

Personal from the Editor – Mr Herbert W Armstrong –

***Plain Truth* August 1966, on the Occasion of Mr & Mrs Armstrong's 49th Wedding Anniversary**

YESTERDAY, as I write, Mrs. Armstrong and I celebrated our forty-ninth wedding anniversary. There's nothing special about a forty-ninth anniversary, as such-except, as Mr. Gerald Waterhouse, PLAIN TRUTH regional Editor for The Philippines, might point out, it is seven periods of seven years each, and seven is a number denoting perfection and completeness.

There was something special planned for us, but I didn't know about it until too late. I spent a good share of the day planning a very special new booklet I hope to have printed soon, which is a new, considerably enlarged edition of The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy. We have mailed out more than a million copies of this book in its present 28-page form. But it deserves a more complete explanation of how and where the United States and the British nations are identified in that whole third of the Bible that is prophecy.

As I wrote, and worked on the enlargement of this book, Mrs. Armstrong sat curled up in a guest chair in my office, reading a book. Then, midafternoon, we went out to my brother's home, remaining for dinner. I knew the students - those of them who are on campus during summer vacation-were having some kind of evening program over in the Physical Education building, but Mrs. Armstrong and I felt a little tired and decided not to go.

Later, we learned that the students had a special anniversary ceremony of some kind planned for us, when three of them, headed by the student-body president came to our home with a giant bouquet of 49 beautiful red roses, and a long scroll signed by the 150 or so students now on campus, under the words:

"To Mr. and Mrs. Herbert W . Armstrong, with deep love and sincere gratitude from the students of Ambassador College on your 49th wedding anniversary. Well, that was our anniversary.

But there is something very special about a 49th anniversary.

It seems that it is coming to be a rather rare thing for any marriage to last that long! Too few young people take marriage seriously, or realize the true MEANING of it-the responsibilities involved---or what real love is.

A rapidly degenerating standard of morals is being given public acceptance today. Mere children begin "going steady." They become overly sex-conscious.

The world has taken a comparatively fast leap from the extreme of prudery and ignorance to the opposite extreme of promiscuity and fornication.

Teenagers too often begin to think about marriage before they realize what it is, just as they begin indulging in premarital sex before they have adequate knowledge about sex and the Creator's PURPOSE in designing it.

They do not realize that **LOVE is an outgoing concern for the one loved**. They confuse attractiveness in sex-appeal with love. They don't fall in love. They do fall, all right. But they fall in LUST, not in love. And, of course, most of them know nothing about GOD. The daring catchphrase, "God is dead," may sound clever to them. But they are not conscious of the living God! And , not knowing Him, they have no conception of what He could mean to them - how much He could, and would, do for them.

The TRUE values are unknown to them. The fact that a young man or young woman could, and should, rely on the living GOD to select his or her lifelong mate, would probably sound a little odd. Yet, if they only knew it, GOD never makes a mistake. And those who actually have left the romance in the hands of God, relying on Him, have found that He did not make a mistake.

I know of several in this category, being very happy people. I didn't really know much about God until ten years after I was married. Yet, somehow, I knew that the Living GOD had selected for me, and given to me, my wife. I frequently prayed, even before conversion, before I really knew God.

In those days my prayers were all carnal, all selfish, except for one thing. I did often, in prayer, thank God for giving me my wife. Of course, what I "somehow" knew then, I know by the better evidences today. God used my wife to bring about my conversion-to bring me into HIS WORK as His servant. And He has used her, ever since, in a ministry that has always been a partnership.

Of course, being a woman, she has been the "silent" member of the partnership, but a real and effective partner in it, nonetheless. WHY do marriages fail? Always because people are carnal-minded-selfish, and self-centred.

Each wants to be on the RECEIVING side, concerned about what they GET from the other or how much the other PLEASES them, but not what they may contribute to please the other.

In today's modern world, the meaning of LOVE has been all but lost. It has been so romanticized, so confused with selfishness and LUST, that people carelessly call any sex desire "love."

Today nearly all popular songs are falsely supposed to sing about love.

Motion pictures, television, novels-all confuse and eroticize "love" and induce society to accept lust in the name of "love."

If I had to define love in four words, I would say "Love is an unselfish outgoing concern" for the one loved. Love is primarily on the giving, serving, sharing side, not on the getting, taking, factional, striving side.

It is not selfish.

Do you know the greatest enemy you have, that causes you more trouble, and pain and suffering than anything else? It is YOURSELF!

This self-centeredness becomes angry, resentful, whenever it imagines it got stepped on. That anger and resentment brings with it unhappiness, and pain. You blame it on the other person, of course. But the REAL cause of the trouble was your own SELF.

I think I may say very truthfully that Mrs Loma Armstrong and I have always had a very real OUTGOING CONCERN, each of us for the other. That is real love.

God says to us, through Solomon, "...rejoice with the wife of your youth"· (Proverbs 5: 18). God has been allowing me that blessing these forty nine years, And I am very, very grateful.

A marriage can be one of the very finest blessings, or one of the most terrible curses. But the MAIN thing is, to get rid of that carnality-that SELF-centered spirit. REPENT of it, seek reconciliation with GOD through the living Jesus Christ, and receive HIS Spirit of Love.