

Reports About Garner Ted False

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TUCSON — March 3: last week newspapers in Los Angeles, Calif., Pasadena, Tyler, Tex., and, I understand, other parts of the country, carried stories speculating on the return of my son, Garner Ted Armstrong, to the Church.

Some of the media coupled this speculation with the resignation of Mr. Stanley R. Rader from his executive responsibilities as treasurer of this Church.

Let me say emphatically, this is merely newspaper speculation, and totally unfounded. My son denied it, and I deny it. A coincidence was used by the press to raise the question. Garner Ted was in Los Angeles at the same time Mr. Rader was resigning. I knew nothing of his presence in the Los Angeles area until I read it in newspapers. I was also in Pasadena very briefly to address a congress of leading ministers and foreign office managers, worldwide, convening in Pasadena. But there was no connection whatsoever.

Let me speak frankly and candidly.

Would I like to have my son back? Did the father of the prodigal son rejoice exceedingly when his son returned repentant? Ted did not go out under the same conditions. He did not take his share of property (which I didn't own) and spend it on riotous living and drunkenness.

There have been many words about details of why my son was sent away ... But the real basic CAUSE lies in something my son was quoted as saying some time ago in a newspaper — to the effect that he had never agreed with his father. **Newspapers almost never quote one correctly. But it seems to me that this statement attributed to him is about true and explains basically it all.**

In my serious in-depth study of the Bible from the fall of 1926 to spring of 1927, I had been challenged and I was studying almost night and day to have my own way — TO PROVE THAT GOD IN THE BIBLE SAID WHAT I THEN BELIEVED HE SAID. But I had to see with my own eyes that God in the Bible said just the opposite of what I believed. I had to learn that I was WRONG—not only in what I believed but what I was. I learned I had NOT AGREED WITH GOD.

Two can't walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). I had to REPENT of what I was, what I had done (turn from it), and of what I had believed. I realized I had never AGREED WITH GOD. I was not until then walking with God. He opened my mind to UNDERSTAND His Word — what God says. Adam did not believe God. Multiple thousands heard Jesus preach, but only 120 believed what He said. Just about the most rare thing on earth is to BELIEVE GOD. To AGREE WITH GOD!

I PROVED the Bible was God's Word — God speaking in writing. I surrendered completely to Him. I decided with all my heart to GIVE myself to Him. Jesus Christ had bought and paid for me with His shed blood. I decided to GIVE myself to Him, and to WALK WITH HIM!

As we have walked along together, AGREED, I have stumbled and fallen down through weakness — not disagreement — a few times as in John 1:6-9 (which study again), when I confessed and repented, He reached down, forgave, picked me back up so I could continue walking with Him. But I had to AGREE with Him (His Word).

My son did not agree with me. And since I was agreeing with CHRIST and walking with Him, my son — whether he realized it or not — was disagreeing in many ways with Christ. We just could no longer walk together.

Time changes things — and sometimes changes us. I begin to realize now more than I did that he may have been really sincere in his disagreement with me as I was agreeing with Christ, in principle as well as specific word. But regardless of sincerity, he disagreed with much of the doctrine, both in principle and in detail.

He disagreed in regard to the Church and wrote a booklet, after starting his own work, in

disagreement on this important subject. True, he continued to believe in Christ, and in the Commandments, but in many general and basic areas he was in vital disagreement. He has said, as quoted in the press, that he preaches the same Gospel. He may believe that, but he is in vital and basic disagreement.

He disagreed with what Christ was doing through His chosen apostle, and in how it was being done. The basic doctrines of God's Church were being watered down. My son was being influenced and misled by scholars bent on secularizing Church doctrines to conform with the "Christianity" of this world as it is foretold in Revelation 17, especially the "daughter" churches.

During the years 1973 through 1976 and into 1977, I was overseas carrying Christ's Gospel (Revelation 10:11) into many nations, and through personal meetings and visits with many kings, emperors, presidents and prime ministers of nations — as well as other high officials in governments and in universities. I was away from Pasadena up to 300 of the 365 days in the year. I was leaving the day-to-day executive administration at Pasadena to my son as executive vice president. The Church was being turned upside down. It seemed to be a matter of going as far as possible in the ways and beliefs of this world's "Christianity" as influenced by Satan — which amounts to going as far as possible into Satan's ways and AWAY FROM GOD'S WAYS!

