

"Let Justice be done, though the heavens fall!"

## Joseph W. Tkach -- Saint? or Religious MONSTER?

In these last days, we hear much about religious scandals, cover-ups, the sins of religious leaders such as Jim Baker of the PTL Club, and Jimmy Swaggart and his connections with prostitutes. But many people today consider charismatic Joseph W. Tkach of the Worldwide Church of God to be above reproach, a "saint." A careful, cautious study of his past, however, puts the lie to that fairytale. Beware those who seek to steal not only your pocketbook but your soul!

William F. Dankenbring

Is Joseph W. Tkach for "real"?

Four years in a row, while I was yet a member of the Worldwide Church of God, in good standing, I was called on the carpet ostensibly for crossing over the line insofar as promotion of my books, published by Triumph Publishing Company, my own company, was concerned. In 1982 I was reprimanded by Tkach and Ellis LaRavia (no longer apparently part of the Worldwide Ministry, I believe he is now on a "sabbatical") who played the "good cop, bad cop" routine on me for my sending out a letter to my own mailing list, asking people to pray for the success of my new book of that time, *Beyond Star Wars*, which was printed in a mass market paperback edition by Tyndale House Publishers. This, apparently, to them was a "no-no," but their demagogic tactics disturbed me no end. When they saw I wouldn't give in to them, they let the matter drop, admitting I had a right to publish my books.

### *A Shocking Accusation*

A year later in the April 1983 *Pastor General's Report*, a publication sent to WCG ministers, somebody wrote an article blasting my books and publishing company, with scathing disapproval and denunciation. The article was either written or approved by Tkach. The index of Worldwide Church of God publications listed it and credited it to Tkach. However, Tkach sent an emissary to inform me that he did not write it; he claimed that Herbert Armstrong wrote it, and therefore Tkach was compelled to approve it. Regardless of who wrote it, however, it was libelous and

blasphemous. The article declared:

"Question: Several ministers have asked about Mr. William Dankenbring's advertisement for his books which have been distributed to members through mailings, at Feast sites, etc. Are the books endorsed by the Church? Does the Church approve of them or recommend them? Is Mr. Dankenbring still a member of the Church?

"Answer: Mr. Dankenbring is classified as a member of God's Church. But that does not imply that his privately-sold writings have the approval or endorsement of the Church.

"Human nature seems to want to use God, or God's Church, for personal gain or profit. The moneychangers used God's temple as a place of business to sell at a profit to God's people. In blazing anger, Jesus drove them out. Jesus said, 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise' (John 2:16). We, the members, are God's house, builded into a HOLY TEMPLE (Eph.2:20-21).

"In II Peter 2:3 God warns, 'And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.' Yes, SELLING FOR PROFIT their words in writing to the members of God's Church.

"Perhaps the selling of doves and things for sacrifice was not in itself wrong, but exploiting God's HOUSE as a place or means of selling to God's people was.

"The membership of God's Church has been exploited for private gain a number of times by those no longer members.

"God has commissioned HIS CHURCH -- not private members on their own -- to feed the flock. The Church publishes much literature -- magazines, booklets, books, reprint articles besides the personal ministry, to feed the flock -- AND WE DO NOT CHARGE A PRICE OR MAKE MERCHANDISE OF OUR MEMBERS IN SO FREELY GIVING GOD'S TRUTH! [Editor: Is that right? I seem to recall books by Herbert Armstrong and Stanley Rader having price tags, as well as Ambassador College Envoys which were very exorbitant in cost!]

"Although Mr. Dankenbring is a graduate of Ambassador College and has studied under Mr. Armstrong and our ministers, he has stated in writing, 'I appreciate him (Mr. Armstrong) very much, although I have disagreed with him from time to time on some relatively "small" or "little" things.' [Editor: Notice how the writer here uses Mr. Armstrong's name; it is for this reason that I doubt Mr. Herbert Armstrong wrote this piece at all, but rather Joseph Tkach or more likely Mike Feazell or one of his other flunky "ghost writers"!] But what the writer might consider 'small' or 'little' disagreements might in God's eyes be vitally important disagreements.

"God's Church therefore does not endorse nor give approval to Mr. Dankenbring's books, nor those of others than the Church's own publications or those definitely approved."

Joe Tkach claims he did not write that article but that Herbert Armstrong did. However, the fact that the article refers to "Mr. Armstrong" in the second person puts the lie to that statement. Also, the phraseology of the article has always struck me as

"second rate" imitation Armstrong. He wouldn't write that way. Thirdly, he saw my full page book advertisements at the Feast in Big Sandy, and never criticized or condemned them, and when Don Ward announced from the pulpit that they were not officially sanctioned by the Church, Herbert Armstrong even questioned why he made such an announcement. Later when I talked to Bob Fahey, then HWA's chief assistant, about my books and such, he discussed it with HWA, and there was no negative reaction. Fahey told him I was like a "sheep bleating in the wilderness," and sought to bring us together. Therefore, the above quoted article is totally inconsistent and out-of-character to have been written by Herbert Armstrong! If it had his authority, it surely would have carried his by-line, but was anonymous!

