

15 Accusations and Truthful Responses about Herbert W. Armstrong

By [COGwriter](#)

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Since first learning about the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) more than 30 years ago, I have heard many false accusations against the WCG and its leadership. This article, however, dwells only on the accusations I have personally heard against church founder Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA).

Although it is not likely this article will persuade anyone who has made up his mind that he/she doesn't like HWA, I hope those who are interested in the truth will realize that he has often been unfairly accused.

One problem with doing this research is that HWA grew up during a time when one was taught not to dignify false accusations with an answer. Thus he almost never denied the many attacks against him personally.

Another problem is that since he is dead (he died in January 1986) I cannot ask him about any of these matters.

It has been said that it is impossible to prove a negative. So about the only way this writer knows how to try to do that concerning someone who is dead is list the accusations, review whatever facts are available, consult with some who were around HWA for decades, attempt to contact witnesses, and include that information in this article.

I spoke with many people who had much contact with HWA relevant to these accusations, I spoke with several of the accusers, and I had E-mail communication with the reporters of some of the accusations. I name many of my sources, but several requested that I not include their names.

I have also reviewed various of HWA writings and writings of his critics. The accusations answered in this article range from what some might describe as the trivial to the deadly serious.

No middle name

Accusation No. 1: HWA was named Herbert Armstrong at birth and did not have W as his given middle initial.

This is true according to Living Church of God founder Roderick Meredith of Charlotte, North Carolina, and from one of HWA's relatives who lives near Tyler, Texas.

In all U.S. States I am aware of, anybody can take just about any name he wants, including middle initials, as long as he has no intent to defraud anyone.

There were apparently so many Herbert Armstrongs that HWA decided the sheer number of them caused confusion. One of them even lived across the street from the Pasadena, Calif., campus of Ambassador College (the school HWA founded) in the early days, causing problems with mail deliveries.

Why HWA chose W is not clear, but by adding it he made his name more distinctive.

In HWA's early years it was not unusual for people to have middle initials that did not stand for anything. An example is Harry S. Truman. According to the *World Book Encyclopedia*, President Truman's initial did not represent a middle name.

The excesses of youth

Accusation No. 2: HWA drank to excess.

A quotation attributed to HWA's grandson has it that HWA drank too much (see a quote from John Tuit's 1981 book *The Truth Shall Make You Free*).

However, HWA's grandson told *The Journal* that he did not "recognize the first person statement attributed to me in Tuit's book".

Other observers have said he was often sluggish or sleepy, presumably from alcohol, almost every night.

Another wrote: "Armstrong himself admitted to excessive drinking as a young man, but 'not at all even the fraction of the volume of an alcoholic' (Autobiography, p. 240)" ("Booze!," Dec. 9, 2002, Missing Dimension Web site, published by Gavin Rumney, Auckland, New Zealand, www.missingdimension.com).

The truth is that HWA did drink alcohol, as do probably a majority of Church of God members. Here is specifically what he himself wrote about his younger days and alcohol:

"I began palling around with two other young men who were advertising representatives of magazines. One of them was in process of separating from and divorcing his wife. The wife of the other was away for the summer and fall. We began to haunt nightclubs--then called cabarets. Often we would hang around these places of sorrowful, moaning, screeching, wailing music--if you could call such dirges 'music'--until 1 or 2 a.m. We began to drink--not at all even a fraction of the volume of an 'alcoholic'--but too much for efficiency" (*Autobiography of Herbert Armstrong*, 1986 edition, p. 243).

If HWA had as much problem with his liver due to alcohol as his critics have contended, then maybe he would have died prematurely because of liver damage. But he lived to be 92 1/2 years old.

Also, HWA did take a variety of medications, and some can make a person appear under the influence of alcohol when such is not the case.

Regarding the above quote attributed to HWA's grandson, he told this writer on Dec. 17, 2002: "I did not say those things in Tuit's book. He [HWA] was not a drunkard, and if he were he never could have done all the things he did." (He also made other strong denials of this allegation that I did not get down verbatim.)

This is the third or fourth accusation I have investigated in Tuit's book. Thus far every time I have contacted a source cited in the book, the source has denied making the accusation. I conclude that Tuit's book is entirely unreliable for anyone seriously interested in determining the truth about accusations against HWA.

Dixon Cartwright of Big Sandy, Texas, publisher of *The Journal*, did tell this writer that in the late 1970s at various times he answered the phone in the office of *The Worldwide News* in Pasadena when HWA was calling to dictate his editorial and that HWA "sounded as if he were under the influence."

However, Dixon Cartwright agreed that it is possible HWA could have been under the influence of medications, as HWA was on medications at the time.

Dr. Meredith acknowledged that he witnessed HWA drinking a "bit heavily" at times but never saw him incoherent or drunk.

Others have said HWA did drink at certain public functions and that he did, for a while, rely on alcohol to help him fall asleep at night--this part seems to be true.

Cocaine

Accusation No. 3: HWA was addicted to cocaine.

A former WCG member told me this in 1982.

This obviously false accusation is strongly denied by my numerous sources and in one respect is somewhat funny, since the toxic effects of cocaine are more or less the opposite of those for excess drinking: tachycardia, or extreme nervousness.

An addiction to cocaine would have been extremely difficult to conceal because, as one medical source (*Merck Manual*, 1999 edition) understates it: "Discontinuing sustained use of cocaine requires considerable assistance."

Gross impropriety

Accusation No. 4: HWA was guilty of gross sexual impropriety.

After reviewing the details of one particular allegation regarding sex and what I uncovered, Dixon Cartwright, *The Journal's* publisher, asked me to remove them from this article because of the lack of proof and because certain parties are not alive to defend themselves and because *The Journal* is a family publication.

Various versions of this accusation are extant, most of which seem to be based on a chapter of David Robinson's 1980 book *Herbert W. Armstrong's Tangled Web*. (A version of the accusations appears in Tuit's book as well.)

I investigated four allegations related to this specific accusation and concluded that unless certain alleged audiotapes (which have never been made public, and I requested them and even spoke to one who had claimed to hear them--he finally admitted to me that he actually had not heard them) surface (and I made diligent inquiry to attempt to find them, including dozens of phone calls, plus E-mails through late February 2003, and even later after this article was originally published), the accusations are not provable and aspects of the accusations are indeed disprovable.

Perhaps I should mention that since one aspect of these accusations is commonly attributed to a comment supposedly made by HWA's son Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) concerning his dad and another relative. I personally called Garner Ted Armstrong's office on Dec. 12, 2002 to inquire about this particular accusation. I was not able to speak with GTA directly, but a key employee of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association discussed it with him and got back with me. Through his spokesperson, GTA declined to comment except to pass on the message that "everything you really need to know about my father is contained within the autobiography." Thus GTA did not stand by a statement attributed to him on this matter--so how can any believe this?

In December 2006, I saw a post at an anti-Church of God website that stated that Dibar Apartian supposedly confirmed that he felt that HWA was guilty of incest. On January 3, 2007, I spoke with Dibar Apartian about this. He knew HWA for the past 30 plus years of HWA's life. Dibar Apartian clearly and flatly denied the claim someone made that Dibar Apartian said he felt that HWA was guilty of incest. Every single time I have gone to the alleged sources of information on this incest matter, none of these "sources" have ever stood by the statements that the anti-HWA critics have claimed were made. I would like to add that Dibar Apartian is 88 1/2 years old and he specifically told me that it should be clear to everyone that he has nothing to gain by denying this. Dibar Apartian also told me that he has never once made a statement confirming any of HWA's alleged personal faults, and specifically that he never stated that he thought HWA was guilty of incest.

In his *Tangled Web* book, the late D. Robinson wrote that "like the Wizard of Oz, Herbert Armstrong is operating on image. When his hand is called, there is no substance there. Like the Wizard, he is just a lot of bluster."

Based on my experience in trying to track down credible sources for this accusation, all I find--including a whole chapter in Robinson's book--is "just a lot of bluster." Actually, it appears to me that no one who has made or repeated most of the accusations against HWA actually has any real proof for most of them--no one seems to have checked with either the primary (those involved) or secondary sources (those with proof), but instead relied on accusation and rumor--simply stating a false charge does not make it true, no matter how many times it may be repeated.

Improper involvement

Accusation No. 5: HWA was improperly involved with female Ambassador College students.

Bernard Kelly's *Bible Expositor* newsletter of Oct. 19, 2001, publishes allegations that in 1957 HWA unsuccessfully attempted to recruit AC coed Suzanne Black as a "special lady" for the purpose of providing him with sexual favors and claimed that HWA justified his actions in this regard by declaring that he was "above the law."

I spoke with many who were around HWA in the late 1950s, including Dr. Meredith, Dibar Apartian and Wilbur Berg. They all said that, based on their close association with him at the time, they believed such accusations could not be true.

If the accusations were true, why would Suzanne Black remain a WCG member until 1975, some 18 years after the alleged incidents, and why would her husband teach at Imperial Schools in Big Sandy and later at Ambassador College many years after the alleged incidents?

I even spoke with her husband, Wiley Black, on this matter. In my opinion his comments, as well as the report in Kelly's newsletter, were contradictory and illogical. It is clear to me that those that repeat this accusation simply have not attempted to question either of the Blacks about it.

B. Kelly also quotes S. Black as saying HWA's wife, Loma, forced her to clean toilets in a women's dormitory with her bare hands and that Dr. Meredith tried to drown her by pushing her head forcefully against a rock while he was baptizing her, an accusation Dr. Meredith categorically denies.

When taken as a whole, S. Black's testimony, as published by Kelly, lacks any credibility.

HWA's disposition

Accusation No. 6: HWA had a temper.

By numerous accounts, this accusation is true.

False prophecies?

Accusation No. 7: HWA made false prophecies.

