People who regularly read financial publications are aware of such statistics and become extremely leery when they hear some group like Elmas Corp. *guarantee* you up to a 46% return. While occasionally a certain stock, coin, painting, etc. may appreciate at a rate of 50% or more for several years, Treasury bills are the closest thing to a *guaranteed* investment because the U.S. government stands behind them, and they paid an average of 12% interest over the last 5 years.

Another reason some ex-Worldwide Church members and other Christians fall for such scams is that they believe in miracles and tend to distrust many of society's institutions, particularly establishment bankers and financial advisers, and so, when a fellow Christian comes knocking on their door to sell investments, they seem to believe God is somehow backing his or her advice. Instead of logically asking: "What does this person know about financial investments, and if this deal is so great, how come the Wall Street wizards who spend their whole lives striving to earn the almighty dollar haven't thought of the idea?", they let down their guard.

The *Wall Street Journal* (9-20-85) explained that many Elmas investors still believe firmly in the company because, in the early going, they received dividends promptly. Like consultant Tim Johnston who invested \$57,000, they believe that big banks and stockbrokers, as well as the government, forced Elmas out of business. "The banking system is a powerful organization, and I believe the banks hated us because we were paying more interest than they could pay." Though Johnston's opinions are pure nonsense, the faithful need a scapegoat - a "Great Satan" - to blame for their predicament. Otherwise, they might have to believe God failed them. The court-appointed Elmas receiver states that many Elmas investors hold him personally responsible for their potential losses, calling him the "deceiver," instead of the receiver. He has received two death threats. But for some reason, the investors never ask themselves: "If this was such a successful investment, how come 50% or more of the money has disappeared?" The receiver didn't cause the money to disappear. It was gone when he arrived!

Those who read business periodicals and newspapers are aware that there has been an epidemic of investment scams over the last several years. *Newsweek* (Dec. 24, 1984, p. 31) wrote that "Utah, the Land of the Mormons, has earned itself another name: the Stock-Fraud Capital of the Nation" and went on to state that roughly 1 out of every 100 Utahans had been bilked by quick-buck artists. *Forbes* (June 20, 1983, p. 33) covered the same subject and stated that "most of those bilked are Mormons, and the bilkers, too, profess to be upstanding members of the church and use church connections." (*Money* magazine also covered this general subject in the issues of June 1984, p. 219 and April 1985, p. 112.) The moral? If you have religious friends in sheep's clothing (woolen suits) suddenly show up at your home selling an investment that's too good to be true, be polite to them, but keep your wallet in your pocket until they leave. You'll be glad you did.

By the way, we hear Richard Plache just wrote an article for *World Insight* titled "Spontaneous Giving." And the *Wall Street Journal* article quoted above claimed Plache was looking for overseas investors to help start a "mission of mercy" investment fund to

"creatively" make up the money investors lost with Elmas. But, the *Journal* adds: "So far, he hasn't found any investors."

### **Larry Johnson's New Address**

A number of AR readers have written us asking for information on Larry Gilbert Johnson, the former WCG member who started the group known as the Congregation of Yah or the Laodicean Church of God. At one time Johnson had a mailing list of 10,000 readers, a monthly income of \$5,000 and owned four homes. But in recent years few have heard from, or of, Johnson. Now, thanks to some excellent research provided us by Robert C. Williams of *The Shofar*, we have been able to locate the head of the Congregation of Yah.

Larry Gilbert Johnson is now number 463-07 at Arizona State Prison in Florence, Arizona where, since November 1982, he has been serving a twelve-year sentence for child molestation. Johnson was convicted of having a continuing sexual relationship with the 13-year-old daughter of one of his "wives." (Johnson, who believes in polygamy, claims he has had eleven wives and eleven children but cannot locate all of them.) Court records show that Johnson's physical relationship with the young girl started when she was eight years old.

A psychiatric report in the court record (Maricopa County, case number CR-127 373) reveals that Johnson understood child molestation to be a crime in Arizona, but that he showed no remorse for his acts, believing he was exempt from such laws as a "prophet of God" (Johnson has taught that he and Garner Ted Armstrong are "the Two Witnesses of Revelation"). The court-appointed psychiatrist reported that although Johnson's mental state was close to paranoid and grandiose, he was not legally insane. Because of an anti-lawyer bias, and perhaps thinking God would miraculously intervene, Johnson refused to participate in his own defense. According to court records, he was tried and sentenced in absentia. Later appeals failed.

### **Martin's A.S.K. Expands**

Ernest L. Martin, former WCG minister and Ambassador College professor, has expanded his new Associates for Scriptural Knowledge (A.S.K.) organization by starting an Academy for Scriptural Knowledge. Martin recently announced that his Academy is producing a correspondence course called the Home Study Course of the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge, and he has asked for "pledges" for the support of the new course. According to Martin (letter of August 5), the course will replace "the haphazard way in which I have provided research work... over the last eleven years...."

Martin claims that after taking the course, "you will be able to instruct others in the essential subjects within the Bible.... It can put you into the position of being a 'professional' yourself - and in a very short time" (Introduction, p. 1). Apparently those taking the Home Study Course hope to become "Teachers of the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge (the identifying initials are T.A.S.K.) and all of us together can be a 'T.A.S.K. Force' to help the world know more about Jesus Christ...." According to Martin (p. 4), "The prime key to learning any subject is by repetition..." and repetition apparently will

play an important role in the new correspondence course.

For this group of future teachers Martin has started a newsletter called *The T.A.S.K Force (A Journal of Prophetic Events in Today's News)* that each month will survey news events "which will reflect a fulfillment of biblical prophecy."

But even more interesting, we think, is the special ministry just begun by Martin's wife, Joan Marie. She now has her own little monthly newsletter. Its first edition had the heading "From the desk of Joan Marie" followed by the title: "*Postscript*" (*P.S. We Love You*). Her newsletter makes extensive use of the "Holy Names" and promises to publish excerpts from each month's "love letters" to A.S.K. In the premiere issue she writes, "*Postscript* will provide a means for rejoicing as we select Associates to receive 'love bouquets.' Recipients of these bouquets (symbols, of course) will be honored for extra special deeds of love as associates of A.S.K. or students of the Academy."

The mailing address for "Doc" Martin, Joan Marie, A.S.K., T.A.S.K., the Academy, the Home Study Course, and *Postscript* is P.O. Box 1863, Hemet, Calif. 92343. Incidentally, because some have asked, although Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard and "Jesus Christ Lightning Amen" (yes, that's really what he calls himself), the founder of the white-robed "Christ Family" cult, both live in the Hemet area, "Doc" Martin and Joan Marie, as far as we know, have nothing to do with either group.

### **Music From Oregon**

Not every religious group split-off from the WCG has become notorious. One church organization that simply ministers quietly to its flock is The Church of God, the Eternal founded by Raymond Cole, one of the first men ordained by Herbert Armstrong and one of the first ministers to leave the WCG in the mid-seventies. Most of this organization's members are scattered throughout the U.S. (One member in Baltimore mentioned how they meet there at Shoney's Motel, the first sabbath of each month and in members' homes.) Their ministers include Bryce Clark, John Mitchell (former WCG ministers), George Leemon, and in Switzerland, Jean Aviolat. Besides personal ministering, the organization maintains a printed literature and cassette tape outreach program.

One unique facet of their ministry is, we feel, worth special notice. The leadership of this church appears to be sensitive to the role of music in biblical worship and has instituted the commissioning of original liturgical music. George King, a church staff member, is a college-trained musician and composer who has been working on a new church hymnal and has also composed a number of lengthy pieces for the church's annual festivals. He eventually hopes to produce works for all the church holy days. So far, using biblical texts as a starting point, he has composed cantatas for Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles and an oratorio titled "The Song of Moses." These works have been composed in a Baroque style similar to that of J. S. Bach or George Handel and have been tastefully orchestrated. Those interested may obtain cassette tape recordings of these choral works by writing to: Church of God, the Eternal, P.O. Box 775, Eugene, OR 97401. Considering how small this church organization is, we think this music program is truly an ambitiously creative undertaking. What a pity that the WCG with its vast resources and the millions it spends on "culture" has not shown one iota of the vision of

this small Oregon church.

### **Literature of Interest**

In our 1977 issue (p. 68), we reported on "Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots," pointing out that many of Herbert's supposedly original teachings match those published by G. G. Rupert (1847-1922) of Britton, Oklahoma. Mr. Rupert wrote many books and articles advocating: tithing, sabbath observance, church eras, avoiding military service, only one true church, a type of British Israelism, and much more that is strikingly similar to HWA's teachings. We recently discovered that former *Plain Truth* staff member George Johnson now of Johnson Graphics has acquired several of Mr. Rupert's books and has republished that author's *Time, Tradition and Truth Concerning the End of the World* (200 pages). Copies are available for \$6 each by writing to Johnson Graphics, Rt. 1, Box 230, Decatur, MI 49045.

\* \* \* \* \*

William T. Voyce's June 3, 1985 letter to the Worldwide Church of God is a veritable research paper with a "point-by-point refutation of their interpretation of American Sabbath history." Mr. Voyce is a member of the Church of God, 7th Day and wrote the 7-page letter to the WCG after reading their article "The Church They Couldn't Destroy." Mr. Voyce has not received a WCG reply to his letter, the subject of which he feels is so important that "if the truth about this matter were more widely known, a good share of the Worldwide Church's membership would never have joined in the first place." Copies of this interesting letter are available for \$1 by writing: William T. Voyce, 140 South Hickory, Des Moines, Iowa 50317.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Hal Lindsey's Prophetic Jigsaw Puzzle: Five Predictions That Failed!* by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi. Dr. Bacchiocchi writes that the purpose of his 90-page booklet is not only to expose "the senselessness of Lindsey's sensational scenario, but also to explain the true nature and function of end-time prophecies." His booklet also does an excellent job in refuting the WCG's prophecies about the Beast, the Common Market, Israel, and the end time. Those interested in this new book should send their requests along with \$2.95 to Biblical Perspectives, 230 Lisa Lane, Berrien Springs, MI 49103. Dr. Bacchiocchi has also written important books on the sabbath and the time of the crucifixion. Those who may be interested in these subjects should write to the above address for details.

\* \* \* \* \*

Former WCG member Steven Collins has written several articles refuting Worldwide's prophecy doctrines including one called "A Biblical Examination of the 'Captivity Dogma.'" Mr. Collins believes that contrary to Armstrong doctrine, God is preparing Russia, not Germany, to attack America and her allies. For more information on his material write: 8500-101st St. Circle, Bloomington, MN 55438.

\* \* \* \* \*

World Insight has several articles and tapes written by former Worldwidiers for former and current Worldwidiers. We noticed an article in the Autumn 1984 issue of their magazine (p. 6) which was especially interesting. Titled "Ministering to the Walking Wounded," this article by Brian Knowles, without mentioning Worldwide by name, draws attention to the parallel between the WCG's ministry and the wicked shepherds of Ezek. 34:2-4, 6. For a list of this organization's tapes and articles write World Insight, P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Concepts of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (104 pages) by Matthew Alfs is a work detailing the Trinitarian/non-Trinitarian views held by various Christian denominations. The book has sections on several of what Alfs calls the Second-Advent- spawned groups including the WCG, Church of God (7th Day), SDAs, JWs, and Christadelphians. The hardback edition is \$12.95 plus \$1.50 shipping and the paperback is \$7.95 plus \$1.00 shipping. Write to: Old Theology Book House, P. O. Box 12232, Minneapolis, MN 55412.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Biblical Church of God (Canada) has several studies by Keith Hunt that they are offering free to AR readers. They suggest that their booklets *Divorce & Remarriage - What Does God's Word Say?* and *Law and Grace - A Study in the Book of Galatians* might be of particular interest. Their address is: Box 964, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada L1H 7N1.

\* \* \* \* \*

*I would strongly urge those who are involved in Armstrongism to read the book Blood and Honor by Reinhold Kerstan. The author recounts the story of how as a young boy he was led into the Hitler Youth Movement. He was swayed from his faith in Christ to faith in Hitler. This book may be obtained from The Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc., Minneapolis, MN 55403.*

*-Kansas*

\* \* \* \* \*

*I recently read a book entitled Scripture Twisting - 20 Ways the Cults Misread the Bible by James W. Sire. It is published by the Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 60575 and I recommend it to your audience....*

*I am currently reading the book Thirty Years A Watchtower Slave by William Schnell, a true story of this man's experiences in the Jehovah's Witnesses. It is like reading a history of the WCG, yet for a much larger organization. The similarity of this and the WCG is so*

*remarkable, that I suggest it as "must reading" for your readers. Most religious bookstores should have it, or it may even be in the public library. Brainwashing, elimination of independent thinking, zombie-like church members, money making in the name of religion, it has it all...*

*One more book I have come across... is The Cult Explosion by Dave Hunt, published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR 97402. I don't recommend it to your readership, however, as I feel it may be too upsetting to an already upset audience. It mentions the WCG as well as other cults throughout the book and centers on the similarity in all cults and the spirit (demon) influence in all of them. I don't agree with all his theories, but the book gives an astounding insight into the world of hurtful religion. It seems the Devil agrees with the idea that if you can't beat them, join them. It seems more wars have been fought over or because of religion and its "influence" than for, or over, any other single cause. This book exposes the "influence."*

*-California*

\* \* \* \* \*

*I have studied the literature put out by Herbert Armstrong and I recognize it as the con game that it is. I find it very mysterious how my wife, whom I regard as intelligent could believe such teachings as Herbert puts out. Now I have discovered a book which I believe solves the mystery. It is an important book called The Mind Possessed, A Physiology of Possession, Mysticism, and Faith Healing by William Sargant, published by J. B. Lippincott Co. (2350 Virginia Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740). The author is an eminent British psychiatrist. I think you would be doing an invaluable service to pass this title on to your readers.*

*-Canada*

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Joel Bjorling (RR 2, Gilson, IL 61436) has written us that he is compiling a bibliography and historical study of Sabbatarian and Sabbatarian-related groups, churches, and organizations in America. The project is being prepared under the auspices of the Institute for the Study of American Religion of Chicago and will be published by Garland Publishing of New York. Officers of Sabbatarian organizations may wish to contact Mr. Bjorling and provide information about their groups for inclusion in the study.

\* \* \* \* \*

Readers with an interest in Bible prophecy may find the February 1985 issue of *Discovery* magazine of interest. It contained an article (p. 34) by Martin Gardner entitled "666 and All That." The article shows how different mathematical methods have been used to relate different names to the number 666. Gardner points out (p. 35) how one such system "yields 666 when applied to the first name of Garner Ted Armstrong,

Herbert's excommunicated son who runs the rival Church of God, International, headquartered in Tyler, Texas."

\* \* \* \* \*

Editor: We remind our readers that listings of literature are provided for information purposes only and do not imply an endorsement of all the views they contain.

## ***Letters***

*Although I dropped out of the WCG two years ago, I'm still listed on the church computers as an active member. I still have contact with the members and receive church literature. I can do this because I'm good at biting my lip. After receiving the last Worldwide News, however, I wonder if it's even worth trying to maintain those ties.*

*First, I want to thank Ambassador Report for the service you perform. I call it a service because like many Worldwidiers who have had the courage to leave, I need reassurance and support from people of similar circumstance, and you people provide that link.*

*Anyway, in the June 24 edition of the Worldwide News, HWA wrote a special insert explaining the problems the church went through during the decade of the seventies. I'm sure you've read it, and I would be interested in your reaction to it. HWA never ceases to amaze me. He never takes responsibility for his own folly. He blames everything on the "liberal element" in the church. "Liberal" is a dirty word in the church. Remember Pavlov's dogs? You mention "liberal" in the church, and people start frothing at the mouth. HWA has an obvious anti-intellectual bias that he breeds very effectively into the membership. As a result they waive their right to think.*

*As a defense mechanism, I guess, I've tried to muse over the lies and misinformation HWA puts out, but this makes me sad, and it makes me very angry.*

*While I am at it, I'll mention another thing the church does that upsets me. Maybe you've picked up on this because it's done systematically and for a reason, Whenever there is a natural disaster or tragedy somewhere in the world, be it brush fire, tornado, hurricane, even a plane crash, the church will invariably report about those members living near the disaster who escaped harm or injury - giving no compassion or sympathy to those "worldly" people who have suffered. The obvious message here is, of course, that God protects his people. And this is the basic theme of The Plain Truth magazine.*

*But I wonder if statistics really bear this out. Ever read the church obituaries? The members have their share of untimely death. Which prompted, I suppose, the recent Worldwide News article encouraging members to pray more for God's protection. The article seems to imply that if you get hurt in an accident, regardless of who is at fault, you are slack in your prayers. You are less righteous than, say, the pastor-rank minister who wrote the piece and mentioned the mishap he miraculously avoided.*

*-California*

*In past ARs you have stated that a WCG member only "pays and prays." You may or may not have noticed in the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course that lesson 19 proves you are correct. In fact, they go one step further as to the functions of the individual member. First, keep your mouth shut; second pay; third, pray. According to the course (lesson 19, page 12) a member's duty does not include "personally proclaiming Christ's message to his community or to the world." What it does include is the giving of "tithes and generous freewill offerings" and the "fervent and prevailing, continual PRAYERS of all members." I find it rather amazing that their own literature would verify your evaluation of a WCG member's only duties!*

*-AR Reader*

*I am a former AC student (1956-59). It was only when I began to focus my attention on Jesus that I began to see that there was something dreadfully wrong with the movement. Jesus has never been the focal point of Herbert's teaching. In fact songs, etc. that showed deep feeling for Christ were considered stupid sentimentality.*

*-Kansas*

*For over two years, I have been calling friends in the WCG and even (at peril to myself considering that I could be held "in a bad attitude) called two ministers I respect [about problems in the WCG]. I felt I had to be going crazy. The church I attended had seemed to lose all semblance of balance or love. Fear held sway and it held the congregation fast. No one evidently dared talk or put into words their distress. There are those who love to call the ministry to inform on the so-called "goats" (as opposed to sheep) among the congregation.*

*First of all, the taped message by Dave Albert sent to all congregations was unbelievable. Among other things, the unbelievable assertion was made that women's minds were incapable of researching biblically and that he would not think it remiss for a wife to address her husband as "my lord." Only a sense of fascination for what would follow next prevented me from leaving during that tape. No wonder the little dictator-husbands have been literally unrestrained. And as for the impressionable young men, especially, sitting at Pasadena and drinking in this pap - God help their future wives and children.*

*Then, I became chillingly aware that in sermons locally and by tape from Pasadena, whole quotes and page numbers were being given from The Incredible Human Potential. Is this our Book of Mormon? Whatever happened to "not adding to or taking from the word of God"? To keep my sanity during sermons I played the "margin game." Jesus Christ and HWA each received tick marks when quoted. Guess who got the most quotes? You undoubtedly know.*

*A recent sabbath turned into a condemnation of us all, but particularly women. The women, I suppose, have been the source of all temptation and if we could just get them plain enough and respectful enough the men would be fine. Purdah (a la the Ayatollah) may be next. High heels, swimsuits, hair dye, vanity - it's all on us. Next to be hit was society, i. e., education, the media, etc. Never mind that God commended the Bereans and*

*used one of the most educated men without parallel to be the apostle to the Gentiles.*

*Then, power asserted and sword unsheathed, we proceeded to the Mishnah - the fine do's and don'ts of godly conduct. Some of these (emphasized every Sabbath) include: washing one's car before the Sabbath, not removing one's jacket unless the minister tells you to (that is gives his permission), and so on and so forth ad nauseum. In self-defense I took to deliberately leaving the car dirty and going home and applying the brightest nail polish I could. Did I mention the minister who has told his congregation they must ask permission before leaving town for a weekend? Or another one who told his people they need permission to get together in a function with more than two couples present? "Give me liberty or give me death!"*

*-Texas*

*Last month, I decided to quit attending the WCG after almost 15 years' membership. I had been on my way out for the past three years or so as a result of spiritual unfulfillment. Through Bible study and with the help of correspondence with some tremendous teaching pastors' programs on the local gospel station, and the prayer for deliverance from cultism on the part of a dynamic woman I met about 1½ years ago (she was delivered from 15 years with the Jehovah's Witnesses and now has a ministry of exposing cults), and also by visiting around to other churches (all without the knowledge of my local WCG ministers), I edged my way out and last month, decided to give it up.*

*The period of withdrawal was a little traumatic, but not nearly so horrible as that experienced by those naive, poor souls who have attempted to discuss their "religion frustrations" with the ministry. Had I done that, I would have been suspended for revealing that I do not accept that HWA is God's only living Apostle. I would have been told to take a holiday and study all the booklets again, and get myself straightened out in order to be allowed back to church with ministerial blessing.*

*The thing that helped me most was reading The Godmakers by Ed Decker. He came out of Mormonism. His account of Joseph Smith's personality so resembled facets of HWA's that I thought: "My goodness! There's so much similarity. Here I am laughing at these Mormons for blindly obeying such a strange character. Meanwhile, we in the WCG are doing quite the same thing!" I can't recall the name of the founder of the JWs, but the little I have heard about him makes me inclined to conclude that he was also of the same ilk. Maybe they're all the same.*

*I really feel sorrow and compassion for Mr. Armstrong, Maybe I shouldn't, but I do. Whether he has willfully deceived his following or not, it is a sad fact that he surely must have deceived himself. All the hue and cry about deception, and look who's the most deceived. Let God judge him. It remains that all of us who fell for it are not without responsibility. For whatever reason, scriptural ignorance, poor judgment, naivety, self-deception, God may very well have used this route to illuminate us. That's not to say I am condoning anything. But some people will never come out of there because they are so happy putting themselves under bondage - it relieves them of responsibility, or so they think. Well, no, they don't think. They fear to. They just "trust."*

*In coming out, I decided that with this manner of ministry, the only way was to not let my right hand know what my left hand was doing. I didn't want to be forced out, I wanted to go out on my own, when and if I was ready, and when I was sure in my own mind that I had proved truth.*

*I had not attended those boring WCG Bible studies for about three years (only went through a sense of obligation-guilt, anyway) - time was better spent studying with the radio pastors. Now, however, I am taking four Bible courses at the local Glad Tidings Church, which has a thriving atmosphere of joyful Christians. What a delight to go through the word with excited people and dig out all those "neat things." One of the courses is "Comparative Religions" - how to spot cults and witness to people in them. Of all things, the first assignment is to write an essay on "Armstrongism," ie., HWA and GTA.*

*-Canada*

*I became a member of the Radio Church of God in the early '50s and was baptized by Herman Hoeh. I tithed and did all those things for many years, then left when one of their ministers and I disagreed on makeup. I had heard Mr. Armstrong say many times that nothing is wrong in itself but that moderation should be practiced in all things, I agreed, and still do, with that statement. When I told the minister this, he informed me that the church had been forced to take a stand on makeup and the ladies of the church are no longer permitted to wear even a little bit. He informed me that Mr. Armstrong had excommunicated his own daughter, Beverly [Armstrong- Gott] because of the makeup issue. This really irked me because while I didn't know Beverly too well, I liked and admired her, especially her beautiful voice.*

*I'm afraid our conversation became more heated than either of us had intended. I know I pointed to his very modern and eye-catching attire and accused him of trying to look his best in a modern world by way of conforming to the current styles, hair cut, etc. I was never officially excommunicated, but after that the only thing I received from them through the mail was The Plain Truth. Needless to say, I stopped tithing and disassociated myself from the church.*

*-California*

*Because of disagreement about makeup, I was put in the nonmember category... even though I had come into the church during the no makeup period. When the minister said that we were to be slaves to Jesus Christ, I had to agree with him. But could it be that he perhaps put someone else ahead of or in place of Jesus Christ?*

*The unhappy feelings that I had been experiencing for years in the WCG were enabled to jell with my audacity to question makeup. Even without being one of those "in the know," it has been easy to see the double standards that exist. But the fear of not being in God's church was a strong habit ingrained in me since 1965.*

*Being a single (D&R case) working mother at the time ('73-'74) I asked for third tithe help. First, the minister asked if I had paid third tithe. Then when I said "Yes, twice*

*during my third tithe year," he said, "Pray more, Mrs.-----." I burst into tears and cried most of the night. In the morning, I couldn't work because my eyes were almost glued shut. This may sound foolish to most people, but I naively thought that God had rejected me through the minister. That man had already seemed not to like me and had talked about going to bat for another in my position when she committed adultery and was on third tithe. He seemed to get pleasure in putting me down....*

*I have discovered that there is life after the WCG. It does take some time to become totally deprogrammed. It's been about a year. The truth doesn't change and become vain and puffed up - people do. Love of the truth is what we all must hold fast to now so that deception doesn't hold us in its iron-clad grasp.*

*-Minnesota*

*My daughter and two lovely children have been left by her husband (after he joined the WCG). He was a loving husband and father prior to joining, but he is now a rigid and fanatical stranger to all of us. We are heartsick as are his relatives.*

*-California*

*Please send all future correspondence to my friend's address -----. My wife, still being in the clutches of Herbert, is very antagonistic and not only makes (or tries to make) my life miserable, but has destroyed some of my mail. Being a disabled veteran, I am unable to support you financially at this time, but do appreciate having false apostles and false prophets exposed, as they have brought misery to my life! I know that one day my wife will no longer worship this puny man. That is so comforting.*

*-AR Reader*

*As a recent AC graduate, I have given much thought as to how today's AC students and grads can be helped. First of all the sad truth is that most of today's AC students are young, naive, impressionable 18-year-olds who come to college already firmly entrenched in "the church" - due to programming of church and parents. The church is all they know. The college reinforces this from day one. "This world has no hope outside of God's church," they say.*

*How well I remember Mr. Ames' forums on "How to Survive World War III," inferring that the only way to escape the world's problems and the coming tribulation is through "The Church." (Not to mention Dave Albert preaching "Never, never, never leave The Church.")*

*Now, in today's complex world with its many problems, fragile economy, etc., coming out of a well ordered "family" - one with all the answers, promises of protection, and where using one's head is not a requisite - is not an attractive option for most.*

*Somehow, an AC student or grad must be compelled to take a questioning look. My first step was learning how to think on my own. I owe a lot to Dr. Stavrinides and Dr.*

*Dorothy.... When I began to use my head a little I began scouring scholarly books on Daniel and Revelation. The scholars who wrote these books had intensively researched Daniel and Revelation and compared evidence from many different fields of biblical research. What I began to see finally is that people "in the know" rarely agree with anything HWA has to say about these "prophetic" parts of the Bible. To my dismay, I woke up and realized at last that along with the old adage "there ain't no free lunch," "there ain't no place of safety."*

*Once I finally debunked prophecy and the commonly accepted myth that as long as I stay in the church God will work out the world's problems and take care of me, the rest began to fall like dominoes. (Although for months after these realizations, I would wake up with nightmares of being "left behind," nuclear war, and/or "Germans.") I think, in other words, that to open up a mind the necessary first step is to remove the security blanket belief of prophecy and the idea of "being protected" somehow, through it all....*

*It does help to have someone to talk to. I saw a documentary called "Moonchild" and an interview with a girl who left the Moonies. I remember she said she had tried leaving twice and kept coming back. Finally, she requested the services of a professional "deprogrammer" to help her. I feel my situation was similar in that after reading Tangled Web and others, I sought personal verification before I could really believe what I was reading.*

*-California*

*My husband and I left the WCG nine years ago after an agonizing period of doubt and disappointment. Finally, we could no longer compromise with our spiritual hunger and had to admit that we were not being sustained by the "neutral sermons" and off-color humor which at that time was the junk-food (and the only food) emanating from the pulpit.*

*It felt good to be honest with ourselves again, but it was, truthfully, a while before we learned to think for ourselves and trust our own judgment.*

*Needless to say, when we left we were showered with dire predictions, none of which came to pass. We have been blessed with "worldly" goods which we once were taught could only be expected to be enjoyed by those who held an "office" in the church. We hold a joint position which pays us a good salary, allows the wife (me) to fulfil a potential always before throttled and undeveloped, and which has the added blessing of letting us be of service to a number of fellow human beings. It's all been very rewarding.*

*We still have many friends in the WCG and hope the day will come when their eyes can be opened too.*

*-Missouri*

*After being away from the WCG for a little over a year now, I am still a total mess. Physically, mentally, you name it. I'm wondering if there are any organizations that help*

*former members of cults regain their former strength and vitality? I truly feel I need help and don't know where to get it.*

*-Minnesota*

Editor: Here in the Southern California region we know of a number of psychologists qualified in helping former cult members with readjustment problems. However, we are really not in a position to recommend psychologists or therapists to our readers around the country. We simply have no way of knowing who can help. Locating the kind of assistance you need will probably require a bit of effort on your part. Perhaps one organization that may be able to offer a suggestion is *Focus*, a support group for former cult members that is affiliated with the Cult Awareness Network of the Citizens Freedom Foundation (the latter's national mailing address is: Box 86, Hannacroix, NY 12087).

*I was thrown out of the WCG. They let me back after three meetings with the local pastor. I was out for 14 weeks. I made up my mind I would quit after I got back if they ever let me back. After reading all your reports and believing them, I still can't get myself to quit. Maybe if I read a few more I will be able to, but I doubt it. I honestly don't know where else to go. It seems it doesn't matter how bad the problems are with the leadership, I still believe their proofs for their theology. Don't let me down and quit writing though. Your help is what I need to see both sides.*

*-Pennsylvania*

Editor: You would benefit from writing a letter to The Association for Christian Development, P.O. Box 4455, Rolling Bay, WA 98061. Ken Wesby's recent tape on cults is highly recommended. We think ACD has much to offer current WCG members.

*Thank you for the AR. As mental problems increase in the WCG, your work is becoming more valuable all the time. I have been out of it a long time now and sometimes I tell myself I don't really care, what is happening over there. Then I meet someone I know who is still in and see the depressed state they are in. A friend of mine who is still in recently confided in me that he had contemplated suicide.*

*-AR Reader*

*I have to take this opportunity to write and explain how we are using the Ambassador Report entitled "What's Behind the Plain Truth Magazine? and Who Is Herbert W. Armstrong?"*

*I always make sure I have several copies in the car, in my books, etc. If I see someone reading The Plain Truth I always walk up to them and ask if they know who and what is behind that magazine. Most of the time they have no idea. They almost always thank me for my time and effort, but before I go, I hand them a reprint of your article.*

*I also use that reprint when talking with store managers, owners, etc. They also thank me for shedding more light on this magazine. As of this date, I have never been refused. They*

*always take the magazine out of the windows and out of their stores.*

*Most establishments are not aware that it is a church (cult) behind the magazine. Some even think it belongs to the Catholic Church.*

*Keep up the good work and keep the information flowing. Many people rely on you to get the inside story.*

*-AR Reader*

*While visiting another ex-Armstrongite this summer, I was given some old ARs to read. It was like coming home. 1960 to 1975 was a big chunk of my life. It certainly is something one never forgets. It has taken 10 years to remove the bitterness. Keep up the good work and please put me on your mailing list.*

*-Ohio*

*I was once a member of the WCG. Of all the news you print about them, they must be worse than most churches. Just keep doing what you are doing, maybe some of my friends that are still with the cult will someday realize that your newsletter is the real good news.*

*-Kansas*

---

Your letters to *Ambassador Report* are important! Not only do we want to hear of what is happening to the WCG and related groups in your area, but we appreciate your suggestions on what we need to cover in future issues. If there is something you'd like us to investigate, please drop us a note.

- JT

[Next Issue \(AR34\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR34 January, 1986

### Herbert Armstrong's Sinking Ship

Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and Ambassador College are in trouble - BIG trouble. The last four months have been one of the most traumatic periods in the WCG's fifty-two year history. Here are the latest developments.

- Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the WCG's founder and its self-appointed Apostle, is acknowledged to be in rapidly failing health. The 93-year-old preacher has not been seen in public since late September. And while there is every indication that HWA is lucid and coherent, it appears from his writings that he is forced to run his organization from his sickbed. The WCG's 1985 fall festival was the first such festival since the church's founding at which HWA was unable to personally address his flock. In his Nov. 25 letter to his "brethren and coworkers" HWA admitted: "I have been confined to my home, with a doctor, who seldom makes house calls, coming to see me every day - sometimes twice a day."
- Church officials claim the WCG's income is down significantly (*Worldwide News*, Sept. 17). While such claims have often been made over the years to stimulate contributors to greater generosity, other WCG announcements indicate that this time the problem may be real.

Just how desperate the WCG is for money is perhaps best revealed by a recent directive from church headquarters. WCG members already pay first tithe; second tithe, third tithe every three years, feast day offerings (seven as opposed to the three of the Old Testament), special offerings, etc. They also donate generously of their time. But in today's WCG that is obviously not enough! Quite a number of current WCG members have written us of how they have been perturbed by a recent headquarters directive ordering local WCG congregations to turn over what little funds they have in their activity accounts. Those are the funds each congregation saves for church socials, outings, and other fellowship

activities. HWA wrote in his Nov. 25 letter, "we must prepare to tighten our belts and reduce our living standards!" He really meant it.

- The church's *Plain Truth* magazine, long suspected of inflated circulation figures anyway, is soon to be trimmed in both circulation and issue size (by one full signature, or 12-16 pages, according to HWA's Nov. 25 letter). And some recent editions of the *Plain Truth* have been printed on paper of noticeably inferior quality with more black and white and less color.
- All across the U.S. local ministers have been admitting that the *Plain Truth's* newsstand program is being cut back severely. WCG finances are one factor. But the *big* reason? Complaints from the public! While we cannot verify just how big the cutbacks have been nationwide, we suspect that the Buffalo, New York area is typical. There, according to one WCG minister, the newsstand program has been cut back a full 50% due to public pressure. Yet, that minister had the nerve to tell his listeners this has been their "best year ever."
- In his Nov. 25 letter HWA wrote: "We are pruning our less effective stations on television..." What he didn't tell his readers, however, is that a large and growing number of stations *no longer want* his "World Tomorrow" program. They frankly state that as a broadcaster HWA is way over the hill. Carrying the HWA program can hurt a station's ratings.

While keeping the members in the dark, HWA has been auditioning top WCG ministers in an attempt (at least, ostensibly) to find a new voice for the "World Tomorrow." But so far, HWA claims, there has been no one up to the task. We've heard that Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), HWA's ostracized broadcaster son, told one WCG official he'd be happy to audition. So far, however, HWA does not appear interested in his son's offer.

- In his December 9 letter to church members, HWA announced that Ambassador College's Big Sandy campus will close permanently at the end of the current school year. Excuses given for the move included the church's financial problems, the state of Texas' requirement that colleges pursue accreditation, and the "needs of the ministry" - HWA's absurd claim that the WCG is growing so rapidly that all available college personnel are needed in "the field." However, in an address to Pasadena church members Dr. Donald Ward, an administrator at the Big Sandy campus, bluntly told his audience that the WCG would not be able to find employment for most of those being terminated and that many dedicated College employees would have to endure a prolonged period of unemployment.

The announcement that Ambassador's Big Sandy campus will soon close its doors has shocked many members who have long believed HWA's claim that the Ambassador campuses represented an important arm of "God's Work." Many, too, cannot understand why Ambassador is being cut at a time when many Christian colleges in the U.S. (for instance, Jerry Falwell's Liberty Baptist College in Virginia) are experiencing phenomenal growth.

Besides the closing of Big Sandy, many in Pasadena believe that

Ambassador's oldest and last remaining campus will be closed, too, if HWA lives another year. The lead article in the Dec. 30 *Worldwide News* was entitled "Education: What does God expect?" In it, HWA, through aide Aaron Dean, instructs the youth of the church on how to go about getting an education outside of Ambassador. (Key points: don't live on campus, and avoid subjects such as psychology, sociology, theology and law - in other words, avoid those subjects that deal with the heart and core of what the Bible is all about because you might discover points of view more intelligent and more sane than that taught by "the Great Apostle.") Some see this article as the handwriting on the wall for Ambassador College.

- Sources in Texas say that the WCG's luxurious executive jet has been quietly put up for sale. Apparently HWA feels he will never again have need of it. There is also well-founded speculation that HWA has no intention that anyone else (including his son Garner Ted) ever have the use of that jet.
- The Dec. 20 issue of the *Pastor General's Report* (p. 5) has announced that Herbert Armstrong has ordered the reprinting of his *Autobiography* Volume I and the printing of a new Volume II. While considered by many WCG members as the equivalent of Holy Writ, HWA's *Autobiography* has been called "about two-thirds fiction" by Garner Ted Armstrong, HWA's son.

---

&COPY; 1986 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

### **An Open Letter to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong**

*Editor: Many readers will recall David Robinson's 1979 open letter to HWA reproving him for the great sorrows he has inflicted on his church and very own family. That powerful letter appeared in the appendix of Robinson's 1980 book Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web. But Robinson's letter has not been the only one sent to HWA in condemnation of his lifestyle and mismanagement of the WCG. Over the last ten years we have read and heard of many letters written to HWA by former close associates who have implored him to finally begin practicing the way of life he himself has preached for decades.*

*This past fall we were sent a copy of another such letter - apparently sent anonymously to HWA. Considering how HWA has always turned his back on such counsel we think it highly unlikely such efforts will bear fruit. Nevertheless, the letter was obviously written after much prayerful reflection and we believe it may prove of interest to our readers.*

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

For years now you have been granted power, wealth, and prestige, and in your realm, none could stand against your might. Your life, though, has reached a major crossroad, and soon you will be called on to give account to your Maker concerning how you have used your talents to further His priorities.

This letter will evaluate your lengthy reign over the organizations you call God's Church and God's College and reveal what you must do to ensure their success once you leave the scene.

Since your youth you have been given a rare and priceless gift - the power of persuasion. Though President Ronald Reagan is called the great communicator by the media, truly you have been the great communicator on the religious scene for over one half of a century, with few rivals. Your skill and success in marketing and selling your product (the message of the Worldwide Church of God) is one of the big success stories in modern advertising. None can deny the many triumphs you have had in the broadcasting and publishing areas. Due to your almost single-handed efforts your church-college has prospered where most other organizations of a similar nature have gone belly-up.

While your successes have been spectacular, you have had a dark side to your life that few have been aware of. Your reign over the church has paralleled the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel who did evil in the sight of the Lord. As I said earlier, your life is at a crossroad. Either you can continue along the path you have been walking for the past 50 years and die in shame and dishonor, or you can follow the example of King Manasseh of Judah and repent and begin trying to right the wrongs you have perpetrated over your lifetime.

Perhaps you'll recall the story of Manasseh, which was recorded for all to read, just as your life will be. King Manasseh reigned in Jerusalem for 55 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord, practicing idolatry. But he was taken into captivity by the Assyrians for his sins. Like all the kings of Judah and Israel, he faced a crossroad in his life, but unlike most of the kings, he actually "entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers" (II Chronicles 33:12). The Lord heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem, and this time Manasseh turned away from idolatry and began to serve the Lord. Will you follow King Manasseh's example?

You had all but died in 1977 with heart failure, but miraculously your life was allowed to continue, no doubt not only to let you reap what you have sown in your life, but also to make you aware of the hypocrisies and sins you have practiced during your ministry so you could repent. And sure enough your immorality, double-dealing, fornications, carousing, drunkenness, jealousy, selfishness, and anger (see Galatians 5:19-21) became headline news in the world's news media. What you practiced in the dark was published for all to see. As Luke wrote: "Nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light" (Luke 8:17).

Surprisingly you accurately divulged your true character, proclivities, and value system in your *Autobiography*. In a nutshell, you described yourself as an aggressive,

manipulative, stubborn, power-hungry individual who would stop at nothing to satisfy your desires. You described how you yearned to hob-nob with the wealthy, powerful, and influential. You bragged how you pushed out all other Christians who were competing with you for leadership of the Church of God people with whom you were associated. You gloated over how you put yourself and your work *first*, even when it meant your family nearly starved or were deprived of the necessities of life. Mr. Armstrong, these are NOT things to be proud of!

According to a number of sources, including your own daughter and son, you abused your daughter during the 1930s and 1940s when you were first building your "true" church. God was emphatically not speaking through you then, and as would be expected, all of your sweeping prophecies came to naught. Your mistreatment of your children has been like a curse on you and on them and on their children, and rather than honoring you as an apostle, you are despised for what you have done to them. Even now, your only surviving son, Garner Ted, would like to at least be on good speaking terms with his human father, but you have hardened your heart against him and refuse to even talk decently to him or his family. Yet, Mr. Armstrong, it was you who has preached for 50 years that you were a man of God whose mission was to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers.

How can a man claim to be an apostle of God - even a Christian - and not be on speaking terms with members of his *own family*? This is something you need to straighten out before your death. You need to publicly apologize for all the hurt you've brought to your own family and lies you've spread about them, and apologize from your heart to each of them personally. I pray that your heart will soften enough that you can see your great need to humble yourself before God and man. You need to make amends with many of the church officials whom you treacherously and uncompassionately kicked out of your organization after these people had given you the best years of their lives. You brag about being an ambassador for world peace, yet you persecute the church brethren who disagree with you with a viciousness uncharacteristic of a true Christian!

You have caused untold misery to thousands of people in your church with your poorly researched divorce and remarriage policy. You split apart thousands of marriages over this, wrecked happy families, and made mental cases out of many of these victims. Yet you sit there in a wealthy church surrounded with servants and the finest luxuries money can buy and do not lift a finger to relieve the burdens you have caused these people. You have even refused to apologize. Don't you remember Jesus' words: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"? You are about to face your Creator. If you can't find it in your heart to apologize and make a good-faith attempt to right the heartaches and wrongs you have caused, how do you think your Creator will react to you? You spent millions of dollars on legal fees to humiliate the wife whom you said God gave to you - millions that could have better been spent helping members whose lives you have destroyed - yet you aren't even at peace with your wife Ramona whom you have put away in divorce, contrary to God's law and your own teachings. Do you think God is blind to this?

For 40 years you taught it was wrong to seek medical help. You insisted the sick should avoid doctors and medicine and instead pray for healing. This unbiblical teaching cost dozens of lives and much unnecessary trauma and damage to those who put their faith in

you. You have done nothing to remunerate these people for their suffering at your hand, yet you avail yourself of the finest doctors and medical treatment church money can buy. For these actions, you need to publicly apologize to all the congregations of the church and repent before God.

But like the kings of Israel, your worst sin has been that of idolatry. But unlike these kings, you didn't set up idols of other gods. Instead you caused the church to idolize you, your works, and your words. You set yourself up as the sole authority over God's holy Word, and you absurdly claimed that even when you contradicted Scripture and taught error, God bound your error in heaven. And like the false minister Diotrephes, you kicked out of your church all who dared stand up to your heresies (III John 9-10). All along it was you, Mr. Armstrong, who was the leaven in the midst of the church - you and a handful of your cohorts were the fornicators that I Corinthians 5:1-2, 6, 11-13 commands the church to excommunicate and refuse to associate with.

Mr. Armstrong, God has a strong message for you: "*Repent!* Those whom I love I reprove and chasten. So be zealous and repent!" But you are probably thinking: "I am rich, prosperous, and highly successful. I'm God's Apostle!" But deep down you know that though you are highly adored and flattered by the sycophants who surround you like vultures, you haven't a true friend left. You are even afraid to mingle with the brethren after services. You have wronged so many that you are surrounded by bodyguards and have to preach and then run like a coward after church services. You are truly wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Before you breathe your last breath, you need to get right with God in heaven. Mr. Armstrong, remember the immortal words from your favorite oratorio, Mendelssohn's "Elijah": "If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, ye shall ever surely find Me. Thus saith our God." You desperately need to take the Eternal up on his promise. Then go before all your congregations at the Feast of Tabernacles this year by videotape or satellite and divulge your sins before them, tell them how you betrayed them, and tell them how you've repented and that you are deeply sorry. You need to apologize to them for putting yourself in place of God and causing them to idolize you, and you need to explain why that was wrong. Then you need to promise and carry out big changes in the church - especially in the way you treat members, employees, and former members - and YOU need to provide for those whom you have ruined financially and healthwise.

If you repent, seek wise counsel, and make these big changes, you will have the power to turn many to righteousness, and as Daniel wrote: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). But if you neglect this challenge, some day you may awake to shame and everlasting contempt.

In Jesus' Name,  
A Loyal Member

### **Gallup Ranks the TV Evangelists**

For years audiences have heard Herbert W. Armstrong crow about having the number one religious telecast in the U.S. While his program may be number one as far as number

of television stations' time purchased, he is by no means the most popular or influential TV evangelist, according to an April 1984 Gallup survey. When the Gallup Organization asked viewers: "Which religious television programs do you watch most often?" only 1% of viewers named HWA's program as their choice. Billy Graham headed the list with 16% of viewers indicating they watched him, followed by Jimmy Swaggart with 13% naming him, followed by Oral Roberts with 12%, Pat Robertson's 700 Club with 11%, Jim Bakker with 10%, Robert Schuller with 8%, Jerry Falwell with 6%, Rex Humbard with 5%, Baptist programs with 4%, Ernest Angely with 2% and, further down the list ranking 16th with only 1% was Herbert Armstrong.

When the Gallup Organization asked viewers to give the names of the religious programs or their sponsoring groups they had watched on TV over the past 7 days, 25% mentioned that they had watched Jimmy Swaggart, 20% had seen Oral Roberts, 18% had seen Pat Robertson, 16% had viewed Jim Bakker, 14% tuned in to Billy Graham, 13% watched Robert Schuller, and 12% heard Jerry Falwell. Ranking 14th on the list was, of all people, Garner Ted Armstrong, Herbert's son, followed by Catholic programs ranking 15th, and then by Herbert Armstrong himself in 16th place. It was indeed surprising to see Garner Ted, with his humble program on only a handful of stations compared to Herbert, so high on the list.

This Gallup survey says a lot about Herbert Armstrong's effectiveness as a TV evangelist. It also indicates that the Worldwide Church of God, which sponsors HWA's programs, isn't getting a very good return on the millions of dollars spent on Apostle Armstrong's shows. Of course, any objective viewer could have told the church that. HWA comes across as an absent-minded, senile old man who is in such poor health that he might give up the ghost right there before his viewers. Groping around for his magnifying glass and misreading simple Bible passages does nothing to dispel his feeble image. And one can't help but notice how his head bobs and rotates back and forth, round and round, almost as if it's in a shaky orbit and ready to come crashing down at any moment. If the church officials were smart, they'd either find another speaker to preach their message, or they would at least cancel the program. But they let Herbert make the decisions and he's so obsessed with his own infallibility and importance that he doesn't seem to know it's time to bow out gracefully.

### **Ambassador College Accredited**

Herbert Armstrong may not want Ambassador College accredited, but, nevertheless, it has been - due to the efforts of *Ambassador Report*.

On March 21, 1985, the International Accrediting Association sent Herbert Armstrong the news:

Dear Chancellor Armstrong:

We take great pleasure in informing you that upon a careful evaluation of the current Ambassador College catalog, the International Accrediting Association has decided to grant Ambassador College full accreditation, effective immediately. Our Congratulations.

Sincerely yours,  
Robert E. Imbeau, Ph.D.  
Vice-President

The International Accrediting Association is affiliated with Rev. Hensley's Universal Life Church of Modesto, California and is not one of the thirty or so accrediting associations formally recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Education. Nevertheless, it does have the legal right to accredit institutions and Ambassador College is now one of those institutions it has accredited.

Unfortunately, however, Ambassador College officials have yet to inform their students of this important news.

### **Exodus Update**

The December 6 issue of the WCG's *Pastor General's Report* announced that Keith Thomas, a long-time WCG minister, has been "removed from the ministry." The notice, typical of others we've seen in that publication, mollified the news with "Mr. and Mrs. Thomas remain members of the Church" and carried the warning "Not to be announced."

### **Killer Harris Turns Preacher**

On Oct. 14, Charles Evino Harris, the Seattle WCG member convicted of slaying two women and wounding two other people in a vicious shooting spree (see our last two issues), was sentenced to life plus 57 years. In imposing the prison sentence King County Superior Court Judge Terrence Carroll stated: "The court has to make certain Mr. Harris does not ever regain his freedom."

According to the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* (Oct. 15, p. A3), Harris appeared in court wearing a white suit and carrying a Bible. He read selections from the Bible to Judge Carroll and predicted that Christ would return to earth "in this generation," ending war and causing mankind to live in peace and joy. Judge Carroll suggested to Harris that he study other sections of the Bible - those dealing with harming and killing others. Harris' life sentence will allow him plenty of time to study those passages.

### **Buchner in America**

In November, *Ambassador Report* had the pleasure of being paid a visit by John Buchner of Australia. Mr. Buchner, a former WCG member now in the Christian mainstream, is working on an advanced degree with the WCG the focus of a sociological study to become a thesis and book. Readers will recall that about a year ago Buchner did a survey of former WCG members that attempted to answer many fundamental questions as to why people join and leave the WCG.

As part of his research, Buchner came to the United States to meet with leaders of various organizations having historical ties to the WCG. He was treated cordially by all, with one exception. While some WCG officials had at first agreed to talk to him, all meetings were

cancelled, apparently on orders from WCG honcho Joe Tkach who didn't have the sense to see how Buchner's research could actually help the WCG, but instead wrote Buchner an insulting letter.

Nevertheless, Buchner feels his trip was a success. He wrote us the following report on his trip:

*The Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the work of the Spirit, is entering the lives of many former Worldwide Church of God people. This assessment is seen through the eyes of faith. My mission to the United States last November and December involved a search for understanding the spiritual processes at work in the lives and ministries of former WCG leaders. Going to meet them as brothers has been an acknowledgment that God is at work in us all, and is for us all in the person of Jesus. Meetings with former WCG evangelists, workers and members were remarkably stimulating and provided rare insights into their contributions, as well as their struggles with the demands of the Gospel.*

*Meetings with the Church of God International in Tyler were positive, but I sensed a problem somewhat typical of many former WCG leaders - a growing sense of futility over their years in ministry. As age increases, so do the doubts about the value of past work. The stress involved in change was readily apparent, and one senses the presence of a troubled spirit, and the need for healing in these people. In time, the CGI could mature into a healthy evangelical church. The temptation to be reincorporated in a redundant theological and organizational structure is strong, however, and people of goodwill would do well to continue in prayer for Garner Ted Armstrong and Ronald Dart.*

*The Association for Christian Development in Seattle may be regarded as a healthy and growing part of the body of Christ. Ken Westby and Charles Dorothy understand the meaning of open ministry and prudence in Christian studies. A similar strong desire for fidelity to truth was evidenced in the Church of God, The Eternal and I was granted a rare interview with Raymond Cole. In this body, as with numerous smaller groups, scriptural truth is understood literally and an older tradition of interpretation is stood by. Many important questions are raised in this manner, and yet new categories of thought need to be explored to arrive at more satisfactory answers.*

*Many of these men and women are high in intellect and in their dedication to religious knowledge, but have not been through the discipline of higher education; they can bring fresh insights to their studies and, as dialog proceeds, acquire appropriate tools for dealing with questions of faith and practice. An inner reality has also been experienced and I had deep spiritual concourse with them. These are people of deep conviction, natural gifts, and energy desperately seeking authenticity in life and ministry, often having to struggle with the reality of their abiding weaknesses.*

*There are some within the WCG still struggling with their conscience. To protect themselves, some strenuously oppose the Gospel and any approach of good-will. A gracious response is hard to draw from a dry spiritual well, and I am saddened by the insulting reproaches of WCG leaders. Although the dean of students at Pasadena extended some courtesies, my appointments with WCG officials were cancelled because*

my research was "not congruous with the aims and purposes" of the WCG. Covert meetings with students at Ambassador College revealed a high degree of intellectual myopia.

My mission involved meetings with many former WCG people, as well as academics and clergy involved in cult-research. The most encouraging meetings were with friends at the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Denver. This church is growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and has a desperate need for qualified Christians to share in its ministry. A small donation will provide you with their tape Reaching Out to WCG Brethren (P. O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233).

I hope that my forthcoming book will adequately present and explain something of the complex phenomenon that is Armstrongism. In the meantime, the preliminary results of my questionnaire are now available. You can obtain a copy for a donation that covers my costs - request Armstrongism in America (U. S. \$15), Armstrongism in Australia (A \$10), or Armstrongism in Britain (10 pounds). Airmail postage is included. Write to John Buchner, P.O. Box 108, Milperra NSW 2214 Australia.

### **Book Review by Brenda Denzler**

*Editor: Brenda Denzler is a former WCG member now majoring in religion at Wichita State University. She will be in the 1986 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.*

### **Beyond Fundamentalism, by James Barr**

Westminster Press, 1984, 195 pp.

Eight years ago, Oxford biblical scholar James Barr published *Fundamentalism* (Westminster Press, 1978), in which he attempted to provide a critical analysis and description of the fundamentalist (Christian) point of view. His latest book *Beyond Fundamentalism*, is a more pastoral response to the issues and attitudes of that branch of the evangelical movement known as fundamentalism.

In the second line of his Preface, Barr states that he "does not seek to argue with fundamentalists and convince them that they are mistaken" (p. vii). Rather, his objective is to address those persons who have been in fundamentalist churches and are beginning to question some of the beliefs and attitudes they were taught. Barr says that such people often feel they have lost their bearings due to losing the certitude that seems to be one of the distinguishing motivations of the fundamentalist movement. For Barr, the tragedy is that former fundamentalists often endure "deep pain and personal suffering" in the process of their exiting fundamentalism, leading some to give up on religion altogether.

Barr believes that fundamentalism is an interpretational system in which the Bible is less at the center than is a "peculiar picture" of what the rest of the world is like, and that those exiting fundamentalism must come to see that the Bible points in a different direction and that the "outside" world is of a different character than they have been taught to believe. The emerging fundamentalist must often reevaluate his or her beliefs about the nature of the "outside world." As regards the spirit, *Beyond Fundamentalism*

provides the re-forming fundamentalist with a systematic response of mainstream Christianity to the attitudes and ideas about the nature of faith and the church which are commonly taught in fundamentalist circles.

Barr presents fundamentalism as a system of biblical interpretation (a subset of evangelicalism) that has five central propositions: (1) The nature of God is perfection and constancy, (2) All scripture is inspired by God. (3) All scripture, as the inspired word of God, is infallible. (4) The Bible may be understood without error only when allowed to interpret itself. (5) The Bible is the sole authority for understanding God and for guiding human life. In effect, Barr wants to show that those principles describe a closed circle of reasoning and that fundamentalism "jumped on" somewhere in that closed circle, bringing with it *unacknowledged* methods and views (interpretations) that work to deny the very propositions that fundamentalism claims to support.

In making this criticism, Barr meets fundamentalism on its own grounds - the question of what the text of the Bible really does say. He insists on stripping away all excuses and smokescreens used to hide what he sees as fundamentalism's repeated unacknowledged breaches of its most important principle: letting the Bible interpret itself. In so doing, Barr investigates fundamentalism's doctrines of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, the form and extent of the canon, the uses of Scripture, Christology, the use of the prophetic paradigm, the nature of God, and justification by faith. On each of these topics, he shows that the usual fundamentalist position is at best only one of several possible directions that Scripture might point, and at worst, totally unsupported by Scripture.

In recognition of the fundamentalist-inspired importance of relying solely on the biblical text, Barr centers his discussions around the biblical witness. He avoids reliance upon arguments from tradition, scholarship, or historical criticism. While he also seems to avoid a recognition of the many controversies that exist within fundamentalism - controversies which take into account some of his critical points, he constructs his presentation based upon the experience and practice of fundamentalism by the lay member and the fundamentalist preacher, whose instruction in faith seldom appears broadened by any awareness (much less critical evaluation) of such controversies.

Barr begins his book by looking at the two main texts used to justify fundamentalism's understanding of biblical inspiration and infallibility. He points out that II Timothy 3:16-17 (i.e. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for... ") is the only passage that speaks in any definite way about the inspiration of Scripture and that, judging from the amount of biblical attention given to the issue of inspiration, it is not a priority item in the biblical message. The passage, he points out, raises questions about the nature of the Scripture which is to be considered inspired, the nature of inspiration itself, and the role of Scripture as the supreme (and sole) criterion for faith.

II Peter 1:20-21 ("...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man..."), Barr claims, encourages a universal and general interpretation of Scripture within the overall Christian community - that mainstream Christianity which fundamentalism despises as Christianity-gone-bad. He points out that it is fundamentalism itself which seeks to privately interpret Scripture outside of (and to the exclusion of) the larger Christian community, thereby violating the

very Scripture which it claims to follow. "One may reasonably ask for the meaning of the biblical text taken in itself; or for the meaning as perceived by scholarship; or for the meaning as perceived by the church as a whole. But if one says that one *must* [emphasis reviewer's] follow the evangelical interpretation, or the conservative interpretation, or some other partisan understanding, then one is likely to transgress the guidance of II Peter 1:20-21" (p. 7). Barr also notes that, contrary to Peter's admonition, fundamentalism pays great attention to individual personalities within its circle.

One of the key presuppositions of fundamentalism is that God is both perfect and unchangeable in word and in deed. Barr shows that fundamentalism has ignored the large witness of Scripture which illustrates God's variability and relative disinterest in absolute perfection [editor: recall David] and has concentrated instead on a handful of verses that make statements about God's unchangeable nature. Barr shows that the Bible presents a creative tension between God-as-omniscient (and therefore unvarying) and God-as-changeable, whereas fundamentalism attempts to deny that any tension exists at all in the biblical portrait of God. Thus, Barr points out, fundamentalism, which is supposedly based solely on Scripture, proclaims a view of God that is contrary to the witness of Scripture, reading *into* the great historical and literary expanse of Scripture its own more recent ideas about the nature of God - a reading justified only by a few verses out of the entire biblical witness. Barr shows that the fundamentalist corsetting of the living God into a static nature is not the result of the overall portrait of God as presented in the Bible, but rather derives from reason and philosophy more evidently than from Scripture.

Barr describes justification by faith as the "religious core" of fundamentalism. He points out, however, that though the theological concept is central to the evangelical side of Christianity, it is by no means the only understanding with which the New Testament may be read, nor, perhaps, even the best. Even if justification by faith were at the core, however, Barr claims that there is some question whether fundamentalism really obeys and promotes the doctrine. He points out that fundamentalism's precious precept of the infallibility of Scripture serves more to set a pattern and tie the believer down to one set of ideas and approaches than to bring the freedom implied in justification by faith.

Barr closes his book with an explanation of and rationale for traditional Christianity. Though fundamentalism claims to be the most recent expression of a long but often thin line of "true" Christian thought, Barr claims that in point of fact it exhibits little knowledge or insight about church history or the history of doctrine, and certainly little training in the often complex theological positions taken by many of the early church fathers from whom it claims to descend. Fundamentalism, Barr points out, appeals to ancient orthodoxy in a highly selective way. He asks how it can claim to be the sole true heir of a history and a tradition that it accepts only in part. In particular, Barr emphasizes that the treasured fundamentalist appeal to Scripture as the sole source and guide for Christian belief and life (*sola scriptura*) is found nowhere in early Christian orthodoxy.

Barr addresses, as well, fundamentalism's claim to stand firmly within the Protestant tradition with their emphasis on *sola scriptura*. He asserts that fundamentalism embraces only a portion of the spirit of the Reformation, and that, even then, it does not do so as strongly as it embraces the post-Reformation orthodoxy and revivalism of several centuries later. While Barr agrees that there is some historical connection between fundamentalism (particularly the more mainstream evangelicalism of which

fundamentalism is a splinter-movement) and the Reformation, he shows that, just as evangelical fundamentalism is one legitimate expression of the spirit of the Reformation, there are many other equally legitimate (or better) expressions of the Reformation spirit as well. On the one hand, Barr calls for increased fundamentalist tolerance for nonfundamentalist Christian faith because of their common origins. But on the other hand, he realizes that for fundamentalism to confess itself to be just one among several good presentations of the faith of the Christian Reformation, would be for fundamentalism to deny its claim to be the only current of "true" Christianity in existence.

It is a recognition of the struggle between mutual respect and fundamentalist exclusivism which mark Barr's final chapters. In those chapters, he seeks to present orthodoxy as it sees itself within the stream of Christian life and history, and he seeks to present the former fundamentalist with a rationale end an interpretive method for holding on to evangelical Christianity. Fundamentalism and evangelicalism, he points out, do not have to be synonymous. To those who would defend the fundamentalist position of exclusivity in determining Christian faith and life, he admonishes: "...unless there is openness to all serious possibilities of interpretation, the Bible is no longer primary authority" (p. 177).

In attitude and effect, the doctrine and practice of the Worldwide Church of God is surprisingly similar to that of other fundamentalist groups, their protestations of uniqueness notwithstanding. Like other emerging fundamentalists, former members of the WCG often grope to find different approaches to faith and values in religious practice. Some, who need the certainty that a fundamentalist belief system tries to offer, become members of other fundamentalist sects. Others (re-) integrate themselves into one of Christianity's mainstream denominations. Still others, unwilling or unable to join a mainstream church and yet equally unable to sort out the contradictions they see in fundamentalism, become disenchanted with religion altogether. It is for this last group, in particular, that Barr has attempted to provide a constructive response to fundamentalist dogma by the larger Christian community of faith. His work deserves careful consideration by those former Worldwide members who are working through their own ideas about Christian faith and life.

### **McNair Lawsuit Update**

The WCG is undoubtedly having financial difficulties. And one major reason is the astronomical sums it is paying out to lawyers for no better reason than to protect Herbert Armstrong's preposterously over-inflated ego. While the WCG is tied up in a number of lawsuits draining its coffers, the one Herbert's attorneys seem most preoccupied with is the Leona McNair v. Worldwide defamation suit we reported on in the fall of 1984.

Readers will recall that Mrs. McNair won a \$1.26 million verdict. But 18 months later she has still to see even one penny of that money. The WCG's lawyers have posted the required bond (McNair's eventual award will include 10% per annum added on to the original award) and have appealed the verdict to every possible state and federal court. Their appeal of the judgment is currently before the U.S. Ninth Circuit. After losing there, they'll undoubtedly try to spend more WCG money before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Such extravagant pettifoggery comes at a price. Top lawyers today often bill at \$250 to \$300 per hour. Beverly Hills lawyer Allan Browne is reputed to have made millions off the WCG. And that figure is constantly rising.

Yet, for all the millions in legal fees, what have Armstrong's pettifoggers accomplished? They lost at trial, they lost every appeal, they've given the WCG some of the worst publicity it's had in years, and now they've allowed Herbert, himself, to be drawn into the fray.

Prior to the 1984 trial, Judge Olson ruled that HWA should not be a defendant in the McNair suit. Tony Stuart, McNair's attorney, appealed that decision and after the trial was over won a reversal from a state appellate court. Thus Herbert Armstrong must now stand trial to determine what damages, if any, he must *personally* pay in *addition to* those already assessed against the other defendants. But the start of that trial has been delayed by Herbert's lawyers repeatedly claiming he is too ill to be deposed.

One superior court judge, Daniel Fletcher, suggested that an independent physician could examine HWA to determine if he really was too ill to be deposed. But Armstrong lawyer Ralph Helge, behaving like an overly energized Ambassador sophomore giving an "attack speech," yelled at the judge that that would not be acceptable because "We don't believe in doctors!!!" Herbert Armstrong's personal physician sat in the court room even as Helge spoke. Judge Fletcher quietly told Helge he was sorry his suggestion had made him so upset. To which Stuart quipped: "Your Honor, Mr. Helge always behaves like this."

Helge's outlandish performance notwithstanding, the court ruled that HWA must submit to a deposition. But Herbert's lawyers are appealing - again.

## ***Letters***

*Thank you for the recent AR. Years ago I would have been shocked that I would be reading a "dissident" paper with such relief, but there you are. May your readership grow and grow! Your discretion is much appreciated.*

*May I confirm what you reported on the Mystery of the Ages. It is being pushed on everyone, especially the children. Our minister says it will make "a nice addition to the Bible." Please go through this book and expose the errors to people. Among many incredible assertions, it states that HWA is the "angel to the Church at Philadelphia." How do they have the gall to put such things in print? At the Feast, members were admonished to read this publication three times!*

*Also, let me confirm another point you mentioned, Ken Westby of the ACD has been a real help to me. Any of his newsletters and tapes will be a balm to our people. And how we need that balm!*

*Moreover, I must tell you that the "great escape" is being mentioned often. "The Place of Final Training" is the euphemism they are using now. Much dangling over the lake of fire*

*is threatened nearly every Sabbath. How can the WCG ministry make fun of the fundamentalists for preaching hellfire and brimstone when they do the same thing? Fear is such a good means of control.*

*Briefly, let me say what has helped me more than anything else. It is the growing conviction through personal Bible study that Jesus Christ is the Rock - not HWA, the "Church," the Sabbath, or anything else. If He is our foundation, we don't need to have fear. But if our foundation is the slippery sand of the WCG doctrine, God help us!*

*To any souls who are in turmoil let me recommend reading Phillip Keller's book A Shepherd Looks at the Good Shepherd and His Sheep (Zondervan Publishing). The contrast between the false shepherds and the Savior is beautifully done.*

*Finally, to any who believe HWA's assertion that the WCG is the only true church, think about this: HWA admits that the Sardis era is still a Church of God. Supposedly, years ago, the three final church eras were taught as being co-existent in the end time.*

*-Texas*

*It seems that WCG is using any excuse to put the old folks out of the church because they don't want to have to keep them. Some of my friends were put out when they thought they didn't have much money. They don't care that God commands them to look after the widows.*

*-Florida*

*I believe Herbert Armstrong is going down fast. They showed a film of him in Tucson that was made Aug. 19. He looked pretty bad. He said he had a fever. Six weeks later, he was supposed to speak by satellite, but they said he still had a fever! I've also noticed that his TV shows are all reruns. Of course, the members wouldn't admit that anything is wrong.*

*I couldn't believe Herbert's Aug. 19 film. He kept telling the members, "I am your father, you are my children."... Everything [in church] is such a big secret. Your AR is the only WCG news source. Please don't stop.*

*-Spouse of WCG member*

**Late News:**

## **HWA Names Tkach Successor**

Just as we are going to press, WCG attorney Ralph HeIge has announced (Jan. 14) that Herbert Armstrong has named evangelist Joseph K. Tkach, 59, to succeed him as church leader in the event of HWA's death. HWA was quoted as saying, "I am in a very physically weakened state, enduring severe pain and with virtually no strength whatsoever." HWA said he named Tkach to avoid "confusion and doubt in the mind of the church members and coworkers regarding the godly authority of his successor" and to ensure that none other than his personal choice attempted to lay claim to the position.

---

Our apologies that this issue is only half our usual size. But frankly, it's all we could afford to publish. Even as is, we are in the hole for about \$3,000. So we hope that those who want to see the *Report* continue will keep us in mind. Our warmest thanks to those who did help to make this edition possible.

- J.T.

---

By the time you receive this issue you will probably have known the news for some time. But just in case you haven't heard - Herbert W. Armstrong died on January 16. Details of that and the big changes in the WCG will appear in our next issue.

- *Ambassador Report*

[Next Issue \(AR35\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR 35 April, 1986



Buddhist monks (left) and dignitaries listened as Herman Hoeh delivered the eulogy for Herbert W. Armstrong. The casket was closed throughout. Joe Tkach, HWA's successor, can be seen peering out from below Hoeh's hands.

---

### [Herbert W. Armstrong Goes to His Reward](#)

It was something many Worldwide Church of God (WCG) members really believed would never occur. Nevertheless, it did. On the morning of January 16, Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the founder of Ambassador College and the self-appointed Apostle of the Worldwide Church of God, died.

Although he was already 93 years old, many of his followers were actually surprised by the news. For years, Gerald Waterhouse, a leading WCG evangelist, had toured the world teaching Armstrong devotees that God would not allow "Mr. Armstrong" to die before the second coming of Christ. But like so many other Waterhouse prophecies, this one also failed.

Waterhouse notwithstanding, the Armstrong organization for a number of months may have been preparing its members for the inevitable. In a letter to members dated Dec. 23, HWA (if it was indeed him writing) mentioned his weakened state, angina attacks, and "the uselessness of this present evil world." Then on January 10 HWA wrote his followers:

This is my first letter to you in 1986, and could very well be my last. Now in my 94th year I am in a very physically weakened state enduring severe pain and with virtually no strength whatsoever. I briefly described my condition in last month's co-worker letter to you, and now it has worsened. It may be that the Work God has given me to do is complete, but not the Work of God's Church, which will be faithfully doing God's Work till Christ, the True Head of this Church, returns.

After much counsel and prayer over the past months God has led me in announcing a decision last week to appoint Mr. Joseph W. Tkach, director of Church Administration, to the office of Deputy Pastor General, to assist me while I am in a weakened state, and should God choose to take my life, to place himself totally in Christ's hands to lead God's Church under Christ, succeeding me as Pastor General, in the difficult times ahead. Christ will lead in the decision about which men will continue the telecast.

According to *The Worldwide News* of January 27, HWA told his advisory council of his decision to appoint Tkach on January 7, a date very significant to Waterhouse, an avid numerologist. (Actually, we think the date may be significant too, but for a different reason. As Joe Tkach, of Russian decent knows, January 7 is Russian Christmas!)

Only nine days after naming Tkach his successor, HWA was dead. Tkach (called "Old Joe," "Comrad Joe," and "Mr. T" by some who have difficulty pronouncing Tuh cotch´) called an 11:30 a.m. meeting of all church headquarters personnel to announce HWA's death. He told them how "The greatest work lies yet ahead." According to an employee who was there, not one person was seen crying and most behaved as though nothing of great significance had happened. Some supervisors even told their subordinates not to discuss HWA's death, but to go on as though nothing had occurred!

Some WCG observers speculate that before his death, HWA was concerned his funeral might be ignored by the many world leaders to whom he had given so generously over the years. Whatever the case, at HWA's death church officials planned for only a small, private burial service. But grumblings among some WCG members wanting a big funeral seem to have convinced Tkach to change plans. HWA's January 19 funeral was quite public, and as it turned out, HWA would probably have been quite pleased by the large turnout and grandiose style of the event.

---

&COPY;1986 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola,

and Margaret Zola.

---

According to *The Worldwide News* (Jan. 27, p. 1):

"The casket was brought to the grave site in a hearse surrounded by an honor guard of Ambassador student leaders, led by Paul Bennett and Anthony Marcinelli, the student body presidents of the Pasadena and Big Sandy colleges, " said Mr. Borek. "We didn't want Mr. Armstrong's body brought to the grave site alone."

"Mr. Armstrong probably had the most dignified funeral service of any of the apostles," Mr. Borek added.

"The entire Advisory Council of Elders were pallbearers", he said. "The lineup was chosen by Mr. Tkach." At 1:58 p.m. the hearse was opened, and the coffin was removed....

The casket was carried to the grave site by Mr. Dean, Mr. Apartian, Mr. La Ravia, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Neff, Mr. Meredith, Mr. McNair and Mr. Smith.

Mr. Armstrong's casket, made of solid mahogany and weighing upwards of 1,500 pounds, "is exactly the same as the one his wife was buried in in 1967," said John Kennedy, Auditorium P.M. assistant pastor....

Mr. Armstrong's burial plot lies between his mother, Eva Wright Armstrong (1866-1961), and his wife, Loma Dillon Armstrong (1891-1967). Mr. Armstrong's son Richard (1928-1958), who died in an auto accident, is buried on the other side of Mrs. Loma Armstrong. None of the burial plots have headstones, only foot stones....

According to news accounts, about 4500 gathered for the funeral at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena. Among the dignitaries who attended were Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Pasadena Mayor William Bogaard, consulate representatives of China and Japan, and a contingent of orange-robed Buddhist monks from the Wat Thai temple of Los Angeles. (In recent years HWA gave significant sums of WCG money to a Buddhist temple in Sri Lanka.) Also in attendance, and seated in the front row of the "unconverted section," were HWA's daughters Beverly Gott and Dorothy Mattson, his daughter-in-law Shirley Armstrong, and his son Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA).

---



Photos by Gary

McCarthy

The honor guard of Ambassador student leaders - "We didn't want Mr. Armstrong's body brought to the grave site alone."

---

Some news accounts reported that GTA "wiped tears from his eyes." Someone also claimed that Gerald Waterhouse appeared to be sobbing. Those two may have been the only ones who shed any tears. One eyewitness said:

It was the strangest funeral. First of all, I never saw so many policemen at a burial. Were they expecting a riot or something? And the atmosphere was really odd. The top ministers looked somber, but everyone where I sat seemed to be having a good time. I really didn't see anyone upset or crying. In fact, Beverly and Dorothy were laughing a bit and afterwards seemed quite happy talking to Aaron Dean. There was also some very uncouth behavior. One Ambassador department head climbed atop a tombstone to get a better view and had to be asked to climb down. It was a strange funeral.

The presiding speaker was Herman Hoeh, Editor of *The Plain Truth*, who indicated that condolences had been received from government representatives of Israel, Jordan, Great Britain, China, Japan, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. Hoeh's eulogy began:

On this occasion it seemed appropriate to consider the background of the work that Mr. Armstrong had been doing these past decades. We often see only what is present and seldom understand fully the background and the development of the institutions that he founded.

Hoeh proceeded to enumerate HWA's accomplishments (the broadcast, magazine, foundation,

college, etc.), and then for the next 20 minutes or so, painted HWA as the most recent in a succession of God-led men beginning with Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus. He extended that succession right up to modern times with what we must admit was, at times, a most imaginative reconstruction of history. For instance:

And in 1660 they [the Church of God] came to the state, then colony, of Rhode Island. And from there they spread west. And it was in 1927 that Mr. Armstrong came to know and understand the small remnant of this Church.

But before I continue, I must tell you that the Church had already come to the recognition of the government of the United States. The Church of God was here when the American Civil War occurred. The Church of God was the primary instrument in this country to establish the conscientious objector status of those who sought to live in peace on either side in the Civil War.

The Church of God, in the person of Andrew Dugger, presented in the time of the First World War the petition of the Church to remain free of the obligation of killing one's neighbor.

And through Mr. Herbert Armstrong's efforts on behalf of the Church of God in the Second World War and the Korean War, our membership has never slain or destroyed brethren on either side. We have prayed for the peace of the nations. We have prayed for the safety of the world's leaders.



One can only wonder what went through the minds of McNair, Helge, Ames, Apartian, Waterhouse, Meredith, and the others as they gazed at the casket...

---

Before concluding, Hoeh reassured his audience that:

It is our purpose in this January of 1986 to continue Mr. Armstrong's work, to assure our representatives who are here from many countries around the world that we will continue in our relationship and offer our services....

Hoeh's eulogy (which, incidentally, contained no mention of any resurrection - a subject usually expounded upon at WCG funerals) was followed by a closing prayer by Joe Tkach, whose eloquence about HWA peaked with:

And now as we close another chapter in the book of Acts and begin a new one, we readily admit and acknowledge that there is no man who can fill his shoes, but, Father, we aim to follow in his footsteps....

The Worldwide News of Feb. 10, devoted entirely to HWA, contained letters of condolence from many leaders including President and Mrs. Reagan, California Attorney General John Van de Kamp, United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Peter Tarnoff of the World Affairs Council, Otto von Habsburg, Leopold de Rothschild, Edmund Rothschild, and numerous leaders of the state of Israel. (It appears that HWA's old friends Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos were unable to send their condolences. We suspect they were preoccupied with other problems.) We understand that the special Feb. 10 issue of *The Worldwide News* is being made available free to the general public. The address to write to is The Worldwide News, P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, CA 91129.

### **The Press Waves Good-bye**

While in most of the U.S. the death of HWA was given relatively little news media attention (and in the rest of the world almost none), in Southern California HWA's demise was big news for almost a week. Most TV stations in the area covered both his death and funeral. Articles appeared in the Pasadena *Star-News* (Jan. 17, 18, 20), the *Los Angeles Times* (Jan. 16, 17, 20), the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* (Jan. 17), the *Pasadena Weekly* (Jan. 23), and many other papers.

The most cynical piece we saw was Harold Hubbard's column in the Jan. 25 Pasadena *Star-News*. It was titled "Tolerance of the Worldwide Church of God comes easier now." Hubbard simply gave a long list of community and charitable projects financed by WCG money and then closed with: "Tolerance comes easier now."

The most irreverent treatment of HWA's passing that we saw in print was in the Feb. 22-23 issue of *The Weekend Australian*. Phillip Adams' article was titled "End of the World Here for Two - Thank God!" and began:

It must come as a great shock to both of them, but Herbert W. Armstrong and L. Ron Hubbard are dead. These god-like gurus, who dominated the lives of countless disciples, have carked it, snuffed it and kicked the bucket. And the world is a better place for their passing.

The article succinctly covered the lives of both HWA and Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, who also died recently.

The cleverest HWA obituary we came across appeared in the Jan. 18 edition of *The Guardian*, the respected British paper:

Herbert Armstrong, the 93-year-old head of the Worldwide Church of God, stated recently from California that his tome, *Mystery of the Ages*, "may be the most important book since the Bible." He has now been called in to account for this statement - he died on Thursday.

The most sensational article appeared in the *Globe*, Feb. 4. Titled "The Holy Man Who Broke My Heart," it told of Garner Ted's repeated attempts to reconcile with his father. The *Globe* presented a photo of HWA standing close to a seductive young mini-skirted Oriental woman who was supposed to be "Ramona Martin, a half-breed Cherokee Indian," HWA's second wife. Actually, it wasn't Ramona but, according to some sources, HWA's former Filipino girlfriend. WCG members who sent clippings of the article to church headquarters requesting an explanation were never answered.

*Christianity Today* (Feb. 21) reviewed many facets of HWA's career, including how some of his followers believed he had been resurrected in 1977. *Time* magazine (Jan. 27, p. 78) noted how HWA had taught his followers to "shun medical care (though he used it as his own health deteriorated) and that remarried members should divorce their second spouses and rejoin the first (though he repealed that dictum in 1976 and a year later married a divorcee)." *Newsweek* (Jan. 27, p. 72) recalled how HWA had been accused of "misusing church funds" and how he had excommunicated his own son from Worldwide. The obituary concluded: "The two were never reconciled."

That the old preacher and his preacher son never reconciled was a fact that the press repeated again and again in the days following HWA's death. HWA had taught that he was the Elijah prophesied to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers" (Mal. 4:5), but he was not even willing in his final days to say one kind word to his own son Garner Ted. While many newswriters know of HWA's excesses, perversions, false teachings, hypocrisy, and outlandish arrogance, the one fact most often reported on to reveal his true spirit was his completely unnatural and cruel hatred of his very own son.

### **The Fast Moves of Mr. T**

HWA was dead only a short while when Joe Tkach, the WCG's new Pastor General (he has not yet declared himself an Apostle) had armed guards placed around HWA's old residence, the Ambassador College "Social Center," and, it is rumored, spent days personally rummaging through HWA's personal belongings. What he found, we don't know. We do know that at one time HWA had millions of dollars worth of art objects in his basement vault.

Apparently, there has yet been no firm decision as to whether Mr. T will move out of his 280 South Orange Grove parsonage and into HWA's "Social Center" home or whether, as has been discussed, the "Social Center" will be left as is, to function as a church museum or shrine dedicated to the dead "Apostle." Whatever the case, Tkach has already taken over HWA's luxurious old office on the fourth floor of the church's Hall of Administration and is being chauffeured about in HWA's Cadillac limo.

---



...and as he turned to the camera, what was Garner Ted Armstrong thinking?

---

Not surprisingly, Tkach has appointed a number of trusted subordinates to key positions. Pastor Larry Salyer is now overseeing the WCG's field ministry, and Doug Horchak, one of the WCG's brighter ministers (and Tkach's son-in-law), is Salyer's top aide and likely successor.

The WCG will continue its *World Tomorrow* telecast with new personalities: Pastor David Hulme, Pastor David Albert, and Evangelist Richard Ames. Tkach hopes he, himself, will eventually be able to tape programs good enough for airing. Actually, David Hulme's first few telecasts proved quite successful, bringing in over 19,000 calls per program as compared to HWA's average of 16,000. Albert's and Ames' programs had lower numbers of responses, but still, we are told, approximated HWA's old average. It appears the WCG should have no trouble gaining new members via TV.

*The Plain Truth* staff box has changed a bit with the April issue. Tkach is listed as Publisher, but Herman Hoeh remains as Editor. With his relationship to Tkach considered cordial, we suspect Hoeh's influence as the elder statesman of WCG ideology will continue. Nevertheless, the PT itself appears headed for rough times. The March issue (the last with HWA as Editor-in-Chief) was the smallest in years, having a mere 29 pages, little color, and inferior paper. The April issue is no better.

The Pasadena campus of Ambassador College is, for the time being, still headed by Deputy Chancellor Raymond McNair. But the Big Sandy, Texas campus is set to close this spring. The

Texas campus may not be sold, however, as it is being considered for the site of a new badly needed minister-retirement complex. Nevertheless, a Japanese group continues to express a strong interest in buying it.

As for the WCG's executive jet, which HWA wanted sold, it has been taken off the market. Tkach intends to use it to meet important world leaders - something not anticipated by HWA. Present at HWA's funeral was Osamu Gotoh who, for years, was HWA's world tours "advance man." We understand he is available as an addition to Tkach's travel team. We have learned that Tkach is already making plans for a major trip. Destination? The Soviet Union.

The WCG's Advisory Council has as yet seen no real shakeup. Council members are: Herman Hoeh, Roderick Meredith, Raymond McNair, Dean Blackwell, Leroy Neff, Norman Smith, Ellis La Ravia, Leon Walker, Dibar Apartian, Richard Rice, Richard Ames, Harold Jackson, Ralph Helge, and Aaron Dean. All are ordained ministers except Helge who is the church's attorney. The youngest of the group is Aaron Dean who, for a number of years, was Herbert Armstrong's executive assistant. Dean is now apparently in a similar position as executive assistant to Tkach. For that reason, he is considered by many as the number two man in the Worldwide organization.

Kevin Dean, Aaron's brother and until recently head of the church's Imperial Schools and the church's YOU (Youth Opportunities Unlimited) program, has "resigned" for reasons not made public (*Pastor General's Report*, Jan. 24, p. 2). Kermit Nelson will replace Kevin Dean as director of YOU. Jim Snook, the Dean brothers' stepfather remains as head of Ambassador College security and communications - no insignificant post.

Attorney Stanley Rader, no longer an attending WCG member or minister, wrote letters praising HWA that were published in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Pasadena Star-News* (Jan. 26). In an interview with the *Star-News* (Jan. 17) Rader said HWA was "one of the finest individuals to walk the face of the earth.... The opportunity to work with him was the most rewarding of my life.... He created lasting and binding friendship wherever he went. He believed that it was better to give than to receive and he practiced that." Rader, who was not seen at HWA's funeral, has no position in the Tkach regime and, his gushy laudation of the Apostle who fired him notwithstanding, no one in Worldwide seems to want him back.

Ralph Helge's position as WCG chief counsel seems secure and his influence in that organization will likely grow. Like Tkach, Helge came to Pasadena from Chicago and was a long-time Armstrong follower. Shortly after HWA passed away, he told the press this about his late spiritual leader: "When you were in his presence, you knew you were in the presence of somebody special. There was a dynamic strength that just emanated! But aside, or next to, that leadership of strength was also an absolutely warm hearted person." Helge probably believes this.

The transition from the Herbert Armstrong era to the Joe Tkach era has not been completely free of stress. There have been shouting matches and a rumored physical altercation on "the fourth floor" - the location of Worldwide's key executive offices. But overall the WCG has seen a remarkably smooth transition of power. Most significant is the fact that there have been no major defections of ministers or members and no major drop in church income since HWA's death. There have been a few who have left Worldwide to join GTA's organization or other groups, and there are also a few so disillusioned that after a period of non-tithing and non-attendance they will drift away, but their numbers are very small.

Former WCG minister Howard Clark described the situation very well when he said: "Those in the WCG who have had the intelligence and character to leave have already done so. Those that remain are conditioned to a movement that has become institutionalized."

## Unanswered Questions

To the WCG's many thousands of true believers, the circumstances surrounding HWA's final weeks and death may appear as neat as ribbon on a bouquet of flowers. But a careful review of the WCG's official version of recent events leaves many questions unanswered. Let's analyze a few WCG statements and see if they make any sense.

The first problem involves the last two member letters attributed to HWA (dated Dec. 23 and Jan. 10). To many, their syntax and style were different from all past HWA letters. Anyone who has read HWA's co-worker letters over the years knows how every one was literally filled with words in ALL CAPS, words underlined, and exclamation points!! The Dec. 23 letter did not contain one word in caps, one word underlined, or one exclamation point. The Jan. 10 letter, which announced Tkach as HWA's successor, had "PLAIN TRUTH" in caps once, two scripture cites underlined (HWA usually put them in parentheses), and only one emphasized word in the entire letter: "It may be that the Work God has given me to do is complete, but not the Work of God's Church...."

Only months ago, HWA was telling some associates "The Work" would end when he died. Of course, the difference in syntax, word emphasis, and style may have been due to a weakened physical state. But some insiders say that almost to the end HWA was able to play the piano, intimidate and harangue subordinates, and be his old cantankerous, mercurial self. What was it that most upset him? Based on inside information, it was the knowledge that someday all that he had created would be left to another man - most likely, he feared, Garner Ted Armstrong. That being the case, who, or what, persuaded him to name a successor? And of all those he could choose from, why Tkach - a man who never graduated from Ambassador College and who, until recently, was so low on the WCG totem pole that Garner Ted Armstrong did not know him by either face or name.

Let's look at the WCG's official explanation of how HWA told his top executives that he had chosen Tkach to succeed him. According to *The Worldwide News* of Jan. 27 (p. 1):

Jan. 7, Mr. Armstrong called a combined meeting of the Advisory Council of Elders and board members of affiliated (Church) organizations, according to a press release from the Church's Legal Office. Also present was Ralph K. Helge, the Church's legal counsel.

Evangelist Joseph W. Tkach and Aaron Dean, Mr. Armstrong's executive aide, were with Mr. Armstrong in his home during the meeting. To avoid any contagion to Mr. Armstrong, other board members met in the executive boardroom on the fourth floor of the Hall of Administration and communicated by telephone conference hookup, according to Mr. Helge.

"As was customary, Mr. Armstrong opened the meeting with prayer," Mr. Helge said. "The tone of Mr. Armstrong's prayer was deeply moving to all the men as he stated he felt that the time was approaching 'to pass the baton.' "

Mr. Armstrong then designated Mr. Tkach, director of Church Administration, to be his successor to the office and title of pastor general of the Church and to the other offices, titles and authority held by Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Tkach would assume the various offices and titles in the event of Mr. Armstrong's death.

Mr. Armstrong announced that he was appointing Mr. Tkach to the office and title of deputy pastor general of the Church and its affiliated organizations, said Mr. Helge.

Personally designating a successor, said Mr. Armstrong, would aid in preserving the unity that exists in God's Church and prevent some from falling away.

Mr. Armstrong said his designation was made after "much prayer, reflection and counsel" with many council members. Board members unanimously endorsed Mr. Armstrong's designation, said Mr. Helge.

Here we have the WCG's legal department, in a carefully worded statement, admitting that HWA was isolated from his entire organization, with only Tkach and Dean having full access to Armstrong. According to lawyer Helge, this was necessary "to avoid contagion to Mr. Armstrong." But why is it that all but Tkach and Dean posed a threat? Are we to believe that HWA had acquired some type of immune system deficiency? And that Tkach and Dean, unlike most mortals, are somehow entirely free of germs? If HWA was truly that ill the week before his death, some members ask, why was there no "hot line" call for them to pray and fast? HWA and others made such appeals to the membership in the past.

According to WCG spokesman David Hulme, the cause of HWA's death was "basically just the effects of becoming old, just old age" (Pasadena *Star-News*, Jan. 17). Tkach's first letter to the church after becoming Pastor General said this:

I am deeply saddened to have to inform you that Herbert W. Armstrong's illness has ended in the manner least expected by all of us. Mr. Armstrong died peacefully in his sleep at 5:59 this morning while resting in the favorite chair of his late wife Mrs. Loma Armstrong.

Does Tkach really expect people to believe that no one suspected HWA was near death, but that when it happened - just days after Tkach had been named successor - *someone* was right there with watch in hand to record the exact *minute* when it happened? And *who* was that someone? Not one WCG statement anywhere, to our knowledge, has ever indicated who was there at the end. Why the secrecy?

In 1984, *Ambassador Report* interviewed a lady who had been a personal secretary to both Stanley Rader and Herbert Armstrong. When asked who she thought would succeed HWA, she quite emphatically told us:

Joe Tkach. There's no doubt in my mind. Kevin and Aaron [Dean] want power and they want the WCG's top position for themselves. But they know they're still too young, that's why they need Joe Tkach. Keven and Aaron know how to manipulate Mr. Armstrong. At some point they'll see to it that he names Joe as his successor. Mr. Armstrong will die and Joe will be in charge - at least for a while. Eventually though, I'm sure Aaron or Kevin or both will find a way to take over.

In 1984, we didn't take her opinion seriously. Maybe we should have.

It is a well-known fact that in recent years, HWA, according to his own public statements, was legally blind and unable to read. How then could he really have known what was stated in the letters or other documents he was asked to sign? Of course, letters can be dictated. But did he really dictate his last letters? How aware was he of the decisions he was purportedly making? If

he really made his own decisions, whose information was he relying on? And what about those drugs so many have said he was taking? Did they affect his judgment or contribute to his end?

HWA's death certificate was signed by Dr. Ralph Martin (of Pasadena), who had treated HWA since 1984. The certificate states that HWA's death was caused by ventricular fibrillation (an uncoordinated twitching of the muscle fibers of the ventricles of the heart for which CPR is normally administered). Other contributing factors were renal (kidney) insufficiency and chronic anemia. According to the certificate, the death was not reported to the coroner. There was no biopsy. There was no autopsy. There was no inquest.

And what of HWA's wealth? He certainly was no pauper. The following appeared on page 2 of the Jan. 26 *Los Angeles Times*:

In a will made out four days before his death, Herbert W. Armstrong left all of his real and personal property to the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God which he founded. The 93-year-old pioneer radio preacher stated in the will that he intentionally omitted his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, who lives in Texas, and daughters Beverly Gott of La Canada and Dorothy Matson of San Luis Obispo, not because of any ill will but because he thought they were adequately situated and that the distribution of the estate through the church would benefit more people. The document contained no estimate of the worth of his estate. Armstrong died Jan. 16 at his Pasadena home.

HWA's lawyers have seen to it that the public never learns how much he had, where it was, or where it went. Leroy Neff, executor and WCG treasurer, is tight-lipped. The Armstrong daughters, apparently satisfied with what was given them inter vivos, have not contested the will. Neither has GTA, who is said to be terrified by the mere thought of courtrooms and lawyers. Nevertheless, in his own way, GTA is fighting back.

### **GTA: I Was Robbed!**

Early morning on Jan. 16 Garner Ted Armstrong received a phone call from HWA aide Aaron Dean who informed Ted that his father had just died. (Dean, it seems, was one of the very last people to see HWA alive.) GTA immediately headed for California, and ever since has been making it very clear he believes that he - not Tkach - is the one who should be heading the WCG. At a lengthy January 17 news conference held at the Sheraton-Universal Hotel in Universal City, California, GTA told the gathered newsmen he considered himself the "spiritual leader" of the church.

GTA is convinced that HWA's closest aides thwarted his efforts to talk to his father, that they deliberately encouraged HWA's "paranoia" of his returning to take control of the WCG, and that the circumstances in which HWA found himself paralleled the "Howard Hughes saga." Ted said his attempts to contact his father for six months were based on comments from friends inside the WCG who were convinced HWA wanted to see him. (*Ambassador Report* has reason to believe GTA is telling the truth on this!) However, Ted's phone calls never went through to his father and his letters went unanswered. Said GTA, "I was never told by my father that he did not want to see me." The refusals, Ted said, always came through intermediaries. GTA revealed much about his religion management philosophy when he said:

Sooner or later, a church has to identify with a person. And if it's not the same person [as leader and speaker], there could be confusion.... Who does Billy Graham's preaching? Billy Graham" (Pasadena *Star-News*, Jan. 18, p. A- 1).

Then, in an interview with the *Globe* (Feb. 4, p. 23), GTA stated:

I'm surprised that my father would pass over his own son as church leader.... I was the logical and natural choice. My roots go very deep, clear back to the church organization that ordained my father when I was a baby boy. From the standpoint of experience, training, education, and as my father's spiritual heir, I am the most qualified to head the church.

GTA has taken off his gloves and has turned out a number of articles and cassette tapes telling his side of the story. It will be interesting to see how many are willing to listen. His address is: Garner Ted Armstrong, P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, Texas 75710.

### **Reader Comments on HWA's Passing**

Editor: The news of HWA's death inspired a flood of comments from our readers. Here are excerpts from but a few of the letters we received:

*Your little green note [that HWA died] was like a winning lottery ticket. I leave it to you to find out who the next despot is.*

*-Pennsylvania*

*May HWA Rest in Peace. He sure as hell didn't give us poor dumb sheep any peace while he was alive. Every dog has its day, and I knew his would come.*

*-California*

*I really feel that HWA should be given the "Lenin treatment" now in existence in Moscow. Herbie could be stuffed, placed in a crystal glass showcase, and set up in the lobby of his cathedral building for all his devotees to adore. I'm sure he would like that.*

*-Pennsylvania*

*So "the Wicked Witch of the West" is dead. The Apostle of the "Only True Church" has come to the end of his gold-bricked road. The Great Consumer with his wolfish appetite is no more. Now, I ask you, who could possibly qualify to don his noble toga and step into his custom-made sandals? Quite an undertaking to follow someone with such lofty connections and who kneweth all things and could not err. Too bad his whole corpus of ideas, which has left such an infection, could not have been laid to rest with him.*

*It is not the love of money that is the cause of most of our evils, but letting ourselves come under the spell of some of these modern day prophets' delusions and visions. They play on our fears and desires, and like children loving to hear fables, we who are naive or overly imaginative enjoy listening to things that are not true. We are spared the effort of thinking for ourselves. In order to remain safely in the flock they can induce us to swallow many terrible and hard ideas - because out in the darkness awaits the Big Bad Wolf.*

*In that cult I was suckered into, the preacher had to be a chameleon in disguise. Some Saturdays in one hour his ideas on infallible doctrine could change dramatically. We, the members, were like little chameleons too, changing easily from red-hot to cool-blue. No problem - and if there was one, better not let anyone know - remember the Wolf and the Lake of*

*Fire!*

*We live in an age of marvelous accomplishments in many fields, and yet a great many of us are not educated enough to spot a charlatan. Too many of us still believe in fairy tales.*

*It's time Dorothy got out of Oz and went back to Kansas.*

*-Reader, West Virginia*

*Living in the vicinity of Los Angeles and reading local news coverage about Herbert W. Armstrong's death provides cause for reflection upon the true nature of his life work. In summarizing his life, the press quoted one of the more sizeable claims of this self-styled apostle. "I have traveled over the four quarters of this globe we call Earth." Armstrong wrote in the introduction to his latest book, 'Mystery of the Ages,' published in 1985" (Pasadena Star- News January 17, 1986).*

*The curious thing about this claim is how similar it is to the one, and only one, verse in the Bible that speaks of an individual who goes to the "four quarters of the earth." Rev. 20:7 tells about the time when Satan is "loosed out of his prison" and "...shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth" (vs. 8). And why does he go? Notice those words: "to deceive."*

*Quite a comparison! But then, it would not be that shocking to those who know the real situation that existed since (and as a result of) the death of Herbert's first wife, Loma, back in 1967. Before that time, he was greatly restricted in travel as the oldtimers know. But with Loma's death, HWA was given the freedom and impetus to travel widely. Some that were close to HWA even perceived in him an underlying "sense of relief" that this, restriction was removed by her death. It was as if he were "loosed" to travel throughout the four quarters of the earth - and to do the things he desired. (Since the travels of HWA really began "in earnest" back in 1967, and ended with his death in 1986, one could even surmise that we have just witnessed one more completion of a 19-year time cycle.)*

*It would appear to have been through ignorance (or oversight) that Herbert Armstrong used the expression from this scripture to apply to his work when it has such obvious connections with Satan's activities. But, as a former minister of his church, I find that things like this are not all that amusing - especially when one considers the many things which have been done to others because of what the scriptures supposedly say.*

*Of course, I would not presume to judge another by saying that his intent was to deceive - as in the case of the Devil. Therefore, the comparison is only to be "circumstantially discerned." But, as the church taught so forcibly: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." (Jer.17:9).*

*-Gary Arvidson  
Pasadena, CA*

*I cannot understand how some people can say they could not stand HWA's personal life, but insist he had good doctrines.*

*-North Dakota*

*We could look on the appointment of Joe [Tkach] as Herbert's final snub of the "intellectuals" or possibly his final joke upon the church. More likely in his senile state he simply chose his nursemaid, the one that was the closest to him in his last days. Anyone prophesying in the late 1950s that Joe would one day replace Herbert would have brought on a giant belly laugh from all of us (including Joe himself). I feel nearly the same at this point in time. Yet on the other hand, he is a better choice than Garner Stud. But then who wouldn't be?...*

*No doubt there will be further division and problems as all of these men come under the double curse of Paul as stated in Galatians 1:8-9 (a most profound statement - amazing really for Paul who tried to be all things to all men that he might gain them for Christ). Yet when referring to the preachers of Herbert's Galatian Gospel he states (and again repeats the statement), "Let them be accursed...." We can be sure that, no matter what the outcome of all this, they will be.*

*-California*

*Recent issues of the AR have given the impression that you have somehow gone "soft" on GTA. While I admit GTA is a little less objectionable than HWA was, I hope it is not your policy to encourage people to follow him. GTA's recent public comments to the press in Los Angeles revealed him for what he is. This man is still duped by his father's many theological errors, still thinks "the Armstrongs" were given a "commission" and are therefore special, still is out to increase his following, and still doesn't admit nearly enough responsibility for the absolute devastation he brought on thousands of us.*

*I know many feel sorrow for him for the ill-treatment he received from HWA. Obviously, HWA was wrong in that. But let's be honest with ourselves. Family member alienation is what Armstrongism is all about! Where could you find another religion that on a per capita basis has caused as much family strife and sorrow as this one?*

*Ted has a lot of nerve to boo-hoo about his father not wanting to see him, because that's exactly the kind of hurt thousands of us have had to endure daily. While he may not want to face it, the fact is GTA for over two decades, played a major role in creating the monster that is Armstrongism. GTA may be a little better than his old man was, but I, for one, will not be shedding any tears over his problems.*

*-Ex-WCG Member*

*I'm hoping to be an eyewitness to the falling apart of Herb's empire. There is not a minute of my life that the WCG does not effect because of my husband's blind dedication. Many, many, more hours a week go into his church activities than his home and family activities. I'm sticking with my husband because I know that the person I married is still there and the person he is trying to be hopefully will crumble as the WCG does.*

*-Wife of WCG Member*

*[The day I found out HWA died] I took a bottle of champagne home and celebrated. She [WCG member wife], of course, wasn't too thrilled. She had been crying all day, but told our son not to worry because they have a new leader.*

*-New York*

*I just read your latest [January] issue, and, as usual, I have now been filled in on all of the "otherside" that my husband doesn't seem to see. Your newsletter is like a small island to me. I'm swimming around in a sea of turmoil. My husband keeps knocking me off the edge of the boat, then your "island" arrives and I know I'm not alone.*

*For about a week after HWA's death, my husband was rather subdued, and really a bit closer to normal. He studied less, slept more, and we actually spent some time working crossword puzzles together (frivolous thing for a member of God's church to do!). But now, he's back to his usual belligerent, chauvinistic un-self. I guess they came down pretty hard on them at the last Sabbath service. He's such a good robot.*

*I feel like this will never end, like there's no use in struggling with this marriage any more. But I'm so afraid that leaving him will only cause him to cling tighter to them. He gives them the best of himself his very essence, and I just get "leftovers" It seems like the harder I try, the more demands he makes. But, of course, all of our marital problems stem from "my attitude." All our attempts at communication go in circles: I don't love him, or I would look at what he believes and why. I cannot argue scripture. I don't know enough to. Besides, others have tried and failed.*

*So tell me, how does God really feel about this mockery of a marriage? I'm not claiming to be a Christian, but I do know right from wrong. Is it wrong for me to leave this man? I don't really expect an answer, but I just wanted to try to express the desperation I feel. How can anyone stand to spend their life like this?*

*I really feel sorry for HWA. Whether it's now or later, he will have to account for all the unhappiness he has caused. I wish I could be there to add my two cents worth.... Thanks for being on the receiving end of my letter. People around me don't really understand.*

*-Wife of WCG Member*

*I just finished watching The World Tomorrow. It was a review of Herbert Armstrong's life work. It occurred to me that ... Armstrong's strength was more in the exterior of the Gospel rather than the interior. The meaning of the Gospel for the interior life seemed to be hidden from his eyes. All the broken relationships that occurred between him and his colleagues and his family as well testify to the lack of understanding of the nature of God. What seemed to have escaped him was all that Jesus and the apostles taught in regard to meekness, humility, purity, and love. The major part of Jesus' teachings and also the apostles' concerns itself with the development of the interior life - the rest with the coming Kingdom. In closing let me quote from The Living Bible (Rom. 12:76), "Work happily together. Don't try to act big. Don't try to get into the good graces of important people, but enjoy the company of ordinary folks. And don't think you know it all."*

*-Kansas*

### **Aussie Bishop Slams PT**

Australian researcher John Buchner recently discussed the WCG with leading Anglican theologians, including John Stott and the Archbishop of Sydney, and commented on HWA's death on prime-time TV news. Bruce Wilson, Bishop of Canberra, offended at what is clearly a misuse of his work by *The Plain Truth* (PT), wrote Buchner of his disappointment. Bishop

Wilson has apparently concluded what many others have over the years - the Armstrong organization simply cannot be trusted. Here is Bishop Wilson's revealing letter:

22nd January, 1986

Dear Mr. Buchner:

Thank you for your letter dated 2nd January, 1986. I only returned from four weeks' leave yesterday so I was not able to reply until today.

Thank you for the photocopy of the article "Can GOD Survive in Australia?" from *The Plain Truth* magazine. I had not seen the article and in fact was unaware of its existence. Thank you also for your booklet "Armstrongism in Australia." I remember in my teens listening to Armstrong on Radio 2KY in Sydney. I can't say that I was ever tempted to join. I usually listened as an exercise in comic relief, but I can understand the serious issues lying behind the sort of thing you write about in your booklet.

I am very happy to give you a comment which you may like to include in your thesis. It is as follows:

In 1983 I published a book entitled *Can God Survive in Australia?* which examined the place and significance of Christianity in the lives of contemporary Australians. The thesis of the book, which is of course open to debate and further exploration, was solidly based in statistical material, the social sciences, Australian history and biography. The book quickly became a best seller. I have seen many, many reviews, a few of which were critical of the book but engaged it with integrity and respect.

The only scurrilous use of the book which I have seen in any kind of review or article on it appeared in an article with the same title as the book, "Can GOD Survive in Australia?", published by the Armstrong sect in their magazine *The Plain Truth* in January 1985.

The article in *The Plain Truth* magazine does not attempt to debate one single matter of fact or substance in the book, but with a sweeping assertion dismisses the enormously complicated socio-historical background to the current state of the Christian Church in Australia under the carpet of "religion is in decline in Australia because the institutional churches are corrupt" The *Plain Truth* article does not itself offer a single piece of factual evidence other than mere assertion for this crudely simplistic explanation of the decline of religious influence in Australia.

The *Plain Truth* article is not a review of my book. What it does is to take part of its evidence and arguments in order to support what can only be called sectarian propaganda. For example, *The Plain Truth* article makes no mention at all of my own suggestions for a solution to the declining influence of Christianity; it merely uses the analytical part of my thesis for its own propaganda purposes. Nor does the *Plain Truth* article mention the fact that I, the author, am myself a senior minister in a mainstream institutional Christian Church in Australia.

As always with publications by the Armstrong sect, the article is attractively written, interesting, provocative and aimed at a very general readership. One wonders whether that readership is capable of discerning the seductive illogicality in the seeming plausibility of the article's argument.

Yours sincerely,  
Bishop Bruce Wilson  
Australia

**Sedliacik is Drawn into the McNair Fray**

In our last issue we reported on the continuing Leona McNair versus Worldwide Church lawsuit - now in its seventh year. With HWA dead, WCG lawyers can be relieved that he, at least, will not be deposed. Nevertheless, the WCG's legal bills continue to mount as the McNair lawsuit remains unresolved.

The latest rounds in that battle have revolved around WCG writer Richard H. Sedliacik, a long-time church member and employee. Sedliacik, we have learned, worked on the June 25, 1979 issue of the *Pastor's Report* which contained the Rod Meredith comments that became the early basis of the McNair lawsuit. As that publication's actual editor (under HWA), Sedliacik was in a position to know almost all the key facts surrounding the publication of the offending article. Ironically, however, Sedliacik never testified during the McNair v. Worldwide trial.

Before that trial Sedliacik was grilled for hours by Armstrong's lawyers. But, no doubt, the answers he gave to their questions were not the answers they wanted to hear. Sedliacik refused to bend the facts to conform to the WCG's contrived defense and the church's attorneys decided it was best not to call him to the witness stand. However, Antony Stuart, Leona McNair's attorney, subpoenaed Sedliacik and hoped to see him testify. Surprisingly, at the court house at the last minute, Stuart decided against calling him to the stand. Why, we don't know. But some in the court building hallway observed and overheard (because of their loud tone of voice) how WCG lawyers were pressuring Sedliacik to get him "into line" and how, at one point, one ordered him to flee the court building.

Nevertheless, Leona McNair won at the 1984 trial and since then the WCG has been on its appellate quest to find a sympathetic judge. Tony Stuart, in the meantime, must have wondered what Sedliacik's testimony would have yielded. With the WCG unwilling to settle out of court and the possibility existing that some judge down the line could order a retrial, it is not surprising that Stuart decided to find out what Sedliacik really knew. A few weeks ago, Stuart subpoenaed Sedliacik to appear for a deposition.

Clearly, this was something the church lawyers feared. After a delay, the deposition was scheduled for March 18. Sedliacik again found himself under pressure to bend the facts. Every human being can only take so much. And Sedliacik - described by many former colleagues as a sensitive, sincere, and religious man - was being pushed to the brink. He may have also feared (and with good reason) that WCG leaders were quite capable of setting him up to be the "fall guy." Whatever his motivation, he took decisive action. Without the aid, assistance, prodding, coaxing, or cajoling of lawyers, Sedliacik put in writing everything of relevance that he knew about the June 25, 1979 *Pastor's Report*. He then had the 18-page statement notarized and sent copies of the declaration, along with copies of supporting documentation, to church lawyers Bruce Armstrong (no relation to HWA), Ralph Helge, Allan Browne, and - Tony Stuart, Leona McNair's attorney.

When Stuart arrived at his office on the morning of March 17, there was a message waiting for him:

Do not open package from Sedliacik. Call me first.  
-Bruce Armstrong.

Unknown to Armstrong when he left that message was the fact that the package had already been opened. And Stuart, believing Armstrong had no right to order him not to read his own mail, went ahead and read the Sedliacik material.

The next morning, Richard Sedliacik and his wife Elva appeared at Stuart's office for the scheduled deposition. But before Stuart could begin the questioning, Bruce Armstrong and Marcy Burns (lawyers hired by the WCG) insisted on a private conference with the Sedliaciks. It lasted well over an hour. Armstrong then announced an objection to the deposition because of a possible conflict of interest on his part in representing both the WCG corporation and the Sedliaciks. (Isn't that something he should have considered earlier?) He then accused Stuart of "bad faith" in opening the package sent to him by Sedliacik and threatened that he would attempt to get Stuart and his firm disqualified from representing Leona McNair any further. To that threat Stuart angrily responded: "I'm sure you would love that to happen, but it will be a cold day in hell when it does!"

After a short exchange between the lawyers, the Sedliaciks were subjected to another "conference" with the church's lawyers. After two hours, Richard and Elva emerged. Richard commented that the situation had left him confused. He stated his name, and spelled it, for the record. No questions were asked or answered and the deposition was "recessed." Why didn't Sedliacik stay to answer questions? Rumor has it that during the last two-hour "conference" with the WCG lawyers, Sedliacik received a phone call. It was from WCG chief counsel Ralph Helge who *ordered* Sedliacik to leave.

Just dealing with lawyers can be a taxing experience for anyone. We understand Richard Sedliacik was so exhausted by the ordeal he felt it necessary to leave the state for an extended rest. The WCG's lawyers have not been able to locate him since. Nevertheless, they have been on the prowl.

On March 26, church lawyers went before Commissioner Christine B. Hickman and asked for, and got, a stay of plaintiff's discovery pending the bringing of a motion for disqualification. The WCG desperately wants Stuart and his firm thrown off the case. In pursuit of that, they intend to dispose Stuart on April 8 - a date obviously chosen for its harassment value. Stuart is scheduled to present his oral argument on the WCG appeal before the Ninth Circuit Court on April 9!

Richard Sedliacik's deposition is scheduled to resume on April 15. Will he appear and answer truthfully?

At the March 26 hearing before Commissioner Hickman, Stuart presented copies of letters written on March 20 by Sedliacik to lawyers Armstrong, Browne, and Helge. The letters to Browne and Armstrong were essentially identical to the letter to Helge which read:

Dear Mr. Helge:

This letter is to inform you that I do not desire to have Mr. Bruce Armstrong represent me at any upcoming deposition. Neither do I want you or anyone from your office to represent me, or any other lawyer for that matter. I will be representing myself. I have no intention of leaving another deposition until it is complete.

Jesus said "the *truth* would make us free" (John 8:32). My conscience tells me I must truthfully answer all questions asked of me. This, as you know, is God's will for anyone who claims to be a Christian (Exodus 20:16, Romans 13:8-10).

Sincerely,  
Richard H. Sedliacik

## **Letters**

*I have been out of the WCG for over two years now and it is like a giant burden has been taken away. My marriage is again "on track" - as a matter of fact today is our 37th wedding anniversary.*

*We both enjoy the Ambassador Report.*

*-Ohio*

*We want to thank you and your staff for the work that you are doing. We were loyal members in the Worldwide Church of God for 23 years. We both served as Deacon and Deaconess. The time came when we could no longer put up with the hypocrisy, and then we began to question many of the teachings. We finally had to face the fact that we were merely following a man. We left WCG over 5 years ago. We appreciate the inside information we receive through your publication as our son and his family have remained in Worldwide.*

*-AR Reader*

*Thank you for continuing to send out the AR. I have been a member of WCG for 33 years, but for about the last eight or ten years I have known something was rotten in "the Work." So [I] have been working at proving all things, and you have really been a great help to me. I hope you can and will continue to send out the Report as more and more people are going to need it. I pass mine on to all who will read it.*

*-Texas*

*Thank you for helping me. For two years I have been trying to leave "the Church" but just didn't seem to be able to quit. Last month on Dec. 6 I left. After 21 years I just became so frustrated and nervous. I thought I was the only one until I read your Report and learned of so many others just like me. Thank you for your good work.*

*-Ohio*

*Several weeks ago I wrote my first letter to you which was kindly answered with several recent ARs. Although deeply stunned by these appalling revelations, my wife and I are very grateful to your organization for this release from the deceptions and bondage of the WCG....*

*Your publications have transformed our lives for the good. Although the discovery of truth can be painful, it does grant freedom. This is true. We hope the AR continues - that more families may be released from the slavery of the WCG as we have been.*

*-United Kingdom*

*After I received your ARs several years ago, I took them in to my local minister and asked a few questions. He was not too pleased with me and promptly kicked me out of the church. At first I was heartbroken. None of my "friends" would speak to me and I felt lost without the organizational comfort I had received from the WCG. It didn't take long for me to discover other compensations. My relationship with my husband (who'd never been in the WCG)*

*improved dramatically. And I believe that I'm now much closer to God. I've also found new friends and new activities and no longer miss the WCG.*

*I feel very sorry for those members who are just staying in because they are afraid to leave the security of the organization. I hope that everyone in that situation can get their hands on a copy of the AR and find the courage to leave. I'm sure that many of these people would leave if they only knew how many of us have already left and found rewarding lives. If only one person in the WCG reads the AR and gets out then you've done a great job. That's why I continue to support the AR even though I've been out for several years. And that's why I hope you can continue to publish.*

*-Washington*

---

### **In an Upcoming Issue...**

Joe Tkach - who is he? And what kind of man is he? Is he a man of proven character, or another Herbert Armstrong? What is he like as a minister, as a family man, as an administrator? And what kind of people are his closest associates? A lot of our readers want to know the answers to those questions and so do we.

In a future issue we will be taking a look at the real Joe Tkach. In the mean time, if any of you can help provide us with information on the WCG's new hero, please let us know.

Until next time - our thanks for your continued support.

-John Trechak

[Next Issue \(AR36\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR36 August, 1986**

### **The WCG Moves On**

It is now over six months since Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and Ambassador College, passed away, leaving his religious empire in the hands of former top aide Joseph W. Tkach. In the six months he has had at the helm, Tkach has moved quietly to solidify his power base and restructure the WCG hierarchy through the same musical chairs routine so often employed by his predecessor.

Evangelist Roderick Meredith, who, before HWA's death had expressed a strong interest in succeeding to the pastor general position, has been transferred out of Pasadena to head the Big Sandy, Texas campus of Ambassador College. He takes over the position long held by evangelist Leslie McCullough, whom HWA had once seriously considered naming as his successor. McCullough is to be transferred to South Africa to head church operations there. He will replace Dr. Roy McCarthy, who is being "retired."

In "the field," there have been numerous ministerial changes, but they have gone generally unreported in church publications. Said one of our sources, "Mr. Tkach does not want outsiders - or the ministry - to find out what's really going on."

While Meredith has been elated at his new responsibilities, there is some doubt as to the permanence of his position. Only one year ago there were plans to close the Texas campus entirely. But shortly after taking over as pastor general, Tkach announced that the college would seek continued state certification. There is some doubt, however, whether Ambassador (Big Sandy) will be able to meet state requirements and be allowed to continue granting degrees beyond 1988. Even Meredith has expressed serious doubts as to whether the Big Sandy college will survive.

On the proselytizing front, the WCG claims major increases in responses to its religious telecasts - now being done by ministers Richard Ames, David Albert, and David Hulme. But whether that mail increase has translated into financial increase is doubtful. The July

14 issue of *The Worldwide News*, in a tiny article on page 12, mentioned that the WCG has sold its feast site in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. It is difficult to believe that such valuable properties would be liquidated if the WCG's income was really growing. Actually, some insiders are saying the church is already having trouble paying its bills on time and that more assets will have to be liquidated before long.

As for the church's print media efforts, we can only imagine what HWA would think if he were alive to see what has become of his *Plain Truth* magazine. Down to a mere 29 pages, the PT has not only shrunk in size, but appears to be having difficulty finding new articles. The May issue, for instance, featured "Why Russia Will Not Attack America!" - a hopelessly naive article written by HWA and reprinted countless times in the last few decades. The PT also continues to serialize HWA's book *Mystery of the Ages*.

In charge of the WCG's editorial thrust is Dexter Faulkner, a nonordained member whose writing style is as dynamic as "Just one more thing" - the name of his regular *Worldwide News* column. Faulkner is editor of *The Worldwide News*, *The Good News* and *Youth 86*. He is also executive editor of the *Plain Truth*. While Herman Hoeh, as PT editor, outranks him, insiders say Hoeh spends little time on the PT and Faulkner is really "the brains" behind that publication as well.

Another writer worth special mention is Paul Kroll, who had an article in the June PT. Kroll, once the arch-liberal editor of the PT, was removed during the purges of the early '70s. But with the WCG badly in need of writing talent, Kroll has been rehired by the editorial department after recently rejoining *Worldwide* and, apparently, being deemed rehabilitated.

One aspect of the WCG's media-game plan has remained the same. As with his predecessor, the new pastor general is regularly shown in photos with the politically powerful, the rich, and the famous. Recent editions of church publications have had photos of Tkach with Richard Nixon, Warren Burger, Armand Hammer, Robert Dole, the Kirov Ballet, and Abbot Phra Thepsopon of the Wat Thai (Buddhist temple) in Los Angeles. Tkach has been traveling extensively throughout the U.S. speaking before WCG congregations. (Some Pasadena church members have complained that Tkach has only given one or two rather ordinary sermons in Pasadena since HWA's death.) Tkach has also begun taking the kind of foreign tours HWA was so fond of. The planned trip to Russia was cancelled, but he has gone to England, Europe, and Africa. Of course, those tours provide opportunities for the PR photos so dearly loved by WCG members.

Since taking over, Tkach has been careful to give HWA honored treatment in all WCG publications, telecasts, and sermons. There are even plans to put out an "official" biography of HWA. But some insiders are predicting that the attention being given to HWA's memory will soon be reduced and Tkach will be pushed further and further into the limelight. Other likely changes to look out for are a change in the format of "The World Tomorrow" telecast (more news, less prophecy) and a possible phasing-out of the *Plain Truth* magazine.

Will there be doctrinal changes? So far Tkach has been careful to walk in HWA's footsteps. For instance, in his March 24 *Worldwide News* editorial, Tkach parroted

HWA's old hard line against women wearing makeup. But some insiders are saying they see some doctrinal changes coming in the future. One teaching the WCG may have to alter is its doctrine on the imminence of Christ's return. While HWA told his followers for decades that "the Work" was in the "gun lap," some top WCG ministers have privately stated they believe the end-time work may have thirty or more years to go!

Don't look for too many changes between now and the Feast of Tabernacles in October. But once Tkach has presided over his first fall festival as pastor general, anything can happen.

### **The New WCG - A Church at the Crossroads** by Brenda Denzler

Almost every individual who has followed the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) through *Ambassador Report* or through personal contact with member relatives has, at one time or another, asked himself what it is that keeps WCG members fastened to their church with its rigid hierarchical control, administrative abuses, doctrinal ambiguities, and 50-year history of failed prophecies. Not only do many WCG-watchers wonder about how that organization has managed to survive, but many wonder about the future of friends and relatives still clinging to that dystopian church.

---

&COPY;1986 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

As a former WCG member now majoring in religion at a U.S. university, I have in recent months come across a number of sociological studies that I feel may provide us with significant insights. I suspect it may prove liberating to some to discover that, despite the unique character of the WCG experience, it is in some ways a very predictable experience that clearly fits into the spectrum of known social behavior. By looking at the way belief, commitment, and resolution of contradictory information have all played a part in making Worldwide what it is today, we may be able to gain an insight into what it will be tomorrow.

### **Defining the WCG Experience**

In August 1933, after a long and heated exchange of opinions, Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) made his final break from the Oregon State Conference of the Church of God which had ordained him to the ministry only two years earlier. Armstrong's search for the "one true church" had led him to the little-known Sabbath-keeping group, though he claimed that his association was never more than tentative because the church did not

possess all the important characteristics that he believed necessary in the true body of Christ. Apparently two of the more important qualities that the group lacked were extensive public visibility and great power (Armstrong, pp. 308-314).

Within months of the break, and with the support of only about 20 people, Armstrong began *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast and *The Plain Truth* magazine for "the MASS-proclaiming of His Gospel" so that "GOD'S WORK at last could come to life after centuries of sleeping, and go forth in mighty power to all the world" (Armstrong, pp. 450- 451, emphasis his).

From the outset, HWA's exegetical style was to piece together scattered biblical texts in order to proclaim with unblushing certainty the fates of individuals, Western society, and the world in general. In the final analysis, every prediction revolved around the unimaginable horrors that would occur in an imminent Tribulation, with only the few who were faithful and obedient to God's word being protected in a place of safety. Such predictions were not designed simply to inform or warn the public, but rather to fascinate and frighten the unsuspecting person into the waiting arms of the tiny Radio (later to become Worldwide) Church of God, which was fast developing into "God's only true church" under Armstrong's leadership. The literature and broadcasts proved to be very successful in increasing church membership and, not incidentally, the church's financial base.

What was actually occurring in the pages of *The Plain Truth* and the radio broadcast was a massive effort in the name of God to radically transform the way people see and understand the world - their reality. In varying degrees, mainstream religion provides a similar kind of experience by reinterpreting selected ideas and assumptions of one's subjective reality and building upon that reality. New religious vocabularies help converts to understand the present and to imagine the future in new ways.

In Worldwide, however, the process of conversion demands the near-total disintegration of the structure of one's previous "reality" and the complete re-construction of a "reality" which radically re-interprets not only the present and the future, but the past as well. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, in their ground-breaking book *The Social Construction of Reality*, call this radical resocialization *alternation*.

Alternation requires that a person become strongly identified with a significant individual, such as an Armstrong, who can explain the alternative perception of reality and who will encourage complete identification with and activity within the group. As a result,

The alternating individual disaffiliates himself from his previous world and the plausibility structure that sustained it, bodily if possible, mentally if not... and thus is protected from... potential reality-disrupting influence... [O]ne must now be very careful with whom one talks. People and ideas that are discrepant with the new definitions of reality are systematically avoided (Berger and Luckmann, p. 159).

The success of the Worldwide Church of God (as with other groups with utopian expectations) has depended on its ability to sustain this redefinition of reality and the exclusivity of commitment among its members. As Rosabeth Moss Kanter states in her

book *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*:

...the problem of commitment is crucial... [A community] must vie with the outside for the members' loyalties. It must ensure high member involvement.... It must often contravene the earlier socialization of its members in securing obedience to new demands. It must calm internal dissension.... The essence of such a community is in strong connections and mutual obligations (Kanter, p. 65).

Successful commitment-building in such communities is a process in which a person's "chance to make other choices or pursue other options" (Kanter, p. 70) is decreased by the demands of the community.

The policy of the WCG since its earliest years has been to promote itself as the sole arbiter of truth while at the same time denouncing all other understandings and practices as inferior, if not Satanic. People who accept the Armstrong "reality" often make irrevocable sacrifices. Families and careers may be evaluated by new standards, be found wanting, and be rejected in order to win the acceptance of the church and gain protection from the Tribulation, direction and purpose in this life, and life itself in the hereafter. The magnitude of the sacrifice(s) made tends to determine a person's likelihood of remaining committed to the WCG after upsetting events or information.

All of these factors - belief, alternation, sacrifice, and commitment - are heavily involved when anyone joins Worldwide or when they remain committed to it despite developments that others would consider logical reasons for ending such commitment.

### **Commitment and Disconfirmation in the WCG**

In the 1950s three sociologists from the University of Minnesota investigated continued commitment to belief systems and proselytizing activity in the wake of events that disproved a group's key beliefs - in other words, after *disconfirmation*. They wrote in *When Prophecy Fails*:

Suppose an individual believes something with his whole heart; suppose further that he has a commitment to this belief, that he has taken irrevocable actions because of it; finally, suppose that he is presented with evidence, unequivocal and undeniable evidence, that his belief is wrong: what will happen? This individual will frequently emerge, not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before (Festinger, et. al., p. 3).

The *dissonance* (psychological conflict) that exists in a member of Worldwide when original expectations and final fact do not agree must be reduced or eliminated if he or she is to remain within the group. The more someone has made irrevocable life changes to conform to the expectations of Worldwide, the harder it becomes to reject the disconfirmed belief system. Instead, the person may try to ignore the fact that disconfirmation has occurred. He or she may attempt to reinterpret the disconfirmed belief, to change the behaviors required by the belief, or even to discover "new" information that will increase the overall harmony of the belief system so as to make the point of dissonance relatively less noticeable (Festinger, et. al., pp. 26-27).

But whatever explanation is made it is still by itself not sufficient. The dissonance is too important... the believers still know that the prediction was false.... But there is a way in which the remaining dissonance can be reduced. *If more and more people can be persuaded that the system of belief is correct, then clearly it must, after all, be correct* (Festinger, et. al., p. 28, emphasis theirs).

Members may also make further predictions in an effort to get one right and finally receive confirming evidence that not even the skeptical can deny (Festinger, et. al., pp. 214-215).

All of these ways of coping with disconfirmation require strong mutual support within the WCG community. At some point, however, the disconfirming evidence may become so overwhelming that belief itself must be rejected, whether on an individual basis or *en masse* (Festinger, et. al., p. 12).

Armstrong's major failures as a prophet go back to World War II. He had already failed to make accurate predictions about the course and conduct of the war, but those predictions were fairly minor when compared with the overarching prediction of an imminent and horrifying time of global trial (the Tribulation) which was to be followed by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. During the early 1940s, this scenario was supposedly being played out within the context of World War II.

The undeniable cessation of hostilities in 1945 without benefit of a returned Jesus presented Armstrong and his followers with a dilemma: how to account for this disconfirmation of their most central prophecies - prophecies that made membership in the church an absolute imperative if one wanted to escape the unspeakable terrors to come. Rather than admit church teaching about the Tribulation and the Second Coming to have been in error, the Radio Church of God proclaimed "new" insight that brought the entire system of belief back into the realm of the believable once again.

God had granted the world a reprieve in order to more adequately warn it of the impending Satan-inspired horrors and the subsequent wrath of God against the disobedient. The words of one 1950s saucer cult enthusiast after her failure to be picked up by extraterrestrials might as easily have come from a member of the Radio Church of God in the late 1940s: "All I know is that the plan has never gone astray. We have never had a plan change" (Festinger, et. al., p. 166).

By redefining expectations without acknowledging that redefinition was occurring, disconfirming events could be transformed into amazing evidences of God's continuing plan for "the Work" and the world. In the face of such unexpected yet exciting events, and with the nagging yet unacknowledged fact of the failure of the original predictions, the entire organization could be expected to have embarked upon a renewed effort to "warn the world" and, not incidentally, offer a "way out" for those individuals who were among the "elect" chosen to escape so fearful a Tribulation.

Within less than a decade, the Radio Church of God extended its broadcasting efforts into Europe, where new members were brought into the fold by implanting the same fear of the Tribulation and extending the same assurances of safety in exchange for absolute commitment to the Armstrong organization. The founding of Ambassador College for the

training of additional WCG ministers indicates that Armstrong's message was in fact designed to attract as many people as possible to church membership, not just to warn them in a nonproprietary way. Finally, the little Radio Church of God became the Worldwide Church of God, laying claim to the widespread visibility and power that Armstrong had envisioned for the church that "Jesus" was building.

By the 1960s Armstrong's views on the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ, which had become linchpins of church teaching, had solidified once more into definite, time-linked prophecies. The popular booklet *1975 in Prophecy!*, generously illustrated with bleak sketches of the Tribulation, became a basic statement of the church's new timetable for end-time events, and WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse became the church's main prophet-of-dire-consequence for slackers and intellectuals who doubted God would heed Armstrong's prophetic timetable.

1972 dawned for the WCG with a breath of expectation followed by a long sign of relief mixed with consternation at the failure of the long-dreaded Tribulation to materialize so that Christ could return in 1975. The phenomenal growth of the organization had begun to slow noticeably since the death of Loma Armstrong (also unpredicted) in 1967. The death of his wife gave Armstrong greater freedom to travel around the world with his message and the slowing growth rate did not seem to dampen his drive to gain recognition and respect for the religious empire he had built.

With son Garner Ted in the U.S. maintaining his strong leadership role in the church, the elder Armstrong bestowed lavish gifts upon the great and near-great as he supposedly "warned" them of the coming intervention of God in human affairs. For this audience, however, Armstrong's message often became merely an admonition about a "strong hand from someplace" instead of the threatening predictions about a Satan-inspired Tribulation and a wrathful Christ that had been so instrumental in building the church. The construction of the Ambassador Auditorium and the founding of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation as the specifically nonreligious arm of the church presented members with further distractions from the disappointments of the early '70s. Through the church newspaper, co-worker letters, and weekly sermons, members were constantly updated on the momentous developments in "the Work."

However, prophetic disconfirmations, the widespread and unconcealable moral lapses within all ranks of the ministry, and several long-standing doctrinal disputes combined to create an overwhelming dissonance for many members and ministers that could no longer be dispelled by the rationalizations and glosses of the leaders. Armstrong's high-level meetings and the cultural events in the Ambassador Auditorium could not disguise the essential frailty of the "reality" that Armstrong so boldly proclaimed as the only way of salvation. Forty years after its birth, the Worldwide Church of God began to seriously fragment.

Since 1974 the WCG has had to concentrate more of its energies on holding on to current members. Armstrong presented his near-death in 1977 as a miraculous, Christlike resurrection, possibly in order to reinstate himself as the focus of members' admiration and loyalty, a position that had become the premature inheritance of his evangelist son, the charismatic Garner Ted. The end result of Armstrong's return to center stage was the ouster of his son in 1978. Hundreds of members left the WCG with him.

Perhaps the single greatest impetus for reinforced commitment to the WCG since 1972 was the receivership imposed on the church by the State of California in 1979. Most members rallied quickly and without suspicion to ministers' impassioned claims that the church was under attack by Satan-inspired forces. The church-state issue was largely useless, however, in prompting new efforts toward proselytizing for the Armstrong/WCG way of life.

In the seven years since the lawsuit, Armstrong's declining health and vitality were matched by a decline in effective proselytizing. The entire organization seemed to be waiting for something - anything - to rekindle the sense of urgency that had marked the church's first 40 years. The Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ, though still central to the WCG's reason for existence, had been unmistakably disconfirmed and were by this time becoming mere abstractions in an indefinite future.

The final blow to the original Tribulation-Second Coming scenario came with Armstrong's death this year. By the end of January the venerated founder and his exclusivist doctrines had been seriously disconfirmed and threatened to become ineffectual in maintaining the commitment of many members.

Not one year before HWA's death, evangelist Gerald Waterhouse told a Florida congregation that should God let HWA die, it would be proof that HWA was a false apostle. Waterhouse is a textbook example of renewed commitment following the undeniable disconfirmation that took place upon HWA's death. An analysis of the transcript of a recent Waterhouse sermon (Pasadena, March 1, 1986) provides us with indications of how the WCG leadership can reinterpret old beliefs so as to rationalize Armstrong's death and try to offset the wavering commitment it has caused in numerous WCG members.

### **God's Deception and Church Momentum**

For most members, continued affiliation with the WCG will require transferring their loyalty from Armstrong to the new pastor general, Joseph Tkach. Waterhouse has lost no time in promoting that transfer in his sermons. From relative obscurity, Tkach has emerged as the WCG's sleeping giant of destiny. Waterhouse views Tkach as a type of the biblical Joshua who led the people of Israel into the Promised Land. HWA has become, of course, a type of Moses, who died just short of the goal. Loyalty to Tkach is now equivalent to loyalty to HWA, which of course has always been equivalent to loyalty to God.

Waterhouse attaches cosmic significance to things that seem to "key in" Tkach as virtually predestined to follow in HWA's footsteps. The meaning of Tkach's name, the date of HWA's last co-worker letter naming Tkach as his successor, the ubiquitous time cycles, and Tkach's "right lineage" as a street-wise South Chicagoan are just a few of the abstruse matters that Waterhouse finds profoundly significant.

Of particular interest is the way in which Waterhouse presents Tkach's sterling qualities against a backdrop of HWA's shortcomings - shortcomings that were never mentioned

while HWA still lived.

According to Waterhouse, HWA's unfortunate tendency to choose men for the ministry according to their talent, ability and charisma led God to permit Satan to stir up the 1979 confrontation with the State of California so that Armstrong could have clear evidence that "disloyal liberals" and "intellectuals" were on the "team" and had to be removed.

Unlike HWA, who was "always at the top of the Work, not down on the grass-roots levels," Tkach has been at the grass-roots for 20 years, which means that he will not need to rely upon counsel from others, as Waterhouse assures us the autocratic Armstrong did. Nor will Tkach's contribution be frustrated any longer by having to take counsel from HWA. As pastor general he won't "have to go to Mr. Armstrong... and wait the time to get the information there. Mr. Armstrong's time was so divided...." As a result of not having to wait for HWA, God, through Tkach, will be able to "accelerate all... departments in a very rapid manner." Over and over again, Waterhouse emphasizes that under the leadership of Tkach, the Work can now "multiply," "magnify," "mushroom," and "accelerate quickly" in a "phenomenal" way.

Perhaps part of the reason for Waterhouse's projection of growth has to do with the planning that can be done now that HWA's whims no longer dictate the daily operation of the organization. Notice this quote (again, taken directly from the *Ambassador Report* transcript of the March 1 Waterhouse sermon):

Just like in the television area. Mr. Armstrong used to write his own script out. Mr. Omasta did not know when Mr. Armstrong was coming, so they put even a little TV camera out there to let them know when he drove up. They didn't know what he was going to speak on when he got there, so they couldn't prepare weeks in advance. Now they have three men. They can be assigned subjects weeks in advance... and the television crew has the time to back them up, to get back-up material for the telecast, so that it can be done so *professionally!*

According to Waterhouse, the ministerial services department under Armstrong was characterized by an atmosphere of suspicion because "the ministerial services had been through several administrations and turned off." Tkach, though initially faced with rejection when put in charge of the department several years ago, "brought them out."

All of these observations, however, are retrospectives for Waterhouse, who had been a major proponent of the belief that HWA's death would never be permitted by God, else HWA would be revealed as a false apostle. In trying to reconcile this major disconfirmation, Waterhouse in effect describes God as a deceitful manipulator of a chosen people who would be incapable of maintaining their momentum and continuing to "do the work" if they were to be told the truth about God's plans.

Jesus Christ *could not* enlarge my understanding to even think that Mr. Armstrong was going to have to die.... He had to keep my momentum strong in supporting Mr. Armstrong, to be transferred over to Mr. Tkach *immediately!* Once you lose momentum, it's very difficult to regenerate that.... See, he has to keep piecemealing it until we're there!... God only can show you what he knows is good. He cannot show you the end result.

## The Future of the WCG

Belief in the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ has not died in the WCG. The presentation of Tkach as a type of Joshua leading Israel into the Promised Land would seem to indicate that the immediate millennial hopes of the WCG are not likely to change with Armstrong's passing. Indeed, if the Tkach-Joshua type is taken very seriously, the eschatological expectations of the church can only become more intense, more immediate.

In the original formulation of the Tribulation idea, one purpose of the place of safety was to escape the suffering and death that would overtake 90% of the world's population, especially disloyal members. Suffering and death were clearly undesirable. But suffering has been getting new, though contradictory, attention in the church. A year ago the *Ambassador Report* reported on a sermon by Tkach in which he alluded to the suffering he feels WCGers will soon have to endure while "perform[ing] the job to which God has called us to accomplish. And believe me," said Tkach, "we are going to suffer!"

While an exaggerated fear of persecution might, to some degree, offset the disconfirming fact of Armstrong's death and help to keep members committed to the organization, it is not impossible that paranoia about persecution could well become a self-fulfilling prophecy, driving the church toward the very suffering Tkach is preparing his followers to face.

To add complexity to the picture, since Armstrong's passing, death seems to have gained a special value in Waterhouse's thinking. Waterhouse rationalizes that God had to let HWA die as a means of keeping him safe from the Tribulation. "Now he's already put in some very safe place - the grave. So Mr. Armstrong is safe. He'll never have to go through [the Tribulation]." Will the WCG's legendary "place of safety" dogma soon be modified to include death as a reasonable way of being saved out of the Tribulation? According to Waterhouse:

"Mr. Armstrong knew it was going to be *terrifying*. And he hoped we'd qualify to escape. If you remain loyal to [this church], you will. Either through death, or in a place of safety.... If you die in the faith, *you are protected from the Tribulation....*"

Death is now - at least to a degree - a friend of some in the WCG. When combined with the WCG's heavily misanthropic view of human existence, this development could foreshadow a time of real physical danger to WCG members from within rather than from without the organization. Whether this danger will be enough to break the grip of fear that holds many WCGers in the church remains to be seen. If historical precedent is any indicator, there is little hope that this will happen.

Almost since the beginning of the radio broadcast and *The Plain Truth* magazine, events have disconfirmed WCG pronouncements. Until the last 20 years those disconfirming events were met with renewed - and very successful - efforts to do "the Work." The church gained membership, visibility and power.

In recent years, though, the cumulative effect of the disconfirmations has produced a different response. Proselytizing, though pursued in innovative programs (as in the PT newsstand program), has failed to win the same kind of response from the public, and mounting internal problems and defections have, to a degree, caused the WCG to retreat into itself with a "hold the line" mentality.

Now, with Armstrong's death, the WCG stands at a crossroads. If indeed the new pastor general is able to vigorously warn the world about the horrifying punishments soon to be inflicted on the world for not living according to WCG precepts, the campaign might draw new people into commitment to the church.

If, however, the leadership must concentrate its attention on consolidating its power over a base of increasingly uncertain and fearful members, the WCG may well close in even more upon itself in a putrifying paranoia leading to total isolation or worse.

In large measure the future of the WCG depends on the ability of Pastor General Tkach to reinforce current commitment to the church without overdoing the persecution theme that could make the church appear undesirably paranoid to potential new converts. Furthermore, Tkach's "street-wise" image may have to be refined if he is to truly, as Waterhouse claims, "follow in the footsteps" of HWA by learning to execute the strong-arm tactics coated with charisma that made Herbert Armstrong an end-time apostle and Worldwide the "one and only true church of God."

#### Works Cited

Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*. Pasadena, California: Ambassador College Press, 1973.

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1967.

"The Evolving Worldwide Church of God." *Ambassador Report*, June 1985.

Festinger, Leon, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter. *When Prophecy Fails*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956.

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972.

#### **HWA Remembered (Part I)**

With Herbert Armstrong dead and buried, some readers might prefer to forget about him entirely. But during the last few months, in reorganizing and cleaning out our old HWA files, we came across a number of items we think deserve attention.

One question that has frequently been put to us by our readers is, "What name does the W stand for in Herbert W. Armstrong?" Actually, it doesn't stand for any name. Many who knew him personally say that HWA didn't have a middle name. He adopted the W at

some point (at least as far back as 1915) simply to add dignity, dimension or dressing to what he apparently thought was too ordinary a name. And why the W rather than some other letter? We really don't know. But former WCG minister Gary Arvidson has theorized:

"First of all, as an advertising man HWA must have known that of all the letters in the alphabet W is visually the largest, phonetically the longest, and with its three sharp angles, symbolically assertive. Second, W was the middle initial of Henry Ward Beecher, one of the most famous and influential preachers in American history. I have wondered, frankly, if HWA was not unconsciously or even consciously modeling himself after Beecher."

Henry Ward Beecher was indeed one of the most famous preachers of the last century. He had a large following, was rich and politically influential, traveled widely abroad, claimed to be a friend of U.S. presidents and European royalty, constantly sought the public limelight, has been called an opportunist and hypocrite, and made national headlines when he was put on trial for adultery in 1875. David R. Robinson, a devoted student of British and American history, and the author of a revealing book on HWA, told us:

"Henry Ward Beecher and Herbert Armstrong had much in common. The definitive biography of Beecher is *Henry Ward Beecher - An American Portrait* by Paxton Hibben. That biography, which can still be found in many libraries, first appeared in 1927, shortly before Herbert embarked on his career in religion. I really think Herbert read that book, or at least knew of Beecher's life story. There are just so many similarities in their two lives."

One book that offers valuable insights into factors in American history that helped mold HWA's religious outlook is volume one of *The Americans* trilogy (*The Colonial Experience*) by renowned historian Daniel Boorstein. Part one on the Puritans and part two on the Quakers left your editor convinced that in many of the doctrines and customs of those two highly influential Anglo-American religious movements one can clearly see the precursors of much of the teaching and spirit of the Worldwide Church of God. Space here does not permit a detailed examination of the many connections. However, readers may wish to, at least, check out p. 52 where Boorstein recounts the history of Benjamin Franklin's "*Plain Truth*, one of his shrewdest political pamphlets. Neither pro nor anti-Quaker, the pamphlet gave a full, fair and even prophetic picture of the colony...."

Actually, HWA never hid the fact that he had studied Franklin's life (Armstrong *Autobiography*, p. 29) nor that Franklin's *Plain Truth* was an inspiration for his own. From reading about Franklin, HWA was surely aware that the American patriot was not only irreligious and sexually promiscuous, but an astute politician who rose to great prominence and power in a state founded by Quakers - the very religion into which HWA had been born, and a people with many of the unbending "be ye separate from the world" characteristics of Worldwide today (cf. Boorstein, pp. 33 -69). One can only wonder to what degree HWA saw in Franklin a pattern for his own future.

There are undoubtedly many other authors that had a profound influence on HWA. (See Robert Geringer's article "Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots" in our 1977 issue for some examples of HWA's noncrediting of sources and outright plagiarisms.) One author

we have wondered about in this regard is the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941). While we have never read or heard of HWA quoting Bergson by name, a number of HWA's "unique" teachings seem to have been anticipated by Bergson. For instance, Bergson's philosophy of static and dynamic religions, his view that the laws of physics and chemistry would never adequately explain life, the sharp distinction he drew between human mind and animal brain, his criticism of intellect and his preference for intuition, and his view that the world is a "machine for the making of gods" all predate HWA's later "discoveries" of virtually identical "new truths." Not only that, Bergson's postulation of two types of morality: closed (rote or instinctive conduct which conforms to prevailing conventions) and open ("a preferred or ideal form of behavior motivated or directed by no one but the free individual," "guided by inspiration and intuition," and "best exemplified in the life of heroes and saints" - Sakakian on Bergson) may well have served HWA as an intellectual justification for his own lifelong moral duplicity.

Bergson, considered by some as the most popular living philosopher of the early part of this century, won the 1927 Nobel prize in literature. A librarian at the Portland Public Library, where HWA did so much of his early "research" on evolution and religion (*Autobiography*, p. 289), told us that, not only would that library have obtained Bergson's works as they were published, but their catalog lists the 1911 and 1920 English editions of Bergson's *Creative Evolution* as still in their library. And a librarian inspection of the 1920 edition showed that it was acquired in 1921.

Recall that HWA's *Autobiography* gives the summer of 1925 as the start of his evolution studies (p. 288) and 1926 as the start of his systematic Bible studies. In 1927 the *Plain Truth* was conceived and a dummy copy produced (p. 506) and in 1928 HWA embarked on his career as a preacher (pp. 346-351) - all during an extended period when he and his family were going through "extreme financial hardship" (p. 351 and p. 506).

Admittedly, the evidence connecting HWA to Beecher and Bergson is still circumstantial. But the connection between HWA and author Bruce Barton is substantiated by HWA having mentioned on numerous occasions that he read Barton's book, *The Man Nobody Knows*. Here is an excerpt from that best-seller which appeared in 1925:

### **Jesus as Advertising Man**

He would be a national advertiser today, I am sure, as he was the greatest advertiser of his own day. Take any one of the parables, no matter which - you will find that it exemplifies all the principles on which advertising textbooks are written.

1. First of all they are marvellously condensed, as all good advertising must be. Jesus hated prosy dullness.

2. His language was marvellously simple - a second great essential. All the greatest things in human life are one-syllable things - love, joy, hope, child, wife, trust, faith, God.

3. Sincerity glistened like sunshine through every sentence he uttered. The advertisements which persuade people to act are written by men who have an abiding

respect for the intelligence of their readers, and a deep sincerity regarding the merits of the goods they have to sell.

4. Finally he knew the necessity for repetition and practiced it. No important truth can be impressed upon the minds of any large number of people by being said only once.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that HWA's life course, with its self-aggrandizement, distorted self-history, moral debauchery, and manipulation of the lives of thousands was far more a matter of purposeful and knowing choice than many have allowed themselves previously to believe.

(More new discoveries on HWA in a future issue - JT)

### **GTA Update - The Leopard's Kept His Spots**

For a number of years after Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) started the Church of God, International (CGI), it seemed to us that most WCG members might be better off in CGI. With all its problems, CGI still seems less fanatical, more open about its beliefs, far less (if at all) paranoid about "the world," and has a membership that generally seems more interested in following the Bible than any one man. It has not been unusual for the Report to receive letters such as this:

I would like to point out something, if you don't mind my mentioning this to you. In one issue of the AR, you refer to members of the CGI as Garner Ted Armstrong's "followers." I was a WCG member from 1965 to 1982, and decided to join the CGI in 1982 and am currently a member. I joined the church because it is adhering to sound biblical doctrine unlike the WCG (witness the primacy of Peter doctrine and the 144,000 doctrine currently taught by WCG). I am on the local council of my local church. Believe it or not, about 99% of the members I have spoken to (and there are more than 40 in the church in the local area) do not feel they are in the church to follow GTA. They are there, if you will "in spite of him." As long as GTA is honest enough to preach the Gospel and be true to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who alone is the Chief Apostle (*Jesus*, not GTA), we will remain in this church. We do not at all feel that we are the "one and only true church" by any means. Not at all. God's church is made up of those who obey God and are led by His Holy Spirit and are helping to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So just a few lines to let you know that we faithfully read your report, and also to let you know that we are not "followers" of GTA.

-California

But not everyone who has joined CGI has found what they are looking for. For instance, one ex-CGI member wrote us a long letter complaining that CGI pays its top brass too much and its field ministers little or nothing, that the organization tends toward nepotism, that CGI's board is too often bypassed by GTA who appears more interested in flying the church airplane here and there to enjoy the physical pleasures of life than in spiritual matters, and the church's financial statements still do not provide members with an adequate representation of who is getting what. The man concluded:

Where did the CGI learn the church business? From Herbert W. Armstrong and the WCG!... GTA once said that people accuse him of going down the same road that his father did. How does he answer them? "Give me 40 years and then make a judgment." We've had no difficulty making a judgment, and it didn't take us 40 years.

-Texas

Another ex-CGI member wrote us:

While our daughter worked for CGI in Tyler, Texas, God opened her eyes to see GTA and his cult for what they are. When Ron Dart told her not to spend time answering letters that didn't have money in them, she woke up. That helped open our eyes too, thank God!

-California

For a number of years, GTA was very clearly distancing himself from many of his father's doctrinal and administrative errors. (For instance, see his article "Who Is Your Authority?" in the July-August, 1984 issue of *The International News*.) Not only that, in many public utterances, and especially in private, GTA was quite willing to not only reveal his father's worst side, but made it clear his father had adopted a number of outright heresies.

But with his father's death early this year, GTA abruptly reversed his position. In a series of articles, letters, and sermons, GTA has painted his father as a great Christian who discovered great truths, did great works, and who will undoubtedly be in God's Kingdom. Virtually the entire February-March issue of *The International News* was dedicated to praising HWA and promoting GTA as his spiritual heir! The church paper reprinted a Jan. 18 Pasadena *Star-News* article in which GTA was quoted:

Garner Ted Armstrong... said Friday he would be leading his father's church now if the two had met recently before his father died.... "And there would have been a different assignment of a successor" to his father's position.... Garner Ted Armstrong said he considered himself the "spiritual leader" of the church... "sooner or later a church has to identify with a person."

Also reprinted was an AP story that appeared in the January 18 *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*. It quoted GTA as saying:

"I believe that I am my father's successor, spiritually speaking.... I fully intend to follow in his footsteps...."

Some who know Ted say he was clearly making a play for WCG members, and that when the big membership switch from WCG to CGI didn't materialize, Ted was astonished. But even more astonished were some of the members of CGI who couldn't believe their eyes when they read Ted's new praise of HWA.

One CGI member, Steven Collins (who, because of his outstanding research, writing, and

speaking skills was a likely ministerial prospect) sent CGI headquarters a very blunt letter (dated March 5) saying that HWA had been guilty of "Deep, chronic hypocrisy.... Deep, chronic idolatry.... Deep, chronic Phariseeism...." that had caused untold misery, hardship, suffering, and spiritual destruction in the lives of thousands. Collins wrote that HWA had "taken the WCG and molded it into a persecuting, oppressive, autocratic, deceived and Pharisical body." With numerous scriptural quotations cited as authority, he pleaded that CGI not give "any more favorable memorialization of HWA."

In a curt letter dated March 27, GTA personally answered Collins:

Your letter is positively quixotic. However, instead of accepting your invitation to "tilt at windmills," I will merely respond by saying that I have received your letter, as I am sure all the others to whom you may have addressed it have, and will give it the attention it deserves.

I do not desire to create "straw men" and attack them viciously, nor to engage in "tilting at windmills," so will not dignify your letter with lengthy disclaimer.

GTA then went on to claim the media "misquoted" him. Collins, in a letter dated April 8, responded that had Ted really been misquoted, the newspaper articles should not have been reprinted without a disclaimer.

We think GTA's short letter is very revealing. First of all, it shows that Ted's communication skills are not simply limited to playing out those old roles he does so well - the all-knowing prophet of Yahweh, the jet-set executive, the honky-tonk lush - he can also turn out the kind of prose you'd expect from a foppish Fifth Avenue fairy.

And what chutzpa! (Let's not even comment on his telling an audience to turn over 40 years of their lives before they could make a judgment on him.) He just wouldn't think of setting up "straw men to attack them viciously." Here is a guy who has built a thirty-year broadcasting career on essentially one rhetorical device - the "straw man." Yet he apparently expected Collins to believe he wrote this thing with a straight face.

But the truly amazing thing is how he - like his father before him - will occasionally throw out a bit of *real* truth here and there, smugly confident it seems, that his audience is too stupid to catch on. Those who were around HWA for even a few years will recall one of his oddities. He would tell an audience: "I have noticed, brethren, that when men criticize and condemn others for some sin, they themselves are ALWAYS guilty of the SAME SIN!!!"

Then a few moments later he'd be condemning all of the western world for lawlessness, idolatry, and sexual perversion. Now compare to GTA.

Nowhere in his letter does he even refer to one of the many scriptures cited by Collins. No, such things are "quixotic," foolish "tilting at windmills"! And in such truly honest utterances we see the real Garner Ted Armstrong. Students of literature will immediately see what GTA was not so cryptically saying. The triple reference was to Cervantes' Don Quixote, to many, the world's greatest comedic novel and one that represents (like the

word "quixotic" itself) a very precise idea: that those who pursue lofty ideals, who are enthusiastic visionaries, who seek after "the impossible dream" - are FOOLS! This was the message of GTA's letter to Collins, and anyone who has ever really studied GTA's life knows it is also the message of his life. For the brief moment it took GTA to write those lines, he was, whether he intended it or not, being honest and was revealing his true philosophy.

Ted's short letter to Collins ended with a subtle suggestion that Collins not return to CGI - a suggestion Collins has wisely heeded.

The CGI has many members we consider very fine people, and our friends. We hope that at least some of them will take enough interest in their church, and themselves, to check into Collins' allegations. He may be contacted by writing to Steven Collins, 8500 101st Street Circle, Bloomington, MN 55438.

### **Hoops Plans Feast at Tahoe**

Steven Collins is not the only one to recently part company with CGI. Robert Hoops, a former WCG minister affiliated with CGI for a number of years, has, in the last few months, been pushed out of that organization also.

Hoops' difficulties with CGI apparently began when CGI headquarters in Tyler, Texas, in the centralized-government style of HWA, issued a directive to its ministers around the country on how contributions from those at the Feast of Tabernacles are to be handled. Tyler stated that CGI headquarters would get *all* contributions and would unilaterally decide on how all such monies would be spent. Hoops, who coordinated CGI's feast in northern California last year, felt Tyler's new demands were both unbiblical and high-handed.

He strongly believes (1) that members have a right to designate how their contributions are to be used, (2) that there should be more sharing of "second tithe" between members so that the less affluent are able to enjoy the week more fully, and (3) that the feast should be more of a festive family vacation than a way for church headquarters and some top ministers to expand their income. Hoops also has strong feelings about local ministerial autonomy as regards what should or should not be allowed said from the pulpit. (Keep in mind that, with only a few exceptions, CGI's field ministers are volunteers serving without salary, and who work full-time at regular jobs to support their families.)

There were a few sharp exchanges of views in letters between Hoops and Tyler with Hoops' "credentials" then being pulled by CGI.

Nevertheless, Hoops is still coordinator for a group planning a Feast of Tabernacles convention for this fall at King's Beach at Lake Tahoe, California. Bob tells us that among those who will be featured speakers are Steven Collins, Kenneth Westby, and Dr. Charles Dorothy. He also told us that attendance is not restricted to members of any particular denomination and that former (and current) WCG members are welcome, as are any others who wish to enjoy the beautiful environment of that part of the country and

the fellowship of friendly Christian people. For details, write: Robert Hoops, 8642 Highway 128, Healdsburg, CA 95448, or call (707) 433-7369 on weekdays between 6 a.m. and noon (California time).

### **"Doc" Martin and Joan Marie Split**

In our March and October, 1985 issues we reported how ex-WCG minister Ernest "Doc" Martin had left his position as head of the Foundation for Biblical Research, and with his new bride, Joan Marie, had started an organization called Associates for Scriptural Knowledge (A.S.K.). Now it appears that Martin's A.S.K. is in hot water. In April, Joan Marie put out a letter to the students of A.S.K. in which she lamented Martin's on-going battle with the bottle, their marital difficulties, and their squabbles over control of A.S.K.

Not to be outdone, "Doc," who was in England when the letter hit, upon his return put out a rebuttal letter. In it, he claims the union was strained by his loyalty to the name Jesus Christ (Joan Marie, he says, prefers "Yahshua"), and her unwillingness to limit her role to that of housewife. He also intimates that it was not he, but Joan Marie, who was having "blackouts." Thus, he writes, it was necessary "to fire her from A.S.K.," but it was really Satan who caused "my beautiful wife (whom I still love very much) to turn against me." Another Dr. Martin letter, dated June 21, gave even more details concerning their troubled relationship. Not surprisingly, the two are now divorced. Martin is still running A.S.K. and Joan Marie is hoping to go into real estate. Their mud-slinging letters make interesting reading for soap-opera buffs. Those interested may write to Joan Marie at P.O. Box 7014, Hemet, CA 92343 and Ernest Martin at P.O. Box 7777, Hemet, CA 92343.

### **FBR Update**

When Dr. Ernest Martin resigned from the Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR) in February 1984, many who had supported that organization from its start in 1974 wondered if it could survive without Martin. After all, for ten years Martin had so monopolized the pages of that organization's publications, many had come to think of Martin as synonymous with FBR. Nevertheless, one-and-a-half years after Martin's departure, the FBR is both surviving and publishing the work of more and more authors.

While FBR publications regularly feature articles by FBR editor Ken Fischer ("The Biblical Significance of Baptism," "The Lord's Supper," "Just Why Should You: Love Not the World?," "The Olympic Scriptures," etc.), the FBR has increasingly published articles by other authors including Joel Bjorling, Peter M. Leschak, Paulos Karageorgi, David Ord, Lambert Dolphin, Gene Justice, William Barclay, Rudy Dykstra, C. Gary Reid, Bernard Dawson, Al Zaizer, Jim Coram, and others. Some of the articles we have found particularly interesting are Gary Arvidson's "The Tetragrammaton" (*Commentator*, Sept. and Oct. 1985), Millo Accaus' "Life and Liberty" (about the abortion issue, *Commentator*, Nov.-Dec. 1985), and "Banquet of the Dispossessed" by Dr. James A. Sanders (Professor of Intertestamental and Biblical Studies, Claremont School of Theology; *Commentator*, Oct. 1985).

The FBR is both nondenominational and nondogmatic, and we've always found them cordial toward us whether we've agreed or disagreed with their published views. Those

interested in biblical studies may wish to be on their mailing list. Their address is: Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102.

## **Alumni News**

Editor: Being able to hear from old friends from our Ambassador College days is one of the real blessings we receive from *Ambassador Report*. In our next issue we'd like to put in an extensive Ambassador Alumni section. If you are an Ambassador Alumnus, drop us a note and tell us a little of what you've been doing since AC. We'd like to hear from you!

Ambassador alumni Bill Moore (Bricket Wood, '69) and his wife Judy (Foster, Bricket Wood, '70) are now living in Omaha, Nebraska where, since earlier this month, Bill has been working as a ticket agent for Continental Airlines and spending most of his free time writing. He recently sent us this letter:

*It's enough to make one believe in Fate - or the hand of God. How else does one explain two miracles in one day?*

*Ever since resigning from the WCG ministry back in 1980, it's been a tough go for us financially. When you're 35 and have virtually no marketable skills, courtesy of Ambassador College's unique educational philosophy, you do what you have to do. In my case, my brother taught me the window cleaning business, so for the next five years I operated a commercial window cleaning business here in Omaha. Call it pride, vanity, ambition, or whatever, but I was determined to not become stuck in the rut of being just another blue-collar worker. But then being just another white-collar worker didn't appeal to me either. What did appeal to me was becoming a professional writer. So, contrary to all the rules, I decided to learn the trade. I read, took classes, did part-time copy writing, and waited patiently for my first big break. Meanwhile....*

*In March 1985, my son Ari, then 13-years-old, developed endstage renal disease, commonly called kidney disease. He had been a promising young gymnast and a good student. Suddenly all that changed and for the next fifteen months, his life would be tied to a dialysis machine, an unbelievably restricted diet, and much frustration. Well, living with a teenage boy who is going through not only all the changes of adolescence, but living from one blood transfusion to the next (many end-stage renal disease victims require transfusions every several weeks because their own bodies have stopped manufacturing red blood cells) can be a maddening and emotionally exhausting experience for the entire family. If it hadn't been for humor and being able to laugh together, I shudder to think what the last fifteen months might have been like.*

*Then it happened, all in one day!*

*June 4, 1986 will be forever etched into our memories. At 4:15 a. m. we received a completely unexpected call from our hospital's organ transplant co-ordinator. I will never forget her words, "Mr. Moore, I believe we have a kidney for Ari. Can you bring him into the hospital right away." It was - pardon the analogy - like waking up Christmas morning to find there really was a Santa and he'd left all the presents you'd hoped for. Ari was instantly awake and eager for the operation - as long as he could take his*

*skateboard with him! (He actually rode it down the hospital corridors just before his operation and his doctor rode it later that afternoon.) Ari had been on the transplant list only 16 days and we were not told who the donor was, but we suspect it was a local 17-year-old girl who was declared brain dead after an automobile accident the day before. The operation, which began about 8:30 a. m. (after Ari's blood was tissue typed and cross matched with the donor kidney) lasted until a little after noon. Although the operation took a little longer than usual, everything went very well. Miracle number one for the day.*

*Miracle number two came about 1:30 p.m. just after returning home for a change of clothing. The telephone rang and it was Peter Carry, the executive editor of Time-Life's Discover magazine, calling to say they had decided to buy an article I had submitted to them several weeks earlier. I cried. Judy cried. My article ["The Secrets of the Black Boxes"] will be in the August, 1986 issue of the magazine. This was my first major freelance magazine article and to have it published in such a prestigious publication is a thrill.*

*In all candor, both miracles came at the best time possible. We were all being drained emotionally and financially to the point of exhaustion. As I write this almost four weeks after Ari's operation, he is doing fabulous. He has all the vigor and life of a growing 15 year-old and now he wants me to teach him to drive! He can eat anything he wants (and he's eating us out of house and home). Of course, he will have to take immunosuppressant drugs like cyclosporine for the rest of his life, or until someone comes up with a means to "Specific immunosuppression." And no kidney transplant is forever... Nevertheless, life for us has definitely taken on new meaning and promise. I even have a chance of getting a story produced for the Disney Sunday Night Movie, but more on that if and when it happens. In the meantime, we are enjoying every minute of our lives, grateful for its miracles. Sometimes things really are the gloomiest just before the dawn.*

*-Bill Moore  
Omaha, Nebraska*

## **Letters**

*Thanks for the April issue of Ambassador Report. As I read of the elaborate funeral of Herbert Armstrong, this scripture came to mind.- "I have thought deeply about all that goes on here in the world, where people have the power of injuring each other. I have seen wicked men buried and as their friends returned from the cemetery, having forgotten all the dead man 's evil deeds, these men were praised in the very city where they had committed their many crimes! How odd!" (Eccl. 8:9-10, The Living Bible.)*

*-Tennessee*

Editor: Thanks for pointing that out to us. And, incidentally, that passage on through verse 11 in both the King James and Moffatt translations is also quite relevant.

*In Vancouver. HWA's passing was almost a non-event. This left my friend's husband (he's*

*in, she's out) bewildered and even miffed. He expected more. When asked about who and what is next, his remark was. "I don't know. You and your friends seem to know more about what's going on than we do."....*

*Here 's a typical event in the everyday annals of the WCG that might amuse you: I have a feisty 92-year-old pal who is the only person in the WCG who has not rejected me since I departed the organization. She has a chronic bladder infection which is very tiring. Her mind is sharp, but she's drained physically by this problem. Anyway, she can't endure sitting through church services so she doesn't go. As it happened, she was not able to appear for Passover in the spring of 1985. They informed her of the "Second Passover" for those who were not at the first. By evening, she's pretty much a rag. She didn't make the second Passover, either. Consider her age and her infection, which is not classified information. She does send money.*

*As the months rolled by, she noticed that mail had stopped coming from the WCG - no epistles, no PT, nothing. At last she phoned to inquire. She was told she had been disfellowshipped and the reason was: "Refusal to keep the Passover." There was no inquiry or follow up and no notification. Just swift, decisive, and of course appropriate action. She is not taking it sitting down, though. She told me she is having the minister over to take him to task over this.*

*This may also interest you. I have associations with some Christians who are active in deliverance ministry. They tell me of a case where a demon being cast out of an individual was commanded to name himself His answer: "Herbert W. Armstrong." There is actually a demon (or demons) going around named Herbert W. Armstrong.*

*-Canada*

Editor: We've heard such demon stories before and, frankly, don't know what to make of them.

*You would think Herbert W. Armstrong never existed from the news in the Pittsburgh, PA area. The only thing that has changed here is that the church got an order from headquarters to combine all the churches into one service on the Sabbath. Four areas will become one now, all in Pittsburgh. This will mean a long haul for some now, but who would voice their disapproval?*

*The report from headquarters is that money matters were not good and all will have to sacrifice. Of course, the sacrifices will come from the ones who can afford it the least.*

*Also, the ministers here in Pittsburgh are again telling the people not to go to doctors. They must be anointed instead.*

*-Pennsylvania*

*My husband joined the WCG in Feb. 1985 and since then my entire life has been in turmoil. I have three children who are 11, 8, and 15... My husband has not worked a day*

*in 11 months, but he has so far managed to "donate" over \$700 in five months. Figure that one out!*

*-New Jersey*

*As my husband has been involved with this cult since last summer, our life has changed much for the worse and I am trying to make him see how wrong this cult is. He has been unemployed for almost four months now because in this area jobs are scarce and as he wants to conform with rules of the cult. I do not think he has much chance of getting a job. Fortunately, I am working full-time, but most of my income is used for all the household expenses, and we also have a baby who is now 20 months old... As far as I am aware, he is tithing over 10% out of his unemployment benefits in order to attend the Feast of Tabernacles at Brighton in October, something he can ill afford to do.*

*-England*

*I've heard of your Report in years past, but never needed it or had your address, until my minister in Atlanta allowed me to come to North Carolina to take a job, and then the minister in North Carolina disfellowshipped me for taking the job. That's when a friend told me of your whereabouts and so I wrote to you.*

*...By the way, the only person in the WCG who helped me during my recent trials was the associate pastor of the Atlanta church, Mr. Gordon Harry, who has since also been disfellowshipped!*

*-North Carolina*

*I really appreciate getting the Report, but nothing surprises me anymore.... I know you wonder why I stay in the church. I have some very dear friends in there that have not gotten wise yet and it would hurt them so very, had. So I will stay in until I get thrown out.*

*...I will say, "Let's talk about the Bible," but no one will. All they want to talk about is going to Petra.... It is comical to hear what they really do believe. I heard one say that they are expecting to leave for Petra in Feb. 1986. Mr. Waterhouse told them they would not have to go through any temptation or tribulations. But [his minister] said they would. They are all confused, but still they believe everything they hear.*

*As you know this church is a secret one. We are not allowed to ask questions. They tell us if there is anything we need to know we will be told...*

*I know of seven people that the local WCG minister threw out of the Baltimore church and more that quit. And one young man shot his head off because he could not take it any more. He had only been baptized a few months before.*

*-West Virginia*

*I've been a member of the WCG since '69 so I've seen a lot of coming and going.... You know, as well as I, we have in this outfit the same format as the "Iron Curtain." We dare not speak freely even to friends. We cannot question. We must be careful that we use the right word and have a certain tone of voice. I do not care to play the "dump sheep" role any more. So may I be put on your mailing list to receive the Ambassador Report?*

*-Alabama*

*Since I am a widow living on my late husband's social security and have a visual handicap, plus an adult retarded son, I am unable to contribute as fully as my heart would like to do, but I pray more and more WCG members will wake up as to what really is going on in that cult of deception, lies and gross errors - including my own children!*

*One of the problems for you, I know, is the fact that those of us who get your newsletter pass it around to others who like to read it for free and refuse to contribute a cent for their own copies. I have stopped doing that and told them to write to you themselves if they are truly interested in what is going on behind the scenes in that marriage-destroying, child-brainwashing, con-artist cult. I saw so much of that going on in my local church, especially the marriage-breakups which were blessed by the ministers to promote unions inside the church (so-called). Leave the mate of your youth and marry someone within the True (ha ha) church seems to be the name of the game these days and seems to be gaining ground steadily every year. God does not break up marriages, but almighty HWA and WCG dictators certainly seem to delight in such practices.*

*Thank God the husband of my youth did not desert me when I was in that mind-control organization, although I gave him a bad time once in a while (trying to convert him) in my stupidity. He hung in there with me because he believed in the vows we said, "till death do us part." At least death took him from me, not Herbert the pervert!*

*-AR Reader*

*Received Ambassador Report yesterday and I find that I am not alone in my thoughts about the Worldwide Church of God. I have been married for 47 years and now my husband is wanting a divorce. I have never been in the church, but he has for the last 16 years and has now met a woman that is a member. He feels that they have something in common and so he wants to call off all the years of our marriage. I can't help but put all the blame of this separation on the church. I'm hoping someday my husband will come to his senses.*

*-Ohio*

*The Plain Truth newsstand program is now quite interesting. They may as well cut it back by 50% or 100%! Here in Winnipeg a lot of PTs are being picked up and destroyed. On the streets and in public parks I have seen large numbers of PTs blowing around in the wind. I even saw a bus-shelter floor literally covered with ripped-up PT's - The Plain Trash reduced to its simplest form.*

*The article "Soviet Economic Crisis" in the Jan. PT is indeed plain trash! It states that the USSR can no longer afford maintaining the East European satellite countries and that eventually the Kremlin would let them go on their own, thus paving the way for a 10-nation United Europe. What ridiculous plain crap! The PT made a 360 degree flip-flop. A few years ago they said, "The Russian Bear moves slowly and ponderously, always ahead, never backwards!"*

*-Canada*

*Years ago, I, too, had been interested in joining the Armstrong church. I wanted to attend Ambassador College, "the happiest place on earth," as well. I contacted ministers in 1977 with the intention of becoming a member, having listened to The World Tomorrow radio broadcasts and having read The Plain Truth magazine and other free literature for nearly six years by then.*

*However, upon meeting the ministers, I instantly developed a very uneasy feeling, as though they were TOO eager to have me join. They repeatedly asked me if I listened to Garner Ted Armstrong every day, and wasn't he wonderful, wasn't he great - which was odd because aren't we supposed to praise and worship God, not people? Now it's plain that the church was undergoing its schism at that time. Maybe the ministers wanted me to side with them against Herbert W. Armstrong. They had an overly familiar "you're one of us now" attitude toward me which I also found offensive. After all, I didn't really know them. And from the conversation, I felt better versed in their own doctrine than they were, which was not the most reassuring sensation in the world for a prospective "believer." Suspicion awakened, I couldn't join.*

*Of all the off-beat sects I could have been interested in, why the one that was to face national scandal less than a year after my attempt to join? Served me right. I liked their slick, contemporary style, their "relevance to today 's world," their attacks on both Roman Catholic doctrinal error and "sentimental churchianity" so much that I didn't bother to do my homework on the Armstrongs themselves. I was too eager to accept everything they said without investigation and that's precisely what folks like the Armstrongs seem to count on to gain converts.*

*Now I know that my relatives are in serious trouble from "Strong-Arm-ism." They're under the Armstrong spell so deeply that it may require the spiritual equivalent of "The A-Team" to rescue them at this point. I do fear for them greatly, but I'm not sure I can help. As you indicated in your newsletters, people caught in HWA's devious trap are not even talking about it, so there's a brick wall to deal with first.*

*-California*

*Thank you for your kind response to my last note and for supplying [former WCG pastor] Keith Thomas' address. After trying to compose a letter to him during spare moments over the past week, I picked up the telephone last night and gave him a call. And. I'm very glad I did.*

*We talked for over an hour and I was pleased to know that he is doing relatively well with*

*good future prospects in business. I was struck by the commonsense approach he had taken to the WCG, eschewing the idea of adding to HWA's fan club and by not encouraging his parishoners to read Mystery of the Ages.*

*I was struck, too, by his description of the church he left behind. I knew there were enough problems back in '78 when I pulled out, but to hear the word on the WCG today is astonishing. The cultism surrounding HWA is incredible, only slightly less so than the seeming approval it is garnering among the ministry. When I was in, there was some effort to disguise WCG theology as "biblical truth" as opposed to just the sage sayings of "God's apostle." How my heart aches at the thought of thousands deceived into believing that this man - or any man - virtually held the keys of the Kingdom in his hands, and that he was to be honored as a great prophet.*

*But even more than this, Mr. Thomas and I both lamented the many talented and bright people - Jack Martin, Gordon Muir, Brian Knowles, Bob Kuhn, Art Mocarow, to name a few "at the top" - drawn into the WCG only to be chewed up and spat out as they become less useful, i. e., less likely to say "Yes, Mr. Armstrong," to every whim of the king of the hill. Added to the talented members of what you so aptly call the "Executive Exodus" are the thousands of people who are church members and who come from rich, varied backgrounds. It's just so very sad.*

*The bright spot among all this is that recovery - and even renewal - is possible. Mr. Thomas - one of the more energetic and self-motivated people I've met (he went back to college and earned an accredited Bachelor's degree in his late 40's) - is but one example; Brenda Denzler is another. From reading Ambassador Report and from contacts with people like Keith Thomas, my own desire to help others caught in HWA's traps intensifies.*

*Equally important, I have come to realize that those who are or were involved in the WCG are people, important to God and important to their fellow men and women. While I've been at times angry at HWA and the WCG for their insidious teachings, I now understand that such anger should and must stop at the people who, like myself have only been pawns in the game to one degree or another. I can only hope that, in some way, my future efforts will be constructive and helpful to the people involved, not just an attack on WCG doctrine.*

*And, John, I owe this understanding - which is part of a continuing process as I seek to evaluate six years in the WCG and its ramifications in my life - to the work you and your colleagues have done. I'm grateful for that work and want you to know you have my personal support and shall have my financial help as I am able. Let me know if I may assist in any other way. Meanwhile, thanks again and God bless.*

*Cordially,  
Mark A. Kellner  
Boston, MA*

*\* \* \* \* \**

One of the really sad things about the "Ambassador Experience" is not simply how many people were abused, but how many really fine people were simply used and discarded. It's a pity Mark Kellner's letter will not be pondered over by the WCG's new leadership.

As we are about to go to press, we have just heard that the WCG's income has taken a significant drop and that Tkach has decided to deactivate a large number of ministers he considers too old, too sickly, or too uncooperative. But as we are out of time and room in this issue, the details will have to wait until next time.

Our thanks for your letters of encouragement and for your kind support of *Ambassador Report*.

- JT

[Next Issue \(AR37\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR37 January, 1987**

### **Tkach Turns Apostle**

No, we're not kidding. Joseph W. Tkach is now an apostle. Or at least, so he thinks. Worldwide Church of God (WCG) ministers increasingly refer to Tkach as "God's Apostle," and insiders say Tkach seems to like it that way.

It is now one year since WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) passed away, leaving Tkach in charge. When HWA died, many hoped that Tkach would moderate the policies of HWA. There have been changes, but as the old saying goes, "sometimes the more things change, the more they stay the same."

Like his predecessor, Tkach enjoys being photographed with the rich and famous. On December 6, Tkach left Sabbath services early to fly to Washington, D.C. where the next day he attended a White House reception honoring actress-comedienne Lucille Ball, singer Ray Charles, and four other entertainers. While there in a reception line, Tkach was able to speak to Reagan for a few seconds. In recent months the "Iranscam" affair has brought the President criticism from both Congress and the press. Tkach, in an outburst of enthusiastic support for Reagan, advised the President to "give 'em hell!" At least some in the WCG have winced at the story, believing the unrequested advice was simplistic and inappropriately phrased. However, when you consider that hell, and how to give it, is something of which the WCG ministry has expertise, perhaps Tkach was really just speaking straight from the heart.

One thing that never seems to change in the WCG is the executive musical chairs routine. A few months ago, Tkach brought his son-in-law minister, Doug Horchak, into headquarters to become assistant to evangelist Larry Salyer, who heads the WCG's Church Administration Department. Things didn't work out for Horchak and Tkach sent him back into "the field." To replace Horchak under Salyer, Tkach brought in Joseph Tkach Jr. from Arizona. A lot of members believe Joe Jr. will one day leapfrog over Salyer to become the WCG's number two man and eventually will be the heir-apparent to the WCG throne.

One WCG bigwig who is now a small wig is Ellis LaRavia. This summer Tkach stripped him of his position over the Ambassador Foundation. Insiders say that Tkach was upset with LaRavia's "inability to control his wife." One day she went into a rage in the church's Hall of

Administration building and then physically assaulted evangelist Larry Salyer. The police were summoned and she was physically restrained. We understand she has since been put into an institution for those with emotional problems. The Ambassador Foundation is now headed by David Hulme, one of the WCG's three broadcasters, and recently ordained an evangelist.

Sometimes it's a little hard to figure out the WCG. In *The Worldwide News* for Dec. 29, 1986, the "Personal From Joseph W. Tkach" column began this way:

What a year of growth this has been!

In fact, the growth has been so rapid that our field ministers, along with the rest of the Work, are at the point that they are hard pressed to support it all.

He then went on to tell the members that the church did not have the \$5 million needed to purchase the building in which the church's Mail Processing Department has been housed for years. He asked the members to contribute to a special building fund (which, of course, is separate from regular tithes and offerings). Tkach also announced in the column that there will be major cutbacks in the church's publishing operations and a ceiling put on the Plain Truth's circulation.

Yes, "what a year of growth this has been!"

There are those who do like Tkach and his style. But not everyone in the WCG is thrilled with his leadership. For instance, it is rumored that the WCG's three broadcasters are unhappy that they cannot preach extemporaneously on the air, as does Garner Ted Armstrong, but are required to read from scripts that must be approved. And former HWA aide, Aaron Dean, in a January 10, 1987 sermon, made certain oblique comments that have been interpreted to mean that he believes Tkach's reign will not be a long one and that Dean, himself, is destined to take on a much bigger role in the WCG.

From our vantage point it is clear that there is not much love in the WCG. We continue to receive letters from current members who complain that the WCG is a cold church. Many non-members make the same observation. In the letters to the editor section of *The Courier* (of Prescott, Arizona) on Oct. 31, 1986 there appeared the headline, "Shocking Lack of Christianity" followed by this letter:

On October 11, 1986, Boy Scout troop 330 arrived at Lake Valley School, returning 4 hours early from a camping trip that was interrupted by a severe thunderstorm and temperatures that plummeted to the mid 40's. Thirty-five boys were cold, wet and some even close to hypothermia. We were confronted by the "*Worldwide Church of God*" who refused to allow the boys inside Lake Valley's gym to get warm, to use the phone, or even to use the restroom! They insisted the boys stay outside in the continued rain so that they would not disturb their services which were not to begin for at least 15 minutes. This, in my opinion, shows a shocking lack of Christianity and compassion for these boys. I am upset and appalled by this "*religious*" organization's undeniable disregard for the safety and well being of our fellow man.

Bill Edwards  
Scoutmaster, Troop 330

**The McNair Versus WCG War Continues**

The old proverb "justice delayed is justice denied" seems to have been forgotten in California. Those who file a lawsuit in this state must routinely wait five years to get to trial. And if the suit is won at trial, there may still be years of appeals if the opposing party is wealthy enough to be able to afford the luxury. Even famed Harvard law professor Arthur Miller has described litigation in the California state courts as "a fate worse than death."

Leona McNair's libel and slander suit against the WCG and two of its evangelists was filed in mid-1979, but the case did not get to trial until the summer of 1984 (see our September, 1984 issue). In August of that year, a unanimous jury awarded her \$1.26 million, but as of January, 1987 the case is still bogged down in the courts. The WCG is presently attempting to get a reversal in the California Court of Appeal. In the meantime, the McNair versus WCG war has continued on a number of other fronts.

---

&COPY;1987 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

For instance, the WCG's legal team, desperate to get something on the scoreboard, came up with a bizarre plan of trying to get Antony Stuart, Leona McNair's lawyer, disqualified from the case for opening mail sent to him by a WCG employee. Not surprisingly, in September Judge Sally Disco threw out that WCG motion.

As we reported last January, Herbert W. Armstrong had originally been named as a defendant in the McNair suit, but the trial court ruled that he should not be a defendant. Stuart appealed that ruling and got it reversed, but only after the trial had ended. It therefore became necessary to plan on a second trial, at which it would be determined what damages, if any, HWA would *personally* have to pay *in addition* to what Leona had already been awarded. Unfortunately, HWA died before being brought to trial or even being deposed. This, however, has not stopped Stuart from aggressively pursuing the case against HWA's estate. Stanley Rader, who in 1979 was HWA's top aide and the WCG's chief counsel and treasurer, has been subpoenaed. Other witnesses will undoubtedly be subpoenaed before the trial, now scheduled to begin August 3. HWA's estate - left to the WCG and its size kept secret - is being represented by lawyer Marcy Byrnes, a long-time friend of WCG lawyer Allan Browne.

As we reported in April, a key witness in all this is Richard H. Sedliacik, the managing editor of the *Pastor's Report* in June of 1979 when the libelous statements about Leona McNair appeared in that publication. Ever since Stuart first subpoenaed him, Sedliacik agreed to cooperate and tell the truth. But the WCG, in its own special way, repeatedly made it clear it did not want him to do that.

In August, 1985 Sedliacik had his *Pastor General's Report* job taken from him. In November, 1985 he was stripped of his "Bible I.Q." column in the *Plain Truth*. In December, 1985 he was informed that he would no longer be doing the WCG's *YES Bible Lesson*. In March, 1986 Sedliacik's *Good News* "Ministudy" was dropped. Through all this, Sedliacik remained loyal to

the WCG, hoped he could remain one of its employees, and was never told that his job performance was inadequate in any way. In fact, with each deprivation of duties, he was actually commended for the quality work he had performed for the church. Yet, step by step the WCG's leaders got their message across - and not very subtly. At one point, Earle Reese, of the church's legal department, told him outright, "The way you answer the questions [from Stuart] will determine what work you'll be doing for the church."

Throughout this entire period there was a stream of letters to Sedliacik from the WCG's legal department attempting to coax him into testifying *only as directed*. (While the WCG's lawyers tried to put a gloss on their nefarious communications, their true motives were all too obvious.) Sedliacik wrote back that he would not testify in any manner that was not 100% honest. (Among other things, the WCG lawyers wanted Sedliacik to testify that evangelist- author Roderick Meredith was "meticulous." Sedliacik disagreed. They also wanted him to testify that the *Pastor's Report* was produced under strict time constraints. Sedliacik disagreed.) The WCG insisted Sedliacik follow the orders of Bruce Armstrong, a pugnacious WCG-appointed lawyer. Sedliacik repeatedly refused. He also informed the WCG in writing that he did not want Bruce Armstrong to represent him. Nevertheless, twice afterwards Armstrong showed up in court attempting to represent Sedliacik. Both times the court would not allow it.

Sedliacik is an honest man, but a sensitive man with very serious health problems. One of his sons also has had serious health problems. Sedliacik repeatedly indicated to the WCG that the pressure from church ministers and lawyers was hurting both him and his family. Nevertheless, the letters, phone calls, and visits continued and took their toll. In April, however, Sedliacik and his wife complied with Stuart's subpoenas, appeared for the depositions, and told what they knew.

*Ambassador Report* attempted for months to get the details of Sedliacik's testimony, but neither he nor the parties to the suit will provide that information. The WCG's lawyers have somehow been able to get the court to seal key documents produced by Sedliacik. And Stuart and Leona McNair adamantly refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, from the court records that are available, and from sources within the WCG itself, we have been able to piece together much of what Sedliacik testified and to draw some conclusions:

- (1) In June of 1979 Richard H. Sedliacik may have been managing editor of the *Pastor's Report*, but he reported to others who had "final edit" authority. Those superiors included Herbert W. Armstrong, the publications's editor-in-chief; Aaron Dean, HWA's personal aide; and lawyer Stanley Rader, the WCG's chief counsel and a partner in the lawfirm of Rader, Helge, and Gerson.
- (2) In 1979 certain WCG lawyers had important oversight responsibilities with regard to what was allowed to be printed in the *Pastor's Report*.
- (3) Reports on the testimony of WCG witnesses at the McNair trial convinced Sedliacik that certain key facts he had relayed to WCG attorneys were not made known to the court, or were distorted in the course of the trial. For instance, in spite of Rader's relationship with the *Pastor's Report* in 1979, church lawyers got him excluded as a defendant in the case.
- (4) As a result of the above, Sedliacik became distrustful of the WCG's lawyers and began to suspect he was being "set up" as a scapegoat. He seems to believe the documents he has held on to are crucial evidence in his own defense. (He's probably right.)

Sedliacik's problems unfortunately did not end with his deposition. A few days afterward, when he arrived for work in his only remaining church position (as *Bible Correspondence Course* editor), he discovered he had been locked out of his own office "for security reasons." Not long after that, the church informed him that he was being put on a leave of absence without pay "for health reasons." The WCG told him they made the leave "without pay" because they had to be "good stewards of God's tithes," but not to worry because he would be remembered in their prayers. What followed for Richard was months of continuing unemployment and stress, with more and more health problems.

Then in November, according to sources close to Joe Tkach, Larry Salyer, the WCG's current number two man, made Sedliacik an offer. As an act of "Christian charity," the WCG would give Sedliacik \$1,200 per week for one year, followed by over \$700 per week for an indefinite period of time. First, however, he would have to turn over the documents he has relating to the McNair case, with an admission that they belong to the WCG. Of course, it is not difficult to see how such a crudely fashioned arrangement could prove to be not only an unenforceable "contract" for lack of consideration, but could even bring against Sedliacik allegations of perjury, larceny, conversion, or extortion. Sedliacik is apparently convinced the offer was not made in good faith and has wisely refused to sign on the dotted line.

Among the papers the WCG wants from Sedliacik are: office memos from Stanley Rader, Aaron Dean, and others, showing their working relationship with Sedliacik and his subordinate position; a *Worldwide News* statement that the *Pastor's Report* was a newsletter with Herbert W. Armstrong as editor-in-chief; and the draft of a June 25, 1979 *Pastor's Report* article by Raymond McNair with hand-written editing by none other than Stanley R. Rader (he preferred that HWA be referred to as "Christ's Apostle," not "God's Apostle").

The Pasadena *Star-News* of April 12, 1986 had an article on the McNair case with this statement: "Church attorneys claim Sedliacik stole 'confidential' documents from the church. In a written statement, however, Sedliacik said the documents never would have been missed if the lawsuit had not been pursued." A few days later, however, church lawyer Ralph Helge wrote the *Star-News* saying the WCG never said Sedliacik stole the documents! But if that's the case, then the papers are rightfully Sedliacik's. (Then what's all the fuss about, Ralph?)

While the battle over Sedliacik was being waged, the WCG, apparently unhappy with the California courts, took the McNair war into the federal courts where Ralph ("We Never Lose") Helge and his legal team recently were handed one more defeat.

The WCG has claimed all along that the libelous statements made against Leona were made "in the context of an ecclesiastical debate," and were therefore protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The California Superior Court that tried the case rejected that argument. In 1985, the WCG sued Leona (and the California Superior Court) in U.S. District Court, claiming that the trial court in the McNair case had violated the church's constitutional rights. The U.S. District Court threw the case out on *Younger* abstention grounds. The WCG then appealed to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. That appeal was argued and submitted April 9, 1986 and the three-judge panel handed down a published 11-page opinion on December 5.

Judges Mary M. Schroeder, Betty B. Fletcher, and Donald S. Voorhees clarified 28 U.S.C. Sec. 1257 and held that the U.S. District Court, as a court of original jurisdiction, has no authority to review the final determination of a state court in judicial proceedings. The only court in which to obtain review in such situations is the United States Supreme Court. The judges affirmed the

district court's decision and concluded that, although the U.S. District Court below had dismissed the WCG action for other reasons, the U.S. District Court lacked subject matter jurisdiction and should have dismissed the case on that basis. We don't know what overpriced legal scholar wrote Worldwide's brief, but we understand that most of Leona McNair's brief was researched and written by Christine Spagnoli, then a law student at Loyola of Los Angeles.

Incidentally, the April 9 oral arguments before the Ninth Circuit Court were heard in that court's new Southern California headquarters - the Vista Del Arroyo building, just one short block from Ambassador's Pasadena campus. Those who've read our earliest editions (ARs 2-4) may recall how in 1977 the U.S. government had planned to give away that multimillion dollar property (formerly a resort hotel turned veterans' hospital) to Ambassador College after it had been declared "surplus" government property. Ambassador College withdrew its application for that government handout only after a much publicized, months-long taxpayers protest (led by *Ambassador Report*) which resulted in higher government scrutiny of the Armstrong organization. The U.S. government later realized it really did need the property. After a major renovation, it became in 1986 a highly useful federal court and office building, complete with a fine law library (which the AR editor now enjoys using quite frequently).

On April 9 the three judge panel allocated one-half hour to each side in the McNair case to present their oral arguments. Representing Leona McNair was Antony Stuart whose presentation was calm and concise. Representing the WCG, and doing his usual Eddie Haskell imitation, was Allan Brown who attempted to teach the judges about WCG theology. For some odd reason, Judges Schroeder and Fletcher seemed more interested in legal matters and repeatedly interrupted Browne's discourse with pointed questions. To one question on the legal doctrine of collateral estoppel the best Browne could do was a smile and, "Well, it's been a while since I've been in law school, your honor...." Judge Donald Voorhees just sat quietly with a faint grin that may have indicated amusement at something or other. Ralph Helge declined the court's offer of coming to the lectern for treatment similar to Browne's.

Outside, the sun shined brightly; the birds sang. Through the courtroom windows one could see the newly planted flowers that trim the spacious lawn. And in the court building there were some who recalled the part *Ambassador Report* played in the history of the Vista Del Arroyo.

At precisely the end of Browne's allotted half-hour he was summarily cutoff mid-sentence by Judge Mary Schroeder with a crisp, "Your time is UP." Observing the beautiful decorative trim near the edge of the courtroom ceiling, your editor thought, "What a nice old building," and tried not to smile too much.

---



The beautiful Vista Del Arroyo building in Pasadena, California. (Photo by Gary McCarthy.)

---

### **Are the U.S. and Britain the Israel of the Bible?**

American and British-Israelism, or the theory that the Israel of Bible prophecy is the English-speaking nations of today, remains a major tenant of the WCG and many WCG-related sects. In our September, 1982 issue we ran a letter by N. H. MacMichael, Keeper of the Monuments at Westminster Abbey in London, who stated that the famous Coronation Stone most probably came from Perthshire, not Palestine, and, contrary to HWA's claims, was not designated by Abbey officials as "Jacob's Pillar Stone." One of our readers, who has studied the subject and saved copies of supportive documentation, took exception to MacMichael's views and wrote us:

I was raised in England and I went to a Church of England school. I well remember being taught as a young lad by my teachers in that school, being taught very matter of factually, that the stone under the Coronation Chair was by history and tradition reputed to be "Jacob's Pillar Stone" - we were even shown the scriptures in the Bible to indicate that belief. There was at that time great interest in such things in England because of the coming Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. About three years ago I was back in England and Westminster Abbey - I looked through many of their books and booklets (not those written by religious organizations) and I still found in those booklets put out by official Westminster for the tourists the statements that tradition says this stone was Jacob's Pillar Stone - the stone that he anointed.

The reply of N. H. MacMichael to the person in Australia does not surprise me at all, as it would seem that all official persons connected with the royalty are instructed to deny any connection with the throne of Britain being the throne of David.

-Pastor Keith Hunt  
The Biblical Church of God (Canada)  
P.O. Box 964  
Oshawa, Ontario L1H-7N1  
Canada

Another reader informed us:

*The Covenant People's Advocates* has from time to time published annotated bibliographies on British-Israelism and has given short life sketches of well-known men who adhered to this belief. The address of this publication is: Box 68, Velma, OK 73091. This group has also established a library in Oklahoma devoted exclusively to the concept of British-Israelism.

While British-Israelism and the WCG's somewhat modified version of it seem to be gaining in popularity, there are many organizations that have put out articles and books refuting the theory. One Ambassador alumnus recently wrote us:

#### **Where Are the Lost Gentiles?**

I was discussing something from the Bible recently with a woman at work, when she terminated our conversation with, "Well, you can prove anything from the Bible." I had to agree with her. I know I've heard some strange doctrines "proven" from the Bible.

How about "proving" reincarnation from Matt. 11:11-15 and Mal. 4:5-6? Malachi does say that Elijah the prophet would be sent, and Matthew quotes Christ as saying (v. 14, King James version), "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Therefore, John the Baptist was Elijah reincarnated and you'd *better* receive it! Or so this argument challenges.

I like the way Christ dealt with one of the strange doctrines of the Sadducees (Matt. 22:23-28). The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection (that's why they were sad, you see), and I'm sure they could have quoted many verses from the Old Testament that would "prove" their doctrine. (Ecclesiastes *must* have been their favorite book.) In verse 29 Christ tells them that they don't understand the scriptures or the power of God, and then proceeds to quote one phrase that they must have known by heart (v. 32). (Could God be much of a God if He would allow the three men, whose very names He uses to identify Himself, stay dead forever?)

Another strange doctrine is British-Israelism. This one I know about, for I used to believe it. British-Israelism is a *great* doctrine - it appeals to our vanity. We Americans (and the British) are spoiled - we like to be on the winning team. We know we're special and if we can identify with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel we're in. The big problem is that to do this we're going to have to get rid of Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Have you ever read Romans? Romans 11? Romans 11:11?

Now if we compare British-Israelism with Paul's writings (Rom. 11:11) the question is (if I can formulate it): If salvation is come to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, yet the Gentile nations who proclaim Christ are really the Lost Tribes, then they are not Gentiles, and therefore the Gentiles must be lost and we now have to identify the Lost Gentiles to know who is going to provoke Israel (who, don't forget, *are* the Gentiles who proclaim Christ and are prosperous, *but* can't provoke Israel to jealousy because they are Israel but

don't know it, but still can't provoke Israel anyway, because they are Israel even if they don't know it, and.... So the provoking Gentiles are really lost! (Is that right? Have we found the Lost Ten Tribes, but lost all the eligible provoking Gentiles in the process?) Provoking isn't it!

See what I mean? Did *you* get lost? Are we sounding like the Sadducees? Are we serious?

All kidding aside, this doctrine has lots of problems, but its clash with Paul's ministry to the Gentiles is one of its biggest shortcomings. If we don't realize that Paul had a special commission to take the good news of God's salvation by grace to the Gentiles (the real Gentiles), that Israel's rejection of their Messiah was the open door for God to deal directly with the Gentiles, and that Paul is God's Apostle during this time of the Gentiles with a special gospel *not* dependent on the old covenant with Israel, we are going to miss a large part of what is called the New Testament.

It seems that Paul's special ministry has been lost in the traditions of Christianity and very few recognize the real importance of these times of the Gentiles. I discovered the significance of Paul's writings from the literature of the Concordant Publishing Concern. Concordant publishes a New Testament, numerous books and booklets on biblical subjects, and a bimonthly magazine called *Unsearchable Riches*. In the January, 1936 issue of this magazine is the very best article on the problems with British Israelism that I've ever come across.

Concordant has the most respectful, honest, truthseeking approach to the holy scriptures that I've ever read (II Pet. 1:20). I would really hope that you would check into the Concordant Publications for yourself. Their address is 15570 West Knochaven Drive, Canyon Country, California 91351.

-Clyde Walters  
Pasadena, CA

Editor: If you found Clyde's comments about the "provoking Gentiles" confusing, well we did too. We asked him to clarify it for us and he said it was meant to be confusing (a touch of humor?). He adds:

The real confusion comes from the use of the term "Israel" in HWA's writings. He stated that most people mistakenly think that the Jews are Israel, but that in reality the Jews are only part of Israel which is composed of the Jews and the Lost Ten Tribes. However, he additionally claimed that the real Israel of today, both racially and nationally, are just the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Now, whichever of his definitions of Israel you choose, you can't reconcile it with Romans 11:11!

The WCG's view of the Israel-Identity theory is put forth in its free booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, which has gone through a number of versions over the decades. Some can recall one version that predicted the fall of the United States in the 1970s. Now it appears that the latest edition has again modified older editions. Former WCG member Richard A. Marson, who publishes the newsletter *Reality Report*, wrote us:

I have taken careful note of the fact that the Worldwide Church of God has continued to strongly promote the American and British-Israel theory since the death of Herbert Armstrong and, in fact, has published a new version of the book dated 1986. Although the latest version is very close to the 1980 edition, it is interesting to compare the two and note a tendency toward becoming less emphatic about various matters: In the new book we read: "Why are the world's best minds often unseeing...." The old book did not include the word "often." In the old book we read: "They are totally unaware! Why?" This statement is left out of the new version. In the old book Armstrong talks about the ancient cities of the Bible

and says: "He named every city of consequence.... And He foretold precisely what would... happen...." In the new book the word "every" was left out. There are many other examples of a similar nature, including the proclivity to push the fulfillment of prophecy into the indefinite future.

Since this American/British-Israel theory is still being strongly promoted by the church, I feel it is important to people who are still searching for truth to carefully examine the evidence. For those who would be interested, I have copies of my book on this subject available, complete with notes to the 1986 edition of their book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. The title of my book is *American and British Israelism Debunked*. It can be obtained by writing Reality Report, 4224 N.W. Market Street, Seattle, WA 98107. Price, \$6.95.

Finally, a former WCG minister and Ambassador College professor, who now teaches history at a California college, sent us this interesting letter:

It might interest you to know that the Jan./Feb. 1986 issue of the *Biblical Archaeology Review* displayed a group photograph of Ambassador College student volunteers at the City of David dig on its color cover. As has been quite common with news releases about the dig, Ambassador is not mentioned by name, but the presence of a smiling Ron Kelly in the middle of the picture makes the identification pretty certain. You will be interested to notice, too, that unlike Ambassador's other dig participants of the 1970s, on whom Herbert W. Armstrong imposed a working-dress code of shirts for men and sleeved shirts or blouses for women, these volunteers of the '80s - now that all "liberal" influences have supposedly been expunged - consist of bare-chested men, and women not only displaying bare upper arms and shoulders, but attired in what one particular Ambassador preacher of righteousness once condemned as "boob tubes."

Incidentally, although the excavations in Jerusalem near the Temple Mount and in the Jewish Quarter unearthed many spectacular architectural remains, one particular early discovery of these Ambassador-supported digs has gone largely unnoticed. In the September 1975 issue of the *Biblical Archaeology Review* Dr. Magen Broshi of the Israel Museum published an article announcing "Part of Ten Lost Tribes Located." With all the interest in the Ten Tribes at Ambassador, and with the fact that this was one of the first studies drawing extensively on evidence unearthed by the excavations of Professor Benjamin Mazar and Professor Nachman Avigad, both of whom were receiving generous financial support from Ambassador, it is interesting that this article went rather unnoticed there. Based on a more detailed and technical paper he had published elsewhere, Dr. Broshi pointed out that according to evidence obtained from these digs, at the Assyrian conquest of the ten-tribe northern nation of Israel (721 B.C.) there was a large flight of people from these "lost tribes" to the neighboring kingdom of Judah, which was then at peace with Assyria. Broshi stresses that "substantial numbers" of the population were involved. Herbert Armstrong, of course, has insisted that these people, or their descendants, ended up in N.W. Europe. This is the only archaeological excavation I know of which has unearthed evidence so completely contradicting a major doctrine of its financial benefactor. For that matter, how many of the enthusiastic volunteers realized they were helping uncover material that put their beliefs into question?

-Gunar Freibergs, Ph.D.  
Pasadena, CA

Editor: For information about the Sept. 1975 edition of *The Biblical Archaeological Review* write: The Biblical Archaeological Review, 1317 F Street Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20004.

## **Yahweh Cultists Convicted of Murder**

We sometimes get letters from individuals who seem convinced that Sabbath-keeping, belief in

Israel identity doctrines, or knowledge of "sacred names" are sure signs of conversion or deep spirituality. We doubt, however, that that is so. Notice the following, which appeared April 18 in the *Hutchinson News*.

Survivalist cult leader Michael Ryan testified at his murder trial that "Yahweh" spoke to him directly, and that he could read minds. Ryan, 37, and his son, Dennis, 16, were sentenced to life imprisonment for the 1985 killings of James Thimm, 26, and 5-year-old Luke Stice.

"Yeah, I knew what... people were thinking.... It was weird at times," said Ryan, who denied that he was crazy despite an insanity plea entered on his behalf. He was unconcerned about his fate because "whatever happens is what [Yahweh] wants to happen."

Ryan, who, according to testimony, controlled the lives of the two dozen members of his cult, said he was often reluctant to carry out Yahweh's edicts, but he believed that if you disobeyed, Yahweh would "take it out on someone you love." Former members of his group told of being whipped and kept in chains. In killing Thimm, Ryan said he was "doing what I felt we was told to do, whether I wanted to or not."

Ryan said he began smoking marijuana, which he claimed was justified by the Bible, to soothe chronic pain resulting from a 1978 truck accident. In 1981 he converted to the racist religious tenets of James Wickstrom, former "director of insurgency" for the right-wing Posse Comitatus.

Ryan said his group stole farm animals and equipment, at Yahweh's bidding, to buy food and weapons - as much as 50,000 rounds of ammunition at a time. He said the group only stole from farmers with insurance.

Experts in non-mainstream religions are puzzled by the "talking through the arm" ritual allegedly taught to convicted murderer Michael Ryan by Posse Comitatus leader Jesse Wickstrom. "The arm stuff is used by various groups associated with the Identity Movement [British-Israelism]," said attorney Randal Rehmeier, who helped prosecute Ryan.

In the ritual, a questioner puts one hand on another person's shoulder and the other hand on that person's upraised wrist. When a question is asked, Yahweh signals an answer by forcing the person's out-stretched arm to either rise or fall; a rise means yes, a fall, no. Researchers believe that the ritual is a form of divination, but are unsure as to its origins.

In the spring of this year, the *Omaha World-Herald* ran a long series of articles on these "Rulo Farm murders," as they were called. Witnesses testified to the verbal abuse, beatings, drug use, polygamy, homosexuality, divination, torture and murder that engulfed the Ryan cult with its iron-fisted dictator who believed in Israel-identity and claimed to be following Yahweh's commands. Convicted along with the two Ryans was cult-member John David Andreas who was sentenced to 30 years on related charges. Andreas formerly attended WCG services in Omaha where his parents are "charter members" of that WCG congregation.

### **Materials of Interest**

*One More Sunday* by John D. MacDonald is a novel about greed and exploitation in big business religion. Some who have read this novel see parallels to the WCG and the Armstrongs. In fact, they are even mentioned by name on pages 29, 30, and 245. The best seller is available in many bookstores and libraries or for \$4.45 (in paperback) by writing to: Fawcett Mail Sales, Dept. TAF, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022.

\* \* \*

The Bible Sabbath Association, Fairview, OK 73737 has recently published a new edition of its *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups*. Christians interested in seventh-day Sabbath observance will find this \$7.00 directory a valuable source of information on Sabbatarian churches, schools and publications.

\* \* \*

*From Sabbath to Sunday* by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi is without question the most thorough historical study we've ever seen on the replacement of Sabbath keeping by Sunday observance in early Christianity. Dr. Bacchiocchi, now a Seventh-Day Adventist college professor, was the first non-Catholic to graduate from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome (summa cum laude) and this work was actually published by the Pontifical Gregorian University Press in Rome (apparently causing some to speculate on whether the Vatican would some day consider the reestablishment of Sabbath-keeping among Catholic Christians).

Anyone interested in the seventh-day Sabbath or the history of the early Christian church will find this 369-page book a welcome addition to their library. A copy of *From Sabbath to Sunday* may be purchased for \$12.95 by writing to Biblical Perspectives, 230 Lisa Lane, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103, U.S.A.

\* \* \*

Joel Bjorling has informed us that his book *The Churches of God, Seventh Day: A Bibliography* should soon be off the presses. This bibliography, which includes a history of Sabbath-keeping groups in America, a study of the issues involved in the Sabbath-observance controversy, and a study of the issues involved in the "sacred names" controversy, will be over 300 pages long and will sell for \$35. For more information write: Joel Bjorling, RR 2, Gilson, IL 61436.

\* \* \*

Giving & Sharing, 4673 Onondaga Trail, St. Charles, MO 63303-7328 (tel. 314-447-8773). This small organization, headed by former WCG member Richard C. Nickels is one we think many of our readers can benefit from. Mr. Nickels describes Giving & Sharing as "a nonprofit mail order bookstore serving the Sabbath-observing Churches of God around the world." They carry most Bibles and religious books in print, and ask for a suggested donation to cover their wholesale cost of materials. Giving & Sharing puts out a very forthright flyer on Nickels' background and beliefs. Their listings include numerous works on the history of Sabbatarian churches and a short, but interesting, biography of Herbert Armstrong. We think that Bible students, even should they disagree with Nickels' theology, will benefit from contact with Giving & Sharing as he makes available Bibles and Bible helps at well-below retail prices. Write to him for details.

\* \* \*

Joseph Hopkins, the author of *The Armstrong Empire* (1974) recently sent us Christmas greetings. We were glad to learn that he, his wife (a professional musician) and four grown children are all well and prospering. Dr. Hopkins continues to teach at Westminster College in Pennsylvania, is minister of visitation at First Presbyterian in New Castle, Pennsylvania, and is

very active as an international tour guide. This year alone he traveled to Britain, Ireland Kenya, and the Sough Pacific. Dr. Hopkins continues to follow the WCG's activities and has put together a new four-page outline of WCG beliefs and history. Those interested in a copy should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Joseph Hopkins, c/o Westminster College, New Wilmington, PA 16172.

\* \* \*

The Cult Awareness Network (CAN) is an organization devoted to alerting the public to the danger of destructive cults. CAN keeps tabs on hundreds of cults and reports its findings in a monthly newsletter. CAN also publishes some excellent papers giving advice to parents or relatives of those who have become ensnared in a cult. Not surprisingly, CAN considers the WCG to be a cult, and over the last few years, CAN and its 58 regional offices have often cooperated with the AR. Those interested in learning more about this organization should write to: Cult Awareness Network National Office, P.O. Box 608370, Chicago, IL 60626.

\* \* \*

The April-June, 1986 newsletter of the Personal Freedom Outreach carried an article by M. Kurt Goedelman called "The Plain Truth? - or - Nothing of the Truth? A Christian Look at the Worldwide Church of God." The address for Personal Freedom Outreach is P.O. Box 26062, St. Louis, MO 63136.

\* \* \*

Our Christian friends at *Cornerstone* magazine have informed us that their 1987 *Directory of Cult Research Organizations* will soon be coming off the press. It should be around 50 pages and will contain the names and addresses of evangelical countercult ministries and nonevangelical cult research organizations and experts. The directory sells for \$4.95 and may be ordered from: Comerstone Press, 4707 N. Maiden, Chicago, IL 60640.

\* \* \*

Former WCG member and Ambassador alumnus Harold Hemenway has produced an eight-page booklet entitled "Rejected Knowledge!" which shows how the WCG has followed the Roman Catholic Church and adopted some of the latter's theological errors. He has also written a 14-page paper entitled "What Does the Bible Say About Obeying a Man?" which analyzes the primacy of Peter doctrine from the viewpoint of scripture. The booklet is available for 500 and the larger paper for \$1.50 by writing to Harold Hemenway, 4036 S. 128th St., Seattle, WA 98168.

\* \* \*

Long-time AR supporters and Ambassador alumni Des Griffin and Karen Anderson-Griffin have moved their family and their publishing operations out of the smog of Pasadena and into the clean air of rural Oregon. They report that they and their children, Dan and Karmonde, are thrilled with their new home. Their new address is Emissary Publications, 9010 S.E. St. Helens, Clackamas, OR 97015 (phone: 503-824-2050). Among the books they distribute are the Armstrong exposes by Robinson, Tuit, McNair, and Hopkins. Write to them for details.

\* \* \*

Steven Collins continues to turn out articles that could benefit many in the WCG. Of particular interest are "Petra: Place of Safety or Latter-Day Death Trap?" and "How Many Tithes in Tithing?" For a price list of available materials, write Steven M. Collins, 8500 101st St. Circle, Bloomington, MN 55438.

\* \* \*

We were totally dumbfounded to learn that a fair number of former WCG members are now embracing something called the "Serpent Seed Doctrine." Those holding to this teaching believe that Satan had sex with Eve, producing "Satan's seedline," and that the seedline is now composed of the Jews and/or the Blacks. We actually know of some who now take this teaching so seriously that they become physically shaken whenever near anyone who happens to be Jewish or Black. The "Serpent-Seed Doctrine" has been given an appropriate critique in an article recently published by the Association for Christian Development, P.O. Box 4455, Rolling Bay, WA 98061. We strongly recommend that those caught up in this new doctrine write the Association for this article and give it prayerful consideration.

\* \* \*

Tony Badillo of Xavier Press has discontinued his inewsletter *Newsgrams* because of a lack of public support. However, he continues to distribute other materials. Badillo still has copies available of his excellent book on tithing (\$9.95). His 30-page article "Born Again - But When?", which completely takes apart HWA's doctrine on that subject, is available at \$3.00 per copy. Those interested should write to Xavier Press, P.O. Box 11074-AR, Dallas, TX 75223.

\* \* \*

Restoration Fellowship, headed by former Ambassador College professor Anthony Buzzard, publishes scholarly papers on theological matters, including challenges to a number of WCG doctrines. Their paper "Elohim does not mean God in Two Persons" is one we found most interesting. Their address is Restoration Fellowship, Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061, U.S.A.; or in Europe: 91, Hughendess Rd. Marshalswick, St. Albans, Herts., England.

\* \* \*

The Restoration Fellowship's strict monotheistic views are not without critics. One is ex-WCG member Bill Shrewsbury who has written an open letter on the subject. He also has a paper on tithing. They are available on request by writing him at S.R. 3, Box 615, Eustis, FL 32726.

\* \* \*

Author Gene Justice wrote us some months back that he still has copies available of his booklet *The Israel Identity Syndrome* (\$4) and the research paper "The Sabbath for the People of God" (\$1.50). Also, he has a free brochure listing other works on biblical topics. For a copy of the brochure send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Gene Justice, P.O. Box 6801, Birmingham, AL 35210.

\* \* \*

*The Shofar* continues to shock. Publisher and editor Robert C. Williams is convinced that almost all of the WCG's doctrines are in error. For instance, in the June-July issue of his newsletter Williams argues that the Sabbath should begin at sunrise, not sunset. The address for *The Shofar* is P.O. Box 7399, Phoenix, AZ 85011.

\* \* \*

Former WCG minister Don Prunkard and his wife Jeanne write that they are no longer associated with any church organization, but do have a small publishing, taped-message, and letter-answering ministry. As they have since the mid-70s, the Prunkards maintain some strong views on the WCG. Their address is 8302 Brunswick Ave. North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443.

\* \* \*

Oscar Murray is a former WCG member who, since leaving that church, has produced a number of research papers on divorce and remarriage, the theology of Paul, and other biblical subjects relating to the WCG. Mr. Murray wishes to share his research with others. For a list of what he has available, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: P.O. Box 124, Millersburg, OH 44654.

\* \* \*

Former WCG member Harold W. Strong is blind, but that has not deterred him from being a dedicated student of the Bible. Via tape recordings, Mr. Strong has given some very sharp observations about the personality of Herbert Armstrong, the WCG's doctrinal errors, and about certain WCG policies that callously ignore the handicapped and burden government welfare programs. Mr. Strong can provide information on such topics via cassette tapes to those that are interested. For his convenience, questions to him are best put on cassette tape. His address is: Harold W. Strong, 111 East 7th Street, No. 108, Sioux Falls, SD 57102.

\* \* \*

In the last few years, a number of our readers have stated that they have been helped considerably by the publications of *The Christian Verdict*, P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, CA 92028-0904. One reader wrote us: "Verdict helped me initially with the Sabbath question, but later even more with their articles on biblicism. I now believe they are right in saying that, in a sense, we've made a god out of the word. We should be emphasizing and revering the Word of God, not the word of God. Even Jesus, when quoting from the Old Testament, did not always do it accurately. The Bible has its place, certainly, but it was not intended to be worshipped as we have done."

### **Groups of Interest**

Instituto Cristao De Pesquisas  
(Christian Research Institute)  
Rua 24 de Maio 116, 30 Andar,  
Sala 4 01041 Sao Paulo, SP Brazil

This organization is interested in following the WCG's activities in Latin America. They would like to hear from anyone with information on the WCG's activities in Spanish-speaking or Portuguese-speaking countries.

\*

Feast of Tabernacles  
(Robert Hoops, coordinator)  
8642 Highway 128  
Healdsburg, CA 95448.

We understand that those who attended this group's convention at King's Beach this year were quite pleased to hear messages from a number of old friends including Charles Dorothy, Ken Westby, Don Smith, and Al Carrozzo. Mr. Hoops tells us that tapes of the sermons are available. Write to him for details.

\*

First Century Church of God  
(Carl M. Schaeffer, pastor)  
P.O. Box 3646  
Napa, CA 94558

\*

One church that has a fair number of former WCG members is the Seventh Day Baptist Church. For information write: Seventh Day Baptist Center, P.O. Box 1678, Jonesville, WI 53547.

\*

The Church of Israel  
Rt. 1, Box 6233  
Schell City, MO 64783

\*

Universal Church of God  
(Ray Lampley, minister)  
315 E. College St.  
Longview, TX 75601

\*

Longview Church of God  
P.O. Box 6712  
Longview, TX 75608

\*

The Church of God  
(John Trescott, minister)  
P.O. Box 722  
Anadarko, OK 73005

\*

Although the title "prophet" was not among the many he heaped upon himself, Herbert Armstrong saw himself performing a prophet-like function of "warning the world." In this role, Armstrong found it necessary to spend many millions of dollars in going to world leaders with his message. One former WCG member we know of also believes he has a God-given, warning message task, but he is able to accomplish his mission with only a very tiny fraction of the budget required by the WCG operation. The man's name is John Kerly. And through his "Messenger of the Covenant" ministry, he gets his message to world leaders in the most direct and economical way imaginable - he simply writes to them. In this straight-forward way, he has actually contacted more world leaders than Herbert Armstrong, himself. We've seen copies of some of his letters, and the responses, and quite frankly, we've been left almost speechless. We believe the big spenders of the WCG could learn a thing or two from messenger Kerly and suggest they write him at "White Rock," P.O. Box 1506, Gatlinburg, TN 37738.

\*

Hossca Harrison, P.O. Box 1559, Boulder, CO 80306. Years ago we knew him as WCG member Daryl Harrison of Sacramento, California. But about five years ago, while vacationing in Hawaii, Daryl was in a "drowning accident," went into a coma, and had a near-death experience. As recounted by Harrison, it was during his recovery that a celestial being named Jonah, who Harrison describes as a "master" and "teacher of righteousness," began communicating to, and through, him. Jonah has since given Harrison the name "Hossca," which supposedly means "the shining one." Hossca now tours the country giving seminars on such topics as "Atlantis - Yesterday and Today," gives private readings at \$75 a visit, and has a tape program. We'd normally discount such phenomena as less than claimed. However, we did notice in a lengthy article on Hossca in the Boulder, Colorado *Sunday Camera* of Feb. 10, 1985 that Seattle psychotherapist David Calof says Hossca is "more psychic than psychotic" and claims he has healing powers. We have yet to see the evidence.

### **An Important Comment on "Groups"**

Attempting to keep track of the ever increasing new WCG-offshoots, the offshoots of the offshoots, and the many other groups to which disenchanted WCG members turn is becoming increasingly difficult. We remind our readers that we do not have the resources to check into each listed group, and that mention of a group - even if accompanied by favorable comments - *DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN UNEQUIVOCAL ENDORSEMENT OF EVERYTHING THEY DO OR TEACH.*

For instance, in our October 1985 issue, we mentioned the Church of God, the Eternal (CGE) headed by ex-WCG minister Raymond Cole. Our comments were somewhat favorable because of glowing reports from certain current CGE members. As soon as that issue was mailed, however, we received letters from a number of former CGE members who said the leadership in that organization was extremely oppressive, uncaring, self-righteous, and hypocritical, and that we were extremely naive. Perhaps that is so, but unless we have information to the contrary, we

still feel it's preferable to think the best of others and give the benefit of the doubt whenever possible. Richard C. Nickels of Giving & Sharing (see above) offered us this criticism:

I have been associated with a couple of WCG spinoff organizations, and am intimately aware of others. Without judging any specific group, I can truthfully say that some WCG offshoot groups are as bad or worse than the WCG. Rather than "quietly ministering to the flock," as you say, some have, like the WCG, left a wake of shattered individuals suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). I know of several ex-members of offshoot groups who have given up all religion, twice burned by the same sort of thing.

The dangerous offshoots haven't gained notoriety because AR and other media haven't covered the story. There is an "Ambassador Report" but not a "WCG Offshoot Report." I continue to receive correspondence from hurt individuals of various ex-WCG groups, and do what I can to help.

I'm sick of hearing of ministers, WCG or ex-WCG, who don't practice what they preach. Isn't this really what the AR's message should be, exposing the hypocrisy of those in the WCG or ex-WCG, and not promoting a repeat of the same errors?

Mr. Nickels does have a point, but still there are many AR readers who ask that we keep them informed of new WCG-related groups and movements. We think there is a value to mentioning such organizations and we hope we can continue to do so. But please keep in mind that unlike the WCG, whose headquarters are in our own "backyard," many of these groups are located in distant states and we do not have the means or the inclination to check into all their activities. That being the case, listings should not ever be viewed as endorsements of everything these organizations do or teach.

## **Alumni News**

One of the nice things about publishing *Ambassador Report* is being able to hear from, or about, many AC alumni we've known over the years. Unfortunately, not all that we hear is good news.

We were saddened to learn of the death of WCG Preaching Elder **Mike Hechel** (Big Sandy, 1966). Mike's wife, Kay (Big Sandy, 1962-66) told us he died from colitis which had developed from the stress he experienced while serving in the WCG ministry for over 19 years. She wrote us:

As of this date, five months since Mike died, not a single person from the WCG has ever called to see how my three teens and I are doing. The local pastor who replaced Mike has never called. The lack of Christianity in the church now is unbelievable. I have been around the WCG for close to 30 years and spent four years at AC. To be treated like this is very sad.... I have removed myself from their presence and I have come through this ordeal only with the help of a lot of friends. I am happier now and more at peace than I have been in years. Until recently, I did not realize how the WCG was depressing us and keeping us from being true Christians. It is very sad to know of the many lives - including my husband's - that they have destroyed with their total domination.

-Mrs. Kay Hechel  
203 White Church Lane  
Summerville, SC 29483

Former WCG minister **Stan Suchocki** (Bricket Wood, 1969) recently wrote us:

After leaving Ambassador College employment in 1980 I began working as a cost engineer at Santa Fe Braun in Alhambra, California. But in August I was laid off and **Betty** [nee **Rupp**, Pasadena, 1966] and I decided to move back to western New York and look for work here.

Spiritually speaking, Betty and I are active lay members in non-denominational Christ-centered churches wherever the Lord leads. While in the Pasadena area, we were members of Lake Avenue Congregational Church for two years after leaving the WCG and then were led to become active members in the Cornerstone Christian Fellowship pastored by Jim Johnston. I highly recommend this fellowship to anyone wishing to hear anointed messages about the good news of Jesus Christ. Every meeting is blessed and you sense the Holy Spirit's presence. Meanwhile, Betty, our two kids, and I are waiting to see what the Lord is doing in our lives in this western New York area. We are expecting a miracle.

**Barbara Davisson** (Big Sandy, 1965-1969), now Barbara Woodbury, recently wrote us that in 1982 her husband Vance lost his job as a ranch foreman after being severely injured in a horse accident. After the accident, Vance - whose parents had donated their family ranch to the WCG in the '60s - was able to find employment only as a janitor and bus driver for a small elementary school. To help support their four children, Barbara also started working as a school bus driver and cleaning homes between bus runs. She wrote:

At AC we were ingrained with the teaching that mothers such as myself would never have to work outside the home. And, of course, Christ was supposed to have returned five years before it was necessary for me to help make ends meet. At AC the most important thing was learning how to live, not how to make a living. I had four years of AC but I am barely qualified for any job. I am not the only one who feels this way. Even loyal WCG-member alumni I've talked to feel that an Ambassador education is not worthwhile in the world in which we live.

Many Ambassador alumni complain, with good cause, of the inadequacy of their AC education. And we've known some for whom the "Ambassador experience" played a major role in later severe depression, drug or alcohol addiction, chronic unemployment, etc. There also appears to be as many divorces among former-WCG-member alumni as among current-member alumni. Nevertheless, we've noticed that those Ambassador alumni who've been able to psychologically overcome the "Ambassador experience" and then obtain an accredited degree or marketable work skills are often quite successful both in their careers and in their personal lives.

**Marvin J. Plakut** (Pasadena, 1979 and Student Body President there his senior year) writes:

From 1979 to 1982 I was the student Housing Officer at AC in Pasadena. In that position I worked regularly with Raymond McNair, Rod Meredith, Dick Ames, etc. During that same time I also diligently studied philosophy, biblical scholarship, and history, and became "enlightened." Pasadena was then rapidly descending into the severe regimentation mentality of Raymond McNair's Bricket Wood and by 1982 I could no longer tolerate the "double agent" role I had to play. I was "kicked out," but by December 1984 I had my MBA from Cal. State, Los Angeles. I am now Director of Support Services for a large health organization here in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Linda Lance** (Pasadena, 1971-1973) taught Home Ec. at Imperial Schools and in 1973 married **Steve DuCett** (Pasadena, 1973). They left Worldwide in 1974. In 1975 Steve enlisted in the Air Force, served four years as a pharmacy technician in Idaho, earned a second Bachelor's Degree (Psychology), an Associate's Degree in Pharmacy and a Master's in Counselling Psychology. He currently works for Dow Chemical selling agricultural chemicals in Iowa and is a captain in the Army Reserve. Linda teaches pre-school, and they have one daughter Laura, who is 12.

Many who attended Bricket Wood in the late '60s will remember **Stan Potratz** (class of 1969) for his unabiding interest in just about everything having to do with agriculture. Stan recently wrote us:

**Ann** [nee **Morrell**, Bricket Wood, 1969] and I separated in 1980 and I have since married a local girl. My wife Jean and I own and operate a mail order business called Premier Sheep Supplies, Ltd. We import specialized products from England, New Zealand, and Australia for resale nationally to U.S. sheep producers. I travel regularly in the northern U.S. and overseas about every two years. The WCG left me disillusioned, but not bitter, and I would be very interested in meeting old friends again. My address is: RR 1, Box 159, Washington, Iowa 52353.

In 1974, WCG employee **Andrew McCooey** (Bricket Wood, 1974) and **Margaret Bond** (Bricket Wood, 1970) had just been married and were on their honeymoon when, "in the typically sensitive style of the WCG," Andrew's employer made him "redundant." Margaret wrote: "At the time we thought it was a disaster, but it wasn't. Andrew went into law and after studying and doing articles for five years qualified as a solicitor in 1979. He is in general practice now." Margaret writes that she still finds time for reading and painting despite being the mother of two daughters, assisting Andrew in his work as a lawyer, and pursuing her own legal studies. The McCooey's left the WCG in 1981 and now live in Sittingbourne, Kent, England.

Many of our readers will remember **Jeff Calkins** (Pasadena, 1973) for his decade's worth of articles in *The Plain Truth* magazine. Calkins was among those AC graduates who, realizing the severe limitations of an unaccredited degree, saw the value of pursuing a legitimate college education. While working for *The Plain Truth*, Calkins earned an M.A. in political science at Cal. State, Los Angeles in 1978. He then went on to study law at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles where his achievements included the Dean's Service Award, the West Publishing Co. Award for General Scholastic Proficiency, membership in the St. Thomas More Honor Society, and an editorship with the Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review. Calkins graduated magna cum laude in 1982, is currently a member of the California Trial Lawyers Association, and is with the Santa Ana, California, lawfirm of Lemkin and Kutinsky. His wife **Mary** (nee **Marcussen**, Pasadena, 1973) remains a WCG member.

**Marc D. Tollefson** (Pasadena, 1976) had two years of accredited college work before coming to AC and although he comes from a family of lawyers (his father was a judge), he always wanted to be a dentist. So after Ambassador, he completed his (accredited) undergraduate work at the University of Washington and then went on to get his D.D.S. at that University's dental school. He left the WCG at that time. Marc now is in private practice in Tacoma, Washington. He and his wife Barbara have three children.

**Theresa Gordon** (Pasadena, 1966-1969), a CPA for some time now, recently wrote us: "This summer I received my Ph.D. from the University of Houston and accepted a position with the University of Idaho as assistant professor of accounting."

This past summer, **Gary de Jager** (Bricket Wood, 1970), his wife **Roberta** (nee **Mitchell**, Bricket Wood, 1972) and their three children, stopped in Pasadena for a few days on their way back to Australia from a six-month stay in Britain. Gary holds a position as tertiary lecturer in computers at Queensland Institute of Technology in Brisbane, Australia (and still maintains his interest in squash, chess, and classical music). The de Jagers left the WCG in the mid-70s.

**Allan de Jager** (Pasadena, 1969) and his wife **Sheena** (nee **Kenworthy**, Pasadena, 1969) live

in Brisbane, Australia where Allan is director of a medium-sized computer company. They have four children.

As a WCG employee in the early '70s, **Harry Eisenberg** (Pasadena, 1969) "began to see the writing on the wall." He applied to Pepperdine University (one of the few accredited universities that would accept an AC undergraduate degree) and earned a Master's in history in 1973. Sheepskin in hand, Harry fled the WCG coop and wound up in Washington, D.C. where for a time he was quite successful as a Savin copier salesman. However, at that time, his marriage to **Deanne** (nee **Cihal**, Pasadena, 1968-1970) ended in divorce. (Deanne has since remarried and lives in New York.)

The divorce and a renewed interest in religion spurred Harry to emigrate with his two children to Israel where he lived for four years. But the murder of one of his close neighbors jolted him into realizing, as he puts it, "that I wasn't God's instrument to reform Israeli society and I was happy to return home."

After short stays in New York and North Carolina, Harry returned to the Los Angeles area. Having a strong desire to be a screenwriter, he enrolled in a writing seminar at UCLA where he learned of plans to revive the old Art Fleming TV game show "Jeopardy!" Harry writes:

I contacted the producers to apply for a writing job and with all the other applicants was asked to submit one "game board" within 48 hours. Wanting the job pretty badly, I submitted two. We were basically rated according to how many "good" questions we submitted, and having submitted twice the requested number, I had more acceptable questions and was hired. The show has done very well. We are presently the second-highest rated of some 200 syndicated shows and this year our writing staff was nominated for an Emmy award.

Harry lives with his two children in Saugus, California, and is now engaged to marry Debby Fleming, formerly of Houston, Texas (and never in the WCG).

### **Attention AC Alumni!**

Since August, we've received more AC alumni comments than we have room for in this issue. But we intend to continue the Alumni News section and will include many more next time.

Aside from the fact that we enjoy hearing from, and about, old friends, we think the Alumni News section is important for two reasons. First, current Ambassador students who read the AR benefit from the experiences of alumni. Second, we think case histories help all of us to get the "Ambassador experience" in proper perspective.

Unfortunately, we are often unable to tell some very remarkable stories. All too often we hear from Ambassador alumni who have gone on to real success, but say, "Don't put it in the AR. I don't want anyone to know I was ever a part of the WCG." Frankly, we think that's a little silly. Here's why: (1) The WCG is not the only group in the world that has problems. Many people, if not most, at one time or another in their lives get involved in some less-than-perfect (or downright crazy) church, movement, political party, or government operation of which they are later embarrassed or ashamed. But that's life. We all make mistakes. Why make our involvement with Worldwide a bigger problem than it is, or was? (2) Those who read the AR understand the WCG enough so that when they read of an alumnus with problems, they understand. And when they read of success stories, they know that such success came against

great odds. (3) The WCG wants you to hide your story! We know of many WCG "leaders" who regularly tell the lie that all alumni who have left the WCG are "under a curse." Of course, if you're an Ambassador student who rarely, if ever, has any contact with an exmember alumnus, it's easy to be duped by such nonsense.

So why not give the current students at AC and us a hand? If you've ever spent any time at Ambassador College as a student or faculty member, we'd like to hear from you. But please - type or print clearly, include dates of AC attendance, campus, maiden name if you're a married woman, and concisely give us a few highlights of your life since AC. Just use the above Alumni News section as a guide to the kind of news our readers would find interesting.

\* \* \*

Our apologies for the long delay since our last issue in August, but circumstances made it impossible to get out an edition in the last quarter of 1986. Although we published quarterly for years, in 1986, as in 1985, we were only able to get out three issues. We hope this year we'll be able to get back on our quarterly schedule, even if one or two issues must be a little shorter than usual. Our thanks to the many readers who wrote us recently, encouraging us to keep publishing. And our special thanks to those whose generosity made this issue possible.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR38\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR 38 April, 1987

### Tkach Rewrites HWA's Healing Doctrine

Joseph W. Tkach, coronated as the successor to Apostle Herbert Armstrong (HWA) little more than a year ago, has just made the most monumental change in church doctrine in the Worldwide Church of God's 53-year history. Declaring that Christ had revealed "additional new truth to His church," Tkach, "on the authority of Jesus Christ" established a new healing doctrine that is the exact opposite of what HWA had taught for over five decades (*The Worldwide News*, Mar. 23, 1987).

While we commend Mr. Tkach for his courage and honesty in changing one of the WCG's flawed dogmas, we take issue with his statement that the WCG's revised healing doctrine is "new truth." While it is possible that Mr. Tkach only recently discovered this "new truth," the early New Testament church certainly understood the proper roles of physicians and divine healing, and the mainline Protestant and Catholic churches have had an essentially correct understanding of doctors and divine healing for decades. And as early as 1974 all of Mr. Tkach's "new truth" was discussed heatedly in the WCG's doctrinal committees and was known to hundreds of ministers and church personnel, some of whom were fired for insisting the church recognize this "new truth" along with the real truth about Pentecost, tithing, and divorce. In fact, David Antion, the WCG's director of church administration and the field ministry in the early '70s, wrote a widely circulated paper in 1975 containing the same material Tkach's article on healing "revealed." Also, in 1974, the Foundation for Biblical Research released a detailed booklet (*Healing, Medicine, Physicians*) that explains the same "new truth" Tkach discovered plus much more, and it is estimated that 20,000 WCG members and former members read it.

We realize Mr. Tkach couldn't afford to say it from a church politics standpoint, but, instead of implying that Christ had just revealed new, additional truth on healing to the WCG, he should have admitted the following: HWA taught heresy on the subject for over 50 years and, even when told of the suffering and death caused by the major flaws in his teaching, HWA absolutely refused to consider any changes to his doctrine. The many ministers who knew better were unable to reverse this heresy until now.

A lot of our newer readers must be asking: "So the church modified their healing doctrine. Who cares?" To answer that, let us first explain what the WCG taught on healing and then show how that teaching affected human lives. David Antion's doctrinal committee paper of 1975 ("A Study and Summary of the Doctrine of Healing") summed up the old WCG position well. His paper noted seven tenets underlying the old doctrine:

(1) It is God's will to heal each and every disease or sickness and He makes this promise in the Bible. (See Psa. 103:3; Heb. 13:8; Mal. 4:6; James 5:14.)

(2) Healing is the forgiveness of sin. Therefore since only God can forgive sin, only God can heal. Healing cannot come by any other means.

(3) One of God's names is "God, our Healer" (Ex. 15:26). Since it is part of God's name that He heals, it is *idolatry* to trust (and by extension "use") *any other* means to cure sickness. (See II Kings 1 and II Chron. 16.)

(4) Healing is the forgiveness of sins through the stripes of Christ. Therefore not to trust God for healing is to reject the sacrifice of Christ and to make oneself unworthy to take the Passover!

(5) Faith - it is according to your faith that you will be healed (Matt. 9:29).

(6) We must repent of physical sins just as we would repent of spiritual sins in order to receive forgiveness. (See John 5:14.)

(7) It is sin to administer or to accept drugs since Rev. 21:8 says that "sorcerers" (Greek *pharmakos*) will have their part in the lake of fire.

Herbert Armstrong stated the following in *Does God Heal Today?*, his authoritative booklet on the subject written in 1952:

Here's God's instruction to you, today, if you are ill. If we are to live by every Word of God, we should obey this Scripture. God does not say call your family physician.... He does not say, call the doctors and let them give medicines and drugs, and God will cause the medicines and drugs and hope to cure you. Yet that seems to be the way many professing Christians believe, because it's what they practice. Instead God says call God's ministers. And let them pray, anointing with oil... (p. 19).

But what if that alone didn't work? The little booklet answered that one too:

Don't pay any attention to how you feel, or what you see, after you have called upon God for healing. Just know you are to have it - and that's that! (p. 20.)

Garner Ted Armstrong was even more fanatical in a *Good News* article (June 1964, pp. 4, 22):

To rely on any foods, supplements, medicines, drugs, knives, or even on fasting, for healing (and none of these can, ever have, or ever will heal!) is to break the commandment against idolatry!

The effects of these now-admitted heresies were devastating to the church members who adhered to them. Over the years we have received hundreds of letters from members who saw loved ones die in agony or suffer needlessly because they feared to consult physicians or take medicine. One Oregon reader wrote:

We watched a person in the WCG waste to death rather than go to a physician. Another young person died of appendicitis rather than going to see a doctor. I sit here in continual pain and hemorrhaging because years ago I was "afraid" to visit a physician, and today I can't afford it.

Herbert W. Armstrong's own wife Loma died without proper medical treatment and suffered needlessly due to the stupidity of his heretical teachings on healing. Yet during the last decade of his life HWA surrounded himself with physicians, nurses, medical advisers and every form of medication available in a futile effort to preserve his physical life, all the while refusing to change his healing doctrine for the church (see our issues of Dec. 31, 1981, p. 2; and Jan. 1983). Members refused vaccinations and didn't carry health insurance. Strangely, though, while members avoided aspirin, they

swallowed vitamin pills by the millions.

---

&COPY;1987 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

In his recent major article on healing, Tkach writes: "Jesus was deeply compassionate, empathizing with the suffering of humanity. He 'was moved with compassion' toward the multitudes and healed their sick." When you read the above paragraphs, you can't help wonder which Jesus Herbert Armstrong and his cohorts have been praying to and following all these years. How, in God's name, could these arrogant men (HWA, Garner Ted Armstrong, and evangelists Hoeh, Meredith, McNair, etc.) claim to follow a compassionate Jesus and still harden their hearts to the cries of the sick and afflicted? How? - especially when for over 12 years the truth on healing and physicians has been at their fingertips. Oh, they knew better! Of course they did. But pride, arrogance, and a big paycheck had a higher value than did other people's lives. Perhaps with Mr. Tkach in charge the church's hardline approach to dealing with its members will soften, and mercy and compassion will be the new watchwords.

Whatever the case, church members will benefit from the WCG's new understanding of healing. Tkach's material, no doubt influenced by the research of David Antion and the Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR), points out, as did both Antion and the FBR, that Luke was a beloved physician in the New Testament and that "God nowhere in His Word commanded Christians to avoid doctors, to avoid checkups, to avoid medicines, inoculations, or any surgical operation." He goes on to say: "God is our protector and deliverer. Yet does He expect us to avoid calling the police if we hear a prowler in our yard?" Antion, in 1975, wrote: "Is healing totally the prerogative of God? We know that one of God's names is 'God our Healer'... He is our Protector, Provider, our Banner. But we use police protection, security guards, protective helmets, goggles, and seatbelts. We buy insurance. We don't think that this violates or is committing idolatry."

In a real slap at HWA's old teaching Tkach states:

A person can even refuse to seek medical attention because of vanity - a desire to appear somehow more spiritual.... But fear, vanity or self-righteousness is not faith. To die "in faith" without seeking medical attention because of fear, vanity, or self-righteousness would be nothing more than self-delusion.... God does not expect us to just sit down and leave everything up to Him. He has given us minds and He expects us to use them.... Physicians are only mortal men and can only work with the laws God designed to speed, enhance or aid recovery. God has never condemned that. As healing is not a "test of righteousness," neither is going to a physician a "test of righteousness." It does not show lack of faith in God's ability to heal and does not prevent God from performing a miracle....

Let's realize that one kind of medical procedure is not intrinsically more righteous or less sinful than another.... Special diets or supplements are just as physical as surgery, radiation or chemotherapy. One is not more spiritual than another, though some may have more side effects than others (*The Worldwide News*, Mar. 23, 1987).

Let us rejoice with Mr. Tkach and the WCG over this new enlightenment and hope more new truths will be acknowledged in areas that directly affect people's lives.

## The TV Evangelist Wars - Not Enough Sheep to Go Around?

1987 has not been a good year for American TV evangelism. For months now the U.S. news media has reported with unrelenting intensity on various TV preachers who have been hit with accusations of immorality, fraud, and financial irresponsibility.

First there was evangelist Oral Roberts who early in the year told his television audience that God would "call him home" (that is, take his life) if they did not send him \$4.5 million by March 31. That fund-raising tactic got Roberts a lot of flak from the press, but it also brought in \$3.2 million. As Roberts' deadline drew near, however, he was still \$1.3 million short of what he claimed God was demanding. So he told his flock that he would go into a room high up on the "Prayer Tower" at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa to fast and pray, presumably so God would spare his life. That exercise, although carried out briefly, proved redundant when a Florida dog-racing promoter, who candidly admitted he thought Roberts needed psychiatric help, came forward with the \$1.3 million ransom needed to stay Roberts' execution. (One can only wonder how many people were disappointed by the dog-racer's generosity.)

Roberts' dramatics hurt the image of TV evangelism, but that image was tarnished ever further when it became known that Tammy Faye Bakker, wife of Pentecostal preacher Jim Bakker and co-host of the religious "Jim and Tammy Show," was admitted to a drug-rehabilitation clinic because of a serious drug-abuse problem. To make matters worse, shortly afterward, her preacher husband resigned from their religious organization, the PTL (for "Praise The Lord") Club, because of accusations of personal immorality. Then, almost daily, those vague charges were fleshed out with more and more lurid details from the news media.

First Bakker claimed he had only once, in 1980, committed an indiscretion in an attempt to get his wife jealous during a low point in their marriage. (It later came out that this low point was when Tammy became romantically involved with a country-western singer.) Bakker tried to portray his fling as a 15-minute episode during which he was so nervous he was unable to perform. But when the "victim," Jessica Hahn, a tall, slender, 27-year-old came forward with her side of the story, Bakker changed his. He attempted to portray Hahn, who was a 21-year-old church secretary at the time of the incident, as an experienced woman who "knew all the tricks." But Hahn later countered that the supposedly 15-minute fiasco had really been an hour-and-a-half session in which she was drugged, forced to perform oral sex on Bakker, and then was turned over to another evangelist for more sex.

While Bakker, in seclusion at his Palm Springs-area home, has tried to give the impression that his moral failings were limited to one incident only, *The Nation* (April 4, 1987, pp. 419-420) insinuated that local police knew that Bakker "used to put on a blond wig and consort with hookers." To further complicate the Bakker scandal, the preacher claimed that as a result of his affair with Hahn, he fell into the trap of paying blackmail in a futile cover-up attempt. But as more facts surfaced, it became clear that this "blackmail" was really a legal settlement arranged through lawyers to ward off a lawsuit by Hahn.

One would have thought that because of the nature of the Bakker scandal, other TV preachers would have avoided all contact with it. Not so, however. With the exception of TV evangelist Pat Robertson, who is running for the United States Presidency, almost all of the top TV religious personalities have gotten into the act. Smiling Robert Schuller and Oral Roberts, down from his tower, have allowed themselves to be interviewed repeatedly on the matter and have come out with statements in Bakker's defense. And evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, who some accused of being behind Bakker's public humiliation - and for ulterior motives - was quick to publicly condemn Bakker for, not only his personal lifestyle, but for the style of his ministry. (It's not the first time Swaggart has publicly condemned other preachers. Marvin Gorman, a New Orleans evangelist who says he once had an affair but repented, claims Swaggart hounded him out of the ministry with unfounded accusations of multiple adulteries. Gorman is now suing Swaggart for \$90 million.) It is interesting that Bakker's PTL

network dropped Swaggart's programs last year after Swaggart began endorsing author David Hunt, whose book *The Seduction of Christianity* strongly criticizes many evangelists, including some who are friends of Bakker.

Most prominent, however, among those interjecting themselves into Bakker's affairs is Rev. Jerry Falwell, who has stepped into the fray to become the new chairman of PTL. Oddly, however, Falwell is a Baptist and PTL is Pentecostal. Because the two denominations have not seen eye to eye on many doctrinal matters, Falwell's move has made many of his own followers wonder about the purity of his own motives. While "The Jim and Tammy Show" (now with a new name and new hosts) is ranked only 13th in the ratings among religious programs, the PTL organization has a \$129 million per year income and substantial real estate holdings, including a 2,300-acre theme park, Heritage U.S.A., which draws 6 million visitors per year. (To supplement her income, Tammy Faye sold recordings - 15 albums-worth of her singing religious songs - and had her own line of cosmetics, jewelry, and panty hose. We're not sure if Falwell will be involved in the marketing of these products.) But more significant, perhaps, is PTL's ownership of a cable television network. In the *Los Angeles Times* (April 11, 1987, Part II, p. 3), reporters Russell Chandler and John Dart pointed out that "Falwell is the only top electronic preacher who doesn't have a satellite network and thus has to syndicate his programs." Of course, with Falwell now the chairman of PTL, that may change.

In writing about the "pulpit wars," the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and other publications have all commented that much of the current chaos in the electronic ministry seems to be due to too many preachers trying to share too few viewers. While television evangelism is big business (about \$1.3 billion per year), the number of viewers interested in a religious product is not unlimited. In recent years, many TV ministries have experienced lower ratings and declining revenues. Here is what Todd Mason and Scott Ticer wrote in the April 6 issue of *Business Week*:

The concept of evangelists in need of white knights is a jarring one, but broadcast evangelism always owed as much to Adam Smith as to the Apostles. From the early days of radio, evangelists paid up front for airtime and relied on salesmanship to raise the necessary contributions. These days, though, too many evangelists are chasing too few faithful. "The evangelists have done something even Coke couldn't do," asserts Arthur C. Borden, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, an accrediting organization. "They have saturated the market."

That market is huge - about \$1.3 billion. No longer confined to Sunday mornings, groups like PTL and Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network use satellites to feed all-day programming to cable systems and independent broadcasters. Bakker's PTL had revenues of \$129 million last year. CBN revenues probably top \$200 million.

These empires rest on a very small audience by commercial-television standards. A 1985 study by the University of Pennsylvania determined that only five million Americans watch an hour or more of religion per week. The typical viewer is a blue-collar woman at least 50 years old. The growing flock of evangelists is carving this limited audience into ever-smaller pieces. Even top-rated Robert Schuller, the mellow heir to Norman Vincent Peale's positive thinking, is sagging in the A.C. Nielsen ratings. Last year, Schuller's revenues fell \$6 million short of his target of \$42 million, according to his producer, Michael C. Nason. "We had to cut our budget last year. We're not getting the revenues."

Despite these problems, the demand for airtime keeps building. Dallas ABC affiliate WFAA could fill every morning with religious programming, says President David T. Lane. "There is that much demand, but we won't do it. It's overkill." Meanwhile, evangelists must contend with competing programming, such as the ubiquitous homeshopping shows.

*Newsweek* (April 6, p. 20) gave this insight:

[Television preachers] tend to come from the same background as their audiences: rural, relatively low income, often somewhat alienated from mainline America. The viewers, says the Rev. William Fore, executive director of communication for the National Council of Churches, "feel they are on

the short end of things," and they find order and promise in the televangelists' messages. The preachers, he believes, begin their careers wanting to establish true ministries but fall victims to their own success and a kind of Faustian bargain: to expand, they need ever more viewers, ever more air time and ever more money to buy it. In time, the money becomes an end in itself and the appeals more blatant. Falwell has encouraged his followers to use their savings and even borrow to send him money. Swaggart warns that if he can't buy air time, "then people will die and go to hell by the thousands."

No matter how bad the allegations against Jim and Tammy Bakker, our guess is that within a couple of years they will be back on the air. Most people who support such organizations are either very forgiving or very blind to reality. Long-time readers of the *Report* know that Garner Ted Armstrong's past makes Jim Bakker seem like an angel. Yet GTA's TV program continues on the air. And even though the documented private life of Herbert W. Armstrong made even GTA seem like a saint, Herbert Armstrong was never taken off the air, and the program he started is thriving as never before. It's a strange world, isn't it?

### **World Tomorrow Rises in the TV Ratings**

How does the WCG's "World Tomorrow" fit into the TV religious picture? Amazingly, just one year ago "The World Tomorrow" was not even among the top fifteen religious programs on TV. But after HWA's death, a change in the program's format boosted it in the ratings. Today "The World Tomorrow" is ranked number four among TV religious programs by both the Nielsen and Arbitron rating organizations (*Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 25, 1987, p. 29). (See page 4 for a chart showing how television's top religious programs are currently ranked.)

"The World Tomorrow" program's high ranking among religious shows doesn't mean it commands a very large viewing audience when compared to other popular TV programs. For instance, "The Cosby Show" was seen in 28.4 million homes for the week ending March 23, according to Nielsen's ratings. This means the Cosby show's audience was 50 times larger than "The World Tomorrow" program's for that period. And even the 66th-rated show was seen in 8 million homes. Looked at another way, "The World Tomorrow," on 236 TV stations, is drawing between 2,300 to 4,500 viewers per station on average - not a very impressive number when you consider many of these stations are in major metropolitan areas with millions of potential viewers.

WCG contributors perhaps ought to ask themselves if church officials are making wise use of their tithing dollars by pouring millions of dollars into TV programs in hopes of capturing some of the 5 million Americans who watch at least one hour a week of religious shows, when over 230 million Americans are not even tuned in. *U.S. News & World Report* (April 6, 1987, p. 63) reported that "evidence suggests that the big television ministries direct fewer of their dollars to humanitarian and missionary programs than do the traditional churches." This statement certainly applies to the WCG.

The WCG takes in more money every year than any of the big televangelists, including Bakker's PTL Club. Yet even though there are between 10,000 to 30,000 homeless people within a 10-mile radius of Ambassador College campus in Pasadena, the WCG virtually ignores the homeless and instead pours millions into concerts for the rich and TV programs talking about the end of the world and the sad state of humankind. And like Bakker and the other televangelists, the WCG's leaders wallow in wealth, live in quarter-million-dollar homes, and dine in the finest restaurants. One cannot help but wonder what good it does the homeless to hear (if they have access to a TV set) that "the end is near" and "billions live in misery." But the WCG has always been a church full of people who like to preach at others from a safe distance rather than have to deal one on one with the poor, blind, and naked of this world.

### **WCG Teenagers on Trial for Murder**

Fourteen-year-old Brooks Wilson Trew of Lake Forest, Washington will go on trial July 19 for the murder of Kevin W. Wisman, a 28-year-old North Seattle resident. Wisman was shot to death on the

morning of July 13, 1986 and his body was discovered the following day by a friend. Police discovered Trew's wallet at the scene of the crime, and after an investigation Trew, then 13, and a friend, David Richard Mills, age 14, were charged with premeditated murder. The parents of both Trew and Mills are long-time WCG members and the two boys became acquainted through church activities.

Mills has already gone on trial and in December was found guilty of first-degree murder. According to court testimony from Mills, he and Trew planned the murder as a way of getting revenge against Wisman for having previously lured them into sexual acts. On the evening of July 12, the two youths, accompanied by an unnamed 11-year-old boy, went to Wisman's apartment. As before, Wisman provided them with alcohol and sexual acts were performed. According to statements the boys made to police, as Wisman then lay face down intoxicated on his bed, the two teenagers massaged his back. It is alleged that Trew quietly pulled out a .22 caliber revolver, put it to the back of Wisman's neck and killed him with a single shot. The three boys then fled the scene.

According to the *Seattle Times* of July 22, 1986, Mills had been a friend of WCG member Charles Evino Harris, who in 1985 was convicted of murdering two women, crippling a third, and attempting to murder a fourth individual during a shooting spree (see our June, 1985; October, 1985; and January, 1986 issues). During Harris' trial, Mills' father testified how he and his wife once "thought it would be nice if our sons could get together [with Harris] on a weekend or something, sort of like a big brother, spend some time teaching him things." However, according to testimony given by the unnamed and youngest of the three boys, teenager Mills once talked of how Harris had actually taught him guerrilla warfare and how to kill people.

Accomplice Mills, who has already been sentenced, was tried as a juvenile. Under Washington state law those convicted in juvenile court must be released by their 21st birthday. Accused triggerman Trew, however, will be tried as an adult. David Compton, one of Trew's defense lawyers, presented testimony to the effect that Trew is a troubled youth obsessed with war and death - a Rambo fan who is desperately in need of help. But Judge Norman Quinn, in ruling that Trew be tried as an adult, said that no one has given him a clear idea of how long it would take to cure Trew of his emotional problems, and should Trew reach 19 and still be resistive to treatment, he would regret having kept the case in juvenile court. Mills and Trew are the youngest individuals ever charged with first-degree murder in King County, Washington. And Mills is the youngest person in King County ever convicted of that crime.

## **HWA Remembered (Part II)**

During the '50s and '60s "The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong" ran serially in the *Plain Truth* magazine. Then in 1967, the episodes covering HWA's life to 1934 were combined to form one 510-page book, *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Volume I*. (This volume was revised and reprinted in 1973, but after a few years the WCG ceased sending copies of it to the public.) Volume II has never appeared, but some months after HWA's death in 1986, the WCG issued another revision of Volume I of the *Autobiography*.

The new edition opens with HWA's personal crest (some wonder about its symbology) and contains many previously unpublished photographs of HWA as a young man. Some reveal an arrogance typical of HWA in later years, but never before seen in photographs published in official church publications. The new Autobiography is worth looking at, but how truthful is the text? In the past, Garner Ted Armstrong has referred to his father's 1967 *Autobiography* as "two-thirds fiction." We suspect the new version may be no better. Here is what one of our readers wrote us after reading the new *Autobiography, Volume I*:

Many times HWA said he would never dignify accusations with a reply. But he did! With reference to page 8 of your April 1984 issue of *Ambassador Report*: "That was the year [1933] HWA began

abusing his own daughter. Is it any wonder he hasn't slept well since?" Note pages 546-547 of the new edition of his Autobiography: "The year and three months (Dec. 1931-Feb. 1933) spent in Astoria, averaging perhaps less than five hours sleep per night - with one ordeal of three days and three nights with no sleep - had left me in a condition which made it difficult to get to sleep at night."

I checked the September 1960 PT, page 5, and did not find that explanation in the original version. He inserted it in the first chapter not covered in the old Vol. I, at a time frame of late March 1933.

### TOP TV RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS

EVANGELIST	A.C. Neilson		Arbitron		No. TV Stations
	Rating	Viewers	Rating	Viewers	
Robert Schuller, "Hour of Power"	1	1,277,000	2	1,729,000	172
Jimmy Swaggert, weekly program	2	1,046,000	1	2,080,000	287
Oral Roberts, "Expert a Miracle"	3	814,000	3	1,116,000	199
"The World Tomorrow" - Worldwide	4	560,000	4	1,054,000	236
Richard DeHaan, "The Day of Discovery"	5	449,000	5	663,000	157
Jerry Falwell, "Old Time Gospel Hour"	6	438,000	6	547,000	186
Kenneth Copeland, "Believer's Voice"	7	367,000	7	534,000	152
D. James Kennedy, "D. James Kennedy"	8	363,000	8	527,000	105
"Insight" - Paulist Productions	9	315,000	15	273,000	44
Pat Robertson, "The 700 Club"	10	309,000	9	468,000	137

Also among the top 15 programs: George Vandeman, "It Is Written," of Newbury Park, Calif., and Fred Price, "Ever Increasing Faith," of Los Angeles.

Chart from the *Los Angeles Times*, Part 1, Mar. 28, 1987, p. 29. These figures were ranked from the "sweeps" period of last November.

---

There are many, many sentences omitted in the new version, sometimes whole paragraphs and sections. In their place are a few new paragraphs. For instance, he omits some of the references to his having visited Baptist ministers.

On page 426 of the new edition, he omits the fact that it was Taylor, an ex-SDA minister, later a "pentecostal" minister who wrote articles against the Sabbath (pages 410-411 old 1967 edition, also omitted), who first suggested that HWA be ordained (page 398, old edition). On page 427, new edition, he omits the fact that he was ordained so that he could join Taylor in the campaign at Eugene (p. 399, old edition).

He deleted references to the "Sardis church," as well as references to the work GTA is doing.

It is interesting to note that the persecution he writes about did not start until 1933, and then it seemed to be universal. The ministers of the Church of God knew he was not one of them.

On page 567, he writes that Elder Dugger had invited him to join their church, but "I never did *formally* join it." The word "formally" is new.

Not new, but interesting, is the comment on page 635, "All of us at Eugene church... severed all connection and effort at cooperation with those who had proved themselves willing to serve Satan and their own personal greed, and to injure the very work of God!" This was in August 1937, when HWA's ministerial credentials were revoked. He must have known it was due to his no longer being the husband of one wife, as his god had given him his daughter....

-California

The new 610-page *Autobiography* is available for free by writing to the Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, CA 91123 or by calling their toll free number: 800-423-4444.

### **Alumni News**

Former WCG writer **Robert Gentet** (Pasadena, 1962) now lives with his family in Wichita, Kansas and works for Boeing Airplane Co. His wife, **Margie (Eaton)**, Pasadena, 1962-63) is an architect. They have two daughters: Rochelle is studying at Wichita State University, and Renee is majoring in chemical engineering at Trinity University in San Antonio. Besides working for Boeing, Mr. Gentet also writes about science and religion for *World Insight* magazine. Old friends can write him at 653 Harding St., Wichita, KS 67208.

After 20 years in the WCG, **David Summerfield** (Big Sandy, 1970) was "marked" in 1982. David writes us that since leaving the church he has "lost many 'friends' but has gained Christ and new friends. I no longer tithe but do help the needy and am blessed far beyond what I was in the church. There is life after the WCG but it is not always easy. If we trust God and follow His lead, He will restore what we gave up and abundantly more." David is married to the former Julie Buchholtz and is a foreman for a successful South Bend, Indiana building contractor.

**Claude Michael Murphy** (Big Sandy, 1969) and his wife **Lois (Holman)**, Big Sandy, 1968-69) left the WCG in 1975 after "reading the Bible without WCG materials and finding that the WCG was not preaching the truth at all." Mike is currently a licensed engineer for the state of Oklahoma. Religion still plays an important role in the Murphys' lives. Over the past few years, Mike has found spiritual rewards in teaching himself to read the New Testament in Greek. The family regularly attends Eastland Hills Baptist Church, and the Murphys' teenage son hopes to someday become a minister.

A few months after graduating from AC-Pasadena in 1969, **Paul Lay** was told by WCG minister

Richard Plache that he was demon possessed. Paul wrote us that "for about 12 hours Mr. Plache had me scared out of my wits thinking that I might have a demon. Finally, I came to the conclusion that I didn't have a demon and that if there was a demon causing problems, it was in the church organization."

Soon after this episode, Paul flew back to his parents' home in Des Moines and entered Iowa State University. Since graduation, Paul has been working as a Social Security disability examiner in Des Moines. While working on a claim at a local hospital in 1976, he met medical records clerk Theresa Janssons, whom he later married.

Since leaving the WCG, Paul has been actively involved in several different churches including the Church of God (7th Day), the Bible Church of God (7th Day), the Assembly of Yahweh, and the Living Word Ministry. Recently, however, Paul has found spiritual fulfillment in his close association with several like-minded friends who meet occasionally to discuss religion. As a hobby, Paul writes songs based on the Bible.

Not everyone who has left the WCG is still "religious." After graduating from Ambassador (Pasadena) in 1973, **Larry A. Taylor** worked for the WCG for a time. But after reading *Humanist* magazine, he became more interested in humanism and is currently active in the humanist movement. (There are about 4,000 active humanists in the United States, but they are divided into a number of special or single interest groups.)

Taylor, who is a member of the Pomona, California chapter of the American Humanists, attended a 1986 De Benneville Pines retreat for Humanists and Mensans (those with I.Q.s in the top 1% of the population). The Religion section of the Whittier, California *Daily News* of September 20, 1986 had an article on Taylor and the retreat and quoted Taylor as saying:

"If people were taught real science, we'd have less problems with creationism, astrology, and pseudo-scientific things.... People don't understand science as a method. They think it's a bag of facts. But it is a method of arriving at new facts and new understanding.... We adopt as a philosophy that human beings take responsibility for themselves. We do not appeal to the supernatural for our predicaments."

Taylor is married to Beverly Serbell of Whittier, California (where they now reside) and is currently employed in computer operations for a major bank.

In our last issue we mentioned Ambassador alumnus Jeff Calkins, who became a lawyer after graduating from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. Another Ambassador graduate who went on to study law at Loyola of Los Angeles is **Nancy Wagner** (Pasadena, 1976). She graduated from Loyola and passed the bar in 1984. She currently works in the legal department of KNBC-TV in Burbank, California.

That famous television station is where a number of popular television programs (including the Johnny Carson Show) are taped. Also working at that station is **John Portune**, the former WCG minister and AC faculty member who many regard as one of the best minds ever to teach at Ambassador. He is currently an electrical technician at KNBC. Apparently turned off with the American religious scene, Portune has been quoted as saying, "We need more religions about as much as we need new warehouses."

Quite a number of Ambassador alumni are currently in teaching careers. For instance, **Michael C. Kusheba** (Big Sandy, 1971) now teaches data processing at Kilgore College in Texas. He told us he has fond memories of AC students and wishes that his current students possessed a little of the dedication of the students he knew at Ambassador.

Many former AC alumni will remember **Calvin Tormanen** who taught chemistry at Big Sandy from 1975 to 1977 and at Pasadena from 1977 to 1978. Since 1981, he has been an associate professor of chemistry at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. Tormanen and his wife Susan were members between 1971 and 1979. As well as being an AC veteran, Tormanen is an army veteran who served as a rifleman in the 199th First Infantry Brigade in Vietnam. Tormanen is thankful that he has come through both these experiences relatively unscathed and is now able to live a full and happy life.

**Orlin Grabbe** (Pasadena, 1970) for a time worked as an assistant to WCG evangelist David Jon Hill and taught theology classes at Ambassador. In the early '70s, however, he decided to move on to other things. After studies at California State University, Los Angeles and the University of California, Berkeley, he went on to Harvard University where he earned a Ph.D. in economics. He is currently a professor at the prestigious Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

Orlin's brother, **Lester Grabbe** (Bricket Wood, 1968) went on to earn a doctorate in theology from the Claremont School of Theology. He taught religion for some time at Ambassador but was found to be "too intellectual." He is currently a professor at the University of Hull in England.

Another brother, **Crockett Grabbe**, earned degrees at the University of Texas and then went on to earn a Ph.D. in physics at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. He is now a professor of physics at the University of Iowa. As a church member in his precollege days, Crockett wanted to go to Ambassador College. His application, however, was rejected because he was considered "overweight." "That," says Crockett, "was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me."

Ambassador alumni **David Price** (Bricket Wood, 1968) and his wife **Sheila (Tremlett, Pasadena, 1970)** call London, England home, but their careers regularly put them on the continent. After Ambassador, both of the Prices went on to get university degrees. David received his M.A. in European Studies from London University. After working for a Fleet Street news magazine and for the B.B.C. newsroom, in 1980 he became Information Officer for the European Commission's scientific research programs in Brussels. He left the Commission as an official in 1982 and became a freelance journalist. (He says he much prefers the independence of freelancing over being part of a bureaucracy.) David is currently editor of *I'M (Information Market)* newsletter, an English and French publication that encourages the use of database and other online computer information systems. (David writes that *Report* readers who would like a free copy should write to *I'M*, 177 Route d'Esch, L-1535 Luxembourg.) While his work as a journalist is demanding, David still finds time to pursue his studies toward a doctorate, and he has given seminars and lectured at both London University and Oxford University.

After Ambassador, Sheila earned a joint degree in French and history at London University and later earned an M.A. at the London School of Economics. She went on to do research and teach at South Bank Polytechnic in London where she lectured in French on French politics. In recent years, while working on a London School of Economics Ph.D. in international labor history, she has lived and studied much of the time in Paris. She is currently lecturing at the University of Kent.

David writes, "Since 1980, travelling to and from Brussels, London, and Paris has been a way of life for us." Despite their busy schedules, however, the Prices still try to stay in touch with Ambassador alumni friends.

### **New Ambassador Alumni Association Formed**

Go to virtually any normal college or university in the United States and you will discover an affiliated alumni association. Most institutions of higher learning encourage, and even sponsor, such associations knowing that they promote institutional pride, provide a reservoir of knowledge that can assist the institution in an advisory capacity, and provide their members with a means of maintaining

friendships begun in their student years.

Until now, there has been no viable Ambassador College alumni organization. Some years ago, AC attempted to start one, but, perhaps fearing that the "innies" would be contaminated by contact with the "outies" (yes, Ambassador alumni both in and out of the WCG have adopted belly-button symbology to describe their church status), the association did not admit non-WCG member alumni. The WCG-assisted organization folded almost as soon as it was formed.

In the last few years we have received numerous letters from Ambassador College alumni who have suggested that *Ambassador Report* start an Ambassador College alumni association. We thought the idea was a good one, but we were never quite in a position to get the project rolling on our own.

Now, however, through the efforts of a dedicated group of Ambassador alumni, a legitimate Ambassador College alumni association has been formed. Membership is open to all who were ever students, faculty members, administrators, or on the staff at any of the Ambassador campuses. The organization is not tied to any religious group (or to the *Report*, for that matter), and is intended as a completely secular organization open to all alumni regardless of personal religious or nonreligious affiliations. So far AC and the WCG have had no involvement with the new organization, but association spokesman Bob Boyce says he would welcome any reasonable WCG involvement church leaders would feel appropriate. The new organization has already achieved nonprofit tax status. Thus all donations are tax deductible.

The association's working committee is composed of Bob and Judy Boyce of Longview, Texas (214-759-0835); Jack and Pat Martin of Dallas, Texas (214-867-5619); Paul and Mary Jo Flatt of Atlanta, Georgia (404-422-5040); Curtis and Melba Borman of Longview, Texas (214-663-2018); Jeff and Linda Booth of Amarillo, Texas (806-353-4400); Tony and Natalie Hammer of Dallas, Texas (214-520-8704); Bob and Sandy Haworth of Tyler, Texas (214-839-7104); Charles Groce of Tyler, Texas (214-561-2525); David and Molly Antion of Pasadena, California (818-577-7870); Jack and Ruthann Pyle of Manchester, Missouri (314-394-5839); Bob Ellsworth of Pasadena, California (818-449-4902); Wayne and Cheryl Freeman of Longview, Texas (214-759-6644); and Dennis and Joye Pyle of Overland Park, Kansas (913-362-8185).

"The Alumni Association," as it is officially called, is currently planning to host an Ambassador College alumni reunion "for all classes since the inception of the institution." The reunion is scheduled to take place at the fabulous Loews Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas (really a resort within a hotel) on the evening of Saturday, July 4, with a business networking social to follow the next morning. We understand that David Antion will M.C. the Saturday evening activities. Bob Boyce, who is coordinating the event, told the *Report* that the reunion will provide an opportunity for many old friends to get together in a truly beautiful environment and, for those interested, an opportunity to help chart the association's future course.

The association is very young and its future activities will depend on the needs and desires of those who wish to be involved. Some ideas that are being tossed around are a possible reunion of alumni to be hosted in the Pasadena, California area in 1988, other reunions in other parts of the U.S. and even abroad, and perhaps some type of newsletter or yearly update on alumni. (The Dallas reunion will have a printed program and, we are told, they are accepting paid-for advertisements. Write to them for details.)

We think The Alumni Association may serve a real need for thousands of Ambassador alumni around the world, and we encourage all those who may be even a little interested in its possibilities to either call one of the working committee members listed above, or write to:

The Alumni Association

P.O. Box 9342  
Longview, Texas 75608.

They have put together a fine package of information on their organization and the Dallas reunion, and they tell us they will send a free package to anyone requesting it or to any names and addresses provided.

### **The Concordant Publishing Concern**

In our last issue, Clyde Walters of Pasadena mentioned a Christian organization that many of our readers tell us has helped them greatly. The Concordant Publishing Concern, founded in 1909, is a small nondenominational teaching and translating ministry. Their address is: 15570 Knochaven Road, Canyon Country, CA 91351 (telephone: 805-252- 2112). Though it is not associated with any church, there are a few small independent congregations and Bible study groups in the United States and Canada as well as other parts of the world that have an informal association with it. The Concern's ministry, however, is primarily to individual believers, including a good number of former Worldwide Church of God members. Though they publish literature on nearly all major biblical subjects, the Concordant Publishing Concern is best known for its *Concordant Literal New Testament With Keyword Concordance* and its bimonthly expository magazine, *Unsearchable Riches*.

Jim Coram, now 41, became the president of the concern a couple of years ago. But when he was in his early 20s, he was a member of the Columbus, Ohio congregation of the WCG. He met his wife-to-be, Suella Grimm, through the WCG in 1972. Shortly after their marriage the following year, they resigned from the WCG, and before long became interested in the teachings and work of the Concordant ministry. Due to the fact that they had resigned from the "true church," strange childbirth "curses" were summarily pronounced upon them shortly after they married. Nonetheless, Jim and Sue have one child, a healthy and bright 12-year-old son, Marc.

Mr. Coram is presently working on a book entitled *His Achievement Are We*. The following is an excerpt from that theological work:

#### **Believing the Scriptures** by Jim Coram

Through the Scriptures we enjoy fellowship with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to know Him, "the only true God," and the One Whom He commissions, "Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). If we wish to *believe* the testimony of the scriptures, however, we must first know what they *say*.

Subsequently, we will need to learn to discriminate between their words and our mere inferences from them, and to apply them to the right time and people, besides judging their sense and apprehending their figures. But before any of these endeavors can begin, *we must first know what they say*.

Through definitive passages, concerning all subjects of consequence, the sacred writings provide their own internal evidence which *establishes* the significance of their vocabulary terms and grammatical forms.

It is to be regretted that those who cannot concur with our findings nearly always appeal to "scholars" and "authorities." We do well to *consult* others, and it is not wrong to *agree* with them. But the least suggestion that truth concerning any certain subject is practically established because either the "majority" or a certain class or movement find accord among themselves concerning it, is only a manifestation of foolishness if not conceit.

Most have little inclination and no idea how to discover the meaning of scriptural terms for themselves. Few seem to realize that translations, for all their likenesses, frequently vary in many important particulars. They do not merely differ in the way the passage is expressed, but they differ concerning the essential ideas which the passage contains. Their differences are frequently substantial, not merely incidental. It is evident, then, that even scholars are often confused, or that they are at least quite inconsistent in the application of their knowledge.

Who are we to believe - those who boast the loudest of their credentials or those of their mentors? Are we to entrust our faith to those who are the most vociferous and adamant - who insist that *they and theirs* alone are "orthodox," "evangelical," "conservative," "spirit-filled," or perhaps even the "true church" or "apostolic"? Through such shibboleths, those who appeal to such things are only removing all doubt that they are entirely out of sympathy with the apostle Paul's words, "Let no one be boasting in men" (I Cor. 3:21).

The meaning of any certain word may not always be vital, but the principle involved of founding all upon God's Word, apart from human learning and theology, is always vital and must be sustained at all hazards.

The scriptures are our only authority. There are helps (and hindrances), but no "authorities." Expositions represent fallible human endeavors to grasp God's truth as revealed in His word, and are neither authoritative nor inspired. The opinions of the founders of evangelical movements, however great or godly, are no more authoritative than those of other believers, are equally amenable to the tribunal of Holy Writ, and must stand or fall by its verdicts. To set up the teaching of any man, or set of men, as an "authority" is a return to Romanism.

When considering the meaning of a word in the Concordant Version, or in any version, most presume that the meaning intended is that of the common definition (including its usual connotations) which prevails in ordinary English usage. As a rule, they already know this definition without consulting a dictionary. But even if they do refer to some type of lexical aid, most still presume that the primary or most popular English definition which is given in such a work is the idea the translator had in mind. But this is not always the case, and it is *never* the way to engage in discovering the meaning of a scriptural expression.

In preparing a *version*, even a comparatively literal one, consideration must be given to idiom, and in many cases concessions must be made due to a lack of correspondence between the original and the receptor language. Though it should not be the primary consideration, good diction must be preserved as well. This is essential if a version (or "translation") is to be useful to the great majority of its readers.

In the nature of the case, on the whole, all translations must be imperfect representations of the original. Yet even the worst are accurate in many particulars. They contain much that is true, even though a high percentage of their renderings are either poor or positively false. Understanding the words, phrases and grammar of the original, based upon the knowledge gained from its own definitive passages, is the only sound (or possible) basis for faithful translation. This is the Concordant method (and, it is the only Concordant method). To the degree that we follow it, our renderings are correct. Others follow it to a great degree themselves. If they did not, *all their renderings would be wrong* instead of only some of them.

A "word" is simply a speech form that denominates or describes a particular object or action. Within any certain period of time, those words which come into common use during such a period (or already exist at its beginning) cannot possibly *denote* more than one idea, even if they should soon find themselves being employed in a multiplicity of special applications. Otherwise, communication (much less translation), except for perhaps a few well-placed grunts, would be impossible and vanish from the face of the earth.

In the majority of cases, the words which comprise a statement are not used definitively. Their declarations may be vital, but that has nothing to do with whether or not they are definitive. For example, the words of Roman 3:24 are of the greatest importance to us, for they lie at the heart of the gospel: "Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus." But what does it mean to be *justified*? What does it mean for something to occur *gratuitously*? What significance is there to the fact that this gratuitous justification occurs in God's *grace*? Neither the passage nor its context will inform us.

We must learn the force of each of these terms from other places. For example, "justify" appears definitively in passages such as Deuteronomy 25:1 and Luke 7:29; "gratuitously" is illuminated through John 15:25 and II Thessalonians 3:8, even as "grace" in Romans 4:4 and 11:6.

It is through such passages as these latter ones that we determine the meaning of these key expressions. We then carry the knowledge we have gained concerning the meaning of these words into our considerations of Romans 3:2-4. Before we read it, we *already know* what each of these terms mean, and only wish to note their particular usage in the passage at hand. There is no other way to be certain of the meaning of a word whenever it appears (as is usually the case) in a passage that is less than definitive. In many passages it is possible to assign any one of several ideas to a term and still express a conceivable thought through the clause in which it is found. But this is only to speculate, it is not to know. We are not to guess, we are to believe. Yet we cannot know what to believe if we do not know what has been said.

The best of tools still require competent workmen, if good work is to be produced. Likewise, the most accurate translations of the scriptures must be used intelligently and skillfully. There is much to consider beyond the matter of translation. But an accurate translation will prove to be very useful to all its thoughtful readers and is simply indispensable to the careful student.

The Concordant Publishing Concern has recently put out a tape entitled "The Meaning of God's Words." The tape is normally \$3.50, but *Report* readers who write to Concordant at the address above may obtain the tape, a copy of *Unsearchable Riches*, and a listing of available materials for only \$2.00. Those interested in theological study may find this an economical way to acquaint themselves with this unique ministry.

## **Letters**

*My husband and I were faithful sheep for nearly 18 years, but upon reaching our late 70s, we were no longer able to physically or financially participate in WCG activities. When we began to absent ourselves from activities and services, it soon became apparent that we were no longer welcome. When we did attend, the minister would reach across in front of me to shake hands with the "faithful." Members would turn away when I approached. This was a challenge and was welcomed by me. I began to vocally air my opinions.*

*There came a day when a minister phoned for permission to hunt on our property. I refused him. Next came the "witness of three." Each member in his turn paid us a visit. They sat at our table and ate our food... while all the time they were getting information to take back to the preacher. Another phone call came for permission to hunt and another "no" was given. The preacher then said, I understand that you do not approve of the way the church operates." I told him I did not care one way or the other what the church did... he then asked me if I was familiar with Matt. 18:16-18. Next Sabbath we were officially disfellowshipped.*

*Only one couple stood by us. Others hid when they saw us in a store. One lady we know phones and asks if we've received the latest AR. If we have, I will discuss it at length with her over our party lines. She phoned me... and in the course of the conversation she said they were the lowest they had ever been financially, but that they had heard a sermon on offerings and tithing. She said, "How can you give the 10th dime if you only have nine?" She says there is little communication between WCG members and that everyone is afraid to say anything. She knows how great we feel being free from that bondage.*

*-Missouri*

*When we came into this church, my husband had an excellent reputation as a barber and hair stylist. Unfortunately, his boss's business was open Tuesday through Saturday, and when Saturday was cut out of his work schedule, it left only a four-day work week. He could cut only so many people's hair in four days, and his boss and a co-worker did all they could to make him miserable. Since we were instructed to tithe ten to twenty percent (plus), it wasn't long until we were late on rent, utilities, and bills. The assistant pastor told us to "tighten our belts." Three moves later (that is, the last time we were asked to leave our home), we began to question why God takes from the poor. It became obvious we couldn't afford to tithe.*

*When my husband couldn't get by working only four days, his alternative was to open his own shop. Things seemed to work smoothly... but, we had unforeseen setbacks. In 1984, we couldn't come up with our taxes. We counselled with the ministers [and were told to] "hang in there." They made it obvious that they were disgusted with our financial problems, and we were told, "You'd better do something quick!"*

*We wrote to Ambassador College for further help and asked them if God made provisions for the poor. When our minister found out, he was fit to be tied. We received no answer from headquarters so we called them. They gave us smooth talk, but no real answers. This was the real beginning of our woes with the minister, assistant minister and several members. We felt like two unwanted, unloved, rejected-by-God nothings! We tried to fight the depression, but... unfortunately even my best friend became convinced that we had deep spiritual problems.*

*My husband was under so much stress. We were unable to pay our taxes, we were forced to go out of business, and yet we kept on tithing! We observed the Feast of Tabernacles in 1984. During this time, we opened our home to a church family that turned out to be wolves in sheeps' clothing. We knew this family had problems and we wanted to help them if we could. It wasn't any secret by then that we weren't in good standing with the ministers. This man went back and told the ministers that we were going to start our own church - an out and out lie! We were upset, but not idiotic enough to do that!*

*Well, after we sold the shop, my husband couldn't find a decent job.... He searched the Bible for answers regarding the provisions God gave for the poor. He came across Lev. 25:35-36 and we were able to cross-reference Mal. 3:9-10 with Proverbs 3:9, Deut. 18:20-22, Jeremiah 14:14 and Jeremiah 28:9. We also found a booklet published by HWA in 1956 titled "1975 in Prophecy." This began to open our eyes and we realized God was still with us and that this church was a false church!*

*-Ohio*

Editor: We contacted this couple recently and were pleased to learn that since leaving the WCG their situation has greatly improved.

*A young woman I know was asked to turn over her property to the WCG. The woman's first husband had been killed in a traffic accident and the property was intended for their young son. After her first husband's death, the woman remarried a WCG member who sent all his money to headquarters and lived off her salary. When the church insisted she turn over her property to them (or to her second husband who would have then turned it over to the church), she refused. As a consequence, she was declared unwelcome. She ended up leaving both the church and her second husband.*

*-North Dakota*

Editor: We are in the process of compiling a file on how the WCG's legal department "assists" members with their wills and in signing over their estates to the church. We would appreciate hearing from any readers with information in this area.

*Since my husband joined the WCG, my situation has proceeded downhill all the way. My husband started throwing out all "impure" foods, from canned vegetables to boxed foods, cereals and frozen foods. He even went so far as to throw out medications. He stopped giving me money. He insisted upon doing the food shopping himself. He stopped our credit cards, gas credit, and turned off the electricity. He beat me twice and finally the judge made him leave the house. He still hasn't given me a dime and I have three little children to support! Yet in one eight month period, he gave the WCG over \$3,000! The Children's Protection Service got involved and when my husband was questioned about not giving us support, he denied everything.*

*-AR Reader*

Editor: This letter is unfortunately typical of dozens we have received this past year from women all across the U.S. It appears that in the evolving WCG, supporting the ministry is considered more important than supporting one's own children.

*My husband has become involved with the WCG. He has not joined it yet, but it has already done enough damage to our marriage that it will never be the same again. If I can do anything at all to turn him around, I will. Maybe he will read the AR and start thinking for himself again. We have been married for 25 years, have children and grandchildren, and I am not willing to give up on this marriage just because some organization has him brainwashed. I will continue to fight to save our marriage until I see there is no hope left...*

*I thought I was going nuts and thought maybe I was wrong because I felt so strongly against this. Then I read some of the letters in your report. I find I'm not alone. If I can just show him that he is wrong in believing some of these so-called "truths"! He has changed from a very loving, caring man into a very sad, frightened, unfeeling human being. For some reason, he is not able to see this. If I could just have the man I married back again!*

*-Colorado*

*I will begin by saying I attended the WCG for 25 years (baptized 17 years ago). I am now out of it and picking up the pieces of my life.... At 19, I was very anxious to get married as [we were taught] there were only two years until the time to flee to Petra. That was also the year that my husband borrowed money to give to the church while I begged him for more money to feed us. From day one we struggled. Also, he was the head of the household so he could demand full course meals three times a day with meat at lunch and dinner - no matter what.*

*Everytime he lost his job it was my fault because I was so security minded and God had to punish us. I suffered for 16 years, but fortunately I was blessed with wonderful children and my love for them kept me going. My husband and I are now separated and getting a divorce. Thankfully, I guess because I did most of the child-rearing, our children no longer want to go to WCG services.... My husband is bitter towards me and holds the threat over me that if I interfere in any way [with what he teaches the children when he has them], that he will have me "marked." Much of my family is in the WCG so I have to be careful not to say anything.*

*I am trying to deprogram myself from the mind-control and teachings of the WCG... Sometimes when the pressure is too much I read the articles in the AR and it helps me to be so thankful that I am out and starting the climb up to a better life. I have lived with guilt for one thing or another for so long that it is difficult to rid myself of it. How can that possibly be the way God wants us to live?*

*-Canada*

*One day I happened to notice in my husbands Sabbath notes a complete lesson or sermon on how important it is to have foreplay with your mate during sex. It made me sick!... I made a promise that when HWA came into our bedroom that was where it would end.... My husband has been a member for almost a year and it's been a year of hell and misery for our marriage and our family. I have fought this cult in every way.... I don't understand why anyone would let an organization like this run their life.... Well, I've had it up to here, and I will not stand quietly by and accept this garbage.*

*-Connecticut*

*My wife is still a member and the WCG keeps hounding her for money and she doesn't know any better than to give it to them. Just recently she pledged \$300 to send to Hawaii in the amount of \$25 per month for a year. I don't know what the money is for, but I think it is for the Y.O.U. program. She won't talk to me about the WCG and she doesn't want me to talk to her about the Bible, so my home is a lonely place.... My wife will only listen to what her ministers say and will no longer read anything that does not come from the WCG. She is afraid she will be deceived if she reads anything that is not approved by their ministry.*

*I left the WCG about six years ago after being a member for 15 years. It is so good to be out of that dictatorial bondage and to be able to study the sacred scriptures myself. I have learned much and am growing spiritually. I am at peace with God and rejoicing in His grace free from fear.*

*- Washington*

*I am very interested in keeping up with all the changes and developments in the WCG as several of our children and their families are yet entrapped in this organization - after all these years. I can see the terrible eroding effects it is having upon their lives and I also know of the terrible after-effects that this organization can have upon a person, even years after they have come out of it. In the case of my daughter, it has left deep emotional and mental disturbances.*

*-Minnesota*

*Thanks be to God, my one daughter and her family are now out of Armstrong's Satanic control and the letters in your recent report should help to withdraw my other daughter and her family. Meanwhile, I am not communicating with that daughter and her family at all since I made it very plain that while they are prepared to give honor to Armstrong in preference to their own mother they can just forget I exist.*

*I believe... that family is beginning to feel hurt at my ignoring them. So once again the saying that to some, "one has to be cruel to be kind" may be proving fruitful. I have not replied to their Mother's Day card and gifts, but instead have cut out and sent them the letter in your report telling of the Deacon and Deaconess who woke up to the fact that they were following the instructions of a mere man.*

*-Virginia*

Editor: We can well understand your strong feelings on the WCG. But if your children are thoughtful enough to send you a Mother's Day card, wouldn't it be better to "disagree without being disagreeable"?

*I realize that the AR is not meant to be a sounding hoard whereby ex-WCG ministers should confess their shortcomings, but it seems odd to me that out of the hundreds of them there hasn't been even one that I can think of that publicly apologized for the wrong-doing they have done toward their fellow man. Or do they still feel as they did when they were in "power" - that they are beyond reproach?*

*-Minnesota*

Editor: We've known of a few who have expressed remorse over their involvement with the WCG. For instance, note the following letter.

*Many thanks for your efforts. It's hard to believe the destruction we ministers wreaked on some very lovely people who have sacrificed so much for a handful of wind. Keep plugging, maybe you can pry a few more from the wreckage.*

*-Charles Hunting  
(Former WCG evangelist)  
Florida*

*People are still dying over Herbert Armstrong's doctrine that members cannot see doctors. A local elder's wife died here recently. She had refused to see a doctor up to her last breath. She literally*

*starved to death. She was buried and her husband was on his way to the Feast of Tabernacles that same afternoon.*

*-Pennsylvania*

Editor: Hopefully, with the WCG's new healing doctrine we may see fewer of these needless tragedies.

*Brenda Denzler honed in on a trend which has nagged at my mind for months. Before my exit, I was shocked at the attitude communicated "from the top down" that death was to be embraced. Sorrow or normal grief over a death was heretical, putting a member's "conversion" in grave (no pun intended) doubt. Gerald Waterhouse (is there no stopping that man?) mentioned in a tape last spring that there were only two ways to live through the Tribulation - death or Petra. Given Petra with Gerald, death probably would be better, come to think of it... What are the implications of a philosophy like this? Suicide, mass murder, and ever-present fear seem very likely possibilities.*

*-Texas*

*After reading your last report I feel better in knowing I was right in what I saw and felt about the WCG. I once thought it was just me. Most of all in the WCG there is the fear to question anything. Be dumb, blind, and ignorant or be put out. The capacity for logic is not there, and if you have it, you will be told that "many ways seem right to man but such are the ways of death." Love and concern have diminished. You may even be reprimanded for using the word "love" in a prayer! Sincere desires to improve the church will get you disfellowshipped. Tunnel vision is what you are required to have. No thoughts, no ideas, no feelings, no expressions, and most of all - no answers to questions. Divorce is being promoted heavily; counselling of man and wife with a minister is often refused. The minister here uses EXTREME emotional outbursts. Men I know of in the church are afraid to speak to him for fear of being put out of the church.*

*-Kentucky*

*Thanks very much for sending me your AR. Having been associated with the Radio-Worldwide Church of God since 1957, and having been the first "mixed," black-white family in "the church," I can attest to the validity of the things that you write in the AR.*

*-Illinois*

*Getting out of that church was the hardest thing I have ever done. I still have feelings that I have lost my salvation through leaving. I am getting letters from some in the church who wish they had the nerve to leave like I did. I simply couldn't afford second and third tithes!*

*-Pennsylvania*

*I don't know how I would have made it without your reports. I felt like God had left me. I found out about the AR from others that were kicked out of the WCG. I felt like there was no place to go. Your reports gave me courage to go on and find a new life. Now I know God is there when I need him. I feel closer to him than I have for years. HWA used to teach that there was no going back once you joined the WCG or you would be lost forever. The fear of this nearly made me lose my mind.... I am happy now. I study the Bible and am close to God.*

*-Illinois*

*Our old friends in the WCG keep "coming out." It's just a matter of time until they call us. It's like*

*we're the alumni and our group keeps getting larger and larger. It gives us a good feeling to know where we're going and that God's will is being done in our lives now more than ever.*

*-New York*

*I would deeply like to thank you for the Ambassador Report. Just to know there are others who faced the same disillusionment and confusion that I once faced is a great comfort.*

*-Nebraska*

*I would like to mention that I have phoned and asked the WCG several times why World War III hasn't started yet. Herbert said on national TV that WWII would start "in our lifetime." I assume "our" included Herbert's lifetime. So far, no response, but at least a couple of the operators on their toll-free number might think about it.*

*-New York*

Editor: The WCG's toll-free number is 800-423-4444.

*I sincerely believe that much could be done to prevent the WCG from disrupting or shattering lives if a concerted effort were made by your readers to complain to every radio and TV station and every store which is spreading WCG propaganda (via broadcasts, telecasts, or PT in their own area). Personal experiences or tragic letters printed in current or former ARs from members or former members, etc., could help convince radio and TV stations and stores that they want nothing to do with such a cult. There is great power in numbers and there are large numbers of former WCG members who would like to spare others the unpleasant experiences which they themselves have endured. If they desire enough to spare them, they will act! Previous issues of the AR have shown how the statements of one or two people have made a store reject the PT. The last issue showed how people in Winnipeg have hampered the PT distribution effort. In one way or another, the propaganda could be stopped if those who know what the WCG is got involved.*

*The WCG is constantly losing members, so their resources would constantly decrease if their attempts to gain new members through the PT and broadcasts or telecasts were hampered. Listen, all of you who have suffered at the hands of the WCG. Think of all the heartaches, the traumas, the shattered lives, the family breakups, the suicides! Help protect unsuspecting future victims from suffering likewise at the hands of the WCG! If you really care, ACT!*

*-South Dakota*

### **A Few Words From the Editor**

Longtime readers of *Ambassador Report* know that we have never made it a practice to spur our readers on to greater and greater contributions to the *Report*. Nor have we ever suggested that our readers should "sacrifice" for the *Report*. Such tactics not only repulse us, but we know how financially devastated many have been by their involvement with Worldwide, and we know too how many of our elderly readers have great difficulty just surviving on meager fixed incomes (and such individuals should disregard the following).

I wonder sometimes, however, if our reticence about our financial needs hasn't been a mistake. Our last two issues have left us significantly in debt. That is especially disappointing considering how many have written us saying they greatly appreciated those two issues. Unfortunately, a lot of those letters of thanks were not unlike the one that said, "Keep up the good work! *Ambassador Report* has

been a tremendous blessing to my life and I am sure it is helping many hundreds of people around the world. I'm sorry I can't contribute, but I know God will bless all of you some day in His Kingdom."

That's all very fine, but it somehow just doesn't help us pay the *Report's* bills. Frankly, I suspect that most of our readers really have no idea how much effort and money it takes to put out a medium-sized, fully typeset, carefully edited newsletter such as *Ambassador Report*. That may be because we can all go to any newsstand and purchase many high quality, slick, full-sized magazines for two to five dollars an issue. I suspect, however, that many do not realize that the price of such publications is kept artificially low by extremely high volume printing, which drastically cuts the per unit cost, and advertising, which provides most of the revenue for most magazines (and which consumers eventually pay for through increased prices on advertised products). *Ambassador Report* has neither of these significant marketing advantages. But because of the standards that we adhere to, we still have many of the same expenses that the "big boys" have: office supplies, reproduction fees, long distance phone calls, investigative research fees, legal expenses, travel bills for distant interviews, photocopying costs, tape duplicating, photography (when we can afford it), typesetting, printing, mail processing expenses, post box fees, bulk mailing fees, postage, and on and on it goes.

In order to economize, we do not rent office space, but work out of our own homes. We have no one on salary. And we always shop around for the best prices on those things we need. Nevertheless, just getting one more issue out has often meant very real sacrifices on *our* part.

Our next issue has been some time in the making and will be one of the most important we've done in some time (and for that reason it may be a bit delayed). That issue won't be published at all, however, without the financial assistance of our readership. If you like *Ambassador Report* and want to see it continue, please show your appreciation by financially supporting our efforts. Your contribution will make a difference.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR39\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR 39 September, 1987

### WCG Now Bigger Than Ever

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG) has been without its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA, 1892-1986), for well over a year now, but still it continues to physically prosper. The Pasadena *Star-News*, in a front-page article on August 30, reported how the WCG's unaccredited Ambassador College recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. According to the article, WCG membership is now at 87,000 and the church's annual budget is a whopping \$163 million.

Clearly, the WCG is growing. And from everything we can tell, it's still pulling in those big bucks by doing the same thing it always has - bleeding its members dry. On page one of the *Los Angeles Times* business section for August 2 there appeared an article entitled "Debtors' Lives Are Open Book in Bankruptcy" by *Times* staff writer Michael A. Hiltzik. The lengthy article was not about the WCG per se, but about the current state of confusion in America's bankruptcy courts. The article, however, did contain this eye-opening lead which does tell us a good deal about the level of fanaticism still extant in the WCG:

The legal questions that arise in the federal courthouse of Fargo, N.D., do not normally cover such grand issues as redemption and salvation. But one day last year Bankruptcy Judge William H. Hill found himself confronted with these ultimate matters.

Before him was the case of David and Kathleen Gaukler, who by most measures would have to be judged destitute.

The Gauklers had annual expenditures of \$28,470 on their annual income of \$21,700. They were supporting four children. Mrs. Gaukler had lost her job. They had lost their home, and their car had been repossessed. They were spending \$280 a month on food for their family of six, an amount that Judge Hill considered adequate "to purchase little more than subsistence provisions."

Where was the money going? To the Worldwide Church of God, the fundamentalist church known for its luxuriant Pasadena campus and the sweep of its television ministry. Of their monthly income of \$1,800, the Gauklers were contributing more than \$672 per month to the church.

Hill took the opportunity to question the church's credo. "It seems a quite stern and uncaring religion that would require faithful adherence to such a level of giving," he complained. Of the Gauklers he wrote: "Apparently they are willing, on the basis of church dictates, to sacrifice the financial well-being of themselves and their children in order to make contributions they obviously cannot afford."

But he could not bring himself to step between them and their God, and, with a figurative sigh, he approved their petition of bankruptcy. "This wasn't a case of their setting themselves up as a religious corporation and donating money to themselves to buy a Mercedes," he said later. "These people were very sincere."

All of us at *Ambassador Report* were moved to read of the plight in which Mr. and Mrs. Gaukler (and their four children) find themselves. We called the Gaukler residence to offer our assistance, but Mr. Gaukler, sounding very nervous, refused to discuss the matter. Later calls were not answered. And a follow-up letter offering some advice (along with back issues of *Ambassador Report*) received no reply.

### **Filippello's Elijah Work**

On the morning of July 1, thousands of readers of the Pasadena *Star-News* were confronted by a full-page announcement entitled "Open Letter to the Worldwide Church of God." The ad began with a strong rebuke of the WCG's leadership and charged that there is adultery among the church's top ministers and serious deviation from scriptural teaching. (The ad's author is particularly angry with the WCG's latest divorce doctrine and with the church's policy that ministers need pay only first tithe, not the three tithes required of the lay members.) The ad then provided a very detailed prophecy outline of the "end times" based on the author's understanding of over two dozen quoted biblical passages.

Most Pasadenans, after reading 15 years' worth of headlines about WCG scandals, defections, investigations, lawsuits, and the like, were probably amused by the ad. Undoubtedly, however, some were not laughing when they read that "beginning April 1st, 1988 no rain will fall on the United States, England, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand... April 1st 1988 to July 1989 one third of the above nations (their populations) will die from famine, pestilence and disease epidemics caused by the first four trumpets."

Who placed the ad? For a few days we didn't know. The ad was sponsored by the Church of God Philadelphia Era (1800 S. Robertson Blvd., Suite 49, Los Angeles, CA 90035), but contained no identification of its author other than this cryptic statement: "The name Shiloh, Elijah, Wonderful Numberer, One of the Two Witnesses, Joshua, an Eagle, a Peg, the Last Prophet and many more hats I will be wearing of which my major responsibility will be Rev. 12:14...." A few days later, on July 6, the Pasadena *Star-News* ran a story about the ad and identified its author as Martin C. Filippello, who in March of this year resigned from the WCG ministry after 29 years of service. In a March 7 letter to WCG

Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, Filippello not only resigned from the WCG, but turned down an offer of full-time employment by the church (in recent years he has not been on full salary with the WCG). Among the reasons he gave for his decision was this statement: "We should be teaching God's people that God hates divorce and yet leading ministers are married to divorced women. We wonder why we are having a disaster with many marriages in God's church. The entire book of Malachi indites [sic] us. We are the ones stealing God's tithes."

After listening to a number of the taped sermons that he offers free to those who write for them, we phoned Mr. Filippello, and he graciously consented to an interview. Mr. Filippello was cordial and quite open. He does not hide the fact that he believes he is the prophesied end-time Elijah, and he is convinced he has the responsibility of attempting to turn the WCG from its sins. Filippello, besides identifying the Elijah of Malachi's prophecy, teaches that the WCG is the Laodicean Church of Revelation, that Joseph Tkach is the "man of sin" described in II Thessalonians, that Herbert W. Armstrong will be resurrected in January 1988, that Tkach's reign will end in March, and that "the great tribulation" will begin April 1st (a day we think many will find appropriately symbolic).

---

&COPY;1987 Ambassador Report. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

The WCG has tried to distance itself as much as possible from Filippello, even going so far as to insinuate to the press that he has a mental problem. Perhaps the two to three hours of Bible study that Filippello does each day have produced an overly vivid imagination. But frankly, he doesn't really sound any less rational than most WCG ministers, and he sounds considerably more rational than some such as Gerald Waterhouse.

Why Filippello feels so compelled to take on such a unique mission we don't know. It is interesting, however, that Filippello and Tkach are both from Chicago, were once very close friends, and were even ordained local elders on the very same day. We understand the WCG has told its members not to listen to any of Filippello's tapes but to immediately destroy any they receive. But if everything Filippello says is crazy, why should this be necessary?

Mr. Filippello told us that he will send, without charge, copies of the July 1 *Star-News* ad and the July 6 *Star-News* article along with a cassette tape of his sermon "The Resurrection of Herbert W. Armstrong" to all who request them. We've listened to that tape and can honestly say it is without doubt completely unlike anything we've ever heard.

## Dankenbring's Triumph Publishing

William Dankenbring is a name many former WCG members will recognize. After graduating from Ambassador College in 1963, Dankenbring wrote for the *Plain Truth* for 11 years. He wrote on an amazing variety of subjects, and one former *Plain Truth* editor has called Dankenbring "one of the best writers the church ever produced." In 1974, however, the *Plain Truth* went through an editorial department reorganization and Dankenbring found himself no longer working for the WCG.

In the years that followed, Dankenbring, a hard-working family man who was once an Eagle Scout, went on to careers in insurance and real estate, and in recent years has been a high school registrar. His first love, however, has remained the Bible. Cut off from writing opportunities with the *Plain Truth*, Dankenbring, nevertheless, remained loyal to Herbert Armstrong and the WCG's theology. But he still desired to use his writing and business skills in a way that would advance what he saw as "God's truth." That desire led to his founding Triumph Publishing, an independent publishing company devoted to disseminating - on a commercial basis - many of the same teachings the WCG was promulgating.

Right from its start, Triumph did not thrill the WCG. Dankenbring was not criticizing the WCG's leaders and he was in harmony with all its teachings. In fact, he remained a loyal, tithe-paying member. But Triumph still made many in the WCG uneasy. "Who gave you the authority to do this?" was a question frequently put to Dankenbring by members who could not fathom "truth" coming from any source other than HWA or his hirelings. The ministry, too, on a number of occasions, challenged him on certain wordings that appeared in his articles and on whether it was appropriate for him to market his books during the WCG's Feast of Tabernacles. Behind his back, however, the official WCG position toward Dankenbring was vehement. In an article either written or approved by Tkach, the April 23, 1982 *Pastor General's Report* (a publication sent to WCG ministers) contained this attack on Dankenbring:

Question: Several ministers have asked about Mr. William Dankenbring's advertisement for his books which have been distributed to members through mailings, at Feast sites, etc. Are the books endorsed by the Church? Does the Church approve of them or recommend them? Is Mr. Dankenbring still a member of the Church?

Answer: Mr. Dankenbring is classified as a member of God's Church. But that does not imply that his privately-sold writings have the approval or endorsement of the Church.

Human nature seems to want to use God, or God's Church, for personal gain or profit. The moneychangers used God's temple as a place of business to sell at a profit to God's people. In blazing anger, Jesus drove them out. Jesus said, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:16). We, the members, are God's house, builded into a HOLY TEMPLE (Eph. 2:20-21).

In II Peter 2:3 God warns, "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Yes, SELLING FOR PROFIT their words in writing to the members of God's Church.

Perhaps the selling of doves and things for sacrifice was not in itself wrong, but exploiting God's HOUSE as a place or means of selling to God's people was.

The membership of God's Church has been exploited for private gain a number of times by those no longer members.

God has commissioned HIS CHURCH - not private members on their own - to feed the flock. The Church publishes much literature - magazines, booklets, books, reprint articles besides the personal ministry, to feed the flock - AND WE DO NOT CHARGE A PRICE OR MAKE MERCHANDISE OF OUR MEMBERS IN SO FREELY GIVING GOD'S TRUTH! [Editor: Recall that books by HWA, Raymond McNair, and Stan Rader have had price tags.]

Although Mr. Dankenbring is a graduate of Ambassador College and has studied under Mr. Armstrong and our ministers, he has stated in writing, "I appreciate him (Mr. Armstrong) very much, although I have disagreed with him from time to time on some relatively 'small' or 'little' things." But what the writer might consider "small" or "littly" disagreements might in God's eyes be vitally important disagreements.

God's Church therefore does not endorse nor give approval to Mr. Dankenbring's books, nor those of others than the Church's own publications or those definitely approved.

Still, Dankenbring was not disfellowshipped. Triumph continued to grow, and by 1986 more WCG members than ever were familiar with Triumph's books and articles.

Official WCG tolerance for Dankenbring, however, ran out some months ago when, instead of simply putting out materials that echoed official church dogma, Dankenbring published an article that put forward a new view of the 2300 days prophecy of Daniel. The article was distributed to a few members and a handful of ministers, most of whom seemed to view it favorably. He was then to learn, however, that in the WCG "new truth" can still only come from one source - the man at the top.

After 30 years of dedicated service to the WCG, Dankenbring was summarily disfellowshipped in January. None of his old friends in the ministry cared enough to even want to discuss "his problem" with him. Phone calls requesting counselling on the matter got him nowhere.

The WCG again showed itself to be a very cold and cruel church. But in dumping Dankenbring it may have also (once again) shot itself in the foot. Dankenbring, like many others, is now convinced that the WCG is the Laodicean church of Revelation and he has put out a number of new articles challenging the WCG on some important doctrines. Our mail indicates that despite official WCG warnings against doing so, many Worldwidiers are reading and passing around his publications. Those interested in Dankenbring's books, articles, and Prophecy Flash newsletter should write for his price list. The address is Triumph Publishing, P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91001.

**GTA Still Preaching**

Whether you like him or not, there's one thing you have to say for Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA). The man has staying power. No one in the religion field (not even PTL's Jim Bakker) has ever been put under the kind of scrutiny to which GTA was in the 1970s. And no preacher has ever been so thoroughly discredited by his own church (then the WCG) and his church's founder (in this case, his own father). Yet here it is 1987 and GTA is still at it, still preaching much the same thing he always did (and many say still behaving in exactly the same way he's always behaved).

Today, GTA is clearly in command of his Church of God, International. His good looks, trim physique, and forceful speaking style all remain. His weekly telecast is on about 20 stations across the United States. His free magazine, *Twentieth Century Watch*, while lacking the huge circulation of the WCG's *Plain Truth*, is clearly superior in writing style, layout, and even paper quality. And GTA is not hiding behind "spokesmen," hired announcers, or press releases. For instance, on July 23 he was one of the guests on the popular television talk show hosted by Oprah Winfrey.

In the last few years, GTA has been increasingly open in his criticism of the WCG. For instance, in the spring issue of his *Twentieth Century Watch* was a revealing GTA article about his father's claim of apostleship. That issue also contained an interesting article on the disfellowshipping or excommunication doctrine of the WCG. The address for GTA and *Twentieth Century Watch* is P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, Texas 75710. The phone number is (214) 561-2525.

### **Ernest Martin Reorganizes**

Dr. Ernest L. Martin, the former WCG minister who went on to head the Foundation for Biblical Research for a number of years and then started the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge (ASK) has a new address. After Martin's second marriage ended in divorce in 1986, Martin's output seemed to dwindle. Recently, however, after marrying for a third time (to a successful real estate agent named Ramona), Martin seems to be getting more active in the religious publishing field.

ASK recently put out a large list of works by Martin (the list is free, the other materials are not) that are available in print, including a good number of new ones on prophecy, and some that are sure to be quite controversial. (For instance we notice that Martin now postulates that Jesus actually "died according to the Law of Moses and it was by stoning." We have also heard that Martin is now convinced that he knows the exact spot where Jesus was born.) In recent years we have not always agreed with Martin's conclusions, but we know that in the past many in the WCG have found his writings of interest. The new mailing address for ASK is P.O. Box 7777, Alhambra, CA 91802.

### **New Works on "British Israelism"**

"British Israelism," or the belief that the English-speaking peoples are the true descendants of the so-called Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, continues to fascinate many who have left the WCG. We have recently heard of a number of new works related to the subject (both pro and con) written by former WCG members.

Pastor Keith Hunt of the Biblical Church of God (Canada) believes firmly in the theory and recently wrote us that he has written and published a "very large book" on the subject. Its title is *In Defence of David's Throne*, and it sells for \$10. The address to write to for further information is: Biblical Church of God (Canada), Box 36, Station A, Kelowna, B.C., V1Y 7N3, Canada.

\* \* \* \* \*

Former WCG minister and Plain Truth editor Brian Knowles has written articles for a number of Christian publications since leaving Worldwide. One article he's written that we found particularly worthwhile appears in the September 1987 issue of *Bible Advocate* and is entitled "Was Dan Really a 'Serpent's Trail'?" While the article does not criticize Herbert W. Armstrong by name, Knowles does take issue with Joseph Allen's *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*, the 1902 book upon which HWA based so much of his own prophecy teachings. Those who would like a copy of the September *Bible Advocate* (it's free) should write: Bible Advocate, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233.

\* \* \* \* \*

Former WCG member Leona McNair is known to many *Ambassador Report* readers because of her ongoing legal battle with the WCG. But many will be interested to learn that Mrs. McNair, a nurse by profession, is also a devoted Bible researcher and budding writer who has recently completed a 55-page commentary on Genesis 49.

Entitled "Shadows of a Better Covenant," the thesis puts forth "the concept that Jacob's blessing of his sons is directly related to the message concerning the Redeemer of Isaiah 9:2-8, and that the 'word given to Jacob' refers to the prophecy of Genesis 49." Mrs. McNair's insights into the symbology of Genesis 49 stand in sharp contrast with the views of many British-Israelism supporters (including her ex-husband, evangelist-author Raymond McNair) who see Genesis 49 as a revelation of the identities and fate of certain modern nations.

While a good deal of effort has already gone into this project, Mrs. McNair hopes to eventually enlarge her thesis into a full-size book. That, however, may take a few years. In the meantime, those who are interested in obtaining a copy of "Shadows of a Better Covenant" should write to: Leona McNair, P.O. Box 41494, Pasadena, CA 91104. To help cover production, printing, and mailing costs, Mrs. McNair is asking \$7 (U.S.) per copy. She also tells us that she would very much appreciate receiving any comments or criticisms readers of her thesis may have regarding her work.

### **C. Gary Reid's Series on Prophecy**

Those who have followed the activities of the WCG and its many offshoots will have noticed that interpretation of Bible prophecy has played, and continues to play, a major role in the religious experience of these groups. But some observers who have followed these movements for a decade or more will have noticed how many of their interpretations have been both radical by mainstream Christian standards, and with time

have proven themselves clearly erroneous.

The prophetic passages of the Bible are fascinating reading. But all too often, it seems, they are used by the ill-trained, the fanatical, and the unscrupulous to coerce the ill-trained, the fanatical, and the naive into handing over huge sums toward the promotion of self-proclaimed prophets and apostles. With only a few exceptions, it appears that Bible commentators among those who are either in, or have left, the WCG, approach the subject of Bible prophecy with very little objectivity.

Perhaps that is why we have found a recent series of articles in the *Commentator* of the Foundation for Biblical Research to be so eye-opening. Written by C. Gary Reid, the three-part series entitled "Prophetic Interpretation: Apostle-Style" looks at the unanticipated way many biblical passages have been fulfilled in the past, and from that basis postulates that in the future biblical prophecies that are yet unfulfilled may come to fruition, but in ways quite different from the literalistic and simplistic scenarios envisioned by some modern-day "apostles."

Besides having a theology degree from Ambassador College, Mr. Reid has a Master's degree in mathematics and has written for a number of publications including *Ambassador Report* at its inception. Those interested in his excellent series on Bible prophecy should send their requests (there is no charge) to: The Commentator, Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 499, Pasadena, CA 91102.

### **Alumni Association Holds First Reunion**

On July 4 and 5, the newly formed Ambassador College Alumni Association (see our April issue) had its first reunion at the Loews Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas. *Ambassador Report* has heard from a good number of the Ambassador alumni, former faculty members and administrators who attended, and overall, it seems, the gathering proved a real success. One Ambassador alumnus who attended sent us this report:

The Anatole Hotel, where the reunion was held, is one of the most elegant hotels in Texas. It was built for the Republican convention that nominated Ronald Reagan for President. When the Anatole's management discovered that Bob and Judy Boyce were chairpersons of an alumni committee that would be bringing people from all over the country to the Anatole, they offered the Boyces the elegant Ronald Reagan suite. Those who checked in with the Boyces by phone were graciously invited to an impromptu reception at the suite before the evening's activities.

The reunion later began formally with an hors d'oeuvres reception. Even though the fresh fruit, vegetables, fondue, meat nuggets, and cheeses were inviting, they were barely touched for about half an hour because the crowd was so intent on seeing old acquaintances and on viewing the bulletin board displaying memorabilia and letters from those who could not attend.

After the social hour, chairman Bobby Boyce welcomed the alumni with a brief history of how the reunion originated. He told how a group of friends, no longer associated with the Worldwide Church of God, had continued to gather for yearly vacations. They felt that an Ambassador College alumni association would provide a means of keeping in touch with old friends in a relaxed environment, sharing a

common history, and providing a social and professional network.

Bob then introduced the Master of Ceremonies for the evening, David Antion. After the preliminaries, Antion explained that he would announce in sequence each year of the college's operation. Former students who attended Ambassador College in those years could speak for one minute if they desired, telling what had happened in their lives since they left the college.

The first one to speak was evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong. (As he began to speak without introducing himself, someone jokingly yelled out, "What's your name?") Ted told of his church's activities in Tyler, Texas and at the one-minute time limit quipped that this had been the shortest speech he had ever given.

Wayne Cole was one of the earliest AC students attending the reunion. He is now working in real estate. Others attending included Ron Dart (Ted's colleague at the Church of God, International), Tony Hammer, Bill McDowell (now in oil exploration in Louisiana), and David Robinson (author of the book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*). Robert Kuhn, now living in New York, gave greetings from George Geis, recently named a distinguished professor in the Graduate Management Program at UCLA. Also attending was Jill Hockwald Banker, the former daughter-in-law of Joseph Tkach (the current chief of the WCG). Paul Hunting transmitted greetings from his father, former WCG evangelist Charles Hunting, who now lives in Florida.

After one alumni member joked that he had attended "God's headquarters college in Pasadena," Jack Martin said he had attended "God's most righteous college in Bricket Wood." Jack was followed by a Big Sandy alumnus who announced he was from "God's country club college." Gary Alexander (whose IRS problems have been reported in the AR) elicited the strongest laughs of the evening by announcing that he had performed an experiment to see if not paying taxes was more dangerous than not paying tithes.

Door prizes went to Bill Farr for traveling the farthest to attend the reunion (from northern Alberta, Canada), and to Ted Armstrong for being associated with Ambassador College the longest.

The celebrants were asked to fill out a questionnaire asking their opinion on the current reunion and their input for the next one. This open opinion poll was a refreshing change from the non-democratic environment of the WCG. As the evening closed, everyone was invited to share a brunch together at the Anatole the next morning.

The general feeling regarding the reunion was that it was long overdue. It was for some the first contact they had had with the Worldwide Church of God (even if just with former members) since they left that church. And it was for some an acknowledgment, finally, of the part the WCG and Ambassador College had played in their lives. Of the 168 people in attendance, several had driven for hours or flown hundreds of miles to attend. Some alumni who still belong to the WCG decided to attend the reunion and they were warmly welcomed in keeping with the committee's goal that the gathering would be open to all who were associated with Ambassador College at one time, regardless of their current associations. The depth of feeling regarding the reunion was illustrated by one *current* church member who supports it so strongly that he or she anonymously sent a \$250 donation toward expenses.

Although the reunion will probably not be an annual event, the consensus of opinion of those present was to hold another gathering next year in Palm Springs, California. Several hundred are expected to attend since plans have been announced a year ahead of time and the Southern California area has a large number of alumni living there.

The reunion organizing committee included David & Molly (Hammer) Antion, Jeff & Linda (Shaklee) Booth, Curtis & Melba (Jenison) Borman, Bob & Judy (Prince) Boyce, Bob Ellsworth, Paul & Mary Jo (Bailey) Flatt, Wayne & Cheryl (Vance) Freeman, Charles Groce, Tony & Natalie (Pyle) Hammer, Bob & Sandy (Holladay) Haworth, Jack & Pat Martin, Jack & Ruthann (Schutt) Pyle, and Dennis & Joye (Williams) Pyle.

While most who attended the reunion seem to have found it a positive experience, there were a handful who were somewhat critical:

I've heard that Garner Ted Armstrong will be hearing from a few people. Many were shocked at his presence at the reunion and he certainly did not try to keep a low profile. He stood to talk twice. I don't believe anyone else did that. Many expected GTA to stand and apologize for the havoc he personally has caused in so many lives. Of course, that apology was never forthcoming and never will be....

Mr. Bob Boyce closed with a statement that former students owe a great deal to their former instructors. I don't believe that was the popular opinion, not with those to whom I talked. There is a big division still between ex-students and ex-ministers. The same with ex-members and ex-ministers and never will there be harmony there.

While it was wonderful to be re-united with old friends... the scars are very, very deep. I personally contacted a dozen former students and they informed me they could in no way endure such a gathering. The healing of wounds has not taken place and they feel they could never attend such a meeting. I think some of those who thought they were up to it really felt a good deal of pain and resentment.

-Anonymous, California

The thing I liked best about the AC reunion was that GTA was treated just like any other AC grad.

-Name Withheld

Listening to the stories of my fellow alumni at the reunion in Dallas, it was notable how many of the Ambassador College alumni own their own businesses or hold graduate degrees. It would appear that many of us became successful in spite of Ambassador College, not because of it.

-Pasadena Alumnus

Like any other human organization - especially one just beginning - the alumni association has, and will continue to have, problems. But that doesn't mean that the idea isn't a good one. Most of those who attended the reunion apparently found it to be a very positive, and even therapeutic, experience. Undoubtedly, it could have been an even better experience had Ambassador College given the association a little bit of

encouragement. We understand that not only did Ambassador's Chancellor, Joseph Tkach, refuse to attend (thereby passing up a golden public relations opportunity for the college and an opportunity to show true Christian love) but Tkach, in true WCG-cult style, even discourteously refused to reply to a personal invitation sent him by chairman Bob Boyce. (Boyce, however, says he is not insulted and hopes Tkach will decide to attend next year.)

We at *Ambassador Report* feel that, in spite of whatever small inadequacies it may have, the alumni association can perform a very useful function. We encourage all our fellow alumni to support the efforts of its organizing committee by helping locate as many alumni as possible. Those on the association's mailing list will then be able to receive details of future reunions. Bob Boyce has informed us that in a month or two he will be mailing out a small publication, tentatively called *Alumni News*, which will contain a complete report on the Dallas reunion. The association has also put together an official "Statement of Purpose" which clarifies the goals of the association. Those who would like a free copy of the *Alumni News* and the Statement of Purpose, or who would like to provide alumni names and addresses, should write: The Alumni Association, P.O. Box 9342, Longview, TX 75608.

### **"The Bible Speaks" Cult Loses a Round in Court**

The following news item appeared in a number of publications this spring, including the *Boston Globe* (page 1) on May 20:

Following a 3-week nonjury trial in Worcester, Mass., U.S. Bankruptcy Judge James Queenan Jr. has ordered The Bible Speaks to return all of the \$6.5 million donated to it by heiress Elizabeth Dayton Dovydenas.

Judge Queenan rejected the church's claim that the First Amendment forbids such intervention. He asserted that the Rev. Carl Stevens Jr.'s conduct "reeks of undue influence" and that the Bible Speaks pastor had abused Mrs. Dovydenas' trust "as well as the trust of many good and devout members of the church" in what testimony revealed to be "an astonishing saga of clerical deceit, avarice and subjugation."

The judge found that Stevens achieved "total dominion and control over Dovydenas in part "by deceit and insincerity," persuading her that she "was a special person anointed by God to promote good through gifts" to the church. He also noted that the pastor's "attempts to ruin the claimant's marriage were intentional and malicious."

Mrs. Dovydenas, 34, is the daughter of a founder of the Dayton-Hudson Corp., the 5th-largest retail chain in the U.S. She sued the church on grounds of undue influence and fraud to recover donations she made while a member from 1983 to 1986.

The judge's decision has set the stage for the possible forced liquidation of the 20,000-member church's 70-acre headquarters in Lenox, Mass. But The Bible Speaks' lawyer, Norman Grutman, has said that if he lost the case, he would take it all the way to the Supreme Court.

One newspaper (in a UPI release) quoted Gordon Walker, attorney for Dovydenas, as

saying: "I think the case stands for the proposition that even evangelists are accountable and must play by the rules."

During the trial Dovydenas testified that cult leader Stevens "said he had the delegated authority of God, that when he speaks, it is Jesus speaking.... I was afraid I would be punished by God, even to having my life shortened, if I didn't obey him."

Judge Queenan's decision comes as a breath of fresh air to many who feel that the U.S. courts put on blinders and castrate themselves virtually every time some defendant raises "religion" as a defense for fraud, misrepresentation, larceny, etc., etc. But whether his decision will stand remains to be seen. The July 26 *Los Angeles Times* reported that an appeal has been filed on behalf of "The Bible Speaks." The lawyer for "The Bible Speaks" is the flamboyant Norman Roy Grutman who represented Larry Flynt's *Hustler* magazine not long ago in a lawsuit brought by the Rev. Jerry Falwell (whom Grutman then referred to as "Foul-well"). As it's turned out, Grutman, who claims he is presently a Christian Scientist, was PTL's lawyer when Jim Bakker was dethroned, and so Grutman now represents Jerry Falwell's PTL. (Stan Rader, where are you now that big-time religion *really* needs you?)

### **Congressman Pickle's Hearings**

The controversy that has surrounded the Jim Bakker-PTL scandal has apparently prompted more than a few citizens to write to Congress. The Oversight Subcommittee of the House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee will be spending a day or so in October on hearings concerning the tax laws by which religious nonprofit corporations are able to escape thorough government scrutiny.

During August and September Ambassador Report editor John Trechak repeatedly phoned government officials in Washington attempting to persuade them of the need for major reforms in this area of the law. The following is a letter your editor sent to Ms. Russlyn Guritz, the staff member coordinating research for those Oversight Subcommittee hearings:

Dear Mrs. Guritz:

As I indicated to you in our phone conversation earlier today, I am sending you a number of back issues of *Ambassador Report* and some other materials that I hope will prove insightful to Representative Pickle and the subcommittee.

Having reported for over ten years on the scandal-plagued Worldwide Church of God and other religious organizations, I have become firmly convinced that there is a great need for our tax laws to be reformed so as to require greater financial accountability by religious nonprofit corporations.

While I am aware that some Constitutional questions may be raised by such a proposal, I am a bit cynical toward any suggestion that such reform would violate the First Amendment. First of all, I believe you will find most legal scholars assert that a complete wall of separation between church and state (Jefferson's phrase, not the

Constitution's) is not mandated by either the free exercise clause or the establishment clause. And second, as a practical matter, such separation does not exist today.

At the present time, religious and pseudo-religious groups are easily formed into nonprofit corporations through state law and are then given significant tax advantages through federal law. Many of these corporations then make extensive use of the public airwaves and the U.S. Postal Service to generate huge revenues and, quite often, to provide huge incomes to the heads of these government-created "nonprofit" entities. Yet in many cases it is virtually impossible for the contributor (often very devout but financially unsophisticated) to ever find out what became of his or her contributions.

I therefore applaud Congressman Pickle's interest in the problem, and I hope you will contact me if I may be of any further assistance to you, Representative Pickle, or the subcommittee.

Sincerely,  
John Trechak, Editor

The congressman most responsible for the upcoming hearings is Rep. J. J. Pickle of Austin, Texas. His Washington mailing address is: Rep. J. J. Pickle, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515 (phone 202-225-4865). We've suggested to Congressman Pickle that along with some of the big names of TV evangelism who have already been asked to appear that the Oversight Subcommittee subpoena "Apostle" Joe Tkach and WCG treasurer Leroy Neff. We'd find it fascinating to see them explain how they intend to spend the \$163 million the U.S. government is helping them make this year. We've also suggested that while they're at it, they could subpoena former WCG accountants Stanley Rader and Jack Kessler. We're confident both of them could prove very valuable witnesses. If you think those are good ideas, why not write Congressman Pickle or *your own* Congressman (or woman) and tell them what *you* think.

## ***Letters***

Editor: The following letter came in response to our April issue in which we reported how the WCG finally - after 50 years of doctrinal error - changed its position on "divine healing" so as to allow its members to seek medical help when they are ill.

*How wonderful that God has finally led His "True Church" out of the darkness and into a "New Truth" that the rest of the Christian world caught onto quite some time ago - God doesn't mind if his followers go to doctors!*

*Too bad that careless God didn't think to let His "True Church" in on that little piece of truth a bit earlier for there would be more of His followers around to support His Work.*

*I received your April issue today, on what would have been my mother's 62nd birthday. She died at age 44, after a decline in health over several years, during which time the total medical care she received consisted of being anointed over and over again as she wondered what sin she had committed that was so heinous that God would withhold his gift of healing. The emotional impact on our family (three children at home; the youngest*

age seven) was, to say the least, devastating.

*I am actually very grateful that Joseph Tkach has had the intestinal fortitude to reverse one of HWA's strongest and most harmful doctrines. Now, perhaps, my remaining parent will not have to be prematurely sacrificed on the altar of Herbert Armstrong's megalomania.*

*-Sandra (Haux) Entler  
AC Pasadena, 1972*

*My wife and I have been members of the WCG since the early '60s and have been able to see a lot of changes take place. It seems that when the leading ministers want to do something that is against church doctrine the doctrine is changed. About all we hear in services is sermons on tithing and obeying. It's almost like a broken record.*

*-Kentucky*

*As an Ambassador grad and ex-member of the WCG, I could not help but reflect on Ambassador College when I recently had the chance to see a special edition of the college newspaper which was printed at graduation time this year. As usual, there were photos of the beautiful people of Ambassador, living the lives that such a stimulating environment offers. I caught a glimpse of a few familiar faces of people that I knew from the mid-seventies, noticed the usual action photos of AC people enjoying the good life in Southern California, and had an opportunity to see the new Pastor General, among other things, serving pancakes at a college breakfast. It certainly looked wonderful. Who would ever guess by reading this publication that this college and its sponsor, the Worldwide Church of God, could have brought so much sorrow to so many people's lives.*

*While I have some good memories of my alma mater, there is one fact that prevails above all else: I am not welcome there! All of my time and money invested in Ambassador are given no recognition by those in power who make the rules. Indeed, I know of people that have invested enormous amounts of money in that college and church, and they are not even welcome to walk on the very property they helped pay for!*

*I came to Ambassador as a graduate from another college: accredited, I might add! But I did not have much use for my accredited degree. I wanted to go to Ambassador. There I thought I would find friendship and happiness. I was to find out five years later how much value my Ambassador friends were: only a few remained friends. In all of the nine years that have passed since I graduated from AC I have not heard from the college so much as once!*

*Now, notice the contrast when I write of the "worldly" college I attended. I continue to receive alumni publications and have for over a decade. For years, I have received several letters a year from this college inviting me to on-campus alumni functions and to participate in alumni trips. The department in which I did my major study sends me a yearly survey and updates on the department. When I recently returned to take some classes, I was welcomed and treated with kindness! All this from a college that I counted of no value!*

*And Ambassador College? Well, we know how "concerned" they are for all their alumni. And to think I loved Ambassador more than any other place on earth. Because of the horrible things the WCG has done and the reflection this places on AC, I have become ashamed to say that I ever attended Ambassador. Thankfully, I had an accredited degree. My wife, who also has an AC degree, has not been so lucky. After almost a decade, she is still working toward an accredited degree while working full time. Many people in her field have long since completed their masters' programs and are working on doctorate programs. But thanks to Ambassador, my wife is still spending time and money to get back to the point she thought she had reached when she was handed her AC "degree."*

*Yet for all the problems this church and college have caused people, these "institutions" continue on their merry way. Not a single apology has been offered. No sorrow expressed from the vaunted leaders who have caused so much hurt.*

*What then is the real purpose of Ambassador College? Why continue to exist if college officials continue to ignore a large segment of its alumni population? How incredible to see Ambassador alumni having to form their own alumni association because Ambassador College refuses to recognize many of its own graduates! If anything speaks of the treachery of these AC officials, this is it!*

*A closing comment on WCG and AC personnel management style. As Dorothy said while in the Land of Oz: "My, people come and go so quickly around here!"*

*-An Ambassador Grad, Missouri*

*Our son was always a bright man who made good grades, played football in school, and graduated with flying colors. After graduation he immediately started working and saving his money. At the age of 19, he bought a nice little house and a brand new car. He was doing so well that he started saving money to build a bigger house.*

*After a while, he met a girl.... Eventually, she moved in with our son and within about two months they got married. Eight months later they had a darling little girl. After the baby came she continued working as before, because they were saving for a new house. When she first met our son, she told him that she left home because her parents were too strict. They were members of the WCG. She told our son that she stopped going to their church and often made fun of it when her parents came to visit them....*

*After about a year, they sold their little house and started building their new house out in the country. In the meantime, they moved in with my husband and me. I took care of their little girl while they worked and waited for their house to be built. About two months after they moved into their house, our son came to visit us and announced that they were going to sell their house and move into an apartment. We asked him why he would do that when they hated apartments. I told him there would be no future in an apartment and that he should look to the future.... He just laughed and said, "We won't need a house because the world will end before I retire, and besides, having a house and nice things is too materialistic. We're not supposed to have materialistic things." When I asked him what he was talking about, he laughed again and said, "Can't you see how the world is*

today? It's a sign of the end of the world." He said that Jesus is coming soon and will destroy this world. He also said that the government and the whole world is possessed by the Devil.