Somebody obviously did not like what I was writing, and used this means to pummel me in the stomach and turn Church people everywhere against my books! It seemed strange at that time that prior to this article suddenly appearing, NOBODY in the Church had talked to me negatively about my books or their contents, and I had been praised by several ministers for them, and some ministers even used them for the basis of sermons and Bible studies! The fact is, evangelist Raymond F. McNair even published his book *Ascent To Greatness* through my company!

Also, strangely, two or three months before this article appeared, I had just sent a couple of my books to the attention of Stanley Rader, and his office had written me a short but nice letter appreciating them.

At the same time, I had sent several copies of my books to the attention of Herbert Armstrong, with a short supportive cover-letter, in which I tried to tell Mr. Armstrong I was loyally back of him 100% in his efforts to get the Church "back on the track." I did write the little sentence admitting to not agreeing with him in every little thing, but I went on to say -- in the rest of the sentence, for some reason not quoted honestly in the PGR article -- that we were all growing together in grace and knowledge, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man" (Eph.4:13).

I was merely being honest and straight-forward, for there were a few items I would have liked to talk to Mr. Armstrong about -- since he had flip-flopped on the subject of whether physical life of any kind existed on earth prior to Adam and Eve's creation, as evidenced in his books *The Incredible Human Potential* and *Mystery of the Ages*. However, I never got a chance to talk with him about these things -- I was literally "blown out of the water" by this nasty, scurrilous diatribe printed in the *Pastor General's Report*, with no "by-line" to show who the insidious author really was.

Whether or not he wrote it, I immediately telephoned Joe Tkach and sought to make an appointment to talk to him and Ellis LaRavia about the matter. He did not return my first phone call. The second call I got him personally, and he agreed to have a meeting to discuss the matter -- but he seemed reluctant somehow. He never called me back to set up the meeting, and I decided to commit the problem into God's

hands and leave it there.

### *The "Annual Visits"*

A year later I was called to task once again for publishing and promoting books. This time, though, Joe actually seemed to approve of the book I had published, *The Incredible History of God's True Church*. After we finished our discussion, he and Ellis both seemed to be impressed by my "good attitude," and Joe even asked me to begin writing articles for *The Plain Truth* again, which he promised to show to Herbert Armstrong so they could be published. In the following months, despite having turned in 5-6 articles, I heard nothing in response, however, and it appeared that Joe Tkach had merely been leading me on -- he was not interested in my articles after all.

The following year, when I wrote to book stores and gift shops in Festival areas to have them display my books, including Ivor Fletcher's book on Church History, my own books on *Overcoming Satan*, *Last Days of Planet Earth*, and Paul Syltie's book *Millennial Agriculture: The New Eden*, I quickly got a phone call from Tkach's office asking me to come and see him. This time he and Selmer Hegvold were in the office, and Tkach immediately got down to business and read me a memo he was threatening to send to ALL festival sites, accusing me of preaching things contrary to Church doctrine!

The kid gloves were off! He obviously meant business! However, the whole idea I felt was totally absurd. This was patently ridiculous, and I thought he was being ridiculous, but I went along with the game, humoring him. I pointed out that he knew very well where I stood on the subject of Satan's Fate. I had even written a book about it several years before, with the very title *Satan's Fate* -- and the Church had known it for years, and nobody had ever said anything to me about it. It seemed ridiculous to bring that up as some "point of controversy," in order to blast me publicly and to blacken my reputation. I then pointed out to him that since the Church had told the various gift shops that they did not want them selling my books, in most Feast sites my books would not be present at all, and my books would only be represented in a few places, at a few sites. It seemed ludicrous -- like shooting a yellow canary with a huge cannon -- for them to send such a memo to all festival sites! Joe apparently thought better of his plan, and the memo never went out.

### *The Final Meeting*

A year later, we had another one of our "annual meetings," and I asked Joe what he thought of the research paper I had sent to him on Daniel's 2300 day prophecy, which differed from Herman Hoeh's old interpretation. I had sent copies of the paper to about twenty different headquarters ministers, and only one had even responded, Leroy Neff, and he said he found it "very interesting," but sadly said he had no time to study into it further. When I asked Tkach about it, he merely said he discussed it with Dr. Hoeh over the phone.

I had already presented Hoeh with a copy, as well as had him over for dinner at our home, where I had presented the "newly discovered truth" to him. At that time, he seemed to be impressed with it, and did not deny it at all. When I pointed out that Adam Clarke's Commentary even had it right, except it was one year off, he exclaimed, while he picked his teeth with a toothpick, "I read that." I asked him whether he meant he had read it back in the 50's, and he nodded but said nothing else. So I offered, "Well, back then it had no significance and we didn't know then that the 2300 years would be up in 1967, the year of the Six Day War."

After all these meetings with Joseph Tkach, I came away with the impression that this man was cagey, street-wise, smart in a political sense, and very cunning and crafty. No wonder he had wormed his way in to the very top, impressing Stanley Rader, with whom he was ordained as an evangelist during the Church's Receivership Crisis. However, I came away with the distinct notion that this was not a man who could be trusted -- not at all. He was a consummate liar, shifty, covered up his tracks well, and was a master of flattery. When he took over the Church after the death of Herbert Armstrong in January 1986, I had grave misgivings and doubts about the future of the Church -- but I decided to give him a chance, to see how he would operate. I was not long in finding out.

