

# **FRESH EVIDENCE DENIES MR ARMSTRONG'S ACCUSERS!**

This paper is addressed to those who truly seek to worship God in spirit and in Truth, who therefore do not blindly follow a man and who are wondering about the ongoing schisms in the Church of God. This paper may be freely reproduced and distributed, provided this be done in its entirety, without alterations of any kind and solely for the edification of the true Church of God.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	3
2.0 May We Trust Unconverted Accusers?.....	4
2.1 Testing for True Conversion.....	4
2.2 Examples of Unconverted Men in Christendom and the Church of God .....	4
3.0 The Allegations .....	7
4.0 The Worth of the Exit Support Network’s Evidence .....	8
5.0 Evidence from the Autobiography .....	9
5.1 On the Air!’ (Volume 1, chapter 31, pages 541-542).....	9
5.2 Eugene Campaign Starts (Volume 1, chapter 32, page 546).....	9
5.3 My First Car (Volume 1, chapter 35, pages 601-604) .....	10
5.4 New Facilities Needed (Volume 2, chapter 40, page 3).....	10
5.5 First New Car (Volume 2, Chapter 41, pages 27-29),.....	10
5.6 The Creation Memorial (Volume 1, chapter 16, page 300).....	11
5.7 The Bitter Pill (Volume 1, chapter 16, pages 305-6) .....	12
6.0 The Evidence of the April 1984 Ambassador Report Examined.....	12
7.0 Why Did Mr Armstrong Not Sue? .....	14
8.0 Mr Armstrong under attack by family and Christendom .....	14
9.0 Evidence From Other Sources .....	15
10.0 Lesser Accusations .....	16
11.0 References.....	17
12.0 In Conclusion .....	17

# FRESH EVIDENCE DENIES HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG'S ACCUSERS!

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a fresh look at the accusations levelled against the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong, and shows these must be rejected by truly converted Christians. Especially examined are claims that Mr Armstrong committed incest with and even raped of his daughter Dorothy over the period 1933 to 1943 but which claims surfaced only some forty years later during the 1970s. This point is significant for Mr Armstrong's circumstances changed greatly over those forty years. During the 1930s he was virtually penniless and could only afford the cheaper hotel rooms with little privacy, whereas during the 1970s he stayed in luxurious hotel suites. The alleged incest may have sounded plausible in that 1970s setting of luxurious hotel suites but let us remember that the circumstances were entirely different during those early years when the alleged incest is supposed to have happened.

In addition during the 1930s Mr Armstrong was literally run off his feet travelling many miles up and down the US west coast between radio broadcasts, church services, mid-week evangelist meetings and writing articles for the *Plain Truth* magazine. He had no staff to assist him and much of the work fell on his shoulders. It is preposterous to even consider he could have taken his school-age daughter Dorothy in tow with him on those frantic journeys for the purpose of incest, when often he had time for only a few hours sleep in some dingy hotel room.

The late David Robinson in his book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, accuses Mr Armstrong of committing incest with and even raping his daughter Dorothy between the ages of 13 and 20 years over the period 1933 to 1940 but did David Robinson ever examine the facts or was he intent to destroy Mr Armstrong's reputation because he had come to hate him? The late John Trechak claims in his *Ambassador Reports* that Mr Armstrong continued incest with Dorothy throughout her courtship with Vern Mattson and even till her marriage aged 23 in 1943.

Should we not ask a few questions before we accept these claims? Do we not owe this to our mentor and teacher and God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant, the late Mr Herbert W Armstrong? Does not God's Word require us to prove all things and to test both the witness and his testimony before reaching our verdict? Does not God's Word also require a woman – and Dorothy certainly was a woman once over 16 - to scream out when raped in an urban environment? So shouldn't we be asking Dorothy some searching questions, why she continued sleeping with her father up to her marriage as she alleges? In truth no one has asked such questions and it was assumed that Dorothy's spoke the truth and it was not considered that she may have been snared by Satan. Surely we must consider the possibility that Satan would attack God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant and what could be more effective than to do this through members of his own family?

God's Word requires that we judge only on the tested evidence of no fewer than two true accusers. This means we need to test or cross-examine at least two witnesses and verify their testimony before judging. A number of men have alleged that the late Mr Herbert W Armstrong committed incest with his daughter Dorothy between the ages of 13 and 23. Note that the allegations are not for her ages between 3 and 13 but between 13 and 23, which cover her years of young womanhood and even the time of her courtship with her future husband whom she married aged 23! We can not dismiss that from at least age 18 Dorothy ought not to have allowed any alleged incest. If Dorothy's claims were true, then she is an adulteress and that would make her a questionable witness indeed. Yet Dorothy is the only witness because all the other accusers rely on hearsay evidence that originated with her. So far no witness has been properly cross-examined and no evidence has been verified. This paper aims to do this in retrospect and the reader should avoid the sin of judging before testing the accusers and their testimony as God requires of us (Deut 19:16-18).

The incest accusations have greatly troubled many members of the former Worldwide Church of God, and have done great damage to the reputation of that church and its founder and servant of God, Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and therefore also his teaching. These accusations have caused many to forget that only Mr Armstrong and no other man in our time made the Bible come alive by teaching us beautiful truths that had become lost to mainstream Christendom and even to the Church of God. It is a nonsense to pretend we could have got the truths taught by Mr Armstrong from others. From whom? Perhaps the Sabbath truth from the Trinitarian Seventh Day Adventist Church? Then from who the truth about Mainstream's false Trinity. Or from where the truth about the holy days and feasts? Yet there are men who claim that Mr Armstrong was not God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant. Those man can not be taken seriously and must be rejected regardless of

their testimonies on incest. This is a major thesis of this paper that those that ridicule or treat Mr Armstrong contemptuously can not have been converted to God's Truth and so can not be considered reliable witnesses against Mr Armstrong. In truth such men are like tares planted by an enemy amongst the wheat (Mat 13:24-30). Some of them may even be subverters from mainstream Christendom alarmed over Mr Armstrong's highly successful worldwide teaching during the 1970s.

This paper shows we must reject hearsay 'evidence', test accusers, verify carefully all evidence, and examine the accusers' motivations before we reach our verdict on Mr Armstrong. This paper also briefly examines lesser accusations levelled against Mr Armstrong, such as plagiarism, questionable prophetic claims, extravagant spending of church funds and arrogantly standing over those who question some aspect of his teaching or administration. May this paper convince the reader to prove all things and not take anything for granted as we are instructed (1 Thes 5:21). Also when judging let us not forget the quality of mercy (Mat 23:23): for example let us at least view Mr Armstrong's alleged 'plagiarizing' through his eyes, rather than through this world's atheist academic eyes. Bible Truth carries with it no human copyright and remains free to use by God's servants.

Let the reader not assume that I slavishly follow either Mr Armstrong or his teaching as many do. My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (see Section 11.0) essays that Mr Armstrong led from 1934 God's seventh and final Church of God era of Laodicea rather than Philadelphia as Mr Armstrong claimed. Nevertheless I see Mr Armstrong as having been God's 20th-century messenger to the Church of God and that we must pay him the respect his high office deserves.