Various sources have leveled this accusation. For this article, I simply cite one of them, the book *Transformed by Truth* by Joseph Tkach Jr.

Under the heading "Failed Prophecies" in chapter 11, J. Tkach listed several supposed failed prophecies of HWA:

* Mr. Armstrong wrote that the death of Pope Paul VI could "plunge the world into the most terrifying crisis ever experience by man."

* Mr. Armstrong wrote that a meeting of Catholic cardinals "may well prove to be a WORLD-SHAKING EVENT--the most important world event since World War II!"

* In 1980 Mr. Armstrong wrote that the world had "entered into a 'whole new ball game.' The intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan changes the whole world picture."

* Mr. Armstrong wrote that the 1980s "well might see the END of this present world; WAKE UP!"

* In the early '80s Mr. Armstrong wrote that "signs are now fast appearing that our Work of the GREAT COMMISSION may be much more near completed than we have realized." n

Mr. Armstrong wrote, in the early '80s, that "God's great work through His Church (Philadelphia era) may be FINISHED in a matter of months."

* Mr. Armstrong wrote of the 1980 U.S. presidential election that "this present election travesty may well be the very LAST political election for the presidency of the United States, with little incompetent men vying for the coveted prize."

* In 1981 Mr. Armstrong wrote that the conditions that would allow Bible prophecies to be fulfilled were "fast accelerating, indicating that we are indeed in the very last of the last days." He predicted that "terrible, frightful things are going to happen in the next few years that are going to take the lives of probably two thirds or more of all the people now living on the face of the earth."

My response to J. Tkach's listing here of these supposed examples of HWA's prophecies is to point out that many of HWA's predictions did indeed come to pass, even though HWA obviously believed we were closer to the events of the very end time than we were.

Nevertheless, the death of Paul VI did trigger a drastic turnaround in world events, ultimately leading to the appointment by the Catholic cardinals of Pope John Paul II, who was instrumental in helping break Eastern Europe free from communist influence.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets did change world events markedly. It contributed to the bankrupting and dissolution of the Soviet Union. It contributed to the influence of leaders such as Osama Bin Laden. Those events are still resonating in the aftermath of Sept. 11 and the war on terrorism.

The WCG under HWA did at least partially fulfill the prophecies of Matthew 24:14 and Revelation 3:7-8 about the work of the end-time Church of God.

Regarding the 1980 presidential election, in November 1980, HWA sent Herman Hoeh out to state that the election of Ronald Reagan meant that there would be much more time (Sermon, Sacramento, November 1980). I personally heard this.

HWA did make various errors in the 1940s in his predictions concerning the outcome of World War II. But his main errors were when he suggested--or at least implied--dates for specific prophecies.

None of the specific "prophecy" items listed above in *Transformed by Truth* were actually false. After all, if the criterion for a true or false prophecy is that it happens when the predictor thinks it will happen, then Paul, Peter and even Jesus are guilty of the same type of false prophecies that HWA is accused of. (For example, "Surely I am coming quickly," Revelation 22:20).

Further, when HWA said something "may" happen, he was not making a false prophecy. It was true that certain things might have happened. He allowed for that when he used the word "may."

HWA critics also tend to forget that he made many correct predictions. For example, in the December 1948 issue of *The Plain Truth* HWA predicted a coming "United States of Europe." As recently as October 2002, Valery Giscard d'Estaing suggested that the name of the European Community should be changed to United States of Europe. I believe HWA was among the first if not the first to coin the term United States of Europe for the government that is even now still forming in Europe. Even if the EU is never renamed, the truth still stands that a united states of Europe is still forming.

HWA also correctly predicted that the Soviet Union would never launch a major attack on the United States. He also preached that East and West Germany would reunite (which happened) and lead a unified Europe (which is happening). At the Feast of Tabernacles in Tucson, Ariz., in October 1979, the WCG taught that the unified Europe would probably include many nations then in the communist bloc.

Although the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have not been taken over by a German-led unified Europe (that ultimately will not include the U.K.), many of us in the COGs believe this prediction will eventually come to pass.

Another point needs to be made here. HWA never claimed to be a "prophet" in the accepted sense (see accusation 14). He did not receive information in visions and dreams or from God face to face, as did the prophets of old. Therefore it is improper, in my opinion, to characterize any predictions of his that did fail to come to pass as "false prophecies."

Income matters

Accusation No. 8: HWA made predictions he knew were false in order to maximize the WCG's income.

Although it is true that at one time HWA apparently believed that members of the WCG would probably "flee" to a "place of safety" in 1972 and that Jesus Christ would probably return in 1975, as those dates grew closer HWA and associates apparently began to have second thoughts about the accepted time line. John Robinson of Decatur, Ind., wrote an article in 1997 that talked about this aspect of the history of the WCG. As 1972 drew near, wrote John Robinson, some in the WCG "began to question the time line set forth by Mr. Armstrong and Herman L. Hoeh, the chief architect of the church's teachings on government and prophetic understanding. The first high-profile minister to do so was Roderick C. Meredith, then head of the WCG ministers . . .

"In the late 1960s Mr. Meredith wrote in a letter to the ministry that he felt there was 'more time left than we had expected.' "To his credit, Mr. Meredith tackled the issue head on and began to influence members to rethink the issue" ("WCG Governmental History Traced Up to Tkach Era," *In Transition*, Jan. 31, 1997). Dr. Meredith informed me that Mr. Armstrong sent the letter (which was quoted by J. Robinson) to all WCG ministers in 1969.

Further, here is what Leroy Neff of Big Sandy, Texas, a retired WCG evangelist, treasurer and AC faculty member, recently said on the subject of Christ's predicted return in 1975: "Rod Meredith preached strongly around 1970 that it was very unlikely" ("Third Ambassador Campus Came to Texas in 1964," by John Warren, *The Journal*, Sept. 30, 2002).

If HWA were trying to milk money out of church members and the church's "coworkers," you would think he would have waited until late 1975 and claimed to have had a vision that instructed him to change the date. Instead, he encouraged Dr. Meredith inform the ministry and others that 1975 would not likely be the end. The truth is that HWA did believe what he wrote and so strongly wanted Christ to return that he sometimes allowed his enthusiasm to bias his writings.

Money matters

Accusation No. 9: HWA was in it for the money.

HWA believed what he wrote--according to all sources with whom I spoke in connection with this article, including people I haven't yet mentioned by name, such as Aaron Dean of Gladewater, Texas, and even people who can be described as critics of HWA, such as Art Mokarow and Norman Edwards.

A careful reading of HWA's autobiography reveals that his decision to preach had the immediate effect of hurting his income rather than enhancing it. It was several decades before his income was reliably better than before he had begun to preach. If he had been in it for the money, one would have expected him to retire at some point and live off what he had accumulated. Instead, he continued to make telecasts until shortly before he died at age 92, visited 70 nations to proclaim the gospel *after* he was of retirement age and pushed himself relentlessly to get the gospel out.

The value of world trips

Accusation No. 10: HWA wasted money visiting world leaders and other dignitaries, and in other ways, without financial accountability.

HWA believed that Matthew 24:14 (the gospel will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations) applied to him personally. He went to 70 nations directly and all the rest indirectly (through attending, as well as speaking at, various state functions).

I do not doubt that some money was wasted, but, as a former cost accountant, I think I am qualified to state that money is almost always wasted to some degree when major projects are undertaken.

Of HWA's visits with world leaders Legacy Institutes' Leon Sexton of Bangkok, Thailand, wrote: "In 1984, Herbert W. Armstrong visited King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit in this same palace. I was along as part of the Ambassador Foundation team. At that time the queen explained her project and the goals she wanted to achieve to help her people. The project was in its infancy and the queen needed help. Mr. Armstrong decided to help the queen get her silk project off the ground and donated seed money. "Now, nearly two decades later, we find that the church's involvement in these projects to help the poor in Thailand, through the efforts of the king and queen, have once again been blessed by God and have born abundant fruit. So much for the gainsayers who say Herbert Armstrong was

throwing money down a rathole by giving to help the royal family of Thailand or that he 'bought meetings' with them with church money!" (as quoted from a letter to Legacy supporters dated Nov. 9, 2002).

Furthermore, regarding wasted money to do the work of God, even those called of God sometimes erroneously make this accusation--the disciples did! "A woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.' But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her' " (Matthew 26:8-14).

However, it was apparently Judas, who later betrayed Jesus, who objected the most, "Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. " (John 12:3-6). Perhaps Judas influenced the other disciples to believe a false accusation--and perhaps those in the Churches Of God can learn from this lesson and not let those who make false accusations improperly influence them.

Jack Kessler made a variety of accusations that money was wasted, etc.--WCG addressed those accusations in the *Pastor General's Report* dated March 18, 1982 and denied their validity. Furthermore, that same *Pastor General's Report* includes a reprint of statements made by Jack Kessler as of March 1, 1981 admitting that there had been no fraud and that the Arthur Anderson provided " completely unqualified opinions two years in a row" (an unqualified opinion, in laymen's terms, means that the outside auditors found nothing wrong of any importance). Hence for him to later change his position seems odd at best.

As indicated above regarding financial accountability, HWA's WCG was audited by major accounting firms and published proper financial statements. But for some reason, critics still tend to ignore them.

Ministerial credentials

Accusation No. 11: HWA was never properly credentialed as a minister.

This is simply not true--though it is true that years after he left the [Church of God \(Seventh Day\)](#), they revoked his credentials with them.

Elder John Kiesz of Denver, Colo. (who died in 1996), an associate of HWA in the 1920s and '30s in the Church of God (Seventh Day) wrote (according to the Giving & Sharing Web site [www.giveshare.org]): "In 1931 he [HWA] was ordained to the ministry, and in 1932 he received his Ministerial License Certificate from the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, signed by O.J. Runcorn as President, and Mrs. I.E. Curtis as Secretary. The headquarters of the General Conference of the Church of God (7th Day) had been at Stanberry, Missouri, since the late 1880's."