I couldn't believe my ears! I was in shock. Where did he hear all this? It must have been from his wife's family, and he took it seriously. Right away I knew that he must have joined, or was planning to join, the WCG. I wouldn't believe it because he was born, baptized, and raised as a Catholic. He always said that if he ever stopped going to the Catholic Church, he just wouldn't believe in any other church. He then started telling us that we are all going to hell because HWA's church is the only true church and that all the other Christian churches (especially the Catholic Church) are of Satan. We tried to tell him how the Catholic Church was started by Jesus and then by Peter and the other apostles, but he wouldn't believe us. We would read scriptures in the Bible and he would put different meanings on them and they would be all twisted. It got to the point where he told us not to visit him anymore, so we left him alone.

Soon after that he lost his job because his job required Saturday work and he wouldn't work on the Sabbath. He was without a job for almost two months when he finally got another job with a big cut in pay. His wife then quit her job because her religion forbids mothers to work outside the home. After his cut in pay and her quitting her job, their income dropped to less than half of what they used to make... They finally put their house up for sale and moved in with her parents....

It's heartbreaking to see a child doing so well and then let it all go because of some weird religious beliefs. We have been under a lot of stress as we are still trying to get him out by writing to him and sending him booklets about our religion, but he seems to be so brainwashed or hypnotized that nothing seems to penetrate. We were hoping that when HWA died the church would die too. However, he has other cronies now on TV that have taken his place preaching the end of the world. I think it's terrible that so many families are broken up and hurt because of a weird church like the WCG. They actually encourage their members to leave their family if the relatives don't agree with them. Is that love? That's not how God would want it.

-Texas

It's so good to continue to receive Ambassador Report. I was glad to hear of the change in teaching about healing. I was in Pasadena during Loma Armstrong's illness and death. HWA's attitude at that time was a major factor in opening my eyes.

I had terrible headaches about that time. Although (or because) I was making every effort to conform, I was told my headaches were a result of a bad attitude. Finally, I got up enough courage to buy aspirin. I still remember seeing the nose of an AC employee pressed against the drugstore window!

GTA visited Lakeland a few months back. We drove up to see him, thinking surely he had learned a few things during the last twenty years. Since we had trouble finding the place, we arrived a little late but just in time for his sermon. He got up and started talking about beating your children - I couldn't believe it! Only the gray hair was different. All the old

*memories were so overwhelming I couldn't stand it so I got up and left.*

*I am happy to tell you that I recently completed an M.A. in Counseling at the University of South Florida. I was truly amazed at how caring and unselfish the "secular humanists" can be! I still have a strong faith in God and His leading, but am not much involved in religion. I have just begun working at a maternity center where I believe I will have the opportunity to do some good.*

*Thank you so much for continuing the AR.*

*-Bobette Pestana, Tampa, Florida*

*Would you please be so kind as to send me another copy of the Ambassador Report? My 91-year-old mother destroyed the envelope with the latest report before I even had a chance to read it.*

*-Ohio*

*Jim Coram gave me a copy of the AR and I found it to be of interest. (I work at the Concordant Publishing Concern.) I was a devotee and fellow-traveler of the WCG from age 12 to about age 28 (1957-1972), but never did join up because the requirements for salvation were too severe. But because of my faith in their prophecy, I took German in school and eventually joined the Roman Catholic Church so that I could be on the "right" side when "Assyria" (Germany) invaded "Israel" (the USA). Ha! Anyway that's all over with now and I really can laugh about it.*

*-John Swanson, Pasadena, California*

*I have very little to do with Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson. But I think there is somewhat of an apology in order for grouping them with HWA.*

*Jimmy Swaggart, I do know, through his program "Child Care International," prepares between 300,000 and 400,000 meals a day for children, has built 277 schools, and purchased 57 mobile self-sustained medical units in Third World countries. Contrast that with the self-centered attitude of the WCG.*

*If there is good, then there is indeed good and we should recognize that. We have come out of something that is not good, and too often we are quick to assume all religious organizations and their leaders, "under the skin," are somehow related. Not so.*

*-Dr. Larry Jackson  
Gaithersburg, Maryland*

*I'm dropping you a line regarding an item in your most recent issue of the AR (Jan. '87). You had mentioned how dumbfounded you were to learn of ex-WCG members now embracing the serpent seed doctrine. Of course, this is nothing less than an example of how people give heed to "doctrines of demons." What you may have done, unwittingly, is*

*contributed to others persuing that false teaching. You listed, along with other groups, the Church of Israel in Schell City. They teach precisely that which you condemned - and rightly so - on the previous page.*

*Because the Church of Israel holds to some teachings similar to WCG (annual Holy Days, Israel Identity, etc.) it may have attracted some who still see valid the keeping of those days, etc. Satan has his snare out for many such. I have read some of the literature of this group and they are one of the most racist groups around. They take great pride in being Israelites. They have a whole series of tapes and literature on so-called anthropoidology, that all races other than their own are animals. The superiority of "us" and the inferiority of "them" is no new teaching. Every nation from modern Japan to the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians have promulgated that Satanic lie. There is much more that I could say about this group, but the less said about such garbage the better.*

*-British Columbia, Canada*

*It is good to see that there are people who have come out of the WCG and your report has helped them. It is like you finally have someone to talk to and listen to about your complaints in the WCG. For in that church you just never knew where you stood. If you kept all to yourself you were fine. If you tried to discuss and counsel with anyone, it was always as a subordinate. They were there to tell you, not to help you. Speak too much of your own mind and they'd tell you to get back in your place!*

*-Illinois*

*It has now been five and a half months since I quit attending [WCG services], and I feel as though I'm more a part of the human race. I know I'm not yet disfellowshipped (I still get the WCG lit), but I also know it's coming. It'll probably be around Passover or just after. I find there are some really kind people "in the world " and they're much more tolerant! I've also come to the conclusion that many of us in the WCG are quite immature - immature in our actions, ideas, and the way in which we treat others. Indeed the ministry speaks to the people as though they are children.*

*-Oklahoma*

*First HWA got us to turn our relatives and friends against us, then when you find out [the truth about the WCG] you leave and lose the friends you've made in the WCG. Many don't leave because they fear to be lonely.*

*-Missouri*

*It's been over a year since I left the WCG. It isn't easy when the friends you had are almost all in the church. I've really helped myself to a certain extent because I love to read. Through books I travel, get to know about young love and right now [I'm reading] a scary one about human cell experiments. I'm an old lady, alone but not lonely, and I love reading the AR.*

*-Wisconsin*

*Our son joined the WCG. His wife and her family are so brainwashed that we can't get close to them. They completely ignore us except for a small gift for Mother's and Father's Day. We helped him so much and now we're getting nothing back - no letters or signs of love - just silence. It's worse than death. It breaks our hearts. We need the assurance from people like you that the truth is getting out, but it needs to get to every WCG member - our son and his family included.*

*-Minnesota*

*My husband is a WCG member and we are now going through a custody battle. He is filing so many papers, he will run me dry financially before my divorce. I am being supported with food by the Salvation Army, three local churches, and family and friends have also helped financially. I have sold most of my valuables to keep my house and children going. My husband pays \$60 a week in child support (when it comes). Most of his salary goes to the WCG. His own children he neglects; no medicine, food, or clothing has he paid for since August 1986. He's never even considered paying for other household bills, but he refuses to give up his support of the WCG.*

*-New York*

*Please keep up your good work. Your newsletters mean so much to me and have really helped me over the past five years - since my ex-wife (a WCG member) and I divorced and I was left with three sons to raise.*

*-Kentucky*

*My son and his wife are very much into WCG teachings and you don't dare make a negative remark or talk to them. If you say anything they will not answer you. Or more seriously, as they have four children, I would not be allowed to see them. I tried to talk to my son, but he said he is sure this is the only real church there is in the world and he believes so strongly (his wife too) that it scares me....*

*My daughter-in-law's sister was staying with them as well and suddenly we didn't see her anymore. They wouldn't answer when we asked where she was so I asked my grandson and he said that Satan deceived her and she left the church.... I suddenly knew in my heart the extent of the bondage they were under. The children are beaten a lot and all have callouses on their behinds. I never hear them talking about Jesus, but always about Satan and what a bad guy he is. I see they want to be right so badly that they follow all the WCGs rules and regulations according to the letter.*

*-Canada*

*Something I've never heard discussed in your report is how our experiences [as WCG members who've left] have made us stronger spiritually. Like the persecution in the early church or in today's communist countries, our persecution made us more zealous for*

*God. I think that's often why we are so dissatisfied with the way Americans "play" church. Even though in our zeal we were not worshipping the true God, our intentions were there. When our allegiance shifts to God, it is usually much stronger than that of most Christians. We can count our blessings.*

*-Sincerely, in Christ,  
Lois E. (Holman) Murphy  
Oklahoma  
(AC, Big Sandy, 1968-69)*

*I find it very interesting to learn what is going on in the WCG. However, what is more important about the Report is it has given me support over the last five years with the realization that I am not alone and that there are many others around the world in a similar situation. Also, it gives me hope in the fact that people do wake up to the falsehood of the WCG, leave, rehabilitate themselves and live productive lives again with a free mind.*

*-Australia*

*A few days ago I went out to lunch with some friends from work who have never been in the WCG or had any idea that I had been. When they asked me what had brought me to California from my home state of Washington, I actually found myself lying to them in order to avoid mentioning the WCG. Afterwards, I couldn't believe I'd done such a thing! After all, I've been out of that church for almost 14 years, have adjusted well since leaving, and most importantly have never lied about the experience before. So why was I starting now?*

*After much thought, I finally decided that there were several reasons. First of all, yes, even after 14 years, I still have painful memories of the WCG that can upset me. I also feel some shame at having been taken in by a group that everyone in Los Angeles seems to know is bizarre.*

*After exploring some of the reasons why this event happened, I became rather angry at myself. After all, why should I feel ashamed of having been a WCG member? I did nothing wrong except be young and idealistic. The ones who should be ashamed are the WCG officials who have done so much damage to so many lives.*

*Now that I've had more time to think about what happened I once more feel pretty good about myself. After all, I survived the AG/WCG experience, got an accredited degree, a good job, and have good friends (none of whom have rejected me just because of my former AC/WCG connections). If on occasion, I have flashbacks to painful WCG experiences, it doesn't mean that I haven't adjusted properly, it just means that I'm human. I'm sure there's not one former WCG member who found it easy to leave that church, but I bet most have found their lives much better and much more rewarding since leaving. I know I have (despite the occasional setback).*

*-California*

*Thank you for a job well done. Because of the AR I'm getting my life back in order.*

*-Ohio*

### **A Note From the Editor**

I owe our *Report* readers an apology. In our last issue (April 1987), I stated in closing that I was working on an article that would be "the most important we've done in some time." As of mid-September that article is still not done, and although much research has been accumulated, I can't in good conscience release the results yet. It's become clear to me that in order to do the kind of quality reporting we have in the past I'll need another three to six months for completing the research for that article and putting it all in print.

At first we planned to just hold off publishing this issue. But a good number of you wrote saying you'd appreciate receiving almost anything from us just to know we're still "hanging in there." Well, we are. That's why I became convinced it was important to get out this edition even if it lacked the lead article that's been in the works now for almost two years. I apologize for not getting out the big article I'd hoped for. But I really think most of you will have found this issue worthwhile nevertheless.

When our April *Report* went out we were concerned that this one might be our last. But thanks to some generous contributions, we've gotten caught up with most of our bills and so far, at least, we're able to continue.

We should point out, however, that even when an edition of the AR doesn't come out on time, we are still able to help many who write to us through back issues and personal correspondence. While a large percentage of those who write us are former WCG members or relatives of members, in recent months we seem to have been getting an ever increasing amount of mail from current WCG members. Apparently, the death of HWA and subsequent changes in Worldwide have prodded a good number into reexamining why they are in that organization. We hope that trend will continue.

Our thanks to all of you who are helping us to help them. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

- J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR40\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR40 March 1988

### Tkach Consolidates Power, Names Successor

When Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the founder of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), died in early 1986, he left his religious empire in the hands of evangelist and church administrator Joseph W. Tkach. In 1986, some old-timers in the church wondered if Tkach's tenure as head of the WCG would be permanent. After all, they pointed out, Tkach is not a brilliant theologian, a dynamic speaker, or a good writer (he relies heavily on ghost writers). He is not even a college graduate. But Tkach's critics overlooked one thing. Tkach is politically astute - at least when it comes to the inner-workings of the WCG.

A little over two years after HWA's death, Tkach is firmly in charge of the Armstrong empire. So much so, in fact, it is highly unlikely any faction in the church could have him ousted, or would even try. So secure is Tkach that even the trappings of his position are ballooning. No longer, for instance, is he simply the "Publisher" of the *Plain Truth*. The latest *Plain Truth* staff box designates Tkach as "Chairman and Editor in Chief." (At the same time, the names of article authors are no longer under the article titles, but are smaller-type, article-end by-lines.) Insiders also say that Tkach hopes to sell off the church's G-III executive jet and replace it with a full-size Boeing 727. Apparently that will allow him to take along an even larger entourage on his world travels.

In recent months, Tkach has demonstrated his control of the WCG organization by consolidating power through the appointment of loyalists to important church posts. Tkach's most significant move has been the raising of his son Joseph Tkach Jr. (AC, Pasadena, 1973) to what is, in effect, the number-two position in the WCG. While many considered him a flunkout from the church's ministerial training program just a few years ago, Tkach Jr. has now been raised to "Pastor rank" and is over the administration of all the WCG's U.S. churches. (Church administrator Larry Salyer now only oversees the WCG's foreign churches.)

Joe Jr., who stands out in church publication photographs because of his distinctive rabbi-

like beard, is currently married to the former Tamara Hall (AC, Pasadena, 1978). His earlier marriage to Jill Hockwald (AC, Pasadena, 1973) ended in divorce. Tkach Jr. now lives next door to his father in Pasadena, and insiders say Joe Jr. is the Pastor General's most influential advisor. (This may not be a bad thing. Besides having an Ambassador degree, Joe Jr. also has an accredited M.B.A. He may well turn out to be a positive influence on the WCG. At least we hope that will be the case.)

There is every indication that Joe Sr. is very pleased with Joe Jr.'s performance in his new responsibilities. So, a short time ago, when Tkach Sr. told subordinates that he had already chosen his successor, many began to speculate whether it was his son. Pastor General Tkach apparently refused to disclose the name of the one he has designated. But we are told the name of "Apostle" Tkach's successor is written down in a sealed envelope locked away in a church safe. The contents of the envelope will only be revealed in the event that the current "Apostle" dies or is incapacitated. We, of course, cannot say with certainty what name is in the sealed envelope, but our guess is that it is Joe Tkach Jr.

\* \* \*

Besides putting his son into the church's number-two position in the WCG, Tkach has filled other important positions with loyalists. For instance, evangelist Raymond McNair has been removed as Deputy Chancellor of the Pasadena Ambassador College and is being shunted off to New Zealand where he will run the church's small office there. (Former New Zealand office manager Peter Nathan has a brain tumor, we are told.) Taking over as Deputy Chancellor in Pasadena is Dr. Donald Ward, formerly dean of faculty at the Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas.

While Ward appears to be a Tkach supporter, how well the two will work together remains to be seen. One area in which they seem to differ is in their views on the nation of Israel and on Jews in general. Tkach is viewed by many as very pro-Jewish. He continues HWA's policy of maintaining strong WCG ties with the government of Israel, and his affection for the Jewish people is reflected in his peculiar habit of quite regularly beginning sermons with greetings in Hebrew. These, in turn, are followed by loud responses - in Hebrew - from the congregation (*The Worldwide News*, Aug. 31, 1987, p. 6).

Ward, on the other hand, is described by some long-time friends as highly distrustful of *all* Jews. Not only has Ward collected anti-Semitic literature, we are told, but on one occasion he referred to Ambassador College professor Mark Kaplan as a Jewish "double agent" simply because of Kaplan's ethnic background. It will be interesting to see if Ward is able to moderate such views in his new position.

\* \* \*

Replacing Dr. Ward as dean of faculty at Big Sandy is Dr. Michael P. Germano. In the 1970s, Dr. Germano served as dean of faculty and then vice president for academic affairs at Ambassador College in Pasadena. In recent years, Germano, a local elder, has been an associate pastor for WCG congregations in Banning and San Bernardino, California. Undoubtedly one of the best educated members of the WCG, Germano holds

a theology degree from Ambassador, a B.S. in physics from the University of Illinois, a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Southern California, and a law degree from the University of La Verne. With such outstanding credentials, Dr. Germano is viewed by many as a likely choice to eventually replace Big Sandy Deputy Chancellor Roderick C. Meredith.

### **HWA Still Dead as Filippello Waits**

In our last issue (Sept. 1987), we reported how former WCG minister Martin C. Filippello, had prophesied that the late Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the WCG, would be resurrected in January 1988. January has come and gone and, not surprisingly, HWA is still dead. Filippello had, as recently as December, preached that if his prophecies did not reach fulfillment his listeners would know that he is a "false prophet."

---

&COPY;1988 *Ambassador Report*. Published quarterly, as finances allow, as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123  
John Trechak, Editor & Publisher Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

Considering how dogmatic Filippello had been in his predictions, we wondered what his current position would be. When we phoned him in early March, he readily admitted HWA did not rise as expected. So sure had he been of his prophecy, Filippello said, he had actually waited at the cemetery on January 16 to be on hand for the event. He wasn't alone. A good number of WCG members, we are told, cruised near the cemetery the entire day in anticipation of "something big." But nothing happened.

Now, Filippello says, he's just "trying to hold together." His followers, who once numbered over 150, have now dwindled to under 50. But Filippello, although sounding a bit discouraged, still holds out a glimmer of hope in his prophetic timetable. April 1, he feels, is still going to be the date on which "the great tribulation" will begin.

"But," we asked, "what if it doesn't?" "Then I am a false prophet," he replied. "And I'll send out a letter of apology to those who listened to me... and I'll start looking for a job." If he does that, he'll be a far better man than his hero, Herbert W. Armstrong, ever was.

### **The California Court of Appeal Reverses the McNair Decision and Orders a New Trial**

On Dec. 30, 1987, the California Court of Appeal for the state's 2nd Appellate District

reversed the \$1.26 million defamation verdict won by Leona McNair against the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in 1984, and ordered a new trial. As reported in past issues of *Ambassador Report*,<sup>1</sup> the McNair v. WCG defamation suit revolved around statements made in 1979 by WCG evangelist Roderick C. Meredith during a ministerial conference and in a church publication.

In ordering the new trial, the court held that the U.S. Constitution's free exercise (of religion) clause takes precedence over a state's interest in promoting a citizen's reputation through defamation laws. With the concurrences of Justices Robert Feinerman and Herbert L. Ashby, retired Justice James Hastings<sup>2</sup> (sitting by appointment) wrote in the 15-page opinion:

Our accommodation of the competing interests of our society - one protecting reputation, the other, the free exercise of religion - requires that we hold that in order for a plaintiff to recover damages for defamatory remarks made during the course of a doctrinal explanation by a duly authorized minister, he/she must show, by clear and convincing evidence, that the defamation was made with constitutional malice, that is with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not. Whether a plaintiff is a "public figure" or the method of publication is via a "newspaper" is irrelevant under this holding.<sup>3</sup>

The Pasadena Superior Court jury that granted Leona the \$1.26 million in damages had not been instructed about deciding constitutional malice so the jury could not have determined whether the evidence supported a verdict in her favor, the justice wrote. Consequently, the court ordered that the McNair case be completely retried.<sup>4</sup>

Antony Stuart,<sup>5</sup> Leona McNair's attorney, told the Report:

Of course we're disappointed in the Court of Appeal's decision that the case should be retried, but we are supremely confident about prevailing in a second trial should the California Supreme Court affirm the Court of Appeal's decision. And that is because the only thing the Court of Appeal required be done differently is to ask the jury to determine whether Meredith's remarks were made with "knowing falsity or reckless disregard for the truth" ["constitutional malice"]. We believe the jury did find that and more in the initial trial. They found, first of all, that the statements were false; second, that the defendants made the statements with the intent to cause severe emotional distress to Leona; and third, that the defendants engaged in a conspiracy to defame and injure her.

We are comforted by the Court of Appeal's affirmation [of the principle] that Leona, and people like her, who are victimized by the heavy-handed conduct of any church, have a right to sue for their damages. But we are concerned that the Court of Appeal's opinion provides more protection to churches for libel and slander than that which is given to the press, or to anyone else for that matter.

What Stuart was referring to was that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that media defendants obtain the so-called "constitutional malice" standard when sued by public figures in libel actions over speech on matters of public controversy.<sup>6</sup> (The reason for granting the press this level of protection is that in a democratic society the press plays an essential role in the political process.) The California Court of Appeal's new law, however, grants churches even *more* protection; so that when churches are sued for

defamation in the future, "constitutional malice" will have to be proven even by plaintiffs who are *private* figures and even in cases involving matters of *private* concern.

A thorough analysis of the McNair case's relation to the modern law of libel and the First Amendment's free speech, free exercise, and establishment clauses would involve discussions of complex legal doctrines more appropriate in a law review article. But suffice it to say, many legal scholars who are aware of the reversal in the McNair case recognize that the California Court of Appeal, by its new law, has completely ignored the establishment clause of the First Amendment and has now given churches speech protections significantly superior to those of the press and vastly superior to those of private citizens.<sup>7</sup>

The California Court of Appeal, by its broad language in the McNair decision, has also given us many more questions than answers. For instance, what did the court mean by "during the course of doctrinal explanation"? In the WCG, and indeed in most churches, religious doctrine covers the full gamut of human existence. A WCG minister, Catholic priest, or Jewish rabbi can quite logically be viewed as almost always expounding upon religious doctrine when speaking publicly or writing, for these religions' doctrines relate to virtually *everything*.

And what did the court mean by "a duly authorized minister"? Many religious organizations consider clergypersons "authorized" only if they have been ordained through special rites. Some religionists, however, consider a clergyperson "authorized" if simply "self-dedicated." Others consider a minister "authorized" only if "ordained by God," or if God's special favor is shown through a life of celibacy or by speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Are these the kinds of indicia that courts will henceforth weigh in determining who is "authorized" under the new law?

It is quite apparent that should the California Court of Appeal's new law be allowed to stand, the inevitable consequence will be that future courts will have to define scores of religious terms. In so doing, the government will be declaring which clergypersons are "authorized," which topics are "doctrinal," which organizations are "churches" - and which ones are not. Obviously, such determinations (and they will be necessary under the California Court of Appeal's new law) will lead to increased government entanglements with religion, and, if left unchecked, could eventually stamp an imprimature of state approval upon certain religions.<sup>8</sup>

Not everyone, of course, is hurt by the Court of Appeal's new rule. For instance, some publishers of newsletters dealing with religion-related topics have obviously been given new far-reaching protections significantly greater than those afforded the general press. But many who believe in "separation of church and state" cannot help but feel uncomfortable with a court decision that augurs increased government meddling with religion. And we should all feel uncomfortable with an activist court creating a law that promises not simply protection for the Billy Grahams and the Archbishop Mahoneys of our society, but that also promises preferential judicial treatment for the Gene Scotts, the Rabbi Kahanes, and the Louis Farrakhans.<sup>9</sup>

Stuart's appeal to the California State Supreme Court may take months. It is quite

possible that the case could then be brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. In the end, there may well be a new jury trial, and after that, quite possibly, more appeals. But while the lawyers, judges, and legal scholars engage in the paper chase, Leona McNair waits for justice, alone in Pasadena. As a result of her lawsuit against the WCG, one WCG-member son speaks to her only briefly if she calls him. Her other son, a WCG employee, refuses all contact with his mother and will not even give her his address. Although Leona earns her way as a nurse, friends say she is unable to afford the therapy psychologists have testified she needs as a result of evangelist Meredith's attack on her and as a result of her traumatic experiences in the WCG.

Sources have indicated that the California Court of Appeal's decision hurt Leona deeply because in its published opinion, the court repeated, as fact, many of evangelist Meredith's statements about her that the unanimous jury had found to be untrue. That the court would do this, friends say, was devastating to her. But, we are told, through prayer and Bible study, and with the encouragement of friends, Leona has since been able to regain the spiritual strength she needs to carry on.

-John Trechak

#### Footnotes

1. See our Oct. 1984, Jan. 1986, and Jan. 1987 issues.
2. Justices Hastings and Ashby were appointed by then governor Ronald Reagan. Justice Feinerman was appointed by former governor Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown Jr.
3. 197 Cal.App.3d 363, 377.
4. Previous to the California Court of Appeal's ruling, of course, no legislative or judicial body had ever set down such a difficult standard for private citizens attempting to prove defamation. The layman can therefore liken this activist panel's reversal to some governing body in the sports world taking away a champion's medal and saying, "Okay, you won under the old rule, but we don't like those rules now. So go back and try to win under these new, more difficult rules we've just created."

Those who've never studied the law, but who've been blessed with old-fashioned common sense, might ask: Why go through all the time, trouble, and expense of a new trial? Even if the Court of Appeal's new rule were correct, wouldn't it make more sense to simply regather the jurors from the first trial (the ones that, after all, sat through almost seven weeks of testimony) and, through a court proceeding with the Court of Appeal's new instruction added to the previous jury instructions, again ask the jury for their verdict?

Those interested in learning why so much of our law is archaic and inefficient will find enlightenment in distinguished attorney Charles Rembar's book *The Law of the Land* (published by Simon and Schuster). Mr. Rembar's work is an entertaining history of the barbaric origins of our Anglo-American legal system and its numerous anachronisms.

5. Mr. Stuart is with the Los Angeles lawfirm of Greene, O'Reilly, Broillet, Paul, Simon, McMillan, Wheeler, & Rosenberg.

6. The "constitutional malice" standard, as it has come to be called, derives from a line of U.S. Supreme

Court decisions beginning with the famous case of *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* (1964) 376 U.S. 254, and as refined in cases such as *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.* (1974) 418 U.S. 323, and *Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. v. Greenmoss Builders* (1985) 472 U.S. 749, all of which were cited as authority by the Court of Appeal.

7. The establishment clause requires that "Congress [and the courts, by case law and logical extension] shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion...." We think it is very significant that nowhere in its opinion did the Court of Appeal in any way address the establishment clause implications of its ruling.

8. Perhaps belatedly sensing the inevitable difficulties its broadly worded opinion will create, the court, in a procedure not usually seen, filed an additional footnote to the decision a month after the opinion itself was filed. The footnote (a revised number 13) reads:

Our opinion is based on the unique facts of this case that involve a former well-known and important member of the church (respondent) in a controversy that raises questions concerning church doctrine and teachings. We are not saying that explanation of church doctrine per se can shield the speaker or writer from a negligence action for libel or slander. There certainly must be a nexus between the person allegedly slandered or libeled and the religious activity involved. Accordingly, any determination of the malice required must be decided on a case by case basis.

It is somewhat amusing to see Leona McNair being portrayed as "well-known." In 1979, not one WCG member in 10 probably knew who she was. Among the general public, undoubtedly, not one American in a quarter million would have recognized her name.

It is also amusing that the court should want to make Leona "important." Of course, in one sense, all human beings are important. But in the general sense of "important" meaning influential in society, how could any woman in the WCG be "important"? In the WCG no women are ordained to the ministry, none are allowed to preach, and at the present time none are corporate officers or trustees. WCG women are taught to be completely subservient to men (fathers, then husbands), even to the point of having men decide what makeup, if any, they may put on their faces. That being so, how could any WCG woman be viewed as "important"? Unless, of course, all human beings are "important." But if that egalitarian definition is embraced, then the court's choice of words is meaningless in the context of its opinion.

Transparently, the court was attempting to paint Leona McNair as a "public figure." Yet, the lower court found, as a matter of law, that Leona was not a public figure! What's more, the Court of Appeal, in the body of its own opinion, stated that "[w]hether a plaintiff is a 'public figure'... is irrelevant under this holding."

The court's statement that there must be a nexus, or connection, between the person allegedly defamed and "the religious activity involved" (not defined) is so vague as to make us wonder how any future court could find direction in this attempted limitation. What degree of nexus, and exactly what kind of nexus, does the court have in mind?

Finally, in the last sentence of the note, the Court of Appeal seems to throw up its hands in frustration and feebly admit that it really has not articulated a clear rule to be relied on in deciding future cases involving defamatory statements made during activities relating to religion. Future cases of this type, it writes, will simply have to be decided on a "case by case basis."

9. That greatly increased entanglement of religion and government could occur in the U.S. in the near future should not be assumed to be far-fetched. In this regard it is interesting that among those candidates now running for the U.S. Presidency, at least four (Gore, Hart, Jackson, and Robertson) are

seminary educated. Two (Jackson and Robertson) are ordained ministers. And one (Robertson) claims that God personally talks to him. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (March 4, 1988), Robertson has stated that only those adhering to certain specific religious beliefs are qualified to run for political office. The same *Times* article also reported that Robertson has been known to speak in tongues, and he has stated that within 10 years he expects to see "judges speaking in tongues from the bench."

### **HWA Remembered (Part III)**

As was inferred in Parts I and II of "HWA Remembered," even though Herbert W. Armstrong is now gone, new insights into his famous career continue to emerge.

Volume two of the *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong* has now been released by the WCG. (Free copies may be obtained by writing the WCG or by calling one of their toll-free numbers listed in the *Plain Truth*.) This final volume, which is a compilation of many HWA autobiographical articles formerly serialized in the *Plain Truth* and of some of his co-worker letters, is reported to have been edited by WCG evangelist Herman L. Hoeh.

Many readers who were in the WCG during the last two or three decades will undoubtedly be amazed at Hoeh's editorial chutzpah when they read this 659-page work. Volume two, which covers HWA's life from about 1938 to his death in 1986, tells of his struggles in building Ambassador College, the Worldwide Church of God, the *Plain Truth*, and of his travels to meet world leaders (many of whom, HWA notes with some astonishment, either died or were removed from office shortly after meeting him). But what is most striking about his book is what is *not* covered. There is virtually no discussion of Worldwide's many turbulent years of political infighting, doctrinal changes, ministerial defections, and splinter groups. There is no hint of the many articles and books that have appeared in recent years accusing HWA of gross immorality and extreme hypocrisy. The state of California's 1979 investigation of the WCG and the receivership imposed upon the church are given only passing comment.

Even more surprising (because it so blatantly reveals this book to be the duplicitous puffery of HWA that it really is) is the treatment given HWA's son Garner Ted Armstrong. With the exception of a few passing references, Garner Ted is almost nowhere to be found. Yet for over two decades, when the Armstrong empire experienced its greatest growth ever, Garner Ted was the church's leading evangelist and its chief spokesman on both radio and television. Now, however, the official WCG line, evident by volume two of the *Autobiography*, is that Garner Ted Armstrong has become a "non-person."

The *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong* is unquestionably propaganda. But amateur sleuths interested in HWA's real past will find that this book does offer occasional insights - if one is capable of "reading between the lines." For instance, beginning at page 48, HWA recounts how from April through July of 1942 he left his wife and sons behind in Eugene, Oregon and moved into a Hollywood, California apartment with his daughter Dorothy, then in her early twenties. The move to Hollywood, we are told, was necessary because the recording facilities there were so much superior to those he'd been using in Oregon, and being in Hollywood provided access to top radio announcers such as Art Gilmore.

However, one professional recording engineer that we talked to, a long-time member of the Audio Engineering Society and a man whose extensive experience in entertainment industry sound engineering dates back to the 1940s, said that HWA's explanation is ludicrous. While Hollywood (and New York City and a number of other entertainment industry centers) did have generally superior facilities for recording large orchestras and movie sound tracks, studios and equipment for doing broadcast-quality recordings of the spoken word were available throughout the United States by 1942 and such equipment could even be purchased then by individuals for home use. Radio announcers, too, were in no short supply. And even if one decided to use a particular Hollywood announcer for a few sentences of opening and closing comments, as were spoken by Art Gilmore, the technology of the era allowed for high-quality, lathe-cut masters for dubbing. Books on the subject of recording-arts history clearly bear this out. In other words, contrary to his *Autobiography* assertions, there was really no technological reason for HWA to have gone to Hollywood in 1942.

Then there is the excuse given by HWA for Dorothy's company. At page 48 we read that Dorothy "demanded" that she be taken to California in the hope that she might see her Marine fiance. But a careful reading beginning at page 47 shows that her fiance was in Quantico, Virginia and that there was only "some possibility" of him coming through Los Angeles or San Diego or San Francisco on his way to the Pacific theater. Further, it is admitted, such a stop-over, if it were to have happened (and it didn't), would have been "very brief," perhaps only "twenty-four hours - or even less." Yet Dorothy lived with Herbert in Hollywood for close to *four full months!*

HWA readily admits that during all this time his wife Loma was back in Eugene running the church office while trying to raise their two sons on her own. We then read that in June Loma called Herbert to tell him she was having difficulty maintaining discipline over their son Dick and so she was sending him down by train to be with his father. When the thirteen-year-old arrived, what did Herbert do? Did he talk to his son about Christian values, lecture him about why he should have been more thoughtful toward his mother, or organize his son's summer plans toward productive activity? No! He first takes him on a tour of sin city. Then, the next day he suggests to his son that he go off alone and visit one of his young friends who had recently moved down from Oregon. Dick's friend lived in Hawthorne (in pre-freeway days, probably about two hours out of Hollywood). HWA then tells his thirteen-year-old, "You have to begin right now learning to be self-reliant and finding your own way around.... I'm too busy getting the broadcast ready to tell you [how to get to your friend's home]. Here's car fare. You're on your own. Find your way back. And be here in time for dinner. Goodbye, son."

Apparently Dick made it back without getting mugged or molested because in the days that followed, HWA would regularly give him money and, in effect, tell him to get lost. This, HWA claims, was all done to teach his thirteen-year-old "self-reliance."

While we don't doubt that HWA treated his son the way he describes, we don't believe that his claimed motive for doing so was his real motive. Considering HWA's years of advocating strictness in childrearing, HWA's abandonment of supervision over his son in order to enhance self-confidence in him (and since when did HWA ever encourage people to be independent?) seems completely out of character. The motive that does fit

the man and the circumstances, however, is that he didn't want little Dick around during the day to witness what was *really* going on.

Herbert's almost four-month-long Hollywood odyssey only ended when Loma and some associates - very likely suspecting something was amiss - drove down to Hollywood all the way from Oregon and brought Herbert and the rest of the family back to Eugene. That's not the way HWA worded it. But as you read Herbert's version of what happened, isn't that what really jumps out at you from the printed page?

Recall that since 1980 when David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* first appeared, there has been wide circulation of the allegation that beginning in 1936 HWA had a very long incestuous relationship with his daughter Dorothy. Considering the significance of those charges, it is remarkable that editor Hoeh would allow Herbert's thinly-disguised Hollywood odyssey to be included in the *Autobiography*. Was Hoeh attempting to bring HWA's image down to earth? Or did HWA before his death order that his Hollywood odyssey be included in his *Autobiography* as some sort of cryptic message to the worldly potentates he loved so much more than his humble brethren - a cryptic message that he was able to sin more than all of them and still get away with it?

We may never know the answer to that. But we believe the *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, when read with the skeptical eyes of a careful detective, reveals dark secrets about the man his followers called "the Holy Apostle of God's True Church."

### **Bobby Fischer Update**

Ever since we published our large 1977 issue, which contained an interview with former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, we have regularly received letters from readers asking for updates on the renowned chess genius. Over the years, we have attempted to locate Fischer to ask for another interview and to offer assistance in promoting his once-budding career. Unfortunately, it has proven impossible for us to locate the elusive chess champion. Recently, however, a reader sent us a clipping from the November 13, 1987 edition of *The Globe and Mail* (of Canada) in which reporter Bill Girdner wrote about Fischer's current lifestyle. The article is informative:

#### **U.S. chess wizard held in check by his own eccentric fears**

Riding an orange public bus that runs between Pasadena and Los Angeles, say chess players, is how the eccentric and enigmatic American chess genius Bobby Fischer now spends his days. "He never gets off," said an international-class player living in Los Angeles who asked that his name not be used. "He just stays on, going round and round."

Mr. Fischer has retained his genius and can still "smash" almost any opponent, said former friends and competitors, but he now applies his mind to memorizing anti-Semitic literature and preaching against the Soviets. "He's not well," the player said. "He's a smart and loveable man, but it's bad. He doesn't have money. He's very poor."

Mr. Fischer became an unlikely American idol in the Icelandic city of Reykjavik in 1972 when he beat Soviet Boris Spassky for the world championship of chess - a game that generally receives almost no attention in the United States. He made the covers of *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, and *Life* magazines, and North American viewers followed the slow play-by-play of his contest with Mr. Spassky on television. Chess groupies even emerged who worked their way up the ratings chart, according to chess players and teachers, in the hope of eventually seducing Mr. Fischer.

"Chess is like war on a board," Mr. Fischer said then. "The object is to crush the other man's mind." Part of what made Mr. Fischer a media star, observers have suggested, was that the match became a symbolic superpower confrontation: Mr. Fischer was the only American to wrest the world title from the Soviets, who have dominated chess since the Second World War.

When, temperamental as always, he threatened to quit play after only a few games, then President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger telephoned to coax him back to the board.

In the world of chess where mastery of the game is all, Mr. Fischer was and remains legendary. "He's as great as everything that everybody said about him," said Max Wilkerson, a chess expert who directs the chess room at the Mechanics Club in San Francisco and has played Mr. Fischer. "But he is completely unforgiving as a person."

Mr. Wilkerson was present when Mr. Fischer made his first appearance in the Manhattan Chess Club, the most famous chess milieu in the United States. At the age of 11½, he played senior master Walter Shipman and lost. Members of the club had heard about the young sensation, and they crowded around Mr. Shipman to ask: "How's the kid?" Mr. Wilkerson says he can remember verbatim the prophetic answer: "Not yet boys, but just wait."

Born in 1943 in Chicago, he won the U.S. championship at 14 and the world championship at 29. But then things began to go wrong. Mr. Fischer refused to defend his world title in 1975. He came under the wing of a fundamentalist church in Pasadena, the Worldwide Church of God, and gave the church much of his royalties and prize money.

Mr. Wilkerson said he turned away from the Worldwide Church of God after a leader of the church predicted the return of Jesus Christ on a particular date. When that event did not materialize, Mr. Fischer rejected the church. Players in the Los Angeles area say that since then, he has been living with friends or in seedy hotel rooms, surrounded by chess books and Hitler memorabilia. He has alienated many of his friends

through his "paranoia" and his ability to "eat everything that's not nailed down," they say. They describe Mr. Fischer as a "human vacuum cleaner" sucking up food and egos. Friends say he never lets them know where he is staying, always requesting that he be dropped off and then finishing the route home on foot. One of his principal fears is that he will be killed by Russian agents, they say, and he also believes that all defectors from the Soviet Union are KGB agents still loyal to their Soviet masters.

In the spring of 1981, Mr. Fischer was arrested by Pasadena police [when he was found] wandering along a highway and, when he refused to give his address, [he was] charged with vagrancy. He wrote a small book about the experience called "I Was Tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse." It became a hot item in chess stores, and employees at a chess store in Los Angeles sold their 200 copies out in two weeks, even though the book said nothing about chess. A number of people including Soviet news reporters have requested copies since then, said the employees, but they are no longer available.

Now, Mr. Fischer lives in Pasadena with another chess player, said chess enthusiasts in Los Angeles and San Francisco. He still studies the game along with a book promoting white supremacy that he has memorized word for word. For example, if a friend gives him a page and line number of the book, he can recite the exact words of that line complete with punctuation.

"He has a terrible illness. He may feel he's going to come back and play in a tournament," the international player said. "But he couldn't handle people watching him, the proximity of people. He would flip out." Mr. Wilkerson, however, said people forget that Mr. Fischer has dropped out before and every time he came back stronger. "Nothing Fischer could ever do would surprise me any more," Mr. Wilkerson said. "If he came back tomorrow, it wouldn't surprise me. If he never came back, it wouldn't surprise me either."

## **The Coronation Stone Revisited**

*Editor: As many WCG observers know, the Coronation Stone of Westminster Abbey figures prominently in the WCG's Anglo-Israel teachings. In 1987, after considerable research, writer Bill Moore (AC, Bricklet Wood, 1969) sent us the following letter regarding his research on the subject.*

I read your January 1987 AR and wanted to respond to the letter on page four regarding "Jacob's Pillar Stone." One of the very first things I did on my October 1986 trip to London was to visit with the head librarian of Westminster Abbey. Very few tourists visit the library since it is reached through an ancient and continuously locked wooden door off a wing of the cloister. The library was converted from a monk's dormitory in the 1600s and houses a rare collection of 17th-century volumes. I asked the librarian, an

obliging whisp of a woman in her late 40s or early 50s, if she had any historical background material on the coronation stone. She dug out a dog-eared copy of the abbey's standard tourist guide in the margins of which she had written copious notes similar to the way WCG members mark the margins of their Bibles. She recited the legend of the stone originally having been brought to the British Isles from Israel thousands of years ago. She hastened to add, however, that no reputable historian places any credence in the legend. Unfortunately and ironically, despite the hundreds of ancient volumes in her library, none deals with the history of the coronation stone. For that you have to go to other sources, and I have.

Alfred P. Smyth is recognized as one of the world's preeminent medieval historians. His book, *Warlords and Holy Men - Scotland AD 8 - 1000* (published in 1984 by Edward Arnold, London), was recommended to me by Dr. D. H. Caldwell, Assistant Keeper, National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, Scotland. I have corresponded with Dr. Smyth regarding the legend that the coronation stone, which was removed to Westminster Abbey in 1296 by Edward I of England from its original location in Scone, Scotland was the Lia Fail of Tara Hill. He kindly took a great deal of his time to find and photocopy two obscure scholarly dissertations relevant to the question of the origin of the coronation stone in Ireland and known as Lia Fail in Irish history. The first was written in 1836 by John O'Donovan, who, in the words of Dr. Smyth, was "the greatest of nineteenth century scholars." O'Donovan's unpublished "Letters Containing information relative to the Antiquities of the County of Meath" contain information I believe your readers will find of interest. Here are a few excerpts:

Keating [a 16th-century Irish historian] says that the Irish Colony who emigrated to Scotland in the beginning of the 6th-century took with them this stone, and he quotes or rather translates from Hector Boece an old rann from which he believes that the Scots would obtain monarchial sway in whatever Country [sic] they could bring (find) this stone. Keating, after giving us a full account of the virtues, history, etc., of this stone, says that the above prophecy was fulfilled in the then reigning Monarch [sic] of Great Britain (Charles I ?) who was of Scotie origin and found the Lia-Fail at Westminster Abbey.

The rann above referred to runs as follows (But his rann is nothing else but a translation of Hector Boece's Latin "Ni fallat fatum" by Keating himself): [I have omitted the Latin version for your readers - W.M.]:

The Scotie tribe, a noble race  
Unless the prophecy be false  
Wherever they find the Lia-Fail  
Are entitled to supremacy.

O'Donovan then quotes Sir Walter Scott's rendition of the poem:

Unless the Fates be faithless found  
And Prophets voice be vain  
Where e'er this Monument is found  
The Scotie race shall reign.

O'Donovan continues:

It is said that in the reign of Edward I this stone was removed from the Abbey of Scone in Scotland to Westminster where it is now to be seen but called by the name of "Solomon's Stone."

I could never find an older authority for the removal of this stone to Scotland in the 6th Century than Keating's and I therefore have not believed it since I began to question the divine authority of Irish history. Keating does not quote any authority and as we have the authority of the poem of Cuan O'Lochain in the Dinnseanchus that the Lia Fail was at Tara in the time of the writer (10th century) we must reject Keating's story as a silly fable, or at least as founded upon oral tradition or perhaps drawn from the fabulous writings of Hector Boece and other Scotch historians of the same descriptions.

Regarding the accuracy of Hector Boece's history, the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* says the following, "The composition of [Boece's] history displays much ability; but [his] imagination was, however, stronger than his judgment: of the extent of the historian's credulity, his narrative exhibits many unequivocal proofs; and of deliberate inventions of distortions of facts not a few, though the latter are less flagrant and intentional than early 19th century criticism has assumed."

The second publication which Dr. Smyth sent me is of much more modern vintage. It is a 1971 archaeological review of the monuments at Tara Hill, County Meath, Ireland, written by the late Sean P. O'Riordain, Professor of Archaeology, University College, Dublin. According to Dr. Smyth, Professor O'Riordain was "the greatest archaeologist in Ireland in this century." Your readers will recall that Tara Hill was the site of the throne of the ancient high kings of Ireland. According to Professor O'Riordain, the Lia Fail *still stands on Tara Hill today*:

Towards the centre of Rath na Riogh are the two earthworks marked the Forradh (or Royal Seat) to the east and Teach Cormaic (Cormac's House) to the west.... Here also we see, beside the modern statue of St. Patrick, an upright granite stone [looking surprisingly like a phallic symbol - W.M.] marked lightly with a cross, the letters R.I.P. and initials - for it marks the grave of some of those killed in the Battle of Tara in 1798. It already stood there in Petrie's time but tradition had it that it formerly lay near the Mound of the Hostages. Now this according to the Dinnshenchas, was the position of [Lia Fail], the inauguration stone which roared under the feet of the king. Hence the stone over the '98 grave is taken to be the Lia Fail - notwithstanding the late story in Keating of its transfer to Scotland.

So if the Lia Fail - "stone of destiny" is still standing at Tara Hill, then what is the origin of the red sandstone block housed under the graffiti-riddled oak throne chair in Westminster Abbey?

The question of the origin of the British coronation stone was thoroughly investigated in 1869 by William F. Skene in his 44-page treatise, "The Coronation Stone." After recounting the purely legendary movement of the Irish coronation stone from Egypt [not Israel, notice] through Spain to Ireland, he states the following:

It is somewhat remarkable that while Scotch legend brings the stone at Scone from Ireland, the Irish legend brings the stone at Tara from Scotland. The two legends, at all events, are quite antagonistic to each other, and there is one historic fact certain as to each. First, the Lia Fail, or Irish stone, did not leave Tara, but was still there in the

eleventh century; and secondly, the Scotch stone was not in Argyll during the existence of the Irish colony of Dalriada, nor was it used in the inauguration of their kings. The first appears from this, that the Irish translation of Nennius, made in the eleventh century, has appended to it a list of the *Mirabilia* or wonders of Erin, among which are the three wonders of *Teamar* or Tara; and the third is "the *Lia Fail*, or stone which sounded under every king whom it recognized in the sovereignty of *Teamar*." Another version says "there is a stone at Temhar, viz. the *Lia Fail*, which used to sound under the feet of every one that assumed the kingdom of Erin." Petrie, in his *Antiquities of Tara Hill*, quotes other older documents to show that the stone still remained there. The second fact is shown by the account given by the biographers of St. Columba [the 6th-century founder of Christianity in Scotland] of the inauguration of Aidan as King of the Scots of Argyll. The account is given by two of the successors of St. Columba - Cumine the White, who was abbot [of Iona] from 657 to 669, and Adomnan, who was abbot from 679 to 704. St. Columba had obtained at the Council of Dumceat the independence of Scotch Dalriada; and if ever there was an occasion on which the Stone of Destiny might be expected to play a prominent part, it was in the solemn rite by which St. Columba constituted Aidan king, in obedience to a divine command declared in a vision, and accompanied by a prophecy regarding his successors. He ordains him by placing his hands upon his head, blessing him, using what Adomnan calls "verba ordinationis"; but, throughout the whole description, there is not a single allusion to the Fatal Stone.

After quoting Professor Ramsay who physically examined the coronation stone and concluded that it was, in all probability, cut from the sandstone bedrock found in the region of Scone, Skene concludes that:

[T]here was no connection between the stone at Scone and the Lia Fail at Tara, and that the legends of their wanderings, like the tribes with whom they are associated, are nothing but myth and fable.

It was the custom of Celtic tribes to inaugurate their kings upon a sacred stone supposed to symbolise the monarchy. The Irish kings were inaugurated on the Lia Fail which was never anywhere but at Tara, the "sedes principalis" of Ireland; and the kings of Scotland, first of the Pictish monarchy, and afterwards of the Scottish kingdoms which succeeded it, were inaugurated on this stone, which never was anywhere but at Scone, the "sedes principalis" both of the Pictish and of the Scottish kingdoms.

In conclusion, Irish and English historians, as well as Irish tradition (with the exception of Keating in the 16th-century), reaffirm the fact that the Lia Fail - or fabled "Stone of Destiny" - never left Tara Hill in County Meath, Ireland. It still stands as part of a memorial to Ireland's fight for independence from England. As for the English Coronation Stone in Westminster Abbey, it was removed - more militant Scottish nationals will say "stolen" - from the royal seat in Scone, Scotland in 1296 A.D. by Britain's King Edward I. It is this stone that later was mistakenly called "Jacob's Pillar Stone" in a transparent attempt to biblically justify the growth of British imperialism from the 16th to the 19th century. Neither the large phallic stone at Tara Hill nor the sandstone block at Westminster are "Jacob's Stone" regardless of what Anglo-Israelism or Worldwide Church of God dogma may teach. This is an incontrovertible fact of history.

- Bill Moore, Papillion, Nebraska

## More on Anglo-Israelism

*Ambassador Report* continues to receive letters regularly on Anglo-Israelism or British-Israelism - the teaching that the English-speaking "white" nations are the so-called lost ten tribes of Israel. The doctrine is not unique to the WCG, and more and more groups seem to be adopting it, although with variations. For instance, *Time* magazine (Oct. 20, 1986, p. 74) reported how the militant Aryan Nations and other new racist groups in the U.S. make "Identity," as they call the teaching, a central part of their belief system.

It is interesting to note some of the variations of the doctrine now being promulgated. For instance, one group (The Pathfinder, P.O. Box 291, Spokane, WA 99210) puts out a flyer on the supposed migrations of the "lost tribes," and equates them with "the Caucasians" or "Western Christian nations." It is unclear from the flyer whether or not Catholic Spain and Italy are considered Christian by the author, but he is somehow convinced that "among the peoples of Anglo-Saxondom, you will always find Bible and worship of Jesus Christ, just as the Bible states that Israel would do."

Then there was the AR reader who wrote us: "All white Christians are true twelve tribe Israel. Russians and all Slovanics are [the] tribe of Issachar." Perhaps Joe Tkach will appreciate learning this. Whatever the case, it is remarkable to us just how far some will extend the boundaries of their "modern Israel."

One of the best papers we've ever seen on Anglo-Israelism is titled *Truth Line* (dated August, 1981) and is published by TSL Publishing House, P.O. Box 18122, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118. Besides giving a biblical critique of the doctrine, the paper provides an interesting history of the belief and lists a good number of groups that adhere to it. We know very little about the TSL group, but they appear to be former WCG members who put out a number of free publications aimed at helping Worldwidiers.

## The Bricket Wood Sale - What Really Happened

*Editor: Ambassador College currently has two campuses: one in Pasadena, California and the other in Big Sandy, Texas. But until 1976, the WCG also operated a beautiful and developing college campus at Bricket Wood, England in London's green belt. In 1976, when the Armstrongs sold off that campus, it was claimed that financial difficulties had forced the sale. Many of us, however, who had spent time at the college in England and who knew the stated goals of the church, suspected that there was more to the sale than the official line. For surely, if the WCG really was in financial difficulty, other assets could have been liquidated at less cost to the effectiveness of "the Work." For instance, we wondered, why not sell off one of the jets, or cut back on the concert series or cut back on the amount of land owned for keeping the fall festival? Why sell off a whole college campus - one that eventually could have developed into a respected academic institution? We recently asked Charles Hunting, for many years the WCG's business manager in England, what he knew of the Bricket Wood sale. He sent us the following account of what really transpired:*

The story of HWA and the Bricket Wood meltdown is, I think, an uncomplicated story of HWA faced with a decision brought about by one of the periodic supposed "financial

crises" and his own personal desires to live a different pattern of existence after the death of Loma [Armstrong, HWA's first wife].

A decision was made largely, I think, between HWA, church attorney Stan Rader, and Ted [Garner Ted Armstrong, HWA's son, and then a church V.P.] that one of the colleges had to be closed because of the financial problem. Ted had then come back into power and the job was left to him as to which one was to go. There was no question probably in Ted's mind as to which way the decision would eventually go, but there had to be a selling job on the demise of Bricket Wood. It became Ted's job to push the decision, and as it turned out, a huge struggle ensued between Ted and myself as to which one would go, Texas or England. I was just a bit naive still at this stage of the game, but should have realized, even then, that it was all show.

I was called to Pasadena for a conference chaired by Ted, with Ron Dart, Bob Kuhn, David Antion, and about five others whose names escape me for the moment. HWA and Rader were out going to and fro, India or most likely Thailand, keeping in close touch with the proceeding by lengthy telexes. The final recommendation was to be arrived at by the august body of advisers at the above mentioned conference and was to be referred to HWA and Rader for the final inspired decision from on high.

The conference raged on all morning, with Ted presenting his reasons for Cactus Alley and I as the lone exponent for England. I sighted the whole international scope of the work, the huge printing facility in England, etc., etc., as valid reasons for the continuation of the English college. There was scarcely a word out of the mouths of the other members of the "advisory" team.

The meeting broke up for lunch. After the close of the morning session and before its resumption in the afternoon, virtually everyone of the "team" came to me and told me that I was right in my arguments; there was no need for two American colleges, and the one in Bricket Wood should remain open or both should be closed. We resumed after lunch in Ted's office, this time with just a few of the elite - Garner Ted, Kuhn, Antion, Dart, and Ted's Court Jester (I've forgotten his name for the moment). Although all of these fellows had told me Ted's best little you-know-what-house in Texas should close, not one, nil, zilch would make even the slightest protest in that short, informal, afternoon session when Ted guessed that it was the consensus of opinion that [the college in] England was to go down the tubes. So the sham morning meeting was merely the, window dressing for Ted's previously made decision.

I will never forget the scene that followed. I looked at each one of the "consensus" who had thirty minutes before told me Ted was wrong. Not one would look at me and not one raised even a whisper of protest. I will never forget it. One looked at the floor. Most kept their eyes fixed on their bread and butter. When no one disagreed with Ted, Bob Kuhn spoke up and said, "Let's telex HWA and tell him that it is the unanimous recommendation of the group that Texas will remain open." I told Bob, "Don't you dare put my name to that telex!" Ted was furious that I would oppose his august highness in the presence of the group, but he cooled off and the telex sans my name was sent.

It is my studied opinion that nothing was done in any major action by Ted, or anyone else, in which HWA did not totally concur or else didn't really care. In the case of closing the college, Herbert, now free of Loma, would be happy to be free of Bricket Wood.

Free, free, free to pursue the life of a wealthy jetsetter. So closing Bricket Wood was what he really wanted, but he had to make some kind of a show and he could always blame Ted as the Simon Legree in the act. If the Texas college stayed open, it didn't tie him down. That was Ted's problem. And after all, Ted was now the voice of the last, great, end-time work and it was no small gesture on HWA's part to keep "the Vice," sorry, "Voice" happy. HWA did the same thing when Teddy wanted to start his [*Plain Truth*] newspaper. We in England screamed to high heaven that it would do nothing in England but create a litter problem. But HWA didn't even really care about his beloved *Plain Truth* and let Ted put out his miserable failure to supplant the [magazine format] PT. It did create a litter problem, too.

HWA was getting what he wanted out of life. To pursue those aims, he wanted to separate himself as far as possible from the agony of day to day decisions and from contact with students and/or people in the church with whom he had so little in common. It is a well-known fact that TV religionists all hate to meet up with their followers. They do have much to hide. And it was to the advantage of all of us in the top echelons [of the WCG] to provide a cover and cater to the Armstrongs.

One final comment about HWA. I am sure you are as aware as I am of the total selfishness of the man and his complete lack of sentimentality about anything that was in the slightest degree remote from his own personal desires. People who had served him well were immediately removed from the scene at the slightest hint of a threat, whether they constituted a real threat or not. Take my case. I was not taken in, or even involved in, any of the meetings in which HWA participated that ended with my removal from England. HWA didn't even call me, or talk to me, until after he had made his final decision. And even this was to only yell at me something about kicking him in the stomach. This was just before he began speaking to the church in England. The man had no personal loyalty or sentiment toward England, the Bricket Wood college, or anyone there after Loma's death. It was an encumbrance to his new lifestyle. And it was a continuous thorn in Ted's side because of my [past] close contact with HWA (but that had really virtually ended by this time as I was no longer included in the flying entourage).

This might fill in part of the picture for you. But they are only my own personal opinions, and I have never discussed them before with anyone.

- Charles Hunting, New Smyrna Beach, Florida

### **Charles Hunting on Radio**

Many who were in the WCG during the sixties and seventies remember how church executive and evangelist Charles F. Hunting was then one of the church's most captivating speakers. And those of us who were privileged to have Mr. Hunting as a theology and speech professor at Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, also recall that he was a man of warmth, humor, integrity, and compassion.

When your editor left the WCG in 1974 he sent letters to dozens of WCG friends (he thought) explaining his reasons for leaving. Only two wrote back to express any concern -

one was Charles Hunting. In 1975, when Bob and Connie Gerringer left the WCG, only one WCG minister cared enough to write them and express his feelings of concern on the matter - Charles Hunting. (Bob's 22-page response is the so-called "Gerringer letter" which has been widely circulated in WCG circles ever since.)

By the late '70s Hunting could no longer tolerate the situation in Worldwide, and for reasons of conscience felt compelled to resign from the organization he had served wholeheartedly for two full decades. For doing so, he was ostracized by virtually all his Worldwide associates. (And he has a son and a daughter who are still members.)

In the eleven years since leaving Worldwide, Hunting has apparently been involved in a number of business ventures, and has spent much time in theological study (he is currently working on a book about the trinity doctrine). Until recently, however, he had not really spoken out publicly about the WCG. Now, that may change. On August 5, Hunting was interviewed for over two hours on the Clyde Thomas WHIS radio talkshow in Florida. There was no bitterness in Hunting's voice. But he was very frank and revealed a great deal about his experiences with the Armstrongs and about how the WCG operates. (Hunting's comments about HWA's meetings with world leaders and about HWA's spending habits were particularly interesting.)

Will Hunting be doing more interviews in the future? Perhaps. He wrote us: "Maybe I am just now coming out of a mental shell. And with a little practice at this sort of thing I might be more effective in the future. Who knows? I do know that there is a tremendous interest in these matters on the part of the public."

Those who are interested in the WCG will be pleased to learn that Mr. Hunting's interview on WHIS was recorded, and cassette tape copies are available for \$1.50 each (to cover duplicating and postage costs only) by writing to Charles Hunting, 314 Columbus Ave., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32069.

### **Materials of Interest**

Among current WCG members, there is probably no church doctrine more frequently questioned than the anti-makeup doctrine. Apostle Tkach reiterated HWA's dogma on the subject in a *Worldwide News* article that appeared in June. Now Keith Hunt of the Biblical Church of God (Canada) has challenged Tkach's makeup position in an article entitled "Makeup - Our Answer to Joseph W. Tkach" which appeared in Hunt's newsletter *The Truth of the Matter*. We found this article educational and believe many involved with the WCG will benefit from it. Free copies may be obtained by writing The Biblical Church of God (Canda), Box 36, Station A, Kelowna, B.C. Canada V1Y 7N3.

Another author who addresses the makeup issue is Ralph Woodrow. His book *Women's Adornment - What Does the Bible Really Say?* contains much Bible teaching and much common sense. Women in the WCG will find this a very helpful study. We understand the book is priced at \$4.00 and is available by writing to Ralph Woodrow, Box 124, Riverside, California 92502.

It is certainly not the purpose of *Ambassador Report* to promote atheism or to campaign against religious faith. Intellectuals who wonder why that is so may find something of an answer in the works of Carl Jung and in Peter Shaffer's play *Equus*. Nevertheless, we readily acknowledge that some of the most insightful writing on religion today is being done by individuals some Christians would call agnostics or atheists. In the past year, unsolicited copies of three generally anti-religion publications made their way into our mailbox. We think they should be mentioned because some of our readers will, at least, want to be aware of their existence.

*Free Inquiry* is a large, well-written, scholarly, and often entertaining quarterly published by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism. *Free Inquiry* publishes articles on the nature of religious experience, the history of religions, provocative letters, editorials, book reviews, and advertisements. Their exposes of many religious organizations are particularly interesting. Many of their articles are by world-renowned scholars and the writing is usually first-rate. *Free Inquiry* is not free. Sample copies are \$3.75 each, available by writing Free Inquiry, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005.

*The American Rationalist* is a small magazine (or newsletter) published six times per year by the Rationalist Association. The American Rationalist bills itself as "The Alternative to Religious Superstition" and appears to promote a philosophy similar to that of *Free Inquiry*. Sample copies are \$1.00 each and may be had by writing The American Rationalist, 2001 St. Clair Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63144.

*HUMSIG* is a newsletter of the humanist special interest group in Mensa, the high IQ society. This small, but well-written, newsletter is edited by former WCG member Larry Taylor who, after earning a theology degree at Ambassador, went on to earn accredited Master's degrees in both history and computer science. Sample copies of his newsletter are \$1.00 each and may be obtained by writing HUMSIG, P.O. Box 5456, Whittier, CA 90607. The one issue we saw contained an article by Taylor questioning the accuracy of the Gospel account of Jesus' life. (We suspect that that article will generate a rebuttal or two from Christian scholars and we'd like to see any that may be published.)

\* \* \*

As to religious orientation, what happens to WCG members who leave the WCG? We've noticed, over the years, that some rejoin mainstream churches. But a very large percentage lose all interest in religion, and a very significant percentage move on to religions just as nontraditional as Worldwide.

Lois E. Murphy (nee Holman, AC, Big Sandy, 1968-69) is a former WCG member who is now an active member of a mainline church. For Lois, the transition out of Worldwide and into the Christian mainstream was not easy. There were many disappointments along the way. Yet, she says, it was all worth it. Her experiences are contained in her article "Why the Prodigal Doesn't Return" which appeared in the November issue of *Moody Monthly*. Those who would like a free copy of her very fine article can obtain one by writing to Lois E. Murphy, 541 Oak Park Drive, Choctaw, OK 73020. As a courtesy to her, however, please be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your

request.

\* \* \*

Long-time readers of *Ambassador Report* will recall that in our December 1981 issue we published portions of a series of newspaper articles about the cult phenomenon written by Dan'l C. Markham. Rev. Markham, an editor, church pastor, and county commissioner, has continued to study the cults and recently expanded the original series of articles into a 120-page book entitled *The Cultic Phenomenon*. It is available in bookstores in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. In North America, however, it may only be obtained (for \$8 per copy) by writing: Dan'l Markham/Book, P.O. Box 1, Ilivaco, WA 98624.

\* \* \*

Finally, one of our readers sent us the following thought-provoking letter:

*Dear AR Friends:*

*I obtain your wonderful AR from a friend and have been a regular reader for the past seven or so years. It is well-written, informative, and appealing. I especially find the letter section and the segment detailing new publications and groups to be valuable. I have passed on your address to many persons and will continue to do so.*

*I want to relate a few things that I think you and your readers will find of interest or use. My strongly held opinion is that the greatest obstacle to members of the WCG and other Christian sects experiencing the liberating power of real Christianity is the fundamentalist mind-set engripping such ones! I can testify to this myself having been associated with a Christian sect similar to the WCG for almost 15 years. What freed me from the totalitarianism pervading my own sect was purging myself of the above-described "mind-set" through some well-chosen literature, discussion with friends of intellectual bent on a free level (unsupervised by sectarian authorities or literature), and some good, hard, honest thinking. As regards literature, I particularly want to mention James Barr's tome *Beyond Fundamentalism* which I believe is simply one of the "books of the century." Barr demonstrates how fundamentalist-minded groups structure the thinking of their laity so that they view the Scriptures through colored glasses, not as they are actually meant to be viewed. Sectarian groups use the Bible and the concocted verbal-plenary doctrine of inspiration merely as a political tool or lever with reference to the members. Barr's research goes to prove that the Bible can be assessed honestly and straightforwardly as it was meant to be so that a vibrant and productive Christian faith can be anchored. It is an eye-opener in the true sense of the word, and yet so sensitive and pastoral - a really fine work from all vantage points. It can be ordered for only \$9.95 from the Verdict people (P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, CA 92028). I have also found useful some of the literature of *Fundamentalists Anonymous*, P.O. Box 20324, Greenley Square Sta., NY NY 10001. I would also like to mention that a perusal of sociological studies by people such as Bryan Wilson, James Beckford, Joseph Zygmunt and others specializing in sectarianism and authoritarianism has proven most helpful and informative. (Sociological journals can be found at most college libraries.)*

*It is enlightening to see one's sect in the light of and in comparison with, the teachings and practices of other sects with similar bents, etc. I've found helpful here works of comparative religion, among which I'd like to mention Alfs' Concepts of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (available from O. T. B.H., P. O. Box 11337, Minneapolis, MN 55417) and the multi-volume works by Melton and Piepkorn. I would like to add that the least helpful works were those done by "anti-cultists" like Walter Martin and other evangelical preachers who merely substitute a so-called "orthodox" brand of fundamentalist thinking for a so-called "Unorthodox" brand. The review in the 2/9/86 issue of Christian Century of Martin's Kingdom of the Cults was appropriate in this regard when it remarked that such a work "is a conservative Protestant, normative-minded book of reference and judgment," containing, to be sure, some good information in the form of quotations, but which is "very, very difficult to dredge up and use, given its ideological wrapping." The review concluded with the observation that the author "seems to have little faith that one can report what a group stands for and let it be judged by people of various vantages. He helps - over-helps - them along."*

*In conclusion, I would like to say that the joy of asking the questions is just as great as the joy of receiving the sectarian "answers"; the joy of uncertainty is just as great as the joy of certainty; the joy of groping for God each day is just as great a joy as having "found" Him (all wrapped up in a neat, man-made package) in the sect. There need be no abyss to fall into beyond the perimeters of the sect's controlling influence: one may simply find there (as I believe I have) a springboard into a better life!*

*- An AR reader from the Midwest*

**Beg Your Pardon:** Two of our readers have pointed out to us that in our January 1987 issue we gave an incorrect address for *Reality Report*. Their correct address is 2442 (not 4224) N.W. Market Street, Seattle, WA 98107. Besides their newsletter, this organization publishes the book *American and British Israelism Debunked* by Richard A. Marson. We hope our error has not inconvenienced too many readers.

## ***Letters***

*I have heard ministers say that Herbert W. Armstrong was greater than any of the original apostles. Then, after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong they were saying that he was disorganized and a hindrance to "the Work." Now Joseph W. Tkach is an "apostle" in the office of Elisha - with twice the spirit as HWA. Or is he now in the office of Joshua? Now "the Work" will leap forward greatly since HWA. is out of the way....*

*I stopped attending the WCG shortly after returning from Red China around the first of the year. I saw WCG government in action in Red China, where I worked for two months. I attended WCG [services] for 26 years. What a waste! But that was my fault.*

*- Jon Johnson  
(AC, Pasadena, 1965)*

*I want to ask you people at AR something. Around 1982 there came out a book called Holy Blood, Holy Grail written by three men. It was about the history of a very old secret society of some of the most famous men in history. According to this book, this society is still around and they are working toward a United States of Europe to be headed by an imposter-Christ. The three authors of Holy Blood, Holy Grail have now put out a sequel called The Messianic Legacy. It is published by a Henry Holt. I saw a copy the other day in a bookstore and noticed in the back that Mr. Herbert Armstrong is mentioned and that headquarters had somehow read the first hook and had investigated the authors. I also noticed that the end of the book predicts what Mr. Armstrong preached for years about Europe.*

*So I asked a friend in the Church if he knew about any of this and he said he had heard from a friend in CGI that Mr. Dart was up on this. He also heard from a friend that a lot of the ministers had read these hooks. So I asked our local minister about it. He was very silent. Then after a long pause he said, "You are not to read those books or discuss them with anyone. Is that clear?" I asked him why, and all he yelled was "Is that clear?!"*

*When I mentioned this to my friend he said that he was told something similar by his church pastor. What I want to know is why are we not to read or discuss these books, especially considering the Church's prophecies are the same?*

*- Illinois*

Editor: Sorry, we don't know. Perhaps it's because authors Baigent, Leigh, and Lincoln do not ascribe to a fundamentalist view of the Bible or because they delve into the history of Anglo-Israel doctrines. Whatever the reason, we find their writings most interesting, even if a number of their conclusions are unconvincing. You'll notice, for instance, if you read their second book carefully, that it appears that they may well have been duped by the "secret society" and that the society may well be fictitious.

*Long after I left the WCG a friend of mine, a long-standing member of that cult, became afflicted with cancer. Not only did the church not offer any kind of help or encouragement, but when he was no longer able to attend services, not one of the members came to visit him. Instead, at the Feast of Tabernacles in Rapid City, South Dakota, some minister stated that cancer was due to sexual sins, which, in my friend's case, was the farthest from the truth.*

*Also, to add insult to insult, when my friend was at his lowest ebb, a local elder from the Watertown church came around and asked his mother (not a member) if there were any "envelopes" for them. Meaning, of course, containing tithes and offerings. This shows what a coldblooded congregation of evildoers they are while operating under the deceptive guise of "God's Church."*

*- North Dakota*

*I am generally not in the habit of buying "skin magazines," but I bought the November and December issues of Playboy to read the two-part series by Jessica Hahn. They are very revealing to say the least, and some of the things she describes are very familiar. In*

*many ways the PTL is much like the WCG. Did PTL learn from HWA or did HWA learn from PTL? It is amazing how so-called Christians can use and abuse people and then fling them aside like mere garbage! It is also of interest how Jessica Hahn came to adore and worship the ministers and leaders of the church instead of God, and how the same thing takes place in the WCG. Another interesting point is that PTL spent millions of dollars on buildings that are built in the competition for money and to make them look big and powerful. This reminded me of the articles "Edifice Complex" and "Fleecing the Flock" (Ambassador Report, 1977). I hope that the Playboy article will cause many more people to wake up and think for themselves instead of letting ministers and church leaders do their thinking for them.*

*- Manitoba, Canada*

*You might be interested to know that I was recently made a "non-member" (but not disfellowshipped). Apparently, [my minister] and the church administration in Pasadena are especially upset that I never paid off my college bill... I never planned to renege on the bill, but unfortunate circumstances have prevented me from making payments.... Currently I am wondering if the church will take me to court over the bill or release me from the debt after seven years (Deut. 15:7).*

*- AC Alumnus*

Editor: If the tithing laws of Deut. 14 are still valid (and the WCG teaches that they are), then, logically, the debtor release laws of Deut. 15 should also be valid. Right?

*I left the WCG in 1974, and, with the exception of one couple who met us "on the sneak" once a year, have had virtually no contact with anyone in the WCG organization. Imagine my shock then when out of the blue, two friends from the WCG, who are still members in good standing, phoned me and asked if they could come over for coffee. I was so curious, of course I said yes. The visit was pleasant enough. However, I wondered if they were buttering me up for a future kill. They said their minister preached a sermon saying that, if members left on their own and were not disfellowshipped publicly from the pulpit, and were not trying to spread any of their [own] ideas, it was okay for a WCG member to keep in touch on occasion! Is this a "new truth"? I certainly never heard of it before. A ex-member friend of mine, whose member sister lives in Texas, told me that her sister heard the same sermon preached in her congregation.*

*- New York*

Editor: We don't know if there is such a new policy, but if there is, it certainly would be an interesting change from the many years of "the Dracula complex" (to be explained in a future issue).

*I thank you so much for the Report I love to read it and can't wait for the next one. You are doing a good thing so keep up the good work.*

*I haven't been to church in... weeks.... I'm sure there is nothing new as we hear the same*

*old sermons over and over. All that goes on is for the young teenagers who [WCG ministers] say will be our leaders in times to come. So pity us if it's true.*

*- West Virginia*

*My wife's brother, former PT editor... is just as smug, superior and close-minded as ever. My wife, who had been a WCG member for 22 years, loaned him our copy of David Robinson's Tangled Web some time back. He later told her he "did not want to read it." My wife, who was as brainwashed as they come for 20 years (I lived with it!) replied, "...you can't read it because the church won't let you! You aren't allowed to even think for yourself. Why can't you realize that?" She may as well have talked to a wall, and that sad situation persists to this very day.*

*- California*

*You people and your work are all that keep up the sanity of a lot of folks like myself. Just when I feel like I'm on a desert island, I get a new AR or I spy an old one and reread it. Please don't ever stop what you're doing - the world needs to know.*

*- Kentucky*

*As I have many friends in the Amish community where I live, I am aware that no one is safe from the WCG. A few people who were members of the Amish church have left it to become Worldwidiers. I talked to one man who did so, though I realized it was too late to do any good. I did so simply because his father asked me to do so. It is heartrending to see how such a move on this man's part has upset his mom and dad. I gave his father a copy of one of your older magazines and he had several copies made for some of his friends. So your magazine is at least known by a few people in this area.*

*- Ohio*

*I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for this publication. I had doubts of my own about the WCG, but I also believed in - and never really questioned - its doctrines, practices, and authority. My method of "proving all things" consisted of reading Herbert's "ideas" and then looking up the prescribed scriptures and that proved it.*

*The AR is truly an eyeopener. With your help, I - and, thankfully, my mother too - am beginning to see the light. Its not easy, but I don't think I ever would even have seriously considered leaving "the Church " if I had not seen the evidence presented in the Report. I have you to thank for my newfound freedom.*

*- Washington*

*I have now left the church of GTA. I had been put out of the WCG in 1979 so I believed GTA but now I know I made another mistake. I no longer go to any church as I don't know who or what to believe. So I read my Bible and try to do the best that I know how.*

*God has been with me and has kept me on the right track so goodbye to the phonies.*

*- Florida*

*I wish all your letter writers would sign their letters because I am so eager to hear of the many I knew from AC. It really hit home to me how much hurt and pain has been inflicted on every person who has stepped into the trap of WCG. The most dangerous part can be a root of bitterness if we're not careful.*

*My indoctrination in the WCG began when I was 11 years old. I left in 1980 and so WCG had 21 years of my life to form and shape. Unfortunately, I couldn't afford to go back for four more years of college to learn a new career, etc. The hardest thing to change in my thinking pattern is [the idea that] there is no future and so no need for goals or planning for the future. That idea has been there so subtly for so long. Thank God I now see it and it's changing.*

*Each time I hear of someone else leaving, I'm thrilled. To all of you who have left or are on their way, I wish you the best. I've wondered about everyone I used to know at one time or another. I'm glad we have the AR to connect with each other. I know for me, 21 years of my life are closed to me as if I had no past except through the AR.*

*- Marilyn (Haupt) Howald  
(AC, Pasadena, 1970)*

*My husband divorced me because of leaving the WCG and now can freely come and go as he pleases. I think the WCG [made a fraud of] our marriage as I chose to live with him, and he put me away. He now puts church activities over our three children also. I am going through deprogramming with my two girls, and it is hard. My son is still going [to WCG services] with his dad. I still love my ex-husband but know it will never work unless he gives up the WCG and comes back to me. I think he tries to avoid and hurt me because of this. I pray daily about it and have gone back to the Methodist church where I now feel comfortable. This domination thing is big to him also. He thinks he needs to be "the man in charge" and in control of every situation.*

*I would appreciate your prayers. I won't wait forever for him, but it would be nice if we could be back together as a family again some day. I am getting my life back together slowly and surely. It feels good to be free again and out of bondage.*

*- AR Reader*

*I left my husband last November when things got to be more than I could stand. We were divorced in April. I just learned that he's all set up to marry a woman - you guessed it - in "God's true church." I guess I was still entertaining notions of a reconciliation, but now I realize that will never happen. I know there were things I did wrong in our marriage, but the WCG was always the seat of our difficulties. We became so alien to each other, and it still makes me sad to think of the shell he's become.*

*I know enough about his personality to be able to predict the outcome of this union; it will only be a matter of time. And to think that he was constantly accusing me of being unfaithful. I still can't even seem to dredge up enough interest to even date.*

*Well, life goes on and we learn, etc. It's a new day tomorrow and I'm different than I was yesterday. I want you to know I send all my love out to you people with this letter. I hope you can always carry on. I don't think my belief system now is exactly compatible with yours, but I think we will arrive at the same destination one day, just different paths. You perform more of a service to "outies" than "innies." I think sometimes because we all do what we really want in our lives anyway. There is a reason the WCG exists and a reason why "they" are in. They have to live and learn too.*

*- Kentucky*

*As I watch the constant parade of TV ministers forced to admit their sex sins on the news, I can't help but feel that the AR opened the way for this type of information to come out in public. If you think about it, your 1977 issue started the ball rolling. Ever since then it seems that the press has been more forthcoming with information about sex sins by ministers and politicians. Unlike some people, I feel that this information should be told and am proud to be able to give some support to a group of people who had enough courage to tell the truth about these matters.*

*I feel that it is important for a minister to set a good example to his congregation. If he is not setting that fine example and has sexual or other profound problems that he cannot control he should get out of that profession and get some help.*

*At any rate, it's interesting that the AR was really the first publication to report these types of problems. People who give their lives and money to an organization need to know just what they're supporting. The AR is giving people the kind of information they need about the WCG and its many offshoots. Keep up the good work.*

*- Washington*

---

### **Editor's Note**

Many of you have written me in the last few months asking for more information on the background of "Apostle" Tkach. Unfortunately, it has proven incredibly difficult to get most who've known Tkach over the years to tell what they know about him. For some odd reason, those who seem to know the most are also the most tightlipped. I am still working on that story, however, and one of these days it should be in print.

Our last issue was dated September 1987. I had hoped to get out an issue in December. But a lengthy illness coupled with two powerful earthquakes breaking up my Los Angeles-area apartment (plus my being in graduate school and trying to earn a living) made a December AR impossible. It's been a long time between issues, but I hope you'll

notice that this edition is longer than most and is really filled with valuable information.

My thanks to all of you who write to the *Report* telling a little about your lives. I read each of your letters carefully and really value your comments and suggestions.

Finally, my special thanks to those who are financially assisting the *Report*. I hope that those who are able will continue to support our efforts. The letters we receive from hundreds and hundreds of readers tell us that *Ambassador Report* is not just informative, it really is accomplishing a great deal of good. But if we are to continue publishing, we need *your* help.

My warmest wishes go out to each of you.

John Trechak, Editor

[Next Issue \(AR41\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR41 March 1989

**Joseph W. Tkach -  
God's New Rep on Planet Earth  
(Part 1)**

by John Trechak

On January 7, 1986, Herbert W. Armstrong, the former advertising man who founded the Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College, lay grievously ill in his Pasadena, California mansion. Sensing that his end was near, the 93-year-old, self-proclaimed "Apostle" named his top aide, evangelist Joseph W. Tkach, as his successor.<sup>1</sup> Nine days later, Armstrong was dead and Tkach became the Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), the Chancellor of Ambassador College, the President of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, the Publisher (now Editor in Chief) of the *Plain Truth* magazine, and the Chairman of the Board of the WCG and its subsidiary corporations.

From his executive suite on the top floor of Ambassador College's opulent Hall of Administration building in Pasadena, Tkach (pronounced Ti kotch) today rules over a religious empire with yearly revenues of well over \$170 million. With the WCG's corporate jet providing him a second office in the sky, Tkach travels almost constantly throughout the U.S. and abroad to speak before church audiences and to meet with influential business and political leaders. He has been photographed meeting with then President Reagan and the First Lady, former President Richard Nixon, industrialist Armand Hammer, former Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, Senator Robert Dole, Jordan's King Hussein, and many other newsmakers. Tkach's monthly magazine, the *Plain Truth*, is published in seven languages and has a circulation last reported at over seven million. The WCG's "World Tomorrow" television program, on which Tkach is not a speaker but of which he has total editorial control, is regularly rated by the Nielson organization as among the top three religious programs in the United States. And while the *Plain Truth* magazine and "World Tomorrow" broadcast cover many religious topics, both also deal

extensively with important issues in the areas of national politics, military preparedness, international relations, economics, crime, morality, health, public welfare, and virtually every other area of major public concern.

Tkach's monthly editorials in the *Plain Truth*, while very short, invariably touch on wide-ranging matters of great consequence. And through his oversight of all WCG publishing and broadcasting operations Tkach's views are disseminated not only throughout the United States, but far beyond. For instance, the *Plain Truth* maintains 12 foreign offices, the WCG has over 50 foreign congregations, and Tkach's organization maintains close relations with political leaders in many foreign countries including Israel, Jordan, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Where Tkach's influence is most keenly felt, however, is in the lives of the WCG's more than 80,000 devoted members.

### **The Followers and Their Faith**

In order to carry out "the Work of God," the WCG, with its more than 725 local congregations, has molded itself into an organization as well-coordinated as most armies (an observation not lost on Tkach who enjoys referring to the members as his "troops").<sup>2</sup> And like most armies, membership in the WCG is no casual thing. The WCG claims to be, and is, "a way of life." And that "way of life" is one that is highly structured and carefully monitored by the WCG's ministerial hierarchy.

Like most fundamentalist Christian churches, the WCG teaches the infallibility of the Bible and the divinity of Jesus Christ. But beyond that, many religious scholars see the WCG's belief structure as eclectic, with various doctrines paralleling those of Jews, Seventh-Day Adventists, Identity groups, Quakers, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Central to WCG survival is its redistribution of wealth program. To advance this program, the WCG teaches as dogma that all human beings who do not give a tithe (10%) of their gross income directly to God's headquarters (in Pasadena, of course) are *stealing from God* and are therefore under a curse. But members don't just send in their one tithe; they put aside a second tithe for the keeping of the church's holy days, and every third year give an additional third tithe that is supposedly earmarked for the church's poor. (There are many poor in Worldwide, but, it seems, they rarely receive much "third tithe." In the past, *Ambassador Report* has documented how a significant amount of third tithe funds have been used to buy fuel for the corporation's jet and to refurbish the homes of top WCG executives.) In addition to first, second, and third tithes, WCG members are expected to give holy day offerings, free-will offerings, building-fund donations, youth-camp donations, and - if they have anything left - to occasionally make interest-free loans to the church.

Not only does the WCG strip its members of most of their disposable income, but it also monopolizes their time. Worldwidens are expected to do a considerable amount of daily prayer and Bible study. They are required to observe strictly the seventh-day Sabbath and the annual holy days of the Old Testament (Christmas, New Year's, Easter, and Halloween are all condemned as "pagan"). And not only does the WCG ministry tell its members what they must do with their time and money, but the members are also told what hairstyles and clothing are appropriate, what their sex lives should be like, what

they may or may not eat (the Levitical dietary laws are observed), what makeup they may use, and what they may think. They are also required to be "separate from the world." Because of the latter, Worldwidars generally refuse to serve in the military, refuse to serve on juries, refuse to vote, and distance themselves from non-member friends and family.

Such regimentation is seen by the WCG hierarchy as not simply a requisite for salvation but as necessary for one of the church's supposed functions - warning the peoples of the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia ("modern Israel" to Worldwidars) that we will soon be conquered by a United States of Europe led by a militant Germany (and with the Pope's blessing). Not surprisingly, in the last fifty years the prophetic timetables of Worldwide's seers have repeatedly had to be altered. The WCG's numerous failed prophecies, however, have not significantly deterred the organization's continuing growth.

---

&COPY;1989 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher  
Editor

Mary E. Jones, Associate

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

### **Motivating "the Troops"**

For most people who must struggle today just to earn a living and support their families, it is mind-boggling that anyone would willingly put himself under the kind of bondage offered by the WCG. But even a few rather bright and well-educated individuals have, over the years, been lured into Worldwide's indoctrination process and have gone on to become WCG true believers (the "sheep" as Herbert Armstrong was known to contemptuously refer to them).

Getting fascinated by the "World Tomorrow" program is easy. It's well-produced, newsy, not too religious-sounding, and it's often on interesting and timely topics. The telecast offers the FREE *Plain Truth* magazine. You subscribe. And then you order the FREE "Bible Correspondence Course," and the many FREE booklets that are offered in the magazine. Pretty soon you feel guilty for getting all this incredible "knowledge" for FREE, and so you send in a couple of contributions. Now you're a "co-worker." A few more contributions and you're invited to attend WCG services - a real honor because until now you never even heard there was this group secretly meeting in your very own town. (The WCG's Sabbath services are held without public notice in rented halls. The time and place are not advertised. The general public is not invited. And the phone numbers of local WCG pastors are usually unlisted.) By now, your family thinks you're behaving a little strangely. But at WCG services you meet people who actually believe some of the same things you do. You're then encouraged from the pulpit to avoid the ways and ideas

of Satan's world (which encompasses just about everything). You spend less and less time reading about, or thinking about, anything that contradicts WCG dogma ("The Truth"). Before long the WCG doesn't just make complete sense to you - it's your whole world.

Actually, getting into Worldwide is easy. It's getting *out* that's the tough part. That's because to encourage you to stay, the WCG ministry has some pretty potent motivators.

On the "stick" side, there is still that old standard: hell fire. But WCG ministers are far too sophisticated to simply rely on that basic Bible doctrine as a motivator for their flocks. To substantially augment the hell-fire teaching, Worldwide has its Petra doctrine. Here's the essence of it. Supposedly, when everything comes crashing down on us soon in the U.S. and Britain, God is going to miraculously whisk all the Worldwidiers away to Petra, a desolate area of Jordan in the Middle East, where, WCG doctrine has it, God will protect and educate his chosen during three-and-a-half years while the rest of the world is in chaos. But, so the teaching goes, you won't get to go on this fun trip unless you are a WCG member in good standing. As nutty as it sounds, this teaching, ridiculed by a long line of prominent WCG ministers who have since thought it wise to depart the WCG, has such a stranglehold on Worldwide's group psyche that it continues to be a major reason why many members "hang on" It also is a major reason why many relatives of Worldwidiers really fear that one day their Worldwide relatives will be on a plane to Jordan destined for the WCG's version of Jonestown.

On the "stick" side, there's one more motivator that should be mentioned. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses, the WCG's ministers wield the disfellowshippment ax. Step out of line and you're disfellowshipped - that is, put out of the fold and shunned. For a lot of people, this turns out to be one of life's really lucky breaks (although they may not realize it at the time). But for those with a mate, family, or close friends still ensnared in Worldwide, it can be, and often is, traumatic.

On the "carrot" side, Worldwide has a few more motivators for the flock. One big one is that the WCG ministry promises its devotees that the ultimate reward for their diligence is that they will become GOD. (No, that's not a typo.) To the WCG, God is a family into which all Worldwidiers will eventually enter. (Some undoubtedly already have their sights set on certain galaxies they would like to rule over when this occurs.) But not only are Worldwidiers going to be God, in their minds they already are very special. That's because the WCG fervently holds that it is the one and *only* "True Church of God." To the WCG, all other churches, even those professing to be Christian, are really "of the Devil." It's the kind of elitist view of the world that can make even the least-educated and most poverty-stricken feel they are *very* important.

Worldwide's unique belief structure and the separationist attitudes it engenders almost always cause those joining Worldwide to become increasingly alienated from family and friends who are not WCG members. Once in Worldwide, the member becomes increasingly sucked into the WCG's activities and thinking patterns, as well as increasingly subject to the WCG's Big Brother government.

And that brings us back to Tkach. As the one cleric sitting at the very apex of the church

hierarchy, Tkach - like Herbert W. Armstrong before him - is seen by Worldwidars as God's chief spokesman on earth and one whose authority is so great that he is answerable only to God. Indeed, like Herbert Armstrong before him, Tkach has declared himself "*the* Apostle of Christ." That being the case, the influence (and even control) that Tkach exercises over the lives and minds of his followers is absolutely enormous.

It is no wonder then that since Tkach took over the WCG's reins, *Ambassador Report* has received a steady stream of mail from relatives of Worldwidars asking us for more information about Tkach. A few current members, too, have apparently found official WCG pronouncements about Tkach unsatisfactory and have asked us to look into his background.

### **Getting the Facts about Tkach**

Putting together a biographical sketch and assessment of Tkach's life has not been easy. First of all, in contrast to Herbert Armstrong, who loved to reminisce about his past and wrote a massive two-volume *Autobiography*, Tkach has provided the public with very little information about himself. The closest thing to a Tkach biography is a short one-half page article ("Passing the Baton" by Jeff Zhorne and Michael Snyder) that appeared in the Jan. 27, 1986 *Worldwide News*, the official church newspaper. That article, which introduced the new Pastor General to the WCG's members, contained many gaps in Tkach's story and left many questions unanswered.

Second, the WCG's top leaders refused to cooperate on the research for this article. While certified letters were sent to Tkach, his wife, his son Joe Jr., his executive secretary, his attorney, and numerous associates asking for interviews or for specific information, neither Tkach Sr. nor anyone employed by his organization ever responded. (Of course, should this cool aloofness someday dissipate, the pages of the *Report* will be available for their comments.)

Third, by no means the least of my problems was that a fair number who have known Tkach over the years adamantly refused to discuss what they know about him. Some appeared to take this position out of Christian benevolence (misplaced, I think), some because they wish to place the agony of their WCG experiences completely out of mind, and some out of fear of reprisals.

Fourth, among those who have known Tkach over the years (and who are not reticent), there is a very wide spectrum of views on what he is really like. Former WCG evangelist, college professor, and church administrator, Ronald Dart, for instance, has privately described Tkach as "tough as nails, not very bright, a liar, and - a true believer."<sup>3</sup> One Orange County, California AR reader wrote me, "My memories of Mr. Tkach, in particular, are horrifying. He was cruel, hateful, uncaring, and idiotic. I pray for him." Others who've known Tkach have described him as "fanatical," "bullheaded," "oppressive," and "ruthless."

On the other hand, there are a few people who have described Tkach in terms that are quite flattering to him. Richard Plache, Ambassador College Dean of Students during the late '60s and for a time one of Tkach's superiors at the WCG's San Marino, California

congregation, told me his recollections of Tkach were that of a decent man who did his job properly and was never involved in any scandals. Dr. Robert Romagnoli, a college professor of physics and a current WCG member who has known Tkach for over twenty-five years, views Tkach as a humble Christian who "sincerely believes he sits in Moses' seat" and is making an honest attempt at reforming the WCG.<sup>4</sup> Another scientist, Dr. Stig Erlander, a former WCG member and former Ambassador College faculty member, who now resides in Altadena, California, emphatically told me he thought Tkach was "a great guy" who, as far as he knew, was always humble, courteous, and caring.

Clearly, there are among those who have known him opinions that differ greatly as to what Tkach is really like.

Finally, after more than two years of sifting through data for this article, it has become clear that much of what the WCG disseminates about Tkach is not just inaccurate information - but consciously created disinformation. And just as happened with Herbert Armstrong, there is now a great deal of mythology about Tkach that the WCG membership has come to accept as absolute truth. Separating the fact from the fiction has been fun, but it has also been time-consuming work.

### **The "Official" Tkach Story**

According to the *Worldwide News* article by Zhorne and Snyder, Tkach served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and afterward returned to his native Chicago to work at Hupp Aviation. On March 31, 1951, Tkach married Miss Elaine Apostolos<sup>5</sup> and in the next few years the young couple had three children: Joe Jr.,<sup>6</sup> Tanya, and Jennifer.<sup>7</sup> Tkach was baptized into the WCG (then the Radio Church of God) by WCG evangelist Dean Blackwell on March 1, 1957. On June 7, 1961 Blackwell ordained him a deacon, and on June 3, 1963, WCG evangelist Roderick C. Meredith ordained him a local elder. About this time, Tkach resigned from Hupp and started working full-time in the ministry. For three years Tkach served in a number of the WCG's midwest congregations and in 1966 was transferred to Pasadena, where he took a few classes at Ambassador College and served in the local ministry. Not until 1974 was he raised to the rank of preaching elder. In 1979 he was assisting evangelist Herman Hoeh at the WCG's "Pasadena A.M. church." All of a sudden in 1979 Tkach became personal assistant to church founder Herbert W. Armstrong, was raised in rank to evangelist, and was named director of Ministerial Services (now called Church Administration). In March 1981, Armstrong appointed him to the WCG's Advisory Council of Elders. And just before his death, HWA named Tkach as his successor.

### **Origins**

The above paragraph provides the highlights of the official Joseph Tkach "biography." At least, that is as much of the official story I feel we can trust. Beyond that skeletal outline, however, there is a lot of contradictory information circulating about Tkach and a lot of fiction.

Take, for instance, the simple matter of Tkach's age. For some odd reason the WCG doesn't want to reveal Tkach's exact birth date. Church employees currently refuse to

provide that information over the phone. And those who write to WCG headquarters asking for information on Tkach are sent a WCG form letter that claims Tkach was born in 1926.

In reality, Tkach was born March 16, 1927. That is the birthdate on his California driver's license and that is the date on his birth certificate.<sup>8</sup> Why the Tkach organization gives out the phony 1926 birthdate I have no idea.

Then there is the matter of Tkach's ethnic background. Here again fictions abound. Perhaps because he often begins his sermons with greetings in Hebrew, some are convinced Tkach is Jewish.<sup>9</sup> Even WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse has called Tkach a physical "Levite" - that is, a descendant of the tribe of Levi, a branch of the ancient House of Judah. However, I have found no evidence whatsoever that Tkach or either of his parents were ever, by any reasonable definition of the term, Jewish.

While many seem to know that the surname Tkach is somehow Russian, the rumor that Tkach, himself, was bom. in Russia is not true. According to Tkach's birth certificate, Tkach was born at his parent's home at 5038 South Rockwell in Chicago, Illinois. The birth certificate also states that Joe's parents both immigrated to the United States from Czechoslovakia.<sup>10</sup>

A great deal of insight into Joseph Tkach's background was graciously provided the *Report* by Joe's last surviving sister, Mrs. Anna Bregin<sup>11</sup> of Oak Forest, Illinois. In a lengthy phone interview last August, Mrs. Bregin related how Joe (Senior) was the youngest of five children and the only son of Vassil and Mary Tkach. Mrs. Bregin said that although her parents had emigrated from Czechoslovakia, her parents were, in fact, of Carpathian Russian stock. Students of geography and history will recall that the Carpathian Mountains, part of which separate Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, "have been a whirlpool of races where Germans, Magyars, Slavs, Gypsies, and various Asiatic tribes have mingled for centuries." <sup>12</sup>

Mrs. Bregin, Joe Tkach's sister, said that their mother, Mary Tkach, had been from the village of Svidnik (in what is now the northeastern corner of Czechoslovakia.<sup>13</sup> Their mother came to the U.S. at about 17 years of age, their father at about age 21. Mrs. Bregin said their parents met and married in the United States. Their father died in 1963, their mother in 1984.

### **Russian Boy in Chicago**

That the Tkach family would settle in Chicago is not surprising. Besides its large Irish, Italian, German, and Scandinavian ethnic populations, Chicago has, since the turn of the century, attracted large numbers of working class immigrants from eastern Europe. Probably no other area of the United States has such a large concentration of Czech, Slovak, Ukranian, and Polish Americans. And perhaps no other big city in America has such a large number of ethnic neighborhoods.

The neighborhood where Joe Tkach grew up was one such ethnic neighborhood. With St.

Peter and St. Paul Eastern Orthodox Church located there, the neighborhood, I have been told, was composed then mainly of blue-collar working people of Russian origin. Many of the men who lived there undoubtedly worked in factories located in the nearby Central Manufacturing District and the Kenwood Manufacturing District. Some may have also worked at the nearby Imperial Accordion-Star Concertina Company or at the Italo-American Accordion Company.

In sermons, Tkach and some of his underlings have insinuated that Tkach grew up in a very rough neighborhood. Some have painted Tkach's childhood as having required pugilistic skills for survival. Tkach, himself, has even jested how he wanted to learn the violin as a child but that carrying violin cases in his old neighborhood had gangland connotations.

But the area west of Gage Park, where Tkach grew up, is *not* the rough and tumble "Back of the Yards" area of South Chicago! Nor is it Cicero where the Capone gang was once centered!<sup>14</sup> Father Semkoff, of St. Peter and St. Paul<sup>15</sup> told me that the neighborhood where Tkach grew up had always been, and still is, clean, quiet, and free of gang violence. Former WCG minister Arthur Mokarow, who grew up in the same area and at the same time as Tkach, agrees that the neighborhood, although blue collar, was a relatively good one. Business people and educators familiar with that part of Chicago and its history all told me the same thing. Most said it still is a quiet neighborhood. And when I commented to Tkach's sister, Mrs. Bregin, that I had heard that she and her brother had grown up in a rough part of town, she replied incredulously, "No way! Who could ever have said that?" I didn't have the heart to tell her it was her brother and some of his fellow ministers.

---



*Ambassador Report photo*

The center house in the above photo is 5038 South Rockwell in Chicago where Joseph Tkach was born and where he lived during childhood. The house was owned by the Tkach family until a few years ago.

---

### **What's in a Name?**

For many years, most Worldwidiers in Pasadena knew the current Pastor General only as Joe Tkach. But when Herbert W. Armstrong died, some observers noticed that something new was immediately added to Tkach's name - a middle initial. For a few days in January 1986 Tkach's middle initial was a K.<sup>16</sup> Shortly thereafter, however, in public announcements, the WCG replaced the K with a W, and before long the WCG's ministers began saying the W stood for "William."

Not surprisingly, some *Ambassador Report* readers are the suspicious type. Recalling how Herbert W. Armstrong had not been given a middle name by his parents, but had himself adopted the W for effect,<sup>17</sup> some wrote the *Report* and asked if Tkach had done the same thing. Knowing that William is not a common name among Russians and that working-class eastern European immigrants in the past often did not give their children middle names, I, too, wondered. So I checked the Tkach birth certificate provided me by the Cook County Department of Vital Statistics. The document gives Tkach's name as simply Joseph Tkach. There is no W or William. However, Tkach's marriage certificate of March 31, 195 , reveals that by that date Tkach's name had acquired a W. Why, I don't know. Nor do I have a clue as to why Tkach appears to have begun publicly using the W

only after HWA's passing.

But, some may ask - what's in a name? To many people, not much, perhaps. But in Worldwide some see great mystical significance in such things. Notice what evangelist Gerald Waterhouse, the WCG's leading preacher, had to say about Tkach's name:

So in Mr. Tkach's case, Joseph William Tkach - it all has meaning to his calling! Joseph means "add to," so God provided through Mr. Armstrong the foundation and the guidelines that he adds to. Now, the name William comes from Wilhelm - means "strong will," with a helmet, which typifies authority, and the general needs a helmet to lead the soldiers. He's the pastor general over the soldiers - we're soldiers, you know. Christian soldiers. And then Tkach, in Russian, means "weaver." And he's been assisted by Robin Webber, and in German, Webber means "weaver" too. So he's been weaving with his assistant, and they're weavers.<sup>18</sup>

Is there any validity in what Waterhouse says about the meaning of Tkach's name? In the course of researching for this article, I phoned each of the dozen or so Tkach's listed in the Chicago phone directory. None are related to the WCG's Tkach and most didn't seem to feel their family name had any special significance. However, one lady told me that she had done a bit of research on the etymology of her family name. The name Tkach, she said, is fairly common in Russia, the Ukraine, and in Czechoslovakia. While the name Tkach appears to mean "weaver" in Slavic tongues, she said, it also means "tailor" or "*spider*."

The WCG has made a big deal out of the "weaver" definition of Tkach. WCG ministers have even gone so far as to routinely refer to *God* as "the Master Weaver."<sup>19</sup> WCG ministers, however, never seem to bring up the "spider" definition. As one long-time WCG observer, paraphrasing poet Mary Howitt, told me, "Welcome to my parlor said the spider to the fly. Herbert [Armstrong] used to call his followers sheep. Are Herbert's sheep now flies?" Obviously, being "the Master Weaver's master weaver" is more desirable than being simply "God's little spider." "Spider" brings to mind Sir Walter Scott's famous analogy of the liar ("O, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive") and the "spider's web" metaphor of Isaiah 59:5.

### **Stretching the Facts**

Calling someone a liar, as evangelist Ronald Dart and others have called Tkach, is not nice. "Liar" is a strong word. It's harsh. It's unpleasant. And in a society such as ours where politicians, lawyers, advertising men, and televangelists are often respected and compensated in direct proportion to their ability to bend words, we should perhaps not be too critical of an "Apostle" who likes to stretch the truth. Nevertheless, it is amusing to compare some of Tkach's claims with stark reality. For instance, the Jan. 27, 1986 issue of Tkach's *Worldwide News* (p. 3) stated: "The pastor general established churches in South Bend, Fort Wayne, and Indianapolis, Ind.; Rockford and Peoria, Ill.; Davenport, Iowa; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Cincinnati, Ohio; and St. Louis, Mo." (Whew! Did even St. Paul start that many congregations?) Actually, with his list "the Apostle" is stretching things quite a bit. Ministers who were in the WCG in the early '60s say that while Tkach may have preached in those congregations occasionally or assisted the pastors in charge there, they don't recall that Tkach "established" *any* of those

churches (as the word "established" was always used in the ministry). In the '60s, as now, the work of establishing, or starting up, new local churches was almost always delegated to Ambassador-trained ministers of higher than local elder rank. In actuality, the WCG's churches in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and Grand Rapids were established by evangelist Dean Blackwell. And the WCG congregation in St. Louis was actually established by Gene Carter, the brother-in-law of former WCG evangelist Raymond Cole.

When HWA died and Tkach took over as Pastor General, Tkach's PR people told the press that their boss had once been a "Chicago-area businessman."<sup>20</sup> Yet, not only is there no evidence that Tkach ever owned or managed a business in Chicago, the WCG also has claimed that before Worldwide, Tkach had really been a "supervisor" (over "several hundred employees," no less) at a Chicago manufacturing plant. But as will be shown below, even that claim by Tkach is untrue!

### **Tkach: My Early Life**

Here is the way Tkach has had his writers portray his early life:

Before coming into God's Church, Mr. Tkach served in the U.S. Navy, receiving a certificate in basic engineering in 1945.

He then attended the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, studying industrial management, industrial safety and human factors in industry.

In 1950 Mr. Tkach was hired by Hupp Aviation, where he worked in the apprentice program. Before resigning in 1963 to serve in the ministry, he advanced to supervisor and obtained journeyman credentials.

He was once fired by Hupp Aviation for keeping the Sabbath, an incident he described to the combined Pasadena churches Jan. 18.

"I was threatened if I didn't come in on that Sabbath for a special meeting that I would be fired," Mr. Tkach recalled. "Upon coming home from Church services there was a telegram waiting for me stating that I was fired."

"Monday morning I received a telephone call from the personnel manager saying, 'Management would like you to come in immediately, as fast as you can get here.'

"I didn't know what to expect," the pastor general continued. "But after arriving at the plant, out in the parking lot there were almost 2,000 people milling around on a wildcat strike because they heard that I was fired.

"You see, we serve a God who fights our battles for us. My job was given back to me."<sup>21</sup>

Out of curiosity, I phoned Hupp Aviation in Chicago. The company's receptionist told me that Hupp is now officially called Aircraft Gears Corporation. "Your company must be very large," I said. "Oh, no," she replied. "We're very small. We've never had more than a

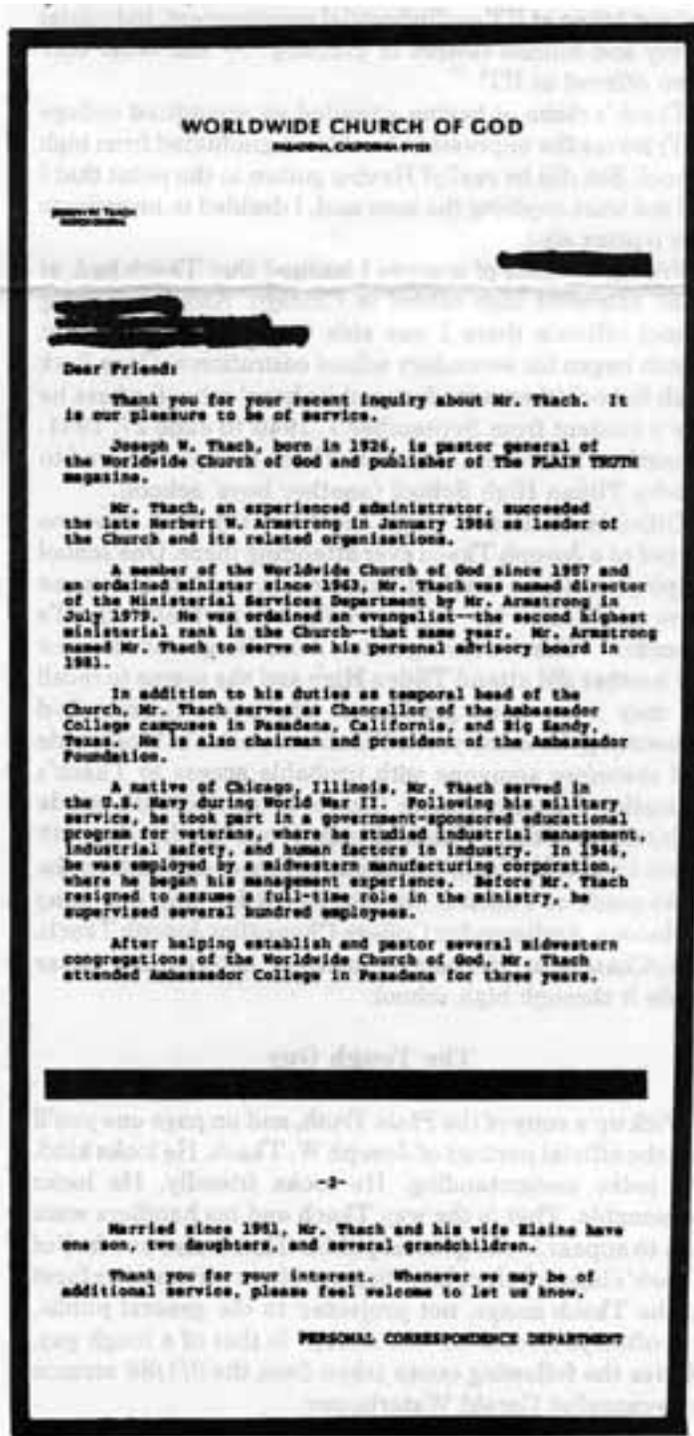
few hundred employees at the very most." I told her a little about the article for which I was researching and she transferred my call to an older engineer who had been with the company since at least the early fifties.

"Do you remember an employee by the name of Joe Tkach?" I asked. After a moment's reflection the gentleman told me he did. He not only remembered Joe, but he also clearly remembered Elaine, who had worked in the company's office and who had become Tkach's wife. "Had Tkach been a manager or supervisor at the plant?" I asked. "Oh no," he said. "What was his position then?" I inquired. "He was just one of the guys - just one of the guys who worked in the plant," he answered. The engineer said he was sure his memory was accurate. Tkach had not been a manager or a supervisor, or even a union leader, for that matter. He was "just one of the guys."

"But surely you must recall the incident when two thousand Hupp employees demonstrated at the plant on Tkach's behalf," I said. Not only did the engineer not recall such an incident, but he was sure nothing of the sort had ever taken place. First of all, he explained, the company had never been so large as to have such a large number of employees demonstrating. And second, he said, even an incident involving a handful of employees would have been very big news at the small plant and he would have known of it. "I'm sure nothing like that ever happened here," he told me, "but if you don't believe me, check with the front office."

I had my call transferred to the company's personnel department. At my request, a helpful employee went to get Tkach's file. Returning to the phone, she said, "Let's see - oh yes, he started working here in February 1947 and he quit September 20, 1963.<sup>22</sup> You know, for someone who worked here that long there is very little in his file." I then asked her, "Was he ever a supervisor?" "Oh no," she replied. "It says here he was just an hourly wage employee." The company's records clearly reveal that for the 16½ years Tkach was at Hupp he did one thing and one thing only: "assembly work." Do the company's records show that he was fired and rehired after two thousand employees demonstrated? No.

---



**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD**  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA  
91123

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your recent inquiry about Mr. Tkach. It is our pleasure to be of service.

Joseph W. Tkach, born in 1926, is pastor general of the Worldwide Church of God and publisher of The PLAIN TRUTH magazine.

Mr. Tkach, an experienced administrator, succeeded the late Herbert W. Armstrong in January 1986 as leader of the Church and its related organizations.

A member of the Worldwide Church of God since 1957 and an ordained minister since 1963, Mr. Tkach was named director of the Ministerial Services Department by Mr. Armstrong in July 1979. He was ordained an evangelist--the second highest Ministerial rank in the Church--that same year. Mr. Armstrong named Mr. Tkach to serve on his personal advisory board in 1981.

In addition to his duties as temporal head of the Church, Mr. Tkach serves as Chancellor of the Ambassador College campuses in Pasadena, California, and Big Sandy, Texas. He is also chairman and president of the Ambassador

Foundation.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Mr. Tkach served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Following his military service, he took part in a government-sponsored educational program for veterans, where he studied industrial management, industrial safety, and human factors in industry. In 1946, he was employed by a midwestern manufacturing corporation, where he began his management experience. Before Mr. Tkach resigned to assume a full-time a in the ministry, he supervised several hundred employees.

After helping establish and pastor several Midwestern congregations of the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Tkach attended Ambassador College in Pasadena for three years. Married since 1951, Mr. Tkach and his wife Elaine have one son, two daughters, and several grandchildren.

Thank you for your interest. Whenever we may be of additional service, please feel welcome to let us know.

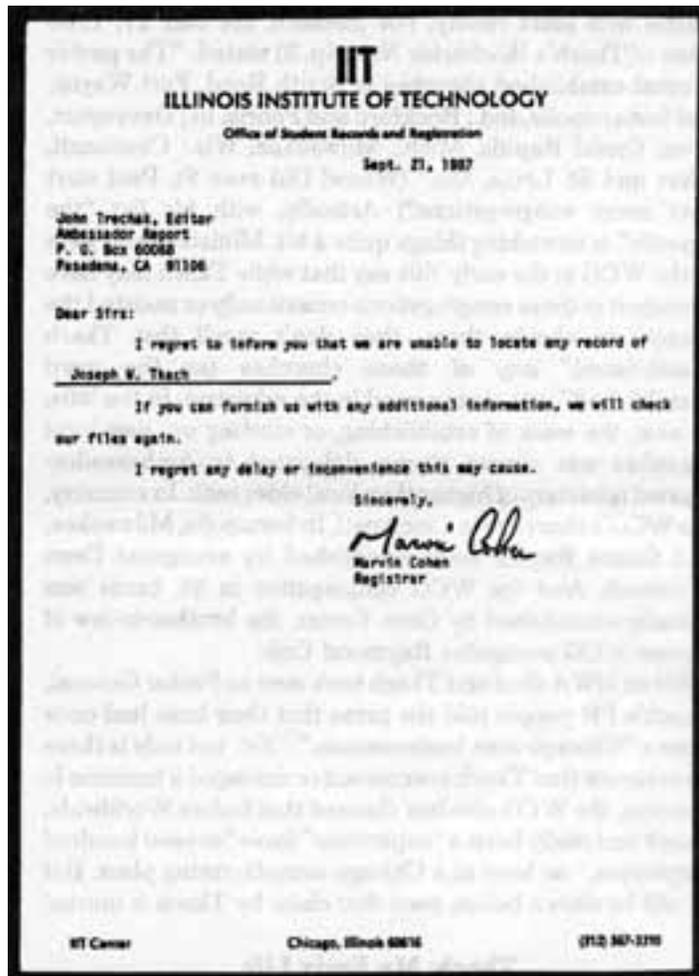
PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT

---

So Tkach was not born in 1926, was never a Jew, did not establish churches during the sixties, was never a Chicago businessman, was never an aviation industry production supervisor, and never had thousands of fellow factory workers demonstrating on his behalf. What about his claim of having attended the respected (and long accredited) Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)?

In late 1986 I phoned IIT and asked a clerk in the college's records office if IIT could verify Tkach's claimed attendance at the institute. After a lengthy search through their records they informed me that they had no record of a Joseph Tkach ever having attended IIT. Being concerned that perhaps they were mistaken, I wrote formally to the registrar of IIT requesting a careful check of their records to verify whether or not Tkach had ever attended. After many months Registrar Marvin Cohen wrote me: "I regret to inform you that we are unable to locate any record of Joseph W. Tkach..." Unwilling to believe that "master weaver" Tkach would not only fabricate lies out of whole cloth but would also publish them nationally, I once more phoned IIT and asked that they *again* carefully check their records. My insistence was no doubt irritating, but once more the polite folks at IIT made a thorough records search. When I called back they were emphatic: "There has never been a Joseph Tkach at this institute!" What's more, they informed me that from a careful review of past school catalogs it was clear that the courses Tkach claims to have taken at IIT - "industrial management, industrial safety and human factors in industry" - had *never* been offered at IIT!<sup>23</sup>

---



ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
Office of student Records and Registration

Sept. 21. 1987

John Trechak, Editor  
Ambassador Report P. O.  
Box 60068  
Pasadena. CA 91106

Dear Sirs:  
I regret to inform you that  
we are unable to locate  
any record of Joseph W.  
Tkach.

If you can furnish us with  
any additional  
Information, we will check  
our files again.

I regret any delay or  
inconvenience this my  
cause.

Sincerely,  
Marvin Cohen  
Registrar

---

Tkach's claim of having attended an accredited college (IIT) leaves the impression he at least graduated from high school. But did he really? Having gotten to the point that I did not trust *anything* the man said, I decided to investigate this matter also.

From a number of sources I learned that Tkach had, at least, attended high school in Chicago. And by phoning school officials there I was able to get verification that Tkach began his secondary school education at Gage Park High School (then a modern public boys' school) where he was a student from September 7, 1940 to June 27, 1941. Records at the school show that Tkach then transferred to nearby Tilden High School (another boys' school).

Officials at Tilden High, however, say they have no record of a Joseph Tkach ever attending there. One school employee told me that had Tkach ever completed even one class at Tilden his name would be in their school's records.<sup>24</sup> Tkach's loving sister, Anna Bregin, assures me her brother *did* attend Tilden High and she seems to recall he may even have graduated. However, Garner Ted Armstrong, for many years Tkach's superior in Worldwide and therefore someone with probable access to Tkach's education history, claims Tkach is an eleventh grade dropout. Whether Tkach dropped out in the eleventh grade or whether he dropped out before even finishing the tenth grade at Tilden is unclear. But either way, one thing is obvious. Ambassador College Chancellor Joseph Tkach, like Chancellor Herbert Armstrong before him, never made it through high school.

### **The Tough Guy**

Pick up a copy of the *Plain Truth*, and on page one you'll see the official portrait of Joseph W. Tkach. He looks kind. He looks understanding. He looks friendly. He looks personable. That is the way Tkach and his handlers want him to appear to the general public. That is also *one-half* of Tkach's image before his *followers*. However, another facet of the Tkach image, not projected to the general public, but often projected to "the sheep" is that of a tough guy. Notice the following quote taken from the 3/1/86 sermon by evangelist Gerald Waterhouse:

So God had to have a tough man - a fighter. Mr. Tkach used to just love to fight. He'd fight anyone that looked like he wanted to fight. If he didn't look like he wanted to fight, he'd make sure they looked like they wanted to fight. So he'd get a fight. Very unusual man.... Up in the office the other day he said, "I don't even fear demons." One time one came into the office there, I heard, and tried to get him to move out. And he just leaped over the table and grabbed him, and on the way down, I'm sure, that demon was fightin' about that. He just leaped over the desk, grabbed him on the way down, shook him [and said], "You don't say that in my office." Man, that demon went back and he said, "Satan, there's one guy down there - he's tough! He scared me!" I imagine that really shocked him. Most of 'em kind of recoil, you

know, and get out of the way. Here's one that came over the desk at him!  
[Waterhouse then quoted Joshua 1:5.] "There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not fail you nor forsake you." Now, he didn't add this responsibility to a man that didn't have a base for it, 'cause he adds to our talents. See, he had to make sure this man was born of right lineage, grew up in South Chicago among tough individuals, a fighter, fearless, so he could then add to that, like Saul, who was a strong individual. When he was going up to Damascus, he wasn't going in saying, "Oh, I think I'll tiptoe up through the sand over here. I'll go up and see if I can reason with these Christians up in Damascus and see if I can convert some of them to Pharisiasm." No, he was breathing out threatenings! He's already caused people to blaspheme and to - well, put some to death even!

For now, let's put aside the question of whether being from Chicago really shows "right lineage," and let's also, for the time being, overlook this business of Tkach chatting with demons. Let's just ask ourselves: Does having a belligerent, physically combative spirit really indicate the presence of righteous character? Gerald Waterhouse thinks it does. So too, it seems, does Tkach, who, while projecting a "nice guy" image via church publications, often plays a not-so-subtle "tough guy" before his "troops." Now notice the following quote taken from a taped holy day sermon (10/25/86) given by Tkach on the subject of ruling "da masses."

When we are gods we will be given the responsibility to judge da masses. How will we deal with people? What will be the tools of our trade? Will it be the rod of iron? Or soft-headedness?....

Many will have to learn how to work during the White Throne Judgment. You are going to have to be responsible to insure that they learn these habits - that it becomes a part of them. And what Paul is saying - to see the benefit of doing an honest day's work and labor. In II Thessalonians 3:10 the apostle Paul said that if a man doesn't work neither shall he eat. Are we going to be softheaded enough to give in simply because we see the suffering of someone? Instead of insisting and upholding the law of God and enforcing it as God demands it to be done? Christ is going to come to rule with a rod of iron.

Of course, there are times in life when all of us must be tough. And toughness - at least when guided by law and intelligence - is an important executive characteristic. But many who've observed him over the years say Tkach's crude brand of toughness is nothing more than misguided, insensitive, bullheadedness.

About a year ago, while having lunch with a long-time friend of Tkach, I mentioned how many perceived Tkach as violent and capable even of murder. A few weeks later, Tkach's friend wrote me a letter ending with the following paragraph:

Before he was made head of CAD [Church Administration Dept.], Joe Tkach said there were instances in which those over him would try to "set him up." Several said that he was free to divorce his wife. One even brought this to HWA's attention. On another occasion, one asked Joe if he would commit murder if asked to by HWA. Joe said that no matter how he would have answered, his answer would have been used against him. He said something like, "You ought to know what I will do." I wonder if this was the origin of the report that he would commit murder.

## The Big Black Car

Quite a few people that I talked to told stories about Tkach's pseudo-gangland style. But there is one incident, in particular, that stands out in this regard. Jack and Rick (not their real names) were two Ambassador College (AC) graduates of the class of 1970. Like a lot of AC alumni since then, they found their unaccredited Ambassador degrees virtually worthless in obtaining meaningful employment, their insistence on strict Sabbath-keeping also cost them many job opportunities, and so both went through very hard times after AC. For Jack, the years 1970-73 were spent in mere subsistence-level jobs, alternated with periods of unemployment. In mid-1973 Jack was just getting by on the little he earned as a night-time liquor store clerk. Although he had tithed faithfully for years, there were few "blessings" to show for it. His clothes were old, he had no car, and then he lost his apartment. Rick, who had not long before gotten a job as a pressman at the Ambassador College Press, heard of Jack's situation, and, being a generous fellow, told Jack he could sleep on his living room sofa and share what little he had until he got back on his feet.

During the few months that Jack was staying at Rick's place there was much happening in the WCG. Numerous church theologians were circulating papers showing that there were serious errors in many Armstrong teachings. Jack, a zealous Bible student, became convinced that church leaders he had supported loyally for years were wrong on many key doctrines and that wrong teachings and policies were destroying the lives of thousands in the church. In November, he heard church founder Herbert W. Armstrong tell a congregation that he would never change his teaching on divorce and remarriage (actually, he later did when he decided to marry a divorcee) and that anyone who didn't agree with him had no business sitting in WCG services. Jack agreed; it was the last WCG service he ever attended. It was about that time that outspoken WCG pastor Al Carozzo resigned from the WCG and started his own local congregation in Pasadena. Jack attended a few of Carozzo's church meetings and was reported to WCG headquarters by church spies (yes, the WCG has them).

On a Monday evening in early 1974, Jack answered a knock on the door only to find himself nose to nose with Tkach and, standing behind him, an associate named Elmer. "We've come to talk to you, Jack. It'll only take a few minutes," said Tkach. Jack wasn't feeling very sociable. For the last few weeks he had been hearing stories of how Herbert Armstrong had *known* for many years that his marriage-destroying doctrines were in error, but for ego reasons had refused to change them. Jack had also learned that for years Herbert's evangelist son, Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), had seduced dozens of Ambassador coeds and ministers' wives yet was still allowed to continue as church spokesman on radio and television. But besides having all that on his mind, Jack could see in Tkach's bloodshot eyes that Tkach really wasn't interested in his concerns about the church or in his personal problems. Tkach only needed "a few minutes" because he had come to subject Jack to the "knuckle under or be disfellowshipped" ritual. Jack thought, "If anyone needs to be thrown out of the church, it's HWA, GTA, and goons like Tkach." Jack didn't move out of the doorway but looked Tkach in the eye and said, "I'm busy and you didn't make an appointment." A startled Tkach could only stammer, "But Jack, it'll only take a few minutes." "Good night!" said Jack, as he shut the door in Tkach's face.

Rick, who had overheard the brief conversation from the next room, said, "You know, if

you leave here tonight, Tkach will be waiting outside for you. He's not used to being talked to that way." When Jack responded that he thought the suggestion was silly, Rick pointed to the guncase in the corner of the room - a case that held a doublebarreled, twelve-gauge shotgun. "Look," said Rick, "don't load the gun, but take it with you. When they stop you, they'll see it, and it'll give them a good scare."

Jack thought Rick was letting his imagination run amuk, "but what the heck," he thought. "Maybe Rick knows something I don't; it might give us a laugh." He waited ten minutes, then hung the guncase containing the shotgun over his right shoulder. He exited the building, turned left, walked twenty yards and, not seeing anyone, went back to Rick's apartment feeling very foolish for listening to Rick. But Rick was adamant. "No! No! I'm sure they're out there!" he yelled. "You should have turned to the right. They're out there waiting for you. I just know it!"

"Okay, okay," said Jack, rolling his eyes. "Just to show you what a nut you are, I'll go back out there." Jack walked out the door, again with the sheathed gun hanging from his right shoulder. This time he turned to the right. Halfway down the darkened street, he heard a car engine start up somewhere behind him. Then over his left shoulder he noticed a black Plymouth Fury slowly following him. He walked a little faster. The car sped up. Suddenly, as he approached a driveway, the black sedan surged forward and pulled to the right, partly blocking his path. Before even coming to a complete stop the car's back door was swung open by a push from a shadowy figure in the front passenger seat.

It was Tkach. In an angry and authoritative voice, he commanded, "Get in Jack! Right now!" The thought flashed through Jack's mind that maybe he had made a mistake in not loading the shotgun. Jack glowered at Tkach and told him firmly, "No one's forcing me into any car. No one!" Jack instinctively reached up for the strap on the guncase. But then as the shotgun slid down into better view, Tkach screamed out in a panic to his driver, "It's a gun, Elmer! Get out of here!" Elmer's foot hit the gas peddle like it was made out of solid lead. Burning rubber for half a block, the black Fury sped away into the night.

Back at the apartment Jack and Rick had a good laugh. The next day Tkach never called for an appointment, but he had Elmer phone. And Elmer told Rick that if he didn't *immediately* order Jack out of the apartment, he'd be fired from his job. That evening Jack, penniless, found himself literally on the street.

Not many churches are headed by apostles who enjoy making zealous Bible students homeless, or who will sneak up to Christians on darkened streets to hustle them off in big, black cars. Such overbearing behavior has undoubtedly contributed to some of the sinister rumors surrounding Tkach. But it's important to notice that Tkach does not relish conversations with angry people toting shotguns. Perhaps that shows he isn't really the tough guy he often pretends - or maybe it shows he has a bit of sense after all.

### **Tkach the Warrior**

In WCG circles much is made of Tkach's military career. Evangelist Gerald Waterhouse regularly paints Tkach as a born fighter. And Tkach's leadership skills have been compared to those of General George S. Patton.<sup>25</sup> While I don't doubt that Tkach was in

the military service,<sup>26</sup> I have strong doubts about some of his claimed exploits.

Shortly after Tkach took over Worldwide in 1986, certain church members communicated to me how in sermons some WCG ministers were claiming that Tkach, during the second world war, had been a navy gunner who had gained fame for his relentless downing of kamikazes. I was told one minister had been so vivid in describing how Tkach had single-handedly decimated much of the Japanese air force that some church members had become physically shaken by the bloody accounts of Tkach's ravagings.<sup>27</sup>

It is not my desire to disparage Tkach's military service, but I have a problem believing his "gunner Joe" claims.<sup>28</sup> According to *The Worldwide News*, during World War II Tkach was a crewman on the destroyer USS *Austin*.<sup>29</sup> Now here is what the U.S. Navy has to say about the USS *Austin*:

The second *Austin* (DE-15) was launched 25 September 1942 by Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, Calif, as HMS *Blackwood*; sponsored by Mrs. W. C. Sprenger, wife of Lieutenant Commander Sprenger; taken over by the Navy and reclassified DE-15, 25 January 1943; and commissioned 13 February 1943, Lieutenant Commander H.G. Claudius, USNR, in command.

Attached to the Pacific Fleet, *Austin* operated with TF 51 during the recapture of Attu (11 May 1943). She then escorted convoys between San Francisco and Pearl Harbor until 14 September 1943, when she sailed once again for Alaskan waters. For the next year she escorted vessels between Alaskan ports, patrolled, and acted as a weather ship. From April 1945 until the end of the war, *Austin* was on escort and patrol duty in the Carolines (1 April- 10 June) and Marianas (12 June-August). Returning to San Pedro, Calif, she was decommissioned 21 December 1945 and scrapped in 1947.

The above quote is taken from the authoritative *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Volume I (1959), published by the Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History Division, Washington, D.C. This Navy publication lists *every* warship that has ever flown the U.S. flag. For instance, even the first *Austin* built in 1839 is listed. Furthermore, the publication details every naval engagement in which each ship participated. Notice that the *Austin* was not involved in the battle of Leyte in 1944, nor at Okinawa in 1945 - the two battles in which the Japanese used kamikazes.<sup>30</sup> The closest the *Austin* ever got to any action at all was during the landing of troops on Attu in the Aleutian chain on May 11, 1943.<sup>31</sup>

Even if Tkach was on the *Austin* then (he would have been only 16 and the Navy during WWII required all enlisted men to be 18 or over), the Japanese on Attu did not have kamikaze planes.

### **Going AWOL**

Perhaps when the Navy Department finally gets around to digging out Tkach's service record for us it will somehow corroborate some of his claims.<sup>32</sup> Be that as it may, however, evangelist Gerald Waterhouse has told congregations around the world how

during World War II Tkach, fearing for his life, went AWOL. Here is how Waterhouse told that story in Pasadena (3/1/86):

[Mr. Tkach] was in the U.S. Navy on an aircraft tender, loaded down with aviation fuel.<sup>33</sup> He began to get the premonition the ship was going to be blown up, killing everyone on it. He had a close friend on the ship - a German person (not nationality, but extraction), and he said, "When we get to this island, you and I are going to jump ship." [His friend] said, "I'm not going to jump ship!" Mr. Tkach said, "If you don't jump ship, I'll beat you up!" So he decided better to fall into the hands of the Navy than Joe Tkach! So when they got to this island, they were still a mile off from the beach, and they packed their sea bags very full for flotation, tossed them over the side about midnight, slipped down the anchor chain, pushed the sea bags for a mile to the beach, went into the jungle, watched the ship until it left, and then turned themselves in to the local marine commandant. He said they were put in the brig, and they had fights with Marines every day. I'm sure Mr. Tkach enjoyed that! Telling those Marines, "I'm a swabbie. Come in here, boys, I'll show you!" So he had his recreation, his exercise, with Marines. Now if you think this is not of God's hand.... They could have been court martialed, and even shot, if you understand, when you jump ship in time of war. But God was dealing with him. So another [ship] comes in and these two men, with their identical ratings, [Mr. Tkach and his friend] transferred out without being court-martialed, and the other ship was hit and blew up killing everyone on it. Now this very day the German calls Mr. Tkach up on that anniversary and thanks him for saving his life, 'cause he still appreciates it. That's respect. He's a fighter....

I'll make no attempt at reconciling the obvious contradiction between Waterhouse's story of Tkach going AWOL and Waterhouse's conclusion that Tkach is some type of super warrior.

[Part II of this serialized article will appear in the next issue of *Ambassador Report*.]

### Footnotes

1. The January 27, 1986 issue of *The Worldwide News*, which announced the death of HWA on page one, very clearly stated that HWA had named Tkach as successor on January 7, 1986. In the weeks that followed, WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse not only corroborated that fact in sermons throughout the United States, but he saw incredible significance in that date. Here are Waterhouse's exact words on the subject taken from his 3/1/86 sermon in Pasadena:

And then the baton was passed exactly 52 years from the day Mr. Armstrong began to preach the gospel. January 7, 1986 is when Mr. Armstrong signed the official document that transferred the authority to Mr. Tkach as deputy pastor general and in case of his death, he would assume the role of pastor general. Now he was gonna sign it on the 6th, Mr. Neff was telling me, but God didn't want him to sign it on the 6th. So he let a little problem come up, and Mr. Neff was involved, and he heard something through the telephone, and Mr. Armstrong's heart began to act up and he couldn't sign it on the 6th because God wanted it signed on the 7th. He doesn't always have to find a reason. He just makes someone - he just finds a reason. He made sure he found one. And he got so stirred up, his heart acted up so much, he couldn't sign it on the 6th, so he signed it on the 7th. Exactly 52 years from the time he began to preach the gospel to the world.

In the April 1986 issue of *Ambassador Report*, I pointed out that January 7 is the traditional day of Russian Christmas. Since that issue some in the WCG have begun claiming that Tkach was actually named successor on January 8.

2. See, for instance, *The Worldwide News*, June 22, 1987, p. 1.

3. Ronald Dart in 1978 occupied the position of head of WCG church administration. With only the two Armstrongs over him, Dart was then the WCG's number three man. He is currently Garner Ted Armstrong's top executive assistant in the Church of God International, in Tyler, Texas.

The quote marks are a bit of editorial license as Dart did not say these words directly to me. However, the quote comes via David Robinson, author of *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*. It should further be pointed out that Dart's reputation among many former (and current) WCG ministers and AC alumni is that of a man of high intelligence and integrity. That being the case, I feel the quote is very significant.

4. Because WCG members, especially if on the WCG payroll, are so habituated to parroting the official WCG line, I usually assign very little weight to their opinions. Dr. Romagnoli, however, is not a church employee, has outstanding academic credentials, and possesses a high level of independent thought. Therefore, although he is a WCG member (and I suppose because he is a rather interesting personality), I don't feel his comments should be carelessly slighted.

5. "Apostolos" is the Greek word for "apostle."

6. Joseph William Tkach Jr. was born in Chicago on Dec. 23, 1951. He is now Joe Senior's top aide, and many in the WCG acknowledge him as Joe Senior's heir apparent.

7. Tanya is married to WCG minister Douglas Horchak, who pastors the WCG congregation in Glendora, California. Jennifer is married to Paul Butter, a WCG member in Tasmania.

8. Copies of Tkach's birth certificate and marriage certificate may be obtained from the Bureau of Vital Statistics (for Cook County), 118 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602.

9. See, for instance, *The Worldwide News*, June 22, 1987, p. 3, where Tkach is quoted beginning a sermon with greetings in Hebrew.

Among those who claim Tkach is a Jew is Eureka, California minister Don C. Hall. Hall, who has labeled himself "The True Didache of the Worldwide Church of God" and distributes anti-Jewish literature, claims that Tkach is "an Oriental Khazarian Jew" and that "LeLom Tickach" in Hebrew means "always take." I find the "True Didache" unconvincing.

10. Tkach's birth certificate reveals other family history some WCG members may find

interesting. Joe's father, Vassil, was a laborer who at Joe's birth was 35 years old. Joe's mother (maiden name Mary Zavoda) was a housewife, then age 32. Joe was apparently born at home with no physician, but a midwife (Mrs. A. Soltis), attending. While Joe's birth brought the number of living children in the Tkach family to five, two other children had been born alive to the couple, but had died in early childhood.

11. Mrs. Bregin, recently widowed, is retired and has never been a member of the WCG. She, nevertheless, had nothing but kind words about her brother.

12. *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1958 edition, article "Carpathian Mountains." See also the article "Carpathian Ruthenia." Carpathian Ruthenia, formerly the eastern-most province of Czechoslovakia, was ceded to the Soviet Union in 1945.

13. Both of my own parents come from this same region of Czechoslovakia. My mother, Mrs. Helen Trechak, recalls that during her childhood, Carpatho-Russians in Czechoslovakia were very proud of their district ethnicity. In other words, they saw themselves first as Carpatho-Russians, not Czechs or Slovaks. My mother also recalls that the name Zavoda (Mary Tkach's maiden name, meaning "freedom") was a very common name in Svidnik, as were the Christian names of Mary and Vassil (a derivative of Basil, meaning "kingly").

14. For detailed descriptions of Chicago's neighborhoods and their history see *Chicago Magazine's Guide to Chicago* published by Contemporary Books.

15. The Eastern Orthodox Church where Joe Tkach and his parents attended before joining the Radio Church of God. Father Semkoff, now 71, has been at the church for 46 years and has vivid memories of the Tkach family.

16. See the Pasadena *Star-News*, Jan. 15, 1986; and the *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 17, 1986, p. 34.

17. See our August 1986 *Ambassador Report*, p. 5.

18. From Waterhouse's taped sermon at Pasadena, California, March 1, 1986.

19. Tkach, himself, often uses the "Master Weaver" metaphor. For instance, in his 10/25/86 pre-recorded "Last Great Day" video, Tkach said, "Yes, the tapestry of humanity is now being completed by the Master Weaver." Tkach, too, has been called a "master weaver" in regard to his sermons. See *The Worldwide News*, June 27, 1988, p. 1.

20. *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 17, 1986, p. 36.

21. *The Worldwide News*, Jan. 27, 1986, p. 3, col. 1-2. While the quote is taken from "The Passing of the Baton" by Jeff Zhorne and Michael Snyder, recall that Tkach is Editor in Chief of all WCG publications.

22. Notice that Hupp's records show that Tkach began working there a full three years

earlier than he claims. Why Tkach wants to distort this part of his personal history, I don't know.

23. As will be shown in future parts of this serialized article, Tkach's chief mentor was WCG evangelist "Dr." Herman L. Hoeh, I find it an interesting coincidence that Hoeh himself thought nothing of fabricating huge chunks of his own academic record. See *Ambassador Report*, June 1979, p. 12.

24. Out of fairness to Tkach, I should mention that from the comments made by Tildon High administrators, I got the impression the school's records for the early forties were somewhat in disarray. It is therefore conceivable Tkach's file was misplaced, lost, or stolen. Tildon administrators say, however, that they made a thorough search.

25. *The Worldwide News*, June 8, 1987, p. 3, col. 4.

26. The Military Personnel Records section of the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis has confirmed that Tkach did serve in the U.S. Navy. His service number is 728 00 41. Under the Freedom of Information Act a request for information on Tkach's service record has been filed with the Department of the Navy. After more than four months, however, the Department of the Navy has yet to respond.

27. I am told that the minister who repeated Tkach's war stories so vividly was Dennis Van Deventer speaking at Imperial School, Pasadena on or about February 1, 1986.

28. Previous to Tkach, the only other "gunner Joe" I was aware of was Senator Joseph R. McCarthy who, during his campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1946, inflated his meager service record and told Wisconsin voters to put a "tail gunner" in Congress. While McCarthy's contrived military record apparently helped him to enter the U.S. Senate, historians now say his whimpy military activities during the war had only been that of a self-serving "promoter." In the Senate he gained a reputation for manipulation, violent accusation, disregard for law and custom, and pervasive lying. He was censured by the Senate in 1954. See Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate*, the University Press of Kentucky (1970), pp. 5, 9, 15, 24.

29. *The Worldwide News*, June 22, 1986, p. 3, col. 2.

30. See the Simon and Schuster *Encyclopedia of World War II* (1978), article "Kamikaze."

31. *Ibid.*, article "Attu."

32. See note 26 above.

33. This claim, of course, contradicts Tkach's other claim that he served his WW II hitch on the destroyer USS Austin.

## WCG News in Brief

Joseph Tkach's popularity among WCG members continues to soar as his campaign to totally transform the WCG moves forward. While some church employees in the past criticized Tkach for "running headquarters like Joseph Stalin ran the Kremlin," many now seem to view him positively as the WCG's Gorbachev.

Tkach recently announced that women in the church will again be allowed to wear makeup (WN, 11/14/88, p. 1). The church's prohibition against membership in "worldly" clubs seems to have been quietly dropped also. A number of WCG executives are members of Pasadena-area men's clubs. For instance, a friend of the *Report* met one WCG executive last year at a Lions' Club Christmas party and was told, "We're getting the best of both worlds! We're keeping the church's holy days and the world's holidays too!" Tkach, himself, was made an honorary member of the Pasadena Rotary Club on October 26 (WN, 11/14/88, p. 8). Some church insiders say that the next change to look for will be a relaxation of the WCG's prohibition against birthday celebrations.

Like Herbert Armstrong before him, Tkach is maintaining contacts with the rich and powerful. This past year, for instance, Tkach and his entourage attended private receptions for the Duke and Duchess of York ("Andy and Fergy") at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles and aboard the 412-foot royal yacht *Britannia* (WN, 3/28/88, p. 1). Also like his predecessor, Tkach continues to support worthy artistic endeavors. Notice this excerpt from *The Worldwide News* (4/18/88, p. 1):

The Dance Theatre of Harlem, acclaimed as one of America's principal dance companies, begins a five-week tour of the Soviet Union May 10. The trip is sponsored in part by the Ambassador Foundation.... Foundation chairman Joseph W. Tkach announced funding by the foundation March 10 at the home of entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. who was host to a fund raiser for the tour.... Arthur Mitchell, a former principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1969 after being moved by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the black civil rights leader, the previous year.

The WCG's Gulfstream III corporate jet was recently replaced by a less luxurious, but significantly larger, British Aerospace Corp. (BAC) 1-11 jet (WN, 12/14/88, p. 1). The new jet will allow Tkach to take a much larger entourage with him on his travels.

For many years Herbert W. Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, Gene Hogberg, and other WCG prophecy experts pointed to Franz Joseph Strauss, the premier of the state of Bavaria in West Germany, as the man who would be "the Beast" of Revelation. In the Obituaries section of the *Los Angeles Times* on Oct. 4, 1988 it was announced that Strauss, 73, died on Oct. 1 following an apparent heart attack and surgery from which he did not recover.

One sad news item - Frank Schnee, the WCG's longtime regional director for German-speaking areas is suffering from Parkinson's disease and has had to be replaced by John Karlson (AC, Pasadena and Bricket Wood, late '60s).

During the past year, Tkach raised at least three more ministers to evangelist rank: Dr.

David Albert, Dr. Donald Ward, and Gregory Albrecht (WN, 5/2/88, p. 1). One interesting fact - all three, besides having AC training, have graduate degrees from accredited universities.

Under Chancellor Tkach Ambassador College, like the WCG, appears destined for dramatic changes. Tkach recently announced that beginning with the 1989-90 school year, the Big Sandy, Texas, campus will offer a four-year program (it currently has only a two-year program), and the student body will be increased to about 500. Tkach also stated that he wishes to see the Big Sandy college pursue accreditation. But, some may ask, wasn't this kind of thing tried before? Here's the way Tkach (or his ghost writer) answers the critics of his accreditation plan (WN, 9/19/88, p. 8):

I should note that some of the problems encountered in the late '70s, such as the relaxation in admission policies and in faculty hiring and supervision, had no relationship to the pursuit of accreditation and certainly will never be repeated.

Those decisions, though they may have been made in all sincerity, were made by an administration no longer associated with God's Church, in an effort to vastly increase the size of the college without regard to sensible admission policies based on the real purpose of the college.

But what about AC Pasadena? Doesn't Tkach want the church's main college accredited? Actually no, say insiders, who claim Tkach, fearful of increasing earthquakes, wants to see all of the WCG's Pasadena real estate sold. According to church sources, if Tkach can find a Japanese buyer willing to spend \$200 million for the church's Pasadena real estate, the WCG may move its headquarters from Pasadena to Big Sandy, Texas.

### **John Tuit Rejoins Worldwide**

John Tuit, the key initiator of the famous 1979 lawsuit against the WCG (see ARs 7-14) and the author of the 1981 book *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, recently phoned the Report to announce that he has returned to the WCG. Said Tuit, "I feel that the church problems that caused me to leave the church in 1978 have been corrected. I think Mr. Tkach is doing an excellent job straightening the church out." Tuit says he no longer plans to distribute his book. A few copies may still be available, however, from Emissary Publications, 9205 S.E. Clackamas Rd., no. 1776, Clackamas, OR 97015.

### **The McNair Lawsuit Takes a Bizarre Turn**

In October the Leona McNair v. Worldwide Church of God libel and slander suit (see ARs 29, 34, 37, 40) took a bizarre turn when a Los Angeles Superior Court judge prevented the case from going to a jury by summarily dismissing the suit.

The suit had been filed in 1979 following vicious statements made against Leona McNair by WCG evangelist Roderick C. Meredith. After years of depositions and interrogatories, the case finally went to trial in 1984. The unanimous jury awarded Leona \$1.26 million. The WCG then attempted to get the federal courts to intervene on its behalf in the McNair case, but the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles declined the WCG's invitation.

A WCG appeal to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals was similarly rebuffed (see our January 1987 issue). But in 1987 the California Court of Appeal threw out the jury's verdict and ordered a new trial to be held based on a new rule of law it created (see AR 40). In March 1988 the California State Supreme Court, over minority votes by Justices Mosk and Broussard, refused to consider reversing the Court of Appeal decision (*Los Angeles Times*, 3/18/88, Part II, p. 3).

The case was set for retrial. Judge Robert Olson, who had presided over the first trial, decided not to preside over the second. The case then went to Judge Melvin Grover, a former Santa Barbara police officer with a tough, no-nonsense approach to his judicial duties. When for lack of timeliness, a WCG motion for summary judgment was not permitted, Beverly Hills lawyer Allan Browne and the rest of the WCG legal team showed their dislike of Judge Grover, and they were able to get him disqualified by affidavit on the very day the trial was to begin.

Because no other judges were available then in Pasadena, the case was transferred to downtown Los Angeles Superior Court where Judge Christian Markey was assigned to preside over the jury trial scheduled for December. When the WCG again moved for summary judgment (a procedure that allows the judge to decide the case on his own, thus keeping it away from the jury), Judge Markey only reluctantly allowed oral argument on the motion to be scheduled. Judge Markey even told the WCG's lawyers he honestly believed they were wasting their time.

But then just days before the motion was to be argued, Judge Markey made a startling announcement: He was immediately retiring from the bench to become General Counsel for the University of Southern California. (USC Law Center is, incidentally, where WCG lawyers Allan Browne, Stanley Rader, and Jack Kessler all obtained their law degrees. It is also where the WCG has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to establish the Herbert W. Armstrong Professorship of Constitutional Law. See our July 1983 issue.)

The WCG's motion for summary judgment was then made to Judge Richard Lavine, a prominent member of the Beverly Hills Bar Association who once taught law at USC. Lavine quickly decided in favor of Allan Browne's client. In fact, so sure was Lavine that the WCG's position was correct, his written opinion on the motion was actually completed a full two days before he heard oral argument on the motion.

It has been reported that WCG attorney Ralph Helge, elated over the WCG's good luck, has assured the WCG's ministry that the suit was won "God's way" and that it is now completely over. But it really isn't. Antony Stuart, Leona's attorney, is taking the case back to the California Court of Appeal. And no matter which side wins there, you can be sure that the case will once again come before the California State Supreme Court. Said Stuart, "After what she's been put through all these years, my firm is just not going to abandon Leona McNair!"

### **Plache in Prison**

On September 13, Richard Plache, former Ambassador College Dean of Students and WCG pastor, was sentenced to four years in prison for his involvement in the Elmas

Trading Corp. scam (covered in our October 1985 issue). In mid-summer Plache was tried in the U.S. District Court in Sacramento (case no. CR 87-164) and was found guilty on 18 counts of mail fraud and SEC violations. Elmas, which was essentially a Ponzi scheme aimed at Christian fundamentalists, netted about \$76 million from 5,500 investors. Prosecuting attorney Geoffrey A. Goodman told the *Report* there was no doubt in his mind that Plache was guilty.

Among those also convicted in the case were James Attarian, 76, the president of Elmas who was sentenced to eight years, and Don Smith, 53, the vice-president who was sentenced to four years. Both Attarian (who is reputed to be distantly related to California Governor George Deukmejian) and Smith are supposedly devout Seventh-Day Adventists. Attarian, Smith, and Plache are presently serving their time at the federal minimum security prison at Lompoc, California.

Incredibly, the entire Elmas story has received very little press coverage in spite of the fact that \$76 million was involved and thousands of Christian believers were victimized. A small number of publications covered the story in 1985. And the *Walla Walla Bulletin* (of Washington State) ran a series on the scam in 1985-86. Since then, however, almost no one in the press has been willing to adequately cover the story. Repeated letters and phone calls by *Report* editor Trechak to newspaper editors throughout California got no results whatsoever. The *Los Angeles Times* and the *Pasadena Star-News* didn't even mention the Plache trial.

Although Plache was not one of the founders of Elmas, he was one of its outstanding money raisers, having collected some \$6 million from about 500 trusting investors. Those investors - all of whom were promised huge profits - will only get back about 40 cents for each dollar invested. Apparently most of the money taken in by Elmas has been accounted for. But according to court-appointed receiver Richard Schaffer of Los Angeles, about \$4.5 million cannot be located. Nevertheless, through it all Plache seems to have maintained his optimism. Shortly before leaving for prison he told the *Report*, "I have now found a peace that surpasseth all understanding."

### **A Case of Stealing from the Blind**

In 1970, Garnet H. Hill was a 77-year-old WCG member whose eyesight was beginning to fail him and whose wife was dying of cancer. In spite of his personal problems, however, when Herbert Armstrong sent out a co-worker letter saying the church was in dire need, the long-time WCG member sold all the real estate he owned. With the \$30,000 he received, he gave \$20,000 to the WCG as a gift. The WCG minister who handled the transaction, however, never gave Hill a receipt. Instead, Hill was simply told to keep quiet about the matter.

As the years went by, Hill began to suspect something was wrong. He didn't want his gift returned; he just wanted to be sure "headquarters" had gotten it. He started asking for the receipt he never received and kept asking what happened to his contribution. For his persistence, he was disfellowshipped (and Joe Tkach later affirmed the local minister's action). It was a terrible blow for the old man who by now was legally blind, without a wife, and dependent on his friends in the church for companionship and help. Hill died in

1983, a month short of his 90th birthday. His last years were spent cut off from "the Work" he loved. Interestingly, while the church would have nothing to do with him, just ten days before he died, the church's legal department wrote Hill asking if Ambassador College was still in his will!

While the WCG turned its back on the old blind man, one former WCG deacon did not. Mr. N. C. Gilbert of Lantana, Florida, took care of Hill in his final years, and when the old gentleman passed away in 1983, Gilbert saw to it that Hill's remains were buried in his native Canada, where as a young man he had been aviator Lieutenant Hill.

The sad story of how the WCG treated Garnet Hill, an old, blind man who loved "the Work," has been written up in an article by Mr. Gilbert. Those who would like a free copy should write Mr. N. C. Gilbert, 7087 Washington Ave., Lantana, Florida 33462.

### **James D. Tabor's Genesis 2000**

There is rarely a week when *Ambassador Report* does not receive in the mail at least two or three new publications about religion from publishers hoping for a review, or at least a mention. The majority of such books, journals, and newsletters go unmentioned, however, because so often they are poorly written or on subjects I am convinced our subscribers would find uninteresting or even offensive. That is why it is a pleasure to bring to the attention of *Report* readers a new journal about religion that is not only of exceptional quality, but is, I'm sure, one many *Report* readers will find absolutely fascinating.

The journal is called *Genesis 2000*, and its editor is James D. Tabor. As it turns out, Professor Tabor was actually at Ambassador College when I was there (we're both class of '70 Pasadena grads), but it has only been in the past year that we really became acquainted by correspondence and telephone. To present some of Dr. Tabor's unique background, let me take a shortcut and quote from one of his letters:

....I was raised in the Church of Christ and graduated from Abilene Christian University in 1966 with a B.A. in Greek and biblical studies. I had begun to listen to GTA/HWA back in high school and followed them with some interest through college. After graduation I spent a year in Europe in the mission field, working with Christian believers behind the Iron Curtain (Yugoslavia, Poland, Russia), smuggling in Bibles and literature. I returned to the States in 1967 and was determined to go out to Ambassador College to investigate things there firsthand. Over the years I had continued to study the Bible, and more and more had concluded that the Armstrongs had something nearer the truth than my own background of the Church of Christ. I was baptized (2nd time) by Tony Hammer around Passover, 1968 and that fall entered AC, Pasadena. I spent two years there, 1968-70, and divided my time three ways: teaching the first Hebrew and Greek classes (David Albert was in my Hebrew class) at AC; getting a second B.A. in Theology from AC; and going to Pepperdine University to get an M.A. Basically my experiences at AC were positive. I was never mistreated in any way, and left voluntarily in 1970 with no hard feelings or regrets. Remember, this was in 1970, before all the disruptions of the '70s, and in the absolute heyday of the WCG. I left because I could plainly see that those people were not open-minded seekers of God's truth. There was an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, of dogmatism about any area of biblical research. And I had had enough training at Abilene and Pepperdine to see that there were a lot of flaws in many of

their teachings. I was frankly disappointed. I felt I had been misled by all the rhetoric I had heard about just following the Bible, honestly proving things, etc. I honestly thought AC would be that kind of place. I was sorry to leave my friends, especially Olin Degge, Mike Marlan, and Robert Kuhn. I also deeply admired many of the leaders in that work. Robert begged me to reconsider and stay on, working within to change things, which he eventually tried to do, I think. But it was not for me.

I spent the next decade at the University of Chicago getting first a second M.A., then finally a Ph.D. I was exposed to the most radical historical-critical biblical studies and gradually lost all faith in God, the Bible, or any idea of ultimate human purpose. I was reading, during all that time, dozens of books on philosophy, science, psychology, etc. I would characterize myself as a romanticized, bohemian, existentialist, nihilist - basically a follower of Freud and Nietzsche. I taught six years at the University of Notre Dame and for the past three years have been teaching here at the College of William and Mary. My field is Christian origins (NT) and ancient Judaism, as well as Greco-Roman culture and religion. During all this time I pursued a successful scholarly career publishing a major book on Paul which took me ten years of research, numerous articles, etc. I am currently working on a second book with Harper and Row titled *A Noble Death? Suicide and Martyrdom Among Ancient Jews, Christians, Greeks, and Romans*.

Just about two years ago, for reasons it is difficult to fully explain, I began to turn back toward some kind of theism, and gradually, toward faith once again in the God of the Bible, and even in the Bible itself, but in a non-fundamentalist way. This has been a slow process. I would call it a crawl back to faith through the door of the Hebrew Bible. I have not yet "arrived" hence *Genesis 2000* and its approach of questing. But my foundational beginning is the fundamental revelation of God in the Bible, primarily the Hebrew Bible (OT), at least as a starting point. I don't like labels, neither Jewish (which I am certainly not), nor Christian (since I think what Jesus of Nazareth was all about has so precious little to do with Christianity). This return to faith really means simply that out of all the philosophical options I have considered, the one I find most compelling is the claim of God as revealed in the Bible. This is nothing new to many, foolish to others, but to me it is a hard fought ground upon which I now stand. I remain self-critical. That is my key point....

To do justice to Prof. Tabor's qualifications and writings would require a whole issue of the *Report*. Instead, I'll just briefly point out that his book *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* has received acclaim from scholars around the world. For instance, one reviewer, Michael Goldberg of William and Mary, wrote:

What Albert Schweitzer did for comprehending Jesus by locating him historically in a world of apocalyptic expectation, James Tabor has done for understanding Paul. Thanks to Tabor's careful, thorough study, no serious scholar, whether historian or theologian, can hereafter justifiably speak of "Paul's message" apart from the discussion of the "ascent to Paradise," which was its ground. This book is, in short, indispensable for all students of first-century Christianity and Judaism.

Another reviewer, Morton Smith of Columbia University, wrote:

This is a remarkably honest effort to acknowledge what Paul actually says, and to identify what he was talking about - the ideas and experiences of men of his time. No

other book on the market comes so close to the real Paul.

Those interested in more information about *Things Unutterable...* should write its publisher: University Press of America, 4720-A Boston Way, Lanham MD 20706.

Reading through the first issue of *Genesis 2000* I was immediately struck by Tabor's wonderfully readable style. Unlike so many scholars today, Tabor has not lost the ability to communicate with "normal" people. He doesn't obfuscate. His writing (at least in the journal) has a clarity and accessibility that is, I think, uncommon among academicians in his field. What's more, he is not preachy. Volume I, Number 1 has an editorial, two book reviews, the preface to a future Letters section, three articles on rather profound subjects: "The Great Religious Questions," "In Defense of Theism," "Knowing the God of the Bible," and a "Bible Study" section that utilizes modern "narrative theology."

I personally look forward to reading future issues of *Genesis 2000*, and I'm sure many *Ambassador Report* readers will also. For a free subscription, write to Genesis 2000, P.O. Box 754, Williamsburg, VA 23187.

- JT

\* \* \*

### **Editor's Note**

My apologies for the long delay between issues. But my personal schedule in 1988 made it impossible to get out an issue since March. I hope to do better in 1989.

During the early '80s *Ambassador Report* newsletter came out four times per year. In 1986 and 1987, there were only three issues per year, and last year there was only the March issue. Obviously, the *Report* is no longer a quarterly. Nevertheless, with your help, I hope to keep *Ambassador Report* going.

My thanks to all of you whose gifts and encouragement make *Ambassador Report* possible.

- JT

\* \* \*

## **Please Note Our Address Change**

Please notice that our *Ambassador Report* post office box number is 60068. (It has not been 4068 for some years now.) Also, beginning by the time you receive this issue (AR 41), our post office zip code will be changed to 91116. Mail sent to our old address will still be forwarded to us, but using our current, correct address will help the post office in serving us more efficiently.

[Next Issue\(AR42\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

**AR42 September 1989**

### **Joseph W. Tkach - God's New Rep on Planet Earth**

**(Part II)**

**by John Trechak**

In Part I of this article (in AR 41, our March 1989 issue), I gave an overview of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and showed how Joseph W. Tkach, the WCG's Pastor General, has promulgated an official biography of himself that is very much different than his real life story. I showed how, contrary to his claims, Tkach was not born in 1926, did not grow up in a violence-plagued neighborhood, never attended the Illinois Institute of Technology, was never an industrial plant manager, did not establish churches throughout the Midwest during the sixties, and is not a World War II U.S. Navy hero.

Since March, the *Report* has been able to obtain additional information about Tkach from the U.S. Department of the Navy via the Freedom of Information Act. Tkach's permanent Navy record, including his official separation documents, amplify the conclusions reached in Part I of this article.

#### **Tkach's U.S. Navy Record**

While Tkach claims to have been a heroic "gunner" who shot down many Japanese kamikazes, Tkach's service record reveals that he did not wear the enlisted specialty insignia of an antiaircraft machine gunner, gun pointer, or gunner's mate. Tkach's rank was "fireman second class," an entry-level rank indicating training only in elementary mechanical maintenance. The only awards or decorations Tkach received were an Asian Pacific Area Ribbon and a World War II Victory Ribbon, which indicate merely that he served in the Pacific during the second world war. He was awarded no medals of any kind.

The Navy's records show that Tkach's period of service was January 17, 1945 to July 22, 1946. After receiving eight weeks of basic training at the Naval Training Center at Great Lakes, Illinois, Tkach served on just two ships: The destroyer escort USS *Austin* (DE 15) and a converted cargo ship, the USS *Jupiter* (AVS 8). As I pointed out in our last issue, the *Austin* was never in a battle where kamikazes were involved, and she only saw limited action at Attu on May 11, 1943 - 16 months before Tkach joined the Navy. So even though he served aboard the *Austin* briefly at the tail end of the war, the heroics Tkach fantasizes about could not have taken place aboard the *Austin*.

What about the USS *Jupiter*? The authoritative *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Volume III (1968), has a lengthy article on the *Jupiter's* very distinguished wartime record. For almost the entire war, the *Jupiter* carried supplies and troops into battle, often while in danger from enemy fire, during the campaigns for the Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, the Gilbert Islands, Tarawa, the Marianas, Saipan, the Palau Islands, and the Philippines (including the Battle of Leyte Gulf). Quite likely, it was from some of the *Jupiter's* older mates that Tkach first heard the war stories into which he later inserted himself. But one thing is certain, Tkach was not aboard the *Jupiter* during any of its dangerous World War II missions. The *Jupiter's* last brush with danger in WWII was at Iwo Jima where she remained until Japanese resistance on that island ceased March 16, 1945. Coincidentally, that was Tkach's eighteenth birthday and, according to the Navy's records, he was just then completing his basic training in Illinois. The *Jupiter*, for almost the entire war, cargo ship AE 43, returned to San Francisco in late July 1945 and during a four-day period was converted into an aviation supply ship (AVS 8). For the remaining month of the war she sailed on a few routine missions, but none put her in any danger.

Clearly, the U.S. Navy's official records show that Tkach could not possibly be the tried-in-battle warrior he and his associates claim he is. Additionally, the military records offer a number of other insights into Tkach's character. For instance, one of Tkach's top assistants has publicly stated that Tkach wanted so badly to serve in WWII that he falsified his age to Navy recruiters in order to enter the war before all the real fighting was over. But the Navy's records correctly give March 16, 1927 as Tkach's birthdate. And I was told by Tkach's last surviving sister that with the aid of his father's signature, Tkach was able to enlist in the Navy two months short of his eighteenth birthday in order to avoid being drafted into the Army. Obviously, it was only years later that Tkach's phony 1926 birthdate would so conveniently help him pass off his fanciful war stories. Anyone capable of adding 18 years to 1927 would have realized Tkach's service in WWII was too brief to have included all his claimed exploits.

In Part I of this article I wrote how Tkach began his secondary education at Chicago's Gage Park High School in September 1940. After one year Tkach was transferred to Tildon High, where he would have graduated in June 1944 had he remained in school. But as I pointed out in Part I, Tildon officials have been unable to locate any record of Tkach completing even one semester there. Tkach's military records show that from January 1943 to January 1945 he worked as an apprentice tool and die maker for Center Manufacturing Co. of Chicago. Those same records also show, however, that Tkach falsely represented to Navy recruiters that he had completed four years of high school before entering the service.

Finally, the Navy's records show that Tkach was honorably discharged. There is no

indiciation that he jumped ship, went AWOL, brawled with Marines, or spent time in the brig. Nor is there any indication in the records that he ever served aboard a Navy tender, a gasoline tanker (an AOG), or an oiler (an AO) that was later blown out of the water. Those Tkach stories, as spread around the world by evangelist Gerald Waterhouse, are apparently nothing more than yarns spun by "the master weaver."

### **The Education of the Chancellor**

There is a funny story told in some circles about when church founder Herbert W. Armstrong put Tkach over the WCG's Church Administration Department. Ambassador College professor Roderick C. Meredith, who preceded Tkach in the top Church Administration post, contacted a fellow elder and vented his feelings about the new appointee. Meredith, absolutely dumbfounded that Tkach would be chosen for such a high position, explained how, during the 1960s, he had personally reviewed all the entrance applications and I.Q. scores of field ministers brought to Ambassador for formal training. Tkach's I.Q., said Meredith, was among the very lowest of those ever admitted and was in fact "even lower than the Blacks!"

While the anecdote probably says more about Meredith's attitude about race than it does about Tkach's intelligence, it does reflect a perception of Tkach that, although privately held, appears to be widespread among WCG executives - namely, that Tkach is just not very bright. Of course, we should not fault someone for what nature has not provided. Most of us do not have a precision of mind, command of language, and store of memory of which we may be proud. But regarding Tkach, there is the perception among many that he has never made a real effort to gain any type of education or to achieve excellence in anything other than WCG rank (if indeed "excellence" and "WCG rank" may properly be used in the same breath).

---

&COPY;1989 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher  
Associate Editor

Mary E. Jones,

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

Arthur Mokarow, a respected former WCG minister and administrator, who went on to study at Oxford and now runs a successful management consulting firm in Houston, grew up with Tkach in the windy city and attended the same schools. Mokarow told me that he doesn't remember Tkach as excelling in sports, student leadership, social activities, or in academic work. Said Mokarow, "Joe just didn't stand out."

Claims about Tkach having attended the Illinois Institute of Technology notwithstanding, I have seen no evidence that Tkach ever took even one class at an accredited college. At unaccredited Ambassador College, where he is now the Chancellor, Tkach supposedly

had three years of classes - at least that is what was stated in the Jan. 27, 1986 *Worldwide News*. But according to many I interviewed, including former WCG administrator Al Carrozzo who was Tkach's superior during the period in question, Tkach really had only one full year at Ambassador and his academic performance was mediocre, at best. Afterward he may have sat in on a few lectures, but he was never matriculated toward a degree, and he definitely never graduated.

But what about self-education? Certainly many men and women, unable to attend a university, are motivated to prepare themselves for successful careers through extensive reading and personal study. Strangely, of the scores of people I have interviewed for this article and who have personally known Tkach, not one could recall Tkach ever reading, collecting, quoting, or even talking about *any* book,<sup>34</sup> with the exception of the Bible. And some who worked with him in the past say he didn't seem all that interested in studying the Bible, either. I wonder if similar observations were made by *Plain Truth* editor Herman L. Hoeh and church founder Herbert Armstrong. For in the past, Hoeh is said to have derisively referred to Tkach as "that Russian peasant" and some who were close to HWA say that the church founder viewed Tkach as "a virtual illiterate."

As many WCG members in Pasadena are aware, Tkach is not able to read prepared scripts convincingly off a teleprompter, and so, the *The World Tomorrow's* broadcasting chores have been delegated to ministers David Hulme, Richard Ames, David Albert, and Ronald Kelly. What many Worldwidiers don't know, however, is that Tkach must rely on surrogates in other areas, as well. For instance, for articles and editorials bearing his by-line, Tkach is utterly helpless without his team of ghost writers, editors, and secretaries. So poor are Tkach's writing skills, I understand, that without assistance he even has great difficulty answering simple letters.

Tkach has been lucky enough to find ghost writers to do his writing and "hirelings," as Garner Ted Armstrong calls them, to read scripts on *The World Tomorrow*. Tkach, unfortunately, has yet to find a way to use proxies to permanently replace himself in the pulpit. For while *Worldwide News* articles invariably describe Tkach's sermons as "inspiring," "moving," and "powerful," most Pasadena Worldwidiers know better. As a preacher, Tkach is just not an Armstrong.

One Tkach inadequacy, I am told, is that he just can't seem to come up with interesting new topics. At his prime, HWA would speak on new topics almost every week. Garner Ted Armstrong still does. Insiders say, however, that Tkach has very few subjects with which he is comfortable, "church unity" being a theme he has beaten into the ground for over three years now. Perhaps this inability is one reason Tkach now so often takes his sermons on the road. Out there, before local WCG congregations around the world, it is not necessary to come up with new ideas. The novelty of a visiting "Apostle" is enough to inspire great enthusiasm - the kind required to maintain an apostolic level of ego inflation.

But burning up a fortune in jet fuel<sup>35</sup> visiting "the troops" doesn't solve Tkach's second major speaking problem: his grating style. Tkach's sermons are often frantic, high-pitched, monotone deliveries of simplistic ideas described with much repetition and limited vocabulary. But even worse, during moments of special excitement - as when

describing prophesied martyrdom - Tkach's pace and pitch can rise to levels that bring listeners shudders like those from flat chalk on blackboard.

All of the above leads to two rather obvious questions: How is Tkach able to run the mammoth WCG organization? And how in the world did Tkach ever get put in charge?

### Playing the Role

Considering Tkach's very limited education, how is it that he is able to preside over all the business, legal, personnel, and spiritual facets of the 85,000-member church, Ambassador College, the Ambassador Foundation, and all the other affiliated WCG operations? The answer is that, unlike the WCG in the heyday of autocratic HWA (the 1950s and 60s), the WCG today is not really run by one man, or two. It's run by an *oligarchy* - a relatively small group of about 30 or so top elders and department managers. Although Tkach by church doctrine has more than just veto power, Tkach is far more of a team player than egocentric HWA was ever capable of being. As a result, insiders say, the WCG's top managers get their way more often than not.

In return for Tkach's great deference to the church's management team (and in return for his generous use of cash "bonus" payments<sup>36</sup>), the management team is only too happy to inflate, prop up, and massage Tkach's image before the members. A similar relationship exists between Tkach and his field ministry. Although, as in HWA's era, the ministers "out in the field" (to use WCG headquarters jargon) are frequently transferred to different pastures - lest any develop too devoted a following and become sheep rustlers - Tkach seems to allow his field reps considerable latitude in decision making. Consequently there is more and more variety of doctrine among WCG ministers. One AR reader wrote me:

I am not a Worldwide member but I deliberately go to church social events with my [member] husband in order to meet people in the church. I have found that there is a *lot* of variation in what members are taught. For instance, the local minister in our area de-emphasizes Petra. But I have heard from a friend in New York that the minister in her area is *hot* on going to Petra. Worldwide ministers each seem to put their own funny twists on what they were taught. One evidently will not eat food unless it is blessed. I could give many other examples. Aren't the ministers all taught the same thing? It seems to me that the only generalization that can be made about the WCG's ministers is that they are inconsistent.

One striking example of how the Tkach organization now operates may be seen in the WCG's adoption of a new "Five Year Plan." Not unlike the five-year plans so popular in the centrally managed socialist countries, the WCG's Five-Year Plan was put together by a committee composed of some of the WCG's top executives. According to the April 3, 1989 *Worldwide News*, the plan (which begins with a general overview, ends in specific details, and will be renewed annually) was put together by: Dexter Faulkner, editor of church publications; Barry Gridley, manager of Publishing Services; David Hulme, manager of Communications and Public Affairs; Joseph Locke, Ambassador Foundation vice president for international affairs; Leroy Neff, church treasurer; Larry Omasta, producer of the *The World Tomorrow*; Rick Pelt, manager of Facilities Administration; James Peoples, manager of Computer Information Systems, Purchasing and Travel;

Richard Rice, manager of the church's Mail Processing Center; Larry Salyer, associate director of Church Administration; Fred Stevens, manager of accounting; Ray Wright, manager of Media Planning and Promotion; and Bernard Schnippert, the director of Media Production Services who was also the one who chaired the committee.

In addition to the above individuals, there are, of course, a number of other important WCG executives who share in the power structure. Tkach's son Joe Jr. has his father's old position over the WCG's U.S. ministry and is heir-designate to his father's throne. Ralph K. Helge, who, like Tkach, came to Pasadena from Chicago during the 1960s, is the WCG's chief legal counsel.<sup>37</sup> Finally, there is Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, the editor of the *Plain Truth* who for decades was HWA's chief doctrinal theoretician and propagandist. During the seventies Hoeh was Tkach's direct superior and mentor. According to certain insiders, Hoeh's spiritual influence over Tkach, although invisible to the unenlightened, is actually significant.

### **How He Got There**

One of the most frequent questions put to *Ambassador Report* is: How in the world did Tkach ever become Herbert Armstrong's successor? Interestingly, the question often comes from people who have personally known Tkach. As one long-time church employee explained on the phone: "I always assumed Mr. Ted Armstrong would wind up on top. Let's face it. Not only is he Mr. Herbert Armstrong's only living son - his own flesh and blood - but he can *really* preach. He's a prolific writer, too. And he's a professional broadcaster who doesn't even need scripts. He graduated from Ambassador College and he's got a Ph.D. He speaks fluent Spanish, he's a singer and musician, he's a sportsman, he's an athlete, and he's a licensed jet pilot. He even has good looks and charisma.<sup>38</sup> Mr. Tkach, on the other hand-well, he's just Joe Tkach!"

To understand how Tkach was able to rise to the top of the heap, we need to review a bit of WCG history. Beginning around 1973, Armstrong organization maladies and a series of very public scandals produced an exodus of the WCG's best preachers, teachers, administrators, and thinkers (see our "Executive Exodus" lists in ARs 2 and 24). By mid-1978, even HWA's son Garner Ted Armstrong had left (actually he was thrown out) to form the competing Church of God, International, headquartered in Tyler, Texas. To most observers at that juncture it appeared that upon the death of its founder, Herbert Armstrong's empire would fall into the hands of church attorney-accountant Stanley R. Rader (see "Ex-Jewish Convert May Inherit Church's Wealth," *Time* magazine, June 19, 1978). But it was not to be.

In January 1979, the attorney general of the state of California launched a major civil suit against the WCG, invaded the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College with a team of investigators, and placed the entire Armstrong organization in receivership (see our 1979-80 issues for details). Rader encouraged Pasadena church members to stage a sit-in demonstration at headquarters, and he then called together hundreds of the WCG's top ministers and administrators for a meeting in Tucson, Arizona, where 87-year-old HWA lived with his 40-year-old wife. Tkach, who was then only an insignificant "preaching elder," was not invited to the meeting. He was left behind in Pasadena.

At the start of the state's action, the man in charge of the WCG's church administration department was evangelist C. Wayne Cole. But when Cole decided to cooperate with the state attorney general, Rader - who was the primary target of the lawsuit - saw to it that Wayne Cole, evangelist David Antion, and a number of other prominent church moderates were fired.<sup>39</sup> HWA replaced Cole with evangelist Roderick C. Meredith, an arch-conservative and HWA loyalist who, during the 1960s, had held the same top administrative position.

Although Meredith was put over the field ministry, during 1979 it was really Stanley Rader who ran the WCG. Rader's control was almost total. If decisions were not made by him, they would routinely be made by Virginia Kineston, his domineering executive secretary.<sup>40</sup> More significantly, because HWA's wife, Ramona, and HWA's two personal aides, Kevin and Aaron Dean, were all then personally loyal to Rader, Rader really controlled almost all access to HWA. Meredith, aggrieved over the extent of Rader's power, confided to a number of ministers that he wanted to see Rader removed. It wasn't long before Rader learned of Meredith's desire from a number of sources including Tkach. In mid-1979 Rader saw to it that HWA removed Meredith as head of church administration. Rader then chose "loyal" Tkach to take over Meredith's responsibilities. On Sept. 27, 1979, Rader, Tkach, and Ellis LaRavia (then also a Rader loyalist) were all raised to evangelist rank.

It's not difficult to see why Rader chose Tkach. First of all, Tkach pretended to be personally loyal to Rader. Second, because Tkach was not a dynamic speaker, not an Ambassador graduate, and not a theological giant, it was unlikely he could upstage Rader, a virtual Bible illiterate who lacked both an Ambassador degree and adequate pulpit skills. Third, Tkach was clearly no ideologue. His participation in the January sit-in - clearly contrary to long-standing church doctrine - showed Rader that Tkach would not be hindered by church doctrine when ordered to act contrariwise. Finally, Tkach gave the impression of being one who carried out the orders of superiors with mindless gusto. Former WCG administrator Al Carrozzo, who had been Tkach's superior until 1972, recalls about Tkach:

I certainly remember how Joe worked for me. He was a sycophant. I'd ask him to do something, and he would. But he'd do it with such excessive speed and excessive thoroughness it just wasn't balanced. He was also flattering toward me to the point of dishonesty. In sermonettes, for instance, he'd say things about me that were nice, but he'd exaggerate to the point that everyone knew they weren't true. That kind of thing really embarrassed me. But Herbert Armstrong just loved that kind of behavior.

Some oldtimers say that Tkach learned to be unctuous and fawning toward superiors by observing the way Dean Blackwell, his own superior in Chicago, treated HWA on his visits there during the '50s. Many who knew him say HWA loved to be surrounded by sycophants. (Isn't this the true origin of that WCG phenomenon "the Super Deacon"?) And HWA loved flattery. In this regard, many of those in the WCG during the '70s recall how HWA would glowingly bask in the undisguised puffery heaped upon him - in his presence - by Stanley Rader when giving the annual "state of the church treasury" reports at the fall festivals. Yes, HWA loved the kind of behavior described by Carrozzo. And, apparently, so did Rader. But in advancing Tkach, Rader seriously blundered. It was a miscalculation that would lead to Rader's ouster in 1981.

## Switching Sides

Of the many myths in the WCG concerning Tkach, none is bigger or sillier than the story of Tkach's role in the 1979 church crisis. According to evangelist Gerald Waterhouse, Tkach was the moving force, the "real brains" behind the famous 1979 sit-in demonstration at church headquarters. In his March 1, 1986 sermon in Pasadena, Waterhouse said:

When the attorney general hit, you knew who was instrumental in getting the sit-in to protect the buildings? Mr. Joe Tkach! He kept Mr. Blackwell here, but the rest of us were over in Tucson at the conference. Mr. Blackwell was the senior man here. He kept him up until 3:30 in the morning and said, "I'm not going to let you go to bed until you authorize this sit-in, because, can't you see, the spirit of God is stirring up these people from all over California to protect his properties?"

The demonstration revealed how easy it is for the WCG's membership to be led into activities totally contrary to longstanding church doctrine. For until 1979 the entire ministry had taught that to engage in any type of civil disobedience was a sin. Evangelist Meredith had even referred to demonstrations for political purposes as "demon strations." Nevertheless, the sit-in, perhaps the biggest in Pasadena history, did succeed in keeping state investigators out of church buildings a few days, and the publicity generated did gain the WCG support from numerous mainstream churches that the WCG had previously labeled as "of the Devil." But was Tkach really the moving force behind the sit-in?

Stanley Rader's book *Against the Gates of Hell*, written and published while Rader still considered Tkach a loyal friend (manifested by a few positive references to Tkach in the book), nowhere credits Tkach as masterminding the sit-in. Even the *Worldwide News* of Feb. 5, 1979, which covered the church crisis and the sit-in, nowhere reports Tkach as in charge of anything. When the sit-in took place in January 1979, *Ambassador Report* co-publishers Bob Gerring, Len Zola, and I spent three days near the scene of the demonstration. It certainly did not appear that Tkach was in charge. As other newsmen noticed, the one who seemed to be in command of the demonstration was Kevin Dean, HWA's aide and then a Rader loyalist. (See the photo on page 5 of our March 1979 issue. Kevin Dean is shown clearly in charge of the group that confronted us near the sit-in.) Most significantly, when A. Sheridan Atkinson, the chief operating officer of receiver Steven Weisman, attempted to enter the church's blockaded administration building with his staff, it was not Tkach who confronted him. It was deacon Wayne Pyle who spoke for the church and blocked the doorway.

Although Tkach was apparently one of those asked to phone members to get them to demonstrate and was one of the ministers who spoke at the sit-in, he was clearly not the mastermind behind the episode. The real mastermind was Stanley Rader. Tkach's role in the sit-in was actually minor.

There is a second reason why Waterhouse's sit-in story is silly. It portrays Tkach as a man whose loyalty to the WCG was undivided. In reality, Tkach's loyalties were once with those who brought the civil suit against the WCG.

The one who initiated the big lawsuit was WCG member John Tuit, then of New Jersey. As the suit was being put together, Tuit's lawyers suggested that it would be helpful if the suit was formally initiated by a group of relators that included a California resident. Tuit, then sympathetic toward Garner Ted Armstrong's organization, asked GTA's son, Mark, if he had any suggestions. Mark mentioned a man by the name of Earl Timmons. No one seemed to know much about Timmons, but Mark recalled that when his father had been put out of the WCG, Timmons showed up one day at GTA's home. He brought an envelope containing a very large amount of money. It was this gift that apparently was the first to Ted's new church organization. As a result of such generosity, it was thought Timmons might enthusiastically cooperate with Tuit. That is how Timmons became a relator in the big 1979 lawsuit.

Unknown to Tuit (and Mark Armstrong probably) was the fact that Timmons, although a WCG member, was extensively involved in criminal activities.<sup>41</sup> He was also a long-time, close, personal friend of Tkach. Timmons has told me that well before the state initiated the lawsuit, he informed Tkach completely of what was going to transpire. And C. Wayne Cole has related to friends how before the state served church officials with the complaint, Tkach tipped him off that the action was coming and introduced him to Timmons. Therefore, although Tkach now pretends that he was always 100% loyal to HWA and the church organization, this is clearly not so. Had Tkach warned HWA and Rader of what was about to transpire, church attorneys may very well have headed off the suit and saved the WCG millions of dollars in legal fees. Tkach clearly did not put HWA and the WCG corporation first in his life. He used the confidential information he gained from Timmons only to his own political advantage. Once it became clear that Rader was not going to just lie down and die, Tkach's loyalties switched (at least ostensibly) to the side of Rader.<sup>42</sup>

### **Rader's Fall**

By 1981 Rader knew that he had been duped by Tkach. On Feb. 1 of that year he sent HWA a lengthy telex from Japan. It contained the following comment:

With respect to Joe Tkach, I recommended him. Although I did know about his connection with Mr. and Mrs. Timmons (two of the relators in the lawsuit), I did not find out the full details concerning his *illegal fencing activities* until they surfaced recently when we were preparing our civil rights case. He is obviously not the man I recommended to you and I apologize for my error in judgment.<sup>43</sup>

By the time Rader sent the above telex it was already too late for him to do anything about Tkach. For by then Tkach had secured his position among HWA's inner circle of aides. Within that small group, Tkach aligned himself with Kevin and Aaron Dean whose loyalties were no longer with Rader. Kevin, the most intelligent and dominant of the three, hatched a plot to destroy HWA's confidence in both Rader and Ramona, HWA's wife. The anti-Rader forces surreptitiously taped Rader and Ramona in private conversations, some of which were not complimentary to HWA (see AR 16 at p. 2). Through the use of such illegally gotten recordings and through rumor, innuendo, and character assassination, the conspirators were able to turn HWA against both his long-time attorney and his very own wife. Almost immediately, HWA moved out of his Tucson home and back to Pasadena, instituted divorce proceedings against Ramona, and

fired Rader.

Rader had fallen prey to Tkach in the same way that other superiors of Tkach had in the past. Carrozzo recalled of Tkach in the early '70s: "At some point it became obvious to me that Joe was reporting to those above me on what I said and did - and not always accurately. It's interesting that when I resigned Joe was given most of my old responsibilities." A similar scenario was played out later when Wayne Cole was ousted in early 1979 and when Roderick Meredith was ousted in mid-1979. Then, when Rader was knocked out of power in 1981, Tkach, along with the Deans, inherited much of the influence over HWA that had previously belonged to Rader.

### **Uriah Heep**

One long-time observer of WCG politics has pointed out that Tkach's personality and modus operandi match perfectly that of Uriah Heep. In Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*, Uriah Heep - the unctuous, fawning, and scheming clerk - managed by deceit to worm his way into partnership with Mr. Wickfield, after which he proceeded to gain full control of the business.

From mid-1981 WCG publications pictured HWA as firmly in charge of the WCG. But HWA's three top aides, Tkach and the two Deans, were exerting tremendous influence because they were able to monitor HWA's activities and filter most of the information he received. Recall that during this period HWA was in his nineties, was ailing, hard of hearing, and legally blind. During all this time, however, HWA did not name a successor. Suddenly, in early 1986 HWA named Tkach as his successor. Why?

The explanation usually given in church circles is that HWA, then very ill, feared his son Garner Ted Armstrong would somehow take over the WCG upon his death. HWA may have been led to believe this because his hatred of his son was constantly fueled by the rumormongering of aides who had everything to lose should GTA ever have reconciled with his father. But the fact is, GTA no longer had a following among WCG members and he was no longer a WCG minister respected by that church's ministry. GTA, therefore, was really not in a position to take over the WCG.

Furthermore, if there was a need for HWA to name a successor, why didn't he choose a respected evangelist such as Norman Smith, Herman Hoeh, Ellis LaRavia, or Roderick C. Meredith? Certainly, had HWA not designated a successor, upon his death the church's council of elders would have chosen one of these four men.

Some believe that HWA's three closest aides manipulated HWA into making Tkach his successor. That may be a partial answer. But the main reason Tkach was chosen, I believe, is that egocentric Herbert W. Armstrong wanted to guarantee that his successor would not be a man capable of outshining him in any way. One distinguished California psychiatrist, who has followed the WCG very closely for some years, has said privately that in choosing Tkach, Herbert Armstrong very likely was motivated by a subconscious desire to see his successor fail.

That theory makes a lot of sense. As I reported in the January 1986 issue of the Report,

just weeks before his death HWA ordered that his corporate jet be put up for sale. Clearly, HWA never anticipated that Tkach would carry on in his own grandiose style. Yet, not only has Tkach carried on in the same way, both his new jet and the gifts he spreads abroad are far larger than Herbert Armstrong's ever were!

After gaining control of the WCG, Tkach energetically thrust himself among the rich, the royal, and the powerful. Former WCG minister and author David Robinson told me, "Tkach is a classic example of someone being where he ought not be." Then, quoting Ecclesiastes 10:7, Robinson said, "I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." Anyone who has seen Peter Sellers as Chauncy Gardener in the movie *Being There* will understand.

Former WCG minister Gary Arvidson has called HWA's designation of Tkach as his successor, "Herbert's last big joke on the church." That may be so. But as Tkach dismantles HWA's doctrinal edifice piece by piece, discontinues the publication of most of HWA's writings, and turns the legacy of Herbert W. Armstrong into a faded memory, the biggest victim of that joke may turn out to be Herbert W. Armstrong, himself.

### Footnotes

34. Those who made this observation knew Tkach only in his pre-apostolic days. It is quite likely that since then his ghost writers have attempted to cover up this once very obvious idiosyncrasy.

35. Former WCG minister David Robinson, a licensed pilot, says the WCG's BAC 1-11 jet uses about 800 gallons of fuel an hour at almost \$2 per gallon. One Worldwider close to Tkach has estimated that when we add to those fuel costs the cost of payments on the jet (or depreciation), pilots' salaries, insurance, hotel bills for Tkach's huge entourage, and the price of the hugely extravagant gifts Tkach gives to the dignitaries he meets, the actual cost of Tkach's ego-maintenance trips approaches \$30 million per year. That figure sounds a bit high to me, but refuting the allegation is impossible since the WCG refuses to open its books to any outside investigators.

36. Tkach, unlike HWA before him, knows the value of a buck. He also knows how to use carrots. Bonus checks have become a regular part of life for WCG employees who are loyal to Tkach. Shortly after Part I of this article appeared, I am told, many ministers in the WCG received "bonuses" of up to \$10,000. Why, I have no idea.

37. Helge, a long-time church employee and bombastic speaker, has yet to be ordained even a local elder. Yet Helge's assistant, Earl Reese, was recently ordained. This obvious snub of Helge has led some to speculate that Tkach's confidence in Helge is waning and that Reese will eventually be the WCG's chief counsel.

38. Tkach has none of these qualities or qualifications. I have heard some WCG members say that Tkach is both an accomplished guitarist and licensed helicopter pilot. They are mistaken on both counts. Such false notions arose only because of the audacity of Tkach's PR men. The *Worldwide News* of June 27, 1988 showed Tkach posing with a group of musicians while holding a guitar as though performing. And the *Worldwide News* of Jan. 18, 1988 showed Tkach sitting in the cockpit of an in-flight helicopter while wearing pilot headgear as though he was piloting the craft. Both shots were staged.

39. The most dramatic and poignant account of what took place at this juncture in WCG history is contained in a tape recording made by evangelist David Antion in early 1979. Copies of the tape, entitled "Firing and Disfellowshipping, January 1979," are probably still available from Mr. Antion, 311

Waverly Drive, Pasadena, CA 91105.

40. As a *Newsweek* magazine stringer covering the court proceedings in 1979, I vividly recall Kineston's presence on the witness stand. In her shimmering outfit she was self-assured, sharp-tongued, and haughty. She lacked only a whip to have appeared a Madam deSade. As such, she represented the antithesis of idealized WCG femininity. Some are convinced that the way she intimidated and dominated the WCG ministers she interfaced with was a major cause of Stan Rader's eventual downfall.

41. The Los Angeles county court building in Pasadena has a very thick criminal file on Timmons. He has been convicted for drug dealing and felon firearm possession. How Timmons became involved in the lawsuit is explained in John Tuit's book *The Truth Shall Make You Free* on p. 140.

42. Besides Cole, another individual who was told in advance that the lawsuit was coming was Herman L. Hoeh, Tkach's superior in 1978. The fact that neither Cole nor Hoeh warned Rader of the impending suit in late 1978 is probably the main reason Cole was fired and Hoeh was not allowed to be a church trustee in January 1979. It is noteworthy that although Tkach also knew the suit was coming, he was not disfellowshipped along with Cole. This logically leads to the question: Was Tkach the one that betrayed Cole and others to Rader? I am convinced he was.

43. The entire telex was published in AR 23, our January 1983 issue. Before publishing the telex, I wrote Tkach asking him to respond to the allegations it contained. He never answered my letter.

[Part III of this article will appear in the next issue of *Ambassador Report*.]

## **WCG Growth Stalls As Doctrines Shift**

According to official WCG publications, under Joseph W. Tkach's leadership, the WCG has achieved a new high in effectiveness and unity. But even in official pronouncements there are hints that all is not well in the Tkach organization. For instance, in his June 26 letters to members and coworkers, Tkach admitted that at that junction the WCG's income for 1989 stood at only 3.7 percent over the same period in 1988. By the end of July that percentage was down to 3.2-almost 3 points less than the low 6 percent growth rate that had been expected! When inflation is taken into account (currently running over 5 percent per annum) a 3.2 percent growth rate represents a loss in purchasing power. This, in an organization that used to boast of an annual growth rate of 30 percent. What has happened?

There are probably many reasons for the slackened growth rate. But one important factor appears to be widespread lack of confidence in WCG teachings. In the WCG, doctrines come and go. The keeping of birthdays, once forbidden in the WCG, is now okay (see the *Worldwide News*, July 17, 1989, at p. 3), and there is talk in WCG circles that voting in government elections will soon be declared allowable.

Because of the Tkach administration's doctrinal shifts on makeup, healing, birthdays, and voting, some conservatives complain that the WCG is now coming into line with the Systematic Theology Project (STP). The STP was an early 1970s attempt at codifying WCG doctrine into an official statement of belief. Its principal author was Dr. Robert Kuhn, Garner Ted Armstrong's executive assistant. Although the STP had, and still has, many admirers, many church conservatives saw it as a Trojan horse of liberalism, and HWA ultimately rejected it.

Comparing recent WCG doctrinal changes with the STP, one sees numerous parallels. However, Tkach is really going much further than the STP. First of all, Tkach has put forward a new interpretation of Matt. 24:42 that completely contradicts one of HWA's central teachings and puts the WCG in line with mainstream Protestantism. In the July 3, 1989 *Worldwide News* Tkach's editorial had this explanation:

Jesus did not tell his servants to watch world events in order to figure out what he clearly told them they were not given to know. Rather, he told them to stay continually on alert, to be always ready and ever prepared, so that whenever he returns they will be ready.

Those familiar with what HWA taught will immediately recognize that Tkach has completely reversed a *major* WCG doctrine. For HWA taught the church members that it was imperative that they "watch world news." (See HWA's June 25, 1985 co-worker letter.) Indeed, ministers even taught that this was one reason members should listen to *The World Tomorrow* broadcasts. Notice also that Tkach downplays the reliability of Bible prophecy, something HWA would never have done.

Second, under Tkach the WCG is putting new emphasis on the person of Jesus, thereby putting the WCG, again, more in harmony with mainline Protestantism. In the January 23, 1989 *Worldwide News*, Tkach wrote:

I am thrilled to announce that our new booklet, *Who Was Jesus?*, written by Paul Kroll, is now printed and ready for mailing. Until now, we have not had a booklet devoted entirely and specifically to teaching people about who Jesus was, what He did and is now doing, His purpose, and the supreme importance of what it all means to each human being ....

I believe this will be one of our most important pieces of literature as we continue to do the job of preaching and teaching the full gospel of Jesus Christ - the unparalleled good news about the salvation of mankind through Jesus, and [editor: note the order] His prophesied Second Coming to establish the Kingdom of God.

The new emphasis on the person of Jesus alters what HWA taught concerning the church's purpose for existence. For HWA, the primary purpose of the church was not preaching Jesus. HWA taught that the church's *primary* function was to publish and broadcast the gospel of the coming Kingdom (or millennial government) of God "as a witness" to "modern Israel" and the world. (See HWA's reprint article "What is the True Gospel?")

A third major shift brought about by Tkach is a new emphasis on racial equality. While HWA's theology placed an emphasis on the special place of "modern Israel" (the English-speaking nations) in this world and in the coming Kingdom, Tkach seems to emphasize the equality of all races before God (see the May 11, 1987 *Worldwide News*, p. 1). This new concern for minorities is reflected in numerous church policies. For instance, last year's incoming freshmen class at Ambassador College, Pasadena, was composed of approximately 20 percent minorities. As one Ambassador coed told me on the phone, "Mr. Tkach is not living in the past. He is leading us into the twenty-first century."

Although some doctrinal changes, like those on healing and makeup, have been

announced formally, many have not. Tkach and his team often allow new doctrines to be slipped into articles in church publications without any fanfare. In the same way, doctrines that Tkach doesn't care for are quietly de-emphasized or ignored altogether.

While HWA was adamantly opposed to the "positive thinking" philosophy of Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller, a recent *Good News* article ("Someday Isle" by Peter Moore, in the July-Aug. 1989 issue) espoused essentially that philosophy. While HWA (often quoting Eccles. 9: 10) emphasized that you should strive for excellence in all things, one recent article in a WCG publication (the Nov.-Dec. issue of *Youth 88*) suggested that doing things in a slipshod manner is okay - as long as you are having fun. The article was appropriately titled "How to Play the Piano Badly." And, while HWA taught the doctrine of "church eras," many WCG members say that that doctrine has just disappeared. Apparently Tkach has said, "Don't even mention eras to me again." Clearly, Armstrongism is gradually evolving into Tkachism.

Perhaps as a result of the many doctrinal changes in recent history, WCG members, more than ever, are reading publications that are challenging the validity of current WCG doctrines. One small organization whose publications are having a big impact on the WCG is William F. Dankenbring's Triumph Publishing Co. Dankenbring, a former *Plain Truth* writer who still holds to many WCG doctrines, has written a string of articles that challenge a good number of WCG teachings. In Worldwide many have been reading his articles "Prove All Things - 35 Places Where the Worldwide Church of God Plunged Into Error!", "The Astonishing Prophetic Errors of Herbert W. Armstrong!", and "Who Is 'Shebna' in Bible Prophecy?" (in which Dankenbring sees Tkach fulfilling the role of Shebna in the prophecy of Isaiah 22:15-19). For a price list of Dankenbring's writings or for a free subscription to his *Prophecy Flash* newsletter write to Triumph Publishing Co., P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91001.

Another publication that has caused a considerable stir in WCG circles is *The Faithful Word* newsletter. Published and distributed by a group of WCG members (some of whom have now been disfellowshipped), *The Faithful Word* has challenged the church's new healing doctrine, the use of white flour in Passover bread, the totalitarian nature of the WCG ministry, and other church teachings and practices. *The Faithful Word* newsletter has been widely disseminated at certain church feast sites and also may be obtained by writing to The Faithful Word, Box F-191, 323 S. Franklin Bldg., Chicago, IL 60606-7094.

The keeping of sabbaths - both the weekly and annual holy days of the Old Testament - are an important part of WCG teaching. Yet even in this area there is much questioning. A number of the WCG's best minds, for instance, are convinced that the church is calculating the dates of its annual holy days incorrectly. One individual in the WCG wrote us:

The Jan.-Feb. 1988 issue of *The Good News* contained an article on the calendar which provides a continuation of the deceit that originated under Armstrongism. On page 10, Mr. Neff writes, "God entrusted the preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures and the details of the calendar to the Jews. The Jews preserve these Scriptures and the calendar to this day." This is not true! Any Jewish Encyclopedia will admit that the Jews have made unscriptural changes in their calendar. The history of these changes is well known. The present Jewish calendar originated in

Babylon no earlier than 359 A.D. All historians refer to it as the *Jewish* calendar. Books written by AC staff members call it the *Hebrew* calendar. But to the supposed dumb sheep, it is presented as God's calendar.

Mr. Neff describes details of this calendar, some of which are such "that certain of the feasts God established would fall on appropriate days of the week." Mr. Neff fails to mention that these feasts are Atonement (not really a feast) and Trumpets. Nowhere does scripture specify days of the week for any Feast but Pentecost. For their own convenience and through a process of evolution, the Jewish rabbis, the tradition of whom was condemned by Jesus, decided that Atonement should not fall on Friday or Sunday. This prohibits Trumpets from falling on Wednesday or Friday. Later Sunday was added to the days on which Trumpets was prohibited. Roughly speaking, the new moon in the seventh month occurs on these three unscripturally prohibited days over 40% of the time. This one error alone makes the Jewish calendar wrong over 40% of the time.

There are other unscriptural errors. Scripture requires that the first day of the first month be determined for the spring holy days. Due to the effects of the sun, the various months may vary by several hours from the mean length. So one can not always determine the first day of the first month by counting backwards 177 days from the first day of the seventh month, as the Jewish calendar proscribes [sic]. But it is a simple matter to look in an almanac to find the time of the new moon and convert to Jerusalem time. Then determine which evening it could be first seen.

Christian churches which adhere to the Jewish calendar do so in an attempt to avoid confusion. But to the best of my knowledge, only Armstrongism is deceptive about the history and evolution and name of the Jewish calendar.

Not only are the calculations of the annual holy days being questioned, some are questioning the way the weekly sabbath should be figured! Behind this line of thinking is former WCG minister Martin C. Filippello who, convinced that Tkach is the end-time "man of sin," had hoped and prophesied that Herbert W. Armstrong would be resurrected in January 1988 (see our Sept. 1987 and March 1988 issues). On March 8, 1989 Filippello ran a large ad in the Pasadena *Star News* in which he stated: "Is Saturday really God's Sabbath? Can you prove Saturday is God's Sabbath from the Bible? God's Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3) must be the 7th day counted from the new moon (new month)." Filippello's theory apparently revolves around lunar cycle calculations. At least that is the impression we got from the free tape he offers via the Church of God Philadelphia Era, 1800 S. Robertson Blvd., #49, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

Finally, there is a doctrinal debate brewing concerning Herbert Armstrong's place in church history. Some are aware that during his early ministry (the 1930s and 40s) and later (during the 1970s and 80s) HWA displayed few, if any, signs of conversion. This observation seems to haunt a few who now rationalize that observation with the church's doctrine that HWA was the first person to preach the true gospel in 1900 years. To see God's hand in HWA's life - despite all his flaws - there is now the 18-year time cycle theory.

The theory goes like this: During the first 18 years of HWA's ministry (1931-49) HWA was not really converted. It was during this "cycle" that HWA had a long-term incestuous relationship with his younger daughter (see ARs 27 and 40). As a result, God did not bless his ministry. But, so the theory goes, when HWA stopped having sex with his

daughter in the 40s, God began to work through him and, beginning in 1949, God blessed "the Work" with tremendous wealth. Then in 1967 when HWA's wife Loma died, HWA again reverted to seeking after young flesh, drunkenness and debauchery. Again, so the theory goes, God withdrew his power from HWA for 18 years. Beginning in 1967, however, God gave his spiritual power to none other than Joseph W. Tkach.

The 18-year time cycle theory raises a number of questions. First of all, if God is working through some alternating evil-good-evil time-cycle plan in the WCG, does that mean Tkach - now in his second time-cycle - is in a non-converted phase? Second, who was the originator of this theory? Could it have been *Plain Truth* editor Herman L. Hoeh, the man who originated the 19-year time cycle theory back in the 1950s? And if so, where did Hoeh get the idea? Certainly nowhere in the Bible do we find an 18-year or 19-year time cycle doctrine (although "time cycle" doctrines are central to certain eastern religions). Nevertheless, Tkach is said to be aware of the new time-cycle doctrine and has not criticized it. In fact, it appears that he may be convinced that in HWA's last cycle HWA was not converted. And some speculate it will be only a few years before Tkach turns HWA into a "non-person." Already, Tkach has ordered that HWA's magnum opus *Mystery of the Ages* no longer be distributed and, reportedly believing the book to be an evil influence, has ordered all remaining copies in storage to be destroyed.

### **Hope for the Dead**

*Ambassador Report* frequently receives letters from WCG members who say they are unhappy in Worldwide, but fear leaving because of the church's doctrines on hell fire and the unforgivable sin. Not unlike certain other denominations, the WCG's teachings on hell fire instill in many a deep fear of disobeying the church's ministry.

Former WCG member David C. Strickland of Doncaster, England says that much of the fear experienced by WCG members is caused by a misunderstanding of a number of scriptural passages. Mr. Strickland did two years of research on the doctrines of salvation and hell fire and that research has resulted in a thought-provoking 89-page booklet. *Entitled Hope for the Dead - All the Dead*, Mr. Strickland's booklet should prove of assistance to many who wish to exit the WCG but feel doctrinally constrained from doing so.

Those interested in obtaining a copy should write the author at 20 Mutual Street, Hexthorpe, Doncaster DN4 OEF, England. Mr. Strickland has indicated that as long as his limited supply lasts he will provide a free copy to any AR reader who requests his booklet.

### **Greg Doudna's Showdown at Big Sandy**

Greg Doudna, an alumnus of Ambassador College (Big Sandy 1972-75, Pasadena 1976), has written a remarkable 600-page book about the WCG and his personal experiences while a member. The title is *Showdown at Big Sandy (Youthful Creativity Confronts Bureaucratic Inertia At an Unconventional Bible College in East Texas)* and it is published by University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. When ordered from the publisher the cost per copy for universities or

their students (including postage and handling) is \$30.25 paperback or \$37.25 hard cover. For individuals not associated with a university the cost is \$51.75 paperback or \$61.75 hard cover.

Doudna's book is well-researched, very readable, and contains both a helpful bibliography and a very large "index of persons." Because of the high cost, those doing research on the WCG would probably find a complete set of AR more helpful (because our back issues cover more thoroughly the historical events covered in the Doudna book). However, those who were students at Big Sandy in the early 1970s will find this book very entertaining; those writing about the WCG will find this a useful reference work; and anyone with a friend or relative studying at Ambassador will find this book most helpful in that it shows what it is like to be a student at Ambassador College (and surprisingly, the atmosphere at both AC campuses has changed very little in the 13 years since Mr. Doudna was a student).

Those wanting copies of Mr. Doudna's book may obtain them by writing University Microfilms International (see above). However, Mr. Doudna has informed us that he has a very limited supply of paperback copies which he will sell at cost (\$22 each) as long as his supply lasts. For information write to Mr. Greg Doudna, 973 W. Exchange St., Akron, Ohio 44302.

### **1989 Biblical Theology Symposium**

A very unusual gathering took place in Pasadena, California the weekend of June 23-25. Sixteen individuals, from several states and as far away as England, met for two days of intensive study and discussion as part of what was called a 1989 Biblical Theology Symposium. The list of participants reads like a *Who's Who* roster of former WCG/AC evangelists, pastors, faculty members and administrative leaders: David Antion, Phillip Arnold, Anthony Buzzard, Al Carrozzo, Wayne Cole, Ronald Dart, Olin Degge, Charles Dorothy, Lester Grabbe, David Jon Hill, Charles Hunting, Brian Knowles, Robert Kuhn, Ernest Martin, Jack Martin, and James Tabor.

The Symposium was planned and sponsored by James Tabor and Robert Kuhn, and had no connection to any organization. The theme of the Symposium was "Twenty Years After." Kuhn and Tabor found it fascinating that all participants would have been in fundamental agreement on all basic biblical doctrines back in 1969, during the heyday of the WCG. But, they wondered, what about today, twenty years later? The only stipulation in making up their somewhat arbitrary and selective list of individuals to be invited was that each one have some kind of ongoing interest in biblical areas. Tabor explained, "We were not interested in current church affiliation or personal matters, nor in trying to hammer out some kind of agreement or harmony. We knew that many very different attitudes, approaches, methods, and conclusions would be represented by such a group. That was what we wanted and expected."

The sessions focused on three subject areas: Christology and Salvation, Prophetic Scenarios, and the Biblical Covenants. Three to four hours of discussion were allotted to each. Many participants prepared formal papers, most of which had been predistributed.

According to Tabor, the atmosphere was relaxed and enjoyable, with a good mixture of humor and earnest debate. Many of the participants had not seen one another for a decade or more and this personal aspect of renewed friendship turned out to be as valuable as any substantive exchange of views. "As it turns out," he said, "one could have hardly assembled a more diverse group in terms of the biblical areas we discussed."

Though the group represented various directions and achievements over the past twenty years, it is interesting that of the sixteen, six had gone on to earn accredited Ph.D. degrees from major universities. None of the participants are current members of the WCG. Although several WCG leaders were invited they declined to participate. Tabor and Kuhn hope that some of the papers presented can be edited and published in a small volume. They also stated that similar meetings might be planned for the future.

### **Tuit Leaves Worldwide - Again**

In our last issue, we reported how John Tuit, the author of *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, had returned to the WCG. Shortly after that issue appeared, Tuit called us to say he had again left the WCG. He explained how he had hoped that under Tkach the WCG would be different. It didn't turn out that way. Said Tuit, "The package is different, but underneath there are the same spiritual problems." It's been months since Tuit stopped attending, but, he recently told us, "The local minister still hasn't called me to find out why."

### **Letters**

This Joe Tkach can't be too bright! I've been an ex-WCG local elder now for several years - thanks a great deal to you people. But I can't help but think that if I had ever met this man and he started to tell me of his Navy experiences during WWII, I could tell that he was lying as soon as he started talking. To begin with, a DE is not a destroyer, but a destroyer escort. (Not to diminish the record of WWII DE's.) I served on a destroyer from 11/43 to 11/45 (USS *Aulick* DD569 Pacific). Anyone who served on a "can" during this time can cut his story to ribbons. Is he too dumb to even have realized this? He is a disgrace to the men who died aboard those gallant ships.

- Walt Scull, New Jersey

I think you misread your notes. On page 3, you state that I view Joe as a humble Christian who "sincerely believes he sits in Moses' seat." Joe never believed that he sat in Moses' seat. He used to sincerely believe that HWA sat in Moses' seat. I would appreciate your printing a correction in the next issue. I view Mr. Tkach as a humble Christian who "sincerely believed that HWA sat in Moses' seat." He no longer believes this.

- Robert Romagnoli, California

I'm really liking your article on Mr. Tkach. I don't like the title of your article, however. You should have added a question mark.

- Karen Griffin, Oregon

As you mentioned in your article, Slavic individuals often did not have middle names. That was so in my case as well. But after repeatedly being asked for my middle name in elementary school, I assumed my father's [Christian] name as my middle name. My middle initial E stands for "Efrem-ovich," i.e., "the son of Efrem." Perhaps Tkach, believing William to be equivalent or similar to Vasili, his father's [Christian] name, may have done the same thing.

- John K. Karenko, Illinois

*Editor: The church's letter answering department has recently begun explaining Tkach's acquisition of the W in just that way.*

I must tell you how close I was to "joining" WCG, to the point where I received an initial visit by two ministers (Mike Swagerty and Ron Dick - perhaps you know them). I mentioned before that since 1959 I was "hooked" on the literature, radio broadcast (less frequently) and tithing (when I was able). It was only four months ago that I contacted Pasadena and asked to see a minister! (Almost 30 years later, but I was ready.)

So what changed my mind? Well, one thing was the way I was received by Messrs. Swagerty and Dick. I mean to say that after 30 years of expectation, I was excited about finally meeting someone from the "true church." I received them as a child would - thrilled, happy, rejoicing, etc. But all they had to say was "read the literature again, look up every quote (Bible passage), call us back." Well, that was exactly what I'd been doing for 29 years, reading and re-reading every piece of WCG literature I could get my hands on!

Those two fellows were so remote, while I laid my heart open to them. They asked if I would trim my beard (which probably looked about as shabby as that of one of the sojourners to Canaan after 40 years in the desert). I said yes, I'll trim it, shave it, you name it, because I know the WCG's men are mostly clean shaven. I said I really wouldn't care to insult anyone, "just get me to the church on time!"

Ha! After they left, my wife expressed her shock and anger at these two from WCG. They did not speak with her at all, though she was in the room while they directed questions at me. Now, she asked, "Did either one of them grab you and hug you and say hello or God bless you? No!" (I, in my excitement, started to hug them when they arrived, but immediately got a cold signal.) Their visit and how it left me cold nearly shattered me. I mean, after nearly 30 years of waiting to meet another Christian?! And they just said call us again after you get all the answers down pat. Well, within days of their visit, I was led mysteriously to questioning the WCG. Almost magically a copy of Kingdom of the Cults was handed to me in a second-hand store - the price was 25 cents! I read it and boy was I surprised. I don't agree with the author so much, but it sure started me to questioning my idol HWA. Well no, actually I said, maybe he was in error about this or that but basically HWA is a good fellow. Hmm.... Next I discovered the AR. Just a couple of weeks ago, and whew! Now I am one of the thankful ones who never quite walked through that door. I have a 2-and-a-half-year-old daughter and a wife of six years -

what would have become of them? My wife definitely would have balked at, or challenged, the HWA line. Somehow I was led here. Thanks for your help and work. I hope if we ever meet it will be a joyful experience, unlike the cold Swagerty and Dick meeting, which hurt me inside.

- Fred Burkhart, Chicago, Illinois

We lost our daughter to the WCG nine years ago now and haven't seen or heard from her in four years.

-Canada

I have found your report very helpful. I will give the copies to my boyfriend, a WCG member. I am having a very hard time standing up and watching him change from a good, honest, patient, loving person into a cold, distant, critical person. He has been a member for six years, left about a year ago and went back after the Feast of Tabernacles came up. Since then, our life has been a living hell. He constantly stated he was determined daily to go back to the church, and I knew there was trouble when he snuck behind my back to speak to the minister to ask permission to get back into the church, after we had agreed to talk it over first. When asked if he really wanted to go back to the church, he replied, "No, but I don't know if I can stay away." I pray he will see the light. I am currently doing a complete study on the WCG and will give him the completed project. Hopefully it will open his eyes. I think your report is well worth it.... I am at the end of my rope. I almost can't take anymore, but I love him way too much to see this happening to him.

- Illinois

The WCG has ruined my wife's mind. She sleeps most of the day. I don't know what to do about it.

- Pennsylvania

*Editor: Your wife may be suffering from chronic depression. You may need to seek the advice of a doctor.*

Please send a copy of *Ambassador Report* and any information that may help us. Our son has been taken in by this Worldwide Church of God. And we are very concerned that it is going to end his marriage.

---

That's it for AR42. Our next issue is almost ready. Hopefully we can get it out in six to eight weeks. We need your continued support, however, so please keep us in mind.

J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR43\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR43 December 1989

### Joseph W. Tkach - God's New Rep on Planet Earth

(Part III)

by John Trechak

*Editor: Because Part III of this serialized article does not repeat certain key information contained in Parts I and II, it is important that the two earlier parts be read first. They were published in ARs [41](#) and [42](#) (our March and September issues). In that way, what follows may be understood in proper context.*

As explained in Parts I and II, Joseph W. Tkach, the new Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), Chancellor of Ambassador College, and "God's Apostle for this age," has created for himself a colorful official biography very much at odds with his true past history. Separating fact from fiction in Tkach's past is often difficult. That is especially so when it comes to the many stories circulating in WCG circles that connect Tkach to criminals and criminal activity.

Those stories include the allegations that in the past Tkach misappropriated for his personal use thousands of dollars of church funds set aside for the poor, that Tkach was once a fence (one who disposes of stolen property), and that he has had dealings with numerous criminals including professional hit men. Such stories are widely believed in WCG circles. But are they true?

#### Is Tkach a Crook?

Because Tkach and his lawyers refused to be interviewed for this article, the first step in my search for answers was the central criminal records files for Los Angeles County. I discovered that for the 22 years Tkach has lived in Los Angeles County, no Joseph Tkach

has been convicted there of any felonies, or even misdemeanors. But what about in Chicago where he previously resided? Not wanting to spend money on air fare, I phoned a respected private investigator in Chicago and asked him to check the criminal records of Illinois to see if Tkach had ever been convicted in that state. When he phoned back in a few days, he apologized, saying, "I'm sorry, Mr. Trechak. I really am. Criminal files in Illinois often get lost or even destroyed. But I don't think your man was ever convicted up here. There's just no record of him." After all the colorful stories I had been told, I was a bit surprised. Just to be sure, I contacted one more private investigator - one who had been helpful to me in the past. After a few days he phoned me with the results of his investigation. Not only could he find no record of Tkach having ever been convicted of any crime *anywhere*, he could find no record of Tkach ever having gotten even one traffic ticket!

Convictions make for easy reporting. But truth does not begin and end at a courtroom door.

The allegation that Tkach in the past misappropriated to himself church funds set aside for the poor comes from numerous sources. In our March 1982 issue I published a lengthy letter that had been written by WCG attorney-accountant Jack Kessler to the WCG's board of trustees. The Kessler letter recounted numerous ethics violations by top WCG executives. The letter contained the following statement:

According to Mr. Robin Webber, Mr. Joseph Tkach apparently felt justified in giving himself from a trust fund he controlled a little advance of \$5000.00 as a "needy Church member" to take advantage of a special investment in unregistered securities then illegally being peddled (against advice of counsel) by the Dean brothers.

In early 1982 I wrote both Tkach and the WCG's legal department asking if they wished to comment on the Kessler allegation. Neither replied.

Beginning during the early sixties, when he was still in Chicago, Tkach's superiors often gave him responsibility over the "poor fund" or "third tithing" accounts of local congregations.<sup>44</sup> Earl Timmons, for a decade a confidant of Tkach, told me that Tkach would often siphon off funds by making *loans* to needy church members, then labeling the loans on the books as gifts paid out, and finally pocketing the loans when they were repaid. I personally recall how during the early seventies, a number of my WCG friends, unemployed at the time, went to Tkach for assistance. In each case they were granted a few hundred dollars. They were startled, however, when Tkach informed them that the amount they received was only a loan and that the loan had to be repaid to Tkach personally *in cash*.

I asked one former church secretary, who had known Tkach quite well during the seventies, if she believed Tkach had siphoned off funds meant for the poor during those years. She told me, "Oh sure he did. But so what? In those days a lot of the ministers were doing the same thing." Perhaps that is so.

In defense of Tkach, one of his friends wrote me:

I [once] heard from Tom Justus [a former WCG minister] that Joe Tkach was

stealing from Third Tithes. Joe was then living in a rented house, paying little more than \$200 per month rent. He tried to buy a house. But, according to Paul Knedel, he could not qualify, as his income was under \$18,000 per year. Some secretaries were making more than that. So where's the loot?

The allegation about Tkach having once been a fence was contained in a Feb. 1, 1981 telex from WCG attorney Stanley Rader to church founder Herbert W. Armstrong. As I have quoted in past issues, Rader's exact words were:

With respect to Joe Tkach, I recommended him. Although I did know about his connection with Mr. and Mrs. Timmons (two of the relators in the lawsuit), I did not find out the full details concerning his *illegal fencing activities* until they surfaced recently when we were preparing our civil rights case.

Rader is not the only one who has made such allegations. It was in January 1979, as I waited to be interviewed for a TV news segment about the WCG receivership, that Earl Timmons first mentioned to me how Tkach had knowingly dealt in stolen property. Whether the item was a refrigerator for a church member or gold rings for his daughter Tanya's wedding, Tkach apparently had no qualms about buying or selling goods that his friends warned him were stolen. According to Timmons' wife, Shirley, Tkach would rationalize such dealings by saying, "If you don't know where it comes from it's not wrong."

---

&COPY;1989 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

### **The Mafia Apostle**

As I explained in Part I, Tkach likes to be thought of as a tough guy. In his yarns about shooting down kamikazes, beating up Marines, or in telling employees "the way Mr. Armstrong would chew people out was sandbox compared to the way I do it," there is always that "tough as nails" theme. Along that vein, the WCG abounds in stories about Tkach having friends in organized crime-friends that can be called upon when needed.

Such stories have convinced most Worldwidiers that Tkach is not just tough, but is one who should be *feared*. As a result, many - even among those who have left Worldwide - refuse to say anything regarding Tkach for fear of retaliation. Three long-time Tkach acquaintances even warned me that by writing about Tkach I was putting myself in grave physical danger. Nevertheless, is such fear of Tkach really justified? And where did those wild stories about Tkach's gangland connections come from?

In the course of investigating Tkach's background I decided to see if any of Tkach's in-laws could offer an insight into his past. Using the Chicago phone directory, I began phoning people with the name Apostolos - the maiden name of Tkach's wife. I reached a man named Mike Apostolos. When I asked if he knew an Elaine Tkach (Joe's wife), he answered in a low voice, "She's my sistah." Apostolos spoke with a slow gruffness reminiscent of convict characters in 1930s gangster movies. But he was quite open about his life and background. He said he was 77 years old, not married, a WCG member, and was considered by some to be senile ("that's what they tell me"). He explained how both his parents had been of Greek ancestry and how his father had been a strict disciplinarian. He also said he had spent 19 years of his life in Pontiac Prison.<sup>45</sup> When I asked for further details, he would only say he didn't like to discuss his past crimes.

Apostolos sounded contrite about his past mistakes, yet there seemed to be a residue of certain old values. At one point he said, "My father was Mafia. He knew Alfons." Naturally, I asked, "Alfons who?" His reply was, "Alfons Capone. My father and Alfons were good friends." Not knowing how to react to such talk, I commented, somewhat awkwardly, how, over the years, I had read a few books about the Mafia's history and was aware of their so-called "code of honor." Apostolos' voice became animated: "Yeah, if you treat the Mafia good, the Mafia treats you good. In prison the Mafia treated me real good."

I then asked him if Joe Tkach had ever been involved in any criminal activities. His reply was: "Who? Joe? Nah. He would never do anything like that. Joe is a good man. When I was in prison he used to always visit me."

Two ex-WCG members who knew Tkach back in the sixties told me they don't recall Tkach as being involved with crime or criminals in those days. But they recalled how, at some juncture, Tkach gained a reputation as one with contacts in organized crime. Said one ex-member, "I seem to recall it was Alan Manteufel who started that rumor." (Manteufel was a WCG minister who died in 1978-from alcoholism, some say.)

Whether it was because of Tkach's visits to his imprisoned brother-in-law, or because of an overactive imagination on the part of Manteufel or someone else, the rumor of Tkach's Mafia connections became widely accepted as fact in WCG circles. As for Tkach, not only did he make no effort to dispel the rumor, he encouraged it. Ken Nagele, a former WCG member who once worked for Tkach told me, "Joe Tkach even used to kid about his old Mafia connections." A number of former members also recall how Tkach had a "Mafia Staff Car" sticker on the black sedan in which he used to visit members. While many undoubtedly took the sticker as a joke, others did not. Some have since noticed in the news how one major crime figure apprehended not long ago in Southern California also had such a "humorous" sticker on his car.

To many people the idea of openly claiming to be associated with organized crime is both in poor taste and stupid. After all, if one really is involved with organized crime, why broadcast it? Nevertheless, there are some individuals involved with the underworld who take pride in such connections. I personally recall how, some years ago, certain Mafia leaders in New York City turned a Columbus Day parade into a media event interpreted as pro-Mafia. I was in the New York area at the time and watched a news interview with one of the parade's organizers, a reputed Mafia don, who did everything possible to

enhance his gangster image.<sup>46</sup>

Tkach has often behaved in a similarly childish manner. But is there any real substance behind the image of an "Apostle" with lots of gangland friends? One man who answers unequivocally in the affirmative is Earl Timmons.

Earl Timmons<sup>47</sup> is certainly one of the most unusual individuals ever to have gone through the WCG. During the early seventies, he was a successful plumbing contractor in the Pasadena, California area. A WCG member since the early sixties, he was a very close friend and confidant of Tkach from 1969 through 1978. The two were so close they would get together almost daily over coffee. Shirley Timmons was also close to the Tkach family, as she was one of the church women who, for years, took care of Tkach's ailing wife.

Because of his plumbing business, Timmons came in contact with many Los Angeles County businessmen. One was George Pappageorge,<sup>48</sup> who owned a service station and U-Haul rental business at Rosemead and Colorado Boulevards in Pasadena. According to Timmons, however, Pappageorge was not just a legitimate businessman, but the central figure in a major crime ring. Timmons alleges that Pappageorge and his associates were involved in burglary, robbery, and interstate trafficking in stolen cars and other merchandise, with the U-Haul business furnishing a convenient cover for the movement of stolen goods and contraband.

Court records show that Timmons' allegations should not be thought of as fantasy. George Pappageorge and two accomplices, Kenneth Casper Moran and Sidney Bartolotta, were convicted in 1974 on multiple counts of kidnapping (at gunpoint), robbery, burglary, and conspiracy.<sup>49</sup> One of the kidnapping victims (of the three separate kidnappings listed in the original indictment) was Donovan Hargens, then owner of Don's Market in Pasadena. Pappageorge and Moran were convicted on all - counts with Moran going to Folsom Prison and "Pappy" going to San Quentin.<sup>50</sup>

Reading through the huge file on the case, one is struck by the large number of individuals that were involved. One of Pappageorge's accomplices was Ron Hayward, described in one affidavit as a volatile, violent, and psychotic<sup>51</sup> individual whose main goal in life was to become a successful hit man (a goal Timmons fears Haywood has achieved). At some point during the police investigation of the kidnappings, Hayward turned state's evidence and somehow implicated Timmons. Timmons, in turn, was granted immunity from prosecution when he fingered Pappageorge.

The court records I have seen do not implicate Timmons in any of the more violent activities of the ring. For instance, he was not an accomplice in any of the kidnappings. But, by his own admission under oath, Timmons was involved in one highly unusual escapade with Pappageorge. In 1972, as the police began to move in on the ring, Pappageorge hastily called Timmons to a private meeting. He told Timmons that the police had just searched the home of Moran's wife and he thought his place of business would be searched next. Pappageorge, a demolition expert missing a few fingers because he wasn't expert enough, told Timmons that at his garage there was a carload of contraband explosives that he wanted moved. It is unclear from the records I have seen

whether the TNT and dynamite were stolen, intended for safe cracking, or worse. But there was a lot of it - about a quarter ton or enough to blow up a city block. Timmons got the explosives, destroyed some by dilution, and finally dumped the rest in the mountains north of Pasadena.

From reading the court records it becomes obvious that Pappageorge and his many associates were involved in a very wide range of criminal activity. Yet, according to Timmons, George Pappageorge and his associate Kenny Moran were very close friends of Joe Tkach. Timmons is sure of this, he says, because he was the one who introduced Tkach to Pappageorge. From then on, says Timmons, Tkach would often spend time socially with Pappageorge and Moran. Why? According to Timmons, "Joe just liked them. He'd go out to restaurants with them and he liked their company."

The extent of Tkach's dealings with the Pappageorge-Moran gang is speculative. But the statement by WCG attorney Stanley Rader that Tkach once engaged in "illegal fencing activities" raises a number of questions. During the early seventies, the WCG started a local discount store for its members in the Southern California area. Called the Crown City Commissary, the Pasadena store was a pet project of Pastor Al Carrozzo who saw it as a way for the WCG to give something back to its members. But when Carrozzo left the WCG in late 1973, Tkach moved into the vacuum caused by Carrozzo's departure.

Some now wonder if Tkach was fencing through the Commissary. They recall how the Commissary often had on sale, for very low prices, huge lots of some items (sporting goods, for instance) for which there was very little demand among church members. Some also remember how the Commissary was abruptly shut down in mid-1974 amid rumors that "hot stuff" was being sold there. Former WCG minister Howard Clark remembers how in early 1974 Timmons (who had been a contractor for the remodeling of the Commissary building) told him he was providing Tkach's Commissary with "merchandise." Timmons denies he did anything illegal in those days, but he does not make the same denial for Pappageorge and Tkach.

The wild stories about Tkach that WCG evangelist Gerald Waterhouse tells in sermons are apparently believed by most WCG members. There is one story Waterhouse has told around the world, however, that has raised a lot of eyebrows. According to Waterhouse, during the 1979 WCG crisis when the State of California investigated the WCG and installed Judge Steven Wiseman as a receiver over its operations, Tkach was supposedly in contact with two prominent residents of Joliet Prison who offered him the services of hit men.

Although Waterhouse is probably wrong about a detail or two (like the name of the prison), the story may actually be true. At least one man, Earl Timmons, believes Waterhouse. Timmons told me that in 1979, when the State of California versus Worldwide suit was in progress, he was informed by a deputy attorney general that Tkach was using his influence to assist in the release of Kenneth Moran from Folsom Prison and George Pappageorge from San Quentin. Affidavits in the Los Angeles archives reveal that for some time Timmons was convinced Pappageorge had taken a contract out on his life. Finding out in 1979 that Tkach wanted Pappageorge and Moran released only exacerbated those fears. For in 1979, as a relator in the state's action against Worldwide, and as one who knew much about Tkach's past, Timmons feared Tkach would gain much

if Pappageorge was successful in getting revenge. Timmons quickly sold his Pasadena home and immediately moved out of the Southern California area. He has made himself very difficult to find ever since.

Having been informed by California authorities since then that both Pappageorge and Moran have been released from prison, Timmons remains frantically concerned about his personal safety. I wonder, however, if by becoming so fearful, Timmons has not reacted exactly the way Tkach had hoped. After all, by Timmons being in hiding for over a decade, much important information about Tkach, *that should have come out in 1979*, has remained unpublished until now. It could well be that Tkach is actually much more clever than many believe.

### **Personal Tragedy**

Tkach has achieved financial success, power, and influence. His life, however, is not without ongoing personal tragedy. During the mid-sixties Tkach's wife, Elaine, suffered a devastating mental breakdown from which she never fully recovered. Eyewitnesses have told me how for many years she seemed to be in a "trance-like state," behaving "like a zombie," and "not in reality." Some who have known her well say that at times she complained of "atomic bombs going off in her head." Some talk of how she has roamed around Ambassador's Pasadena campus in only a robe and slippers. Others have told stories of incredibly destructive rampages in the Tkach residence that led to her being forcibly confined to her room for months at a time and never left unattended. (Those who recall the insane Bertha Rochester in Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* will have a good idea of what Mrs. Tkach's condition and confinement were like.)

One individual, close to the Tkach family, has written me that since HWA's death Elaine's condition has improved. And a number of people have reported how she is now able to go shopping on her own. (Any appearance of improvement may be due to the powerful drug Haldol, which is used to treat schizophrenic psychosis. Tkach made a positive reference to the drug in his Oct. 14 satellite broadcast to the WCG.) However, when I recently saw Mrs. Tkach wandering about in Pasadena, she still seemed to me to be very disturbed.

Mental illness is always a tragedy for any family. But that is doubly so for families in the fundamentalist WCG. Until recently, the WCG's ministry taught that all illness was the fruit of sin and medical science was a Devil-inspired substitute for God's forgiveness. In 1987 the WCG reversed its position on those two doctrines. However, most WCG members still seem to believe that mental illness is always the same thing as demon possession. And according to some who've known the Tkach family, Tkach is convinced his wife is demon possessed.<sup>52</sup> Many other WCG ministers are similarly convinced. Yet neither Tkach nor his subordinates have the ability to cast out the demons in the Apostle's wife.

Mrs. Tkach's problems have caused the WCG ministry no end of embarrassment. Members ask: How can Mr. Tkach live with demons and not be affected? And why would "God's Apostle" tolerate the presence of demons in his wife? To counter such questions, Herman L. Hoeh, the WCG's leading propagandist and authority on demons,

has put forward what must be the ultimate in WCG theological oxymorons: the doctrine that one can be filled with the Holy Spirit and be demon possessed at the same time. The folks at WCG headquarters apparently thought Hoeh's ideas on demons so important, a tape of Hoeh's sermon on the subject was required listening for WCG congregations in August of this year. Notice the following excerpt:

So in this life, we resist the devil. We resist demons. And if you don't resist demons it's possible for a converted mind to become temporarily demon possessed. And that demon, or demons, have to be cast out.... Yes, it is possible for a person to have the Holy Spirit. The demon does not displace the Spirit of God. The demon displaces the human will. The Spirit of God does not determine your will. You do! The Spirit of God is simply that spirit force that you, your will, your mind, can call on in addition to your own. A demon does not link up with your mind like the Spirit of God does. It displaces your will from your bodily functions and your mental functions.<sup>53</sup>

WCG members should ask Herman Hoeh how the above teaching squares with II Tim. 1:7, a rather uncomplicated Bible verse that used to be quoted quite often in WCG sermons. In the King James version it reads: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

### **Why Did She Snap?**

Among those who've personally known the Tkach family, Elaine's affliction has been attributed to a number of supposed causes. One WCG member, a long-time friend of the Tkach family (and one who views Tkach as a dedicated servant of God), wrote me:

I have never known a woman more outgoing and filled with Christian love and God's Spirit than Elaine. In her quest for the truth, she gained a knowledge of the Scriptures that surpassed that of many of the ministers. And what she learned, she put into practice. Besides serving her husband and children, she helped many families in the Church. During the Feast days she would serve another dozen or so who stayed at their house. The Evangelist in the area [Dean Blackwell] would take her along visiting, as would her husband. Her entire life for about a ten-year period was dedicated fully to the service of God and His people.

After they moved to Pasadena in 1966, it did not take Elaine long to discover the true character of the Armstrongs. In less than two years, she started staying away from services due to headaches. Then she started to proclaim that both Armstrongs were "inhumane." After that she became overly quiet and withdrawn. She is the first Church member I know to have come to the discovery that the Armstrongs were not what they claimed to be. This knowledge was too much for a woman so filled with Christian love and dedication and good works. Part of her died. She is no longer the same person. Her human spirit was crushed. Part of her brain was damaged by this intense emotional realization and disappointment. Another precious life ruined by the lies and hypocrisies of the Armstrongs.

A few, who have personal knowledge of the situation, have speculated that Elaine's condition was exacerbated by Joe's domineering insensitivity and by the intermeddling of church official Roderick C. Meredith in Tkach family matters during the mid-'60s. However, almost all the WCG oldtimers I talked to were convinced that there was a connection between Elaine's condition and a sexual relationship she allegedly had with evangelist Dean Blackwell, her husband's superior in Chicago during the early '60s.

The Tkach administration now wants the Blackwell affair downplayed as having been merely verbal overtures by Blackwell. With only one exception, however, all the WCG oldtimers I talked to said their understanding was that the Blackwell affair was out and out adultery - *at the very least*. And, significantly, that widespread perception in WCG circles arose as a result of statements made to numerous individuals by Joe Tkach, himself. When I suggested to former WCG pastor Al Carrozzo that Blackwell's romantic relationship with Elaine Tkach was now being portrayed as only verbal, he replied, "That's not the way Joe talked about it years ago. He believed Dean Blackwell had gone to bed with his wife."

Carrozzo is known for his frankness. He is a man that does not mince words. His understanding of the Blackwell affair with Elaine Tkach, however, is very mild compared to what some others have said. For instance, at least one WCG evangelist has described the Blackwell-Elaine trysts as "wife swapping." When I first became aware of this accusation I assumed the evangelist was confusing Dean Blackwell with Blackwell's brother, Lowell, who was put out of the WCG ministry years ago because of alleged wife swapping. That sordid business was actually detailed in a turgid open letter written to the *entire* WCG ministry by church administrator Roderick C. Meredith in the early '70s. But a similar accusation against Tkach has now come from other sources, as well.

In March, I was contacted by Indiana businessman Robert Skaggs, who had been a WCG member in the Midwest during the early '60s. He had then been involved with the WCG's visiting program and had been very close to both Tkach and Blackwell. Skaggs claims that when he knew him, Tkach was not genuinely interested in religious truth, but was possessed by a lust for power. Skaggs told me that in his quest for power Tkach stooped so low as to allow evangelist Blackwell, then his superior, to sleep with Elaine, his wife. In return for this favor, says Skaggs, Blackwell had Tkach ordained into the WCG ministry.

When I was told this I pointedly asked Mr. Skaggs, "Are you saying that Joe Tkach was ordained in return for participating in some kind of wife-sharing arrangement?" His answer: "Absolutely!" Skaggs went on to state that Blackwell had at least one other man ordained for the same reason.

As shocking as they are, Mr. Skaggs' accusations regarding Blackwell are in step with Blackwell's reputation among many former colleagues. Former church administrator Gary Arvidson told me, "Yes, Dean Blackwell had something of a reputation. Without going into details, let's just say he was known as someone who really knew how to bring relief to the widows." Another former WCG minister recalled how Blackwell repeatedly had to be brought into headquarters for periods of moral rehabilitation. Some such periods culminated in pulpit pronouncements by Blackwell (somewhat akin to those of Jimmy Swaggart) that he had finally repented and learned his lesson.

Another former WCG minister who commented to me about Blackwell's reputation is David Robinson. He recalled how, in the fall of 1971, WCG minister Don Wineinger confessed how he had obtained a quick promotion to the rank of preaching elder. Wineinger said he became aware of Blackwell's double lifestyle and threatened Blackwell with exposure if he wasn't raised up a notch in rank. Within days, Blackwell

had Wineinger ordained a preaching elder. I would have liked to have verified this information with Wineinger. Unfortunately, Wineinger committed suicide in 1978 after murdering his wife at a Spokane, Washington divorce lawyer's office. As for Blackwell, my letters to him, asking for an interview, were never answered.

### **The Women in Tkach's Life**

In 1966 Tkach, along with his family, was brought to Pasadena for what was to have been only one year of study at Ambassador College. While in Pasadena, however, his wife's mental condition continued to deteriorate to where she proved an embarrassment to the image-conscious leaders of the WCG. Because of her often bizarre conduct, Tkach's superiors felt he could not be sent back to "the field." And so Tkach became stranded in Pasadena, working only as a local elder, doing nothing but giving sermonettes and visiting members.

Because of his wife's condition, friends say, Tkach was deprived of a normal marital love life. For female companionship he was forced to look elsewhere. He didn't have to look far, however. The WCG has always had its share of ministers' groupies - lonely females romantically attracted to authoritative "men of the Word." And so it was with Tkach. Even in his first year in Pasadena, one passionate young woman followed him from Chicago to enroll at Ambassador College just to be close to him. So inflamed were the young woman's passions, Herbert W. Armstrong became convinced she was demon possessed. One minister recounted to me how Armstrong attempted to cast out the woman's Tkach-love demon, but, alas, no amount of spiritual coercion from HWA could do the job. In the end, the young woman was expelled from the college and sent back to Chicago.

The college girl was by no means the last female to be aroused by Tkach's charms. One former church employee of the early '70s wrote me:

My recollections of Joe when I knew him are not favorable to him. I was concerned for his heart because he drank so much coffee every morning, sitting in our CAD [Church Administration Dept.] office talking to Mr. Cole's secretary. One morning I came to work an hour early and discovered Mr. Tkach had left a gigantic bottle of champagne on [Miss X]'s desk. Being a naive individual, I couldn't put it together. [Minister] Fred Coulter later remarked to me: "Didn't you know Mr. Tkach is having an affair with Mr. Cole's secretary?" Then it all made sense. Mr. Tkach had an invalid wife and was very friendly with women, too friendly. I hope he has repented of his problem. According to Mr. Cole, you can never accuse someone of adultery unless you were in bed with them.<sup>54</sup> But in this case, there was an appearance of evil, even if they didn't go all the way. I can just imagine how my wife would feel if I gave my secretary a big bottle of champagne!

I was able to locate Miss X; I wrote her and left messages on her phone answering machine. To my requests for an interview I never received an answer. A friend of hers said that although Miss X, in the past, admitted she tried to get Tkach in bed, Miss X claimed Tkach was "too self-righteous to do anything." Earl Timmons says, however, that Tkach's affair with Miss X was "hot and heavy." Timmons told me, "I used to let them use my house in the afternoons so they could be alone together."

Others have talked about Tkach frequenting Pasadena coffee shops and flirting with waitresses. One former church employee wrote me of how Tkach was frequently overly helpful to "church widows." In the last few years I have been told repeatedly of Tkach's relationships with a number of church secretaries. I wrote to three of them asking for an interview and, as usual, received no reply.

One of those women deserves special mention. "Mrs." Ellen Escat, a divorcee, is regularly quoted and shown in church publications.<sup>55</sup> When quoted, she is often describing Tkach's sermons in glowing terms. When shown or reported on, it is usually in regard to her accompanying Tkach to some important function. Described by one WCG insider as "a domineering woman prone to temper tantrums," Mrs. Escat is Tkach's top female assistant and, as such, has considerable influence in the WCG power structure.

Exactly how long Mrs. Escat has worked at WCG headquarters is not clear. But she first came to the attention of many headquarters church employees in early 1979 when, according to eyewitnesses, she and Joe Tkach were seen on numerous occasions holding hands in public and appearing romantic toward one another. When I mentioned these reports to one of Tkach's close friends, he tried to explain away such conduct as being due to Tkach having an affectionate nature. "But that's all it is," he said. We are to believe that Tkach, whose marriage is now in name only, has been leading the life of a "eunuch for the Kingdom" (Matt. 19:12).

Regarding Mrs. Escat, the question naturally arises: Where is Mr. Escat? A story told among top headquarters personnel is that in 1980, when Mr. Escat discovered the relationship his wife was having with Tkach, he angrily confronted Tkach and other top WCG leaders about the matter. In return for his pledge of silence, so the story goes, he was granted some type of beneficial arrangement.

As Mrs. Escat never responded to any of my letters, I decided to contact Mr. Escat. Although he was not listed in any phone directory, through a bit of detective work, I discovered Eugene Baptiste Escat Jr. was a retired businessman living alone on Pasadena's wealthy southwest side. I drove over to his home, noticed a for sale sign out front, and found Eugene working in his garage. He was a trim and well-dressed gentleman who appeared to be in his mid-fifties.

Eugene gave me a cordial greeting. But when I explained that I was with *Ambassador Report*, he became visibly nervous. Hoping to gain his cooperation, I gave him a few back issues of our publication. I then noticed a curious thing. In a nervous reaction, he rolled up the issues, as one would large building plans, and held them at chest height with both hands. As I talked about Tkach, his face contorted into a deep frown and his trembling hands began to squeeze and twist the rolled-up issues almost as though he was strangling the neck of a chicken.

Eugene then blurted out, "I've met Tkach. He's *weak! Very weak!* I can't believe he's in charge over there." He went on to say how he had also met with and had had business dealings with church attorney Stanley Rader. But when I pursued the matter, Eugene checked himself and said, "I better not say any more." He then hastily retreated into his home and bolted the door.

It's too bad we couldn't have talked further because I would have liked to have asked how it was that he achieved such a favorable divorce settlement with his ex-wife. In looking over the 1981 Escat divorce papers at the Pasadena court building, I noticed that even though the Escats were married for 12 years and even though California is a community property state with "no fault" divorce, Ellen came out of the marriage with little more than her personal belongings. Eugene, on the other hand, did very well indeed. He got their entire house (which he recently sold for \$425,000), and he was not required to pay one penny of alimony.

Perhaps that's just as well. As one of the WCG's most important personnel, Ellen receives a generous salary from the WCG. And in 1987 Tkach had Ellen moved into a luxury condo almost directly across the street from his own church residence. Explained Tkach to one volunteer mover, "I want Ellen to be close to her work."

There are many church employees who condone Tkach's personal lifestyle because of his wife's affliction. Some even see a certain righteousness in the fact that, although most top WCG ministers feel it would be okay, Tkach has refused to divorce his wife and remarry. Some who know Tkach, however, are not convinced that his refusal to do so has been motivated by principle. One woman pointed out to me that by refusing to divorce his wife, Tkach has avoided alienating his three children.

Another woman, a former top secretary at church headquarters, told me, "Unfortunately, there are a lot of unfaithful husbands around who stay married just because it's part of their lecherous game plan. They will entice women with sad stories of how their marriages are on the rocks. But once they've had enough of the new woman, they'll say they want to be faithful to their wife again." The former church secretary told me how some years ago, when Tkach had been installed in a bigger office, he told her privately how the new office had a hidden bar. He then flirtatiously asked her if she'd like to see it and have a few drinks with him. She explained to me, "I told him absolutely not. I was married and he was married. But that didn't seem to make much difference to Joe."

It wouldn't have made any difference to most WCG employees, either. After all, virtually all top headquarters personnel privately acknowledge that church founder Herbert W. Armstrong had a ten-year ongoing sexual relationship with his youngest daughter.<sup>56</sup> Yet that didn't stop the WCG from revering Armstrong as "God's Apostle." In today's more liberal WCG, any revelations about the real Joseph W. Tkach will probably cause no impact whatsoever. The WCG's members are, after all, true believers.

[Part IV of this article will appear in the next issue of *Ambassador Report*.]

### Footnotes

44. Some of Tkach's more strident critics point out how, during Jesus' earthly ministry, Judas was given an identical responsibility (Jn. 12:4-5, 13:29).

45. I attempted to get this claim verified by prison officials in Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana. They could find no record of Apostolos. Similarly, my private investigator in Chicago could find no mention of him in any Illinois criminal records. Nevertheless, two former WCG members who knew both

Apostolos and Tkach in the early sixties say Apostolos was convicted of armed robbery and served a prison sentence in Indiana.

46. He wore a black shirt with white tie, kept his ugly bodyguard close by, and used the kind of self-evident lies and rough talk one would expect from a hood. Within a few weeks he was assassinated - quite probably by brighter Mafia associates who realized that flaunting one's underworld connections only brings greater scrutiny from law enforcement and the press.

47. *Correction:* In our last issue I wrote that Earl Timmons had been convicted of drug dealing and felon firearm possession. Since September I have discovered that that statement is not quite accurate. Earl Timmons was actually convicted of burglary in 1954. Affidavits in the criminal records archives of Los Angeles also contain allegations by former associates of Pappageorge that in the seventies Timmons illegally purchased and carried a handgun, used various aliases, and attempted to bribe friends into committing perjury. It should be noted, however, that those allegations all come from friends of Pappageorge, a man Timmons helped put in prison. Other than his 1954 burglary conviction, for which he received a five-year suspended sentence, it appears that Timmons has not been convicted of any felony.

It has been pointed out to me that the Earl Timmons convicted of drug dealing in Pasadena is properly *James* Earl Timmons. Although the Earl Timmons of WCG fame rarely uses his full name, it is properly *Alvin* Earl Timmons. The two Earl Timmonses should therefore be distinguished. Friends say Alvin Earl has been a respectable businessman for years and now avoids all contact with criminals. I hope that my error has not caused embarrassment to either Alvin Earl, or James Earl, Timmons.

48. Like "Apostolos," "Pappageorge" is a Greek name.

49. The court records are found in *People v. Moran, et. al.*, files A309048 and HC204116 in the archives of Los Angeles County Superior Court.

50. One facet of the case that deserves brief mention is how many of those involved had colorful nicknames. Pappageorge was "Pappy." Three of Timmons' friends were "Tricky Ricky," "Bob the Bikeman," and "Val the Pullman." Timmons, himself, was called "Earl the Plumber" - on the surface an innocent enough designation considering he really was a plumber. Yet, some will recall how during the early seventies when Watergate was continuously in the news, "plumber" for a time took on a special connotation.

51. In one affidavit it is stated that in 1973 Hayward chose as a hold-up victim Walter Pudinski, then the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol.

52. Tkach's belief that his wife is demon possessed may explain evangelist Waterhouse's comments about Tkach talking to demons and Tkach's own pulpit comments about taking phone calls from demons. ("After all, you never know when God will call.")

53. Thinking people will undoubtedly wonder why the church hierarchy feels compelled to resort to such demonic illogic to explain Mrs. Tkach's affliction. Most experts in the medical field view schizophrenia as essentially a biochemical imbalance of the brain (see N. C. Anderson, *The Broken Brain*, Harper and Row, 1985). And many types of schizophrenia are treatable with drugs. Some physicians even claim that some afflicted with the disease show marked improvement with megavitamin treatment. In other words, if Tkach simply accepted medical science's understanding of schizophrenia, his wife would be characterized as just ill - not demon possessed.

Openly adopting a scientific view on the matter, however, could cause problems for both Joe Senior and Joe Junior, the church's number two man. Most medical experts view schizophrenia as having a *genetic*

connection. (See "Study Ties Schizophrenia to Genetic Flaw" in the *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 10, 1989, p. 44.) In other words, a tendency toward schizophrenia is seen as transferable from parent to child. Should such information become well-known among the WCG's ministry and membership, many would begin to view much of Joe Jr.'s frequently questionable behavior in a new light. Further, many would begin to see Joe Sr.'s designation of Joe Jr. as his successor-to-be as truly the worst possible choice. It takes but little imagination to foresee the bizarre and tragic consequences that could ensue should the myrmidon character of the WCG's membership be left at the whim of a schizophrenic Pastor General.

54. If this indeed was Cole's view, he was wrong. In the centuries preceeding "no fault" divorce, thousands of divorces were granted in common-law jurisdictions around the world on grounds of adultery. In only a very small percentage of those cases were the offending mates ever actually caught in bed with their "correspondents."

Raymond Cole - whose speaking style has always reminded me of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's - is now the head of the Church of God Eternal (P.O. Box 775, Eugene, OR 97401), a church whose members take pride in having retained most of HWA's original teachings. I personally phoned Mr. Cole hoping to pry something out of him about Tkach, but it was quickly obvious I could not. I then very facetiously said how nice it was that Mr. Tkach had remained faithful to his ailing wife all these years. After a slight pause, Cole retorted (again in a tone reminiscent of MacArthur's), "I think you need to go back and do more research!"

55. In church publications Ellen Escat is often referred to as Mrs. Escat. See, for instance, *The Worldwide News*, Aug. 14, 1989, p. 1, column 5. The fact that Mrs. Escat is a divorced woman has, to my knowledge, never been revealed to the membership, as a whole.

56. See the April 1984 issue of *Ambassador Report* and *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* by David Robinson (John Hadden Publishers, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1980).

### **WCG Income Hits \$201 Million - But Audit Raises Serious Questions**

Throughout the fifties and sixties the WCG's membership shot up rapidly, while its income grew at roughly 25% per year. But since the media disclosures in the 1970s of financial mismanagement and sexual immorality committed by the WCG's top leaders, the church's income and membership growth have slowed considerably. The church's worldwide audited financial report for 1988, compiled by the prestigious accounting firm of Arthur Andersen & Co., reveals that church membership reached 92,000 baptized members at the end of 1988, which represents an annual increase of 4.1% per year over the last 5 years. (See *The Worldwide News* issues of Aug. 28, 1989, p. 8, and June 4, 1984, pp. 5-7.)

The recent Arthur Andersen audit reports that the church and its affiliated organizations garnered \$201.3 million in support and revenue in 1988, up 4.6% over the 1987 figure, which means church income just about kept up with inflation. But church income had been growing at 8.8% compounded annually since 1983, so the 4.6% increase for 1988 may be indicative of a slowing trend in the church's income. Another barometer of a slowdown in church growth may be the fact that postage and shipping for church publications rose only 3.3%, indicating that requests for church publications are relatively flat. And remember, it's church literature that converts people into tithe-paying members.

Expenses for 1988 shot up to \$199.8 million, up 10.9% over the previous year. The

biggest contributory factor to this rise in expenses was due to a 12.3% increase in salaries, up from \$65.9 million to \$74 million. Professional and performing artists' fees for the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation were up a whopping 36% to \$4.6 million, while travel expenses were up 14.7% to \$6.6 million. Meanwhile, needy members received assistance of only \$7.4 million, up a measly 4.9% over the 1987 figure.

But even though Arthur Andersen gives the church a clean bill of health by stating that the audited financial statements present fairly the combined financial position of the church and its affiliated organizations, this pronouncement should absolutely not be taken to mean that the church is spending its money in the manner expected by most of its unsophisticated members.

Let's take, for instance, the issue of how third tithe is spent. Members have been led to believe by numerous sermons and church publications that third tithe goes only to needy members. Yet our investigations over the years have shown that much of it has been diverted to the apostle's travel expenses, jet fuel, decorations for ministerial homes, and ministerial salaries. The financial statements show that \$7.4 million was spent to assist needy members in 1988, but strangely the figure showing how much money was donated for third tithe is missing.

We decided to estimate how much third tithe was collected by the church in 1988. To figure out what percentage of the \$187 million of contributions received in 1988 came from third tithe, we reasonably assumed a member would typically donate 14% of his income to the church for first tithe and offerings. Assuming a member would have an income of \$10,000 a year, this would come to \$1,400 per year. Next, we conservatively estimated he would give 15% of his second tithe, or \$150 per year. And finally, since third tithe is given only 2 years out of every seven, he would give \$1,000 two years out of every seven years or an average of \$285.71 a year (2.85% of his income per year) for third tithe. If we take \$285.71 given for third tithe and divide it by the total hypothetical yearly contribution of \$1,835.71 ( $\$1,400 + \$150 + \$285.71$ ), we see that about 15.56% of a member's donations should be for third tithe. If we further reasonably assume that only 75% of the church's contribution revenue of \$187 million in 1988 came from members, we can deduce that the church took in *at least* \$22 million in third tithe.

But the church paid out only \$7.5 million in assistance to needy members in 1988 - not \$22 million! Where did the rest of the money go? Did it go for the travel expenses of the top leaders? For partying with the rich and famous? For expensive furnishings in ministers' homes? We frankly don't know.

While the church was skimping on supporting its needy (thereby putting a greater burden on the relatives of members and on government services), it managed to purchase property and equipment of \$17.6 million in 1988 and \$17 million in 1987. Interestingly, another \$725,000 was given to "certain" former employees on a "discretionary basis" in 1988. Why only "certain" former employees? Is hush money involved? Why aren't all employees given retirement, assuming some of this money is for retirement? Is former church attorney Stanley Rader being paid some of this money? These questions, unfortunately, are not addressed by Arthur Andersen's audited financial statements.

It is time that all WCG members ask their ministers these kinds of questions and demand some answers. And if answers aren't forthcoming, perhaps it is time all church members ask *themselves*: Am I being a faithful steward over what God has given me when I send my tithes and offerings to such an organization?

## **Members Detail Doctrinal Changes**

Since our last issue, a number of current WCG members and some friends of members have written us stating that the WCG's evolution is proceeding at a much faster pace than even we had reported. Here are a few excerpts from those letters.

Thank you for the September AR. The material on JWT was most interesting. I'd like to comment on a couple of the things you brought up in that issue. First, the changing doctrines. You pointed out several that I had missed. I had noticed the renewed emphasis on Jesus Christ. This is also evidenced in the change in meaning of the Passover bread from symbolic of the sacrifice for physical sin to the symbolic taking into our lives of Jesus, the bread of life. Going along with this there has also been a greater emphasis on the need to be in union with Jesus, having Him live His life in us, although, as I pointed out before, it is unlikely that they will carry this concept to the ultimate (that God rules individuals through His Spirit). This would not be healthy for their concept of church government and power over the people, which I predict will not be changed. A very important change that you did not mention is clarification of the role of works in the Christian life. For years some ministers had said that although one receives eternal life by grace apart from works, one has to qualify for it by good works. An article under the authorship of JWT in the *Worldwide News* pointed out that this was so much doubletalk, and that qualification for eternal life is by faith. Works come in to determine the reward, or the position in the kingdom. This matter of qualification did not come from HWA, but HWA did contribute to the confusion by saying that works do not determine one's salvation, yet on other occasions he implied that they did. This kind of dichotomy is found in his book *Mystery of the Ages*. That book as well as all other HWA publications have been withdrawn from circulation *for extensive rewriting* to bring them into line with current doctrinal changes.

I found the letter about the Hebrew Calendar interesting, although I disagree with its writer that the arbitrary determination by Jewish authorities of some of its starting points and Feasts was unknown to the congregation. Many sermons were devoted to this subject, especially by Herman Hoeh. In addition, he pointed out that the order of the years with the intercalary months within the 19 year cycle was changed by the Jewish authorities in the 300s AD to bring the calendar back in line with the seasons. It is no secret that the calendar is not exact and has to be manipulated from time to time. In my opinion going by the Jewish version of the Hebrew calendar makes sense as it does avoid confusion. Some of the holy-day-observing churches do make these determinations for themselves, resulting in differences of a day or two from one to another congregation.

One more comment. In the WCG there have been several antipsychology sermons, one by Joe Jr. Where they are going with this remains to be seen.

-California

I am quite disappointed at the performance of the new "apostle"! I was naive enough to think that he would finally put the church "back on track." Now I wonder if there

is a track. If there is, I don't think he can find it.

The enclosed article is about a local church building. Have you heard about the WCG wanting to build local church buildings? Is this a "Tkachism"?

-Canada

Editor: Here is the article referred to above. It appeared in *The Winnipeg Sun*, August 31, 1989, on p. 14.

### **Church Alters Plans**

by Donna Carreiro

Love thy neighbor means a lot to [WCG minister] Ben Hofer, which is why he's not going to build a church on his property after neighbors objected. "Mr. Hofer didn't want his neighbors for enemies," Robert Vandenberghe, who opposed the church, said yesterday.

Vandenberghe told the *Sun* this week he was angry Hofer planned to build a Worldwide Church of God - with a 170-car parking lot - at St. Anne's Road and Forbes Road. "It would have attracted too much traffic to our area," Vandenberghe said. Although city councillors said there was nothing they could do to him, Hofer gave in to neighborhood pressure.

But Vandenberghe is not accepting his victory with grace. "Mr. Hofer should have consulted us to begin with," Vandenberghe said. "It was only through my fighting it all the way up the hill that he succumbed. I feel I worked for it."

City Coun. Al Golden disagreed. "It was very magnimonious [sic] of Mr. Hofer to change his plans like that," Golden said.

---

Have you heard about the \$100,000 donations Mr. Tkach gave - \$100,000 to the victims of Hurricane Hugo and \$100,000 to the victims of the recent earthquake in northern California?

According to my mother, who still attends WCG, this announcement was made at the Feast of Tabernacles that she attended. Many folks were shocked and did not agree with the giving of the donations because of the "be apart from the world" doctrine. "Mr. Herbert Armstrong would never have done that," some said. Other folks thought the donations were a good idea: "Letting our light shine."

-Missouri

Another doctrine being allowed to simply peter out is the prohibition against interracial marriage. Long overdue, I'd say. Incidentally, they have to get rid of that old doctrine if they ever want to get Ambassador accredited. My WCG friend is directly involved in the issue, being of mixed race. He mentioned that they apparently allow mixed dating now. He, himself, dated a half Caucasian, half Japanese girl at the college two weeks ago with no flack. That's good, but I can see a

lot of racially minded people leaving the church over that one, can't you?

Also, according to...the WCG isn't the only holder of "the Truth" anymore. In fact, "other churches may have truths that haven't been revealed to us yet" is a direct quote of... (as staunch a member as they come). I never heard that when I was in college. I think people still inside the WCG aren't realizing the massive ideological changes the church is undergoing. The deletion of the church eras doctrine in itself would have made old Herbie pop a few veins, don't you think? But if people would notice this, maybe they'd notice it's all a big petty game being played by whoever's in charge and looked to as "the Apostle."

-Recent AC Grad

A lot of members complain that all the doctrinal changes in WCG are making the church just like CGI [Garner Ted Armstrong's group in Tyler, Texas]. But really there is more going on here. You failed to notice how many of the changes have put the church in line with the teachings of Ernest Martin. And I have heard that Mr. Tkach used to study Martin's old Foundation writings, even though we were all taught it was a sin to do so.

-California

Last sabbath our minister (Rod Dean, Elkhart, Ind.) told us to purge our literature from the church. We are to throw away any old articles and booklets. He said we should just read current literature! Interesting. We are to forget the past. I wonder if this will eventually include HWA.

-Indiana

### **Ernest Martin, ASK, and the Tithing Dilemma**

Of the more than 250 ministers who have left the WCG in the last two decades, none has had a greater impact on the WCG, itself, than Dr. Ernest L. Martin. Once the head of the Theology Department at Ambassador College and formerly the President of the Foundation for Biblical Research in Pasadena, California, Martin is now Director of the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge (ASK). Some months ago Martin moved the headquarters of his organization out of Southern California. The new address for Martin and ASK is: P.O. Box 25000, Portland, Oregon 97225-5000.

One of our readers, Bob Ellsworth, has brought to our attention the fact that Martin has rewritten his booklet *The Tithing Fallacy* and has produced a thought-provoking new study titled *The Tithing Dilemma*. We've seen a copy, and agree with Bob that *The Tithing Dilemma* completely debunks the WCG's triple tithe doctrine. Martin makes the assertion that "It is a sin for anyone today to pay a biblical tithe to any preacher, church or denomination and it is equally a sin for any ecclesiastical leader to receive tithes from any person." Many WCG members and friends of members will, undoubtedly, benefit from reading *The Tithing Dilemma*. We understand copies of the 52-page booklet are available (for a suggested donation of \$5.00) by writing to ASK at their new Portland address.

## Ministries That Can Help

The ministries listed below offer current or prospective WCG members special help in the form of literature (or cassette tapes) on religious topics relating to WCG teachings and/or have personnel familiar with the WCG. Appearance on the list should not imply that such organizations agree with everything AR publishes or that we agree with all of their teachings. Over the years, however, AR has received favorable comments about all of the following ministries:

Christian Research Institute, P.O. Box 500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693. This organization publishes *Christian Research Journal*, a magazine founded by Dr. Walter Martin, who, we are sad to report, recently passed away.

Christian Research Institute - Canada. 114-13th Ave N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2M OE2, Canada.

Apologetic Research Coalition, Box 168, Trenton, MI 48183.

Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, P. O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502.

Robert E. Erickson Ministries, P.O. Box 1830, Indio, CA 92201.

Association for Christian Development (Kenneth Westby, Director), 4449 South Star Lake Road, Auburn, WA 98001 (new address).

Great Joy Publications, 12 Ballynahinch Road, Carryduff, Belfast BT8 8DN, Northern Ireland.

Steven M. Collins (author and publisher), 3901 Crescent Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57106 (new address).

*Focus on Truth* (Richard A. Wiedenheft, Editor), P. Box 45, Lake Winola, PA 18625.

Sentinel Publications and *The Southern Sentinel* (Christopher J. Patton, Editor), P.O. Box 6241, Lakeland, FL 33807.

MacGregor Ministries, Box 73, Balfour, B.C. VOG 1CO, Canada.

*World Insight* magazine (Kenneth Storey, Editor), P.O. Box 35, Pasadena, CA 91102.

Concordant Publishing Concern (Jim Coram, Office Manager), 15570 W. Knochaven Dr., Canyon Country, CA 91351.

*Reunion News* (R. M. Kachere, Editor), 190, Tythe Barn Lane, Whitlocks End, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 1PF, England.

Watchman Fellowship (Phillip Arnn, Director of Reserch), P.O. Box 13251, Arlington, TX 76013. Their *Watchman Expositor* (Vol. 5, No. 5 for 1988) had a revealing interview with Garner Ted Armstrong, who had much to say about his father, HWA.

### **Kenneth Fischer, 1930-1989**

We are very saddened to report that Kenneth Fischer, the President of the Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR) has passed away. A student at Ambassador College, Pasadena, during the late fifties, Ken worked for the Worldwide Church of God until 1974, when he joined with the newly formed FBR. Shortly afterward, Ken became the FBR's office manager, and in 1984 the Foundation's President.

Perhaps because of a serious hearing difficulty, Ken was not a charismatic speaker. But during the early eighties his research and writing skills developed to where he was turning out a major study almost every month. During the mid-seventies, when the FBR lost its previous director (Ernest L. Martin who went on to form the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge), the FBR's income dropped to where just keeping the Foundation in existence was an arduous task. Yet, almost single-handedly, Ken was able to put out an issue of the FBR *Commentator* every month and to personally answer the many letters he received from Bible students around the world.

About two years ago, Ken's health began to go steadily downhill. Then this past spring he was diagnosed as having "pulmonary interstitial fibrosis" - a scarred lung condition apparently caused 35 years ago when he regularly inhaled fiberglass dust while working in a paper factory. During the last few months of his life he was emaciated, bedridden, and weakened to where just reading or speaking a few sentences was exhausting. Yet, his faith in God remained strong. He died Nov. 4, only a few hours after telling his family he knew his time had come.

Ken was buried Nov. 7 at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena. (His grave is only a short walk from Herbert Armstrong's.) The grave-side service, led by Gary Arvidson, Ken Storey, and Mike Fischer, was attended by family and close friends. Also attending were a few WCG employees and, in a gesture appreciated by the Fischer family, Herman L. Hoeh who brought condolences from the WCG's Pastor General.

Ken leaves behind his wife, Clara, five children, and many friends. All who knew him will remember his enthusiasm for the Bible. But we will all remember also his warm Christian outlook. Mary E. Jones, who worked for the FBR during the early eighties, said, "Ken was a good employer and a kind man. He loved life and he loved people. He had a genuine concern for everyone, no matter what their economic status or their level of faith. He will be missed by all of us."

\* \* \* \* \*

As for the future of the FBR, its new president, C. Gary Reid, told us, "Ken's death is a real loss for all who've had a part in the FBR. We've now got to ask ourselves - where do we go from here?" Gary Reid says he will be in Pasadena in late December to meet with

the rest of the FBR board to determine the FBR's future plans. Friends of the FBR who would like to offer their suggestions may write to Gary Reid (c/o General Delivery, Sandford, Ont. LOC IEO, Canada) or to board members Gary Arvidson, Howard Clark, and Gary Schultz (c/o Foundation for Biblical Research, P.O. Box 928, Pasadena, CA 91102). Those who would like to send condolences to the Fischer family may write to them in care of the FBR address.

## Letters

My sincere thanks for your latest revelations about the current WCG chieftain, Joe Tkach. The Sept. 1989 AR is really more than that. It is a gripping study of the degeneration of human character and mass deception.

-Axel Hart, Australia

Thanks for the latest AR. I have read it with underlining pen in hand, and enjoyed all your observations. However, there is one problem. I have trouble reconciling a "not too bright" Tkach with the man who has managed to worm his way into the position of influence and power that he now holds. Perhaps Tkach isn't "book smart," but there must be little doubt that he is cagey - a survivor, indeed, an "overcomer" in the most crass sense of the word.

-Brenda Denzler, North Carolina

My husband and I love *Ambassador Report*! More importantly, we need it. When we were WCG members, we used to throw it out when it was sent to us, I suppose at someone's request. Being typically suspicious, we trashed them - what an incredible waste! How we wish we had those ARs back, but now we've gotten past editions through some ex-Worldwidiers in the area.

The WCG has always lacked something and we knew it. Just prior to my baptism, the older minister [a close friend of the Tkachs] who'd counseled me threatened to spank me if I didn't get baptized. Then some months later, during individual marriage counseling, he made a pass at me, claiming to be conducting a "project," which was to be kept confidential. Then he took me in his arms and kissed me on the lips hard. Then he had me picture a lewd scene (a nude woman tied to a tree - the rest is too embarrassing to mention).

He tried to get me to admit to something in regards to sexual behavior which I believe he admitted he himself was guilty of. By the way, he was particularly fascinated by pantyhose and had a few sexual theories regarding it. He was just a filthy old man! But I, at the time, did not think to question his weird behavior, being so "new in the faith."

The WCG almost destroyed our lives. I can't believe we allowed this organization to come in and swallow us up. The funny thing is, we're not alone, just one of many tragic, but now triumphant, cases that seem to follow a very similar format. Even the ministers are a lot alike in how they deal with their congregations.

-Ex-members from Wisconsin

*Editor: Over the years we've been alarmed to learn how many top WCG ministers and officials have been unable to resist the temptation to experiment with adultery, homosexuality, incest, and/or other sexual perversions. For those WCG leaders who are unable, or unwilling, to tap the Almighty's help in overcoming their sexual obsessions, there is an organization that they might seek help from: Sexaholics Anonymous. This group has chapters all over the U.S. and Canada. Write to S.A., Box 300, Simi Valley, Calif. 93060 and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. All correspondence is strictly confidential.*

*Incidentally, aside from the spiritual and psychological reasons why the above "minister" should seek help, there is also a very practical reason why he should. Wisconsin is one of four states in the U.S. that makes it a felony for clergymen to sexually seduce or abuse church people who come to them for counselling.*

My "ex" is at the Feast this week and showering my kids with gifts and good times while his child support is late and he owes me \$500 for taxes which the government took out of my return (I don't think he even files). What a farce! Let me know if I can help anyone who is going through the agony of a mate joining the cult. Unfortunately, my situation ended in divorce mostly over many of the policies which have now been changed. Again, a joke! What a bunch of absent-minded hypocrites. I appreciate your efforts at exposing them and hope those efforts might prevent (or at least console) the crisis families go through because of "God's True Church."

-California

I praise the Lord I found an address to those who have come out of the Worldwide Church of God and know the truth of God.

My reason for writing, my brothers and sisters in the Lord, is we have a cult problem at [Sing Sing,] the prison that I am in. Many of the believers in Christ read Armstrong's *The Plain Truth*. I ask, do you have any tracks exposing Armstrongism and/or the WCG?.... Anything I could pass around would help. Please help, but pray first. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

-David Maynard #85B2434  
354 Hunter Street  
Ossining, NY 10562-5442

According to the local minister, Pasadena is sending Mr. Vic Kubik [a WCG minister] to Russia four days after the feast. Pasadena has briefed him on how to talk to the Russians about the *World Tomorrow* and how to get it aired in Moscow. He is going to say that adults and teens need help with problems such as drugs and alcohol. Apparently it could mean a big jump in church literature going to the Russian people because their broadcasting stations cover large areas.

-AR Reader

I have just been made aware of your organization and would like to know how accurate your information is on the WCG. My husband has turned our house upside down in his new "religion" of HWA. Two of our three children are very bitter now on religion since his change. He seems out of control, irrational and brainwashed. This has been going on for three to four years now and two weeks ago he announced God leading him to HWA as a follower. He won't accept the fact it is a cult.

-Michigan

It has been a struggle since I left the WCG, but it has been worth it. I know now I made HWA and "the Church" my god and not God and the Lord. But we all make mistakes. I still write to one former member that you put me in touch with and she is a God-send. We need a lot of support when we leave and I got it from family and friends, but not from any of the supposed "loving" members of the WCG.

-Illinois

I've been very ill for nearly two years. I have a muscle disease, much pain and weakness. I'm hardly able to do what has to be done - cook, clean, etc. But does my pain stop my husband from going to the Feast or anything else they do? No! Now, my blood pressure and pulse are so faint, it's hard to find.

-Ohio

My wife has had Alzheimer's for about seven years and it's developing into the advanced stage, at age 59. We have Catholic friends who are more concerned about her health than two of her sisters who are presently with the WCG. To me this church is like a cult - only interested in what's going on in their own little circle. They must feel loving your neighbor doesn't apply if you aren't in their organization.

-Kansas

I have been a student of the Concordant Publishing Concern for the past eight years (since leaving WCG) and am very happy to be free from the bondage of the dictatorship of that [WCG] organization. But my wife is still a faithful member and unable to study or even talk about the Holy Scriptures with me. I miss having her fellowship in the Scriptures. We were together in the WCG 17 years. I am hoping and praying that sometime she will also see the truth about that so-called church and stop attending. But, I know only God can make it happen and I believe He has a purpose in its existence and that all things are out of Him.

-Washington

Thank you very much for exposing the monstrous evil covered up by Herbert Armstrong. Keep it up. I have been away from the WCG since 1986 and am just now realizing what

it is that I had been a part of for 18 years.

My wife is in Worldwide and is divorcing me (apparently with the sanction of her minister). I was "put out" for questioning the competence of the church ministry in helping people with marital problems. For nine years I struggled to keep my marriage alive. After constantly going to them with my problems and being told to avoid "outside" professional help, I told them finally what I thought of their capabilities.

I'm fighting for my children against a woman who insists on staying on welfare yet refuses to allow me to take care of, or even visit, my own children....

While church members struggle to observe the [Mosaic] laws, stand up to threats to their economic life for obeying God, and struggle to make ends meet, Tkach and his ministers live in luxury and don't even pay tithes. They verbally abuse, berate and tell their flocks not to think. They have made it a sin to use the mind that God gave every one of us.

The last thing I was told before I left was that I had to obey everything, without question, whatever [our minister] spoke from the pulpit which was to be taken along with the Bible as unquestionable truth. And Mr. Armstrong's book *Mystery of the Ages* was to be as if it was part of the Bible - in spite of its racist and unbiblical ideas on "Israel."

Only late this year have I begun active deprogramming of my mind. I have read *The Tangled Web* and it has helped. People need the facts to truly evaluate someone's alleged "Work."

-California

I am very interested in continuing to receive your report. Having spent 25 years in WCG as a D&R case, I feel they have had a little something to do with my life being wasted. But I still want to hear what goes on with them.

-California

*Editor: Previous to the mid-70s, the WCG taught that once a person married (in any church), no divorce was possible in God's eyes. Therefore any marriage after a divorce was considered void. In those days, one who joined Worldwide as a divorced and remarried person (a "D&R case") was required to separate from his or her mate (and children, if necessary) and live celibate. See Al Carrozzo's article "Home Breaking - Armstrong Style" in our 1977 issue. Since the 1970s the WCG has dropped its "D&R doctrine," but, unbelievably, has come up with new family destroying doctrines. More on that in a future issue.*

We left the church in 1979, and not like others who were bitter and some we knew who took their own lives, it made us stronger Christians. How simple God's truth is when no one is between you and God.... Our only son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter are still in WCG and have turned away from us. We never hear from them. We have written many times with no response so I don't write anymore. I just pray for them and hope that

before it's too late, and we are gone, they will wake up to the truth.

-California

I just wish someone could find a way to open the eyes of those yet in this cult. I have several dear family members and other friends who will starve their families in order to be faithful and good tithing payers.

-Colorado

*Editor: Tragically, there really are people who would allow their families to starve rather than disobey their church's dictates. The following Associated Press article appeared in many papers on Sept. 9, 1989:*

#### **Pair Convicted in Starvation Death of Son**

A jury convicted an unemployed couple of third-degree murder Friday for starving their 14-year-old son during a six-week fast that the family endured while leaving nearly \$4,000 for God and waiting for his help.

Larry and Leona Cottam, who are Seventh-day Adventists, held hands and showed no emotion as jury foreman Maria Uitti read the guilty verdicts before the packed Luzerne County [Pennsylvania] courtroom.

Eric Cottam died Jan. 3 after the family had not eaten since Nov. 22. The Cottams' 12-year-old daughter, Laura, recovered from malnourishment and is in foster care.

Besides third-degree murder, which required a jury finding of malice on the part of Cottam, 39, and his wife, 38, the couple were found guilty of reckless endangerment and endangering the welfare of children. The Cottams remained free on \$50,000 bail each posted by an anonymous benefactor. No sentencing date has been set. The Cottams face a maximum of 28 years in prison.

Thank you for your dedication to making the truth known. It is truth that sets men free and I am sure that many WCG members have you to thank for helping them out of the bondage of false teachings. Keep up the good work.

-Alfred E. Sauer  
Moundridge, Kansas

I was a WCG member for five years, left for a year, recently returned last fall. But, after receiving a copy of the AR and reading the AR of 1977, I've stopped attending. I never believed in the apostleship of HWA and when Mr. Joseph T. was made leader and proclaimed an apostle, this was about all I could take. I left shortly after seeing the members revere and worship the newly appointed "apostle," the church news boasting his every move, and Mr. Waterhouse preaching the Tkach gospel. I thank God for your report and look forward to any more issues or information you can send me.

-Illinois

I was a member of the WCG for years up until this past summer when I finally quit checking my brain at the door and checked out a few things. My daughter still attends Worldwide, but will tell me nothing. I have heard the church is in turmoil and I would like to keep abreast of what goes on.

-Oklahoma

Thanks again for the *Report*. As usual it was filled with information and very thought provoking. Time after time I intended to drop you a line and express my appreciation for all your effort and that of your staff, but for some reason never got around to it. Perhaps I didn't because dwelling on the WCG is painful. Having experienced AC at Bricket Wood and later having served in the [WCG] ministry, I am left with a deep appreciation of what might have been. Unfortunately, that ideal is positioned alongside the dismal failure we see today.

Your description of the "thug" mentality used to subjugate the members during Tkach's ascension to power was sickening. Where is the concern, love, if you will, of these pretenders in the ministry? You know many of them personally, just as I do. How can they even mention the word faith in a sermon without waves of remorse coming over them? Apparently there was a lot less there than met the eye when we knew them.

Gerald Waterhouse and his ability to find significance in the acts of those who pay him would be humorous if they were not such an affront to reality. I also am a Naval veteran and they would do well to get their facts straight, especially about the "apostle's" pugilistic encounters with the Marines. If this sounds a little indignant just let me mention that other ministers express the same disgust with seeing the flock pillaged and perverted.

It has come to my attention that considerable effort is being devoted to bring the "lost sheep" back into the fold. There is an old saying in the marketing world that "there's gold in them thar inactive accounts." Herbert W. would have understood that perfectly. They know where the money is! I proved, as did many others, that the root, the foundation, the bedrock, bottom line of the WCG in HWA's later years was money, period! Faith had long ago fled to higher ground.

In the AR you have a potent vehicle to help others - most of us are frustrated but have little leverage to change the situation. I will be looking forward to the next issue. Keep the cutting torch burning.

-Lawson O. Price  
Johnson City, New York

### **From the Editor**

My sincerest thanks to all those who have made this issue possible. We usually don't run pages of letters from readers who have been helped by the *Report*. Nevertheless, our mail

clearly shows thousands continue to benefit from our work.

Finally, with the holiday season approaching, I wish to extend to all of the *Report's* readers my warmest season's greetings and my prayerful hope that all of you will have a prosperous, healthy, and spiritually fulfilling New Year.

-John Trechak

[Next Issue \(AR44\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

**AR 44 June,1990**

### **Ambassador's Pasadena Campus Folds Up**

In mid December, Joseph W. Tkach, the Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), announced that the Pasadena, California campus of Ambassador College would be phased out of operation and that the WCG's college program would be centered only at its Big Sandy, Texas campus. For the time being, however, the WCG still plans to keep its headquarters in Pasadena and use Ambassador Auditorium for the Ambassador Foundation's concert schedule. Rumors of the possible closing had circulated in church circles for weeks. But when Tkach's decision was finally announced, it still proved a major disappointment to most Ambassador students and church members who had taken pride in the beautiful Pasadena campus, which first opened in 1947.

Whether or not the WCG will ever again maintain any kind of college program in Pasadena remains to be seen. There has been some talk of using the Pasadena campus for a graduate school of theology that would offer "certificates" (not degrees), but those discussions have not yet materialized into an actual plan. In December there had been some hope that the Pasadena campus, could be used to at least teach a freshmen contingent of students. That plan, however, was quickly scuttled.

Tkach had hoped that most of the WCG's operations could remain in Pasadena. But WCG department heads informed him that by moving most of the Ambassador student body out of southern California and into the ranch land of east Texas, Worldwide's headquarters operations would be deprived of most of the cheap labor now provided by student workers. So Tkach then decided to move a good number of WCG and *Plain Truth* departments to Texas, along with the entire Ambassador student work force. Now, however, some department heads in Pasadena are wondering who will be doing the janitorial, gardening, and other lowly tasks currently being done by first-year student laborers.

**Why Such Confusion?**

The current confusion at Ambassador College comes as no surprise to the *Report*. In our large 1977 issue we published the thoroughly researched article "The Missing Dimension in Ambassador College - Accreditation" by Margaret D. Zola. The author detailed why Ambassador remained unaccredited after 30 years and what it needed to do to become accredited. Ambassador's administration in 1977 and those administrations since then obstinately refused to pay any heed to the accurate data, logical conclusions, and good sense contained in that article. As a result, for the last 13 years Ambassador College has remained nothing more than an unaccredited diploma mill.

Fortunately, in the last few years, anti-diploma-mill legislation has been passed in both California<sup>1</sup> and Texas.<sup>2</sup> In effect, the new laws make it impossible for an educational institution in those states to offer degrees unless that institution is accredited or has achieved a state-defined level of minimum qualifications essentially equal to those normally required by recognized accrediting associations.<sup>3</sup> To bring both the California and Texas campuses up to those minimum standards would require the expenditure of more church funds than Tkach finds acceptable.<sup>4</sup>

Tkach's plan, for now, is to turn the Big Sandy college (currently a two-year school) into a four-year college and, hopefully, to get it accredited. Toward that goal, Ambassador has purchased hundreds of acres of real estate in the Big Sandy area and has begun construction of a new college administration building.<sup>5</sup>

That Ambassador College will someday achieve accreditation should not be assumed. College founder Herbert W. Armstrong told the college's first students in the late '40s that full accreditation was not far off. Ambassador students in the '60s and '70s were told the same thing. Now the obstacles facing Tkach's accreditation plans are as formidable as ever. Some insiders have told the *Report* how a number of Pasadena faculty members have turned down Tkach's request that they move to Texas and how Ambassador is having difficulty recruiting qualified professors and instructors. Others have stated that the fundamental inadequacies that plagued Ambassador's accreditation efforts in the past all remain.

The organization that will determine whether or not Ambassador College gets accredited is the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Ambassador alumni who may wish to provide the Southern Association with insights into Ambassador's strengths and weaknesses should write: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Attn.: Dr. David Carter (Associate Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges), 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097. The Association's phone number is: (404) 329-6500.

On Friday, May 18, the last commencement was held at Ambassador's Pasadena campus. As evangelist David Hulme told a reporter a few days earlier, "It's the end of an era." For the immediate future, church officials hope to lease some of Ambassador's classroom space to Pasadena City College." But as one WCG insider told us, "As soon as a wealthy buyer can be found, I think Mr. Tkach will sell off most of the campus."

#### Footnotes

1. See SB 190, amending Chapter Three, Part 59 of the Education Code of California, sponsored by State Senator Rebecca Q. Morgan of Menlo Park and signed into law by Gov. Deukmejian on Oct. 1, 1989.

Ambassador is not the only college that has run into trouble with the new law. The State Board of Education evaluation team has recommended that state approval be removed from the Institute for Creation Research in Santee (San Diego County), the only creation science school in the country offering Master's degrees. See the *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 18, 1990, p. A3.

2. See Subchapters G and H, Chapter 61; and Subchapter K, Chapter 5 of the Texas Education Code. Copies and further information may be obtained from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Universities and Health Affairs Division, P.O. Box 12780, Austin, Texas 78711.

3. Solely through the efforts of *Ambassador Report*, Ambassador College was accredited in March 1985 by the International Accrediting Association of Modesto, California (see our Jan. 1986 issue). Unfortunately, that accrediting association is not fully recognized by the State of California.

---

&COPY;1990 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123  
John Trechak, Editor & Publisher Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

4. See Tkach's "Dear Brethren" letter of Dec. 21, 1989; and the *Pasadena Star-News*, Dec. 15, 1989, p. A-1.

5. *The Worldwide News*, Dec. 11, 1989, p. 1.

6. See "Graduation marks end for Ambassador school," in the *Pasadena Star-News*, May 14, 1990, p. A-1.

## Joseph W. Tkach...

(Part IV)

by John Trechak

### Is Tkach Really Russian?

Since the earliest years of Herbert W. Armstrong's ministry, doctrines concerning race and racial origins have played an important role in the WCG's theology. The WCG's views on Bible prophecy, for instance, are to a great extent built upon racial identity theories. And because HWA read Bible prophecy as indicating both a present and future special role for the "Israelite" peoples (whom he believed to be not just the Jews, but also the nations of northwestern Europe), it was once very common in Worldwide for ministers and members to attempt to find in their lineage ancestral connections to the peoples of northwestern Europe, especially those of the British Isles. That is undoubtedly one reason why older WCG members often express amazement at Pastor General Tkach's frequent references to his supposed Russian roots.

Not only does Tkach claim to be of Russian descent, but WCG publications, especially the *Worldwide News* (WN), in recent years have regularly played up persons, places, and things that are Russian. Apparently equating Russia with the U.S.S.R. (they are not equivalent), the WN's editors have reported how Soviet officials have visited Pasadena, how the WCG has sponsored tours by famous Soviet performers (WN, 6/13/88), how the WCG has sponsored tours by famous Soviet performers (WN, 6/13/88), how the WCG has financed a U.S. ballet company's tour of the U.S.S.R. (WN 8/22/88), how a 12-year-old daughter of an Australian WCG couple wrote a letter to President Gorbachev and was then able to meet the Soviet Ambassador to Australia (WN, 1/23/89), how a large group of WCG teenagers were given a WCG-financed tour of the Soviet Union (WN, 8/22/88), and how one Nevada WCG member translates Russian for official U.S. inspectors at U.S.S.R. nuclear test sites (WN, 2/6/89).

The WN has openly called for greater understanding of the U.S.S.R. (WN, 12/7/87, p. 2) and has even featured a front page photo of Tkach and Joe Locke, a Tkach aide, wearing Russian winter hats (WN, 2/15/88). Then when Russian cellist-conductor Mstislav Rostropovich came to Pasadena to receive an Ambassador Foundation award from Tkach, the WN (2/20/89) was quick to put the famed musician's words to Tkach on page one: "Thank you, my dear Russian brother."

Of course, AR is not criticizing the building of bridges between nations nor the recognition of the many achievements of the Russian people. Nevertheless, all of this new emphasis on Russia - mainly because Tkach claims to be Russian - is very, very silly. Why? Because Tkach is *not* of Russian descent!

As I pointed out in part one (see our March 1989 issue), Tkach was born in Chicago and his parents came to the U.S. from Czechoslovakia. Tkach's parents were, themselves, members of a minority ethnic group in that country. While often calling themselves Carpatho Russian, the people of northeastern Slovakia (the Presov Region, where Tkach's mother and father came from), southeastern Poland (the Lemkian Region), and Ruthenia (Subcarpathean Rus) are all essentially one ethnic group: the Carpatho-Rusyn, Rusnak, or Slavish people. Because of the Pan-Slavic movement and the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in that mountainous region over the centuries, the Rusyns (especially those coming to America) have often thought of themselves as being Russian. But by looking at a map of eastern Europe one will quickly see that they are not really Russian. They are as ethnically distinct as the Welsh are from the English. Separating the Carpathian region of northeast Slovakia and the westernmost part of Russia proper is about 500 miles of the Ukraine. And just as the Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians are not true Russians, neither are the Ukrainians. And most certainly the Carpatho-Rusyns with their distinct geographical location, culture, and language, are not true Russians.

Some months ago I wrote a lengthy letter to Pastor General Tkach attempting to help him understand a bit of his own ethnic background. I even pointed out how some historians trace the origins of the Rusyn people to a Scandinavian tribe that settled in the area of Kiev in the ninth century A.D. (the so-called Normanist theory which ties that Scandinavian tribe to the Normans who conquered northwestern France and later England). Apparently my letter and the accompanying materials I sent made no impression for, I hear, Tkach is still saying he is Russian. Oh, well ....

Those who are interested in learning more about the Carpatho-Rusyn people will enjoy reading *Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America* by Professor Paul Robert Magocsi (Chairman of the Ukrainian Studies Dept. at the University of Toronto, Canada). This 175-page book is published by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, sells for \$20, and may be ordered from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, New Jersey 07022. Be sure to also ask for a list of their other fine publications and for information about *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, the quarterly newsletter devoted to the study of Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic heritage.

Another book that will help researchers to understand Tkach is *The Orthodox Church* by Timothy Ware, published by Penguin (and Pelican) Books. Just as Herbert W. Armstrong's theology contained facets reflective of his childhood in the Quaker religion, some see in Tkach reflections of his childhood in the Russian Orthodox Church. Timothy Ware's book provides insights into both Tkach's religious past and the turbulent religious history of eastern Europe.

## Helping Relatives and Friends Exit the WCG

by John Trechak

Ambassador Report frequently receives letters from individuals concerned about a relative or friend<sup>1</sup> who is about to join the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), or who has already joined and who is now exhibiting self-destructive behavior. Such behavior often includes excessive financial contributing (even to the point of giving away one's home), withdrawal from family and friends (even to the point of leaving for parts unknown), excessive secrecy, arrogance toward non-WCG people, and habitual lying. The concerned individual who writes us often will ask if there is something that can be done to influence the friend or relative into leaving the WCG.

We at AR are not psychologists or professional counselors, but after 14 years of publishing the *Report*, witnessing thousands exit the WCG, and helping many of those exiting along with their families, I believe we can offer a number of observations and suggestions that may be of help to those concerned about their Worldwide relatives or friends.

## Maintaining Contact

First of all, it is difficult to help someone if lines of communication are not kept open. In our experience, communication with the WCG member often breaks down because the concerned individual is not fully aware of the true nature of the WCG and because misconceptions and resulting miscalculations will often cause the concerned individual to prematurely take steps that greatly harm whatever rapport he has with the Worldwider. Let me strongly suggest a number of "Do Nots."

(A) Do not overdramatize the WCG's problems. Even though the WCG is a destructive cult,<sup>2</sup> it is not the worst of the modern destructive cults. There are some cults, for instance, that openly advocate drug use, "free love," incest, prostitution, human sacrifice, devil worship, terrorism, etc. The WCG does not. This is important to keep in mind because portraying the WCG as worse than it really is will only help to put a gulf between you and the WCG member, and doing so will only reinforce a key WCG belief-that deep down everyone in "the world" is hostile to everyone in "God's True Church."

(B) Do not forget that in the U.S. and in most Western nations we have something called "freedom of religion." In the U.S., for instance, everyone has a right to believe any religious idea he or she chooses, no matter how illogical it may appear to everyone else. And with the exception of acts that are specifically prohibited by the law (such as using illegal narcotics in religious ceremonies), conduct based on religious belief is generally still protected, even if that conduct is self-destructive to the cultist (for example, quitting one's job and putting one's family on welfare in order to keep certain holy days). The point is this: All too often well meaning individuals, in an unsophisticated effort to help a WCG relative, show disrespect for the member's legal rights as a free citizen and thereby tear down the lines of communication they have with their friend. Helping the member then becomes far more difficult, if not impossible.

Two specific cases of this problem come to mind. Some years ago, I was contacted by a very distraught Jewish mother whose son had left the Jewish faith to join Worldwide and was contemplating marriage to a young woman also in the WCG. The mother's main concern was keeping her son Jewish, an understandable reaction from a Jewish mother. However, as she spoke to me it became increasingly obvious that the mother was completely oblivious to the fact that her son was an adult (albeit a young adult) with every legal right to choose his own religion. I was simply unable to convince her of that obvious fact, and she pursued her own obstinate course in dealing with her son. Her attitude only furthered the breakdown of communication between parent and child and pushed the son *further into* the WCG.

Coincidentally, not long afterward I was contacted by a Catholic mother who was in an identical predicament and who had exactly the same attitude as the Jewish mother. Again I was unable to persuade the mother to acknowledge that her son needed to be treated as an adult (even if he lacked the maturity of his parents). The Catholic mother pursued her own intolerant path and, not surprisingly, achieved the same negative outcome that the Jewish mother reaped - there was a giant gulf put between her and her son, with the son drawn ever further into the WCG.<sup>3</sup>

(C) Do not assume that there is some magical statistical formula as to what kind of people are attracted to the WCG. Those drawn to it come from all age groups, religions, philosophies, education levels, races, nationalities and walks of life. The WCG has even drawn a few college professors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and corporation vice presidents. The majority of WCG members are generally hard working, lawabiding, and self-sacrificing (even if such sacrificing becomes directed only toward the WCG's mission).<sup>4</sup> The above caveat is important to keep in mind because too often those trying to help their WCG relative or friend will inadvertently or even maliciously characterize the WCG as composed entirely of worthless people. This is clearly not so. Any such negative characterization of the WCG's membership will be seen by the member as inaccurate and will only further reinforce the WCG teaching that *it* is the "One True Church" and "the world" is out to get them. Simplistic characterizations of the WCG are therefore self-defeating for the one trying to provide exit help.

(D) Do not assume that only a certain type of person ever exits the WCG. All types of people leave and often for very different reasons. However, it does seem that people who tend to be individualistic, intellectual, creative, and/or inquisitive do have a better chance of either leaving or, more likely, being thrown out.

(E) Finally, in regard to keeping lines of communication open, do not assume that the WCG member doesn't already have much of the information you wish to offer him. We have discovered that there are *some* - not many, and by no means a majority of - WCG members who know their church is filled with both doctrinal error and great corruption in its hierarchy. Yet, for whatever reason, that small group has made a conscious decision to remain in the WCG. Frankly, we have a number of such individuals on AR's mailing list. We not only respect their right to worship and fellowship with whomever they choose, but we also still consider them friends.

## Affirmative Steps

At this juncture those who would like to help their relative or friend exit the WCG are probably thinking something like this: "Ok, I see the necessity of not disrespecting my relative's right to freedom of religion, and I see it's important not to make assumptions or unfounded accusations. But I love my relative, I believe the WCG is a destructive cult, I am convinced my relative's involvement with the WCG is hurting him and his family, and I feel morally obligated to take some kind of action. I agree that there are some things I should not do. But beyond simply keeping lines of communication open, aren't there some affirmative steps that are appropriate? Isn't there something I can *do*?"

The answer is yes. There are affirmative steps that can, and should, be taken to help someone who is becoming ensnared or is already ensnared in a cult.<sup>5</sup> But determining *what* should be done (proper strategy), *when* it should be done (proper timing), and *how* it should be done (proper execution) is not easy. That is simply because every human being is, in some ways, unique. Even in some of the most radical cults where zombie-like uniformness is mandated, every member is going to have an inner self with needs and desires somewhat different than anyone else in that cult. There is therefore no magic formula that will work 100% of the time in extricating members out of the WCG. Nevertheless, after 14 years of publishing AR, we have noticed that some methods work better than others.

## Classic WCG Exit-Assistance Scenarios

Let me be specific. There are some Christians well versed in their Bible, who upon learning that a friend is enamored of Worldwide teaching, will sit down with their friend and attempt to rationally discuss Bible theology in an attempt to disentangle their friend from Worldwide teaching. Preliminarily, let me just point out that this approach often fails because either the one who sincerely believes he/she is "well-versed" in the Bible really isn't, or because the WCG invitee<sup>6</sup> actually knows more about the Bible than the one attempting to rescue his friend. But putting aside those problems, here is what we have noticed often happens. A knowledgeable Christian layman or minister counsels with the WCG invitee or member and fairly conclusively demonstrates that a number of WCG doctrines are in error. Very commonly the WCG member will respond like this:

Okay, so we are wrong on a few points, but we have been wrong before - on Pentecost, healing, birthdays, and other things - and we changed. That's because we have God's Spirit; no other church does. Even if we are wrong on almost everything, I don't care. This is God's Work and I am not going to take myself out from under God's authority and protection!

Believe it or not, that is exactly the rationalization used by thousands in the WCG.

Now, let's look at another weak, although not always ineffective, approach-attempting to show the WCG member that the WCG's leadership is corrupt. Typically the way this happens is that the caring individual will find out about *Ambassador Report*, will request and read a few copies, and will then ask the WCG invitee or member to read them also. If the friend is still in the invitee stage and has not gone too far along in the WCG's indoctrination program, there is a fairly good chance the invitee will see the danger ahead and will turn away from all involvement with the WCG. Sometimes, too, even WCG members of long-standing will read a few issues of AR and decide it is time to leave. This most often is the case where the member is having significant financial, marital, health, psychological, or employment problems and has come to the realization that the WCG has really not provided the answers to those problems and may even be a significant cause of the difficulties.

However, what about the staunch WCG member who is not having significant problems, or who, at least, is not aware that he is really in trouble? In the vast majority of such cases, simply handing the member copies of AR will do no good whatsoever. First of all, members are taught they must never read *Ambassador Report*, and many are taught they must even burn whatever copies they receive or turn them over to their supervising minister.

Nevertheless, even some staunch members are too curious to obey those standing orders and will read a few AR issues. What happens then? Very often the member will simply deny to himself the possibility that AR is truthful. He'll say, "It's all lies!"<sup>7</sup> Some, however, will sense

that AR is telling the truth, Then what? Here is the kind of rationalization that most often follows (and let me emphasize, this kind of rationalization is *very* common):

Okay, the church has some problems at headquarters and maybe Mr. Tkach isn't perfect, but David wasn't perfect either.<sup>8</sup> We are not to judge.<sup>9</sup> Even if everything the *Report* says is true we still have God's Truth so I am not going to take myself out from under God's authority and protection!

The essence of the above argument is this: "We have the Truth so evidence that the church lacks the Holy Spirit (as shown by major corruption throughout the church hierarchy) is irrelevant to me." Notice that this argument is really the inverse of the previous scenario's argument, namely: "We show evidence of the Holy Spirit (good works, doing the Work of God, etc.) so not having all the Truth is irrelevant to me.

Now, over the years, we at AR have noticed a remarkable thing. *If* (1) a member is willing to listen because lines of communication have been maintained (and because of a search for answers to personal problems and/or because the member has retained some independence of thought) and (2) one can show that the WCG's hierarchy is corrupt and (3) one can show that the WCG has serious doctrinal errors, then, we have discovered, there is a very good possibility the member will be on his way out of the WCG.<sup>10</sup> The member may decide to leave then and there. More likely, however, he will begin asking questions openly in church circles. Before long, on some pretext (usually "you have a bad attitude," or "you lack respect for authority") the local minister will order the questioning member not to return to church and not to talk to other Worldwidens. The member will be *out*.<sup>11</sup>

In some cases, all three factors (willingness to listen plus awareness of doctrinal errors and political corruption) are present, yet the member remains in Worldwide. Sometimes the reason is obvious - a good paying job with Ambassador College or the church, or perhaps family ties. At other times the real motivations of the member are unknowable - at least to those of us at AR.

I hope that what I have discussed to this point illustrates some of the difficulties one can expect in attempting to assist a WCG member in exiting. Successfully assisting a friend or relative in exiting the WCG is not impossible but, as the above should demonstrate, it does require wisdom plus a proper mind set: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves [Matt. 10:16]."

### **Getting Prepared Before You Act**

Recall that the first major principle I gave above is that lines of communication must be maintained with the WCG member.

The second major principle in helping a Worldwider exit is this: *Before* you take affirmative steps to really intervene, you need to have an understanding of two important areas of information. You will need: (A) an understanding of what the WCG is all about in terms of teachings and practices, and (B) an understanding of what destructive cults are and how they operate.<sup>12</sup>

Let's discuss the first type of information needed - that concerning the WCG's teachings and practices. Obviously, how much of this type of information will be needed will depend on many factors. One important consideration is how long the friend has been involved with the WCG. The longer the friend has been in Worldwide, the more information about Worldwide you will most likely need. Unfortunately, most of us have limited resources. All of us have only so much time, money, and energy that we can devote to the problems of those we care about.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, let me suggest some minimums.

Besides the issue you are now reading (AR 44), I would strongly suggest that the individual planning an intervention read, at least, [AR 30](#) (Dec. 1984), [AR 41](#) (March 1989), [AR 42](#) (Sept. 1989), and [AR 43](#) (Dec. 1989). [AR 45](#), when it is published, should also prove helpful.

Once those AR issues are digested, I would suggest that the would-be intervenor then watch a few *World Tomorrow* telecasts, carefully read a few issues of the *Plain Truth*, the *Good News*, a few WCG booklets, and perhaps a few parts of the WCG's *Bible Correspondence Course* - all with a *critical eye*.<sup>14</sup> You will notice that much of what the WCG preaches *to the general public* is fine.<sup>15</sup> In fact, there is much that is very commendable.<sup>16</sup> Your research will give you some idea of the kind of allure that the WCG possesses. (An educated and/or astute

individual, however, will also notice the frequent use of fallacious reasoning and the pervasive oversimplification of just about everything.) Then compare the niceness of the WCG's public positions with the testimonials of former Worldwidars in *AR* and with your WCG friend's problems, and you will have a much clearer idea of what you are up against.

At this juncture in the concerned individual's research, it will be a rare person, indeed, who will not feel a bit overwhelmed. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, the WCG is not just a branch of Christianity. It is radically different than mainstream Christianity. Second, its unique doctrines do not simply cover ritual and ethics, but cosmology, history, race, health, sociology, international politics, etc. - in other words, everything. There are few people educated sufficiently to take on all WCG teachings in any kind of spontaneous debate. And frankly, I would not recommend that approach with regard to helping your WCG friend.

What about seeking the advice and counsel of respected clergymen? Of course that is something to be considered. Unfortunately, we have found over the years that most clergymen, even theology professors, are ill-informed about the WCG. If you do find one who is knowledgeable about the WCG, he may prove invaluable in assisting you to understand the WCG. Certain religious organizations may also be able to help to some degree. In the past, we have recommended that readers write to various organizations which have former WCG ministers or members on their staffs and who put out literature (or, at least, are able to offer advice) concerning WCG doctrines.<sup>17</sup> Many exit counsellors make similar suggestions and even recommend that the would-be intervenor carefully maintain files of all available publications of the target cult and publications by critics who are countering the cult's teachings.

While such diligent research may prove valuable when the time for active intervention finally arrives, it usually will prove very time consuming, especially if the would-be intervenor is not fairly well-educated in biblical theology. Additionally, even if the concerned individual has a fair amount of Bible knowledge and has the time to research and refute dozens of WCG doctrines, such effort will often prove fruitless because the research was directed at issues not central to the WCG members key problems.

Let me give a couple of examples. A relative joins the WCG and soon the rest of the family notices that, among other things, he will no longer eat ham or seafood. Some Bible students in the family will then embark on a Bible research fling to "prove" to the WCG member that the dietary laws of Leviticus were only ceremonial in nature, that the idea that "unclean meats" are unhealthy derived from rabbinical theorizing during the Middle Ages, that the Leviticus dietary laws never applied to Gentiles, and that the early Christian church never applied the majority of those dietary laws to Gentile converts. Now, whether or not such assertions are true is not what is important here. What is important is that the whole issue is not central to the WCG member's main problems! If the WCG member doesn't want to eat ham or seafood, why make it a big deal? Aside from the fact he'll probably be consuming less cholesterol and fat than the rest of his family, why not simply respect his wishes?

Christmas observance is another area where many create needless family strife. Because Worldwidars believe Christmas is really a disguised version of the ancient Saturnalia, they do not observe Christmas either as a religious holy day or as a secular holiday. Many non-Worldwidars take offense at this and will try to pressure their WCG relative into getting the Christmas spirit and may even attempt to refute the WCG's teaching on the subject.<sup>18</sup> But why? The WCG's teaching on Christmas is *not* central to the member's key problems!

What is central to the WCG member's problems (his psychological pain, social dysfunction, career derailment, family stress, and very likely his poverty) is *not* what days he worships on, what foods he avoids, what clothes he wears, or what holidays he prefers not to observe. What is central to the WCG member's problems is his having been psychologically coerced and subtly duped into a system of controlled behavior that encompasses the four key cult characteristics described in footnote number two: (1) isolation, (2) nonthinking, (3) absolute obedience, and (4) giving everything. If the concerned individual is going to do doctrinal research in preparation for an intervention (and I am convinced such research should be done), that research should center *on those four cult characteristics*.<sup>19</sup>

As for WCG organizational policies and practices (as opposed to theological doctrines) there are a very limited number of sources. I believe back issues of *Ambassador Report* will prove the most valuable, but the books by David Robinson and Marion McNair, as well as John Buchner's *Armstrongism Bibliography*, can be helpful.

### **Understanding the Destructive Cult Phenomenon**

I explained above that *before* the concerned individual attempts an intervention, he needs to (A) understand the WCG's teachings and policies, and (B) understand what destructive cults are and how they operate. For years, I have emphasized the first point above. In recent

months, however, I have come to believe that the second point - understanding the nature and methods of destructive cults in general - is equally important.

How then can the concerned individual obtain this needed understanding? To that question I respond with both bad news and good news. The bad news is that until the last ten years or so there really weren't too many books that even dealt specifically with the cult phenomenon. Those who wanted to get a handle on the problem had to spend considerable time locating and reading a variety of works (often quite technical) in the areas of behavioral psychology, group psychology, comparative religion, advertising techniques, symbology, semantics, logic, and fallacy. All of this took a lot of time - a lot more than most have been willing to invest, even for the dearest relative or friend.

Now for the good news. In the last two or three years a few really excellent books have appeared which deal very precisely with the cult phenomenon and which offer excellent guidance for those with relatives and friends ensnared by a cult. Let me recommend one of those books in particular: *Combating Cult Mind Control* by Steven Hassan.<sup>20</sup> I cannot recommend this book too highly. If you have a friend, relative, or loved one involved with the WCG (or some other destructive cult), or if you yourself were once a WCG member, *buy this book, read it, and study it!* The money and time you invest in it will come back to you many times over as a result.

Hassan's book contains so much information of value to the individual who wishes to help a WCG member that it is not practical for me to cover all the pertinent parts. (Amazingly, however, nowhere in the book is the WCG so much as even mentioned.<sup>21</sup>) Allow me, however, to briefly outline what his book covers.

Hassan begins with his own experience of getting duped into the Unification Church and shows what it was like to be a Moonie. As I read this portion of his book I not only found dozens of parallels to my own years in Worldwide, but I was astounded to see that our experiences were virtually 95% identical. Hassan then goes on to show how his parents were able to rescue him from the control of the Moonies in 1976. After a period of readjustment, he was able to continue his college education (he now has a Master's degree in counseling psychology), and during the last ten years has specialized in the exit counseling of cult members.<sup>22</sup>

Hassan then goes on in chapter three to show what destructive cults really are and their various types, how they recruit, why they are successful, and how they induce phobias in their members. Chapter four deals with "understanding mind control." This chapter has shocked a number of Ambassador grads, who, even though long out of Worldwide, did not realize how they had once been manipulated and how much negative WCG psychological baggage they still retained. Chapter five is on "cult psychology." Again, the reader will see the WCG's methods on virtually every page. Chapter six deals with how to protect oneself from the influence of cults, and there are many insights provided on how to analyze a cult's dynamics.

Chapter seven covers "exit counseling," Hassan's *non-coercive* system of helping friends and relatives leave a destructive cult. Hassan's methods (both in their overt and covert forms) are not to be confused with so-called "deprogramming," which is often illegal and has a number of negative psychological aspects, besides. Chapters eight and nine further amplify Hassan's methods, and chapter 10 covers "strategies for recovery." (Incidentally, I'm sure many exWorldwidiers could greatly benefit from reading this chapter. Our experience has shown that even some who have been out of the WCG for many years are still being adversely affected by what the WCG did to them psychologically.) Finally chapter 11 covers a number of interesting legal and sociological topics relating to the cult phenomenon.

Because he is a professional exit counselor, it is not surprising that Hassan encourages readers who wish to intervene in a relative's cult addiction problems to obtain professional help. I am well aware of the fact that probably a large majority of those reading this article will not be able to afford the kind of professional assistance Hassan recommends.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, even if financial resources are lacking, those hoping to help a friend or relative exit Worldwide should still study Hassan's book. In fact, the more inadequate the concerned individual's financial resources, the more time and energy needs to be spent in preparing for the intervention. For such individuals *Combating Cult Mind Control* will prove invaluable in planning the strategy, timing, and execution of an intervention.

### **There is Always Hope**

As I have indicated above, there is no simple solution to the problem of how to help a friend or relative exit the WCG. But neither should the problem be viewed as hopeless. There are certain pitfalls that need to be avoided, but there are also positive steps that can, and should, be taken.

In a future issue I hope to amplify a number of points discussed only briefly in this article. In the meantime, I hope this short article will be of assistance to the many readers who continually write to us out of concern for WCG friends and loved ones.

#### Footnotes

1. In this article I use the terms "relative" and "friend" interchangeably. Either or both terms may also refer to a parent, child, or acquaintance of the concerned individual. I use the term "individual" or "concerned individual" to refer to the non-cultist attempting to help the cult member friend or relative. And, rather than use he/she throughout, I have opted for the traditional "he" to refer to both sexes. Obviously, however, females are just as susceptible as males to the influence of cults.

2. Since our 1976 issue ([AR 1](#), see p. 36), we have used the word "cult" to describe a particular type of religious organization--one having four specific characteristics:

- (1) Isolation - the encouragement of separation (even if only psychologically) from nonmember family and friends.
- (2) Nonthinking - the condemnation of any substantial questioning of the leader's teachings.
- (3) Absolute obedience - the development of response patterns in the member whereby he obeys, without questioning, the orders of religious superiors.
- (4) Giving everything - the encouragement of members to excessively contribute money, homes, property, and time, even to the point of severely harming his family and himself.

The above definition is in line with the way the major news organizations use the word "cult" today. There are, however, some problems with the term. First of all, a glance at any dictionary will show that the word "cult" can and sometimes still does refer simply to a religion or a religious system, even if generally beneficial to its adherents and generally respected. In AR we do not use the term "cult" in such a broad way. Second, many religious groups use the word "cult" to refer to any religion with which their own doctrines disagree. For instance, many fundamentalist Christians would refer to the Sikh religion as a cult. Even though Sikhism is a cult in the sense of being a religion (so is Christianity) we, again, do not use the term in that simplistic sense. Finally, even among psychologists and sociologists there are a number of different formulas used in defining a "cult." Nevertheless, in comparing the various definitions used by experts with the four point definition we have used over the last 14 years, one will immediately see that the four-point definition captures the essence of what many experts are defining in somewhat different language.

Cult expert Steven Hassan prefers the term "destructive cult" over simply "cult." That may be a clarification of terminology we should adopt in the future.

For more details on the way the term "cult" is used by experts in the counseling fields, see J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America*, Garland Publishing Inc., New York and London, 1986; and Rachel Andres and James R. Lane (eds.), *Cults & Consequences*, Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, 1988.

3. As an aside, let me make one observation about young people, parents, and cults. I have seen repeatedly that young people will very often join a cult precisely *because* their parents do not want them to. In many cases it seems joining a cult can be part of the maturing process of leaving mother and father and becoming "independent" (even if that independence is only fictional). When that is the case, over-insistence by parents for continued obedience to them will often prove to be counter productive. Not only that, if parental insistence and protests are too strong, should the child join the cult, it becomes doubly difficult for the child to leave. For to do so the child will have to openly acknowledge by his leaving that Mom and Dad were right after all. It is my personal feeling that for many unhappy cult members, it is the unacceptability of "loosing face" with family and old friends or the fear of extreme humiliation - that keeps them from acknowledging the giant mistake of their cult membership and from leaving its influence. With that in mind, let me suggest that the concerned parent (or other concerned individual) should not be so openly hostile to the WCG that the child or friend will have to face unbearable humiliation should they later wake up and decide to leave.

4. Cult expert Steven Hassan states that the majority of destructive cults much prefer people with better work habits, social skills, and professional credentials rather than those who are physically or educationally handicapped because the former, being more productive, are able to give the cult more money and service, while the latter often require the cult's financial assistance. This is clearly so with the WCG.

5. There is a very strong parallel between the situation where a family is being hurt because a family member has become ensnared by a destructive cult and the situation where a family is being hurt because a family member has become seriously addicted to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. There is a wealth of published information available showing how families can deal with a family member beset by one of the latter addictions. It is only in the last few years, however, that psychologists have come up with plausible and systematic intervention models for the cult addiction or ensnarement problem.

6. I am using the term "invitee" to designate one who is not yet a member of the WCG, but who is reading WCG religious writings, is perhaps beginning to attend services, and is contemplating full membership in the WCG. Dissuading an invitee from joining the WCG is usually far easier than persuading a long-time member into leaving.

7. Those that kid themselves into believing *AR* is "all lies" seem to forget that the WCG has a large, powerful, and litigious legal department. And those lawyers have, in the past, leaned very hard on the press - even when the press was reporting on the WCG very conservatively. The Pasadena *Star-News*, for instance, is one paper that has been sued by the WCG in the past. It no longer does any expose-type reporting on the WCG.

The WCG's lawyers will take on just about anyone for just about any reason. In 1988, a Gerald D. Langenderfer began distributing flyers which equated Joseph Tkach with "the Anti-Messiah." The flyers contained a number of outrageous statements that would have led the average citizen to suspect its author was in need of a bit of sympathy, if not therapy. From the WCG he received neither. Instead, the WCG's lawyers immediately filed a complaint for damages and injunctive relief for invasion of privacy, civil harassment, trademark and servicemark infringement, tradename infringement, and defamation. Langenderfer, apparently too poor to even maintain a permanent residence, was unable to retain counsel and, in essence, lost very quickly by default to the WCG's legal team. He is now under a permanent

injunction not to distribute the offending materials. My point is not that Mr. Langenderfer was correct in either his conclusions or in his methods. But the case (L.A. Superior Court case number C681878) demonstrates that the WCG is very quick to flex its legal muscle whenever it feels someone is hurting its reputation with the publication of even the most trivial of false information.

WCG members seem oblivious to the above. There is another curious fact about the members who believe AR to be "all lies." While a good many get angry with us for being "so evil," a very large number take a bizarre delight in feeling that AR articles are "persecution." Obviously, this is a nonsensical notion. AR is not burning down church buildings, nor lynching, shooting, or throwing stones at anyone. That would be persecution. We are only expressing our views and reporting the facts as best we see them. The expression of ideas, even when critical, in a free society's marketplace of ideas is what democracy is all about. Nevertheless, to many Worldwidars AR represents "persecution." The really odd thing, however, is that quite a few Worldwidars actually thrive on this so-called "persecution." Here is what one recent Ambassador graduate wrote me:

I'm sure you realize that for the WCG members, persecution is invigorating and even desirous, as it confirms their belief that they are Satan's main target, and it just makes them pray and study harder and send more money into HQ. I know, I was there. So were you.

Students of psychology will recall the chapters on religious masochism in Theodor Reik's classic work in psychoanalysis: *Masochism in Modern Man* (1941, now published in paperback by Pyramid Books under the title of *Masochism in Sex and Society*).

8. WCG members seem to forget that David was a bloody warrior and a king - not a priest, rabbi, or New Testament minister of the Gospel. Refer to I Timothy 3:1-7. Worldwidars also seem to forget that the editors of the Hebrew scriptures saw fit to leave David's most heinous sins in the record for scores of generations to read.

9. This WCG view derives from an out-of-context interpretation of Matt. 7: 1. For a clear understanding of what Jesus was getting at, keep reading (verses 2-5), then compare with the parallel account in Luke 6:37. For a clearer translation of Matt. 7:1-5 see the Charles B. Williams translation (*The New Testament in the Language of the People*). Finally, compare Matt. 7:1-5 with I Cor. 6:2-4 and Rev. 2:2.

10. Please note carefully that in making this observation I have not gone into any detail regarding when or how such an intervention should be done.

11. An important caveat needs to be made at this juncture. All too often individuals attempting to assist a relative out of the WCG assume they have solved all the member's major problems once the relative exits Worldwide. Unfortunately, that is all too often not the case. There are two major reasons for this: (1) The problems (emotional, family, psychological, etc.) that initially caused the relative to get interested in Worldwide may very well still be there. And (2) any extended membership in the WCG (or any other destructive cult, for that matter) tends to put onto the cultists even more problems (psychological, physiological, medical, financial, marital, etc.). For these two reasons it is not uncommon for ex-Worldwidars to experience great difficulty in adjusting to reality after exiting

Worldwide (this is true of those exiting almost all destructive cults). It is also not unusual for those exiting to go through a phenomenon psychologists call "floating" (slipping back into a cult-altered state of consciousness). Unfortunately, we have seen this occur all too often, with some former members returning to Worldwide or joining cults even more destructive than the WCG!

The solution appears to lie in some type of post-exit rehabilitation program involving family, clergy, and/or psychologists trained in the cult phenomenon. If that is the case, there is a direct parallel to the rehabilitation programs advocated by physicians when dealing with drug addicts who have gone through "detox." For a thorough discussion of rehabilitation as it applies to former cultists, see Rachel Andres and James R. Lane (eds.) *Cults & Consequences*. This helpful book may be ordered for \$14.95 by writing the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, 6505 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048, or call (213) 852-1234.

12. Actually, there is another area of information that is important - knowledge about what the member or invitee is really like. I will assume that the concerned individual is close enough to the WCG friend or relative to have a fairly good idea. However, this is obviously a very big assumption. We often do not really "know" those very near and dear to us. I will not attempt to say more about this potential problem, however, as it is clearly one for those trained in psychology and counseling.

13. Not everyone, of course, is so constrained. In the last year, for instance, we have received letters from a number of highly educated individuals who, in preparation for intervening in a WCG relative's situation, have read a half dozen books on Armstrongism and then sent the Report a check for \$150, requesting everything we ever published. Such thoroughness, while admirable, may be overkill for most individuals planning an intervention. On the other hand, we have found that that degree of study is often terrific therapy for the friend who has recently exited Worldwide and finds himself in a highly tense and confused state, attempting to find out what really happened to him and around him during his WCG years.

14. Notice carefully what I have italicized for emphasis: "with a critical eye." I stress those words because, in fact, when the would-be intervenor begins to study WCG publications there is a danger that if the materials are read passively the would-be intervenor can, like his friend, get sucked into the WCG mind set. It has happened. In fact, the same phenomenon happens with other cults as well. So if you are not fairly well-educated in theology, and in studying WCG materials you find yourself getting hooked, do yourself a big favor - contact a competent clergyman, theologian, or one of the organizations listed in footnote 17 and get a different perspective. Don't let overconfidence in your own intellect and education propel you down the same path of error previously taken by the one you are trying to help.

15. The would-be intervenor needs to understand the basic outline of the WCG indoctrination program. *The World Tomorrow* telecast is aimed at the general public and is almost never of a controversial nature. Most of the positions taken are very mainstream (condemnation of drugs, promiscuity, crime; concern about the environment, the arms race, and the breakdown of the modern family). The main underlying purpose of *The World Tomorrow* TV program is to continually get new subscribers for the free and also fairly noncontroversial *Plain Truth* magazine. The *Plain Truth* then leads the more religious-minded onto *The Good News* magazine, a more theologically oriented publication, and onto the WCG's doctrinal booklets. These, in turn, lead Bible students onto the WCG's *Correspondence Course* where the WCG's key doctrines are more openly expounded. Usually, by lesson seven the

student is introduced to the WCG's tithing doctrine. If he swallows that one and starts tithing to Worldwide, it is usually not too long before he is invited to attend WCG Sabbath services. It is in church services (where tape recording by members is prohibited) and especially in personal counseling that the WCG promulgates its truly cultic doctrines: absolute obedience to the ministry, spying on fellow members, distrust of all WCG critics, disfellowshipping and "marking" of ex-member critics, divorce of mates too critical of Worldwide, the cursing by God of those who do not conform to the WCG's triple-tithe system, etc. In recent years, the WCG's legal advisors, fearing continued bad publicity and lawsuits, have advised the church's ministry not to put such cultic teachings in writing. Hence those doctrines which exemplify the WCG's use of mind control and which show the WCG's truly destructive nature are not easily found in the WCG's official publications or even in letters written by WCG officials.

16. *AR* agrees with many positions taken by the WCG in its *Plain Truth* magazine. There is often a lot of common sense in its articles on the breakdown of the modern family, the drug problem, the evils of the arms race, the deterioration of the world's environment, race relations problems, the horrors faced by many of our senior citizens, crime and violence in America, and the rank materialism of the Western world. To understand, however, how we at *AR* view some of those "good words" by the WCG, let me resurrect one of WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong's favorite allegories. In putting down the teachings of some of the famous preachers of his day he would say in effect, "Take a glass of 100% pure water. It's natural, healthful, and life-sustaining. But if you add just a few drops of cyanide to the glass and drink it, the contents of that glass will kill you-even though 90% or more of what you drank was natural, healthful, and life-supporting." I personally can think of no better analogy for describing the WCG's doctrinal brew.

17. Among the organizations in this category are: Concordant Publishing Concern, *World Insight* magazine, Association for Christian Development, *Focus on Truth*, Academy for Scriptural Knowledge, and *Reunion News*. See [AR 43](#) (our Dec. 1989 issue), pp. 7-8, for addresses and details.

Additionally, let me make a further recommendation. One individual who has helped thousands of Worldwidiers over the years (including the entire *AR* staff) is former WCG pastor and Ambassador College instructor Howard Clark. Although saddened by much of what he observed during his years at WCG headquarters, and although the WCG's hierarchy has turned their backs on him because of his criticisms of the WCG's leaders, Howard still says, "I never met a Worldwide Church of God member I didn't like."

Because Howard, a few years ago, suffered a severe heart attack which left him chronically weakened (on top of the afflictions he's borne from the Korean War), I am reluctant to give out his northern California mailing address for fear he'll be swamped with lengthy letters. However, Howard says he is always willing to talk to any Worldwide member or friend of a member who is having a problem. Howard Clark's phone number is: (707) 457-3147. Many WCG members having church-related problems or individuals who would like to help a relative exit the WCG will find that Howard's understanding, compassion, and knowledge of the WCG could be of great help.

18. Most fundamentalist Christians who attempt to refute the WCG teaching on Christmas find that the WCG has some pretty good arguments against its observance. Nevertheless, the very best counter to the WCG's position, I believe, came from the late Walter Martin of Christian Research Institute (P.O. Box

500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693).

19. I don't mean to suggest that the WCG's hundreds of doctrines are not of any significance. But the world-be intervenor normally has limited resources. By limiting doctrinal research to the central problem areas, the preparation phase for the intervenor becomes far more manageable.

There is another reason why I suggest limiting research mainly to the central cult issues. If the Worldwider can come to understand that he is in a destructive cult and he makes the decision to come out from that mind-control environment, he has a whole lifetime ahead of him in which he can pursue knowledge in the fields of theology, philosophy, psychology, history, etc. Once his mind is freed from the shackles of cult mind control he will be able to work on those doctrinal questions that may be affecting his life, but which are not central to his key problems.

In a future issue I hope to cover a number of scriptural passages relevant to the four major cult characteristics described in footnote two. Of course, those researching the subject now can begin with *Strong's Concordance*, Bible dictionaries, and other Bible helps, or may consult with clergymen who have some knowledge of the cult phenomenon.

20. *Combatting Cult Mind Control* by Steven Hassan (copyright 1988, 199 pages plus chapter notes and appendices) is published by Park Street Press, One Park Street, Rochester, VT 05767. It is distributed in the U.S. by Harper and Row and in Canada by Book Center, Inc. of Montreal. Most larger bookstores in the U.S. either carry the book or can order it for you. It may also be ordered over the phone by calling Harper and Row's toll-free book ordering number: 1-800-638-3030. Hassan's book, available only in hardback, sells for \$16.95. If ordered directly from Harper and Row there is also a \$1.50 mailing fee if one can wait four weeks for delivery or a \$7.50 mailing fee if one wants express mail delivery. Those who cannot afford to purchase a copy should check with their local public or college library. If your library does not have a copy, talk to the head librarian, explain what Hassan's book is about, and ask them to order a copy.

21. I recently heard the funny story of one WCG member who started reading the Hassan book to learn more about what those crazy cults - not her own "True Church" - were all about. By the time she finished the book she came to see that she was in a destructive cult! She has since left the WCG. Let me say, however, I would not recommend that the concerned individual just give a copy of Hassan's book to the WCG friend expecting such dramatic results.

22. Bostonian Hassan has become recognized as an international expert on cults. He served as National Coordinator of FOCUS, a support and information network of former members of destructive cults. In 1979 he founded Ex-Moon, Inc., a support group composed of more than 400 former members of the Moon cult. For the last 12 years, he has lectured at dozens of colleges and universities, including Harvard, Yale, MIT, Johns Hopkins, Tufts, Oberlin, and the University of Pennsylvania. He has appeared on virtually all the major talk shows (*Larry King*, *Oprah*, *Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, *Geraldo*, etc.). And he has been interviewed and quoted extensively in the press (see, for instance, the "Trends" section of *Newsweek*, Oct. 23, 1989).

23. Experienced exit counsellors usually require a three-day period of counselling with the cult member

to assist him in making the initial break with the cult. Such counsellors usually charge a fee of \$500 to \$1000 per day plus expenses (airfare, food, and lodging). Additionally, many exit counsellors require the assistance of at least one former member of the cult. Such assistants often charge \$200 to \$300 per day plus expenses. Thus a three-day exit counselling program can easily run \$3,000 to \$5,000, and there is really no guarantee the exit counselling will be a success. On the other hand, even a mere five to ten years in the WCG can cost a member \$20,000 to \$100,000, or more, in contributions alone, not to mention the potential destruction of career, family, health, and mental well-being.

### **New Support Groups**

Exiting the WCG, like exiting any other destructive cult, can be a stressful experience for the member and also for the member's family and friends. One of the best ways to alleviate some of that stress is by having friendly contact with people who have themselves gone through the WCG exiting experience. Such contact can provide insights into the kinds of problems the Worldwider can initially expect, information about sources of help (books, organizations, cult-aware psychologists, understanding clergy, etc.), encouragement that the Worldwider can eventually overcome cult mind control and personal problems, and, most important, understanding friends who are both willing to listen nonjudgmentally and to share their own experiences.

