

Charges Against Herbert W. Armstrong—DISPROVED!

Some so vehemently disagree with the gospel message that they've spread vile and vicious rumors about the late Herbert W. Armstrong. Let's look squarely at the sources of one of these rumors in particular, examining the facts.

BY BRIAN DAVIS

FOR 40 YEARS OR MORE, EVIL RUMORS HAVE CIRCULATED that Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God, committed incest with his own daughter. This is used as evidence that God did not use Mr. Armstrong to raise up His true Church.

Where is the *evidence* of Mr. Armstrong's heinous crimes? Where is the proof?

Some Internet sources say *dogmatically* that this supposed incest took place between 1933 and 1943, and it only ended because Dorothy got married in 1943. Other Internet sources say *dogmatically* it occurred in the 1960s on the airplane while Mr. Armstrong was traveling the world meeting world leaders delivering a message of hope, peace and the Kingdom of God! Supposedly, while delivering such a message, this man (in his 70s) was committing incest with his daughter (somewhere near age 50) who had been married nearly 30 years and had not even been a member of the Church for nearly 20 years!

These attackers and accusers can't even get their stories straight!

As we will see, there is no basis for such claims—they are completely false and without merit. When we understand the reality of the evil spirit world, described well in Ephesians 6:11-12, we understand that these are demonic attacks meant to destroy the character of a righteous man and to persuade people against understanding truth.

Those who believe and spread such blatant lies—incidentally, John 8:44 records that Satan is the father of lies—are guilty of being pawns of Satan himself. On a physical and spiritual level, there is ample evidence that shows these accusations are false. Have you proven them false?

We *must* make sure we are not ignorant of this often-used method of attacking a man God used powerfully. This is a way to discredit him and the work done through him. Don't allow yourself to harbor *any* doubt about this—prove it for yourself.

Those who repeat such lies are tools of Satan, but they also show themselves to be weak intellectually. More importantly, it is an insight into their spiritual life. The fact is, these are baseless accusations. Those who believe these kinds of lies are simply not close to God and don't know His Scriptures the way they should.

Overwhelmingly and undeniably, there is NO EVIDENCE of any wrongdoing by Mr. Armstrong! No one has ever

produced any proof of anything. Instead they rely on thirdhand accusations, gossip, hearsay and outright lies. As a simple *matter of fact*, Mr. Armstrong would be found NOT GUILTY of these crimes in any court of law—and that is a fact!

Still, people continue to spread this unverified hearsay and false accusations. Revelation 12:10 reveals the one who inspires them to do so: Satan, "the accuser of our brethren."

Consider the sources that have spread these rumors.

WHAT THE 'SOURCES' SAY

Most of these accusations stem from a book written in 1980 by David Robinson, a former WCG minister who had been fired by Mr. Armstrong. Surely, anyone can see that this man would not be an unbiased source. In addition, he was not personally close to Mr. Armstrong, yet he claimed that Mr. Armstrong confessed these things to him during a 30-minute walk at a Feast one year. Could anyone really believe such a claim? He also made other accusations against Mr. Armstrong and the WCG that have since been proved false.

Would any statements made by this man be considered credible at any level? This is considered "proof"—yet it amounts to nothing!

Supposedly, Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) stated that his father was guilty of this crime. However, though he lived about a quarter of a century after being disfellowshipped by his father, *not once* would he verify any statements supposedly attributed to him concerning these allegations.

Anonymous sources on the Internet state that when Mr. Armstrong was firing Garner Ted, he replied, "Dad, I will destroy you. I know about you and Dorothy." Who are these anonymous sources? Were they present during this meeting? How do they know what was said? And Garner Ted never confirmed any of this to be true.

I spoke with Mel Olinger, Mr. Armstrong's chauffeur, who witnessed this meeting when Mr. Armstrong fired Garner Ted. He told me about their exchange, but said nothing about Dorothy. Mr. Olinger did say he thought Garner Ted was so angry that he would have punched his father that day if he (Mr. Olinger) had not been present. Considering his anger, why would Garner Ted not use this issue against his father? He actively tried to attack him in many other ways—why not use this as well? The only possible reason is that it never

happened, and these statements attributed to Garner Ted are fabricated! Another supposed proof—yet, nothing!

Another Internet “proof” claims there are audio tapes floating around where Mr. Armstrong allegedly admitted to committing this unspeakable crime. “People” say that these *elusive* tapes have existed for over 40 years. YET TO THIS DAY, NO ONE HAS EVER BROUGHT FORTH THESE TAPES! Mr. Armstrong has had many enemies over the years who would have loved to destroy him, including the state of California and the rebellious ministers of the 1970s. Yet not one has been able to produce proof, tapes or any other evidence to prove these allegations. If “all this proof” was so readily available, why did it never surface? Why did no one ever prosecute Mr. Armstrong?

