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The Rhetoric of Garner Ted Armstrong

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Stephen George Dick for the
Master of Science in Speech presented March 13, 1972.

Title: The Rhetoric of Garner Ted Armstrong

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Stephen Kopyokoff, Chairman

Theodore Grove

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Jim Weiss

William Hamilton

Garner Ted Armstrong is fast becoming a well known religious and political commentator. The purpose of this thesis was to describe and discuss the techniques and characteristics of Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric. The question to be answered was "What are the characteristics of a successful religious broadcaster?"

The method used in the selection of the speeches to be used in this study consisted of selecting a number of speeches (56), then breaking them down into theme categories. After analysis there were eleven categories. One speech was

selected from each category, and these eleven speeches were the speeches that were used in the study.

The results of my study showed that Mr. Armstrong uses various forms of persuasive techniques, among them, for example, the simile. The logical development of Mr. Armstrong's speeches leaves a great deal to be desired. He does not support his assertions and leaves the audience to supply a great deal of the support and verification for his arguments. His greatest attribute is his voice and personality. He has a very pleasant voice and his personality is similar to that of an entertainer. Possibly his inventory of subjects is one of the main attractions of his broadcast. He speaks, generally, on social problems such as pollution, crime, and drugs. He is a successful broadcaster, and quite possibly it is the combination of these characteristics that make him so successful.

THE RHETORIC OF GARNER TED ARMSTRONG

BY

STEPHEN GEORGE DICK

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
SPEECH

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1972

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:

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March 17, 1972

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS..... | iii |
| LIST OF TABLES..... | v |
| CHAPTER | |
| I. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| HISTORY OF BROADCASTING..... | 1 |
| METHODS OF RESEARCH..... | 6 |
| SELECTION OF SPEECHES..... | 8 |
| GENERAL PURPOSE: CHAPTER SUMMARIES..... | 11 |
| II. BIOGRAPHY..... | 13 |
| III. STYLE..... | 18 |
| IV. LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT..... | 29 |
| V. CONTENT..... | 48 |
| VI. SUMMARY..... | 54 |
| ADDENDA..... | 57 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 58 |

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE

I. THEME CATEGORIES OF THE 56 PROGRAMS..... 8a

CHAPTER ONE

The need for a religious affiliation is an important one to many people. It can be fulfilled in several ways. An individual may go to a local church, he may attend revival meetings, or he may listen to gospel radio programs. By listening to a gospel radio program, an individual can listen to the word of God, as delivered by the radio preacher, and thus satisfy a basic need for affiliation. Such a program is "The World Tomorrow." The speaker of the program, Garner Ted Armstrong, is the topic of this thesis.

The history of religious broadcasting is almost as old as radio itself. The very first transmitted sermon was done by Dwight L. Moody with the use of Alexander Graham Bell's telephone in 1876. It wasn't until 1906 on Christmas Eve that Reginald A. Fressenden gave the first religious oriented broadcast on the wireless.¹ The program consisted of scripture reading, violin music, and some carols.

While experiments on the radio continued, the idea of religious broadcasting went into a dormant period. Commercial progress in the broadcast field was stalled during World War I because the government controlled all the radio transmitters. War regulations were lifted in 1919 and radio began a new life. In 1921 religious

¹ Barry Sidell, Gospel Radio, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1970), Back to the Bible Press, p. 53.

broadcasting returned to the air in the form of a church service done on January 2, 1921 over KDKA in Pittsburg.²

The February 1922 issue of Literary Digest gave gospel radio national attention.

Preaching by wireless is more than a passing fad, for already, we are assured, it has proved entirely practicable for a man to sit at home-even, for that matter, to lie abed if he is so disposed- and hear to the minutest detail all that his ears could gather if he were actually present at the services.³

A complete historical survey would merely be a list of radio pioneers in the field and would not add to this study. The important aspect, however, is the rapid growth that religious broadcasting experienced during the 30s and 40s. It began with individuals such as Paul Rader, and Charles Fuller who entered religious broadcasting as individuals and later retired leaving religious programs that are still being broadcast today. For example Charles Fuller was the founder of the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" in 1937. While the program is now called "The Joyful Sound," it is heard on more than 143 stations around the world.⁴

An example of one of the more powerful religious radio networks which developed out of the early days of broadcasting is the Moody Radio Network. Its first broadcast was

² Ibid,. p. 62.

³ "The Gospel By Wireless," Literary Digest, February 4, 1922, p. 32.

⁴ Sidell, p. 69.

in 1925 and since that time it has purchased four radio stations in the midwest area; two in Chicago, one in Cleveland, and one in Moline, Illinois.⁵

Another example is Theodore Epp and the program "Back to the Bible." It began in the early days of radio and is still being heard on 500 stations around the world. It began in May of 1939 when Mr. Epp was first heard on station KFOR in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Today, religious broadcasting has expanded into television where the more nationally known individuals are not only heard but also seen. Broadcasters such as Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and Kathryn Kuhlman, to name a few, have been heard and seen on both radio and television. There are thousands of religious broadcasters throughout the nation. Not only are there national broadcasters, but local broadcasters also attempt to preach the gospel to the radio audience. Gospel radio, with its many broadcasters, offer the listener an opportunity to develop a religious affiliation with the radio preachers.

Religious broadcasting has become what might be called a popularity contest among broadcasters. Today, the success of a religious radio program is determined by the amount of listener response the broadcaster receives from a particular area. If he does not get any response, then generally, the broadcaster considers it a waste of

⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

money to remain on the air in that area; so he cancels his program.

Today on the radio there are many preachers with many different styles and deliveries. Besides the evangelist, who usually relies upon preaching as his medium, there are programs which have singing and story telling, dramatizations, and discussions. There are many program formats, but basically the preaching evangelists dominate the airwaves. At KLIQ-AM in Portland, Oregon there are, for example, 19 daily programs. Sixteen of those programs are conducted by individuals who rely upon preaching as the basis of their broadcasts.

In Portland, Oregon there is one full time and two part time religious stations. However every station in Portland has some form of public service programing which is generally religiously oriented. These programs are usually run in the early morning hours or on the weekends. They do this in an attempt to achieve a balance in their programing, a balance which is supposed to fill the public need.

There are, in addition, unwritten laws governing the balance of programing at a radio station. The federal body that governs the air waves, the Federal Communications Commission, cannot legally control programing. However it does control the station by threat of failure to renew the station's license to broadcast. For example, a station's license renewal application contains its program schedule.

The station is required to give the rationale as to how it's program schedule fills the needs of the community. If the F.C.C. feels that the station's program schedule does not fill the needs of the community, the Commission informs the station that their application for license renewal has been reviewed and that the program schedule does not fill the needs of the community. The Commission will not tell the station to change it's program schedule, but rather it will not issue a license until the station conforms. Due to this unwritten policy set by the F.C.C. most stations strive to have balanced programming by having various ethnic, religious, and special interest groups conduct programs. This allows people of all races and religions a voice in the so-called public broadcasting.

As in any business, radio stations go through periods of time of limited funds available from sponsors and when religious broadcasters are not willing to sign long term contracts. However, if there is air time available, there is usually a religious broadcaster willing to pay the money to broadcast his program. Such a program is "The World Tomorrow." The program is heard by an estimated 40 million people weekly.⁶ Since the inception of the program, it has expanded to 216 radio stations in the United States, 34 Canadian stations, and 20 foreign stations.⁷

⁶ The New York Times, October 10, 1969, p. 54.

⁷ This is Ambassador College, (Pasadena, 1968), Ambassador College Press, p. 43.

Garner Ted Armstrong is the spokesman for the program and it is his rhetoric that will be discussed in this paper. A full understanding of Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric might disclose answers to questions about this man and his rhetoric, and about religious broadcasting in general.

Mr. Armstrong's media exposure is not limited to radio. He is becoming a well-known figure on his weekly television program. However, television preaching is not within the scope of this paper. The television program uses many visual aids which affect Mr. Armstrong's use of vivid description. Also Mr. Armstrong writes many booklets and articles for "The Plain Truth" the official magazine of the program. These written publications will not be included in the study, because they are a prepared, edited, and revised version of the material Mr. Armstrong presents on his daily program. This study will include the daily radio program called "The World Tomorrow." The program is heard on 216 stations daily, seven days a week.

The question that I am attempting to answer in this study is, "What are the techniques and characteristics of a successful radio preacher?" The intention of this study will be to describe Mr. Armstrong's persuasive techniques. I will be describing such characteristics as logical development, style, and delivery. Another aspect of this method will be to identify and evaluate the rhetorical techniques used by Mr. Armstrong. For example, it is clear that Mr. Armstrong uses techniques of logical development

such as systematic thought progression.

Over the years there have been many areas of rhetorical criticism studied. Consequently there are many studies and methods of criticism from which to draw. For example in 1947 A. Craig Baird and Lester Thonssen wrote an article called "Methodology in the Criticism of Public Address." They pointed out that one of the many areas of approach a critic can use is the area of interpretation and evaluation.⁸ The critic must interpret what the speaker has said and evaluate it according to certain guidelines. Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric will be interpreted and presented with several such guidelines pertaining to logical principles, intellectual methods, oral language, use of statistics, and analogies. Analysis of Mr. Armstrong's speeches will be presented as to how he organized his thoughts, and how he used the techniques of persuasion in the development of his speeches.