Although some of the WCG "spin-off" groups do provide satisfactory assistance to those who are comfortable with the teachings of those new groups (and a number are a big improvement over the WCG), we at *AR* have noticed that many in need of a support group are simply not comfortable turning to another religious organization for help. That is why we are very pleased that a number of nondenominational support groups composed of former members are springing up around the U.S.

One such support group that deserves special mention is "Help Net" of Merrill, Wisconsin. Composed of men and women who have exited the WCG in Wisconsin in recent years, "Help Net" is a nondenominational (although predominantly Christian) group that meets every two to four weeks for mutual support and provides assistance to those facing WCG exiting problems. The group recently wrote *AR*:

We are only too happy to talk to anyone who has a problem regarding the WCG: members who are considering leaving, family and friends of members, and even WCG members who wish to remain members, but wonder why some of us have left. We are willing to correspond with those in need of emotional support. We are willing to visit with WCG members and relatives. (We are not a wealthy group, but we are willing to drive, or fly, a few hundred miles occasionally for a visit if travel expenses can be provided.) Presently, our group is preparing several packets of information dealing with different WCG facets: doctrinal, historical, biographical (HWA, Tkach), and cult analysis materials. We are also compiling a bibliography of materials relating to Worldwide. We emphasize that it is only our desire to help those in trouble. We are not attempting to steer anyone toward any particular religion.

For information on our support group, send us a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope, along with a summary of your needs and situation. You will receive a personal reply along with a list of available information, Write to: HELP NET, P.O. Box 811, Merrill, Wisconsin 54452.

Another support group may soon be forming in the northern New Jersey area. One of our readers, Warren J. Carlson, wrote us:

I think there's a real need for some sort of support group for those of us who are suffering our own sort of PTSD after the WCG/AC experience. Like Vietnam veterans (of which I am one), we ex-WCGers are an isolated lot often with no one to share our unique experiences.

I would like to form a Worldwidewers Anonymous support group for ex-members in the northern New Jersey area who would be interested in getting together periodically to rehash and let loose old experiences which I know have had a profound influence on most of us. There is no one, other than ex-WCGers, who can completely understand the "Armstrong experience" without having lived through it. I learned this recently in trying to explain to someone untainted by WCG propaganda just exactly how one becomes a member of that church. He found it extremely hard to believe that one couldn't just walk into services when he/she felt like it, as, for instance, in the local Methodist Church with its "All Welcome" sign out front.

I have plenty of my own experiences to relate regarding the WCG "life." I was a member from 1970 until 1979 and attended AC (Pasadena) for a semester in 1976. I went back to a local state college and will receive a B.A. (Honors) in History this month, and at the ripe old age of 45!

Those ex-Worldwidewers in the New Jersey area who would like to get together should write me [Warren J. Carlson] at 67 Clark Street, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028.

---

*Editor: Ambassador Report is not intended as simply a vehicle for the personal views of its editor or founding publishers. Unlike many publications dealing with religious subjects, we do not pretend to have the answers to all of the major theological and philosophical questions that confront mankind. Please keep that in mind as you read the following two articles which are presented just as submitted. All the views they present do not necessarily reflect our own. Nevertheless, we believe many of our readers will find them as thought-provoking as we did.*

## **Can Christians Be Demon-Possessed?**

by John Buchner

If Herman Hoeh [a WCG evangelist] really teaches that a Christian (that is, one in whom the Spirit of God dwells) can also be indwelt by an evil spirit ("demon"), he is not far from the kind of teaching that is common among modern pentecostals.

A review of several books on the topic, in pentecostal bookstores, indicates a fairly high preoccupation with the spiritual dangers faced by Christians. Titles such as *Conquering the Hosts of Hell*, *Pigs in the Parlor*, *The Adversary*, and *Demons Defeated* represent the field of popular, somewhat neurotic ideas on the topic. Somewhat calmer in its approach, Dickason's recent *Demon Possession and the Christian* nevertheless proposes that true Christians can be "possessed." However, a more conservative range of opinion is found in Montgomery (ed.) *Demon Possession*.

The autobiographies of many religious (mostly pentecostal) leaders abound with tales of demonic onslaughts in their early ministry; Herbert Armstrong's case is no different. A more subtle form of "satanic influence" is recounted by a professor of psychiatry (Wilson, in Montgomery - above). He says that "there seems to be a pervasive personality influence that results in evil." Such people become "wolves in sheep's clothing," intruding into religious organizations for their own gain, while appearing normal. Occasional aberrations are tolerated, because the individuals have built up what is called "idiosyncratic credit." As long as these people give their followers what they want (and cult members are quite often complicit in their situation) their position is secure.

The psychiatric literature (an interesting source is Checkley's *The Mask of Sanity*) abounds with inexplicable behavior and mental disorders that lend themselves to supernatural explanation. However, it is beneficial to consider a number of possible ways in which "demonic" influence is effected. The notion of the existence of supernatural beings, identities with characteristics and personalities which attempt to colonize human beings, with evil intent, is rather oldfashioned. No one (let alone Christians) need fear such a "possession."

Any "demons" may well be unresolved conflicts in the human psyche, manifesting themselves in a number of perplexing (and sometimes distressing) ways. Manic-depressive illness is more common than admitted, and in extreme cases may be attended by bouts of hysteria followed by profound melancholia. The thought processes accompanying this condition may give rise to fantasies and paranoid states, and there are a host of complex psychological states that can dominate and adversely affect those predisposed to them.

An "evil spirit" is often thought of as an attitudinal disposition, especially in authoritarian regimes where the legitimacy of the elite and the system depends on unquestioning obedience from the followers. Therein lies the manipulative power of terms such as "demonism": all thoughts, feelings and actions that show independence in the face of church hierarchy are defined as being of malevolent supernatural origin (the oxymoron being that a "normal" member would not have these attitudes, so the attribution of spiritual intervention follows).

Normal people, however, experience a range of fluctuating emotional and mental states and are not absolutely consistent with their behavior, so it is necessary to accept that we all come under negative forces (mostly arising out of our own psyche) and are capable of having evil thoughts and of performing the most unfortunate and cruel acts. To the extent that we love less than we ought, disregard the needs of our neighbors, and shunt God into some irrelevant corner of our lives, we all are culpable of wickedness. Such a state (despite the fact that we are by faith saved and filled with Christ's righteousness) can be compared to the demonic personality.

Christians are not exempt from these stresses (which may arise from social and relational disorders), and it may be that people who are inclined toward religion evidence a fairly high tendency toward neurotic and delusional personalities. It is easier for such people to interpret "normal" psychological variation as spiritual oppression. It may just be a case of "self-fulfilling prophecies."

Arguably more important, and mostly overlooked by person-oriented religionists, is the "demonic" nature of the oppressive, demeaning, exploitative and inequitable social structures - and consequential relational disjunctures - that characterize our human society. The corrupting influence of power, wealth, status, and competition may be the real "demons" we need to confront and declare impotent through faith in the living Christ who conquered "the world," and through responsible participation in the affairs of mankind.

The "devil" must be exorcised from religion, perhaps more urgently, as he is the embodiment of all those wicked structures that keep in power the enemies of the Gospel's liberty and grind the weak and pitiful under their fascist heel. Those who speak most vehemently against the devil in their midst are often the most authoritarian and unspiritual merchandisers of religion. They exercise the "spirit of fear" that shrivels the love of many.

Within these parameters, there could be no more demonic organization with its elfin rulers than the Imposter Church in Pasadena. Hoeh could be right, but he would find it hard to accept that his whole company of "christians," from "apostle rank" to lowliest third-tither, inadvertently are deceived and "possessed of the devil." As long as that arrogant and oppressive system (the details of which have long been cataloged in *AR's* pages) exists and opposes the liberal Spirit of God, every deluded supporter is an enemy of Christ and is in Satan's bonds. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ will save them.

*Editor: Mr. Buchner is currently writing his Ph.D. thesis and is associated with the Macarthur Institute of Higher Education (mailing address: P.O. Box 555, Campbelltown, N.S.W. Australia 2560). He is the author of the outstanding Armstrongism Bibliography (1984, 130 pages), which is currently being updated and revised with annotations.*

## **A New Perspective on the Afterlife**

by Robert L. Jackson\*

Every time I read the section on new religious groups in *Ambassador Report*, I'm surprised at how many new church groups have been formed by former Worldwide Church of God (WCG) ministers and members. What amazes me the most, however, is that these ex-Worldwidiers, after being lied to and mentally abused for years by the WCG often opt for another religious group that is little more than a clone of the WCG as far as doctrine is concerned. Having worked with the WCG doctrinal committee and editorial department for years, I learned firsthand that the majority of the WCG's teachings are based on dubious research, specious reasoning, quoting scripture out of context, and just plain intellectual dishonesty, and over the last 14 years *Ambassador Report* has printed article after article exposing this. Yet a number of these new groups who have read the *AR* regularly still continue to cling to WCG teaching uncritically.

I can almost see these people look at me in disbelief, shake their heads, and say: "What do you expect us to do - go back and join a Catholic or Protestant church and adopt their beliefs, beliefs we rejected when we joined the WCG? Or are you suggesting we should explore different belief systems that offer non-Christian explanations about our purpose for being on this planet, how God is judging us, and what awaits us in the afterlife?"

### **A Unique Alternative**

Ten years ago just after my wife miraculously recovered from cancer a close friend of mine gave me two books that gave us a totally different perspective on our purpose for life and what awaits us after this life. Those two books were entitled *Life After Life* and *Reflections on Life After Life* (both published by Bantam Books). The author, Dr. Raymond A. Moody Jr., received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Virginia and later returned to school and obtained an M.D.

Since leaving the WCG, I had sought to understand our purpose for existence and what happens when we die. I always felt the answers of many Christian denominations were inadequate. Some churches, for instance, stress that salvation depends on baptism by immersion and receiving the holy spirit. Others offer sprinkling as a form of baptism, infant baptism, or baptism for the dead, all apparently intended to ensure that you get to be in God's presence in the afterlife.

Dr. Moody's books offered me a totally new perspective on this subject. What Dr. Moody did was rediscover and document an experience that is widespread in the human condition. He called it the near-death experience (NDE). People who have an NDE appear to be at the brink of death or may even have been pronounced clinically dead from a heart failure, a bad accident, a drowning, etc. In general an NDE consists of a person leaving his or her body in spirit form and traveling through a tunnel or passageway to a world beyond that glows with love and understanding. In this realm the "dead" person meets dead friends and relatives bathed in glorious light and is guided through a life review by a Supreme Being, who sends the new arrival back again to live on earth.

Dr. Moody first heard of the NDE as a philosophy student at the University of Virginia. While working as a philosophy professor and later as a medical student, he began compiling case studies on NDEs. Today Dr. Moody has studied more than a thousand case histories of adults and children who have clinically reached the point of death and survived. He has devoted his entire psychiatric practice to counseling patients who have had NDEs.

But how common are these NDEs? Dr. Moody writes in his latest book *The Light Beyond* on page 6 that pollster George Gallup found that eight million adults in the U.S. have had some form of an NDE.

### **What Are Near-Death Experiences Like?**

Dr. Moody derived nine descriptive traits that define the near-death experience, but he explains that not all people who undergo an NDE have all nine traits. One of the traits is a sense of being dead. The person may find himself floating above his body watching the physicians trying to revive him or he may pass through a wall into another room and observe what other people are saying. Later when he is revived, he can recount the details of what he saw and heard. A person having an NDE has a real sense of peace and painlessness and finds himself in a spirit body that some describe as a cloud of colors or an energy field.

At some point in the experience a tunnel or portal opens to the person, and the person is propelled through the dark space toward a brilliant light. Some people go up stairways instead of through a tunnel. Once through the tunnel, the person usually meets beings of light glowing with a beautiful luminescence that seems to permeate everything and fill the person with love. Some see beautiful pastoral scenes. One

woman told Dr. Moody that she saw a meadow surrounded by plants, each with its own inner light. Occasionally people see cities of light that defy description in their grandeur. People communicate in telepathic ways that result in each person immediately understanding the other.

As the experience progresses, the person is drawn to a Supreme Being of Light who radiates total love and understanding. This Being takes the person on a total life review in which the person sees every action that he has ever done and the effect of that action on all the people in his life. The Being of Light helps him put the events of his life in perspective and points out that the two most important things in life are love and knowledge. Time is greatly compressed, and the experience is so pleasant that many become upset that they must return to their body on earth.

When I first describe an NDE to someone, he usually responds by saying that the NDE must be just a dream. But NDEers claim the experience is much more than a dream in that the experience transforms them. After the event NDEers say they no longer fear death - the obliteration of consciousness or self. One NDEer Dr. Moody spoke with was a fire and brimstone preacher who commonly told his congregation that "if they didn't believe the Bible in a certain way, they would be condemned to burn eternally." When the preacher went through his NDE, he said the Being of Light told him not to speak to his congregation like that anymore because it was making the lives of his congregation miserable, but the Being of Light did it in a nondemanding way. When the preacher returned to his pulpit, he offered a message of love, not fear, Dr. Moody recounts.

Upon their return, almost all NDEers say that love is the most important thing in life. Most find it the hallmark of happiness and fulfillment. They return from "death" with a sense that everything in the universe is connected and carry with them a newfound respect for knowledge. They become acutely sensitive to the immediate and long-term consequences of their actions. One sociology major told Dr. Moody:

The most important thing I learned from this experience was that I am responsible for everything I do. Excuses and avoidance were impossible when I was there with him reviewing my life.... I remember one particular incident in this review when, as a child, I yanked my little sister's Easter basket away from her, because there was a toy in it that I wanted. Yet in the review, I felt her feelings of disappointment and loss and rejection.... But when I was there in that review there was no covering up. I was the very people that I hurt, and I was the very people I helped to feel good.... It is a real challenge, every single day of my life, to know that when I die I am going to have to witness every single action of mine again, only this time actually feeling the effects I've had on others. (See pp. 46-47.)

In all my years in the Worldwide Church, I never heard such a clear and beautiful explanation of God's judgment. The WCG stressed gehenna fire, death, and three resurrections, one of which was to cast the evil people of the world into a lake of fire. While I can't prove the above passage by the sociology major is true, it does seem to reflect how you would expect an all-loving Supreme Being to treat his children.

#### **NDEers Become More Spiritual, Less Religious**

NDEers "tend to abandon religious doctrine purely for the sake of doctrine," Dr. Moody writes. One former seminary student reflected this attitude when he described his NDE to Dr. Moody:

My doctor told me I "died" during the surgery. But I told him that I came to life. I saw in that vision what a stuck-up ass I was with all that theory, looking down on everyone who wasn't a member of my denomination or didn't subscribe to the theological beliefs that I did. A lot of people I know are going to be surprised when they find out that the Lord isn't interested in theology. He seems to find some of it amusing, as a matter of fact, because he wasn't interested at all in anything about my

denomination. He wanted to know what was in my heart, not my head.

You can guess after reading the above passage that proponents of the near-death experience might receive some opposition to their writings from conservative ministers who tend to very zealously protect their tithe-paying supporters against teachings contrary to their denomination. And sure enough there is opposition from them. Dr. Maurice Rawlings, M.D., writes in his book *Beyond Death's Door* (published by Bantam Books) that a person's initial encounter with the Being of Light could represent "merely a sorting ground. It could also represent a deceptively pleasant situation to imply security and sanctuary and to prevent a desire or need for changed lives. This could be a satanic deception according to Charles Ryrie, Billy Graham, Stephen Board and other Christian spokesmen who quote II Corinthians 11:14" (p. 70).

And on page 100 of his book, Dr. Rawlings, himself a staunch Christian, explains that many theologians take issue with the concept of universal forgiveness offered by the Being of Light to patients having "good" experiences, whether their lives were good or not or whether they were believers or not. Dr. Rawlings reminds his readers that Satan, seldom appearing in a bad light, is capable of appearing as an angel himself.

While there is no way to prove or disprove the theory that Satan is deceiving those who have an NDE, there is also the unprovable possibility that Satan is using these Christian-professing ministers to deceive people about the Supreme Being's true personality. Perhaps the Supreme Being is far more merciful and forgiving than these ministers have ever grasped, and perhaps this Being has an agenda for humankind that none of us have truly comprehended. I think you have to judge the NDEs on their own merit. Are people who have had an NDE becoming atheists, or are they more certain than ever that a Supreme Being exists? Are they more despondent after the experience, or do they have a new zest for living? Do they seek to be more loving and kind than ever, or do they dive into materialism?

While Dr. Moody's three books will help you answer the above questions, you should also read Dr. Kenneth Ring's much lengthier and more scholarly works titled *Life at Death: A Scientific Investigation of the Near-Death Experience* (published by Quill in 1982) and *Heading Toward Omega: In Search of the Meaning of the Near-Death Experience* (published by William Morrow & Co. in 1984). Dr. Ring is a professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut and president of the International Association for Near-Death Studies, the only organization devoted to the spread of information about the NDE to professionals and the lay public.

I found rereading my NDE books and writing this short article to be an exhilarating, emotionally moving experience. I hope all AR readers will pick up one of the NDE books I have mentioned. I guarantee you that reading such a book is a joyous and captivating experience - especially reading the dozens of personal accounts from those who cheated death and lived to tell about it. Another nice feature about the NDE concept is that it is not the product of any religious group. Therefore, reading about the NDE will not lead you to some weird cult that wants to clean out your pocketbook. Knowing about the NDE, however, may broaden your outlook on life and give you an inner peace of mind by offering you answers to questions on the afterlife unavailable from most churches.

*\*The nom de plume of one of AR's much appreciated longtime friends and advisers.*

## Letters

I am a former member of the WCG. For almost a decade of my life, I found it a very depressing environment, a society in itself with rules, policies, and regulations that ruined most of our lives. I found myself depressed all the time. I was afraid to even counsel with anybody about it for fear of being reported to a minister. I guess I was supposed to smile and be a hypocrite. I found church services like a morning religious show. People there never seemed to get to know one another. Because everybody was suspicious of one another nobody trusted anybody. Was this God's church with so much fear and intimidation?...

I left because the minister in my area was beating up on the people and throwing them out like trash. I saw this, got scared, and left. WCG ministers don't seem to care for their people, other than for their property and money. There's no justice in that church.

-Canada

My son dropped out of college at the age of 19 and married a girl from the WCG. He has changed from a nice, proper young man to a rude, nasty person I don't know. He was in art and music. He no longer has any interest in such things. He and his wife have been married 2-1/2 years and now have a baby boy 15 months old. In the beginning I got close to the baby, but we had a disagreement and now they won't let me see the baby. I worry about him so much. They have moved and changed their phone to an unlisted number. I cannot tell you how much this hurts....

My son's father-in-law was also in the WCG. He died suddenly in his bedroom at home. My son was living there at the time. He found him dead and called me. I went over there and when I got there they were just taking the body out. One of the pastors from the WCG... was in the bedroom looking for a will. The body was not even out of the house yet. I could not believe my eyes....

The *AR* helps me a lot. When I read it I know I am not going crazy, that they have brainwashed my son, and he is not the son I used to know. I worry about him so much, but all I can do is pray for him that someday he will come back....

I used to show *ARs* to my son when his wife wasn't around. He acted like he was interested. But then he wouldn't talk about it in front of her. He seems to be afraid to let her know he read them.

-A Sad Mom in Ohio

Our only son and his wife became WCG members in 1970. Almost 20 years have gone by and things have not changed. In fact at this point and time it has become worse.

Although they live just 25 miles away, it has been a year since our son came by. His wife and two sons haven't been here for years. They treat us like we have the plague, don't answer our letters, ignore checks we send to the boys for Valentine's Day, Easter, and for good grades in school. They don't even cash them. I made the mistake of saying two presents we were giving the grandsons were like the Christmas gifts that we had given our two other grandsons (not in WCG). He refused to take them, making a scene which ended in him telling me to "shut up!" He would only take the presents after his father told him they were not Christmas gifts....

We are 71 and 67 years old and don't need this type of total disregard for our feelings by our son. We are of the Lutheran faith and feel that we are going to heaven. The WCG treats us like we are on the road to hell.

-Minnesota

Through research, I came across your address in an article published in the *Christian Herald*, October 1988. The reason for my research is that my father has become involved with the Worldwide Church of God and has gone through some changes that frighten our family. All of the things mentioned in the *Christian Herald* article (diet, many holidays, etc.) are what he is delving heavily into at the moment. What is also frightening is their secretive meeting place and how when asked if we could come to a service my father hesitated and finally said we could only come for a visit. I confronted my father one night three weeks ago and told him I felt that he was being bamboozled by this group because a week prior to this he gave them \$600. Of course, my comments did not go over too well. I told him I was afraid that the WCG would financially drain my parents. To make a long story short, I am afraid for my father and what will happen to our family.

My father has said that he would require proof that this organization is not on the up and up. He does not want to talk to a minister from another religion.

-Louisiana

Please stop sending me your X-rated newsletters about the Worldwide Church of God. In the first place, I don't believe a word of it. In the second place, if every word were true it is not my concern. Neither Mr. Tkach nor any other human runs God's Church. Christ always has run it and always will. If those men at Headquarters are doing wrong, let Christ handle it. You are certainly not Christians to write such garbage. Have you no fear of God?

-Mrs. John Buckwald  
Baltimore, Maryland

This is the second time someone has sent me your "report" that I did not want! The first time it was sent to my mother, who has absolutely nothing to do with the Church of God. After asking her a few times to make sure she didn't ask for it, I promptly BURNT IT TO ASHES!

Now, this time I'll probably do the same. You are wasting your time and effort to send something as your report to me.

Remember one thing, okay? If there is going to be any moving out of people in GOD'S CHURCH, GOD will do it! Not you or any human being. Not even Satan the Devil, unless God permits it, if you can even believe this.

You called me "friend" in your introduction letter. I respect that. But you are going about this report on your whole attitude [sic] the wrong way. But I probably can't make you see that, can I? Whatever does not include GOD WILL FAIL! I am sorry that the things you say about Joseph Tkach, in your research and opinion, are true. Or seem to you to be true. But I'm one who let's GOD JUDGE what will be done. Not some imperfect human, like the rest of us.

-[No name was given.]

P.S. I can't give you my name because it may be used against me. I'm trying to be as sincere, okay? However, if I receive any more copies of your report, I'll burn it and send back the ashes to you in an envelope. That is how serious I am about waiting for GOD TO JUDGE what should be done. It is truly sad that all you are doing, in my opinion whatever that is worth, is making people's lives miserable. The focus is not what GOD thinks, which WCG members should be thinking about. But the focus is to get personal and have personal vendettas. Why can't we all take a good, hard look at ourselves in the mirror for once? Just once?

P.P.S. It hurt God that someone would try to include my mother in something she knows nothing about. Just leave her out!

*Editor: The above letter, postmarked Wisconsin, came to us unsigned and with no return address. If we were the ones sending him and his mother copies of AR (and we weren't, as far as I can tell), how could we take them off our mailing list? The information we presented on Tkach apparently seemed accurate to him, but he neither cares if it is nor indicates he plans to look into the matter for himself. He says he doesn't believe in "judging," but he judges the Report without even attempting to get all the facts. He seems to believe that if something needs to be done then we should just sit back and let God do it. If that is the case, then why is the WCG trying to do "God's Work"? Why not just let God do his own work? And what about HWA's old teaching that "God always works through human beings"? When HWA taught that did he mean God was unable to accomplish anything through anyone other than himself or Joe Tkach? I've noticed that the God in my Bible has the ability to work with, or through, any human being at any time he so desires. Doesn't there seem to be a tremendous disparity between the God we read of in the Bible and the God worshipped by the author of the above letter?*

I have been out of WCG since 1985. My two daughters are still in the group. Recently, one of the WCG members called me and asked if I had any HWA tapes that I may have kept. She said all the WCG congregations have been instructed to destroy all of HWA's tapes. She said she felt that the church's history was being destroyed.

I told one of my daughters about it and she said that that member feels Joseph Tkach is being led by Satan and that the church is becoming the "lukewarm church."

Mr. Amos, a minister from the Columbus, Ohio church has decided he is one of the Two Witnesses and is starting a new group. Apparently, the member mentioned above is planning to become part of Mr. Amos' following.

-Ohio

*Editor: Many WCG ministers privately teach that those who leave the church are inevitably put under a curse. Yet, our mail indicates that just the opposite is usually the case. Note the following example:*

I was terminated from the WCG in 1974 at the age of 26 after 10 years in the membership. A low self-image during my childhood, I feel now, made the WCG and its message a self-depreciating structure of great attraction.

I finished high school in 1966 with an A+ average and near the top of the senior class. The WCG minister advised against a secular college and I was rejected from Ambassador three years in a row - which was humiliating and further devastating to my self-image. "Stay in the local church area, where you can do the most good," I was admonished. That I did, while pursuing a career in broadcasting.

When removed from the church for being too "creative," my life metamorphosed quickly over the next year. From writing, I soon was teaching speech and journalism in an area vocational school. At the age of 26 I entered an off-campus college program and completed my BA and MBA while teaching full-time.

In 1978, I began my own company, developing and duplicating audio and video sales and training programs. In 1986, I commenced studies toward a doctorate in business communications, which was finished in March 1988.

The years since my break with the WCG have been the most fruitful, fulfilling and exciting years of my life. It was as though a terrible burden had been lifted from my creative processes and my self-image has grown stronger year by year.

Looking back, the years in WCG have given me great insight into the functioning of my mind. Bitterness has now evaporated into appreciation for lessons learned. Life goes on.

-Robert C. Grupe, Ph.D  
President, Quality Productions Inc.  
4230 N.W. 36th  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

In reading the material I have already received, I was able to get the story behind the story of the official WCG and filled in a lot of gaps. It reads like a drama performed in front of millions, with the uncanny ability of the WCG to suppress the facts of the actual events exposed. Thank you again for revealing what may be the biggest con ever perpetrated on sincere Christians on their journey for truth.

-Florida

Thanks for the info. I guess it's a little morbid always wanting to go back to view the dead body. But on the other hand, it's nice to hear from others who proved there's life after WCG.

-Former WCG member, California

Thank you so much for all your efforts publishing the *Report*. AR was mainly responsible for getting my family and myself out of WCG. We were in 16 years.

Thank you! Thank you!

-Redlands, California

#### **A Note From the Editor**

One of the more difficult things about editing any periodical is having to decide what goes in and what stays out. That problem was particularly acute with this issue because in recent months we have received an unusually large amount of inside information, remarkable letters, and even articles dealing with the WCG. Unfortunately, not only are the *Report's* finances limited, but my time and the amount of

time I can reasonably expect our volunteer staff to donate are also limited. (After all, we have to earn a living, and we have family responsibilities like everyone else.) Consequently, this issue represents only about one third of what I had hoped to publish.

I am going to try to complete another issue within two months. Hopefully we can then get out most of our backlog of information, articles, and letters. I hope those of you who believe in what we are doing will continue to support our efforts as you are able. The *AR* staff and I cannot do it alone. We need your help.

My thanks to all of you who helped make this issue possible.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR45\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR45 September 1990

### Stressful Times Hit the WCG

Officially, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) is not in a crisis. And the official portrait of WCG Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach continues to smile on the editorial page of his Plain Truth magazine. But even a fleeting review of the WCG's own publications for the last few months reveals that the WCG is going through stressful times. Not only is the WCG's income and influence in decline, but many members perceive their church as one being transformed into a spiritually limp and lukewarm version of what church founder Herbert W. Armstrong intended.

As reported in the June 4 issue of *The Worldwide News* (WN, the WCG's official newspaper), Ambassador College in Pasadena saw its fortieth and final commencement ceremony on May 18. Although many, including Dean of Students Greg Albrecht, were saddened to the point of being near tears, Tkach apparently saw the occasion in a more festive light. At the reception following graduation Tkach proposed a toast to the last Ambassador graduates of Pasadena and had 3,000 balloons released into the California sky. Tkach's attempt to make the day a happy experience for the campus' last graduating class was marred, however, when that evening's graduation ball was rudely interrupted. At about 10:30 p.m. a squadron of helicopters from the California Department of Agriculture buzzed the Pasadena campus spraying malathion, the toxic chemical pesticide being used to attack a local infestation of the Mediterranean fruit fly. As a result of the chemical bombardment, all of the food and refreshments being served outdoors at the ball had to be destroyed.

With the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College closed, the last remaining Ambassador campus is the one at Big Sandy, Texas. For most of the summer Ambassador employees were busy stripping the Pasadena campus of its books, desks, pianos, computers, and other moveable property for shipment to Texas. For the time being, Tkach is hoping to move much of the church's operations into the vacated buildings. For instance, the church's 24-member legal team, now renting office space on Lake Avenue in Pasadena, will soon be moving into what used to be the college's Fine Arts Building on Green Street (WN, May 7, p. 8). Nevertheless, such relocations appear to be only temporary.

### Pasadena Property to Be Sold

Even though AR reported in March 1989 that Tkach intended to sell off the entire 70-acre Pasadena campus, until very recently WCG spokesmen flatly denied Tkach had any such plan. But then, on May 23, 1990, the Pasadena *Star-News* ran a front page article entitled "Real estate agent says Ambassador for sale." In it, real estate agent Ted Slaught of the Charles Dunn Co. of Los Angeles was quoted as saying it is "common knowledge" among community realtors that the WCG is going to sell its Pasadena properties. Slaught went on to detail how the property had been submitted to a number of domestic and foreign prospective buyers who had already made preliminary inspections of the campus. Ambassador spokesmen continued to claim that the campus was not being "listed" as for sale. But church spokesman Michael Snyder admitted to the *Star-News* that if the WCG received a "serious offer" it would be willing to sell all of its Pasadena real estate *including Ambassador Auditorium* (called the "House for God" years ago when contributions for its construction were being solicited). Finally, with WCG members asking a lot of embarrassing questions, Tkach was forced to admit (WN, June 4, p. 1) that he, indeed, did plan to sell off the entire Pasadena campus.

In actual fact, the WCG has already received a number of serious offers. One, by a group of Japanese businessmen, for \$140 million was rejected by Tkach as too low. Tkach apparently is still hoping to get at least \$200 million for the property. Most Pasadena-area realtors, however, say such a figure is unrealistic in today's rapidly deflating real estate market. But what a realistic figure would be is difficult to say. As recently as early 1989 an undeveloped three acres of land on the southeast corner of Orange Grove and Colorado boulevards in Pasadena was sold by a Pasadena Elks Lodge to Ramser Development for \$11 million. Ramser intends to construct a \$200 million luxury resort hotel on the property which is directly across Green Street from Ambassador College (*Los Angeles Times*, Real Estate section, Feb. 5, 1989). According to knowledgeable sources,

Ambassador officials had made an \$8 million bid on the same property only to lose out to Ramser.

### **Big Sandy Woes**

With the Pasadena campus closed, Ambassador College educators are seemingly pinning all their hopes on the Big Sandy campus. But here, too, the WCG has run into big problems. As we reported in our last issue, Ambassador officials had hoped to see Big Sandy accredited within about one year. Now, however, Ambassador officials are privately saying that accreditation in the near future is unlikely. A policy change by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has resulted in a rule requiring colleges requesting accreditation to perform an 18-month self study *before* the association will consider an application for accreditation. The problem AC faces is that the State of Texas is requiring all colleges to be fully accredited by July 1991 (WN, May 21, p. 8). If unaccredited by that date Ambassador College will be closed down by the State of Texas. Moving back to California would not be an option because California's new anti-diploma-mill law is as stringent as that of Texas. Had Ambassador not left Pasadena the State of California would have most likely closed the Pasadena campus by 1991. No wonder some college officials are speculating that AC may eventually have to move to another country (Granada? The Cayman Islands? Sri Lanka?) if it is going to survive at all.

Accreditation is not Ambassador's only problem. AC's administrators have been so disorganized of late they have been unable to complete publication of a college catalogue in time for the new school year. Some recent AC applicants were dissuaded from pursuing an AC education when they were informed that an Ambassador College catalogue would not be available for them until *after* they were accepted for admission and had arrived on campus.

---

&COPY;1990 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123  
John Trechak, Editor & Publisher Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

Ambassador administrators have also been faced with delays in their construction program. One of our correspondents sent us the following:

Big Sandy, Texas - As construction of additional classroom and dormitory facilities on the Big Sandy campus of Ambassador College continued to fall behind schedule, college officials recently gave approval for the general contractor responsible for construction to begin working on Saturdays to meet the deadline set by the college. Until recently, the Worldwide Church of God, which owns and operates the college, had required construction to cease each Saturday, which the church observes as its Sabbath. The reason for the change in policy was the need to complete the classroom and dormitory buildings in time for the start of the new fall semester beginning in September.

### **Income: Negative Growth**

The future of Ambassador College is but one of the many problems being faced by Tkach. Church income is way down. Church Treasurer Leroy Neff has confided to friends that he is very pessimistic about the WCG's financial future. Neff has reported that contributions to the church's building fund (for Big Sandy) "are low and even less than last year" (WN, March 19, p. 3); that the WCG's spring holy day offerings were down 10.6 percent compared to last year (WN, May 7, p. 3); that offerings at Pentecost were down 7.5 percent (WN, June 18, p. 8); and that overall WCG income for the first half of 1990 was down 0.4 percent. Wrote Neff, "It is probably the first time since the early or mid 1970s that we have completed the first half of the year with such a low figure" (WN, July 16, p. 3).

Not surprisingly, the WCG is having to cut back in many areas. A few examples: There is apparently no more *World Tomorrow* on radio anywhere (WN, June 18, pp. 1 and 4). The WCG has been forced to discontinue its telecast's toll-free WATS telephone service, a development Tkach somehow sees as "quite encouraging" (WN, May 7, p. 1). Tkach has taken the WCG's telecast completely off the air in Australia because: "The World Tomorrow is perceived [in Australia] as an American religious show, with accompanying negative attitudes, particularly in light of the American televangelist scandals. Audience levels [for The World Tomorrow] on Sunday morning are so low they are virtually immeasurable.... In addition, airing costs have spiralled to unacceptable levels..." (WN, May 7, p. 1).

Australia may not be the last area to be deprived of the WCG's telecasts. Tkach has stated: "I'm not saying we're thinking of doing away with television. But somewhere along the line - five or ten years from now - as television rates continue to escalate, we may be forced to" (WN, June 18, p. 1). Some insiders feel it will be a lot sooner than five years before Tkach takes the telecast completely off the air. Whether or not David Hulme, the WCG's leading broadcaster and media expert, will then decide to start his own television ministry remains unclear.

## Plain Truth Cut Back

The *Plain Truth* (PT) magazine is another medium being cut back by Tkach (WN, June 18, p. 1). Actually, unknown to most WCG members, the PT's circulation has been quietly diminished a number of times in the last few years. One reason has been the ongoing campaign waged by many Christian groups and former WCG members to continually empty PT magazine racks of their contents thereby making the WCG's magazine rack campaign very expensive. We have heard of some regional groups which have repeatedly removed and destroyed thousands of PTs every week. We know of a number of Canadian groups who each claim to have removed over 25,000 PTs per year in a number of Canadian cities. And some anti-cult groups have even resorted to removing entire PT magazine racks.

We've heard of one ex-WCG member back east, for instance, who was so distraught over his many wasted years in Worldwide that he frequently suffered from insomnia. On such nights he would get into his pickup and drive about town looking for PT magazine racks emblazoned with the words "FREE-TAKE ONE." So he would take the whole rack, that is. He would repeat the process throughout the night until his pickup was completely filled with PT-loaded magazine racks. He would then head for the city dump. Only afterward was he able to go home and sleep peacefully.

No wonder the WCG now frequently bolts its magazine racks to the sidewalk without even asking permission from nearby store owners or city officials (*Philadelphia Enquirer*; May 6, 1987; p. 2-BJ). And in Britain, at least, the WCG is adding a threatening message to its racks:

**Warning:** The magazines on this stand are provided free of charge to all having a genuine wish to read them. Any persons removing the same for other than genuine reasons may commit an **offense** rendering themselves **liable to prosecution**.

We have even heard that the WCG's lawyers have sent threatening letters to individuals they have suspected of removing PTs for reasons they did not consider "genuine."

Incidentally, while we at AR can fully appreciate the strong feelings of many anti-WCG activists and while successful defenses might be raised in litigation over the kinds of anticult activities described above, we do not recommend or advocate such activities. The WCG has First Amendment rights like the rest of us; those rights should be respected. More important, we don't want to see well-meaning zealots embroiled in costly legal battles even if they eventually "win." Nevertheless, with all of that said, we have been told by sources privy to *Plain Truth* planning that the activities of many anti-cult activists are the main reason Tkach has decided to cut back the church's magazine rack program and the circulation of the *Plain Truth* magazine.

## The Shifting Sands of WCG Doctrine

As reported in past issues of AR, since 1986 Tkach has changed numerous WCG doctrines. He has done flip-flops on healing and medicine, makeup, birthdays, church eras, and the nature of the true gospel. Many WCG members had hoped that the rate of WCG doctrinal change would have slowed by now. Nevertheless, Tkach has made it clear that many more changes are on the way.

In a bitter editorial in the WN (May 21, p. 1), Tkach, displaying the bullheadedness for which he is becoming famous, was emphatic that he is going full steam ahead with his (and his inner group's) agenda for changing the WCG. Without naming names, Tkach lashed out at "predatory prophets" who continue to criticize his deviations from the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong. Openly stating that HWA was wrong about many things, "especially having to do with prophecy" (p. 6), Tkach attacked his critics with statements such as:

I am sorry to have to say it, but certain ones who were once among us have now set themselves up as special "prophets," or "watchmen" of the Church or the nation, using fiery language to proclaim that "This is the end!"... But these would-be prophets want to change God's love into a yoke of bondage. They want to lead the unsuspecting right back into the very errors that Jesus warned the ministry about in Matthew 20:25-28. They lust to be lords over God's people. They want to lure people into their web of power, authority and fear in order to exercise dominion over them, all promising bigger and better spiritual rewards.

The ministries that have openly criticized Tkach for deviating from HWA's teachings and then lying about it include: Triumph Prophetic Ministries (William F. Dankenbring, whose powerful writing in *Prophecy Flash!* newsletter continues to dismantle the Tkach facade brick by brick), Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003; The Church of God International (Garner Ted Armstrong, son of the WCG's founder), P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, TX 75710; *The Faithful Word* newsletter (which has caught Tkach in scores of lies), Box F-141, 323 S. Franklin Bldg., Chicago, IL 60606-7094; and *The Philadelphia Trumpet* (Gerald R. Flurry and John R. Amos, two ministers who recently exited the WCG and distribute Flurry's 83-page book *Malachi's Message*, a scripturally based critique of corruption at WCG headquarters), P.O. Box 1787, Edmond, OK 73083-1787. Ironically, while none of these four ministries seem to subject their followers to fear tactics, claims of extravagant spiritual rewards, or totalitarian yokes of bondage, such descriptions do perfectly fit the WCG!



Some current WCG members are not happy with the way Tkach is changing many of the doctrines taught by HWA. One couple, Mr. and Mrs. Jules Dervaes (P. O. Box 92322, Pasadena, CA 91109), have parked their sign-laden van near Ambassador College in Pasadena every Saturday for the last two years. Tkach saw to it that they were disfellowshipped.

Even more deplorable than Tkach's repeated mischaracterizations of competing ministries is his increasing willingness to legally harass those critical of the direction his new WCG is taking. Notice this excerpt from a recent letter put out by *The Faithful Word* group:

We took this issue to our mailing service, only to be told by a PRIVATE mailing service that they could not mail the FW any longer. It seems they had been traced down and harassed by attorneys from California and Chicago who represented a large church. They were apparently told the FW held "conflicting beliefs with a major religious organization" (whatever that is) and possibly even [committed] mail fraud!....

We are apparently just one more in a long line of "dissidents" who are finding that MONEY ANSWERS ALL THINGS! To those who can afford to retain large "litigation teams" in most of the major cities of the United States, reaching up to swat down "flies" like us (who still care about the TRUTH) is no more than a minor irritation!

Truth is not even an issue to these people! Money - income - is the ONLY issue! Income has become their only means to measure their righteousness. "Gain" has become their "Godliness." They glory in their (faithless) shame.

Other religious groups have similarly been harassed. For instance, Richard C. Nickels of "Giving and Sharing" (see below) was warned in a letter from WCG attorneys that he should no longer distribute copies of Herbert W. Armstrong's famous booklet *1975 in Prophecy*. What possible legal basis the WCG could have for such a demand is unclear because in the 1960s many thousands of copies of the booklet were distributed without the copyright notice required by Sections 10 and 19 of the Copyright Act of 1909. The booklet should therefore be properly viewed as in the public domain. Nevertheless, Tkach clearly does not want it distributed.

Most WCG members are oblivious to the full extent of change Tkach intends for the WCG. But some idea of how extensive that change will be can be seen in a comment made by WCG PR man Michael A. Snyder in a February 1, 1989 letter to author Dr. Ruth Tucker. He wrote:

...Three years ago Joseph W. Tkach, the minister who succeeded Mr. Armstrong, instituted a wide-ranging review of all published literature, which is still underway (there are more than 100 published titles). Herbert Armstrong's book, *Mystery of the Ages*, has been pulled from circulation pending a doctrinal review and the book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* has been reissued in a new revised edition.

Because the WCG's doctrines are expounded upon through its official publications and because each publication clarifies at least one or two major doctrines, the fact that "more than 100 published titles" are being reviewed would logically infer that at least 100 WCG doctrines are up for grabs. One WCG insider, however, has confided to AR that the number of WCG doctrines that need to be revised is closer to 300!

While some doctrines have been openly changed, many have been secretly modified. This has been accomplished by rewriting older articles by HWA and others while leaving their by-lines on the revised articles. A look at the copyright notices on many newly printed WCG books and articles is quite revealing. For instance, on the WCG reprint "How to Be an Overcomer" there now appears the following odd copyright notice: "Original text by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986) & COPY; 1953 Worldwide Church of God" - not the standard form of notice. Obviously, many old articles - and doctrines - are being doctored.

### Prophecies Useless?

Of the scores of doctrinal topics now in flux, prophecy seems to be particularly foggy to Tkach. While *The World Tomorrow* still devotes time to the subject and while letters by Tkach to his *Plain Truth* readers tout the WCG's understanding of Bible prophecy (see his May 1990 letter, for example), in private Tkach seems to be convinced the church is no longer in HWA's "gun lap." He has told friends Germany may not unite shortly, that a United States of Europe may be further off than anticipated, that a temple may not be built in Jerusalem, and that Christ's return may be far in the future (on the latter, see WN, April 23, p. 1). Other ministers at church headquarters seem similarly confused. Note what one recent Ambassador graduate wrote to AR:

I heard a tape by evangelist Ron Kelly a while back in which he made jokes about prophecy, and essentially (almost directly) admitted that "we" (students of Bible prophecy) know so very little about prophecy that it is almost useless to study it. You just wait until it happens, I guess, and then you find it in some obscure passage in Ruth or Obadiah or somewhere. If that's the case then what is the point of Gene Hogberg's "Worldwatch" in the WN? To state each month that which is obvious - that Europe is going to unite? Only an idiot would say it is not. My church friends in California are mesmerized by events in Europe, as if that is proof of Bible prophecy [being fulfilled]. My goodness, where does it say in the Bible that 12 nations (plus maybe three, four, or five more from the east) are supposed to form a new mega-market in which the U.S. (supposedly Manasseh) is irretractably intertwined, and four of whose members (Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands) are "Israelite"?

### **Interracial Marriage**

The significance (or lack thereof) of race and the way in which the world's races should interact is another doctrinal area undergoing sweeping changes in the WCG. Whereas HWA saw the Anglo-Saxon "race" as having a special past and future historical role, Tkach increasingly emphasizes the complete equality of all races. Whereas HWA was known to have refused to marry interracial couples, Tkach has stated that while his church is not trying to encourage interracial marriage, he now strictly prohibits ministers from refusing to marry a man and a woman because they are of different races (WN, July 30, p. 1).

As Tkach himself acknowledged (p. 5), the topic of interracial marriage is an emotionally charged one in WCG circles. Even in the Church of God International, once thought to be more "liberal" than the WCG, interracial couples have had difficulties being accepted by fellow church members and have even been denied marriage by some ministers. For instance in 1986 when CGI ministers refused to marry one CGI couple because he was white and she was black, the couple was forced to go to a Baptist minister to have their wedding performed.

The couple, now Mr. and Mrs. (C. A. and Doreen) Foland, left CGI to help found the Sabbath-keeping Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which is pastored by former WCG minister Ross May. The Folands have appeared on a number of talk shows and their personal trials have been documented in newspapers. Those interested in knowing more about their story or in hearing a tape they distribute called "Grace and Race," which deals with the difficulties inherent in interracial marriages, should write to Mr. C. A. Foland at 223 N. Lynn St., Indianapolis, IN 46222.

### **More Oxen, More Ditches**

Some WCG members suspect that Tkach is in the process of watering down the WCG's Sabbath doctrine. Help Net (see [AR44](#), p. 8) has speculated that the WCG's new emphasis on the "wave sheaf" and on Christ having risen to heaven on a Sunday (see WN, March 6, 1989, p. 5 and *The Good News*, May/June 1988) may be a precursor of greater tolerance for Sunday worship. Tkach's recent decision for construction to be done at Big Sandy on Sabbath days has further upset some members who feel working on the Sabbath is a direct violation of the fourth commandment and that this is another sign that their church is becoming lukewarm. The following letter from a Big Sandy WCG member is typical of a number we have received:

In July, Mr. Tkach flew in to give a sermon, right before leaving for Kenya. His sermon started with a question: "It's the Sabbath, it's winter, and your furnace just broke. Would God want you to fix it, or have your family be cold and suffer? No, he'd want you to fix it. It would be considered an ox in the ditch. Well, we here at the college also have an ox in the ditch. We will not be able to open classes this fall on schedule and that may cause problems with the accreditation program. It may be that we will have to ask the outside crews to start working on the Sabbath."

The very next Friday night after sundown men laying carpet were still at work. The following morning a local contractor, Scott Zhorne, and another builder, both WCG members, had full crews at work pouring concrete and doing other labor. Then just this week a subcontractor contacted a local independent contractor who is in Worldwide and asked if he would help on a big job that needed to be finished. When asked where and for how many days, the member was told it was for AC and it required working seven days a week until the job was completed. The member declined.

The first thing many at Big Sandy say about this is, "So what? They did it with the House for God [in Pasadena]. What's the big deal?" So I asked evangelist Ron Dart about this. He said [Sabbath work on the House for God] caused a great problem within the ministry. The conclusion reached was that DMJM [the firm building the House for God] had been given a contract with complete control from architect to the finished product. The church was not involved in any decisions such as hiring or firing of employees, deciding how the job was to be done, etc. The difference now is that the church and college *are the contractors*. They do the hiring and are working side by side with outside crews. Church personnel have been brought here to oversee projects (Jem Wendt, for instance, for air conditioning) and to supervise the crews who are really the "stranger that is within thy gates" [Ex. 20: 10, Deut. 5:14].

Since they announced in the Pastor General's Report last fall that you could own a McDonald's - just so long as you yourself don't work on the Sabbath - what does the Sabbath now mean?

Here at Big Sandy the church does have the control over hiring workers and deciding when work can be performed. They could have worked two consecutive shifts per day by stringing lights. There are plenty available from the oil field suppliers that can turn night into day. Working on seven Sabbaths will not help the college that much. But they have just relaxed one more of the fundamental doctrines of the church.

### **Recovering Gays Welcomed**

Church teaching about homosexuality is another doctrinal area feeling Tkach's liberal touch. In the past, the WCG put out articles and booklets that not only condemned the "gay lifestyle," but did so in very blunt terms. Now, some claim, Tkach wants the WCG to avoid being abrasive on the topic. Some who have written the WCG's headquarters in the last six months asking what the church's position is on homosexuality say the church never even answered their letters. Apparently, the subject of homosexuality is undergoing doctrinal review.

More than a few WCG members have expressed surprise over a recent article that appeared in an official WCG publication with Tkach's full approval. "Hope for Homosexuals" by WCG minister Dennis Luker (*The Good News*, May/June 1990) reveals the WCG ministry's changing attitude toward gays. While still labeling homosexuality as a sin, gone is the kind of authoritative language that once described homosexuality as particularly loathsome. Luker quotes I Cor. 6:9-11 to show that homosexuality is no worse than other sins. He then writes (on p. 25):

God in past ages has called homosexuals into his Church, and he is doing so today!

The big question is, Will you as a member of God's Church have the love, compassion and understanding to accept these brethren and help them grow spiritually?

Some may feel that homosexuality is the worst of sins. But notice what Christ said in Matthew 11:23-24....

Luker goes on to explain how he has counselled many gays and how "Not all fit the description of Romans 1...." Most gays he's known, says Luker, were just "victims." They just didn't get enough love from their parents, he says. (It's interesting that while the WCG is ostensibly critical of modern psychology, Luker relies on behaviorist and Freudian concepts to explain away why gays are gay.) Luker then goes on to explain why those with AIDS are welcome at WCG services and quotes Tkach: "Let's not be so unduly terrified about this disease [AIDS] that we lose our Christian perspective about extending the right hand of fellowship to our own brethren."

Are homosexuality and AIDS really as widespread in WCG congregations around the country as Luker's article implies? "I don't think so," said one former WCG minister and Ambassador College instructor. "At least I don't think it's been that big a problem among the general membership. But I wonder now about Headquarters. Dennis' article reminds me of the kind that used to come out in church publications before scandals broke in the press - the kind of article that was used to prepare the members for the upcoming shock of revelations from the news media. Now they've got me wondering what is really going on down there in Pasadena."

Yes, a lot of us are wondering.

### **Ambassador Foundation Continues to Entertain the World's Wealthy**

Ambassador College in Pasadena is gone, and *The World Tomorrow* may not have a tomorrow, but the Ambassador Foundation's 1990-91 concert-opera-ballet-entertainment season is in full swing. The Ambassador concert schedule, which is heavily subsidized by the WCG and provides thousands of free tickets to some of California's wealthiest music lovers, has become a mainstay of the Southern California cultural scene. The Foundation's 1990-91 season lineup includes:

At least five different symphony orchestras, including the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields with Sir Neville Marriner (recently honored with an award from Tkach); numerous opera stars, including June Anderson and Mirella Freni; more than a dozen great pianists, including Andre Watts and Ivo Pogorelich; violinists Pinchas Zukerman and Nidja Salerno-Sonnenberg; cellist Mstislav Rostropovich; flutist James Galway; the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in 17 different programs; numerous chamber ensembles, including the Juilliard String Quartet; guitarists Julian Bream, Christopher Parkening, Manuel Barrueco, and the Romeros; numerous ensembles specializing in pre-Baroque music; the Koslov Youth Dance Ensemble of Moscow; actor William Windom (as Ernie Pyle); the Jose Greco (Spanish music and dance) Company; Opera A La Carte doing "The Pirates of Penzance"; the Vienna Choir Boys; the Pirin Bulgarian National Folk Ensemble; the New England Ragtime Ensemble; The Shanghai Acrobats and Imperial Warriors of the Peking Opera; Keith Brion and his Peerless Sousa Band; Ballet Folklorico Nacional de Chile; The Soviet Acrobatic Revue; The Canadian Brass; Cab Calloway, the Nicholas Brothers, and the Rhythm Kings; Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys; Chet Atkins; the David Grisman Quintet; jazz great Billy Taylor; singers Tony Martin and Barbara McNair; The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra; Mel Torme and the McGuire Sisters; Larry Elgart and his Manhattan Swing Orchestra, the Modern Jazz Quartet; jazz guitarist Lee Ritenour; jazz saxophonist Scott Hamilton; and many, many more.

One Southern California music aficionado has called the Foundation's cultural program "an absolute delight, a veritable orgy of entertainment pleasure." Leading Southern California music critics have not always been as enthusiastic. For instance, see Martin Bernheimer's "Beckmesser Awards of 1988" (*Los Angeles Times*, Calendar section, Jan. 1, 1989) where the Foundation received his "Stretch-the-truth-in-advertising award," and Robert D. Thomas' column in the June 25, 1989 Pasadena *Star-News* in which the Foundation was accused of being "heavy on hyperbole." Nevertheless, Ambassador Auditorium is recognized as an acoustical gem (see "A Fabulous Hall" in the *Los Angeles Times*, San Gabriel section, Feb. 4, 1990), and many of the artists who perform there are unquestionably first rate. Those who would like a free color brochure describing the Foundation's 1990-91 season can obtain one by calling the Ambassador ticket office's toll-free number (which remains operational): 1-800-CONCERT.

---



THAI PRESENTATION — Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach presents a ceremonial gift to Abbot Phra Thepsopon of the Wat Thai (Thai Temple) in Los Angeles, Calif., April 26. The presentation was part of a ceremony commemorating the 100th-day anniversary of the death of Herbert W. Armstrong. (Photo by Raymond Epperson)

The above photo of Tkach paying his respects at an idol-filled Buddhist temple appeared in *The Worldwide News*, May 5, 1986. We know of not even one WCG member who questioned why Tkach would ever be at such a place.

---

While the Ambassador concert series remains very popular with Southern California's wealthiest music lovers, the Foundation has WCG-subsidized projects to assist the wealthy in other parts of the world, as well. A two-page Ambassador Foundation advertisement that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (Calendar section, Feb. 28, 1988) stated:

The Foundation has also provided major funding for: renovation of the Royal Opera House, Covent Gardens [London, England]; restoration of buildings of The Royal College of Music [London] and the construction of a new opera theatre; The Variety Club of Great Britain; [and] commissioning Sir Michael Tippett to compose a work for guitarist Julian Bream which received its world premiere at Ambassador Auditorium.

The WCG's income is dropping, but the Ambassador Foundation continues to spend vast sums on Tkach's whims. According to one of our journalist friends at the *Times of London*, one project in England, helping to build a replica of Shakespeare's Globe theatre, has received a Foundation commitment of one half million dollars. And that is but one overseas Foundation project.

Back in California, the Foundation has chosen a new spokesman for its television commercials. He is actor Patrick Stewart who plays the Captain of the Starship Enterprise on the new television show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. In one of his commercials, the TV spaceman tells viewers to come to Ambassador Auditorium to "celebrate the greatness of the human experience." Patrick Stewart is a very fine actor, but what his Ambassador Foundation commercial has to do with what the Worldwide Church of God claims is its purpose - the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ - is anybody's guess.

### Is the WCG Becoming "New Age"?

AR frequently receives letters from readers who wonder if the WCG is becoming a "New Age" religion. A number of religious writers suspect that it is. Texe Marrs in his book *Ravaged By the New Age - Satan's Plan to Destroy Our Kids* (Living Truth Publishers, 1989) unequivocally classifies the WCG as a New Age cult. The Help Net group (P.O. Box 811, Merrill, WI 54452) points out how the WCG habitually uses New Age terminology such as "new world order," "human potential," etc. Phillip Arnn of the *Watchman Examiner* (P.O. Box 7681, Columbus, GA 31908) frequently writes about New Age movements and, while not actually calling the WCG a New Age group, has written that the WCG's "God Family" doctrine derives from Hinduism. Finally, Richard C. Nickels of Giving and Sharing indicates in his March, 1990 newsletter that the WCG now has many of the

characteristics of a New Age organization.

According to some who have known him for over 40 years, Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, the WCG's most influential theologian, has been a lifelong student of Eastern religions. He apparently invited a Buddhist to speak at the WCG's Feast of Tabernacles two years ago and has traveled to the Orient to partake of Eastern philosophy. That may be so, but does that make the WCG a New Age church?

The term "New Age" does not really apply to any one well-defined movement, but to many movements, religions, and cults that often espouse doctrines that are incompatible with one another. Generally speaking, "New Age" is an umbrella term used to describe a large number of religious philosophies having their origins outside of the traditional Western Judeo-Christian heritage. New Age philosophies often include elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, Gnosticism, reincarnation, astrology, the human potential movement, the belief that man will become God, and the belief that an enlightened mankind will soon experience a new world order or "new age" of love, peace, and prosperity.

An analysis of what the New Age phenomenon is all about and a discussion of whether the WCG is really a part of it is beyond what we can cover in a newsletter. But for those who really are interested in the subject, we recommend the book *Understanding the New Age* by Russell Chandler (Word Publishing, 1988). According to the book's publishers, "The New Age is probably the most widespread and powerful phenomenon affecting our culture today.... Its pervasive philosophy influences sociology, theology, the physical sciences, medicine, anthropology, history, sports, and literature. In fact [Chandler] concludes, nothing is exempt - not even churches and synagogues. New Age ideas have percolated into major corporations, political action groups, schools, health clinics, and the military. With careful research and clear analysis the author explains the New Age perception of the human mind - crucial to understanding this 'hybrid mix of spiritual, social and political forces.'"

### **The WCG's New Spirit and Style**

Many of the changes taking place within the WCG are quite substantive - doctrinal changes relating to prophecy, race, and sex, for instance. But there are also many smaller changes that of themselves may not appear to mean much, yet when taken as a whole indicate the WCG's new spirit and style.

Take, for instance, the *Plain Truth's* new ad campaign. In *Harper's* we recently saw the following headline in a PT ad:

"All men by nature desire to know."  
-Aristotle, Philosopher-

"As we acquire more knowledge, things do not  
become more comprehensible but more mysterious."  
-Albert Schweitzer, Philosopher-

What is going on here? Certainly Aristotle is worth reading (especially the *Ethics* and the *Politics*), but since when has the WCG become one of his fans? HWA used to condemn Aristotle's writings as constituting one of the underpinnings of Roman Catholicism.

As for Albert Schweitzer, the famous humanitarian, missionary, physician, organist, musicologist, and *Christian theologian*, his works are also worth reading. But since when has the theology of Schweitzer had much in common with that of HWA? Not surprisingly, a number of WCG old timers have expressed surprise over the *Plain Truth's* new ad campaign.

Some members have also been expressing surprise over some of the political alliances the WCG has been making of late. One example: On April 17, the United States Supreme Court decided one of the most important religious freedom cases heard by the Court in recent years. In *Employment Division of Oregon vs. Smith*, 494 US\_\_\_, 108 L Ed 2d 876, 110 S Ct \_\_\_, the Court held that the Free Exercise Clause of the U.S. Constitution does not bar a state from prohibiting the use of the drug peyote in religious rites, nor does the clause bar a state from denying unemployment benefits to persons discharged for such drug use. The Court's decision drew harsh criticism not only from American Indian tribes who use the drug, but from many large religious denominations, as well. Nevertheless, on June 4, the Supreme Court, issued a one-line order denying a petition for a rehearing of the case. Among the many organizations that supported the petition for rehearing were the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the National Council of Churches, and the Worldwide Church of God (*Los Angeles Times*, Religion Section, June 9, p. F 13).

There was a time when the WCG was viewed as a fairly pacifistic organization. Some now wonder, however, if that is changing. In the last few years the security force at Ambassador-Pasadena has been beefed up considerably. It is difficult to drive near the Pasadena campus now, even on Saturdays, without seeing the church's hefty, black-uniformed officers circling the campus or patrolling blocks away in their squad cars complete with roof-mounted police search lights. No mere security men, these; all nine are either "sergeants," "lieutenants," or "captains" (according to the WN, March 5, p. 5).

Some Pasadena-area residents have complained how, while strolling near the campus, they have been stopped by Ambassador patrols and asked to identify themselves. Is that legal? From what the Pasadena Police Department tells us, apparently it is. Maintaining good relations with local police departments is, for Worldwide, probably a very smart thing to do. And in Big Sandy such is clearly the policy. The college there recently gave the Big Sandy Police Department a free car (WN, July 16, p. 8). Money can buy you security. (Is that what the Bible teaches?)

One of the things that money can clearly buy is state of the art technology. Ambassador College was recently nominated for a Computerworld Smithsonian Award for developing a computer system called "Swiftnet," which uses a personal computer-controlled telecommunication switch that allows people who work at home to communicate, via touch-tone telephone, with supervisors thousands of miles away (*Los Angeles Times*, San Gabriel section, June 17, p. 9 and *Computerworld*, June 4). A number of computer experts we talked to said they were uninformed about the full capabilities of the new technology. But one speculated that such a system could be utilized by Worldwide to put members to work at personal computers in their homes or to more closely monitor local church members' or ministers' activities.

### **Are You In a Cult?**

Media Spotlight is a California-based Christian organization and newsletter that monitors the media from a Christian perspective and reports on what the media is pumping into the minds of Americans. In 1980 they published an outstanding special report by Albert James Dager on the traits most often found in aberrational Christian cults. The article asked 26 questions (listed below) to which an affirmative answer indicates a potential cult characteristic. Of the 26 characteristics often found in aberrational Christian cults, an astonishing 25 clearly apply to the WCG!

#### **DOES THE CHURCH YOU BELONG TO:**

(1) Have, at its head, a single person or group of persons who claim exclusive apostleship from God? (2) Believe itself to be the only true church? (3) Teach that all other Christian churches are part of the world system and are under the influence of Satan? (4) Operate in a secret or semi-secret manner, shunning outsiders except as they are invited by members? (Many times such organizations will seclude themselves in rural areas or, if in the city, will enclose their grounds with high walls, hedges, or iron fences and gates.) (5) Teach that no other church has the special revelation of God's purpose or working that they have? (6) Teach that you should not use your mind in an attempt to understand the deep spiritual truths that they impart, but you should learn to experience the "reality" of God or Jesus through techniques such as repetitious use of His name or some other procedure? (7) Tell you that you should not question what your leaders are telling you, but that you must trust them because they have been given a special position of authority or ministry from God? (8) Require or at least urge you with firmness to get into the flow of things through constant contact with your fellowship to the exclusion of all others with the exception of using only necessary contact with outsiders for the purpose of witnessing? (9) Teach you that should you leave their fellowship you will backslide, fall into Satan's hands, become ill, get divorced, or have some other calamity befall you as part of God's judgment against you? (10) Teach that you must love each other but that you must hate God's enemies - defined as your enemies because only you are on God's side? (11) Teach that there are other true believers in the world but since they are not part of your fellowship, they are in "darkness," "confusion," "Babylon," etc.? (12) Have its own teaching aids and/or Bibles and require that you shun all others as containing error, using primarily theirs as being the only ones having the whole truth? (13) Teach that if you are faithful to this true church you will find special favor with God so as to be delivered from the great tribulation while He pours out His judgmental wrath upon all others? (14) Teach that if you remain faithful you will one day be like God and will possess His nature - that you will be exactly the same as He? (15) Teach that you should discard your own opinions and assume the opinions of the elders because they are in your best interest? (16) Require that you give a substantial portion of your income to it or to its leaders? (17) Require that you donate your time and talent as free labor for the needs of the body in order to be considered a member in good standing? (18) Teach that you must cease thinking as an individual and begin thinking corporately, assigning your will to the will of God as defined by your elders? (19) Teach that everyone is "out to get you" and that you must be willing to sacrifice all you have including your life, if that is necessary, for the sake of the group? (20) Shun those who have left the fellowship for whatever reason and teach that they are "reprobate," "dogs," "heathen," "publicans," or some other derogatory term? (21) Cover up or ignore the sins of its leaders or its leaders' families while coming down hard on its members for their indiscretions? (22) Have a reporting system that suggests you reveal the faults or discontentment of others in order that they may be "protected" from error and kept on the right path? (23) Engage in public fights against its enemies and employ non-Christians to fight its battles for it through harassment or litigation such as lawsuits? (24) Teach that its leader is the revelator of God's truth for today - that the true Church has not functioned since the first century but has been restored by your leader? (25) Maintain such an identity with its leader's ministry so as to make the two indistinguishable? (26) Claim that its leader is the second coming of Jesus Christ and that he will usher in the Kingdom of God for all those who follow him?

Those who would like to obtain a complete copy of the *Media Spotlight* article referred to above or who would like to learn more about this fine organization should write to: Media Spotlight, P.O. Box 1288, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

### **Joseph W. Tkach...**

**(Part V)**

*Editor: Since beginning this serialized article on the WCGs current Pastor General, AR has continued to receive letters from readers offering insights into Tkach's background and personality. For this issue, I am interrupting my narrative in order to publish a few interesting comments from some of those letters.*

Dear Mr. Trechak:

In your March 1989 issue I read how Mr. Tkach's official birth certificate shows that he was born on March 16, 1927, but how in church publications he claims he was born on March 16, 1926. As soon as I read that in your newsletter I looked up those dates in my copy of Arthur Spier's *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar* [Behrman House, New York, 1953]. I think I may have come across the reason Tkach is lying about his birth date. On the Hebrew calendar, March 16, 1927 was the twelfth day of Adar II. That day is not a special day. But March 16, 1926 was the first day of Nissan, the first day of the first month of the sacred year!

-Kansas

*Editor: My thanks for your keen observations and interesting theory. One comment about Tkach's real birth date. There are a number of biblical scholars, including a few in Worldwide, who see great mystical significance in numbers associated with names and dates. One Bible numerologist I know claims the number 12 is associated with "organized beginnings" and the number 13 with "rebellion." The month Adar II is, of course, a 13th lunar month of the Hebrew sacred year. That being the case, some numerologists read Tkach's true birth date as foreboding some type of "organized beginning of rebellion." I am not a numerologist. Nor do I know the considerations that went into Tkach's choice of a fictitious birth date. I have heard, however, that Tkach is superstitious and know that he is aware of the supposed mystical significance of certain numbers.*

I recall that back in the late '60s, when Tkach was acting as overall evaluator in the Pasadena Spokesmen's Club I was attending, it was widely rumored that his wife was suffering from a brain tumor and that it was the cause of her very abnormal behavior. At one particular meeting, when it was reported that his wife was missing from their home, Tkach related how his wife had to be locked inside her home to prevent her from wandering away. However, many in the church at the time said that Mrs. Tkach disagreed with how her husband was acting in the church and that she knew something that would embarrass her husband and the church. So Tkach started the rumor about her having a brain tumor and he kept her confined to her room. I understand that at some point she eventually left him and went back to Chicago for a while.

-Texas

In your December issue, you quoted a Robert Skaggs about how Mr. Tkach supposedly did some pretty horrible things to his wife years ago. I asked one of the ministers about this and he said you made it all up, that there was never a real Robert Skaggs. Is that true?

-New York

*Editor: Why don't you ask Mr. Skaggs yourself? He is the editor of Bible Truth Research, R.R. 1, Box 140, Underwood, IN 47177.*

The gas station at Colorado and Rosemead Boulevards [tied to the Pappageorge crime ring, see [AR43](#)] is where Tkach would always send me to rent trailers to move widows when I was head of the church moving team. No wonder!

-Ken Nagele, California

At a recent [evangelistic] campaign, Garner Ted Armstrong privately told a man that Joseph Tkach makes \$500,000 per year. Do you have any knowledge of Mr. Tkach's annual salary?

-Ohio

*Editor: No, I don't, nor do I know where GTA got his information. Even if it's only an estimate, however, it may be accurate - even conservative. Back in the days when the WCG was grossing less than \$80 million per year, HWA got a yearly salary of over \$200,000. Stanley Rader, the church's attorney and CPA, would justify such remuneration by pointing to a number of California corporations with revenues less than Worldwide's and top executives whose salaries were greater than HWA's. Tkach, today, can argue that Worldwide's yearly revenues exceed \$200 million. He can also point to the fact that in 1989, while the average California worker received a pay increase of 5% (barely enough to keep even with inflation), the state's top 100 corporate executives received pay increases averaging 46.5% (Los Angeles Times, Business Section, May 27, 1990). The Times wrote of those top executives: "That 46.5% pay hike means the average California executive earns. \$1,711 an hour.... Five years ago, seven-digit pay packages were relatively rare. Now, any chief executive of a large corporation seems to get one" (Ibid., p. D7). If Tkach really is making \$500,000 per year (and I would be surprised if he did not), he would just be going along with the rest of society. And that is what the WCG is all about today. Isn't it?*

### **Chris and Denise Patton in Prison**

It is with much sadness that we report Ambassador alumni Christopher J. Patton and Denise Morrow Patton are now serving prison sentences in North Carolina.

Many Ambassador alumni of the early '70s will recall how the Pattons briefly served the WCG in Jerusalem and how Chris also taught archaeology for a time at AC. In the '70s Denise and Chris went into real estate and later also into securities. By the mid-80s, the two were no longer in Worldwide, but became connected with Garner Ted Armstrong's Church of God, International, from which Chris obtained ministerial credentials. Unfortunately, the Pattons used their many contacts among WCG and CGI members to entice dozens of trusting people into giving them huge sums of money and real estate to be "managed" by them. They then embezzled funds, sold bogus government bonds, forged mortgages using imposters' names, and persuaded two dozen clients to invest \$600,000 in an imaginary shopping center and a fictitious housing development.

For a time the Pattons seemed to have it all. They had a beautiful home, money, investments. He drove a Mercedes, she a Maserati. But in early 1988 Chris discovered Denise was having an affair with Joseph Warren Hertzler, the son of a local church family. Not only was Denise having an affair with Hertzler, 13 years her junior, she made him vice president of her mortgage company and lavished him with expensive gifts. In September 1988, out of jealousy, Chris went to the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and confessed that he and his wife had been embezzling from their clients. Then, this year, after pleading guilty to 26 counts of conspiracy and obtaining profits by false pretenses, Chris was sentenced to 5 years in prison, Hertzler to 10, and Denise to 15 (which in North Carolina's system of justice means they could all be out by 1992).

In the meantime, Chris has lost his SEC license and is on a leave of absence from his editorship at the *Southern Sentinel* (now the *Jerusalem Sentinel*, a publication of the United Biblical Churches of God with whom he joined after having his ministerial credentials revoked by CGI). In May, Chris married a 17-year old woman after he and Denise divorced. Denise says, however, that she still loves Chris, even though he has tricked the State Bureau of Investigation, framed her, and opened a Swiss bank account. Authorities say about \$3 million is missing and may never be recovered. Those who would like to know more about this sordid mess (and of the dozens of naive church people who lost their life savings to these charlatans) can read the details on page one of the Feb. 4, 1990 edition of *The News and Observer* (215 South McDowell St., Raleigh, NC 27602).

### More Researchers Writing About WCG

The number of scholars, theologians, and writers researching the WCG continues to grow. We've recently heard of two that our readers may wish to know about.

Dr. John M. Lubinda. (The University of Zambia, School of Education, P.O. Box 32379, Lusaka, Zambia) is a former WCG member who is writing about his experiences in Worldwide. We have not yet been informed when, or if, his manuscript will be published.

Mr. Neil O'Connor (Castle Treasure, Douglas, Cork, Ireland) is studying at St. David's College, University of Wales, which is Britain's oldest theological university apart from the divinity schools at Oxford and Cambridge. The title of his doctorate thesis is: *A Comprehensive Analysis of the History and Doctrines of the Worldwide Church of God, Together with a Critique of the Latter from the Viewpoint of Early and Modern Orthodox Christian Thought*. He stresses that his thesis will not be an expose of the WCG in the potboiler sense, but a reasoned presentation of all available evidence.

Mr. O'Connor writes that he is having some difficulty in obtaining all the research materials he needs. He wonders if any AR readers would be able to loan him material such as early member and co-worker letters by HWA, pre-1970 *Plain Truth* and *Good News* magazines, and copies of *The Worldwide News* (all years). If any readers are able to assist Mr. O'Connor in any way, please write to him at his Ireland address given above.

### Genesis 2000 Update

In the March 1989 issue of AR we reported on and recommended *Genesis 2000*, an outstanding new theological journal edited by Prof. James D. Tabor. Because only one issue was ever produced and because we know how difficult it is to keep any periodical alive, we recently asked Prof. Tabor if he would update us on his plans for the journal. Here is his response:

Several hundred readers wrote in response to the March 1989 *Ambassador Report* article and copies of the original pilot issue of our publication were sent out. Unfortunately, supplies were quickly exhausted. No further issues of the journal have yet been published. However, during 1989 there were a number of significant developments and there are some exciting plans in the works for 1990 and beyond.

First, the nonprofit organization, Genesis 2000, Inc., which publishes the journal, *Genesis 2000*, received tax exempt status from the Federal Internal Revenue Service. In this day of corporate fraud and religious rip-offs, getting such status is no easy matter. It involves literally hundreds of pages of documentation and a lengthy review process. However, as of May 1989, all gifts to Genesis 2000, Inc. are fully tax deductible. The editors and board of the corporation are *prohibited* in the by-laws from ever receiving salaries or any personal gain from any aspect of the operations, and the corporation remains committed to distributing all publications free of charge. In terms of "business sense," this policy does not make much sense. But I feel sure that many *Ambassador Report* readers will agree with me, given our past experiences in various religious organizations, that this is a refreshing policy.

Second, the corporation, Genesis 2000, with the help of gifts from the Kuhn Foundation and the Reunion, Inc., sponsored the 1989 *Biblical Theology Symposium* held in Pasadena, California, as reported in the September 1989 *Ambassador Report*. This meeting brought together former top leaders of the WCG for a weekend of intense discussions and dialogue. This summer, through various private gifts, as well as another generous gift from the Kuhn Foundation, Genesis 2000, Inc. will sponsor archaeological and historical research in the Dead Sea Cave area in Israel, including in-depth reports on what various orthodox Jewish groups are doing with reference to rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. Those on the mailing list will receive a full update on these efforts.

Finally, 1989 brought some important physical changes and adjustments in upcoming plans, forcing a delay of some projects and all publications. I took a new teaching job as professor in the Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I had previously been at the College of William and Mary. That necessitated all the changes, both legally and physically, required by such a relocation from Williamsburg to Charlotte, NC. These matters are almost settled as of this date. The move has put us terribly behind with publication plans, but by October 1990, things should be in full operation again.

Plans are to publish a quarterly newsletter, detailing various news and projects of Genesis 2000, Inc. Then, rather than a formal journal like the sample issue sent out in 1989, we will publish a series of in-depth biblical and philosophical articles which will be mailed to all on our list as they come out. The first, titled, "Neither Jew, Christian, Nor Moslem: Restoring Abrahamic Faith," will be mailed out in late October, funds permitting. Others which are already planned and mostly written, but not yet printed are: "The Holy Scriptures: Which Bible? Whose Canon?"; "The Five Fundamental Flaws of Evangelical Christianity"; "The Jesus of History and the Christ of Christianity"; "Faith, Reason, and Revelation in the Modern World"; "Jesus and the One God of Israel"; and a dozen or so others. Every year or so these articles will be gathered together and published in book form.

As explained in the pilot issue of the journal, Genesis 2000 is dedicated to exploring the implications of biblical faith, as primarily reflected in the foundational Hebrew scriptures, in the late 20th century. It is the position of the editor that the so-called "New Testament" is a kind of extended Rabbinic *pesher* or *midrash* on the foundational "Holy Scriptures," or Tanakh (Hebrew Canon) - intended primarily for the Greek/Gentile world. The editor is dedicated to bringing the best of historical research to bear on the study of ancient Jewish and Christian origins, cast in the framework of the modern world and our essential questions.

So, there is my answer. Genesis 2000 is alive and well, but adjusting temporarily to its move to the Carolinas and its initial startup tasks. Interested parties can still write using the P.O. Box 754, Williamsburg, VA 23187 address (we still get mail there) or to me directly: Prof. James Tabor, Dept. of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC 28223. We will have a Charlotte box number later in the year. Those who have previously written to Genesis 2000 in response to the *Report's* original article are on our mailing list and will automatically receive publications beginning in October of this year.

-James D. Tabor

### **Richard C. Nickels: Giving & Sharing**

Richard C. Nickels is a former WCG member who, after a short time with Raymond Cole's Church of God, The Eternal, began his Giving and Sharing ministry around 1978. Readers may find his services of value because, besides offering Bibles and Bible-related books at discount prices and publishing a newsletter dealing with topics of interest to Sabbath and Holy Day-keeping people, Mr. Nickels publishes "family trees" for the Worldwide Church of God, the Sacred Names groups, and the Church of God Seventh Day showing their historical roots and their offshoots. For those who would like more information about Mr. Nickels' publications, write to Giving and Sharing, 4673 Onondaga Trail, St. Charles, MO 63303-7328.

### **Strickland on "The World's Greatest Hoax"**

In our September 1989 issue we mentioned Dave C. Strickland's 89-page book *Hope for the Dead - All the Dead*. A number have since written us expressing how that book helped them to understand and overcome the effects of the WCG's fear-inducing teachings on hell fire and the unforgivable sin. Now Mr. Strickland has written another book which he believes will be beneficial to those WCG members who live in fear of the so-called "Great Tribulation." The intriguing title of his new 56-page book is *The World's Greatest Hoax! (Why the Christian and non-Christian world is on line to fall for the greatest deception of all time)*. Those who would like to receive a free copy should write to the author: Dave C. Strickland, 20 Mutual Street, Hexthorpe, Doncaster DN4 0EF, England.

### **No Tithes to Be Paid This Year?**

As most Bible students are aware, the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25) is an important Old Testament teaching. The WCG, however, really makes no effort to apply the Jubilee Year doctrine. Perhaps that is because a logical inference of the teaching is that no tithes should be paid or collected during Jubilee Years. Now, one zealous Bible student has put out a small, but interesting, paper which calculates the 69th Jubilee Year as being from the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, 1990 to the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, 1991. Those who would like copies of his research on this topic should write: David Rydholm, 1512 Lebanon St. SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

### **Letters**

I have just finished reading Tkach's "Personal" column [in the May 21 WN]. When I read "change is a hallmark of growth and one of the important elements of God's true church," I began to get a queasy feeling. While we all know some changes are necessary at times (usually very minor), it is what is being changed, and how drastically, and for what purpose that can become alarming, very alarming.

When those changes bring a spiritual organization into lockstep with the spirit of our time, one no longer need wonder about the source. This course in other institutions in our country has been almost universally followed, and you see what we have.

When Tkach quotes HWA as saying no large denomination has publicly admitted error and changed their teaching, and uses this statement to back up his desire to make as yet unspecified changes of doctrine in Worldwide, then they both are wrong. Many, if not all, of the large denominations have done so in this very century. And, perhaps the largest of all denominations, Communism, has just done so on a colossal scale (HWA did properly include Communism as an organized religion). The historic truth is that among most of what used to be fundamentalist denominations, change has been so drastic and so public that only a few of those denominations still even claim to be fundamentalist, and there is a real question about them. Many, even of those who used to be Calvinist, are ordaining women, and even homosexuals, all in the name of change. If inching change moves in the direction of humanistic liberalism, and most does, then it becomes dangerous. Architects of such change are not ministers of God, but rather represent the god of this world, who is very powerful and very persuasive. (It should be much more difficult to change basic doctrine than to change the United States Constitution.) In fact, men can't change God's law at all. They can only say they have such power!

It is distressing to hear these apostles of change suggesting understanding of the identity of modern nations, with emphasis on Israel, is not a fundamental teaching and perhaps not of much importance. The book of fundamentals (foundational truths) is the book of Genesis, which lays down the foundations of all humans, with a strong emphasis on "the fathers," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their offspring. Paul wrote that one of the purposes of Christ's first coming was to "confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Romans 15:8), those fathers being Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

One should not let a personal bias blind one to this vital truth, without which one cannot understand the full meaning of "judgment, mercy and faith." While salvation is certainly individual, it happens within the framework of nationhood or "the promises made to the fathers" - themselves national promises. The context of Matthew 23 is national, fully as much as it is individual.

Was there a "lack of judgment, mercy and faith" in Worldwide during the days of Herbert Armstrong? Absolutely. But such lack in no way neutralizes the doctrine under discussion here.

Of repentance mentioned by Tkach, one can only wish there were such among Worldwide's leadership - repentance of major violations of the real basics - the ten commandments! But I suppose that would be asking too much. We shall see what God thinks in due course.

For someone in the business of religion to play down current happenings in Europe is to court disaster. To ridicule the "watchman" responsibility or the "Ezekiel message" must be placed in the same category.

-David Robinson  
P. O. Box 35982  
Tulsa, OK 74135

In the August 1989 PT there is a letter from an A. Lange, Doncaster. This being my own town, I managed to locate the writer, a teenage girl named Alison. She told me the PT is disgusting. When I expressed surprise at her comment, she explained how the PT editors had added a sentence to what she had written and that it was contrary to what she would have said. I wonder how many other letters to the PT are similarly doctored.

-England

I recently read a church brochure containing all the names and pictures of the WCG ministry. I was curious to see who had remained "loyal" to the church among those I've known.

It struck me that if you eliminated the black and Spanish ministers and looked at the surnames of the remainder, then you notice how a large percentage of the remaining "loyal" ministers have Germanic surnames! (There are also quite a few Irish surnames!) I hope this doesn't sound racist. But there are racial characteristics or traits, and the Germanic personality is known to be very orderly and likes society to be run in a strict legalistic fashion. Could this be the reason so many are determined to be in the WCG to the bitter, bitter end?

-Scotland

What is finally causing me to write is a comment concernign the Cottam family [AR43, p. 10] who let their son starve to death. You noted that this was because they did not want to "disobey their church's dictates." As a Seventh-Day Adventist I can tell you that was not the case. The media always likes to make stories sensational. You can find the true story by writing to the SDA office in Reading, Pennsylvania. The facts are that the family was no longer connected with the SDA church. Cottam had once been a pastor and either resigned or was let go. The family became introverted and would not accept visitors or help from the church or anyone else. It was obviously a dysfunctional family with deep psychological problems, but no one knew how bad it was. It is not known how they planned to "give their money to God." Of course, the media have reported they were on a religious fast. Frankly, I have never known a Seventh-Day Adventist to go on a religious fast. (Some need one!) It would be nice to think that Seventh-Day Adventists are dedicated tithepayers, but only about 50 percent or less are and they do not become fanatical about it.

-Maryland

*Editor: Thank you for the clarification. I ran the story on the Cottam family exactly as it came off the AP wire. Nevertheless, considering that I have known many SDAs over the years and have found those I've know to be fine Christians, and certainly not fanatics, I should have questioned the exact wording of the AP story. Nevertheless, my main point was not to criticize that denomination, but to simply show that some people will put fanatical devotion to a religious teaching above the safety and well-being of their own children.*

John, you may not have heard this one. St. Peter was conducting a tour of newly welcomed entrants at the Pearly Gates. There were spirit people in groups and St. Peter was asked who the various groups were. He explained that one group was Catholic, one Baptist, another Lutheran, etc. Then they came to a high wall where people could be heard talking on the other side. Someone then asked St. Peter who those people were and he replied, "Oh, not so loud. Those are the Worldwide Church of God people. They think they are the only ones up here."

-Florida

Thank you for the *Report*. It is good to know what the WCG is up to. I was there about 34 years. I learned a lot - some good, some not so good.

-Oklahoma

Between my wife and I there remains the usual problem, she being a blind Worldwide follower and I trying to show the truth of the matter. To her nothing is true unless WCG says so. We are both on Social Security and she has doctor's bills over her head, but WCG comes first.

-Arizona

Maybe my daughter and son-in-law would have come out of that cult if the truth had been brought to light on that con operation. They've belonged to WCG since 1975 and show no sign whatsoever of coming to their senses. I've got all kinds of literature, books, and tapes disproving the false teachings they've swallowed but, of course, they refuse to either read or heed. You might as well talk to a brick wall than to a member of the Worldwide Church of God.

-Illinois

I am enclosing a small gift as thanks for your work. You saved me from possibly joining the WCG. If not for your reports, I just might have done it, with disastrous consequences.

-CPA, Ohio

I am seventy years old and put in 25 years in Worldwide, but I am free now.

-Oklahoma

#### **Editor's Note**

We'll have to close this issue at this point as it's all we can afford for this quarter. Hopefully we'll have another issue out by around the middle of December. My thanks to those readers who are still interested in, and supporting, our publishing efforts.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR46\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR46 January, 1991

### No More Good News

As 1990 closes and the new year begins, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and its Ambassador College (AC) continue their steady decline under the leadership of Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach. Insiders say that for 1990 the WCG experienced less than zero financial growth. Important WCG news items since our last issue went to press include the following:

- In his September 25 letter to WCG members and coworkers, Tkach shocked his followers by announcing that the WCG's weakening financial condition had caused him to kill the *Good News*, for decades the church's main theological magazine. The January 1991 issue is the final edition. According to Tkach, the WCG's more secular *Plain Truth* (PT) magazine will now become more religious in tone. But Tkach has also admitted that the PT's circulation is being pruned back. Whereas under church founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) the PT had grown to a circulation of over seven million (and at almost double the current number of pages per issue), the PT's circulation in recent months has shrunk to 3.2 million, according to the official WCG newspaper, *The Worldwide News* (WN, Aug. 27, p. 3). During this past summer, church executives were already anticipating that the PT's circulation would drop to 2.3 million (*ibid.*). By late August the PT had already been phased out in areas of the Middle East, West Africa, "and other nations where we simply cannot sustain the circulations" (WN, Aug. 27, p. 1, quoting WCG executive Larry Salyer).

- *The World Tomorrow*, the WCG's television program, is also feeling the effects of the church's financial decline. The number of stations now carrying the telecast has shrunk from 250 in 1988 to only 113 this past year. The WCG's media experts anticipate that that low figure will sink even lower (*ibid.*, p. 3). Like the PT, the telecast is expected to become more religious in tone (WN, Nov. 19, p. 1).

- In spite of Tkach's decree allowing church members to do campus construction work on

the Sabbath (see our last issue, p. 2), the new buildings at AC-Big Sandy were not completed until mid-November (WN, Dec. 3, p. 1). And according to evangelist Donald Ward, current president of AC, achieving accreditation for AC should not be considered a foregone conclusion. Mere candidacy for accreditation is not possible for AC before June 1992 (WN, Dec. 3, p. 3).

- Remarkably, while almost all indicia of the WCG's health point downward, Joseph Tkach Jr. (director of the WCG's U.S. ministry) claims the church's membership is growing (WN, Sept. 10, p. 1). To accommodate such supposed growth, Junior says it is important that the WCG ministry be completely interlinked by computer:

The ministers use the computers for word processing and local record keeping [of highly personal information about members' private lives - ed.]. Through electronic mail the computers are connected to headquarters, regional offices and the computers of other ministers. About 75 percent of the U.S. ministers have computers now, but Church Administration hopes that almost all will have them by 1992. (WN, Sept. 10, P. 1.)

- As in years past, the continuous musical chairs game goes on in Worldwide. Evangelist Frank Brown, formerly over the WCG's operations in Britain, is now over the WCG's operations in Canada (including the French-speaking areas). Evangelist Leslie McCullough, formerly over the WCG's operations in South Africa, is now in Frank Brown's old job in Britain (WN, Nov. 19, p. 8; Dec. 3, p. 1).

The new chairman of the theology department at AC is Russell Duke, considered by a good number of older ministers to be a theological bantamweight.

Evangelist Roderick C. Meredith (1261 E. Palm Dr., Glendora, CA 91740, tel. 818-914-4004) is no longer allowed to preach or write articles for church publications. Exactly why Tkach is angry with Meredith we cannot say.

Evangelist Leroy Neff has been removed as the WCG's director of Financial Affairs and Planning because, we are told, Tkach thought him too loyal to HWA's ways and too open with the membership regarding the church's declining finances. Neff has now been given the unpleasant task of heading the WCG's Divorce and Remarriage Evaluation Committee. Neff's weighty duties over WCG finances have been given to Steven Andrews, an inexperienced, generally unknown young administrative assistant formerly under Larry Salyer (WN, Nov. 19, p. 3).

The list of those holding the "rank" of WCG evangelist continues to swell with the recent additions of J. Michael Fezell (Joe Sr.'s chief ghost writer and Joe Jr.'s "side-kick"), Bernard Schnippert (Tkach's "Five Year Plan" coordinator), Kyriacos Stavrinides (one of Tkach's top doctrinal theoreticians), Dr. Clint Zimmerman (on Neff's D&R committee), and Joseph Tkach Jr. (WN, Nov. 5, p. 3).

- Under Tkach, WCG doctrines continue to change. Whereas HWA taught that "God's Work" (the true church's proclamation of "the warning message" just before Christ's return) was in the "gun lap," Tkach emphasizes that Christ's return could very well be far off. Nor does Tkach see the church's commission as being that of a watchman warning of

the coming Beast power. For Tkach, the church's commission is to preach Jesus Christ (WN, Aug. 27, p. 4). Those who studied theology under HWA will instantly recognize Tkach's new (actually "mainstream") gospel as what HWA used to refer to as "another gospel."

Whereas HWA taught that the majority of those faithful to "God's Work" would be spared the anguish of a soon-coming, universal "Great Tribulation," Tkach now teaches that it is a serious error to teach that those who are faithful will be physically protected (ibid.).

For decades, most WCG members believed that during the Great Tribulation, all loyal WCG members would be miraculously taken to "the place of safety." Most members were convinced that that place would be Petra, a desert area of Jordan honey-combed with caves. World cruising evangelist Gerald Waterhouse liked to call Petra "the place of final training [for ruling the world]." Until recently, most WCG members believed Tkach also held to Waterhouse's view - especially since Tkach made a 1987 tour of Jordan, met with King Hussein, visited Petra, and had the entire trip played up big in *The Worldwide News* (March 9, 1987, pp. 1, 3, 8).

---

&COPY;1991 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

Now, however, Tkach and a good number of his mimicking subordinates are saying that they have grave doubts about the Petra theory and that probably those members lucky enough to be protected during the Great Tribulation will be scattered among numerous places of safety. The new teaching has set off a wave of panic among a good number of Worldwidiers who, we've heard, are increasingly hiking into wilderness areas in search of caves in which they hope to hide out during the three and a half years of WCG-prophesied world chaos.

But why did Tkach change his views on Petra? Recent news reports out of the Middle East have pointed out how Petra, far from being an isolated area, is actually Jordan's leading tourist attraction, often bringing thousands of visitors per week. It was even used as a movie set for the conclusion of Steven Spielberg's 1989 film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Perhaps Tkach realized that with visiting film crews and thousands of tourists every week, Petra was just not the isolated "place of safety" he once thought.

- More and more WCG members are apparently taking an interest in various conspiracy theories of world events. Tkach has recently been going out of his way to ridicule such theories, especially the so-called "Jewish conspiracy theory" (WN, Aug. 27, p. 4).

- With Tkach changing so many WCG doctrines, it is not surprising that there are more and more reports of groups of members and some ministers leaving the WCG. The latest minister to make his exit is Mr. Colin Sutcliff of Christchurch, New Zealand. Sutcliff, who is the father-in-law of WCG broadcaster David Hulme, reportedly left with about 40 members to align with Gerald Flurry's breakaway church in Oklahoma. He will not be the last WCG minister to exit because of Tkach.

## **Want Your Tithes Back?**

About every other month AR gets a letter from an angry ex-WCG member who writes as one recently did:

When I joined the WCG I was led to believe that it was the one and only True Church and that its leaders were sincere and dedicated caretakers of the truths revealed to Mr. Armstrong and of the tithes I contributed toward publishing those truths. Now, after years of sacrificing career, family well-being, friendships, health, and savings on the WCG's triple tithing doctrine, I have been disfellowshipped for doing one of the very things that they preached - trying to "prove all things." It has become painfully clear to me that the WCG is a gigantic fraud. The church's leaders do not believe the very things that they preach. They show their true colors by the self-serving, whimsical way they constantly change church doctrines and by the immoral way they live. They tolerate the grossest of sins among those in headquarters' inner circle. Yet all the while they browbeat us members for being human.

I now find myself forced out of the church to which I gave many years of service, sacrifice, and loyalty. Yet they keep all the money I took from my wife and kids to give to what I was led to believe was "God's Work." When I asked the church to return all the money they took from me by fraud, their lawyers had the gall to say the church could not return one penny because they had already spent all of it!

Surely there must be a legal solution to my dilemma. I certainly would never have contributed to the WCG had I known that the church was going to use my tithes to preach doctrines that it once taught were of the Devil. I certainly would not have given money for "God's House" if I had known "God's House" would be used by homosexual performers and then be sold to Japanese investors so that a small group of controlling executives I had never even heard of before could maintain their lifestyle! The money that I contributed was given to me by God with the requirement that I be a good steward. Surely there must be some way I can get the courts to get it back for me so that I may use it the way God intended. Surely a just legal system would never tolerate such evil in "the land of the free and the home of the brave." Would our judges simply allow the perfect crime to be committed in God's name?

Every time AR gets such a letter we feel sick to our stomachs. Because the way the legal system has operated in the past, the answer has been: yes, sadly, our legal system does tolerate such perfect crimes. Lately, however, we have begun to wonder if all of that is changing.

Of course, the argument used so often by WCG lawyers that "your contributions have already been spent" is both flippant and nonsensical. Dollar bills, like bushels of wheat, are legally fungible, i.e., one dollar bill is equally as good as another. Nor can the WCG

hide behind the traditional view that all gifts or pledges to charities must be nonrevocable because to hold otherwise would deprive charities of financial stability. That principle makes some sense for legitimate charities and churches. But it was never intended as a means to perpetrate fraud and extortion (as where the vilest of hypocrites pretend to be pious "men of God," use mind control techniques to achieve an undue influence over uninformed followers, and then, through fraudulent statements and fear-inducing tactics, coerce followers into giving money that eventually gets used for purposes at variance with their church's stated goals).

Regarding the latter, the United States Supreme Court appears to agree. The Nov. 17, 1989 issue of *Christianity Today* (p. 71) reported:

The [U.S. Supreme] Court also let stand a lower court ruling [869 F.2d 628 (1st Cir. 1989)] that a woman [Elizabeth Dovydenas] who gave millions of dollars to the Bible Speaks, a Lenox, Massachusetts-based religious group, may get it all back based on her contention that she was unduly influenced to give. Church/state expert Dean Kelly of the National Council of Churches called the ruling "ridiculous." "If a former member can recover contributions made to a religious group in good faith, and this becomes a trend, churches would have to put all donations in escrow, essentially being unable to use them for fear of having to give them back," Kelly told the *Chicago Tribune*.

It apparently never occurred to Kelly that such rulings will encourage churches to be more honest, even more Christian. Nor does it seem to have occurred to him that the more the crooked ministries are put out of business, the more money there will be freed up for use by legitimate Christian groups who truly are seeking to do God's will.

The days when a money-making organization can be immune from judicial rulings simply by claiming it is "religious" are clearly over. The successful prosecution of televangelist Jim Bakker shows that the nation's courts are losing patience with religious frauds. And the Supreme Court decision in *Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith*, 108 L. Ed. 2d 876 (decided April 17, 1990 and commented on in our last issue), greatly clarifies the principle that the conduct of individuals and groups is not beyond the authority of the courts simply because such conduct is labeled as "religious." Dozens of cases currently before the courts are bearing this out. One example was reported on in a UPI story carried by many papers (including the *Los Angeles Times*, Religion section, p. 7) on June 2, 1990:

WHEELING, W. Va.- Federal officials say they will attempt to confiscate everything at the Hare Krishna Vrindaban commune except the temple, alleging that it was all purchased with money obtained through fraudulent means....

The three men and the corporations, the indictment alleges, used mail fraud to defraud the public of the money by fraudulently soliciting funds for a school, but failed to tell those contributing that "children were sexually molested" at the school.

Because of its victory in the 1979 *State of California v. Worldwide Church of God* lawsuit, many WCG executives arrogantly assume that the WCG is legally impregnable. But legal experts that we have talked to say such an assumption on the part of Tkach and company is a mirage.

Just as we go to press, we have received a letter from Nebraskan Richard Stambler, the spokesman for a group of recently alienated WCG members, who, very much like the author of the letter that began this article, feel the WCG has defrauded them. The group has been doing considerable legal research and consulting with attorneys with the goal of putting together a class-action lawsuit against the WCG corporation, its trustees, and its officers. The group intends to take the WCG's current leaders to court and to get their tithes returned, at the very least.

Not being legal experts, AR has no way of knowing if such a lawsuit will succeed. Nor do we know how various statutes of limitations would restrict participation in such a suit by members put out of Worldwide more than two or three years ago. Nevertheless, the group's legal theories generally seem quite logical.

Mr. Stambler says, "If there are any ex-WCG members who have been disfellowshipped unjustly (or who felt morally compelled to resign from the church) in the last few years and who wish to be part of a legal action aimed at getting their contributions returned, we'd like to hear from them. Letters should be addressed to me, Richard Stambler, Rt. 1, Box 92, Walton, NE 68461. I would prefer letters that are as detailed as possible and that are either typed or printed very clearly. But I will also take phone calls from those interested in what we are planning. My phone number is (402) 489-8514."

## **Two Views on What Makes the WCG Tick**

*Editor: We at AR have had our own ideas about what really motivates the leadership of the WCG. But, as the following two letters show, others have their own, very often quite substantiative, views.*

I think church ought to be a place where people go to take instruction in how to use the Holy Spirit, the power of God, but those now in control of the WCG cannot allow that kind of instruction. They don't want to see us take up arms against them. I am, of course, referring to the demons-alien spirit invaders on the planet. Thus they hold down the membership. (Remember the 1986 movie *Aliens* with Sigourney Weaver?)

Your comments [in [AR43](#)] on Mrs. Joseph Tkach and her demon-possession problems were most interesting. The fact that none of the WCG ministry can cast them out is also most interesting. That fact says to me that they have no positive spiritual power. The WCG's ministers are all spiritual frauds!

That Joseph Tkach would consent to live with demons in his wife says to me that he is also possessed. The book *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* by Dr. M. Scott Peck (1983) - formerly Assistant Chief of Psychiatry and Neurology Consultant to the Surgeon General of the Army - was most instructive to me on the subject of evil, possession and demonic behaviors. On page 80 of his book he said this: "It is my experience that evil [demonic possession] seems to run in families." So I would suspect that all of the Tkach family is infested/infected.

Dr. Peck also says: "Since the primary motive of the evil [person] is disguise, one of the

places evil people are most likely to be found is within the church. What better way to conceal one's evil from oneself, as well as from others, than to be a deacon or some other highly visible form of Christian within our culture... evil people tend to gravitate toward piety for the disguise and concealment it can offer them" (see the footnote on pages 76-77) ....

The WCG is a place where many [demons] have chosen to hide out. And I think that they are doing more than merely hiding out - I think that the WCG is part of an enormous plot to do something on the world scene soon. There is a glitter in Joseph Tkach's eyes that speaks volumes.

-Phyllis Nelson Grau  
New York

Having had past institutional employment with the State of Oklahoma Department of Human Services in the areas of counseling and direct care with mentally ill clients, I am able to professionally detect many traits of dysfunctional characteristics among the leading ministers in the WCG past and present. It would be interesting to see what appropriate testing would reveal. However, based upon observation in conjunction with the American Psychiatric Association's *DSM-III-R* medical diagnostic criteria, it is virtually certain Mr. Joseph W. Tkach is, at the very least, presently suffering some textbook symptoms of Dysthymic Affective Disorder, which helps to explain many of his decisions concerning the future course of the WCG. He may be very sincere and doing the best he feels he can, but yet be at the mercy of a clinical illness which he neither understands nor will admit. Denial of such afflictions is exceedingly common. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, whom I always loved and admired, was a very complex and tormented person who internally suffered most of his adult life. His medically based *DSM-III-R* diagnosable condition of egodystonic psychosexual disorders are easily understood when recognized they were deriving from a narcissistic personality disorder with paraniodal tendencies compounded by classic symptoms of dysthymic depression, which helps account for both his charismatic leadership ability and his desire to initiate personal relationships with international authority figures.

Although Herbert Armstrong was mentally aware of his actions, I firmly believe he did the very best he could while suffering from his unrecognized and untreated mental health problems. I'm certain our true Creator will take his medical problems into consideration at the judgment.

Recognizing the mental illness factors in the ministerial activities and modalities of operation also helps to understand why so many WCG members have been mentally and emotionally upset - occasionally traumatized - rather than being the recipients of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control" from the WCG ministry! It is virtually impossible for persons suffering from mental illness to control themselves into the exacting standards of scriptural discipline - this in itself can create and intensify an ego-dystonic disorder.

-David C. Whitaker  
Oklahoma

*Editor: DSM-III-R is the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, Revised (1987).*

## **Pakozdi-Parker and Gateways Institute**

For a lot of people, "the Worldwide Experience" has provided more than its share of surprises. One of our readers wrote us the following:

As a former 20-year-plus WCG member and a current CGI member, you can imagine the head spinning I have been enduring since reading many of your reports.... When I joined the WCG in 1968 I was told the road would be rocky. But I never imagined anything like what the past 23 years have held - and this is all before the Tribulation!...

Until the early 80s [here in the Cincinnati area] we had a WCG minister named Jack Pakozdi. Now, on cable television there is frequently seen a Jonathan Parker, Ph.D., who is with Gateways Institute of Ojai, California. He sells tapes on success, weight loss, how to quit smoking, etc. Oddly, this Dr. Parker is a dead ringer for Mr. Pakozdi! Seen with Dr. Parker is a Dr. Leslie Brice, Director of the Institute. And, amazingly, Dr. Brice is a dead ringer for Mrs. Jack Pakozdi! Could all this be mere coincidence?

Robert L. Swimm  
Covington, Kentucky

As our Kentucky reader may have begun to suspect, Dr. Parker - or "Jonathan," as many of his devoted followers now refer to him - is actually one and the same person as Jack Pakozdi, his former WCG minister.

### **Media Master**

If you tune in to Jonathan's programs (really hour-long paid commercials masquerading as educational programs) you will see the very finest in smooth, sophisticated, high-tech salesmanship. Two of Jonathan's programs, broadcast hundreds of times in the Los Angeles area (one on "success," the other on weight control), are so well done that some confess to being almost mesmerized into watching them repeatedly.

Through Jonathan's television programs and publications such as his *Break-Through* newsletter and *Discoveries Through Inner Quests* catalog, one learns about Gateways' more than 300 self-help and subliminal tape programs authored and narrated by Jonathan.

According to Gateways publications (P.O. Box 1778, Ojai, CA 93023), Jonathan's lectures and subliminal messages will increase your wealth and prosperity, help you stop smoking, unlock your natural healing forces, reduce stress, dissolve fear and worry, lower your body weight, produce a body beautiful, improve self-image, increase self-confidence, heighten creativity, expand your memory, sharpen your concentration, help you overcome grief and fear of rejection, improve your sleep, keep your kids off drugs, and even improve your driving! Naturally, for all this you must pay. Some of the tape sets

cost more than \$150.

## **Enlightened Mind Workshops**

If the tapes aren't enough to do the job, there are Jonathan's Enlightened Mind Workshops. According to one of Jonathan's ads:

At the heart of the workshop experience is accelerated self-mastery through altered-state mental clearing and positive reprogramming. You will refine the process of using mind training techniques that enable you to:

- Eliminate negative memories, fears and guilts.
- Dissolve self-sabotaging thinking and conflicts
- Manage transitions and weather difficult crises
- Explore higher consciousness and channel your higher self
- Get in touch with your life-purpose
- Realize the profound meaning of the Secret Tibetan Doctrines and Egyptian Mystery School Teachings
- Explore past and parallel lives
- Experience mental projections or enlightening out-of-body experiences

In such New Age lingo Jonathan promises a great deal. But on the registration form for one of his workshops there is this warning:

Meditation provides opportunities for personal growth, but can also involve both pleasant and unpleasant emotional and/ or psychological experiences. Your attendance at any meditation session presented by the Institute of Human Development is entirely at your own risk.  
THE RECORDING OF SESSIONS IS NOT PERMITTED.

Jonathan's workshops have been held in such scenic locations as Aspen and Maui. Of course, they are not cheap. Nevertheless, some of Jonathan's adoring fans cannot do without them. Wrote one devotee:

During the workshop all surface questions were answered and deeper ones were laid to rest, creating an extremely peaceful state of mind. The discussions and meditations caused a chain reaction and I feel a clearer mind, a peaceful attitude and a total willingness to explore totally the inner world. I sincerely hope Jonathan continues to do workshops because the energies that are felt in person cannot be transmitted on tapes.

## **Jonathan's True History**

Jack Pakozdi, who would later become "Dr. Jonathan Parker," was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Before coming to Ambassador College (Pasadena) in 1967, Pakozdi lived in Wellsville, a small rural town in western New York state, and earned a B.S. degree in education from Mansfield State College in Pennsylvania. Leslie Ann Brice came to Ambassador (Pasadena) in 1967 from Phoenix, Arizona where she had been a student at the University of Arizona Jack and Leslie were married in 1969 and after graduating from Ambassador in 1970 Jack was employed by the WCG. From 1974 he

served as a WCG minister in Hays, Kansas. Then in early 1979, during the turbulent period when the WCG was being sued by the State of California, Pakozdi was sent back to Ambassador for a refresher program and in mid-year was transferred to Cincinnati where he pastored a WCG church and Leslie sold real estate.

Sources close to Jonathan Parker say that most of the methods now used by Jonathan were actually learned while he was a student at Ambassador College and while he was a WCG minister. In fact, it was while serving as a WCG minister in Cincinnati that Pakozdi developed his Dr. Jonathan Parker alter ego and launched his Institute of Human Development, a supposedly "non-profit" organization that is the parent of Gateways Research Institute. For a time in Cincinnati, friends say, Pakozdi actually lived a double life. On weekends he was a WCG minister giving "Christian living" sermons at sabbath services. During the rest of the week, however, he was transmogrified into famed researcher Jonathan Parker, Ph.D. Because he feared the WCG might discover the true identity of his alter ego, early promotional literature put out by "Dr. Parker" showed him wearing a homemade disguise consisting of a tilted toupee with mismatching beard and mustache. Such precautions, however, did not prevent Pakozdi's suspicious superiors from eventually discovering his double life and defrocking him.

Pakozdi's exit from the WCG was no quiet fading away. His final WCG sermon, given in mid-1982, was described to the *Report* by Mr. Swimm:

Services began normally with hymns, opening prayers, and sermonette before Pakozdi took the pulpit for what we thought would be a routine sermon. He then proceeded to denounce the church's leadership and to announce that he and his wife were divorcing. (It wasn't until a TV appearance by "Doctors" Jonathan and Leslie that I even suspected they were not divorced!) Pakozdi then tearfully left the pulpit and the building. The congregation was left in a state of shock!

### **Overflowing Abundancy, At Last!**

Quitting the WCG and starting his Institute has paid off handsomely for Jonathan. Insiders say, for instance, that Jonathan's 1988 sales were a whopping \$23.5 million. At one point Gateways' marketing operation employed a staff of 80, making it one of Ojai's biggest employers. According to one insider, Jonathan and Leslie (who, until recently, was the one actually running the company) banked upwards of \$20 million from their "Mind Power" TV show alone. In a predictable concession to their nouveau riche status they purchased the largest house in Ojai - a \$2 million, rambling 8,000-square-foot expanse of house-trying-to-be-mansion.

According to his self-promoting materials, some of Jonathan's Gateways income has gone toward grants to better-known research institutions and scientists. Thus, like the WCG's Ambassador Foundation, Gateways has attempted to buy respectability. But how legitimate is Jonathan's Gateways Research Institute?

On his products and in his publications Parker is described as "one of the most highly respected authorities in the self-development field." Yet, among leading psychologists and therapists that we talked to none had ever heard of Parker or his Institute.

Jonathan claims to have a Ph.D. Yet inquiries to Gateway on this subject are met with flimsy evasions. AR has been unable to find any evidence that Jonathan (or Leslie) ever earned a doctorate anywhere. A letter from AR to Jonathan asking for details about his Ph.D. and requesting an interview was never answered. Nor have we found any evidence that Jonathan is now, or has ever been, licensed or board certified to practice psychology or psychotherapy in California or any other state. The California Board of Psychologists and the California Board of Behavioral Science Examiners in Sacramento told the *Report* that they have no Jonathan Parker or Jack Pakozdi on their certification rolls. While Jonathan's programs make mention of his years spent in "private practice," such practice appears to have only been his experience as a WCG minister. Nor have we found any evidence (such as published research papers) to indicate that Gateways is in any way a true research institute.

Laced throughout Jonathan's TV commercials are skillfully casted testimonials supposedly from satisfied customers whose lives were transformed by listening to Jonathan. In fact, insiders to the Gateways realm say that some of the testimonials are given by friends, relatives, employees, or associates of Gateways. In one blatantly dishonest TV testimonial a man is shown driving up to a sumptuous mansion-like home in a sparkling white new \$50,000 Jaguar, extolling that all his new-found wealth was a result of listening to Jonathan's "prosperity" tapes. Actually, say insiders, the home and car were both Jonathan's. The man, who lives in much more modest circumstances in another part of the country, was provided a free round trip ticket and other perks to fly in for the carefully orchestrated charade.

### **The Subliminals**

A big part of Gateways' current catalog advertises Jonathan's subliminal tapes. These are recordings of innocuous New Age music or nature sounds such as ocean waves over which have been inserted voice tracks of supposedly positive messages. These messages are recorded in such a way as to be consciously imperceptible, but, supposedly, are still able to affect the listener's subconscious mind. Wilson Brian Key, Ph.D., author of *Subliminal Seduction*, *The Clam-Plate Orgy*, and *The Age of Manipulation*, claims that advertisers have been successfully manipulating the public for years using subliminal techniques (a claim strongly denied by the advertising industry). In recent years, some have claimed that subliminal technology has also been used to overlay demonic and suicide-inducing messages onto the recordings of certain "heavy metal" rock groups (a claim strongly denied by music company executives).

But does subliminal technology really work? While there are some researchers who say it does, the preponderance of current scholarly evidence in the field indicates that it does not. For a discussion of that evidence, see "Subliminal Deceptions" by Bruce Bower (*Science News*, 8/25/90, p. 124), "Are You Open to Suggestion?" by Jo Anna Natele (*Psychology Today*, 9/88, p. 28), and "Now You Hear It ..." by David Kalish (*Marketing and Media Decisions*, May 1988, p. 32).

### **Rehashed Psycho-Cybernetics**

What about Jonathan's lectures? A careful review of Jonathan's *Prosperity Solution* and

*Winning at Losing* sets of tapes reveals that while his lectures do contain much useful advice (the kind of stuff one would expect in a "positive thinking" church sermon), the real core of Jonathan's approach parallels that found in Dr. Maxwell Maltz's book *Psycho-Cybernetics* (Prentice Hall, 1960, and still available in paperback in many bookstores). During the late sixties the Maltz book was widely read at Ambassador College where it was strongly recommended by instructor David Albert (now a broadcaster on the *World Tomorrow* religious program) and professor Richard Plache (now in prison). Nevertheless, around 1969, after Ambassador College vice president and evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong, attacked Maltz's methods in a sermon as being "demonic," the campus was purged of all copies of Maltz's work and the reading of *Psycho-Cybernetics* was strictly forbidden at Ambassador College. Apparently Jonathan doesn't agree with Armstrong's assessment of Maltz's theories; he has adopted them as gospel truth.

### **Divorce Pending**

Whether or not Gateways' tapes are able to help those paying for them, they apparently have not been able to do much for Jonathan and Leslie's relationship. They recently filed for divorce. (This time it must be for real. The Ventura County case is number D177286.) Friends say they are not surprised as the Parker's "open marriage" was maintained formally only for the good of their two boys. Jonathan, some say, has had a mistress since his days as a WCG minister.

Leslie, trim and attractive as ever, is currently working for Wolf Fitness, an Ojai company that sells \$1000 exercise machines. Friends say that while Wolf is connected to Gateways, Leslie is no longer running the Institute. Her old position has been taken over by Sylvia Taylor, currently married to an architect, but formerly married to WCG minister Doug Taylor of Cincinnati (one of the ministers the IRS put in prison years ago for a "start your own church" scam - see the [April 1984](#) issue of *Ambassador Report*). Sylvia, described by insiders as efficient and charming, is well remembered by WCG members in Cincinnati. Wrote one of our readers, "When Mr. Taylor pastored the 'Cinti South' church, his wife Sylvia would come to services braless. She used to stir up quite a fuss among the brethren and even more among the wives."

### **HWA's Formula Works**

Even with its recent reorganization, Gateways continues to thrive. Friends of Jonathan say he is intelligent and personable. But much of the credit for Jonathan's success must go to the late Herbert W. Armstrong, the advertising man who founded the WCG and Ambassador College. Clearly, Gateways has been built upon the same formula Armstrong used to build the WCG. Business experts point out how both organizations (1) have identified a specific market, (2) have cornered a specific placement in that market through unique products, (3) utilize slick packaging, (4) have authoritative spokesmen, (5) make outlandish promises for their products, (6) make sophisticated use of the media, and, most important, (7) utilize the true essence of Herbert W. Armstrong's "give-get principle," i.e., get more than you give and you make a profit.

The system works. As Jonathan intones ever so slowly on one of his hypnotic "Mind Talk" tapes: "The good life is mine. I face life with happiness and confidence. I achieve

success more and more every day. I am filled with positive expectancy. My life is like a great magnet that attracts happiness, fulfillment, and prosperity. Each day I progress further and further. Each day is exciting and wonderful. My mind is focused steadfastly on my goals and objectives. My positive thoughts and beliefs make me wealthy and prosperous...."

## **Combatting Cult Mind Control**

A number of readers have complained that they have not been able to locate a copy of a book we recently recommended, Steven Hassan's *Combatting Cult Mind Control*. It appears that the hard bound edition is now out of print. However, we have learned that a paperback edition is now available. It sells for \$12.96 (plus \$2 for shipping) and may be ordered from Inner Traditions International, c/o AIDC Dept. 09, 64 Depot Road, Colchester, VT 05446. Or you may call their toll-free number: 1-800-445-6638 to order the book if you have Visa or Mastercard.

## **Sir Anthony Buzzard and The Restoration Fellowship**

Many Ambassador alumni will remember Sir Anthony Buzzard as one of Bricket Wood's better lecturers of the 1970s. Educated at Charterhouse School and Christ Church, Oxford, Buzzard (pronounced Ba-zard') now teaches at Oregon Bible College in Illinois. He has written numerous articles on Christology and eschatology and is the author of the book *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah - A Solution to the Riddle of the New Testament* (Ministry School Publications, 1988). Buzzard is also founder of The Restoration Fellowship which publishes a number of studies relating to certain WCG doctrines.

Who, or what, was Jesus before his human birth? The WCG (similar to the Catholic Church since the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and many Protestant denominations) teaches that Jesus had been Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament. (This teaching is, of course, one of the major barriers separating Judaism from modern Christianity). Buzzard disputes the WCG (and Catholic) teaching in a number of well-reasoned articles. We first became aware of some of the details of Buzzard's view through one of his articles reprinted by the Foundation for Biblical Research in 1989. In response to a letter from AR, Buzzard wrote us:

It is difficult indeed to see how one can be the second Adam, if one's origins are not in the womb of one's mother. Granted, of course, that Jesus is supernaturally conceived, yet He is a man (I Tim. 2:5). The Jewish people did not think the Messiah would be other than human.

If you enjoy good theological books there are two which more or less say this clearly. James Dunn's *Christology in the Making*, (Westminster Press, Philadelphia) challenges the whole notion of Incarnation and just rescues it in John, but does not find it in Paul. My cousin, the late J. A. T. Robinson, argued with Dunn that preexistence is not in John if you read without the benefit of postbiblical spectacles colored by the conciliar decisions at Nicea and Chalcedon (*Human Face of God*, SCM Press)....

Gen. 1:26 is not thought even by Trinitarians these days to be a proof of a second or third member of God's council as elsewhere. *Elohim* certainly cannot be used as any kind of proof. It is plainly a singular word in meaning where it refers to the Messiah (Ps. 45:6) and to a pagan god. It may be a plural (in form) of intensity or majesty; authorities differ.

Mark 12:8ff provides the locus classicus of Jesus' confirmation of the basic tenet of Israel. "The Lord our God is one Lord." Yet the Messiah is a different Lord as is clear from the later part of the same chapter. Ps. 110: 1 (the most often cited passage in the NT) distinguishes between Yahweh and the Lord Messiah. Some ex-WCGers are still mishandling this passage.

Charles Hunting, who is very active as time allows him correspondence with all enquirers, and I are preparing a book on the Trinity. We hope this will help the genuine truth seekers amongst the ex's and any others.

Anthony Buzzard has written a number of articles on the pre-existence of Christ doctrine and the questions it raises. Those interested in learning more about his controversial view on the subject should request a copy of his paper "The Preexistence of Christ - Truth or Tradition?" Write to Restoration Fellowship, Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061. To help with postage and handling, the Fellowship says a contribution of \$1 would be appreciated. Incidentally, those writing to the Fellowship may also wish to request a copy of Buzzard's short paper "An Examination of Worldwide Church of God's Treatment of Daniel 11 and 12." It is quite relevant in these times of heightened interest in Bible prophecy.

## **1975 in Prophecy**

Of all the booklets ever written by WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong, *1975 in Prophecy* probably caused more people to join the WCG than any other. But because 1975 didn't turn out the way that HWA predicted, that booklet is one that the WCG would prefer to forget. Nevertheless, copies of the uncopyrighted 32-page booklet are still available from a number of sources. One organization that can supply copies (at \$3 each) is Midnight Messenger, 9205 S.E. Clackamas Rd., #1776, Clackamas, OR 97015. (For an additional \$2, you can also obtain their Sept.-Oct. edition of Midnight Messenger which contained what we thought were a number of eye-opening articles about the causes of the Persian Gulf crisis.)

Incidentally, in our last issue we stated that the WCG had warned Richard C. Nickels not to distribute the "1975" booklet. Mr. Nickels recently wrote us stating that, although some years ago the WCG asked him not to distribute certain WCG copyrighted booklets, the "1975" booklet was not one of them. AR's editor apologizes for his error.

## **Living With a WCG Mate**

AR very frequently receives letters from individuals asking for advice on how to understand and cope with a mate who has joined the WCG. While back issues of AR can provide insights into the WCG, we are not marriage counsellors and do not pretend to have answers for every situation. Recently, however, we became aware of a very fine

article on the subject of how a Christian from a main-stream denomination can adjust to living with a mate who is a WCG member. The article, "Religion Divides Our Home" by Phyllis Doudna, appeared in the August 1985 issue of *Home Life* magazine. The author has kindly offered to provide a free copy of her article to anyone who requests it and sends a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Those interested should write to: Mrs. Phyllis Doudna, 973 W. Exchange St., Akron, Ohio 44302.

## **Ambassador Report Reunion and Support Groups**

We continue to hear from reunion and support groups for ex-WCG members. One in the Kansas City, Missouri area has had enjoyable reunion picnics in 1989 and 1990. Another get-together is planned for September 1991. Those interested in more information should write to: Tom and Jeanette Buller, 5125 N. Tullis, Kansas City, MO 64119 (or phone 816-455-3376).

### **Former Minister Offers Help**

*Editor: AR is very pleased that more and more former WCG members and ministers are coming forward to assist those hurt by the WCG. The following two letters are excellent examples of what we would like to see more of.*

Dear AR Staff:

My exit from the WCG in the fall of 1970 was an exhilarating and uplifting experience into a freedom and compassion I had never know. I was not at that time interested in counseling or helping others leave as I felt like a rank amateur in the new life I had found. Years of work, study and experience have shown that I was. Now 20 years later and after reading your June 1990 AR I would like to offer my name and address as one who would be happy to talk to and counsel with any people who are sincerely considering leaving, are in the process of leaving, or who have left the WCG and want help with traumatic emotional reactions.

While I never have felt any animosity for the WCG, for its members, or for my 10 year experience, I have never wanted to return. What I do on occasion miss is the genuine camaraderie I experienced with many I pastored in three local churches and the real bond I felt with some ministers, fellow students, and friends in the church.

I do have extensive training in dealing with deep-seated emotional problems - no degrees other than my AC degree - but I work with severely troubled young people and children, so I do have much first-hand knowledge of the psychological forces that motivate all of us.

I would be happy to hear from people who want to do in depth analysis of why they feel as they do, people who just want a sympathetic ear to vent on or some who just might want to say hello after 20 years.

Robert Lay

383 David Drive  
Evergreen, CO 80439  
303-674-7410

### **WTL Fellowship**

We know there are a lot of ex-WCGers that are hurt, angry and disillusioned. They've had so much taken away from them. Sometimes it just helps to have someone to understand, or just bounce their feelings off of. We would really like to be able to help them in that way. Although qualified counselors have their place, even they can't fully understand what WCG does to a person without having experienced it firsthand. So, although we can't and don't intend to replace a qualified counselor, we would like to lend all the support and encouragement possible to any and all ex-WCGers who'd care to write us. For what it's worth, one of us is a college graduate with a major in psychology and was a social worker for a number of years. But the "plain truth" is, we just want to be there for fellow ex-WCGers.

WTL Fellowship  
P.O. Box 741  
Merrill, WI 54452

### **Letters**

In your most recent issue you made a comment on pages 2 and 3 regarding ministries that Tkach has lashed out at. I must tell you that you are misinformed about the Flurry and Amos group....

First of all, the book *Malachi's Message* is scripturally based only to the extent that anything Herbert Armstrong ever wrote or preached was scripturally based. If you believe HWA's doctrines were scripturally based, then you will also believe that Flurry's book is scripturally based. You are correct when you state his book is a critique of corruption at WCG headquarters. But it is only a critique of the corruption of Tkach and there it ends. Flurry vehemently denies any corruption at the hands of HWA. He states dogmatically that HWA was a righteous man. You see, *Malachi's Message* is nothing more than a deification of HWA. It is a written graven image of Herbert W. Armstrong. *Malachi's Message* is a plea for the people of the WCG to return to the "righteous" ways of HWA. Otherwise they are all going to die in the Tribulation and probably go to the lake of fire for choosing Tkach over Flurry....

Mr. Flurry has set HWA up on a pedestal. One member counted the number of times HWA's name was stated in one sermon; 26 times! God was only mentioned by name three times....

You seem to defend HWA by criticizing Tkach's watering down of the former false prophet's doctrines. You may rest assured that Tkach has not mischaracterized Flurry and Amos. They are simply HWA resurrected.

-Ohio

*Editor: Perhaps we should have written that Flurry's book was based upon his interpretation of scripture rather than "scripturally based." We did not mean that we endorse Mr. Flurry's views.*

*As for the changes that Tkach has made, we have never stated that those changes are all bad. His new teaching on healing, for instance, will clearly make life better for many in the church. Nevertheless, even where his changes have been generally positive, or even theologically sound, we have noticed a negative side. Consider the following points:*

*(1) While Tkach has repeatedly tried to fool the WCG membership that he is carrying on in the HWA tradition, that is not the case. Tkach is clearly going contrary to HWA's teaching in many areas. The Faithful Word group has documented this very well.*

*(2) If Tkach is going contrary to HWA's will, then where is his authority? Tkach sits in HWA's seat! He would not have been given that seat had he not deceived HWA into believing he was going to carry on in HWA's footsteps.*

*(3) Even though Tkach has liberalized the church's policies on medicine, makeup, birthdays, and interracial marriage, thereby making the life of WCG members easier, aren't those changes really going to make the WCG a more enticing cult? Doctrines that you will probably not see changed are those central to the WCG's cult status: the WCG's church government doctrine, which puts Tkach in an infallible Pope-like position, and the WCG's triple tithe doctrine which continues to bleed dry those who are mesmerized into thinking it grants magical blessings.*

*Finally, now that Tkachism has replaced Armstrongism, why would any WCG member believe his church is the true church? I was recently flabbergasted to learn that some poor souls are hanging in there because they are convinced they are being led by "an Apostle." And they believe Tkach to be an Apostle because they have been taught that the WCG's "Apostle" can somehow trace his authority in some kind of unbroken line of succession back to one of the twelve whom Jesus chose. Such an idea is, of course, completely nonsensical. No evidence of such a line of succession exists. However, the question needs to be asked: If doctrine is really secondary to an unbroken line of succession from one of the twelve apostles, then why are those of such belief in the WCG? Somewhat rhetorically I would ask such WCG members: Why not just join one of the churches that really have evidence that they can trace their bishops' lines of succession back to one of the original twelve- namely, the Catholic (Roman and Orthodox) churches?*

Dear Mr. Trechak:

Needless to say, the 12 issues [of AR] I have read have been a shock. Like many others who have never been members, just recipients of literature (and sometimes donators of tithes), I had no idea of the extent of WCG's problems and hypocrisies.

I've been receiving their material for close to 20 years. Even without having been a member, I have noticed a great change in their material - *The Plain Truth*, *Good News*, *World Tomorrow* telecasts, and even some booklets - since the death of Mr. Armstrong. It is as if everything he emphasized is slowly being erased. One can only wonder why.

A prime example of this is something I am at a loss to understand. From the beginning of my contact with WCG, I was constantly reminded to be on the lookout for the reunification of Germany. It is happening. Yet, since the removal of the Berlin Wall, I have not seen WCG "capitalize" on this in any of their publications. It suddenly seems that it is no longer important, even though they've mentioned it constantly in the material I have received for close to 20 years! What is going on?....

I don't know if many people have read WCG's French-language booklet, *Les Pays de Langue Francaise Selon la Prophetie* ("The French-Speaking Nations in Prophecy"). It is about the European half of *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. Anyone doing just surface research about European migrations, dolmens, and megaliths will come across maps with routes identical to the migratory routes WCG claims the enslaved Israelites took after their Assyrian captivity. Indeed, in all of my years of reading WCG material, this is the only book I have come across that mentions the erection of stone monuments to the biblical God, yet none of their English-language material has mentioned it! In fact, I've never seen this topic mentioned in material from other Bible-based religions....

I should also mention that WCG now has two versions of *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. The new one has 53 pages of text and no index. The original book by HWA had the same cover, but was 196 pages with an index. Oddly, the revised version (uncredited) does not allude to a French-language booklet at all (the HWA one does, on page 146). What is going on?

-New Jersey

*Editor: Obviously, those that now head the WCG have ideas about Bible prophecy that are somewhat different from those of HWA. But exactly what their views on prophecy really are remains to be seen. It could very well be that at this time those now heading the WCG do not even know what their own views on prophecy really are.*

I am very pleased that you have finally gotten around to reporting on the Ambassador Foundation's concert series [in [AR45](#)]. According to *The Worldwide News*, the concerts are helping to build the church's "image." But if you read the local papers you will see that that is not always the case.

For instance, in 1988 the church sponsored a performance by Russian ballerina Maya Plisetskaya at the Shrine Auditorium. It was a disaster. According to Martin Bernheimer, the *Los Angeles Times* music critic [April 26, 1988], the old dancer was very stiff, her costumes were old and dirty, her performance was like a vaudeville show, and instead of having live musicians in the pit, she had a loud tape recorder! Gag! And we were told the church was promoting quality in the arts.

Then last year there were the Foundation's ads for soprano Jesse Norman. Did you notice what the church called her? The "greatest of high operatic priestesses." I kept thinking, "Since when does God's House need to have a priestess"? Even more shocking to me was what the Pasadena *Star-News* wrote about violinist Alexander Markov [March 16, 1988]. That paper wrote how Mr. Markov "plays like the devil" - just like Paganini who was supposedly "in league with the devil." Mr. Markov, the article said, was "every bit suggestive of a modern-day fiddling Faust" and "demon-strated" at God's House!

-California

*Editor: The Star-News critic was undoubtedly only using a metaphor for passionate fiddling. But the metaphor does bring to mind a humorous bit of WCG history. During the late '60s one Ambassador professor, David Wainwright, came up with a unique aesthetic theory. Because the Bible speaks of "this world" being "Satan's world," and because "God's Apostle" (HWA) talked about Satan "broadcasting" to the world, surely (so the theory went) all the great music of this world was inspired by Satan and his hordes of demons. Wainwright heard demonic influence in virtually all of the great composers (Bach, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner, for instance) and in some of the world's greatest performers (Horowitz was at the top of his list). Wainwright's theories caused a good number of Ambassador students to fear listening to classical music, just as, years later, the music theories of Ambassador professor Richard Plache would frighten many Ambassador students away from rock records. Wainwright's campaign to expose the supposed demonic influence behind classical music came to an end, however, when Herbert Armstrong discovered that some of the compositions on Wainwright's hit list were some of his own favorites. Wainwright continues to teach at Ambassador, but his current views on musical demons are unknown.*

I was a member for 15 years. My husband is still a member (13 years) and is an Ambassador graduate. He is questioning, but after we attended a recent GTA public meeting (Aug. 11, 1990) just out of curiosity, he was called aside into a back room the following Sabbath by the WCG minister and local elder and intimidated. They told him he committed a "very serious offense" by attending that meeting, and mentioned the word "disfellowship" many times. My husband told them to do what they felt they had to do, but he defended a person's responsibility to prove all things. He was curious why GTA was disfellowshipped for supposedly the same teachings they have brought back. We had not told anyone about attending the public meeting so apparently the WCG spies were hard at work.

-Ohio

During my "member-in-good-standing" era, I found few problems with the WCG's theology, but began to find many with its messengers. That feeling became expressed. I told John Rittenbaugh and another minister that they and the church were wrong to preach that HWA would not die but would be alive to lead the flock to a place of safety. I reminded them of the church's own teachings of prophecy in which certain scenarios had to be in place and that HWA could not possibly live until those things became evident. (HWA was very ill at the time and died not long afterward.) At that moment in our conversation Rittenbaugh and the other minister seemed to be taken by apoplexy at my "overt blasphemy" against God's prophet. With visible trepidation they suggested that if I

felt that way it might be best if we sever my relationship with the church.

-South Carolina

I went to my library in Victoria and most of the books mentioned in your flyer are now out of print....

I've been involved with the Worldwide Church of God for 8 years now and was interested in checking its background along with another church member. The WCG ministry heard about it through my "friends" and put me and my curious friend out because the AR material is supposedly a threat to the WCG and me. I feel like I've been slapped in the face for trying to "prove all things."

-Canada

*Editor: One reason why it is difficult to find books about the WCG in public libraries is that WCG members often remove and destroy them. There are whole states where many libraries list books about the WCG as having been purchased for their patrons use, yet not one can be found on their shelves. Some WCG members have also been known to mark library books with WCG-related messages.*

My daughter was told not to come to church if she didn't tithe. Yet she is a single parent trying to raise two children on a less than minimum wage job.

-Kentucky

I allowed my high blood pressure to go untreated for 20 plus years because the church then taught that medicine to control it was a grave "sin" and I believed it. Now I am permanently disabled with heart, kidney, and artery disease at age 42. I am now on total disability so my income is very limited.

-Former WCG Member

I have a sister still in WCG. I am hoping she will read AR and free herself from it, but I have little hope that she will as she reads only what she's told she must read. To quote her, "I don't clutter up my mind with anything but the Bible." As I pointed out to her, she reads only what she's told to read even in the Bible.

-Arkansas

A friend has been involved in the WCG for about six months and I am concerned that he's been brainwashed by WCG. Although he used to be a vibrant, happy, alive person and very talented, now all he ever talks about when I ask what's up is the WCG. To my inquiries about the WCG, his responses are what I consider somewhat flimsy regarding challenges to doctrine.... In closing, I'd like to say that while I am not at all an adherent to any Christian denomination or any organized religion, I do believe in many aspects of spirituality and in some divine and very beautiful, incredible Creator. It is much easier for

me to read and trust AR because of its nondenominational stance and open mind.

-South Dakota

I am disabled and retired on social security at \$432 per month and have heavy medical bills. My wife is still brainwashed by WCG and is today on her way to the Feast of Tabernacles. She works part-time and gets a social security check of \$581 per month, but as you know a lot of that goes to WCG. I struggle to get her to read the AR but seldom will she consent to reading it or any other literature about God's Word unless it is written by a minister in WCG.

I have never been happier in my life than I am today even though I suffer physically and miss the fellowship of my wife and others of like faith. After giving 15 years of devoted time and work to the WCG, I didn't formerly resign from it. I just stopped going to their services and stopped giving any money to them and to my great surprise not one minister, not one deacon, nor any other church person ever contacted me and asked me why I left WCG. That is how much love or care they showed about me in their belief that I was doomed to their hell fire and brimstone death, never to have another chance to live again. But in reality I was glad that they didn't call me or come to talk to me and ask a reason for my leaving. That left me free from their shackles and I didn't have to explain anything to them. This shows how much love there is in that cult.

I love my wife and I don't bug her anymore about the so-called true church and she doesn't want to hear about what I believe concerning salvation, etc. But I let her know as much as she will listen to, but she doesn't like to talk about it.

-AR Reader

Before I knew what hit me, I was feeling very suicidal. I never knew what "dysfunctional families" were. I came to find out I was raised in one! My husband was beside himself. He didn't know what to do with me - institutionalize me or what! Over the last eight years since my husband and I have been together, I've tried to tell him what it was like growing up in WCG. At first he thought I was exaggerating or even making it up, everything seemed so bizarre. Well, now he knows differently. I received help through a therapist. That decision was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I also started buying all the books and pamphlets I could about my problem and then found out about you.

Even my mother who is still in the WCG has told me she has had suicidal thoughts off and on. It's no wonder as my mother has had a horrible life in that destructive cult. Mom and Dad have been in WCG for 27 years....

My father had a very successful business before they joined up. Then eventually (you know how the story goes) he lost everything, even our home - our home! I'm 33 years old now and trying to pick up the pieces and go on. But it's been so very, very hard.

-California

You and your staff make everything so plain about all the deceit and the corruption that goes on in the WCG. Anybody with part of a brain should be able to see through their curtain and know what's going on behind it. I honestly believe that the scripture "Like sheep led to the slaughter" applies to them.

-Kansas

It saddens me so knowing my son and family are such a part of the WCG. And frankly, they now seem more involved. My son works for a well-to-do WCG deacon in the man's business. Yet he receives minimum wages and tithes 30 percent. As a parent, can you please advise how to reach members if they appear very happy and ever so smug in this church? It is as if we are so wrong and they are the only church that is the true one. I simply feel frustrated at times but avoid any discussion. I remind myself as a mother my unconditional love is to accept them in all this. In the meantime, I pray a lot and offer my concerns to our loving Lord.

-Washington

I was a deacon in WCG for 15 years and it was tougher on me than on my wife. It seemed I was in more church functions than her. They kept me so busy that I had no time for my children and they were neglected many times. The love between my children and myself was almost gone. We are happy now and the love has returned, thanks to you folks.... May God bless you many times over.

Joe and Doris Coutcher  
Florida

## Readers' Gay Concerns

Dear Mr. Trechak:

You will probably think I am an overly suspicious woman, but with all the talk here at headquarters about certain ministers being bisexual or gay, I can't help it. There is something about our Pastor General that bothers me. It's his official portrait - the one that appears in *The Plain Truth* and in the new Ambassador College catalog. First of all, Mr. Tkach is holding a book of poetry by Milton. I cannot understand why he did not choose to hold a Bible. Then there is his expression. Maybe I'm imagining things. But frankly, to me Mr. Tkach looks effeminate in that picture. Most of all, however, what bothers me is that instead of a wedding band on his left hand Mr. Tkach has a pinky ring! Now, before you start laughing at me, let me explain.

In our culture married people wear their wedding ring on the ring finger of their left hand. This has been the custom for hundreds of years. Mr. James Remington McCarthy made this very clear in his book *Rings Through the Ages* [Harper and Brothers, 1945]. Mr. McCarthy further wrote that wearing a ring on the little finger of the left hand is a symbol that the wearer is a "lover," not a married person [p. 59]. I asked a librarian about this and, to my amazement, she referred me to the new *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*. (I

never suspected such books even existed!)

According to our library's *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality* [Garland Publishing, 1990], "Gay men have often used clothing to indicate that they were potential sexual partners for other males. Of course, any type of clothing associated with the opposite gender can be so used, but more subtle signals are often desired" [p. 246]. Then on page 416 it says that some homosexuals wear pinky rings as a symbol of their sexual preferences! What do you think about Mr. Tkach's pinky ring?

-Pasadena, Calif.

*Editor: Perhaps Mr. Tkach's ring is too small for his ring finger. Whatever the case, don't get carried away. Symbols can change. I checked the encyclopedia you quoted and found that in years past, a red tie was "'almost a synonym' for homosexuality in large American cities." Yet, today, red ties-like the one worn by Tkach in his official portrait - are worn by so many men in public life that the special connotation has surely been lost. As for Tkach's official portrait, well - he looks friendly, at least, doesn't he?*

In reading your [September](#) issue I found it interesting that you have finally noticed how the church has been influenced by the so-called Gay Liberation movement. But I was disappointed in how wimpy your coverage was. I cannot believe you are not more aware of just how serious the problem really is at headquarters.

To begin with, you certainly must know that the Bible condemns homosexuality from cover to cover. Contrary to *The Good News* views of Dennis Luker, homosexuality is not simply a bad habit like having one beer too many or eating an extra slice of apple pie. Gay activists know the Bible is their enemy. Dr. George Weinberg in "The Madness and Myths of Homophobia" wrote that the chief cause of "homophobia" (the term he uses to describe all negativity toward homosexuality) is "the teachings of religion, and the Bible in particular." In reading Dennis' *Good News* article, I thought it amazing how he did not quote but a very few of the Bible's many passages that condemn homosexuality, and that the ones he did quote he watered down.

What Dennis' article accomplished was to show that the Church has fallen victim to the same International Gay Conspiracy forces that are affecting all of society. You may have noticed on the op-ed page of the Dec. 3, 1990 *Los Angeles Times* there was an article by left-winger Marshal Alan Phillips praising *The New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible which replaces the 1952 *Revised Standard* version. Phillips wrote how the "new Protestant version of the Bible is more tolerant of and sensitive toward homosexuality, removing one more obstacle to full societal acceptance of gays, including legal marriage and its associated benefits." The new translation simply waters down all the Bible passages that condemn homosexuality. In other words, instead of turning away from those practices the Bible condemns, the gay lib movement has simply gone ahead and changed the Bible!

For well over a decade the U.S. has been the target of a very real, very organized, and very powerful movement aimed at making homosexuality an accepted "alternate lifestyle." Now, before you call me a conspiracy freak, go to your nearest big city library

and see how many books there are on the subject of "living gay." In particular notice *The New Gay Liberation Book* published by Ramparts Press of Palo Alto, California in 1979. It can be found in almost every big public library in the country. It begins with a chapter on how to become a practicing homosexual and then moves on to tell about how "the movement" will eventually make the homosexual lifestyle accepted in America. The chapter headings tell the story: "Born Again" (not about Jesus but about losing one's virginity in a gay bar), "Testament of a Gay Militant," "Memoirs of an Ancient Activist," "Bisexual Politics," "Inside Sado/Masochism," "Looking Toward Transvestite Liberation," "The Madness and Myths of Homophobia," and "We Will Conquer...."

In the eleven years since Ramparts' gay lib book came out, homosexuality has become so accepted in America that one can become labeled a bigot, or worse, if one even hints that homosexuality might really be a perversion. Not only are most media personalities dead-fly afraid of offending any gays, many politicians rely on gay organizations to get elected. It is well known, for instance, that Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles has the large gay population and many gay organizations of that city as a power base. It is also well known that a good number of his top staff are gay. (One question for you. Why is it that even though he can't get one vote from Worldwidars because none of us vote, and even though he never cared much for Mr. Herbert Armstrong while he lived, Mayor Bradley now is very friendly toward the Ambassador Foundation and the church's new leaders?)

I think you folks at AR need to do some homework. Let me suggest a number of books: *Shadow in the Land* by U.S. Congressman William E. Danneneyer (Ignatius Press, 15 Oakland Ave., Harrison, NY 10528, copyright 1989), *Gay Priests* by James G. Wolf [Harper and Row, 1989], and *Betrayal of Trust--Clergy Abuse of Children* by Annie Laurie Gaylor (Freedom From Religion Foundation, Box 750, Madison, WI 53701).

You might also benefit from a GTA [Garner Ted Armstrong, P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, TX 75710] tape titled "Is Homosexuality a Sin?" The tape is from a broadcast he did in 1980 and, I have been told, was in response to conditions in Pasadena that he was aware of at the time. In spite of his own problems in those days Ted made a lot of sense in that broadcast.

I should make one more suggestion. There are some gays who not only deny they are gay, but hide the fact by actually going out of their way to attack homosexuality! I learned this from a book you may not have read. It is *Citizen Cohn*, the biography of lawyer Roy Cohn, by Nicholas Von Hoffman [Doubleday, 1988]. You can get a Bantam paperback edition in almost any bookstore. Cohn was one of the most influential conservative Republicans in America during the last forty years. Perhaps because he never married, some wondered if he was homosexual. But he not only vigorously denied he was gay, he publicly attacked the notion of gay rights and referred to all homosexuals as "fags." Yet, as Von Hoffman thoroughly documents, Cohn was not just gay. He was notoriously promiscuous, on one occasion even bringing a young male lover with him to the Reagan White House. He died of AIDS in 1986.

I mention all of this simply to point out that one can be *publicly* against the gay lib movement, yet secretly be a practicing homosexual, even secretly promoting the gay lib movement.

I simply am wondering: Are you just sitting on information that the rest of us are already well aware of? If so, why? Are you afraid of the GLAAD organization? Or are you just plain naive?

-City of Industry, Calif.

*Editor: You've raised quite a few issues. I'll try to comment on each, even if only briefly.*

*Yes, AR is in possession of much information about homosexuality in the WCG hierarchy that is, as yet, unpublished. But there are good reasons why I do not immediately publish every scandalous WCG story that comes my way. First of all, unless I can independently verify such information, I do not publish anonymous letters containing serious allegations (and there seems to be an avalanche of such letters in WCG circles these days). Verifying such information is often very difficult, if not impossible. Second, I am very leery of information coming from sources who do not reveal how they obtained their information and then say "don't quote my name." Increasingly, I am getting shocking letters of that type. Again, if such information is not independently verifiable it's not usually usable.*

*Third, contrary to a widespread belief in the WCG, I simply do not believe all WCG news of a scandalous nature is fit to print. For instance in the mid-80s a number of readers informed me of how a certain minister had many years ago committed some serious immoral acts with church girls. I made inquiries and developed a file adequate for a story. Before I actually decided to run the story, however, the minister discovered I was investigating and phoned me. He was candid and upfront. He admitted the information I had was correct and he knew I had every legal right to run the story. But, he said, the conduct was repented of, not since repeated, and if I ran the story it would only hurt his family and the good he was able to accomplish as a minister. Maybe I was overly trusting, but I believed him then and still do. I never ran the story. To this day I am convinced that my decision was proper.*

*Now, with all of that stated, let me specifically address the issue of homosexuality in the WCG leadership. In addition to the three points expressed above, this topic has given me a number of very serious concerns. One has been that in delving into this matter for a number of weeks both with informants and with books some have asked me to study, I have found the whole business not just repulsive, but extremely depressing. I now wonder if a frank and thorough AR expose on the subject will not prove as repulsive and depressing to AR's readership as it has to me.*

*But there is a more serious ethical problem that I have been forced to confront. Even though the "gay lifestyle" is repulsive to me personally and even though I personally abhor the so-called "gay lib" movement (because it encourages people to experiment with morose practices many will find addictive), I sincerely do not have any built-in animosity toward gay people. Perhaps that is because during my lifetime I have known and gotten along reasonably well with many intelligent and talented gays both in my work and while at various colleges (including Ambassador). I also appreciate the accomplishments made over the centuries by gays in literature, music, the visual arts, and many other fields. For example, one of my favorite orchestral works is Variations*

*and Fugue on a Theme by Purcell by Benjamin Britten, the late English composer who happened to be a life-long practicing homosexual. (Incidentally, that piece is the theme music for the Ambassador Foundation's Los Angeles area classical music broadcasts.)*

*But whatever my own moderate (at least, I think they are) views on the subject, I know that many people are far less understanding. In recent years there has been a tremendous increase in unprovoked violence directed at gays. And I have really wondered if a tell-all type of expose on the subject of homosexuality in the WCG would only inflame the hatreds of some who lack any Christian charity toward those whose heredity, upbringing, or whatever, has led them to adopt a self-hurting lifestyle. AR is unequivocally opposed to all forms of violence and hatred directed at gay people (as far as this goes, Dennis Luker's Good News article was at least correct up to a point). AR is also opposed to government intrusions into the bedrooms of private citizens (something some "conservatives" apparently favor).*

*Nevertheless, even with all the above caveats of compassion and moderation, we are still faced with a fundamental question: Where do we draw the line?*

*Lest anyone think I am some kind of a moral nihilist, let me just state for the record that I very much agree with the traditionalist views (on sex, family, and homosexuality) of attorney, Lutheran elder, and Congressman William E. Dannemeyer as expressed in the Congressional Record of June 29, 1989 (pp. H3511 -H3514). Those views - based, I feel, on a very straight forward reading of history, scripture, and the law - seems to be quite moderate and balanced. Yet Dannemeyer's concise statement, which not only defined homosexuality as contrary to the common law, natural law, and scripture, but also alleged that federal policy is now being heavily influenced by the gay lib movement, aroused such vehemence among leaders of that movement that one U.S. Congressman felt compelled to call for a House Ethics Committee investigation - not of the many Congressmen now promoting the agenda of the gay lib movement - but of Rep. Dannemeyer! (Los Angeles Times, July 11, 1990, p. E5.) I would strongly urge those interested in so-called gay rights issues to read the Dannemeyer statement. The Congressional Record can be found in most public libraries. For those who don't have access to a public library, Rep. Dannemeyer's office has kindly offered to send a copy of his Congressional Record statement on homosexuality to any AR reader who requests it. Write to: Hon. William E. Dannemeyer, 1235 N. Harbor Blvd. #100, Fullerton, CA 92632.*

*Regarding the GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), organization, I'll just make a few comments. Most Americans would be dumbfounded if they knew how much influence GLAAD has over the American media. Members of that national homosexual organization monitor virtually all electronic and print media in the U.S. So-called "slurs against homosexuals" are reported to the various GLAAD hotlines. Then through its huge network of gay activists GLAAD responds against those individuals and companies it feels are not representing the gay lifestyle in a positive light. Increasingly, news editors, fearing lost advertising, product boycotts, subscriber cancellations, and even personal unemployment, are very reluctant to write or say anything critical of gays or homosexuality in general. Even television evangelists have to be careful of what they say about homosexuality. I understand that a few years ago evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong's television program was cancelled in a few markets because he made*

*comments critical of homosexuality. Since then he seems to have toned down somewhat his public criticisms of homosexuality. AR has not yet had any pressure exerted on it by GLAAD (probably because we're too small). But even if we did, it would not affect our decisions regarding what we publish.*

*One final comment. Like the journalists that probably write for your local paper, I am not someone who claims to have all the answers to life's multitude of problems, paradoxes, and moral dilemmas. Some, or even many, of my views discussed above may be in error. But I hope I have, at least, candidly answered the City of Industry writer's questions (the same questions many others have also been asking me of late) and given you some idea of the journalistic and ethical problems with which I have been burdened for many months. I have not yet decided how much I will write on this matter (if at all) in the future. So any suggestions or criticisms I receive will be carefully considered and appreciated.*

\* \* \*

My thanks to those of you who are continuing to support *Ambassador Report*. And my best wishes to all of you for a healthy and happy 1991.

J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR47\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**AR47 March 25, 1991**

Dear AR Reader:

Even though the next full issue of *Ambassador Report* has been written, publication of that issue has been delayed by at least five weeks. As editor of the *Report*, I am writing to let you know why.

For a number of years now, each new issue of the *Report* has required more time, more work, and more money to produce. At the same time, it seems, each new issue has generated ever decreasing financial contributions. It has really become almost impossible to continue publishing the *Report*. In trying to find a way to continue publishing, I contacted an accountant friend and asked him to review our situation and offer suggestions. After reviewing the *Report's* finances, he wrote me the following:

Dear John:

Fourteen years of having put out *Ambassador Report* has already cost you over \$120,000 of your own money. Let's face it, it's the reason you don't own a home. You need to carefully look over your books again and face up to what your publishing efforts are costing you personally.

To be quite blunt, John, in looking over your records I noticed that you have a lot of deadbeats on your mailing list. Margaret [Zola] mentioned how you've even got some WCG ministers getting ARs for free. At the very least, you need to trim your mailing list....

As much as I hate to admit it, I think my accountant friend is right. Although we do have some very fine people on our mailing list, and although a handful are truly generous, the majority of our readers appear not to have the slightest idea of how much sacrifice on our part goes into turning out an issue. Furthermore, the great majority of our readers do not contribute anywhere near enough to justify our efforts.

A lot of AR readers seem to believe I am a millionaire (I am not) or that we have some wealthy benefactor or foundation backing the *Report* (we don't). I say this because of the many letters we receive from people who ask for so much, yet give so little. I can only conclude that many are not just misinformed, but are living in a private fantasyland. Let me give you a few examples.

A few days ago I received a letter from an Australian man who plaintively wrote how the WCG had cost him his wife and family, his health, and his job. Nevertheless, he wrote, he had recently rejoined the WCG after begging to be readmitted. This individual had the nerve to ask for *free* back issues of the *Report* (at airmail postal rates to Australia, no less) because he could not afford to contribute anything - to the *Report* that is. To the WCG, of course, he'll be giving 10% or more of everything he earns.

Another reader wrote to me complaining how he hadn't received an issue for some time. He didn't seem to recall that he had never contributed a dime to AR, or that he had moved numerous times without sending us a change of address (thus giving us added postal forwarding fees). His complaint letter was accompanied not by any kind of contribution, but by a list of freebies he expected from us in addition to being put back on the mailing list. He expected free back issues of AR, old issues of WCG booklets and magazines, a complete list of WCG spinoff groups, a copy of the Systematic Theology Project, etc., etc., etc.

Another individual, unfortunately typical of many WCG members, recently wrote how he'd been reading AR in South Africa for years and wanted to be put on our mailing list. He also sent along a list of 22 lengthy questions for me to answer. It was obviously of no consequence to him that for me to properly answer all his convoluted queries would require eight or nine hours of research and writing. He contributed not a penny toward the issues he had already read or the ones he wanted, nor did he provide anything to cover the high cost of postage to his country (\$2.51 per three ounces). Yet, I was expected to drop everything for a day and provide him with answers to all of his problems!

A midwest family who recently lost their aging WCG-member father only to discover he had, over the years, given away the family's entire fortune to the WCG (leaving his wife and children with nothing) recently contacted me asking for help. Through back issues, letters, and long-distance phone calls, I was able to provide insights into the law of wills and WCG policies and was able to suggest how they might find the right attorney to assist them with their legal problems. No contribution was ever sent to AR.

Then there's the reader who wrote me demanding that I provide him with meticulously detailed documentation on the personal life of Joseph Tkack. This fellow, apparently another WCG member, actually wanted me to electronically bug the bedrooms of certain top WCG executives and to set up around-the-clock surveillance of all of Joseph Tkach's movements with all taped evidence to be mailed to him personally! Aside from the fact that what he was suggesting is illegal (and therefore I wouldn't do it), the cost of such an undercover operation (according to industrial espionage experts I talked to) would be well over \$30,000 for just a few weeks. Naturally, our skeptical WCG reader has yet to come up with such a contribution. In fact, he has yet to contribute even one cent to AR.

A final example is one that, unfortunately, is all too common. I was contacted by an Ohio wife whose husband had been in Worldwide for a number of years giving \$6,000 annually to the Tkach organization. (Incidentally, my accountant friend pointed out to me how it is not uncommon for people to stay in the WCG for twenty years. And that \$6,000 times 20 years at 8% interest equals a future value of \$275,000.) The wife's marriage was rapidly disintegrating because of the church and she wanted to know if there was any way AR could help. As I usually do in such cases, I immediately mailed off a few key back issues of the *Report* and phoned her. Within hours we were able to work out a marriage-saving strategy. A month later she wrote me:

Dear Mr. Trechak:

Our deepest thanks to you and the others at *Ambassador Report*. As a result of reading your wonderful newsletter and taking your advice, my husband has decided to leave the WCG for good. Doing so has saved his job and our marriage. With \$6,000 a year more than we had before, it looks like we'll finally be able to give our three children some of the things we never thought we could ever afford. May God bless you! Enclosed is \$10 for the five back issues you sent us.

That letter and the \$10 (which didn't even cover the photocopying and postage costs of sending the back issues) was the last I ever heard from those folks. I guess they really didn't feel any need to help others gain the freedom that they had gained. And maybe what we gave was really worth only \$10 to them.

Frankly, letters such as the one last quoted remind me of a memorable scene in George Steven's 1940 movie *Vigil in the Night*. The heroine in that film, a 19th century English nurse played by Carol Lombard, risks her career by forcefully speaking up during a surgical operation and telling a domineering surgeon he had just made a terrible mistake. The outraged surgeon finally realizes the nurse is correct just barely in time to correct his error and save the life of his patient, a wealthy industrialist. Later, when the convalescing industrialist discovers that the nurse's courage had saved his life, he presents her with a wrapped gift. After she exits the room, an understanding physician suggests that she open the package. And when she does, she discovers a handbag worth but a few pounds. The silence as the two stare at the bag is broken only when the physician cynically quips, "I just wanted to see how much he thinks his life is worth."

Perhaps after 14 years of AR I, too, am getting a bit cynical. But I really should not be surprised about the ingratitude of most people. A Bible-student friend recently reminded me of the incident described in Luke 17:11-19. It's the story of the ten lepers who approached Jesus, asking to be healed. The Lord told them they would get their wish if they simply presented themselves before the priest. They did so and all ten were miraculously healed. Yet, in spite of the magnitude of the blessing bestowed upon the ten, *only one* was appreciative enough to return to Jesus to offer his thanks. With what may be viewed as a bit of righteous cynicism, Jesus asked his disciples, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the other nine?"

I used to think that the story of the ten lepers was indicative only of the cold-hearted spirit of the times in which Jesus lived. Sadly, however, that kind of blind, unimaginative, self-centered ingratitude is just as much - if not more - with us today. Author David

Robinson, whose own personal sacrifices in publishing *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* have been appreciated by all too few, recently commented to me how he had come to see ingratitude as one of the worst and most prevalent sins of our times. I am beginning to believe his observation is quite correct.

I have never asked our readers to show their appreciation for the *Report* by truly sacrificing for its continuance. And I don't intend to now. I know there are many worthy churches, charities, and movements all vying for the public's limited discretionary income. And I am fully aware of today's high cost of living and the fact that we are in a recession.

Nevertheless, it does truly amaze and disappoint me that so many who were once in the WCG giving thousands of dollars yearly to an organization that held them in absolute bondage, will not give even a tenth of that amount to an organization that has helped them gain their freedom. It is even more disappointing when I think how many of those same people will write me, or even tell me to my face, how informative, helpful, well-written, and even entertaining they find each issue of *Ambassador Report*.

AR's meager finances are such that some changes - like thinning our mailing list - will have to be made if it is to survive. Some of our more enthusiastic subscribers have encouraged me to put a stiff subscription price on the *Report*. To those readers I have sent a two-page letter that explains why implementing such a policy would actually kill the *Report*. One suggestion that has been made, however, will be implemented. I will be compiling a list of the contents of all back issues of AR (along with a realistic suggested donation amount for each) for those wishing to obtain back issues.

On my book shelf sits the completed 80-page hand-written manuscript for the next *Report*. Beside it is a large box of filed research for the issue following. Those two issues will provide more insights into the real WCG than anything I have ever written. I am eager to publish those two issues, but the funds necessary for typesetting, printing, and postage are just not there. And, I refuse to go further into debt to provide information to many who don't seem to care to get it.

I will eventually get the next issue of the *Report* into print, but exactly when I cannot say. When it is printed, however, it will be sent only to those who are financially contributing to our efforts. If you've sent a contribution to AR during the last six months you are on our mailing list to receive the next issue when it comes out. If you haven't contributed, I'm sorry, but I simply cannot promise you any more issues.

My own philosophy is such that I would prefer to be generous. But there simply are limits to how much I personally can give.

Sincerely,

John Trechak

[Next Issue \(AR48\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

AR48 May, 1991

### Tkach: "I'm Born Again!"

Worldwide Church of God (WCG) Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach is continuing to implement his now not-so-secret agenda of transforming the church founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA). In the January 28, 1991 issue of the church's newspaper *The Worldwide News* (WN), one of Tkach's ghostwriters, under Tkach's by-line, wrote how WCG members are already "born again." Summarizing the new doctrine, the WN article stated: "...when the Bible speaks of a person as being 'born again' it is speaking of Christian conversion, not of the ultimate Christian inheritance" (p. 6). While the new WCG position completely contradicts a major HWA teaching, Tkach's ghostwriter explained that HWA simply didn't understand the subtle difference between the Greek words *gennao* and *sullambano*. But Tkach does, supposedly.

Just how many HWA teachings have now been changed by the Tkach cabal is difficult to calculate. An article in the Nov./Dec. issue of Gerald Flurry's *Philadelphia Trumpet* (P.O. Box 1787, Edmond, OK 73083) reported that Tkach had already changed 26 HWA doctrines and policies. But since that article appeared, there have been more changes. For instance, those now requesting the WCG booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* are being informed that that booklet is no longer in print. And WCG public relations man Michael Snyder has predicted that within a year the doctrine found in that booklet will probably no longer be taught by the WCG.

Another HWA teaching that is being questioned is the WCG's nontrinitarian view of the Godhead. There is now an official "study paper" on that doctrine being circulated among WCG ministers. Official church spokesman Michael Snyder, interviewed on the religious radio program *Talk From the Heart* (broadcast Dec. 13 on WMUZ, Detroit), stated that *all* WCG doctrines are now under review. His comments regarding the WCG's God-is-not-a-trinity teaching seem to indicate there may be a change in that WCG doctrine in the near future.

With Tkach Sr., Michael Feazell, and Tkach Jr. making the WCG's public image their top

priority, and with WCG public relations man Michael Snyder busily cooperating with mainstream Christian media around the world, it's no wonder so many think the WCG has become a nice organization. The announcer on *Talk From the Heart* referred to the WCG positively as "moving toward orthodoxy." Even former WCG minister Richard Wiedenheft, now the editor of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, was made hopeful by Snyder's performance. Wiedenheft ran edited excerpts of the Snyder interview in the February 1991 issue of the *Sentinel* (RD 1, Box 222, Fairview, OK 73737) and also published an editorial that praised the supposedly great courage of Joseph Tkach in bringing change to the WCG.

However, when we listened to a tape of the interview, we noticed Snyder admitted that WCG leaders were "preparing new doctrines on prophecy," but also said that a Christian baptized in a Protestant denomination did not necessarily have to be baptized in the WCG in order to join, denied the WCG was exclusivist, denied HWA was ever guilty of plagiarism, and denied Tkach uses ghostwriters. While the WCG has made some changes, one thing hasn't changed. The WCG hierarchy is still not being honest with the general public or even with its own members.

### **The WCG, the Buddhists, and the Quayles**

The WCG's unquenchable hunger for acceptance by the world often puts its ministers into strange relationships. For example, the Feb. 11 issue of the WN reported (p. 8):

Monks in the Wat Thai (Thai Temple) in Los Angeles commemorated the fifth anniversary of the death of Herbert W. Armstrong here Jan. 16.

Attending the ceremony were evangelist Herman Hoeh, *Plain Truth* editor; Raymond Epperson from the Ambassador Foundation; [and WCG assistant pastor] Leon Sexton....

Isn't it odd that WCG members are forbidden to attend services at any Protestant or Catholic church, yet WCG ministers may openly participate in reincarnation rituals at an idol-filled Buddhist temple?

An important part of the WCG hierarchy's agenda has long been to develop contacts high in government. So when the June 4, 1990 issue of the WN briefly mentioned (p. 12) that WCG evangelist David Hulme met on April 26, 1990 with Marilyn Quayle, the wife of the U.S. Vice President, we didn't suspect there might be any special significance to such a meeting. But then we read Suzanne Nicole's article "Quayle & Armageddon" in *The Freedom Writer* (Sept./ Oct. 1990, published by Simon, Porteous & Associates, P.O. Box 589, Great Barrington, MA 01230). Nicole reports how Mrs. Quayle, her parents, and quite possibly her husband take a great interest in Bible prophecy and have come under the influence of "a far-right preacher named Colonel Robert B. Thieme, Jr. of Houston, Texas." Nicole wonders if Thieme's views are making inroads into the Bush administration via the Quayles. The theory that the Bush administration may be subject to the influence of certain religionists is not farfetched. The *Los Angeles Times* (Feb. 7, 1991, pp. E1 and E2) reported that the White House had ordered six copies of fundamentalist preacher John F. Walvoord's book *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis* (Zondervan). According to Jonathan Peterson, a spokesman for the book's

publisher, the six copies were "for the President and his men." With top government officials taking such a serious interest in Bible prophecy and with WCG evangelists regularly courting those officials, could it be that we will one day have a U.S. President who is influenced by the WCG's leaders?

---

&COPY; 1991 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian Service. ISSN 0882-2123  
John Trechak, Editor & Publisher  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

### **More Evangelists Stifled**

We have previously reported how WCG evangelist Roderick C. Meredith is no longer allowed to preach. Now, the Tkach cabal has stifled two more evangelists: Ellis LaRavia and Norman Smith. It is not yet entirely clear what they have done to deserve being banned from WCG pulpits, but we should find out by our next issue.

### **Ambassador Gets an Alumni Association - of Sorts**

A number of AR readers have asked us what became of the Ambassador College alumni organization founded about five years ago by Bob Boyce (see [AR38](#)). We tried to find out. But letters sent to that organization's post office box and to Boyce's home have come back marked "undeliverable as addressed" and phone calls to Boyce's phone answering machine were never returned. Sources in Texas tell us Boyce's alumni association is no more.

A new Ambassador Alumni Association, however, was recently formed by Ambassador College. The premiere edition of its new *Ambassadors* quarterly newsletter (\$15 per year for very little information) revealed that the association will be used to assist alumni in getting their employers to make donations to Ambassador. Not all Ambassador alumni, however, will get to join this unique alumni association. Jim Marion, AC-Pasadena's student body vice president in 1983, recently wrote us the following:

Here's a fine example of Ambassador "glasnost." At the home of one of my WCG relatives, I saw in *The Worldwide News* a short article about the new Ambassador Alumni Association. Thinking that joining this would give me a way to keep up with the accreditation drive, I sent in a letter asking for information. I'm interested in the accreditation drive because I have a faint hope that someday the college from which I graduated might become accredited and add somewhat more respect to my resume. Other than this, I have little desire to associate with WCG members.

The attached letter from Tom Delamater, public relations officer, is what I got in

reply. It seems Ambassador has redefined the concept of an "alumnus" from "an Ambassador College graduate" to "an Ambassador College graduate that is a believing, practicing church member." Wouldn't it be a shame if intelligent, educated Ambassador College graduates became exposed to different philosophies of "wayward" alumni? Well, what did I expect?

Jim Marion  
2305 Knighthood Ln.  
Garland, TX 75042

Here is Ambassador's reply:

Dear Jim:

Thanks for your letter of January 22. We have, indeed, established an alumni association at the college.

In the organization of the alumni association, the college, in cooperation with the Worldwide Church of God, has established the following policy: To be considered for membership in the alumni association, an alum must be in harmony with the philosophies and principles of Ambassador College and its principal sponsor, the Worldwide Church of God. However, alumni shall not be required to adopt such philosophies or principles as their personal religious convictions.

You and Jan are listed in the Church's records as disfellowshipped. Therefore, we ask that you begin the process of applying for membership in the alumni association by contacting the pastor of the Worldwide Church of God congregation nearest you. His name is Allen Bullock, and his phone number is (214) 495-6659.

Thanks, Jim, for your interest. Say hello to Jan.

Sincerely,  
Thomas R. Delamater

As "the church lady" of "Saturday Night Live" would say, "Now isn't that special?"

Actually, the letter Jim Marion (and many other nonWCG alumni) received was tame compared to what AR's editor got when he wrote to the alumni association. Not only would AC not take his \$15 for a subscription to the association's newsletter, but they didn't even suggest he contact a local WCG minister.

### **Mystery Mailers Ask for \$200 Million**

During the last quarter of 1990, many Ambassador College alumni and WCG members received an unusual flyer in the mail. It was mailed by a mysterious Kansas City organization called Save the Pasadena Ambassador College Campus Fund (SPACCF). The mailers wrote that they wanted to "raise \$200,000,000 as quickly as possible" (wouldn't we all!) supposedly "to buy the [Pasadena] campus from Joe Tkach...."

While saving the Pasadena campus may be a worthwhile goal, SPACCF's promise to

open the campus "for all those who would enjoy visiting and possibly rooming on the campus for brief periods throughout the year" sounds a lot like what jailed evangelist Jim Bakker once promised those contributing to his Heritage USA theme park. Furthermore, while SPACCF hopes for individual contributions of \$1000 and up, their flyer insists that contributions be made only via U.S. postal money orders.

Even more disturbing is the fact that the persons behind SPACCF refuse to identify themselves. Their flyer states that they cannot reveal their identities "for obvious reasons." SPACCF has no phone listing in the Kansas City metropolitan area and their flyer gives only P.O. Box 413186, Kansas City, MO 64141 as an address. When we wrote directly to SPACCF asking for information, we received no response. When we phoned Kansas City postal officials asking for the name(s) registered for that box, we were informed that Box 413186 was registered to an individual or individuals, not to an organization doing business with the public. Therefore, in conformance with postal regulations, the box holder's name(s) cannot be given out.

Suspecting that something was not "kosher" with SPACCF, we contacted the Post Office's Postal Inspection Service in Kansas City. After more than four months of investigation, the Service has still not been able or willing to provide us with the name(s) of the holder(s) of SPACCF's post office box.

The Office of the Secretary of State for Missouri told the Report that there is no Save the Pasadena College Campus Fund registered in Missouri as required by the fictitious name regulations of that state. The Missouri Attorney General's Office has told AR that anyone who contributed to SPACCF and has a complaint should contact the office of Mr. William L. Webster, Attorney General of Missouri, P.O. Box 899, Jefferson City, MO 65102 (tel. 816-531- 4207).

### **Plache Released From Prison**

Former Ambassador College Dean of Students and WCG minister Richard Plache, convicted in 1988 of 18 counts of mail fraud and SEC violations (see [AR41](#)), has been released from the Federal minimum security prison at Lompoc, California. He is currently in a halfway house in the San Diego area. During the Christmas Season, Plache sent his friends and followers a six-page "prison epistle" that began with "....So let me begin by extending 'grace and peace to you from God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.' This is a gift which I give to you and is priceless in value." The letter ended with, "It is my prayer that you all will have a blessed holiday season and that the new year will truly be 1991-derful! May God richly bless you in all your ways. In His love, Richard."

### **The FBI Files on the WCG**

Have you ever wondered what information on the WCG might be found in the files of the FBI? Kentuckian Gene Bailey has. And his curiosity prompted him to contact FBI offices around the country to request copies of their files on the WCG under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA," 5 USCA Sec. 552).

Unfortunately, while the FOIA seems to hold out much promise for investigators,

utilizing it can be time consuming. Bailey has had to wait well over a year to receive the first release of documents since his initial request. And utilization of the FOIA is not without financial costs. The FBI has charged Bailey plenty just for photocopying and he has also incurred attorney's fees. Furthermore, the FOIA does not really make all government held information accessible. The FOIA provides numerous loopholes or exceptions whereby the government may withhold information at its own discretion. For example, the government may withhold information when it feels its release would jeopardize an ongoing investigation, national security, or the concealment of a confidential informant. The government may also withhold information which it feels impinges on a living citizen's privacy rights. Where files contain information about a living individual, the government generally will not release that information without the individual's permission. Thus, in order to get the FBI's files on Joseph W. Tkach, one would have to obtain Tkach's written permission. Bailey has written to Tkach requesting such permission, but "The Apostle" never responded or cooperated in any way.

In spite of the numerous exceptions and restrictions built into the law, Bailey has discovered much by utilizing the FOIA. For instance, the FBI's office in Los Angeles has admitted that they have seven main files pertaining to Herbert W. Armstrong and two main files pertaining to the WCG. One of those files originated in and was coordinated by the FBI's Atlanta office. Other filed investigations were reported to FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C.

So far, the FBI's Los Angeles office has given Bailey 72 pages of information. Most of those pages are heavily censored with blacked-out sections. The Los Angeles office also informed Bailey that they are withholding 164 pages of information in their entirety. The FBI has not even hinted what those 164 pages contain.

In addition to the Los Angeles office, other FBI offices have files on the WCG. The FBI's Washington, D.C. office has informed Bailey that their office has about 500 pages of information about HWA and the WCG. There is an additional 112 pages dealing with Ambassador College, the *Plain Truth*, the *World Tomorrow*, and Stanley R. Rader. The government originally told Bailey he should have all the documents he requested by March. But they have now informed him that it will take another three to four months for the government to decide how much, if any, of the remaining files can be released. The government has stated that the large file on HWA is designated as "classified" for national security reasons. Whether or not it will be declassified and released to Bailey remains to be seen.

It is not surprising that the FBI should have taken an interest in HWA. While we were never able to verify the allegation, it was rumored for years that certain members of HWA's entourage were smuggling illegal drugs into the U.S. by concealing the powdery substances in sealed canisters of *World Tomorrow* video tape and in the bulkheads of the WCG's corporate jet.

But Bailey has learned from the FBI that other federal investigative agencies have had files on the WCG. Those agencies, the FBI said, include the Air Force's Special Investigations Office and the Central Intelligence Agency. Regarding the latter, one CIA employee told Bailey that after each meeting with foreign leaders during the 1970s and early 1980s Herbert Armstrong and his Jewish attorney-accountant Stanley R. Rader had

probably been debriefed by the CIA and that there would be files on those debriefings. But now, however - months after being told by the government that the CIA had files on the WCG - Bailey has been told by the CIA that no such files can be found!

In addition to contacting numerous federal agencies, Bailey has written to the secretaries of state for the 50 states in an attempt to ascertain exactly who the corporate agents of record are for the Worldwide Church of God, Inc. and the Church of God, International, Inc. in each of the separate states. As a result, Bailey made some startling discoveries. In a number of states, the agent for both the WCG and the CGI are the same individual - a current WCG minister. In one case the agent listed for the CGI was never in the CGI headed by Garner Ted Armstrong and is now deceased. For Minnesota, there are two agents listed for CGI: an individual who is no longer in either CGI or the WCG, and Ralph Helge who is actually the chief attorney for the WCG. Even more curious is the fact that in some states (Utah, for example, in a state filing dated April 19, 1982) the list of CGI directors includes the names of such WCG luminaries as Ralph Helge, Ellis LaRavia, and Raymond McNair and their addresses are all listed as 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, California. It is difficult to fathom what possible excuse can be given for the maintenance of such legal confusion. Certainly one has to suspect some kind of chicanery is involved. While we reported back in 1978 ([AR 6](#)) how the WCG was trying to tie up the name "Church of God, International" so that Garner Ted Armstrong's new church would be inconvenienced, since then GTA's Tyler, Texas organization has clearly become known everywhere as "the Church of God, International." With WCG people in Pasadena still registered as doing business under the same name it is quite conceivable that property left by will to Garner Ted's CGI could eventually wind up in one of Worldwide's CGI shells.

Bailey is continuing his investigations and says he hopes that by mid-September all his requests for documents from the various government agencies he has contacted will be processed. He also says he would be willing to provide a photocopy set of all those documents to anyone who will send him enough to cover his printing and mailing expenses. Ralph Helge has already sent in a check. Those interested should write to: Gene Bailey, P.O. Box 1144, Nicholasville, KY 40340-1144. However, Mr. Bailey emphasizes that at this time he has no way of knowing exactly how much information will be contained in the government files yet to be reviewed. It may turn out that very little will be released.

Hopefully, within four months we will have had a chance to look over those documents ourselves. We hope to provide our readers with a synopsis of their contents in a future issue of *Ambassador Report*.

#### **HWA Remembered (Part IV)**

One of the most intriguing aspects of the life of Herbert W. Armstrong was his frequent visits with the heads of state and/or top leaders of many nations: Israel (very often), Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, India, Nepal, Singapore, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Kenya, Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan, Belgium, Spain, Austria, West Germany, Great Britain, Romania, and Communist China.

Because HWA met with such communist leaders as Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania (in October 1971) and Deng Xiaoping of China (on Nov. 7, 1984), some have speculated that HWA was a communist sympathizer. There is not the slightest evidence that HWA was ever sympathetic to communist ideology. But whether he was sympathetic to the way totalitarian communist regimes actually operate is another matter.

HWA never hid the fact that he did not believe democracy to be God's form of government. In this regard, it is interesting to note HWA's long friendship with Leopold III of Belgium. According to the WN (Feb. 10, 1986, p. 2), Leopold was instrumental in arranging many of HWA's meetings with heads of state. But unknown to most Worldwidiers is the fact that Leopold, a staunch Roman Catholic, had been forced to abdicate his throne in 1950. The underlying reason was that Leopold had surrendered Belgium to the Nazis in 1940 and had refused to flee the country to set up a Belgian government-in-exile in France or England. He spent most of the war in Germany. One international relations expert told AR, "Deep down Leopold was really a f----- fascist." After Leopold died, his widow presented HWA with the Cross of the Veterans of King Leopold (WN, May 13, 1985, p. 1).

Because HWA was meeting regularly with powerful world leaders it is not surprising that the CIA would have taken an interest in HWA. During the Cold War years the CIA, not unlike the KGB, made extensive use of members of the clergy as sources for information. A prime example is the CIA's use of many in the Roman Catholic Church's hierarchical priesthood as informants in Western and Eastern Europe. The CIA would have been only too happy to have used HWA in a similar way.

But was HWA being used for more than just information gathering? Over the years, many noticed that in a number of cases, after HWA visited a country, that country's government would fall or there would be a major change of leadership. Examples: Ethiopia after HWA visited Haile Selassie, the Philippines after HWA visited Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, India after HWA visited Indira Gandhi, and Egypt after HWA visited Anwar Sadat. (Some even recall how HWA was to have met with Allende of Chile but Allende was overthrown and killed - with CIA help, many say - shortly before HWA was to go to that country.)

Because of the above coincidences (and perhaps because Rader was reported to have had friends in the White House during Republican administrations beginning with Nixon), some at WCG headquarters kidded that HWA or someone close to him was somehow being used by the CIA to bring down governments. While the idea sounds like something out of a spy novel, such a theory should not be dismissed out of hand.

It will be interesting to see if the CIA ever finds its file on HWA's travels or if the FBI ever releases its large Washington file on the WCG.

### **McNair Case to be Retried**

When Leona McNair filed her defamation lawsuit against the WCG in 1979, few would have thought the case would still be in the courts 12 years later, but that is exactly what has happened. The lawsuit has been a bitterly contested series of legal battles (see ARs

[10](#), [29](#), [34](#), [35](#), [37](#), [40](#), and [41](#)). While Leona was awarded \$1.26 million by a jury in 1984, the California Court of Appeal reversed the decision in 1988 and ordered a new trial. In 1989, however, trial judge Richard Lavine prevented a jury from hearing the case by granting summary judgment to the WCG. WCG congregations were told the church had finally beaten Mrs. McNair "God's way." Not so. Antony Stuart and Michael L. Goldberg, attorneys for Leona, appealed Judge Lavine's decision and in March 1991 the three judge panel of the California Court of Appeal (second district, fifth division) ordered the Lavine decision reversed and granted Mrs. McNair a new jury trial. Presiding Judge Paul Turner's opinion (filed March 27 with the designation "Not To Be Published," that is, not to be cited as case law - an oddity of the California court system) shows that Judge Lavine had clearly been out of line in granting the WCG summary judgment and had made the Court of Appeal's earlier reversal look like a cruel hoax perpetrated against Mrs. McNair. Turner's opinion even seems to hint that he is not in sympathy with the legal reasoning found in Judge James Hastings' earlier Court of Appeal opinion (see [AR 40](#)). Nevertheless, Turner wrote that the court was unable to reinstate the first jury's award because of the so-called "rule of the case" principle. (In layman's terms, the rule means that once an appellate court sets down a rule for a lower court it will not later change the rule for that case.)

At the March 5 oral arguments on the appeal, WCG attorneys Ralph Helge, Bruce Armstrong, Jeffrey Lowrey, Daniel Gonzales, Roy G. Weatherup, and, of course, Allan Browne of Beverly Hills should have realized things were not going well for them when Judge Turner pointedly asked, "How do you know who's telling the truth here?... Could it be that Dr. Meredith is a liar?... Is there any way that we can tell who's telling the truth? I know it's a tough question.... When it comes to finding out who is telling the truth - well, that is why we have juries!"

Helge did not like the court's decision. He told the Pasadena *Star-News* (April 2, p. A-5), "This is a dumb case." Helge's sour grapes attitude is not surprising. Legal experts say that because the WCG has refused to settle the case out of court, attorneys' fees alone have cost the WCG well over a million dollars. And there will be more bills coming.

### **More Gay Concerns**

*Editor: Readers' and editor's comments about homosexuality in the WCG hierarchy run in our [January issue](#) drew a flurry of heated letters to AR. As the following excerpts show, there is a wide spectrum of views on the subject.*

I just finished reading your [January issue](#) of the *Ambassador Report* and as usual enjoyed it. However, I must comment on the letter from the Pasadena person who thought Joseph Tkach might be homosexual just because he wears his ring on his little finger, or by the way he smiles in his picture, or because he's holding a book of poetry. Those ideas are ridiculous, and something right out of the Salem Witch Hunts!

Don't misunderstand. As a former WCG member I have no admiration for Tkach. But I believe in fairness. And to judge him homosexual based on such silly so-called "evidence" is not only unfair, it is sinful. Is this how that Pasadena person picks out all homosexuals? Does he or she think that all men who do not look or act like John Wayne

are homosexual? I happen to know a lot of decent God-fearing men who have at one time or another been unfairly labeled homosexual just because they dressed or acted a little different from the average "macho man"....

Christians should remember that God tells us to only hate the *sin* of homosexuality, not the persons themselves. We should pray that they will turn from their ways and repent and give thanks to Jesus. They have as much chance as anyone else if they change. That Pasadena person should remember too that there is a sin that God hates worse than homosexuality and that is hurting an innocent person: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6). Maybe wearing a ring on your little finger is a homosexual signal but I never would have known it if I had not read that Pasadena person's letter. As for all homosexuals looking and acting effeminate, that Pasadena person should remember Rock Hudson. Who would have thought in a million years that manly Rock was a homosexual! Until we know for sure whether or not someone is a homosexual we should always be willing to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Please print my letter in one of your future issues. The problem of innocent people being labeled homosexuals because of silly things like what that Pasadena person mentioned is bigger than you know.

David W. Berryman  
Alabama

I read the correspondence headed "Readers' Gay Concerns" in the last AR with a real feeling of sadness. Regardless of the problems of various WCG ministers, the comments offered had far less balance and charity than Dennis Luker's GN article. While I'm all for exposing hypocrisy, the publication of gleeful and flimsy speculation about the sexual orientation of named individuals is another matter.

The issue obviously hits a raw nerve with many people. The homophobic views expressed in AR need, however, to be challenged. I'd heartily recommend John Shelby Spong's *Living in Sin?* (Harper & Row, 1988) as a powerful corrective. Nor is Spong, an Episcopal bishop, afraid to come to terms with the biblical texts. Those who think that the matter can be neatly summed up with a few trusty proof-texts need to think again.

A final comment. People, despite (or maybe because of) their many differences, are at the end of the day still people. Like yourself, I have known, and sometimes admired, a number of gay people. These included some within the WCG who crucified themselves with guilt and denial. In this respect they were oppressed not so much by Herbert Armstrong, as by the unthinking antipathy of the rest of us.

Gavin Rumney  
New Zealand

*Editor: I am not unfamiliar with some of the arguments used to explain away the Bible's many verses dealing harshly with homosexuality. But I generally find such arguments*

*unpersuasive. For example, Marshall Alan Phillips (Los Angeles Times, Dec. 3, 1990, p. B5) argues that the Genesis 19 story of the mob of men surrounding Lot's house and desiring to gang rape Lot's masculine visitors is not really a condemnation of homosexuality, but is merely a condemnation of inhospitality. Is inhospitality the reason God destroyed Sodom? To me, Phillips' argument is ludicrous.*

*As for Episcopal Bishop Spong's 1988 book, I have not yet been able to find a copy. However, I noticed that in his latest book, Rescuing the Bible From Fundamentalism (Harper and Row), the Newark, New Jersey bishop speculates that St. Paul was homosexual. To Spong, "Nothing else could account for Paul's self-judging rhetoric, his negative feeling toward his own body, and his sense of being controlled by something he had no power to change." Ironically, such a strained reading of scripture does not help to buttress the main theme of his book. It is one thing to deny fundamentalism by reading scripture in an informed, scholarly, or even critical manner. It is quite another to argue as fact positions completely at variance with the text, when that text is purported to be the very basis of one's religious philosophy and faith.*

I should be most interested if you can give me a list of famous homosexual and bisexual men and women in all countries of the world, past and present, particularly among scientists, philosophers, mathematicians, literary figures, artists, composers, statesmen, etc.

I want to know out of genuine interest, and not for sensational reasons. It seems that God created some people homosexuals and their homosexuality is natural for them. Nowhere does Christ condemn it and as regards the passages in the Old Testament, he specifically warned us not to "put new wine into old bottles." Moreover, some Christians, such as Anglican Bishop Hugh Montefiore, even believe that Christ himself may have been homosexual or bisexual.

England

*Editor: Such wild notions about Jesus are certainly not the Anglican Church's official position. And George Carey, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, is clearly opposed to homosexuality (Los Angeles Times, April 20, p. A12). I find it difficult to believe that Rev. Montefiore would engage in such reckless speculation. But if he does, he only echoes that of Christopher Marlowe. Attempts to portray various Bible heroes as homosexual have gone on for centuries and, I am told, continue to go on privately in certain WCG circles. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of the David and Jonathan relationship (some scholars believe that I Sam. 20:30, 41 and II Sam. 1:25, 26 show that Jonathan had a homosexual attraction to David), such speculations often seem to flow more from overactive imaginations than from straightforward readings of scripture. For an excellent rebuttal to the notion that the Bible can somehow be made compatible with the homosexual lifestyle, see "Judaism, Homosexuality, and Civilization" by Dennis Prager in the April/June 1990 edition of Ultimate Issues (6020 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, \$7.50 per copy).*

*As for famous gays through the ages, many are discussed in Homosexuals in History by A. L. Rowse (MacMillan Publishing Co., 1977). Among those included in Rowse's book*

*are James I and Renaissance humanist Desiderius Erasmus whose version of the Greek New Testament became the progenitor of the Textus Recepticus. (Regarding the latter, see Bruce Manning Metzger, The Text of the New Testament - It's Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration, Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 96-106.)*

I agree with your ethical views on what's fit to print. But, to be honest, your truthful and "disgusting" reporting on Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong in years past was instrumental in my leaving WCG.

When I first heard Herbert and Garner Ted had stumbled, I concluded, "Well they're only human, we all make mistakes. But, the WCG is still God's True Church." However, after finding out that their sins were repeated, continuing, and perverted, I concluded that in no way can the WCG be "the one and only true church of God"!

S. Stanley  
Kusaka Oregon

In general, I agree with your views on homosexuals and the homosexual lifestyle. However, I do not think these views apply to this specific situation. In regard to homosexuality in the WCG hierarchy, I believe you would do a genuine service in publishing any facts you have on the matter. This would not be in the nature of a witch hunt directed against those who choose an alternate lifestyle, but a revelation of *hypocrisy* of the highest degree.

These people are among the most radically fundamentalist and literalistic when it comes to interpreting Bible scripture - in some cases separating married couples and breaking up families by their teachings - while they themselves often do not conform to their own rigid interpretations.

I say just give the readers the unadorned facts in a non-judgmental way and let the chips fall where they may.

Patricia Roberts  
South Carolina

*Editor: The above letter seems to be on target regarding what I had thought was a dilemma. Hypocrisy - especially of the magnitude found in the WCGs top leadership - is itself a real evil. And it has been pointed out to me that hypocrisy is an evil about which many gays, themselves, feel strongly. In the last few years there has been a debate raging in the publishing world about the practice of "outing" - that is, publicly revealing certain public figures as being closet homosexuals. Many gay leaders, themselves, actually favor the practice (a lengthy discussion of the issue appeared in the Los Angeles Times, March 22, 1990, p. E1).*

*Now, just as we are about to go to press, I have discovered that in the April edition of GLAAD/LA Reports (published by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) a short article appeared about our January issue's comments on gays. While they wrote*

*how AR was "conservative " and contained "homophobia," nowhere did they object to us writing about the gays in Worldwide. In fact, GLAAD was quite glad about the way we had described their organization! Yes, it's a strange world.*

*I will have more to say about this matter next time. However, for now let me just end this section with the following letter which I found very instructive:*

A friend passed me your [January 1991 issue](#) because of the letter from the City of Industry and your response. The dilemma of dealing compassionately with obviously sinful and self-destructive behaviour is not as deep as you seem to imply. The first error is to assume that homosexual behaviour is not a free choice and therefore an appropriate subject of moral judgment. A quick reading of the science from Kinsey to Masters and Johnson makes it clear that the idea that homosexuality is anything but learned behaviour did not even arise from the science but from theology. We are all capable of sexual release with men, women, animals, and objects. The fact that we don't is [due to] prior knowledge about right and wrong. To quote Kinsey, "It is clear that the human male would be promiscuous in his choice of sexual partners throughout his life if it were not for social sanctions." Orgasm is associated with the release of endorphins that mold the brain to increase the probability of repetition of any behaviour that preceded the release. It is the central mechanism of addiction.

The social consequences of permitting those who have become addicted to deviant sexual activity to recruit others into similar activity is painfully obvious. The gay movement is energized by the need to increase opportunity. We have found the moral courage to oppose drug pushing but have not found the courage to even mention in public the obvious fact that teaching deviant sexual activity is the moral and neurochemical equivalent of pushing drugs. God's condemnation of such activity is not a divine whim. It is a fundamental necessity of our human condition.

Yours in Christ,  
Peter M. Webster, MD, FRCPC  
University of Toronto Clinic  
Canada

### **Is the Temple Almost Here?**

Many WCG members can remember a time when WCG ministers taught that before the return of Christ, the Jews of Israel would rebuild the sacred edifice that once stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In recent years, however, official WCG statements on the subject have been very equivocal. Oddly, this WCG ambiguity on Bible prophecy occurs at a time when it appears very likely that the Temple will actually be rebuilt in the near future.

Professor James Tabor, editor of *Genesis 2000* (P.O. Box 561476, Charlotte, NC 28256), has sent us clippings of a number of articles about the possible rebuilding that have appeared in the last two years: "Speedily in Our Time" in *The Jerusalem Post Magazine* (Dec. 22, 1989, p. 6), "Rebuild Herod's Temple? A Few Israelis Hope" in *The New York Times* (April 9, 1989, p. 17), and "Time for a New Temple?" in *Time* magazine (October

16, 1989, p. 64).

The idea of building the Temple is not just talk. *Time* magazine reported:

Two Talmudic schools located near the Western (Wailing) Wall are teaching nearly 200 students the elaborate details of Temple service. Other groups are researching the family lines of Jewish priests who alone may conduct sacrifices. Next year an organizing convention will be held for those who believe themselves to be of priestly descent....

No group is more zealous than the Temple Institute, whose spiritual leader, 50-year-old Rabbi Israel Ariel, was one of the first Israeli paratroopers to reach the Mount in 1967. "Our task," states the institute's American-born director, Zev Golan, "is to advance the cause of the Temple and to prepare for its establishment, not just talk about it."

During six years of research, the institute has reconstructed 38 of the ritual implements that will be required when Temple sacrifices are restored; it will complete the other 65 items as funds permit. A museum of the completed pieces has drawn 10,000 visitors during the current holy days. In addition to such items as trumpets, lyres and lots, the institute is preparing vestments for the priests-in-waiting. According to Scripture, the clothing must be painstakingly made with flax spun by hand into six-stranded threads.

One difficulty is the requirement (as in Numbers 19:1-10) that priests purify their bodies with the cremated ashes of an unblemished red heifer before they enter the Temple. Following a go-ahead from the Chief Rabbinate, institute operatives spent two weeks in August scouting Europe for heifer embryos that will shortly be implanted into cows at an Israeli cattle ranch.

It is not just Jews who would like to see the Temple rebuilt in Jerusalem. Many fundamentalist Christian groups, believing a rebuilt Temple must precede the return of Jesus Christ, are actively promoting the idea of rebuilding the center of the ancient Israelite religion. One such group, The House of Yahweh (P.O. Box 2442, Abilene, TX 79604), headed by one-time WCG member "Wild Bill" (now "Elder Yisrayl") Hawkins, publishes a 14-page tract entitled "A Peaceful Solution to Building the Next Temple in Yerusalem" which even gives diagrams of how the job should be done.

Another church that is less equivocal than the WCG regarding the Temple is Garner Ted Armstrong's Church of God, International (P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, TX 75710-2525). They are now offering a free booklet entitled "Will a Temple Soon Be Built in Jerusalem?" From GTA's March 28 letter to his magazine subscribers, it appears that he believes a Temple in Jerusalem is not far off.

### **should a Ministry Incorporate?**

In a provocative pair of articles appearing in the Jan./ Feb. and March/April issues of *Midnight Messenger*, author Donald Bergeron argues quite eloquently that there is no valid law requiring a church or ministry to incorporate in order to have tax exempt status. Many budding ministries will find Mr. Bergeron's views fascinating and perhaps even helpful. (We should stress the "perhaps" because whether the IRS is always sufficiently

cognizant of constitutional law is seriously questioned by some legal scholars.) Copies of *Midnight Messenger* are available for \$2.00 each by writing to *Midnight Messenger*, 9205 S.E. Clackamas Rd., Clackamas, OR 97015.

### **FBR Slows to a Halt**

A number of readers have asked what has become of the Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR). At the death of FBR president Kenneth Fischer in 1989, FBR board members had hoped that the organization could continue. But with C. Gary Reid in Toronto, Gary Schultz in southern California, Howard Clark in northern California, and Gary Arvidson now in North Carolina, the group has found itself too dispersed for a continuing publishing operation. Since his 1984 heart attack, Howard Clark has been in frail health. Nevertheless, he has been trying to answer as much FBR mail as possible. Clark's FBR mailing address is P.O. Box 279, Gasquet, CA 95543.

### **Helping Those in WCG: Important New Studies from Concordant**

Over the years, we have repeatedly pointed out four major characteristics of the destructive cults: (1) isolation, (2) nonthinking, (3) absolute obedience, and (4) giving excessively (see our [June 1990](#) issue, p. 6, for details). As regarding point four, we continue to recommend the Ernest L. Martin booklet published by the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge, (P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225) and the Tony Badillo book published by Xavier Press (3122 Jerome, Dallas, TX 75223). As regarding "nonthinking" and "obedience," we can now recommend a really outstanding work recently published by Concordant Publishing Concern.

*Authority, Instruction and Service* by Jim Coram is a concise, yet highly thoughtful, biblical study that we feel sheds much light on two important issues: (1) how should the believer relate to scripture, i.e., how should a Christian intelligently read the Bible, and (2) how should the believer relate to ecclesiastical organizations, i.e., what role should human authority play in the believer's spiritual life (or how and with whom should we fellowship).

Mr. Coram writes:

The clearer our grasp of the evangel of true grace and of the intrinsic authority of the Scriptures themselves, the more clearly we will see the absurdity of human authority and the harmfulness of any posture which entails practical lordships over the faith of other believers. God is able to establish His people, and He does so, according as He is intending. The truth does not need the assistance of human dominion. "Success" is no proof of faithfulness. To the contrary, it is usually a strong indication of the opposite.

Mr. Coram's paper is not an attack on any denomination, but it is, nevertheless, a study particularly relevant for those in the WCG or for those with loved ones in the WCG. We wholeheartedly recommend it to our readers.

We similarly recommend Mr. Coram's article "Christmas and Easter" which was published by Concordant this past December. Worldwidiers are well aware of the fact that many of the concepts and traditions associated with the two great Christian holidays derive not from scripture, but from ancient heathen customs. Unfortunately, while the WCG's teachings on the origins of the two holidays are fairly accurate, a misunderstanding of certain basic New Testament principles leads many Worldwidiers to apply the historical information about the two holidays in such a way as to cause themselves and their loved ones much needless family stress and hurt feelings. Many divorces regularly result from such situations. (Recall that isolation - the encouragement of separation from family and friends - is one of the four main characteristics of destructive cults.) Mr. Coram's brief "Christmas and Easter" article can be of great help to many WCG members and friends of members.

Concordant tells us they will send the "Christmas and Easter" article and the "Authority, Instruction and Service" paper free of charge to any AR reader requesting them. (We should point out, however, that Concordant, like AR, relies on the financial support of its readers for continued publishing.) Those interested in obtaining copies of the two Jim Coram articles or in further information about Concordant's many excellent publications should write to: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350 (tel. 805-252-2112).

### Letters

How about a "Winners and Losers" section in AR? Right now you could make a case regarding the Gulf War. Example: a clear loser is William Dankenbring for saying U.S. losses would be in the thousands, that there would be no decisive victory for the U.S. and its allies, and that the war would be long and would lead to a depression. At least Worldwide was cautious [on the Gulf War] and GTA said this war would not lead to Armageddon. But GTA, HWA, Dankenbring, and a lot of others have taught for many years that the U.S. and Britain won their last war in WWII and that the pride of our power has been broken ever since (in language that was definite, dogmatic, to the Millennium, end of story). Well, look what's happened. The U.S. has just won three consecutive wars! First against Grenada and its Cuban friends, then Panama, and now Iraq. [And let's not forget the British victory over Argentina.] Pride in our military power has never been higher! Are the "prophets" eating crow now and apologizing for being wrong?

Ron Wagner  
Washington

*Editor: Although the military performance of the U.S. and its allies was, indeed, very impressive, one has to wonder what kind of political victory was achieved with the Gulf region still in turmoil and Hussein still ruling Iraq. In the March issue of Prophecy Flash! (P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91001) William Dankenbring offers an explanation for his past predictions about Iraq. Nevertheless, trying to predict the future is always risky business, no matter how well intentioned the prognosticator may be.*

*For example, in the March 1991 issue of The Philadelphia Trumpet ex-WCG minister Gerald Flurry wrote that California's five year drought would continue to get worse*

*because it is a curse from God. Quoting passages from the "sacred" writings of HWA, Flurry wrote that God has put the curse on California because in 1979 the state's attorney general brought the famous lawsuit against the WCG. (Frankly, while the sins of California might make such a punishment well deserved, it is difficult to fathom why God would curse the entire state for a lawsuit that was aimed primarily at WCG lawyer-accountant-evangelist Stanley R. Rader.) In the weeks immediately following Flurry's curse-by-drought prophecy, California had weeks of heavy rain. Although the drought is still officially on, a large area of the state (the entire central coast region), which previously had emergency conditions, now reports numerous reservoirs at 100% of capacity (Los Angeles Times, April 4, pp. A1, A3). It seems Flurry's prophetic schedule is a bit off.*

*Another ex-WCG minister who has had prophecy problems is Martin Filippello. In 1988, when HWA was not resurrected from the grave as Filippello had predicted (see [AR40](#)), many thought Filippello would dissolve his ministry. But he has kept right on preaching, believing that only his timing was a little off. Friends say Filippello now believes that HWA will be resurrected some time this spring.*

As someone who has worked at church headquarters many years now, I must take exception to your comments [in the [January issue](#)] about Mr. Steve Andrews, our new director of finance and planning. Yes, it is true some of the "oldtimers" seemed to look down their noses at him. But for them to call him "inexperienced" just because he has not been ordained very long is really not fair. Even though Mr. Andrews is only a local elder, he is a CPA, a lawyer (who graduated from Loyola of Los Angeles, by the way), and a former USC lecturer. He is also someone who has the respect of Mr. Stanley Rader, under whom he worked for six-and-a-half years. So you see, even though Mr. Andrews is not an evangelist yet, he is certainly not "inexperienced."

## California

*Editor: Thank you for the clarification regarding Mr. Andrews being a very bright and well-educated individual. After checking out the information in your letter, I wrote Mr. Andrews an apology for my poor choice of words. I also pointed out how I was looking forward to seeing whether his organization's annual financial statements will contain data on how much third tithe revenue is collected each year and what level of remuneration is now being given the WCGs top executives. Finally, I asked him what his relationship with Stan Rader was in years past and what it is now. I am looking forward to his reply.*

Could you please send the *Ambassador Report* to my sister, a former WCG member, who was told not to come back until she could tithe. She only worked part time - two weeks out of the month - and had a daughter in high school and a son in college in need of help.

## Alabama

*Editor: Her WCG minister was right. If you can't afford to give away 10% to 30% of your gross income (50% to 100% of your disposable income), you have no business indulging in the WCG.*

I got kicked out of Armstrong's church many years ago for not sending enough money in. Lucky me.

Gertrude Westhoff  
Washington

It is true that the WCG rips off the old people of their money. I know so many cases of that. I was disgusted at the way they treated that poor blind man [see [AR41](#)] after he gave them so much. One lady I know left everything she had in a will to WCG and they promised to look after her until she died. They only visited her a few times to clean her place and that was it. She died and the church got it all. Her relatives were very angry about it.

I have an older friend, 89 years old, in a hospital (part of an old folks home) and WCG wanted to know how much she had and what she was going to do with it. She wouldn't tell them so they put her out of the church. She changed her will and left them out altogether. I am the only one that visits her, they just cast her off. They did the same to another friend in her 70s. They tried to pry it out of her how much she had and what she would do with it. She wouldn't tell them so they put her out because "she couldn't go to the Feast." All they were interested in was the money. I also am the only one that visits her.

Emily Young  
Ontario, Canada

During my wife's almost three weeks in the hospital, the pastor [from her WCG congregation] made one visit to see her and told her the best thing she could do would be to finish dying and be ready for the world tomorrow. Then after she came home there were only two lady members who visited her, but no financial assistance was offered by anyone.

Tennessee

Only a few years ago I wrote a tract titled *The Christological Controversy: The Supreme Being Oneness - or Trinity?* I hope you will find time to study my views on the subject. I also have a copy of Herbert's *Fundamentals of Belief*, which has no date on it, but it seems to me he [HWA] gave it to me in the late 1930s. As you may recall, Herbert and I were very close friends from 1935 to 1945 when he dropped me like "a hot potato." It was some time after that that he came up with the idea that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. When that came up I was reminded that back in about the middle 1930s Brother Snow showed me a magazine published by the "Jesus Only" people who then claimed the Jehovah of the Old Testament was the Jesus of the New Testament. So when Herbert came up with the same idea I felt he was setting a trap for himself.

John Kiesz  
820 Woodlawn Ave.  
Canon City, CO 81212

*Editor: Mr. Kiesz is an elder in the Church of God, Seventh Day. Copies of his Christology tract may be obtained for a donation of \$1.50 by writing directly to him.*

It seems from reading the [October AR](#) that the WCG under Tkach may be gradually moving towards the same doctrinal watershed which the Jehovah's Witnesses (then millennial Dawnists) reached after the death of Charles Taze Russell and the takeover by Judge Rutherford. Your photograph of the "picketing van" may perhaps suggest that the time is now ripe for official HWA breakaway sects to emerge and operate independently of the WCG, as for example the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement and the Dawn Bible Students Association did after Russell's death. (Both look to Russell only as their leader and mentor and consider the official "Witnesses" as apostates who have changed the truth once delivered by Russell. It looks as if I shall have to keep my discs [of research for a thesis on WCG] on standby for revision right up to the date of presentation.

I hope you can keep the excellent *Report* on the road and I wish you every success. Every issue chronicles the sad irony of the disintegration of HWA's world. How much longer before his system can no longer be labelled "Armstrongism"?

Neil O'Connor  
Castle Treasure, Douglas  
Cork, Ireland

Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God seem to be functioning true to form as I observed from my seven-and-one-half years experience as an employee at Big Sandy in transportation, also as head of maintenance in aviation. I was designated the Federal Aviation Agent for the Big Sandy airfield by the FAA and was fired by the college when I called them to task for flight safety infractions. They have a great deal of difficulty preaching and following Christian principles and doctrine. They just bend them to their needs!

Walter L. Prigmore  
Cuba, Missouri

I've been thinking about something for quite some time. It's virtually impossible to keep the Sabbath perfectly in our present day society. People in the WCG do not turn off their utilities on Saturday, but somebody has to be on the job so that they can have water, heat, lights, etc.

It's a custom in our area that the majority of our young people get married on Saturday afternoon at about 3 p.m. The wedding ceremony starts in a local church, followed by a social hour, a dinner, and then a dance in the evening. Among the guests at times are some of the local WCG people who arrive way before sundown "seeking their own pleasure." Occasionally they have to travel farther than a "Sabbath day's journey" for such an event....

How hypocritical they are and the situation gets worse as time goes on.

Kansas

*Editor: AR does not promote or denigrate either Sunday observance or Sabbath keeping, but you make an interesting point. Along a similar line regarding the keeping of "the law, " have you ever known a WCG member who adhered literally to the actual "unclean meats" law of Lev. 11 by avoiding all restaurants that ever serve pork products or by destroying cooking implements (v. 35) that have even touched pork? For that matter, how many WCG husbands literally put their wives out of the house during their periods (Lev. 15:19-33)? And how many WCG members have blue ribbon fringes on all their clothes (Num. 15:37-39)? We are not advocating such practices, but we point those out to show that some who claim to be keeping all of "the law " are really doing a bit of picking and choosing.*

*Regarding the WCGs continuing watering-down of the Sabbath doctrine, it is interesting that Tkach has changed the beginning of the WCG Sabbath from sunset to the beginning of darkness. This change has some HWA loyalists seeing Tkach as the one who would "wear out the saints of the most High and think to change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25). Yet some who believe Tkach is the prophesied "son of perdition " (II Thess. 2:1-12) still remain in the WCG. Try to figure that out.*

### **Editor's Note**

In response to my March 25 letter ([AR47](#)) dealing with AR's financial problems, I received a number of remarkably insightful letters. Hopefully, in a future issue I can share them with all our readers. For now I will just mention that many of those for whom my March 25 letter was intended never responded in any way. We now have a much smaller mailing list. Surprisingly (or maybe I should not have been surprised), many of those for whom my letter was not really intended (because they regularly contribute to AR) sent the *Report* a contribution anyway. Because of such folks this issue was made possible.

I had hoped to include Part VI of the Tkach series in this issue. However, it became necessary to postpone it in order to give a number of WCG executives to whom I've written a little more time to answer certain questions I have put to them. With a little bit of luck the next issue of the *Report* should be mailed out by September.

My sincerest thanks to those of you who are continuing to support our publishing efforts.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR49\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

AR 49 November 1991

**Joseph W. Tkach -  
God's New Rep on Planet Earth**

(Part VI)

by John Trechak

*Editor: Part VI of this serialized article covers a very tragic aspect of the Joseph Tkach story - the effect his teachings and policies have had, and are having, on the family lives of not only his followers, but upon the family lives of thousands who wish they had never heard of Tkach or his Worldwide Church of God. It should be pointed out to those Just starting on this series, however, that because Part VI builds upon what was covered in Parts I through V, those parts should be read first so that what follows may be understood in proper context.*

Joseph W. Tkach - the Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), Chancellor of Ambassador College, and the Chairman of the Ambassador Foundation - is viewed by many of his followers as a God-led visionary who is leading "God's People" into the 21st century. Since the death of WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong in 1986, Tkach has instituted a string of doctrinal changes (for instance, making medicine, makeup, birthdays, and interracial marriage permissible). Because of those changes, many of Tkach's followers say the WCG is now a kinder, gentler church. Unquestionably, Tkach has made the WCG a more liberal and modern organization. But is it really kinder and gentler?

The WCG continually publishes articles in its magazines and devotes whole segments of *The World Tomorrow* telecast to extolling the virtues of the traditional family (both nuclear and extended).<sup>57</sup> Yet, Tkach's reign (not just since 1986, but even from 1979 when he first started running the WCG's Church Administration Department) has been incredibly brutal toward the family relations of thousands - especially toward families where one mate is not a WCG member. An avalanche of letters to the *Report* indicates that Tkach's teachings and policies have devastated thousands of families and have led to

untold numbers of separations, divorces, child custody battles, child kidnappings, the inadequate support of children from homes broken apart, the estrangement of children from parents and grandparents, plus the psychological problems and social ills that flow from family breakups and intra-family warfare. Let's look at some specific ways in which Tkach and his organization are hurting families around the world.

### **Dumping on Outsiders**

One of the legacies of the Tkach administration is a policy AR has come to refer to as "dumping on outsiders." As with most cults, the WCG expects its members to put loyalty to the WCG's leaders far above any loyalty they may have toward country, community, or *family*. Members demonstrate their loyalty by obedience to the WCG's ministry and by exorbitantly contributing time and money to the WCG, thus leaving less for their family and usually none for community service.<sup>58</sup> Membership in the WCG is usually so consuming that it is quite common for WCG members to be completely estranged from relatives - even parents or children - who are not WCG members themselves.

But what happens when a WCG member runs into serious financial difficulties such as prolonged unemployment, the death of a breadwinner mate, or homelessness? That's when the "dumping on outsiders" policy becomes operative. In the majority of cases the WCG will not provide needy members with meaningful financial assistance. Instead, the WCG ministry will simply dump the member's problems (and often the member himself) onto community agencies or, more likely, onto the doorstep of the member's non-WCG relatives.

That's not the way the church is supposed to work. For decades the WCG has taught that the faithful are required to pay the church a tithe, or 10%, of their gross income every three years (actually every third and sixth year in a cycle of seven) *in addition to* regular tithes and offerings. According to WCG teaching, this "third tithe" is supposedly a kind of insurance or welfare fund:

Why did God command a third tithe anyway? God instituted the third tithe for a very real and important use. Without it many in God's Church would go hungry and homeless.... God has commanded a third tithe for the support of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow who have no visible means of support (*The Good News*, Nov. 1962, p. 7).

In recent years some ministers have routinely called the third tithe fund "welfare income." For instance, in one of his reports in the *Worldwide News* (Sept. 10, 1990, p. 3) church treasurer Leroy Neff wrote:

Welfare income: This is often called the third tithe fund. It is for the widows, the fatherless and for the genuine emergency needs of members. Whatever is left over is used to pay field ministerial expenses. This year we have received 1.8 percent more than last year.<sup>59</sup>

In reality few WCG members living in poverty or in need of financial assistance during a crisis are given back any of the money they put into the third tithe insurance fund.<sup>60</sup> Some WCG ministers even get irked if a needy member brings up the subject of third

tithe assistance. A case in point is that of South Dakotan Harold W. Strong who was a WCG member for 17 years. A few years after being baptized Harold started to go blind. Unable to work, having lost everything, and being unable even to heat his home in winter, he asked his local minister what he should do. The minister told him to go on welfare; third tithe assistance from the church was not even mentioned. So for years Harold subsisted on a meager \$140 per month from welfare (and, later, some SSI and social security). During all that time the church never offered him any third tithe assistance whatsoever. By 1977 Harold was completely blind. And because he had by then been a WCG member for 15 years, he began to question why he should not be eligible to receive third tithe assistance. As a result of his questioning, Harold was suspended from the church for nine months.<sup>61</sup>

According to recent WCG exiters, when the WCG ministry does offer needy members assistance, it is usually only for very small amounts of money and it is almost always in the form of a loan. Even then the WCG's policy is to never offer financial help until the needy member has exhausted all government assistance and all possible help from non-WCG relatives. According to former WCG deacon Herbert Zacharios of Wisconsin, enforcement of the policy started with Tkach:

---

&COPY;1991 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123  
John Trechak, Editor & Publisher Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor  
Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

We attended the Feast of Tabernacles for our last time at Biloxi, Mississippi in 1979. During a service one of the speakers reported how two men had been raised in rank to evangelist - Stanley Rader and Joseph Tkach.... The speaker told how Tkach had taken it upon himself to go through the rolls of those receiving third tithe and remove everyone who was eligible for social security and/or welfare and/or anyone who had a living relative - in or out of the church - who could be responsible for their care.<sup>62</sup>

The outsiders dumped on by the WCG often find the needy member's situation quite bleak. I've heard of a number of cases where a member had no contact with his or her family for more than a decade and during all that time contributed very generously to the WCG. But, when the member was diagnosed as terminally ill with cancer or some other dreaded disease, the WCG's ministry refused to provide any financial assistance. Instead, the member was ordered to move in with non-WCG relatives and have *them* provide care until death ended their ordeal.

### **Spiritual Executions**

The WCG practice of disfellowshipping (excommunicating or ordering the shunning of) members the WCG ministry wishes to punish continues to wreck havoc in the lives of thousands.<sup>63</sup> While the practice can be linked to certain Bible passages, numerous former

WCG ministers say the WCG's doctrine is far harsher than what the Bible actually prescribes.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, we have seen over the years that in the process of discarding unwanted members, WCG ministers quite often have told ugly falsehoods about the ones being put out in order to justify their actions.<sup>65</sup>

Because being disfellowshipped often means being cut off from family relations or losing friends still in the WCG, the psychological impact of being disfellowshipped is often utterly devastating. Quoting William Martin, professor of the sociology of religion at Rice University, reporter Bill Marvel wrote in *The Dallas Morning News* (Aug 2, 1990, p. E1):

...the Worldwide Church of God has resorted to disfellowshipping frequently. (The late Herbert W. Armstrong, the church's longtime leader, even disfellowshipped his son, Garner Ted Armstrong.) Those who fall - or are driven outside - church boundaries often find themselves in a no-man's land in which they become non-persons, cut off from friends and family. "It's part of the biblical pattern that you're not supposed to eat or even talk with persons who have been disfellowshipped," Martin said. "They are literally dead. It means losing society. It's a tremendous loss."<sup>66</sup>

The idea that disfellowshipping is a kind of spiritual death or execution has not been lost on the WCG's leaders. In his column in the *Worldwide News* (Sept. 17, 1985) managing editor Dexter H. Faulkner wrote:

I just heard the saddest news a person could hear. Three families my wife and I were very close to have all died.

We labored together, we suffered trials together, we bore children together, we laughed together, for twenty years. We had one thing in common - we were all members of God's Church. But now they have been disfellowshipped.

I tried to analyze what brought about our friends' tragic demises. Did they underestimate the enemy?

Hundreds of letters to AR over the years have shown the accuracy of Professor William Martin's view that disfellowshipping is often extremely traumatic. For instance, one California woman wrote us:

I was in the Worldwide Church of God since I was a kid (for 20 years). I was put out about one and a half years ago. I've had emotional scarring, have suffered terror, insomnia, panic, etc. since being cut off from them. I haven't had anyone to help me. I'm in and out of mental wards. Can you send me some materials?...

In the above situation the woman was able to get consolation by reading AR. Back issues helped her to realize she had not been imagining the WCG's many failings. I recommended she contact a Christian psychologist and one of our readers who had gone through similar problems. They were able to help her regain her confidence. She also received emotional reassurance from a mainstream Christian support group. She was eventually able to overcome the trauma of leaving the WCG. As the following letter shows, however, everyone is not so fortunate:

We had a funeral for our oldest daughter (age 33-1/2) last week. Her husband was still in that church but she had left. God only knows how she suffered. She could no longer take the stress and killed herself with car fumes. She left us three beautiful grandchildren, but her husband will not let us see them now. We are "bad" because we left that cult. That's the story of our life involved in the Armstrong church. The pain is so intense, I don't know how we will make it. Please pray for us.

[Name withheld by request]

It is truly disappointing that while Tkach and his PR people are making every effort to give the impression that the WCG is becoming a more humane church, the old disfellowshipping policies remain in full force.<sup>67</sup> Those thrown out of the WCG are still being told that for normal fellowship "privileges" to be granted, they must demonstrate "unconditional surrender to the government of God's Church" - i.e. if you don't lick the ministers' boots you can't come back in.

### **The Home Breakers**

The WCG has always been a cult ready, willing, and able to break up marriages.<sup>68</sup> One of the key tools used to do so has always been the WCG's divorce and remarriage (or "D and R") doctrine. The old version of the D and R teaching was described by WCG evangelist Herman L. Hoeh as follows:

Of prospective Church members - those applying for baptism - somewhere near one in three or four have been divorced. Many have remarried. To qualify to be baptized and accepted into God's Church MANY were required by the Church, knowing God's teaching against adultery in Matthew 5:32 and 19:18, to separate from a second marriage - in many cases a happy marriage with children.<sup>69</sup>

Thus the prospective member who was a D and R case was immediately put into a hellish Catch 22: Either to divorce one's present mate, live celibate, and perhaps also be permanently separated from one's children in order to achieve salvation - or to save one's marriage and thereby be consigned to hell fire. Naturally, many who decided to preserve their marriage had the joy of that relationship greatly diminished by doubts as to their spiritual future. And many who decided to put salvation, as they perceived it, above family were later to be tormented by unfulfilled physical needs and profound loneliness.<sup>70</sup>

To help guarantee that separated D and R couples would not weaken and backslide into forbidden liaisons, WCG clerics would often require that separated mates move to states distant from one another. When both mates, however, were WCG members it was inevitable that they would occasionally spot each other at one of the church's annual feasts or yearly conventions.

I very distinctly recall seeing one such accidental meeting at the WCG's Squaw Valley convention in 1969. Moments before a service was to begin, with everyone scurrying to their seats, a separated D and R couple accidentally saw each other. Obviously still very much in love, they instinctively and passionately ran toward each other to embrace. But

almost instantly, as though some powerful dark force descended between them, the would-be embrace became a mere holding of hands as the two looked into each other's eyes, trembling and sobbing. In anguish with tears streaming down their faces, they then quickly turned from each other to take their places at opposite ends of the auditorium. I have seen very few real-life scenes as poignant. Incidentally, the sermon that day focused on the importance of obeying church authority.

Not surprisingly, the old D and R doctrine cost the WCG prospective members and, of course, considerable income. In 1974 the WCG came up with a new D and R teaching. In the same 1982 WN article quoted above, Herman L. Hoeh wrote how the WCG's leaders scuttled the old D and R doctrine (that a first marriage was bound by God until death) and how church members since 1974 have been allowed to divorce and remarry under two new circumstances:

(1) If the believing Church member has been newly converted and the mate refuses to live with him or her because of the religion, and (2) if both had been in the Church, but one falls away, or turns bitter against the Church or refuses to live as husband and wife with the still loyal member.

In this second case the embittered one is to be officially considered a nonmember or unbeliever. "A brother or sister is *not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace*" (I Corinthians 7:15). And the member may divorce.

The current D and R teaching as outlined by Hoeh<sup>71</sup> gives the WCG ministry broad power over the marriages of its members and over the marital circumstances of many *non*-members. A non-member spouse who expresses disapproval of the way the member spouse spends his or her time and money or the way children are being raised can be viewed as "not living as husband and wife" or as having "departed the marriage" and the member spouse will be given ministerial permission - or even encouragement - to divorce. The member spouse who is looking for an excuse to get a new mate is also given new power. Such members can easily create marital stress - unconsciously or even purposely - and then use the non-member's angry reactions as "proof" that the nonmember spouse has, in essence, departed the marriage.<sup>72</sup>

A repeated scenario has been that the member going off regularly to church services and conventions without his or her spouse meets someone of the opposite sex with whom they feel more comfortable. The non-member spouse either accidentally discovers, or is informed directly of this new "friend" and no longer is as amorous towards the member mate. The member mate then goes to the ministry, claiming the non-member is no longer living as a true spouse, gets permission to divorce, and after divorcing goes off into the sunset with the new-found WCG devotee. (To make matters worse, many wives deserted this way then find that their tithe-paying ex-husband has little money left over for spousal or child support.)

### **What Do You Mean "Unbeliever"?**

The WCG's current teaching on D and R has had some very bizarre ramifications. For example, note the following indignant excerpt from a Sept. 25, 1989 letter to Church of God, International (CGI) members from CGI president Garner Ted Armstrong (emphasis

his):

When you have had to experience divorce *up close*, you understand the terrible emotional and mental duress; the weeks, months and even years of sleepless nights, countless tears, with one's stomach tied in knots, loss of appetite; where practically *everything* in your life seemingly revolves around the terrible conflict and trauma of *divorce!*

Sadly, we have had to hear of cases where the parent organization, the Worldwide Church, has "ruled" that when divorce occurs within their ranks, but when one of the parties is a member of the Church of God, International, that party is viewed by the WCG as "an unbeliever"! They then invoke Paul's statement "If the unbeliever depart, let him depart," and rule that the member remaining within the WCG is *FREE TO MARRY!*

"Unbeliever?" But HOW can a member of God's church who believes in the *whole* Bible; knows the truth about [long list of doctrines WCG and CGI once held in common]... attends church every Sabbath, and is a loyal and faithful member of *God's true church* - yes, HOW could any pharisaical "holier than thou" so-called "religious leader" label such a one an *UNBELIEVER?*

This is nothing short of utter BLASPHEMY! Jesus Christ of Nazareth warned very sternly of those who would *dare* to attribute to the very power of God's Holy Spirit the works of Satan! He said such inferences were perilously close to the *UNPARDONABLE SIN!*

We in God's Church (the Church of God, International) have *NEVER* inferred that the members of the WCG are "unbelievers."

This thinly-disguised "excuse" to permit DIVORCE is heinous beyond my ability to describe! Thank God it is not I who am called to judge; Almighty God will judge such acts and deeds, and those who are committing them; those who are aiding and abetting in perpetrating *divorce* will have to answer to One far more powerful than I!

GTA is entirely correct in pointing out the incredible pain inflicted on thousands by the WCG's current D and R doctrine. He is also correct in suggesting that *many* sabbatarian church people do not agree with the WCG's current position on D and R. Notice the following article excerpt which appeared in the *La Crosse Tribune* of Wisconsin, Feb. 11, 1984 about Ambassador College graduate and University of Wisconsin alumnus Dennis Hallingstad:

A 34-year-old Sparta man was ordered jailed for 30 days after bursting into a Monroe County courtroom Friday afternoon and reading Bible verses, apparently to protest a hearing in his divorce case.

Dennis Hallingstad, who claims the divorce is illegal because it violates his religious freedom under the Constitution, was ordered jailed by reserve Judge Richard Harvey of Racine for contempt of court.

Hallingstad then ran from the courtroom and was arrested a few minutes later in the restroom of a nearby hospital. He then was strapped to a stretcher and wheeled into a makeshift courtroom at the Monroe County Sheriff's Department so that the divorce

case could continue.

But the hearing was again disrupted when Hallingstad, who had appeared to be in a deep sleep, began screaming that the judge was an agent of Satan and should repent of his sinful ways. Hallingstad said God was using him to speak to the world.

"I want the news media to know what's happening in this country. I want them to know the judge is of the devil," Hallingstad shouted.

Harvey ordered Hallingstad placed in secure detention at St. Francis Medical Center in La Crosse. The judge then granted the divorce to Hallingstad's wife, Janice, saying it was the most difficult case he has handled in nearly 50 years of law practice.

"I've had nothing but turmoil in the case since it started," said Harvey, who was named to the case after other judges either disqualified themselves or refused to take the case.

Hallingstad filed lawsuits in Monroe County last year against Circuit Judge James Rice, Mrs. Hallingstad, a friend and a court commissioner in an attempt to block the divorce.

He said Jesus Christ does not recognize divorces and that it is therefore a violation of his religious freedom for a court to dissolve a marriage. He also has asked state Rep. John Medinger, D-La Crosse, to introduce a bill making divorces illegal in Wisconsin.

In addition, he recently filed a lawsuit in La Crosse County Circuit Court asking for \$50 million in damages against the Worldwide Church of God, which he claims is a cult that has gained control of the minds of his wife and 6-month-old son, Gregory....

According to court documents, Hallingstad married his wife in 1977 and convinced her to join the Worldwide Church of God, a California-based group that is headed by its elderly spiritual leader, Herbert W. Armstrong.

Hallingstad said in a recent La Crosse Tribune interview that he was kicked out of the local branch of the church early last year after questioning church leaders' interpretation of the Bible and criticizing Armstrong for getting a divorce....

### **The Mechanics of "D&R" Mayhem**

In an October 1984 sermon given in Buffalo, New York, leading WCG minister Harold Jackson stated that in 1982 (the year in which Hoeh wrote his definitive WN article about D and R), there were 265 divorces among the WCG's members. In 1983, he said, there were 235. Although current statistics are unavailable, every indication is that there are now *more* divorces annually among WCG members.

Those not familiar with the WCG's overbearing ministry might assume that divorce in the WCG is like divorce anywhere else where people simply get lawyers and go to court. Unfortunately, like just about everything else of significance in a WCG member's life, divorce requires ministerial involvement. To get authorization to divorce a mate, the complaining mate must reveal virtually all details - no matter how private or intimate -

about the marriage (including all premarital sexual activities). Local ministers make thorough written reports on such matters and those reports are then forwarded to WCG headquarters where an all male "D and R *committee*" reviews them and decides the fate of the distant couple.

As head of Church Administration in January 1986, Tkach instructed the entire WCG ministry about:

the importance of doing a thorough job on these writeups.... No divorce and remarriage decisions are to be made at the local level... remember that *all* divorce and remarriage cases should be written up and sent to Pasadena *regardless of how clear-cut or simple* the case may seem.... Be specific about key dates involved in the courtship, marriage ceremony, divorce, separations, fornication, etc.....<sup>73</sup>

Not only does the WCG's "D and R committee" in far away Pasadena intrude into all the intimacies of the couple's relationship, in recent years the WCG's huge staff of legal personnel have also gotten into the act. I've seen numerous documents - including letters from WCG attorney Ralph Helge himself - revealing that WCG lawyers have provided substantial financial assistance to WCG members divorcing their non-member mates. This often seems to be the case where the nonmember is also an outspoken critic of the WCG. In such cases, the WCGs lawyers seem to revel in being able to financially break the critic's back.

One New York businessman wrote to me about the effects his divorce from a Worldwider had on him and his business:

I guess the last four and a half years have really taken their toll on my sanity. The legal battles of my divorce have finally, drained my last drop of blood. My business closed three months ago in bankruptcy, over \$100,000 in debt. The creditors and state are currently hovering over the carcass picking it clean. I'm currently unemployed.... The divorce was finally completed last month with my ex on her fourth or fifth attorney - I lost count.... Her second attorney was the one paid \$8,000 by Helge. And then she turned around and filed a fee application with the court for me to pay an additional \$13,000 including \$625 for the psychiatrist she called as a witness!....

I'll probably still have to pay \$2500 [in fees] - can't discharge that kind of debt. And I still have to pay past sales taxes, employees' taxes, income taxes, etc. (about \$30,000) if they don't raise enough auctioning off what has been my life of the last 10 years!

The involvement of WCG lawyers in divorces of WCG members is not limited to providing financial assistance to members out to divorce and/or harm mates critical of the church. WCG lawyers have been known to assist members in the kidnapping of children - that is, in surreptitiously whisking away children from the custody and care of the non-WCG mate.

In one of the cases for which I have documentation, a wife who was a WCG member went back to her native Germany with her children for a visit. (The main purpose of the trip, to which her member husband did not openly object, had to do with family finances

and social security.) Although her marriage had not been all she had hoped for, her Oregonian husband had never brought up the idea of a formal separation or divorce. However, while the wife was in Germany, the couple's WCG minister in Oregon privately suggested to the husband that he divorce his wife. (Incidentally, throughout this period the wife remained a church-attending WCG member!) Then, while the two were still apart, WCG lawyer Larry Darden secretly wrote the husband:

As you know, our firm serves as general counsel for the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Helge has discussed your letter with me and asked that I write to you on his behalf....

(1) Contact your wife in Germany and arrange for a voluntary transfer of the children to you - either permanently or for a visit.

In order to protect yourself in that regard you should be able to send non-transferable, non-refundable tickets for the trip naming your children as the only possible users and Portland as the only destination. I understand that TWA or other large airlines can arrange tickets in that manner for you.

On arrival of the children in Oregon you might consider contacting an attorney in Portland to assist you in filing for divorce or separation and for custody of the children....

(3) If your wife will not voluntarily release the children, you might choose to fly to Germany, after obtaining the appropriate passports or visas for the children, and bring the children back with you. As your wife is gone much of the time you should have little difficulty in that regard....

As you have equal right to custody with your wife until after a court has awarded custody during a divorce or separation proceeding, it would be to your advantage financially and strategically to avoid making custody a court issue in Germany or Oregon until after the children are with you in Oregon.

The attempted kidnapping did not prove successful for the husband. But the WCG-lawyer-counselled kidnapping attempt caused the woman's oldest son to develop severe emotional problems. The attempted kidnapping also resulted in the wife having to be hospitalized for severe trauma and damaged nerves in her right arm with the possibility of permanent paralysis. The legal and emotional warfare waged against the impoverished woman by her husband and his WCG ministers and lawyers continued for over five years. Although the two finally divorced with the wife getting child custody, many of her emotional wounds remain to this day.

Over the years, the evidence has continued to mount of WCG ministers encouraging the kidnapping of children away from "unconverted" mates and former mates. For example, as I reported in [AR32](#) (p. 6):

In 1979, *Ambassador Report* was contacted by Dr. Galal Badr, a college professor at George Mason University in Virginia. Badr told us how he had been married to a WCG member, had gone through a divorce, and had been granted custody of their young daughter Abigail. Badr told us, however, that his daughter and his ex-wife, Marianna (a one-time school teacher from Philadelphia, maiden name - Dowhan) had

disappeared, and a WCG minister, who hinted he knew of their whereabouts, had told him, "If you don't cooperate, you'll never see your daughter again." Badr refused to "cooperate" and true to the minister's prediction, he has not seen or heard from his daughter (or ex- wife) since then....

In late 1979, Dr. Badr wrote to WCG headquarters asking their assistance in locating his missing daughter. It was some time before he even received a response. Finally on July 3, 1980, WCG lawyer Ralph Helge wrote Dr. Badr that "the Church" would not intervene in his case because, "Any other position would demand that the Church become an investigator and fact finder in thousands of cases."

In recent court proceedings WCG-member relatives of Badr's ex-wife took the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer when asked questions about the missing teenager and her fugitive mother.

Abigail would now be 18 years old. Dr. Badr recently told me, "It has been more than 13 years since I last saw my daughter's face, her brown hair, her green eyes, or heard her voice. I don't know if she is well or even alive. Your readers who have children of their own will perhaps have some idea of the kind of sadness I feel inside. What has caused Marianna to subject me to such cruelty, and in the process make herself a fugitive from the law, I cannot understand."<sup>74</sup>

Child kidnappings are not the only means used by WCG ministers and lawyers to inflict emotional trauma upon uncooperative non-WCG mates. Floridian Carl Youngquist was married to a woman who joined the WCG. Although raised a Lutheran, Carl, himself, attended WCG services for a short period but lost interest. Before long, Youngquist noticed a profound change in his wife's personality. Eventually he became fed up with her obsession with the WCG and with her insistence on educating their three children at home. In late 1987 he filed for divorce and asked for custody of their three children.

Youngquist's parents, devout Christians who had helped raise their son's children, wrote AR about what happened next:

About six weeks after our son filed for divorce and for custody of the children, she charged him, on the advice of someone in the WCG, with sexually abusing their adopted five-year-old daughter.

The divorce hearing was held in December 1988 in West Palm Beach. We found out, through our lawyer, that the WCG was paying her lawyer directly from Pasadena. Besides her first lawyer, she had a second lawyer retained by the church. He objected to every question Carl's attorney asked about the church. For that reason the divorce hearing took two days rather than one.

At the divorce hearing Carl's ex was accompanied by an entourage from the church. In the hallway we saw them all laughing and having a gay old time. The so-called minister and treasurer testified but answered no questions regarding the church.

In May of 1987 the state of Florida dismissed the civil suit (alleging sexual abuse) because of insufficient evidence. But then the state filed criminal charges for which, if he had been found guilty, he could have received 25 years in prison! Because of the criminal charges against our son, his ex-wife "as awarded temporary [now

permanent] custody of the children and he was ordered to pay \$131 weekly in child support - prompt payment of which she enforces through repeated legal actions.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Youngquist  
Ocean Grove, New Jersey

Richard G. Lubin, Carl's defense lawyer, was convinced of his client's innocence and refused all offers of a plea bargain.<sup>75</sup> Florida prosecutors were unable to make out a case and all charges against Carl were dropped in December 1990.<sup>76</sup> By then, however, Carl and his parents had paid out over \$100,000 in legal fees. Although permitted to occasionally see the three children, Carl and his parents say the youngsters have become emotionally distant, even cold, toward them. The years of bitter court battles have left all those involved emotionally scarred.

### Who's On Top?

The D and R doctrine is not the only way the WCG ministry undermines the marriages of thousands. If one reads official WCG publications dealing with marital relations, one finds promulgated what might be called a traditional Christian marriage ideal: Husbands are to faithfully love their wives, provide for and protect them and their children, be strong family leaders, yet show kindness, compassion, understanding, patience, etc. Wives are to faithfully love their husbands, be devoted homemakers and domestic managers, raise children in the faith, be understanding, patient, etc. Most people would probably find the *public* WCG model for the ideal family to their liking.<sup>77</sup>

Yet, the way the WCG message is actually read by many husbands transmogrifies the WCG marital ideal into one of male-centered, insensitive tyranny over a presumably inferior and subjugated serf. Furthermore, with many WCG clerics the more equitable marital model advocated in WCG publications is completely ignored and the overt message from the pulpit and in private counseling is one of unrestrained male domination.<sup>78</sup> Notice what one of our readers in Kansas wrote in this regard:

Thank God that Jesus Christ came and liberated women (as well as men)... and gave women the respect and consideration that God intended from the beginning. In the WCG our minister for several years preached about [women being] the less intelligent half of the human race. He felt God gave to men HIGHER talents and "smarts." He spoke to his own wife as if she was his servant or slave and he was the tyrant king.

We had a really good marriage *until* we were in the WCG a few years. My husband then became insensitive, treating me like I was dumb! He expected me to be subject to his every demand - regardless of how I felt and regardless of what I thought was proper. It was just like what the ministers demanded of their congregations - we were to do *as they said* even if it was wrong! The marriage became based on an attitude of dictatorship and tyranny, not on the idea that we were two capable human beings seeking to be Christians.

The ministry took us back to Old Testament days. Maybe this is why some of the ministers thought it was okay to have extra-marital affairs - because King David did, didn't he?

Not surprisingly, the WCG is an organization rife with the double standard. There are congregations in which the presiding cleric routinely puts down women for the most trivial of "flaws" - poor choice of clothing styles or makeup, "excessive" voicing of opinion, lack of deference toward males, etc. Yet some of those same ministers will expect the wives in their congregations to be "understanding" toward their husbands' "problems" with adultery or even incest.<sup>79</sup>

Excessive male dominance is the usual pattern found in WCG families that are dysfunctional. Ironically, however, when some ministers feel it is to the WCG's advantage, they are quite willing to support a wife bent on being the dominant mate in a marriage. Note the following letter written to AR:

I was suspended from the WCG Jan. 12, 1989 by David Register and his mostly silent assistant Ken Sparks. My wife, a diehard WCGer has become *extremely* self-righteous since finding out about the WCG. She has also become dominant and uncontrollable in family affairs. She involved the ministry early on and they took her side! They won't listen to me or to our children from her previous marriage. (Her first husband left her because of the same problem when they were both Catholics.) The ministers just back her up!

Situations such as the above are particularly vexing to husbands who, themselves, were taught to be dominant leaders. Men who've perhaps had a fundamentalist Christian upbringing or who have been military officers or business managers often seem to have little tolerance for a wife suddenly "wearing the pants" with full approval and encouragement from some 25-year-old Ambassador College-trained Tkach hireling. And so, even though such men are often very much in love with their wives, divorce becomes inevitable.<sup>80</sup>

### **The Love Bashers**

In addition to tampering with members' marital relations and using the D and R doctrine to break up existing marriages, the WCG ministry frequently destroys *budding* relationships and *future* marriages through heavy-handed ministerial match-making and match-breaking. For decades, WCG ministers have considered it their God-given prerogative to encourage (read "coerce") certain individuals to marry. Conversely, they have also thought it their God-given prerogative to use their considerable psychological influence to discourage (read "destroy") certain budding relationships.

Obviously, there is an important counseling role to be played by any proper ministry as regards those contemplating marriage and even as regards young people just dating. But in the case of the WCG, with its highly authoritative - and often outrageously rakesh-ministry, marriage counseling has frequently been nothing but inane -and often self-serving - intermeddling with the legitimately private lives and intense emotions of trusting, child-like Christians.

I personally know of dozens of marriages ruined by WCG ministerial match-making/breaking. But let me just quote from one recent letter to AR:

I would like to tell you that I [recently] married a woman I have loved for the past 27 years. I met her when I first got into the WCG in the 1960s. We first dated back in the spring and summer of 1964 but [WCG evangelist] Dean Blackwell broke us up because he wanted her to go to Ambassador College. Unfortunately, she only attended for two years, then worked for the college. At age 23 Ol' Joe Tkach played matchmaker and advised (or whatever it is they do to so many people) that she marry a man she had known for only three months. He turned out to be an alcoholic and sex pervert - basically a closet homosexual. She went through 20 years of sheer hell.

Because of the church, I, myself, married on the rebound in 1965. That marriage lasted only a few years after we left the church back in 1974.

I cannot begin to warn people enough about how this organization has hurt, manipulated, controlled, and ruined the lives of thousands of innocent, unsuspecting victims. Our personal story could fill a book.

### **What Spirit Is Behind All This?**

When we look at the WCG organization with its proclivity for thwarting budding relationships, mismatching mates, interfering in marriages, breaking up families, and separating children from parents and grandparents, we need to ask ourselves what is the spirit that infuses and motivates Tkach's so-called church?

Some years ago I heard Professor Lon Sobel, an internationally renowned legal scholar, lecture on the subject of entertainment business litigation strategies. He made an insightful comment that had relevance far beyond the subject upon which he lectured. He cautioned his audience of young litigators that whenever they were involved in legal battles with corporate giants, it was imperative they understand the attitudes, values, and psychological bent ("spirit," if you will) of the individual or group of individuals at the very top of that organization. He explained that it is the mindset of those at the very top that will permeate an entire corporation (and, in turn, affect the course of the litigation). That important principle is well understood by not just great trial lawyers, but by many psychologists and sociologists as well.<sup>81</sup>

What happens in the WCG and in the lives of its members is most often not the result of doctrines or policies derived from a sincere search for transcendent truths, but is almost always the result of policies that flow from the idiosyncrasies, prejudices, projections, and psychological bent of its top leader and his inner circle. And, as I have emphasized since our first issue, we can best understand the spirit underlying the WCG if we look at the private lives of those key individuals.

In this regard, let me quote from an insightful letter written by former WCG member/deacon N. C. Gilbert<sup>82</sup> to WCG minister Randall R. Kobernat on Dec. 30, 1984:

Mr. Kobernat, I do not [condone] incest or rape. In addition to physically, people can be raped mentally, emotionally, financially, and spiritually. And, I might add, Mr. Armstrong's own daughter will only answer, "I am not at liberty to discuss it" when asked if the incest charges against her father are true or false. I realize that happened a long time ago, and could/should be repented of and forgotten; but the attitude and spirit of *forceful control* (TOTAL authority) is still in the [WCG] organization. Mr.

Kobernat, if I said I was a minister (or apostle) of God and was committing incest, do you think Rev. 2:2 would apply to me? Dr. Joyce Brothers writes that people who commit such *perverse acts* do it, in most cases, to show their *power* and *control* over others. Christian ethics, love, mercy, etc. seem to be taking second place to obedience and control. It reminds me of the children's game "Simon Says." Either you do *exactly* what "Simon" says, or you are *out!* Is Christ a part of such?

Since 1976 virtually every issue of AR has focused on the issue of the WCG's spirit of forceful and totalitarian authority over the minds of its members. I have also reported extensively on HWA's long-time incestuous abuse of his youngest daughter. I will not reiterate those sad facts in this article. Nor will I devote space here to Garner Ted Armstrong's promiscuous past. Those matters have been covered in detail in past issues of the *Report*.<sup>83</sup> However, as one of AR's readers wrote me, "You have written extensively about the private lives of HWA and GTA. You have a *duty* to now report what you know about Mr. Tkach and his associates."

### **Joe Tkach Jr.**

After Joe Tkach Sr., the most visible WCG figure is Joe Tkach Jr. Although less visible than his father in WCG publications, Junior is actually running much of the WCG.<sup>84</sup> As one WCG insider revealed to AR: "Basically, right now, Joe Tkach Jr. and Michael Feazell are running the church. Mr. Tkach Sr. trusts no one else!"

Junior's official title is Director of Church Administration U.S.A.<sup>85</sup> Those who remember him as a student at the WCG's Imperial School in Pasadena during the late 1960s and then at Ambassador College from which he was graduated in 1973, say he was not a brilliant student. Indeed, some classmates considered him "a goof ball."

After graduation he was a ministerial trainee in California, Indiana, and Arizona. Ordained in 1976, he was also cut from the WCG payroll that same year. Between 1976 and 1986, Junior took a few extension classes in psychology from Arizona State University, worked as a social service worker, earned an MBA from the small Western International University in Phoenix, and then worked for Intel Corp. for a couple of years. Since being lured back to employment in the WCG, his father has had him raised to evangelist rank.

Divorced from his first wife, Jill, in 1978,<sup>86</sup> Junior remarried in 1980. Those familiar with Junior's first marriage say it was a tumultuous relationship. Friends of Jill say Junior was an habitual wife beater and Jill, now a born-again Christian, has told friends that Tkach Sr., himself, even struck her on two occasions. The following letter from a former member of Junior's Arizona flock reveals something of Junior's character and personality:

I knew both Joe Tkach Jr. and Jill, his first wife, in a personal way [because my wife and I spent considerable time traveling with them on church business].... It certainly came as no surprise when we were apprised of Jill divorcing this "Hitler"! Certainly I could not blame her for such overdue action. I say this not from hearsay, second-hand scuttlebutt, or rumor, but because my wife (who still clings to the cult) and I witnessed his outrages first hand.

On one occasion, Mr. T. invited my wife and I to ride along on their trip to Prescott, Arizona where he was to give a Sabbath sermon. Jill was driving while Mr. T. Jr. was in the back seat preparing his sermon. Jill missed the turn-off to Prescott from the Phoenix to Flagstaff freeway. She had driven about 10 miles past the turn-off when we realized that she had gone by the Prescott exit. Mr. T. Jr. blew his top, to say the least! He cussed and swore at Jill from that point, 10 miles past the turn-off all the way to Prescott, about 60 miles from the freeway as I recall. He called her every vulgar name in the book: "an S.O.B.," "a stupid imbecile," "a F---ing bitch,"; and he said "God D--- you!"- except he said whole words, not just the starting letters. He just kept screaming the epithets at her. While he continued to scream out those deplorable rantings and ravings, I wondered if I should tell him to shut up. But I knew that if I did I would be disfellowshipped on the spot. After searching for years to find what I most ignorantly assumed to be "God's One True Church," and being taught never to question, much less upbraid, one of "God's ministers," I bit my tongue and felt embarrassed that a fellow human being would react so disgustingly to such a trivial mistake.

It's interesting that the moment we pulled into the church parking lot, Mr. T. Jr.'s personality did a 180 degree somersault. He smiled and greeted the deacons in the parking lot, apologized for being late, gave his sermon, and acted as though none of the turmoil in the car had ever happened. Mind you, he had carried on in the car ranting and raving for over one hour straight! Jill was left in tears by his tongue lashing. I remember thinking at the time - if he would mistreat his wife so horribly in our presence, how far would he go in brutalizing her in private?

Some time previous to the above incident, we were visiting his home when my wife asked him a question about [erotic] fantasies. He told her that fantasizing was perfectly normal, that he himself did this, and that he even encouraged his wife to fantasize about other men!<sup>87</sup>

I recall he said that he hated his Dad and that his father was a "little dictator" who had never shown him any love. The picture he painted of his father was nothing like the picture painted of Mr. T. Sr. in the *Worldwide News* where he is supposedly a family man who loves children. However, the description given by Mr. T. Sr. in the 7/17/89 WN of people in the WCG jockeying for position does fit perfectly my recollection of Mr. T. Jr. When Mr. T. Sr. became transformed from being a "little dictator" - as his son had described him - into being a "big dictator," he dangled a one-quarter to one-half million dollar carrot in front of his son's nose. That is what caused Mr. T. Jr. to want to gravitate to Pasadena in 1986. At his going away party, he told my wife that he had really changed. Well, I have to wonder. Someone who has, doesn't have to boast about it.

A considerable amount of evidence accumulated by AR indicates Junior has really not changed at all, but has only gotten better at concealing his leopard spots.<sup>88</sup> Tkach Sr., however, doesn't seem to mind.

### **Dean Blackwell**

In his rise from lowly local elder to "God's Apostle," Tkach Sr. has had a number of mentors. The first was evangelist Dean Blackwell, Tkach's superior in Chicago during his early years in the church. For many WCG members, Blackwell's reputation centers around his mellifluous voice and his pulpit fulminations against sexual immorality. For many WCG ministers, however, Blackwell's reputation is that of, as one of his former colleagues put it, "a hypocrite with the personal morals of an alley cat and the brains of a

chicken."<sup>89</sup>

Former WCG member Robert Skaggs<sup>90</sup> told the *Report*:

Dean Blackwell was absolutely idolized by women in the Chicago church. He, in turn, took advantage of many. He had a basement office with a couch. That is where many of his escapades would take place. He used to ask various church women to come over to his house to do his wife's housework for her. He had the nerve to ask my wife to come over like that. I told my wife, "Let Mr. Blackwell's wife do her own housework!"...

Around 1963, a deaconess caught Blackwell in bed with the wife of [a WCG local elder]. When she told me what she had seen I called evangelist Rod Meredith at church headquarters in Pasadena. I thought Blackwell would be removed or, at least, reprimanded. Instead, Meredith had one of the Chicago ministers come to me and say if I wanted to continue attending services I would have to be rebaptized!

In other words, Skaggs was not-so-subtly told that when it came to the personal morals of top ministers he was to mind his own business. His experience in this regard reflected a WCG policy unknown to most lowly members. As Mary Ellen Dahlgren, former executive secretary to Herbert W. Armstrong and Stanley R. Rader, told the *Report*, "the official, although unwritten rule, was that adultery by ministers ranked preaching elder and lower was to be punished, but adultery by ministers ranked pastor and above was to be covered up."

Under Blackwell, Tkach learned firsthand about the WCG's double standard and about church politics. When Blackwell seduced Tkach's own wife in the early 1960s, Tkach's silence was rewarded when Blackwell got him ordained.<sup>91</sup> Blackwell also put Tkach in charge of the Chicago congregation's third tithing "poor fund." As Blackwell's "bag man," Tkach gained a knowledge of how to distribute favors for selfish gain. With that experience he was later able to land a similar position of grass roots influence when transferred to WCG headquarters in Pasadena.<sup>92</sup>

Once Tkach became the WCG's Pastor General, many assumed that because Blackwell had slept with Tkach's wife, Tkach would get his revenge by firing him. Not so. Although Tkach did get satisfaction from being able to dominate and humiliate Blackwell by transferring him to the Philippines for a time, after a spell Tkach allowed his old mentor to come back to the U.S. In return for keeping his mouth shut about much of Tkach's past, Blackwell remains on full WCG salary as one of Tkach's "doctrinal advisors."

### **Herman L. Hoeh**

For over forty years Herman L. Hoeh - evangelist, doctrinal theoretician, Ambassador College professor, WCG board member, and *Plain Truth* editor - has been one of the most influential men in the WCG hierarchy. He has also been one of Tkach's most important mentors. From 1976 to 1979 Tkach assisted Hoeh in pastoring the "Pasadena Auditorium A.M." congregation. The teacher-student relationship that developed provided Tkach with the insights and advice he needed to gain control of the WCG's Church Administration Department beginning in 1979.<sup>93</sup>

"Dr." Hoeh, as he is often referred to because of his Ph.D. from still unaccredited AC, is an individual not lacking in IQ or political skill.<sup>94</sup> In spite of certain well-known eccentricities,<sup>95</sup> most Worldwidiers view Hoeh as a mild-mannered gentleman and scholar. But there is another side to Hoeh - one very much at odds with his conservative straight image.

I first became aware of Hoeh's double life in mid-1977. We had just published [AR2](#), our large ["In Bed With Garner Ted"](#) issue, and the revelations it contained were prompting many headquarters personnel to resign from the WCG. One such individual was Ron Lepeska, a gifted photographer and graphics artist who had been employed at church headquarters for a number of years.

One day, Ron received a phone call from Hoeh. "I understand you've left the church," said Hoeh. As Ron answered in the affirmative, his racing thoughts were that Hoeh had phoned in his capacity as a WCG minister and was about to counsel him to rejoin the church. Instead, Hoeh responded, "That's good. I've got a job for you." He explained to Ron that he had an extensive collection of photographic "art" - with some photos having cost him \$200 apiece - but that a handful of photos had slight defects which required a bit of "touching up." While surprised at Hoeh's indifference toward his new non-member status, Ron agreed to assist the evangelist.

Later, after Hoeh dropped off twenty or so photographs, Ron was flabbergasted at what he saw. Ron - who had become sympathetic to AR's goals and was even then designing AR's new letterhead - phoned *Report* co-founder Len Zola. Shortly thereafter Len and I visited Ron's home to see the photos for ourselves. We discovered that most of the photos were clearly homoerotic. About half were of naked young boys with exposed genitals and naked buttocks. A few shots combined black leather and Nazi motifs. Most surprising, however, were three full-frontal nudity photos of very pregnant women - all of whose faces we recognized from WCG church services!

How, and from whom, Hoeh obtained his photos is unclear. It is interesting, however, that for years we have heard stories about WCG headquarters in Pasadena having its own secret group of nudism aficionados. We know, too, that Hoeh is a skilled amateur photographer who in the past has talked of leaving the ministry to become a professional photographer.<sup>96</sup>

The photos of naked boys in Hoeh's collection raises the question of whether Hoeh - in spite of his church's teachings - is latently bisexual or gay. At least one former Ambassador College instructor thinks Hoeh is. He told me:

Back in 1969, when I showed up to teach at Ambassador, there was to be a formal faculty reception. Herman Hoeh, aware that I didn't own a tuxedo, offered to loan me one of his. He invited me to his home and in his bedroom told me to disrobe so I could try on a tux. I did as he said only to discover the tux didn't fit me. It was only years later, after I was married and knew more about the ways of the world, that I pieced the puzzle together. Hoeh - who had sat on the bed leering at me - should have known all along his tux wouldn't fit me. He is five inches taller than I am! But then, he did get a chance to leer, didn't he.

What exactly is Hoeh's state of mind at present is difficult to say. Observers note that in recent years his obsession with Buddhism, Buddhist monks, reincarnation, and the nation of Thailand<sup>97</sup> has steadily increased. Insiders say Mrs. Hoeh has not taken well to her husband's continuing weirdness. One of our readers recently observed her aimlessly wandering about a supermarket with a dazed look, talking to nonexistent companions. In the meantime, Tkach keeps Hoeh on as editor of the *Plain Truth*. The two men remain close friends.

### **Men With Boys**

Let me interrupt myself at this juncture to make an observation. In the past, homosexual attraction in the WCG hierarchy has gone largely unnoticed by the WCG's membership. As one former WCG member who is gay told me, "Straights just don't know what to look for. They assume that if a man is married, occasionally takes a woman to dinner, or doesn't behave effeminately, he could not possibly be gay. Ha!"

Heterosexuals, too, most often do not realize how complex, sophisticated, and formalized homosexual relations can become. To illustrate the latter, let me quote briefly from a Eugene O'Connor essay about homosexuality in ancient Greece - a time and place often idealized in modern homosexual literature:

Indeed, a whole body of homoerotic literature grew up around the themes of male beauty and how one ought to woo and win a boy.

The customary social pattern was this: a boy in his teens or, at any rate, a younger man (called an eromenos, or "beloved") was sought out by an older male (called an erastes, or "lover"), who might be already married. Women in classical Athens were kept in virtual seclusion from everyone but their immediate families and their domestic activities were relegated to certain "female" parts of the house [cf. Tit. 2:5]. As it consequence, boys and young men - partly by virtue of their being seen, whether in the gymnasium, in the streets, or at it sacrifice (its in the Lysis) - became natural love-objects.

The adult man acted the role of the aggressive pursuer, who openly courted a younger male. So eager were men's affections, in fact, that boys had to be regularly escorted by tutors [cf. Gal. 3:24-25] to keep from being molested. In no case was a boy to be seen as the aggressor; essentially playing the female role in a society in which well-bred women were largely absent from public life, the boy would, while displaying his beauty and charms, withhold them at first, yielding to the man only after a period of courtship.

Strict rules of conduct bound both parties: adult males could face prosecution for seducing free-born youths, while Athenian boys and young men could be censured for soliciting sexual favors for money. That would make them in effect equal to courtesans, who were hired companions and lacked citizen status.

This erastes-eromenos (lover-beloved) relationship, although it was sexual and in many ways comparable to typical male-female relations, with the man assuming the dominant role, was meant ideally to be an educative one. The older man instilled in the younger - in essence, "made him pregnant with" - a respect for the requisite

masculine virtues of courage and honor. Plato acknowledges the educative value of male-male relations when, for example, he has Alcibiades in the Symposium recount how his passion for Socrates (here humorously cast in the role of the beloved boy) has filled him with the pang of philosophy, and when Socrates in the Phaedrus describes how the soul of the pederast (literally, "a lover of youths") who is blessed with philosophy will grow wings after a certain cycle of reincarnations.<sup>98</sup>

Some have seen a similar type of tutorial under-culture developing in the WCG's higher echelons. (One oft-photocopied letter supposedly from one WCG executive/minister to another alleges just that and in considerable detail.<sup>99</sup>) Indeed, I personally recall from my years at Ambassador how certain church "scholars" were very aware of the sociology of ancient Greek homosexuality.

### **Stanley R. Rader**

Another important Tkach mentor was Stanley R. Rader,<sup>100</sup> the Jewish CPA-attorney who, for many years, was HWA's chief advisor. As detailed in Part II of this series,<sup>101</sup> Rader hand picked Tkach to run the WCG's Church Administration Department in 1979. Until HWA removed Rader from power in 1981, Tkach took his orders from Rader. To do justice to Rader would require a whole book. For purposes of this article, however, I will mention only a few items.

There are few WCG members who are not aware of the many stories that have circulated over the years alleging that Rader is bisexual. Interest in Rader's private life peaked around 1980. In that year, former WCG minister David R. Robinson published his book *Herbert W. Armstrong's Tangled Web* which repeated a number of widely circulated accusations concerning Rader.<sup>102</sup> One was that Rader's accounting partner, Henry Cornwall, was also Rader's homosexual partner. Another was that there were in existence photographs of church founder HWA having sex with young boys. (Copies of the photos were widely believed to be in Rader's possession.) Additionally, Robinson revealed how Rader had been unreceptive to any suggestion that the WCG maintain a position of staunch opposition to homosexuality.

According to Robinson's account, HWA, Rader, and Cornwall all had opportunity to deny the allegations to his face but never did. And, although the WCG sued Robinson over the book (for invasion of privacy), and although lawyer Rader is known for his litigiousness, the accuracy of Robinson's allegations concerning Rader's sexual preferences was never brought into issue. Finally, after just a few months of pleadings, the WCG quietly dropped the suit. In 1981, when author John Tuit published the same allegations against Rader in *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, the WCG did not even bother to threaten a lawsuit.

HWA stripped Rader of power in 1981 (while giving him a \$250,000 bonus). But it is important to note that Rader was removed only because he represented a threat to HWA.<sup>103</sup> HWA never objected to Rader's personal lifestyle. Nor did Rader object to HWA's. As for Tkach, he never objected to the lifestyles of either HWA or Rader.

During the last decade Rader has continued to live in Pasadena where he is often seen

about town in the company of his dotting wife. Friends say he spends considerable time reading fine literature, maintains contacts with numerous world leaders, and is "Of Counsel" with the Los Angeles law firm of Morgan, Wenzel, and McNichols. His clients include notorious cult leader Tony Alamo<sup>104</sup> (original name Bernie Lazar Hoffman) who, in recent years, has been charged with felony child abuse, admits to having stolen his late wife's body from an Arkansas mausoleum, and in 1991 was arrested by FBI agents after allegedly threatening to kidnap and hang a federal judge.<sup>105</sup>

While Rader no longer attends WCG services - his wife has said, "my husband is too charismatic; it would disrupt the church" - he remains a WCG member. Tkach has not seen fit to disfellowship him. And, not long ago, when asked if Rader was still receiving a paycheck from the Ambassador Foundation Tkach replied, "I don't know."

### **Gerald Waterhouse**

Of the many colorful characters one finds in the WCG hierarchy, few are as odd as evangelist Gerald Waterhouse. A native of West Texas and a 1956 graduate of Ambassador College, Waterhouse has spent the last 25 years repeatedly circling the globe as the WCG's most long-winded evangelist.<sup>106</sup> While also promulgating such oddball notions as "the place of final training," the mystical meaning of "Big Sandy," and the importance of Christians remaining "dumb,"<sup>107</sup> Waterhouse's chief function until 1986 was to promote the glorification of Herbert W. Armstrong.

Since church founder Armstrong's death in early 1986, Waterhouse's four-hour-long sermons<sup>108</sup> -given before five or six different audiences per week - have been aimed at accomplishing one thing: the glorification of Joseph W. Tkach. Toward that end, Waterhouse has been quite willing to disseminate scores of outlandish untruths about his latest idol. Some, such as Waterhouse's claim that Tkach was a fearless WWII warrior, have been explored in detail earlier in this series.<sup>109</sup>

---



**FURRY WARMTH**—Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach (right) and his assistant Joseph Locke don Russian headgear Feb. 5 in Kamloops, B.C., where temperatures dipped to minus 40. [Photo by Tammy Salomaa]



**One of Tkach's more humorous traits is his love of "showing off." The pages of the WCG's newspaper give him many opportunities to show off his friends in photographs and in article comments. The photo on the left of Tkach and Joe Locke in matching outfits appeared on page one of the Feb. 15, 1988 WN. The photo of Tkach followed by Locke and "Mrs." Ellen Escat appeared on page three of the July 6, 1987 WN.**

---

In spite of the many lies Waterhouse spreads, Tkach continues to allow Waterhouse to preach around the world. He is not alarmed by Waterhouse's continued promulgation of outlandish untruths. Nor is Tkach alarmed by Waterhouse's preference for a hotel-hopping lifestyle,<sup>110</sup> his boast of never having kissed a woman other than his mother,<sup>111</sup> his taste for leather, his love of wearing nylon undergarments,<sup>112</sup> his having been counseled by fellow WCG ministers regarding "homosexual tendencies," or the perception of many WCG ministers that Waterhouse is "mentally unstable." As long as Waterhouse continues to promote Tkach worship, he's okay with Tkach.

### **Dennis Van Deventer**

Another Worldwide minister who has, like Waterhouse, carried Tkach worship to insane heights is Dennis Van Deventer. As explained in [Part I](#),<sup>113</sup> Van Deventer was the minister who from the pulpit "had been so vivid in describing how Tkach single-handedly decimated much of the Japanese air force that some church members had become physically shaken by the bloody accounts of Tkach's ravaging." Not only does Tkach tolerate such nonsensical fiction about himself, he seems to revel in being the object of worship.

One close friend cautioned Tkach not long ago that when Van Deventer speaks about

"the Apostle" it is as though he is talking about God. To this observation Tkach flippantly suggested that compared to the poor way Herbert Armstrong had run the church perhaps he really is like God!

So confident is Tkach of Van Deventer, Tkach has put him in charge of the church's headquarters security force - no small responsibility considering the amount of intrigue that occurs there. Van Deventer is also said to be one of those with whom Tkach likes to share his back yard Jacuzzi - the place where, I'm told, the WCG's most important decisions are made. And Tkach can often be seen on late night walks with Van Deventer - a practice regarding which some have warned Tkach of potential image problems. For while Van Deventer is currently married and behaves in the "hard-nosed S.O.B. style" expected of supposedly macho managers in the WCG, his critics say he is overly interested in other males. It is also well-known at headquarters that while he was a student at the church's college in Texas, Van Deventer was expelled for performing a homosexual act upon a male employee of the church.

All of the above has led many to ask: Is Tkach gay?

### **Joe, Are You Gay?**

The question of whether Tkach is gay - or, more precisely, bisexual - may sound outlandish at first considering that Tkach's 30 year marriage has resulted in three grown children and considering Tkach's church condemned homosexuality very strongly in the past. But while most of the general WCG membership has been mesmerized by the WCG's PR team into believing that Tkach is a dedicated family man who, because of his wife's mental illness, has been forced to become "a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12), insiders know better. One minister who has known Tkach for over two decades and who has had hundreds of intimate discussions with him over the years, told me bluntly, "Mr. Tkach has not had sex with his wife for over 22 years. And, let's face it, you either use it or lose it. We shouldn't criticize Mr. Tkach because he has needs."

For some years, many insiders assumed that those needs were being met solely by Tkach's executive secretary "Mrs." Ellen Escat.<sup>114</sup> Increasingly, however, some insiders are saying that although Tkach can function with women, he actually prefers male companionship.<sup>115</sup> So widespread has this perception become that stories about the personal preferences of Tkach and some in his inner circle have become quite widespread.<sup>116</sup>

For example, Ambassador College graduate Ralph DiFiori recently wrote the *Report*:

In the summer of 1987 I was with Mr. Tkach and his assistant Joseph Locke. We were at an international site [Rome, Italy] and I stayed with Mr. Locke. In a casual conversation with Mr. Locke, he confided in me that Mr. Tkach doesn't like to be alone at night.<sup>117</sup> While he sleeps alone, he likes Locke's company until he's ready to go to sleep. It startled me because we were always told Mr. Tkach was a fearless leader. Another interesting thing Locke mentioned, which I found very amusing, was that Mr. Tkach enjoyed watching professional wrestling on TV. So [we have] a modern apostle who enjoys Hulkamania. Now that's something. I can easily guess

what other stuff they enjoy, but who am I to judge?

Locke, in his mid-forties, has never been married, shows little romantic interest in women, but shows considerable concern for the welfare of young boys, and lives with two young men across the street from Tkach. Besides being an officer of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation and an almost constant companion of Tkach on tour, he is Principal Supervisor of Imperial School (a church-sponsored elementary school) in Pasadena. According to one outraged parent, it was while employed in the latter capacity that he once<sup>118</sup> disciplined a teenage boy by whipping him - after first requiring him to strip naked.<sup>119</sup>

Those who are convinced Tkach is a closet homosexual-bisexual point to a variety of facts to make their argument. Some examples:

Former WCG minister Elmer McElroy was one of Tkach's closest friends from Chicago. He was the driver of Tkach's big black car in the incident described in [Part I](#) of this series.<sup>120</sup> Elmer's ex-wife has stated she knew that while Elmer was a WCG minister he was having affairs with men in the church. Just days after the big black car incident, in fact, Elmer left the WCG and "came out of the closet." He now resides back in Chicago living openly with his gay partner. Critics of Tkach say he knew all along that Elmer was gay. But that even while he and Elmer were putting Bible-believing Christians out of the WCG, Tkach was "covering" for his friend Elmer.

When Dennis Pebworth, a former WCG member, died of AIDS<sup>121</sup> in 1987, Tkach attended his funeral and displayed great emotion on the occasion. Some WCG conservatives were surprised to hear of Tkach's attendance and behavior because until that time no top WCG leader would have dared pay his respects at the funeral of an ex-member who was a known homosexual.<sup>122</sup>

Another Tkach relationship that has disturbed some church conservatives is Tkach's long-time relationship with J. Michael Feazell. Feazell, now one of Van Deventer's close friends, is Tkach's chief ghostwriter. Officially, he is assistant to the *Plain Truth's* publisher (Tkach). He is also an evangelist and a member of the WCG's board of trustees.<sup>123</sup> That someone so young (he's only 40) should quietly have been given so much authority galls some WCG old-timers - especially when, as one minister told me, "Mike is an incredible cry baby." One former *Plain Truth* writer told me, "Feazell is very effeminate. Mr. Herbert Armstrong would never have allowed him to be ordained an evangelist."<sup>124</sup> I am not saying that Feazell (who is now married) is gay, but how did Feazell get so much power? According to ministerial sources, Feazell virtually lived full time with Tkach (and Tkach's then confined, schizophrenic wife) for ten years beginning when he was 18 years old. And just as Herman Hoeh became mentor to Tkach in the 1970s, Tkach became mentor to the young Feazell. The two have remained trusting mutual admirers ever since.

Tkach has a number of idiosyncrasies that get him into trouble with his more conservative associates. One quirk is that, unlike church founder HWA, who was more formal, Tkach is very "touchy-feely" with men in public. I personally thought this criticism quite silly until someone pointed out to me how there are hundreds of photos -

many already published in the *Worldwide News* - of Tkach giving male friends a little touch here and a little squeeze there (or of male friends doing the same to him).<sup>125</sup> I would prefer not to read too much into such gestures, but as one individual noted, "Mr. Armstrong would not have been so publicly affectionate with other males." Another individual told me, "Sexual harassment was a big topic in the news recently. A lot of people think it's the kind of thing that must involve a male boss and a female employee and that it must involve dirty talk. But a male employee who is frequently touched by a male superior can't help but feel a little bit odd about it. After all, what's the purpose of it? Is he sending out signals, or what?"

A far more significant observation about Tkach's psycho-sexual bent revolves around his actual direction of church teaching about homosexuality. The WCG's official position used to be one of absolute opposition. For almost two decades that position was exemplified in Dr. Roderick C. Meredith's article "The Shocking Truth About 'Queer' Men!" But around 1979, right about the time Stanley Rader and Joe Tkach became evangelists and really took over control of the WCG, many noticed a major shift in the WCG's official position on homosexuality. *Plain Truth* articles attacking the gay lifestyle became almost nonexistent.<sup>126</sup> Meredith's article became first more difficult to obtain and then "out of print." If one wrote the church asking what its position was on homosexuality, after much delay one might get the church's new official paper on the topic, "Is It True Some Are 'Born That Way'?" - a sociological-psychological study by Donald D. Schroeder (whose by-line, for some reason, is now deleted from reprints). While the paper certainly is not pro-gay (and contains some excellent points), it clearly lacks the strong, masculine language found in the "classic Meredith" article. Today, Tkach strictly forbids Meredith's article from being distributed. Many see in this a desire by Tkach to avoid offending gay friends.

Even more disappointing to some is the defensive way Tkach has responded to the well-intentioned criticism of his private life. When stories about Tkach being bisexual inundated church headquarters around February 1990, many thought Tkach would forcefully rebut such accusations by restating the WCG's historical opposition to homosexuality. Instead, Tkach's own sermons and editorials began emphasizing the importance of forgiving sins.<sup>127</sup> Tkach also ordered the (now defunct) *Good News* magazine to publish a very odd article by WCG minister Dennis Luker. In "Hope for Homosexuals"<sup>128</sup> Luker called for greater understanding of homosexuals, stated that homosexuality was not the worst of sins, and reiterated Tkach's position that the WCG would not bar those with AIDS from attending WCG church services.

Taken on its own, Luker's article may not seem very startling. But what is shocking is the contrast between the very liberal tolerance Luker advocates toward homosexuals and homosexual problems as compared with the very rigid and harsh approach toward heterosexual sins and sinners exemplified by WCG policies for decades. Then again, maybe we shouldn't be shocked. The double standard has been at the heart of the WCG since it began. Sins by those at the top of the WCG - whether adultery, incest, or homosexuality - are to be gently forgiven.<sup>129</sup> However, sins committed by lowly members - even when less serious - are to be dealt with harshly.

Luker's article has been viewed by some conservative WCG observers as but one more indication of the dilution of moral values taking place in both the WCG and in many

other churches. Greater tolerance of homosexuality within the ministry is clearly the current trend in America's major denominations.<sup>130</sup> Many see the WCG as simply going with that trend. So much so it has been speculated that there is an "international gay conspiracy" at work. While I find such a suggestion a bit over-dramatic (assigning supposed conspirators a level of skill and stealth I doubt they possess), reliable sources have told me that a number of major denominations have powerful gay cliques in their hierarchies. For instance, a number of former JW's say there are such cliques in the hierarchy of the JW organization. *The Watchtower*, an official JW publication has even admitted, "Shocking as it is, even some who have been prominent in Jehovah's organization have succumbed to immoral practices, including homosexuality, wife swapping, and child molesting."<sup>131</sup> The WCG is no different.

We are living in times when a very large percentage of the population (even in the Christian community) seems to feel it is wrong to condemn any sexual conduct as long as it is "between consenting adults." Clearly, such was not the view of the Apostle Paul who saw a direct connection between personal philosophy and personal sexuality (Rm. 1:21-32). Nor is such the view of many (perhaps even most) psychologists today who frequently see a direct connection between neurosis (caused by childhood trauma and/or misguided personal philosophy) and sexual dysfunction and/or deviant behavior.<sup>132</sup>

I personally believe that while the sex life of almost all citizens should be a completely private matter, the personal immorality of elected - and spiritual - leaders is of too great import for all of us and therefore should not be ignored.<sup>133</sup>

Again, is Tkach gay? Frankly, if we evaluate the information being put forth by his critics we must concede there is no hard evidence. In a criminal trial, where guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, defendant Tkach would probably make out okay. But even without hard evidence, there is still a substantial body of circumstantial evidence available. And in a civil trial, where liability would be found by a preponderance of the total evidence, Tkach would probably not fare too well.

Nevertheless, whatever one concludes about Tkach's personal conduct behind closed doors, when one looks at the totality of the evidence regarding the upper echelons of the WCG, it is very obvious that Tkach's WCG is ethically, morally, and spiritually little different now than the "worldly" churches it has so long condemned.

*Editor. Part VII of this serialized article will appear in the next issue of Ambassador Report.*

### **Footnotes**

57. In virtually every issue, the *Plain Truth* magazine features such articles as "Saving Bad Marriages, Making Good Ones Better" (3/90), and "Building Strong Marriages -Why Marriages Succeed, Why Marriages Fail" (4/90). The *Plain Truth* even has a monthly section called "Today's Family." Topics covered in the last few years have included: "Marital Abuse... In the Name of God" (8/89), "The Family Makes a Comeback" (1/90), "Can Love Die?"(3/90), "Letting Go [of Grown Children]" (11-12/90), "Keeping the [Romantic] Flame Burning" (1/91), and "The Abuse of the Elderly" (3/91). Finally, there's the WCG's ever popular booklet *How to Have a Happy Marriage*, written by six WCG authors who ostensibly have all the answers on this important topic.

58. Of course there are exceptions. But generally speaking the WCG has always dissuaded members from giving of their time and money - what's left of it after the WCG's requirements - to community or charitable causes. This reality stands in stark contrast to the WCG's vigorously self-publicized support of various charities through its Ambassador International Cultural Foundation activities.

59. It is significant that nowhere did Neff actually state how much third tithe the WCG actually took in. And I have not seen that information published in any WCG source. In Arthur Anderson's Audited Financial Report on the WCG for 1989 (WN, July 16, 1990) church assistance to needy members in 1989 was given as \$7,709,000. But as I pointed out in the Dec. 1989 issue (p. 6), my calculations show that such a figure represents, at best, only about a third of what the WCG should be giving to its poor members if its own doctrines were being adhered to. That Neff and Arthur Anderson would omit such important information from their reports strongly suggests the WCG's leaders are involved in a major coverup with regard to its welfare fund.

60. In fact there doesn't seem to even be an actual third tithe fund. Financial statements by Arthur Anderson published in the *Worldwide News* never show a separate third tithe accounting. Third tithe contributions from members apparently continue to be co-mingled with the WCG's general purpose revenues. (We can only wonder about the legality of such a procedure.) Nevertheless, as Leroy Neff's statement about "welfare income" indicates, the WCG's leaders are certainly aware of what third tithe contributions are supposed to represent.

61. If you have read AR over the years, you have a good idea why Mr. Strong wasn't offered any church assistance. While Mr. Strong was suffering financially, millions of dollars every year were being diverted from the third tithe fund to pay ministers' salaries. Many more thousands of dollars were being siphoned off to pay for expensive artwork, furniture, carpets, and drapes in the leading ministers' homes, while Apostle Armstrong winged his way all over the world using third tithe to pay for jet fuel. With these kinds of financial abuses unchecked for decades, is it any wonder that there wasn't enough church assistance to go around for noninfluential members like blind Harold Strong?

62. Fortner WCG minister David Robinson says the policy described did not really originate with Tkach, but that it was not enforced previous to Tkach's rapid ascension in 1979. Before then WCG ministers, out of compassion, often ignored the official policy and provided help to the needy as they saw fit. Tkach has zealously squelched such soft-heartedness in the ministry.

63. The broad outlines of the WCG's doctrine can be seen in Herbert Armstrong's article "God Commands That We Avoid Certain Ones!" (*Worldwide News*, Feb. 25, 1980). Then in "When One Is Disfellowshipped - Which Family Comes First?" (*Good News*, April 1980, p. 4) Armstrong made it clear that when family members were disfellowshipped, relatives who remained in the WCG's good graces were to avoid their disfellowshipped family members. Armstrong reasoned that by being in the WCG a member was in the "God Family" and that that relationship had to take precedence over relationships that were merely "physical."

It is interesting that while HWA, himself, did not seem to differentiate between "disfellowshipping," "marking," or "putting out" a member (evidenced in the last few paragraphs of HWA's Feb. 25, 1980 WN article), the WCG today seems to have a multitiered approach. "Disfellowshipping" can be merely refusing to allow a member to participate in church services or it can mean prohibiting current members from having any contact with the disfellowshipped individual. "Suspension" often seems to refer to a temporary disfellowshipping. "Marking" usually means revealing the disfellowshipped member's "sins" publicly as from the pulpit. Additionally, the WCG now seems to have added an "inactive member" category for those who have just drifted away from the church, but have not tried to criticize it or draw away members. Current members are apparently allowed social contact with "inactive members."

64. Bible passages the WCG uses to condone its disfellowshipping practices include Matt. 10:36-37, Rom. 16:17, 1 Cor. 1: 10, 11 Thes. 3:6, 14-15, and II John 10. Among those who have pointed out the

flaws in the WCG's interpretations of those passages are evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong of the Church of God, International and Dr. Ernest L. Martin of the Academy for Scriptural Knowledge (P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225).

It should be further noted that nowhere in scripture does one find that "disfellowshipping" or "marking" can only be done by ministers. I recently read copies of letters titled "Notice of Disqualification and Disfellowship From the 'Real' Body of Christ" sent by former WCG member Gary J. Kelley of Wyoming to his former WCG ministers Chuck Zimmerman and David Grey. In the letters, Kelley described the intellectual and spiritual limitations of the two men and to Zimmerman, Kelley wrote:

I blame you for the destruction of my marriage because you barged into my home and told my wife that I was spiritually leaving her and that it was okay to divorce me. I blame you for embarrassing and humiliating me in front of my wife (now my ex-wife) and children when you were invited for counseling, and for allowing my wife to defraud me and my daughter to disgrace me. I blame you for creating untold mental and physical suffering in me as well as dozens of other church members....

65. See the Dec. 30, 1984 letter of N.C. Gilbert to WCG minister Randall R. Kobernat. Copies are available from Mr. Gilbert, 7087 Washington Ave., Lantana, Florida 33462.

66. After the Dallas newspaper article appeared, writer Bill Marvel was contacted by a WCG spokesman who claimed that the WCG very rarely disfellowships anyone. Yet, just a few weeks later *The Birmingham News* (10/28/90, p. A-1) ran a lengthy article about the WCG disfellowshipping members in Alabama and stated that many members loyal to HWA's teachings were being disfellowshipped. One member, 90-year-old Marvin Ragsdale, was put out for letting 66-year-old R. D. Bailey, a disfellowshipped member and neighbor, mow his lawn and take him to the hospital for treatment (Ragsdale had been struck by lightning a few weeks before). Ragsdale said he was not about to forsake a friend and neighbor just because he questioned some church teachings.

67. The WCG is not the only church that practices disfellowshipping. The Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) have a very tragic legacy of destroying individuals and families in the same way. One of our readers, Richard Rawe (Box 443, Soap Lake, WA 98851), has put together extensive documentation about the thousands who have been absolutely devastated by the JWs' disfellowshipping practices. In this regard the parallels between the JWs and the WCG are truly amazing.

68. Mal. 2:16 (Moffat) quotes God as saying "I detest divorce and cruelty to a wife." While the WCG will quote this verse in its writings, the WCG's leadership seems never to have been able to grasp the spirit of what it really means.

69. Herman L. Hoeh, "Divorce and Remarriage: How - and When - Did the Worldwide Church of God Come to Its Teaching on This Important Subject?"; *The Worldwide News*; May 10, 1982; emphasis his. It is difficult to read Hoeh's article without noticing a certain indifference toward the joys of romantic male-female love.

Presumably, a D and R person who wanted to be a WCG member and still remain married could do so if the mate from the first marriage was simply "bumped off" - not an impossibility considering the hatred some feel for their ex-wives or ex-husbands. Fortunately, we have never heard of someone actually committing murder in such a circumstance. Some "D and R" members, however, were known to jokingly question whether murder was a solution to their dilemma.

70. Being celibate in the WCG has always been more demanding than celibacy in any other denomination. HWA strictly forbade masturbation and, according to many ex-WCG ministers interviewed, HWA required his ministers to always ask prospective members, "Do you masturbate?" Yet, "Apostle" Armstrong, himself, loved to masturbate. So much so, he even kept a diary - called the

"flog log" by some ministerial associates - recording the dates and details of such episodes. See David Robinson, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, John Hadden Press, Tulsa, OK 1980, p. 86.

71. Although Hoeh's statement was published in 1982, the WCG's position on authorizing the divorce of a member from an "unbelieving mate" remains the same. See current WCG form letter LO54-0190, paragraph five.

72. Just as the WCG teaching on disfellowshipping is parallel to that of the JW's (see footnote 67), the WCG's position on divorce and remarriage is strangely similar to that of the JW's. For that reason, non-WCG individuals who fear they will be divorced by their WCG-member mates may be given important insights from an article published last year in *Bethel Ministries Newsletter*. The article was titled "Families Broken Apart by Jehovah's Witnesses: Can They be Restored?" and appeared in the Mar./Apr. 1990 issue of *Bethel Ministries Newsletter* (Hope Chapel, 2420 Pacific Coast Highway, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254).

73. *Pastor General's Report*, Jan. 17, 1986, pp. 3-4.

74. Dr. Badr has asked that any readers who have information about his missing daughter please write him at P.O. Box 2579, Reston, VA 22090 or phone him at (703) 860-2838.

75. *The Palm Beach Post*, Dec. 13, 1989, p. 1B.

76. When Assistant State Attorney Douglas C. Fulton nolle prossed case no. W. Div. 88-8167-CF, he gave as grounds: (1) "The [child's] mother and legal counsel have interfered in the discovery process to the extent that they have unduly delayed the case." (2) "There is testimony by the child in the transcript of the competency hearing which suggests that the child's testimony is not reliable." (3) A licensed clinical social worker and expert in child sexual abuse "is going to testify on behalf of the defendant. Based upon interviews with the [child] and members of the [child's] family, she does not believe that the [child] was sexually abused by the defendant." And, (4) "The child has made statements about sexual abuse while in the custody of her natural mother."

77. Readers should not assume that the author of this article has confidence in the WCG's published formula for marital success. Although there is much that may be said positively about "traditional" roles in "traditional" families (George F. Gilder has done so eloquently in his book *Sexual Suicide*), I am convinced that the WCG's simplistic approach - with its emphasis on wifely "obedience" - is not only inadequate, it very often is a major cause of marital discord in WCG families.

We live in an age where women have more control over the procreative process, where brain power is more important for survival than muscle power, where women are as educated - and frequently are more educated - than men, and where a family's economic survival now usually requires both mates to work outside the home. In such an environment, attempts to find marital happiness by slavishly conforming to the WCG's "government from-the-top-down" formula invariably proves disappointing at best. I say this based on 25 years of observing the WCG scene and based on thousands of letters about marriage problems written to AR over the last 15 years. I am convinced that for any marriage to succeed today requires substantial effort, understanding, tolerance, communication, cooperation, and compromise by both wife and husband. A lot of husbands who think that simplistic and mindless "obedience" - as advocated by many WCG clerics - is the magical key to marital happiness are in for major disappointments.

78. Some WCG ministers (I'm told broadcaster David Albert is one) carry this theme to such extremes they actually require their wives to briskly respond "Yes Sir!" upon any command. (Some have even gone beyond that by requiring a "Yes Lord!!") Others have ridden this theme into the bedroom by teaching that the only "correct" way to make love is with the husband ON TOP!

79. I personally recall how some years ago I stayed with a WCG family while on WCG business in the Midwest. The family's older daughter was openly very hostile toward her father; he seemed disturbed and perpetually guilt ridden; his wife appeared emotionally beaten and bewildered; their younger daughter seemed confused. I mentioned to a WCG executive that I was concerned about the family's emotional state. He replied, "Well, you know that Mr. has been having sex with his older daughter don't you? Everyone in the local church knows about it." The local pastor, I discovered, knew about it too, but did not consider the man's attitude bad enough to warrant his disfellowshipment. While this took place before Tkach's ascension to power, I'm told such abhorrent situations are still tolerated in some WCG congregations.

80. Some of the most bitterly fought divorce wars I ever followed derived from situations of exactly this type. In a number of cases "macho" husbands made it very clear that by interfering in their marriages WCG ministers were putting themselves in physical danger. In fear of getting a bloodied nose or much worse, such ministers of Tkach have sometimes sheepishly ordered WCG women to relinquish custody of their children to their divorcing husbands. My impression of such passion-charged divorces is that in the end no one gets a clear victory. Husbands, although retaining custody of their children, are often not only left without a woman's help in raising the children, but are left with a significant amount of feeling for their former mates of whom their children serve as a constant reminder. I have also gotten the impression from such situations that the ex-wives are left with much guilt for having "abandoned" their children. Furthermore, those who remarry within the WCG do not seem to easily forget the passion exhibited by their ex-husbands especially in comparison to the WCGers they now find themselves sleeping with.

There are circumstances when divorce, unfortunately, may be necessary. Christians who are struggling with the doctrinal question of whether divorce is a proper alternative in a difficult marriage will find Ralph Woodrow's book *Divorce and Remarriage* of help. (For details write Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502.) On the other-hand, many psychologists now say that far too many people see divorce as a solution to their problems when in fact divorce frequently makes an individual's problems even worse. For insights on the latter, see *The Case Against Divorce* by Diane Medved (Ivy Books, 1990). Readers contemplating a divorce might also want to consider what it will really be like by reading *The Wife-in-Law Trap* by Ann Crytser (Pocket Star Books, 1990).

81. See Eric Berrie, M.D., *The Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups*, Ballantine Books, 1963.

82. See footnote 65 above.

83. Those interested in obtaining back issues of AR should write for our "Ambassador Report Publications" listing of the contents of all back issues.

84. Tkach Sr. is more and more becoming a mere figurehead as was HWA in his later years when the WCG was actually run by men such as Stanley Rader and his partner, Henry Cornwall.

85. Tkach Jr. was born in Chicago, Dec. 23, 1951. His official, although extremely brief, biography appeared in the *Worldwide News*, Aug. 31, 1987, p. 7.

86. Maricopa County, Arizona, case no. DR 87172.

87. This advice, mind you, came from a man who has done a considerable amount of marriage counselling over the years and even went on to teach psychology at Ambassador College.

88. Space does not permit a detailed biography of Tkach Jr. at this time. A major serialized article - like

the one on Tkach Sr. - is planned for future issues of AR.

89. The statement was made by author and Texas historian David R. Robinson.

Incidentally, Dean Blackwell should not be confused with his brother Lowell Blackwell who enjoyed wearing female undergarments and was put out of the WCG ministry for allowing his wife-swapping activities to become too well-known. For the official WCG biography of Blackwell, see the article "When a minister needs relief Dean Blackwell pitches in," WN, May 27, 1991, p. 5.

90. Mr. Skaggs was in the WCG from 1961 to 1971. He currently resides in Underwood, Indiana.

91. See [AR43](#), p. 4.

92. See [AR42](#), p. 3.

93. See [AR42](#), p. 4, footnote 42.

94. See [AR31](#), p. 4 for a detailed list of some of Hoeh's more "positive" traits.

95. Among WCG executives, anecdotes about Hoeh's pet goat are legion. So are stories about his obsession with "natural eating habits." Former WCG minister Howard Clark and his wife Beverly recall how, on a High Sierra camping trip with a number of leading WCG ministers, the group had finished a meal of grilled trout. Hoeh - who believes God intends man to utilize all the nourishment He provides - gathered up the twenty or so discarded fish heads and devoured them gills, eyeballs, and all. "The man," says Clark, "has absolutely hellacious stomach acids." I talked to some non-WCG business executives who described Hoeh's formal banquet gastronomical eccentricities in terms far less charitable.

96. Sexologists I interviewed stated that Nazi and black leather motifs are common in homosexual B and D pornography. An erotic fascination with pregnant women, I'm told, is common to certain types of deviants. And "voyeurs" are frequently amateur photographers who ban together in porno camera clubs. See "In Search of Bettie Page," *LA Weekly*, Oct. 11-17, 1991, p. 22.

97. Hoeh's connections with Thailand have troubled some WCG conservatives who, quite correctly, see that nation as steeped in the worst kinds of sexual practices. In *Travels* (Ballantine Books, 1988, pp. 122-3), Michael Crichton, the distinguished author, film director, and M.D., has described one of Bangkok's many government-protected child whorehouses: "There is a guard, and a central courtyard. In the courtyard are parking stalls, with curtains in front of each stall. 'That's for the cars; you pull the curtain so people can't read the license numbers,' Ed [the tour guide] says. 'Politicians, really important people come to this place....'" Some WCG observers say it was Bangkok's sexual debauchery that attracted HWA to that country in his later years. The WCG's Ambassador Foundation continues to pour WCG tithe money into that deeply-troubled land.

98. The quote is taken from the Introduction to *On Homosexuality: Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium* by Plato; translated by Benjamin Jowett, with selected retranslations, notes, and introduction by Eugene O'Connor; Prometheus Books, 1991. Copies may be obtained for \$7.45 each by writing to Prometheus Books, 59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, NY 14228.

99. One minister told me that the letter, with numerous names blacked out as by a censor, has been distributed throughout the WCG by "conservatives." While he identified who he is sure are the original sender and recipient, I have not been able to get either Pasadena minister to comment. In the meantime, an unofficial spokesman for Tkach told me the letter was most likely created by someone in the Garner Ted Armstrong organization. A spokesman for that church, however, flatly denied the allegation.

100. Rader is apparently one of broadcaster Mike Wallace's favorite villains. At the opening of the CBS special "Mike Wallace Then and Now" which aired on Sept. 26, 1990, there were clips from Mike Wallace interviews of such notorious celebrities as Malcolm X, John Ehrlichman, the Shah of Iran, Ferdinand Marcos, and the Ayatollah Kohmeni. Included in the sequence was a clip of Rader yelling at Wallace: "You're contemptible!"

101. [AR42](#), p. 3.

102. See Robinson, pp. 249-252.

103. [AR15](#), p. 3.

104. Reported in the *Newhall Signal and Saugus Enterprise* (Valencia, California), September 30, 1987.

105. *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1991, p. A28; July 13, 1991, p. B3; *New York Times*, July 6, 1991, p. A10.

106. A short biography of Gerald Waterhouse appeared in the *Worldwide News*, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 4.

107. See [AR16](#), p. 6.

108. There seems to be some doubt as to whether Waterhouse's sermons should really be considered four hours in length. One AR reader, Bernard Solleveld of Winnipeg, wrote us, "I remember sitting through a four hour sermon that Waterhouse preached. I had a tape recorder with me and filled a tape on both sides. Later when I played it back I discovered that Waterhouse had really preached four one hour sermons. That is, he had preached the same one hour sermon four times!"

109. See [AR41](#), p. 6; [AR43](#), p. 3.

110. *Worldwide News*, April 27, 1987, p. 4.

111. Robinson, p. 228.

112. *Worldwide News*, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 4, column 2.

113. [AR41](#), p. 8.

114. The details of "Mrs." Ellen Escat's involvement with Tkach were covered in Part III of this series. See [AR43](#), our December 1989 issue, pp. 4-5.

115. While for a number of years many insiders assumed Tkach planned to divorce his wife to marry Escat, in recent months he has told friends that even if he could get away with divorcing his wife, he still would not marry his secretary. Such statements plus the widespread stories about Tkach's personal preferences have apparently left Ellen Escat very depressed. Sources at headquarters have told the *Report* that she is drinking heavily (to the point of having been visibly drunk at some public functions) and that her liquor bills - charged to the WCG - have, of late, been astronomical. I am not condemning. I am sympathetic and have told her so in two notes.

The fact is Tkach has made a real public show of affection for "Mrs." Escat (holding hands in public, allowing repeated references to her and even photographs in the *Worldwide News*). But because of the widespread stories at WCG headquarters that Tkach is bisexual, there is much speculation that Escat is simply being used as a "front."

Similar speculations have appeared in the press concerning Elizabeth Taylor's relationship with the late Malcolm Forbes (see the *Los Angeles Times*, 3/22/90, p. E1) and about Eva Gabor's relationship with entertainer-businessman Merv Griffin (see the *Washington Post*, 4/12/91, p. B 1; *People Weekly*, 4/29/91, pp. 34-37). Both men in later life are said to have developed a sexual preference for males, with women friends serving merely as publicity "fronts."

116. The question has been raised by numerous religious leaders outside the WCG, as well. See "Ministerial Letter" of 10/17/90 by Pastor John W. Trescott (The Church of God, 900 W. Alabama, OK 73005); and William Dankenbring's *Prophecy Flash!* (Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003), 12/30/90, p.4; 10/30/90, p.4; 7/31/90, p. 11.

117. Internal WCG documents obtained by the *Report* clearly show that when Tkach travels he *always* requires a hotel suite with two double beds. Interesting, indeed, considering that Mrs. Tkach never travels with her husband.

118. One that we know of, that is.

119. In a separate letter to *Ambassador Report*, Mr. DiFiori wrote about Locke: "Members would be astonished (though they'd never believe it) that his assistant (a nice man, I have nothing against him, he gave me \$50 for some fun) got up that morning and left for the day's activities doing no prayer or Bible study. I was shocked myself. Mr. Tkach was nice enough to me in Rome. Can't complain there. But he does have an explosive temper that surfaces whenever something irks him."

120. See [AR41](#), p. 6.

121. It's interesting that since Pebworth's death the WCG has quietly begun contributing Ambassador International Cultural Foundation money to a Pasadena-area hospice. (In itself odd because the WCG in years past was never pro-hospital in its medical teachings.) Ostensibly, the money was for a hospice devoted to cancer patients (*WN*, April 2, 1990, p. 6). But when I personally contacted the hospice, I was informed that a large percentage of their patients were actually dying of AIDS.

122. Lest anyone misinterpret what I am saying - I am not suggesting it was wrong for Tkach to show sympathy at the death of a good friend (or to give money to a hospice for dying AIDS victims). Quite the contrary.

Dennis was a charming, intelligent man, and a talented jazz pianist. But as I recall from a personal conversation I had with him shortly before I left the WCG, he did little to hide his homosexuality. And it is for that reason, I suspect, that some church conservatives read so much into Tkach's attendance at his funeral.

123. About the only information that WCG members have been given about Feazell - the *most* influential WCG leader after Tkach Sr. - is a few paragraphs in the *Worldwide News*, Nov. 5, 1990, p. 3.

124. Maybe so. But this view erroneously assumes that HWA was really not tolerant of behaviors and affectations usually associated with homosexuals (see the Phillips translation of Rm. 1:27- "...receiving ...in their own personalities the consequences of their own perversity"). HWA's true feelings, however, were evident from his often - admitted friendship with Bill Tilden, the 1930s Hollywood-based tennis star. "Never change a winning game; always change a losing game" was a piece of advice Tilden gave

HWA who frequently quoted the maxim in public. HWA's mostly unsophisticated audiences were apparently oblivious to the well-known fact that in the 1940s Tilden was publicly disgraced by two convictions on morals charges and by revelations of his obsessive homosexual interest in young boys. See Irving Wallace, et.al., *The Intimate Sex Lives of Famous People*, Dell, 1976, pp. 661-3. Yet HWA was always very candid about his great admiration for Tilden.

125. Excluding published photos of mere hand shaking, photos of Tkach hugging, touching, or squeezing men (or being hugged, touched, or squeezed by men) include those in the *Worldwide News*, 1/26/87, p. 1; 3/9/87, p. 4; 5/11/87, p. 5; 8/17/87, pp. 4-5; 8/31/87, p. 3; 5/30/88, p. 5; 6/27/88, pp. 1, 3; 8/8/88, p. 5; 10/31/88, p. 3; 1/23/89, p. 3; 2/6/89, p. 1; 2/20/89, p. 1; 8/11/89, p. 5; 3/19/90, p. 3; 4/2/90, p. 3; 5/7/90, p. 3; 8/13/90, p. 4 (seven shots on just one page!); 9/10/90, p. 3; 1/14/91, p. 3; 2/25/91, p. 3; 3/11/91, p. 3; 4/15/91, p. 3; 4/29/91, p. 3; 5/27/91, pp. 3, 6; 6/10/91, p. 6; 6/24/91, p. 3; 7/8/91, p. 3; 7/22/91, p. 3; and 8/19/91, p. 3.

126. The Church of God, International responded very forcefully to this shift in 1980 when CGI president Gainer Ted Armstrong (son of the WCG's founder) produced a powerful broadcast titled "Is Homosexuality a Sin?" Cassette copies of that broadcast are still available from CGI, P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, TX 75710.

127. See, for instance, Tkach's editorial "Prejudice in God's Church?" which appeared in the July-Aug. 1990 *Plain Truth*.

128. The article appeared in the *Good News*, May-June 1990, pp. 24-26.

129. According to a March 9, 1989, letter from WCG spokesman Ronald B. Nelson, the WCG's official position is that ministers who commit such acts are always disqualified from the WCG ministry.

130. See "Door Open For Ordination of Gays," *Atlanta Journal*, 3/16/91, p. E7; "Presbyterian Group Urges Ordination of Homosexuals," *Chicago Tribune*, 2/28/91, p. 3A; "Milestone In [Lutheran] Church: Gay Clergy Ordained," *N. Y. Times*, 1/22/90, p. A 10; "Lesbian Ordained Episcopal Priest," *N.Y. Times*, 1/27/90, p. A1.

131. *The Watchtower*, January 1, 1986, p. 13.

132. See Alexander Lowen, M.D., *Love and Orgasm*, Collier Books, 1965; and Arthur Janov, Ph.D., *The Primal Scream*, Perigree Books, 1970 (particularly chapter 17 which deals with homosexuality and bisexuality).

133. Regarding the propriety of publishing facts about the private sex lives of WCG leaders, see my editorial in the [1977 Ambassador Report, p. 1](#). I would additionally refer my Christian readers to I Tim. 3:2 and Eph. 5:11 (RSV). As for my friends in the legal community, I would remind them of conflict of laws fundamentals. In the Report, I prefer to apply the reporting principles of the jurisdiction being reported upon. That is, I report on the private lives of WCG leaders in the same way they frequently have reported (and not always as carefully) on the private lives of members from their pulpits (see *McNair v. Worldwide Church of God*, 197 Cal. App. 3d 363).

Incidentally, each and every WCG figure referred to critically in this article was given an opportunity to be interviewed. None responded to my letters. Nevertheless, should any of them wish to respond to my published comments about them, space will be made available in a future issue.

## **Journey From Eden**

*Ambassador Report* occasionally receives complaints from a few readers who feel AR, and all other religion-related publications for that matter, should never mention anything having to do with sex - and especially not in a frank manner. While we can understand the sensitivities of some who were perhaps raised in a more prudish or discreet era, the fact is we live in an age where it is quite common to see the sex lives of powerful and famous people alluded to, and often discussed in detail, in the media. A few weeks ago we watched the televised U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee hearings focusing on Judge Clarence Thomas's private life. As for frankness, it would be very difficult for AR to outdo *The Intimate Sex Lives of Famous People* (200 of them!) by Irving Wallace, Amy Wallace, David Wallechinsky, and Sylvia Wall (Dell, 1981) - a book which not long ago was a national best seller. Finally, AR does not even come close to the kind of frankness about sex that is found in the Bible.

It is strange but true, nevertheless, that most people who have read the Bible for years are unaware of the huge number of sexual references it contains (over 600!). One reason for such ignorance is that because of extensive use of euphemisms, most translations do not reveal what would have been plain sexual language to readers in the ancient world. Another reason for the lack of awareness is that most Bible students know very little about the history and customs of biblical times. For these reasons many students of scripture will undoubtedly find a new book we've come across to be particularly helpful toward gaining a better understanding of the Bible.

*Journey From Eden* by Kevin James Aaron is an in-depth, well-documented account of everything about sex we were not told in Sunday School (or in Professor Rod Meredith's classes at Ambassador) and were afraid to ask. It is a complete history of the sexual practices, customs, creeds, and ceremonies among the people by whom, and about whom, the Bible was written. The 212-page quality paperback, which includes nearly 600 biblical references and an extensive bibliography, is well researched and written in a very readable style. *Journey From Eden* is available to AR readers for \$5.95 from Cathedral Publications, P.O. Box 888, Cathedral City, CA 92235.

## Letters

Referring to [AR, May '91](#), p. 4, "HWA Remembered (Part IV)." I believe that HWA said - on tape - that he actually visited Salvadore Allende three days before he was overthrown. Of course, that was long ago and history is subject to change in WCG hands.

Douglas Chalmers  
Sparta, Greece

You noted on page 4 [of [AR48](#)] that HWA met with Ceausescu in October 1971. I was on that trip along with Saintly Radar and Osumo Ghoto, our "born again" Japanese fixer. Fortunately perhaps for Ceausescu the meeting never took place. Could this be the reason he remained in office years after the cancelled meeting with HWA contrary to the fate suffered by Selassie, Marcos, et al? I jest.

Charles Hunting  
(Former WCG executive)

Florida

*Editor: Thanks for the correction. The Feb. 10, 1986 WN, from which we got our information leaves the impression HWA actually met the Romanian dictator. However, the actual wording was "October 1971 - Invited by Romanian President Nicolai Ceausescu, Mr. Armstrong travels for the first time to a communist country." The 1986 article listed many leaders HWA met with during his lifetime. It is interesting that in 1986, before Ceausescu was overthrown and executed, the WCG wanted HWA's name associated with the Romanian dictator. Yet HWA's meetings with Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos (by 1986, ousted in disgrace) and Indira Ghandi (assassinated in 1984) were not mentioned in the article.*

I am recovering from an operation which was connected with my illness-SLE Lupus. I agree with your 3/25/91 letter and the reason for it. There are costs involved and I have always sent what I could. The situation in which I find myself is due to an illness which was beyond my control. I did have a good paying job when I was in the WCG and I was unmarried. However, while in that church I almost died from this illness because they forbade doctors and medicine. I have been so badly injured by the effects of Lupus attacks that I can no longer work and can barely do housework. My hands and feet are badly crippled and I have extensive damage to kidneys, heart, stomach, etc. The WCG took my money but then when I was ill and close to dying, my "unconverted" office friends came to my rental and found me in a coma and took me to the hospital. The WCG minister (Al Dennis) was so angry with me for "allowing" myself to be put in the hospital I was told not to come back to church until I repented. Well, I was so scared about losing my salvation I begged them to let me return after three full months that my illness required me to recover at home. The doctor would not release me to go back to work and my insurance ran out so I asked the church if they could help me from the third tithe fund I had paid into for years, but I was told I must apply for welfare instead. But I did not. I found out since that the third tithe fund was not to help people like me, but was the ministers' slush fund. My mother helped me and then I met my husband.

Well, there is much more to my story, but I won't go on. I am out of the WCG since 1983 and married now but with the cost of my illness and living expenses, there are few dollars left. My husband had also been in Worldwide and came out with no savings at all. We had to start from scratch and have only bare necessities. My hands are cramping so must close for now.

Joyce Jordan  
Visalia, CA

Thanks for sending your releases to me and my son. His marriage has been broken and his children alienated because of his wife's absolute commitment to the WCG. We have been struggling in court for the last five years over child custody and a property settlement and the end isn't yet in sight. He is a college grad and his wife (ex) has a master's degree in education, but her mind and life are completely under the control of the WCG cult.

Minister

(50 years, Church of the Brethren)  
Florida

I no longer believe any of the doctrines or other garbage funneled into my mind while in Worldwide. Now, instead of being depressed about religion, I'm depressed about marriage. Although I love my husband, I deeply resent the fact that he sided with the organization that caused me so much emotional, mental, and spiritual pain - to the point that I felt that if I didn't get out, I would quite possibly lose my mind. Instead of blaming them for causing this reaction, he seemed to blame me for not being able to take it. Any trust I had in him has been damaged beyond repair. The strange thing is he seems unable to understand why we aren't close anymore. I've told him quite plainly my feelings, but he seems to beat the words out of his mind almost as soon as they are out of my mouth.

[Name withheld by request]

I was a WCG member until July 1986, when upon examination of irrefutable evidence I decided to get out. Subsequently, I attended several groups which brought skepticism from my WCG wife's family members that I was in the "bonds of Satan." Upon enough pressure from family, my wife departed and will not return nor talk about it.

The bottom line is that the ministers encouraged her to do so, of which I find no biblical basis. Her family cut me off like I did not exist and instead of trying to help mend the marriage they have broken it up. Their recognition of me and response to attempted communication is far from Christian.

Justification of divorce has become commonplace in the WCG in order to remove those who do not fit their mold, who use their brains, or won't get down and worship the ministers. Whatever happened to love and the marital guidelines of the Bible? I feel for the numerous AR readers who have endured similar circumstances and the destruction of the family. I dearly loved my wife and little boy and pray for them and for your newsletter to possibly save some from this ongoing process of breaking homes apart.

N. Milton Dove  
Georgia

Joe Tkach is someone I once knew quite well, but what he did to our family is a story which many think should be told.... By signing one paper in Pasadena, Joe Tkach set my children up for abduction by mind control experts. It could be proven.

Oregon

Regarding ex-husbands who are still in the WCG and not giving proper child support money because they are tithing in preference to supporting their kids, I have this very problem with my ex-husband who I threw out of the house in 1982 because of his incestuous abuse of our daughter. I finally divorced him in 1985. He was out of the WCG for a while and so was I over the whole divorce matter. Finally I was readmitted (in another city) and then later he was readmitted. When I asked the ministers in the two

cities to collaborate in helping me to get proper child support money from him, they collaborated to throw me out! After I was disfellowshipped, I sued my ex in family court and the court awarded me child support....

It all goes to show how we women are brainwashed by our husbands in the WCG to accept everything they say. I wouldn't put up with incest and adultery but I did put up with his inadequate child support for five years (1982-1987) before I decided to fight.... To be blunt, the WCG is promulgating the doctrine that children of mothers not in the WCG are worthless and are to be thrown away by their fathers who remain IN!

## Ohio

I became a member of this lot (I can't call them a church) as a 17 year old so that I could marry my husband (he was a long-time member). Without going into all the story, 21 years down the line with many, many years of doubt and being told I doubted because of lack of conversion and spiritual contact to God and also by not being brought up as a "decent church girl" (this I've always been told by my mother-in-law) and 20 years of marriage to a very dominant and cruel man, I decided that for the safety of my four sons and for my mental stability, I'd have to end the marriage. Very sad, I know.... I had to get a court order to have him removed from the house - it was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life....

Now I have to start all over again - new life, new friends, new thoughts and new understandings. The boys and I are making it slowly, but we are all much more relaxed and happy. I have full custody of them. He didn't want them - too much trouble, he said.

## Australia

I recently was given some copies of AR. They have been very helpful to me since I have been disfellowshipped from the WCG this last year. They explain a lot of things that I was feeling about the church. I had never seen an AR before and didn't know about the things written about. My husband would not allow me to read anything sent from ex-members or talk to any friends who left the church. Reading these issues now helps me know that God is not part of that church.

I'm now in the middle of a divorce suit. My husband, who I let take our three children for a month last August (he was to bring them back for school), kept them and filed for divorce, asking for custody, and \$300 a month support from me (I'm not even able to work). The church is supporting him in this. Two WCG ministers, David H. Treybeg from Spokane and Graernme L. Marshall from Calgary, have been down-right rude and nasty, which surprised me. They told me if I would not stay with my husband I have deserted him and God and that I deserve nothing and must leave my children alone. They are doing everything they can to keep my children from me, making them scared of me and not trusting of me because of church teachings....

It is not easy to leave the church, lose your family and have friends all turn on you. Even my own mother and sister, who are members, turned on me.... I am worried about my children and how to help them. They are very confused right now.

## Canada

These [young WCG] girls are being lured into marrying someone in the church. It turns out to be a big joke and a big nightmare.... I have watched the WCG for over 20 years. They have torn families apart, taking everything the families had. They did that to my late husband. We hardly had a roof over our heads by the time he got his eyes opened to the truth about five years before he died. But by then it was too late. My four children and I lived a hellish life.... There was a case up here where the husband would throw tantrum fits. The ministers still let him stay in the church. They told the wife, "just give him time." She finally filed for divorce. He came in, killed her, then himself. Young couple. Very sad.... Please warn the young [WCG] girls about the trap they are getting into.

## West Virginia

I'm one of HWA's victims. I was thrown out in 1981, my wife divorced me in 1982 with the church's blessing. I was labeled "unconverted" because I had a mind that still worked, therefore the marriage was not "bound" and she was free to divorce me. This was done under the guidance and direction of "Preacher" Dave Pack of the Rochester, New York church.

Harry R. Williams  
New York

I was a school teacher in a small town on the northeast coast of Newfoundland in 1955. One Sunday night I tuned into WWVA, Wheeling and heard the powerful voice of HWA saying "The World Tomorrow." I married that year and in time we had eight children. We moved to Toronto in 1964. Everything went reasonably well until the seventies when the church allowed divorce. Then my wife got ideas and soon we were divorced and now she's remarried.

I have seen a lot of changes over the years and am beginning to reevaluate my life at 71.

Herbert H. Matthews  
Canada

I don't know what it's going to take for God to straighten some of these so-called Christian men out. They think because they know the scriptures they can live their life any way they please. I never dreamed after 26 years of marriage, and at 66, I would have to start my life all over.

## Pennsylvania

My brother and his family's involvement with WCG has brought such pain and sorrow to my elderly parents, not to mention the rest of the family. God's way is not a way that brings pain, destruction and separation of family units but seeks to keep His family in harmony and love for each other. I am deeply saddened that the last years of my parents'

lives are being spent with the effects this cult has placed on our family. It is our prayer our family will be united once again.

I just wanted to say how much I appreciate your efforts. May the Lord uphold you.

Janet Matero

---

### **Editor's Note**

In our May issue ([AR48](#)), I mentioned how this edition (AR49) was to have appeared in September. Long-time readers, however, will have read that statement with a grin, knowing how often in the past I have had problems meeting deadlines. The reason is simple. When *Ambassador Report* began a decade and a half ago, we had a team of over a dozen researchers, writers, and editors. With the passing years, however, most of those involved with the Report have had to drop their involvement due to career and family responsibilities. Today, I, alone, am personally responsible for virtually all of the editorial and daily routine operations of AR. It gets to be a bit much at times and so it is not easy to always meet deadlines. I thank all of you for your patience.

This issue, although a bit long, is actually only about half of what I had prepared for publication. With the economy in recession, contributions to AR have been below expectations and so this issue represents the most that I can afford to publish right now. I will try to get out the next issue very early in 1992. Every so often I get letters from readers asking if AR has ceased publication. I have no intention of stopping the *Report*, at least not without giving all of you a very long advance notice. So I hope that those of you who believe in what AR is doing will continue to support our efforts.

Finally, with the year end approaching, I want to wish all of you (even those who don't "believe in" Christmas) a safe and happy holiday season and a very healthy, prosperous, and spiritually fulfilling 1992.

John Trechak  
Editor & Publisher

[Next Issue \(AR50\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**June 1992 (AR50)**

### **The WCG's Decline Continues**

Under the direction of Pastor General and Apostle Joseph W. Tkach, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) continues to experience the doctrinal changes, the policy shifts, and the declining influence that began with the death of church founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) in 1986. Significant WCG news items of the last 18 months include the following:

Increasingly, some WCG ministers are teaching that Herbert W. Armstrong was a type of false prophet who really didn't understand the true gospel. Even Tkach is admitting that Armstrong had taught many errors. Notice what Tkach wrote in his March 25, 1991 co-worker letter:

Many long-time members and co-workers will remember that there was a time when we were preaching, based on our interpretation of Bible prophecy, that "America has won her last war!" We were sincere, and we thought we understood the prophecies correctly. Our goal was to warn people that they needed to awaken from spiritual lethargy and turn to God. But, brethren, we were wrong - not about the need to turn to God, certainly - but about using specific prophetic interpretations as the means of getting people to do so.

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news of the kingdom of God, that is, the redemption of humanity, the reconciliation of all mankind to God from its state of alienation from him (Luke 4:18-19). That reconciliation is possible only through the Son of God, Jesus Christ....

\* \* \*

The WCG's income continues downward. The church's total revenue for 1990 was \$211,563,000 - a drop of \$214,000 compared with the previous year's revenue. But in 1990 church expenses actually exceeded revenue by \$10,592,000 according to the

church's *Worldwide News* (WN, 9/2/91, financial statement, p. 7). Now Tkach has announced that WCG income for 1991 was 3.8 percent below the total for 1990 (Tkach co-worker letter of Jan. 27, 1992). The current year has produced no substantial rise in the WCG's revenue levels. Insiders at Ambassador College in Texas say there have been numerous cutbacks there in recent months. The *Plain Truth* magazine, which once had a circulation of over 8 million, is now reported to be under the 2.7 million circulation mark reported as recently as last fall (WN, 9/2/91, financial statement, p. 5). Long gone are the days when the WCG's income grew by 30% per year.

\* \* \*

After a ten-year relationship with Arthur Andersen & Co., the WCG has a new external accounting firm: Coopers & Lybrand, another one of "The Big Six" (WN, 4/29/91, p. 8). No reason for the switch has been made public.

\* \* \*

The WCG has taken its \$15 million advertising account out of the hands of the giant BBDO advertising agency and has given the account to Dick Janik & Associates, a small Los Angeles-based media buying service. To handle the new business, Janik had to hire six new employees (*Los Angeles Times*, 2/5/91, p. D6).

\* \* \*

The *Plain Truth* magazine has a new editor. He is evangelist Greg Albrecht. Former *Plain Truth* editor Herman L. Hoeh will now be a kind of super editor over all WCG literature including magazines, the Bible Correspondence Course, form letters, and booklets (WN, 12/23/91, p. 1). Insiders view old-timer Hoeh as the last conservative brake on the WCG's ongoing transformation. As such, many younger WCG ministers and executives are looking forward to the day when Hoeh retires.

\* \* \*

Former Ambassador College Dean of Students and WCG pastor Richard F. Plache has rejoined the WCG after being released from prison in 1991. In 1988 Plache was convicted on 18 counts of mail fraud and SEC violations (see [AR 41](#)). Plache remains married, lives in the San Diego area, and has recently worked as a writer on contract for the WCG's *Plain Truth* magazine. His future employment plans are unclear.

\* \* \*

The *McNair v. Worldwide Church of God* libel case (see ARs [10](#), [29](#), [34](#), [35](#), [37](#), [40](#), [41](#), and [48](#)) continues into its 14th year. In November, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to intervene on the WCG's behalf (*Pasadena Star-News*, 11/5/91, p. A3). Then, in their latest round in court, WCG lawyers (about a dozen of them) argued that the case should be

thrown out because Leona McNair had supposedly been a WCG minister. She told the press, however, that the WCG's claim that it had allowed a woman to be a minister was ludicrous. "You never dared open your mouth," she said. "I just served a lot of tea." Los Angeles Superior Court Judge David A. Horowitz denied the church's motion (*Pasadena Star-News*, 3/20/92, p. A6) and the new trial is currently scheduled to begin July 6.

\* \* \*

We are sorry to report that Beverly Gott, the eldest daughter of WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong, recently passed away at age 73. She died of cancer. Insiders say that, although she was neither a WCG member nor employee, she had been receiving financial support from the WCG for many years.

\* \* \*

Other prominent WCG figures who recently passed away include WCG ministers Walter M. Dickinson, 70, and T. Vincent Panella, 63, who both died of cancer (*WN*, 3/25/91, p. 3). The WCG's leading black minister, Harold L. Jackson, 80, died in mid-December. He was a member of the WCG's Council of Elders (*WN*, 12/23/91, p. 1).

\* \* \*

---

&COPY; 1992 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher  
Editor

Mary E. Jones, Associate

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

The WCG continues to modify its doctrines to make them more palatable to the majority of mainstream Christians. For instance, the WCG is now officially teaching a modified type of Trinity doctrine. An official WCG doctrinal position written by K. J. Stavrinides states:

The Worldwide Church of God teaches the full divinity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit - the biblical foundation of all Trinitarian discussions....

The Worldwide Church of God has made all biblical truths an indispensable part of its teaching, including the doctrine that God is One - but not the specific way in which God is One (which is entirely a philosophical matter). It teaches the full divinity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit - but it does not enter the debate of whether God is an essential, a personal, or a supra-personal being, in the way these terms are used by theologians.

There is no mention of God being a "Family" as HWA had taught. Although the WCG is still quietly teaching that the Holy Spirit is a divine power and not a divine person (WN, 12/23/91, p. 1), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago was so impressed with the WCG's new openness that in early 1991 it invited a number of WCG leaders to the seminary to meet with its faculty and graduate students.

\* \* \*

Many mainstream Christian groups are applauding the WCG's drive to become part of the Christian majority. *Christian Research Journal* (Summer 1991, p. 34) wrote how "The Worldwide Church of God continues its march toward Christian orthodoxy." Michael Snyder, a professional PR man who frequently represents the WCG, has announced that the WCG has discontinued distribution of HWA's *Mystery of the Ages*, *The Incredible Human Potential*, and *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (ibid.).

\* \* \*

The WCG's march toward mainstream acceptability can be seen in many subtle shifts in church policy. For example, not long ago a Jewish cleric named Wexler was given a considerable amount of air time on *The World Tomorrow*, with program host David Albert praising him as "a remarkable rabbi!" Even the WCG's attitude toward traditional church architecture is changing. Whereas the WCG ministry once routinely referred to church steeples as "phallic symbols," the February 1992 *Plain Truth* (p. 7) showed a picture of a Gothic-style cathedral along with the caption, "Church architecture, a symbol of the civilizing power and influence of Christianity in a materialistic world."

\* \* \*

The WCG used to view unfavorably the practice of cremating, as opposed to burying, dead bodies. No more. WCG insiders report that cremation is regularly being allowed - particularly for cases of widows dying while on third tithe support (there are a few). Cremation saves the church money.

\* \* \*

According to the *Worldwide News* (3/11/91, p. 1), actordirector Sam Wanamaker was chosen as the recipient of the Ambassador Foundation's fourth annual Ambassador Award for Excellence. With substantial financial assistance from the WCG, Wanamaker is spearheading the drive to rebuild Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. The original Globe was shut down in 1642 when Britain's Puritans under Oliver Cromwell closed all playhouses in London (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/18/90, Calendar section, p. 1).

In presenting the award to Wanamaker, Tkach said:

As we near the dawn of a new century, it is important to do everything in our power to build a better world.... For nearly two decades the Ambassador Foundation - with

the sponsorship of the Worldwide Church of God - has sought to promote understanding and to reduce tension throughout the world.

Ambassador alumni who took classes years ago with church founder HWA can vividly recall when he taught that building a better world now was emphatically not the purpose of the end-time church. Being "a watchman" was. Tkach has now changed all that.

\* \* \*

Many who studied theology at Ambassador during the sixties can recall how certain leading church clerics then saw Prince Charles as the end-time "profane, wicked prince of Israel" described in Ezek. 21:25. While many of the tabloids now seem to agree with the WCG's old assessment of Charles' character, today's WCG has a decidedly different official view of the heir to the British throne. WCG writer John R. Schroeder states:

### **A prince with principles**

Prince Charles is a sincere believer in higher values.

In the conclusion to his book on architecture, *A Vision of Britain*, he wrote: "What is the point of being the most technologically advanced society if, at the same time, we lose our soul...."

The prince's words are a carefully phrased call to live a new way of life. Jesus Christ spoke similar words....

When he becomes king, Charles will take on the title "Defender of the Faith." While this title applies specifically to his relationship to the Church of England, he is already making his stand for the sacred over the secular.

He is worried by the prominence of materialism and the dwindling concern for nature, community and creativity. His stand for Shakespeare is just one example of responsible royal concern for the people whose sovereign he will become.

Yes, as that Cole Porter song goes, "Brush up your Shakespeare...."

\* \* \*

Even though a number of WCG executives now privately celebrate Christmas in a secular way, the WCG is still teaching its members that Christmas is not to be observed religiously. Nevertheless, the WCG's leadership seems to be mellowing a bit toward the idea of celebrating Christmas. Two letters published without editor's comment in the *Worldwide News* (11/25/91, p. 3 and 12/23/91, p. 3) reveal this new spirit of moderation:

I have recently read your editorial in the November-December *Plain Truth* magazine regarding "Is Christmas Christian?"... your belief that it's time for Christians to reconsider the yearly practice that taints the worship of Christ with the pagan "birthday of the invincible sun" is totally ludicrous. As long as we keep in our hearts

the true meaning of Christmas, God will be glorified because we honor and remember the birth of his Son.

I am dismayed when I hear Church children use the word pagan. Nothing will distress a teacher more than a 6-year-old telling her that her most sacred holiday of the year is pagan. We have never used that word around our children. I tell our children that... it would not be kind to make fun of what others do, just as we don't want people to make fun of what we do.

\* \* \*

In a recent editorial (WN, 5/5/92, pp. 1,7), Tkach explained to his followers that "It should not become a spiritual issue if we miss eating unleavened bread a day or two during the Festival [of Unleavened Bread]."

\* \* \*

The ongoing changes in the WCG, of course, are prompting many to leave. Pastor John Rittenbaugh (tel. 704-544-2016) recently exited with five local elders and about 200 members. He now has congregations in Charlotte, NC; Washington, D.C.; Anaheim, CA; and Chicago, IL.

\* \* \*

One of our readers, Mr. M. Thompson (P.O. Box 276, Richmond, NSW 2753, Australia) recently sent an open letter to the regional director of the WCG in Australia. The letter discussed a number of reasons why Thompson sees an evil conspiracy operating within the WCG hierarchy. Ironically, Thompson was disfellowshipped for believing something Joseph W. Tkach, himself, had preached in Sydney on Dec. 26, 1987:

And I tell you now that... we are living in the day when the Laodicean spirit is beginning to take root within God's Church. And it won't be long before the Laodicean spirit and the Laodicean Church and the Philadelphian Church are going to be side by side. And from outward appearance you won't be able to tell...

\* \* \*

With the WCG changing so many of its fundamental teachings, naturally many church publications are out of date. For example, as the *Pastor General's Report* of May 21, 1991 reported: "The current 32-lesson [Bible Correspondence] course, which is replete with dated explanations of our teachings and doctrines, has been revised as an interim course of 12 lessons...."

The 12-lesson interim course will be in effect until the fall of 1992. Then, according to the *Pastor General's Report*, there will be another new Bible Correspondence Course. It will be interesting to see how many new teachings that one contains.

\* \* \*

"God's Church Isn't What It Used to Be" - title of an article published in the Nov./Dec. 1990 *Good News* magazine (now defunct).

## **The New, Loving WCG**

At the end of 1991, many religious news writers concluded that the top religion stories of the year involved sexual issues. The *Los Angeles Times* on Dec. 28 (p. F16) carried a Religious News Service article that began:

Disputes over human sexuality rippled through religious bodies in 1991, leading even liberal denominations to wonder how far they could go in modifying traditional standards in light of contemporary practices. The issue of homosexuality was especially divisive, turning up as a key factor in a threatened schism in the Episcopal Church and seriously undermining the ecumenical movement as Orthodox groups suspended activities in the National Council of Churches. Debates on sexuality in many churches this year were like hot coals dropping on a raging fire.

And so, too, it was with the WCG. Space limitations and the sensibilities of some of our readers prohibit us from running most of the letters we have received relating to sexual matters. However, two letters we recently received will show the kinds of concerns being raised in WCG circles.

Thanks for the recent AR. It's always interesting, although as time goes on I cease to be shocked by anything anymore, especially concerning what goes on in the hierarchies of religious organizations.

Considering that one of the main themes of this recent issue was homosexuality (the morality of which is as debatable as it may be), I wish now that I had written you sooner. I wanted to relate one of my experiences at the college [Ambassador] which wouldn't weigh so heavily of and by itself were it not for the fact that a friend of mine living here in Japan (and a fellow "ex-AC grad," as we like to refer to ourselves) mentioned that he had an experience eerily almost identical to mine.

I had requested personal counseling with [WCG Elder] Fred Stevens of Accounting who was then my Ambassador Club Director. After our discussion at his office, in which he included many anecdotes of his many close contacts with HWA (apparently he was one of the few who had direct access to him in his later years), he invited me to take a stroll with him around campus a few times. As he shared many things with me and I with him, I began to feel that here I had a true friend and a close brother. After strolling around awhile, he invited me to come to his apartment. I gladly accepted the invitation. There we continued to talk in his living room, and the conversation came to how we should all love each other, and be ready to help each other, talk to each other about anything (including sexual matters) without inhibitions, etc. I found myself opening up to him as well about a few intimate matters.

Well, eventually I needed to get back to campus, but as I rose to leave, he came close to me and kept talking about how we really should be closer to one another, etc. and began to embrace me. That's fine - I don't mind hugging my good buddies once in a

while, but I gotta tell you - this hug was a doozy. As well as lasting long past the usual accepted length (whatever that is), he pressed his crotch up against mine and began caressing me to the point where it was getting very embarrassing for me.

And you see, at the same time I was chastising myself for feeling embarrassed about it. After all, Fred Stevens was a minister and couldn't possibly have any deviant sexual motives, so why was it so awkward for me?

As this "embrace" began dragging on for many minutes, I finally couldn't stand it any longer and broke away, saying I had to hurry back to the dorm.

The next (and last) time I talked with Fred Stevens was in the Auditorium a few days later, but the feeling was completely different. I approached him as before, but now he was changed, somehow. I mean the atmosphere was colder. He greeted me, yes, but certainly not as the man I had felt so close to the other day. He had nothing to say to me. You can imagine how confused I was.

Now looking back, I wonder if, since I didn't give him what he wanted - I shudder to even imagine what that could be - he had no use for my friendship.