*Disfellowshipped without a Hearing!*

A year after Herbert Armstrong's death, Tkach sent two ministers to my home to inform me I had been "suspended" from Church for having written a new Triumph Publishing catalog, advertising a new booklet "Daniel's 2300 Day Prophecy Revealed for the Very First Time!" and for having written a Church member in Australia a letter informing him I thought the Church was then composed of a mixture of Laodiceans and Philadelphians, and that I had grave doubts about where the Church was headed, but that time would tell.

The next week the ministers returned to my home to inform me that I had not only been suspended, but "disfellowshipped" as well. The third week, Jim Reier, the lead minister, called me on the telephone, informing me that I was going to be "marked" that very weekend and that it would be better if my wife stayed home that day so that she would not be too embarrassed.

After much prayer and fasting, I decided that the time had come to follow the example of Herbert Armstrong, when he left the Church of God Seventh Day back in the early 1930's. The time had come to put my trust completely in the hands of God, and to serve Him totally, independently, and to trust HIM with the outcome in pure, shining, unadulterated FAITH!

In the five years since that time God has blessed my efforts, and my wife's, and those associated with us in Triumph Prophetic Ministries. In the intervening years,

Joseph Tkach has proven his true colors -- and they are black with a very wide white stripe! The Church of God, since he took over the helm, has plunged over the cliff of out-and-out apostasy, with a speed and violence that is breath-taking. Doctrines are being shifted and changed right and left, so that most members don't know what the Church teaches any more, and are afraid to ask their local minister lest they be looked upon as some sort of "dissident"!

I have categorized the massive sea-changes in doctrine that have overwhelmed the Worldwide Church of God in other articles. Suffice it to say that Joseph Tkach has virtually undermined and disgorged every vital doctrine taught by Herbert W. Armstrong, especially those in his most important book he ever wrote, *The Mystery of the Ages*. Tkach has destroyed the doctrine of the God Family, the doctrine of Christ's humanity, the doctrine of when we are Born Again, altered significantly the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, claiming now that the Church is the Kingdom, and abolished all real understanding of Biblical prophecy, claiming "prophecies fail" and cannot be trusted. He has really messed with the minds of God's people, leaving them in grave spiritual jeopardy and peril. The major doctrine upon which Jesus Christ built the Church through Herbert Armstrong, the identity of the United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy, has been jettisoned and thrown overboard, with only the final "taps" waiting to be sounded for its interment.

A man who is so changeable when it comes to Church doctrines, what is he like in his personal life and habits? Is he the saint that so many seem to think? How does his winsome smile play in Peoria? What kind of character does he have?

#### *The Robert Skaggs Testimony*

I recently had the pleasure of talking with a Robert Skaggs, longtime member of the Church of God in the Chicago, Illinois area. He has been out of the Church for several years, but was a member back in the early Chicago days, the early 1960s, when Dean Blackwell was district superintendent and when Joseph Tkach was first ordained as a local elder. Tkach and another member, Martin Fillipello, were summoned to Chicago one Sabbath and both ordained the same day.

According to Mr. Skaggs, who was also a leading member, Dean Blackwell was a very sensuous minister, and participated in sexual relations with a number of women in the Church, with or without their husband's knowledge. He had a special office in his basement, where trysts were held.

Blackwell also saw to it that leading Church women would clean his home 2-3 times per week, and cook special meals when out-of-town guests would arrive. Several women wound up in his arms or bed, as the situation dictated, including the wives of Mr. Fillipello and Mr. Tkach, according to Skaggs. Said Mr. Skaggs, the way to quick ordination in Chicago was to give your wife to Mr. Blackwell! Skaggs himself refused to let his wife go over to the Blackwell residence, and told her, "Let Mrs.

Blackwell do her own cleaning!"

Mr. Skaggs related to me how one time he saw Mr. Blackwell put his hand on Mrs. Elaine Tkach's buttocks and give her a fondling pat. He has no doubt that Mrs. Tkach was one of Dean Blackwell's lovers.

### *The Phillipello Affair*

However, according to Mr. Skaggs, when Martin Phillipello found out what his wife had been doing with Blackwell, he went crazy. A leading Church woman one day took some food over to the Blackwells, hearing that Dean Blackwell was sick in bed. So she tip-toed into the bedroom, and to her chagrin and shocked surprise, she saw Mrs. Phillipello in BED with Dean Blackwell, both of them naked as jaybirds. She hurriedly retreated. A few days later, after Sabbath services, she was invited for dinner with the Skaggs. While there, she told Mr. Skaggs what she had seen -- it was too much for her to keep to herself. Skaggs, smelling the scent of scandal and corruption in the Church, immediately telephoned Pasadena and spoke with evangelist Roderick C. Meredith. Meredith acted surprised on the phone, but promised to get to the bottom of the problem.

The next thing Skaggs knew, he had been summarily suspended from Church, disfellowshipped, and was informed that HE needed to repent! In fact, in order to get back in the Church, a year or so later, he had to submit to the embarrassment of being *re-baptized*, although he had done nothing wrong!

Meanwhile, what about Phillipello? As I said, he virtually lost his mind over the sexual debauchery involving his very own wife. He took his new lease car, supplied by the Church, and his new credit card given to him as a minister, and took off -- no one knew where. All the Church could do was follow the receipts of the credit card which Phillipello used prodigiously as he snaked his way to Las Vegas. Finally they caught up with him, but pressed no charges. In fact, Phillipello was reinstated in the ministry with a minimum of fuss. Apparently by this time he had overcome his sense of loss and shock, and was willing to keep quiet about the "Blackwell affair."