## **2.0 MAY WE TRUST UNCONVERTED OR QUESTIONABLE ACCUSERS?**

### **2.1 Testing for True Conversion**

The doctrinal teachings of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong are so different from and even contrary to those of mainstream Christendom, that it is inconceivable that once converted to his teaching, that anyone could ever return to the largely non-biblical and even pagan doctrines of mainstream Christendom or turn to atheism as some have done. Surely such men and women were never truly converted to God's Way in the first place. Perhaps they were superficially attracted to some narrow aspect of Mr Armstrong's teaching, such as *Israel Identity* or the Sabbath and holy days but without truly understanding the full scope of his teaching. It is also inconceivable that anyone truly converted to Mr Armstrong's quintessential teaching could fail to understand that this was available in our age only through Mr Armstrong and through no one else. That therefore Mr Armstrong was clearly God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant. Therefore no truly converted person could ever denounce or treat Mr Armstrong disrespectfully, let alone ridicule him, as some have done. We can not take seriously the testimony of men and women who fail to meet these tests.

This last point is best illustrated from David's continued respect for King Saul. David twice spared the life of his deadly enemy, King Saul (1 Samuel chapters 24 and 26). Even after Saul's death, King David showed respect for King Saul as God's anointed. In the 20<sup>th</sup>-century God chose Mr Herbert W. Armstrong to proclaim His Truth; therefore anyone who denigrates or ridicules Mr Armstrong can not possibly have been a truly converted Christian. Another example is found in Numbers 12:1-10 where God reacted in great anger against Miriam and Aaron for treating disrespectfully His servant Moses. Let there be no doubt in the reader's mind that we are required to treat God's servants with respect and that we may not judge them guilty without proof as so many did with Mr Herbert W. Armstrong on the unproven testimony of apparently unconverted men and women.

### **2.2 EXAMPLES OF UNCONVERTED MEN IN CHRISTENDOM AND THE CHURCH OF GOD**

Here follow examples of men in Christendom and in the former Worldwide Church of God, who acquired considerable Bible knowledge but who were never truly called by God to His Way.

DR ETHELBERT W BULLINGER

The quite remarkable Anglican minister and Bible scholar, Dr Ethelbert W. Bullinger (1837-1913) is especially renowned for his *The Companion Bible* with its copious and largely fine side notes and 198 appendixes. From appendixes 156 and 165 it is plain that Dr Bullinger understood that Jesus was crucified

and buried just before sunset of the Passover day of Wednesday Nisan 14, and was resurrected just before sunset of Saturday Nisan 17 and so was by the Sign of Jonah precisely three days and three nights in the grave. Yet despite that tremendous understanding Dr Bullinger remained an Anglican minister committed to mainstream Christendom's Good Friday, Easter and Sunday observances, which plainly deny the Sign of Jonah. Although Dr Bullinger honestly analysed those biblical facts he failed to make the connection to observe Passover and reject Good Friday and Easter whose roots are pagan. Obviously despite his sincerity Dr Bullinger was never truly converted to God's Truth.

THE REV J.H. ALLEN

The Rev J.H. Allen's book *Judah's Sceptre And Joseph's Birthright*, must have inspired Mr Armstrong's most successful booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. Yet the Rev Allen's understanding of Israel's modern identity did not cause him to look deeper into the needs of the US and Britain to observe the 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath, the Passover and holy days and festivals. Mere knowledge does not guarantee conversion or being called by God. Perhaps the Rev Allen was inspired through seeing himself an Israelite, which inspiration may have been largely vanity.

Let us now turn to examples of unconverted men in the former Worldwide Church of God.

THE LATE MR JOSEPH W TKACH AND HIS SENIOR MINISTERS

Being baptized in the former Worldwide Church of God or having graduated from Ambassador College is no guarantee of being truly converted. For example late Mr Joseph W. Tkach and his senior ministers rejected during the 1990s the entire body of Mr Armstrong's teaching despite having confessed belief in those at the time of their baptism. There can be only one explanation, namely that these men were never truly converted to Mr Armstrong's teaching or their conversion was so shallow that for practical purposes it was non-existent.

**MR FRED COULTER'S CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL CHURCH OF GOD**

I was contacted by a number of people from the Australian division of Mr Fred R Coulter's *Christian Biblical Church of God*. These all denounced Mr Herbert W. Armstrong as a false prophet, a liar, a thief of church funds, a plagiarist, a child molester and a rapist. These people came to see the man who taught them to understand the Bible as one of the worst type of criminal! I was sent a tape of Mr Fred Coulter's farewell sermon from the Worldwide Church of God given on the Day of Atonement 1979. In it Mr Coulter denounced Mr Herbert Armstrong as corrupt and bereft of the truth. It seems Mr Coulter had forgotten that he had received only through Mr Armstrong God's Word of truth. In an other 'sermon' tape Mr Coulter ridiculed Mr Herbert Armstrong as a false prophet and lampooned Mr Flurry of the *Philadelphia Church of God* for remaining close to Mr Armstrong. It is true that during the dark days of the Second World war and again during dark days of the Cold war that Mr Armstrong at times interpreted prophecy too enthusiastically. But is it possible that Mr Coulter might have done the same had God called him instead of Mr Armstrong? Could anyone honestly claim they would have acted more wisely in similar circumstances? So is it fair to denounce Mr Armstrong as a false prophet and bereft of the truth? I don't think so and therefore I see Mr Coulter at best a good rote learner of Mr Armstrong's teaching but also one who was never called by God.

**MR GARNER TED ARMSTRONG**

The Lord Jesus instructs us to test our teachers (prophets) by examining their fruits (Mat 7:15-20). Although converted Christians do sin from time to time, both the severity and the frequency of their sins should reduce with time as they grow in grace and knowledge (2 Pet 3:18). Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's son, the late Garner Ted Armstrong, was an ambitious man who disobeyed his father and tried to wrest control of the former Worldwide Church of God from his father. Garner Ted promoted his Systematic Theology Project despite his father requesting he desist from this. In addition throughout his long ministry Garner Ted acquired a reputation as the playboy evangelist, who remained an unrepentant womaniser. Garner Ted became one of the chief accusers of his father and showed a lack of respect for the man he should have known was God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant. We are not talking about an occasional lapse of morals by Garner Ted but a pattern of behaviour that continued throughout his life as an evangelist. It gave the former Worldwide Church of God a bad name and later also his own church, the *Church of God International*. Such ongoing behaviour reveals Garner Ted Armstrong lacked the fruits of a truly converted and repentant Christian. How can we take seriously the accusations of this man, who never lived by God's law.

### **DR JAMES D TABOR**

Ken Westby reports in the March 2006 issue of *The Journal* on Dr James D Tabor's book, *The Jesus Dynasty: The Hidden History of Jesus, His Royal Family, and the Birth of Christianity* that we can learn from this book despite its 'unorthodox' perspectives because of Dr Tabor being widely accepted for his biblical scholarship. Unorthodox perspectives? That is one way of describing Dr Tabor's rejecting both the virgin birth and Jesus' resurrection. Yet Dr Tabor was once closely associated with Ambassador College having been both a student there and a lecturer of Greek. How is it possible that a person who was once so closely associated with the Church of God would later claim that Jesus had a human father and reject His resurrection? The secular academic world may recognize Dr Tabor as a biblical scholar but the Church of God should only see him as an unconverted man who was never called by God. I am not linking Dr Tabor with the accusers of Mr Armstrong but cite his case as an example that all was not well at Ambassador College. It is plain that Dr Tabor was not an isolated case.