Crediting sources

Accusation No. 12: HWA was forgetful, and he was a plagiarist.

Yes, HWA could be forgetful. After reading various editions of HWA's *United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* and J.H. Allen's book *Jacob's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*, I do not agree that he was guilty of plagiarizing Allen's book. Although I believe HWA got certain ideas about this subject from Mr. Allen and, from what I have heard, the first edition of US&BC, which I have not seen, was much closer to Allen's work, I also believe HWA simply comes to conclusions different from Allen's in too many instances for any plagiarism charge to hold water, especially in HWA's later editions. Of course, if HWA did make significant use of Allen's work, then he should have credited Allen, even if his use of this work falls short of plagiarism.

HWA paraphrased more than he should have, but, since he, along with his wife, Loma, was the entire editorial and publish staff for a while, it is understandable that they could have become careless in this regard.

Regarding *Has Time Been Lost?*, it appears that this booklet was quite similar to a booklet originally produced by the Church of God (Seventh Day). According to an article by Norman Edwards (*Servant's News*, November 1998), the CG7 did not have a copyright notice on it when it published it. Edwards also wrote, "The two booklets are word-for-word identical in about half of the places. Armstrong did add some things, but in many places he simply dropped out information--such as the 1910 dates of encyclopedias which, if included, would make the booklet look 'old' (see p. 24)." At the time CG7 published it, without such a copyright notice, the information was in the 'public domain' and it would have been legal for it to have been copied and republished (but I feel that should something in the book should have indicated that it was republished). I think it is likely that either HWA did not recall that he did not write much of this particular booklet or some of his staff made an improper assumption. As a writer I can verify that the more you write the less you remember about what you actually did write. I think a factor in HWA's failure to properly credit other sources was his lack of formal education. Even though he was a naturally talented writer, he was not privy to formal training that would have instilled in him the highest regard for properly crediting other people's works.

The 18 truths

Accusation No. 13: HWA's "18 truths" are not individually all original.

This is true but not relevant. People who hurl this accusation fail to recall that HWA did not say he came up with his list of truths. He wrote: "At least 18 basic and essential truths have been restored to the True Church since" the year 1933 (*Mystery of the Ages*, Dodd & Mead, 1985, p. 251), and he said in a sermon in which he listed the truths that the "Philadelphia Era of the Church," which he believed to be the WCG, was "restoring what had been taken away, restoring what had been taken away" (Sermon. "Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era," Dec. 17, 1983). (Here is a link to an article that list those truths titled [Did You Know What the First Changes the Tkach Administration Made?](#))

Thus HWA believed the Ephesus (apostolic) era, the first of seven, held to certain truths that God used him to restore to the Philadelphia (sixth) era of the church. HWA also acknowledged that other, non-Church of God, groups had portions of the truth (he wrote this in a letter to WCG members dated Nov. 19, 1976).

Divine revelation?

Accusation No. 14: HWA, as did Joseph Smith and other religious leaders, claimed to have divine revelations.

HWA did not claim to have massive amounts of biblical truth instantly revealed to him by God or an angel. He documents in his autobiography how he engaged himself in a six-month study of the Bible after being challenged on the Sabbath and other issues. He also wrote, "Emphatically I am NOT a prophet, in the sense of one to whom God speaks directly, revealing personally a future event to happen or new truth, or new or special instruction from God--separate from, and apart from what is contained in the Bible. And I never have claimed to be" (*Tomorrow's World*, June 1972).

An unlikely source to back of HWA's claim in this regard is Joseph Tkach Jr. Here is some more of what he wrote about HWA and the subject of divine revelation in *Transformed by Truth*: "Mr. Armstrong used the term revealed in a way substantially different from how one might see it defined in most dictionaries or seminary textbooks. When he said something had been revealed to him, he did not mean that God had poured the new understanding directly into his waiting mind. No, whatever the new teaching happened to be, it usually came through a more human channel. "When some people hear this for the first time, they wrongly assume that Mr. Armstrong knowingly talked about 'new revelation' in a deceitfully malicious way. When he'd talk about ideas being revealed to him, most people automatically assumed he meant revealed in the sense of Paul's experience on the Damascus road or Isaiah's experience when he was called into ministry as described in Isaiah 6. But this would be to misunderstand. "Mr. Armstrong's use of the term revealed was a good deal more elastic than that, and I don't believe it was deliberately deceitful or malicious . . . Regardless of what you may personally think of Herbert W. Armstrong, one fact is incontrovertible: The overriding reason our reforms have developed and taken root is that Mr. Armstrong himself always insisted that those who want to follow God must find out what God's Word really says, then go and do it."

J. Tkach's most serious charge

Accusation 15: HWA ran a cult.

If the Joseph Tkach WCG had real reason to know that Mr. Armstrong was guilty of any of the 14 previous accusations, it is logical that it would have mentioned them or perhaps included them in his book *Transformed by Truth*. The truth is that the only accusations above that are directly mentioned to in the book (or official WCG sources) are those regarding prophecies. Yes, J. Tkach states that HWA was wrong doctrinally and prophetically, but perhaps the roughest comment alluded to be against HWA in *Transformed by Truth* was suggesting HWA taught "cultism": "As successor to WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong, Tkach boldly led the Pasadena, California-based church from cultism into Christianity." I disagree. I believe he ran the most biblically-based church that existed on the earth--which, according to Jesus, would be a little flock (Luke 12:32).

God uses imperfect people

Throughout history, God has called and used imperfect human beings. Noah is recorded to have gotten drunk (Genesis 9:21). Lot got drunk at least two times and then unknowingly committed incest on those occasions (19:30-36), yet the Bible calls him 'righteous' (II Peter 2:7-8). Abraham (12:12-13), Isaac (26:7), Jacob (27:24), and Joseph (42:7) all lied or were at least misleading at some time. Sarah dealt harshly with a maidservant (16:6;21:10) and lied to God's representative (18:15). Moses had a temper, was a murderer, and a fugitive from justice (Exodus 2:11-15). David was a womanizer (I Samuel 25:42-43), adulterer (II Samuel 11:3-4), and murderer (11:14-24), who displeased God (vs. 27), yet David was also a man after God's heart (I Samuel 13:14). The Apostle Peter lied, cursed, and denied Jesus (Mark 14:67-71), and later was caught being hypocritical by the Apostle Paul (Galatians 2:11-13). Paul referred to himself as a "wretched man" (Romans 7:24) and his original name was Saul (Acts 7:58). "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). By writing this paragraph, I am not saying that I think HWA is guilty of anything I did not think he was guilty of before (and even if he was and he repented, that is between him and God). I am simply stating that if the reader comes to a different conclusion on some of the accusations, that simply does not take away from what God had him accomplish.

The fact remains that it is pretty hard--some would say impossible--to prove a negative. No matter how many people with whom I try to verify various supposed facts, it is nearly impossible to prove that something did not happen. On the other hand, most of the

allegations I have encountered are illogical, do not fit with the facts and cannot be properly verified either (plus HWA has been dead for more than 19 years).

Jesus accused too

Jesus was falsely called "a glutton and a winebibber" (Luke 7:34), was implied to be a child of fornication (John 8:41), falsely accused of having a demon (Matthew 12:24), questioned about whether he paid taxes (Matthew 17:24;22:17), and was falsely accused of breaking the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-14). He was correctly called (by some of the same accusers) "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 7:34), called the leader of people accused of transgressing the "traditions of the elders" (Matthew 15:2), one who had many false witnesses rise up against him (Matthew 26:59-60), recorded to have demonstrated public anger and outrage (Mark 11:15-21), reportedly arrested as if He were a robber (Mark 14:48), and crucified with thieves (Matthew 27:38)). Jesus was even "numbered with the transgressors" (Luke 22:37), yet Jesus was the Son of God.

People attacked Jesus personally because they did not want people to heed His message--that appears to be a leading reason for the accusations against HWA. It is easier to attempt to attack the messenger than the biblical message. Of course, today, many not only attack the dead, but the living--such as Roderick Meredith, human leader, under Jesus Christ, of the Living Church of God (for more information, please read the article [11 Accusations and Truthful Responses about Roderick Meredith](#)).

That you be not condemned

Those who wish to pass judgment against HWA on the aforementioned allegations would do well to mediate on this: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:1-2).

If something illegal ever happened, the proper biblical course of action (according to the apostle Paul) would have been to press charges, for if any "have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls" (Acts 19:38-39). The courts were open for HWA when he was alive, and if any crime occurred the charges should have been brought 19 to 70 years ago.

Actually, when the WCG was charged in court for alleged misuse of public funds (and it is my understanding that John Tuit was one of the parties that filed against HWA on this), the State of California eventually dismissed the charges. Though various accusations may have been made in court cases, HWA was never convicted of any crime I am aware of, including any of the accusations listed in this article, nor was proof of them offered against him in court.

If HWA were guilty of a crime, God will have to judge him. Although I do believe some of the charges I listed above are valid--such as HWA's temper and (with the qualifications I listed) his carelessness in not properly credited some of his sources--I do believe was a man of God.

Most of the allegations against him are similar to those made against other spiritual leaders down through the ages. God holds us accountable for what we know. In this article, I did my best to share what I know about the accusations and truth about Mr. Armstrong. I have little doubt that his critics will try to dismiss most of the truth shown in this article.

Hearing the truth

The Bible also suggests that knowing the facts about possibly sordid matters can help one that God is calling. Those who may doubt that should recall that Joseph was not quite sure on how to handle Mary's premarital pregnancy until God sent an angelic messenger to tell him the facts (Matthew 1:18-23). Is it not hard to believe that your fiance is a virgin when she is pregnant?