The number and length of the various methodologies continues to grow year by year. To attempt to include and describe all methodologies is not within the scope of this study. I was mainly concerned with the method of Baird and Thonssen, but I also borrowed from methodologies and articles written by Barnet Baskerville, Donald C. Bryant, George Campbell, and Stephen Toulmin.

⁸ A. Craig Baird, and Lester Thonssen, "Methodology in the Criticism of Public Address," Quarterly Journal of Speech, (April, 1947), p. 135.

In the matter of which speeches to use in this study, I selected tapes of Mr. Armstrong's program which would give me a fair sample of his rhetoric. I used two different sampling techniques in the selection of the tapes used in this study; Interval and Cluster sampling.⁹ Interval sampling is the selection of certain units at a specified interval. And Cluster sampling is the selection of units as a group.

In this study it was decided, first of all, to take one week (seven days) of tapes at different intervals until the desired number of tapes was required. In 1970, for eight months all tapes from the second week of each month were selected. This gave a total of 56 tapes. These 56 programs constitute the material for this study.¹⁰

The reduction of the number of tapes was suggested in order to have a workable number. It was decided to analyze each program, determine the topic and set up overall categories for the 56 programs. This was accomplished by using a two step method. Step one was to listen to the first two minutes of each program, and determine the topic. Step two was to cue into the middle of the program and listen for two more minutes. This was done by the use of the tape counter. Generally, for a half hour tape at 7 and 1/2 ips

⁹ Ricard W. Budd, et al. Content Analysis of Communication, (New York, 1967), Macmillian Co. p. 22-23.

¹⁰ See Table One

TABLE ONE

THEME CATEGORIES OF THE 56 PROGRAMS

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| EVOLUTION..... | 8 |
| GOOD GOVERNMENT..... | 3 |
| JESUS..... | 6 |
| HUMAN NATURE..... | 6 |
| HONESTY..... | 1 |
| HUMAN NATURE (general)..... | 5 |
| MORAL DECAY..... | 5 |
| WAR..... | 4 |
| RELIGION..... | 5 |
| TEN COMMANDMENTS..... | 2 |
| EASTER..... | 2 |
| RELIGION (general) | 1 |
| POLLUTION..... | 6 |
| BIBLE PROPHECY..... | 5 |
| WORLD PROBLEMS..... | 4 |
| AGRICULTURE..... | 1 |
| WORLD PROBLEMS (general) | 3 |
| LAW and CRIME..... | 4 |
| JUVENILE DELIQUENCY..... | 1 |
| LAW and CRIME (general) | 3 |

(inches per second), the number of feet per reel is 600. This figure is based upon the thickness of the tape which is generally 1.5 mil. Each program was cued to 300 feet and from that point I listened another two minutes. The reason for the cueing into the body of the speech was to determine if Mr. Armstrong maintained the topic that he began with at the start of the speech.

The results of my analysis showed that Mr. Armstrong does indeed announce the topic of his program in the first two minutes of his introduction. The hypothesis, that he did state the topic of his program in the first two minutes of each program, was supported by the second step of my method. For example in program number W-5650 he said this in the first two minutes,

And greetings friends around the world. Chances are you have drawn your last breath of fresh air, and chances are you never drew your first one. But experts agree that you and your children will never again breath clean air.

300 feet into the program he said,

It consumes the same amount of breathable air as the entire population of Santa Monica. That's one family automobile. It consumes the same amount of air as the entire population of Pasadena and Santa Monica.

Another example is the program number W-5692. In the first two minutes he said,

Greetings friends around the world. And now the kids are stoned on Jesus. Cold turkey off drugs, and pot. You name it, they have used it. But now they are talking about Jesus and the Jesus movement.

300 feet into the program he said,

Here is the true Jesus, here is how he is described. Why not accept him? Nobody has presented them a true Christ, someone has been presenting a counterfeit.

As you can see, Mr. Armstrong gave the topic of his program in each case in the first two minutes of the program. This was the case in all 56 programs.

From these tapes I was able to establish a number of categories which Mr. Armstrong seemed to repeat throughout his broadcasts. There were eleven categories discovered, as Table One points out. These were relatively exact categories. By this I mean categories that Mr. Armstrong actually set by the announcement of the topic of his program.

For the purpose of analysis some of the programs were combined into more general categories. In Table One, the general categories Religion, World Problems, Human Nature, and Law and Crime, were made by collapsing sub-categories into one general category. An example of collapsing categories would be when Mr. Armstrong discussed the general topic of world problems in one program. Then in another program he discussed the problem of agriculture as it affects the world. These two programs were collapsed into the general category of World Problems. This is characteristic of the classification of the other three categories mentioned above.

From each of these eleven categories I selected one tape. Generally, as Table One indicates, the categories were fairly equal in the number of programs per category,

with the exception of the categories Evolution and Good Government. The rationale for selecting only one tape per category was that if the categories Evolution and Good Government were excluded, the remaining categories would range between 6 and 4 tapes per category. The frequency percentage of 6 programs for every 56 programs is 10%, and for 4 programs it is 7%. If tapes were selected on the basis of the frequency percentage, then, this percentage would not seem to warrant the selection of another tape from the categories with 6 programs. Therefore using the categories primarily to reduce the number of tapes, I selected one tape per category, disregarding the emphasis placed upon the categories. Since the primary purpose of this study is to describe Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric, the eleven programs will give ample opportunity to view his rhetoric in the light of the eleven different subjects.

In summary, then, this study will be limited to the daily radio program. It will be primarily descriptive, and it will be descriptive in the terms of the techniques and characteristics of persuasion. This study seeks to discover what those techniques are and describe the way Mr. Armstrong uses them in his attempt to persuade.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter One:

In chapter one, I have discussed the methodology and criteria that I intend to use in the study. I also presented the method in which the tapes were selected for

the study, and diagramed the categorical breakdown of the 56 programs. I described the purpose and reason for this study.

Chapter Two:

In chapter two, I will present a biographical sketch of Garner Ted Armstrong. In this sketch I will present his background, education, training, experience and the history of the radio program.

Chapter Three:

Chapter three will present Mr. Armstrong's techniques of style as he deals with the various subjects. In this chapter, I will deal with propositions and materials that compose the speeches, and the characteristics of his style.

Chapter Four:

Chapter four will deal with the logical development of Mr. Armstrong's arguments. This will include the use of logical support and chains of reasoning. Also in this chapter I will develop a version of the Toulmin model for the study of his reasoning patterns.

Chapter Five:

Chapter five will be a brief discussion of some of the major themes and ideas in Mr. Armstrong's speeches.

Chapter Six:

Chapter six will be the summary chapter. I will discuss conclusions that I arrived at during the study of the rhetoric of Garner Ted Armstrong.

CHAPTER TWO

A discussion of Mr. Armstrong's background, education, training, and experience is important for a complete understanding of his rhetoric. Baird and Thonssen point out that an understanding of the background of the speaker is not only necessary but important in the discovery of his thoughts and ideas.

Adequate insight into a speaker's methods of thinking and into the modes of expressions, is better assured if based upon complete information concerning his speech and other training, his experiences and the source of direction of his ideas.¹

This chapter will delve into the background of Mr. Armstrong with respect to his importance as a world renowned religious broadcaster.

Garner Ted Armstrong was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. A native of Portland, Oregon, he was born in 1930. Shortly after his birth his family moved to Eugene, Oregon where he spent his boyhood. In 1948 Mr. Armstrong joined the Navy and spent four years serving during the Korean conflict. Following this Mr. Armstrong entered Ambassador College and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1956.² According to the biographical

¹Baird and Thonssen, Quarterly Journal of Speech, (April, 1947), p. 137.

²Ambassador College was founded in Pasadena, California in 1947 by Herbert W. Armstrong. Today Ambassador College has three campuses, in Pasadena, St. Albans, England, and in Big Sandy, Texas. Ambassador College is a four year institution that offers post-graduate programs in many fields.

pamphlet on Mr. Armstrong released by Ambassador College, he realized that the ideas and concepts of his father and the college agreed with his conceptions of life. He gradually began to take over the responsibilities of the broadcast. And in the meantime he continued his education at Ambassador College. He received his Masters degree in 1960, and in 1966 he received his Ph.D.³

Mr. Armstrong while completing his formal education, has not stopped expanding his knowledge. Not only does he carry the responsibilities of the vast radio and television network, but he also is the Executive Editor of the "Plain Truth" magazine. He writes articles for the magazine and also co-authors the booklets that are offered on the program. He has written numerous articles on the problems and challenges man faces in the modern world.⁴ In these articles Mr. Armstrong has often said that man needs to become educated in order to understand many of the world's problems. His concern for adult education has been significant in Ambassador College establishing adult education programs all over the world. He is the Director of the Foreign Education Service for the college and its offices in many areas of the world such as Bombay,

³This came from a two page mimeographed paper given to the press by Ambassador College. It is called A Biography of Garner Ted Armstrong. No date of publication was given, p. 1.