### **MR WILLIAM F DANKENBRING**

Another example is the Ambassador College graduate, Mr William F Dankenbring who too has denounced Mr Herbert W. Armstrong as guilty of the vilest conduct. Often we can tell a lot from even the smaller signs. For example, which true Christian would call his magazine *Prophecy Flash* when Revelation 19:10 declares, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"? The so-called 7 Mystery Letters reveal Mr Dankenbring gave space in *Prophecy Flash* even to Jewish Kabala mysticism.

Mr Dankenbring co-authored with John D. Keyser the article *How Are The Mighty Fallen!* (Reference see Section 11.0). In this he denounces both Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and his son Garner Ted. Against Mr Herbert Armstrong Mr Dankenbring claims that the incest allegations are well documented, and refers to chapter twenty, titled *Incest!* of David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*. In sections 5.0 and 6.0 we will see this is far from well documented.

Against the late Garner Ted Armstrong Mr Dankenbring brings his friend Jerry Horton's claim that he once opened Garner Ted's office door, which happened to be ajar, to find on the couch Garner Ted having sexual relations with a young college co-ed. I am not seeking to clear Garner Ted of this charge but I insist that we must reject such hearsay evidence seeing we are unable to cross-examine Mr Dankenbring's friend Jerry Horton. Further had Garner Ted indeed engaged in a sexual relationship, then surely he would have not only closed but locked his office door. Just how gullible does Mr Dankenbring think we are that this took place behind an office door that was ajar, when by this very account we know that Garner Ted was well aware he could not rely on his staff respecting a closed door.

Mr Dankenbring has rejected much of Mr Armstrong's teaching and was plainly never converted to God's Truth. That he has any following suggests only that there were several more that were never truly converted.

### **THE EVANGELIST ANTION BROTHERS**

Early 2007 Mr Mark T. of Wisconsin wrote to me how at the 1993 Feast of Unleavened Bread he had asked Evangelist Gary Antion whether the incest allegations were true. Gary Antion assured him they were true because his older brother, Evangelist David Antion, had 'inside' information from Garner Ted Armstrong. Mark T then spread Gary Antion's assurance widely in his Wisconsin Worldwide Church of God and was promptly disfellowshipped by his then pastor, Mr Ray M. When he appealed to Gary Antion, this evangelist failed to back him up.

How much lower can an evangelist sink? Not much lower I should think! Would you judge Mr Armstrong on the say so of this evangelist? I should hope not. We are supposed to test both the accusers and their testimony. How can we trust the testimony of this untrustworthy evangelist?

Let us now look at Evangelist Gary Antion's source, his older brother Evangelist David Antion. However before we do I need to remind the reader that we are dealing here with hearsay evidence that can not be tested and which would not be allowed in a court of law.

Evangelist David Antion on whom Mark T's witness, Gary Antion, relied, was closely allied to Garner Ted Armstrong. David Antion had left Mr Herbert Armstrong's *Worldwide Church of God* to join Garner Ted's *International Church of God*. In addition David Antion was married to Garner Ted Armstrong's sister in law. It is plain that David Antion was rather too close to Mr Herbert Armstrong's chief accuser, Garner Ted Armstrong, to be trusted. Considering the existing family, church and employment relationships between David Antion and Garner Ted Armstrong, how could David Antion have thoroughly tested the

testimonies of Garner Ted Armstrong and his sister Dorothy without also seriously damaging those relationships? Perhaps David Antion had convinced himself that Mr Armstrong was guilty and so felt no need to test further but that fails to test both the accusers and their testimony as God's Word requires.

It is clear that David Antion had joined Garner Ted Armstrong's anti-HWA conspiracy and would speak in accord with Garner Ted Armstrong. So how reliable was Evangelist Gary Antion's 1993 testimony to Mark T? The following paragraph shows we must even question David Antion's conversion despite him having been an evangelist.

David Antion did a rather surprising thing for an ex-Worldwide Church of God evangelist, he studied psychiatry and then became a marriage counsellor. Now psychiatry and true Christianity do not go together for psychiatry is Satan's science which teaches that not we but our circumstances are responsible for our sins. Besides marriage counsellors had better understand God's *Garden of Eden Marriage Law* which does not permit divorce and remarriage. So how can a member of the Church of God even consider such a career? I can not believe that either Evangelist David Antion or Evangelist Gary Antion were ever truly converted to God's Way.

I reject that the evangelist brothers David and Gary Antion may be taken as reliable accusers against God's 20<sup>th</sup> century servant, Mr Herbert W. Armstrong. I was disappointed that Mark T. embraced their untested evidence and then judged Mr Herbert Armstrong to be guilty of incest. In this he sinned and needs to repent of that sin.

Before we accept in the Church of God the evidence of a witness, we must critically examine not only the evidence, but also the witness. For example, was the witness truly converted to God's Way, could he have had a hidden agenda when making the accusation. Members of the Church of God must carefully examine the fruits of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's accusers as well as their testimony before accepting their testimony.

### **3.0 THE ALLEGATIONS**

The originator of the incest allegations was Mr Armstrong's daughter Dorothy and these came to the surface only many years later and even after the death of her mother. There have been some notable cases where daughters in later life falsely accused their father of incest: especially alleged suppressed memory cases. Most cases of incest occur at a much lower age than allegedly was the case of Dorothy, who claims to have suffered incest and even rape between the ages of 13 and 23.

Dorothy was clearly not converted to her 'father's religion' for in 1951, aged 31, she walked away from it altogether. Her father's Autobiography shows (See Section 5.3 below) that as a teenager she became disaffected with her 'father's religion' over the poverty it brought the Armstrong family during her teens.

In Section 6.0 we will examine her husband's ambivalent behaviour towards her father, which suggests he may in the end not have been convinced of his wife's allegations.

Had the rape and incest allegations when Dorothy was aged between 13 to 23 been true then this does not reflect favourably on Dorothy. Once Dorothy exceeded age 16 and certainly age 18, she must have been aware that permitting ongoing incest was adultery against her mother. Certainly at age 18 she would have been able to put a stop to it but by her own allegations she did not. That places a big question mark next to Dorothy's name.

The Bible rules that in an urban situation a woman must cry out and can not be held innocent when she fails to do so when being raped (Deut 22:24). Dorothy alleges that the hotel's manager came to the door to inquire what the noise was about. At that moment Dorothy could have screamed out for help that she was being raped but allegedly she kept her peace. Now we have only Dorothy's word for this and then only some forty years after the event when the hotel manager is no longer available to be examined.

It is important the reader keeps the following 1930-1940s dates in mind when reading the rest of this paper and also remember that Dorothy announced the alleged events only some 40 years later during the 1970s. The incest is alleged to have started in 1933 when Dorothy was 13 and is alleged to have continued till 1943 the year of Dorothy married at age 23. The rape in a hotel room took allegedly place in 1936 when Dorothy was aged 16.

The alleged period of incest extends to the very year of Dorothy's wedding, which means the alleged incest overlapped her courtship with her husband to be. This raises further question about both Dorothy's morals

and also about the likelihood of her allegations being true. We will see that there are other questions to be asked as well. Unfortunately such questions were not put to Dorothy.

