

Partial Transcripts of WCG Leadership Succession & Developments

Mr. Aaron Dean: “Accepting God’s Way”
@ FT 10/96 Mt. Pocono, PA (Mr. Armstrong’s personal aide.)

I had 12 years of traveling with Mr. Armstrong. So many of us have heard so many things. Our history has been rewritten to a certain extent, been rewritten in a different way than it actually happened, and it’s unfortunate that we look at our past in that way, or that others have done that, ... Many people wondered why we had to go thru what we did. In this sermon I want to set some of the record straight, ...because there were so few people with Mr. Armstrong when he traveled, or around him at the various times he did all the different functions that he did, and he carried a lot of responsibility.

Today, I’m going to talk about the things we’ve gone thru. ... Some of the things we go thru, we wonder why we have to go thru these things the way that we do, It’s painful, ...If you could look at us emotionally, you’d probably see all of us beat up, bloodied an scarred a bit, badgered around, wondering why we were left out there to dry for about ten years, it seems... People wonder why someone didn’t stand up sooner and say something at a time when things started to change. (And, there were people standing up and saying things.) ... I never volunteered for any of my jobs because I saw those jobs for what they were. It was a lot of work. A lot of pain. A lot of suffering at times. You see mud thrown at you if you’re in a position of power, you see people assuming and wondering or judging what you do and why you do it. Those things are not fun! ... It’s amazing how many people we air-brushed out of pictures (due to being disfellowshipped!)...I tried to stay back out of the lights as much as possible.

But as we look back to what happened right before Mr. Armstrong’s death, and you hear so many things how the transition took place, and a lot of people have asked me, Why did Mr. Armstrong pick Mr. Tkach? , (because of what’s happened). Why didn’t he pick someone else?

Now, you’ve heard different things along the lines of: that Mr. Tkach had been **trained** all the years to do this, which **really didn’t happen!** If you really want to know why Mr. Armstrong picked the way he did, you have to go back to a long-running conversation that Mr. Armstrong and I had had for several years. About picking a successor. Because Mr. Armstrong would ask, Who should be in charge if I should die? And I would say, Mr. Armstrong, has God told you someone? And, he’d say NO. And I’d say, well if He hasn’t told you someone, then I don’t know that you have a right to pick a successor! And, that would go on, and he’d say, well, OK, and he’d let it go. He’d bring it up later, and we’d have the same conversation. Finally, as he was having more health problems and his blood count was going down, and he was getting weaker and weaker, and he realized... the Council of Elders had been formed to pick a successor, back in ’79 or ’80, I guess it was, it was appointed, but Mr. Armstrong started talking about the fact that the Council would not be able to decide on someone. That it’d be difficult for them to pick someone, there were ‘certain people’ on the Council who would lobby to be in charge. There were some people who WANTED to be in charge, and he knew that! And so at that point in time he decided that he needed to pick someone. And, of course, I still told him that I didn’t know that he had the right to, but if he wanted to, obviously he had the *legal* ability to do so.

So, he’d pick someone. For about a month. And then they’d give a sermon or do something, and he’d look at them and say, Naw, he can’t be it! And, he’d pick somebody else. Then he’d look at them and they’d give a sermon or something, and he’d sit there and...I’m one of the few people who’d get to watch Mr. Armstrong evaluate all the sermon speakers: I learned what to say and what not to say, from him, because he’d sit there with his TV and watch it, because it was piped-in from the Auditorium, and he’d sit there and say, “They don’t get it yet”, So, I always knew what to say when I got up and spoke, because I knew he’d be listening. But it was fascinating, because he

would change about every month. And I began to realize that what God was going to do was to appoint the person He wanted for whatever reason that was! And, he would let him die.