### *Immorality Unlimited*

Did Joseph Tkach "buy" his way into the ministry by "selling" his wife's sexual services to evangelist Dean Blackwell? John Trechack of *Ambassador Report* fame, interviewed Robert Skaggs, and wrote up the story as follows:

"However, almost all the WCG oldtimers I talked to were convinced that there was a connection between Elaine's condition and a sexual relationship she allegedly had with evangelist Dean Blackwell, her husband's superior in Chicago during the early '60s.

"The Tkach administration now wants the Blackwell affair downplayed as having been merely verbal overtures by Blackwell. With only one exception, however, all the WCG oldtimers I talked to said

their understanding was that the Blackwell affair was out and out adultery -- *at the very least*. . . . When I suggested to former WCG pastor Al Carrozzo that Blackwell's romantic relationship with Elaine Tkach was now being portrayed as only verbal, he replied, 'That's not the way Joe talked about it years ago. He believed Dean Blackwell had gone to bed with his wife.'

Al Carrozzo is the minister who blew the whistle on the sexual scandal of Garner Ted Armstrong, in the early '70s, who was sleeping with innumerable co-eds, baby sitters, stewardesses, and young Ambassador College girls mesmerized by his allure, glamour, and boyish good looks and the trappings of power and spiritual "authority." Says John Trechak:

"Carrozzo is known for his frankness. He is a man that does not mince words. His understanding of the Blackwell affair with Elaine Tkach, however, is very mild compared to what some others have said. For instance, at least one WCG evangelist has described the Blackwell-Elaine trysts as 'wife swapping.' When I first became aware of this accusation I assumed the evangelist was confusing Dean Blackwell with Blackwell's brother Lowell, who was put out of the WCG ministry years ago because of alleged wife swapping. That sordid business was actually detailed in a turgid open letter written to the entire WCG ministry by church administrator Roderick C. Meredith in the early '70s. But a similar accusation against Tkach has now come from other sources, as well.

One of these sources is the very same Robert Skaggs with whom I talked a few weeks ago. Trechak continues:

"In March, I was contacted by Indiana businessman Robert Skaggs, who had been a WCG member in the Midwest during the early '60s. He had then been involved with the WCG's visiting program and had been very close to both Tkach and Blackwell. Skaggs claimed that when he knew him, Tkach was not genuinely interested in religious truth, but was possessed by a lust for power. Skaggs told me that in his quest for power Tkach stooped so low as to allow evangelist Blackwell, then his superior, to sleep with Elaine, his wife. In return for this favor, says Skaggs, Blackwell had Tkach ordained into the WCG ministry.

"When I was told this, I pointedly asked Mr. Skaggs, 'Are you saying that Joe Tkach was ordained in return for participating in some kind of wife-sharing arrangement?' His answer: 'Absolutely!' Skaggs went on to state that Blackwell had at least one other man ordained for the same reason."

Trechak goes on in his amazing and candid report, saying that evangelist Dean Blackwell had a "reputation" among the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God as a sort of "ladies' man." He seemed to especially have a way of consoling "widows" in the Church. Because of his moral transgressions, he was at times brought into Pasadena for "R and R" -- repentance and recovery.

Writes John Trechak:

"As shocking as they are, Mr. Skagg's accusations regarding Blackwell are in step with Blackwell's reputation among many former colleagues. Former church administrator Gary Arvidson told me, 'Yes, Dean Blackwell had something of a reputation. Without going into details, let's just say that he was known as someone who really know how to bring relief to the widows.' Another former WCG minister recalled how Blackwell repeatedly had to be brought into headquarters for periods of moral rehabilitation. Some such periods culminated in pulpit pronouncements by Blackwell (somewhat akin to those of Jimmy Swaggart) that he had finally repented and learned his lesson" (*Ambassador Report*, 'Joseph. W. Tkach -- God's New Rep on Planet Earth,' III, December 1989).

Former WCG minister David Robinson, who wrote *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, a fascinating expose of the Armstrong empire and failings, sexual "warts" and entanglements, including the shocking account of decade-long incest, told John Trechak that in the fall of 1971 WCG minister Don Wineinger confessed to him how he had obtained a quick raise in ministerial rank to that of preaching elder by threatening to expose Blackwell's transgressions and his double lifestyle. Faced with this threat, Blackwell quickly raised him up a notch in rank -- within mere days. Years later, Don Wineinger and his wife were having severe marital problems. One day in 1978, while consulting a divorce attorney, Wineinger committed suicide in after murdering his wife.

In my own recent conversation with Mr. Skaggs, he told me how one evening when he lived in Kentucky, and the Blackwell group was staying overnight in his home, he got up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. In so doing he had to pass through the living room, where he saw Dean Blackwell at midnight standing and hugging the girl who was Jack Pyle's fiance! Jack Pyle was later to become a minister in the Church. Sleeping, supposedly, not twenty feet away on the sofa, was Mrs. Blackwell, either impervious or not caring about the whole thing!

