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NEW BERLIN CRISIS



BERLIN crisis strikes fear into Europe. Russian Communist Boss Khrushchev has incited East German Reds to take over all Berlin. Though momentarily foiled, latest Russian move has begun to set the stage for World War III! Here is part of bustling East Berlin, with Communist-controlled stores in background.

The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong

This twelfth installment reveals the disintegration of the business in Chicago and the commencement of his first college activity.

THE FLASH depression of 1920 had swept every one of my big-space advertisers into receiverships. It sounded the death-knell of the publishers' advertising representative business which I had built in five years to an annual income equivalent to \$25,000 in today's money, by age 28.

Reviving a "Dead Horse"

But I did not quit. I had paid a price to learn the lesson of sticking to a thing. I had *not* learned that a *dead* horse is DEAD! For two more desperate years I hung on, vainly attempting to revive a dead business.

What I did not know, then, was that the Eternal God was intervening to take from me and to destroy my IDOL—the god I was placing before HIM! As covered in the earlier chapters of this autobiography, I had been born of old Quaker stock—the same as ex-President Herbert Hoover, who is a distant cousin of mine—perhaps fourth or fifth. I was reared in the Sunday school of the Friends Church. But at age 18 I had lost religious interest except superficially, and had seldom attended Church. After moving to Maywood, my wife and I decided we ought to join a church. We attended a few to look them over. We rather liked the pastor and the people of the River Forest Methodist Church, so we joined—more from social preference than theological. Actually, I knew little or nothing of that church's doctrinal beliefs. I assumed that *all* Protestant churches were God's churches. It was merely a matter of selecting the "church of our choice." Religion played a minor role in my thoughts and life.

I didn't think of it in this light then—but I worshipped at the shrine of the god of VANITY. I was ambitious to be considered as "IMPORTANT" by important people, and to reap a good share of this world's material goods. I craved material success.

Succession of Sevens

I have learned since that there is often significance in numbers, especially in God's dealing with mankind. Seven is God's number of perfection and completeness. Many things occur in cycles of sevens. God's direct intervention in my life in bringing me down toward real repentance and surrender to Him, began at age 28—four 7s. This was a long and painful process, lasting *seven* years—until age 35—five sevens, when I was finally converted. There were to follow exactly *seven* preparatory years of intensive Bible study and evangelistic experience before God *opened the door* of radio and the printing press for the very *start* of this present world-wide work—at age 42, or six sevens. There were exactly *seven* more years—poverty-stricken years of humility being weaned completely from worldly economic ambitions—for the work to develop purely as a small *local* work in the Pacific Northwest. And then, in 1941, at age 49, the door was opened for the work to launch out on a *national* scale—although I did not actually walk through that door until the following year. After seven more years—December 27th, 1948—the lease-option contract on the original property that comprised the Ambassador College campus was converted into a *purchase*, and we came financially "over the hump" of what had appeared certain failure, and the future of the expanding work became assured.

Back to the story.

The next two years—from late 1920 until December, 1922—were discouraging years. A few nationally known business executives, unable to take the reverses of the depression, sank to despondency and committed suicide. One of these was the president of one of the large automobile manufacturing concerns whom I had known personally.

I had been knocked down, stunned,

groggy—but not knocked out. Desperately I clung on, hoping to climb back on top.

Conference with Millionaires

One morning—it must have been about February, 1921—a telephone call came from the secretary of the National Implement and Vehicle Association. An important meeting of the Board of Directors of the association was in progress. Mr. Wallis (I do not now remember his initials), president of the J. I. Case Plow Works, my biggest client, was chairman of this board. He had asked the secretary to call me and ask if I could run over immediately to their meeting, being held across the Loop in the Union League Club.

I told him I would be right over.

I raced down to a clothes-pressing shop and shoe-shining parlor, a half block down West Madison Street from my office, ducked into a dressing room and had my suit pressed and shoes shined while I waited—a rush job. Then I caught a taxi and hurried to the Union League Club.

Being ushered into the private room where the Board meeting was being held, I shook hands with Mr. Wallis, and in turn was introduced to six other millionaire presidents of large farm-implement manufacturers. I remember there was Mr. Brantingham, president of Emmerson-Brantingham, among the others. The magnetism of the powerful personalities of these seven big-business heads surcharged the atmosphere of the room. It was the first time I had ever been in the presence of so many big men at once. I was deeply impressed. But they were not in a happy mood. They were a deeply concerned group of men. The depression was ruining their businesses. They faced ruin.

Advising Clients to Cancel

"Mr. Armstrong," said Mr. Wallis,



Mr. Armstrong and his mother, with Beverly, in Maywood shortly before second daughter was born. Eva W. Armstrong is still enjoying life, age 92½.