Most of you don't know that Mr. Armstrong had a stroke about two months before he actually died. Almost died that week. Thought he was going to. Had he died that week, someone else would be in charge! Not Mr. Tkach! But he got well. Well in the sense of getting better, not 'well'. And so, another couple of months went by, and Mr. Tkach happened to be the one that was appointed at that time, when he did die. And it was interesting. The reason that Mr. Koch's name was 'in the hat', because there wasn't anyone Mr. Armstrong really thought was qualified, because there was no-one that had all the aspects of the job, there were so many things Mr. Armstrong did, obviously, telecasting, publishing and the writing that he did, and the travel to see leaders, et cetera. No one else really understood his job and could do it, so he knew that. **He knew Mr. Tkach was not qualified for it as well! But he knew that the Church was a parent organization. And that that would continue, and that Mr. Tkach was over Church Administration at the time, and that was the only reason he was even in the running, per se, or 'in the hat' to be drawn out.**

And so, I saw what happened and how it came about. And it wasn't a matter of Mr. Tkach having been trained and chosen for all those years, et cetera. In fact, Mr. Tkach asked me to give a sermon about that, how he was picked and chosen and trained, and I told him I can't do that, Mr. Tkach because you weren't!! **I said, To say you were trained for a number of years, would be for me to lie!** Because, 9 months before he (Mr. Armstrong) died, Queen Sirikit came to visit the campus, and we had seven major functions on campus! Mr. Tkach wasn't even invited to any of them! I said, If you were trained for that, you'd have been there at all those meetings! I said, the reason you're there is because you were over Church Administration when Mr. Armstrong died, and he appointed you. It had nothing to do with any of the other training, or ability to manage, or borrow money, or any of the things I've been told at various times, the last ten years.

There were a lot of promises made to Mr. Armstrong by Mr. Tkach! Promises that, unfortunately, he didn't keep!! Yet, there's always ways around things, when you are put in a position. And, the catch word of the day became, "Well, you have to answer to God, not to Mr. Armstrong!" Which is true! However, when you make promises, in my book, you keep them! I also made a number of promises to Mr. Armstrong, during that time. He asked me to help out. He said, you need to be Mr. Tkach's aide. I said, Mr. Armstrong, I didn't want to be your aide! Which is true. I turned him down three times over a period of a month. Finally, he made me do it. ... And he asked me to be his (Mr. Koch's) aide, and I said, Mr. Tkach has his own staff. And he said, Well, Mr. Koch's staff is not coming up with him! His staff has caused him problems! Mr. Tkach needs the support of the Council and he needs you there to help him with all of the overseas things and the international things, and, of course, I was a member of the Council as well at that time. And he needs the help. But he is coming up into the office, his office staff is not coming up! Which is interesting, when you see where all the problems in the Church, where the new doctrines and ideas have come from! Mr. Armstrong could clearly see that. He could clearly see that, yet he couldn't see what would happen to the Church, because he wouldn't have liked what we've gone thru, obviously. He'd be totally against it. In fact, I'd probably get fired again for what's happened, for not doing more than I did!...

We're going thru what we're going thru for whatever reason God wants! ... And, I could see, Mr. Armstrong's greatest concern before he died was -- he talked about in the weeks before he died, the one commission that he gave to Mr. Tkach, the strongest one, was that the next step of his plan, (he didn't know if there'd be more travel, he didn't know if there was more work to do, he didn't know if that'd been done or not done), but he knew the next thing was the purification of the Bride. The Bride has to make herself ready! ... I'd wondered, How is God going to purify the Bride?

And, as things began to change, .. and it was interesting, because **I was Mr. Koch's aide for a time, along with the rest of his staff which came up, so he had a number of aides, and I would bring things to his attention, that in my view would cause damage to the Church, and I would talk to him respectfully, and he'd get mad at me, and chew me out, ...and each time I would bring something up that he didn't care for, I would lose one of my positions, ...**

But, it was interesting, that I began to see that God was going to test His people! He was going to test each of you, individually, I sat, thinking that the persons sitting next to me believed what I believed. Well, they didn't! I was there because I **wanted** to be there. They were there because they thought they **had** to be there... We heard a lot about **legalism**, and the people that talked the most about legalism didn't understand legalism!...