Joseph, however, made the right decision once he heard the truth (vs. 24). But others in the Bible did not, even though the truth had been revealed to them (i.e. Eve, Jonah).

Will you?

COGwriter

FRESH EVIDENCE DENIES MR ARMSTRONG'S ACCUSERS!

This paper is addressed to those who truly seek to worship God in spirit and in Truth, who therefore do not blindly follow a man and who are wondering about the ongoing schisms in the Church of God. This paper may be freely reproduced and distributed, provided this be done in its entirety, without alterations of any kind and solely for the edification of the true Church of God.

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- Minor corrections to Section 9.0 (e.g. 'commonly' was 'common')

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Table of Contents

Description Page

1.0 Introduction	
2.0 May We Trust Unconverted Accusers?	
3.0 The Allegations	
4.0 Mr Armstrong's Situation During the 1930s	
5.0 Evidence from the Autobiography	
5.1 On the Air!" (Volume 1, chapter 31, pages 541-542)	
5.2 Eugene Campaign Starts (Volume 1, chapter 32, page 546)	
5.3 My First Car (Volume 1, chapter 35, pages 601-604)	
5.4 New Facilities Needed (Volume 2, chapter 40, page 3)	
5.5 First New Car (Volume 2, Chapter 41, pages 27-29)	
5.6 The Creation Memorial (Volume 1, chapter 16, page 300)	
5.7 The Bitter Pill (Volume 1, chapter 16, pages 305-6)	
6.0 The Evidence of the April 1984 Ambassador Report Examined	
7.0 Why Did Mr Armstrong Not Sue?	
8.0 Mr Armstrong under attack by family and Christendom	
9.0 Evidence From Other Sources	
10.0 Lesser Accusations	
11.0 References	
12.0 In Conclusion	

FRESH EVIDENCE DENIES HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG'S ACCUSERS!

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a fresh look at the accusations levelled by certain men against the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong, and shows these must be rejected by truly converted Christians. Especially examined are claims that surfaced during the 1970s of offences that allegedly happened forty years earlier when Mr Armstrong was literally run of his feet launching the *Plain Truth* magazine, the *Radio Church of God* and conducting evangelising meetings. The late David Robinson's book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* accuses Mr Armstrong of having committed incest with and even raped his daughter Dorothy between the ages of 13 and 20 years. John Trechak's Ambassador Report accuses that Mr Armstrong continued this incest till her marriage at age 23 to Vern Mattson in 1943.

These charges have greatly troubled many members of the former Worldwide Church of God, and have done great damage to the reputation of that church and its founder and servant of God, Mr Herbert W. Armstrong. These charges have caused many to forget Mr Armstrong made the Bible come alive by teaching us beautiful truths that had become lost to mainstream Christendom. Those charges have caused many to question and reject Mr Armstrong's teachings, contributing to the current Babylon of confused doctrines that fill many letters, articles and advertisements in *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*.

But how many have tested Mr Armstrong's accusers, their accusations and their motivations as God's Word requires (Deut 19:16-18)? Let us do this now and if we find those charges not proved or false, then let us restore to Mr Armstrong the presumption of his innocence as we would want done for us when accusers arise against us. Let us disdain those who accused him falsely and who were tares planted by an enemy (Mat 13:24-30), agents sent by Satan, including subverters from mainstream Christendom alarmed over the worldwide spreading of Mr Armstrong's teaching. This teaching they intended to bring down and there is no more effective way to attack the Church of God than discrediting its 20th-century leader, Mr Herbert W. Armstrong.

This paper shows we must reject hearsay 'evidence', test accusers, verify carefully all evidence, and examine the accusers' motivations before we reach our verdict on Mr Armstrong. This paper also briefly examines lesser accusations levelled against Mr Armstrong, such as plagiarism, questionable prophetic claims, extravagant spending of church funds and arrogantly standing over anyone questioning any aspect of his teaching or administration. May this paper convince the reader to prove all things and not take anything for granted as we are instructed (1 Thes 5:21). Also when judging let us not forget the quality of mercy (Mat 23:23): for example let us at least momentarily view Mr Armstrong's alleged 'plagiarizing' through his eyes, rather than through this world's atheist academic eyes.

Let the reader not assume that I slavishly follow either Mr Armstrong or his teaching as many do. My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (see Section 11.0) essays that Mr Armstrong led from 1934 God's seventh and final Church of God era of Laodicea rather than Philadelphia as Mr Armstrong claimed. Nevertheless I see Mr Armstrong as having been God's 20th-century messenger to the Church of God and that we must pay him the respect this high office requires.

2.0 MAY WE TRUST UNCONVERTED ACCUSERS?

The doctrinal teachings of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong are so different from and even contrary to those of Mainstream Christendom that it is inconceivable that once converted to his teaching that anyone could ever return to the artificial and even pagan doctrines of Mainstream Christendom. Yet that is precisely what was done after Mr Armstrong's 1986 death by the late Mr Joseph W. Tkach and several of his senior men in the former Worldwide Church of God. How could it happen that men educated at Ambassador College in Mr Armstrong's teaching and presumably at the time of their baptism converted to this, surrendered this teaching so easily? It did happen and so we must recognize that it is possible to have been baptized without

being truly converted to God's Truth. Any issue of *The Journal* shows how many were apparently never converted to God's Truth for today they dream of all manner of strange doctrines without ever focussing on the more substantial Bible issues. Let us consider a couple of examples of men with excellent Bible knowledge but who were not called to the Church of God and so were not truly converted.

First the remarkable Anglican minister, Dr Ethelbert W. Bullinger (1837-1913) renowned for his *The Companion Bible* with its copious and largely fine side notes and 198 appendixes. From appendixes 156 and 165 it is plain that Dr Bullinger understood that by the Sign of Jonah Jesus was three days and three nights in the tomb, was crucified on the Passover day, that this was Wednesday Nisan (Abib) 14, was then buried just before sunset and was resurrected just before sunset of Saturday Nisan 17. Yet despite that tremendous understanding Dr Bullinger remained an Anglican minister who stayed committed to Good Friday, Easter and Sunday observances. It is quite likely Mr Armstrong learned about the sign of Jonah teaching from *The Companion Bible*. Dr Bullinger honestly analysed those biblical facts but failed to make the connection to observe Passover instead of the Good Friday and Easter whose roots are pagan.

Another notable example is the Rev J.H. Allen author of *Judah's Sceptre And Joseph's Birthright* which declares the Identity of the ten so-called lost tribes of Israel. The principal thesis of one of Mr Armstrong's most successful books, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* was derived from Rev. Allen's book. J.H. Allen too remained a Protestant clergymen and he contributed significantly to Mr Armstrong's understanding. Knowledge of Truth is by itself insufficient for true conversion.

Of course not all unconverted members publicly displayed a disdain for Mr Armstrong's teaching as done by Mr Tkach and his men. So how else can we tell whether a minister or member is not truly converted? One of the most telling signs is failure to show respect for God's 20th-century servant, Mr Herbert W. Armstrong. After all let us never forget that without Mr Armstrong's labours and his writings we would not have known about God's Plan and Way that are utterly unknown to Mainstream Christendom.

We must look especially at the example set by David when he twice spared the life of his deadly enemy, King Saul (1 Samuel chapters 24 and 26). Even after Saul's death, King David showed respect for King Saul as God's anointed. In the 20th-century God chose Mr Herbert W. Armstrong to proclaim His Truth; therefore anyone who denigrates or ridicules Mr Armstrong can not possibly have been a truly converted Christian.

I was approached by a number of people in the Australian division of Mr Fred R Coulter's *Christian Biblical Church of God*. These all denounced Mr Herbert W. Armstrong as a false prophet, a thief of church funds, a plagiarist, a child molester and a rapist. These people came to see the man who taught them to understand the Bible as a criminal and were unable to grasp the incongruity of that position. I was sent me a tape of Mr Fred Coulter's farewell sermon from the Worldwide Church of God given on the Day of Atonement 1979.

In it Mr Coulter said that Mr Armstrong was corrupt and even bereft of the truth. I wondered from whom had Mr Coulter received God's message of truth? In an other 'sermon' tape Mr Coulter ridiculed Mr Herbert Armstrong as a false prophet and lampooned Mr Flurry of the *Philadelphia Church of God* for remaining so close to Mr Armstrong. It is true that during the dark days of the Second World war and again during the Korean and Cold wars that followed that Mr Armstrong at times interpreted prophecy too enthusiastically.

Still most would see this as having been intended as warnings to Israel rather than prophesying and so it is unreasonable to condemn Mr Armstrong as a false prophet. Frankly Mr Coulter's ridiculing of Mr Armstrong marks him as not being truly converted. Unfortunately there are quite a few like Mr Coulter. The Lord Jesus instructs us to test our teachers (prophets) by examining their fruits (Mat 7:15-20). Although converted Christians do sin from time to time, both the severity and the frequency of their sins should reduce with time as they grow in grace and knowledge (2 Pet 3:18). Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's son, the late Garner Ted Armstrong, was an ambitious man who disobeyed his father and tried to wrest control of the former Worldwide Church of God from his father. Garner Ted promoted his Systematic Theology Project despite his father requesting he desist from this. In addition throughout his long ministry Garner Ted acquired a reputation as the playboy evangelist. Garner Ted became one of the accusers of his father and showed a lack of respect for the man he should have known was God's 20th-century servant. We are not talking about an

occasional lapse of morals by Garner Ted but a pattern of behaviour that continued throughout his life as an evangelist. It gave the former Worldwide Church of God a bad name and later also his own church, the *Church of God International*. Such ongoing behaviour reveals Garner Ted Armstrong lacked the fruits of a truly converted and repentant Christian.