One effect of the 40-year delay is that neither Mr Armstrong nor anyone could call and test witnesses. For example the hotel manager, who allegedly came to inquire into the noise caused by Dorothy during the alleged rape in one of his hotel rooms. Assuming the manager was about 40 years in 1936, then forty years later he could be too old to be questioned, if indeed he could be found at all. Forty years is a long time. I doubt that David Robinson, the author of the book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, attempted to trace the hotel manager and check whether Dorothy's claims are indeed valid. Besides her claim came through another party, her late brother Garner Ted Armstrong.

Is it not strange that these allegations surfaced some forty years later and only after Mr Armstrong's wayward son Garner Ted became estranged from his father and his father disfellowshipped him for disloyalty and his alleged adultery with co-eds at Ambassador College. So was it an accident that after being ousted, Garner Ted Armstrong began talking to his sister Dorothy? Was it an accident that he only then learnt of these allegations after talking to his sister Dorothy? Could they have conspired against their father to weaken his position and strengthen their own relative to their father's in the Worldwide Church of God? After all control over the Worldwide Church of God was in the 1970s a great price indeed, for the church turned over a huge amount of money annually. Let us not fool ourselves that either Dorothy or her brother Garner Ted was a converted Christian in the Worldwide Church of God.

#### **4.0 THE WORTH OF THE EXIT SUPPORT NETWORK'S EVIDENCE**

With the allegations and growing resentment over Mr Armstrong and the 1990s doctrinal changes in the Worldwide Church of God, an Exit Support Network (ESN) was formed to help those who believed to have been misled by Mr Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God to come to terms with life after the Worldwide Church of God. Never mind the huge amounts of biblical truth they could have learnt in the time they were in the Worldwide Church of God but apparently fail to learn; instead they accepted the untested allegations by untested accusers and condemned Mr Herbert Armstrong.

The ESN gives many examples of alleged false teaching by Mr Armstrong. Now anyone who came to understand through Mr Armstrong the falsity of the Trinity doctrine, would never return to that, irrespective of what Mr Armstrong may or may not have done. Yet on their website I found they charged Mr Armstrong with falsely referring to God's enabling holy spirit by the pronoun 'it' instead of 'he' as does mainstream or Trinitarian Christendom.

Mr Armstrong taught that when translating from the Greek NT manuscripts to English the translators could have to chose between the pronouns 'he', 'she' or 'it'. The King James translators chose 'he' because they believed there is a third God the Holy Spirit. The truth is that the Greek does not specify whether the pronoun should be masculine, feminine or neuter. When we understand the holy spirit to be an enabling spirit from God, then we should use 'it' instead of 'he'. This was taught by Mr Armstrong and therefore all in the former Worldwide Church of God ought to have understood this. Yet the ESN people used this to discredit Mr Armstrong as a teacher. However, in this they demonstrated to have been unconverted and this we must bear in mind when reading their accusations against Mr Armstrong.

For example, when they claim that Mr Armstrong's wife Loma had attempted to stop her husband travelling alone with their daughter Dorothy by train from Oregon to Los Angeles by insisting he take also their son Richard. It is then alleged that Mr Armstrong thwarted his wife's attempt by sending his son alone on a separate train to teach him leadership. As evidence of this they point to the Autobiography but without giving a reference and indeed my search of my copy of the Autobiography failed to find that evidence.

But even if Mr Armstrong had sent his son separately would that have assured Mr Armstrong to be alone with his daughter? Surely when Richard arrived in Los Angeles the three would have joined up again and stayed in the same hotel room.

Can we trust this feeble attempt at discrediting Mr Armstrong? Or should we place it in the same category as their attempt to discredit his rejecting the personal pronoun 'he' for God's enabling holy spirit and replacing this with 'it'?

I expect that many partially converted people who never properly understood the Trinity issue but assumed the incest allegations must be true, do swallow such shallow accusations.



Before we leave this section and examine evidence from Mr Armstrong's Autobiography I draw the readers attention that, unlike the above ESN evidence, I give below full references to the Autobiography so that readers may examine the evidence I put before them

## 5.0 EVIDENCE FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Let us return to the period 1933-1940 and 1936 the year of the alleged rape.

In 1934 Mr Armstrong began the church work in a very small way on the north-west coast of the United States. This was at the height of the Great Depression and Mr Armstrong had not earned much whilst researching the Bible and entering the ministry. He was quite poor with a wife, two teenage daughters and two younger sons to support. Whatever money he had left over after paying for the essentials, was devoted to pay for publishing the Plain Truth magazine, radio broadcasts, fuel for driving to and from radio stations, Sabbath church services, and weekday evangelistic meetings.

These were not the 1970s when Mr Armstrong had plenty of money to hire entire hotel suites in expensive hotels, travel first class and drive luxury cars. During the 1930s he was short of money and hotel rooms in which he allegedly raped his daughter were costly. Besides so hectic was his weekly schedule that often he spent only a few hours in his hotel room, arriving after midnight and getting up well before sunrise, and so leaving little time for incest. Besides we will see that Dorothy was not even with him!

When seen in this context David Robinson's allegations begin to look rather silly. Let us now examine Mr Armstrong's life during those 1930s to see if we should give any credence to the incest and rape allegations. For this we now turn to Mr Armstrong's two-volume *Autobiography*.

I have a copy of the 1986 printing of the 2-volume paper-back '*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*' and also an electronic copy downloaded from Internet from which I obtain the extracts below. All references are to my paper-back edition by volume, chapter and page number. This allows the reader to verify the quoted passages. I now place before the reader a series of quotes from the Autobiography from which we can form a picture of Mr Armstrong's situation during the 1930s. I emphasise by underlining the more important points.

### 5.1 "ON THE AIR!" (Volume 1, Chapter 31, Pages 541-542)

#### *Music for Early Radio Broadcasts*

On the first Sunday morning in the new year, 1934, precisely at 10 a.m., we were ON THE AIR. The program has been continuously on the air, without missing a single week, ever since.

Mr. Hill had suggested that we produce a regular Sunday morning church service, condensed into 30 minutes. I had planned it according to his suggestion. In our new local church, then meeting out at the Jeans school house, 12 miles west of Eugene, we had a young couple, Claude and Velma Ellis. Claude was a very good tenor. His wife Velma sang alto. They sang duets. They supplied the music.

I do not remember the exact format of the program, as it started, during those first few months. Very soon the duet was replaced with a mixed quartette, with our daughter Beverly singing soprano, Mrs. Armstrong alto, Claude Ellis tenor, and Alfred Freeze bass, with Mrs. Ellis at the piano.

Note that Mr Armstrong was surrounded by friends, and family members and in particular his daughter Beverly. Also note how this program remained an ongoing weekly commitment. KORE was located in Eugene, from where it moved around 1950 to Springfield OR. Since Mrs Armstrong was with Mr Armstrong because she was one of the singers, there would not be much opportunity for incest in a hotel room.

### 5.2 EUGENE CAMPAIGN STARTS (Volume 1, Chapter 32, Page 546)

#### *Accommodation*

During the July-August meetings at the Firbutte school, and on through the winter with the new local church continuing meetings at the Jeans school house, 12 miles west of Eugene, my wife and children had remained in Salem. I had lived with the Elmer Fishers on their farm seven miles west of Eugene.

