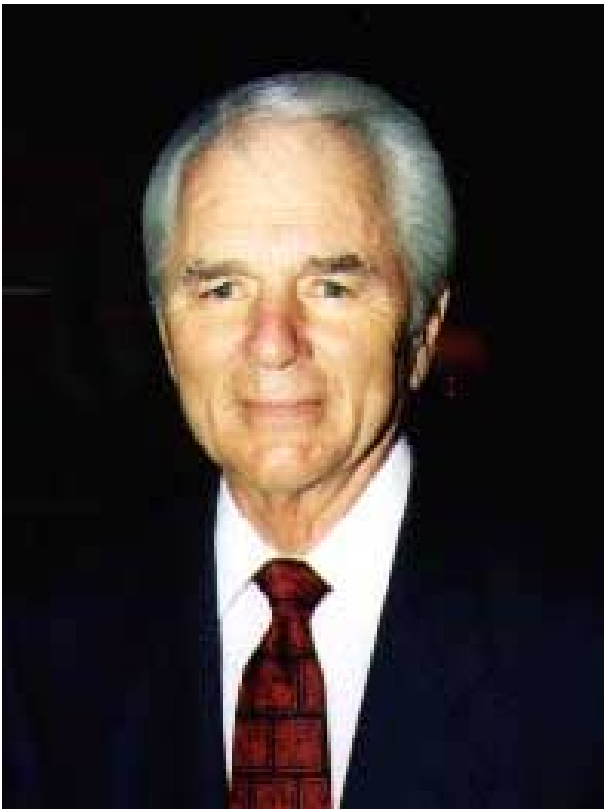


End of an Era –

Garner Ted Armstrong, Once Famed Evangelist, Dies in Hospital

The dulcet tones of the voice of Garner Ted Armstrong, have been silenced. The one-time voice of the World Tomorrow radio and television programs has gone off the air – for the final time. The legacy of Herbert and Ted Armstrong will now have to be written by their heirs and the remaining ministers of churches which were spawned by the break-up of the World-wide Church of God after the death of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. With some 300 or more break-away groups, the harvest would seem to be ripe – but devastated in the aftermath of the hurricane which has swept over the once strong and viable religious organization. What happens now?

William F. Dankenbring



“Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen! Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice . . .

“Saul and Jonathan – in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions . . .

“How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother . . .

“How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!”

II Samuel 1:19-27.

Toward the end of August, famed evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong was hospitalized for complications arising from pneumonia. He was placed in intensive care and then removed to a regular room in the hospital in Tyler, Texas, after his breathing returned to normal. But he reacted adversely to an antibiotic and had to be returned to intensive care once again. Ted's liver was damaged and he appeared to be in a coma. He died 1:30 pm, Monday afternoon, September 15, 2003. Funeral services were held Thursday of that week, at the Croley Funeral Home in Gladewater, Texas.

His death, at the age of 73, came as a shock to his family and church, who fully expected him to recover and be healed. As his condition grew worse, however, the church leaders called on the church for a day of fasting and prayer. Nevertheless, a few days later he died.

Memories

Memories of Ted Armstrong came flooding back into my mind, as I heard of this sad news. I remember meeting him for the first time at Gladewater, Texas, at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles in 1958. I was then beginning my senior year at Shoreline High School in Seattle, Washington, and had recently begun attending the Radio Church of God, as it was then known, in Tacoma, Washington, ministered to by Jimmy Friddle.

I knew Ted Armstrong personally, having attended Ambassador College from 1959 to 1963, taking his second year Bible Class in 1960. He picked me to begin editing reprint articles that year, as I began working in the Mail Receiving Department, after serving a year on the "Construction crew" my freshman year. When I graduated in 1963, I worked in the Letter Answering Department, under Clint Zimmerman, and began writing articles for the church's magazines in 1964-65. Ted was thrilled with my work and abilities, at that time, and picked me to write a book on the Proof of God, and placed me as the head of a new "booklet department" under David Jon Hill. I remember those years vividly, as I was still single, unmarried, and looking for a wife! When I was really down in the dumps, my personal life seemingly a disaster, with no marriage prospects in sight, he suddenly began praising me to the hilt in a sermon at the Feast of Tabernacles, in Squaw Valley, Lake Tahoe area, of California. He said I was worth 6-8 men "in the field," meaning the field ministry.

