

ming back

many as the most likely to take over the church should the 88-year-old church founder die?

"I have already said I am resigning (church positions) as of July 1," Rader said, asserting he would remain active, but only in a sideline function.

Besides, he said, it has been "media speculation" that cast him in a role of engineering the ouster of the younger Armstrong, and it was the same media that manufactured a so-called breach between him and the son and between the son and father.

But Garner Ted Armstrong was incensed over claims that contact has been made with him.

"If anyone says I have been in contact, they're wrong," he said. "I haven't heard a whisper... The last time I saw my father was in 1978, and he has not answered any of my letters or phone calls since then. It is sort of a mystery to me."

Anyway, he said, "we are going along at a pretty good clip here."

His own organization, the Church of God, International, patterned after his father's church and observing the same traditions, has a membership of several thousand that supports his radio and television programs and is steadily growing.

But the younger Armstrong doesn't rule out the possibility of coming back. If conditions were right, he likes the idea.

"It would depend on how (he offer) were made and by whom," he said, making it clear he would not be the one to make overtures toward reconciliation. He's had enough of that, he said.

"The last time I wrote was in the spring of 1960 when my two sons were baptized, and I never received an answer," he said. "It will be the last."

His reaction was hardly that of one who has been offered a

quickly to rancorous recollections of mistreatment and unwarranted blame that he claims was heaped on him by his father and Rader.

"I haven't anything to repent of," the younger Armstrong said, still chafing at accusations by his father that he attempted to divert corporate mail. "My father has admitted to others that I never did that... but he has never (recanted). That tells you a whole lot."

"The repentance thing is a two-way street," Garner Ted said, claiming none of the charges in the letter of excommunication were true.

"If they think they're going to characterize me as Peck's bad boy, and have me dancing like a yo-yo, or think they can play with me (like a cat), they have another think coming," he said.

"There's been a lot of water over the dam," he said, recoiling at vilification before congregations and accusations in published church reports.

And there is more than just reconciliation involving him, he said. "I've got a tremendous commitment to thousands of lives in the Church of God International," he said.

Any reconciliation would have to include all those who have joined with him, and would require a change of name to recognize the total reconciliation.

Armstrong said he didn't know what to make of the speculation, considering it inappropriate to deal in "clandestine" overtures.

"If it is to be done," he said, "it should be done honestly and with good faith and good will."

"It could be that they are testing the waters in their own camp," he said, "to see what would be the reaction of the ultra right-wing camp."

But Rader should know his Bible better, Armstrong said.



TED ARMSTRONG

prodigal son has no application to him. The prodigal son was off wasting his father's fortune, Armstrong said.

"There is a vast difference between the prodigal son and Rader's statement on repentance. He (Herbert Armstrong) didn't give me anything. I haven't spent a dime of his money," he said.

"They have run over my body with a steam roller," he said. "They must not have a high regard for their own constituency to stir them up one way and rain a ton of propaganda of hate and then applaud for me to come back."

Nevertheless, Armstrong acknowledged it has been on his mind to someday return. "The members have always been my only concern," he said, admitting he has been in contact with some of the lay membership. "I know there is a significant percentage of the members who have never bought the propaganda the leadership have presented."

He questioned, however, whether there is anything to return to. "If it means returning to political infighting, and intrigue and fear and wrestling with an unmana-