⁴The booklets mentioned in the broadcast are researched by Ambassador College. They have a booklet for every subject that is discussed on the program. For example, Courtship and Marriage, The Truth about Child Rearing, A Whale of a Tale, and Marijuana.

Sydney, and Jerusalem.⁵

Mr. Armstrong has had extensive training in foreign affairs and has had considerable experience in dealing with people of other nations. He gets this experience on his trips to the various education centers around the world that Ambassador College has developed. Mr. Armstrong seems to reflect his extensive travel experience in dealing with the many problems he discusses. Experience alone, however, does not make him a popular broadcaster. These experiences do allow Mr. Armstrong to relate to many of the problems that he brings to the attention of the listening audience.

The program itself started long before Garner Ted was associated with it. Garner Ted's father, Herbert W. Armstrong, founded the broadcast in 1934 in Eugene, Oregon. The conception of the program began with six lectures written by Herbert for an adult group. After hearing one of the lectures Mr. Frank Hill, the owner of radio station KORE in Eugene, offered Mr. Armstrong an opportunity to broadcast one of his lectures. The response to the lecture done on the air was overwhelming. Following the suggestion of Mr. Hill, Mr. Armstrong began the program "The World Tomorrow" on a weekly basis.

Several years later, approximately 1944, Mr. Armstrong was operating on about five or six radio stations.

⁵A Biography of Garner Ted Armstrong, p. 2.

At this time he was recording his programs at Keating Recording Studios in Portland. An engineer for Keating studios at that time was a man by the name of Robert Lindall. Mr. Lindall was able to recall some important background information on the program and the college. At that time, 1945, Herbert Armstrong was commuting from Eugene to Portland once a week. He would come to the studio and record his program for distribution to the stations that he was on. In 1947 Mr. Armstrong inherited an estate in Pasadena, California. He left for Pasadena and continued his broadcasts from there. The estate included a mansion, which today is in the center of the campus of Ambassador College.

Garner Ted's complete acceptance of the responsibilities of the program were completed in 1959. Since that time he has become a major radio and television commentator. David M. Jack, owner of five radio stations in Washington, Oregon and California, said that "Mr. Armstrong is the number one religious broadcaster in the nation. He has the largest mailing list, and one of the largest magazine circulations in the country." For example, the "Plain Truth," the magazine of the program, has a circulation list of over two million subscribers.⁶

Mr Armstrong's popularity can best be attested to by Mr. George Sanders, General Manager of radio station KWJJ in Portland, Oregon. Mr. Sanders said that in the

⁶This is Ambassador College, p. 43.

evening during the time period when Mr. Armstrong is on the air, the station has a Portland survey rating of fourth in the city. He added that at this time 8-10pm, when everyone is generally listening to music, this is a good rating.⁷

Mr. Sanders made it clear that these are very broad statements and that one must draw his own conclusions. He added that "Mr. Armstrong's appeal over the years can be shown in the number of stations that his program is on. It takes a lot of money to be on one station seven days a week, much less the number he is on. If he were not popular, and he did not get a lot of response, then he would not be on the air."⁸

The program has had a long history. From its first conception with Herbert W. Armstrong as the spokesman, the program enjoyed a continuous growth. Currently, with Garner Ted Armstrong as the spokesman, the program has reached new dimensions through the use of radio and television. The purpose of this study is to discuss the rhetoric of the current spokesman, Garner Ted Armstrong.

⁷At the time of this interview, KWJJ, during the daylight hours, had a city wide rating of number one for men and two for women.

⁸This was a quote from George Sanders, General Manager of radio station KWJJ in Portland, Oregon. This interview was conducted in May of 1971.

CHAPTER THREE

The concept of style is important in the study of Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric. He combines exciting delivery with a masterful display of language to present a style that is unique in religious broadcasting. His skill with the spoken word is a characteristic of his personality. And when combined with a dynamic voice, he presents a very unique style to the radio audience. It is the combination of language and delivery that develop the radio character of Mr. Armstrong.

An audience's acceptance of a speaker is dependent upon the type of character that the speaker presents over the air. The character of a speaker is a combination of such things as the speaker's moral attitudes, the language used, how he presents his topics, and the truths he presents.

The character of a speaker has been a much discussed subject. Aristotle was one of the first to describe and discuss the character of a speaker. In Book III of the Rhetoric he says,

The narration should depict character to which end you must know what makes it so. One such thing is the indication of moral purpose; the quality of character depicted and is itself determined by the end pursued.¹

Mr. Armstrong's character is developed not only by his style, but by his attacks upon those problems of society that most people abhor, i.e. pollution, war, dishonesty, crime, etc. In other words the moral purpose that

¹ Aristotle, The Rhetoric, Tran. by Ingram Bywater, (New York, 1954), p. 209.

Aristotle discussed. Not only does Mr. Armstrong develop his character in the eyes of the listener by discussing such subjects, but his language adds to his credibility. Aristotle said that language can be an important factor in persuading an audience that the speaker is speaking the truth. He said,

The aptness of language is one thing that makes people believe in the truth of your story; their minds draw the false conclusion that you are to be trusted from the fact that others behave as you do when things are as you describe them; and therefore they take your story to be true, whether it is or not.²

Prime examples of this concept in Mr. Armstrong's speeches are his descriptions of moral decay (page 26) and his description of a city (page 26). The audience may realize that what Mr. Armstrong says about moral decay, for example, is true.

Another important aspect of style is the organization of a speaker's thoughts. The reason being that it is often apparent when a speaker's thoughts are not organized and do not flow in an orderly manner. The task of putting the materials into an organized framework is very important because it forms the structure of the address which must be clear and easy for the listener to follow.

Mr. Armstrong's speeches always seem to be organized. They follow a pattern which is marked first by a statement of proposition, then followed by supports for that statement. There are several characteristics of the organization

² Ibid., p. 178.

of Mr. Armstrong's speeches that are important in the overall development of his topic. First of all he opens the program by introducing the general subject for the day. For example he might say "And greetings friends around the world, and now the kids are stoned on Jesus." Or he might say "And greetings friends around the world. If you knew what was going to happen in the next five years, all of your plans would be dramatically changed." And finally he might say "And greetings friends around the world, and now a noted scientist says that the 21st century will bring a vast increase in human wealth. If anyone is around long enough to enjoy it." From these first statements the listener generally knows what the subject of the speech is going to be. Then Mr. Armstrong proceeds to make several more generalizations about the subject. Following this, he generally states a secondary proposition which supports the first in detail. For example, he may start his broadcast by making a proposition about men, their characteristics and the things that men have been able to discover. Then he may say, "and do you know man does not even know where he came from." Then he will develop his argument on evolution.

The conclusions to his speeches, very probably, generate concern among many of the listeners. He develops a problem, tells the listener that these problems do exist, and that if they want to know the solution, and they want proof of what he has been saying, then they must write for the booklet. This leaves the listener

suspended and hopefully gives the incentive to write for the booklet, thus achieving one of the purposes of the program. Mr. Armstrong has said that Ambassador College has a booklet full of proof on just about every subject that a listener might ask for. For example he said,

Now we have this booklet 'Does God Exist?' This booklet will prove to anyone whose mind is open and sincere. It will not prove it, absolutely will not, to a carnal minded, stiff-necked, bigoted, castiron hearted, crass, argumentative college student who does not want to prove that there is a God. If your mind is closed and you are a bigot, then forget it. If you are not a bigot, then I'm not talking to you, but if you are, then your mind is closed, so I won't hurt your feelings anyway. All you'll do is get mad at me. So if your mind is open, then write for the proof that God does exist.

Another example would be,

Its about time you research a little bit of this for yourself. You ought to write for this brochure the one called 'A Whale of a Tale' and another on 'A Story for the Birds' graphically, full color illustrated, they get down to the nitty gritty. Because they make you take issue with some points that you can sink your teeth into. Its not some great vague, pedantic argument from an ultra-intellectual university level. Its in laymen's language. But I'll guarantee you that there are plenty of quotes out of some of the top evolutionary textbooks. So write for the one of the Ten Commandments.

Whether the subject is good government, divorce, evolution, or pollution, he rarely reveals the solution within the context of the speech.

According to Thonssen, Baird, and Braden,

The purpose of the speaker or writer is to reduce his thesis to a clear cut statement that embodies both his over-all ideas and his rhetorical aim for informing, entertaining, persuading, convincing, inspiring, or combining some of these

ends.³

Mr. Armstrong organizes his speeches in such a way that the listener always maintains an awareness of the point that he is trying to make. His proposition does not become lost in an ocean of words. The best example is his discussion of evolution. Mr. Armstrong, a firm believer in the Bible account of the creation, states that man has attributed human development to an unproven theory called evolution. From this point Mr. Armstrong moves through several arguments showing that evolution could not possibly be the answer to man's creation. A discussion of evolution follows showing the fallacies of the theory. And at the end of the program he goes back to his major premise and states that for the full answer one must write for the booklet. Each subject that Mr. Armstrong discusses generally follow^s this pattern with only a few exceptions.