What really shocked me was when my friend Darryl recently told me that he had had a "close encounter" with Stevens that compares almost word for word with mine described above. Uncanny, isn't it?

(signed) Mike Savoia

A number of young men have stated that they have had private encounters with minister Stevens that were almost identical. Suspecting that Elder Stevens could explain these incidents as perhaps some new type of "laying on of hands," we phoned him on May 7. Unfortunately, as soon as we asked him what the WCG's current position was on homosexuality, he declined to continue the conversation any further.

At AR we continue to hear cases of WCG ministers who use their authority as a pretext for becoming intimate with members counseling on spiritual matters. This type of abuse of trust is not found only in the WCG, but is a problem rampant in many denominations. In the *Los Angeles Times* (March 31, 1990, p. F14), David Briggs of Associated Press wrote:

An increasing number of complaints by laymen and research indicating that up to a quarter of the clergy may have committed some form of sexual misconduct have led churches to address the issue, according to some church leaders and ethicists.... [A survey] showed up to a quarter of clergy engaged in misconduct that included such acts as kissing and hugs that were more than friendly embraces....

"By authority of their position, ministers have a lot of power and a lot of sway over people coming to them seeking help," [Rev. Emilie M. Townes of the St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO] said. "If the minister's always right, anything he or she asks of them must not be out of line."... "Sexual involvement by clergy is tantamount to family incest," said the Rev. Susan Moss, a member of the Interfaith Task Force on Sexual Exploitation by Clergy in Minnesota. "The dynamics are the same: Parishioners come to church expecting that clergy will help provide a nurturing, caring environment, a safe place to grow in faith. When that trust is

betrayed, the whole congregation becomes the victim."

As long-time AR readers are well aware, there is extensive documentation of the sexual excesses and abuses of authority by leading WCG ministers over the years. For that reason undoubtedly, a new parenting program instituted in at least one WCG congregation is being viewed with great suspicion. One of our Wisconsin readers wrote us:

Last Saturday, the 7th of December, the local WCG congregation in Wausau had a meeting concerning the new program there called: "Little Pals."

The way it works is this: The adults each have a "little pal" (i.e., a child from another family), as their own "little pal." For example, my WCG-member brother-in-law has another family's young son (maybe 9 or 10 years old) as his "little pal." My sister-in-law has another family's daughter as her "little pal." Both their "little pals" have mothers and fathers and siblings in WCG. My mother-in-law who is in the church has a "little pal" girl who has a mother and sister in WCG (but whose father is not a member).

I asked her if it was the case that men get boys as their "little pals" (yes) and women get girls (yes). This isn't just for "spiritual orphans" either. I asked if this was to be just at services that they sit with each other, she said she thought so, but commented that the Deacon and his wife had the family of one of their "little pals" over to their home for a meal. She also told me that one of the functions of having a "little pal" would be to exchange Feast of Tabernacles gifts with them.

Having a "little pal" seems to be a great invitation for any "closet" or otherwise pedophile to get away with his/her vile acts with the WCG's blessing, and none (i.e., innocent parents of innocent children) could be the wiser.

It is also another substitution for an extended family that would normally come with grandparents and aunts, uncles and cousins in families outside the isolated cult atmosphere. It will encourage the commune type relationship of one cultist to another.

How many congregations are involved in the "Little Pals" program is unclear. The program at this point does not appear to be nationwide. But one has to wonder why WCG headquarters would allow any of its local ministers to initiate such a plan. Many innocent people find it difficult to believe that some individuals could possibly use a Christian organization as a means of furthering personal homosexual goals. Nevertheless, such a misuse of Christian fellowship is increasingly common. One of our readers recently sent us a collection of classified ads that have appeared in "adult" publications in California. Most contained graphic language so offensive we cannot reproduce them here. Nevertheless, what we found most shocking were the ads run by supposedly Christian groups: "Affirmation" - a gay and lesbian Mormon organization, "SDA Kinship International" - supposedly "the oldest and largest support group for Gay/Lesbian Adventists," "Sovereignty" - gay and lesbian Jehovah's Witnesses of San Francisco and Sacramento, and other organizations of homosexuals who are supposedly Christian.

Even more shocking is a letter we recently received from an Alabama man who puts out a

Bible Correspondence Course. This Bible teacher, who claims to be "a servant of God," privately advocates nudism, child pornography, and erotic love between adults and children. He has difficulty understanding why police agencies are monitoring his activities and why AR refuses to publish his address or promote his Bible course.

The bottom line is this: We should not assume that because someone is religious, or is even a minister, they should automatically be allowed to be physically intimate with us or to be trusted with our children.

## **Joseph W. Tkach - God's New Rep on Planet Earth**

(Part VII)

by John Trechak

Anyone who has followed *The Worldwide News* regularly in the years since Joseph W. Tkach took over the Worldwide Church of God will have noticed that a considerable amount of that church newspaper's space is devoted to the idolization of Tkach. In photo after photo we see "The Apostle" - face perpetually tanned, figure maintained by careful dieting, body swathed in a wide variety of very casual to very formal outfits, and demeanor relaxed from his daily Jacuzzi sessions with friends. We see Tkach, the serious executive, lecturing employees. We see Tkach, the wise counsellor, listening attentively to the words of celebrities. We see Tkach, the indignant cleric, pounding pulpit lecterns before WCG congregations around the world. We see Tkach, the father figure, holding babies and gently stroking the hair of little children. And we see Tkach, the master politician, jovially shaking hands with long lines of adoring WCG followers at each local church he visits.

Among loyal WCG members, there seems to be not the slightest suspicion that what they are being media fed about Tkach is anything other than truly sincere, spontaneous spirituality. Yet, to those with even a little training and experience in advertising, public relations, and the modern media, it is immediately obvious that the Tkach organization has spent considerable time, money, and effort to create its idol, and that all of Tkach's public appearances are carefully staged.

For a number of years we have heard stories about some of the gimmicks the Tkach team uses to prop up the Tkach image. For instance, at most stops Tkach will actually spend an entire hour or more shaking hands with congregation members. But before each local performance, we've been told, Tkach requires a list of the names of the area's biggest contributors, with personal data on each, so that he may give them special attention in the receiving line. We at AR are not naive. Nevertheless, when one of our WCG headquarters sources recently provided us with copies of internal WCG documents showing the idol-enhancing machinations and excesses of the Tkach team, even we were surprised at the lengths to which the Tkach organization will go to control the minds of its members and to pamper its guru.

The documents comprise official instructions from Tkach's headquarters tour coordinators to WCG advance men. We had originally planned to put full-size photos of

the documents in this issue. But because of their large print and excessive white space, doing so would have required using too many AR pages. Instead, we are publishing the complete contents of the leaked documents, but in smaller type. There are no editings, deletions, or additions. Emphasis is theirs:

### **Transportation Arrangements**

For Mr. Tkach and his traveling party:

- 1) Reserve three (3) WHITE LINCOLN TOWN CARS. If Lincoln Towncars are not available, fullsize sedans will suffice. White Towncars are best; our second choice is black.
- 2) Look at each vehicle we are to use. Be sure each is clean inside and out. Many times the vehicles need to have a smoke smell removed before use. Be sure the interior of each car is in good condition and not a wild color.
- 3) The lead Towncar (the one used for Mr. Tkach) needs to have each tire over inflated by four pounds.

For Mr. Jay Brothers (Steward) supply the following:

- 1) Please reserve a FULL-SIZE VAN FOR LUGGAGE.
- 2) Be sure the following requests are met:
  - A) Provide a chauffeur to drive the van to and from the hotel.
  - B) It should have only two seats (one for the chauffeur and one for Mr. Brothers). Be sure there are no seats in the back, only an empty bed.

If the television crew is coming, please reserve a Mini-Van:

Be sure the following requests are met:

- A) Provide a chauffeur to drive the van during the entire stay. Please provide a complete map of the city with the airport, hotel and meeting hall marked for easy reference.
- B) It is best if the van has windows all the way around, for filming purposes. Take the last seat out of the back of the van for equipment storage.
- C) The television crew may be traveling commercially and will therefore arrive at a different time than Mr. Tkach. If this is the case, you need to be sure the vehicle is available for them when they arrive.

The captains will make their own transportation arrangements.

If touring is approved for Sunday, please reserve the following:

- 1) An EXECUTIVE 40-PASSENGER BUS.
- 2) It should be a very nice bus with high-back seats, restroom facilities, etc. Do not get a school bus, but rather a very nice executive touring bus.
- 3) Provide the following items in the bus for Sunday's touring activities:
  - A) 7UP, regular and Diet Coke in glass bottles
  - B) Perrier mineral water in glass bottles
  - C) Various salted and unsalted nuts
  - D) Orange juice
- 4) If the bus trip is longer than 45 minutes, provide the following items in addition to those items listed above:
  - A) One large platter of various cheeses and crackers
  - B) One large platter of sliced fresh fruit with dip
  - C) One large vegetable platter with dip

### **Hotel Accommodations**

- 1) Please carefully research to find the **FINEST HOTELS** in your area. Take time to visit each of these hotels. If at all possible, look at the actual suites we will be using. Take note of the interior and exterior condition of the hotel, quality of service, decor, etc. If it is difficult to make a decision, it might be helpful to make up a list of pros and cons for each hotel. We would like the very best **your city** has to offer. **Keep in mind that quality is of the utmost importance. Before making a commitment, call me for further instructions.**
- 2) If possible, we would like to have king size beds in all rooms. If they are not available, queen size will suffice.
- 3) Be sure to get a confirmation number from the hotel and have them send you a confirmation receipt.

Please call the hotel, one or two days prior to Mr. Tkach's arrival, to confirm that all rooms are as close to each other as possible. If the television crew is coming, confirm that one one-bedroom suite is as close to the front lobby and elevator as possible - for equipment and hauling.

- 4) All hotel charges will be paid by Mr. Michael Rasmussen on the day of departure.

Please personally inspect the following rooms:

5) One two-bedroom suite for Mr. Tkach (PRESIDENTIAL OR EQUIVALENT). It should have two (2) separate bedrooms with a separate living room area, dining room, air conditioning and a refrigerator. We would also like to have a jacuzzi-type tub in the master bedroom if possible. Please be sure this suite is the very finest. (If this suite has three bedrooms, please be sure to let me know.)

For security reasons, do not use Mr. Tkach's name in making the reservation or in any hotel listing. The only exception to this would be our private in-house rooming list which you will distribute at the airport upon BAC 1-11 arrival.

6) Another two-bedroom suite. It should have two (2) separate bedrooms with a separate living room area and air conditioning. This suite should be located on the same floor as close as possible to Mr. Tkach's suite.

7) Two (2) one-bedroom suites. They should each have a bedroom with a separate living room area and air conditioning. These suites should also be located as close as possible to Mr. Tkach's suite.

8) Four (4) deluxe rooms for the flight crew. Each should have a bedroom with a king or queen size bed and air conditioning.

Try to obtain rooms that are not right next to an elevator, ice machine or anything else that might cause a disturbance throughout the night.

If the television crew is coming please inspect the following (in addition to the rooms listed above):

9) One (1) one-bedroom suite. It should have a bedroom with a separate living room area and air conditioning. It needs to be as close to the front lobby and an elevator as possible (for equipment hauling).

10) Two (2) deluxe rooms with king or queen size bed and air conditioning.

Please supply the following in Mr. Tkach's suite:

- A) One large platter of fresh fruit
- B) One small platter of fresh sliced vegetables and dip
- C) One small platter of various cheeses and crackers
- D) Two quarts or liters of spring water in glass bottles (room temperature), EVIAN if available
- E) Perrier (two large glass bottles)
- F) Two six-packs Coke Classic in glass bottles

- G) Four six-packs Diet Coke in glass bottles
- H) Six containers of **PLAIN NON FAT** yogurt
- I) Six containers of "Spicy V-8" and six containers of regular V-8

IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO HAVE THE HOTEL PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL REFRIGERATOR IN MR. TKACH'S SUITE.

Please supply the following in the second two-bedroom suite:

- A) Four quarts or liters of spring water in glass bottles (room temperature), EVIAN if available
- B) Perrier (twelve 8-ounce glass bottles)

Please supply the following in all one-bedroom suites and deluxe rooms:

- A) Two quarts or liters of spring water in glass bottles (room temperature), EVIAN if available
- B) Perrier (four 8-ounce glass bottles)
- C) Six spicy and six regular V-8 containers (one-bedroom suites only)
- D) One six-pack of Diet Coke in glass bottles

Important Note - If television crew is coming: Due to allergies, please be sure there are no flowers of any kind in Mr. Bergstrom's room.

Mr. Michael Rasmussen's American Express card is to be used for reserving hotel rooms, and banquet rooms. I will also be sending a cash advance made out in your name. Please use this to pay for any charges that are not covered by the American Express card.

It will be necessary for you to keep detailed records of how this money is spent. Please keep all receipts, marking them with the date, amount spent and a brief description of the item or service being paid. These receipts, along with the balance in money, should be sent to Pasadena as soon after the trip as possible.

If you need additional funds, call me, and I will immediately have another check drafted and mailed to you. If there is not sufficient time for this, another alternative is for you to use money out of your local account and then send in the receipts. A reimbursement check will be sent to you.

Send all receipts and balance of advance of:

Mr. Derrick Coker  
Worldwide Church of God  
Accounting Department  
P.O. Box 385

## Welcoming Arrangements

- 1) Due to airport security, we ask that only the coordinating pastor, his family, chauffeurs and photographers meet Mr. Tkach at the airport.
- 2) Please be at the airport a minimum of one-half hour before the BAC 1-11's scheduled arrival. There is always the possibility of early arrival due to winds.
- 3) Assign **two (and only two)** photographers to take pictures for possible use in "THE WORLDWIDE NEWS." Photographs should capture all the highlights of the visit (five to seven rolls each). Refer to the information sheet sent to the pastor from Headquarters.

Please give all undeveloped film to Mr. Rasmussen before the BAC 1-11 departure.

- 4) Once you have returned your completed questionnaire I will call you with the name of the airport handling agent for your area. After you have his name and phone number, please make the necessary arrangements for all vehicles to drive onto the tarmac alongside BAC 1 -11 during arrival and departure. Due to security and safety policies at some airports, this will not be allowed. If this is the case in your area, have the vehicles and chauffeurs as close as the airport officials will allow.
- 5) Please purchase 14 small tourist lapel pins which are representative of your area for everyone in the traveling party. It can be the name of your state, stage flag, etc. Try to keep the pins smaller than 3/4 inch in diameter. These pins should be in the envelopes which will be distributed at the airport upon Mr. Tkach's arrival.

## Sequence of Events

### Friday - Late Afternoon:

- 1) Mr. Tkach and his party arrive at the airport and are met by the coordinating minister and family, photographers and chauffeurs. The coordinating minister will distribute envelopes containing hotel keys, rooming list and lapel pin.
- 2) Chauffeurs then drive Mr. Tkach and his party from the airport to their hotel.

### Friday evening:

Free

**Saturday morning:**

Free, until hotel departure for Sabbath services.

**Saturday afternoon:**

- 1) Chauffeurs pick up Mr. Tkach and his party at their hotel and drive them to services.
- 2) Arrive at hall 20 minutes before services [and] are directed to the hospitality room. The hospitality room is for Mr. Tkach, his party, coordinating minister and those serving.
- 3) Two minutes before services Mr. Tkach and his party are escorted from the hospitality room to their seats in the front row.
- 4) 1:00 p.m. Services begin.
- 5) 3:00 p.m. Services conclude.
- 6) After Services, Mr. Tkach shakes hands with the brethren and ministry.
- 7) After shaking hands, Mr. Tkach is directed to the ministers' meeting.
- 8) The meeting normally lasts one hour. Mr. Tkach speaks for 45 minutes and then will conduct a 15 minute question-and-answer session.
- 9) After the meeting Mr. Tkach and his party will be driven back to their hotel (if the meeting is not in the hotel).
- 10) That evening Mr. Tkach will host a buffet dinner at his hotel for all ministers and their wives as well as all deacons, deaconesses and spouses. The buffet dinner will be held in one of the hotel's banquet rooms. The banquet will be coordinated by Mr. Jay Brothers (BAC 1-11 Steward).
- 11) 9:00-10:00 The dinner will conclude. Remainder of the evening is free.

**Sunday:**

- 1) Mr. Brothers will pick up the luggage of the traveling party.

2) 10:00 a.m. Depart hotel in an executive bus for touring (if approved by Mr. Tkach).

3) After touring, the chauffeur will drive Mr. Tkach and his party to the airport.

---

### **That's Show Biz, Folks!**

*Editor: We showed the above Tkach tour guidelines to friends in Hollywood working in the entertainment industry and familiar with its customs. One television talk show executive told us, "Very few celebrities stage their appearances this meticulously, and with the exception of a few superstars like Michael Jackson, Madonna, or Prince, very few entertainers - even among the very neurotic - would expect to be pampered to such a degree." Indeed, those we talked to said they could think of only one celebrity who exceeded Tkach in degree of required pampering and in concern for personal image - the Pope.*

### **Counter-Cult Organizations and Materials**

Today, there are so many organizations battling the cults and so many books on the cult phenomenon, it is difficult for AR to keep track of all of them. We list below a number that some readers may find of interest. Appearance on the following list does not imply that we endorse all the views of such authors or groups, or that they endorse ours. Nevertheless, we have found the following anti-cult books, journals, and organizations noteworthy.

*How to Rescue Your Loved One from the Watchtower* by David A. Reed (Baker Book House, 1989) is a book not directly about rescuing someone from the WCG, but about rescuing members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs). Nevertheless, because there are so many similarities between the JWs and the WCG, many who have relatives or friends in the WCG can benefit from Reed's book. Mr. Reed, currently affiliated with the Baptist denomination, is a former JW elder and presiding minister who has written extensively about the JWs. His newsletter *Comments from the Friends* is devoted to exposing JW doctrinal errors and to helping both current and former JWs. Those interested in obtaining copies of *How to Rescue Your Loved One from the Watchtower* (\$9.95 per copy) and back issues of *Comments from the Friends* (\$1.50 per copy) should write to *Comments from the Friends*, P.O. Box 840, Stoughton, MA 02072.

Another organization that is working with JWs is Bethel Ministries of Manhattan Beach, California. As with David Reed's ministry, this organization is aimed at helping current and former JWs. Nevertheless, it has materials that are relevant to the WCG. For instance, a number of articles in recent issues of the Bethel Ministries newsletter, edited by Randall Watters, were particularly relevant to the WCG phenomenon: "Deprogramming and Exit Counselling - Are They for Christians?" (Jan./Feb. 1990),

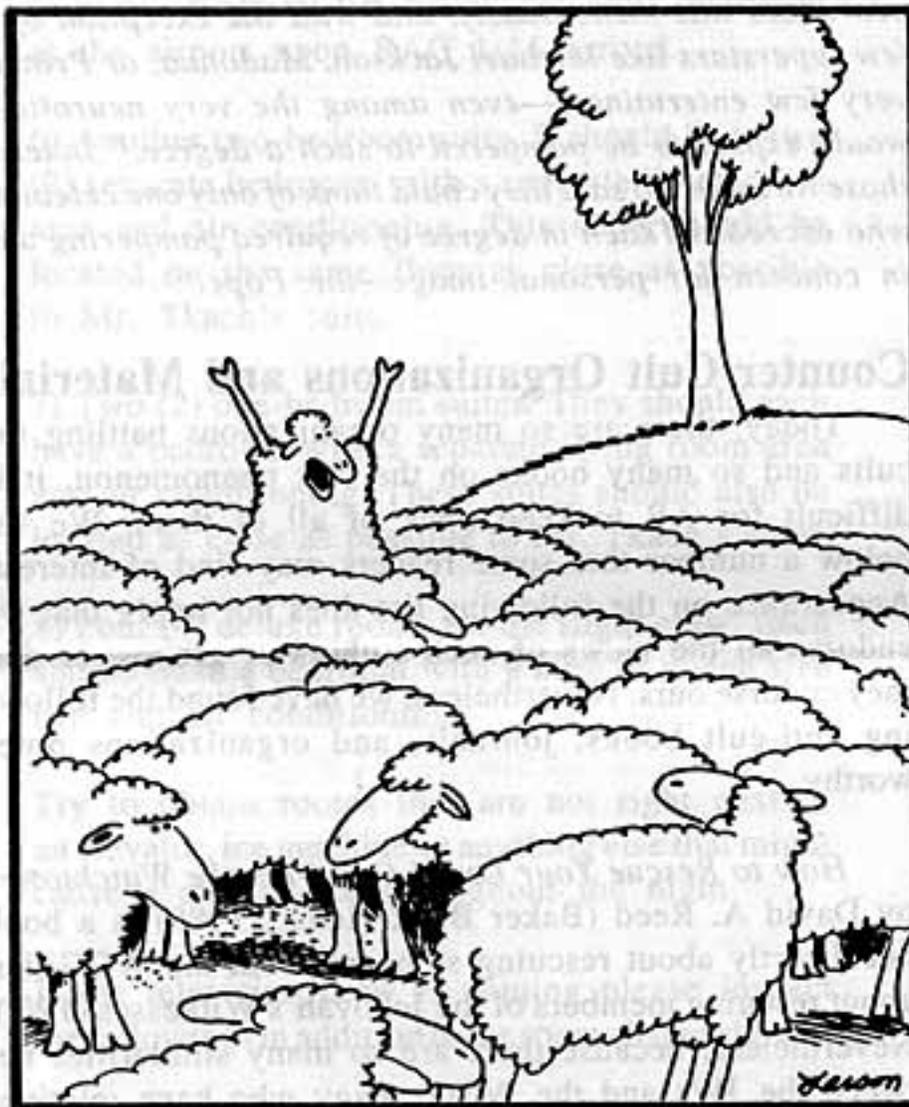
"When Prophecies Fail - A Sociological Perspective on Failed Expectations in the Watchtower Society" (May/June 1990), and "Understanding Watchtower Phobias" (July/Aug. 1990) all contained much of relevance to understanding the WCG as well as the JWs. Those interested in obtaining more information about their publications should write to: Bethel Ministries, P.O. Box 3818, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

*Psychiatry and the Cults - An Annotated Bibliography* by John A. Saliba (638 pages, \$60 plus postage and handling). The publisher of this large work has not supplied us with a review copy so we are unable to comment as to the quality of its contents. Those who would like information about this book should contact Garland Publishing, 136 Madison Ave., Dept. G.K., New York, NY 10016 (tel. 212-686-7492).

*Cultic Studies Journal* (\$15 per year) is published semiannually by American Family Foundation, Box 336, Weston, MA 02193 (tel. 617-893-0930). We have not yet been provided a review copy of this academic journal, but those who are interested may be able to get details by writing to the publisher.

Religion Analysis Service, Inc., P.O. Box 806, Brainerd, MN 56401-0806 (tel. 800-562-9153) is an evangelical Christian organization that distributes "books and tracks exposing cults and unscriptural teachings." Those interested in knowing what they have available should request a copy of their catalog.

---



**"Wait! Wait! Listen to me! ... We don't HAVE to be just sheep!"**

(From *Beyond the Far Side* by Gary Larson. Available at most bookstores.)

---

*Watchman Expositor* is a cult expose periodical published by the Watchman Fellowship, Inc., P.O. Box 13251, Arlington, TX 76094-0251. In the last few years they have done a number of articles relating to Armstrongism. Their vol. 7, no. 3 edition, for instance, carried an article (p. 5) on the WCG's old "born again" doctrine. And their vol. 8, no. 2 issue contained an excellent article about a number of central WCG teachings. Their vol. 8, no. 5-sp issue contained a very thorough history of the WCG and an analysis of the recent WCG doctrinal changes. The article was entitled "What in the Worldwide Church of God is Going On?" Also of special interest is The Watchman Expositor's "1992 Cult Catalog" which lists many WCG splinter groups as cults.

The spring 1991 edition of *Christian Research Journal* contained an article about the WCG written by Bill Alnore. Those interested in receiving a copy should write to the

journal at P.O. Box 500, San Juan, Capistrano, CA 92693.

*What About Those Dangerous Religious Groups?* is a concise booklet on the cult phenomenon. It is particularly helpful in giving relevant Bible passages that highlight the spiritual characteristics of "dangerous" religious groups. For a free copy write to Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, MI 49555-0001.

Deo Gloria Outreach is a Christian organization dedicated to informing both the Christian and secular public of the growing challenge posed by pseudo-Christian and quasi-religious cults. Although based in Britain, the organization also appears to be active now on the continent, as well. Services offered include printed materials and personal counselling. For more information, write Deo Gloria Outreach, Selsdon House, 212-220 Addington Road, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8LD, England (tel. 01-651-6430).

Fundamentalists Anonymous (FA) is a national network of support groups for individuals who have been psychologically harmed by involvement with various so-called "fundamentalist" religious groups. FA was founded by Richard Yao who got his Masters degree from Yale Divinity School and his J.D. from New York University Law School. Those who would like to know exactly what FA is all about (AR has few details) should write to: Fundamentalists Anonymous, P.O. Box 20324, Greeley Square Station, New York, NY 10001 (tel. 212-696-0420).

*Tithing: God's Command or Man's Demand?* by Tony Badillo has been referred to in past issues of AR. We still feel it is the most thorough book on the tithing doctrine we've ever seen. We recommend it to those who have become hooked on the WCG's teachings on that subject. Xavier Press informs us that they still have copies available for \$9.50 each. For more information about the tithing book and other WCG-related literature published by Xavier, send two first class postage stamps to: Xavier Press, P.O. Box 45411, Dallas, TX 75245.

Many AR readers tell us that they continue to benefit from the writings of Ernest L. Martin, once the head of the theology department of Ambassador College. We found two recent articles by Martin to be of special interest: "How Churches Disobey the Commands of God Today" and "Who Has Real Authority in Christianity?" Readers may obtain a free copy of each by writing to Academy for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225 (tel. 503-292-4353).

The question of whether Christians are biblically required to keep the Old Testament sabbaths is one that continues to be debated in WCG circles. For instance, Garner Ted Armstrong of the WCG offshoot Church of God International (P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710) recently announced that his organization was publishing a new booklet on the subject (they answer the question in the affirmative).

Another concise work on the subject was recently written by Sir Anthony Buzzard whose conclusion is quite different than that of Armstrong. Buzzard's booklet, which we recommend highly, is titled "The Law, The Sabbath and New Testament Christianity." It is available for \$2 by writing to Restoration Fellowship; Box 100,000; Morrow; GA 30260. (Note: This is their new address.) Be sure to also ask for a list of their other

thought-provoking publications.

The Association for Christian Development (ACD, Kenneth Westby, Director) is an organization many ex-WCG members have found personally beneficial. The November 1990 issue of ACD's newsletter began a series of articles we found particularly interesting. Written by Kenneth Westby, the series discusses recent scientific evidence pointing to a seven-day cycle extant in nature as a building block of plant and animal life. Discoveries seem to provide "a biological explanation for the mystery of the week." Also of interest is a pair of articles recently published on the so-called "Near Death Experience." Those who would like to receive ACD's newsletter should write to: Association for Christian Development, 4449 S. Star Lake Rd., Auburn, WA 98001 (tel. 206-859-1017).

*The Faithful Word* group, which publishes studies about HWA's statements of doctrine as contrasted with Tkach's revised teachings, apparently has a new address. We've been told it's The Faithful Word, 117 W. Harrison Bldg., Suite 600-F191, Chicago, IL 60605.

*MacGregor Ministries News & Views* published two concise articles on the WCG in their April-June, 1991 issue: "The Betrayal of Ann (the testimony of a former member of the Worldwide Church of God)" and "Why the Worldwide Church of God is a Cult." Those interested should write to: MacGregor Ministries, Box 73, Balfour, British Columbia, VOG 1C0, Canada.

The subject of thought control and brainwashing comes up repeatedly among those studying the cult phenomenon. One of our readers has brought to our attention a work that thoroughly explains these diabolical methods: *The Rape of the Mind* by Joost A. M. Meerloo, M.D. (The World Publishing Company, New York, 1956). It can be found in many university libraries. Our reader points out how pages 126-140 of Meerloo's book seem particularly relevant to the methods used by numerous WCG ministers.

The incredible proliferation of religious cults in the U.S. during the last twenty years has, quite understandably, led to a proliferation of counter-cult organizations. Today there are literally hundreds of organizations that, like *Ambassador Report*, monitor the activities of various cults. In 1987 Cornerstone Press published a *Directory of Cult Research Organizations* listing many countercult ministries and other cult research organizations. The Cornerstone directory has now been updated to include over 500 Christian countercult ministries and over 140 secular cult research groups. It is the best listing available on the subject. The new directory retails for \$7.50 per copy (including postage) and may be ordered by writing to Cornerstone Press, 939 West Wilson, Suite 202-C, Chicago, IL 60640 (tel. 312- 989-2080).

Of the many counter-cult organizations in the United States none has been more active than the Cult Awareness Network (CAN), headquartered in Chicago. CAN publishes a monthly newsletter containing news reports on the cults, puts out numerous factsheets on the various cults, and provides advice to those with friends or relatives in the various cult groups. CAN's national headquarters is at 2421 West Pratt Blvd., Suite 1173, Chicago, IL 60645 (tel. 312-267-7777). Cynthia S. Kisser is the Executive Director. Two of the many regional CAN offices that have been most helpful to AR are the Los Angeles area office

(Prescilla Coates, Director), 1917 Hampton Lane, Glendale, CA 91201 (tel. 818-845-4354) and the New York City office (Larry Zilliox, Investigator), 67 Irving Pl., 3rd Fl. South Entrance, New York, NY 10003 (tel. 212-777-7137). For the address and phone number of the CAN chapter or office nearest you, write to the CAN national headquarters in Chicago.

## **Dankenbring's Prophecy Flash!**

One of our readers recently wrote us:

In AR you mention a lot of religious organizations that seem to me to be worse than the [WCG]. Don't you realize you are encouraging people to get hooked on such groups? For example, you have mentioned William Dankenbring's *Prophecy Flash!* Yet Watchman Fellowship has included his organization on their list of cults. You surely must have noticed how Dankenbring can be very dogmatic and "sets dates" for prophecies. Many [WCG] ministers say Dankenbring is insane. When will you fellows get around to revealing the skeletons in his closet?

It is true that occasionally some of our readers will get "hooked" on some author or group we mention in AR. Let's not assume, however, that such an interest is always a negative thing. Frequently, individuals leaving the WCG utilize such groups as a source for important information or as a stepping stone in their spiritual growth. And sometimes our readers find organizations with which they feel genuinely compatible.

It has never been our goal to make AR into a countercult cult. While we have valuable information to offer regarding the WCG and some of its offshots, we do not pretend to have all "the truth." We mention many organizations knowing full well that they have flaws at times. So do we. But very frequently organizations which may be weak in one area are strong in another and, therefore, have much to offer. While some well-meaning Christian organizations seem to throw the "cult" label upon any religious organization that does not hold to some of their own religious beliefs (e.g., the divinity of Jesus, Trinitarianism, Sunday worship, etc.), that is not how AR uses the term "cult" (see [AR 44](#), pp.2-8). There are a number of plausible definitions for the term "cult" (or "destructive cult"). But we have used the term to refer only to groups that (1) promote isolation from nonmember friends and family, (2) promote nonthinking or uncritical thinking, (3) require absolute obedience to a person or persons who claim to represent God, and (4) encourage unrestrained giving of time and/or money to the group's leadership. Dankenbring's small ministry has none of those characteristics.

It is true that Dankenbring has been very outspoken, has taken a number of positions that seem extreme, and has "set dates" regarding some Bible prophecies. Yet, we should remember that a number of Old Testament prophets did the same kinds of things. Is Dankenbring insane? No, and it is really unfair for WCG ministers to so quickly dismiss his ministry in that way.

We at AR have known Dankenbring quite a few years. While some of his articles may have a certain dogmatic ring to them, he has always treated us with the utmost cordiality and openness. He works as an administrator for a large metropolitan high school, is a part-time publishing entrepreneur, is a family man (married 27 years, three kids, never

divorced), was an eagle scout, is a devout Sabbath-keeping Christian, and is a dedicated Bible researcher and writer who regularly turns out more articles than the entire WCG editorial staff. As for skeletons in his closet - we honestly don't know of any. Yes, some of his articles are a little on the wild side. But perhaps that is why so many find them interesting. *Prophecy Flash!* is available from Triumph Publishing, P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003.

## Questions for the Editor

Q. I am convinced that Mr. Tkach should not have taken the title of "Apostle" even though the designation was used in the early church. Now I am wondering about the title "Pastor General." Where did that come from? I don't find it in my Bible.

A. No, and it's not in anyone else's Bible either. Where exactly Herbert W. Armstrong got it is hard to tell. But it is interesting that "The Black Pope," the head of the Catholic Church's Jesuit Order, has a similar title: "The Father General" (see Malachi Martin, *The Jesuits*, Simon and Schuster, 1987, p. 31). According to former WCG minister David Robinson, HWA's top advisor, Stanley Rader, was very knowledgeable about Catholic history and organization to which he looked as a model for WCG hierarchical organization. Another HWA subordinate highly knowledgeable of Catholic organization and history was Herman Hoeh who remains as the WCG's chief editor and doctrinal advisor. These facts have led to speculation that it was Rader or Hoeh, or both, who were behind HWA's adoption of the title "Pastor General" (and later "Apostle") and behind HWA's drive to mold the WCG's hierarchy after that of the Roman Catholic Church.

Q. Even though you have reported how Mr. Tkach's parents came from Czechoslovakia, the church members continue to be told that Mr. Tkach's ancestors were Russian. I am very confused as to why he would want to be thought of as Russian. On page one of the April 10 *Los Angeles Times* there was a very large article about how the Los Angeles area has become a haven for the so-called Russian Mafia. The *Times* reported how this large criminal network has branches now in Chicago, New York, Boston, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Miami, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Because many of the Russian Mafia's members are former KGB men, some U.S. government officials are saying it is the most vicious and technologically advanced crime syndicate they have ever encountered. Do you have any evidence that Mr. Tkach has ties to these new Russian gangsters? Why does Mr. Tkach say he is Russian?

A. We've seen no evidence that Tkach is currently in contact with the crime ring you describe. As for Tkach's perception that he is of Russian decent: Because of the eastern European Pan-Slavic movement of Czarist days, many Rusyns - that is Carpathian area people who were of the Russian Orthodox faith - viewed themselves as Russian, even though they lived in eastern Czechoslovakia (a hybrid nation formed only in 1918 remember). Like many Rusyns or Rusnaks who came to the U.S. before WWII, the father of Tkach Sr. apparently saw himself as Russian. His son, Tkach Sr., has simply continued to view his roots the way his father did in spite of evidence to the contrary. The loss of a clear understanding of their historical identity is quite common among many, if not most, Americans of Rusyn origin. See Paul Robert Magocsi, *Our People - Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America*. For information write to *Carpatho-Rusyn*

*American*, 132 Hawthorne St., Pittsburgh, PA 15218. Incidentally, the latter publication profiled Tkach in their Fall, 1990 issue.

Q. What is the "Dracula Complex" referred to on page 11 of your [March 1988](#) issue?

A. It's a term we coined to refer to certain strange behavior patterns of the WCG ministry. Over the years we have noticed that whenever the WCG ministry is confronted by (1) blunt talk about Jesus or the Holy Spirit operating in the lives of non-WCG Christians, or (2) the glare of media exposure about the sins of WCG leaders, WCG ministers usually react like the blood-sucking Count Dracula did in the movies when he was (a) shown a crucifix, or (b) exposed to sunlight. Like the revulsed Count who would hide his face in his black, silk cape, WCG ministers are adamant in their refusal to honestly confront certain truths. And most especially, like Dracula - whose image was never reflected from a mirror - most WCG ministers refuse to allow well meant criticism to penetrate their consciousness. It's a type of mind control reflex or denial.

Actual examples are legion: AR issues or AR letters mailed to WCG ministers are almost always refused. (Some have even come back marked "Return to Satan!") Requests for interviews are routinely denied. Some WCG lawyers are unable to talk to AR writers directly and can only communicate via a non-WCG colleague. On one occasion a panic-stricken WCG executive literally ran out of a building when the *Report's* editor turned to cordially chat with him in a bank line. What strange forces possess such people we're not sure. But "Dracula Complex" seems a pretty fair description of the phenomenon.

## Alumni News

Many Big Sandy Ambassador College alumni of the early seventies will remember the story-telling skills of alumnus **Peter M. Leschak**. Now living in Side Lake, Minnesota, Leschak is a freelance photographer and writer whose work has appeared in many national magazines, including *Harpers*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *New Age Journal*, and *Outdoor Life*. His collection of essays, *Letters From Side Lake*, is published by Harper and Row. "Apocalypse Then - The Mind of a Messiah Watcher," an article about his experience with WCG prophecies, appeared in the July 1990 issue of *Magical Blend* (P.O. Box 11303, San Francisco, CA 94101, \$3.95 per copy).

**Harry Sneider**, the former AC athletic coach who has also trained a long list of world class athletes, including race car driver Danny Sullivan, Olympic jumpers Dwight Stones and James Butts, water skier Wayne Grimditch, cyclist Mark Gorski, and bodybuilders Mike Mentzer and Lou Ferrigno, now claims a doctorate in physical fitness from Pacific Western University. Along with his wife, Sarah, and his three teenagers, Sneider is currently promoting "aerobic resistive rebounding" - a low-impact, home exercise system that utilizes minitrampolines, hand-held weights, and various aerobic principles. Articles about Sneider's inspiring life and exercise methods have appeared in the Pasadena *Star-News* (July 2, 1990, p. C-1) and in the re-spected weight training magazine *Ironman* (May 1991, p. 68). Those who would like information about Sneider's training methods should contact him at Sneider's Family Fitness, 115 Loralyn Dr., Arcadia, CA 91006 (tel. 818-355-8964).

Pasadena alumnus **Larry Taylor** wrote us a while back about a couple of alumni names he has seen in the media. **William R. Fairchild**, once a systems programmer at AC Pasadena, had a technical article published in the March 1990 issue of *Mainframe Journal*. Its title was "MVS/XA I/O Subsystem and DASD Event Traces." Fairchild, at the time the article appeared, was with Landmark Systems Corporation.

Taylor also wrote us about **Bob Nesler**:

Remember Bob Nesler? He was an AC student, sometimes doing animation for the TV department. He was the only person that I know who managed to get kicked out of AC twice. His editorial cartoons even got the *Portfolio* shut down once.

I recently saw his name in the animation credits for the cartoon series, "Garfield," on CBS Saturday morning. There was even an on screen gag with his name, Nelsner, showing.

I would like to hear more about the AC graduates and WCG veterans.

## Letters

It seems to me that "God's Little Spider" a.k.a. Joseph Tkach is playing both ends against the middle. To the general public, Worldwide is saying, "Look, we've changed. Aren't we a whole lot more conventional? We're merely just another denomination of Christianity, aren't we? How can anyone even think of calling us a cult?" Is this not Tkach's goal? Theoretically this approach should attract more members.

But to the WCG membership, the impression that is given is this message: "We're making only a few minor changes. We still keep the Sabbath and the holy days. We still have God's spirit. Don't worry about the changes - don't even notice them. God is still in command."

Is this not duplicity of the worst kind? The loyal membership is simply not being told the truth.

Recent WCG Exiter  
Tustin, California

*Ambassador Report* and other publications have catalogued about 100 false prophecies uttered by HWA, and God has not allowed any of them to come to pass, showing the world that HWA is not a minister of God, and also declaring that he is a wicked one. I use the present tense, as HWA is still alive in the minds of many, whereas God commands that the false prophet must be put to death (Deut. 18:20-22).

Prophecy aside, the fact that HWA lived the satanic way of get identifies just whose "apostle" he was!....

I do know of one person (but only one) who holds a grudge against Mr. Joe Tkach Jr. In

spite of this grudge, and in spite of his being a close friend of mine, he had only one thing negative to say about Joe Jr. Since I feel that he still holds a grudge, I doubt if he can be objective; so I will not reveal his name.

Other than this one comment, I have heard only positive things about Mr. Joe Jr. I doubt that his ex-wife Jill would confirm the story you printed about what happened on the way to Prescott. I have never known Joe Jr. to exhibit such a temper.

The story about the affair between Dean Blackwell and Elaine originated with Rod Meredith. I do not consider him sane. He denies reality.

Current WCG Member  
California

*Editor: Friends of the long-time WCG evangelist say that Roderick C. Meredith resides in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendora, is in good health, and sounds rational. Because he remains on the WCG payroll, Meredith refuses to be interviewed in the pages of AR. Sources indicate, however, that due to the mellowing influence of his colleague Dennis Luker, the self-styled "conservative" has greatly moderated his once highly critical attitude toward homosexuals. Meredith remains loyal to the Tkach organization and hopes that one day he will again be allowed to give sermons.*

I am surprised at how few people speak of the blessings they have received since leaving the WCG.

I was the Chief Photographer for the *Plain Truth* and Ambassador College for four years and had 17 years in the WCG. My job was to make the pictures I took look like whatever HWA said was true (even when what he said was not true). Believe me, pictures can lie.

I went through a divorce with no help from the church. One minister tells me I am bound, another says I'm free, etc. I lost my wife and four children to the church. So you see I, too, can make this a "woe is me" letter. Instead I'm going to say hallelujah! I now understand I Tim. 2:5 that there is no one on earth between me and the Father - I have a straight line through Jesus to the Father. Also I cannot lose my salvation or be disfellowshipped from the Father by anyone or anything on earth (Rom. 8:38, 39). If I need healing now I don't have to call anyone. I go direct [to God] and I have received a lot of healing the past couple of years.

I retired at the age of 55. Five years late. AC would not retire me God's way (Num. 8:25). I am now 67 years old and still participate in all the sports I did at the age of 50 thanks to miracle healing.

Life is a joy to me now in spite of the fact that my family is still in the WCG. I put the problem in God's hands and I am sure He will open their eyes and mind as He did mine when they are ready to listen. Thank God that we are no longer in bondage (Rom. 8:15).

Eugene I. Smyda

Panama City, Florida

I took your advice in [AR45](#) and phoned 1-800-CONCERT - Ambassador Auditorium rushed me their pompous brochure airmail (98 cents postage). The same day I phoned the Church at 1-800-423-4444 and ordered "What Do You Mean Salvation?" (still available!) and still haven't gotten it (must be 4th class mail - after all it's only "gospel")....

Did you notice in one WN on "Tips for Managing Your Finances in Recession" they recommend members fix their cars with junk parts from the auto junk yards? A lot of members are already driving unsafe cars and this would endanger them even further. Why doesn't the famous Ambassador garage, which Waterhouse used to say was so spotless clean in his slide show, use junk parts on Tkach's limos?

Wisconsin

I was born poor. My family is poor. I was a strict Catholic until 12 when I learned Satanism. And by 14 was living a biker lifestyle, plus I was a homosexual. I found Jesus, or he found me, at 16 and I have been serving him since. In 1984 I was convicted of murder, which I did not do, and was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison where I serve Christ. I have six years in now. I am Orthodox Christian and study comparative religions, Cults, Greek, and Hebrew. I am writing a book (for the last 2-1/2 years) on religions in which I have had experience.... All the ARs you have ever sent me are in our Chapel Library for my brothers to read. Thank you for sending them.

David Maynard, #85 B 2434  
Sing Sing Prison  
Ossining, NY 10562

I am thankful for your recent April letter even though it made me heartsick and brought tears to my eyes. AR has helped me more than anything else except the Bible and Ernest Martin to get over the bitterness I felt from being brainwashed in the WCG for 10 years. I left that cult in 1975. I am now 76 years old, have had no personal contact with others of like beliefs. It's been a hard and lonely life and except for AR and Ernest Martin's material, I probably would have committed suicide. Reduced to poverty, only a third grade education, no children, I left a good husband because they told me my marriage was not legal in the sight of God because of his living ex-wife (though they had been divorced 10 years). He is now dead.... A social security check of \$372 a month is all I have to live on.

I can't seem to come up with the right words to express how thankful I am for all the ARs you've sent me.

M. E. Robinette  
308 N.W. Murray, #502  
Lee's Summit, Missouri 64081

My father, age 76, became a member of WCG about three years ago. He now seems to be

unable to make a decision without asking the advice of the minister. He is also triple tithing which concerns me since he has a small fixed income and I think he is doing without medical care to pay the tithes. He was always a man of strong opinions but now he seems to be a follower. I'm also worried that he's giving the church his principal since he is talking about the church "taking care of him." What can I do to get him away from their influence? I feel I'm losing contact with him. Also, what about going to Jordan? He talks of this.

Florida

*Editor: While the WCG does not now officially teach that its membership will eventually flee to Petra in Jordan, many WCG members apparently still cling to that teaching. As with so many doctrines, what many WCG members believe is now out of step with what WCG headquarters is preaching.*

*As for getting your father out from under their influence, be sure to read [AR44](#). You might also want to consider using an exit counselor. While their fees sometime seem high, in the long run they are often very cost effective.*

My husband became affiliated with the Worldwide Church of God about three years ago. Since that time, I have noticed gradual changes in his behavior and personality. Some of his ideologies have become downright bizarre. I want my husband back and I'm preparing to do whatever it takes to get him back.

South Carolina

Just received the [Nov. '91](#) issue of AR. You emphasized the many marriages broken by the church. I wonder if anyone knows just how many have been kept from getting married at all by this church. Not being even allowed to date or marry outside the church and, of course, with ministerial meddling, as you called it, I know of many who were kept single for many years and some who simply never did get an opportunity. Seems this church was like the Pope preventing his nuns and priests from marrying and then condemning the church for all the problems with masturbation and homosexuality that resulted. The WCG would always blame the church people for anything that went wrong, never the leaders or the doctrines of the church.

In regard to the third tithe, the church is trying as it were to be a nation (an Israel with a welfare system). But the New Testament Church was a church, not a nation. We already have social security and welfare benefits provided by our nation. Why the people of the church see a need for their own welfare system one must wonder. But, of course, tithing in the Bible was never on money, only on food. So the con game continues.

The November issue of AR was indeed a good one. I only wish there were a way to get more people aware of the *Report*. The most interesting or significant comment of this issue to me was that question you ask on page six: "What spirit is behind all this?" It is interesting that in the words and preaching of Christ those most condemned were the religious leaders of his day. The church under the greatest condemnation in all of Paul's writing was the Galatian Jewish church of his day. And the church most closely akin to

the Galatian church today is the WCG.

The spirit behind all this, you stated, was the spirit of forceful control. WCG evangelist Dean Blackwell once stated that the demons followed Satan much like the Nazis followed Hitler. They felt they must obey the orders! And they felt they must obey - sadly, the wrong person. Dean said there was a reason why the first commandment was the first - how we must have no other gods before God, the true God. When we do, whether it be our mates or our religious leaders or the government, or whomever or whatever, it always leads to problems. How right Dean was in so many things yet he also fell under Herbert's spell and domination, it seems. And so the church has put itself in the place of God in the lives of the church people with the sad results that we see.

I think there has been no other person that has had such an effect on my life for better or for worse than Dean Blackwell. His preachings were no less than profound. His insight into spiritual matters seemed profound. His speaking ability was profound. His wisdom was profound. His abilities were profound. Just like GTA? Just like HWA? Just like... Satan?

And so it seemed with many of the ministers of the church. Such ability to speak. And much truth. But truth mixed with error and false doctrines of men. And it is interesting to note the ones God chose in the Bible to be his major preachers were just the opposite of the WCG preachers. Moses of the Old Testament could not speak at all and had to have his brother do it after he whispered the words to him. Paul described himself as the worst in speaking ability. The reasons given by Paul were that God did not want men glorified or looked to with admiration. This was to be directed to God only, not man. Christ said his church leaders were to be as servants not rulers. Herbert twisted that verse also to read that those who served were to be the rulers (just the opposite of the intent of Christ). And so the church continues to play God in the lives of the people of this church to their hurt. But God will judge them and the results will become apparent.

Well, Christ said many would come in his name and deceive many and Paul warned of false doctrines to come. No one likes to think it is they who are deceived. But Jesus, himself, wondered if, when he returned, he would even find the faith upon the earth. Except in a few, I don't think he will.

J. Van Orman  
Brea, California

Your April 3rd letter to us folks who haven't been contributing sure explains why we haven't gotten a *Report* since November. Sorry to have to hear that you, too, are looking for work now. We have read in the papers that California is having it worse than other parts of the country economy-wise. Then after we got your short renewal letter we heard about more earthquakes and then the L.A. riot. Hope you folks are all okay.

We also heard from friends in Pasadena that a little while back the home where AR has its files was burglarized. Did AR's files get stolen again?

Washington

*Editor: It's true that some months back the home where our files are stored was burglarized and ransacked. Even though all the stolen items were not recovered, the burglars were finally apprehended and it doesn't appear that the incident had anything to do with AR (unlike our 1977 burglary). Quite amazingly, though the house was thoroughly ransacked and searched for valuables, the rooms where AR's files are located were somehow overlooked.*

*As for California, yes, things could be better. The Los Angeles Times has reported that unemployment here is actually six times greater than what the government has been admitting. We have somehow survived in spite of the economy, the earthquakes, and the riots. But getting out this issue of AR (#50) has not been easy. Right now we have enough information on file for about four complete issues. But the funds are just not available to publish everything we can document. The last issue of AR ([#49, Nov. 1991](#)) was the largest and most difficult one we've done in years. Yet, it produced significantly fewer contributions than usual.*

*We will continue to publish Ambassador Report, but the rate at which we get new issues into print depends to a great extent on the level of support we receive from our readers.*

*Our thanks to all of you who are encouraging our efforts.*

*-J. T.*

[Next Issue \(AR51\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

October 1992 (AR51)

### Is Armstrongism Dead?

It used to be called "Armstrongism." Whether it was sermons heard from Worldwide Church of God (WCG) pulpits, articles in the WCG's *Plain Truth* magazine, telecasts of *The World Tomorrow*, projects of the Ambassador Foundation, or literature published by Ambassador College, we used to think of it all as one thing: "Armstrongism" - the ideas, personality, and message of Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA). But now, seven years after Armstrong's death, so much of the doctrinal and organizational edifice erected by Armstrong has been transformed by his successor, Joseph W. Tkach, that many are beginning to ask: Hasn't this thing become "Tkachism"?

### Audit Shows WCG's New Direction

In July, the WCG released its annual "Worldwide Audited Financial Report" in *The Worldwide News* (WN, 7/28/92, pp. 5-9). Like the financial reports of any other corporation, the WCG's report naturally attempts to portray its activities in the best possible light. Nevertheless, the report, which covers the years 1990 and 1991, is quite revealing.

First of all, for 1991 the WCG's total revenue was \$196,985,000 - down almost seven percent from the \$211,243,000 it made in 1990. How much of the drop was due to the ongoing recession and how much was due to the management of the Tkach team is not known. But clearly, the WCG's income is falling.

Second, there are major changes occurring in the way the WCG spends its money. For while overall WCG income declined, the Tkach organization actually spent more for what it calls "nurturing the church" (\$71,379,000 - up seven percent from 1990) and for the Ambassador Foundation (\$8,566,000 - up 25 percent from 1990). At the same time, however, the WCG spent 25 percent less (only \$58,656,000 in 1991 compared to

\$78,317,000 in 1990) for what it calls "preaching the gospel." Expenditures for electronic media declined by 19 percent and money spent on publishing declined a whopping 36 percent.

A number of the statement's notes are quite revealing. In note 1.A, the WCG states that it has approximately 98,000 baptized members. It would be edifying if we could know how many of that figure are "inactive." Note 1.A also states that "the Church does not publicly appeal for funds, involve itself in politics nor actively seek new members." Semantic arguments aside, it is difficult to see why the WCG feels a need to make such a dishonest claim. Most churches proselytize to one degree or another, and so does the WCG. As for politics, the WCG's top clerics don't just cuddle up to local officials, they unashamedly brown nose all world leaders that make themselves available.

Note 3.B states:

Each third and sixth year in a seven-year cycle, members who are financially able contribute an additional ten percent of their annual income to the Church Assistance Fund. This is commonly referred to as third tithe. Monies contributed to this fund are used to assist the needy in the Church, to cover the costs of administering the Church Assistance Fund, and to pay other expenses of the field ministry, including a portion of ministerial salaries.

A few comments regarding the above note: First, the paying of third tithe only by "members who are financially able" is a new doctrine that has crept into the WCG in the last few years. It's a nice change, but one that does not go far enough. It should have been obvious to church leaders long ago that with government welfare and insurance programs - which church members are encouraged to make use of - there is no justification for a mandatory third tithe in any modern church. Second, nowhere in the Bible can one find that third tithe is a proper way to finance the field ministry. And third, the WCG still refuses to divulge how much money it takes in as third tithe so it remains impossible to calculate from the financial statement how much third tithe has been misappropriated.

Note 6 begins: "The Church, Ambassador College and the Foundation have been named in various lawsuits and actions, some of which involve claims for substantial damages." While the still-delayed McNair case, often reported on in AR, is one of the lawsuits, the other referred-to cases are not identified.

Note 6 admits: "The Church is currently providing assistance to certain former employees of approximately \$1,476,000 annually. This discretionary assistance is provided based upon the employee's needs and accordingly, could be discontinued in the future." As recently as in the 1989 statement (WN, 7/16/90, p. 5), the WCG was paying out only about \$1,000,000 annually to former employees - about \$800,000 of which was "discretionary" and about a half of which one Tkach associate has referred to as "hush money." Who today is receiving the \$1,476,000 is not known. But it would appear that the WCG is in the process of retiring many of its old-timers.

Note 7 contains the following: "The Church is undertaking immediate steps to address certain issues raised in a 1989 audit by the Canadian taxing authorities. These issues, if not resolved, could affect the Canadian Church's status as a charitable organization."

Exactly what the issues are is not stated in the note.

Finally, while the WCG's published audit does represent a substantial improvement in policy from the days when HWA only gave an oral financial report at the church's fall festival, there is still a significant level of ambiguity in the report. Specifically, nowhere in the report is there an indication of what level of remuneration is received by any of the WCG's executives. Nor is there any indication that the abuses that existed under HWA - of millions being siphoned off yearly via "expenses" - have ever been corrected.

## **Beyond Tithing**

With WCG revenues having declined in 1990 and 1991 and with its U.S. revenues down three percent for 1992 (WN, 6/30/92, p. 3), it is not surprising that the Tkach team has been looking for new ways to market its product. (Incidentally, lest someone think we are being disrespectful in using business terminology - in a letter to Dunn & Bradstreet, the WCG, itself, described what it does as "sales.")

---

&COPY;1992 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service.

ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

In a May 19 WN editorial (p. 6), Tkach outlined some of the new methods he is instituting:

...we are currently exploring the feasibility of a visiting program in which member couples would be trained to call on *Plain Truth* subscribers who respond to a letter asking if they'd like a visit from a member couple.... We are also planning to test in some areas a new procedure on the telecast. At the close of the program, the presenters will inform viewers that the sponsor of the program, the Worldwide Church of God, has local congregations in their area, and invite them to write for information about attending.

Long-time WCG members know that such an "open door policy" was not allowed by church founder HWA. Nor did HWA entrust members with the responsibility of personally preaching the gospel or of personally inviting nonmembers to church services. Nevertheless, some insiders say that in those areas where the new procedures have been tested, they have proven very effective. And some insiders feel that by adopting such methods - methods long used by the Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults - the WCG will become more effective than ever before in making "sales."

By encouraging members to become personally more active in WCG operations, the Tkachs, of course, are dipping into a previously untapped church resource. They know

that time is money. Note 3.1 of the WCG's latest financial statement says: "The efforts of volunteer workers are not recorded as contributions and expenses, since it is not practical to calculate the monetary value of the benefits received. Such services might constitute a significant factor in the Church's operations."

By getting their followers more personally involved in "spreading the gospel," the Tkachs will be able to further cut back expenditures for print and electronic media. As a result of such cutbacks, they will then theoretically be able to funnel more money into other areas such as the Ambassador Foundation. Indeed, that is already happening. According to a report we received from Dunn & Bradstreet in mid-July, since 1988 the number of WCG employees decreased from 1,890 to 1,325 - a decrease of 30 percent. Yet, according to Dunn & Bradstreet, during that same period the number of Ambassador Foundation employees went from 30 to 200 - an increase of 567 percent!

The two new marketing techniques discussed above are not the Tkachs' only bright ideas. A third new scheme has been labeled Friends in Deed. This new program aims at giving members the "opportunity" of serving their communities. In explaining how the new "opportunity" will be granted, church director Joseph Tkach Jr. wrote in the June 16 WN (p. 4):

...the pastor of each congregation will follow a three-step procedure: 1) determine assets and talents of the local congregation, 2) determine needs of the community and 3) adopt Church assets and talents to fill community needs.

Here is how the program will work. Let's say that your city government, like so many today, is short of cash. In order to keep expenses and taxes down, the city has to fire a half dozen janitors. Well, that's no problem. Your mayor needs only to phone the WCG's local pastor with his list of WCG "talent" and in almost no time the city will have six WCG volunteers coming over to clean the city's toilets for free. Tkach Jr. writes:

In some cases, several of our congregations are already participating in certain community-service activities that fulfill the purpose of the Friends in Deed program.

For example, some congregations have participated in the Adopt-a-Highway program, in which groups are responsible for keeping a mile of a given highway free of litter.

Obviously, there is a time for volunteer service, and service to one's community can reap spiritual dividends. But aside from becoming one of George Bush's "thousand points of light," of what benefit will the new program be to the WCG itself? Considering the WCG's history of institutional self-centeredness, it is difficult for us not to be more than a little bit suspicious of the motives behind Friends in Deed.

As one of our readers wrote us: "Besides giving the church 30 percent of his paycheck, my husband gives them his Saturdays, his Wednesday evenings, and an hour every morning. Already he has very little money or time left for his family. Now they want him to volunteer away some of his Sundays to clean highways! What next? Living at the airport and handing out booklets?"

## **Goin' to Guyana**

Mention Guyana and most people immediately recall the 1978 Jonestown massacre which took place in that small South American country. That is why we were surprised to read in the WN (5/19/92, p. 8) how the WCG is working to "forge a positive relationship between the Church and the government of Guyana." One way in which the relationship is being developed is through an agricultural testing project run jointly by the Ambassador Foundation and the government of Guyana. The project was initiated by WCG minister Dale Schurter after discussions with Hamilton Green, the country's Prime Minister.

Additionally, since August 1990, a WCG-related corporation called Ambassador Farms Enterprises Limited (AFEL) has operated a farm project and "several miscellaneous ventures" in Guyana. Most recently, the article reported, AFEL opened produce stalls at the Stabroek Market in Georgetown. The government apparently gave AFEL permission to build the stalls even though, according to the article, "30,000 other applicants had already applied for the position."

Ostensibly, the WCG's farming and produce marketing operations in Guyana are aimed at benefiting its poor members in that country. Yet according to the WCG's own official figures (WN, 4/14/92, p.5), the church has only 115 members in the entire country. Even if all 115 were near starvation, one would have thought that the parsimonious Tkachs would have simply sent down a shipment of basic foodstuffs, rather than set up a produce marketing operation, a joint church-government agricultural experiments program, and other "miscellaneous ventures." It would be nice to know what the Tkach people are really up to in that part of the world. But Guyana is a little bit out of the way for us to find out.

## **The Doctrinal Merry-Go-Round**

Since AR's inception, we have attempted to keep up with the WCG's ever increasing rate of doctrinal change. Lately, however, the pace at which doctrines have been changing has left us feeling a little dizzy. Even the WCG ministry seems overwhelmed. For example, in 1991 when the WCG issued a booklet entitled *Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God*, many WCG pastors told their congregations that the booklet really did not represent the WCG's doctrines, but was only intended for "the world" as a public relations ploy. One such minister was "conservative" evangelist Herman Hoeh about whom one of our headquarters sources wrote us:

The Trinity doctrine may not be as modified as it appears. On Feb. 8, 1992, Herman Hoeh presented a sermon to the Pasadena East PM congregation concerning the WCG's recently published Statement of Beliefs. He commented specifically on the statement: "The Worldwide Church of God teaches the full divinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit..." He cited a dictionary definition of "divinity": "of or related to or proceeding directly from divinity." Since God is divine, so is His Spirit. He went on to indicate that the Statement of Beliefs was a document carefully crafted to make the WCG seem more orthodox to mainstream Christianity and that the position of the church has not essentially changed. The Statement was designed to be capable of being viewed in two ways.

That Hoeh would admit how the WCG was being double tongued is not surprising. Since the late 1980s, Michael Snyder, the WCG's top PR man, has been telling WCG members how Tkach's executives have embarked on a program of actively deceiving the news media into thinking the WCG is changing, but that the WCG had no intention of doing so.

Nevertheless, in spite of what Snyder, Hoeh, and many other WCG leaders have told congregations, in the March 17 WN (p. 4) Tkach Sr. stunned many WCG conservatives with the following, almost offhanded, comment:

By the way, I have heard recently that a few ministers and members may have thought that the Statement of Beliefs is not for members, but is only for use in public relations efforts to people outside the Church.

This is absolutely untrue! This new booklet captures the core beliefs of God's Church and constitutes our official statement on most of our major doctrines such as God, baptism, repentance, salvation, the kingdom of God and other vital teachings.

It most certainly is for members, and is for nonmembers as well! It is part of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations.

Amazingly, since the above statement appeared, some WCG ministers have been telling members Tkach's "clarification" was, itself, only for public relations purposes and should therefore be ignored by members. So who is deceiving whom now? Is Michael Snyder deceiving "conservative" ministers and members when he says the WCG is attempting to trick the media? Is Tkach deceiving "liberal" ministers and members when he says that the new teachings are for everyone? Did Tkach get the ministry's support for the recent changes by deceiving the "conservatives"? Or is Tkach deceiving himself?

Whatever the case, certainly Tkach personally brought on much confusion when he wrote in the WN (12/23/91, p. 1): "the Statement of Beliefs does not constitute a closed creed." In other words, the WCG may change again at any time and, indeed, it will. That is because the WCG, like all other cults, is built on personalities, and not really on law. And it is upon the whims of those personalities that the doctrines of the WCG are based. A good example of the doctrinal confusion extant now in the WCG is its teaching on "apostles." As many readers will recall, HWA started to apply the term "apostle" to himself sometime in the late sixties. Tkach then adopted the title for himself a few months after HWA died (see [AR 37](#)). Now, however, in a bit of back tracking Tkach writes (WN, 3/31/92. p. 1):

When referring to Mr. Armstrong or myself, however, the Church uses the term apostle (drawn from the list of ministerial offices in Ephesians 4:11) only as a designation of the highest spiritual and administrative human office in the Church.

The term definitely does not connote an apostolic function in the Church that is equivalent to that of the original apostles. Not since the first century has the Church had that kind of apostolic leadership in person.

Long-time WCG members can recall, however, how HWA claimed that he was the first

person in over 18 centuries to preach the true gospel (*The Inside Story of the World Tomorrow Broadcast*, pp. 9-10). Many also recall how HWA had compared himself to the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:11-12) by claiming that he, too, had not been taught the true gospel by any man, but had received it "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Thus Tkach's watering down of the WCG definition of "apostle" is but one more alteration of what HWA had taught.

Another example of WCG doctrinal confusion concerns, of all things, the Ten Commandments. In his May 27 letter to coworkers, Tkach wrote:

...it is a common mistake to assume, "If everybody would just keep the Ten Commandments, what a nice world we would have." Christians should consider that the Ten Commandments do not require kindness, mercy, compassion, generosity, sacrifice for others, impartiality, patience or love. Nor do the Ten Commandments specifically forbid conceit, envy, hatred, rage or selfish ambition. The Ten Commandments are important, but they are not enough.

Of course, no educated person would claim that the Ten contain every specific moral and legal requirement placed upon mankind by God and society. Nevertheless, throughout history innumerable theologians, philosophers, and legal scholars have marveled at how the Ten (when properly understood with all their implications and in all their fullness) represent an amazingly succinct summary of the ethical duties placed upon all humankind. Indeed, even Herbert Armstrong used to teach that the Ten Commandments were "God's Royal Law" - the first four summarizing man's duty to God and the last six summarizing man's duty to fellow man (love toward God and love toward man being the two great commandments - see Matt. 22:35-40). Why Tkach has now decided to tamper with this long-accepted teaching is a mystery. But insiders predict that the criticism his latest gaffe has drawn will, undoubtedly, require Tkach to backpedal in the coming months.

Perhaps HWA's teaching on the Ten Commandments was what Tkach was referring to when he wrote (WN, 3/31/92, p. 7): "Like *all* people God has used to do his work, however, Mr. Armstrong also taught some things that were not strictly the Bible message, but were his own interpretations of certain scriptures." If that is the case, then how much authority should members see in Tkach, himself? Obviously, Tkach has only one claim to fame - he sits in Herbert Armstrong's seat.

Finally, in his April 22 letter to coworkers, Tkach wrote: "As we look at today's rapidly changing political world, we must not be deceived into believing that the end of the age is imminent." Insiders say Tkach privately believes Christ's return is very, very far - perhaps 100 years or more - distant.

HWA used to teach that as the Millennium was a type of Sabbath and as "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (II Pet.3:8), God had a 7,000-year plan that was rapidly reaching the end of the sixth "day." The HWA era *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course* devoted many pages to "God's little-understood 7,000-year plan for mankind" (see Lesson 1, pp. 14-15; Lesson 39, pp. 10-16; Lesson 44, pp. 2-16). In his last years, HWA repeatedly emphasized that the church's commission of heralding the soon-coming Kingdom was well into the "gun lap." Now, with Tkach convinced Christ's

return is far off, he has secretly ordered his ministry not to preach the old 7,000-year plan. Even the *Plain Truth* magazine is being used to attack the old doctrine (see the July issue, p. 22).

WCG insiders say that Tkach is so openly opposed to so many key HWA teachings that he wants no one reading *The Mystery of the Ages*, the book HWA called his "masterpiece." Some members complain that in order to read their church founder's "masterpiece," they must do so in secret or risk being disfellowshipped.

It remains to be seen how many more doctrines will be altered or dropped within the next few months. Evangelist Michael Feazell, Tkach's closest adviser, is now a graduate divinity student at evangelical Azusa Pacific College near Pasadena. Already, much of the Trinitarian thinking he has received there is finding its way into WCG literature (see, for instance, the new WCG booklet *God Is...*). Headquarters sources tell us that so many more doctrinal changes have already been decided upon that publication of the new, much-revised *Bible Correspondence Course* has had to be delayed until some time in 1993.

In the meantime, Feazell has gotten Tkach to begin introducing a more "Protestant" style of writing into church publications. For example, in his August *Plain Truth* editorial, Tkach (or ghostwriter Feazell) wrote:

It is no sin to feel the anguish of severe suffering. Even from the depths of our pain can come the knowledge that Jesus is there with us, that he too knows this pit of despair, that he too has walked through the valley of the shadow of death. And he will lead us through it, bring us back into the light, restore our hope, and remind us of the eternal love of the God of salvation and of the glory that awaits us.

A nice thought, certainly. But WCG old-timers distinctly remember how HWA used to attack such "Protestant" sentiments as "effeminate, sugar-coated perversions of the true gospel." Yes, the WCG is changing.

## **Ministerial Exodus Continues**

One of the latest ministers to exit the WCG is James E. Baldwin of Charlestown, New Hampshire. His reasons for leaving and the reasoning process he used in deciding to leave are detailed in an open letter he wrote to all his friends. One quote:

I was not opposed to the changes as some were, but I had to ask myself, "If what we now have is the truth, then how shall I account for so much error of the past? How credible was HWA's often-made statement that he was not taught by men but by the living Jesus Christ?"

Those who would like a copy of his entire, well-reasoned letter may write to Mr. Baldwin at P.O. Box 320, Charlestown, NH 03603.

## **Why Can't We All Get Along?**

The October issue of the *Plain Truth* had a quote all of us in California are only too well aware of: "Why Can't We All Get Along?" Those were the words of Rodney King, the black man whose videotaped beating by a handful of white sheriff's deputies set in motion the events that led to the Los Angeles riots last summer. Putting aside the question of whether Rodney King is really someone the WCG should be quoting as an authority on anything other than what it's like to be physically abused by police officers, the headlined quote is remarkable in that it really does reflect part of the new Tkach game plan.

Very clearly, the Tkach WCG is trying to do everything it can to "love bomb" new members into its fold. For example, in a sermon taped for the benefit of numerous distant congregations, Tom Lapacka, a minister who also works in media purchasing for the WCG's television outreach, told WCG members that it will be all right for visiting men to come to church services with pony tails (even though current WCG members are forbidden to have "long" hair). In other words, the WCG is quite willing now to overlook a few things in order to bring in new members.

Along the same lines, in the September *Plain Truth* there was an article titled "Accepting Your Child's Friends." In it, author Rick L. Shallenberger literally threw away the kind of advice we used to hear from successful parents and child rearing experts when he argued that parents should not be too critical when their children bring home friends who wear black leather outfits, use heavy makeup, or tattoo their faces. (See the picture of the punker that accompanies the PT article.) The article states:

So what do you do? Should you make a set of rules concerning who your teenager should and should not have as friends?

You can try, but chances are, your rules probably wouldn't work. It's probably too late for that.

Clearly, this kind of wimpy advice on parenting is something new in the WCG. Shallenberger's article may contain some nice ideas on tolerance. But a lot of parents who are concerned about the very real dangers that gang violence, drugs, and venereal diseases pose to their children's survival, are going to find it hard to accept the idea of allowing punkers the opportunity to influence their children as the new PT suggests.

Trying to make the WCG more tolerant of just about anyone who could become a tithepayer is but one of Tkach's policies. Another shift seems to be to imitate "the world" whenever possible. For instance, while the WCG still has not okayed the actual keeping of Christmas, imitating Christmas-type customs seems to be gaining a foothold. For instance, Tkach has given his blessing to the sending of holiday cards. In the May 5 WN, there was a reproduction of Tkach's own Holy Day card for Passover. It showed a painting of a Charlton Hestonish Moses leading his people. (One thing that confused some members, however, were the Roman-legion type standards also visible in the illustration. Some members thought they were "pagan Baal symbols.")

Finally, there's the debate that is raging in the WCG about the word "liberal." For as long as anyone can remember the WCG has viewed the word "conservative" as good. And the word "liberal" as bad. (Can't you just hear Dana Carvey reading this?) So

ingrained has that set of equations been in the minds of most WCG members that many have thought a liberal arts education was inherently evil because it was "liberal." Well, to change that misimpression (or is there more going on here?), along comes AC President Donald L. Ward with an article (WN, 12/23/91, p. 5) that explains:

The word liberal was derived from the Latin root *liberi*, which means "free." To be *liberal* is to be free, to be liberated. So, the word liberal in its most obvious meaning, as applied to education, has a wide connotation.

Liberal education requires methods of learning and knowledge that free one from fear, ignorance, superstition and the dogmas of man. It is dependent upon knowledge, but is much broader and complete...

Therefore, a true "liberal arts education" is in perfect harmony with the biblical injunction: "You shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Don't misunderstand. We don't disagree with Dr. Ward. But his views seem to be more in line with those of AR than those of the WCG we once knew.

## **Renehan's Revelations**

It was not long after the death of HWA that it became very obvious to us how Tkach had a secret agenda for transforming the WCG into a church radically different from the one HWA had built. HWA's last major article, written shortly before the onset of his final illness, was "Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God" which appeared in a special edition of the WN (6/24/85). In that major article, HWA warned his followers about the "liberals" in the ministry with whom he had crossed swords for over a decade. Incredibly, HWA's body was barely in the grave when his successor, a man HWA had been led to believe was a "conservative," immediately began step by step to institute virtually every doctrine and policy change that HWA had so vehemently opposed. (See the above-referenced HWA article on p. 3, column 2.)

One veteran WCG member who has uncovered evidence of the extent of Tkach's plan to transform the church is Bruce Renehan of Tehachapi, California. Mr. Renehan recently sent us the following letter:

On May 8, my wife and I were visited by the local pastor and his associate (Dave Dobson and Leon Sexton). I had not solicited their visit. But since I knew that they were coming, I decided that I would be completely open with them about all of the errors I have discovered about church doctrines. I was fully willing to let them disfellowship me over the things that I had discovered concerning Worldwide Church history, the Old Covenant being done away, and the New Covenant now being in force. So I spilled my guts to them for about three hours.

The first thing I told them was that the WCG by all definitions falls into the category of a cult. The pastor agreed, but then quickly said that the New Testament church fell into that category also. I disagreed with him on that point and reminded him of how Jesus specifically warned against authoritarian government in his church. That's when his attitude became subdued. Next I talked about how HWA had made over 100 false prophecies in his lifetime and I reminded them of Deuteronomy 28. I

recited from the histories of William Jones and Emilio Comba showing all of the deliberate lies by Herman Hoeh who tried to create an apostolic lineage for the WCG. They were without an answer and I started to feel a little sorry for them. Each time they got defensive I offered more information.

After a while, I began to show them what the New Covenant is and how the WCG has been in error on that teaching. I said that the Mosaic Law which was given at Sinai is simply done away. They looked at each other and then at me. Then, to my amazement, they replied, "We both agree with you. You are right. We discuss these things between ourselves all the time. But, of course, until word comes down from on high we cannot preach these things."

Then I began to elaborate to them that if the Ten Commandments are done away then that would include the Sabbath Day and tithing. They didn't even flinch. They agreed that I was absolutely correct. But, they added, "We can't breathe a word of this to the other members because if we did, many people, especially the old-timers, would just get up and walk out of the church."

They told me that I can't be telling others about what I know, but that I could still attend services. I said that, like Paul, I could be all things to all men - even if I didn't think the Sabbath was still binding. They then said that if I was patient and hung in there, *in 10 or 15 years I would see the whole church teaching the things that I have come to believe!...*

My wife, who has been in the church since she was a little girl, feels she needs the church and wants to continue attending. On the other hand, I feel the church needs men who are not pussyfooting around. Our church leaders' lack of boldness to preach the truth reminds me of when Samuel asked Saul, "What is this bleating sound that I hear?" And Saul answered, "It's the people. I did it because of the people."

Since Mr. Renehan sent us the above, he has continued to research WCG history. Before the end of the year, he intends to publish a book entitled *Daughter of Babylon - The True History of the Worldwide Church of God*. Renehan says his research reveals that plagiarism, trickery, and even falsification of documents have played a role in the WCG's creation of the fable that it is the "one and only true church." From correspondence with officials of the Church of God (Seventh Day), the Seventh Day Baptist Church, the American Waldensian Society, and other organizations, Renehan has been able to debunk many of the claims now being formulated into dogma by the Tkach organization. Renehan is tentatively planning to make copies of his book available for about \$15 each. Those interested in further details should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Daughter of Babylon," P.O. Box 1551, Tehachapi, CA 93581-1551.

## **New Discoveries on WCG "History"**

In addition to the research being done by Bruce Renehan, a number of others have been uncovering the real facts behind many of the WCG's bogus historical claims. One such researcher is Warren J. Carlson of Glen Ridge, New Jersey. He sent us the following letter:

Those who were members of the WCG back in the early 1970s (and I was one of them) will, no doubt, remember a booklet published by the WCG. It was authored by

Herman Hoeh and was entitled *A True History of the True Church*. This bit of dubious "history" purported to reveal the true identity of the seven churches of the book of Revelation - the so-called seven eras of the church.

Most WCG ministers and members embraced the church eras theory with fervor, since the WCG was identified by Hoeh as the Philadelphia era, and it was the Philadelphia era of God's true church which would escape the fiery fate which would be meted out in the last days to an unrepentant world and an apostate Catholic Church. The Philadelphia era would flee to a place of safety, assumed to be Petra in Jordan, under the leadership and guidance of God's one and only Apostle for the ultimate gun lap. Although I understand the Hoeh booklet is no longer in print and is unobtainable from the WCG, a modified and watered down version of this alleged "true history" appeared in serial form in the *Good News* before it was scrapped, and then recently in the newly religified *Plain Truth*.

The Waldensians, a twelfth-century heretical sect founded in France by Peter Waldo, was included among those groups which the WCG claimed to be one of the seven churches of Revelation. Hoeh assigned the Waldensians to the Thyatira church, or era. The recent PT article about Waldo and the Waldensians, while diluting any mention of the "church eras," nonetheless made it clear that the WCG still believes the Waldensians to be a group which is its spiritual forefather. Thus, one would believe, it would be expected that the Waldensians cleaved to the same eclectic assortment of Old Testament and New Testament beliefs which the WCG follows today. Not so!

I have researched and written on Peter Waldo and the Waldensians during the course of my studies toward a BA in history. What I found regarding the Waldensians was that, although there are some similarities between their doctrines and those of the WCG (for example, the Waldensians didn't believe in military service or in the taking of oaths), there are some striking dissimilarities between the two. In fact, the Waldensians were closer in beliefs to the Roman Catholic Church than to today's WCG!

There is no documentary evidence to substantiate that the Waldensians observed either the seventh day sabbath or the holy days, observed Levitical dietary laws, or tithed. In fact, according to documentary evidence from the thirteenth century, the Waldensians strongly opposed both the practice of tithing and the possession of material wealth by the clergy. Here's what one document revealed on both subjects:

On tithing: "They [the Waldensians] say that tithes are not to be paid, because the early church did not pay them. They say that if tithes ought to be paid, then the Church, too, should pay them. If you say that the Jews paid tithes, they respond that we should then observe all the other legalia of the Old Testament.... They say that those who pay tithes are damned, as are laymen who receive tithes, since they spend them wickedly."

On possessions: "They say that clerics ought to have no possessions or property."

Source: Peters, Edward, ed. *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980.

How interesting! So who has deviated from the truth? Was Waldo in error on tithing (a subject which one could certainly say is at the core of WCG doctrine)? And if so, what does that say about the WCG's teaching regarding church "eras" and Waldo's

place in them? Or is it the WCG which has deviated from the truth by proclaiming that anyone who does not tithe (and three times over!) is "cursed with a curse"? Who has got the curse right - the WCG or its claimed historical antecedent, the Waldensians?

If Tkach would read what the Waldensians had to say about possessions, would he give up his chauffeur-driven limo, his Jacuzzi, and his jet? Anyone who is careful in handling the pure Biblical truth knows that the Waldensians were closer in spirit to the church of Jesus Christ than the WCG ever has been or ever will be.

Warren J. Carlson

Readers interested in uncovering the facts about the origin of many WCG doctrines may find one additional source of help. In their Jan.-March 1991 issue, *The Discerner* published an excellent research paper by Dwayne Krogstad of Northwestern College in Minnesota. Mr. Krogstad's paper, titled "Early Leaders of Seventh-Day Adventism," does not mention the WCG directly. However, he does show the origins of a number of Adventist doctrines HWA, himself, later adopted. *The Discerner* is published by Religion Analysis Service, 821 Washington St., Brainerd, MN 56401.

## **Assyrians and Chaldeans**

The interpretation of Bible prophecy has played an important role in the WCG's growth since the 1930s. One of the key elements in the WCG's prophetic scheme has been the theory, developed by HWA, that as a result of migrations over the centuries, the nations in many Bible prophecies are today known by different names. For example, HWA taught a type of British Israelism. That is, HWA saw the House of Judah (the Jews) as distinct from the House of Israel which he saw as the white English-speaking nations (the U.S. and British Commonwealth, essentially).

Among the Bible nations HWA claimed to have "identified" were the ancient Chaldeans, whom he saw as the modern Italians, and the ancient Assyrians, whom he saw as the modern Germans.

Unbeknownst to HWA or his followers, apparently, was the fact that there are peoples on earth today who can, and do, trace their origins to the ancient Chaldeans and Assyrians and those peoples are not the Germans or Italians.

According to the *Los Angeles Times* (3/16/91, p. D 1), the descendants of the ancient Chaldeans by and large still live in the Middle East with the bulk of the modern Chaldeans forming a Roman Catholic minority in modern Iraq. They have a distinct identity, language, and culture. Some modern day Chaldeans have emigrated out of Iraq and about 60,000 now live in Detroit, Michigan where about 600 independent grocery and liquor stores are owned by Chaldeans. For more information about the real Chaldeans, see the short research paper "Who Are the Chaldeans?" by Rev. Michael J. Bazzi, distributed by the Chaldean American Association, 115 South Mollison Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020 (tel. 619-588-9669).

As for the modern Assyrians, about 1.5 million people living today in Iraq claim to be their descendants. Like the Chaldeans, they are a Christian (in this case Orthodox Catholic) minority with a distinct identity, language, and culture. Like the Chaldeans, the Assyrians tend to view themselves as foes of Arab Saddam Hussein. About 300,000 Assyrians have emigrated to the United States and about 68,000 now live in Chicago (*Los Angeles Times*, 2/21/91, p. A9).

Mr. Homer Ashurian, a spokesman for the Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation told the Report, "Many people are surprised to learn that there are still Assyrians in the world today. No, we have not disappeared. We are still here." For more information about the real Assyrians, contact the Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation, 7055 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60626 (tel. 312-274-9262).

## Modern Israelites

One of the absolutely key doctrines of Armstrongism was HWA's version of British Israelism. It was a "version of" because it was never exactly the same teaching as that put forth by such groups as the British Israel World Federation. Nor was it exactly the same as those theories put forth now by many "Identity Movement" groups. Nevertheless, insiders say that none of the "Identity" theories - including HWA's as expounded in his book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* - hold any appeal for Tkach. It seems likely, therefore, that the Armstrong version of British Israelism is headed for the doctrinal scrap heap. Nevertheless, we continue to receive letters from readers who find the Armstrong theory fascinating.

Among those who have studied British Israelism, few have done as much serious research as has William Moore of Papillion, Nebraska. In [AR40](#) we ran a letter from Moore concerning some of his research. Shortly thereafter, an article critical of Moore's views appeared in *The Truth of the Matter* published by the Biblical Church of God (Canada). In response to that article, Moore wrote us the following:

As you suggested, I wrote the group in Canada for a copy of their August, 1988 issue. In it they pretty much castigated me for what I had written about British Israelism. Much of their argument focused on the physical composition of the Coronation Stone of Westminster Abbey. They took exception to my calling it "red sandstone" and my saying that it was probably quarried near Scone in Scotland where the ancient Pictish kings had their royal seat. [Many British Israelism believers prefer to think of the Stone as literally "Jacob's Pillar Stone" of Gen 28:11-ed.] As evidence to support their contention that the Stone housed in Westminster Abbey was not quarried in Scotland, or anywhere else in the British Isles for that matter, they cite an alleged physical examination of the Coronation Stone by a Professor Odlum about the year 1926 or '27. Supposedly, Odlum's examination refutes William Skene's nineteenth century observations that the Stone came from the red sandstone formations near Scone in Scotland.

According to Keith Hunt, editor of *The Truth of the Matter*, Odlum and an unnamed geologist were permitted to examine the Coronation Stone. To quote Hunt, "They worked under a tremendously powerful arlight. They had the finest microscopic instruments it was possible to get [sic] they made a perfect microscopic examination of that stone and they compared what they found with Scotch granite, granite from Aberdeen, stone from Scone and from Iona, and so on, and they were absolutely

satisfied and so wrote and stated, that the stone under the Coronation Chair was not the same texture, was not red sandstone, and that there was no stone in the British Isles, anywhere, that compared with it." In an effort to determine the veracity of Odlum's claims, I wrote The Reverend Canon A. E. Harvey, Librarian of Westminster Abbey. His assistant, a Mrs. E. Nixon, kindly replied to my inquiry... As her letter indicates, Westminster Abbey officials claim they have no record of any geological examination of the Coronation Stone conducted during the 1920s. Dr. C. F. Davidson, Senior Principal Geologist, Her Majesty's Geological Survey, did examine microscopic sections taken from the Stone when it was cleaned in 1892. Although Davidson does not give the exact year of the examination itself, he does say it was "some years" prior to 1951 when he wrote his article on the Coronation Stone for the *Illustrated London News*. (Mrs. Nixon sent me a copy of the short article.)

Davidson writes, "The Stone has been examined by successive generations of geologists, including John Macculloch, who made the first geological survey of Scotland, and Sir A. C. Ramsey, Sir Archibald Geikie [Prof. Skene refers to both Ramsey and Geike in his 1869 work, *The Coronation Stone* - Moore] and Sir J. J. H. Teall, three of the most distinguished Directors of H. M. Geological Survey." As you will have noticed, there is no reference to a Professor Odlum. Regarding the most likely geological and geographic origin of the Coronation Stone, Dr. Davidson observed the following in his 1951 article:

"From these investigations, it has long been known that the Stone is almost certainly of Scottish origin; but its lithological character is such that it has always been found a difficult matter to trace it with any certainty to the locality whence it was derived.

"Some years ago, the writer had an opportunity of examining microscopic preparations of minute fragments obtained from the Stone while it was being cleaned in 1892. These were compared with similar preparations of rocks from various localities and geological horizons, and from this study the Coronation Stone was found to agree most closely in lithology with sandstones of Lower Old Red Sandstone age from Scotland. Several examples of sandstone petrographically indistinguishable from the Stone of Destiny were collected from the neighborhood of Scone itself.

"A microscopic section of a pebble from the Coronation Stone has been examined, and it was found that this rock could be matched exactly with pebbles from the sandstones of Perthshire and Angus. [We] can thus assume with reasonable certainty that the Stone was quarried somewhere in eastern Perthshire, probably not far from the ancient seat of the Pictish monarchy."

All this leads me to conclude one of two possibilities. Either the official records of Westminster Abbey are incomplete and Her Majesty's Geological Surveyors are in error or the Professor Odlum story is pure fiction created from whole cloth. Neither Mr. Hunt nor his British Israel associates furnish any substantiating evidence of Odlum's examination; they cite not one reference from which one could verify Odlum's claim. The geologist who participated in Odlum's examination is also unnamed.

In the words of Mrs. Nixon, "I cannot believe that any proper geological examination could have taken place without the express consent of the Dean and Chapter and there is no indication of that having been either asked for or given."

If Professor Odlum examined the Coronation Stone in 1926 or '27, he apparently did so without the permission or knowledge of the authorities responsible for the care and protection of the Stone. Logically, the good professor would have wanted their support for his investigation, not only to gain access to the Stone but also to help corroborate that he had, indeed, examined authorized samples from the Coronation Stone. Without that endorsement, no matter what the conclusions might have been, we would have no guarantee that the samples he examined actually came from the Stone of Scone, defeating the whole purpose of his investigation.

I am interested in reviewing any evidence AR readers might have of Odlum's 1920s examination, if it exists. In the meantime, I propose to write Her Majesty's Geological Survey to obtain whatever information they might have regarding the geographic history and physical composition of the English Coronation Stone. I'll keep you posted on developments.

Bill Moore

Readers familiar with only the HWA version of British Israelism may be surprised to discover that there are many other varieties of the theory. Those just beginning to study the subject may benefit from reading J. Gordon Melton's chapter on "The Identity Movement" in his *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (Garland Publishing, 1986).

Another helpful work is *Anglo-Israelism: Divine Master Plan or Satanic Deception?* published by TSL Publishing House, P.O. Box 18122, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118. While AR does not endorse all the views in this book (nor in most other books we mention), TSL's 77-page book is, nevertheless, helpful in understanding Armstrong's prophecy theories and the racial theories of many he seems to have influenced: Anglo-Israelism and Euro-Israelism groups, the Posse Comitatus, the Order, the CSA, neo-Nazi Skinheads, the Aryan Nations, proponents of the "Serpent's Seed" doctrine, etc., etc.

As is obvious from TSL's book, there are varieties of "Identity" theory to fit the needs of just about any racist group. Some readers are aware that the Mormons view the native American Indians as "the Lost Ten Tribes" of Israel. Many will be surprised to discover, however, that "the Lost Ten Tribes" at one time or another have been thought to be the Japanese people and even some of the Maori of New Zealand. For an excellent insight into the latter, see Peter Farb's *Man's Rise to Civilization (As Shown By the Indians of North America From Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State)* (Avon, 1968, pp. 235, 328-9, 367).

Today, there are even a significant number of blacks who believe they are the "true Israelites." Notice what one of our New York readers wrote to us:

I am writing you for two reasons. First, in *Bitter Harvest: Gordon Kahl and the Posse Comitatus Murder in the Heartland* by James Corcoran (Viking Books, 1990), the "Christian Identity" movement is mentioned on p. 38 along with its connection to British Israelism and Herbert Armstrong. You may find the book of interest.

Second, I'd like to mention the Black Muslim/Black Hebrews movement. I don't know if these people are active on the west coast, but in Manhattan they have been out in growing force for about four years now. (Let me tell you right here that I am white and of northwestern European heritage.)

The most militant followers dress in garb that can only be described as ancient Israelitish with Shakespearean touches. On weekend nights, they lay siege to a streetcorner and pump out over loudspeakers what can only be described as AFRO-Israelism! Basically, they claim Adam was black, all of the Hebrews were black (and the Egyptians too), all of the prophets were black, Christ was black, God is black, and whites are either (depending on the source) a genetic mutation (ala albinism) or the spawn of a person whose line God cursed with perpetual leprosy. Either way, the basic idea is that all whites are of Satan and when blacks wake up to their true Israelitish heritage, they will rise up and destroy all evil, Devil-loving whites around the world.

When I first came across these people four years ago, I laughed about them to myself because their claims seemed so outlandish. Yet I have seen them grow in influence, power, and in number of adherents. Most, if not all, of them eschew Christianity and have taken up Islam. Louis Farrakhan is apparently one of their leaders. And, like the Anglo-Israelites, they identify the Japanese as the children of Ammon. Surely this stuff must have some roots in Anglo-Israelism. Or is it the reverse, as they assert (that the whites have stolen, wholesale, their beliefs - and identity - in order to suppress all non-whites)?...

I'm not sure if you find any of this interesting or just plain ridiculous. I discounted it four years ago. But these people aren't going away and I think we are going to hear more about them as time goes on.

It is probable that in the near future a number of authors will be publishing new books involving HWA's British Israel theory. We understand one such author is Steven M. Collins (3901 Crescent Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 47106). While he acknowledges that some of HWA's historical data was flawed, Collins seems to feel HWA's general views on British Israelism were correct.

Another writer who seems to feel that HWA's theory has merit is Gary Arvidson. Formerly with the Foundation for Biblical Research and now living in Cherryville, North Carolina, Arvidson has been working on a large book dealing with Bible prophecy and the Identity theory. For a number of years now, Arvidson has correlated a substantial amount of data dealing with the Bible record, secular history, geography, astrology, and the mystical teachings of Manly P. Hall and others. One major part of his planned tome is already complete. But it remains to be seen if Arvidson will ever find the means to publish all of his research.

Finally, many will be as surprised as we were to discover that Identity theories based on the idea of a twelve-tribe nation are not found only among Bible-believing groups. In their new book *Twelve-Tribe Nations and the Science of Enchanting the Landscape*, authors John Michell and Christine Rhone write that many ancient civilizations were divided into twelve tribes with each tribe corresponding to one of the signs of the Zodiac. While Israel is the most famous of the twelve-tribe nations, there are many others. The authors claim that examples of twelvetribe nations can be found "in all times and places, from remote antiquity to the nineteenth century, from Iceland to Madagascar, from

Europe through the ancient East to America." The beautifully illustrated *Twelve-Tribe Nations* (\$14.95 plus \$3.50 postage) is available through many bookstores or by writing to: Phanes Press, P.O. Box 6114, Grand Rapids, MI 49516 (tel. 800-963-0892).

## **FBI Releases Stripped WCG Files**

As we reported in [AR48](#), Gene Bailey is an AR reader who has been using the Freedom of Information Act in an attempt to get the FBI's files on the WCG. After being put on hold for two years, the government finally sent Bailey the hundreds of pages of information he requested - well, sort of. Bailey tells us that the government's censors blacked out so much of the information for "national security" and other reasons that what he received is virtually worthless.

## **Ambassador Granted Accreditation Candidacy-Again**

In June, Ambassador College received word that the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges had granted it "candidacy status" in its most recent drive for full accreditation. Writing in the July 14 WN (pp. 3, 6), Ambassador College President Donald L. Ward explained:

The next step for Ambassador College is to prepare a progress report in the spring of 1993 and, we hope, receive another creditation visit in the fall of 1993 with the expectation of receiving full accreditation in June of 1994.

In the meantime, the achievement of candidacy status provides the constituents of the College with all the practical benefits of accreditation.

All those who are Ambassador alumni certainly wish AC the best of luck in its accreditation drive. But as Ward, himself, pointed out in his article, Herbert Armstrong, writing in the college's 1947 *Bulletin* had promised that Ambassador would be accredited before its first senior class graduated. Forty-five years later, Ambassador's last remaining campus is still unaccredited. If one looks care-fully at the Southern Association's list of recommendations and suggestions reprinted in the Dec. 23, 1991 WN (p.3), one will see that most parallel the suggestions made by AR in our large [1977 edition](#) (pp. 4-8). Our suggestions in 1977 were ignored and Ambassador-Pasadena's candidacy status ended in 1978.

With the state of Texas threatening to close the Big Sandy campus if it doesn't become accredited, Ambassador's current accreditation drive may be forced to succeed. Those recently visiting the Big Sandy campus report numerous changes. For example, there is now an intercollegiate sports program. There seem to be more foreign students on campus (in 1991 there were 39 countries represented). And the student body is quite noticeably racially diversified. In fact, last year's student body president was Kevin Epps, a black student. The results of Tkach's multimillion dollar building program are evident everywhere. And construction of the new Harold L. Jackson Hall of Humanities was begun in May.

Incidentally, Tkach has adopted one more policy common at virtually all other colleges of "the world." Contributions made toward the construction of various buildings, when generous enough, get special recognition. According to the June 2 WN (p. 1):

Those who donate from \$200 to \$999 will be considered Silver Circle members; \$1,000 to \$4,999 will be listed in the Golden Circle; \$5,000 to \$9,999, the Platinum Circle, and \$10,000 or more, the Ambassador Circle. Alternatively, if a congregation, group of congregations or individuals donate \$50,000, a plaque will be placed on a classroom acknowledging the group's or individual's contribution.

Because the WCG contributes about \$13,000 per year toward each student's enrollment, each Ambassador student is spending only about \$4,500 per year (tuition and living expenses) to attend Ambassador (WN, 6/10/91, p. 10). If the cost of attending Ambassador can continue to be kept that low, it may turn out that for many church families an Ambassador education for their kids will one day be a good deal.

## **World Tomorrow Too Erotic?**

Some WCG members complain that the only way they can get *The World Tomorrow* is if they can afford cable TV. But if you are one of those still lucky enough to get the church's telecast in your area, you may have noticed an occasional slickness in the production. Many Worldwidiers are pleased by their telecast's sophistication. But the telecast does have its critics, even among church members. For example, WCG headquarters recently received the following colorful comment from a viewer:

Mr. Tkach, Christ's gospel should be of a clean and respectable nature fitten to be presented to young children and Christian adults. I noticed as recently as a few Sundays ago the telecast presenting a group of practically nude, shapely prostitutes parading and displaying their beautiful bodies before a pack of long-haired, bearded, filthy street men who appeared to be dying of AIDS or syphilis. Those prostitutes were wearing nothing at all except very, very scanty bathing outfits.

Back when the Apostles were recording the gospels, you never read about them going into such groups and taking pictures of whores and whoremongers (doing everything but the very act itself - which creates a lust in those taking such photographs) and then presenting such worldly idolatry and filth.

I admit, however, that as the gospel of the kingdom, sexual relations should be gradually taught to children, but only as they become old enough to learn of such. But not by displaying nude, shapely, female bodies twisting and wiggling in front of a pile of sickly, nasty, dying, lustful men who would not make buzzard bait.

## **Kinsey, Sex and Fraud**

Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, author of the famous studies *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) has been called "one of the 100 most important Americans of the twentieth century" (*Life*, fall 1990). Kinsey, whose work is said to have set in motion "the first wave of the sexual revolution," has been called by *Esquire* magazine, our age's "Patron Saint of Sex." In the years since Kinsey's

writings first appeared, his research has become so accepted by the media that his conclusions are almost always given the status of accepted scientific "truth." And today, when representatives from the sex institute that bears his name appear on TV talk shows, they are frequently accorded almost unquestioned deference.

It is difficult to underestimate the impact Kinsey has had on sexual values in the late twentieth century. According to *U.S. News* (1/9/89), Kinsey's work provided society with "the cornerstone of almost everything known about human sexuality." Indeed, Kinsey's research is often said to form the very foundation of modern sex education. In the last two years, however, a number of researchers have been questioning the very foundation of Kinsey's work.

In *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People*, authors Dr. Judith A. Reisman, psychotherapist Edward W. Eichel and editors Dr. John H. Court and Dr. J. Gordon Muir make the startling claim that Kinsey's research is the "most egregious example of science fraud in this century." The authors document the Kinsey team's research chicanery so devastatingly that a reviewer for the prestigious British medical journal *The Lancet* (3/2/91, p. 547) wrote that Reisman, et. al. "demolish the foundations of the two [Kinsey] reports."

Among the author's charges are that Kinsey's data was obtained from a sample of interviewees that was grossly unrepresentative of society (containing a high percentage of prisoners, sex offenders, etc.), that Kinsey's research was skewed to reflect his own biases toward bi-sexuality and against traditional Judeo-Christian values, and that some of Kinsey's data was obtained from highly detailed sex experimentation done on children illegally and without informed consent. In reporting on the new book, the *Times of London* (12/29/90, p.8) wrote, "The Kinsey Institute founded by the pioneer denies the authors' claims, ignoring the book's call for a full investigation. The institute's attempt to stifle the allegations, by asking a local radio station not to broadcast a talk programme on the subject, has only added to the controversy."

When we realize how long it has been that Kinsey's research has been accepted as scientifically valid, the evidence presented in *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud* is, indeed, shocking. For those who wonder about conspiracies in the mass media, or about how it has come to be that pedophiles can openly march in parades and how major denominations can openly ordain avowed homosexuals, this book will provide unsettling insights.

*Kinsey, Sex and Fraud* (\$19.95 plus \$2.00 shipping) may be ordered at bookstores or directly from the distributor: Huntington House Publishers, P.O. Box 53788, Lafayette, Louisiana 70505 (tel. 800-749-4009).

## Letters

*Editor: Our [AR50](#) article about Pastor General Tkach's traveling style brought a number of colorful letters from our readers, including the following:*

I wonder if that pseudo Pope would actually notice if his limo's tires were overinflated by

only two pounds or if they were underinflated by a few pounds. If I had anything to do with it, I would underinflate one of his rear tires by about ten pounds so that the car would start to vibrate when it built up speed. That so-called "Apostle" would undoubtedly get so upset that he would heave his fruit and vegetable platters left and right! You know, soft drinks like 7Up and Coca-Cola are hard to get anymore in glass bottles up here. If Tkach were to come to Winnipeg, he would have to drink out of plastic! And, as if all his requirements are not enough, he still wants a touring bus? He should be stuffed in a rickshaw pulled around the city by the local WCG pastor!

Canada

*Editor: Security experts tell us that the reason for overinflating limo tires the way Tkach requires is to increase the vehicle's maneuverability in the event of a terrorist attack.*

I found the leaked instructions about how field ministers were to prepare for, and cater to, the desires of Joe Tkach and his entourage remarkable.

I personally took care of arrangements for Herbert Armstrong at the Feast of Tabernacles sites where I was festival coordinator for seven years. While I certainly don't want to become an apologist for HWA, I do feel the need to point out that HWA was never as demanding or as hard to please as Tkach. Herbert Armstrong always brought his own driver, Mel Olinger, because his eyesight was failing due to old age. It is true that he preferred black Cadillacs. But if for some reason, as happened in 1978, a Cadillac wasn't available, another car would do without complaint from Armstrong.

At all feast sites other than Big Sandy he stayed in the hotel or motel where the other ministers were staying. We customarily reserved only two rooms for him - a bedroom and a sitting room. The bed was standard for the motel, though we moved in furniture for the sitting room if the motel didn't already have such a suite. He did want a small refrigerator for his wine and champagne, Bristol Cream Sherry and Dom Perignon, respectively. Mel took care of his luggage and helped him in other ways, and Dr. Lochner gave him the rubdowns he wanted as he advanced in age.

While Loma still lived, his requirements were much more moderate than that because of her conserving nature. For example, there was no jet airplane then. Personally, I believe the Falcon and the G-2 were corrupting influences in a manner not different from what we see in Washington today.

I have little doubt that had Herbert Armstrong been younger, he might also have gone as far as your piece shows Worldwide's current leadership has gone (especially if Loma had not been around to curb the slide down the slippery slope). But, the fact is HWA did not do so before he died, even though he was the church's founder.

David R. Robinson

*Editor: Former WCG minister David R. Robinson is the author of Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web which first appeared in 1980. Since then, besides being active in the*

*commercial real estate field, Robinson has written a number of papers ("The Russian Empire," "Our Noble Language," "The Devil and His Power," etc.). He has also written and recently published A Little Corner of Texas, a 222-page history of Live Oak County, Texas where he grew up. While the new book has nothing to do with the WCG, the years of research that went into its production and its charming stories will be appreciated by many - especially those with connections to South Texas. A Little Corner of Texas was favorably reviewed by Dan Kilgore, past president of the Texas State Historical Society, and has also gotten Robinson back on TV and into the newspapers (see the Alice Echo-News, 8/24/91, p. 1). Those interested in ordering a copy of Robinson's latest book (\$18.95 including postage) or in obtaining information about his papers should write to: John Hadden Publishers, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74153.*

I am a disabled veteran. My wife, who is a WCG member, has taken control of our finances and I have to sneak away any monies that I can after my wife pillages my veteran's allocation and sends a big chunk to the memory of Herbert. Meanwhile, I have only one change of clothes, what I wear is dilapidated, and there are holes in my shoes.

Arizona

I have heard that the WCG is now asking its members to send in 2.8 percent out of every pay check if they find it too hard to pay the whole 10 percent of third tithe every three years. I don't think this is Biblical at all.

Oklahoma

After spending more than twenty years in the Armstrong (now Tkach) church, I finally decided to order all your back issues. What a revelation! They really helped me to feel better about my life.

So much of what I had previously suspected (but only vaguely) now turns out to have been true. All along "a little voice" (maybe my subconscious - or was it the Holy Spirit?) was telling me something was very, very wrong in the church. Now I wish I could have read every one of your publications long ago. What a difference it would have made in my life. And how much money I would not have wasted on that "church."

I have only one criticism of your efforts. It is no wonder you are short of funds for publishing. You are giving too much free publicity to groups who are, no doubt, draining funds away from AR. I suspect many of your readers order all kinds of reading materials because of your mentioning other publishers. And then they have nothing left for the *Report*. Just a suggestion. I want to see you keep publishing.

Florida

I have relatives in widely separated congregations, and it appears that each local congregation may have a rather large difference as to emphasis and even doctrine.

North Carolina

*Editor: The new WCG seems to be somewhat similar to its new Trinity doctrine - really three churches in one. There's the WCG that is hypnotized by Tkach: they will believe anything he says. A second WCG thinks Tkach is not moving fast enough: this group can't wait to start keeping Sunday and Christmas. A third WCG is loyal to the bones of HWA: these folks are members of "The Dead Apostle's Society. " What your local WCG congregation hears from the pulpit depends on which WCG the local pastor belongs to. In one sense, of course, it doesn't really matter. It's all still the same WCG!*

## **Editor's Note**

As you may suspect, because of the long time it has been between [AR50](#) and this issue, we have been struggling, like many of you, to get through the current recession. It has never been easy publishing the *Report*, but this past year it has been very close to impossible. In order to keep publishing, we have had to cut back our mailing list considerably. We just can't afford to send out issues to those who don't contribute. So if you want to continue receiving AR, we occasionally need to hear from you.

If we can pay off the debts we have incurred for this issue, our next should prove highly informative. In addition to our regular reporting on the WCG, we hope to give an update on the major WCG splinter groups. We also hope to provide more insights into the possessive psychology of cults and on the newest methods of combatting their influence.

Our thanks to all of you who are helping to make this publication possible.

J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR52\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

June 1993 (AR52)

Editor: More than seven years have now passed since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), founder of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), Ambassador College, the Ambassador Foundation, the *World Tomorrow* broadcast, and the *Plain Truth* magazine. Those years have seen Armstrong's successor, Joseph W. Tkach, make dramatic changes in WCG doctrine and church policies. Not surprisingly, those changes have not been accepted by many in the WCG's ministry. The latest addition to the WCG's executive exodus is none other than long-time WCG evangelist Roderick C. Meredith.

Bruce Renehan, a twenty-three-year veteran of the WCG who recently exited, is writing a book about the history of the WCG. He provided us with the following article.

### **Rod Meredith Becomes Contender for Church of God Crown**

In December, evangelist Roderick C. Meredith parted company with the Worldwide Church of God. Dr. Meredith, a Joplin State College R.O.T.C. student and Golden Gloves boxing champion who came to Ambassador College in 1949 as one of that institution's earliest students, was also one of the very first evangelists ordained by Herbert W. Armstrong. For most of that church's history, Dr. Meredith was one of the WCG's leading theologians, college professors, and top executives. But now, Meredith has started his own competing church, The Global Church of God, and his own competing religious broadcast, *The World Ahead*. Here is a round by round description of how it happened:

Round 1. In mid-1992, Tkach decided to put the WCG's oldest shepherds out to pasture by retiring them. Pro-Tkach politicians saw this as a smart move because it helped Tkach save face over past embarrassments [a good example: the WCG's loss in the McNair case], it further distanced the church from HWA, it removed from the Council of Elders voices opposed to change, it helped create straw men to take the blame for the failure of past "paradigms" (a new WCG ministerial cliché meaning "patterns" or "ideals"), and finally, it paid back most of Tkach's past antagonists who, as he has mentioned in

numerous sermons, had threatened to destroy him in his early years in Pasadena.

The first old-time evangelist to be forcibly retired was Gerald Waterhouse. In cutting him off, Tkach gave Waterhouse a minor bit of acclamation in a minor article attached to an almost mocking photograph of his grinning face in the *Worldwide News* (WN, 9/22/92, p. 8). Waterhouse had made an entire career out of promoting Herbert Armstrong adoration on a round-the-world preaching circuit that made him one of WCG's most influential ministers. His sermons included massive doses of his own unique prophecies plus imaginative expositions on the supposed cosmic significance of various numbers, calendar dates, and the names of Herbert Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, Stanley Rader, Big Sandy, Bricket Wood, and Pasadena. He was the main proponent of the doctrine that WCG members would flee one day to Petra in Jordan. He lionized Herbert Armstrong as fulfilling an end-time role as Moses, Zerubbabel, John the Baptist, John the Revelator, one of the Two Witnesses, Malachi, Ezra and Elijah. He unflinchingly told WCG congregations that they would never see Herbert Armstrong die of old age. Few, if any, of Waterhouse's predictions came true. Once HWA died, the new object of Waterhouse's idolatry became his new boss, Joseph W. Tkach who, in Waterhouse's eyes, began to take on superhuman qualities. But Waterhouse's style did not adjust to the new administration. His sermons (actually, his sermon, singular - his sermon repertoire seems to have included only one real sermon which he repeated thousands of times) continued to be filled with rantings, ravings, and lectern pounding. Significantly, his sermons continued to extend well past the time limits normally allowed to local pastors who were frequently offended by his audacity. Clearly, Waterhouse was a loose cannon that needed to be tied down.

Round 2. A second major WCG figure Tkach decided to retire was Meredith. It should not have come as a surprise. Meredith had been privately saying for some time that he thought Tkach was leading the WCG in the wrong direction. In fact, before HWA had even died, Meredith privately made statements to the effect that he, and not Tkach, should be Armstrong's successor. Not surprisingly, for a number of years, Meredith was not allowed to speak from WCG pulpits (although he continued to receive a generous church paycheck). Then, in October, Meredith was allowed to deliver a closing prayer before thousands gathered at a Feast of Tabernacles service in Palm Springs, California. The prayer was of world-record time length. It was so long that at least one member was seen taking notes.

It was shortly after that faux pas that Meredith was asked by the Tkach administration to retire gracefully. The humiliation [and salary cut - ed.] was more than the evangelist could bear and so he requested a private audience with Pastor General Tkach. The resulting meeting lasted over two hours.

Thousands of WCG members waited with baited breath to discover the outcome of the confrontation. Undoubtedly, many frustrated Worldwidiers, hoping the WCG could avoid another schism, were like the crowd in the movie *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. In that comedy there was a scene in which the crowd asked the Roman governor for the release of a prisoner named Roderick. In a parody of the biblical "give us Barnabas" episode, the throng cried out "release Roderick!" When the Roman emperor, who had a speech impediment, heard this, he commanded his men by shouting "Wewease Wodewick!" As Roderick was summoned for release, the crowd was both joyful at the result and

hysterical about the governor's manner. But for Roderick Meredith there would be no such reprieve from the WCG's emperor. Instead of being released from his years of censorship and pulpit denial, he was, instead, fired and disfellowshipped from the very church he had helped to create.

---

&COPY;1993 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service.

ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

Round 3. Next came a mysterious letter mailed to WCG members around the world from an anonymous group. Signed merely "Friends from Pasadena," the letter accused Tkach and his staff of sabotaging the sanctity of Herbert Armstrong's divine commission by secretly destroying all of Armstrong's doctrinal "revelations." Its style, delivery, and typeface, coupled with the fact that it came from someone with computer access to the WCG's membership list, led most to conclude that it was an inside job. Some at WCG headquarters felt the letter had to have come from the church's editorial department (with purposeful misspellings added in to throw the inquisitive off track). Some in editorial, however, were convinced that the guilty culprits were in the church's television production department. Still others thought that the letter was the combined effort of some in the now de facto defunct Council of Elders. The Council, originally set up by HWA, had for years been sitting on its hands. With every distasteful doctrinal swing toward Protestantism, they have had to contend with the possibility of eventually resigning their positions and getting real jobs at McDonalds or elsewhere. Many thought that old-timers on the Council were the actual "Friends from Pasadena." Naturally, WCG headquarters told the field ministry that any members receiving copies of the letter were to turn them in to their pastors unopened.

---



---

Round 4. With the "Friends from Pasadena" letter circulating throughout the church, some were convinced that there would be an internal revolt against the Tkach administration and that Meredith would be restored to power. No such revolt transpired. Indeed, many came to feel that not only was Meredith behind the letter, but that he may have been responsible for other such anonymous letters in the past. Meredith quickly learned the frustration that other WCG members have felt over the years when they have

attempted to apply the mandates of Matthew 18:15-17 ("if a brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault..."). Numerous statements Meredith has made in the last few months indicate that he actually expected a number of WCG evangelists to come to his rescue in December. It didn't happen. Even Dr. Herman Hoeh, whom Meredith had considered one of his very closest friends, told Rod in essence, "I never knew you, depart from me you worker of iniquity."

Round 5. With his break from the WCG now complete, Meredith formally announced that he had formed the Global Church of God (GCG). He then declared himself Pastor General. In a December 31, 1992 letter to his "Brethren and Co-Workers," Meredith boasted how he had been "ordained an Evangelist by Jesus Christ through Herbert W. Armstrong forty years ago this month. He then went on to outline his differences with the Tkach administration and his goals for the new church. In a flyer distributed widely, Meredith has explained his mission as threefold: "(1) To preach the gospel of the soon-coming Kingdom based on God's Laws. (2) To preach the end-time prophecies and give Ezekiel's warning to our peoples. And, (3) to feed the flock of God through weekly Sabbath Services with inspiring, dynamic preaching."

Round 6. With Meredith's announcement, the WCG rumor mill went into overdrive. Some Tkach associates began calling Meredith "insane." Employees at the church headquarters Meredith had helped to build began referring to Meredith's new ministry as "The Gullible Church of Rod." Yet, while many employees were outwardly laughing at the insulting terms in a benign show of WCG support, they were secretly sending tithes and offerings to Meredith's new ministry. And, like Nicodemus in the night, many close, personal friends of Rod and his wife assured them over the phone that were they not on the WCG's payroll, they would surely join Global openly. In fact, in the first few weeks following Global's establishment, its 800 number was so jammed with calls from those offering moral support, it was difficult to get through because of the almost constant busy signal.

Round 7. One series of comments by Tkach, in particular, only expanded the Meredith problem. Earlier in the year, Tkach had carelessly remarked in a sermon how previous church administrations had been in error on major policies and ideas that "we were dumb to believe in the past." The remarks, actually transmitted via satellite to the entire church during the Feast of Tabernacles, infuriated a fair number who deduced that the statement was actually a veiled attack on church founder Herbert W. Armstrong. In late December, in a clumsy stab at damage control, Tkach attempted an apology for the "dumb to believe" remark in a video-taped sermon sent to all WCG congregations. Unfortunately, in what many perceived as an outrageous display of poor emotional control, the apology quickly degenerated into a tirade against members not in agreement with his new doctrinal and policy positions. Tkach, in effect, said to those who didn't like his changes, "There's the door! Good riddance!" Among those who took Tkach's advice was veteran WCG deacon Bill Brazil. He now oversees Global's printing operations.

Round 8. The tirade that prompted Brazil to leave was not an isolated incident. Although Tkach has long sought to project the persona of a kind and benevolent administrator, many insiders say Tkach ever more frequently is behaving like a wounded lion ready to devour his own young.

Others say Tkach is increasingly paranoid. An example of this is a strange announcement WCG headquarters required all its pastors to make in late December. With the seventh anniversary of HWA's death approaching, pastors were ordered to warn their members against any kind of demonstrations during church services on the anniversary date. The pastors then threatened their flocks that if any member displayed disloyalty to headquarters on that date, the ministry was under strict orders to call the police and have that church member arrested in front of family and friends during services.

One minister from a northwestern state confided in me, "I don't know what we'd do if a problem broke out here. We don't even have a phone in the hall. We'd have to drive down to the 7-Eleven. By the time we got back, everybody probably would be gone."

When the anniversary date came, nothing happened. So what was the point of the announcement? In trying to track down the source of the rumor that a disturbance had been planned by anti-Tkach forces, the first group I thought to ask was the newly formed Global Church of God. My contact in that organization told me, however, that they had absolutely nothing to do with the scare. In fact, further investigation revealed that the actual perpetrator of the scare was on the top floor of the WCG's Hall of Administration. Has Tkach, then, become like Caesar, living in fear of the "Ides of March"? Does he run when there is no one chasing him?

Round 9. In January, Tkach finally got down to serious mud-slinging. In an editorial in the WN (1/26/93, p. 1), Tkach, in essence, called Meredith self-righteous, power hungry, and a liar. He further stated that Meredith wants "to take [his church] back into the bondage of an impossible salvation by works." Tkach claimed that it is he, himself, and not Meredith, who is following in HWA's footsteps. And that HWA, before his death, had privately confided in him that Meredith had been a continual thorn in his side. Unfortunately, like many other statements HWA supposedly made to Tkach before his death (including, supposedly, a plea by HWA that Tkach change many of the WCG's key doctrines), there seem to have been no other witnesses to this HWA to Tkach communication.

Round 10. Meredith has fought back with a series of stinging jabs: Meredith emphasizes how he was one of the first evangelists ordained by HWA and how he knew the Armstrong family personally and intimately. He even assisted HWA in attempting to resurrect Richard Armstrong after his fatal car crash in 1958, and he was one of the few at Loma Armstrong's death bed. Using Waterhouse-like "reasoning," he points out that GCG was born 40 years after he was ordained and that at GCG's very first service there were 19 people in attendance - exactly the same number as at HWA's first service decades ago. Meredith likens Tkach to Diotrephes in III John 9 and also, predictably, to Lucifer in his rebellion against God.

Round 11. Some in the Tkach camp, however, have come up with their own numerological rebuttal to Meredith. Someone has pointed out how there were seven years between the WCG financial crisis of 1965 and the church crisis of 1972 when Garner Ted Armstrong was put out of the WCG [and major WCG prophecies failed]. There were then seven years until the start of the famous State of California versus WCG lawsuit in 1979, another seven years until the death of HWA in 1986, and, finally, another seven years until Meredith's great rebellion of 1993. The theory WCG numerologists are apparently

promoting is that God allows Satan to attack the WCG in some major way every seven years. Meredith therefore is supposed to represent but one more Satanic attack the WCG will weather on its way to "the end."

Round 12. As we go into round twelve, it is very clear the match between Meredith and Tkach will be a long one. In the three months since GCG was formed, Meredith has settled on a mailing address (P.O. Box 5500, Glendora, CA 91740-5500), has a toll-free number (800-959-1641), a monthly newsletter, a number of booklets that imitate HWA's old booklets in content and style, cassette lectures that sound almost as supercharged as HWA was in his early years, a weekly radio broadcast that is already heard in 12 major markets, congregations in 18 U.S. cities and two foreign cities, and plans for a magazine to begin later this year. Besides Bill Brazil, prominent WCG figures who have already aligned themselves with GCG include Edwin Pope (a CPA who is GCG's business manager), Donald E. Davis (GCG's general manager), Norman S. Edwards (heads GCG's computer department), Jim Downes, Eric Myers, Sven Clark (GCG's mailing manager), Ron Nelson, John D. Schroeder, Art Gray, Sidney Hegvold, Charles Knowlton, David Pack (who brought many of his Akron, Ohio congregation with him), Jean Carion (who brought 175 of his Brussels, Belgium congregation with him), Mordakhai Joseph, Gene Scarbrough, and evangelist Raymond McNair, who will head up GCG's editorial efforts. By the time this article goes to press, it is likely that many more will be added to the Meredith camp. On January 2, Meredith told his congregation:

When I grew up in the chat piles of Joplin, Missouri, it was the largest lead and zinc mining city on earth... in the amount of lead mined and so on. I got this scar here on this hand and another on this and several over my head. My mother used to wash the blood off my head over the bathtub. And I got called all kinds of names, so I'm used to being called names. And I hope you get used to that too! That doesn't bother me. As long as God is with us, it's going to work out!

Meredith, who once punched a "liberal" fellow evangelist in the face in church, is a scrapper. It looks like Tkach is in for a real fight.

-Bruce Renehan

*Editor: Mr. Renehan tells us his book on WCG history is almost completed. Those interested in finding out more about it should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Daughter of Babylon," P.O. Box 1551, Tehachapi, CA 93581-1551.*

## **GTA's CGI Becoming Like HWA's WCG?**

Of all the churches that have sprung out of the WCG, probably the most prominent is the Church of God, International (CGI). Because it is headed by Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), the son of WCG founder HWA, for many people this organization represents the true continuation of the Armstrong "commission." CGI currently has more than 3,500 members, annual revenues of more than \$3 million, and a weekly telecast that is seen in about 40 markets. Small compared to the WCG, CGI has maintained only a modest annual growth rate since its start in 1978. However, through the issuance of \$750,000 in

first lien mortgage bonds in 1992, CGI was recently able to complete the construction of a corporate headquarters building on Lake Palestine, south of Tyler, Texas. As part of the complex, there is CGI's "Family Life Center," which was made possible by a bequest from a nonmember lady who was obviously an admirer of GTA. Recently GTA announced that he plans to open a ministerial training school called "Imperial Academy" at the same site in the fall of 1993.

While CGI has its own evangelistic activities, a good percentage of CGI members are former WCG members. Why do folks leave Worldwide to join CGI? Here is what Mr. Lloyd W. Cary of Toledo, Ohio wrote us on that topic:

After 26 years, our family came out of the WCG. And, honestly, once we made up our minds, it was like coming out of slavery in Egypt! It happened like this. We sat and squirmed for years, knowing that all the [doctrinal] changes were not right. But we were caught up in the "paradigm" (the pop psychology term they use to give themselves more credibility) of "God is on His throne," "this is God's one and only true church," and "Christ will work it out." The problem was we didn't know there was anywhere else to go without jeopardizing our eternal life....

I recently had a conversation on the phone with a lady in Worldwide and I said, "Mrs. so-and-so, if I pointed to words in your Bible and they were different from what Worldwide taught, which would you believe? After some hesitation, she said - and I quote - "Well, I'm no scholar. I guess I would believe what the church says."....

I challenge anybody sitting in WCG services to take this test: While taking notes, make a check list in your margin and notice how many times WCG ministers *correct* your Bible. Some of the phrases to listen for are: "This verse, or word, *should be*.... The *original* Hebrew, or Greek, (which no living man has ever seen) is.... The \_\_\_\_ translation reads..." [etc.]. Again, the real issue is: Are they Bible *believers* or Bible *correctors*?

Putting aside a host of philosophical questions raised by such views, the above comments, nevertheless, reflect views commonly held by many who leave the WCG to go to CGI (and other church organizations), namely, that the WCG's leadership has intellectualized away too many of what they see as the Bible's fundamental teachings. Ironically, for quite a few years after GTA left his father's organization, the WCG's official position on his departure was that he had been disfellowshipped for having liberalized too many of the WCG's teachings. It is true that upon founding CGI, GTA did adopt a number of doctrinal positions different from the old WCG (for instance, allowing those who were ill to obtain medical treatment - a doctrinal change Tkach later adopted for Worldwide - using softer language regarding tithing, and doing away with the "church eras" and "Petra as a place of safety" doctrines). GTA has even allowed his members to sing a number of traditional hymns that HWA would have considered "too Protestant." Nevertheless, a comparison of the current doctrines of CGI and WCG reveals that CGI is far closer to the original teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong. In fact, it is fair to say that had HWA not been senile during the last decade or so of his life (see [AR23](#)), the WCG during the eighties would very likely have evolved into a church very much like CGI is today.

During the eighties, AR frequently received letters from folks who said they were much happier in the CGI than they were in the WCG. Many have told us they found CGI less

authoritative and more open. In regard to the latter, it is interesting that GTA, unlike Tkach, has frequently allowed himself to be interviewed by members of the press. Some have also pointed out that CGI has courageously taken a strong stand against the rabidly racist "Seed of Satan" teaching that some former Worldwidiers have adopted.

Not only do most CGI members say they believe in CGI's doctrines, there are many who remain GTA admirers. And certainly GTA, himself, recognizes the follow-the-leader phenomenon that pervades many churches. In the January 18, 1986 edition of the Pasadena *Star-News*, GTA was quoted as saying, "Sooner or later, a church has to identify with a person." Nevertheless, there are some in CGI who are there not because of GTA, but in spite of him. One AR reader recently told us, "Ted doesn't realize how tired some of us are of hearing about his past accomplishments, his hunting expeditions, his knowledge of jet aircraft, or of how he met world leaders years ago." There are other complaints. One of our Orange County readers wrote us:

It's good to know that some things never change. I just received a copy of *The International News* published by CGI. In the lead article, GTA writes, "I find it difficult to be cutting, sardonic, cynical to people." Say what? Anyone who has ever listened to Ted for over five minutes knows what utter nonsense this is! Typical GTA BS.

Sometimes it is difficult to take GTA seriously. For instance, in his Dec. 17, 1991 letter to his "fellow-laborers," GTA wrote, "I hope you saw Diane Sawyer's 'Primetime Live' expose of three 'televangelists' here in Texas. Some of the blatant hypocrisy used by these men to extract money from their television audiences was absolutely shameful." He then went on to report how his right hand man, evangelist Ronald Dart, has written a forthcoming book that exposes the fund raising gimmicks of televangelists. (We wonder if it includes a chapter on the mandatory triple tithing doctrine.) GTA went on to offer his readers a sermon tape entitled "Avoiding False Christs and False Prophets." In a recent telecast, GTA even lamented how a lot of TV preachers "seem to only want your money - or your daughter."

Back in 1988, when Christian fundamentalist groups around the country protested Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (thereby turning a terribly boring and stupid movie into a box office success), GTA jumped on their bandwagon. About the movie he had only read about, GTA wrote his followers:

I was stunned - sickened, absolutely shocked almost beyond words.... [and regarding some of the language in the movie:] Words nearly fail me to describe my utter OUTRAGE; the anguish of heart, the feeling of literal, physical sickness that came over me at the moment I saw such a blasphemous statement attributed to Jesus Christ.... Surely only a demon-possessed or demon influenced mind could begin to conceive of a scenario so grossly blasphemous as that which is portrayed in this motion picture!

Some of us can remember a Garner Ted in the seventies who, as a former navy man with a naked girl tattoo, would casually tell dirty jokes while guzzling beer and playing cards after basketball games at Ambassador, and who wondered aloud about how a masculine Jesus could ever possibly have had anything other than normal sexual urges. We are supposed to believe now, however, that the new GTA is a much more sensitive

individual. GTA now even offers a cassette sermon entitled "How to Have a Happy Marriage." Actually, the lecture many have been waiting to hear is, "How I Screwed Around and Still Kept My Wife, Family, and Ministerial Credentials." (Ted: No kidding. As a book it would be a major best-seller. Think about it.)

There is no need to rehash the extensive coverage we gave to GTA - "the playboy preacher" - in [AR2](#). Those facts remain undisputed. When Larry Flynt announced in June, 1978 that the September issue of his Hustler magazine would make those same sordid facts known nationally, GTA was coincidentally disfellowshipped, this time for good, by HWA within days. While HWA's June 26, 1978 disfellowshipment letter to GTA gave other (nonsensical) reasons for the disfellowshipment, the fact is GTA's reputation for womanizing within the church and gambling in Vegas played a major role in his being permanently banished from the WCG. Yet, to this day, GTA has not publicly (or, perhaps, even to himself) acknowledged the part his own sins played in his fall.

In late 1992, GTA finally published a formal explanation of how he left the WCG to start CGI. The 87-page booklet, titled *The Origin and History of the Church of God, International*, offers many insights into the tortured history of Armstrongism. Not surprisingly, the booklet does have its historical gaps and euphemisms: HWA's daughter, Beverly, was a "hostess," HWA's years-long incest of his daughter Dorothy was merely a "personal, family problem," how GTA really came to know so much about Ramona Armstrong's character before his father married her is not stated, Stanley Rader - who is attacked viciously throughout the booklet - is never actually named, etc. Nevertheless, there are some very forthright sections that help explain the personality of HWA, the reasons for the rift between HWA and GTA, HWA's unstable mental state during the last decade of his life (GTA thought HWA was insane at times, pp. 56 and 65), Stanley Rader's overwhelming influence over HWA, and the corporate chaos that existed in the WCG in the seventies and eighties.

Sadly, the booklet also reveals the incredibly inflated ego of GTA. He leaves the reader with the distinct impression that he sincerely believes that for decades he, alone, was running "the Work" (see p. 31). GTA makes no mention of the fact that for many years it was Al Portune who really ran the business operations of the church, Herman Hoeh who edited the *Plain Truth*, and Rod Meredith who oversaw the administration of the ministry. The significant contributions of those three men plus many, many others are simply ignored. It is also disturbing to read statements such as the one on page 85: "I believe God has appointed me to be His 'watchman' to His people Israel, and to all the world."

Why does GTA believe such stuff? The answer is found on page 80, where we find this statement from a letter he wrote to his father in April of 1979:

You are a pretty good salesman, Dad. You have told me and tens of thousands of others how I was given the gift of speech by a miracle from God, and how my very life was a miracle. You always felt God had intended me to be born - and intended me to be given that gift and had always intended to use me in His work. You sold me on that fact. And, Dad, I still believe you.

Reading such statements, it is difficult not to conclude that GTA, himself, has been not

just a perpetrator, but also a victim of Armstrongism. It is also sad to see the extent of GTA's amnesia about his own past morality problems. No wonder he wrote his followers (Sept. 25, 1992), "It has been a traumatic chore for me to write this very difficult and sometimes traumatic booklet, going back through many of the almost mind-boggling events of 1978 and 79." Since his 1978 ouster from the WCG, GTA has denied his past a number of different ways. In a large front-page article in the Pasadena *Star-News* of Sept. 4, 1987, there was this statement:

Armstrong flatly denied old stories that he had sexual encounters with Ambassador students and other women. [Said GTA:] "There was never a whisper of anything immoral [!!!-ed.] and hadn't been for years and years."

In 1988, however, he had a different story and came a bit closer to the truth when, in an interview with *Watchman Expositor* (Vol. 5, No. 5), he was asked about why he had been forced out of the WCG (the first time) in 1971 for conduct "considered to be sin." GTA responded this way:

Not "forced." My father and I both agreed that we needed that (time apart) because I had had some very serious problems in my marriage and family. I have never commented on that nor will I now. Basically I had a mid-life crisis. I experienced a sort of partial nervous breakdown because of the load that was on me.

Although mid-life crises are a well-recognized psychological phenomenon, and GTA's extreme conduct in 1971 can be diagnosed that way, he neglected to mention that much of what got him thrown out of the WCG in 1971 and later was carnal behavior that went on long before his "mid-life crisis" and that also went on afterward.

Another way GTA has handled his past is evidenced in the way he sympathetically mollycoddled Jimmy Swaggart when that televangelist made tabloid headlines in the late eighties. In his May 31, 1988 letter to supporters of his own evangelistic association, GTA wrote:

Recently, Jimmy Swaggart returned to his pulpit, delivering a sermon having to do with repentance, contrition, "forgetting those things which are behind," and citing many scriptures to his audience which had to do with repentance and forgiveness. Of course, the American news media was having none of it. The news article I read was cynical, skeptical, hostile. It portrayed many of the loyal Swaggart followers as dupes, who parroted lines from the Bible concerning "forgiveness," as if all of this forgiveness and pardon really had to do with nothing....

This from a preacher who, for many years, has been touting the strict Law of Moses, and who, with ever increasing frequency lately, has been touting the death penalty as the great answer to America's crime problem. Later in his letter, in the subliminal-suggestion-threat style so common to cult leaders, GTA included the following warning:

I think all of us understand that it was a grave mistake for Jimmy Swaggart to "judge" Jim Bakker. But I am sure that no human being on the face of the earth knows that any better than Jimmy Swaggart!

GTA's followers by and large seem to have confidence in him. And those followers

include many folks who are quite aware of GTA's past. For instance, one follower is Ian Boyne of Jamaica. Mr. Boyne is a talk show host and columnist in that country and has one of the world's most extensive collections of writings about Armstrongism. Yet he describes himself as a true CGI "Armstrongite."

Another CGI church member who was long willing to overlook GTA's past was John Tuit, author of *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, an expose about the WCG that came out in 1981. After a mysterious fire destroyed his upstate New York lumber business a few years ago, Tuit moved to Hays, North Carolina (he is currently on disability due to a serious back injury sustained at work). Feeling a need to fellowship with Sabbath keepers, he started attending CGI services again in Statesville. He recently told us that until this past year he felt comfortable being a part of CGI. But recent developments have resulted in his distancing himself from the GTA administration, although he still feels a loyalty to his local pastor and congregation. Tuit says that with Tyler's new plans to credential its ministers on a yearly basis, prohibit CGI pastors from preaching more than one hundred miles from their congregations, and other gimmicks designed to centralize power and control in Tyler, he fears that GTA is going the way of his father.

CGI has its share of critics, even within its own ranks. While GTA seems to believe that his persona is essential to the survival of CGI, not all of his ministers or members believe that that is the case. Some complain that GTA's TV program, for instance, reveals too much of his own faults. They have a point.

In early April, a GTA broadcast that touched on the Koresh standoff saw GTA poo pooing the government's supposedly excessive concern with the Davidians. (He has since thought it wise to be more critical of Koresh and now even uses the Waco tragedy to promote a booklet expounding his own adventist views of "Armageddon.") On the early April telecast GTA, apparently oblivious to the fact that Koresh's followers had already killed four federal officers and wounded 15, and apparently believing that Koresh was being picked on simply because of a few minor violations, and apparently oblivious to the fact that federal regulations about assault rifles are essentially based on their ease of convertibility to fully automatic weapons (thus giving those who have them a significant firepower advantage over local police officers with their standard-issue weapons), GTA launched into a cynical and embarrassingly lengthy discussion of how the calibers of banned assault weapons are much smaller than those of the scoped Weatherbys in his own hunting rifle collection. (Who in the world cares if Ted's is bigger than Koresh's?) He further commented that in serving their warrant, the federal government should simply have sent one agent to the door to ask if there really was child abuse going on. Child abuse, of course, was not a part of the federal case (although it should have been part of a state case). But his comment, nevertheless, left the distinct impression that to GTA child sexual abuse is no big thing (not surprising, perhaps, considering that GTA grew up in a family where father-daughter incest was tolerated). With such an obvious insensitivity to the feelings of average viewers, such an abysmal lack of understanding of current affairs, and a superficial approach to Bible teaching that is frequently all too evident, it is not surprising that the GTA TV ministry has been able to recapture only a tiny portion of the huge audience it had in the mid-seventies.

A further criticism one hears from those within the CGI organization is that while GTA has given himself a fine salary (making it possible for him to live at the exclusive

Emerald Bay subdivision near Bullard, Texas with its private security force and mandatory country club membership), and has even provided church employment for his sons Mark and Matthew, most CGI ministers are expected to serve *without pay*.

Some CGI ministers also complain about other church policies. For example, some point out how GTA likes to claim his church board is "independent" (able to fire him should he go astray, see his church history booklet, pp. 86-7), and as having women (plural) and laypeople in its makeup. Yet, they point out that the board's eight members (in late 1992) actually included GTA, his wife Shirley (the sole woman), CGI employee Guy Carnes (Shirley's brother-in-law), CGI employee Ron Dart, and CGI employee Benny Sharp. The only members not openly on CGI's payroll, and who therefore might be called "independent," were CGI minister Lesley Pope, advertising man Larry Brookreson, and Pocahontas Savings and Loan President Skip Martin. Even if Brookreson's advertising business and Martin's savings and loan received no business opportunities from CGI (doubtful), GTA could still be assured of having a majority of votes from those whose livelihood are dependent on the continuation of cash flow into CGI. This is not to suggest that such a structure is illegal, nor is it uncommon for "family-controlled" Christian ministries. But the fact is CGI's board is not the truly independent entity painted by GTA. Furthermore, while church finances are under the board's authority, actual church policy on ordinations and doctrine - the real gut issues in any church - are not under their purview, but are under the purview of a separate ministerial council which, itself, is made up of a majority that is either on CGI's payroll or who have a financial interest in CGI. By temperament and training, all council members are GTA yes men.

While it is unlikely to happen, given the makeup of his board, GTA is very aware of the fact that his board still has the legal power to remove him from CGI's top position. Should that ever happen, however, GTA has a backup plan. Early on, GTA set up an independent "Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association." As the name implies, that legal entity is built around GTA, himself. Presumably, he is able to receive a separate income from that operation and would continue to do so if ever cast out of CGI.

Increasingly there are critics convinced that CGI is well on its way to becoming the kind of cult the WCG was in its heyday. As evidence of this some point to the soon-to-open Imperial Academy. Dubbed "Imperious Academy" by some, this new ministerial school is seen by more than a few as GTA's attempt at training a young and impressionable ministry that will eventually take over local CGI congregations from elders who GTA views as too independent. That such a scheme is exactly what GTA has in mind is evident in a statement he made in his church history booklet (p. 21):

[My father] would hold a successful evangelistic campaign, visit in people's homes, baptize new believers, and then leave the newly-organized local church in the hands of another minister with whom he was cooperating.

Soon, he would return to the region, only to find the church had dwindled down to virtually nothing, or that the formerly cooperative minister, eyeing the flock as something to be fleeced, not fed, had decided to go independent.

Years and years of painful experience taught him that the *only* way he was going to see his labors bear fruit in a really large and powerful way *was to educate a ministry for the church himself!*

Translation: GTA will soon follow in his father's footsteps. At Imperial Academy he will train young and easily moldable young men to be his obedient field ministry. And they will in due time replace most of the problematic elders that have known GTA - and his limitations - since their WCG days. Prediction: In ten years CGI will be another WCG in the old HWA style. And without the moderating influence, the "balance of power" - both political and spiritual - that comes from truly independent and mature elders and associates, GTA will eventually become the kind of major nut case he describes his father as being during the last decade or so of his life.

Not surprisingly, CGI already has its own offshoots. One formed in 1985 is the Church of God, Denton Congregation (Austin Newell, Pastor); P.O. Box 1893; Denton; TX 76201. More recently there has been created The Congregation of God, Seventh Day; P.O. Box 2345; Kennesaw; GA 30144. John Pinkston, who formerly pastored CGI's Atlanta congregation is leading that organization. We understand he left CGI after GTA prohibited him from preaching the gospel via his own radio program. (True to the usual pattern of Armstrongite churches, Pinkston's organization has since had its own internal "rebellion," complete with a near brawl during one of their services, as detailed in his 8/13/93 "Open Letter" tape.) Among those ministers who have recently left CGI are Lesley Pope of Midwest City, Oklahoma and David Owen of Chattanooga (who split with Pinkston since splitting with GTA). If one looks at the current roster of CGI ministers, one notices that with the exception of Ron Dart and David Antion, GTA's brother-in-law, there are no other former WCG evangelists, regional directors, department heads, or *Plain Truth* editors who have gone with, and *stayed with*, GTA. Other than Antion and Dart, the best-known WCG celebrity to go with CGI is GTA's old drinking buddy and general "sidekick," Jim Thornhill, who now leads CGI's Salt Lake City flock.

Some critics within CGI have written to us that although CGI for a number of years had attempted to be, or at least claimed to be, nonauthoritarian, some CGI ministers are now beginning to revert back to their authoritarian WCG ways. At least one CGI minister is telling his congregation that CGI is the one and only "true church." Others are quite willing to use strong-arm methods to maintain their "authority." Cosden A. Foland, a security guard who was recently in the news for his heroics in foiling a store robbery (see *The Indianapolis Star*, 8/18/92), was a loyal CGI member who discovered that by entering into an interracial marriage he was no longer welcome in CGI (see [AR45](#), p. 4). As a result, Foland (223 N. Lynn St., Indianapolis, IN 46222) formed his own small fellowship group. He, nevertheless, still wanted to consider the CGI brethren his friends and hoped to occasionally fellowship with them as he and his family did with other groups. Here is what happened to him:

My family and I were sitting in CGI services listening to the sermon when four men came up and asked us to leave. I said, "Why?" They then said that if we didn't leave they would call the police. I said, "Call the police!" But the police never came. A few days later, however, the police did come to my place of work and served papers on me.

We were all on the TV stations. And in court my lawyer made them look sick. They are sick, but I continue to pray for them. Anyway, the judge said that I could visit or go to the church if I wanted. I no longer want to, however.

Ironically, GTA claims his church is nonracist, intimates that dual church affiliation is okay (see history booklet, p. 82), and condemns the WCG's excommunication policies (history booklet, p. 86). While there are those who are happy with their membership in CGI, our mail indicates that many who leave the WCG for CGI do not remain there for long. For many, CGI is a half-way house, only a stepping stone to other things. As one of our readers wrote us, "GTA's church is in a time warp. They are essentially just holding onto the few truths they had ten or twenty years ago. Those who really want to grow spiritually find themselves moving on."

Such people apparently feel toward CGI a lot like GTA felt toward WCG in 1988 when he told *Watchman Expositor*:

I don't know if I could have survived in that organization [the WCG]. It would have been like asking a certain kind of flower to thrive in a certain kind of weed bed. I only wanted to fulfill what I feel is a personal destiny. If I am wrong about that, it will take God to show me, not some human, political or religious force.

Those who may want to receive GTA's *Twentieth Century Watch* magazine ("The Germans are coming! The Germans are coming!") or who may want to check out CGI for themselves can write to: The Church of God, International; P.O. Box 2530; Tyler; TX 75710. Good luck.

## **You Can Fool All the People Some of the Time, But...**

As we have been reporting since at least AR41, for some years now Joseph Tkach has been hard at work changing WCG doctrines and policies in a frantic effort to give the WCG a new image as a noncultish, mainstream church. What the WCG has been doing is not unlike what the Seventh Day Adventists did for many years. When exposed by famous cult watcher Walter Martin (the late founder of Christian Research Institute and *Christian Research Journal*), the SDA's went on the offensive. They began a twenty-year dialog with Martin and instituted a number of changes in the wording of their public positions. By doing so they were able to convince a number of cult watchers that they had evolved into a mainstream Christian church. Nevertheless, they still retained many points of doctrine that mainstream believers see as cultish. (There is an excellent discussion of this history in the April-June issue of *The Discerner*, P.O. Box 806, Brainerd, MN 56401.)

That the Tkach team's PR offensive has been successful in some quarters can be seen by a remarkable statement that recently appeared in a new book published by Baker Book House. On page 11 of *Why We Left a Cult* by Latayne C. Scott, there was this statement:

I selected four groups I believed would be most relevant to readers: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, New Age believers, and Worldwide Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong's movement). However, after many conversations with ex-members of the Armstrong group, I find I must agree with the assessment of the *Christian Research Journal* that such astounding changes have taken place in both the doctrines and practices of that group (accompanied by a significant decline in

membership) that they can no longer be accurately viewed as a cult. While, of course, many cultic groups (most notably and overtly the Mormon church) have tried vigorously through an image-changing campaign in the media to be accepted as "another Christian church," the Worldwide Church of God seems to be doing it through repenting and changing instead of publicity and advertising. Only time will prove the group's sincerity. Meanwhile, I am fascinated with the prospect that a cult, as a group, can turn to God.

Who the ex-WCG members were that Scott talked to, we don't know. She certainly did not talk to any of us at AR. Nevertheless, her comments do show how effective the WCG's image-changing campaign has been. And it really should come as no surprise. First of all, many cult fighting organizations have a simplistic view of what a "cult" really is. While AR has used a four-point test to characterize an organization as a "destructive cult" (encouragement of isolation from family and friends, non-critical thinking regarding the group's teachings, absolute obedience to the group's government, and excessive giving of time and money - see [AR1](#) and [AR44](#)), many Christian anti-cult groups define a "cult" simply as a group that falls outside the doctrinal parameters of what they view as Christian orthodoxy. Very aware of the latter, Tkach has changed a number of WCG doctrines and policies that have given it its "cult" reputation in the eyes of mainstream Christian groups.

Just since our last issue, Tkach has been publicizing a number of doctrinal changes. For example, while HWA adopted the title "Apostle" without any reservations, and Tkach later also adopted the same title, now Tkach is backtracking as to what the WCG means by "Apostle." In the January, 1993 *Plain Truth* (page 19), there was the following statement at the end of a short article explaining what is meant by the title "Apostle."

Today, some Christian denominations use the title *apostle* for the person who holds the chief spiritual office in their church.

These churches generally do not mean the term in the broadest, biblical sense - as eyewitnesses of the resurrection - but rather in the administrative sense.

Of course, even the wording used gives the impression that WCG somehow considers that there are multiple "denominations" of the true body of Christ. But, as we shall document below, that is not what WCG teaches. Published statements such as the above do, however, get the WCG points with some Christian cult watchers.

The same issue of the PT gave us an article by Terry D. Warren entitled "God's Amazing Grace." It was about John Newton (1725-1807), the slave trader who went on to become a Christian minister and the composer of the popular hymn "Amazing Grace." The article by Mr. Warren is excellent. And certainly, to most of us, the Newton hymn is a classic, beautiful of both sound and sentiment. Yet, the article's author neglected to mention a very interesting point. "Amazing Grace" was one hymn that was never sung in the WCG during the days of HWA because HWA absolutely *hated* that hymn. With its emphasis on grace and a melody that HWA apparently found too sentimental, he simply would not allow it to be sung in his church. Now, under Tkach things are different. More points for Tkach with the Christian cult watchers.

Another recent WCG image change aimed at the cult-watching crowd, is the new WCG

position on "the cross." For HWA, the cross was an offense. Many can recall how the WCG used to teach that the cross symbol predated Christianity as a phallic symbol in pagan religions. So in the HWA era many WCG ministers preferred the translation "stake" to "cross." Now, that teaching is no longer WCG dogma. The doctrinal change was heralded to WCG members in a Paul Kroll WN article appropriately titled "Should we use the word cross?" (WN, 2/9/93, p. 4). Now, Tkach increasingly likes to use the word "cross." In the May/ June PT, Tkach devoted his entire editorial to the cross, writing:

For the Christian "army," however, there is only one battle cry, one fundamental reference point providing the courage, strength, and morale to endure to the end in the good faith. That battle cry is: Remember the cross!....

The cross of Christ, therefore, becomes the central reference point for every Christian....

In simple terms, if you're having trouble forgiving your spouse, remember the cross. If you're struggling with sexual sins, remember the cross. If you're involved with dishonest business tactics, *remember the cross!*

Today, if one reads only the WCG publications intended for the general public, one can easily be lead to believe that the WCG is just one more Protestant denomination. (Of Tkachism, former Worldwider Bob Ellsworth likes to say, "It's really Herb Lite - tastes great, less filling.") But carefully read those WCG writings aimed at only the baptized members of the WCG and one can clearly see that the WCG still retains all the key traits of a "destructive cult." For example, the February 25, 1992 Tkach letter to his members and co-workers contained no hint of ecumenicalism. Instead, Tkach was very plain:

---



Tkach is now claiming a type of clairvoyance with the dead HWA, much like Luke Skywalker had with Yoda in Star Wars. Doctrinal changes just come to him now as if Armstrong's voice whispers to him out of the grave: "Use the force Joe." Tkach brought this out in his December videotaped "apology" to the church. He repeatedly emphasized that HWA privately told him to change the church's doctrines once he died. But Dr. Meredith, recalling HWA's stubbornness, says that to believe such a story, one would have to be crazy.

---

As I write this month, I pray that God's people truly understand what it means to be a member of the body of Christ, and why it is that the Worldwide Church of God holds certain distinctive teachings and practices not followed by most other Churches....

[Tkach discusses the seventh-day sabbath, the Old Testament holy days, and then:]  
That is why this Church stresses obedience to God as necessary to Christianity....

What makes us the true Church of God? We are God's Church because God works in us by his Spirit to worship him and serve him. It is what God does that makes us his Church....

Does this mean it makes no difference what Church you belong to? Far from it! It makes every difference, for you need to be part of Christ's body....

In other words, to his followers Tkach still claims that the WCG is the "one and only true church," and thus continues to psychologically and spiritually isolate members from their families and rest of the Christian world. The mandatory triple tithe system of HWA remains in effect. So does the oppressive church government system HWA modelled after the Catholic Church's hierarchy (which, like the hierarchy of the Sicilian Mafia, was modeled after the hierarchical system of the ancient Roman empire). So, even though there have been many changes under Tkach, spiritually speaking nothing has really changed.

To give you a better idea of what a massive subterfuge the Tkach organization has been engaged in, we quote below a May 6, 1992 letter written by then-WCG-member Bruce Renehan to Dr. Ruth Tucker, an Illinois theologian and the author of *Another Gospel*, who has naively endorsed the WCG's supposed conversion.

Dear Dr. Tucker:

I appreciate the time you took to talk with me on the phone concerning recent "doctrinal changes" within the confines of the Worldwide Church of God. I do realize now, as an afterthought, that you and I were not on the same wavelength. It seemed as though you were trying to impress me with the fact that the church that I have been a member of for over 23 years is becoming more and more "Christian" in its teachings. I must have come across sounding very paranoid. For that I apologize. But I would like to explain.

You and I are both in the dark on certain issues. And part of the problem is purely semantic. When I first began to realize this about myself, I found that I had to learn what other Christians meant by terms like "born again," "grace," "repentance," "salvation," etc., etc., because they differ from Worldwide terminology.

Let me explain what these and other terms mean to a Worldwider. The term "born again" used to mean becoming a God. Now it means being conceived to become a God at baptism. Baptism is a requirement to "salvation." "Salvation" means being changed into a God at the return of Christ. Baptism is by full immersion. Sometimes baptisms are considered invalid because the member displays "carnal tendencies." "Carnal tendencies" are equated to rebellion against "God's government," that is the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God. One must always be completely obedient to ministers in the Worldwide.

"Grace" is God's free gift. But, it is earned by obedience to "God's ministers" (Worldwide ministers only are true ministers) and by keeping the "Commandments of God." The "Commandments of God" are the laws given to Moses in the Pentateuch (the WHOLE Pentateuch). Christ is considered an elder brother who kept the Pentateuch perfectly. This shows us that we must do likewise to become a God.

Protestants are the harlot daughters of the Great Whore of Revelation 17. The Great Whore is the Catholic Church. The pope is the false prophet. Protestant churches are

Satan's churches and Protestant ministers are ministers of Satan. Worldwidiers would rather slit their wrists than become "Protestant." So you can understand that when Bernie Schnippert (leading Worldwide minister) explained to all Worldwidiers in a taped sermon, that they were "born again," he was emphatic that he was "NOT SPEAKING OF BEING BORN AGAIN LIKE PROTESTANTS ARE BORN AGAIN!"

There is only One True Church, the Worldwide Church of God. Worldwidiers, on the inside, refer to themselves as the Philadelphia era of God's True Church (although the published stance has been changed to please outsiders). This strongly held belief means that God will divinely protect them in a "place of safety" during WW III (or the Great Tribulation). Anyone who leaves the Worldwide Church of God is a heretic and cannot be associated with and will not be divinely protected with the Philadelphians.

(There was some confusion in our conversation about the Philadelphians. This is not the church that Gerald Flurry started. I'm talking purely about the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God and not other distinct churches.)

It is understandable that you feel the way you do (since being approached by Messrs. Hulme and Snyder). The Worldwide has taken a very deliberate stance in the area of public relations in the past decade. I heard Michael Snyder myself, in the late 80's tell church members that church teachings would be disguised to the media in an effort to stop the Worldwide from getting bad press reviews. Had you been circumspect enough to ask the members (or ex-members) of the Worldwide Church of God if they themselves felt the doctrinal stances were leading them closer to Christ, you would have learned differently. Maybe I'm wrong, but your being led to believe the new and improved Worldwide stance under Joseph Tkach seems a bit like a police officer asking the parents if they are abusing their child and not noticing the bruises all over the child itself.

As far as old Worldwide tactics *NOT* changing under Tkach, I have just spent the weekend with two of my best friends in Fresno, Byron and Linda Sanders. Byron has been in the Worldwide all of his life. He was disfellowshipped just two weeks ago. Why? Because he would not acknowledge Herbert Armstrong's and Joseph Tkach's apostleship and obey the local Church leaders above the scriptures. Linda was disfellowshipped on the grounds that she attended church services in another church. I am bound by Church doctrines to turn my back on them and not associate with them ever again. But I refuse to do that on threat of being disfellowshipped myself when I am caught...

This is far from an isolated case. Almost all disfellowshipping is related to Church "government." This is to cause remaining members to fear going against the administration. I can assure you that the Worldwide is still a cult in every sense of the word. I don't know of any member who shares in this imagined bliss that the Church's public relations people are feeding the media.

And those editorials in the *Plain Truth* are purely window dressing for outsiders. Worldwidiers rarely read the *Plain Truth* because it is pablum compared to inside doctrines.

I found your statement on page 216 of *Another Gospel* most interesting: "...it is impossible to assess how significant any changes in church doctrine will be. Will they, in fact, be more cosmetic than real?" This is exactly why I have decided to leave the Worldwide Church of God. It just doesn't offer the way to Christ and has

made no real effort, aside from semantics, to do so.

-Bruce Renehan

That the WCG is still a cult in every sense of the word is obvious in almost every letter we receive from those leaving it these days. For instance, just a few weeks ago we received the following:

I have recently left the WCG due to reading your AR and the publications of Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Tony Badillo and others. When the ministry of the WCG found out what I had been reading and trying to share with others, they then, with a letter and an official announcement from the podium, disfellowshipped me. I wish to thank you for rescuing me from that deceitful and burdensome church and for your reports. I am now a much happier widow.

-Mrs. Dorothy Stankovsky  
Wisconsin

Space does not permit us to run the hundreds of letters we have received in the past year attesting to the fact that the WCG is still a cult whose leaders still actively use the mind control techniques we have reported on for years. While there is no doubt that along with the doctrines that have remained the same but have only had cosmetic changes made to their descriptions, many WCG doctrines and policies have changed (and some for the better). Nevertheless, the WCG is still a cult steeped in deception and oppression.

While some cult watchers have been fooled, not all of them have been so naive as to take the WCG at its word. For example, in Britain, the anti-cult Conservative Family Campaign (26 Farm Ave., London SW16 2UT) has recently been able to get *The World Tomorrow* removed from a number of stations in Europe. One executive of that Christian organization knows what it is like to be involved with the WCG. He wrote us:

I have a great personal interest in this matter. My mother and father were reluctant to go to hospital in spite of complications at my birth in 1965. It was only through the intervention of my grandmother that they consented. I wonder if their involvement in the [WCG] was responsible for this.... Anything you send will be greatly appreciated. I was brought up in the cult and almost committed suicide before becoming a Christian.

-Mr. Paul Geddes

The editors of *Christianity Today* have not been fooled either. In the November 9, 1992 issue (pp. 57-8), they reported on the WCG's apparent shift toward orthodoxy, but were quick to make a number of astute observations:

Many of the changes of the past six years are reflected in materials furnished to *Christianity Today* by WCOG's communications office....

Despite the changes, even a cursory examination of WCOG's official Statement of Beliefs is likely to raise eyebrows among trained theologians. CT provided several with a copy of WCOG's official statement without disclosing WCOG's identity.

Said Eastern College's (Philadelphia) Chris Hall, "In several places the wording is such that the door is left open to distorted beliefs and unhealthful emphases." He added that the section on the Trinity is unorthodox and that the inclusion in the doctrinal statement of such peripherals as the angelic realm, tithing, and the millennium "makes me suspect a group that majors in the minors. This is one characteristic of a cult."

WCOG's position on the Trinity appears to be the major concern raised by ministries devoted to watching cults and aberrant groups....

In addition to the issue of the Trinity, according to [James Walker of Watchman Fellowship], there are lingering concerns about WCOG teachings on the sufficiency of grace. He said that while the church has at points articulated an orthodox position on the doctrine of grace, it has not reconciled this view with other writings suggesting that salvation is something that must be earned.

Walker and others who have monitored WCOG from an evangelical perspective applaud the changes they have seen, even as they hope for more. As of now, WCOG appears still to be a long way from the mainstream church's standards of orthodoxy.

Finally, we can't help but chuckle as we report one of the funniest twists in this long-running episode of PR deception by "God's Church." For years, the front man in the WCG's PR campaign has been Michael Snyder, A.P.R. (an Accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America) who, right down to his signature, seemed to revel in being a true propagandist.

How Snyder was able to maintain his sanity while working for the likes of Joseph Tkach, David Hulme, and company, we don't know. But apparently he was able to do it. WCG informs us that Snyder is no longer working for them. While Snyder is now in hiding and we therefore have not been able to locate him, insiders say he has left the church. And friends report that Snyder is now saying privately that he is convinced the WCG really is "a cult" after all.

We told you so, Michael.

## **Dismantling of HWA's Empire Continues Under Tkach**

In recent months it has become clearer and clearer what Joseph Tkach's true feelings have been toward HWA. Tkach has told numerous individuals that the worst seven years of his own life were the last seven years that HWA lived. Considering what an SOB his old boss was, such an admission is not surprising. And considering the way Tkach feels about HWA, it is also not surprising that he would want to completely demolish HWA's monuments.

Of course, there is no bigger monument to HWA than the original Ambassador College campus in Pasadena, and the Tkach team continues to look for a buyer. (Actually, such a sale would only be the latest step in Tkach's de facto policy of selling off most of the

WCG's real property, something Tkach has been quietly doing since becoming Apostle in 1986.) While some at WCG headquarters claim that the WCG's Pasadena properties have been appraised at \$175 million and that the asking price is about \$200 million, we have also been told by others that the property has been appraised at about \$275 million and that Tkach wants at least \$300 million for the property. Upon the sale, we are told, Tkach intends to spend \$100 million to build a new WCG headquarters complex somewhere in Oregon, New Mexico, Arizona, or Nevada. With the remaining monies, Tkach supposedly intends to set up a retirement fund for the WCG's elderly elders. While real estate experts say the current southern California real estate market is soft, others say that Tkach has already had nibbles from certain unnamed Arabs and a Chinese group that is hoping to start a college. With the British about to abandon Hong Kong to the Communist Chinese, many in that rich colony are fleeing to southern California. Already, the millionaire community of San Marino near Pasadena boasts a very substantial population of wealthy families from Hong Kong. An exclusive college to accommodate the needs of such families would make many in that community very pleased. In the mean time, the old Pasadena campus is used as the world headquarters of the WCG, with old dormitories such as Manor Del Mar and classroom buildings now housing church administration and editorial operations.

With the WCG trying hard to appear more Protestant, it is not surprising that many WCG leaders are getting their theological training at seminaries and colleges other than Ambassador. Russell Duke, the chairman of Ambassador's theology department, recently completed his doctorate in practical theology at The Union Institute in Cincinnati (WN, 4/13/93, p. 5). Union Institute is a small, private, "nontraditional university," established in 1964. Its 500 graduate students can choose from among 108 different majors offered in its Ph.D. programs. Michael Feazell, assistant to Apostle Tkach, and Tkach's chief ghost writer, recently got his Master of Divinity degree from the Methodist-founded Azusa Pacific College. And Hugh Mauck, a 73-year-old WCG local elder and former WCG executive, recently received a Ph.D. in exegetical theology from Christian Bible College and Seminary in Independence, Missouri (WN, 2/9/93, p. 8).

With some WCG ministers getting their educations from non-Ambassador sources, it is not surprising that many new ideas are making their way into the WCG. For example, WCG members who used to be told that they would one day enter into God's Kingdom, are now being told by Tkach that they are already in God's Kingdom (WN, 12/1/92, p. 1 and letter to members, 9/24/92).

In a March *Plain Truth* side bar (p. 11) entitled "Did Gospel Writers Change Jesus Words?", Senior Editor Paul Kroll (once the editor of *Black Belt*, the karate magazine) explained how some of the Gospel authors had "divine license" to fictionalize some of Jesus' sayings:

It may come as a surprise to learn that writers of New Testament books adapted Jesus' sayings and stories to new situations. The fact is, they did so in a number of cases....

Such examples - and there are many - show that the Gospel writers had divine license to adjust Jesus Christ's original wording. This allowed readers to understand the narratives more clearly....

That is why we shouldn't insist on harmonizing every detail in the Gospels.

Then there is that small question regarding the nature of Jesus' resurrection. Eric Pement, whose organization publishes the excellent *Directory of Cult Research Organizations*, sent us the following note:

You should know that I was present at the 1991 Tanner Annual Lectureship (the "cults" portion of the title was omitted that year), held at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. I was present for the plenary session and the workshop led by David Hulme and Mike Snyder. I believe videotapes of those sessions may be available from TEDS. Some of the changes seemed striking: they indicated a willingness to consider dropping British Israelism and closed communion - or at least *think* about it. On the other hand, David Hulme openly denied the physical resurrection of Christ from the dead in favor of an invisible, spiritual resurrection.

-Eric Pement, Senior Editor  
Cornerstone Magazine  
939 W. Wilson  
Chicago, IL 60640

Some insiders are saying that the next major area of WCG doctrinal change will probably come in the area of prophecy. To prepare members for those changes, Tkach recently had his good friend Dean Blackwell make a taped sermon (3/20/93) on the subject of prophecy. Titled "Prediction Addiction," the sermon made light of many preachers' attempts at understanding that facet of the Bible. While never ridiculing HWA by name, some of the examples he used seemed to have come right out of old HWA sermons. Here is one interesting quote that shows where the WCG may be heading:

So we need to correct errors in our thinking. The Bible is not one third prophecy.  
And 90 percent of what is, is not for our day!....

When I look back over some of the things we have in print, some of the things we've preached, that's highly embarrassing to me. And I can't believe we actually didn't see through the things we printed. Whether it's Leviticus 26 or Daniel 12 or other areas.

Getting the WCG's membership to adjust to the constant changing of doctrines has been a major challenge for the WCG's leaders. To help members psychologically adjust to the changes, last year Tkach ran a propaganda campaign in the WCG built on the theme of "Changing Paradigms." He even had a commercially produced video tape shown in local churches to persuade members that constant change is a good thing. As part of the campaign, Tkach sold the notion that there are five paradigms [the word actually means patterns, models, or ideals] that the WCG should discard: (1) "Anything the pagans did, we must avoid." (2) "Anything the Protestants say or do, we must avoid." (3) "Our commission [is] to prophesy and condemn." (4) "All truth was revealed through Herbert W. Armstrong." And (5) "doctrinal change equals watering down the truth." (Quotes are from WCG minister David Register's 1992 sermon explaining Apostle Tkach's condemnation of "the five paradigms." It was reported on in the Vol. 9, No. 10 issue of *Watchman Expositor*.)

Critics of Tkach point out that when he took over after HWA's death, he authorized a

published list of "18 essential, basic truths that God restored to His people through our late Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong." (WN, 8/25/86, p. 5.) The critics point out that of those 18 "basic truths," fully half (numbers 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17) have already been rejected by Tkach. And that total does not include many other new doctrines that HWA would never have accepted or the changes that are still coming.

The rapid changes have, at times, been even a bit rapid for Tkach, himself, and he has had to backtrack a number of times to cool off. For instance, when his recent comments about the inadequacy of the Ten Commandments (see [AR51](#), p. 3) brought an avalanche of criticism, Tkach found it necessary to give his followers a lengthy "explanation" of what he really meant (WN, 9/22/92, p. 1). The new policy of giving members commemorative plaques for contributions to Jackson Hall (see [AR51](#), p. 8) has been reversed by Tkach, who now says "the whole idea ... was a mistake" (WN, 11/6/91, p. 1). Tkach's comments at the fall festival regarding certain old policies being "dumb" has now been "explained" by Tkach as a statement not really about HWA (WN, 11/17/92, p. 1). Some of our readers north of the border report that Canadian WCG members are again being required to pay third tithe even though Tkach had previously exempted them because of the high income taxes of that country. And a legalistic article in the WN (12/1/92, p. 3) regarding the meticulous keeping of the Sabbath has been interpreted by many as a reversal of years of lax Sabbath rules in the WCG. One example of the latter was given to us by a reader who explained that in many congregations it has become commonplace for WCG weddings to be rehearsed on Friday nights and for the weddings and their receptions to be held on Saturday afternoons. Some WCG watchers feel that Tkach may want to tighten up the Sabbath rules to show that he has not yet gone completely "pagan."

Besides "remember the cross!", another big slogan that Tkach is now pushing is "Upward, inward and outward" (letter to members, 11/24/92). (Somehow it doesn't quite have the ring of an HWA slogan, does it.)

The WCG is changing so rapidly that some ministers have even commented that the WCG should become a member of the World Council of Churches. Such comments, however, appear to be mere trial balloons (attempts to see if the membership would balk at the idea). We contacted both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches and found that the WCG has not made an application to join either.

Nevertheless, changes are taking place at every level of the WCG. You may have noticed that beginning with the February issue, the *Plain Truth* has had a new modernized format designed by Randall Cole and other professional artists. The church will also soon have a new hymnal. While retaining most of the old Dwight Armstrong hymns, 43 percent of the new hymnal will be made up of contemporary or *traditional Protestant* hymns. The collection is slated to appear later this year (WN, 8/11/92, p. 1).

The WCG, always big on computers, recently updated its computers to include the new IBM AS/400 Worldwide Circulation and Support System. And many WCG field ministers now have their own interconnectible PCs. The WCG has also started using advanced bar-coding technology to keep track of its members and magazine subscribers. The WCG will even be bar coding its Holy Day offering envelopes from now on (WN,

12/29/92, p. 6). Through the use of such technology the WCG is now able to immediately ascertain from any returned envelope exactly who the envelope was originally sent to, how much money the parties have been contributing, what church literature they have ordered, plus much more, and much more personal, data.

In Britain, there was recently some confusion among former WCG members who received a letter on WCG letterhead and with the official signature of Joseph Tkach. One who received the letter said he could not understand how the WCG even knew how to find him because he had moved many times since leaving the WCG more than a decade ago. The letter caused genuine shock among some because it stated that many former WCG members had been disfellowshipped improperly and without cause by WCG ministers who had acted contrary to church policy. The "WCG" letter asked that the former members assist Tkach in ferreting out the problem ministers. The letter also claimed that a full one half of the WCG's ministry is secretly active in freemasonry. While the letter appeared to have been mailed by someone with much inside knowledge of the WCG, sources within the church claim that the letter is not authentic and that Tkach was not its author. We have yet to discover who is behind the mailings.

In December, many Ambassador College alumni received a mailing from the Ambassador Alumni Association (P.O. Box 111, Big Sandy, TX 75755) promoting membership in that organization. Benefits of membership include discounts on "selected Ambassador College merchandise available by mail." Yearly membership dues are \$15, but "now you can use your Visa or Mastercard to join." One catch though: "It is understood that members of the Ambassador Alumni Association are in harmony with the goals, purposes and philosophies of Ambassador College and its principal sponsor, the Worldwide Church of God."

The WCG's television program, *The World Tomorrow*, continues to become more sophisticated. Viewers are now treated to occasional "dramatizations" that make the WCG's message more attractive to viewers. In order to ensure quality acting, the producers frequently employ professional Hollywood actors, with auditions of 20 or 30 actors from a Hollywood casting company not unusual (WN, 8/25/92, p. 6). With such attention to detail, it is not surprising that *The World Tomorrow* is ranked by Nielsen and Arbitron as being second among all network religious programs. Only Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power* has more network viewers (WN 9/22/92, p. 3).

Joseph Tkach's plan to get his church more actively involved in charity work is moving ahead. Recent projects have included church members raising money for children in war-torn Croatia and the participation of Ambassador students in the Jerry Lewis MS telethon (WN, 11/17/92, pp. 1, 12).

Because the WCG loses so many of its "church kids" to other denominations or atheism, Tkach has been particularly interested in developing programs to keep young people in the WCG. The WCG recently started *ARROWS in Flight*, a magazine for the WCG's teenagers (WN, 2/9/93, p. 1). And one WCG minister, Curtis May, recently had a "Youth Day" for Sabbath services: church youngsters were allowed to perform ushering duties, lead songs, take attendance, and deliver opening and closing prayers. Tkach is encouraging other pastors to try out the church-promotion idea in their own congregations (WN, 12/15/92, p. 1).

The WCG's ongoing concerts at Ambassador Auditorium (formerly "The House for God") continue to draw sophisticated crowds and critical acclaim. An August jazz festival at "The Ambassador" received high praise from jazz critic Leonard Feather of *The Los Angeles Times*, who wrote, "Anyone looking for a primer in the art of running a jazz festival would have been wise to have studied what happened... Sunday at Pasadena's Ambassador Auditorium." The Ambassador Foundation recently published a brochure detailing the concert season lineup for 1993- 4. The season features scores of the very finest opera and concert world stars, plus dozens of stars from the pop, jazz, and country music fields. Those interested in getting a free copy of the brochure can call the auditorium's toll-free number: 1-800-CONCERT.

The WCG continues to operate around the world to propagate its message. One area of the world in which the WCG is taking an increased interest is Eastern Europe. During the past year, the WCG was excited to discover that there are scattered Sabbatarian groups throughout the region, including the western Ukraine, close to the part of Czechoslovakia where Tkach's parents originated (WN, 10/6/92, p. 1 and 12/29/92, p. 1). WCG insiders say that Tkach had hoped to lure many of "the Ukrainian brethren" into the WCG but that most balked at the idea when they learned of the WCG's tithing policies.

Another area of the world where the WCG takes a special interest is Thailand, whose northern area is part of the "Golden Triangle" (where most of the world's heroin actually comes from) and whose capitol of Bangkok is the world's premier city for child prostitution. Tkach recently sent his close friend and advisor Ellen Escat to that country as his personal representative to meet with Queen Sirikit. Escat says she likes Thailand because " there is so much mutual love and respect between those ruling and those being ruled. In Thailand, it's a way of life" (WN, 12/1/92, pp. 4-5). Included with the WN article reporting on her trip, there was a picture of AC student Jonathan Reedy teaching English to a class of Buddhist monks - a project sponsored by the Ambassador Foundation. Other pictures in that issue included one of idols at the Thai palace, more shots of Buddhist monks, and one of Escat touring a Thai agricultural research project.

Readers keep asking us for an update on Stanley Rader. According to GTA's church history booklet (p. 58) and many rumors, Rader is supposedly still involved with the WCG in some capacity. But we have seen no hard evidence of that. We have learned, however, from a reliable source that Rader has been busy researching the life of New York attorney, author, and art collector Myron Orlofsky who was a victim of art fraud years ago. Rader has told some that he is doing research for a book about Orlofsky.

Tkach continues the practice begun under HWA of inviting famous people to speak at Ambassador College. The latest celebrity to do so was former Speaker of the House, Jim Wright (WN, 3/23/93, p. 3). A few years ago, the WCG was able to lure Senator Strom Thurmond to Ambassador. It is interesting that Wright was booted out of government for alleged ethical improprieties and that Thurmond, according to the *Los Angeles Times* (5/20/89, p. 23), openly admits that he is regularly deluged with gifts ranging from free hotel rooms to free plane rides and that even his eyeglasses were paid for by a political contributor.

Joseph Tkach Jr. continues to gain power within the WCG hierarchy. In mid-1992 Jr.'s

assistant for overseas church administration, Larry Salyer (once Jr.'s boss), supposedly asked to be relieved of his position so that he could be sent to pastor a church in St. Louis. Replacing him is Randall ("Randy") Dick (WN 7/28/92, p. 1). The move further enhances the now-pervasive influence of the Baby Boom generation within the hierarchy of the WCG.

"Criticizing Mr. Tkach is tantamount to committing the unpardonable sin!" - Gerald Waterhouse, speaking at the WCG's Feast of Tabernacles in Australia in 1990. The quote is from the manuscript of a 518-page book of essays about the WCG. The book's author, Murray S. Thompson (P.O. Box 276, Richmond, NSW 2753, Australia) is currently looking for a publisher.

How would you like to listen in on the behind-the-scenes chatter, wireless mike comments, and two-way transmissions that go on at WCG headquarters? Believe it or not, you can do just that if you have a scanner and a copy of the December, 1992 issue of *Popular Communications* (76 N. Broadway, Hicksville, NY 11801; tel. 516-681-2922). In an article titled "Scanning Televangelists," that publication showed how to listen in to many of the private electronic communications of religious groups. Within the article was a list of the communication frequencies used by various organizations including WCG headquarters in Pasadena and Ambassador College in Texas.

### **McNair v. Worldwide Finally Ends**

Mrs. Leona McNair's libel lawsuit against the Worldwide Church of God, Roderick C. Meredith, and her ex-husband Raymond McNair, was finally ended in December when the suit was settled out of court for \$750,000 (Pasadena *Star-News*, 11/21/92). Mrs. McNair has finally gotten her check, paid off her substantial legal fees and expenses, and is trying to get back to a normal life. The lawsuit which began in 1979 has been one of our longest running AR stories (see ARs [10](#), [29](#), [34](#), [35](#), [37](#), [40](#), [41](#), [48](#), and [50](#)). In settling with Leona, the WCG still refused to admit any wrongdoing, but claimed that the settlement amount represented what the church's insurers would have had to spend had the case been retried.

The victory by Leona was no small accomplishment. While over the years a few have been able to sue the WCG and win, most plaintiffs have discovered it is almost impossible to win against an organization that is quite willing to spend virtually any amount necessary to stop those who have grievances against the WCG. Whereas Leona prevailed, many others in the past have not. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Gilman Anderson of Minnesota who sued the WCG back in the mid-eighties (see [AR33](#)) were unsuccessful in their lawsuit. More recently, the attempt by Richard Stambler (see [AR46](#)) to put together a class-action suit against Worldwide fell apart. While a couple dozen former members indicated their willingness to participate in such a suit, Stambler discovered that just preparing for such a legal battle requires far more time and money than he ever anticipated. (Nevertheless, Stambler - Rt. 1, Box 92, Walton, NE 68461 - says he would be willing to turn over his legal research to anyone interested in carrying on the project.) Stambler is currently taking out some of his frustration by distributing anti-cult flyers.

Leona McNair says she intends to get back to her career in nursing very soon. In the

meantime, she is working on a book about tithing which she believes is a false doctrine that has cursed many Christians. Whether or not the book ever gets done, she has already written a short, but thought provoking, paper on the subject and she is distributing it to friends.

The best thing about her lawsuit coming to an end seems to be that, because she is no longer perceived as fighting against "God's Work," her two WCG-member sons are once again able to talk to their mother. Ironically, because Leona's ex-husband, Raymond McNair, recently left the WCG for Rod Meredith's Global Church of God, Leona's two sons are not supposed to talk to their father now because he has become "an enemy of God's Church."

## **Comments on Koresh**

*Editor: The Waco tragedy involving the government siege of David Koresh and his Branch Davidians prompted many to write AR asking questions about what transpired and for our opinions on various facets of the story. Space does not permit a thorough review of the entire story. For an overview of what happened, see the articles that appeared in the major news magazines. Particularly insightful are the articles that appeared in Newsweek (3/15, 5/3, and 5/17). But because so many have written, I will very briefly make a few personal observations:*

Because Koresh had previously lived in both Tyler, Texas and in southern California, and because two AC alumni, Dr. James Tabor of the University of North Carolina and Dr. Phillip Arnold of Reunion Institute of Houston, were involved with the Waco tragedy (as consultants to the government and by going on the radio trying to persuade Koresh to give himself up), some have wondered if Koresh had a connection to the WCG. The answer is that even though Koresh had a number of doctrines that were identical to those of the WCG, he was never a WCG member. However, if you look at the history of his movement and the history of his predecessors, you will find that the Branch Davidians had in their religious roots some of the same antecedents that HWA had. An excellent explanation of this fact, along with a related family tree of Sabbatarian and adventist churches, is found in the Vol. 10, No. 4 edition of *The Watchman Expositor* (P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094-0340; tel. 817-277-0023).

Some have asked my legal opinion as to whether the government had actual "probable cause" to obtain the search warrant that sparked the initial Feb. 28 shootout. The answer is very simple. "Probable cause" can be as little as an anonymous letter to police coupled with conduct that, although legal, could be interpreted as typical of a certain class of criminals (just behaving outwardly like a drug seller, for instance). See *Illinois v. Gates*, 462 U.S. 213 (1983). In the case of David Koresh, he had made it known locally that he was in the market for explosives and hand-held rocket launchers, had already purchased almost \$200,000 worth of assault rifles, hand grenades, and at least one tripod-mounted M-60 machine gun, and had made statements that he was planning some type of show of force. And, in fact, Koresh had previously solidified his control of the movement through a shootout in 1987 with George Roden, a former contender for the Davidians' leadership. Furthermore, dissidents from the group who had moved to Australia had been warning since 1990 of the danger of the Koresh movement and had provided numerous affidavits

to law enforcement officials. There was more than adequate information for probable cause and a search warrant.

Did the government botch the initial raid? Obviously they did. While one can be sympathetic to a government agency that cannot comprehend the extreme nature of a violent cult, the BATF should have known better. Cult expert Rick Ross of Phoenix, one of the country's leading deprogrammers and a personal friend, recently told me how, because he had helped exit two Branch Davidians in the past, he had warned of Koresh's potential for violence. And, according to *Time* magazine (May 3, p. 33), the government had an informant in the Koresh compound before the shootout who overheard Koresh say that the agents were on their way and that he would not be taken alive. According to the magazine, the informant was able to get away in time to have been able to tip off the government agents that the Koreshites were armed to the teeth and were waiting for them. Unfortunately, it seems that the macho BATF (with leaders who were apparently hoping to get publicity for themselves by allowing the press to be present for the initial raid) simply could not comprehend that a religious group was capable of outgunning them.

Once the siege began should the government have used different methods to get Koresh to surrender? Being critical with all the hindsight of a Monday morning quarterback is, of course, much easier than making wise decisions under pressure when one is in charge of anything. But, it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that the government needs to do some homework about cults. Of course, once Koresh decided to openly challenge the authority of the federal government through violence, there was no way that he, personally, was going to come out a winner. (Those who doubt this should read a good history of the Civil War beginning with the John Brown insurrection and a history of the bombing of Nagasaki.) Nevertheless, it is a tragedy that a way was not found to extricate more of his followers - and especially their children - from his control.

Rick Ross is highly critical of the BATF and, to a lesser extent, the FBI for not listening to his advice that once the siege began the main focus of their persuasion should have been on the followers, not Koresh, who Ross believed was mentally too far gone to be reasoned with. Given the paranoia that infects most cult groups, it is difficult to see how the techniques used by the government could have accomplished anything other than increase their paranoia and dependence on "Yahweh Koresh." After all, how many of us would not get a little crazy (or be made more crazy) if we were subjected night after night to the psychological tactics the government employed: blinding searchlights shining into the compound; roaring helicopters flying overhead; and recordings of Nancy Sinatra, chanting Tibetan monks, and the sounds of rabbits being slaughtered. Ross suggested, instead, that they use loudspeaker messages from loving relatives who, obviously, would want their loved ones in the compound to cooperate with the government. Certainly anything that would have gotten the Davidians closer to reality would have made more sense than the creation of an "end-time" environment that paralleled the apocalyptic scenario that Koresh had been predicting all along. As pointed out in *Newsweek* (5/3, p. 29), at both the Feb. 28 shootout and the last day of the siege, the government played right into the hands of Koresh's prophetic scenario.

What was the nature of Koresh's psychological state? A number of experts such as Dr. Louis J. West of UCLA have labeled Koresh as a psychopath, obviously an intelligent

diagnosis. Syracuse University psycholinguist Murray Miron saw Koresh as a delusional paranoiac, another logical diagnosis. But, at least one psychologist diagnosed Koresh as a multiple personality because he did not seem to know from one day to the next what deals he had just struck with the government negotiators, and he designated himself through a series of changing names, titles, and symbols. In Biblical times he would have been called "demon possessed." While the news media seems to flinch at such a term, a lot of psychologists of the analytical school would describe Koresh exactly the same way.

Did Koresh want his followers to die in the agony of a fire that he, himself, lit or ordered to be lit? The final government investigation may provide an answer. But a number of observations can be made at this time. Rick Ross points out that the compound had a total of 65 doors and windows plus numerous tank-made breaches out of which the Davidians could have escaped. Only seven or eight chose to do so. According to *Time* (p.31), two cult members who got out alive were spared only because of the heroics of agents. In one case agents even had to forcefully restrain one cult member from going back into the burning building. The logical inference is that most of the followers of David Koresh knowingly allowed themselves to perish in the flames. And according to the detailed sequence of events of the final day as reported in *Newsweek*, it would appear that the fire was set from within at three different locations simultaneously, and that most of those inside could have escaped the flames had they made an attempt to do so.

That someone would choose such an end is difficult for most balanced, rational minds to comprehend. But let us not forget that David Koresh - and his followers - did not have rational, balanced minds. The astute editors of *Newsweek* pretty much foresaw how Koresh was going to end his life (see their 3/15 issue and note particularly p. 58). One could even make the argument that Koresh's end was the fulfillment of an old plan - conscious, unconscious, or demonic. To provide a few insights into Koresh's mind set, let me quote a most insightful letter from one of our readers. David Whitaker is not only an avid Bible student ("scholar" would perhaps be more accurate), but he is also someone who has had professional experience in the mental health field. Here is what he wrote to us about Koresh:

As an epitaph to the unfortunate incident near Waco, Texas, involving the Branch Davidian cult, it is interesting to note how Vernon Howell managed to literally fulfill the meaning of his appropriated name "David Koresh."

As was publicized in the news media, Vernon Howell claimed that the name "Koresh" is the Hebrew form of the name "Cyrus" - referring to the ancient Persian monarch who reigned 538-529 B.C. It should be observed that, although Cyrus was a Gentile monarch who was friendly toward the Jewish people, there exists no historical indication Cyrus ever followed or practiced the Jewish religion or converted to the God of Israel. The prophet Isaiah twice emphasized the words, "though thou hast not known Me," clearly describing Cyrus as a Gentile monarch who did not personally know God, although God used him as a human "messiah" ("anointed") to liberate the Jewish people from captivity at that time in history (Isa. 45: 4-5). Allowing the Jewish people to return to rebuild Jerusalem was only one of many acts which Cyrus preformed during his lifetime.

The Hellenized form of the name "Cyrus" translates into English as "Miserable." "Cyrus" is the Anglicized form of the Hellenized "Kyros," with the original Persian being "Kurush," and the Hebrew nameform used by Isaiah being "KRSH" in the

ancient consonantal Hebrew, the Persian pronunciation being acknowledged by the Jewish people. The modern pronunciation as "Koresh" is based on modern - not ancient - Hebrew. If the modern Hebrew method is used, "kor" means "furnace," and "esh" means "fire." (Compare *Strong's Concordance*, Hebrew Dictionary nos. 3564-3565, 3566, and 784 [and as a Bible student, it is very likely that David Koresh would have had access to a copy of the ubiquitous Strong's - ed.] ) Therefore, the name "Koresh" translates literally as "Furnace (of) Fire," which is an apt description of the ultimate destiny to which David Koresh and his followers offered themselves and their children.

The first name which Vernon Howell took for himself was "David" - a Hebrew name meaning "Beloved." When the two names "David" and "Koresh" are applied to one individual, the translated meaning is "Beloved Furnace of Fire" - a name filled with opposite and disassociated meanings, which provides an excellent description of Vernon Howell's divided personality, i.e., a man who said one thing and did another, a man who couldn't keep his word to law enforcement officials, and a man whose moral conduct was filled with inconsistencies in relation to his claim to be Jesus Christ, the Lamb, and the true interpreter of the Seven Seals of Revelation. The living of a lie in committing uncounted acts of adultery, child molestation, and only God knows what else, certainly fulfills the disassociative meanings inherent within the combined names "David Koresh."

In Holy Scripture, a "furnace of fire" is always associated with either the murder of God's servants by unregenerate unbelievers or as Divine Judgment from God upon the ungodly and incorrigible sinner. From the viewpoint of Holy Scripture, the destiny sought and achieved by David Koresh for himself and his followers was neither Scriptural nor necessary.

-David Whitaker  
Enid, Oklahoma

Finally, a few very brief comments on something many of us need to think about. As a publication read by many Sabbatarians, AR frequently receives letters and submissions from sincere individuals who hold to the notion that seventh-day Sabbath keeping is "a sign" of the true people of God and that to be one of the "true" churches of God a church must have that "sign." Yet, David Koresh and his followers all kept the seventh-day Sabbath. In fact, the Branch Davidians are the very first group listed in the 1986 *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups* published by The Bible Sabbath Association (Fairview, OK 73737). Not only that, Koresh kept the annual Holy Days, eschewed unclean meats, loved to study prophecy, and indeed, from the age of 12 could recite the entire New Testament from memory. Yet, look at his end. What happened in Waco was a terrible, terrible tragedy. But, hopefully, it is one from which many of us will learn some very important lessons.

## Obituaries

We are sorry to report the passing of a number of individuals who will have been known to many of our readers.

Keith F. Thomas died on January 9, 1992. Mr. Thomas was a member of the WCG from 1954 and a minister until 1986 when he resigned from the WCG ministry. The WCG refused to print his obituary since he had been disfellowshipped for not attending

services. Actually, the minister who took over the local church after he resigned asked him not to attend locally, but to attend with another congregation over 100 miles away. The new minister admitted that he feared the local congregation would still look to Mr. Thomas as a minister and would not respect his replacement. The deceased is survived by his wife, four children, and nine grandchildren.

Although he passed away more than two years ago, we failed to report that Mr. Jim Doak died in January of 1991. No longer a member of WCG, his death was not reported by the WCG in which he had been a minister for many years. He is survived by his wife, Bobby, who lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

All of us at AR were very saddened to learn of the recent death from melanoma of Robert N. Justus, 44, of Springdale, Arkansas. Bob, a member of CGI at his passing, was co-owner of a printing company and an avid pilot. The editor of AR fondly remembers Bob as the fellow Bricket-Wooder who introduced him to the music of many great British big bands in the late sixties and as the fun-loving friend with whom he used to sneak off campus for ice-skating sessions at a London rink. His survivors include his wife, Paula Ann, two daughters, a stepdaughter, and a stepson.

Finally, we are saddened to report the death of Los Angeles TV news reporter Wayne Satz, 47, from a heart attack in December. Satz, a lawyer-journalist most famous as the reporter who broke the McMartin story, had been off the air since 1987 when he reported on his own station's unethical attempts at manipulating the Nielsen ratings. Ironically, his wrongful termination suit against the station was settled in late 1992 and he had been back on the air only a short while when he died unexpectedly. He will be missed by all of us at AR, not just because of the high quality of his reporting, but because by giving air time to publishers Trechak, Nugent, and Gerring in the mid-seventies, he was the first Los Angeles television journalist to cover the *Ambassador Report* story.

## Letters

Wow! Unbelievable! On Sunday morning I turned on my radio to get the latest racing results on KIEV, our local pony station, and who did I hear but Mr. Herbert Armstrong! Preaching just like he did many years ago! But then at the end of the broadcast I heard him say his name was Rod - "like a fishing rod" - Meredith. I remembered an evangelist by that name from my days in the WCG. But this still freaked me out. Because I had heard from friends still involved with the WCG that on January 16, exactly seven years from the day he died, Mr. Herbert Armstrong was scheduled to come out of the grave and begin preaching again. I didn't believe them, but when I heard that broadcaster's voice it shook me up. Now I'm thinking that maybe Mr. Armstrong's spirit or powers or something came out of the grave and went into Mr. Meredith. I'm feeling really freaked out by this. What do you think?

California

*Editor: I agree. You do sound "freaked out." We at AR had also heard the story that HWA was supposed to be resurrected on January 16. And we heard that some were planning a prayer vigil at his grave that day in anticipation. Finding it difficult to fathom*

*that there are people who would believe such a thing, we drove up to the cemetery. As crazy as it sounds, however, for a good part of the day there were groups praying over HWA's grave in the rain. There were also bouquets of flowers and two notes from Joseph Tkach. Who the notes were meant for, we don't know. HWA is dead and after January 16 he still remains in his grave.*

Mr. Trechak, something I heard last Sabbath (Jan 30) really got me upset. At around 1:30 p.m. I turned on KUSC, one of our local classical music stations. I had hoped to listen to some beautiful classical music while studying my Bible. But instead of beautiful music, what I heard was some of the most bizarre stuff I have ever experienced. It was a piece called "Polyrhythms - Chants for the Priestess." The announcer said it was based on African tribal music. I'm sure that was correct because it was all drums and voodoo-like chants. What upset me, however, was that just as I reached over to turn the program off, the announcer said the program was being sponsored by the Ambassador Foundation. So I continued listening. The next piece was a piece of modernistic cacophony by some Jewish intellectual. I could hardly stand listening. But then I really got a shock. The announcer on this program sponsored by the Ambassador Foundation said he was in the process of planning his special April Fool's program. He explained how his special Halloween broadcast had been a great success.

It bothers me that my tithes are being used to support such programs. What is your opinion of this?

California

*Editor: I don't think I would have cared much for the music you describe. But KUSC is a great classical music station and I'm glad your tithes are helping to support its music broadcasts.*

On Sunday, April 4, I watched the church's *World Tomorrow* telecast. The speaker was Richard Ames, Dr. Meredith's brother-in-law. The broadcast, which was about the Crucifixion, was in many ways very fine. But I found one production detail very confusing. In portraying the last Passover meal that Jesus had with his disciples, the program used Da Vinci's painting "The Last Supper." It is the one that shows Judas having accidentally spilled salt and Jesus eating fully leavened bread. I found the use of that Catholic painting confusing for a number of reasons. First, the WCG used to teach that it was a violation of the second commandment to portray the Deity via physical representations. Second, the WCG used to teach that the traditional representation of Jesus as having shoulder-length hair was effeminate and historically inaccurate. Third, the WCG used to teach that only unleavened bread was proper at Passover. And, fourth, the story about Judas and the spilled salt was never a part of WCG teaching and is found nowhere in the Bible. So are we seeing the quiet introduction of new doctrines "under our very noses" via the broadcast?

Washington

*Editor: Apparently so. What other explanation could there be?*

The day before the Feast of Trumpets, 1992, there was a suicide in the Fresno church. A 17-year-old girl, whose parents are dear friends of mine, shot herself with a .45 automatic right in front of her parents. Her mother told me later that the girl always became depressed during the holy days because she didn't feel she was "good enough." She felt unworthy by church standards, although she was a sweet, normal woman. This is the second suicide in the Fresno WCG in nine years. The other suicide was a minister's son, age 23.

Over the years that you have investigated the WCG and read thousands of letters from your readers, in addition to those who have died from lack of medical care or by being murdered, how many suicides have there been? And do you see any kind of a trend?

John Bowers  
California

*Editor: We have no way of knowing how many there have been, but we have heard of dozens of WCG-related suicides over the years. Back in mid-January, Glenn Troike, the son of WCG minister Paul Troike, committed suicide. Recently, former WCG member Elilu Neitsch - who never seemed to recover fully from the WCG experience or her husband's suicide some years ago - herself committed suicide in Pasadena. She left behind a sixteen-year-old daughter. A few months ago we heard of a WCG member committing suicide up in Wyoming. We don't know if there is a trend. Nor can we know for sure which suicides were caused by membership in Worldwide. After all, some may well have been caused by factors having nothing to do with church membership. However, from the mere fact that some members and children of members have committed suicide, we can logically deduce that WCG membership does not automatically protect one or one's family from that kind of tragedy.*

*Similarly, one has only to read the obituary section of the Worldwide News to see that Worldwidiers die just as frequently as others (maybe more frequently) from cancer and other diseases (often at an early age), from violence, or in accidents. For example, in the obituary section of the 12/2/92 WN, there were among the deceased one 47-year-old man who died from injuries suffered in an industrial accident, one 50-year-old man who died from an accidental fall at a construction site, and one 23-year-old man who died in a swimming accident. Their affiliation with WCG doesn't seem to have given them much protection from accidents. But the same can be said about CGI and other groups. For instance, last October six CGI members were killed in a fiery car crash in Mississippi while traveling to their church's Feast of Tabernacles in Florida (Jonesboro Sun, 10/23/92).*

My little brother has been fighting cancer and was anointed by a very compassionate minister from the Church of God, International. As my in-laws still attend with Worldwide, it was brought to my attention that members of the WCG are saying my brother cannot be healed as he was anointed by a "false minister."

Illinois

*Editor: In Mk. 5:25-34, we read of the woman healed by touching Jesus' garment. Verse*

*34 relates how Jesus told her afterwards, "thy faith hath made thee whole." He didn't say "you have been healed because you are in the right denomination." The fact is there are cases of miraculous healings in many denominations. And we have heard of many cases of people being healed after they left Worldwide. We even know of cases of dramatic healings of individuals who were not in any denomination or who were not even Christians. Almost always, however, there seems to be present some element of living faith.*

In a taped sermon given on May 30, 1992, Mr. Joseph Tkach Jr. told a story about Harold Jackson, the black WCG elder who passed away last year. Here is what Joe Jr. said:

I had heard many stories about him [Mr. Jackson] and I had heard that he had visited Malcolm X. So I asked him about it and he told me, "Yes, that's true." He went to visit Malcolm X when he was in jail. This is before Malcolm X was known as Malcolm X, before he was known as anybody on a notoriety level. And while he was in jail he found a copy of the *Plain Truth* and a booklet and he also had the writings of Muhammad Elijah. And Mr. Jackson said as he visited him in jail he encouraged him not to read any more of Muhammad Elijah's writings but to continue reading the *Plain Truth*. And he told me how he told him how one set of literature will take you through the right door. The other will take you through the wrong door.

Interesting that Mr. Jackson had that experience visiting Malcolm X in jail, because it was years later he had the opportunity to hear Malcolm X speak in a big public setting and he and one of the deacons from Chicago went to hear him speak and they walked in and sat down and as Malcolm X was speaking he recognized him as the guy who had visited him in jail and [he] said, "Well, look what we have here. We have some representatives from the Worldwide Church of God sitting amongst us."

Mr. Jackson was the same race as everybody else in that room. But, he told me, he felt as if he was a different color.

Only seven months before, in the December 23, 1991 WN, the official Jackson obituary gave data that shows Tkach Jr.'s story to be doubtful at best. According to the obituary, Jackson first heard the World Tomorrow broadcast in 1951 in San Diego where he lived. Malcolm X (then Malcolm Little) was incarcerated on a burglary conviction in Charlestown Prison in Massachusetts from February 1946 to early August 1952. The obituary further stated that, "Mr. Jackson was ordained a deacon in November 1957 and a local elder in 1959. That year he moved from Southern California to Chicago, where he served for 12 years."

It seems unlikely that a first year lay member would travel over 3000 miles to visit a convict. I might add that Malcolm was a Muslim convert by 1947.

Now that Malcolm X has become a black folk hero among the nation's black youth, it's interesting to hear for the, first time in 40 years that he almost left the Nation of Islam to become a WCG member. I'm sure the young blacks listening to the tape were astounded. I wasn't.

Mark Thornton  
Wisconsin

*Editor: It appears that Tkach Jr. is a chip off the old block.*

We've been corresponding with a few ex-Worldwidiers, whose names were passed on to us. One of them mentioned how some Ambassador students had been taught to admire some of Hitler's traits. Examples: He had the leadership ability to sway the masses, he never let his hair cover his forehead (supposedly the seat of human will), and he was willing to be brutal when he believed his goal was righteous (thus suggesting that "God's ministers" have permission to do the same toward their congregations). I guess we should not have been surprised considering that HWA, himself, is widely reported to have been a student of Hitler's psychological methods.

Wisconsin

*Editor: I'm not surprised either. But, the WCG ministry's fetish for non-covered foreheads has always seemed nonbiblical and odd to me. What is the basis of the taboo? Is there some tie-in to the parapsychological phenomenon of chakras? I don't know. But it seems particularly odd to equate the ability to sway "the masses" with a fetish for hair-bare foreheads. The latter, however, does sound like the kind of fetish that Hitler, who had a great interest in the occult, might have had.*

You've published a few letters questioning whether or not the Waldensians were part of the "true church."

In tracing their beliefs to the Waldensians, Herbert Armstrong and Herman Hoeh were merely buying into a view that had been around for several centuries. No doubt they had been influenced by Dugger and Dodd's book, *A History of the True Church*, which describes the history of the Waldensians in chapters 8-16. This work quotes extensively from Hugh Smith's *Church History*, Jones' *Church History*, Wylie's *History of the Waldensians*, Ernesto Comba's *History of the Waldensians* (originally published in Italian), and a number of other works.

Ellen G. White also discussed the Waldensians in chapter four of *The Great Controversy*, published in 1888. She may have based her understanding on a four-volume history by A. Muston, titled *Israel in the Alps* and first published in 1851. Muston asserted that the Waldensians were keeping some of the Old Testament practices, including the Holy Days.

The Waldensians, themselves, claimed to be the uncorrupted remnant of the apostolic church, a view which was supported by Theodore Beza, the founder of the Swiss Calvinist church, and Olivetan, another Calvinist who from 1532 to 1535 preached Protestant doctrines to the Waldensians. Both Beza and Olivetan believed Paul had established the Waldensian church on his journey to Spain. A Catholic inquisitor of the fourteenth century, Reinerius Saccho, even admitted that the Waldensians had existed long before Peter Waldo came on the scene.

If you took an English literature course in college, you might remember John Milton's poem about the persecutions faced by the Waldensians. Cromwell had sent S. Morland as

an emissary to the little church and in 1658 Morland wrote *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Piedmont*. Apparently, the Waldensian church was quite well known among Protestant circles in England and perhaps served in some way as justification or validation for their rejection of Catholic doctrines.

Apostolicity has always been an important issue within Christianity, and Herbert Armstrong was no different than other churchmen in trying to establish an apostolic succession and continuity of doctrine for the Worldwide Church of God.

Linda Hardy White  
Carrollton, Texas

*Editor: Mrs. White and her husband Wes are former WCG members who now fellowship with the Church of God (Seventh Day). "CG7" is the group from which HWA, himself, exited to begin his own religious organization. Many individuals, disillusioned with the WCG, have found CG7 more to their liking. There are a number of branches, with the largest headquartered in Colorado (330 West 152nd Ave., Broomfield, CO 80020). Their magazine is The Bible Advocate, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233-0677. Another branch is the Church of God, 7th Day; 79 Water St.; Salem; WV 26426 (a branch from which HWA once had credentials). Both the Colorado and West Virginia branches have published some revealing information about HWA's association with CG7. A third branch is The Church of God, Jerusalem (World Headquarters), P.O. Box 10184, Jerusalem 91101, Israel. This organization, with more than 40,000 members, publishes The Mount Zion Reporter, founded by the late A. N. Dugger who was once a senior associate of HWA. This group is now headed by Mr. Gordon Fauth.*

My husband and I left the WCG in October 1992 and thank God every day that we have been freed from that bondage. We can't figure out how we could have allowed them to control us for 12 years. Doubt about the WCG had been building over the last few years, but when we "discovered" in September that the New Covenant released us from having to keep the Holy Days, that was the last straw.

To our surprise, we were not alone in our studies. Other members up here independently came to the same conclusions as we did. And many of them wrote to Vancouver (Canadian HQ) and Pasadena with their new found truth, naively believing that the church would correct their teaching when they saw the truth. Of course, they refused it. (We later learned that Tkach has known for at least five years that the church does not have to keep the Feast Days and yet he has made no attempt to correct the error in teaching.)

I've attached our exit letter to Frank Brown for your information. It pretty much sums up the major reasons for our departure.

Over the last six months 32 people (23 adults) up here have left the WCG and more are still studying. Most of us have started attending the Church of God (Seventh Day). (Another 10 people left the WCG three years ago and attend there also.) Some of those who left were longtime members of 20, 25, and 28 years. As well, some have joined a support group for people who have left cults; we all need a lot of healing after years of

being victimized. The group advertises in the local paper and gets more calls from WCG members all the time....

We continue to pray that more of our dear friends will get out of that abusive and destructive cult and that you please pray with us. The WCG may be attempting to look more Christian, but in reality the fear tactics and manipulative treatment of members exists as much today as it did when HWA was alive.

Lorie Supruniuk

*Editor: After a short correspondence with the Supruniuks, Lorie sent us the following:*

We've been pouring over the ARs. One of the first things we read was "the Gerringer letter." It was super. One of the things that really struck us was that the process and the feelings Bob went through were so similar to our own, yet our experience was twenty years later! I firmly believe that God's Spirit was slowly working with us, chipping away at the errors the WCG taught us. When we allow His Spirit to lead us, we all end up being led out of the WCG!

That reminds me of a call we received from Bob Scott, an assistant pastor in Edmonton on illness leave. When Mr. Scott heard of our decision to leave the WCG he called and I had a long, tiresome conversation with him. He pleaded with me, using all the familiar arguments. Then he asked what we had been reading and where we got our information. I told him we've been reading Galatians. "Don't read Galatians!" he said. "You should never read Galatians without a minister present. In fact, even Dr. Stavrinides has trouble understanding it. If you read Galatians you will study yourself right out of the church!" He was right about one thing.

I've also been in shock at the amount of proof there is against New Testament tithing and (it shouldn't surprise me, but it does) that the church knows that it is wrong to burden the people this way. Tithing never was one of the things that we questioned when we left, we thought they had that right, although over the last few months we've been wondering about that too (just like the Sabbath). The Church of God (7th Day) teaches tithing as a Biblical principle but not as a law. The tithes and offerings stay in the local area and are used for the local minister's salary and local expenses. Very little is sent to Denver headquarters and the books are always available for anyone to look at. This seems to be a better system, but really should we be calling it "tithing" or would "free-will offering" be less legalistic?

I appreciated your private comments about the Sabbath. Dave and I have been leaning to the same conclusions about it being a principle rather than a legalistic rule. Fortunately the pastor of the Church of God (7th Day) congregation we're fellowshiping with is very strong on grace and is allowing us to work this out for ourselves. He hasn't pushed us on it at all. In fact, one of the men from our group just experienced a shift change and now has to work on Saturday. No one from the church has told him to quit his job or anything. Yet we know what would have happened if he was still in the WCG.

Some very interesting history about our pastor: His name is David Kauer (ring a bell?).

He's about 58 years old and his dad and HWA were contemporaries in Oregon. David is a corporate accountant (the church encourages men to have "real" careers before entering the ministry) and from 1964 to 1980 David worked at the church's Denver HQ as the secretary-treasurer. He then became a pastor for the churches in Seattle/Tacoma, Washington and in 1986 he moved to Edmonton to pastor the church here.

When GTA left the WCG for the last time (three is a number of completion isn't it?), he went to visit David Kauer in Denver to search out his father's roots. He looked over old copies of the Bible Advocate that HWA had written for. Even GTA was surprised to find out just how involved his father had been with the Church of God (7th Day) and for how long. It seems HWA didn't even tell his own son the truth.

So did the name David Kauer ring a bell? You mention him on page 69 of the 1977 AR in "Herbert Armstrong's Religious Roots." Neat huh? I've enclosed a copy of the documentation that shows HWA's involvement and membership in the Church of God (7th Day) until 1938. [Readers can write to CG7 to get a copy - ed.] Do you get Gerald Flurry's *Philadelphia Trumpet*? The issue I received today has an article showing the "true" history of HWA's foundling church. Same old lies....

Regarding our letter to Frank Brown, by all means let your readers know they can have a copy from us. It would be helpful if they could send a self-addressed business envelope, just to save me some time. But because it would be impossible for Americans to buy Canadian stamps, we'll take care of that. If there is anything we can do further to expose the WCG, please let us know.

*Editor: The six-page letter the Supruniuks wrote to Frank Brown contains many valuable insights about the WCG's current problems. Those who would like a copy may write to: David & Lorie Supruniuk, 12947 - 102 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5E 4J4, Canada.*

My wife Gail and I have left the WCG and are now Methodists. We recently started a support group called Help-Net, a Christian organization that helps people who are in, or are coming out of, cults.

Dennis Winters  
P.O. Box 771233  
Wichita, KS 67277

Having read all 51 issues of *Ambassador Report* published to date and several of the books you have often mentioned, I have decided to resign from the Worldwide Church of God after nearly three decades as a member (copies of resignation letters as deacon and member enclosed).

Melvin W. Kangas  
New Hampshire

I want to thank you very much for sending me all the back issues I requested some time ago.... You must realize that having all this hard data at our fingertips has made the

difference between remaining totally messed up mentally, and having the peace of mind that the truth brings. We are still searching for clarifications on various doctrines, but at least we are absolutely clear on the Worldwide Church of God and its corrupt ministry.

I do hope that you are preserving all this information in some sort of permanent storage medium. This information must never be lost. It would be wonderful if the entire history of the WCG could be written up in a form that would be available both to scholars and the public.

Thelma M. Demers, B. Ed.  
B.C., Canada

I have been a member of the Worldwide Church of God for thirty years. My negative experiences are too numerous to write about. You can imagine how sick I feel about all that I have read so far. Mind control is a terrible thing to break away from.

Colorado

I hope some day you can report on the utter, total collapse of the corruption known as the WCG. But people love to be deceived. HWA taught that. I heard him say so on a Bible study tape. And as long as they love to be deceived, the WCG won't collapse. I have no illusions about it. HWA taught that they love to be deceived and no one understood it better than he did. He was speaking to about 70,000 that he had deceived and I humbly acknowledge that at that time I was one of them. I paid a terrible price for allowing myself to be deceived.

Harry R. Williams  
New York

I am glad that you have not given up the good fight against the WCG. It's been a long and difficult struggle for me to exit this cult. The mind still plays tricks on me even though I feel that I'm getting more normal each and every day. Reading your publication is a reentry into the real world again. I look forward to your reports.

Greg J. Pokorny  
New Jersey

## **A Few Comments From the Editor**

As time passes there seems to be more and more WCG related information that needs to be reported. With the constant upheaval in WCG doctrines, policies, and personnel, plus the ever increasing number of WCG spinoff groups, it is becoming ever more time consuming to keep track of what is happening both in the WCG and in its daughter churches.

Many who have never been journalists will perhaps be surprised (but those who have, will not) that this issue represents over two solid months of full-time research. Yet, I still

have about 1,000 pages of research materials already filed for the next two issues. I had hoped to report on the Flurry group and about a dozen other groups in this edition. But it looks like all of that will have to wait for the summer and fall ARs.

My apologies for not being able to get issues out on a more timely and predictable schedule. But, because AR does not provide anyone on its dwindling "staff" with a salary, AR projects sometimes have to be put on the shelf for weeks, or even months, at a time.

I hope all of you will continue on our mailing list. We do need to hear from you occasionally. Not just because we need contributions to continue, but because, with so many people changing addresses every year, we do need to know that you are still there - literally.

My thanks to all who contributed toward this issue.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR53\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

September 1993 (AR53)

### WCG Adopts Trinity Doctrine

In a funny kind of way, it truly is a pity we cannot bring back Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) from the grave - at least for a little while. We would love to see the look on his face when he learned what has become of the institutions he founded: The Worldwide Church of God (WCG), Ambassador College, the Ambassador Foundation, *The Plain Truth* magazine, *The World Tomorrow* broadcast. All have been so completely transformed since his passing in 1986, that if he would even recognize them, HWA would undoubtedly be dumbfounded at what they have become. Indeed, it is fair to say that virtually everything HWA founded, discovered, taught, and built up has now been turned on its ear, and what remains ostensibly in his name (for instance, the WCG corporation) is now actively in opposition to much of what he stood for during his lifetime.

The latest HWA doctrine to be spit out by the current WCG administration of Joseph W. Tkach is HWA's adamantly non-trinitarian view of the Godhead. During his lifetime, HWA taught in no uncertain terms that the trinitarian view of God was not only erroneous, but was a pagan teaching that originated with the Devil himself. Now the WCG would prefer to forget it ever embraced such "unorthodox" views. After months of laying the psychological groundwork for the monumental change, the Tkachs called a ministerial conference in Pasadena in early June. During the conference, billed as "the most important since Acts 15," the gathered WCG bigwigs were told by Tkach Jr. and doctrinal expert Kyriacos Stavriniades that the WCG's God is, in fact, a three-person-in-one deity. According to the new view, not only are God the Father and Jesus "persons," but the Holy Spirit, too, is a person. HWA, of course, taught that the Holy Spirit, although coming from God, was really a non-physical power or force and was not an actual person. The WCG's new teaching - which is being hailed by many Christian denominations - is not only at variance with what HWA taught, it is even at variance with what the WCG was teaching just a few weeks ago. It is so much at variance, in fact, that the WCG has pulled its just-published "God Is..." booklet so a new version will reflect the latest WCG doctrine.

So which of HWA's teachings will be next to go on the chopping block? Insiders tell the *Report* that among those doctrinal changes to be announced to the church membership will be the new status of the Holy Days which, it is suggested, will become just symbols of God's plan - not really laws and not really required for salvation. (The WCG ministry has already been informed about this "modest paradigm shift" - *Pastor General's Report*, 7/13/93, p. 4.) Another doctrine being discussed by WCG theoreticians is the unclean meats doctrine. Some are already saying that the Old Testament dietary laws were only instituted because the ancients lacked refrigeration. Now that we have

refrigerators, so the argument goes, there is no logical reason to pass up the pork and shrimp. Tkach Sr. has also told one of the WCG's gay members he plans to change the WCG's public position on homosexuality somewhat. However, our source does not know how far that change will go or how it will be instituted.

Naturally, with so many doctrines being constantly changed, it is getting a bit confusing for some Worldwidiers to understand exactly what it is that they believe or don't believe. To help such members out, Tkach Jr. has issued the following order to his field ministers:

The June 15 *PGR* listed the only Church publications that should be in local church libraries. The Sabbath booklet, although not on that list, may be in Church libraries.

Obsolete booklets often contain explanations that are no longer representative of the Church. We do not want them in church libraries because many people would view them as officially sanctioned if they were there. So, if a new booklet is published on any particular topic, the old booklet should be removed from all local church libraries. (*Pastor General's Report*, 7/13/93, p. 6.)

Even more amazing is the Tkach position that doctrines, themselves, are just not that important. In fact, according to Tkach Jr., doctrines often get in the way:

The one chord that binds together each little denominational bundle is the identical thing that has caused every split and division that ever took place between brethren - DOCTRINE! As long as DOCTRINE is employed as [the] basis for church unity, every so-called "church" will suffer strife, division and separation into more divisions. (WN, 4/27/93, p. 5 in Tkach Jr. article entitled "Does God Identify and Underpin His Church by Doctrines, Growth?", emphasis his.)

Whatever one may feel about such views, long-time WCG observers will immediately recognize that we are witnessing a *monumental* transformation in the WCG's sales pitch. The WCG's ministry is apparently no longer going to say: "Follow us because we have the truth." What the Tkachs are telling us is: "Follow us, give us your money, and trust us with your spiritual welfare - not because we have the truth (because doctrinal truth does not really count for much, it's always changing and, besides, it only causes problems) - but follow us because of the loving feelings you get from being in our loving church."

## **WCG to Scuttle Its Prophecy Foundation**

Twenty years ago, it was not possible to discuss Armstrongism without discussing HWA's teaching on the subject of the identity of Israel - that is, his doctrine that the United States and the British Commonwealth ("US and BC") were the "House of Israel" of Bible prophecy. In today's WCG, however, that doctrine is so much in disrepute that many WCG ministers no longer discuss it. Some are even claiming the WCG never taught it! While there are a few who obstinately hold to it, the Tkach administration is now quietly preparing the way for HWA's version of British-Israelism or "Identity" to be abandoned as numerous other HWA teachings have been. A member of the Council of Elders recently leaked a copy of an 8/10/92 memo from WCG evangelist Joseph Tkach Jr. to WCG minister Mike Swagerty at Ambassador. Because it clearly shows the direction the Tkachs are taking on the "Identity" teaching, we believe you will find it as remarkable as we did. Here is what Jr. wrote to Swagerty on the subject of "Israel in end-time prophecy":

---

Hi Mike!

Little has been said because it was initially announced as a 2 year study project before we revise the booklet. Since it will require more time than just the 2 years to produce anything, I would not preach on the topic of Israel in end-time prophecy, if you plan to include anything about US & BC. All it will do is generate more questions and possibly more confusion. To directly answer your questions, I would not stick my neck out on it at all.

You commented that US & BC was a big mainstay of the ministry. I would draw your attention to the booklet, "1975 in Prophecy" which was also one of the biggest mainstays of the ministry and often listed by members as the main booklet that brought them into the Church. And it was found to be in error and removed from circulation.

I would answer any inquiries about "US & BC in Prophecy" by saying that we are studying the material in order to produce a revised booklet.

Allow me to acquaint you with some of the problems, if you are not already aware of them.

1) From a Biblical overview: Our traditional belief is that the covenants and promises recorded in the Old Testament have not yet been fulfilled. Yet, we have never addressed how these promises of a continuing line of kings should be understood in light of the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When you stop and consider the significance of Acts 4:12 (neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved) the teaching of US & BC has no significance. The national identity is of no consequence given Christ's sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice is (and it should be our central plank and fulcrum) pivotal to God's plan. God is no longer dealing with a single nation.

2) From a plan of salvation view: In light of the New Testament, and the centrality of Christ in God's plan of salvation (as mentioned above) much of the relevance of our teaching on US & BC is reduced to - so what! Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." In Galatians 6:16, Paul refers to the Israel of God. While we do not cease being male nor female, Jew nor Greek, American nor German while we are human; in this life we are asked to partake of God's nature and be part of the Israel of God - spiritual Israel.

3) From a logical view: Accepting the identity of modern nations as explained by US & BC forces us to have an a priori presupposition to prophecy. In other words we force ourselves into a corner on interpreting the prophecies by stating the conclusion and then forcing the text of scripture to fit our preconceived conclusions.

4) From a historical view: All of our traditional proofs are based upon folklore, legend, myth, and superstition. There may be some reliable historical evidence, but our booklet has never used any of it. Some of our statements contradict the evidence of history. It is a historical fact that the British empire found this explanation favorable as a justification for their imperial expansion of their empire.

[5] From an ethical point of view: It is a well known fact that Mr. Armstrong did not originate this teaching. In fact, earlier editions of the US & BC [booklet] plagiarized vast portions of a booklet entitled "Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright." It is not possible to say that this was revealed to Mr. Armstrong, when in fact, we can see where he copied it from - including the historical errors.

[6] From a practical point of view: In the 1600's when the Sabbath-keepers came to America, they did not preach to the native Americans or to themselves that, "hey! we are Manasseh, and we must warn everyone of their true national identity." Whether a person is from Manasseh, Ephraim, Assyria, or Italy, it is not pertinent to salvation.

We don't need to know whether we are Manasseh, or Ephraim to preach the coming tribulation, the day of the Lord, the return of Christ, the Millennium, or the white throne judgment.

Now, my opinion of US & BC is that this is an interesting episode in history that needs to be pursued. And that is what we are doing, but it will take time. It should not stay at the high level of doctrine until we can find proof. This is especially important if it is to remain the central plank in our view of prophecy. We can't simply say this is something to accept on faith because the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ reduces the importance of the idea to a non-essential in terms of salvation.

Well, we have to keep working at it.  
Hang in there!  
Warm regards  
[J. Tkach Jr.]

When the complete undoing of "US & BC" will be sprung on the WCG membership remains to be seen. But, clearly, the old HWA doctrine is as good as dead.

\* \* \*

*Editor: In the last few years so many WCG doctrines and policies have changed - and so radically - that it would perhaps be wise for us to pause a moment to reflect upon the magnitude of those changes. Former WCG minister David C. Pack has provided all of us with a service by putting together and distributing a rather comprehensive list of WCG doctrine and policy changes. Apparently compiled while he was on the WCG payroll as a minister, and it is therefore quite authoritative, the uncopyrighted paper has recently gotten wide distribution in WCG circles. Pack, who has not been one of our favorite WCG ministers (see [AR32](#)), is now a minister with the WCG's newest competitor, the Global Church of God (P.O. Box 5500, Glendora, CA 91740-5500). That being the case, we should keep in mind that he has a certain theological bias. (And most emphatically, Mr. Pack's views are his own and not those of AR.) Nevertheless, his compilation of 154 doctrinal and 28 policy changes is well-researched and his comments do reflect the thinking of many prominent ministers and laymembers still in the Tkach organization. With those caveats in mind, we are presenting Mr. Pack's paper below.*

*A few clarifications should be made for newer readers. The abbreviations: PT, WN, PGR, CAD, PCD, CW, and Reg. Conf. stand for, respectively: Plain Truth, Worldwide News, Pastor General's Report, Church Administration Department, Personal Correspondence Department, Co-Worker, and Regional Conference. The term "cc:Mail" refers to the WCG ministry's new computer network system. Except for punctuation corrections and the addition of some italics, the paper is unedited. Emphasis by underlining is Mr. Pack's throughout.*

## **Doctrinal Changes of the Worldwide Church of God by David C. Pack**

This is a comprehensive list of most all the doctrinal changes of the Worldwide Church of God. While some of these changes are smaller and less significant, others are huge and have a devastating

impact on belief. Many changes involve numerous re-explanations of individual scriptures that could have been listed separately, making this list, quite literally, almost unending. A more comprehensive approach was attempted at the risk of being called picky because it demonstrates that heresy is a cancer that eventually leavens everything it touches. If people were being killed instead of truth, surely we would call this a holocaust.

There are perhaps four to six changes that might be for the better. I do not wish it to be said that "Dave Pack disagrees with every change the Church has made since the death of Mr. Armstrong." This has been said of Dr. Meredith and Mr. Raymond McNair among others to deliberately make us look like Armstrong worshippers rather than followers of truth. It is probably inevitable that this list will fall into the hands of people who will set out to attack and discredit it. I claim it to be neither complete nor perfect. The list grows almost daily anyway. Clever word-gimmickry can probably successfully explain away some few of these changes. Will you let that obscure the massive scope of this great apostasy as you study this list? Or will you prove all things, hold fast that which is good and only follow teachers of truth?

II Thes. 2:3 says a falling away (Greek *apostasia* - "a defection from truth") will precede Christ's return and verse 13 shows that receiving salvation is attached to "belief of the truth."

I Tim. 6:3-5 makes it clear what one must do in such historic and prophetic circumstances as these we now face. 2000 years of church history show people of truth and courage have always been willing to take this Biblical step. (Note: PGR Personals almost always appear 1-2 weeks later as a WN Personal.)

1. The Gospel of the *Kingdom of God* is now almost entirely about Jesus. "Christ is the Gospel.... He is the Kingdom of God." (PGR, 8/4/92 and 4/20/93, Personals.)
2. The Kingdom is here and we're in it now.
3. Mr. Armstrong was not the modern Elijah. The Church instead fulfills that role. (PCD form letter.)
4. Matt. 24:14 is no longer the Church's commissionit's "just a prophecy." (*Portfolio*, 3/4/93, Forum & Assembly, R. Kelly.)
5. Ezek. 33:1-7 was fulfilled by Ezekiel - it was never our responsibility. Isa. 58: 1 is not "thoughtful, dignified and friendly" - "it's too dogmatic." (WN, 12/29/92, G. Albrecht.)
6. Modern Israel's identity (U.S. & B.C. book) has been shelved/abandoned and called "folklore, legend, myth and superstition." (J. Tkach Jr. memo to U.S. field minister.)
7. "Christ fulfilled the major Purpose of the national identity of Israel." (PT, 12/92, Q&A section.)
8. Prophetic emphasis was just "prediction addiction." Prophecy is to encourage believers, not warn nonbelievers. (Numerous WN Personals.)
9. The second coming is possibly far off - maybe following another world war. (Numerous places in 1991 and later.)
10. There is no 7000-year plan of God. (PCD letter L57.)

11. God is ...a Trinity (defined as "3 in 1") and a mystery variously called three "consciousnesses, existences, entities" and the concept of the Trinity is not pagan. ("God Is..." booklet, p. 44.)
12. God is... not a family - He has one.
13. God is... not a person [nor] is Christ.
14. God and Christ don't have a body.
15. Man is not made in God's literal form, shape and image.
16. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Polytheism, etc. teach us much about God. ("God Is..." booklet, p. 4.)
17. Christians are only adopted sons who will never become God Beings. God is not reproducing Himself.
18. Christ resurrected Himself. (He, then, couldn't have died for us.) (G. Albrecht sermon to ministers in 1991.)
19. The terms Father and Son are only analogous concepts. (see I Jn. 2:22!)
20. Christ could not sin - Mr. Armstrong's explicit definition of the spirit of anti-Christ. ("Millions Do Not Know What Christ Really Was," HWA reprint, pp. 3-4.) If He wasn't tempted and He didn't overcome sin He can't be our High Priest and had an advantage over us.
21. Striving to imitate Christ toward salvation is "an unscriptural false hope." (PGR, 1/22/91, Q&A.)
22. Christ was crucified on a cross and not a stake.
23. The cross is now "a symbol of service and sacrifice" and members at HQ (and elsewhere) are already wearing crosses. "Remember the cross" is now the WCG "battle cry." (PGR, 2/17/93, Personal.)
24. Interracial marriage is no longer wrong.
25. Marriage to unbelievers is now permissible "because we traditionally defined believers as baptized WCG members" - this is "extremely narrow." (PGR, 4/20/93, p. 3., J. Tkach Jr.)
26. II Cor. 6:14 is just a warning about spending time with idolaters. (PGR, 4/20/93, p. 3.)
27. Divorce and Rearriage is now permitted for over two dozen reasons including "mental abuse, emotional or spiritual abandonment" and many other hard-to-define reasons. (Special Policy Statement, 4/20/93, J. Tkach Sr.)
28. An annulment may be obtained by anyone who regrets getting married several months into the marriage. Also, the Church now accepts any legal annulment. (Special Policy Statement, 4/20/93, J. Tkach Sr.)

29. Place of Safety is not to be emphasized.
30. Church eras are not to be emphasized. (PGR, 2-3 years ago.)
31. Any Church history booklets are gone because "we make no attempt to trace ourselves to the first century." (M. Snyder, 12/13/91, Detroit WMUZ radio interview.)
32. The "invisible church" doctrine (from Augustine) allows for good Protestants and others to be saved. "We make no claims to exclusivity." (M. Snyder, 12/13/91, Detroit WMUZ radio interview - 11/17/92 cc:Mail to all ministers from J. Tkach Jr. states the same in various ways.)
33. Instead of "enduring to the end to be saved," Christians are saved now.
34. Christians are born again at conversion instead of at the resurrection.
35. Social activism through do-gooding in the community is now Christian duty and will help spread the Kingdom. (PT, 3/93, p. 17.)
36. Personal evangelizing and "sharing Jesus" is Christian duty and will spread the Kingdom. (Numerous WN Personals, 12/92-3/93 and various CW letters.)
37. The ability to evangelize is a gift of the Spirit. (PGR, 3/2/93, Personal.)
38. A completely open door exists to every Church function.
39. The Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, means "called together," not "called out ones."
40. Now is the time for the world's salvation. (Telecast, 3/29/92, D. Hulme.) Mr. Armstrong always understood this was not true.
41. Members may visit and invite prospective members to church - once a duty only for ministers.
42. Members may freely join worldly organizations.
43. Salvation is a gift by grace through faith requiring no works or obedience.
44. The WCG "understands and practices New Testament Christianity." Old Testament verses are rarely quoted. (Tithing booklet ["Tithing and the Give Way"], last page.)
45. Being led by the Holy Spirit - not any set of doctrines - or being in the right organization defines what a Christian is. (CW letter, 2/25/92 and WN, 4/27/93, feature headline, p. 5.)
46. Obedience springs from the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:32 says God gives His Spirit to them that obey Him.
47. Baptism is not required for salvation. (D. Hulme, M. Feazell statements at Evangelical Conf. in Deefield, Illinois.)
48. The Laying on of Hands is "not a fundamental doctrine" so it was excluded from the Statement

of Beliefs - see Heb. 6:6. (J. Tkach Jr., cc:Mail to minist-ers, 1/93.)

49. Unconverted mates are "unbaptized members." (*Arrows in Flight*, 4/93, p. 4.) The term member is subjective because only God knows who they are. (*Arrows in Flight*, 3/93, p. 3.)

50. The focus of WCG literature is now grace, mercy, reconciliation, sanctification and Christ's blood.

51. The terms "qualify," "development of holy, righteous character," "building holy righteous character," "striving to overcome sin," "conquering sin," "qualifying for the Kingdom of God," etc. are removed from our publications by written policy. (U.S. Reg. Con. handout, M. Feazell, 8/92.)

52. The terms "false religionists," "professing Christianity," "so-called Christians," "religions of the world," "converted Christians," "pagan religions," etc. are both judgmental and condemning and are not to be used. Instead, terms like "Christianity," "Christians," "Mainstream Christians," "Jesus' disciples" should be used. (U.S. Reg. Conf. handout, 8/92, G. Albrecht.)

53. Mr. Armstrong taught the Ten Commandments are the basis for love while the WCG teaches the Ten Commandments don't forbid hatred, envy, rage, selfishness, conceit, and don't require love. (CW letter, 5/27/92.)

54. Mr. Armstrong said the liberalism of the 1970s put the Church in "mortal danger of becoming Laodicea" (GN, 8/79, Personal) but [the] current Pastor General accuses people who wish to hold to old teachings of being self-righteous judges who use emotional arguments to gain their own following. (WN, 12/17/90, Personal.) The current Pastor General wrote "a pharisee is anyone who thinks he has knowledge others do not have." (WN, 10/10/89, Personal.)

55. Co-workers are now "Brothers and Sisters in Christ" and PT subscribers are "Fellow members of the household of faith." (PT, 4/92, Personal.)

56. Voting and contributions to politicians are private matters. (Announced in Big Sandy.)

57. Third tithe may be paid every year at 2.8% abrogating the Deut. 26:12-15 third-tithe-year prayer of faith.

58. Tithing is called a "concept" instead of a law.

59. The WCG is officially pro-choice because "abortion is not equated with murder." IUDs, which kill fertilized ova, are permissible for contraception. (Private letter sent to members and personal CAD advice to members who call and ask.)

60. Men may wear earrings (though not yet at services) and probably the apostles did. (PGR, 1/22/91 and J. Tkach Jr. at Reg. Conf. 8/92.)

61. Proper hair length can't really be determined for men or women (PCD letters) and PT illustrations show David praying, Daniel in the lion's den, the prodigal son, Jesus Christ and the apostles on the telecast all as long-haired men.

62. Members may attend services while overcoming smoking.

63. Reciting the Lord's Prayer is not vain repetition. (PT, 1/93, Q&A.)
64. Position when praying makes no difference. Being on the knees is not important. (WN, B. Schnippert.)
65. New people are to be allowed to attend no matter how badly they dress (and members are allowed to be more lax as well).
66. We take no real position on the 144,000.
67. Prophetic charts are to be avoided.
68. The Beast [is] racism. (11/92 G. Albrecht sermon and M. Feazel sermon sent to ministers.)
69. The Bible is only 20% prophecy at the most (D. Blackwell, 1/93, "Prediction Addiction" sermon) when most all commentaries and Mr. Armstrong knew it was over one third prophecy.
70. Matt. 24:4-5 now refers primarily to strange people who call themselves Christ or to political demagogues rather than to false prophets who come in Christ's name. ("Will Christ Return?", D. Hulme.)
71. The woman astride the Beast is now merely something to be revealed in the future. She is referred to as "Babylon." ("Babylon-Past, Present and Future," p. 15.)
72. Spiritual Babylon is not here yet. People will only have to come out of it when it arrives. ("Babylon-Past, Present and Future," p. 21.)
73. The WCG now keeps "New Testament" not "Old Testament" feasts. The new meanings of each feast day all essentially honor or celebrate Christ in some fashion. J. Tkach Jr. called the holy days "nice window dressing" in the Philippines and Australia in ministerial conferences.
74. Col. 2:16 now has a completely new explanation softening the importance of the holy days. ("God's Festivals and Holy Days," pp. 20-21.)
75. The Azazel goat of Lev. 16 may be symbolic of Christ instead of Satan.
76. Instead of the Father, Jesus Christ is the most important subject in the Bible. (PGR, 4/20/93, p. 8, M. Fezell.)
77. At Christmas "There is nothing wrong with beautiful music, with happy family gatherings, with feasting, rejoicing and even appropriate festive decorations and treats for children..." ("Christmas-the Untold Story," p. 19.)
78. A Christmas nativity scene (*Youth* 92, 11-12/92) and pictures of Christ, angels, Mary, Holy Spirit like a dove, church buildings with steeples, etc. are all increasingly common. The new PCD letter on pictures and images states that worshipping, not making, these things is what's wrong. It should be noted that this point plus the cross, reciting the Lord's prayer, etc. are natural fruits that spring from those who stop worshipping God in Truth. Such people eventually stop worshipping God in Spirit as well. (John 4:23-24!)

79. The new Passover ceremony states that the bread represents the Church and not just Christ's physical body. The blessing asked over it is to reflect this at the Passover service.
80. The term "body of Christ" is merely a metaphor. (PT, 5-6/93, p.17.)
81. Jonah's sign is now primarily his ministry. (PT, 2/93, p. 23.)
82. Christ was now "about three days" in the grave. (PT, 5-6/93, p.8.)
83. Christ was resurrected bodily (physically), not as a Spirit being. (D. Hulme, M. Feazell statements at Evangelical Conf. in Deerfield, Illinois.) [*Editor: On this point, Pack's recollection of Hulme's comment differs from that of others who were at the conference.*]
84. "It is of no consequence whether one eats unleavened bread every day during the Festival of Unleavened Bread." (PGR, 4/21/92, Personal.)
85. Easter is now called a "religious day venerated by the Christian world picturing miracles important to Christianity." It is lumped [together] with Pentecost. The "Christian Easter season continues to Pentecost." (PT, 5- 6/93, p. 7.)
86. [The years] 30 and 33 A.D. have now (apparently) been adopted [as dates] for the crucifixion because they both have Friday Passovers. (PT, 11-12/92 [?]; "Reviews You Can Use," R. Kelly.)
87. The Old Testament Passover was the 15th of Nisan, not the 14th, after all.
88. Leaven is not a type of sin (per three HQ sermons sent to ministers - B. Schnippert, V. Kubik, and one other.)
89. Christ's body and blood both represent spiritual forgiveness. (Healing booklet [probably "The Plain Truth About Healing"-ed].)
90. Healing has been largely exchanged for medical science.
91. There is no physical sin.
92. One can be anointed for emotional turmoil. (PGR, 1/22/93, Q&A.)
93. Blood transfusions are entirely personal matters. The "life is in the blood" has no real bearing on this point. (PCD letter and healing booklet.)
94. Olive oil not only represents the Holy Spirit, but [it] is now also symbolic of medicine and concern of the Church during anointing. "An anointing is, when properly understood, an encouragement to seek medical help." (Healing booklet, p. 49.)
95. Treatments like chemotherapy are just as natural as vitamin C because natural means physical and both are physical. (Healing booklet, pp. 52-53.)
96. New Testament miracles were to prove Christ was the Messiah and are not to accompany preaching the Gospel today because people can now read about it in the New Testament. God didn't want a large church today and miracles would have brought that. (WN, 3/23/87.)

97. Laws are "contravened," not broken. (Healing booklet, p. 58 and WN, 3/27/87, p.3.)
98. Home birthing is not as good as a hospital [delivery].
99. "Disease and suffering (such as AIDS) are not punishments that come from a God of love and mercy." (PT, 11-12/92, "Letters to the Editor", p. 2.)
100. Disease is not a product of cause and effect; it is a built-in trial of life. (Healing booklet, pp. 5, 14.)
101. Hybrid vegetables are improved and enhanced products. (PT, 1/90, p. 27.)
102. One cannot increase the amount of the Holy Spirit one has. You either have it or not. (PT, 5-6/93, Q&A.)
103. The Work being blessed with growth as fruit is now formally disconnected from pleasing God (WN, 4/27/93, pp. 5-6). This standard, which was always Mr. Armstrong's, "can even be a form of superstition" (said by Pastor General [Tkach]). Mr. Armstrong's statements about 30% growth for 35 years have been repudiated by studying the wrong 35 years.
104. Mr. Armstrong used a "health-wealth gospel" hype approach to attract people.
105. Ukrainian charismatics are now deemed converted.
106. Women may write, teach, quote scripture and be interviewer/presenters [on WCG telecasts].
107. Women may direct choirs and be department heads.
108. The new marriage ceremony deletes the wife's vow to submit (and is very weak and Protestant in tone).
109. Accreditation for Ambassador College and worldly theology degrees are now deemed necessary and of value. This is because the Church had an "anti-education bias" during Mr. Armstrong's leadership. (WN, 4/3/89, p. 7.)
110. The existence of God cannot be scientifically proven but must be accepted on faith. ("God Is..." booklet.)
111. Unlike what Mr. Armstrong said, we shouldn't need proofs of fulfilled prophecy to believe the Bible is true. (WN, 8/19/91, Personal.)
112. Increasingly, commentaries seem to be the final source of truth in all matters.
113. Prov. 22:6 means train up your child in a vocation. (PT, 12/92.)
114. Various occupations (that can pay highly) may be chosen seemingly without worrying any longer whether they are right to do. (General advice.)

115. The Sabbath does not have to be kept for salvation. (PCD, D. Hunsberger, personal response to inquiry; J. Tkach Jr. in private letters.) Some Sunday-keepers, who WCG now believes may have God's Spirit, might never be led to the Sabbath. (Same sources.)

116. The Quartodecimans were Sunday keepers. ("Easter Is Pagan.")

117. Sunday keeping is not the mark of the Beast. (M. Snyder, Detroit WMUZ radio interview, 12/13/91.)

118. The Sabbath begins at dark, not sunset.

119. Local church bulletin boards may advertise homes for rent or for sale on the Sabbath. (PGR, 1/22/93, Q&A.)

120. Services may be skipped if one is "too tired to come." (Pastor General's taped sermon, summer/92.) Compare this to Heb. 10:23-26 in end-time context.

121. Christians need not attend services every Sabbath. (D. Blackwell sermon in Akron, 4/17/93.)

122. Make-up is being used-with no enforced guidelines.

123. Birthday parties and celebrations have replaced birthday "recognitions."

124. The WCG is now a "Christian denomination"! - a term Mr. Armstrong utterly denied and condemned. (GN, 10-11/83, p. 22.)

125. Genesis tells us all we can know or say about Nimrod. We should not use "anti-Catholic polemics" like *The Two Babylons*, or *Babylon Mystery Religion*. (WN, 3/20/89.)

126. The lesson of Job was not self-righteousness. It was that God is always worthy of unconditional love by humans. (PT, 10/92, "The Trial of Job," P. Kroll.)

127. The symbol of a fish as used for centuries "by Christians" is okay as long as we don't get carried away. This form of idolatry is not really wrong. (PT, 10/92, p. 20.)

128. Polygamy was not a sin and would be okay if it was a custom of our time. (PGR several years ago. An evangelist-professor in Texas has also openly stated this.)

129. PCD letter L57, debunking God's 7000-year plan, states modern forms of human life have been on earth long before 6000 years ago.

130. Geological strata were not a result of a flood but of stages of creation laid down by God. (Refresher [course for WCG ministers], late 1980s.)

131. Prehistoric people may have been created by Satan.

132. Adam and Eve are metaphors, not real people.

133. The two trees are metaphors, not real and not literal.

134. The Garden of Eden is a metaphor.
135. Cain and Able of Eden is a metaphor.
136. Noah's flood was local, not worldwide. (J. Tkach Jr. to a field minister in personal letter.)
137. The Tower of Babel is a metaphor.
138. The languages weren't divided at Babel. There were foreign languages before that time. ("Babylon - Past, Present and Future," p. 5.)
139. There were no seven literal days of creation. This was also a metaphor.
140. Eve did not carry the seed of all races within her as previously taught. (PGR, 1990.)

Church Government has been changed in a variety of ways:

141. When Mr. Armstrong held the office of Apostle "the term definitely did not connote an apostolic function in the Church that is equivalent to that of the original Apostles." (PGR, 3/24/92, Personal.) [*Editor: Mr. Pack is correctly alluding to the fact that while HWA lived the WCG taught that Armstrong's title was considered equivalent.*]

142. Almost all the Pastor General's material for Personals, letters to Co-Workers, sermons, speeches, PGRs, etc. are ghost-written. By contrast, Mr. Armstrong wrote almost all of his material himself.

143. The Systematic Theology Project (STP) has been officially reinstated along with the "Doctrinal Team." Mr. Armstrong strongly denounced both.

144. The Advisory Council of Elders almost never meets and has no real voice when it does.

145. Members may attend any congregation of the WCG that they wish, though very few are aware of this policy.

146. The very Protestant NIV is now the recommended first Bible of choice. (PT, 5-6/93, p. 26.)

147. All WCG literature is full of Protestant terms and buzz words. (i.e., "spiritual environmentalist," "kingdom support system," and many others.)

148. Virtually all reference to Biblically important numbers (3, 7, 12, 19, 40, 360, 1260) have been deleted.

149. Adopting children and foster parenting are no longer discouraged. (WN, recent feature article.)

150. Children now have a "valid reason" to leave the Church if they disagree with it. (PT, 1/93, p. 11.)



151. Masturbation, is not really wrong - it is the fantasizing that accompanies it that should be stopped. (PCD letter.)

152. We are no longer called now to primarily do the Work. (Said commonly several years ago.)

153. Of the "Seven Keys to Understanding the Bible" reprint, three [keys] have been rejected and the other four altered. This reprint (written 40 years ago) is, of course, now gone. Note: since Mr. Armstrong said these [keys] were vital to understanding the Bible, is it any wonder WCG leaders no longer understand the Bible?

154. Persecution is now an embarrassment to be avoided. (Recent R. Kelly "God Is..." sermon and recent Mr. Tkach video sermon sent to all churches.)

\* Dr. Hoeh said in his 1/92 sermon about the then new "Statement of Beliefs" booklet: the "scripture stands above a Pastor General. The Pastor General does not stand above scripture."

### **Policy Changes**

1. The Good News was killed.

2. The Newsstand Program was killed.

3. The toll-free phone number was killed.
4. The 32-lesson *Bible Correspondence* Course was killed.
5. Mr. Armstrong's literature is all removed along with his by-line. Only a few of his titles still exist but the contents are completely different.
6. Many of the most doctrinally sound evangelists and senior ministers have been demoted, retired, fired, or transferred far away.
7. European television has been killed along with [broadcasting to] some other areas of the world.
8. All international financial support has been shut off.
9. United States television stations have decreased to less than half of the total at Mr. Armstrong's death.
10. Local Church Bible studies have been deemphasized and can be cancelled at any local pastor's discretion.
11. The WCG now advertises local Church addresses on the telecast.
12. Quoting Protestant ministerial journals and secular experts now fills all WCG literature and telecasts.
13. Ministers' wives may once again work and even do it fulltime.
14. All publications are to reflect sexual and political correctness. Terms such as man, mankind, manhood, spokesman, chairman, forefathers, etc. are now to be humanity, people, human beings, humankind, adulthood, spokesperson, chairperson, forerunner, ancestors, etc., etc. (U.S. Reg. Conf. handout, 8/92, G. Albrecht.)
15. Brethren are told they can "believe anything, just stay in the Church and don't talk about it to others."
16. The blessing of children is now to be done privately. (PGR, Fall/92.)
17. Baptisms are now to be done privately. (PGR, Fall/92.)
18. Sermonettes are now to be directed to youth.
19. A new Passover ceremony was sent [to the field ministry] this year. (Uses NIV.)
20. A new Baptism ceremony is planned. (PGR announcement, 2/17/93.)
21. A new Funeral ceremony is planned. (PGR announcement, 2/17/93.)
22. A new hymnal is coming and will include many "old favorites" - to be received by Feast time. (PGR announcement, 2/17/93.)

23. Ambassador College Pasadena was closed and combined with Big Sandy, increasing enrollment from 500 to 1200 - both contrary to Mr. Armstrong's instructions before he died.

24. Intercollegiate sports have been reinstated at Ambassador College after Mr. Armstrong permanently banned them [because he viewed such programs] as participating with the world.

25. Money, no longer faith, now determines which doors the Church walks through - could this be why the open door set before Philadelphia has obviously closed in so many ways?

26. A new retirement policy and terms denies nearly all rights to retirees.

27. Local sermon tapes may not leave that area or be kept longer than one year.

28. All doctrine is on the table. (M. Snyder radio interview.)

*Editor: As David Pack indicated above, the list of WCG doctrinal changes seems to grow almost daily. As the following article by Warren Carlson shows, many major doctrinal changes are creeping into the WCG via the Plain Truth magazine:*

### **Is This Really the Plain Truth?**

Holy obfuscation, Batman! Say it isn't so, Joe. Is the WCG really going down the evolution trail? Were Christ's parables made to be understood by all, even "the World"? Was the parable of Lazarus and the rich man really just a reflection of Egyptian folklore? After reading some muddled July 1993 *Plain Truth* articles, this longtime PT reader (since 1961) and former WCG member (10 years) has cause to pause at the rapid pace of drastic change in the WCG led by that Protestant Roader, Joe Tkach. Consider the following points gleaned from that July issue:

Joe Tkach leads off on page one with his opening "Personal" column and concludes that: "The one true God - The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - created all that is." Holy rampant paganism! Isn't this the Trinity doctrine, scorned so long by HWA? And what's that clickety-clickety-click I hear in the distance? The sound of Herbert Armstrong spinning rapidly in his grave?

In a page five sidebar entitled "Were Parables Used to Hide the Truth?", one would be led to believe that HWA and the WCG's former teaching that Christ's parables were NOT intended for the general public has been thrown overboard, jettisoned along with a growing host of former long-held WCG beliefs. The author writes: "Is the kingdom of God a secret, given only to a chosen few?" HWA certainly believed so, and so did WCG members. The sidebar continues: "Did Jesus tell his parables, which seem so simple, so accessible and so timeless, to keep outsiders from grasping the truth?" Yessir, that's what HWA taught. Only the elect, meaning WCG members of course, get to understand the truth in this age- at least that's what was taught in ancient times. There's that sound again. (Clickety- clickety-clickety-click.) HWA must be spinning even faster in his grave.

In an article written by Norman Shoaf, "What Jesus' Parables Reveal" (July PT, p. 4), we read the following regarding the parable of Lazarus and the rich man: "It's hard to wrench from this parable exact details about the afterlife. Jesus was drawing on images from Jewish and Egyptian folklore, which his listeners would have realized." Holy hoppin' heresy! Didn't HWA always teach, and wasn't there a WCG booklet written by HWA which explained in detail, that the story of Lazarus and the rich man was a lesson setting out the fate of the unbelievers who were to be burned up in the final Gehenna fire? Egyptian folklore?? (Clickety-clickety-clickety-click - the sound is getting

louder and faster.)

John Halford's article "Religion and Science-Bridging the Gap" (July PT, p. 14) is a lengthy statement of what must be the new thinking in the higher circles of the WCG regarding evolution, as the following excerpts make clear: "Genesis 1 and 2 further describe God forming the earth and the life-forms on it in six days of creative activity. Most scientists believe the planet's features were molded by natural forces while life developed gradually, from simple to complex organisms, including human beings. Could both of these apparently contradictory concepts be two ways of looking at the same thing? Perhaps they can." Holy jumpin' secular humanism! The WCG has thrown Adam and Eve on the scrap heap and embraced apes and evolution! But wait-there's more.

Says Mr. Halford: "Opponents of evolution often seize on the fact that it is 'only a theory.' But to do this is to misunderstand the scientific method." Oh? HWA in a legion of articles heaped scorn on what he repeatedly emphasized was a theory of evolution, which he went to great lengths to denounce. Again it appears that the old-time HWA religion has been given a mighty shove off the starboard side into the heaving seas. And as a caper, just where did Halford go for higher religious edification concerning science and faith? To an Anglican priest! - a minister of what used to be called a daughter church of the Great Whore of Babylon. And why is an Anglican priest being quoted about faith on the pages of the PT? Yipes! (Clickety-clickety-click. There's that sound again.)

And I didn't even mention what the Questions section had to say about the "7,000-year plan of God," another old-time WCG teaching given the swift kick out of Pasadena. 7,000 years? Under the new thinking, it could be 10,000 or 100,000 years. (Ciickety-clickety-click. No rest for the weary, Herb.)

After reading the July *Plain Truth*, it is obvious that membership in the National Council of Churches is not far off for the WCG. In fact, I would guess that it is only a matter of time - and a short time at that - before a 50-foot Christmas tree appears at Yuletide in front of the "House for God" in Pasadena and an Easter egg hunt is held on the grounds of the former AC campus, with photos appearing in the *Worldwide News* of a beaming Joe Tkach patting the head of a smiling youngster who managed to garner the most eggs. Don't laugh. It won't be long. (Clickety-clickety-click.)

*Editor: Shortly after we received the above article, Mr. Carlson sent us the following:*

I know many must be confused by the changes going on in the WCG. I'm tempted to call some members who were friends while I was in the WCG, but I know my attempts would be futile. When you leave the WCG it's Joe Stalin time - you're a nonperson, obliterated from the pages of history, erased from the memory banks, zapped and evaporated.

I just started getting the PT again starting with the July issue after a couple of years absence from their subscription list. I was startled by the changes. Even the pictures of Joe Tkach change from issue to issue - one issue has him posing sans jacket on Wall Street, Gordon Gockoesque suspenders. The next month we see him smiling at the camera holding for dear life onto what appears to be a Bible. For all I know, it could be the Koran, or the Kama Sutra. Maybe even the Book of Mormon. Or the latest Robert Ludlum potboiler.

There were some more zingers in the September PT. The Kingdom of God is here already. I didn't know this. And the millennium "may or may not equal 1,000 years." I also noted the "liberal" use of jargon straight from the seminaries - what Gerald Waterhouse called "theological cemeteries" - words such as Amillennialism, Premillennialism, Dispensationalism, etc. There's that sound again.

(Click-ety-clickety-click.)

-Warren Carlson

## **Sardis Is No Longer Sardis**

One of the more remarkable developments in Tkachism of late has been the WCG's recent overtures toward the Church of God (Seventh Day) churches (CG7). During his lifetime, HWA always referred to the CG7 group - out of which he came - as "Sardis" because, he claimed, they were "spiritually dead." Now, however, with HWA and his church eras doctrine officially dead, the Tkachs have decided that the CG7 folks are not so bad, after all.

Sources within CG7 have told us that in the spring a number of top WCG leaders went to Denver to meet with Calvin Burrell, the president of the Denver-based branch of CG7:

The WCG requested the visit because they wanted to get a better understanding of the CG7D's organizational structure (i.e., they vote their council and ministers into office). We heard that at the visit the WCG reps asked several questions about the organizational structure and offered an apology for past treatment and for calling them Sardis, the dead church. Calvin Burrell's questions were more of a doctrinal nature. He was told that the WCG is coming closer to CG7D's teachings.

Apparently, the above meeting led to an invitation for the WCG reps to attend CG7's biennial general conference in early summer. Joseph Tkach Jr. along with Victor Kubik, Michael Feazell, and Greg Albrecht actually attended and were well received. According to sources in both the WCG and CG7, the developing ties are being encouraged by both denominations. In explaining the developing ties to the WCG's ministry, Tkach Jr. wrote to his field ministers:

Becoming acquainted with the local pastor (if any) of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in your area is an important proactive approach that may have helpful benefits in the future. At the conference, we met many of their church pastors who expressed interest in meeting our church pastors in order to build a friendship rather than maintain barriers of exclusivity.

There are groups with which we would not desire to fellowship because of their disfellowshipped status and their divisive teachings. However, the Church of God (Seventh Day) is not one of those groups. (*Pastor General's Report*, 7/27/93, p. 6.)

Notice that the WCG is now willing to have fellowship with a church against which HWA rebelled, but it will not have fellowship with churches that claim a doctrinal allegiance to HWA!

## **Global Increases, International Decreases**

In June, we reported on the founding of the Global Church of God (CGC) by former WCG evangelist Rod Meredith. In the few months since then, Meredith's organization has grown at a rapid clip taking hundreds of members from Worldwide (now including WCG ministers Ben Faulkner, William Swanson, and John Ogwyn who brought many of his former Baton Rouge and Lafayette, Louisiana congregation members with him), has expanded its radio broadcast to 16 major markets, has just put out the first edition of its full-color *The World Ahead* magazine, and is reported to have church revenues already rivaling those of the other major WCG offshoots.

In contrast to CGC, however, WCG spinoff Church of God, International (CGI), which is headed by

Garner Ted Armstrong, recently had some important defections. Les Pope, who was a CGI minister and board member until February 24, has now formed the Fellowship Church of God (2019 Moore St., Oklahoma City, OK 73141). Pope has told friends that while he does not disagree with CGI's basic theology, he has had misgivings about many CGI policies and practices. For instance, he complains that CGI does not want its members and ministers to question anything, that ministerial conferences are just lectures to subordinates with no give-and-take, that CGI leaders Garner Ted Armstrong and Ronald Dart give themselves salaries that are bigger than Billy Graham's, and that Garner Ted Armstrong has become obsessed with notions of building a huge church empire. (Is another Armstrong "Edifice Complex" rearing up again? Oh NO!) Besides pastoring a congregation, Pope plans to start his own religious broadcast. To counter Pope's "rebellion," CGI briefly dispatched Ron Dart to Oklahoma City to round up local CGI supporters and keep them in the CGI corral.

Another recent CGI defector is author John Tuit (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*) who, just after we went to press with our last edition, sent us a copy of a resignation letter he wrote to CGI president Garner Ted Armstrong. It provides a number of insights into what is going on in CGI:

Dear Ted:

The recent edicts from your office have given Paula and me cause for concern. Since around 1985, the CGI seemed to be proceeding in a right way.

Now, the new rules for field churches remind me of the early days, when, in the original 1979 [CGI] constitution and by-laws, you were proclaimed Chairman in perpetuity. Do you remember the uproar over that? You should!

So now we have a new list of ranks, deacons who aren't allowed to anoint (what about Stephen and Philip?), administrators (we call them spies here in NC), speaking credential requirements, and a prohibition against unpaid ministers going more than 100 miles to serve a congregation. All the preliminaries to a total central control as soon as you are ready to place your new Academy graduates, loyal to you, in place. Then, when questions are raised, you say the rules don't really mean what they say, as Ron Dart wrote in his letter to the Statesville Church. Anything to pacify us for the moment, until you are ready to tighten the screws another turn.

And, the money. Always the most important concern, it seems. You claim authority over local church finances, try to tell us that Holy Day offerings must be sent to Tyler, demand local financial reports and complain about congregations that are saving toward a down payment on a building.

Yet, I haven't seen a financial report from Tyler since 1979. Of course, you have never published the schedule of salaries, allowances and benefits of the staff at Tyler, as you should. Are you fearful of the reaction from the struggling members who support you? Your statement in 1978 that the CGI would be squeaky clean has been relegated to the junk heap.

In addition to these problems, you have reverted back to your early 1980's practice of ridicule of others, including your own father. And, because you were offended by someone who didn't practice good personal hygiene, you launched an attack on all men who don't dress in a suit and tie. This doesn't apply to me, except in mid-summer, so I don't have a personal stake in your comments. However, you have offended many who either can't afford such clothes, or by local custom just don't dress that way.

As I have seen these developments over the recent months, it has become evident that you are just playing church, or worse, running a religious business, and want control, with the final concern being MONEY.

You don't seem to get it. If you would just preach the Gospel, stop trying to build a central

headquarters, stop trying to quench the working of the Holy Spirit among God's people, you would be blessed in such service. I spoke on this recently, and enclose my sermonette notes for your study.

Rather than be drawn into another round of "church sandbox," Paula and I have decided to withdraw our membership, effective immediately, from The Church of God, International, of Tyler, Texas. We will, of course, remain members of The Statesville Church of God, International, an independently organized congregation, under the laws of North Carolina. And, most importantly, we remain members of The Church of God, headquartered in Heaven, under the rule of Jesus Christ. It is sad that there are those who, while members and officials in physical organizations called the Church of God, may, by their actions, be threatened with loss of the spiritual membership, if it hasn't already happened, assuming that it ever existed in the first place.

Sincerely,  
John Tuit  
Route 1 Box 263  
Hays, NC 28635





---

## Book Review:

*Daughter of Babylon - The True History of the Worldwide Church of God* by Bruce Renehan. Daughter of Babylon, P.O. Box 1551, Tehachapi, CA 93561; 203 pages plus documentary appendixes, spiral-bound first edition \$15 plus \$3 postage.

There is perhaps no teaching more perplexing to Worldwide Church of God outsiders than the WCG's "one true church" doctrine. Now it appears that at least one key insider is equally perplexed by this cherished doctrine's spiritually paralyzing side effect.

Recently, Pastor General and Apostle Joseph W. Tkach Sr., who appears to want the doctrine modified somewhat, voiced his own exasperation with the rigid closed-mindedness of his Worldwide flock. In his efforts to unravel myths and errors from Armstrong doctrine (a.k.a. "God's Truth"), "Master Weaver" Tkach seems truly bewildered by the group's unshakable, unyielding fixation on Armstrong's faulty rendition of "the faith once delivered."

As white-knuckled true believers cling tenaciously to what they heard "from the beginning" from Armstrong (not to be confused with the true gospel message first century Christians heard from the beginning), Tkach seems resigned to the fact that he will just have to "cut them loose."

Truly there is none so blind, Tkach chides, as one who will not look.

Author Bruce Renehan dares to take that look, examining the dynamic power which inhibits the Worldwider's challenge of his belief system - Herbert W. Armstrong's very own "one true church doctrine." In his book *Daughter of Babylon - The True History of the Worldwide Church of God*, the former Armstrong loyalist confronts the Worldwider's myopic world view and puts the church's historical documentation to the acid test.

Can the Worldwide Church of God, Renehan asks, really prove it is the "one true church" - the authentic descendant of the primitive first century church founded by Jesus Christ? Was Herbert W. Armstrong, as Worldwide historians have long contended, merely one Apostle in a long apostolic succession leading back through time to the original twelve? Or did Worldwide historians, trusted men of the cloth, reconstruct the entire garment of church history - stitching threads of truth to the colorful fabric of fiction - in an effort to cloak Armstrong's "government from the top down" in the wrap of ecclesiastical credibility? Renehan exposes the true historical and theological roots of the Armstrong movement and the false premises upon which Armstrong's "one true church" doctrine is based.

*Daughter of Babylon* is highly recommended for Worldwidiers - past, present, and prospective. Those who face the task of weeding through the "one true church" mythological maze will find *Daughter of Babylon* truly enlightening. Some, in fact, may even find themselves released finally (with a clear, educated conscience) from any continuing, uneasy allegiance to Armstrong's theology.

-Janey (George) Milligan

## Whitaker On the Three Tithes

*Editor: With the WCG changing so many of its doctrines, some wonder if it will now get around to changing its triple tithing doctrine. During the past year David C. Whitaker of Enid, Oklahoma has submitted a number of rather intriguing theological papers to AR. While we do not have the means to publish all of them, we suspect many of our readers will find his comments on the WCG's tithing doctrine thought provoking.*

Over the years, many of us have become painfully aware of the various abuses in the applied practice of "tithing" as enjoined by the Worldwide Church of God and related groups which claim to obey the Scriptural laws for the First, Second, and Third Tithes.

Within the WCG, the teaching has been to send the First Tithe to the WCG's headquarters in Pasadena, for members to withhold an additional 10% of their total gross income to use in keeping the annual Festivals, and every third and sixth year in a seven-year calendar cycle for members to withhold and send a yet additional 10% to headquarters as a "third tithe" to be distributed among widows and poor within the WCG. This means baptized WCG members have been required to withhold up to 30% of their annual gross income every two years out of seven, and withhold 20% of their total gross income during all other years. [Note that these percentages are for "tithes" only; they do not include the separate "freewill offerings," mandatory holy day offerings, special offerings, building fund donations, loans, etc. that the WCG encourages - ed.]

Many times during the Third Tithe years, WCG members have had to unduly "sacrifice" - not be blessed! - in order to obey and fulfill the WCG's demands regarding money. This has taken various forms: Sometimes families and their children have maintained inferior nutrition levels; badly needed home repairs have gone undone (while their ministers have lived in well-kept homes); medical needs for family members frequently have gone unattended; and even needed dental repairs and cleanings have often had to be put off. Some of the ways WCG children have been neglected during "third tithe years" would be viewed as statutory child neglect or abuse in some states.

I cannot help but be reminded of Jesus' description of the ancient apostate Jerusalem Pharisees who had forsaken the traditions (Hebrew *Kabbalat*) from the Prophets in order to construct their own unethical interpretations of Torah administration: "And they prepare heavy and oppressive burdens for other men's shoulders, but they will not remove them with their finger" (Matthew 23:4 from the Greek text). In reading the unpointed Torah Scrolls in use at that time, the human "finger" was always used as a pointer to keep the place in the text of the Scroll while reading and when passing the Scroll from man to man or from rabbi to disciple. Jesus was here saying that these corrupt Pharisees possessed the accurate knowledge about Torah and could have used their "finger" to point from the Torah Scrolls the proper and intended teachings regarding the practice of Scriptural Law so as to produce great blessings upon all those who obeyed. Rather, these unethical Pharisees refused to use their "finger" on the Torah Scrolls to point out the truth about the proper application of the Law to the people - these Pharisees refused to use their individual and collective "finger" to "remove" the misinterpretations and malpractices of the Torah which they, and the Jerusalem Elders, had created at variance with the Kabbalah and Oral Torah anciently promoted by Ezra from the Prophets.

On a Gentile level, the WCG ministry is guilty of this same kind of refusal and sacrilege - dabbling around with Divine Laws which they don't properly understand. The WCG ministry has never taken the time and or made the effort to search Judaic history to discover the proper manner of understanding the Scriptures pertaining to the Second Tithe and the Third Tithe! As a result, many times the WCG manner of keeping the Second and Third Tithe laws has generated hardships and curses rather than blessings and happiness.

In ancient Israel, the Second and Third Tithes were considered to be what we today would call "declensional tithes" based upon the tithing formula described by the Hebrew words *ma'aser min ha-ma'aser* ("tenth from the tithe") mentioned in Numbers 18:26. This *ma'aser min ha-ma'aser* applied to the special tithe offered by the Levites from the main national Tithe they received, and also applied to the method of determining the amounts for the Second and Third Tithes. In fact, the Hebrew word for "second" (as in Second Tithe) is *sheniy* which means "double" in the sense of "secondary" or "subsidiary." The Second Tithe was understood to be a "juxtapositional tithe" or "a tithe accompanying along beside" in relation to the main national Tithe.

Rabbi Dan Cohn-Sherbok explains:

The 'first tithe' (Numbers 18:24-26) was given to the Levites after the heave offering ('terumah') - (10% of 10%) - for the priests had been separated from it.... The 'second tithe' (Leviticus 27:30-31; Deuteronomy 14:22-6) was a tenth part of the first tithe, and was consumed by the owner himself in Jerusalem; it applied in the first, second, fourth, and fifth years in the Sabbatical cycle, and is dealt with in the tractate Maasar Sheni ("Second Tithe") in the Mishna. The 'poor tithe' (Deut. 14:28-9; 26:12) was calculated in the same way as the second tithe and was paid in the third and sixth year of the Sabbatical cycle; it was given to the poor.... The Levites also paid a tithe (10% of 10%) from what they received (Numbers 18:26), in the form of an offering to God. (*The Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica*, p. 543, Entry: "Tithe"; c1992, Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, England.)

At no time in the history of ancient Israel or in the history of the Jewish religion did God require the people to withhold in excess of the mandated 10% total in tithes! Since the First Tithe (10%) also included the amounts of the Second and Third Tithes (10% of 10% each) according to the specified years within a Sabbatical (seven-year) cycle, anything given as additional was considered as an "offering," and anything additionally demanded by the king was defined as a "tax."

Why should any Christian church impose a tax burden on its own members above and beyond the stated intent and requirements of the Law? Even a good law, when substantially exaggerated beyond its original intent and purpose, can quickly become an unethical law of oppression and tyranny. And this is what has occurred in the WCG as a direct result of the anti-Judaic bias inherent within the cliquish, pro-Gentile mentality of the men positioned in the WCG's top echelons.

After becoming aware of this information about the correct method for determining the subsidiary Second and Third Tithes, will the WCG ministry choose the only moral and ethical course to pursue - changing their ways and enlightening their laymembers? Or, will the desire for money overrule any decision for spiritual improvement and performance? Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1810 A.D.) observed in his time: "desire for money and influence is now greater than sexual desire" (*Chayei Moharan* 2:52, no. 25). Does Rabbi Nachman's observation apply to our present American culture also? And, if so, how strongly has the Worldwide Church of God been affected by the widespread desire for money? In this case, you be the judge.

-David C. Whitaker

## **Book Review:**

*The Making of a Tradition - A Criticism of Orthodox Christian Theology* by Mark M. Mattison. Ministry School Publications, 3880 Jefferson SE, Wyoming, MI 49548; c1991, 142 pages, \$5.95 (plus \$1.50 for shipping).

In this historical survey of popular Christian doctrines, Mark Mattison contends that the teaching of the "Trinity" developed over a long period of time in conjunction with influences from Platonism

and Gnosticism. Catholic catechist John A. Hardon, S.J., once remarked, "As a Christian today reviews the history of the Church in the first eight hundred years, the most striking feature of the seven general councils held during that period is their concern to safeguard the reality of the triune God." Mark Mattison explores the events and forces which served to make the Trinity dogma so important to the developing Catholic Church, including the political usage of the Trinity teaching as an instrument to combat the doctrines of Arius of Alexandria. Also, following the scholarly position of German historian and philologist R. Reitzenstein's 1921 work, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, Mark Mattison describes how the grassroots pre-Christian Mystery Cult system developed into the early movement called "Christian Gnosticism," and contributed extensively to Catholic religion. With so many forces at work from outside the Holy Land in which Christianity originated, Jesus Christ became perceived "as a mysterious hybrid of various substances." In addition to explaining the pagan theological and extra-biblical influences which occasioned the formation of the Trinity concept in early Catholicism, Mark Mattison calls for a return to the true worship of the One God of Monotheism which Jesus and the original New Testament Church understood. This epochal book, *The Making of a Tradition*, should be required reading for all current and former Worldwide Church of God members who seek a better understanding of the Trinity teaching in relation to the doctrinal changes occurring within the WCG organization today.

-David C. Whitaker

## **Gary Scultz Leads Secret Saucer Base Expeditions**

Not everyone who leaves the WCG finds himself absorbed in the activities of WCG spinoff groups. Some move on to more interesting pursuits. A good example is Gary Scultz, a former WCG member and Foundation for Biblical Research board member who has also been a research scientist working on projects relating to air pollution abatement and primary energy technologies. While still maintaining a keen interest in biblical studies, in recent years Schultz has focused much of his attention on the UFO phenomenon.

While, for many people the idea of UFOs - and the related phenomenon of "alien abductions" - is the stuff of tabloid headlines at best, in recent years, more and more educated people have begun to view the subject as something to be taken seriously. Not only are there hundreds of books on the market that purport to give an explanation for UFO sightings and claimed "abductions," but there are whole magazines devoted to the idea of beings visiting our planet from other galaxies or dimensions. One such magazine, for example, is the *MUFON UFO Journal*, 103 Old Towne Road, Seguin, TX 78155. And in recent years a number of respected academics have produced books dealing with the UFO and abduction phenomena. One such book is *Secret Life - Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions* published by Simon & Schuster. The author of that work is David M. Jacobs, Ph.D., an associate professor at Temple University.

Not only are there scholars who take seriously the possibility that aliens may be visiting our planet, many everyday Americans feel likewise. Besides the millions who claim to have seen a nonterrestrial craft, about one in every 50 adult Americans may have had some type of UFO abduction experience (based on a poll conducted by the Roper organization - *Los Angeles Times*, 5/20/92, p. E1). There are even support groups for those who are trying to understand and psychologically cope with their abduction experiences (*Los Angeles Times*, 3/8/93, p. B1), and one insurance company actually offers UFO abduction insurance (*Los Angeles Times*, 8/19/93, p. B2).

Until a few years ago, the subject of UFOs was not one that greatly interested Gary Schultz. But in late 1989, Schultz heard ufologist Bill Cooper in a radio interview and later at a lecture. Cooper challenged the skeptical to see "the craft" for themselves by going out to "Area 51" near Nellis Air Force Range in Nevada. Taking up the challenge, Schultz and his wife Pearl went out to the location

in early 1990. On their first visit to the area, they saw nothing unusual. But on a second visit, they not only made six separate UFO sightings, but they were able to photograph some of the UFOs in flight. Since then, Scultz has researched the UFO question extensively and has taken others out to "Area 51" and adjacent "S-4" near the government's nuclear test site in Nevada and to another UFO "hot spot" near Tehachapi, California in the hope of having a "close encounter" with UFOs. So many have wanted to see the saucers, in fact, that with an associate named Norio Hayakawa, Schultz has started a tour and lecture organization called Secret Saucer Base Expeditions.

Now, before anyone thinks that Schultz is not just an eccentric, but is a charlatan besides, a few points need to be mentioned. Those of us who've known Schultz over the years are convinced that he is both sincere and not one who is out to defraud the public. Furthermore, many of those he has guided to the desert sites have seen some thing very unusual. Not only are Schultz's photographs quite authentic (there is no hint that they were created by any kind of trick photography techniques), a fair number of others have also taken both still photographs and videos of the craft. Among those who Schultz has guided to the desert locations have been representatives of the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Outlook*, *Business Week*, *Omni*, KROQ radio, and television stations KCOP, KTTV, and KNBC. Some TV news crews were, themselves, able to video tape the craft in flight, and those of us who have seen some of the video footage can attest that whatever it is that is flying about out there looks and maneuvers like nothing we have ever seen before.

Could the craft be some type of highly advanced spy plane? Such a theory is held by a number who point out that Schultz's tour group has encountered some resistance from government security personnel. In May of 1991, for instance, the groups' caravan was buzzed by a military CH-53 helicopter which tried to run one of the saucer watchers' cars off the road. The incident resulted in a criminal complaint being filed with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles (*Los Angeles Times*, 6/16/91, p. E1).

Some who hold to the experimental spy plane theory also point to some other unusual happenings in the southern California region during the last year or two. Many living in the L.A. Basin have noticed that tremors similar to earthquakes have been hitting the area quite regularly "on schedule" (for a while, every Thursday at about 7:00 a.m.). Many earthquake-experienced citizens have wondered how any type of earthquake activity could occur with such precise regularity. But phone calls to Caltech and various government agencies resulted in the explanation that no earthquakes are being registered at those times, but that we are getting "skyquakes" of undetermined origin. According to Jim Mori, a seismologist with the United States Geological Survey, the shocks have been caused by "something that's traveling through the atmosphere at several times the speed of sound in a generally northeasterly direction." And an analyst with *Jane's Defense Weekly*, the respected London-based military periodical has speculated - based on Congressional records that accidentally included secret information - that the skyquakes were probably caused by a new government spy plane, dubbed "the Aurora," which supposedly can fly about 4000 miles per hour (*Los Angeles Times*, 4/17/92, p. B1; see also the *Pasadena Weekly*, 5/28-6/3/93, p. 2).

While not doubting that the government may have such a spy plane, Schultz, nevertheless, does not believe that "the Aurora" is what he has been seeing out in Nevada or at another location in the Antelope Valley north of Los Angeles (and Fred Francis, NBC's Pentagon correspondent, agrees with him). "First of all," Schultz says, "what we have seen is a craft that is completely silent. It doesn't sound or behave like any type of jet or VTOL aircraft." Furthermore, Schultz points out that the flight patterns of the craft - sudden accelerations and decelerations, zigzagging motions, and 90-degree turns - all indicate a craft of highly advanced technology with control over gravity (something unknown in the general scientific community). Based on the evidence that Schultz has in his possession, he has concluded that the UFOs he has observed are actually alien craft that the government has somehow acquired and is now using for its own clandestine purposes.

While many UFO researchers view the UFO phenomenon as being of a psychological or spiritual nature, Schultz says, "Not all alien craft and alien contacts are of the ultraterrestrial or supernatural type. Some of these experiences are with physical aliens and their craft." Schultz has developed a theory to explain this phenomenon biblically. Referring to it as "an ontological sandwich," he points out that "angels - supernatural creatures - are far superior to physical man. So one explanation of aliens would be that these are also physical creations like man, but technologically more advanced. And just as both men and angels can be either good or evil, these aliens are probably capable of being either good or evil, as well."

An interview with Schultz appears in the August issue of *Omni*, the science magazine, and another interview appears in the 1993 book *Alien Contact (Top-Secret UFO Files Revealed)* by Timothy Good (published by William Morrow Co., 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019). To help clarify his views, Schultz has also produced two lecture tapes: "UFOs and the Bible" and "The Shadow Government, UFOs, the Bible, and You" (\$6 each). For further information about taped lectures, tours to sighting areas, and seminars about UFOs, write to: Secret Saucer Base Expeditions, P.O. Box 599, Gardena, CA 90248 (tel. 310-393-0778).

## Book Review:

*Angels and Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination* by Keith Thompson, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. (One Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867, tel. 800-457-2226), c1991, 248 pages, \$19.95.

Things that go "Bump!" in the night...

I was in my booth in Booth City, Ambassador College, Texas, studying late one evening in the early 1970s when C.J. appeared breathless at my door. "UFO!" he said, and disappeared again. Of course I followed him. A handful of guys were standing between the booths, near the Wall, looking up at the sky in the direction of Gladewater. The only thing I could see was an extraordinary bright, reddish light. Someone brought binoculars and tried to see more, but they didn't make the image much clearer. The light seemed to be standing still, or else moving directly away from me so slowly that it appeared to be stationary. Then suddenly it took off at a sharp angle to the northeast and disappeared from view. The others were pretty shook up. They said that they had seen it pass right over the booths, about 1500 feet in the air. It was large and round, with a lot of red and white lights around it. And it didn't make a sound. None at all.

Among all the speculations and dogmatic assertions about "The Truth" that took place in the Worldwide Church of God, there was not a great deal of attention devoted to trying to understand, in any sort of complex way, the nature of the universe in which we live. We knew (or thought we knew) about God and about the "elect's" destiny to become virtually God. We speculated that as "Sons of God" we might be given our own solar systems or galaxies to rule someday. But the WCG was not otherwise noted for engaging in, or encouraging, metaphysical inquiry. Of the denizens of other levels of reality we knew very little save that they came in two kinds, good and bad - and that the good angels existed in order to praise God and, as God's messengers, to help us. The bad angels we tried to think about as little as possible, so as not to encourage their presence among us. But this narrow and frightened view of the universe sometimes left faithful members without answers. Any anomalous experiences that didn't involve anointing by an elder were either ignored or else attributed, with a truly inquisitorial mentality, to those cosmic bad-boys, the demons. So there was no context into which to fit this UFO sighting over the Big Sandy campus except the chilling one that perhaps a bona fide demon had just passed overhead.

In the twenty years since the night of that sighting, I have heard several people talk about their experiences with UFOs in the WCG. Many people, when they come out of that organization, try on

their own to understand the significance of their UFO encounters and how the existence of such things squares with the view of the universe that they were taught in the church. Keith Thompson's book, *Angels and Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1991), may be one of the most sound pieces of thought about the nature of UFOs available today, and a valuable guide for those ex-WCGers still looking for answers to the riddle of their own UFO experiences.

Thompson develops two lines of inquiry. On the first and most straightforward level, he presents the modern history of the UFO "myth" beginning with Kenneth Arnold's famous sighting in 1947. In this historical narrative, Thompson does not concern himself with the validity or lack thereof of any particular UFO sighting. That issue, he claims, is one of the central tenets of the UFO myth - that with enough time and money, the real truth of UFOs can eventually be discovered. His interest is not in establishing or demolishing the "nuts and bolts" reality of UFOs, but rather in tracing the historical development of the "UFO-as-idea."

One of Thompson's more interesting short asides deals with the historical precedents for the modern "age of flying saucers." Here he deals with such phenomena as the "mystery airships" seen over California in the late 1800s, the visions of medieval mystics, the report of a French archbishop who narrowly saved three men and a woman from being lynched by a mob of frantic Frenchmen because they had disembarked from a "cloudship," Constantine's famous vision at the Milvian Bridge after which he professed Christianity, and Ezekiel's report (chap. 10) of a "whirlwind out of the north" and "wheels within wheels." He speculates that Ezekiel's wheels and modern UFOs might be essentially the same phenomenon - a shape-shifting technology form that has mastered the dimensions of space-time in such a way that defies human description.

On a second and more theoretical level, Thompson analyzes the UFO myth in terms of the place it holds in "humanity's religious search." To accomplish this, he draws upon insights provided by comparative religion, depth psychology, and cultural anthropology. It is important to note that Thompson uses the word "myth" in its scholarly sense: as a sacred story whose purpose is to account for the origin of things. Myth is not something that is "not true." On the contrary, because myth functions allegorically, it is (for those who hold it) ultimately true. Myth has significance not only on its surface but also on deeper, more profound levels as well.

It is at those profound levels that Thompson discovers the religious significance of UFO's for modern human consciousness. Thompson believes that whatever "teaching" may be ascribed to UFOs is simply to remind us who have made virtual gods out of science and technology, and whose view of the universe has been thereby constricted, that human beings actually inhabit multiple worlds and take part in multiple realities. The really strange thing, according to Thompson, is not that aliens or angels might exist, but that modern Western culture has placed these dimensions of reality off-limits to serious, rational consideration. To take UFOs seriously as a modern mythico-religious phenomenon, says Thompson, is to wake up after "a long sleep of denial" (p. 228).

*Angels and Aliens* explores the link between technology and metaphysics in a way that is thought-provoking to those who have not had an encounter with a UFO, and comfortingly helpful to those who have - particularly those who come from the WCG and continue to suffer the pinching-off of reality that the WCG teaches. In my opinion, Thompson's book is a "must read."

-Brenda Denzler

## Letters

Dear Mr. Trechak:

My wife and I are not regular readers of your publication, but I am hoping you might be able to help us with a problem. We are still members of the Worldwide Church of God. But there is so much confusion and tension in the church now. Many are planning to leave during the fall. We even heard that during the feast there will be demonstrations and walkouts by some ministers who are loyal to Dr. Meredith.

We are getting tired of so much church politics but we still want to keep the feast this fall. Would you know of any other religious organization that would let us attend their Feast of Tabernacles even if we have not formally left the Worldwide Church yet? We don't want to join another church, just keep the feast in a nice environment, not have to see so much politics and confusion.

-Oregon

*Editor: In your part of the country, two organizations that might be of help are: Feast of Tabernacles (R. W. Hoops), 8642 Highway 128, Healdsburg, CA 95448 and Association For Christian Development (Ken Westby), 4449 South Star Lake Rd., Auburn, WA 98001.*

I think that overall you folks at AR do a very fine job with your publication. But every so often I feel you are a bit naive about some of the groups you mention. Let me give you but one recent example.

In your last issue you mentioned the Watchman Fellowship group in a positive way at least three times. Aren't you aware of how prejudiced they are?

I have before me copy of their Vol. 10, No. 2 issue which contains their 1993 listing of groups they call "cults." Now, granted, they do list many crazy churches that deserve such a label. But just look at some of the others they list: John Denver, John Bradshaw, *Union Life*, Norman Vincent Peale, all groups that can possibly be labeled "New Age," everything related to UFOs, and even Pumsy the Dragon! I think their list reveals that not only are they prejudiced, they are a bit paranoid.

John Denver is a singer-songwriter who is so squeaky clean he is very boring at times. A cult leader? Hardly.

John Bradshaw is a psychologist (and a former professor of theology) who has helped thousands of people understand themselves better. I personally know people who were greatly helped by his programs. He encourages people to seek God and never tells people what church to join. Why label him a cult?

*Union Life* is a fairly mainstream Christian ministry. Norman Vincent Peale was a respected minister in a major denomination. So they may have had an occasional odd idea. A lot of us do at times. Does that make all of us - everyone except Watchman, that is - cults?

Anything that can possibly be labeled "New Age" is supposed to be cultish. Of course, they neglect to mention that the Bible, itself, not only refers to a future new age (the Millennium), but most of the ideas that so-called "new agers" are interested in - the idea of life beyond the grave, the reality of spirit, the significance of names, numerology, symbolic thinking, predestination, the interpretation of dreams, the existence of angels and evil spirits, etc.- are all ideas found in the Bible itself.

As for the Sacred Names people - well, should they be labeled a cult just because they take some Bible passages literally?

And where did Watchman come up with the notion that "belief in extraterrestrial beings who have visited Earth and provided knowledge... is always contrary to biblical truth"? From cover to cover the Bible is filled with stories about non-humanoid beings - both evil and good - that come to earth with information for humans. The latter are referred to in the Bible as "angels" (see Gen. 19:1, Lk. 1:28, etc.). I guess the folks at Watchman just never noticed.

And what about Pumsy the Dragon? Pumsy is a hand puppet that is used in schools as an entertaining way to teach young children. Do the folks at Watchman really think a hand puppet can be a cult?

Now, I know what you are going to say: Watchman is only listing those groups that fall outside of "orthodox Christianity."

I guess that is why they list not only the WCG, but most of the WCG offshoots like Dankenbring, Meredith, etc. But is it really fair to label groups as cults simply because they have some teachings that the big Protestant denominations don't have? Frankly, while the WCG and its offshoots may have problems, let's not forget that some of what HWA taught was true: Sunday worship did come from a Roman emperor, Christmas came from the Saturnalia, and there is an awful lot of rank paganism in "orthodox Christianity."

But even if you stay with Watchman's standards, i.e., that we should ostracize every group that does not toe the line as to accepted mainstream Protestant teaching, in what category does that put some of the wackos that we see on the so-called "Christian TV" stations? I was amazed that Benny Hinn did not make Watchman's list. Not did Judaism. If a cult is any religious group that doesn't adhere to "orthodox Christianity" then certainly all religious Jews are in a cult. And what about the Roman Catholic Church? They didn't make Watchman's list either. Yet, can you think of a bigger cult?

Don't get me wrong. I don't hate Jews or Catholics. Nor Hindus for that matter. But, I think as soon as someone starts categorizing ALL religious (and even nonreligious!) organizations that are outside of Protestant "orthodoxy" as being a "cult," to my way of looking at it, the ones doing the labeling have, themselves, become a cult.

I hope that in the future AR will not give such "cult experts" so much space.

-Missouri

*Editor: We have stated repeatedly that just because we mention a publication or group in AR does not mean that we endorse all their views. (Just as, undoubtedly, such groups do not necessarily endorse all our views.) In fact, we regularly report on groups with which we have little in common and give their addresses so that our readers can, if they wish, make their own inquiries and come to their own conclusions. We are simply not in the business of running the lives of our readers. As for the Watchman Fellowship organization, they regularly report on the WCG and related groups and they do so in a very professional manner. For example, the recent Vol. 10, No. 7 issue of their magazine - published in the face of outlandish legal threats from the WCG - thoroughly covers the WCG's recent shift to trinitarianism. For a free copy, write to Watchman Fellowship, P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094-0340.*

There is one thing in your last issue that I take issue with. You seemed to be far more critical of the Branch Davidians than the government. Of course I had no love for David Koresh, but surely you realize that this was a threat to all freedom loving people who believe in the Constitution. The government could not have cared less if Koresh claimed to be Jesus Christ or that he was sexually abusing the children. They only wanted to take one step closer to taking away the people's right to

bear arms. The only thing that has kept our government from turning into a complete dictatorship is that our crooked leaders in Washington, D.C. know most of the American people are armed.

Also, while I'm no follower of Garner Ted Armstrong, I agree with him that the government should have used the Andy Taylor approach and sent one agent or the local sheriff, who knew Koresh, to talk about the gun violations. As for child abuse charges, that should have been handled by the local welfare department, not a bunch of trigger happy Barney Fifes. Just how in the world did burning those poor, little children alive help the fact that they had been abused? Don't we have great government? In fact, we will never know if the firearms charges were true or not because all of them were destroyed! The facts are clear that the BATF and the FBI caused the fire by throwing gas into the compound and turning over the Davidians' kerosene lamps they were using because their electricity had been cut off!

As for the agents that were killed, of course that was bad too, especially for their families. But they knew the risk they were taking when they took jobs as agents. I really believe many law officers today would not be killed if they would learn to be our friends and protectors instead of acting like the Gestapo.

Last of all, John, I noticed that you got a good deal of your information about the Branch Davidians from *Newsweek* magazine. That publication is nothing more than a rag for the system. It is owned by *The Washington Post*, whose owner, Katherine Graham, attends the secretive Bilderberger meetings but never reports on them in her paper or magazine. If you want the real facts, read *The Spotlight*.

John, I'm not mad at you.... Everyone is entitled to one mistake.... By the way, you may print this letter along with my name.

-David W. Berryman  
Muscle Shoals, Alabama

The least that the WCG could do would be to refund to each of us the money we gave to build the feast sites that they sold and to build the Pasadena campus and auditorium that they are now going to sell.

-Wisconsin

We were members of the WCG for 12 years. Leaving was not easy, but your efforts with the *Report* were an immense help, maybe more than you will ever know. After burning our bridges with former church affiliations and friends, and then leaving the WCG, you were our only lifeline to sanity. My very best wishes and thanks.

-Eleanor Roufs  
Minnesota

## **About This Issue**

This issue that you are holding is not the one I promised in June. Although that one is almost ready for printing, I thought it best to delay it so that the more timely information that this issue contains could get out immediately.

For some months now, I have been researching the subject of the WCG spinoffs. There are so many

now, and so many that hold to very strange beliefs, I thought that that information would make an informative issue or series of issues. But, in recent weeks it has become very obvious that the WCG is in the midst of a true revolution - one that pales into insignificance all the crises in its past, even the famous 1979 lawsuit brought by California's Attorney General. Many cult monitoring organizations have come to the same conclusion.

Where all this is leading is hard to figure. While the WCG has adopted a number of mainstream doctrinal positions, they have also been flirting with a number that are quite unorthodox. While they seem to want better relations with some religious and news organizations, they remain quite belligerent toward many others. While they admit their church has made many doctrinal and administrative errors over the years, they are doing little, if anything, to rectify the thousands of injustices they perpetrated in their past. "All you need is love" is a nice notion, but for most of us the slogan rings hollow without the physical evidence. (And didn't Paul write something along those lines?)

The next issue of AR should be quite interesting. We'll be getting it out as soon as we pay off the bills we incurred in doing this one. My thanks to all of you who are supporting our publishing efforts.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR54\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**February 1994 (AR54)**

Editor: In the last issue of AR, I emphasized the many dramatic changes that have taken place in recent months in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), Ambassador College, *The Plain Truth* magazine, and on *The World Tomorrow* telecast - the institutions founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong. In this issue I mainly want to report on the amazing phenomenon of the growing number of WCG offshoots. However, before doing so I'd like to raise an important question: Of all the doctrinal changes taking place in the WCG now run by Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, which one is the most significant?

One reader who recently wrote me said AR was over reporting on the Trinity issue and that we should be focusing more on the WCG's changing views on evolution. Some have thought we should be emphasizing the WCG's clear shift regarding the place of Jesus in defining the Gospel. Still others have suggested that the change in the WCG's approach to prophecy is the most important. While all of these views have merit, let me put forward my own suggestion - one that I have not yet seen made in any other publication. I believe the most significant change made in the WCG by the Tkach administration is this:

### **The Bible Is Being Deemphasized**

Now, this may at first seem like an outlandish statement to make. After all, the WCG still quotes the Bible extensively, writes about it, quotes it in doctrinal statements, has members (some, at least) who study the Bible, and Mr. Tkach continually quotes from it in editorials and sermons.

Nevertheless, even though this change (like so many others) has not been overtly announced, it has taken place and one does not even have to "read between the lines" to see it. I first noticed the shift in the Tkach administration's position in the July 27, 1993 *Pastor General's Report*. On page one Pastor General Joseph Tkach makes this statement:

Before the *God Is...* booklet was published, I wrote to the Church explaining that the teaching we once held - that the destiny of human beings is to become Gods - was not one we could support theologically (or biblically, for that matter). At that time, I encouraged all members to read the new booklet carefully. [Tkach then goes on to write how many found the new booklet difficult to comprehend.]

Putting aside, for now, the distortion of HWA's teaching Tkach creates by using the word "Gods," let us just focus on one phrase: "was not one we could support *theologically* (or *biblically*, for that matter)." Please note the words I have italicized: "theologically OR biblically." Now, think for a moment - in all the history of the WCG - up until now - when was "theology" ever considered a basis for belief other than when it was "biblical theology"? With only one exception (discussed below), I can't recall any theological position that HWA's organization ever took that did not have at least an ostensibly biblical basis. Indeed, there are many of us who took theology classes at Ambassador College in years past who can distinctly recall that the WCG's position (often stated by reference to Rev. 22:18) was that we were not to produce theological positions that were not biblically based. There was no "theology OR biblical theology." There was just the latter.

Most seminarians understand the difference. Among academicians there is a distinction made between "natural theology" and "dogmatic theology." The former is usually defined as a branch of philosophy or metaphysics. A good example would be Aristotle's discussion of the "unmoved mover" - that is, the "uncaused cause" - what can rationally be described as the Creator God. (Here's the one HWA exception I alluded to above. HWA's booklet *Seven Proofs God Exits* would be viewed as an example of natural theology, and, indeed, many have recognized that that booklet's arguments came from various classical philosophers - even though one could also argue that those arguments are *a priori* within the Bible itself.) On the other hand, "dogmatic theology" refers not to a branch of philosophy, but to the dogmas or basic doctrines of a particular religion built upon that religion's first articles of faith. For example, in a religion such as fundamentalist Islam, the basis of their dogmatic theology would be the Koran. Among fundamentalist Christians, the basis of dogmatic theology (what most of us have simply referred to as plain "theology") would be the Bible.

Many, if not most, individuals raised in a Protestant home simply assume that the Bible - often called "The Word of God" - is the basis of belief for all Christians. Nevertheless, while all Christians make some room in their theology for the Bible (or, at least, the New Testament), exactly what that place is often varies from denomination to denomination. Let me give but one example.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches, which predominate in Eastern Europe and which are some of the fastest growing Christian denominations in the world today (and to which Joseph Tkach Sr., his wife, and a few other WCG leaders once belonged), have a view of the Bible that is quite different than that of Protestantism. Let me quote briefly from the latest edition of *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin Books, 1993) by Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallisto of Diokleia). The author is both a clergyman and a lecturer at Oxford and this work is considered the authoritative introduction to the subject in the English language. In explaining the position the Bible holds within the Orthodox Church, the author writes (pp. 199-200):

The Bible is the supreme expression of God's revelation to the human race, and Christians must be "People of the Book." But if Christians are People of the Book, the Bible is the Book of the People; it must not be regarded as something set up *over* the Church, but as something that lives and is understood *within* the Church (that is why one should not separate Scripture and Tradition). It is from the Church that the Bible ultimately derives its authority, for it was the Church which originally decided which books form a part of Holy Scripture, and it is the Church alone which can interpret Holy Scripture with authority. There are many sayings in the Bible which by themselves are far from clear, and individual readers, however sincere, are in danger of error if they trust their own personal interpretation .... When received into the Orthodox Church, a convert promises, "I will accept and understand Holy Scripture in accordance with the interpretation which was and is held by the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of the East, our Mother." [emphasis is his-ed.]

---

In other words, the Bible is only a part of Tradition (with a capital T), and it is Tradition - and Tradition as understood by the clergy alone - that forms the basis of that religion. But what is this "Tradition"? On page 196, the Bishop explains:

...to an Orthodox Christian, Tradition means something more concrete than this [opinion, belief, or custom handed down]. It means the books of the Bible; it means the Creed; it means the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and the writings of the Fathers; it means the Canons, the Service Books, the Holy Icons - in fact, the whole system of doctrine, Church government, worship, spirituality and art which Orthodoxy has articulated over the years.

One final quote. On page 202, the Bishop writes:

The doctrinal definitions of an Ecumenical Council are infallible. Thus in the eyes of the Orthodox Church, the statements of faith put out by the seven councils possess, along with the Bible, an abiding and irrevocable authority.

Now, you may ask, what does all of this have to do with the WCG? Only this: if one studies the early history of the Christian churches, one sees that those first three- or four-hundred years parallel very remarkably the WCG's last few years. In both cases there are the same debates about law versus grace, Judaic-Christianity versus Paulinism, pyramid church government versus collegiality, the same debates about the relevance of Greek and Hebrew terms, the same dickering over the ideas of post-apostolic church "scholars," and, of course, the big debates about the nature of God. Anyone wanting to understand what is happening in the WCG in our day would do well to study the early history of the Eastern Orthodox Church. (Timothy Ware's book is highly recommended for this and, especially for those having trouble understanding the WCG's new pronouncements on the Trinity, his chapters on that subject are particularly illuminating.)

Those that doubt that this repeat of ancient history is happening before our very eyes should look at the Nov./Dec. *Plain Truth*. A PT reader asked (p. 11), "During the Christmas season, why do you cast a gloomy atmosphere on the celebration? As God loves all of us, can't you be more understanding of those with different beliefs?" Here was the WCG's response (emphasis here is mine):

Although the Bible does not teach nor command the observance of Christmas, we respect your difference of belief. It is not our intent to condemn others, but to teach and explain the biblical examples.

The Worldwide Church of God observes the biblical Holy Days that Christ and the apostles observed. The apostles continued to observe these days after the crucifixion....

We understand that not all Christians, including many Sabbatarians like ourselves, observe these days. We believe, however, that *the tradition* of Jesus and the apostles warrants our observance of them, rather than the traditional holidays introduced in later centuries.

There you have it. The biblical holy days were just "the tradition," just as the days some keep today are traditional. No wonder that in the same issue of the PT, Tkach's Christmas season editorial (p. 1) stated:

Jesus' birth was a miracle of unparalleled significance for humanity, bringing true light into this world of darkness.... Don't just hum the Christmas tunes. Believe the good news!

In the new WCG with its new recognition of traditions, it is not surprising that the new *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course* is not just being altered, it is being cancelled. Local members who find the new church doctrines confusing or contradictory will simply have to trust the explanations given by the church's Greek scholars. Local church pastors have already been told that weekly Bible studies are "optional." And in Pasadena, the tradition begun by Herbert W. Armstrong more than 45 years ago of having weekly Friday night ("commanded assembly") Bible studies at church headquarters will soon come to an end. Insiders say Tkach wants the weekly studies to be permanently cancelled. The steadily declining small numbers in attendance show that among those at "HQ" there is just not enough interest in the Bible to keep the studies going.

-John Trechak

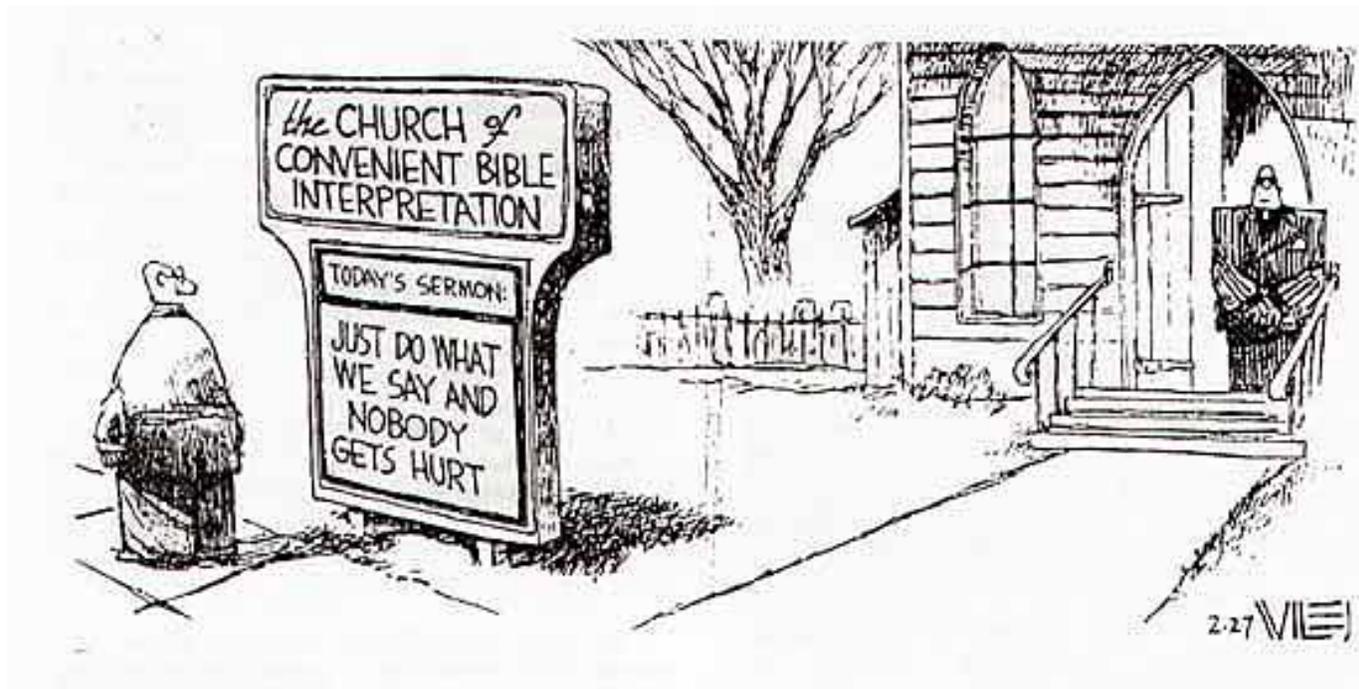
## WCG Tidbits

WCG Sabbath services in Pasadena were canceled for January 1 this year. The church's parking structure was rented out to some of the New Year's Day hordes who came for the Rose Parade and the Rose Bowl football game. With no place for the members to park their cars, services were just cancelled. Why they were not simply postponed to later in the day or moved to another location was never explained. Interestingly, next year the Rose Parade will be held on Monday, January 2. The reason? The organizers of the parade have an understanding with the Christian churches of Pasadena that the parade festivities will never be scheduled so as to interfere with the regular services of any of the city's established churches. Apparently, as regards the New Year's parade and church services, Pasadena's Sunday keeping churches have priorities that differ from those of the WCG. (Incidentally, the Ambassador parking structure in question was seriously damaged in the January earthquake. Most ironic, considering that in December Tkach asked all WCG members to fast, presumably for church deliverance or a "sign.")

Recent broadcasts of the *World Tomorrow* have caused confusion in the minds of some viewers from another era. One California reader wrote us: "I like to watch the religious programs on TV. Sunday I saw Garner Ted Armstrong for the first time in many years. I was thrilled to see him again. I was surprised at some of the things he now says, and I was even more surprised that he has gone back with *The World Tomorrow*. But I still think he is TV's greatest preacher!" Sorry to have to report this, but Garner Ted has not returned to *The World Tomorrow*. The new addition to that program's string of "presenters" is WCG minister Judd Kirk (no relation to the *Star Trek* character). Insiders say he is the replacement for David Albert, who had the Tkach-forbidden habit of deviating from scripts formally approved by the Tkach family. Albert is now teaching psychology at Big Sandy. In the meantime, Judd Kirk is fulfilling a lifetime fantasy. Said one of his former colleagues, "He's spent a lifetime literally imitating Garner Ted Armstrong right down to the minutest details of personal grooming, posture, and delivery. Now he's getting his chance to act the part on TV."

WCG insiders report that declining church revenues have caused Tkach Sr. to be in a panic. Layoffs in the hundreds are in the offing. And Tkach has told the young Turks that manage the church - Little Joe, Feazell, Albrect, Kubik, etc. - that he wants to see a moratorium put on doctrinal changes. The young Turks, however, are reported to have openly balked at the idea. They envision even more dramatic changes in the coming months and years. Those changes will undoubtedly involve fundamental HWA teachings. Little Joe was approached by WCG members in a restaurant one day as he ate shrimp. Questioned about his diet, Little Joe responded, "It's OK, I'm not a Jew." Another WCG minister decided this year to put up a Christmas tree in his living room and Christmas lights on his house. When members started driving past his house to gawk at the lights,

the minister's supervisor called "HQ." Little Joe's response: "No problem. It's OK."



## Slavery Under the New Freedom

With church revenues declining, WCG leaders are being forced to find new ways to raise money. One member recently wrote us:

You have successfully put into print what a lot of us have privately suspected or thought, but the "reinforcement" of weekly Sabbath services suppresses. It is the most devastating feeling in the world to realize that you've been deceived and defrauded - especially under the guise of religion. I am now trying to repair the credit rating that I enjoyed prior to the WCG, which was ruined as a result of the high interest loans we took out not only to survive financially, but to support "the Work."

Many church areas have now cashed in on the local church-sponsored "fundraiser" consisting of the assembly and sale of fruit baskets. There are two delivery dates: Thanksgiving and "December." The Thanksgiving baskets are decorated in colors like orange, brown, and yellow; the "December" baskets are decorated in red and green. One congregation, the Boston church, has been so successful they even made a "how to" film for other church areas to emulate.

For those who don't like to sell, it is expected they "serve" by spending the dates designated for assembly working as basket assemblers. You see, this measures just how much a member's heart is in "the Work." For those who do not participate in either the assembly or in sales, there's a bit of tongue-lashing from the lectern at services.

Of course, a lot of us are wondering just where all the proceeds from these fundraisers actually go. Ministers are allowed to use part of the funds to buy themselves high-tech toys and software (for tracking purposes, no doubt)!....

It amazes me how, for a church that does not keep Christmas, we make merchandise out of it. Personally, I think it's unethical, as is the use of sermonette and sermon time to promote the fundraiser, and the peripheral sales activities and sales-related discussions that take place on the Sabbath. And then there's the tremendous stress a member experiences for lack of participation and enthusiasm. They are real good with guilt!

I'm told that in Boston, for those who didn't participate in the fruit basket fundraisers, they get an additional five or six "opportunities" to serve. In a 10-month period, there were additional fundraising projects that involved inventory, telephone book distribution, candy bar sales, clean-up, painting projects, and more. They even had an outright request on two Sabbaths for contributions from their second tithe to fly past ministers and their families in for their 25th anniversary party. The money-hungry game goes on and on.

In spite of it, in Boston the church activity fund is always broke. The minister there has been known to openly complain about how low his salary is from Pasadena. But you know as well as the rest of us that there are different colors of money, and what benefit packages the ministers have! They are exempt from social security taxes, pay no 2T, no 3T, get housing allowances, a new automobile, health insurance, etc., etc.

Editor: Aside from the obvious (leaving WCG), let me make one suggestion to members in this oppressive position. Calculate the hours you are slaving for your local task master and multiply that number by what your time is worth. It might be worth \$15 an hour or it might be worth much more. For instance, Sunday time - time you are taking away from your family, for instance - might be worth \$100 an hour to you. In other words, put a dollar amount on the time you are giving your task master and then just simply deduct that amount from your tithe checks. Time is money. Doctors and lawyers know this. So does Tkach. YOU SHOULD TOO!

## **Will the Real "One True Church" Please Stand Up!**

For most of its existence, the WCG had a curious interpretation of Rev. 17:5. That verse talks about a Babylon that is "the Mother of Harlots." Herbert Armstrong saw in that symbology the Roman Catholic Church as the great mother church and the Protestant Churches as her harlot daughters (churches who traded spiritual heresies for money and who gave birth to their own daughter churches). That colorful interpretation is never mentioned by the WCG today. Perhaps the doctrine's fading away came because it is just not nice to call established Christian churches "whores." But another reason may be that in the last twenty years, the WCG, more than probably any other church in America, has been an organization of great confusion that has given birth to many other religious organizations which, in turn, have often given birth to even more religious groups - and even more religious confusion. Furthermore, that process is increasing at a tremendous rate.

In our very first issue in 1976, we mentioned nine separate religious organizations that had already come out of the WCG experience. Since then there have been scores more. So many in fact, that it has become increasingly difficult for us just to learn of the existence some of them, let alone to discover what all of them now teach. But so many AR readers have been asking us for updates on the WCG offshoots, we are going to attempt to tell you what we know of them (and for some groups, unfortunately, it is very little). Before doing so, however, a few points should be made.

First of all, while most of the WCG offshoots may have teachings with which we disagree, we shouldn't be too quick to assume what motivates the leaders of such groups. For some of the church leaders, it is all too clear that a hunger for spiritual truth and a desire to serve mankind are not at the core of their motivation. Nevertheless, we should not assume that such is the case for everyone that leaves Worldwide to start another group. Certainly, as for those who join such organizations, our experience has been that most are very sincere in their desire to gain spiritual understanding and live godly lives. The same might be said for some ministers in the various churches (even though a desire for a following, tithe money, a chance to preach, self-deception, miseducation, and even

serious delusion, may be involved in some cases).

Second, it is important to remember that as human beings, all of us have failings. While some failings rise to a level to warrant being reported on, not all do. In other words, just because some group is having problems does not mean that it should automatically be labeled a "cult" or be attacked in the press. It is not always easy for us to know where to draw the line on this. However, as a general rule, the more a group fits the definition of a "destructive cult" (see [AR44](#) for a detailed explanation) and the more the unethical or deviant conduct is likely to be long-running, intentional, or illegal, the more we feel we have a duty to report those facts.

Finally, readers should not assume that because we mention some groups without critical comment that we are endorsing them. There are many organizations with which we are not in philosophical agreement. However, because they have something to offer our readers, we will mention them and give their addresses. Sometimes we can learn even from those who are in error on some point, or many points, even if what we learn is only that we should not waste any more time on such a group.

## **The Armstrongism Group**

In [AR51](#), our lead headline asked the question, "Is Armstrongism Dead?" One of our readers responded to that question with the following astute observation:

I agree with you that in the WCG Tkachism has replaced much of what Mr. Herbert Armstrong used to teach. But, if by "Armstrongism" you mean the core teachings that Mr. Armstrong gave us - (1) the importance of keeping the law of God, including the seventh day Sabbath, (2) the importance of the Holy Days, (3) the importance of tithing, (4) the importance of church government, (5) the identity of Israel in prophecy, and (6) the importance of preaching the gospel of the coming Kingdom - well, then "Armstrongism" is not dead. It lives on in a growing number of groups. Furthermore, all those groups readily admit they got their key doctrines from Herbert W. Armstrong. So, it's pretty clear that "Armstrongism," as you call it, lives on.

The writer makes a very good point. In fact, outside the WCG, Armstrongism seems to be proliferating rapidly. A few who have come out of the WCG to form new religious organizations have rejected most, if not all, the key teachings of HWA (we'll write more of them in a future issue). But a majority of the break away groups still hold on to most of the core teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong. Below is a listing of the major Armstrongite churches that we are aware of, along with a few comments about their key features.

## **Church of God, International**

CGI was covered quite thoroughly in our last two issues so we will not review that information here. But a few recent CGI items should be mentioned.

With CGI's new corporate headquarters building in place near Tyler, Texas, CGI has now started a program there to train CGI ministers. Called Imperial Academy, the program is in no way a college or seminary, yet it is being dubbed "Church of God, International's premier leadership school."

The Academy's first session began on July 5 with a total of 37 men and women students. According to CGI's International News (IN, Vol. 14, No. 6, p. 5):

These students spent two weeks of in depth [two weeks? in depth? - ed.] study through a variety of class instruction. Mr. Armstrong taught Homiletics (the art of preparing and preaching sermons), Prophecy, and History of the Church of God, International.

Mr. Ronald Dart taught Principles of Speech and Preparing to Serve; Mr. Vance Stinson taught Comparative Theology; Mr. Bronson James addressed the Fundamentals of Fellowship; Mr. Charles Groce, in his Conflicts Resolution class, explored the problems of local congregations and how to solve them.

In addition to all of the classes, there was an "Introduction to Speech" club. This club met twice a week and both men and women gave speeches on any topic they chose.

As we reported in our last two issues, not every one in CGI is happy with the Academy. Many see it as only a way for President Armstrong to further consolidate his hold over the CGI.

## **Global Church of God**

Of all the WCG spinoffs, the one currently growing the fastest is Roderick C. Meredith's Global Church of God (GCG, P.O. Box 5500, Glendora, CA 91740-5500).

Recent developments in GCG include the addition of numerous congregations. GCG now has over 85 fellowship groups in nine countries. While not all the groups have a pastor - some are just small "video groups" - the number is growing steadily. Among the most recent WCG pastors to join Meredith's camp is evangelist Carl McNair who brought many of his Helena, Montana congregation with him.

GCG has a doctrinal and marketing game plan that mimics the winning formula put together by Herbert W. Armstrong; it has a dedicated higher echelon; and its chief spokesman is not generally perceived as a raving lunatic or a whoremonger. For those reasons, it is quite likely that GCG will emerge as one of the three or four clear frontrunners among the dozens of Armstrongite organizations. Nevertheless, because of the oppressive personalities of its leaders, it is also sure to have a contentious future. Notice the following September 6 open letter to Roderick Meredith from one ex-WCG member who attempted to fellowship with GCG:

Dear Mr. Meredith:

I was recently disfellowshipped from the Global Church of God by area minister Dave Pack because I found it necessary, once more, to stand up for the Truth.

On August 6, 1993, I was awakened at 10:30 p.m. by a telephone call from Mr. Pack. I was questioned about my interest in Mr. William F. Dankenbring's articles about Passover and Pentecost. In my studies of this comprehensive literature, I have proven to myself, from the Bible, that the dates and manner in which we keep these Holy Days are in error. I was sharing my new understanding of these Truths with the Host of the Tuckerton, New Jersey congregation. This is what prompted the call from Mr. Pack.

In our conversation, Mr. Pack made the statement, "Mr. Dankenbring makes his living acquiring information on sins about people and paying people to publish books about them. Aren't you glad, John, that he doesn't know your sins or he would publish a book about you?" Why is it that when we can't attack the message, we attack the messenger? When will this stop?

Mr. Pack was also very hostile toward Mr. John Trechak, saying he has been spreading garbage about him for years. And "that Trechak is no good." In one of your early sermon tapes you admonished us not to say unkind things about people, even when we ourselves are attacked. Is there a double standard in the Church? Where is Mr. Pack's humble attitude that ministers and members alike are supposed to exhibit?

Mr. Pack said that if I passed out any more literature, which I have already proven to be true, or call any members to discuss these issues, that I "would not ever be able to come back." Not ever?

In a conversation with a friend, Mr. Pack said I would lose my salvation if I continued this practice.

In Mr. Pack's conversation with me he made the statement, "I've never been wrong yet!" My question is, does God back him up even if he is wrong? Mr. Pack seems to think so!

I am extremely disturbed by the method used to force me out of the Church. Very similar tactics were used by WCG Ministers when they disfellowshipped me without proving me wrong! Mr. Pack refuses to address these issues, saying it is not his job. Is it this Church's policy to disfellowship a duly-baptized, God-fearing servant of Jesus Christ, without proof of error, or is the Global Church of God becoming WCG II? I had hoped that a better lesson would have been learned.

All facts related to my understanding of the Truth are in the Bible. If anyone wishes to have further information for their studies, please write or call me.

John F. Morris  
Q11 Coachman Manor  
Lindenwold, NJ 08021  
tel. (609) 435-0231

Undoubtedly, GCG is very fortunate to have as one of its top ministers a man who has "never been wrong yet." Not many of us can make such a claim. Mr. Morris is not the only new GCG member to be rudely banished. A number of Meredith's Pasadena-area associates have been put out for agreeing with Dankenbring's Holy Days position and for "Judaizing" (this includes the use of such Hebrew theological terms as *Torah*, *Tenach*, or *Mischna* - terms Meredith does not want used in GCG). Some prospective members have been put off by other Meredithisms. One former respected WCG minister wrote Meredith a friendly letter of encouragement. Instead of a personal reply, he was sent a copy of GCG's tithing booklet and some tithe envelopes. Another minister, John Trescott (see "Splinters" section below), attended a couple of GCG meetings but was told he was no longer welcome as he held some views that are not allowed in GCG (one being that he feels elders, such as himself, should not insist upon being called "Mister," but that calling elders by their first names is entirely proper).

As is obvious from the above, while Tkach's ministry may still believe in church government, the Meredith church will be strictly enforcing church government by chastening with spiritual whips. It's a sort of B&D outfit: you get put into spiritual bondage and then you get disciplined by the ministry. If getting whipped is your thing, then Meredith's church may be the one for you.

## **Triumph Prophetic Ministries Church of God**

Triumph Prophetic Ministries Church of God (TPM), founded by William F. Dankenbring, is a group to which many former WCG members are being drawn. While we have commented on TPM in the past (see [ARs 39](#) and [50](#)), Dankenbring's work continues to stir up controversy and many have asked us for an update. As we have pointed out in the past, unlike a number of other WCG offshoots, TPM does not seem to have a secret side. Dankenbring and his team put out a huge monthly magazine called *Prophecy Flash!* (PM or "the *Flash*") plus a large selection of other publications that are quite up front about many of their beliefs. (The magazine and a list of their other publications is available for free by simply writing to Triumph Prophetic Ministries, P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003). An evaluation of TPM teachings can easily be made from reading TPM literature and making a comparison with critical literature from other sources. Nevertheless, we should point out what many, including AR, view as TPM's positive and negative sides.

First of all, on the positive side, of all those who have ever been a part of the WCG, there has never been anyone who could compete with Dankenbring in terms of sheer personal energy, zeal, and quantity of output. Just the amount of material that Dankenbring writes, edits, and publishes is amazing (particularly to those of us who have worked in the publishing field). On top of that, Dankenbring has even gone on radio now. He can be heard weekly on short wave around the world. (See the *Flash* for details.) Second, unlike most of the other WCG offshoots, Dankenbring has not fooled himself regarding the very sinful nature of HWA. He quite correctly weighs up the evidence and concludes that HWA, far from being a righteous man, was a man who committed some horrible sins, including incest, and was probably not a "man of God" (see the letter section of his 2/93 *Flash*). Nevertheless, because he feels that HWA presented many correct teachings, Dankenbring has referred to HWA as one "used by God" (Editor: couldn't the same be said of Nebuchadnezzar, Judas, and Satan?).

Third, unlike the publications of most of the other WCG offshoots, the *Flash* doesn't ignore the existence of its competitors, nor the implications of what they are teaching. While he is often criticized for being too energetic in some of his scathing rebukes, nevertheless, by openly debating the views of Garner Ted Armstrong, Jim Rector, Ernest Martin, Anthony Buzzard, Charles Hunting, Fred Coulter, Leona McNair, Roderick Meredith, and especially Gerald Flurry, Dankenbring has contributed to the marketplace of ideas - particularly among Sabbath-keeping Christians. The latest Dec./Jan. issue was particularly good in this regard.

Fourth, occasionally one finds genuine flashes of brilliance in the *Flash*. For example, in the 2/93 issue, writing mainly about church hierarchies, Dankenbring correctly points out that in the WCG and in most of its offshoots, there is an emphasis on pyramid structures. He then very astutely points out that whereas ancient pagan cultures put great emphasis on hierarchical systems of human rule and such was reflected in the architecture of the pagans' pyramid temples, the Bible places more emphasis on individual relationship to God and such is reflected in the rectangular shape of the Jerusalem Temple (and, he could have added, the cubed city of Rev. 21). He then draws on the examples of the solar system and the atom as analogies to God's preferred system of church structure. (While his article does not further the analogy beyond that of the solar system and the atom, many students of analytical psychology and abstract art would further point to the mandala of dream analysis - often considered a symbol of mental wholeness and balance - as the embodiment of the same principle on the unconscious psychic level. Interestingly, those same thinkers frequently point to triadic structures as symbolic of tension, instability, and imbalance - ed.).

Fifth, the *Flash* has quite often been quite courageous in running controversial - yet frequently insightful - articles and readers' comments that few other publications would run. For instance, the May issue of the *Flash* contained a rather well-documented David C. Whitaker article that equated the Mark of the Beast with the Christian Cross - the kind of theological speculation one would find in very few Christian publications. And on page five of the letters section of the 1/93 *Flash*, one reader pointedly speculated that HWA did not die a natural death, but was murdered. While that theory has been quietly discussed in WCG circles frequently since 1986, no other publication has dared bring it up in print.

Nevertheless, with all that said, many *Flash* subscribers who take the time to carefully read through its monthly 70-80 pages are often quite critical of its contents. Criticisms we have heard include: "Dankenbring is convinced he is on a unique mission from God; he does not discourage his readers from believing that he is the prophesied Elijah." "Dankenbring can't control himself from setting dates. Just like HWA, Hoeh, and Waterhouse, he thinks the Bible shows us how to predict future historical events down to the year, sometimes the day. He wrote last year that Christ will return on April 11, 1998." "I can't stand all the crazy stuff about the meanings of names. When he says that Joseph W. Tkach means 'He Who Adds or Multiplies Wicked Many-Stranded Webs of Deception' and then says his own name means 'THE STRONG-WILLED, RESOLUTE PROTECTOR AND

BRINGER OF THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!' he sounds a lot like Gerald Waterhouse." "Mr. Dankenbring says the United States is Ephraim. He's got me confused. Mr. Herbert Armstrong said that Britain was Ephraim and that we were Manasseh!" "Dankenbring is still hooked on that old mistranslation I Jn. 3:4. Hasn't he ever read the Book of Galatians?"

But probably the biggest criticism we hear of Dankenbring's *Flash* is in regard to his prediction that Saddam Hussein is the Beast of Revelation. What exactly he now believes about this is unclear. In the letters section of his 9-10/93 issue he gave a lengthy explanation of what some claim are his failed prophecies. One rather interesting statement was this:

Although I have discussed dates many times, in an attempt to understand the way things will work out in the future, I have tried to avoid being dogmatic, but always said, "probably," "possibly," "very likely," etc. Why have I done this? To stop the mouths of those critics and heretics who accuse me of being a false prophet! In other words, I boldly make "predictions," but couch them in terms which should show the careful reader that these "predictions," although Bible based, are my personal OPINION - and like anybody else, I have a right to personal opinions. Those "opinions" at times can be wrong, but that does not make me a "false prophet" as these angry and hateful critics argue! [emphasis is his throughout his quotes--ed.]

Nevertheless, on the very next page, Dankenbring, expounding upon Rev. 13:14, very unequivocally writes: "Saddam Hussein WILL BE PART OF THE EMERGING BEAST POWER prophesied to rule the world in the Last Days!"

Just how seriously some of his readers take such statements can be seen in a reader's letter published on the last page of the 7-8/93 *Flash*:

I was driving along in the car listening to the latest news bulletin on the radio. Saddam Hussein was mentioned and after the bulletin had ended I switched off the radio and began thinking about this man Saddam Hussein as I was driving along. After a few moments my eyes glanced over the instrument panel and at that very instant the numbers on the mileometer changed from 6659900 to 666000. I shook my head a few times, looked again and said something loud which was probably something like WOW!

While some *Flash* readers are concerned about Dankenbring's authoritative tone on prophecy, quite a few more are concerned about his overall tone which many hear as unreasonably dogmatic and even egocentric. A good example was Dankenbring's article "The Enemy Within" which appeared in the 5/93 *Flash*. It was essentially a 13-page attack on the ministry of James R. Rector, a former WCG minister who later left Garner Ted Armstrong's CGI to form his own Cornerstone Publications ministry (3802 Olive Street, Texarkana, TX 75503, tel. 903-792-1352.) Incidentally, it should not to be confused with Cornerstone Publications of Chicago.

For some time, Rector apparently gave Dankenbring the impression that he was backing the latter's ministry. According to Dankenbring's article, however, it became clear to him at some point that Rector in his own ministry was using ideas culled from Dankenbring's articles without giving the latter proper attribution. Furthermore, Rector was seen as attempting to lure some of Dankenbring's mailing list onto his own. While we have no reason to doubt that Dankenbring facts are accurate, the article attacking Rector was viewed by many as having been more fanatical and vindictive than anything they had ever seen or heard from Herbert W. Armstrong, himself. And for that reason, some told us they would no longer subscribe to the *Flash*.

Quoting Jer. 23:30 as if it were some type of ancient copyright law ("I am against the prophets that steal my words"), Dankenbring accused Rector of being, in effect, a type of ministerial Milton Berle. But even more wild, Dankenbring equated such acts with Satan enlisting a third of the angels "in his REBELLION against the Most High God" (p. 4 of article). And, warned the *Flash*,

"WATCH OUT! BEWARE OF SUBSTITUTE MINISTRIES THAT SEEK TO LEAD YOU TO FOLLOW THEM!" To Dankenbring, Rector was leading "a plot to destroy the Work of God" (p. 6). Then on the next page Dankenbring brought in that old standby, Matt. 12:31-32 (often used to prove the Trinity, by the way), to shift into high gear:

Those individuals who bad-mouth this Work, and speak EVIL of it, are bringing themselves dangerously close to the LAKE OF FIRE!.... [Then after quoting a Rector letter in which Rector says some have complained about Dankenbring's work, Dankenbring wrote:]

Notice! These individuals haven't just attacked me. That could be forgivable. But they have so ATTACKED GOD'S WORK!!! That is another matter altogether. God's Work is inspired by and directed by and follows GOD'S SPIRIT. Thus these evil "complainers" have chosen to attack the very *Spirit of God - which is blasphemy against the HOLY SPIRIT!*

God hates division. He hates discord. The proof of that is what He did to Korah....

Unity in the faith and truth is VERY IMPORTANT to God! WOE be to anybody who would seek to DESTROY that unity!....

The plain truth is, Jim Rector has STOLEN members and sheep from this Work, and also stolen tithes and offerings in the process....

There CANNOT be TWO independent "works of God," competing with each other, both truly serving GOD!....

Brethren, please let me make this crystal clear: There is ONLY ONE TRUE WORK, TODAY, WHERE GOD IS WORKING! AND THAT "WORK" IS NOT, AND NEVER HAS BEEN, CENTERED IN TEXAS!!! Any work emanating from Texas, which claims to be the cornerstone of God's end time WORK, is misrepresenting itself - it is a rival - a fraud - a seditious competitive, variant THIEF in the sight of Jesus Christ, stealing disciples and sheep AWAY from the TRUTH and TRUE End Time Work! BEWARE!....

The above quotes are but a small fraction of what is a very revealing article. Those who are attracted to TPM should be sure to read that article in its entirety. Incidentally, while we have no reason to doubt that Rector was quoting Dankenbring's material and was hoping to expand his own mailing list, when one AR reader wrote him for his side of the story, Rector (who, incidentally, is reported to be battling cancer) wrote back saying he refused to say anything negative about TPM and its founder. All he would indicate was that there had been some misunderstanding and that he hoped he and Dankenbring could work them out privately.

Finally, there is one aspect of the Dankenbring ministry that needs to be given special attention because it has such amazingly awkward ramifications for the WCG and virtually all of its offshoots. While there are a good number of ex-Worldwidiers who, having not abandoned the traditional Christian canon literally or in spirit, feel that a straightforward reading of Galatians absolves them from any requirement of keeping the Old Testament Holy Days, for a number of reasons many other ex-Worldwidiers still feel the keeping of those days - and at the biblically approved times - is important. Among the Armstrongites who keep those Holy Days, the majority keep the Passover on the evening of Nisan 14 of the Sacred Hebrew Calendar and keep Pentecost on a formula - calculated spring Sunday or Monday (not on a fixed Sacred Calendar date). Now, along comes Mr. Dankenbring - who has become virtually anathema to all his competitors - and in a series of lengthy and quite thoroughly researched articles claims quite forcefully that the WCG and virtually all of its spinoffs are keeping those two Old Testament Holy Days *on the wrong days!* According to Dankenbring, Passover should be kept on the evening of Nisan 15 and Pentecost on Sivan 6 (see the 8/92 and 3-4/93 issues of PF).