There are several other examples of unconverted men in the ministry. One is Darrell W. Conder a former long-serving minister in Mr Herbert Armstrong's church. Darrell Conder now rejects both the New Testament and Jesus as false and has become an agnostic. There is no question that the Bible and especially the NT suffers from translation errors and from corruptions of ancient manuscripts. That does not prevent us from discerning the Bible's central God-breathed message. It is difficult to see how anyone who now rejects God's Word could have been called by God.

Ken Westby reports in the March 2006 issue of *The Journal* on Dr James D Tabor's book, *The Jesus Dynasty: The Hidden History of Jesus, His Royal Family, and the Birth of Christianity*. Dr Tabor is widely accepted for his biblical scholarship. Indeed Ken Westby claims we can learn from this book despite its 'unorthodox' perspectives. Unorthodox? That is one way of describing Dr Tabor's rejecting both the virgin birth and Jesus' resurrection. Yet Dr Tabor was closely associated with Ambassador College having been both a student there and a lecturer of Greek. How is it possible that a person who was once so closely associated with the Church of God would later claim that Jesus had a human father and reject His resurrection? The secular academic world may recognize Dr Tabor as a biblical scholar but the Church of God can only see him as an unconverted man who was never called by God. I am not linking Dr Tabor with the accusers of Mr Armstrong but cite his case to show that all was not well at Ambassador College. It is plain that Dr Tabor was not an isolated case.

Another example is the Ambassador College graduate, Mr William F Dankenbring who too has denounced Mr Herbert W. Armstrong as guilty of the vilest conduct. Often we can tell a lot from even the smaller signs. For example, which true Christian would call his magazine *Prophecy Flash* when Revelation 19:10 declares "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"? The so-called 7 Mystery Letters reveal Mr Dankenbring gave space in *Prophecy Flash* to Jewish Kabala mysticism. Below we will find Mr Dankenbring's name linked to the accusations made against Mr Armstrong.

Mr Dankenbring co-authored with John D. Keyser the article *How Are The Mighty Fallen!* (Reference see Section 11.0). In this he denounces both Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and his son Garner Ted. Against Mr Herbert Armstrong Mr Dankenbring claims that the incest allegations are well documented, and refers to chapter twenty, titled *Incest!* of David Robinson's book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*. In sections 5.0 and 6.0 we will see this is far from well documented.

Against the late Garner Ted Armstrong Mr Dankenbring brings his friend Jerry Horton's claim that he once opened Garner Ted's office door, which happened to be ajar, to find on the couch Garner Ted having sexual relations with a young college co-ed. I am not seeking to clear Garner Ted of this charge but I insist that we must reject such hearsay evidence seeing we are unable to cross-examine Mr Dankenbring's friend Jerry Horton. Further had Garner Ted indeed engaged in a sexual relationship, then surely he would have not only closed but locked his office door. Just how gullible does Mr Dankenbring think we are that this took place behind an office door that was ajar, when by this very account we know that Garner Ted could not rely on his privacy being respected by office staff.

Before we accept in the Church of God the evidence of a witness, we must critically examine not only the evidence, but also the witness. For example, was the witness truly converted to God's Way, could he have had a hidden agenda for making the accusation. Members of the Church of God must carefully examine the fruits of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's accusers as well as their testimony before forming their judgment.

3.0 THE ALLEGATIONS

The originator of the incest allegations was Mr Armstrong's daughter Dorothy and these came to the surface only many years later and even after the death of her mother. There have been some notable cases where daughters in later life falsely accused their father of incest: especially the alleged suppressed memory cases. Most cases of incest occur at a much lower age than allegedly applied to Dorothy, who is reported to have suffered incest and even rape from age 13 to 23.

Dorothy was clearly not converted to her 'father's religion' for in 1951 she walked away from it altogether. Her father's Autobiography shows (See Section 5.3 below) that as a teenager she became disaffected with her 'father's religion' over the poverty it brought the Armstrong family during her teens. In Section 6.0 we will examine her husband's ambivalent behaviour towards her father, which suggests he may in the end not have been convinced of his wife's allegations.

Had the rape and incest allegations between her ages 13 to 23 been true then this does not reflect favourably on Dorothy. Once Dorothy exceeded age 16 and certainly age 18, she must have been aware that permitting ongoing incest was adultery against her mother. At age 18 she would have been able to put a stop to it but by her own allegations she did not. That places a big question mark next to Dorothy's name.

The Bible rules that in an urban situation a woman must cry out and can not be held innocent when she fails to do so and is raped (Deut 22:24). Dorothy alleges that the hotel's manager came to the door to inquire what the noise was about. At that moment Dorothy could have screamed out for help that she was being raped but allegedly she kept her peace. Now we have only Dorothy's word for this and then only some forty years after the event when the hotel manager is no longer available to be examined.

The incest is alleged to have happened from 1933 till 1943, the year when Mr Armstrong's daughter Dorothy married. Dorothy was born in 1920 and so the alleged incest occurred when she was aged between 13 and 23 years. The rape in a hotel room took allegedly place when Dorothy was aged 16, which therefore would have been 1936. It is important we keep these dates in mind when reading the rest of this paper and to remember that these allegations were first made public only some 40 years later during the 1970s.

The alleged period of incest extends to the very year of Dorothy's wedding, which means the alleged incest overlapped her courtship with her husband to be. This raises further the question of Dorothy's morals.

Frankly it all sounds rather improbable. We will see that there are other questions to be asked as well. One effect of the 40-year delay is that neither Mr Armstrong nor anyone could call witnesses. For example the hotel manager, who allegedly came to inquire into the noise caused by the alleged rape of the 16-year-old Dorothy in one of his hotel rooms. Assuming the manager was about 40 years in 1936, then forty years later he would be retired or dead and would be hard to trace. Forty years is a long time. I doubt that David Robinson, the author of the book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, attempted to trace the hotel manager and check whether Dorothy's claims are indeed valid. Besides her claim came through another party, her late brother Garner Ted Armstrong.

Is it not strange that these allegations surfaced some forty years later and only after Mr Armstrong's wayward son Garner Ted became estranged from his father and his father disfellowshipped him for disloyalty and his alleged adultery with co-eds at Ambassador College. So was it an accident that after being ousted, Garner Ted Armstrong began talking to his sister Dorothy? Was it an accident that he then learnt of these shocking allegations after talking to his sister Dorothy? Could they have conspired against their father to weaken his position and enhance their own in the Worldwide Church of God? After all control over the Worldwide Church of God was in the 1970s a great price indeed, for the church turned over a huge amount of money annually. From their actions is plain that Dorothy and Garner Ted were not converted and that both had carnal minds.

4.0 MR ARMSTRONG'S SITUATION DURING THE 1930S

Let us return to the period 1933-1940 and 1936 the year of the alleged rape. In 1934 Mr Armstrong began the work in a very small way on the north-west coast of the United States. This was at the height of the Great Depression and Mr Armstrong had not earned much whilst researching the Bible and entering the ministry. He was quite poor with a wife, two teenage daughters and two younger sons to support. Whatever money he had left over after paying for the essentials, was devoted to pay for publishing the Plain Truth magazine, radio broadcasts, fuel for driving to and from radio stations, Sabbath church services, and weekday evangelistic meetings.

These were not the 1970s when Mr Armstrong had plenty of money to hire entire hotel suites in the most expensive hotels, travel first class and drive luxury cars. During the 1930s he was short of money and hotel rooms in which he allegedly raped his daughter were costly. Besides so hectic was his weekly schedule that often he spent only a few hours in his hotel room, arriving after midnight and getting up well before sunrise, and so leaving little time for incest. Besides we will see that Dorothy was not even with him!

When seen in this context David Robinson's allegations begin to look rather silly. Let us now examine Mr Armstrong's life during those 1930s to see if we should give any credence to the incest and rape allegations. For this we now turn to Mr Armstrong's two-volume *Autobiography*.

5.0 EVIDENCE FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I have a copy of the 1986 printing of the 2-volume paper-back '*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*' and also an electronic copy downloaded from Internet from which I obtain the extracts below. All references are to my paper-back edition by volume, chapter and page number. This allows the reader to verify the quoted passages. I now place before the reader a series of quotes from the *Autobiography* from which we can form a picture of Mr Armstrong's situation during the 1930s. I emphasise by underlining the more important points.

5.1 "ON THE AIR!" (Volume 1, Chapter 31, Pages 541-542)

Music for Early Radio Broadcasts

On the first Sunday morning in the new year, 1934, precisely at 10 a.m., we were ON THE AIR. The program has been continuously on the air, without missing a single week, ever since. Mr. Hill had suggested that we produce a regular Sunday morning church service, condensed into 30 minutes. I had planned it according to his suggestion. In our new local church, then meeting out at the Jeans school house, 12 miles west of Eugene, we had a young couple, Claude and Velma Ellis. Claude was a very good tenor. His wife Velma sang alto. They sang duets. They supplied the music.

I do not remember the exact format of the program, as it started, during those first few months. Very soon the duet was replaced with a mixed quartette, with our daughter Beverly singing soprano, Mrs. Armstrong alto, Claude Ellis tenor, and Alfred Freeze bass, with Mrs. Ellis at the piano.

Note that Mr Armstrong was surrounded by friends, and family members and in particular his daughter Beverly. Also note how this program remained an ongoing weekly commitment. KORE was located in Eugene, from where it moved around 1950 to Springfield OR. Since Mrs Armstrong was with Mr Armstrong because she was one of the singers, there would not be much opportunity for incest in a hotel room.

5.2 EUGENE CAMPAIGN STARTS (Volume 1, Chapter 32, Page 546)

Accommodation

During the July-August meetings at the Firbutte school, and on through the winter with the new local church continuing meetings at the Jeans school house, 12 miles west of Eugene, my wife and children had remained in Salem. I had lived with the Elmer Fishers on their farm seven miles west of Eugene.