But by late March I had rented a house on West 4th. I think the rent was about \$7 per month. I had arranged for meetings to start in the Old Masonic Temple on Seventh Avenue. Then one evening my wife and children arrived in Eugene with our household furniture and furnishings on Ed Smith's truck. That night we arranged for my family to sleep on mattresses on the second floor of the Old Masonic Hall.

So from July to August Mr Armstrong lived apart from his family. Did David Robinson consider that in his accusations?

### 5.3 MY FIRST CAR (Volume 1, Chapter 35, Pages 601-604)

#### *New suite for Mr Armstrong and worn stockings for his wife and daughters*

Along in those early years, 1934 to 1936, I sometimes laughingly boasted that "I have a suit of clothes for every day in the week -- and this is it!" But that one suit finally became threadbare. It became a handicap to the work. Mr. Elmer Fisher decided I had to have a new one, and took me to the Montgomery-Ward store and bought me a new \$19.89 suit. It may have been a year and a half or two years later when that one was looking equally unpresentable. At that time Milas Helms, near Jefferson, formed two committees, one headed by him at Jefferson, and the other at the Eugene church, to solicit contributions from members for another new suit. They raised \$35.

Through these years my wife wore used clothes her sister sent her, and how we shifted to keep our children clothed I do not remember -- except that one woman at Alvadore stopped tithing by saying:

"Well, I'm not going to let any of my tithes go to buy silk stockings for those Armstrong girls." She said cotton stockings were good enough for them. Yet ALL other girls in high school wore silk stockings! This was before the days of nylons. Had our girls worn cotton stockings, they would have been ridiculed and laughed at by the other girls. Mrs. Armstrong did not want this to happen. She prevented it by accepting worn silk stockings from others, with runs in them, and sewing up the runs -- for both her daughters, and herself.

It was incidents like this that soured and prejudiced our children against God's truth. Through those years most of the members of the church in Eugene lived better, economically, than we.

.....

Let us take note of especially this last paragraph. Teenagers do not take kindly to wearing second hand stockings. Experiences like that would not have endeared Mr Armstrong's religion to his daughters. It could well explain why Dorothy was never converted and so remained carnal in spirit and may well have hated her father's religion. Let us not forget that she also was denied Christmas and birth days.

Note also how this segment again shows a struggling Mr Armstrong of the 1930s who would not have had the resources to hire hotel suits to take his daughter to as he might have during the 1970s.

### 5.4 NEW FACILITIES NEEDED (Volume 2, Chapter 40, page 3 )

But now our old secondhand car was about to lie down and die of old age and much use.

Near the bottom of this letter of April 5, 1939, I find this: "Another serious need is a new car. The present one, five years old, is in the Albany garage for lack of a \$50 repair bill. We are totally dependent on our car to transport the six of us (self and singers) to Portland and back for the Sunday broadcasts. We have to drive 600 miles every week -2,500 miles a month in Gods work. The present car won't hold out longer. We are doing the very best we can with what we have to do with."

Mr Armstrong drove many miles each week and we will find in another segment arriving during the early hours of the morning in a small hotel and sleeping not even four hours to begin the activities of the next day. How ridiculous to imagine that he had time and opportunity to commit incest.

### 5.5 FIRST NEW CAR (Volume 2, Chapter 41, pages 27-29),

Somewhere around November, 1940, station KRSC in Seattle had switched our time from 4 p.m., which was the same time we aired on KWJJ, Portland, to 8:30 Sunday mornings. At first I suffered keen disappointment, feeling it would mean a smaller audience. But it proved a blessing in disguise. The listening audience picked up faster than ever.

Best of all, it made possible for me to drive to Seattle to put the program on live, instead of sending transcriptions. In those days our transcriptions had to be recorded in almost amateur manner on inferior equipment in Eugene. The “live” broadcasts made possible news reporting, and analysis of the very latest news, hot off the radio station teletypes, explaining the prophetic meaning with the Bible.

We were still limping along every Saturday afternoon and night the entire 320-mile drive from Eugene to Seattle in our old 1934 Graham. Constantly we had connecting rod trouble.

For many months this arduous routine was continued. I usually arrived in Seattle about 1 a.m., Sunday morning. I remember well tuning in Seattle’s powerful 50,000-watt station KIRO, which I could hear on the car radio the entire distance from Portland to Seattle. How I wished we might broadcast over such a powerful station! But we couldn’t afford it -- then. God later allowed us not only to afford it, but opened time for us on that splendid station twice daily.

The gruelling routine of those weekend trips lasted, I believe, until the spring of 1942. Arriving at my hotel -- one of the newer but smaller ones -- a service was provided whereby the garage, a block down the street, came after my car upon arrival. After a very few hours sleep I was awakened at 5 a.m. -- showered, shaved, dressed, and down to the all-night fountain in the corner drug store, where I bought the morning paper and hurriedly checked through it for prophetic news while drinking a glass of orange juice and a cup of coffee.

Then I hurried back to my briefcase and portable typewriter, and started rapping out script for the broadcast. In those days, even before the United States entered the war, security precautions required that every word be presented in script form -- one copy for the station announcer, one from which I was to speak. I did not dare deviate from the script. I had to have the half-hour script completed promptly at 8 a.m., when I dashed down, checked out of the hotel, and found my car waiting for me at the hotel entrance. Arriving at KRSC at 8:15, I had fifteen minutes in which to hand over the station copy of the script to the announcer, scan quickly the news teletape for any last-minute bulletins of significance I had not found in the morning paper, and clip it and write out any comment on my portable typewriter. At exactly 8:30, the familiar “GREETINGS, Friends!” was going out on the air. At 9 o’clock I leaped into my car, stopped off at the old “Half-Way House” midway to Tacoma, for breakfast, then continued the tiresome jaunt, with a state 50-mile-per-hour speed limit, on the old horse-and-buggy winding highway to Portland. Stopping off at Chehalis for lunch, I usually arrived in Portland about 3 p.m., with one hour to again check teletapes for last-minute news. Then, on the air over KWJJ at 4. Off at 4:30. Arriving in Eugene at 7:30 I would find the little church filled with a Sunday night audience. Then an evangelistic sermon and, usually, preaching every night through the week, working daytime’s in the office answering letters, writing The Plain Truth, or out making calls on people needing help, people interested, holding private Bible studies, etc. It was a grind.

.....

Mr Armstrong did not write this as a defence to the incest accusations but as an account of his activities in those days. He appeared to have had at times only 4 hours sleep but virtually working around the clock, whether it was driving between broadcasts, church services, evangelistic meetings or his office.

The Autobiography does not mention of Mr Armstrong’s daughter Dorothy being part of this hectic program and indeed how could she be. She was at school wearing second-hand silk stockings and hating her father’s church activities, which brought about their economic hardship.

I don’t believe Mr Armstrong had the funds to pay for more than the absolute essential hotel accommodation, as in Seattle. Elsewhere he would have stayed with church members, for example, when on the road to those weekday meetings. *In this context the incest and rape allegations simply do not add up!*

## **5.6 THE CREATION MEMORIAL (Volume 1, Chapter 16, page 300 )**

I had disproved the theory of evolution. I had found PROOF of CREATION – PROOF of the existence of GOD -- PROOF of the divine inspiration of the BIBLE.

