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Utopian Campus ---a Preview of Wonderful Era

Pasadena's Ambassador College Prepares Sect for Divine Government

BY KENNETH REICH
Times Staff Writer

For sheer opulence, the campus of Ambassador College in Pasadena has few equals in Southern California.

Cheerful, clean-cut boys and girls move in a businesslike manner from one sparkling new building to another. Many of the living quarters are in glamorous old mansions. Splendid fountains and an artificial stream complement well-kept gardens. When there is no smog, there is a fine view of downtown Pasadena and the mountains beyond.

Ambassador College is also distinctive in other ways.

The dormitories are always kept locked; each of the 550 resident students has his or her own key. Student body officers are appointed by the administration, not elected. Smoking and necking are banned. Girls' skirts are expected to come down to their knees; boys are expected to wear their hair short.

Visitors Questioned

Security patrols roam the campus at night and visitors are asked questions when unaccompanied during the daytime.

In keeping with a freely-expressed desire to keep many aspects of the college's life out of the limelight, the student newspaper, the Portfolio, put out weekly by a journalism class, carries this message in a box on Page 2:

"Portfolio is a limited circulation publication. It is for the student bodies of Ambassador College. It is not to be sent home to friends and relatives."

The college, now in its 22nd year, is in the process of applying for formal accreditation.

Its administrators say their aim is to provide what they see as a "Missing Dimension" in today's higher education. Thus there is heavy emphasis on instruction on the activity of marriage, right and healthy dating, the laws that make for a happy and enduring marriage, child rearing and discipline and the responsibilities of happy family life.

"Just as important in this Missing Dimension," says an explanatory

booklet, "is personality development, character building, a right knowledge of spiritual and moral values and respect for law and authority."

Apocalyptic Movement

More a self-contained, utopian-oriented society than just a school, Ambassador College's Pasadena campus and other campuses in Texas and England are among the outward signs of an apocalyptic religious movement which is fast growing into a worldwide institution.

Many Southern Californians have never heard of Ambassador College, the Church of God, or its leaders, Herbert W. Armstrong, 77, and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, 39.

But the views held by them are disseminated throughout the world in these ways:

—The World Tomorrow radio and television programs, appearing at least weekly, and on many radio stations daily. The outlets include 229 radio stations in this country, approximately 100 abroad and 38 television channels in the United States and Canada.

The programs, broadcast from ultra-modern radio and television studios on the college's Pasadena campus, are a mixture of off-the-cuff news commentary and preaching by Garner Ted Armstrong and occasional interviews with others. They absorb most of the \$115,900-a-week advertising budget.

—The Ambassador College Press, which prints four-color booklets and two magazines from a main printing plant in Pasadena and other plants in England and Australia.

The major publication is The Plain Truth, a 48-page monthly magazine put out in English, French, German, Spanish and Dutch editions. Founded in 1934, it now has in excess of 2 million circulation, up nearly a million in the last three years.

In recent years, The Plain Truth, which is sent to subscribers free of charge and carries no advertising, has become secularized. Last spring, a religiously oriented magazine, Tomorrow's World, was introduced.

Divorce Scare

The Plain Truth's November issue was representative of the magazine's present content, carrying articles analyzing (negatively) the Vietnam moratorium, disputing the theory of evolution, pointing to the "alarming decline" of the American merchant fleet, discussing the current furore over sex education, analyzing the meaning of Thanksgiving and asserting that the threat of famine in the world was greater than many would like to believe.

—Advertising in such magazines as Life, TV Guide and the Reader's Digest, a recent Plain Truth advertisement in Life showed rice being tossed at happy, good-looking newlyweds. The headline on the ad asked, "Will it end in divorce?"

"Their chances are one in three!" the ad continued. "But WHY? What has changed? Few know! . . . There

are LAWS that produce HAPPY marriages, but the chances are about 100 to 1 YOU don't know what they are! But YOU can know! . . .

\$32 Million Budget

"We offer, FREE, with an already-paid three months' trial subscription to The PLAIN TRUTH, this eye-opening, attractive, full-color, illustrated booklet. It will bring you the true perspective of the modern MARRIAGE CRISIS! Offered, gratis, as an educational public service. We have nothing to sell—nothing for you to join."

And that is true. People who have tried to send in \$3, \$4 or \$5 to pay for their subscription to The Plain Truth have had the money sent back. Even at Ambassador College—where the Armstrongs' theories are brought into practice—the tuition and other charges do not come close to covering the costs of students' education.