Another characteristic of Mr. Armstrong's style is the type of presentation he uses. It would be called extemporaneous. This form of presentation leaves nothing except the actual wording to the moment of delivery. The topic is carefully chosen, the central idea is painstakingly phrased, and the materials thoroughly researched.⁴ Mr. Armstrong does not use a manuscript, and while he may have a few sketchy notes, all of the preparation comes

³Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo W. Braden, Speech Criticism, (New York, 1970), p. 488.

⁴Robert G. King, Forms of Public Address, (New York, 1969), p. 78.

before the broadcast.⁵

Mr. Armstrong's delivery has two major characteristics; unusual word emphasis and inordinate repetition. These two characteristics of his delivery stand out in the analysis of his speeches. Word emphasis in his speeches accomplishes two major objectives. First it attracts the listener's attention, and second it holds the attention through the body of the speech. For example, in one of his speeches dealing with human nature, he discussed the questions that men ask, "We live in a world where OUR NEWS is filled with some of the most AWESOME, UNACDEPTABLE, and UNTHINKABLE QUESTIONS, some of the most highly MONUMENTAL PROBLEMS that have ever CONFRONTED MANKIND. And we ask THEM with a kind of a CASUAL, ACCEPTANCE which makes those GIANT QUESTIONS seem commonplace." The emphasis is upon those words which give importance, stress, and urgency to the subject.

Unlike other religious broadcasters, Mr. Armstrong has a tendency to place emphasis on words which do not normally receive emphasis in normal speech conversation. For example, while placing emphasis on the words which stress his point, he increases the tempo of his delivery to a rate of excitement. This makes the subject interesting while stressing the seriousness of the matter. From a speech on human nature he says, America, you see, is LOSING

⁵ This statement came from David M. Jack, owner of five radio stations in the Pacific Northwest.

THE WILL to ACT. America, you see, is LOSING THE PRIDE of her POWER. She is LOSING her RESOLVE, BECAUSE AMERICA has lost her MORALS, and BECAUSE AMERICA has lost sight of HER GOD, and BECAUSE America HAS LOST HER ABILITY to BLUSH, we are LOSING the BATTLES at HOME, WE WILL LOSE THE BATTLES ABROAD.

This quote is also a good example of another characteristic of Mr. Armstrong's delivery; and that is repetition. He continually says America is this, America is that. And he continually drives home the point that America is doing all these things which is leading to the downfall of the human race.

To accentuate the techniques that Mr. Armstrong employs, he has a very distinctive voice. His voice increases his ability to communicate to the listener. His voice has all the qualities of a radio announcer. It is quite possible that Mr. Armstrong has had professional voice training, for he once aspired to be a night club singer, but gave up a singing career to take up the responsibilities at Ambassador College.⁶ The quality of Mr. Armstrong's voice is reminiscent of many of the good radio announcers heard on the air today. His voice has a deep rich quality that, when combined with good diction and precise pronunciation, gives Mr. Armstrong an advantage over a large majority of the religious broadcasters. Mr.

⁶ Roberta Ostroff, "The Old Evangelism," The Los Angeles Times, September 19, 1971, West section, p.14.

Armstrong's voice often regulates the way he presents certain aspects of his topic. For example, humor would be characterized by a light medium-paced voice, distinguished from a more serious slow heavy form of delivery, which is characteristic of a serious subject.

Mr. Armstrong demonstrates a type of style that is completely unique among religious broadcasters. His use of language and voice combine to offer the listener a style that is interesting and intriguing. His language is flowery, which means that Mr. Armstrong has a vocabulary that often times is composed of words that are, very probably, unfamiliar to the average man. For example he uses such words as "abrogate," "exacerbate," and "ubiquitous."

While Mr. Armstrong does not normally use words that might not be understood, he does use them occasionally and when he does it seems out of place. It is possible that the use of such words could be so much window dressing for the purpose of impressing the audience. However the use of such words adds little to the text of the speech and quite possibly the use of such words could destroy any argument he was striving to build because of the listeners inability to understand the meaning of a word. If, however, the listener has the initiative to look up the words that they do not understand then this could be another positive factor for saying that Mr. Armstrong is intellectually stimulating.

However it is quite probable that the listeners of the program neither have the time nor the incentive to look

up the words they do not understand.

If Mr. Armstrong were not clear in his meaning, then the whole purpose of his broadcast would be defeated. Because one of the purposes of the broadcast is to inform people of his beliefs and prophecies.

Mr. Armstrong combines his vocabulary and his ability to describe his subject to develop a simile, which is not only descriptive, but has a tendency to draw the listeners emotions into play. A simile is defined by Webster's as "a figure of speech, in which one thing is likened to another, dissimilar things by the use of like, as, etc."⁷ In the simile he manipulates the words that he uses, entwines them with a dynamic voice to create an exciting result. The unique aspect of his use of the simile is the combination of word use and thoughts or ideas which result in a unique description. For example, Mr. Armstrong is discussing juvenile delinquency, and he describes the moral decay that is running through many of our homes today. "Just like a wretched mass of noxious, annoying filth and vomit that is flowing just like a loaded turgid millstream of slime through the homes of millions of our society today." Another example of this type of simile is his description of a city. "What is our city? Are not our cities an agonizing burden of woe and misery? A tangled jumble of asphalt, steel, aluminum, and glass; of pipes, septic, sewage,

⁷ Webster's New World Dictionary, ed. David B. Guralnik, (New York, 1964), p. 1359.

and conduit, and copper tubing, wire, and jumbled tangles of automobiles, ramshackled buildings, old decayed red brick, and belching smoke stacks, and hydrocarbons, and sulphur oxides, and thousands of teeming people, with truculence and hostility and never a kind word for each other."

Although minor, another aspect of his style is his humor. It generally takes the form of sarcasm. It could be called wit with a touch of sarcasm. His humor is not significant in the overall outlook of his rhetoric. However, when he does use sarcasm it is generally used to drive home a point. For example, he was discussing the discoveries of anthropologists in Africa, and how they claim to be able to establish the date of bones they have found. "How do they know that? If they knew just exactly when he lived, why can't they place it a little closer? Such as seven million, three hundred forty-three thousand, two hundred and ninety-four years, six months, three days, and two hours." Another example is his discussion of the same subject, a few sentences later, "here is some shrewd scientific detective work. They took these tiny fragments and discovered what the creatures' habits were. They decided that the teeth grew one after another. From this evidence... evidence?...evidence?...evidence?...evidence?...what evidence? It says they decided. I wonder how this would hold up in court. You are on trial for murder, and the prosecutor says, I have decided that you are guilty. And the judge says,

from this evidence I'm now ready to pronounce sentence."

Mr. Armstrong's style is composed of many techniques of persuasion and personality characteristics. Unusual word emphasis, repetition, and similes are techniques of persuasion; while delivery and language are characteristics of Mr. Armstrong's personality. While these characteristics are not unique in religious broadcasting, it is the combination of these qualities that give him a unique style that is generally unknown in religious broadcasting.

CHAPTER FOUR

The study of a speaker's rhetoric must include the study of his logical development. By logical development I mean the systematic flow of the development of his arguments. Through the study of a speaker's logical development, many characteristics can be discovered. For example, do the speaker's thoughts follow an orderly, logical progression? Does the speaker support his assertions with facts about the subject? And does he maintain his proposition throughout the speech?

George Campbell's theory of logical development seems to best describe the type of logical development found in Mr. Armstrong's speeches.

The sole and ultimate end of logic is the eviction of truth; one important end of eloquence, though, as appears in the first chapter, is neither the sole, nor always the ultimate, is the conviction of the hearers. Pure logic regards only the subject, which is examined solely for the sake of information. Truth, as such, is the proper aim of the examiner. Eloquence not only considers the subject, but also the speaker and the hearers, or rather for the sake of the effect intended to be produced in them.¹

Continuing Campbell's thoughts on logical development,

Logical proof is of two classes: intuitive evidence and deductive evidence. The former includes everything whose evidence results from the simple contemplation of the ideas or perceptions which form the proposition under consideration and as a medium of proof.²

Mr. Armstrong's logical development seems to follow *

¹ George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, (New York, 1851), p. 54-55.