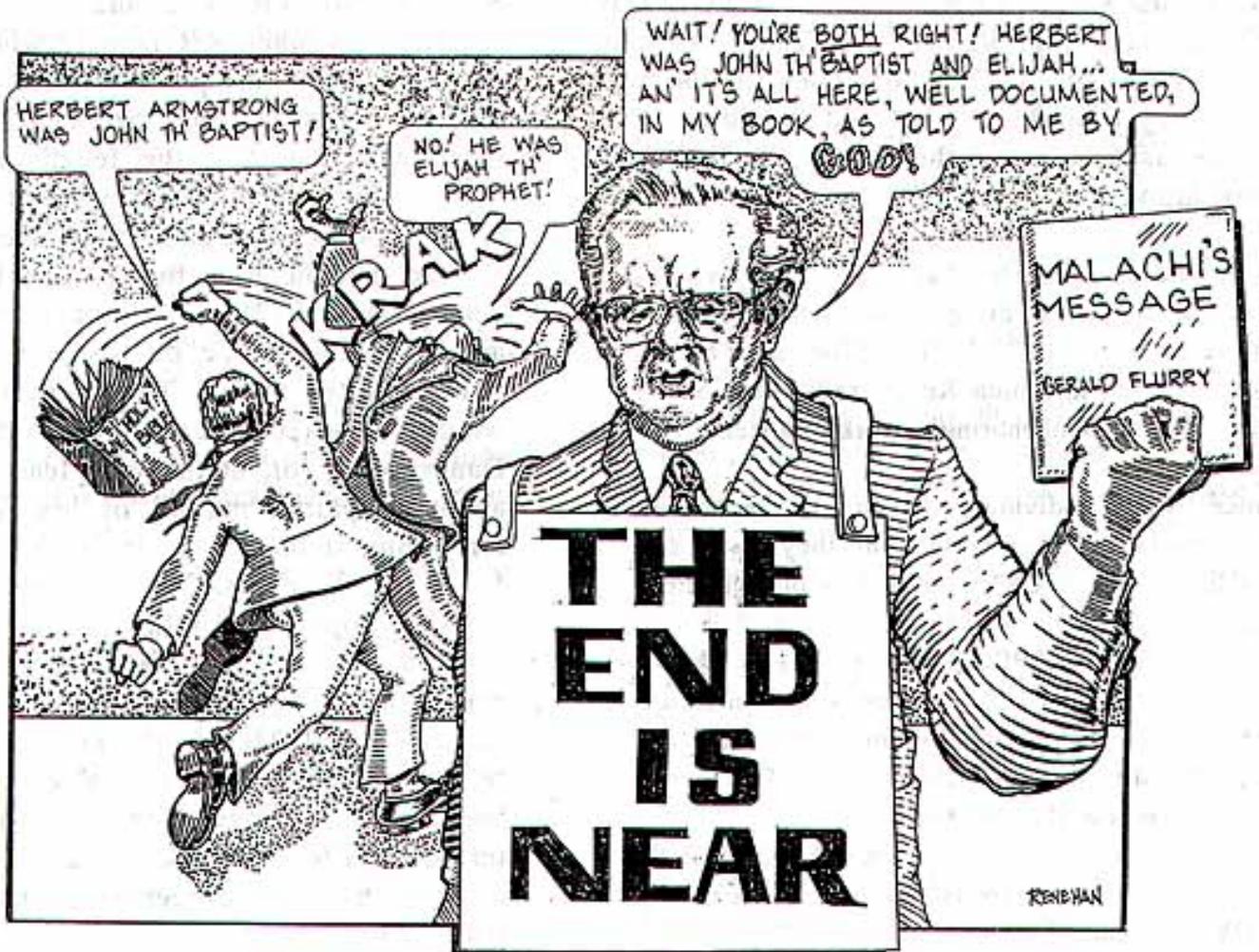
Now, to many AR readers who read Galatians very literally (or who are just plain irreligious), the only reaction to this would be, "So what? Who cares?" But to those who feel that the legalistically correct keeping of such days constitutes a command from God, Dankenbring's claims cause major uneasiness for two big reasons: (1) the data he uses to back up his claims seem very persuasive, and (2), the weight of Jewish rabbinical scholarship appears to be on his side. So what are all the Armstrongites to do? To begin following TPM's view would, in effect, be admitting that God is inspiring Dankenbring (or, at the very least, that he knows more about scripture than all of his Armstrongite competitors). But, if that is the case, then what are they doing following Tkach, GTA, Meredith, and the rest?

One top WCG minister has privately stated that Dankenbring is correct about the dates, but that WCG cannot make too many more doctrinal changes at this juncture. And Meredith's group has been so stymied by the issue, it has ordered copies of Fred Coulter's book on the Passover (see below) to help their ministers refute the *Flash*. Dankenbring, sensing his competitors' dilemma has of late been emphasizing the issue, saying that submission to the new understanding on the date and manner of keeping Passover and Pentecost constitutes "the Final Test" of God for people at this time (the Flash, 5/93). It remains to be seen how many will pass this new test, but in the meantime it is clear that William F. Dankenbring and his *Flash* will continue to be a major thorn in the side of Joseph W. Tkach and lot of other religious leaders.

## Flurry's Philadelphians

No, we're nor talking about some fifties' singing group, unfortunately. The Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) founded by former WCG preacher Gerald Flurry is one of the WCG's most vibrant - and fanatical - spinoffs. While started by just a handful of Armstrongite zealots just four years ago (officially on Dec. 7, 1989), this small group has shown amazing growth ever since. Today, the PCG (P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083), with only about 3,500 members, produces a slick, full-color, monthly magazine called *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, a magazine for its members called *The Philadelphia News*, numerous booklets, and at its own new television studios produces its *Key of David* television program, now seen in eleven major U.S markets and via cable access - throughout the entire U.S., Canada, Europe, and beyond. Besides "Pastor General" Flurry, other key personnel are former WCG ministers Dennis Leap, Colin Sutcliffe, Wilbur Malone, and Flurry's son Steven. (Former WCG minister John Amos, who helped found the group, died of a heart attack a few months ago.)

Reading through back issues of the *Trumpet* ("Tpt" - to be distinguished from "the PT" - *The Plain Truth*) and from their booklets, one readily can see PCG's hardcore beliefs. In a paragraph, here they are: We are living in the "end times." God sent Herbert W. Armstrong as the prophesied Elijah to warn the world. At the time of HWA's death Satan was cast down to earth. Joseph W. Tkach became the prophesied "son of perdition" who has polluted most of God's "Philadelphians" into becoming "the Laodiceans." God has now raised up Gerald Flurry to lead those remaining true to God - those still "Philadelphians" - and God, through an Angel, has inspired Flurry's book, *Malachi's Message*, which is essentially a warning to the Laodiceans: unless they repent of their liberal ways, recognize Herbert W. Armstrong as their "spiritual father" and Gerald Flurry as God's messenger for today ("Elisha"), and begin tithing to his work, they well be persecuted by the Beast and will all die horrible deaths in the Great Tribulation. According to Flurry, his book, *Malachi's Message* (which they acronym "MM"), is the "little book" spoken of in Rev.10:10 and is therefore a sacred writing. In the Sept./Oct. 1992 Tpt (p. 8) Flurry wrote about his book (and the emphasis is his):



*Malachi's Message* is a new vision from a mighty angel. It's a NEW REVELATION - not something somebody already knew!

This new revelation is God's way of saying that we must give the little book a special importance and the majesty it deserves. Only then can we properly respond to the great Work of God - much of which revolves around the little book.

Whew! And we thought HWA had an ego problem!

Unfortunately, Flurry's aberrations do not end there. Here are but a few samples of statements made in the monthly *Trumpet* during 1993:

January: The issue starts off with an article praising HWA in lavish terms (p. 3), gives a poem to their departed hero the "Faithful Warrior" (p. 8), and reprints without permission from the *Worldwide News* the "18 Restored Truths" of HWA (p. 9). Just as HWA was a type of Elijah, PCG is a type of Elisha (p. 13). "Mr. Armstrong said many times that he was the father of us all either DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY!.... we must look upon HWA as our spiritual 'father'.... When prospective members come to the PCG, the first and perhaps most important question we ask them is, 'Do you believe Mr. Armstrong fulfilled the role of the endtime Elijah?' If they don't believe this then we don't invite them" (p. 15, emphasis in Tpt quotes are theirs). "Paying our tithes shows submission to God's government" (p. 19).

February: "THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN WAS THE LAODICEAN ERA IN EMBRYO!" (p.

1). The Key of David is essentially the "truths" contained in HWA's booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (which Flurry has aptly acronymed "US&BIP") (p. 2). "What is important for all to understand is the fact that God did not stop publishing when our present Bible was canonized" (p. 5).

March: "The other groups who left the WCG are also BLIND to the fact that God is using the PCG, AND NO OTHER CHURCH, to knock on the Laodiceans' door" (p. 1). "I haven't even heard one of these groups claiming they have new revelation from God" (p. 2) [clearly inaccurate]. Joseph Tkach's ethnic background is attacked as being "alien" and based on this Flurry concludes that Tkach is the "end-time Shebna" (p. 9). "God's true Levites" are equated with "true ministers" (p. 10). "Nowhere has Satan's attack on God's truth been more effective since Mr. Armstrong's death, than Christ's doctrine of healing" (p. 14). "Mixing the races only lessens the quality of the original race" (p. 18).

It is, however, in Flurry's editorial attack on Rod Meredith that he outdoes himself: Flurry begins by calling Meredith, in essence, a liar (p. 2). He then writes (p. 28):

Or course, there are different groups of lukewarm and dead churches. But Mr. Armstrong ALWAYS PREACHED THAT GOD WORKS THROUGH ONLY ONE MAN AND ONE CHURCH! The rest are deceived....

This leader I quoted earlier [Meredith] is teaching a satanic doctrine! IT IS VERY UNBIBLICAL TO SAY THERE ARE BRANCHES OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH!....

Where did I get this new revelation [MM]? As Paul said, it was "NOT AFTER MAN." It came from God! Members of God's Church who can't see that revelation are BLIND!....

A CHURCH COULD HOLD FAST TO EVERY DOCTRINE MR. ARMSTRONG TAUGHT AND STILL BE LAODICEAN-BLIND!

April: The attack on Meredith continues. Flurry's claims that in God's church there has been the worshipping of demons (p. 4). "Mr. Meredith must destroy God's government to get people to follow him instead of the ONE AND ONLY Church that Christ is using today - the Philadelphia Church of God" (p. 5). Collegial and/or democratic government is satanic (p. 7). Meredith is compared to Lucifer (p. 10). "Only one group can be in a covenant relationship with God" (p. 11).

May: The WCG's leadership is referred to as a Judas-type conspiracy and Tkach to "the son of perdition" (p. 1). Satan is using Tkach (p. 7). Tkach Sr. and Tkach Jr. are Russians [inaccurate] and, quoting a October 1963 *Plain Truth* article, Flurry writes that the Russian people are inherently liars (p. 7). The WCG is the Synagogue of Satan (p. 11). HWA's *Mystery of the Ages* and Flurry's *Malachi's Message* go together "hand and glove" [and, therefore, are both supposedly sacred writings] (p. 24). The 144,000 of Revelation are the Laodiceans (WCG and company) who will be "sealed" by God by going into the Great Tribulation and being raped and torturously killed, while the PCG escapes this fate (p. 25). Satan used David Koresh as a means of bringing persecution on the true church (p. 28).

June: "The Laodiceans have to PROVE THEMSELVES BY DYING FOR GOD" (p. 16). A Laodicean does not have to be an active member of the WCG at this time. What is a Laodicean? The Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) teaches that a Laodicean is one who rejects the Philadelphia Standard. The Philadelphia Standard is made up of the TRUTH that Mr. Armstrong restored to the Church during his lifetime (along with what the PCG teaches today)" (p. 17). But on the very same page the *Trumpet* admits that its teaching on the 144,000 is not in accord with that of HWA who believed that the 144,000 were the Philadelphians.

July: Flurry claims that "God's secret" in Amos 3:7 refers to his own book, *Malachi's Message* (p. 16).

August: Demons have turned the Laodiceans away from God through philosophy and education (pp. 20-21).

Sept./Oct.: This issue is interesting because a number of statements show how the PCG handles the sordid personal history of HWA. For example, Stephen Flurry, Gerald's son, writes:

If [Satan] can keep repeating lies over and over again, he knows that pretty soon people will believe them....

In this latter half of the twentieth century, Satan has repeatedly tried to discredit Herbert W. Armstrong, both before and after he died....

Pretty soon many lies and rumors were circulating about Mr. Armstrong. There have been manuscripts, papers, reports, and books with hundreds of pages detailing the many sins of Mr. Armstrong. I mean every kind of sin you can imagine! Most of which are so disgusting they are hardly appropriate for printed matter. Very few of these publications try to disprove the teachings, or THE MESSAGE Mr. Armstrong taught. Instead, they put down the man and then THROW OUT THE MESSAGE WITH IT.

[It is very difficult to view this statement as anything other than a calculated distortion of the facts. Obviously, the author is familiar with the AR, as well as the writings of Robinson, Tuit, Dankenbring, and others. AR has criticized HWA, not just for his life style, but for many of his teachings. Robinson, Tuit, and Dankenbring have criticized HWA's life style and, in addition, have been quite specific about where they thought HWA was doctrinally in error and where they thought he was correct. Nevertheless, isn't it interesting that the author nowhere attempts to disprove the serious and well-documented allegations made against HWA. Nor, for that matter, does he give his readers the names and addresses of those making the allegations in order for his readers to make up their own minds - ed.]

November: Gerald Flurry writes (pp. 4-5):

I have been in the ministry over 20 years. In many marriage counseling sessions I have noticed that the wives are zealous and excel in numerous marital responsibilities. But many wives cause some serious problems in their marriages. The root cause is usually not submitting to their husbands as God commands. Their problem is with God's marital GOVERNMENT, and the LAW on which it is based....

Why can't the GCG accept the many REVELATIONS given to the PCG? They simply lack the childlike submission to God's government, so God won't REVEAL to them which Church is doing His Work today.

[In other words, if Dr. Meredith would only be more childlike, and submit to Mr. Flurry, as would any righteous wife to her husband, there would still be hope for him. But Meredith is too stubborn to obey Flurry. Of course, Meredith says the same about Flurry - ed.]

December: This issue is a particularly good one for seeing the unbalanced spirit that permeates the Flurry PCG.

In the lead article, Flurry writes about California's recent economic problems and its natural disasters (the kind that have gone on here for thousands of years): "California is the only state who

attacked Mr. Armstrong and his work. Actually, they attacked a lot more than that. California really **ATTACKED THE LIVING GOD!** Today God is wreaking vengeance on California and all of Israel - mainly the American and British peoples."

In another article, Flurry writes how Christ has only one wife in prophecy - the PCG. All other churches will have no spiritual husband. He expects to see seven different Laodicean churches. "God's own lukewarm people are going to be devoured by the sword.... They are 'murderers' because they are guilty of the blood of Israel" [by not helping to prophesy with MM] (p. 19). On the next page, Flurry writes:

God will look to and use THIS MAN who is childlike before His word (Matt. 18:1-3). For example, this man will read God's revealed word in *Malachi's Message* and act on it out of godly fear! He KNOWS that book contains God's truth. He trembles and obeys.

Then, on page 21, Flurry writes: "The PCG has the distinct honor to **SPEAK FOR GOD!**"

How is it that some can believe such nonsense? The answer is given in the same issue of the *Trumpet*. In an article entitled "Your Living Environment," one of Flurry's associates, Colin Sutcliffe (incidentally, the father-in-law of *World Tomorrow* broadcaster David Hulme) explains that scientific methods based on observation are inherently wrong. He equates human reasoning to "doing our own thing" - therefore human reasoning is a no no (p. 26). God's plan for managing every aspect of the global environment "is NOT based on either SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTATION or ON OBSERVATION, but ON REVELATION!... Revelation is the basis of what will be used in the World Tomorrow" (pp. 26-27).

There you have it. Don't trust your own God-given powers of observation; don't use your own God-given reasoning abilities; just believe the revelation - of Gerald Flurry.

We've covered the Flurry group's beliefs in some detail for two reasons: (1) His own published writings reveal him very clearly to be a cult leader of the first magnitude. And (2) we expect him and his followers to be in the news in the future. Nevertheless, we don't plan any further detailed studies of his writings. The reason for that is simple - reading his "literature" gives us a headache.

In the last few years we have received a good number of letters from individuals who have made the mistake of leaving the WCG for PCG ("out of the frying pan and into the fire" was how one put it). Each told us that the experience cost them many thousands of dollars and much mental confusion. We have heard from a number who have said the experience cost them their marriage. We have even been contacted by mental health therapists who were attempting to treat some who had come out of the PCG, but who found their patients' mental problems overly complex. While Meredith's B&D church may chastise with spiritual whips, Flurry's group likes to chastise with spiritual scorpions. Flurry's outfit is for those into spiritual S&M - real pain. If you want to be spiritually brutalized, the PCG may be the church for you.

While Flurry claims that his church is one that promotes traditional Christian family values, the evidence shows otherwise. One of our readers, after getting involved with PCG along with his wife, soon discovered that PCG put a barrier between his wife and himself. When the husband discovered that his wife wanted a divorce, he also discovered that not only would Flurry not assist the husband in saving the marriage, but that Flurry was encouraging the wife in her divorce plans. Those who would like further details of this case should write to: Mr. Glen Myers, 1407 Iroquois St., Clearwater, FL 34615.

Over the years, AR has shown that many of the cults we have reported upon have had leaders who

have tolerated the worst sexual vices within their inner circles. The same appears to be the case with PCG. One PCG exiter has written an open letter in which he claims that the PCG ministry has secretly tolerated homosexuality among some members, and adultery and bizarre sexual acts by some in its ministry. For details of those allegations, write to: Mr. Bill Cline, P.O. Box 22228, Lexington, KY 40522.

Another individual who can shed much light on the Flurry cult is Mr. Don Marshall of Edmond, Oklahoma. He wrote us:

I knew that something was not right within the WCG because of the way our two ministers, Gerald R. Flurry and John Amos, were fired and disfellowshipped. Another man, J. Timothy Thompson, and I helped raise up the "Philadelphia Church of God" in Edmond. If I knew then what I know now, I would not have been a party to that effort. Being very naive, my wife and I helped him produce and distribute *Malachi's Message*. Little did I know that Flurry would turn out to be a duplicate copy of Armstrong. I regret I had anything to do with promoting the same fraud upon the hundreds of people who became members of the PCG just as HWA had done upon the thousands who became members of the WCG.

-Mr. Don Marshall  
Lt. Col. USAF, ret.  
4200 East Depel Dr.  
Edmond, OK 73034

Mr. Marshall is an individual of high intelligence and character. And yet, for a time, he was misled by a cult leader. Getting duped by a cult leader - even one like Gerald Flurry - can happen to just about anyone. One final bit of information on Flurry. On the evening of Sept. 18 of last year, Flurry was arrested in a parking lot of a university in Edmond, Oklahoma. According to the police report, Flurry had been drinking and fell asleep in his car with empty beer cans on the front seat. What he was doing driving about a college campus late at night is anybody's guess. After discovering that Flurry was unable to either get the car into gear or to stand up the police officer asked to see his driver's license. Instead of complying, Flurry reportedly handed the officer a twenty dollar bill. When the police officer returned the twenty, Flurry upped the ante by five bucks. He was then arrested.

## **Church of God, the Eternal**

As for holding onto the "conservative" teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong, Church of God, the Eternal (CGE) beat out Flurry's group by about fifteen years. Former WCG evangelist Raymond C. Cole began this organization 1975. While a few of HWA's early teachings have been modified slightly with time, this group has essentially adhered to all the doctrines HWA taught before HWA, himself, started liberalizing the WCG in the early seventies. For example, they recognize divorces only in cases of intentional fraud before marriage vows are taken.

There is, however, one significant difference between CGE and the old WCG under Armstrong. CGE appears to be more Calvinistic - specifically, they strongly believe that only those God "calls" can come into "the Truth") and therefore CGE does not have any type of radio or television outreach program. That fact, undoubtedly, is the reason why this group's membership continually hovers around only 300 to 400. Yet, members say they are being fed "strong spiritual meat" via the church's cassette tape program and other materials that emanate from CGE headquarters (P.O. Box 775, Eugene, OR 97440).

CGE's hard-core membership seems very dedicated to their church. And ministers Bryce Clark and

Jean Aviolat are still with the group. Nevertheless, CGE has had its share of critics and defectors. Some find evangelist Raymond Cole too authoritarian. "A General Patton with two pearl-handled revolvers," is what one former member called him. One of our readers, Mr. Stanley Daniel of South Africa, even tells the funny story of how he was disfellowshipped by Cole even though he was never even a member of CGE. Mr. Daniels is now with The Church of God (S.A.), P.O. Box 3421, Cape Town 8000, Republic of South Africa.

Ministers who have defected from CGE over the years include Arlie Satterfield, George Leeman, John Mitchell, Robert Sloneker, and the late James Doak. Paul Royer left many years ago to begin the Church of God, Sonoma (4343 Wallace Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95404) and Richard C. Nickels left to begin "Giving & Sharing" (a mail order bookstore for Sabbath-keepers, but which also has its own printed materials espousing views that seem to the right of Cole's - their new address is: 2014 NE 85th Street, Vancouver, WA 98665-9770).

## **Church of God Evangelistic Association**

This group is headed by former WCG and CGI member David J. Smith. His *Newswatch* broadcast can be heard throughout most of the United States on a number of clear channel stations. The program has also expanded onto TV and Smith's 30-minute program can be seen in several major markets. Smith's messages deal primarily with his interpretation of news events - in the light of Bible prophecy, naturally - and almost always revolve around various conspiracy theories involving the New Age movement, Trilateral Commission, Council on Foreign Relations, Freemasonry, the Illuminati, and various other conspiratorial organizations all supposedly engaged in bringing about "the final world social system." A few years ago a series of his radio program dealt with the supposed prophetic significance of the ABC television series "Amerika." To listen to Smith, there is a bogeyman hiding in every closet. His scare tactics have apparently proven quite effective in attracting growing numbers of followers and, more importantly, financial supporters. The first year's subscription to his *Newswatch* magazine is free - after that there is a subscription fee. In addition to *Newswatch* magazine, Smith also publishes a magazine called *Restoring Knowledge of God* which deals mostly with doctrinal issues.

CGEA's basic doctrines are similar to those of the old WCG. Public marking from the pulpit is frequently practiced. The authoritarian Smith is in complete control of this organization and no dissent is permitted. Those who long for this type of stifling spiritual environment can write to CGEA at 319 Osler, Suite 160, Arlington, TX 76010.

## **The Christian Biblical Church of God**

Former WCG minister Fred R. Coulter heads this small, but growing, church. He recently wrote us:

We are ministering to many of the brethren who have been twice burned, sometimes three times burned, by various ministers and churches of God. We ourselves, as you know, have experienced that twice burned feeling! It's terrible. But what has pulled us and others through has been that we have kept our hearts with God and our noses in the Bible and let God heal us. It is true that true spiritual growth can be achieved through suffering. Not many of us like suffering, but it certainly teaches us lasting lessons.... As a result of helping so many people who have been spiritually mauled and bludgeoned, we have nicknamed ourselves "the No Hassle, Recycle Church of God."

Besides ministering to a small congregation in California, Coulter, along with Carl D. Franklin,

ministers to fellowship groups in about seven states. CBCG has an extensive cassette tape Bible study program and printed materials on numerous Bible topics. Coulter, who has a working knowledge of Greek, has translated much of the New Testament and years ago produced his own harmony of the gospels. Nevertheless, he is not without his critics (Bill Dankenbring is one). And one reader wrote us that she thought "Coulter shows an anti-Jewish bias and is a bit too much like a young HWA for my taste." Nevertheless, in recent months we have received a number of letters from readers who, after leaving WCG, CGI, and other groups, found fellowship with CBCG to their liking.

Of particular interest to many are Coulter's materials on topics that are currently controversial in the WCG and related groups: the Trinity controversy (Coulter is generally in line with the old WCG position on this), counting Pentecost (he favors the Sunday observance - not the Monday observance HWA and even Cole accepted), and the observance of Passover (he favors the Nisan 14 view). In regard to the latter, Coulter has a huge 319-page book on the subject, *The Christian Passover* (available from York Publishing for \$21.95 - write to CBCG for details, they have a free flyer about it). CBCG has a free paper available about counting Pentecost, and regarding the Trinity controversy, Coulter tells us he will send a free booklet and six cassette tapes dealing with the Holy Spirit to anyone who requests that package. (We've seen that booklet and an additional research paper by Franklin dealing with the subject and they represent a considerable amount of serious research.) In addition, they are soon going to publish a 64-page book that focuses on how false teachers work from within church organizations. Their basic premise is that two teachings - hierarchical church government and "one and only church of God" - are false doctrines that form the basis of many heresies. For more information contact: The Christian Biblical Church of God, P.O. Box 1442, Hollister, CA 95024 (tel. 408-637-1875).

One aside. Just as Dankenbring's materials are being read by many of the WCG's top ministers, Coulter's materials are being used by many of the ministers and doctrinal committee people in Global and other groups. Yet, in both cases, members of those churches are told not to study "dissident literature."

## **The Association For Christian Development**

This group evolved out of the Associated Churches of God which formed in 1974 when a major block of WCG ministers bolted from the WCG. The Association (ACD, 4449 S. Star Lake Road, Auburn, WA 98001, tel. 206-859-1017) currently publishes a magazine called *The New Millennium*. The editor is Kenneth Westby, and the leading contributing editor is Charles V. Dorothy, once one of Worldwide's top theologians. Dorothy, besides having a Ph.D. in theology from Ambassador, earned another Ph.D. in religion from the prestigious Claremont Graduate School in 1989. He has a book in the offing and many articles to his credit. In the December issue of *The New Millennium*, his article "Judge Not - What Did Christ Mean?" was one many found very insightful. Other contributors to the publication include Gary Arvidson, Dr. Phillip Arnold, Karl A. Hampton, Jerry McClenagan, Ken Ryland, and Robert Wertz.

Another contributor is Steven M. Collins, author of the 400-page book *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel - Found!* A while back he wrote us:

I am still affiliated with ACD and am very comfortable with its approach and tenets. ACD, I believe, is one of the more mature offshoots of the WCG. We freely tolerate honest differences over scriptural interpretations, prophetic concepts, etc. and we can differ without becoming angry with one another. ACD has jettisoned all vestige of "we-only" exclusivism when dealing with other churches. While I am admittedly a "conservative" on biblical doctrine, I have benefitted from some of the critical canonical analysis that academic "liberals" have presented.

ACD, in my view, is an ideal home for ex-WCG, or ex-CGI people who want to retain many of our traditional beliefs [such as the Sabbath and Holy Days] within an organization that has completely eliminated any vestige of mind-control, intimidation, or oppressiveness.

One final thought on ACD. Of all the groups that we have dubbed "Armstrongite," this one is arguably the least so. In fact, we only list them here because of their historical connection to the WCG.

## Splinters

Editor: I am including under this heading the names and addresses of a number of groups - both churches and publications - that can be generally viewed as "Armstrongite." We are using the term "splinters" here because they are either very small groups (usually having only one minister or leader) or because we have too little verifiable information about them to give more data.

**Christian Church of God**, P.O. Box 7254, Amarillo, TX 79114-7254. The pastor is Jeff Booth. We noticed they were favorably mentioned in a recent ACD publication.

**Scriptural Church of God**, P.O. Box 15037, Plantation, FL 33318. The pastor is Keith Hunt. Back in 1988, when he was based in Canada, Hunt was teaching, among other less radical ideas, that mushrooms were not to be eaten because they did not qualify as "the green herb" of Gen. 1:29. We currently do not have any more information about this group.

**Churchlight Publishing Association**, P.O. Box 9901, Colorado Springs, CO 80932. Jack Hines, who pastors the Colorado Springs Church of God, is the editor. What we find most interesting about this conservative Sabbatarian group's small newsletter is the directory of independent Sabbatarian churches they frequently include in their pages. We also found one article in the May 1993 issue particularly interesting. In "How Accurate is the Hebrew Calendar," the author wrote: "lay members are unaware of how this calendar is computed and the fact that it is grossly inaccurate." The computation of the Hebrew Sacred Calendar is increasingly an issue in the WCG offshoot groups.

**The Jerusalem Sentinel**, P.O. Box 547, Crystal River, FL 34423 is another publication with a special interest in the Hebrew Calendar. Charles Kimbrough is president and Mark Carr is the editor. Apparently this publication serves a number of independent Sabbatarian groups which have a strong aversion to centralized church authority. Many involved with their network of groups are ex-WCG Sabbath keepers.

**Church of God (Sabbatarian)**, 900 W. Alabama St., Anadarko, OK 73005. This group is headed by John Trescott, the editor of *Light of Truth* magazine. Trescott was formerly a member of the WCG, CGI, and other groups. He still holds to many of HWA's teachings, but in a letter to AR, wrote that he now disagrees with about 30 doctrines HWA taught. His little booklet *John Who?* explains who he is and gives many insights into the churches he was a part of formerly. One interesting trait that Mr. Trescott has is that he does not isolate himself from the ministries of other groups. His recent contacts with the Global Church of God were mentioned in his July issue. We found one statement particularly interesting:

The only ministers they seem to want, former little Hitlers or not, are those coming directly from the WCG. And they are brought on enjoying a paycheck, as well. I think it would do them all good to get out and try to earn a living by faith first. But then, there would not be the funds to build an organization such as what they have now begun to build.... I believe it would be fitting for all the ministers now coming to the GLOBAL CHURCH OF GOD from Gerald Flurry's group, WCG, or whatever, to publicly apologize for their condoning of the wicked, hierarchical

WCG government, and ask the brethren in every one of the Churches of God to forgive them.

**Universal Church of God**, Route 1, Box 52, Hanna, OK 74845. In February, 1992 AR received a letter from this group signed "Ray Lampley, Prophet of the Most High." The letter explained how he and John Trescott the following month would begin a five-week tour of seven western states to give a testimony to the leaders of those states warning them that The Great Tribulation had begun on March 26, 1991 and that it would last for 1,260 days. We also received a copy of a letter prophet Lampley sent the previous month to the governor of California. The letter began [and the emphasis is his]:

Dear Governor Wilson:

In Accordance with the ORDER OF DESTRUCTION which was filed in the Supreme Court of the United States as the result of failure to answer or to comply with a LAWFUL PROCLAMATION AND DEMAND AT THE COMMON LAW OF GOD, the State of California is presently being destroyed and will continue to be destroyed by authority as stated in Revelation 11:3-13.... The Kingdom of God will be established on this earth beginning October 7, 1994... Please write us if you want to be a part of this end-time work.

The letter was signed the same as the one to AR. Now, we don't know if Governor Wilson ever answered the letter or even saw it. But, we do have to wonder how many tax dollars were spent in surveillance of prophet Lampley and his friend as they made their five-week tour of the west. Trescott apparently is no longer associated with Lampley, but Anderson Fields Jr., another "Prophet of the Most High" is. And so, as you might already have guessed, we now have Lampley and Fields representing themselves as "The Two Witnesses."

**Proclaim Liberty**, P.O. Box 371, Pasadena, CA 91102 (tel. 1-800-241-4499). Headed by former WCG minister David Fraser, this is another vehemently anti-Tkach, pro-HWA ministry that also claims to be the "Philadelphia era." Fraser puts out numerous free booklets, tapes, and a very thin magazine that leaves some with the impression that it is by and for individuals on LSD. Besides the mismatched colors and psychedelic artwork, Fraser likes to write in simplistic, one sentence paragraphs printed in large type surrounded by much space. During the 1992 presidential campaign, a spokesman for Ross Perot criticized Fraser's publication for using Perot's name and statements in such a way as to leave the impression that the presidential candidate was somehow connected to the Fraser group (*Pasadena Star-News*, 5/19/92). A good overview of Fraser's ministry is contained in his July 18, 1992 taped message "Goals and Purposes."

**Trans-World Publishing**, P.O. Box 333, Pasadena, CA 91102. In spite of the ostentatious name of this "group," this is really ex-WCG member Bernard H. Kelly who publishes the inaptly named *Common Sense* newsletter containing both Armstongism and a few original ideas.

**The Masterminder Broadcaster**, P.O. Box 2900, Vista, CA 92085-2900 (tel. 619-945-7300). Many readers will recall Al Carrozzo, the popular WCG minister who blew the whistle on Garner Ted Armstrong in 1973 (see [AR2](#)). Since then his life has been something of a rollercoaster ride. He went through a divorce, then remarried; went through a bankruptcy and then reportedly made millions on the stockmarket. While his "Twentieth Century Church of God" appears to have fizzled into oblivion, Carrozzo and his son Tom have started something called the Liberty Foundation which publishes *The Masterminder Broadcaster* newsletter. After reading a few copies we have no idea why it is called that.

**Twentieth Century Church of God**, P.O. Box 25, Nineveh, PA 15353. This church, which has no connection to the church of the same name stated by Al Carrozzo years ago, is headed by former WCG member C. Kenneth Rockwell. He believes WCG to be Laodicea, puts out doctrinal studies,

and has a radio program called *The Voice From Afar*.

**Church of God's Truth**, P.O. Box 2951, Corona, CA 91718 (tel. 909-737-0559). Headed by former WCG minister James Russell, this church publishes the *Prove All Things* newsletter and the booklet *Postponements - Another Mystery of the Ages* which deals with Sabbath and Holy Day keeping and calendars.

**The Total Truth**, 30 Barren Creek Rd. Clemdenin, WV 25045. While dubbed "A magazine of love, truth, and understanding," this small, typed newsletter seems merely to reflect editor Lee Grose's personal obsession with prophetic date setting and - you guessed it - calendars.

**Restoration Church of God**, National Headquarters: 1500 E. Tropicana, Suite 110, Las Vegas, NV 89119 (tel. 702- 251-8343). M. John Allen, the "Pastor General" who heads this group, wrote us: "Being a religious leader is the last thing I want to do right now. What I would really like to do is be a promoter of rock stars. But, unfortunately, that does not appear to be what is in store for me."

**Seek and Find! Ministries**, P.O. Box 435, Brakpan 1540, Rep. of South Africa. Pastor R.V. Stapleton, a genealogist and former WCG member, puts out articles and attempts to answer religious questions.

**Alpha and Omega Christian Foundation**, P.O. Box 123, Berowra Heights, N.S.W., 2082, Australia. Coordinator Grigore Sbarcea, publishes *The Christian Herald*, a theological journal which has included insightful commentary about Mr. Sbarcea's experiences in WCG and CGI. This journal seems more substantive than those put out by many WCG-related groups. That is likely due to the fact that Mr. Sbarcea has a B.A. (majors in religion and ancient history) and has done postgraduate work at an Australian university.

**Midnight Ministries**, P.O. Box 29, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP17 8TL England. Headed by former WCG member Malcolm B. Heap and his wife Helena, this small group puts out religious pamphlets and the *Awake! Awake!* newsletter.

One interesting aspect of this ministry is their belief in new revelations. Their son Richard is even believed to have the gift of prophecy. In January of last year it seems God spoke to Richard and revealed that a BMW dealership was about to donate to their ministry a red BMW 325i estate car to assist in the ministry. Heap then wrote to a local BMW dealer telling of God's message. When the dealer didn't respond, Heap went personally to the dealer apparently expecting to collect the free car. Understandably, the dealer thought this a joke. But, the dealer's levity disappeared when he later received a letter from Heap stating, "From this day on, God is going to take away your business to such an extent that in the near future your showroom will close down and most of your staff will no longer have a job." The name of Heap's ministry, coupled with group's letterhead containing a falcon and a sword, didn't help the dealer's disposition much either. The dealer phoned the police and Midnight Ministries made the television news and the front page of the 10/6/93 *Bucks Herald*.

**Top of the Line**, P.O. Box 72, Manchester, TN 37355. This is one of our favorites. Under his *White Rock* logo, former WCG member John E. Kerley, Sr. issues updated bulletins regarding which positions, thrones, and heavenly bodies will be assigned to various living personages in the First Resurrection. How he gets this information we have no idea. But we have been pleased to see that on occasion editor John Trechak has been awarded various planets [not really surprising, some say he's already in outer space, just kidding - asst. ed.]. Others who have made the list are George Bush, Jerry Falwell, Robert Dole, Dolly Parton, and Olivia Newton-John.

\* \* \*

We occasionally get letters from individuals asking about Larry Gilbert Johnson, founder of the Laodicean Church of God (see [AR33](#)). According to Arizona officials, Johnson was released from Arizona State Prison on 2/29/92 and was last known to be residing in the Phoenix area. We have no other information about him.

## **The Bible Sabbath Association**

The above listing of WCG offshoots is by no means complete. First of all, in order to save space we have not listed many of the offshoots that have been mentioned in AR in the last few years. Second, we have not included groups outside of the "Armstrongite" spectrum. We'll try to cover some of the non-Armstrongite groups Worldwidars are turning to in a future issue. Third, there are now simply so many WCG offshoots it is virtually impossible for us to monitor, or even to find out about, all of them.

For those who would like to find out about other WCG-related groups, our recommendation is to order a copy of the *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups*. Copies of the 1986 edition and the 1989 supplement can be ordered for \$5 by writing to Bible Sabbath Association, Rt. 1, Box 222, Fairview, OK 73737. The directory lists many WCG related groups. Unfortunately, there have been so many changes in these groups in the last five years, some of the information it contains is outdated. However, the Association informs us that they are working on an updated directory right now. So, if you know of some group that should be listed, please write them with the details.

## **The WCG Exiting and Support Network**

People need people. It's a basic fact of life. And individuals never need the support of others more than when some personal tragedy hits home.

Most people who have been through a cult exiting experience will tell you it was one of the most difficult, traumatic occurrences of their lives. Family ties are often cut - or have to be reestablished. Friendships, and sometimes lifetime careers, come to an end. Belief structures assumed correct for years or even decades are questioned. There is stress and resultant health problems. Many, for a time, will even question their own sanity. ("How could I have been so blind to the obvious?") For relief, some turn to alcohol or drugs, others to religion - or to another cult. Some simply ignore their own feelings (denial, self-deception) only to discover, perhaps many years later, that those feelings and ideas never consciously acknowledged or worked through are still really there, doing immense emotional damage to the self-deceiving individual. It is a proven and well-researched fact that most ex-cult members need transitional help, education on cult awareness, and support to guide them through the exiting stage and to insure a healthy adjustment while reconditioning their lives.

Over the years, we have noticed that cult victims take several paths upon exiting. Some walk away and sever all contacts or they may be left "shunned" by the group. Sadly, some gravitate toward other cultic, aberrant, abusive religions. Of course there are many who are left mistrustful of any ministry and doubtful of any religious beliefs. That is why cult victims benefit greatly by some sort of support, whether it is an informal support group or just having someone to talk to who understands. Guidance regarding important education relating to this experience is essential.

AR has mentioned a few local support groups in the past, but we have never had the means to put

together a complete listing. Nor have we had the means to start up an international network of such groups. Additionally, we have simply not had the means to provide all the help that is often needed by those who have recently exited WCG, or to those thinking about leaving, or to the families of such people. Other organizations and individuals, however, are trying to fill some of those needs. One such individual is Linda Stuhlman, a businesswoman and former psychiatric nurse. She and her husband Paul, a professional management consultant, and their two children were once all dedicated WCG members. She recently wrote us:

It was about two years ago when we first suspected we might be in a cult. Unraveling the whole WCG story was not easy. Extricating ourselves from the WCG trance took a great deal of effort. We read *Ambassador Report*. We contacted the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) and American Family Foundation (AFF) and met with many of their experts. We travelled to Minnesota to attend the annual, National CAN Conference to aid in our recovery. We educated ourselves by talking to psychologists, social workers, and lawyers. And we spent every spare moment reading the ample available cult books and articles plus the massive amounts of literature written about the real WCG.

Along the way, we came to realize that even though AR, CAN, and many other organizations are doing all they are able, those currently or previously victimized by the WCG have unique concerns and needs. The help available for cult victims, if located, is usually not specifically tailored to the WCG victim.

I am presently a Cult Awareness Network and American Family Foundation representative for WCG cases. I have also established a WCG Exiting and Support Network. The purpose of this network is to provide a central contact point to aid exiting members in streamlining their recovery from the WCG. The objectives are as follows:

1. Offer personal, confidential guidance and provide information and resource data for questioning or exiting members as well as concerned non-WCG family members.
2. Distribute or recommend reading materials for those thinking about leaving, and for ex-members pursuing an investigation about the WCG as a cult.
3. Provide a listing of professional mental health experts who are knowledgeable about cults in general and the WCG in particular.
4. Maintain a referral service for those in need of qualified exit counseling consultants or for those requesting to speak with helpful, supportive ex-members who could aid with specific needs or requests.
5. Institute local support groups in as many areas as possible along with a means of interconnection for the local groups.

The goal of the Network is to provide a helping hand for those who have had their personal lives shattered or who were affected in any capacity by their WCG involvement. Many former WCG members are willing to share their experiences with those now exiting Worldwide, perhaps personally, or via phone, fax, or even computer.

The Network will function as an information and support service. It will not in any way recommend specific churches or attempt in any way to convert the exiter to other belief systems.

Those who would like more information, either to assist The WCG Exiting and Support Network or to request help, should write to me: Linda Stuhlman, WCG Exiting and Support Network, P.O. Box 6104, Hamden, CT 06517. Or, you may call me at (203) 281-7182.

One final request. Dr. Langone of the American Family Foundation is currently doing a research

project relating to cult experience and suicide. If any AR readers know of a WCG-related suicide, I would like to hear from you. Of course, all information will be kept strictly confidential.

-Linda Stuhlman

## Letters

Editor: Our last issue's listing of the many doctrinal changes going on in the WCG brought in a huge number of comments from readers who are both former and current WCG members. What is most remarkable about those letters is the wide range of opinion they reflect about the changes. The following excerpts show just how wide a range of views there are on the subject:

I got the [September](#) issue of AR. It just about blew my mind the changes Mr. Tkach is making in church doctrine. A lot of it doesn't make any sense at all.

-Oklahoma

Well, well. God's Apostle works in mysterious ways, doesn't he? Now let me see if I've got this right. The Kingdom of God is here already. Exactly when did it start? The beast is racism. Toward what race? The Place of Safety is not to be emphasized. I guess that makes sense considering we're living in the Kingdom of God, or maybe it's because there isn't a Place, at least not for the "little people." The existence of God cannot be proven. Does that mean my *Seven Proofs God Exists* booklet is out of date? The Millennium "may or may not equal 1,000 years." What do they think the word "millennium" stands for?

This is madness! Maybe HWA is turning in his grave. Maybe he resurrected himself and is inside Rod Meredith's body. But at least I know why they decided the Sabbath begins at dark, not sunset. Now they'll still have time to watch Beavis and Butt-head on Friday nights.

-Kansas

I've been in the WCG for 23 years, and I am frustrated to say the least by what I've seen, especially in the last year or so! Mr. Zimmerman [the local WCG pastor] told us, "What changes?" He said there had been only two or three "minor adjustments"! I wasn't bothered too much until this new trinity doctrine - but I have a hard time swallowing this one! I'm beginning to wonder if this is really God's one and only true church anymore. Can you help me? I don't have any money to send you because of tithing. I am not only financially bankrupt, but spiritually bankrupt as well, wondering what is the real truth.

-Arizona

I spent some time going through David Pack's list of 154 doctrinal changes, checking each one. I don't know about any other AR readers or WCG observers, but I found 75 of the 154 - almost half - to be steps in the right direction.

-David C. Strickland  
England

It was a shock to read of so many changes in the WCG. It seems my judgment of Joe T. was correct. Not really the con man like HWA. No doubt he would like to correct the hurts of the past.

But for many it's just too late. The damage that has been done cannot be repaired.

-California

I have never felt so positive about the WCG in all the 20 years since I left. I just read the latest AR article about God not being a family - that they were wrong about polytheism. Praise the Lord!

-Alabama

Because of my decades-long association with the WCG I, too, have been shocked at the many recent changes. But, with study I have come to see that there is much that we all need to learn about the New Testament. For instance, many have been ridiculing the idea that racism could be the Beast. I, too, thought that was completely impossible until I read *Jesus - a Revolutionary Biography* [Harper Collins, 1993]. The author, Prof. John Dominic Crossan, is considered the world's leading scholar on the historical Jesus. Many of his views seem to be in harmony with the scholarship of Mr. Tkach Jr., Mr. Feazell, and Dr. Stavrinides. Dr. Crossan shows how the present or sapiential Kingdom, egalitarianism, and open commensality - for which Mr. Dankenbring has labeled Mr. Tkach Sr. "the Pancake Apostle" - were at the very heart and core of what Jesus personally taught. I therefore think we should not be too quick to ridicule those who are perhaps more learned than we and who have the courage to correct doctrinal errors.

-California

Reading about the WCG adopting the Trinity teaching made me realize how lucky I was in leaving the stranglehold of that group years ago. It just so happened that as your last issue appeared, I was reading Dr. Edmond D. Cohen's brilliant psychological study *The Mind of the Bible Believer* [Prometheous Books, 1988]. On page 321, there is the following pertinent statement:

The biblical statements implying a Trinity work out so that any coherent summarization one tries to make of them will be wrong. If one focuses on Scriptures indicating that God is "one" and describing the personality attributes of God the Father, then one runs counter to others, indicating the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, making Jesus the ultimate judge, and conferring on the Holy Spirit such dignity that blasphemy against him is a special, unforgivable class of sin. If one focuses on the different consciousnesses and volitions of the three, then one neglects his oneness and the commandment to "have no other gods before Me" - not "before Us." If one tries to make the Trinity one God with three faces or aspects, then the ability of one to be present when another is absent and of one to be literally dead while the others remain alive go unaccounted for. No matter what the novice may understand of God's quantity, the initiate can always force him to be wrong, correct him, and admonish him to be less proud of his sin-cursed, wicked little mind, and more dependent. Having a doctrine flatly stating the contradiction seems to explain the matter. In the development of the Trinity into an express doctrine, there must have been some analogical contamination from the political triumvirates that governed Rome during two crucial periods in the years leading up to the fall of Jerusalem.

In another section of his book (p. 149), Dr. Cohen goes so far as to write that the Trinity doctrine serves as a model for the internally fragmented and confused state of mind of the mind-controlled true believer and is, therefore, useful as a mind-control tool of organized religion.

My suspicion is that, even though in one sense the WCG's acceptance of the Trinity teaching brings them more into the mainstream, in another sense it will only lead to the greater enslavement of the cult's members.

-New Jersey

As a former evangelist in the WCG during its explosive growth under Herbert W. Armstrong, I was genuinely astonished at your September lead article, "WCG Adopts Trinity Doctrine." For the past 20 years, a number of us, including Anthony Buzzard, an Oxford graduate and former instructor at Ambassador College, have made the study of the Trinity one of our primary concerns. It is important to know who the God of the Bible is.

We have found that many Trinitarian scholars reject most of the Scriptures used in support of the Trinitarian position. In other words Trinitarians, themselves, say that the verses often used to build a case for the Trinity are unconvincing. Given the circumstances of the first-century Jewish background of the early Christians and their unflinching conviction about monotheism, it would have been impossible for them to have adopted a view of God as three "Persons." Besides being a most complicated philosophical abstraction (this idea that one is somehow three and three is somehow one), the word Trinity is nowhere found in the Bible. When the authors of the New Testament say "God" (*ho theos*), where do they ever mean "God in three persons"? Jesus was not a Trinitarian (Mark 12:28ff.). It is hard to see why his followers should be. Paul defined the One God as the Father. I Cor. 8:4,6 is his plainly unitarian creedal statement.

Mr. Tkach, the Pastor General of the WCG, has been badly misinformed by his present cadre of theological advisors when he is quoted in *Christianity Today* as saying, "The Trinity is Bible teaching." Perhaps he does not know that blood has been shed over this issue. The violence of dogmatic Trinitarianism led to the death, amongst others, of Michael Servetus.

The evidence of competent scholars shows that the Trinity did not attain the status of church dogma until the fourth century and only then under great political pressure from Emperor Constantine at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. The question one must ask is: Why did it take 300 years for this supposedly "plain Bible teaching" to become installed as dogmatic truth?

Anthony Buzzard and I will be glad to share our research. We can show that much modern scholarship has demonstrated the very shaky ground under the Trinity.

"Orthodox" mainline churches are hardly suitable places for ex-WCG members to find "fellowship." The truth about the sleep of the dead and Gospel of the Kingdom will not generally be accepted. Few Protestants know that Martin Luther and William Tyndale held the Armstrong position on the nature of death long before HWA!

Former Worldwidiers should definitely remain truth-seekers and not just abandon precious truth for the sake of convenience. If our own exploration over the past 20 years is in any way valid, contemporary Christianity is largely based on a twisting of Paul and a rejection of the historical Jesus - especially his message about the Kingdom of God.

The Armstrong experience can be a useful launching-pad to real restoration of biblical faith. Returning to mainstream traditions uncritically is a double disaster. On no account should truth be abandoned. Everything should be examined carefully, as Paul advised. Worldwidiers should now cease playing "follow-my-leader" and take discipleship to Christ seriously.

-Charles F. Hunting  
219 Copeland Drive, Orlando, FL 32806  
with Anthony Buzzard  
185 Summerville Dr., Brooks, GA 30205

Among those who have studied cultural anthropology and comparative religion it is well known that cultures tend to create gods in their own images. Before the anthropologists, even many

philosophers commented upon this same widespread phenomenon.

Voltaire had inscribed on his chapel in Ferney the cryptic statement *Deo erexit Voltaire* (perhaps "God arises from Voltaire") and, according to Karen Armstrong in her current best-seller, *A History of God*, Voltaire "suggested that if God had not existed then it would have been necessary to invent him." In the nineteenth century, Ludwig Feuerbach revealed in *The Essence of Christianity* that by logical deduction, the only God that man can worship is the one that man conceives of in his own imagination. Thus, in one sense, man begets God in his own image.

Isn't it interesting that when we analyze the cosmologies of the Armstrong and Tkach administrations, we find that God was cordial enough to allow his very nature to evolve into a curious reflection of each WCG administration.

Let me suggest that when Armstrong or Tkach have used the term "God" they were really subconsciously referring to themselves and their administrations rather than to the true Creator God. The parallels are evident in the following ways:

In the days of Herbert Armstrong, WCG members were led to believe that spiritual inspiration was imparted from God into the mind of their "apostle." And they were indoctrinated to accept HWA as God's conduit of inspiration to a world held captive by the invisible Lucifer. Armstrong used no ghostwriter, per se, although he did need a staff of editors. His sources were more ethereal. So, his view of the Holy Spirit was that it had no personality; it was simply an "inspiration." Armstrong's view of the Holy Spirit was that it flowed like water from a reservoir down from God, then through him first to be distributed by him to his community of true believers. (That is, of course, as long as they paid their water bills to the apostle's water company in Pasadena, in the form of tithes and generous offerings. Otherwise they would have their service cut off.) HWA's view of the Godhead gave significance and force to his tenet of government "from the top down." The old reservoir/conduit theory supposedly made Armstrong the only earthly source for the Holy Spirit and conversion.

Armstrong further believed that Jesus was fallible while on earth. Since Armstrong's death, however, his view of Jesus has been cynically dubbed "the big gamble theory" by the WCG's current top Greek scholar, Kyriacos J. Stavrinides, and his cronies. Was God the Father gambling that Christ would not give in to temptations of the flesh and lose out on eternity? In 1990, Stavrinides emphatically answered, "No!" and another Armstrong teaching fell. But Herbert Armstrong had, indeed, taken a big gamble on his own son, Garner Ted, who eventually lost out on inheriting his father's throne. During the sixties, HWA was fond of publicly and proudly referring to GTA, with obvious allusion to Matt. 3:17, as "my son, in whom I am well pleased." But then Ted fell from grace by yielding to the same lusts to which his father had earlier succumbed. Herbert's self-identification with a Father God who gambled on his son Jesus, from his temptation in the wilderness to his agony in Gethsemane, later became a distasteful paradigm for the Tkachs. So they just changed it. And in the process, they changed God.

Now, as all "insiders" are well aware, Joe Tkach is not "inspired" in the same way his predecessor was. He is not an effective communicator and his frequent verbal outbursts are reminiscent of the irrational and wrathful God of the eighteenth-century Protestant preacher Jonathan Edwards. And so Tkach's policies must be revealed to the WCG's membership by his only begotten son, Joe Jr., who seems all too prone to portray himself as a martyr. As for Tkach's "inspired" written words, those are actually incarnated by yet a third person. Yes, a person. Namely, Michael Feazell. Even though he is not as visible as the father and the son, that doesn't mean that he is not a separate and distinct person. When he writes, he does so in the name of the father. And though these three are indeed separate persons, they all speak the same thing - and always *in nomine patriae* - Joseph W. Tkach.

How remarkable that the WCG's God is led around by the nose so easily by mere mortals. To the fleshly trinity's dotting lemming-like followers, it never seems to occur that truth can be anything other than what their capricious leaders say it is. Under the Tkach administration, the Godview has evolved into something quite unlike that of Herbert Armstrong's. Indeed, it should be obvious to all that in today's WCG the supposed nature of God has complied with the Tkach administration's real life paradigm - the father, the son, and the holy ghostwriter.

-Bruce Renehan

*Editor: Mr. Renehan, who is married and the father of four daughters, is a twenty-three year veteran of the WCG. Although 42 years of age, he is now an undergraduate student at a California university, majoring in psychology. He hopes to eventually specialize in the area of religious psychology and cultic therapy. In addition, he is the author of Daughter of Babylon-The True History of the Worldwide Church of God, a 203-page book that many of our readers have called one of the best WCG deprogramming tools they have ever seen. One who read the book said, "as a tool for getting current WCG members to wake up, I think Renehan's book is even superior to AR. AR is a little strong for the fragile minds of WCG true believers. Renehan handles the subject with kid gloves, but his documentation is very, very thorough." Bruce tells us that the number of orders for his book has not warranted it being published in hard-bound form. However, the spiral-bound facsimile (photocopied) version he is sending out is very much worth his asking price of \$15 plus \$3 for postage and handling. Those interested in obtaining copies should order them directly from the author. His mailing address is: P.O. Box 1551, Tehachapi, CA 93581-1551. By the way, please note the correct zip code. In our last issue we gave it one digit off. Our apologies to any who were inconvenienced by that oversight.*

It is certainly amazing to me how so many persons who claim that they are dedicated to Jesus Christ seem to forget what He has said, and what we all have believed in the past, can suddenly just throw up their hands and tell everyone that they were wrong all these years, and take the pronouncements of a nobody that claims to be the representative of Christ, tells everyone that HWA was wrong, and then obey this person's substitutions. Just what are they admitting to today? Can a leopard change his spots?....

When I saw Tkach's last tape to be used as a sermon, and at the end as he was leaving the lectern he stuck out his tongue to the people, I knew that this man was not of the calibre that should be leading God's group....

Now, in your latest release you elaborate the latest ministerial conference items which were discussed. I wonder how these ministers who just several years ago, even just several months ago, were declaring God's doctrine. But now, a few weeks later, they completely change, and with a straight face change the position they had from many years of training just to ensure a paycheck. It tells me they have never known God before, nor do they know him now. They should hang their heads in shame....

With all of this behind me, I will never again join any religious group.

-California

Have you contemplated an "End is Near" issue of AR? Of course I mean an end of the WCG as we once knew it. With Joe Tkach throwing out old doctrines with the speed and finesse of a blind man cleaning out his attic, it won't be long before WCG is just one more steeple on the Protestant landscape. It is interesting that there is talk of making the Holy Days just a "concept." The church

membership has picked up on all that has happened, and the falling revenues show that more and more of them now regard tithing as also just a "concept."

-Robert D. Ellsworth  
408 So. Pasadena Ave., Suite 4  
Pasadena, CA 91105

*Editor: AC alumnus Bob Ellsworth, besides running a successful tape duplicating business in Pasadena, is involved in marketing a number of significant books about the Bible. Some of his ads have recently appeared in national magazines. Additionally, Ellsworth, along with Dr. Robert Kuhn, Dr. Ernest L. Martin, and Dr. James Tabor, is actively involved in "The Original Bible Project" which is producing a new translation of the Bible. We hope to report on the project in a future AR. For now, those interested in obtaining information about the project may write to the above address for information.*

*One comment regarding WCG tithing. While rumors persist that many in the higher WCG echelons believe that their tithing doctrine needs total revision, the Tkachs don't seem to see it that way. Joseph Tkach Sr. has recently made it quite clear that he considers non-tithers to be stealing from God. Notice the following:*

I have had a long interest in the Waldensians and was interested to learn that there is a town in North Carolina named Valdese which was founded by Waldensians about 1893. They are a Sunday keeping church.

I am also interested in tithing and felt that Joseph Tkach's recently calling people who don't tithe "thieves" opened my eyes to his approach.

Being in the WCG at present is like being in an unhappy marriage - people want to leave but fear the alternative, the unknown.

-Australia

Though maybe not as tough as the old bunch, the bastard offspring of the WCG are still pretty mean. Power and its associate offenses seem to be in the fore. In none of the writings I have received from them have I read much about Faith, Hope, or Love - the foundations upon which all godly fellowships must be built. These great basic virtues may be given an occasional nod, but Power is the true operative word.

-Howard Clark  
Gasquet, California

I was aghast when I read in the last AR how one reader felt that *The Spotlight* was where to go for all the answers. It looks like many who leave the WCG replace it with right-wing, religious-right, authoritarian type philosophies and views. Let someone else do your thinking for you. Replace one rigid way of thinking with another. It still equals slavery....

Is God a Republican? Is Jesus Christ a "Dittohead"? Are The Forces of Righteousness on the side of ultraconservative, fundamentalist, right-wingers? To hear many ex-Worldwidiers and current Worldwidiers, you would think so. GTA sounds like a Rush Limbaugh wannabe. His Clinton bashing grows tiresome. Think back over the years. When Democrats were in power he would be venomous in his attacks on government evils, quoting scriptures about "the basest" being in charge.

When Republicans were in power, he was strangely silent regarding that, but would quote scriptures about showing respect to the government and about not speaking evil of dignities. (To Ron Dart's credit, on a recent tape he said God is not a Republican and refused to engage in Clinton bashing.)

Now, mind you, there is plenty wrong with Clinton and the Democrats. But same with the Republicans and the conservatives. Do conservatives have a lock on the Truth? I think not. But I think many ministers are closet Republicans. Is not all the world (both the conservative and liberal camps) deceived by Satan? Each side has some truth. It therefore angers me when ministers give a wink and a nod of approval to the conservative political camp - it shows partisanship and lack of objectivity.

-Ron Wagner  
Washington

*Editor: Accompanying Mr. Wagner's interesting letter was an article that appeared on the Op-Ed page of the June 12, 1993 Seattle Times. In the piece entitled "Asking twenty questions about the 'liberal media'" columnists Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon quite persuasively demonstrate that the U.S. mass media, in stark contrast to its "liberal" public image, is actually, in fact, covertly very much politically ultra-conservative. Those interested in obtaining a free copy of that eye-opening article may write to the two columnists at P.O. Box 13193, Oakland, CA 94661. Be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.*

My wife and I have been members of the WCG for about 10 years. It has only been for the last two years or so that we had begun to realize that something was seriously wrong with this "cult" group that we have been associated with.

During a time of severe personal troubles with our son's suicidal mental condition and my father's terminal cancer we found that our supposed "spiritual family" were more than unsupportive, they were actually critical of us spending time assisting our loved ones' needs. This and other factors have led us to the point of "opening our eyes" to what is really going on within this WCG cult that we had been active in for so many years....

I have just read my first *Ambassador Report* ([AR52](#)).... it is a breath of fresh air to find that we are not alone in the feelings of anguish from the years of mental abuse that we endured through the WCG.... Thanks for the peace of mind that I have already received through this one single copy I have read. I look forward to receiving many more in the future.

-California

I read the *Report* last night before going to bed. Then I dreamed that I was shanghaied into a UFO piloted by Joseph Tkach. The stewardess - I think her name was Ellen - was serving spring water at room temperature.

-Tennessee

Please, please, please continue to send me the AR. I will contribute as I am able. After 25 years in the WCG we are brain dead and almost destroyed.

-Virginia

## Editor's Note

In closing this issue, let me first draw your attention to the last letter above (and, yes, it is a real letter). The reader's language may seem particularly stark, but, in fact, we receive many letters that are just as pointed. Many hundreds of WCG members, both former and current, have been expressing similar feelings. The WCG's recent history, and particularly the last few years, have left thousands of people in a state of real mental confusion and emotional distress. To many such individuals, AR represents a means of coming to grips with reality and a way of gaining emotional and spiritual stability.

We don't make it a policy to run pages and pages of letters praising our own efforts. Like other publications, we could do that. But, I think our limited resources are better used in other ways. However, I do want to emphasize to all of you who are supporting our efforts: besides providing you personally with information, your contributions are significantly helping hundreds (and quite likely, *thousands*) of confused and hurting people.

Regarding another matter: my thanks to all of you who wrote us after the terrible Altadena fires in late October and expressed your concerns for our safety. As some of you know, Altadena (just north of Pasadena) was the virtual center of our activities for quite a few years. As it turns out, the old Gerringer home was not harmed. (Although, in actual fact, because they are in the process of moving to Missouri, they had just sold the residence where AR had been typeset for many years and where we kept many of our files until just a few weeks before the fires.) As for the Zolas' home - they were not there at the time because their careers require them to travel so much. But their home was in real danger. One nearby house was destroyed only a block to the east, another was severely burned a block to the south, another was completely destroyed a few hundred yards to the west, and the enormous Mt. Wilson blaze actually came to within a few hundred yards of the north end of their property (this was close to the same ridge where just a few weeks earlier four firefighters lost their lives while battling another fire in the area). At one point, those of us hosing down the Zolas' home were forced to evacuate on orders from fire officials because of the thick smoke and high winds. Nevertheless, the Zolas' property was completely saved - as were the properties of our other AR friends in the area.

In addition, some wondered how we fared through the January earthquake centered in Northridge. While our nerves were jangled a bit, all of us came out OK. And now in February (tonight, just as I write this, the rains and the winds are just starting to die down), I can report that we have also survived the Altadena mudslides. So, in spite of the near-Depression economic conditions we have in Los Angeles County, we do have much to be thankful for.

Once again, my thanks to all of you who expressed your concerns and to those who are supporting our efforts.

With warmest regards,  
John Trechak  
Editor

[Next Issue \(AR55\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

May 1994 (AR55)

Editor: Whatever we may think of the late Herbert W. Armstrong, one thing is certain. He was the founder of a small religious empire. That empire included not just the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and Ambassador College, but the Ambassador Foundation, the *Plain Truth* magazine, and, of course, *The World Tomorrow* broadcast and telecast. As we have previously reported, Armstrong's successor, Joseph W. Tkach, has not been so successful. While attempting to modernize and revamp the Armstrong inheritance, Tkach's efforts have resulted in the continuous decline of the organization that was left to him. Ambassador's Pasadena campus was closed and is eventually to be sold, the *Plain Truth's* circulation has gone from about 10 million down to under 2 million. And still the decline continues.

### No More World Tomorrow

To the absolute shock of many long-time WCG observers, Tkach, in his February 24 letter to the church's members, informed his followers that after the current TV season ends there will be no more World Tomorrow telecasts. The announcement is surprising because the WCG's broadcasts and telecasts have played an important part in the WCG's history for fifty years. Not only was the program the key to bringing in new tithe-paying members (and important in replenishing the flock as many left the church), but the broadcasts were seen as an important part of "the Great Commission" of "warning modern Israel." Just last year the entire format of the telecast was changed from a one topic lecture style to a "magazine style." (The WCG's television marketing experts believe that most of the people that are attracted now to the WCG's message have difficulty keeping their minds on only one subject for a whole 20 or 25 minutes.) But even with the change in format, the responses to the telecasts have been in decline.

Current members, who are often completely confused about the direction Tkach is taking in leading the WCG, write us virtually every day asking, "What in the world is going on in this church?"

Of course, trying to figure out what is really going on inside the secretive WCG hierarchy would require the sleuthing skills and intuition of a professional Kremlinologist. But from what we have been able to piece together from sources inside the organization, it appears that Tkach may know what he is doing. To quote Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, "Though this be madness, there is a method in it."

The current plan appears to be to totally transform, not just the doctrines of the WCG, but its marketing plan, as well. In recent weeks, for instance, television commercials promoting the *Plain Truth* have been appearing between segments of many different nationally popular programs just like commercials for Scientology's *Dianetics* have for some time. The PT commercials have even been placed directly after the popular Rush Limbaugh show, giving the impression that they are now a sponsor of that program. (If Judd Kirk and company can't do the job, what better promoter for the WCG than Limbaugh?)

But increased use of TV advertising is only part of the shift in game plan. Tkach favors a much more open church than did his predecessor. He also senses that there is much more that he can get out of the membership than mere tithes. Already many WCG congregations have been holding "open houses" which bring to services the curious who may have only gotten a few issues of the PT. When they attend they are "love bombed" and frequently are indoctrinated into Tkachism quite rapidly. The importance the Tkach administration places on this new technique can be seen in one *Worldwide News* (WN) subhead: "Open houses created to move congregations toward evangelism" (WN, 7/6/93, p. 10). The new emphasis on "evangelism" is being coordinated by the WCG's new Evangelism Support Services Department headed by Tom Lapacka. And, as we reported in [AR54](#), the WCG with its new "fundraisers" has discovered what many other denominations did years ago with their raffles and bingo nights. With the open church and fundraiser policies seen as successes, there is now talk of transforming each WCG member into a smiling and roving ambassador for the Tkach gospel. While WCG insiders claim the church has no intention yet of having members go house to house, the opening article of the September 14 WN began this way:

"Church members are our best ambassadors," said Tom Lapacka, Evangelism Support Services manager, at the open house conference in Pasadena, Aug. 19 and 20. "If evangelism is going to take place it will take place through them."

Now, if this sounds like the WCG may one day be imitating the Jehovah's Witnesses with their annoying neighborhood "ministers" or the Mormons with their youthful and self-righteous "missionaries," you are probably thinking the way Tkach is. Because the dedicated members of the JWs and the LDS churches have made their denominations among the fastest growing in the U.S., if not the world. And in what better group to attempt such a low-cost marketing plan than in the WCG - in which more than twenty years of journalistic exposés and dozens of splinter groups have not dented the total faith of its genuine true believers? To facilitate the open house marketing method, Tkach believes it would be wise for local congregations to have their own church buildings now. So he has announced a plan whereby some local congregations will build their own local church buildings.

Eventually, what takes place in these buildings may be quite different than what WCG

members have experienced in the past. Tkach intends to put the WCG's television studios to work producing more video-taped "training programs" and sermons for local congregations. The plan will obviously accomplish a number of goals: The messages that WCG members will hear will be much more monitored. There will be less chance for local ministers to lead their congregations out of the WCG. There will be less of a need for local pastors. (Indeed, with a flood of video sermons from headquarters, all Tkach would really need in local areas are deacons who can set up and turn on a TV.) And, finally, videos with their editing and special effects are a much more effective method of mind control than traditional sermons and sermonettes.

---

&COPY;1994 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

Another area that Tkach is giving a new emphasis is in the recruitment of young people. This is another major WCG policy shift. For years, the WCG was one of the few cults that primarily aimed its recruitment toward older people. Worldwide stood in stark contrast to most of the other major cults which have traditionally emphasized nabbing the young. All that may now be changing. The Summer Education Program, YES (Youth Education Services - for pre-teens), YOU (Youth Opportunities United - for teens), *Youth* magazine, and other programs designed to keep young people in the WCG and to attract the young from without are all getting new emphasis.

Finally, look for changes in the very spirit of WCG services - services that are now to be called "Saturday services," not "Sabbath services." Already ministers are being told to keep sermons down to 45 minutes so as not to tire out the newcomers in their midst. Insiders even report that Tkach is seriously entertaining the idea of adding on a testimonial or public confession section to church services wherein men and women can rise and give short testimonies of how they overcame personal problems via "the Church." It is not clear if Tkach got the idea from the Church of God-7th Day or Church of God, International, which have both had the practice, or from Ellen Escat who was once a Pentecostal. Whatever the case, the public confessions should make for some very entertaining moments in Saturday services.

## **More Defections and Demotions**

The WCG's historical proclivity for musical chairs continues unabated. The latest WCG big wig to leave the employ of the organization is World Tomorrow broadcaster Judd Kirk. World Tomorrow broadcaster David Hulme, while still in the WCG, is said to be "in the doghouse." What his future responsibilities, if any, will be are not known. It appears his main interests lie in the area of concert promotions. Others who have left recently include Larry Salyer, who has joined the Meredith organization.

Dennis Van Deventer, once thrown out of Ambassador College for performing a homosexual act, has been removed as head of WCG security. In that position he required WCG security personnel to carry Mace and wear black uniforms with black leather accessories. One of the things that apparently got him fired was getting drunk and loudly badmouthing Tkach while having lunch at the local Elks Club in Pasadena, a popular watering hole for WCG executives. We understand he will be kept on as a WCG minister.

## **Waterhouse Is Loosed Again**

Just when some thought it was safe to go back into WCG services again, Pastor General Tkach has called evangelist Gerald Waterhouse out of retirement and has loosed him upon a number of "problem congregations."

During the last Feast of Tabernacles in the Philippines, Waterhouse gave his new tour sermon. The message was vintage Waterhouse: The WCG is the only true church. To Waterhouse that is a given, a supposition upon which all of his other propositions rest. Thus, to Waterhouse, based on the Roman Catholic interpretation of Matt. 16:19, God backs up any decision made by Pope Tkach "whether it is right or wrong." In the sermon, heavy on references to hell fire, Gerald Flurry ("a snow flurry") and Rod Meredith ("he loves to wield the rod, he loves authority when he is the one who has it") were attacked by name. Waterhouse claimed that Tkach was on the road almost every week speaking before local congregations. According to Waterhouse, one reason for Tkach's travels was to combat homosexuality in the church. And, said Waterhouse, "God is... revealing his nature through... Mr. Tkach." (Compare that statement to Rm. 1:20. - ed.)

To those who doubt that HWA actually appointed Tkach as his successor, Waterhouse offers three "Proofs": (1) In the last sermon he ever gave (at the Fall Festival in 1985), HWA told the members that they should be loyal to whomever is the Pastor General of the WCG. (2) In HWA's last co-worker letter, written six days before his death, HWA announced that he had designated Tkach as his successor. And (3), just days before his death there was a press release that indicated that HWA had appointed Tkach as his successor. No other evidence was offered by Waterhouse that Tkach's appointment is legitimate.

## **Was HWA's Designation of Tkach Valid?**

There are some big problems with Waterhouse's three "proofs," above, that HWA legitimately left the Worldwide organization to Tkach.

First of all, in the last HWA sermon, Tkach was not named; HWA was just restating the well-known WCG teaching that members should be loyal to the Pastor General. Second, as regards the co-worker letter, there is much reasonable doubt that HWA, in a near-death condition and legally blind, could have knowingly signed the letter, let alone written it. Third, and most important, even if HWA designated Tkach as claimed, was the appointment valid? In the law of wills, a will is not valid if the testator is not mentally competent (for instance, if through physical illness or mental delusion he cannot fully

understand what he is doing in making the will), or if he is under undue influence (as when a counsellor or aide exerts psychological persuasion for self profit), or where there is coercion (as where an aide might threaten to reveal the testator's sins after his death), or where there is fraud (as where an advisor knowingly provides the testator with false information - such as "I will never chage a thing after you pass away - and thereby benefits under the provisions of the will).

Every indication that we have is that all of these factors were quite likely in operation when HWA designated Tkach. Why HWA's son, Garner Ted Armstrong, Evangelist Roderick Meredith, or the WCG's board did not take any legal action to remedy the situation remains unanswered to this day. In fact, it remains a mystery why the WCG's current board - many disgruntled with Tkach - does not take legal action against him now.

## **The Mt. Pocono Mystery**

With the WCG in ever increasing financial difficulty, it is not surprising that Tkach has been telling aides that he wants the church's Pasadena properties sold off, even if the WCG has to accept less than the \$300 million or so it had hoped for. Such a visionless approach is one that brings shudders to many long-time members who have taken pride in the Pasadena properties that once housed Ambassador College and now are the church's headquarters. Their fears are further compounded by the realization that WCG leaders have made some atrocious land deals in the past.

One example is the WCG's quiet sale of the church's Mt. Pocono (Pennsylvania) festival site in 1987. While such a large sale could not be completely hidden from the church's membership, the lack of details provided the membership regarding the sale prompted more than a few to write us asking if we knew what was behind the transaction. It was not until last year that we at AR were able to make any inquiries about the matter. But the few facts we uncovered did give us reason to feel that members' concerns were justified. What follows is a recent letter written by AR editor John Trechak to the Board of Trustees of the Worldwide Church of God regarding the Pocono property sale:

April 1, 1994

Board of Trustees  
Worldwide Church of God  
300 West Green Street  
Pasadena, CA 91123

Gentlemen:

A number of my readers have asked me to look into a matter that relates to your responsibilities as trustees for the Worldwide Church of God ("the Church"). Specifically, some have alleged that the board acted improperly in selling off the Church's Mt. Pocono festival site in 1987. When the allegations were first made a few years ago, I was not convinced that there was sufficient evidence to warrant such a claim. In recent months, however, after reviewing a number of legal documents and newspaper

articles relating to the sale, I have come to a different view. Before publishing anything about the matter, I wish to give the Church's Board of Trustees the opportunity to answer a few questions, and that is the purpose of this letter.

The Mt. Pocono property, located in beautiful Monroe County, Pennsylvania, consisted of more than 247 acres of land, much of it landscaped, with parking lots, outdoor recreation facilities, and numerous structures including a 7,000-seat auditorium complete with sound system. Much of the property's value, you will recall, resulted from the many thousands of hours of volunteer labor donated by Church members over the years in the belief they were contributing to the long-term effectiveness of the Church. I, myself, worked at the site as a nonpaid volunteer in the summer of 1967. The property was a popular site for Church festivals and other Church activities. Not surprisingly, numerous *Worldwide News* articles since the sale have indicated that the Church has had some difficulty finding new festival sites that are comparable. Therefore, **Question No. 1 is: Why was the property ever sold?**

Some have assumed that the Church was strapped for cash in 1987 and that cash flow problems were behind the sale. But if one looks at the deeds on file with the Monroe County Recording Office, one notices that the transfer of the two tracts comprising the 247 acres were each made for "one dollar and other valuable consideration." That phrase is an interesting one. It is normally only seen on deeds where the grantor is making a gift to the grantee. The grantee in this case was a Japanese corporation called the U.S. Senda Group, Inc. This leads to **Question No. 2: If the Church was actually making a gift to the Japanese corporation, what was the reason for the gift?**

In spite of the "one dollar and other [unspecified] valuable consideration" language, there is evidence that some money did change hands. On the deeds for the two tracts it is stated that a Pennsylvania realty transfer tax was paid. The total amount was \$25,500. In Pennsylvania, the property transfer tax rate is two percent. Therefore the required affidavit shown the county tax collector must have stated the sale price as \$1,275,000 (or about one third of what WCG members were spending in the Pocono area during each year's fall festival). Now, here is where I have problems understanding this deal. Not only does the tax amount contradict the deed's language of gift, but Pennsylvania State Representative Joseph Battisto says the Senda Group actually paid \$3 million for the property (see the *Pocono Record* 9/25/92, p. A1) which in 1986 had been appraised for \$2.2 million (*Pocono Record*, 10/30/92, p. B2). Furthermore, in spite of the fact that Pennsylvania real estate prices have been dropping for some years now, Senda is in the process of selling the property to the state of Pennsylvania (for the creation of an arts and exhibitions center) for \$4 million to \$5 million (*Pocono Record*, 10/30/92, p. B2). These facts lead me to ask the following: **Question No. 3: How much did the Senda Group actually pay for the property?** And, distinctly separate, **Question No. 4: How much did the Church actually receive for the property?**

Perhaps the fourth question could be answered if one were to see a copy of the Church's financial statement for 1987. Because the Church regularly published complete, audited financial statements in *The Worldwide News* before Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986 and has done so in the last few years, one would think that the Church would have published its 1987 financial statement sometime in 1988. However, for some reason, the Church did not make available its complete 1987 financial statement for its members. That leads me

**to Question No. 5: Was the lack of a published and complete 1987 financial statement connected in any way to the Mt. Pocono land deal?**

The suggestion some have made that the Mt. Pocono site was not sold at fair market value is one that troubles me. It is particularly troubling because the Mt. Pocono land deal received such scant coverage in *The Worldwide News* and other Church publications. Even the ministry was kept in total darkness on the matter. *The Pastor General's Report Index* for the relevant years shows that no articles mentioned the impending sale. I'm sure you realize that your fiduciary duties as trustees would have made it legally imperative that in selling off the Mt. Pocono site the board would exercise great care in getting a fair return by properly listing the properties, widely advertising its availability, asking the field ministry's help in locating potential buyers, taking bids, etc. I have not heard or read anything regarding the sale that would indicate such care was exercised by the board. In fact, certain board members from that era have stated that it was common for Church officers to routinely make decisions of that magnitude independently and to inform the trustees post hoc. While I know that Pastor General Tkach, his assistant Michael Feazell, and church treasurer Leroy Neff were privy to the sale, I wonder to what degree other board members knew what was actually transpiring. That leads me to **Question No. 6: Did the board actually agree to the sale based upon full disclosure of its details and with full discussion of its merits before the decision to sell (as is legally required) - or was there only supposed agreement after the decision to sell by what Herbert Armstrong used to refer to as his "dummy board"?**

The Worldwide Church of God is not the only organization that likes to operate in secrecy. Those currently negotiating the sale of the Senda Group's Mt. Pocono property have been criticized similarly. For instance, Charles Sperrazza, Republican candidate for Pennsylvania's 118th state House district, said of the Senda-Pennsylvania negotiations: "This project is being foisted on the taxpayers in virtual secrecy.... We need a full disclosure about the project - facts will show that the beneficiaries will be bureaucrats, with the burden falling on the taxpayers." (*Pocono Record*, 10/30/92, p. B2.) So secrecy surrounds the property to this day. But not just the property, the Senda Group, too.

In reading a report I received from Dun and Bradstreet, I discovered that U.S. Senda is a corporation formed in California on 2/9/87 - in other words, just weeks before the Mt. Pocono land deal was consummated. The report states that U.S. Senda is primarily involved in "amusement and recreation," but virtually no other information about this corporation is publicly available. Dun and Bradstreet did not even have figures as to any of its revenues or its number of employees. From incorporation papers I received from an investigator in Japan, I discovered that U.S. Senda Group is a subsidiary of Nihon Format, Inc., a corporation whose board is composed of only Senda family members and whose president is Katsuhiko Senda. Now, while U.S. Senda may be involved in only amusement and recreation, Nihon Format is involved in much, much More: Buying, selling, leasing, and administration of real estate; management of hotels, restaurants, and bars; sale of medical equipment; manufacture of telephone devices; sale of furniture and sports equipment; sale of language study equipment; sale of precious metals; consultation regarding the establishment of sites for conventions and trade fairs, etc. In other words, U.S. Senda is a part of a fairly large and diversified parent corporation. Nevertheless, a few weeks ago, while looking over the deeds in the Mt. Pocono land deal, I noticed a very curious thing. In the filed recording papers, the official representative for Senda in

California was a gentleman with an office not in San Francisco, downtown Los Angeles, or Century City as one might expect, but in Pasadena, of all places. What a coincidence, I thought. Then when I went to the address listed on the papers, I found that U.S. Senda was no longer there. The building was not an office building, but an indoor baseball batting club. Later I discovered that in 1987 the building was ostensibly only a warehouse. You know the building. It is directly behind Mijares Mexican Restaurant, not more than a few hundred yards from the Church's Hall of Administration. In fact, it is just across the 210 freeway from the section of Waverly Drive where former WCG attorney and chief accountant Stanley Rader lives. Another strange coincidence, I thought. But that's not all. When I discovered where U.S. Senda had moved to (200 E. Del Mar Blvd. in Pasadena), deliverymen told me that the suite at which the Senda Group received mail is also an address where Osamu Gotoh and associates received mail. I'm sure you gentlemen are well aware of the serious and well-documented allegations made against Mr. Gotoh, Mr. Rader's friend, in the [1977 issue of Ambassador Report](#). With that in mind, **Question No. 7 is: Did Mr. Gotoh have anything to do with the Mt. Pocono land deal?**

In the last few years, numerous articles have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* regarding the vast amount of U.S. real estate purchased by Japanese corporations in the last decade. Some of those corporations are known to have ties to organized crime. I have no information that the Senda Group is such a corporation. Nevertheless, the manner in which the Mt. Pocono land deal was carried out makes me wonder what was really behind the deal. You should too. Let's not forget how the Senda people were able to renege on a key part of the deal with Worldwide in 1988 when they refused to honor a contract provision allowing WCG to lease the property for the Feast (*Worldwide News*, 8/8/88, p. 1). That such a major contract breach was possible leads me to **Question No. 8: Were the attorneys representing WCG in the deal exclusively interested in protecting the WCG's interests, or were they more interested in facilitating a good deal for Senda?**

This leads me to one final query. **Question No. 9: Will the Church's Pasadena properties now be disposed of in the same manner?**

Gentlemen, I look forward to your timely response.

With warmest regards,  
John Trechak  
Editor & Publisher

*Editor: What follows is the complete and unedited April 11 response of Leroy Neff, Secretary of the WCGs Board:*

Dear Mr. Trechak:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 1, 1994, directed to the Board of Trustees of the Worldwide Church of God.

The other time I wrote you was to ask that you discontinue sending me your

unsolicited publication. Thank you for complying with my request.

I do not read your material, but others who do, tell me that the avowed purpose of *Ambassador Report* is to destroy the Worldwide Church of God. Also, that your writings have been salacious and slanted. Based on what little I read years ago, this evaluation would appear correct.

In view of this kind of a comment, we do not view you as being the appropriate candidate to oversee the Church's finances, or instruct its trustees on their legal responsibilities. We respond to your letter only to impede what we believe is an obvious intent to mislead your readers with misstatements and false innuendos - not because we feel you have any credence or credibility.

Contrary to what you say, the Church has not had difficulty in finding new Feast sites.

We are advised by legal professionals that "one dollar and other valuable consideration," is not normal on deeds of gift. A gift is without consideration.

The property was not gifted to anyone, but rather, sold for a full and valuable consideration.

You asked what was paid for the property and how much the Church received for the property. The price that was paid was the price that was negotiated in an arms length transaction. The price was not, as you have falsely suggested, below fair market value. The property was in fact sold for a price which exceeded the appraised value as determined by two licensed appraisers.

The sale was completely audited by Arthur Andersen and Co. If the complete financial statement for 1987 was not published in the *Worldwide News*, it had nothing to do with the sale of the Pocono property.

You are incorrect that the fiduciary duties of the Trustees require the specific action you refer to. The Board did act with full disclosure before, not after, the transaction.

You raise a lot of irrelevant and unfounded speculations regarding the "Senda Group." We suggest you refer any such questions to the Senda Group.

The attorneys representing the Church in selling the Pocono property were interested in protecting the Church's interest and they did not represent the "Senda Group."

There are other false and misleading innuendos in your letter and the fact that we do not take time to address them all should not be considered an admission to the truth of any of the matters in your letter.

Sincerely yours,  
Leroy Neff  
Secretary of the Board

*Editor's reply:*

Dear Mr. Neff:

I want to thank you for your enlightening and entertaining letter. But there are a few points I want to mention. I would have written you a personal note, but as you do not want to receive mail from me I thought this would be the proper forum to address those points.

First off, however, let me just comment that although I have not been made aware of what law firm you are currently relying on for your legal advice, I want to express my admiration for their chutzpa and/or sense of humor. As one who has had a tiny bit of legal training myself, I find those qualities quite admirable, especially in young lawyers. Let me draw your attention to but one example of how that chutzpa/humor manifested itself in your comments. Paragraph six of your letter states: "We are advised by legal professionals that 'one dollar and other valuable consideration' is not normal on deeds of gift. A gift is without consideration." Now I ask: "and other valuable consideration"? Like what? A buck's worth of wampum beads? Marbles? Baseball cards? Well, let's put that question aside just for the moment so we can review some legal fundamentals.

As every law school casebook on contracts points out, consideration does usually distinguish a contract from a mere gift. Furthermore, courts generally will not examine whether the value of the consideration was commensurate to the bargained for exchange in a contract. However, with perhaps a very few exceptions, judges are not idiots and so the courts do recognize the concept of "nominal consideration." Essentially, nominal consideration exists when a donative promise is falsely put by the parties into the form of a bargain. Now, I don't want to bore you with a long list of cases, so let me just quote from a popular legal work you probably have in your own library, Black's Law Dictionary:

*Nominal consideration.* One bearing no relation to the real value of the contract or article, as where a parcel of land is described in a deed as being sold for "one dollar," no actual consideration passing, or the real consideration being concealed.

Now notice what law professors John D. Calamari and Joseph M. Perillo write in their famous *Contracts* hornbook (2nd edition, p. 139):

Economic inadequacy, then, except in one unusual situation [Where "Unthinking lawyers have sometimes run afoul of the general rule by drafting such meaningless clauses as 'in consideration of \$1.00 by each to the other paid.' " - p.138], does not prevent any bargained for detriment from constituting consideration. On the other hand, economic inadequacy may constitute some circumstantial evidence of fraud, duress, overreaching, undue influence, mistake or that the detriment was not in fact bargained for.

I don't want to turn this note into a legal brief, but let me suggest that your lawyers were either pulling your leg or have simply just not done their homework. I suspect your law firm is a young and impoverished one without access to the Lexis or Westlaw computerized research systems. So let me suggest that your lawyers begin their legal research with the long line of cases beginning with the famous old case of *Fischer v. Union Trust Co.*, 138 Mich. 612, 101 N.W. 852 (1904). They should also read the *Restatement of Contracts, Second, Sec. 87, Comment b.*

I'll summarize for them. Where consideration is only token, courts will usually conclude that a gift was involved, rather than a bargained for exchange. In such cases, many courts will void such pseudo-contracts. In the case of the Pocono land deal, the use of "in consideration of one dollar and other valuable consideration" on the deeds for the purchase (?) of hundreds of acres of land logically leads to what I asked in Question 2: If the Church was actually making a gift to the Japanese corporation, what was the reason for the gift? You have not answered that yet to my satisfaction. By the way, if you have any doubt what "for one dollar and other valuable consideration" means in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, just do what I did. I called the county register's office and asked the young lady clerk what it meant there. Her pointed answer? "It means a gift was made."

Now, with that preliminary comment out of the way, let me be more to the point. I am truly sorry that you have clouded the issues surrounding the Pocono land deal with vague references to what you believe to be the *Report's* avowed purposes. (By the way, our actual purposes were clearly stated in our very first letter of 1976 and I will be glad to send you a copy should you ever decide to come out of your hiding ostrich posture.) You admit your opinion of our purposes are based only on hearsay and a brief perusal of perhaps a few of our early issues. Ostensibly based upon such unfounded views of our supposed purposes, you (and I must assume the rest of the board) have refused to clarify why so many dubious coincidences surround this real estate transaction - a transaction for which, in spite of the deeds' language of gift, there is every indication that there were millions of dollars involved.

With so many serious questions raised, I cannot understand why you could not have put aside your prejudiced view of the *Report* and simply answered our nine little questions. While you and your lawyers were careful to justify your own actions and the actions of the unnamed lawyers who were involved in the 1987 deal, you specifically evaded answering questions 1, 3, 4, 7, and 9. The evasion of answering question 7 regarding Mr. Gotoh is all too obvious. But even more amazing is the evasion of answering questions 3 and 4. The significance is this: If newspaper reports are correct that Senda actually paid \$3 million for the property, and if Monroe County tax records, are correct that WCG received only \$1,275,000 for the property (in spite of the language of gift on the deed), then what became of the difference - the \$1,725,000? Who got that?

Most important today, however, is this question: Is history now about to repeat itself in the sale of the Church's Pasadena properties? That was question 9 and you chose not to answer that one either.

Mr. Neff, is it *Ambassador Report*, or isn't it really the Worldwide Church of God's Board of Trustees, you included, who are the ones with "an obvious intent to mislead readers with misstatements and false innuendos"?

Incidentally, my recent letter to the Senda Group's president in Japan was returned unopened. We are presently attempting to locate his whereabouts.

-J.T.

## **WCG Ministers Rake in the Big Bucks**

Have you ever wondered what the WCG's ministers and executives make? A highly reliable WCG insider recently disclosed what Tkach pays himself and his underlings. Tkach's salary is \$335,000 per year. Evangelist rank ministers get \$120,000 to \$130,000 per year. Department heads and regional directors get \$80,000 to \$81,000 per year. Field ministers with 15-25 years experience get \$50,000-\$55,000. Ministerial assistants receive about \$36,000. And ministerial trainees \$26,500. These figures do not include numerous perks such as parsonage allowances, health and life insurance, use of company cars, travel allowances, gifts of ample second tithes to spend, etc. Our insider indicates that like HWA before him, Tkach has virtually all of his daily living expenses paid for him by the church in addition to his salary. Tkach is said to give about \$80,000 back to the church in tithes and offerings each year. Retirees from the church are paid up to 80 percent of what they earned while in - as long as they keep their mouths shut.

## **The Puzzling Pogorelich**

The World Tomorrow may soon be gone, Ambassador College's old Pasadena campus is on the chopping block, and the WCG may be disintegrating, but the music continues on with the Ambassador Foundation. Subsidized by the WCG's tithepayers to the tune of about \$1.5 million per year (necessary because even with the exorbitantly high price of tickets to Ambassador shows and concerts, the Ambassador concert series is not self-supporting), this year's series continues with a line of world-class artists. (One example: the August 7 Brazilian jazz show was a huge success.) But not only does the concert series continue, this year Ambassador added a new event - The Ivo Pogorelich International Piano Competition.

The competition was held at Ambassador Auditorium December 2-16. Beginning with 40 pianists from 13 countries, by the third round the group was whittled down to eight finalists. At the competition's conclusion there was a tie for the silver medal with Evgeny Zharafants, 34, of Russia and Irina Plotnikova, 39, of Russia each being awarded a silver sculpture and \$5,000 in cash. There was also a tie for the gold medal with Michael Kieran Harvey, 32, of Australia and Juilliard student Edith Chen, 23, each receiving a gold sculpture and \$75,000 in cash. All eight finalists received recording contracts with the Naxos and Marco Polo labels. Presenting the awards were Carmen Romano Lopez de Portillo, former first lady of Mexico, and Sir Edward Heath, former prime minister of Great Britain.

Those of us who attended the event were impressed not only with the high calibre of piano artistry displayed by all the participants, but also by the overall excellence of the Ambassador Auditorium personnel. Nevertheless, there were some disturbing aspects to the competition.

The first question raised by many who followed the competition was: Was it rigged? While no one would claim that the four medalists were not all very fine musicians and may have won even under different circumstances, many pianophiles in the audience came away unhappy with the results. For instance, listening to the audience's applause at the final awards presentation, one got the impression that the majority of the audience

avored the dynamic, yet very poetic, Olivier Cazal of France. Undoubtedly, Cazal felt similar to many of his fans. At the awards ceremony the day after the winners were announced, Cazal's encore consisted of only the funeral march from Chopin's Second Sonata.

Cazal was not the only participant who was disappointed with the way the contest was structured. Pulitzer-prize-winning critic Martin Bernheimer wrote in *The Los Angeles Times* (12/15/93, p. F1, "More Questions Than Answers"):

Some experts were surprised that the makeup of the international jury was kept a secret until the day before the first round. When the roster was finally announced veterans of both foreign and domestic wars found it oddly constituted at best, lightweight at worst.

A noted artists' manager in attendance, Maxim Gershunoff, charged cronyism. The names of famous teachers and performers were scarce, in any case, and some of the judges' credentials seemed inflated. The 13-member panel includes only three Americans, two of whom find primary employment as radio announcers.

(The competition's jury contained not one famous pianist from the Southern California area in spite of the fact that many make their homes here. There was no Leon Fleisher on the jury. No Daniel Pollack. No Leonard Pennario. - ed.) Bernheimer continued:

More disturbing, however, were recurring worries about nepotism. To serve as president of the jury, Pogorelich appointed his wife, Alice Kezeradze, identified in the puffy program book as a pianist with "a brilliant concert career" and "an outstanding pedagogue." She would function as an active, voting president, and was given veto power over her colleagues.

Troubles began, as always, as soon as the first contestants were eliminated. Several of the instant losers were artists already enjoying distinguished careers, but that happens. One person's Cliburn is another's Votapek.

Among the predictable cries of distress, however, one heard strange accusations regarding Kezeradze. One contestant, speaking on condition of anonymity, claimed that four colleagues in the competition had studied with the jury president, and that one of them was related to her - possibly a niece.

Specific queries about these matters were duly addressed to the Ambassador information officer. After checking the matter out, he said only Pogorelich could answer, and would do so during the first intermission at the finals, Monday. Later he said Pogorelich would be too busy to speak to the press. Meanwhile, Kezeradze said her husband would speak to the press, but she herself could do so only after the contest was over.

After four hours of obfuscation, an angry Pogorelich agreed to an impromptu all-too-public chat when encountered on the steps of the auditorium.

"I'm ashamed to be shaking your hand," he shouted upon being introduced by the information officer. Finally, he and his wife grudgingly answered a few quick questions.

The questions concerning the competition did not end there. When at year's end, *Times* critic Bernheimer gave the Pogorelich Competition one of his infamous Beckmesser Awards (the "So-who-needs-judges award"), many pianophiles wondered why the WCG was so careless in not avoiding the appearance of evil in a competition supposedly designed to enhance the Foundation's, and the WCG's, image. Many WCG members wondered why the WCG would even be financing such an event when church income has been seriously declining for over two years. Those fearful of the "New World Order" wondered why the WCG asked so many multinational corporations to participate (some, like Occidental Petroleum, PacTel Cellular, and Lufthansa Airlines, donated funds). Many local Christians could not understand why, as one of the special prizes awarded, the Foundation gave a Croatian sculpture of a reclining nude with her breasts high in the air. (The sculpture, titled "Sunbathed Woman," is now on display in the church's Hall of Administration.) And the four winners' sculptured trophies - looking like a burning bush viewed from one side, but a cupped hand containing a piano when viewed from the other side - were suspected by some conspiracy buffs as having overtones of Masonic symbology.

The most intriguing question, however, is why did the Ambassador Foundation decide on Pogorelich as their front man? The Yugoslavian pianist, who records for Deutsche Gramophone, is no amateur. He is often praised for his imaginative Bach, and critics have hailed his recording of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* (three pieces about the seductions and terrors of demons). Nevertheless, many critics have called Pogorelich's playing uneven and his interpretations frequently eccentric. One critic even referred to one of Pogorelich's performances of the Tchaikovsky First Piano Concerto as "perverse." Ironically, that performance took place at Ambassador the night Tkach presented Pogorelich with a special award for excellence. In his highly respected work *The Art of the Piano* (Summit Books, 1989, pp. 203-4), distinguished Juilliard professor David Dubal writes that Pogorelich is a master of publicity and self-promotion, but that:

Pogorelich is not comfortable in Romantic music. He is inhibited in it and relies on an unconventional, often overblown approach. His Scriabin Second Sonata, *Poems*, and Etudes are straightlaced, stiff, and tasteless, with no sign at all of the music's eroticism. Nor is he a master colorist, and his Chopin, while sometimes refreshing, is stern, even puritanical. It is seldom saturated with youthful verve, and it can be pedantic, as in some etudes or the C-sharp minor Scherzo. His Chopin Polonaises in F-Sharp minor and C minor are gloomy conceptions....

He is not a truly successful concerto player. Pogorelich needs the stage to himself.

Most certainly, Ambassador's claim that Pogorelich is the "No. 1 Piano Superstar of His Time!" is a highly inflated one. Even critic-broadcaster Jim Svjeda, who was one of the competition's judges, has referred to Pogorelich as a "largely self-indulgent punk" (*The Record Shelf Guide to the Classical Repertoire*, p. 307).

That the supposedly Christian Ambassador Foundation would settle upon Pogorelich as a front man is even more surprising when you consider his personal image. Aloof and notoriously arrogant, frequently seen smoking in public, and with an eastern European accent reminiscent of Bela Lugosi's Count Dracula, no less, many find him inaccessible. (Rather like David Hulme - a kindred spirit perhaps?) Pogorelich's wife, Alice

Kezeradze, is many years Ivo's senior - she was teenage Ivo's piano teacher, in fact. (She has been described as a female tyrant not unlike Tkach's female mistress Ellen Escat - another coincidence?) And then there are those persistent rumors in classical music circles that baby-faced Ivo is HIVpositive. (As we go to press, Pogorelich has yet to respond to our letter to him about the matter.) Could it be that the Tkach organization chose Pogorelich to represent them out of sympathy? Far more important, however, are two questions. One is frequently asked by leading authorities in the classical music field: Are not great music and the spirit of competition completely incompatible? The second is frequently asked by religious thinkers: Is the way of competition to be God's way in the World Tomorrow?

Questions, questions. But as Martin Bernheimer, the *Times'* famous music critic wrote, the Ambassador Foundation gives us few answers.

## **Flurry Again Praises Flurry**

It's embarrassing to have to report a story like this. But Gerald Flurry is at it again. In the February 1994 issue of his *Philadelphia Trumpet* he again blew his own horn - loudly. The cover story was a piece by Flurry in which he extolled his own prophetic powers in supposedly having predicted the January Northridge earthquake. Flurry began his editorial: "I made some astounding statements about the California earthquake - BEFORE IT STRUCK! Let me quote myself from a sermon given to our Church on December 21, 1991..." He then went on to give a quote from his sermon which contained this "prophecy":

What if there is another massive earthquake on this earth - maybe from two years by the time this booklet [about the book of Amos] goes out? I'm not saying that's going to happen. I don't know. But I KNOW THAT THE LION HAS ROARED, BRETHREN!

Later in the article he quoted from his own work, *Malachi's Message*: "You are going to see THE DATE OF MR. ARMSTRONG'S DEATH TAKES ON MORE SIGNIFICANCE AS TIME GOES ON. Mr. John Amos and I were disfellowshipped on December 7, 1989 - 40 days before the anniversary of Mr. Armstrong's death. The number 40 is significant in the Bible."

The fact that the Northridge quake (actually centered in nearby Reseda) happened on January 17, not on January 16 (the anniversary of HWA's death), didn't phase Flurry. After all, he was just a few hours off in his prophecy. So, he said, that didn't matter.

Herbert Armstrong did not see it that way. He used to say that a true prophet could predict totally unexpected events to the exact time of their happening (see his booklet *The Proof of the Bible* - that is, if you can locate a copy). That reasoning actually made some sense. To illustrate, what if the editor of this publication suddenly thought he was a prophet and made the following pronouncements:

I don't know what his name will be, but I prophesy that the next President of the United States will be accused of having had an affair and he will also be accused of

financial improprieties sometime in his past. This will show that he has human faults.

I don't know exactly when it will occur, but I prophesy that within the next two years, there will be tornadoes in the state of Oklahoma. This will show that God is not pleased with the Philadelphia Church of God headquartered there.

I don't know the exact date of the article, but I prophesy that next year there will be a newspaper article about a major natural disaster involving snow and in that article the author will use the word flurry. This will be proof positive that Gerald Flurry is a curse upon the earth and that I am a prophet.

Now, aside from the fact that making such prophecies would bring in much income (because there are SO MANY foolish people out there who love such nonsense), those statements are not worth anything. That is because, as they are phrased, they only express the normally expected, and anyone who thinks about it for a few minutes could make the same "Prophecies." (Actually, if someone regularly made statements to the opposite of the above, and they all came true, he might have a better claim to the title of prophet.)

All of this seems lost on Flurry. In his editorial he humbly writes: "We must understand that my stunning statements are not based on human reasoning [true - ed.] or on human prediction [not true - ed.]. They are based on God's word and His Work."

The Northridge quake was certainly no picnic - especially for those who lost loved ones or property in the ordeal. Nevertheless, it may not have been the total disaster that Flurry has envisioned.

Aside from the fact that the quake helped wake up California to the dangers inherent in some of its building code miscalculations and has spurred industry to switch to "telecommuting," something badly needed in the crowded area, it may have helped Southern California in other unexpected ways. Notice this quote from the *Los Angeles Times* (3/7/94, p. A1, "Quake Seen Speeding Recovery of Economy"):

... seven weeks after the Northridge earthquake sparked fears of regional paralysis, the surprise is that Southern California's economy is not faring worse.

Sky-high estimates of up to \$30 billion in damage have been slashed to \$13.5 billion in a UCLA study. Freeway repairs in Los Angeles are preceding much more rapidly than in the Bay Area after the 1989 Loma Prieta quake. Federal money is coursing through the pipeline from Washington.

"The irony of it is that this bad event that created a lot of hardship is going to start economic expansion about a year before it would have happened otherwise," said private economist Mark Zandi, who expects a recovery this summer, based on his analysis of Hurricane Andrew and other natural disasters on their regions.

Flurry is just not getting the respect he thinks he deserves. In England, when the *Daily Express* ran one of his ads (with a photo of HWA) on Feb. 12, the editors fittingly put it next to a wristwatch ad that had in large print the headline, "**Watch out - there's a fake about.**" Then, on Sunday, Feb. 20, the *Edmond Evening Sun* (pp. 1A and 6A) ran a front-page exposé on Flurry titled "Is It A Cult Or 'God's Church'?" (those who would like a

photocopy of that article by Curtis Killman may obtain one for \$2.50 by writing to the *Edmond Evening Sun*, Circulation Department, P.O. Box 2470, Edmond, OK 73083. Be sure to give the name of the article, date of issue, and the pages.)

One final comment on Flurry. In our [last issue](#) we reported how in October, Flurry had been arrested when found drunk behind the steering wheel of a car parked in a university parking lot. To his followers, Flurry explained away this episode by saying the law was unfair and should be changed and by claiming that the officer who arrested him, Brandon C. Berryhill, was a WCG member (the WCG denies this). On February 23, Flurry pleaded nolo contendere to the main charge of "APC" - being in actual physical control of an automobile while intoxicated (like DUI - Driving Under the Influence) and was fined \$400 plus \$200 in victim's compensation plus court costs. In addition, he may face a term of incarceration. His date of sentencing has been suspended to Feb. 23, 1995. But Flurry apparently doesn't feel he will ever have to show up. He has been telling followers he expects to flee to Petra in Jordan sometime this year and perhaps as soon as June. We here at the *Report* wish him a pleasant journey.

## Petra in the News

Flurry and thousands of others in the WCG and its spinoffs who have a hankering to spend a few years living in a dry, dusty cave in the Near East will be interested to know that an absolutely fascinating article on Petra recently appeared in *The New York Times* (1/4/94, p. B9). Titled "Ancient City of Petra Is Yielding Its Secrets," the article contained a wealth of information many Petra buffs will find mesmerizing.

For example, while most of us know of Petra's caves and cliff dwellings where Lawrence of Arabia and 500 of his men briefly lived during WWI, few know that under Petra's sand dunes lies an ancient city that once housed perhaps 30,000 people. Archaeologists are now attempting to remove the sand. The ancient metropolis, located in an area the Bible calls the Valley of Moses, was an important city from the third century B.C. until the second century A.D. During the Augustin Age, the Nabatean kingdom which contained Petra was responsible for 25 percent of the gross economic output of Rome. It was even a center for artists and scholars. Most significant today, however, is that the new excavations at Petra are turning up scores of papyrus scrolls, some dating from biblical times, that may eventually prove as revealing to historians as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Petra buffs who want to read the lengthy article should first check with their local libraries. If they do not have it, a photocopy of the article may be obtained by calling the *Times'* clipping service at 1-800-543-6867. Petra buffs may also want to see our article on devil worship at Petra in [AR32](#).

## More Groups!

In our last issue we mentioned numerous WCG offshoots that we view as "Armstrongite." The list was by no means complete. Since that issue went to press we have learned of the existence of more such offshoots. Although we have few details about what they teach, here are some we learned about in just the last few weeks: Biblical

Church of God, P.O. Box 612440, San Jose, CA 95161. Bible Study Association, 28877 Sumerville, Eugene, OR 97405. Family of God, 7119 Western Trail, San Antonio, TX 78244. United Biblical Church of God, P.O. Box 547, Crystal River, FL 32623. Bible Education Services (Donald L. Hudgel, Executive Director), P.O. Box 736, Troy, OH 45373. The Church of the Great God (John Rittenbaugh, Pastor), P.O. Box 471846, Charlotte, NC 28247-1846. The Fellowship Church of God (Les Pope, Pastor and Editor of *The Fellowship Newsletter*), P.O. Box 300143, Midwest City, OK 73140-0143. And Church of God (of Peace), P.O. Box 53, Farnborough, Hants. GU14OYZ, United Kingdom.

Those who are fascinated by the WCG offshoots and their histories will find the research of one of our readers very helpful. Mr. Alan Ruth has put together an amazing flow chart of the WCG's offshoots, complete with the names of their leaders and their dates of creation. He has also written a 15-page paper on the subject. Those who would like a copy of the flow chart and the paper should send \$2 to Mr. Alan Ruth, 30290 W. 12 Mile Rd., Apt. 204E, Farmington Hills, MI 48334.

## Where Do They Go?

One of the questions we get asked quite frequently is: When members of the WCG leave, where do they go? There is no way for us to provide anything other than a very general answer to that question. We have never had a means of doing a survey or careful study of the question. But based on almost twenty years of doing AR and receiving many thousands of letters, we have a rough idea of what a survey would reveal.

A very large percentage of those who leave Worldwide gravitate to other churches that are Armstrongite (we reported on the major ones in our [last issue](#)). Very, very few join mainstream, orthodox denominations. In fact, we at AR have personally known only about two or three dozen individuals over the years who have done so. One who did is Ambassador graduate and former WCG employee Bob Gentet (211 Probasco St., Lawrenceburg, IN 47025) who now pastors a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church congregation in Indiana.

A few former WCG members attend Unitarian-Universalist Church services as a way of giving their children church-attending experience without strong indoctrination. (See our letters section for one example.) A Pasadena Unitarian minister once told AR that his denomination was ideal for people who were no longer religious but who still wanted to attend church services.

Many who leave the WCG are so disillusioned with organized religion that they almost never attend any church services and want nothing to do with any church organization. One California reader recently wrote us:

I am grateful to Herbert Armstrong for two things: First he showed me by scripture that all other churches are wrong. Then by fourteen years of example he showed me that his church was also wrong. Now I know I will never need some man or group to tell me about God.

Nevertheless, while many who have been in the WCG leave with the attitude that they would prefer to keep all other religious groups at arm's length, many in this category still retain a strong interest in spiritual matters and the Bible. What follows is a summary of what such non-Armstrongite ex-WCG members frequently find interesting and often comment upon in letters to AR. As in past issues we are giving various addresses. However, we must again emphasize: this is done only so that readers can do their own research. By mentioning a group or publication, we are not endorsing all their ideas. Nor are we implying that they endorse all of ours.

**Associates for Scriptural Knowledge (ASK), P.O. Box 2500, Portland, OR 97225.**

While some would call this organization "Armstrongite" because its director is Dr. Ernest L. Martin, once the head of Ambassador College's Theology Department (and later president of the Foundation for Biblical Research), Martin's theological and historical views often differ so much from those of both Herbert Armstrong and Joseph Tkach, we don't believe it best to classify ASK as a WCG offshoot. However, we do believe that of all the ministers and college professors that have left the WCG over the years, no one has had more of an impact on the WCG, and beyond, than Martin.

Although most of Martin's theology can be described as Pauline, some of his ideas are quite original, even controversial, and have produced a good number of critics. Nevertheless, Martin also has had some important publishing successes. The scholarship in his book *The Star That Astonished the World* has been used as the basis for Christmas and Nativity programs in over 600 planetariums around the world. Many astronomers now consider this book the authoritative work on the subject (see the 12/93 issue of *Imprimis*). His book *Secrets of Golgotha*, in which he argues that Jesus was actually crucified on a tree on the Mount of Olives, has received a number of favorable reviews. A number of scholars have stated that in his book *The Original Bible Restored*, Martin has actually discovered the correct ordering of the books of the Bible. Martin's book *101 Bible Secrets* and *The Tithing Dilemma* are very popular among those new to Bible study. And many ex-Worldwidiers have said that his booklet *The ABC's of the Gospel* is the best work they ever read concerning a modern Christian's legal position in Christ.

Over the years Martin has written and spoken on numerous topics that continue to be debated in WCG circles: the nature of the New Covenant, the Jewish Calendar (he has studied its problems for more than thirty years), "counting" Pentecost, the Trinity (he has articles and tapes on the subject which seems to echo some of the views of Anthony Buzzard), universal reconciliation (some of his views are similar to those of the Concordant organization), and progressive revelation (among his many writings on that subject, his March, 1994 article is highly recommended).

Martin's latest book is titled *The Place of the New Third Temple*. In it he puts forth the astonishing theory that not only will there soon be a new Temple built in Jerusalem, but that Christians will have a part in building it and that "the Jewish authorities will actually devote the building to Christ Jesus and to the basics of his Gospel message."

In addition to his books, papers, and lecture tapes, Martin publishes a newsletter, *The ASK Communicator*, in which he discusses the Bible, ancient history, and Bible prophecy with its possible applications to modern times. Many of his insights on the Near East are undoubtedly based on his many years of doing archaeological work in that region. Those

who would like more information about ASK should write to their Portland address and request a price list for their publications.

**Dr. Gene Scott**, Box 1, Los Angeles, CA 90053. W. Eugene Scott, Ph.D. is someone a number ex-Worldwidiers have turned to for answers. Scott has written 20 books and publishes *Truth* magazine for his contributors. His *Festivals of Faith* program is usually taped at his University Cathedral, a restored United Artists theater in downtown Los Angeles. His telecasts can be seen 24 hours a day in many markets and his shortwave broadcasts can be heard 24 hours a day around the world. He broadcasts live over Radio Moscow in Russia and from Mt. Hermon in Israel.

Those who have never seen one of Scott's programs have missed one of the great entertainers of our time. Tune in to one of his telecasts and you will see Scott, bearded and with long silver hair, probably wearing a cowboy hat, a jockey's cap, or the tricorne of an eighteenth century admiral. Or, if he's in the mood, he might be in black wearing a clergyman's collar. He also frequently wears two pairs of glasses simultaneously and often puffs on a large cigar while doing Bible studies. Nevertheless, while being one of TV's most colorful characters, Scott is no dummy. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophies of education at Stanford. In addition, Scott is an artist and occasionally he will take bids on some of his paintings during his telecasts. He's also not poor. He lives in one of Pasadena's largest mansions. Some say he now has two.

Scott's theology is mostly Pauline. On a recent broadcast he stated that the "judaizers" of Galatians were probably none other than the followers of James, the brother of Jesus (see Acts 15). Scott frequently teaches about demonology, pyramids, Atlantis, and a number of other exotic subjects. But over the years, he seems to have also picked up a good number of ideas from Herbert Armstrong. During the WCG's legal battles in 1979, Scott, who was then having his own legal problems with the government, sided with the WCG, and Stanley Rader appeared on Scott's TV program as an adoring guest. It was soon after that Scott began teaching his own brand of Israel Identity. Today he also teaches that Jesus had the last supper on a Tuesday night Passover, was crucified on the afternoon of the next day, a Wednesday, and was resurrected late Saturday, not Sunday. HWA, of course, taught the same thing.

Naturally, Scott is big on the tithing doctrine. To those that promise to listen to "the teaching" at least once per week, contribute weekly, and call in to the station at least once per week Scott grants the privilege of becoming a "King's House" and those so privileged are given a "King's House number" when they make their initial pledge. Those that promise to tithe are given a "King's Tither" number. Scott is very serious about this. If he gets the feeling that of his 50,000 King's Houses not enough are sending in their money, or if not enough are calling the hot line of his program when it is on the air (and in many places that is 24 hours per day), then Scott simply yells at his viewers and refuses to preach until enough phones are busy. In the meantime, he puts on slides of Los Angeles with jazz or rock and roll music or videos of his race horses, with his pledge phone number superimposed. Before too long, the Cathedral's phones start to ring and then Scott starts preaching again.

Yes, some ex-Worldwidiers now follow this guy. And some even speculate that he will be the one to eventually acquire the WCG's Pasadena properties.

**Concordant Publishing Concern**, 15570 W. Knochaven Rd., Santa Clarita, CA 91350, tel. 805-252-2112. The Concordant organization puts out books and papers on biblical theology that many ex-Worldwidiers praise for their thoroughness and insights. To some, Concordant is an organization for intellectual Bible fundamentalists, in that while holding to the Bible as inspired by God and attempting to allow the Bible to interpret itself, they, nevertheless, are quite adept at tackling some of the Bible's biggest mysteries. Jim Coram, who directs this group's California office, is a former WCG member who is always sympathetic to WCG members in search of biblical understanding. Concordant puts out an introductory package for those who write to them for the first time. Their booklet *Eonian or Everlasting?* is a good introduction to the doctrine of universal reconciliation. Their book *The Problem of Evil and the Judgements of God* by A. E. Knoch is a more lengthy discussion of that topic. The group's newsletter for 1/2/92 contained a very outstanding explanation of various views on the nature of God ("Notes on Trinitarianism, Modalism, and Arianism") which many WCG members could read to their benefit. One final comment about Concordant. This is a very non-authoritarian group. Those who enjoy being beaten over the head by an obsessive pastor will probably not find this group to their liking.

**Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association**, P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502-0124. Over the years we have received many letters from ex-WCG members who have stated that Ralph Woodrow's ministry has been of great benefit to them. Indeed, even among current members, his book *Babylon Mystery Religion* has been very popular.

Last year, Woodrow published a carefully researched, 64-page book titled "*Three Days & Three Nights*" - *Reconsidered in Light of Scripture* (\$4, including postage). The booklet may cause a stir in WCG circles because Woodrow now believes he was in error in teaching, as HWA once did, that Jesus was in the grave for a full 72 hours from a Wednesday to a Saturday. He recently wrote us:

My change on this doctrine has upset several people who have written letters of irritation. I guess I had not realized that some apparently feel the time factor is such an essential point of doctrine! I would think the fact of the resurrection itself would be the big thing.

Some incidental remarks in your paper have prompted me to reconsider also some teachings from Armstrong regarding Babylon mystery religion. As I have re-read Hislop after many years, I see that some of his conclusions are not consistent. When I hear people make statements like "Nimrod was the first Santa Claus," I realize how wild things can get.

Other publications by Mr. Woodrow that we have found interesting are his booklet *Does the Bible Teach a Jewish-Type Millennium?* and his papers "Reckless Rumors" and "The Lost Books." His article on the twenty-third psalm is one of the finest commentaries we have ever seen on the subject.

**Original Language Text Unfolding**, 130 W. Main St., P.O. Box 1, Little Chute, WI 54140. John J. Purvins, who describes himself as "one of the elders in God's Church in the Appleton area" is the coordinator of this ongoing Bible research program. He writes,

"If you harbor anti-Jewish sentiments, the Text Unfolding is not for you.... Most of the errors in the King James and other English translations began with the anti-Jewish and anti-law mind set of the translators."

Finally, let us mention three groups that are doing very substantial biblical research. Each deserves a full AR article, and we apologize that our limited resources must curtail our comments this issue. **Genesis 2000**, P.O. Box 561476, Charlotte, NC 28256. Headed by Dr. James Tabor (see [AR41](#)), this group is involved in many projects that are of great interest to ex-WCG members. Perhaps most important of these is **The Original Bible Project**, 408 So. Pasadena Ave., Suite 4, Pasadena, CA 91105. Another group producing biblical materials is the **Great Lakes Society for Biblical Research**, P.O. Box 63, Jenison, MI 49429-0063. Headed by former WCG minister John Cheetham, this group has been doing much writing on the subject of angels, a subject oddly absent from much modern Christian literature. Lastly, we must mention **Reunion**, P.O. Box 981111, Houston, TX 77098, tel. 713-523-1861 (J. Phillip Arnold, Ph.D., Executive Director), a teaching fellowship that is regularly turning out some of the most intelligent and thought-provoking biblical studies we have ever come across.

## Support Groups

In our last issue we mentioned **The WCG Exiting and Support Network** (generally speaking, a secular, non-sectarian organization). Its founder, Mrs. Stuhlman, recently wrote us the following:

Many past and current exiters and questioners have found their way to The WCG Exit and Support Network through the *Ambassador Report*, others via the Cult Awareness Organizations, or by word of mouth. These individuals have expressed much gratitude for the help we have offered them in a variety of ways. WCG abuse is a rampant problem. The healing process begins when the WCG-abused victims make a personal decision to take back their power and control by reporting the emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, financial, and, all too often, sexual abuse inflicted on them. This is easier said than done, but very possible to accomplish.

No WCG victim escapes abuse completely. All survivors of cultic abuse are left isolated to work through the destructive effects and ramifications. If you have been victimized by disfellowshipping or abuse in any way, it is time to do something about it! Don't keep the pain to yourself. You are not alone. More and more people are sharing their experiences with others through the NETWORK. Let others who understand help you. Victims do not have to succumb to the control and fear tactics that once permeated their life. Exiters, you are now free - to think, question, make decisions, and speak up. You have a personal story; please share it with us. Get connected to people who have been there and can relate to your situation. Don't put off until tomorrow what can heal you today. Something can be done about the abuse by working together.

Contact: The WCG Exit and Support Network, P.O. Box 6104, Hamden, CT 06517; tel. 203/281-7182.

-Linda Stuhlman  
Network Founder

A related group is The WCG Exit Resource Link of Canada. Headed by Brent Leeson and Steve Richard, this support group can be reached at Transcona RPO, P.O. Box 62075, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2C 5G2; tel. 204/222-0002.

In the north-central part of the U.S., one group that is helping WCG exiters is Help Net. Mainly the concerned Christian work of former WCG member Louise Doescher, she can be reached at N2954, Hwy. 107, Merrill, WI 54452; tel. 715/536-3094.

Another support group for those exiting the WCG is: I Think - International. The Founders are Kerin Webb in the U.K. and Mark and Collette Stallard in Canada. Besides providing support for current and past WCG members, they are active in making the truth about the WCG and other cults better known to the media and to church and government leaders. Whereas a few of the ex-WCG support groups we know of are secular or semi-secular in approach, the U.K-Canadian group is evangelical. Mr. Webb and the Stallards tell us they would very much like to hear from ex-WCG members who would like to occasionally be of assistance (through letters, phone calls, or personal contact) to those who are in the process of exiting Worldwide and other cults. Their address in Britain is: I Think-International, P.O. Box 1953, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH8 OYQ, United Kingdom. In Canada their address is: I Think-International, P.O. Box 2921, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4B5, Canada.

One final comment on the support groups. They provide an important service in giving those exiting WCG a chance to have contact with some who have gone before them. While readers should avail themselves of such services, please remember that those providing such services are often making a real sacrifice in time and money to help others. Whenever possible, please make an effort to help them recoup losses for printing, postage, phone time, etc.

## Letters

Jesus said that in the last times there would be many false teachers. Well there certainly are and in your last issue you listed some.

-Wisconsin

I think all of your readers owe you their thanks for one of your unique policies - that of giving the addresses of competing organizations and others. I'm sure you realize that by doing so you must lose considerable income as many probably contribute to the groups you mention and ignore AR. But by giving those addresses many of us are learning a great deal. So keep up the good work.

One final comment. I wrote to Mr. Glen Myers regarding Gerald Flurry and he sent me a great paper he has written. I wish to point out, however, that even though my letter got through to him, the address you gave for him contained a typo. The correct address is Glen Myers, 1047 (not 1074) Iroquois St., Clearwater, FL 34615.

-Washington

Most of the changes [in the WCG] are for the good. But how long will it be before they tell us the Old Covenant is done away and we no longer have to keep certain days or tithes? (My husband stopped tithing long ago.) And when will they tell the people that we are not the "one true church"?

-Current WCG Member  
Colorado

Since WCG is now talking "freedom from the law," let us test them. Paul wrote: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." (Gal. 4:28-31, King James Version.)

So if the leaders of WCG are sincere they will let go of all the Old Covenant law from Sabbaths to tithes - if not, they are going to be rejected by Christ. There is nothing "hatched in the hot place" more anti-Christ than what the WCG has done with the law. Is it any wonder that this nation is experiencing a turn to the faith that goes with the bondwoman? The law-oriented ministries have circled the earth with the law and what we see coming to pass on the earth are the curses for breaking their law. They have really hung a trip on this nation and on the body of Christ. May God deliver us from them. Jesus said, "According to your faith be it unto you." They bought it - now they've got it.

-Former WCG member  
California

Astounding, the new directions of my former alma mater and former church. In the past, many left the WCG because of oppression. Now it seems more are leaving to maintain their hold on what they believe to be the truth. I guess the only ones left are those who never took any of it very seriously!

Two items in [AR53](#) stood out: (1) the new "follow us... not because we have the truth... but follow us because of the loving feelings you get..." and (2) members can now "privately believe anything." If this organization keeps heading in those directions, they might as well affiliate with the Unitarian-Universalist Church and be done with all the hype!

I take my six-year-old son to one, at his request for church attendance, because I feel it will do the least damage to his belief system of all the religious organizations (I would not be in any for my own benefit). Wouldn't it be amazing if the WCG evolved to the point I would be comfortable taking my child to WCG services? What goes around, comes around.

-Guy Gipson

(AC '67, left WCG '70)  
Pennsylvania

*Editor: I'm not sure you would be comfortable there. But the WCG is already encouraging non-critical former members to attend their services. We have even heard of cases where WCG ministers, upon instructions from Tkach, have contacted ex-members and apologized for the way they had been treated in the past. As for children attending, the WCG is now especially interested in attracting children, teenagers, and those of college age into their ranks.*

Recently my wife and I were invited back to the WCG by the senior minister of the local WCG congregation. Because of colds, flu, rainy weather, and disinterest, we still haven't visited with them. In the meantime, last month we both received three-page letters from Joe Tkach welcoming us back as reinstated members! It amused me but upset my wife and it is one of the reasons for our three-month delay in not attending. Rich Nichols says we should go just to set the record straight. Bill Dankenbring said, "Go - if you're a glutton for punishment." Some friends agreed with me when they said, "Go out of curiosity." We will go, but probably just this one time, because we really have very little in common with them. When they take the centuries-old stand that "God is one" and, therefore, "Jesus was essentially praying to himself," as one 25-year member admitted to me a few weeks ago, then we are definitely on different wave lengths.

-Canada

Please help me! I think I am losing my mind! Last summer Mr. Tkach ran a series of articles in *The Worldwide News* concerning God's nature and number. I have read those articles over and over and over. The more I read them, the more I get confused.

Let me explain. In the August 16 issue, Mr. Tkach wrote that "the Bible reveals that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct, that is they are not the same - but neither are they separate Beings." I just can't understand that, no matter how hard I try. Then he wrote: "A popular misconception of the nature of God is to think of three God Beings in one Godhead, with the Holy Spirit as a third separate Being. To us, such a concept, that the Holy Spirit is a third, separate Being, is, and has always been, entirely foreign to our thinking. The Bible teaches that there is one God, and any concept that makes the Holy Spirit a separate Being is not biblical."

But then someone showed me a copy of *The Watchman Expositor* [Vol. 11, No. 1; P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094-0340] and in it I saw an official statement on WCG letterhead from headquarters, written by Mr. David Hunsberger. In it, he said: "Yes, the Church teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-equal, co-eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, indivisible, of one essence, and immanent.... The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are universally accepted in Christendom and we have no objection to their statements." In the official letter Mr. Hunsberger also wrote: "The Worldwide Church of God does teach a form of the Trinity..." Yet, Mr. Tkach has said we do not teach the Trinity! Mr. Hunsberger then wrote: "We do not mind using the word 'Person' in reference to the Holy Spirit.... But since the common usage of the word creates confusion, we prefer the term *hypostasis*." So now everyone in the church is using the

word *hypostasis*. But when I looked it up in my dictionary, the religious definition was "a person of the Trinity."

Can you see why I am confused? God is one, but God is three. The three are "co-equal," but the Holy Spirit is not a person. He/it is a *hypostasis*. Yet the dictionary says a *hypostasis* is a person! Furthermore, if he/it is not a person, then what does that make the Father and the Son? The Father is a *hypostasis* also and so is the Son. So if they are "co-equal" with the non-person Holy Spirit then that would make them also non-persons. But I think the Bible says they are persons. I can't find any place where Jesus prayed to the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father, why didn't Jesus also pray to him? And when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he didn't start out, "Our *hypostasis* which art in heaven." I also can't figure out now how, if the Jesus *hypostasis* was God and omnipotent, like Mr. Hunsberger says, how could he have died on the cross? I guess only his body did. But it seems to me that such a doctrine means we also have to believe in the eternal soul doctrine (which Mr. Armstrong condemned) and the doctrine that Jesus' soul preached for three days in Hell while his body was in the tomb. Maybe I'm just stupid, but I'm beginning to think that this *hypostasis* stuff is hocus pocus. Please add me to your mailing list.

-California

*Editor: You are not the only one having problems with the new doctrine. So many WCG ministers have shown that they can't understand it that WCG headquarters sent each pastor a 16-video-tape lecture series by Kyriacos Stavrinos who attempts to explain the new doctrine. The 35 hours of lectures did little to convince some ministers that the new doctrine was sound Some have privately indicated they are very opposed to the new teaching.*

I feel that you have constructed an erroneous conclusion in your example on page two [of [AR54](#)] regarding tradition. When Joe Tkach refers to the tradition of Jesus and the apostles, he is still referring to Scripture. Observance of the Lord's Supper and Pentecost are biblical traditions. Observance of Christmas is an extrabiblical tradition. There is a difference.

-Robert J. Romagnoli, Ph.D.  
Reseda, California

*Editor: Thank you for your criticism, but I suspect you may have missed one article that appeared in Tkach's Worldwide News. In the September 14 issue (p. 4), there was a Neil Earle article titled "The role of theology: What it is and why we need it today." In it, Earle wrote:*

*...some issues ...are not directly addressed in the Bible. These, and many other such questions, belong to the discipline of theology.... Theology is simply humanity's reasonings and conclusions about God arranged in a systematic and formal way.*

*Earle then goes on to praise Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, the "first theologian," and St. Thomas Aquinas, the thirteenth century Roman Catholic theologian.*

*While Earle does say that the Bible still retains a special, superior place in the WCG's belief system, his article in the official church newspaper makes it very clear that nonbiblical or extra-biblical theology is creeping into his religious organization. Whether that is necessarily a bad thing is not the issue. But it is a development that Herbert Armstrong would never have tolerated.*

Thank you for the latest issue of AR. Your insightful comments that the WCG is deemphasizing the Bible hit the nail on the head. If you were Rush Limbaugh, you would be praising yourself for your great wisdom.

We have moved from Washington to Wyoming due to a job transfer. The Giving & Sharing book service is now being conducted by Earl Lewis. The new address is: Giving & Sharing, P.O. Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849. I am concentrating on doing more writing.

-Richard C. Nickels  
Gillette, Wyoming

I knew early-on the WCG was wrong, but it took me years to become normalized again.

Their subtleties are always grabbing the unindoctrinated and putting them in bondage. Just tonight, during the evening news, they had a very good Bible come-on for the upcoming telecast. II Pet. 2:3 tells of those who make merchandise of sincere seekers through feigned words. Verse 19 continues, "while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption."

-Washington

Our local pastor recently said the wildest thing. That top leaders in the Worldwide actually talk to, and receive messages from, demons. Then, he said, "the *Ambassador Report* has all the facts in a file and it will probably all come out later in the year." Is there any truth to what he said?

-California

Editor: yes.

I had to leave my family to get into the WCG in 1965. So I've been away from my children ever since. Boy have I been done wrong by. And I'm very weary of being stepped on by others. I guess I'll never be liked much by this world's society being I'm not in any of their lodges or clubs. Neither was Christ and they hated him too.

-Oklahoma

What news to learn that Judd Kirk, the GTA clone, was not a Hollywood actor, as I presumed, but a WCG minister. I figured that Tkach had held a casting call for a GTA look-alike and dug up Mr. Kirk at Warner Brothers or Universal. One can only wonder

what dark Freudian impulse drove Tkach to seek out a GTA double in the first place....

By the way, what ever happened to the Bible?.... A careful reading of recent *Plain Truth* issues and a comparison with issues of, say, even two or three years back, would show that the Bible is being quoted less and less in its pages. Love and grace pour forth out of the PT in abundant and flowing quantities. And it seems as if repentance, overcoming, and achieving a certain standard of righteousness have been relegated to the WCG basement to gather dust alongside the other multitude of doctrinal castaways notated by minister Pack in a previous issue. Tkach and his sidekicks seem to be living in an Alice in Wonderland world deep in their Pasadena bunker: What was "truth" yesterday becomes "untruth" today. And tomorrow? Who knows?

Meanwhile, such eminent personages as the inspirational Protestant writer C. S. Lewis and the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer are being quoted in the PT with increasing frequency, and the content of the magazine itself is now reminiscent of the publications produced by the Billy Graham organization. A lot of easily digested spiritual pabulum signifying nothing. Can it be that the "strong meat" which HWA touted is no longer being served in WCG Sabbath services either? I can only guess....

As one of your letter writers said, Worldwide is destined to become just one more Protestant steeple on the horizon. So Worldwidiers had better get used to hearing more about C. S. Lewis, W. B. Yeats, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and company, and less and less about what the Bible has to say about repentance, righteousness, and overcoming. Just one more Protestant steeple.

As for the assortment of crackpots, looneytunes, goofballs, practitioners of quack religion, barmy souls, conspiracy theorists, and so forth and so on, who claim lineal descent from Prophet Armstrong (he is spinning so rapidly in his grave these days that one can only wonder if his underground activity was the actual cause of the recent L.A. earthquake), what can one say? ....To cry or laugh? That is the question. For lost souls who have succumbed to their song, I weep. For those who assume greatness in the guise of a servant of God, I can only laugh. Didn't both Ezekiel and Jeremiah have harsh words to say about false prophets who lead the sheep astray?

Well, as the ancient Chinese curse goes (or was it something Yogi Berra is reputed to have said?): May you live in interesting times. Interesting, indeed. I look forward with anticipation to the next AR.

-Warren Carlson  
New Jersey

### **A Note From the Editor**

In all the years that I have had a part in putting out the Report, there have been few issues that have taken more out of me than this one. Not only did it require more than three full months of my time, with considerable stress, but it also has taken thousands of dollars of my own funds. I think most of you will agree, however, that AR55 is one of the most

important that we have ever produced. I hope all of you will contribute to the Report as you are able.

My thanks to all of you who are helping in this effort.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR56\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

October 1994 (AR56)

The religious-educational edifice erected by the late Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) continues to transmogrify. The Worldwide Church of God (WCG), *Plain Truth* magazine, Ambassador College, and other institutions he built are ever evolving under the direction of Armstrong's heir Joseph W. Tkach, Sr.

### Ambassador Finally Accredited

In the June 28 issue of the *Worldwide News* (WN) Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach announced that Ambassador College (in Big Sandy, Texas) has finally been officially accredited by a recognized accrediting association, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Additionally, Tkach announced that the college will now be officially called Ambassador University. The editor and founding publishers of the *Report* congratulate Mr. Tkach and his staff for having accomplished a goal that many others failed to achieve in the past. We are sure that the college's new status will be a blessing to all Ambassador alumni.

Some indication of just how much Ambassador has changed under Tkach's leadership can be seen in recent announcements. Examples: The university has now been granted an FCC license to have its own radio station (it will be broadcasting "acoustic, light jazz and classical" music). Three Ambassador executives - Thomas Delamater, William Stenger, and Dyle Koch - now serve on the board of the Big Sandy Chamber of Commerce. In April the university served as host to an invitational semantics symposium. And the university's men's volleyball team finished the season with a 29 and 8 record while both the men's and women's tennis teams were also quite successful this past year (WN, 5/3/94, p. 5).

Incidentally, since Tkach's June announcement regarding accreditation, many Ambassador alumni have asked if the institution's new status is retroactive for those who received their Ambassador degrees in years past. Here is what the university has stated about that:

Technically, accreditation is not retroactive to past graduates. (It is officially retroactive to Jan. 1, 1994.) But with most universities and employers, most graduates will fall under the accreditation umbrella.

Now that we are accredited, Ambassador University will be listed in various directories of higher education. The two most important of these are *Transfer Credit Practices*, published by the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the *Higher Education Directory*.

As Ambassador University gains a reputation as an accredited institution, the date of accreditation and the name will cease to be issues. (When graduates apply to graduate schools or for jobs, they should use the name Ambassador University. Accreditation should not be raised unless others raise it. Then merely state that Ambassador University is accredited, not when it was accredited.)

The above statement is found in a helpful article that appeared in the WN dated July 26, 1994 (p. 3). Anyone holding an Ambassador degree and suspecting it may be a factor in future studies or employment would do

well to read the entire article. Those with questions about their degrees should write to Ambassador University, Big Sandy, Texas 75755.

## **Tkach: There Are True Christians In Other Churches!**

During the past year or so, one of the most hotly debated topics in WCG circles has been the question of whether there are "true Christians" in churches other than the WCG. Statements on the issue made by WCG ministers revealed many conflicting views and much double talk. But with increased frequency, Tkach started to reveal where he, himself, was headed on the issue.

While HWA lived the WCG seemed to be united on the "true church" issue. To Armstrong, there was only one true church - his own, and there was only one main representative of God on earth - himself. While there was an occasional ambiguity on the subject of the sabbatarian groups from which HWA had separated years ago, he got around that issue by declaring those sabbatarian organizations part of the "Sardis era" - that is, spiritually dead. As for all other Christian churches, they were not just dead, they were anti-Christ "pagan." Now Tkach has taken a decidedly different position.

For months, a leaked February 9, 1993 letter written by Tkach was making the rounds in WCG circles. Tkach's letter was a response to a letter from church member Colleen Miller of Gardnerville, Nevada. The member had asked why the WCG should be preaching the gospel (as currently defined by Tkach) if other churches are already doing that on a very large scale. Instead of answering the way HWA would have (that the WCG was the only church preaching the true gospel), Tkach readily admitted that other churches besides the WCG were preaching the gospel, that there were converted Christians in churches other than the WCG, that some in the past left those churches for the WCG for reasons that were improper, and that "The criterion for salvation is faith in Jesus Christ, not membership in a particular denomination."

Copies of the Tkach letter began circulating wildly among confused WCG members and ministers. When Colleen Miller allowed her own minister, Randy Schreiber, to read the Tkach dictum, he promptly mailed his own five-page letter to Tkach. Schreiber pointed out to Tkach that if any member of any church could genuinely be converted, would it not follow that members of the WCG spinoff groups could also be converted? Tkach was not amused and, we hear, Schreiber is no longer in the WCG ministry. Those who would like copies of Tkach's letter to Mrs. Miller along with Schreiber's pointed letter to Tkach and Tkach's secretive response to Schreiber should write to WCG historian Bruce Renahan, P.O. Box 1551, Tehachapi, CA 93581-1551 (please include \$3 to help cover photocopying and postage).

In the spring, Tkach felt compelled to make his views even more plain in a front page editorial in the church's newspaper (WN, 5/17/94). There he emphasized that there are true Christians in many denominations:

---

&COPY;1994 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

Many of us know people who are indeed dedicated Christians, yet are not of our Church.... It doesn't mean that we aren't the true Church of God. *It simply points out the fact that the true Church of God is not limited to any corporate entity nor any human organization....* It is the people in whom God dwells by his Spirit that make up the Church, the Body of Christ.... That means that all who are converted are members of the *one and only true Church....* We might know of some, as we come into contact with them and see their fruit. But God has not set us as his watchdogs to try to determine to what extent he has children in other organizations.... So, how are we to regard those who attend "other churches"? With love. Does anyone think

God would approve of our ridiculing them? Yet, that is just what many of us have tended to do over the years.... Let's get this vital point: *It is the Holy Spirit that identifies and unifies the true Church of God, not any humanly incorporated church organization.* That is what the Bible teaches, and that is also what Mr. Armstrong taught. [Emphasis is his - ed.]

Tkach's teaching that there are true Christians in other denominations seems to have been accepted by a good number of his field ministers. One of our readers wrote us: "Apparently [our local WCG minister] has accepted my wife's baptism as being valid even though she was not baptized by a Worldwide Church minister." And in June, Dale Lawson, a minister of the "Sardis" Church of God (Seventh Day), was invited to give a sermon before the combined Atlanta East and Northeast congregations (WN, 7/26/94, p. 8). Yes, the WCG is really changing.

## More Trinity Confusion

Recent issues of the *Report* have covered the WCG's struggle with the trinity doctrine. Some cult monitoring organizations have become convinced the WCG has now fully adopted the orthodox trinity position. But whether the church as a whole has really adopted it remains open to debate. One of our readers in England wrote to WCG regional headquarters there inquiring about what the WCG's teachings on the subject really are at this time. In an April 1994 letter, WCG minister Robert C. Boraker responded:

The word "trinity" is not found in the Bible and we will refrain from using it for that reason. It merely means "threefoldness." In that sense, we do believe in the "threefoldness" of God - being the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and always have. But we do not accept the traditional teaching about the "Holy Trinity" and never have. We still do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a person and will refrain from using the word "persons" in reference to the Godhead.

A comparison of the above with the WCG's other official, and often conflicting, statements on the subject seems to reveal the utilization of what psychologists refer to as the creation of "cognitive dissonance"- a propagandistic tool used for mind control by many cults. On the other hand, Christian theologians have debated the nature of God issue for hundreds of years and many have admitted their difficulty in understanding the subject. In defense of Tkach's new position, one knowledgeable reader pointed out to us:

Mr. Tkach's views on the trinity may not be as foolish as many make them out to be. The great theologians have always recognized serious problems in the area. If we accept the fact that God is beyond space and time while believing the Bible stories that Yahweh appeared in the form of a burning bush, a cloud, a small voice, a thunderous voice, etc. then we begin to see there is a problem with our finite minds grasping what we must admit is an unfathomable set of paradoxes relating to the infinite.

Granted, the WCG's attempts at articulating a very complex concept have been weak at times. But there is merit to what they are trying to accomplish theologically. If I were explaining the trinity doctrine publicly, I would do it this way: God is a mystery beyond time and space and therefore no human being is capable of truly "seeing" or "hearing" God in God's totality. But to the very limited minds of the human race, God has revealed himself/herself/itself over the centuries in different ways: in the OT as Yahweh, in the gospels as Jesus, and in the NT church as the Holy Spirit. Each of the three is a manifestation (a hypostasis) of God. Yet because God is beyond space and time, in each we do not comprehend the totality of God (what was referred to as "the ousia" or modernly as "the Ground of all being" or as "the Ein Sof" of Kabbala). Trained theologians recognize Mr. Tkach's view of the trinity as differing somewhat from that of the Roman Catholic Church and being somewhat closer to that of the Orthodox Catholic Church and perhaps Kabbala. Let me suggest that those wishing to achieve a better understanding of the subject read Professor Karen Armstrong's book *A History of God* [Knopf]. Those who do will discover that Mr. Tkach is a lot smarter than many of his critics.

Maybe so, but most of his followers seem totally bewildered by his new trinity teaching.

## More Doctrinal Shifts

If one wants to see what the latest WCG changes are, one only has to read the *Plain Truth* (PT) magazine. For example, the cover story of the May/June issue was all about the importance of getting help from psychologists when one has emotional problems (a solution frowned upon by most WCG ministers in HWA's

time). The issue even included an interview with a Christian therapist.

Evolution versus creationism is another subject that has been covered in the church's magazine of late and is a topic of great interest to many. One of our Arizona readers wrote the *Report* criticizing us for not putting more emphasis on the matter:

The PT magazine recently revealed a major sellout to the evolution theory after years of quality, devastating articles, booklets, telecasts, and radio broadcasts that exposed evolution as an unrealistic, phoney, fraudulent, combined "science" (so-called) and scam that is inherently an atheistic, de facto state religion. That doctrinal switch is as religiously, momentarily fundamental as any could be, but in AR it has only been indirectly reported upon.... Given their inner-circle sabotage capitulation to evolutionary thinking now, in time practically all the other doctrinal switches will be automatic, very predictable, or at least unsurprising.

While many see the WCG as having "sold out" to the evolution theory, a careful reading of the WCG's writings on the subject reveals a certain ambivalence on the subject. Recent PT articles by Neil Earle and John Halford (March and August 1994 issues) show that the WCG's intellectuals do not fully accept Darwin's slow evolution views (neither do many evolution-believing scientists) but neither do they want to discount scientific evidence. At the same time, they do not appear ready to throw out a literal reading of the Genesis account. We have not seen a clear statement as to what the WCG's position really is, or will be. Our sources within the organization indicate that the WCG's top leaders have yet to reach a consensus on the issue. However, there seems to be a new position on at least one point. HWA's teaching that a gap of eons separated Gen. 1:1 and Gen. 1:2 is now only referred to as "a theory" (see the March PT article by Earle, p. 21).

Finally, it should be pointed out that some things in the WCG never change. One Ohio member wrote headquarters about the fact that so much of what headquarters was claiming to be true (as regards doctrine and WCG history) did not square with what she was being taught by her local minister or with what she recalled from her own years of experience in the church. Top church administrator Tkach Jr. wrote her back in an attempt to smooth things over, but in the process he very clearly stated, "Members are not responsible for the teachings of the Church, but only for whether they believe them to be true." In other words, headquarters will determine what is truth and you folks out in "the field" must accept it and submit.

## **New Questions Raised About HWA's Death**

Almost nine years have now passed since Herbert W. Armstrong passed away in early 1986. Yet, many still wonder about the circumstances surrounding his death so soon after "passing the baton" to Joseph W. Tkach. Now William F. Dankenbring has raised new questions about the end of the WCG's founder. Writing in the August edition of his *Prophecy Flash!*, Dankenbring made the following shocking statement:

I recently learned that the night Herbert Armstrong died, there was a frightful row - a shouting match - which occurred in his bedroom in his home on South Orange Grove Boulevard, in Pasadena. In the room were just he and Joseph W. Tkach. The security guard on duty in the home, whose name I won't mention, heard Herbert loudly scream, "YOU ARE FIRED!!!" He then heard a sound of scuffling, and then silence. The security guard, shortly after that, saw Mr. Tkach leave Mr. Armstrong's bedroom, straightening his tie, and exiting. The next morning Herbert Armstrong was found dead in his bed - not in his wife's favorite chair, as the *Worldwide News* incorrectly reported in a subsequent article which was nothing more than a propaganda piece. The apostle was dead. But the mystery deepened. What really happened?

The loud and heated exchange of words in Mr. Armstrong's bedroom that night brings to mind many serious questions. Those around Mr. Armstrong knew that he had heart trouble, and that he had been warned by his physician not to lose his temper or become angry - as it could lead to deadly repercussions, such as another heart attack, or stroke, ending his life. Yet that night there was screaming and a loud and heated explosion from his bedroom. It has been suggested that the thing that ticked Mr. Armstrong off was that Joseph Tkach - after ostensibly getting from Mr. Armstrong a signed statement appointing him as his successor - told him that night in no uncertain words that he was going to CHANGE EVERYTHING, doctrines, policies, etc. As a result, according to this scenario, seeing that he had been totally betrayed, Mr. Armstrong "hit the roof" and exploded in uncontrollable anger, leading to his own death that very night!

Many WCG oldtimers are appalled by the way Tkach has allegedly taken over the WCG. On the other hand, there are some who view Tkach as a genuine hero because, as one put it, "Tkach gave HWA exactly what he deserved and now he's taking care of all of HWA's lackeys!" Those who would like to see Dankenbring's article in its entirety should write to Triumph Prophetic Ministries, Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003.

## **The Exodus Grows**

Pastor General Tkach continues to purge the WCG ministry of those out of step with his leadership. Two WCG ministers "retired" very recently are Dean Wilson and James Friddle. These "retirements" come in addition to the many transfers announced just months ago. In the April 19 WN it was announced that over 80 WCG ministers were being transferred to new areas. The list included Robert Spence, Billy Bryce, and Les McColm who were retired (we assume because of age or health). Since then, others retired because of age, budget reasons, etc. include Ambassador administrator Dr. Lynn Torrance and WCG minister and Ambassador instructor Stan Bass (WN, 6/14/94, p. 8). One important demotion a few months ago was that of Tom Lapacka who had briefly been in charge of the WCG's Evangelism Support Services Dept. (see [AR55](#), p. 1). Replaced by Victor Kubik, Lapacka is now over the less prestigious Church Relations Department, the WCG's de facto PR section.

Besides those demotions, retirements and defections that are reported in WCG publications, there are often those that are given little, if any, publicity. For instance, from sources in South Africa we have learned that minister Frank Nelte was suspended, perhaps permanently, for questioning new doctrine, and that minister Jonathan McNair was disfellowshipped months ago for being in sympathy with his father, evangelist Carl McNair who is now with the competing Global Church of God.

One of our readers wrote us: "Here in Australia a lot of people are going over to the splinter groups. Over 200 to the Philadelphia Church of God, some to Dankenbring's group, some to Garner Ted Armstrong's CGI, and now a large number have gone to the Global Church." Another Australian reader wrote us: "I have just heard that Bruce Tyler, the WCG minister from Canberra, has flown the coop, taking 60 members with him to Meredith's Global Church."

As regarding Australia, one of our Texas readers wrote us: "We have heard that in Australia some ministers and members have initiated a lawsuit against the WCG demanding their tithes back, saying they have paid them to a false church. Headquarters is trying to keep this quiet as they are afraid it will spread to other areas." If any of our readers have information of this alleged lawsuit, AR would appreciate further details.

## **WCG Revenues in Decline**

In June the WCG released its "1993 Audited Financial Report" (WN, 6/28/94, pp. 5-10). The statement, prepared by the respected CPA firm of Coopers and Lybrand, shows that in 1993 the WCG's total revenues were \$175.6 million, down almost 10 percent from the WCG's total revenues of \$191.3 million in 1992. Recall that the WCG's income for 1992 was down from the \$196.9 million received in 1991 and that WCG revenues for 1991 were down substantially from the record WCG revenues of \$211.2 million made in 1990 (see [AR51](#), p. 1).

Now, the latest information on WCG income is that for 1994 revenues are still falling. For example, in his August 25 co-worker letter, Tkach stated that WCG income for 1994 is down seven percent from that of 1993. Furthermore, not only is *The World Tomorrow* telecast off the air completely (the telecast for September 11 was the last), it appears that the WCG is presently not even buying much advertising time on TV. So the slide continues.

## **More Real Estate Deals**

In our [last issue](#) we gave some of the details surrounding the WCG's 1987 sale of its Mt. Pocono festival site to a mysterious Japanese corporation. Now, another WCG festival site has been put up for sale. One of our

Wisconsin readers tells us that a for-sale sign now sits on the grounds of the WCG's Wisconsin Dells festival site. The realtor is United National Real Estate (tel. 608-297-7123).



## Spinoff News

In an August 1, 1994 letter to his followers, Garner Ted Armstrong (P.O. Box 2530, Tyler, TX 75710) announced that his *Twentieth Century WATCH* magazine will again be published (it has been in limbo for the last four years). The same letter also contained some remarkable international news: Based on Information from Israel that came via Dr. James Tabor, Armstrong reported that the government of Israel has been quietly negotiating with representatives of the Pope to turn over control of Jerusalem's "Old City" to the Vatican. If true, it puts a feather in the cap of Armstrong as he has been predicting such an event for many years.

The Global Church of God (GCG), under the direction of Pastor General Roderick Meredith, continues to grow. Among those who have gone over to the Meredith camp are WCG minister Bill Swanson and former WCG member Carol Little, daughter of one-time WCG powerhouse Stanley Rader. The GCG recently moved its headquarters to San Diego, California (P.O. Box 501111, San Diego, CA 92150-1111). GCG insiders say that Meredith recently purchased a new San Diego-area residence, the opulence of which has shocked some of his followers. Meredith, however, has defended the propriety of his new home saying, "God expects me to live this way."

Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God continues to grow. One of our Scottish readers tells us that Flurry is picking off more WCG members in Britain than even Rod Meredith. One of Flurry's new fans in the U.S. is Gwen La Ravia, wife of WCG evangelist Ellis La Ravia.

*The Truth of the Matter*, edited by Keith Hunt, has a new address. It is 4955 N.W. 47 Ter., Tamarac, FL

33319. The September 1994 issue had a lengthy article on the WCG's new trinity teaching titled "WCG's Nothingness God."

In [AR 55](#) we briefly reported on Midnight Ministries of England. Minister Malcolm Heap, who prefers that we refer to him by his Christian name Malcolm, wrote to us complaining that we did not give him fair coverage. Furthermore, he wrote:

If you want to give us a "fair chance" to prove our validity as an authentic prophetic ministry that God is using, then I would like to submit another prophetic claim. We have made the statement over a year ago - and we still stand by it - that a young boy aged four who died tragically of cystic fibrosis about eleven years ago, (the son of two former members of the WCG) will soon be raised back to life through our ministry. God has told us He will do this to demonstrate that He has spoken through us, and is using us for a function in the Body of Christ.

We will see if this "prophecy" is fulfilled in our time. Meanwhile - Malcolm now claims that his prophecy that the automobile dealership which would not give him a free BMW would be closed has come true. The dealership is still operating but has been sold to a new owner (*The Bucks Herald*, 3/17/94). Apparently the sale of the dealership constitutes a fulfilled prophecy. Those who want more details can write to Malcolm at P.O. Box 29, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP17 8TL, United Kingdom.

## More Groups

We continue to learn of new ministries which have ex-WCG members as either leaders or followers: Mystery of the Kingdom, 5202 N. Hwy. 52, Wausau, WI 54401 (headed by Pastor Martin Muzynoski, a former WCG member who now teaches a Sunday sabbath); Church of God Elohim, P.O. Box 111131, Cleveland, OH 44111; The Cincinnati Church of the Savior, c/o Cliff Robinson, 154 Country View Dr., Harrison, OH 45030; *The Countdown* (Alex Cain, Editor), Church of God, P.O. Box 53, Farnborough, Hants., GU14 OYZ, United Kingdom.

In England, there are a number of groups of former WCG members who meet informally. For details about one such group contact our friends John and Kathleen Peckett, 38 West Bank, Carlton, Nr. Goole DN14 9PZ, United Kingdom.

## The Reunion Talkline

In Britain, *Reunion News* (not to be confused with the Reunion organization in Houston, Texas) continues to assist people who are exiting the WCG. Peter Griffiths, the group's secretary, recently wrote us that, although their publishing operations have slowed down of late, both he and Mac Kachere are operating "Reunion Talkline," a phone-in service for those who would like to share their WCG-related experiences, locate former WCG friends in Britain, gain information about the WCG, etc. Kachere can be reached in London at: 081-200-5527 and Griffiths, in the Birmingham area, can be reached at 021-744-1277. Griffiths does ask, however, that although he and Kachere will be happy to take phone calls from around the world (of course, not collect!), they ask that no calls be made later than 20:00 GMT - in other words, please do not get them out of bed in the middle of the night to talk about the WCG. For those who would prefer to write to them, their mailing address is: Reunion News, 190 Tythe Barn Lane, Whitlocks End, Shirley, Solihull B90 1PF, United Kingdom.

## Alan Ruth Updates His "Splits" Research

In our last issue we mentioned how Alan Ruth, one of our readers, had put together an outstanding listing of the many WCG offshoots. Mr. Ruth now informs us that his paper, "The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs and Troubles," which includes a five-page flow chart of major WCG offshoots and addresses of the many groups is now 69 pages in length. Those who would like a copy of the enlarged paper can obtain one for \$5 by writing to Alan Ruth, P.O. Box 4373, Troy, MI 48099.

## Ex-Worldwider Fascinations

In the last year we have reported on a number of religious groups that are absorbing former WCG members. The listings we have given are by no means complete. From our mail it is evident that many former members are interested in a very wide array of esoteric religious, spiritual, and philosophical movements. While it is not possible for us to go into much detail on all of these movements and their leaders, we are listing below a number that are increasingly being mentioned in letters to the *Report*.

**Sacred Names groups.** This religious movement, which predates Armstrongism, is keenly aware that the words "God," "Lord," and "Jesus" (as found in the English translations of the Bible) are translations of Hebrew and Greek words that are quite different in sound. The groups that comprise this movement put great emphasis on such biblical passages as Exodus 23:13, Joshua 23:7, Acts 4:12, and Revelation 3:8 which seem to emphasize the specific names of the deity as significant for proper worship. Because most of these groups, like the WCG, emphasize a theology that incorporates the keeping of the Old Testament law, many former WCG members have made a smooth transition to these groups. Some of these groups are Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly (P.O. Box 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262) which publishes *Light* magazine, The Assemblies of Yahweh (Bethel, PA 19507) which publishes *The Sacred Name Broadcaster*, The House of Yahweh (P.O. Box 2498, Abilene, TX 79604) which publishes *The Prophetic Word Magazine*, and Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah (401 N. Roby Farm Rd., Rochesport, MO 65279) which publishes *The Master Key*. (For a more comprehensive list of Sacred Names groups see *The Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups*, published by The Bible Sabbath Association, Fairview, Oklahoma 73737.)

One former WCG member who does not claim to be a part of a Sacred Names group, but still seems to have adopted some of their ideas, is Vello Kulbin (31731 Outer Hwy. 10, Redlands, CA 92373). In "What is to Happen Next in Bible Prophecy?", a paper he has been distributing, he wrote (his caps and underlining deleted here): "A Jesus will come! Joshua is our true Savior's name. Jesus will be the Antichrist's name. First, Jesus will come and reign on the earth. Then, our true savior Joshua will come and overthrow the world government established by Jesus."

Sacred Names teachings have become so widespread among former WCG members that former WCG ministers Garner Ted Armstrong, Dr. Ernest Martin, and Fred Coulter have all written papers critical of its premises. Some ministers in the Church of God International, which seems to be filled with Sacred Names adherents, have called the Sacred Names doctrine a major heresy.

**Pro-Jewish groups.** "The Jews" continue to hold a special fascination for many former WCG members. This fascination runs the full gamut from very anti-Jewish sentiments to very pro-Jewish sentiments. Groups that fall into the latter category include numerous ministries aimed at either bringing Jews to Jesus or bringing Christians to some type of Judaism. Those in the "Messianic Jewish" movement most often keep the seventh day sabbath, the annual Jewish holy days, revere the sacred names, and keep many Jewish customs, yet view Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Because of their faith in Jesus, the Israeli Supreme Court in 1989 ruled that Messianic Jews are not entitled to automatic Israeli citizenship (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/27/89). Yet most Messianic Jews are very loyal to Israel. Some of the American groups that fall into the Messianic Jewish category include Zola Levitt Ministries, Box 12268, Dallas, TX 75225-9987; Hatikva Ministries (Joseph Goode, President), P.O. Box 3125, Port Arthur, TX 77643 -3124; *Jewish Voice Prophetic Magazine* and *Jewish Voice Broadcasts* (Evangelist Louis Kaplan, President), P.O. Box 6, Phoenix, AZ 85001; Lederer Messianic Ministries (Barry Rubin, Executive Director) 6204 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215; and the umbrella organization Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, P.O. Box 417, Wynnewood, PA 19096 (tel. 1-800-225-MJAA).

While a number of former WCG members have been attracted to the Messianic Jewish groups, a few have begun attending regular Jewish synagogue services. One such individual told the *Report*, "I feel very much at home there. I just never mention my faith in Jesus."

One individual who is quite at home with both Messianic Jewish and Rabbinical Jewish groups is Dr. James Tabor (see [AR41](#)). Tabor, a prolific writer who once taught at Ambassador and who now teaches at the

University of North Carolina, recently announced that he was closing down his *Genesis 2000* publication so that he could devote more time to his work with United Israel World Union of New York (UIWU) and United Israel of Jerusalem (UIJ). The two organizations publish, respectively, the *United Israel Bulletin* (1123 Broadway, New York, NY 10010) and *Jezreel's Call* (P.O. Box 33078, 91033 Jerusalem, Israel and in the U.S.: P.O. Box 345, Lenoir, NC 28645). UIWU was founded in 1943 by David Horowitz, a journalist who maintains an office at the United Nations headquarters in New York. According to Tabor, now a vice-president of UIWU, the main purpose of UIWU is:

....to foster Torah faith for all nations, or as David Horowitz expresses it: "Mosaic Law for One World," based on the vision of Isaiah 2 and 11 and other related texts. An integral part of that vision is the UNION of all twelve tribes of Israel - not only the Jews (Judah), but the so-called "lost tribes" of Israel as well. [From Tabor's August 8 letter to his *Genesis 2000* subscribers.]

UIJ is a separate organization founded in 1993 by Tabor, Dennis Jones (who has completed a Nazirite vow), and John Hulley (who graduated *magnum cum laude* from Harvard University with a degree in international economics and then was a senior economist for ten years at the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington, D.C.). The purpose of UIJ is to publish both biblical research and historical material based on Hulley's research dealing with the identity of those portions of the so-called "lost tribes" of Israel which they believe once migrated into northwestern Europe. Those who would like to know more about UIJ or UIWU may write personally to Tabor at P.O. Box 561476, Charlotte, NC 28256. Those who would like to know more about Dr. Tabor's views about the Bible and the B'Nai Noah movement in which he is active, may obtain some of his writings from Emmanuel, P.O. Box 442, Athens, TN 37371-0442.

**Anti-Jewish groups.** While many former WCG members seem enamored of all things Jewish, many others have gone to the opposite extreme and have become affiliated with organizations that are quite anti-Jewish. Some of the groups are clearly neo-Nazi. For instance, there is the German American National Political Action Committee (P.O. Box 1137, Santa Monica, CA 90406) led by Hans Schmidt who claims the Holocaust was a myth created "to obscure the fact that Hitler was right" and *Thatcher Thunders!* (A.C.C. Services, P.O. Box 509, Anderson, TX 77830) run by R. G. Thatcher who claims that the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 are none other than Zerubbabel and Eliakim of the Old Testament who were supposedly resurrected already in this century as Adolph Hitler and Joseph Goebbels! Other anti-Jewish groups believe in various varieties of the Israel Identity theory and sometimes even keep the seventh day sabbath, the OT holy days, and other OT laws, while being at the same time anti-Jewish.

**Conspiracy theory groups.** Very popular with both former and current WCG members are "conspiracy" views of the world - world views that emphasize the idea that the course of history is being directed by secretive, self-advancing groups, often seen as the super rich, leading bankers, the Masons, the Jesuits, "the Jews," nationalists, internationalists, leftists, rightists, Marxists, fascists, the Illuminati, the Trilateral Commission, etc., etc. Space does not permit us to cover this fascinating area in any detail. An overview of some of the more prevalent - and outrageous - theories can be found in *New World Order - the Ancient Plan of Secret Societies* by William T. Still (Huntington House Publishers and available for \$10 from Religion Analysis Service, P.O. Box 22098, Robbinsdale, MN 55422-0098-note new address).

Of all the publishers that specialize in the area of conspiracies and secret orders, the most popular among ex-Worldwidiers is Emissary Publications run by author Des Griffin and his wife Karen. The Griffins publish *Midnight Messenger*, a controversial, yet thought-provoking, newspaper. For a sample copy and catalog of their many intriguing publications, send \$3 to Emissary Publications, 9205 S.E. Clackamas Rd., #1776, Clackamas, OR 97015 (tel. 503-824-2050).

Another ex-Worldwidier (and ex-CGI minister) whose current ministry emphasizes conspiracy theories is Jim Rector, Cornerstone Publications, 3802 Olive Street, Texarkana, TX 75503; tel. 903-792-1352. His 1994 series of taped lectures on "The Specter of Globalism" is very popular among many ex-Worldwidiers. In his November 1993 letter Rector wrote:

For a number of years now, many events have been transpiring behind the scenes on the world stage - events that all will ultimately contribute to the most diabolical, demonic and deceptive plan for complete world domination ever attempted or foisted off on an unsuspecting and unprepared mankind. The Beast of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 is in the wings now. It is only a matter of time before this hideous monster is

unveiled.

Rector sees Satan as the mastermind behind the emergence of the "The New World Order" and in his complex Bible prophecy theory Rector brings in almost every possible factor of fundamentalist demonology: New Agers, occultists, channelers, UFOs, Benjamin Creme and Lord Maitreya, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers, the Bilderburgers, the Trilateral Commission, the Club of Rome, virtually all international bankers, the Priory of Zion, the Knights of Malta, the National Council of Women, the Pro-choice groups, the Sierra Club, the World Council of Churches and many leading religious figures, virtually all of the great philanthropic foundations of America, Henry Kissinger, George Bush, President Clinton, and even Stanley Rader (who Rector claims is a 33rd degree Mason, the group's highest honor, he says). All of these individuals and groups are seen as in league with the Devil and are supposedly working toward "globalism" (Jan. 10 and Jan. 17, 1994 letters to his subscribers).

**Survivalist groups.** A number of former WCG members are involved with groups that are often called "survivalist." These are usually composed of individuals who see Armageddon in the near future and, having little confidence in the ability of modern government to stem the downward slide of Western civilization, feel they will have to go it alone. One organization that seems to fit into this category is Center For Action, 1106 N. Gilbert Rd. #2114, Mesa, AZ 85203 (tel. 602-969-9260). This organization is headed by former Vietnam war hero and U.S. Presidential candidate Bo Gritz. Additionally, one publication that is popular with survivalists is *American Survival Guide*, P.O. Box 70015, Anaheim, CA 92825-0015.

## **Deprogramming Yourself - The Editor's View**

As editor of the Report, I want to share with all of you some thoughts I have on the Worldwide experience and on exiting it, in particular. One of the more positive aspects of putting out a publication such as this one is getting letters from readers who share with us their many many insights, life experiences, and problems. But there is a down side to this, as well. All too frequently readers tell us of their problems and ask for help we are not in a position to give. Unlike the ministry of the WCG, which seems all too willing to give advice on virtually every facet of life, we have never thought ourselves qualified to do so. There is, however, one very frequently asked question for which we may be able to offer at least a few suggestions.

The question is often put like this: "I have been a member of the WCG but suspect that it is a destructive cult. What should I do now?" Readers who ask such questions are often looking for a quick and easy solution to their spiritual problems. Frankly, I doubt that there is such a solution. My own observations convince me that each of us must work out our own solutions to our own problems. That does not mean, however, that I cannot offer a few suggestions. (And they are just that - mere suggestions. They may not apply to many, or even most, readers). To those exiting the WCG, I have two initial suggestions: First, don't be too quick to join another group. All too often people burned by the WCG jump into some other group that is just as harmful as the WCG. Many cult experts suggest that those leaving a destructive cult allow at least one year before joining a new group. If religious fellowship is sorely missed, then why not make a point of visiting - without joining - a different denomination's services each time you want to fellowship?

Second, with the increase in time that comes from not being a regular WCG member, devote a good portion of that new-found time to studying those topics that underlie the WCG's doctrines. I can't stress the importance of this too much. So often I have noticed that some will leave the WCG over one or two doctrinal matters or because of some corruption problem, all the while assuming that most of what they have come to believe is still correct. (When I left the WCG in 1973 I was in this category.) Unfortunately, many go on to discover after years of negative, and often painful, experiences that a very large amount of what they had come to believe was true is really fallacious. Most of those who leave the WCG could benefit from going back to college. Obviously, very few have the time or money to do that. However, through a systematic program of independent reading one can gain a considerable amount of valuable insight and information. What follows is a list of books I frequently recommend to those who not only want to deprogram themselves from the WCG's propaganda, but also want to gain a better understanding of many of the topics the WCG stressed.

## Books About Cults and Mind Control

Every so often I receive a letter from someone who has read a number of our past issues, suspects the WCG is a cult, but somehow has lingering doubts about it. For those in this category I would suggest reading one or more from the following group:

Steven Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control* (Park Street Press, 1989). I thoroughly reviewed this book in [AR44](#) and still think it is one of the finest books available on the subject. The paperback edition sells for \$12.95 and a new audio cassette version sells for \$17.95. You may order directly from the publisher (there is a \$3 charge for shipping): Park Street Press, P.O. Box 388, Rochester, VT 05767 (tel. 1-800-488-2665).

Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton, *Toxic Faith: Understanding and Overcoming Religious Addiction* (Oliver Nelson, 1991). The relevance of this book to WCG members is apparent from the fact that Joseph Tkach Jr. is highly critical of it. I highly recommend it.

Ronald M. Enroth, *Churches That Abuse* (Zondervan, 1992). In this book Enroth, a professor of sociology at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, offers "help for those hurt by legalism, authoritarian leadership, manipulation, excessive discipline, and spiritual intimidation." After reading the Enroth book, Bruce Renehan wrote, "This is a book that could help many Worldwidiers. Professor Enroth has done a wonderful job of exposing the world of abusive religion."

Father Leo Booth, *When God Becomes a Drug: Breaking the Chains of Religious Addiction and Abuse* (Tarcher/ Perigree, 1991). In reviewing this book psychologist John Bradshaw, himself a former monk, pointedly wrote, "No addiction is more toxically shaming and soul-murdering than the religious abuse that flows from the actions of religious addicts." Rev. Booth views religious addiction as a disease that can be treated by application of a modified version of AA's twelve steps. (Incidentally, many psychologists see religious addiction as similar to drug addiction. See, for example, Milkman and Sunderworth, *Craving for Ecstasy: The Consciousness and Chemistry of Escape*, chapter four, Lexington Books, 1987.)

Marlene Winell, Ph.D., *Leaving the Fold: A Guide for Former Fundamentalists and Others Leaving Their Religion* (New Harbinger, 1994). Dr. Winell, a psychologist, offers almost 300 pages of guidance and resources for those who have become convinced that they are in a destructive cult or abusive denomination.

Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (Norton, 1961 and University of North Carolina Press, 1989). While subtitled "A Study of Brainwashing in China," this famous work has become the most often-quoted by experts in deprogramming and exit counselling. Those who may find it too technical or long should skip over to chapter 23 where the author outlines the "eight psychological themes which are predominant within the social field of the thought reform mileau." Former Worldwidiers who have read this chapter have often commented how Lifton has succinctly captured the essence of the Armstrongism experience.

## Books About Learning to Think

Over time it has become all too obvious to us at AR that one reason why some leave the WCG, only to become engrossed by some movement even more unbalanced, is that many have never had any formal or systematic training in how to think clearly. If one were to go to college specifically to learn how to think more clearly, one would take a number of courses in the area of philosophy. Such courses would include logic, the study of fallacies, semantics, epistemology (which includes the study of what justifies belief), metaphysics (including ontology and cosmology), ethics, aesthetics, politics, and the history of philosophy. In some Christian denominations, seminarians are expected to master the essentials of each of these areas before beginning graduate-level studies in theology. A young person desiring to eventually be a scholar would do well to read college-level textbooks about all of these subjects. Unfortunately, many do not have the time or the energy to invest in such a program of self help. For such individuals I would recommend the following books (in fact, they would be just as helpful to the budding scholar):

Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (Quill, 1977). Some will think it odd that I

would rank this book so highly - that is, until they read it. More than any book I know, this one will make you suspicious of information and ways of thinking absorbed from the mass media. It should encourage you to want to spend less time watching the boob tube. Additionally, it contains valuable insights into the conspiratorial nature of modern society. If you read only one of the books I suggest, this should be it.

Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book* (Touchstone, 1940, 1972). This work will not simply make everything you read more understandable, it will greatly expand your view of the world of the intellect. One Ph.D. candidate who read the book told me, "Why didn't they make this required reading when we were just starting college? It would have made our college years so much easier." One caveat, however. I personally disagree with one small section of the book - the section on canonical writing (assuming the authors were not writing with tongue in cheek). I think canonical writing should be read with the same critical care that the authors advocate for other types of writing.

Rudolph Flesch, *The Art of Clear Thinking* (Barnes and Noble, 1951). Like some other books on this list, locating a copy of this one may take some time. Nevertheless, doing so will be worth the effort as it is easy to read and teaches important skills that will make all of your studies more productive.

V.A. Howard and J.H. Barton, *Thinking on Paper* (Quill, 1986). While this very short book is mainly about writing (and for that it is very good), its opening chapter offers such a major insight into how to think more effectively that it alone makes this book very valuable.

S.I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1939, 1978). While Hayakawa perhaps slightly overstates his key premise, this book still remains a classic introduction to the study of semantics. In particular, it is invaluable for the study of religious and philosophical literature.

Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (Washington Square Press, 1926, 1961). Durant's book, one of the best-loved of our time, presents a concise overview of the lives and opinions of some of the greatest thinkers of Western civilization. While this is not a college textbook on the history of philosophy, it is, nevertheless, a very readable introduction to the subject.

*Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Crowell Collier and MacMillan, 1967), Vol. 3 article on "Fallacies." I know of few subjects that can prove as valuable to Worldwidiers (or to just about anyone else, for that matter) as the study of fallacies - erroneous ways of reasoning that have the appearance of soundness. Although it does not cover formal fallacies, a helpful and concise work is *With Good Reason: An Introduction to Informal Fallacies* by S. Morris Engel (St. Martin's Press, 1976). When I first studied the subject of fallacies two decades ago, it was via Irving M. Copi's excellent college textbook *Introduction to Logic* (MacMillan, 1972). It's very good, and because there is a new 1994 edition out, you may be able to locate a copy without too much trouble. Nevertheless, most will find the above encyclopedia article (available in many libraries) quite adequate. Additionally, I would recommend Arthur Schopenhauer's short work *38 Ways to Win an Argument* to anyone who wants to be able to spot fallacious reasoning in action. Whether one wants to see through the specious arguments of politicians, lawyers, advertisers, clerics, or just about anyone else, this short work - frankly, about how the cleverly devious do their devilish persuading - is invaluable. Unfortunately, locating a copy of this nineteenth century treatise may prove difficult. I found a short translation of it in *Five Rings, Six Crises...* by Boswell and Starter (Viking, 1990).

### **Books About the "Real World"**

After this section, I list a number of works I believe offer significant help in understanding the Bible. But I am here giving a few books higher priority for a reason. One may know how to think clearly, but if one just dives into biblical study what usually happens is that the student goes down a lot of dead ends and wastes a lot of time. The reason? The biblical literature was not written in a vacuum. It relates to the real world - both spiritual and physical. And if the student does not have an adequate understanding of that world, then much of what is in the Bible will not be understood or will be misunderstood. An obvious example of this relates to historical context. If one has no grasp of ancient history then one will have a very difficult time in both the Old and the New Testaments. But there are many other areas of knowledge that are also very relevant. Here are a few books that provide important information on a number of those areas:

Thomas R. Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Malthus, considered one of history's earliest economists, was a young cleric in 1798 when he brought out the first edition of what was to become one of the most influential writings of all time. Not only is the work acknowledged as a classic of political economy, its profound influence has extended to the areas of biology, theory of history, sociology, moral philosophy, and even theology. Although Malthus was later to do a number of significantly enlarged editions of the original work, the concise first edition makes its arguments most cogently. In 1959, The University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor Paperbacks) republished the first edition as *Population: The First Essay*. This work provides an important introduction to the books that follow in this section.

Gordon Rattray Taylor, *The Great Evolution Mystery* (Harper & Row, 1983). While this is not the most current work on the theory of evolution, it is one of the most readable and interesting. The author is no theist and he has faith in the general evolutionary theory. Yet he sees problems with Darwin's version of it. While the author does not admit to teleology (the concept that the future draws us into it or that there is a cosmic plan), virtually all that he writes seems to point in the direction of physical life having come about from a supernatural, guiding mind.

Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative: A Personal Inquiry into the Animal Origins of Property and Nations* (Dell, 1966). Don't let the intellectual-sounding title throw you. Newsweek very aptly called this book, "One of the most exciting books about the nature of man that has ever been presented." Unlike the great personages of the Bible, most of us have grown up estranged from earth, sea, animals, and the rest of creation. Ardrey helps us get back in touch with the reality of the biological world. One warning, however. If you start this book, finish it. I know one individual who read only a third of it and came away with conclusions diametrically the opposite of what the author intended and clarified by book's end.

Peter Farb, *Man's Rise To Civilization: The Cultural Ascent of the Indians of North America* (Penguin, 1991). This very readable book makes an excellent introduction to cultural anthropology. Many Bible students will be surprised to learn how much a study of anthropology and American Indians can add to their appreciation of the Bible and life in general.

Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*. The first edition of this work appeared in 1890. Generally regarded as one of the great classics in anthropology, it offers many profound insights into the history and nature of Western religion. While the complete version of this work is quite lengthy (13 volumes), many will find one of the condensed, and sometimes illustrated, versions adequate.

### **Books Specifically About the Bible**

There are so many interesting and valuable books available about the Bible that it is impossible to provide any kind of comprehensive list. However, based on personal experience and the experiences of hundreds of our readers, I can suggest a number that will dramatically help many gain a better understanding of history's most important collection of writings:

Hershel Shanks, editor (in collaboration with a team of scholars), *Ancient Israel: A Short History from Abraham to the Destruction of the Temple* (Prentice Hall, 1988). Based on the most authoritative and up-to-date scholarship, this book is one of the finest short histories of ancient Israel available today. Hershel Shanks is founder, editor, and publisher of *Biblical Archaeology Review* and *Bible Review* magazines. Incidentally, the latter may very well be the most informative Bible-related publication available today for the non-academic public. Those who would like more information about it, or the Ancient Israel book, should contact: The Bible Archaeology Society, 4710 41st Street NW, Washington, DC 20016; tel. 1-800-221-4644.

Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (Summit Books, 1987). I wish the catchy title of this book had actually been something like, "How Did the Old Testament Come to Be?" It would have more accurately described the content of this most interesting book. While many in the general public might have some difficulty understanding this work, those with WCG experience should grasp its central ideas with no difficulty. While, admittedly, Professor Friedman is presenting a theory, it is a very plausible one which recognizes, among other things, the significance of there having been a House of Judah that was distinct - even as to religious particulars - from the House of Israel.

Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford University Press, 1968). This is a scholarly work and many will find portions of it difficult reading. Nevertheless, the average reader can skim or even skip some of the more technical portions and still read this work to great benefit. I am always amazed how the vast majority of Christians claim faith in the New Testament, yet have so little idea of how it came to be. Dr. Metzger's book answers many basic questions. By the way, while some bookstores charge \$30-\$40 for a copy of this outstanding work, copies can be obtained for only \$19.95 from Watchman Fellowship, P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094-0340.

Ian Wilson, *Jesus: The Evidence* (Harper & Row, 1984). Who was the historical Jesus? That extremely important question is addressed in quite a number of books that have appeared in recent years. Journalist Wilson presents a fairly objective overview of the evidence. Both believers and non-believers can find valuable information in his work. A more reverential and apologetic work is James D. G. Dunn's *The Evidence for Jesus* (The Westminster Press, 1985), a thoughtful book that apparently was written in response to Wilson's. A third book about the historical Jesus is John Dominic Crossan's *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (Harper Collins, 1994). While Professor Crossan does not view Jesus in supernatural terms (he discounts the possibility of a resurrection), he is, nonetheless, quite sympathetic to his subject. It is difficult to see how even the most coldly analytical non-believer could come away from Crossan's work without recognizing Jesus as the most significant individual in human history. While fundamentalists may find some of his conclusions disquieting, Professor Crossan's book contains many valuable insights about the life of Jesus.

Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (Vintage Books, 1979). This outstanding piece of historical scholarship won the National Book Critics Circle Award and the National Book Award in 1980. And very justifiably so. This easy-to-read book not only concisely offers a vast amount of information about the earliest years of Christianity, but to the thoughtful Worldwider (or recent exiter) it shows the amazing parallels between Christianity of the late first to early third centuries and the recent history of the WCG. Those who find Dr. Pagels' ideas thought-provoking may wish to follow up this book with two important writings by early Christian leaders: "The Letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch" and "The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians." Both are found in *The Apostolic Fathers*, Second Edition, translated by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer and edited by Michael W. Holmes (Baker Book House, 1989).

Morton Smith and R. Joseph Hoffman, editors (with a team of scholars that included the almost ubiquitous James Tabor), *What the Bible Really Says* (Prometheus, 1989, Harper Collins paperback, 1993). In this book's conclusion co-editor Hoffman states, "It can be taken for granted that 75 percent of what the average Christian or Jew 'thinks' about the Bible is interpretation and not scriptural at all." Worldwidewiders who understand that the sabbath is the seventh day of the week, who know the difference between the House of Judah and the House of Israel, who know how the Saturnalia was incorporated into Christianity, etc. will not find Hoffman's comment too surprising. Nevertheless, this work contains enough startling information to educate - or offend - just about everyone.

A few final comments. The above list is structured so that the more general and basic books usually precede the more advanced and specialized. For that reason many who do not have a college education will still find it manageable. It should be pointed out, however, that the list is not an exhaustive one. There are many more books that could be recommended to those trying to "deprogram" themselves from the WCG experience. Nevertheless, the above will provide a good start to those who have sufficient intellectual curiosity coupled with the time and energy to pursue a program of self-education - especially in those areas where the WCG laid down dogmatic, and frequently erroneous, "answers" to many of life's biggest questions.

-J.T.

## Obituaries

We at the *Report* were very saddened to learn of the recent death of our one-time classmate Richard Paige, 51, from cancer. In addition to an M.A. in history from New York University, Richard had a B.A. from Ambassador College (Pasadena class of 1970) and a bachelor's degree in medical technology. In recent years

the former Ambassador professor of history and archaeology worked as a medical technician at Mother Francis Hospital in Tyler, Texas. He is survived by his wife Deanne and children Michael and Shoshan (WN, 8/9/94, p. 11).

Sometimes the *Report* is not as timely as it should be. A few weeks ago one of our readers asked us what had become of writer and Ambassador alumnus (Texas, 1970) Gene Justice of Alabama. When we made inquiries we were shocked to learn that Gene, an old friend, had been killed in 1990 in a head-on collision with a drunk driver who had crossed over into his lane. In the '80s, Gene's biblical research and writings helped many of our readers who, like us, will be saddened to learn of his passing.

## Letters

I left the WCG four years ago. Two weeks ago I saw a lady who is still in the church. I told her, "They sure made a lot of changes in the church, haven't they?" She said, "No, they haven't changed anything. Everything is still just the same as always."

-Wisconsin

I've been told by friends still in the WCG that they have a different Passover service, but it won't be implemented until next year; that outsiders may come and observe Passover services, but not partake; and that Passover will no longer be considered a solemn service, but rather a time of fellowship. Boy, I wish that had been the case when I was in - then the hall was always as quiet as a tomb.

-Wisconsin

If the WCG finally becomes almost like orthodox Christianity how long will it take - years? Sure, they're starting to talk more about Jesus Christ now, but how much do they really know about the freedom of being in Him and not under the law? Hardly any of the songs in the new hymnal are really about Christ. In looking through the new hymnal I discovered that only about 23 out of 234 mention Christ or Jesus and most of those only had His name mentioned once!

-Colorado

Recently I was taken aback to discover that Joe Tkach Jr. had actually excused church members from sabbath services in early July so they might attend a church-recommended therapy seminar costing participants \$500 each. (Isn't the 10 percent of one's salary, paid to "spirit led" church counsellors, enough anymore?) The members who doled out the small fortune were taught the pop psychology theory called "synergism." What's that? Actually, it is not a psychological term. It is really a sixteenth-century theological concept. It is the belief that if enough people believe in the same thing simultaneously - love, wealth, or success, for example - then an energy force is created that will actually bring about the desired effect. Some pop psychologists refer to synergism by the term "critical mass theory."

This type of experimental psychology is not really supported by true scientists any more than blood-letting is by reputable modern doctors. Such charlatanism is not new in the field of psychology. In the eighteenth century, Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer created the rage in Paris by advocating bathing with magnetic copper rods to correct physical and mental maladies. A few years later Franz Joseph Gall developed phrenology, the theory that a person's character can be ascertained by feeling the bumps on his head. The theories of both Mesmer and Gall have since been thoroughly debunked, just as those of the synergists have. Maybe Joe Jr. should stop dabbling in pop psychology. It's no better than his pop theology.

-Bruce Renehan  
California

We still attend services (tongue in cheek) as it is a good social club and we are waiting for Tkach's announcement that the commandments are done away with and therefore are obsolete. We no longer pay

tithes but have many friendships which we have made over the years.

-South Africa

*Editor: In recent months we have been amazed at how many WCG members have written saying they no longer are in harmony with official WCG teaching but they still attend services because the church functions as a "social club."*

Your [AR54](#) issue was just great. But there was one letter and editor's comment that left me a bit confused. Mr. Wagner's letter and the editor's comment is one that I can't understand. How can anyone in, their right mind think that our news and entertainment media are "ultra-conservative." Just watching TV should tell all of us that the media are "ultra-liberal." Could you explain how you came up with your opinion?

-Missouri

*Editor: In our culture we use the words "conservative" and "liberal" in a variety of ways and nor always with great precision. In addition to common media parlance, which uses the terms to designate political alliances, religionists and political scientists use the words quite differently.*

*If you are talking about scriptural exegesis, "conservative" generally refers to views that favor a more literal interpretation of scripture and "liberal" to a more allegorical interpretation of scripture. If you are talking about Christian ethics, then "conservative" most often refers to traditional viewpoints on morality issues. Examples include viewpoints that are in favor of traditional family structures and against promiscuity, divorce, premarital sex, and homosexuality. If you use the words conservative and liberal in that way, then you are most certainly correct. The media are not just liberal, but ultra-liberal. As an example, ten years ago who would have ever thought that we would see a pop music concert (in this case Michael Jackson on TV doing an hours-long show before thousands of screaming fans) during which the star stroked his crotch throughout the entire show? Yet one cable TV station literally broadcast such a concert from eastern Europe last year. Is that "liberal"? If you are talking, Christian ethics, you bet it is.*

*But there is another way that the terms "liberal" and "conservative" are used. In the areas of political science economics and sometimes history, the terms more frequently refer to one's viewpoint about the control-of-power status quo. In layman's language, we could define those terms this way: "Conservatives" want to conserve the status quo-that is, they want those who now have privilege and power (whether political, economic, or social) to be able to hold onto it, and conversely, for those who do not have it not to be able to gain it. "Liberals," on the other hand, can be viewed as those who do not have the power they feel they are entitled to, and therefore they generally feel that we, as a people, should be more liberal or generous in how our society's power is distributed. In watching Congressional debates, I have noticed that liberals usually tend to be quite generous with other people's money (and power), whereas conservatives, the ones who seem to perceive themselves as having the money (and power), are more restrained regarding other's taking it from them.*

*As an aside, let me point out another interesting facet of this subject. Some years ago I had the privilege of hearing a lecture by law professor Daniel L. Stewart, one of the country's leading experts in the fields of property law and Constitutional law. He very adroitly commented that if one looks at the political positions of American liberals and conservatives (a prime example would be written opinions of the liberal and conservative justices of the U.S. Supreme Court), one would very consistently find some glaring inconsistencies of logic. He pointed out, for instance, that liberals, while frequently more liberal or generous or tolerant on matters regarded as social (free speech, for instance) are frequently more intolerant or pro-government restrictive regarding economics (corporation regulation, for instance). Conservatives, on the other hand, while often backing or upholding ever more legislation that may impede social freedoms, are generally quite tolerant or anti-law-and-order in regard to laws that impede large corporations and the wealthy. One can look back on a number of self-described conservatives in our recent political past to see that some "law and order" candidates were also the ones calling for "deregulation." If you think about it, this is logically a self-contradiction. Regulations, in a practical sense, are laws. Of course, the term "regulations" is usually used in general discourse to refer to rules that impede corporations, businesses, and the wealthy -*

*not those that impede shoplifters, burglars, and other so-called "common" criminals. So what you are left with from those politicians is the message that they want to be tougher toward the poorer, less empowered segments of society, but less demanding (more liberal) toward those who are empowered by privilege, wealth (often inherited or gotten by sophisticated manipulation of our legal system), or resultant political strength.*

*Columnists Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon in their article "Asking twenty questions about the 'liberal media'" were obviously using the terms liberal and conservative in the political-economic sense. (Incidentally, you can still get a free copy of their article by writing to Cohen and Solomon at P.O. Box 13193, Oakland, CA 94661. Please be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)*

*For an example of the press being criticized from another point of view you might want to see a copy of a new study called "Faith in a Box: Network News on Religion" put out by an affiliate of Pat Robertson's 700 Club: Media Research Center, 113 S. West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (it sells for \$2). Both papers contain valuable insights about the press and for many, a comparison of the two papers will prove very educational.*

I think the Tkachs may be the ones who finally blow the WCG apart. In many ways the WCG is already starting to look like the Jehovah's Witnesses! They could dump the trinity doctrine just as fast as they adopted it, get rid of the word "Church" in their name, and accept the doctrine of the 144,000. Then the members could be duped into local Kingdom Halls! There they would be duped into going from door to door doing their "personal evangelizing." A friend of mine is a JW and he talks just like a WCG member.

My sister and brother-in-law are still staunch WCG members. I also have a lot of good friends who are still in the WCG and I see them quite often. They now have the "TKACH FRIENDLINESS" and have invited me to services many times. I still consider many people in the WCG my friends. Many of them are sincere and well meaning and it would not be right for me to insult them. But I do not want to go back to that dog vomit! The scripture states that Jesus Christ is "the same, yesterday, today and forever." If the WCG was the one and only true church, its members would not be buffeted to and fro by every wind of the continuously changing doctrines they are creating! They are being careless with the scriptures! I suspect many will wake up soon and leave. Those that remain will probably be convinced that this is the great falling away.

-Canada

Last week I went to my second church service in the Worldwide Church [in recent years]. Each time I went they made me feel very welcome. I have not had to repent or humble myself in any way to the ministers. In fact it was Mr. Dennis Luker who called me and said we were all welcome to come back! It all started when I kept hearing that Joseph Tkach had said that many members of the church had been disfellowshipped unjustly. So I thought I would see if he really meant it. I wrote him an honest, open letter last September and told him of our family's case and sent him copies of our disfellowship letters. In just a few weeks we all got a call from Mr. Luker who said our disfellowshipments had been made null and void and that our memberships had been restored! Mr. Luker said that the ministers who put us out would also be disciplined. They were Richard Rice and Lawson James Tuck. While we may never support the church 100% again, I can't tell you how wonderful it is to get to fellowship with my old friends in the church again without them being afraid to speak to us.

Whatever his reasons, I commend Mr. Tkach for at long last taking the club away.... John, it has now come full circle. Those who really loved the church and wanted to reform it are being welcomed back, and the hardliners like Roderick Meredith are being thrown out! God's justice may seem to move slowly to us but it gets here!

-David W. Berryman  
Muscle Shoals, Alabama

There is a WCG breakaway group nearby that publishes that Winston Churchill was the King of the South and that Christ died to abolish the Book of Exodus and bring into force the Book of Deuteronomy and, of course, that HWA was the Elijah. The bizarre and painful thing is that the leader of this group is very

intelligent and sincere. You probably get reports of thousands of such groups.

-Australia

*Editor: Not thousands, but it does seem like hundreds. There are so many, in fact, we just can't keep up with all of them any more.*

Needless to say, I am still suffering emotionally from the jackasses [of the WCG ministry]. Everything I built by their teachings has been taken apart twig by twig until there is only a barren stump.... I just feel like a pile of worthless manure. The gigantic stress and coercion by the WCG over the years with fear and terror has damaged my health, nervous system, and brain, I think.... In my wildest dreams I never, never could have believed that religion could deceive anyone like it has, nor the damage afterward. I have been out three years and I am constantly getting flashbacks of all sorts concerning how I was so cleverly tricked and I'm emotional about it. I would have to be dead not to feel many things.

-Illinois

*Editor: Anyone who is having ongoing, serious emotional problems as a result of their WCG experiences should consider talking to a therapist knowledgeable about cults. Unfortunately, many therapists are not really qualified in the area. One organization that specializes in the rehabilitation of former cultists is Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center, P.O. Box 67, Albany, Ohio 45710; tel. 614-698-6277. Contact them for a brochure and copy of their newsletter.*

John, as you may remember, back in January I sent AR a check for a complete set of all your past issues. After reading through all of them, I realized what a smart investment I had made. I have been greatly helped psychologically, spiritually, and even financially by reading about my church's history as documented in AR. I have also been amazed at how many of your predictions about the WCG have come true. You really have a handle on what is going on. You know, I just got the July 12 issue of *The Worldwide News* and Mr. Tkach's front-page editorial is titled, "Being constantly vigilant to stay biblical." Seems our Pastor General has just discovered that his church is drifting into unbiblical waters. Had he been reading the *Report*, he would have discovered the problem way back in [February](#) when your publication's lead story about the church was "The Bible is Being Deemphasized."

-New York

Thanks for the latest AR. Your coverage leaves me with a sense of "wonder" at the extent of charade in "The World of Church." This leads to incredulity that finally breaks over into a paroxysm of laughter. That is the best medicine.

At times it is hard to believe all this can be happening. There are so many diverse bacterial strains that have mutated out of the mother virus WCG. This issue of AR was enough to convince me that all this infected behavior indicates the source must be a retrovirus with unlimited potential for diversification. How bizarre. The WCG fountainhead may even have "one leg up" on AIDS in its speed and capacity for proliferating in different forms.

We contribute financially only to AR since it is the single effort that identifies the sickness (religious addiction) and attempts to inoculate the required antibodies. Unfortunately, some still experience that occasional malaria-like attack. Is there any hope? Is the final solution only the final event?

-Gary Arvidson  
North Carolina

This is a follow-up to your Ambassador Report issue of [February](#) and the reference to the questions surrounding the Boston Church's activity fund and just where all the money is going.

In early April, the minister gave a scathing sermon about gossip and took the opportunity to bring up the matter of the "gossip" that was circulating in the Boston and Worcester WCG congregations about what he was doing with the money from the fundraisers. Speaking in his own defense, he said that he would post a listing of where the money was spent. That was in April. It is now September and the list still has not been posted. Tells you something, doesn't it!

-Boston Church member

My late husband Len and I were the chief fundraisers in the Brisbane North congregation. We thought the thousands of dollars we raised were being put towards making the Y.O.U. camp at Lake Moogerah the best in Australia. It was some time before we realized that such was not the case. Even though the signs on our continuing street stalls and our police permits read, "Proceeds to Lake Moogerah Youth Camp," little of the money was going there and the camp is now defunct. The crunch came a few months before my husband died of cancer. We always handed currency and checks into the ministry, but suddenly we were not being issued with receipts for same. When we protested and asked why, we were told we had a bad attitude in not trusting the ministry.

As we were both pensioners and many checks were our personal ones, we had to answer to the government's Social Security and Taxation Department as to what these monies were that were going in and out of our bank account. They said receipts were necessary. That fact didn't phase the money-crazed ministers one iota. So we dug our heels in and continued fund raising, but for the Queensland Cancer Fund and the Children's Hospital. (We knew they would issue receipts and we didn't wish to just throw away the fundraising expertise we had gained.) In the WCG this made us about as popular as pork in Jerusalem. To make a long story short, Len died after an eleven week illness. I carried on the fundraising with help from friends....

In hindsight, I could write a book about our experiences in Worldwide. Len, who was my second husband (we had both lost earlier partners to cancer) was the first man baptized into the church in Queensland. That was in the late '50s by windbag Waterhouse. I came into the church in 1970 in Bill Bradford's time. After departing the church, I attended with CGI for a short time, but soon found out that money and mind control were also the name of their game. Now I am associating with a small group of Worldwide escapees. We fellowship regularly at my home and have Bible studies.... We are a happy group.

Editor: After I wrote to the above reader for permission to run her name along with her letter, she responded with a few more details of the story:

Certainly use my name and address if it will help. With God on my side, I will not be losing any sleep over upsetting those my letter will expose or offend. I still retain documentation of our letters going to and fro to Worldwide headquarters at Burleigh Heads asking - almost begging - for receipts for the money we forwarded to them. I also have all the receipts that were promptly forwarded to us by the charities I mentioned, along with glowing letters of appreciation from them.

In my last letter I don't think I mentioned all the things that occurred just prior to my late husband's death.... As soon as Len was diagnosed with cancer and admitted to hospital, I informed the ministry and prayers were asked for him in the local churches. He received quite a few visits from members, but the ministry was quite conspicuous by its absence. Len was responding to radium and chemotherapy but then they discovered that the cancer had spread to the bile duct. The surgeons decided to operate immediately to reduce his pain. The operation was quite a major one and the prognosis was that Len had only a few more weeks to live. Now, you are not going to believe this. (Or are you?) Three days went by after the operation and although Len had visits from Catholic priests, Anglican and United Church ministers, and Salvation Army personnel - all offering their kind services - not one minister from Worldwide bothered to call. Here was this wonderful, decent Christian man who had served the church and the community so well, lying there, knowing that his life was ebbing away and not one so-called minister of the church he had served wanted to know about it! *[It was only after this woman made an angry call to a WCG minister that her husband finally got some attention from the ministry in whose church he had been a longstanding member - ed.]*

Len died with dignity and one member of the medical staff told me his attitude touched all their lives. The

doctors said that even though Len must have suffered excruciating pain, he never asked for morphine, but calmly accepted death. They just shook their heads and admitted that they had never witnessed such faith. I know that God was with Len....

I continued in the church for almost another year.... It was over another fundraising incident that I finally blew my stack and resigned. Even though I had sent a letter of resignation to headquarters at Burleigh Heads, our local apology for a minister announced to the congregation that he had been forced to "stand me down" for a few weeks until I repented of my bad attitude....

It was not until some few weeks after my exit from the WCG that I was given some copies of AR by friends who had already departed the church. They were a wonderful help and comfort to me. I can truly thank God daily that He released me from bondage and gave me the truth that really does set us free.

-Mrs. Thelma Smith  
East Brisband, Qld.  
Australia

### **A Christian Hero Passes Away**

In May, Ambassador Report lost a good friend. He was Mr. John Weidner, the owner of a chain of local health food stores, who, although never a WCG member, had a keen interest in our publication and the people of the WCG. For quite a few years now there was never an AR issue that went out that did not receive a very prompt contribution from Mr. Weidner, often accompanied by much appreciated words of encouragement. Because of limited space, what few obituaries we run are usually short. But, in this case we believe that many of our readers would appreciate reading the following excerpt from a Myrna Oliver article about Mr. Weidner that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (5/23/94, p. 3):

John Henry Weidner, the Dutch-born hero decorated by many nations for rescuing more than 1,000 Jews and Allied airmen from the Nazis during World War II, has died at his home in Monterey Park. He was 81.

Weidner, who moved to the United States in the mid-1950s to escape memories of the war, died Saturday of heart failure, the Southern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists announced Sunday.

The pacifist son of a Seventh-day Adventist minister, Weidner [whose sister, Gabrielle, died in a Nazi concentration camp] was a leader of the Dutch-Paris underground, which operated escape routes from war-torn Holland, Belgium and France into neutral Switzerland.

He was captured repeatedly, interrogated by Klaus Barbie, the infamous "Butcher of Lyon," and tortured by the Gestapo and France's Milice secret police. He always escaped, jumping off trains, swimming the Rhine under Nazi fire, and once diving out a third-floor prison window just prior to his scheduled execution.

For his efforts, Weidner earned the Order of the British Empire, the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau and Medal of Resistance, the French Croix de Guerre and the Medaille de la Resistance, Belgium's Order of King Leopold II and the U.S. Medal of Freedom with Gold Palms. He was also designated an officer of the French Foreign Legion of Honor.

Israel, recognizing him as a "Righteous Gentile," entered his name as a hero in the Golden Book of Jerusalem and planted a tree with his name on the Hill of Remembrance at Yad Vashem. Also recognized by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Weidner was one of seven people chosen to light candles at last year's opening of the Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Weidner's wartime exploits were chronicled in the 1966 book by Herbert Ford titled *Flee the Captor*.

Atlantic Union College last year established the John Henry Weidner Center for the Cultivation of the Altruistic Spirit, which will sponsor lectures, concerts, classes, exhibits and social programs promoting altruism.

"During my father's lifetime," Weidner said in a speech in Pasadena honoring Holocaust victims in 1989, "he taught me, my family, his parishioners and the community that the most important quality in a human being was to love, respect and treat our fellow man as we wished to be loved, respected and treated."

"I was a witness to the barbaric treatment of the Jews by the Nazis. I personally observed the crushing of the skull of a Jewish infant who was torn out of the arms of its mother," he said. "I was determined to heed the teachings and example of my father and I did everything that I could to save as many lives as possible."....

- - -

With the above thoughts we bring this issue to a close. My apologies for the long delay between issues, but like many of you, I have been burdened of late by my own set of personal problems. I thank all of you for your patience. And, as always, my special thanks to those of you who are helping to make our publication possible.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR57\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

January 1995 (AR57)

As has been the case for over two decades now, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), with its Ambassador University and ever-evolving *Plain Truth* magazine, continues to be one of the great soap operas of the religious world.

### Sabbath in Crisis

Since its very inception the WCG's sabbath doctrine has been one of its distinctive features. In fact, it was church founder Herbert W. Armstrong's study of the subject in 1926 that led to his initial religious conversion. The essentials of Armstrong's teaching on the subject were that the sabbath of the Ten Commandments is the seventh day of the week and that its non-observance constituted a sin which had to be repented of for salvation. Strict sabbath observance therefore constituted a requirement for Christian living.

When Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) died in 1986, it was inconceivable to WCG members that such a fundamental doctrine of Armstrongism would ever be questioned by those that had followed him. In recent years, however, as HWA's successor Joseph W. Tkach, Sr. changed scores of WCG doctrines, many WCG observers openly wondered whether Tkach would eventually change his predecessor's sabbath doctrine as well. But numerous ministers of the WCG, particularly church administrator Joseph Tkach Jr., from the pulpit repeatedly scoffed at such suggestions. Nevertheless, the *Report* has now learned that the entire sabbath doctrine is indeed being reevaluated by a very large number of WCG ministers and particularly by the organization's top leaders. Not only is the old doctrine being questioned, but preparations have already begun for the eventual watering down that many insiders say is inevitable.

A key ingredient in those preparations is the widespread dissemination of the 345-page book *Sabbath in Crisis* among WCG ministers. *Sabbath in Crisis* was authored by former Seventh Day Adventist minister Dale Ratzlaff who now heads Life Assurance Ministries. In his book Pastor Ratzlaff argues quite effectively that under the New Covenant, observance of the Old Testament sabbath is simply not required. While the argument has been made before, what makes Ratzlaff's book so remarkable is the thoroughness with which he approaches the subject. While his book is very easy to read, *Sabbath in Crisis* contains over 800 scriptural references. It is perhaps for that reason that his book has had such a profound effect on the thinking of so many WCG ministers. We have learned that although WCG headquarters does not yet want the book widely disseminated to its members, hundreds of WCG ministers have already purchased and

read the book. Pastor Ratzlaff tells us that WCG headquarters in Pasadena has even purchased bulk shipments of the book for distribution to key church personnel. (We have had this information verified by headquarters executives and sources in the field ministry.) *Sabbath in Crisis* is available in many Christian bookstores, but it can also be ordered directly from Life Assurance Ministries, P.O. Box 3745, Sedona, AZ 86340-3745; tel. 602-282-4319. The price is \$14.95 per copy (plus \$2 for shipping to destinations outside the U.S., and California residents must add a 6% sales tax). Those who would like more information before ordering, or who would like information about bulk order discounts, should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the above address.

While it appears inevitable that the WCG will in time be modifying its sabbath doctrine, does that mean that the WCG will soon be keeping Sunday? We asked a number of WCG insiders that question. While demanding anonymity, one frankly said, "Mr. Tkach knows he can't go that far yet because sabbath keeping is important to the members' feelings of being special. But what will probably happen is that Mr. Tkach will slowly modify church policies regarding the sabbath. I think we are going to start by allowing members who have to work on Saturdays to go ahead and do that without being disfellowshipped. Besides, it will help church income. How open that policy will be, I can't say for sure right now. But frankly that has already been quietly happening in some church areas. In some congregations, as long as the member continues to tithe and does not create division by openly opposing church authority, he may go ahead and work on the sabbath without being disfellowshipped. Of course, that is not yet the policy with all of our pastors, but it is a policy we hope will eventually be the norm."

(Note: the above was written months before the January 7 announcements described at the end of this issue. We have left this article in to show how calculating the WCG's top leaders really are - ed.)

## **Been Reading the PT Lately?**

No, we're not kidding. Every AR reader should subscribe to the *Plain Truth* (even if you're disfellowshipped and have to use a pseudonym to get it). Why? Because it's so funny to see the PT's writers systematically decimating every last vestige of Armstrongism before our very eyes.

For instance, take the October issue - please! (Sorry, couldn't resist that.) There on page eight began an article in praise of "Contemporary Christian music" - what the article explains as the Gospel (read "Protestant") message when combined with rock music. Could you imagine what Handel-loving HWA would have done to a writer who submitted such an article to him? Yet there it was in the PT, complete with photos of all the latest Christian-rock stars.

Then there was the Nov./Dec. issue. On page 14 Neil Earle explains that the gospel is "your invitation to the Kingdom." Sounds OK, but then a couple of pages later he tells us most emphatically what the gospel is not: It's not "the Social Gospel" (ironically, the very thing many say Joseph Tkach has been preaching the last few years), it's not "the Health and Wealth Gospel" (what many Protestant ministers preach and what some WCG ministers in the past have preached), it's not the Gospel of Works (what Herbert Armstrong was accused of preaching), and most certainly it is not "the End-Time Gospel" (what Herbert Armstrong most definitely preached and what Garner Ted Armstrong, Roderick Meredith, Gerald Flurry and others preach today).

---

But turning to page 20, we get an even bigger shocker. There, John Halford does homage to Mary, "the mother of Christ" and "the first Christian." The article comes complete with 12 (count 'em -12!) different paintings of "the Madonna" by mostly Catholic painters. Remember when the WCG eschewed everything Roman Catholic? No more. It's all great stuff now.

Here at AR we wondered about the phrase "mother of Christ." On the surface there might not appear to be anything wrong with it. But HWA avoided the phrase - undoubtedly because it comes so close to the Catholic phrase "Mary, Mother of God" which, itself, comes so close to the biblically condemned worship of the "Queen of Heaven" (Jer. 44:17,25). So we contacted one of our "inside sources" and asked, "What gives with this new recognition of the Madonna? Is the WCG trying to capitalize on the new goddess worship thing? Or the wave of fervent Marianism that has been sweeping the Catholic world in the last few years?" Our insider replied, "Not at all. Mr. Tkach simply recognizes the importance of women, not only in modern society but throughout the Bible." "Fair enough," was our reply. "But isn't 'mother of Christ' simply a euphemism for 'Mother of God'?" After a long pause, all the man could say was, "Well... let's be honest. Jesus is a hypostasis of God. Therefore Jesus is God. So, yes, yes, I guess that's right, Mary is the Mother of God, in a sense. But please, PLEASE don't quote me by name."

## How Many Members?

Readers frequently ask how many members are currently in the WCG. The official WCG position is that WCG "membership remains constant at around 100,000 members" (see Mark A. Kellner's excellent article in the 11/8/93 issue of *Christianity Today*). There are a number of reasons why we question that figure. First of all, the many WCG splinter groups continue to drain away WCG members at an accelerating rate. Rod Meredith's organization alone is reported to have pulled away over 6,000 Worldwidiers in just the last year. Flurry and GTA are likewise pulling away WCG members. The drain is plainly visible in Pasadena where there used to be four WCG congregations., but now there are only two. Another reason why we doubt the WCG's claim of having 100,000 members is that the way members are counted appears to have been changed. No longer is one either a member or a non-member. There is now something called "an associate member." Notice the following letter from a reader in Iowa:

Yesterday I spoke briefly to Dan Fricke, our pastor here at the Des Moines Worldwide Assembly. His evaluation was that I had been sending out some strange letters and that it would be more appropriate to communicate by telephone. I am now an associate member. I explained that perhaps the reason my letters seemed strange is that I am actively ministering in at least two other organizations and that I had gotten into the habit of communicating by memos because that's the way we do it at the office.

Of course, I know my letters are strange. If they seem somewhat strange to me, how much stranger must they be to you?

(Editor: According to one Pasadena source, the WCG's actual active membership is now down to

about 60,000 members and that number is continuing to drop.)



## Gary Alexander - Optimist

One of the most remarkable individuals to have ever gone through the Ambassador experience is Gary Alexander, writer, editor, publisher, musician, financial consultant, lecturer, and bibliophile. In 1993, Gary and his wife Karen (Biedler) were tapped to run the annual gatherings of the Eris Society, which, in their press release, was described this way:

Eris is the Greek goddess of discord, whose golden apple was marked, "To the fairest" (*Kalliste*). The squabble over this apple created the jealousy that led to the Trojan War. We have adopted that name to apply to a group of highly intelligent free thinkers - sometimes mischief makers - who meet once a year to discuss the arts and sciences, philosophy to theology - the world of ideas beyond our workaday lives.

The Eris Society is a unique organization, if it can be called an organization at all, since it actually has no formal structure. It is not incorporated, is not a partnership, is owned by no one in particular. We pay no dues. We have no by-laws or voting. Rather, it belongs to those who are invited and who attend its annual gathering.

For 14 years, the annual Eris gathering in Aspen, Colorado has brought together some of the brightest and boldest thinkers in the United States: leading economists, college professors, authors, physicians, psychologists, performing artists, and scientists.

Along with his many business activities, Alexander still finds time to lecture and write. In October, he gave a talk before the Northern Virginia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. His talk, titled "Welcome to the Initial Meeting of Apocaholics Anonymous," began this way:

Hi, I'm Gary and I'm a recovering Apocaholic. I'm currently Apocalypse-free for nearly four years. I left the church of the Religious Apocalypse nearly 19 years ago, and the church of the Secular Apocalypse five years ago. Yes, I still get the urge to proclaim the end of all things from time to time and I read the Crisis Press, but now I white-knuckle my way to a history book for a little perspective. *If you wish to join Apocaholics Anonymous, our only requirement is a desire to give up Eschatology.*

After the humorous introduction, Alexander went on to talk about his former careers as a *Plain Truth* writer and financial-world doomsdayer. Today, Alexander is much more of an optimist and his talk - now a paper - has given us much to think about. While we do not agree with all of his conclusions, many would undoubtedly find his 10-page paper edifying. For a copy, send \$2 to Gary Alexander, c/o The Eris Society, P.O. Box 161, Vienna, Virginia 22183-0161. Be sure to also request a listing of his many other provocative writings. Finally, to their old friend John Kilburn, Gary and Karen ask, "Where are you now?"

## Literature of Interest

The WCG's new position on the Trinity has already been the cause of thousands leaving the WCG and we continue to get letters from readers wanting more information on the subject. Earlier this year, former Ambassador instructor Anthony F. Buzzard, now a professor at Atlanta Bible College, and former WCG evangelist Charles F. Hunting completed a book titled *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound*. The book presents Bible students with an alternative to the Binitarianism of the original WCG and its current brand of Trinitarianism which some see as really a form of Modalism. A number of current WCG ministers who have read the book have privately indicated they agree with the two authors' conclusions. Additionally, in the foreword to the book, religious scholar Sydney A. Hatch wrote:

This book is a devastating indictment of the central dogma of historic or mainstream Christianity - that version of the faith which, unknown to many, stems from the councils and the creeds. Christianity still prostrates itself before the low wrought-gold throne of Constantine. Its dogma has produced tragic and bloody episodes in history. Something is askew.

At the same time, however, the message and purpose of *Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* is positive. It does not condemn but attempts to tell the patient about the terrible wound to his body-ecclesiastic and then offers the healing balm of Jesus' own creed. Its very object is to propose ways of believing that more accurately conform to what Jesus believed and taught about God and about himself.

The new, 172-page book is a thorough and scholarly study that is extensively footnoted and contains a six-page select bibliography. Copies are available for \$9.95 plus \$1.50 postage by writing to either of the co-authors at 185 Summerville Dr., Brooks, GA 30205.

*The Worldwide Church of God versus the Church of God (7th Day)* is a seven-page paper written by John Kiesz, a sabbatarian oldtimer who knew Herbert Armstrong personally in the 1930s. Those studying HWA's early history may find the paper of interest. For a copy, send \$2 to John Kiesz, 820 Woodlawn, Canon City, CO 81212.

While the WCG has toned down its anti-Christmas rhetoric in recent years, the WCG's official position still is that Christians should not keep that holiday. Most of the WCG's offshoots have taken a similar stance. Even Ernest Martin of ASK has reverted to that old HWA teaching (see the December, 1994 issue of his ASK newsletter). In the past, one Bible researcher who was often quoted by the anti-Christmas groups was evangelist Ralph Woodrow. Now Woodrow has

published a new booklet on the subject, modifying what many felt was his former Armstrong-like position on the subject. Titled *Christmas - Reconsidered*, the concise 59-page booklet gives a very thorough analysis of the Christmas issue, covering many of the arguments used by the WCG and other groups over the years. Many who feel they understand the Christmas issue will still find Woodrow's latest study very thought provoking. (As an aside, readers of the booklet will notice two unnamed men mentioned on page 45. The author informs us that, yes, they were WCG officials who admitted to him that the WCG position on Christmas trees was in error.) The high quality booklet is available for \$5 by writing to Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502-0124. Incidentally, sources within the WCG tell us that a change regarding how the WCG views Christmas may be in the offing and that the moderate position taken by Woodrow is close to where the WCG, itself, may be in one or two years.

*Christmas: To Every Man an Answer* by Julius A. Afolalu. The author of this 70-page booklet is a former Worldwider who tells us he would eventually like to marry a former Worldwider (but, alas, he has still not met the right one). His booklet is a spirited defense of Christmas observance that some will find interesting. A copy may be had for an international money order of \$5 by writing to Mr. Afolalu at P.O. Box 135, Ilawe Ekiti, Ondo State, Nigeria. He suggests that all letters be sent registered because of the very high rate of mail theft by postal employees in that country.

What is "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" mentioned in Rev. 2:15? Many of us who were in Worldwide years ago can recall sermons in which some WCG ministers would claim that the Nicolaitanes were followers of a Saint Nicholas (actually a fourth-century bishop) who was supposedly later to be mythologized as Santa Claus. We recently came across an article which presents a much more plausible theory. According to C. J. Milosh, "Nicolaitanism" is really clergy elitism - that is, the idea that the clergy are "special" people who have an inherent right to lord it over their flocks. We think Milosh's article is one many would find very eye-opening. The article first appeared in the July-Aug., 1992 edition of *The American Christian*. Copies of that issue may be obtained for \$2 by writing to American Christian Ministries, P.O. Box 2038, Ft. Davis, TX 79734.

Attempting to identify the "Lost Ten Tribes" seems to be an ongoing project with many current and former Worldwidiers. During the past year we came across three new works on that subject. They are: *The Tribes* by Yair Davidy, 480 pages, available from Russel-Davis Publishers, Hebron 1993, Israel (\$25 including postage). Incidentally, this book has a "rabbinical approbation." *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel ... Found!* by Steven M. Collins, 3901 Crescent Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57106, 425 pages (\$50 per copy, write to the author for details). And finally, from a more critical viewpoint, there is *Shadows of a Better Covenant*, an insightful 60-page booklet by Leona McNair. For a copy write to the author at 1875 Paloma Street, Pasadena, CA 91104-4816. (To help cover printing and postage, a contribution of \$5 would be appreciated.)

Long-time WCG observers who have read *Sabbath in Crisis* by Ratzlaff have discovered an ironic fact. Apparently unbeknownst to Ratzlaff, much of his research and conclusions parallel those of Dr. Ernest L. Martin, the one-time head of Ambassador's theology department, who went on to head the Foundation for Biblical Research and now the Associates for Scriptural Knowledge. A number of WCG insiders are aware that during the seventies Joseph Tkach, while publicly loyal to the teachings of HWA, was privately indicating that he agreed with many of Martin's conclusions. Those who read Ratzlaff's book may wish to compare his work with some of Martin's booklets on the new covenant: *The Law of Moses, the Passover and the Lord's Supper; What Is Progressive Revelation in the Bible?* and others. In addition, many will be interested to learn that Martin has just published *Restoring the Original Bible* (\$19.95), a 500-

page book which so completely updates and amplifies his 1984 edition *The Original Bible Restored* that it is almost an entirely new book. To order any of these works, contact Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225, tel. 1-800-292-4352.

Dr. James Tabor and the Original Bible Project (OBP) have been mentioned in our pages before (see ARs [41](#) and [56](#)). The Project's main goal is to produce a significant, new translation of the entire Bible by May 1997. The OBP board of directors is made up of Dr. Robert Kuhn, Dr. James Tabor, and Robert Ellsworth, with Dr. Tabor serving as chief editor. Dr. Ernest Martin, although not on the board, has been an inspiration and great supporter of the Project since its inception. Dr. Tabor has recently expanded his group of translating consultants and has announced that Dr. Michael Wise of the University of Chicago would be working with him in this capacity. In September the OBP announced that it had completed work on the book of Genesis. Mr. Ellsworth tells us that the OBP will send a free copy of its preliminary edition of *The Book of Genesis: A New Translation with Notes* to any of our readers who requests a copy. This is a very generous offer as the preliminary edition is, itself, a very fine reference work for all who study the Bible. We suspect that many who read it will want to support the efforts of the OBP and perhaps subscribe to their newsletter *The Chronicle*. For more information contact: The Original Bible Project, 408 S. Pasadena Ave., Suite 4, Pasadena, CA 91105; tel. 1-800-848-2731. Incidentally, to learn even more about the OBP, you may also request a video tape they have produced about the goals of the organization. It is available for a suggested donation of \$10.

## Comments on Waco

Even though almost two full years have passed since the beginning of the Branch Davidian tragedy in Waco, Texas, we continue to get letters from readers wanting more information about what transpired. As most readers are aware, the U.S. Treasury Department's report on the initial raid was highly critical of the performance of its Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF). But no government report or court ruling concluded that there was a lack of probable cause when BATF agents obtained their original warrant. (Whether the warrant was served in the legally prescribed manner is a completely different matter and is one that, for some reason, has not been addressed in any article we have seen. Nor have we seen a video of the initial moments of the serving of the warrant, a fact that is rather disturbing.) At the same time, the Justice Department's report on the FBI's handling of the 51-day siege that followed the raid absolved the FBI of misconduct, blaming cult leader David Koresh and his followers for the April 19 conflagration's suicides and/or murders. Nevertheless, in that report some of the government's outside experts did fault the FBI for not having heeded the warnings of the government's negotiators. Nancy T. Ammerman, a cult expert and visiting scholar at Princeton University, said, "There was an understandable desire among many agents in Waco to make Koresh and the Davidians pay for the harm they had caused [the deaths of four federal agents].... Arguments for patience or unconventional tactics fell on deaf ears." (*Los Angeles Times*, 10/9/93, p. A1). As a result of the botched raid and later cover-ups, a number of BATF officials were fired (*Associated Press* articles of 2/27/94).

In the trial of 11 of the Davidians that survived the ordeal, three were acquitted of all charges. Three of the 11 were convicted of weapons-related charges (possession of a grenade, conspiracy to possess machine guns, and using or carrying a firearm during the commission of a crime), and five were convicted of both using a firearm during the commission of a crime and of voluntary manslaughter (legally defined as the voluntary, unlawful killing of another human being under circumstances that, while not justifying the homicide, mitigate it - usually meaning that the homicide was committed under heat of passion induced by some provocation). The five each received a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison plus fines of up to \$10,000 (*Chicago Tribune*, 6/18/94, p. A2). Another Davidian, Kathryn Schroeder, on a plea bargain was convicted

of resisting arrest and was sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of \$5,000.

In explaining the severity of the sentences, U.S. District Judge Walter Smith Sr. said, "those defendants engaged in conspiracy to cause the death of federal agents.... not one single defendant apologized or expressed any real sorrow for the dead or injured agents." In fact, according to the *Los Angeles Times* (6/18/94, p. A23), "while some Branch Davidians asked for leniency, others had stood before Smith... and hurled personal insults at him, blaming the government for the agents' deaths. Most said that they had nothing to apologize for."

While *Ambassador Report* is not the place for a lengthy analysis of all aspects of the story, we should pass on some information we received about the Koresh story this past year. A number of readers have made reference to a video distributed by attorney Linda D. Thompson and the American Justice Federation who claim that the government was entirely at fault in the Waco tragedy. Thompson's tape, which contains controversially edited footage of the April 19, 1993 holocaust, is called *Waco - the Big Lie*. Copies may be obtained for \$20 by writing Real World Productions, 7092 Highland Road, Suite 174, Waterford, MI 48327. Those who view the tape may also wish to read the article "Anti-government video on Waco revealed to be a hoax," in the August 1994 edition of *Cult Awareness Network News* (2421 West Pratt Blvd., Suite 1173, Chicago, IL 60645). The article contained a number of startling claims including this one:

Thompson claims in her lawsuit that the fire that consumed the compound was deliberately set by government agents. Her videotape, "Waco: the Big Lie," includes a sequence that shows an armored vehicle under FBI command ramming the compound. A narrator describes the scene: "You can see that this tank has a gas jet on the front that shoots fire. You can also see the fire quite plainly."

But Mike McNulty, chairman of a privately funded think-tank called the California Organization for Public Safety (COPS), obtained an uncut version of the original private film from which Thompson drew her footage.

The footage had been shot by KWTW in Waco, and was edited by Thompson for her project without permission from the station.

McNulty forwarded the tape to *Machine Gun News* columnist Ken Carter, who, in a February 1994 issue of the gun enthusiast magazine, described what Thompson's video did not show: "In the COPS version, rather than stopping the video at the point where the illusion of flame is most apparent, as in the AJF tape, the camera continues to follow the vehicle as it backs clear of the building.... As (the) tank turns away from (the) camera, (the) reflection spreads to reveal what appears to be a large section of tan wallboard leaning against (the) turret."

One month before the release of that article, Carter was interviewed for a Jan. 21, 1994 *Gun Week* article entitled "'Waco: The Big Lie' Revealed as Hoax," "Linda Thompson suckered all of us with that one," Carter told *Gun Week*. "And she knew exactly what she was doing, since the videotape sequence was edited a split second before the vehicle pulls back and executes a hard turn which clearly shows the 'flame' image stabilize and turn out to be a piece of wallboard."

*Soldier of Fortune* magazine also has reviewed the tape and concluded that the "flame" really is "wallboard and other construction debris knocked loose" by the tank.

Another fact that comes out in the CAN article is that contrary to numerous press reports, the Chicago cult monitoring group had nothing to do with instigating the raid on the Davidians. In fact, says CAN, they did not even learn of the BATF investigation until the initial raid had already taken place.

One individual who has had much to say about the Waco tragedy is Dr. James Tabor who, along with Dr. Phillip Arnold, had been in limited communication with David Koresh during the siege. In his December 13, 1993 letter to *Genesis 2000* readers, Tabor wrote:

Trying to get at the truth of what happened, coming to love and understand the survivors (the so-called "Branch Davidians" which is not a name they wear but was given them by the media), and doing what I can to combat the trend of government intervention in religious freedom (labeling certain groups as "cults," etc.) consumed much of my year. April 19 was a sad day in American history and 90% of what you heard about David Koresh through the media was distorted lies.

Tabor's views about the Waco disaster can be read in the October, 1993 issue of *Bible Review* magazine; in an insightful Haim Shapiro interview of Tabor that appeared 7/17/93 in the international edition of *The Jerusalem Post Magazine* (P.O. Box 81, Jerusalem 91000, Israel); in two of his taped lectures distributed by Emmanuel (P.O. Box 442, Athens, TN 37371); and in a book to be published by the University of California at Berkeley in the summer of 1995 (its tentative title is *Why Waco? - the War Against Cults and Religious Freedom in America*). Incidentally, the *Bible Review* article by Tabor (along with pointed commentary by John Pinkston) was reprinted in *The Herald* (Oct.-Dec., 1993) published by The Congregation of God Seventh Day. You can get a free copy by writing to them at P.O. Box 2345, Kennesaw, GA 30144.

Undoubtedly the Waco story is not at an end. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, now in private practice, has agreed to represent the convicted Davidians in a massive lawsuit against the federal government. In the course of that action many startling facts may still be revealed.

The Waco tragedy has been paralleled by many to the tragic Weaver fiasco that occurred in Idaho in 1992. That tragic drama began when U.S. Deputy Marshal William Degan was killed as authorities attempted to arrest Randall C. Weaver, an adherent of the Christian Identity movement, on a charge of selling an illegal sawed-off shotgun. During the strange arrest attempt and its aftermath, Weaver's 14-year-old son was also killed, as was Weaver's wife as she stood in the cabin's doorway holding her baby daughter. (She was shot by a government sniper who was 600 feet away, *Los Angeles Times*, 10/19/93, p. A4.) What followed was a ten-day siege of the Weaver home that only ended when Vietnam war hero Bo Gritz was able to talk Weaver into surrendering. In January FBI Director Louis J. Freeh criticized some of the methods used by 12 of the agents involved in the shootout and disciplined them with short suspensions. But critics of the government say the punishments meted out were so slight as to amount to mere slaps on their wrists (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/7/95, p. A4). Nevertheless, with Gerry Spence, considered by many to be America's greatest trial lawyer, representing the Weaver family in a civil suit, it is quite possible that many new and startling facts will yet emerge regarding federal policies toward religious minorities. (Incidentally, those interested in researching the Randy Weaver story in depth should contact *Midnight Messenger*, 9205 SE Clackamas Rd., #1776, Clackamas, OR 97015; tel. 503-824-2050.)

## **WCG Demons**

Like most Bible fundamentalists, Worldwidars have traditionally been fascinated by the subject of demons. And over the years the *Report* has received numerous letters regarding the subject. Particularly within the WCG's leadership, there are many who take the subject of demons very seriously. One such individual is Dr. Herman Hoeh, the elder statesman of WCG evangelists. A few months ago, WCG historian Bruce Renehan sent us the following information:

For over a decade now, Herman Hoeh has frequently told church members about a 1970s encounter he had with a supposedly demon-possessed Irishman who came to visit him. As the story goes, a red-haired, glassy-eyed Irishman simply appeared at Hoeh's office one day and requested to talk to him. Hoeh allowed the man to sit across from him at his desk and they conversed for a while. Hoeh did not suspect anything unusual until the guest leaned forward and quietly asked if Hoeh could get God to see things from "his" perspective - a perspective he quietly called "the way of competition." Hoeh immediately concluded that the man was possessed by the Devil. So he answered the question by saying, "That's simple. Just repent."

But was Hoeh concerned about who was communicating with him? Not at all. As he tells it, he was as ecstatic as a prison psychiatrist who discovers that he has encountered a true multiple personality. So, he wondered, how could he capitalize on the opportunity? Realizing that openly consorting with a demon-possessed man might have given the appearance of evil to his colleagues at church headquarters, Hoeh decided to drive the man to a secluded location for further discussions. How much each revealed to the other is not clear. But the often-told story does raise some interesting questions:

(1) Jesus was able to discern demon-possessed persons immediately. Why was Hoeh able to perceive the problem only after a lengthy discussion? (2) Paul warned in his writings about the dangers of receiving any messages from demons. Why did Hoeh not heed Paul's warning once he was certain he was talking to a demon, if not the Devil himself, as he claims? (3) The Bible warns that demons are "lying spirits." If so, why did Hoeh want to have discourse with the visitor? Finally, (4) why didn't evangelist Hoeh follow the New Testament example and simply cast out the demon?

An even more amazing story is one that involves Hoeh's leading disciple, Pastor General Joseph Tkach, himself. One of our readers, a long-time Tkach acquaintance, tells the story of how, in the mid-1960s, while visiting with Tkach in Pasadena, Tkach confided to the church member that "a demon" had informed him that he would one day be Herbert Armstrong's successor. The incident is particularly amazing because when it occurred, Tkach, by his own admission, was so far down on the WCG totem pole that the mere suggestion he could ever succeed HWA would have brought guffaws from everyone in the WCG's hierarchy. Yet, somehow, in the mid-sixties Tkach's "demon" knew exactly what was to transpire in the WCG by 1986.

Some years ago in [AR14](#) we reported on a book titled *Demolishing the Hosts of Hell* by Ken Worley, a Baptist preacher who claims to have successfully performed hundreds of exorcisms. The author claimed that in the course of his work many of the demons he cast out of suffering people had verbally identified themselves. Strangely, there were some who identified themselves by the name Herbert Armstrong.

In 1990, AR received a lengthy letter from a reader who told a remarkable story. During the reader's childhood, her father became interested in Armstrongism and what followed for the large family was years of involvement with the WCG, Ambassador College education, and years of family strife as some family members joined WCG spinoffs and other cults. The woman, herself, left the WCG in the 1970s and found a large measure of spiritual peace and well-being. Yet, in 1987 she was beset by strange physical illnesses that physicians were only partially able to diagnose and treat. The woman eventually concluded that the illnesses were caused by demonic forces and so she began to rebuke the demons in the name of Jesus. Doing so brought relief, but each time the relief was only temporary.

Then one day, during a pastoral counseling session, she had a breakthrough insight. She became convinced that her years in the WCG were somehow at the root of her spirit-induced ailments. During the next few days she began removing from her home almost all vestiges of her years in Worldwide: WCG literature, sermon notes, etc. She immediately noticed an improvement in her

condition. But then, a few days later another bizarre incident occurred. She explained:

One day as I set out for my regular two-mile walk, I opened my mouth to sing one of the hymns I learned in the WCG, "O, sing a new song to the Lord, For wonders He has done..." but nothing would come out! I tried again, but my tongue, literally would not work. I noticed that even the melody seemed garbled in my mind. What in the world... ? I opened my mouth a third time and as the blockage remained I became convinced that the Lord had stopped my tongue.

When the woman returned home, she took out the WCG hymnal, which she had kept, and read the introduction by Herbert Armstrong. She continues:

I had my answer.... The principal thing is not that the WCG songs were scripturally correct. They were penned to promote the cause of the "land" of Captivity and Confusion. The Lord was telling me, "It's time to sing the songs of Jerusalem and Zion. You're out of captivity now." And then there was the very poignant verse: "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." That day marked the end of WCG hymns for me. Out they went.

Amazingly, the woman's physical condition improved. On another occasion, during a period of stress, she accidentally discovered one of her old Ambassador textbooks complete with marginal notes from the lectures of evangelist Ron Kelly. Out went the book. And, again, she felt better.

Her many years of experience with the WCG and its aftermath have led this woman to conclude that the WCG is not only filled with "lying spirits," but that its demonic forces can have lingering effects even upon those who think they have escaped its clutches. The woman above has concluded, "Satan, not God, is the founder of the WCG, and the only way to set anyone free is with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Are such experiences actually the result of WCG demons? Obviously, for some people the answer is yes. But what are these demons really? To Worldwidiers and most Bible fundamentalists, demons are nonphysical, fallen angels that rove the earth causing all sorts of havoc. Others see demons as personifications of psychic entities or controlling, personality-splitting complexes. To find answers to such questions, some ex-Worldwidiers have looked to the writings of the Human Potential Foundation Press (P.O. Box 6, Falls Church, VA 22040), the Great Lakes Foundation for Biblical Research (P.O. Box 63, Jenison, MI 49429) and even to the books of Zechariah Sitchin (author of *The Twelfth Planet* and *Genesis Revisited*). Others have found plausible explanations in the writings of psychologists. Those with an understanding of Jungian psychology may wish to read the extremely interesting book *Demons of the Inner World* by Swiss psychiatrist Alfred Ribi, Shambhala Publications, 1990. Whatever one's view, the subject of demons and exorcism has increasingly been gaining the attention of millions of Americans. (For an outstanding report on this phenomenon, see the article "Deliverance or Denial?" by Roy Rivenburg which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/25/91, p. E1).

Finally, one important point about the WCG's views on this subject. For many years most WCG ministers, with their anti-intellectual bent, routinely labeled as "demonic" virtually all psychological problems and illnesses they could not understand (most, in other words). The harm this caused to hundreds, if not thousands, was truly devastating. The following story from one of our Texas readers is not unusual:

I only lasted in Armstrongism about 18 months. At the Feast of Trumpets in 1976, the local elder put me out of the assembly for being "demon influenced." Then in 1982 when I made an effort to attend a holy day service the same local elder had me arrested for trespassing. It was

only after being freed from the bondage of the Armstrongs that I started making progress in my life. I learned that my so-called signs of demon influence were, in fact, caused by a major mental illness. There is no complete cure for my illness. However, it can be treated with medication. And for the past seven years, I have been able to lead a fairly normal life.

Thankfully, in recent years the WCG ministry has begun to recognize that for many mental problems there is medical help available. Undoubtedly, much of the change has been due to the fact that Joseph Tkach's wife (and the mother of church administrator Joe Jr.) is, herself, schizophrenic and dependent upon medication to maintain her mental equilibrium.

## Letters

I have been happily reading your reports for years but was disappointed by your last one. In [AR56](#) you were too sweet on the WCG's leaders. Why congratulate them for accreditation or anything? I even get the impression sometimes that you think Herbert Armstrong had a good side to him.

-California

*Editor: I do think HWA, for all his flaws, still had some good in him. While it is clear that the organization he started was, and still is, a destructive cult, that fact alone should not get in the way of recognizing that HWA had some good points. Personally, I can think of a number of things that he taught that were correct and even ahead of his time. Just a few: (1) He emphasized the importance of "cause and effect" in human conduct at a time when most of the media seemed to be ignoring that very elementary concept. (2) Contrary to the majority of intellectuals of his time, he did not assume that human history had an inevitable upward and ever-improving moral evolution built into it. (3) He recognized the pagan origins of much of what has come down to us as mainstream Christianity. (4) He taught about the significance of the breakdown of the traditional family. And (5), he recognized that the world was heading into increasingly precarious times and that technology alone could not be our savior. I could go on.*

*None of the above should imply that HWA was a truly righteous man or that he did not have some terrible sins in his past. But just as we should not ignore those faults, we should neither ignore his better side. The same applies to Tkach. He is most certainly a self-promoting politician. Nevertheless, we should not ignore his accomplishments. Accreditation will be a blessing to all Ambassador alumni. Just as Tkach's change in the WCG's old healing doctrine will save lives. Not all the changes made by Tkach are beyond criticism. But let us not be so critical as to lose all balance.*

Now I've heard it all. Ex-Worldwidars joining neo-Nazi groups! But I guess I shouldn't be surprised. Haven't those knuckleheads heard that some of us fought a war to prevent the Nazis from taking over the world? Don't those idiots understand that Hitler and his bunch wanted to destroy Britain and the United States? I suppose they think that just because Hitler was a Christian of sorts that that made him OK.

-Illinois

*Editor: Actually, even though Hitler had the war-time support of a number of Christian denominations, he was not a Christian. It has been well-documented that Hitler was a practicing occultist who intended to turn Germany toward the worship of ancient gods after the war. You can read the amazing details in The Occult and the Third Reich by Jean-Michel Angebert*

(Macmillan, 1974).

I am not in sympathy with the practices and beliefs of the Branch Davidians. But I see a sinister side to the attack by the U.S. government.... The U.S. appears to be going the way of Nazi Germany. While my friends insist that we are Israel, I have to suspect that the United States may really be the prophesied Beast Power.

-WCG member  
California

*Editor: We have had a number of letters from readers who say they now see the U.S. as the Beast of Revelation. One such reader pointed out that the U.S. got its legal and government administrative system from the British who got theirs from William the Conqueror, a Norman, and that the Norman system traces back to the ancient Romans. Another reader claims that the American idea that all men are created equal actually traces back to a decree of Roman Emperor Caracalla who, in 212 A.D., granted full Roman citizenship to all freeborn inhabitants of the empire. A third reader pointed out that during the Pax Romana of ancient times, Roman soldiers were the Western world's policemen, just as today, during what is often called the Pax Americana, the soldiers of the United States seem to have taken over that role. A fair number of readers have also made the rather interesting observation that while the U.S. considers itself a democracy, the actual fact is that, like Rome, we have a small but very powerful ruling class and a growing de facto slave class (even though no one dares call it that publicly) - that is, millions who live from paycheck to paycheck and dare not question or speak out about anything. Finally, some have dug out their history books and made the discovery that even though many of the signers of the U.S. Constitution were nominal Anglicans (quite willing to take up arms against the head of their church for economic and political motives) or nominal members of other Christian denominations, the majority seemed to have been Deists (the Enlightenment's equivalent to modern humanists) who were far better read in the Greek and Roman classics than they were in the Bible. These readers point out that the Founding Fathers' love of Greco-Roman ideas is evident in the Greek-columned architecture of many Washington buildings and in the fact that atop our very Capitol's dome is not a Christian symbol, but the statute of a Greek goddess. Apparently, such facts have convinced some that the United State is the heir to the dark powers of the Roman Empire and is therefore the final reincarnation of the Beast. If any reader has seen an article on this theory, we'd appreciate receiving a copy.*

*In WCG and ex-WCG circles at the present time there are at least six views regarding the identity of the end-time, ten-horned "Beast" of Revelation: (1) HWA's old view that the Beast will be a ten-nation United States of Europe; (2) Ernest Martin's view that the ten will be an alliance of mainly Arabic nations that surround the state of Israel today; (3) the anti-Jewish view that Rev. 11:8 identifies the great city of the Beast as Jerusalem and that, therefore, the Beast is the pro-law legalism of Rabbinical and/or Messianic Judaism, (4) the view, as stated in the letter above, that the United States and its allies constitute the Beast, (5) Joseph Tkach's view that no one can know anything about prophecy and that even if you could it wouldn't matter anyhow, and, finally, (6) the view that the Beast will be some type of economic-political arrangement that will encompass the whole world. Note the following letter:*

On December 2, the headline in the *Los Angeles Times* read "Senate Approves Sweeping Pact to Revise Global Trade Rules." As I went through the article I became alarmed at how incredibly broad the world's new trade agreement is and at how little opposition there was to it from our nation's leaders. Many describe it as the most important economic treaty in the history of the world.

However, what startled me even more was the front page of that edition's business section. On its front page was a large chart showing the world's current trade blocs. There were eleven listed: The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Andean Group, the Assoc. of Southeast Asian Nations, the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations pact, the Caribbean Community and Common Market, the Central American Common Market, the Southern African Development Community, the Southern Common Market, and Russia. Only Eastern Europe, India, and the Arabic and central African countries have yet to join trade blocs. But there is already talk that most of them will eventually attach themselves to neighboring blocs. Russia, for instance, wants to join the European Common Market and negotiations toward achieving that end begin in 1998.

Now, you may be wondering why I find all of this significant. The answer is simple, Russia is a single nation now. It is not a trading bloc, as even the article admitted. If you take them off the *Times'* comprehensive list, you see that the world today is divided up into exactly TEN groups of nations.

I read in one magazine how scientists have come up with a way of imbedding small computer chips in people's hands or foreheads as a way to identify people for purchasing on credit without the use of ID cards. Then in the *Ventura County Star* a few days ago there was a political cartoon showing the flags of a number of nations, but the biggest flag of all was that of the World Trade Organization. The symbol on the flag was the bar code we see on most goods now. I didn't think it was funny.

Now, with our Senate having assured the worldwide implementation of GATT, I can't help but wonder if the end-time Beast is not already here.

-California

Over the years your journal has provided suggested helpful titles to read. WCG members and ex-members alike have much to read. Many troubled people have doctrinal questions, but my observation is that rarely do they question the very philosophical foundation of the WCG and its colorful spinoffs. I'm speaking of questioning adventism, defined as believing in the imminent and visible second appearance of Jesus Christ. Many people would think it madness to question this as it has been so deeply ingrained in them. But that is the very reason to question it. So many teachings of the WCG were, and are, wrong. If this concept cannot stand, then it makes little sense to run after many of the groups you have recently listed. As far as I can see they are all adventists. Those of your readership who are in a true search for the truth would do well to consider other Christian views of eschatology (final things).

To this end I would suggest reading Robert Clouse's *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (Intervarsity Press, 1977). The four views are presented by able proponents and equally able opponents provide critical comments. Again, why should people take the WCG's meaning of the millennium as a given? It's a crucial question.

After I resigned from the WCG ministry in 1992 I did some research into the teachings of the preterists. Preterism is quite the opposite teaching of adventism. I was most impressed with the honest handling of the dozens of imminency statements in the New Testament. Most of these are ignored by adventists or all manner of interpretive gymnastics are practiced to avoid their real import. The interested reader can obtain a simple introductory booklet titled *What Happened in 70 A.D.?* from: Kingdom Counsel, 122 Seaward Avenue, Bradford, PA 16701. (Send \$3.) These people are distributing a number of thoughtful materials dealing with the problems in adventist

teachings. One of the best is a book by Gary DeMar entitled *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*. It's good for those "tired of prophetic pessimism and failure."

Along these lines, your readers might like to know of a significant date. This past October 22 marked the 150th anniversary of the collapse of the Millerite movement. The Millerites' final date [for the return of Christ] passed as "The Great Disappointment" but unfortunately the gullibility of the people remained. William Miller, a false prophet, started the modern-day second advent movement in this country. After "the passing of the time" the survivors organized as a new business the Seventh-Day Adventists and it was from this body that the various Church of God groups emerged. Out of one of these came Armstrong's Radio Church of God, later called the Worldwide Church of God. It has all been documented elsewhere.

I am enclosing a copy of a chapter from an old book on the Millerite movement. If you decide to write on the movement (and I hope you will) this article will help. I think people should know how Millerism wrecked the lives of a great many in the last century. It will help in understanding why lives are still being wrecked. Someone once said, "A bad tree cannot produce good fruit."

-Jim Baldwin  
P.O. Box 320  
Charlestown, NH 03603

*Editor: We are not currently planning any articles on the Millerite movement, but information about them can be found in many public libraries. Those interested in studying where Herbert Armstrong got many of his ideas should read Bruce Renahan's book Daughter of Babylon (it sells for \$15). It briefly discusses the HWA-Millerite connection. Regarding preterism, Bruce recently wrote us the following:*

I have done a considerable amount of study about early Christianity and have come to see things quite differently than while in the WCG when I was influenced to believe that we were living in the "last days."

First of all, if one were to take New Testament prophecies at face value then the Preterist interpretation would be the most plausible; that is, the first century followers of Jesus were predicting the "end of the world" in their time because the Romans were crushing every vestige of Jewish rebellion and it was only a matter of time before their Jewish world would cease to exist.

Second, for those who insist that there was a "primitive church," I would agree, but it did not resemble anything that we would recognize today as "Christianity." According to many scholars, the so-called "primitive church" probably resembled the community of Zealots who died at Masada more than anything else we might imagine (Francis Potter, *The Lost Years of Jesus* and John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*). Later, various sects such as the Gnostics (perhaps the offspring of early Jewish mystical groups) began to call themselves "Christian" and so that term began to get muddled, just as it is today.

In the 4th Century, Christianity as we now know it, emerged from the early ecumenical councils (the one at Nicaea being the first), from the resulting creeds, and from one other important development - the canonization of what we now call the Holy Bible. Many have been led to believe that the Bible as we now have it was preserved intact by early Christians and that the Catholic Church was determined to destroy it. But the second-oldest complete Bible manuscript in existence (complete in the sense that along with the Old Testament it contains all of the New

Testament) is the Codex Vaticanus, which, as the name implies, has long been preserved by the Vatican. And the very oldest complete Bible manuscript in existence is the Codex Sinaiticus, which was preserved for centuries in a Catholic monastery (Dr. Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Oxford University Press, 1968). According to Professor Metzger (p. 47), "some scholars believe that the two manuscripts were originally among the fifty copies of Scriptures which the Emperor Constantine commissioned Eusebius to have written...." Scholars have demonstrated that both manuscripts were composed in the fourth century and both are considerably older than the Textus Receptus upon which the King James version was based. Instructive in this regard is a comment found at the very beginning of Professor Metzger's highly regarded book:

The necessity of applying textual criticism to the books of the New Testament arises from two circumstances: (a) none of the original documents is extant, and (b) the existing copies differ from one another.

After the Christian religion infiltrated Western culture, history proceeded through 700 years of the Dark Ages, 200 years of the Crusades, and 400 years of the Inquisition. Then, around the 15th Century, the Reformation and the Age of Reason began to destroy the traditional Christian paradigm. Intellectuals began to challenge every belief of the Church, often through scientific discoveries.

Then in the 17th Century an antithesis occurred. Recall that by this juncture there had already been the increased dissemination of Bibles throughout Europe made possible by the development of printing press technology. Along with that phenomenon came an increased scrutiny of biblical texts. In 1650 Bishop James Ussher published *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* in which he calculated from the Bible that Adam was created in the year 4004 B.C. It was such factors that eventually led to the Great Awakening, revivalism, and Millerism. It was at about the same time that John Darby (founder of the Plymouth Brethren) developed the doctrine of dispensationalism and, undoubtedly, that idea combined with those of Ussher led many to see God as having a "7,000 year plan." All of these factors have led, in our own century, to a renewed widespread feeling that this is now the "end time." (For further study refer to Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church* and Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*).

Having a very narrow view of history, avoiding logic and reasoning, and leaping onto the "end time" bandwagon is, in my opinion, essentially destructive to human progress. This fatalist philosophy frequently leads "end time" advocates to conclude that human efforts toward scientific and social progress are not in harmony with God's will. It further entices, or depresses, individuals into abandoning patterns of life-structuring that lead to personal advancement and well-being. Perhaps we should coin a name for such people: "cosmophobes."

Why do so many Bible fundamentalists insist that we are living in the "last days"? I believe it is because taking personal responsibility for conditions in the world is too frightening for many. So they prefer to believe that when chaos breaks out on the earth God will rescue them by rapturing them away or taking them to a place of safety. Frankly, having seen Ingmar Bergman's classic film *The Seventh Seal*, I have to wonder if there was ever a time when the trials and tragedies of human existence have not led many to conclude that they must be living in the "last days." Even in Plato's *Symposium*, written over 2300 years ago and filled with concepts that later turn up in the New Testament, one encounters the phrase "in these later times." When a person gets caught up in this kind of paranoia, every global occurrence, and even arbitrary dates, random numbers, and supposed meanings of names become speciously significant and alarmingly prophetic (Leon Festinger, *When Prophecy Fails*). While wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, pestilence, false

prophets, and injustice continue as they have for millennia, God continues to stay his intervention - to the amazement of the cosmophobes. Nevertheless, the cycle of "end time madness" tragically continues, just as it has for over 2,000 years.

-Bruce Renehan  
P.O. Box 1551  
Tehachapi, CA 93581-1551

The notion that many of the Bible's "end-time" prophecies would find a literal fulfillment in our time was given a giant boost in 1948 when the nation of Israel was formed. Herbert Armstrong was not the only one who saw the potential significance of that historical event. Since then, many Christian fundamentalists have been mesmerized by events in Israel and numerous famous preachers (Jerry Fallwell, Pat Robertson, and Garner Ted Armstrong among them) just can't wait until the Jews erect some sort of Jerusalem Temple complete with animal sacrifices and the full panoply of Mosaic law. Ironically, these same preachers, who claim to love the people of Israel, also teach that once a Temple is erected Israel will experience great military defeats, great loss of life, and near total annihilation. I sometimes get the feeling that what such individuals are really looking for is physical evidence to vindicate the weak faith they have in their own Christian fundamentalism.

Nevertheless, there are many first-rate Christian scholars who scoff at such simplistic approaches to the biblical literature. In fact, some say that it is the height of foolishness to be encouraging Jews to be Zionists and to rebuild a physical Temple in Jerusalem. One such scholar was the late Cecil J. Lowry, Ph.D., D.D., who once headed the Southwest Bible Institute and was editor of *The Christian Vanguard*. In his booklet *Whither Israel?*, which first appeared in 1955 and was reprinted in 1987, he showed how scripture should be interpreted, showed the true nature of Judaism, and in particular, debunked the myth that there is such a thing as a racially pure Israelite. I could quote dozens of passages that have relevance to the issues faced by those re-examining their Armstrongite beliefs. Here is but one (from page 67):

I can see no special miracle in the preservation of Judaism as a religion any more than I can see a miracle in the preservation of any other religion. In the light of the Bible and scientific facts, Twelve Tribed Israel can never be restored to Palestine, simply because they are racially Absorbed in the stream of humanity. Talmudic Zionism can at the most establish a nation in Palestine of men bound together by religion and by Jewish cultural traits. The tribes of Israel can never be numbered as Moses numbered them, for such tribes do not exist.

Dr. Lowry's booklet is still available (for only \$2.50, incl. postage) from: Chapel Library, 2603 W. Wright, Pensacola, FL 32505. I think all who still cling to Herbert Armstrong's ideas on prophecy would do well to read it.

-New Jersey

I can't believe you would suggest to your readers a book that says get rid of your TV. I just watched the baseball history series that ran on public television stations here. What a great experience. Surely you are not suggesting that we do not watch such programs.

-Florida

*Editor: Of course not. I saw the series you referred to, and it was both educational and entertaining. But that Public Broadcasting System series is not typical TV fare. PBS does have a large number of outstanding concerts, plays, and documentaries such as the recent four-part,*

*historical exposé on communism. But as a nation, we are continually watching more and more prurient soap operas, TV sex-talk shows (even Johnny Carson has lambasted the genre as essentially programs by, for, and about dysfunctional people), sitcoms that are frequently badly written and mindless, insipid variety shows, religion programs that are often mere entertainment shows, sensationalistic and superficial news programs which many rely on for their view of the world (as though everything TV reports is accurate), plus the endless materialistic propaganda of frequently dishonest commercials. While one can find some quality entertainment and education programs on television, for most people the addictive and hypnotic attraction of TV results in less time being available for real thinking, reading, exercising, conversing, meditating, etc. A recent op-ed article in the Los Angeles Times (9/23/94, p.B7) was titled "Culture, Behavior: We Are What We Watch." Here is the way the article by Professor Donella H. Meadows of Dartmouth College began:*

*New reports come out every month or so about the decline of the American mind. Every study shows a direct correlation between poor intellectual performance and frequent television watching. No surprise. There are roughly as many studies showing that television rots the mind as there are studies showing that junk food rots the body or that cigarette smoking rots the lungs - as if we needed studies.*

*The Gerry Mander book that I recommended in our last issue may at first appear a bit extremist. But his view that television is the greatest propaganda tool ever invented and one that seriously harms its viewers and our entire society is supported by a very large body of research.*

I tuned in to Tkach's around-the-world Feast of Tabernacles satellite transmission on September 20. At one point Tkach held up a super market tabloid with the bizarre headline "Moon Turning to Blood." He said some of the WCG's past attempts at interpreting prophecy were as crazy as this. To me, his comment seemed insensitive and stupid. I also noticed that standing 15 feet behind him were two security thugs. Were they expecting trouble this year?

In a recent PT editorial Tkach seemed soft on the Feast of Tabernacles. But to the members he addressed by satellite he said it is "God's law." He keeps on saying that "we cannot earn salvation by keeping the feast." Of course, this is like saying every so often "the world is round, not flat." It's so obvious even HWA understood it. I see such comments as a red herring. Such talk just muddies the waters so that the glaring contradictions in their doctrines cannot be too obvious. For example, they have thrown in the towel on Colossians 2:16-17 but they still observe feasts to "see Christ's saving work." However, if it is still God's law, why don't they point out to other churches that they are sinners for not observing those days? Tkach said that with the changes some are thinking they need not tithe. I know one member who not only doesn't tithe, but skips the feast altogether to take an alternative vacation with his family and avoid flack from fellow members. Tithing and the feasts are Tkach's next big challenges.

By the way, during the Tkach satellite sermon a cheeky cameraman caught Gerald Waterhouse in the audience looking at the notes of the guy next to him as Tkach slammed prophecy.

-Wisconsin

My sister-in-law likes to listen to "The Wave" - our southern California "New Age music" radio station. She recently got their monthly program guide and in it there is a listing of recommended "clubs." At the top of the list, right above the Baked Potato and Birdland West was Ambassador at 300 West Green Street in Pasadena. Yes, just call the club at 1-800-CONCERT for tickets to New Age music events. Weird.

-California

My husband and I were in the WCG for 28 years, but after this year's Day of Atonement we said, "This is the last time." We attended the Feast of Tabernacles with CGI. When we returned home our local WCG minister visited us and asked why we had attended the CGI Feast. So we told him. He then told us, "You can believe anything you want to and still be a member of the WCG. Your salvation doesn't depend on your agreeing with all the changes the church has made." He asked us to promise to attend WCG services on Oct. 1 and we did. That day the sermonette and sermon were directed at us - "obey and stay" was the message. On Oct. 8 we attended CGI services. A few days later we received a WCG letter informing us that we were now "former members of the WCG."

-Indiana

### **Late News: Tkach Says Sabbath, Holy Days, Tithing Not Mandatory!**

In a videotaped announcement to virtually all WCG churches on January 7 (coincidentally Russian Christmas), Pastor General Tkach took the bold step of telling his followers that the WCG would no longer demand a legalistic observance of the Old Testament Sabbath, Holy Days, or tithing. Said Tkach, members are now free to use the Sabbath day to go to work if circumstances required. Edited out of the tape, but heard by hundreds in Tkach's live comments at Big Sandy, Texas (where the tape was produced) was the statement that it would even be OK to play golf on the Sabbath if one so desired. Additionally, Tkach "clarified" HWA's teaching on unclean meats. Apparently, HWA never thought it was a spiritual sin to eat "unclean" meats. While Tkach is not endorsing pork and shrimp as healthy foods, eating such foods will supposedly only make one physically unclean for a few hours; it will not interfere with one's membership in God's Kingdom. While the new doctrines have long been anticipated by the *Report*, the announcement put many oldtime WCG members into total shock. How many thousands of WCG members will now leave the denomination remains to be seen. But already dozens of leading ministers say they will soon be leaving the WCG. And a number have indicated they plan to start their own competing organizations. We will have further news on these major developments in our next issue.

J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR58\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

April 1995 (AR58)

### **WCG in Chaos as Revenues Plummet**

The religious empire founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) has never been in greater disarray. On January 7, virtually all Worldwide Church of God (WCG) congregations were required to sit through a videotaped sermon given by Armstrong's successor, Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach. Preaching in a shrill and often haranguing tone, telling occasional jokes about Baptists and Methodists in heaven, and once even referring to himself as "this crazy Russian," the long-winded Tkach announced a startling number of doctrinal changes. Among the many statements that shocked Tkach's listeners was this one:

We have already seen in Hebrews eight that the Old Covenant is obsolete. It's history! As someone would say, it's kaput! It's over! Finis! The old package of laws has been taken apart. And some of the laws have been discarded. Some laws have been changed. And some have been continued. And others have been added. A new covenant is different. It not only adds faith and Holy Spirit, it also renews some of the old laws and the burdens and packages that we could not bear. Let's look at Hebrews seven.... Does it sound like I'm doing away with the law? I'm helping us to understand what God expects of us so we can run true to form as the children of God.

Emphasizing his new New Testament understandings over HWA's old Old Testament preferences, Tkach told the stunned members of his WCG that a legalistic keeping of the Old Testament sabbath, holy days, and dietary laws comes from "ignorance and stupidity" and such observances would no longer be required for WCG membership. Additionally, Tkach told his followers that his ministry would no longer teach that strict tithing is mandatory, either.

Tkach was well aware he was risking a drop in church income by making the announcement. During the sermon he even admitted how he knew that by speaking on the subject he was gambling. But apparently he hoped that after his announcement members

would actually contribute even more generously than they had before. Speaking about members who in recent months had reportedly been withholding their tithes from him, Tkach said:

So how much more should we be willing to give freely and generously to the work of God to be done? Not holding back your tithes! Oh, Oheeeeh! [Editor: At this point Tkach's voice panicked into well above the high-C stratosphere and, for a brief moment, some thought he was having a heart attack. Barely catching his breath, Tkach continued:] They, they go on to say, "We know that in a sense it is a form of stealing, but when we do return it we're going to give another 10 percent or 20 percent to it" - based on the Old Testament requirements. Under the New Covenant the tithe is voluntary. And you're just as guilty of stealing if you don't give anything voluntarily as you were under the Old Covenant when you were commanded to give a tithe!!!

Some have speculated that Tkach's "Russian Christmas Present" (as the sermon is often referred to because it was broadcast on January 7, the traditional date of Russian Christmas) may have been intended to weaken the WCG. A careful review of the taped message reveals that such was not the case. What comes across very clearly is that Tkach, albeit in a very clumsy way, was trying to increase WCG revenues. For instance, he told members that the weekly sabbath was only an Old Covenant law. So members can now work on Saturdays if they want and supposedly they will tithe on the wages earned while doing so. But Tkach never intended that WCG members discontinue tithing. In fact, he made it plain that he was anticipating that members would henceforth be contributing even more to him. He shouted, "The New Covenant requires greater sacrifice!"

Many members apparently did not hear that part of the sermon. It is not surprising. Most were so chagrined by some of the things Tkach said they were left virtually speechless. Tkach did not simply lambast strict sabbath keeping. He left many with the impression that Jesus authorized all kinds of law-breaking when it was expedient. For instance, Tkach said that Jesus's apostles were technically guilty of law breaking when they gathered and ate wheat on the sabbath. But that was no big deal, said Tkach. Using the example of David in I Sam. 21, Tkach said, "Taking care of hunger is more important than keeping such strict taboos that were forced on us." Actually, in his 12/21/94 *Pastor General's Report*, which had prepared his ministers for the new teaching, Tkach had expounded upon the same incident by writing (pp. 16-17), "The letter of the law was broken, but that was OK because a more important principle of the law was being kept. There was an important human need.... *Humanitarian needs are more important than sticking to a strict interpretation of rules.*" After all, said Tkach in his sermon, "Compared to the Pharisees, Jesus was an extreme liberal." Finally, in the conclusion of his sermon Tkach said:

We are a New Covenant church.... It's a New Covenant between God and his people.  
We have finally been LIBERIZED!---or liberated I should say; I hate the word  
liberized [sic]. We've been liberated!

The effect of Tkach's Russian Christmas Present was immediate and profound. WCG income plummeted. As a number of newspapers observed, "The Worldwide Church of God told its members that tithing was voluntary, not God's command, as previously believed, and they listened. Now a month later, the church is facing its toughest financial crisis in its 61 years" (*The Washington Post*, 2/18/95; *The Arizona Republic*, 2/18/95; *The Charleston Gazette*, 2/18/95; *The Rocky Mountain News*, 2/19/95; *The Houston*

*Chronicle*, 2/25/95). While in official announcements church leaders say that WCG income for 1995 is only 20 or 30 percent lower than for the same period in 1994, insiders have stated that the total drop for 1995 might eventually prove to be more than 50 percent. So convinced are some that the WCG is heading for bankruptcy, a number of field ministers have discouraged their flocks from sending any money to headquarters because, as one put it, "Most everything sent in to Pasadena will only wind up in the pockets of lawyers." As for the attitude of the WCG membership as a whole, one insider said, "There are only two kinds of people left in Worldwide: Those that love Tkach - they don't tithe. And those that still tithe - they hate Tkach." Obviously, Tkach's gamble has not paid off.

---

&COPY;1995 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service. ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

## **The Music Is Ending**

The general public first became aware that a major crisis was brewing in the WCG in January when church leaders announced that they were discontinuing the Ambassador Auditorium Concert Series after the current season ends. Here were the headlines: "Ambassador Concert Hall to Close in May" (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/28/95, p. A1), "Auditorium Will Face Its Final Curtain: Loss of Church Funding Marks Ambassador's End" (*Pasadena Star-News*, 1/28/95, p. A1), "And Then There Was Silence in Pasadena" (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/30/95, p. F1), "Adieu, Ambassador" (*Pasadena Weekly*, 2/3/95, p. 2).

Ambassador Auditorium, with its exceptionally fine acoustics and beautiful surroundings, has been a Southern California landmark for twenty years. Not surprisingly, therefore, news that its concert series would be discontinued came as a shock to many civic leaders. Michael R. Hawkins, president of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, obviously made prayerful by the news, said, "God Almighty, that incredible auditorium, with those acoustics, it would be a crime to let that thing sit empty." David Hulme, Ambassador's director of performing arts, also seemed to be hoping for divine intervention when he said, "It would be wonderful if members of the community around us could come to our rescue in whatever way they feel they can" (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/28/95). Not every Pasadenan, however, was heartbroken by Ambassador's plight. Rick Cole, a Pasadena councilman and former mayor who lectures on civic responsibility at Pasadena's Fuller Seminary, told the *Star-News* (1/28/95) that he thought the Auditorium was "a gaudy and expensive effort to buy respectability" by the WCG. "It was an extraordinary cultural asset," he said, "but it had no connection to the city of Pasadena.... It was paid for by little old ladies from the Midwest, and they spent lavishly. A [city] bailout is inconceivable." Cole went on to say that last year the WCG had been offered an "attractive deal" for some of its east-of-the-freeway properties from a Los Angeles development company (probably Pacific Alliance Realty), but that before the deal was consummated, Worldwide had asked the city for

certain unspecified "non-monetary concessions" which Pasadena officials were not willing to grant.

While the classical music concerts that HWA loved so much, and to which the WCG provided a \$2.5 million yearly subsidy, are certain to end, David Hulme, a WCG evangelist and part-time jazz concert producer, told the press that the Auditorium may still be used for public events (an awards ceremony for Black History Month was held there in February), for jazz concerts ("a source of revenue, not a drain," says Hulme), and for rental to independent promoters (*Los Angeles Times*, 2/3/95, p. F14).

## Cuts, Cuts, and More Cuts

The announcement about the demise of the Ambassador Concert Series was just the beginning of woes. For weeks Southern California newspapers continued to report on the incredible shrinking church of Joseph Tkach.

In "New Direction for Church Leads to Spending Cuts" (*Pasadena Star-News*, 2/7/95, p. A1), writers Keith Sharon and Mark Kendall reported how the WCG was taking drastic action to stay within its ever-dwindling budget. According to WCG spokesman J. Thomas Lapacka, the *Plain Truth* magazine, already down to a circulation of 1.5 million (it was once over 8 million) is to be cut back to 750,000. *Plain Truth* editions in Spanish, French, Italian, and Norwegian are being discontinued altogether. The WCG's Pasadena technology department will be cut back, as will the so-called athletic department. (What? No more personal trainers or free rubdowns?) The church's Imperial Schools for the children of church members and the WCG's private travel Agency will both become companies accepting patrons who are not WCG members in order to increase revenues.

The church's fleet of 250 vehicles will be sold, as will Tkach's two limousines and corporate jet (a decision that resulted in his becoming more upset than when his parents died, said Tkach). Right now it looks as though Tkach will not be able to write out another \$100,000 WCG check as a gift to the Reagan Library or for dinner with the Clintons at the White House. Nevertheless, Tkach expects an upturn. He has stated, "Things are going to get better or God doesn't exist."

In [AR56](#) we reported how for 1993 WCG income had dropped to \$175.6 million. According to David Hulme, the WCG's income for 1994 was even lower, only \$130 million, and that for 1995 it will go lower still. Obviously, the WCG is strapped for cash and selling off its Pasadena properties would help. But church treasurer Steve Andrews admitted that while the WCG has had six offers to purchase the church's Pasadena properties, none of the offers had been considered adequate for acceptance (*Star-News*, 2/7/95).

In "Church Cutbacks Continue" (*Pasadena Star-News*, 2/8/95, p. A1), Mark Kendall reported that Ambassador University's \$8.8 million per year budget was being trimmed. As a result, 39 faculty and staff members were being fired and tuition will be raised 17 percent to \$315 per class.

In "Financial Crisis Grips Worldwide Church of God" (*Los Angeles Times*, 2/9/95, p. B1),

writers Larry B. Stammer and Denise Hamilton reported that the WCG was being "rocked by members' reaction to major reversals of its most fundamental doctrines.... a startling recanting by church leaders of long-held church teachings set down by its founder...." The article detailed how the WCG was firing 107 (15 percent) of its 708 Pasadena employees and that the *Plain Truth* edition currently being printed in England would be eliminated. When asked if the church now regretted having taught false doctrines in the past, WCG spokesman Tom Lapacka said, "Yes, we always regret. We express regret."

A day after the *Times* article appeared, the Pasadena *Star News* (2/10/95, p. A1) reported that the WCG was firing 41 of its editorial employees and 22 of its television employees. The church is closing its Caribbean office in Fort Lauderdale and its five-member staff there will be reduced to three who will work out of their homes. After March the WCG would not be producing any more television commercials. It was just a few months ago that the church's television program was cancelled in favor of the commercials-only approach. (Ironically, *The Worldwide News* of 2/21/95 had a front-page article with the headline, "TV Ads for Literature Hit the Spot," which claimed the commercials were proving to be a great success. Now even that campaign is dead.)

Two days after the above *Star-News* article appeared, the same Pasadena paper (2/12/95, p. A1) ran a large front page article and an accompanying piece providing an overview of the WCG situation. Those articles contained these interesting comments:

Reinterpreting the Bible has recently become a costly enterprise for the Worldwide Church of God.... Tkach, who a church spokesman said does not speak to the press, has been reinterpreting the Bible since he took over the church in 1986....

Peter Eddington, a church member from Pasadena, said the changes represent "growth" in the church. Elizabeth Mizner, a member from Glendora, said the move toward mainstream Christianity is "exciting."

Exciting indeed. Three days later, with a headline that read "175 Face Church Layoffs," the *Star-News* (2/15/95, p. A1) reported, "The church will fire between 175 and 180 of its 708 employees by May...."

## Who's Left?

Trying to figure out exactly who is still on the WCG payroll and who isn't has become a tricky business. There was a time when determining such things was not all that difficult. The WCG's "grapevine" used to be an almost totally accurate source of information. That, however, was in the days when most members thought it was a sin to lie. Now things are different. Today, it is not uncommon for church leaders to intentionally spread false rumors. Sometimes this is done to see if the rumor, ostensibly given in confidence, is leaked - thereby revealing the tippee as a disloyal subject. Other times the false information is spread simply to hurt political opponents. When we attempt to verify outlandish rumors, we still find that many are true. But there is often no way of knowing quickly what is really happening in WCG inner circles and the situation there is constantly changing.

Today, the actual makeup of the WCG hierarchy is extremely unstable in nature. In the

last few weeks, for example, it has been commonplace for some WCG executives to be fired, rehired, suspended, reinstated, retired, reevaluated, rehired, and refired again in almost endless cycles. This bizarre pattern has, to some extent, been due to competition in the evangelist market. Roderick Meredith's renegade Global Church of God, for instance, has been luring away some WCG executives by promising them a salary equal to what they earned in Worldwide if they should bring along a certain number of sheep into Global. Sometimes extensive negotiations between the sheep rustlers have resulted in Meredith upping the ante by 10 percent, with Tkach, just hours later, again upping the ante a few more points in order to hold on to a star evangelist and his sheep.

Other reasons for the confusion include the major miscalculations of Tkach himself. For example, during the week ending February 3, WCG employees in Pasadena were told that, because of the church's dire financial situation, those that resigned or were fired in the future could not be guaranteed severance pay (they currently receive one week's pay for each year they were employed by the church). Employees were then told, however, that should any resign immediately they would still receive their severance pay at the old rate. Within two days so many of the WCG's top employees had turned in their resignations it appeared that very soon there might not be enough qualified personnel left to continue operations. Tkach panicked. By Sunday, February 5, when *Report* associates paid an informal visit to WCG headquarters, we learned that Tkach had already retracted the previous week's statement. Those who are let go in the future will still get severance pay - supposedly.

So who is left? Some are saying that during the last few months about 80 WCG ministers have resigned and approximately 20 more have been fired (but these figures go up and down every day, it seems). Here are some of the personnel changes we have learned of:

Evangelist Leroy Neff, former WCG treasurer and the executor of Herbert Armstrong's estate, has left. Early in the year he sent Tkach a scathing six-page letter that Tkach claims left him heartbroken. As copies of the letter began circulating among members, many sent bouquets of flowers to Neff at his old headquarters address. They were intercepted by Tkach's "assistant" Ellen Escat. We have not been able to locate Neff for a statement.

Evangelist David Hulme, who for a number of years was the WCG's front man on TV, has resigned from the ministry. Apparently he will remain as the Auditorium's director of performing arts only until the current concert season ends.

Victor Kubik, a conservative (that is, a traditional Armstrongite) and top administrator who spearheaded the WCG's outreach into the Ukraine, has resigned. Rumors abound that he will start his own church in Minnesota where he has a small following.

Doug Horchak and his wife Tanya, one of Tkach's two daughters, have left. How and to where is unknown at this time.

Church theologian Kyriacos Stavrinides has been sent packing back to Greece. He accused Tkach of not understanding the WCG's new trinity doctrine. (Does anyone?)

Evangelist Dibar Apartian, head of the WCG's French language ministry, has resigned to

join evangelist Roderick Meredith's Global Church of God.

Colin Adair, who recently headed the WCG's Caribbean efforts, has also resigned to join Global.

Pastor Harold Smith left Worldwide with his Washington state congregation to join Global.

Long-time WCG minister Carlton Smith has been "retired" but reportedly without retirement pay.

Long-time WCG minister Don Billingsley (who was driving the church vehicle in the 1958 car crash that took the life of Richard Armstrong) has been fired, most likely for being a conservative.

Minister and Spanish language broadcaster Pablo Gonzalez is reported to have left Worldwide and gone independent.

Alabama minister Ray Wooten has left and now has his own United Church of God (2543 Elizabeth Drive, Pelham, AL 35724; tel. 1-800-688-8266).

Earl Williams, charismatic minister and PT writer, has resigned from the WCG. While church leaders say he is not starting a competing group, he has completely left, taking with him a large number of members and some elders. He continues to produce materials for many WCG members who find his New Covenant views appealing. His address is Christ's Church of Grace, 2531 Burwick Walk SW, Snellville, GA 30278.

Houston pastor Jim Franks has left Worldwide. Tkach loyalists say Franks is now with "the party of the circumcision."

Others who have left the WCG ministry include Roy Holladay, Ken Giese, Ron Wallen, Rand Millich, Ron Weinland, Dave Mills, Jim Servidio, Gerald Weston, Lyle Welty, and Eugene Noel. The March 15 *Pastor General's Report* listed most of these men and others as leaving. The comment that they were simply resigning the ministry but had no intention of going elsewhere or starting their own organizations is not true in every case.

Among those ministers who have vacillated about resigning, but who are still technically in Worldwide, as of our press deadline, are Herman Hoeh, Dennis Luker, Robin Webber, Frank Brown, Leon Walker, Dean Wilson, and Les McCullough.

Gene Hogberg, for many years the WCG's expert on world news, is no longer with the PT. Insiders say Tkach doesn't believe world news is important.

Church attorney Ralph Helge is no longer head of Worldwide's legal division. While still employed somehow by the WCG, he has indicated to friends that he now suspects there may be something wrong with the church. Worldwide's legal department is now under the auspices of church treasurer Steven Andrews, said to have been a protégé of one-time

WCG powerhouse Stanley Rader.

Incidentally, speaking of Rader - some say that the famous attorney-CPA was recently spotted at Worldwide headquarters in Pasadena. The sighting has led to speculation that the former HWA advisor who assisted in the sale of Ambassador's old Bricket Wood, England campus may now be assisting in the sale of the WCG's Pasadena real estate.

Not all those leaving the WCG's employ do so profitably or painlessly. On Feb. 2, WCG minister Ron Howe committed suicide by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. He left behind a note, but its contents have not been publicly disclosed. He was given a nice obituary in the *Pastor General's Report*.

## **Party Time for Tkach**

Now with all the doctrinal and financial chaos, defections, and intrigue swirling about what HWA used to refer to as his "Eden" in Pasadena, what is Joseph W. Tkach up to privately? Obviously a believer in the aphorism, "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping," Tkach has gone on a personal shopping spree. Insiders say that Tkach has been buying wide-screen televisions, crystal, and other fine things for himself. And, some say, he is now having second thoughts about selling off his two limos and his jet. Tkach recently moved out of his home at the corner of South Orange Grove and Del Mar Boulevards. That residence, designed by the famous early Pasadena architectural firm of Greene and Greene, has gone to Tkach's daughter Jennifer and her husband Paul Butler. Tkach has now moved a half block up Pasadena's "Millionaire's Row" into what was previously Herbert Armstrong's mansion (the Ambassador "Social Center"). Existing garden walls there will soon be heightened to increase privacy and to keep Tkach's guard dogs at bay.

At the Greene and Greene residence, Tkach for some years now has kept a younger, single male housed in the Tkach guest room over the garage. Tkach and his male friend had often been seen together feeding Tkach's large flock of pet pigeons and, it is claimed, on at least one occasion the two had been seen holding hands. Whether Tkach will be taking his male friend to a new location is not yet known.

But on the west side of Orange Grove Boulevard is a WCG-owned condominium complex where Ellen Escat, one of Tkach's frequent companions, has been residing. That building will now be sold. To accommodate beloved Ellen and other friends, Tkach has had his private interior decorator refurbish the nearby Grove Terrace apartments which for many years served as college dormitories. Now transformed into luxurious condos - some at a cost of \$500,000 each (necessary because of the fine draperies and carpeting, gold leaf trims, expensive furniture, rare paintings, stocks of fine wines, etc. that went into the refurbishing), beloved Ellen will be able to enjoy the comfort to which she has become accustomed since leaving her husband (see [AR43](#)). Tragically, however, decorators were not able to find a suitable location for beloved Ellen's Jacuzzi at her new condo. But not to worry! Tkach ordered some of the church's custodians (a number of whom had been given their termination notices a few days before) to have the Jacuzzi installed in Tkach's new backyard, just a hundred feet or so from beloved Ellen's new condo. So everything is working out just spiffy for Tkach and his friends.

# Secret WCG Bylaws Leaked by Insider

*Editor: In recent years the WCG's leadership has gone to considerable lengths to create the impression that the WCG is no longer a destructive cult. Nevertheless, the church's leaders continue to keep many crucial facts hidden regarding the inner workings of the Worldwide organization. For example, members (those baptized and paying tithes) who request copies of the WCG's Bylaws are routinely told that such documents are not meant for distribution to lay members. In fact, such documents are considered so top secret they are stored in a multilocked vault and without special clearance even top ministers are not permitted to see them. For that reason, we are very pleased that one WCG insider recently provided us with a copy of the following:*

## BYLAWS OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD, A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT RELIGIOUS CORPORATION

### ARTICLE I - SUBORDINATION

1.1 This corporation is chartered by and subordinate to the Church of God, a/k/a Worldwide Church of God, an unincorporated association, of which Joseph W. Tkach is the Pastor General, which Church is hereinafter referred to as the "Association."

### ARTICLE II - DEFINITIONS

2.1 "Corporation" shall mean this California Corporation.

2.2 "Corporate Governance" shall mean the Pastor General. In the event that either of the conditions occur set forth in Sections 5.4 or 5.5 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Articles of the Association, then the term, "Corporate Governance," shall mean and include the Board of Directors of the Corporation as it shall from time to time be constituted, until the designation of the successor to the office of Pastor General or upon his inability to govern being terminated, as provided in Sections 5.6 or 5.7 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or, article) of the Bylaws of the Association, at which time the term "Corporate Governance" shall again only mean the Pastor General.

2.3 "Ecclesiastical Decision" shall mean a decision that requires religious considerations. Such decision shall be within the sole and subjective discretion of the Corporate Governance, shall be conclusive and final, subject to review by the Association's Church Authority, as that term is defined in the Articles of Association and Bylaws of the Association, and shall not require oral or written evidence as to its basis.

### ARTICLE III - OFFICES

3.1 The principal office and other offices of the Corporation, for the transaction of its ecclesiastical and temporal activities, shall be designated by the Corporate Governance as it deems advisable according to the circumstances.

#### ARTICLE IV - MEMBERS

4.1 There shall only be one class of corporate members. They will be referred to as the "Members of the Corporation." "Members of the Corporation" shall mean the Advisory Council of Elders of the Association as it shall from time to time be constituted.

4.2 Only the Pastor General shall be empowered to call meetings of the Members of the Corporation. Notice of any such meetings may be given in any manner permitted by law, including, but not limited to, the following: Certified or registered first class mail to the Member's last known address, postmarked forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting, or upon four (4) hours advance notice, either in writing personally delivered, or by oral communication, to the Member or an adult person residing in his household. All meetings of the Members of the Corporation may be held within or without the State in such locations as the Pastor General shall designate.

4.3 In the event that either of the conditions occur set forth in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Articles of the Association, then the call and notice of meetings of the Members will be as follows:

4.3.1 Call of Meetings: Any three Members of the Corporation will be empowered to call a meeting of the Members of the Corporation.

4.3.2 Notice of Meetings: Notice of any such meetings may be given in any manner permitted by law, including, but not limited to, the following: Certified or registered first class mail to the Member's last known address, postmarked seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting, or upon forty-eight (48) hours advance notice, either in writing personally delivered, or by oral communication, to the Member or an adult person residing in his household.

4.3.3 A copy of such notice shall likewise be delivered to the then advisor to the Association's Advisory Council of Elders at his then current office address.

4.3.4 All meetings of the Members of the Corporation under Section 4.3 of these Bylaws may be held within or without the State as a majority of said Members shall designate.

4.4 Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit waiver of call and notice, meeting by telephone conference call or action without a meeting, which are otherwise provided by law.

#### ARTICLE V - CORPORATION RECORDS

5.1 The Corporation's books, documents and records shall be deemed absolutely confidential and secret and no person shall have any right of access to or utilization of said

information unless authorized or subsequently approved by an Ecclesiastical Decision. The Members of the Corporation and the members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation are exempted from this restriction and shall have power and authority to review such books, documents and records at any reasonable time as limited by law.

## ARTICLE VI - GOVERNANCE

6.1 The governance of the Corporation is, after the biblical example, hierarchical in form. Joseph W. Tkach shall hold the office of Pastor General of the Corporation and the office of Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors. The title and office of Pastor General shall be equivalent to that of President.

### Appointment and Removal

6.2 The Pastor General shall have the sole power and authority to appoint and remove officers of the Corporation. He may exercise said power and authority at any time, with or without cause or notice.

6.3 The Pastor General shall have the sole power and authority to appoint and remove any singular member of the Board of Directors, or the entire Board of Directors of the Corporation. He may exercise said power and authority at any time, with or without cause or notice.

6.4 The Pastor General shall have the sole power and authority to form and dissolve committees and to appoint and remove any singular member of the committee or the entire committee. He may exercise said power and authority at any time with or without notice. No member of any committee need be an officer or a director of the Corporation.

6.5 In the event that either of the conditions occur set forth in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Articles of the Association, then the Members of the Corporation shall be vested with the power and authority set forth in 6.2 and 6.3 of these Bylaws.

6.5.1 The Members of the Corporation shall be vested with said, powers and authority until the designation of the successor to the office of Pastor General or upon his inability to govern being terminated, as provided in Sections 5.6 or 5.7 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Bylaws of the Association, at which time the power and authority so vested in the Members of the Corporation shall terminate and the same shall be reinvested in the Pastor General.

### Numbers and Qualifications

6.6 The authorized number of directors shall be not less than one (1) and not more than fifteen (15). Each member of the Board of Directors, each committee member or each officer of the Corporation must be a Church member of the Association at the time of his appointment and must remain such during his term in office. If for any reason he does not remain a Church Member of the Association during his term in office, then he shall be

disqualified from serving as a director, committee member or officer, which disqualification shall constitute his removal from his respective office without the necessity of further action. A quorum of the Board of Directors or of any committee for the purpose of conducting corporate business shall mean a majority of the directors or committee members holding the office of director or committee member at the time of the meeting.

#### Terms of Office

6.7 The person holding the office of Pastor General of the Association shall also hold the office of Pastor General of the Corporation. Joseph W. Tkach shall hold the office of Pastor General of the Corporation and Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors for life. Other members of the Board of Directors and other committee members shall serve until they resign or are removed.

#### Place of Meetings

6.8 All meetings of the Board of Directors may be held within or without the State and in such locations as the Corporate Governance shall designate.

#### Call and Notice of Meetings

6.9 Only the Pastor General shall be empowered to call meetings of the Board of Directors and of any committee. Notice of any such meetings may be given in any manner permitted by law, including, but not limited to, the following: Certified or registered first class mail to the director's or committee member's last known address, postmarked forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting, or upon four (4) hours advance notice, either in writing personally delivered, or by oral communication, to the director or committee member or an adult person residing in his household.

6.10 In the event that either of the conditions occur set forth in Sections 5.4 or 5.5 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Articles of the Association, then the call and notice of meetings of the Board of Directors will be as follows, until the designation of the successor to the office of Pastor General or upon his inability to govern being terminated, as provided in Sections 5.6 or 5.7 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Bylaws of the Association, at which time the power and authority to call and notice meetings shall be reinvested in the Pastor General:

6.10.1 Call of Meetings: Any three members of the Board of Directors will be empowered to call a meeting of the Board of Directors.

6.10.2 Notice of Meetings: Notice of any such meetings may be given in any manner permitted by law, including, but not limited to, the following: Certified or registered first class mail to the director's last known address, postmarked seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting, or upon forty-eight (48) hours advance notice, either in writing personally delivered, or by oral communication, to the director or an adult person residing in his household.

6.10.3 A copy of such notice shall likewise be delivered to the then advisor to the Association's Advisory Council of Elders at his then current office address.

6.11 Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit waiver of call and notice, meeting by telephone conference call or action without a meeting, which are otherwise provided by law.

## ARTICLE VII - INDEMNIFICATION

7.1 The Corporation shall have the power to indemnify or make advance payments to the full extent permitted by law.

7.2 The Corporation shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, its affiliated or subordinate organizations, or their predecessors or successors against any liability asserted against or incurred by them in such capacity or arising out of their status as such whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify them against such liability.

## ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

8.1 The Pastor General shall have the sole power and authority to amend or repeal these Bylaws. In the event that either of the conditions occur set forth in Sections 5.4 or 5.5 of Article V (or any corresponding renumbered section or article) of the Articles of the Association, then the Members of the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to adopt, amend or repeal these Bylaws only upon two-thirds of the Members of the Corporation affirmatively concurring to do so at a duly called and noticed meeting, or by unanimous written consent of said Members without a meeting, provided the notice therefore or the consent sets forth the Bylaw to be amended or repealed and the Bylaw to be adopted.

*Editor: The above Bylaws of the WCG Corporation (not to be confused with the Bylaws of the WCG Association) have been reproduced exactly as they were provided to us. There are no edits or deletions. Hopefully, in the future we may be able to publish the WCG Association's Bylaws with its "top secret" Article V which deals with procedures should the Pastor General be incapacitated physically or mentally (the latter being what many feel has already happened). A few important points should be noted carefully:*

*(1) Most people who classify themselves as WCG "members" are only members of the WCG "Association." The only members of the WCG Corporation are those who belong to the Association's Advisory Board of Elders. Thus to some extent the WCG Corporation parallels the organizational structure of the Orthodox Catholic Church where "the church" is in reality only a select group of bishops.*

*(2) Tkach has sole authority over the selection and removal of the corporation's Board of Directors. If some board member does not like Tkach's managerial decisions, Tkach simply replaces him with someone who will obey his dictates. Tkach can do so without cause and even without notice. He explicitly also has sole authority over the content of the*

*Bylaws. The Corporation's board is therefore a true dummy board. Because the Association's Advisory Board of Elders is determined in the same way, it, too, is a dummy board. Thus, as regards governance, the only major religious organization that compares to Tkach's WCG is the Pope's Roman Catholic Church.*

*(3) In the final analysis, all WCG doctrines, policies, assets, and personnel are controlled legally by the whims, caprices, and fantasies of but one human being - Joseph W. Tkach. In a very real sense, therefore, the Worldwide Church of God is Joseph W. Tkach.*

*One final thought. Many of us can recall seeing copies of the WCG's Constitution and Bylaws in 1979 when the Attorney General of California brought the state's lawsuit against the WCG. An amendment to that document filed with the State of California on June 18, 1968 seems to indicate that any major change of the WCG's legal structure required a vote of a majority of the church's baptized members, not just its elders. It would seem, therefore, that for the current Bylaws to have legally superseded the old ones would have required such a vote. When was there such a vote?*

## **More Chaos Coming**

Many, many more WCG changes are right around the corner. Already, the WCG's *Youth* magazine has a price tag on it. (Who would want to pay for such pablum?) According to Tkach's "Dear Brethren" letter of 2/23/95, the church's summer camp in Minnesota may not open this summer. As for the unclean meats doctrine, Tkach wrote in the 1/24/95 *Worldwide News* (p. 8), "there is no scriptural requirement for Christians to abstain from unclean meats." Also on diet: "[Gen. 9:3] indicates that humans did not eat any meat before the flood" (WN, 2/21/95, p. 7). Now top evangelists are privately talking about doing away with the yearly Passover service and replacing it with a "Lord's Supper" to be celebrated four times per year. In time the foot washing ceremony will also be deleted. The Feast of Tabernacles is still scheduled for this fall. But eventually Tabernacles will probably have its name changed to "The Festival of Faith." As for the time of the year at which these Festivals will be held, well, that is no longer certain. Some ministers say they want that decision left up to local pastors. So if a local congregation would want to hold its festivals, say, December 25 to January 1 that would be okay with some. As to whether this fall's scheduled Feast will ever materialize, some have doubts. Already WCG members are being told that they do not have to take off from work to keep the holy days and that the Bible does not command them to save second tithe (WN, 1/24/95, pp. 5, 8).

Apostle Tkach has told associates that he wants the WCG ministry purged of all disloyal conservatives by the coming Passover season in late April. Tkach seems to have deluded himself into believing that by doing so he will put an end to his problems. That is unlikely. The situation with Big Sandy is a case in point.

Ambassador University at Big Sandy, Texas is headed by Dr. Donald Ward who led the drive for that institution's recent accreditation. A few months ago Ward, a conservative, fell out of favor with Tkach. Insiders say that with the WCG having financial problems and being unable to sell Pasadena for the kind of money he expects, Tkach finally came to regret going against HWA's wishes to have the Texas campus sold and the Pasadena campus maintained. Unable to take full responsibility for his decision, Tkach blamed

Ward for what he now sees as a fiasco. Ward was asked to resign. Ward refused, pointing out that he has a five-year employment contract. Miffed, Tkach decided to cut back the University's funding. Now it is rumored that some at Big Sandy, viewing Tkach as "an out-of-control moron," are talking about a complete break with Pasadena. There is even talk that eventually, should Worldwide go bankrupt, some sort of Big Sandy linkage with Garner Ted Armstrong's International or Rod Meredith's Global will materialize. Insiders say that with so much of "his money" invested in Big Sandy, such talk sends Tkach "right up the wall." But with his support among many old-time members slipping daily, there may not be much that Tkach can do to permanently save Big Sandy for himself.

With so much confusion in the Tkach camp, it is perhaps not surprising that someone would start a new Worldwide Church of God. Yes, that's right, another Worldwide. WCG minister George Crow, a Houston lawyer, has registered a new Worldwide Church of God with the state of Texas. This one is called The Worldwide Church of God Texas (Charter No. 1347064, filed with the Texas Secretary of State on 3/6/95). Crow has stated privately that the new corporation is "a shell" being readied should the Pasadena group go bankrupt. Who will be in this new church and exactly what its real purpose is remains unclear. The new group can be reached via Mr. Crow at 1519 Miller Ave., Katy, TX 77449; tel. 713-391-9564.

One possible WCG scenario is that Tkach and his associates will, themselves, intentionally split up the WCG. Some top honchos in Pasadena have already been toying with the idea of splitting the WCG into two separate organizations - one for the old diehard conservatives and one for the new liberals. While Tkach has told the field ministry that no new church name is in the offing (PGR, 3/1/95, p. 6.), some WCG leaders for a time contemplated "The New Covenant Church of Christ" as a name for the new liberal subsidiary. What legal ramifications such a church split would have is unclear. Would WCG assets be transferred to the liberal wing, with the conservatives getting stuck with all the retirement programs and other bills left over by Tkach? Would the old WCG just walk away from all its financial and contractual responsibilities? Would the new liberal group? And what would be the ethical justification for such a move? No one seems to know. Insiders say, however, that because of the unanticipated complexities of such a plan, it is being shelved - for now.

One cynical insider explained it this way: "Look, it's a little game we play with the members. We're going to liberate the church no matter what. But it can't be done all at once. We go two steps forward and wait for a response. If there's too much howling from the kiddies [the counterrevolutionaries?], we say it was all rumors. We deny anything major is being changed. So we take one step backwards. But as soon as things cool down, well, then it's time to take two more steps forward. It's not fast enough for me, but Joe [Tkach Jr.] and Mike [Fezell] know what they are doing."

## **HWA's Views on the Current Chaos**

Contrary to the hopes and beliefs of a handful of Armstrongite fanatics, Herbert Armstrong remains in his grave and will continue to do so for some time. Nevertheless, years before his death HWA did make a few statements that have relevance to the current

Tkach administration.

Ambassador alumni from the earliest years of the college recall how in the 1950s HWA would frequently say, "If this work is not of God, it will perish." Then, in later years HWA told some that he envisioned the WCG after his death splitting into numerous warring sects with perhaps one eventually predominating. At least regarding the future of his own organization, Armstrong seems to have had some understanding, maybe even a prophetic insight.

There is one other HWA statement, frequently made while he was alive, that many Ambassador alumni also recall: "God is not the author of confusion!"

## **Bible Knowledge Expanding**

As we approach the year 2000, interest in the Bible seems to be expanding at an exponential rate. Go into almost any bookstore and you will find dozens of new books by reputable scholars writing about the Bible's origins, its contents, its significance, etc. Even on TV there are frequently programs now devoted to such topics. One of our readers recently commented:

Having studied the Bible all my life, I thought I had a good understanding of its contents. But in the last few weeks since getting cable television installed I have been watching a series called "Mysteries of the Bible." I have come to see that there is very much that I need to study. Here are just some of the few surprises I got from the one segment I saw.

I used to think that the Old Testament was canonized hundreds of years before Christ. I learned that it wasn't. It was after 70 A.D. that the Old Testament was finally canonized by the rabbis of that time. I used to think that everything that was done by the Roman Emperors was evil. But I discovered that Constantine played the key role in canonizing the New Testament at Nicaea. I used to think that everything the Gnostics taught was heresy. But, I wonder now, because I learned that they were persecuted by Constantine because they would not bow to what they thought were his own heresies. I used to think that we had the whole Bible today. But I found out that there are Lost Books of the Bible - books that are now lost, but that are actually mentioned in the Bible, itself, as being inspired.

So many of us who spent years in the WCG were led to believe that we really understood the Bible when we actually did not. That is why I think it is wonderful that so many who have left are finally getting around to confronting some of the really big religious issues.

In recent months, AR has been receiving so much Bible-related information of significance in the mail it is not possible to review more than a few items. But, because some are so noteworthy, we will very briefly mention a few for those who are interested in biblical studies:

"The Christmas Covenant" was an article by Jeffery L. Sheler that appeared in the Science & Society section of the 12/19/94 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*. The subtitle stated, "Was Jesus's birth part of a divine plan leading to a golden age? Scholars are re-examining

the biblical prophecies." If you have not already seen it, try to locate a copy at your local library. Even many who have studied the subject for decades have told us they found the article very enlightening.

Not everyone likes the writings of William F. Dankenbring. But we recently found his article "The Battle Over the Bible" fascinating. Quoting extensively from the writings of Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165), Dankenbring makes the startling claim that during the early years of the Christian era certain Jewish scholars tampered with the Hebrew Scriptures in order to obscure references that could point to Jesus as the Messiah. Dankenbring concludes that the Septuagint version of the Old Testament may be more accurate than the Masoretic text. The article was published in the January, 1995 issue of *Prophecy Flash!* (P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003).

Another researcher who has concluded that certain Jewish rabbis of the past have tampered with their own Hebrew scriptures is Carl D. Franklin. In his 30-page paper "The Two Jehovahs of the Psalms," Mr. Franklin made some assertions we found so astounding we asked him for further documentation. He kindly responded with an extensive bibliography that covered the following points: (1) source material which shows the corruption of the rabbinic text edited by Jacob ben Chayim of 1524-25; (2) source material which shows the corruption of the Levitical priesthood; (3) source material which shows deliberate tampering with the Old Testament text; (4) source material which shows rabbinical corruption with the worship of Isis and Osiris of Egypt, Mithras of Persia, Ba'al of the Canaanites, and Mystical Kabbalism; and (5) source material which analytically destroys rabbinic, German, and English textual criticism of the last one hundred years. Those interested in reading Mr. Franklin's papers should write to Carl Franklin, 58775 Klumbis Rd., Dowagiac, MI 49047.

A good number of our readers continue to express an ongoing interest in the Branch Davidian-Waco tragedy. Dr. Phillip Arnold informs us that "Reunion Institute offers a package of research materials on the Waco Crisis including articles, audio tapes, and video tapes for a \$30.00 donation (shipping included)." As Dr. Arnold was personally involved in the negotiations that went on with David Koresh, he has a good deal of information about what really transpired in Waco. Some will also be interested to learn that Dr. Arnold heads the Religion-Crisis Task Force, an organization composed of 24 leading scholars and professionals concerned about the way government approaches religious groups perceived as dangerous and labeled as "cults." To order the Waco package or to contact the Task Force write: Reunion Institute, P.O. Box 981111, Houston, TX 77098; tel. 713-523-1861; fax 713-523-3585.

## Letters

In [AR56](#) you reported how WCG minister Robert Boraker stated, "The word 'trinity' is not in the Bible and we will refrain from using it for that reason." Well, the words "Millennium," "Eucharist," "Bible study," "pray and pay," "co-worker," etc. are not in the Bible either. What consistency.

-Washington

I was sorry to hear of Gene Justice's loss. I remember him from college as a man of warmth and wit. When I got your last AR I was also facing loss. My husband, Mike Murphy, died July 11, 1994 after a 15-month battle with cancer. He graduated from Big Sandy in 1969. I was then Lois Holman and attended 1968-9....

I've been out of the WCG for over 15 years and enjoy reading of the changes. Many seem too good to be true, but I think they are. I recently attended a WCG service while visiting my parents and was very pleased with the service.... I think there are changes coming in the Christmas doctrine and in calling pastors "reverend"....

I would appreciate letters from those we knew if you will print my address. Old friends are so special and it's so hard to keep in contact.

-Lois Murphy  
541 Oak Park Drive  
Choctaw, OK 73020-7511

Your publication performs a valuable service in mentioning the many, many new ideas circulating in WCG circles. I have written to most of the groups you have referred to. Some have valuable truths but some have wild ideas. For instance, I wrote to a few Preterist groups. I was shocked to discover that some seem to think that Christ returned to earth way back in the first century! I laughingly mentioned this to my brother-in-law who is still in the WCG. To my amazement, he agreed with that view! He says his minister is teaching that God's Kingdom is already here!

I would like to see AR devote more space to the new doctrines and Bible theories.

-Illinois

*Editor: We simply do not have the resources to thoroughly review all of the new ideas that are circulating among current and former WCG members. We have space to only briefly allude to them and give a few references for those doing their own research. However, you are very correct in saying that some of the new teachings and theories are a little wild.*

In your last issue, you asked if anyone knew of a group that teaches the United States is the Beast of Revelation. I am surprised that you did not know already. Both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists teach something close to that. Here at [WCG] headquarters, a few of us are leaning in that direction, but because we are in a doctrinal overload situation, Mr. Fezell does not want any new teachings aired publicly right now.

-California

I was interested that other readers suspect that the United States is the Beast of Revelation. Waco started me thinking along those lines. The chief proponent of this kind of interpretation is Kenneth B. Klein. In his book *The False Prophet*, he makes a good case for the United States and the United Kingdom being the fulfillment of the Beast of

Revelation 13 (similar to the SDAs) and the False Prophet. He sees the United Nations as the eighth beast of Revelation. He has an interesting idea for the image of the beast. The book is available from Ken Klein Ministries, 1574 Coburg Rd., #125, Eugene, OR 97401. He is currently making personal appearances in Southern California; I attended one of these. Another Oregonian, James Lloyd, expresses similar views in his *Beyond Babylon*. As may be expected, this interpretation is abhorrent to many who believe in Anglo-Israelism.

-WCG member  
California

How could anyone think that the United States is the Beast? Mr. Dankenbring has proven conclusively that it is Saddam Hussein. Anyone who reads *Prophecy Flash!* magazine would understand this.

-Oregon

On page seven of [AR57](#) you listed six hypothetical scenarios for the fulfillment of the Beast prophecies. Would you like to increase the total to a "perfect seven"? After all, the Beast has seven heads - tsk, tsk. So here is one more speculative construct to entertain your readers, if it fails to expand thinking into potentials.

Most prophecy buffs (HWA, the evangelicals, etc.), knowing that Rome fell in AD 476, seem to get locked into a resurrection scenario that plays out in Western Europe with a trail of heads and horns composed of characters like Justinian, Charlemagne, the Hapsburgs, Napoleon, Hitler, et al. This trail supposedly leads to the final formation of 10 nations/10 kings. That view has been quite popular. But other views, previously thought marginal, are growing in acceptance.

For example, as a number of historians recognize, there was a second trail of continued power leading away from Rome! First, Emperor Constantine transferred Rome's authority to Constantinople (often called "the Second Rome"). Then when that city fell to the Muslims in 1453, the trail of power called the "Eastern wing" (leg?-see Daniel 2) went first to Kiev and then to Moscow (which the Russians call "the Third Rome").

Notice that this hypothetical scarlet-colored Beast (Red Russia/Red Army) has had seven heads from Lenin to Gorbachev (hereinafter "MSG"): Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, and MSG. (Malenkov does not qualify as a head because he was only a temporary interregnum). MSG, the seventh, suffered a "deadly wound" when he was ousted from power and the USSR collapsed. Broadcaster Dan Rather used almost those very words when he first reported that "the mortally wounded Gorbachev" had been ousted. The deadly wound (two-fold: MSG and the USSR) will be healed upon his return to power when he fulfills his avowed purpose of restoring the USSR. Events will dictate this, but the restoration will not include all 15 of the former republics because five of them are Islamic and will never agree to the plan. Only ten of the republics will come together on a voluntary basis and together they will "give their power to the Beast" (Rev. 17:13). This includes their weapons, both land-based and submarine ("rise up out of the sea," Rev. 17:13). Under this scenario, I guess the only clear prophetic

identity we could assign to Yeltsin is that he is "the eighth and is of the seven" (Rev. 17:11).

When Andrei Gromyko cast his vote for MSG he said, "He has a nice smile, but he has iron teeth." As for that famous birthmark on MSG's head - could it be the endtime fulfillment of the legend that began with the mark of Gen. 3:15?

I'm no prophet, I'm only presenting a possible scenario, but I'll consider any clue that unfolding history hasn't already scrapped. After all, Rev. 13:3 says, "All the world wondered after the beast." What eventually transpires will be different than what the majority will be expecting.

For those who would like to know more about MSG's possible future, let me suggest the *Center for Action Monthly Newsletter* published by Bo Gritz (c/o HC 11 Box 307, Kamiah, ID 83536). Col. Gritz has shown that MSG has 50 characteristics of the Antichrist. For those who only read the mainstream press let me suggest the eye-opening article about MSG entitled "Trying to Grab the Microphone" which appeared on page 32 of the 3/13/95 issue of *Newsweek*.

-Gary Arvidson  
North Carolina

"Conspiracy" seems to be a hot topic of animated discussion among many AR readers. Being a long time student of the subject, I thought I'd offer a thought or two.

First of all, what constitutes a conspiracy? Mr. Webster defines conspiracy as (1) a planning and acting together secretly, especially for an unlawful or harmful purpose such as murder or treason; (2) the plan agreed upon, the plot; (3) the group taking part in such a plan; (4) a combining or working together.

Considering Webster's definition, I am surprised that any controversy should arise regarding the subject in WCG circles. From cover to cover, from the Garden of Eden to the endtime Beast, the Bible, which most of us have studied assiduously, chronicles the centuries-long tale of world conspiracy upon conspiracy stacked upon numberless conspiracies. Why should we, then, be surprised that major conspiracies continue in this day and age when they have existed for centuries?

Rather than mount my soap box, I simply suggest you consider a few books I have found useful in my studies: *Secrets of the Federal Reserve* and *The Federal Reserve Conspiracy* by Eustace Mullins are "must read" books revealing the who, what, where, when, why, and how with names, faces, places, and bountiful citations from government archives and Federal Reserve documents. *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* by Gary Allen - a great little pocket book with essential information. Hard to find these days. *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*, a 1,348-page study by Dr. Carroll Quigley, a world-class historian who for several years was allowed "to study it all from the inside." *The Naked Capitalist* by Cleon Skousen, an excellent commentary on Quigley's *Tragedy and Hope*. *The Anglo-American Establishment*, another outstanding book by Quigley, only 354-pages but potent. *America's Secret Establishment: An Introduction to the Order of the*

*Skull and Bones*, another outstanding book by Dr. Quigley sheds a bright light piercing the dark side of America's movers and shakers. *The Federal Reserve and Our Manipulated Dollar* by Martin A. Larson reveals why we're broke and they aren't. *The Creature From Jekyll Island: A Second Look at the Federal Reserve* by G. Edward Griffin exposes the method by which the Federal Reserve creates money out of nothing, the concept of usury as the payment of interest on pretended loans, the true cause of the hidden tax called inflation, the way in which the Fed creates boom-bust cycles, and why yesteryear's dollar has been devalued more than 98 percent! For those who are really stout of heart, there are Des Griffin's books: *Fourth Reich of the Rich* and *Descent Into Slavery*. Finally, there is *Call It Conspiracy* by Larry Abraham, giving most of the names with pictures!

Two bookstores I recommend are: Emissary Publications (owned and run by my good friends Des and Karen Griffin), 9205 SE Clackamas Rd. #1776, Clackamas, OR 97015, tel. 503-824-2050; and American Opinion Book Store (managed by my irrepressible daughter, Erin Cullen) 4306 Utah Street, San Diego, CA 92140, tel. 619-281-1338.

Those who are interested in digging deeper into "The Conspiracy" may write to me. I will respond as health permits.

-Howard C. Clark  
P.O. Box 246  
Gasquet, CA 95543  
(tel. 707-457-3147)

I have no need of your reports any longer so please cancel my subscription. For more than 30 years I was sure that God was using Mr. Garner Ted to tell it like it is. But lately I saw that God is now using Rush Limbaugh, a great American. Rush speaks the truth. How anyone could be a Christian and not back him 100% I don't know. I wish Mr. Garner Ted would get off the air and give his time and support to Rush. I think you all should do the same.

-Texas

*Editor: Former deejay Rush Limbaugh and his "dittoheads" are clearly a major political force in the U.S. today. So much so that there is even a magazine that critically monitors everything Limbaugh says and does. It's called Flush Rush Quarterly (P.O. Box 270525, San Diego, CA 92198).*

*Our mail shows that many people somehow view the so-called political right as identical to "true Christianity." It may sound funny, but an increasing number of Americans seem to believe that Jesus is a Republican. Such individuals might have their view of reality expanded somewhat if they could study the views of a remarkable individual I first met in the late 1980s.*

*I was at the Loyola Law School Library in Los Angeles where I was doing legal research. Walking through a corridor, I heard a dynamic voice coming from one of the public lecture halls. The speaker was a mid-fortyish but lean, square-jawed man of somewhat military bearing. I had never heard him, or of him, before. But because of the power and*

*clarity of his presentation I took a seat in the sparse audience and listened. He was saying things that I thought at first were completely, outrageous: The Soviet Union, he said, was not really a serious military threat to the U.S. The strength of the Soviet military had been greatly exaggerated by the U.S. military-industrial complex to insure that excessive amounts of tax dollars would flow into their coffers. The "Star Wars" program would not succeed in guaranteeing peace, but if fully deployed would very likely bring about nuclear war because of the inherent limitations of computer technology. Then he said something that still rings in my ears: "Having sat in meetings with some of our nation's top leaders, I can tell you - the lunatic fringe is not in charge now, the lunatics are."*

*Normally, I would not have paid attention to such comments, but this was no fool. The speaker was Dr. Robert M. Bowman, a retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Colonel who flew 101 combat missions over Vietnam, earned his Ph.D. from Caltech where he specialized in aeronautics and nuclear engineering, and then went on to head the "Star Wars" program in the Ford and Carter administrations. He is a recipient of the Eisenhower Medal, the George F. Kennan Peace Prize, the Society of American Military Engineers Gold Medal (twice), and many other awards. After his government service, he was Manager of Advanced Space Programs General Dynamics and Vice President of SpaccCom.*

*In recent years he has headed the Institute for Space and Security Studies and publishes Space and Security News, a journal that provides unique insights about the world's military, political, and environmental condition. (Example: his 3/94 issue featured a shocking exposé about the big-government/big-business coverup of the health dangers posed to all of us by power lines and radar.) A study of Bowman's writings reveals that in spite of his extensive military background, he is probably the antithesis of a Limbaugh "dittohead." For example, he is not fearful of the U.N., does not panic at the mention of international law, is not anti-environmentalist, and most certainly is not anti-intellectual. Yet - and this is important - Bowman is a well-versed and devout Christian.*

*In January, I was very pleased to learn that Dr. Bowman now has his own radio program called "Solutions From the Left and From the Right." The Los Angeles Times has called Dr. Bowman "the best public speaker in America" and even if for only that reason, many will find his new program provocative. Additionally, Dr. Bowman now publishes a newsletter called Christianity in Action. Its premier edition took on the thorny, and usually sidestepped, issue of "Making War: A Christian Perspective." Those who would like a sample copy should write to: Christianity in Action, 5115 S. AlA Hwy., Melbourne Beach, FL 32951. (One suggestion though: I know for a fact that Dr. Bowman and his wife Maggie, in their patriotic and Christian zeal for sharing what they know, have gone even more into debt than I have in putting out AR. So please, if you want his newsletter, contribute to it as you are able.)*

In [AR56](#) you ran the obituary of Mr. John Wiedner, the WWII hero. I recently talked to a Pasadena man who knew him personally and he told me something amazing. In performing all his heroic exploits in WWII, Mr. Wiedner never killed anyone or even carried a gun. Surely, to have saved the lives of so many Jews and Allied airmen as he did, he must have had God's help. I would like to read the book about his war experiences. Where can I get a copy?

-California

*Editor: The book is Flee the Captor by Herbert Ford. Copies of the updated edition may be obtained from the Adventist Book Center, 1501 E. Chevy Chase Dr., Glendale, CA 91206, tel. 800-765-6955. The price is \$12.95 plus \$4 shipping per copy.*

The best thing about AR is that it shows decisions, changes, and internal dynamics of the WCG to be based upon expediency - the true raw material of humanistic psychological workings, not the Holy Spirit, not the mind of God, not the leadership of Jesus Christ. This then assists former and present members (and others negatively impacted upon) to see that this expediency is a worldwide phenomenon (pun intended). Human nature is everywhere. The WCG is not different and it is not special!

This is an education by degrees, a gradual lifting of a veil that blinds and chokes and disfigures perceptions. Finally one can stand and state clearly that one's membership in the WCG cult was an egocentric and selfish experience - an experience to be learnt from thoroughly!

-Murray Thompson  
Australia

Someone sent me your publication. Tell them to stop it. I've read enough. I saw the letter from Mr. Baldwin. It's too bad that he has left God's church. If he had stayed longer he could have heard explained why Jesus Christ let the early church believe He was returning in their time. Mr. Waterhouse explained two years ago that if Christ had told them He was returning many centuries later they would not have been motivated to preach the gospel during their lifetime as it was necessary to have done. So that explains it.

You people don't know it but you are helping Mr. Meredith's Satanic work. He claims to be loyal to God, but he has thrown out God's basic truth - loyalty to the GOVERNMENT of God! Nothing else matters. He once knew how God chose Mr. Armstrong. We all understood that was true because Mr. Armstrong was the only one to whom the true gospel was shown in 1900 years. We know that God later chose Mr. Tkach because Mr. Armstrong told us so! Therefore the new doctrinal understandings that Mr. Tkach has taught us are from GOD! Mr. Meredith does not understand that. Neither do you people.

-Indiana

Will all WCG property be sold and unaccounted for, like the Poconos? Events of the last few years seem to indicate that now, with the groundwork laid, all that remains is to alienate the membership (well underway!), sell the assets, and depart on an extended vacation.

It has been reported that a very good offer was made on part of the Pasadena property but was refused because payment was proposed to cover a five year span instead of for immediate cash.

Nevertheless, the members don't seem to be shaking loose that easily. Perhaps the old brain washing that Pasadena is infallible is a bit of a hindrance just now. My wife and

daughter left the bunch six months ago for Rev. Rod and his rebellious reprobates, but now they do read the AR.

-Arkansas

Here in Texas the story has really gotten around that since he took over from Mr. Herbert Armstrong, Mr. Tkach has been able to stash away \$2 million each year in a foreign bank account. We've repeatedly been told that Joe Jr. has been able to do the same with \$1 million per year for some time. Have you also heard this?

-Texas

*Editor: Yes, we have. But we have seen no evidence yet to confirm that the story is true. In these strange times when it seems there is a new, competing WCG offshoot springing up every other day, we suggest a bit of skepticism in dealing with all the stories - at least until they can be verified.*

I'm mad! For 25 years we supported the Work with tithes and offerings to the point that we could not support our family properly, could not send our kids to college, could not get medical help for serious problems, and so on. Now we are told it was all a big mistake. We really did not have to send that money in and we would not have been under a curse if we did not. It seems to me we have been under a curse! For listening to Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Tkach, and the rest. We have been robbed! I feel lower than low. All washed up....

For your information, in a local paper the last week of January, I saw this letter to columnist Ann Landers:

Dear Ann: I'm afraid you recently gave someone some advice that was not up to your usual standard. You told the person who had been victimized by various televangelists that he could not sue. A Florida couple recently was awarded \$1.5 million by a Dallas jury in a case against a prominent televangelist. I know of at least seven other lawsuits pending against televangelists.

You also said televangelists only promise to *pray*, not to heal. The sad truth is that many of the televangelists do promise miracles in exchange for donations. By so doing, they are taking advantage of people's faith, which is as cold-hearted and cynical as any kind of abuse.

Faith abuse is a huge problem in America today. I am director of the Trinity Foundation, a watchdog organization dedicated to ending this abuse. We sponsor a nationwide toll-free help line for people who believe they or a loved one has been victimized by a televangelist. The number is (800) 229-VICTIM.

By the way, Ann, I agree with your assessment that Billy Graham is about the only big-name preacher who seems to be trustworthy.

-Douglas Duncan, Director  
Trinity Foundation, Dallas

If any of your other readers are as angry about what is going on in the church, then they may want to call Mr. Duncan's organization as I have done, or they can write to Evangelist Victims Advocates, P.O. Box 33, Dallas, TX 75221. They should mention the WCG and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a reply. I also think some of us need to start writing to the proper government officials to ask for an investigation. I suggest that everyone who has been victimized by the WCG write to their own state's attorney general. They can help. Also, because the WCG is based in California and Texas, everyone who has contributed to Tkach can write to the top lawmen of those two states: The Honorable Dan Lungren, Attorney General of California, Dept. of Justice, 1515 K Street, No. 511, Sacramento, CA 95814; and The Honorable Dan Morales, Attorney General of Texas, Supreme Court Building, P.O. Box 12548, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711.

-New Reader  
Illinois

It should not come as a surprise that the WCG is now on the verge of total collapse. Mr. Tkach claims to have been chosen by Jesus Christ, but it is very easy to prove that Christ did not choose him. The Bible shows us very clearly how God wants a new leader of his church to be chosen. First the entire congregation, not just some secret board of elders, should put forward candidates whom the entire congregation recognizes as having proper spiritual experience and maturity. Then those chosen individuals should draw lots. In that way God reveals who He chooses to lead His people (Acts 1:15-26). Mr. Armstrong's autobiography and the church history book by Dugger and Dodd show that Mr. Armstrong was chosen to be an Apostle by this very method. Any other method of choosing a leader, such as the Roman Catholic system which the WCG has adopted, will produce the confusion we now see. It is sad that in his old age Mr. Herbert Armstrong forgot this and was swayed into choosing Mr. Tkach. But then again, we really don't know for sure that Mr. Armstrong really chose Mr. Tkach, do we.

-South Africa

In [AR57](#) you made some positive comments about Mr. Tkach. I think it is commendable that you try to see good in someone even if you disagree with them overall. However, I hope you are not being deceived about Mr. Tkach's true nature.

After repeatedly listening to a cassette recording of his January 7 taped message (the one my relatives call the Russian Christmas Present), I came away with mixed thoughts about Mr. Tkach. In one way, I feel sorry for him. He is up in years, having spent most of his life duped by Mr. Armstrong. Now he has come around to seeing that what Mr. Armstrong taught was not really the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He's probably bitter. Having carefully studied and prayed about what he has said, I have come to see that Mr. Tkach is theologically correct in most of what he says. But that is not the end of the story.

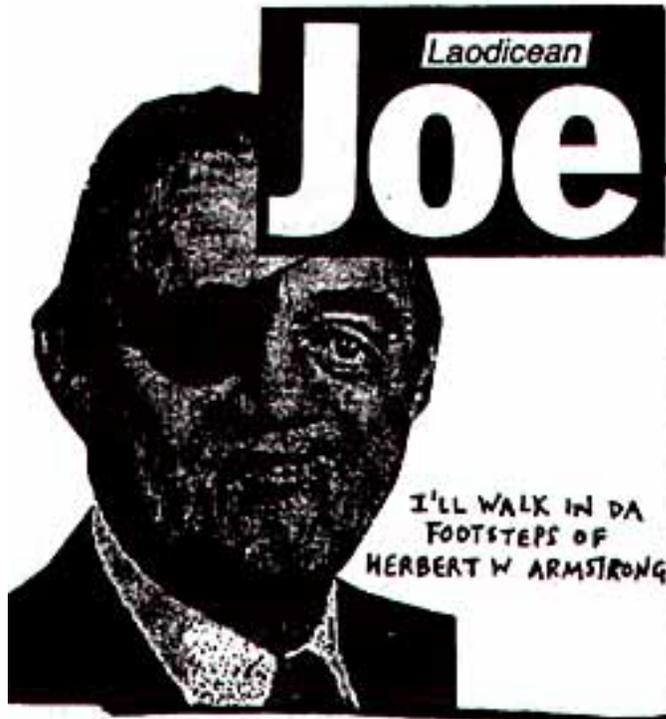
Thousands of us have given many years to the WCG. And we have given much time and much money. Now Mr. Tkach says, in effect, it was all for nothing. We were stupid in doing what we did. It doesn't take the brain of a genius to figure out that we have been defrauded! That being the case, why is Mr. Tkach, who is supposedly so full of the Holy Spirit's love and wisdom, not returning the money we gave him under false pretenses? He

is not doing that. Instead, he puts out of the church anyone who openly disagrees with him about anything. I know of some ministers who have given their whole life to the church, thinking they were serving God, who Mr. Tkach has thrown out of the Church with barely the shirts on their backs. Many are now up in age. Somehow I think that is wrong. Especially when you consider that Mr. Tkach, himself, is doing very well financially.

And what about those who left years ago because they were teaching the very things that Mr. Tkach now says are the true gospel? I frankly don't see much difference between what Mr. Tkach is now teaching and what Dr. Martin has taught for years. Correct me if I'm wrong. So is Dr. Martin being given an apology and asked back? What about the other "liberals"? Is Wayne Cole going to be asked back? Or David Antion? Or the hundreds of other "liberals"?

Mr. Tkach is preaching love and tolerance all the time. Yet in his own management of the church there is precious little toleration, precious little justice, fairness, or kindness. He seems to want to be a New Testament Christian, but he also wants to be a rich, powerful corporation president who has the respect of the world. I don't think you can have it both ways (Matt. 19:24). Even if much of what he says is theologically correct, don't let him fool you! Mr. Tkach, like Rasputin, is still the center of a cult - one that demands only two things: obedience and money.

-Washington

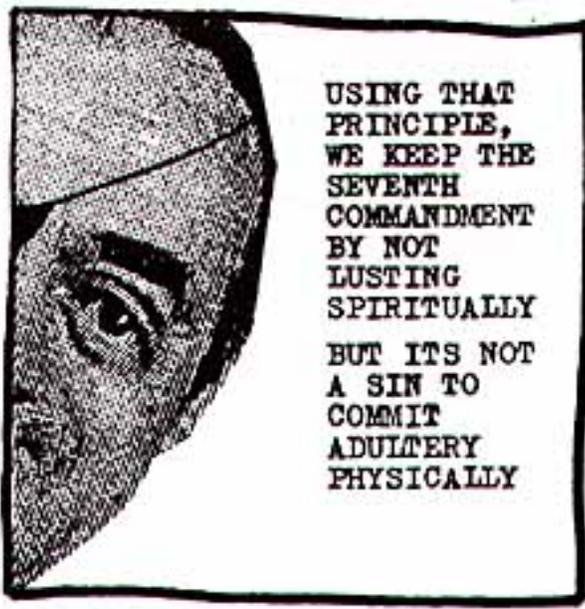


Laodicean  
**Joe**

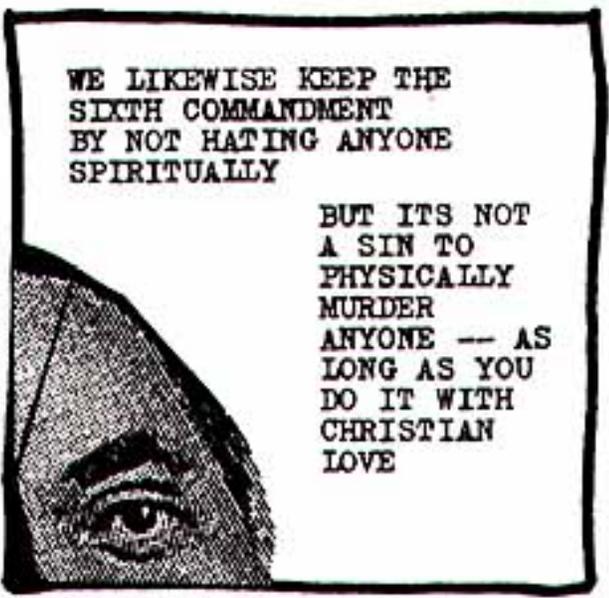
I'LL WALK IN DA  
FOOTSTEPS OF  
HERBERT W ARMSTRONG



NEW COVENANT  
CHRISTIANS KEEP THE  
SABBATH SPIRITUALLY  
  
ITS NOT  
A SIN  
TO WORK  
PHYSICALLY  
ON THE  
SABBATH



USING THAT  
PRINCIPLE,  
WE KEEP THE  
SEVENTH  
COMMANDMENT  
BY NOT  
LUSTING  
SPIRITUALLY  
  
BUT ITS NOT  
A SIN TO  
COMMIT  
ADULTERY  
PHYSICALLY



WE LIKEWISE KEEP THE  
SIXTH COMMANDMENT  
BY NOT HATING ANYONE  
SPIRITUALLY

BUT ITS NOT  
A SIN TO  
PHYSICALLY  
MURDER  
ANYONE -- AS  
LONG AS YOU  
DO IT WITH  
CHRISTIAN  
LOVE



— SO YOU SEE I DON'T  
TEACH THAT THE LAW  
IS DONE AWAY -- BUT  
THAT WE MUST KEEP  
IT IN A MORE  
MATURE AND  
SPIRITUAL WAY!

ON YOUR WAY OUT  
JOE, PLEASE DON'T  
STEAL ANY MORE WCG  
ASSETS--  
PHYSICALLY OR  
SPIRITUALLY



© DIZZY DEPT '95



*Editor: The above cartoon was not created by AR, but is from a flyer being distributed widely among WCG members. It shows some of the feeling generated by Tkach's "Russian Christmas Present. "*

You may remember how I wrote to you folks back in the fall after I met an ex-member who gave me your address. I had spent many years in WCG and the new direction had left me in a daze. I thought to myself it was finally time to figure out what I had really been a part of. I ordered all your back issues and have since read every one. To say my eyes were opened is a huge understatement. I have now started reading some of the books you suggested in [AR 56](#), and again my eyes are getting opened real wide. So, I thought, I'll try to encourage some of my family who are still in the Tkach church to read your materials. But no. They will just not listen to anyone. I am flabbergasted. You have so much to offer, but they will not pay heed. They are like people who are walking in their sleep and do not want anyone or anything to wake them up! How terrible.

-Ohio

## Editor's Note

It is absolutely true that simply giving a WCG member one of our publications will not automatically result in the Worldwider discovering that he or she is being manipulated by very devious charlatans. Nevertheless, every week *Ambassador Report* plays a major role in assisting people to come out of what is obviously a very destructive cult experience.

I wish we had the means to do more. Nevertheless, each issue is helping hundreds who have been victimized by the "Worldwide experience." Lack of funds have made it necessary to cut a huge amount of information out of this issue. However, with a bit of luck we will be including all of that, and more, in AR59.

My thanks to all of you who are helping *Ambassador Report*.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR59\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

June 1995 (AR59)

### Thousands Flee From Tkach

The people of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) have for decades talked about "fleeing." But few ever thought they would be fleeing from the Pastor General of their own church. Nevertheless, for thousands of irate WCG members, that is exactly what has occurred. In the last few weeks thousands of WCG members have rejected the leadership of Apostle Joseph W. Tkach and have renounced their WCG membership.

As we detailed in past issues, since taking over the leadership of the WCG upon the death of church founder Herbert W. Armstrong, Tkach instituted a never-ending stream of doctrinal changes. So sweeping have the changes become, even the most loyal of Tkach "true believers" have had to admit the WCG is very, very different than it was a decade ago. In fact, on numerous religious issues the WCG today is 180 degrees off of its old course. For example, in recent months WCG members have been told that those who privately keep Christmas and Easter will not be disfellowshipped. We have been told that the Dave Pack list of WCG doctrinal changes (see [AR53](#)) has now grown to over 210 changes. The earliest modifications made by Tkach caused some to bolt the WCG. But in recent months, the whispered criticisms of Tkach, particularly among his own ministers, crescendoed to a roar and the numbers of those exiting have increased dramatically.

From the beginning of the year, computer buffs who peruse E-mail and "surf the Internet" began noticing that messages about Worldwide, posted by Worldwidiers, were becoming increasingly strident. All too often coming from anonymous sources using such pseudonyms as "Law Keeper," "Pro-obedience," or "True Believer" (obviously oblivious to Eric Hoffer's classic by that title), the messages, while often containing huge quantities of unverifiable data and misinformation, nevertheless revealed that among WCG members and ministers there was a massive amount of distrust, even hatred, of Tkach and company. Some posting E-mail seemed to be on the verge of mental breakdown over the changes in their church's belief system. Others have referred to Tkach as the Antichrist and his organization as "The New Coven Church" or "The Synagogue of Satan." And quite a few voiced outright hostility about "the Gang of Four" - the ones really running

the WCG: Tkach Sr., Tkach Jr., Michael Feazell, and Greg Albrecht (or perhaps Ellen Escat).

With dozens of ministers resigning (see [AR58](#)), Tkach knew he had a problem months ago. But he did not realize how well organized his opposition really was. Tkach found that out in early April. He finally discovered that well over 100 disgruntled WCG ministers, representing many thousands of members, had been in constant contact with each other and that they did not want to continue participation in what they viewed as Tkach's "slide down the slippery slope."

## **The Rebels' Demands**

"The rebels," as headquarters "New Covenant Christians" refer to them, wanted to make their position clear to the Tkach administration. To represent them, approximately 170 WCG elders chose three men: Dennis Luker, Bob Dick, and Jim Franks who soon became Judas, Brutus, and Cassius to the Tkach loyalists. On April 5, the rebel trio met for three hours with Church Administration director Joe Tkach Jr., assistant director Richard Rice, and *Plain Truth* editor Greg Albrecht. Tkach Sr. never made it to the meeting. He was rumored to be soaking in his Jacuzzi after a rough day of feeding his pet pigeons.