I asked Mr. Skaggs about whether Joe Tkach was guilty of the same kind of sexual sins and excesses as Dean Blackwell appeared to be. He said that he was sure the answer was yes. He was positive. According to Skaggs, Blackwell chose men around him to help him who were "birds of a feather," who were just like him. "Birds of a feather flock together," he said.

### *"Servicing the Widows"*

As if to corroborate this intriguing story and candid revelation of serious sexual hanky panky among the leaders of the Chicago Church in the early '60s, I recently received a letter from a woman in Chicago, a long-time Church member, who wrote to me just a few weeks ago. She declared:

"Dear Mr. Dankenbring:

"I feel that I must come forward and speak to you frankly. I have been reading letters from others who suffered at the hands of the ministers in the Worldwide Church of God. Now I tell you what

happened with me.

"I have been a widow for many years. A long time ago, after my man died, Joe Tkach came to visit me. He wasn't nobody important then.

"I'm ashamed to tell that he took advantage of me and I'm ashamed of myself ever since. He offered me comfort but then was aggressive with me and forced himself.

"I blame myself mostly, but also him because he should have known better too than to take advantage of me in my weakest time after my man died. People need to know the truth, that Joe Tkach is not the saintly man he wants you to think he is.

"I have repented and try to live the best I can now. I think God has forgiven me. I pray for Joe too, but still feel bad about the whole thing."

### *Tkach's Incredible LIES about His Background*

Tkach's claim to have attended Illinois Institute of Technology was utterly bogus. That institution of higher learning has absolutely no record of him as a student of any kind, and the courses he claims to have taken -- "industrial management, industrial safety and human factors in industry" -- were never even offered at ITT! Officials there adamantly and emphatically insist there never was anybody named Joseph Tkach at that institute! The fact of the matter is, Joseph Tkach never even graduated from high school!

Tkach completely lied about his background, including the famous story about a wildcat strike by 2,000 people when he was supposedly once fired by Hupp Aviation for refusing to work on the Sabbath. Now officially called Aircraft Gears Corporation, that company never had more than a few hundred employees in its history and official records as well as old-time employees attest to the fact there never was any such strike at all!

What about Tkach's vaunted military service record? Didn't he single-handedly shoot down Japanese kamikaze airplanes in World War II, jump ship and escape to a beach by floating, going AWOL, just before the ship was blown up by the Japanese and sunk? Didn't he then turn himself into the local marine commandant, get tossed into the brig, and while there beat up on several Marines in the brig? Absolutely, utterly, completely UNTRUE -- every one of these claims is complete HOGWASH! The truth is, Joseph Tkach never saw any real fighting action in World War II. The ship he was supposedly stationed on, the U.S.S. Austin, was a destroyer escort, and according to official naval records never saw action at the places where the Japanese used kamikaze fighters! It wasn't in any famous World War II naval battles at all. It never saw a single kamikaze. Nor was it ever blown out of the water by the Japanese.

The whole tissue of stories about Joe Tkach's World War II exploits were

manufactured out of whole cloth, merely in an attempt to bolster his self image and his public persona and profile among the Church brethren, to lend credence to his becoming "pastor general" of the Worldwide Church of God!

### *Is Tkach a Crook?*

Judas Iscariot was a "thief," and was the treasurer for Jesus' small group of disciples. He held the bag, and was outraged when a woman anointed Jesus' feet with a pound of expensive ointment, asking why the ointment was not sold for the money it would bring. Wrote the apostle John, "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (John 12:3-7).

Beginning in the early '60s, Tkach's superiors often put him in charge over the "poor fund" or "third tithe" accounts. Wrote John Trechak in Ambassador Report about Tkach's money managing activities:

"Earls Timmons, for a decade a confidant of Tkach, told me that Tkach would often siphon off funds by making *loans* to needy church members, then labeling the loans on the books as gifts paid out, and finally pocketing the loans when they were repaid. I personally recall how during the early seventies, a number of my WCG friends, unemployed at the time, went to Tkach for assistance. In each case they were granted a few hundred dollars. They were startled, however, when Tkach informed them that the amount they received was only a loan and that the loan had to be repaid to Tkach personally in cash.

"I asked one former church secretary, who had known Tkach quite well during the seventies, if she believed Tkach had siphoned off funds meant for the poor during those years. She told me, 'Oh sure he did. But so what? In those days a lot of the ministers were doing the very same thing.'" (*Ambassador Report*, "Joseph W. Tkach -- God's New Rep on Planet Earth, III, December 1989).

Stanley Rader, former attorney and adviser to Herbert W. Armstrong, whose name is very familiar to those in Worldwide Church of God circles, in a February 1, 1981 telex to Herbert Armstrong commented on Joe Tkach's "illegal fencing activities" which surfaced when the Church was preparing its civil rights case. Former WCG attorney and accountant Jack Kessler, in a letter he wrote to the WCG board of trustees, recounted many ethics violations among top executives of the Church. He made the following statement regarding Joe Tkach's helping himself to money from the "poor fund" or "third tithe" fund. Said Kessler:

"According to Mr. Robin Webber, Mr. Joseph Tkach apparently felt justified in giving himself from a trust fund he controlled a little advance of \$5000.00 as a 'needy Church member' to take advantage of a special investment in unregistered securities then illegally being peddled (against advice of counsel) by the Dean brothers" (*ibid.*).