² Ibid.

the intuitive form mentioned by George Campbell. The overall picture of the logical development of Mr. Armstrong's speeches begins with the very first statement of each speech. He sets down a proposition, then presents what he considers to be evidence to support that proposition. For example, when discussing the topic of Bible Prophecy, for the United States and Great Britain, his proposition is that the United States and Great Britain are mentioned in the Bible as two of the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel. Mr. Armstrong supports his proposition by giving the 49th chapter of Genesis as his evidence. He reasons thusly: Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Israel. He had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. In verse 26, it was prophesied that Ephraim and Manasseh would inherit the blessings of the heavens above and the blessings of the womb. Mr. Armstrong reasons that the United States and Great Britain are Ephraim and Manasseh. The reasons he gave were, "Why is it that 6% of the world's population enjoys 50% of the world's wealth? How do you explain that Ephraim and Manasseh are prophesied to be world powers? And in 1800 Great Britain became a world power." He might add a few more examples, but at this point he said, "Don't take my word for it, prove it for yourself. Send for the booklet, The United States and Great Britain in Bible Prophecy." Also in this speech Mr. Armstrong uses a form of logical support called syllogistic reasoning. He does not use the syllogistic reasoning pattern often, but when

he does it is quite evident. For example, he was preparing for his proof of the prophecy by explaining the 12 tribes of Israel. He said that if people read in the paper that Israel had declared war on the Jews, they would be surprised. He continued by saying that one of the 12 sons was named Juda. Only one tribe was called Juda, while the others had various other names. This tribe, Juda, became known as the Jews. Then he said, "All Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews." He continued this line of thought by saying, "all Texans are Americans, but not all Americans are Texans." A little later in the speech he repeated the phrase but changed the state, "all Californians are Americans, but not all Americans are Californians." He was repeating to stress the point that there was a division in the 12 tribes. According to A.M. Tibbetts in his book, The Strategies of Rhetoric, this form of reasoning is called the enthymeme. "In your everyday reasoning, you seldom see syllogistic reasoning in its full three sentence form. What you usually find is the enthymeme. The enthymeme is an abbreviated syllogism, abbreviated because a part of the syllogism has been omitted."³

In discussing the area of support or evidence for statements and statistics given during the course of the program, Mr. Armstrong does not normally give the surveys, the studies, the authorities from which he quotes. He has

³ A.M. Tibbetts, The Strategies of Rhetoric, (Glenview, 1969), p. 226.

proof from various authorities on just about every subject, but he does not mention who or what they are. This is done purposely. He has stated in several of his broadcasts that he does not want to spend time giving support for his statements. Instead, he says, "write for the booklet, prove it for yourself."

Over the years, Mr. Armstrong's policy concerning the revealing of support evidence has changed. In comparing three programs from several years ago, the only difference that could be detected was a change in giving support for assertions. Several years ago he would cite authorities or studies. But now, if he does, it is the exception rather than the rule. For example, in one of the older programs, Mr. Armstrong was discussing world peace through law. In the first ten minutes of the program he mentions an article from the Fort Worth Star Telegram, that had agreed with a position he had taken. He also mentions a speech given by the Secretary General of the United Nations, U'Thant, as quoted by the New York Times. Today, Mr. Armstrong probably would never mention either U'Thant or the New York Times. He would have said a high ranking official at the U.N. or a leading newspaper said this. In today's broadcasts, he does not support assertions, facts or figures. He generally does not make mention of anyone or any study that would support his statements. For example, he often mentions surveys or polls taken for this or that. But he does not mention the name of the study, the date, or the researchers who conducted the study.

Another example is found in his program on pollution. He said that an automobile traveling 30 miles in 30 minutes burns more oxygen than the entire population of Pasadena does in the same amount of time. Also he says that in 1965, U.S. industry dumped 10 million more tons of pollutants into the air than the entire steel industry produced. Now while I do not dispute the possibility of the facts being true, Mr. Armstrong could have cited the studies that these figures came from. It is quite possible that Mr. Armstrong considers himself an authority, and feels that he does not need to support his assertions. But I think that the purpose in not revealing the source materials is to motivate the listeners to write to the college for the booklets.

Another view of Mr. Armstrong's logical development can be seen by the use of a version of the Toulmin model. "Toulmin's model is essentially an argumentative model based on legal pleading in contrast to the syllogism which is based on a mathematical model. Toulmin's model is intended to provide a more explicit model than that which is provided by the syllogism."⁴ Toulmin's model has six elements in contrast to the three provided by the syllogism. These are 1. Data, 2. Claim, 3. Warrant, 4. Backing, 5. Reservation (exceptions) and 6. Qualifications. Data provides the basis for inference answering the question "what do you have to go on?" In the diagramatic model, data are assumed to be accept-

⁴This quote came from a mimeographed sheet handed out by Dr. Francis Gibson from his class "Reason in Oral Discourse."p.1.

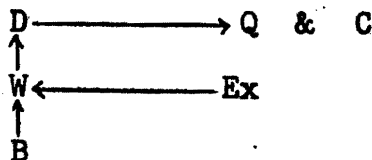
ed as true. •Claim consists of the conclusion arrived at on the basis of the evidence and by way of the warrant. ,Warrant is an inference license which permits you to move from the evidence to the claim or conclusion. It answers the question, "how did you get there?" The backing consists of any kind of data from examples, analogies, theory, expert testimony, etc., which supports the probable truth or soundness of the warrant. The reservations or exceptions section consists of any kind of qualifying circumstance in which the warrant or the claim would not hold true. The qualification of the claim or conclusion is indicated by modal terms such as "certainly", "very probably", "possibly", etc., as well as other kinds of qualifying terms or phrases which indicated the degree of confidence the speaker has in his conclusion or claim in light of his trust in the warrant and the exception possible."⁵

Dr. Francis Gibson, Professor of Speech at Portland State University, developed the version of the Toulmin model that I have adopted for use here. The reason for using the Toulmin model was discussed earlier. But the rationale for using Dr. Gibson's version of the Toulmin model was because, as explained to me, this version presented arguments in a simple, orderly, and understandable fashion. It is my belief that for an argument to be easily understood, it is necessary that the argument be capable of being described and presented

⁵Ibid.

easily. For this reason I selected Dr. Gibson's version of the Toulmin model.

In diagrammatic form, the model can take several forms. One of the more widely used forms is diagrammed thusly:



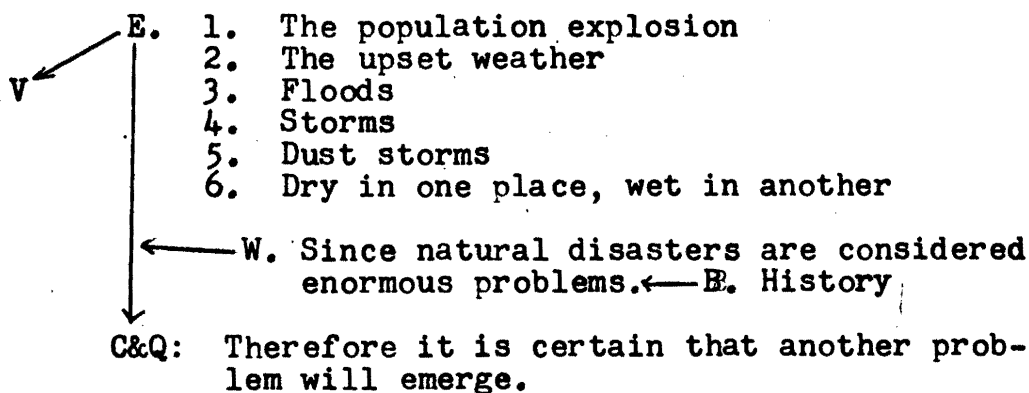
Of the eleven programs selected for this study, eight arguments were taken from eight of the eleven original programs; one from each program. The rationale for selecting eight programs was that in order to eliminate the possibility of a chance occurrence, which could possibly happen if only one program were used, more than one program were used, more than one program had to be used. And if patterns did occur in Mr. Armstrong's reasoning, then 50% of the eleven programs would have been sufficient for this purpose. The subject of each program is insignificant at this point. Because the structure and development of each program does not rely upon the overall subject matter. And only the structure and development of each argument will be the main concern of this section.

The method utilized in discovering the arguments that Mr. Armstrong used entailed listening to each of the programs and discovering the first argument that Mr. Armstrong developed in any detail. The next step was to develop each argument in a Toulmin layout. From this I hoped to discover what Mr. Armstrong deleted from his arguments and what he

assumed the listener would accept without stating it. Then evaluating the results of my findings according to the basic fundamentals of speech development. I will present each argument with first a brief description of the content, then the Toulmin layout, and finally a brief evaluation.

The subject of the first program was war. Mr. Armstrong led up to the argument by discussing war on a very general basis. He brought up the subject of Viet Nam and then said, "Even if the Viet Nam problem were solved, another enormous problem would come along to take its place." This was the proposition of his argument.

"Even if the Viet Nam problem were solved, another enormous problem would come along to take its place."



In this argument Mr. Armstrong developed a strong case for impending natural disasters. His main point of contention was that regardless of what problems are solved, there will be others to take its place. From the proposition to the evidence, Mr. Armstrong concludes that natural disasters will make up the bulk of the "enormous problems" to come. He offers the listeners a warrant by saying that these natural

disasters are considered to be enormous problems. And backs this by simply saying look at history. Mr. Armstrong then moves to his conclusion that there will be other problems to take the place of current problems. In this argument Mr. Armstrong assumes that the listener can supply the verification. For example most people have seen a natural disaster of some sort. Thus they know what a problem it can be. Also Mr. Armstrong fails to make mention that war is a man made disaster, not a natural one. He uses natural disasters to support his proposition which deal with man made problems. Also natural disasters occur all the time. Occurring before, during, and after a war. Now whether or not man is affected by a supreme being, as he claims a natural disaster is, he does not say. Thus the validity of this argument can be questioned.

