

Who Was In Charge?

Compiled by Myra McQueen (Odessa, Texas)

Below is some research that I did which may be of interest to you in light of the fact that it shows that Tkach was not the powerful figure that he painted himself to be. He did manage to get and to keep some major power over the membership by subversion and deception.

It appears that he was nearly as ignorant of the inside workings of the changes made as HWA became. Thanks-Myra

After reviewing an interview of Larry Salyer by Ewin Barnett, <http://www.quango.net/ekkklesia/larrySalyer.htm>, I am beginning to wonder who was in charge of the WCG when HWA died. I got into this study as a result of finding out that Joe Tkach Sr. had to go to Ralph Helge, in order to get all the powers of the chancellery and the Pastor General's office, that had been given to HWA <http://www.thejournal.org/in-transition/v3issue1/wcg-church-government-history-2.html> - from periodical "In Transition."

Mr. Tkach wanted all of Mr. Armstrong's powers (John Robinson)

"Mr. Armstrong intended Mr. Tkach, after his death, to answer to the WCG council of elders regarding doctrinal matters, according to Mr. Dean in a Jan. 29 interview."

"Both Mr. Dean and **Larry Salyer**, who worked with Mr. Tkach at the time and is now editorial director for the Global Church of God, say that Mr. Tkach within months of Mr. Armstrong's death grew obsessive about the limitations Mr. Armstrong intended for him to labor under."

"Mr. Salyer said Mr. Tkach demanded that WCG lawyer **Ralph Helge** make changes necessary to give him all of Mr. Armstrong's titles and powers."

"Former WCG insiders say that the council of elders enabled Mr. Tkach to accomplish his desire. After all, they were used to top-down government and following orders."

Now that makes it look like the WCG Law Dept. was running the church(?) and for sure Rader was in charge of Herbert Armstrong for awhile there.

But Larry says some things in the interview that make it hard for me to believe that Tkach ever had the power for change, or for reversing any change, that he really wanted-*ie*,- Larry Salyer- "Mr. Tkach was always a likable, affable, fun person to be around. He liked to get together and have discussions and he liked to get together in his office after work sometimes and sit around, talk, have a glass of wine or whatever and there were some good times in the personal sense. Mr. Tkach was difficult to work for in the sense that he was very unpredictable."

"He did not have a vision, in my opinion, speaking now after historical perspective. He did not have a vision of where the work was going, why it should go there or how to get it there. He simply was flailing day to day in terms of 'where do I go from here?'. Often the answer depended on who got his ear on a particular day. He also focused way too much attention on trivial matters, with which I guess he was comfortable, such as lawnmower problems in Big Sandy." (Tkach had been a grounds keeper for the AC.)

Salyer further states in regard to doctrinal changes-"After this big discussion, I was assured by Mr. Tkach that this would not be published or printed in any manner until we could come to a complete doctrinal consensus on it. This is very clear in my mind, as I was leaving the next day on vacation and wanted to comfort the others who had objected. They felt that I, as Director of CAD [Church Administration Department], had to be the point man on this. Having done so, I drove to Big Sandy, only to find that the Pastor General's report had come out the day after I had left with all the same materials intact, in which we in fact had told the church that we no longer believed that God was a family."

"This, I see as the clearest sign of the beginning of doctrinal disintegration for a couple of reasons. First, because Mr. Tkach had made a decision in my presence not to publish the material, only to change his mind as soon as the pressure from the "conservatives" was off. It made it clear that he was not really in control. Second, the doctrine itself is fundamental to resisting such later doctrinal error as the trinity and the immortality of the soul. This also showed a lack, on the part of the "progressives", of real spiritual understanding. Of course, that may be generosity on my part. Maybe they knew all along that they were knocking out a huge piece of the foundation."

Larry Salyer: "I remember going into Mr. Joe Tkach Jr.'s office and saying, 'Joe, I have a question here from one of the regional directors in the international area and he has a problem with this Nature of Christ doctrine. I said I can't answer his question because I have exactly the problem he does.' He said, 'Well, what's the problem?' I said, 'Well, the problem is, that we're basically saying that Christ couldn't sin, therefore in a sense did not have all of the same human capacity the rest of us have, therefore he really couldn't have functioned as our savior, or expect us to walk in his footsteps.' He looked up at me, kind of blinked and said, 'Well, Larry, I'd rather have a savior that couldn't sin, than a savior that didn't sin.' That was the end of the discussion. He said 'I'll pass it on to somebody else.' So he took the memo from me and said he would give it to somebody else to answer."

Now, this sounds like Joe Tkach was a little man trying to do a big job and so passing the buck was better than saying, 'I don't know, but let's look into it together.' He wanted to look like he was in charge.

"But tampering with major doctrines had clearly begun. I think we're talking now as early as late '88 or early '89. We're already into some fairly major doctrinal issues, some of which may not have hit the church fully at that time. But I think if you went back and looked at the documentation, which I have not done recently, but I think you could see that clear back in '88 or '89 we were beginning to open the door to some major doctrinal disintegration."

EWIN BARNETT: "Long before the doctrinal changes were formally announced, during his spring of '94 Ambassador commencement address, Joseph Tkach, Sr. said that the rumors that the church was making significant doctrinal changes were untrue. He also made similar remarks during a number of his church visit sermons up until the fall of '94. In one audio clip I have he calls the rumors 'damnable lies.' Knowing him as you do, how can you explain these statements?"

