

SEX ALLEGATIONS FORCE ARMSTRONG'S RESIGNATION

Charges of sexual assault against Garner Ted Armstrong have led to the televangelist's resignation as head of the Church of God International. Suerae Robertson, a licensed vocational nurse, said that Armstrong had begun to employ her in spring 1995 for massage therapy and claims that the television preacher made repeated lewd requests, grabbed and bit her, and attempted to force her into satisfying his immoral requests. She filed suit in state court in Tyler, Texas, last Nov. 22 and is seeking unspecified damages from Armstrong and his church.

According to an Associated Press report, the masseuse maintains that during two visits last summer Armstrong "insisted that he receive his therapy in complete nudity" and that she was to "concentrate her therapy on the area of his groin, lower back, inner thighs and buttocks." Robertson also claims that the televangelist informed her that "his execution of the Lord's work was so vital that any transgression would be overlooked by God."

Garner Ted, 64, is the son of Herbert W. Armstrong, the late founder of the Worldwide Church of God. In 1978, the younger Armstrong was excommunicated from the Pasadena-based sect by his father and established his own ministry, the Church of God International, now based in Tyler. His current television broadcast is aired weekly on cable and on approximately 30 other stations.

—MKG

TILTON FILES FOR DIVORCE FROM SECOND WIFE, THEN RECONCILES

Former televangelist Robert Tilton reconciled with his second wife, Leigh Valentine Tilton, just 16 days after he filed for divorce. Before their brief separation, Tilton and his wife had been married 21 months.

Tilton and his current wife, a former beauty pageant contestant, preach together at Word of Faith Family Church and World Outreach Center in Dallas. Two months before their breakup, the Tiltons, along with her 3-year-old son, had moved into a \$681,000 parsonage in the North Dallas suburb of Addison.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s Tilton and his first wife, Marte, were prominent on both religious and secular airwaves. Their *Success-N-Life* program was seen on about 200 stations and at its peak, took in \$6 million a month in

donations. In 1991, ABC's *PrimeTime Live* aired an exposé of the televangelist and his "ministry" that led to the collapse of the program and Tilton's church, whose membership plummeted from 10,000 to under less than 1,000. Tilton and his first wife were divorced in 1993, after 25 years of marriage.

Responding to the temporary split with Leigh, Tilton told reporters: "We serve a miracle-working God."

—AMG

FALSE-MEMORY THERAPY CASES REAP JUDGMENTS

"I put my parents through hell," Jane Brennan said of accusations brought forth during a case involving a "memory therapy" session. She was awarded more than \$120,000 while her therapist, Beverly Nussbaumer, was convicted with negligence by a Colorado jury. The award, handed down late last year, was a fraction of the nearly \$1 million settlement requested.

Brennan sought treatment from Nussbaumer for premenstrual syndrome in 1990. The therapy, Brennan said, resulted in the implanting of a false recollection of sexual abuse by her father. The treatment allegedly caused Brennan's physical and mental impairment and affected her ability to work. Brennan said her therapist "presented it to me as fact [not just theory]. This is really damaging especially when you go to someone because you are hurting and vulnerable and the power they have is so great." Nussbaumer's attorney, Gilbert A. Dickinson, argued to the court that Brennan was "better than she was before treatment."

Along with the anguish it has caused to her parents, Brennan said her husband and three small children have suffered. While her father is pleased that the family is back together, Brennan "feel[s] very guilty" as her father's health has been failing with strokes and confusion since the ordeal came about. She stated that, "Some don't realize the harm they [therapists] can do to people. That's why I did this."

Henry Bible, a psychiatrist also named in the lawsuit, was acquitted of the negligence charges brought against him.

In Minnesota, a Ramsey County jury awarded the former patient of a St. Paul psychiatrist a \$2.3 million settlement. Dr. Diane Humenansky was convicted of trying to persuade her patient, Elizabeth J. Carlson, into believing that she had a multiple-personality disorder. According to a report in the

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