The second argument was taken from a program which dealt with juvenile delinquency. Mr. Armstrong was discussing youth in general when he presented this argument. "There was never before a nation, that you could uncover in the dust of history, that has a bigger problem with its youth than the United States of America." (Diagram for this argument is on the next page.)

- V. 1. Pasadena police have made record arrests in the last few years.
2. Back in the early 50's and 60's youth have been responsible for up to 50% of the crime.
3. Television and radio ads are geared for youth.
- E. 1. We pick up our newspapers every day and see stories of our kids committing crimes.
2. We have to legislate laws to try and combat our kids.
3. Our society is geared for our youth.

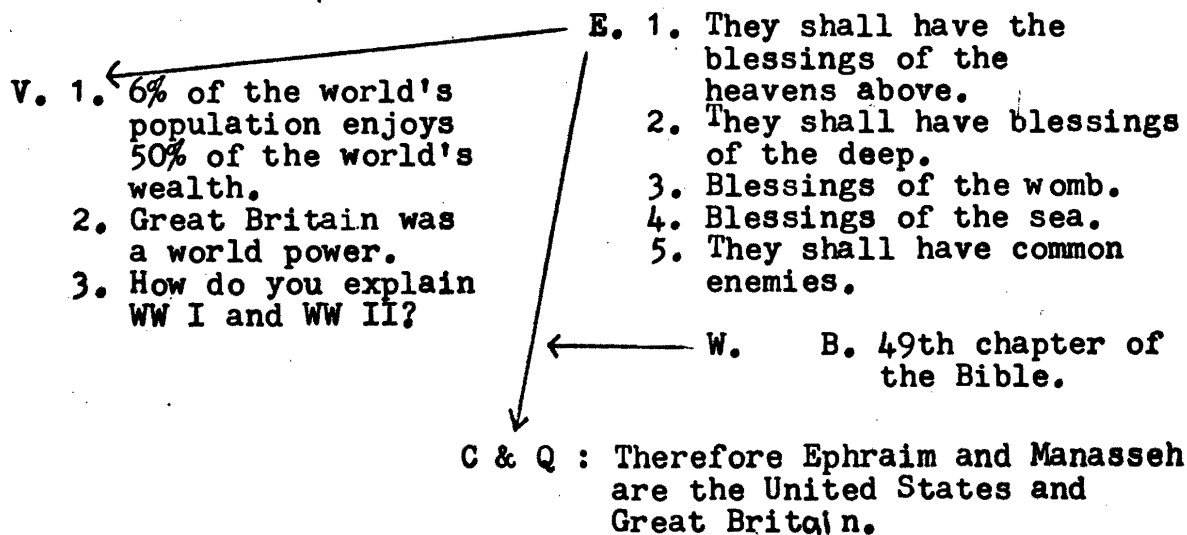
W.

C & Q : The United States of America has never had a larger problem than its youth presents it now.

In this argument Mr. Armstrong clearly presents his evidence and the verification of that evidence. He leaves the listener to provide the warrant which allows the conclusion to follow. However the conclusion does not follow the evidence in this argument. The conclusion that the United States has never had a larger problem with its youth does not follow from the evidence presented. This, quite possibly, could be the reason why no warrant was presented. The warrant allows the speaker to make a conclusion and from the evidence the conclusion, in this particular argument, presented, does not follow. For example, because our society is geared for our youth, this is not necessarily a reason why youth is a problem. This is a very general statement and specifics are needed for this particular argument. And point number two dealing with legislating laws, is not a reason but rather a result of the conclusion.

The verification of the evidence, while stated, is not supported by statistics or studies. For example, even though these items are generally known to be true, the argument would be more acceptable if there was support for his assertions. If Mr. Armstrong had presented such facts and figures to support the verification, this would have supported the warrant which would have allowed him to move to his conclusion more smoothly.

The third argument came from a program dealing with Bible Prophecy. Mr. Armstrong was discussing the United States and Great Britain as mentioned in the Bible. He claimed that the United States and Great Britain are mentioned more often in the Bible than any other country. His proposition was that the United States and Great Britain are Ephraim and Manasseh as discussed in the first chapter of the Bible.

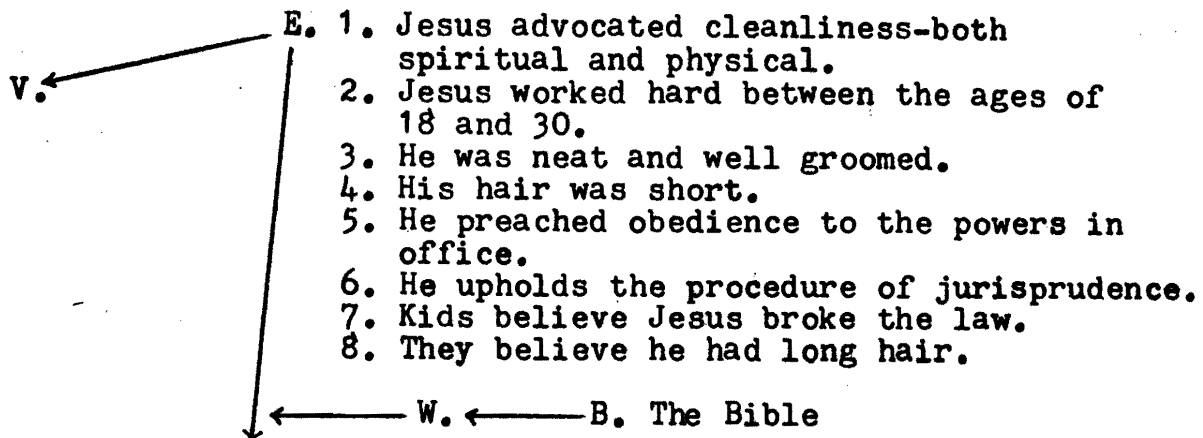


In this layout, Mr. Armstrong presents a fairly well developed argument. He presents the evidence, supports

the evidence with verification, presents backing, and moves to the conclusion. However once again, as in the previous argument, the conclusion does not follow the evidence presented. For the conclusion to follow the evidence, the evidence would need to show how the United States and Great Britain were receiving the mentioned blessings. And mainly there would need to be a clearer connection between the conclusion and the Bible. Mr. Armstrong says that Ephraim and Manasseh were promised the blessings. But he does not connect this to the United States and Great Britain sufficiently to warrant the conclusion. He does say, "How else can the fact that 6% of the world's population enjoys 50% of the world's wealth." But this is not an acceptable piece of verification for the evidence.

As always, proof is in the mind of the hearer. If the listener believes Mr. Armstrong's presentation of this argument, then it would be valid. However if the listener demanded more proof and a clearer connection between the United States, Great Britain, and the Bible, he might consider the argument to be invalid.

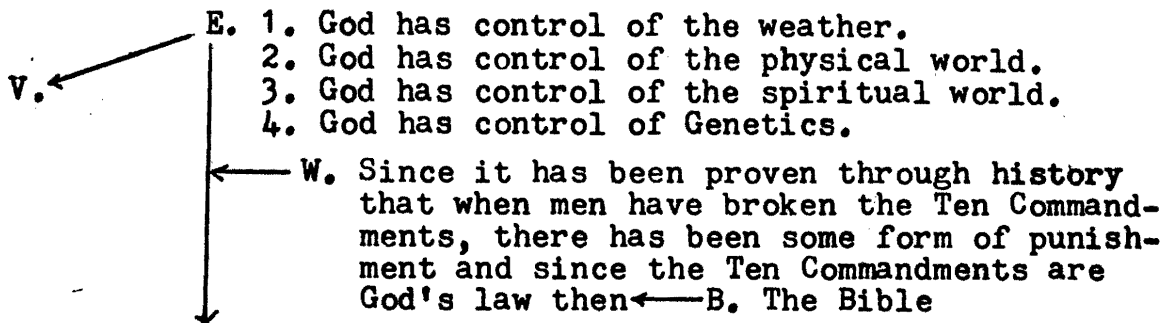
The fourth argument came from a program in which the subject was the youth of America. Mr. Armstrong has taken a firm stand against the youth that call themselves the "Jesus people." His major argument is that the Jesus the kids are worshiping is a false Jesus.



C & Q : The Jesus the kids worship is a false Jesus.

In this argument Mr. Armstrong does not develop it as well as he possibly could have. He presented his evidence, without verification and moved to the conclusion assuming that the audience would fill in the missing parts of the argument. It would seem that Mr. Armstrong feels that it is not necessary to support the evidence. He offers no verification, which would imply that he feels his audience has seen the kids that he is referring too. He gives the Bible as his sole support for his backing, offering however, no mention of scripture where his evidence can be proved. It would seem that in this particular argument Mr. Armstrong is relying heavily upon his own acceptance as an authority. This may be sufficient for an audience of followers but hardly sufficient for a critical thinking individual.