According to Worldwide Church of God teaching, members are to contribute a special "third tithe" to the Church every third and sixth year out of a seven year cycle. This money was to go to help the poor widows, orphans, and strangers -- the poor and homeless in real need. After those needs were met, the balance could go for ministerial needs. Unfortunately, the third tithe fund often became a sort of "slush fund" for the use of ministers in the Church to "pad" their own incomes, for their own "needs."

In the December 1991 *Ambassador Report*, John Trechak reports that the Worldwide Church of God adopted a new policy of dumping needy members living in dire poverty on government agencies, relatives, and others, before even considering assisting them with "third tithe" or "poor funds." The Church absolved itself of all responsibility for its own poor, as much as possible. This policy, according to former WCG deacon Herbert Zacharios of Wisconsin, began with Joseph Tkach. He wrote to Trechak:

"We attended the Feast of Tabernacles for our last time at Biloxi, Mississippi in 1979. During a service one of the speakers reported how two men had been raised in rank to evangelist -- Stanley Rader and Joseph Tkach. . . . The speaker told how Tkach had taken it upon himself to go through the rolls of those receiving third tithe and remove everyone who was eligible for social security and/or welfare and/or anyone who had a living relative -- in or out of the church -- who could be responsible for their care" (*Ambassador Report*, December 1991, 'Joseph W. Tkach -- God's New Rep on Planet Earth,' part VI).

Cruel insensitivity seems to mark Joseph W. Tkach. Beneath his shining exterior is a grave tomb full of dead man's bones. Herbert W. Armstrong distrusted men who were too carefully groomed and immaculately suited. He sensed "fraud" might exist beneath the exterior of such men. Joseph Tkach is one of the most smartly groomed and perfectly coiffured men I have ever met. Invariably he dresses with a panache and flair that seems incredible. But what is on the "inside"?

God said to Samuel His prophet when He sent him to anoint David as the new king, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature . . . for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the OUTWARD APPEARANCE, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

Jesus said of the religious Pharisees, church leaders of that time, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make CLEAN the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of EXTORTION AND EXCESS. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. WOE unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto WHITED SEPULCHRES, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of DEAD MEN'S BONES, and of all UNCLEANNES.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto me, but within ye are full of HYPOCRISY and INIQUITY" (Matt.23:25-28).

Many serious allegations have come to the fore indicting Joseph Tkach and revealing what a scoundrel and wastrel and scallawag he really is. From incredible lying about his past, amazing falsification about his employment record and naval record, to fantastic exaggeration about his previous educational background, Joseph Tkach reveals himself to be an inveterate liar, braggart, and guilty of oleoginous duplicity. He is cruel, callous, vicious, vindictive, venomous and viscerally volatile, with a temper like Mount Vesuvius.

### *A Spiritual Dracula*

Despite his smiling facade, and carefully manicured exterior, this "would-be apostle" is nothing more than a spiritual vampire, preying on his innocent victims and devouring their spiritual souls. If you would like to KNOW the proven FACTS about this modern Judas Iscariot, then write for our free articles: "Who Is Shebna in Bible Prophecy?", "The Mafia Apostle," "Is Joseph Tkach an Apostle of Christ?", "The Pancake Apostle," and "Joseph W. Tkach -- Apostle? or Apostate?" These articles will open your eyes to the true nature of the man who is Satan's active supporter and secret agent leading the Worldwide Church of God astray, the man who is a modern day "Balaam"!

The truth is, this diabolical monster in sheep's clothing, this modern spiritual Dracula, this heinous "beast," wormed his way into the Church of God and took advantage of every opportunity to further his own career. The name "Tkach" itself apparently means "weaver" in Slavonic tongues, as well as "tailor" and "spider."

### *"Ye Shall Know Them By Their Fruits"*

Jesus Christ told His disciples, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall KNOW them BY THEIR FRUITS" (Matt.7:15-16). What are the "fruits" of the life and ministry of Joseph Tkach?

Let's face it. The Joseph Tkach story is just beginning to unfold. Or should I say that his carefully orchestrated "cover up" is just beginning to unravel. A number of allegations have been made that he is a crook, a liar, scoundrel, mountebank, shyster, and thoroughly depraved character, not only immoral but worse -- amoral. But more recently serious charges have been made that he is also bi-sexual, having sexual intercourse with both males and females. Is there any truth to these allegations?

One Tkach supporter excuses Tkach's supposed sexual activity, what ever it may be, with the comment that he hasn't has sex with his wife Elaine Tkach for over 22 years. He remarks, "Let's face it -- you either use it or lose it. We shouldn't criticize Mr. Tkach because he has needs." Will Christ excuse sexual immorality just because

some man thinks he has "needs"? Whether Joseph Tkach is "gay," is currently the subject of a raging debate. Some suggest that there is incriminating circumstantial evidence. Unlike Herbert W. Armstrong, Joe Tkach seems often to be surrounded by single young men, or effeminate men. His propensity for "touching" other men, and his enjoyment of seeing semi-naked males wrestle on television, fuels the speculation.