In an interview, Garner Ted Armstrong placed the budget for all operations—radio, television, magazines, booklets, the college, church administration—in this fiscal year at between \$32 and \$33 million.

He said that approximately 70% of the funds come from the tithing of the 50,000 members of the Church of God, which has about 170 widely scattered churches and 360 ordained ministers—mostly trained at the colleges. (There are several other religious denominations that go under the same name, but have no connection with the Armstrongs.)

Armstrong said the other 30% of the funds come from contributions, especially from "co-workers," which is a classification of persons who are not church members but may be on the way to becoming ones and in the meantime are helping out on a more-or-less regular basis.

Although no contributions are solicited on the radio and television broadcasts, they are accepted when freely offered, Armstrong said. Gifts also are accepted from magazine subscribers as long as they make clear they are contributions, not payments for their subscriptions.

At one time, it was touch-and-go as far as financing was concerned, but recently income has been more than adequate.

Present and expected levels of income have been sufficient to enable the borrowing of money from banks for college expansion and to encourage editors of The Plain Truth to lay plans for expanding their circulation to as high as 4 million. New presses are being installed in Pasadena and a \$22 million building expansion is being completed at the college.

Although the college is said to be non-denominational, the Armstrongs' religious beliefs as represented in the Church of God are a key to understanding not only the philosophical underpinnings of the institution but also many of the specific rules governing school operation and student conduct.

The central belief is that within 20 years mankind's problems will

prove to be insurmountable. In the midst of an atomic war, Christ will return to Jerusalem and establish a divine government in which man will have no part and to which he will be completely subject.

This is set forth in a 96-page booklet entitled "The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like," which is distributed to those who request it.

"Now notice just how the new World Government will function!" the booklet says at one point.

Not Democracy

"It will not be so-called Democracy. It will not be 'Socialism.' It will not be Communism or Nazism. It will not be human Monarchy, Oligarchy, or Plutocracy. It will not be Man's government over man. Man has proven his utter incapacity of ruling himself."

"It will be DIVINE Government—the Government of God. It will not be government from the bottom up. The people will have no votes. It will not be government of or by the people—but it will be government FOR the people! It will be government from the TOP (God Almighty) down! . . .

"No HUMAN will be given any government office. ALL in government service will then be divine spirit beings, in the Kingdom of GOD!

"All officials will be APPOINTED—and by the divine Christ . . ."

The point is hammered home later in the booklet that "Man won't acknowledge it yet, but man has demonstrated by 6,000 years of inefficient, bungling, wasteful, efforts of HUMAN government that mortal man is utterly INCAPABLE of rightly governing himself!"

Many Booklets

The booklets on such subjects as pollution, hippies, crime and famine which the Ambassador College Press also distributes frequently contain incisive analyses of current problems, but they wind up with similar general statements—such as this one in the booklet, "Hippies, Hypocrisy and Happiness":

(OVER)

"What, then, IS the answer? What IS the solution to this world's many-faceted, multi-hued problems?"

"IS there an answer—short of nuclear war and blasting all life off the face of the planet earth? Do YOU KNOW of any possible answer? Well, believe it or not, this world is going to be set straight and made right in less than 20 years from now!

"Sound impossible, ridiculous? WELL, IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN — and if you're alive then, you'll live to see it with your own two eyes!

"There WILL soon be peace in our generation. There will be worldwide peace — no more war, fighting, bloodshed, revolts, revolutions, or violence. There will be unpolluted waters, lands, and fresh air everywhere to breathe—no more septic rivers, polluted lakes, contaminated air, smog and filth.

Day at Hand

"That day is soon coming. NOTHING can stop it!"

By their varying and often independent stands on contemporary issues, the Armstrongs cannot easily be assigned a place on the political spectrum from left to right.

On the racial question, for example, they have come to occupy a moderate, even in some respects liberal, position. Although they agree in some respects with the movement known as Anglo-Israelism, that the British and American peoples are descended from the lost tribes of Israel, they have dissociated themselves from parts of that movement which have seemed to be against present-day Jews.

But the Armstrongs' religious fundamentalism and authoritarianism attract many adherents of the right and have placed them in a position of rivalry with certain conservative or right-wing groups.

Fatalistic View

Their movement is sometimes accused by such groups of draining the strength of the anti-Communist movement by its fatalistic view of events.

To the argument that the Church of God teaches resignation and defeatism by saying there is nothing man can do until God intervenes, Garner Ted Armstrong replies:

"We don't teach withdrawal. We're not on Cloud Nine. We're telling (our followers) to get involved, find where God is, find what the situation is . . . We're not waiting with a bottle of orange juice and a sack of grapes for Christ to arrive. We urge people to lead a righteous, moral, pure life."

