

mishandling of her brother's estate, of which she had been named executrix nearly two years before his death.

Bishop issued a press release which stated that, "The allegations made by Darrell Wayne Perry's children are completely without merit." She also maintained that the allegation that she "hastened her brother's death is completely unfounded." The statement, released through her ministry, announced that, "Bishop never advised him against medical treatment; instead, she either personally took him to his medical appointments or arranged for someone to do so."

Bishop's positive-confession theology is borne out in her book, *Your Life Follows Your Words*. The advertisement for this volume boasts, "You will not be able to put this book down as Darlene Bishop uncovers the truths of how your life follows your words. By the time you finish this book, your faith will be so strong, that you will be able to believe God for anything." The publication claims "her brother [was] healed from throat cancer." She also writes in the book that "God healed her of breast cancer."

According to an Associated Press report, "in a deposition taken for the case in probate, Bishop says she believed she had cancer, but a physician did not diagnose it." Bishop also contends that the omission of disclosing her brother's death in the book was that it was published while he was in remission. However, in spite of her brother's death, Bishop continues to advertise and sell, without qualification, the book with its claims of divine healings.

Perry wrote a No. 1 hit for country singing star Tim McGraw in 1994. He also wrote songs for Lorrie Morgan, Toby Keith, and the Backstreet Boys.

Bishop is co-pastor, along with her husband Lawrence, of the 4,000-member Solid Rock Church, north of Cincinnati. She hosts *Sisters*, a weekly 30-minute television program. She is also a popular conference speaker in Charismatic venues. In March she appeared at Paula White's "Life by Design Conference" with White and T.D. Jakes.

—MKG

RESUSCITATING ARMSTRONG

From the time of its inception, the Worldwide Church of God, the sect founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong, was considered unorthodox in its doctrine and practice. Armstrong considered himself Christ's sole true apostle on the earth who announced the "true original Gospel." He went to great lengths to try to show the Trinity was a pagan-derived doctrine, presented a defective Christology, denied the bodily

resurrection of Christ, and adhered to a strict legalism and sabbatarianism.

Following Armstrong's death in 1985, several of the church's key leaders appeared to agree, renouncing many of its founder's heretical teachings. This transformation was hailed by many evangelicals as a move from a "cultic sect" to a "Christian church." With the theological mutations came a diminishing of Armstrong's heretofore unquestioned authority. Yet not all of those within the WCG hierarchy endorsed the "conversion" to orthodoxy, and schisms followed.

A new book, *Raising the Ruins*, written by Stephen Flurry, contends that the church's deviations were not the result of a spiritual awakening, as church leaders maintain. Flurry argues the group was taken over by corrupted visionaries with an agenda.

An editorial review from his book promotes it as "the shocking, gripping untold story of the doctrinal hijacking and spiritual destruction of the Worldwide Church of God after the death of its founder." The review also alleges to be "the story of a cabal of leaders who destroyed Mr. Armstrong's work, sold the church's assets and hoarded the money."

Flurry maintains that some of the doctrinal alterations were occurring under Armstrong's nose before he died. The two men most villainized by Flurry are Joseph Tkach Sr., who succeeded Armstrong as pastor general of the church (and who died in 1995), and his son, Joseph Tkach Jr. Tkach Jr. told his version of the WCG's revisions in his 1997 book, *Transformed by Truth*. (See, Peter Ditzel, "Transforming the Truth - The Worldwide Church of God Continues to 'Make' History," *The Quarterly Journal*, July-September 1998, pp. 5-12.)

Flurry is a member of the Philadelphia Church of God, executive editor of its news magazine, *Philadelphia Trumpet*, and president of Herbert W. Armstrong College in Edmond, Okla.

Flurry's book, published in October 2006, is an ambitious attempt to recover what Armstrong loyalists see as the religious leader's severely maligned legacy. Flurry identifies Armstrong as one of the foremost religious leaders of the 20th century, the world's leading televangelist, and a Bible-based humanitarian.

Apart from the book, the Philadelphia Church of God is also resuscitating the late cult leader by way of the printing and free distribution of seven of Armstrong's principal books. The Philadelphia Church of God, following a fierce legal battle with the Pasadena-based mother church, gained copyright for the publications.

After *Raising the Ruins* enjoyed brisk sales of its initial printing of nearly 15,000 copies, Flurry and his church rushed to a second printing of 50,000 copies in late December.

—MKG