Sadly, however, trials and tests came, and before long I found myself in the San Francisco area, assisting Dennis Luker, a field minister, in 1967, the year of the 'Hippies,' and "Flower Power," and the height of the Vietnam War. I returned to Pasadena that fall and my personal life had taken on new meaning. I married Capitola ("Cappy") Callihan, in September of that year, and resumed working in the Letter Answering Department and writing articles for the magazines. I was later transferred to become a writer also for the Ambassador College Correspondence Course, under Richard Sedliacik.

Division and Corruption

In the early 1970's, however, as the church became rent with division and dissension, horrible facts came to light about the personal life of Garner Ted Armstrong. It became "common knowledge" (but never discussed openly) that he had been having many adulterous affairs with a number of Ambassador college coeds, babysitters, and women in the church. This news was shocking – appalling – devastating – and many left the church in a spirit of bitterness and anger as a result, although these "allegations" were never publicly admitted or confessed.

Nevertheless, the evidence was overwhelming, and in 1977 a full-color magazine was produced by a number of ex-Worldwidiers (the Radio Church of God had since been renamed as the "Worldwide Church of God") exposing and blazing forth with all the dirt, shame, and evil doings of the Armstrongs, especially Garner Ted. The lead article, "In Bed with Garner Ted," was written by one of the Ambassador coeds he had seduced more than once.

Another lead article was written by former evangelist in the church, Al Carrozzo, who had split because of the shameful cover-up of Ted's misdeeds and the way the church was being run by Herbert Armstrong. (The Armstrongs were aptly named "Arm-strong" as they consistently used "strong arm" tactics to quell dissent and to subdue rebellion in the ranks). In this article, titled "The Profligate Son," evangelist Al Carrozzo wrote, "In spite of repeated public denials, Ted has privately admitted that he has been guilty of flagrant, continuous adultery and fornication for almost a quarter of a century [remember, this was written in 1977] – as a church member, an executive, and an evangelist!" (*Ambassador Report*, 1977, page 44).

Carrozzo said that he first learned of Ted's amorous affairs in 1965 when it came to light that another minister in the church had been committing adultery with two coeds who worked with him. Upon discovery, in his own defense he challenged that if Garner Ted could do it and get away with it, then the church had no right to discipline him. However, the double standard was quickly employed – he was immediately dismissed and disfellowshipped when he would not submit to being stripped of his ministerial credentials, even though he was offered another job.

Seemingly, in his conversations with Al Carrozzo at that time, Ted was very emotional. Despite his womanizing and adultery, he had the conviction that he was especially called to preach the gospel. He said, "Put me behind bars, slip my food to me, keep me in solitary confinement, but put a microphone in front of me because I must preach this message to the whole world!"

Later it dawned on Carrozzo that Ted was a sterling actor and a powerful persuader – one who could make *you* feel guilty for even bringing up a delicate subject with him such as the matter of his committing adultery!

Years later, in 1972, Ted's affairs once again surfaced. In the evening of January 30 there was a confrontation with leading church ministers and his father. He returned home from a Laker's basketball game to find his living room filled with upper echelon ministers and his father, and most of the headquarters leadership. As Al Carozzo put it, he was stunned, and, "Upon learning the purpose of their visit, he flew into a reactionary rage during which he openly admitted he had had illicit sexual relations with some 200 women – and this was his 'conservative estimate' – during his two decades of association with his father's church. Among his consorts were literally dozens of youthful, wide-eyed coeds, plus several who became executive or ministerial wives."

Ted also confessed to having an intimate sexual relationship with an Ambassador college coed and the stewardess on the church's Falcon jet. The affair allegedly began in Jerusalem in 1970. He claimed that this was, however, real love – he wanted to divorce his wife Shirley and marry this young girl. However, years later I received word from the man who later married this woman that it wasn't really a love affair at all. He told me that the girl feared Ted, and was greatly frightened by his advances, and that he actually *raped* her. When she fled from the college and went back home, he allegedly followed her and camped out in front of her home, causing her to feel terror. She died several years ago.