But by late March I had rented a house on West 4th. I think the rent was about \$7 per month. I had arranged for meetings to start in the Old Masonic Temple on Seventh Avenue. Then one evening my wife and children arrived in Eugene with our household furniture and furnishings on Ed Smith's truck. That night we arranged for my family to sleep on mattresses on the second floor of the Old Masonic Hall.

So from July to August Mr Armstrong lived apart from his family. Did David Robinson consider that in his accusations?

5.3 MY FIRST CAR (Volume 1, Chapter 35, Pages 601-604)

New suite for Mr Armstrong and worn stockings for his wife and daughters

Along in those early years, 1934 to 1936, I sometimes laughingly boasted that "I have a suit of clothes for every day in the week -- and this is it!" But that one suit finally became threadbare. It became a handicap to the work. Mr. Elmer Fisher decided I had to have a new one, and took me to the Montgomery-Ward store and bought me a new \$19.89 suit. It may have been a year and a half or two years later when that one was looking equally unpresentable. At that time Milas Helms, near Jefferson, formed two committees, one headed by him at Jefferson, and the other at the Eugene church, to solicit contributions from members for another new suit. They raised \$35.

Through these years my wife wore used clothes her sister sent her, and how we shifted to keep our children clothed I do not remember -- except that one woman at Alvadore stopped tithing by saying:

"Well, I'm not going to let any of my tithes go to buy silk stockings for those Armstrong girls." She said cotton stockings were good enough for them. Yet ALL other girls in high school wore silk stockings! This was before the days of nylons. Had our girls worn cotton stockings, they would have been ridiculed and laughed at by the other girls. Mrs. Armstrong did not want this to happen. She prevented it by accepting worn silk stockings from others, with runs in them, and sewing up the runs -- for both her daughters, and herself.

It was incidents like this that soured and prejudiced our children against God's truth. Through those years most of the members of the church in Eugene lived better, economically, than we.

.....

Let us take note of especially this last paragraph. Teenagers do not take kindly to wearing second hand stockings. Experiences like that would not have endeared Mr Armstrong's religion to his daughters. It could well explain why Dorothy was never converted and so remained carnal in spirit and may well have hated her father's religion. Let us not forget that she also was denied Christmas and birthdays.

Note also how this segment again shows a struggling Mr Armstrong of the 1930s who would not have had the resources to hire hotel suits to take his daughter to as he might have during the 1970s.

5.4 NEW FACILITIES NEEDED (Volume 2, Chapter 40, page 3)

But now our old secondhand car was about to lie down and die of old age and much use. Near the bottom of this letter of April 5, 1939, I find this: "Another serious need is a new car. The present one, five years old, is

in the Albany garage for lack of a \$50 repair bill. We are totally dependent on our car to transport the six of us (self and singers) to Portland and back for the Sunday broadcasts. We have to drive 600 miles every week - 2,500 miles a month in Gods work. The present car won't hold out longer. We are doing the very best we can with what we have to do with."

Mr Armstrong drove many miles each week and we will find in another segment arriving during the early hours of the morning in a small hotel and sleeping not even four hours to begin the activities of the next day. How ridiculous to imagine that he had time and opportunity to commit incest.

5.5 FIRST NEW CAR (Volume 2, Chapter 41, pages 27-29),

Somewhere around November, 1940, station KRSC in Seattle had switched our time from 4 p.m., which was the same time we aired on KWJJ, Portland, to 8:30 Sunday mornings. At first I suffered keen disappointment, feeling it would mean a smaller audience. But it proved a blessing in disguise. The listening audience picked up faster than ever.

Best of all, it made possible for me to drive to Seattle to put the program on live, instead of sending transcriptions. In those days our transcriptions had to be recorded in almost amateur manner on inferior equipment in Eugene. The "live" broadcasts made possible news reporting, and analysis of the very latest news, hot off the radio station teletypes, explaining the prophetic meaning with the Bible.

We were still limping along every Saturday afternoon and night the entire 320-mile drive from Eugene to Seattle in our old 1934 Graham. Constantly we had connecting rod trouble. For many months this arduous routine was continued. I usually arrived in Seattle about 1 a.m., Sunday morning. I remember well tuning in Seattle's powerful 50,000-watt station KIRO, which I could hear on the car radio the entire distance from Portland to Seattle. How I wished we might broadcast over such a powerful station! But we couldn't afford it -- then. God later allowed us not only to afford it, but opened time for us on that splendid station twice daily.

The gruelling routine of those weekend trips lasted, I believe, until the spring of 1942. Arriving at my hotel - - one of the newer but smaller ones -- a service was provided whereby the garage, a block down the street, came after my car upon arrival. After a very few hours sleep I was awakened at 5 a.m. -- showered, shaved, dressed, and down to the all-night fountain in the corner drug store, where I bought the morning paper and hurriedly checked through it for prophetic news while drinking a glass of orange juice and a cup of coffee.

Then I hurried back to my briefcase and portable typewriter, and started rapping out script for the broadcast. In those days, even before the United States entered the war, security precautions required that every word be presented in script form -- one copy for the station announcer, one from which I was to speak. I did not dare deviate from the script. I had to have the half-hour script completed promptly at 8 a.m., when I dashed down, checked out of the hotel, and found my car waiting for me at the hotel entrance. Arriving at KRSC at 8:15, I had fifteen minutes in which to hand over the station copy of the script to the announcer, scan quickly the news teletape for any last-minute bulletins of significance I had not found in the morning paper, and clip it and write out any comment on my portable typewriter.

At exactly 8:30, the familiar "GREETINGS, Friends!" was going out on the air. At 9 o'clock I leaped into my car, stopped off at the old "Half-Way House" midway to Tacoma, for breakfast, then continued the tiresome jaunt, with a state 50-mile-per-hour speed limit, on the old horse-and-buggy winding highway to Portland. Stopping off at Chehalis for lunch, I usually arrived in Portland about 3 p.m., with one hour to again check teletapes for last-minute news. Then, on the air over KWJJ at 4. Off at 4:30. Arriving in Eugene at 7:30 I would find the little church filled with a Sunday night audience. Then an evangelistic sermon and, usually, preaching every night through the week, working daytime's in the office answering letters, writing The Plain Truth, or out making calls on people needing help, people interested, holding private Bible studies, etc. It was a grind.

.....

Mr Armstrong did not write this as a defence to the incest charges but as an account of his activities in those days. He appeared to have had at times only 4 hours sleep but virtually working around the clock, whether it was driving between broadcasts, church services, evangelistic meetings or his office.

The Autobiography does not mention of Mr Armstrong's daughter Dorothy being part of this hectic program and indeed how could she be. She was at school wearing second-hand silk stockings and hating her father's church activities, which brought about their economic hardship.

I don't believe Mr Armstrong had the funds to pay for more than the absolute essential hotel accommodation, as in Seattle. Elsewhere he would have stayed with church members, for example, when on the road to those weekday meetings. *In this context the incest and rape allegations simply do not add up!*

5.6 THE CREATION MEMORIAL (Volume 1, Chapter 16, page 300)

I had disproved the theory of evolution. I had found PROOF of CREATION – PROOF of the existence of GOD -- PROOF of the divine inspiration of the BIBLE. Now I had a BASIS for belief. Now I had a solid FOUNDATION on which to build. The BIBLE had proved itself to contain AUTHORITY. I had now studied far enough to know that I must LIVE by it, and that I shall finally be JUDGED by it -- not by men, nor by man's church denominations, theories, theologies, tenets, doctrines, or pronouncements. I would be judged by Almighty GOD finally, and according to the BIBLE!

This short segment shows how Mr Armstrong had disproved Evolution and had come to recognise that God is the supreme authority. He had not been fully converted yet as the next section shows. But we do learn that he was making a serious investigation of his wife's newly found Sabbatarian religion.

5.7 The Bitter Pill (Volume 1, Chapter 16, page 305-6)

But do not suppose I quickly or easily came to admit my wife had been right, or to accept the seventh-day Sabbath as the truth of the Bible.

I spent a solid SIX MONTHS of virtual night-and-day, seven-day-a-week STUDY and research, in a determined effort to find just the opposite. I searched IN VAIN for any authority in the Bible to establish SUNDAY as the day for Christian worship. I even studied Greek sufficiently to run down every possible questionable text in the original Greek. I studied the Commentaries. I studied the Lexicons and "Robertson's Grammar of the Greek New Testament". Then I studied HISTORY. I delved into encyclopedias – the "Britannica", the "Americana", and several religious encyclopedias. I searched the "Jewish Encyclopedia", and the "Catholic Encyclopedia". I read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", especially his chapter 15 dealing with the religious history of the first four hundred years after Christ. And one of the most convincing evidences against Sunday was in the history of how and when it began.

I left no stone unturned. I found clever arguments. I will confess that, so eager was I to overthrow this Sabbath belief of my wife, at one point in this intensive study I believed I might possibly have been able to use arguments to confuse and upset my wife on the Sabbath question. But there was no temptation to try to do it. I knew these arguments were not honest! I could not deliberately try to deceive my wife with dishonest arguments. The thought was immediately pushed aside. I know now she could not have been deceived.

Finally, after six months, the TRUTH had become crystal clear. At last I KNEW what was the truth. Once again, GOD had taken me to a licking! It had been bewildering -- utterly frustrating! It seemed as if some mysterious, invisible hand was disintegrating every business I started!

That was precisely what was happening! The hand of God was taking away every activity on which my heart had been set -- the business success before whose shrine I had worshipped. This zeal to become important in the business world had become an idol. God was destroying the idol. He was knocking me down -- again and again! He was puncturing the ego, deflating the vanity.