Now I had a BASIS for belief. Now I had a solid FOUNDATION on which to build. The BIBLE had proved itself to contain AUTHORITY. I had now studied far enough to know that I must LIVE by it, and that I shall finally be JUDGED by it -- not by men, nor by man’s church

denominations, theories, theologies, tenets, doctrines, or pronouncements. I would be judged by Almighty GOD finally, and according to the BIBLE!

This short segment shows how Mr Armstrong had disproved Evolution and had come to recognise that God is the supreme authority. He had not been fully converted yet as the next section shows. But we do learn that he was making a serious investigation of his wife's newly found Sabbatarian religion.

### 5.7 The Bitter Pill (Volume 1, Chapter 16, page 305-6)

But do not suppose I quickly or easily came to admit my wife had been right, or to accept the seventh-day Sabbath as the truth of the Bible.

I spent a solid SIX MONTHS of virtual night-and-day, seven-day-a-week STUDY and research, in a determined effort to find just the opposite. I searched IN VAIN for any authority in the Bible to establish SUNDAY as the day for Christian worship. I even studied Greek sufficiently to run down every possible questionable text in the original Greek. I studied the Commentaries. I studied the Lexicons and "Robertson's Grammar of the Greek New Testament". Then I studied HISTORY. I delved into encyclopedias – the "Britannica", the "Americana", and several religious encyclopedias. I searched the "Jewish Encyclopedia", and the "Catholic Encyclopedia". I read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", especially his chapter 15 dealing with the religious history of the first four hundred years after Christ. And one of the most convincing evidences against Sunday was in the history of how and when it began.

I left no stone unturned.

I found clever arguments. I will confess that, so eager was I to overthrow this Sabbath belief of my wife, at one point in this intensive study I believed I might possibly have been able to use arguments to confuse and upset my wife on the Sabbath question. But there was no temptation to try to do it. I knew these arguments were not honest! I could not deliberately try to deceive my wife with dishonest arguments. The thought was immediately pushed aside. I know now she could not have been deceived.

Finally, after six months, the TRUTH had become crystal clear. At last I KNEW what was the truth. Once again, GOD had taken me to a licking!

It had been bewildering -- utterly frustrating! It seemed as if some mysterious, invisible hand was disintegrating every business I started!

That was precisely what was happening! The hand of God was taking away every activity on which my heart had been set -- the business success before whose shrine I had worshipped. This zeal to become important in the business world had become an idol. God was destroying the idol. He was knocking me down -- again and again! He was puncturing the ego, deflating the vanity.

It is plain that Mr Armstrong made a very thorough investigation that took him out of circulation for half a year. He even studied N.T. Greek and familiarised himself with various Bible study aids. This was not a passing fad for he was taking it seriously. He had set out to prove his wife wrong on the Sabbath but in the end came to acknowledge she was right.

I find it inconceivable that a man who has gone through so intensive a study and therefore must have known there is a God, would have over a period of 10 years wilfully committed incest with his daughter. If Mr Armstrong had been accused of an adultery, then I would have compared this to David's affair with Bathsheba but of which David repented without any further sins of adultery. Instead we are considering that Mr Armstrong committed one of the worst possible sexual offences and continued this over a period of a decade. I don't believe that God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant could have done that. The above personal history of Mr Armstrong does not fit so vile a sin.

## 6.0 THE EVIDENCE OF THE APRIL 1984 AMBASSADOR REPORT EXAMINED

Amongst the strongest accusations against Mr Herbert W. Armstrong are those published by John Trechak in his Ambassador Reports, for example the following of April 1984. It will be shown that these should not be taken on face value. Everywhere we find telltale signs of the reports falseness. Note, for example, in the second paragraph how John Trechak twice refers to the former Radio Church of God as an 'organization', thus revealing what he really thought of this church. Even when he refers to it as a church, it is to highlight

Dorothy's departure from her father's church in 1951. It should be plain that neither John Trechack nor Dorothy were called by God, let alone ever converted to Way of God's church.

### **Extract From The April 1984 Ambassador Report**

Dorothy has stated that her sexual relationship with her father continued into the early forties. In 1943 Herbert officiated at the ceremony in which Dorothy was married to Vern Mattson, who soon afterward was to serve overseas in the U.S. Marines. We have no information that the incestuous relationship continued beyond that point. However, Dorothy has related to friends how, around the time of her engagement, Herbert told her that her marriage need not put an end to their own special relationship.

Shortly after Vern's discharge from the military, Herbert was able to provide him with employment within his growing organization. Although Dorothy drifted away from her father's church by around 1951, Vern continued his association. He was the organization's business manager before the Albert Portune era

Note: commenting on the above material, Mr William Dankenbring relates: A friend of mine, when he learned of these allegations years ago, went directly to Mr. Vern Mattson, who had married Herbert Armstrong's younger daughter. He was a golfing buddy and friend of Mattson, so he asked him point-blank if the accusations and rumours were true. Mr. Mattson sadly informed him that they indeed were factual. In fact, when Mr. Mattson himself learned of the truth of Herbert having had sex with the woman who later became Mattson's wife, he was furious, and in a rage took a pistol, and burst into Herbert Armstrong's private office, waving the pistol around. Herbert, shaking like a leaf, apologized profusely and promised to never do such a thing again.

Accounts, such as the preceding one have been uncritically accepted by many. Let us look at these more critically.

First the ultimate source is John Trechak through his Ambassador Report. I would not trust John Trechak for he could easily be a plant by mainstream Christendom to discredit the remarkably successful Mr Herbert Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God. And what better way to discredit a church and its leader than to accuse him of the vilest of sexual misconduct, which although difficult to prove is also difficult to disprove.

Although John Trechak was the ultimate source, he allegedly obtained the accusation through a chain of five people. The first being Mr William F. Dankenbring, who allegedly obtained it from an unnamed friend, who also happened to be a golf buddy of Dorothy's husband Vern Mattson. This unnamed friend of Mr Dankenbring, obtained the information from Vern Mattson, who in turn allegedly got it from his wife Dorothy. There are five people between the alleged incest and gullible readers of John Trechak's Ambassador Report – Dorothy, her husband, his unnamed golf buddy, Dankenbring and Trechak. Not exactly an inspiring chain of witnesses!

Returning to that chain of five doubtful witnesses, let us remember that no court of law should allow hearsay evidence. Here we are asked to accept even fifth-hand hearsay evidence! This is worse than gossip conducted over the back fence to destroy someone's reputation. No one called by God should be persuaded by such shoddy evidence.

It gets worse on closer inspection.

God's Word requires us to test the witness and his testimony. Which of these witnesses can we test? Trechak is dead and I suspect he was a plant by mainstream Christendom. Also I place a huge question mark next to the name Mr Dankenbring. We have no idea who is Mr Dankenbring's unnamed friend and Vern's golf buddy, but that he was a friend of Mr Dankenbring does not inspire confidence.

We are told that when Vern Mattson learnt about the incest he stormed into Mr Armstrong's office threatening him with a pistol and that Mr Armstrong confessed. What is the worth of a confession obtained under such circumstances? How would we react when a maddened gunman accuses us?