A former WCG minister who was put out of the Church in 1979 claimed to have heard the tapes. Bob Thiel, a former WCG member, questioned this minister, and he admitted that he had actually never heard the tapes! Again, why not? Because they don’t exist! Another supposed proof—yet, nothing!

Mr. Thiel continued investigating these accusations made by David Robinson and others. After extensive research, he wrote: “I also spoke with another Armstrong personally on this and will state that no one would verify this. And while all the parties are now dead, GTA, Dorothy and certain others (like Dr. Lochner) were alive when I tried to verify this from them. Thus, no one who supposedly was involved or actually heard some admission/confession would stand by that.

“In December 2006, I also saw a post at an anti-Church of God website that stated that Dibar Apartian supposedly confirmed that he felt that Herbert W. Armstrong was guilty of incest. On Jan. 3, 2007, I spoke with Dibar Apartian about this. He knew Herbert W. Armstrong for the last 30-plus years of Herbert W. Armstrong’s life. Dibar Apartian clearly and flatly denied the claim someone made [about his belief in Mr. Armstrong’s guilt].

“I also personally spoke with others who knew and worked with Herbert W. Armstrong for decades. None of them ever saw or heard any proof of this charge against him.

“Every single time I have gone to the alleged sources of information on this incest matter, none of these ‘sources’ have ever stood by the statements that the anti-Herbert W. Armstrong critics have claimed were made. I would like to add that at that time Dibar Apartian was 88½ years old and he specifically told me that it should be clear to everyone that he has nothing to gain by denying this (he also told me this later, and he is now in his 90s). Dibar Apartian also told me that he has never once made a statement confirming any of Herbert W. Armstrong’s alleged personal faults, and specifically that he never stated that he thought Herbert W. Armstrong was guilty of incest.”

Mr. Thiel quoted Mr. Robinson’s book as saying, “Like the Wizard of Oz, Herbert Armstrong is operating on image. When his hand is called, there is no substance there. Like the Wizard, he is just a lot of bluster.” And Mr. Thiel concluded, “Based on my experience in trying to track down credible sources for this accusation, all I

find—including a whole chapter in Robinson’s book—is ‘just a lot of bluster.’ Actually, it appears to me that no one who has made or repeated most of the accusations against Herbert W. Armstrong actually has any real proof for most of them—no one seems to have checked with either the primary (those involved) or secondary sources (those with proof), but instead relied on accusation and rumor. Simply stating a false charge does not make it true, no matter how many times it may be repeated.”

MORE ‘SOURCES’

One source heavily circulated on the Internet says a newspaper article from 1984 proves Mr. Armstrong was guilty and *even admitted it*. In the small article dealing with Mr. Armstrong’s divorce settlement with his second wife, Ramona Martin, it states that Mr. Armstrong “testified that he had read the settlement agreement and did not feel

Jesus said, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” We sincerely believe this is what has happened in Mr. Armstrong’s case: His critics have accused him without just cause.

it was unfair.” That statement, if it were even true, would only be finalizing an agreement primarily dealing with financial issues.

Here is the other quote from this article supposedly “proving” Mr. Armstrong *admitted* to committing incest: “Lawrence Deckter, [Ramona’s] lawyer, said the testimony would explain an ‘understanding’ the couple reached about Armstrong’s ‘prior incestuous conduct with his daughter for many years.’”

THIS IS THEIR SUPPOSED PROOF THAT MR. ARMSTRONG ADMITTED TO INCEST?

First, since when is a quote from a newspaper reporter quoting the opposition’s attorney proof of anything? Do reporters not make mistakes? Do they not lie? Do attorneys ever lie? Do they lie about their opposition? Even *IF* such a statement were made, what does it mean? The couple reached an “understanding”? Maybe the understanding was that this accusation would be dropped because there’s no proof—and there’s no proof because it did not happen!

Another source circulated on the Internet providing supposed proof of these accusations is Dorothy’s own husband. Of course, there are no direct statements from him, but several people state that privately he has said these rumors are true. That makes these statements hearsay at best; they could be, and probably are, flat-out lies. Nevertheless, for argument’s sake, let’s assume the hearsay is true and, again, we will consider the source.