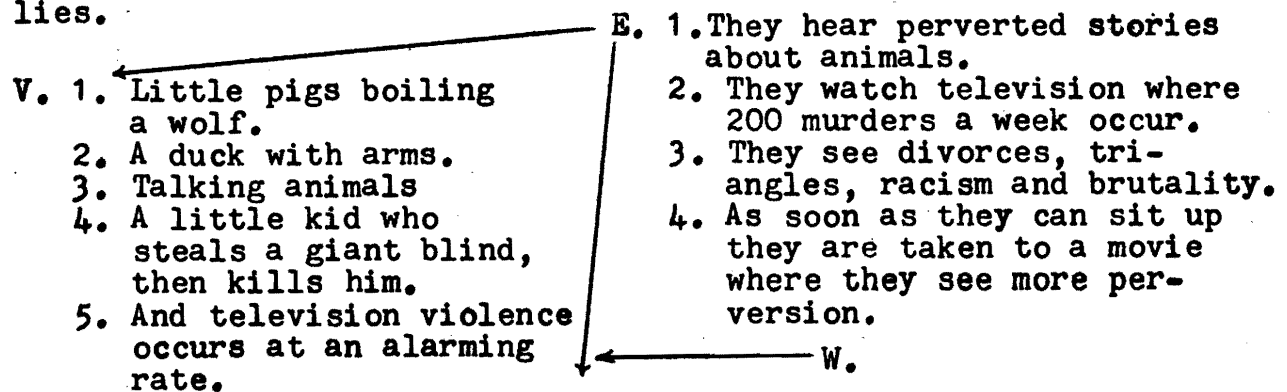
The subject of the fifth argument was the Ten Commandments. It was Mr. Armstrong's contention that if man would only follow the Ten Commandments, then everything would be beautiful. His premise was that "If you were to follow the Ten Commandments there would be automatic blessings."



C & Q : If the people would follow the Ten Commandments there would be blessings.

This is an example of one of Mr. Armstrong's better arguments. Here he presented his evidence, backed his warrant, and moved to the conclusion. In a theological argument such as this one, the verification of the evidence could only be supplied by the listener. A belief in the existence of God would have to be provided by the listeners. In this case Mr. Armstrong assumes that his listeners believe that there is a God and thusly can verify the evidence.

In the sixth argument the subject of the program was moral decay. Mr. Armstrong was outlining the development of an individual, and made the point that our society was sick because our children are growing up in a fantasyland full of lies.



C & Q : Our children are growing up in a fantasy land full of lies.

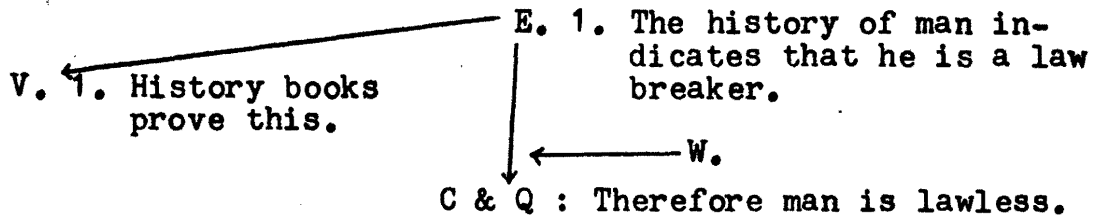
In this argument Mr. Armstrong offers more verification for his evidence than he normally does. While he does not offer verification for all his evidence, he does support the first two points strongly. Mr. Armstrong once again relies upon the audience to supply much of the argument. He does not present a warrant and backing. But again relies upon his acceptance as an authority to supplement any support that might be needed. The argument is well developed in that he follows the basic laws of evidence and verification. To the critical listener, however, Mr. Armstrong . quite possibly does not offer enough evidence to prove his premise. His argument would be much more acceptable if he were to offer, for example, a study that would state facts on the number of children that watch television during a certain time period. A small addition to his argument might mean the difference as to whether or not the argument is acceptable to the listeners.

In the seventh argument Mr. Armstrong presents an argument dealing with pollution. The general topic was pollution, but he said that "the biggest pollution problem is the population explosion." (The diagram is presented on the next page.)

- V. 1. ← 2/3 of the world's population live on famine conditions.
 2. Food conditions might start WW III.
 3. Crime is at an all time high.
 4. Cities can't support the people now.
- E.1. There is too little food in the world to feed the number of people here now.
 2. The cities are over-crowded.
 3. The highways are over-crowded.
 4. Scientists state that the populus is doomed and only a small minority will survive.
- ← W.
 C & Q : Therefore population is our greatest problem.

In this argument Mr. Armstrong presents his evidence and supports it with his verification. Once again his warrant and backing are implicit. He develops a good argument in that the evidence and verification are presented, but in order to move to the conclusion that population is our greatest problem, more backing is needed. Most individuals would be willing to agree that population is a huge problem. But more support of the evidence is needed. This is generally where Mr. Armstrong's arguments fail to reach the stage of complete development.

In the final argument to be analyzed here, Mr. Armstrong presented a small simple argument. But it once again points up the lack of support he presents for his arguments. The topic was evolution and in his introduction to the subject he said that "The only thing that is lawless and contrary to law is man."



This argument is a very basic layout. Here Mr. Armstrong is attempting to present a very specific case against mankind. But he supports it with a very general verification. Had he merely stated a few examples of such infractions committed by mankind and stated what history books these could be found in, he would have had a well developed argument. As it stands, however, it is too general and simplified to be accepted as a complete valid argument.

In the logical development of Mr. Armstrong's arguments, it is quite clear that, often, he says quite a bit, but it makes very little, if any, logical sense. He offers evidence, presents verification, and assumes that the audience will provide the warrant. Also his conclusions often do not follow his evidence, and generally he fails to support the evidence that he does present.

What does this mean in the study of Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric? In the development of his arguments Mr. Armstrong relies upon the listener to accept his logical development with little or no support for his statements. The distinction must be made between acceptable and apparent logic. Mr. Armstrong uses both of these forms of logic in his

arguments. When he makes a statement that basically needs support, because of its nature, he does not offer support. He probably realizes that the listener will fill in any evidence needed. This would be an example of apparent logic, that being that the logic is so evident to the audience that it does not need to be stated.

Mr. Armstrong, generally, offers arguments that will be acceptable to the audience. He discusses topics that the listeners come into direct contact with everyday. If he presents his argument in a smooth seemingly logical manner, the listener will accept his presentation regardless of whether or not they agree with his point of view.

The fact that Mr. Armstrong's arguments are not sound logically, very probably, does not affect the acceptability of those arguments by the listener. The listener can very easily assume that an argument is logical, if the speaker makes it seem so. The fact that the listener cannot replay or re-read the text of the speech, to check the validity of the argument, is a definite handicap to the listener. When the listener is subjected to an argument where he hears it once and only once, then he is at the mercy of the speaker and his persuasive tactics.

Mr. Armstrong did not offer a complete argument in the programs that I discussed. There was always a section of the argument that the listener was asked to supply. More often than not the listener was asked to supply verification or backing for Mr. Armstrong's points of evidence.

The lack of support in Mr. Armstrong's arguments

does not seemilgly affect the validity of them in the eyes of the listener. If, in the analysis of his arguments, the rules of speech development were followed by Mr. Armstrong, then he would present much more support for his generalizations. However, it must be taken into consideration that Mr. Armstrong does offer the listener evidence for the assertions made during the programs. The booklets, that are offered by the college, not only present support for the generalizations made by Mr. Armstrong, but they act as a measure of interest in the broadcast. By not presenting all the support needed during the broadcast, and offering the booklet to the listener, the booklet fulfills a two fold purpose. First it offers the desired support, and secondly it acts as a measure of interest in the broadcast.

Mr. Armstrong has said that "it's time for you to research this problem for yourself. You can do this by writing for the booklet." While fundamentally the lack of support for his assertions and generalizations decrease the validity of his arguments, the lack of support probably does not decrease the interest that the listener has in the broadcast. The reason for this might very well be that the listener knows where to get the evidence. And they can get it simply by writing for the booklet.

CHAPTER FIVE

The final step in the study of Mr. Armstrong's rhetoric is to examine the content of the speeches. It can be said that Mr. Armstrong's speeches deal with current national and world problems which are seen in the light of Bible Prophecy.