An anonymous letter, ostensibly from a high level executive of the Church in Pasadena, has been written and widely distributed accusing Tkach of being the leader of a vast homosexual ring at Ambassador College and the headquarters of the Worldwide Church of God. The letter describes a night in London, England, when a young Ambassador student, who was with the Tkach party on the Church jet, walked by Tkach's hotel room late at night and heard mysterious moans and groans from inside. Worried, he knocked on the door, asking if everything was all right. There was sudden silence. He walked away, but looked back down the hall and saw a male member of the group scampering across the hall to his own room! The next morning at breakfast, the male member of the entourage told those present that Tkach often had "war injuries" which caused him to moan and be in pain at night. This episode so preyed on the mind of the young man, that according to the letter, he later sought ministerial counsel in Pasadena.

The fact is, we live in an increasingly homoerotic society, with some reports suggesting that one American and British male out of four is presently homosexual. Advertisements are being run in newspaper "personals," in various cities, by homosexuals promoting gay parties, orgies, sexual contests, and utter depravation. Some ads are being run by Mormon "gays," by Seventh Day Adventist "gays," by Jehovah Witness "gay" groups. Who can deny -- who can be so naive as not to realize the strong likelihood -- that Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God are a microcosm of the world's society around them and have the VERY SAME PROBLEMS!

I do not know personally if Joseph Tkach is "gay" or not, but I do know that we live in a sick, sick, SICK WORLD! It is not my purpose to "prove" one way or the other whether Joe Tkach is bi-sexual, in this article. Certainly there is cause for suspicion. Regardless of that question, however, there is mountainous evidence that he is a spiritual renegade and reject, reprobate to the faith and truth of God, and a serious MISLEADER of the End-Time Churches of God -- a spiritual shipwreck! Those who refuse to look at all the evidence, and the alarming and dramatic changes in Church doctrine, are playing with "spiritual fire"!

Suffice it to say that when the time comes, no doubt God Almighty will thoroughly expose the wickedness of His supposed modern end-time "ministry" on this earth -- those who claim to serve Him but pervert His word, His truth, His doctrines, and twist and distort and reject His commandments! The apostle Paul wrote, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor male prostitutes nor HOMOSEXUAL OFFENDERS nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers

will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor.6:9-10).

Rather, God says, "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the *vile*, the murderers, the *sexually immoral*, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and ALL LIARS -- their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death" (Rev.21:8).

God's Word thunders like a massive thunder-clap, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who SUPPRESS THE TRUTH by their wickedness . . . For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became FOOLS . . . . Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the DEGRADING of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a LIE . . ." (see Romans 1:18-27, NIV).

In due time, no doubt, God will expose the very most SECRET SINS of the highest echelons of His End-Time Churches! He will certainly neither spare nor pity. He will deal with each individual's secret and covered-up, unrepented of sins. As the apostle Paul wrote, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid" (I Tim.5:24-25).

*"The Acorn Falls Close to the Tree"*

What about Joseph Tkach, Jr.? What about his fruits, lifestyle, and attitudes? Is he a true bona fide servant of the Living God?

Or is he a "chip off the old block," as they say? Is he "like father, like son"?

According to many reports, the actual "brains" behind the Worldwide Church of God, today, is Joseph Tkach Jr. Although not as prominent as his father, he appears to be the one actually running the show from behind the scenes, to an increasingly large extent. One Worldwide insider told John Trechak, "Basically, right now, Joe Tkach Jr. and Michael Feazell are running the church. Mr. Tkach Sr. trusts no one else!"

Joe Junior is Director of Church Administration U.S.A. Those who remember his high school and Ambassador college days don't seem to recall that he was a brilliant student by any means. Some thought of him as a "goof ball."

Joe Junior was ordained a local elder in 1976, then cut from the Worldwide Church payroll, an event which must have "smarted." Between 1976 and 1986 he took extension classes in psychology at Arizona State University, worked as a social service employee, got an MBA from a small university in Phoenix, and worked for the Intel Corp for a few years. After being hired back in the Worldwide Church of God by his father, he was quickly raised in rank to Evangelist!

Joe Junior is a divorced and remarried man. His first wife, the former Jill Hockwald, was a fine, sweet, attractive young woman, the daughter of Art and Virginia Hockwald, long-time Church members in the Pasadena area, whom I knew quite well over the years. It seems strange to me that a member of the Church -- a minister, no less -- could marry a woman in the Church, and then divorce and REMARRY, as Joe Junior did, divorcing Jill in 1978. Jesus Christ calls this plain and simple ADULTERY! (Matt.5:31-32).

However, friends of Jill say that Joe Junior was a wife beater, and Jill has told friends that even Joseph Tkach Sr. struck her on two occasions. The following letter from a member of his Church in Arizona, to John Trechak, quoted at length in *Ambassador Report*, December 1991 issue, provides a telling insight into the real character of Joseph Tkach, Jr. It is so graphic and descriptive of the "fruits" of the Tkach family, particularly Joe Jr., that some might be offended by the implied language quoted, although the bad language is not reproduced. Nevertheless, here is graphic testimony of the kind of person Joe Jr. really is, according to a one-time friend and eye-witness of his conduct. The writer declares:

"On one occasion Mr. T. invited my wife and I to ride along on their trip to Prescott, Arizona where he was to give a Sabbath sermon. Jill was driving while Mr. T. Jr. was in the back seat preparing his sermon. Jill missed the turn-off to Prescott . . . She had driven about 10 miles past the turn-off when we realized that she had gone by the Prescott exit. Mr. T. Jr. blew his top, to say the least! He cursed and swore at Jill from that point . . . all the way to Prescott, about 60 miles from the freeway . . . He called her every vulgar name in the book: 'an S.O.B.,' 'a stupid imbecile,' 'a F---ing bitch,;' and he said, 'God D--- you!' -- except he said whole words, not just the starting letters. He just kept screaming the epithets at her. While he continued to scream out those deplorable rantings and ravings, I wondered if I should tell him to shut up. But I knew that if I did I would be disfellowshipped on the spot. . . I bit my tongue and felt embarrassed that a fellow human being would react so disgustingly to such a trivial mistake.