LARRY SALYER: "I was not personally aware of those comments at commencement, as I had already left the organization in February of '94. Even at the time I left, I had a conversation with Mr. Tkach in which he said that I was jumping to conclusions. He suggested that my problems were the result of reading the literature of others. I had read no one's literature, and I told him this. I said, 'Mr. Tkach, my concerns are not based on what others have written at all, but they are based on what you have written.' He continued, even at this late date, to try to convince me there had been no major doctrinal shift."

"At any rate, Mr. Tkach at first, I believe was somewhat of a victim. I say 'somewhat' because it's clear to me in my discussions with Mr. Tkach that he had held certain reservations about certain doctrinal matters for decades. He openly admitted for example, that he never agreed with the healing doctrine, etc. Now, I don't think anybody would have criticized him for say 'I have some concerns about an aspect of the healing doctrine,' or whatever, but he basically would make statements that he never believed this or he never believed that. But for the most part, there were times when Mr. Tkach seemed to be committed to retaining the basic doctrinal structure in the church. It was over a period of time, when a lot of material began to be printed in the PGR, and otherwise presented to the church, which he seemed to be completely unaware of, that he began to find himself in this position you're discussing, where he's making statements that are totally contrary to the facts."

Interesting comment in light of the fact that Joe had no formal education was- "The PGR was always submitted for his review and approval but it seems like the contents never sank in."

"At some point, having been questioned frequently about his contrasting statements, it must have occurred to him that he had to figure out how to justify this. So he began to take the lead in the doctrinal matters, not in terms of initiating them, but in terms of announcing them and supporting them."

My comments here-This indicates that Kyriacos Stavrnides (a WCG scholar formerly hired by HWA to hone up his doctrinal decrees and make them more palatable to prospective proselytes) was in charge, and apparently using other ministers such as Mike Fezell to initiate his changes, since Mike took over the doctrinal committee. Was he also in charge of the changes that followed?

Continuing with Salyer-"In other words, my opinion is: Mr. Tkach had an inherent weakness in his doctrinal position to start with, but he would not have initiated all the massive changes that occurred. Once they began to be initiated and he saw that the ball was rolling very quickly down hill, he decided he would be the person who was pushing. So, he sort of jumped into the fray and said, "I'm responsible for all these doctrinal changes."

"That was not true from the beginning, though I would say he never really resisted doctrinal change, because he was usually intimidated into believing he didn't really have any choice except to accept what his scholars said."

Was Joe Tkach the original author of the current WCG religion, or was Stavrnides? For sure Joe had much trouble getting the powers that he later came by, and that mostly in name only. But he did manage to make a name for himself, as did the ancient descendants of Noah in Gen. 11:4-"...let us build a tower, whose top may reach into heaven, and let us make us a name..."

Perhaps a more interesting story is to be told in the very well hidden life of the Grecian scholar hired by Herbert Armstrong. Kyriacos Stavrnides was not converted to the Armstrong religion, but he was well paid by Herbert to do the job of the Holy Spirit, and blend the doctrinal concepts of HWA, adopted from other religions, as most realize now (ie, the makeup doctrine came from some Pentecostals who joined the WCG during the mid-fifties, and the Petrine Doctrine of the hierarchy came from the Catholics, the prophecies about a return of Christ in '75, as suggested in the booklet '1975 in Prophecy,' came from Jehovah's Witnesses, who also failed in their prophecies, etc.) in with the Scriptures, and to make these doctrines look like "God's Apostle" had some new revelations from Jesus Christ, who was then given second billing to "the only apostle of the twentieth century." Of course this leaves out another named Apostle of the twentieth century (Heb. 3:1).

Although, Stavrnides did not like his role of promoting the false prophet, he now saw in the naivety of Tkach the chance to convert Armstrongism to Protestantism, by doing a little undercover staff shuffling.

Once he managed to switch a few doctrines right under Tkach's nose and he saw that the younger Tkach Jr., was for the changes, he continued to use those willing to push the changes through.

Joe Sr. only found out about these changes later in the church periodicals. He knew that if he denied making them, he would look like the weak leader that he actually was.

Once the changes began to be initiated, and the church began to fall apart, he began to look like a great sacrificing Christian to the Protestant world. Not a little of that so called "hush money" (as well as other benefits) was flowing out to the critics, such as Philip Arnn of "Watchman Fellowship," who now claims that the WCG has joined the rest of the evangelicals among the more orthodox Christians. Joe was now a big man after all.

Unfortunately, Arnn and the rest of the Protestant world ignored the abuse that continued unabated in the WCG hierarchy that could not (and still cannot) change the name of their organization, because they are unwilling to change the name of founder. Herbert Armstrong is still attached to their leadership, in a very strange way-ie, while they deny the dogmatic doctrines of HWA, they cannot deny that they continue to follow many of them.

If they change the name of the WCG, and they have tossed several prospective names into the ring for appetizers, they have to get rid of the name of Herbert Armstrong completely, because nothing they have will be originated by HWA. This has thrown a major wrench into the current workings of the Worldwide Church of God.

There has been only promises in the past for a name change, and even some voting on names, and many names have been tossed into the ring for consideration, but the hierarchy is a major obstacle in getting rid of the original articles of Incorporation,

signed in '68 by HWA & Albert Portune, and **restated** in 1987 by Joe Tkach Jr, and by Gene M. Michel <http://www.quango.net/eklesia/1987wcgb.htm>. This so called restating of the articles gave absolute control to Tkach and kept the membership from having any vote in the final decisions made.

In order to change the name, the articles will have to be put before a voting membership. This they are very reluctant to do, especially in light of the fact that what is left of Joe's empire is entirely in his personal name.