Dorothy’s husband was business manager for the Church, but Mr. Armstrong fired him in the early 1960s. Two

individuals I spoke with who were personally very close to Mr. Armstrong told me that one reason Mr. Armstrong fired him was that he was having college co-eds over to his house and was smoking and over-drinking with them. I was told that Mr. Armstrong would not tolerate that behavior. In addition, I was told that it was also brought to Mr. Armstrong's attention that this man was dishonest in handling the Church's accounting and finances and was lying about it to Mr. Armstrong. This was the other reason Mr. Armstrong fired him.

With all this in mind, you would have to agree that Dorothy's husband would be a biased source even *if* the statements attributed to him were true. Yet those supposed statements could easily be lies anyway. I am not accusing anyone of anything—I'm just stating what has been stated to me so you may consider the sources so commonly quoted on the Internet.

What about Dorothy herself? Some have stated that Dorothy hated her father and used this incest claim to extort money from him. Yet Dorothy wrote a scathing letter to Stanley Radar amid the court case with the state of California and had it printed in the *Pasadena Star News* in 1979. Here are some segments from her letter so you can see for yourself what she thought of her dad! Keep in mind that she had not been a member of the Church her father founded since the early 1950s!

In that letter, Dorothy wrote about how "the lifetime work of my father, that beautiful campus, even my father's credibility is fast disappearing." She wrote, "Dad is no longer a young man—he is over there in Tucson in such seclusion he only gets the slant of news that is handed him by the adviser he trusts. Any other person who tries to give a whole picture is branded as a conspirator who is trying to do him harm. It hurts us, his real family, but what can we do? We can't protect him, for if we try, we will be labeled as 'conspirators.'" She also wrote, "It will be a year next month since I've been able to have contact with Dad—yet when I last saw him, everything was fine between us. Now I hear that Dad has been told that I am against him, that I hate him!" Further down, she made the following statement: "I've worried and stewed about Dad's welfare and health." And later, she wrote, "I was brought up to believe that God is love." She concluded, "Please wake up before it's too late. I am so weary of seeing our family name being dragged through a fiasco, I just had to say something. If you really love my father, put a stop to this three-ring circus.

"I am not a Church member, as you all no doubt know, but the Church, through my family, has always been a large part of my life, and I am a most ashamed and concerned daughter who must finally speak out in horror and shock at this latest fiasco."

Does any of that sound like something that she would have written if the allegations about Mr. Armstrong and Dorothy were true?

Please remember: When you read something on the Internet, ANYONE could have written it! *Anyone* can say ANYTHING on the Internet! Don't be so naive as to believe anonymous Internet sources, third-party hearsay or disgruntled Church of God haters! People lie! We must remember both the origin of lies, character assassination and slander and the reasons for promulgating this one in particular. Let's pray that we are more spiritually mature in our thinking

WHAT HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATES SAY

Let me give you some additional testimony from individuals who were close to Mr. Armstrong.

Steve Szabo worked in the television department under Mr. Armstrong, producing the *World Tomorrow* program and other productions. He traveled internationally with Mr. Armstrong on many occasions. Mr. Szabo said only disgruntled and dissatisfied people said these things and that those who said them "were all, at best, very questionable sources." He also said, "Mr. Armstrong was a very dedicated, humble man. I heard the rumor, but I dismissed it. There was never anything that would lead me to believe he was guilty of anything like that."

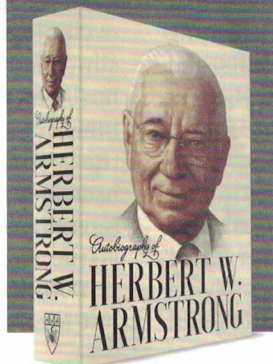
Mel Olinger absolutely loved Mr. Armstrong and deeply respected him. Mr. Olinger would not even go to visit Mr. Armstrong's grave without wearing a dress coat. He has shared with me many stories of personal dinners and conversations he had with Mr. Armstrong. They all centered on a love for God, a profound fear of God, and a deep, sincere desire to please God. In addition, he told me about how much Mr. Armstrong spoke about family relations and helping people to develop proper parent-child relationships.

Mr. Olinger's wife, Loretta, stated, "I knew Mr. Armstrong too well to know that he didn't do that—nor ever would have." She knew Dorothy Mattson very well and remained close to her throughout the 1960s, '70s and '80s. They had some dealings together regarding real-estate transactions and she would even pick up Dorothy's children from school and take them back to her home. Mrs. Olinger told me there was never any indication of a strange relationship between Dorothy and her father. She said Mr. Armstrong maintained a warm, loving and normal relationship with both of his daughters—Beverly and Dorothy—until he died. She also told me Dorothy was very upset with the Tkach team for not allowing her to see her father when he was sick in late 1985.