I see a group of people who have been individually tested. And, I see that as what God wanted done. That, painful as it may be, and as battered and bruised as we may become, that's the only way really that God knows where you stand!... What do you really believe? What are you willing to die for? People in our history, back in the first century, had to die for what they believed. Hopefully, we won't have to...and, certainly, some of the things we've experienced in the last ten years have been even more painful than death! I know that in my career, I felt that dying would be the easier way out. There were times when things seemed to go so wrong, ... and I thought it would be easier if I just went now. But, God doesn't work that way. Because, the trials you go thru are to purify you, to test you, and to make you stronger. And, every time I went thru a trial, I would pray and ask God to please make this my trial, and not my preparation for one! ... I unfortunately inherited Mr. Armstrong, who did so many things and who had so many people around him who had **lied** to him. ... When I look at the mistakes he made, it was because other people gave him bad information. I'd like to see you make good decisions with bad information. And, I sat in that airplane, listening to people tell him things, about various aspects of the work, that **were not true!** I couldn't say anything at the time, because I wasn't his aide when I heard a lot of these things, yet, he'd make decisions based on those.... He was kept away for many years in the '70's, for various reasons. People controlled the information that went to him. ... Mr. Armstrong tended to trust people... The problem we had in the '70's was that he was kept away so much... (After 1977) Mr. Armstrong said, I'm only here because God brought me back to put the Church **back on track**. Which is one of the same comments I made to Mr. Tkach. Why did God bring him back to put the Church back on track in the '70's when it was going the same direction it's going now? A lot of questions like that, all of us have asked, probably. But it was God's doing at the time.

I look at the Church at that time, I saw people that were fairly complacent. ... A complacency that has been replaced by a 'first love'! ... It's interesting that when all this struck, very few of us now can't prove what we believe... Now, we're excited about it again, because we're individually being tested and tried. We're finding that 'first love'. ... Each of us individually is making choices... The Church is a spiritual organism ... People can sit and be a member of an organization, and not be members of that organism. God knows who is His. There are certain criteria, a certain set of beliefs, that you have to have, because of your obedience to God and to Christ. But at the same time, God has chosen to test each one of us in certain ways. Some ministers were challenged very early on. Some members were. There are some members in other churches that have yet to be challenged. There are people who still attend in our previous association who still believe the same as you do, but feel that they shouldn't leave yet. And, maybe there'll come a time, soon enough, when they will be forced to do something against God's Law.

I did write to Mr. Tkach and complain about some of the things he was doing, to no avail...

We had to go thru something difficult, but yet something that's so rewarding! To realize that, YES, I am willing to die for something. ... You've chosen to follow what you can prove yourself in His Book. God doesn't want us following men. ... We'll never have the same comfort zone we had in previous times. ... You can't get into the Kingdom, unless you yourself have labored and travailed and know where you stand, and are willing to put up with the trouble the world may give you, and to **know what you're willing to die for!**

**Mr. Larry Salyer: “Standing for Truth – A Personal History”
@ Grand Junction, CO 12/2003 (Mr. Koch’s successor over Church
Administration in Pasadena, after 3/1986.)**

I don’t know what you understand when you read, “*His commandments are not grievous*”, but I remember a time in what is called the Church of God when it was said that His commandments WERE grievous!, on the pretense of promoting grace. Grace is a marvelous focal point of the entire Plan of God, without which we can’t live and function. Grace is the dominant theme, in one sense, in the entire Bible... But grace, that is not grace, but is license, is not grace, it is not of God! ... The Church of God began to proclaim that we were short on grace and long on Law, instead of increasing the grace so that it was longer than the Law, we shortened the Law! Bad mistake! We come under the Law temporarily when we sin, and then we’re relieved of that ‘under the Law’ position by the grace of Jesus Christ when we repent and ask for forgiveness...

God’s people must focus their minds, their energies and their attitudes on a significant enough purpose, the central theme of God’s work, which is to bring all of mankind ultimately into His Family. We must focus significantly enough on what God’s purpose is, that our personal differences and our organizational differences ultimately disappear! Because, otherwise, we have divided the Body of Christ, unintentionally, but in reality!