Yet Ambassador Report also claims this aggrieved son-in-law continued in Mr Armstrong's employ and even after his wife Dorothy left her father's church in 1951. We are not talking about staying in an otherwise convenient business relationship but about staying in a fundamentalist church founded on the teachings of his

allegedly incestuous father-in-law. Surely it should be anathema to Vern Mattson to remain employed by allegedly so vile a man and minister of religion. How could he possibly see Mr Armstrong as God's servant if he still believed in his wife's incest allegations? Incest which Dorothy claims continued during her courtship with her husband. If Vern continued believing his wife's accusations but remained employed by what he saw was a despicable church leader, then what does this tell us about Vern Mattson's morals?

One explanation could be that Vern Mattson no longer believed his wife's accusation! Perhaps he had seen inconsistencies in Dorothy's story and perhaps he had come to know Mr Armstrong better. It would not be the first time the true nature of a spouse is seen only years into a marriage.

Of course this is speculation but we deserve an answer to the question, *Why did Vern Mattson continue to work for Mr Armstrong after his wife left her father's church?* The only reasonable answer seems to be that Dorothy's accusations no longer held much sway with her husband. He certainly no longer waved a gun under Mr Armstrong's nose but instead worked to promote Mr Armstrong's life's work

Again we find after carefully considering this Ambassador Report that there remains more than a reasonable doubt over Mr Herbert Armstrong's alleged guilt and quite a bit of doubt about Dorothy.

## **7.0 WHY DID MR ARMSTRONG NOT SUE?**

Why did Mr Armstrong not sue his 1980's accusers? Such accusations, even when false, are not easily disproved. Fathers are readily judged guilty by the world on the say so of a disaffected daughter. Such cases, even if later disproved, causes irreparable damage to the father's reputation. Suing would also have brought the work to a halt because it would have taken most of Mr Armstrong's time and even for several years. Besides which father would feel comfortable suing others, when this would inevitably lead to his children being dragged through the courts? In the end there would be no winners but only losers, including the work of God on which he should be concentrating. That Mr Armstrong did not sue his accusers is no admission of guilt.

## **8.0 MR ARMSTRONG UNDER ATTACK BY HIS FAMILY AND CHRISTENDOM**

Let us also remember that these accusations surfaced only after the 1967 death of Mrs Loma Armstrong. Further that Garner Ted's ambitions became evident after his mother's death. Mrs Loma Armstrong's agonising death would have been seen by many the result of a misguided zeal for Mr Armstrong's healing doctrine. This may well have caused resentment with both Dorothy and Garner Ted; and may have shaped their attitude towards their father and 'his' religion. They may have overlooked that their mother chose to adhere to the healing doctrine. Besides I reject that Garner Ted and Dorothy were converted.

I would like to know what motivated Dorothy to make her allegations only decades later? If incest did take place between her age 13 to 23, why did she allow it to continue beyond age 16 and even till age 23 when she married? At age 18 she must have known it was immoral and even adultery against her mother and should and could have stopped it. Yet if the allegations are true, she continued even till age 23. Her story just does not add up!

We must remember that Mr Armstrong incurred the wrath of mainstream Christendom for his outspoken denunciation of their mainly pagan non-biblical doctrines. He openly denounced as pagan their Sunday, Good Friday, Easter and Christmas observances. Likewise he rejected most of their doctrines, including their Heaven and Hell eschatology, Trinity, their infant baptism. In addition he had a powerful prophetic message that identified as Israelite the Anglo-Saxon and certain other nations. Compared to this mainstream Christendom's message lacked substance and relevance in especially the Cold War era. No wonder Mr Armstrong was despised by mainstream Christendom. I think it no accident that men like the late John Trechak arose who published Ambassador Report which was not only critical of but quite condemnatory of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and his teaching.

Reading condemnations of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong, like the book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* raises a number of questions about the authors, including whether they were ever truly converted to Mr Armstrong's teaching. I recall one of his critics referring to the biblical holy days and festivals as '*feasts of the Jews*' which must cause us to question his conversion. We should thoroughly test Mr Armstrong's accusers before we take notice of their accusations.

Finally let us look at Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's message and work. I can read with understanding God's Word only because I was drawn by God to study Mr Armstrong's literature. It was not David Robinson or Garner Ted or Dorothy Armstrong or Fred Coulter or Gerald Flurry who opened my understanding to God's Word. Let us remember that Mr Herbert W. Armstrong was for all of us our gateway to God's Truth.

It is plain to me that only Mr Armstrong and no one else was God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant. I don't believe that the person who gave us so much enlightening literature could have committed incest with his daughter. My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* shows how I see three major but related doctrinal errors in Mr Armstrong's teaching but I do not believe he committed those acts or that he was a deliberately false prophet as some now claim. Instead I believe that to discredit Mr Armstrong's teaching, Satan snared a number of men and women in both his family and in the Worldwide Church of God. Satan appears to have largely succeeded but that is a test God allows to be applied to His church. As each issue of *The Journal* shows the churches of God are failing this test in large measure.

## 9.0 EVIDENCE FROM OTHER SOURCES

The following quotes from Mr Robert J. Thiel's article "*15 Accusations and Truthful Responses about Herbert W. Armstrong*" (URL reference see Section 11.0) should convince the reader that there exists more than a reasonable doubt and that no jury should find Mr Armstrong guilty of those vile incest allegations. Robert Thiel's list of fifteen accusations levelled against Mr Armstrong range from his adopting his second initial 'W' without having a second name to that he drank too much. The reader is urged to access Mr Robert Thiel's Internet based article (e.g. through his public library's Internet service) to judge for himself the puerile nature of those accusations. The following quotations are from Mr Robert Thiel's article concerning the incest allegations.

### (START QUOTATIONS FROM ROBERT THIEL'S "15-ACCUSATIONS..." ARTICLE)

"Gross impropriety Accusation No. 4: HWA was guilty of gross sexual impropriety.

"I investigated four allegations related to this specific accusation and concluded that unless certain alleged audiotapes (which have never been made public, and I requested them and even spoke to one who had claimed to hear them--he finally admitted to me that he actually had not) surface (and I made diligent inquiry to attempt to find them, including dozens of phone calls, plus E-mails through late February 2003, and even later after this article was originally published), the accusations are not provable and aspects of the accusations are indeed disprovable.

"Perhaps I should mention that since one aspect of these accusations is commonly attributed to a comment supposedly made by HWA's son Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) concerning his dad and another relative. I personally called Garner Ted Armstrong's office on Dec. 12, 2002 to inquire about this particular accusation. I was not able to speak with GTA directly, but a key employee of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association discussed it with him and got back with me. Through his spokesperson, GTA declined to comment except to pass on the message that "everything you really need to know about my father is contained within the autobiography." Thus GTA did not stand by a statement attributed to him on this matter--so how can any believe this?

"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 HWA 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."