When I first began learning of these affairs, about 1972, it caused me and many other church members great consternation, and feelings of anger. A vast cover-up was perpetrated by his father who publicly denied Ted's problems were "moral" issues at all. He claimed they were problems due to stress and a heavy work load, but this was as false and disingenuous a tall tale as the human heart ever devised. Furthermore, it was announced by Herbert himself that any who would try to look into the matters for themselves would be threatened with quick disfellowshipment, and church members were severely warned not to do so "in the name of Christ"! At the time, I felt such a proclamation bordered on utter blasphemy -- using the name of Christ in a profane, blasphemous manner.

At one time, in the mid 1970s, Ted told Al Carozzo, "Al, let's get one thing straight! I'm a no good, adulterating, fornicating son of a bitch!" These words were said to him at 10:05 am, Wednesday, May 16, 1973. Despite this admission, however, Ted's problems with lust and adultery continued to surface afterwards. Whenever they threatened to reach the public, the facts were quickly squelched and suppressed, and flatly denied, over and over again, like a broken record.

When Ted's amorous affairs were discovered, his father did not take immediate action to relieve him of his responsibility, or publicly rebuke him for his sins. Rather, he was given a slap on the wrist. One time he was temporarily exiled to a cabin in beautiful Colorado, to ponder his ways. Another time he was exiled to Hawaii, to consider his life style. While there, however, the "old Ted" came back to the forefront. An angry letter was received at the church headquarters from the woman who managed a massage parlor in Hawaii. She wrote exclaiming that one of her girls who had been

watching Ted on television, and striving to come out of sin, was horrified when she recognized Ted himself in the “massage parlor.”

For some reason, Herbert Armstrong never took strong action regarding his son’s rampant adulteries. Rather, as Al Carrozzo put it, “Instead of removing Ted from the ministry for good – as he had done with other ministers guilty of adultery – he precipitated a vast cover-up, much like former President Nixon attempted. There is one major difference though: Herbert had been covering up Ted’s sexual looseness since the early 1950s” (*ibid.*, page 46).

Beginning Triumph Publishing

As these horrible revelations were hitting the fan, I was let go from employment with the church in 1974, and felt relieved and yet angry, because I had dedicated my life to serving God and I wasn’t about to allow men to suspend me from that calling. So I began publishing books under the aegis of Triumph Publishing Company, books on creation versus evolution (*The First Genesis: A New Case for Creation*), Bible prophecy (*The Last Days, Beyond Star Wars*), and sound Bible based doctrinal (*Overcoming Satan*), and others. During this time I also published a very successful book entitled *Health Secrets from the Bible*, and a unique book by Evangelist Raymond F. McNair on American and British history titled *Ascent to Greatness*, and one by a church member Ivor Fletcher titled *Incredible History of God’s True Church*.

As Ted’s sins became well known in private circles, and the cover-up continued for years (any who spoke of these things were kicked out of the church immediately), I found myself struggling to keep publishing these books, as the church seemed to develop a very negative attitude toward them and I was accused, in the early 1980s, of being “competitive” and my books suddenly began to be called “unapproved” from the pulpit and at the annual Festivals. My name and reputation were becoming “mud” in the eyes of jealous and position-oriented ministers, who truckled and toadied before those above them in the church government.

Ted himself was finally “fired” and disfellowshipped from the very church his father had started in 1934 and for which he had been the “heir apparent” for many years. This occurred in 1978, the year before the church itself was savagely attacked by the state of California. In 1979 the state itself intervened and seized the church’s property and assets, causing Herbert Armstrong to transfer church government and accounts to Tucson, Arizona. With no funds coming to the Pasadena offices, the state quickly ran out of money to run the “receivership.” Church members conducted massive demonstrations against the state action. Finally, the state legislature passed new legislation forbidding the Attorney General from interfering in the affairs of churches and religious institutions, bringing the receivership to an end.

By this time, of course, Ted had been removed from the Worldwide Church of God. The breach between father and son was irreparable.

I liked Ted as a person, and his personality was very winsome and delightful. I remember playing against him numerous times on the basketball court, in softball games, and truly admired his camaraderie, sense of humor, and many talents. Nevertheless, his personal life of infidelity and womanizing I could not stomach, nor the cover-up engineered by his father all those years.

When the church began going down the slippery slope of wickedness and cover-ups, and men began playing politics by shameless bootlicking, toadying and servile, self-aggrandizement, corruption became rampant and the name of the game and the way to get ahead. I was thankful to no longer be employed by the church, or a part of its administration. There was a feeling of freedom and liberty to be able to be independent, and to publish the truth without fear or favor of men.