"It's interesting that the moment we pulled into the church parking lot, Mr. T. Jr.'s personality did a 180 degree somersault. He smiled and greeted the deacons in the parking lot, apologized for being late, gave his sermon, and acted as though none of the turmoil in the car had ever happened. Mind you, he had carried on in the car ranting and raving for one hour straight! Jill was left in tears by his tongue-lashing. I remember thinking at the time -- if he would mistreat his wife so horribly in our presence, how far would he go in brutalizing her in private?

"Sometime previous to the above incident, we were visiting his home when my wife asked him a question about [erotic] fantasies. He told her that fantasizing was perfectly normal, that he himself did this, and that he even encouraged his wife to fantasize about other men!

"I recall he said that he hated his Dad and that his father was a 'little dictator' who had never shown him any love. The picture he painted of his father was nothing like the picture painted of Mr. T. Sr. in the *Worldwide News* where he is supposedly a family man who loves children. However, the picture given by Mr. T. Sr. in the 7/17/89 WN of people in the WCG jockeying for position does fit perfectly my

recollection of Mr. T. Jr. When Mr. T. Sr. became transformed from being a 'little dictator' -- as his son had described him -- into being a 'big dictator,' he dangled a one-quarter to one-half million carrot in front of his son's nose. That is what caused Mr. T. Jr. to want to gravitate to Pasadena in 1986. At his going away party he told my wife that he had really changed. Well, I have to wonder. Someone who has, doesn't have to boast about it" (*Ambassador Report*, December 1991).

The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard change his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer.13:23). The Hebrew word for "accustomed," here, is *limmud* and means "instructed, taught, learned," and comes from the root word *lamad*, "to goad, to teach." Those who are taught, goaded, instructed to do evil and learn their lessons well, becoming skilful at evil, how can they really change or repent, and turn over a new leaf?

### *End-Time Deceivers Foretold*

The apostle Peter warned about End-Time deceivers, "Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their GREED these teachers will EXPLOIT you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. . . Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings . . . But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

"They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. . . .

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Pet.2:19-22).

God's Word will expose all sins. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb.4:12-13).

*EXPOSE and REPROVE!*

As His true servants, God commands us to EXPOSE the wicked and their wicked ways and deeds. The apostle Paul wrote, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather REPROVE them. For it is a shame to even speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd [discovered] are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph.5:11-13). The New International Version has this passage, "Have nothing to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather EXPOSE them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible" (Eph.5:11-13).

Jeremiah also wrote, "Concerning the prophets: all my bones tremble . . . The land is full of adulterers . . . The prophets follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. . . . Among the prophets of Samaria [modern Israel, the capital of the northern ten tribes, now representing Ephraim-America] I saw this repulsive thing: They prophesied by BAAL and led my people ASTRAY. And among the prophets of Jerusalem [the Church] I have seen something horrible: They commit ADULTERY and LIVE A LIE. They strengthen the hand of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. They are ALL LIKE SODOM to me . . ." (Jeremiah 23:9-14).

The apostle Peter thunders against many modern church leaders, "With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they *seduce the unstable*; they are *experts in greed* -- an ACCURSED BROOD! They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the the way of Balaam, son of Beor, who LOVED THE WAGES of wickedness" (II Pet.2:14-15). Jude writes, "WOE to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for PROFIT into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's REBELLION" (Jude 11).

I do not condone the sins of modern day Church leaders. I do not make excuses for them. Those who willfully and deliberately engage in habitual, repeated, and lust-driven sin, who are addicted to the "spiritual cocaine" of sexual debauchery, are ganging up on the edge of the precipice of the lake of fire and brimstone -- the fiery holocaust of Gehenna! Unless they totally and bitterly REPENT IN DUST AND ASHES, the wrath and fury of God will be poured out on them in the presence of all the holy angels and in the sight of the righteous (Matt.25:31-46; Mal.4:1-2).

God will not be mocked. They will receive the proper recompense for their wicked and evil perversions. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Gal.6:7-8).

When all the facts are added up carefully, it becomes clear as crystal that Joseph W. Tkach, the so-called "apostle general" of the Worldwide Church of God, is definitely not a "saint," as he may appear to the gullible and naive who judge by the

outside appearance. The evidence is in; the facts are perfectly clear: Joseph Tkach is an end-time tyrant, a spiritual MONSTER who will like the evil fire-god Molech DEVOUR all those who put their trust and faith in him!

Should we follow such a man into out-and-out spiritual apostasy? God thunders in His Word, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven . . ." (Rev.18:4-5). God commands: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? . . . 'Therefore COME OUT FROM THEM, and be SEPARATE, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'" (II Cor.6:14-18).

*Will you* come out?