At the same time, he went on to reiterate that "overall, it's not likely" that contemporary problems can be solved by human efforts.

On a recent radio broadcast, the younger Armstrong declared that "insistent right teaching" was necessary in today's complex world.

"We feel we know the true values of living based on biblical concepts," he said later. "Take a 19-year-old. How much is his experience in life. How much does he know about dating and sex?"

"We're saying over and over again: 'Keep the Ten Commandments. Abide by the law. Don't commit adultery . . .'"

Insistent right teaching could be taken as the keynote of Ambassador College and the elementary and high schools the Armstrongs operate adjacent to it.

Several visits to the college, attendance at classes and conversations with faculty members and students indicated there is a general enthusiasm for learning and ready acceptance of the strict discipline.

Classes are conducted with spirit. Study areas and sleeping rooms in the dormitories are attractive if somewhat austere in furnishing and decoration. The food in the student center cafeteria is good. There is a highly spirited intramural athletic program making use of splendid athletic facilities, including a huge swimming pool and new gymnasium.

In October, visiting professors from the Western Assn. of Schools and Colleges—the accrediting

body—recommended that more Ph.D.s be added to the faculty and that the library be expanded.

Larger Library

The college is moving ahead in accord with both suggestions. Under the new head librarian, Dr. Marion B. Grady, formerly of Ball State University in Indiana, the library is being increased in size from 40,000 to 120,000 volumes.

Nearly all Ambassador students help pay off the approximate \$1,800 annual cost of their education by taking part-time jobs on the campus and according to Garner Ted Armstrong most graduates later make their careers within the college, the college's press or the Church of God.

He said he expected this to change in future years, because there won't be enough new positions available for graduates.

Still, the most unusual aspect of Ambassador College is the discipline. It is one of the few colleges in the nation where assigned dormitory monitors are required to make regular behavior reports on the students.

With a few exceptions, students seemed in interviews reluctant to go into such specifics about college life, confining themselves to describing Ambassador as "an isle of happiness" or the like.

College officials also refused requests to see a copy of the student handbook which lists rules for student conduct.

Rules Handbook

Garner Ted Armstrong explained that the handbook contains such rules as the one against necking, telling students that the first violation would bring a stern warning and the second expulsion.

Armstrong said he did not feel that "everything we do in private should be disseminated to the public" and, as regards the necking rule, he said at one point:

"I don't think the average person is going to understand it . . . We have been a little sensitive. We don't want to be made fun of."

Asked why student body officers were appointed rather than elected, Arm-

strong said, "Basically, it had its origin in theological concepts of government from the top down.

"We do not believe on that level that we can maintain rapport between faculty and students if we turn it over to the student body," he added.

Armstrong's father, Herbert, who is founder and head of the Church of God, the college and all other operations, warned students at last spring's commencement exercises that protests such as have rocked many other campuses would not be tolerated at Ambassador.

The older Armstrong, whose early career was in advertising, was in Europe while this article was being researched and could not be interviewed, but Garner Ted Armstrong made it clear that students are expelled without hesitation when disciplinary violations are considered serious enough.

Richard F. Plache, the Dean of Students, said that between seven and eight of every 10 students who enter Ambassador College as freshmen graduate. He said only a few do not take to the discipline.

The admissions procedure is rigorous, with only about one in every six or seven applicants accepted. Plache said that only two of the 180 entering freshmen this fall have dropped out—one girl because she did not like the school, the other because she was homesick.

Many of Ambassador's students come from the Midwest and South and there are quite a few from abroad. At present, there are several married students. The 150 married couples do not live on the campus, while residence is normally required for unmarried students. Armstrong said that until 1955 or 1956 there were no Negro students.

Social Activities

A comprehensive schedule of social activities is provided the student body, and while students are free to leave the campus, the college catalog suggests an annual entertainment expense per student of only \$20.

Among the Armstrongs' proudest statements about Ambassador College is that of the many hundreds of graduates only one has ever been divorced.

The booklet, "This Ambassador College," after describing the school's physical plant, goes on to say:

"Even more impressive are the students themselves. They appear to be actually happy! They radiate. They are animated. They give you a smiling, warm and cheery 'Hi!' And, if you have visited other campuses, you are surprised by the noticeable absence of hippie-type students.

"No student or faculty revolt, no protest marches, no riots or violence. These students give evidence of having a purpose, and knowing where they are going."