Beginning of a New Work

Even so, the new church authorities decided to put me out of the church in January, 1987, a year after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong. Since then I began Triumph Prophetic Ministries, which publishes the very magazine you are reading.

Over the years, God led me to discover new truths and foundational doctrines. I determined to take nothing for granted, and investigated and reviewed the basic doctrinal teachings of the church. I wanted to make certain that I was going in the right direction – following God’s Word – and decided to “assume” nothing, but once again set myself to “prove ALL things” (I Thess.5:21).

As Triumph Prophetic Ministries grew, I came to have major differences of opinion regarding the Word of God, and true Biblical doctrine regarding the Holy Days of God and the sacred Calendar, and other issues. While the Worldwide Church of God was rapidly rejecting ALL the basic teachings of Herbert Armstrong, and returning to Protestantism, I set out proving which teachings were correct and which ones were in error. I learned that Herbert Armstrong was indeed right on most things – and was headed in the right direction, overall. But I learned that he made several major mistakes when it came to the true Passover, Pentecost, and the true Calendar of God.

I began shouting aloud, thundering the “new truth” which God had revealed, proving FROM THE SCRIPTURES when Passover and Pentecost should be observed. But it was seemingly to no avail. Only a relative few were interested in “re-proving” the truth and making sure their foundation. Although the Worldwide Church of God became divided after the passing of Herbert W. Armstrong, in January, 1986, none of the other churches which arose after the death of Herbert Armstrong paid any attention to these new provable revelations. Even after the Tkachs, father and son, began clearly preaching heresy and began leading the Worldwide Church of God back into rampant paganism and error, which I had been fulminating against since 1987, the other newly formed churches kept me at arms distance, and refused to investigate whether they were in fact teaching error themselves. They all followed the legacy of Herbert

Armstrong, right or wrong, each one vying with the others, claiming to be the “only one” truly following in his footsteps and deserving of wearing his “mantle.”

Feet of Clay

Ted was at one time the second-in-command of the Worldwide Church of God. Everybody thought he would be one of the “two witnesses,” together with his father. Their falling out in 1978 created great waves in the church. At that time he began his own church, the Church of God, International, with Ron Dart as his major helper. But he was ejected from that church in the mid-1990s due to the uncovering of even more ongoing sexual scandals and adultery accusations.

Seemingly, all his life, during his ministry, from the early 1950’s till the ‘90s, allegations of sexual misconduct, and even rape, were made against Ted Armstrong. How horrible it all was! How could such a man continue in the ministry of the great God who ABHORS sexual immorality, and even more, HYPOCRISY and the subsequent COVER UPS!

Nevertheless, everyone knows Ted was a gifted speaker and orator, and many felt he was himself a victim, as well as a victimizer. One can only wonder how he survived growing up under the iron-fisted rule of his totalitarian father, Herbert Armstrong, who had his own hypocrisies and hidden sins, which included adultery and womanizing (though nowhere near to the same extent as that of his son!).

Blind Leading the Blind

How God will judge Garner Ted in the resurrection, I do not claim to know. I have often wished devoutly that he would truly repent, and turn to God, in complete broken-hearted sincerity. Maybe at some point late in his life he did. Nevertheless, it appears to me he will have a great deal to answer for when he stands before Christ! I shudder to think of him standing before Christ, one day, fulfilling Jesus’ words: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matt.7:22-23, NKJV).

When it came to the greater truths of God, and spiritual insight, Ted was “blind” to the truth. Even earlier this year, when confronted with the fact that in one place he wrote that Christ appeared before Pilate at 6:00 am in the morning, and in another place he said that it was at 12:00 am midnight, this contradiction wasn’t important enough to him to bother to correct!

What was seemingly unimportant to him is very important to Jesus Christ, who warned, “They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into the ditch” (Matt.15:14). Yeshua also declared, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt.16:6). These were the religious leaders

and self-anointed ministers and preachers of the time. They, like many ministers professing to serve God today, were “blind” to the true things of God (Matt.16:11).

Jesus was very angry with the religious establishment who were guilty of despicable hypocrisy. He exclaimed, in thundering denunciation of hypocrites claiming to serve Him, “WOE to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, *hypocrites!* You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to” (Matt.23:14, NIV). He thundered, “WOE to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and see to make a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you, blind guides!” (verses 15-16, NIV).