It is plain that Mr Armstrong made a very thorough investigation that took him out of circulation for half a year. He even studied N.T. Greek and familiarised himself with various Bible study aids. This was not a passing fad for he was taking it seriously. He had set out to prove his wife wrong on the Sabbath but in the end came to acknowledge she was right.

I find it inconceivable that a man who has gone through so intensive a study and therefore must have known there is a God, would have over a period of 10 years wilfully committed incest with his daughter. If Mr Armstrong had been accused of an adultery, then I would have compared this to David's affair with Bathsheba but of which David repented without any further sins of adultery. Instead we are considering that Mr Armstrong committed one of the worst possible sexual offences and continued this over a period of a decade. I don't believe that God's 20th-century servant could have done that. The above personal history of Mr Armstrong does not fit so vile a sin.

6.0 THE EVIDENCE OF THE APRIL 1984 AMBASSADOR REPORT EXAMINED

Amongst the strongest accusations against Mr Herbert W. Armstrong are those published by John Trechak in his Ambassador Reports, for example the following of April 1984. It will be shown that these should not be taken on face value. Everywhere we find telltale signs of the reports falseness. Note, for example, in the second paragraph how John Trechak twice refers to the former Radio Church of God as an 'organization', thus revealing what he really thought of this church. Even when he refers to it as a church, it is to highlight Dorothy's departure from her father's church in 1951. It should be plain that neither John Trechack nor Dorothy were called by God, let alone ever converted to Way of God's church.

Extract From The April 1984 Ambassador Report

Dorothy has stated that her sexual relationship with her father continued into the early forties. In 1943 Herbert officiated at the ceremony in which Dorothy was married to Vern Mattson, who soon afterward was to serve overseas in the U.S. Marines. We have no information that the incestuous relationship continued beyond that point. However, Dorothy has related to friends how, around the time of her engagement, Herbert told her that her marriage need not put an end to their own special relationship.

Shortly after Vern's discharge from the military, Herbert was able to provide him with employment within his growing organization. Although Dorothy drifted away from her father's church by around 1951, Vern continued his association. He was the organization's business manager before the Albert Portune era.

Note: commenting on the above material, Mr William Dankenbring relates: A friend of mine, when he learned of these allegations years ago, went directly to Mr. Vern Mattson, who had married Herbert Armstrong's younger daughter. He was a golfing buddy and friend of Mattson, so he asked him point-blank if the accusations and rumours were true. Mr. Mattson sadly informed him that they indeed were factual. In fact, when Mr. Mattson himself learned of the truth of Herbert having had sex with the woman who later became Mattson's wife, he was furious, and in a rage took a pistol, and burst into Herbert Armstrong's private office, waving the pistol around. Herbert, shaking like a leaf, apologized profusely and promised to never do such a thing again.

Accounts, such as the preceding one have been uncritically accepted by many. Let us look at these more critically. First the ultimate source is John Trechak through his Ambassador Report. I would not trust John Trechak for he could easily be a plant by mainstream Christendom to discredit the remarkably successful Mr Herbert Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God. And what better way to discredit a church and its leader than to accuse him of the vilest of sexual misconduct, which although difficult to prove is also difficult to disprove.

Although John Trechak was the ultimate source, he allegedly obtained the accusation through a chain of five people. The first being Mr William F. Dankenbring, who allegedly obtained it from an unnamed friend, who also happened to be a golf buddy of Dorothy's husband Vern Mattson. This unnamed friend of Mr

Dankenbring, obtained the information from Vern Mattson, who in turn allegedly got it from his wife Dorothy. There are five people between the alleged incest and gullible readers of John Trechak's Ambassador Report – Dorothy, her husband, his unnamed golf buddy, Dankenbring and Trechack. Not exactly an inspiring chain of witnesses!

Returning to that chain of five doubtful witnesses, let us remember that no court of law should allow hearsay evidence. Here we are asked to accept even fifth-hand hearsay evidence! This is worse than gossip conducted over the back fence to destroy someone's reputation. No one called by God should be persuaded by such shoddy evidence. It gets worse on closer inspection.

God's Word requires us to test the witness and his testimony. Which of these witnesses can we test? Trechak is dead and I suspect he was a plant by mainstream Christendom. Also I place a huge question mark next to the name Mr Dankenbring. We have no idea who is Mr Dankenbring's unnamed friend and Vern's golf buddy, but that he was a friend of Mr Dankenbring does not inspire confidence.

We are told that when Vern Mattson learnt about the incest he stormed into Mr Armstrong's office threatening him with a pistol and that Mr Armstrong confessed. What is the worth of a confession obtained under such circumstances? How would we react when a maddened gunman accuses us?

Yet Ambassador Report also claims this aggrieved son-in-law continued in Mr Armstrong's employ and even after his wife Dorothy left her father's church in 1951. We are not talking about staying in an otherwise convenient business relationship but about staying in a fundamentalist church founded on the teachings of his allegedly incestuous father-in-law. Surely it should be anathema to Vern Mattson to remain employed by allegedly so vile a man and minister of religion. How could he possibly see Mr Armstrong as God's servant if he still believed in his wife's incest allegations? Indeed if he continued believing his wife's accusations but remained employed by what he saw was a despicable church leader, then what does this tell us about Vern Mattson's morals?

One explanation could be that by 1951 Vern Mattson no longer believed his wife's accusation! Perhaps by then he had seen inconsistencies in Dorothy's story and perhaps he had come to know Mr Armstrong better. It would not be the first time the true nature of a spouse is seen only years into a marriage.

Of course this is speculation but we deserve an answer to the question, *Why did Vern Mattson continue to work for Mr Armstrong after his wife left her father's church?* The only reasonable answer seems to be that Dorothy's accusations no longer held much sway with her husband. He certainly no longer waved a gun under Mr Armstrong's nose but instead worked to promote Mr Armstrong's life's work. Again we find after carefully considering this Ambassador Report that there remains more than a reasonable doubt over Mr Herbert Armstrong's alleged guilt.

7.0 WHY DID MR ARMSTRONG NOT SUE?

Why did Mr Armstrong not sue his 1980's accusers? Such accusations, even when false, are not easily disproved. Fathers are readily judged guilty by the world on the say so of a disaffected daughter. Such cases, even if later disproved, causes irreparable damage to the father's reputation. Suing would also have brought the work to a halt because it would have taken most of Mr Armstrong's time and even for several years. Besides which father would feel comfortable suing others, when this would inevitably lead to his children being dragged through the courts? In the end there would be no winners but only losers, including the work of God on which he should be concentrating. That Mr Armstrong did not sue his accusers is no admission of guilt.

8.0 MR ARMSTRONG UNDER ATTACK BY HIS FAMILY AND CHRISTENDOM

Let us also remember that these accusations surfaced only after the 1967 death of Mrs Loma Armstrong. Further that Garner Ted's ambitions became evident after his mother's death. Mrs Loma Armstrong's agonising death would have been seen by many the result of a misguided zeal for Mr Armstrong's healing doctrine. This may well have caused resentment with both Dorothy and Garner Ted; and may have shaped their attitude towards their father and 'his' religion. They may have overlooked that their mother chose to adhere to the healing doctrine. Besides I reject that Garner Ted and Dorothy were converted.

I would like to know what motivated Dorothy to make her allegations only decades later? If incest did take place between her age 13 to 23, why did she allow it to continue beyond age 16 and even till age 23 when she married? At age 18 she must have known it was immoral and even adultery against her mother and should and could have stopped it. Yet if the allegations are true, she continued even till age 23. Her story just does not add up!

We must remember that Mr Armstrong incurred the wrath of Mainstream Christendom for his outspoken denunciation of their mainly pagan non-biblical doctrines. He openly denounced as pagan their Sunday, Good Friday, Easter and Christmas observances. Likewise he rejected most of their doctrines, including their Heaven and Hell eschatology, Trinity, their infant baptism. In addition he had a powerful prophetic message that identified as Israelite the Anglo-Saxon and certain other nations. Compared to this Mainstream Christendom's message lacked substance and relevance in especially the Cold War era. No wonder Mr Armstrong was despised by Mainstream Christendom. I think it no accident that men like the late John Trechak arose who published Ambassador Report which was not only critical of but quite condemnatory of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and his teaching.

Reading condemnations of Mr Herbert W. Armstrong, like the book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* raises a number of questions about the authors, including whether they were ever truly converted to Mr Armstrong's teaching. I recall one of his critics referring to the biblical holy days and festivals as '*feasts of the Jews*' which must cause us to question his conversion. We should thoroughly test Mr Armstrong's accusers before we take notice of their accusations.

Finally let us look at Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's message and work. I can read with understanding God's Word only because I was drawn by God to study Mr Armstrong's literature. It was not David Robinson or Garner Ted or Dorothy Armstrong or Fred Coulter or Gerald Flurry who opened my understanding to God's Word. Let us remember that Mr Herbert W. Armstrong was for all of us our gateway to God's Truth.

It is plain to me that only Mr Armstrong and no one else was God's 20th-century servant. I don't believe that the person who gave us so much enlightening literature could have committed incest with his daughter.

My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* shows how I see three major but related doctrinal errors in Mr Armstrong's teaching but I do not believe he committed those acts or that he was a deliberately false prophet as some now claim. Instead I believe that to discredit Mr Armstrong's teaching, Satan snared a number of men and women in both his family and in the Worldwide Church of God. Satan appears to have largely succeeded but that is a test God allows to be applied to His church. As each issue of *The Journal* shows the churches of God are failing this test in large measure.