In 1986 I was happily serving as the Dean of Students at Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas. ... (Best job I ever had!) But, then, Mr. Armstrong died, and I’d had an opportunity as Dean of Students, to work fairly closely with Mr. Armstrong, because he was always very much involved in the college. Up until then, I had worked with him and around him as pastor of the Church in Pasadena, in the Auditorium, (’80-’82) but the contact was some-what limited. But in becoming Dean of Students, I was actually ushered down to Big Sandy in the G-2, lectured all the way, on how the college was to be run. *(This continues, but is withheld presently on request of the speaker.)*

And then, all of a sudden, Mr. Armstrong died, and in March of 1986, I was arm twisted into moving to Pasadena to take over the responsibilities of the Director of Church Administration. (The job Mr. Tkach had before Mr. Armstrong died.) So, Mr. Tkach moved into the Pastor General’s office, and I moved into Mr. Koch’s office. I say ‘arm twisted’ as I didn’t think things in Pasadena would go as well as I would like to see them go. On the other hand, when you think there is a potential for ‘problems’, you don’t shrink, you say, maybe I can help solve, or **prevent** those problems! **That in a sense, made me second in command in the WCG from 1986 until 1992, with one exception, because only a year and a half later, that changed! But, I stayed until 1992.**

Arriving in Pasadena, Mr. Tkach personally took our family to dinner, and we talked there for several hours about the Church, about the work, on following-up on what Mr. Armstrong had done, about what might need fixing and changing and so forth. And, when we left the meeting, I will confess, even though I had known Mr. Tkach since 1963, we left the meeting, and I said to my wife, I don’t think he can do this job! But she, being more wise and more Spiritual than I am, said, He can if he lets God use him. I’m not in any way saying that Mr. Tkach was in any way an evil person, or that he had a wrong intent or motive at that point in time, I’m simply saying that, historically speaking, there were complexities at hand that were going to ultimately lead to tragedies within the Church.

Mr. Tkach was faced with a very traumatic situation. He didn’t know what he was getting into. Now, some may ask, Why did Mr. Armstrong appoint Mr. Tkach to that job if he didn’t have the capacity to do it? The answer might surprise you. Mr. Armstrong personally told me one time why he would probably appoint Mr. Tkach, and this was in the summer of 1985, ¹ not too long before he died, He said, Mr. Tkach is a street fighter. Mr. Tkach will not let somebody come in and take over

¹ In June of 1985, a Special Edition of *the Worldwide News* said that in the event of his death, the Advisory Council of Elders would appoint one of themselves to become the new Pastor General. This was not the way it ultimately was done!

the Church. He specifically had in mind, believe it or not, Mr., Garner Ted Armstrong! And he said, I am fearful of what would happen if, after my death, GTA came back and got control over the Church! I'm fearful of the Church becoming very liberal, and unidentifiable as the Church of God.

Now, I find that **terribly ironic** today, as Garner Ted Armstrong, who died just a couple of months ago, persisted in teaching most of the Truth, a great deal of the Truth, until the day of his death.

But, there is no way his organization or congregation were in any sense, even a small percentage removed from the Truth as the Worldwide Church of God became, by the time even I left it, much less when some of you were able to leave after seeing what was happening!

So, ironically, Mr. Armstrong appointed Mr. Tkach in a sense to save the Church from outside influences that would undermine and destroy the Church. Mr. Tkach himself was vulnerable to all kinds of influences. He at some point lost track of the reality that he had to let God use him, and consequently, things began to go downhill. Now, there were some complexities, as I said, and some of you will remember. Mr. Tkach was surrounded with what had been considered in years before, 'big guns'! ... There were some of the 'old workhorses' of the Church, who were still around, and in pretty prominent places, and all of a sudden, Mr. Tkach is chosen to be the Pastor General, and he is dealing with all of these 'former generals' and he is a 'corporal' who has been moved into the position of managing the 'army'.

Now, that also explains why I also ended-up in Pasadena. I didn't end-up there because I was the best man for the job, necessarily. I had a relationship with most of the ministry because of my work in Big Sandy and because of my teaching in the refresher program, which I did in Pasadena for many years. But, I had no experience in that kind of supervision, and I wondered at the time. Why me? And, I asked Mr. Tkach, Why me? And I said, have you counseled with Dr. Hoeh and Mr. Blackwell and some of these other people about who you should put in this job? He said, No, and I don't need to!

Well, later, it occurred to me that I had just enough credibility for the ministry to not think it was weird for me to take that job, but I also was young enough and out of that rank of the 'generals of the army'. I didn't belong in the ranks of the Les McCulloughs, and the Rod Merediths and the Raymond McNairs, and so forth, who were surrounding Mr. Tkach. So, he could use me as a 'go-between' with the ministry, and I had just enough credibility to make it work, without having the influence to intimidate him.

