

WHAT? COLL/PT. DESTROYED AFTER !!

Patriarch Puts Confidante in Ousted Son's Shoes To Be Crown Prince of Worldwide Church of God

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PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Four months after the ouster of TV evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong, the troubled Worldwide Church of God has a new crown prince — a formerly Jewish lawyer-accountant who could inherit the rich religious empire of Armstrong's father.

Stanley Rader, smooth-talking adviser to ailing 86-year-old church patriarch Herbert Armstrong, has emerged as victor in an apparent power struggle that pitted father against son, with Rader in the middle.

The upshot was Garner Ted's "disfellowship" last June. Rader compares the father-son schism of Herbert and Garner Ted to the biblical story of David and Absalom:

"The son wanted to destroy everything the father had built."

Now, the mustachioed 48-year-old Rader occupies Garner Ted's former office, with its views of snowcapped mountains and the church's Ambassador College complex. He travels the world with Herbert and, by his own account, has taken Garner Ted's place in his father's heart.

"Mr. Armstrong has said publicly very often that I am a son in whom he is well pleased," says Rader. "The only other one he ever said that about was Ted Armstrong."

Rader, a convert, gave up a lucrative law practice in his rise to become general counsel and treasurer of the 75,000-member church.

In a four-hour interview, he lifted the secrecy surrounding the church, speaking of Garner Ted's alleged transgressions, his own conversion, the church's wealth and his role in its future.

He wore a pure white suit and dark glasses. There was only one question he declined to

answer — the exact amount of his salary.

"My salary was always a little more than Ted Armstrong's," Rader says. It is known that the son received \$85,000 a year plus such perquisites as private planes and trips abroad.

The Worldwide Church's lavish spending on its leaders has been a sore point with its ministers and members. Some have quit in protest.

"We're quite wealthy," Rader says. Last year, the fundamentalist sect grossed \$68 million; this year it will be closer to \$78 million.

Yet, the church spends more than it gets — last year \$1.2 million more — but Rader insists it goes to the church's prime mission, to spread the word of a second coming of Christ.

Most money comes in tithes from members and "co-workers," non-members who contribute, as chess star Bobby Fischer did.

Outsiders are often shocked by the level of tithing — 10 percent of a member's yearly income for the church, 10 percent for religious festivals and another 10th every third year for the church's poor.

"Members can join the church without giving any money," says Rader. "But they are taught scripturally it would be a sin not to tithe. It would be stealing from God."

"What we generally find," he adds, "is that when they stop giving they stop believing."

Rader met Herbert Armstrong in 1956 when he came to California from White Plains, N.Y., as a young lawyer and began handling church legal matters. But he did not become a church member for nearly 20 years.

"My background was Jewish, but I was not in any religion," Rader says. "It wasn't some-

thing I thought about much."

By the middle 1960s he had become close with Armstrong, he recalls. "Mr. Armstrong asked me to give up all my commitments and devote my talent, energy and time to him. In 1969 I said yes."

At that time Garner Ted was the church's star, a radio and TV evangelist who drew millions in contributions. He was handsome, silken-voiced and the same age as Stanley Rader.

Two years later, there were murmurings of adultery and gambling involving Garner Ted. Rader says Herbert secretly cast his son out of the church in 1971 but then allowed him to return.

The "problems" never went away, however, and by this year excommunication was the only solution, Rader says. "We have never admitted the adultery allegation that was widespread. But his condition was contrary to the requirements of a minister."

Worse, Rader says, when Herbert suffered a heart attack in 1977, Garner Ted tried to seize control by saying his father was senile and dying. "I think he believed his father was so sick and so weak he would never return to an active role," says Rader.

"Where Ted made his crucial mistake," he says, "was he tried to run me down in the eyes of his father and that tripped his hand."

Now, Rader is in the church, baptized "in a bathtub at the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong" while on a world tour. And Garner Ted is gone, seeking converts for his own Church of God International and, he says, glad to be out of his father's "fear-ridden organization."

"Mr. Rader is very clearly the victor in what was a power struggle," Garner Ted says. "He moved into my office, into my desk; his secretary sits where mine sat."

On Rader's desk is a portrait of the grandfatherly Herbert Armstrong with the inscription: "I was shooting the moon on you."

Many — including Garner Ted — think Herbert eventually will tap Rader as his successor, but Rader shrugs this off. "I

don't feel that is my calling. I don't want to be a minister," Rader says, then adds: "Of course, several letters have come in recently telling me that Christ was not a minister. He was a carpenter."

Although Rader leaves the impression that a divine sum-

mons might change his mind, he insists he only wants to be the chief lieutenant. He is sure any new church leader would want him as right-hand man.

"Let me put it this way," he says. "There are no bodies buried. But if there were, I would know where they are buried."



NEW CROWN PRINCE — Stanley Rader, general counsel and treasurer of the 75,000 member Worldwide Church of God, is shown standing in front of a fountain at the Ambassador College in Pasadena, Calif. with the college administration building in the background recently. Rader, 48, formerly Jewish lawyer-accountant, could inherit the rich religious empire of Herbert Armstrong. (AP Laserphoto)