"you know, of course, the extent to which this depression has hit the farm tractor industry. This meeting has been called in the interests of this entire industry. The industry cannot survive unless we can find some way to stimulate sales in this depression. We have to find some way to induce farmers to buy tractors—and they have quit buying them.

"Now what we want to ask you is this: can you—*will you* bring pressure on the editors of the bank journals of this nation, whom you represent, to write strong and vigorous editorials urging bankers to advise the farmers to resume buying tractors. Can your editors show the bankers WHY they ought to bring pressure on farmers to buy tractors, and save this great industry?"

It was a crucial moment in my life. Here were seven heads of great corporations. They represented the entire great farm tractor and farm implement industry. And they were appealing to *me* to devise an idea, and take an action that would save this vast industry of American Big Business from bankruptcy!

What an appeal to my egotism! What a temptation to think of personal importance!

But I *did* know the FACTS! And when this test came, I *had* to be honest with these men. It was no time for a grandstand play for personal glory, or for pretense. I knew the FACTS—hard, cold, stern FACTS—and I *had to be honest!*

Even though I knew it meant cancellation of what tractor advertising had not already been cancelled.

Of course the implication was that, if I could induce our editors to undertake a campaign to pressure bankers into inducing farmers to purchase tractors in this depression, an unheard-of volume of big-space advertising would be handed me on a platter!

I was well aware of that. I was well aware that I had it in my power to ignore FACTS I had gathered, and start such a campaign in America's leading bank magazines. These men didn't know what I knew. But it would be misrepresentation—and deliberate dishonesty.

I was ambitious to make money. But

not by falsification or dishonesty! I *was sincere!*

"No, gentlemen," I replied without hesitation. "I cannot do it! I have been constantly in touch with the bankers in regard to the farm tractor situation. Let me tell you what the country bankers *know*. They know that corn which normally has been selling for \$1.12 per bushel has dropped down to 18¢ per bushel. I have one client now whose business has skyrocketed since the depression—the Gordon-Van Tyne Company of Davenport, Iowa. They make, as you know, pre-fabricated structures for temporary grain storage. Everywhere farmers are buying these, and storing their grain for a rise in the market—after the depression is over.

"Bankers know that one tractor replaces six horses. Tractors have to be fed gasoline, which is expensive right now. Horses are fed on 18¢ corn and oats and hay that have skidded likewise in price. Country bankers know their farmer customers would think they were fools to recommend buying tractors and feeding them on high-priced gasoline, when they have their horses being fed on grain they can't sell."

The next day I received a cancellation of my last remaining tractor account—J. I. Case. But I still had my honesty and self-respect.

A Child's Menu

In early May, 1921, it was necessary

On the farm in Iowa. Beverly, age four—in 1922.



to take a business trip to Iowa. It was decided that I should take our eldest daughter Beverly, then almost three, for a visit with her "Auntie Bert" as she called her Aunt Bertha, while I transacted business in Iowa.

In a lower berth on the sleeper that night, as I was undressing her to put on her sleeping garment, Beverly stood up, and discovered she could reach up and touch the shiny top of the berth.

"See, Daddy," she exclaimed, "I'm a BIG girl now. I can touch the ceiling."

Next morning we were having breakfast in the dining room of the Hotel Savory. When the waitress brought me a menu, Beverly, in the highchair they had brought her, demanded a menu also. Laughingly the waitress gave her one. She looked up and down the menu with a studious expression—it might have been upside-down. And then, with great feminine dignity, in a very lady-like voice, Beverly gave the waitress her order.

"I think I will have," she said, pertly, "some ice cream, some string beans, and some candy."

Later, when her younger sister Dorothy became about the same age, she ordered a dinner.

"I want some ice cream, pop-corn and some chewing-gum," she ordered.

I never did quite agree with the modernistic psychologists who say we should always give children whatever they want—that they instinctively know what is best for them.

Our children and grandchildren, of course, like all others, have on occasion gotten off some "cute" sayings. One time my wife was putting on Dorothy's little Dr. Denton sleepers to put her to bed. It seems they were made of wool, and they scratched her skin.

"Mother," she said seriously, "nobody but just me and God and Jesus knows what a fix I'm in!"

Recuperating in Iowa

Things in my business went from bad to worse. It was discouraging—frustrating. I was taking the biggest beating of my life—but hung stubbornly on. Finally, about July, 1922, it became necessary to give up our apartment. My income had gone too low to support my family, and at that time we decided



Mrs. Armstrong and Beverly, on farm in Iowa—1922.

that Mrs. Armstrong and the girls should go to her father's farm in Iowa, to lessen the expenses.

I rented a single room about a block away in Maywood, furnishing it with some of our very fine furniture, and the rest of the furniture was put in storage. We had a Knabe piano I had purchased new on contract, but it went back to the store when we could no longer keep up the payments. All the rest of the furniture had been bought for cash.