Ted seemed to start out with such promise. He may well have felt abused and mistreated by his father as a young boy, even neglected. It is said that those who become victimizers of others were often victims in their own childhoods. Ted later wrote a horrible booklet entitled “The Plain Truth about Child Rearing” – probably one of the worse, most ungodly booklets ever written, teaching parents to spank even tiny infants, and attributed their crying to incipient “rebellion” and “carnality.” Was he himself treated this way as a young child?

End of an Era

There is no doubt in my mind that Ted was blinded, like so many others, to the truth of God concerning many fundamental Biblical truths. He did not seem to have a true questing, seeking, searching, humble heart, willing to confess it and admit it when he was proved wrong. Instead, his approach, for years, I remember, was to please his father at all costs – even if it was to forsake and give up a truth of the Word of God.

One year in the mid-1970s he as much as admitted it. A ministerial conference was being held in Pasadena, I believe it was in 1973 or 74. At this conference he admitted to having had an “affair” with a stewardess on the church Falcon jet. He professed his repentance. Then, to demonstrate his loyalty to his father, Ted told the ministers meeting in Pasadena, that even if he *knew* a particular Scripture – for example, some point in the book of Hebrews -- meant a certain thing, but his father saw it differently, then he would accommodate his father and teach it *his way* – even if he *knew* it was wrong!

When I heard those words, I was very disappointed and heart-broken. I knew that was the *wrong attitude!* God’s Word must come first before *anything else!*

When I heard Ted make that confession, I knew in my own heart, that he was not a God-fearing, God serving man – but a servant of “men,” who placed his own father on a far higher pedestal than God Himself – in other words, as an IDOL figure or image!

On the other hand, Ted did teach a great deal of basic truth. He taught obedience to the laws of God – although he himself did not obey them! He taught the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Messiah – but I do not know how seriously he himself took these things.

Certainly, I hope that in the scales of justice, when God judges the world -- I sincerely hope that Ted's good deeds will outweigh his bad deeds, and he will be entitled to a portion in the World to Come.

It is with profound sorrow that I learned of Ted's untimely death. Truly, we have come to the END of an ERA – the era of the Armstrongs is now OVER. They were not the spiritual “giants” that many even today give them credit for being. They both had “feet of clay.”

Nevertheless, it is with a feeling of sadness and deep sorrow that I learned of the death of Garner Ted Armstrong. O what potential he had! O what a miserable mess he made of things! Around 1988-89 I wrote an article titled, “How Are the Mighty Fallen!” It was an expose of the Armstrongs and their sins and hidden cover-ups. It was a sad lament that such gifted men should plunge into such grievous wickedness, self-righteousness, succumb to pride and arrogance, and carry on as if they had a “free pass” from God to live life as they pleased, while other “dumb sheep” supported their lavish life styles and secret conduct of adultery and fornication.

What will happen to those people in his church, the Intercontinental Church of God? Where will they go? Will the church continue on the same path it has been following, under Garner Ted Armstrong's leadership?

Or will the leadership be willing to confront its errors and sins, and begin to truly follow God?

And what about the leaders of the other offshoots of the Worldwide Church of God, that sprang up like dandelions after a spring rain -- men such as Gerald Flurry, of the “Philadelphia” Church of God, Roderick Meredith and the “Living Church of God,” David Hulme of the “United Church of God,” and Roy Holladay of the “United Church of God,, an Association”? What about them, and their church following?

Where are they headed?

Will any of these end-time church leaders come to grips with these issues, face the music, and search the Scriptures, with a whole heart and open mind, sincerely desiring and seeking God's TRUTH? Or will they continue in spiritual DENIAL?

We will see. But, I for one am not going to hold my breath.

The Recessional

God of our fathers, known of old –
 Lord of our far-flung battle line –
 Beneath Whose awful hand we hold
 Dominion over palm and pine –
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet –
 Lest we forget – lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
 The captains and the kings depart:
 Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
 An humble and a contrite heart.
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget – lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
 On dune and headland sinks the fire:
 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
 Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
 Lest we forget – lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe –
 Such boastings as the Gentiles use
 Or lesser breeds without the Law –
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget – lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
 In reeking tube and iron shard –
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And guarding calls not Thee to guard –
 For frantic boast and foolish word,
 Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!
 Amen.

-- "The Recessional," Rudyard Kipling