"J. Tkach's most serious charge Accusation 15: HWA ran a cult

"If the Joseph Tkach WCG had real reason to know that Mr. Armstrong was guilty of any of the 14 previous accusations, it is logical that it would have mentioned them or perhaps included them in his book *Transformed by Truth*. The truth is that the only accusations above

that are directly mentioned in the book (or official WCG sources) are those regarding prophecies. Yes, J. Tkach states that HWA was wrong doctrinally and prophetically, but perhaps the roughest comment alluded to be against HWA in *Transformed by Truth* was suggesting HWA taught 'cultism': 'As successor to WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong, Tkach boldly led the Pasadena, California-based church from cultism into Christianity.' ..."  
**(END QUOTATIONS FROM ROBERT THIEL'S "15-ACCUSATIONS..." ARTICLE)**

Let us remember that the late Garner Ted Armstrong's office in 2003 declined to support Garner Ted Armstrong's 1970s accusations. Now why would that be? Also interesting is that Joseph W. Tkach and his transformed Worldwide Church of God apart from denying Mr Armstrong's teaching and charging him with teaching cultism did not even allude to the incest accusations. Yet the late Mr Tkach knew the principal accusers and must have had access to the Worldwide Church of God's legal department's files. There are plenty of accusations that have come to us even fifth hand but we fail to find substance to those accusations. So why did so many judge God's servant the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong?

## 10.0 LESSER ACCUSATIONS

Apart from the incest accusations Mr Herbert W. Armstrong was also accused of plagiarism, extravagantly spending church funds and autocratically standing over those who dared question aspects of his doctrine or his administration. When judging him on these lesser accusations we should remember that Mr Armstrong saw himself as God's messenger to God's church and even God's end-time Elijah and so effectively infallible and answerable only to God; and certainly not answerable to this world's mores like plagiarism.

My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (See section 11.0) shows Mr Herbert W. Armstrong did not lead God's church era of Philadelphia but instead led from 1934 God's church era of Laodicea, whose Greek name suggests a lording it over the people and that indeed characterized Mr Armstrong's ministry. That paper also shows that Mr Armstrong and his ministry were lukewarm to a pivotal doctrine of God's Plan, and that this led to his being spewed from our Lord's mouth during 1978/79. Laodicea is an era in which we must expect a lording over the people, as indeed Mr Armstrong's ministry did. It was not the era of Philadelphia which should be noted for its brotherly love. That Mr Armstrong's era lacked brotherly love can be seen from his ministry having become utterly divided and in open conflict.

I do not see all this absolving Mr Armstrong of those lesser accusations, for with the benefit of hindsight these actions caused great damage to the work in the long run. In the light of Revelation 3:14-21, Laodicea and its characteristics were part of God's Plan for our day. Since 1974 and especially during the 1990s we witnessed prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes but we were unaware of this because we mistakenly believed we were in Philadelphia.

Let us begin with the lesser charge of plagiarism. This concerns especially Mr Armstrong's most successful book *The United States and Britain In Prophecy*. Much of this book is based on the Rev. J. H. Allen's book *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*. Mr Armstrong apparently saw the truth contained in this book as God's truth and therefore freely available, but may have decided to rewrite it to avoid its at times mainstream theology. Mr Armstrong would not have seen this as plagiarism but as utilising truth gathered by a man God had raised for this purpose. Parallels being the life works of James H. Strong, W. Gesenius, Dr Ethelbert W. Bullinger, G. G. Rupert, and J. H. Thayer. Those that charged Mr Herbert W. Armstrong with the 'crime' of plagiarism were primarily motivated with destroying his reputation.

Many have also condemned Mr Armstrong's extravagant spending of church funds. For example, hiring the Vienna Symphony Orchestra for the opening of the Pasadena auditorium. We must see these actions in terms of his personal philosophy, which he acquired as a successful businessman, that to meet the best people one should travel first class, stay in first class hotels, wear expensive clothes and not be seen skimping on expenses. Obviously there were less expensive ways of opening the auditorium but for Mr Armstrong only the best could serve God's work. No doubt he expected even the poorest church members, whose tithes and offerings helped pay for all this, to be equally enthusiastic. We should not be surprised that many, after witnessing the events of the 1990s and hearing of the many accusations against Mr Armstrong, then turned against him: after all Satan intends to snare God's elect.



Mr Armstrong is also accused of having been tough and autocratic to the point of arrogance. That may be true but he did publish the Plain Truth around the world in seven languages and gave away gratis huge amounts of church literature. I wonder how many of us would have managed to publish even a couple of photocopied pages locally with monthly articles that would be eagerly sought after by the public? Mr Armstrong managed a huge publishing and broadcasting enterprise, three university-style colleges, a large church organization with an annual turn over of hundreds of millions dollars. How many entrepreneurs running such an enterprise are noted for their kindness, tolerance and leniency? After all does not God foretell He will rule the world with a rod of iron? Today we witness in *The Journal* monthly an avalanche of conflicting doctrinal ideas. I suspect these already existed during Mr Armstrong's life time but how could he have coped with this had he agreed to consider every whim of doctrine?

Before we condemn Mr Armstrong of the many lesser wrongs he has been accused of, we must remember to consider these from his point of view and also that it is easy to judge things with perfect hindsight. He accomplished a huge work but he did make errors; as have all of God's human servants. King David made many errors and committed some of the worst sins on record. But this king's redeeming feature was that he repented of his sins once he became aware of them. The thesis of my paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (See section 11.0) is to point to a major sin committed in God's church during 1974 and to call the ministry to lead us to repentance rather than remain in conflict with one another. So far this has not happened and so far the church continues to splinter and diminish. Our focus should be on that rather than on condemning God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant, the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong.

## 11.0 REFERENCES

The following are the principal references mentioned in this paper:

- *Mr Armstrong's Autobiography* (available from several sources on Internet),
- *How Are The Mighty Fallen!*, by Mr Dankenbring & John D. Keyser available on Internet at <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/mityfall.htm> ,
- *John Trechak's Ambassador's Report of April 1984*
- *Robert Thiele's 15 Accusations* (available on Internet at <http://www.cogwriter.com/hwaacc.htm> )
- *Laodicea's Lamp!* (Paper P1 at my home page [www.rightly-dividing.net](http://www.rightly-dividing.net) )
- *The Garden of Eden Marriage Law* (Paper P3 at my home page [www.rightly-dividing.net](http://www.rightly-dividing.net) )

## 12.0 IN CONCLUSION

The incest and rape allegations have been critically examined and shown to lack substance to such an extent that we must consider them puerile and scurrilous. In particular it was shown that the incest allegations do not fit Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's 1930s circumstances. It was shown that the allegations came from people who had remained carnal in spirit and unconverted despite several being ordained ministers. Only those called by God the Father to His Church and who properly responded to His call and who continued to grow in grace and knowledge may be considered as truly converted to God's Way: and only they will show proper fruits which we may test (Mat 7:15-20). They will recognize that the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and no other man was called by God the Father to be His servant to His 20<sup>th</sup>-century Church of God. We must test Mr Armstrong's accusers and reject those who disrespected and ridiculed God's 20<sup>th</sup>-century servant and who even denied God's Word. All of Mr Armstrong's accusers display unsatisfactory fruits. We must test the witnesses, their testimony and their motivation before we judge. Many failed to do this and carelessly related the 1990s demise of the Worldwide Church of God with Mr Armstrong's alleged sins. My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (See section 11.0 ) reveals there is an entirely different explanation for the events that overtook the former Worldwide Church of God. That these events are prophecy fulfilled before our eyes but which were not seen because our focus was not on God's Word but on what our blinded guides told us. We failed to prove all things (1 Thes 5:21) and as *Laodicea's Lamp!* shows this we failed from as far back as 1974, when the real problems began!

—oOo—