From this time I entered upon perhaps the blackest and most discouraging three months of my life. It was a mistake to try to face this up-hill tread-mill climb alone without my wife and family. If ever I needed my wife it was now.

I began palling around with two other young men who were advertising representatives of magazines. One of

them was in process of separating from and divorcing his wife. The wife of the other was away for the summer and fall. We began to haunt night clubs—then called cabarets. Often we would hang around these places of sorrowful, moaning, screeching, wailing music—if you could call such dirges "music"—until 1 or 2 A.M. We began to drink—not at all even a fraction of the volume of an "alcoholic"—but too much for efficiency. My mental attitude became one of frustration.

Finally, I got two or three weeks behind with the room rent on my single room, and I felt too humiliated to go back. I went to a north-side second-rate hotel—then to another. Finally I could not even keep this up.

I reached the end of the rope in Chicago in October, 1922. I was lone-



Mr. Armstrong on the farm in Iowa, age 30.

some for my wife and children. At last I, too, had to seek refuge on my father-in-law's farm in Iowa, where we would have no cost of living. I do not remember now, but I probably travelled this time in a day coach.

My father-in-law was finishing up corn shucking and I did the best I could to help him—but I was inexperienced, and unable to keep up with him.

Thru that fall and winter, I spent most of the time in resting, and recuperating in morale from the crushing defeat of losing my business because my *Big-Business* clients had lost theirs. That winter, beside the warm fire of burning oak logs, I read thru three or four books of fiction—about the only fiction reading of my entire life. I did what I could to help on the farm, but that wasn't much, and my wife, of course, did the cooking, and housework.

My First College Activity

At this time my wife's younger brother, Walter, was a freshman in

Simpson College in Indianola. Along in November he came to me with a proposition.

"Herb," he said, "I've decided to go in for the college oratorical contest, if you'll help me."

A short time before had been the first day of basketball practice. Walter had been the star basketball player in Simpson Academy, which he had attended instead of High School. His greatest ambition had been to make the Simpson varsity basketball team, and to be chosen on the Des Moines Register's all-state team.

On opening day of basketball practice, he was the first one into the gym with a basketball suit. When the coach and other players came on the floor, the coach had frowned and walked over to Walter.

"Dillon," he said, "what are you doing here? We won't need you. We have all the material we need this year. Go to the showers and get into your street clothes."

This was open humiliation before all the candidates for the squad. Being rejected without a chance to even *try out* for the team was unfair, unjust, and discriminatory. He couldn't understand it. He was MAD! Later he found the reason. The coach's salary at that time was being paid by a certain fraternity, and only frat members were given consideration for the team.

"Now here's the way I figure," he said to me. "In oratory, *anyone* can compete. They can't throw me off because I don't belong to a frat. Now you are a professional writer. If you will help me write my oration—and it is allowable to have help—and work with me on delivery, I think I have a chance. The two best orators Simpson ever had are a Junior and a Senior—both members of that frat. If you can beat them, it will be sweet revenge. Will you help me?"

"Well, Walt," I replied, "I don't know a thing about college oratorical contests. I never saw one. I have never read the script of a college oration. I don't even know what they are like. But if you will bring me copies of a few sample orations, I'll sure help you if I can."

The exciting experience of engaging

in this, my first participation in college activities, and what it led to—starting a business of once again selling surveys to newspapers—and migrating to Oregon in a Model "T"—and being infuriated into a study of the Bible and of evolution, will follow in the next issue.

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 2)

God's help, but I am very worried about my husband as he refuses to listen to anything religious. We are church members and he thinks that our church is the best. Since listening to the radio I feel our liberal church is something like a 'Religious Tranquilizer Pill' to make life more bearable for the majority."

Woman from Los Angeles,
California

A new concept of study

"You have won me over to a new concept of Bible study and I wait from lesson to lesson, and am now caught up and waiting for the next test. I have asked for so many of your pamphlets that I feel ashamed to ask for any more. I know it costs money, of which I was never blessed with much, but I do manage to send a little regularly and hope to be able to increase this soon.

"So many broadcasts claim worldwide coverage, our church broadcast claims to be the oldest, some claim more countries, some claim more languages, but *all* but *one* always ask for donations. This ONE, you know the one I mean, puts its faith in God to provide the means. And if we who listen want to let our God down then we are sure sorry men. This in addition to the unadulterated word of God I hear over *The World Tomorrow* broadcast is what has won me over to the true Bible study completely, but I have so many questions I'm sure the Lord Himself would run out of patience with me. How can we ever find time enough for the study of God's Word?"

Man from Stamford, Connecticut
Editor's comment: The *World Tomorrow* broadcast is now heard throughout the world, and goes out each week with five million watts of power.