The HARM that was done as a result of this attitude to GOD'S CHURCH is INCALCULABLE! It harmed, in a way I think my son did not realize, thousands of members of the Church of the living GOD. It led to lukewarmness, a more careless attitude toward real or strict obedience to the ways of God. It led to wrong and false concepts on **points of doctrine**. I need not here go into detail.

The Work of God's Church started from NOTHING financially. But it started rich in TRUTH and in FAITH that was THE faith of Jesus Christ. It grew from smallest beginnings at the phenomenal rate of 30 percent a year on the average for 35 years — a record UNMATCHED in the annals of organizations, institutions or human operations that I know of. That is from 1934 to 1969.

When I finally turned the microphone for broadcasting over to my son I was able to say: "Into this mike you are speaking over more wattage of radio power worldwide than any other program on earth. It's all been built for you to use. I've gone out and actually SOLD this program to the station managers of superpower stations all over America and the world. You don't have to produce the money to pay for it. The Church and organization is built."

But when I had to take him off, and excommunicate him, in 1978, our program was the SMALLEST in the religious field. We had gone down to five-minute programs, and they were ineffective and had to be canceled.

When this Work has PLEASED GOD, He has prospered us and the Work has GROWN steadily. When the Work does not please God it DOES NOT GROW! From 1968 through 1978 THE CHURCH AND ITS WORK CEASED ITS GROWTH. Those were the years I was away proclaiming the Gospel in nations all over the earth (Revelation 10:11) and my son was in executive administrative charge at Pasadena. In those years the Work, especially in the United States, DID NOT GROW!

In many ways, I have been appalled at the HARM done to God's Church during those years!

The REAL enemy in this is not my son or any man — it is SATAN. I well know that many will rise up in indignation and say, "Satan can never deceive ME!" But Satan HAS deceived every human who ever lived, except Jesus Christ! He has deceived the greatest human minds that live today or ever did live! The root question is, can we allow GOD to open our minds to this?

I had to, 54 years ago. I was deceived by Satan. I believed I was right. I was sincere. God caused me to be PAINFULLY CHALLENGED! I had to come to see I was WRONG! It was a bitter pill to admit. A STRUGGLE went on inside me. I didn't want to admit I was wrong. It was a spiritual BATTLE. I lost that battle. Jesus Christ won! He "brought me to myself" and I surrendered.

I BELIEVED Christ, the living Word of God. Through human weakness I have not lived perfectly — I have stumbled and fallen down a few times as I have WALKED WITH CHRIST WITH WHOM I AM IN AGREEMENT! But I have repented of that, worked on myself to OVERCOME — cried out to

God for divine HELP in overcoming this weak human flesh. But I have WALKED WITH CHRIST BECAUSE I AM IN AGREEMENT WITH HIM!

Let me tell you of the FOUNDATION of this present era of God's Church (another point — this "era" my son has disagreed with). Let me tell you how YOU came to be in God's Church today.

My first "son" was a daughter. I was not disappointed — I felt I would have a son later. Our second child was another daughter. I was not disappointed in that, but when three doctors — one the most noted obstetrical physician in the world — told us we could never have another child, that, indeed, disappointed me. It meant I could never have a son. Every man, I think, wants a son. My wife and I were of opposite RH-blood-factor type. She almost died in bearing our second child.

But soon after my conversion, summer of 1927, God miraculously healed instantly my wife of several complications. She would have died in less than 24 hours. I had been converted, received God's Holy Spirit and His gift of FAITH only a few months before. My wife and I knew upon this miracle from God we could have a son!

The next year God gave me my long wanted son — 10 years after our first child! Born of a miracle! A GIFT FROM GOD! The happiest day of my life, I called it! About a year and four months later God gave me a second son, Garner Ted! More than two years later he was dumb — could not talk. When I knelt and prayed for him he was instantly healed of pneumonia, and his speech restored. By next day he was speaking in small sentences!