Now, I also suspect, and in one sense, God put me there to both try me and to be a voice of dissent. Because, I was a voice of dissent from day one! A voice of dissent toward some of the things that were going wrong in the Church, specifically some of the administrative things that later became doctrinal things.

Another complexity! When Mr. Tkach appointed me as Director of Church Administration in 1986, he appointed my assistant also. He didn't let me appoint my assistant, he appointed my assistant, and my assistant was Doug Horchak. Again, close friend, but son-in-law of Mr. Tkach. Only later did both Doug and I come to understand that Mr. Tkach put Doug there to watch me! He did! He put Doug there to watch me, which both of us bitterly resented and within six months, Doug had resigned, and moved to Denver. (as WCG Pastor.) **Doug came into my office and said, Larry, I can't do this anymore, there's a conflict between home and dad, and you, and the office, and the things he wants me to say and do, and the things I need to do to serve you. He said, I had to tell Mr. Tkach, Larry is my boss, I work for Larry! But, dad wants me to 'work for' him around you!** He said, I'm not going to do that, and I'd like to have a field assignment, so I personally worked out the arrangements to send him to Denver.

So, Mr. Horchak left, and that left a big void in the office, and a few months later, as I was struggling with how do we fill this void in the office, I went into Mr. Tkach with a few names, thinking, well, out of the three or four I'm proposing, I'll surely get one of these. And, they were all people with history and credibility, and recognizable names in the Church, and I laid the paper in front of Mr. Tkach and I said, I'd like to have one of these guys, and I'd like you to consider them in this order. He looked at it briefly, threw it back in my lap and said, NO! No way! I said, Why not?

He said, because I'm bringing my son in to assist you! So I've gone from son-in-law to son! Now, if Doug was brought-in to watch me, what is Joe being brought-in for? So, he brought Joe, Jr. in.

Joe, Jr. had **not** been an employee in the Church, except for a very brief stint as an assistant years before. He did not have a relationship or credibility with the ministry and he certainly didn't have any with me, and I'd known him since he was a young boy! But, he came-in to be my assistant, and it was only a matter of time before the friction in the office was so great that I personally went to Mr. Tkach and said, I think the only way to solve this so that you're happy and I can continue to function, is if we actually change this department into two departments. Because, Joe, Jr. believes that he can manage the ministry and, I don't believe he can, but if you believe he can, you go ahead. And I will be happy to separate the department into two parts, and I will take all of the international areas, which I've traveled to and Joe doesn't really know much about, and he will have the domestic responsibilities. Mr. Tkach JUMPED at that chance, and said, Great idea, let's do that. Then sent me up the hill to where I was holding an international conference to announce my job was changing. At least I was still their boss. As Frank Brown said, it's the first time I've seen anyone announce his own hanging!

But, at any rate, part of the reason for that, it was not just the friction between Joe and me, it was that I was continually in conflict, fairly continually at that time, even in late '87, in fairly continual conflict with Mr. Tkach, Sr. and, of course, that made it a two against one situation. So, I was continually expressing my concerns and frustrations about certain things, mostly at that time, administratively: the media and the spending of money in certain ways, and the domestic problems that we were creating in Pasadena, economically around the college and the Church.

So we divided the department. Now, I should also mention here that Mr. Tkach, Jr. said, Well look, we've got some situations in the Department that I don't want anything to do with: Imperial Schools, Summer Camps, Divorce and Remarriage decisions which the Church was making at that time, so my job ended up being the International Work, and these added things, and thankfully, the Feast also stayed under my jurisdiction. So, from November 1988 thru 1992, that was my job. Judy and I traveled rather extensively throughout Africa and Asia and Europe and so forth. We never did travel in South America. I went down to Mexico a couple of times. So, that was our general history, trying to manage the Work and the ministry throughout the rest of the world.

What I found continually, in Pasadena, during that period of time was that Mr. Tkach on the one hand wanted to be equal to Mr. Armstrong in terms of the respect and the appreciation within the Church. I also recognize that **he did not have the same make-up as Mr. Armstrong. He didn't have the same intellect, he didn't have the same training or education, he didn't have the same history with the Church. So, there was no way for him to step into that role.** And, so consequently, he was intimidated by others who thought they could 'manage' him, almost like a politician gets managed.