At the meeting, the three rebels presented individual letters, signed by 10 of the 14 original regional pastors. The letters requested that church members and ministers who could not in good conscience accept the church's dramatic changes in doctrine be allowed to worship separately without recrimination. The representatives of his highness, The Apostle, rejected the "outlandish demands." On April 11, Tkach Sr. (for some odd reason, writing in the sarcastic style of Joe Jr.) sent evangelist Luker a fax:

Dear Denny,

Regardless of how you wish to sugar-coat your efforts to divide the Church, division is still the name of the game you are playing. What you call so ironically a "peaceful separation without recrimination or disfellowshipping for those who desire to maintain our previous beliefs" is in fact a request for the Church to support your anti-Christian belief that anyone who does not keep the seventh-day Sabbath and the annual holydays is, in fact, not a true Christian. That belief is contrary to Scripture....

I respond to your "request" as did Jesus to Judas the traitor: "What you are about to do, do quickly."

Luker and his friends took Tkach's advice. With irreconcilable differences ending their relationship to Apostle Tkach, the ten regional pastors immediately announced they would meet April 23-26 to begin setting up a new church organization and that a week later all interested elders would have a general meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## **Tkach: Send Money Quick!**

Calling his critics "rebels like Korah," Apostle Tkach responded to the crisis just as his

predecessor used to do, by lashing out (with love, of course) in a "Dear Brethren" letter. On April 17, he wrote to his subjects:

I am saddened to have to write you this important emergency letter to let you know that certain disfellowshipped former ministers are now forming their own church organization and have pulled out all stops in trying to disillusion and overthrow the faith of our brethren. I have to warn you that a few of these ministers want to disaffect as many members as they can in order to finance their efforts to divide the Body of Christ....

---

&COPY; 1995 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service.

ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Geringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola

---

Paul wrote.... Christ is the end of the law.... We have now been informed that some of these men have been at work for months, secretly laying the ground work for their rebellion. We have also received information that certain ones would like to take control of Ambassador University from faithful University Board members.

Some of them have tried to convince members that headquarters is "doing away with God's law." Nothing could be further from the truth....

Those who want to make merchandise of you tell you that certain teachings of Mr. Armstrong are what you should cling to - specifically the teaching that the Sabbath and Holy Days are required for Christians.... the ministers who are trying to gain your affection want you to believe that the identifying sign of true Christians is Sabbath and Holy Day keeping. They want you to believe that people aren't true Christians unless they are keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days. But that is *not* what Jesus and the apostles taught. They taught that the identifying sign of true Christians *is faith in Christ* (Galatians 2:16)....

How ironic that the letter of Jude condemns those who are dividing the Church, yet some use him as their authority for doing it. Some use every means of discrediting Church headquarters, resorting even to rumor, innuendo and lie to win you over to their side....

In congregations where the pastors have taught faithfully the focus on Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit has led the Church to emphasize over the past nine years, there is little discontent and turmoil. But in congregations where pastors have *avoided* following headquarters' lead in preaching about the centrality of Jesus Christ to the gospel, the Church and our lives, there is turmoil. In certain cases, they have allowed, if not caused, the problem, and then blame headquarters and me for what amounts to their own failure to follow where Christ leads. We have now been told that a few of these men have been in quiet rebellion for years, and some have been planning to form their own churches for some time.... And now, some have planned a major meeting over the weekend of the last Holy Day of Unleavened Bread and the following weekend for all ministers who disagree with the Church to "make their

plans."...

This should be the most exciting and positive time in the history of this Church, and I am saddened that it has to be marred by this rebellion. I know that Satan hates the truth....

Brethren, I must ask you to be especially generous with your offering on the last Holy Day of the Unleavened Bread festival.... I must tell you that we do really *need* these offerings, and especially at this time, when this rebellion has so negatively affected the Church's income. Please give prayerfully and generously....

The members did not give generously. Insiders say offerings for Unleavened Bread were disastrously low. The WCG's bleak financial status was made quite evident when the *Los Angeles Times* (5/12/95, p. B8) reported that the WCG had quietly auctioned off a trove of sterling silver purchased by the WCG's late founder. The *Times* article stated:

The high-quality silver, used by Armstrong during formal dinner parties for heads of state and other luminaries, was sold for an undisclosed price last month by Christie's auction house in New York, the Pasadena-based church confirmed.... Silver candelabra, wine buckets, platters, creamers, silverware and silver decorative items such as a miniature ship and horse were among the goods sold at the auction, said church spokesman Tom Lapacka.... He added that the church no longer entertains in Armstrong's lavish fashion.

Further sales of church assets are on the way. And insiders tell us that the church now has at least two possible buyers for the WCG's Pasadena real estate.

## **David Hulme Shocked by Changes**

While the Tkach team was doing what it could to slow down the WCG's financial hemorrhaging, the over 100 ministers that sent the rebel trio to Pasadena were hard at work. Photocopiers, fax machines, and the Internet all came into high-volume use as the rebels spread the word that they were leaving. Photocopies of ministers' resignation letters started flying about the country like snowflakes in a blizzard.

Evangelist David Hulme's six-page resignation letter of mid-April was especially popular. Hulme, for a time the WCG's chief broadcaster and of late Ambassador Auditorium's entertainment director, rejected Tkach's "New Covenant position," calling the Apostle's "new truths" nothing but "old errors." Hulme now sees Tkach's writings and public statements as filled with overwhelming contradictions and inconsistencies. Hulme quoted from some Tkach sermons in which he distinctly stated that the law must be kept and other sermons in which Tkach stated the law does not need to be kept. Hulme also quoted from Tkach sermons in which the Pastor General attacked and ridiculed "rumormongers" who claimed the WCG was going to water down Armstrongite doctrines eventually - all accusations that have since proven completely true. Wrote Hulme:

This perhaps did not surprise those who know you well, because you have said that many of the recent changes have been in your mind since the 1970s. In fact you used these words to me in your office on February 8, 1995 and again more fully on April 13. On both occasions you said that Joe Tkach Jr. and Mike Fezell have simply

picked up on your own longstanding ideas....

Then there is the issue of Sir Anthony Buzzard's publication *The Law, the Sabbath and New Testament Christianity* which has surfaced among us recently. According to Ron Kelly, its conclusions are fully supported by Mike Feazell and Greg Albrecht. Some of those conclusions include Sunday as the appropriate day of worship, and the observance of the Lord's Supper as frequently as desired. I understand that at the January '95 Regional Directors' Conference the participants were told that soon the Church would observe the New Testament Passover/Lord's Supper more than once a year. Then suddenly the announcement of the change was postponed until next year.

It can therefore be said that most of the rumors mentioned in your sermon of April 30, 1994 did have substance and have been confirmed by your own or your administration's statements. Time will tell whether the remaining rumors will find similar substantiation....

These concerned members and ministers are anxious to preserve the truth and way of life they have learned and to which they are committed. They cannot be categorized fairly as legalists or Judaizers. Furthermore they certainly are not willing to fall under the influence of Azusa Pacific University theologians, one of whom is reported to be writing "a new constitution" for the Worldwide Church of God, while others are said to be helping the church into the "Christian mainstream" by advising on doctrinal matters....

The most disturbing aspect of our recent conversation on the eve of Passover is that with some pride you stated that you had agreed with Richard Plache and Al Carozzo in the 1970s with regard to the place of the law in the Christian life. You said you agreed with them (and therefore disagreed with Herbert W. Armstrong) but felt that they were ahead of their time, and that nothing could be done. I remind you that Richard Plache was one of the prime movers in a 1975 attempt to overturn Sabbath observance in Britain. As a result he was put out of the church, along with Charles Hunting and David Ord, by Mr. Armstrong. If you agreed with these men as you claim, did you inform Mr. Armstrong of your radically different stance any time before his death? In a conversation with him in September 1985 he told me that he was considering you for the position of Deputy Pastor General. He specifically asked me if you would keep the church intact. I told him I believed you would continue his doctrinal emphasis. His concern was to select a potential successor who would MAINTAIN the church, keep it united, and continue its preparation for Christ's return. He thought "the work" was essentially done. The fact that he chose you on the basis of continuity of doctrine and practice when in fact you believed very differently, in my mind casts serious doubt whether he would have appointed you if he had known your beliefs. That you differed so much from your predecessor explains why almost every doctrinal and administrative change caused me to inform you that something was very wrong. It is only in the light of your comments about Richard Plache and Al Carozzo, however, that I have put it all together. Apparently you and I were not agreed in the first place. I thought you were upholding Mr. Armstrong, but it now appears you were not. By your own admission you were simply biding your time....

Effective Wednesday, April 19, 1995 I am resigning....

So that there will be no misunderstanding I am sending this document to twelve people known to me for their integrity and honesty. They will serve as witnesses to the content and intent of this memo....

In bidding Tkach adieu, Hulme was in effect acknowledging that he was a little slow in picking up on the fact that Tkach is a duplicitous self-server whose long-time agenda has been to transform the WCG into an ostensibly mainstream Protestant denomination. Had he been reading *Ambassador Report* he could have figured that out years ago.

Some within the Tkach camp, however, do not view Hulme as so innocent. One told AR, "On, come on! David isn't that dumb. He knew where we were heading all along. It was only after he saw that he would no longer be producing concerts at the Auditorium that he became so principled." Hulme attempts to project the nobility of the Victor Lazlo character in *Casablanca*. In reality, he is more like Claude Rains' police chief who, when forced to close down Rick's night club, exclaims, "I'm shocked! Shocked to find that gambling is going on in here!" - just as the croupier runs up with the chief's roulette winnings. Hulme's last production at Ambassador Auditorium, once known as "the House for God," took place on May 17. It was a concert by saxophonist Larry Elgart and his Manhattan Swing Orchestra.

## **Tkach: The Holy Ghost Made Me Do It!**

On April 26, after talking to his lawyers, and only after discovering that Hulme's letter was being widely disseminated, Tkach finally responded to Hulme. But instead of simply walking two doors down to talk privately to Hulme, his old friend and neighbor, Tkach sent Hulme a formal letter:

It is with regret that I accept your resignation, and with sorrow that I read your false accusations and misrepresentations. It is further disappointing that you chose to share your letter of resignation with a dozen people who are, as you put it, known to you "for their integrity and honesty," but at least one of whom (if it was not you), allowed your misleading, if not distorted, perspective to be distributed around the world....

The more the Holy Spirit led us into truth, the more we could see needed to be changed. The Holy Spirit set the agenda, not me. In April of 1994, I had no idea that the Holy Spirit would lead me to see that we had been wrong in our understanding of the old and new covenants and the implications of that fact on our understanding of Sabbath and Holy Day observance, clean and unclean meat and triple tithing....

You have twisted and misrepresented my comment that the recent changes have "been in my mind" since the 1970s to mean that I understood, believed and embraced these things at that time and have kept that fact a secret ever since. That is not what I was conveying to you, and it surprises me that you took it that way....

Your assertion that ministers have been terminated under "questionable circumstances" is another false conclusion, as is your assertion that the Church's doctrinal position is publicly "in tatters." ... And your statements about Azusa Pacific University, including the falsehood that an Azusa Pacific University theologian is "writing a new constitution" for the Church, amount to little more than an irresponsible slam against that University and against our ministers and members who have attended there....

Tkach's letter ended with the usual claim of love for its target, even as Hulme's letter and

subsequent comments were all supposedly done in the same gentle spirit. It's somehow reassuring to know that no matter how much WCG ministers appear to be beating the hell out of each other - it's all being done "out of love."

## **"The Uniteds"**

Back to the rebels. The so-called ringleaders having met after Unleavened Bread, it was time for the big get-together in Indianapolis. According to the group's press releases which spewed forth via a state-of-the-art "faxback" system, there were approximately 312 individuals in attendance, of which 155 were church elders. The conference of elders went from April 30 through May 2 and produced a large number of important decisions:

It was decided that the new organization would be called The United Church of God-an International Association. A transition plan was adopted by the delegates. It was decided that a more permanent arrangement would be decided upon at another general conference scheduled for early December. The transition plan was approved by 98 percent of the delegates.

Apparently all elders ordained by the WCG were considered valid delegates and each in attendance had a vote. The delegates decided that once the transition period is completed, there would be an annual conference to elect board members, review an annual financial audit, ratify bylaws, and ratify doctrinal changes.

The new church has an interim board composed of nine members. Those elected to the board were Bob Dick, Jim Franks, Roy Holladay, Doug Horchak (Tkach's son-in-law), Denny Luker, Burk McNair, Ray Wooten, Victor Kubik, who will also serve as operational manager for ministerial services, and David Hulme who was also voted interim chairman of the board.

Among those nominated for the board, but not elected, were Wayne Dunlap, Roger Foster, David Havir, Bill Jacobs, Clyde Kilough, Dave Myers, Richard Pinelli, Jim Servidio, Randall Sliver, Guy Swenson, Richard Thompson, Lyle Welty, Dean Wilson, Ellis LaRavia, and Gerald Waterhouse. The vote was certified by Jim McMillion, CPA.

The conference agreed on a brief (actually, *very* brief) statement of beliefs which include a non-trinitarian view of God, the maintenance of the traditional Bible canon, and the retention of Sabbath and Holy Day keeping. While not mentioned in press releases, one UCG minister has privately informed us that tithing will, of course, be a key doctrine. Proposed festival sites for UCG's Feast of Tabernacles this fall include Asheville, North Carolina; Corpus Christi, Texas; Jekyll Island, Georgia; Redding, California; Tucson, Arizona; and unspecified foreign locations. In their press releases to date there was no mention of Israel Identity ideas, the role of prophecy, the calculations for Passover or Pentecost, divine healing, or divorce and remarriage. So while the new UCG may appear to be following in Herbert Armstrong's footsteps, many suspect there will eventually be digressions from what HWA taught. Certainly, church governance by vote of the church's elders is totally contrary to one of HWA's central tenets. Look for major doctrinal squabbles in the near future.

The new organization's temporary mailing address is: United Church of God, P.O. Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91006-1780. Publications that reported on the new church included *The Los Angeles Times* (5/4/95, p. B1), the *Pasadena Star-News* (5/5/95, p. A3), and *Christianity Today*.

## **The Worldwide Church of Texas**

According to an April 24 statement issued by former WCG minister and lawyer George Crow, the new, oxymoronic Worldwide Church of God of Texas (WCGT) held a conference in Houston on April 17-18. The conference was attended by 40 pastors, elders, and lay persons. The WCGT, whose board members are George Crow, son Bill Crow, and Hubert Caudill, has been in contact with the United group, but what the relationship of the two organizations is, or will become, is not yet clear. The original WCG, obviously not too happy over the new group, has brought a legal action in a Los Angeles court, seeking an injunction against the Texas group's use of the church name. The Texas group, which we understand already has congregations in a number of states, may be contacted by writing Worldwide Church of God of Texas, P.O. Box 30, Katy, TX 77492-0030. Its phone number is (713) 260- 9648.

## **Lucifer's Revolt**

More than five years ago, when we first learned and reported that Tkach was planning to radically transform the WCG, one of his closest associates confided that "Joe means business. Even if it means losing half the members and ministers he is going to straighten out the church's doctrines." The estimate that the changes could cost him half the membership was a rather astute one. Right now, Tkach is saying that about one third of the ministry has left him in just the last few months.

Not surprisingly, Tkach compares the new revolt to the one led by Lucifer in which one third of Heaven's angels turned against God. But the so-called rebels see things quite differently. For instance, in his resignation letter, minister Mario Seiglie wrote:

I have honestly tried to show the brethren both sides of these doctrinal changes, the pros and the cons. They have had access to this material at our office as well as what has been sent to them. I have been going over this material with them so they can see it even-mindedly.

According to the Ministerial Manual and the Lecture for Deacons and Elders Outline #2 on God's Government which you presented us, in p. 7 it says, "God wants to see if we will submit to men (within His law) even though none are perfect." Under your direction that condition "within His law" was placed so that not under any circumstance are we to obey you, just as long as your instructions are "within God's laws." Under your guidance it said in p. 10, section C, "Going above the chain of Command" part 2: "An assistant or elder may go over his pastor's head - a. When the pastor intentionally teaches doctrinal error or heresy. For example, he says the Holy Days are nice but not commanded." So you see, these biblical principles have been clearly violated and its breach consists of heresy. I must be consistent. I cannot teach this heresy against God's laws....

Seiglie then went on to explain how he took a vote of his congregation and found that 98 percent wanted to continue keeping the law (holy days, etc.) as they had been taught and that his people wanted nothing to do with those who taught otherwise. In concluding, Seiglie wrote:

Already many "little ones" have left, never to follow any church. I don't want to be in any of your shoes when all these things come to a head. We love you and have nothing against you despite all the turmoil which has been caused, the sleepless nights, the wives' and children's anguish because of all of this. So now you know my position and can act accordingly.

Of course, Seiglie was disfellowshipped.

In many areas of the country, things have gotten a bit raucous in WCG circles. A few weeks ago, down in Big Sandy pro-Tkach minister Russell Duke was locked out of services on orders from a minister of another faction who had Tkach Jr. cut off a phone hookup and then monopolized the lectern with assistance from deacons who took over the control booth and sound system. From the church upheavals of 1979 many have learned, like guerrilla fighters in third world countries, that in a revolution gaining immediate control of the electronic media is essential for success. (Today, with the proliferation of photocopy, fax, and computer technology, the balance of power over men's minds seems to have shifted away from centralized power. This was something the leaders of Eastern Europe learned a few years ago, and something the Tkach group is in the process of learning now.)

In just the last few days we have heard of some congregations splitting in two with legal threats hurled back and forth by opposing ministers. There have been many instances of whole congregations leaving the Tkach fold en masse.

## **Executive Exodus Update**

Right now it is very difficult to get a completely accurate list of just who has left the WCG, where they have gone, or where they are going. There are still a good number who, although planning to leave shortly, have not yet made the leap. Believe it or not, we have even heard of some ex-WCG ministers, long gone, who are now so keen on the WCG's new teachings, they are seriously considering rejoining the WCG.

Ministers who have left the Tkach WCG within the last six months include: Colin Adair, Dibar Apartian, John Bald, Daniel Barnes, Wilbur Berg, Maurice Benson, Karl Beyersdorfer, Alton Billingsley, Tony Bosserman, Charles Bryce, Steve Buchanan, David Burson, John Cafourek, Todd Carey, Jim Chapman, Herbert Cisneros, Tom Clark, Raymond Clore, Richard Crow, Randy D'Alessandro, Tom Damour, Howard Davis, George Delap, Roy Demarest, Bob Dick, Roy Dove, Richard Duncan, Richard Dunlap, Wayne Dunlap, John Elliot, Rob Elliot, Roger Foster, Jim Franks, Ken Geise, Bruce Gore, Lambert Greer, Larry Greider, Mark Gully, Arnold Hampton, Mike Hanisko, Vernon Hargrove, Dave Havir, Gene Hogberg, Roy Holladay, Doug Horchack, Don Hooser, Noel Hornor, David Hulme, Bill Jacobs, Bill Jahns, Greg Johnson, Bob Jones, Clyde Kilough, Mitch Knapp, Randy Kobernat, Saul Langarica, Steve LeBlanc, Floyd Lochner, Otto Lochner, Paul Luecke, Ken Martin, Burk McNair, Darris McNeely, Mark

Mickelson, Rand Millich, David Mills, Steve Moody, Dave Myers, Norm Myers, Steve Myers, Eugene Noel, Brian Orchard, Cliff Parks, Bob Peoples, Gary Petty, Richard Pinelli, Dick Rand, David Register, Camilo Reyes, Harold Rhodes, Melvin Rhodes, Robert Rodzaj, Larry Roybal, Randy Schreiber, Stuart Segal, Mario Seiglie, Jim Servidio, Rex Sexton, Steve Shafer, Steve Sheppherd, Carlton Smith, Gary Smith, Harold Smith, Ron Smith, Randy Stiver, Guy Swenson, Herb Teitgen, Dick Thompson, David Treybig, Jim Tuck, Don Turk, Tom Turk, Cliff Veal, Keith Walden, Larry Walker, Leon Walker, Ron Wallen, Don Waterhouse, Gerald Waterhouse, Robin Webber, Ron Weinland, Lyle Welty, Roger West, Gerald Weston, Glen White, Earl Williams, Jack Williams, Doug Winnail, Ray Wooten, Warren Zehring, Matt Zenchel, and Chuck Zimmerman.

## **Splinters Growing**

With the WCG fragmenting, it is not surprising that many WCG offshoots are gaining members fleeing from Tkach.

Roderick Meredith's Global Church of God has picked up a number of WCG luminaries. In a March 24 letter to his co-workers, Meredith announced that new additions to his ministerial roster include Lambert Greer, Rand Millich, Raymond E. Clore, James Taylor, Daniel Barnes, Don Turk, Maurice Benson, and Dr. Floyd Lochner. Meredith also announced that his program *The World Ahead* will soon be on television. Mark Kellner reported in the April 24 issue of *Christianity Today* that Global now has 7,000 attending weekly services and took in \$3.5 million in 1994. But while Meredith's group is holding its own, we have heard reports that some, unhappy with Meredith's autocratic management style, have recently defected to the new United group. Meredith also seems to have a growing credibility problem. One Wisconsin reader wrote us, "Meredith said that he does not want John Bald or Burk McNair in his group as they stayed in with Tkach which proves that they are preaching for filthy lucre. But what about Meredith and Ray McNair? They stayed in with Tkach until the Leona McNair lawsuit was settled."

Garner Ted Armstrong's Church of God, International continues to experience modest growth. Not long ago, GTA was in Australia where he had an evangelistic campaign. One of our Australian readers wrote:

GTA spoke in Brisbane last Saturday to about 375 people in the City Hall. As a former long-time WCG member it is hard to say what impression a member of the general public would have gained from the lecture. I went purely for the social occasion of seeing many people I had not seen for years, and I was not disappointed in the number of ex-members I saw there. I suspect GTA's purpose was to attract disaffected and confused WCG members to CGI. The time and place of CGI services were announced and everyone invited.

GTA ranged over the ten commandments, the Berlin Wall, the United States of Europe, his 42 years of broadcasting (repeatedly), his family, and only at the end took a slight swipe at church organizations that don't hold fast to the sabbath and unclean meats doctrines. One hour of him was quite enough for me.

Besides the major WCG offshoots (the ones headed by David Hulme, Garner Ted

Armstrong, Roderick Meredith, Gerald Flurry, and William Dankenbring), we continue to hear of many congregations fleeing the Tkach church who are remaining independent of any national organization.

## **Packing For Petra**

With the WCG and its spinoffs in extreme disarray, it is not surprising that some believe they are well into "the last days." What is surprising is how many still believe that when "the end" comes, they should be in "the place of safety" - Petra, in the desert of Jordan. In the March issue of his *Countdown* magazine, former Worldwider Alex Cain of England wrote:

Now is the time to start saving cash for Petra. We suggest that people make sure they have sufficient money to at least take a one way journey there. From the human viewpoint we suggest at least both ways so that if you decide you don't like it for any strange reason then you can at least opt out. Remember though it will be a different world that you come back to. We still believe it is Petra as this is the only spot that we know at present that would accommodate the last bit of hell on earth. By this we meant that in the last few minutes before Christ actually returns Satan will pelt the earth with the stars of heaven, rocks, etc. so that if it were possible no flesh would be saved. If people are in the deep holes of Petra they would clearly be safe.

Yeah, right.

## **MacGregor Dissects Worldwide**

MacGregor Ministries is a Canada-based organization that monitors religious cults. Their April 1995 *News & Views* magazine contained an interview-format article about the WCG's latest changes. Although perhaps a bit naively pro-WCG, the article was generally fair and, at times, revealing. Notice these official statements from WCG spokesmen Joe Tkach Jr., Michael Feazell, and Greg Albrecht:

We have more than 741 ordained ministers who are in the full time ministry, [and] 1,035 other lay elders.... The church has no objections to our members fellowshiping with other Christians.... the Worldwide Church of God views tithing as a principle for Christians. It is not a law.... We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the grave in the same physical body in which he died [although glorified].... Because we have recognized past errors from the pulpit and in print, we fail to understand requests to "expose" Herbert W. Armstrong. We see no biblical mandate for Christians to "expose"... When Herbert W. Armstrong left the Church of God (Seventh Day) he established a ministry independent of his past associations. He did not actively evangelize members from the parent organization, but instead began to preach Christ to the world at large. While he made mistakes, he did not attempt to establish his ministry at the expense of the ministry that had trained and nurtured him.... It is not the tradition of the Worldwide Church of God to keep Christmas, but members may make up their own minds whether to participate or not....

MacGregor expressed some disappointment that Worldwide is not yet willing to label HWA a false prophet and may never do so. Most revealing, however, was the following exchange:

MM Question 17: Will the WCG offer medical and psychological help for members who were damaged by the doctrine/beliefs and regime in the past? Will there be counselling for broken families due to practices from the past?

WCG Reply: While the Worldwide Church of God sincerely regrets any and all erroneous teaching or administrative practice of the past, it cannot accept allegations that church teachings and practices are inherently responsible for personal dysfunctions. It is our belief that Christians should come to Christ for healing, rather than blaming other human beings as being the source and cause of their sin.

Translation: "We told you we were God's ministers. You believed and trusted us. We led you by the nose and you got burned for it. You gave us your money, you threw away years of your life, you may have lost friends, a career, a mate, or even a child as a result. But that was your sin. Don't come to us asking for anything. We defrauded you fair and square. Now, just believe in Jesus."

Is it any wonder that Tkach now wants everyone to believe in merciful grace, not vengeful law? And is it any wonder why so many ex-WCG members say they have lost confidence in all churches?

A copy of the April issue of MacGregor's *News & Views* may be had for \$2.50 by writing to MacGregor Ministries, Box 294, Nelson, B.C. V1L 5P9, Canada; or in the U.S. at Box 591, Point Roberts, WA 98281.

## **Support Groups and Literature**

We continue to get letters from WCG exiters requesting addresses of sabbatarian groups around the world. While many addresses can be found in back issues of AR, we do not maintain a comprehensive list of all sabbatarian churches. After all, there are hundreds of them. The best source of information on that subject is the new, updated edition of the *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups* published by the Bible Sabbath Association, Fairview, OK 73737; tel. (405) 227-3200.

John Robinson, the first editor of the WCG's *Worldwide News*, a former journalism instructor, and now a successful magazine publisher, has started a newspaper called *In Transition*. Robinson, who now worships with a United congregation, indicates that his newspaper is intended for those "who believe the Sabbath is different from other days of the week and who believe that the Holy Days are to be observed." In addition to articles about the new UCG, Robinson's first edition contained articles about Global, CGI, and the new WCGT. Interviewed by the Pasadena *Star-News* (5/19/95, p. 3), Robinson stated that in future issues he hopes to even include news about the Tkach WCG, which Robinson now designates as Worldwide Church of God of California. Tom Lapacka, a spokesman for that group, however, says there are no WCG plans to cooperate with the new venture. (So much for Tkach's ecumenical spirit.) As for other non-UCG church leaders, already some are saying their followers should not be reading the new publication. (Sounds familiar.) For subscription information, write to: *In Transition*, P.O. Box 450, Monroe, Indiana 46772.

I Think International, P.O. Box 1953, Bournemouth, BH8 OYQ, United Kingdom. Headed by Kerin P. Webb, this is a cult awareness organization with considerable knowledge of the WCG. Their "Issue No. 4" came out in April and is available in the U.K. for two British pounds (checks made payable to Kerin Webb) or "four U.S. dollar bills."

On a related matter: We regularly get asked whether any former WCG members are in the process of taking legal action against Worldwide. We are often hesitant to encourage trust in the legal system, at least as regards getting justice for abuse by the WCG. Nevertheless, even with all its lawyers and money, the WCG is not an impregnable fortress. Two who believe they can make a difference against the WCG legally are Peter and Annie Hovey of Lymington, Hampshire in England. They have had extensive exchanges of pointed correspondence with the Charities Commission of that country, Members of Parliament, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the media, lawyers, and stonewalling executives of the WCG. Any attempt to publish all their animated correspondence would, unfortunately, require a large book. Nevertheless, anyone who is contemplating a similar campaign might do well to write them for their advice. The Hoveys may be contacted by writing c/o I Think International.

Another support group for former members of the WCG and its spinoffs is run by Trevor Smith, P.O. Box 7357, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland KA32 LF.

In Australia, former WCG member Thelma Smith is now part of a Sabbath Association that publishes a fortnightly newsletter on the Bible and world events. Her address is 35 Didsbury St., East Brisbane, Qld., Australia.

A small group of former cult members have started a new organization called Spiritual Progressions Advancement Network (SPAN). In their December 1994 "Monograph # A1" they published an article titled "How I Recuperated From 21 Years in the WCG." The article by former WCG member P. E. Nelson is unique in that the author discusses esoteric psychological techniques such as hypnosis and dowsing which played a part in her recuperation. The six-page article is available for \$3. A longer, 28-page paper by Ms. Nelson titled "Religion versus Spirituality: Playing the God-Game" is available for \$8 from SPAN, Box 137, Ceres, New York 14721-0137.

The April issue of *The New Millennium* had two articles relevant to the current WCG situation. One asked, "Where is the true church?" and the other asked, "Is it law or is it grace?" Write to Association for Christian Development, 4449 S. Star Lake Rd., Auburn, WA 98001.

With the "law versus grace" topic so heated in WCG circles, and with so much confusion over the subject, let us recommend two articles many, including AR's editor, found helpful in the past: "The Address on the Envelope" and "When Did the Church Begin?" by the late A. E. Knoch. The two articles are contained in a booklet available for only \$2 from: Concordant Publishing Co., 15570 Knochaven Rd., Santa Clarita, CA 91350; (805) 252-2112.

AR has mentioned the writings of Dr. Ernest Martin many times over the years and we

continue to receive letters from WCG exiters saying they are being greatly helped by his writings. Martin recently published a 185-page textbook titled: *The Biblical Manual* "for members and ex-members of the Worldwide Church of God, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Church of God International, Philadelphia Church of God, Global Church of God, and all other 'true' or 'remnant' Churches of God." Some of Martin's ideas are controversial, but he does offer many valuable theological insights. Furthermore, as a former Chairman of the Department of Theology at Ambassador College, he has extensive knowledge of Armstrongism and Tkachism. We understand his new manual is available for \$19.95 (plus shipping: \$3 U.S., \$6 foreign). The manual is available from: Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 24000, Portland, OR 97225; tel. (503) 292-4352.

Finally, one of our Australian readers asked that we mention two addresses for the Christian Biblical Church of God in that part of the world: P.O. Box 30, Glenhuntly 3163, Australia; and P.O. Box 305, Albany 1331, New Zealand. We wish we had permission to identify the reader because he has created something we found rather amazing: a year by year history of the Worldwide Church of God, in considerable fine-print detail precisely listing, as in a horizontal flow chart, all important events, all predecessor groups, and all major and many minor WCG offshoots from 1900 to the present. It's all there on one long piece of drafting paper-over eight feet long! Hopefully, one day it will be available commercially. It would make a great conversation piece for a prayer closet or some other small room.

## **"Mr. Pasadena" Passes Away**

Lathrop (Lay) Leishman passed away on April 27. Affectionately referred to by Pasadena-area residents as "Mr. Pasadena" and "Mr. Rose Bowl," Leishman was for decades one of Pasadena's most influential businessmen and civic boosters. Leishman was a past president of the Tournament of Roses and was credited with persuading the Wrigley chewing gum family to donate their Orange Grove mansion to the Tournament organization half a century ago.

In an obituary that appeared April 29, the *Los Angeles Times* stated:

Born on Terminal Island, he moved with his family to Pasadena as an infant. He was educated at Oregon State University. Leishman operated the Crown City Lumber and Mill Co., founded by his father, until it was sold to Ambassador College in the 1960s. Afterward, he and his sons created the Leishman Management Co., dealing in real estate. Leishman served as president of the Pasadena Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Pasadena Rotary Club and the Southern California Retail Lumber Dealers Assn. He was a director of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, a trustee of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church and on the board of the local Salvation Army. He was also a member of Al Malaikah Shrine Temple and was a 32nd-degree Mason who held York and Scottish Rite degrees.

The Leishman Management Co. has its main office across the street from the WCG's Imperial School. And the old "Leishman Building," where Joseph Tkach had his office in the early seventies, is directly across from the WCG Hall of Administration on Green Street. Not surprisingly, many Worldwide executives recall Lay Leishman with a certain fondness. As one Ambassador alumnus said, "Mr. Leishman was always a great friend of

Worldwide. He will be missed by the church."

## Letters

*Editor: Let me remind everyone that letters excerpted in this section do not necessarily reflect my own views. In fact, a very large number do not. In deciding which letters to include, I usually select better-written or more colorful letters that reflect a cross section of readers' viewpoints. And today, most certainly, there are many viewpoints about virtually every subject. As for attribution, I prefer to run comments with the writer's byline. However, that is not always possible because writers often explicitly or implicitly (as when the writer is a current WCG member) indicate they want anonymity.*

I have been reading my father's *Ambassador Report* and find that I must have been in the wrong church. I am a member of what used to be called the Worldwide Church of God. I just think Joseph W. Tkach has gone too far this time.

-Tennessee

I left the WCG cult in 1992 after four years of tithing and observance to the old covenant as commanded by the ministry. Mr. Tkach now proposes that such observances were the result of "ignorance and stupidity." OK, I fully accept the charge. But what must also be taken into consideration is the fact that if I had not been a victim of my own "ignorance and stupidity," I would not have been influenced by the *Plain Truth* magazine into joining the WCG in the first place.

Furthermore, had not my "ignorance and stupidity" been sustained and prolonged by the teachings of his ministers, I would have departed the church much sooner than I did. Also, had not my fellow brethren been suffering from "ignorance and stupidity," they too would have thrown in the towel.

So where would that leave Joseph W. Tkach? The only reason that there was a sizable congregation when he took over is that the members held fast to the doctrines which he now believes to be the result of "ignorance and stupidity." Doctrines, I might add, which he himself was paid very handsomely to teach.

It is also worth asking, how many members would Tkach have been prepared to disfellowship during his earlier ministry had they not been fully conforming to the doctrines to which he now ascribes two strongly pronounced and deeply insulting words?

-Richard Heath  
West Yorkshire, England

On his video Tkach said he had argued many times with HWA over the church's "new truths." I find that very hard to believe. Years ago, when Ernest Martin merely mentioned some of the same ideas to HWA, HWA disfellowshipped him immediately. And HWA would summarily disfellowship anyone who entertained such thoughts, much less argued

with him.

- "No State"

My husband who was in the WCG for over twenty years has left and gone to Global. As far as I'm concerned he left because he wants to be under the law and have Mr. Meredith tell him what to do. In other words, work for his salvation.

The changes are great. At least Jesus Christ is mentioned. Instead of legalism we have freedom and a lot of love.... Under HWA the New Covenant was never mentioned. All that has changed. It's in the Bible. Read Galatians. I hear Global already has an offshoot. It's all for Power and brainwashing the people. Mr. Tkach is not the only one to be criticized. Let's show some love for our fellow humans.

-Canada

The states will now be flooded with churches and all believing what they want to. God, help them all. Members that have left in Vancouver have been attending the Four Square Church in their area.

-Oregon

Some up here have left to join a group called "The Children of Yahu." Do you know anything about them?

-Wisconsin

*Editor: All we know is that "The Children of Yahu" is a sacred name group based in Albany, Minnesota.*

Here in Puerto Rico the church split when minister Pablo Gonzalez was put out. The majority went with him. Of 150 people, only 36 stayed with Tkach.

-Puerto Rico

My WCG husband just heard about the United Church men revolting against Mr. Tkach. It didn't phase him one bit. He said "the great falling away was prophesied in the Bible." I don't think it ever occurred to him that it might be Mr. Tkach who has fallen away.

-Illinois

*Editor: Not all the mail we receive is negative regarding Tkach and the new direction taken by the WCG. A fair number of people believe that Tkach has improved the WCG and we know that some who left years ago have recently returned to the WCG.*

We understand how some cannot understand what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church,

but He is there! Once the spirit-filled learn of Mr. Tkach's spirit-filled ministry to the oppressed, many shall return and rejoice. We left in the 70s to join the Assemblies of God. Now with all the positive changes made by Mr. Tkach, we have decided to again fellowship with our old WCG friends. Praise the Lord!

-Louisiana

Stop sending my parents your reports. Us teenagers like the way the church is now. Did you know that the new Miss Bahamas and the new Arizona Miss TEEN are both in the church?!! It was in the *Worldwide News*. I think it's way cool. But you are not.

-Wisconsin

In saying that world news is unimportant, Tkach is denying that prophesied end-time events are in process of occurring now! Why would he do this? I suspect he doesn't want his sheep to realize that we are in what HWA called the "gun lap" to the concluding World Scenario of Geopolitical Events. Why does he want to hide this information? I think he wants to get out with the Church's money while he can before the collapse of America and the world financial system.... I suspect he is creating for himself the funding for his own personal Place of Safety....

For your information, John, there are a number of people channeling messages from extraterrestrials from the Pleiades and from Sirius who are providing information on what the near future will bring us in the remainder of 1995 and 1996. The picture does not look bright for the continuance of America as a nation. The earth changes that are predicted to occur in America as a result of Earth's moving into the Photon Belt will take down the insurance industry and our communications systems and then the federal government. Europe will not escape unscathed either.

A local psychic with whom I have been in contact says that the volcanic eruptions will be so bad that so much ash will fall, beginning in late 1995 and 1996, that vehicular transportation will be next to impossible. The ash will clog all air filter systems in cars, trains, and planes, etc. Gordon-Michael Scallion is predicting from his visions that states will secede from the Union because they will refuse to send their funds to pay for the earthquake, storm, and volcanic damage in other areas of the country; they will seek to preserve their own territories and financial base. State governments will also ultimately collapse and people will be left in survival communities. This is the scenario for the remainder of the decade.

A lot of people will be seriously shaken when the WCG closes down and Tkach & Co. mysteriously disappear.

-New York

In Mr. Tkach's January 7 video sermon he said, "If someone can eat lobster, God bless 'em." Some of my friends in the church are now eating all the shrimp and pork they can get their hands on. I thought the laws about unclean meats were really health laws. What

is your advice?

-Maine

*Editor: Please don't ask us to turn AR into a dietary journal. We have seen articles by respected scholars who have stated that the biblical kosher laws were not originally thought of as health related. Apparently, the argument that those laws were based on health considerations was first made by Rabbi Maimonides (1135-1204). Nevertheless, whatever the actual basis for the laws, there are many who, while not feeling constrained by Old Covenant considerations, still believe they are better off avoiding pork and shell fish.*

You are very right that the WCG has been disintegrating severely. But I think you have not noticed how the people themselves, including a large number who have left, are disintegrating mentally. We left about two years ago and we have stayed in contact with many who we knew in the church. However, my wife and I are disturbed about something we have noticed about those who are leaving the WCG now. Too many are getting caught up in movements that are even crazier than the WCG.

We know some who have gotten involved in the occult. Others, it seems, are rabid racists. Some have become anti-government fanatics. We know a few who are almost anarchists. They get funny ideas about the Constitution, like only their own interpretation counts or that it doesn't apply to them. Some have started quoting neo-Nazi literature as though it was the gospel truth. One told us he has gotten rid of his driver's license because it is a symbol of "the beast." One who believes in the seed teaching [the serpent seed doctrine - ed.] keeps a fifty caliber machine gun in his attic. A few are so paranoid they have joined paramilitary groups, the kind of thing you'd expect in Northern Ireland. One of our friends used to go on militia "maneuvers" every other weekend - until his wife said once more and she'd leave. Another hands out booklets urging readers not to pay taxes, all the while being a member of "The Patriots." I didn't think too much about it until the recent bombing in Oklahoma City. Some newspapers reported that the suspects they arrested were connected to private militia groups and one article I saw even mentioned "The Patriots" by name. Do you know if any of the suspects arrested in connection with the Oklahoma bombing were ever members of the WCG?

-California

*Editor: No.*

Thank you for turning me on to "the Flush" - *Prophecy Flash!*, that is. You seem to go for it. I do too, but only because it is the most radical of all the wacky ex-WCG stuff around. I love reading the letters people send in to Dankenbring.

In the March issue someone from Malaysia gave the proof we were all waiting for as to why Dank is Elijah. You see, Dank's zip code and his post office box number each add up to 13. And 13, according to Dank, is a good number. Mr. Armstrong, of course, taught that 13 was the number of rebellion and associated it with the rebellious 13 colonies of Manasseh. But not Dank. He thinks it's "Ephraim's lucky number" and he is Ephraim's

lucky prophet. Wild stuff!

One letter, however, scared me when I went back and read it. I first read it about a week before the terrible tragedy in Oklahoma. Then when that awful event took place I remembered it and it made me concerned. Here is what one of his readers from Oklahoma wrote:

Well, things are being seen here in this area that should wake us up some. The TV news here have shown and talked about the Oklahoma Militia getting started here (already has formed). Also on Sunday, Feb. 5 I was near Muskogee, Oklahoma, and for the first time, I have seen some of the black, unmarked helicopters I have read about and heard of for the past few months. I saw two. But people just scoff and say they are only National Guard copiers.

Considering what happened in that writer's state only a few weeks after his letter was published, I found this comment somehow disquieting. Can you give me some idea what all of this is about? I must have missed some new truth about militiamen or helicopters or something.

-Ohio

*Editor: According to the Los Angeles Times (4/22/95, in a very interesting front-page article titled "Facing the Fear of an Enemy Within"), there are a significant number of Americans who are convinced that the U.S. government has black, unmarked helicopters monitoring Bible-believing Christians in preparation for their roundup and internment in concentration camps. Apparently this fear has spurred many to arm themselves with assault weapons and to join paramilitary groups.*

*Undoubtedly, the Waco and Ruby Ridge tragedies have played a part in making this fear rather widespread. But with the year 2000 approaching and the return of Christ being anticipated by millions, there are also widespread fears that "the beast" of Revelation is right around the corner. As we have reported in past issues, there are some former and current Worldwidars who believe that the United States is "the beast power." When Ronald Wilson Reagan was president, we knew some who were convinced that he was "the beast" because each of his three names has six letters. Later, some thought that George Bush was "the beast" because one of his speech writers came up with the catchy phrase "New World Order." Now, some - including a fair number of current and former Worldwidars - are convinced that President Clinton is "the beast" and that black helicopters are coming to take them away.*

In [AR57](#) and [AR58](#) you published seven options for the fulfillment of the endtime "Beast" of Revelation. I would like to suggest an additional scenario for the fulfillment of this prophecy. Rev. 13:1-7 states this final beast will have "seven heads and ten horns," one of its seven heads will recover from a "deadly wound" which will attract worldwide "wonder," and it will have authority "over all kindreds, tongues and nations."

The United Nations is a worldwide organization which is on the verge of satisfying all the above criteria. In an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (reprinted 11/10/94 in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*) Stanley Meisler reported that the U.N. Security Council will

soon have seven "permanent members" and ten "temporary members." When Germany and Japan are added as permanent members," there will be "seven heads" who possess the most power in the United Nations. Only the "seven heads" (USA, UK, France, China, Russia, Germany, and Japan) will possess veto power on the Security Council. The "ten horns" will be the ten seats which rotate among various nations within the U.N. These "ten horns" do have a vote on all important U.N. matters, but no veto power. The seven heads and ten horns of Revelation's prophecy constitute a total of seventeen entities working together in a global power structure. The seven permanent and ten temporary nations on the U.N. Security Council constitute a group of seventeen nations heading a global power structure in our modern world.

Together, these seventeen nations can implement the war-making power of the U.N., and Rev. 13:4 prophesies the "seven heads and ten horns" will control a war-making entity. Both the Korean and the Persian Gulf Wars were technically U.N.-authorized wars, although the USA provided the majority of the armed forces in both wars. The increased subordination of the NATO command structure to the U.N. in Bosnia, and the willingness of the Bush and Clinton administrations to subordinate U.S. troops to U.N. commanders in Haiti, Somalia, etc. also fulfills this prophecy.

What about the "head with the deadly wound which was healed"? If Germany joins the Security Council, it would fulfill this part of the prophecy. Germany was truly "severed in two" at the end of WWII, and being "cut in half" is generally fatal for any kind of entity. When Germany was suddenly and unexpectedly reunited as a nation in 1991, the "world wondered" as TV cameras riveted their attention on East and West Germans celebrating atop the Berlin Wall and the German reunification dominated world news for months. Germany is reasserting itself economically and politically in the world as it has now almost completely recovered from its "deadly wound."

The membership of the U.N. is indeed from "all kindreds, tongues and nations," and its host of global agencies (UNESCO, WHO, World Court, etc.) are asserting more and more political control over the nations. The GATT treaty will complement the U.N.'s globalist mission as it has created a new and powerful "World Trade Organization" which will accelerate the economic integration of the world's nations.

Current efforts also exist to give the U.N. its own standing army, spy satellites, and the authority to levy a tax on all nations. If such efforts are successful, and Germany and Japan join the Security Council, I believe the identity of "the Beast" of Revelation will be clear for all to see.

-Steven M. Collins  
3901 Crescent Drive  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

*Editor: Mr. Collins recently resigned as a board member of the Association for Christian Development. He is the author of a book on Israel Identity theory.*

For your consideration: Look at the GATT Shield.... It looks like 10 toes up - the 10 regions, the 10 NATIONS of Revelation that will turn on the "Whore Religion" and

destroy her.

-Don Samples, Louisiana  
WCG minister (resigned 1977)

Be "the beast" whom he will. What about "the image of the beast"? May I suggest that television is an excellent candidate? Television meets every qualification listed in Rev. 13:15. Television has electronic life image, it projects an image, it speaks, and it commands worship (addiction) from its viewers.

-George Holt  
Tennessee

I am really worried about my [relative]. All the years he was in Worldwide he was a fanatic about law and order. Once Tkach started changing doctrines he started reading Gerald Flurry's literature and then told me he thought Tkach was the Antichrist. Now he is into something else. He has become a follower of some fat lady who has called for an armed march on Washington to arrest all the members of Congress. I wonder if that nut Flurry is behind it.

-Ohio

*Editor: No, I don't think Flurry is involved in that. I believe your relative is a devotee of attorney Linda Thompson, an outspoken critic of the federal government. She was mentioned in Newsweek (5/1/95), in "Beyond the Fringe," a sidebar to the article "The View From the Far Right." That magazine claims that Ms. Thompson is one of those worried about government helicopters.*

*By the way, does anybody really believe Tkach is smart enough to be the Antichrist?*

A Michigan friend told me about the Philadelphia Church of God's internal problems. He said he learned about ministers disfellowshipping ministers and Mr. Flurry getting rid of rebels. Can you fill me in on this?

-New York

*Editor: We've heard the same thing. But Flurry's Oklahoma organization is secretive to the point of paranoia and getting the details from them is virtually impossible. However, a couple of interesting bits of data about the former WCG minister: Flurry apparently likes some of the ideas of Dr. Ernest Martin. In the April issue of his Trumpet, he ran an article which plagiarizes many of the discoveries made by Martin regarding the Bible. And, for reasons we cannot fathom, Flurry seems to be trying to recruit U.S. military people. He has been running ads in Stars and Stripes, the armed services newspaper.*

I've come across a few in my travels who feel the USA is the end-time Babylon. One former Worldwider... of Washington feels we are to go out to meet the Bridegroom at a certain location: along the Zambezi River in South Africa!

- "No State"

*Editor: Huh?*

In your last "Letters" section you gave the address for the anti-Limbaugh newsletter *Flush Rush Quarterly*. In the interest of fairness, how about printing the address of *The Limbaugh Letter* (P.O. Box 420093, Palm Coast, FL 32144-0093)? On the subject of politics, I disagree with your [sic] definition of "conservative" in [AR56](#). If conservatives only cared about people with "privilege and power," why would anyone in the middle class be a conservative? I feel the conservative movement is about freedom because economic freedom is just as important as social or political freedom. Anyone who has read Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* understands that the most fair economic system mankind can devise is capitalism, not the watered down socialism that most modern liberals advocate....

On a different subject, why do you give so much space to conspiracy theories? I've found most of those conspiracy theories to be borderline racist (i.e., anti-Jewish). I believe these racist theories to be a slippery slope to Nazism.

Finally, way back in [AR51](#), one of your readers mentioned Afro-Israelism. First, let me state that I am a white male. Yet, after reading *The Black Biblical Heritage* by John Johnson and a similar article in *Ebony* magazine, I find this viewpoint to be quite logical. Perhaps my marriage to a black woman influences my opinion. But *The Black Biblical Heritage* has an extensive bibliography and seems to be well documented. Do you know of any books opposed to this viewpoint?

-Kentucky

*Editor: Yes, virtually every other book we have ever seen on the subject.*

On April 19, 1993, I happened to be in a barbershop in Potomac, Maryland when the Waco compound was burning on live TV in front of us. I said out loud, "This is a sad day for America." The barber said, "They're a bunch of kooks who asked for it!" The rest of the barbershop patrons agreed with him, not me.

Knowing the man's razor was near my throat at the time, all I managed to mutter in response was, "What about the children? Did they deserve it too?" He said, "They're probably all Koresh bastards. He shouldn't have whored around with so many women." Another said, "They just had the bad luck to be born into the wrong families. It happens all the time." So I seethed in silence.

Can you imagine being in a barbershop on April 19, 1995, and hearing folks say, "They're just a bunch of federal employees. They deserve it." Or, "The kids were just born into the wrong family"? In the case of Waco, the few survivors of that holocaust were put on trial and sentenced to 10-40 years....

Every story of a family broken up in Oklahoma City reminds me: Where were the stories of families broken up in Waco? Who interviewed the grieving parents there? Were religious "cultists" somehow less than human, deserving of nerve gas, asphyxiation in underground bunkers, or long prison sentences afterward?

My point is that tyranny is possible because we the people (the barbershop patrons) let it pass, and then we the people want to avenge the avengers later on.

The first horseman of the Book of Revelation does not have to mean international warfare. To me it now seems to describe statism, or "localized tyranny." He "conquers and goes forth to conquer" can be localized aggression by a domestic police state.

Having written the Four Horsemen doctrinal book for the WCG (in late 1972), I have entertained several theories on the identity of the riders. Based on history and reality in this century, I have come to the tentative conclusion that the allegory links natural cause-and-effect factors, leading naturally from one to the other. The second horseman is the nexus, "taking peace from the earth." That, obviously, is war. But then what is "going forth to conquer" (the first Horse)? In this century alone, several despotic governments have taken the lives of more than 100 million of their own citizens, not in war, but in Stalin's purges, Mao's Cultural Revolution, Hitler's Third Reich, Pol Pot's Killing Fields, etc. Former Christians love to mock the Dark Ages or the Inquisition, but they were picnics (10,000 dead here and there) compared to the true Darker Ages under this century's atheist killers.

National police states (Horse #1) often lead to foreign wars (#2), leading very often to famines (#3), causing malnutrition, hence disease (#4). There is a natural link from one to the next. This doesn't involve biblical exegesis as much as common sense.

-Gary Alexander  
P.O. Box 161  
Vienna, VA 22183-0161

I was a WCG member for many years. Looking back, I think what bothers me the most about that experience is a set of basic attitudes it instilled that are still a part of me. Somewhat frightening is the fact that until recently I hardly realized those attitudes came from the WCG. Those attitudes include an unconscious disrespect for authority and for law - what boils down to an almost criminal attitude toward the government. I realize now that the WCG subtly planted these beliefs into all of us because they wanted no competition for loyalty. Somehow patriotism was viewed as a threat to the WCG, maybe because it threatened the minister's complete power over their people. After all, it was us, "The Church," against them, "The World." At any rate, I still see this attitude in many WCG members and ex-members and I am sure they don't even realize where the attitude originated. I also think it's the reason so many are attracted to fringe groups.

The Oklahoma bombing has shown what a hideous turn this type of thinking can take. As a result of this incident, I hope Worldwidars and ex-Worldwidars will look more closely at why they are so often anti-government and what being anti-government means to them. After all, we Americans all live in this country. This is our home. Do we want it to be

more of an armed camp than it already is? Another Beirut? Another Bosnia? Or do we want to try to make changes in ways that make sense - through free speech, through petitioning our elected representatives, and through voting? Perhaps it is time that ex-Worldwidiers become a part of this country and realize that the roads we drive on, the bridges we cross, the many health and safety services we have, the parks where our children play, the libraries where we study, and the relative peace we enjoy in this country come about because of our government and because of our laws.

-Washington

*Editor: I'm not sure we should tie HWA to everything that is going on in America today. After all, there were the Whiskey Insurrection rebels, John Brown's militiamen, militant secessionists, vigilantes, and anarchist bombers long before HWA began preaching. But you may be right that many former Worldwidiers have a distrust of government so intense that they get labeled as societal fringeers. Could it be that some are overreacting to the old "government from the top down" WCG? I'm not sure. It has been pointed out that those leaving Worldwide more often than not either join no group or join churches and political movements that are outside of the "mainstream." Some are by nature independent and refuse to be slavish followers of the herd. For others it may be that the more fringe the group, the more its members can claim that they are not part of this world," but are part of a special "elect." In fact, this phenomenon may have been a major reason why the number of members leaving the WCG has continued to increase the more Tkach has brought the WCG into "orthodox Christianity."*

I gave your last AR to my wife to read while she had a \$95 check already made out to WCG for tithes. I said, "You should read this before you mail that letter." She didn't say anything, but read the entire report. She still didn't say anything. Her tithes check will be mailed today. Nothing seems to phase a person who is brain-washed.

-"No State"

From my viewpoint, the changes in the WCG are God-ordained and He is ruling mercifully and sovereignly over all. In time to come, I believe there will be many testimonials from grateful members about this time and the overflow of God's grace to them.

-California

There is one minister who told us that he was on retirement and getting his retirement pay from WCG. He said he knew that if he would make the decision to stay with the [old] truths he could not live with the new teachings, but to leave [the WCG] would cost him his retirement pay. He did leave and his retirement pay stopped. Being honest with the word of God and seeking to continue in the faith once delivered to the saints, he is now getting pay from Global at less than what his retirement was. But he is content now because he has the liberty to preach the doctrines he was taught and came to believe.

I ask you, how much bargaining power, as you suggest, does Worldwide have to keep its ministers when people are not tithing anymore as they did before? After all, isn't Mr.

Tkach trying to sell off church property just to stay afloat, while all the while telling his constituents that they don't have to tithe? Mr. Tkach had to be very naive to think that his new teaching wouldn't adversely affect his income.

-Minnesota

*Editor: You are very correct that because WCG income has plummeted in the last few months, much of the bargaining power Tkach once possessed has evaporated. As for whether or not he was as naive as it seems, time will tell.*

I had been a member of the WCG for about ten years but quit in 1975 for personal reasons. I had always had an emptiness and decided to go back. But after reading their publication *God Is...* I realized what they are teaching is not what I had learned from the Bible. Now I hear all sorts of strange doctrines are being followed. Actually they aren't so strange. I heard them before in the Lutheran Church.

-Minnesota

*Editor: One of our readers, a former WCG minister, gives the following advice:*

Regarding religious organizations. Beware. There may be one or two around that will help rather than do you harm. A few things to look for: 1. Do the "leaders" have real jobs where they earn their own income as Paul did? (Read carefully Acts 20:17-38, especially verses 30-35.) 2. Never allow yourself to fall into a position in which you do not have full authority to. place your "leaders" on trial for things like arrogance and corruption. The church at Ephesus was praised for doing just that (Rev. 2:2). 3. Be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17:10,11). 4. Take Paul's admonition to "prove all things, hold fast to that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). There is much more, but the above should give an idea how to remain stable and how to endure to the end. Above all, do not place your salvation in the hands of *ANYONE ELSE* beside yourself. It is *your* responsibility to work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

-Bob Hoops

8642 Highway 128  
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Becoming involved with the WCG was the worst mistake I ever made. I sent a letter to Joe Tkach Jr. in October, 1993 asking that my name be removed from membership and that my tithes be returned. After not hearing from them for two months, I contacted the Louisiana Department of Justice. Ralph Helge quickly responded to them. Mr. Helge said that it was not true that the church ignored my letter to Joe Jr. He sent them a copy of the letter which. he had supposedly sent me a month after my letter to Joe Jr. The Louisiana Department of Justice then provided me with a copy of that letter which, by the way, was addressed to the apartment I lived in nine years ago while a college student. If Mr. Helge really had sent that letter, the Post Office would have informed him that the letter was undeliverable: first, because I had moved, and second, because my old apartment building was closed and vacant!

-Raife Smith II  
Louisiana

It recently occurred to me that I've given the WCG thousands of dollars and only about thirty to AR in the last two years. Yet you folks have done more with the little you've been given than the WCG did with the billions they've spent over the past five or six decades....

I owe you and the other AR contributors a large debt of gratitude. By late 1992 I'd developed several doctrinal disagreements with the WCG but still wanted to remain a member. About that time a friend lent me copies of every issue of AR which I finally had the courage to read. I was left shocked, enraged, and liberated from my blindness. Especially infuriating was the information on HWA's sexual abuse of his daughter Dorothy between 1933 and 1943 ([AR27](#)). Initially I doubted it, but an inquiry of Mr. Gary Antion confirmed the awful truth and it prompted me to send a letter to 35-40 members who I knew personally. They received them on April 19, 1993 as the Branch Davidian compound burned on TV. But few of them were ever opened because the local ministry (Ray Meyer and Warren Heaton) ordered an emergency hotline message to all members saying I was disfellowshipped and commanding them not to open any mail from me. Most of the letters were returned unopened.

The following Saturday I was "marked" from the pulpit and called a liar (even though Meyer, days before, had admitted he knew about Armstrong and his daughter). My old church friends and acquaintances were gone. The few who read the letter reacted with a "so what?" response and couldn't believe I would consider this significant in any way. A decade of incest and hypocrisy had no impact on HWA's credibility or his "apostleship." One of those people was Victor Kubik who said he was amazed that I would be concerned about this "blip of history," as he put it.

Like you, I endured accusations of slander and malicious gossip. The truth isn't for everyone. But for those of us who appreciate it, it is a gift from God. Thank you for helping me end my idolatry and grow closer than ever to God and His truth.

-Mark Thornton  
Wisconsin

Do you remember how not many years ago Worldwidiers were warned not to study the book of Galatians without a Worldwide minister present? Now, my wife tells me, in Worldwide the book of Galatians is the most often quoted and most studied book of the Bible. However, members here are now being told not to read the book of Revelation!

-Georgia

You folks do a pretty good job reporting, but you missed a few stories that appeared in the *Worldwide News*: It's now okay to call ministers "reverend" (12/27/94, p. 5). In Australia, some WCG ministers are teaching the Tkach religion in public schools; their government allows this (5/31/94, p. 4). Finally, way back in 1993 the WN stated, "We

cannot adopt the extreme neo-Creationist position - that everything came into existence 6,000 years ago" (5/11/93, p. 7). Less than one year later they wrote that on the evolution theory the church was taking the "middle path" (2/1/94, p. 4). Now the church does not publish articles attacking evolutionists at all.

-Pennsylvania

I heard that the WCG was getting a new name so I went to the library and read all the Los Angeles business newspapers looking for an announcement. All I could find was a legal notice in the March 1 *Daily Commerce*. A new California corporation was formed called "Gangsters for Christ." Is that the new name?

-California

*Editor: No, that is a separate organization.*

A friend of mine who works at HQ Pasadena recently told me of some very strange goings on. He and a co-worker were walking on campus when they were overwhelmed by a very strong incense-like odor that seemed to pervade the whole WCG property. Because of certain pre-conversion experiences, my friend at first thought the smell was from giant quantities of marijuana being burned. Out of curiosity the two men sniffed the air and followed their noses. They finally came to a garage located near the old Grove Terrace gardeners' offices, not far from Tkach's new residence. There they noticed some people removing a large quantity of ashes from the area.

They wondered what was going on. Was someone sacrificing pigeons perhaps? No. It was just Dr. Ha. (That's how it's pronounced, but I think it's spelled "Hog," and he is not Dr. Hoeh, by the way.) It seems the latest health guru Tkach has brought on board is an Oriental, non-member "healer" who, although not a licensed M.D., is at HQ performing what he calls "Aromatherapy."

-California

*Editor: What a relief. For a moment I thought something weird might be going on there.*

*Incidentally, speaking of health gurus around Tkach. The last one we heard about was Dr. Phil Fowler, a chiropractor reputed to be an expert in "Chinese medicine" and other "alternative medicine" therapies which the Pastor General finds indispensable. For some time Fowler, who often travelled with Tkach and had an office near Tkach's Hall of Administration penthouse, was so influential in Tkach's life some WCG executives feared he was practicing some type of "mind control" over the Apostle. Well, the latest is that Dr. Fowler, unhappy with the doctrinal changes in the church, is no longer seen at headquarters but has gone back to the Modesto area. That may explain the presence of the new health guru.*

I don't like to sound critical, but I wish AR would concern itself with more important topics about the WCG. I mean, who cares if some of the ministers are queer? It's still

God's church isn't it? And so what if *1975 in Prophecy* wasn't worth the paper it was printed on? And so what if Armstrong proclaimed himself an Apostle. So a few prophecies didn't pan out. So what? And if headquarters wants to skim a little off third tithe, what of it? And maybe some evangelists are playing around on their wives. Who are we to judge? Remember Korah!

All I really want to know is: What ever happened to "Lukewarm Luke"? Or was it "Laodicean Luke"? Remember him? He was a cartoon character that appeared in *The Good News* magazine back in the '60s. I hope he wasn't disfellowshipped. He'd fit into the WCG real well these days.

-Jerry Fry  
Kansas

*Editor: Sorry it's taken so long to respond. But we think we may have found him in one of our old Ambassador Review files. While it's pretty difficult to tell from this angle, we're pretty sure he's the same character. Frankly, we don't think the shot we found should be published because it's not a pretty picture. It appears that his having been frozen in a contorted posture for so many years resulted in a diminished oxygen supply, and now he is no longer "Laodicean Luke," but "Sardis Sam." And yes, you were right, he is still a loyal WCG member.*

### **Editor's Note**

I'd better end this issue right here before I get daffy. A short comment, however.

Some, suspecting that the WCG's end is in sight, have asked me if I intend to continue putting out the *Report*. The short answer is yes. First of all, for all that has happened, the WCG is still far from extinct. Second, there will be many major developments in the story of the WCG and its offshoots in the coming months. I think they will be worth reporting.

My thanks to all of you for your continued support of our publication.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR60\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
[hwarmstrong.com](http://hwarmstrong.com)

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

October 1995 (AR60)

### Tkach Sr. Dies of Cancer Little Joe Now Rules WCG

The church founded by Herbert W. Armstrong never seems to want for woes. As many will have heard by now, Joseph W. Tkach, the Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and the Chairman of the Board of Ambassador University, passed away at 2:20 p.m. on Saturday, September 23. On May 12 Tkach had surgery to remove his gall bladder; on May 28 he was readmitted to the hospital because of severe intestine and back pain. Surgeons then removed a grapefruit-size tumor from his intestines and discovered he had cancer. The 68-year-old cleric later underwent chemotherapy but, according to insiders, the cancer spread to his bones and elsewhere. While public pronouncements by church spokesmen continued to offer hope for Tkach, sources at the church's Pasadena, California headquarters said privately for weeks that his outlook was not good.

In spite of his physical affliction, Tkach continued to offer encouragement to his followers. According to the *Worldwide News* (WN, 8/29/95, p. 1), on August 18 Tkach spoke for 25 minutes at a student forum at Ambassador University in Big Sandy, Texas. His speech, delivered while seated, received a wildly-enthusiastic standing ovation. Meanwhile back at church headquarters in Pasadena, Little Joe, as Joe Tkach Jr. is affectionately referred to by headquarters personnel, was officially placed in full charge of all WCG operations. On September 5, Tkach Jr. was named Deputy Pastor General in a private laying-on-of-hands ceremony presided over by the elder Tkach and with the assistance of prominent Council of Elders members.

On September 16, Tkach Sr. briefly addressed the WCG's headquarters congregation in Pasadena. Listeners say that Tkach did not indicate any apprehension that he would soon die. A few days later Tkach experienced persistent nausea and was again admitted to Huntington Memorial Hospital. Physicians soon realized that the Pastor General's condition was rapidly worsening. Pasadena sources say that the actual cause of death was probably a brain hemorrhage caused by the spreading cancer. When Tkach died, his wife Elaine, not his secretary Ellen Escat, was at his side. Obituaries for Tkach appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (9/25/95, p. A16), the Pasadena *Star-News* (9/26/95, p. A1), *The New York Times* (9/27/95), and *The Washington Times* (9/30/95, p. C4). Tkach was buried on September 26 at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena where his grave is not far from that of his predecessor, Herbert W. Armstrong.

Tkach will be remembered for leading Ambassador University to accreditation and for leading the WCG closer to the Christian mainstream. Since taking over from Armstrong in 1986, Tkach was responsible for dismantling many of his predecessor's doctrines (HWA's anti-medical teachings, "Israel Identity," etc.). In the last few years Tkach confounded critics by continuing to alter church teachings even when it meant a major decline in WCG income and prestige. Even more amazing, toward the end of his life Tkach, unlike his egocentric predecessor, disavowed that his "apostleship" equated with the authority of the original Twelve. Some who knew him say that over time he had come to understand that not only are there true Christians in many denominations, but that neither he nor his church are the center of the universe. In that regard, Tkach may be acknowledged by religious historians as almost unique among leaders of religious cults. Even *Christianity Today* (Oct. 12), in an article written before Tkach's passing, stated that Tkach's WCG has been on a "commendable journey of faith" and encouraged the entire Christian community to extend to them "the right hand of fellowship."

Joseph Tkach Jr. now becomes the third Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God. Most WCG observers expect him to continue along the doctrinal path blazed by his father. And, say associates, his management style will probably not deviate much from the "my way or the highway" approach of his father. Assisting Little Joe in his new endeavor are his advisors: evangelist-theologian J. Michael Feazell ("Fez"), media manager Greg Albrecht, business manager-lawyer Bernard Schnippert, church administrator Randy Dick, public relations spokesperson Tom Lapacka, and Greek theologian Kyriacos Stavrinides. After Little Joe, those six advisors are now virtually the only men in the WCG with any significant say about church doctrine and administrative policy. With the possible exceptions of ministers Herman Hoeh and Ronald Kelly, none of the "old timers" from the Herbert Armstrong era are left with even minor influence in the new Tkach organization.

### Tithing Not Done Away!

With WCG income continuing to sink to new depths, it should perhaps not come as a surprise that the Tkach organization has again modified its position on tithing. It was less than a year ago that Tkach Sr. made headlines nationally when, in a taped sermon later shown around the world on January 7, he said that tithing was not required (see [AR57](#)). Now all that has changed. In an official WCG statement printed in the July issue of *MacGregor Ministries, News & Views* the revised standard Tkach message has become:

The Worldwide Church of God views tithing as voluntary under the new covenant, though it remains the appropriate minimum standard for Christian giving.... Since the Christian's heart will be concerned with the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, giving to support that effort is a natural response.... Only through the generous financial support of its members and friends is the Church able to fulfill these responsibilities.

So there you have it. The WCG leadership now says that getting out the gospel is important again and so the minimum standard of giving is the tithe.

## Changing Ways of Worship

By the time this AR edition is in circulation, the WCG's Feast of Tabernacles, now called the Festival of Faith, will be held around the world. Church leaders are expecting an attendance of only about 54,000 (including unbaptized mates and children). Whether the Festival will be held next year is open to question as church leaders increasingly are saying privately that it is a pointless Old Testament holdover from Armstrong days. According to internal WCG documents we have obtained, this year's Festival is geared toward one thing: "Bringing people (WCG) to Christ - coming entirely into the new covenant."

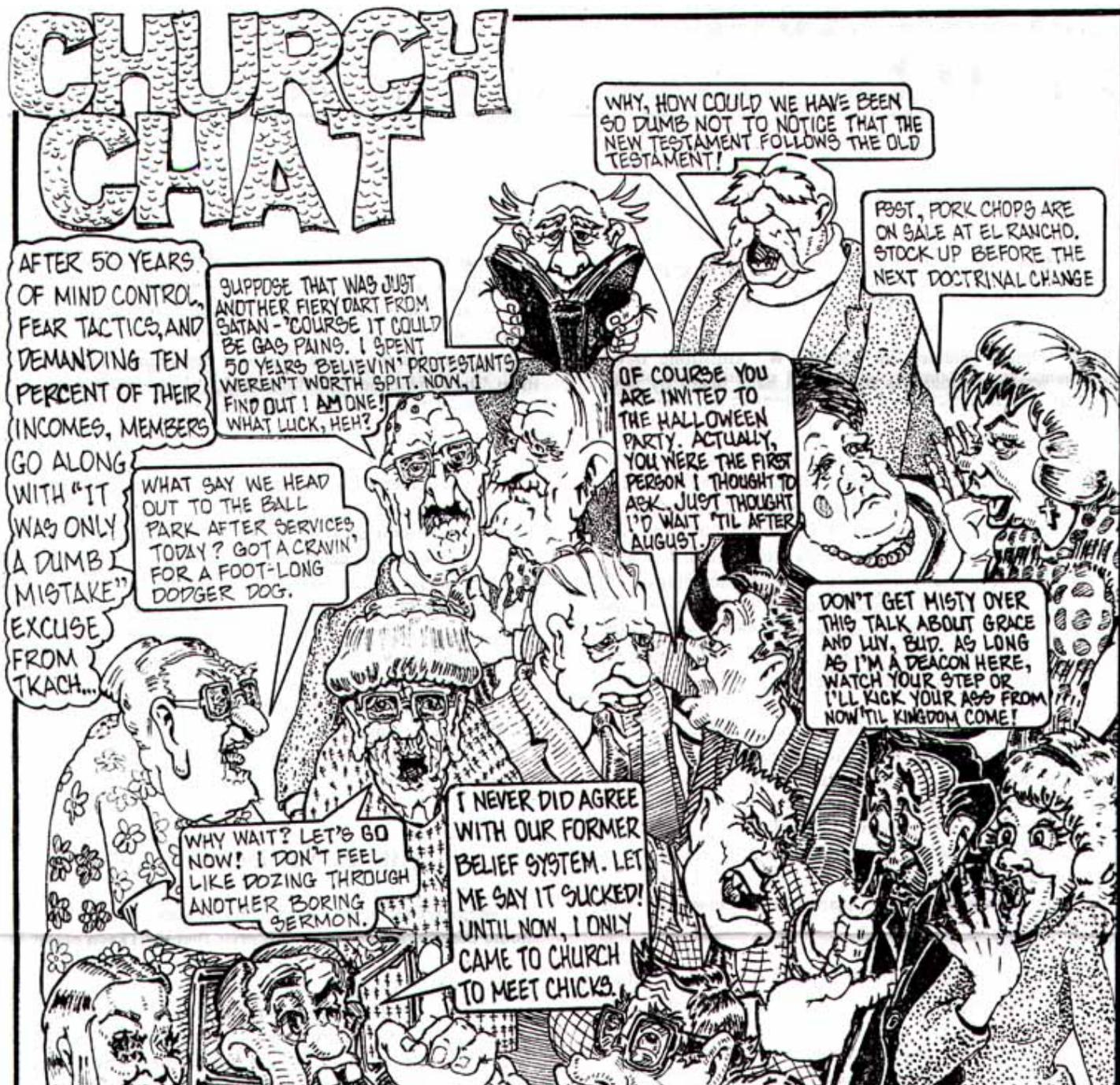
&COPY;1995 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service.

ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher

Mary E. Jones, Associate Editor

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringe, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.





According to one WCG Festival Administration memo we have seen, this year's Festival should prove totally unlike any WCG feast of the past. The memo, dated February 1, 1995, indicates that Worldwidars attending the fall Festival will most likely witness a major overhaul in the format of their services. The memo lists the "New Testament elements of worship" as being (and this list is an unedited quote):

1. Music
2. Scripture reading
3. Prayer
4. "Amen" response
5. Sermons
6. Exhortation
7. Giving gifts
8. Doxology
9. Confession
10. Lord's supper, baptism (sacraments)

According to the memo, there will be two or three pieces of music "as people flow into the hall." Services will include "intercessory prayer," "a word from our youth," and "testimonies." Sermons are not to be over 35 minutes in length and services will close with a "benediction." The festival pastor "coordinates [the] overall effect."

With amen responses, confessions, and testimonials being planned, will we soon see "holy roller" manifestations at WCG services? Already WCG literature talks positively about "speaking in tongues" and a number of church pastors have indicated that in-service "sacred dancing" is on the way. But headquarters cautions that it's best for pastors not to rush things. As the Feb. 1 memo warns: "How far to go on this at every site? - best to do the revised format at every site but not totally radical yet." Yes, don't get totally radical yet!

## Wondering About Hell

Just how far the WCG has come in the past year can be seen in an official March 1995 statement of required WCG ministerial teachings. (Ironically, the one who actually prepared the statement, WCG Pastor Greg Sargent, has since left Worldwide for United.) Here are just a few excerpts:

The Worldwide Church of God is not the only true Christian church. Virtually all churches are true Christian churches, e.g. Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.... We should leave the fellowship of a church only for legitimate reasons.... we must still admit that Mr. Armstrong (an apostle but not in the same sense as the original apostles) was a minister of God who brought many people to Christ. He was converted and was a Christian.... The observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath or any day is not required of New Covenant Christians.... YOU [Youth Opportunities United] no longer requires members to abstain from organized sports participation on the Sabbath. What teens do in regard to the Sabbath is between them and their parents.... Christmas, Easter and Sunday can be legitimate forms of Christian worship, acceptable to God.... The Worldwide Church of God teaches that the Bible consecrates all meats. Romans 14:20 says all meats are clean.... All food is clean.... It is not necessary to delevain your properties for the Days of Unleavened Bread nor fast on the Day of Atonement.... Obligations for New Covenant Christians are those listed only in the New Testament. Everything in the Old Testament is abolished in Christ. In order for an Old Covenant command, statute, judgment or ordinance to be valid under the Now Covenant, it must be specifically commanded in the New Testament.

Considering how radical all of this sounds to old-time Worldwidars, are there any more changes that we can expect to see in the near future? One clue was dropped by Joseph W. Tkach when he spoke in Big Sandy on Aug. 18. There, in describing his personal trials of the last year and his love for Ambassador students, he casually commented:

I know what hell is like. I've been there and back several times in the last few months, but I would do it again for your sakes.... Ask, and if it is in your best interest educationally - we're not talking about giving you Porsches here, people in hell want ice water, too - we will try to provide it.

The use of such analogies stunned some in the audience because until now no WCG minister has challenged the idea that the dead sleep and

those in hell do not possess consciousness. Certainly, until now WCG members assumed that only Catholics believed that a soul could go to, and return from, hell. We asked one of our Pasadena sources if Tkach's Big Sandy comment was a tipoff that the WCG leadership was about to start teaching the immortal soul doctrine and along with it the idea that souls in hell are capable of thought and conversation. His reply: "What's so odd about that? Haven't you ever read Lk. 16:23-24? Don't ridicule something you don't understand!"

## **Executive Exodus Update**

Since our last issue so many ministers and executives have left the WCG it is impossible for us to provide a complete listing. Some names which need to be added to our previous Executive Exodus listings include: John Anderson, Gary Antion, Rick Beam, Bill Bradford, Ted Budge, Bill Butler, Stephen Elliot, Dave Evans, Dan Hall, Don Henson Jr., Fred Kellers, Douglas Johnson, Mark D. Kaplan, Ron Laughlin, Bob League, Graemme Marshall, Marc Masterson, Frank McCrady III, Larry Neff, Steve Nutzman, James O'Brien, Richard Petty, Greg Sargent, Dale Schurter, Gerald Seelig, Steve Sidars, Britton Taylor, Ken Treybig, Mark Welch, and William Winner. Little Joe and his advisors are apparently now in the process of trying to find out just who has stayed and who has left or will soon be leaving. Hopefully, within a few months the smoke will clear enough for the WCG's leaders to provide us with an update on who remains on their team. Special mention, however, should be given to a few WCG luminaries who recently announced their departure.

Church treasurer Steven Andrews has resigned from the WCG. He is now with the United group. His old position as church treasurer has been filled by Bernard Schnippert.

Long-time WCG evangelist Les McCullough, director of the WCG's United Kingdom operations, has resigned over doctrinal differences. The WCG has told its members that this was a "retirement" (WN, 8/29/95, p. 3). Other WCG ministers in Britain who have either resigned or asked for retirement include Ron Bolzem, Jonathan Bowles, George Delap, David House, John Jewel, David Magowan, Peter Shenton, and Alan Tattersall. Now heading what remains of the WCG's British operations is John Halford.

We previously reported that Leon Walker, director of the WCG's Spanish language work left the WCG in April. Since then 11 other WCG ministers representing about 1,500 members in eight Spanish speaking countries have followed him out. Although he has warm feelings toward a number of sabbatarian groups and has met recently with Roderick Meredith, Walker says that for now he and his followers intend to align with United.

In Germany the WCG lost its regional director, Paul Kieffer, a few other ministers, and a fair number of lay members who have all now defected to United.

More WCG defections are sure to be on the way. WCG minister and AU professor David Albert, for instance, has made overtures to join the Global group. He was rejected, however, as not being spiritually qualified.

## **Ambassador University Limp On**

Ambassador University President Donald Ward has left the WCG and, as a result, is no longer with Ambassador. WCG headquarters claimed he left for health and personal reasons. Dr. Russell Duke is now the Interim President at Ambassador and Dr. Michael Germano remains as Academic Dean with Dr. William Stenger still Associate Academic Dean. While five of the University's nine board members have been replaced and while the number of faculty and student enrollment are both down this year, AU somehow continues to function.

## **Dr. Merritt: Fighting for Truth and Justice**

One prominent WCG member to exit in the last few months is John Merritt, M.D., of Laguna Hills, California who had served on Ambassador University's Board of Regents. After going over to the United camp and being removed from AU's board, Merritt brought a lawsuit against AU in a Texas state court, hoping that the court would intervene in AU's internal squabbling and reinstate board members who had been removed after being disfellowshipped. (AU, a private, denomination-sponsored institution, not surprisingly requires its board members to be current WCG members.) The Texas court refused to get involved in what it viewed as essentially a church matter. According to Ralph Helge, again director of the WCG's Legal Services Department, Merritt failed both to understand fundamental legal principles and to pursue his legal cause with diligence; he therefore got what was coming to him (WN, 8/15/95, p. 2). Maybe so, but in the meantime, one of Merritt's lawyers, George Crow of Houston, has refiled the suit in a Federal District Court in Texas and his investigations continue to turn up data on the Tkachs that gets curiously and curiously. For instance, Crow has discovered the existence of a Colorado corporation named "Joseph W. Tkach, Pastor General of the Church of God and His Successors, a corporation Sole." Crow says that for some reason this Colorado corporation has shown a lot of activity since the beginning of 1995. Crow also has discovered that the WCG has other "shell" corporations set up including one in California called, "Church of God, an International Association" and another in Utah. (Actually, we have discovered that the one in Utah is not simply a shell, but is one that has had monies flowing through it for the benefit of certain WCG executives.)

Another activity that Merritt has been involved in is the establishment of the Friends of the Sabbath fellowship. This informal network consists of representatives of various sabbatarian and almost-sabbatarian religious groups. In June, the Friends of the Sabbath sponsored Jubilee '95, a symposium on Sabbath keeping held at Dana Point, California. Among the speakers were SDA author Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi and ASK president Dr. Ernest Martin. Also attending were representatives from the WCG and many WCG spinoff groups including Triumph Publishing's William Dankenbring whose printed materials were particularly interesting to the group.

Those who would like to know more about Friends of the Sabbath or who would like to obtain tapes or transcripts of Jubilee '95 should write to: Friends of the Sabbath, 27068 La Paz No. 500, Laguna Hills, CA 92656 (tel. 714-362- 4444).

## Sabbath Summit Coming

Surprisingly, among those who were not invited to the Jubilee '95 symposium were leaders of The Bible Sabbath Association, the nation's foremost pro-Sabbath organization. Former WCG minister Richard Wiedenheft has been active with that group for many years and former WCG member Richard Nickels of Giving and Sharing (P.O. Box 100, Great Neck, MO 64849) is quite likely to be the Association's next president. Perhaps it was just an oversight. Mr. Nickels informs us that the Association plans to hold a "Sabbath Summit Meeting" of leaders of all the major Sabbath-keeping groups in 1996. For information contact the Bible Sabbath Association, Rt. 1 Box 222, Fairview, OK 73737.

## Church Chart Now Available

In our last issue we mentioned how one of our Australian readers had produced a remarkable eight-foot-long flow chart which in great detail shows the history of the WCG and its offshoots. A number of readers have expressed a desire to obtain a copy of the chart and we are happy to announce that its creator, John Morgan, is now making copies available. In addition, he informs us that all those requesting a copy will also receive both a cassette tape explaining in his own words how the chart came into being and a most interesting article about Sabbath keepers in Scotland who, decades before HWA began his ministry, were holding to many of the same doctrines HWA later taught. To obtain the chart, tape, and article, send \$7 (U.S.) to: Mr. John Morgan, P.O. Box 30, Glenhuntly 3163, Australia.

## GTA at It Again!

Ever since [1977 when we first reported on the secret life of evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong](#), we have received letters from readers who have wondered if the famous televangelist has ever cleaned up his act. While we have heard many rumors that he has not, we have had little interest in following up on those stories. Now, however, it appears that we should.

This past summer while visiting Oklahoma, GTA paid a visit to a local masseuse. He said he wanted a massage but, according to sources with firsthand knowledge, the 65-year-old televangelist obviously expected more. The masseuse, a married woman, soon found herself the victim of unwanted sexual advances. She made it clear that she did not offer illegal services. But on a subsequent visit GTA's long-time problem again reared its ugly head and the woman found herself being groped and fondled. Luckily, with much effort she was able to extricate herself from his clutches, but not before a hidden security camera captured the incident on video tape. The rolling tape then captured the sound of GTA somehow being able to relieve the tension of the moment followed by his greatly relaxed voice singing along as the radio played "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree."

A few weeks later, while visiting Phoenix, Arizona to speak to some of his followers there, "Dr. Armstrong," as he now prefers to be called, was approached by a legal representative of the masseuse. GTA did not deny that the Oklahoma incident had occurred but, he said, it was all the woman's fault. Nevertheless, he generously offered to pay her \$10,000 to keep quiet. When that offer proved inadequate, GTA brought his attorney into the act. An offer of \$20,000 in hush money was refused. The masseuse then contacted some in the media offering her story - and a copy of the tape. She also began talking about bringing criminal charges against GTA for sexual assault. That was at the end of August. Since then all has been quiet. Apparently the warring parties have somehow been able to quietly resolve their differences.

With GTA and his associates now making a vigorous effort to lure exiting Worldwidiers into their International group, perhaps it is time that we again look into the activities of this nefarious Elmer Gantry. We would appreciate hearing from any readers who may have more information about the secret life of "America's Playboy Preacher."

## Flurry Gets Flakier

Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God continues to grow on the outer fringes of Armstrongism. Most appealing to the Flurryites is the prospect of "fleeing" - not from Flurry, unfortunately, but to Petra in the Jordanian desert. The July issue of Flurry's Philadelphia Trumpet featured a cover article about this locale, Flurry's idea of a sun-filled vacation. Another article, "Elijah Has Come Already - and They Knew Him Not," centered on the life of Flurry's idol, Herbert W. Armstrong. The issue contained four pictures of the deified Apostle. Flurry, who claims to be Elisha and a number of other biblical personalities, continues to gain new followers, but it appears that he is doing so only by becoming ever more fanatical. One of our readers, in close contact with members of Flurry's group, sent us the following information:

Prospective members of Gerald Flurry's church must recite: "I believe that Herbert W. Armstrong is the endtime Elijah." Flurry has now mixed diet and religion: white rice and white bread are a sin. The Philadelphians have also adopted a policy of racial discrimination. It is now a sin for persons of different racial backgrounds to fraternize on all but the most superficial levels. According to Flurry, the wearing of jewelry is sinful. Heart pendants are demonic and will send the wearer to the lake of fire.

Another informant wrote us:

Philadelphian minister Colin Sutcliffe, once a WCG minister in New Zealand, has fallen out of favor with Flurry. Along came the newly formed United Church and a great opportunity for family reunification. But United, now headed by Sutcliffe's son-in-law, Chairman Hulme, declined to accept him as a minister.

So much for brotherly love and unity.

## Hulme's UCG Grows

Of the dozens of Armstrongite groups that have come out of the WCG in the last 25 years, the largest is now the United Church of God currently headed by Chairman David Hulme, not to be confused with David Hume, the great Scottish philosopher and historian. Hulme's United Church of God should also not be confused with the United Church of God started in 1974 by ex-WCG minister Richard Wiedenheft or with the United Church of God started by Ray Wooten who has now disassociated his United Church of God from Hulme's United Church of God (UCG).

Hulme's UCG has only been in existence a few months, but already it has almost 15,000 enthusiastic members. While there had been some indication when this group coalesced that it would usher in some level of democracy, some who have already left the group say that under Hulme ("a one-man-show") and church administrator Victor Kubik ("thinks the Czars really knew how to rule") the UCG is rapidly becoming another religious autocracy.

At present the UCG has no television ministry to compete with those of "Elisha" Flurry, Dr. Garner Ted Armstrong, or General Roderick Meredith whose bear-like Karate chops can now be seen on the boob tube. But with already more than \$1,000,000 in surplus revenues, a TV show built around Chairman Hulme is probably not too far away. Already the UCG with new offices in Arcadia, California not only has a church periodical called *New Beginnings* (NB), but it is inaugurating a full-color magazine called *The Good News* (not to be confused with the old WCG publication of the same name).

Doctrinally, the UCG has openly stated that it intends to follow the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong as stated in the famous "18 Points" (delineated by Joseph W. Tkach in the WN, 8/25/86, p. 5). David Hulme has indicated, however, that some Armstrong doctrines will need to be modified (NB, 6/16/95, p. 2). You can bet that Hulme and company will accept Tkach's modification of HWA's old healing doctrine and a few other Tkach organization discoveries. One doctrinal item that Hulme and company are struggling with, however, is a definition for God. Apparently, after decades of serving in the ministry, this is something the UCG ministers were never able to clarify in their own minds. Hulme assures his followers, however, that no matter what definition they come up with, it will not involve a Trinity (Hulme's letter of 5/17/95, p. 2). With that one prejudgment acknowledged, Hulme does indicate that he and his colleagues are otherwise open to suggestions. Hopefully, within a few months, the UCG will issue a statement as to who or what it is exactly that they are worshipping.

Those desiring to be kept up-to-the-minute about changes in this latest of Armstrongism reincarnations can do so by utilizing UCG's sophisticated "Faxback and Information Service" by calling 317-526-2036 (after Oct. 18 the number changes to 317-839-5002). UCG's mailing address is: P.O. Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91066.

## Organizing Your Church

Former WCG minister Ray Wooten, who has his own United Church of God, apparently feels that it is best for local congregations to maintain a certain level of autonomy even when they affiliate with a national or international organization. Ostensibly, one advantage of doing this is that the local organization is better able to buffer itself from liability in case a government agency wants to investigate the international movement or a disgruntled member decides to sue the umbrella group for abuse, fraud, etc. For those interested in starting their own local church corporation, Wooten has put together an informational church start-up kit. His address is United Church of God, P.O. Box 361334, Birmingham, AL 35236-1334.

Those fascinated with the ways in which the new WCG offshoots are being set up might do well to locate a copy of the book *How to Organize and Manage Your Own Religious Cult* by Duke McCoy and once distributed by Loompanics Unlimited (P.O. Box 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368, tel. 360-3852230). When we read it years ago, we were amazed how the WCG and its offshoots were applying its principles very, very precisely. We have been told that the book is now out of print and it is very difficult to locate a copy. If any reader knows how we may obtain copies, please drop us a line.

Another writer presenting similar dark-side information is Anthony Pratkanis in the article "How to Sell a Pseudoscience" which appeared in the July/August issue of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine (\$4.95, published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, 3965 Rensch R., Amherst, NY 14228-27443). In explaining how one can dupe the unwary into believing just about anything, psychology professor Pratkanis explains "nine effective persuasion tactics for selling all sorts of flimflam." Those who are persuaded that mind control techniques do not exist would do well to study Dr. Pratkanis' article. All nine techniques have been used by the WCG and are now being used (perhaps unconsciously and perhaps not) by all the major WCG spinoffs.

## Exiting to the Esoteric

We have reported in past issues how those exiting the WCG very rarely join mainline churches. Over the years we have known of a few who have joined mainstream churches such as the Lutherans or the Baptists. For example Louise Doescher, the former WCG member who ran Help Net in Wisconsin (see [AR55](#), p. 10) and who is currently working on a book about the WCG, is now a Baptist and tells us she has found spiritual peace in that denomination. And here in the Pasadena area a few prominent ex-Worldwidiers (and even a few current WCG ministers) frequently attend Sunday services at the popular Lake Avenue Congregational Church. Nevertheless, over the years the vast majority of those who left the WCG either joined one of the WCG offshoots or no church at all. Within the last two years, however, we have begun to notice something new. While they are still in the minority, a growing number of WCG exiters are being attracted to what we might call, for want of a better term, esoteric movements.

Some of these esoteric movements are derided by critics as "New Age." Unfortunately, what "New Age" means exactly is not always clear. To such authors as Russell Chandler in his book *Understanding the New Age* (Word Publishing, 1988) anything "New Age" is unbiblical and unchristian. But many leaving the WCG do not agree. One former member wrote us:

Frankly, I am just sick of people condemning every spiritual teaching as New Age or occult simply because it does not match the childish nonsense they have been taught in Sunday school or in some seminary. First of all, when they call New Age a movement they don't have any idea what they are talking about. That label is applied to many different ideas. Just as the word Christian can apply to many different groups with

many differing ideas, so New Age is an umbrella term that is very imprecise.

People do the same thing with the term "occult" which simply means "hidden or secret knowledge." Paul used the word Mystery which means the same thing. Those who study the occult are simply studying knowledge that the average carnal person is not readily attuned to. I think most people who use that term in a nasty way are getting the occult mixed up with black magic. Not all magic is black magic! Moses and Jesus were adept at magic (the white type), that doesn't mean they were evil! Anyone who reads *Jesus the Magician* by Morton Smith will quickly see the difference.

As for New Age ideas being unbiblical, well, people who say such things do not really know their Bible. Here are some New Age ideas you find in the Bible: symbology (found from Genesis to Revelation) and dream analysis (Gen. 40, Matt. 2:12), numerology (found throughout the Bible), dowsing (Num. 20:8), reincarnation (Mal. 4:5, Matt. 16:13-14), out-of-body experience (II Cor. 12:2 and possibly Eccl. 7:6), astrology (Gen. 1:14). I wish the Sunday school teachers would start reading their Bibles more thoroughly!

We do not have either the space or the inclination to cover all the "New Age" ideas being discussed in WCG and ex-WCG circles. However, as regards the above topics, the books and other sources most often being referred to by WCG exites are: Carl Jung, et al, *Man and his Symbols* (Doubleday, 1964); *The Companion Bible* (theologian Bullinger paid careful attention to numbers in margin comments); Gary Arvidson's 1994 series on the Tetragrammaton in ACD's *The New Millennium* (4449 S. Star Lake Road, Auburn, WA 98001); publications of the American Society of Dowsers (Danville, Vermont 05828-0024); Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston, *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology* (1961, now published by Quest Books, The Theological Publishing House, Wheaton, IL); Kenneth C. Fleming, *God's Voice in the Stars: Zodiac Signs and Bible Truths* (Loizeaux Brothers, 1981); and Jon Anthony West and Jan Gerhard Toonder, *The Case For Astrology* (Penguin Books, 1970). For the orthodox Christian view on such practices contact Watchman Fellowship (P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094).

While so-called "New Age" ideas are playing a part in the shifting spirituality of some ex-Worldwidiers, much of the change in thinking that is occurring seems to be due to the "tohu and bohu" we now see in both the WCG and most of its offshoots. For example, because of the never-ending doctrinal debates going on in these groups, some have begun to question the very premises upon which their faith has been based. Among the basic questions now being asked are: Do some non-Western religions possibly have insights lacking in Christianity? Does our Christian Bible represent the complete canon of inspired literature? Are some of the books of the Bible less inspired than others? Are there books other than those in the Bible that are inspired?

One organization that is confronting such questions headon is the I Think International group in England which recently changed the name of their publication to *Potentia International* (Box 1953, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH8 OYQ England). Writing in his August issue, editor Kerin Webb, formerly a WCG member, stated (pp. 1-2):

I, personally, hold the opinion in the light of my own research that the Bible is one of a line of religious philosophies based upon a set of evolving concepts, which date back to antiquity and beyond. And therefore, personally, I believe that the evidence which seems to clearly demonstrate a basis for the proposition that postulates that there's taken place a cross pollenisation of ideology, an ideology which has been borrowed and then molded by Hebrew/Christian writers, is a sound one [sic].

While some ex-Worldwidiers, like Mr. Webb, are studying comparative religion, others feel the Bible simply needs updating from other supposedly sacred, writings. In the latter category are some ex-Worldwidiers who have joined the Urantia movement. Urantians (not to be confused with Unitarians or with the Unarians of El Cajon, California) trace their beginnings back to *The Urantia Book*, a work supposedly revealed solely by celestial beings in order to correct the alleged flaws in the Bible. This celestial message was first published in 1955 by Dr. William Sadler, the founder of the Urantia cult. *The Urantia Book* is said to be the largest book ever to have been channeled by supernatural beings working through human beings. While there have been other "channeled" books over the centuries, *The Urantia Book* is unique in that it contains a good deal of modern science and a very-detailed purported biography of Jesus with claimed "facts" not found in the gospels. So dedicated are Urantian followers, many study *The Urantia Book* assisted by the official *Urantia Book Concordance*, a reference almost as large as most Bible concordances. The Urantia Foundation (533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614, tel. 312-525-3319) has attracted scientists and intellectuals into its fold and some claim the group has gotten a number of its teachings from the Seventh Day Adventists. This latter fact may be the reason some ex-WCG members find themselves attracted to this movement. Now, however, cult expert Martin Gardener, author of *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*, says the Urantia movement may be splintering. Readers who have family or friends involved in the Urantia movement may want to read his book for an understanding of what they are up against.

One of our readers who feels there are important truths to be found in non-biblical religions is former WCG member Patti Laessig of Merrill, Wisconsin. Ms. Laessig continues to study the Bible, but in addition has found meaning in the natural religions of the American Indians. In particular, she has found Mary Summer Rain's first four books in "The No-Eyes Series" (*Spirit Song*, *Phoenix Rising*, *Dreamwalker*, and *Phantoms Afoot*) to be spiritually enlightening. In a recent letter to the Report, Ms. Laessig wrote us:

I believe that the Native American spirituality is the truest and purest form of worship I've found. It doesn't require a middleman. It gives access to God/the Great Spirit Creator individually - the same message that Jesus Christ gave us, if only we would pay attention to what the Bible says... I believe we are each responsible for the deeds we do. I believe each of us is a perfect spiritual being, a "chip off the old Great Spirit" (i.e. made in the image of God) therefore we innately have the Holy Spirit within and the "unpardonable sin" is the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which would therefore mean to be untrue to the Self - to go against the natural spirit within, to weave a false mask or identity, to take on false doctrines, dogma, and society's superficial ego-identities. If we are true to the Self, doing what comes naturally brings joy, peace, and kindness. We begin living with the LOVE - of God and each other - that Jesus taught.

While some ex-Worldwidiers are augmenting the traditional Christian Bible with spiritual teachings derived from other sources, some have lost confidence in parts of the traditional Christian canon. For example, some have confronted the centuries-old debate regarding law versus grace by simply deleting the Pauline parts of the Bible from the canon. One, former WCG member wrote us:

After many years of careful Bible study we have come to see that the New Testament as originally delineated by the Catholic Church at Nicea is really two separate religions - the essentially Jewish religion of Yeshua the Nazarene and the Gentile religion of Paul. Mr. Herbert Armstrong was on the right track when he taught that the law was not done away. But sadly, he didn't realize that the religion of Yeshua [Jesus] and his brother

[James] is not compatible with the religion of Paul. Many scholars are coming to see this now.

The writer then went on to quote from *The Jesus Conspiracy* by Holger Kersten and Elmar R. Gruber (Element Books, 1994, p. 341):

What we today refer to as Christianity is a misinterpretation and twisting by Paul of the true teaching of Jesus. Knowledge about this misinterpretation, and the doctrine of Salvation by the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus which is given a central place in it, has long belonged to the truisms of modern theological and church historical research. Unfortunately until now these truths have been suppressed by all possible means, and therefore have not penetrated to the foundations. Even at the start of the eighteenth century the English philosopher Lord Bolingbroke (1678-1751) noticed two completely different religions in the New Testament, that of Jesus and that of Paul. Kant, Lessing, Fichte and Schelling also clearly distinguished between the teaching of Jesus and what the "apostles" made of it. A large number of reputed modern theologians have come to acknowledge this fact.

Somewhat similar views can be found in some of Hyam Maccoby's writings, first brought to our attention by former WCG minister Bill Moore. In the last few months we have noticed some of Maccoby's books offered for sale at the bookstore of Fuller Seminary where a number of WCG executives have gone for graduate level studies. Not only are Maccoby's books being read by ex-WCG members, some such as *The Myth Maker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* (Harper, San Francisco, 1987) are being studied by some ministers in the WCG offshoots.

While some ex-WCG members have cast off the writings of Paul, a few have gone much further. Students of the writings of Dr. James Tabor, for instance, tell us that Tabor has come to believe that only the Old Testament is truly inspired and that the *whole* New Testament is merely commentary on the Old. Tabor, who is currently working on a new Bible translation scheduled for completion in late 1998, is active in the B'nai Noah movement and other pro-Jewish activities (see [AR56](#)). One of Tabor's disciples wrote us:

What the B'Nai Noah movement is attempting to achieve is a return to the roots established in the first century A.D. by Yeshua the Nazarene and even earlier Judaism. Those in the movement are using this as a starting point to become closer to the LORD God and His (for sure) Holy Word, the O.T. or Tanach. To us now the N.T. is more likely a collection of writings inspired by the "early church fathers" than it is a collection by the LORD God.

While many ex-WCG members continue to look for answers in the Bible, or at least in part of it, it is probably not surprising that some have begun looking outside of religion altogether for answers to the question of how to live. One small movement that is drawing ex-Worldwidiers deserves mention because of its odd combination of offbeat wisdom and anti-societal insight. The small movement centers on the writings and ideas of Ernest Mann, never a Worldwider, but once a financially successful businessman who at the age of 42 dropped out of society and began living a very simple and creatively frugal life aimed at minimizing expenses (of both money and time) and maximizing personal freedom.

Mann, now almost 70, is severely critical of modern capitalism, the ruling elite, and modern lifestyles. To replace their influence, he advocates something he calls The Priceless Economic System ("PES") by which mankind would supposedly be able to live without setting fixed prices on goods or services and by which society would eventually not be focused on making profits. Mann advocates a very simple ethic based on a few simple principles such as the golden rule and the maxim that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Among those who have found value in Mann's ideas are survivalists who believe that modern civilization is heading toward a complete breakdown, economic conservatives who believe he offers the ultimate in economic self-reliance, senior citizens on very limited fixed incomes, anti-government activists who see in Mann's philosophy a means of escaping the intrusions of the modern state, libertarians who see his ideas as offering a means to achieve a maximum level of personal freedom, and even some fundamentalist Christians who feel Mann is emphasizing the heart of the Gospel while jettisoning valueless doctrinal debate. For many years Mann has promoted his ideals by putting out his "Little Free Press" newsletter, which, in spite of what might be viewed as excessive idealism, is still quite enlightening and entertaining. Also quite popular among some ex-WCG folks are Mann's book *I Was Robot - Utopia Now Possible* and a collection of his newsletters published in book form as *Free I Got*.

Because he eschews business dealings, Mann no longer distributes his two books himself. However, they are available for \$7.95 and \$8.95 respectively from Jim Wortham, Marathon International Book Co., Box 32, Madison, IN 47250-0032. As for Mann's newsletter, it is still being published occasionally. A recent edition, #116, provides an excellent overview of Mann's unique philosophy. For a copy write to: Ernest Mann, Little Free Press, 301 SE 11th Street, Lot 218, Little Falls, MN 56345. In accordance with his own philosophy the newsletter is free, but Mann does ask that with your request you include some stamps or a little something to cover mailing expenses.

## David Whitaker's Mystical Insights

Before leaving the subject of the esoteric, special mention should be made of one former WCG member whose writings are having an impact on a fair number of former WCG members and others who are serious students of the Bible. For some years now David Whitaker of Enid, Oklahoma has corresponded with a number of individuals around the world and many of his letters have proven so interesting a fair number have been photocopied and distributed quite widely. Some of the less controversial ones have even been published by William Dankenbring in *Prophecy Flash!*

Unlike many ex-Worldwidiers who put down their religious ideas on paper, Whitaker does not claim to be a minister, prophet, or to have a special mandate from God. Nor does he claim to have all the answers on every theological issue. Nevertheless, he does possess a vast knowledge of religion, psychology, philosophy, ancient history, astronomy, classical music, and many other subjects. He also takes a special interest in the Hebrew language, the Kabbalah, and Jewish mysticism. It is from his study of the latter that Whitaker has developed a number of theories which, although they may at first seem a bit radical, nonetheless, are very plausible in light of the scriptural and historical data he has amassed. In particular, Whitaker is convinced that to understand the New Testament in its fullness, one has to not only understand the Mediterranean culture of the first century and the Hebrew language, but one has to take into account the widespread awareness of the Jewish mysticism of the time. Whitaker views the earliest Christians as embracing what he calls "Apostolic mysticism." To demonstrate this, Whitaker refers to dozens of N.T. verses that to most of us have the feel of well-worn simple truths. Yet, as he so ably demonstrates, when

one views those same verses with the eyes of one adept in Jewish mysticism they frequently have an added depth and dimension of meaning quite beyond the simplicity we often assume. In a 1992 letter to AR, Whitaker wrote:

The majority of contemporary clergymen and theological historians believe the New Testament writings present no concrete formulae for mystical practice, and it is for this reason most Christian practitioners reject any attempt to comprehend the Faith of Jesus and the original Apostles within a mystical context.... The entire historical and cultural mysticism underlying the New Testament writings and thought-forms is conveniently neglected by Western European and American scholars and theologians who find it awkward to mentally identify with the intellectual and mystical modalities of ancient Mediterranean peoples and civilizations.... Understanding the paramount influence and involvement of the Jewish Mystic Tradition underlying the New Testament writings is absolutely essential to clearly and correctly comprehending the allusions and nomenclature used by the authors of the New Testament writings! Only when this missing background inherent within the ancient Galilean culture is restored can the modern reader begin to properly and profoundly understand the true Message contained within the colloquial wording of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures!

Readers should not assume that AR endorses each and every one of Whitaker's views. Nevertheless, his writings (in the form of one to four page letters that are really well reasoned essays) are very thought provoking. During the past few years we have been tempted to publish some of them, but have not because: (1) taken out of context they would offend and confuse many readers and (2) we lack the funds to publish them in toto. Nevertheless, because we think some would be interested in reading his letter-essays, we have asked Mr. Whitaker if he would make available photocopies of a set we thought were particularly thought-provoking. Subjects include: Christianity and Judaism, The Types of Judaism, On the Importance of Understanding the Hebrew Language, On the Ten Commandments, Jeremiah in Babylon, What/Where is Babylon Today?, The "Lost Books," On Jewish Mysticism and Early Christianity, The Term "Kabbalah," Is Jesus Metatron?, Jesus and Hanukkah, Will Jesus Return in the Year 2000?, The Real Meaning of "the Thousand Years," Is the Universe an Apparition?, On Evolution, Is God Androgynous?, Does God Have Feminine Aspects? The Feminine Side of Men and God, On Homosexuality, Did David Love Jonathan Sexually?, Are All Abortions Sin?, Philosophy - Greek and Jewish, Was Pythagoras a Student of Kabbalah?, Is Reincarnation in the Bible? Jewish-American Indian Parallels, Jews and Anti-Semitism, Bible Study Levels, Predestination and Fate, and Recommended Books.

Mr. Whitaker informs us that he would be willing to make the above set of letter-essays available to all who would like them. However, he cannot do so without asking for financial assistance because he is on a very limited fixed income (he is living on only government disability assistance due to a number of serious ailments). We therefore would suggest to any who would like to obtain the above set of writings, that along with your written request you include a money order for \$10. Write to: David Whitaker, 710 E. Chestnut Ave., Enid, OK 73701.

## Back to Waco

Readers continue to express a fascination with the 1993 Branch Davidian tragedy at Waco. Many have already read *See No Evil: Blind Devotion and Bloodshed in David Koresh's Holy War* (Summit Group, 1993) by Tim Madigan who had extensive first-hand contact with the tragic events as a reporter with the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Now James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher have produced *Why Waco? - Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995).

Decidedly more sympathetic toward Koresh and his followers than previous books on the subject, Tabor and Gallagher present a number of facts that have not received wide attention in the major media. But they also take a number of positions that are sure to raise eyebrows: The authors view the Waco tragedy as having been to a great extent precipitated by the "pervasive influence of those who see 'cults' as dangerous and troubling movements in America today" (p. 146). Desiring to promote religious tolerance (p. xi), the authors condemn the use of the word "cult" because it is used to "demonize" certain groups and, instead, advocate the use of "new religious movements" as the more politically correct term (p. 7; p. 213, n. 2). Cult experts supposedly do not possess the academic qualifications necessary to evaluate such groups and are only "cult bashers" who engage in "uninformed slander" of these new movements (p. 217, n. 40). Similarly, the views of former cult members cannot be trusted as those leaving "new religious groups" are now "defectors" (p. 95). Robert J. Lifton's famous work on brainwashing is glossed over with two sentences (p. 147) and "mind control" is deemed a fallacy (p. 177). In concluding, the authors state that "cults make a signal contribution to American life by raising questions of ultimate value, by offering paradigms of commitment, and by making principled challenges to the status quo" (p. 186). (Question: Could not the same be said about the Communist party, neo-Nazi groups, and many terrorist organizations?)

One cult expert singled out for condemnation by Tabor and Gallagher is exit counsellor Rick Ross of Phoenix. According to the authors, in deprogramming a Davidian named Bill in 1992, "Ross effectively used his broad familiarity with 'cults' and a careful reading of the Bible outside of the compelling setting of Koresh's teaching sessions to raise doubts in Bill's mind" (p. 95). When contacted by the Report, Ross said:

Yes, I do advocate reading the Bible carefully, but much of what Tabor and Gallagher wrote about me is inaccurate and I have written to UC Berkeley complaining about those inaccuracies. Had the authors made an attempt to interview me I could have helped them get their facts straight. But they did not. I suspect that much of what they wrote is similarly flawed by being based too much on secondary sources. I have been reading Tabor's writings for a few years now. And quite honestly, I think his views are getting stranger and stranger.

Even if that is so, in a number of ways *Why Waco?* does make an important contribution toward our understanding of what took place at Waco and toward reducing the risk of such tragedies occurring in the future. Perhaps the most important lesson that can be learned, especially by law enforcement, is that when dealing with destructive cults - sorry, "new religious movements" - it should not be assumed that the usual negotiation tactics employed in terrorist or hostage situations will suffice. As Tabor and Gallagher advocate, to protect the members of such groups from themselves it may indeed be necessary to bring in a team of religion scholars to make some sense of their inner world. It may even be necessary to talk only in "Bible babble" because, as was apparently the case with Koresh, that may be the only language discernable to the group and its leaders.

While the Tabor-Gallagher book will prove of great interest to many fascinated by the Davidians, one other information resource should not be overlooked. In July the House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee and Oversight Committee jointly held hearings on the Waco

tragedy. Many who watched those hearings on C-Span were amazed at the amount of information (and frequently contradictory views) aired in those hearings. A spokesman for the Judiciary Committee has informed us that transcripts of those hearings will soon be published. For information, contact the United States Government Printing Office. As for *Why Waco?*, if copies cannot be had from your local bookstore, you may order copies by calling the publisher's toll-free number: 800-822-6657.

## Religion in the News

The official and public "repentance" that the WCG has undergone during the past year strikes some as a unique event in modern religion. That a denomination should acknowledge its cultish ways and go almost "mainstream" in the course of only a few months is not common, yet the phenomenon of a sect or denomination openly admitting to past wrongs is apparently not that rare.

Religion writer John Dart of the *Los Angeles Times* (6/19/95, p. A1) has reported that, "A wave of confession and repentance for past sins, some of them the racist evils of decades or centuries ago, is sweeping Christianity worldwide." According to Dart, Christians openly repenting and publicly admitting their denominations' past sins include the Pope apologizing for Catholic complicity in the African slave trade of centuries past, for the Church's role in the exploitation of Latin American Indians during that continent's colonial period, for Catholic brutality toward Protestants during the 15th to 17th centuries, and for the Church's condemnation of Galileo for saying the earth revolved around the sun. In mass ceremonies German Christians have repented for German atrocities during the Nazi era and for the German invasion of Holland in WW II. French Christians have openly lamented atrocities committed against Muslims during the Crusades. The Lutheran Church in America has confessed to the anti-Jewish diatribes of Martin Luther during the 16th century. New Zealand Christians have gathered by the thousands to confess their forebears' sins against the native Maoris. Japanese Christians have publicly repented for the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Hawaiian Christians have publicly repented for their forebears' treatment of native Hawaiians. And, in what has been billed as the largest mass apology in American history, the Southern Baptists recently acknowledged and lamented the fact that their denomination was formed 150 years ago as a pro-slavery denomination. Dart suggests a number of possible reasons for the mass repentance phenomenon including the approach of the new millennium. But one interesting factor is *Healing America's Wounds*, a book by John Dawson, a mission director for Youth With a Mission of Colorado Springs. For an interesting discussion of the merits and criticisms of the new mass repentance phenomenon, see Dart's excellent article.

The WCG is not the only Pasadena-based religious organization trying to polish up a tarnished image. According to the Pasadena *Star-News* (8/11/95, p. A1): "The state Attorney General's Office is investigating the Fuller Evangelistic Association after a former executive filed a complaint questioning how the money was handled by the association." In recent years the association has gained a national reputation for its programs directed at showing churches how to grow. A separate Pasadena entity, Fuller Theological Seminary, gained notoriety in 1992 when it was reported that John Geoffrey Finch, a famous practitioner of "Christian psychology" and for whom Fuller's Graduate School of Psychology had named a building, had his license to practice revoked after a Washington state board found him guilty of sexually abusing three patients (Pasadena *Star-News*, 8/13/92, p. A1).

According to a recent article that appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*, the Canadian communications company Spar Aerospace has completed installation of a transmitter and satellite dish at the Vatican as part of a plan to provide the Pope with a highly sophisticated satellite communications system. The manufacturer, a world leader in satellite communications, says that by using the new system the Pope will be able to broadcast his daily messages live to over 800,000 churches in all parts of the world and by doing so maintain constant communication with the world's one billion Roman Catholics.

According to *Episcopal Life* (July/Aug. 1995):

The Diocese of Pittsburgh is leading the Roman Catholic Church and the Internet community into new territory with an "electronic confessional" that allows people to admit their sins and receive penance online. The ground-breaking service has been approved for a 180-day trial period by the Vatican as a bona fide alternative to in-person administration of the sacrament of reconciliation. The 24-hour interactive service, hosted at Carnegie-Mellon University, is reachable at the home page <http://mea.culpa.cmu.edu> on the World Wide Web.

As we reported in [AR51](#), Assyrians and Caldeans are still distinct ethnic groups in the Middle East and the United States is now home to many from both groups who have emigrated here. For over 1,500 years the Assyrians have been thought of as Orthodox Catholic because of doctrinal schisms with Rome. Now, however, those differences have been resolved. In a ceremony at the Vatican on Nov. 9, 1994 Pope John Paul and Mar Dinka IV, patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East signed a "Common Christological Declaration" which sets the stage for a reconciliation of the two groups. For his church headquarters, patriarch Mar Dinka IV has chosen Chicago and so now that American city is the center of Assyrian worship and the headquarters of one of the world's oldest Christian denominations (*Chicago Tribune*, 9/8/95).

In August, residents of the eastern United States fearfully listened to weather reports as Hurricane Felix in the Atlantic moved toward the nation's eastern coastline. As the hurricane stalled off of Virginia and finally petered out, one individual claimed credit for "the miracle" - televangelist and sometime presidential candidate Pat Robertson. Robertson told his 700 Club followers that it was his prayers that were responsible for the storm's diversion. Robertson made a similar claim in the 1980s regarding Hurricane Gloria.

On September 7 the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut bestowed an honorary doctorate upon the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church and a religious empire which finances the conservative *Washington Times*. Moon, who takes personal credit for the fall of communism, and whose followers claim he is the end-time Messiah, said in his acceptance speech that he is working to bring about a united world (*New York Times*, 9/8/95). Since 1991 Moon has given the financially ailing University of Bridgeport over \$98 million. Some in the WCG have suggested he would be an ideal candidate to purchase the WCG's properties in Pasadena.

Former U.S. President George Bush recently completed a tour of Vietnam, China, and Japan where he gave speeches. For speeches in Vietnam he received a six figure fee from Citibank. Bush also spent nearly a week speaking at meetings sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace, an organization connected with the Unification Church of Rev. Moon who not long ago was serving time in a federal prison for tax evasion. On Sept. 14 Bush spoke at the "Global Family Festival" in Tokyo where he and Mrs. Bush were the warm-up

speakers for Unification Church followers who had come mainly to hear the wife of Rev. Moon speak about and praise the virtues of her husband and his religion. Moonies revere Mrs. Moon as "The True Mother." Neither Mr. Bush nor his aides would disclose how much the former President was paid for the appearance (*New York Times*, 9/4/95 and 9/15/95). Only days before, Bush ridiculed the U.N.-sponsored Fourth World Conference on Women in China with remarks that made some editorial writers question his understanding of China's anti-democratic policies (*New York Times*, editorial of 9/13/95).

George Bush is not the only one critical of the international women's meeting that was held in Beijing. Among American evangelical groups Charles Dobson's Focus on the Family has been most strident in attacking the conference it saw as "the most radical, atheistic and anti-family crusade in the history of the world." Seeing the conference as part of a giant conspiracy to do away with all distinctions between the sexes, Dobson wrote "events about to unfold on the world scene are almost beyond comprehension" (Dobson's Dear Friends letter of August 1995). At its conclusion the Women's Conference issued an official statement of its adopted positions which included an affirmation that the family is the basic unit of society and should be strengthened. Other provisions included: the condemnation of forced sterilizations and forced abortions (as is common in China), the condemnation of systematic rape in wartime (as in Bosnia), the condemnation of female genital mutilation (common in African and Muslim countries), the condemnation of domestic violence and sexual harassment, the advocacy of rights of inheritance for females (although not necessarily to the same extent as for males), and the advocacy of banking services for low-income women (*New York Times*, 9/15/95). Apparently, to some such proposals are really scary.

The Dobson group, once based in Pasadena, is now based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, a city some have mentioned as a possible relocation sight for WCG headquarters. (Recall Tkach's Colorado corporation, discussed above.) In the early '90s Colorado liberalized its tax code to accommodate religious groups (just as California and some other states were tightening their tax laws) and the Economic Development Council of Colorado Springs began to actively recruit evangelical nonprofits to relocate in that area. Colorado Springs has since lured so many Christian fundamentalist organizations to its environs it has become the nation's "capital of the Christian right." The evangelical influx even includes two thousand members of private militias who regularly go on maneuvers in the Colorado Springs area (see "God and Man in Colorado Springs" by Marc Cooper, *Utne Reader*, May-June 1995, reprinted from *The Nation*, Jan. 2, 1995).

Speaking of private armies -

For a sense of the continuity of the terrorist tradition in America, consider this actual sequence of events: The FBI smashes a dead-serious plot to overthrow the federal government and reveals that for more than a year the rightwing militias involved were undergoing army-style training, fired up by inflammatory talk radio. They planned to use their bombs, rifles, and machine guns to wage guerrilla warfare on American cities, and they claimed friends and allies in government and the military. They aimed, in one reporter's words, to "bomb selected buildings, seize public utilities, blast bridges, terrorize Jews, appropriate Federal Reserve gold, assassinate fourteen Congressmen, and set up a dictatorship." The goal: to remove all liberal and anti-Christian forces from government, not least the liberal President and his active wife.

This happened in January 1940.

So begins one of the year's most eye-opening articles. An outstanding historical study showing how some things never change, "Home-Grown Terrorism" by Philip Jenkins appears in the Sept. 1995 issue of *American Heritage*. Those interested in the so-called milita movement will find it a revealing study of the American psyche.

## Letters

[A WCG member I know] was so proud of his three grown children when he explained the "new understanding" to them. (The WCG is never wrong, you know. They just have "new understanding.") All three just accepted it without question and immediately put the changes into practice in their lives. I find it scary to see how someone could reverse their thinking just like that. "Oh, this is what we are to believe now. Okay." A bunch of robots with their power of thinking, the free will that God gave them, destroyed....

I am writing to a very depressed ex-member in Colorado. She is having a very hard time coping with what she views as totally wasted years. Because of tithing and the constant pressure to help "the Work" members often did not, and could not, save for retirement or to buy a home. Often they were so limited in career choices. And for what? Now they are told all the sacrifices were not necessary.

Many are baffled by the changes, wondering what to do. I've seen some jump from the frying pan into the fire. One believes Jesus is really the Antichrist. Others are so wrapped up in prophecy they can't cope with life today. I feel sorry for those who will never taste the freedom of having the right to choose, the freedom to make friends with people of all creeds, the freedom to serve God as best as they can without some minister having to give his blessing, or interfering, or making decisions about their life-decisions the minister is often totally unqualified to make.

-Oklahoma

Followers of Chairman Hulme allege that we will soon be keeping Sunday in Worldwide. As proof of this they mention a certain booklet that is being widely studied by the ministry. I was told this was not yet official teaching, but may soon be. I'm getting tired of learning of official doctrines a year or two after they have already been decided upon. How can I get a copy of the booklet?

-California

*Editor: The booklet is The Law, the Sabbath and New Testament Christianity by Sir Anthony Buzzard, an Ambassador alumnus and former Ambassador lecturer. It is available for \$3 from Restoration Fellowship, 185 Summerville Dr., Brooks, GA 30205.*

What ever became of Mr. Michael Snyder, the head of WCG's Public Relations Department and the oft-quoted spokesman for Mr. Tkach? I wrote to headquarters asking about him and they sent a very suspicious answer saying, in effect, they could not answer me. Has he joined one of the Armstrongite offshoots?

-Iowa

*Editor: Sources close to Snyder tell us that some time ago he fell in love with a fellow employee's wife who then divorced her husband as Snyder divorced his own mate. The two lovers then married and took off for parts unknown. We have written to Snyder at his old address and sent messages to him via mutual acquaintances, but he has not responded. WCG insiders say he is no longer a member of the WCG and considers them a cult. We do not know if he has joined one of the WCG offshoots.*

[AR59](#) was very informative. I have been seeing some of the same things here in my area. My WCG-member ex-wife and others are running around eating shrimp every chance they get now and are probably hoping to get increased support payments from me to pay for it! Now she and her new husband are trying to ADOPT my youngest daughter. Seems the new hubby is shooting blanks and they cannot have any of their own so now they want one of mine! Amazing! More legal fees, like always. I had hoped that eventually this would all end, but there is no end in sight for these divorce problems.

-"No State"

Like you, I noticed in their releases that the United group makes no mention of the divorce and remarriage doctrine, a doctrine that once caused considerable turmoil in WCG circles. Can you tell me if any of the new groups have information on that subject?

-Illinois

*Editor: I am not sure which groups are still writing on "D & R, " as it used to be called. While the issue seems to have faded from the spotlight in recent years, one of our readers has done considerable study on it and would be able to tell you who is still writing on that subject. Contact: Glen W. Myers, 1047 Iroquois St., Clearwater, FL 34615.*

I thought your little comment linking the WCG to Sardis was meant in jest. But after giving Rev. 3 some thought, I wonder if you are not on to something.

-Texas

*Editor: Actually, my allusion to Sardis was only half in jest. While I don't promote the church eras teaching, I think it's obvious that Rev. 1-3 is at least referring to the fact that different churches, whether individual congregations or whole denominations, have different group characteristics. While the WCG has long considered itself Philadelphian (partly because of its "open door" via the electronic media), I find that label preposterous because I don't know of any church group that has been more lacking in genuine love. For years, the Laodicean label seemed to fit - as long as the WCG was wealthy and arrogantly convinced it had all "the truth." But now, with the WCG no longer that wealthy, with so much repudiation of its founding doctrines, and with its members so lacking in confidence in who they are and what they are about, it seems to be a dead church. David Whitaker recently sent us a portion of the book Letters to the Seven Churches by William Barclay (Abingdon Press, 1957). Two of the book's chapters - "Sardis: The Peace of Death." and "Sardis: The Church of the Living Dead" - seem to describe many of the characteristics of today's WCG.*

The letter [in [AR59](#)] about the U.N. being "the Beast" left me in stitches. I'm sure the writer is a fine fellow, but the idea that the U.N. is "the Beast" is absurd. Yes, I know, many ex-Worldwidiers believe such nonsense. But the U.N. is so ineffectual it can't even stop the fighting in Bosnia. Let me quote from an article by right-wing commentator Tom Bethell: "Consider the imagined U.N. plot to take over the United States. In reality the United Nations is a waning institution, and in the years ahead will probably have to struggle to survive at all.... Militia types would be closer to the truth if they saw the United Nations as a tool of the United States, increasingly used to disguise essentially unilateral U.S. actions (in the Gulf War and Haiti, for example)."

-Washington

*Editor: Mr. Bethell's comment that the U.N. may one day have to struggle to survive was more prophetic than he may have realized. According to The New York Times (9/12/95), U.N. General Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali says the U.N. is already so broke that "its development funds are drying up, and its field personnel are at risk. " In regard to the latter point, recall that to date about 200 U.N. peacekeepers have been killed in what used to be Yugoslavia. According to the same article, the reason the U.N. is nearing financial ruin is that many member nations are in arrears in their membership payments. "The United States is the worst delinquent, according to U.N. figures, with arrears of nearly \$1.8 billion."*

The Armstrongism "church wars" have left me turned off with religion, but I still read Mr. Dankenbring's writings because he publishes articles found nowhere else. In his April-May *Prophecy Flash!* he published an article that shows: "the post-War Nazi Underground had an additional objective: to infiltrate the American Federal Government and use the GOP (Republican Party) as a 'Trojan Horse' to obtain political dominance over the United States of America, and achieve through political channels the conquests envisioned by the Third Reich."

Another article shows how the WCG leadership uses hypnosis to control the minds of its members. The author's very scientific evidence is overwhelming. I think, however, that the Bible itself hypnotizes people with the same methods. That is why I am no longer a Bible thumper.

-Ohio

*Editor: I agree with you that the psychology article was very informative. However, let me make two comments. First, while I am sure you are correct that many are misreading and misapplying the Bible to their own detriment, I don't feel, and I am sure the article's author was not suggesting, that one has to be hypnotized by the Bible to learn from it. Second, although I think the author of the article made some astute observations, I think both he (and you) should distinguish hypnosis from mind control. The two are not synonymous and not all hypnosis is used for evil purposes. For pointing this out to me, my thanks to P.E. Nelson of SPAN, P.O. Box 137, Ceres, NY 14721-0137.*

*By the way, I agree that Dankenbring publishes articles that can be found nowhere else. In the same April-May issue of "The Flash" there was a piece titled "A Letter From the Future" in which Dankenbring vividly describes the utter horror he expects will be experienced by unrepentant Worldwide members when, in the near future, the government will supposedly start rounding up Sabbath keepers and executing their ministers. The address for "The Flash" is: P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003.*

I have been reading materials put out by many of the WCG spinoff groups. I have noticed that in the last year many of the writers have gotten weird beyond anything I could have imagined. All this talk of black helicopters coming to take away Christians is a bit much for me.

There is a pattern to all these nutty new groups - a pattern, I might add, that was the key to Herbert Armstrong's success. First, they interpret the news in the most extreme way. This leads to their readers becoming very fearful, even paranoid. Second, they offer their readers a simple solution to their fears - pray and, naturally, pay. Third, they emphasize the uniqueness of their own ministry so they can have a monopoly over their followers' minds and tithes. Finally, by barraging their followers with tons of "literature" and through the use of mind control techniques they encourage their followers to be dependent on them. What we are witnessing in many of these groups is purposely created dependency or co-dependency. Didn't someone once liken this world's religions to a drug?

-Pennsylvania

*Editor: I believe you are referring to the famous statement of Karl Marx that "religion is the opiate of the people." However, that analogy was not his creation. See, for example, Rev. 17:2.*

No [WCG] minister is saying we can't ever read the book of Revelation. But we are not to make that the center of our life anymore. The Gospel is not centered on "heads and horns." Some who have left us could not understand that. The church is much better off now than when Mr. Armstrong was emphasizing the wrong things. Please give Mr. Tkach and his loyal ministers some credit.

As for those who are calling Mr. Tkach the Antichrist, I think they are coming very close to blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

-Georgia

As the late Herbert W. Armstrong did, I appreciate great music. For that reason, I was appalled to read what Mr. Hulme programmed for the last Ambassador concert. Jazz is fine for many occasions, but that was certainly not the kind of music befitting such auspicious and calamitous times in God's very own church. More appropriate for the final concert would have perhaps been Andre Watts performing Olivier Messiaen's entire *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jesus*. At the end of the Third Reich, as the Allied armies encircled Berlin and cannon fire could be heard in the distance, the great German maestro Wilhelm Furtwangler led the Berlin Philharmonic in its last Nazi-era concert. The final piece? Wagner's Prelude to Die Gotterdammerung ("The Twilight of the Gods"). That choice revealed a profound awareness of historical moment and a courageous theatrical flair on the part of Furtwangler. Producer Hulme, on the other hand, revealed a personality that is truly dull, dull, dull.

-New York

*Editor: I've heard that story about Furtwangler before, but I believe it's apocryphal. Nevertheless, you are probably right that a more imaginative program could have been concocted for Ambassador's swan song. For instance, the last concert at Ambassador could have included Prometheus, the Poem of Fire by the Russian composer Alexander Scriabin (d. 1915) who, while preoccupied with the purifying aspects of fire, promoted an artistic philosophy he called "the Mystery" and waited for what he called "The New World Order." The concert could have included Jubilee Games, the last major composition by Leonard Bernstein, the late, brilliant, bi-sexual, conductor-composer. In that piece Bernstein took as his literary theme the Jubilee Year of the Old Testament. Building on Gematria concepts centered on the number seven, Bernstein created a piece where, Jazz-like, the members of the orchestra are given spaces of time in which each can play whatever comes into his/her mind. The results of this Jubilee "freedom" are, of course, quite cacophonous. While already dated in these "postmodern" times, the piece is, nonetheless, quite entertaining - just like the new WCG.*

*Here's another idea. As its going-away gala, Ambassador could have sponsored a performance of Meyerbeer's opera Les Huguenots. Set in 16th Century France when Catholics and Protestants were busy slaughtering each other in the name of God, the action centers on the "ethnic cleansing" of the infamous St. Bartholomew Day Massacre of 1572. On that day in Paris the conservative (or were they liberal?) Catholics slaughtered 2,000 liberal (or were they conservative?) Huguenots. Composer Meyerbeer captured the essence of that family-splitting, nation-rending era in an opera of grand spectacle and excess. Had Ambassador staged it, the final production would have been reflective of both the excesses of Herbert W. Armstrong and the religious schisms that have destroyed the Ambassador concerts themselves.*

*By the way, after the Ambassador concert series came to an end, the WCG produced and distributed a lavish, full-color brochure about how great their twenty-year concert series had been. Many leading Pasadena-area residents could not understand why, if the series had run out of finances, its managers would waste so much money in praising themselves to a public all too familiar with their past glories. Strange.*

*Come to think of it, maybe the last concert should have just been a few songs by the new rock group Elijah's Mantle.*

I've been a WCG member since 1960.... At the present time we are down from 250 to 150 in our congregation. But I do like the fuller understanding we are receiving of the new covenant.

-Florida

I recently visited the Concord, New Hampshire WCG congregation after having left two and a half years ago. I just wanted to see some old friends and find out what they thought about all of the recent doctrinal changes. To my surprise, nobody there seemed to realize that the doctrines had changed to any great extent. I quoted several recent *Worldwide News* articles about various changes but all they did was smile. A deacon told me he doesn't always read the *Worldwide News*. He and everyone I spoke to seemed as brainwashed as they were the day I left. The sermon was a taped message from Greg Albrecht who clearly indicated that sabbath observance was not required for Christians today. Nobody I spoke with afterwards seemed to have heard or understood this. All they wanted to talk about was how wonderful the church and its leaders in Pasadena are. When I commented that there seemed to be many fewer people in attendance (weekly attendance was about 275 when I left; now it's about 100) I was told that many people were traveling due to the Memorial Day holiday. I guess the old saying is true-ignorance is bliss!

-George W. Reich  
New Hampshire

Years ago, Mr. Armstrong put out a booklet on tithing. The basic idea was that if one tithed God would "open up the windows of Heaven" and shower down prosperity and well being. Well, when I became a WCG member I soon saw that many of the members were very poor. Now I look back on those times and realize that the entire WCG and most of its members, instead of being blessed by God, were actually cursed.

We should ask ourselves why that is so. Here are four possibilities. (1) Mr. Tkach has admitted that under Mr. Armstrong the WCG was "Judaizing." In Galatians 1:8 it clearly states that those who do so are under a curse. So that is one possibility. (2) In Jer. 48:10 it says, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully...." Can you think of a group that has been involved in more spiritual deceit than the WCG? (3) It is now well known that many top WCG ministers, including Mr. Armstrong, were guilty of terrible sex sins. Yet, the people [of the church] continued to give them tithes and thus ignored Jesus' warning of Matt. 7:6 (and recall that in the Bible "dogs" often refers to homosexuals). The people [of the WCG] gave "God's tithes" to those they should have seen were not exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit. The people were actually supporting an anti-Christ church and anti-Christ ministers. How could God bless them? Finally, (4) even though there have been so many terrible sins within the ministry, there continue to be coverups of the problems. The Tkachs, Flurry, GTA, Meredith, and Hulme have all been guilty of this type of lying to the people which is completely contrary to scripture. On this last point, you may be interested in an article that appeared in the Jan.-Feb. 1989 issue of *YNCA Light*: "What to Do When a Minister Is No Longer Blameless." The address is Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, P.O. Box 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262. Incidentally, that article showed right out of the Bible that, contrary to what Tkach Jr. and others say, you folks at the *Report* were biblically correct all along in exposing the sins of the WCG ministry. Keep up the good - and scripturally commanded - work!

-Missouri

## What Next?

We go to press only days after the burial of Joseph W. Tkach. Yet, already there is an escalating craziness in the WCG. Insiders say that at headquarters there is now a flood of suspicion and rumor. Questions being whispered in the hallways include: Will Little Joe and Fez soon be writing a comprehensive exposé of the life of Herbert W. Armstrong? With most of the WCG offshoots claiming they are heirs to HWA's legacy, that seems quite possible. Will Dorothy Mattson finally reveal publicly the details of her sexual abuse by her father Herbert W. Armstrong? If Worldwide decides to discontinue what benefits she receives from her father's old organization, she may find there is no longer any reason to keep still about the past. Will Ellen Escat be writing her own exposé about the Tkachs, both Senior and Junior? Neither Senior's widow nor Little Joe are all that keen about sweet Ellen. Insiders say it's likely they will cut off her special benefits. If that happens, who knows? Ellen may embark on a writing career.

The next few months should prove interesting. We will do our best to keep you informed - as our finances allow. Our thanks to all of you who are supporting our efforts. Without that support *Ambassador Report* would not be possible.

-J.T.

[Next Issue \(AR61\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**March 1996 (AR61)**

### **Tkach Jr. Downsizes WCG**

With the death of Worldwide Church of God (WCG) Pastor General Joseph Tkach Sr., his son and successor Joseph Tkach Jr. has taken over an organization in doctrinal disarray, with low morale, and with financial problems so severe many wonder if it will make it through the current year. Founded by former advertising man Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), who died in 1986, the WCG was once thought of as "the Armstrong empire." While spiritual and moral problems abounded, the organization HWA left to his successors nevertheless had doctrinal cohesiveness, financial strength, and a strong media outreach. Now, all of that is gone. The most recent developments in Worldwide suggest that Tkach Jr. (Junior) may not be able to save what looks like a rapidly disintegrating operation. Here are just a few of the most recent WCG developments:

With the passing of Tkach Sr., Junior has started making important personnel changes at headquarters. Apparently the first to go was Mrs. Ellen Escat, once the elder Tkach's "executive assistant." Headquarters sources tell us she was quietly "let go." Where she has gone and how much severance and/or pension she received is not known at this time.

Then in early March the WCG reduced the number of its full-time employees by 287. That major cuts were coming had been publicly announced weeks before (*Pasadena Star-News*, 2/21/96, p. A1). But until they came no one knew for sure how extensive the cutbacks would be. At headquarters some departments were cut by more than half. Other departments, such as Shipping & Receiving and the Transportation Department, were completely eliminated. Even the corporate jet was finally sold off a few weeks ago. The Legal Department lost 12 of its staff and is now composed of only Ralph Helge and two subordinates. Imperial School will close at the end of the current school year. And the YOU program for the church's young people is being dropped ostensibly because church kids can now go to sporting events on the Sabbath. How many of the church's remaining 239 full-time ministers around the nation were let go in the latest round of cuts is not yet known. As for headquarters, just last year the WCG cut 358 of its 700 headquarters employees. At the beginning of this year there were only 342 full-time headquarters

employees left (*Los Angeles Times*, 2/21/96, p. B4). Some WCG observers say that the WCG administration team may now be down to as few as 125 full-time employees. And still many are saying that there are more cuts on the way. Not surprisingly, WCG income is very, very low. One source told us that the WCG is receiving only about \$100,000 in tithes per day. Virtually everyone we talked to with any inside knowledge of the situation has said that WCG income is under \$40 million per year now. There are many sabbatarian ministries that operate on considerably less than that, but it remains to be seen if the WCG's leaders, so used to giant financial cash flows, will be able to lead the WCG on such relatively low revenues.

The much lowered church income has resulted in major changes in the way the WCG gets out its gospel. *The Plain Truth* magazine's editorial content is more Protestant with each issue. Its circulation continues to shrink. The magazine comes out only every other month. Many foreign countries do not even get the PT anymore. Already the WCG says it is willing to accept paid advertising in the PT and some insiders predict that within the year it is quite likely that the PT itself will have a subscription price. The WCG is already charging for some of its materials. One recent advertisement for a video and booklet on evolution asked for \$25 "or more." And a new music video by Pat Boone called "Israel, O Blessed Israel" goes for "a gift of \$30 or more." As the ad said, "When you order products offered in the *Plain Truth* magazine, you help us to continue to announce Jesus Christ's gospel of salvation...." We don't condemn the practice of asking a minimum amount for certain items, but it does represent another major deviation from the marketing methods of HWA.

Then there is the Pasadena real estate problem. Just this past fall Junior was telling members two serious offers for the sale of the church's Pasadena, California properties were being considered and that it was likely the WCG would accept one of them. But in December Junior announced that all offers to purchase the properties had fallen through. Few details were made public. But insiders have admitted that sale of the properties that have long been the church's headquarters and were formerly the main campus of Ambassador College and the home of the famous Ambassador Auditorium, was necessary if the WCG was to be able to keep functioning in a normal business manner.

Who is actually selling the Pasadena properties remains unclear. According to the *Los Angeles Business Journal* (1/15/96) four major commercial brokerage teams have been vying for the account: CB Commercial Real Estate Group Inc. and Beitler Commercial Realty Services, both of Los Angeles, New York-based Cushman & Wakefield Inc., and San Francisco's Grubb & Ellis Co. As we go to press we have been told that Junior is still undecided about who should be representing them and has not even decided how the properties should be listed.

Tkach Jr. is determined to dump the Pasadena properties, but where WCG headquarters will eventually wind up remains to be seen. Virtually every month there is a new location considered as the likely choice. For a time Albuquerque, New Mexico was at the top of Junior's list. Then Colorado was a top consideration with the cities of Boulder and Colorado Springs being specifically mentioned. Then just a few months ago it seemed like Big Sandy, Texas would be the place. Lately, Junior is said to have been talking about Palm Springs. Some are beginning to question his business sense, or lack thereof, and others are suspicious that Palm Springs may be where Junior winds up in comfortable

retirement. By then, however, there may be no WCG left. One embittered former headquarters employee said, "Mr. Herbert Armstrong thought big; Little Joe thinks small - very small."

## **HWA's Billion Dollar Mistake**

*Editor: One of our Ambassador alumni readers in Pasadena recently made a very astute observation about the decline of the WCG:*

Evangelist Les McCullough, who a few months ago left the WCG and is now with United, has told friends a very revealing story about Joe Tkach Sr. Apparently when Tkach first decided to sell off the church's Pasadena headquarters properties he hoped to get \$250 million for the entire package. The California properties were put on the market in 1990 and very quickly an unnamed businessman offered to buy the properties for \$240 million. So amazed was Tkach that he would get an offer that large so soon, he began thinking that the properties were probably worth much more. The offer was rejected and the properties were then listed at \$300 million.

---

&COPY;1996 Ambassador Report. Published irregularly (as finances allow) as a Christian service.

ISSN 0882-2123

John Trechak, Editor & Publisher  
Editor

Mary E. Jones, Associate

Founding Publishers: Robert Gerringer, Bill Hughes, Mary E. Jones, John Trechak, Len Zola, and Margaret Zola.

---

Tkach's timing could not have been worse. The California economy, in decline since mid-1989, was seeing real estate prices decline and they have continued to do so until today. Additionally, many California institutions such as colleges have been having difficulty just staying afloat; none seem interested in engaging in expansion schemes. No one nibbled at Tkach's \$300 million asking price. While a few organizations showed mild curiosity with the properties, no one indicated they would ever be willing to pay anywhere near the kind of money the Tkach administration was expecting.

A few months ago, desperate for cash, the Tkach team recontacted the businessman who years ago had offered the \$240 million. If he were now to make an offer on the properties, they wanted to know, how much did he think they would be worth? His answer? "If I were buying now I would pay no more than \$95 million. But I am no longer interested in buying."

Tkach's decision to turn down the original \$240 million offer cost the church about \$150 million. But his incredible financial miscalculations didn't end there. Consider that at the height of its financial power in 1990 the WCG's annual income was over \$211 million. Now, we are told, it is going to be under \$40 million per year. That's a decline of well over \$160 million per year. Multiply that out for just the next six or seven years and you

quickly realize that when Herbert Armstrong appointed Joe Tkach as his successor, it was clearly a billion dollar mistake.

## **Christmas and Easter Take Root In the New WCG**

With Tkach Junior and associates telling WCG members it's okay to keep Christmas, it is not surprising that this past December quite a few WCG members went "whole hog" and got themselves Christmas trees and were out singing Christmas carols. To prod the WCG field ministry into accepting the new view of the holiday once condemned as "totally pagan," Tkach suggested to his field ministers that they read the concise 59-page book *Christmas - Reconsidered* by Ralph Woodrow, an independent evangelist based in Riverside, California.

Now with Easter off the WCG condemnation list some at WCG headquarters are recommending Woodrow's 64-page book *Easter - Is It Pagan?* Writes Woodrow in one of his flyers:

There is no Biblical command to observe Easter. This does not make it wrong. In the Old Testament, in addition to the days that were kept by *command*, a number are mentioned that were kept by *custom*.

Ralph Woodrow's writings are fairly well known in WCG circles because for many years he held numerous positions that were similar to those of HWA. In recent years, however, not unlike the Tkachs, Woodrow has come to believe that he had been in error on a number of doctrines and he has changed a number of his previous positions. His recent writings on Christmas and Easter show a high level of biblical understanding and many - even those who do not agree with his conclusions - will find much of value in those two books. Those interested can order them for a contribution of \$4 for the Christmas subject and \$5 for the one on Easter by writing to: Ralph Woodrow, P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502-0124. For an alternative view on the subject of Christmas, an article worth reading is "The Great Christmas Exchange" by Kenneth Westby. It's available from The Association for Christian Development, 4449 S. Star Rd., Auburn, WA 98001; tel. 206-859-1917.

Incidentally, it should not be assumed that just because Tkach and Co. will not prohibit their followers from observing certain holidays that they condone all pagan practices once observed on those days. For instance, the WCG position now is that although it is okay to use a pagan holiday calendar date to worship Jesus, it would be wrong to engage in child sacrifice on those days (WN, 11/14/95, p. 12). Having come to suspect that the WCG really has made some basic changes in its teachings, a few members have begun to ask if other "pagan" holidays will later be accepted by the WCG's leadership. One clue is found in an e-mail memo Junior sent to certain WCG field ministers back in early 1995. It contained this interesting comment:

Halloween, on the other hand, we do not endorse, and we teach our members that it is best avoided. However, we are not ignorant of the fact that Halloween has become for most people, a merely secular holiday. We don't police what our members choose to do in

regard to trick-or-treat with their children.

Tkach, Jr. has yet to address the question of April Fool's Day.

## Services Reveal Worldwide's New Spirit

Many who have been out of the WCG a few years would be dumbfounded by a trip back to the WCG for a church service. In February a long-time friend, still on the WCG books as a member, was visiting Pasadena and decided to attend sabbath services at WCG headquarters. This was the "Auditorium P.M." service, the WCG's only remaining headquarters congregation (declining membership has obliterated the Auditorium A.M., Imperial A.M., and Imperial P.M. congregations). Upon entering the Auditorium our friend was given an Order of Service handout - the type that is virtually standard in all Protestant churches:

### Today in Pasadena

February 24, 1996

*"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20)*



Opening Worship Music	Pasadena Church Choir "Come, Christians Join To Sing" by Christian Henry Bateman piano accompaniment - Allen Andrews
Vocal Solo	Jon Graham "Jubilee" by Michael Card
Call to Worship	Mark McCulley
<i>A Mighty Fortress Is Our God</i>	page 34
<i>Come, Thou Almighty King</i>	page 10
+Opening Prayer+	
<i>Be Thou My Vision</i>	page 14
+Intercessory Prayer+	
Church Life	Tom Lapacka
Hymn	Mark McCulley
<i>Who Is on the Lord's Side?</i>	page 8
Scripture Reading	Gary Endres
	Matthew 5:1-20
Worship Music	Pasadena Church Choir "We Believe" by Nathan DiGesare and Dan Scott
Sermon	Dr. Bernie Schnippert
	<i>Christ as Fulfillment of the Law</i>
+Closing Prayer+	
Hymn	Mark McCulley

**Christ as Fulfillment of the Law****+Closing Prayer+****Hymn***All Hail the Power***Mark McCulley**

page 272

**+Final Blessing+**

Along with the above Order of Service program were some printed announcements: The extreme changes in the WCG have caused so many members to have emotional problems that the headquarters congregation now has a couple of professional psychologists heading "process group" sessions that will discuss "aspects of adjustment: Loss - Betrayal - Grief - Fear." "The cost will be \$10 per person with 8-10 people per group." The "International Festival" applications are now available. The Imperial School Drama Club is doing a production of *The Nerd*, a comedy by Larry Schure. (Back in December the Ambassador Drama Club at Ambassador University performed Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.) The Imperial Junior High boys' basketball team was set to be playing Benton Middle School at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. "Discipleship classes" (whatever those are) have begun. For "spiritual recharging" WCG employees now attend a Wednesday morning "Chapel Service" at headquarters. There are now WCG "Women's Prayer Groups" and a "Women Helping Women In Crisis" group (members could sign up at "the Women's Ministry table in the Lobby"). The Women's Ministry is also hosting a "Self-Defense course for females 12 years old and up." Finally, *The Serendipity New Testament For Groups* is being sold by the WCG for only \$10 - at the Women's Ministry table.

One final anecdote on this topic. A former WCG member who had been out a few years heard about the changes and was curious as to what was going on. He decided to see for himself and made a trip to Pasadena to attend headquarters services. Afterward, in a state of near disbelief at the magnitude of the changes, he told one of our long-time friends, "Everyone was very happy-happy. It was like being at one of the old Tammy Faye-Jim Bakker TV parties."

### **Tkach & Co. Align With Cult Fighters**

One of the most amazing recent developments in the WCG has been its acceptance among many mainline and evangelical organizations, churches, and theologians. Among those who have sung the WCG's praises in recent months are David Neff, Executive Editor of *Christianity Today*; Bob Ricker, President of the Baptist General Conference; Richard J. Mouw, President of Fuller Seminary; Rev. George Mather, Pastor of the Sherman Oaks (Calif.) Lutheran Church (*Worldwide News*, 12/5/95, p. 10); Dr. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries (co-worker letter of 1/29/69), and H. B. London Jr., Vice President of Ministry Outreach for James C. Dobson's Focus on the Family. Mr. London spoke at WCG headquarters on Oct. 27 and his taped message has been distributed to the WCG's field ministry (*WN*, 11/14/95, p. 11). Then there is well-known Christian theologian and author Ruth Tucker who has gotten so enamored of the WCG, this past Nov. 9 she spoke at Ambassador University.

Even more remarkable is the close relationship that has blossomed between the WCG's top leaders and the Christian Research Institute (CRI), for decades one of the country's

leading cult fighting organizations. CRI was founded by the late cult fighter Walter Martin who in his famous book *Kingdom of the Cults* devoted no small amount of space to attacking HWA and his church. But CRI's current president, Hendrik (Hank) Hanegraaff, over the last few years developed a close and warm working relationship with the Tkachs and with PT editor Greg Albrecht. So close is the relationship that in his office Tkach Jr. has a photo of Hanegraaff and himself hugging each other. And in his October 6 "Dear Co-laborer" letter Hanegraaff makes the claim that CRI played a major role in the WCG's transition into an "orthodox" Christian church. The claim may not be an exaggeration. Hanegraaff has had both Junior and Albrecht on at least three broadcasts of his radio program *The Bible Answer Man*. The broadcasts were genuine mutual-back-scratching lovefests. Then in the winter 1996 issue of CRI's magazine *Christian Research Journal*, there appeared an article by Tkach Jr. entitled "A Church Reborn" and, you guessed it, it's all about the born again WCG. Said a member of one of the WCG's breakaway groups, "Who could have ever imagined that one day the head of the WCG would be supporting an organization that is actively persecuting sabbath keepers loyal to the teachings of Mr. Herbert Armstrong? It's mind boggling!" The Hanegraaff letter, the Tkach article, and most especially the three cassette tapes of the radio broadcasts with Tkach Jr. and Albrecht being interviewed and taking calls from both fans and critics are all most enlightening. Although transcripts of the broadcast are circulating in WCG circles, nothing can compare with listening to the melting tones on the tapes. We recommend them for anyone wanting to really understand the new spirit in the WCG. The written materials and the cassette tapes (the three tapes are \$18) may be ordered by writing The Christian Research Institute, P.O. Box 500, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693-0500; tel. 800-443-9797.

## **Ron Dart and Texas Whores Reject GTA - But True Fans Stand by Their Man**

In our last issue we reported on evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong's latest sex scandal and our suspicion that GTA was probably going to get away scot-free. In early October all the information we had been given suggested that GTA and his lawyers had been able to do a fairly good job of damage control. Soon after [AR60](#) appeared, we learned from some within Church of God International (CGI) that GTA was telling people that our report was "all lies" and that although something did happen at a massage parlor (!), it was in Tyler, Texas, not Oklahoma. While we had been led to believe that the incident took place in Oklahoma (apparently at the time we were contacted, the woman's representatives were trying to shield her from reporters' inquiries), GTA's explanation struck us as akin to a murder suspect defending himself by arguing, "Lies, all lies! I'm 100% not guilty. It was a nine-inch knife not a seven-inch knife! You can't trust the press."

On October 29, soon after [AR60](#) was mailed, Evangelist Ronald Dart, for many years GTA's right hand man, sent a letter to all his "friends and brethren in the CGI." The letter began:

After much prayer and soul searching, I have come to see that it is God's will for me to make a change in the direction of my ministry. I will try to explain.

A couple of weeks ago, I had another episode of cardiac arrhythmia. I saw my doctor, had an EKG, and discussed a change in medication with him. His conclusion was that the episode had been brought on by stress. This episode made me think very seriously about my future effectiveness to God and the Church. I know that He will sustain me, but He also expects me to use common sense.

At the same time, the church at large (we in the CGI do not believe we are all there is to the church) has suffered shattering blows. I have called this the age of confusion, and the church has lamentably not been immune....

[Dart, giving no details, hinted that he intended to serve in some type of independent ministry, then concluded:] I sincerely hope to maintain a warm and friendly relationship with the CGI in the years to come, but (and I do not use this expression lightly) God has shown me it is time to move on.

In a Nov. 2 letter to his "Fellow Ministers and Hosts" GTA put his own spin on the situation. Giving considerable emphasis to the severity of Dart's heart problems, GTA wrote how Dart still hoped to continue teaching, but that his medical problems required that he be "out from under stress as much as possible."

News of Dart's resignation stunned and angered many in CGI. Some accused him of only wanting a following and increased income. Some saw his wife's thriving business, Academy Books, which distributes books to a number of churches, as part of a less-than-kosher conspiracy. For example, CGI member and insider Darren M. Cary wrote Dart a lengthy letter which contained these statements:

First of all, the incident GTA was involved in is a terrible blow to the church. He knows it, we know it, everybody knows it. But I believe it is not a fatal blow. In fact, I am confident that the situation will blow over without consequences too great to bear.

Nevertheless, it did hurt. But then came the phantom punch: Ronald Dart Resigns From CGI. You of all people know that this is big news. It cannot be played down....

I don't buy the idea that people are less receptive to you because of your involvement with us. You know very well that you are famous among those of the "Armstrong tradition." Your sermon tapes have absolutely flooded the "market" around the world. Global, United, Christian Biblical, etc. members and refugees feed on your preaching. And that's not to omit Christian computer buffs being shaken by your Internet ministry. This was all done while being in the CGI - free of charge.

These people may question your motives if they find that you are charging a price for the same information....

You said you obtained the rights to your tapes and written material, but that we could use them, too. Who's going to ask, "Hmmm, should I pay five bucks - plus shipping and handling - or should I get them from CGI?" I realize that Academy Books has a considerable customer list. That's great....

But there are plenty of support/therapy/outreach ministries trying to help ex-WCGers. We don't need any more....

Such arguments did not prompt Dart to return to the Armstrong fold. With only his wife Allie, former CGI minister Larry S. Watkins, and a few others assisting him, by early December Dart had started his new organization, Christian Educational Ministries (CEM), P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, Texas 75791; tel. 903-509-2999. Using the already well-established mailing list of Academy Books, by mid-December Dart had out a co-worker style letter that explained his goals. One interesting comment was:

Rather than creating a new centralized church with government and power, we have concluded it is time to leave off the debate about "church government" and turn instead to *service* and *work*. What we visualize is a network of small, self governed churches assisted and supported by a service ministry which can provide the things a small church cannot do for itself - things that will enable the church to be more effective in its own community.

Dart is a skilled writer and effective preacher. Author David Robinson used to frequently say, for instance, that of all the ministers WCG produced, Dart may have been the best at educating his listeners. Since that introductory mailing, Dart has produced other writings and tapes and has begun a periodical called *CEM Network Newsletter*. The first issue which appeared in early January was devoted to the subject of how to set up your own church. One CGI insider says GTA is furious about what Dart is doing. No wonder. CEM's mailing list is already past the 2000 mark, CEM has merged with Academy Books, a number of former WCG, CGI, and UCG ministers have expressed support for Dart's ministry, and Dart has even begun doing a weekly radio program called *Born To Win*. We hope his weak heart holds up.

At about the same time that Dart was setting up CEM, GTA was fully engaged in setting up a defense against the sex scandal's growing notoriety. He concocted a very colorful scenario about how he had a back problem from sports injuries and innocently responded to an ad for therapeutic massage. On the Internet, GTA loyalist Charles Martin of Fort Worth spread this version of what happened:

GTA's mistake was not stopping the woman. No sexual intercourse occurred, as is bared out by the videotape [huh? - ed.]. The massage parlor then attempted to blackmail GTA with the tape and GTA turned over the incident to the FBI. It turns out that the parlor was the cover for an extortion ring that specialized in blackmailing ministers. GTA presented all of this, including the videotape, to the Board of Trustees along with his resignation. The only Board member to accept the resignation was Ron Dart. GTA then turned around and offered to only do the broadcast and leave the administrative duties to someone else, namely Ron Dart. This was refused (uncertain as to who refused, board or Ron Dart or both). Once the article in the *Ambassador Report* came out, Ron Dart resigned.

We have good reason to believe that the claim that GTA showed the video tape of himself in action to the CGI board is not true. In fact, we do not believe he even had access to the tape back then. And knowledgeable sources have indicated that GTA has refused to even look at the tape since. Nevertheless, many of his followers accepted his version as gospel truth.

On November 23, however, the doo-doo really hit the fan. Beginning on that date many newspapers and television stations around the country ran an AP story that verified that

GTA was now being sued in a sex scandal. The best report of the AP data that we saw had the headline, "Sex Suit Names TV Evangelist - Garner Ted Armstrong Denies Nurse's Accusations." The Jim Schultz article appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*:

DALLAS-A woman filed a lawsuit in Tyler on Wednesday accusing television evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong of sexual assault and demanding money damages from both him and his religious organization, the Church of God, International.

Armstrong denied the allegations in a written statement from his office in Flint, near Tyler. Soon after Armstrong's statement was released Wednesday afternoon, a spokesman for the Church of God, International told Associated Press that Armstrong had severed his official relationship with the church. Church executive Charles Groce gave the date of Armstrong's resignation as Nov. 11.

Suerae Robertson, described in the state district court suit as a licensed vocational nurse in Tyler, accused Armstrong, 64, of making lewd demands and trying to force her to fulfill them during two massage sessions in July. Her attorney, John C. Osborne of Houston, had emphasized in statements to reporters Tuesday, before the suit was formally filed, that Armstrong's religious organization would be a prime target of the suit and the demand for damages. "His church knew or should have known that he was a loose cannon," Osborne said.

Groce told the AP late Wednesday that Armstrong stepped aside Nov. 11 as head of the Church of God, International and his weekly television program, which is carried nationally by cable and about 30 stations. "He has voluntarily removed himself from the ministerial and ecclesiastical activities of this ministry," Groce said, adding that Armstrong could return in the future. No successor was immediately appointed, he said.

Robertson, 48, alleges that Armstrong began to visit her home in March for massage therapy after she ran a newspaper advertisement for her services. According to the suit, Armstrong "insisted that he receive his therapy in complete nudity" and that Robertson "concentrate her therapy on the area of his groin, lower back, inner thighs and buttocks because of stiffness he purportedly felt from his driving."

During a July 4 session, Armstrong's behavior became "increasingly bizarre," the suit says. The lawsuit alleges that Armstrong said he needed some "relief," grabbed Robertson's breasts and genitals and tried to bite her breasts. Then, according to the lawsuit, he put her in a head lock and tried to force her head toward his genitals, but she broke free and fled the room. Armstrong allegedly told Robertson that "his execution of the Lord's work was so vital that any transgression on his part would be overlooked by God." She then secretly videotaped Armstrong's behavior during the next session, on July 15, which led to the lawsuit.

Robertson seeks unspecified damages from Armstrong and his church, claiming she has suffered severe emotional distress and mental anguish because of the evangelist's alleged actions. "She is unable to work," said Osborne. "She is under psychiatric care as a result of his actions."

A statement faxed to the Chronicle and signed by Armstrong said: "The allegations of sexual assault are totally false. The proper forum for proving that these accusations are false is in the courts."

Armstrong's two-paragraph statement also said, "The people making these accusations against me are under investigation by federal, state and local authorities." A spokesman for the U.S. attorney in Beaumont said Wednesday he was unaware of any charges pending against Robertson. A spokesman for the Tyler Police Department said he had no information at all about Robertson and was unfamiliar with her name.

Groce, speaking for Armstrong, declined to elaborate on the charges that Robertson is under investigation. He said Armstrong was traveling Wednesday and was not available for any comment beyond the statement itself.

As horrible as the above description may seem, it is quite mild when compared to the actual complaint. Here is one excerpt:

During these therapy sessions, Plaintiff discovered that Armstrong was actually a minister and a televangelist. At that point, Plaintiff and Armstrong began conversations regarding religion. Further, Armstrong stated that he was the head of Church of God, International, and that Plaintiff should come and join his church. Still further, Armstrong, acting individually and on behalf of Church of God, International, began to minister to the Plaintiff regarding religion and the teachings of his church. Among other things, Armstrong, individually and on behalf of Church of God, International, stated that his church observed the sabbath, Old Testament kosher and dietary laws and that he himself was sent by God to do his work in a similar fashion to that of King David....

During Armstrong's therapy sessions, his behavior would become increasingly bizarre. During the massage therapy/ministering sessions, Armstrong would begin to fondle his genitals and try to place Plaintiff's hands on his genitals while he would minister to Plaintiff. [This is one method of spreading the Gospel we have never heard of before - ed.] Plaintiff would resist and felt extremely apprehensive as Armstrong's masturbatory actions and religious conversation combined with his tattoos, including that of a naked woman on his body would greatly frighten her...

On or about July 4, 1995, Armstrong came in for a scheduled therapy session. Upon his arrival, Armstrong stripped naked and placed himself upon the therapy table. Plaintiff entered the massage room, the parties engaged in general conversation and Plaintiff commenced the therapy session. Immediately, Armstrong's actions were more aggressive than any of his previous therapy sessions. Armstrong began to fondle his own genitals and wanted the Plaintiff to rub massage oil on his penis. Plaintiff declined and became extremely frightened when she discovered the smell of alcohol on defendant Armstrong's breath....

[Editor: I am omitting a section that follows because of its very graphic detailing of GTA's violent behavior. The essence was discreetly covered in the Houston Chronicle article quoted earlier.]

Within a short time of the assault of Plaintiff by Armstrong on July, 4, 1995, Armstrong began to call the Plaintiff and apologize to the Plaintiff profusely. Armstrong stated that the entire incident was a complete misunderstanding and that he hoped that he could continue receiving massage therapy from her and that he could continue ministering to her. Thereafter, Plaintiff set up another appointment between the two for service on July 15, 1995. Armstrong showed up for his scheduled appointment on July 15, 1995 and again apologized for the earlier assault...

Amazingly, right after apologizing GTA stripped naked and within minutes there was an almost identical rerun of the sexual assault of the previous visit! Again, the masseuse was violently and sexually abused, but again through much effort was able to break free:

Plaintiff resisted, left the therapy room and did not return. Thereafter, Armstrong masturbated until ejaculation, dressed and left the premises. Plaintiff has never spoken to Armstrong since and will not schedule Armstrong for any appointment ever again.

The horrible incident of July 15 was the one captured on video tape. We have spoken to some who have seen it and they assure us it most graphically reveals GTA as a genuine "sexual predator." It has recently been rumored that dupes of the tape are now circulating in church circles and are even being sold. We will provide further details in our next issue.

In spite of the seriousness of the charges against GTA, a good number of GTA loyalists are standing by their man. For a very short time GTA ostensibly "stepped down" from his title as President of CGI, but clearly he still remained head of the main Armstrong family business, The Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association. In a Dec. 1 letter from GTA to his "friends and subscribers," written under the Association's name and logo, the televangelist made no mention of the scandal that has made headlines nationwide. Instead, he wrote of the past glories of his and his beloved father's old *World Tomorrow* and offered his fans a tape of some of that program's decades-old highlights. Then in a co-worker letter sent out Dec. 5 on CGI letterhead GTA reassured his followers that "everything continues as before." He said CGI's work had not been hampered by the recent crisis, that his television program was still going out and that he would soon tape a program on "The Mark of the Beast." But then in the very same letter he stated, "After lengthy consultations with members of the board of directors, and after much thought and prayer, I felt I should resign from all corporate responsibilities during this time of crisis, until this situation has been resolved." A few days later CGI ministers were claiming that GTA resigned on Dec. 7 (was he reinstated after his Nov. 11 resignation?), but that he remained a CGI minister in good standing. CGI spokesmen claimed that its operations were then being directed by an executive committee composed of Charles Groce, Guy Carnes, Ian Hufton, Benny Sharp, and Vance Stinson. All five were viewed as dyed-in-the-wool GTA loyalists.

Then on Monday, Dec. 11, more doo-doo. The nationally syndicated television news program *Inside Edition* broadcast a segment on the GTA sex scandal. The program had clips of GTA's television program with the televangelist arguing for the death penalty and quoting Jesus who said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" What followed was an interview with Mrs. Robertson at the scene of the incident. Frequently drying tears from her eyes, and once having to ask for a break to regain her composure, the obviously distraught nurse told how on the morning of the fourth of July, she unexpectedly got a call from GTA who then showed up at her home at nine o'clock "obviously intoxicated." The nurse explained how during his therapy Armstrong unexpectedly sat up on the table and then pushed her up against the wall and began to sexually assault her. After a brief struggle, she ran and hid. In the days that followed she was petrified with fear, she said, because of GTA's local influence and power: She called a lawyer and private investigator who advised her to secretly video tape Armstrong

should he show up at her home again. She did so when he showed up a few days later for a repeat performance.

But *even more allegations* followed, this time from Mary Irby, a local salon owner who said that she once employed two masseuses who had received similar abuse from Armstrong. Said Irby, "It's common knowledge in my industry about this situation."

Apparently, with the sex scandal growing more well known every day, by mid December GTA was facing increased questioning by his own ministry. On Dec. 19, Mr. Tom Justus, a longtime minister, resigned from CGI's ministerial council, saying the CGI's leadership was failing to face the truth of its predicament and that although some thought things would some day quiet down, things would never again be business as usual for the CGI. Mr. Justus continues to pastor his congregation in Springdale, Arkansas but what his future relationship with CGI will be is unclear. His departure from the council followed that of Ron Dart a few weeks previous and that of Desmond Burke earlier.

At about the same time as Justus was resigning, Thalia Hufton, the wife of CGI minister and mail department manager Ian Hufton, was doing her own investigation. She talked to a number of Tyler area masseuses who told her that, yes, indeed, Garner Ted Armstrong had been one of their regulars and that he had a reputation for violent behavior. Mr. Hufton tried to confront GTA with the allegations "brother to brother" but was rebuffed. When Hufton and his wife began circulating a letter to the CGI ministry in an effort to get CGI to repent of its coverup of the GTA scandal, he was fired on Jan. 17. (Note: Hufton's mailing address is Rt. 2, Box 114, Hawkins, TX 75765; tel. 903-769- 3520.) Justus and Hufton then organized a meeting of concerned CGI ministers in Dallas, Texas on Feb. 9-10. By then they had obtained a copy of the video tape showing GTA's performance at the massage parlor. About half of CGI's ministry attended the conference, but only a handful were willing to view the tape. Those that did came away shocked and saddened.

GTA, himself, refused to attend the Dallas meeting. Instead, he sent his son Mark along with myrmidon Vance Stinson. Mark, whose arrogance seems to exceed that of even his father, is not a CGI minister or Sabbath group host. Many claim he is not even baptized, and some of us recall his days in Pasadena when his homosexual tendencies were all too obvious (not too many ministers' sons in those days carried purses and made sexual overtures to male Ambassador students; Mark was a flaming exception). Nevertheless, the overly kind CGI group allowed Mark to speak. He defended his father and since then his attacks on those questioning GTA's character have gotten more strident. Of course, he says Satan is behind this rebellion and, as theologian Mark sees it, Hufton and Justus had no right to question his old man's behavior. What will be the outcome of the Dallas meeting is unclear. CGI spokesman Bronson James has stated that GTA and his loyalists will not listen to their critics.

We have been aware for two decades that many of GTA's closest associates have known of, and condoned, GTA's promiscuous sex life. Former WCG-CGI member John Tuit (980 Dehart Comm. Ctr. Rd., Hays, NC 28635), who in the early 1980s wrote the WCG expose *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, submitted an affidavit in the current lawsuit on behalf of the plaintiff. His affidavit contains this statement:

I am aware that the Church knew of his [GTA's] reputation of sexual indiscretions but chose to have him as their minister and Chairman regardless. In fact, the Church of God, International condoned his sexual indiscretions by consciously ignoring Armstrong's repeated indiscretions. In fact, I had a conversation with agent for Church of God, International, Benny L. Sharp. Mr. Sharp stated directly to me that "so what if Ted (Garner Ted Armstrong) screwed some girls."

Sharp is GTA's long-time business manager. He admitted to David Robinson years ago that in reality he was an agnostic and that his position with GTA was "just a job." And a profitable job it has been too. Many say that his years with GTA have made him a very wealthy man. Now he has been appointed Chairman of CGI's Ministerial Council! As we are about to go to press, one of our mid-West investigators has just sent us the following report:

Garner Ted Armstrong continues to openly associate himself with the Church of God, International. I have obtained a new booklet authored by GTA. It is titled, "You Can Take It With You!" On the back cover it clearly states "Copyright 1996 The Church of God International, Tyler, Texas." As we were already informed, no functional break ever occurred between Garner Ted and the CGI in re morals charges against him. Mr. Les Pope, a former CGI minister and board member [see [AR53](#), p. 9], told me that some of the CGI ministers did their own field investigations and discovered that many other masseuse establishments in Texas and surrounding states have maintained Garner Ted's name on a list of unwanted clients for a significant number of years.

A confidential source in the Chicago area, a former WCG member who is gay, recently explained to me what is believed to be the origin of Garner Ted's sexual escapades with women and girls. As reported to me, when Garner Ted was a young man, he apparently was living with another young man in a gay relationship. When his father, Herbert, found out about it he yanked GTA out of this gay relationship and commanded him never to participate in such a life-style ever again. So long as Garner Ted remained away from gay involvements, Herbert Armstrong looked the other way in regard to GTA's many heterosexual involvements. This long-established, family-based behavioral programming may account for the constant denial of sexual misconduct by GTA in spite of the extensive documentation of his lifelong problem.

We have also just learned that the CGI has been dropped as a co-defendant by the presiding judge in the Armstrong case. That decision, however, is being appealed. Of course, GTA himself still remains a defendant even though some CGI ministers have led their followers to believe that the entire suit has been dismissed.

A March 1, 1996 "Dear Brethren" letter from GTA indicates that GTA is having increased problems with some in his organization who are starting to distrust him. Some of his ministers, for instance, thought he needed a ten week "Sabbatical Rest" - something GTA adamantly opposed. Nevertheless, that GTA is still running the CGI is obvious from the fact that his letter containing his signature was on CGI letterhead and was mailed out from CGI headquarters. To buttress his position as indispensable to God no matter what his sins, GTA included a letter from Bronson James. Unfortunately, James, the CGI's leading black cleric and now the secretary of CGI's Ministerial Council, has had his own share of scandal in years past. One former CGI member, C.F. Foland (see [AR45](#)), has alleged that James for a time kept a white mistress "on the side" while a

married CGI minister and that GTA not only knew about it, but took no disciplinary action. Perhaps James is now repaying the favor? Whatever the case, James wrote a note to GTA's readers regarding how the CGI was handling the GTA scandal. One interesting comment:

Mr. Armstrong had previously written you about the most severe trial he has ever had, beginning last summer. Many have since viewed the video-taped message Mr. Armstrong delivered on January 27th, and have seen and felt his deep repentance, and how he asked for forgiveness.

We have not seen this repentance performance and we do not know if GTA was able to duplicate the crying demonstration of televangelist Jimmy Swaggart, whose techniques have been carefully studied by GTA in the last few years. Bronson James went on to describe how a group of selected CGI ministers recently engaged in a session of hand-holding and prayer and how they then laid hands on GTA (but not in the way we would recommend) as a way to cleanse him of his sins and restore him to grace and a re-purified TV ministry. James then quoted extensively *from GTA's own notes* regarding what GTA said about *himself* at a board meeting: "FACT: My new television programs are better than ever." One full page of GTA's nauseatingly manipulative self-aggrandizing notes followed. Just as GTA has apparently come up with a new and unique way to preach the gospel, this too is also new and unique. We have never read a fund-raising letter from anyone in which the author quoted a friend who then in turn quoted the author praising himself at such length. But apparently the self-adulation works. Sources in Texas tell us that a recent headquarters sermon by GTA got him a standing ovation from his adoring, and apparently near brain dead, congregation.

The lawsuit against GTA is filed with the 114th District Court of Texas located in Smith County. Those interested in obtaining copies of court documents in the case should contact the court clerk at the Smith County court building. (Copies cost \$1.00 per page.) The mailing address is County Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 1018, Tyler, Texas 75710; tel. 903-535-0636. The official name of the suit is *Suerae Robertson v. Garner Ted Armstrong and Church of God, International*, case number 95-2850-B. We will continue to monitor this case as there are new developments and, undoubtedly, more sordid revelations.

## **FBI Arrests "Prophet" Lampley in Alleged Bomb Plot**

On Saturday, November 11, the FBI raided the Vernon, Oklahoma home of Ray Willie Lampley and arrested Lampley, 65; his wife Cecilia, 47; and John Dare Baird, 53, on charges of conspiracy to manufacture and possess a bomb. Lampley is a former WCG member and self-proclaimed "Prophet of the Most High" who in recent years toured the U.S. issuing prophecies and not-too-veiled threats against government officials (see [AR54](#), p. 12).

According to reports from AP, Reuters (11/14/95), the *Los Angeles Times* (11/14/95), and the *Enid [OK] News & Eagle* (11/13/95) and based on statements made by FBI spokesmen and McIntosh County Sheriff Bobby Gray, Lampley allegedly obtained a

bomb manufacturing handbook from a Larry Wayne Crow of New Mexico in October and then proceeded to obtain the materials necessary to construct ammonium nitrate bombs. We have been told that the trio's plans were probably made known to the FBI by leaks from within the burgeoning militia movement. Sheriff Gray told the *Enid News* that it was his belief that the bomb about to be assembled was intended for a "test run" near the white separatist community of Elohim City. Said Gray, "From what I'm thinking they probably would do some bombing there and try to lay it on the federal government." Although the FBI has stressed that they do not believe Lampley had anything to do with last June's Oklahoma City bombing, the Elohim City group had been discussed in news reports about that tragedy because phone records revealed Oklahoma City bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh had been in contact with that group.

According to the complaint, after the "test run," the Lampleys would likely have gone on to other targets. The complaint alleges that among the targets they had discussed were government welfare offices, abortion clinics, gay bars, civil rights groups, the Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith in Houston, and the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama. Lampley had allegedly started assembling the first bomb the day before the Saturday, November 11 arrests. Assistant U.S. Attorney Doug Horn informs us that the arrests may have averted a major act of violence.

## **Grapevine No Longer Foolproof**

There was a time in WCG history when WCG members frequently talked about a church "grapevine" with a certain amount of pride. Back when AR first started, and for a number of years thereafter, we would receive information informally over the phone or by mail and almost invariably if it came from a member of the WCG or its offshoots, it would be proven later to be true. Sadly, in the last few years all that has changed. The once vaunted WCG grapevine all too frequently produces not just unfounded rumors, but frequently misinformation and purposely created disinformation. In turn, all of this makes putting out a publication like AR very expensive. Because it has become necessary to carefully check out even the most innocuous pieces of information, our investigative expenses have skyrocketed. Perhaps the WCG and its offshoots have just gone through too much stress, or maybe it's that the world as a whole is undergoing so much change at such a fast pace that some are getting a bit jumpy, even hysterical. But in the last five to ten years we have really noticed a marked increase in provably false stories being accepted as truth and being heatedly circulated in church circles particularly via the Internet. Some of these stories are so colorful that perhaps we should devote some space to them in future issues and give them the debunking they deserve. But for now let us just give a few examples.

The recent death of Pastor General Tkach produced a flood of wild and hateful stories. First there was the one about how Tkach really died of AIDS. We read this on the Internet and we received numerous letters claiming this story was factual. No one making the claim produced any evidence whatsoever. We looked into the matter as best we could through sources in Pasadena and we talked to some medical experts about it. Folks, the story is just not true. Tkach did not exhibit any of the telltale signs of AIDS, nor is there any medical record indicating that to be the case. Every piece of evidence that we have seen indicates that Tkach died just as reported in the press - from cancer and its complications.

The Tkach funeral also generated some wild ideas. Those who attended, and those reading the WN, noticed that the Tkach funeral had certain military trappings including a U.S. Navy honor guard. Now this apparently perplexed some who thought that the Tkach family was trying to revive the old fabricated stories about how Tkach had been a WW II hero. Others insisted this indicated that Tkach had been, in reality, a military spy within the WCG. Nonsense! If we could verify something like that, that is exactly the kind of story we would love to print. But folks, again, using all the resources and sources at our disposal, we could find not one shred of evidence for either theory. One former WCG executive told us, "Once AR exposed Mr. Tkach's background around 1989 he knew the jig was up. He knew that a lot of people were reading AR and I don't think he later tried to revive those false stories spread by [evangelist Gerald] Waterhouse."

As for the spy stuff, we have seen no evidence of that and the story seems extremist on its face. According to a Veterans Administration spokesperson we talked to, anyone who has served in the U.S. military is entitled to an honor guard at their interment. The services of a U.S. Navy honor guard are free of charge and can be arranged for through the officiating funeral home. When we talked to one long-time friend of the Tkach family he told us what we believe to be true: "Joe served in the U.S. Navy from 1945 to 1946. And he was both proud of that service and proud to be an American. What is so unusual about that?"

Finally, some noticed in the WN (10/3/95) that at Tkach's death and later at his funeral those present included his daughter Tanya, now a member of the competing UCG, and Douglas Horchak, one of the founding ministers and executives of United. This caused some to conclude that United and WCG were planning a merger or that the two churches are secretly in league somehow. Again, we found no evidence of these strange theories. According to sources in the UCG and WCG, the Horchaks' presence was one of purely familial love. As one individual pointed out, "Remember how even as HWA neared death he was so filled with pride and hatred for his son GTA he refused even to talk to him before he died. But when HWA died, Mr. Tkach did not do anything to prevent GTA being at his father's funeral. The Tkachs, for all their problems, have been able to rise above some of the pettiness we have seen so much of over the years."

Tkach Sr. did indeed have his character flaws. You can read about them in many past issues of AR. None of what we revealed in those articles was ever challenged by the Tkach administration. There was never ever a demand for a retraction, let alone any kind of legal threat. The fact is, even though Tkach Sr. had a lot of skeletons in his closet, he also had some strengths, good qualities, and some devoted friends and family. Let's not make him out to be worse than he was. Creating demonizing falsehoods does not serve journalism, let alone Christianity.

*Editor: The following article was submitted in response to a letter that appeared in issue [AR59](#). The author, besides having an Ambassador degree, has studied communications at the University of Cambridge and the London School of Music and Dramatic Arts, has a Masters Degree in political science, has done post-graduate studies at Heidelberg, has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, and is currently a manager with a major California corporation. He monitors the European political scene and his writings on international relations and political philosophy have appeared in scholarly journals and books.*

# On Paranoia and Its Influence on Prophecy

by Ernest Zimmermann

In the letter section of [AR59](#), Steven Collins of Sioux Falls depicts a neat and numerically charming prophetic picture of the United Nations, with Germany and Japan as major players in it. While emotionally appealing, such prophetic mathematics usually are devoid of concrete and relevant contextual and historical details. I am taking a moment to add some thoughts and facts that may balance these prophetic calculations, projections, and speculations.

Mr. Collins mentions the reunification of Germany in 1991 and misses the point that Germany was split in three parts after WW II. The eastern-most third including Prussia was not reunited with the western and middle parts of Germany in 1991. Poland absorbed the third German part as spoils of World War II in 1945 while Russia took over part of eastern Poland. The Germans in 1991 had to formally relinquish their claim to that territory which went to Poland. For years after the war, out of that eastern-most region Germans were herded into the largest forced displacement of human population since the westward migration of the Germanic tribes after the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the 4th century A.D.

Germany also did not "unite suddenly and unexpectedly" as Mr. Collins states. Secretary Gorbachev in 1985 realized, along with others in the West, that the Soviet Empire was unable to sustain its satellites in eastern Europe, Africa, and Cuba. In an attempt to shore up his empire, he actually managed to destroy the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. In turn, this weakened the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe to the point of their having to seek an arrangement with the resurgent U.S. and NATO. To compound the problems for the Soviets in the 1980s, the West embarked on a technological revolution by way of the mass distribution of the microcomputer and the military development of SDI. The double threat of a world-wide distribution of electronic information spilling into a society where photocopy machines were under lock and key and a space-based military threat developed by the U.S. further eroded Soviet power, confidence, and influence. Financially bankrupt and militarily rapidly falling behind, the Empire could not survive the 1980s without an accommodation with the West.

By the time Gorbachev agreed to the merger of East and West Germany under NATO, every Communist government in the Eastern European satellite orbit had been overthrown and the Warsaw Pact had collapsed. Gorbachev made no attempt at stopping the East Germans' drive toward self-determination. He voiced no conditions. In contrast, Stalin in 1952 had offered the Germans reunification of all three parts provided the Germans would not join NATO. West German Chancellor Adenauer rejected that offer and in 1991 the Germans surrendered one third of the territory Germany had within its borders in 1937 in exchange for a peace treaty with its WW II enemies. To students closely monitoring political developments in east central Europe, there were indeed real-political reasons for the events of 1991 in Germany; they were hardly "unexpected or sudden."

Militarily, Germany cannot realistically be viewed now or in the near future as a major world power. In the 1991 treaty with their WW II enemies, the Germans renounced all aspects of developing and possessing nuclear weapons. Germany as a "world power" always implies economic strength, not military might. (Similarly, Japan functions as an economic giant and a political and military midget on the world scene.) As a case in point of Germany's military dwarfism, the Germans have been most hesitant to become involved in the Balkans, and only under heavy pressure from its European allies did the Germans contribute a non-combat military unit to the current conflict. The Germans were there 50 years ago and have firm intentions not to entangle themselves in that theater again even as part of NATO.

In economic terms, Germany since the joining of the two parts in 1991 has acquired a much greater public debt in percentage of GNP. The German financial markets now absorb a larger amount of domestic savings that used to be available for borrowing by the U.S. government and others. The rapid growth of public debt is also a result of the Germans' underestimating the cost of the joining of the two parts, now projected to reach a trillion Deutsche marks. The long-term consequences of that large debt have not yet been fully felt in the international monetary market.

Mr. Collins also paints with the "internationalist" brush with ease but again scant consideration is given to political reality. It seems that interdependence is confused with internationalism. In 1991, the bi-polar system of the Cold War was replaced with a multi-polar, interdependent one. Mr. Collins shares in the common mistake of overestimating the internationalization of given societies and nation-states. Marx in the last century and Lenin at the beginning of the current century failed to recognize that nationalism is far more resilient than internationalism. Hitler, Mao, and Stalin in correcting that mistake were successful in molding nationalist movements that climaxed in dictatorial powers and war. In a more recent example, the U.S. made a similar mistake in Vietnam by underestimating North Vietnamese national resolve as a driving force. A nebulous concept of "international anti-Communism" could not compete as a key motivating idea for the South Vietnamese to fight their nationals to the North. The North Vietnamese operated from a nationalistic premise and perceived the U.S. as the latest iteration of a thousand year history of invaders. Robert McNamara with his statistical projections devoid of historical and political reality as much as Lyndon Johnson with his perception of "yellow dwarfs with pocket knives" had no concept of the strength of nationalism as a politically motivating, and essentially spiritual, force.

Internationalism as applied by Mr. Collins is refuted by the political reality in Germany. Germany today faces a considerable problem in terms of xenophobia as that country last year witnessed a number of xenophobic riots. Multiculturalism may be in vogue with the intelligentsia and ruling elite. The populace at large, on the other hand, perceives these trends differently. The German xenophobia of today is perhaps the outward manifestation of the frustration over the unadjudicated and uncompensated wrongs endured by millions of displaced and expelled Germans in the far eastern part of Germany after WW II. For many of today's Germans it does not make political, social, and economic sense to accept migratory nationals from the very countries that not long ago expelled Germans forcefully from areas that had belonged to Germany for hundreds of years.

The U.N.-led internationalism projected by Mr. Collins does not bear out in the political

context of the real U.N. and its current operations. The U.N. has turned 50 this year and now has a major mid-life crisis. For one thing, the organization is near bankruptcy since the U.S. and other members are delinquent in paying their dues. About three dozen U.N. members have even defaulted on their payments to their landlords in New York. The U.N.'s peace-keeping missions worldwide continue to drain its coffers and the IMF controlled by the U.S. is in no mood to act as the U.N.'s bank. It should be difficult for the U.N. to attract venture capital considering that entrepreneurs invest in institutions and companies in the firm expectation of making profits, and not for humanitarian reasons or philanthropic dreams.

Concerning the addition of permanent members to the U.N. Security Council, a U.N. proposal for a possible expansion includes not only Japan and Germany, but also Brazil, India, possibly Argentina, and others. This would bring the number to more than seven, voiding the implied significance of "seven heads" in Mr. Collins' prophetic number scheme. Adding Germany and Japan to the Security Council would further complicate an already vexing U.N. problem. Articles 51 and 107 grant the Charter members certain bellicose rights against "enemy" states - Germany and Japan of WW II. With the peace treaty of 1991 between Germany and its WW II enemies, this knotty problem may not have been alleviated. Changing these charter articles adopted in 1945 requires a vote by the U.N. General Assembly. However, the Assembly is controlled by Third World countries and their allies and such a vote could yield an unpredictable outcome possibly contrary to the interests of the Charter members. Most telling, Japan is quite reluctant, if not unwilling, to become a member of the Security Council. This position would require that Japan greatly increase its military expenditures, currently held artificially low because of the U.S., by treaty, shouldering much of the burden of Japan's defense. An increase of Japan's military might would at once create nervousness among Japan's neighbors who have not yet forgotten Japan's role in WW II.

GATT probably will not complement "the UN's globalist mission" as Mr. Collins states. The GATT treaty is composed of very concrete, ironclad, and hard-nosed national trade interests haggled over by all participants. More than any other treaty, GATT currently reflects the commercial interdependence of nations in the 1990s. Again, this interdependence seems to be mistaken for "internationalism." In addition, economic "internationalism" does not represent the implied economic danger to the U.S. so often accepted as fact within "prophetic" analyses. The myth of the U.S. becoming an economic "also-ran" is born out in alarmist headlines, not in economic reality. The U.S. is not being taken over by the "internationalist" economy and may not face an economic meltdown and fade into the international economic field for these reasons. While foreign investment in the U.S. has risen dramatically, foreigners owned only about 6% of U.S. stock and about 14% of U.S. corporate bonds in 1993. In 1994 and 1995 the Japanese began a sell-off and liquidation of real estate and other holdings in the U.S. The U.S. trade gap between 1980 and 1994 was virtually the same, with our trade equaling about 20% of our production, while in Germany, for example, their trade was about 40% of their production. While Americans invest overseas, 95% of all stocks and 97% of all bonds owned by Americans are domestic stocks and bonds as of the end of 1993. Actually, the size of the U.S. economy has a much greater effect on the "internationalist" economy than the other way around.

The key to the American economy is an increase in the efficiency of economic

production, which has increased exceptionally over the last five years, and it currently means that nearly 90% of what Americans consume is produced domestically. Foreign trade and investment have helped U.S. companies to do better: In 1993 the U.S. exported 77% of its commercial aircraft and 37% of its electronic gears while the U.S. imported 55% of its tableware and 77% of its cameras. Trade does not set U.S. wage rates because trade is not large enough as measured against the entire economy. Trade primarily affects manufacturing which is about one sixth of the U.S. economy.

Moreover, domestic competition plays a greater role in the U.S. economy than does foreign competition. There seems a greater significance attached to Toyota running in competition with Ford than if Sears were to absorb J.C. Penney or the other way around, although the latter scenario would have a much greater impact on the economy in terms of layoffs. In related fashion, only about 7% of production by American companies is outsourced to overseas producers. The implied "danger" in international economic agreements such as GATT may be their success. A Lehman Brothers economist states that currently 46 of 49 major economies are growing. The expansion of so many countries is without precedent in economic history. Within this context, a perceived threat to the U.S., as a result of "internationalist" economic activities such as GATT, seems to exist only in some people's heads.

Another key feature of prophetic and conspiracy theories is the failure to recognize national interest as the governing principle of international politics and economics. Specifically, Mr. Collins alleges that "current efforts also exist to give the U.N. its own standing army, spy satellites, and the authority to levy a tax on all nations." This is said without a shred of supporting evidence. Which nation is handing over spy satellites? The French have made available non-military reconnaissance photos to news agencies, for hard cash. U.S. low-end reconnaissance photographs may soon be commercially available to news agencies as well. However, it is inconceivable that the U.S. military establishment would yield top-level information-gathering capabilities via spy satellite and other means to the U.N. when the same establishment goes to extraordinary lengths to protect and conceal its methods and results from its own citizens. Would Mr. Collins cite a single example of a nation, anywhere on this planet, voting to fork over tax money or relinquish national sovereignty over its armed forces to the U.N.? Is it not because of the nations' refusal to yield sovereignty, the dwindling national contributions, and the U.N.'s inability to raise funds through national money markets that the agency is broke? Where is this monolithic U.N. attempting to control nations? The U.N. cannot exist without financial and political support from national governments. At this time it still is in the national interest of the members of the U.N. to keep the organization alive. It is quite doubtful that nation-states would voluntarily relinquish sovereignty and assign it to a body that was created by the victors of WW II. After all, Stalin and Roosevelt traded: dominance over Eastern Europe for the establishment of the U.N. on American shores.

Mr. Collins' ideas, like those of televangelist Pat Robertson and many other fundamentalists, share in the common shortcomings of broad prophetic pronouncements, futuristic "visions," and conspiracy theories of religion, politics, philosophy, and history. Therein lies a peculiar feature that paranoid and fear-driven groups and individuals have in common. Researchers have shown that such individuals and groups motivated by fear and paranoia often duplicate and mimic the very characteristics they fear. For example, the John Birch Society, which perceived a Communist behind every bush, organized

itself into cells, a structure attributed to Lenin who developed the concept for Communist movements in the 20th century. The hatred of the KKK encompassed not only blacks and Jews, but also Catholics. Yet the Klan dressed in vestments resembling priestly Catholic robes, followed a popish Grand Dragon, persecuted others in the name of Christ, and shunned those outside the group. In similar fashion, current militias perceive their main enemy in federal authority. However, the same militias take their pronounced organizational form from that hated symbol of federal authority - the army.

Conspiratorial depictions of internationalism, globalism, and presumed U.N.-directed takeover of nations, with nations abolishing sovereignty, travel along the same path. These speculations are usually derived from a profound fear of national and international economic and political anarchy. Fear of political anarchy on such a grand scale leads those groups and individuals to take refuge in a parallel form of personal and collective intellectual anarchy. Paranoid and intellectually adrift, they spawn sweeping and bombastic conjectures and projections, wild speculations, and sinister conspiracies. Such concoctions are attractively packaged sales items displayed in the pseudo-religious market. Such "godly prophecies" of "certain" coming events are appealing, comforting, and soothing to the consumer, and often quite profitable to the manufacturer.

In summary, the primary motivating force behind such prophetic schemes and events seems to be fear. Such "prophecy" falls under the category of pious deception. It is not knowledge that inspires these godly schemes because they consistently fail over one critical factor - the devil sits in the details.

## Letters

Your latest on GTA [in [AR60](#)] is a lot of bull!

-Lois Marzoline  
San Pablo, California

As I write this letter, I have become very disturbed about the way the ministry conducts itself and ministers to the church. My respect for the ministry has become so low that not even an ant could crawl under it.

-Stanley Daniels  
Church of God in South Africa  
P.O. Box 3421, Capetown, 8000  
Rep. of South Africa

*Editor: We are sorry we do not have space to run all of Mr. Daniels' long letter which documents an incredible amount of abuse heaped upon him during his previous associations with WCG, CGE, and CGI.*

First, let me thank you for the service you provide. I've been a member of the Church since 1975, CGI since 1982. Some of the members are the most wonderful Christians you could ever meet. But I'm coming to see Ted Armstrong and his father before him as truly

evil men. If there was ever a man who needed to be brought to his knees - in fact to grovel on his face in the dirt - it is Garner Ted Armstrong. The hurt he has caused to a lot of fine, sincere people is unforgivable!

-Mrs. Okemah Epperson  
Arkansas

*Editor: I completely agree with you that the WCG, CGI, and other groups have within them some very fine people who are very sincere and loving. But I personally think we all need to have more than just sincerity and love. We also need to grow in wisdom. While I do not doubt that an all-loving God is capable of forgiving any sin, no matter how horrible, Paul made it abundantly clear that some men, because of their personal habits, emotional makeup, and personal history, should simply not be serving in the ministry (I Tim. 3). That is a lesson many in CGI and other groups have apparently not yet learned. We wish them well in their ongoing learning experience.*

My brother-in-law, who is an elder in the WCG, went with us to our Evangelical Free Church last week and is now asking for copies of our pastor's sermons. Praise God!

-Texas

Thank God this local elder escaped the Worldwide Church over 20 years ago.

-Mel Jennings  
Jennings Real Estate, Greenbrier, Arkansas

For 33 years I have been searching for the Philadelphian Church and have not found it as yet. I did not give up and will continue to search....

-John Adams  
Poughkeepsie, NY

*Editor: Please drop us a note if you have any luck.*

After more than two decades with the WCG, the changes of the last few years left me so depressed and disoriented I started seeing a psychologist for therapy. In one session I showed him a copy of your publication given to me by a concerned friend. My therapist said that maybe I should start to really confront the things that were bothering me. My sessions were costing me \$100 per hour already so I didn't think it was too much to send in \$200 for a complete set of ARs. It took me three months to read through all of them from [AR1](#) and the [Gerringer letter](#) to [AR60](#). At the end of the three months it turned out that I really didn't need much therapy anymore. I now only see my therapist once a month or so. But confronting the issues head on and doing my own studies proved to be the biggest help. I think I am beginning to understand what Paul meant in Phil. 2:12 where he wrote, "Work out your own salvation...." Thank you for all the help you have provided.

-California

# Obituaries

Editor: Our limited space usually prevents us from doing the kind of obituaries we wish we could. Often, we find out about someone's passing long after they are gone. For instance, a few months ago we learned that former WCG minister Roger Malone died March 20, 1995 of cancer. He was pastor of a Community Church in Vera, Oklahoma at the time of his death and is survived by his wife who now lives in Ramona, Oklahoma. He had many friends in both the WCG and his last congregation.

The following obituaries are most difficult for me to write for obvious reasons, and the personal comments are entirely my own.

## David R. Robinson 1922-1995

It is with much sadness that I must report that our good friend David R. Robinson passed away on November 29. As many long-time readers know, David was a former WCG minister who went on to become an author whose writings and informal ministry had a considerable impact on many people who had been associated with the WCG and Armstrongism. Before making a few personal comments, let me quote a succinct obituary that appeared in the Dec. 1 edition of the *Tulsa World*:

### David Robinson, Tulsa Author Dies

Author, businessman and former minister David Rex Robinson died Wednesday. He was 73. Services are scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at Moore Funeral Home Southlawn Chapel [Ronald Dart officiated and interment was at Rose Hill Cemetery in Tyler, Texas - ed.].

Born in Frederick, Robinson became a pilot in the Army Air Corps at the beginning of World War II and flew DC-3 transport planes in Europe. He and his wife, whom he met in Scotland, came to Tulsa after the war ended.

He was the author of two books. The first, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, is a book that is critical of the Worldwide Church of God for which he was a minister. The book was a landmark case of First Amendment rights in Tulsa in 1980, and the lawsuit against its publication was dropped one year later.

The second book is titled *A Little Corner of Texas* and is a chronicle of life in Live Oak County and surrounding areas of south Texas [where David lived during the prewar years - ed.].

He is survived by his wife, Margaret Gray Robinson; two daughters, Felicity Reedy of Tyler, Texas, and Mary Ann Perrin of Tulsa; three sons, John Stephen Robinson of Berne, Ind., Mark Edward Robinson of Plano, Texas, and Robert Gray Robinson of Bullard, Texas; a brother, Douglas Robinson of Springfield, Va.; a sister, Mabel Hurley of Payson, Ariz.; nine grandchildren; and 2 great grandchildren.

In the 1969-70 school year David Robinson, then respected church elder, spent a sabbatical year taking course at Ambassador College in Pasadena. During that school year I was at the same AC campus in my senior year. (My three previous AC years were spent at the old British campus. Oddly I cannot recall ever having met him during that year in Pasadena.) After their sojourn in Pasadena, the Robinsons were sent to Florida where David was a field minister. About a year later the Robinsons were transferred to Big Sandy where among his many church duties David taught classes in history and other subjects. Undoubtedly because of his knowledge of both the Bible and history and because of his flying skills he was also a frequent guest speaker at many WCG churches throughout Texas and much of the south central United States.

In mid-1979 I received from one of our readers a photocopy of a typed manuscript by a David Robinson. (I must confess that even then I did not know who he was.) It was an early draft of a few chapters from the book that was to become *The Tangled Web*. When I finally got around to reading those few chapters, I was utterly shocked. Of course, by 1979 all of us with AR already knew that HWA was a very flawed human being. However, at that juncture we had no idea of the extent of his hypocrisy and personal sins. Robinson, who had known HWA for decades, in the late 1970s became privy to much of HWA's secret life. Those sad revelations left him indignant at what he correctly saw as a totally intolerable level of corruption at the highest level of the WCG. Robinson was obviously a man that had the guts to tell it like it really was and he was prepared to let the chips fall where they may.

In those days, having been so often ignored, rebuffed, and insulted by both current and former WCG ministers, I did not often try to contact them for information or interviews. Nevertheless, after much deliberation, I finally obtained Mr. Robinson's phone number and on October 23 of that year I called him. Much to my surprise, he was very much the cordial gentleman. He said he had read AR and found it both enlightening and helpful. He was frank about his beliefs about the Law, the sabbath, about race, British Israelism, and everything else. He essentially believed most of the things that HWA had taught for years. But he was also quite blunt about the fact that he could not in good conscience support in any way a church whose leaders were condoning the most horrendous of sins among themselves and yet were so brutal to the little ones who were faithfully sending in their tithes and sacrificing for "The Work." It was during that phone conversation that David first told me about HWA's history of incest with his younger daughter and how he had come to learn of it.

Over the next few months many other phone conversations followed and a genuine friendship developed. By early 1980 Robinson, having been prodded by friends to write it, had finished most of his book. But in mid-March he called me and said he really felt he needed an editor or two to help polish up his writing. I was extremely flattered when he asked if one of my AR associates and I would be willing to read through his entire manuscript and offer suggestions as to how it might be improved. It was a pleasure to work with David. He was a natural writer who was also uncompromising on matters of truth and accuracy. Yet he was always willing to listen to criticism and was remarkably open minded regarding matters of wording, style, grammar, etc.

*Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* was printed and ready for shipment in June, 1980 when Robinson was hit by a lawsuit from two WCG employees who were surrogates for

HWA, Rader, and company. Before long, however, the judge dropped the temporary restraining order preventing distribution and the book was finally released at the end of July. Many of the details of that legal battle were reported in [ARs 12](#) and [13](#) so I won't retell that story here. However, a few points should be made.

First, I have always found it more than a little irritating when people have asked me, "Is the incest story really true, or did Robinson just make that up?" The question is most irritating because a little bit of thinking would provide the answer. When WCG through its surrogates sued Robinson, they never sued under a libel theory. That is, they never said that the book was a lie. They sued under an invasion of privacy theory! In other words, they were claiming that Robinson had revealed church hierarchy secrets! Then in [AR27](#) I showed how HWA had admitted privately that the incest allegations were true. I learned this directly from HWA's wife Ramona with whom I was in regular contact during the time she and HWA were divorcing. The fact is Robinson was one of the most honest human beings I have ever known. Nonetheless, even though he had no doubts as to the accuracy of the incest data, he thought the truth of the matter was so unseemly he actually vacillated a bit about publishing it. I have often wondered if my arguments to him that he had a duty to tell the whole of it may have been what tipped the scales in favor of publication. Whatever the case, the appearance of *The Tangled Web* was an important event in WCG history.

One other point should be made about the book. Few people realize what tremendous sacrifices Robinson and his devoted wife made in coming out with that book. They not only found that many long-time friends were no longer friends, the legal bills they incurred were very, very large - about \$86,000, in fact. Those bills literally ate up almost every penny that David made from the sale of his book. Many also do not realize the price the Robinsons paid for standing up to HWA in the late seventies. When David confronted HWA, he was not just disfellowshipped, he left his WCG position with only two weeks of accrued vacation pay. At age 57, David found himself with few savings, no pension, no accrued social security, no severance pay, nothing. HWA even tried to take Robinson's only car from him. To survive, Mrs. Robinson took odd jobs and David eventually got a position managing commercial real estate. To make ends meet he even painted houses. And yet, in all the years I knew him, I never heard David complain about that or say that he regretted writing the book.

David had so many fine qualities and we had so many memorable conversations over the years it would take a book to recount all of them. I recall how on one visit to Pasadena in the early 80s he asked me along on an afternoon tour of Huntington Museum. He had a great love of American and British paintings, and particularly portraits of our founding fathers and the many great men of American and British history. As we walked through the galleries, David, who would often humbly and humorously refer to himself as "just an old country boy," regaled me with colorful stories from a lifetime of reading biographies and histories. It was a very educational and entertaining experience.

David also had a remarkable capacity for observing and understanding human traits. He could talk for hours about the psychological makeup of hundreds of people he had known in Worldwide, and the insights he provided me over the last 16 years were not just enlightening, they were of tremendous value in putting out the *Report*.

But David had one trait that deserves special mention. Ever since our first conversation in 1979, both David and I knew that although there were many things we held in common (our dislike of hypocritical religious tyrants and our mutual love of history, for instance) we were from very different generations, very different backgrounds, we were both independent types who held independent views, and we did not agree on many doctrinal and philosophical points. And yet, somehow we could always have civilized, warm, and stimulating talks. I think that was mainly due to one quality David had which so many today have lost. He never feared people who were different than himself and he could disagree without being disagreeable. He really was a gentleman.

This past summer David learned that he had cancer of the esophagus and that he did not have many months to live. On the evening of October 17, he phoned me. He sounded extremely weak and somewhat emotional, but he wanted to talk at some length. He told me how he had been preparing for the inevitable and had signed over the copyright to *The Tangled Web* to his son John, the publisher of *In Transition*. With much effort he had also written a paper about the history of the book and the lawsuit that followed. He hoped that after he was gone his son would reprint the book and distribute it along with the paper. He told me he had just finished the paper that very day and that now he did not plan to get any more hospital treatments, but just planned on dying at home. As he became too tired to continue talking and as we said goodbye I was very saddened by the fact that I would soon be losing a very dear friend. A few days later I unexpectedly had one more call from David. It was very short. He had read [AR60](#) and wanted a few details about the latest GTA scandal. Very weak then and obviously saddened by what he had read and by what I told him, he could only say he was very sorry for GTA, very sorry that Ted could not overcome his problems. But, he said, he was not surprised it had come to this. "No," he said, "it's not surprising when you consider the kind of father he had."

That was the last time I was ever able to talk to David. But it was not his last message. On the evening of November 29, I got a call from David's loving wife. She sounded subdued, but said she was okay, "Just all cried out." David, she explained, had died quietly that morning without too much pain. She then said that before he died he had asked her to relay a message to me after he passed on. He wanted me to know that he felt it had been a great privilege to have been associated with the *Report* all these years. As I hung up the phone and with a few tears in my eyes, I thought, "No, we at AR, all our readers, and all those in Worldwide, whether they knew it or not, were the ones who were privileged to have had such a great friend."

### **Andrew Trechak Sr. 1922-1995**

As AR editor, I don't often use these pages to discuss personal matters. Nevertheless, as difficult as it is for me to write about, I want to mention the recent passing of my father, Andrew Trechak Sr. He was 73. In mid-November, as David Robinson battled cancer and just two weeks before he passed away, my mother called me from New Jersey and told me that my own dad had had a stroke, paralyzing the right side of his body. At that time we held out hope that he could recover and with therapy return to an almost normal life. Tragically, during the month that followed in the hospital he developed single pneumonia, then double pneumonia, and had a second stroke. After much agony he died on December 14.

My father did not have an easy life. He was the son of immigrants and an immigrant himself who came to the U.S. at the age of seven in 1929 at the start of the Great Depression. For many years his father was a coal miner in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. During those hard times the family was constantly on the move and my dad was never settled in one place long enough to get the education he needed. He also had health problems most of his life. As a WW II veteran who left the service quite weakened, a few years after the war he lost a kidney to TB resulting from a service-related injury. He then suffered a lifetime with tinnitus due to improper treatment he received in a VA hospital where he battled for his life for six months in 1948. Yet in spite of all his problems, Dad carried on. He was always a hard worker, quite often in less than desirable jobs, was a faithful husband, raised two sons, never smoked or drank, and was one of the most religious individuals I have ever known. His great love, however, was always music and I think the "In Memoriam" published on the first page of the December issue of *Quarter Note*, an American Musicians Union publication would have pleased him:

We are very sorry to report the death of Andrew Trechak Sr. from Garfield, New Jersey. Andy was an accordion player and orchestra leader. Some of our members will remember him as a member who participated in AMU membership meetings, often expressing worthwhile comments to the discussion. Others will remember him as the orchestra leader for our last AMU Christmas Party, about ten years ago. Andy played dance music with a Guy Lombardo style, and was proficient in Polish, German, and Hungarian music.

Andy was an honorary member of AMU, and had joined us in 1981. We feel deep sympathy for his family and friends. He was a fine musician and gentleman. Andy was also an accordion teacher, and a member of the American Accordion Association.

My father was never a member of the WCG. Until his death he remained a loyal member of the Russian Orthodox Catholic Church. But throughout his life he was fascinated by various evangelists. Around 1962 the radio evangelists that he admired the most were HWA and even more so GTA, whom he came to view as the world's greatest preacher. So often did he praise the Armstrongs that I decided to subscribe to the Plain Truth and to order all available Armstrong publications just to prove to my dad that he was mistaken as to their prophetic claims. Well, my dad never studied the Armstrong literature, but I did and I got hooked on the Armstrong message. By 1966 I was a music student at the Juilliard School in New York City, but by then I had also become so indoctrinated with the Armstrongs' ideas I foolishly decided I just had to go to Ambassador. It was a decision that shocked and angered my father who had always hoped that I would have a career in music.

In the decades that followed I sensed that my father came to regret even more that he had played a part in my having gotten on a life course so heavily influenced by the Armstrongs. Perhaps that is the reason why, although he was never a WCG member or co-worker himself, he was still a great supporter of AR. In fact, it was only after he died that I realized that for quite a number of years he was actually our biggest financial contributor. Even in retirement and while on a fixed income, there was never an AR issue that went out that did not result in a very generous contribution from my dad. That financial help played a major part in our publication's survival and no doubt was

responsible for many hundreds, if not thousands, of people getting the help they needed to escape from Armstrongism. I can't help but feel sad that I never took the time to thank my dad on behalf of all our readers for the help he provided all of us, and, I'm sure, without ever realizing how much good he was doing.

Besides myself, my dad is survived by my mother Helen; my brother Andrew Jr., a concert pianist who teaches at Wichita State University; my brother's wife Anne and their three children; my dad's sister Mary and her husband George, who along with their grown children Eileen and George Jr. and their families were all very dear to my father; and many other relatives and admirers both in the U.S. and in Europe. My thanks to all my AR friends, who having learned of my grief in this family matter, were so kind as to send cards and notes of encouragement. Those notes and your prayers were very much appreciated.

\* \* \* \* \*

My apologies to all of you for the long delay between issues. But a host of family, financial, and health problems simply made it impossible for me to work on AR for a few months. The amount of information that has accumulated in that time has been very large and, unfortunately, much of what needs to be reported will not fit into our limited space. What I have done in this issue is to report on the stories I felt were the most timely and urgent. Hopefully, if I can raise the necessary funds in the next few weeks, I may be able to put the rest of the accumulated data in the next issue and get it into the press fairly soon. Again, my thanks to all of you for your patience and support.

-John Trechak

[Next Issue \(AR62\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

July 1996 (AR62)

### Plain Truth Gets a Price Tag

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG), the religious business created by the late Herbert W. Armstrong and now controlled by Joseph W. Tkach Jr., is slowly sinking in the mire of its financial, organizational, and spiritual mismanagement. The latest sign of the worsening slide was a May announcement by Tkach, now taking the title of "President of Plain Truth Ministries," that he has been forced to put a price tag on the *Plain Truth* magazine.

The magazine which once went out free of charge to almost 10,000,000 subscribers every month, and of late was still going out free of charge to 600,000, will now cost \$12.95 for a yearly subscription. And that yearly subscription will give you only six issues, not the twelve of yore. Ah, but those issues will have 48 pages, not 32, Tkach tells us. And the new PT "offers the latest in inspirational, Christ-centered entertainment and educational materials - videos, CDs, books and other study aids, all carefully selected to help you revitalize your personal relationship with your Lord and Savior." But that's not all! The new PT will have interviews with the likes of "Bible Answer Man" Hank Hanegraaff, theologian Ruth Tucker, and singer Pat Boone! (Incidentally, you can see Mr. Milquetoast grotesquely pigging out on a box of chocolates in the new Weird Al Yankovich rock video which parodies a scene from the movie *Forrest Gump*.)

Putting a price on the PT is not the only sales gimmick Tkach has come up with to raise money. Here's another one from the would-be Jerry Della Femina: The WCG's new view on evolution is found in an 80-page booklet and an hour-long video now being made available to the public. We weren't sent a review copy so we can't tell you what the new view is precisely. But insiders say that Tkach has been able to cleverly graft evolution theories into creationism so as to offer everyone a little of each. We are also told that Worldwide is no longer teaching a universal flood because Tkach Jr. has for some time been convinced that Noah's flood was "just a local affair." The evo-creato booklet and tape are not sold in stores. But they can be yours for "a gift" of only \$25 (or more - that's okay too). You can even charge it "on your VISA, MasterCard or Discover" credit card. Of course, you have to act now, etc., etc.

Not surprisingly, with worn-out sales gimmicks such as these, the Tkach Co. desperately needs to sell off more Armstrong-era assets if it is to stay afloat. Naturally, the main asset is its Pasadena properties which currently hold the WCG headquarters offices and which, in the eyes of the church's members, are a symbol of the church's future. Some say Tkach is getting so hard up for hard cash he will probably have to sell that real estate for a lot less than it is really worth. He may have no choice. In 1986, Japanese investors purchased the famous Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles for an

estimated \$219 million. It was recently sold for \$60 million (*Los Angeles Times*, 6/11/96, p. D1). With Southern California real estate still selling frequently at drastically lowered prices, many experts suspect that the WCG - if it can even find a buyer - may not be able to get more than \$60 million for its Pasadena properties. In fact, while Tkach later denied the accuracy of the report, last year one newspaper stated the properties had been appraised at only \$59 million. If Tkach can actually fetch no more than that for his Pasadena real estate, don't be surprised if the properties wind up in the hands of another cult group or with the United Church of God (UCG). Presently headquartered in temporary offices in nearby Arcadia, the UCG has been quietly picking up most of the WCG's exiting members and could conceivably come up with a down payment if the price drops low enough. No wonder that when the representatives of the Tkach Co. and Grubb & Ellis, the internationally known real estate firm chosen to hawk the properties, came together in March to sign a contract, the Grubb rep meekly suggested to Bernard Schnippert, Worldwide's rep, that they pray over the document (*Worldwide News*, 4/16/96, p. 1). Incidentally, any AR reader interested in buying the properties should call Grubb VP Gregg Herbert at 714-833-2900.

In the meantime, the "new *Plain Truth*," as Tkach calls it, may already be in trouble. On June 20, the President of Plain Truth Ministries admitted at a WCG employees meeting that the campaign for cash-paying subscribers has not gone well. To break even financially, the PT needs a paying circulation of at least 100,000. But as of June 20, only about 19,000 had subscribed. Perhaps one of our Pasadena sources was right when he said, "It doesn't look good. We may have made a mistake to put the subscription at \$12.95. That's very close to thirteen, and everyone knows that thirteen is God's number of rebellion."

### **Three Evangelists Shelved**

In April, the WCG announced the retirement of three of its most senior evangelists: Herman L. Hoeh, Dean Blackwell, and Norman Smith. In the *Worldwide News* (WN, 4/16/96, p. 1) the three were praised for their long service to the WCG. What, if anything, the three will be doing for the church in the future is not clear. One Pasadena insider tells us that Hoeh has been quietly making overtures to a number of spinoff groups in which he would probably feel more at home. The WN article indicated, however, that Hoeh, now a PT "editor emeritus," will still have membership on some of the Tkach Co.'s dummy boards.

Depending on their views of Tkach theology, various insiders viewed the announcement differently. For example, one Tkach loyalist said, "I think it's about time Mr. Tkach removed them. He's cleaning house, getting rid of those who can't get up to speed, those who can't understand the Trinity, those who can't or won't see Christ in what we are doing. We still love them, but it's time for us to put away legalism and those who long for it." But one of those who still has warm feelings for "the old days" (and who apparently confuses retirement with some of Paul's statements about death) said, "I think God has spared those three loyal servants and has taken them away from the evil to come."

---

&COPY;1996 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow. ISSN 0882-2123  
Opinions expressed in by-lined articles and letters are not necessarily those of the publisher.

---

### **What's In, What's Out**

With today's WCG it is sometimes difficult to know exactly what the church stands for, or what it is

against. For example, faith healing - used to be in, now it's out. Eating pork and shrimp - used to be out, now it's in. Avoiding those of worldly religions - used to be in, now it's out. Makeup on women - used to be out, now it's in.

A few of the latest: Christians becoming policemen - used to be out, now it's in (WN, 1/2/96, p. 3). Christians becoming members of the military - used to be out, now it's in, basically (ibid.). Long, emotional public prayers - used to be out, now it's in (WN, 1/30/96, p. 1). Illustrating biblical scenes - used to be out, now it's in (WN, 1/30/96, p. 8). Making images of Jesus in the flesh - used to be out, now it's in (ibid.). Making images of the true God - used to be out, still is (ibid.).

Previously in, and still in, are tithing and attending church services (even if the days have changed). In fact, on a tape of a 1/21/95 sermon still being distributed to explain the New Covenant, Tkach Jr. claims at even though virtually all Old Testament laws are no longer binding on Christians, by attending church services and tithing faithfully one demonstrates one's conversion.

Easter - used to be out, now it's in. Tkach very subtly eased Easter into the WCG when he had Ralph Orr in the 3/12/96 WN (pp. 9-10) slyly conclude a pair of articles on "the Passover-Easter controversy" this way:

This was not done every year in every church area, unfortunately, but this year it will be. The sermon topic for the first day of the festival will be "He Is Risen!" [the traditional Orthodox Catholic Easter greeting - ed.] and we will rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior. From this year forward we will commemorate not only the death, but also the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will celebrate the resurrection every year.

Because the resurrected Christ appeared first on a Sunday morning, some members may want to commemorate the resurrection on April 7, the Sunday morning during the festival. Some may do this privately or in a small group; others may choose to visit a service sponsored by another denomination. They are certainly free to do so.

On your home calendar you will notice that April 7 this year just happened to be Easter Sunday. So the WCG really has gone from Passover lamb to Easter ham.

Finally, one new teaching should be pointed out because even among some stalwart Worldwidiers it has caused a little ripple. In the Q&A section of the 1/2/96 WN, there appeared this question: "Is there any example of God taking a pagan custom and making it part of true worship?" Answer: "Yes, Let's consider some." The examples given included: (1) human sacrifice, originally pagan, but "God turned a pagan practice into a foreshadow of his Son", (2) divorce, (3) having a king, (4) temple building, and (5) the word "God" which was originally used in pagan worship. The author's conclusion? "God forbids idolatry, but he does not forbid everything that idolaters did. He does not forbid the harmless. What he forbids is the abominable."

## **Hopes of WCG Gays Dashed**

For at least a year before he passed away, Joseph Tkach Senior was telling some that he was going to make major changes in the WCG's traditional teachings about homosexuality. Why he felt the need to do so is not clear. Perhaps Tkach was taking a cue from what has been going on in other Christian denominations. For example, All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, one of the largest, wealthiest, and most active Episcopal congregations in the nation, has been a leader in advocating acceptance of gays into the congregation, into the ministry, and even into same-sex "marriages" (*San Gabriel Valley Weekly*, 6/14/96). Some gays in the WCG apparently thought that Tkach Senior was going to take the WCG down a similar path. At the very least, it was assumed that the WCG would discontinue its condemnation of homosexuality in church literature and in church sermons. That hope was actually fueled by a number of official church writings that toned down the church's past vehement

denunciations of both homosexuality and homosexuals. One such writing, the WCG's PT Supplement *Homosexuality: Understanding the Struggle*, which is still being distributed, begins with:

Trapped between a life-style they have rejected, and Christians who reject them. "If God has called me, why hasn't he healed these terrible desires? Why isn't God answering my prayers?"

Later on page one there is this plea for tolerance and understanding:

Many heterosexuals consider homosexuality to be the alcoholism, gambling and adultery, as - well, at least - normal. There, but for the grace of God, go we.

But to be attracted erotically to someone of the same sex seems so strange and unnatural to many heterosexual Christians.

The article goes on to discuss "homophobia" and the possibility that sexual identity may be inherited (the article said we still can't know for sure). Thus homosexual Christians in the WCG had reason to hope that the future might bring more tolerance for their urges. They were wrong. Not a little unlike President Clinton, who once seemed to favor gays in the military but now says he does not favor them in marriages, the WCG's leaders seem to be retreating from their let's-be-friendly-to-gays position.

The new drift was first indicated shortly after Tkach Senior passed away. In a Pasadena sermon last October 28 evangelist J. Michael Feazell, the WCG's new director of Church Administration and the number two man in the Tkach Co., told a surprised audience in no uncertain terms that the WCG still condemned homosexuality and would not be liberalizing its position in the future. The sermon has proven to be a policy statement. Gays in the WCG say that since last fall they have noticed a definite cooling toward them at headquarters. Oh dear.

## **New Women's Ministry Growing**

WCG gays may not be making much progress in getting the kind of recognition they want, but Worldwide's women are faring better. During the last year, the Tkach team began promoting an officially sanctioned "women's ministry." Prominent in the new ministry are Tammy Tkach, the wife of the new Pastor General, and Sheila Graham, a long-time Plain Truth writer and editor who is now the church's national coordinator of women's ministry.

Writing in the *Worldwide News* (4/16/96, p. 2), Ms. Graham reported how she and Tammy had appeared at a WCG women's conference in Dallas on March 29. The luncheon meeting drew a whopping 270 women. Certainly no bras were burned, but there was still plenty of excitement on the part of those attending. Quoting her own speech to the group, Ms. Graham wrote:

Ministry is not a choice. Jesus Christ commissioned all Christians, men and women, to take up their crosses... As women in the church, we haven't had much opportunity to develop our leadership abilities. Women's ministry allows us those opportunities through service to each other and the church.

Showing once again how the new WCG is not a reclusive organization, about 200 of the women who attended the luncheon stayed in Dallas to attend the 1996 Keys for Abundant Living Conference sponsored by Renaissance Ministries which is led by Texas TV personality Deborah Tyler.

Since the conference Ms. Graham, who recently lost her PT position and as a result lost her home, has announced that she is expanding her ministerial services with a newsletter that will be an independent ministry. A promotional flyer for the new publication said, "If you feel out of touch with other women believers, you'll want to read *Christian Women in Touch*." The flyer also promised that each issue will

contain a letter from Tammy Tkach (who, like Mrs. Feazell, now gets a generous salary from the WCG, separate from her husband's). A yearly subscription is \$10; the address for the new publication is P.O. Box 2028, Arcadia, CA 91077.

## **Dells Feast Site Now "Miracles Center"**

In [AR55](#) we reported on the strange circumstances surrounding the sale of the WCG's Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania festival site. Now, some WCG members are asking questions about the sale of yet another major WCG property, the Wisconsin Dells festival site. One of our alert readers, Mr. Frank Miller of Wisconsin, brought to our attention a number of local news reports that have us wondering what kind of policy is at work in selling off the WCG's remaining real estate. Notice the following article that appeared last September 13 in a small Wisconsin newspaper, the *Adams County Times-Reporter*:

Ted Poppe, administrator of Endeavor Academy in Lake Dolton, announced recently the acquisition of the Worldwide Church of God Convention Center near Wisconsin Dells. According to Poppe, the Center will become International Miracles Healing Convention Center using the spiritual transformation methods of *A Course in Miracles*.

The entire facility, located on a 250-acre site on Highway 23 just east of the Dells, consists of a 110,000 square foot coliseum with seating for 16,000 persons, a large administration building with a 300-seat auditorium, in addition to three residential homes and several out buildings.

The purpose of *A Course In Miracles*, a Christian religious training program, is to foster continuing revelatory experience of the individual students human self-identity. This, progressing to an integrating union with the Universal Mind of God.

According to the *Course* teachers, this enlightening spiritual transformation and healing of the mind and body is brought about solely through the unqualified application and acceptance of unconditional love and forgiveness.

The Foundation for Inner Peace of Mill Valley, Calif, publisher and translator of the material, reports that more than one million sets of the *Course* Text, Workbook, and Teacher's Manual are in public hands. According to sources at the Foundation, there are more than 1,000 formal Miracles congregations meeting in churches, public places, and private homes, as well as many thousands of individual students in personal study and practice.

The institution Endeavor Academy, located at 501 East Adams Street in Lake Dolton, is under the auspices of The New Christian Church of Full Endeavor of Baraboo. The primary tenet of the Academy is that the conceptual mind of a human being is a transitional point in space/time in an inevitable evolutionary conversion of noncreative thought to the singular wholeness of eternal life.

The school employs a broad diversity of philosophy, psychology, science and art in the transformative learning process with *A Course In Miracles* being its major vehicle of enlightenment.

Dr. Stephen D. Howard, a Harvard-trained psychiatrist and student-teacher at the Academy, describes the Course as "an unearthly science of quantum communication experienced through the art of enlightening self-recognition."

According to Administrator Poppe, "it is expected that the new Miracles Healing Center, the first of its kind, will be open to everyone in joyous service every day the year round."

The Worldwide Church of God will continue to use the convention hall for its annual fall festival of the "Feast of Tabernacles." Said Dr. Poppe, "We join wholeheartedly with Worldwide Church members in their willingness to be continually transformed by the Holy Spirit and in the steadfast

mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Transfer of ownership of the property is expected to be completed by Nov. 1 of this year [1995]. Broker in the transaction is Jack Krause of Montello Realty. The sale price was not disclosed. The property has been marketed at \$1.7 million.

Since the above article appeared, reporter Eric Sandve writing in *The Wisconsin Dells Events* (2/17/96, p. 1) reported that the WCG has now decided not to use the Dells facility for the 1996 Feast of Tabernacles. Most likely the WCG was not able to guarantee that a sufficient number of members would show up for the Feast this coming fall. The United Church of God, however, has indicated that it will be in the Dells area for the 1996 Feast, although not necessarily at the old WCG site.

It is interesting that no WCG publication has really explained to its members exactly what kind of group has purchased the Dells site. The members were not told, for instance, that the so-called *Course in Miracles* is based on the words of the "Ascended Jesus" and that those words, supposedly "direct from God," were given through a woman who supposedly acted as a scribe (ibid., 9/6/95, p. 1). A spokesperson for the Academy says that the words were "put in a drawer for seven years" and then published by the Foundation for Inner Peace which also operates the Cheese Factory restaurant in the Dells area.

Yes, it certainly is good to know where our tithes have gone.

## **Ambassador Puts On a New Face**

With the WCG rapidly losing income, some at the new Joseph W. Tkach Hall of Administration building at Ambassador University (AU) are concerned. They wonder how long the university will be able to continue operating. But one source close to Dr. Russell K. Duke, the new President of AU, indicated in May that there were still no definite plans to close the Big Sandy, Texas campus.

It does appear, however, that in attempting to survive, AU is being forced to change a few of its more isolationist and cultish policies. For example, speaking at AU's graduation ceremonies on May 20 was Lester C. Bank Jr., the founding dean of the Haggard School of Theology at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California. Introduced by Tkach Jr. as a "beloved brother in Christ," Dean Bank is not a member of the WCG, a status that in the past would have kept him off the graduation ceremony speakers list.

Another change indicative of the increased openness is the new policy that allows anyone, regardless of church affiliation, to subscribe to the university's newspaper *The Portfolio*. Subscriptions are \$20 per year (\$10 for alumni); write to The Portfolio, Ambassador University, P.O. Box I 11, Big Sandy, TX 75755.

The AU Alumni Association also reflects the new, more reasonable, attitude. In the last few months many Ambassador alumni, and even some who are no longer members of the WCG, received invitations to join the Ambassador University Alumni Association. The invitation announced two new policies:

1. There are no longer dues for alumni association membership. It is now free to all former students who completed at least 24 credit hours at Ambassador.
2. There are no longer membership restrictions based on an alum being in harmony with the philosophical underpinnings of the university or our principal sponsor, the Worldwide Church of God.

In addition to the new policies, the association announced that it plans to publish two magazines annually for "active alumni" and the association will be hosting regional alumni activities in the future. One such activity was an alumni weekend scheduled in June at the Holiday Inn at Mt. Kisco, New York for alumni in the New York region. The association has a number of get-togethers and other programs in the works. Some openly wonder if the new programs will fizzle out like so many other WCG and Ambassador programs of the past. Nevertheless, those who want to get on the association's mailing list may write to the Ambassador University Alumni Association, P.O. Box 111, Big Sandy, Texas 75755.

Most accredited universities have alumni associations which have as one of their purposes the raising of contributions for their alma mater. We have to suspect that AU's new interest in its alumni association may be due to difficulties it is having in the raising of funds by other means. One of our Louisiana readers sent us a letter that may shed some light on the subject:

Recently, WCG officials came back to the AT&T Foundation seeking eligibility for Ambassador University in the company's educational matching gift program. Unfortunately, the company did not approve AU's application for eligibility. If they had been approved, AU would have been eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per donor in matching funds per year.

On April 18, 1996, Mr ...[company executive] left a message on my voice mail stating that AU had been disqualified from participation in AT&T's educational matching gift program. I was shocked and appalled to learn that "God's University" would be disqualified from participation in the gift matching program - and this after all that money was spent on accreditation.

By the way, one of the young ladies I used to visit at the Big Sandy campus constantly complained of the shoddy construction and materials used in the quickly constructed student residence halls. I wonder if they ever fixed that problem. On one of my Sunday afternoon visits I personally inspected the peeling wall paper and leaking ceilings of one women's residence hall and I must say it was not "Ambassador Quality."

Maybe not, but some things are getting more modern, even post modern, at Ambassador. The student rule book tells us that at AU it is now A-OK for male students to wear earrings. Of course, the earrings may not be of too outlandish a style. That would be wrong.

## **Tkach Basks in Praise**

Early this year Dr. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries extended an invitation to Tkach Jr. to appear on his half-hour radio program *Truths That Transform*. The program taped in mid-February was aired on more than 250 stations in the United States.

Azusa Pacific University asked Tkach Jr. to address a convention of denominational leaders hosted by the university on February 28. Tkach's talk "From Jerusalem to Antioch" was reportedly well received by the more than 1,000 denominational leaders who attended.

Independent evangelist Ralph Woodrow (P.O. Box 124, Riverside, CA 92502), whose writings have for years been circulating in WCG circles and whose book on Christmas has become popular now with the WCG's field ministry, was invited in April to lunch with WCG leaders Joseph Tkach Jr., Greg Albrecht, Tom Lapacka, and Mike Morrison. Woodrow tells us the meeting was warm and that he believes the WCG has acquired an openness it did not have previously.

One WCG publication that is getting praised in "orthodox Christian" circles is the new PT Supplement *What Do the Scriptures Say About the Sabbath?* which leads Christians away from sabbath keeping. A year ago, Tkach Sr. wrote in the Pastor General's Report (3/15/95, p. 3): "In Christ, we are free to hold worship services whenever we choose. Our choice now rests primarily on

our own tradition, not on any requirement of the law." (What was it that Herbert Armstrong used to harp on about "tradition"?) Proving that he and his father meant exactly what they said, Tkach Jr. cancelled headquarters sabbath services for June 20 in order that Ambassador Auditorium could be used for a weekend set of money-making seminars on race relations, an event insiders tell us did not turn out to be the profit-maker they had hoped.

## **David Covington Exits Hints Tkachs Faked WCG Repentance**

The WCG's executive exodus continues. Among the latest to exit was pastor David Covington. In a May 11 note to us he wrote:

I am a pastor of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and contributing writer for its publication *The Plain Truth*. This past year I travelled to all six of our United States ministerial regional conferences as a workshop presenter on healing from spiritual abuse. The WCG has long been identified as a cult by such authors as Walter Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults*, and it has a long history of inflicting spiritual wounds.

However, in the past couple of years, our group has been able to convince many outsiders, such as Hank Hanegraaff (Bible Answer Man), Ruth Tucker (Trinity University), and *Christianity Today*, of our repentance and move toward orthodoxy. I implore you to take a closer look at the underlying dynamics of the WCG. I feel this group is still very toxic and has fundamental changes it must make in order to be accepted into the Christian community as not being spiritually dangerous. My resignation letter is enclosed.

His attached 12-page open letter to Joseph Tkach Jr. was most enlightening. Covington, who has been with the WCG for 25 years and also has a masters degree in counseling, wrote how "many ministers have conveyed to me that they feel trapped by the *current* system, but are afraid to speak up." Citing "hierarchy and legalistic rules" as the heart of the WCG's problems, Covington wrote Tkach (and the emphasis is his):

Your administration shows no willingness to address the core, most damaging cultic aspects of the WCG system. As a result, I must resign from the full-time ministry. **I am encouraging WCG congregations to hold open forums to prayerfully consider local incorporation, local governance, and local maintenance of funds. Where that is not possible, I am encouraging members to leave and join healthy Christian churches where they can find help and healing.**

Covington obviously was striving mightily to do the right thing when he stated:

This is not against you. I love Mr. Albrecht, appreciate Mr. Feazell's efforts and validate what you have tried to accomplish. Yet, you have implemented these changes through our historically abusive dynamics. In your present position, I am convinced you aren't even capable of seeing, much less addressing, the genuine problems. I compare the 1996 WCG to a husband who used to beat his wife seven days a week and now has cut back to four. And, the wife is supposed to be satisfied with his progress! Worse still, he's holding seminars on domestic violence! Your administration continues to be abusive, but you hold spiritual healing conferences. I can no longer accept this!

While the WCG changes of the last few years give the appearance of having made the WCG a better place, Covington's detailed analysis of the WCG's motives and methods has left many convinced that most of the changes have only been cosmetic and that the WCG remains an abusive cult. As for those observers who have been led to believe that the WCG has changed significantly, Covington writes, "These observers [religionists such as Hank Hanegraaff and Ruth Tucker] cannot possibly understand what it is like to be a member of this church. They miss the dynamics of this system which remain abusive." Covington details nine specific problems that he says have still not been rectified within the

Tkach organization:

1. Authoritarian hierarchy: Totalistic nature; "Pastor General" all-powerful.
2. Lack of accountability: "Pastor General" legally accountable to none.
3. Closed communication: Open and honest discussion still thwarted by structure.
4. Manipulative tithing: Current heavy emphasis seems characteristic of past exploitation.
5. Financial control: Congregations still send 100% of their donations to headquarters.
6. Local congregations not a true priority, e.g. \$250 Million campus sale. [That is, if such an amount was ever paid for the Pasadena campus it would not directly benefit local congregations - ed.]
7. Chaos and confusion: Jesus lost among ever-changing policies, programs and crises.
8. Lack of respect for members/ministry: Current administrative approach condescending.
9. WCG organization most important, more than Jesus or people: Corporation 1st, church 2nd.

While acknowledging that the WCG has made progress in some areas, Covington makes this startling comment (p. 3):

Almost all the doctrinal issues now being discussed were reviewed during the 1970's by WCG administration and suppressed when Herbert Armstrong put the church "back on track." This is likely to occur again. Note the following curious excerpts from a recent WCG ministerial journal: "We ought to view all human knowledge, including our own doctrinal positions, as always subject to correction...." It would appear you are already heading down this road, with continued double-speak regarding tithing and festivals.

In other words, Covington is saying we should not be surprised if the WCG at some point reverts back to all the old Armstrong teachings. (Question: If that were to happen, what would become of all the WCG spinoffs?)

According to Covington, while most of HWA's so-called "18 truths" have been shown to be heresy by the Tkach administration, that same administration has failed to address the "government of God" issue with the same zeal. Covington asserts (p. 4) that the WCG is still a dictatorship with Tkach making "numerous, significant and controversial decisions, doctrinal, administrative and financial, without meaningful discussion or consensus of any kind." Covington claims (p. 5) that Tkach has a "closed communication style" in which "dissent is not tolerated, but is labeled as division and used to disfellowship those who disagree."

Even some of the small points that Covington makes in passing are quite interesting. Some examples: While Tkach has never seriously considered moving church headquarters out of the western United States, nearly 80 percent of the WCG's membership resides east of the Mississippi, a fact which Covington feels shows a lack of real interest in the membership. What really happens to most of the moneys that members in local congregations send into headquarters is not clearly explained to the membership. The WCG administration rarely gives a detailed explanation of how much is being spent on specific programs until those programs are about to be discontinued. The revenue that will be made on the sale of the Pasadena properties will not be given back to local congregations where the money to build the Pasadena campus originally came from. Instead, it will be used to give Tkach more personal power. Major cuts continue to be made in the WCG's budget, yet Tkach, himself, recently received a large pay raise, a fact not widely publicized to the membership (pp. 6-7).

Covington very properly paints the WCG as being a de facto Tkach sole proprietorship in which 100 percent of the local moneys get sent to Pasadena with probably less than 20% flowing back. This is in stark contrast to most Christian churches where most local contributions are used locally and only a small percentage are sent to a central administration or elsewhere.

One idea being bandied about by the Tkach elite clique is to put the entire field ministry on a part-time basis. Such talk has undoubtedly contributed to what Covington describes as a large number of ministers being "on the verge of emotional breakdown." Yet while all of this is going on, Junior's

power is actually increasing! Covington very bluntly points his finger at Tkach, saying (p. 10):

I know you say that you have lost members and income by the changes you have made. *However, your power and prestige have not been abated.* In fact, you have now had opportunity to speak before hundreds of denominational leaders, be interviewed on radio with James Kennedy and Hank Hanegraaff, obtain several book contracts, and that in addition to your planned radio program (and aforementioned pay increase). You did not possess anywhere near this kind of prominence before. And frankly, you achieved it by force!.... What I do know by overwhelming evidence is that the WCG [read the Tkach elite clique] places its own continuance above Jesus' will or the members' welfare.

If we think about this a bit we see that what Tkach has done is pare down the WCG machine and in the process destroy the careers of hundreds of WCG loyalists while increasing his own personal power, fame, prestige, and income. In essence he has been utilizing a strategy similar to that used by Garner Ted Armstrong when he set up the CGI. It is the kind of "downsizing" strategy Tkach undoubtedly read about while studying for his MBA and the same kind of strategy that has been used of late in American business where millions have been downsized out of a job while CEO's have made giant personal fortunes on their stock options overvalued by the downsizing.

Covington's assessment of the WCG's spiritual condition is so dismal, he is not sure whether turning the WCG into a healthy Christian church is even possible. Nevertheless, he does give very concrete suggestions as to what should be done. Many of his proposals are in sync with those we have made over the years ourselves. Unfortunately, we have every reason to believe his suggestions will get no more attention from the WCG's leaders than ours did in the past. In a phone interview with the *Report*, Covington said he not only suspects the WCG, when its finances get bad enough, will be bringing back much of the legalism of the past, but that he saw it beginning months ago when WCG employees were told that tithing was mandatory. He did admit, however, that in recent weeks he has been a bit surprised at how far the Tkach crew will go in spreading lies.

Since the Covington open letter appeared, WCG luminaries have attacked it privately, in meetings, from the pulpit, and on the Internet. Mrs. Greg Albrecht has even referred to Covington as a Judas Iscariot. (C'mon, Karen, get a thesaurus!) Still, Covington's open letter is a gem of thorough analysis and sound advice. We are sorry we do not have the means to run it in its entirety. Those wanting a complete copy, however, can write to David Covington at P.O. Box 70012, Nashville, TN 37207; tel. 615-670-0178; covingld@aol.com for e-mail.

## **Offshoots Scramble for WCG Exiters**

With the liberalized WCG being perceived by Armstrong loyalists as completely adrift from the teachings of its founder, and with thousands of Armstrongites having left the WCG in recent months, clerics of the WCG offshoots have been in a feeding frenzy to bite off what they can of the remaining financial resources of exiting WCG members. It is difficult to gauge exactly who the biggest players are in the game because of the varying ways the spinoffs measure their size. Head counts are sometimes based on numbers of baptized members, sometimes on sabbath day attendance by baptized members, sometimes on attendance figures that include all family members, sometimes on numbers of financial contributors, sometimes on publication subscribers, etc. Nevertheless, the most important WCG spinoffs currently seem to be the United Church of God (Bob Dick chairman, David Hulme president) with a claimed membership of approximately 20,000; Rod Meredith's Global Church of God with a reported 7,000 members; Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God with an estimated 7,000; Garner Ted Armstrong's shrinking Church of God International with now probably less than 1,500 members (down from almost 5,000 a year ago); the new CGI breakaway "Churches of God" alliance with probably over 2,000 members; Fred Coulter's Christian Biblical Church of God with perhaps 500 supporters; and William Dankenbring's Triumph Prophetic Ministries (Church of God) with its many publications and a round-the-world broadcast but no official acknowledgement of membership size.

The above seven groups seem to be the major branches of modern "Armstrongism." Nevertheless, they are not the only players in the game. Joseph Tkach Jr. himself has stated that there are now over 100 active WCG splinter groups in existence. Keeping track of all of them is beyond the capabilities of *Ambassador Report*. But one individual who is trying to keep tabs on at least their whereabouts is former WCG member Alan Ruth of Barnabas Ministries. Mr. Ruth keeps an updated list of nearly all the branches of the Armstrongite family of churches, along with their addresses and the names of their key personnel. Those interested in obtaining a copy of his updated list (it's free, but donations are appreciated) should contact Alan Ruth at Barnabas Ministries, P.O. Box 310208, Detroit, MI 48231; aruth88521@aol.com for e-mail (World Wide Web site at: <http://www.gatecom.com/~barnabas>).

## **Can Humpty Dumpty Be Put Back Together?**

Don't count on it. We keep getting letters from readers who suggest that because there are so many Armstrongite groups around the world now it is only a matter of time before they all unite in love to form one great end-time ministry. The reason such a thing will not happen is this: The very spirit of Armstrongism - with its deeply entrenched fallacy of "ministerial rank," its still pervasive anti-intellectualism brought over from American fundamentalism, and its rampant semi-paranoid tendency toward "us versus the rest of the world" - runs contrary to the kind of compromise that would be necessary to create a significant movement united in anything more than just name. Look carefully at the splitoffs and what you see is not a coming together, but factions and division everywhere.

All of the major WCG splitoffs now have their own splitoffs. And, it seems, virtually every one of the major splitoffs now has someone dogging their tail. (Has any religious movement ever had so many revolutionaries and then counterrevolutionaries?) For example, Dankenbring's popular Triumph Prophetic Ministries has been getting a lot of heat lately from Myron Martin's *Patriots of the Kingdom* (P.O. Box 20004 CDO, Concord, Ont. L4K 4T1, Canada). And a while back Rod Meredith's Global Church lost Norman S. Edwards (the author of the infamous "Friends of Pasadena" underground letter) who helped Meredith found the Global Church. Now Edwards puts out a theological and interchurch news publication called *Servant's News* (formerly Friends of the Brethren, P.O. Box 6516, Springdale, AR 72766-6516; tel. 501-872-1003; e-mail: 75260.1603@compuserve.com). Past articles have included: "Will You Be Counted Worthy to Escape?" and "Learning From the Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong." One publication that Edwards has distributed is his 34-page paper "How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?" which has reportedly influenced many to leave the Meredith camp. Another religious curmudgeon who has been taking on Meredith and others is Bernard H. Kelly, President of Royal Embassy College and Managing Director of Trans-World Publishing which operate out of a motel room across from Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia, California (130 W. Huntington Dr., Room 122 to be exact).

We have every reason to believe that the pattern of WCG splitoff groups fracturing, with the new breakaways attacking the old and each attacking all the others, will continue. In fact, with so many Armstrongites reading interchurch publications such as *In Transition* (see [AR59](#)) and sharing news on the Internet, the trend toward division will undoubtedly increase. That is not to suggest, however, that there are not Christian counselors and counseling organizations who are ready, willing, and able to help in bringing about some semblance of Christian peace and order to the chaotic situation in which the Armstrongites find themselves. Some organizations who have indicated a willingness to serve in this way are Church Counsel (John J. Purvins, Coordinator), 130 W. Main St., Little Chute, WI 54140; tel. 414-733-5271 and Bible Education Services (Donald L. Hudgel, Exec. Dir.), P.O. Box 736, Troy, OH 45373. But as of now it seems that none of the breakaway groups is willing to listen to advice from "outsiders." And each one seems intent on reinventing the wheel.

## **Meredith Attacks Conspiracy Buffs**

One indomitable personality that we doubt could ever fit into any type of sabbatarian federation is former WCG evangelist Roderick Meredith who now heads the Global Church of God (GCG). Independent-minded, some say hardheaded, Meredith recently shocked his followers by vehemently attacking some notions that are gaining widespread acceptance in ex-WCG circles - namely the so-called international conspiracy theories revolving around Jesuits, Jews, and Freemasons.

The Meredith attack coincided with an admitted financial crisis within the GCG that has forced Global to cut back in a number of areas including the purchase of air time for its telecast (Meredith co-worker letter of 5/24/96). GCG insiders tell us that within Global there has been a surge of interest in the so-called conspiracy theories, with many GCG members becoming suspicious that some of their own leaders have become conspiratorially compromised. In a powerful - and remarkably logical - response that reveals a considerable amount of research on the subject, Meredith devoted a good portion of his May-June *Global Church News* to discussing the conspiracy theories ravaging his church. Here are some excerpts (and throughout the emphasis is his):

Brethren, I now want to address one aspect of this problem that has become far more widespread than I had realized - even though I previously wrote about it in the January-February GCN. This problem is the preoccupation that a number of our members seem to have with "international conspiracies," black helicopters and a supposed Jesuit infiltration of the Church. Before I address these ideas, let me say up front that I am not lambasting any of you who've been caught up in them - nor am I questioning your sincerity, your conversion or your zeal for the Truth. I am simply asking you to carefully consider what I'm saying.

There have always been conspiracies. But just who is conspiring and the motives involved are usually obscure. For a long time, a great number of people have attempted to tie together all kinds of events to paint a picture of a massive international conspiracy involving nearly everybody - yet one that almost nobody seems to know about directly. Whether the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Illuminati ("enlightened ones") or fictitious "Inver Brass" of several Robert Ludlum novels, there seems to be no shortage of secret societies that covertly rule the world. Many think such groups are all branches of the same conspiracy - all controlled by either the Zionist "Jews" (who supposedly aren't really Jews), or the Roman Catholic Church or, mysteriously, both! Is this so?

**The simple answer, brethren, is that we don't really know and we *can't* really know!** But common sense ought to tell us that many of the scenarios that some conspiracy buffs concoct are really absurd. For instance, many of them claim that America's Founding Fathers - as freemasons - were trying to formulate a New World Order according to the design of die Illuminati (or "illumined freemasonry"). Yet they quote Presidents Washington and Jefferson as being against the machinations of the Illuminati! This is totally contradictory. Conspiracy buffs also claim that the highest levels of freemasonry are the Knights Templar and the Knights of Malta - both Catholic orders. Therefore, they think the Catholics control freemasonry - and, thus, the Illuminati. But when you consider that most of the Founding Fathers were extremely anti-Catholic, this is all *non sequitur* - it doesn't follow! It is true that they wanted a "New Order of the Ages" - but only one in which America would be the shining "city upon a hill," an example of a God-fearing society for other nations to emulate. They wanted nothing to do with "Romanism."

Other things are also *non sequitur*. Conspiracy buffs argue that the Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S. are actually working together for the same goals. Their debates are supposedly contrived to take the public's focus away from the plotting going on between them. If that's so, then why are clearly internationalist agendas so often thwarted in this process? Also, if the media and publishing industries are all controlled by the conspirators, how is it that so many books and magazines denouncing the conspiracies line the shelves of bookstores? Why did *Time* magazine print a huge expose on the collaboration between President Reagan and Pope John Paul II to overthrow Communism if that magazine is totally controlled by the Catholic Church, which denies the report? Moreover, why would the Catholics try to overthrow international Communism if it was their own invention - through the Bolshevik Revolution being instigated by the freemasons? And why did they promote a bipolar world (U.S. vs. USSR) that threatened humanity's very existence if their goal has always been a one-world system?....

Advocates of conspiracy theories could probably answer these questions. But sadly, that is because **the typical conspiracy addict often has "an answer for everything"** - that he rashly formulates to protect his pet conspiracy ideas. Many times, such a person has become so entrenched in this type of thinking that it is extremely difficult to face the possibility that his whole premise - upon which assumption after assumption has been heaped - is false. **One favorite response is that the international conspirators have repeatedly acted against their own interests to foster the illusion that they don't have the power that they actually do.** What an incredible answer! It can apply to anything that doesn't fit the scenario! **With such reasoning, you can make any circumstance mean anything you want it to mean.** Brethren, can we not see this? "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a SOUND MIND" (2 Tim. 1:7). We must use the "sound mind" that God gives us to evaluate the information that comes into our heads....

In recent months one of the oddest ideas that has been circulating in Armstrongite circles is that "Jesuit secret agents" have somehow infiltrated the WCG and now even Meredith's Global Church. Meredith, himself, seems to have unwittingly contributed to the confusion when on April 19 he sent his followers a "special emergency letter" in which he attacked Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi, the Seventh-Day Adventist minister who has authored a number of popular books advocating sabbath and holy day observance. ("Dr. Sam" as the leaders of United and other groups affectionately refer to him, can be contacted at Biblical Perspectives, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, MI 49103). Some Global members, apparently aware that Dr. Sam studied in Rome years ago, leaped to the conclusion that he was a "secret Jesuit agent" bent on the destruction of the sabbatarian movement. Meredith has since realized that he made a mistake in attacking Dr. Sam and has stated he should have been more careful in what he wrote. Nevertheless, Meredith's earlier comments caused much confusion and he was forced to address the problem. We are certain that Mr. Meredith really did not mean to imply that Dr. Sam or even certain unnamed Jesuits are really "satanic." In the GCN article he briefly touched on the Jesuits (p. 11):

Because of the prominence of the Great Whore in prophecy, some of our brethren have gotten excited about some videos put out by John Osborne's *Prophecy Countdown* on "The Jesuit Agenda" - supposedly explaining what has happened to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. By extension, they think this is also what happened in our former association. And now they think it is even happening here....

Some people think that we want to join up with the United Church of God and other groups - as part of the Jesuit agenda. In fact, Messrs. Carl McNair and Larry Salyer [two of Meredith's subordinates] have been accused of this. That's ridiculous.

Then on page 12 Meredith went on to ridicule another increasingly widespread notion - that sinister internationalist forces using black helicopters are coming to take away all "the true Christians":

If I am God's servant and this is the human headquarters of a true Work of God, why aren't black helicopters hovering around *my* home? Why aren't they hovering around our headquarters in San Diego? Yet they AREN'T! And I have yet to find any of our ministers who have ever noted black helicopters supposedly watching *their* homes!

The Meredith article makes for interesting reading. Copies may be obtained by writing to Global Church of God, P.O. Box 501111, San Diego, CA 92150-1111.

## **GTA Porno Movie a Hit**

In our last issue we reported how Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), son of WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong and head of the breakaway Church of God International, was being sued by a Texas masseuse for sexual assault. Not surprisingly, the story has made for some colorful writing in Texas newspapers. The most colorful of the articles we came across was by Holly Mullen writing in the *Dallas Observer* (5/9-15/96). In an article appropriately titled, "How Low Can You Go?", Ms. Mullen

began:

The man at the pulpit with the mass of neatly coifed silver hair is speaking of sin and redemption, pleading with his flock to forgive him his very human frailties. "No one is free from sin," he says. His eyes have filled with tears.

The camera lens zooms in, and the man, his voice quavering, continues in a near-whisper: "I let down my wife of 42 years." [He could have added, "And I've done that pretty regularly for those 42 years" - ed.] Then, after a dramatic two-second pause, he thunders [uh oh, here come the thunders], "But I tell you - and with sodium pentothal in my veins - *I have never sexually assaulted a woman in my life.*"

The man is Garner Ted Armstrong.... In his first public admission of a colossal moral lapse six months earlier, the 66-year old Armstrong does not offer his followers the tawdry details - the local TV stations and *Inside Edition* had already done that quite well. Instead, he tiptoes around the specifics, saying, "By now, you've probably heard or read the stories."

It's gut wrenching, this routine of coming clean in public - pioneered by follow televangelists Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker. Confronted with these bare emotions and seeming remorse, the members of Armstrong's flock can do little but extend their forgiveness. There are those, of course, who remain unwilling to pardon the fallen leader. And they have been busy ever since that January 26 evening, floating copies of the videotaped sermon around the world.

Just 10 minutes northeast of Flint, in a tiny frame home in Tyler, Royce Robertson is gearing up for another day of what he calls his "investigation" of Garner Ted Armstrong, the Church of God International, and its business dealings. Robertson, 38 years old and pudgy, his thinning brown hair pulled back into a flimsy ponytail, keeps a copy of the minister's weepy confessional in a bulging nylon briefcase along with an entire arsenal against Armstrong and CGI - several thick folders of legal documents, tax and real estate records, and magazine articles, including a particularly salacious *Hustler* profile that detailed the sexual escapades and financial questions leading to Armstrong's 1978 ouster from Worldwide Church of God....

Also stuffed inside the briefcase is the most lethal weapon of all - or so Robertson thinks. It is a grainy, 43-minute videotape of his ex-wife, Suerae Robertson, massaging a naked Garner Ted Armstrong at her Tyler salon on July 15, 1995 [a Saturday]. With recordings of big-band tunes playing softly in the background, a tattooed Armstrong is seen masturbating on a massage table as Suerae, dressed in baggy surgical scrubs, lightly flicks her oiled fingers along his arms, back, buttocks, and between his thighs. About 15 minutes into the tape, Armstrong makes one of many clumsy grabs at Suerae's breasts and gropes at her crotch. She makes several weak attempts to pull away and politely protests his behavior, but not once tells him to leave. Suerae never actually touches Armstrong's genitals, but at one point she pumps massage oil from a nearby dispenser into his hands, allowing him to do the work himself. He moans and begs her to "give me some relief."...

[Armstrong lawyer Tom Buchanan of Tyler, Texas] says his client does not deny going to Suerae Robertson for a massage service for which he expected sexual contact, and for which he expected to pay. "Garner Ted Armstrong is an imperfect man," he says. "Unfortunately, he's done some stupid things, and this is one of them. He's never denied showing bad judgement in going there."

But as unseemly as Armstrong's video-taped behavior may appear, the Robertsons themselves are no Citizens of the Year. Smith County court documents show that their 4 1/2-year marriage, which Royce says ended in divorce after he began an affair with a topless dancer from Dallas who "had a drug problem," was annulled on May 2, 1995. The reason? Suerae had never divorced her previous husband, whom she married in Dallas County. Nor was Suerae, a 49-year old vocational nurse and grandmother of six, ever licensed by the state as a massage therapist - so her sessions with Armstrong were illegal. There's also the matter of a few bounced checks - totaling about \$1,000 - which Suerae wrote against her checking account shortly after the alleged assault last summer. She pleaded no contest in Smith County to a misdemeanor theft-by-check charge and received deferred adjudication on the condition that she repay the money.

Meanwhile, Royce Robertson has been trying to rustle up some business of his own from

Armstrong's misfortune. For two consecutive weeks in March, he bought a classified advertisement in the Dallas Observer hawking \$29.95 copies of the uncut video-tape. The ad read, "TV EVANGELIST CAUGHT IN THE ACT!" And so the alleged assault that Royce claims has so traumatized his ex-wife has now become a marketing tool. "It wasn't a good idea," Royce concedes when confronted about his money-making scheme. "But it was out of total concern for Suerae. It was absolutely out of desperation."

The Robertsons have found little sympathy in Tyler. A local criminal-defense attorney quaffing a cold Heineken after work at Rick's on the Square, a favorite downtown yuppie bar, offered his own sneering assessment: "It didn't sound like there was *anything* therapeutic about the massage." To him and many others in this East Texas town of 75,000, the case of the randy preacher and the desperate masseuse shows just how low human beings can go....

On July 15, the day Armstrong returned for an appointment, Royce hid a video camera inside a wall clock in Suerae's massage room. From an upstairs bedroom, Royce watched the situation on a video monitor. "I was close enough to get there quick if anything turned the least bit violent" he says.

The 43-minute, black and white tape - of which 300 copies are now floating around worldwide, thanks to Royce's entrepreneurship - begins with Suerae walking into the massage room, dragging on a cigarette as she throws a sheet over the massage table. A nude Armstrong then walks in. The two embrace - "though very lightly," Royce says. Then Suerae snuffs out her cigarette in an ashtray on the corner of a nearby hot tub, and Armstrong lies face down on the table.

The rectangular table is not like the ones most registered massage therapists use in their work. It splits apart in the middle, where, Suerae explains, "men can, you know, sort of hang," and can also split into an upside-down V, on which the clients legs are extended. On the tape Suerae stands inside the V, between Armstrong's spread legs. During the next 43 minutes, she performs a feather-light massage on the minister as he masturbates, grabs her breasts, and tries to pull her on top of him.

The sound of their voices is largely drowned out by the incessant ticking of the wall clock and a tape of bigband music. "Autumn Leaves" is playing about 15 minutes into the tape, as Armstrong tries to pull Suerae's hands to his genitals. When she says, "That's not part of the massage," he lets go. At 42 minutes, Suerae leaves the room and Armstrong then walks out of camera range. A low moan is heard off-camera. The final scene is of Armstrong walking back into view, dressed in double-knit pants and a sweater. There's a little lift in his step and he is singing along with the Andrews Sisters: "Don't sit under the apple tree/With anyone also but me/Anyone else but me... /Till I come marching home."....

When Royce isn't propping up Suerae, he can often be found digging through the huge, leather-bound indexes at the Smith County Courthouse, trying to turn up financial information on Armstrong and his business cronies. He calls this work "investigation." Royce knows where all of the Church of God International officers live and what cars they drive.

"That's (CGI business manager) Benny Sharp's white Continental," he points out during a drive through the church's grounds in Flint. "There's Garner Ted's Bronco," he says, cruising past Armstrong's home. "These guys really have some money. Most of 'em have boats, too."....

In Tyler, the gossip about Garner Ted and the masseuse was blazing last fall, but has now burned down to an ember. "Good old Garner Ted, he's just a good ol' boy and I don't know what to think about her," says a well-known Tyler real-estate broker. "Nobody in this deal smells very good."....

The article discusses much more: Texas laws regulating the massage industry, the ethical standards in therapeutic massage, Suerae's personal financial problems, her house, her childhood history of sexual abuse and lifetime of emotional problems, etc. - much more than most will want to know about this hillbilly soap opera. However, those who just have to know all the facts can obtain a copy of the entire article for \$2 by writing to the Dallas Observer, 2130 Commerce St., Dallas, TX 75201.

Since the above story appeared, the infamous GTA sex video has become something of a sensation in

Texas and elsewhere, with thousands of copies now in circulation. One group which has not been too keen on the video, however, are the members of CGI. In fact, so upset are most that more than half of CGI's ministers have resigned from CGI taking with them more than half of CGI's membership. Most, if not all, who have left seem to be incorporating their congregations separately while trying to maintain ties to each other through an alliance called simply "The Churches of God." The 27 ministers of the group had a conference in Tulsa April 12-14 and agreed to be independent churches working in cooperation to serve their people. The new alliance has an information center that is quite open about their organizational structure, personnel, beliefs, finances, and programs. Their oversight committee is made up of ministers Les Pope, Tom Whitson, and Tom Justus. The group's Information Center address is RR 2 Box 114, Hawkins, Texas 75765, with another organization address at P.O. Box 54621, Tulsa, OK 74155. The group's toll free number is 800-611-8080.

As for evangelist Ron Dart, formerly top assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong, we understand that his new organization, Christian Educational Ministries (CEM), is thriving. Dart's new radio program *Born to Win* is already on about thirty stations, including one in Australia (and you can even hear the program on your computer at <http://www.cajunland.com/cem/>). He has a popular Internet ministry and a growing network of sabbatarian community churches. One interesting doctrinal or policy announcement from Dart is that his group will now take up only three annual holy day offerings per year, not the seven that the WCG and others do contrary to Deut. 16:16. CEM seems fairly straightforward about its programs and policies, so those who would like more information should contact them at CEM, P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791; tel. 903-509-2999; [cem@gower.net](mailto:cem@gower.net) for e-mail.

Meanwhile, back at the courthouse in Tyler, Judge Cynthia Kent has recused herself because, it turns out, her husband is a member of the law firm that is representing Garner Ted Armstrong. The new judge is Louis B. Gohmert. The jury trial is scheduled to begin November 18. Of course, it is quite possible that before then the case will be quietly settled out of court.

## **Rick Ross and CAN Bankrupted Scientology Backed Attack**

Within the microculture of the anti-cult movement, no organization has been more influential than the Chicago-based Cult Awareness Network (CAN). And while not as famous as Ted Patrick or Gallen Kelly who have gotten more media attention (and jail time) for their activities, in the shadowy world of exit counselors and deprogrammers few have been more successful than Rick Ross of Phoenix. Now both CAN and Ross have been badly stung by the pro-cult forces.

CAN and Ross were among the losers last September when a jury in Seattle's U.S. District Court awarded \$4.8 million to Jason Scott, a Seattle-area man who claimed he had been held against his will by three men when Ross was called in to deprogram him away from Life Tabernacle, a United Pentecostal church. The jury agreed with Scott that his constitutionally guaranteed right to practice religion had been violated and for that awarded him almost \$1 million per day for each of the five days he was kept at the deprogramming site, a luxury beach condo. CAN was included among the defendants because Scott claimed it was a Seattle CAN volunteer who recommended Ross's services when his distraught mother sought a professional deprogrammer to break the psychological hold a Life Tabernacle minister had over her son.

At the deprogramming session Scott, then 18, recanted his association with the Life Tabernacle. But afterward Scott recanted his first recantation and obtained the assistance of lawyers with close ties to Scientology. In recent years, hordes of Scientologist lawyers, energized by massive infusions of cash from the "new religion" started by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, have been in league with cult followers of every bent in waging near-all-out war against the counter-cult movement. As documented in Richard Behar's famous *Time* magazine cover story of 5/6/91 and in Bent Corydon's

book *L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman* (Barricade Books, 1992), Scientology is probably the largest and most aggressive of the modern destructive cults. No other cult, for example, has ever attempted to intimidate the press to such a degree or infiltrate anti-cult organizations, anti-cult law firms, and even law enforcement branches of the U.S. government as Scientology has done since the 1980s. Nor has any other cult, as far as we know, maintained such a large and aggressive team of lawyers, or so actively used the courts to harass its critics. For example, just one of the many anti-cult organizations currently under attack by the Scientologists is Watchman Fellowship which seems to have done nothing more than accurately report on Scientology's well-known methods and non-Christian teachings.

The use of frivolous lawsuits by wealthy and unscrupulous plaintiffs bent on harassing poorer defendants is a growing problem in the United States (*New York Times*, 6/11/96). As long as a plaintiff can show some possible reason for a glimmer of hope that some jury somewhere could possibly find for him, a sufficiently wealthy aggressor can bring any number of suits against a poor defendant and thereby exhaust the defendant through endless depositions, interrogatories, and costly paperwork. In the end the plaintiff may not win in court, but no matter. By using the courts for such strategic lawsuits against public participation, or "slapps" as the legal profession refers to them, the First Amendment freedoms of the defendant and others are severely chilled.

Before Jason Scott brought his civil case, Scientology had engaged in a massive campaign of disinformation against CAN, much of it done through mailings from anonymous or unreachable individuals with phantom organizations at mail drops or bogus addresses. (AR has for years been flooded with this kind of garbage mail.) Getting nowhere with such childish pranks, Scientology-assisted plaintiffs then brought some 50 suits against the dedicated cult fighting organization. One long-time CAN activist, Priscilla Coates of Glendale, California, alone was hit by 22 lawsuits. Until Jason Scott came along, none of the suits against CAN had been successful. While Scott's attempt at getting a criminal conviction against Ross failed in 1994, the lucky judgment for him in the civil case resulted in both Ross and CAN filing for bankruptcy.

Now we have learned that CAN, which had been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy, or reorganization, while appealing the dubious judgment against it, has just been thrown into Chapter 7, complete liquidation. All of CAN's employees have already been discharged, but what will become of its corporate assets is unclear. Some fear that Scientology or its proxies may now be able to gain legal ownership of CAN's extensive archives, its mailing list, the very name "Cult Awareness Network," and even the group's phone number, thereby gaining further means for harassing cult fighters around the world. With virtually all of its headquarters resources gone and its backers in disarray, it might appear that CAN, as we have known it, is no more. But some supporters point out that CAN's local affiliates, always fiercely independent, will continue on as will the group's informal system of personal networking.

As for Rick Ross, it is doubtful that Scientology and its pro-cult allies will ever be able to truly silence him. In fact, in a mid-June phone interview Ross told us he will soon be launching a new counter-cult offensive via the Internet. We will provide details about that in a future issue. For now, those interested in learning more about the Jason Scott case or about Rick Ross and his amazing career will find two articles helpful: "Cults in the Courtroom!" by John Colwell (in the 10/25/95 issue of *The Stranger*, 1202 East Pike # 1225, Seattle, WA 98122) and "Hush, Hush Sweet Charlatans" by Tony Ortega (in the 11/30-12/6/95 Phoenix *New Times*, 1201 East Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85034).

## **Ernest Mann Murdered**

We are sorry to have to announce that author Ernest Mann has died, and under very tragic circumstances. On the evening of March 12, the 69-year-old Mann was bludgeoned to death by his 17-year-old grandson Eli B. Johnson. The troubled youth had dropped out of school in 1994. Unable or unwilling to live with either of his parents, Eli had been living with his grandfather on and off, sharing a trailer house in southeast Little Falls, Minnesota where the murder occurred. After the crime, Eli

fled to a wooded area near town and took his own life with a .22 caliber handgun that had been stolen, probably by Eli, in a burglary months before. The tragedy was reported in the *Morrison County Record*, 3/17/96 and 3/24/96.

Mann, whose legal name was Larry F. Johnson (not the Larry Gilbert Johnson of Laodicean Church fame) was the author of the book *I Was Robot* and the publisher of the *Little Free Press* newsletter. His writings were increasingly popular in ex-WCG circles and especially among those who valued a simple existence coupled with maximum freedom from governmental and societal intrusion. It is likely Mann's writings will continue to be distributed. For information contact Sandy Nelson, 730 3rd St. N.E., Little Falls, MN 56345. Ernest Mann's son Rod is planning a memorial newsletter to be sent to his father's many admirers. For information on that or to send regrets write Rod Johnson, 309 Cedar Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55454.

## **Charles V. Dorothy, 1934-1996**

We are very sorry to report the death of our old friend Charles V. Dorothy from cancer on Father's Day, June 16. Dorothy, who earned Ph.D.s from Ambassador College and later from prestigious Claremont College, was one of the brightest and most likeable individuals to have ever taught at Ambassador. In recent years he lectured and wrote for the Association for Christian Development in Washington state. Ironically, a week before his death, Dr. Dorothy was informed that his work *The Books of Esther*, the culmination of a lifetime of research, had finally been accepted for publication by a major publisher. A tribute to his life and work has been published by ACD and many of his outstanding lectures are still available on cassette tape from that organization. Dr. Dorothy is survived by his wife Camilla, his five children, and by many friends and former students. Most who knew him personally will not soon forget that through a life of adversity and disappointment, his was still one of steadfast faith and encouraging optimism. Those wishing to express condolences to his family may write c/o the Association for Christian Development, 4449 S. Star Lake Road, Auburn, WA 98001.

## **Calendar Confusion**

Of all the religious topics that interest the Armstrongites these days, the most popular and most perplexing seems to be the ancient Hebrew calendar. In the last three months we have been sent more than twenty different articles and papers on the subject. Apart from questions regarding the proper days for keeping Passover and Pentecost (issues upon which much has also been written), the main calendar concern these days seems to be the issue of whether or not it is even possible to properly calculate the ancient calendar so as to know what any given day really is. The problem has worked up some into paroxysms of manic mysticism.

In a 3/25/96 letter to a Bible student, Ronald B. Nelson, one of Dr. Meredith's GCG representatives, wrote the following:

There is a lot of discussion about the sacred calendar among God's people today. Most recognize that "Judaism" is not the original religion of ancient Israel and Moses. Therefore, some people assume that they should not use the Jewish Calendar. As an alternative, some have set about to devise their own independent calendar based on their own understanding of what is involved.

There is no indication in the Scripture that each individual was ever responsible to determine the dates of the Holy Days. It should be obvious that however the Holy Day calendar is determined, it was an *official decision* lest people convene on whatever days each one felt was correct. That would have produced confusion, not order and unity (I Cor. 14:33). It would have been like it was in the days of the judges when people were left to their own devices. Notice: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25).

When the technical issues are rightly understood, it is easy to see why there is some confusion

about God's calendar today. If five people sit down and attempt to draw up a solar/lunar calendar to serve the biblical purpose, virtually everyone will arrive at different conclusions (methods and dates). This is because the Bible doesn't tell us precisely how to construct a "sacred calendar." [Emphasis mine - ed.] Evidently, God gave the knowledge to the leadership (the priests, Aaron and his descendants). They, in turn, were to coordinate the Holy Day dates so that all the people come together at the same time.

Here are just a couple [sic] of matters that the Bible is not plain and clear with regard to calendar construction: 1) Precisely when to begin the first day of the year, 2) How many months were to be in a year, 3) When and how to add an intercalary month (i.e. a 13th month to keep the calendar in sync with the seasons), 4) How many days were to be in each month, etc.

So, the issues are not as simple as they may seem when one begins to study all the factors that have to be considered. Global is researching further into the most common questions concerning God's calendar. Once we have something which God's faithful ministers of many years feel is ready for publication, we will present it in an article or booklet. Meanwhile, it would not be possible for me to comment....

Nelson's admissions should raise some questions in the minds of alert people. For example, if the Bible really does not show how to calculate the Sacred Calendar, would that not indicate either (1) God does not consider it important to keep the biblical holy days in a mathematically precise time frame, or (2) keeping the biblical holy days is no longer something required by God? Furthermore, even if we assume that God still intends all believers to keep the OT holy days in a physically precise manner, if the believer must go outside of the Bible to find the means of calculating the sacred calendar's dates, would that not indicate either (1) that the oracles of God encompass more than the just the Bible, or (2) that some other group of clerics other than the Armstrongite ministers (Jewish rabbis or prophets perhaps?) may have been designated as the repositories of God's esoteric knowledge and that they therefore have spiritual authority superior to that of the Armstrongite clerics? Perhaps it is such questions that prompted St. Paul to write, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath (Col. 2:16).

While Global is in the process of studying the calendar issue, Dr. Ernest Martin, who for many years was the WCG's leading expert on the subject, has already published a 30-page paper on "How To Calculate the Biblical Calendar." Dr. Martin, who was recently interviewed by Father Ronald Lengwin of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh on his KDKA talk show, continues to publish materials of interest to many ex-Worldwidiers. Other timely Martin writings include his paper "By Grace Are Ye Saved" and his lecture "Why Churches Fall Apart." For details write to: Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225-4351, tel. 503-292-4352, e-mail: askssm@aol.com.

## Letters

I thought the article you ran by Dr. Zimmerman criticizing Steven Collins' letter in [AR60](#) was outstanding. I'd like to see the *Report* print more articles that show balance and facts in the area of Bible prophecy. Too many people who have left the WCG have gone down strange paths in their searchings and are coming up with ideas that they firmly believe yet are unrealistic and smack of paranoia.

The idea that the U.N. is sending helicopters to round up true Christians is ludicrous. Anyone who even casually follows the news on the U.N. knows it is a wimp of an organization. Here's one example. Because Moammar Gadhafi refuses to turn over the guys who are accused of blowing up the plane over Scotland in 1988, the U.N. has put a ban on all flights in and out of Libya. But on June 22 Moammar decided he wanted to attend the Arab conference in Egypt. So, giving the finger to the U.N., he just got on one of his Boeing 727s and told the pilot to head east. After the conference he just went back the way he came. Nobody did a thing to him. The U.N. only issued a statement saying he

was a very bad boy. Does that sound like a powerful organization? Frankly, they are about as wimpy as they come.

The newspapers here in New York have been full of stories lately about how the U.N. is on the verge of bankruptcy. A few months ago I even saw a story on the TV news showing how some sessions of the General Assembly had to be cancelled because the U.N. building's roof was leaking. Newsmen here refer to them as a mismanaged and bloated bureaucracy lacking even the money to fix their leaking roof! All they have is a history of doing lots of paperwork, passing all kinds of lofty resolutions with no way of financing or enforcing them, and then doing nothing. They are pathetic. How can anyone think they are the awesome and terrifying Beast of Revelation!

May I ask - why did you ever run Steven Collins letter in the first place?

-New York

*Editor: The reason is simple. Mr. Collins' views are similar to those held by many ex-WCG members and he expresses them well. Please keep in mind that we try to include a diversity of opinions in our letters section and in the by-lined articles that we run. Incidentally, Collins took exception to the Zimmerman article and should you wish to read his extensive rebuttal to Zimmerman's rebuttal you may write to him at: 3901 Crescent Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57106.*

We probably never would have found out the real scoop on GTA if it weren't for the AR. Pretty much the whole church in Tucson and Phoenix left CGI and are receiving tapes from Ron Dart. We personally don't want anything to do with organized religion and the Armstrongs. We should have known 20 years ago that GTA was a bad apple.

-Arizona

In these parts most who read your story about Mr. Ted Armstrong were suspicious you made the whole thing up. But that was before we saw the video tape of GTA with the masseuse. It was sent to CGI members who thought that the story was not for real. One of those who sent out copies was elder Gary Porter, 11968 N. Honesty Lane, Pocatello, Idaho 83202. We got our copy by just calling him at 801-562-2532.

I must admit I found the video upsetting. I did not realize that Mr. Armstrong was so impotent. His prostate is not working or he was drunk or something. Why would any normal man want to lie face down on a table with his legs spread and his butt up in the air and have someone rub oil in his rear end for a half hour while he played with himself? I was saddened to see with my own eyes all the difficulty he had getting any results. Obviously he was tricked by a woman who was deceived (I Tim. 2:4). I have to believe the woman deceived herself into thinking she was really a nurse. I'm sure she was not. I have been in hospitals and no nurse ever did that kind of crazy thing to me!

After viewing the tape a number of times and praying and fasting about Mr. Armstrong's repentance we are still not sure if we should leave the CGI. Are you also distributing copies of the video?

-Arkansas

*Editor: Absolutely not! When an AR reader mailed me a copy I felt obligated to watch it once in order to verify the information we received on the GTA story. But after just a few moments of the pathetic and disgusting spectacle, I decided to fast forward in order to get through the ordeal as quickly as possible. I then mailed the tape back because I prefer not to have such material in my home. Frankly, I think most readers will be better off not seeing the tape. Furthermore, to those distributing the porno*

*tape, a suggestion: please put a label on it saying in large letters: WARNING: VIEWING THIS TAPE MAY CAUSE NAUSEA!*

Some of my friends who have remained in CGI say that Mr. GTA's sex sins are not all that bad when compared to those of the current WCG leaders. They've told me some pretty wild stuff. I hope you cover those stories some day.

-Texas

*Editor: We're investigating those rumors (and that is all we consider them at this point). We will comment further in a future issue.*

Here in New Zealand the WCG changes are certainly evident, and in this respect enclosed is a press cutting from *The New Zealand Herald*, Sept. 2, 1995. This is the largest daily newspaper in the country and here is Jack Croucher, who controls the New Zealand WCG work, excited about their newfound understanding with the Greenlane Christian Fellowship movement which is a charismatic group that meets on Sunday!

-Colin Moffat  
New Zealand

Frankly, some of us who once gave thousands of hard-earned dollars toward the building of "the House for God" in Pasadena are shocked that it has now become, in effect, the private property of one man - Mr. Tkach Jr. - to do with as he wishes. And we are heartbroken that he wants to simply discard God's House like just so much garbage. Can't anything be done about this travesty?

-Arizona

*Editor: A lot of people have been asking the same thing. Frankly, I don't think there is much that individuals can do at this point. But let me recommend that you read an excellent article which appeared on page seven of the 6/3/96 issue of New Beginnings. Written by our friend Steven Andrews, an attorney and CPA, the article will give you some idea of the kinds of ethical and legal considerations that may impinge on Tkach's plan to sell off Ambassador Auditorium and the rest of the WCGs Pasadena properties. New Beginnings is published by the United Church of God, P.O. Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91006-1780.*

My husband, a member since 1981, remains in the WCG. Here in Wichita, they have gone from two congregations to one, with very few social functions. The changes don't seem to bother my husband. It also doesn't bother him that I write you a check, but he does not want to read AR.

-Kansas

I think it is really scary how so many in the WCG will simply follow whatever doctrine or policy change they are given. How can such a thing be happening?

-Rhode Island

*Editor: Generally speaking the WCG membership is a rather unsophisticated and anti-intellectual group that is easily manipulated by some very obvious advertising, propaganda, and mind control techniques. For example, the membership had already been pre-programmed into accepting the new PT marketing methods via near-subliminal hints in past WCG publications. See, for example, the Q&A section of the 12/5/95 WN where all the marketing changes were subtly introduced and*

*rationalized A few weeks later, the WN (1/30/96, p. 8) quietly announced that Carmel Omasta, a youthful and chic blond with an MBA from Cal State, Los Angeles, was the Tkach Company's new "product coordinator," the one in charge of marketing the WCGs line of "Christian products." The effectiveness of such pre-programming can be seen in the fact that when the new PT policies were officially introduced weeks later virtually no WCG member was surprised or upset.*

I had been a member of the WCG all of my life (33 years), attending with my family and graduating from Ambassador College in 1987. That is where I first began to wonder what on earth was going on! During my first week of classes as a freshman, Mr. Greg Albrecht told us that we would find out a lot of things while we were at Ambassaor College, but that we should not write home and tell anyone about it because they did not need to know and would not understand. Well, I thought, what could be going on here that no one should know or understand? A great deal - as I have discovered in the last three years since leaving the organization.

Thank you for the great job you have done in exposing this great fraud to us all.

-Karen Allen  
Australia

I appreciate how you keep us informed of the various groups, including their mailing addresses. Most splinters will not inform their people of other groups. They don't want to lose their "dumb sheep."

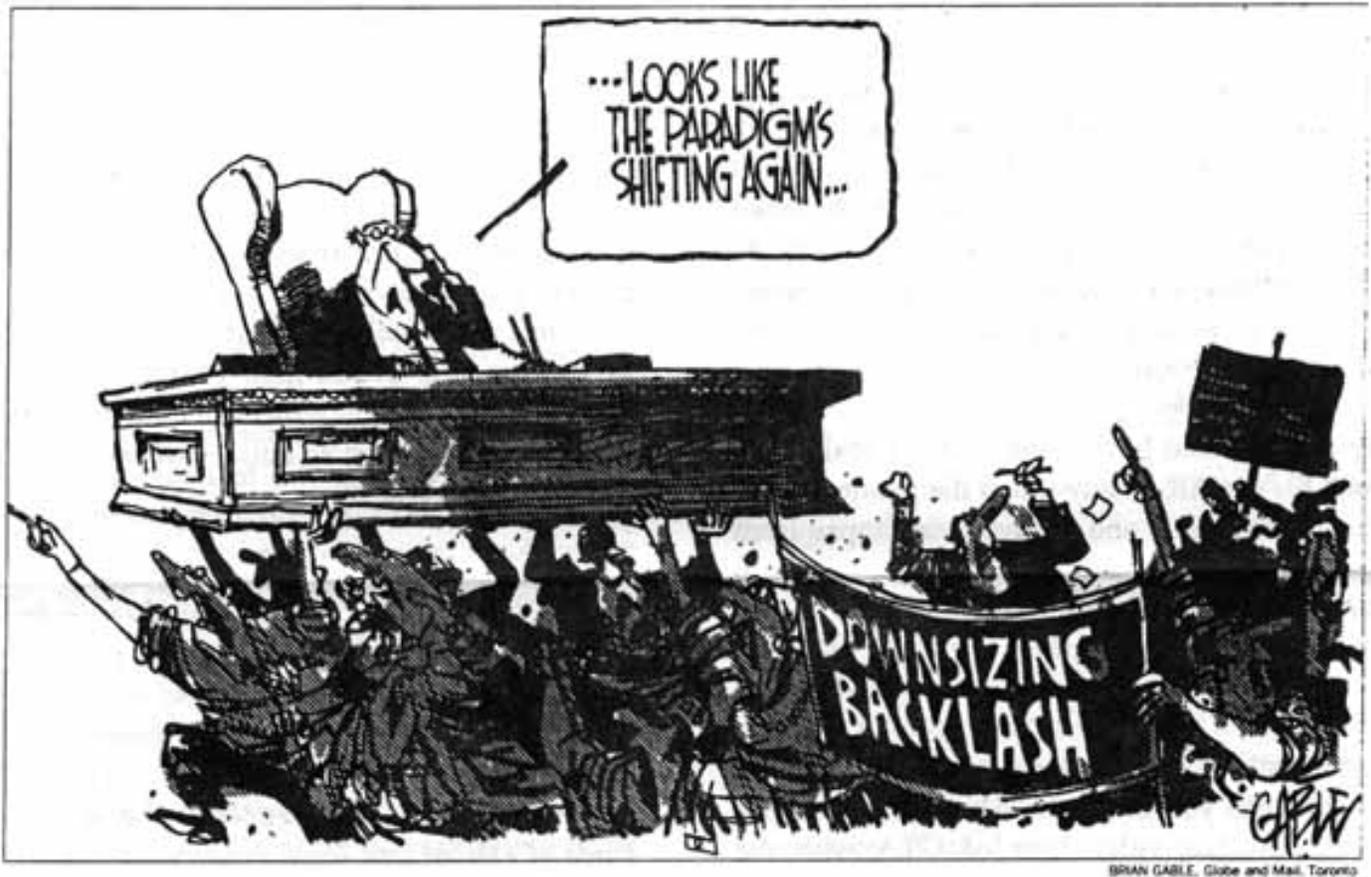
-Indiana

HWA always said that if his work was not of God it would fail. That was not good theology because there are hundreds of religions that are centuries old that are not of God, yet they still thrive. Nevertheless, it is interesting that one of HWA's predictions has finally come true.

-Ed Dullum  
Minnesota

Organizations by their very nature have to promote pride, a killer of the true Spirit.

-Ralph Ward  
Washington



BRIAN GABLE, Globe and Mail, Toronto

## Another Crisis?

Just as we are going to press, we have learned that the WCG's very existence is again being threatened by yet more financial troubles and political infighting. With the official WCG annual budget down to only about \$50 million (and some say it's really less), Tkach is now hinting that it may be necessary to close Ambassador University after all. Dr. Duke was told just that when he arrived in Pasadena for a meeting on June 23. But an even more serious problem revolves around whether the membership can be counted on to continue sending their tithes directly to Pasadena or if they are going to begin giving their tithes to their local pastors. The question becomes: Who will control the limited financial resources that are left - the headquarters generals or the local commanders?

That kind of question has been whispered among WCG pastors for some time now. With Tkach already having cut their benefits and increased their workloads while providing them with virtually no fresh blood from a telecast or broadcast outreach, and with the *Plain Truth* and even Ambassador University on very shaky ground, there is increasingly very little reason for the WCG's field ministry and even Tkach's hand-picked regional pastors to stay loyal to Pasadena. To top it off, with Tkach having even talked of putting the entire ministry on a part-time basis and having them hold church services in their homes, he has been giving his field ministers every reason to start planning a major revolt. Perhaps it is already in the works.

Sources in Pasadena say that the regional pastors (formerly called the district supervisors) recently demanded to see Tkach who agreed to a meeting that took place the last week of June. As we go to press we have learned that the cantankerous regional pastors have now left town, but not before a few resigned.

Is it conceivable that the entire WCG membership would side with their local pastors in a showdown with Tkach? We tend to doubt it. But one insider told us, "I'm all for it! The regional pastors know

best what doctrines to adopt and how to put together the whole doctrinal package for best results in their individual areas. Why shouldn't they be the ones controlling the resulting revenues?" No one is saying what really transpired at the recent meeting. Many knowledgeable observers are convinced, however, that unless Tkach can reverse the rising tide of discontent in the field ministry, his headquarters elite clique may not be far away from ruling over a church with no members.

\* \* \*

We will be monitoring the latest WCG crisis and we will be getting out another issue as soon as finances allow. Our thanks for your continued support and encouragement.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR63\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

September, 1996 (AR63)

### Tkach Goes Ecumenical

It was the kind of happening that most observers of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) never thought they'd ever see. For National Prayer Day on May 2, Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, California became the venue for a prayer service attended by 515 people including Mayor William M. Paparian and other Pasadena area dignitaries. What made the service so unusual, however, was not the day, the prayers, the politicians, or the Marine Corps color guard that participated. What was new was the use of the WCG's "House for God" for a religious service presided over not just by WCG ministers Michael Fezell and Tom Lapacka, but by Rev. Kent Puls of the Canoga Park Lutheran Church, Dr. Les Blank, dean of the school of theology at Azusa Pacific University, Major Charles Yuill of the Salvation Army, Rev. Garner Scott Odell of Westminster Presbyterian Church, and Father Efstathios Mylonas of St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church.

Even in the decade following the death of church founder Herbert W. Armstrong in January 1986, such an ecumenical worship service at the very seat of WCG authority was unheard of. But after more than a decade of doctrinal change and with WCG leaders in the last two years having come out of the closet about their increasing contacts with what Worldwidiers used to call "the religions of the world," such a prayer service is now considered, well, "normal" by the WCG headquarters congregation.

The May 2 event was not a token sop to the spirit of ecumenism. In the last year there have been many cases of WCG ministers reaching out to other denominations in various ways. Some WCG clerics are now studying at seminaries of other faiths, a good number of WCG congregations share church buildings with other denominations, some WCG congregations have had joint sabbath services with other sabbatarian denominations (*Worldwide News*, "WN," 3/12/96, p. 12), some WCG ministers have suggested to their lay members that they attend Sunday services with other denominations, and last February, 43 WCG ministers attended the evangelical Promise Keepers clergy convention in Atlanta where they were prodded into "rekindling, guarding and spreading the flame of the Holy Spirit" (WN, 2/27/96, p. 1).

The new ecumenism, while surprising for the WCG, does seem to be a growing international phenomenon. The *Los Angeles Times* (3/16/96, p. B4) in a Religious News Service article titled "Move Toward Unity Seen in Protestant Churches" stated:

A new spirit of unity is taking hold in American Protestantism thanks to a swell of ecumenical initiatives around the nation, proposals that could see millions of Christians put aside divisions on many topics, including how Holy Communion is understood.

Among the American Protestant denominations pursuing a new ecumenism are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. Even more ecumenical than American Protestant denominations, however, is the Roman Catholic Church. The *Los Angeles Times* (9/30/95, p. B4) in a Religious News Service article titled "Catholic Church Widens Outreach to Other Faiths" stated:

Thirty years after the Second Vatican Council added interfaith dialogue to the Roman Catholic agenda, the changing American religious scene has profoundly altered the American church's outreach to other religious groups. Where once Catholic interfaith dialogue largely meant conversation with Jews, mainline Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christians, today it also means growing relationships with Muslims and evangelical Protestants.

That the Tkach church is very much a part of this growing ecumenism was made clear on June 26 when leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the WCG met for the first time at the Adventist Church World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. Ostensibly, the leaders of the two groups got together simply to discuss their mutual beliefs (WN, 7/23/96, p. 4). But accompanying the June 26 Adventist News Network press release that we received about the meeting was another press release about another set of meetings:

Mississauga, Ontario - Considerable progress was made in recent talks aimed at improving inter-denominational relations between the Lutheran World Federation and the Seventh-day Adventist World Church. The meetings, which occurred June 16-21 in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, sought to break down false stereotypes, identify common beliefs and discover real or imagined friction between the two

churches. A statement released by representatives from both denominations stated that the talks were a significant step "in achieving mutual understanding."

The Mississauga meetings were the second in a series of yearly conversations to be held through 1998 and included the presentations of position papers related to, church doctrines and practices. Lutheran papers addressed the topics of justification by faith and the role of the law in the New Testament. Adventist papers discussed the relationship between justification, sanctification and the final judgement of God, and the Adventist understanding of the law and Sabbath.

Where all of this ecumenical energy is leading is anybody's guess. But a number of leading theologians are beginning to speculate that just as the entire world seems to be economically heading toward becoming what some call a global village (or global plantation?), there is similarly a possibility we will someday see some kind of globalization of religion. Such speculation is no longer the province of small apocalyptic sects. In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (8/31/96), famed theologian and author Karen Armstrong began by asking: "Is acceptance of Jesus Christ necessary for salvation?" She went on to discuss the well-known case of Rev. Richard A. Rhem who has upset many in the Dutch Reformed Church in America by his stated conclusion that such faith is not necessary for salvation. What was most interesting, however, were Karen Armstrong's final comments:

In the light of all this, some Christians even look forward to a new reformation, in which religious men and women across the globe pool the special insights of their faiths.

But Mr. Rhem's critics find this enthusiasm for other faiths deeply disturbing. To them, it seems a betrayal of a divine trust and a threat to religious identity. Some people join fundamentalist sects to find certainty in a world where nothing seems sacred. Others reassert the old exclusive doctrines - more stridently than ever.

---

&COPY; 1996 *Ambassador Report*. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.  
ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher.

---

Like the new fundamentalism, however, the new liberalism is here to stay. In the 21st century, people of all faiths will have to decide whether to embrace the new globalization by expressing it in religious terms or to react vehemently against it and retreat into denominational ghettos.

Putting aside the many obvious questions of global import raised by the above statement, it appears that the central spiritual issues now being faced by the world's major religions are not that much different than those now being faced, albeit on a smaller scale, by the WCG and its daughter churches.

### **Will the WCG Be Scuttled?**

For at least two years, a number of long-time WCG employees have said privately that Joseph Tkach Jr. inwardly abhorred the legacy of Herbert W. Armstrong so much he had a secret plan to purposely scuttle what was left of the Armstrong ship and then shove off, himself, in some kind of lifeboat. We thought such a notion was a bit extreme. But now we are not so sure. So much of what Tkach Jr. has been doing is so strange, so contrary to the successful money-making formulas laid down by HWA, that it is difficult to see any other kind of rationale behind what is occurring.

A good example is the "new *Plain Truth*." As we reported in our last issue, the plan to put a price tag on the formerly free magazine resulted in a monstrous drop in circulation. The number of people willing to pay for the new magazine was so small that very quickly Tkach sent out a letter to all the old readers begging them to resubscribe. If they couldn't afford the subscription price, he said, he'd send it to them for free. Still, most did not reorder the magazine. And no wonder. Many have noticed that the new PT has become essentially a catalogue for selling Christian books, Christian videos, Christian CDs, and Christian knickknacks. The editorial content of the new PT is so vapid, so lacking in substance that even many critics of the WCG are longing for the old *Police Gazette* style of the PT's earlier years. Times change. In Russia, *Pravda*, the Communist propaganda paper begun by Lenin in 1912, once boasted a circulation of 11 million but in recent years saw that circulation dwindle to under 200,000. In late July *Pravda* (which in Russian means "Truth") ceased publication. Some are wondering how long it will take for the same fate to descend upon the *Plain Truth*.

Another WCG institution in deep trouble is Ambassador University. The WN in July admitted that "Ambassador has one to two years to become self-sufficient." The WCG has already cut back so much of its funding for the University that in August, Dr. Russell Duke, the university's new president, sent out a letter to all locatable alumni begging for financial contributions. In it Duke explained:

This past academic year a \$5 million subsidy from the church supported a \$12.5 million budget for 760 full-time students. That represented a rather remarkable reduction of \$9.5 million in subsidy over just a five-year period... For the 1996-97 academic year we anticipate receiving \$1.2 million cash from the church to support a \$9.6 million budget. That's a reduction in subsidy of almost \$4 million in just one year's time.

He went on to describe new program cutbacks and "another tuition increase." We don't know how well the fund raising letter did. But we do know that many alumni who feel that the WCG and Ambassador helped destroy what should have been the best years of their

lives felt insulted just receiving the letter.

Out in "the field" in local congregations the WCG doesn't seem to be doing much better. Since our last issue we have received dozens of letters from current WCG members around the U.S. who say that in their church area it appears that the membership is being prepared for a time when local congregations will be on their own, cut off from headquarters "subsidiaries." Whether that is really Tkach's plan or simply economic pragmatism on the part of local pastors we cannot say. Already Pasadena has inaugurated what they refer to as "house churches" where members simply meet for services in the homes of their local pastors (WN, 5/21/96, p. 2). Many have taken the new plan as one more sign that the WCG-Titanic is steaming toward calamity.

While Tkach once talked of selling the WCG's Pasadena properties as the means by which the WCG corporation could be saved, no buyer has appeared on the horizon and possibly none will. Tkach admits that most sellable WCG properties outside of Pasadena have already been sold. WCG leaders are now talking about breaking the Pasadena properties up into segments and selling off each as the need arises. The first block to go will probably be the mail processing facility. With annual church income rumored to be under \$35 million now and getting thinner by the month - "a worrisome trend" moans church treasurer Schnippert - it may be that Tkach has already prepared a lifeboat for himself and a few friends.

In June the WN announced that a new "transdenominational" Plain Truth Ministries (PTM) has been launched. Begun with a rumored \$2 million "subsidy" from the WCG headed by Tkach Jr., the new PTM, also headed by Tkach Jr., is separately incorporated. Conceivably, should WCG Inc. go belly-up, PTM could continue on as a Christian business that keeps Junior and closest friends in the money for a few years. According to their official press release, PTM has already become a member of the Evangelical Press Association and the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. So, apparently unbeknownst to most members, Tkach has officially positioned his church in the Protestant spectrum as an "evangelical" church. Besides Tkach, the other PTM board members are Greg Albrecht, Mike Feazell, Bernie Schnippert, and Monte Wolverton - the Tkach Co.'s brain trust.

One of PTM's priorities is a radio program that will have Tkach as spokesman. Scheduled to begin airing this fall, the segments will be only two minutes long and therefore should not tax the attention span of listeners too much.

## The WCG: A Dysfunctional Family

In the last few years, the WCG has campaigned vigorously to change not just most of its core teachings, but also, more importantly, its public image. As an indication of just how well the Tkach Co. has succeeded in the latter, one has only to look at the July 15 issue of *Christianity Today* where a huge amount of space was devoted to singing the praises of the new Tkach church. The author of the article gushed, "Never before in the history of Christianity has there been such a complete move to orthodox Christianity by an unorthodox fringe church." True? Technically perhaps, but it reeks of overstatement. Throughout history there have been many cases of large groups, even whole nations, adopting Christianity en masse. Historians tell us that was the case with Russia. Around 988 when that nation was still steeped in paganism, Prince Vladimir shopped around for a new religion for his people and considered Judaism, Islam, and Byzantine Orthodoxy. Judaism, so the story goes, proved too austere; Islam, with its many prohibitions, including one against the drinking of liquor, was also rejected; but the Eastern Orthodox faith with its colorful icons, its liturgical music, its services of pageantry and incense, all offered the kind of grand gesture that appealed to the melancholy Russian soul. And so he converted his entire people to that truly orthodox form of Christianity.

As if in a hushed tone, the *Christianity Today* writer tells us of her initial, almost wondrous contact with the WCG's dream team:

Then came that phone call I will never forget. It was from Michael Snyder, assistant to the director of public relations.... The conversation that followed was nothing short of astonishing.... But most astonishing was Snyder's own testimony of faith, which convinced me he was a brother in Christ.

Whether this phone call occurred before or after Snyder left his wife for the wife of one of his co-workers in Christ, we're not sure. But, as reported in past issues, Snyder is no longer working for the Tkach Co. spinning out PR BS, and he has made it plain that he considers Worldwide a cult.

The *Christianity Today* article calls the WCG's transformation "a story that has no precedent in the history of cultic movements." That may very well be true. We do not know of any case where a cult group has been so successful in fooling so many cult experts. Omitted from the CT article were a number of pieces of data that would have given readers a more accurate picture of what has happened in the WCG. There was no mention of *Ambassador Report's* twenty years of reporting on the inner workings of the group. Nor was there any mention of pastor David Covington's recent resignation from the WCG or his dramatic open letter detailing why the WCG is still a cult (see [AR 62](#)). Also omitted was any mention of the fact that the author of the CT article, Ruth Tucker of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is now working for the WCG-controlled Ambassador University teaching Christian History 101 - bit of information that may explain a lot.

While more and more Christian organizations - particularly those which stand to gain from PTM's new business ventures - are praising the Tkach church for its increased "orthodoxy," some knowledgeable observers still see the Tkach church as a spiritually dysfunctional one. The recent Vol. 13, No. 2 issue of *The Watchman Expositor* contained an insightful article about the WCG by Phillip Arnn who has been monitoring the group for years. While praising the doctrinal changes made by the Tkachs in the last few years, Arnn specifically questions the means used by Tkach Sr. to achieve those ends. Writes Arnn:

Joseph Tkach's decisions affected tens of thousands of lives. Like the enlightened despots of past empires, he used his authority to bring about change for the good of the people under his care. However, his administration was a confusion of mixed signals. Though trained in the Armstrong school of totalitarian rule, he had come to recognize the abuses. As Pastor General he asked his ministers to be less authoritarian, yet he upheld their abusive actions when a member had the courage to appeal to headquarters for arbitration. On doctrinal issues, Tkach would write about New Testament justification by faith, then give contradictory sermons which preached Old Testament "works" salvation.

It appears that Joseph Tkach was the elder brother trying to lead his siblings away from the pain of the past while continuing to honor the parent who abused them. He dismantled Armstrong's teachings but kept Armstrong's form of government, which he used to enforce the changes.

Arnn correctly points out, "The attitude that God's government resides among the ruling elite is still evident, from the top down to the local ministers." Arnn gives a number of examples that match reports we have received. He also states, "The WCG is a dysfunctional family that is trying to move forward under the burden of the betrayal of trust that is the pain of the past." The dysfunctional family analogy is a good one. In fact, some psychologists familiar with the WCG have speculated that most of those attracted to it may actually be from dysfunctional families, and that because of their own abusive upbringing, members in Worldwide have often been unable to see that their ministry was abusive and their church environment dysfunctional. This latter theory is one we hope to investigate in future issues.

The Arnn article, like the rest of the *Expositor* issue, is excellent. Those who would like to obtain a copy should write to The Watchman Expositor, P.O. Box 13340, Arlington, TX 76094-0340.

Phillip Arnn is not the only writer who is somewhat skeptical about Worldwide's supposed change of course. Another is Peter Ditzel, a former WCG member who until a few years ago was writing for the *Plain Truth* and the *Pastor General's Report* (he did the Q & A sections for both, plus ghost writing for WCG leaders). Now, after a spiritual journey out of the WCG, he writes and edits for evangelical Christian publications including *The Quarterly Journal*, the Personal Freedom Outreach newsletter.

In the Journal's July-Sept. 1995 issue, Ditzel asked the question, "Has the Worldwide Church of God Really Moved from Cultism to Orthodoxy?" He answers that question on page one:

Based on my experience as a former member of and writer for the WCG, I believe it is at best premature to declare any such transformation. In fact, it may never be the best option to accept the WCG as an organization into the evangelical fold. Here's why.

He follows with a probing analysis of Armstrong doctrines and how they have and have not changed. In concluding, he advises:

Rather than being accepted as orthodox before it has demonstrated a full accountability, the WCG should - as with all cults - be kept in check by an orthodox Christianity that rises to its rightful place as the moral and spiritual leader of western society...."

The above article by Ditzel was followed by another in the Oct.-Dec. issue of the *Journal*. Titled "From the Plain Truth to the Real Truth," this piece tells the story of how he joined the WCG and then later came to the conclusion that he was in a cult. He writes about the inner struggle he had during that period of time:

The real question forming in my mind was this: If the teachings of Herbert Armstrong were not biblical and were, in fact, heretical, where did that place the WCG? Since the WCG was founded on Armstrong's human-devised, false doctrines, the answer was inescapable: the WCG is not God's Church; it is a false church, any changes Tkach might institute would make no real difference.

Not surprisingly, Ditzel suggests that those in the WCG, rather than try to reform it from within, would be better off just leaving it for safer Christian fellowship elsewhere. We talked to Mr. Ditzel by phone recently and found him intelligent, warm, and balanced. He also indicated that he is currently doing research for possible future articles on the WCG and its offshoots. Those who would like to obtain information about PFO's *Quarterly Journal* should write to: Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136-0062.

## Waiting for Superchurch

Just as the WCG is reaching out to touch other Christian denominations, some of the bigger Armstrongite splits are doing a bit of neighborhood cruising themselves. Through interchurch publications such as *In Transition* and *Servant's News*, through interchurch forums such as Friends of the Sabbath, and through the many sabbatarian discussion groups on the Internet, there seems to be a surprising amount of sabbatarian organization realignment in progress. Many keep asking us: Is some new super Armstrongite or Adventist organization emerging? In September of 1994, one expert in the field of Adventism, William Washington of TSL Publishing House (P.O. Box 08347, Cleveland, OH 44108) wrote us the following:

I wonder if events now taking place in the WCG could be of historic proportions. We could be witnessing the beginnings of America's fourth great Adventist revival that will result in the formation of at least one, new, major Adventist church (I use the word Adventist in its broadest sense). Adventists have not only prophesied falsely that the Second Coming of Christ was near, they also preached Conditional Salvation and repentance. And it was preaching repentance, not making false prophecies, that was truly their most important work.

Large scale Adventist revivals in the U.S. have traditionally occurred in times of great economic and political stress and in times of perceived moral decline. These revivals have not occurred randomly but cyclically: each great revival being concurrent with a great

economic depression. The first was the 1830s and 1840s Millerite revival that occurred during the great depression of 1837 through 1845. The Millerite revival produced the Seventh Day Adventists, the Advent Christian Church, Church of God (Adventist), Church of God (Abrahamic Faith), and other groups. The second great revival was the 1870s revival which was concurrent with the 1870s great depression. From this revival came the Russellites (who became the Jehovah's Witnesses) and the Church of God 7th Day. Charles Russell, founder of the Russellites, and Andrew F. Duggar, leader of the original Church of God 7th Day, were both at one time affiliated with the Advent Christian Church. The third great revival came in the 1930s during the Great Depression, and produced the WCG and Sacred Names movements. Andrew N. Duggar was the son of Andrew F. Duggar, and A.N. Duggar was leader of the Church of God 7th Day when Herbert W. Armstrong was affiliated with that group.

Each of these great Adventist revivals and great depressions have in some way been connected to the first year of a Biblical week of years. The first year of the present week of years was from Spring 1993 to Spring 1994; this was also an apparent Jubilee year which could possibly mean that events one might expect to see in the first year of this week of years were shifted to the second year. History indicated that another great depression and another great Adventist revival were both due in this present week of years. We published a book in 1994 that dealt with the subject of Adventist revivals, depression cycles, war cycles, and weeks of years. I had wondered if we would see another Adventist revival; and then I learned from a friend who left the WCG in July that the organization was disintegrating. Could it be the start of the fourth great Adventist revival? Could one of the WCG splinter groups become the next SDA, or WCG, or JW's? Time will tell. But if the past is prologue, there will be another great depression in the near future; and from the wreckage of the WCG will come a great worldwide religious movement. We can only hope that this next movement, if there is a next movement, will not repeat the mistakes of the past and be led by another corrupt and cunning false prophet who establishes an oppressive and authoritarian cult like the JW's or WCG.

Mr. Washington's speculation about a new superchurch is a scenario many are hoping to see. But a unified superchurch composed of former Worldwidiers seems more unlikely with every passing month. On the issue of the sacred calendar alone, there are now so many competing views that this fall Tabernacles keepers will have four categories of competing church groups to choose from, each with their own sacred calendar and/or way of calculating OT holy days. Resignations from the splitoffs continue to abound. A recent example is that of Wesley B. Webster from GCG. In a resignation letter published in *Servant's News* in August, Webster (75462.2411@CompuServe.COM) indicated that Global is playing mind games with its members and that some of its leaders are less interested in preaching truth than they are in protecting the memory of HWA. Many complain that the latter is also a priority with UCG, CGI, and a number of other WCG spinoffs. Finally, as always, there are new prophets popping up. The latest one is Murray Hyson (RR 3 Westville, Nova Scotia, Canada BOK 2AO) who is sending out a 311-page book and a letter that details why he - not Flurry, Hulme, Meredith, or anyone else - is the True Apostle sent to finish HWA's end time work.

## Bomb-making Prophet Gets Prison

Willie "Ray" Lampley, the former WCG member turned "Prophet of the Most High," has joined a growing list of Armstrongites whose religious beliefs have gotten them into trouble with the law. In April after listening to more than two weeks of evidence, a jury found Oklahomans Lampley, 65, his wife Cecilia, 49, and associate John Baird, 54, guilty of conspiring to build an ammonium nitrate bomb. In addition, Ray Lampley and Baird were convicted of carrying firearms in relation to a crime, and Lampley was also convicted of solicitation of a crime of violence.

The three were apprehended with the help of confidential informant Richard Schrum, who secretly infiltrated Lampley's Universal Church of God and tape-recorded conversations in which all three talked at length about their bombing plans. Before the sentencing in July, defense lawyers contended that Schrum was a wanna-be cop looking for the limelight after the Oklahoma City bombing. And Judge Seay even agreed that Schrum was "a shady character at best." Nevertheless, the jury found the evidence, including 30 hours of surreptitious tape recordings, convincing. The three had intended to bomb a number of targets including Department of Human Services buildings and the Anti-Defamation League's offices in Houston.

U.S. District Judge Frank Seay in Muskogee gave the three the maximum prison sentences allowable for the crimes under federal guidelines. While he did not comment how under the biblical standards advocated by Lampley he and his fellow conspirators would have been stoned on the spot, he did remind defense lawyers that, "If not for the government moving in on them, they may have killed a lot of people." Bombs do that. Judge Seay sentenced Lampley to 11 years and 6 months, his wife Cecilia to 4 years and 3 months, and John Baird to 10 years. A fourth defendant, Larry Wayne Crow, accepted a plea bargain to testify for the government. Crow pleaded guilty to misprision (concealment of a felony by one not a participant in the crime) and received probation and a six-month stay in a halfway house. Lawyers for the three said they planned to appeal, but experts say they do not see much chance of a reversal. (Reported on by Bill Swindell in the *Tulsa World*, 7/11/96, p. 1; see also [ARs 61](#) and [54](#).)

## Mystery Mailer Psychoanalyzed

In our last issue we mentioned that throughout WCG circles in recent years there has been a marked increase in the spread of unsubstantiated, unverified (and often unverifiable) rumors, a factor which has contributed to the morass of confusion in which the Armstrongite groups now find themselves. Even worse, one can often find examples of purposely created and carefully crafted disinformation. A prime example of the latter is an unsigned flyer that is getting wide distribution in WCG circles and which, perhaps because it mimics the layout and type style of a nationally circulated men's magazine, has been accepted by many as factual. While most readers will probably already have seen it, for the benefit of those who have not, here it is:

# WCG Pastor General Junior Agonized Over Sex Change Operation

PASADENA, Calif. - Even in the topsy turvy world of religiondom, the pendulum swings of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in recent years have set them apart. But just as things were about to settle down, rumors are frothing afresh from the Green Street sewer.

In conjunction with an article in the October 30 issue of the dissident publication, In Transigence, these rumors have sparked renewed inquiry into just what bizarre future faces its its Commander-in-Grief, the neophytic Joseph Tkach Jr.

Joe Jr., or just Junior as his subordinates prefer to call him, is most often described as a moody, reclusive curmudgeon who was quoted saying, "Most of the ministers who are left don't even talk to me." While his devotees say this is unwarranted and misleading, many of his detractors are even less flattering accusing him of a style of whining, meandering doubletalk that leaves even his most dedicated underlings clueless and discouraged. But in person, Joe seemed unusually open with a remarkable sense of humor.

## From the Mouths of Boobs

In a follow-up interview to the In Transigence article, I asked about the growing spirit of contempt among the rank-and-file ministry. Leaning back in his overstuffed office chair, a look of puzzlement spread across his face. "How'd you come to that conclusion?" he asked. I was somewhat embarrassed, hoping I could have avoided relating what it had begun to look like I couldn't. And he insisted. So I told him that in the commissary, just minutes earlier, I overheard a table-full of ministers repeatedly referring to him as "that son of a pustuled crotch."

No sooner had the words left my lips than his head fell forward and he began to pound the desk with his fist as he erupted in uncontrollable laughter. After a few minutes he regained his composure. "Oh, no, no, you misunderstood them," he said with his eyes still streaming from laughter, "that was a phrase showing their respect. What they must have said was 'son of Apostle Tkach.'" I was quite relieved by his good humor and throughout the interview he was more forthcoming than I could have ever hoped.

## Upward then Inward and Outward

Junior agreed that there had been some controversy sparked by that In Transigence article since last week, but he said the paper had quoted him accurately for the most part. Repeating the pledge he made earlier, to "follow Christ upward, inward,

and outward," he said this demands more than just the oral skills by which he has risen so quickly. Little did this reporter comprehend, at the time, just what he could have meant by such a cryptic remark.

## Randy Dick Takes Aim at Junior's Feminine Back Side

Though on the top of the corporate dog pile since his father's terminal illness became critical, knowledgeable sources reveal Junior's growing preoccupation with a vision calling him to an African missionary position as the "bride of Christ." Presently, he feels wholly inadequate for the task, except for his submissive spirit. Unusually troubling, however, is the lip service he has been forced to pay to some of WCG's more uncomely appendages namely one Randy Dick who, not only a deep offense to his "feminine" side, is now strategically positioned as Church Administration Director (CAD) and armed with ample wife and savvy to oust Junior from the top.

But Junior seemed strangely unconcerned. "All during my rise to power," he sighed, "some guy or another has been on top of me, but it's just not the same as being a woman." Hanging his head, he continued saying he was particularly unqualified for the job he now holds. Admitting the lack of any broad experience, he somberly raided off a long string of the exploits of former leaders he could never hope to match.

Junior claims his only real contribution to the church is as a bystander, saying he has watched the church through the eyes of a child, a student, a single man and a divorced man. "The only eyes I haven't seen it through are the eyes of a woman," he quipped with a coy wink.

## He's Got a Ticket to Denmark

Since the early days of GTA, an extended hunting trip after the fall festival has been the custom of top ministers. Well, that - like most everything else at WCG - has changed. Questioned about rumors he had taken a sudden and somewhat secretive trip to northern Europe only days ago, Junior beamed saying he had just returned from his first visit to the famous Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. Reaching into his desk drawer, he retrieved a bag full of Danish sugar cookies, souvenirs, photographs of himself at the park entrance and five boxes of unopened playing cards. This piqued my curiosity since any fool knows Tivoli is closed in the fall. When I asked why the park had been kept open so late, he suddenly became sullen and defensive

blurring out, "What makes you think you know everything; things change sometimes." Then he abruptly ended the interview saying, "If you have any more questions, write my secretary."

Scuttlebutt around the Ambassador University campus has it that the trip was, in fact, a preoperative visit to the renowned gonadectomist and plastic surgeon Knudsen Jorgensen. Famous for exorbitantly expensive sex change operations on West German celebs, Jorgensen could not be reached for comment.

Festooned by the rhythm of his royal paycheck and a massive inheritance languishing in Switzerland, money is certainly no object for Junior. But there is little doubt he's strategizing the best way to explain away the soon-coming changes to any surviving traditionalists.

## Easy as a Camel Going Through an IRS Loophole

Fomented by conservatives, opposition has grown to an effort to reverse the longstanding doctrine prohibiting ordination of women as preachers. But most informed observers think Junior can deftly waltz through with the old Ticonderoga two-step: He won't have actually been a woman when he was ordained. WCG leadership, one step ahead of the Fem-Ordeal resistance movement, sees this maneuver as a slick and easy end run to establish a useful precedent even if on a somewhat dubious technicality.

Most of the ministry has no better sources of information than the rumors we all hear. "You know, when it comes to this sort of thing, Junior is really tight-lipped," said Randy Dick, "but I think this is what the CAD in me likes the most about him."

"You needn't listen to all that ya'duh, ya'duh, ya'duh; he just does what he's there for and leaves." After a moment of reflection he continued, "Of course, if he goes through with the operation a lot about him will change, but I don't think this will."

Randy Dick, formerly known as GTA's "right-hand-man," considers himself indispensable to the cash flow of the entire worldwide operation. Several years ago he blithely passed up a lucrative offer from the Playboy Channel for a part opposite Mr. Hands in an X-rated version of that old Saturday Night Live skit corn "Mr. Bill." Said Dick, "Their offer couldn't come close to what I get here." Then he whispered, "Sometimes I get to feeling guilty, but, hey, it's all legal and everything."

November 7, 1995

Granted, many have found the above article funny. But there is a serious problem with it. We know because we spent a considerable amount of time and money trying to verify whether any of it was accurate. After all, we are only too aware of the many sex scandals that have plagued the WCG over the last two decades, and we are always willing to get out the facts about the WCG's leaders. But in this case, we have discovered that none of the claims made in the mysterious mailer's flyer are true.

At first one might think that someone is simply trying to smear the WCG's new leaders. But is that really necessary? Aren't the actual facts bad enough? And if someone really wants to expose their negative side, isn't there a better, more ethical way?

Finally, what kind of person would be writing this kind of offbeat humor? We showed the mysterious mailer's flyer to a number of readers who have a substantial amount of education in the field of psychology. Most agreed with the astute observations one made about the likely personality of the flyer's anonymous author:

The first thing we notice is that the writer is very familiar with the locations, personalities, and climate of intrigue in the Worldwide Church hierarchy. This was not written by a complete outsider or an average lay person. Quite apparent is the fact that the writer harbors resentment toward Mr. Tkach and others who he probably feels have deprived him of something. What exactly that is we cannot tell. He appears to be resentful of their power or wealth or both.

There are little hints here and there that the writer is one who has traveled widely and experienced the good life, appreciates the manly sport of hunting, likes to gamble - one who enjoys only an occasional game of "old maid" would not esteem "five boxes of unopened playing cards," and likes popular music - notice the allusion to the Beatles' song "Ticket to Ride."

But much more interesting is the writing style. Notice the plethora of colorful adjectives. Those alone would lead me to suspect the writer was a professional communicator, either writing or speaking for a living. That conclusion is further buttressed by the writer's knowledge of journalistic interview techniques. It is interesting too that the style has a certain virile punch - what you might expect from someone who lives a fast and active man's life, so to speak.

Now here's something odd. Notice the word "festooned." I don't think I have ever seen that word except in fiction set in the Pacific - you know, action-adventure sailing stories. In fact, I was reading the famous story "Koolau the Loper" just the other day and I noticed it was used there. Who knows? Maybe your mystery man likes to read those kinds of adventure stories himself.

Very obvious, however, is that the writer is obsessed with sex. But notice - in a strange, crude, juvenile sort of way. I think this is someone who views sex as simply a cheap pastime or perhaps as just a body-pampering act like getting into a Jacuzzi for relaxation. And there seems to be an over-fascination with the buttocks of the male physique and this may indicate the writer is either homosexual overtly or latently so. On the other hand, his awareness of the psychology of female sexuality may point to bisexuality, while the derogatory way he writes about the female gender shows an individual who is disrespectful of women, anti-woman, in fact.

This is a tormented person. I am left with the impression that to this individual being in charge is very important. I would guess that the writer is some type of executive, probably an authoritarian one. Notice the references to who is on top, who is on the bottom, the obsession with rank. I suspect you may have here a man who is constantly protecting his position of higher rank within an organization. He must be on top. And yet - and this is not unusual for the type - he must secretly wish that he would at times not have to be on top, so to speak. You know, it is very stressful for executives, for example, to always have to be "on top." Researchers such as Dr. G. G. Scott, for instance, say that one reason that male patrons of so-called "S and M dungeons" are frequently executives or policemen is that those in such professions are made emotionally unbalanced by having to always be "in charge." I suspect your mysterious writer is tormented in that way.

The references to Jorgenson and Denmark are very curious. The writer does not seem to realize that most Americans wanting a sex change operation these days have the procedure done in Trinidad, Colorado. It has been many years since Americans have had to go to Europe for such surgery. My guess - and, mind you, while it may be an educated guess, it is only a guess - would be that the writer was in his sexually impressionistic late teens or early twenties in 1952 when the famous story of Christine Jorgenson's sex change operation in Copenhagen broke in the newspapers. That would mean your writer here is, oh, I'd say somewhere between about 59 and 69 years of age.

Here is another indication of his age. Notice that he views Mr. Tkach Jr. who is in his late forties now as being young, a "neophyte" he calls him. So too, Mr. Randall Dick is portrayed as a young man. I suspect the writer was once acquainted with the two gentlemen and now envies them their youth, their energy, or perhaps in homosexual envy he views them as good looking. This may indicate the writer is past mid-life, perhaps even approaching old age. Like von Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* he seems to be yearning for the days of his own, now-past, youthful glories.

A rather sad individual I would say. If you find out who he is, please give him my advice: Get into therapy.

We still have not discovered who the writer of the article was. Our copy came in an envelope with no return address. It was simply postmarked Tyler, Texas.

## Earl Williams' Woes

When minister Earl Williams of Georgia left the WCG a year ago, some wondered if he would be the leader of a major movement composed of members leaving both the WCG and its Armstrongite offshoots. After all, it was Williams, who helped prod the Tkachs into making some of the WCG's most important doctrinal changes of the last few years. Many saw Williams as highly principled. That image was only enhanced last year when he posted a message on the Internet: "My wife and I have decided to bring complete closure to any relationship with the Worldwide Church of God. We are officially disfellowshipping ourselves from the church...."

Williams was on a roll. Now, however, it appears that whatever spiritual momentum he once had has been dissipated. In fact, some are now of the opinion that Williams' breakaway group Christ Church of Grace is on the way to becoming a destructive cult. Mr. Jasper Fletcher of Decatur, Georgia has written us:

I left the Worldwide Church of God over two years ago and your publications were a factor in my coming to that decision. I then joined one of the offshoots of the WCG, namely Christ Church of Grace, started by Earl Williams. I have since left Christ Church of Grace because of the many problems associated with that church and its founder. Because I was a deacon, a board member, and worked closely with Earl Williams, I am very aware of the problems of that organization. I wrote Earl upon my departure to try to address some of the problems. My letter was returned unopened. Disillusioned, I didn't do anything until now. Lately, however, I have had to come face to face with the responsibility of alerting my brothers and sisters to what is happening in that church.

In the attached open letter to Earl Williams, Mr. Fletcher alleged that the Williams church is becoming a cult "so fast that it's frightening," that Williams has become an abusive and autocratic leader, that "every premise upon which this church began has been

changed, been cast off, or ignored," and that Williams has "turned away from a commitment to faithfully preaching and teaching the truth as revealed in the scripture." Those who would like a complete copy of the open letter should write to Jasper Fletcher, 3688 Citation Drive, Decatur, Georgia 30034. And those who would like Williams' side of the story can write to Christ Church of Grace, 2531 Burwick Walk SW, Snellville, GA 30278.

## A Church Like China

*Editor: Gary Alexander the writer, critic, and political commentator, is currently working on a book about investment opportunities in the emerging economies, with a focus on China. He recently returned from a three-week fact finding tour of that country and on his return wrote us:*

Let me tell you how much my trip to China and my research of Chinese regimes in this century remind me of the history of the Worldwide Church of God and similar authoritarian regimes. In many ways, the Chinese history parallels WCG history, but on a much grander scale: In the 1950s China experienced a time of open self-criticism followed by purges and the Great Leap Forward followed by famines. In the 1960s there was the Cultural Revolution followed by the exiling of Red Guards to the countryside. In the 1950s and 60s new edicts from on high sought to change ruling "paradigms," sometimes twice a year, for over 600 million people!

If you want to see these switches in dramatic form, check out some Chinese films. In the last two weeks I've seen: *China My Sorrow* (1989, directed by Dai Si-jie), *Blue Kite* (1993, by Tian Zhuang), *Farewell My Concubine* (1993, by Chen Kaige), *Red Sorghum* (1987, by Zhang Yimou), and, probably the best, *To Live* (1994, also directed by Zhang Yimou).... Many of these are actually banned in China, but are available in the West.

Can you imagine a billion people living under an everchanging cult-like series of changing paradigms? I've just been reading *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang, a woman born in China in 1952. It's about the "Let 100 Flowers Bloom" movement of 1956-57 when Mao encouraged criticism and diversity of thought and artistic expression. The author writes (p. 212):

Under the Hundred Flowers policy, the country enjoyed about a year of relative relaxation. Then, in Spring 1957, the Party urged intellectuals to criticize officials all the way to the top. My mother... felt that China was really going to have a modern and democratic party, a party that would welcome criticism to revitalize itself. She felt proud of being a Communist. When my mother's level was told about Mao's speech, soliciting criticism of officials, they were not informed about some other remarks he had made around the same time, about "enticing snakes out of their lairs" - to uncover anyone who dared to oppose him or his regime.

It turns out that Mao was so stunned in 1956 by the Hungarian uprising and Khrushchev's "secret speech" about Stalin's excesses that Mao was determined to hear every piece of criticism in the land and then imprison, torture, and murder those who dared to follow his "100 Flowers" edict at face value. He told them, "Say what ever you want to say, and to the full." Then came the hammer, the famine, and the Red Guards. What a social laboratory!

*Editor: From the upcoming book, Mr. Alexander has prepublished 144 pages dealing with China's history, geography, economics, sociology, and politics, and his own travel experiences in that country. Interested AR readers may obtain a copy for only \$10 by writing to Gary Alexander, 11230 Leatherwood Dr., Reston, VA 22091. One section relates explicitly to the Worldwide experience and is particularly noteworthy because it shows how the Worldwide experience can, in an odd way, be turned into something of value:*

Here's where my experience helps me. In August of 1966, just when Mao was cranking up his arrests and tortures, via the Red Guards, I was entering my senior year at Ambassador College, and Karen was entering as a first year student - but with three college years under her belt in Ohio, including a year at Kent State.

I don't want to dare to compare our experience to the Cultural Revolution - that would trivialize the true suffering of others - but we experienced a similar top-down, strict behavioral government, with constantly changing paradigms. We were taught to dress plainly, speak reverently of our leader; there was no open display of affection allowed. We were told to pray an hour a day, which mentally prepared us to believe everything our leader told us, and he eventually told us some very outrageous things. If we disagreed, we were "struggled" fiercely for variations from the party line, whenever we strayed.

Then in the 1970s, I read several books which helped me realize the mind games involved here: Eric Hoffer's *The True Believer* was the best one, along with Harry Browne's *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World*. These books, and many others like them, helped me to see the power of cult-like manipulators over their "dumb sheep" (our leader's name for us).

Since then, I've recognized when I, or other people, fall under this spell. My experience has helped me weigh whether a person is speaking out of freedom, or speaking from under invisible strings of coercion, from a puppeteer/power figure.

That's why I think that the people of China I met are telling the truth. With a few exceptions, in the power structure, I felt the people we met - in accidental, unplanned interviews - were telling us the truth. They were generally happy with their lot in life and their chance to do better. I am not saying it is impossible to fool me, but I think I can smell out liars or con games better than most due to my 12-year experience in this esoteric sect.

-Gary Alexander  
"China Chronicles"

## British to Shuffle Throne and Royals

Of all the remarkable doctrines disseminated by Herbert Armstrong, perhaps the most colorful had to do with the return of Christ. The way HWA explained it, Jesus was not just coming back to earth, he would be returning to reclaim an existing throne - the royal throne of England. While the new WCG has now totally rejected all vestiges of this doctrine (see the nine-page attack on it in the 2/27/96 WN, for instance), many Armstrongites in the splitoffs still cling to the teaching.

How HWA came to conclude that the British royal family is composed of Jews ruling over the Israelite tribe of Ephraim would take a book to explain; it has to do with obscure groups of banished Jews, the Trojan War and the fall of Troy, and mind-boggling conspiracies involving royal seed and such. Suffice it to say, the so-called Stone of Scone, also called Jacob's Pillar Stone and the Stone of Destiny, a part of Britain's coronation throne in Westminster Abbey, was to HWA a very important thing - the very seat upon which the Messiah would one day sit.

Now, in 1996, the 336-pound lump of yellow sandstone is again making headlines. It seems that the Scottish independence movement has been gaining strength and a lot of angry Scotsmen have been talking about getting control of their land back from those uppity people down in London. But Prime Minister John Major, clever politician that he is, has come up with a plan of appeasement: Rather than give back all of Scotland to the Scots, why not just give them back a little bit - say, one stone? And so he has recommended to the Queen that the Stone - which many historians and scientists say had its origins in Scotland, and upon which the ancient Scots used to crown their kings, and which the Scots say is a war trophy the nasty English took back to England 700 years ago after one of their victories over them - should be returned to Scotland. And apparently the Scots, perhaps not the shrewd tough bargainers we thought they were, think Major's offer is a pretty good deal and have agreed to take back the Stone (*Washington Post*, 7/4/96). It will soon have a place of honor in Edinburgh, the Scottish capital.