Both my sons became ordained ministers in God's Church. My eldest son Richard David (Dick) was the most loved minister in the Church — because, I think, he GAVE the most love toward all. In his 30th year he suffered multiple injuries, broken bones, internal injuries in a head-on automobile crash while "in harness" on a baptizing tour.

I prayed. I thought of Abraham having to be willing to sacrifice his only son. I had to face the question. Would I be willing? It was a SERIOUS monumental moment in my life. I told God that if that was His will, I would be willing. I didn't think God would require it. He did not in Abraham's case. But in mine, HE DID REQUIRE IT! Dick died one week after the crash!

I carried on, but in much prayer! I had one son left, now my only living son. Garner Ted was working into the broadcasting, and in due time became executive vice president of the Church and Work of the living GOD!

When, after being overseas most of the time for a number of years, I came to realize what was happening to the Work of the Church, I was appalled. It would be easier to lose a son in death, as in Dick's case, than to have to disfellowship him and send him away. Three times before I had felt compelled to do this — twice privately to protect his good name on a hoped-for and expected repentance, the third time openly in the presence of all Pasadena-based evangelist-ranked ministers. Each time I made the mistake of accepting remorse for repentance. I feel the remorse was real and sincere. But I myself had to learn just how deep repentance is! Remorse and godly sorrow only initiates or works toward repentance, which is permanent turning from!

A father naturally loves his son. I love mine, even as Abraham loved his son Isaac. But finally I had to love God's Church, God's Work, God's commission to me, more. I had gone through persecution ever since I surrendered to Christ! I had suffered the hideous nightmares of SATAN'S attacks and persecutions, and his temptations. I had faced the question of giving up my firstborn son and had been called upon to give him up!

Now I had to face the question of giving up, in a manner far more punishing than in death, my only living son. I was going to weaken. I had written a letter to him giving him one more chance. But in multitude of counselors there is safety, says God's Word. Other headquarters ministers in counsel said I had to consider God's PEOPLE, His Church, His Work, above the personal love of my son. Quickly I wrote a letter of disfellowshipment. I mentioned four reasons. They were four reasons of the minute, not the real basic underlying reason I am here setting forth. They were the final four incidental reasons — the final straws — that broke the camel's back.

I said above, my son did not go out taking his share of material goods, which his father did not have anyway. I have here tried to cover as clearly as possible the real underlying reason why he

was sent out. In all of that it was a different circumstance than Jesus' parable of the prodigal son.

But, if God does draw him to "come to himself" and see why he was not walking with his father, or with Christ as I walk with Him, and be brought, at last to a REAL repentance that is basic and PERMANENT, I would REJOICE as overwhelmingly and gratefully as the father of the prodigal son.

I have continued to pray earnestly, fervently from the heart for this EVERY DAY. I never let my eyes close on my pillow at bedtime without beseeching God in Jesus' blessed name for this every night. I have asked our membership to pray for this and I ask again now that you pray for him earnestly every day!

I think now my son may very well have been sincere in his own mind in not agreeing with his Father — and as his father was walking with Christ, I didn't realize at the time he might be really sincere in his own mind about his disagreement.

I thought, in 1972 when he was out of the Church and Work in Colorado, that Zechariah 3 might be prophetically speaking of him as Joshua the high priest, and wrote him a long letter expounding this. Could it be possible that is a correct application after all? Only God knows our minds and hearts.

But it is still true that two can't walk together except they be agreed. I am agreed with God and with Christ the Head of the Church. I shall never water down the TRUTH He has revealed to me, nor in any manner compromise with it. We are ALL OF US going to have to AGREE with God and with Christ HIS Son, if we are to walk together with them, into God's Kingdom.

Please pray for the Work! Please pray for — not against my son — that we may all WALK TOGETHER BY AGREEING WITH GOD AND WITH CHRIST! I know how hard it would be for my son to admit he has been wrong, to come to himself, to really and fully repent. But in no other way could he ever come back into the fellowship of God's Church and in NO OTHER WAY could he ever serve in it. God did bring me to such a change of attitude and belief and such repentance. Nothing is impossible with our GREAT GOD!

[emphasis added]