The study of the content of Mr. Armstrong's speeches is important because it is the content of his speeches that adds to the appeal of Mr. Armstrong and his program. For many years the study of the content of speech had been over looked by critics. Critics would analyze the speaker's logical development, style, etc., but would rarely discuss the actual content of the speech. Barnet Baskerville, in an article that appeared in the Central States Speech Association Journal in 1953 commented that the study of content is very important and that for a full understanding of a speaker's techniques, the study of content cannot be omitted. He also added that the important part of a speech is its communicable content.¹ Thonssen, Baird, and Braden agree with Baskerville in the quest for a change in the area of content consideration. They said that content is most important because it is the core of communication. They said, "Although language, emotional appeals, and delivery complete the process, intellectual substance (knowledge, meaning, thought) has been and continues to be the core of communication. The initial question is 'What did the speaker

¹Barnet Baskerville, "The Critical Method in Public Address," Central States Speech Association Journal, (December, 1953), p. 5.

say?"²

The important point is that not only is the study of content itself significant, but the content of Mr. Armstrong's speeches is very important because of the fact that he discusses subjects that are relevant to today. This point has been described as the difference between a speaker who has been remembered throughout history and one who has not. Thonssen, Baird, and Braden said this,

Such distinguished orators as Demosthenes, Burke, Webster, and Calhoun are associated with great movements in history. There are undoubtedly many other competent speakers whose names might now be indelibly inscribed upon the memory, had they been equally skilled in sensing the nature of the problem of their day, and in placing them in the context of a larger social system.³

This has always been the mark of Mr. Armstrong's speeches. As shown in the first chapter, the text of Mr. Armstrong's speeches has almost always dealt with social problems of some sort. One of his favorite subjects is pollution. But generally, the subjects of his speeches, even if they are religiously oriented, are applied to society in some form. For example, another favorite topic of Mr. Armstrong's is evolution. He discusses evolution as seen by an individual who has been brought up in school learning that man evolved from a monkey. He points out the fact that man has been raised to believe these evolutionary theories,

² Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 388.

³ Ibid,. p. 394.

and that man's scientific oriented life is one of the causes for the decline of morality today. Mr. Armstrong submits that if man would fully consider and study the facts behind evolution, he would clearly see the inconsistencies of the theories.

Mr. Armstrong's speeches, generally, contain several ideas that continually occur. As these ideas are developed the point to keep in mind is that Mr. Armstrong always relates these ideas to the larger social context. The ideas that occur the most deal with social problems, Bible Prophecy, and human nature.

Mr. Armstrong deals with many social problems in the text of his speeches. He has discussed such problems as crime, over-population, pollution, and drugs. These problems make up a great percentage of Mr. Armstrong's speeches. He makes the point that these things are definite problems and generally describes these problems and indicates what things are going to be like if they persist. The solution Mr. Armstrong offers is very simple. He merely suggests that if human nature could be changed then there would be no problems. People cause problems and if human nature were changed to follow the Ten Commandments, then there would be no crime, no pollution, and an escape with drugs would not be necessary.

All the social problems and man's current human nature are predicted through Bible Prophecy. Mr. Armstrong contends that all of the riches that the United States and

Great Britain have are a result of Bible Prophecy. And if you follow his line of reasoning, the United States and Great Britain can be found in the Bible. He contends that this has all been prophesied and that there will be a one world government with God as the ruler.

These are the main concepts that the program revolves around. Mr. Armstrong asserts that there are these problems caused by human nature. The solution is to change human nature by following the Ten Commandments. The results will be an eventual one world government with God as the leader and a police force that would keep the peace.

Does this indictment of human nature and discussions of the nature of mankind make Mr. Armstrong appealing to the listener? Apparently it does. But there are other possible reasons for his appeal. In an article written for Christianity Today, Joseph Hopkins asserted that there are five reasons for the appeal of the program.

1. In an age of religious apostasy, in which millions of Bible-believing Christians have lost confidence in their denominational leaders and institutions, Herbert W. Armstrong has declared himself and his church to be unequivocally committed to the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. He has projected an image of unwavering orthodoxy by affirming the diety, virgin birth, vicarious death, glorification, and pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ.
2. In a day of moral decay and spiritual poverty, Armstrong has scathingly condemned the new morality, biblical illiteracy, the drug menace, divorce, the women's lib, pollution, inflation, and other aspects of society today that many feel are warning signs of the demise of civilization.

3. In a time of cynical repudiation of moral values, Armstrong has vigorously affirmed the old-fashioned Christian and American virtues of honor, reverence, patriotism, thrift, integrity, chastity, and temperance. Thus he has gained the sympathy and support of vast numbers of the so-called silent majority.

4. In a period of widespread pessimism and despair, the Armstrong gospel promises a bright, new, beautiful "World Tomorrow," from which all the evils of contemporary society will be eradicated and in which peace, prosperity, and complete happiness will prevail. The gathering gloom of protracted war, intensified poverty and famine, multiplied degeneration and spiritual nihilism—all these conditions bolster the role of Herbert W. Armstrong as prophet. For years he has warned that these signs would occur just before the return of Christ to create a perfect new society under his millennial reign.

5. In an era of incessant financial appeals from scores of religious and charitable organizations, it is refreshing to find an operation that appears to be completely non-mercenary. All literature is offered free of charge. No representative will call unless invited. There is absolutely no pressure to contribute or to join. This low-key approach has done much to win the public confidence in the Armstrong enterprise.⁴

Another characteristic of the content of Mr. Armstrong's speeches is that he does not present a politically oriented broadcast. When compared to other religious broadcasters, such as Carl McIntire and Stewart McBernie whose broadcasts are politically oriented, Mr. Armstrong very rarely makes political comments. He does occasionally make a comment concerning the dangers of communism, and the fact that Viet Nam is a problem. But his speeches deal with social problems and what the solutions are for those problems.

⁴ Joseph Martin Hopkins, "Herbert W. Armstrong," Christianity Today, (December 17, 1971), p. 7-8.

The content of Mr. Armstrong's speeches seems to be somewhat restricted to those subjects that detail social problems of some sort. And if not social problems, then those subjects which deal with the solutions to those problems. It is the combination of subject content and style that makes Mr. Armstrong unique among religious broadcasters. Thonssen, Baird, and Braden added this, "One of the marks of the great orator is the facility to direct intellectual energy to the manifestly urgent necessities of the moment."⁵ Mr. Armstrong seems to fit all the characteristics of a great orator. He presents problems which are relevant to today, and he seemingly communicates with his listeners. A communicable program is the elusive key that all religious broadcasters seek, but, generally, fail to achieve. Mr. Armstrong has been able to communicate with his audience and the program is a success because of it.

⁵ Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 394.

CHAPTER SIX

Garner Ted Armstrong is an orator, a prophet, and a religious broadcaster. He is an orator with a gift of language and wit that many listeners are unaccustomed to. His programs speak of the doom of mankind and he prophesies about the world tomorrow and what it will be like.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the techniques and characteristics of the rhetoric of Mr. Armstrong. I was attempting to discover what the characteristics of a successful broadcaster are. While Mr. Armstrong is, quite possibly, the most successful religious broadcaster on the air today, it is difficult to say that if another broadcaster had the same characteristics, then he would be successful also. Mr. Armstrong combines the techniques and characteristics of persuasion with a unique style to develop a personality that is both interesting and pleasing to the audience.

Mr. Armstrong's air personality presents him to the listeners much the same way a night club personality would be presented. He has wit, his voice is personable, and most important he communicates with his audience. This ability to communicate is combined with a voice that can be both dynamic, pleasant, and sincere. And when combined with the type of style that is unique among religious broadcasters, the result is communication. Without an understanding between the speaker and the listener, the

process of communication would be lost in a jungle of words. Mr. Armstrong has said that the purpose of the broadcast is to stimulate the listener to think and then mail for the booklet. The success of this purpose is evident in the number of booklet requests that Ambassador College receives each month.

The purpose of this paper was to discuss the rhetoric of Mr. Armstrong. In discussing his rhetoric, it was discovered that he makes great use of rhetorical techniques such as the simile. Also, in the study of Mr. Armstrong's logical development, it became clear that his arguments were incomplete and he left much for the listener to supply. He did not support his assertions or his arguments, and consequently the overall development of his arguments were incomplete because of it.

However, it must be taken into consideration that one of the main purposes of the broadcast is to influence the listener to write for the booklets that are mentioned during the course of the broadcast. By persuading listeners to write for the booklets, Ambassador College can then determine certain characteristics of the audiences and areas that the broadcasts are heard in. If, however, establishing proof would defeat that particular goal or purpose, then there is no other alternative but to present the broadcast under the pretext that the listener can get proof by writing to the college. I must add however, that a listener might be influenced even more if Mr. Armstrong

would give more proof than he does at the present time. 56
Just a small sample of that proof, that he is withholding,
might persuade a listener to write who might not other-
wise have done so.

The purpose of any media is to communicate with its
listeners or readers the thoughts and ideas that might
be of concern to the listener. Garner Ted Armstrong has
and is communicating with his listeners. Since success
in religious broadcasting is determined by popularity,
Mr. Armstrong can be said to be one of the most success-
ful religious broadcasters of our time.

ADDENDA

On February 15, 1972 Ambassador College canceled the daily "World Tomorrow" program. This was a national cancelation which at first seemed a sudden and irrational move considering the number of listeners the "World Tomorrow" has across the nation. There was no reason given for this move by the College, but David M. Jack owner of radio station KLIQ, interpreted this primarily as an economic move. He thought that the rationale behind the cancelation of the daily program would save the College between two and three million dollars a year. Also he felt that they (Ambassador College) probably felt, now that they have an immense mailing list, they can carry the audience over to their Sunday television and radio programs. The economic loss to local radio stations will be substantial and it remains to be seen whether or not the listeners will continue to follow the Armstrong interpretation of the Bible on a weekly basis.

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