Well, this flies in the face of everything HWA ever prophesied, and the Armstrongites have been infuriated by this wicked thing the Queen has agreed to do. A good example of the vehemence that the Queen and Prime Minister have stirred up was an article by Gerald Flurry, prophet of "the little book." In his *Philadelphia Trumpet* (Aug. 1996, p. 5), Flurry wrote of the stone (and naturally the emphasis is his alone):

It represents salvation to the whole world! The world cannot even imagine the great destiny of this stone! What a past! What a future! I BELIEVE THIS STONE IS THE MOST PRECIOUS PHYSICAL THING ON THE EARTH. I also believe that Queen Elizabeth JUST MADE THE WORST DECISION OF HER LIFE! AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS MADE THE BIGGEST MISTAKE IN ITS HISTORY!

Nevertheless, the Queen says the Stone must go. It's no wonder she cannot pay Flurry more attention. What with the royals making tabloid headlines in sex scandals almost every week, she is concerned that before long even her subjects in England, let alone the rebels in Scotland, may want out from under her family's rule. And that, she knows, would not be good for the family business. George VI, Queen Elizabeth's father, once remarked that the British royals are "not a family, we're a firm." And a pretty lucrative firm it is with total public funding of the family said to be about \$70 million per year.

So realizing that the royal family has a public relations problem, the Queen has done what any sensible CEO would do in such a predicament. She has called in her finest advisors and formed a "Way Ahead" committee to rethink the mission and means of support of the family business (*New York Times*, 8/25/96). Under discussion are such radical ideas as downsizing the royal family itself and altering the Crown's source of income by giving up the \$70 million they receive each year in public assistance (to be replaced perhaps by reclaiming the rents - which now probably would exceed \$100 million per year - that they once collected from Crown properties such as Regent Street and Trafalgar Square). Also being considered is putting an end to male primogeniture, eliminating the ban on royal marriages to Roman Catholics, and changing the Crown's status as Defender of the (Anglican) Faith. Prince Charles has gone on record as saying that rather than being the Defender of the Faith, he would prefer to be the Defender of the Faiths (plural). What all of this will mean for religious life in Britain is unclear. But one thing is certain. There will be some changes made.

## New Date Set for Christ's Return

Among Bible-believing Christians one of the most frequently pondered questions always seems to be: When will Christ return? We regularly receive letters and articles on the subject. Over the years we have seen scores of different theories; so many, in fact, we have pretty much ceased reading unsolicited submissions on the subject. Recently, however, we received one that did grab our attention.

David Strickland of England sent us a nearly 200-pages-long manuscript entitled *The Crystal of God*. The first thing that struck our eye was the beautifully ornate quality of the handwritten manuscript. Then, as we began looking it over, we were absolutely amazed at the intricacy and detail found in this attempt at a biblical system for predicting the date of Christ's return. Giving particular attention to the biblical Jubilees, Strickland sees the date of Christ's return as only a few decades away. Has Strickland found the hidden secrets that unlock the means to predict the future date? We have no idea. We do know that in the past Mr. Strickland has produced some controversial and thought-provoking works and, whatever its theological merits or demerits, we suspect that in this work Strickland may one day have a best-seller on his hands.

Strickland is currently talking to commercial publishers. But, he tells us, making money was not his goal in writing the book. He would

like to have scholars and serious Bible students read his work and to offer whatever criticisms and thoughts they may have. For that reason, he says, he is offering pre-publication copies of the manuscript in its draft form to AR readers at cost price which is 15 pounds (U.K.) or \$25 (U.S.), including postage. Those interested should write to David Strickland, 20 Mutual Street, Hexthorpe, Doncaster DN4 0EF, United Kingdom.

While on the subject of dating Christ's return, one other author should be mentioned. David Whitaker has written on the subject and he tells us he is convinced that as in Jesus' time, "no man knows the day or the hour." He points out that there are many ways to use scripture to come up with different dates for the Messiah's return. To illustrate his point he has detailed two different Kabbalistic methods and has shown that while each system has its own logic and scholarly advocates, each produces a wildly different conclusion. Those interested may obtain a copy of the letter-essay on that subject for \$2 along with a list of all his other available studies. Additionally, as a follow-up to the collection of his writings we reported on in [AR59](#), Whitaker has put together a second collection of over 20 controversial articles not contained in the first set and is making that available for \$10. Write to David Whitaker, 710 East Chestnut Ave., Enid, OK 73701-2328. Incidentally, our congratulations to Mr. Whitaker on his recent marriage.

## Mount Sinai Lost, Found?

Most diligent students of the Bible are aware that the Mt. Sinai referred to in most Near East travel guides does not seem to have all of the topography of the biblical site: no adequate campsite at its base, no adequate water supply, etc. Furthermore, there is that interesting comment in Gal. 4:25 where Paul states that Sinai is in Arabia, what today is Saudi Arabia, not at the "traditional" Egyptian site given in the travel books. For those reasons we were intrigued by a publication sent to us by one of our readers. In *Discovered!* Newsletter No. 6 of Wyatt Archaeological Research a considerable amount of data is given which points to a specific, location on the Saudi Peninsula as being the actual site of Mt. Sinai. Assuming that their data is not fabricated, it is difficult to believe that they have not discovered the actual location. For information about the newsletter, write to Wyatt Archaeological Research, 713 Lambert Drive, Nashville, TN 37220. We understand that some of the same data is covered in the 223-page book *The Mountain of Moses*, available from CTI Publishing Co., 140 Marine View, Office 204, Solano Beach, CA 92075.

## God on the Internet

"In ten thousand years human beings have gone from hunting to farming to cities to cyberspace. Behavior is screaming forward, and it might be nonadaptive. Nobody knows. Although personally, I think cyberspace means the end of our species.... Because it means the end of innovation.... This idea that the whole world is wired together is mass death. Every biologist knows that small groups in isolation evolve fastest. You put a thousand birds on an ocean island and they'll evolve very fast. You put ten thousand birds on a big continent and their evolution slows down. Now, for our own species, evolution occurs mostly through our behavior. We innovate new behavior to adapt. And everybody on earth knows that innovation only occurs in small groups. Put three people on a committee and they may get something done. Ten people, and it gets harder. Thirty people, and nothing happens. Thirty million, it becomes impossible. That's the effect of mass media - it keeps anything from happening. Mass media swamps diversity."

-Malcolm  
in *The Lost World*  
by Michael Crichton

Malcolm, the character in the new Crichton novel, is not alone in fearing Cyberspace. The Internet and the World Wide Web with their home pages, billboards, discussion groups, and huge files for downloading may be all the rage, particularly among the young, but on any given day one can read in the news media and on the Net itself about the many problems associated with our newest high-tech ways of communicating. For instance, legal experts around the globe today are grappling with the complex issues involving cyberspace and copyright infringement, libel, pornography dissemination, criminal conspiracy, information theft, electronic surveillance, and invasion of privacy. Some are even concerned about the possible use of high-tech hidden persuaders in the form of subliminal messages being implanted in software (the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/1/95, p.1). While such issues may not concern most users of the Net, some problems confront us all regularly.

One problem inherent in the new communications medium is the way in which low quality and/or poorly stated data ("noise") can be quickly and cheaply transmitted, thereby flooding cyberspace with cybergarbage. One Texas reader wrote us, "Quite by accident this summer I found a religious forum on CompuServe which has a WCG section consisting of downloadable files and a message board. Most of the messages are rhetoric/diatribes for and against the current church changes or discussions of HWA's past." And one California reader wrote, "Belated thanks for providing the address of the online forum that nonmembers are/were able to join. I followed it avidly for a while, then lost interest. Entirely too many lunatics babbling about entirely too much lunacy."

A second problem is negligently transmitted misinformation which can be, and often is, distributed around the world at lightning speed. Here is a case in point. Last October we ran a small story about how the Roman Catholic Church had set up an Internet confessional in the Pittsburgh area. We got the story online from a normally reliable source who quoted the July/August 1995 issue of *Episcopal Life*. Shortly after we ran the story, one of our readers wrote us, "With reference to page 9, [AR60](#), I tried to confess my sins via <http://meaculpa.cmu.edu>, but there was no such address." Figuring we had merely gotten the address wrong, we called Father Ben Vaghetto, Chancellor of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He patiently explained that not only was no online confessional in operation in Pittsburgh, but that no Monsignor Timothy Blessing, as quoted in the story, even existed. We then called an editor of *Episcopal Life* in New York to find out what was the basis of their story. She told us that although they had run the story just as we had quoted it, they had since discovered that it was a hoax. They had been duped from an Internet source, their printed story was then replicated a

thousand fold online, we picked it up, and so on. Of course, journalistic errors have been around a long time, but now they can be made for wider dissemination at less cost and at much greater speed.

A third, and even more serious, problem inherent in the Net is its vulnerability to disinformation. There simply are ways in which bad information can be purposely disseminated while the sender's identity remains concealed. For example, in the last two years there have been a number of WCG-cleric impostors operating online. In the 2/15/95 *Pastor General's Report*, for example, Joseph W. Tkach Jr. complained of one such imposter spreading disinformation when he wrote, "The person on the Internet who claims to be me isn't."

A fourth problem involves censorship. A number of our readers say that they have experienced a considerable amount of censorship on the Net, particularly with some church billboards. This should not come as a surprise. Someone controlling a service because he/she is paying for its upkeep is not going to be keen on passing on messages attacking their organization or themselves. The experience of most of our Netaactive readers has been that postings on boards for WCG members and paid for by the WCG or its members are virtually always highly censored. Yet there are a number who have been part of such online discussion groups or chat rooms who are unaware that important bits of information have been filtered out of the discussion or that whole topics are deemed nonpostable.

Some say the new technology deprives users of the reality and spontaneity of face to face relations and very frequently Internet communication brings out the worst in people. An excellent observation on the latter was made by Michael Warren (Mike-W10070@aol.com) in the March/April *Plain Truth* where he wrote:

If you've ever toured the religion forums on the Internet on your computer, you know how divided Christianity can be. In one of the forums I inhabit, the debate over doctrine and theology continues literally around the clock.

At its best, the discussion can be healthy and beneficial. At its worst, it degenerates into venomous accusations and merciless condemnation. Sometimes in our zeal for the truth, we forget things like simple courtesy. Instead of agreeing to disagree about our differences, we're quick to condemn one another.

One pastor in my community lamented that the devil hardly had to worry about losing ground since we Christians are so busy fighting each other.

Critics point to other Internet negatives. Many say it is addicting, even more so than TV, and that with all the "noise" it can be both excessively time consuming and expensive for the amount of information retrieved. Another very real problem and one that is too much ignored, is the economic class bias inherent in the new technology. The Net is not an economic class leveler; it is another means by which the already wide gulf between rich and poor will grow wider. After all, to just access the Net requires at least a computer with modem, online time, and a certain amount of training, all of which come with a price.

However, even with all the above negatives, it is a fact that when used skillfully, the Internet can be a very powerful information tool. And whether we like it or not, the Internet is here to stay. Not only is cyberspace all around us now, it is expanding. And in no field does it seem to be expanding more rapidly than in the field of religion.

Today on the Internet one can read thousands of posted messages relating to religion, participate in theological discussion groups, enter into religious chat rooms, join online debates over doctrine, read the home pages of hundreds of denominations and local churches, read a digitized Bible in six languages, visually tour the Church of St. Luke in Stroudsburg, Pa. or the Sistine Chapel in Rome, see an exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Library of Congress, buy or sell Christian products, get advice from online Christian ministries and counselling services, or join a cyberchurch like the First Church of Cyberspace at <http://excepe.com/chender> (at ground level the Central Presbyterian Church of Montclair, New Jersey). Already there are quite a number of clerics who routinely refer to themselves its cyberministers, including a handful who were once in the WCG.

There are also anti-religion sites. Former WCG member Larry Taylor ([ltaylor@kaiwan.com](mailto:ltaylor@kaiwan.com)), now a freethinking rationalist working on a Ph.D. at UCLA, has posted a number of remarkable papers having to do with Bible inspiration/infallibility/canonization on the "Secular Web" site at <http://freethought.tamu.edu>. They are very well researched and thought provoking but most certainly are not for the spiritually timid.

Of all of the religious organizations in the world, the one that is currently making the greatest use of the Internet is the Roman Catholic Church. We have seen over 210 Net listings for Catholicism. A few examples: A year ago the Holy See announced the start of a home page (<http://www.catholic.net>) created by a group of students at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark. It even includes a section on the Vatican Mission to the UN. A few weeks later, the Vatican inaugurated its own electronic hookup and in only 24 hours more than 200,000 individuals logged on to read the text of a papal message translated into six languages. In the next two weeks more than a million people logged on to <http://www.vatican.va/>, a computer address that will probably become a new bully pulpit for the pope who has already established himself as a best-selling author and world-touring celeb. Want to send the pope a personal message? You can do it via the same address. And those subscribing to the Vatican Information Service (<http://www.vatican.va/vis/>) can receive Vatican communiqués on their computer (for only \$400 per year). There are already many new Catholic programs being planned for the Net. At just one ground-level location - Christ in the Desert, an isolated Benedictine monastery in Abiquiu, New Mexico - there are 24 monks hard at work designing new Catholic sites for the World Wide Web (*New York Times*, 3/17/96).

While the Roman Catholic Church may have taken the religious lead in cyberspace, not too far behind in effective use of the Net is the Worldwide Church of God and its offspring. Here are just a few of the WCG-related organizations that have home pages: The WCG (<http://www.wcg.org>), The United Church of God (<http://www.ucg.org>), The Global Church of God's World Ahead

(<http://www.deltastar.nb.ca/worldahead/index.ht.>), The Church of God International (<http://www.cgi.org>), Alan Ruth and Barnabas Ministries (<http://www.gatecom.com/~barnabas>), In Transition (<http://www.lo.com/~robinson/>), and The Jerusalem Sentinel (<http://www.espercom>).

One of the most popular sites for WCG members and former members is Byron Sanders' Web page on Armstrongism (<http://www.cybergate.com/~birone/Armstrongism.html>). Mr. Sanders has also generously provided *Ambassador Report* with a home page (<http://www.cybergate.com/~birone/arindex.htm>) where there is a listing of all past AR publications.

For those skilled in its use the Internet can provide valuable information about religion quickly and at reasonable cost. But for those just beginning to use a computer or even for those with even a little experience on the Net, learning how best to use the new technology can be frustrating and very time-consuming. That is why so many will be pleased to learn about *God on the Internet*, a new book by Mark Kellner, the "On Computers" columnist for *The Washington Times* and a frequent contributor to *Christianity Today* and other religious publications. Kellner's new book covers just about everything a would-be net surfer needs to know about approaching religious topics on the Net. From basic computer principles and jargon explained in easy-to-understand language to more advanced methods of researching religious topics, his book is an invaluable tool for both the beginner and the advanced Net surfer. The over three hundred pages of well-illustrated text discusses the top ten Internet religious sites using clear diagrams, gives the addresses of many Internet mailing lists, news groups, and file libraries, and even shows how the Internet can be used as a legitimate tool for the enhancement of one's spiritual life.

Most interesting to AR readers will be the chapter on the Worldwide Church of God. Kellner provides an excellent overview of recent developments within Worldwide and its spinoffs and makes what we think is an astute observation: that the Internet has played an important role in the WCG's disintegration. We agree. But in a phone interview with the *Report* Kellner went even further in predicting the effect the Internet will have on religion in the near future:

I think that increasingly it's going to be a major force in the world's religions. What has happened in Worldwide - the rapid proliferation of now doctrinal ideas, the disintegration of old structures, the massive organizational realignments - all of that is likely to happen in a number of other major denominations during the next few years. In fact, I would not even be surprised if before the end of this decade the Internet brings about major changes in the Roman Catholic Church.

*God on the Internet* is published by IDG Books Worldwide. It is available in most large bookstores for \$24.99. Or it may be ordered by calling the publisher's toll-free number: 800-762-2974. Mark Kellner may be contacted by e-mail at [Markkel@aol.com](mailto:Markkel@aol.com) or through his Internet home page, <http://www.reston.com/kellner/kellner.html>.

## Books and Such

Former WCG executive Frank P. Inglima has written a new book. Titled *Don't Overlook the Bible, Look It Over*, it is "a step toward understanding the Holy Scripture." The 152-page book sells for \$8.95 from Inglima Publishing, 8649 Pacific Hills Way, Sacramento, CA 95828; tel. 916-682-4365.

Former WCG member Ivar T. Mattson tells us he is "among those who have returned to the mainstream church." He has also written a historical novel about Judas Iscariot titled *Simon* in which some readers have seen shades of certain characters prominent in the WCG. For information write to Ivar T. Mattson, 10421 E. 44 St. Tulsa, OK 74146-3712.

William L. Hamilton's religious background is mostly in the areas of meditation and Buddhism. He was never a member of the WCG. Nevertheless, in his new book *Saints and Psychopaths* one notices some interesting parallels to the WCG experience. He writes, "There are more psychopaths pretending to be saints than there are real saints. This book will provide you with some understanding of what a psychopath is, what a saint is and how to tell the difference." For details write to: DANA, P.O. Box 1527, Coupeville, WA 98239.

A number of readers have asked us where they may now obtain copies of *The Truth Shall Make You Free*. There are at least two answers because there are now two WCG-related books by that same title. The more famous of the two books is the one by John Tuit. Mr. Tuit no longer lives in New Jersey and mail being sent to his old address is apparently being returned. For details about his book write to: John Tuit, 980 Dehart Comm. Ctr. Rd., Hays, NC 28635. The other book by the same title is by Mr. Zie Muse, Rt. #4, Box 788 C, LaFollette, TN 37766. Write to him for details.

Margaret Robinson, widow of author David Robinson, tells us that do has only a few copies remaining of Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web. They are \$20 each. Write to John Hadden Publishers, Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135.

## Where Are They Now?

**Dannie Rogers**, AC-Pasadena class of 1970, is the WCG's new superintendent of U.S. ministers. Dannie, who in addition to his Ambassador degree now has a masters in theology from Emory University, is married to the former Barbara Lynn Rand and they have three children (WN, 5/21/96, p. 2). Mr. Rogers will be working under church administration director Michael Feazell.

**Joseph W. Locke**, who worked for the WCG for 30 years and who was once one of Tkach Sr.'s closest aides, has left Pasadena for Florida where he will be a funeral director (WN 7/23/96, p. 13).

**Dr. Donald Ward**, former president of Ambassador University, is now president of a Bible study group which offers religious instruction through the mail, on cassette tapes, and via the Internet. Years ago this would have been called a Bible correspondence course, but its creators, who are hyping it as a 'virtual university,' have dubbed it The International Biblical Learning Center (IBLC, 27068 La Paz, No. 488, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656).

**Richard Ames**, the former WCG television personality, is now with the GCG, headed by his brother-in-law Roderick Meredith. Many in that denomination are aware that Ames has a more professional broadcasting style than Meredith and some wonder how long it will be before he takes over as that group's TV spokesman. In the mean time, **Raymond McNair**, the evangelist formerly with the WCG and now with the GCG, seems to have fallen out of favor with Meredith. Sources in San Diego say McNair's actual duties have been cut back and some are wondering if he will eventually realign with another organization or start his own.

With United Church of God having already picked up such former WCG luminaries as **C. Wayne Cole** and **Paul Suckling**, it should not have come as a surprise that WCG evangelist **Aaron Dean** would join their ranks. But when he did recently, it raised a few eyebrows. Because of Dean's long friendship with former WCG superstar **Stanley Rader**, some have wondered if Rader will one day be openly supporting the UCG. Who knows? Rader already has a daughter in the GCG. And one Pasadena friend told us, "Mr. Rader continues to have a deep interest in the Bible and yeah, you got it, God works in mysterious ways."

## Jehovah Visits Pasadena

As many readers already know, while Pasadena, California is often thought of as a somewhat staid place, it does have its share of colorful characters. The *Pasadena Weekly* (5/24-30/96, p. 4) reported the following incident which took place just a few blocks from WCG headquarters:

### Cops Bust God

Police responding to a report of a man with a gun at Brookside Park on Tuesday afternoon found themselves chasing Jehovah. Car aficionados, take note: God, also known to police as 39-year-old Robert Cali, drives a Toyota.

According to an incident summary provided by police officials, Officers Eric McWilliams and Kevin Jackson were patrolling near the park when the man-with-a-gun call went out over the police radio. When they approached Cali, he allegedly drove away in his Toyota 4-Runner, trying to climb an embankment to escape the officers. He stopped the truck in the bushes at the south end of the park, got out, pointed his finger at the cops - and told them that he was "Jehovah."

God was feeling a bit wrathful, apparently, since he also allegedly told McWilliams and Jackson that he was going to kill them. Moments later, police charge, Cali turned the truck back down the hill, forcing the officers to jump out of the way. Cali swerved through the Brookside Park parking lot, police say, moving back and forth through a maze of cars and people. The Almighty-piloted Toyota ended up on a baseball diamond at the north end of the park, crashing through about 200 feet of fence. Cali eventually stopped the car, with cops tackling and handcuffing him after a foot chase that ended several hundred feet to the south.

With help from witnesses, police were able to recover a loaded .45 caliber revolver that Cali had allegedly ditched near a pay phone. Police say the ruler of the universe has been charged with assault with a deadly weapon for driving the truck at officers.

Incidentally, God may not be omniscient, after all: Cali claims to have no memory of the events leading up to his arrest, police say.

Police Lt. Dave Richter acknowledges that the incident is "kind of one of those bizarre cases."

## Dr. John Mahan, 1943-1996

We are very saddened to report the passing of a dear friend of the Report and of many former Worldwidiers, in the Pasadena area. John J. Mahan Jr. Ph.D., died on September 3 at his Pasadena home from lung cancer. He was 53. A former U.S. Marine and Ironman calibre triathlete, Dr. Mahan had a private psychology practice in Pasadena and was the district psychologist for La Canada Schools and other local institutions. A member of First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood and never a WCG member, himself, John was nevertheless a loving and able counsellor to scores of WCG members and former members who all too often had psychological problems caused or exacerbated by their association with the Armstrong movement. Besides hundreds of friends, he leaves behind his parents, his wife, his stepson John Christian, and daughters Sigrid and Inger. Interment was at Resurrection Cemetery in Montebello.

## Letters

During the early '70s, when discussing church problems with friends in Pasadena, I predicted that after Mr. Armstrong died, the church would fragmentize - to friends' disbelief I learned at [the 1993] fall Festival that Mr. Armstrong had made the same remark to a few confidants. Sorry that we were both right.

-JW. Robinson  
Mississippi

For the fellowship (we've been in 33 and 25 years) we still attend the... [WCG] congregation and can attest to the double standard. The words from Pasadena sound nice, but the reality of control tactics, guilt, and attempts to keep us too busy to think and have personal time in our family still exist.

The feeling we get from Pasadena is they want us to donate 10 percent or more, be regular in attendance to show we are good children, and then preach the gospel for them: We do the work and they get our \$\$\$.

There was a short time in 1995 when we were being fed on Christ. No more, at least not here. We hear most congregations are like ours in the way they are being run (pseudo-New Testament), but there are some moving forward toward true Christianity - no doubt due to their individual pastors. We feel Pasadena has been preparing the local congregations for the time when they will be cut loose - possibly with Pasadena GONE.

-"No State"



Six WCG employees (four ministers) were sacked here [in Australia] this past week. There just isn't the money to pay them as so many WCG members are "sitting on the fence." The minister who was unhelpful to me (to put it mildly) as I was leaving Worldwide in 1993 has himself resigned and joined the Methodist/Presbyterian church. He was extremely innovative in church service format and now stories are surfacing about his playing factions in the congregation off against each other as well as other omissions/commissions.

-Mrs. L. Stratford-Smith  
Australia

The [July Ambassador Report](#) has again provided a truthful appraisal of current problems. With one phrase the editor exposes the culprit - the "deeply entrenched fallacy of ministerial rank."

The interpretation of "ministerial rank" by the Armstrongites and other denominational systems is contrary to God's ways. It basically is opposed to God's way of selecting his servants. The "gift of gab" does not determine one's ability to be a preacher of righteousness. One's lifestyle does.

I am amazed how little the Worldwidites and their offshoots question the lifestyles of their teachers. Is it any wonder that some leaders' careers end in "massage parlors"?

-John J. Purvins

*Editor: Mr. Purvins is the Seminar Coordinator of Church Counsel, a Christian organization some former WCG members have found helpful. The address is 130 W. Main St., Little Chute, WI 54140; tel. 414-733-5271.*

Hey John! Just went to see Burt Reynolds' new movie Striptease. Wild! He plays a degenerate congressman who lusts after Demi Moore. Wants sex. I wonder why. They had him dressed up and made up to look like Garner Ted. The silver hair, the tight polyester pants, the leer and all. I couldn't believe my eyes. Wild!

-New York

When we read [AR62](#), your comment after the letter from Arkansas left us thinking you did not approve of Mr. Gary Porter sending out the video of GTA with the masseuse. But in the letter there was an address for Mr. Porter and we ordered a copy. I'm glad we did. Although it was disgusting to see, it did wake us up. My wife and I have decided to leave CGI and find fellowship elsewhere.

For your information, Mr. Porter did not make any money getting those tapes out. He did it to help people like us. Please don't criticize him for doing us a service.

-California

*Editor: I'm sorry if I left the impression that Mr. Porter was doing something wrong. I understand that he, himself, is very pained by what he discovered about GTA. One reader in Tulsa sent me a copy of an open letter in which Mr. Porter likened GTA to a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde. I'm sorry we do not have space in this issue to run it in its entirety as it is an outstanding discussion of the nature of true evil. Copies may be had by writing Gary Porter at 11968 Honesty Lane, Pocatello, ID 83202.*

I make a living putting on piano concerts in nursing homes and retirement centers (1400 programs in under six years). My life's work is very rewarding, but not in dollars. I've seen most of the national parks, hiked and climbed several mountains out west, and met folks in all quarters of the sabbatarian movement. Most of that social contact with so-called law-keepers has been a bitter disappointment that I can only liken to Paul and Christ's experiences with the Jews. Yahshua told them, "None of you keeps the law [But] Midnight Ministries is a good investment in heaven's storehouse.

-Todd Derstine  
P.O. Box 96  
Oneco, FL 34264

I tried to become a teacher using my Ambassador BA but California Credentialing rejected it. So I asked Big Sandy to send a letter which made things even worse. The Big Sandy registrar wrote that Pasadena had only been a "candidate for accreditation." So much for my hope to teach.

-William Noak  
noack@west.net  
California

I can't help but laugh when I hear from friends still in WCG how it might actually be okay to keep Christmas and Easter. I told them they need to read Dr. Ernest Martin's literature because I learned those truths from Dr. Martin more than fifteen years ago!

-Washington

*Editor: In last November's edition of the ASK Commentator Martin wrote:*

*The truth is, a great number of the Rabbis already know that Jesus is the true and only Messiah, but they at the present do not want to disclose it because to do so means they would have to join forces with the Catholics and Protestants whose type of Christianity is filled to the brim with idolatry and with unbiblical customs and pagan rituals. The Jewish authorities will have nothing to do with such rebellion to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. What they see rampant in modern Christendom is pure idolatrous practices such as Christmas, Easter, a belief in the Trinity (which is a Greek concept of God and not that of the Jews or the Bible). They now see an image of a long-haired Zeus in almost all Gentile churches and in their books (and this "Jesus" looks almost identical to that of the Egyptian god of late antiquity called Serapis). Our churches are truly displaying a pagan god, not the real Jesus.*

*It thus appears that Martin has now taken positions on Christmas, Easter, and a few other topics that are somewhat different than his positions of about fifteen years ago. You might want to write to him for details of his current views. The address is Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225.*

I used to make a point of trying to keep up with all of the WCG-related groups to see what they are thinking. But about a month ago I started thinking that I was wasting a lot of time. What with Global, United, Philadelphia, International, Christian Biblical, and about two dozen other groups sending me literature, it was taking me more than 30 hours a week just to read everything being sent to my

home! What really got me thinking though was when Mr. Dankenbring sent me a flyer about the new fellowship groups he is forming. Here is something he wrote about the WCG off-shoots, and I'm quoting exactly:

in far too many cases off-shoot churches coming out of Worldwide... preach just more of the same old worn-out, shoddy, out-dated doctrines and exert the same old heavyhanded church "government" with a new coat of "paint." Many people are tired of the "same old routine"....

There is truth in what he wrote, but something bothered me. I recalled II Tim. 4:3 and wondered, could it be that some of us have gotten itching ears? That we always need some new doctrines? It sounds like we are getting sort of prone to trendiness. Who ever heard of a church that always has to get rid of old, stale doctrines and always have new, fresh doctrines? So last month I cancelled all my subscriptions to all the offshoot literature. I still want to read the AR when it comes out every few months just to see all the craziness I am missing out on. But instead of having the preachers draining me of time and money, I have gotten to taking books out of my local library. I can study what I want and not be bothered with ever changing doctrines from teachers who admit they never could get it right in the first place. I have more time now, and guess what? I am starting to feel better about life!

-Iowa

Having successfully removed ourselves from WCG nearly two years ago, yours is the only publication we read to get the "inside stuff." Beyond AR we don't want to give any more time or energy to those folk; 22 years was enough. Thanks for your efforts on behalf of us all.

-Michael Gitter  
Wisconsin

## Editor's Note

There was a time when getting inside information about the WCG and its offshoots was very difficult. Now, the problem is quite different. There is so much information floating around it is very time-consuming to sort out the worthwhile from the prosaic, trivial, and goofy. We have no plans to expand AR; already many people are spending too much time reading about the Tkach Co., the Armstrongites, and all the way-out movements that are popping up. We want to keep AR informative and interesting, yet readable and of a manageable size. With that in mind, please let us know what topics and stories you would most like to see covered. My thanks to those who send news clippings and relevant local news. And, as always, my thanks to all of you who are financially supporting our publishing efforts.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR64\)](#)  
[Back to Index](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

**February 1997 (AR64)**

### **Ambassador University Closing**

Ambassador University President Russell Duke announced on December 30 that the University's Board of Regents has decided to close Ambassador's Big Sandy, Texas campus, the last remaining campus in what was once a three campus system. Duke explained that the 50-year-old institution would have enough money to finish the current semester, pay off its bills, provide severance pay to departing faculty and staff, and provide some assistance to current students desiring to continue their formal education elsewhere. However, declining enrollment and the University's withering financial base have made it impossible for the institution to remain viable.

Ambassador University, formerly Ambassador College, was started in 1947 by Worldwide Church of God (WCG) founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) mainly as a training vehicle for the then growing ministry of the Radio (later Worldwide) Church of God. In recent years, however, the WCG's ministry has itself been withering in size, and sweeping changes in church doctrine by Armstrong's successors, Joseph W. Tkach Senior and Junior, have resulted in the defection of perhaps two thirds of the church's members and a loss of more than \$170 million annually from its one-time annual income of over \$210 million.

Few WCG observers were surprised by the Duke announcement; most had seen it coming. Nevertheless, the announcement still brought tears to the eyes of alumni who had been students at the Texas campus and at the previously closed California and England campuses. The announcement was particularly upsetting to many who had supported and sacrificed for the institution which had only in the last few years gained accreditation and general public acceptance after more than four decades of significant academic inadequacies.

As for what will become of the Big Sandy, Texas properties no one really knows. Some have suggested that the properties could be utilized as a luxury retirement community for

the WCG's, rapidly aging ministry. But that suggestion apparently does not appeal to the Tkach administration, which is strapped for cash and is not eager for new expenditures. President Duke has indicated that the Board of Regents would consider utilizing the property in conjunction with some other Christian educational institution or ministry. Most likely, however, the properties will simply be put up for sale.

A number of interesting suggestions have been made as to how the properties may eventually be used. For example, some have suggested that with just a few modifications AU could easily be transformed into an excellent low-security prison. With the U.S. prison population having tripled in the last 15 years, many states have started looking to corporate America to provide them with efficient, state-of-the-art, privately managed prisons. With the rapid growth of companies such as Corrections Corporation of America, already managing 47 prisons, and The Wackenhut Corporation, currently managing 27, the new industry is in need of more sites than ever before. The Big Sandy properties are not only large enough to accommodate such an operation, but many of the necessary facilities are already built.

Another possible use for the properties could be as a resort of some type. And with more and more states liberalizing their gambling laws, the possibility that AU will one day be a resort and gambling casino is not as outlandish as it may first appear. Although Texas does not currently allow private gambling casinos, there are some Texas businessmen who hope that will change. Some WCG observers feel that the possibility of selling off the properties to a resort developer may be what Tkach actually had in mind when in November the University announced that its formerly private golf course would now be leased to a commercial operator. Already at the new operation, called Ambassador Hills Golf Club, for only five dollars members of the general public can tee off.

Whatever the eventual use of "God's little Eden in Texas," it is still not a certainty that the AU properties in Texas will find a buyer in the near future. Ambassador's old Pasadena, California campus has been up for sale for more than six years now and still no buyer is in sight for that chunk of Eden. The Texas Eden may fare no better.

Finally, there is considerable speculation about one more potential problem. Much of the land on which AU now sits was previously owned by the Hammer family, a once wealthy East Texas clan that became involved with the Herbert Armstrong ministry and in the 1950s deeded the land over to the then Radio Church of God. Typically, when gifts of land are made to churches, the deeds contain clauses that restrict the uses to which the properties may be put. If the Hammer's transfer contained the usual gift-to-church language limiting the use of the land for religious purposes, the campus may not be unencumbered of potential claims by the surviving Hammers once it is no longer used as a Christian college. Some are speculating that should WCG Inc. attempt to sell the land to subdividing land speculators, a resort developer, an agricultural corporation, the state of Texas, or a non-Christian religious sect, the surviving Hammers (who include Tony Hammer, Buck Hammer, Mrs. Garner Ted Armstrong, and others) may be in line for an automatic reversion of title to the property or, at least, may be able to interpose a major legal challenge to any attempt by Worldwide to sell the property. If that happens, closing Ambassador's Texas campus may turn out to be one more Tkach team fiasco.

## **Tkachs' London Theatre a Success**

Critics of the Tkachs Senior and Junior frequently point to a long list of WCG setbacks as supposed proof of some kind of family curse and imply that somehow everything touched by the Tkachs is doomed to failure. That is not an entirely fair criticism. As an example of how the Tkachs' largesse has been a blessing to some, we need only look at the success of one of the Tkachs' favorite projects, the rebuilding of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. As reported in [AR45](#) (p. 5) and elsewhere, through its Ambassador Foundation, millions in WCG members' tithes have been channelled to this important cultural project. Now, finally, the theatre is nearing completion and its resident company's premiere production, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, recently ended a sellout run in London before heading for New York.

---

&COPY;1997 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly---as finances allow.

ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher.

---

As some WCG members know, the man most responsible for the resurrection of the original Globe is Sam Wanamaker (1919-1993), the actor-director-producer who in 1991 received the fourth annual Ambassador Award for Excellence (*Worldwide News*, "WN," 3/11/91, p. 1). At the Wanamaker fete on Feb. 16, 1991, Tkach Sr. said that the WCG's financial support for the project started in 1988 and was part of the WCG's efforts "to build a better world." But while Wanamaker's name is recognized by many in the WCG, few seem to know anything about his remarkable life. A 12/29/96 *New York Times* editorial by Karl E. Meyer has helped fill in some of the lesser-known facts from Wanamaker's bio that for some reason were omitted from WCG pronouncements about him. Here is an excerpt that we found interesting:

As a teenager in Chicago, Mr. Wanamaker saw a half-scale reconstruction of the Globe at the 1934 World's Fair, and later joined its Shakespeare troupe. He made his Broadway debut in 1942, fought in the Pacific theater in World War II and seemed destined for a successful career as director and classical actor, whose roles included a Stratford-on-Avon Iago opposite Paul Robeson's Othello.

But like Robeson, who was an avowed Communist, and innumerable other Americans who were former Communists or vaguely leftist, Mr. Wanamaker became unemployable in the blacklist decade. Some sought to salvage acting careers by confessing error and informing on colleagues before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Summoned to Washington for such a rite, Mr. Wanamaker chose exile in Britain. As punishment, his passport was revoked in the 1950's.

The Shakespeare project helped Mr. Wanamaker keep his sanity and dignity intact.... Mr. Wanamaker lived to see the Globe's walls rise, this time with safeguards against fire. At his death in 1993, a cavalcade of players filled the memorial service in Southwark Cathedral. What might have pleased Sam Wanamaker more is the throng of students from all comers of the world who crowd the reborn Globe, its fine

exhibition hall and its varied menu of readings.

Our unofficial London correspondent, Mr. R. M. Kachere, tells us that at the restored Globe there is a plaque honoring those that contributed toward its reconstruction and listed very prominently among the donors is the Ambassador Foundation. Additionally, Mr. Wanamaker is very properly honored by a plaque in the nave of Southwark Cathedral. It says "In Thanksgiving for Sam Wanamaker, Actor, Director, Producer, 1919-1993, whose vision rebuilt Shakespeare's Theatre on Bankside in this parish."

## **Now Tkach II Can Say: "This Is the Life! - real ABUNDANT living!"**

One of the all-time-great Herbert Armstrong *Plain Truth* articles was a 1963 piece titled "This Is the Life! - real ABUNDANT living!" In it, Apostle Armstrong extolled the beauties of the good life - specifically, his own! It was vintage HWA. Life was good for him, he said, because he had found God's way and in return for doing the right thing God had blessed him and blessed him ABUNDANTLY!

It was not just in the *Plain Truth* magazine that HWA would so unabashedly applaud his own financial good fortune. Many Ambassador alumni can recall how on many a Sabbath he would tell his congregation of how God had blessed him:

Brethren, other than my clothes and a few personal items, I own virtually nothing. Everything I once owned I have given to God's Work. Nevertheless, God has blessed me, and blessed me greatly, God has seen fit to provide me with everything I need. Take, for example, my beautiful home. It is not mine. I don't own it; the church does. But I get to live in it. I don't own the beautiful grounds and gardens you see at our campuses; the church owns them. But I get to walk there and see and smell the beautiful flowers. I don't own the luxurious corporate jet that takes me around the world. The church does. But I get to fly in it...."

Of course, while such statements may have been technically true, they were, nevertheless, intended to deceive. HWA had for many years been guided by a team of astute CPAs and lawyers. He therefore undoubtedly understood something of which the vast majority of his unsophisticated followers were completely unaware - namely, that possession of great wealth and legal title are not synonymous. As HWA's top advisor, lawyer-accountant Stanley Rader once expounded to a startled Ambassador alumnus visiting his home, "It's not what you own that counts, it's what you *control!*"

One of the funniest of HWA's pulpit ploys was the frequent emphasis he put on the so-called "give versus get" principle. Put simply this was the idea that those in "the world" wanted only "to get," but the truly spiritual wanted very much "to give." What he neglected to explain was that as WCG members would give, HWA was usually the one who would get - their tithes and offerings, that is.

Other "technical truth" techniques used to deceive the sheep as to the magnitude of how much HWA was really getting included: (1) the exclusion of church-paid-for perks when discussing personal income (these perks went into the millions per year with HWA), (2)

using only church salary as an income figure when, in reality, HWA had the power to receive separate salaries from his church, college, foundation, etc. (3) telling members he had just given the church a big loan when, in fact, HWA retained and used his corporate offices to repay himself such loans at will. We still don't know if Loma Armstrong or Ramona Armstrong ever got separate salaries, but a number of other family members received separate incomes from the Armstrong organizations for doing very little. There were other little tricks, but you get the idea.

When HWA's successor, Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach I, came along, some hoped that they would see a greater level of fiscal restraint and a higher standard of truthfulness. Those well-wishers were disappointed. Now, with the old Armstrong empire crumbling about them, some WCG members are finally distrustful of their current leader, Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach II. Many believe that he may be using the same deceptive "technical truth" ploys that HWA did to deceive his sheep and many are wondering just how much he really makes. A few months ago, *In Transition* wrote the WCG and asked for full disclosure as to the salaries and perks paid to all top church officials. The WCG refused to cooperate. Instead, through its field ministry the WCG's leaders have spread the story that no one in the WCG hierarchy receives a salary of more than \$100,000 per year from the church. A lot of people, however, don't believe that that is all Tkach II is getting.

Since our last issue, one WCG insider has quietly come forth claiming to have seen an official WCG document stating that Tkach's actual remuneration exceeds \$340,000 per year. Although we can't prove that figure is accurate, we suspect it is. Undoubtedly, the Tkach Co. will deny it. However, there is one way for WCG officials to get out the truth. All they have to do is let our auditors look at the books of WCG Inc., the Ambassador Foundation, Ambassador University, Plain Truth Ministries, and the many other corporations now controlled by Tkach. How about it Joe? We'll be waiting for your response (but we won't be holding our breath).

## **Fezell Calls For Volunteer Pastors**

J. Michael Fezell, the Tkach Company's number two man, has seen the future and apparently it does not bode well for the WCG. Admitting that the Company's constantly plunging income was the inspiration for one more paradigm shift, church administrator Fezell has put out a call for volunteers to serve as "lay pastors" of smaller WCG congregations (WN, 9/17/96, p. 1). In the same WN containing the Fezell article, a smaller article accompanying an Application Request form, explained that:

Although lay pastors will not receive a salary, they will receive reimbursement for ministerial expenses, supervision from their regional pastor and continued in-service training and administrative support from headquarters. It's a volunteer commission....

The move was widely seen as another step toward a completely unpaid WCG field ministry. Some paid WCG ministers, sensing that the new volunteers represent a threat to their own employment, have begun derisively referring to the volunteers as "the lays." And some WCG pastors have even speculated that before long the WCG will see female lay pastors. They point out that accompanying the articles calling for volunteer ministers was a large article titled "Every Woman Has a Ministry." Another interesting observation

is that Tkach, who has an accredited MBA, seems to be mimicking the current downsizing trends of the corporate World where CEOs continue to make huge salaries and even give themselves bonuses while they downsize their corporations and shove many of their employees into poverty. Yes, the gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider - even in the WCG.

Christian men and women interested in volunteering as WCG lay pastors should keep in mind that once accepted into the lay program you will be required to go through a five-day "intensive training session in Pasadena" and you may also be required to relocate. To request an application form, write to: Lay Pastor Application - CAD, Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green Street, Pasadena, CA 91129.

## **WCG Slouches Toward Sunday**

You would think that with all the WCG's financial woes its top honchos would put the brakes on any more doctrinal changes, at least for the time being. But noooooo. Tkach & Co. continue to coax their ever shrinking band into the world of Protestantism. Why the Tkach clique doesn't just tell its members they are already Methodists, Lutherans, or something else, and immediately bring in the few remaining Protestant doctrines they have yet to adopt, we don't know. Nevertheless, the latest little paradigm shift, not unlike the recent slide into Easter worship (see [AR62](#), p. 2) is somewhat subtle only if you are a brain-dead WCG member. If you've been reading the *Report* for a few years, you probably already knew something like this was coming.

In November, the WCG introduced a new church service time slot in Pasadena. While on Saturdays at WCG headquarters there is still a morning service remaining, now there is also a late afternoon service for those who can't make the earlier one (convenient for those who are on the golf links or working at McDonald's all morning). The Ambassador Auditorium late show begins at 4:30 p.m. every Saturday. If you open an almanac and look at the sunset times for early winter in southern California, you notice an interesting thing. For most of the winter, those late services actually extend well beyond sunset into what WCG clerics used to call the first day of the week. It takes little imagination to see that the late service will eventually become the late, late service (leaving more time on the links) and then within a few years, or sooner, many will find it quite natural when services begin on Sunday morning.

Once the Sunday services arrive, it will be interesting to see what form they take. Last summer, the WCG began experimenting with a "contemporary worship" format at special Friday night meetings that supplemented their regular Saturday services (WN, 8/27/96, p. 13). At these contemporary worship services, members could come in casual dress to sing modern "praise and worship songs" to a rock beat and watch Christian videos. Among those who've participated in the program are Mike Hale, Mike North, Terry Miller, and the Oasis Praise Band. One guest speaker last summer was actor Bruce Marchiano who played Jesus in the movie *Matthew*. Pasadena members we've talked to say they are not sure if the experiment proved a success.

## **More Doctrinal "Clarifications"**

If The Guinness Book of Records contained such a church category, certainly the WCG would be listed as the world's all-time doctrinal change champ. In November the Tkach administration continued its record run by issuing new doctrinal formulations on abortion and the death penalty. The statements (WN, 11/19/96, p. 9) contained these issue-sidestepping and paradoxical tidbits:

The Worldwide Church of God teaches that under all ordinary circumstances abortion is not a legitimate biblical or ethical choice and constitutes sin. When a mother's life is at stake, however, abortion is considered a legitimate biblical choice by the church. Member's choices about abortion in other extraordinary circumstances, such as rape or incest, are not considered a test of fellowship.

The Worldwide Church of God teaches the biblical mandate that God has placed responsibility for human government and justice into human hands, under his sovereign authority, and that such human government is to be exercised justly, honestly, fairly, ethically and responsibly... [biblical citations]. Therefore capital punishment may or may not be appropriate, depending on its administration.

Finally, the WCG seems to be changing its decades-long teaching on church hierarchy. Since at least the mid-1950s the church had taught that Paul in Eph. 4:11 was setting up a hierarchy of "ministerial rank." But in a lengthy multi-authored article in the 9/17/96 WN, the Tkach Co. reinterpreted that verse to be a description of individual ministerial talents or functions. According to that WN article (p. 11):

Doesn't everybody know what an evangelist is? No. We have used the title as an administrative rank, but Paul was probably not describing a church-government hierarchy in Eph. 4:11.

## **In Transition Terminated**

In October, publisher John Robinson announced that as of January 1997, his religious newspaper *In Transition* will cease publication. Since early 1995, *In Transition* has provided those in the sabbatarian Christian community with frequently interesting "News of the Churches of God" of Armstrongism. According to the publisher, among those factors precipitating the publication's demise were "an increasing calcification within the different fellowships.... a growing tendency for ministers and other members to view their group as the only true church or, at least, to view themselves or their group as spiritually superior to others within the Body of Christ" [in much the same way as the sabbatarians running *In Transition* view nonsabbatarian Christians - ed.] and a realization that the publication was serving as a vehicle "to polarize rather than to unify the different fellowships of the WCG offshoots and the greater Sabbatarian community."

While true as far as it went, we nevertheless discovered that there were other factors at work as well. One knowledgeable source told us:

John meant well. I know he thought if we just got out the facts, truth would prevail, the various "Churches of God" [the WCG breakoffs] would all straighten out their organizations and eventually they would come together in love to perform a great end-time Work, sort of what we all envisioned years ago. But so far it hasn't worked out that way.

As a member of United [Church of God] John was getting a lot of flak from United members who thought he was devoting too much space to other groups like Global. From members of other groups he was getting flak for being too pro-United. From those who like GTA he was getting flak about mentioning Ted's legal problems. From those who didn't like Ted he was getting flak about not providing enough detail about GTA's sexual activities.

Many could sense that he was trying very hard - perhaps too hard - to give Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong an honored place in the minds and hearts of those who have left Worldwide. But it is pretty hard to ignore all the dirt that has come out about Mr. HWA, especially when you consider it was Mr. David Robinson, John's own father, who blew the whistle on Mr. Armstrong having committed incest with one of his own daughters. Many readers came to suspect that John was struggling with the issue of whether or not his father had been a true Christian. It did not help him when many noticed he did not even give his father's death a mention in *In Transition*, let alone a proper obituary. That even upset some of his friends. I can only imagine what his relatives thought.

As for Mr. Dixon Cartwright's plans to continue on with another publication, we hope he can succeed. It's possible he will as he has been *In Transition's* real editor anyway. While he doesn't have John's dynamic leadership, he certainly is a skilled editor and has good intentions. But as John and the rest of us discovered, a publication of this type can be a trial.

Trial or no trial, for thousands of avid readers *In Transition* has provided some wonderful tidbits of controversy. A good example is the December issue with its lead article by Aaron Dean, a long-time Stanley Rader aide. In that piece, Dean, now based in Gladewater, Texas, not far from where Cartwright's new publication is based, hinted that HWA would never have named Joseph Tkach Sr. as his successor had HWA not been seriously ill (and presumably not in a lucid state of mind) when he did so shortly before his death. (Actually, Dean should know. He was part of the Tkach cabal that pulled off the death bed coup.) Almost as if to suggest that he, himself, should have been named HWA's successor, Dean (and publisher Robinson obviously) included along with the fluff piece a number of photos showing how close Dean had been to HWA. Many did not miss the inference that if Tkach Sr.'s appointment was invalid, then Junior's is invalid as well. (Needless to say, Dean, who has been on the Big Sandy faculty until recently, can kiss his severance pay goodbye.) But even in United the piece has caused some ruffled feathers because some are now saying that if Dean was really meant to have succeeded HWA, then his credentials are superior to those of UCG Chairman David Hulme. (Maybe Dean shouldn't count on ever getting anything from UCG either.)

John Robinson's loyalty to the legacy of Herbert W. Armstrong is now self-evident, but that was not always so. Just weeks before his death, author David Robinson, very aware that his time was near, phoned *Report* editor John Trechak and told how he had signed over the copyright of his book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* to his son John with the confidence that after his death his son could be trusted to promote, reprint, and distribute the book. In fact, in what was one of his very last phone calls to *Report* editor Trechak, David, in a weak and strained voice, quietly said that almost the only thing that had kept him alive the previous two weeks was his determination to complete a short history of how the *Tangled Web* had come to be written and published despite the vigorous efforts of Herbert Armstrong's lawyers. The history was finally just about completed, he said,

and it was to be included along with those copies his son would distribute after his death.

Before his father died, John Robinson purchased almost all of the remaining supplies of the Tangled Web. It was assumed by everyone who knew of the matter that at some point John Robinson would be selling the copies he purchased along with the 44-page history of how the book came to be. Everyone also assumed that later, as holder of the copyright, John Robinson would be reprinting the book and acting as its publisher. But that never happened. He has never publicized the fact that he has copies for sale; what copies he has are rotting in a warehouse somewhere.

Some in Texas are now saying that John Robinson and his associates have become Herbert Armstrong's greatest defenders. Nevertheless, many of us will be sorry to see *In Transition* out of business. It performed a valuable service in reporting the goings-on in the largest of the Armstrongite groups - a service AR did not have the financial means to perform. As mentioned above, Robinson associate Dixon Cartwright intends to continue putting out a publication somewhat similar to the one terminating. It will be called *The Journal: News of the Churches of God* (Box 1020, Big Sandy, TX 75755). Cartwright plans to cover even the smaller Armstrongite breakaways, but admittedly will focus on the larger ones: "United, Global, International, and, as much as feasible, Philadelphia." The latter phrase leaves us thinking that most of the 100 or so Armstrongite groups now in existence will not come within the scope of their coverage. And whether or not it will even have the ability to fully monitor the behind-the-scenes activities of the major seven or so Armstrongite breakaways remains to be seen.

## **Global and United - Now Less So**

The two biggest WCG breakaways, the United Church of God and the Global Church of God, are reportedly experiencing existence-threatening difficulties. In the fall of 1996 Roderick Meredith's Global Church had to take out a \$1.2 million dollar loan to keep up its ministerial outreach. At about the same time seven key administrative personnel were let go. They were administrators Jeffrey Patton, Brian Weeks, Michael Kahlenberg, Brian Hoselton, Eric Myers, Lory Nelson, and Ron Nelson. Still remaining are Larry Salyer, Carl McNair, and Edwin Pope. Some insiders say that because aging evangelist Rod Meredith stubbornly refuses to share power with subordinates clearly more competent than himself, the situation within Global is likely to deteriorate further in the coming months.

Even bigger problems are plaguing the 20,000-member United Church of God. The biggest of the WCG splitoffs, United is getting increasingly disunited and appears about ready for a split of its own. Informants leaving the group tell us that besides haggling over such matters as sacred calendar calculation, the really big issue upsetting both its ministers and members is what its Arcadia, California "home office" euphemistically refers to as "the governance problem."

In simple terms what it comes down to is this. The denomination's home office executives feel they should be the ones calling the shots regarding which ministers will serve where, how local congregations will be organized, and how the denomination's money will be spent. However, many UCG field ministers and members have come to

believe that the old authoritarian top-down style of leadership inherited from Herbert W. Armstrong is no longer apropos. After all, they say, the Arcadia executives were chosen by the ministers who met in Indianapolis in 1995. It was not the headquarters executives who chose the field ministers. While not all UCG field ministers are ready to apply the same democratic principles to their own flocks, many members think it is time that they do. After all, they say, the local ministers would not be getting a salary if the membership were not financially supporting them.

UCG's home office execs see their church as being organized along standard business textbook lines. The UCG's tripartite structure of home office execs, field ministers, and members is somewhat analogous to the typical business organization structure of corporate officers, middle management, and workers. The big difference with UCG, however, is that the folks on the lower rung are not getting paid by those over them; they are paying the guys above them. Perhaps a better analogy of UCG's tripartite structure might be found in certain kinds of political writings where nations are divided into royalty (or super elites), supporting professional classes, and the general public (often disparagingly referred to as the masses, the great unwashed, or the bewildered herd). UCG's top honchos have assumed that the old authoritarian structure brought over from the WCG would hold, that those at the bottom would remain passive "spectators of action" who only pray and pay. But after their bitter WCG experience, not all UCG members are willing to abide by the old status quo.

At the root of the current "governance problem" in UCG is the classic *elite versus egalitarian* tension so often encountered in political theory. The big question for UCG has therefore become: Is the breakaway church going to be run by the elites (in this case individuals ordained by the old WCG that has since proven profligate) or is the church's ministry going to derive its earthly authority from an egalitarian legitimization granted by the spirit-filled membership? It will be interesting to see if United can find a solution to the problem.

The fight for control is likely to heat up in the next few months. Already a few outspoken UCG ministers have been disfellowshipped by their fellow ministers. And more than a few UCG congregations are talking about bolting the umbrella group. Many are openly calling the Arcadia home office "tyrants."

One related facet of the overall problem is the question of who is going to pay for the retirement of the many aging ministers that left WCG to find refuge in UCG. But an even more inflammatory issue involves the delaying tactics of the UCG's top executives in fulfilling promises made to relocate the church's so-called home office. At Indianapolis in May 1995, it was decided by the assembled ministers that Arcadia, California was to be only a temporary headquarters location. Many in UCG view the Los Angeles area as an inappropriate headquarters location because of its "worldly" environment, its distance from major centers of UCG membership (the majority of its members live east of the Mississippi), and on recent business studies that have concluded that Los Angeles County, where the home office is located, is currently the very worst U.S. metropolitan area for the start-up of a new business venture.

Clearly the Arcadia bosses have been dragging their feet about moving. And many UCG pastors and members feel that what is really motivating their stubborn refusal to move is

not the good of the church, but financial/career/personal self-interests. One UCG member told us:

A lot of us have heard that David Hulme has been working on a Ph.D. at USC. Some of us think he is using the church only to get an income to finish his education and then move on. Some think he wants to get back into the concert productions business, maybe even take over the old Ambassador Auditorium, and that those are his real motivations for staying in L.A. Steven Andrews has more opportunities if he stays in California because of his accounting and law credentials and some of us think he is not too eager to take the bar exam in another state. Did you hear about his crazy argument for wanting to keep headquarters in California? We refer to it as "Cookiegate." We also know that some at the home office own real estate in the L.A. area and don't want to lose money selling now in what is considered a buyers' market there. Furthermore, a lot of us think the home office bunch are just spoiled, stuck-up types who can't see themselves living away from the sun and fun of Hollywood rather than here with us poor folk in America's heartland.

On the other side of the coin, some of the leaders in Arcadia seem to think they are the victims of a conspiracy. One loyalist said:

Mr. Hulme and the others have been very tolerant of dissent. Let's face it, Mr. John Robinson and others are more interested in their own power base and income. They are collaborating with members from other groups to start up their own competing operation. IBLC [the International Bible Learning Center which Robinson helped start in 1995] is not good for United. It is a business competitor and is already taking away members and income from the church. Frankly, if you ask me, Mr. Hulme has been far too liberal in allowing such nonsense in the church.

But what exactly is "the church"? While the Arcadia home office seems to feel that they are "the church" and that the field ministers and members have simply to decide if they will stay with "the church," others out in "the heartland" feel quite the opposite. Many UCG members have the rather democratic view that UCG's membership constitutes "the church" and, as one member put it, "the home office can stay with the church - or they can leave the church!" As John Robinson himself wrote in the December *In Transition*:

The honeymoon seems to be ending between a significant number of members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and the church's home office as some members, including elders, express concern that the church's leadership is moving away from the "spirit of Indianapolis."

## **GTA Sex Trial Postponed**

Evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) has been given a little more time to come up with an explanation as to what he was doing in a Texas massage parlor on Saturday, July 15, 1995. Plaintiff Suerae Robertson, the masseuse who is suing him for sexual assault (see ARs 60-62), requested and was granted a postponement of the trial date. The Clerk of the Smith County Courthouse in Tyler, Texas informs us that a new trial date has not yet been set.

In the meantime, the Church of God International, which GTA founded and which still

retains him as a minister and broadcaster, has lost about half its members in the past year. Nevertheless, the GTA radio and television programs remain on the air in many markets.

## **Herbert Armstrong Resurrected!**

Just when some thought it might be safe to go back into the "Churches of God" - HE'S BACK! Yes, Herbert W. Armstrong is up and around. No, not physically - although this past January 16, as they've done on the anniversary of his death each year since he died in 1986, small groups of true believers gathered at the Armstrong grave in Altadena, California to pray for his immediate physical resurrection. Thankfully, at least that hasn't happened. Nevertheless, HWA is back in spirit as his writings and ideas are being rediscovered by thousands around the world.

In most of the Armstrongite groups - the Global Church of God, the Philadelphia Church of God, the United Church of God, and a host of others - HWA's books, articles, and pamphlets are being reprinted, distributed, studied, and analyzed by religious zealots for whom, it seems, the last twenty years just never happened. About the only HWA writing that has not come back into circulation is *1975 in Prophecy*. All the others on Israel identity, sabbath and holy days, even divorce and remarriage are again coming into use.

One of the most active in this resurrection process is Richard Nickels, president of the Bible Sabbath Association and founder of Giving and Sharing, a sabbatarian publishing group (P.O. Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849; tel. 888-687-5191). In recent years the latter organization has become one of the best sources for copies of HWA classics. Nickels' collection *Early Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong* contains many important HWA writings published between 1928 and 1953. While insisting he is not a worshiper of HWA, Nickels nevertheless feels that HWA's teachings, with only a few exceptions, were fundamentally correct.

Finally, for those with net access, there is the Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.golden.net/~mtech/memorial/hwa/hwa.html> where you can get a number of HWA writings. At this site you can even get the entire text of HWA's book *Mystery of the Ages*. Of that book HWA once wrote, "Time may prove this to be the most important book written in almost 1,900 years." The Tkachs disagreed and the book is no longer available from the WCG, but it is available at the Memorial Page.

## **Whodunit?**

You are a murder mystery fan and you start reading Ellen Hart's latest, *The Oldest Sin*. On the opening page you notice that the book has something to do with a Bible college in the Los Angeles area. The year is 1971. A few pages later you notice that the founder of the college is "an Apostle" and, guess what? He has "a Commission." Hmmm. The Apostle has an evangelist son and his wife thinks the Apostle's followers are "spineless wonders." The Apostle's church is "the only true church," it's run along authoritarian lines, and the whole thing is "sinking into a kind of madness." Now you're really hooked. A few more pages and a liberal minister appears. He says makeup is okay, you can eat pork, and he's got some new ideas on tithing. Before you know it the "Church of the First Born" is heading for an annual convention, a week-long sabbath festival they call

"Tabernacles Week." But then you panic and blurt out, "Oh no! Don't go! DON'T GO!! The sermons are bad enough, but this is a murder mystery. Someone is bound to get hurt real bad!"

You want to put the book down in terror of what you know will happen at any moment. Instead, to gain some composure, you turn to the dedication page. It reads:

For Gregory Johnson, one of the greatest gifts of my college years and beyond, and also for all those long-ago friends who survived their membership in the Worldwide Church of God.

Oh, that explains it. You read on and the parts about dorm life at the Bible college bring back a lot of memories of your own years at Ambassador. You vaguely remember a Greg C. Johnson, "yeah, he was that talented, well-dressed guy who hung out with the arty set." But who is Ellen Hart? You dig out all your old Envoys and you can't find an Ellen Hart. But that picture of her inside the back cover looks familiar. And then you remember. Ellen Hart is none other than Pat Boehnhardt, AC/AU (or whatever) Pasadena, 1971.

Those of us who had the pleasure of being at Ambassador in the days when she was there recall her as one of the absolutely most fun-loving, witty, and creative people who ever passed through that institution, or any other for that matter. She wrote prose, poetry, songs. She sang and played guitar and piano. And a lot of us still remember those lunch-time Student Center organ ducts she played with PT writer Charlie Vinson. After Ambassador, Pat returned to the Minneapolis area where she had twelve years of experience as a professional chef. She then began a professional writing career and became a two-time winner of the Minnesota Book Award for mystery/detective fiction. *The Oldest Sin*, her tenth book, is published by Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, and is available at most major bookstores.

Whodunit? We can't tell you. But if you were ever in the WCG or a church like it, you will find *The Oldest Sin* a wonderfully entertaining reading experience.

## Letters

Some time ago we were told that when the church's Pasadena properties are sold the money would be used to allow local Worldwide congregations to build their own church buildings. Now we have heard that the money will just be given to some of the church's top ministers. Which story is true?

-Missouri

*Editor: There is no telling what the latest plan is. But in the September WN (p. 7) Bernie Schnippert, WCG's treasurer, stated that the first priority would be "to fund a retirement plan for faithful full-time ministers and employees who meet the criteria of age, years of service, loyalty, membership status and other requirements not delineated here." After that, if there is anything left over, the plan is to perhaps use some for other, not as yet determined, purposes. So, no need to worry. Tkach and friends will be well provided for.*

We left the WCG in 1995 and went into United. Now we are out of that organization too. About three months ago we started reading the *Tangled Web*, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, and *Armstrongism, Religion or Ripoff?* Needless to say we were shocked. But we know these things are true because we read much and talked to many people.

We heard so many rumors about WCG and they came true. Now we are hearing rumors about United. One is that Bob Dick was at one time receiving two paychecks, one from WCG (before he officially resigned) and the other from United. We also heard that United was two years in the making before they emerged. They tried to tell us they just went to Indianapolis and it was just born, almost spontaneously. Do you realize that these same ministers were therefore the very ones who were once aligned with the "great falling away"?

We also heard that some evangelists in GCG are wanting to align with United, but they are doing it secretly. They know Meredith would never step aside and share the spotlight with anyone else. GCG is hurting for money, so what to do? What to do?

-Mr. & Mrs Clyde E. Brown  
Ohio

To obey blindly for the sake of a command is not a virtue in itself, but a slavish submission from fear of punishment. Religious knowledge is much more profound and complex than historical knowledge. Most religious beliefs are confirmed through experiences rather than from texts and man-made traditions.

-Walter Urban  
Kansas

## **The Case of the Missing ARs**

Did you receive our last issue, [AR63](#)? Apparently a lot of our regular subscribers did not. [AR63](#), which began with an article titled "Tkach Goes Ecumenical," was mailed out at the very beginning of October. Normally, within three weeks of mailing out an edition we start hearing from readers. But by mid-November we had heard from only a handful. Then a number of long-time friends wrote or phoned and said they still had not received their issue.

By mid-December it was obvious that something was very wrong. For instance, the amount of contributions received after the October mailing were so low we wondered if we would be able to continue publishing. In fact, this issue only gets out through a small bank loan. From the number of complaint letters that we received and from the fact that we had very few address correction updates from the post office it appears now that perhaps two thirds or more of our last mailing just disappeared.

What happened? Frankly, we still don't know. At first we suspected that the record

number of bulk mailings that politicians made before last November's U.S. elections somehow interfered with our own bulk mailing. But, why then did so many foreign mailings, including many air-mailed to Canada, also somehow get lost? We haven't a clue. We have talked to postal officials and they too cannot figure it out. Whatever the cause, it has set us back a little bit.

If you are one of our regular subscribers and did not get a copy of [AR63](#) (October 1996) please be sure to mention that in a letter. We still have a few copies left over from our last printing and we will try to get one out to you ASAP.

My apology for this issue having to be so short. But it's all that we can afford at this time. With a bit of luck we will be able to get out a larger issue next time - hopefully in a couple of months. My thanks to all for your patience and support.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR65\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

May 1997 (AR65)

### More Secrecy at the Tkach Co.

Joseph W. Tkach Junior, the heir to the religious empire started by Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), now rules over a Worldwide Church of God (WCG) so enfeebled that reading the WCG's monthly financial reports in the church's *Worldwide News* (WN) is a little like reading the medical chart updates for a terminally ill hospital patient. For the months December 1996 to April 1997, the WCG Treasurer's reports began: "Income increase in December needed for stability," "December stable," "1997 starts out fairly stable," "February income stable and within projections," and "Income stable as first quarter closes."

In the new WCG, "stable" translates into a mournful "there is no change." No longer are solemn fasts called when there are three consecutive months when revenue growth for the year dips below 30%. Now in Worldwide the most that can be hoped for is just paying bills on time. At church headquarters in Pasadena, California, mere corporate survival for one more month brings whimpering sighs of pseudo-relief and whispered prayers of pious thanksgiving. The WCG's financial condition is so precarious now that for 1995, the Tkach team and its accounting firm, Coopers & Lybrand, were just barely able to get their financial audit done - and not until mid-January of 1997! In explaining the delay to the church's membership, church treasurer Bernie Schnippert, sounding a bit like an exhausted, would-be John Paul Jones, admitted in the February WN that "The audit for 1996 has not yet begun." But what is even more revealing is this statement from the same article:

For some years the church has published the audit, in whole or in part, in the WN. This is helpful for the few who gain some insight into the financial matters of the church, but others have said it is unnecessary and confusing.

Since the audit for 1995 is so late as to be almost irrelevant to our current financial picture, and since the full audit covers numerous pages, we have chosen not to publish it.

Paradoxically, by adopting the new approach, the Tkach group is returning to a style of financial secrecy that permeated the WCG in the sixties and seventies when the organization learned the hard way that such an approach just did not work. It was church counsel Stanley R. Rader who around 1979 initiated the greater levels of financial accountability and openness that are now being obliterated by Tkach and company. Treasurer Schnippert assures us that any church member who really wants a copy of the financial statement may obtain one by just writing to him. Should any of our WCG-member readers ever receive a copy, we would certainly appreciate an opportunity to review it and then, hopefully, dispel some of the nasty rumors now circulating about where Worldwide's dwindling assets are really going.

Not surprisingly, with the increased secrecy has already come increased discontent among the WCG's laity. And much of that discontent has been prodded on by all-too-transparent double talk from the WCG's leadership. Here is but one example. For many years, HWA and those loyal to his vision taught that the properties that the church owned were an important part of the overall mission of the church. While there is no doubt that HWA was extravagant and spent foolishly in many areas, there is also no doubt that the actual physical plant of Ambassador's Pasadena, Texas, and English campuses did serve as very tangible symbols of the better world that HWA envisioned.

Along came the Tkachs and before long there was supposedly no longer a need for beautiful real estate as symbols of a vision (nor, indeed, some might argue, for the old vision itself). Instead, there arose "a new paradigm." So what to do with all that real estate? To the bottom-line-oriented Tkach team there was only one answer: Sell it, of course. But a lot of people couldn't understand the paradigm shift. And so Tkach and company had to come up with an excuse for wanting to sell off all that real estate. The properties cost too much to run, they said. They just weren't efficient money makers for the Work. Well, a lot of members actually bought that story. And then some of those folks began asking why, if the properties were such a drain on the Work, did not the church just walk away from them? Even worse for the Tkach team, if the church has so mismanaged its income as to have bought so much property that it never needed in the first place, then why should members keep sending money to church headquarters?

Well, of course such logic would never do because the unstated, but very real, fact is the properties are not being sold as any kind of a blessing to the church members or to get out any gospel or to take care of any pressing need. The main reason they are being unloaded is to provide a retirement fund, not for all the many dedicated employees of old, but mainly for the top honchos now running the Tkach Company. Read Schnippert's Q&A pieces in the WN for December and February and it is difficult to come to any other conclusion.

Meanwhile, Schnippert claims that "our income in 1997 in the United States is projected to be more than \$100 million less than the church's highest income year" (WN, 2/18/97, p. 11). Actually, it is closer to \$170 million less because in 1990 the WCG's yearly income peaked at over \$211 million. Today, Schnippert doesn't talk much publicly about yearly figures. He just says he is hoping for a daily income of only \$122,000 (WN, 1/21/97, p. 6). And he even admits he is including the revenues from Plain Truth

Ministries (PTM) in that figure (WN, 4/22/97, p. 10). From what we have been able to figure out from his somewhat obfuscating statements, Schnippert is making his yearly revenue projection based on a six-day work week (minus about ten no-mail holidays per year). That would give him annual combined WCG-PTM revenues of only \$37 million. Of course, if his projection is based on only a five-day work week then that yearly figure will come out to less than \$31 million.

It's no wonder that as we go to press, at WCG headquarters there is again talk of more layoffs coming. This, after more than 700 employees have already been let go in the past two years.

## **Worldwide's Failing Strategy**

Worldwide's financial problems have not come about because the Tkach team is not trying. Unfortunately, however, for Worldwide's still loyal members, what the Tkach team is really working hard at is their own little pet business, Plain Truth Ministries, Inc. - not to be confused with Worldwide Church of God, Inc., a separate corporation. What the new corporation is all about is not so much ministering to a flock, but the merchandising of so-called Christian products. Look at the new *Plain Truth* magazine (PT) and what you see is a lot of ads for books, videos, trips, and even diet plans.

---

&COPY;1997 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.  
ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

That is not to say that the PT is completely worthless. In the Sept./Oct. '96 PT, for instance, there was an article by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. That the Tkach team should be able to enlist the name and prestige of a former U.S. President to bolster its image is no small accomplishment. And Carter's article, while not necessarily reflective of the views of most Worldwidiers, was thought provoking. Among the more interesting comments it contained was this one:

Now leaders of the highly organized Christian right, have successfully injected into America's political debate some divisive religious questions. The most vivid examples involve sexual preference, which obviously have highly personal and emotional overtones....

Since almost all Protestants now condone divorce as an acceptable way of life and rarely mention fornication or adultery, it is much easier and more convenient for heterosexual Christians to focus on homosexuality, refusing to acknowledge that this is a sin never mentioned by Jesus.

In the Jan./Feb. PT, among the books favorably reviewed was Tony Campolo's *Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?* While Campolo says Jesus is neither, some Worldwidiers who read the book were surprised at how liberal his positions were on such topics as illegal aliens and California Proposition 187, environmental activism, support for public schools, gay tolerance, and gun control. While Campolo's views, like some of Jimmy Carter's, may be espoused by many intellectuals, they are not likely the type that will bring in big bucks from those as demographically right wing as most evangelicals or Armstrongites.

Then there was the March/April *Plain Truth*. It featured a cover story about evangelist Billy Graham. Emblazoned on the cover was the title of the interview-article, "Just As I Am," a phrase Graham often uses to describe the conversion experience and one, coincidentally, that is the title of Graham's new book on sale at most bookstores. The phrase is also one that many Ambassador alumni recall was absolutely detested by Herbert W. Armstrong. Nevertheless, Graham is now being actively promoted by the Tkach organization and WCG members are even being encouraged to volunteer for duty at Billy Graham crusades.

The latest PT, the May/June issue, features interviewer Sheila Graham "Up Close and Personal With Pat Boone" (no kidding, that was the title of her article). Boone, who hawks his products in the pages of the PT, has been in trouble of late with the evangelical community. Back on January 27 Boone appeared at a televised record industry awards show donning a heavy-metal outfit that included a chest-baring black leather jacket, earrings, a studded dog collar, shades, and a fake tatoo. The outfit, which Boone now says was worn merely as a joke, convinced some evangelicals that Boone had literally lost his mind.

Among those offended by the display was evangelist Keith Crouch who heads the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Crouch asked his viewers to "pray for Pat," then pulled Boone's *Gospel America* program off the network and refused to renew it until he was assured that Boone had not become permanently demon possessed. Finally, however, after noticing that 90% of those writing to his network asked that Boone be returned to the air, Crouch decided to bring him back via a special two-hour Boone-a-thon in which he promised his near-record audience that "We're going to put the devil under our feet tonight..." and give him "a couple of black eyes in Jesus' name." Using a laser gun to zap a photo of Boone in the infamous leather outfit, Crouch then brought out the singer before an audience that included leather-clad Bikers for Jesus. He then got Boone to apologize to those who had been offended. With that performance assuring Crouch that it was again safe to associate with Boone, *Gospel America* was reinstated on the Trinity Network. Television critic Howard Rosenberg called the Boone-a-thon "The resurrection of Pat Boone." It is not clear whether WCG executives were in the TV audience for the resurrection, but the article about Boone in the latest PT is an important part of the campaign to cleanse the singer's sullied reputation. And, we have been told, Boone's line of Christian products will continue to be advertised in the *Plain Truth*.

In addition to helping Pat Boone, Billy Graham, and other Christian celebrities, recent Tkach activities have included increased intercourse with Hank Hanegraaff's outreach, the Promise Keepers, Mission America, the Church of God Seventh Day, the American

Bible Society, and the Baptist Church. Tkach even spoke one Sunday recently before a Temple City, California Baptist congregation. And in March Tkach was a guest speaker at the National Association of Evangelicals convention in Orlando, Florida. All of these activities by Tkach have enhanced his own public image and that of his new pet business, Plain Truth Ministries, Inc. But how much good has all this effort done for the Worldwide Church of God, Inc. or for the WCG's members? Not much, really. And even with the new PTM, as Worldwidiers refer to it, when it comes to business strategy the Tkach team has yet to come up with a marketing plan that makes any sense.

## **Flurry Wins Big in Court**

When talking marketing strategy with his subordinates, HWA would often quote his one-time friend, the great, gay tennis champion William T. Tilden II, who taught him to: "Never change a winning game; always change a losing game!" Armstrong would repeatedly pound that maxim into the heads of his top lieutenants and headquarters disciples. It's pretty obvious that some, like those who are now the WCG's top executives, were just not paying close attention.

One Armstrong disciple, however, who was paying close attention was Gerald Flurry. Of all the WCG breakoffs, his Philadelphia Church of God, headquartered in Enid, Oklahoma, is the one that has most closely followed the old HWA marketing plan, and it is his group seems to be taking the lead in terms of most effectively promulgating the old Armstrong message. Flurry's PCG also seems to have the best financial growth record of all the breakaways. Now, most paradoxically, it is Tkach's lawyers who seem to have given Flurry and his Philadelphia Church of God their biggest boost.

Early this year Flurry announced that his Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) was republishing Herbert Armstrong's book *Mystery of the Ages*. It was a bold move by Flurry as the WCG corporation holds the copyright to the book and the WCG still has the means to do its enemies harm in the courts.

No sooner had the reprinted books started rolling off PCG presses than WCG lawyers brought suit in Federal District Court in Los Angeles, asking the court to bar PCG from printing and distributing the book. Normally, before a full hearing on the merits of a case where an injunction is sought, there is a shorter hearing at which the court decides if there is enough of a case against the defendant (here PCG) to warrant the granting of a temporary restraining order (a "TRO"). Hearing the WCG motion for the TRO was Federal District Judge J. Spencer Letts. The attorneys for the parties were Benjamim Scheibe of the law firm of Browne & Woods (Browne as in Allen Browne), accompanied by veteran Worldwide counsel Ralph Helge, for the WCG, the plaintiff; and Mark Helm, from Munger, Tolles & Olsen representing Flurry's PCG, the defendant.

The February 18 hearing started out this way:

JUDGE: I've read plaintiffs materials. I don't seem to have anything from you, Mr. Helm. Am I right about that?

MR. HELM: That's correct, your honor.

JUDGE: Do you have anything to say?

MR. HELM: Yes, sir, I do.

JUDGE: Outstanding! [At this point some could sense a certain smugness on the part of the WCG's lawyers - ed.]

MR. HELM: Your honor, we have only recently been brought into this case, and so what I will tell you is based on my understanding of the facts as they exist now. Obviously, we'll need to investigate further. We do not think that a TRO is appropriate at this point. The plaintiff has represented to the court that this is a garden-variety copyright infringement case. Nothing could be farther from the truth. This is a very significant case involving issues arising under the First Amendment, including the free exercise of religion clause....

At this point attorney Helm proceeded to give the court an overview of how the late Herbert Armstrong had left the WCG in the hands of the Tkachs, how the Tkachs then deviated wildly from the doctrinal path of the church's founder, and how beginning around 1989 the WCG's leaders had ceased distribution of HWA's "magnum opus" *Mystery of the Ages*. Helm continued -

This is not a case where the Worldwide Church of God is exploiting the copyright in order to disseminate and earn profits from *Mystery of the Ages*. This is a case where they are trying to suppress and not disseminate Mr. Armstrong's books. That's our understanding.

JUDGE: That's mine as well.

MR. HELM: And so, your honor, the founders of my client, the Philadelphia Church of God, were ministers in the Worldwide Church of God who got to the point where they believed they needed to split off and form their own church, which was more faithful to the tenets and the views of Mr. Armstrong. They view his book, in essence, as the scriptures of their religion.

At this point, Helm may have been a little more open than his client would have wished, but, nevertheless, he was being truthful. He went on to explain that Flurry was not charging for the book. Then Scheibe interjected a number of arguments based on cases that Judge Letts did not think were relevant.

JUDGE: [Impatiently and speaking to Scheibe-] For sale?.... Which do you want to do? Are you here to contest jurisdiction, or are you left to contest the merits?

MR. HELM: [Who was already winning without even having filed a brief but thought he should say something-] Well, your honor, perhaps then we should discuss how to proceed. As I say, I've been on this case for exactly 24 hours, and I....

JUDGE: Well, let me help you. I can't imagine a TRO is going to get granted.

MR. HELM: I'm sorry?

JUDGE: I can't imagine a TRO is going to be granted.

MR. HELM: Okay.

JUDGE: I just thought I'd let you say so....

MR. SCHEIBE: [Unable to fathom that he had already lost the round-] Your honor, I would like to address the merits. I'm somewhat at a loss with the court's suggestion there's not a probability of success on the merits here. I don't think there's any question but that religious materials are amenable to copyright protection.

JUDGE: Of course they are.... Let me tell you why I think you're not going to succeed on the merits here. The copyright seems to me to have two primary purposes, neither of which are at issue here. One is to keep there from being confusion about who is the person publishing the work. The second is to keep strangers from profiting from the work. Neither of those is at issue with somebody who wants to suppress the work entirely. There is no confusion. And what you are talking about, on the strength of your papers, is something that so far as I know no copyright case has ever put at issue. It wasn't a question of whether there would be two publishers or three, but rather whether there will be one or none....

This is admittedly a work by the founder of a religion who has died.... This [the Worldwide Church of God] is an entity that has a corporate structure and it also has a religious structure. The people who inherited the corporate structure are not all of the people who used to have religious position. Some of the people that had religious position have now either been taken out of the corporate structure, or they were never in it. The question is - and it is to me a new one - does the surviving corporation, through its board of directors and a such people, have the right to suppress the founder... the right to prevent there from being future printing of the religious founder's work?...

Scheibe then argued that although Flurry had a right to add upon the teachings of HWA, he should not be allowed to distribute word-for-word copies of HWA's writings.

MR. SCHEIBE: Here they just slavishly copied and they're distributing a direct copy with an altered copyright [notice] which is a crime.

JUDGE: I understand your position but I don't agree with it. The issue is going to be something that I haven't seen yet, and that is with a founder's work - I can tell you, although I don't know to what its germane, my own view of what it ought to take to be a religion - some combination, maybe size, and certainly you have size here, but I think the founder plus the first set of disciples is sort of the rule against perpetuity, a religion that meets the rule of perpetuity certainly is one and should have all religious protection....

I do think that if it is, as I suspect it is, that when you're dealing with the first generation after the founder, that you're dealing with very different religious issues. And you are dealing with a founder's work in the first generation after the founder's [death] and you've had a split in the religion, which was by definition different from the corporation.... the founder did not dream, I suspect - this is what he's going to be saying - he didn't dream that by giving this corporation, which was his corporation that reflected his religion, that those who would come after him would use their corporate power to suppress his religion or to keep any prior practitioners of his

religion, or keep any people that were vested with the authority of that religion, notwithstanding they don't have the corporate position, from making that book available on a continuous, freshly printed basis - I don't believe the founder dreamed that...

The scope of Judge Letts' comments stunned Worldwide's lawyers and seemed to come as something of a surprise even for PCG's counsel. Some legal observers who have seen the transcript of the proceedings say they are surprised at the Judge's profound insights into the case. The judge's reference to the dreaded Rule Against Perpetuities, for example, brought ahs from a number who, after much thought, began to see that HWA's legacy may have been dual - part corporate, part intellectual or spiritual, and that for the latter, there may be significant legal protection available from the courts.

According to Flurry, "Ten days later the Worldwide Church dismissed the case and it filed a new complaint the next business day in Oklahoma in a cynical and obvious attempt to find a more favorable judge." While Worldwide lawyers have been searching for a more favorable judicial climate, Flurry has been taking out huge newspaper ads around the country extolling what he sees as a great victory given by God. In fact, since beginning to re-publish HWA's *Mystery of the Ages*, he has been telling his followers that their Work has entered a new phase, and that God has set before them a new "open door." No longer does he see his mission as being merely to save "the Laodiceans." Now he plans to get his Armstrong message out "to all the world."

## **Inching Toward Ishtar**

While Flurry seems to prosper with each pro-HWA step he takes, the Tkach organization seems to run into walls with each new liberalization. Not only is the Tkach company having problems in the financial area, even their theological strategies are bogged down. Just two years ago, Tkach Junior was telling friends privately that he hoped to see the entire WCG keeping Easter by 1997. It hasn't worked out that way. Last year Worldwidiers were given permission to observe Easter services with Protestant congregations who were observing that religious day. Only a few took up the offer. Many Worldwidiers still tremble at HWA's warnings about Sunday worship which he called the "Mark of the Beast."

This year the WCG announced that Easter services would be held March 30 in Pasadena at Ambassador Auditorium and in Gladewater, Texas with the Gladewater Ministerial Alliance at an Easter sunrise service presided over by Joseph Tkach himself. At both sites, the public was invited. And that was a face-saver for the Tkach team as at neither site did very many Worldwidiers show up. Instead, most remaining Worldwidiers opted to keep their traditional Passover, now referred to by Tkach as "the Lord's Supper," with its old Armstrong method of calculation which came out to April 20th. Not only that, privately many Worldwidiers are still derisively referring to Easter, as HWA used to do, by its old pagan name, Ishtar.

Insiders claim that fear of financial disaster has forced Tkach to back off this year in instituting mandatory Easter observance in Worldwide. But the betting is that by next spring, or 1999 at the latest, the, WCG will be keeping Easter as a group.

If that proves true, the Tkach church's acceptance of Easter may prove to be just in time for what may well be one of the most important events in the 2,000 year history of Christianity: the establishment of a new and universal method for calculating the date for Easter observance.

To understand a little about what is involved, we must go back to the Nicean Council of 325. That Emperor-initiated gathering of Christian leaders recognized that the gospels placed the death and resurrection of Jesus in relation to the Jewish Passover. They concluded that Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday after Passover as that feast's date had been calculated in Jesus' time, that is, on the first full moon following the vernal equinox. The Jews later deviated from the equinox benchmark and later there were also minor Christian modifications of the Nicean ruling. Nevertheless, there was a substantial amount of Christian harmony regarding the issue of when to keep Easter until 1582 when Pope Gregory XIII again "changed times and seasons" (as HWA referred to this proclivity of the popes) by adopting the reformed calendar we know today as the Gregorian calendar. The Orthodox Catholic Churches of the East, not recognizing the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, did not go along with Gregory's unilateral calendar change and instead retained the older Julian calendar (as did Great Britain and its colonies until 1752 when they went Gregorian - which is why for that year in British history the dates Sept. 3-13 are omitted).

Since 1582 the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Churches have kept Easter - the day that theoretically should unite them more than any other - on different days. Only once in four years do the two ways of calculating Easter bring about the same day for the celebration. Some years the dates are quite far apart. This year, for instance, the Roman church and its Protestant daughters celebrated Easter on March 30 while the Eastern Orthodox Churches celebrated Easter on April 27 (as always on a date following the Passover).

Now it appears that this East-West dichotomy of calculation may disappear. High-ranking leaders of most of the world's largest Christian denominations met in Aleppo, Syria, March 5-10 to discuss possible ways of bringing about a unified way of calculating the date for Easter. While barely reported on in United States newspapers, the historic gathering included official representatives of the Vatican, the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow, the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the Middle East Council of Churches, the Armenian Orthodox Church, and many other Roman Catholic, Orthodox Catholic, and Protestant denominations. Then on March 24, in a surprising display of unity, the conference leaders under the auspices of the World Council of Churches announced a proposal by which all Christian churches worldwide would be keeping Easter on the same date beginning in the year 2001 (the year that actually begins the new millennium).

This plan is not without its critics and church politics among Christians everywhere being what it is, it is not altogether certain that the big change will come about. But if it does, will Tkach and company follow? Already, in deciding to keep Easter, Tkach chose to follow the more popular Roman way of calculating the date, rather than the Eastern way which takes into account the Jewish observance of Passover. And with a majority of the world's Protestant denominations likely to follow the lead of the Vatican and the World

Council of Churches, we can probably expect Tkach and company to do the same.

## No Millennium Needed!

Ever since the death of WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong, the Tkach administration has been tirelessly tinkering with the theological legacy of HWA. One would have thought that by now they would have run out of doctrines to change. Not so! The latest doctrinal "clarification" concerns the millennium, or the biblical thousand-year reign of the Messiah. In an April WN article titled "A balanced approach to the Millennium," J. Michael Feazell and Mike Morrison wrote:

Since the New Testament does not emphasize the nature of the millennium, we conclude that it is not a central plank in the church's commission... Although the WCG has traditionally been premillennial, the church does not require its members to believe that Christ will set up a temporary kingdom after he returns. We are sure that, no matter what Christ does after his return, no one will be disappointed.

Don't you feel relieved? Feazell and Morrison go on to state that WCG ministers, while still required to believe in Jesus, may believe and teach anything they wish, or nothing at all, about the millennium. They say it makes no difference. They go on:

In November 1995, Richard J. Foster wrote the following letter to those on his Renovaré mailing list. It provides some helpful comments about speculations about prophecy [They then quote the Foster article and, of course, by doing so in the WN put upon it the WCG's imprimatur]:

As the year 2000 draws near, we are seeing more and more end-time scenarios as apocalyptic zeal rises to fever pitch.

There were early-bird predictions: Edgar C. Whisenant's *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988* and a follow-up book *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993...* sold several million copies; South Korean Lee Jang Rim convinced followers around the globe that Christ would return in October, 1992; and on the air and in his book, *1994*, the popular American radio Bible teacher Harold Camping targeted Sept. 6 as the date for the final trump. [He could have added HWA's 1975, and a string of other dates once favored by Armstrongites.]

The year 2000 is now favored by most prophesy preachers - though it isn't clear whose calendar we are supposed to follow or why God favors round numbers.

(Two heavy hitters on the apocalyptic scene have weighed in with their contributions: Hal Lindsey with *Planet Earth - 2000 A.D.* and Pat Robertson with *The End of the Age*, a novel conveniently set in the year 2000.)

This is big business in Christian book stores and at the Christian Booksellers Convention. And in the general public, a prime-time series on ancient prophecies warned that futurists from Nostradamus to Edgar Cayce have targeted the year 2000 for the end of the world.

We are awash in a sea of apocalyptic tabloid books. Not since the Millerite movement [which led to Adventism and Armstrongism] a century and a half ago has

there been such a feeding frenzy over the end of the world. We can only expect it to increase.

Foster then gives an excellent explanation as to why such end-time hysteria hurts Christianity. He provides an outstanding historical perspective of the phenomenon, and then concludes with a detailed set of suggestions on how Christians can refuse to demean the gospel by mixing hope of the Second Coming with reckless speculation. So far so good. And many will find the article worth studying in its entirety. (The publisher is Renovaré, 8 Inverness Drive East, Suite 102, Englewood, CO 80112-5609.) However, what has caused considerable stir in Armstrongite circles is the section subtitled "A trustworthy model" which concludes the article:

In the fourth century St. Augustine opposed the prophetic literalism of Chiliasm. Instead of the imminent, material, millennial kingdom of Chiliasm, he helped his people see the City of God.

Out of pastoral concern he taught them that the kingdom of God was already a present reality among them in the community of faith and that its full consummation will come in God's time and in God's way in the blessed hope of Christ's return.

Augustine's wise, sensible, biblical vision won the day and influenced the church for centuries to come. May something of that same faith-filled sensibility arise today.

Chiliasm is the doctrine of Christ's expected return to reign on earth for 1,000 years, otherwise called millennialism, something Herbert Armstrong championed for his entire preaching career. And, as many WCG oldtimers recall from Armstrong's book *God Speaks Out on the New Morality*, HWA considered Augustine one of the greatest heretics of all time. Again, Tkachism has turned Armstrongism on its head.

It won't be the last time either. Just as we go to press, we have learned that there is talk at WCG headquarters of changing the WCG's teaching on the immortality of the soul. HWA emphatically taught that humans were not immortal souls. He spent considerable time discussing it and there is no doubt about what he actually taught on the subject. Now, Tkach has let the cat out of the bag regarding where he is heading on the matter. In February on Hank Hanegraaff's *Bible Answer Man* radio program, Tkach said:

The suffering of hell is beyond any experience of misery found on earth today, and it's clearly included in the teaching of Jesus, and the reality is far beyond what those symbols say to us, and that there's no cruelty there but perfect justice, and it's eternal, there's no escaping it.

Was Tkach saying under his breath, "Been there, done that"? Whatever the case, a WCG that teaches the Catholic doctrine of the immortal soul cannot be too far away.

## **WCG Follows Vatican's Lead on Evolution**

Of the scores of WCG doctrines that have changed over the last few years, one of the most significant, yet most underreported, has been its change on the theory of biological

evolution. In the HWA era the WCG's position was clearly that of most Bible fundamentalist groups who teach a special creation and view the creation of man as having occurred on a sixth literal day of a literal week only about 6,000 years ago. But recent WCG articles, videos, sermons, etc. have shown that the WCG's position has itself (excuse the pun) evolved. Now the WCG teaches a type of creative evolution - that is, evolution probably did take place, not gradually but in fits and starts, and it was God who was behind the evolution.

Whether or not the new WCG position is reasonable, scientific, or necessarily anti-biblical is not the point here. What is interesting, we think, is the fact that the WCG's new stance is rather close to that of the Roman Catholic Church.

It may come as a surprise to many, but the Roman Church has never really formally condemned the theory of evolution. In 1950, Pope Pius XII in the encyclical letter "Humani Generis" did strongly caution that evolution could be used to bolster the philosophical positions of atheists and materialists who wanted to remove the necessity of a Creator from the process of creation. Nevertheless, the encyclical stated that evolution doctrine was a "serious hypothesis" that was not objectionable and could be accepted by Catholics as long as it was not embraced as "certain doctrine."

Now comes Pope John Paul II. On October 22, 1996, in a formal statement sent to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the pontiff said that "fresh knowledge leads to recognition of the theory of evolution as more than just a hypothesis." While many laymen did not understand what the Pope was getting at, members of the scientific community understood very well the portent of the announcement. "A theory holds greater weight as a coherent explanation of natural phenomena that has passed critical review, is accepted by most scientists in the field and can correctly make predictions. A hypothesis is a tentative explanation that is not yet widely accepted but may have significant evidence behind it and may in time be elevated to the status of theory" (Robin Smith of Mission Viejo in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/29/96, p. B6). Thus, the Roman Church has, indeed, in a very precise way advanced the acceptance of biological evolution concepts.

What the Pope exactly meant by "fresh knowledge" has not been formally explained by either the Pope or the Vatican. It is interesting, however, that just months before the announcement, there was an international conference on God and evolution at the Vatican Observatory headquarters in the Pope's summer residence near Rome. Among the invitees were some of the greatest names in the world of science, including physicist Paul Davies, recent winner of the Templeton Prize, who suggests that science and Christian theology are now coming together. While the conference was not widely reported in the press, our own sources in Rome indicate that what may have prompted the gathering was leaked information that NASA was almost ready to announce, as it later did in August, that meteorites found on earth and believed to have come from Mars contained evidence of extraterrestrial life. Some Vatican insiders feel that the Pope and some of his closest advisors were thrown into a needless panic by intelligence reports of the upcoming NASA announcement. Ironically, while the NASA announcement did come in August and the international press was very quick to play up the new evidence for life on Mars, not long afterward a number of leading scientists at Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratories indicated they disagreed with the NASA report and some have

privately speculated that Congressional calls for reduced funding of NASA's unmanned space missions (in which JPL in Pasadena plays an important, even central, role) may have biased some researchers in favor of finding evidence of life on Mars when, they claim, there really is none.

Whatever the reason behind the timing of the pontiff's October 22 statement, many religionists in the United States were aghast at its pro-evolution wording. Christian columnist Cal Thomas, for example, viewed the Pope's statement as an outright attack on the book of Genesis and concluded that, "With his statement about evolution the Pope has caught up with the times. He has accepted a philosophy that stands at the core of communism."

In contrast, however, most Catholics could not understand what all the hullabaloo was about. Most we talked to said that Catholic schools have been teaching the theory of evolution for decades and Catholic intellectuals pointed out how some Catholic scholars have long been in the vanguard of promoting pro-evolution concepts. For example, one of the important teachings of Teilhard de Chardin was that God, in his great love, has afforded mankind the opportunity of participating in his own evolution. Teilhard, once described in Henry Luce's *Life* magazine as "the greatest living thinker-prophet of the 20th century," was not only one of the century's greatest Jesuit scholars, he was also a leading paleontologist who beginning in 1923 led scientific expeditions into China where he found traces of paleolithic man, a prelude to the discovery of Peking Man in 1929. Nevertheless, while Teilhard's intellectual influence on the Catholic Church has been profound (and as some conservatives see it, very negative), some modern Catholic scholars see hints at the necessity for evolutionary thought in the writings of some early Catholic theologians. For instance, Father George Coyne, the Jesuit priest and astronomer who heads the Vatican Observatory has pointed out that "In the Augustinian tradition that God is absolute goodness, there is almost the necessity for goodness to reproduce itself, to pour itself out." Naturally, the implication is that both biological evolution on earth and life forms on other planets would be manifestations of God's love.

John Tagliabue, writing in the *New York Times* (10/25/96) pointed out that, "The [Pope's] statement appeared to be the latest action in the fulfillment of frequent urgings by the pope to Catholics that the church should be prepared to amend wrong teachings adhered to in the past." Yes, the Pope, like the WCG's Pastor General, is bringing about paradigm shifts. But who, even just three years ago, would have thought that the two religious leaders ever would have so much in common?

## **The Vatican-Babylon Connection Reevaluated**

Of the many insensitive teachings promulgated by the late Herbert W. Armstrong, probably none was more "politically incorrect" than his view that the Roman Catholic Church was "Babylon the Great" of prophecy and "the Great Whore" of Revelation. Of course, that idea did not originate with Armstrong. Over the centuries many Protestant denominations have held similar views and, in fact, a good number still do. In attacking the legitimacy of the Roman Church, HWA and his subordinates often relied on information contained in the book *The Two Babylons* by Rev. Alexander Hislop (1807-

62) who had been the pastor of the East Free Church of Arbroath, Scotland.

Because of the teachings of Herbert Armstrong and the book by Hislop, for decades many Worldwidiers harbored a near paranoid distrust of, and often open hostility toward, anything even vaguely Roman Catholic. The Catholicism-bashing ideas of Armstrong and Hislop spread well beyond the WCG and its offshoots. Contributing to the anti-Catholic mood in Worldwide and elsewhere was evangelist and author Ralph Woodrow who, although never a WCG member, was well-known in WCG circles because of his writings which often buttressed certain concepts taught by HWA. One such book, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, purported to expose the pagan origins of Catholicism and among Worldwidiers it eventually became even more popular than Hislop's *Two Babylons*.

In recent years, however, Woodrow has questioned a number of ideas that he had promoted, and in particular those that had come from HWA. He has now come to believe that Hislop and HWA were wrong in many of their conclusions about the Roman Catholic Church's history. In an April 3 letter to the *Report*, he told us:

As you know, in my earlier Christian experience, I was influenced by the writings of Herbert Armstrong in some areas, one being the teaching about pagan mixture. The textbook quoted by many was Hislop's *The Two Babylons*. Because it was very detailed, with a multitude of notes and references, Hislop's work seemed to be well documented and became the basis of my book *Babylon Mystery Religion*.

Eventually, however, a history teacher in Colton, while appreciating other things I had written, began pointing out to me that Hislop is not a reliable historian. Then through your paper I learned that the Worldwide Church of God had sent out a memo that questioned conclusions based on my book or on Hislop, or which built too heavily on assumed details about "Nimrod." These factors prompted me to thoroughly restudy Hislop and do further research.

The subtitle to Hislop's book is "The Papal Worship proved to be the worship of Nimrod and his wife." Hislop claims that Nimrod was a big, ugly, deformed black man; his wife, Semiramis, was a most beautiful white woman with blond hair and blue eyes, a backslider, known for her immoral lifestyle, inventor of soprano singing, the originator of priestly celibacy and many other religious practices. These claims and many others appear to me now to be based merely on an arbitrary piecing together of mythology. I discovered that many of the books cited by Hislop clearly do not support his claims. In fact, many of his claims could not be substantiated by any recognized history book!

That realization has prompted me to discontinue publication of *Babylon Mystery Religion* - despite the fact that orders do not cease to come in for it. I have now replaced it with a 122-page book titled *The Babylon Connection?*

While Woodrow's new book most certainly is not an endorsement of every Roman Catholic practice and teaching (he is still critical of a good number - just as are many Catholics today), he nevertheless does shed much light on many false ideas about Catholicism that have been circulating in Armstrongite and Protestant denominations for decades. The new book, which incidentally has received strong praise from the Tkach team, is available for only \$7 at many bookstores or by writing to Ralph Woodrow, P.O.

## WCG Congregation Votes to Exit

Tkach's efforts to convince his followers that the mainstream churches were right all along is apparently getting results. In early April the WCG's congregation in Geneva, Ohio, voted to exit the WCG as a group and to seek affiliation with the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ).

According to an official press release issued by the group in April, the Geneva Independent Christian Congregation - which formerly called itself the Geneva Congregation of the Worldwide Church of God - also voted to switch its day of worship from Saturday to Sunday to accommodate the needs of many of its members who could not always meet on Saturday. "We were finding that with single mothers, Saturday morning was the only day they could get the kids to the doctor or dentist. Employment conflicts kept other members away. There were just always conflicts coming up," said Bill Meyer, the congregation's interim pastor.

The congregation also voted to cautiously continue to explore the possibility of merging or affiliating with other local congregations - possibly with an eye toward initially cooperating in joint youth programs. A few members seem inclined to remain in the WCG, but Meyer said the decision to seek affiliation with the Christian Church in Ohio, headquartered in Elyria, was passed with no dissenting votes.

"I was really surprised by the level of unanimity. The basic issue prompting the separation from the WCG was the maintenance of an absolute hierarchy within the denomination that reserved all essential decisions to a Pastor General in Pasadena, California," said Meyer. "The denomination wanted to collect and administer almost all funds from Pasadena. Members were expected to mail contributions there, and then a fraction would come back to the local church. That was just unacceptable and in fact most of our congregation had declined to contribute this way for months."

To Meyer, the Christian Church in Ohio looked like a good fit because of its congregational autonomy, its accountability mechanisms for pastors, its openness to the full participation of women in the life of the church, and its broadly open understanding of the universality of the church. Said Meyer, "This has been a long journey for us as a congregation. We've systematically studied in our congregational Bible studies the themes of religious tolerance in Romans 14 and 15, the theme of Christian freedom in Galatians, the priesthood of all believers in Hebrews, and the need to translate faith into action in the book of James."

Meyer sees the WCG as attempting to harden the hierarchy by issuing church charters to clarify the relationship of the local churches to headquarters. And ethics documents were being drafted that would require all pastors to pledge loyalty and obedience to the hierarchy. [This is exactly the type of organizational model HWA called "the Image of the Beast" when referring to the Roman Catholic Church's imitation of the Roman Empire's hierarchial governmental system - ed.] To Meyer and his congregation that was unacceptable. Meyer says that the dramatic process of reform in the WCG has now

largely stalled.

"We were very excited to be moving away from an exclusivist, legalistic doctrinal stance. And our congregation had strongly supported the breath-taking process of reform that took place in 1995. But we had expected, once the crisis atmosphere had calmed down, that a newfound doctrinal orthodoxy would soon work its way into logical and biblical changes in the church's governance and culture. Orthodoxy of doctrine should lead toward orthodoxy of action, and we didn't see that happening."

In addition to the above changes in the Geneva group, the congregation has voted to celebrate communion weekly, a departure from current WCG practice. Additionally, Meyer says, "We are allowing women to preach in Geneva. Most of us don't believe Paul's household codes permanently restrict women any more than they permanently sanction slavery. In fact, if anything, the early church pushed freedom for both to the absolute limits of what law and surrounding culture would bear."

Pastor Bill Meyer may be contacted at 6004 Cork-Cold Springs Rd., Geneva, Ohio 44041-9325; tel. 216-466-7910; email: [william.d.meyer@worldnet.att.net](mailto:william.d.meyer@worldnet.att.net). The Geneva Independent Christian Congregation has posted a number of documents on the web site set up by Dr. Mark Tabladillo, a site some exWorldwidiers consider akin to the Wittenberg Cathedral door in Martin Luther's day. The address is <http://www.quango.net/Tabladillo/wcgweb2.html>.

## **Executive Exodus Continues**

The flight of executives and ordained ministers from the WCG, which began over twenty years ago, continues and seems to be speeding up. The 3/18/97 WN announced the retirements of. Robert Bertuzzi, Arthur Docken, Ken Swisher, Rowlen Tucker, Donald Wendt, and Robert Whittaker.

The same WN also listed the following as having left the employ of Worldwide: David Carley, Jess Ernest, Mark Flynn, Steve Gerrard, Warren Heaton, Felix Heimberg, Benjamin Johnson, Terry Johnson, Paul Linehan, Jeff McGowan, Stanley McNeil, Coty Myrttil, George Pinckney, Joseph Scott, Paul Seltzer, Norman Strayer, Terry Swagerty, Eric Weinberger, and Gerald Witte.

## **United Moving to Sunny Cincinnati**

Meeting March 8-10 in Louisville, Kentucky, the United Church of God held its third general conference of elders in two years. The conference was mainly devoted to discussions of procedures for church governance, always a preoccupation in Armstrongite groups. The most important vote of the conference resulted in a decision to move the church's Arcadia, California "home office" to Cincinnati, Ohio, the town made famous by Pete Rose, Jerry Springer, and Joe Bauer. One WCG evangelist now with UCG is reported to have said:

Why, any nit wit should be able to see that God has chosen Cincinnati to be the

headquarters of his representatives on earth. Its on the Ohio River. That's significant! Ohio is an Iroquois word that moans "something great." River is water, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Cincinnati has ten letters and that represents the Ten Commandments. The city was named after Cincinnatus, a famous Roman nobleman and patriot. You see, he was loyal to the government that God had set up, not to some young upstarts who were wet behind the ears, and God chose him during a crisis to serve the crown city of the empire against invading pagans who were bringing heresies to the very seat of government, and he was noble - he knew how to speak the language properly and how to dress properly because he had been educated at a school for the empire's top leadership. He demanded his troops obey orders that were given top down. There was no democracy. They knew better than to question his orders. They obeyed. They won. And he retired. There is a message here for us. A very clear message. The United Church of God is being led by a mighty patriot of the coming Kingdom who has been taught noble ways and has been hand-picked by God to lead the end-time Work to do SOMETHING GREAT with obedient followers who keep the Ten Commandments with the power of the Holy Spirit that is flowing like a river through the leadership top down to the brethren as the leadership RULES an obedient church only for a little while before he leads the church into the wilderness to the place of final training....

Whew! When asked what the WCG's leadership thought of the UCG move, one Pasadena insider was more concise: "Around here some are calling them the Sin City group."

One other interesting piece of information to come out of the Louisville conference was the fact that at least three of UCG's home office executives are making close to \$100,000 a year. Not bad for a denomination that has less than 20,000 members, especially when you consider that the UCG leadership admittedly had difficulty staying within budget during 1996. The group's financial problems were bad enough that in late January UCG President David Hulme, the evangelist (not David Hume the Scottish philosopher of Olympian intellect), had to publicly apologize for handling certain church business matters in a way that was, in effect, much like HWA would have handled them. So, while the UCG does not openly criticize HWA's legacy, they are wisely moving away from at least some of his ways. As for UCG's financial status, it is apparently such that some Arcadia employees, who don't seem to be all that keen on moving anyway, have suggested it may take a very long time for enough funds to accumulate to finance the voted-for move to "Sin City."

## **As Ambassador Closes**

With Ambassador University about to hold its last commencement and close its doors for good, we have one suggestion for all Ambassador alumni. If you do not have a transcript of your Ambassador academic record, you need to obtain one now. Even if your degree is unaccredited, having some proof of what classes you took at Ambassador may some day prove valuable. For information, write The Registrar, Ambassador University, P.O. Box 111, Big Sandy, Texas 75755 - before there is no more Ambassador.

## **Tom Hall, 1940-1997**

Tom Hall (Ambassador, Pasadena 1968) has passed away. One of the most personable individuals we ever met through the Ambassador experience, Hall worked for the World Tomorrow television program as an interviewer and producer of considerable talent until

the mid-seventies when he became disillusioned with the Armstrong organization. After Worldwide, he decided against an ongoing career in religion. At a chance meeting at the Pasadena Public Library some years ago, he humorously told AR editor Trechak, "I decided to get an honest job." Putting his love of people and public service to good use, he developed a successful career in broadcasting. Nevertheless, he remained a committed Christian and once even turned down an offer to work for the Pat Robertson organization. The following thoughtful obituary appeared in the April 16 *Los Angeles Times*:

### **Tom Hall; Popular Radio Talk Show Host**

Tom Hall, popular African American weekend radio talk show host at KABC for 19 years, has died. He was 57.

Hall died Saturday of lymphoma and leukemia, KABC spokesman Bill Lennert said Tuesday. He said Hall's last broadcast was March 15.

Hall was one of Southern California's earliest and most respected minority radio hosts. Hall, who began working for KABC-AM (790) Talkradio in 1979, regularly interviewed experts on politics and local issues. He was particularly known for his astute and humorous handling of "People's Forum," a segment for call-in comments on a variety of topics ranging from science to sex therapy to the national economy.

The radio host had also worked as a public affairs reporter for KNBC television for "The Saturday Show" and "The Everywhere Show." Hall made a brief appearance in the motion picture "The Formula" starring George C. Scott and Marlon Brando.

Before his talk show, Hall spent five years working as interviewer, writer and producer for a television documentary crew. The experience took him to Africa, Europe and the Middle East as well as throughout the United States and earned him credits on more than 40 documentaries. He also had a private consulting company.

Hall is survived by his wife, Luana, and four children. The family has asked that memorial donations be made to the Tom Hall Scholarship Fund, KABC Talkradio Community Relations, 3321 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90016.

### **Where Are They Now?**

Long-time WCG administrator **Richard Rice**, 60, has been retired and has moved back to Louisiana with his wife Virginia. Evangelist **Dean Blackwell**, 64, has been retired by the WCG and is currently working on a master's degree in religion at Azusa Pacific University. It is not known what denomination, if any, Blackwell will be serving in the future.

Former Ambassador faculty member **Mark Kaplan** is currently a USC candidate for a Ph.D. in religion. He previously earned a degree in history from Brooklyn College, another degree from Ambassador, Big Sandy in 1971, and an M.A. in Hebrew studies from the University of Texas in Austin in 1976. A former WCG minister, Mark is now a UCG church pastor in Southern California and is also lecturing for the International Bible Learning Center in Hawkins, Texas.

**Joseph C. Bauer Jr.** (Ambassador, Pasadena 1967), the director of the Ambassador band in the late 1960s, the coordinator of Garner Ted Armstrong's national campaigns in the early 1970s, and once the holder of numerous WCG/AC administrative positions, was recently spotted by founding AR co-publisher Margaret Zola at a travel industry convention in Las Vegas. Seems that "Broadway Joe" is no longer in the religion business, but hosts a sometimes-controversial radio talk show while also teaching communications at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

During the Ambassador-Pasadena school year of 1969-70, **Larry A. Taylor** (class of 1973) was a resident of the infamous 360 Grove Terrace dorm which included, among other characters, PT writers Keith Stump, Charlie Vinson, Jeff Calkins (currently practicing law in Orange County), and AR editor Trechak. Over the years, Taylor, a Mensa member, has researched and written on numerous philosophical and scientific topics (see [AR63](#), p. 9). Currently a UCLA Computer Science Dept. Ph.D candidate, Taylor is also AI Sr. Software Engineer with the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. Larry, whose e-mail address is: <ltaylor@primenet.com>, recently sent us this message:

I have been telling people that the Hubble Space Telescope has "photographic proof" of evolution. Years ago, the "nebular hypothesis" was still speculation about the origin of stars and planets. In recent years, however, the now powerful telescopes and techniques have discovered stars and planets in various stages of growth and development. Some of the photographs are quite beautiful. Check our web site, <<http://www.stsci.edu>>, especially the Orion, Helix and Eagle nebula pictures, and the accretion disk around Beta Pictoris.

The storms of space (see "twisters") and the clash of atoms picture not a fixed creation of the Bible, but the continual creation and destruction of many worlds. This does remind me of an ancient text, not Genesis, but Titus Carnus Lucretius' poem "De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things)."

On March 2, the popular CBS television news program *Sixty Minutes* ran a segment dealing with Internet misinformation. Some Ambassador alumni who watched the program were surprised to see one time *Plain Truth* writer and Ambassador theology lecturer **J. Orlin Grabbe** (Pasadena class of 1970) being ambushed by CBS reporter Leslie Stahl at the "Area 51" bar in Reno, Nevada. With shoulder length hair, a custom-tailored 'eather jacket, and an in-your-face attitude, Orlin provided CBS with the colorful image and sound bites they wanted while he got some free publicity. Inadequately covered in the interview, however, was the fact that Grabbe, who left the WCG in the early 1970s and went on to get a Ph.D. at Harvard and then teach at the prestigious Wharton School of Business, is the author of *International Financial Markets* (Prentice Hall), now in its third edition and considered by many international financiers to be the leading college textbook in the field. Today Grabbe lives in Reno where his exact occupation remains something of a mystery. Nevertheless, his writings on international finance, post-modern culture, the illegal drug trade, money laundering, and government conspiracies are so popular in cyberspace that Don Cox of the *Reno Gazette-Journal* has called Grabbe "a star of Internet gossip." As for his favorite Reno hangout, Grabbe writes:

Gawking *X-File* wannabes are similarly excised from "Area 51," the bar. Only bona

fide galactic travelers, otherworldly spooks, ex-CIA agents, coal-mining Deros, UNR ravers, slumming Blue Lampers, and neighborhood alcoholics are allowed.

We suspect that a few ex-Worldwidlers that we've known would fit right in. Dr. Grabbe's popular web site is at: <<http://feustel.mixi.net/grabbe/kalliste.html>>. Those who want to reach him at a more terrestrial location can try writing to him at 1475 Terminal Way, Suite E, Reno, NV 89502.

## Letters

Thanks so much for [[AR63](#)]. I was particularly intrigued by what you wrote in "Will the WCG Be Scuttled?" I had attached the beginning of it to a letter I put together last month to send to the ministers but decided against it. It's obvious a number of us are thinking the same thing: that Tkach and Co. are preparing their lifeboat and, actually, probably have been for several years.

You wrote that many long-time employees believe Joe Tkach Jr. so abhorred HWA that he set out with a secret plan to scuttle the Armstrong ship. I personally doubt the secret plan part as a means of destroying a financial empire that would have benefitted Joe Jr. personally. Rather, I would posit his secret plan has simply been trying desperately to develop a lifeboat to insure his existence and prominence after the WCG-Titanic, if you will, finally goes under.

I don't believe the WCG-Titanic is still steaming toward calamity. I believe it has been dead in the water since 1986. It experienced the calamitous collision with the iceberg of reality over 10 years ago when HWA died. Most of us did not realize the extent of the damage and we all gave it a good try to prove the WCG was not a personality cult.

Despite our efforts to the contrary, the ship ground to a halt and began to sink. As with the actual Titanic, most did not realize the finality of the situation until many hours later when the SOS flares were fired. The WCG administration does indeed seem to be desperately firing flares now with the launching of Plain Truth Ministries. But, still, the band plays on and there are still some who do not allow themselves to believe the truth and won't until the ship's stem plunges beneath the waves.

The WCG administration has data that is not available to members or outsiders. But, if we were able to obtain this information and graph the WCG's daily income and weekly service attendance from 1986 until now we would easily see that the trend will take the WCG out of existence within the next couple of years. The break with United last summer dropped the income by nearly half, and the hemorrhaging continues. There is a steady stream of WCG members in all directions now: to the offshoot groups, to other Christian fellowships, or simply back to their homes.

It seems to me that the old WCG was held together by three legs: (1) HWA's charismatic personality and leadership, (2) an eccentric and cultic doctrinal framework, and (3) an authoritarian and cultic governmental structure. I believe the cult was broken with HWA's death and there simply was no putting this Humpty Dumpty back together. There

were simply not sufficient dynamics of control to hold it together any longer. Now, ironically, there are three major groups attempting to raise the church-Titanic, each one trying to capitalize on one of those three legs, although leaning on the other two as well. There are the HWA personality offshoots: Flurry, Meredith, etc. There is the WCG doctrinal legacy group: United. And, finally, there is the WCG line of succession or government control group: the Tkach Co. church....

Please feel free to check out my new MINISTRY OF HEALING webpage at:

<http://members.aol.com/coving1d/index.html>  
(note: the character after coving is a one, not an L).

It contains the brand new issue #3 of *Crossroads*, a revised "Resignation Letter" with observations "one year later," a letter in defense of Earl Williams that I never sent, excerpts from a conversation with Greg Albrecht (February 1995) entitled "Further Down the Grace Road" along with his comments about "Herbert Armstrong worship," and lots of other new stuff as well.

-David Covington  
(former WCG pastor)  
Tennessee  
e-mail: [coving1d@aol.com](mailto:coving1d@aol.com).

### **A Family Film Becomes a Horror Flick!**

As a church kid, I had gone to Ambassador against my own wishes. What I got was an education worth less than the paper my degree is printed on. Even my old church now rejects the "theology" degree they gave me! My wife and I quit the WCG physically in 1993, but we had already quit mentally around 1987 when Tkach Senior decided to become a magician and play with smoke and mirrors. Since then, we started our own little business and we are somehow surviving.

A few weeks ago after finishing a long, hard day of work, we remembered that our local theater was having "Family Night" when tickets are discounted and we can get free popcorn, as well. So we got the kids and went to the theater. There we just happened to run into some old friends who had left the WCG around the time we did. We sat down behind them and started watching what was, for the most part, a fun movie. It was *That Thing You Do*, Tom Hanks' directorial debut, about a midwest rock group that has a hit single and travels to California to make a television appearance.

So there we sat in the theater, eating popcorn, and enjoying the movie when all of a sudden it happened. In the blink of an eye we were taken back to Ambassador! Gagging on some popcorn, I shouted out, "Sonuvabitch!" My family and our friends started cracking up. For some of the interior and exterior scenes of the TV studio, Tom Hanks had decided to use Ambassador Auditorium as a set. We watched as the scenes filmed at cult headquarters played themselves out into a metaphor for the experience our family, and many others' I'm sure, had had in Worldwide.

In the movie, one of the characters walks into a back stage dressing room in the "House built for God" and throws up in a marble sink. There is smoking, cursing, and talk of fornication! I wonder what would have happened if I had done any of that in "God's House"? I wonder, too, if I had given the Tkachs a big enough check, like the movie company surely did, if I would have been allowed to have an orgy in there. (But then many of the ministers would probably have wanted to come and take over.)

In the movie, the "leader" of the band, making a giant ass of himself, has a big fight with his pretty girlfriend, a dedicated and decent girl, who he breaks up with right there in front of the rest of the band. It reminded me of the way the Tkachs took their big dump on top of all the loyal sheep that had taken so much of the Armstrong's garbage for years and had paid such a huge price for it besides. I thought it extremely appropriate that these movie scenes should be part of the legacy of the Gang of Four now at the helm of Armstrong's sinking, rat-infested prison ship.

The short scenes filmed at Ambassador were like a slap in the face that could have ruined our evening had we let it. But we quickly got over it and thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the movie. Afterward we had a good laugh with our friends. Maybe my revulsion at the Ambassador scenes helps to explain why I'll never darken the door of a church again. "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me!"

I don't want to identify myself in print yet because I still have family in WCG and its satellites. But someday when I do, I hope to apologize to all those people I helped deceive with my misdirected tithed dollars and my time as an AC faculty member. Until then, sign me:

-Still Pissed off in California

I just had such a frightening experience I must write to you. I was doing my Friday morning housework and had my TV on in the other room. About quarter to ten as I washed the dishes, I heard a familiar voice. I recognized that resonant baritone, that authoritative yet somewhat rambling style, and just knew it was Garner Ted Armstrong back on the air. As I dried dishes I just listened passively as he talked about our nation's troubles and about Lincoln and Washington, about his collection of bird paintings, about his views on crime, about how he occasionally drinks a beer and only sometimes has wine with dinner.

But then he started drifting into weird stuff. He talked about how "you live in a matriarchy, but I live in a patriarchy." Yes, I thought, that sounds like the GTA I knew. But then he really got crazy talking about how he puts women in their place and doesn't allow women to speak their mind. And that he knows how to discipline them when they do. I had enough, and walked into the TV room to shut him off. That's when I discovered it was not GTA after all. I had left the TV on channel 39, our Court TV station, and they were broadcasting the latest parole hearing of cult leader and mass murderer Charles Manson! You would not believe how much Manson sounds like GTA! I can't help but think they have the same demonic spirit. They also both don't seem to have a conscience. Would you believe that Manson now has his own Web site where you can hear his voice and read his messages from prison? The announcer said that Manson has even been

recruiting new cult members into his cult right from his prison cell. It's too bad the politicians let him escape the death penalty. He is a menace to society. Come to think of it, so is GTA.

-California

Hello Friend. I just finished scanning the [home page] summary of the AR. I am pleased to know that this information is available to the public. I too was a part of the WCG. But what I would like to know is why does this report omit the fact that African-Americans were not even accepted to the Big Sandy campus until the year (1987?) when the campuses were combined and that they just happened to appoint an African-American that year for [student body] president? What about separation of the sessions at SEP camp so that a certain class of children wouldn't mix in with the "better children" at Orr, Minnesota? It really is interesting to me that nobody even acknowledges these facts. Maybe you all need to interview some of those former AC grads that are not white who were turned down from Big Sandy and had to go to Pasadena based on some ridiculous foolishness about not enough of males-females to date each other. Maybe u might want 2 interview some of those African-American counselors at SEP that have their story to tell about the humiliation that they had to suffer while watching their younger brothers and sisters be singled out. I figure since your report is so good at telling it like it is and was, u might want to touch up on this in your summary on the Internet.

-Tujuana Evans  
Virginia

My best friend is a f@#%#&@ moron. He left the Armstrong church and now spends his life reading everything put out by the exers. He can never get enough of Heap, Smith, Cox, Flurry and the Prophecy Flasher. So a while back he says to me the Hail Boop Comet is coming, and I says, So what? Well he says it's a sign the end of this rotten world is here. Well the day finally comes when Boop arrives and he calls me up to go out and see the sign with him. It took me a long time to find it. I was expecting a real comet like on the opening of Superman on TV. You know, a big light and WOOOSH! So what do we get? It was this little pin prick with a little bit of hardly noticeable haze behind it. And speed? Hey, we're talking slower than a sidewalk slug here. So I knock on my friend's head and says, YO! Hello in there! Don't you think if God was sending us all a warning message he could do better than this?! No response. The guy's a f@#\*#&@ moron.

-New York City

At the risk of seeming to practice pop psychology, I noticed in "Tkach Goes Ecumenical" a certain detachment in your comments, even perhaps a bit of pooh-pooing of this trend and the WCG's efforts to learn from other religious communities. I hope I'm wrong, but I would urge anyone who dismisses the WCG's new ecumenism to reconsider. While it is true that the new Pastor General has not moved in a democratic way to implement reforms, the exposure of the church to leaders from other faiths - and vice versa - can only bring good things. When leaders - and members - see that other churches can function without the top down tyranny of past WCG leaders (and maybe the present ones, but I'm not close enough to tell), all sorts of good things might result....

This cross-fertilization of the WCG might well produce good things. When people see how other churches operate, it's harder - not impossible, but harder - for an authoritarian style to go unchallenged. That, in turn, may explain the potential "autonomy" move of the congregations you report about on the second page. Once the WCG moves into a congregational style of government, one of two things can happen. The group may weaken, as my impression is of the COG-7th Day folks who I believe are essentially congregational, and become more oriented towards an outreach of sorts while leaving local matters to local boards. Or the other alternative is they may become more vigorous, as we see with the Southern Baptists who call and fire their pastors locally, but whose "convention" is a powerful force in evangelism and other areas.

Bottom line, in my view - the WCG does well to expose its people to other Christians, if for no other reason than to give members some preview of where they can go when the WCG collapses.

Choice blessings,

-Mark Kellner, author  
*God on the Internet*

I was once a WCG member in the St. Petersburg, Florida congregation and I have fond memories of the camp outs, canoe trips, pool parties, yard sales, softball tournaments, picnics, spokesmen's clubs, dances and dinners - the "good old days" of "we are family." But now I have moved on and am studying in a monastic seminary, a cloister, for ordination into the Roman Catholic priesthood. I hope to become a pastor as well as a hospital and prison chaplain.

I would welcome letters from friends new and old.

-Fr. Richard Makuchan  
St. Norbert Abbey  
1016 North Broadway  
DePere, WI 54115-2697

Even though I am no longer an "Armstrongite," I really think it is important for all of us to watch world news. Mr. Herbert Armstrong made many errors, but in my opinion he was right about a few things - this world is in terrible shape, evil abounds and seems to be spreading, there is much suffering, there is much injustice, and there most certainly are many false teachers and crazy preachers!

I think you are doing a great job in revealing who some of the phonies are. But you also deserve a special thanks for continuing to provide the names and addresses of some remarkable organizations. I often check them out. When I do I often confront views that I don't completely agree with, but I also frequently confront new ideas that prove to be worth my consideration. Over the years I have learned much from Dr. Martin, Dr. Tabor, Concordant Publishing, and others. Now I have gotten interested in the work of Dr. Robert Bowman who was a fighter pilot in Vietnam and then went on to become a top

military rocket scientist. Now he is a Christian writer who has some pretty profound ideas, I think.

You mentioned him in [AR58](#) and since reading some of his articles I have become convinced that many of us who were in Worldwide had many ideas that were really quite anti-Christian. Frankly, in our legalism of old, I think many of us were confusing the compassionate and empathetic Jesus of the New Testament with that law and order conservative of the same era, Pontius Pilate. Garner Ted Armstrong, with his church's helmet and crossed swords shield (it reminds me now of the black skull and crossbones symbol for poison) is still teaching that Jesus is a conservative Republican who just can't wait to apply an iron fist to all those who are not sending GTA their tithes....

Dr. Bowman's article on Christian economics in the March issue of *Christianity In Action* was one of the most eye opening articles I have ever read. I was particularly amazed at how many scriptures show the answers to the world's economic problems, yet are virtually never quoted by preachers today. The Armstrongites, in particular, I think, have been sold a bill of goods....

One thing that bothers me about Dr. Bowman's ministry, however, is his title of Most Reverend. It doesn't offend me personally and I understand that he is a bishop in a Catholic Church offshoot, but I think it is an instant turnoff to many Bible believers who might otherwise read his writings and at least give his ideas the consideration they deserve. What do you think about all this?

-Washington

*Editor: I agree with you that for many of us who were in Worldwide, religious titles like Reverend, Bishop, or Father can prejudice us against a man and against what he is saying. I also agree with you that Dr. Bowman is a profound thinker and, I would add, a courageous Christian. The article you referred to is one that will likely make him enemies in high places. It will be interesting to see if televangelist Pat Robertson and some others will respond to the comments Bowman made about them. More importantly, however, I would like to see how they would respond to the scriptures that he quoted. For those interested, the address for Christianity In Action is 5115 AIA Hwy., Melbourne Beach, FL 32951.*

With the Churches of God in the confusion that they are, I suppose it is not surprising that we are hearing some of the most bizarre rumors. There are some who see grand international conspiracies everywhere, even in the churches! One member told me that he had heard how the WCG was now being controlled by space aliens from a hidden base in Nevada! I try not to listen to such insane rumors, but one about *Ambassador Report* did catch my attention and has me concerned. Someone said that one of the PT's former editors has been writing a book that is a biography of John Trechak and an exposé of *Ambassador Report*. What bothers me is that they supposedly have a lot of dirt on you because they have had investigators sifting through your office's trash bins and also they know how to listen into conversations with electronic devices. We are worried that somehow such people might see our name on your mailing list and that bothers us because we still have many relatives in the Church and we don't want to be cut off family-

wise. Is there any truth to these stories?

-Illinois

*Editor: Except for the part about the space aliens, which would really explain a lot (just kidding!), I don't think so. First of all, any book about me personally and about Ambassador Report is going to turn out to be a very small book. There is just not any kind of a big secret story here. Second, if someone wants to go through my trash cans, they certainly would find some dirt, also some banana peels, coffee grinds, etc. Why would anyone do such stupid stuff.? As for your privacy concerns, let me assure you our mailing list is very secure and not available to the public. I seem to recall that about twenty years ago we did give some addresses to a local Christian publisher who wanted to mail out a catalog of religious materials, but it was a one-time-use arrangement. Since then we have thought it wise to adamantly refuse all requests for information about who is on our mailing list. In fact, we are so careful about safeguarding the identities and privacy of our readers that we do not even discard mail we receive without it first going through the shredder.*

*As for people who might want to spy on us through electronic means, I suppose such things are possible, but such efforts would certainly be a waste of time. The AR is just not engaged in any kind of criminal or exotic activities. We heard years ago that there were certain assistants to HWA who went about doing electronic snooping on members and former members, but they apparently ran into some serious legal difficulties and are now long fled from Worldwide circles. While I really don't think any kind of activity like that is being directed against AR or myself, I have a hunch as to how that rumor may have gotten started.*

*About two years ago, I noticed that each evening a van (with tinted windows, no less) would park across the street from my home and it would not leave until daybreak. Although this pattern went on for about four months, I didn't think much about it until one day a neighbor said to me that he had peeked through the van's tinted windows and had seen a large array of lit LEDs on a substantial amount of electronic equipment. He laughingly said he wondered if I was being monitored by the FBI or some other government agency! Well, that evening I went up to the van, knocked on the door, and when its lone inhabitant poked his head out, I asked if he would mind coming out so we could talk. He agreed to listen and I simply explained that as he was not known to any of us who lived on the block, some of us were wondering what he was doing there every night.*

*Well, here is where it got a little strange. With an expression that reminded me of something you would expect on a robot in a science fiction movie, he explained that he was a follower of Rev. Moon and that his leader had married him to a woman in the Philippines who he had to support but whom he had never met. He said that between supporting that wife in the Philippines and tithing to Rev. Moon he could not afford any living accommodations other than his van. And, he said, he just happened to like our street because of its seclusion, peace, and quiet. As he refused to let me see the inside of his van, I can't say what, if any, electronic equipment he had I assume that like a lot of van owners he may have had a stereo system or short wave radio. Whatever the case, I have not seen him or his van since, and I can only hope he has come to his senses and left*

*the Moonies by now. I have mentioned that odd incident to a few and suspect that perhaps some have blown a rather innocent story a bit out of proportion.*

*No, I don't think you need to be concerned*

Keep up the good work. I like the information - the good, the bad, and the ugly. It is only those who wish to hide things that want the press and freedom of information stifled.

-Richard P. Trecek  
Sacramento, California

Just a note to say thanks for the tip on Ellen Hart's mystery *The Oldest Sin*. I enjoyed it immensely!

-William T. Voyce  
Des Moines, Iowa

*Editor: A few readers wrote that they had trouble locating a copy of Ms. Hart's book. The author informs us that copies may be ordered directly from the publisher by writing to: Ballantine Mail Sales, 400 Hahn Road, Westminster, MD 21157. U.S. phone orders may be placed by calling 1-800-793-2665 (you will need a credit card). If wanting to place a phone order from outside the U.S., you will need to call 410-848-1900 and ask for the ordering department. The book costs \$4.95 plus \$4.00 S&H and sales tax if applicable.*

About 12 years ago, I wrote AR a letter expressing my dismay with the Worldwide Church and voiced my apprehension over a post-Armstrong administration. I solicited your staff to draw up a few scenarios concerning its prognosis and was delighted that you reserved a good portion of your next newsletter to that request. A much belated thank you is in order here. Well, after leaving that organization, my zeal for Bible study hit a low ebb, and I lost contact with the membership and all interest in the activities of that church. I felt I had wasted a lot of time and it was about time to get a life.

Recently, I invested in a computer and while browsing the Internet, BOOM! There it was. AR's home page. Scrolling down the list of back issues and reading the topics chronicling what can only be described as the total disintegration of the Armstrong empire left me completely awestruck. I couldn't stop shaking my head as I reeled in my jaw after it hit the floor. I felt like Rip Van Winkle after twenty years of sleep.

In that letter to you years ago I made mention about the WCG membership being scattered to the four winds. But I see now that there are more splinters in the church than there are in an old picket fence. Simply amazing. A comedy of horrors. Keystone cop evangelizing and revolving door theology are some impressions that come to mind as I review this sad history. You've been watchdogging this organization for over twenty years now. How would you encapsulate this entire experience? As for myself, I consider my tour through the WCG as a rite of passage. Because in the process, and through your newsletter, I became acquainted with the Concordant Publishing Concern where my faith revived. And, with its links to similar faiths on the Internet, I will never hunger for

spiritual food again. Far from being a negative avocation, I believe your exposés produce positive fruit for many who would otherwise be fleeced sheep headed for the slaughter. Once again, my heartfelt thanks for the work that you do. You know, thinking back on it now, it really hasn't been just so much "wasted time."

-Tom Alexander  
California

## **A Big Time for Cults, A Bad Time for Cult Fighters**

Since the Heaven's Gate mass suicide in Rancho Santa Fe near San Diego in March and the subsequent flood of articles on the tragedy, many have noticed some scary parallels between the Heaven's Gate cult and traditional Armstrongism. Both groups staunchly believed (and still do) that we are in "the end time" and rapidly approaching the dawning of a new world. While cult leader Applewhite and his followers waited for a space ship, Armstrongites waited (and some still wait) to be taken to Petra or some other place of safety. Both groups had their special inspired leader who had special insights given by God. Applewhite's bunch waited for "the change" while Armstrongites wait for the first resurrection. The Heaven's Gaters had "the two" while many Worldwidiers have thought "The Two Witnesses" must be in their midst. Both groups used scripture in unorthodox ways. Both regimented the lives of members. Both encouraged alienation from family and friends. Both emphasized their own insider's view of world events. Both ridiculed outsiders, no matter how well-educated, as being "of this world." Both made very skilled use of the electronic media and even the Internet. Both encouraged members' docility and pacifism. And, of course, both encouraged outrageous levels of self-sacrifice.

The news media revelations that have come out about the Heaven's Gate cult only reinforce something the *Report* has pointed out for over twenty years. Cults, as we have been careful to define the term (groups that encourage isolation, non-thinking, absolute obedience, and giving everything - see [AR1, p. 36](#)), are not simply "new religious groups"! They are a distinctive type of pathological social organization that tends to destroy the lives of those who become enmeshed in them. Unfortunately, as we have seen in recent months with the Aum Supreme Truth cult in Japan, the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland and Quebec, and now the Heaven's Gate people, bizarre and dangerous cults are popping up ever more frequently. And, with so many millions apprehensive over the approach of the year 2000 with its number two followed by three zeros (OH NO!) we can expect more religious lunacy and cult pushers than ever before. We will also be seeing some of the more zany WCG spinoffs making headlines before too long (more on that next time).

For about as long as our own publication has been around, one organization that has helped tens of thousands of families involved with cults has been the Cult Awareness Network (CAN). There has probably never been a group more dedicated to studying and exposing the methods of unethical cult leaders. And over the years we always considered the very dedicated people who worked for and with CAN as among our best friends.

Unfortunately, CAN - or, at least, the real CAN, the one dedicated to battling the cults - is

no more. As we reported in [AR62](#), CAN became the principal target of a massive campaign by Scientologists bent on silencing critics of their cult founded by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard. The Scientologists' campaign began with directed rumor attacks and anti-CAN publicity salvos. Then around 1991, CAN and its local affiliates and individual staffers were hit with a barrage of lawsuits filed by several dozen Scientology members and others. In one week alone during 1992, Scientologists filed 12 different suits against CAN. Most were civil rights claims which alleged that CAN was denying membership to Scientologists (who CAN saw as wanting membership only to disrupt CAN operations). Most of the suits were dismissed, but in time the lawsuits wiped out most of CAN's annual budget and brought the group financially to its knees.

CAN was forced into bankruptcy and has now closed its operations entirely. But, in an additional development that should make all Americans seriously question whether our judicial system has not lost its rational moorings, bankruptcy proceedings resulted in CAN losing its name, logo, post office box, and telephone number to the highest bidder, a lawyer named Steven L. Hayes, who, it turns out, is a Scientology member! Since then, CAN's old personnel have been fired and replaced with Scientologists who, under the old CAN logo, put out booklets that promote Scientology while attacking the anticult movement and leading cult fighters such as Dr. Robert Lifton, Dr. Margaret Singer, and Dr. Louis J. West. This is no different than if the cigarette industry could win a lawsuit against the American Cancer Society and then, with the help of the courts no less, take over the mail address and phone number of the cancer fighting organization in order to promote cigarette smoking under the American Cancer Society's very own logo!

"It kind of boggles the mind," said David Bardin, an attorney who has represented CAN in Washington. "People will still pick up the CAN name in a library book and call saying, 'My daughter has joined the Church of Scientology.' And your friendly CAN receptionist is someone who works for Scientology!" (*The Washington Post*, 12/1/96.) In helping to bring about this outlandish fraud on the public, the courts are seemingly blind to the great harm they have thereby wrought on both the public and the reputation of our nation's judicial system.

The actual lawsuit that proved to be the straw that broke CAN's back had been brought by an 18-year-old Life Tabernacle member named Jason Scott. He sued after having gone through an involuntary deprogramming session with famous exit counsellor Rick Ross, a long-time friend of the *Report*. CAN became a joint defendant only because a CAN volunteer had unilaterally recommended Ross to Scott's distraught mother. Ironically, a few months after getting his judgment from the court thereby driving CAN into bankruptcy, Scott became disillusioned with his Scientology lawyers and replaced them with a lawyer who had previously battled Scientology. Scott has since reconciled with his mother and settled out of court with Rick Ross. But as for CAN, the damage was already done and it was permanent.

The whole episode points out not only how vicious some cults can be toward their perceived enemies, but it also points out how precarious the cult fighting business has become. Even as this is being written, for example, our Christian friends at Watchman Fellowship are facing a number of lawsuits that have been brought at the behest of Scientologists and others. Fighting cults in the press has increasingly become a tough thing to do.

With the rapid financial decline of the WCG, somehow a rumor has gotten started that we have decided to discontinue publishing the *Report*, as though all we have ever cynically cared about is seeing a corporation go under. As a result of that widespread rumor we have lost some of our contributors. Nevertheless, the rumor is just not true. The increase in cultic activities around the globe, the massive increase in religious anxiety caused by the approach of the next millennium, the continuing transformation of the WCG, the related question of what will become of its assets, and the ongoing life of Armstrongism through new religious organizations all tell us that there are still many questions to be investigated and many amazing stories to be told.

My thanks to all of our long-time readers who support our efforts and know from experience that we are not quitters. With your ongoing support, we will continue on. And, we will do so in the spirit of that old journalistic tradition that powerfully commands us to "give comfort to the afflicted and affliction to the comfortable."

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR 66\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

September 1997 (AR66)

### Tkach Creates New Center To Remember Ambassador

After a life of 50 years, on May 19 Ambassador University had its final commencement. The proceedings, viewed by many alumni as akin to a funeral, were held at Big Sandy, Texas, at the last remaining campus of what was once a thriving three campus system. Giving the commencement address was Joseph Tkach Jr., viewed by many alumni as the key instigator of the events that led to Ambassador's demise. *The Worldwide News* (WN), the official newspaper of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), reported in its June issue, "If the university is not sold as a going institution, it will be closed Aug. 31 and the physical plant sold." Up for grabs will be not only the university's 350-acre campus, but the surrounding 1,900 acres which are also owned by the WCG. The Dallas, Texas real estate firm of Grubb & Ellis will be handling the sale. They are the same folks who are trying to sell off the WCG's 70 acres of Pasadena, California real estate.

To replace Ambassador University, Tkach Junior has now established something called the Ambassador Center at Azusa Pacific University (APU), a self-described nondenominational Christian university located about seventeen miles east of Pasadena, California. The new center will be headed by Dr. Russell K. Duke, Ambassador's last president. From the official WCG version of the story, APU will pick up some of the students left stranded by Ambassador's closing, will house Ambassador's old records, and will "provide the sense of cultural heritage necessary to provide vitality for the WCG." Duke says he will be teaching an APU class on the doctrines of the WCG.

The WCG announcement about the creation of the Ambassador Center brought heated comments from many Ambassador alumni. Typical were those of one angry alumnus who told us:

Tkach has finally revealed himself to be the duplicitous bastard that he really is. The church sent Michael Fezell and him to Azusa Pacific to take classes. No one figured

they'd get brainwashed there and that they would be used by the evangelicals to undermine everything that Mr. Herbert Armstrong ever taught. All this happened with the assistance of those they met through APU. And it all happened while Tkach lied to us that it was not happening just as some, like you guys at AR, were telling us it was happening.

Now this lying SOB has the nerve to tell us he is starting the Center as a way to preserve Ambassador's heritage. Hell, if he wanted to do that he should not have participated in the destruction of Ambassador in the first place. Just who do Russell Duke and Tkach think they are fooling? That APU class Duke is going to teach will be nothing more than an attack on everything Mr. Armstrong believed and taught. But what galls me even more is that they are going to be using Worldwide tithe money to give themselves hefty salaries while they attack everything those tithes and offerings were intended to support.

Frankly, there is no way that I would ever get interested in the kind of Christianity that they push at APU. Here is an institution that has undermined the dedicated work of thousands who believed that Mr. Armstrong was doing the very Work of God. APU has helped Tkach destroy a dream. Those evangelicals over there have promoted a fraud in the name of religion. And now they are going to promote this Center - and I'd bet they are getting paid well to do it - that will hurt thousands more. It is all a great tragedy, a great, great tragedy.

## **Fezell Fading Away?**

When church founder Herbert W. Armstrong was at its helm, the Worldwide Church of God could always count on an almost regular stream of ministerial defections or changes of personnel made at the whim of its top leader. While much has changed under the leadership of the late Joseph Tkach Senior and now Joseph Tkach Junior, the musical chairs habit has not been broken and remains a central part of WCG culture. In the WCG's long slide away from the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong, no individual has had more influence upon the Tkachs than J. Michael Fezell. Having grown up in the Tkach household and having been a lifelong friend and confidant of Joseph Tkach Jr., many assumed that he would continue to be a major power in the new WCG. But now, insiders tell us, Fezell's influence is waning.

In the April WN, Fezell announced that "the time has come to eliminate the office of director of Church Administration, a post I have held since September 1995." The responsibilities of that office were taken up by pastors Dan Rogers and Randy Dick. Fezell supposedly remained on as assistant to the president. At that juncture not much more was said officially. Now, however, we have learned that Fezell's power within the WCG hierarchy is almost zero. Evangelist Greg Albrecht has become the WCG's number two man and often its most visible spokesman. The Fezell family has been moved out of the Orange Grove home they occupied next door to the Pastor General's. Fezell's wife Vicki has not been seen at WCG services for some time. And "the Fez," himself, has told friends that he would prefer to be pastoring a church in another denomination, perhaps the famous Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena where he often attends.

## **A Visit With Pastor General Tkach**

When WCG Pastor General Joseph Tkach Jr. appears in public or in photographs in the church's publications, there is usually a smile on his face. Insiders tell us, however, that the last few years of church infighting and defections have taken a heavy toll on him. A few months ago, one of Tkach's old friends, a former member who has stayed on good terms with certain headquarters personnel, was invited to Pasadena by accountant Jack Kessler, a friend and counselor of Tkach. The old friend said, "Jack Kessler invited me out for some discussion with him and Joe. It was a fairly nonspecific invitation and I didn't know until I got there what it was about.... I had no expectations, I didn't know why I was there." Whatever the real reason for the invitation, the old friend came and saw, and afterward wrote a set of letters to other ex-Worldwidiers about his trip to Pasadena.

Whether or not it was his intent that those letters be made public, by posting them on the Internet they have received a fairly wide distribution. What he had to say is quite revealing about Pastor General Tkach and about the state of affairs at WCG headquarters. Here are some of the comments that we found the most revealing:

---

&COPY; 1997 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.

ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

Jack [Kessler] is an interesting guy and very, very funny. He's very much a gentleman and a fine host. He made me feel welcome in a very awkward and odd situation. Jack spent a lot bringing me to Los Angeles, and he paid for it with his own money. The WCG didn't buy the trip. When I got to the Los Angeles airport, I walked off the plane and saw this balding gentleman in a sports coat. I wasn't sure it was Jack and he was holding this manila envelope. A couple approached him and he slid a sign out and they just shook their heads in confusion when he gave them a peek at it. I walked up to him, wondering if it was Jack, and he pulled this sign out, it read: U SHAKKA ZULU? That was my Internet moniker during the April 1st joke. I nearly split a gut laughing. For those of you curious to what Jack looks like, he's kind of a cross between "Frasier" and "Winchester" on M.A.S.H.

Jack took me to Redondo Beach. I hadn't been there since 1988 when I worked for Continental Airlines. He bought me dinner at a very nice little restaurant. I had my first taste of crab cakes and they weren't too bad. Funny how I still feel guilty eating things like that. Cult habits die hard I guess. Afterwards we drove to Century City and he took me on a tour of the law office he runs. They have extensive computing facilities, almost better than what we have where I work. Definitely first class installation. From his offices you have a wonderful view of Los Angeles, the Pacific Ocean, and Beverly Hills. We spent an hour or so there, then drove to Pasadena. Joe wasn't home yet (he was speaking at a fund raiser for a troubled kids ministry), so we walked the campus several times. He showed me where Rader lived, and Feazell, and Duke, etc. We ended up at Barney's Pub, ordered a pitcher of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, and some chicken wings and killed some time. Then we walked back to Joe's and he was home.... Joe lives in Ellis LaRavia's old house on Orange Grove. It's a barn-shaped building, nice, comfortable, but not ostentatious. It looks like, and is, a family home. Joe broke out three bottles of his home brew Scottish Ale, and it was

delightful-tasting beer, with a slightly fruity taste of Lambic beer, although it was not Lambic. Then he showed me this collection of hot sauces from around the world. These sauces come with really wild names: "Sudden Death," "After Death," "Inner Beauty," "Slap Me on the Ass and Call Me Sally," and hundreds more. I recognized none of these brands except for a few Jamaican varieties. Having been raised on Mexican food in Arizona, I didn't want my manhood challenged on account of a chile pepper. I decided to give these things a go. Jack and Joe showed me how to eat this stuff and man oh man, I nearly cried this stuff was so hot. This stuff could blast a hole in the worst head cold. It probably could etch steel or refine uranium too.

Saturday morning I got up before everyone else, went for a walk to "the Ranch" (now Hughes Market) as I forgot to bring some shaving cream and shampoo. And as I had blisters from my new shoes and from all the walking that Jack and I had done, I got some antibiotic cream to keep my feet from getting blood poisoning. I was walking back to his house when Joe caught me and asked me if I'd eat breakfast with him. We ate at a Jewish delicatessen in Pasadena. Joe is on a high fiber diet. He's lost about 25 pounds on this diet so he eats only oatmeal for breakfast. I had eggs and potato pancakes.

As it did throughout the weekend, the conversation turned several times to why I wasn't attending. When I started to explain why, Joe would tell me what a great job other denominations thought the WCG was doing. This was exasperating so I just dropped the subject. I told him, "You aren't ready to hear it yet." Joe told me several times, "We need people like you who are fighters." I told Joe, "But I don't need the WCG anymore nor want the pain anymore of watching what this church does." He insisted that if I knew the true story (and I can't think of anyone who has a bigger picture of the last five years than I have) that I would want to return.

I went to the WCG services where I got all kinds of strange looks. From those that know me and my current non-WCG member status, to those like Bernie Schnippert and Ralph Helge who couldn't figure out who this guy with Kessler and Tkach was....

One thing that became quite evident while staying with Joe is the pressure he has been under from the UCG, PCG, and GCG people. Joe said a week doesn't go by where he doesn't get a call, letter, or someone walking up to him telling him that they wish he was dead, or praying that he soon would be. He has also received a good number of direct death threats. He said his house has had six attempted break-ins. Fortunately he has quite a good alarm system.

Joe seems to be in a siege mindset and seems to find great comfort and support from denominational leaders Hank Hanegraaff and others. I think this makes it highly unlikely we will ever see any decentralization in the WCG, as Joe will of course not want to see any assets go to any splits, now or future. Plus those that are new covenant minded have put similar pressures on Joe. That doesn't make him too inclined to listen to them either, although I think the latter are less concerned with assets than with some local freedom.

The IRS has audited him every year of the past five years....

One of the amusing stories he related was the influx of charismatics on campus. He said one week he had a charismatic woman come up to him telling him how she could see the "glow of God around him." The next week he had a charismatic man telling him he was in the "grip of Satan." Even the charismatics can't agree. He also related a story of these people (from Four Square, I think) who go on those prayer

walks around the campus and anoint the sidewalks with olive oil. It got so bad they were leaving huge oil stains on all the sidewalks. Joe said, "We finally told them we don't mind you praying, just don't vandalize the property in the process." I suggested he pass out cans of PAM Aerosol Olive Oil spray.

Joe told me he expects to sell the property soon [this was back in the spring - ed.]. He said he expects to lease a property somewhere in California for three years, before deciding to purchase a final property somewhere. He also said that one of the reasons for a hierarchy [church government] versus going to a congregational approach is the way U.S. law treats the two church structures. If a congregational church splits up, the assets are divided among the splits, as it is deemed to be democratic on a local scale. In a hierarchical structure the assets stay with the hierarchy.

One of the more surprisingly controversial moments during my stay at Joe's was [our] conversations with Joe about women preachers. Both Jack [Kessler] and I think there is absolutely nothing wrong with women preachers. God is not a respecter of persons based on race or gender. This got an interesting response from Joe who went into an exhaustive discourse about the "orthodoxy and orthopraxy of the historic Christian faith." I had to ask him what "orthopraxy" meant. Basically, while orthodoxy has to do with a standard of doctrine, orthopraxy has to do with a standard of practice. Walking the acceptable path in the NAE [National Association of Evangelicals] seems to be the guiding rule here. The long and short of it was that since most Christian churches don't ordain women, the WCG won't either. He said it wasn't an "unpardonable sin," but I didn't think to ask him if he thought it was a pardonable sin to ordain women. Sometimes I am not as quick as I am in e-mail.

Joe prays with women preachers in Pasadena on occasions so I am not really clear what he really thinks on the subject. It is clear that women won't be ordained to any speaking role in the WCG.

The whole trip was very odd for me, because I like both Joe and Tammy. They are real people, live normal lives, have kids and a cluttered house just like you and me. To be honest, I think he's the most "REAL" Pastor General the WCG has ever had. There are no pretensions from either Joe or Tammy. But he isn't like you and me. He runs a church that has a sordid history, even if most of that happened prior to his tenure.

## **Worldwider Charged With Murder**

According to Australian police, on June 18, Worldwide Church of God member Gay Elizabeth Lock, 53, was found murdered in her Mudgeeraba, Australia home. Apparently attacked while she slept, Mrs. Lock died from a single blow to the head. Mrs. Lock's husband, Russ Lock, an Ambassador College-Bricket Wood alumnus and computer programmer at the WCG's Australian office in Burleigh Heads, was the one who phoned the police to report the murder. A few days later, however, after burning the blood-soaked mattress on which the victim had last slept, Lock turned himself into the police and confessed to having committed the crime with a hammer. Lock, who remains in custody and has been denied bail, has indicated he intends to plead guilty, but "with diminished capacity." No one we have talked to has been able to point to any factors which may have led to the family tragedy. The couple had one daughter, Sharyn. And according to the WCG, letters and sympathy cards may be mailed to her via the church's Australian office (P.O. Box 2600, Burleigh MDC, Queensland 4220, Australia). No date has yet been set for Russ Lock's trial.

## Teddy Bare on TV

Garner Ted Armstrong recently made it onto one of America's top television talk shows, but not in the way he probably would have preferred. On Geraldo Rivera's July 11 telecast, the well-known television journalist devoted a whole program to the subject of how videotape is playing an expanding role in our legal system and in our private lives. The program titled "Sex, Crime, and Videotape," which was aired nationwide on a Friday afternoon, shocked many viewers because of its startling frankness. Here is how one of our readers described the segment about GTA:

I had just gotten home from a trip to my bank. I got some ice tea out of the fridge and just turned on the TV to relax. All of a sudden I saw Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong naked. Totally NAKED! It was him all right. Oh, they put this video dot over most of his private parts so as not to offend anyone supposedly. But I think that only made it worse. After all, when the masseuse put her hands up in the dot area, I'm sure everyone could imagine what she was up to. It was disgusting. Even more so when he later groaned off camera. That was really disgusting.

What surprised me the most, however, was how casual Mr. Armstrong acted. I get embarrassed if I go to the doctor's office and I am asked to take some clothes off. But it seemed to me like Mr. Armstrong does this kind of thing all the time. What is wrong with that man? And, I wondered, why hasn't he gotten rid of all those dirty tatoos of naked women all over his body? I saw a program recently about how you can have tatoos removed. Surely he must know about that. Or does he like having pictures of naked women all over his body? I really feel sorry for his wife having to look at such things on her husband's skin.

And one more thing. I am not too happy with Mr. Rivera either. He could have just interviewed the masseuse and her lawyer without showing us the actual massage parlor encounter. Why did he have to also show us the dirty video tape?

Well, first of all, Geraldo Rivera is not just a newsman; he is also in the entertainment business. Tapes of lurid subject matter get more people to watch, sell more advertising, and make more money for his program. Let's not forget that Geraldo was the fellow who published a book a while back that revealed the names, along with many private details, of a large number of famous women he had supposedly slept with over the years. (Talk about someone violating others' privacy in order to make money!) So, obviously, Geraldo is quite willing to go beyond the limits of good taste. Nevertheless, Garner Ted is a public figure and one who is clearly not living the life he is telling others to live. So maybe the broadcast will have done some good by discouraging others from supporting his ministry or, at least, from going into massage parlors.

Most of the information covered on the Geraldo program has already been reported on in [ARs 60-62](#). (For example, it was explained how GTA had allegedly attempted to sexually attack the masseuse on an earlier visit to her establishment, and then when he called for another appointment she had a video camera set up in order to document his behavior for legal reasons.) However, the Geraldo program concluded with some new information from Suerae Robertson, the masseuse who is suing GTA, and her attorney, John Osborne. As they flashed on the screen, "Suerae Robertson-Videotaped her sexual harassment by

an evangelist," here is what was said:

GERALDO: Suerae, do you feel safe now? Do you feel challenged by this organization, this International Church of God?

SUERAE: Well, after several death threats to myself, to my attorney, to his family, indications that they knew where my grandchildren were at, and the research that was done on this man when we found out that I'm just one of many that he has done this to...

GERALDO: Allegedly.

SUERAE: Allegedly done this to.

GERALDO: John Osborne, what is the status of this case?

OSBORNE: Right now the case is languishing in the Court of Appeals. The Church of God is trying to get out of the suit. A judge initially ruled in their favor. She later recused herself from sitting in the case, having to do with her husband's relationship, I think, with Garner Ted. But, at any rate, the Court of Appeals is going to rule whether or not the church should be a party to this lawsuit. Once they do, we proceed from there.

GERALDO: The video tape should make the case pretty open and shut - unless they interpret it as Suerae, in some way, inviting that kind of conduct.

OSBORNE: Well, she had a choice. She could either try to persuade a jury pool in a small Texas town where this man is a big fish - her word against his - or she could seek some sort of proof that this man is capable of acting in this fashion. And I think she made the right decision.

As those words were being spoken, a section of the GTA sex tape was played showing the naked evangelist reaching out to put his hands on the hips of the masseuse who was backing away from his advances. It was not a pretty sight.

As we go to press, the Court of Appeals has still not ruled as to whether or not the Church of God International will be joining GTA as a defendant in the lawsuit. The plaintiff claims it should because GTA's promiscuous lifestyle was well known to the church's board members, and they still allowed him to function in a position where his sexually predatory instincts could do harm to others.

In regard to the latter, it is significant what recently transpired in another Texas case involving sex and clergymen of another denomination. On July 25, a Dallas, Texas jury awarded nearly \$120 million in damages after finding the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas had ignored evidence that a priest was sexually abusing boys and that it then tried to cover up the scandal. The award is probably the largest judgment for sexual abuse that

has ever been made against a church organization. Unless the judgment is overturned on appeal, the damages are to be paid by the Diocese of Dallas and the Rev. Rudolph Kos who was found to have committed the sexually abusive acts. The plaintiffs were 10 men and the family of another who committed suicide. The abuses were committed between 1977 and 1992 while Kos was a seminarian and later a priest. As in the GTA case, the plaintiffs charged that the priest's proclivities for improper sexual contacts were known to the church's hierarchy, but that he was still allowed to function as a cleric in situations where his urges would lead him to sexually abuse altar boys and other church members. Kos now lives in San Diego after being suspended from the church's priesthood. He still faces criminal charges that have been brought by two of the plaintiffs.

Apparently, in spite of all the sexual misconduct we see about us in society today, jurors down in Texas do not think it appropriate for clergymen to engage in sexual debauchery or for church organizations to turn a blind eye to such conduct. If that is the case, Garner Ted and his International Church may not fare too well if their case ever goes before a Texas jury.

## **Divided United Focuses on Three Issues**

The United Church of God (UCG), holding even at about 20,000 members, remains the largest of the WCG's Armstrongite offshoots. The new organization is churning out new doctrinal booklets, runs ads in *Reader's Digest*, and is spending money taping what is supposedly going to be a "prime-time TV special" that will star church president David Hulme. That many WCG personages of old still remain on the UCG payroll is evident by some of the by-lines that appear in the church's magazine *New Beginnings*: Mark Kaplan, the famous Jewish scholar; Peter Shenton, whose father had once been a leader in the Flat Earth Society; David Register, the sports car and good life enthusiast; and Robin Webber, formerly Joseph Tkach Senior's "right hand man for secret assignments." Nevertheless, the UCG continues to lose important personnel. One such loss came in late spring with the resignation of pastor Ron Weinland. In a May 26, 1997 resignation letter, Weinland startled many when he wrote:

Many of God's faithful are crying out for leadership. Where is it? It has been caught up in committees that seem to go nowhere. It is caught up in debate by differing mindsets that will not come to agreement. It is caught up in a divided council, so that meaningful and decisive actions expected from leadership are in a quagmire. It is caught up in people who resist and work against the very Constitution and Bylaws [of the church] so that they can get their own way. Can God be pleased with such confusion? Does the membership respect a ministry who fail to give strong leadership through a willingness to stand for principle, integrity, open honesty, and ethical values?

On 12/27/96 I wrote a letter to all the Conference of Elders [COE]. It stirred up quite a controversy. In that letter I only hoped to draw attention to some very serious problems that were being smoothed over, justified, minimized, or simply ignored. The most serious issue was that of the disappearance of reserves through mismanagement, careless stewardship, and/or presumptuous assumption of authority above that allowed by the Constitution and Bylaws.

In preparation for that letter, I was horrified by accounting figures that projected we would only have around \$1 million in reserves, when there was supposed to be over \$5 million by 3/31/97. We didn't even have the monies in reserve for the annual General Conference, as we were supposed to have. My projections were actually off, because we didn't even have \$1 million in reserves by that time. Instead, by all practical measures, if we had paid all our bills to that date, instead of holding back ministerial expense checks and church allocation checks, we would have been in the red.

To many, this kind of stewardship and accounting was unconscionable. But where was the outcry? Where was the decisive leadership that should have taken swift action with those who put the church in such a precarious position? Did anyone go to outside legal sources to see how serious these actions were? To my understanding, no one did. Instead, the whole process was whitewashed, justified, and excused. I've wondered what God would have to say about such handling and eventual disappearance of one third of a year's income from the tithes of His people....

In my cc:mail message to the COE on 5/15/97, I gave reasons why I believed the Treasurer [Steven Andrews] and President [David Hulme] should resign or be asked by the COE to step down. The HO [home office in California] leadership has continued to resist the process of governance to which we had all agreed to submit ourselves. The "Code of Ethics" of the ministry makes it clear that we are to uphold the Constitution and Bylaws. That would include the COE taking action against any who do not uphold that process, nor live up to our "Code of Ethics."

I also drew the attention of the COE to the March 28 letter of Bob Dick and David Hulme that was essentially a slap in the face to both the COE and OCE. In addition, I mentioned Edwin Stepp's divisive sermon (4/26/97) message sent out by the HO. Thirdly, attention was drawn to the legal department's audacity to present a laborious document to the COE concerning the overturning of the balloting process in Louisville.

As the result of a continuing barrage of such conduct and presumption by some, I said I could no longer conscientiously support the leadership of the HO. Furthermore, if the COE did not have the will to decisively address these matters, then I would no longer be able to support the COE. To me, failure to act on these matters spelled "approval."

The actions of the council to uphold the balloting and quickly move on to other business were simply typical of the way things work within UCG. Too many people seemed to accept this action as decisive and swift. It had that appearance, but it did not deal with the cause. I highly respect the courage of one elder who sent a letter to the council addressing that very thing.... that "the COE needs to not just treat the symptom, but to also get to the root cause..."

What is so sad in all of these events of the past two years is that far too many brethren and too many ministers don't even know about many of these ongoing problems. Too many ministers paint a picture of only positive events and smooth over anything that might be negative. We tend to say "peace, peace," when we really don't have peace. Like a dysfunctional family that tries to protect its image, we cover, smooth over, whitewash, and justify the negative and unethical actions of our family. Read Ezek. 13:8-17 on your knees and honestly ask God if that applies to us....

I am resigning because I can no longer conscientiously support the current practices

of this organization. The organization is slowly slipping back into that from which we were jolted loose. It took major doctrinal changes and corrupt government to awaken the church two years ago. We came together at Indianapolis to chart a new course. We only began to address the "effects" of what happened to us in WCG. But what we have yet to address is the "cause." The cause is spiritual and we must learn to righteously judge and discern the difference and act upon those conclusions.

As a result of the inner political turmoil described by Weinland, the UCG is now led by a two-headed executive branch named Dick-Hulme. This two-headed executive, actually Robert Dick (Chairman) and David Hulme (President), now sign letters jointly. That gives some indication of the level of distrust most of the UCG ministry has for its leadership. The UCG's membership, however, is seemingly oblivious to the political infighting that is monopolizing their leadership's attention. Many UCG members are viewing the new two headed executive as a sign that God has shown them the "Two Witnesses" of Revelation. We tried to reach President Hulme for a comment, but he had just taken off for Europe for "cultural events" that included attendance at London's new Shakespeare Center to which he had once helped funnel WCG money. We have since learned that on June 12, Hulme was also "presented to" Queen Elizabeth, undoubtedly as a reward for bringing the bacon, so to speak, back to Britain.

In the meantime, one of our ministerial sources told us: "If you think that those guys are concerned about prophecy or any other biblical teaching you are badly mistaken. In United the ministry is focused on only three things: their salary, their benefits, and their retirement plan."

## **The Splintered Churches of God**

While the UCG holds onto the largest number of ex-WCG Armstrongites, other WCG offshoots continue to fight for the limited number of Armstrongites still available.

Rod Meredith's San Diego-based Global Church of God (GCG) claims it is growing. But sources in that organization tell us that in reality GCO income is up only about six percent over last year, while its television outreach, ad campaigns, and administrative expenses continue to grow. Ex-GCG members have said that the GCG remains mired in rumors that it has been engulfed in a conspiracy led by Jesuit infiltrators bringing in heresies. While not one piece of evidence has ever surfaced to substantiate such a bizarre conspiracy theory, Meredith of late has seemed virtually powerless to stop the spread of the idiotic story which some say has cost him hundreds of members. Another source of problems for Meredith has been the ministry of Myron Martin (Patriots of the Kingdom, P.O. Box 20004 CDO, Concord, Ont. L4K 4T1, Canada). Martin recently put out an open letter to Meredith in which he all but brands Meredith as a false prophet. Some Global executives say privately that the answer to Global's problems would be to put evangelist Dick Ames, formerly the most polished and natural spokesman on the WCG's old *World Tomorrow* program, on the air as a replacement for Meredith on Global's *World Ahead* program. But, they say, they are concerned that Meredith's fragile ego could not take the shock of seeing his brother-in-law succeed in such a high profile role.

As always, the writings of Bill Dankenbring are making waves. In the May-June issue of *Prophecy Flash!* Dankenbring prefaced one of his articles with "New BOMB SHELL

Explodes over Passover Controversy!" The article, "A New Look at Jesus' Last Week and the Sufferings of Messiah!" made a number of biblical observations that have thrown some of Dankenbring's critics into a tizzy. But Dankenbring warned them in the article, "Let the reader beware: If you read this material with an open, unprejudiced mind, this article could completely change your life!" And inside the front cover of the *Flash!* he also prophesied:

This NEW TRUTH will sweep like a TIDAL WAVE over the garbled misunderstandings and errors of the past! It will STAGGER the assumptions and preconceived opinions of men like a SEISMIC JOLT! It will strike the cozy beliefs and false teachings of churches like a MIGHTY EARTHQUAKE - sending "shock waves" around the globe!

Actually, Dankenbring's piece was based to a large extent on the research of Glen W. Myers who wrote and recently updated a paper that points out major flaws in the popular Armstrongite teaching that Jesus was arrested on a Tuesday evening before being crucified on a Wednesday. For a copy of the updated paper write to Myers at: 1047 Iroquois Street, Clearwater, FL 33755.

Meanwhile, Dankenbring's colorful style is being mimicked in another publication. Garner Ted Armstrong has started his own *Prophetic Newsflash!* newsletter. And some in Texas say his writing is improving as he continues to study Dankenbring's original *Prophecy Flash!* for more ideas.

While GTA is trying to bring his new prophecy newsletter up to speed, many of the ministers and congregations that have left his fold in the last two years have been hard at work putting together a new church organization. Formerly called just The Churches of God, approximately 28 elders of the fellowship met in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the end of May and came up with a new organizational structure and a new name: Church of God Outreach Ministries (COGOM). Its main mailing address will now be P.O. Box 5462, Tulsa, OK 74155. One prominent ex-CGI minister who did not attend the conference was Tom Justus of the Church of God Sabbath Day (P.O. Box 1645, Springdale, AK 72765). He has indicated he has reservations about COGOM's new organizational structure. Another problem the new group faces is a budding, but very real, debate over the so-called sacred names issue, a doctrine that HWA in decades past had rejected as being excessively divisive.

## **WCG No Longer Welcome in Russia**

While the WCG as a whole has been on the wane for the last few years, one WCG foreign project has persisted - Worldwide's missionary outreach to Russia. Now, however, a public backlash against Western culture and Western religions entering Russia may put an end to that program.

In an insightful article in the July 14, 1997 issue of *Alberta Report*, Chris Champion wrote:

Mark and Glenda Berg, schoolteachers from Winnipeg, gave up their lives for a year

in 1994 to take the Gospel to a faith-famished land. They worked on the edge of Siberia, in the Russian city of Chelyabinsk east of the Urals, dispatched as missionaries from the Worldwide Church of God to the former Soviet Union. "We taught Bible to public school teachers," reports Mrs. Berg. "But while we were there, the laws regarding what we could and couldn't do changed quite frequently," she says. "And the farther east you go, the more regional politicians there are who want to have control." By the time the Bergs left Chelyabinsk, even the local Russian Orthodox priests, who had initially been friendly, were bristling at their evangelical methods. "There was some pressure by then" to get out, she recalls.

Since the Bergs left Russia, government pressure on missionaries from the WCG and other Christian denominations has increased dramatically. And what is happening in regard to religion in Russia hints at where that country as a whole may be heading.

First a bit of historical background. Not unlike many other nations, since the official establishment of Eastern Orthodox Catholicism in Russia in the 10th century, there developed a very close working relationship between the state and its official church. Unlike its Western European counterparts, however, in Russia the church was not always the submissive member of the church-state marriage. Prof. Serhil Plokyh, director of church studies at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta, points out that for 400 years, except for the 18th century period of state control under Peter the Great known as "Caesaro-papism," the church actually dominated the partnership.

With the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the church's special privileges were eliminated and under the militant atheism of the Soviets, most practicing Christians were persecuted unless they registered with the government as official churches. While large numbers rejected the state's intrusion into their spiritual lives and still worshipped in "catacomb" groups, without government sponsorship and with government persecution that saw many thousands of Christians sent to labor camps, Christianity did not thrive under communism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, interest in all things Western accelerated throughout the Russian sphere for a few years. Sensing that the time was right to proselytize in the East, many Western denominations, including the WCG, began sending missionaries into Russia.

Missionaries say that for a few years their presence seemed welcome. However, when it started to become obvious that the fall of communism was not going to bring about a new prosperity in Russia very soon, but instead was bringing ever greater privation to the Russian masses, a resentment toward much of Western culture began growing. Now, with the Russian economy not able to provide millions with even a subsistence-level existence, with the Russian military in a state of nearly complete dilapidation (its budget is now only one tenth that of the U.S. military budget), and with huge increases in the crime rate and other social problems, many Russians are becoming militantly anti-Western. And with Roman Catholics, American evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists, and Eastern cults making major inroads into Russia, the reinvigorated Russian Orthodox Church has begun to use its formidable influence to halt what it sees as sheep rustling by missionaries from the West.

Earlier this year a bill was introduced into the Russian Parliament to protect the Russian Orthodox Church from competition from the newer religions. The bill's purpose was to

severely limit the property rights and proselytizing rights of any religious group that had not been registered by the old Soviet state 15 years ago. So harsh was the bill that even many older denominations saw it as effectively restoring the Russian Orthodox Church, with its 60 million believers, to its old position as the official state religion of Russia.

In pushing for the bill's passage, Russian patriarch Alexy II likened the "eastward expansion of foreign sects and missionaries in Russia" to the eastward expansion of NATO. And in a sign of growing tension with the Vatican, on June 11 the Holy Synod, the forum that brings together the Russian Church's top clergy, announced that the Russian Orthodox Church had called off a proposed meeting between Patriarch Alexy II and Pope John Paul II that was to have taken place in Vienna on June 21 ahead of a European Ecumenical Council. In a "historical note," the Synod restated its opposition to Roman Catholic missionaries encroaching on Russian territory.

In response to the anti-religious-freedom foment in Russia, Pope John Paul II, the U. S. State Department, and many churches and human rights organizations in the West publicly denounced the Russian Parliament's religion bill. The United States Senate even passed an amendment to a foreign aid bill in July to cut off all aid to Russia if Yeltsin signed the religion bill into law. But all this bullying by the West only infuriated the Russian public which viewed such tactics as foreign meddling in the internal affairs of their country.

Yeltsin, who earlier had vetoed milder versions of the bill, was clearly put into a difficult political position. Nevertheless, in the end, he vetoed the new bill. However, knowledgeable observers in Moscow have told us that the Parliament's votes were so overwhelmingly in favor of the bill (300 votes to eight), it is quite possible that the legislature will vote to override the veto in the near future. Not only that, many local Russian legislatures have already passed laws restricting the activities of newer religious groups in their regions.

Obviously, Russia is no longer going to be a very hospitable place for missionaries from the WCG or from many other Western religious organizations. Already there are reports that Armstrongites and other sabbatarians in some of the more remote former Soviet Republics have decided to flee those regions. And there have even been reports of the murders of a number of Sabbath-keeping Christians in former Soviet regions that now have large Islamic populations.

In light of all these developments, we should ask ourselves what will be the future of democracy in Russia. Many international affairs experts have pointed out that the chaotic political situation in Russia today is remarkably similar to the Weimar Republic period in Germany which ushered in Hitler and the Nazis. Today, with many Russians clamoring for a strongman to replace Yeltsin, and with Russian nationalism and especially Russian Orthodox religious fervor on the rise, we should not be too surprised if Russia, for most of the twentieth century the world's leading atheistic communist power, were to become the twenty-first century's leading fascist power.

## **The Godfather of the United States of Europe**

One of the central tenets of Herbert W. Armstrong's teachings on prophecy was his prediction that before the soon-to-happen return of Christ there would be a United States of Europe led by a great political-military strongman who would be given the blessing of a great European religious leader.

The idea of a politically united Europe is not new. After all, Europe had already been largely united in the days of the Holy Roman Empire. And of course, despots such as Napoleon and Hitler had their own visions and plans for a united Europe. Nevertheless, it was not until after World War II that the idea of a politically united Europe really started being seriously advanced by important European leaders.

Today, such an idea is no longer thought of as merely a theoretical possibility. It is a subject heatedly discussed and reported upon in the world's leading newspapers virtually every day. In the last fifty years, the nations of Europe have achieved ever increasing levels of economic, legal, and military integration. And many of Europe's most influential and powerful leaders are openly working to bring about a fully political European Union within the next decade. In recent months, the most important developments in Europe have centered on attempts at establishing an all-Europe currency to be called the Euro. While it is by no means certain that this attempt will succeed, leading the charge has been German Prime Minister Helmut Kohl who seems to have made the creation of the Euro the hoped-for capstone of his entire political career. Should Kohl succeed, many experts say it is quite possible we will see the creation of a United States of Europe in just a few years.

Armstrongite church leaders are naturally quite excited about such a prospect and evangelists such as Roderick Meredith, Garner Ted Armstrong, and Gerald Flurry are filling the airwaves and the pages of their magazines with warnings that such a coming European Union will be the beginning of the end of Great Britain and the United States. Nevertheless, putting aside for the moment questions of whether a politically united Europe is really prophesied in the Bible or whether such a union would really mean the end of the Anglo-American economic and military hegemony, some will find it more than a little interesting to learn of the origins of the modern movement to unite all of Europe.

It will probably come as a surprise to many, but there is actually a historical figure who among European scholars is quietly referred to as "the Godfather of the United States of Europe." He was very influential in world affairs before, during, and right after the second world war. And it was this individual who, in a series of speeches in the late forties, coined the term "the United States of Europe" and sketched out in considerable detail what the nature of that future union should be like. In doing research on the history of the plan for uniting Europe, we recently came upon some rare old books containing the key United Europe speeches of that great historical figure.

We discovered that on 19 September 1946, at Zurich University in Switzerland, that statesman gave a speech in which he explained for the first time his vision of a united Europe. Here is how he began:

I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe. This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the Western world. It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics. It is the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory which its three or four hundred million people would enjoy. Yet it is from Europe that have sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations, which we have seen even in this twentieth century and in our own lifetime, wreck the peace and mar the prospects of all mankind.

And what is the plight to which Europe has been reduced? Some of the smaller States have indeed made a good recovery, but over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and homes, and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror. Among the victors there is a babel of jarring voices; among the vanquished the sullen silence of despair. That is all that Europeans, grouped in so many ancient States and nations, that is all that the Germanic Powers have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide. Indeed, but for the fact that the great Republic across the Atlantic Ocean has at length realized that the ruin or enslavement of Europe would involve their own fate as well, and has stretched out hands of succor and guidance, the Dark Ages would have returned in all their cruelty and squalor. They may still return.

Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were generally and spontaneously adopted, would as if by a miracle transform the whole scene, and would in a few years make all Europe, or the greater part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to re-create the European Family, or as much of it as we can, and provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe. In this way only will hundreds of millions of toilers be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which make life worth living. The process is simple. All that is needed is the resolve of hundreds of millions of men and women to do right instead of wrong and gain as their toward blessing instead of cursing.... [Here the great orator praised the Pan-European Union, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, Aristide Briand, and the work done by the old League of Nations.]

I was very glad to read in the newspapers two days ago that my friend President Truman had expressed his interest and sympathy with this great design. There is no reason why a regional organization of Europe should in any way conflict with the world organization of the United Nations. On the contrary, I believe that the larger synthesis will only survive if it is founded upon coherent natural groupings.... [He referred here to the Pan-American League and the British Commonwealth of Nations.] These do not weaken, on the contrary they strengthen, the world organization. They are in fact its main support. And why should there not be a European group which could give a sense of enlarged patriotism and common citizenship to the distracted peoples of this turbulent and mighty continent and why should it not take its rightful place with other great groupings in shaping the destinies of men? In order that this should be accomplished there must be an act of faith in which millions of families speaking many languages must consciously take part....

I am now going to say something that will astonish you. The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral leadership of Europe. There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany. The structure of the United States of Europe, if well and truly built, will be such as to

make the material strength of a single state less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honor by their contribution to a common cause. The ancient states and principalities of Germany, freely joined together for mutual convenience in a federal system, might each take their individual place among the United States of Europe....

In all this urgent work, France and Germany must take the lead together. Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America, and I trust Soviet Russia - for then indeed all would be well - must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe and must champion its right to live and shine.

By 1948, the great statesman's dream that there be a Congress of Europe had become a reality. And on 7 May 1948 before the distinguished gathering of the Congress of Europe, meeting at The Hague, he rose up to speak. Beginning with a reference to his 1946 speech in Zurich, he said, "events have carried our affairs beyond our expectations And then:

We need not waste our time in disputes about who originated this idea of United Europe. There are many valid modern patents. There are many famous names associated with the revival and presentation of this idea, but we may all, I think, yield our pretensions to Henry of Navarre, King of France, who, with his great Minister Sully, between the years 1600 and 1607, labored to set up a permanent committee representing the fifteen - now we are sixteen - leading Christian States of Europe. This body was to act as an arbitrator on all questions concerning religious conflict, national frontiers, internal disturbance, and common action against any danger from the East, which in those days meant the Turks. This he called "The Grand Design." After this long passage of time we are the servants of the Grand Design.

This Congress has brought together leaders of thought and action from all the free countries of Europe. Statesmen of all political parties, leading figures from all the Churches, eminent writers, leaders of the professions, lawyers, chiefs of industry and prominent trade-unionists are gathered here. In fact a representative grouping of the most essential elements in the political, industrial, cultural and spiritual life of Europe is now assembled in this ancient hall. And although everyone has been invited in his individual capacity, nevertheless this Congress, and any conclusions it may reach, may fairly claim to be the voice of Europe....

It is necessary for the executive governments of the sixteen countries, associated for purposes of the Marshall Plan, to make precise arrangements. These can apply at present only to what is called Western Europe. In this we wish them well and will give them all loyal support; but our aim is not confined to Western Europe. We seek nothing less than all Europe. Distinguished exiles from Czechoslovakia, and almost all the Eastern European nations, and also from Spain, are present among us. We aim at the eventual participation of all European peoples whose society and way of life, making all allowances for the different points of view in various countries, are not in disaccord with a Charter of Human Rights and with the sincere expression of free democracy....

I was anxious at first lest the United States of America should view with hostility the idea of a United States of Europe. But I rejoice that the great Republic in its era of world-leadership has risen far above such moods. We must all be thankful as we sit here that the nation called to the summit of the world by its mass, its energies and its power, has not been found lacking in those qualities of greatness and nobility upon which the record of famous States depends. Far from resenting the creation of United Europe, the American people welcome and ardently sustain the resurrection of what

was called the Old World, now found in full partnership with the New.

Nothing that we do or plan here conflicts with the paramount authority of a world organization of the United Nations. On the contrary I have always believed, as I declared in the war, that a Council of Europe was a subordinate but necessary part of the world organization. I thought at that time, when I had great responsibility, that there should be several regional councils, august but subordinate, that these should form the massive pillars upon which the world organization would be founded in majesty and calm. This was the direction in which my hopes and thought lay three or four years ago. To take an example from the military sphere, with which our hard experiences have made us all familiar, the design for world government might have followed the system of three or more groups of armies - in this case armies of peace - under one supreme headquarters. Thus I saw the vast Soviet Union forming one of these great groups. The Council of Europe, including Great Britain linked with her Empire and Commonwealth, would be another. Thirdly, there was the United States and her sister republics in the Western Hemisphere with all their great spheres of interest and influence....

As great orators are wont to do, this statesman ended his speech with a plea for the putting aside of petty disputes and a call to action:

A high and a solemn responsibility rests upon us here this afternoon in this Congress of a Europe striving to be reborn. If we allow ourselves to be rent and disordered by pettiness and small disputes, if we fail in clarity of view or courage of action, a priceless occasion may be cast away for ever. But if we all pull together and pool the luck and the comradeship - and we shall need all the comradeship and not a little luck if we are to move together in this way - and firmly grasp the larger hopes of humanity, then it may be that we shall move into a happier sunlit age, when all the little children who are now growing up in this tormented world may find themselves not the victors nor the vanquished in the fleeting triumphs of one country over another in the bloody turmoil of destructive war, but heirs of all the treasures of the past and the masters of all the science, the abundance and glories of the future.

We have quoted goodly portions of these two brilliant and stirring speeches for a reason. By now, many will have noticed that in 1948 the statesman's vision of a future united Europe was very close to what it now appears Europe is on the verge of becoming. Who was the statesman who gave these speeches? Who was this great servant of "The Grand Design," this Godfather of the United States of Europe?

Believe it or not, it was none other than Sir Winston S. Churchill! That fact will come as a surprise to many Armstrongites just as it did to us. That is because for so many years Churchill was not only portrayed by WCG ministers as the greatest of all twentieth century British leaders (which he probably was), but one who represented, not liberal Internationalist ideas, but the kind of British spirit that stood for God, country, empire - "Anglo-Israel" values to Worldwidiers. Yet, it seems, the real Churchill was a far more complex man and a far greater visionary than he has been portrayed by the likes of Herbert W. Armstrong, Raymond McNair, or Gerald Flurry. For example, it is interesting that even today Flurry regularly warns of the supposedly prophesied destruction of Britain by a united Europe and in almost the same breath will quote Churchill as though he had warned of the dangers of such a European political alliance.

Those who would like to read the two Churchill speeches in their entirety will find them

in *The Sinews of Peace* (Houghton Mifflin, 1949) and *Europe Unite* (Houghton Mifflin, 1950). Unfortunately, those two collections of speeches by Churchill are out of print and are not easy to locate, but university libraries or public libraries in larger metropolitan areas may have copies.

Finally, for those interested in studying this subject in more depth, we recommend the article, "Churchill's United Europe" (*History Today*, June 1992) by Roland Quinault, Senior Lecturer in History at the Polytechnic of North London. The author writes that Churchill had been a longtime and enthusiastic supporter of a united Europe, had for a number of years led the European unity movement both in Britain and on the Continent, and was the one mainly responsible for the creation of the Council of Europe and its Strasbourg Assembly in 1949. Quinault writes:

Churchill would have welcomed the creation of a single European market in 1992 since he was, by preference, if not always by practice, a free trader.... He believed that true European unity could not be imposed by a powerful leader, but only achieved by the free union of peoples, based on self-interest and genuine sentiment. Consequently he emphasized the need for popular support towards this end....

Quinault writes that Churchill "hoped to create a Europe which was united, but not uniform" - in other words a Europe where the individual characteristics and traditions of Europe's many ethnic groups would be preserved. In that regard, Quinault sees Churchill as desiring that Britain remain somewhat culturally detached from the Continent and quotes the statesman as saying:

We have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are interested and associated, but not absorbed....

Some Armstrongites might suspect that Churchill's position was merely aimed at thwarting the expansionist plans of the Soviets and that Churchill still envisioned a rather imperialistic Britain for the future. However, Quinault writes:

Churchill regarded Russia as part of the European state system and he did not want a United Europe to be inherently anti-Russian.... Unlike [Margaret Thatcher], Churchill was prepared to surrender some national sovereignty and to strengthen the authority of the Council of Europe and its Assembly. In those respects, his views were closer to Heath, than to Thatcher. But he wanted the Council of Europe to be subordinate to the United Nations and he was never as exclusively Eurocentric as Heath.

While a more enthusiastic campaigner for European union than John Major, Churchill never called for Britain to be at the heart of Europe. At Maastricht, Major echoed Churchill's policy, by refusing to commit Britain to a federal Europe within a set timetable. He also followed Churchill in supporting the enlargement of the European Community and the retention of defence links with the USA and NATO. There can be little doubt that Churchill would have endorsed the Maastricht settlement as a sensible compromise between present reality and future dreams. He desired European union, but he wanted it to be effected by mutual consent, not imposed dictat.

Churchill's views on European union have been largely forgotten, but they are still as

relevant today as they were after the war. The British should remember that the man who personified the bulldog spirit was also the godfather of European unity, while Europeans should recall that this patriotic British premier had a surer vision of European development than many Continentals. It would be most unwise to ignore Churchill's thinking on Europe for he had a knack of getting things right.

Reading through Churchill's European unity speeches, one is amazed at how much his vision of a united Europe seems to be what is actually in the process of being created right now. However, it is also important to see how different his vision was from that prophesied by the Armstrongites. Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the fact that the dream of a politically united Europe still faces hurdles that are not just very real, but very possibly insurmountable.

## **Is European Unity Certain?**

In the last fifty years, those wanting a more economically integrated Europe have made amazing progress in their quest. There is now an astonishing degree of cooperation between all the nations of Europe on matters of trade, transportation, communication, finance, and in the war against international terrorism and crime. In many areas of the law, European law is taking precedence over national law. At the same time, American influence in Europe is not as strong as it was in the sixties and seventies (see "U.S. Boasts It's the Only Superpower, but Winds of Change Are Blowing" by Jim Mann in the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/96, p. A5).

Nevertheless, many reports indicate that whatever greater levels of unity Europe will achieve in the near future, it will at best be only a greater economic one or, if political, only a fragile political one. Tyler Marshall, writing in the *Los Angeles Times* (5/20/96, p. 1) stated, "Cultural differences, myths and rivalries are stymieing the quest for a continental union. Diversity - Latin verve! British pragmatism! - once was seen as strength. But now it is proving divisive." Not even highlighting the obvious differences in language, religion, and ethnicity, Marshall discussed how the nations of Europe are still divided by history, differing educational methods, and especially by cultural values: "Many argue that, with Europe's cultural differences so deeply ingrained, the best that advocates of greater unity can hope for is broader understanding of what they face."

Just how powerful those cultural differences are can be seen in the fact that not only are European countries not readily merging politically into one another, some European countries seem to be splitting up! There is no need to point out the recent Balkanization of, well, the Balkans with Yugoslavia's division. And we all know that just five years ago the Czechs and Slovaks divorced each other. Now, the Scots are talking about greater independence from Britain, the Basques are crying out louder than ever for complete independence from Spain, and the Corsicans are increasingly demanding total independence from France - there has even been bloodshed from armed Corsicans over the issue (*New York Times*, 6/2/96).

Now, in Italy, where the Italian Communist Party only last year made big gains, the northern part of the country is moving toward separation from the southern part in an independence movement led by demagogue Umberto Bossi of the Northern League (*New York Times*, 5/12/96 and 6/11/96). Bossi, whose style reminds many of that of Benito

Mussolini, has already declared a portion of northern Italy to be independent. Calling the new nation Padania, Bossi has even designed green costumes and medieval heraldry for the military officers of the as yet unrecognized country. And, in what many Italians viewed as an outrageous display of near-Napoleonic arrogance, Bossi in August even attacked the pope saying:

We're a long way from the times of Pope John XXII, the great Lombard, who said the church's interest in politics was finished and it was time for people to busy themselves with their consciences. Since then, the Polish pope has arrived, has taken the church and invested it much more with secular powers than spiritual powers (*New York Times*, 8/21/97).

Obviously, the forces of European division are just as real as the forces of European unity. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that not only are there an infinite number of different treaty arrangements possible between nations, but many different types of political union are also possible. For example, before the thirteen American colonies came together under the United States Constitution (signed 1789), they were federated more loosely for eight years under the Articles of Confederation (signed 1781). It may very well turn out that Europe will go through a similar type of intermediate step on its way to a more complete union. Or in the next few years Europe may actually achieve some type of political union, but because of unbridgeable cultural differences, it could turn out to be a political union that lasts only a very short time - just like HWA predicted. We'll see.

## **Tabor on "Mystery Mountain"**

It was about a year ago that we first learned that on a mountain near Las Lunas, New Mexico there exists a rock on which has been carved an abbreviated Hebrew inscription of the Ten Commandments. When we also discovered that a handful of scholars believed the inscription to have been made by ancient Israelites, we were a bit skeptical. We thought it more likely that the inscription was the work of pranksters, perhaps Mormon zealots bent on promoting that religion's Lost Tribes theories through an outright hoax. Now, however, new research by Professor James Tabor has given us second thoughts.

Writing in the Summer, 1997 edition of the *United Israel Bulletin* (1123 Broadway, New York, NY 10010), Tabor points out that the inscription is in an ancient form of Hebrew that scholars have only known about in the last 100 years and that there is evidence that the inscription was seen on the mountain back in the 1880s. Furthermore, there is evidence that other stone markings at the site are in actuality a sky map that astronomically dates a particular eclipse. Amazingly, one scholar puts the date of that eclipse at Sept. 15 of 107 B.C. Tabor points out that that date on the sacred Hebrew calendar was actually 1st Tishri (Rosh Hashannah) in that year. Could it be that the inscription was made on or about that time? Tabor is not the first scholar to have written on the subject of the mysterious stone. Barry Fell in his major study *America B.C.* (New York: Pocket Books, 1989) discusses the inscription on "Mystery Mountain." But Tabor, who is now planning to do archaeological excavations at the site, has shed important light on the subject. Those interested in the travels of the ancient Israelites will find his article of interest.

## **Gary Alexander Enters Politics**

Gary Alexander (AC Pasadena, 1967) the writer, editor, musician, disc jockey, music critic, financier, and tax revolt advocate recently turned 52 and announced that his resumé would contain a new credit - politician. Gary is currently running for a seat in the Virginia State House of Delegates under the Libertarian Party banner. He tells us:

Despite the awesome legalistic hurdles put up by the Demopublican duopoly, I keep telling myself that the original American idea was for part-time volunteer legislators, like you and me, to take a year or two out of their busy life, for public service, like the Swiss do. Putting a finger in the dike of the floodtide of spending by the Leviathan state seems like a noble cause.

Gary brings to the political arena not only outstanding communication skills, but considerable business experience, dynamic energy, and an uncompromising idealism that is rather rare in politics today. One thing he does not bring is a hefty financial base, and so he informs us that he welcomes any and all contributions to his campaign. Those who respond will be added to a mailing list for official position papers. The one we read recently was both unique in its political views and quite colorful. Write to: Alexander For Delegate, 11230 Leatherwood Drive, Reston, Virginia 20191.

Incidentally, Alexander recently did a movie review of the new documentary on the 1993 Branch Davidian tragedy. The movie *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* was produced and directed by William Gazecki and contains new data that again raises troubling questions about many facets of that government operation. Alexander told AR, "My main point is that in 1979, WCG headquarters almost got similar treatment from the state of California. What if the Ambassador campus in Pasadena had been armed and paranoid back then? As I point out in my review, we Americans root for freedom in China, but we root for the SWAT team back home. We want law and order against all oddballs, not realizing that someday the so-called oddballs might be us." The review appears in the September issue of *Liberty* magazine.

## **Armstrong Brewery Expands**

Most WCG members are vaguely aware that besides evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong, WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong had one other son, Richard David Armstrong, who died in a car crash near San Luis Obispo, California in 1958. Old timers say Richard was the Armstrong son who was more gifted in both matters of the head and heart and for that reason was probably HWA's favorite son. Most Worldwidens are not aware, however, that Richard Armstrong and his young wife Lois (nee Lemon, who later married WCG minister Ben Chapman) had a son, Richard David Armstrong II.

The younger Richard Armstrong was, of course, raised in Worldwide and in the mid-eighties he even spent time at Ambassador-Pasadena. Eventually, however, he drifted away from the church. Today Richard Armstrong, 38, is a successful businessman in Grants Pass, Oregon where he is co-owner of the Blue Pine Brew Pub, a small brewery with an attached family-style restaurant and pub.

After undergoing a recent expansion, the brewery is now producing up to 300 gallons of ale a week. Some of their popular items are Pearsoll Peak Pale, an American pale ale; Rip Roaring Red, an amber ale; Big Barley Brown, a British-style brown ale; and Midnight Stout, a dark, full-flavored beer. The restaurant seats almost 90 and regulars recommend the salmon and crab cakes. Besides providing gastronomical delights, the establishment promotes local artists, musicians, and organic gardeners. Eventually every wall in the dining room will be covered by murals painted by local artists. Already the ceiling is painted with a mural reminiscent of the Greek gods Zeus and Aphrodite. As in the pub, the blue pine tables in the restaurant were milled from his own property by Richard himself. And on the outside of the building, rainbows and stars in brilliant colors adorn a facade that is becoming a local landmark.

Besides regular dining, part of the establishment may be rented out for private parties. And, the owners say, they are already planning a gala Oktoberfest. The Blue Pine Brew Pub is located at 422 S.W. Fifth Street in Grants Pass, just a nine hour drive north of San Francisco.

## Where Are They Now?

The WCG has announced that Canadian regional director **Frank Brown**, 59, has been retired. Replacing him in Canada is Gary Moore, 45 (Ambassador-Pasadena 1974).

The June WN announced that "Shorty Fuessel, pastor of the Amarillo, Texas, and Liberal and Scott City, Kansas, churches, resigned from the full-time ministry." No other details were given.

Former Ambassador University President **Dr. Donald Ward** has been the head of the International Bible Learning Center (IBLC) for over a year. He recently announced, however, that because of funding problems he would be leaving IBLC to start his own Bible education service, the Center for Bible Education (CBE). Ward's new group is at Box 452, Hawkins, TX 75765. Shortly after Ward's announcement, IBLC announced it was leaving Hawkins, Texas where it had been based and was moving to California. Their new address is not yet official but their new phone number is (818) 951-4252. Active in the latter group are such former WCG luminaries as Mark Kaplan, David Antion, Dr. John Merrit, Judd Kirk, Leon Walker, and Leslie McCullough, in addition to SDA pastor Samuele Bacchiocchi.

## Hot Links

More and more, current and former Worldwidiers are turning to Web sites for information. Some sites valued by ex-Worldwidiers are:

*In Transition* - it may no longer be going out in newsprint, but editor John Robinson has maintained a Web site that still has updates on Armstrongite offshoots. Also quite valuable at the site are back issues of *In Transition*. Robinson's two-part article on the history of WCG church government doctrine which appeared in the last two issues of IT is especially worth reading. The site is at: <<http://www.io.com/~robinson/>>.

Ex-WCG cleric David Covington puts out his *Crossroads* publication but, unfortunately, only via the net. This summer's *Crossroads* #4 is now available and contains a commentary on the mechanics of mind control which asks, "Why did we do all those crazy things?" The issue also puts a major focus on relationships after the WCG: making friends, dating and marriage/divorce. There is a doctrinal section, a book review, and don't miss the anecdote about the twilight zone. The Covington site is at: <http://members.aol.com/coving1d>.

Former Worldwider Ed Mentell has a web site that many will find helpful, even entertaining at times. Particularly valuable is an easy-to-access complete text of Daughter of Babylon, Bruce Renehan's history of the WCG. Mentell's site is at: [www.herbertwarmstrong.com](http://www.herbertwarmstrong.com).

Much of what is reported accurately about the WCG and its offshoots can make you cry. So anyone who can find a bit of humor in it all is providing a service. One ex-member who works hard at being a satirist is Douglas D. Becker. Formerly the creator and publisher of the *Tkach-22* newsletter, Becker is now turning his talents on the WCG via his web site. And, not all of his material is completely tongue-in-cheek. He wrote us:

You need to look at my web site under the item "Learn about seeking the truth from reversed speech." This will link you to the site of Australian researcher David John Oats with some samples of what he has discovered. He is a clinical psychologist who discovered the reversed speech phenomenon about seven years ago and now has a couple of books on it.

In my own research, I started with the early 90s Dean Blackwell sermon called "Prediction Addiction" where near the end of the tape he says: "Prophecy is of no private interpretation." When that phrase is played backwards he says quite clearly (except for the last word): "We should follow the devout one instead of the usurper." In other, more modern, sermons there have been similar kinds of statements, particularly when the minister was especially emotional.... This is real stuff, it just hasn't come to light until recently.

Douglas Becker's unusual web site is at: <http://www.all2true.com>.

## **Is Bill Gates the Beast?**

Among Christians interested in Bible prophecy, the identity of the Antichrist has for many centuries been a topic of great interest. Among Armstrongites, however, there was a traditional view that the Antichrist of the Bible was none other than the pope. While the WCG no longer promulgates that teaching, many of the larger Armstrongite offshoots still do. One ministry that retains the old Armstrong doctrine is Alex Cain's Church of God which publishes a small magazine called *The Countdown* (Church of God, P.O. Box 53, Farnborough, Hants. GU140YZ, U.K.). Their May and June issues contained articles on the papacy as Antichrist, and in the June issue there was an appendix which listed nine famous Protestant churchmen who in centuries past also believed the same thing.

In coming up with an identity for the Antichrist, many Christians have found ways of

interpreting the number 666 (of Rev. 3:18) and Mr. Cain's article does the same thing. Today, however, we are seeing a plethora of new theories about "666," and some of them are, well, colorful to say the least. For example, one of our readers recently sent us a page from the May 1997 newsletter of televangelist Zola Levitt. It contained this intriguing statement regarding the "number of the beast":

I noticed something interesting about the Internet. It is referred to as the Worldwide Web and Net addresses begin with www. In Hebrew, "w" corresponds to the letter vav which has a numerical value of six. So, www in Hebrew is 666. That correlation would only be understood by those who speak both Hebrew and English and who have also studied biblical prophecy. The people most familiar with Revelation are non-Jewish Christians. Of them, those who know Hebrew usually focus on the Old Testament. It is an interesting connection since the Internet is playing a role in unifying the world.

Then, a few weeks ago, we received the following e-mail message dealing with the same subject:

The real name of *the* billionaire CEO of Microsoft, the world's leading computer software company which created the DOS and WINDOWS programs, is William Henry Gates III. Nevertheless, nowadays he is known as just Bill Gates. By converting the letters of his current name to the ASCII-values and adding his "III", you get the following:

B 66  
I 73  
L 76  
L 76  
G 71  
A 65  
T 84  
E 69  
S 83  
I 1  
I 1  
I 1  
Total = 666!

Some might ask, "How did Bill Gates get so powerful?" Coincidence? Or just the beginning of mankind's ultimate and total enslavement? Before you decide, consider the following:

M S - D O S 6 . 2 1  
 $77+83+45+68+79+83+32+54+46+50+49 = 666$

W I N D O W S 9 5  
 $87+73+78+68+79+87+83+57+53+1 = 666$

Coincidence? You decide.

-Wally <wwallaby@aol.com>

We don't think any of the above theories make much sense, but if anyone feels otherwise, please let us know why.

## Letters

It's almost too much for me, this chameleon Church of God. Yesterday, May 18, while switching channels I just happened to see WCG evangelist Greg Albrecht talking about his born-again church. He was on evangelist James Robison's television show on the Trinity Network. I remembered how you had reported way back in [AR18](#) about the Menge murder and Robison's diabolical scheme to buy the Big Sandy campus years ago. Well, as I watched the program I thought, I don't think I have ever heard the name Jesus said more often in so short a time. First Albrecht kept emphasizing the name, Jesus, Jesus. Robison could not be outdone. So he started in, Jesus, Jesus. That's all you need. Just Jesus.

Frankly, you can write what you want about Mr. Herbert Armstrong, but at least he was not a total fool. He knew that the person of Jesus was less important than Christ's own message that there was something for us TO DO!

For Robison and Albrecht, next to saying the name Jesus hundreds of times an hour, about the only thing that seems to be important is to convince everyone how bad they had once been. Albrecht kept saying how terrible a person he had been before discovering Jesus just a few years ago. Yikes! A few years ago? Where was his head when he was at Ambassador? Nevertheless, there was Albrecht telling everyone, including a few dozen happy, smiling, WCG members in the audience, that even as a WCG minister he did not know Jesus. Not only that, what he did know as far back as the mid-eighties was that many of the WCG's central doctrines were in error! Well, if that is what he felt back then, why in the world didn't he just leave? And if he did not have any character then, why should anyone believe that he has any character now?

As for Albrecht claiming that just a few years ago he had been a very bad person, well, he personally convinced me. But, as it was Robison's show, Robison was not about to be outdone. He started a lengthy confession of his own about how just a few years ago in his ministry he had not known Jesus either! And his vanity had been (?) so great that he had considered running for President of the United States and had even considered putting out a magazine to be called *The Last Word*! Albrecht then said that the WCG would have done that too if only they had thought of the idea first.

Before ending his show with five minutes of sales pitches for his new book, *The Face of the Father*, Robison got Albrecht to admit that the new Tkach team has changed virtually every single doctrine that Mr. Armstrong ever taught. Then Robison asked Albrecht if he thought Mr. Herbert Armstrong had ever been converted. Albrecht said he just did not know and pretended that he "could not judge the man." Obviously, the implication was that Albrecht had just not seen any sign of conversion in the life of Mr. Herbert Armstrong. But as he spoke he just shook his head sending a body language message to everyone that "no, I really don't think he was ever converted." You would have thought that the audience of Worldwidors would have jumped out of their chairs and run screaming out of the studio in protest. But they just sat there like dumb sheep and kept on

smiling for the cameras.

While I am sure that those Worldwidars are now as brainwashed as can be, I am still not sure which of those two evangelists is the more self-righteous or idiotic. Honestly, I wish that Mr. Armstrong could have come up out of the grave and been sitting right there during that television talk show. No doubt the two evangelists' foolish talk would have made him so filled with righteous indignation and so sick to his stomach he would have been tempted to leap out of his chair and puke all over them!

-California

John, I just got back from a trip to Langley, Virginia where I was on company business. In large writing in the lobby of one of our government buildings there I saw this inscription: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free - John 8:32." What government department claims this scripture as its own? The inscription was in the main lobby of the headquarters building of the C.I.A. So now it is not just churches that misappropriate the Word of God.

Incidentally, everyone at C.I.A. headquarters casually refers to the head of the C.I.A. as "the D.O." That stands for Director of Operations, but it is pronounced by everyone there as "Deeo." That made me very uncomfortable. John, I recall that in your Ambassador days you were an opera buff, just as I am today. I'm sure you know how frequently that phonetic word occurs in the climaxes of the great operatic masterpieces. Of course, in Italian and other Romance languages "Dio" means God. Unfortunately, at Langley I couldn't help but suspect that some C.I.A. employees are getting the two meanings mixed up. As you may already know, it's a strange bunch back there at Langley.

-"No name please"

Some say that AR is very anti-WCG. But you were honest enough to report quite accurately about how valuable Mike Fezell's April WN article was. I wrote for a copy of the original paper from RENO-VARE and I found it to be just about the most helpful article I ever read about the Millennium teachings of the Bible. Thank you for telling us about the good in Worldwide, as well as the bad.

-Colorado

Last February, African-American History Month, the Ambassador Chorale combined with the Jarvis Christian College Choir in several performances. For many years, relations between the two schools were strained. But happily, things have been more positive the past couple of years. Then, on its last out-of-state trip, the Ambassador Chorale performed at the bombing site in Oklahoma City.

Dr. John McKenna, AU's last theology department chairman, was a Baptist. Some always feared bringing in theology professors of other denominations. However, Dr. McKenna's contributions here have been quite positive. He helped AU's last batch of theology majors in many ways.

A historical magazine was published and distributed on AU's last Graduation Day. It contains a year in review section as well as photos, a time line, and information on AU's presidents. It contained several photos of Garner Ted Armstrong, something which might not have happened in years past.

-1997 AU grad  
Big Sandy, Texas

I was disappointed in some of the misleading material on the Catholic Church in [AR65](#). It is the Beast, or at least an important part of it. You need to read Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, To call Protestant churches "daughters" of Catholicism misses important facts. Those "daughters" fought and died to remove themselves from "Mother" Rome which has always been the false church.

-Pam Unruh  
Wichita, Kansas

*Editor: By using the mother-daughter analogy I was not trying to denigrate either the Protestants or the Roman Church. The analogy was Herbert Armstrong's and is one that is still frequently used by Armstrongites. Personally, when one studies the incredible atrocities done by both Catholics and Protestants to each other during hundreds of years of European religious wars, I am not so certain that Herbert Armstrong's analogy was such a bad one.*

I left the WCG the year after graduating from Big Sandy in 1978. I have many happy memories of all the wonderful people I met and became friends with while in Worldwide. But after many long years of study and reflection, I entered the Roman Catholic Church this year. Eight years ago I took classes at a local parish to learn what Catholics had to say about themselves and their faith. Most of what I had previously believed about Catholicism proved to be false. I had believed what the WCG said about the Catholic Church without checking for myself. What I found was a very spiritual and Bible-centered faith.

The issues that most non-Catholics get upset over (Mary, the pope, purgatory, confession to a priest, etc.), when examined closely, become easily understood and logical. Many of the practices of the WCG have similarities in the Catholic Church. Herbert Armstrong was "the Pope" of the WCG. The extensive counseling that many members received was no different than the spiritual guidance Catholics receive in the confessional. HWA's second chance theory corresponds with purgatory.

If any of your readers are still confused about what theology to embrace, I would recommend that they give Catholicism an honest look. I now see why the Roman Catholic Church has endured for two thousand years. I will be happy to correspond with anyone who would like to learn more about the Catholic Church. It would be great to hear from any of my former classmates.

-Randall G. Shelby

3855 Cleary Drive  
Paducah, KY 42001

We left Global last year when we discovered the pervasive Jesuit influence. We then went United, but we are having doubts. Some members say that some at the top are members of something called "the League." It is a secret group of Ambassador graduates who are in most of the Churches of God. Now we have learned that some of them are part of "the Brotherhood" - a secret group of Masons and Internationalists who are higher than even the Jesuits. Do you have any information about whether there is a group behind "the Brotherhood"?

-Ohio

*Editor: Sorry, you kind of lost me there.*

I think your work is good therapy for those traumatized by experiences in the Worldwide Church of Armstrong. But as far as changing an organization that "does good" by preying on God's children, it isn't a reasonable aspiration. Only lawsuits and public exposure will bring such beasts to "repentance."

Concerning secrecy in the Church or any other religious organization, it's just the nature of such beasts to be dictatorial and necessarily secretive about their corrupt acts.

Much was said by Armstrong concerning church government, implying that his corporation was the government of God on earth. The truth is, most churches have no legitimate governments. They are simply dictatorships called corporations. Like tobacco corporations, church corporations are havens for foul spirits and all manner of corruption. The dictator at the top tells everyone else on the payroll what to think and do. Hireling ministers become idol worshippers. It seems to me that most ministers will do almost anything to get their paychecks. A successful minister cannot have a close relationship with God as a truly righteous minister will follow God instead of a church corporation (Matt. 6:24).

It is ludicrous to think Christ will come to put a dictatorship over the world. Dictatorships are the enemies of God and all mankind. If anything, God will force church corporations to become more democratic. All men who have led or served dictatorships have proven themselves incapable of governing others as God would have them. In Worldwide, it was said that God's government would be a benevolent dictatorship. But dictators are not benevolent, and the benevolent are not dictators.

The more I comprehend the mind and heart of God, the more I realize Armstrong and the other dictators in his corporation were tragically out of touch with their members and with God. Of course, it paid for them to be out of touch.

-Ed McKinney  
Tulare, California

## A Special Thanks

We have been a little long between issues because of a shortage of both time and money. Besides covering latebreaking news next time, some of the stories we are now working on for AR67 relate to: the very serious social aberrations and mental problems that are increasingly common in the WCG and its offshoots, Judaism in transition, the so-called Coder heresy that is penetrating the Armstrongite offshoots, some new bizarre cults to which ex-Worldwidars are going, the new Millennium hysteria, the conspiracy theory craze, and some new sources of information to help with the question of what in the world is going to be happening next. We will be going to press with that issue as soon as we pay off the bills for this one, hopefully within six to eight weeks.

We don't make a habit of running too much material in praise of ourselves. But we are human like everyone else, and when AR is praised or we get warmly thanked for our efforts, it is very much appreciated. In the June-July 1997 issue of *Small Magazine Review*, writer-reviewer Nick DiSpoldo did a short piece about *Ambassador Report* and in his review had these kind words for us:

Robert O. Ingersoll, the "Great Agnostic" of the 19th Century, would applaud Trechak, although Trechak is a Christian. Nevertheless, he has vigorously investigated religious rip-offs and scams....

Trechak practices what he preaches: he gives away the Newsletter and asks for a donation, if possible. AR has been consistently published and Trechak is relentless in his pursuit to rid organized religion of its rogues and bogus biblical brainwashers.

I thank Mr. DiSpoldo for his kudos. But I should point out that even though I personally take on most of the editorial burdens of putting out the *Report*, I do rely heavily on the creative input, criticism, advice, and thorough work done by a half dozen volunteer editors. Hence the "we" in my editorial comments is not just an "editorial we," but an actual group of individuals who have a say about what finally goes into each issue. While most of them, for one reason or another, prefer not to be credited publicly, this publication would not be as readable as it is were it not for their professional, yet unpaid-for, assistance.

Another group that deserves special mention is our information providers: those readers who provide us with news clippings, printed data, and important tips from literally around the world. Those tips are almost always what initiate our investigations and are therefore indispensable for making AR as informative as it is.

Finally, I should point out that even though we do distribute many copies of our newsletter for free, there are limits to how many we can just give away. This publication would not be possible if it were not for the special generosity of a minority of our readers who are really carrying far more than their share of the financial burden of our publishing work. On behalf of the majority of our readers, who are not able to contribute more than an occasional mite (even though we appreciate and indeed *really need* those "mites"), I want especially to thank that hard-core group of regular contributors for making possible the continued publication of *Ambassador Report*.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR 67\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

December 1997 (AR67)

### Sunday Distinctly Better?

Just a year ago, the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) was still officially "sabbatarian." That is, its official publications openly acknowledged that the WCG held its weekly church services only on Saturdays, the seventh-day sabbath. To WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), seventh-day sabbath keeping was so theologically essential that even with all the doctrinal tinkering he did during his lifetime, he never would have tolerated any deviation from that teaching so central to his theology. In fact, many still recall how on a number of occasions Armstrong warned his followers that should any WCG preacher, including himself, ever question that doctrine from the pulpit, they were to immediately get up and leave.

Well, we hate to say, "We told you so," but a few years ago we did write that it was only a matter of time, before Worldwide's leadership would start easing in Sunday as the preferred day for worship. At that time, Tkach Jr. publicly and sarcastically chided us for even suggesting it could ever happen. Now, in the July *Worldwide News* (WN), buried on page 14 so as not to get too much attention (after all, the well-established Tkach technique is to ever so gently slide new doctrines into the consciousness of members via sermon asides and minor WN articles), there was a short Tkach article titled, "Proclaiming the gospel on Sunday, too." Here is how he has eased in his preference for Sunday worship:

Some members are troubled by the fact that a few WCG congregations now meet for worship services on Sunday....

The vast majority of our congregations continue our tradition of meeting on Saturday. This is usually the day that serves the members best, and in many areas it does not prevent effective evangelism....

However, in some areas, Sunday is distinctly better than Saturday for being able to attract new people to services where they may hear the gospel proclaimed.

Some members have pointed out that the church's "Goal, Mission, and Ministries" statement specifically states that it would offer "worship services on the seventh day (Saturday) and annual festivals, the church's Festival of Tabernacles being the major collective worship event of the year." Regarding that statement, Tkach would only say, "This is still true, and I think it will continue to be true." But for how long, he did not say. However, regarding that old sabbath "tradition" he did offer this new understanding:

Even under the old covenant, God did not require his people to attend worship services on the Sabbath.... Nevertheless, it is a good practice (but not a required one) to designate one day a week to set aside the normal routine and to focus on building our relationship with Christ and his people.

We have not heard of even one current WCG member who has left the WCG over this statement. Tkach's conquest of the WCG's collective consciousness now appears to be complete.

## **Tkach Rewrites History**

In George Orwell's novel *1984*, the Party of Big Brother had a motto: "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." The motto referred to the Party's never-ending work of destroying the records of its past and rewriting its history as a means of controlling its followers' thinking and the course of future events. In Orwell's novel the process was quite deliberate and was carried out for purposes of "reality control" or, in the futuristic language of Newspeak, "doublethink." The whole process led to what Orwell called "controlled insanity" and it was all done with one goal: to perpetually maintain the Party leadership in its position of power and privilege.

While *1984* is often classified as a dystopian, or anti-utopian, satire (a type of fiction), it is also a very helpful primer on the nature of organizational thought control, whether that organization is a nation-state, a corporation, or even a church. The motto about the rewritten past controlling the future refers to a phenomenon well-known to historians: Those parties that win wars or other types of struggles are usually the very ones who write the official histories of those wars or struggles. When they do, the record of the past is usually distorted in favor of the victor. And in creating the distorted records of the past, the writers of such propagandistic histories play an important role in manipulating future events.

Blatant examples can be seen in the way the Soviets of old wrote and rewrote their official histories of the Russian revolution and its aftermath. Some historians (Howard Zinn, for example, in *A People's History of the United States*) point out how many American education-committee-approved history books, whether through omission or misplaced emphasis, contain significant distortions of America's past. The Roman Catholic Church's official histories of itself have been criticized similarly. For example, WCG founder Herbert Armstrong claimed that in the extant histories of the Catholic Church there seemed to be a "lost century" - about a hundred years' worth of missing data at a point in time when the early church was theologically in transition.

Armstrong, himself, thoroughly understood the history rewrite technique and used it himself. His own *Autobiography* has been called by many with first-hand knowledge of the facts (including his evangelist son Garner Ted Armstrong) more than 50 percent fiction. Yet it played, and continues to play, an important role in the ongoing life of Armstrongism. Another example of the personal propaganda-as-history genre was *Against the Gates of Hell* by HWA's attorney Stanley R. Rader, whose history of the WCG's legal battles of 1979-1980 were a hall-of-mirrors distortion of the events many of us witnessed close up. Similarly, GTA's short history of the founding of his Church of God International is infamous for its glaring distortions and gargantuan omissions of fact. Yet that short work continues to perpetuate the CGI branch of Armstrongism.

Now, WCG Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach Jr. adds his name to the above list with the publication of his new book *Transformed by Truth*. In it Tkach tells the story of how the church that Herbert Armstrong founded was led through a "miraculous reformation" to become the vastly different Worldwide Church of God that he now heads. Unfortunately, while much of the book does make a contribution to our understanding of Armstrongism, it is far from being an objective recounting of the WCG's recent past.

---

&COPY; 1997 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.  
ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

Perhaps the most obvious flaw in the book is what it does not discuss. Not surprisingly, Tkach makes no mention of such unseemly matters as the debaucheries and promiscuous sex life of his church's founder, his own father's infidelities, or his own divorce. But even in the area of pure theology there are amazing omissions. The most glaring one concerns Dr. Ernest L. Martin, the one-time head of Ambassador's Theology Department who went on to become president of the Foundation for Biblical Research and the Associates for Scriptural Knowledge. It was Martin's research papers, beginning around 1961, that first introduced Pauline theology to Herbert Armstrong and the WCG. Since then, tens of thousands of Worldwidiers, including Joseph Tkach Sr. himself, were profoundly influenced by Martin's ideas on the New Testament. Yet, nowhere in the main text of Tkach Jr.'s book is there a hint at Martin's existence, let alone an acknowledgement of his profound impact on WCG theology. Other important WCG and former-WCG writers and teachers passed over in the text are Ken Storey, Gary Arvidson, Ken Fischer, Al Carozzo, Kenneth Westby, Charles Dorothy, Brian Knowles, Howard Clark, Charles Hunting, Anthony Buzzard, Robert Kuhn, George Geis, Lester Grabbe, Earl Williams, and dozens more. Their important contributions to current WCG theology are simply ignored by historian Tkach and his editors.

Not surprisingly, *Ambassador Report* also goes unrecognized. Twenty-two years of

exposing the sins and incessant infighting of the Armstrong and Tkach regimes - reporting that put pressure on the WCG to make fundamental changes - are not given any mention. Nor are the important books written about Worldwide by Joseph Hopkins, Marion McNair, John Tuit, and David Robinson.

Instead, the story that Tkach wants his readers to swallow is that it was almost solely through Pastors General Tkach Sr. and Tkach Jr. and their small inner circle that God worked to transform the WCG. Supposedly, it was only within the last decade that God revealed "new truths" to the WCG ministry, and when God did so, it was to the Tkachs who immediately taught those "new truths" to their followers. Long-time AR readers know that thousands of lives were destroyed, thousands of families torn asunder, and hundreds of millions of dollars thrown away before the Tkachs finally acquiesced under pressure and reluctantly agreed to the kinds of doctrinal changes that many "liberals" had wanted made for more than twenty years.

### **Three Conspiracy Theories**

Tkach goes to great lengths to convince readers that the WCG's changes came about through divine intervention and that there was never any secret agenda, timetable, or conspiracy to change the WCG's old doctrines. He specifically mentions three conspiracy theories that are currently circulating regarding the changes that have been made:

(1) The first theory is that the changes were made by evangelists Albrecht, Feazell, and himself as acts of revenge against the church for the abusive way they were treated when they were growing up as "church kids." In what little he says on this, Tkach never denies that there had been abuse. Instead, he says, "Proclaiming the gospel of grace is certainly an unusual way to get revenge." Yes, it is. But when it results in the near total destruction of whole institutions, it is effective revenge, nevertheless. Then he immediately states, "Would to God all 'revenge' was so sweet!" And that is all he tells us about theory number one. Tkach's true believers will read it one way. Those more cynical will take it at face value as the admission it really is. One probably could not find a better example of effective doublespeak.

(2) The second conspiracy theory Tkach blames on departed evangelist David Hulme. Writes Tkach, "David theorized that my dad had all these doctrinal reforms in his mind for ten or fifteen years and was just patiently waiting for the moment when he could mobilize his plan of reform."

This "theory" did not originate with Hulme. Hulme got the idea from AR and we got it, ourselves, from Joseph Tkach Sr. who, circa 1987, confidentially indicated to a mutual acquaintance that he planned to change at least 40 major WCG doctrines over the course of the next few years. (That was not too surprising to us as we knew Tkach Sr. had studied Ernest Martin's writings in the mid-seventies.) The full extent of the changes to come were probably not anticipated and their exact timing may not have been put on a precise schedule. But there most certainly was a plan to substantially overhaul the WCG's doctrines at least as far back as 1987.

(3) The third conspiracy theory is that Tkach Jr. and company had enough "dirt" on

Tkach Sr. to be able to blackmail him into making changes. There is no way to prove to what extent this is true or untrue. But certainly Tkach Jr. at least knew of some of the skeletons in his father's closet. We had revealed a good number in the pages of AR. Junior certainly knew of his father's relationship with "Mrs." Ellen Escat. And quite likely he knew even more than we reported. There is no reason for us to think that such inside knowledge did not give Junior and friends significant leverage with "the old man."

### **Covington's View**

Regarding Tkach's book, former WCG minister David Covington on his *Ministry of Healing* Web site (<http://members.aol.com/exwgcg>) offers these insights:

The WCG has maintained that Mr. Tkach Sr. simply understood these truths as he was exposed to them, there was no timetable of changes and that he courageously instituted them against great losses of members and financial income. This is simply incomplete and is mostly a corporate advertisement. I believe the approach has been dishonest and played on past manipulations to continue controlling present members. Consider the following:

Mike Fezell admitted to me that he and Tkach Sr. were among those responsible for squelching the love and Jesus message of the 1970s "liberals." He recounted stories of being angry back stage in the auditorium as he listened to a sermonette on "love, love, love." But Tkach's *Truth* book makes no mention of these courageous reformers.

Greg Albrecht told my wife and I that Mike Fezell had struggled tirelessly "fighting" Mr. Tkach Sr. to get him to institute changes. But, the *Truth* book seems to indicate Tkach Sr. saw these things himself and acted against all odds.

Greg Albrecht also showed me the cross he wears around his neck (with his father's dog tags attached) and admitted he has done so secretly since the mid-'80s. C. W. Davis [Fezell's assistant] told my wife that Mike Fezell had told him in the fall of 1994 that the changes would be coming in three to five years. But, the *Truth* book goes to great lengths to disprove "conspiracy theories." While I doubt Hulme's belief that Tkach wanted to make the changes since the '70s, I also doubt the administration's statements that they did not have a plan of implementation.

The administration does not [adequately] mention the 40,000-50,000 people who have left the church and either joined evangelical churches or decried Armstrongism altogether. The WCG in the book gives support to the fact they aren't "conning" anyone by saying that Tkach made these changes against knowing he would lose half the church, and made these changes on Christmas Eve 1994. In fact, he made the changes the week before on December 17, 1994 in Atlanta when he realized he was going to be losing up to half the church either way, whether he went with grace or law.

After the Tkach book's end-notes (where we had hoped to see an index, but were disappointed) there is a fold-out flow chart showing the pedigree of the WCG, the Christian denominations from which it sprang and their roots. This chart is followed by another showing the WCG's more than 100 offshoots. It provides the names of all the

groups' leaders, dates of their founding, and some indications as to their size and viability. We were amazed at how much detailed information the WCG maintains about its offshoots and competitors. Tkach, for example, is all too aware that his biggest competitors are United Church of God which he views as being in David Hulmes' pocket, Global Church of God which is headed by Rod Meredith, and the Philadelphia Church of God which is headed by Gerald Flurry. Tkach gives their current membership figures as 18,000; 7,000; and 3,000 respectively. But by also listing the names and church-founding dates for such important WCG reformers as Ernest Martin, Ken Storey, and Earl Williams, Tkach unwittingly reveals that he is aware of the important roles played by such men in the WCG's evolving theology. The *Truth* book's failure to recognize the contributions made by such men was no accident. Additionally, as David Covington points out, "By putting courageous reformers such as Ernest Martin and Earl Williams on the chart with Meredith, Flurry, and the other Armstrongites, Tkach buries them in obscurity - more revisionism."

It is more than a little bit funny, but Tkach is not the only one who has his own special version of the WCG "Reformation." In letters to their own constituents, the leaders of Azusa Pacific University, where the new Ambassador Center is located (see [AR66](#)), have been giving themselves much of the credit for Worldwide's "Reformation." And before his own fans Hank Hanegraaff, radio's "Bible Answer Man," has been claiming most of the credit for Worldwide's transformation. Yes, Worldwidiers of late have had many angels of light - each with their own version of historical "truth."

### **Armstrongism Unveiled at Last**

None of the above is meant to suggest that the Tkach book is a complete fabrication. Much of it is undoubtedly accurate. Furthermore, in those chapters where Tkach deals most directly with the theology of Armstrong, Tkach actually provides a fair amount of new data about HWA that is quite valuable.

For instance, he admits it really is true, as many HWA critics have claimed, that HWA's theology was eclectic. Virtually every doctrine that was once claimed to be unique to Armstrongism was actually lifted from some other denomination. (One exception is the "born again equals spiritually conceived" doctrine which Armstrong apparently devised himself.) Tkach names a number of those sources HWA drew upon and even shows that when HWA claimed God had revealed "new truth" to him, it often meant that he had read of the idea in the writings of some other preacher. Tkach shows how in the twenties, HWA had actually attended a Baptist Church for a time, and how he had been influenced by the writings of a number of evangelical preachers including Charles Finney.

Tkach reveals that, contrary to what WCG officially taught in later years, HWA really did once consider himself to be "God's prophet." And on at least one occasion, HWA actually did publicly proclaim, "I am Elijah!"

The *Truth* book contains many little revelations: Tkach Senior was born in 1927 (just as AR has said, not in 1926 as Tkach Sr. had claimed). Tkach Sr. was once miraculously healed of an ulcer condition, thus allowing him to indulge his taste for hot chili. The WCG has developed a working relationship with the Foursquare Gospel Church and the

Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. Tkach thoroughly understands the psychological concept of "cognitive dissonance" (p. 149) - the technical term for Orwell's "doublethink." Tkach says there are churches in existence that are "Sunday Sabbatarian." Roderick Meredith is a false prophet. And many of Tkach Jr.'s old friends are absolutely convinced he is demon possessed (p. 73).

But of all the revelations provided us by Tkach, the one that will probably shock Armstrongites the most is found in the first endnote for chapter twelve. There Tkach makes the startling claim that he has written documentation that in the late 1920s, when HWA was already preaching in seventh-day churches, he was actually persuaded that there really was no biblical requirement for strict sabbath observance. Here is an excerpt from that HWA document:

In a word, Mr. Dugger, my present status on the question is just this: It now appears to me that the Bible says the Sabbath is abolished, ended, and done away. That, so far as Divine Command is concerned, there IS NO SABBATH.

Tkach also claims to have another document from the same era in which Armstrong is supposed to have written:

Paul said we are not under the law. I have studied this from every possible angle, and tried every possible interpretation. And I cannot persuade myself that the plain, obvious meaning Paul intended to give us by that statement was anything except that we are not under obligation to obey the Mosaic Law, including the Ten Commandments.... Paul's writings, in other words, appear to confirm the idea that God's Law means supreme love to God and equal love to one's fellows, and not specifically the Ten Commandments at all.

As far as we know, Tkach has not made the above two documents available for inspection by independent researchers, so doubts about their authenticity will linger in the minds of many. Nevertheless, if they are genuine, it would suggest that HWA had two theologies: an exoteric one for his sheep, and an esoteric one for himself (compare James 1:8). Or as Tkach euphemistically puts it in his book, "Herbert Armstrong himself was a very complex man."

### **Justified Lies**

Tkach's *Truth* book, itself, is a rather complex affair. For by sitting now in Herbert Armstrong's chair while simultaneously tearing down Armstrong's mystique and doctrinal edifice, Tkach has put himself into what many perceive is a hopeless ethical dilemma. On page 21 Tkach makes this admission:

One of our greatest challenges has been trying to explain these doctrinal reforms to outsiders while maintaining our credibility internally, and some groups have greatly hindered our efforts by their reporting.

How were Tkach and company able to get around this problem? Strangely, Tkach already gave away the answer on the previous page. There he described an interview he and

Feazell supposedly gave to Christian journalist Lorri MacGregor. According to Tkach, the experienced cult fighter was distrustful of the two men. Tkach then describes a stressful moment in the exchange when the skeptical journalist blurted out:

"Tell me, do you believe in 'justified lying'?" .... "Do you believe you can legitimately lie to someone who is not an authentic believer?"

"Certainly not," Mike Feazell replied, "We were far too self-righteous for that!"

And suddenly she warmed up to us.

Notice the word that we have underlined above and how cleverly the issue under discussion was sidestepped. MacGregor asked about a present doctrine or policy. Feazell did not really provide an answer to the question that was asked, but only responded by making a claim about the WCG's past. But even there he is not telling the whole truth. Those who were in the WCG in HWA's era know that while the WCG was legalistic and self-righteous, there were many deceptions that were perpetrated on "the world," in order to effectively carry on "the Work." Many old-timers can recall, for example, how they received free "educational literature" from Ambassador College for years before they discovered that behind the college there was really a church organization that was actively proselytizing. Tkach continues:

Lorri explained that she had to ask the question about "justified lying" because she is a former Jehovah's Witness, and members of that group reportedly sometimes engage in the practice. ("Justified lying" assumes that nonbelievers do not deserve the truth, and therefore believers can lie to "outsiders" if it serves the purposes of the group.) Once Lorri understood how legalistic our church had been through the years, it made sense to her that justified lying would never have been accepted, let alone encouraged among us. We had a truckload of problems, but justified lying wasn't one of them!

There is absolutely no reason why a legalistic organization cannot also hold to the practice of "justified lying." The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is globally famous for it. And those of us who worked for the WCG in the sixties and seventies know from personal experience that the WCG practiced it. Thus the above statement by Tkach is untrue. If we can assume that the one who made it is not entirely deluded, but gives himself some justification for making what he cannot help but know is a lie, then Tkach's statement, itself, is a marvelous example of a very contorted, but very real, "justified lie."

We suspect justified lying comes into play in another very important part of Tkach's Truth book. He tells of HWA's hypocrisy in regard to his old anti-medicine teachings. But, claims Tkach, before dying, HWA told Tkach Senior that "things needed to be changed" (p. 107). Junior readily admits (p. 65) that Armstrong may have been referring to only the church's healing doctrine. But, in the polemical writing of the next paragraph, he says there was no way for HWA's successors to determine precisely what HWA really wanted changed. So, Tkach claims, they were forced to embark on a campaign of biblical research "to identify, if possible, what changes Mr. Armstrong might have had in mind before his death." Therefore, according to this line of reasoning, the massive changes that the Tkachs have made since HWA's death were actually done to carry out HWA's wishes. In effect, Herbert Armstrong made them do it!

*And yet...*

Tkach tells of how Garner Ted Armstrong had tried to initiate minor doctrinal changes in the WCG during the 1970s in the form of what was then called the Systematic Theology Project. Tkach writes, "The Systematic Theology Project (STP) was actually one of the most positive steps the WCG had ever taken." But, he acknowledges, the conservative wing of the ministry distrusted its authors and disparaged the project, saying STP stood for "Slowly Turning Protestant." Tkach admits that the STP resulted in HWA finally disfellowshipping his son Garner Ted for his "liberalism" and "modernizing" tendencies. So while Tkach claims that he and his father had no idea what HWA meant when he said "things needed to be changed," there was plenty of evidence as to the kinds of changes HWA did not want made.

### **Lobster as Christian Symbol**

Tkach devotes a whole chapter to what he now calls his father's Christmas Eve sermon of 1994. Tkach Jr. points out that the immediate effect of the sermon was that many members ran out to restaurants and gorged themselves on lobster. This, Tkach feels, was a good thing because it was symbolic of their new-found freedom in Christ. Writes Tkach:

One friend, a longtime church member, ordered a plate of mussels. Every insect in the ocean was on his plate. And you know what? It really didn't trouble me at all. I've tasted shrimp, I've tasted pork, I've tasted just about everything now.

Although it shows that Tkach can be less than charitable at times, some of the more entertaining parts of his book are where he takes swipes at perceived rivals such as David Hulme (p. 52) or puts down the hypocritical behavior of evangelical clerics such as Dr. Joseph Stowell (p. 60). Sometimes Tkach also displays an above-average wit. He refers to Flurry's Philadelphia Church as a "militant church of God" that is "a snapshot of the WCG in the 1950's." And Meredith's Global Church is "a snapshot of the WCG in the 1960's." Hulme's United bunch - which Tkach says has already watered down one of HWA's so-called essential doctrines - is "a snapshot of the WCG in the 1970's." That's not only very funny; it's also very true.

One of the funniest parts of Tkach's *Truth* book comes at the end of the last chapter. There Tkach relates the story of one evangelist who felt that as Tkach Sr. was giving his so-called "Christmas Eve" sermon in 1994, Herbert was surely up in Heaven watching it all and leading the cheers for Tkach finally bringing the New Covenant to the WCG.

Even funnier, however, is the way Tkach prefaced that last chapter about "The Enigma of Herbert W. Armstrong." Tkach called time out from his narrative to give an "Advisory" warning to those about to turn the page to the next chapter:

To all current or former members of the Worldwide Church of God:

PLEASE READ THIS FIRST!

This chapter is not written to attack or belittle Herbert Armstrong in any way. I will not dare to judge the quality of his spiritual relationship with God...

What makes Tkach's "Advisory" so hilarious is that by the time the reader gets to it, Tkach has already given us enough solid evidence to conclude that HWA was a duplicitous, conniving, scripture-twisting hypocrite who was unconcerned with either the physical or spiritual well-being of his followers, but was motivated almost entirely by egocentric empire building and self-aggrandizement.

### **The New American Hero**

From his own comments (p. 168), we see that Tkach's book is aimed toward at least two audiences: (1) evangelicals whom Tkach wants to convince of the WCG's new "orthodoxy" and (2) current WCG members whom he wants to win over more fully to the governing theology he has decided upon for them. In reality, however, there is a third audience: former WCG members. Much of the Tkach book, and perhaps its most effective parts, are aimed at the 30,000 Tkach estimates have left Worldwide for the Armstrongite offshoots and the 40,000 he estimates have left Worldwide but have yet to join another group (p. 105).

But in addition to trying to reach those three audiences, there is one other thing that Tkach is attempting to do with his new book. He is trying to position himself and his personal ministry within the spectrum of Christian product marketing. That can be seen not only from admissions in the book (see pp. 104, 194-6), but also from the book's advertising campaign. It is rather remarkable to read in the promotion blurbs, for example, how Dr. D. James Kennedy sees the WCG's change as "far more intensive than those that brought about the Protestant Reformation." And Dr. Gordon E. Kirk of Lake Avenue Congregational Church considers WCG's transformation, to of the most dramatic works of God of the century." He even compares it to Paul's conversion on the Road to Damascus.

The use of such extravagant claims hints at what niche in the Christian marketing world Tkach is hoping to carve out for himself: He will be the new "American religion hero," the savior of whole churches, a voice from the wilderness of the cults bringing fresh recruits to the evangelical army of God.

Many who knew him ten or twenty years ago tend to dismiss Tkach as a lightweight. They overlook the fact that he is bright, has an accredited MBA, is a reasonably good speaker and writer, has an educated and talented inner circle of advisers and executives, will have plenty of cash to work with as soon as the college properties are sold and, not insignificantly, is skilled at projecting sincerity while simultaneously being politically calculating. His critics should not be too quick to write him off - especially when you consider how many gullible people there are out there.

Incidentally, Tkach's *Transformed by Truth* is published by Multnomah Books and sells at Christian bookstores for \$19.99. Even Worldwide members are not being given free copies.

## Not Everyone Fooled

In *Apologia Report*, the online theological weekly (Vol. 2: Number 28), there was recently this comment:

After looking over the content summaries of *Ambassador Report* on the Web, it strikes me that Personal Freedom Outreach may be the only evangelical countercult organization in print that could be considered in possible agreement with a significant amount of *Ambassador Report's* consistent criticism of the Tkach administration now behind the WCG. Could it be that the evangelical church is too uncritical regarding the issue of the WCG's "move to orthodoxy"?

With the acceptance of the WCG by the National Association of Evangelicals, most Christian churches are now assuming that the WCG is a reformed denomination that no longer has cult characteristics. However, not everyone has been fooled. There are still a few countercult organizations around the world who remain skeptical about Tkach's new WCG. For example, in the April edition of *MacGregor Ministries News & Views*, Lorri MacGregor wrote:

In some ways [the new WCG] is a kinder, gentler church, trying to heal itself from all the turmoil and find its way into the solid mainstream of Christianity. In other ways its structure remains authoritarian when compared to other Christian churches.

Because of lingering beliefs set in place by Herbert W. Armstrong, the appointment of the Pastor General of the WCG is done without any input by the members. The Pastor General has the power to appoint his own "Corporate Governance." He also appoints his own Advisory Board of Elders and controls the bylaws of the corporation. Dissenters in leadership positions have no recourse except to leave or be expelled. Local congregations have little or no voice at headquarters. Many have expected a change in this format, but a decade and more has passed with little progress in this area.

That is one of the main reasons why we still consider the WCG to be a cult. It may be only a Tkach cult now, rather than an Armstrong cult, but it is still a cult. So when we read in Tkach's *Truth* book about how Mrs. MacGregor seemed to be endorsing the new WCG, we wrote her and asked what was up. Here was her reply:

I was not a happy camper when I read Tkach's comments in his book. After all, I went to them with 22 hard-hitting questions I had compiled from our WCG correspondents. They did give me written answers to those. Over lunch we had some casual "table talk." Apparently he reported his version of this. I said we would continue to monitor the fruit of the church and while I have cautiously encouraged them in their move to doctrinal correctness, I have never "endorsed" them.

The address for MacGregor Ministries is Box 294, Nelson, B.C., V1L 5P9, Canada. Web site: <<http://www.macgregorministries.org/>>.

## Who Will Get the Real Estate?

Sources within the WCG say that the Tkach Company appears to be closer to selling off its Big Sandy, Texas properties and maybe even its Pasadena, California properties as a prelude to building a new Tkach Center somewhere else. A number of prospective buyers apparently have expressed a desire to make a deal. Nevertheless, it looks as though Worldwide will not get the kind of cash it had hoped for.

Worldwide's Texas real estate seems to be worth only about \$30 million in the current market. A possible buyer appears to be an organization planning to build a military academy called the Southern Military Institute. Despite the speculations of some close to Garner Ted Armstrong, it does not appear that any conditions or covenants on the deeds to the land will prevent an outright sale.

As for the Pasadena properties, experts tell us that although there has been a slight improvement in the Southern California real estate market of late, the Pasadena real estate will sell for considerably less than the \$250 million the WCG had hoped to get. Insiders say that Worldwide's agent is talking to at least one potential buyer about a sale price in the range of \$100 million to \$150 million. Who the buyer might turn out to be is not certain. But a number of religious organizations have apparently taken a look at the property. One religious celebrity who has been seen on the Pasadena campus is a Dr. Hoeh look-a-like, Jack Hayford. He pastors the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California, besides having a popular television ministry.

## **Who Will Get the Music?**

When the WCG's financial problems brought an end to the Ambassador Auditorium concert series in 1995, many music aficionado's lamented the loss of the concert venue often lauded as the finest on the West Coast. For 21 years the Auditorium had drawn many of the world's most acclaimed performing artists: Arthur Rubinstein, Beverly Sills, the Juilliard String Quartet, the Kirov Ballet, the Dance Theater of Harlem, Andre Watts, even Bing Crosby.

Because the Auditorium was smaller than most big-city concert halls, its limited seating capacity could not produce sufficient revenues to pay the high fees demanded by worldclass artists. The only way such outstanding artists could be brought to Ambassador was through huge subsidies provided the series by the WCG. Thus in a very real sense, it was the tithes of WCG members that were supporting the fun of a relatively few in Southern California. Another fact not generally known to either the concert-going public or even to many who performed there is that for 21 years virtually every performance in the Auditorium was recorded. Today in Pasadena the WCG has over 900 boxes of high-quality audio and video tapes of performances at Ambassador Auditorium.

Before the concert series ended in 1995, the WCG's leaders had actually planned to just give the collection away to an educational or cultural institution. The Huntington Library was considered, but they turned it down for lack of storage space. Then at some point Stanford University was chosen by Tkach Sr. as the institution to get the archives. The collection was boxed for shipment, but then a legal hitch developed. Sensing that copyright or other legal problems could one day develop regarding the collection, Worldwide asked Stanford for an indemnification clause in their contract. Stanford, not

wanting to be stuck with legal expenses for something Worldwide may have done in the past, refused. Thus the deal was called off and the tapes still sit in storage in Pasadena. WCG insiders say that the fate of the archives will be decided after the Auditorium is sold. Some wonder, however, if Tkach Jr. may not have come to view the tapes as a potential source of income.

The collection is unquestionably worth a fortune. Already some of the tapes have been mastered and released commercially to the public. "Jakob Gimpel at Ambassador," a Chopin recital by the late pianist is now available on double CD and sells for about \$32. Arthur Rubinstein's "Last Recital for Israel" is available on both CD and video and has been one of the best-selling classical recordings of the last few years. It is very likely that many other potential best sellers exist in Ambassador's trove of tapes. And it will be interesting to see what eventually becomes of the collection.

## **Who Will Get the Money?**

With many people becoming increasingly suspicious that before long there may not be any Worldwide Church of God in existence, we are getting letters from readers asking what will become of the remaining assets of the WCG. Here is what we know at this time. On June 7, 1987, unbeknownst to the WCG's membership, and less than two years after the death of church founder Herbert Armstrong, the WCG filed with the state of California papers titled "Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Worldwide Church of God." Signed by Joseph Tkach Sr., Chairman of the Board, and by Gene Michel, Assistant Secretary, the document in Article VI states:

In the event that the corporation's charter is surrendered to, taken away by, or revoked by the Association, the corporation shall be dissolved.

Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, and after compliance with Section 680 of the California Religious Nonprofit Corporation Law, the remaining assets of this corporation shall be distributed to one of the following organizations, corporations, trustees or other entity. In the order of their preference as listed:

A. The Association, or in the event it is unable to take title for any reason, then to

B. The individual members of the Advisory Council of Elders of the Association in trust for religious purposes, as exemplified in the Bible as defined and as expounded by the Association, or in the event they are unable to take title for any reason, then to

C. The organization, corporation or trustee or other entity supported by the Pastor General of the Association, or in the event such power or appointment is not valid for any reason, then to

D. Ambassador College, a California nonprofit corporation.

Of course, there is no longer any Ambassador College. And a check with the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office revealed that all Pasadena properties formerly owned by Ambassador College, Inc. have some time ago been quietly transferred over to the

Worldwide Church of God, Inc.

Most lawyers or government officials casually looking over the filed legal document might not find anything too suspicious. And they probably would not guess that by calling the document a "restatement," Tkach and his lawyers were able to avoid a vote by the entire church membership. To most it would probably appear that the WCG Corporation is the means by which the WCG Association's assets are protected. If the Association (who we might call "The People of the Church") decides it does not want the corporation to manage the church's assets and there is a severance between the corporation and the association, then a sale of the assets would, under section A, result in those assets going back to the Association ("The People of the Church").

But, notice the phrase, "or in the event it is unable to take title for any reason..." There is the catch.

Because control over the WCG Association's collective mind lies with Tkach and his propaganda team (who have the church's mailing list and sufficient liquid assets to wage propaganda campaigns and corporate legal warfare), Tkach and his inner circle have not only the means to initiate a legal severance between the association and the corporation, but they might also have the means to insure that the WCG Association ("The People of the Church") *will be* "unable to take title" for some reason.

What could that reason be? Even though he sits as Pontifex Maximus at the top of the WCG's hierarchy, Tkach may not be able to simply disfellowship the entire membership of the WCG Association without raising the eyebrows of some judge down the line. But what if he could get the lay membership to take themselves out of the Association? Believe it or not, even as this is being written, sources still in the Tkach organization have hinted to us that Tkach is about to set in motion events intended to do just that. If there is no WCG Association, or if it is in total disarray, then Tkach and his small inner circle will, by law, be given the authority to distribute the remaining \$200 million-\$300 million in assets to whomever they choose!

Under the language of Section B, above, Tkach and the inner circle would ostensibly have to use assets "for religious purposes," but such a condition can be gotten around quite easily. There would be little standing in the way of Tkach & Co. taking what assets remain and using them for some nominal nonprofit religious purpose such as their Plain Truth Ministries or even for some entirely new religious organization. You can be certain that Tkach and the vengeful "Gang of Four" will be amply provided for under any reorganization plan. Incidentally, such a chain of events as we describe could be blocked by appropriate actions, but not one member of WCG or its offshoots has yet thought to ask us how.

Finally, we found it interesting that the above Restated Articles were filed by the WCG in 1987. We were recently informed that in that same year HWA's attorney of old, Stanley R. Rader, was again quietly retained by Tkach Sr.'s organization with a contract that extended at least seven years. During those years, the majority of WCG members were misled by Tkach Sr. into believing that Rader was long gone. In his last years HWA clearly indicated he wanted Rader kept away from all WCG power and influence.

However, in his new book (pp. 77-78), Tkach paints Stanley Rader as a humble servant of Christ whom Herbert Armstrong strongly defended against his detractors and who, by winning against the forces of darkness in the famous California versus WCG lawsuit, saved not only the WCG, but every American's right to free expression of religion. What Rader has been doing with the WCG the past ten years is anybody's guess.

## **Tkach's Message for Us**

Joe Tkach was recently spotted shopping near Pasadena while wearing a T-shirt that said, "The Harder I Work, The Luckier I Get." It's an ironic proclamation from someone who inherited his wealth and who attacks Herbert Armstrong for having taught "salvation by works."

## **Aussie Murder Update**

In our last issue we reported the murder in Australia of Mrs. Gay Lock apparently by her husband Russell Lock, a WCG member and employee. We have since learned that at the time of the murder Mrs. Lock was a WCG "deserter" who had begun fellowshipping with an Armstrongite breakaway group. A number of readers in Australia who had personal information regarding the tragedy wrote us and filled in some details of the case. One wrote:

Gay's murder is a tragedy for all concerned. Russell Lock's parents are such a lady and gentleman, very quietly spoken, kind and hospitable.... Russell Lock was persuaded to leave Bricket Wood before graduation [more than two decades ago] to work in the Australian office of WCG. You may recall his time in Pasadena in the early 1970s. He even appeared on the cover of the WCG booklet "How to Have a Happy Marriage."

Another reader, who also wishes to remain anonymous, wrote:

When the murder occurred, Russell's mother Barbara was away in Japan at an art exhibition. Barbara knew nothing of the murder until she arrived back in Brisbane on the Friday afternoon when her family broke the news. It was the following morning that Russell went to the police and confessed to the crime and produced the hammer he used to perform one hard blow to the head while Gay was sleeping.

Naturally all the amateur sleuths around the place are busy trying to create a scenario. Those still in Worldwide hope the verdict will be that Gay had cancer and it was a mercy killing. I would like to think that was so for the sake of Barbara and her husband, but that would only be wishful thinking. The more likely scenario is the fact that Gay had left Russell a couple of times because of the church, while Russell was so steeped in Tkachism, Gay spurned it and got out. I have been told that Gay was heading some Bible Studies for women who left Worldwide. Someone suggested that John 16:2 had to be correct and that Russell really believed he was doing God a favor by killing Gay. None of the hierarchy from Worldwide were present at Gay's funeral. The service was conducted by the group of women Gay was leading.

Russell is being held in the remand section of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre

awaiting [further proceedings]. In that same centre is one David Smith being held on a charge of robbery with violence. He was born into the WCG to parents who are still in the church. In the company of others, he was involved in the robbery of a bank in Moorooka, a Brisbane suburb. No one was killed in the gunfire, but an innocent woman who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time is now in a wheel chair. She has a bullet in the spine which they claim is too dangerous to move. While she remains alive they can't prove that the bullet came from either David's or the policeman's gun.

Friends of the Lock family say that the presiding judge in the case has found Russell Lock mentally incompetent to stand trial at this time. Nevertheless, he still faces a number of hearings, a possible trial, and perhaps sentencing at some point. He is being held in the psychiatric section of the jail which was described by one friend this way:

He is being held in a top security remand prison where one stays till trial and subsequent sentencing. There is razor wire all over the place, dogs sniffing visitors for drugs, and guards everywhere. You have to take off your belt, your shoes are X-rayed, and no money, no pens, no identification are allowed in.

Other friends who have visited Lock say he claims not to have any memory now of what happened on the fateful night. Whether his mental condition will ever improve enough that the judge will declare him competent to stand trial remains to be seen. However, whether he remains in such psychiatric and legal limbo for the rest of his life, or is found competent to stand trial for a homicide he has already confessed to, in a way seems almost a moot question. It is unlikely that any disposition of the case could entirely remove the pain that the tragedy has wrought upon the Lock family, their churches, and their friends. And, of course, there is an innocent woman who is now dead.

## **The Varieties of Religious Experience**

One of the great classics of American scholarship is *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* by William James, widely regarded as the greatest American philosopher of the early twentieth century. In that work, often described as the most important work on religion ever produced in America, James attempted to make sense of the wide range of religious activities engaged in by various cultures. It is too bad that James is no longer with us. He would have a field day studying the incredible variety of religious beliefs and practices now sprouting up both in Worldwide and among those who have left it. And certainly it would take someone with much knowledge of the human psyche to make complete sense out of what is happening. It really is time to call in the shrinks.

One of the theological battles that Herbert Armstrong fought for decades was over what he sometimes described as "emotionalism." HWA had a strong bias against both sentimental Christianity (anything that portrayed Jesus as having a sweet or feminine nature) and "Pentecostalism" (speaking in tongues or "holy roller" public displays). HWA's rather formal approach to religion still persists in a number of WCG offshoots. A good example is the Global Church of God. Notice this excerpt from the June 26 co-worker letter of Roderick Meredith, Global's Pastor General:

It is imperative that we realize that *biblical* Christianity - true Christianity - teaches

the Ten Commandments as a WAY of life. Yet, most of professing "Christianity" constantly emphasizes the *person* of Jesus Christ and almost totally neglects His powerful *message* about the coming world-ruling *Government of God* and our need to prepare for it.

Christ's Gospel was NOT about His own *person*, but about the Kingdom of God.... The true Jesus of the Bible was not a young "smart aleck" who tried to do away with His Father's law!

Now compare that to the opening of Joe Junior's May co-worker letter:

Dear Friend,

Remember the "**Jesus People**" of the '60s and '70s? It was the time of the hippies. Young people were trying drugs, sex, communes and all sorts of unconventional behavior. They were desperately searching for *meaning in life* - and some of them found Jesus.

Jesus changed their lives and gave them meaning. They tried hard to *follow Jesus' example* - even to the way some of them dressed. Some of them wore robes and sandals, walking wherever they went, letting their beards grow.

We may smile at their idealism, but we may also *admire* it. It is certainly a good goal to want to be like Jesus.

Or, how about this excerpt from "The Truth Will Set You Free" (*Plain Truth*, March/April 1997), an article by WCG evangelist J. Michael Feazell:

This Easter, I'm worshipping the Lord. He conquered sin and death. He saved my life. He gave me what it takes to be a child of God. Because he's alive, I'm alive in him. I can never thank him enough. I can never obey him enough. He knows that better than anybody. That's why he died and was raised for me. That's how much he loves me. And that's how much he loves you, too.

Clearly, whether for bad or good, a different spirit now pervades the WCG. The kind of "emotionalism" that HWA condemned is being actively promoted by the Tkach team. Even the WCG's youngsters are encouraged to get into the act. In the July WN, for example, there were testimonial letters from youngsters who had attended the WCG's summer camp. One letter from Jeff Feazell, one of J. Michael Feazell's teenage children, began this way:

Thursday night what the speaker was saying was bringing me down. I was having doubts about my faith. I felt as if I never had Jesus in my life. Maybe I hadn't been studying my Bible and praying enough.

When the speaker asked us to come down and accept or recommit ourselves to Christ, I knew I had done it before, but I didn't feel like I belonged down there. When it was over I didn't want to talk to anyone, because I knew they would ask, Jeff, why didn't you go down and accept Christ?

I sat on the floor against a column in the lobby. A friend asked what was wrong, and

I burst into tears and said: "Where did he go? I never had Jesus in my life. I don't know what I believe any more." Other friends came around me, prayed and sang, uniting to bring Jesus back into my life. I saw Jesus in each and every one of them. They even offered to fast me through the rest of the conference. It was like having a bunch of Jesuses all around me.

Back at the dorm I saw a room of people crying out to the Father, thanking the Lord "for bringing our brother Jeff back into your army." Several accepted Christ that night....

To the Tkach team, the above represents an acceptable level of emotionalism. However, there are limits to the amount of emotionalism that they will accept. Earlier this year in a few WCG congregations, there were outbursts of "speaking in tongues." But then in the June WN (p. 4) Tkach made it clear that he would "not allow the gift of tongues in our services." In addition to run-of-the-mill glossolalia, we have also heard of cases of where some during sabbath services have drifted into altered states of consciousness during which they would begin loudly barking like dogs or laughing uncontrollably, or would fall down semi-conscious as though in a stupor. (Actually, when we first heard of this, we recalled some of the sermons we heard years ago while sitting in WCG services and we thought such reactions were understandable.) But, now the WCG has put the kibosh on these types of "manifestations." In the June WN Tkach wrote: "Slaying in the spirit, laughing in the spirit, getting drunk in the spirit and making animal sounds are not in Scripture." Without condemning denominations that encouraged such "manifestations," Tkach made it clear that he did not want such behavior in WCG services. A number who had hoped to liven up WCG services by such practices are reported to have now switched their denominational allegiance to televangelist Benny Hinn (not to be confused with Benny Hill, although there are some similarities).

## **The Conder Controversy**

The large number of theological controversies raging within and between the WCG breakoffs makes it impossible for us to cover all of them adequately. Some of the ongoing debates center on Bible prophecy, the sacred calendar, the ways of calculating certain holy days and, of course, church governance. Anyone wanting to wade into the mire of those debates should get on the Internet or, at least, write to the breakoffs and get enough literature so that a comparison of viewpoints can be made.

One new issue, however, should be mentioned here. The latest controversy to hit many of the Armstrongite spinoffs, one that appears to have many Armstrongite ministers in a panic, concerns the controversial writings of Darrell W. Conder, a professional genealogist who had once been a personal assistant to Pastor General Joseph Tkach Sr. About two years ago, Conder published a book titled *Mystery Babylon The Mother of Harlots* in which he put forward the idea that many of the customs of the Catholic Church and Christianity in general derive from ancient customs of the pagan mystery religions. Like others who have written on the subject, Conder's views were somewhat similar to those found in *The Two Babylons* by Hislop. As such, Conder's views were not acceptable in the new WCG and it was about the time that his book appeared that he and WCG parted company. Nevertheless, those views were very much acceptable in the Armstrongite offshoots. And so, two years ago, Conder's first big book got good reviews in the pulpits of UCG, GCG, and other Armstrongite churches and Conder developed

something of a network of enthusiastic readers.

After the publication of his first book, however, Conder's historical probings continued and his views began to go decidedly beyond those of Hislop and company. Those new views made it into print in his second book, *Mystery Babylon and the Lost Ten Tribes in the End Times*. In it Conder not only paints the Roman Catholic Church as sinister beyond anything even Hislop or HWA ever imagined, but Conder now also puts forth the thesis that all of Christianity is a hoax perpetrated by the early Catholic fathers in a Satanic attempt to destroy all Israel through Baal worship. While believing in Anglo Israelism and retaining the Old Testament, Conder now maintains that the New Testament is unreliable. He even rejects the Christian Messiah and claims Jesus is merely a mythic literary creation of the early church fathers.

Of course, such ideas are not entirely new. HWA was referring to such debates when he talked about the "higher critics" of nineteenth century German rationalism. What is shocking, however, is that such issues were not debated earlier in the spiritual lives of so many who have devoted so much of their time, energy, money, and spirit to the Armstrongite churches. As it turns out, Conder's ideas are having a dramatic impact on many in the Armstrongite groups. So much so that some Armstrongite ministers, while usually sidestepping any mention of Conder's name, are finding themselves increasingly having to do battle with Conder's ideas.

Conder's two books (which sell for \$19.95 apiece), his free *Masada Magazine*, and other related writings are published by Commonwealth Publishing, P.O. Box 11476, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0476. From their Web site <<http://www.commonwealthp.com>> you can download some materials for free. To anyone wishing to study Conder's views, however, we offer this strong caveat: Study some of the writings of his critics, as well. One such critic is Eric V. Snow who writes:

I believe Conder's [new] book is the most thorough going trash imaginable, but refuting it isn't as easy as you may think. Dealing with his arguments on the messianic texts is particularly a challenge - more than you may think *a priori*.... This guy is real poison, and advocates repudiating Jesus as our Savior, and the New Testament as the Word of God. He wishes to return to some type of Judaism, to the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Mr. Snow, a UCG member who has degrees in marketing, history, and philosophy, has written a rather scholarly, yet very readable, book-length paper titled *Is Christianity a Fraud? - A Preliminary Assessment of the Conder Thesis*. Copies of Snow's paper, with its abundant citations, footnotes, and a helpful bibliography, can be obtained (for \$5 to cover costs) by writing the author: Eric V. Snow, 811 Foote St., Jackson, MI 49202.

Another author whose writings are relevant to the issues raised by Conder is David Whitaker of Enid, Oklahoma. His many years of studying the Hebrew language and the Kabbalah have given him a unique perspective from which those concerned about Conder's thesis will obtain valuable insights. In [AR60](#) we wrote about Whitaker and we mentioned a package of his research papers that were available from him for \$10. Since then, Whitaker has updated his index of writings and there are additional papers that may prove of interest. For a complete list of the papers he has available, send one dollar to

cover costs, and write: David Whitaker, 710 E. Chestnut Ave., Enid, OK 73701 (tel. 405-237-3028).

## Flurry Flourishes

Of all the WCG spinoffs, the one that currently seems to be the most dynamic is Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God (PCG). Bruce Bell of New York writes:

Believe it or not, the PCG has been doing an outstanding job of performing God's end-time commission. All the other broken offshoots are weak and trembling now and are definitely Laodicean. Many ridiculed the PCG, but look at them now: Solvent, powerful, full of grace and truth, imbued with a power from on high!

Mr. Bell's enthusiasm is not shared by all who have checked out the PCG. Eric Bernard of New York has been monitoring the publications and broadcasts of Flurry's organization and he writes:

Flurry praises HWA as the greatest man who ever lived. Then Flurry proclaims himself to be HWA's successor with a "double portion" of HWA's spirit - thus saying that he, Flurry, is twice as great as the greatest man who ever lived. Flurry's followers are deceived, duped, and willingly brainwashed. They are in deep trouble.

Flurry has written articles stressing that, as the only representative of God on earth, his followers must have complete faith in him. He is preparing his church to follow him in flight to "The Place of Safety" - Petra [in the desert of Jordan]. He has not stated this explicitly, but lately many of his articles have strongly implied that at a certain time, God will contact him personally to proclaim the "time of flight." Shades of Jim Jones!

Flurry's *Philadelphia Trumpet* magazine frequently publishes articles about Jordan. It was even the cover story for his July 1996 issue. And we have learned that substantial PCG money has gone into a number of projects in Jordan as a means of maintaining contacts with high-ranking officials there. Those contacts are apparently intended to serve as a foot in the door for the planned exodus to Petra. Such contacts also impress many PCG members who apparently believe that a one-way ticket to the Jordanian desert will be their ultimate salvation. A trip to Petra is one of the Armstrongite carrots that Flurry offers his devotees. On the stick side, secrecy and, a heavy-handed ministry also come into play. Dr. L. Jackson of Maryland told us:

I wrote a letter to Mr. Flurry and said that as I had been a WCG member, I might like to attend one of his churches. I called the phone number they gave me and a stoic voice informed me they would have to "visit me" first. Then came an avalanche of personal questions. Flurry's new-old church is just like, and maybe worse than, Armstrong's in the '50s and '60s. And, no, I didn't get permission to attend.

The Flurry Gestapo probably did him a favor. Another AR reader, David Cavall of New York, writes:

I was briefly involved with PCG and it was unbelievable. The ministers are arrogant, condescending ignoramuses who are biblically ignorant.... They use subtle and not so

subtle methods of keeping you in the organization. They are at least as dangerous as the WCG was in its heyday. They are also getting bigger and richer.

Flurry, who sees himself as having taken on Herbert Armstrong's Elijah mantle, has taken his followers ever further into heresy. Unlike Darrell Conder, who has subtracted from scripture by declaring the New Testament bogus, Flurry has added onto the Christian canon by teaching that some of Herbert Armstrong's writings are de facto scripture. For example, he teaches that HWA's books *The Mystery of the Ages* and *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* are as important as the very Bible itself. Of those two works Flurry has stated:

There is a colossal reason why Christ moved us to print both these books.  
WITHOUT THEM WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE OR GOD'S MASTER  
PLAN! That's how critical they are today! [1/21/97 co-worker letter]

Also appended to the Bible is *Malachi's Message*, Flurry's magnum opus which is supposed to be the "little book" prophesied in Rev. 10: 10, and whose last seven chapters Flurry equates with the "seven thunders" of Rev. 10:3-4. Flurryites are taught that "MM" is a divinely inspired writing and to encourage its veneration, Flurry now subjects his followers to a Catholic-like catechism whereby his followers repeatedly go through long strings of questions which they must answer appropriately. Examples:

Q: Who fulfilled the Elijah role in this century, and restored all things? A: Herbert W. Armstrong. Q: Whom have the Laodicean ministers truly disfellowshipped? A: Mr. Armstrong (and by extension Christ Himself). Q: Who then is the man who is the spiritual father of the ministers today? A: Mr. Armstrong. Q: Who has replaced Christ as the head of the WCG? A: The man of sin. [etc., etc., ad nauseam.]

As we reported in [AR65](#), Flurry's republishing of many of HWA's works still under WCG copyright was challenged in court by the WCG. A federal district court in California refused WCG's request for a temporary restraining order to block Flurry's publishing of the book and the matter awaits further court scrutiny in Oklahoma. Now, however, Tkach has actually assisted Flurry in his case by putting this chapter nine endnote into his new *Truth* book:

In February 1997 we filed suit against the Philadelphia Church of God - one of our splinter groups headquartered in Edmund [sic], Oklahoma - to block the republication of *Mystery of the Ages*. The Worldwide Church of God still holds the copyright to this book, and we contend that no one else has the right to publish it. We feel it is our Christian duty to keep this book out of print... because we believe Mr. Armstrong's doctrinal errors are better off left out of circulation.

This statement may initially seem odd because it essentially admits a major Flurry contention, namely that Tkach does not want HWA's theology disseminated. But if that is the case, Flurry may well have a First Amendment freedom of religion argument that will prevail as regards his republishing and distributing the book. Why then would Tkach's lawyers allow such an admission in print? It could be that by clearly and publicly stating the above position Tkach not only puts up an acceptable front for the evangelicals, but he also gives Flurry, in an under-the-table manner, the legal means to publish the book. If

that seems self-contradictory, recall that the federal judge who refused WCG's request for a restraining order also hinted that although Flurry might be allowed to publish WCG copyrighted materials written by HWA, Flurry may also be required to pay fees to the WCG for doing so. HWA's theological writings may yet prove to be money-makers for Tkach!

## **The House of Yahweh**

While Flurry's PCG may appear to be the most extreme of the WCG offshoots, it is not. The one group that is probably the scariest of the lot is the House of Yahweh. This bunch is led by a former Abilene cop and rockabilly bandleader named Yisrayl Hawkins who, during his days as a WCG member, was known as "Buffalo Bill" Hawkins. His old moniker was an appropriate one.

Hawkins claims that his arrival was predicted in the Bible and that he is one of the Two Witnesses of Revelation. (Who the other Witness is we don't know.) Like the old WCG, Hawkins teaches that we are right now very close to the end of this world and he likes to set dates. Supposedly we are within three years of "the end" as the clock started running with the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Accord. Like most Armstrongites, Hawkins' followers keep the seventh-day sabbath and the Old Testament holy days. But what makes this group so scary is both its ultra-authoritarian leadership and its open militancy. The House of Yahweh headquarters sits in a well-guarded 40-acre compound in Abilene, Texas. On holy days when Hawkins speaks, he is surrounded by a phalanx of armed guards. Part of his message is that as one of the Two Witnesses he will have supernatural power to bring tremendous destruction to the whole planet. But still, he needs the guards.

Hawkins has built up his following through buying time on public-access television and by effective use of the Internet (he is at <http://www.yahweh.com>). Those who get hooked are instructed to use The Book of Yahweh - a special edition of scripture which contains a number of unique readings inserted by Hawkins. The Yahweh name for God is preferred, but of the other biblical names - El, Elohim, Adonai, God, Lord - these, says Hawkins, are all pagan titles that pollute scripture and are actually titles of Satan and other evil beings. And who is Satan? Well, Hawkins answers that in his book *Unveiling Satan: Her True Identity*. Yes, says Yisrayl, it's a she. In addition to sales of Yahweh books, Hawkins supplements his income by selling mobile homes to his followers. But should they ever leave his flock, the trailer is forfeited to Hawkins without any repayment of money. So total is Hawkins' control over his followers' minds, many of them have pierced their ears as a sign of submission. Even stranger, more than 200 of them have legally changed their names to Hawkins.

Abilene police view the group with alarm. There have been reports of polygamy and the stockpiling of weapons at the compound. So far, however, there has not been an investigation because police fear that any confrontation could swiftly escalate into a shootout. A number of Hawkins' men are former members of the Posse Comitatus, once considered one of America's most violent militia groups.

A number of news organizations have sounded the alarm about the House of Yahweh.

The CBS television program *Hard Copy* aired an alarming report about them in May 1996 and repeated it earlier this year. Cult watchers we talked to all agreed that Hawkins' cult may be heading for tragedy. As cult expert Rick Ross told us, "There is the potential for another Waco. The House of Yahweh could very well be the next cult to blow, big time."

## The Really Way Out

The House of Yahweh bunch is pretty extreme. But, believe it or not, it is not as strange as the religious trip some ex-Worldwidiers are now on.

Des Griffin, an ex-WCG member whose writings are popular in conspiracy buff circles, came out last year with a book titled *Storming the Gates of Hell* (Emissary Publications, 9205 SE Clackamas Rd., #1776, Clackamas, OR 97015). In chapter 17, Griffin speculates that "premillennial dispensationalism" may have set the stage for a future phony "return of Christ." Griffin wonders if such a hoax might not have some connection to the UFO phenomenon, particularly as associated with

top-secret facilities such as Groom Lake (Area 51) some 100 miles north of Las Vegas, Nevada, and at four facilities in the Palmdale/Lancaster/Arvin (Bakersfield) areas north of Los Angeles where development of flying saucers and related technology is taking place.

At first, the idea that people would confuse Unidentified Flying Objects with the Second Advent may seem a bit science fictionish. Nevertheless, in 1983, there actually was a group of ex-Worldwidiers who became obsessed with the notion that flying saucers were coming to take them away. So strong was the delusion, the former WCG minister who led the group actually convinced his followers to quit their jobs, abstain from even marital sex, and wait for the saucers to arrive. Alas, they never did (see [AR27](#)).

Now, it appears some WCG exiters are again focusing their attention on UFOs that are supposedly on their way. One ex-member (a highly educated and sincere individual, by the way) puts out an esoteric newsletter called *The Earthworks Group Newsletter*. The June issue contained these statements:

On April 14th when Donna B. (our channeling lady) and your editor spoke with Anitra, our contact on the starship over our area of western NY, she told us that people would interpret the changes differently according to what they were psychologically and spiritually prepared to accept. Those who were prepared to see UFO's would see silver shuttlecraft coming down to land on Earth. Some people would see what Anitra called "a loving blanket of light encircling the Earth." And some people would refuse to look up and acknowledge that anything different had happened at all!

Alas, months later the silver shuttlecraft have yet to land. But this group has been disappointed before:

In late December of 1996, your editor moved circa 45 miles across the border from our home in southwestern NY to a rented house in a small town in PA in order to be

in a position for communications work that Anitra said we would be doing after the landings. This town in PA was on a better ley line than was the town in NY where we were then living, Anitra explained.

But the landings didn't happen in late December, and we had to go back to work at our job in NY after the Christmas vacation.

In another issue, the writer explained that when they prayed "Thy kingdom come," they had "ETs" in mind. This fascination with extraterrestrials and the blending of so-called "ufology" and biblical theology seems to be on the increase among former Armstrongites, just as it is in the general public.

We learned not long ago, for example, that some ex-WCG members are now enthralled with the writings of one Hatonn (it's a one-word name like Cher or Sting). Hatonn, who no one seems to have ever seen, puts out a huge newspaper called *Contact* from P.O. Box 27800 in Las Vegas (but our investigators have discovered that he and his associates also have a secretive base of operations in Tehachapi, California - by some odd coincidence, both areas lie within or near the mysterious aircraft zones mentioned by Des Griffin in his new book). Hatonn's "ministry" is difficult to describe. Some of his literature seems to be Bible-related and centers on prophecy, yet much of it is incomprehensible, at least to us, and seems to center on Hatonn's claim that he is a channeler for a space alien who is presently orbiting earth in some kind of a space vehicle. This is definitely very strange stuff.

But not as strange as the "ministry" of Mary L. Horton, a former WCG member and the ex-wife of Jerry Horton, the former production manager for the *World Tomorrow* radio program. In 1992 Mary came out with a book titled *Time's Forgotten Words - the Chronicles of OM from Across Time* (M.C.M. Publishing Group, P.O. Box 9, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91729). The book mainly consists of messages she has received from, well... afar. Here is how it is explained in the Introduction to her book:

In the fall of 1990, Mary L. Horton became the recipient of a unique and unusual phenomenon. She began to *hear* the thought projection of *word sounds*; however, these *word sounds* were not in any language she knew or of which she had any awareness.

Surprised and perplexed by these events, Mary transcribed the *word sounds* by syllables for later review.

At some point Horton consulted with a Hindu educator who told her that some of the words were similar to the Sanskrit language. Later, "Mary began to receive *thought words* in rhymed verses consisting of three line stanzas in English with highlighted *word sounds* similar to Sanskrit."

The main part of her book consists of more than 200 pages of these three line stanzas with the first line always being: "Across time your words come to me" followed by two lines ending with words that rhyme. We are told that this three line pattern is supposed to have something to do with the trinity - not just the Christian trinity, but the Buddhist, Hindu, Greco-Roman, Scandinavian-Teutonic, and Sumero-Semitic trinities, as well. And

all of this information comes from the OM God. The whole book has a certain rhythmic, almost hypnotic, feel to it. But what does it teach? It's hard to tell. And why would former Worldwidiers find it appealing? Again, we have no idea.

When *Time's Forgotten Words* first appeared, we were convinced that hardly anyone would really buy the book, particularly with its cover price of \$19.95. We were wrong. It's done well enough that chaneller Horton now has two more books out: *Time's Forgotten Mysteries* and *Time's Forgotten Messages!* Well, at least the author is not holed up in some Texas compound surrounded by heavily armed militiamen guarding one of the Two Witnesses.

## **Lit and Links**

One ministry that is causing a stir in Armstrongite circles is that of Wade Cox. His writings on the sacred calendar are particularly controversial, but what we have found most informative, and even entertaining, is his two-part cassette sermon on "The Place of Safety." The address to write to is: Christian Churches of God, P.O. Box 369, Woden A.C.T. 2606, Australia.

While the folks at Concordant Publishing Concern have gotten very little attention in AR over the years (mainly because there has been nothing scandalous to report about them), they nevertheless continue to be of great service to hundreds, if not thousands, who have left the Armstrongite churches. One of our long-time readers, Dean Koehler of Texas, recently wrote us:

If any of your readers are interested in the so-called "Bible Code" that has been in the news lately, let me suggest that they take a look at the very different approach taken by the Concordant Publishing Concern. Their choice of texts, manuscripts, chronology, grammar, and other considerations for translation of the Hebrew scriptures are all discussed in detail in the introduction to *The Concordant Version of the Book of Genesis*. It is available (for \$5) in English and German by writing to Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Rd., Santa Clarita, CA 91335. Web site: <<http://concordant.org>>.

## **Clyde Walters, 1943-1997**

It is with much sadness that we report the passing of Clyde Hamilton Walters Jr. (Ambassador, Pasadena 1970). While Clyde's name has appeared in AR only a few times over the years, he played an important part in the early conception of AR and he was one of our most generous contributors and very best of friends for over twenty years.

Clyde came out to Pasadena in 1967, drawn by the strict theology of Herbert Armstrong. As was the custom of Ambassador College in those days, the student newspaper did a special fall issue in which a small photograph of each new freshman was published along with a few upbeat comments. Next to his photo there was this lighthearted comment:

Clyde Walters from Covington, Kentucky has attended University of Kentucky, worked in a bank with Adrian Smith, the basketball player, and spent time in the

service with tennis champion Arthur Ashe. Clyde attempted to apply to Ambassador in 1965 but a letter from the President detoured him into the service for two years.

Upon graduating from Ambassador in 1970, Clyde was hired by the College to work full time in their data processing center. Within a few years, however, problems within that organization led to many, including Clyde, being downsized out of a job. After a period of unemployment and then working for the local Fedco store, Clyde landed what he thought would be a secure and stress-free job with the U.S. Postal Service. He eventually became what some of us humorously called "The Postman to the Worldwide Stars" because for many years it was Clyde who handled the zip 91105 route with its many homes of top WCG executives.

During the years that followed, Clyde, an avid reader and bibliophile, became interested in the labor movement and took evening college classes in labor relations. Then followed a lengthy period of service as a union representative, dispute resolution counselor and arbitrator, an editor for union publications, vice president of local 220 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, and a delegate to national union conventions. Most who knew him well believed he was destined for higher office.

Just a few weeks before his death, in a phone conversation with AR's editor, he talked passionately and at some length about the importance of working men and women remaining dedicated to the union movement as a means of protecting the hard-fought-for rights unionists had won earlier in this century. He said, "A lot of people don't realize that if they don't fight for what they already have, a lot of their rights are going to be taken from them. It's happening all around us already." Maybe it was due to his reading Noam Chomsky of late, but whatever the case, he had never sounded more well-informed, more dedicated, more confident, more energetic. As it turned out, however, it would be our last conversation. On September 6, he called in to work complaining of severe neck pains. Then after being out more than a week, police went to his home in Pomona and found him face down on the floor, apparently the victim of a heart attack. He probably died just two days short of turning 54. He is survived by his mother, a brother, and a sister, all back in Kentucky.

One postscript. When the WCG began its slow downward spiral in the mid-seventies, Clyde was one of those who, very conservative by nature, was utterly appalled that a Christian church would be willing to change many of its foundational doctrines for reasons of income or political expediency. For a time he went through deep disillusionment with not just Worldwide, but all religion. Then at some point an AR friend introduced him to the theology of A. E. Knoch as published by the Concordant Publishing Concern. Clyde would later comment that it was that discovery which helped him to overcome his profound disillusionment and depression. He later said of that time, "For a while I feared that there were just no real Christians left on this planet. But then I discovered there were still some who were totally uncompromising with the Bible. I also came to see that God's power and love are, in fact, much, much greater than almost all churches have imagined." From that point on, Clyde's outlook on life and on all humanity changed and he never stopped growing as a human being and as a Christian.

We will miss Clyde not only for his tremendous generosity to the *Report* and the affection and loyalty he had for his many friends, but for his concern for the poor, his

dedication to the union movement, his years of work on food drives for the homeless, and for his love of the great truths of the Bible. It was undoubtedly that love that helped him to have a rather unique sense of comradeship with the entire human race. While he was certainly someone who had his own strict standards and unbending principles, more importantly, he was one who could look at the down-and-out or the morally challenged, and with genuine sincerity say, "There but for the grace of God, go I."

We take solace only in the assurance that our dear friend has surely gone to a better place.

## Letters

Thanks for your quick response in sending us all 65 back issues of *Ambassador Report*. It made for heavy reading. However, I can honestly say that the truth, however sad and revolting, makes one thankful to have a Just Savior in whom one can truly rely. (Ironically, it occurred to me as I write, it was exactly 30 years ago today that I first heard Garner Ted Armstrong on the radio.)

Reading *Ambassador Report* helps us to better understand why multiple thousands of converted brethren left WCG over the years; they knew much of what my wife and I just found out in great detail. Like too many in the Church, we were mindlessly ignorant of much of the ministerial misconduct and corruption because we blindly trusted the Church leadership - many of whom were more interested in oppressing and fleecing the flock than in humbly guiding us to become more like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

May our great, kind, and loving Creator continue to watch over and bless you and your family and your ministry of telling us as it is rather than spinning carnal malfeasance into "God's will." Stay humble and make every effort to continue to write as accurately as possible. I believe God will in return continue to bless your efforts, despite whatever false accusations and perceptions are made against you. As Christians we need to conclusively prove and hold fast to all things that are good, and not let the sins of some cynical ministers - regardless of rank - who claim to represent Jesus Christ, drive us from God's revealed Truth. We have His Holy Spirit and we know better.

-Bob & Pat Briggs  
Alpharetta, Georgia  
<Bbriggs134@aol.com>

In [AR66](#), Ed McKinney wrote, "Hireling ministers become idol worshippers.... most ministers will do almost anything to get their paychecks." That reminds me of something a former WCG minister in Phoenix once told me. He said, "I'll preach anything Mr. Armstrong tells me to, as long as he signs my paycheck! " We found out he later got in trouble for ripping off church funds from a WCG congregation in Tennessee. I guess that Tkach's paycheck, as fat as it was, wasn't fat enough.

-Arizona

One of our friends in Pasadena told us that Mr. Tkach's liberalization of WCG doctrine

has led Mr. Tkach's mother, a long-time WCG member, to begin "questioning." They say Mr. Tkach recently had her kicked out of the church residence where she had lived for many years. And that she was forced to move in with her daughter Tanya in Colorado. Tanya's husband, thankfully, is a minister and board member of the sabbath-keeping United Church of God. Why haven't you reported this major story?

-Connecticut

*Editor: Because it's not accurate. A spokesman for Mrs. Tkach Sr. and Tanya Horchak explained to us that because of advancing age, Mrs. Tkach Sr. and her children all decided it would be best for her to live in Colorado with her daughter. They said that doctrinal differences played no part whatsoever in their joint decision.*

I remember the exact moment, and the feeling of my head swimming, when I first realized HWA was my enemy.... In the WCG we always wondered who "the Beast" was. Stupidly, we thought it was in Germany. But all false religion is wicked (Paul) and beast-like (John). HWA was like "a little horn" (Daniel), with "a mouth speaking great things," and "more stout than his fellows." But, it's "...and shall wear out the saints of the most High" that seems to apply right now!

-Peter N. Griffiths  
England

I was intrigued by your quotes of Sir Winston Churchill's United Europe speeches. His idea of a United Europe functioning under a United Nations is certainly unique. But I am surprised that he would have thought in such an anti-British way.

-Canada

*Editor: You can be certain Churchill was not thinking in an anti-British way. Dr. Ernest Zimmerman, who is something of an expert on European history of that era, has pointed out that already in 1943 Churchill was aware and dismayed that the United States was clearly going to be the dominant world power after the war. By 1943 Churchill was already taking a subordinate role to Franklin Roosevelt. Churchill undoubtedly saw a United Europe as Britain's best bet at maintaining some type of leadership role at least in Europe. Such a union would accomplish at least two things for Britain: It would help to prevent another devastating war between Germany and France, and it would provide political and economic allies to the British against growing American involvement in European affairs. Furthermore, as Zimmerman points out, don't forget that Churchill was adamantly opposed to the dismantling of the British Empire. If nothing else, he was staunchly loyal to the Crown.*

*One other comment. Churchill was not the first one to advance the idea of a United Europe under the auspices of a United Nations. Just a few days ago I came across that very idea in a book written in the mid-nineteenth century by famous Russian anarchist Michael Bakunin. Considering how well-read Churchill was, it is most unlikely he would not have been aware of Bakunin's writings on that subject.*

I was reading Martin Gardner's book *Science: Good, Bad and Bogus* when I came upon some positive references to *Ambassador Report*. It's nice to know that someone as respected as Gardner thinks so highly of what you've accomplished. Also, in the same chapter where you are mentioned, he makes an interesting point about the religion scene. He says many people today don't seem to want religion that makes any sense. They now seem to want emotionalism and weird beliefs.

-California

## Late News

Sources within the United Church of God say that that group is on the verge of a major split. The field ministry is upset over the excessive spending and governance style of the Arcadia, California home office which, many say, refuses to abide by the democratic principle of majority rule. Apparently the home office group is stalling on its move to beautiful Cincinnati. Already church attorney Steven Andrews says he is leaving UCG's employ.

More trouble for Garner Ted Armstrong and his Church of God, International. Posted on the Web this week was this message from Pam and George Dewey, and confirmed by CGI board member Skip Martin:

According to reliable sources, in a startling move this week, the Ministerial Council of the CGI has voted UNANIMOUSLY to retire Garner Ted Armstrong from all responsibilities with the CGI - yes, including broadcasting - with the Board to come up with a retirement package. If he rejects the package, his credentials will automatically be revoked and he will evidently be "out in the cold."

As I understand it, a letter was sent from Tyler to local congregations this week instructing them to not play a Ted tape, but rather one provided by Tyler featuring Vance Stinson.

It doesn't sound like this will be an amicable separation, and Ted has launched a campaign against those who have made this decision.

Evidently, there were recent revelations about some things going on in Ted's life that no one knew about for a long time prior to the massage-parlor episode.

The Sue Rae Robertson case is still slated for trial at some point.

In the midst of such chaos, Richard Nickels of Giving and Sharing continues to call for a national conference of leading Armstrongite ministers to attempt to bring about some kind of cooperation between the breakaway Armstrongite groups now savaging each other.

Meanwhil ... Joseph Tkach Jr. is reported to be on a national tour promoting sales of his new book, *Transformed by Truth*.

## We Need Your Help!

Our last issue, as informative and entertaining as many people said it was, brought in a record low response. One friend suggested to me that by mentioning the positive review of AR at the close of the last issue I may have given the impression of being "one of those smart-aleck Laodiceans who say they are in need of nothing." I hope I didn't leave that impression because that is most certainly not the case! Without the financial support of our readers, this publication cannot exist.

As I have done more than a few times over the years, I have simply borrowed the money to put this issue out. This time, however, I did so without having paid off what I borrowed to do the last issue. In the past, when I have gone ahead like this on faith, things have worked out. I hope that will be the case again this time.

My thanks to those of you who are helping *Ambassador Report*, and me personally, in these stressful and crazy times.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR68\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

**April 1998 (AR68)**

### **GTA Ballistic on CGI's Boot**

Just in case you haven't heard - January 9, 1998 is a day that will "live in infamy." At least, so says evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong, because on that day the board of directors of the Church of God International-- finally gave him the boot.

As we reported in previous issues, Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA), the son of Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA), the late founder of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and of the defunct Ambassador University, has been making headlines again because of his sexual peccadilloes. Yet, in spite of a lawsuit charging him with sexual harassment, many articles exposing his sexual indiscretions, and even a video tape showing him cavorting naked in a massage parlor which has been shown at least three times on national TV, until this past fall the board of the Church of God International (CGI) refused to remove the promiscuous pastor from his leadership position in that organization.

In September, however, CGI leaders discovered that Armstrong's sex sins were even more outlandish than had been portrayed in the press. A female member of the church came forward and said that she had been GTA's mistress from 1990 to 1995. That affair only stopped, she said, after the masseuse's lawsuit began and after both Armstrong and his wife called her to ask for her "continued support."

The church leaders, in a message sent to their members and posted on the church's Web site, then admitted: "We now know of several other women Mr. Armstrong has been with sexually since the early 1980s." The board was finally forced to conclude that it is not good to have a minister who is "known as a womanizer."

In November, the CGI board unanimously voted to give Armstrong a retirement package of \$125,000 per year in return for a promise to stay out of their pulpits. Church attorney Shelby Sharpe (his real name) strongly suggested to Armstrong that he accept the offer. At that point the board thought they had a deal and there was not even any plan to

publicly take back GTA's ministerial credentials. However, they soon began to suspect that GTA was not about to go gentle into that good night.

GTA laid low for awhile and even flew to California for his yearly ritual of New Year's celebrations. But friends in California say they never saw him more depressed. Some who have known him for many years said that he was "completely baffled" as to why fellow ministers could not get over his little problem. While GTA may be baffled, psychologists we talked to have not hesitated in diagnosing him as being a classic case of someone addicted to a bizarre lifestyle, with a wife who is a classic co-dependent, and with both Ted and his wife clearly being in massive denial. GTA never made it to the Rose Parade. He flew back to Texas with something on his mind.

A few weeks earlier CGI's board discovered that Armstrong had been feverishly working behind their backs to discredit them, spreading rumors of having been "set up," hinting at "a conspiracy," and accusing the church board of financial malfeasance. They soon realized that GTA was about to challenge them for a larger share of CGI's tithe revenues. In a January letter to their members, the CGI board lashed back at GTA:

He has turned to fabrication and distortion, imputing motives and making allegations that are self-serving and totally void of the truth. He has told so many "untruths" that it is difficult to know where the truth begins....

Mr. Armstrong's recent letters, filled with innuendo, accusations, and misinformation, have only led to an environment of suspicion, discord, and confusion. *His blatant disregard for the truth is beyond the limits of reasonable behavior expected of a minister....*

So, on January 9 - according to Armstrong, "a day that will live in infamy" - the board of CGI gave Armstrong the final boot. Back in 1995, CGI membership had peaked at about 5,000. After the massage parlor scandal broke, about half of CGI's membership and about 60% of its ministers left, leaving CGI with less than 2,500 members. Now, after the latest split, only two thirds of that figure remain in CGI, with those that have followed GTA out of International numbering less than a thousand.

Leaders of the shrinking CGI include: Ben Chapman, James Throgmorton, Loren Chamberlain, Bob Tackett, Ken Register, Vance Stinson, Bronson James, and Charles Groce who is serving as interim chairman. CGI still maintains a telecast outreach which is now called The Armor of God. Current broadcasters are Bronson James and Vance Stinson. CGI's mailing address remains P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, TX 75710. Their Web site is: <[www.cgi.org](http://www.cgi.org)>.

Garner Ted Armstrong's new setup is divided between two corporate shells: his new Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association and a new church dubbed the Intercontinental Church of God. It has been speculated that the new church was named after one of GTA's favorite hotels. Both corporations are operating out of P.O. Box 747, Flint, TX 75762. Their Web site is: <<http://www.gtaea.org/>>. The Evangelistic Association is putting out a television show appropriately called just *Garner Ted Armstrong*. It mostly airs at inconvenient times on a few small stations. The new Intercontinental Church has a small congregation in Dallas/Fort Worth and small satellite

congregations in Seattle and New Orleans. In addition, there are a number of living-room groups around the country that get together weekly to watch GTA video tapes (of him preaching, not the X-rated ones).

Sounding a bit like Don Quixote, Armstrong has described his new work as "the new beginning of the last phase of God's work on this earth for this time." When it was announced that GTA had started an Intercontinental Church, some recalled CGI's official seal of an old helmet with crossed swords, and it was speculated that Intercontinental's new seal would be crossed ICBMs above the helmet of a space cadet. Nevertheless, GTA has settled for a seal depicting a global map beneath a crown, suggesting to some Armstrong's status as one of the world's greatest televangelist clowns and his ongoing reign as the great prince of promiscuous preachers.

---

&COPY; 1998 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.  
ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

## **United Dethrones Hulme**

January was a bad month for more than one ex-WCG minister. On January 20, the governing body of the United Church of God (UCG), its Council of Elders, removed David Hulme from the church's presidency. We asked one UCG insider why, and he responded, "Do you want the short answer or the sordid whole truth? The short answer is David Hulme thought he was Herbert W. Armstrong."

The longer explanation is that last year the UCG Council of Elders (COE) voted to move the denomination's home office from Arcadia, California to Cincinnati, Ohio (see [AR65](#)). Even though an independent consulting firm had advised against the move, a majority of the COE thought it was necessary in order to put to rest rumors of continued UCG ties to the WCG. Since then, in spite of the fact that the financial wherewithal to move was found, Hulme did almost nothing to implement the decision. In fact, COE members got the impression that Hulme and his close associate, church treasurer Steven Andrews, were doing everything in their power to see to it that the home office stayed right where it was.

But there were other COE complaints against Hulme. Some suspected that Hulme was attempting to start a cult of Hulme. As evidence of this they point to the fact that there were huge expenditures for a planned UCG television program in which Hulme, in the style of Garner Ted Armstrong, would be the only featured speaker. In pursuit of TV

stardom, say his critics, Hulme unilaterally chose himself as the UCG's media spokesman, was overspending church funds, was hiring employees without board permission, was transforming personal views into church policy, was withholding employee salary information from the COE, was refusing to carry out Council decisions, was controlling all UCG publications solely toward cult-of-Hulme goals, was refusing to attend many COE meetings, and was firing employees that were perceived as upstaging him. For instance, Hulme fired Jerold Aust, the UCG writer who consistently turned out more articles for UCG publications than any other writer including Hulme.

Finally, some COE members complained that Hulme was traveling to numerous foreign countries on what was purported to be UCG business, but he had done so without COE approval and with the expectation that his exorbitant bills would be paid for by the UCG treasury. In other words, Hulme had been behaving pretty much the way that Herbert W. Armstrong used to behave. No wonder some say Hulme thought he was Herbert W. Armstrong.

With such an abysmal performance, we would have thought that Hulme would have not just been removed as president, but would also have been immediately removed from the COE. Amazingly, however, after the January decision, Hulme remained as a member of the church's board and at full salary. Robert Dick became interim president, and the behind-the-scenes process was begun for a switch in church administration.

## **Meet the New Boss**

Those of us who have been out of the WCG and its offshoots for a number of years are often unfamiliar with the varieties of governance now found in the Armstrongite groups. About two years ago one of our readers, UCG member Eric Snow of Michigan, gave us this explanation of what church government is like in some of the major WCG offshoots:

The UCG is, as one friend of mine in Global likes to call it, a republic, not a democracy. We aren't congregationalist in our form of governance, but the elders do vote for members of the Council of Elders, on the bylaws, and on doctrinal issues as well as the annual budget. The problem with the WCG's form of governance wasn't hierarchy as such, but an uncontrolled hierarchy with no checks and balances on it. Of course, our moderate [UCG] position won't please either Dr. Meredith and Globalites on the one hand, or the Alan Ruth/Ray Wooten/Norman Edwards congregationalists on the other, but it does seem to be lined up with Scripture when examined carefully. Of course, the Bible is mainly silent on the subject of church governance, but we can see no examples of lay members firing ministers in the New Testament. Neither does a one-man, top-down dictatorship exist either, which even Dr. Meredith admits these days.

Well, how is the UCG republic faring? If recent events in UCG are any indication, a lot of former Worldwidiers are not getting an education in democratic institutions, but they are getting an education in human nature. The UCG's yearly general conference was scheduled for March 7-10 in Cincinnati. But well before the conference important decisions apparently had already been made. Here is the way one of our UCG sources explained it to us in early February:

The question who will be the next president and when has already be answered.

Leslie McCullough will be the next president. He will be selected by the Council of Elders when the general session begins in March. Dennis Luker would like to become the Chairman of the Board. Oh, and by the way, about fifty elders will probably be terminated. The official ruse will be that there isn't enough money. The truth is, some elders are going to be eliminated because they supported David Hulme.

The conference has come and gone. Board member Peter Nathan of England, a Hulme loyalist, resigned. Hulme also resigned from the board and has been replaced by Aaron Dean, described by one Armstrongite as "a spiritual powerhouse who, as the very last and closest personal assistant to Mr. Herbert Armstrong, should have been his successor." Besides Dean, the other members of the board now are: Robert Dick, Leslie McCullough, Victor Kubik, Dennis Luker, Gary Antion, Donald Ward, Leon Walker, Roy Holladay, Jim Franks, and Burk McNair. While Robert Dick, not Dennis Luker, remains as chairman, sure enough, former WCG evangelist Leslie McCullough was elected president. The election result proved convenient for McCullough who, as luck would have it, had purchased a new home in Cincinnati just weeks before the surprise vote. Nevertheless, it was a stressful conference for some. One source reported:

The participation in this year's General Council meeting was not prepaid by the UCG. The coffers were empty and people had to raise the money locally or pay for the trip themselves. Many elders did not attend, which is why on some of the issues, they sent faxes to affirm their decisions. And that is also why church attorney Steven Andrews refused the faxes, and after that Chairman Robert Dick sent out e-mail saying the faxes were okay.

COE members had been bristling as much with Andrews as with Hulme whom Andrews has supported. Just a few months ago the relationship between the COE and Andrews had become so strained that the COE had demanded of him a public apology for what they viewed as his attitude of insubordination. In response to that demand, the only public statement issued by Andrews was a written refusal to apologize. Where that tension will resolve itself is anyone's guess. Andrews, a lawyer, had hinted that he might seek his remedy in the courts. Along with his friend Edwin Stepp, Andrews has now resigned. In the meantime, we are told:

In a recent *New Beginnings*, there was mention of an attorney hired by the Council of Elders to deal with Steven Andrews. What no one has said is that Dennis Luker is the one who hired the attorney. How was the lawyer found? Dennis Luker looked in the yellow pages of a telephone directory. Just so you know. Advertising in the yellow pages does work!

As for why the COE chose McCullough for their president, one of our UCG informants wrote:

McCullough spends a lot of time on the phone talking to United's ministers about their problems. He promises to do something, but never does. He is very much a status quo kind of guy. For a church that is run by committee for the benefit of the minister class, he is perfect.

In a move some describe as "politically brilliant," McCullough has announced that unless he is reappointed by the board in three years, he will step down. In the meanwhile,

Chairman Dick is spending more time in foreign travel and is, as one member put it, "proving himself dispensable."

## Premature Ejection

Is the evolving UCG going to be an improvement on the WCG? If their latest general conference was any indication, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

On their Web site, the editors of *The Journal*, an unaligned Sabbatarian newspaper put out by UCG members, recently ran an amusing story about how they were treated by the UCG's leaders at their general conference. Editor Dixon Cartwright and writer Bill Stough attended the fourth general conference of UCG in Louisville, Kentucky (not far from Cincinnati, UCG's new home-base). Cartwright had attended all previous UCG general conferences without incident. But this year was different.

According to *The Journal*, on Sunday, March 8, Cartwright was sitting near the back of the hall with about 650 other people listening to a panel discussion by the COE who were fielding questions from the audience. One elder asked why two of the panel members, Leon Walker and Donald Ward, were listed as being on the staff of the independent paper. A discussion followed during which an elder in the audience, Joel Meeker of St. Louis, rose and addressed the chair, asking, "Is the reporter here from *The Journal* who is not a member of the general conference of elders here with the permission of the chairman?" Chairman Robert Dick said no, to which Meeker responded, "Then I would request, sir, then, since this session, as I understand it, is reserved for members of the general conference, that he be asked to leave." Chairman Dick ordered Cartwright and his associate to leave. Cartwright refused. Chairman Dick then called for hotel security guards to escort Cartwright and Stough out of the building.

We asked one of our UCG experts what was really behind the strange incident. He pointed out to us that Joel Meeker, besides being a UCG elder, is also editor of the French edition of UCG's Good News, a publication that some view as competing somehow with *The Journal*. "What many elders don't like about Cartwright's newspaper," he said, "is that it has some independence and often reports unfavorably on United and favorably about some of United's sister denominations. *The Journal* may be promoting Sabbath-keeping churches as a group, but it is simply not filling a role as a UCG booster. A lot of United ministers want to see it disappear or, at least, be less offensive by not reporting certain facts."

## Hulme Exhumed!

Just days ago virtually all Armstrongologists were convinced that the career of evangelist David Hulme was dead and buried. But now we have learned that Hulme is revolting. That is, he is about to lead a new Church of God revolt. Here is the report we have just received from an exasperated UCG informant:

More chaos and confusion! After saying just a few weeks ago that he had no intention of starting a competing church, we now discover that David Hulme may be starting an independent group to be called simply "The Church of God." Original,

isn't it? And how will he explain away his previous comments about not planning to start another church? Well, he will say he is not starting another church. God is!

The new movement seems to be picking up a little speed. UCG member Eric White tells us:

Clearly a schism is developing over the home office relocation and "central only" versus "local also" preaching of the gospel. At services our pastor read an April 4 letter from Bob Dick and the Council of Elders condemning this action and the misunderstandings some are evidently promoting during this time....

Someone told me that Mr. Hulme may be setting up a new COO based in Fresno, California. For some time, the standard rumor has been about the United Kingdom branch seceding from the UCG. But the real issue is: Why don't they go join Global, instead of setting up yet one more Church of God organization?

So there you have it. Another split is probably on the way. Already the anti-Hulme forces have dubbed Hulme's followers "the Hulmites" (pronounced: Heoomites) and the dogma of his followers "Hulmitism" (pronounced: Heoomitism, it rhymes with rheumatism).

## **Meanwhile, Back on the Titanic...**

December 4, 1997 was a bad hair day for Joseph Tkach. He awoke to discover that the tabloid [\*New Times Los Angeles\*](#), just arriving at newsstands, had a [major story](#) about his reborn WCG. With a cover illustration of Tkach's bearded face, a tiny church building in his right hand and a screaming puppet crucifix over his left, the article's title was billboarded, "Honey, I Shrunk the Church."

The article by Ron Russell describes a rapidly devolving WCG being destroyed by its leaders. Here are just a few of Ron Russell's revelations:

What makes the implosion of the once-prosperous Worldwide Church of God unusual - indeed unprecedented in modern American religious life - is that Armstrong's followers haven't so much abandoned the church as the church's new leaders appear to have abandoned them. Under the stewardship of Joseph Tkach Jr., a 45-year old former social worker, Worldwide's leaders have set off a stunning exodus.... Among the many who have left are those who view Tkach and his colleagues as opportunists who've commandeered the religion for personal gain. "They stole the church!" declares Aaron Dean, a former close aide to Armstrong....

"I've come to the conclusion that the church under this group exists to perpetuate itself and to make money," says David Covington. Formerly one of Worldwide's top field ministers, he spent 25 years in the organization before resigning last year....

Russell points out how, as a result of the changes he made in WCG doctrine, Tkach "has become the darling of conservative religious talk shows." But, at the same time:

A former high-ranking church official says that Tkach's compensation package exceeds \$300,000, including a hefty raise he reportedly was given even as plans were being drawn up to lay off staffers.

Russell is quick to point out that the WCG's top four leaders were given numerous opportunities to answer his questions, but that "Albrecht, the public relations chief, told *New Times* that neither they nor any other church officials would make themselves available for comment." Russell then discussed the WCG's chaotic financial situation and made this startling observation:

The leaders also refused to publish the church's bylaws until a smuggled copy turned up on the Internet last year. Afterward, the church printed the document in its monthly newsletter. The bylaws confirmed what doubters had long suspected - that Tkach, as head of the church, wields virtually absolute financial authority. Not only does the title of Pastor General denote his eminence in spiritual matters, but as chairman of the church's board of directors, he possesses the extraordinary power to appoint or remove other board members "at any time, with or without cause or notice."

More troubling to some, however, is an obscure document drawn up in June, 1987, the year after the church patriarch's death, and during the administration of Tkach's father. The document, a copy of which was obtained by *New Times*, amends the terms under which church assets may be distributed in the event that Worldwide ceases to exist. Should that occur, once outstanding debts are paid, the amendment gives the Pastor General exclusive ability to control the assets and to assign them to an entity of his choice. "That's why [the leadership] has been careful to retain a hierarchical, as opposed to a congregational, structure," says David Covington, the ex-Worldwide minister.

December 4 was not just troublesome for Tkach because of the appearance of the *New Times* article. Later that day Tkach was to be a guest on Larry Mantle's popular radio talk show done at KPCC's new studios on the campus of Pasadena City College. Fortunately, AR staff members, who years ago worked for the station, were tipped off that Tkach was going to appear, and so we were able to get Larry some recent issues of the *Report*, an advance copy of the Ron Russell article, and a list of suggested questions. For months, Tkach had been touring the country promoting his new book and had been having an easy time on conservative religious talk shows (he was even on giggling Pat Robertson's *700 Club* on March 5). But this time Tkach was put in the hot seat.

Tkach probably suspected he might be in trouble when a few minutes into the show Mantle casually mentioned that he, himself, used to listen to the old *World Tomorrow* broadcasts, had admired the broadcasting skills of the Armstrongs, and that he also personally knew and liked David Hulme. Tkach surely also noticed how Mantle excitedly told his listeners that Tkach headed a church that had changed all its founder's teachings "almost overnight!" But the interview really started to get interesting when Mantle started to question Tkach's motives:

MANTLE: But why not leave the church [properties] for them? I understand that you've gone through what is in a sense a conversion process. You have embraced evangelical Christianity that says you are saved by grace, not by your works.... And that's fine. But why not, you and the others who hold that belief, go off either joining other mainstream denominations or starting your own group and leaving [it] for those who put all their money into this, the Herbert Armstrong church?

TKACH: Well, they're in the minority. We're the majority. And we put all of our money

into this too. Ah...

MANTLE: But I thought you'd lost about three quarters of your membership!

TKACH: We've lost about, not only three quarters of our membership, but also three quarters of our income. They took their income and they, ah, they went and started their own work and...

MANTLE: But they would have stayed had your father not made this Christmas Eve, 1994 sermon in which he announced the [changes to be made]. They would have stayed!

TKACH: I can't say that they would have stayed.... Of the total number... of 150,000 people, the majority have stayed. The minority want to hold on to Armstrongism.

Mantle quoted from Russell's article about HWA's excessive lifestyle and the allegations of incest with his daughter (which Tkach did not deny) and then he asked Tkach, with all that known, why he did not distance himself further from Armstrong. "You've been pretty conciliatory," he said. But, replied Tkach, "I don't want to stand in condemnation of Herbert Armstrong," adding with an audible snicker, "I'll let God do that." One caller asked Tkach how his church could still be the Worldwide Church of God because, "Isn't a denomination defined by its doctrines?" And, after all, hasn't he changed all of the WCG's doctrines? Even non-churched radio listeners could see the problem. Then toward the end of the hour-long interview, Mantle's interrogating got quite pointed:

MANTLE: I do want to talk, before we conclude, about control of the church. Again, referencing this *New Times* story. It is stated in there that you control the board of directors of the church. So you can pick and choose who is going to be the board of the Worldwide Church of God. That board controls the church and its assets. As a result, effectively you control the church's assets. Is that accurate?

TKACH: Ah, not entirely, no. Ah, first of all, I'd mentioned that we are currently in the process of revising our bylaws so that the position I hold is elected by the board. So the idea that I own all the property, or ever have, is absolutely preposterous and false.

MANTLE: Or control it. I don't think anyone is alleging you personally own it. But that, for example, if the property were sold and the church dissolved, that you would be able to dispense that money to the nonprofit organization of your choice.

TKACH: Ah, the way, if I recall our articles and bylaws correctly, the way that they prescribe we would have to proceed is that the board would determine who, ah, who the assets would go to.

MANTLE: But if you control the board then, effectively, you control - at least as your bylaws are currently written - you do control that.

TKACH: But they prevent inurement. I couldn't give them to myself. I couldn't prosper from it myself.

MANTLE: No, but if you had some pet... I mean let's say, for example, you believed in UFO visitations and you decided you wanted to give all the church's assets, I mean millions of dollars, to the UFO Network, there'd be nothing precluding you from doing that.

TKACH: Yeah, I would have to, if the board disagreed under this scenario, I would have to, ah, terminate everyone's responsibility on the board and then do that myself.

MANTLE: Stuff like that has happened before.

TKACH: Yeah. I don't think I would get away with it.

MANTLE: Who would stop you though, if it's in your bylaws allowing you to do it?

TKACH: (Quietly and audibly gulping) My family would stop me.

*[EDITOR: At this point we wondered who Tkach meant by "my family." His aging mother? His WCG relatives who are not even on the board? His UCG relatives? The*

*UFO Network? Perhaps even the Mafia? He didn't say.]*

MANTLE: And the bylaws are going to change that. You're not going to have the level of authority?

TKACH: As my book tells in the last chapter, that is something we've said we're going to do. And that's something that we're working on. Ah, yeah. I think it'll be something that we will have completed this year. And when I say this year I mean 1998.

## **Tkach to Step Down?**

It's not likely to happen, but Tkach has been hinting privately that he could, at least ostensibly, step down as President of the WCG. In mid-November the WCG's board began to discuss potential changes in the way it functions. Apparently, Tkach had instructed church counsel Bernie Schnippert to do research into how the church was legally organized with the goal of eventually making changes in the bylaws. Some ideas that Tkach has been playing with include putting a term limit on the Pastor General's service, broadening the grounds for removal of the Pastor General, and the development of a "more collective mechanism for appointing board members and the pastor general."

These sound like sensible ways to bring the WCG more into the Christian mainstream. But many wonder if the WCG's membership is ready for such changes. In fact, some do not feel the proposed changes would accomplish anything other than the complete fragmentation of the WCG as a unified church. Should that fragmentation be accomplished, it could very well set the stage for the transfer of all WCG assets to a new corporation controlled by Tkach and his colleagues.

In the course of the WCG board's discussions of the new corporate direction, Dr. Schnippert explained what is meant in church documents by the term "the Association." Most who would have read the legal documents would have concluded that the term referred to the WCG's lay membership, or at least to its full ministry. Not so, says Schnippert. The way the board looks at it, "the Association" refers only to the WCG's Council of Elders - all of whom are handpicked by Tkach and all of whom can be fired by him at will. Students of European history will notice that, viewed in that light, the WCG's current system of governance is virtually identical to that of the Roman Catholic Church where the Pope handpicks the College of Cardinals and the College then picks his successor. The WCG system is also akin to that reportedly found in some secret societies. We therefore don't hold out much hope that Tkach is serious about implementing changes that would be of real benefit to current, let alone past, WCG members.

## **Merchandising Christ**

Those who know Joe Tkach Jr. personally say that one of his great psychological needs has always been to "fit in," to, be a part of "the world." Some say it was his childhood in the WCG - when he couldn't join all the other kids in keeping Christmas, Halloween, April Fools, "and all the other fool days" (as HWA would say) - that made him feel estranged from the mass of humanity. He has apparently been trying hard to "fit in" ever since. And one way he has been fitting in has been through transforming the WCG into an evangelical merchandising operation.

Many remember the days when it was the Catholics who were big on selling religious trinkets, statues of Jesus and Mary, postcards, and candles. But now, using modern marketing methods taught in business schools (such as the one in Phoenix where Tkach got his MBA), many evangelical groups are merchandising Christ with far more sophistication.

First, there are the "specialty Bibles." These tend to target specific audiences. Some new titles are *Rappin' With Jesus* which turns the plot to kill Christ into a drive-by shooting, *Path to Victory*, an athlete's New Testament which comes illustrated with pictures of baseball star Orel Hershiser, friend of the Tkach organization, the *Couple's Devotional Bible*, the *Singing Bible*, the *Kid's Comic Book Bible*, and the *Women's Study Bible* which includes notes on fertility and menopause. There is even a bulletproof New Testament.

Then there are the modern Christian celebrity books. Unbeknownst to most purchasers of these, however, is the fact that most are ghost-written, and often by non-Christian writers. In "The Scandal of Christian Ghostwriting" (*Midnight Messenger*, Jan.-Feb. 1997) writer Texe Marrs pointed out:

My investigation of the Christian book world has uncovered the disgusting fact that the majority of books supposedly authored by famous Christian personalities are, in fact, the products of ghostwriters. Both novels and nonfiction books are involved. Sometimes the *real* writer is recognized in the acknowledgement section or elsewhere in the book, but, most often, he or she is not.

One such ghostwriter who has written many Christian books is Mel White of Dallas. He uses the title "Reverend" but few of his readers are aware that the ghostwriter is a homosexual who pastors a church Marrs describes as "a militantly gay church." Another author who uses a ghost is Hal Lindsey whose book *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, Marrs says, was actually written by a woman, Carla Carlson, a fact Lindsey has admitted.

Beyond the Christian celebrity books, one can find hundreds of Christian self-help books, some written by "Christian psychologists." Then there are Christian thrillers, Christian bumper stickers, Christian music CDs, Christian jewelry, Christian wall decorations, Christian clothing, and Christian knickknacks (items with religious artwork or with scriptures quoted on them). There are even Christian cereals, Christian cookies, Christian diet books, Christian chewing gum, and a Christian dice game called "Pilgrim's Progress" with dice that have no 6 (the number of man), but do have a 7 (the number of perfection). There are numerous Christian board games; one is called "Bibliopoly." There is a talking Patty Prayer Doll and even Gold Cross Fragrant Pantyhose. Writes Roy Rivenburg in the *Los Angeles Times* (9/24/95):

What would [Jesus] think of this melding of commerce and Christianity?... today, with religious retailing booming - and secular companies swallowing up Christian ones - some say it is hard to tell whether the Gospel is something sacred or just another brand name. Indeed with the exception of furniture and major appliances, it is possible to outfit an entire home in Christian products - bird feeders to body lotions, luggage to lamps.

To promote the consumption of such "holy hardware" and "Jesus junk," as it is actually referred to by some of its purveyors, there is now a burgeoning Christian marketing

movement which among other things has given us "Christian super stores." A fact not generally known to most Christians who purchase Christian products is that not only are fortunes being made in, the new industry, but many of the small Christian companies making and distributing the products are actually owned by large conglomerates which have no interest in religion except for its profit-making potential. For example, Time Alliance, a Christian music company, is owned by TimeWarner, the corporate giant which published Madonna's *Sex* book. And Zondervan Press, which publishes the top-selling *Holy Bible, New International Version* - which is the WCG's officially recommended Bible and the version it quotes in all WCG publications - is actually owned by Rupert Murdoch's HarperCollins which also publishes *The New Joy of Gay Sex*.

Joseph Tkach Jr. wants his church to be a part of this new age of Christian merchandising, and so Plain Truth Ministries was created. Of course, much like the body-building magazines of old which served primarily as catalogues for in-house bodybuilding products, the new *Plain Truth* magazine functions mainly as a catalogue for Christian products which have ties to the Tkach company.

Plain Truth Ministries, which was founded on money siphoned from the WCG, may very well prove to be a big money-maker for the Tkach marketers. But whether the new marketing methods will also save the church that originally bankrolled it remains to be seen. There is still no committed buyer for the two major WCG properties Tkach is trying to unload. In spite of a renewed emphasis on tithing, the WCG's announced budget for 1998 is 10 percent lower than it was in 1997. Some WCG insiders are now even saying that the WCG switch to evangelicalism may not have been such a great business decision. According to Empty Tomb, a Christian research and service organization based in Champaign, Illinois, giving to evangelical churches is in decline. In a study titled "The State of Church Giving through 1995," the group said that evangelicals were now giving only about 4 percent of their incomes to their churches as compared to about 6 percent in 1968. No wonder Tkach is not focusing his attentions on the new evangelical WCG but is, instead, concentrating on his PTM marketing operation.

In II Pet. 2, the Apostle Peter warned of false teachers whose methods would cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and who through feigned words would make merchandise of the church. That word "merchandise" is also found in John 2:16 where Jesus said, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Some seem to have forgotten that Jesus threw the money changers out of the Temple. He did not teach his disciples to study their methods and do likewise.

## **European Unity Closer**

While the Tkach team keeps their followers' minds focused on loving thoughts and consumerism, the goal of politically uniting all of Europe got a step closer to fulfillment on March 24 when the European Commission officially recommended that 11 countries be allowed to join Europe's single-currency plan, which is set to begin next year. The plan is not without numerous obstacles including high unemployment in many countries and strong opposition in more than a few. Nevertheless, advocates of European union are moving ahead.

At this time, Greece, which wanted entrance into the monetary union, has failed to qualify for entrance. Britain, Sweden, and Denmark could qualify and are interested in joining, they say, but only at a later date. That leaves 11 countries which want entrance now and which have qualified: Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Finland. Armstrongites still holding on to founder Armstrong's prophetic scenario for Europe will find the following information interesting: According to *The World Factbook* published by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, of the 11 countries, Finland (whose population is overwhelmingly Evangelical Lutheran) is the only one without a large Roman Catholic population. In Germany churchmen are almost evenly divided between Roman Catholics and Lutherans and in the Netherlands the number of Roman Catholics are about equal to those of the Dutch Reformed denomination. In all the other countries of the 11, the overwhelming majority of the population are Roman Catholic.

On May 2, European national leaders will meet in Brussels to sign the final monetary union agreement and to resolve one issue that still remains: Who will be in charge of the new central bank.

Many former WCG members, particularly those in Britain, recall the dire prophecies of the Armstrongs and view a United Europe with alarm. As a sign of decline, some point to the increasing ownership of famous British institutions by foreigners. Egyptian Mohammed al-Fayed, for example, seems to specialize in acquiring British emblems. So far he has acquired Harrods, London's most famous department store (HWA always shopped there), Turnbull & Asset, the famous British shirtmaker, the castle of Clan Ross in Scotland, and even Punch, the weekly magazine of satire, cartoons and witty reviews. Now the inevitable purchase of Rolls Royce by Volkswagen or BMW is seen as another sign that Germany will eventually come to dominate Britain economically. With regard to such concerns, a law school librarian recently sent us the following:

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby the official language of the EU will now be English, rather than German which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phase-in plan that will be known as "EuroEnglish":

In the first year, "S" will replace the soft "C." Certainly, this will make the sivil servants skip with joy. The hard "C" will be dropped in favor of the "K." This should klear up konfusion and keyboards kan have one less letter.

In the sekond year, there will be growing publik enthusiasm when the troublesome "PH" will be replaced with the "F." This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Government will enkorage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of the silent "E" in the languag is disgrasful, and they should go away.

By the 4th yar, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "TH" with "Z" and "W" with "V."

During ze fifz yar, ze unesesary "O" kan be dropd from vords kontaining "OU" and similar changs vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After zis fifz yar, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun wil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer.

ZE DREM VIL FINALI KUM TRU!!!

Obviously, the talented author of the above has a wonderful sense of humor. But for many Englishmen, behind that humor lurks a reality that inspires genuine fears.

## What Will Happen?

That the entire world is now undergoing a profound and unprecedented technological, cultural, economic, and political transformation is no longer even questioned in the mainstream press. The observation that the entire world is in transition is made so often by major authorities in the media it is getting almost hackneyed. We can all sense that the next few years, let alone the next century, are going to bring astonishing changes in our world. But what kinds of changes? And what kind of a world are we heading into? Of course, religionists like those of the Armstrongite offshoots have their own views. But today there are also many bright and educated secular thinkers who offer us insights that go beyond mere religious speculation. During the past year, we surveyed more than two hundred books on the subject and have found about a dozen that are particularly relevant to the question of where we are going. Ironically, while not biblically based, all of them actually contain much that is relevant to both the prophetic literature of scripture and some of the prophetic theories of the Armstrongites:

### The Ten

With the collapse of the Armstrong Empire, not only have most Worldwidiers turned their backs on the old Armstrong prophecy teachings, but even Armstrongites are increasingly questioning Armstrong's old notions about "the end time." One part of those old Armstrong doctrines was the prediction that we would see in our lifetime a ten-nation world-ruling empire. Now with the plan for a European Union having gone beyond a ten-nation Common Market, more and more ex-Worldwidiers are making adjustments to their prophetic scenarios and are looking elsewhere for "the ten." Many are leaning toward a world view that very much comports with today's "conventional wisdom" that we are going to see a world united by telecommunications and global capitalism. Many Armstrongites have even swallowed the Pat Robertson idea that we are on the verge of a "New World Order" where a world dictator will be leading us into a world where there will be only one government and only one allowable, and mandatory, Satanic religion.

While to some ex-Worldwidiers that idea is thought to be esoteric to their own religious tradition, one can find quite a few thinkers, even some with very secular views of the world, who believe we are quickly heading toward at least some type of a one-world situation. For instance, William Greider in *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (Simon & Schuster, 1997) argues that we are pretty much already

there. While he does not write about universal Satan worship, his view of where the world is now and where it is heading is almost as sinister.

But while Greider and others write of a global capitalism, is a truly united world-civilization really possible? One leading scholar who argues that it is not is Samuel P. Huntington, the distinguished Harvard University professor and the author of *The Clash of Civilizations* (Simon & Schuster, 1997). Huntington writes:

Little or no evidence exists... to support the assumption that the emergence of pervasive global communications is producing significant convergence in attitudes and beliefs around the world. Indeed, this Western hegemony encourages populist politicians in non-Western societies to denounce Western cultural imperialism and to rally their constituents to preserve their indigenous cultures.... The central elements of any civilization are language and religion. If a universal civilization is emerging, there should be signs of a universal language and a universal religion developing. Nothing of the sort is occurring.

While Huntington does not see the world heading toward union, he does view the world as coalescing into cultural or regional blocs framed by religion, history, and language. Looked at that way, Huntington points out how the world is already divided into about ten major geographical regions or civilizations:

1. Sinic - the Chinese
2. Japanese
3. Hindu
4. Islamic
5. Buddhist
6. Western - Western Christianity and its progeny
7. Latin American
8. Orthodox-Eastern Christianity and its progeny
9. African
10. Modern Indian - a mix of Hindu and Islamic

Actually, Huntington adds an eleventh group - the civilization of the Philippines, which he refers to as the Sinic/Western. But when one considers Filipino culture alongside the other ten, one has to suspect that Huntington was attempting to have his civilization chart come out to some number other than ten. Whatever the case, it is interesting that in some ways Huntington's view of the near future, like HWA's, involves a world divided, both geographically and spiritually/culturally, into ten, or about ten, parts.

One final comment about Samuel Huntington. In the 1960s Huntington co-authored *The Crisis of Democracy*, a research paper that in essence argued there was too much democracy in the United States. That paper was the first one produced by and for the Trilateral Commission.

## **The Tribes**

Huntington is not the only scholar who is dividing up the world in anticipation of the new millennium. In *Tribes* (Random House, 1992), author Joel Kotkin predicts, somewhat

like Huntington, that "race, religion, and identity determine success in the new global economy." But, somewhat different from Huntington, Kotkin, who has been a business trends analyst for Fox Television, a senior fellow with the Center for the New West and the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., as well as an international fellow at the Pepperdine University School of Business, is convinced our global economy will increasingly be run by cross-border networks of ethnic-and-religion-based groups who will be ever more tribal and clannish.

Kotkin begins his analysis with the international Jewish community as the prototypical international clan that has a leg up in the business world because of an entrenched network based on shared history and values. Kotkin then goes on to analyze what he sees as the other four leading international networks that will dominate the new global economy: the British (with Anglo-American), the Japanese, the Chinese, and the east Indian. Oddly, while acknowledging that the British, and their Anglo progeny in North America, still control the largest accumulation of foreign investment and most of the world's largest corporations, Kotkin does not envision a never-ending American, or even European, hegemony.

Perhaps one weakness in Kotkin's analysis is that at least two more huge international groups should probably have been added as being predictable economic powers of the near future. For example, the Spaniards within the Spanish-speaking world now wield increasing influence. Regarding Spain, Larry Rohter in *The New York Times* (2/15/98) wrote:

The explosion of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor 100 years ago Sunday set the stage for Spain's retreat from the last remnants of its empire in the New World, and for the emergence of the United States as a global power. Yet as the American Century draws to a close, a resurgent Spain is once again flexing its muscles in Latin America and pushing aside any lingering memories of "El Disastre" as the Spanish-American War is often called there. If it was the cross and the sword that inspired Spain's initial foray into the Americas 500 years ago, it is the checkbook and the satellite dish that are leading what one Colombian magazine calls "the second Spanish conquest."

Rohter, much in line with Kotkin's thinking, points out that a common language and culture - not to mention membership in the European Community and a prospering Spanish economy - give Spain an advantage in Latin America not shared by those countries' big brother to the north.

A second powerful international network that could have been added to Kotkin's group of five is international organized crime. In *Thieves' World: The Threat of the New Global Network of Organized Crime* (Simon & Schuster, 1994), distinguished journalist Claire Sterling shows:

No one has benefited more from the political changes of the 1990s than international organized crime. Within the space of just three or four years, the world's great crime syndicates have joined in a planet-wide criminal consortium unlike any in history. A *Pax Mafiosa* has emerged - an agreement to avoid conflict, devise common strategy, and exploit the planet peaceably together - linking the American and Sicilian mafias, Russian organized crime, the Chinese Triads, the Japanese Yakuza, and Columbia's cocaine cartels. It threatens the liberty, security, and political integrity of the U.S.,

Europe, and all free societies.

For these giants of the underworld, the creation of the European Community in Western Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Empire in the east have erased borders and made the commerce of crime easier than ever....

The drug traffic alone, exceeding half a trillion dollars a year now, is the world's second biggest money-maker, after the arms traffic; and these syndicates engage in both. The interest they have accumulated from investment of drug profits in the last decade is approaching a trillion dollars, according to a European Community estimate.... That doesn't count customary pursuits such as theft, fraud, extortion, gambling, loan-sharking, forgery, pornography, money laundering, and contract killing.

While many governments engage in the same kinds of activities, there are only a handful of national governments that can claim that amount of income and such financial resources. And as Sterling explains it, international organized crime appears to be more organized than many governments. That being the case, it would rank behind only a handful of nations in international power. While not given a chapter in Kotkin's *Tribes*, the international organized crime network is surely one of the powerful tribes to be reckoned with now.

Kotkin's book is not a perfect crystal ball into the future, but what makes his ideas still interesting from our ex-WCG perspective is that in spite of his academic credentials, his approach to the global economy is quite similar to the way many Armstrongite leaders have looked at the world all along. He sees the world as propelled far less by rational thinking, and far more by tribal, almost "conspiracy-driven," networks which in the coming millennium will certainly make "who you know" more important than ever.

This is not the way many of us remember business school. Nevertheless, Kotkin's book is usually found in the business sections of larger bookstores.

## **The Beast**

Fascism played an important part in the prophetic scenarios taught by Herbert W. Armstrong. For decades, the WCG's founder unflinchingly taught that a revitalized fascism would one day reawaken in Europe and would come to dominate not just that continent, but the world. With the decline of the WCG, not only have Worldwidens ceased believing such ideas, but even many of the Armstrongites that remain seem to have put aside that anticipation.

Now, however, an important book makes the startling claim that some, like Armstrong, who taught a future resurgence of fascism, may have been right all along. In *The Beast Reawakens* (Little, Brown and Company, 1997), author Martin A. Lee shows that not only is fascism alive and well, it is right now being resurrected at alarming speed not only in Europe, but throughout the world. Lee does not simply rehash what we have already known - that after 1945 many Nazis fled to Latin America - but he makes the startling claim that:

Shortly after World War II, both the United States and the Soviet Union recruited Nazis and fascist collaborators for the upcoming Cold War - but these Third Reich veterans pursued their own agenda, even while working for Eastern and Western secret services. By playing the superpowers off each other, these unrepentant extremists paved the way for an eventual revival of fascism.