Mrs. Olinger called the incest accusation "a satanic lie. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong had a very close relationship and he would never

GET TO KNOW HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

What kind of person was he? How could God use him so powerfully? To learn more, request your free copy of *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong.*



have done anything to hurt her. His mind was always on the Bible and God's Work. He knew God's Word, and he feared God too much to have ever done anything like that." She went on to say that there were always rumors going around in the '70s and '80s about Mr. Armstrong, yet he would not address them because they were not true.

Aaron Dean was Mr. Armstrong's personal assistant for the last 12 years of his life. Mr. Dean worked directly with Mr. Armstrong beginning in 1973 and continued until his death on Jan. 16, 1986. He told me that he absolutely did not believe any of these accusations against Mr. Armstrong. He said that in all the years he worked for Mr. Armstrong, nobody ever brought it up, and he interacted with Stan Radar, Ramona, Garner Ted, Dorothy and other extended family members. He said this was not Mr. Armstrong's character or nature. He said that in 12 years of working together, Mr. Armstrong never said anything like this to him. That is interesting, given the fact that David Robinson said Mr. Armstrong told him about all this incest on a 30-minute walk during a Feast.

Mr. Dean told me, "People just make up stories. They're not true. I was there." He also said Mr. Armstrong didn't care much about what other people thought; he really only cared about what God thought. He concluded his thoughts on this subject by telling me those who said these things were disgruntled people who simply wanted to destroy the truth and the Church.

One other piece of compelling evidence is provided by Norbert Link, an attorney working under Ralph Helge in the WCG legal department during the attack by the state of California and the legal issues between Mr. Armstrong and Ramona. Mr. Link said people have accused Mr. Armstrong of "the most gruesome personal sins and shortcomings." Mr. Armstrong "was not guilty of any of the accusations alluded to," he said, "which have been launched by ill-informed or malicious people who distort and lie about the truth. And I can assure you of that, having worked in the Church's legal department at that time for many years as an attorney. And having seen a lot more than most of you will ever see. And none of the allegations—some of those that were brought against him—were ever substantiated by any credible evidence whatsoever." He stated this in 2013.

That is extremely compelling and conclusive evidence! Anyone looking into this subject with an honest mind would have to agree.

WHAT THE FACTS PROVE

The facts prove that Mr. Armstrong was a man of dignity and class. His practice, as stated by multiple witnesses, was to *not comment* on accusations and attacks such as these we're addressing. He would not waste his time with it, nor dignify such satanic nonsense! After all, this wasn't the only thing he was accused of. He was also accused of being "in it for the money," being an alcoholic, being a cocaine addict and being a racist—just to name a few of the charges against him. He was even accused of being some sort of a secret agent of

the Catholic Church—a knight in the Catholic Knights of Columbus. Was Mr. Armstrong supposed to honor all these accusations with denials?

Satan wants to use these types of attacks to take people's minds and focus OFF the truth of God and the Work of God! We must know how the devil operates and conquer him. Only those who OVERCOME will sit with Christ in His throne! (Revelation 3:21).

Remember, Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). Christ said, "[Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there

In Matthew 7, Jesus Christ said that a tree is known by its fruit. The good fruits of Mr. Armstrong's public ministry speak for themselves.

is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). We should not be surprised that Satan would inspire such lies about God's servant.

Look at the evidence of Mr. Armstrong's life: nearly six decades of serving God and God's people. Look at the open doors God laid before him. Look at the astounding work that was accomplished. Look at how God blessed Mr. Armstrong's efforts.

In Matthew 7, Jesus Christ said that a tree is known by its fruit. The good fruits of Mr. Armstrong's public ministry speak for themselves! They are out there for all to see. Though Mr. Armstrong was an imperfect human being like the rest of us, we stand behind his Bible-based teachings and are confident that his private life was lived accordingly—despite what his false accusers (most of whom remain anonymous on the Internet) have to say.

It is indeed *tragic* that some are *filled with such hostility* toward the gospel message Mr. Armstrong taught for nearly 60 years that they have attempted to assassinate his character, some post-mortem. The message of hope and good news that Mr. Armstrong taught is the same that Jesus Christ taught, and it is the same that the Philadelphia Church of God teaches today. Jesus said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). The evidence shows that this is what has happened in Mr. Armstrong's case: *His critics have accused him without just cause or evidence!*

Many different people have many different opinions about Herbert W. Armstrong. The only opinion that really matters is God's! What does God think?

Here is what God says about His end-time servant, who is the spiritual father of the true ministers just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ: "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" (Malachi 2:5-6).

THAT is the most compelling evidence of all! ■