9.0 EVIDENCE FROM OTHER SOURCES

The following quotes from Mr Robert J. Thiel's article "*15 Accusations and Truthful Responses about Herbert W. Armstrong*" (URL reference see Section 11.0) should convince the reader that there exists more than a reasonable doubt and that no jury should find Mr Armstrong guilty of those vile incest allegations. Robert Thiel's list of fifteen accusations levelled against Mr Armstrong range from his adopting his second initial 'W' without having a second name to that he drank too much. The reader is urged to access Mr Robert Thiel's Internet based article (e.g. through his public library's Internet service) to judge for himself the

puerile nature of those accusations. The following quotations are from Mr Robert Thiel's article concerning the incest allegations.

(START QUOTATIONS FROM ROBERT THIEL'S "15-ACCUSATIONS..." ARTICLE)

"Gross impropriety *Accusation No. 4*: HWA was guilty of gross sexual impropriety.

"I investigated four allegations related to this specific accusation and concluded that unless certain alleged audiotapes (which have never been made public, and I requested them and even spoke to one who had claimed to hear them--he finally admitted to me that he actually had not) surface (and I made diligent inquiry to attempt to find them, including dozens of phone calls, plus E-mails through late February 2003, and even later after this article was originally published), the accusations are not provable and aspects of the accusations are indeed disprovable.

"Perhaps I should mention that since one aspect of these accusations is commonly attributed to a comment supposedly made by HWA's son Garner Ted Armstrong (GTA) concerning his dad and another relative. I personally called Garner Ted Armstrong's office on Dec. 12, 2002 to inquire about this particular accusation. I was not able to speak with GTA directly, but a key employee of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association discussed it with him and got back with me. Through his spokesperson, GTA declined to comment except to pass on the message that "everything you really need to know about my father is contained within the autobiography." Thus GTA did not stand by a statement attributed to him on this matter--so how can any believe this?

"Based on my experience in trying to track down credible sources for this accusation, all I find--including a whole chapter in Robinson's book--is "just a lot of bluster." Actually, it appears to me that no one who has made or repeated most of the accusations against HWA actually has any real proof for most of them--no one seems to have checked with either the primary (those involved) or secondary sources (those with proof), but instead relied on accusation and rumor--simply stating a false charge does not make it true, no matter how many times it may be repeated."

"J. Tkach's most serious charge *Accusation 15*: HWA ran a cult

"If the Joseph Tkach WCG had real reason to know that Mr. Armstrong was guilty of any of the 14 previous accusations, it is logical that it would have mentioned them or perhaps included them in his book *Transformed by Truth*. The truth is that the only accusations above that are directly mentioned to in the book (or official WCG sources) are those regarding prophecies. Yes, J. Tkach states that HWA was wrong doctrinally and prophetically, but perhaps the roughest comment alluded to be against HWA in *Transformed by Truth* was suggesting HWA taught 'cultism': 'As successor to WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong, Tkach boldly led the Pasadena, California-based church from cultism into Christianity.' ..."

(END QUOTATIONS FROM ROBERT THIEL'S "15-ACCUSATIONS..." ARTICLE)

Let us remember that the late Garner Ted Armstrong's office in 2003 declined to support Garner Ted Armstrong's 1970s accusations. Now why would that be? Also interesting is that Joseph W. Tkach and his transformed WCG apart from denying Mr Armstrong's teaching and charging him with teaching cultism did not even allude to the incest accusations. Yet the late Mr Tkach knew the principal accusers and must have had access to the WCG's legal department's files. There are plenty of accusations that have come to us even fifth hand but we fail to find substance to those accusations. So why did so many judge God's servant the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong?

10.0 LESSER ACCUSATIONS

Apart from the incest accusations Mr Herbert W. Armstrong was also accused of plagiarism, extravagantly spending church funds and autocratically standing over those who dared question aspects of his doctrine or his administration. When judging him on these lesser accusations we should remember that Mr Armstrong

saw himself as God's messenger to God's church and even God's end-time Elijah and so effectively infallible and answerable only to God; and certainly not answerable to this world's mores like plagiarism.

My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (See section 11.0) shows Mr Herbert W. Armstrong did not lead God's church era of Philadelphia but instead led from 1934 God's church era of Laodicea, whose Greek name suggests a lording it over the people and that indeed characterized Mr Armstrong's ministry. That paper also shows that Mr Armstrong and his ministry were lukewarm to a pivotal doctrine of God's Plan, and that this led to his being spewed from our Lord's mouth during 1978/79. Laodicea is an era in which we must expect a lording over the people, as indeed Mr Armstrong's ministry did. It was not the era of Philadelphia which should be noted for its brotherly love. That Mr Armstrong's era lacked brotherly love can be seen from his ministry having become utterly divided and in open conflict.

I do not see all this absolving Mr Armstrong of those lesser accusations, for with the benefit of hindsight these actions caused great damage to the work in the long run. In the light of Revelation 3:14-21, Laodicea and its characteristics were part of God's Plan for our day. Since 1974 and especially during the 1990s we witnessed prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes but we were unaware of this because we mistakenly believed we were in Philadelphia.

[Editing Note: I do not support these particularly views of Henk's in the above couple of paragraphs and caution the reader not to believe anything of this nature without looking at both sides of the story and proving all things – Roger Waite]

Let us begin with the lesser charge of plagiarism. This concerns especially Mr Armstrong's most successful book *The United States and Britain In Prophecy*. Much of this book is based on the Rev. J. H. Allen's book *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*. Mr Armstrong apparently saw the truth contained in this book as God's truth and therefore freely available, but may have decided to rewrite it to avoid its at times mainstream theology. Mr Armstrong would not have seen this as plagiarism but as utilising truth gathered by a man God had raised for this purpose. Parallels being the life works of James H. Strong, W. Gesenius, Dr Ethelbert W. Bullinger, G. G. Rupert, and J. H. Thayer. Those that charged Mr Herbert W. Armstrong with the 'crime' of plagiarism were primarily motivated with destroying his reputation.

Many have also condemned Mr Armstrong's extravagant spending of church funds. For example, hiring the Vienna Symphony Orchestra for the opening of the Pasadena auditorium. We must see these actions in terms of his personal philosophy, which he acquired as a successful businessman, that to meet the best people one should travel first class, stay in first class hotels, wear expensive clothes and not be seen skimping on expenses. Obviously there were less expensive ways of opening the auditorium but for Mr Armstrong only the best could serve God's work. No doubt he expected even the poorest church members, whose tithes and offerings helped pay for all this, to be equally enthusiastic. We should not be surprised that many, after witnessing the events of the 1990s and hearing of the many accusations against Mr Armstrong, then turned against him: after all Satan intends to snare God's elect.

Mr Armstrong is also accused of having been tough and autocratic to the point of arrogance. That may be true but he did publish the Plain Truth around the world in seven languages and gave away gratis huge amounts of church literature. I wonder how many of us would have managed to publish even a couple of photocopied pages locally with monthly articles that would be eagerly sought after by the public? Mr Armstrong managed a huge publishing and broadcasting enterprise, three university-style colleges, a large church organization with an annual turn over of hundreds of millions dollars. How many entrepreneurs running such an enterprise are noted for their kindness, tolerance and leniency? After all does not God foretell He will rule the world with a rod of iron? Today we witness in *The Journal* monthly an avalanche of conflicting doctrinal ideas. I suspect these already existed during Mr Armstrong's life time but how could he have coped with this had he agreed to consider every whim of doctrine?

Before we condemn Mr Armstrong of the many lesser wrongs he has been accused of, we must remember to consider these from his point of view and also that it is easy to judge things with perfect hindsight. He accomplished a huge work but he did make errors; as have all of God's human servants. King David made many errors and committed some of the worst sins on record. But this king's redeeming feature was that he repented of his sins once he became aware of them. The thesis of my paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (See section 11.0) is to point to a major sin committed in God's church during 1974 and to call the ministry to lead us to repentance rather than remain in conflict with one another. So far this has not happened and so far the church continues to splinter and diminish. Our focus should be on that rather than on condemning God's 20th-century servant, the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong.

11.0 REFERENCES

The following are the principal references mentioned in this paper:

- *Mr Armstrong's Autobiograph* (available from several sources on Internet),
- *How Are The Mighty Fallen!*, by Mr Dankenbring & John D. Keyser available on Internet at <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/mityfall.htm> ,
- *John Trechak's Ambassador's Report of April 1984*
- *Robert Thiele's 15 Accusations* (available on Internet at <http://www.cogwriter.com/hwaacc.htm>)
- *Laodicea's Lamp!* (Paper P1 at my Internet home page www.rightly-dividing.net)

12.0 IN CONCLUSION

The incest and rape allegations have been critically examined and shown to lack substance to such an extent that we must consider them puerile and scurrilous. In particular it was shown that the incest allegations do not fit Mr Herbert W. Armstrong's 1930s circumstances. It was shown that the allegations came from people who had remained carnal in spirit and unconverted despite several being ordained ministers. Only those called by God the Father to His Church and who properly responded to His call and who continued to grow in grace and knowledge may be considered as truly converted to God's Way: and only they will show proper fruits which we may test (Mat 7:15-20). They will recognize that the late Mr Herbert W. Armstrong and no other man was called by God the Father to be His servant to His 20th-century Church of God. We must test Mr Armstrong's accusers and reject those that disrespected and ridiculed God's 20th-century servant and who even denied God's Word. All of Mr Armstrong's accusers display unsatisfactory fruits.

We must test the witnesses, their testimony and their motivation before we judge. Many failed to do this and carelessly related the 1990s demise of the Worldwide Church of God with Mr Armstrong's alleged sins. My paper *Laodicea's Lamp!* (See section 11.0) reveals there is an entirely different explanation for the events that overtook the former Worldwide Church of God. That these events are prophecy fulfilled before our eyes but which were not seen because our focus was not on God's Word but on what our blinded guides told us. We failed to prove all things (1 Thes 5:21) and as *Laodicea's Lamp!* shows this we failed from as far back as 1974, when the real problems began!

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