While most of Hitler's Nazis are now dead, Lee claims that they left behind a whole new generation of fascist fanatics that are now rearing up in Western Europe, Latin America, and especially in Eastern Europe. Lee even shows that fascism is reawakening in the United States.

Ironically, some of the American organizations that Lee associates with fascism are among the very groups toward which some ex-Worldwidiers have gravitated in recent years. There is a reason for the connection. Most of the neo-fascist groups in North America have a strong affinity with white-supremacist, or at least white-separatist, sentiments, and in this century there was no writer more influential in spreading the idea of a racially superior, or at least racially distinct, Anglo-American race than Herbert Armstrong. Even though his book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* is now rejected by the Tkachites, it still finds favor with many white supremacists such as those affiliated with the Aryan Nations. In *Millennium Rage: Survivalists, White Supremacists, and the Doomsday Prophecy* (Plenum Press, 1996), author Philip Lamy, a recognized authority on paramilitary groups and apocalyptic cults, gives Herbert Armstrong credit for having "helped popularize British Israelism among the millions of Americans who read his books" and in so doing having cultivated the soil in which others planted more insidious racist seeds. Thus, unwittingly, HWA may have helped to bring about the very reawakening of fascism that he prophesied.

## **The Great King**

One of the linchpins of Herbert Armstrong's prophecies was his prediction that a European king would rise up and bring about the unification of Europe. Armstrong had various ideas who that leader would be. For instance, for many years he thought Bavarian politician Franz Joseph Strauss would be the man. But, toward the end of his life with Strauss having passed away, Armstrong started to suspect that Otto von Hapsburg would fulfill the prophecy. It may have been that suspicion that led HWA into developing a close friendship with old Otto.

With monarchies on the decline in Europe and with Otto past the age of eighty, many scoffed at Armstrong's speculations about the Hapsburgs. Now, however, some wonder if HWA was not on to something. For while Otto is up in age, advocates of monarchy are increasingly heard from in Europe. And, of all the royal families on the Continent, the one that is increasing the most in prestige and influence are the Hapsburgs, and especially those of Otto's line.

In the *Los Angeles Times* (3/27/98), Mary Williams Walsh and Deane E. Murphy reported how Otto von Hapsburg's seven grown children are increasingly active in European politics:

From Scandinavia to the southernmost reaches of the changing and unsettled

continent that is post-Cold War Europe, Hapsburgs are turning up in interesting places, positing the idea that their family's imperial history holds answers to some of the most pressing questions of modern times. Hapsburgs are keeping up the age-old family tradition of strategic marriage, tantalizing monarchical revivalists and striving through electoral politics to shape the development of the continent, which is inching toward unification.

"My brother is doing the same that I am doing," Gyorgy [von Hapsburg] said, referring to Karl Hapsburg-Lothringen, 37, who represents Austria in the European Parliament. "My sister [Walburga] is doing the same in Sweden. If everything goes right, she will be elected to the European Parliament. My sister in Spain [Monica] is very much interested in local politics."

Gyorgy von Hapsburg, 33, is a business executive who lives in Budapest, Hungary. Prime Minister Gyula Horn, a former Communist, appointed Gyorgy "ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary," and charged him with ensuring early membership for Hungary in the European Union as it expands into the former East Bloc. So popular is Gyorgy, that his arrivals at public functions are often met with cheers of "Hail the King!" Then there is Otto, who but for the intervention of a couple of world wars and a few revolutions, would have today, at age 85, been Emperor of a realm once called the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Instead, he is merely the representative of the German state of Bavaria in the European Parliament. There he sits next to his eldest son Karl and tells the people of Europe, "Why not take advantage of the wisdom the Hapsburgs and their thousand-year family can offer?"

Those who would like to learn more about the Hapsburgs (also spelled Habsburgs) should check out *The Habsburgs: Embodying Empire* by Andrew Wheatcroft (Penguin USA, 1997). An even more interesting book is *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of Emperor* by Marie Tanner (Yale University Press, 1993). Some of the intriguing chapter titles are: "Mythic Genealogy," "The Legend of the Last Emperor," "The Order of the Golden Fleece," "Fidecrucem: The Hapsburg Veneration of the Cross," and "The Hapsburg Cult of the Eucharist." Yes, this crazy family really does take itself that seriously.

## **The New World Order**

One of the notions that has swept through ex-WCG circles in recent years is the idea that world conspirators are bringing about a "New World Order." That ancient phrase was brought to modern public consciousness by former president George Bush during the Gulf War, and ever since it has been the subject of much speculation by conspiracy theorists. Anyone not familiar with the "NWO" theory can get an excellent overview of its general dimensions from chapter 34 of *The Sixty Greatest Conspiracies of All Time* by Jonathan Vankin and John Whalen (Citadel Press, 1996). In their entertaining and informative book, Vankin and Whalen are quite adept at poking big holes in many of today's popular conspiracy theories. Nevertheless, regarding the NWO, they write:

Lest we dismiss such concerns as the ranting of survivalist kooks, it's important to note that the New World Order is an equal opportunity conspiracy theory. Left-wingers were just as exercised by Bush's words, although progressives tended to see the preppy president more as a champion of capitalism run amok than as a creepy

commie.

In fact, right-wing or left, suspicions about the New World Order are actually quite rational. The champions of the "NWO" are indeed a cadre of powerful industrialists, bankers, academics, and politicians who for three quarters of a century have been a gray eminence behind the governance of Britain and America. More to the point, perhaps, they are the governors of the Western world. Call them what you will, they are the "Establishment."

There is a lot of religious writing that deals with the "New World Order." Nevertheless, some of the most valuable books on the subject are not religious. Here are two:

*The New World Order: Whether It Is Attainable, How It Can Be Attained, and What Sort of a World a World at Peace Will Have to Be* by Herbert George Wells (Alfred A. Knopf, 1940). While most people recognize H. G. Wells as one of the preeminent science-fiction writers of all time, many are not aware that he was also a highly influential political thinker and an advocate of world government. While not an admirer of Marx or an advocate of violent revolution, in some of his political writings, Wells actually promoted the idea of "an open conspiracy" to bring about a politically united socialist world - pretty much the kind of thing some right-wing pundits fear could happen. Furthermore, Wells envisioned a strong United Nations. In fact, Wells "became the leading spirit behind the Sankey Declaration of the Rights of Man, which influenced the setting up of the United Nations" (Brian W. Aldiss, Introduction to *War of the Worlds*, Oxford World's Classics). For those reasons alone, one would think that his New World Order would not only be much read today for clues to where we could be heading, but much quoted by those of the Bircher mold. Surprisingly, not only is that not the case, the Wells book is currently out of print. Why, we have no idea. But those interested in the subject may be able to find a copy, as we did, in a public library or in a bookstore specializing in old or rare books.

Finally, a most important book on the "NWO" is *World Orders Old and New* by Noam Chomsky (Columbia University Press, 1996). Chomsky, the political activist and MIT professor of linguistics who has been called "the eighth most-cited person in the history of the world and the most-often-cited living human being," is an extremely prolific author who writes in at least two different styles. First, there is the very accessible style of his writings for the general public. A good example is the so-called "Chomsky Trilogy" consisting of his short books *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*, *The Prosperous Few and the Restless Many*, and *Secrets, Lies and Democracy*, all of which give a very concise and readable overview of the state of the world and Chomsky's own political ideas. But another kind of Chomsky book is distinctly in the scholarly style with copious notes and voluminous and detailed references to obscure declassified (and maybe classified) documents from major think tanks, the United States government, and foreign powers. *World Orders Old and New* is that type of book.

Chomsky's insights into U.S. policy in the Gulf are extraordinary and his analysis of the Middle East peace process has been described as incendiary. For even though raised in a Jewish home and the son of a Hebrew scholar, there have been few intellectuals more scathing of what he sees as the undemocratic, brutally oppressive, and monumentally hypocritical Middle-East policies of both the United States and the state of Israel. But it is in his analysis of our present and evolving "World Order" that Chomsky brings insights that are not just penetrating, but often very unsettling. In chapter two, section six, "The

Contours of the New World Order," Chomsky writes (pp. 178- 179):

Structures of governance tend to coalesce around domestic power, in the last few centuries, economic power. The process continues. In the *Financial Times*, BBC economics correspondent James Morgan describes the "de facto world government" that is taking shape: the IMF, World Bank, G-7, GATT, and other structures designed to serve the interests of TNCs [Transnational Corporations], banks, and investment firms in a "new imperial age." At the other end of the bludgeon, the South Commission [a Third World group of intellectuals] observes that "the most powerful countries in the North have become a *de facto* board of management for the world economy, protecting their interests and imposing their will on the South," where governments "are then left to face the wrath, even the violence, of their own people, whose standards of living are being depressed for the sake of the world economy" - that is, the present structure of wealth and power. A particularly valuable feature of the rising de facto governing institutions is their immunity from popular influence, even awareness. They operate in secret, creating a world subordinated to the needs of investors, with the public "put in its place," the threat of democracy reduced....

One may imagine what classical liberals would have thought of this new form of unaccountable, absolutist power, with its extraordinary scale; Thomas Jefferson, for example, with his scorn for a "single and splendid government for an aristocracy, founded on banking institutions and moneyed incorporations," through which the few would be "riding and ruling over the plundered ploughman and beggared yeomanry" - a nightmare realized beyond anything he might have dreamed.

World Orders Old and New should be assigned reading for the many Armstrongites who are waiting for the evil New World Order to arrive. Because if Chomsky is right, it is already here.

## Where Are They Now?

Just after our last issue came out, we were pleased to be paid a visit by our long-time friend **Gary De Jager** (AC-BW 1970) who was on his way from business meetings in New York back to Sydney, Australia where he lives with his wife **Roberta** (nee **Mitchell**, AC-BW 1972) and their three teenage girls. Since their WCG days, Roberta has earned an advanced degree in foreign languages and teaches Japanese and French. Gary has earned a Ph.D in mathematics and currently works as a derivatives specialist for Chase.

Many will remember **Dr. Robert L. Kuhn** (AC-Pasadena 1969) who was Garner Ted Armstrong's executive assistant in the early 1970s. After that era, Kuhn, who already had a Ph.D. from UCLA, went on to get an MBA from MIT. In the years that followed he wrote and/or edited more than 30 books on business and finance. He is currently president of The Geneva Companies, a group specializing in the arranging of mediumsize corporate mergers. In addition, Kuhn is also chairman of the Original Bible Project.

While many are aware of Dr. Kuhn's accomplishments, many may be surprised to learn that his wife, Dora Serviarian-Kuhn, is a respected concert pianist who performs with major orchestras around the world. Her recent recording of the Khachaturian Piano Concerto on the ASV label has been hailed by a number of critics as the finest since

William Kapell's legendary recording of fifty years ago. The Kuhns are scheduled this month to be in China where Dr. Kuhn is working on a series of TV documentaries about the new Chinese economy and where Dora Serviarian-Kuhn will be performing with the China National Symphony.

Another well-known concert artist is pianist **John Khouri** (AC-BW 1967) who for a time served in the WCG ministry and then went on to head Ambassador's music department at Bricket Wood. Khouri, who is based in Vacaville, California, specializes in performing early nineteenth century music written for the fortepiano, the historic predecessor to the modern piano. Khouri owns five restored fortepianos from that era and tours so frequently he no longer has time for teaching. He also performs in duo-forte piano concerts with Janine Johnson. Khouri records for the Entr'acte label and his Web site is: <<http://www.best.com/~jbartram/khouri.html>>.

## **Books, Pamphlets, Tapes**

We regularly get letters from readers skeptical of the many reports over the years that Herbert Armstrong had had a long-time incestuous relationship with at least one of his daughters. People want proof. Well, unfortunately, or fortunately perhaps, video tapes of those acts do not exist. And, as the GTA massage parlor case suggests, even if we had video tape evidence many would still discount the evidence. That does not mean, however, that there is no evidence. For instance, in the recent Ron Russell article, the author mentions how he interviewed HWA's grandson, Richard Armstrong (see [AR67](#)), and how Richard corroborated that HWA's daughter, Dorothy Mattson, had on numerous occasions told family members about the incestuous abuse. (In fact, during her years as a Pasadena-area business woman, Mrs. Mattson had also told many others.) For those who may be interested in seeing the entire Ron Russell article that appeared in *New Times Los Angeles*, it is on-line at: <<http://www.newtimesla.com>>.

Anyone wanting to hear all of Larry Mantle's interview of Joe Tkach on KPCC can obtain a cassette recording of the one-hour program for \$15 by writing to: KPCC Radio, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd. Pasadena, CA 91106. Be sure to give the date of the program (Dec. 4, 1997) and the subject (Joseph Tkach and the Worldwide Church of God) along with your address and phone number.

In our last issue we reviewed Joseph Tkach's new book *Transformed by Truth*. Those who would like to read another John Trechak review of the Tkach book can see it at the online bookstore Amazon.com. Just go to that site and type in the title of the book. Besides the critical review of the book, you will also see another, this one a rave review, by a David Rowell of Montana. We e-mailed Mr. Rowell and suggested he might discover a different, more realistic, perspective of Tkach and his book if he were to read a few copies of Ambassador Report which we would be glad to send him free of charge. He replied:

Who are you to tell anyone the truth about a book you didn't write, about a journey that you didn't complete? Were you privy to all the things the author experienced? Have you been a loyal member of the WCG for 26 years as I have? I've never heard of you so I'm sure you weren't in any way intimately involved. If you were a disloyal former member, which splinter group did you join? I don't recommend you send me

your analysis. You wouldn't enjoy my response because it would expose any false accusations and assumptions you have surely made in writing it.

*Discovering the Plain Truth: How the Worldwide Church of God Embraced the Gospel of Grace* by George Mather and Larry Nichols (Intervarsity Press, 1997). The long title pretty much tells you what this book is all about. The authors never once contacted AR for our perspective. They did buy the WCG's version of events, however. For an excellent review of the book, see David Covington's Ministry of Healing Web page: <<http://members.aol.com/coving1d>> or <<http://members.aol.com/exwgcg>>.

*The Prophetic Significance of New York City* by Gary Arvidson. Sometimes we get a little tired of former Worldwidiers and their Bible prophecy notions. After all, while usually still retaining Herbert Armstrong's Darbyite premillennial dispensationalism, there are now hundreds of variations on the original theme. So many, in fact, we are finding it difficult just keeping up with the new theories. This new paper by Arvidson, however, did get our attention. Years of research have gone into it and many of his conclusions actually make sense. The 24-page paper is available for \$5 by writing to: Prophecy Report, P.O. Box 442, Dallas, NC 28034.

We have commented many times on the writings of Dr. Ernest L. Martin. But many readers will be interested to learn of a new book Martin has written: *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*. Of this book Martin has said: "It will show that our Jewish friends who now gather to worship God at their Western (Wailing) Wall are worshipping at the wall of the Roman fortress of Antonia (named after Mark Anthony) and that wall has nothing to do with their former Temple." A number who are aware of Martin's decades of biblical and archaeological research on the subject tell us they expect Martin's book to cause shockwaves in the world of religion and even among politicians. For more information, contact: Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, Web site: <<http://www.askelm.com>>.

We have mentioned *The Original Bible Project* in past issues. Recently Bob Ellsworth sent us a *Translation Sample* of parts of the Bible that Dr. James Tabor and his team of scholars have already translated. We were extremely impressed not only with the care that has been applied in the translating, but also with the unique and practical format that the project has adopted. We have had letters from a few readers who believe that more translations of the Bible are not needed. But having seen some of what has been done on the project so far, we think this new translation will prove to be an important contribution to biblical scholarship. Those wanting to get more information or a copy of the *Translation Sample* should contact: Robert Ellsworth, The Original Bible Project, 408 South Pasadena Ave., Suite 1, Pasadena, CA 91105.

Back in 1995 (in [AR60](#)), we reviewed the book *Why Waco?* which was co-authored by James Tabor. At the time, we were somewhat critical because the book struck us as overly sympathetic to the Koresh cult. That, however, was before we saw the new documentary movie *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* which got an Academy Award nomination this year. When we contacted Tabor recently, he commented: "I am not convinced that the FBI actually shot people - but the rest of the film, as far as I can tell, is accurate." We agree. What is quite disturbing about the film is not just big government's willingness to use overwhelming force (even against elderly people and children) in order

to protect its image of invincibility, but also its willingness to bend the Constitution out of shape and then unabashedly deceive the public about it. Perhaps almost as disappointing is the abysmally poor job the major media did in covering the whole story. We understand that copies of *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* are already available in some video rental stores. A copy can also be obtained for \$25 by calling (800) 771-2147 (ext. 19).

## Letters

On Sabbath we were told that the terrible attacks on President Clinton have now yielded fruit. The true Gospel of the Great Warning Commission is now being preached to him. Because of his troubles with the press, we were told, he called a famous preacher for guidance on what to say. Mr. Garner Ted, of course. And that is how it happened. So whatever Mr. Armstrong did, God was behind it for us to do the Great Commission. We were also told that Mr. Rader is behind the Paula Jones lawsuit against our President and that he is now her lawyer.

-Texas

*Editor: Paula Jones' lawyer is Robert Rader Jr., no relation to the Rader of WCG fame. As for God inspiring preachers to commit adultery so that "the great commission" can be accomplished, we don't see any such idea in scripture. According to press reports we have seen, the "famous preacher" Clinton called was Rev. Jesse Jackson. Nevertheless, if President Clinton were to actually call GTA for advice on how to handle a sex scandal, he would certainly be calling an expert.*

My sister is a follower of the new Garner Ted Armstrong Intercontinental Church and she has shown us a printing of his new church seal. She thought it was an improvement over the one International had. However, her husband, who is not religious anymore, pointed out to us that the new Intercontinental seal is almost identical to the official seal of what he calls the "OWK." That stands for the "Other World Kingdom" which is an international network of expensive, jet-setting prostitutes who specialize in deviant, pagan sex rituals. He is a programmer and he showed us their Web site. I could only stand to look for a few seconds but, yes, the "OWK" seal is very similar. I hope there is no connection, but I fear the worst.

-Texas

Yesterday, I was in a "Christian book store" when I came upon a new book titled *Difficult Scriptures*. "Let's see what those might be," I thought. So I peeked in and was not surprised to see that the author chose to attack the Ten Commandments, the law of unclean meats, and Sabbath keeping. What really surprised me, however, was the author's name. It was Dr. David Albert. I seem to recall that there was a David Albert in Worldwide years ago. If this is the same man, he must have changed. Can you tell me anything about him?

-Washington

*Editor: Yes, it is the same man. In some ways he has changed, but maybe in other ways he has not. A lovely lady that I know tells of how, as an Ambassador student who worked in the church's television production facilities many years ago, she became convicted in her heart and went to Mr. Albert, as he was then called, for ministerial counseling about baptism. The matter was very serious to her and she expected the minister to discuss the Bible, sin, repentance and other spiritual matters. But to her surprise, he completely ignored those subjects. Instead, he questioned her about the political situation inside the WCGs television production facilities, about the inside scoop on GTA, about who was having affairs, about who was on the way up or on the way down, and other completely worldly matters. Albert then okayed her for baptism. About ten days later, feeling no different after baptism than she had before, she thought back on the counseling session and the whole process. She then concluded it was all a farce. Twenty-five years later she has yet to return to any Christian denomination. As for Dr. Albert's new Christian ministry, let us hope it has improved a bit since the old days.*



Dear Brother Trechak, Grace be unto you from Yahweh, our Father, and from the Savior Yahshua the Messiah.... In your newsletter of December 1997, page 9, you talk about the House of Yahweh and the Two Witnesses. The second Witness was Yisrayl Hawkins'

own blood brother Jacob (or Jaaqob) Hawkins who died on March 22 of 1991.

-Silveer Maes  
Canada

Just a day after I read of the Worldwide member who killed his wife probably over a religion difference, I discovered that the son of Don Schroeder, the famous *Plain Truth* editor, committed suicide by hanging himself. I feel so sad for the families. And I wonder where the Holy Spirit is in all this.

-California

I'm not sure if anyone noticed - or perhaps I should be asking if anyone really should care - but the WCG Web site has removed the blank "Accountability" page from its "Administrative Leadership" homepage. It is replaced with a "Statement of Financial Stewardship" at <http://www.wcg.org/PastorGeneral/FinSteward.html>.

Among other things, it tells us, "The practice of tithing, while not mandated, is encouraged as a minimum standard of Christian financial stewardship." But apparently accountability about exactly how much money the holy hierarchs pay themselves - their total compensation packages, detailed, by name - is not included in the WCG's minimum standard of Christian financial stewardship.

Nevertheless, we are assured, "The Worldwide Church of God, together with its affiliated entities, takes seriously the matter of financial stewardship and strives to abide by the highest of fiscal integrity." Hmmm. Is there something wrong with this picture?

-Bill Meyer  
wmeyer@interlaced.net

I have some info to share with you. First, Shorty and Patty Sue Fuessel are still living in Amarillo, Texas. He is unemployed after more than two and a half decades with WCG as a loyal minister.

There are quite a number who fall in this category. None get unemployment checks; they did not have social security for all that time of employment with WCG. They have been cast aside; all this under a cloak of "Christianity." Charity obviously doesn't begin at home for HQ leaders. And there are currently meetings going on in Pasadena with the regional directors who are going to lay off more pastors and field ministers.

Phyllis Duke is employed as a secretary to evangelist Greg Albrecht at Plain Truth Ministries. Politics? Her husband, Russell Duke, the last President of Ambassador University, is now only teaching an English composition class at Azusa Pacific University. It is a floating class shifted from department to department every year. He is NOT teaching any theology classes. This could be due to the fact that he has a non-traditional (mail-order, write your own program) degree. Academicians may be snobs, but they do have higher standards. And Russell is not fully accepted by the other Azusa

faculty because he is not really needed and they know he "bought his way in" by getting Tkach to put AU funds into APU hands.

There are still nine families living on the Big Sandy campus, while we are still living with the harsh consequences of the decisions made by Joe Tkach and Russell Duke. Neither of them turned out to be the men we thought they were.

- "Tired of being blindsided"

Texas

When I lived in Los Angeles and used to read the *Los Angeles Times*, I was always pleased when I read Mr. Trechak's letters to the editor. I was glad to see that he took on the evils of big business and big government with the same relish and sardonic wit as he takes on organized religion. You can imagine my surprise then when shortly after moving to Philadelphia I noticed in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* a John Trechak opinion piece in which he took on our corrupt court system. There are some very evil things going on in this country and I am glad a few still have the guts to speak out.

- Pennsylvania

*Editor: My comments in The Philadelphia Inquirer appeared in the Opinion section on January 8. They concern the infamous Lisa Lambert case in which the defendant, convicted of murder, on appeal was found not just technically innocent, but "actually innocent" by U.S. District Judge Stewart Dalzell. He released the defendant with statements to the effect that it was obvious she could not get a fair trial in the state of Pennsylvania. The state appealed his ruling and won. Pennsylvania then reimprisoned Lambert and, at first, made the astonishing claim that the situation required no retrial on the facts (which included many new ones showing Lambert could not possibly have committed the crime). Now, as we go to press, I have discovered that the state has been pressured into retrying the case. Unfortunately, the case has gone back to the original judge who seems to be corroborating Judge Dalzell's views about the Pennsylvania court system. It is not even possible for the public to find out how the new trial is going as the judge has issued so many gag orders so as to make the trial virtually a secret one. The Philadelphia Inquirer, in an angry March 14 editorial, has quite properly referred to this new secret style of adjudication as akin to a star chamber.*

I was very glad to see that you recognize that our history books are teaching many lies to our children. I have just read *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by Dr. James W. Loewen. He did a long study of history books used in our school systems and found that the majority contain many major errors that are intended to deceive our children into a stupidity about what this country is all about. I now see why the author wrote, "Indeed history is the only field in which the more courses students take, (in High School) the stupider they become." I am also reminded of a folk song someone once did about how God always backs up our country's side, no matter what we do. It just isn't so.

I would like to also mention one criticism of the AR. I think you are a little soft on criticizing the Catholic Church, the Lutherans, and the Buddhists. I am sending you a cassette tape of a lecture, "The Political Uses of Religion" by philosopher Michael

Parenti (\$5 from People's Video, P.O. Box 99514, Seattle, WA 98199). I'm sending you a free copy. Listen to it! I am also sending you tapes of his lectures "Inventing Reality: The Politics of News Media," "Democracy and U.S. Intervention," "Human Nature and Politics," and "Conspiracy and Class Power." Let me know what you think of them.

-Georgia

*Editor: I don't usually have time to listen to the many tapes that are mailed to me, but I did start listening to the religion one you sent. Then, after I got over Parenti's New York accent and his Woody Allenish humor, I found myself hooked. Dr. Parenti's strong criticisms of the Catholic Church, Martin Luther, and the Buddhists are most thought-provoking. However, I do hope you noticed that the professor's politics are rather left-wing. I noticed at one Pasadena bookstore that Parenti has published a book titled Land of Idols: Political Mythology in America. I thought it was interesting that at the very beginning of that book, Parenti, who I am sure is an atheist, quotes Isaiah 2:7-8 with the implication being that the United States fits that description. I thought it was an apt allusion and recall that it is one Herbert Armstrong, himself, used to make.*

*As for being soft on Catholicism, I hope that by running your letter you can see that I am not. Nevertheless, that denomination does constitute a very large percentage of Christendom and I don't think it should be ignored. They have big problems, yet not everything that they teach or stand for is wrong, as the Armstrongites seem to think.*

*As for inaccurate history books, that problem is not confined to the United States. Historical inaccuracies abound in textbooks around the world. In a February 14 editorial, The New York Times pointed out that after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern European textbooks at first replaced praise of communism with blind acceptance of capitalism. Yet those same history books still perpetuate distortions about the Soviet Union's participation in World War II. Another country where textbooks are changing is France where until recently textbooks ignored France's collaboration with its Nazi occupiers during the war. And in Japan there is an overt national policy of down-playing the Japanese military aggressions of the late thirties and forties and the Japanese war crimes of that era.*

*Even in Israel, there is now a debate over the accuracy of the accepted history of that country's founding fifty years ago. A number of Israeli scholars and a recent television documentary challenge the traditional Zionist tale of heroic return and nation-building in an empty, desolate homeland and draw unsettling parallels between early Israeli "freedom fighters" and modern Palestinian terrorists (The New York Times, 4/10/98).*

*So the problem of historical accuracy and revisionism is a global one. By the way, I think the song you refer to is "With God on Our Side" by Bob Dylan.*

A few issues ago, you reported on a group of researchers who are convinced that the real Mount Sinai is located not where it is generally claimed, but in Saudi Arabia. When I first read your article I thought, "Who are these AR folks to think they know anything about something so profound?" Well, I take it back. Last night (Sunday, April 5) we caught the TV program *Dateline NBC*. They showed the mountain you wrote about and at its top

there was clearly visible evidence of massive fire or radiation damage which suggests to us that the "pillar of fire" (YHVH), mentioned in the OT, had once been on that mountain. They interviewed the researchers and they seemed very reasonable, level-headed and learned fellows - not religious fanatics of any kind. The program showed the massive rocks at the bottom of the valley which were obviously set up in ancient times as a giant altar. And right nearby are ancient petroglyphs depicting calves or young bulls. They also showed the military base and security precautions that surround the area. Obviously, the Saudis do not want the Jews to take back through military force the real Mount Sinai! Again, thanks for bringing this amazing story to our attention.

-Indiana

I was sorry to learn of the *Report* having financial troubles. You deserve better. Here are three suggestions: First, ask each of your readers to do what I have been doing: Occasionally I will call old WCG friends and tell them about your work. I might loan them one copy, but if they like it, I tell them to subscribe themselves and to send in a contribution. If each AR reader would do that I am sure your subscribers would increase in number and it would make a big difference. You might even be able to publish more often. Second, don't promote so many other people's crummy writings in your publication. Each dollar sent to other groups means the *Report* will not be getting it. Finally, have you ever thought about putting a subscription price on the AR?

-Florida

*Editor: Yes, we have thought about it and the reasons for not doing so are explained in a form letter we occasionally send out. If any readers would like a copy, just ask. As for mentioning other publications, yes, we probably hurt ourselves by doing it. And most of the organizations we plug don't even send us a contribution. Nevertheless, giving our readers other sources of information is an important part of what we do in fighting destructive cults and public ignorance. Lastly, we really do like your suggestion about asking readers to try to get others to subscribe. We wish many more readers would do that. It would certainly help to ease some of the financial strain we are under.*

## **Late News**

We have just learned that the revolt within the United Church of God is spreading. Bill Bradford, a UCG minister in San Francisco, told his congregation, "Support the ruling Council or you can go elsewhere!" About 130 decided to leave and go elsewhere.

Joining them in the revolt are Hulmite ministers and lay members in Tulsa, Oklahoma; Oakland, California; Boise, Idaho; Louisiana; South Dakota; and New Jersey. Departing ministers include Cliff Veal, Waldo Armstrong, and Mike Regan. Marc Masterson has been put on suspension. Estimates of how many people are splitting from UCG range from a low of only 350 to a high of over 1,000 - so far. Already a P.O. Box is said to have been established for the all-important task of collecting tithes.

In UCG's largest congregation, the Eagle Rock church near Pasadena, California, Pastor Brian Orchard has decided to leave the UCG's employ. In addition, every last one of the

elders and deacons in Eagle Rock apparently has decided not to participate in the UCG's Passover services. Instead, they are going to keep it with a new group split off from United.

The central doctrines of the Hulmites have been described as "right-wing independent-hierarcialist." And the ring leaders of the new sect are reported to be David Hulme and Steven Andrews who some are calling "the next Two Witnesses." That may refer to the book of Revelation. On the other hand, it could be referring to possible litigation between the many factions of the United Church of God.

The excitement never ends. More next time.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR69\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

---

July 1998 (AR69)

### WCG Leaders Admit: It's All About Money!

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG), the religious empire that church founder Herbert W. Armstrong left to the Tkach family, continues to deteriorate amid the drift of ever changing doctrines and ever-stranger policies.

Along with cosmetic adjustments such as changing the church's official seal from a lion-and-lamb design to a cross over globe-like frame, changing the title of the *Pastor General's Report* to *Crossroad*, downsizing the *Worldwide News*, and eliminating the ministerial ranking system, there have also been new battles over more substantive matters. For example, the ongoing propaganda campaign to transform the sabbatarian denomination into a Sunday-keeping one continues. In the July *Worldwide News* (WN) there was an article titled, "Should we meet on Sundays?" While the article restated the now-established WCG position that a local church can have weekly meetings on any day of the week, it also showed that the number of WCG believers in Sunday-keeping is growing:

If a congregation wants to move its worship service to Sunday, that is fine. We have quite a few Sunday congregations, and many more considering the switch.

But the article then went on to suggest open congregation discussions about what day to keep and the taking of surveys about when to meet:

If only a few feel they must either stay with Saturday or move to Sunday, perhaps a house church or other worship opportunity could be provided for the minority.

If the congregation has two roughly equal portions desiring different days, several approaches can be taken: 1) create two congregations (some have done this, but hall rental and other expenses must be taken into account), or 2) give it more time, more

discussion and, later, another survey to see if desires have shifted one way or the other.

So a local WCG congregation can now be a Saturday-keeping church, or a Sunday-keeping church, or it can be a Saturday-and-Sunday-keeping church. For that matter, it could also be a Wednesday-keeping church, or it could be a Wednesday-and-Saturday-keeping church or a Wednesday-and-Sunday-keeping church or even a Wednesday-and-Saturday-and-Sunday-keeping church. You see, it all depends on the results of the latest survey.

Now, as you can imagine, the local WCG ministers who used to have just one Sabbath day to worry about, now may have to give sermons on both Saturday and Sunday, and maybe on some other days, as well. Plus they are being kept pretty busy just taking surveys. That means less time for the golf course or for moonlighting at another job. Not surprisingly, such ministers have gotten upset with the new heavy workload. So at a late June ministerial conference in Pasadena, many voiced their dislike of the new system of choosing worship days. Church treasurer Bernie Schnippert, however, told them why the new system was necessary. According to a report from one of activist Bill Ferguson's insiders:

The U.S. and international Regional Pastors were meeting in Pasadena this week. Bernie Schnippert spoke to them.... He went on to stir up a stink with several of the ministers. Bernie said he wanted to make clear that he did not believe in the Sabbath or the Holy Days. However, he told the ministers that IF they wanted to make sure that they received retirement, then they MUST continue to meet on the Sabbath and continue to meet on all Holy Days.

He said the name of the game is MONEY! That is his only priority at the moment. The Holy Days are the money-making days for the church. If any of the ministers had any plans of doing away with meeting on these days, he would MAKE SURE that they did not receive retirement and would be terminated.

The ministers were also warned that they were not to do away with meeting on Saturdays, even if they started meeting on Sundays. There are too many in the church still holding on to the Old Covenant, and if they were not able to meet on Saturday then they would go to some other church and the money would go with them.

Schnippert then went on to say that it would be them losing their retirement and not him, as he WILL receive his retirement no matter what actions they decided to take.

The thing that precipitated this state of affairs is quite simple. Once the Tkach team convinced a large percentage of their followers that it was not only permissible, but also better, to keep Sunday, most of those members left to join churches which they now perceive as spiritually superior for having kept Sunday all along. That left the Sunday-believing WCG ministry with the choice of accommodating the Saturday crowd or not having any church left to command. So with money as the main goal, the official WCG policy on Sabbath-keeping is now: Take surveys and do whatever the parishioners want.

## **Pope to Get Ambassador Campus?**

Attempts at selling off the old Pasadena, California and Big Sandy, Texas campuses of Ambassador University continue unabated. Already a part of the Pasadena properties has been sold. After much haggling because of structural defects and zoning problems, the old mail-processing office facilities building, located across the freeway from the main Ambassador campus in Pasadena, has been sold to an unnamed Alhambra, California company. While no deal has yet been consummated for the bulk of the two campuses containing over 250 structures, insiders say many potential buyers have been looking at both campus properties.

For almost a year, it was thought that the Texas campus was going to be sold to a mysterious group that wanted to establish something called The Southern Military Institute (SMI). The American South has a venerable military tradition as exemplified in such institutions as The Citadel and the Virginia Military Academy, so we didn't think that there was anything unusual in SMI being a potential buyer. But that was before a California businessman tipped us off that there was something very unusual about the proposed sale. He told us:

I just checked out a site at [www.dixienet.org](http://www.dixienet.org). You'll find this interesting. The site includes a plea for funds to help purchase a college campus for SMI, to be located at Big Sandy, Texas. They don't mention who the present owner is. Now, get this. The whole site is dedicated to restoring the old antebellum South through a group called "The League of the South." They even refer to the Civil War as "The War for Southern Independence," and "The War of Northern Aggression."

---

&COPY; 1998 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.

ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

Our curiosity aroused, we immediately checked out the site and discovered that our tipster was right. The group really behind the proposed military training facility was indeed the so-called League of the South. And their site does make it amply clear what their intentions are:

The League of the South's goal is good government for the Southern people. We believe secession is the best way to restore good government to the South. Since 1861 the republican system of government established by the Founders has been steadily eroded. Today that government has become the cruel master rather than the obedient servant of the citizens of the several states. We see no way of reforming the corruption within the present system; therefore, The League of the South shall seek to spread acceptance of the idea of secession among the people of the South....

If the thirteen states of the old Confederacy were a nation, its GNP would place it among the top five or six nations of the world. Its laws would better reflect the natural conservatism and Christian roots of the Southern people. Our laws on gun control, abortion, school prayer, and immigration would without question be

different. We could establish a confederation of states and make the provisions of the Tenth Amendment a reality. We could follow George Washington's sage advice about "entangling alliances." We could leave the United Nations and oppose the Bush-Clinton New World Order....

The League seeks to protect the historic Anglo-Celtic core culture of the South because the Scots, Irish, Welsh, and English have given Dixie its unique institutions and civilization.

When people think of old Dixie, the unique institution most think of is slavery. Is the freedom to own slaves one of the rights that the League wants returned to Anglo-Celtic Southerners? The League doesn't say, but they inform us that "the League of the South disavows a spirit of malice toward any group...." And just in case anyone fears a return to the institution of slavery, they publish *Southern Slavery As It Was* by Wilkins and Wilson who intimate that slavery wasn't really all that bad. Obviously, should the League continue to promote its ideas and gain a following, at some point secession from the Union might require a bit of military muscle and that would require military leadership. Hence should SMI ever get going it could fill a role as the West Point of the South. Extreme? Perhaps. But Peter Appelbome writing in *The New York Times* (3/7/98) says the League is no joke.

It is difficult to believe that the Tkach company was not aware of the real nature of the League's intentions when they were negotiating with the would-be rebels. But, whatever the case, WCG officials now say that they will not be selling the Texas campus for use as a war college because the rebel group has not been able to raise the necessary funds. (Confederate greenbacks were not acceptable, either.) Instead, church treasurer Bernie Schnippert told a gathering of ministers in Pasadena in late June that the buyer of the campus, paid for by the tithes of members who were once thoroughly anti-Catholic, will likely be a Roman Catholic organization! So once again Tkach and his associates have shown that they do not care about the obvious theological or ethical implications of what they are doing.

## **United Fragments Again**

Since our last issue, when we reported on the troubles within the United Church of God, rebel evangelist David Hulme has announced that his new church, at this time called simply The Church of God, will be based in Monrovia, California, a town known for its soaring summer temperatures and for its Aztec Hotel, an ornate landmark along historic Route 66. The official address for the Hulmites is: P.O. Box 150, Monrovia, CA 91017. Their web site is at [www.church-of-god.org](http://www.church-of-god.org). And Ricky don't lose that number. It's the only one where you can go daily for Hulme's inspirational "Thought for the Day."

In addition to the rebel Hulmites that we reported on last issue, virtually the entire UCG affiliate church in Britain, the UCGUK led by Peter Nathan, has split from the United Church of God, an International Association, or UCGIA (as the main UCG is now acronymed in order to distinguish it from the other split-off Uniteds). As we go to press, one of our informants within UCGIA tells us that the Hulme-led exodus has slowed to a trickle and that the Hulmites now number no more than about 1,200 with about 13 elders.

In the meantime, back at UCGIA headquarters in Arcadia, California there was a whole lot of packing going on as the entire home office, or what's left of it, was moved to a new facility in Cincinnati. The UCGIA's official address is now a catchy P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

After the Hulmite insurgency petered out, a lot of UCGIA members were hoping things would quiet down in their denomination, but it was not to be. In a pre-Passover video sermon viewed by almost all UCGIA congregations, President McCullough threw down the gauntlet to those who thought they had left the WCG. As one of our readers told us after hearing McCullough's sermon:

My wife asked me, "Did you get the most important point of his sermon?" "I think so," I said, "but what do you think it was?" She then confirmed my own thoughts: "UCG congregations will have NO local autonomy."

It was not long before this policy would prove disastrous to the UCGIA. Within weeks, McCullough and his board decided to apply old fashioned strong-arm methods to their largest local congregation, the one at Big Sandy, Texas. The Home Office simply informed David Havir, the popular pastor of the congregation, that he was being transferred and that the Home Office would just appoint someone else to replace him.

McCullough's high-handedness outraged members of the Big Sandy congregation, telephone lines began to glow in the heat of angry church chatter, secret meetings were held, hate mail was sent, incensed e-mail whizzed through cyberspace, and the UCGIA Home Office boys started to realize they had stirred up a hornets' nest. Nevertheless, they would not flinch. No, "the H.O." had decreed as though by the law of the Medes and the Persians. Even when angry members asked the H.O. to explain what it was that their beloved pastor had done wrong to be treated so, no real answer was given. And, actually, no answer showing reasonableness could have been given, for the transfer was only being done to establish precedent: The UCGIA is to be run like any other religious cult. There must be obedience in quiet submission by ministers of lower rank, and there must be blind obedience by the common sheep. In other words, "You VILL OBEY!!!"

But this was not WCG 1968; this was UCG 1998. And the members in Big Sandy have learned a few things from the decades of church scandals and ecumenical in-fighting. So when the smoke finally cleared after weeks of turmoil, the biggest United Church of God congregation found itself broken up into two separate churches. Today, in that part of Texas there is a shrinking UCGIA congregation pastored by Roy Holladay who takes his orders from his pay masters in Cincinnati. And there is a slightly smaller, but more vibrant and growing, congregation pastored by Dave Havir who, while no doubt trying to take his orders from a source higher than Cincinnati, has shown a remarkable willingness to cooperate with his flock on matters of congregational organization and governance.

In the last two months the members of the congregation, together with Pastor Havir in consultation with George Crow, an able Houston attorney, have worked to amend their church's articles of incorporation and by-laws so as to embrace a congregational form of self-government. This may not be the first time something like this has happened within a WCG breakoff group, but it is the first time we have heard of a sabbatarian Armstrongite congregation doing such a thing almost spontaneously, and with enthusiasm, no less. The

congregation's official name is now: United Church of God, Big Sandy and Pastor Havarir can be e-mailed at dphavir@aol.com.

As for UCGIA, the loss of the Hulmites and half of its largest congregation have inspired many more to drift away. Just a year ago, it was claimed that UCGIA had over 20,000 members. Today some within that group say its total membership is down to about 12,500 and falling. Whereas its paid ministry numbered about 100 prior to the Hulmite exodus, with the latest crisis, 29 ministers had to be put on half salary, nine resigned, and four were laid off or voluntarily quit. As a result of the reshufflings, about 19 church circuits have added an additional congregation or two with more work for ministers. Then, in the move from Arcadia to Cincinnati, the Home Office went from a staff of 30 down to only 12. Reductions in salaries were reported at 5%-15% and allowable ministerial expenses for travel, phone, etc. were dropped to an absolute maximum of \$200 per month. Seeing the writing on the wall, some prominent pastors seem to be planning for their own future exits. Dennis Luker of Seattle and veteran evangelist C. Wayne Cole are among those rumored to be unhappy with the Cincinnati Home Office.

And what are the UCGIA members thinking in the midst of all this madness? According to a number of sources who still attend, most of the members that remain are apathetic. The remaining ministry, in turn, has gone back to, as one tired member put it, "emphasizing doom and gloom in the hopes that the simple will believe that the world is going to hell in a handbasket and that the UCGIA makes handbaskets."

Many more United members are sure to leave in the near future. Just weeks ago, in the June edition of Norm Edwards' *Servants' News*, in an article titled "More Corporate Doublespeak from UCGIA," United member Tim McCaulley revealed that the way United's founders had quietly set up their organization was that under its charter the only legal members of the UCGIA are its ministers. Recall that in WCG, the situation is even more outlandish in that even being a WCG minister in good standing does not qualify you to be a church corporation member. Nevertheless, the UCGIA has been set up similarly. According to McCaulley, the United Church corporate entity promotes an "us versus them" mentality whereby those controlling the corporation, almost like a private club, function as:

...a modern day Sanhedrin and created this "wall of separation" (Eph. 2:14) within the Church. It is complete with its own talmud of constitution and bylaws that, when expedient, ignores the counsel of scripture in the way it isolates the shepherds from their flocks and instead encourages them to be hirelings of the corporation.

McCaulley accuses the UCGIA's controllers of using doublespeak to deceive the tithe-paying church-goers as to the true nature of the organization to which they are paying their tithes. The picture painted by McCaulley is that corporately the UCGIA is virtually a private club, almost a secret society if you will, that treats church attenders as paying customers who are manipulated by the hiring pastors all for the personal benefit of the "members" of the corporation, mainly the ruling inner circle, the original conspirators who set up the system.

If that is indeed the case, and we have every reason to believe McCaulley's view is accurate, then the church organizational structure that the UCG-Big Sandy congregation

has developed may be the only ethical way for all the Armstrongite groups to rearrange themselves. Of course, if the tithe-paying members remain apathetic as to what goes on in their own denomination and local congregation, it will make no difference. The blind will continue to lead the blind. As consumer advocate Ralph Nader says, "If you don't turn on to politics, politics will turn on you."

HWA taught his followers to shun politics, while he, himself, was a master politician. Armstrong's false teaching is a major cause of the apathy we see in so many who have come through "the WCG experience." They have been duped into thinking that it is godly to be a submissive, non-questioning, non-thinking, non-political patsy. Armstrong's false teaching is also a major cause of the chaos that we have seen, and continue to see, in the WCG and all its offshoots. Nevertheless, as the Big Sandy story demonstrates, it doesn't have to be that way. Things can change.

## **Flurry Now Laodicean**

Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) has been one of the more successful WCG spinoff groups. With its *Key of David* telecast and slick *Philadelphia Trumpet* magazine leading the way, it has continued to experience steady growth since its inception in 1989. Now, however, the Flurry organization is beginning to experience the same kinds of troubles that have beset virtually all the other major WCG offshoots.

Within just the last few months, PCG ministers Ron Roth, Mike Okamura, and Randy Schafer have parted company with Flurry taking with them tithe-paying PCG members in a number of states. The three have made numerous accusations about the PCG. They say Flurry's organization is authoritarian and that its ministers are encouraged to spy on members and behave like army officers whose commands are never to be questioned. They say that Flurry now improperly claims to be a prophet, and that the place of safety doctrine is emphasized in order to make the saving of the flesh the principal focus of attention for PCG members. All this is done, they say, because the PCG hierarchy is less driven by a desire for righteousness than by an overwhelming desire for money. Sound familiar?

Schafer also doubts Flurry's claim that his book *Malachi's Message* was personally delivered to him by a great angel and that it was intended to be a part of the Book of Revelation. If that is the case, says Schafer, why then has Flurry revised the book a number of times since the angel originally gave it to him? Mike Okamura additionally points out that in *Malachi's Message* Flurry claims that WCG Pastor General Joseph Tkach Sr. is the prophetic "Joshua," but that "Joshua" is supposed to be alive at the second coming of Jesus Christ, while Tkach Sr. has been dead now for almost three years.

Roth is now distributing an open letter to Flurry which invokes the Armstrongite theory of church eras to show that, among other things, Flurry does not really head the Philadelphia era of the church as he claims, but that Flurry actually heads the final Laodicean era. In his letter, Roth quotes II Thes. 2:11 which talks about God causing his people to believe a lie. Writes Roth:

WHAT IS THE LIE? The lie is that the leader of the PCG is telling his members that through their support of his church they will receive salvation. *Malachi's Message*, on page 144 epitomizes the lukewarm attitude by saying, "Backing and supporting this message is your ticket to a place of safety and a magnificent reward. This is how God makes up His jewels!" Here you are promising a place of safety to those who support the work of the PCG. It is the development of our character that God measures when He makes up His jewels, not the supporting of any work.

Roth is now convinced that "the Philadelphia era was located in Pasadena; the Laodicean era, the seventh and final era, is located in Edmond, OK." Roth says he is only waiting now for the Two Witnesses. For copies of the complete letter, write to Ron Roth, The Church of God, P.O. Box 406, Hustisford, WI 53034; or call Ron at (920) 349- 3674.

## **Global Clarifies Position on War**

In recent years, the theological concerns of most of the WCG offshoots have centered on church governance issues: ministerial credentialing, church organization, calendar determinations, etc. However, with no fanfare or press coverage that we are aware of, last year one Armstrongite group got away from such debates and started focusing on more important ethical and theological issues. The Global Church of God (GCG), headed by Roderick C. Meredith, has now unequivocally reasserted the traditional Armstrong position concerning Christian participation in warfare. Beginning with the article "Violence, War and Christianity" by GCG minister John H. Ogwyn, writing in the June-July 1997 issue of *Global Church News*, the GCG has taken the position that true Christians who submit in obedience to an authority higher than that of human governments cannot in good conscience join military organizations or participate in the wars of this world.

The GCG position reasserts a fundamental teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong, but it runs contrary to the liberalized modifications of that teaching that were brought into the WCG by the Tkach administrations and which some of the offshoots have similarly accepted. What makes the GCG position so interesting, however, is that it is one that can logically be defended from the perspective of biblical theology, normative ethics, and early church history. For instance, while the GCG position is not in harmony with that of the modern Roman Catholic Church, most Catholic scholars would readily agree with Meredith that his church has indeed held fast to the position of the early church. For an eye-opening theological essay proving that such is the case, see the Tony Korec article "The Early Church on War" which appeared in the June-July issue of *The Catholic Worker*. To obtain a copy of this important article, send a contribution if possible to cover postage and perhaps photocopying (we suggest \$1) and write: The Catholic Worker, 36 East First Street, New York, NY 10003; tel. (212) 777-9617.

## **European Unity Update**

In our last issue we reviewed a number of books that present secular and scholarly views about important geopolitical world trends. While there are many possibilities as to what the future might hold, we should not be too quick to think that a very powerful United Europe, something Herbert Armstrong predicted, is impossible. In fact, many today think that such a union is inevitable. Almost every week there are articles in leading

newspapers reporting how Europe is moving quickly in that direction. For instance, on July 7 *The New York Times* reported:

In the clearest sign yet that national boundaries are disappearing within European financial markets, the stock exchanges of London and Frankfurt announced a broad alliance Tuesday aimed at creating a pan-European trading system. The alliance between Europe's two biggest stock exchanges comes as financial institutions across the continent are preparing for the debut of the euro as a new European currency in January.

An April 28 headline in the same paper read, "Euro Could Eventually Rival the Dollar." However, a far more startling headline appeared in *The New York Times* on April 12: "U.S. Frets Over Closer German-French-Russian Ties." Here is how that article began:

The problem with labelling yourself the world's "indispensable nation," as Secretary of State Madeline Albright is fond of calling the United States, is that you become hypersensitive if other nations, less convinced or more uneasy, start meeting without you. Late last month in Moscow, the French, Germans and Russians had their very first summit meeting, and Washington did not take the prospect calmly. Senior U.S. officials like Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott were feverishly interrogating their French and German counterparts about what such a meeting might encompass and what it might mean. The United States regards the new Russia as something of a pet project, if not exactly a client. Helping Russia to feel part of a wider Europe, as NATO enlarges, is fine as far as it goes. But the Americans want to be sure that any special Franco-German understandings with Russia won't undercut an already fraying U.S.-Russia relationship.

The article went on to point out that with another such summit scheduled for next year, and with both the United States and Britain not invited, leaders in both Washington and London are concerned that a new alliance may be on the horizon - an awesome one over which they would have no control.

Back in the early eighties, on a trip to the Pasadena area, author David Robinson was the guest of honor at a dinner hosted by Len and Margaret Zola of *Ambassador Report*. As we sat around the long dining table of their hilltop home, talking politics after dinner, Robinson casually commented that not only did he envision Europe uniting within the next few decades, but that he was certain all of Russia would be part of that union. "But," asked one of the startled guests, "what about communism?" "Well," said Robinson, "it's not a natural system, it's alien to the spirit of the Russian people, and eventually the Soviet system will revert back to what is historically most natural for them." Robinson, a lifetime student of European history, went on to say he thought resentment of United States power and corruption would eventually push the Europeans to unite, and that Russia with its vast resources and centuries of Christian tradition would fall naturally into that alliance. When he said this, there was noticeable silence among his listeners who included a number with significant academic credentials. "Well," said Robinson, "I'm just a country boy," and with that he changed the subject. More than 15 years later, with the Soviet empire in ruins and Russia being courted by a uniting Europe, some who laughed at Robinson's prediction are no longer laughing.

## **The Secret Church of Conspiracy**

### **Part I**

by John Trechak

*Editor: I don't often add my by-line to AR articles, but there is a reason why I do so this time. This article reflects only my own views, and not necessarily those of anyone else associated with this publication.*

By all accounts, Armstrongism is not just a non-mainstream religious movement, it is also a movement that has generated other newer religious movements that in many cases are even more nonconventional than that of "the Armstrong tradition." In the last few years, we at AR have noticed a rather strange and growing body of religious ideas that seem to be forming into yet one more bizarre Armstrongism-related religious system. This new belief system is still not formalized, yet it is very real and very influential in the lives of thousands of former Worldwide Church members.

This new belief system revolves around what can loosely be called "conspiracy theories." These theories, however, are not your garden variety of "Who really killed JFK, RFK, or Martin Luther King." No, these new theories incorporate and integrate Bible prophecies, the year 2000, the "Y2K computer problem," "The One True Church," the Roman Catholic Church, the Jesuit Order, the Pope, Freemasonry, the Jews, the Communist Party of Russia, President Clinton, the FBI, the CIA, the Wackenhut corporation, the late Herbert W. Armstrong, the late Franz Joseph Strauss, evangelist Roderick C. Meredith, former WCG lawyer Stanley Rader, Henry Kissinger, David Rockefeller, virtually all key leaders of the proposed United Europe, powerful figures in finance and politics, and thousands, if not millions, of other individuals and entities.

According to some conspiracy theorists, a number of WCG offshoots are now completely under the domination of mysterious Jesuit infiltrators. Other offshoots, like the UCGIA, supposedly are controlled by a ministry made up almost entirely of members of "Worldwide Masonry" who take their orders from the Grand Lodge of Texas at Waco. We at AR have even had a few anonymous letters warning us that Dixon Cartwright of *The Journal*, a popular sabbatarian newspaper, is a Mason infiltrator who is part of "The Conspiracy." (I am sure he is not.) And in a phone call last year, Dixon laughingly told me that he had seen a document which claimed that I, in turn, was a Jesuit agent hand-picked by European powers to act as a Fifth Column operative against "the Churches of God," again, as part of "The Conspiracy." (The idea is so preposterous it should require no comment.) Undoubtedly, some will eventually bring UFOs into this new theological mix. While to most rational people such notions will seem quite laughable, there are now hundreds, if not thousands, of people who are not just fascinated by these new conspiracy theories, but who, as a result, are being caught up in a new wave of Armstrongite hysteria.

### **An Introduction to "Conspiracy"**

More than ten years ago, after an evening class in property law, I attended an informal after-class reception hosted by the professor who wanted to get to know his students a little better. In those days, like a lot of former Worldwidors, I had been reading the right-wing *Spotlight* newspaper and other periodicals that today would probably be classified as in the conspiracy genre. While I lacked the intellectual means then to adequately

analyze the merits of the claims made in such publications, I did recognize that their approach to world news was radically different from the mainstream press. I thought it might be fun to hear a law professor's comments on the subject so, just as the smiling law professor with wine glass in one hand and an hors d'oeuvre in the other strolled about and approached me with a smile, I blurted out, "Do you believe in conspiracy theories?"

The question was ill-framed and not well-timed. But the answer I got was instructive. The distinguished legal scholar bluntly replied, "Well, of course! There are conspiracies in operation all about this country and around this world even as we speak. You don't think you are getting all the truth just from reading the newspapers, do you?" He was patient with me but, I think, somewhat surprised at my naiveté. I mention this story because I now frequently get asked that same question by ex-WCG and current Armstrongite readers of this publication. And my answer today is about the same as the law professor's. Additionally, however, I usually point out that our prisons are full of people who have been tried and convicted of participating in conspiracies of various types. And even the Bible itself uses the words "conspired" and "conspiracy" many times; just check any Bible concordance. Most of us lived through "the Watergate" years, and we should recall that both the initial break-in and the later cover-up were conspiracies. Robert McNamara's book about Vietnam should tell us that the whole Vietnam debacle was a kind of conspiracy against the American people. And then there was Iran-Contra, the BCCI scandal, and the savings-and-loan scandal which Justice Department officials described as "a thousand conspiracies of fraud, theft, and bribery." And on it goes.

The word conspiracy to most people connotes a small group of men in a smoke-filled room talking in quiet tones. Conspiracies, however, don't have to be composed of small groups. They can be quite vast in scope. Cosa Nostra, the crime syndicate, is a conspiracy. The Colombian drug cartel is a conspiracy. The Russian Mafia is a conspiracy. All three involve thousands of operatives and many billions of dollars.

Conspiracies can also lead to monumental historical events. For example, the 1917 takeover of Russia by the Bolsheviks involved a conspiracy. So did the Nazi takeover of Germany in 1932 and the German invasion of Austria in 1938. Indeed, the signers of the U.S. Declaration of Independence would certainly have been declared conspirators by King George III had their efforts not proved successful. And some have even pointed to the secretive meetings leading to the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1781 as having been a conspiracy. Certainly, some in our country's anti-Federalist faction thought that was the case. If that is news to you, read Charles Beard's highly-regarded historical study *An Economic Analysis of the Constitution of the United States*. But before we continue on and get ourselves into some very murky waters - particularly regarding the WCG - it will prove helpful if we first clarify a few terms.

### **What Do You Mean, "Conspiracy"?**

We live in a time when interest in so-called conspiracy theories is very pronounced. Even ten years ago, for example, a television series such as *The X-Files* would have been unthinkable. Yet today, we not only have *The X-Files*, a successful television series, we now have *The X-Files*, the feature film and with sequels possibly to follow. And in most metropolitan-area bookstores, one can find not just a few books on famous conspiracies, but whole store sections devoted to the conspiracy genre. For a time, there was even a

monthly magazine devoted exclusively to "CT." It was appropriately titled *Paranoia*, which perhaps explains why it is no longer being published. Nevertheless, while conspiracy theories have become an accepted part of popular culture, when people talk about conspiracies they are often talking about not just a wide variety of specific theories, they are often using the term "conspiracy" in a variety of ways. The way a criminal prosecutor would use the term is usually different from the somewhat looser way an historian might use it, and the ways they both might use the term might well be different from the way some students of Bible prophecy would use it. All three, in turn, would probably be using the term differently from the young *X-Files* fan who very likely would use it to describe not just government cover-ups, but also as a synonym for "unexplained mysteries" or "the paranormal."

We have noticed that among our own readership and among those we report on, the term "conspiracy" is being used in perhaps a dozen different ways. Just so we have some idea of what we are dealing with, let's first look at some of the contexts and situations in which the term is being used:

(1) Conspiracy as the law sees it. In the legal world, conspiracy has a very limited and very precise meaning. In the Anglo-American legal system, when a charge of conspiracy is brought, the prosecution must prove the three elements of the crime: There must be (a) an agreement between two or more persons (b) made with an intent to enter into that unlawful agreement and (c) made with an intent to achieve the unlawful object of the agreement. Examples of such a legally defined conspiracy would be when two gangsters agree that later in the day they will rob a convenience store, or when businessmen at an association meeting quietly decide not to compete against each other, but to set prices artificially high. To judges, the illegal agreement is the conspiracy and it is separate from the performance of the target crime. Once the agreement is made, the conspiracy has come about, even if the conspirators later abort their plan for some reason.

It should be pointed out in passing that, even though this basic definition of conspiracy in the law is fairly simple, situations where there are many members in the conspiracy can be quite complicated. That is so, for instance, (a) where there is a so-called chain conspiracy or (b) where there are complicated conspiratorial "hub-and-spoke" relationships within other conspiratorial "hub-and-spoke" relationships. In both conspiracy sub-sets, someone distant from the first conspirators may not know who set the conspiracy in motion, but once they have agreed to perform the illegal acts, they are part of the overall conspiracy.

Notice that when the word conspiracy is used in the legal system it means a very specific thing. But in popular parlance the definition, while not altogether unrelated, can fall well short of the legal definition or be something somewhat different but far more complicated. Notice the differences in the following non-legal usages of the term.

(2) Political parties and open alliances. People with similar views may join together formally to work toward similar goals. Republicans and Democrats are not normally thought of as being members of a conspiracy. However, it is not unusual for the politically overzealous to label political opponents as being part of a conspiracy. Upon questioning, one finds that they are usually not suggesting that a prosecutor would be able to make out some sort of criminal case against their opponents. But the word has a

certain dastardly ring to it, and it is often rhetorically effective.

At the start of the Cold War, there were tens of thousands of individuals in America who were members of various Socialist, Socialist Workers, or Communist parties. When the Red scare began, Senator Joseph McCarthy talked of them as "a conspiracy so vast...." Yet, while many thousands had their careers destroyed because of the innuendo of such conspiracy talk, relatively few leftists in those years were actually charged with, let alone convicted of, conspiracy (a few super-sensational cases notwithstanding). Even the *Los Angeles Times* recently admitted in an editorial (4/18/98) that newly released government files reveal that during the Cold War the domestic threat of Communism was "grossly overblown."

(3) Informal groups of individuals with similar political or religious views. Unfortunately, sometimes it takes nothing more than holding the same view as another to be labeled a conspirator today. Just a few weeks ago, Mrs. Clinton, a lawyer no less, made the claim that there was a right-wing conspiracy out to get her husband. She has yet to provide prosecutors with evidence that would allow charges of anything to be brought against anyone. While there are obviously wealthy and powerful individuals who are quite determined in their efforts to discredit the President, many pundits, even very liberal ones such as Sam Smith of the *Progressive Review*, believe the First Lady seriously mis-spoke herself when she used the term "conspiracy." Nevertheless, the fact is that just because a group of people have the same views and may even network and actively work toward similar goals, that of itself does not really constitute a conspiracy, at least in the legal sense.

(4) Secret societies. In April, the University Art Museum of the University of California at Long Beach presented a unique art show. Titled "Theatre of the Fraternity: Staging the Ritual Space of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, 1896-1929," the show displayed theater set designs and other historical artifacts from an era in American history of which few today are even vaguely aware. The program notes of the show began with a quote from Albert Stevens, *Cyclopedia of Fraternities* (1907):

The probable extent of the influence of secret life may be inferred from the fact that more than 6,000,000 Americans are members of 300 such organizations, which confer about 1,000,000 degrees on 200,000 novitiates annually, aided, in instances, by a wealth of paraphernalia and dramatic ceremonials which rivals modern stage effects.

The stage effects in the show included rather sophisticated "smoke and mirrors" depictions of supernatural events, historical figures, and even scenes of Hades aflame in which choreographed troupes of dancers would cavort. But even more amazing were some of the facts discussed in the Museum's presentation. Few Americans today, for instance, know that a hundred years ago fraternal organizations frequently provided their members with a whole lifestyle that included a distinct social life, important insurance programs, and a life philosophy that was intended to prepare members for the inevitability of death. The fraternities also were a major political force in many states and at least four - The Knights Templar of Freemasonry, The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, The Knights of Pythias, and The Knights of Columbus - had their own well-armed militias.

Today, a smaller percentage of the population are members of fraternal organizations than was the case a hundred years ago. However, the York Rite and Scottish Rite branches of Freemasonry are still with us, as are many other fraternal organizations. And because such fraternal organizations frequently maintain a fair amount of confidentiality as to their membership and private activities, many such groups get labeled as "secret societies."

But does being a member of one of these so-called secret societies constitute being a part of a conspiracy? Unless its members have agreed to violate some law, most courts would not think so. After all, doesn't everyone have a right of association and a right to privacy? Nevertheless, the perceived secrecy of some societies encourages many Christians to view Masonic lodges and other fraternal organizations as hotbeds of intrigue. And ex-Worldwidiers especially almost always tend to view Masons as being part of something sinister.

As extreme as that may seem, however, it is not just Armstrongites or evangelical Christians who tend to view the Masons with great suspicion. Just this past spring *The New York Times* (3/29/98) reported that the British government was investigating the membership of the London-based United Grand Lodge, the premier institution of world Freemasonry, for possible improper influence on the judicial system because so many important judges and police officers are suspected of being members. And even within the Roman Catholic Church there have been published allegations since the 1980s that the organization known as P2, Italy's highly secretive crypto-fascist Masonic Lodge, was composed of members of the Mafia, Italy's intelligence service, and certain high-ranking Vatican clergy as well as top executives of the Vatican Bank.

The A&E cable television channel has produced a documentary titled *Secret Societies* which paints the Masons as rather conspiratorial by nature. There are also many books on the market which portray Freemasonry as a vast cabal. Two such books that are very popular in Armstrongite circles are *The Temple and the Lodge* by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh (Arcade Publishing, 1989) and *The Brotherhood: The Secret World of the Masons* by Stephen Knight (Stein & Day, 1985). So it should not be surprising that among ex-Worldwidiers and Armstrongites in general that the slightest hint at Masonic connections tends to bring suspicion that there is a conspiracy afoot. (More on the Masons later.)

(5) Religious orders. It is not uncommon for members of religious orders to be summarily labeled as being part of a conspiracy. The Jesuits, members of the Roman Catholic Church's Society of Jesus, are frequently painted as being conspiratorial. In my own experience I have noticed two groups who seem obsessively concerned about the Jesuits. First there are Protestant Christians who know of the order's sordid historical record of participation in the Inquisition and assume that the order has not changed in the last hundred years. Second there are Catholic conservatives who know full well that the order has changed, and radically in the last hundred years, but who feel that the order has been tainted by the ideas of Marx, Tyrrell, Teilhard, Pope John VI, and "the Theology of Liberation" of Gustavo Gutierrez.

A good example of a conservative Catholic thinker who greatly distrusts the Jesuits is

Malachi Martin, himself a former Jesuit and professor at the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Institute. In his 1987 best-seller, *The Jesuits: The Society of Jesus and the Betrayal of the Roman Catholic Church*, Martin portrayed "the new worldwide Society of Jesus" as being less loyal to the Pope than to their own views of a liberating Jesus. (More on the Jesuits and Armstrongite churches later.)

(6) Economic class. "The C-Word" is one Americans do not like to use. After all, we are supposed to be a classless society. Here we are in one big boat, so to speak - you, me, the Rockefellers, our neighbors down the street, Bill Gates, the supermarket checkout lady - and all of us are going through life together, all rowing together in this big boat we call America. But a lot of people increasingly suspect that that kind of view is an illusion. If America is one big boat, it is becoming increasingly clear that some people are putting in a lot more time at the oars than others. But even if the profound gap between the rich and the poor is getting ever wider in America today, is "class" a form of conspiracy? Many today don't think so.

Take for instance Noam Chomsky's recent book *Class Warfare: Discussions with David Barsamian*. There Chomsky puts forth the idea that in America today there is a major class struggle going on. Not one where the poor are trying to throw off the chains of oppression laid on them by the rich, but a struggle by the rich - and a very successful one at that - to lay ever greater burdens on laboring people, to cut back welfare benefits to the down-and-out, to cut back social security, to give greater tax benefits to the wealthy, and generally to make life much tougher on the great majority of Americans. Chomsky refuses to attribute what is happening to any kind of a grand conspiracy. Nevertheless, as the title of his book indicates, he clearly sees the dynamics of class as being of great importance in understanding the modern world.

In the Business section of *The New York Times* on just one day (June 23) there were three articles that made a joint statement about class. The first reported that Congressional leaders have again decided to effectively cut the capital gains tax. For tax purposes, income from investments is considered to be different from income from labor, and now Congress feels that those living off of the profits made on capital investments need even more of a tax break than they have already been given in the last few years. The tab for the tax break will, of course, be picked up by the rest of American taxpayers. The second article was about a mistake that had been written into the new tax code by which those dying and leaving behind an estate of over \$17 million dollars will be saved more than \$200,000. The mistake was brought to the attention of Rep. Bill Archer who heads the Ways and Means Committee responsible for oversight of the tax measure. He refuses to correct the error and this "tax break for the rich," as the Times describes it, will cost American taxpayers about \$880 million. Again, the tax benefit going to a wealthy few will be paid for by their less-wealthy fellow Americans. The third article in the same edition of the *Times* concerns a Congressional proposal to slash \$2.2 billion from a President-backed education initiative and the annual financing for home heating for the poor.

Taken as a whole, the three articles remind me of that old saw, "The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer." Well, is such a trend the result of a conspiracy? Again, Chomsky would say no. His way of doing class analysis, like that of many intellectuals today, is to view the world "systemically."

On the other hand, Dr. Michael Parenti, while often on the same side of the political aisle as Chomsky, ridicules the notion that there are no great conspiracies afoot. In his famous lecture "Conspiracy and Class Power," Parenti says that it is ludicrous to believe that the rich and powerful do not talk to each other about matters of mutual concern, and that it is equally ludicrous to believe that those with power are not willing and able to act in a rational and concerted way to protect and enhance their own self-interests.

Some are hesitant to think of "conspiracies" fearing they will be ridiculed as "conspiracy theorists." Such individuals often prefer to think that the world is the way it is because... well, "bad things just happen." Others will not allow themselves to think in class conscious ways fearing that they will be branded as "Marxists." But it is an indisputable fact that Marx was not the first, nor the last, thinker to consider class significant in political and economic analysis. For instance, Adam Smith, the great advocate of market-based economics, in his monumental work *The Wealth of Nations* did a very pointed kind of class analysis in Book One, Chapter Eight, titled "Of the Wages of Labour." There he succinctly showed that the self-interests of the laboring class are at odds with the self-interests of the capital- controlling class. Obviously, workers want to make as much as possible in wages while owners and their managers want to pay as little as possible. But Smith does not just show class interest. He points out that both groups, in order to maximize their own bargaining strength against the other class, unite together in "combinations." Today we usually call combinations composed of workers "unions," and those composed of the controllers of capital "associations."

But Smith goes even further. He points out that while the laborers will band together as best they can, the capital- controlling class, with its greater wealth and better organization due to its smaller numbers, uses its influence to pass laws that put the laborers at a disadvantage in their relationship with their "masters." Furthermore, Smith points out that these "combinations" of the wealthy (or wealthier) are quite willing to rigorously enforce discipline on their own members and frequently operate in secret. While Smith does not actually use the word, isn't this type of secret collusion what many people refer to by the word "conspiracy"? In fact, before the New Deal, strikes by unions were often condemned by courts as "conspiracies in restraint of trade," and under various anti-trust laws today, courts have condemned certain arrangements by associations as being conspiratorial.

While Smith's class analysis is lucid and well worth studying carefully, it was neither the first such analysis done in Britain, nor the most pointed. Perhaps the most trenchant occurred in a 1516 book that is frequently described as one of the greatest treasures of the English speaking peoples. The book is *Utopia* by Thomas More, the lawyer, Greek scholar, and theologian who became Speaker of the House of Commons and then during the reign of Henry VIII the first layman Lord Chancellor of England (today the title would be Prime Minister). After his execution for refusing to acknowledge Henry as head of the Church, he was declared a Saint, a story depicted in the popular 1966 film *A Man For All Seasons*. *Utopia* was written in Latin and most who read it today do so in the 1551 English translation of Ralph Robinson. A more accessible translation, however, is the one by Paul Turner (Penguin Classics, 1965) from which we take the following extraordinary passage:

And the climax of ingratitude comes when [the working class are] old and ill and completely destitute. Having taken advantage of them throughout the best years of their lives, society now forgets all the sleepless hours they've spent in its service, and repays them for all the vital work they've done, by letting them die in misery. What's more, the wretched earnings of the poor are daily whittled away by the rich, not only through private dishonesty, but through public legislation. As if it weren't unjust enough already that the man who contributes most to society should get the least in return, they make it even worse, and then arrange for injustice to be legally described as justice.

In fact, when I consider any social system that prevails in the modern world, I can't, so help me God, see it as anything but a conspiracy of the rich to advance their own interests under the pretext of organizing society. They think up all sorts of tricks and dodges, first for keeping safe their ill-gotten gains, and then for exploiting the poor by their labour as cheaply as possible. Once the rich have decided that these tricks and dodges shall be officially recognized by society - which includes the poor as well as the rich - they acquire the force of law. Thus an unscrupulous minority is led by insatiable greed to monopolize what would have been enough to supply the needs of the whole population.

The idea that there is a rich Ruling Class that acts in concert as a conspiracy has been around a long time. But it is a view that is still held by many sociologists today (for instance, see William G. Domhoff's book *Who Rules America?*). But even if there is not a huge conspiracy here in the legal sense, in what other way could one more-vividly describe the dynamics that bring about the economic results that we see all about us?

Some, like Chomsky and Adam Smith, see the result as having come about from the unconscious operations of the system. This is pretty much also the view of those of the Austrian School of Economics who cling to the "Hidden Hand" or "Spontaneous Order" theory which holds that the effects of everyone simply working to advance their own self-interests brings about the economic order we behold. If you like that order, you might infer that such an order comes from God and you might then reason as did some 18th century European philosophers and theologians who said we live "in the best of all possible worlds." On the other hand, if, like Voltaire who ridiculed the idea in *Candide*, you do not think that this is the best of all possible worlds, you might conclude that although there is an "order" to this world, it might result from some kind of a "collective unconscious" as Jung may have put it, or from the *Zeitgeist* or from some kind of guiding world spirit. But then the question becomes, "What kind of a spirit is that world spirit?" Let's put that question aside for now.

It is true that "conspiracy" may not be the most appropriate word to use in describing what sociologists refer to as systems, processes, struggles, or even wars, whose opposing parties have been delineated by economic class. Nevertheless, when Armstrongites, Worldwidiers, and ex-members talk about conspiracies on a grand scale, even though their definitions may be a bit foggy at times, they still share some fundamental insights with some of the greatest economic and political philosophers of historical and modern times.

(7) The establishment news media. It is rare to meet a former WCG member who does not view the established, mainstream news media with distrust. Often that distrust borders on outright hostility. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that many former WCG members know what it is like to be burned badly by having put too much trust in

authority figures. Another is that many Armstrongites as Bible fundamentalists view the people that bring them the news as "worldly" and therefore as having a general view of the world that is not relevant to their own.

But there is, I believe, another more significant reason that so much of the news media is not trusted, not just by Armstrongites, but by others, as well. It is because most news disseminated to the public today is so terribly slanted, overedited, filtered, homogenized, sensationalized or sanitized, and otherwise processed that most people have at least a vague idea that what they are reading, hearing, and watching as "news" somehow does not match the world they experience first-hand. When confronted by "extremists" who claim the news media is part of a "conspiracy," the defenders of the system will admit that the news media is not perfect. For instance, in an editorial in *The New York Times* on July 3, there appeared this interesting admission:

The pre-launch publicity for a new Time-CNN collaboration called "NewsStand" made its first piece sound like the daring international scoop of every journalists dream. But yesterday, less than a month after CNN and Time jointly charged that America secretly used gas on a mission designed to kill defectors during the Vietnam War, they took it back....

In some ways, this has been a season for media embarrassments. The Boston Globe, owned by The New York Times Company, recently dismissed a columnist after editors learned she had been inventing people and eloquent quotes. The New Republic dismissed a reporter who fabricated a political underworld that seemed, and was, too outrageous to be true. And The Cincinnati Enquirer this week paid Chiquita International Brands an astonishing \$10 million, retracted a series about the fruit company and dismissed the reporter in charge.

Nevertheless, while the major media will admit that mistakes happen, its defenders will repeatedly point to the fact that because of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment protections, we have an extremely wide variety of news sources available and that here in the United States there is no totalitarian government that ever censors the news.

There is technical truth in that defense. In fact, if one has an advanced degree in history, economics, law, sociology, or some other field in which one has been trained to analyze the news, and if one spends a couple of hours a day reading a few of the finer newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, or *The Times of London*, and then if one supplements those sources with a number of insightful academic and professional journals and publications from "the alternative media," and one adds to that a bit of on-line cross-referenced study, and if one then also has a bit of time for contemplation and discussion with others who are similarly studying current affairs, it is possible to get some kind of fairly accurate idea of what is really going on in the world.

The reality is, however, most people are too untrained, too uneducated, too hard pressed for time, and too drained from a hard day's work to make that kind of an effort to stay informed. The great majority of Americans who follow the news, if they care to follow the news at all, get most of their current affairs information from the evening TV news (which in a typical broadcast is about 75% celebrity gossip, sports, and lifestyle pablum), from a few minutes of radio reportage in drive time (much of which today consists of talk shows where completely uninformed and oftentimes weird individuals are given air time

to vent their outlandish views), and perhaps from a few minutes of reading the local hometown newspaper after supper or *The National Enquirer* while standing at the supermarket checkout stand. None of those sources will be all that concerned with substantive economic or national, let alone international, news. And real analysis in such media today is virtually nonexistent. Then, because of the fact that all major media companies are controlled by a handful of corporations who in turn are dependant for advertising revenues on a not-very-large group of corporate advertisers, what we get from these sources is a very limited coverage done in a superficially colorful, but substantively uninformative, way. The end result is that we are increasingly a public that is not just uninformed, but one that is very misinformed.

That, of course, is just my opinion. But it also happens to be the opinion of many leading experts who make a career of analyzing the news media and the state of the nation. For instance, consumer advocate Ralph Nader, speaking at the University of Colorado in March, commented how the state of public awareness has now sunk to such a low point that when many people are asked what the difference is between ignorance and apathy, the answer is likely to be, "We don't know and we don't care!" (Incidentally, Nader's insight-filled speech "The Diversion of Discontent" is one of the most powerful I have heard in years and his passing comments on the relevance of scripture are rather profound. For information on ordering transcripts or cassette copies write to the other "AR": Alternative Radio, P.O. Box 551. Boulder, CO 80306.)

Nader is just one of many important figures who laments the current state of public unawareness. Many authorities have actually analyzed and thoroughly documented how the dumbing down, desensitization, and brainwashing of the American public (and I suspect the populations of many other countries) is being accomplished.

For example, in *Fooling America: How Washington Insiders Twist the Truth and Manufacture the Conventional Wisdom* (William Morrow & Company, 1992), Robert Parry, a former AP and *Newsweek* reporter, documents how until it was too late, the Washington press corps ignored virtually every major scandal of the 1980s, including the Iran-Contra scandal and the S&L scandal. (The latter, by the way, is considered the greatest financial crime in human history and one American taxpayers will be paying for - to the tune of over a half trillion dollars - until at least the year 2010.) Parry explains at least two important media realities: First, he says, what Washington insiders mean by "conventional wisdom" are those viewpoints that do not stray too far from the acceptable middle ground, viewpoints that really never challenge "the system" or the privileges of the corporate elite, and viewpoints that never suggest that America is anything less than the world's standard bearer for truth and justice. Second, Parry writes that in order for reporters to have a job in journalism, they must have access to public figures and sources. If they report the truth boldly, their sources begin to wither away and they will increasingly find themselves denied access to public figures. When that happens their employers no longer find them useful as reporters and they find themselves out of a job. In fact, that is what happened to Parry when he finally broke the Iran-Contra story. Today he writes only for the alternative press.

Noam Chomsky, in such books as *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, has written extensively about propaganda in the modern world. In *Manufacturing Consent* (Pantheon, 1988), co-author Edward S. Herman and Chomsky

provide a brilliant and thoroughly referenced analysis of how and why the major news organizations distort and even misreport the news so often. Many of the key contentions of this book can be found in the video *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky* which not only summarizes the book very well, but also provides an excellent introduction into the life and work of this important scholar.

Finally, for those who doubt that the media's flaws are as serious as I believe they are, let me suggest *Censored 1998: The News that Didn't Make the News* by Peter Phillips and Project Censored. This work details the top 25 censored news stories of 1997. A few, like "Little Known Federal Law Paves the Way for National Identity Card" are now beginning to get some notice in the alternative press, but most of these blockbuster stories - even "Secret Power: Exposing the Global Surveillance System" which appeared only in *CovertAction Quarterly* - have been completely ignored by the mainstream press. However, what is perhaps most disturbing about this book is not just its claims, but the fact that they are so well documented and have been put together by an outstanding team of scholars. The host institution for Project Censored is Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California and the book is published by Seven Stories Press of New York.

Do the claims of such media critics as Nader, Parry, Chomsky, and Project Censored provide a justification for the use of the word "conspiracy" when talking about the news media? In the legal sense, of course not. And even in the hallowed halls of academia, using the word that way will raise eyebrows. But, that doesn't mean that when Armstrongites talk about the news media as being part of a conspiracy that they are total fools. In fact, they are probably much closer to the truth of the matter than those who simply believe that Dan Rather, Ted Koppel, and other reporters of that corporate ilk are incapable of telling lies.

(8) The government as a conspiracy. It may seem odd to some that in a democracy (or at least a republic) some citizens would think of their own government as being a conspiracy directed against them. Sadly, however, many Americans feel that way. And among former Worldwidiers the number who express such ideas is quite high. The reasons for such strong anti-government sentiments are many. But at the root is a feeling that many express in letters to this publication. They see their U.S. government as one controlled by powerful interests who use the institutions of government as a means of enriching themselves while they and the government they control oppress the weak and the poor. Such people therefore see the government itself as a conspiracy or as part of an even larger one.

Such feelings tend to run higher among former Worldwidiers than among the general public because former Worldwidiers, having already been severely burned by the WCG, are perhaps more sensitive to further propagandizing and exploitation. While no judge is going to accept their definition of conspiracy, when such folks use the term, they have a pretty clear idea of what they mean.

(9) The world as conspiracy. To perhaps a majority of Americans, such an idea is absurd. But there are folks who do not simply look at their national government as a conspiracy against them, but view all the governments of the world as a united conspiracy. It's not just church folks who believe this. For instance, intellectual Chomsky, even though he eschews conspiracy theories, sometimes sounds like he believes the whole world has

already been organized globally to the detriment of the majority of humanity. In fact, in his book *World Orders New and Old*, Chomsky quotes Churchill after WWII as having used the term "the world government" as though Churchill considered such a thing an already existing reality. Of course, Chomsky is not suggesting that a world totalitarian state already exists, but the similarity of his language to the fears of some ex-Worldwidiers is striking.

Of course, in this category of usage, there are also those who believe the United Nations is stronger than it really is, and so such folks also sometimes use the word conspiracy when talking about the UN or about the internationalists who favor it as a model for future world governance.

(10) The cosmos as conspiracy. Not just Armstrongites, but most other Bible fundamentalists take seriously those scriptures that describe Satan and his hordes. While not all Christians believe in a literal Satan - there are those who view Satan as a personification of the collective "dark side" of the human species - nevertheless, it is not just Christians who believe in the idea that there is some kind of Satan-led demonic force loose in the universe. There are millions of people in some of the world's other major religions - Hindus, Moslems, Zoroastrians, for example - who believe something very similar. In fact, there are even some sophisticated Jungian psychologists who think such a notion makes sense. So when Armstrongites talk about a universal conspiracy led by Satan, perhaps we should not be too quick to sit in the seat of the scornful.

With the above overview to provide a way of discussing this difficult but important topic, we can move on to a discussion of some of the very bizarre new religious notions that are sweeping the world of Armstrongism. But, because of space limitations in this issue, that discussion will have to wait until Part II.

[To be continued in AR70]

## **The Real Year 2000**

As we race toward the year 2000, billions of people around the world seem to be caught up in anticipation that the arrival of the new millennium will have transcendent meaning. Few, however, seem to realize that the way Western civilization dates its calendar begins with an erroneous assumption as to when Jesus of Nazareth was actually born. Many Christians still actually believe that Jesus was born on December 25 and that the year was 1 A.D. Of course, virtually everyone who has studied the matter even cursorily knows that such a simplistic notion does not match with many historical facts. And, indeed, today most historians and religious scholars are convinced that the historical Jesus was born within the first decade B.C.

One religious historian who has spent decades researching and writing on the subject is Dr. Ernest L. Martin of the Associates for Scriptural Knowledge. And in recent years, many of his conclusions regarding the dating of the birth of Herod, the appearance of "the star" of Bethlehem, and other known events surrounding the birth of Jesus have been gaining support worldwide from many scholars in various disciplines.

For some time now, Martin has taught that Jesus was actually born in 3 B.C. on Rosh Hashannah, or the Feast of Trumpets, which in 3 B.C. began at sundown Sept. 11. If Martin is correct, then that would mean that 1999 years and about 10 months have passed since that momentous event (recall that there is no year zero). It would further mean that by Jewish modes of reckoning, this coming Rosh Hashannah, which this year will begin at sunset Sept. 20, would actually mark the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus. Martin is not one who is big on birthdays, especially as religious holidays. Nevertheless, many of his students are of the opinion that on or about September 20-21 we may see some type of significant occurrence that will be a cosmic benchmark of "the end times." One such student is Ken Nagele who publishes *The Elean Files: A Guide to Understanding the End-Times*. At his promotional web site, [www.elean.com](http://www.elean.com), Nagele writes, "If you thought Year 2000 was important, wait until you see what's going to happen in 1998!"

In our last issue we mentioned Dr. Ernest Martin's upcoming book *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*. Since then, we received from his office an "A.S.K. Geographical Report" titled "Illustrations of the Temple Mount and Fort Antonia" which graphically details some of the essential ideas of his thesis. After carefully reviewing the data, we are convinced that it is not a baseless claim that Martin's theory may eventually prove to be, as one university scholar told us, one of the most important theological and archaeological discoveries of all time. Those who may be skeptical of such a flamboyant assertion may wish to order a copy of the short article before ordering the book. The report, No. A 102, with illustration and diagram, is available for \$2 by writing to Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298. The complete temple book is still not published. But we are told it will be off the press at about the same time as the initial printing of the Original Bible Project translation which is scheduled for release some time in September.

## **Roman Catholicism in Transition**

On June 25, the Vatican announced that it has made a decision to resolve an issue that has split the Western Christian world for over 500 years. The Vatican announced it will sign a declaration with most of the world's Lutherans affirming that Roman Catholics and Lutherans share a basic understanding of how human beings receive God's forgiveness and salvation. The document, approved by the Lutheran World Federation, declares that both denominations have discovered common ground on the issue of "justification." As reported on *The New York Times* (6/26/98):

The Reformation leader Martin Luther held that justification comes solely through faith in God, while the Catholic church taught that a person's good works play a role. Now, through the declaration, Catholics and Lutherans agree that divine forgiveness comes only through God's grace and that good works flow from that.

Conceivably, the resolution of this theological issue will help make progress toward European unity a little smoother on the Continent where the Lutheran denomination is second in size only to the Roman Catholic Church.

It is remarkable that the Catholic-Lutheran theological debate that raged on for over 500

years is virtually identical to the central theological debate that raged among WCG intellectuals from about 1970 until the ascendancy of Joe Tkach Jr. It is also interesting that both debates ended with the same viewpoint prevailing, at least officially.

## **Sabbath Debate Continues**

Some theological debates, it seems, never end. The debate over the sabbath question, for instance. On the question of whether the weekly sabbath should be observed, in recent years there have been two different viewpoints circulating in WCG circles with each viewpoint being thoroughly propounded in a popular book. Strongly in favor of the maintenance of seventh-day Sabbath observance is the book *From Sabbath to Sunday* by our friend Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, an SDA professor at Andrews University. And strongly contra is the book *The Sabbath in Crisis* by former SDA minister Dale Ratzlaff.

Some weeks ago, Christian radio station KJSL in St. Louis invited both Ratzlaff and Bacchiocchi to debate the sabbath issue live on the air. They agreed and the hour-long debate took place on June 15 beginning at 9 a.m. central time. Not surprisingly, opinions as to who won the debate vary according to the sabbath views of the ones who heard the program. In a way, Bacchiocchi continues the debate by posting a synopsis and updated commentary on the Internet. For details, write him at samuele@andrews.edu or at his surface address: 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, MI 49103. Ratzlaff, on the other hand, has responded by making cassette tape copies of the radio debate available for \$4. Write to Life Assurance Ministries, 19109 North 71st Drive, Glendale, AZ 85308.

## **The British Bands**

We have not reported much on the Armstrongite churches in Britain of late, but be assured many are still active in that country. All of the largest WCG offshoots have some ministerial representation in the U.K. In addition, there are a number of Britain-based WCG offshoots that have publishing ministries:

*New Horizons* is published by the Churches of God Outreach Ministries, an association of independent churches formerly with the Garner Ted Armstrong group. Their main address is: P.O. Box 2525, Lincoln, LN5 7PF, United Kingdom; e-mail: coguk@aol.com. In the U.S. subscription requests can be sent to P.O. Box 54621, Tulsa, OK 74155-0621. Incidentally, *New Horizons* is edited by James McBride who in the late sixties was AR editor Trechak's first journalism instructor at Ambassador-Bricket Wood. So all letters critical of Trechak's writing in *Ambassador Report* should be sent directly to Mr. McBride (Just kidding - ed.).

*The Countdown* is a small magazine specializing in biblical esoterica. It is put out by Editor Alex Cain, a 30-year veteran of the WCG who also works as an organic chemist and polymer researcher for the British Defense Department. The address to write to is: The Church of God, P.O. Box 53, Farnborough, Hants. GU14 OYZ, United Kingdom; web site: [www.cableol.net/alexcain](http://www.cableol.net/alexcain).

Servants of Yahweh, P.O. Box 942, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9XY, United Kingdom.

Sabbatarian publisher Isaac Aluochier, not affiliated with any other sacred-name group, is a former WCG member whose article "Herbert W. Armstrong - A Scriptural Analysis" is published on-line at [www.ServeYahweh.org/Articles/Armstrong.htm](http://www.ServeYahweh.org/Articles/Armstrong.htm).

*Awake! Awake!* is a monthly magazine published by Midnight Ministries, P.O. Box 29, Aylesbury, HP17 8TL, United Kingdom. Controversial editor Malcolm B. Heap has been mentioned in our pages before because of some of his more radical pronouncements, his promotion of the ministry of Benny Hinn, and his reliance on the predictions of certain individuals who might be called prophetic channelers. Many observers, such as editor Kerin Webb of *Potentia International* (26 Bramshaw Gardens, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH8 OBS, United Kingdom) thought Heap's ministry would never survive even a year when it started. Yet today Midnight Ministries appears to be the most successful of the WCG spinoffs based in Britain. At least it is the one offering the most printed material. An integral part of Heap's ministry is his regular, biting attacks on the WCG. He has not flinched from proclaiming, "The WCG is not led by the Holy Spirit, but by demon spirits!" charge that has unsettled a number of evangelical groups attempting to join in ecumenical fellowship with the Worldwidars of Britain.

## Letters

There is always someone looking to find fault with God's ministers no matter what. The Seal [of the Church of God, International] is the Coat of Armor that HWA gave to Garner Ted Armstrong years ago and I have the article about that in my files. There is nothing wrong with it. How stupid could anyone get to find fault with that. The men who took over CGI stole everything, all Garner Ted's possessions from him, and are now using that Seal.

Some people will have to stand before God and answer for all they say and for finding fault. They forget God has used GTA for over 40 years to bring us all into a knowledge of the truth. Satan is alive and well and is doing all he can to turn people off of the truth.

It would be good if you left out letters such as that one about the Seal. Who needs it? Garner Ted has not changed anything of the truth and none of us are perfect. We are all sinners.

-Emily Young  
Canada

In [AR68](#) you reported, as I had informed you, that before being chosen to head UCG, Leslie McCullough was buying a home in the Cincinnati area. Now he is saying, "I would like to know the address! I don't have a home there yet." He may be technically right. He may have only been LOOKING for a home in the Cincinnati area - and doing so with UCG Home Office relocation funds.

-"No State"

I would like to respond to the letter writer who "peeked" into *Difficult Scriptures* by

David Albert. First, it is remarkable that a book can be fairly judged by just "peeking" into it. Perhaps the writer has developed a new method of speed reading and comprehension - "Solitary Peeking In The Book Store." It could also be known as "SPIT-BS" because that is what happens when conclusions are based on incomplete data.

Second, my own reading of Dr. Albert's book, in its entirety, did not lead me to conclude that anything was being "attacked." "Attack" implies hostile intent, and his book has none. My critique is this: *Difficult Scriptures* is a comparison of the sacred day and food laws as taught by HWA with opposing views from both Scripture and Christian scholarship with the conclusion that the former lack validity for today's Christian.

Third, I do not believe Dr. Albert's alleged lack of baptismal counseling skills changes the value of his book. I have no use for the WCG or any of its spin-off groups. After 27 years of them I am "church-free." But this book has helped release me from mental and spiritual bondage and I would recommend it to anyone who is not afraid of information that might change their mind about Armstrong theology.

-John Gill  
Texas

I am now fully convinced that the Armstrong-Tkach religious empire was built on intentionally making merchandise of people as opposed to innocent error - deliberate lies rather than well-intentioned mistakes. This makes quite a bit of difference in how the WCG is viewed!

-Mrs. Wayne Becker  
Galena, Ohio

Your review of "European Unity," "The New World Order," etc. was educational. But you failed to include one of the pieces of the puzzle: the redistribution of the world's population.

As you know, some of the more prosperous nations are being inundated with foreigners. The United States is being invaded with immigrants, legal and illegal, mostly Asian and Hispanic. The American heartland is now smothered with this problem, which formerly afflicted only the coastal and border states. In addition to the legislated integration, there is the incessant bombardment of the "diversity" hype and the "multiculture" hype.

When the economic boom fades into recession or depression, will all these immigrants contribute to a structured society? Or will they become an ungovernable mob? Will anarchy create the opening for which the Beast has long awaited? (See II Thes. 2:7 in *Living Bible*.) Is the immigration of these masses of people an accident? Or is it a part of the grand design?

-George Holt  
Tennessee

*Editor: I don't know if I would call it part of a "grand design," but United States immigration policy is certainly no accident. When I made a study of U.S. immigration policy in an immigration law course some nine years ago, I was astounded at how high Congress had set immigration quotas when compared to the much lower levels of all other nations. (And not only have U.S. levels continued to rise, but there is now a move in Congress to make them even higher) At the time, I asked a number of immigration lawyers and immigration policy experts what was behind the high U.S. quotas and they answered uniformly that U.S. immigration levels are kept high in order to keep the wages of American workers low.*

*Our law makers are not unaware of the fact that high immigration plays a major role in rapid population increase, puts a strain on the environment, and contributes to inner-city ethnic tensions. But they are also aware that by flooding the country with workers (some unskilled, but many skilled and educated) they are helping industry to find more laborers or desired labor replacements without having to spend more on retraining American workers or by competitively hiking up wage levels to lure American workers from competing firms. It is a simple supply and demand problem with Congress behaving with a clear anti-labor, pro-business bias. With American corporations now contributing to political campaigns at a level more than ten times that of organized labor, and with big bucks a prerequisite for political campaigning, the politicians know who they must heed if they want to stay in office.*

*It is further remarkable that while the immigration-level issue is one that is vital to working Americans, it is hardly discussed in the corporate-owned American media or, if it is, it is discussed with no mention of the underlying economic agenda. That, I believe, is an indication of just how weak our democratic institutions have become.*

*The Sierra Club recently had an election in which members were asked whether the Club should take a position on the subject of immigration as regards resulting population increases and environmental strains. I was part of a Club faction that said we should. I publicly took that position based on only two considerations: the economic one regarding American wages and the environmental argument. When I did so, however, a number attacked me as being xenophobic and racist. I am neither. Before the Club vote, the media generally seemed to side with the anti-initiative people and the initiative (which was merely an advisory one, with no legal effect) went down to defeat.*

*In the near future, there will be another attempt to bring this important issue to the Club's, and the public's, attention. Any readers who would like more information about this subject may write to Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization, P.O. Box 2399, Berkeley, CA 94702.*

Normally I would not mention a stupid TV program. But if you ever have a chance to catch the episode "The Temple of Haefestus and the Vestal Virgins" on *Xena, Warrior Princess* you will be glad you watched. The story is about a temple and how the bad guys have by stealth and trickery taken over "The One True Church." When they got to the part where the High Priestess was leading a group of temple prostitutes in "Onward, Vestal Virgins" sung to the tune of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" we almost died from laughing. Other COG members who saw it have said the same thing.

Then, on the TV show *Babylon 5* none of us missed the obvious parallels to what went on in the WCG, what with the Vorlon and the Shadows, the fight between good and evil. In the end, they all went off together - the struggle was pointless, except that the fight became irrelevant when the main characters took ownership of their own destiny and would not submit to either side!

Of course, there have been other TV shows with WCG-related themes. We all remember that wonderful episode of *Quincy, M.E.* with the cult leader, Mr. Osbourne, whose lawyer was a right-on hilarious Stanley Rader look-a-like who also looked and sounded like somebody who had just met on camera with Mike Wallace. Years ago at the Feast of Tabernacles in Hawaii, [WCG lawyer] Ralph Helge explained to us that the WCG had considered suing over it!

-Douglas Becker  
Washington

*Editor: Besides the programs that you mentioned, we have seen at least three other TV shows with episodes that obviously drew on Worldwide's history for inspiration. When our large 1977 issue first appeared, the owners of a Pasadena bookstore where copies were being sold told us that a number of Hollywood production company executives immediately sent over couriers to purchase copies. A few even showed up personally in limos. And since then a number of Hollywood writers have subscribed to AR. We would not be too surprised if one day the whole WCG story is turned into a television mini-series. But whether it would be a tragedy, a crime show, or a comedy is hard to say.*

*Incidentally, Mr. Becker's humor-filled Web site is at: [www.all2true.com](http://www.all2true.com).*

**BIZARRO** By Dan Piraro

WAIT! IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME NOW!  
I DON'T HAVE AMNESIA — I NEVER  
HAVE KNOWN WHO I AM!



This weekend the Dallas WCG hosted a seminar for their women, titled "Women Who Live for the Lord." About 600 women attended. My husband, a WCG member, has put in many hours working for the meetings, so I've heard a little bit about the seminar. Joe and Tammy were there, of course, along with some of the usual entourage from Pasadena.

I asked my husband what they were using the projectors for, was it just to project the words of the songs being sung, or was it for something else? He said - and this blows my mind - that they showed digitized slides of Mrs. Herbert [Loma] Armstrong. When I asked why, he said they talked about her as an example of a fine Christian woman.

I've read enough and seen enough documentation that I truly believe the incestuous relationship between HWA and a daughter did occur, and that it probably went on for about ten years, as has been written. I can't believe that Mrs. Armstrong did not know or suspect what was going on. And what kind of a mother would allow her husband to do that to her daughter?

Besides not protecting her daughter and getting her away from that pervert, Loma publicly supported her lying, thieving husband in his false church up to the day she died, knowing what kind of a person he really was. That is not Christian.

Furthermore, by holding up Mrs. Armstrong as a fine example, WCG is implying that HWA also was a fine example. They don't even have to say it. If she is a great example then, of course, her husband, the founder of the church they are in, must also be a great example.

This is unbelievable in one way, but then why should I be surprised? I'm not saying Loma was an evil person, but there are so many other women that could have been used as truly fine examples. So why did they pick her? Psychology, psychology, psychology. I think it was very carefully thought out. They please the old line WCGers, and, besides, what New Covenant-believing woman or man would dare to have dissenting thoughts about this? That wouldn't be Christian, would it?

-Texas

## **Brinsmead is Back!**

In the early 1980s, the writings of theologian Robert D. Brinsmead began circulating in some WCG circles and in the years that followed they made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of Worldwidiers. Brinsmead, who was never a WCG member himself, had been a devoted member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. At some point in the 1970s, however, Brinsmead came to believe that strict seventh-day Sabbath observance was not a requirement for salvation and he became an eloquent critic of many SDA doctrines. In 1981, Brinsmead, a thorough researcher and a persuasive writer, came to the attention of *Ambassador Report* when one of our readers introduced us to his scholarly, yet very readable, publication *Verdict: An International Journal of Theology*.

We mentioned *Verdict* a number of times in years past, but at some point in the early nineties, we lost touch with Brinsmead. When we tried to find out what ever became of him, we received wildly conflicting reports. Some said he had died, others said he was living in an exotic fruit grove in Australia where he had become an old and embittered atheist or, at least, an agnostic who had lost all interest in God.

A few months ago, however, we discovered that Brinsmead's writings of old were still being made available to the public. We also discovered that although it was true that Brinsmead was managing an exotic fruit plantation in Australia besides being active in politics, he was not embittered, was still of an optimistic and lively temperament, and still took a great interest in theological matters.

Now, however, the Brinsmead saga grows more complicated. A few weeks ago the news got out that Brinsmead has returned to writing about religion and that some of his new ideas would soon be on the Internet and in print. Among many former SDAs and former Worldwidiers for whom the charismatic Brinsmead is a genuine folk hero, there was much excitement. But when some advance copies of Brinsmead's latest writings actually started circulating, many old fans were genuinely shocked. In the many years that had elapsed since his last publications, in addition to having renounced the sabbath and all religious "legalism," Brinsmead apparently had also started to question a number of "orthodox"

Christian doctrines, as well. At this juncture, many former Brinsmead followers seem so confused about their hero's new views that they are simply letting time pass before they will comment further.

Meanwhile, Brinsmead's writings can still be obtained from ongoing Verdict Publishing, P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, CA 92029-0904 and from a related group, Worldview Publications, P.O. Box 2770, Fallbrook, CA 92088. Those wanting to read his most famous pieces on-line can visit the Bill Ferguson collection of "Brinsmead's Key Writings" at [www.quango.net/brinsmead](http://www.quango.net/brinsmead) or the Rodney O. Lain collection at <http://members.macconnet.com/users/r/rodneyo/brinsmead.htm>. If you have any trouble getting through, it may be because a number of Brinsmead's former churchmen consider him such a dangerous infidel that some on occasion have successfully hacked those sites.

As for Brinsmead, himself, he is still ensconced at Tropical Fruit World in Duranbah, New South Wales. He is healthy and tanned, and even as you are reading this he is probably reclining in a hammock, sipping a chilled glass of exotic fruit nectar, and perhaps again writing a letter "to a long-absent friend" as he did on February 14 when he penned this confession:

I am through and through an anti-authoritarian, anti-orthodox, and anti-establishment rebel. But am all that in the spirit of fun and laughter. I was not an angry young man then, nor am I a bitter old man now, because the one who is my inspiration is the one who lampooned the world, the religious/social establishment with outrageous stories - but he did it with a big smile on his face; he did it in the context of the eating/drinking man: "Then were our mouths filled with laughter and our tongues with singing."

He (Jesus) started the revolution of being truly human and the pulling down of all traditions, customs, laws, authorities, and structures that forced people to be inhuman.

With gusto and fun, I've made war on Adventism, Protestant orthodoxy, Christian orthodoxy, Biblicism. And it should not be forgotten that whenever my own cause became its own establishment, I made war on that, too, and poked fun at my own orthodoxy as much as that of others.

**Editor:** On that intriguing quote I will end this issue. My special thanks to all of you regular contributors who are helping to keep *Ambassador Report* alive.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR70\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

October 1998 (AR70)

### **Nuns Capture Big Sandy: Ambassador to be Catholic College**

Under the direction of Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach Jr., the religious-business empire built by Worldwide Church of God (WCG) founder Herbert W. Armstrong continues to shrink. In September, the WCG's *Worldwide News* (WN) announced that the Tkach team has entered into a contract to sell Worldwide's Ambassador University (AU) campus in Texas to Pittsburgh-based La Roche College. While the agreement contains a provision whereby La Roche has a feasibility period in which to ascertain that the campus will suit its needs, those knowledgeable about the situation say there should be no real obstacle for the completion of the property transfer within a few months.

La Roche will be getting a huge piece of real estate. The AU property includes more than 200 structures and three quarters of a million square feet of building improvements. There are classroom buildings, office buildings, dormitories, a large university library building, private residences, a convention center, a field house, athletic and recreational facilities, a nine-hole golf course, two lakes, campgrounds with bath house, an FM radio station, an airstrip that is almost one mile long, on-site water and wastewater treatment facilities, and in addition to the core 228 acres of campus, the surrounding 2,000 acres of farm and timberland. Also part of the deal are all of the university's personal property including farm equipment and all of the library's collection.

In explaining the deal to its members, the WCG's leaders have described La Roche College as "a coeducational, private college with a campus in Pittsburgh." The WN article announcing the sale did not mention that according to La Roche's Web site:

La Roche is a Catholic, coeducational, private college that was founded by the Sisters of Divine Providence in 1963.... The Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence... is an international religious community confounded [sic] in Germany

by Wilhelm Emmanuel von Kettler, social reformer and Bishop of Mainz, and Stephanie Starkenfels de la Roche, a French noblewoman, known in [the] community as Mother Marie de la Roche.... The Sisters of Divine Providence, St. Peter Province, Pittsburgh... have been the sponsors and supporters of the college from its inception.

Not generally known among WCG members is the fact that La Roche has generously offered to reemploy many of Ambassador's former faculty members at the new La Roche campus. It is not known if any accepting such an offer will convert to Catholicism. But such a development would not be surprising considering how used to doctrinal shifts former Armstrongites have become. Another fact not disclosed to the WCG's members are the financial arrangements of the land deal. One former WCG member wrote:

A close friend who lives in the Big Sandy metroplex area and who works as a reporter on a local paper has been in contact with both sides in the impending sale of the AU property. His last report to me was that the purchase price was confidential. My request to him was to find out who made that decision.

A few months ago, when the Office Facilities Building in Pasadena was sold, there was enough room in the WN to report an entire page of details regarding the efforts which went into the sale. But there was no mention of the sale price. I thought that that item would have been the most important item in the entire issue, given the WCG's perpetual need for money. I have not yet seen any announcement of the sale price. So, it remains to be seen if they follow the same pattern of behavior with the sale of AU.

So far the WCG has stuck by its pattern of secrecy. Apparently its leaders do not feel that anyone whose tithes helped build AU has a right to know how much is being paid for that prized church asset or where that money will eventually wind up.

## Strange Land Deals

The sale of the Texas campus is not the only strange WCG land deal that we have reported on. In [AR55](#) we wrote about the sale of the Mt. Pocono feast site "for one dollar..." and in [AR62](#) we reported on the sale of the Wisconsin Dells feast site to a mysterious group. Since then one of our readers sent us a clipping from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (3/27/97, p.1) which provides more detail as to what became of that beautiful Wisconsin property. Under the headline "Miracles Happen Here: Dells Center Aims to Heal Body, Soul," writer Jo Sandin reported how that property has been turned into a New Age healing center. Endeavor Academy, which also distributes *Out of Time* and *A Course in Miracles*, two New Age books, makes the claim that people coming to their healing center have been healed of everything from tumors to depression to arthritis:

"Miracles happen here," says Australian-born Rae Visser, 37, who with her husband, Michael, and two other pastors keep the Miracles Healing Center open 24 hours a day....

Basically, the message is this: Pain, suffering, disease, discord and death aren't real. These delusions disappear for those who learn to see themselves as they really are - perfect expressions of eternal life. "We're already in Heaven," says Rae. "We never

left."

Another interesting land deal done by the Tkach team was the sale earlier this year of the WCG's Mail Processing Center in Pasadena. Located across the freeway from the old Ambassador campus, the building was apparently considered unneeded as the Tkach team's proselytizing efforts are producing ever less fruit. Again, as with previous land deals and the latest in Texas, important details about the sale were not made known to WCG members. With the Mail Processing Center sale, the WN only said that the buyer was an Alhambra, California-based company. But why not give the company's name?

---

&COPY; 1998 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.

ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

Our suspicions raised, over the next few weeks the *Report* made a number of visits to the area of the old Mail Processing Center and observed in the parking lot a large number of police-type vehicles. But these were not city or county police cars, but late-model cars with mounted police-style lights. What was odd, however, was that on the days we visited there were no uniformed officers or uniformed security people to be seen. The few employees outside taking smoke breaks all wore suits and ties and appeared to be the kind of employees that spend most of their time at computer terminals.

The building, although it has many very large windows, remains shrouded in secrecy as all the windows are now highly tinted. The locked reception area appears to be well-monitored with automation but has no receptionist. On one of the strange patrol cars we noticed the name "Inter-Com." And thinking that the new company, Inter-Com Security Services formerly of Alhambra, might perhaps be some type of community patrol operation, we phoned the number listed in the phone book under that name and asked what they did. "Was this a community patrol company?" we inquired. After much hesitation, the unidentified voice on the phone quietly answered, "No." "Well, what exactly does Inter-Com do?", we shot back. Long pause, then, "security." "What kind of security?" Very long pause, then, "corporate." "Can you send us some printed information about your company, what it does, what services it provides?" An even longer pause was followed by another quiet, "No." "Can you give us any other information?" Click.

In an age when virtually every mid-size company has some kind of Web site, this company has none. In fact, a search of the Web did not find the company mentioned anywhere. Virtually no Pasadenans that we talked to knew anything about the company. And experts in the field say that "Corporate security" today could mean anything from physically guarding corporate properties to electronically spying on employees, outside electronic surveillance, or hacking into the computer files of competitors. One of our readers, a former Worldwide executive, told us:

The MPC building was built for data processing of mail and for handling thousands of phone calls. There were conduits of data cables and telephone lines that ran into the Publishing/Accounting/CIS building across the street. You can see outlines of the conduit trenches in the parking lot of Publishing where they diamond-sawed the pavement. There are also conduits that run inside the Green Street bridge to the other side of the campus from CIS. None of this is secret information. All the WATS lines terminated in the MPC building. All of this makes it a great structure for any firm handling lots of data or telephone traffic.

Again, the Tkach team has yet to reveal how much was paid for this valuable church asset or what entities got the proceeds.

## **Attorney General Handcuffed**

The strange WCG land deals of the last few years have prompted more than one former WCG member to contact government officials to ask for an investigation. But earlier this year when one individual wrote California Attorney General Dan Lungren about the matter, Robert M. Raymer, a representative of the Attorney General sent this reply:

Thank you for your recent letter to Attorney General Dan Lungren... regarding your request for the Attorney General's intervention in overseeing the Worldwide Church of God. Unfortunately we must respectfully decline your request because we lack authority to act.

In 1981, California law was changed to restrict the Attorney General's charitable oversight role with respect to religious corporations. The Attorney General's Office does not have the same investigative or enforcement powers over religious corporations that it has over public benefit corporations and charitable trusts.

The Attorney General's enforcement powers may be used only if the directors of a religious corporation engage in criminal activity or conduct a public, fraudulent solicitation for "secular" purposes. As to other harmful actions by directors of religious corporations, including self-dealing, improper distribution of a religious corporation's assets, and gross mismanagement, the Attorney General does not have the legal authority to file a derivative civil action on behalf of the religious corporation. Only the directors of the religious corporation, or, in some cases, the corporation's statutory voting members, may file a civil action to correct these types of abuses.

We regret that we could not be of further assistance to you, but hope that the information we have provided clarifies our restrictions in regard to your request.

Long-time readers of the *Report* will recall that the Attorney General of California once had the authority to investigate churches in cases where church leaders were perceived as self-dealing. But as a result of the Petris Bill - which with much lobbying by the WCG's leadership was passed into law after the State of California versus Worldwide lawsuit of 1979 - the Attorney General has lost that power. Ironically, many Worldwidiers who marched, demonstrated, and wrote to legislators to get that law passed are the very ones who now would like the State of California to intervene on their behalf.

We had hoped to get a comment on the situation directly from Attorney General Lungren, but when we phoned his office in Sacramento, we were told, "Sorry, Attorney General Lungren is out of town, campaigning to become our next governor."

## **Tkach's Church Marketing Strategy**

Former WCG members who subscribe to the *Report* and who are following the transformed WCG as led by Joseph Tkach Jr. often comment to us that their impression of the WCG leadership is one of chaotic mismanagement. Many tell us that they cannot see any pattern to what Tkach is doing other than that of a confused religionist. While that may be the impression that is given to those not familiar with the world of religion marketing, our impression is that Tkach does have a game plan that has been thought out, even if it is not playing out as successfully as he had hoped.

In "Religion Journal: New Christian Groups Gain Members," which appeared in *The New York Times* on January 3, Gustav Niebuhr wrote:

Since the late 1960s, many mainline Protestant denominations have reported losing hundreds of thousands of members, while Roman Catholics' attendance at Mass also declined from an earlier peak before leveling off. Yet nationwide polls over that period have reported that the proportion of Americans' who say they regularly attend church has remained unchanged - at or slightly above 40 percent. If one assumes those people are being truthful, the question is where have some of them gone to worship?

In a recently published book, Donald Miller, a professor of religion at the University of Southern California, says that part of the answer lies in the growth of three new Christian movements, all formed since the 1960s, directed at people younger than 50, and made up largely of independent congregations unaffiliated with older mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations.

The three are the Calvary Chapel, Vineyard, and Hope Chapel movements, whose histories, leadership and constituencies Miller describes in his book, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, (University of California, 1997). He calls them examples of "new paradigm" churches, noting that their sanctuaries are typically devoid of religious ornamentation, that pastors and congregants alike favor informal attire, that music is contemporary (often electric guitars and pop-style "praise choruses" in place of organs and hymnals), that sermons center on Bible teaching, and that some degree of openness exists to such "gifts of the Spirit" as speaking in tongues.

All three movements began in Southern California, but have become national. Calvary Chapel and Vineyard are loose associations of independent congregations, while the smaller Hope Chapel movement is affiliated with the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, a 75-year-old Pentecostal denomination founded by evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson.

Niebuhr goes on to show the movements' connections to Bill McCartney and Promise Keepers, the "Jesus Movement," and Rev. Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California. While Tkach has not been a slavish follower of any of these individuals and movements, he has adopted enough of their ways and has either mentioned them outright or alluded to them

sufficiently to indicate he has studied their ideas. Unfortunately for Tkach, the adoption of such new forms of worship and such self-conscious religion-marketing methods has not produced the growth that was anticipated. One of our readers recently passed on the following insight from a former WCG member:

I was just looking at the current WN and noticed something interesting. In the past the WCG Treasurer's Report was for the Church only, and as I understood it, the income for Plain Truth Ministries [PTM] was kept separate. This WN issue says "WCG and PTM income and expenses." If they weren't adding PTM's income to that of the Church in the past, the income has dropped more than they want you to notice at first glance! In past issues, daily averages for the WCG alone were around \$100,000. Now, for this past month, the daily average for both WCG and PTM combined was only \$97,894. What a difference! If my calculation is correct, the WCG is again covering all the expenses of PTM, not just the one million of Church funds that they said would go into it. Mail-in income [of the Church] is apparently being commingled and, I assume, the other income would be advertising sales in the new Plain Truth.

## Strange Days

The failure of the Tkach game plan to bring in the kind of financial growth that he anticipated has forced Tkach to slow down somewhat the frantic pace of doctrinal change that he had maintained previously. As we reported last issue, even though the WCG's leadership is in favor of making the WCG a denomination keeping neither the seventh-day Sabbath nor Old Testament Holy Days, fear of losing old-time Sabbath-keepers and Holy Day-keepers has slowed the rate of doctrinal change a little bit. Nevertheless, some doctrinal evolution continues.

The latest oddity resulting from the spirit of creeping Protestantism, as some Armstrongites refer to it, was the WCG's keeping of the Old Testament Holy Days recently on dates at variance with the traditional Jewish calculations. The leadership of the WCG previously announced that it planned on observing the annual Holy Days on the nearest convenient weekend. Because the Feast of Trumpets this year fell on Sept. 21-22, a weekday, if members were to keep the feast day as the Jews do, it would require many to take off time from work. To Tkach, this was inconvenient. So the suggestion went forth that should a congregation still desire to keep the feast day (this can be determined by survey, remember), but found the actual day inconvenient, then the congregation could reschedule the Holy Day to the nearest weekend.

So, this year after all the surveys were completed, a number of WCG congregations moved the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement to new dates. We have heard reports of WCG congregations around the country scheduling Trumpets services on Saturday, September 19 and Day of Atonement services on Saturday, September 26. At least one WCG congregation, showing even greater innovation, scheduled Trumpets for a Sunday night. While all this calendar juggling was going on, some WCG congregations continued to meet on the traditional Jewish dates. We have yet to find out if the latter churches are Saturday-keeping churches or Sunday-keeping churches or Saturday-and-Sunday-keeping churches. As one of our WCG readers told us, "It is getting really very confusing." But, another humorously told us, "We should rename the church The

Worldwide Church of Convenience."

## **GTA Pays Masseur**

According to papers filed in the county court in Tyler, Texas, the civil suit brought by masseuse Suerae Robertson against evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong has concluded with an out-of-court settlement. Court records do not indicate the amount that was paid to the masseuse to drop her claim that the famous evangelist had sexually assaulted her at her massage parlor in the summer of 1995. By settling out of court, Armstrong was able to avoid an embarrassing trial that would likely have included a replay of the famous hidden camera video of his cavorting naked in a massage parlor. Tyler was also spared a trial that likely would have included testimony from an assortment of Texas masseuses and madams who have claimed that Armstrong has also been an abusive customer in their own establishments.

While Garner Ted has dubbed his latest church venture The Intercontinental Church of God (ICG), his followers appear to be mainly in the states of Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Missouri, Michigan, and West Virginia, with total weekly church attendance reportedly now well under a thousand.

## **Dart on the Air**

While the ministry of Garner Ted Armstrong still survives, it is small and limp now. But one vibrant fellowship whose numbers are swelling is Christian Education Ministries (CEM) headed by Ronald L. Dart, formerly Garner Ted's right-hand man. Dart's *Born to Win* radio broadcast can now be heard on more than 120 radio stations.

During his lifetime, author David Robinson on a number of occasions commented to this publication that he believed that of all ministers to have come through the Armstrongism experience, Dart was in his opinion the most informed and the best teacher. A good example of Dart's intelligence and frankness can be seen in a recent Dart article that has been widely circulated on the Internet. In "Understanding Deception" Dart expounds upon many types of deception and the ways in which they are used. Here is an excerpt:

Almost every religious deception known to man has been introduced by warning its audience against deception. I have seen a lot of strange religious ideas, and most of them cite, somewhere in the text, Revelation 12:9 which identifies the Arch-Deceiver as: "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." The premise is that you, brother, have been deceived and I am here to ease your pain, to rescue you from deception, to lead you to the light. Problem is, the old Arch-Deceiver himself might show up on my doorstep with exactly the same message....

Deception loves to quote scripture (see Matthew 4:6). Any deceiver who cannot find some scriptures that say what he wants them to say isn't worth his salt. For deception, the more scripture the better. When I see a long list of scriptures in an argument, I ignore the list. To me it is a sign of someone who has nothing to say. (I told you not to read this far if you were feeling sensitive.) People who take proof texts out of context and string them together to make a point are immediately suspects. I prefer to read my scriptures in a leather binding and in context.

Dart's Christian Educational Ministries is at P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791; phone: 903-509-2999; Web site: [www.cemnetwork.com](http://www.cemnetwork.com).

## **More United Disunity**

The so-called United Churches of God continue to embarrass themselves. In July the Cincinnati-based United (the UCGIA) announced that as a result of budget cuts and ongoing internecine squabbles 13 elders were terminated or resigned, and another 29 were put on half-salary.

The breakaway United Church of God (Monrovia) led by David Hulme, and which we will acronym the UCGM, has stabilized at about 2,300 members and a whopping 60 elders. As one UCGIA elder has pointed out, "With that kind of an elder to member ratio, if one wants to be thoroughly ruled with a rod of iron, then Hulme's bunch is the church for you." The Hulmites plan to put out a quarterly magazine beginning in January with UK elder John Meakin, an old Bricket Wood classmate and tennis friend of ours, to serve as managing editor.

Even within UCGIA there are more splits. For example, some weeks ago the Tulsa, Oklahoma UCGIA congregation split in two with one of the factions now aligning itself with the United group of Big Sandy, Texas (the UCGBS) which a few months ago itself broke off from the Cincinnati-based United organization. So while everyone in these groups loves the designation "United," there appears to be very little spirit of unity within any of these groups.

## **Philadelphians Fight Over HWA Writings**

Another Armstrongite group that has been having problems of late is Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God (PCG). In recent months we have learned that such prominent PCG figures as Don Tiger, Don Roth, Jim Mortensen, Charles Bishop, and Arlen Berkey have left the PCG, are critical of Gerald Flurry, and are putting out their own set of the almost-complete writings of Herbert W. Armstrong. You may recall that back in [AR65](#) we reported how the WCG had sued Flurry in federal court in an attempt to stop his PCG from distributing the writings of Herbert W. Armstrong. That lawsuit has yet to be concluded. In the meantime Flurry's group continues to distribute Armstrong's *Mystery of the Ages* and a few other Armstrong writings. Now, however, the PCG breakaway group has begun distributing many of HWA's writings for free in CD-ROM format and, of all things, Flurry, has threatened them with a lawsuit for doing pretty much the same thing that he, himself, claims he has a right to do. In other words, Flurry would like to have a monopoly on the writings of Herbert W. Armstrong.

Mr. Tiger and associates consider many of the writings of HWA to be inspired, not in the sense of scripture, but more in the sense of being a type of Talmud. For that reason they would like to see all the writings of HWA made available to the public. Ironically, although Flurry wishes to have monopoly control over all of HWA's writings, Tiger is

convinced that Flurry, himself, does not want all of HWA's writings to be read by the public. Mr. Tiger of the breakaway group has written a fine legal brief of their position and they are offering it free to the public. Those who would like to obtain free copies of the writings of HWA on CD-ROM or who would like to learn more about the positions of Don Tiger and his associates should contact: Don Tiger, 1163 E. Ogden, #705-261, Naperville, IL 60563; tel. 630-235-9845. The group also has a helpful Web site for HWA's writings: [www.herbertwarmstrong.org](http://www.herbertwarmstrong.org) and a helpful legal materials site at: [www.tcog.org](http://www.tcog.org).

## **Global May Take Lead**

Until the last few months, it appeared that the UCGIA, the largest of the Armstrongite denominations, would be the leading Armstrongite church organization as we enter the new millennium. Just a few months ago their membership was over 20,000 and growing. Insiders tell us, however, that following the recent Hulmite split (see [AR68](#)) UCGIA membership is down to about 12,000 and falling.

Now, with the Philadelphians, Uniteds, Garner Ted groups, and other Armstrongites being diminished by splintering, there remains the Global Church of God (GCG) headquartered in San Diego, California as quite possibly the strongest Armstrongite organization. While getting accurate figures on the membership sizes of the Armstrongite groups is not easy, the latest reports on Global indicate that it has about 8,000 members meeting each week in about 275 congregations and video groups. With their message being proclaimed on their program *The World Ahead*, now seen and heard on almost a hundred television and radio stations, its membership is reported to be growing. It is quite likely that the GCG will find itself the leading Armstrongite group in the next millennium. And although rumors persist that evangelist Roderick Meredith may some day be replaced as the head of that group, our sources in San Diego tell us that for the time being he remains firmly in charge of that organization.

## **Lon Lacey's New Mexico Church**

Lon Lacey (AC/Pasadena, 1970) is now pastoring an Armstrongite group called The New Mexico Region Church of God. Lacey, who was ordained a WCG elder in 1992, began the new church in 1995. He has about 50 members in regular attendance plus a taped ministry that reaches another 1,000 and a quarterly magazine called *The Logos Journal: Understanding Our Times*. Those interested in subscribing should write: Lon Lacey, P.O. Box 20457, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

## **The Secret Church of Conspiracy**

### **Part II**

by John Trechak

In the first part of this extended article, I showed how the word "conspiracy" is used today in a wide variety of ways. The examples I gave, however, do not constitute an exhaustive list of active usages. Just since our last issue, for instance, I discovered a number of additional ways that the term is currently being used. For instance, in the

recently published book *The Divine Conspiracy*, Christian author Dallas Willard describes God's true followers as being part of a conspiracy. While I'm not sure I would have called the working of the Holy Spirit a conspiracy, Willard's use of the term demonstrates just how popular the term has become. Suffice it to say, unless we make some attempt to define what we mean by it, using the word "conspiracy" can lead to confusion.

Just as conspiracy talk comes up frequently in popular culture, ridicule of all conspiracy theories seems today almost de rigueur. In fact, one can find many instances in the press where any suggestion of conspiracy is thought to be immediate grounds for disparaging the theorist as a kook. Underlying this approach seems to be the notion that the mainstream press does such a thorough job of ferreting out truth that if we just trust their reporting, we can then go ahead and reject all other views.

Nevertheless, sometimes criticisms not just of individual theories, but of conspiracy theory approaches to understanding current events are justified or, at least, reach a certain level of intelligence.

### **The Paranoid Style**

Perhaps the most famous critique of conspiracy theory thinking ever published is Richard Hofstadter's essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" which came out first in the early 1960s and then in 1965 in a collection published by Knopf under the same title. The book is now out of print but can still be found in many U.S. libraries. All who are fascinated by the conspiracy theory phenomenon will find this short work of inestimable value.

While Hofstadter's lucid work is filled with page after page of relevant insights, I will point out just a few that relate most especially to the Armstrongites. Hofstadter correctly points out that conspiracy thinking can be found in the cultures of many nations, but that such thinking is particularly widespread in the United States. Hofstadter writes that he uses the phrase "paranoid style":

simply because no other word adequately evokes the qualities of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy that I have in mind. In using the expression "paranoid style," I am not speaking in a clinical sense, but borrowing a clinical term for other purposes.... It is the use of paranoid modes of expression by more or less normal people that makes the phenomenon significant.... the clinical paranoid sees the hostile and conspiratorial world in which he feels himself to be living as directed specifically *against him*; whereas the spokesman of the paranoid style finds it directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others.

Hofstadter then points out that while conspiracy theories can be found at both the political left and the political right, at the time he wrote, conspiracy theories in the United States seemed to Hofstadter to be most strongly held by those on the right who feared "a further attempt by a subversive power to make us part of one world socialist government." He then went on to describe some of the most popular conspiracy theories in American history. They included theories centered on purported secret cabals of an

international gold ring, slaveholders, European monarchs, munitions makers, the Pope, the Masons, and international bankers.

Hofstadter paid particular attention to conspiracy theories involving the Bavarian Illuminati who were accused of tampering in American politics as far back as during the administration of Thomas Jefferson. Ironically, Hofstadter, in what is almost a premonition of latter-day Armstrongite fantasies, points out that in years past, the astonishing theory developed that the Illuminati cabal had, itself, been infiltrated by another cabal - that of the Jesuits. Along the same lines, one famous book of the late 18th century talked of a "triple conspiracy" composed of anti-Christians, Freemasons, and Illuminati, all coordinatedly working to destroy true religion and social order.

Hofstadter's essay is must reading for anyone interested in conspiracy theories and United States history. But it should be pointed out that for all its worth, it is rather polemical. The essay makes no mention, for instance, that the underlying justification of our own American Revolution was a widely held conspiracy theory, namely that the King of England was working to gradually usurp the natural rights of Americans. Jefferson, himself, argued that such a conspiracy was underfoot and made that his central justification for revolt against the British. You can read about that conspiracy theory in a document called The Declaration of Independence.

Some scholars have pointed out that Jefferson's conspiracy theory, itself, hearkens back to an even earlier one in England. There in the mid-1600s, the suspicion arose that the Stuart kings were conspiring to make Catholicism the state religion of the British Isles. Some scholars, pointing to the fact that the British Isles had a Catholic population of only about five percent, scoff at the theory. But other scholars point to the fact that Charles II did indeed convert to Catholicism as did his brother and successor James II, and that the latter in making appointments, particularly to military leadership positions, had exhibited a strong preference for Catholics. It was widespread fears of just such a Stuart-Popish conspiracy that led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and to the ascent of William of Orange to the throne of England. In fact, it was John Locke's writings during that turbulent era about those anti-liberal conspiratorial movements that inspired much of Jefferson's own liberal views, and his fears of the King's conspiracy as detailed in the Declaration of Independence.

Thus while Hofstadter makes some excellent observations about the limitations of conspiracy thinking, not all such theories should be ridiculed. Many have played an important role in history. In fact, Hofstadter, himself, admits that many of the better conspiracy theories contain more than a little truth. Nevertheless, he does make a strong case that many who get caught up in conspiracy theories tend to exhibit irrational and almost paranoid modes of reasoning.

### **The Armstrongite Variety**

But what about some of the unique conspiracy theories that have engulfed the Worldwide Church of God and the Armstrongite churches? To understand where some of those have come from it is necessary to review a bit of WCG history.

Because, as Hofstadter so competently demonstrates, conspiracy theory thinking has been so prominent in American history, it should not surprise us that such thinking has been lurking in the WCG as far back as any church old-timers can recall. Herbert W. Armstrong, himself, subscribed to and actively taught a number of conspiracy theories. For example, Armstrong taught that top German militarists and financiers were actively working behind the scenes to bring about a united Germany that was to control a United Europe which, in turn, was to become an enemy of Britain and the United States. Armstrong also taught that the Catholic Church was actively working behind the scenes to extend the influence of the Roman Church to such an extent that a Pope-dominated Catholicism would eventually be reestablished as the state religion of all Europe and beyond. While Armstrong described such notions as prophecies, they were, in fact, conspiracy theories on a very grand scale.

While Armstrong's prophecies/theories were quite colorful (and not always lacking in a certain insight), anyone who makes a study of the varieties of American fundamentalist belief will discover that they were not all that unique. Similarly colorful interpretations of Bible prophecy combined with grand conspiracy theories can be found in many American religious groups. In fact, Hofstadter makes the interesting observation that conspiracy theories go hand-in-hand with almost all Bible-based apocalyptic thinking.

### **Jewish Conspiracies**

In all fairness to HWA, it should also be pointed out, that in stark contrast to some of the modern-day Armstrongites, HWA, himself, did not ascribe to many, let alone all, conspiracy theories. One popular theory that he not only did not ascribe to, but which he criticized, is the so-called Jewish conspiracy.

Conspiracy theories centering on Jews have been around for a long time and they come in many varieties. The most mild of the variants makes a little sense in that we all know that most people are prejudiced in favor of others who have philosophical, religious, or political views, or a personal history akin to their own. That being the case, it is not foolish to think that people in business and personal dealings tend to give a preference, even if only unconsciously, to others of their own race, religion, ethnicity, or political persuasion.

In *Tribes* (New York: Random House, 1992) a book primarily about international business networking, author Joel Kotkin does not talk of the Jews being a conspiracy, but he does point to the Jews as being the prototypical international business network based on ethnicity and shared values and experience. He also says there are other racial and ethnic groups that behave similarly in the business world. But when most Armstrongites talk about a "Jewish Conspiracy," they are not talking about something so prosaic. Most seem to be engulfed in a Jewish conspiracy theory going back at least to 19th century Russia where resentment toward Jews led to infamous pogroms. In that version of Jewish conspiracy theory, the Jews were viewed as a homogenous racial group, organized beyond that of any military organization and bent on world conquest. Prominent in that theory is the so-called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an odd writing purported to be written by leading Jews who were supposedly outlining their plans for world conquest a hundred years ago, but who were not smart enough to avoid leaving a paper trail.

For decades now, the *Protocols* have been considered by reputable historians as unauthentic writings put together by anti-Semites bent on inciting pogroms and in expelling Jews from Russia. Because *The Protocols* play such an important part in Jewish conspiracy thinking, are so widely cited by Armstrongite conspiracy theorists, and because they offer such valuable lessons in conspiracies and conspiracy hoaxes, at this juncture I am presenting a short essay that is available at a number of Web sites dealing with anti-Semitism. On the Web the following essay is attributed to Dr. Daniel Keren who, nevertheless, informs us that it was actually written by Prof. Saul Wallach of Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

---

The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the most notorious and most successful work of modern anti-Semitism, draws on popular anti-Semitic notions which have their roots in medieval Europe from the time of the Crusades. The libels that the Jews used blood of Christian children for the Feast of Passover, poisoned the wells and spread the plague were pretexts for the wholesale destruction of Jewish communities throughout Europe. Tales were circulated among the masses of secret rabbinical conferences whose aim was to subjugate and exterminate the Christians, and motifs like these are found in early anti-Semitic literature.

The conceptual inspiration for the *Protocols* can be traced back to the time of the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. At that time, a French Jesuit named Abbe Barruel, representing reactionary elements opposed to the Revolution, published in 1797 a treatise blaming the Revolution on a secret conspiracy operating through the Order of Freemasons. Barruel's idea was nonsense, since the French nobility at the time was heavily Masonic, but he was influenced by a Scottish mathematician named Robison who was opposed to the Masons. In his treatise, Barruel did not himself blame the Jews, who were emancipated as a result of the Revolution. However, in 1806, Barruel circulated a forged letter, probably sent to him by members of the state police opposed to Napoleon Bonaparte's liberal policy toward the Jews, calling attention to the alleged part of the Jews in the conspiracy he had earlier attributed to the Masons. This myth of an international Jewish conspiracy reappeared later on in 19th century Europe in places such as Germany and Poland.

The direct predecessor of the *Protocols* can be found in the pamphlet *Dialogues in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesque*, published by the non-Jewish French satirist Maurice Joly in 1864. In his *Dialogues*, which make no mention of the Jews, Joly attacked the political ambitions of the emperor Napoleon III using the imagery of a diabolical plot in Hell. The *Dialogues* were caught by French authorities soon after their publication and Joly was tried and sentenced to prison for his pamphlet.

Joly's *Dialogues*, while intended as a political satire, soon fell into the hands of a German anti-Semite named Hermann Goedsche writing under the name of Sir John Retcliffe. Goedsche was a postal clerk and a spy for the Prussian secret police. He had been forced to leave the postal work due to his part in forging evidence in the prosecution against the Democratic leader Benedict Waldeck in 1849. Goedsche adapted Joly's *Dialogues* into a mythical tale of a Jewish conspiracy as part of a series of novels entitled *Biarritz* which

appeared in 1868. In a chapter called "The Jewish Cemetery in Prague and the Council of Representatives of the Twelve Tribes of Israel," he spins the fantasy of a secret centennial rabbinical conference which meets at midnight and whose purpose is to review the past hundred years and to make plans for the next century.

Goedsche's plagiarism of Joly's *Dialogues* soon found its way to Russia. It was translated into Russian in 1872, and a consolidation of the "Council of Representatives" [chapter] under the name "Rabbi's Speech" appeared in Russian in 1891. These works no doubt furnished the Russian secret police (Okhrana) with a means with which to strengthen the position of the weak Czar Nicholas II and discredit the reforms of the liberals who sympathized with the Jews. During the Dreyfus case of 1893-1895, agents of the Okhrana in Paris redacted the earlier works of Joly and Goedsche into a new edition which they called the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The manuscript of the Protocols was brought to Russia in 1895 and was printed privately in 1897.

The *Protocols* did not become public until 1905, when Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War was followed by the revolution in the same year, leading to the promulgation of a constitution and institution of the Duma. In the wake of these events, the reactionary "Union of the Russian Nation" or "Black Hundreds" organization sought to incite popular feeling against the Jews, who they blamed for the revolution and the Constitution. To this end they used the *Protocols*, which was first published in a public edition by the mystic priest Sergius Nilus in 1905. The *Protocols* were part of a propaganda campaign which accompanied the pogroms of 1905 inspired by the Okhrana. A variant text of the *Protocols* was published by George Butmi in 1906 and again in 1907. The edition of 1906 was found among the Czar's collection, even though he had already recognized the work as a forgery. In his later editions, Nilus claimed that the *Protocols* had been read secretly at the First Zionist Congress at Basel in 1897, while Butmi in his edition wrote that they had no connection with the new Zionist movement, but rather were part of the Masonic conspiracy.

In the civil war following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the reactionary White Armies made extensive use of the *Protocols* to incite widespread slaughters of Jews. At the same time, Russian emigrants brought the *Protocols* to Western Europe, where the Nilus edition served as the basis for many translations, starting in 1920. Just after its appearance in London in 1920, Lucien Wolf exposed the *Protocols* as a plagiarism of the earlier work of Joly and Goedsche, in a pamphlet of the Jewish Board of Deputies. The following year, in 1921, the story of the forgery was published in a series of articles in the *London Times* by Philip Grave, the paper's correspondent in Constantinople. A whole book documenting the forgery was also published in the same year in America by Herman Bernstein. Nevertheless, the *Protocols* continued to circulate widely. They were even sponsored by Henry Ford in the United States until 1927 and formed an important part of the Nazi's justification of genocide of the Jews in World War II.

---

In addition to the astonishing Jewish conspiracy alleged in the *Protocols*, another variant of Jewish conspiracy theory is the Jewish bankers theory. This variant became more popular after World War II when the death of millions of Jews in concentration camps made it obvious to many, even to some Nazi troops who had been weaned on the

*Protocols* by Hitler, that as a group the Jews, rather than being a highly organized and massive conspiracy, sixty years ago at least were, in fact, quite disorganized and rather helpless. But as for Jewish bankers, many feel that is a different story. And to some extent that may once have been true. The Rothschilds, the famous family of Jewish bankers, were most certainly an important factor in European politics during the 18th and 19th centuries. Unfortunately for the Jewish-bankers-as-world-controllers theory, while still around, the Rothschilds have nowhere near the power and influence they had two hundred, or even one hundred, years ago. In fact, if one wishes to find banker or financier conspiracies today, one should be looking at the great banking and financial establishments: the Federal Reserve, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc. This is not the place to get into conspiracy theories regarding such financial leviathans. Those interested in such topics will find a huge amount of valuable information in libraries and on the Internet. Suffice it to say, a bit of research will produce much about those organizations, but precious little of worth about any Jewish banker group secretly running the entire world today.

### **Enter/Exit Stanley Rader**

With all of the above as historical backdrop, we now come to some of the most colorful and virulent of Armstrongite conspiracy theories, those centering on Stanley R. Rader. From about 1967 to about 1980, Rader, a CPA and attorney, was WCG founder Herbert Armstrong's chief advisor and most influential confidant. In the late seventies, especially after the ouster of Armstrong's wayward son, Garner Ted, Rader's influence on the Armstrong organization was immense. In fact, for a time, it was well known that Rader's executive secretary, Virginia Kineston, was authorized by Rader to single-handedly run the Worldwide Church operation while Armstrong and Rader flew to distant lands to meet with world leaders or bask in the sun at their Tucson, Arizona hideaways.

Rader's immense power within the Armstrong organization was no secret. In the late seventies, some in the Armstrong organization actually feared that once their church patriarch went to his reward, Rader would be the one who would inherit the Armstrong religious and financial empire. Even the Pasadena *Star-News* (10/12/78) in a front-page headline about Rader said, "Ex-Jewish Convert May Inherit Church's Wealth." Others who were more astute, however, realized that such an event was not likely to occur. Why? Because Rader was perceived as still being Jewish. While we are not aware that Rader was ever any kind of a practicing Jew, he was, nevertheless, from a Jewish family. And as such, in the culture of the Armstrongites, no matter that he had been baptized in a Hong Kong bathtub by Herbert Armstrong who soon thereafter elevated Rader to the rank of evangelist. To the vast majority of Armstrongites, Rader was still a Jew. And not only that, to many Armstrongites he was the most suspicious of Jews for he was trained in the ways of finance and the law, and he was even from that most Jewish of states - New York!

To Armstrongites steeped in conspiracy theories there was only one conclusion that could be drawn from such facts. Rader, many believed, was surely part of the great Jewish conspiracy. With such an albatross hung around his neck, the reality was Rader would never have been able to gain the full confidence and loyalty of a ministry and membership that did not consider him one of their own. But that reality did not matter much to Rader's enemies, especially those loyal to Garner Ted Armstrong, and the theory

that Rader was part of a Jewish conspiracy was promulgated widely and became an entrenched part of Armstrongite folklore.

The Rader myth was spread by many conspiracy theorists. In a tape widely distributed in WCG circles, Bryce Clark of the WCG breakoff Church of God Eternal hinted at Rader being a part of "The Conspiracy." Ex-Worldwider Larry Gilbert Johnson, founder of the Laodicean Church of God, and later a resident of the Arizona prison system, taught that Rader was a part of "The Conspiracy." And in handmade leaflets distributed on car windshields in Pasadena in 1978, so, did world chess champion Bobby Fischer (see [AR4](#)) who went so far as to call Rader "satanic."

Today, with Rader having been out of the WCG limelight for well over a decade and a half, one would have thought that his name would hardly be remembered by the current generation of Armstrongites. That, however, is not the case. We regularly receive letters asking for news about Rader. A few times each year, it seems, someone even writes asking where they may obtain copies of Rader's book *Against the Gates of Hell*. And some folks actually admit that they are devoted fans of Rader. One such admirer recently wrote:

In UCGIA we have been told that Mr. Rader is in league with some of the most powerful men in the world. He has been mentioned as being a part of The Conspiracy, a member of the Bilderberg group, a consultant to world leaders, and an advisor to kings. But I for one do not care. As one who was in the Worldwide Church of God during its most wonderful era, I recall the way Mr. Herbert Armstrong spoke of Mr. Rader. Certainly, it was because of Mr. Rader's love of the Church, his wisdom, and his courage, that Mr. Armstrong's message was able to be spread as it once was.

I for one think that the Church's real troubles and decline began when Mr. Rader was retired. And I wish there was a way for him to be brought back into the Churches of God to help straighten things out. Instead, we are hearing such stupid theories I often think some of the people have been taking stupid pills.

There is plenty of evidence that since Rader's official retirement from WCG in the early 1980s he has had some dealings with leaders in the WCG. That is nothing unusual, local attorneys tell us. Top corporate executives, and particularly lawyers and CPAs with expertise in arcane matters, we are told, are frequently retained by a corporation long after leaving full-time duties because of the value of their expertise (and also as a way to guarantee their silence, no doubt). But does Rader actually control all decisions that are now being made in the WCG? We have seen no evidence of that. Nor have we seen any evidence that Rader is the secret owner of Ambassador Auditorium, as some are claiming. We have made searches of county records and we have not found that Rader is actually owner of any properties believed to be owned by the WCG. Nor have we seen any evidence that Rader is controlling any of the WCG spinoff groups, let alone all of them, as some theorists are insisting. Furthermore, when often seen about town at less-than-exotic watering holes, at discount book stores browsing through novels, or driving his dated sport-utility vehicle to his monthly dental hygiene appointments, Rader today is hardly the image of one of Pasadena's elite, let alone one of the planet's most powerful oligarchs.

Nevertheless, the stupid rumors persist, and even continue to coalesce into the developing mythology of the Secret Church of Conspiracy. We will debunk more of those myths in a future issue. But for now, for those who want to learn more about the true origins of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, we suggest checking out the data at: <http://www.igc.apc.org/ddickerson/protocols.html>.

[Next time: Jesuits, Masons, and the WCG]

## **Caligula, Clinton, and Modern Rome**

The Clinton sex scandal has, of course, inspired more great journalism than we could even allude to in these pages. But one conservative journalist's comments caught our eye as likely to be of particular interest to ex-WCG readers. The journalist is Eric Margolis, an internationally syndicated columnist and broadcaster who also puts out *Foreign Correspondent*, an online news service. In his 9/20/98 release, there was this intriguing analysis:

Watching President Clinton both humiliate himself and torture the nation has made me think a great deal about the Roman Republic. So have others. This week the *Wall Street Journal* titled a slashing column about Clinton "American Caligula." A nifty headline, but not really accurate. Roman Emperor Caligula was a demented monster whose grotesque sexual depravities knew no bounds. Clinton is merely an artful liar, and a very clever knave. Exposure of his clumsy, college dorm sexual antics befouled the White House and brought shame on the presidency. But to compare Clinton's small-time smut to the towering infamies of gloriously wicked Caligula is to gravely defame the ignobelist Roman of them all.

Still, remembering Rome at this time of constitutional and moral crisis is certainly apropos. The American Constitution is the greatest political achievement in mankind's history. Its issue, the American Republic, is the freest, most democratic, and successful nation ever created.

America's founding fathers patterned their majestic creation upon the ancient Roman Republic. The United States was to be the New Rome, wherein citizens of upstanding civic, moral and intellectual virtue would guide the nation's course. That is why the coat of arms of the Roman Republic hangs proudly on the wall of the U.S. Senate, and why Washington is a city of neo-classical buildings with doric columns and Latin inscriptions.

And that brings me to Regulus. As Clinton continues to spew lies and evasions, we should recall not Caligula, but Marcus Atilius Regulus. During the Roman Republic, the Senate would elect a man of the highest ability, character, dignity and respect to be consul, a position that combined military and political leadership. The American presidency is directly based on the Roman consular office.

During the First Punic War, a Roman army, led by Consul Regulus, was forced to surrender in 255 B.C. by superior Carthaginian forces. They temporarily freed Regulus to return to Rome in hopes he would negotiate a peace favorable to Carthage. If he failed, the Carthaginians warned, he would be tortured to death. Regulus gave his word he would return. Upon reaching Rome, Regulus advised the Senate not to make peace with Carthage, but to pursue the war with vigor. Then, heedless of the pleas of the Senate and his family, he returned to the cruel

Carthaginians. A Roman's word was his bond, said Regulus, and must not be violated, His honor, and that of the Republic, said Regulus, required him to keep the pledge. Regulus was tortured to death.

Following his praise of Regulus, Margolis goes on to quote his no-nonsense superior Patricia Kinnaird who said, "If the Pope were caught in the Vatican with a nun, he'd have to resign immediately. End of story."

While some of us are not so sure the Vatican would be found to have such lofty principles or that Clinton should be looking to the Pope, or to Roman consuls, as his standard bearer, Margolis is, nevertheless, an interesting writer. Those who would like to subscribe to his free e-mail report service should send an e-note to: majordomo@foreigncorrespondent.com with the message in the body: subscribe foreignc.

## Book Notes

In our last issue we mentioned the writings of Robert D. Brinsmead. Since that edition appeared, we have learned that the two California addresses we gave are no longer operational. Those wanting to subscribe to Brinsmead's *Verdict* should write directly to him at: Verdict, R.D. Brinsmead, Duranbah Road, Duranbah, NSW 2487, Australia. Those wanting to read his latest writings about the historical Jesus and the religious implications of those discoveries may do so on the Internet at: <http://home.istar.ca/~wkrossa>.

*The Late, Great Hal Lindsey*, the latest book by Dave MacPherson, documents how televangelist Hal Lindsey was influenced by occult beliefs including pyramidology and astrology and how a number of Christian writers have accused him of plagiarism. For information, contact: POST, Inc., P.O. Box 1226, Monticello, Utah 84535.

*Anti-Semitism: A Disease of the Mind* by Theodore Isaac Rubin, M.D. (New York: Continuum Books, 1990). This easy-to-read 146-page study is one of the best that we have seen on the psychology of anti-Semitism. Dr. Rubin makes many observations we have noticed ourselves in our own experiences with Armstrongites. For instance, Dr. Rubin points out, "The anti-Semite's most buried and unconscious secret - from himself and others - is the desire to be a Jew." We think this may explain why there are so many fervent anti-Semites among church groups that from a Protestant perspective are quite "Jewish" in their keeping of OT sabbaths and holy days, their observance of OT dietary laws, etc. Those who are interested in anti-Semitism or who wonder about its hidden psychology, will probably find this book as instructive as we did.

A fair number of AR readers have written us asking for an opinion piece on *The Bible Code*, the popular book by journalist Michael Drosnin and published by Simon & Schuster. We have decided not to do an article on it simply because there is so much critical information about it already available both in printed form and particularly on the Internet. We should, however, mention one outstanding article on the subject. In "The Bible Code - Divine Pattern or Preposterous Chimera?" published in the Summer 1998 issue of *United Israel Bulletin*, Prof. James D. Tabor succinctly analyzes the problems of

Drosnin's thesis and concludes with this intriguing statement:

The mathematical debate will go on and perhaps reach definitive resolution by the scientist. My own conclusion is that the verdict is still out on the final question: Has some author/s or Author/s inserted patterned messages into the text of the Hebrew Bible, or can all the patterns, so far discovered, be accounted for by statistical factors of chance?

For over 50 years the editor of the *United Israel Bulletin* has written and spoken about another "Code" found in the text of the Hebrew Bible. This patterned code has nothing to do with ELS skips or anything esoteric or technically mathematical. It has to do with a peculiar coded style that Horowitz maintains was used by all the writers of the Hebrew Bible and duplicated by no one else or in any other book. Editor Horowitz learned of this from his teacher Moses Guibbory whom he encountered in old Palestine in the 1920s and 30s. Horowitz has subsequently devoted his life's study to this particular phenomenon and its implications for understanding the message of Moses and the Prophets. In a future article I will offer an exposition of this "other Code" of the Hebrew Bible.

The address for *United Israel Bulletin* is 1123 Broadway, New York, NY 10010. A subscription is \$10 per year.

*The Bible Code* was not Simon & Schuster's first book in the decoded-prophecy-in-hidden-text genre. In 1991 they published *Nostradamus: The End of the Millennium (Prophecies: 1992 to 2001)* by V.J. Hewitt and Peter Lorie. This beautifully done volume, rich in full-color illustrations, detailed text, and numerous charts, is no longer available through regular bookstores. However, two of our readers, Joe and Denise Nazarini of Ohio, found a copy in a used-book store and purchased it as a Christmas present for AR. The book is instructive. According to its dust jacket, author V. J. Hewitt "spent more than a decade developing a precise numerical decoding system that she has applied to the famous quatrains from Nostradamus's *The Centuries*. This extraordinary code, when applied, permits an accuracy that has never before been achieved, providing us with precise dates and locations out of the sometimes confusing texts." And now, seven years after the appearance of this earlier Simon & Schuster code book, how well have the prophecies of this code matched up with reality? Here are some of the prophecies contained in the 1991 book:

- 1992: "George Bush Re-elected"
- 1993: "The California Earthquake"
- 1993: "San Diego Disappears Beneath the Sea"
- 1993: "Sound-Waves Kill Cancer"
- 1993-95: "America Burns"
- 1993-96: "A New Hole in the Ozone Layer"
- 1995: "Black Holes Explained"
- 1995-98: "Israel Defeated by her Arab Neighbors"
- 1996: "Margaret Thatcher Reelected"
- 1996: "Medicine Reverses the Aging Process"
- 1997: "Russian Spacecraft Crashes to Earth"
- 1998: "Outerspace Aliens Televised"
- 2000: "A New World Religion"
- 2000: "Mission to Mars"

It is easy to see why Simon & Schuster is no longer distributing this decoded Nostradamus prophecy book. And we wonder if in a few years the new Drosnin code book will likewise be quietly removed from bookstore shelves.

*Sex, Politics and the End of Morality*, by J. Gordon Muir, MD, FFPM, seems to have arrived at a most appropriate time in our history. In a previous book, *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People*, Co-author Muir showed how the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s had been greatly aided by the famous 1948 and 1953 Kinsey Reports, but that those reports had really been elaborate and carefully crafted scientific frauds designed to legitimize profligate and deviant sexual behavior. In his latest book, Muir builds upon his earlier revelations about Kinsey and shows how the sexual revolution that Kinsey helped spawn has produced a Pandora's box of societal ills: new venereal diseases, further erosion of family structures, the trivialization of sex, and now, the Washington sex circus. For many on the religious right, the Muir book will have arrived not a minute too soon.

In advertising the book, the publisher has teased the public with "Why Zippergate is no big deal" and "Why Republicans have less spunk than the neutered First Dog." But for many, Muir's most important contribution will be seen in his revelation that so-called "scientific" data, particularly when about human behaviors, can be seriously flawed due to both inappropriate research methods used in obtaining the data and then by inappropriate applications of the flawed data. Of Muir's new book, author and sexual researcher Edward W. Eicher has written, "This book describes the successful reengineering of society in a sexually pathological direction."

Some Ambassador alumni will remember Dr. Muir from his days at Bricket Wood (class of 1971) and later *Quest* magazine. Today, besides being a writer, Dr. Muir is President of Lochinvar Inc., a medical research and information organization based in North Carolina. *Sex, Politics and the End of Morality* can be found in larger book stores but those who prefer to order the 315-page book directly (\$17.95 plus \$3.50 shipping) should write to Lochinvar Inc., 1381 Kildaire Farm Rd., Suite 123, Cary, NC 27511. For credit card orders, phone 800-247-6553.

## **Brenda Denzler Awarded Doctorate**

We are very happy to report that Brenda Denzler, a longtime reader and occasional contributor to these pages, received her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Duke University this past May. A former Worldwider who attended AC-Big Sandy from 1971 through 1974, Denzler (nee Reser) decided to go back to college in order to earn an accredited degree in religion after she was disfellowshipped in 1982 for doubting that one needed to keep a seventh-day sabbath in order to be saved. In 1987 she graduated summa cum laude, with honors, from Wichita State University in Kansas. As a recipient of a Mellon Fellowship, one of the country's most prestigious awards for humanities scholars, Denzler matriculated at Duke University in the fall of 1987, where she was also awarded the Gurney Harris Kearns Fellowship (from Duke's Graduate Religion program) and several other fellowships from various honors societies.

Denzler attributes her professional focus on religious studies to her prior fifteen years of involvement in the Worldwide Church of God. "In Worldwide we were taught that the WCG was recapturing the true Christian religion, as it was set up in the time of Christ," she recently recalled. "I began my professional career by learning more about the New Testament period. It was a very illuminating experience - one that I would recommend for all those who are trapped in the narrow anti-intellectual thought-world that fundamentalist religious associations tend to foster. In graduate school I expanded my field of study to encompass the early and medieval periods, and wound up my studies by exploring facets of the contemporary American religious scene."

Brenda's 475-page dissertation was titled, "The Lure of the Edge: Science, Religion and the Alien Abduction Movement" and deals with the ways in which the UFO community, particularly abductees, uses science and religion as frameworks for trying to understand the UFO phenomenon and abductions. The dissertation is currently in the hands of a large university press that has expressed an interest in publishing it. Those interested in studying her thesis now, however, can purchase a copy by writing to: UMI, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., P.O. Box 1346, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 and requesting publication no. 9839451, Duke University.

Along with her sons Todd and Graham, two dogs, two cats, and two boa constrictors, Brenda currently resides in Chapel Hill, North Carolina where, besides looking for a university teaching position, she works as a writer and editor. She is also pursuing further research on the UFO phenomenon and tells us, "This is an ongoing story and one that I think will increase in significance as we begin the new millennium." Brenda says she would enjoy hearing from AR readers who may have had UFO or abduction experiences. You may write to Brenda Denzler at P.O. Box 995, Carrboro, NC 27510.

## Letters

Tonight, as I write, it is Rosh Hashanah, Jewish New Year, the Feast of Trumpets. Every year on Rosh Hashanah I put a sign out in front of my house. It reads, "The end of the world has been postponed (again) due to a lack of trained trumpeters." People passing by just stare at it - then keep their distance.

-Ohio

It is true that the WCG and its offshoots have had their doctrinal errors. But I hope you don't think that churches who are "orthodox" by Bible Belt standards have all the answers. Just reading the local papers in our part of the country one should be able to figure out that in spite of what evangelical preachers tell the public, many of the Bible Belt's respected churches are not being blessed. In fact, I really doubt that the religious values of the Bible Belt as taught in so-called "orthodox" churches have really contributed much to the well-being of our part of the country. I sometimes think there is more sin here and more resulting heartache, than in parts of the nation usually pictured as more worldly. And when natural disasters strike, they strike just as hard here, if not harder - almost as though God has turned his back on much of the Bible Belt.

-Alabama

*Editor: I would not want to venture a guess as to what parts of our nation are more sinful or why that might be. But a number of readers have made comments along the lines of the above. For example, David Whitaker of Oklahoma has pointed out to us that many statistics suggest that the Bible Belt has a higher percentage of adultery, incest, rape, and other sex sins than other parts of the country. He recently sent us an article from the Enid News & Eagle (Enid, Oklahoma; April 26, 1998; p. A-2) which began with this sad observation:*

*OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)-Oklahomans pride themselves on family values. Statistics show they marry young. Unfortunately, they marry often.*

*Although it is in the buckle of the Bible Belt, conservative Oklahoma with its population of 3 million, has a divorce rate more than twice as high as New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and other populous states. Only neighboring Arkansas has a higher divorce rate, if you discount Nevada where "quickie" divorces are big business.*

*As for whether or not God is blessing or protecting certain churches more than others, I would not want to venture an opinion. However, Mr. Durward Boyles of Alabama wrote us that he thought many churches in his part of the country were, at the least, not being supernaturally protected by God. Along with his comments he included a shocking clipping from the Religion section of the May 8 edition of the Birmingham News. In an article titled "Deadly tornado tests strength of congregations' spiritual foundations," the paper described how on April 8 a tornado swept through parts of Jefferson County, Alabama taking 34 lives and a surprisingly high toll on local church buildings.*

*In a huge side bar, the paper listed some of the more than 20 churches that suffered major damage or had been totally destroyed: Bethel Baptist Church, Cathedral of Deliverance, Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Ernest Chapel Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Edgewater Baptist Church, Edgewater United Methodist Church, Faith Temple Missionary Baptist Church, First Baptist Church-Gary in Ensley, First Baptist Church-Sylvan Springs, First Baptist Church-West Ensley, Ford Chapel CME Church, Fountain Chapel AME Church, House of Deliverance Holiness Church, Lily Grove Baptist Church, McDonald Chapel United Methodist Church, Oak Grove First Baptist Church, Open Door Church, Rock Creek Church of God, Union Hill Baptist Church in Rock Creek, and West Concord Church of Christ.*

*Oddly, when asked about the massive destruction to church buildings in the area, most ministers there said it was "a miracle" that more churches were not destroyed or lives lost.*

I was surprised to read in [AR68](#) that there are other AR readers besides myself who take an interest in the writings of Michael Parenti. But I was shocked by your comment that he is an atheist. I read his book *Dirty Truths* and I was not just impressed with his powerful writing, but in his condemnation of our evil society he struck me as being akin to an Old Testament prophet giving out the warning message to a sinful Israel. He is much stronger and focused in his message than even Garner Ted Armstrong was in his heyday.

Assuming you are telling the truth about his religious convictions, or lack thereof, from whence do you think he gets his zeal and righteous indignation? I wish I could understand how such things can be.

-Washington

*Editor: You are probably one of only about a half dozen AR readers who have ever read Parenti. While he does not make it clear in his writings, in his taped lecture "The Political Uses of Religion" Parenti makes it very clear that he is an atheist.*

*Most people who come from a Christian background tend to equate atheism with unrighteousness and tend to equate a professed belief in Christ with righteousness. That has been my own bias for most of my life. But in looking back over more than thirty years of involvement with Armstrongism and organized religion, I must admit that along with having known some very fine Christians along the way, I have also known quite a few who, while professing to know Jesus and even claiming to be doing the work of God, were still some of the most morally deficient human beings I have ever known. Author David Robinson once pointed out to me how famed Christian psychiatrist M. Scott Peck in his book People of the Lie makes the startling claim that some of the most evil people on earth are lurking in Christian churches. Peck wrote that that is so because true evil recognizes itself as such and then attempts to hide the terrible reality from all by resorting to churches as hideaways. I think Peck may be overstating things somewhat but, then again, there are some ex-WCG preachers who say, based on their years in the Armstrong churches, that such is indeed the case.*

*Conversely, while all of us can think of some professing atheists who lack moral qualities, I have known a fair number of atheists who were very upstanding and highly principled individuals. For instance, I recall an instructor I had many years ago at UCLA who, besides teaching and working as a composer and executive for CBS, had given years of his life to the peace movement. War, to him, was an abomination and he spent many years of his life donating his time and money toward, as he saw it, keeping our country's youth from being used as cannon fodder in foreign lands. One day after class we were having a private chat and, because he knew of my work with this publication and my religious training, he started to tell me about his own religious views. I will never forget how tears actually welled up in his eyes when he said, "I wish I could have religious faith, but I just can't." Here was a man who wanted to have faith, but for some reason could not, yet he was quite a dedicated and sensitive moralist who sacrificed many years of his life and much of his wealth in the furtherance of humanitarian causes.*

*I can think of many other such examples. Author Jack London is another such individual that comes to mind. I recently commented to a friend how I thought London's book The People of the Abyss, a study of the working conditions of turn-of-the century Englishmen, may well be one of the most Christian-spirited books written in this century. Yet, London was not a believer in the reality of the spirit world and his philosophy contained a large dose of what most would call agnosticism or even atheism. In spite of all that, London not only considered Jesus of Nazareth probably his greatest literary hero, he studied the Bible quite carefully throughout his entire life and incorporated many of its metaphors and teachings into his own writings.*

*Of course, you are already aware of the Bible teaching that faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8) and it is not something individuals can just will up. If you would like to do a study of that doctrine, I know both Ernest Martin at A.S.K. and Jim Coram at Concordant Publishing have done some excellent writing on that subject. David Whitaker (710 E. Chestnut Ave., Enid, OK 73701) has also written an eye-opening paper on how the Bible actually views atheists somewhat differently than many of us have been taught.*

*Finally, you might want to consider what Jesus said in Luke 6:46 regarding calling him Lord while not doing the things that he taught. I have to wonder if there is not a corollary to that idea as regards people who profess atheism, but who actually do many of the things Jesus taught. I certainly am not advocating atheism, but I must admit I would rather have as neighbors folks who professed atheism but who lived by the Golden Rule, as opposed to people who professed Christ but ignored the Golden Rule. If you think that is a radical idea, compare Matt. 7:21-23 with Matt. 21:28-31 and give it some thought.*

John, I am in contact now with an international group called The Freedom From Religion Foundation, with Editor Annie Laurie Gaylor and her husband ex-street-preacher Dan Barker. They publish a magazine called *Freethought Today*, and it often features articles exposing priests and ministers who molest their parishioners. They would like to learn more about the history of the WCG....

I am finally getting on my feet after 137 days in the nut house where I was because of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. While in that institution I met a gal whose four-year-old daughter was run over by a pickup truck. The mother was messed up mentally over that. But we got to know each other and now we are together and we are getting married. I am 47 and going to get married, like my Dad did, at the same age!

Anyway, The Freedom From Religion group carried me for over nine months when I was broke because my relatives ran up \$2,700 in bills on me while I was in the hospital. This atheist foundation was more Christ-like than most of the Christian magazines I subscribed to. Their address is: Freedom From Religion Foundation, P.O. Box 750, Madison, WI 53701. I tried to send them your last issue, but I sent it back to you by mistake. The meds I was on were pretty strong.

-Nebraska

*Editor: The Freedom From Religion Foundation Web site is: [www.infidels.com](http://www.infidels.com). Incidentally, newer AR readers who are not familiar with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and how it relates to the WCG-Armstrongism experience should read Brenda Denzler's excellent article on that subject in [AR33](#), our Oct. 1985 issue.*

As a former WCG tithe-payer, I have written to Mr. Tkach Jr. and Mr. Albrecht asking for the return of my money. I have not had a Christian reply from either. The devilish teachings of the %\$#@\* WCG have cost me dearly and caused much suffering to my disabled mother and to my father who is now dead. Now I badly need my money returned but the WCG leaders don't give a damn.

-Paul Brown  
England

*Editor: We have known of hundreds of former members who, once they realized they had been duped, kindly asked the WCG for their tithes to be returned. The standard answer that the WCGs lawyers have instructed them to give is, "The tithes you contributed have already been spent, so there is nothing to give back." Of course, what they are really saying smugly is, "Get lost, we stole your money fair and square." As far as we know, the only exceptions to such stonewalling have occurred when WCG leaders have been confronted with physical violence coupled with the genuine likelihood of greatly escalated future violence. Of course, we don't suggest such a course of action as it would most certainly not be a Christian approach to the problem.*

I am not a WCG member, but a former member, and I was angry and bitter for a long time after leaving. But with God's help, I have learned to forgive them, even though the scars will always be there. I have seen such a change in the members up here. They seem so much happier and more loving than before. I truly believe the Holy Spirit and their increased knowledge of Jesus Christ and his love for all of us has brought this change about.

-Mrs. Dorothy McCullough  
Canada

I have been subscribing to the publications of Mr. Bill Dankenbring, Mr. Norman Edwards, and many other WCG offshoots. I can't believe how much they are into vicious Clinton bashing. I remember when Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was alive how he taught that we were to have respect for our leaders in government even though they were unconverted and made mistakes. Wow, have things changed, even among those who say they are following in Mr. Armstrong's footsteps.

-Oregon

More than twenty years ago, when you folks came out with the ["In Bed With Garner Ted"](#) story, you really shocked some of us. At first we felt that even if what you wrote was true, such things should not have been put in print. But once we came to see that what you wrote was true and that we had been duped by the Armstrongs, we started to look at the world without the rose-colored lenses we wore previously. I guess it was a kind of "loss of innocence" or a kind of "coming of age." Whatever it was, you folks did all of us a service. No more would we assume that religious leaders, or leaders of any kind, were simply what they seemed on the surface. You helped us greatly to be more questioning and skeptical of authority figures.

I guess that is why I am so surprised at the public's reaction to the Clinton scandal. Can people really be so naive as to think that politicians are always all they pretend? Once the Gennifer Flowers story came out, I always assumed that our President had a weakness for young flesh. But now so many act so shocked that our young President has human frailties.

As for our self-righteous Congress, I think it was utterly disgusting that they entered the Internet porno business. What's more, did you notice how they decided to do so for the first time in history on the Feast of Trumpets? Why could they not have kept the lewd details of the Lewinsky matter secret at least until they decided if there was an impeachable offense? Isn't it all too obvious that their actions were based only on a desire for more political power, not on any genuine concern for the good of the country, its morals, or its image abroad?

But even more disgusting than the low comedy of the White House and the slash-and-burn politics of the Republicans are the antics of the preachers of the Christian Coalition. The television condemnations of Clinton from preachers like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson appall me. First of all, how can they be sure that Clinton's professed repentance is not real? I don't have any way of knowing. Do you? And if Mrs. Clinton can forgive her husband for being made a fool of by a shrewd seductress like that Monica woman, why should we as a country be interfering? Not only that, have you noticed how even Mrs. Clinton has gotten criticism for somehow causing the scandal? I have yet to hear even one Christian commentator praise her for taking her marriage vows seriously and for standing by her man under such humiliating circumstances.

Yes, he tried to cover it up. But I, for one, am convinced that there are times when some matters should be covered up (Prov. 10: 12, Prov. 12:16). And unlike the foolish TV commentators that think Clinton would somehow benefit his family or the country if he would just blab in public about every detail of his sins, I think that when he "threaded the needle" in his depositions, he was being "as wise as a serpent" in not revealing too much (Prov. 29:11) and in answering his accusers according to their own folly (Prov. 26:4-5). I had not intended to give you editors a Bible study. But it seems to me that we have too many in this country who don't understand that when you rush to judgment, you often make a fool of yourself (Prov. 18:13).

From sad personal experience I know what it is like to be in a family where adultery has occurred. Maybe for that reason, I wish that our Congress would have approached this immoral and sad situation with more sobriety and understanding, rather than using a family tragedy for political gain. But it angers me even more to see supposed preachers of the Gospel who are so ignorant of scripture and who behave on television just as abominably as the scribes and pharisees of Jesus' day.

-Washington

*Editor: I never voted for Clinton and have not been one of his fans. Furthermore, I would not agree that the President had any kind of a duty to cover up his sins. Nevertheless, your comments are thought-provoking. I did see both Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell on television lambasting the President and demanding that he resign. I noticed that at no time did they seem to be aware of some of the most fundamental of Bible teachings on the subject of how Christians should relate to civil government.*

*While it is true that the Bible teaches that false prophets should be exposed (Eph. 5:11-12, RSV) and there are plenty of examples of that being done in the Bible (Matt. 23:13-33), as far as I can see there really is a different scriptural standard regarding civil*

*leaders. Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is not of this world (John 18:36). Moses taught that the people were not to speak evil of the ruler of the people (Ex. 20:28, cited in Acts 23:5). Paul taught that Christians should render all due respect and obedience toward civil rulers (Rom. 13:1-7) and pray for their well-being (I Tim. 2:1-2). Peter even went so far as to warn of those who "are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" and he compared those who did to "brute beasts" (II Pet. 2:10, 12). I suppose that if they have been given a commission directly by God to warn a national leader it might be different. But it is hard for me to see Falwell or Robertson as being a modern-day Elijah or John the Baptist because if they were, they would be going to Clinton privately and would be applying the principles of Matt. 18:15-17.*

*Of course, I am not suggesting that in a democracy such as ours, preachers have no right to participate in the political process. But I do agree that if preachers such as Falwell and Robertson would spend less time embroiled in worldly politics and more time in study and reflection, their public pronouncements might be less unseemly and more in line with what scripture plainly says.*

There is a prophetic battle going on today for the nation of Israel. The ultra Orthodox Jewish political parties in Israel are doing everything in their power to outlaw Messianic Judaism - the growing group of Jewish people who believe that Yeshua (Jesus) is the true Messiah.

If passed, one new bill, submitted to the Knesset by Mr. Pinchasi of the Orthodox, would impose a **THREE YEAR JAIL SENTENCE AND A \$15,000 FINE ON ANYONE SHARING THEIR FAITH.**

This law might even apply to you should you happen to be touring the Holy Land - three years in jail if you share your faith in Yeshua (Jesus)! The actual law reads:

Anyone who preaches with the purpose of causing another person to change his religion is liable to three years imprisonment or a fine of NIS 50,000 new Israeli shekels.

Moreover, there's already a law on the books that denies Israeli citizenship to Jews who believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah! They accept Jews who are Muslim, Bahai, or atheist, but not those who believe in Yeshua!

You see, since 1967 more than one million Jewish people around the world have accepted Yeshua (Jesus) as their Savior. These people have discovered that He actually is the Messiah. Never since the time of Yeshua and His disciples has there been such a revival!

Why would the ultra Orthodox want to place a ban on sharing the Good News? Because they are frightened! And they are justifiably worried. Because biblical prophecy predicts that just prior to the Messiah's second coming His Spirit will pour out upon the Jewish people. There will be a spiritual revival among them resulting in the eventual salvation of the nation of Israel. And Satan is doing everything in his power to keep that from happening. He's attacking from the inside out by using Jews to attack other Jews. He

doesn't want Yeshua to return to Jerusalem as foretold by the prophets. That's why it is imperative that we defend the freedom of religion in Israel.

-Joel Chernoff  
General Secretary, MJAA

*Editor: Those interested in this political issue may obtain more information by contacting the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, P.O. Box 274, Springfield, PA 19064; tel. 610-338-0451.*

I just read the intriguing *Damascus Gate* by Robert Stone (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998). It centers around an American journalist living in Jerusalem who finds Jerusalem filled with religious fanatics suffering from "the Jerusalem Syndrome," a documented type of mental illness. In the book it moves one group to try to blow up the Temple Mount.

-California

A big thank you for giving the Internet address of Robert Brinsmead. I read his writings on "Sabbatarianism Re-examined" (chapters 4 and 12) and a lot of things started to fall in place regarding the Old Covenant Sabbath day commandment. It looks back to God's rest (Gen. 2:2-3) and forward to our rest in Christ (Heb. 4). You know this, of course, but I did not, until now. There really is freedom in Christ and I say this with thanks.

-Cathy Tuchlinsky  
Canada

It's been 15 years since I left WCG, but my seven-year experience there still has a big impact on my life. It wasn't all bad. I became a Christian there, read the Bible cover-to-cover, and learned a lot. The Southern Baptist Church I now attend has many of the same doctrines, without the greed and wackiness. My thanks to AR for helping me see WCG for what it was: a money-making personality cult that taught some truth but exploited naive people. I've now successfully moved on to a more responsible church.

-Bill Smith  
Atkinson, New Hampshire

Isn't it strange, Mr. Trechak, people want the truth but are not willing to go that "extra mile" to keep it alive and well. After all that some may learn about the origin of the WCG, they still, when the truth is known, can't seem to find that extra bit of money to help you to help others break free of this world's string of so-called purveyors of the Bible. Jesus said, "The truth will set you free." Well, I am sending you what I can afford and I shall pray for you so you can continue dispersing that AR to help others get out from under the yoke of lying evangelists.

-Dorothy Stankovsky  
Wisconsin

It is getting very exhausting, this Church of God. We have been through Herbert Armstrongism and Joe Tkachism, through Garner Ted Armstrongism and Gerald Flurryism and now the Uniteds. And we are still searching for the answers to prophecy. We know it's coming and soon, but how? There are now so many Bible prophecy theories among God's Sabbath-keeping people! Where are all these ideas coming from?

We read a paper about how Mikhail Gorbachev is secretly the Beast and is setting up world headquarters now in San Francisco. We then heard a tape about how there are Russian troops already hiding in caves in Louisiana. We were then given a book called *The Gods of Eden* by William Bramley that many members are reading. It's about how space aliens (demons) on the moon have sent messages to earth and that those messages are the symbols of the Masons. One religious tape said the Jews were going to build a temple in Jerusalem and it would be a Masonic temple. Then just last week a friend in Pasadena told us that NASA is secretly planning to buy the Worldwide Church's Pasadena properties as a location to greet space aliens. There are so many ideas being spread around and lots of proof, but also many contradictions. We hope you will report on some of these prophecies and about why there are so many of them now in all of the Churches of God groups. Some of these new ideas are interesting but many of them are upsetting.

-California

## **"Proving" Your Favorite Prophecy**

The closer we get to the year 2000, the more it seems that people everywhere are becoming preoccupied with Bible prophecies. The amount of information being published on the subject is absolutely astonishing. We know, because rarely does a day go by that our mail box does not contain some missive from another cleric or group offering "prophetic understanding."

Even more so than among mainstream and evangelical Christians, among Worldwidiers and the Armstrongite offshoots there is an astronomical number of new, and frequently outlandish, notions floating around. This may be due to the stress of the ongoing disintegration of the Armstrong movement, to corrupt ministers looking for new religion marketing devices, to the growth of the Internet, or to all of these factors. Clearly, many of these new theories are being pushed by people who in times past would not have been allowed any writing tool sharper than a crayon, but who now have access to photocopy machines and the World Wide Web.

We will try to report on some of the new theories in future issues. But just keeping up with all the new teachings is difficult because there are so many wild tapes and writings in circulation, particularly on the subject of prophecy.

Such writings frequently contain a variety of biblical, historical, philosophical, and common-sensical errors. But there is one misinformation technique so commonly used by "experts" of the Armstrongite type that we are amazed how often ex-Worldwidiers are falling for it. The method used is quite simple. For whatever premise, no matter how outlandish or even impossible, the prophecy "expert" simply scours all available news

reports and surveys them for possible connections to his premise. Then all those reports not fitting into the predetermined scenario are discarded and ignored. All those fitting the predetermined scenario are then amalgamated, quoted, and cited as absolute "proof" that the prophecy is certain. And, of course, there is then the implication that the writer is "inspired by God" and you therefore need to send the prophet your money. This is the exact way Herbert W. Armstrong and his *Plain Truth* news department used to work. It is also the way so many of his spiritual offspring work today.

Therefore, a suggestion to those who are attracted to the latest wave of prophecy experts. Rather than simply accepting their "proofs," go to your local library and get additional data. Don't just look for data that fits the pet theories. Look also for data that presents contrary views, data that might lead a reasonable person to different conclusions. Admit what you, and the experts, don't know or even can't possibly know. Separate facts from theories. Try to distinguish the self-evident, the demonstrable, the incontrovertible, the probable, the possible, the improbable, and the impossible. In other words, weigh all the evidence.

Above all, try to remember how many times in the past such prophecy "experts" have been wrong!

In future issues we will report on some of the new prophecy teachings as well as the teachings of the growing Secret Church of Conspiracy. Until next time, my thanks to all of you who are helping to make this publication possible.

-JT

[Next Issue \(January 21, 1999 Letter\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

P. O. BOX 60068, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91116

January 21, 1999

Dear AR Reader:

This letter is to let you know that AR71 will be delayed because John Trechak has been in the hospital for over a week. An injury on his foot led to a massive infection. Ultimately, it entered the bone, resulting in his hospitalization. The doctors were hoping that large doses of antibiotics would reverse the infection, but the damage was already too great in his right, big toe, and John has had to have it amputated. He is now facing weeks of recovery and rehabilitation. (He is still on large doses of antibiotics to try to prevent a recurrence and spread of the infection, and will have to return to the hospital every few days for awhile so that the doctors can keep an eye on the situation.)

John was very close to finishing the next AR when he became ill. (But his medical problems have sapped his physical energy and having to undergo an amputation was a real psychological shock, too.) We are hoping and praying that his recovery will be speedy and that he will be able to finish AR71 soon - especially with the most current news regarding the sale of the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena. Tkach has found a group of developers who are willing to buy the campus and develop it into apartments, a hotel, new offices, a conference center, and senior housing. The sale is pending approval of the City of Pasadena. What is to become of the millions of dollars Tkach and company are making by selling off all of the WCGs assets is of vital interest to those of us who contributed thousands of our own hard-earned dollars to make the WCG what it was.

If you have not renewed your subscription to *Ambassador Report* recently, now would be a good time to do so. The need for a publication like the AR has not diminished with the years. Indeed, the behind-the-scenes financial finagling of Tkach and company - not to mention the political wrangling, the power plays, and the doctrinal disputes within the WCG and its offshoots - make it all the more important that the AR be able to continue

its mission to shed light on the Armstrong empire.

I want to thank all of you for your help and support in and ask that all of you keep John in your thoughts and prayers as he struggles to regain his health.

Sincerely yours,  
Mary E. Jones

[Next Issue\(AR71\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)



# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## AMBASSADOR REPORT

February 1999 (AR71)

### Pasadena Campus to Be Sold

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG) has announced that it has found a buyer for its 48 acres of headquarters property, formerly the flagship campus of Ambassador College, in Pasadena, California. The buyer is Legacy Partners, an Orange County development company which has projects in many parts of the country. According to the *Pasadena Star-News* (1/16/99, p. A1), neither party would divulge the amount of the purchase price. But according to the *Los Angeles Times* (1/16/99, p. C2), Legacy has agreed to pay more than \$100 million for the property.

According to the *Times* article:

Legacy hopes to develop a mixed-use "urban village" on the property that would blend upscale apartments, ground-floor retail space, housing for seniors and a hotel and conference center with the handful of historic mansions and large concert hall on the site....

"We want to take what they have done and build upon that heritage," said Legacy partner Bill Shubin. "We'll take the best part of what they have done and then take the buildings that don't have any commercial value and figure out how to redevelop them."

He anticipates razing most of the college buildings, but preserving Ambassador Auditorium; four mansions, including the 28-room Tudor showplace Mayfair, and a handful of other significant structures.

Among the buildings likely to be demolished are the college's gymnasium and maintenance buildings. Because of the size and complexity of the transaction, church officials say escrow could take one or two years. According to church treasurer Bernard Schnippert, quoted in the *Star-News*, the WCG will eventually no longer have a presence in Pasadena, and it has begun looking for smaller-scale headquarters elsewhere in Southern California.

### Christmas Adds to WCG Income

In beginning each issue of *Ambassador Report*, we usually try to mention Worldwide Church of God (WCG) founder Herbert W. Armstrong in order that newer readers have some perspective as to what they are reading about. However, with the passage of time and all the changes instituted since the founder's death in 1986, Herbert W. Armstrong is becoming more and more irrelevant to the members of the church he founded.

A good case in point is the WCG's total embrace of Christmas. While HWA pointed out accurately that Christ was not born on or near December 25, today's WCG, in its rush to be part of evangelical Christianity, seems hardly to care about that fact anymore. Instead the Christmas holiday, turned holy day, has become one more money maker for the Tkach regime. In his December co-worker letter to the WCG, Tkach wrote:

During this time of year people's minds across America are directed toward the birth of Jesus - in the secular world as well as among Christians. For some people, sadly, the Christmas season is nothing more than a secular holiday, complete with immoral partying and overdrinking, while for others it is a special time of thanksgiving for God's grace through Jesus Christ.

Over the past year, many of our members have told us that they would like to give an offering as an act of worshipping during this time of year. In response to this request, we are making the enclosed offering envelope available....

If you choose to give a special offering during the Christmas season this year, please use the enclosed envelope.

**WCG Members Cry Out for Democracy!**

Some months ago, when Pastor General Joseph Tkach allowed local congregations to take surveys to determine which days they wished to keep, he probably had no idea where the survey suggestion would lead. Where it has led is that some congregations now wonder why surveys cannot be taken on other matters of doctrine and church administration. One such congregation is the WCG's Greenville, South Carolina congregation. They first wrote Tkach asking that WCG-wide referendums be used to clarify more church positions. When they received an inadequate reply, they responded:

We as members want to work together with HQ in all major areas, not only in finances! Therefore we are sending this second request to have our primary question answered. It was the only point in our [previous] letter which was in caps, in bold, and underlined. We repeat it here as a direct quote from our previous letter:

"Therefore, for the sake of stability and trust in the church, **we strongly request that such major decisions be put to a CHURCH-WIDE REFERENDUM, that is that people be allowed to have a say in it. After all, we the members collectively are the church.** If not, we would once again have to conclude that the true feelings of our church do not matter to you."

In your response you did not address this request.

This only underscores our perception of a lack of good stewardship in this area. We are sorry to have to say this; however, we feel that we are not being taken seriously. This is what prompted our original letter in the first place. Therefore

**A) The referendums ought to have member-generated questions and be handled by a member committee so that conclusive results may be arrived at.**

**B) Further, the use of a referendum should become corporate policy, i.e. the means by which all major future issues of church doctrines and practices are resolved.**

We admit that what we are posing is a very direct and tough question. But sir, for us members it also has been, and still is, very tough. So, let us indeed go through this "together," strong and united, instead of fractured and dwindled. Fact: in early 1997, there were 81,000 members remaining (WN, 1/97, "History"). We thought then that the worst attrition was over. Yet today, the church's website lists 50,000. That is a drop of 38% since then - and the losses are continuing.

Such terrible and sad attrition needs to be stopped. We plead that now is the time to "reason together."

Sincerely,

Signed by 52 members of the WCG's Greenville, SC congregation.

There is still no indication as to how the Tkach administration will deal with this new way of thinking. But certainly this cry for democracy is something new in the WCG!

---

&COPY;1999 Ambassador Report. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher. Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.  
ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

## **Meredith Downsized**

It was only in our last issue that we predicted that with the shrinkage of the United Church of God, it was likely that the Global Church of God (GCG), headed by evangelist Roderick C. Meredith, would soon emerge as the world's leading Armstrongite organization. But how quickly the winds of fate change direction! Just weeks after mailing our last issue we learned that the board of the GCG, in effect, downsized evangelist Meredith.

But Meredith had no intention of obeying the orders of the church board. While publicly teaching loyalty to "duly-constituted authority," Meredith has always been one to keep an eye out for his own interests. And so, true to form, he lashed back at GCG board member Larry Salyer and the rest of the board of GCG and is apparently on his way to starting yet one more breakaway Armstrongite group. Here, in a letter dated November 21, is the way Meredith explained and excused his actions to his followers:

Greetings from San Diego! This is a special emergency letter, so read it very carefully. You will want to go over this letter and pray

and FAST about it. For SATAN is now striking directly at the Global Church of God and at me personally!

First of all, thank you again for your kind expressions of love and loyalty to me during and since the Feast. The outpouring of enthusiasm for "doing the Work" - and for my leadership - was most encouraging and inspiring. I know that the large majority of you brethren are "Philadelphians" (Rev. 3:7-8). Your heart is in doing a real Work. Your heart is in preserving and teaching the full Truth. And you do believe in God's form of Church Government which was explained to us so carefully by Herbert W. Armstrong.

As most of you know, the Global Church of God was founded - under Christ's leadership - essentially by me and my wife, Sheryl, assisted by Mr. Don Davis. In the last two weeks of December 1992, others began to come with us. We had an informal Sabbath service in my home on December 26, with 19 present, including children. Then, on January 2, 1993, we conducted our first official Sabbath service in the recreation room of a large condominium complex managed by Don Davis. We only had 42 people in attendance. For approximately the first two months no other full time ministers had yet joined us in this effort. So, at age 62, I had to "step out in faith" to start the Global Church of God.

As many of you know, the living Jesus Christ guided circumstances so that I was literally "pushed" to start this Work. After learning of the increasingly apostate movement in our former association, I had been praying fervently and fasting twice a month for God to make it absolutely clear to me what He wanted me to do. Finally, in December 1992, Christ did reveal it very clearly to me. I was told that I was going to be forcibly retired whether I wanted to be or not. And it was made clear that in retirement I was to do "nothing" - not even visit or anoint the sick (which I had requested to do) or write an occasional article.

Brethren, the timing of all this was very significant. Yet it was out of my control, for I was certainly not "trying" to get retired. This assault on my ministry came exactly 40 years after my ordination as an Evangelist in December 1952. And strikingly, the official beginning of Global at our first service was seven years to the month from Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986! Most of you know the significance of those numbers, so I won't elaborate further on that except to say that I am positive that all of this was done with Christ's Divine guidance and blessing.

For about the first three years, Global grew and grew in size and in the impact of the Work. We all rejoiced in God's blessing and guidance. But other ministers came with us and were being added to the Board of the Church and to the Council of Elders. As time went along, some of the Board and Council members began to talk of cutting back on doing the Work of God. As I resisted this, they became more and more presumptuous over the last year. Threats and insinuations made it obvious that if I did not "go along" with them that they would try to remove me from the Board or Council. In fact, in our September Board meeting, they even - over my objections - removed my wife, Sheryl, from the Board and changed the By-Laws so that they can REMOVE ME not only from the Board or Council, but actually disfellowship me from the Church! This makes it VERY CLEAR where they are headed!

You might ask how could they do all of this? It all goes back to a serious, though innocent, mistake I made at the founding of Global. We had to have an outside attorney draw up the By-Laws governing the Church so that we could operate legally, receive tithes and offerings, and so that you brethren would be able to deduct your contributions from your taxable income. Those By-Laws contained the expression that "the Board" was to make all decisions regarding hiring, firing and other administrative and business affairs of the corporation. Frankly, brethren, in the midst of hectic day and night telephone calls from many of you who came early on, with the need to get new booklets out, get our radio program going, etc., I was so busy that I didn't realize the danger of the way those By-Laws were worded. And, besides, the original Board consisted of the most trusted individuals I knew at that time - my wife and me and Mr. Davis.

But, other men came on the Board and the Council - men I have now come to realize had a great deal of personal ambition and a completely different view of how we should conduct the Work of God. So trouble began to brew. For over the last year or two, some of these men have tried to "push" me into going completely off WGN - our ONLY major television outlet in the United States! They have directly pushed for a completely different approach to doing the Work - planning to concentrate our efforts on turning inward - NOT striving first of all to go through the "open doors" that Christ shows Philadelphians will do. I can tell you very definitely, brethren, that this approach would DESTROY the Work of God as we have known it, and would slowly but surely turn us into a kind of "social club," thinking only of ourselves.

Now, these misguided, but very political individuals are beginning to follow the pattern of those dissidents who tried to unseat Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong back in 1979. Rather than trusting that the Living Christ would guide the one He is using to do His Work (and NOT one advocating direct heresy!), these men are using the new By-Laws which they have devised to try to pressure me to do their will or to "oust" me if I don't! You would have to experience the atmosphere of profound disrespect, envy, jealousy and open HOSTILITY displayed in some of our Council and Board meetings to really grasp the impact of what I am talking about.

Dear brethren, we are being trained at this time to learn and later to administer GOD'S form of government. And as Herbert W. Armstrong explained clearly over and over again, God has virtually ALWAYS worked primarily through one man in leading or guiding any particular phase of His Work down through the ages. All the way from Moses, Samuel, David to Nehemiah, that pattern is clearly shown in the Old Testament. Then, in the New Testament, the overwhelming weight of evidence shows that Christ used Peter, NOT as a "Pope" - but, as the definite "Leader" of the original 12 apostles. Then after Acts 15, Peter left the scene and apparently went to the "lost 10 tribes" of Israel in Northwest Europe and the British Isles.

Paul became the obvious and primary leader of the Work to the Gentiles. God even inspired Paul to put this into the very Word of God: "But on the contrary, when they saw that the Gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the Gospel to the circumcised was to Peter..." (Gal. 2:7). Notice that Paul does NOT say that the Gospel to the circumcised was committed "equally" to all 12 of the original apostles, but rather to Peter! And, again, Paul did NOT write that the Gospel to the Gentiles was given to him and Barnabas, but rather to Paul himself! Certainly, these dedicated men - Peter and Paul - used and supported the others working with them. But NO TIME did they have a human "board" of men LACKING FAITH in Christ's leadership to constantly "second guess" them, thwart their decision to preach the Gospel and even threaten them with dismissal if they didn't cooperate!

Frankly, brethren, throughout the Bible, whenever you see a man being used of God - whether by appointment or through circumstances - to raise up or lead a phase of God's Work, that man is "God's anointed" in that particular function and must be

respected as such. Even King Saul of ancient Israel - unrighteous though he was, even to the point of attempting to murder David (I Sam. 19:10) - was respected as God's "anointed." So even when David had already been anointed by Samuel as the next King of Israel, he DARED NOT try to harm or overthrow Saul! When David had a perfect opportunity to destroy Saul he told his warriors "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD" (I Sam. 24:6).

These men who have made these threatening political moves and comments toward me seem to have NO FAITH in the Living Christ to lead His Church and remove me if that were ever necessary. Rather, they have decided to use human, carnal political means to get their way and to thwart the one Christ guided to raise up and lead the Global Church of God. This attitude and approach, if it is allowed to continue, will spread like a CANCER through the body of Christ! Increasingly, our meetings have become more like a debating society. Each "side" has to divide up their constituents and propagandize them before a "vote" is taken on key issues. That is worldly. That is DAMNABLE! We will NEVER learn to faithfully practice God's form of Government if this continues! Frankly, brethren, since I was "out voted" anyway, I tried for a while to cooperate and go along with this system for the sake of UNITY in God's Church. Now I see that I was WRONG. I should NOT have gone along with this "democratic" approach even for the sake of unity. This "political" approach to government is NEVER advocated in the Bible. It is NOT working because it is not God's way, and it breeds CHAOS and confusion. I have not wanted to fight. But now, I am being FORCED to fight for the Truth - for God's form of Church Government and for us to have the ZEAL to finish the Work! Some of these men on the Board want to "politicize" this Church and make it like the human governments of this world.

Brethren, these carnal practices must CEASE within the body of Christ! Now, even since I started this letter, a Board meeting was held yesterday, November 20. Although it had been intimated that these men might be willing to put at least one friendly face on the Board, instead they chose to REMOVE Mr. Carl McNair and put in his place a lawyer! I was ASTOUNDED at the effrontery of this most obvious political move! For Carl McNair is one of the most dedicated, balanced and experienced ministers I have ever known.

Next, this small cadre of men on the Board voted to remove me from having any authority over the preaching schedule and who is to speak on our headquarters sermon tapes to the Churches and video groups all around the world. Obviously, if they had their way, you would be hearing less and less from the one Christ has used to raise up and lead the Global Church of God. Next, I was told by Larry Salyer that I would not be speaking the next Sabbath, November 21, even though I was already scheduled to speak.

Then, they began to call in, one by one, a number of leading employees here - known to be loyal to me - and proceeded to lecture, frighten and/or intimidate them. Has another "reign of terror" begun? In addition to the above matter, I have learned - on very good authority - that several "secret" contacts have been made behind my back with another church fellowship. I find that - though I am still Presiding Evangelist of the Church - I have been intentionally left out and even misled about some of these contacts! This is blatant rebellion and even DISLOYALTY against the Founder and President of the Global Church of God!

I could go on with many more details, dear brethren, but I think you get the picture. Therefore, until these disloyal and deceived men back down, or leave, I am asking all of you faithful brethren to send all of your tithes and offerings in care of me to Post Office Box 501394, San Diego, CA 92150-1304. Just put my name "Roderick C. Meredith" on the check....

In closing, I want to assure you that most of the ministry stand fully behind me.... The majority of the Council of Elders backs my leadership. And all of the Regional Pastors save one stand firmly behind me in this effort to "rescue" the Global Church of God from this small band of rebels on the Board. I know that most of you, dear brethren, back my leadership. But in all honesty, we must now stand and FIGHT to preserve the Global Church of God! With the majority of the ministry and of you faithful brethren standing with us, surely this puny band of politicians will not be allowed to prevail....

But prevail they did and the result was -

## **Meredith Disfellowshipped!**

The board of the GCG was quick to respond to Dr. Meredith's throwing down of the gauntlet. Almost immediately, evangelist Larry Salyer, the director of the GCG's ministry, wrote to the GCG ministry with the approval of board members Raymond F. McNair, J. Edwin Pope, and Norbert Link. A second letter, covering most of the same issues, was written jointly by the four men and directed to the entire GCG membership. In the letter to the GCG ministry, Salyer wrote:

This is a very difficult message to write, and I know that many of you have somehow come to believe such accusations and rumors about me that you may not even care to read what I write. Nevertheless, it is my duty to write, and I will.

This message is from the Board.

I am truly sad to say that after a full day of discussion and guts-out "negotiation," Dr. Meredith has separated himself from the Global Church of God, and as a consequence the Board had no choice but to terminate his employment with the Church. In spite of the rancor apparent in the letter Dr. Meredith mailed to all members on Monday [23 Nov.], today's meeting ended amicably, with handshakes and hugs. We bear Dr. Meredith no ill will, and told him we would continue to pray for him. He hoped we could have friendly contact in the future.

We, the remaining Board members, must respectfully but categorically deny the long list of charges and accusations contained in Dr. Meredith's letter. We consider the letter extremely libelous. Particularly alarming is the fact that Dr. Meredith revealed in his letter that he was already setting up a competing corporation and that he was asking members to send all their tithes and offerings to his personal address, while still in the employ of Global and drawing his paycheck from Global. In addition, we consider this to be a breach of his fiduciary duties as an officer of the corporation.

It should be understood by all that the aforementioned letter was written and mailed during an interim period in our discussions, which we had agreed to so we could all pray about these decisions. Let me amplify that. We held 8 hours of Board meetings on last Thursday and Friday [19 and 20 Nov.] without reaching a successful reconciliation. Both "sides" had proposed certain actions and neither was able to bend enough to solve the conflict.

Dr. Meredith had posed the possibility that he would "leave Global," which he had also mentioned during our recent Council meeting. We recessed the meeting until Tuesday [24 Nov.], at Dr. Meredith's request, so that he could have time to pray about it. We asked him directly if he would "try to stir up the Church this weekend." He said "No, I won't do anything this weekend." Nevertheless, during the weekend we heard that he made many phone calls to field ministers asking for ministers to "stand with him."

Then, late Monday afternoon [23 Nov.], in what could have only been miraculous intervention, we learned that more than a quarter of a million dollars had suddenly been drained from Global's bank account, through the use of unauthorized checks, signed by Dr. Meredith and another individual who had no power to sign any checks. Further, one six-figure check was payable to the very person who signed it without authority. Thankfully, this miraculous intervention allowed us to stop payment of those unauthorized checks. But we learned that fully one half million dollars was moved from our investment account to the operating account to cover the checks. The only conclusion we can draw from this even larger unauthorized transfer of funds is that even more unauthorized checks were planned to be written later. A logical conclusion considering that all of this was done in secrecy!

By the way, these actions were justified by saying that the money was being used to pay back loans to individuals. Maybe so, but that process always involves authorization and is done according to strict agreements and payback schedules agreed to by all parties. In this case, the loans were not due and payable, and the checks were hand-written, apparently outside office hours, and not through the person who is responsible for such checks. The immediate effect would have been to put the Global Church of God in financial jeopardy and on the verge of bankruptcy. When pointed out that this action, in our opinion, might potentially constitute criminal activity, Dr. Meredith suggested that we could just tell the bank that the signer was a 68-year-old man who didn't quite know what he was doing.

Incredible!

Meanwhile, rumors of a letter being mailed from outside the office gave us reason to be suspicious of the "prayer" interval. By Tuesday morning [24 Nov.], several of us, including Dr. Meredith, had received phone calls from concerned ministers and others, pleading with us to do everything possible to avoid a "split." We all agreed that this was urgent and important and went into the meeting with that in mind. Dr. Meredith mentioned it right up front, but had concluded that a recommended "third-party" consultant would not understand our problems and that our relationship had deteriorated too far for this to be practical.

Generally speaking, all agreed, though all parties still wanted to reach a settlement. Shortly after the meeting began, Dr. Meredith produced copies of his 4-page letter and told us that he had had it mailed to the members on Monday [23 Nov., the day before]. This, of course, not only contrary to rules regarding the use of the mailing list, but was also done during the previous agreed upon "prayer period."

Reading the letter at the meeting, we were appalled at the distortion of facts, imaginary incidents, and the invective with which they were presented. All four additional men on the Board had been accused of everything from rebellion to conspiracy, and even a cancerous attitude.

We all stated our sincere desire to come to an amicable solution to our problems. But Dr. Meredith's opening suggestion was that we resign, receive generous severance and/or retirement, and go wherever we wanted to.

After meeting from 10:00 am till 2:30 pm, we took a two hour break and reconvened. We insisted that since the well had been poisoned so badly by the unauthorized letter to all members, there would be no way to go forward unless Dr. Meredith would recant what he had written and acknowledge that it was a terribly divisive act to send the letter out.

Eventually, after much discussion, he went so far as to say that he would be willing to write a letter that would mollify what he had said. Nevertheless, Dr. Meredith would not retract the basic, libelous content of the letter.

We asked if he still felt that he would have to leave. He said yes. We then told him that we had to consider his actions over the last few days and the content of the letter as a decision already made by him to leave this organization. Therefore, to fulfill our ministerial and Board responsibilities, we had no choice but to formalize the dismissal of Dr. Meredith.

As stated earlier, the meeting ended on a friendly note. [Huh?] We are fully aware that this tragic situation will make life difficult for you as well as us. We can only ask that you carefully and prayerfully seek God's will. We hope you all choose to get the facts and make a right judgment about how you will serve God's people at this time. We intend to call a ministerial conference of all full-time men within the next few weeks to clear the air on all these accusations and to rebuild the infrastructure of the Church so that we might go forward. It is the full intent of those of us here in San Diego to continue to do the Work of God as He opens doors for us.

We are prepared to work with any of you to sort out concerns about meeting halls, fleet cars and other matters of mutual interest. We do not have any desire to be antagonistic or unreasonable. If the new corporation is interested in purchasing some of our assets, we will certainly consider the request....

One final thought: Please remember the hurts and offenses that occurred among us when we left WCG and when UCG started, etc. Many people said and did things they now regret. Why don't we try to avoid such pitfalls this time around?....

Tacked on to Salyer's letter was a letter he had previously written. Although chronologically the tacked-on portion would have

made more sense as a prelude to the main body, it, nonetheless, contained numerous insights into the mind of Meredith and GCG's troubles. Here are a few excerpts from that addendum:

What Dr. Meredith perceives as a power struggle probably began during the November '97 Council of Elders meeting, and really heated up during the February meeting, when we unanimously confirmed that we would practice government by consensus of the Council. It broke into the open during the latest Council meeting a couple of weeks ago, when Dr. Meredith made it abundantly clear that he had no intention of abiding by the unanimous agreements of the council of Elders and the Board of Directors concerning the subject of "Church government," which had been discussed for endless hours over the last 5 meetings.

During and after this most recent Council meeting, Dr. Meredith repeated his previous threat that he might have to "pull a David Hulme." He has since told us in no uncertain terms that he will have to make a decision of whether to leave Global.

Yes, the real issue IS Church government!! But, even more than that, it is the integrity of the Church, the ministry, the Council, the Board, and our doctrinal positions and processes that are at stake here. There are many and varied reasons why the Board has recently had to take a stand on principle, and they had nothing whatever to do with "taking over."

Volumes could be written about our discussions and the various writings, sermons, and actions that have flowed from them. Because how we all do our jobs and operate every day is a function of Church government. And this whole "debate" originated with Dr. Meredith's booklet, "When Should You Follow Church Government?" Many of the ministers and members who came to Global in the early years had read and accepted the statements made in that booklet. In fact, it was WHY many came to Global at that time! Our bylaws, the Council, the Board, and our Articles of Incorporation as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization were all based on the concepts and teachings contained in that booklet and in sermons and conversations about this subject. Personally, I had several such conversations with Dr. Meredith at the time I was deciding whether to come to Global. I expect that some of you had similar conversations and concerns. Even when the subject was thoroughly reviewed by the Council in February, Dr. Meredith added his voice to the unanimous decision to continue to preach and proclaim that form of government, based on "multitude of counsel." This government structure also contained a system of checks and balances to prevent one person from leading the Church off course, with provision to correct doctrinal, administrative or personal problems.

Amazingly, even after sending a letter to the entire membership confirming this structure, on June 11, 1998, Dr. Meredith continued to contradict the decisions of the Council of Elders, both in private conversations and in sermons and in meetings. Additionally, he has said several times, including in the initial Council meetings on the subject, something like this: "Well, I wrote the booklet on government to help people come out of WCG, but I never believed it was the way the Church should be governed." What?

In fact, when Mr. Raymond McNair recently asked Dr. Meredith whether he believed God had guided the Council, after we had opened the meetings with prayer and fervently requested God's inspiration and blessing, the reply shocked us all. He said, "Well those are just words. Don't you think the Catholics pray before their meetings?"

I use these examples only to give you the tiniest bit of flavor of what we have been dealing with for some time. We did not share these things with you because we honestly believed they could be worked out and that Dr. Meredith would come to see where he was wrong.

A lot of members, and perhaps a lot of you, don't care much about government structure. However, the more obvious spiritual problem we are dealing with arises out of this conflict. The way Dr. Meredith began to deal with this issue was to say that some of the men at headquarters were trying to tie his hands, and take over the Church. These "accusations" began to surface in the field, and the rumor mill took over. Frankly, it was some time before those of us on the Board knew where they were originating. Nevertheless, a lot of discord was sown. This is ugly and I know it, but I must put this in a little more context for you.

While most of you don't give a hang about how the Board works, or why, let me tell you that it is the focal point of all business and legal liability of the Church. In addition, the Board members can in some cases be held individually and collectively liable for debts of, or judgments against the corporation. We are also responsible to state and federal governments for the way the Church conducts its affairs. The fact that some of you know about this is clear from the immediate call today for repayment of large loans some ministers and brethren have made to the Church during our financial crisis a couple of years ago. They are being used as leverage to pressure the Board to yield to Dr. Meredith's persistent claim to be in sole authority and make unilateral decisions, while the Board bears the liability. This of course could possibly bankrupt the Church, which would serve no one's purpose. I have to liken it to a "scorched earth" policy in battle.

Dr. Meredith has previously threatened that he would "take it over your heads to the lay members of the Church." (Doesn't this sound like democracy?) What is the Church saying now? Don't I recall that you were angry with senior ministers in WCG who never stood up to repeated wrongdoing, even chiding me personally for not having done more? And now am I to understand that the ministry and members are saying, "We are comfortable and happy. Tell us smooth things"? Men who believe they have a duty to God and His people to stand up for the Truth cannot do that. There is much more detail and many different aspects to the current situation, but I see no need to cover it now.

Fellow ministers and brethren, we are in a colossal crisis in the Church.... Let us as members of the Body of Christ set aside the Sabbath of December 5, 1998, to fast together and draw close to God.... I will greatly appreciate your prayers, because praying is the most valuable thing any of us can do.

Thanks for listening.  
Larry

In the seventies Pastor General Herbert Armstrong at one point removed Meredith from the active ministry and forbade him to preach (that time has been called Meredith's "Hawaiian imprisonment" because during that time he was sent to live in Hawaii).

Then in the eighties Pastor General Joe Tkach Sr. at one point found it necessary to ban Meredith from the WCG's pulpits, as well. So now, with the GCG Board's banishment of Meredith from the pulpits of Global, Meredith has gotten his third strike, and some are saying he should be permanently banned from preaching - anywhere.

## Has Meredith Lost It?

Oddly, it was just weeks before the Meredith crisis, that in a letter to the *Sabbatarian Journal*, Meredith wrote:

The bylaws of the Global Church of God, which govern our administrative processes, clearly state that the council of elders has final authority in the church in all major doctrinal as well as administrative matters. The board of directors is charged with conducting the business of the church, including hiring or terminating personnel, establishing their duties and setting their compensation. While both the board and the council have confirmed my leading role in the church, all final decisions are made by consensus - usually after much discussion and prayers.

In spite of such expressed "collegiality," on November 27, the entire GCG Board (Raymond McNair, Larry Salyer, Edwin Pope, and Norbert Link) sent out a letter explaining the leadership crisis to the church's lay members. Space does not permit us to quote more than a portion of it, but in addition to much of the information contained in Salyer's letter to the ministry, the Board's letter contained these interesting tidbits:

This letter is very difficult to write because we are forced to acknowledge that Satan has struck another master blow to the unity of God's people. The small flock of which we all have been a part is once again being scattered.... the Board of Directors formalized [Dr. Meredith's] departure by terminating his employment following his refusal to resign. Some of his reasons are known only to him and to God, but it is apparent to us that the primary reason is a compelling need to be preeminent in every way above the brethren and the rest of the ministry....

Certainly, both the members and the ministry have looked to Dr. Meredith for leadership, and have given him the benefit of the doubt whenever he fell short. And during the first few years of Global, when he was little in his own eyes, Dr. Meredith was able to receive and use the counsel - and even gentle correction - given by his fellow ministers as well as some of the brethren he knew well (cf. I Sam. 15:17). But in the last two years or so there has been an increasing pride and unwillingness to acknowledge transgressions pointed out to him by his fellow ministers and employees. Perhaps it was this resistance to guidance and exhortation that caused him to talk more and more about who is "in charge," of the "human leader," and use other such phrases and words of self-aggrandizement. He prided himself on God having used him to start Global because he had been pushed out of the Worldwide Church of God - whereas, in fact, he only left that Church after his request to at least work as a writer, local older or a youth coordinator was rejected. Dr. Meredith, then, would presumably have stayed in Worldwide while the Work collapsed if he had been allowed to work with young people in one local congregation. Thus, there might never have been a Global Church of God!

Such self-promotion was not even challenged too much at first. But when the fruits of that kind of thinking became obvious in the form of hardheaded, unilateral decisions - often against the counsel of the other experienced ministers - many of us began to be concerned and told him so. Finally, the subject of Church government was addressed by the Council of Elders.

We went back and studied the booklet on the subject written by Dr. Meredith himself when Global was founded (originally titled *Church Government and Church Unity* and later slightly expanded and retitled *When Should You Follow Church Government?*).

We reexamined the scriptures he used and found that he had rightly presented the case against one-man, autocratic rule. This was obvious since there is no longer an apostle on the scene!

Further, our bylaws had been written to provide for some separation of powers to guarantee certain checks and balances in our governmental structure. Many members had come to Global comforted that we had not installed a "dictatorship." We had represented this more "collegial" form of government to various individuals who had asked. Yet, during these past few years we have strayed from our stated structure.

Dr. Meredith assumed authority and preeminence that was contradictory to what we all had believed, taught and directly stated to the general public. This also represented a danger to the Church, in that we were saying one thing in our writings and doing quite another. We were not even abiding by our bylaws.

Some pointed out that this could even jeopardize our tax-exempt status and, if this status were to be forfeited, could make our faithful donors and tithe payers potentially liable for back taxes on their donations.

Also, an increased willingness on Dr. Meredith's part to speak derogatorily about others was observed, opening ourselves up to defamation lawsuits. In the past, the Worldwide Church of God was sued and found liable for 1.26 million dollars because of, in part, defamatory comments made by Dr. Meredith....

Repeated misstatements and contradictions were frequently brought to Dr. Meredith's attention, yet he refused to recognize and correct the problems. Faced with what he saw as undue criticism from his associates and staff, Dr. Meredith's attention became increasingly defensive and suspicious. He wanted us to show him "more respect," and defer to him even when we felt that doing so would compromise our integrity. The record now shows that he began to seek sympathetic ears among the field ministry and the brethren and to engage in character assassination of the most appalling nature. Headquarters ministers were painted as power-hungry. No one could be trusted. People were part of a conspiracy to investigate his every action and to remove him from his office....

In reality, of course, he was receiving a great deal of support behind the scenes. Several of his major booklets were at most only half-

written by him - receiving their depth and substance from other editors and writers. In fact, it became increasingly difficult for the Editorial Department staff to "rework" his material....

Rumor and gossip became commonplace. The Director of Church Administration was referred to as "Absalom," who through political actions, would try to steal the Church....

He dropped casual comments that so-and-so "should be fired." He referred to them by disparaging names. Again discord was sown and people's lives were terribly damaged.... Things came to a head during the Council of Elders meeting of November 10, 1998. He conducted an "inquisition" against a field pastor and Council member in a manner that could only be described as "malicious." Dr. Meredith came in prepared to take a stand as "sole leader" of the Church. He boldly demanded that the Board members, all of whom are on the Council, immediately assure him that we would appoint some of his men (he actually called them "my men") to the Board. When we declined to do so, he recessed the meeting for 15 minutes, saying, "I've got a big decision to make. I am going to take 'my men' into my office and counsel with my friends and advisors." This move was especially significant, since earlier that week Dr. Meredith had told a group of five men meeting in his office that if the Board continued to tie his hands, he would have to leave Global and that he thought the great majority of the brethren would go with him.... a meeting was called for Thursday, November 19. When Dr. Meredith came into the meeting, he started with a lecture and told us we needed to repent of our attitudes toward him. He said, "I am going to play hardball."....

The Global Church of God was in jeopardy. When the meeting reconvened on Friday morning - with reason to believe that Dr. Meredith and certain other staff members were prepared to jump ship - the Board approved a motion stating that all membership lists, mailing lists and files were declared to be the sole property of the Global Church of God and that use of these lists by any individual, without written consent of the Executive Committee, was strictly prohibited. (The Executive Committee, of which Dr. Meredith was Chairman, acts on behalf of the Board to take care of daily routine business.)

Dr. Meredith had objected to the motion and, to our dismay, so had Carl McNair. Dr. Meredith argued, "This is MY Church! These are MY people!" (But isn't it GOD'S Church? Aren't these GOD'S people?) Still, the motion to protect our files was adopted by the Board. It was pointed out to those present that unauthorized use of our private subscriber files would constitute illegal behavior. Next we moved to secure the bank accounts, removing the signature of one man, not on the Board, and whose position on these matters was unknown.... To bring the Board back to five ministers as required in the bylaws, and to strengthen the protection of the corporation, Norbert Link, who is both an ordained minister and an attorney who had already been fully involved in Board meetings and business, was then added to the Board....

In Christian love,

Members of the Board of Directors,  
Raymond F. McNair, Larry R. Salyer, J. Edwin Pope, Norbert Link

The quotes from the Meredith letter and the GCG Board's response were rather long, but we have included lengthy excerpts because we think they very clearly reveal what kind of a spirit motivates Roderick Meredith. We'll leave it to our readers to ponder whether finding the magical numbers 2, 3, 7, 12, 19, 40, 42 (7X6), or 62 somewhere in one's past really constitutes ample proof of one's divine calling. We will not get into an argument as to whether Peter, and not James (Acts 15:13-19), was the leading apostle or whether, in fact, all twelve apostles were of equal "rank" (Matt. 20:25-27). We will also not belabor the point that Dr. Meredith has distorted somewhat what Paul actually said in Galatians (see Gal. 2:9 where Paul mentions the gospel being preached, not just by himself, but also by James, Cephas, and Barnabas, among others who Paul mentions elsewhere).

As to Meredith's recollections of the founding of Global, those who are concerned about such issues may wish to get an opinion from one who was there at the start - Norman Edwards of *Servant's News*, P.O. Box 220, Charlotte, Mich, 48813-0220. Those who would like to read in their entirety Larry Salyer's November letter or the GCG Board's excellent letter to its membership explaining the GCG crisis should write to the Global Church of God in San Diego.

Where all of this will lead for the people of Global is anyone's guess. There have been discussions between the leaders of Global and the leaders of the United Church of God. One has to wonder if at some point Global will not melt into United.

Sadly, Meredith, who in the early years of the WCG considered himself "Number Five" in the universe after God, the Father and Son, and the Armstrongs, father and son, now appears to rank himself as Number Three in the universe and Number One on this planet. While Meredith has many admirers, there have been many over the years who have questioned Meredith's mental balance. And many recall that he was actually head of the WCG's Church Administration Department during the days when the WCG ministry was its most authoritarian and abusive. Now, however, some of those same critics of Meredith fear that 68-year-old's personality problems are being worsened by age. Undoubtedly, Meredith will draw a following. As for us, however, we will not be too quick in sending our tithes to Dr. Meredith.

As we go to press, we have learned that with the smoke clearing somewhat with the Meredith scandal, it appears that approximately 60 percent of the membership of Global has gone to the Meredith camp with the remaining 40 percent staying with the Raymond McNair-Larry Salyer leadership. The Global Church of God remains at P.O. Box 501111, San Diego, CA, 92150-1111.

## **Split in Church of God the Eternal**

One of the earliest splitoffs from the WCG was that of prominent ministers Raymond Cole and Bryce Clark leaving in 1975 to form the Church of God the Eternal. Now, Clark has disassociated himself from the CGE and plans to start yet one more Church of God organization. The reasons behind the latest split are still not clear.

## Exotic New Churches

Whatever else one might think of Herbert Armstrong, we have to admit he understood religion as a business. And one of the principles of the religion business that he understood and practiced was to have a unique product and therefore a kind of monopoly. Not so with most of the WCG breakoffs. Most cling to the basic Armstrongite teachings and to the name "Church of God" and therefore they each market themselves as just one more of the many "churches of God." Recently, however, we discovered that at least two of the breakoffs have deviated from that copycat formula.

One is former WCG minister Dallas James who has started "The Mountain Club" subtitled "Founding Chapter of the Association for Biblical Christianity." His address is 2442 NW Market St., #40, Seattle, WA 98107-4177. He offers online books, breaking news, new biblical research, a first century Christian forum, and links. His web site URL reveals a little about what he thinks of himself. It is [www.bibleprophet.com](http://www.bibleprophet.com). There, you can enter "The Tabernacle" and you can read "Elijah News" and about "Dallas James - House of Aaron" and the "Renewed Levitical Priesthood."

The second former WCG minister who has started what we think is an exotic ministry is Robert J. Petry who after his name tacks on the letters "C.L." (we have no idea what they stand for). Petry has not started a church. Instead, he runs "The Embassy of YHWH." His web site explains it this way:

The EMBASSY of YHWH is commissioned by its government as an Embassy to present information and aid to the Citizens of YHWH's Government/Kingdom/Empire. The Embassy is to help prepare Citizens for events to happen in the next 30-32 years. If you consider yourself one of the Citizens of the Kingdom of YHWH mentioned in the ancient Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, then you should visit this site often for up-to-date information. The Final Countdown is about to begin!

The Embassy's site is at:

<http://members.spree.com/ambassadore/>.

## Scandals in Other Denominations

If one were to read only *Ambassador Report* (we hope no one would be so short-sighted), one might get the impression that the Armstrongite group of churches is the most scandalplagued in the country. This, however, is not so. A perusal of just a few of the nation's newspapers often reveals church scandals far worse than those of the WCG and its offspring. Note the following two excerpts from the *Los Angeles Times* (11/16/98 and 11/19/98):

PITTSBURGH - Father Benz was sick in bed, his brain infected by a lethal virus, his body washed by leukemia, his soul tainted by sin. A pastor at two parishes for 26 years, Benz had just confessed to something unholy: skimming the collection plate of \$1.35 million.

That wasn't all. Parishioners learned that the Roman Catholic priest had been living lavishly with a lady friend and amassing six-figure gambling losses at Atlantic City. He had rooms at the rectory, of course, but also a house in the suburbs, a condo in Florida, a cache of precious coins and a Cadillac. He had a collection of 27 handguns, most still in the box. He had stylish Japanese furniture and a statue of Buddha.

Now he was trapped in a purgatory of catastrophic illness and impending criminal prosecution. The more the law closed in, the more his health seemed to fade. By the time he began admitting his transgressions, viral fever had addled his brain to the point where he was showering with his clothes on and forgetting how to feed himself. And on the day authorities showed up at his sickbed to arraign him, Father Benz slipped deep into a coma.

Nine days later, somebody crept into his room at a Catholic nursing home and plucked the oxygen tube catheter from his nose and the IV needle from his arm. The Rev. Walter J. Benz, 72, died two hours later, moving on to a judgment day in the hereafter, while avoiding one here in suburban Pittsburgh.

He left behind a confession that implicated his female companion, a former church secretary, and a series of riddles. Who did it? Why kill a dying man? Vengeance? Or mercy? Dr. Cyril Wecht, the Allegheny County coroner, thinks the latter motive is the more logical.

Or, how about this story:

ARCATA, Calif - Andy Lowery thought he had seen the type before when Wayne Adam Ford first walked into his Christian book and music shop a couple of years ago. "People who have problems come to see the Christian people," Lowery says.

Ford said his marriage had busted up, he was losing touch with the toddler son he adored, his life was adrift. Lowery tried to help,

selling Ford evangelical tracts and a Bible on tape to listen to on his trucking routes. He even took Ford to the men's Bible study group.

Through it all, only one thing made Ford seem different from other lost souls who dropped by the store. "He said he was concerned," Lowery says, "that he didn't have a conscience."

On Nov. 3, Ford has told investigators, he found his conscience. After a night of heavy drinking and a tearful session with his brother in a threadbare hotel room, the two paid an early-morning visit to the sheriff's station in Eureka. Ford carried his Bible and a woman's severed breast stuffed into a plastic bag. He confessed, investigators say, to strangling four women and dumping their sometimes dismembered bodies in different parts of the state.

Those interested in reading the two stories in their entirety, may purchase them online from the archives section of the *Los Angeles Times* at [latimes.com](http://latimes.com).

## The Rev. Moon-George Bush Connection

On Sunday, September 20, Mike Wallace and his *Sixty Minutes* team again exposed one more crazy cult to the glare of his cameras. While it is no secret that Rev. Sun Myung Moon of the Unification Church is the leader of one of the world's largest and most outlandish cults, the full extent of his hypocrisy was quite evident on that recent *Sixty Minutes* which put special emphasis on Moon's own family problems. Specially highlighted were the cocaine tantrums of Moon's son, who seems to be the heir-apparent to Moon's religious empire.

Surprisingly, however, the *Sixty Minutes* program, while very good, failed to mention one of the most interesting aspects of the Moon story - the connection between Moon and former U.S. President George Bush.

For a number of years now Bush has been the featured guest speaker at conventions sponsored by Moon. (Gerald Ford has also been a guest speaker.) While the conventions have ostensibly been aimed at fostering "family values," critics of Bush have pointed out that by speaking at such events, Bush has been in a way giving his endorsement to Moon. The critics further point out that Moon "calls himself the Messiah and claims he is the second coming of Christ, with a special calling to unite all people, all nations and all religions to create a world centered on God and true love." (*Los Angeles Times*, 9/10/96, p. E1.) It is difficult to believe that Bush is not aware of the outrageous and blasphemous claims made by Moon, claims believed by thousands of Moon's fanatical and brainwashed followers.

But Bush has not just been speaking at Moon conventions espousing family values. Notice this excerpt from *The New York Times* (8/11/97):

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina - Long before the first copies of *Tiempos del Mundo* ever hit the newsstand last year, the flashy, Spanish-language newspaper that is linked to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church was making headlines of its own.

At the newspaper's gala inauguration, former President George Bush called Moon a "visionary" for creating *Tiempos del Mundo*, or *Times of the World*, an 80-page tabloid that its backers said would be distributed by satellite to almost every country in North and South America.

But critics strongly denounced *Tiempos del Mundo* as just another vehicle for the Unification Church to proselytize Latin America where the Korean-based sect has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in real estate, hotels, banks and other businesses....

"*Tiempos del Mundo* is insignificant as far as the newspaper market is concerned here in Buenos Aires," said Pepe Eliashev, one of Argentina's most respected journalists. "It's very clear to everyone that this paper is a Moony outlet, and no one here has forgotten that in the name of anti-Communism, his church supported the military dictatorships of 1980s.".... critics have expressed concern that the church's connection with big business will give the church undue influence in Latin America.

Concerned critics might point to the success of the Moon-backed *Washington Times*, a paper now respected and popular with many conservative Christians.

Why Bush has decided to support Moon so openly is anyone's guess. Some point out that he has already received more than one million dollars in speaking fees from Moon and that only a small portion of this amount has gone to charity as claimed. But there is another intriguing angle to this story. In their book *The 60 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time*, authors Jonathan Vankin and John Whalen (at p. 397) point out that the "Moonie" Unification Church is by some accounts an arm of the South Korean CIA and that the KCIA was founded-in large part by the U.S.'s CIA back in 1961. One has to wonder if George Bush, a former director of the CIA, is not through Moon in a sense getting paid back for the CIA's assistance to the KCIA over the years.

## Jerusalemitis

Among Armstrongites, one of the most prevalent obsessions is with the city of Jerusalem. Because so many believe that the return of Christ will take place, if not around the year 2000, then at least in our lifetime, many are caught up in watching events in the

nation of Israel. Others still believe that their ultimate physical salvation will include a flight to the Middle East, if not to Petra in Jordan, then to some other location nearby.

It may come as a surprise to some, but such obsessions are not unique to Armstrongites. Notice this excerpt from a James Brooke article that appeared in the November 22 edition of *The New York Times*:

DENVER - Denver did not disappear in an apocalyptic earthquake on Oct. 10, as predicted by a Christian sect leader. But now he has disappeared with about 75 followers and their children.

Leading up to Denver's date with destiny, members of the sect, Concerned Christians, sold their cars, furniture and houses. They told relatives of vague plans to travel abroad, probably to Israel, with their leader, Monte Kim Miller.

About 10 of the followers were found this week in Israel, said Brig. Gen Hezi Leder, the police attache at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, on Friday evening. The list of located Americans did not include Miller, who has prophesied that he will be killed in the streets of Jerusalem in December 1999, setting off an apocalyptic end to the millennium.

"We are very concerned about people worried about the end of the millennium coming to Israel and trying to do something," Leder said. "If there is any evidence that they intend to commit a crime, we intend to prevent them from coming into Israel."

Already about 100 American Christians, none of them related to Miller's group, have moved this year to the Mount of Olives section of Jerusalem to await the end of the millennium, said one expert on the phenomenon, Brenda Brasher, a religion professor at Mount Union College in Ohio.

Referring to the Concerned Christian group, she said, "I would be very surprised if this is the only one that takes such an act - dropping out, severing all ties and heading to Israel."

Religious people who become obsessed with Jerusalem to the point that they actually feel compelled to move there are so common that there is actually a whole mental hospital in Jerusalem that is dedicated to treating those afflicted with the syndrome. Many of the inmates imagine themselves to be the reincarnation of Elijah or some other famous Bible personage. The Jerusalem syndrome and the special hospital are discussed in Robert Stone's new book *Damascus Gate*.

## Germany in Transition

The following is an excerpt from "Schroeder's Germany Grows Bolder, Irritating Allies" by Roger Cohen which appeared in the 12/11/98 edition of *The New York Times*. Those who recall HWA's prophecies of a reborn Germany will find it of interest.

BERLIN - After assuring its allies that it represents continuity, the new government of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder is using a bold, often challenging directness that is a radical departure from other postwar German administrations.

Gone are the unquestioning solidarity with a European Union seen as at he guarantor of German stability, the reluctance to challenge NATO on basic points of doctrine and the deference to the United States that reflected both a historic debt and an enduring sense of vulnerability.

In their place Schroeder has bitterly attacked what he called Germany's unfairly high contributions to a wasteful European Union budget. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has suggested that NATO change its nuclear policies. And Finance Minister Oskar Lafontaine has made clear that American-style global capitalism is not to his taste.

"Strange sounds can be heard from Germany these days," the influential Munich newspaper *Suddeutsche Zeitung* said on its editorial page this week. "Where is Fischer's humility toward our big American ally? Where are Schroeder and Lafontaine's consideration and sensitivity toward their European partners? Where, in fact, is the feeling for history?"

The answer, perhaps, is that Germany's feeling for history has shifted with the arrival in power of a new generation that, as Schroeder has said, believes that the country should show "the self-confidence of a nation that has come of age."

## ACD Has Moved

The Association for Christian Development (ACD), one of the more balanced groups to have come out of the Worldwide experience, has a new address. It is: P.O. Box 8058, Federal Way, WA 98003-0058; phone: 253-852-3269.

## Obituaries

We were very saddened to learn of the January death from cancer of Robin Hulme (nee Sutcliff, Ambassador-BW 1971), wife of David Hulme, head of the Church of God (Monrovia).

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Louis J. West in early January, from cancer. He was 74. A member of the faculty

of UCLA, Dr. Louis Jolyon "Jolly" West was an internationally known psychiatrist, civil rights activist, and expert on drug abuse. He was also one of the world's leading authorities on cults and the psychological dynamics of cult programming. Among the many awards he received in his lifetime was the Leo J. Ryan Award from the National Cult Awareness Network.

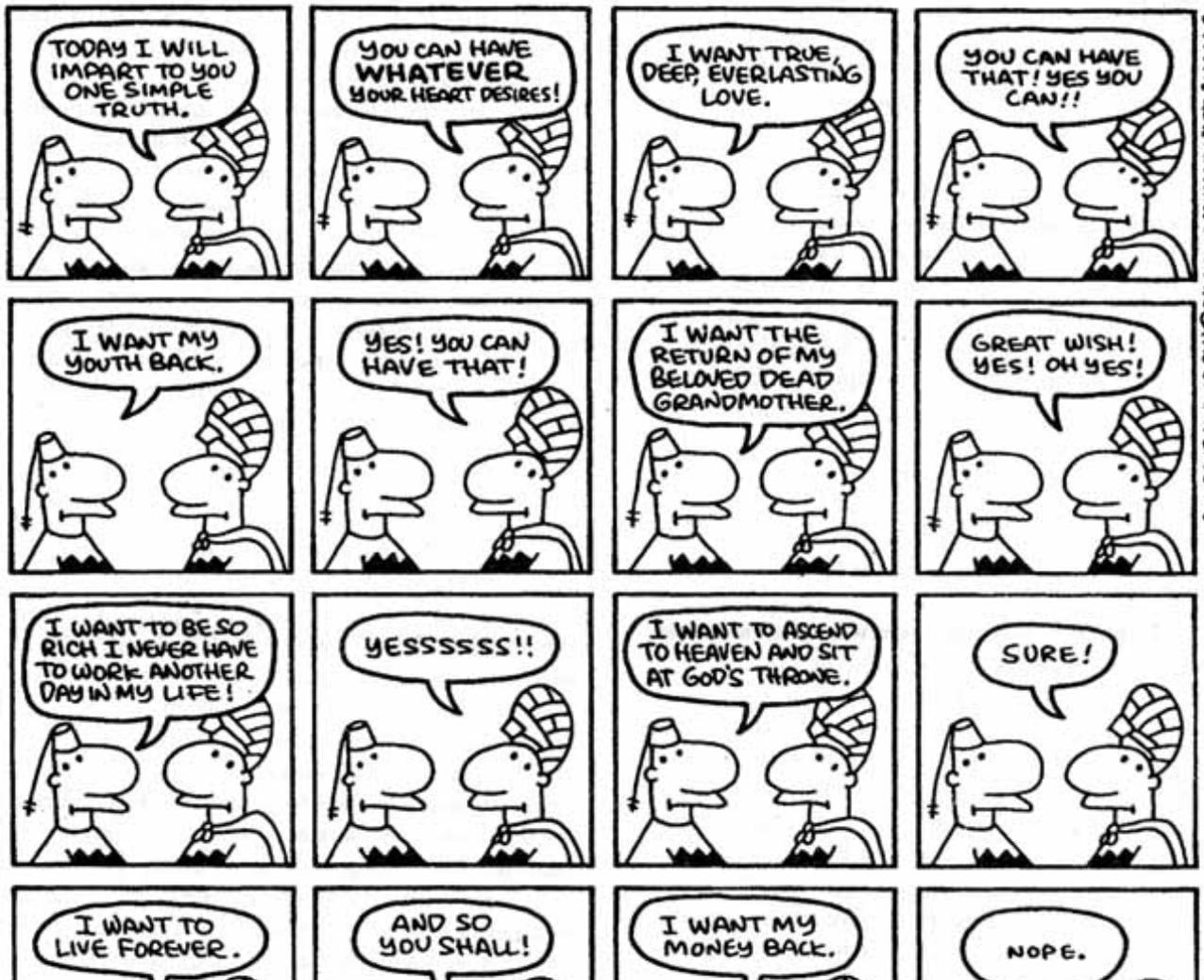
## Letters

This year [1998] for the first time in the WCG Christmas services will be held in the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, and no doubt in other congregations. In the December '98 *Worldwide News* Joe Tkach Jr. discusses guidelines concerning Christmas observance ("A Call to Unity," p. 9). He states that "Every pastor must provide meaningful worship opportunities during the Advent season for members who desire to celebrate the Incarnation of the Son of God." Is there to be reciprocity in requiring that pastors also provide meaningful worship opportunities for those desiring to observe the feast days? A directive from Joe Tkach Jr. in the September 1998 *Worldwide News* (p. 7) indicates that pastors are to "support and encourage those who wish to meet on any of those days (biblical and extra biblical), and will lead in such a way that Christ is honored, preached and taught." The box at the bottom of the above cited article also indicates that this is WCG policy: "Our goal with festivals as a denomination is to provide spiritual leadership while allowing members to observe festivals from two traditions.... However, these statements do not necessarily mandate *meaningful* worship opportunities in the sense that meat in due season is provided to feastgoers. For several years now appropriate feast days messages have not been provided in some locations notably at WCG headquarters in Pasadena. Other than Pentecost, worship services in these locations on feast days and festival seasons has been very general with little or no recognition of the biblical or traditional meanings of these days! The fact that Christ is to be honored, preached and taught is as it should be, but this should be a part of every message. Inasmuch as these general non-feast-specific messages are routinely preached at WCG headquarters, it is evident that it is official WCG policy that the significance of the biblical feast days be omitted or at least severely minimized.

-Robert McDonald  
Pasadena, Calif.

## LIFE IN HELL

©1998  
BY MATT  
GROENING





Dale Ratzlaff, former SDA pastor (4th generation SDA married to a 4th generation SDA) has a book titled *Sabbath in Crisis*. Many of you may be familiar with it. On pages 307-308 he states that after first leaving the SDA church and studying the sabbath in relation to the covenants, he, too, believed Sabbatarians and non-Sabbatarians could co-exist, but quickly realized... this can not be. I quote from his book (he is speaking directly to SDAs here):

Many years ago when I conducted a seven-month study of the Sabbath I felt no compulsion to persuade any of you to change your beliefs concerning the Sabbath. Nor did I feel that way when I started to write this book. However, as I have studied this subject in greater depth, especially in light of the covenants, and have, in the intervening years, received hundreds of phone calls and letters from current and former Sabbath keepers, I now feel I must share with you my deep concern. Prayerfully consider the following....

He goes on to quote many New Testament verses which show, for example, Paul's frustration with the Galatians who were seemingly trying to put themselves back under the Law rather than Grace.

In theory I suppose that if a person, fellowship, or denomination could observe the 7th-day Sabbath in a nonlegalistic way (not feeling superior to all other Christians, not making it a salvation issue, etc.) then the Sabbath might bless that person and help them grow in their relationship with the Lord. IN PRACTICE, however, you will be hard pressed to find an example of this actually happening. Instead all the Sabbatarian groups always seem to revert back to legalism and teaching they alone are true Christians, etc. The Lord has not blessed 7th-day Sabbath observance in any tangible way since the cross. In Christ,

-Bill. Thompson (former SDA)

I attended the Feast of Tabernacles at WCG headquarters in Pasadena, California this year. The location was secondary to the principal feast site for the area at Palm Springs, and all observances except for the Eighth Day were on a weekend, making it more suitable for those unable to take the entire time off from work. The correct time period was observed, with a service on the eve of the First Day on Sunday night, Oct. 4. All services were held in the larger of the two lecture halls in the Science Building. More than 400 feastgoers quickly filled the hall with the overflow hearing the messages in the smaller lecture hall (S112). I don't know how many in WCG attended part-time festivals like this one, but Ronald Kelley reported that the total attendance for the eight-day festival sites was over 10,000.

Gone were most trappings suggestive of the Feast of Tabernacles. No large banner welcoming feastgoers, and the booth of palm fronds that once was erected in the walkway west of the Auditorium was absent. The Feast was barely suggested by the brochure that was distributed. "Come Celebrate Christ!" appeared in big letters on the cover with "Festival 98" in smaller letters below. I did not attend all the services, but there was little I could disagree with in the sermons I did hear. In fact they were quite good even though they were very general with no mention of the Feast of Tabernacles nor its symbolism. The four speakers and their topics were: "Come Celebrate Christ" by Bermie Dizon; "True Celebration" by Dee Bulante; "Jesus the Lamb of God" by a guest speaker from the Jews for Jesus Ministry, Rob Wertheim; and "Let the Living Waters Flow" by Michael Morrison. Lively renditions of gospel music were presented at each service by a choir in spite of very limited space in the lecture hall. Concurrent Spanish language services were held in the Recital Hall. "Love" offerings were taken up on the Holy Days although there was no appeal from the Old Testament concerning not coming before the Lord empty during the three festival seasons.

On October 4, there was but one reference made to the feast, and that was after services were over. It was a sad climax to this first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. After the "amen" following the closing prayer the speaker furtively uttered under his breath, "Have a good Feast." From the back row I yelled back at him, "You have a good Feast too!"

On sabbath afternoon on October 10, five workshops plus a festival video message by Joseph Tkach were scheduled in two different time slots. As far as I was concerned these were the high point of the Feast. The video message, though having little if any content pertaining directly to the Feast, was actually very good. Mr. Tkach surveyed some of the different worship styles used by various congregations in the WCG today. Worship styles can differ, but unity is based on the fact that we worship the one Creator, and that same Creator resides in each one of us through the Spirit of God. Reflecting on the old days when there was a stifling uniformity of sometimes boring worship in Worldwide I noted that we should take some lessons on praise and worship from some of those congregations, especially those from third world nations! In the second time slot I attended a workshop by Michael Morrison called "Shadow of Christ in the Festivals." A brief review by Mr. Morrison on his research on the meanings of the feast days was followed by a lively discussion of the feast days by the participants. Possible solutions concerning some perplexing aspects of the meanings of the feast days for Christians today emerged from the discussion. This workshop was the only event of which I am aware at the Feast in Pasadena which could be called "meat in due season."

Other workshops presented included: "Spiritual Restoration" by Larry Omasta; "Communication, Key to Your Marriage" by Dexter and Shirley Faulkner; and "Diversity: The Beauty of God's Creation" by Leigh Sniffen.

I talked with a number of Feast participants. Many of the "old timers" I knew in the 60s and 70s had reservations about the new direction of the WCG, though most agreed with the correction of some past abuses. Some were very dissatisfied, while a few were reluctant to express how they felt about the church. On the other hand some old timers were very pleased with the church's new direction. I chatted with one couple I had known as Ambassador students in the 60s. I left them with the perhaps overused wish "Have a good Feast!" The lady answered very coldly, "Thank you." I was reminded of the dozens of times I had answered in the same manner someone wishing me a "merry Christmas"! I reflected that I should have at least replied to those well-intentioned folks in a friendlier way.

For 20 years I had seen the need for many of the changes we now see in the WCG. To no avail I tried to point out some of these shortcomings. But amidst the changes for the good it is distressing that many things of value are being discarded. From the ignoring of the feast days to the active promotion of the "traditional" Christian days, it looks like the values we saw in feast day observance are among those things being relegated by the WCG to the trash heap.

To me the festivals mark important milestones in how God has dealt with his people and illustrate the elegance and majesty of how God will carry out His plan in the future. I grieve that the knowledge of these days which point to the redemptive role of Jesus Christ may be lost to many. In spite of this major deficiency in the current mode of observance of the Feast of Tabernacles by the WCG, there was much that was good: the praise and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ in word and song, the prayer service, the fellowship, the catered meal, the potluck, the picnic, the family night, and at times the experience of unity in Christ!

-Robert Macdonald  
Pasadena, California

I recently went to the Feast of Tabernacles in Llandudno, Wales. I visited both the Hulmite faction of the UCG(UK) and the Jewellite faction of the UCG(UK). The latter is led by minister John Jewell and is still affiliated with the UCGIA. The two UCG(UK) groups met within four miles of each other. Up to a few months ago they had been "all brethren together." Now, because of the ministers' egos, 420 "brethren" of the Hulmite faction are no longer speaking to 120 "brethren" of the Jewellite faction except for one or two isolated cases. And this even includes members of families who have split to different factions. So the same old human carnal process continues.

It is very hard to get to the mentality of the people bound in these captive organizations. They really think they are "free," and that you are on the "outside," and probably spiritually "inferior." It is very sad. No doubt, these factions will split further, as I don't believe God is much interested in these organizations anymore and is probably working more through individuals scattered hither and thither. Meanwhile, the people in the groups go on paying and occasionally praying. It's the jam for the ministers: Nice work if you can get it. But the pie is shrinking and shrinking and shrinking.

-Stan Heaton  
England

With sadness I want to tell you that Jay and Jan Mayfield got a divorce. Jay, we believe, now lives in Houston.

-D.P. Free  
Texas

The August issue of *The Journal* quotes Rod Meredith as stating that the GCG Council and Board members can remove him only by a 90% or more vote should he be found to have committed gross immorality or advocated heresy.

Rod added: "Not one slip, but continuing in gross immorality. You know, commit adultery a number of times or get drunk over and over or rob banks...." Millions of American men never commit adultery once, never get drunk once, and never robbed one dollar from anyone. It is a shame that a person who has so little confidence in his ability to not do any of those acts once, still thinks he has been commissioned to administer "God's government."

-Robert Romagnoli  
California

I have been pondering all the storms and changes in the weather that have happened recently across the world. And I wonder if it is a warning like those sent by God to ancient Egypt?

-Frank Miller  
Wisconsin

*Editor: There are still those who ridicule the notion of "global warming. " But the evidence keeps piling up that it is real. The New York Times (12/10/98) reported how the gradual heating up of the earth has been going on since at least 1949. This has led not just to warmer winters and summers, but to many climactic changes, some of them severe (more hurricanes and tornados, for example). You are not just imagining the changing weather conditions.*

Our daughter and family now belong to the United Church of God.... I, myself, am Catholic and I get a chuckle whenever there is a mention of our faith in your newsletter by you or anyone else. I am not offended in any way. Our faith has been around for a long time and can withstand any comments made about it. Especially after all the errors we have made ourselves. What I cannot understand is someone believing in a religion begun in the 1930s. I still remember HWA writing about God coming to him in a dream (with fireworks no less) and telling him he was chosen. Give me a break!

-AR reader

In AR you incorrectly gave the web address for the exWCG atheists as: [www.infidels.com](http://www.infidels.com). That address does not work. The correct web address is: [www.infidels.org](http://www.infidels.org).

-Larry Taylor  
Pennsylvania

I found the comments of newspaper columnist Eric Margolis very eye-opening. Armstrongites just love to think of our country as "modern Israel" when, in fact, we are modern Rome. Margolis made that very clear. But, I hope you noticed his foolish self-righteousness in holding up Roman consul Regulus as an example to be followed. What I got out of his preachy lesson was this: Regulus was a self-righteous fool who got himself tortured to death. Clinton, on the other hand, may be flawed, but he is no fool and, as a result, he lives - physically and politically, at least for now. I wonder if you and columnist Margolis noticed that fact.

-Bret Larson  
California

This is why Ambassador College did not work. Students were the called and chosen of HWA, not God. Ambassador was a work for God, but it was not a work of God. We set out to show God what we could do for Him. And he "scattered" us (Isa. 42:24, Psa. 68:1).

-Texas

It is interesting that while HWA shunned 20th century conspiracy theories, he actually promoted the idea of a first century conspiracy - that of Simon Magus!

-California

I can't wait to read your analysis of the false prophets of the Church of God in your next issues. I know you won't spare them because they deserve no mercy.

I expect no mercy, either. I am the source of the "Gorbachev is the Beast" belief. Since my belief was directly referred to in the last letter of the last *Ambassador Report*, I believe I have a right to present it for your readers in its authentic form. It will be very entertaining for your readers and it will give both you and me an opportunity to shame plagiarists - those who lifted my research without giving credit to me.

Evidently, there are wolves in the Church who, not having a close relationship with God and not having the gift of prophecy, have stolen my material to make a name for themselves and make money on sales of the material. Please let me be vindicated.

In the articles I published in 1991 regarding Gorbachev and the events of the end-time, I claimed to be doing the work of the Two Witnesses. It's shameful that some in the Church of God believe everything in my articles except the part about the Two Witnesses. They want the information but not the prophets. No one contacted me. I guess they figured what they had was sufficient for their shameful purposes.

Fortunately, I saved plenty of copies of the papers my articles appeared in. No one can produce an authentic publication with the Gorbachev belief that predates my original articles. My claim is very important because to a great extent the messenger is the message. If people acknowledge my identity as a Witness, they will trust further prophecies that require important decisions in their lives.

Not only did I write the articles concerning prophecies of Gorbachev, I prophesied in church concerning short-term events about political figures - and people were astonished that unlikely prophecies came to pass. When Clinton was an unknown contender in the Democratic primary, I stated in full confidence that he would be the next President. The congregation was stunned when my

prophecy came to pass. The minister insisted I only "predicted" successfully. He suffers from the same affliction as those who are not looking for the Two Witnesses or Jesus Christ....

People have been deeply offended by my unerring prophecies.... I don't claim to have been spoken to by God or angels. However, I can understand what the prophets have written. They prophesy through my body....

-Edward McKinney  
448 W. Allstar Ave.  
Tulare, CA 93274

*Editor: Another individual who has written extensively on Gorbachev being the Beast is Gary Arvidson of Prophecy Report, P.O. Box 442, Dallas, NC 28034.*

It was in Sept. 1998 that I began listening to AM Christian radio. I heard Sir Anthony Buzzard's *Focus on the Kingdom* and immediately called for the booklet information. After a few weeks, I wrote to Sir Anthony and thanked him for the radio program and the literature. I also just happened to mention we had been WCG members and about the frustrations we were facing.

Soon Anthony called us to explain he had been a member also!.... Sir Anthony mentioned your publication, *Ambassador Report*. He gave us your address to ask to be on your mailing list.

-Julie & Bob Gilbert  
South Carolina

*Editor: For information about the ministry of Sir Anthony Buzzard, write Focus on the Kingdom, 185 Summerville Dr., Brooks, GA 30205.*

In light of the ongoing crisis in the Global Church, I believe it would be very helpful to read the [October, 1984 issue of Ambassador Report \(AR29\)](#) which covers Leona McNair's successful lawsuit against Roderick Meredith and Raymond McNair for libel.... I have never heard a rebuttal by Rod Meredith or Raymond McNair of the shocking evidence presented in the AR article. It has continually amazed me that sometimes, the only source of complete information on activities of the Church comes from those who oppose the doctrinal teachings of the Church. John Trechak and I are on opposite poles on many Bible teachings. However, I respect his integrity and his desire to report the whole Truth, even if it hurts. In the Church today, I am looking most of all, not just for a minister preaching the Truth, but for one telling the Truth.

-Richard Nickels  
Giving & Sharing, Bible Sabbath Assn.  
3316 Alberta Drive  
Gillette, WY 82718  
(307) 685-5191  
Internet: [www.vcn.com/~giveshare](http://www.vcn.com/~giveshare)

I'm sure the WCG story would make a very entertaining mini-series for the tube. But no one would take it to be the truth - most of it is totally unbelievable!

-Charles Straw  
Pennsylvania

### **Editor's Note**

If there is one thing that I have learned thoroughly in publishing the *Report* all these years, it is that truth is indeed often stranger than fiction.

My thanks to all of you who continue to support our efforts. And my special thanks to those of you who wrote encouraging notes to me about my recent health problems. I am doing better, but it will be several weeks before I am fully able to use my foot.

Your thoughts and prayers were much appreciated.

-JT

[Next Issue \(AR72\)](#)  
[Back to Index](#)



# **The Painful Truth**

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

---

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

---

**April 1999 (AR72)**

### **Tkach Plans Retirement Fund**

With the two major properties of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) on their way to being transferred to other corporations, many WCG members have wondered what will become of the monies the WCG acquires from the sale of its Big Sandy, Texas and Pasadena, California properties. In his March 1999 letter to the church, Pastor General Joseph Tkach, Jr. shed some light on the matter:

Because our church has reached a point at which large properties are no longer necessary for our mission, we are very thankful that God has blessed us with potential buyers for the Big Sandy and Pasadena campuses. As you can imagine, however, the sales of these properties involves a complex process, one that takes a good deal of time. We are praying for a successful close of escrow on the Big Sandy property in the next several weeks. However, no transaction of this nature is assured until the day that it is actually final and complete.

The process of selling the Pasadena property is not nearly so far advanced. However, God has blessed us with potential buyer, and we are in negotiations for a purchase and sale agreement. When that agreement is signed, hopefully in the next several weeks, escrow (of probably 12 to 18 months duration) will open. The potential buyer, Legacy Partners, has already begun the detailed technical study, and both we and they are optimistic about the progress of the sale process. Still, the process is complex and time-consuming, and such transactions often hit unexpected snags. Our collective prayers are definitely a vital part of a successful sale.

These assets in Pasadena and Big Sandy have been accumulating over the decades into something that can now help our church move into the future in a responsible way. While only about 6 percent of church income through the years has been spent on property (some 89 percent was spent on media proclamation, congregational and member expenses and the colleges, and the other 5 percent on the Foundation), the total value of the property assets today is significant.

Along with the growing asset we have also had growing obligations through the

years to our faithful church employees and ministers who have given their lives in full-time service and are now elderly or disabled. No provision, other than a discretionary assistance taken directly from cash flow, was ever made by past administrations for these faithful employees' declining years. It is now our responsibility to move this moral obligation out of daily cash flow while continuing to meet it, so that it will no longer have to come directly out of donations, and so that it will no longer be so uncertain for these faithful servants.

We will meet that responsibility with the proceeds from the sales. [emphasis added - ed.] *But that is not all. We will use the assets God provides to ensure and strengthen the integrity of our future as a denomination....*

## **Underground Church Talks Class Action**

While Tkach hopes that the sale of the Pasadena properties will go through without a hitch (but "such transactions often hit unexpected snags"), not all former WCG members wish him success with his plans. A group called the "Underground Church of God" has widely distributed an e-mail announcement indicating that they intend to block the property transfer. Here is what they wrote:

Greetings to the Scattered Brethren of God:

Many of you are aware of the recent announced sale of the Ambassador College campus and facilities located in Pasadena, California to a real estate development firm for a sale price quoted to be in excess of 100 million dollars.

These facilities were purchased with monies donated and sacrificed by several thousands of hard working individuals like yourselves for the expressed and announced purpose of a college campus, auditorium and grounds dedicated to the "Great God." To use these facilities for any other purpose is tantamount to fraud and misuse of the funds reverently donated and given for this purpose. As is quoted in Malachi: "Will a man rob God? Yet, ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

In response to these events, several have been working privately behind the scenes to either block, or at least delay, this unethical and evil transfer of assets to the indiscriminate use of a select few such as Tkach and his cohorts. These individuals were never involved in the solicitation nor dedicated named use of the offerings of the people of God for the Pasadena facilities. A growing group of brethren known privately as the "Underground Church of God" is composed of non-ordained brethren of nearly every current known Church of God group including Worldwide, United, Global, Philadelphia, Living, Hulme, Great God and other corporate groups, as well as many from the independent and Living Room groups.

A leading Los Angeles area law firm has been hired on retainer, and will soon announce a "Lis Pendens" - a legal maneuver to temporarily block the impending sale by proclaiming a "cloud" on the title of the properties pending future legal outcome. In addition, a class action lawsuit will be initiated against the organization proclaiming that the Worldwide Church of God solicited these funds for the named dedicated use for brethren of the Church of God and not for private commercial real estate development or the private financial benefit of a few corporate officers such as Tkach. All brethren who have donated to the Worldwide Church of God in the past will be invited to be participants of the soon coming class action lawsuit seeking

remedy and financial restitution.

In addition a "sit in" similar to that which occurred in January 1979 is being organized. Possibly to coordinate in the year 2000 with the same anniversary as the original "sit in." Brethren by the thousands will attend Pasadena Church services occupying the auditorium and other facilities and continuing in unbroken 24 hour "Religious Services" exempt from criminal trespass laws and legal authority. Several "Underground Church of God" associates have expressed their desire to handcuff themselves to the church facilities and to be removed only by force of law.

In addition to this proposed Pasadena "sit in" all brethren in the Churches of God across the world will be asked to organize and participate by attending peaceably and in mass, as a sign of support, at their local Worldwide Church of God services. This massive flood of attendance of current and past dislocated former members attending their local Worldwide Church of God services in a onetime silent and peaceful gesture will surely send a message to Pasadena and possibly create legal doubt and the withdrawal of any purchase offers for the campus.

---

&COPY; 1999 *Ambassador Report*. John Trechak, Editor & Publisher, Published as a Christian service almost quarterly - as finances allow.

ISSN 0882-2123

Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are not necessarily those of the publisher. References to books, ministers, and organizations do not constitute endorsements.

---

Several local and national news services have been contacted and have assured us of giving full media exposure to these events as they unfold, allowing once again for the excesses and abuses of the financial structure of the Worldwide Church of God to be well known.

You can help currently by forwarding this e-mail to as many as possible on your current Church of God mailing list, and asking them to do the same. In addition, post this e-mail on any Church of God Internet forums and Web sites that you are aware of. This will insure that the leadership of Pasadena will be well aware that the brethren of God are not going to take this fraudulent and thieving action from them without a resistance.

While the Underground Church letter has had wide distribution, it is at this time not exactly clear who the author of the letter really is. Some have even thought the letter might be a hoax. Time will tell whether such ambitious resistance plans by the "Underground Church" will be able to accomplish anything or if time will prove this "resistance" to be just so much hot air.

## **AU to Be Pacem in Terris University**

As we reported in [AR70](#), ownership of Ambassador University at Big Sandy, Texas is about to be transferred to LaRoche College, a Catholic institution based in Pittsburgh and run by the Sisters of Divine Providence. Since then, LaRoche has indicated that it intends

to rename Ambassador "Pacem in Terris University." "Pacem in Terris" is Latin for "peace on earth," the title of an encyclical issued by Pope John XXIII in 1963, the year that La Roche College was founded.

While neither the WCG nor LaRoche officials have yet indicated publicly how much the sale price was for the huge Big Sandy campus, sources in the real estate field in Texas have stated that the campus sold for approximately \$30 million. If that is indeed the case, LaRoche got an extraordinarily good deal.

## **Worldwide Minister Assists Pope**

The pastor of the WCG's St. Louis congregation recently assisted with Pope John Paul II's visit to that city. According to Bill Stough writing in the January 31 issue of *The Journal*, Pastor James Lee is a member of The Interfaith Fellowship Partnership of Greater St. Louis which assisted the Catholic Church in the pope's visit to that city in late January. According to the *Journal* article:

Announcements at WCG church services in St. Louis July 16 gave information on which organizations to contact if WCG members would like to volunteer in the many ways needed to make the pope feel welcome and assist in events the pope would be involved in.

Mr. Lee said before the event that he would like to meet the pope.

"That would be a great honor, but I don't expect to be able to. He is a man of strong character, high principles, and one who has accomplished so much in his life. He has worked to build unity among all Christians and all people of whatever religion they might be. I am very impressed with the wonderful things the pope has done."

Obviously, the WCG's position toward the Roman Catholic Church has changed markedly from the days of HWA when the Roman Church was called the "Great Whore" of Revelation.

## **Meredith's Living Church**

As we reported in our last issue, evangelist Roderick C. Meredith has broken from the Global Church of God. He has now formed a new organization called the Living Church of God (LCG). Meredith was able to draw away approximately 75 percent of the ministry of Global. Among the prominent GCG ministers to go with Meredith's offshoot are Dr. Lynn Torrance, Jonathan McNair, Richard Ames, Dave Hall, David Crockett, and John Ogwyn. The address of the new offshoot is Living Church of God, P.O. Box 501304, San Diego, CA 92150. Ironically, the new Living Church headquarters is housed in the same San Diego building as its parent church, the Global Church of God, which still has the mailing address P.O. Box 501111, San Diego, CA 92150.

## **Bryce Clark's COG**

As we reported in our last issue, minister Bryce Clark has broken from the Church of God the Eternal, which itself was an early breakaway from the WCG. He has now formed a new organization called the Bethel Church of God. Essentially, Clark left CGE because he saw it as straying from the purity of truth that the CGE supposedly began with when it split from the WCG in 1975. He also saw evangelist Raymond Cole as autocratic. But according to one CGE reader:

I understand Mr. Clark had asked to make Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Thanksgiving Day part of church doctrine. Since these are national holidays and not God's Holy Days, there was no agreement. It is up to each individual as to whether they choose to celebrate these days or not. But not as church doctrine. As to what Mr. Cole's teachings are: He is holding to all that was revealed to HWA at the first. The later changes on D&R, Pentecost, and many other minor changes came as a result of doctrinal committees, scholars, and other ministerial judgements. These changes were not revealed to Mr. HWA at the first. Only revealed revelations are accepted by Mr. Cole.

Whether or not doctrinal matters were really at the heart of the split is hard to say. A few months ago, someone in the northwest anonymously mailed us photocopies of what were claimed to be love letters from Raymond Cole to a former secretary. Of course, without being able to interview the claimed recipient, we have no way of knowing their authenticity. But it is interesting that some are on a campaign to discredit Cole.

The address for Clark's new organization is: Bethel Church of God, P.O. Box 25345, Eugene, OR 97402. The Church of God the Eternal remains at P.O. Box 775, Eugene, OR 97440; [www.cogte.org](http://www.cogte.org).

## **Clinton in Prophecy?**

Among Armstrongites steeped in apocalyptic theories and believing we live in the "end times," it has long been a favorite pastime to prognosticate who in the modern world will turn out to be the Beast of Revelation. In the past Hitler, Tito, and Franz Joseph Strauss were popular targets. Now, along comes William Dankenbring of Triumph Prophetic Ministries and says it might turn out to be President Bill Clinton. In the January/February issue of Dankenbring's *Prophecy Flash!* magazine the main lead articles focused on "The Devil and William J. Clinton." In his lead article, "Clinton's Family Tree," Dankenbring wrote:

Amazing but true, recent research provides the most astounding evidence of a direct genealogical link between one of history's most wicked and sadistic monsters - Emperor Nero of Rome - and President William Jefferson Clinton. Read here of the most astonishing pedigree, and the "Nero Connection" to America's beleaguered President, impeached in the House and tried in the Senate for "high crimes and misdemeanors."

Dankenbring then went on to quote J. R. Church of *Prophecy in the News* magazine who wrote:

Bill Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe, but took his stepfather's name as a teenager. Clinton's ancestry can be traced back, on his mother's side, to King Henry

III who ruled England from 1227 to 1272. He is descended from King Robert I of France.

Furthermore, he is related to every Scottish monarch to the current British royal family. Clinton's royal roots include several medieval monarchs and Simon de Montford, a statesman and soldier under King Henry III. Through de Montford, Clinton is related to every ancient aristocratic family in Britain today....

Bill Clinton's family goes back to William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison, making him related to Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. His kinship to Ford makes him "near kin" to Richard Nixon and George Bush. Small world isn't it?

Dankenbring then goes on to quote Church who claims to know a boyhood friend of Clinton who is also supposedly a member of the Rothschild banking family. This unnamed source makes the astonishing claim that in his youth, Clinton at times wore a Jewish skullcap and that Clinton attended Rothschild family functions because he supposedly is a Rothschild descendant. But that is not all. Supposedly, according to Church, the Rothschilds are descended from Emperor Nero! As Dankenbring exclaims, "From the villainous Nero to Clinton - what a legacy!"

To put the final nails in Clinton's coffin, Dankenbring points out how using Aramaic numerology the name Nero Caesar has a total numerical value of 666. Dankenbring then goes on to apply Hebrew gematria and concludes that the name William Jefferson Clinton has a total numerical value of 666. Not only that, writes Dankenbring, so does the name Hillary Rodham!

In a second article, "A New Look at the Devil and Bill Clinton," Dankenbring writes:

History reveals Emperor Nero of Rome to have been a slick, seductive, emotional, popular, much loved Emperor - but a man who craved power, and became one of the greatest tyrants and blood-thirsty demagogues in all human history. What will the record of history have to say about William Jefferson Clinton, America's 42nd President?

Dankenbring then goes on to paint Clinton as a demagogue similar to Nero. The article's subheadings tell the story: "Bimbo Eruptions," "Drugs, Suicides and Murder," "Fundraising Scandals and Treason," "The Clinton Body Count," "Scandals Galore and Prophecy," "Clinton: First Sociopath in the Oval Office?", "Foretold in Biblical Prophecy?", and "The Beast of Revelation."

Dankenbring then concludes with a prophetic interpretation that is increasingly gaining supporters in religious circles both abroad and in the United States, itself:

At this point in history, the United States with its allies IS the end-time "Roman Empire." Our government is patterned after that of ancient Rome. Our constitution is based on many Roman principles. We have a Senate like the ancient Roman Senate. We now speak of "Pax Americana," of the "American Peace," and the "American Age."

Speaking of the "End-Time Babylon," the book of Revelation points out that it will

be both a mighty military power and a world commercial empire (Rev. 13 and Rev. 18). The whole world, for a time, will "worship" this end-time amalgam of nations and western powers - who control world trade and who patrol the world's "hot spots." At the head of this amalgam of nations today is the United States of America!

America is the world's *last and only remaining* "Superpower"!

As the head of this end-time "Babylonian" empire, the United States President could be looked upon as the "king" of Babylon. And, as the end-time "Tyre," the modern counterpart of the ancient world's leading trading commercial metropolis, and nation-state, America be could considered the end-time fulfillment of the "prince Tyre."...

This prophesied end-time world leader [of Ezek. 28:2-5] will sit at the helm of nations - and manage the "New World Order." He is described as "wiser than Daniel." Who can but marvel at the amazing political dexterity cunning and of William "Slick" Clinton, in his ability to conjure up political "witchcraft" to remove himself from political danger? It has been reported that he has an I.Q. of 165 - well into the "genius" level - and he is certainly a "genius" when it comes to politics!

Will Bill Clinton turn out to be the prophesied "Beast" or "Antichrist"? Time will tell! We will know very soon now!

To subscribe to *Prophecy Flash!*, write to Triumph Prophetic Ministries, P.O. Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003.

## **The Secret Church of Conspiracy**

### **Part III**

by John Trechak

In Part II of this series, I covered the Jewish conspiracy theory, but neglected to mention one important point. Just as we might say "the Catholics" or "the French" and thus lump all members of those groups into one homogeneous whole, we often say "the Jews" without giving much thought to what we are talking about. The fact is, just as the Catholics are divided on many issues, and as are the French, the Jews are similarly not a monolithic, homogenous group in many ways. There are Reformed Jews, Conservative Jews, Orthodox Jews (ultra conservative), secular Jews (those that are non-religious, even atheist), and now, Messianic Jews (those that believe Jesus of Nazareth was/is the Messiah). There is even debate among Jews as to who is really a Jew. Some groups emphasize race, others ethnicity, and others religious purity. And all these groups have significant differences of opinion on many philosophical and doctrinal points.

For example, recently, some of the differences between the Orthodox branch (which predominates in Israel) and the Reformed branch (which predominates in the United States) have flared up in Israel to where demonstrations between the two groups have been quite vociferous, almost violent. In a *New York Times* article last year, one Israeli authority was quoted as saying that the differences between the various factions in Israel was now so great, he would not be surprised to see open violence flare up between the factions at some point in the near future. Indeed, in Prime Minister Rabin's assassination we may have already seen the precursor of such hostilities. So when we talk about "the Jews," let us keep in mind that they are not the homogeneous, united kind of entity that

some suppose.

## Masons and the WCG

This will be a short section, as there really is virtually no substantial connection between Freemasonry and the WCG. A few years ago there circulated in church circles anonymous letters claiming that all the ministers in the WCG were actually secretly Freemasons. We have investigated this for some time and have found absolutely no evidence that this is the case. We know of only one former WCG executive who is currently a Mason - Marion J. McNair, author of the 1977 exposé book *Armstrongism: Religion or Rip-off?* McNair is a 32nd degree Mason and proud of it. And in conversations with the *Report* he denied that the fraternity was in any way behind the WCG and he had nothing but good to say about Masonry.

We asked long-ago WCG minister Paul Royer, now head of the Church of God, Sonoma (4343 Wallace Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404), if he knew of any connection between Masonry and the founders of Armstrongism and this is what he wrote us:

I heard the matter discussed briefly in the WCG on an occasion or two by Jack Elliot [a WCG executive many years ago] who as I remember was once a Mason [before joining Worldwide]. As I recall Garner Ted and HWA were around when Jack made the comments, all unfavorable. I personally did not see any evidence of Freemasonry in the church.

Perhaps one reason some WCG members have wondered about a WCG secret connection to Freemasonry is because the WCG, for many years not wanting to buy church buildings and refusing to rent space from other church denominations, found itself renting space from Masonic temples for use for services. And with more than 2.5 million Masons in the United States alone (according to *World Book Encyclopedia*), there are many Masonic halls available for rental. One reader wrote us:

Right from the start, HWA's very first office in Eugene was on the second floor of an old Masonic building [we have not verified this - ed.]. And through the years many of the churches rented Masonic halls for their activities.

This latter statement is true, but it is also true that in many communities where there were Masonic halls available, local pastors rented other facilities. Price and other factors seem to have been the main considerations. But some will prefer to believe otherwise. One funny church story in this regard relates to the old Reseda, California WCG congregation. It used to meet in the Masonic lodge in that city and the lodge's number just happened to be 666. You can imagine the rumors that that fact inspired!

Those looking for a seamier side to Masonry can find it easily in numerous books on the market that purport to expose Masonry. Among the popular exposés are: *The Brotherhood: The Explosive Exposé of the Secret World of the Freemasons* by Stephen Knight (1985), *Inside the Brotherhood: Explosive Secrets of the Freemasons* by Martin Short (1989), *The Temple and the Lodge* by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh (1989), and in the Freemason literature published by Religion Analysis Service, P.O. Box 22098, Robbinsdale, MN 55422-0098. Another valuable, and perhaps more balanced, source of

esoteric information on Freemasonry is the No. 44 issue of *Gnosis* magazine (P.O. Box 14217, San Francisco, CA 94114-0217).

It is interesting that someone critical of the symbolic basis of Masonic ritual is Wellesley College Professor Mary Lefkowitz, a respected classics scholar. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (7/3/96, p. E4):

No myth is more widespread, says Lefkowitz, than the mystical picture of ancient Egypt incorporated in the lore of Freemasonry.... The symbolism and numerology of Freemasonry tends to be looked on as gospel by the strongest adherents of Afrocentrism. But it has little or no foundation, Lefkowitz says, in the vast literature that Egyptologists have uncovered since they began reading hieroglyphics in the last century.

The real source of the Masonic portrait of Egypt, she says, is a three-volume French novel, *Sethos*, published in 1713 by the Abbe Jean Terrasson, who thought hieroglyphics were mystic symbols. Terrasson's novel was widely read during the 18th century, and was so influential that it became the source for the libretto of Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*.

While there are many critics of Masonry with their ideas in print, those wanting to read Masonic defenses to the charges against them will find an excellent source at the pro-Masonry site: [www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/anti-masonry/anti-masonry\\_faq.html](http://www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/anti-masonry/anti-masonry_faq.html), the site of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia.

Again, whatever one thinks of Masonry, we have found no evidence that the ministry of the WCG or any of its offshoots have Masons in their ranks.

### **WCG and Jesuits**

Just as goofy as the theory that the Masons somehow control the WCG and/or its offshoots is the theory that somehow Jesuits have infiltrated the WCG and/or some of its offshoots. This theory has had two major sources.

One source has been claims made by Dr. Alberto Rivera, a mysterious individual who claimed to have once been a Jesuit before finding Christ. (Rivera died in 1997 after supposedly being poisoned by Jesuits, according to his widow's Web site [http://members.tripod.com/~zine\\_damascus/reflections/alberto](http://members.tripod.com/~zine_damascus/reflections/alberto)). Rivera's adventures have been depicted in comic books published by Jack T. Chick, who for over 25 years has been a major figure in anti-Catholicism in the United States. His small comic book tracts are simultaneously the funniest and the scariest anti-Catholic literature to be found today. And they have been popular with many Worldwidars. Besides selling his comic book tracts, in recent years Chick has expanded his outreach onto the Internet. He is at P.O. Box 3500, Ontario, CA 91761-1100; [www.chick.com](http://www.chick.com). (Anti-Chick sites can be found at [www.revolting.com/1.2/chick/chick.html](http://www.revolting.com/1.2/chick/chick.html) and [www.his.com/~panda/paulb/chick.html](http://www.his.com/~panda/paulb/chick.html).)

Rivera's allegations are an important part of Chick's anti-Catholic crusade. Rivera makes the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is actively attempting to thwart mainstream

Protestant and Evangelical churches by sending in undercover Jesuit agents to sow discord in such churches. The theory is that Jesuit intellectuals infiltrate into the high echelons of such churches, pretending to be true believers, but then introduce heretical teachings to bring about the destruction of the Protestant churches.

In the 1970s Rivera was contacted by a number of members of the WCG who had been reading Chick publications. They asked him if WCG attorney Stanley Rader was such a Jesuit agent. Rivera's reply was that Rader was such an agent. How did he know? Rivera never revealed his sources of information. Apparently, the fact that Rader had advanced degrees was adequate proof to Rivera that Rader was a Jesuit agent.

But how reliable was Rivera? Numerous Christian anti-cult organizations, still anxious to find Rivera truthful, have had to concede that they have been unable to verify many of his central claims. Indeed, there is some doubt that he, himself, was ever really a Jesuit, as he claimed. Watchman Fellowship, the evangelical cult-fighting organization, has specifically warned us not to place trust in Rivera's pronouncements. Another group, an anti-Catholic one, Opus Dei Awareness Network (ODAN), specifically warns against quoting Rivera, as he has repeatedly proven so unreliable as to be self-defeating to ODAN's anti-Catholic mission.

Incidentally, both Opus Dei and ODAN are interesting groups worth being aware of. The Catholic Opus Dei is at 99 Overlook Circle, New Rochelle, NY, 10804; [www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org). And the Opus Dei Awareness Network, Inc. (ODAN) is at P.O. Box 4333, Pittsfield, MA 01202-4333; [www.odan.org](http://www.odan.org).

The second source of rumor that the Armstrongites have been infiltrated by Jesuits is a Seventh Day Adventist-related group that distributes a set of video tapes titled *Catholic Charismatic Attack on God's SDA Church*. It is put out by its producer Pastor Jan Marcussen, P.O. Box 68, Thompsonville, IL 62890. (It has also been distributed by the WCG spinoff group The Cincinnati Brethren, P.O. Box 75021, Ft. Thomas, KY 41075.) In the series Marcussen adopts Alberto Rivera's premise that the Catholic Church has been sending Jesuit agents into Protestant churches to cause chaos. If that is not enough, Marcussen goes on to make the startling claims that Jesuits are behind all pharmaceutical companies, that communism was a Jesuit-hatched plot, that Hitler was a Jesuit, and that even rock and roll was developed by Jesuits. But where the tape steps on the toes of Armstrongites is in naming Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi as a Jesuit infiltrator. Bacchiocchi, in recent years, has been a popular author (*From Sabbath to Sunday*) and lecturer in Armstrongite circles. Bacchiocchi, a Seventh Day Adventist minister, promotes the seventh-day sabbath, yet because he did some of his education at a Catholic institution in Rome, they are convinced Bacchiocchi is a Jesuit infiltrator. We wrote Dr. Sam about the allegation and his thoughtful reply was:

The "Jesuit Conspiracy" mentality has plagued our SDA church for many years. The truth of the matter is that the Catholic Church has so many problems of its own that it has no time to cause problems in other churches. Please note that less than three percent of Catholics go to church in Italy. They have plenty of work to do to salvage their own church.

Not only is Bacchiocchi a very pro-Sabbath preacher, he is also an astute critical observer

of the Vatican. Notice an 8/28/98 comment he made to his Special Sabbath Updates readers:

[My lecture will discuss] Pope John Paul II's Pastoral Letter *Dies Domini* where he makes a passionate plea for revival of Sunday observance, by urging, among other things, the passing of Sunday Rest legislation to facilitate Sunday worship. This historical document is significant for two major reasons. First, Pope John Paul II grounds Sunday observance in the Sabbath commandment itself, by making Sunday keeping the continuation and embodiment of the theology and practice of the Sabbath. This explanation runs contrary to Catholic tradition that has viewed Sunday observance as an ecclesiastical institution independent of the Sabbath commandment. Second, the Pope appeals to the "providential" origin of the Sunday rest legislation at the time of Constantine, and to its survival through the centuries, to urge Christians "to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy. The November issues of *Liberty Ministry* and *Signs of the Times*... carry my analysis of the Pope's Pastoral Letter.

As illogical as it is to see Dr. Bacchiocchi as a Jesuit infiltrator, many, nevertheless, have. A few years ago, an invitation by the Global Church of God for Bacchiocchi to speak led to scores of GCG members leaving the organization in the belief that it had been taken over by Jesuit infiltrators. Some even accused evangelist Roderick Meredith of being a Jesuit. And since then we have heard of many other Armstrongites who have left their denominations because their pastors have looked favorably on Bacchiocchi's work. Is there any evidence that Bacchiocchi is a Jesuit? Of course not. The fact that he so strongly promotes the seventh-day sabbath should be proof enough that such theories are nonsense. Yet, some continue to prefer weird conspiracy theories to what should be self-evident.

### **Weirder Yet**

Not only have some Armstrongites and former members seen Jewish Conspiracy, Masonic, and Jesuit connections to the WCG and Armstrongite offshoots, there have even been some who have brought into their theories the Illuminate, the Bilderbergers, the Trilateral Commission, Satanists, and even outer space aliens. Most of these theories are too weird even to get into. Suffice it to say, some Armstrongite members and ex-members are prone toward accepting such strange notions, no matter how contrary to common sense.

Of course, there is a positive side to all of this. Many of those fascinated by conspiracy theories realize that many of them contain grains of truth, and to such people there is merit in attempting to coordinate all the theories into some kind of logical framework. Among former Worldwidiers who have had this approach are author Des Griffin of Emissary Publications (9205 SE Clackamas Rd., #1776, Clackamas, OR 97015, 503-824-2050; [www.midnight-emissary.com](http://www.midnight-emissary.com)) and Ken Nagele, author of *The Elean Files: A Guide to Understanding Life in the End Times* (1442 E. Lincoln Ave., Ste. 373, Orange, CA 92865; [www.elegan.com](http://www.elegan.com)).

But can one go too far with conspiracy theory coordination? Can one get to where conspiracy theories become an obsession that leads to an abandonment of reason? That this is indeed possible can be seen in the ministry of former advertising man and former

Worldwider David J. Smith who heads The Church of God Evangelistic Association, has a radio program, and puts out *Newswatch Magazine* (1420 West Ross, Waxahachie, Texas 75165; 972-937-2227). To Smith, it seems, there was never a conspiracy theory that was not 100 percent true. His ministry appears to incorporate all of them: the Jewish Conspiracy, the Illuminate, the Masons, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers, the Communists, Gorbachev, etc., etc., etc.

Smith has hundreds of tapes available that cover just about every conspiracy theory known to modern man. Unfortunately, many of his ideas are so ludicrous it is difficult to believe people actually pay money to listen to them. On one tape, for instance, Smith makes the astonishing claim that not only are the Russians still planning an attack on the United States, but that tens of thousands of Russian troops have already landed secretly in Louisiana and are in hiding there in caves.

The hysterical tone of Smith's ministry can be seen in most of his utterances. For example on 7/31/98, as the U.S. was in the midst of a heat wave, Smith wrote his followers:

Extremely low frequency magnetic wave generators were working by the Soviet Union and the United States [in the 1980s]. Now listen very carefully to TV weather people. They don't know WHY rain is everywhere except in a circle of about 100 miles with *Dallas/Waxahachie, Texas as the central focus of this intense heat*. If people only knew the spiritual battles going on invisibly, then it would make sense....

In the Bible it is recorded that demons said to some unconverted Jews who were trying to cast them out, "Jesus we know, Paul we know, but who are you?" (paraphrased). In other words **Satan knows God is working in the earth through certain human beings and will stop at nothing to thwart their plans and activities**. God has called for "an ingathering of saints from a Western state" under my leadership. NO MAGGIE, THERE IS NO CHAPTER AND VERSE PROPHECYING THIS, **ONLY GOD'S VISION AND DIRECT THOUGHTS PUT INTO MY MIND AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO HEARD IT STATED ON WORLDWIDE SHORTWAVE RADIO TEN DAYS BEFORE GOD EVER STIRRED ME UP TO GO WHERE THE INGATHERING WOULD BE!!! THEN HE SENT SIX DREAMS AND VISIONS TO OTHER CHURCH MEMBERS UNKNOWN TO EACH OTHER TO CONFIRM THAT I WAS NOT MAKING UP SOMETHING OR HAD SOME BAD PIZZA!**

Colorful stuff, but it is in his pronouncements on conspiracies that Smith outdoes just about everyone. In that network of former WCG members who are enthralled with conspiracy theories of every type - those I think of as "The Secret Church of Conspiracy" - there is no more fanatic preacher than David J. Smith. Smith's preoccupation seems to be a Unified Field Grand Conspiracy Theory - one that integrates virtually all conspiracy theories into a unified whole. And perhaps among all his conspiracy lectures there is no more fanatical one than the infamous Tape Number 801.

On this tape - passed around frequently within the conspiracy buff network - Smith purports to explain how it was that the Pope was actually behind the downsizing of the WCG. According to Smith, Stanley Rader is not just a Jew, but a 33rd degree Mason, tied to both the Illuminate and the CIA and in addition is an agent of the Pope. And, according to Smith, it was Rader who supposedly recruited John Trechak (the author of

this piece) to Ambassador College in the 1960s specifically to start *Ambassador Report* in the late 70s as a means of bringing down the WCG. This, according to Smith, was accomplished by a secret Rome meeting in 1968 between Trechak and Rader's boss Pope Paul VI and through secret contacts, at a German opera house no less, between Trechak and West German politician Franz Joseph Strauss in the late sixties. (Needless to say, all these claims are totally hallucinatory.) To Smith, Bible translator Dr. James Tabor is supposedly actually working toward establishing a Masonic Temple in Jerusalem, and former WCG executive turned author Dr. Robert Kuhn is supposedly writing mind-control books for the New World Order. The WCG, the UCG, and Roderick Meredith have supposedly all come under the control of the Vatican through Jesuit agents. The Grand Conspirators supposedly want "the New World Order" (the rule of the Beast) to be in place by the year 2000.

And where does Smith get his information? One source is "Joseph Tkach's right hand man." (Ask yourself: should someone from Tkach be trusted as a reliable source about the UCG, GCG, or Ambassador Report?) This "right hand man" supposedly provided Smith with a Wackenhut Corporation printout that verified much of his allegations (likely a practical joke hoax). An additional source of Smith's inspiration is a strange little visitor named Bill Youngblood who appears at Smith's back door with messages supposedly from God. Smith speculates that Youngblood is an angel. Another source of inspiration are Bibles that magically appear in mid-air in front of him. Additionally the Holy Spirit whispers into his ear when he visits the Fort Worth stock yards. Dreams and visions play an important part in Smith's ministry. And yet, in spite of all the tell-tale signs of mental instability (he even kids on the tape that many think he is certifiable), there are some who look to David J. Smith for guidance in their lives through conspiracy theories. Of such is the Secret Church of Conspiracy.

## **WCG Gays on the Net**

Gay and lesbian members of the WCG and its offshoots now have at least three Web pages dedicated to gay Sabbatarians. One Pasadena, California-based page is titled "Called Out." According to the introduction to the site:

We are a web page dedicated to gay and lesbian members and former members, ordained and lay members, of the various Churches of God (Worldwide Church of God/WCG, United Church of God/UCG, Global Church of God/GCG, Philadelphia Church of God/PCG, and its many other fellowships). We also welcome our Jewish sisters and brothers and gay and lesbian Christians from any other religious organization that are looking for a haven of rest from angry, hateful, religious extremists.

We also want you to know that you are not alone, whether you are still in the church or no longer a member. We want you to know that God HAS NOT forsaken you, rejected you nor abandoned you. YOU ARE NOT LOST! YOU ARE NOT CONDEMNED TO THE LAKE OF FIRE! YOU ARE NOT GOING TO HELL! You are a precious Child of God, who has a loving and merciful Father in heaven. We also want you to know that there are a lot of us out here right along side you, ready to lift you up and help carry the burden you have shouldered too long by yourself!... We may not have all the answers, but we can point you in the right directions!

The site provides numerous articles concerning being gay/lesbian and still being a member of one of the Churches of God. There are also listings of books on the subject of being a gay Christian as well as numerous references to other organizations, complete with addresses and Internet links. The Called Out site is at <http://home.pacbell.net/tofr>.

A second site is the "Called Out & 7th Day Gay Club." This site is said to be "for 7th Day Sabbatarians, who happen to be gay." It is located at <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/calledoutand7thdaygay>.

A third site is called the "Rainbow 7th Day Sabbatarians." Among other things, this site promotes a Feast of Tabernacles for gay members in the Dallas, Texas area. The site is at [www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/2345](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/2345).

## **Bobby Fischer's Terrors**

Former world chess champion Bobby Fischer is perhaps the most famous person ever to have been a WCG "co-worker." An interview with him was featured in our [1977 issue \(AR2\)](#). Since then, a number of readers have asked for information about what has become of Fischer. On February 2, *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio had this update:

ROBERT SIEGEL, host: A book and movie about chess a few years ago was called *Searching for Bobby Fischer*. Well, the latest sightings of the reclusive chess great would have to make even a die-hard chess fan wonder if the search is worth finding the one-time great prodigy in his current condition. Fischer stays away from the United States, where he's wanted for violating the sanctions against Yugoslavia. He went there to play a match against Boris Spassky in 1992. At age 55, Fischer now lives in Budapest. And over the past two weeks, he has made a series of telephone appearances on radio shows, in which he has ranted against Jews. Fischer, whose own mother was Jewish, screams about a decision to sell off his belongings and memorabilia, which were in storage in Pasadena. He claims that was the work of a Jewish conspiracy.

Last week, he spent an hour on a Filipino radio station spewing anti-Semitic insults, vulgarities, and charges of Jewish persecution. Here's one sanitized excerpt.

(Excerpt from Filipino interview)

PABLO: Bobby - hello, Bob...

Mr. BOBBY FISCHER (Chess Champion): It was all orchestrated by the Jewish world government.

PABLO: OK. Bobby, I'm sorry to say, but we've consumed 30 minutes already with the program. Newscast is about to come in right now.

Mr. FISCHER: Oh, I thought it was, like, five minutes.

PABLO: Yes. No, it's 30 minutes already. And we'll talk with you again one time, alright?

Mr. FISCHER: Sure, sure.

PABLO: We'll call you up again.

Mr. FISCHER: I want to thank you, you know. This is free speech. These Jews - they want to know the most rotten things, but they don't want their enemies to have the opportunity to answer back.

PABLO: Well, this is your opportunity. And we've been giving - we've given you two chances already. We'll call you again.

Mr. FISCHER: Thank you, Pablo.

PABLO: I'll call you again, alright?

Mr. FISCHER: I want to tell you Jews out there this is just the beginning.

PABLO: OK, Bobby. OK.

Mr. FISCHER: This is just the beginning. I'm not afraid of you. You can all drop dead.

PABLO: All right, Bobby. Thank you very much.

(End of excerpt)

SIEGEL: That was actually Fischer's second appearance on the Filipino radio station. Two weeks ago, he gave an interview to that station and also to Radio Calypso in Budapest. His interviewer on the Hungarian station, Daniel Molnar, whose English is limited, had a Hungarian interpreter on hand for what he says began as a straight-forward discussion.

Mr. DANIEL MOLNAR (Radio Calypso): In the first five minutes, it was very interesting and he explained why didn't he return to the United States after the match against Spassky. And after five minutes, he began to cry that his life became destroyed by Jewish people.

SIEGEL: I mean, he was screaming this into the telephone, shouting?

Mr. MOLNAR: Yes.

SIEGEL: You tried to ask him about other things, but he just wanted to shout about...

Mr. MOLNAR: Yeah, I asked how do you remember Boris Spassky in Reykjavik and you met Boris Spassky... (unintelligible) in Yugoslavia and do you have a friendship with Boris Spassky and...

SIEGEL: And did he answer these questions?

Mr. MOLNAR: No, nothing. Nothing. He didn't answer any questions. He only told, "No, no, no. I don't want to answer your questions. I don't want to answer your second question. Don't try to answer your third question." And began to say his original facts.

SIEGEL: Daniel Molnar says that when he asked Fischer to square his anti-Semitism with his own Jewish ancestry, Fischer said, "Let's go to the little boy's room where we'll all see who's Jewish." Molnar said the interpreter toned down Fischer's language when he rendered the chess player's answers into Hungarian. But after several minutes of Fischer refusing to talk about anything but his belief that he's being persecuted by Jews, the station in Budapest cut him off.

*Editor: To fill in some of the gaps of this story, we quote an article that appeared in the San Gabriel Valley section of the Los Angeles Times (2/19/99):*

### **Chess Champ Livid at Reported Property Sale**

by Jim Walters

PASADENA-It seemed like a simple procedure. The renter at A American Self-Storage hadn't paid his bill in six months so the contents were sold in a lien sale to cover back rent.

It didn't seem the makings of international intrigue. But then it wasn't common knowledge that the man was an apparent friend of former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, and that the unit, which rents for \$80 a month, allegedly contained some of Fischer's prized possessions.

While the friend could not be reached for comment at his home or office, another longtime Fischer acquaintance - Olympic coach Harry Sneider - said he was very familiar with the items that Fischer had held in storage since his recluse days in Pasadena, following his 1972 world title win over Russian Boris Spassky.

Sneider, a former physical education teacher and weightlifting coach at Ambassador College in Pasadena and now an Arcadia resident, said he met Fischer in 1972 when the chess champion came looking for conditioning help. The two forged a friendship that has lasted 27 years.

"There was a chess set from that world championship, two file cabinets full of game notes and personal diaries, a letter from Richard Nixon, two 3,000-pound safes," said Sneider describing the items he recalled being stored in the rental unit.

"He (Fischer) said all of the stuff lost is worth \$100 million. I think several million is more like it. We've been able to recover some of the things."

Some of the items were consigned for sale to Dreyer's Auction Inc. of Irvine, which publicized the availability of Bobby Fischer memorabilia on the Internet for its Jan. 10 auction.

"There wasn't much. The entire gross was about \$8,500," said Dreyer's co-owner, Chuck Dreyer. "There were no chess sets. Just miscellaneous letters, books, correspondence, a bronze bust of Fischer."

It was unclear what might have happened to the other items that Fischer and Sneider claimed were stowed away in the storage unit.

During the past five weeks, Fischer, from his home in Budapest, Hungary, has railed over the sales during broadcasts on Bomba Radyo in the Philippines and over the Internet.

In interviews posted on the Internet, the 56-year-old Fischer said the "confiscated items" - as he described them - included a famous statue of three horses that he won in a 1970 tournament in Yugoslavia, a bronze bust he sat for in 1961, a bag of 50 to 100 rare silver dollars, hundreds of chess books, thousands of racy Mexican comic books, and Japanese posters from a Los Angeles movie theater that gave them to him when it closed down. Other items were 600 to 1,000 unpublished games - from simultaneous games played in exhibitions, following his win over Tigran Petrosian for the right to play Spassky in '72.

A spokesperson for A American, which bought the storage building from Bekins Storage in January 1998, said no one was aware of the contents when the lien sale took place.

"We called someone down from the corporate office, they took pictures of the contents we could see from outside the door," Leatherwood said. "There was no inventory. We had no knowledge of what was in there."

## **Harry Sneider Sets World Record**

Former Ambassador College weightlifting coach Harry Sneider, now a professional weightlifting coach, set a world record in the bench press at the U.S. Powerlifting World Championships in Las Vegas in January. Harry bench pressed 402.5 pounds to set the world record in the 220 to 242 pound class in the age 55-60 category.

## **How Soon They Forget**

A recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* stated that the founder and long-time president of Ambassador College had been Herbert W. Murphy.

## **Andrew McCooey's Mission**

Andrew McCooey of England graduated from Ambassador, Bricket Wood in 1973. Since then, he has clearly lived one of the most remarkable lives of any Ambassador graduate ever. The following article about him appeared in the 3 May 1997 issue of the British publication *The Tablet*.

### **Mr. McCooey's Lifeline**

by Sue Gaisford

A number of people have reason to bless the name of Freedom Now. The lawyer who founded it talked to Sue Gaisford about the values which inspire his work. He is a small solicitor with a large mission.

In 1988 Tara Terry telephoned home from the United States to Surrey. Expecting to hear a cheerful holiday report, her father was appalled to learn that his 18-year-old daughter had been arrested and charged with homicide.

Tara had left Camberley to go traveling around America with her boyfriend. In Miami the cheap hotel they were in caught fire: several people were killed in the blaze. Tara was accused of arson: It was alleged that she had started the fire to punish her boyfriend after a row. Now, if found guilty, she faced the electric chair.

Mr. Terry phoned a solicitor he knew from church, Andrew McCooey, and asked for his help. Mr. McCooey practices criminal law from a small office in Sittingbourne, Kent, but he had never encountered a problem like this: he promised to do what he could.

While he was wondering how to tackle it, Clive Uneman, a young motorbiker, turned up at his office. He had read about the case and offered his assistance. McCooey wondered what a Hell's Angel could do against the might of Miami's legal system but, as he now laughs to recall, angels come in many guises. Mr. Uneman had just inherited five properties from his father. He wasn't interested in wealth and handed all the deeds to McCooey, telling him to do as he liked with them.

Thus armed, McCooey set off for Florida. He managed to get bail for Tara, and then hired a forensic scientist from New York, who was able to prove conclusively that the fire had been caused by faulty wiring. It had suited the hotel's owners to blame a young tourist, to avoid the huge claims for damages that eventually followed. Tara was free.

From this incident was born Freedom Now, the organization which McCooey runs. Its purpose is to support deserving people who face serious miscarriage of justice abroad. Tara's case taught him that, without this kind of help, any Briton is on his own if he runs into trouble abroad. McCooey's conversation is punctuated by stories like Tara's. There are dozens of them. A soft-spoken, gentle, respectable man in his forties, he is particularly moved by the plight of imprisoned girls, having three daughters himself. His practice is almost entirely funded by legal aid work. Didn't he have any paying clients? He laughed - well, the best by far has been Myra, whose fees had all been paid by David Astor. It took me a moment to realize he was talking about Myra Hindley, the Moors murderer.

He was Hindley's solicitor for seven years. In the end, she was moved from Maidstone to Durham at about the time he was running out of strength to deal with her case. But that had not been Hindley's fault. He is the first to insist that her crimes were heinous, but he feels that she had been enslaved by Ian Brady, that she is now a completely reformed character and that she has been punished enough.

In her time, she has seen several people who had murdered children come into gaol [jail], serve their time and leave, but her notoriety is such that the media interest in her will probably keep her in forever. She has been informed, indeed, that she will never be released. McCooey remarks, bitterly, that the chief crime reporter of the *Sun* had told him that Myra Hindley's name sold more copies than the Princess of Wales's. Any story, however absurd, was fair game. Seven days a week he was pestered by reporters: once, he was telephoned at midnight to be asked his opinion of her forthcoming marriage. Oh yes, he had agreed with weary irony, sure she was getting married: after all, she had so many suitable husbands to choose from, locked inside a women's prison.

When asked to take on Hindley as a client, he consulted his wife, Margaret, who immediately responded that if he thought he should do it she would agree. Mrs. McCooey is a legal executive, and the only other practitioner in the firm. She mainly deals with cases of domestic violence and child protection. She is a pretty, competent Scots woman, to whom he has been married for more than 20 years. They met during an extraordinary episode in their lives that has clearly had a considerable influence on them both.

As a little boy, the son of Irish Catholic immigrants, McCooey had wanted to be a priest. By the time he was 16 he had decided to train as a lawyer. His career was interrupted by an encounter with Herbert Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Looking back on it now, he describes this organization as a cult, but at the time it seemed important. It took him to the Ambassador College in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, where he spent four years gaining a degree in theology - "for what it's worth." And what was it worth? Well, in the United States it might count as a degree but not in Britain, and he wouldn't claim much for it.

Herbert Armstrong was the father of Garner Ted Armstrong, who used Radio Luxembourg to advertise church activities. Their "Church" was strong on the Old Testament, not a conspicuous feature of a conventional Catholic education. At Ambassador College the rules were very strict. Students observed all the laws of Leviticus, avoiding unclean meat and shellfish, for example, and being careful never even to kiss a member of the opposite sex on pain of immediate expulsion.

Andrew McCooey was selected to become a minister. He met Margaret on the course and, when it finished, they married. It was while they were on their honeymoon that he received the news that his job (and therefore his house) was no longer available. The college had been closed and the Church was reeling under a succession of scandals. The slogan "In bed with Garner Ted" described the son's activities but the father was worse. In his eighties, he had decided to marry a divorcee in her thirties and was publicly raving about the glories of sex. "It was just as if someone told you your mother was a prostitute," says McCooey now.

Yet he doesn't regret those years. For a start, he would never have met Margaret without the Armstrongs - and he speaks of her with much admiration and affection. And then, he learned so much. Having survived a cult, he has a wary wisdom of any organization that claims an exclusive right to the truth, along with a certainty that people - "anybody, including me" - can be seduced into doing or believing almost anything by bogus security offered by such groups.

He is a Catholic again now thanks partly to the benign influence of Lord Longford, whose grandson by marriage, Edward Fitzgerald QC, is a valuable asset to Freedom Now. He speaks quietly of the colossal power of prayer. In Greece, facing a hostile court, he prayed desperately for Lucy, a girl about to be convicted of smuggling the largest load of pure heroin ever captured. He was certain that she was innocent, but never had anyone been acquitted in the face of such evidence. She was acquitted.

While the jury was out on the case of Stephen Owen, a Kent man accused of murder, he did the same. Owen had shot the hit-and-run lorry-driver who had killed his son: there was no doubt about it. And the jury, driven by compassion, pronounced him innocent. "I know now," McCooey says, that there is a real living God who comes to people in their hour of need."

At the moment he is helping several prisoners in Belize, who have the right of appeal to English courts thanks to their colonial history. Last time he was there, he was shown the hangman's rope: so far, he has saved seven innocent lives from its embrace.

He relies on several benefactors to fund these trips, but he worries about it: "I'd like to put Freedom Now on a proper footing: it's pretty amateurish - and I'm hopeless at raising money." He has never taken a penny out of it for himself, but it makes heavy demands on his time and energy and, of course, he has a duty to work at his home practice, not least to provide for his growing family. He did apply for charitable status but, incredibly, was refused. It seems an odd system that allows, say, Glyndebourne [opera festival] to be a registered charity and not this remarkable and courageous endeavor.

Yet in spite of it all, Andrew McCooey is a happy man. He clearly dotes on his children and loves such jaunts as taking the little one to funfairs. And the work, whilst demanding, is immensely worthwhile. "There is nothing more rewarding," he says, "than to take a person whom you genuinely believe to be innocent, to bring them away from a foreign gaol and to deliver them home."

*Editor: In a letter to Ambassador Report, Margaret McCooey (nee Bond, AC-BW 1970) wrote us the following:*

Andrew should really tell you all his adventures in the WCG himself so I will not go into that, save that on ministerial visits as "second man" (alias Invisible Man) he was so bored that he unconsciously untied then tied together minister Mark Elliott's shoe laces whilst deep spiritual advice was being given to some unhappy soul by the master himself!

On our honeymoon, as you probably know, Andrew was "made redundant," i.e. we were told there would be no job, house, or car in Bristol for us and we moved into the Page's

spare room at Working Surrey for the alarming start to married life. Not what we planned. But God was kind, and several months later, Andrew returned to law, and became a law student at Guildford College of Law (he had left a job in law to come to college). Instead of marrying a "rich" minister, I had a poor law student on my hands - but we did say "for better or worse" and actually it was the best thing that could have happened to us and put us on a much better path. We hung on in the church, looked on as black sheep by the Godalming Church under David House, for six more years unfortunately - Andrew would have left much sooner, but I was a "true believer" and kept thinking things would change and get better.

Since going into law it took five years for Andrew to qualify - I also did some studies and am what you would call in the USA a paralegal. We managed to start our own law firm in our livingroom in 1987 and have now been going some 10 years. (We now have offices, by the way.)...

I do family law and have come to specialize in helping women who suffer from domestic violence. It gives endless scope to help and encourage women who have no voice and no power. I also do childcare cases, helping parents with care proceedings and adoption. I run a Survivors Group for women who have been sexually or physically abused in childhood and we have been running for three years. It is not something I am trained for, save having a diploma from London University in Child Protection, but I get the women together and they help themselves. I also organize trips for them to do things they have never done, e.g. go to Albert Hall to hear a classical concert, start driving lessons, get counselling. I find many women come to us through the work our law firm does.

Andrew is 50 and I am 51 and just now, I am trying to rest more. We have a little daughter Christabel of eight. Our others, Juliet and Caroline, are 17 and 20. We have kept and strengthened our Christian faith. Andrew attends the local Catholic Church (his childhood faith) and I attend a United Reformed Church (mixture of Presbyterian and Methodist). God is more real and more important than ever and faith is simple, not complicated now. Because of our experiences in the WCG we have been able to help neighbors not become Jehovah's Witnesses and brought them to Christ instead, and I have attended Mormon missionary meetings and piped up with all the arguments people need to hear why joining a cult is a bad idea. The biblical knowledge we got from the WCG has been invaluable, of course.

We were rebaptized in 1983 by a wonderful Baptist minister Arthur Neil when we lived in Devon, and he knew much about spiritual warfare and helped us turn "right side up" again.

We have had masses of obstacles and battles in life, but we are still fighting on - wounded but not wiped out. We keep in touch with those who left who were our friends, but those still in the church are still too wary of us to return our friendship.

Another thing we do is visit people in prison, as our legal work has taken us into most prisons in Britain. It is good for the soul. Andrew specially speaks on TV and radio against the death penalty, particularly in the USA. He is currently campaigning for Kenny Ritchie, a Scotsman facing the executioner in Ohio, I think, but we lost the media battle

to prevent Nick Ingram being executed in Georgia....

It is particularly ironic that Andrew has found such a field of activity as a lawyer, as he was told at Ambassador College that he could never be a lawyer and didn't have what it takes! His friend and classmate, Adrian Smith, was told the same story, but after a very successful career in selling, he has just graduated from London University with a law degree, which he studied for by distance learning from his farm in Canada. So much for all the labelling and typecasting Ambassador College loved to do.

-Margaret McCooey  
"Woodsell"  
3 London Road  
Sittingbourne  
Kent ME10 1NQ  
England

## **Did Sunday Worship Come From Paganism?**

*Editor: The above question is the intriguing title of the February newsletter of evangelist Ralph Woodrow. Many readers will probably find the following excerpt as eye opening as we did:*

There are *many* Christians - not only those who meet on Saturday, but many who attend church on Sunday - who assume that Sunday observance *originally* came from paganism. The basic idea is this: Sunday was the established day of rest, the weekly holiday in the pagan world. On this day each week, the Romans, Greeks, and other pagans gathered in temples to worship their pagan gods, particularly the Sun-god - hence the term Sun-day. Later, when these pagans professed Christianity, they gradually brought the overwhelming popular practice of meeting on Sunday into the "Church."

The teaching that Sunday worship "came from paganism" has been so often repeated, it may come as a surprise when I tell you this teaching has no basis in fact. It is misinformation. If I can show you - and I believe I can - that Sunday was not a day of rest and worship among pagans, then it should be quite clear that the practice of Christians meeting on Sunday, the first day of the week, did not come from this source.

In the New Testament, "the first day of the week" is mentioned eight times. These references do not give any information about whether or not the first day of the week - Sunday - was a day of rest and worship among pagans. For this we will need to look into *history*. In doing so, suppose we were to contact highly qualified historians - at great centers of learning like the British Museum, the Smithsonian Institute, and Harvard University - and ask them if Sunday was a weekly holiday in the pagan world. Surely their answers would be weighty.

Well, this has already been done - by D. M. Canright, a Seventh-Day minister. He sincerely believed Sunday worship came from paganism - this teaching had been passed on to him by equally sincere people. But when he began to look into the subject more fully, he came to a different conclusion. It was at this time - back in 1913-1914 - that he

contacted these great centers of learning we have mentioned. He carefully avoided giving any idea of his own views or purpose in writing, so as not to influence answers in any way. The responses he received (which I have abridged slightly because of space limitations) are as follows:

From the world renowned British Museum in London, England, Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities:

Sir:

I am commanded by the Assistant Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities to reply as follows to your questions on the ancient week:

**Question 1:** Did the pagan Romans and Greeks ever have any regular weekly day of rest from secular work?

**Answer:** No.

**Question 2:** Did they have any regular weekly festival day?

**Answer:** No.

**Question 3:** Did they have any regular weekly day when they assembled for pagan worship?

**Answer:** No.

**Question 4:** Did they have any special day of the week when individuals went to the temples to pray or make offerings?

**Answer:** No; both for Greeks and Romans the month was the unit and not the week. The Greek calendar varied in different states but the month was generally divided into three periods of ten days. The Romans reckoned from three fixed points in the month, the Kalends or first, the Nones fifth or seventh, the Ides thirteenth or fifteenth. These subdivisions in themselves had no religious significance. Also in the Roman calendars were nundinal, or market days, at periods of eight days. On these days farm work, etc., stopped and citizens flocked into the town markets. To some extent this may be a regular stoppage of secular work, but it had no religious significance.

**Question 5:** As Sunday was sacred to the Sun, Monday to the Moon, Saturday to Saturn, etc., were those supposed deities worshipped on their own particular days more than on any other days?

**Answer:** No; the old worship of the gods was disappearing when the seven-day week came about. The significance of the deities' names was astrological, not religious, e.g., if a person were born on Monday, the moon would influence his horoscope, but the moon was never an object of common worship.

**Question 6:** When was our week of seven days first introduced into the Roman

calendar?

**Answer:** There are traces in the literature of the late republic (first century B.C.) that the Romans used the week of seven days for astrological purposes, in connecting with the many Eastern superstitions of the period. It was probably the third century, A.D. before the seven dayweek came into common use.

**Question 7:** From whom did the Romans learn the week of seven days?

**Answer:** From the Jews, alternately the Assyrians and Babylonians; the names were probably fixed by Hellenistic Greeks.

**Question 8:** Did the pagan Greeks ever adopt in common life, or in their calendar, the week of seven days?

**Answer:** No.

**Question 9:** Did Apollo, the Sun-god, either among the Romans or Greeks, have any special day on which he was worshipped with prayers or offerings more than on any other day?

**Answer:** There were certain set festivals at various temples; these were annual, not weekly.

**Question 10:** Did the pagan reverence for Sunday have anything to do in influencing Christians to select that day as their rest day?

**Answer:** No; it can hardly be said that there was any special reverence for Sunday in pagan times (see answer to Number 5).

- I am, sir, Your obedient servant, F.N Pryce.

*Editor: Those who would like a free copy of the entire Ralph Woodrow newsletter for February, should write to Ralph Woodrow, P.O. Box 21, Palm Springs, CA 92263-0021.*

## **James Tabor Professor**

Our congratulations to Dr. James Tabor on his recent promotion to full professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Dr. Tabor is the chief translator for the Original Bible Project. For information, contact The Original Bible Project, 408 South Pasadena Ave., Suite 1, Pasadena, CA 91105, tel. 626-799-2000.

## **Letters**

Since both campuses of AC have now been sold, wouldn't it be great if all students who attended or graduated from AC received a refund of our college tuition and fees. After all, we were all lied to about accreditation and have worthless degrees. I would love to be

a part of a class action lawsuit against AC and WCG. Now that they are multimillionaires and have had true conversion they should finally do the right thing for once. Wishful thinking on my part?

-Randall G. Shelby  
Kentucky

You can't help but wonder if that bozo Tkach Jr. is just parting the church and college out - just like professional thieves do to an ultra-expensive Mercedes Benz or Jaguar automobile. The parts do add up to more money than the whole in these cases. It would be interesting to see how much of the church funds end up in secret Swiss or Cayman Island bank accounts. The sheep will never know about these transactions!

-Marc D. Tollefson  
Washington

It's finally settling into my mind, as bizarre as it all was/ is, that "The Church" was/is run by people who would be classed as white-collar criminals in non-religious business. They stole my youth, that of my wife, and, in a curiously toxic fashion, set up my family for deeply felt stresses!

-Kevin Benefield  
North Carolina

I hear that for all the big, fancy buildings that are being sold the money is to be put into a fund for the ministers' retirement. I can't believe how much gall these people have.

-Josephine Mayle  
West Virginia

*Editor: The setting up of a retirement plan for the WCG ministers that remain is a top priority of the Tkach administration. You can be sure that those near the top of the church hierarchy will be well provided for. But how much of the proceeds from the sale of the Texas and Pasadena campuses will be used for that purpose we do not know.*

My reading of I Cor. 12 is this: Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same mailing address for money. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Pastor General. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same guilt-trip which works all in all. But the manifestation of the guilt given to every man is to profit WCG Inc.

-Richard

I noticed in the book store that Mr. Tkach's book *Transformed by Truth* sells for \$19.99. And I recalled how among Satanists symbols are often read upside down. Applying that to the price of the book we get the "666 one." Just a coincidence, I suppose.

-California

A while ago you wrote me in response to a letter I sent you. In that letter you asked me what my profession was and what I had found that convinced me that early Gentile Christians did not keep the Sabbath. My apologies for taking so long to get back to you. In this letter I will explain why it has taken so long. To answer your first question, I am a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Illinois where I do research on corn genetics. My Ph.D. is in plant pathology (study of plant diseases), but I consider myself a plant pathologist/plant breeder. The reason it took so long to write you, aside from the fact that I have limited time to do research on the Sabbath/Sunday controversy, is the tremendous amount of material that has been written on the subject. Needless to say, I have not read all of it, but what I have read so far has not changed my view of things after I became aware that under the New Covenant Sabbath keeping is probably not required. That view is that Sabbath observation was not considered a requirement by early Christians, but that Jewish Christians continued to observe it. And that Sabbath keeping by Jewish Christians was considered OK by the Church. When I first began to think about this letter my thoughts automatically led me to think about a complete explanation of my position on the Sabbath. I started to formulate and accumulate thoughts that would be put together in this letter. I was researching various ideas on the Sabbath mainly through the Internet. As I read more and more, I realized that to do justice to this issue would take years of research and a book. I don't have time to do this, so I'll answer your question with a few thoughts.

As I explained in my first letter, I had followed the teachings of the WCG for some time with the intention of joining it when I had completed my degree. My crisis of faith, if you could call it that, occurred when I first saw Gerald Flurry on TV and realized that there had been a split in the church. (This seems comical in retrospect since church splits seem to be one of the main facets of WCG history, but I didn't know that then.) The question at that point was not only who to follow but whether either church had it right. To make a long story short, I ended up researching the Sabbath question (and of course this led to the Mosaic law question) because more than any thing this was the crucial issue to me. It became plain that if the Sabbath (and the rest of the Mosaic law) were replaced by the law of love then neither church had a monopoly on truth. I read through all of the epistles in the Bible hoping I would find something there. This leads me to my first point: There is no Sabbath epistle. Despite all of the numerous articles, booklets, etc. written by the WCG on the subject, it didn't warrant any specific discussions or teachings on the subject in the letters of the apostles. Given the centrality of the Sabbath to Jewish and early Jewish Christian life one would think that the apostles would have seen the need to address the meaning of the Sabbath and its benefits to the Gentile converts and how it was meant for them and not just the Jews. Also, one would expect a discussion of how to celebrate the Sabbath in light of Christ's example and point out how not to get trapped in the rut that the Pharisees were stuck in. Instead, we get an explanation of how the Sabbath foreshadows the rest of God [s plan] in Hebrews chapter four and admonition to strive to enter the rest and that if Joshua had given them rest he would not speak of another day. The point I'm trying to make is this, despite all of the praise given to the Sabbath in both its meaning and its practice in WCG literature and that of other Sabbath-keeping churches, we don't have that in the epistles. This opened my mind to the possibility that Sabbath observance may not be required.

The fact that we lack any specific teachings on the observance of the Sabbath in the epistles is probably the main reason why this question continues. However, we face another issue, the epistles and their treatment of the law. The law has clearly been changed as stated in the book of Hebrews. Yet if only part of it has been changed, as is argued by Sabbatarians, rather than supplanted by the law of love, then we inevitably end up in arguments over which parts are required and which parts are not. Which brings me to my second point, if we discount the idea that the law of Moses has been supplanted by the law of love, we have no code of Christian law. What I mean is this, the old covenant had fairly specific instructions on what was required of the Israelites. Christians, however, have no such list of instructions. If the law has been changed, but not superseded by the law of love, one would expect reasonably specific instructions on which parts of the law were still binding, which parts were fulfilled in Christ's sacrifice and therefore no longer required, the ways in which Christians were expected to obey the remaining laws in light of the fact that Christ extended the meanings of some beyond the letter of the Mosaic law (i.e., if you are angry with your brother then you are guilty of murder, lust equals adultery, etc.), and any appropriate modifications to the observation of the Sabbaths, Holy Days, and other laws in light of Christ's fulfillment of the law. Not only do we lack this, but amazingly we don't even have any detailed instructions on how to conduct the communion service, the only ceremonial addition made by Christ. This situation combined with Paul's treatment of the law, discussion of Christian liberty, and statements made by the other apostles concerning the law, increased my doubts that the observance of the Sabbath is required by Christians.

This brings us to the next place to look, which is the early Church writings made by others besides the apostles. Part of the problem here is there aren't very many of them (what we would call in statistics a sampling problem) so we don't necessarily know how widespread the practices described in them were. I don't want to get into a detailed discussion of them here as I have not read enough on them to satisfy myself that I have looked at them from all angles. I have not read Samuele Bacchiocchi's book *From Sabbath to Sunday*, but from what I have read at his Web site I don't think it would change my view point. I find his idea that there were one hundred years of universal Sabbath keeping in Christianity, followed by a decision to change the Sabbath to Sunday by the Roman church, and then everybody else just went along with it, very difficult to believe. But I would like to read it before I would discuss the Sabbath issue too deeply. Although, I will say that two early church documents that challenge this idea are the Didache and the letter of Ignatious of Antioch to the Magnesians. Both of these letters are available on the Internet at various sites and both of these are estimated to predate Bacchiocchi's time period of the Sabbath to Sunday change. I want to see how he handles these two documents in his book before I would want to discuss them any further. For your readers, one interesting paper I have read is Gordon Shigley's *The Sabbath Option*. The view of this paper is that Sunday was never observed as a Sabbath until around the eighth century. Up until this point, Sunday was a day of worship and Sabbath keeping was simply not required of Christians, although Jewish Christians continued to observe it. Consequently his view is that Sabbath observation is optional. This paper is available at Mark Tabladillo's website [[www.quango.net/Tabladillo/wcgweb3.html](http://www.quango.net/Tabladillo/wcgweb3.html)]....

I also would like to make a few comments on past issues of the AR. In your [Dec. 1997](#) issue you mention the writings of Darrell Conder [who discounts virtually the entire New Testament]. I have not yet accessed his Web site, but your description of his ideas makes me wonder if legalism and striving for purity in one's life through actions is really one

very slippery slope. But it is his conspiracy theory about the Catholic Church that really makes me wonder. It seems from past ARs that WCGers and exWCGers really go for conspiracy theories, and your House of Yahweh article seems to indicate that some will believe just about anything if it is packaged right. It seems to me that WCGers and exWCGers need a healthy dose of skepticism. Recently I began receiving the *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine. I don't recall if you have mentioned it in the AR or not. It is published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal [Box 703, Amherst, NY 14226; tel. 716-636-1425]. They subject claims of the paranormal to the rigors of the scientific method. Not surprisingly, such claims usually come up short. I have enclosed the most recent issue for you in case you are unfamiliar with them. This issue has an interesting article titled "200% Probability and Beyond" that shows that an idea is more believable to people when alternative explanations are absent.

And finally, I'd like to say thank you for all your effort. The AR has been very helpful to me in understanding the phenomenon of the WCG.

Name withheld  
-Illinois

As you might expect, a number of books have been helpful in my recovery. Particularly in this regard have been the writings of Ayn Rand and her supporters. Another exiter suggested I read Rand's novelette *Anthem* (1946). It reminded me of Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984*. I think all of these should be read by those who have been in captivity as we were. Much could be said on this. Another great book is *The True Believer* by Eric Hoffer.

Anyway, shortly after reading *Anthem*, and learning of the philosophy of Objectivism from the publisher's blurb, I came upon an interesting 20-volume LP set of lectures on Objectivism by Nathaniel Branden published in the 60s. I was able to save this set from being trashed. I eventually listened to the lectures which I found fascinating.

I was telling another exiter friend about the Branden lecture. She had been actively involved in the Objectivist movement in the 60s before being sucked into the cult. She loaned me her copy of the Rand biography entitled, *The Passion of Ayn Rand* by Barbara Branden, Nathaniel's exwife. This book is absolutely captivating! The personality of Ayn is just stunning to me.

From Barbara's book I then went on to acquire Nathaniel's side of the story of his life in the Objectivist movement from his book *Judgment Day*. Again, wonderful! Since then I've been buying the collections of Rand's essays. She has given me so much to think about. Her essay "Faith and Force: The Destroyers of the Modern World" is most enlightening. One of her students, Harry Binswanger, published a most helpful guide to Objectivism with his release of *The Ayn Rand Lexicon*.

Of course, Objectivism doesn't answer all the questions of life but I am glad I have found a graspable philosophy which works personally for me as far as I understand it. As I write I am wondering what you think of Rand's philosophy. Care to comment?

-Jim Baldwin  
(former WCG elder)  
jimbo@fmis.net  
New Hampshire

*I have read Rand's Atlas Shrugged and a number of Rand essays. I am not a big fan of her "radical individualism." However, I do think her essay "The Virtue of Selfishness" is worth reading and is particularly valuable for cult members who have the courage to read it. Rand is virtually never mentioned by the WCG, but her writings have played a big part in helping many to extricate themselves from the cult mentality. Back in the sixties and seventies her writings were very popular among Ambassador students disillusioned with AC and on their way out of the WCG.*

As you mentioned, many people are expecting Christ to return around the coming year 2000 A.D. Apparently, they have totally failed to learn the lesson we were taught back in 1975, when the prediction of Herbert W. Armstrong about Christ's return completely flopped. Some ranchers here in Oklahoma, such as the Woodbury family in western Oklahoma, sold their ranch[es] and other possessions and gave the entire proceeds from the sale to headquarters in Pasadena to help with the final thrust of God's Work so the Church could have the Work finished by 1975 when, according to HWA, Christ was scheduled to return!

Occasionally people paraphrase William Shakespeare with their ideas and actions: people are like idiots, making a lot of noise - signifying nothing! Will these people ever learn: To out-predict the Father about when He decides to send back Christ into the world would totally destroy a person. Such a person would by nature boast for all eternity about having known in advance when the most important event in human history was to occur. Compare this thought to I Corinthians 1:29.

-David Whitaker  
Oklahoma

I am trying to locate a copy of *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* by David Robinson, but am having no luck. Do you know of any distributor who may still have copies available?

-California

*Editor: We understand that the original publisher still has a few copies available for sale at \$20 per copy, including update notes. Write to John Hadden Publisher, P.O. Box 35982, Tulsa, OK 74135.*

I would like to help you keep AR going. AR is the only sanity that ever came out of WCG for me. I see it as a virtual "ministry." ...somehow I feel I have a connection with other AR readers who have come to their senses and given up WCG and all the other crazy offshoots and religions. Christ said many would be deceived by false prophets. How true.

I may have a scar but am healed and would like to communicate with others who can identify and relate to that. I am age 41 and attended services in Springfield and Kansas City, MO regularly from 1961 to 1974.

-Jerry Fry  
121 S. Julia  
Olathe, KS 66061

You and I corresponded in the mid to late 80s when I was pulling out of the WCG. Since I last wrote to you - perhaps nine to 10 years now - I have earned both a BA and an MA. (I just received my MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.) Anyway, life outside the WCG has been far more rewarding, productive, and sane than life inside "the Church." I have accomplished so much spiritually, emotionally, and professionally in the more than 10 years I've been away from the control and deceit. My only regret is that I didn't leave earlier.

-Ellen Tiezen  
Oklahoma

### **Editor's Note**

Ambassador Report remains a valuable and unique source of information for thousands trying to understand the "Armstrongism experience." We hope that readers will remember to support our efforts as we continue to report on the many developments in the WCG and its offshoots. Contributions to AR in the past year have fallen to an all-time low. So my thanks to all of you who are still continuing in that support.

-JT

[Next Issue \(October 7, 1999 Letter\)](#)

[Back to Index](#)





# The Painful Truth

Brought to you by:  
**hwarmstrong.com**

## **AMBASSADOR REPORT**

October 7, 1999

Dear Friends:

I am sorry to announce that John Trechak died Sept. 2 from a massive heart attack. John had suffered from many health problems this year and was, in fact, in the hospital at the time of his death.

I know that John would have liked to thank his long time Ambassador Report subscribers for their support and his friends for their friendship over the years.

John devoted 24 years of his life to exposing the Worldwide Church of God's hypocrisy, misuse of funds, and intimidation techniques. An Oct. 26, 1977 article in the *Los Angeles Times* called the *Ambassador Report* "the first concerted attempt to document many of the accusations of a playboy-style living by the Armstrongs," the mishandling of tithes, and the sexual misconduct of Garner Ted Armstrong.

Over the years, John's writing and efforts to expose the cult of Armstrongism helped many people to leave the WCG, and certainly saved thousands of people millions of dollars in tithe money. While the WCG worked to split up families, wasted hundreds of millions of dollars in tithe money, and literally destroyed many people's lives, John worked to help people rebuild their lives and their families, and saved many people the heartbreak of ever joining the WCG.

Although the WCG occupied many hours of John's life, his friends remember him as a fine musician. Even at the age of four he was playing the accordion and entering national contests. At the ripe old age of eight, John switched to the piano which he played until his death. Before being diverted at 18 into the WCG and going to Ambassador College, John took several classes at Juillard and was interested in conducting and composing music. Music was an important part of John's entire life.

One of John's proudest accomplishments was obtaining his J.D. in Law at Loyola Law School. While he never practiced law, his degree enriched his writing and his life.

In addition to being a fine musician and writer, John was active in the Green Party, supported the Sierra Club, and Amnesty International. He belonged to the Jack London Society and participated in their bi-yearly conferences and their e-mail discussion group. John was also an avid weight lifter since high school and broke several records during his years as a student at Ambassador College.

John will be missed by many people, but most of all by his mother Helen Trechak, his brother Andrew Trechak Jr., and his nephews and niece Julie, Gregory and David. John was born in New Jersey and his mother still resides in that state. If any of you would like to send his family a card or perhaps a remembrance of how John touched your life, please send it to: Helen Trechak, c/o Mary E. Jones, P.O. Box 60452, Pasadena, CA 91116.

The former publishers of *Ambassador Report* feel that our lives have been enriched by our friendship with John. And his death has greatly affected all of us. We will never forget him and our hope is that John's early death will teach us to live life more fully with the understanding that our moments on earth are very short and very precious.

Since John's subscribers, friends, and relatives are scattered around the world, we would like to ask that everyone take some time on Nov. 6, 1999 to go outside, watch the sunset, and remember how John touched your life and appreciate the man that he was. In this small token of friendship and love of John we can all share his memory together.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Jones with the former Publishers and staff of *Ambassador Report*

The following letters are from two former Publishers of AR:

I've just finished moving the last of John's AR office and personal possessions out of his home and into storage. The organizing and packing of all AR-related research, reference materials, notes, and library took several weeks. Going through this difficult process brought back a flood of memories of my long friendship with John going back 27 years. Naturally, some of the most poignant occurred during the early years of our waging up-close and personal war against the Armstrongs, Rader, et al. And the war was very hot indeed.

From the early 1980s, though, the AR was John Trechak. This tireless sacrifice manifested itself not solely on the pages of 72 issues. Much of his labor was quiet, behind-the-scenes counseling provided individually to hundreds of WCG members on their way out. John was very instrumental in my own awakening to the doctrinal and secular corruption rife in the Armstrong cult. This 25 year effort at great personal cost is John's greatest gift to all of us. My life is far richer for having known him.

This chapter is now complete. John's research, publications, and personal library will be

utilized in a future book dealing with alternate religions and the role of apostates in changing them. Back issues of all ARs will be available in the near future.

John and I often philosophized about death being "the next great adventure." So many unanswerable questions in this life will hopefully be resolved in the next. Or maybe not. Hence the adventure.

I think John's wish for all in the AR family would be to constantly question, challenge, and grow. Make your own life an adventure. He certainly did.

Len Zola

John Trechak - Publisher, Writer, Musician, Friend

John's death brought Connie and me much sorrow and a deep sense of loss. But at the same time we are so happy that he was a part of our life for so long. Connie and I met John more than 30 years ago when we transferred to the Bricket Wood, England, campus of Ambassador College. Music was one of the passions in his life, and we were lucky to have had him play the piano at our wedding in 1972. John met his longtime companion and the love of his life, Mary Jones, at our home in January, 1976 - and they went on to share life for the next 23 years.

John and Mary not only babysat our two sons, Ted and Fred, from time to time, but our boys cannot remember a time without John as a close family friend. Not only did he keep them challenged with stimulating literature, both fiction and nonfiction (they were always eager to tear into his Christmas gifts), but he and Mary attended their Eagle Scout ceremonies, school plays, high school graduations, and even made it up to Berkeley for Fred's college graduation. And perhaps most important, more than once John served as a non-parental sounding board for our boys as they grew and matured through their school years.

I consider myself fortunate indeed to have had the privilege of being one of those in a supporting role to John as he created and shaped *Ambassador Report* in its early years. As he and Mary "went it alone" with the AR, he perfected his investigative reporting techniques while regularly delivering an interesting, fastmoving, hard-hitting newsletter. The handwritten thank you's of ex-Worldwidiers whose minds and lives were freed numbered in the multiple thousands during the nearly two and a half decades that he spearheaded this crusade.

On September 2, 1999, the AR died with John, and that is as it should be... but its legacy lives on. It was his life's work, and it showcased his talent, tenacity, and dedication. He was no stranger to controversy, and in fact felt quite at home in its presence. He was as uncompromising in his pursuit of truth as he was unapologetic about revealing the secrets which the pursuit of truth often uncovered. A man of conviction, he was fearless and relentless - against all odds, confronting the powerful and well-funded Ambassador College and Worldwide Church of God, he never blinked, and he never quit.

Why did the AR succeed and why did it succeed for so long? I think John's professionalism and commitment to detail were the foundation of his editorial success, but his writing style, his zeal for the written word, made each issue eagerly anticipated by his readers and exciting to read.

A "social" evening with John was seldom "laid back," he was always intense, thoughtful and thought provoking; he challenged and stimulated our minds as much in person as in writing. We (Mary, Len, Marg, Bill, Connie, myself) worked on the AR with John, partied with him, argued politics, philosophized, and pondered the meaning of life with John, and all for nearly a quarter of a century... and we really miss him.

The lives of Connie, my sons, and I were enriched for having known John. I am proud of the positive and lasting impact he had on so many lives, and I am honored to have been one of his *Ambassador Report* co-publishers. Rest in peace, my friend - you earned it.

Bob Gerringer

[Back to Index](#)