The very first time Mr. Tkach went overseas, he went to Jordan, to see King Hussein. That was a friendly place Mr. Armstrong had worked a great deal. He went to Jordan. He came home, and I happened to meet his personal assistant, Mike Feazell. I met Mike behind the Mayfair Building on the campus on the way home one day, and we stood and talked. Mike was just coming back from the airport, and they'd just gotten back from Jordan. Mike said, Larry, we've got a problem! And I said, Well, what do you mean by this, Mike? Now, this was late '86. He said, We've got a problem, and I said, What is it? And he said, **"Mr. Tkach can't do this job!"** Now, this is his personal assistant talking, a man who's about 12 years my junior, so he would have been in his late 30's at the time. He said, Mr. Tkach can't do this job! And I said, What do you mean, and he said, Well, he just can't keep all this going in his mind, It's not the way he works! Mr. Tkach had been a very successful minister to the widows and the elderly, the needy in the Church, and had been a tremendous example of that in the past. But when it came to high level discussions and holding up the image of the Church and so forth, it just wasn't his bag! You can't blame him for that, it just wasn't what he was cut out to do! And, Mike recognized that.

I bring that up, because in that lies the seeds of what happened as the years went by. Because, in Mike's mind, Mr. Tkach had to be 'protected' and 'managed' and manipulated to do what needed to be done! A few months later, Joe Tkach, Jr. comes on the scene, and the two of them together

believed they could manage the Work around him! And so, they took over the management of the Church over a period of time, and I was there, sitting in the meetings, sitting in all the discussions, from budget to television, to every kind of media production, to hiring and firing, to buying airplanes and selling airplanes. I was there for it all! And I can tell you that what happened over a period of time was, Mr. Tkach would occasionally rise to the occasion and say, No, we're not going to do that or we're going to do this, but for the most part, whatever happened in the meeting would generally be **changed** after the meeting by private discussion. And, Mr. Tkach began to be manipulated to do things that were not necessarily his initial intent.

But, because there was disrespect for him, because of his own personal weaknesses and his need to succeed in the job, and because of the vulnerability to manipulation, things began to happen that shouldn't have happened!

Now, Mr. Tkach also had a weakness when it came to public speaking and writing and so forth, and yet the Pastor General had a history of writing and speaking continually! **Mr. Tkach, rather than use that, managed that some other way, chose to use 'ghost writers'!** And so, **Mr. Koch's sermons and speeches, and articles, were virtually always written by 'others'**, unfortunately, including yours' truly!! Mike Feazell, Joe Tkach, Jr. and Larry Salyer wrote most of his material! I can go back and pull rough drafts out of my file today of things I wrote for him to present. Now, that's not such a bad thing, except he had to believe in what he was reading and writing, and what we were writing for him, or presenting, or he should have said, No, I don't want to say that! Occasionally that happened, but most of the time it didn't, and Mr. Tkach became vulnerable by what was being written and being presented to him! And so, you had the situation where the younger generation (his son and his friend)² and others of that age group, were basically managing what he was doing.

I was still the 'bad guy'. I was still the guy coming into the office every day and saying, Why are we doing this? To the point where I became the proverbial dripping faucet. And, it pretty much became every day, by the year 1991 or so. I used to tell my wife when I'd leave for work in the morning, Hon, I probably won't have a job when I come home this afternoon, because I knew there were going to be issues that I was going to have to address, and I had to choose in advance to do that, because otherwise, I'd be standing in his office thinking, If I say this, I'm going to lose my job. So, I chose to lose my job before I left home in the morning, but I gotta say it! So, I was prepared to lose my job, and remarkably, I never did! **He'd get mad at me, he'd yell at me, he'd yell and create an earthquake in the office to make you tremble, and he did that to many people.** He did it to me, but he never fired me!

When I left Pasadena, I finally left of my own volition, because it was impossible to stay, and to continue without the stress killing us.

So, let's go back to this **younger generation**, you also need to understand, a third party was brought into the fray, and that was Mr. Greg Albrecht, a very good friend of mine, and the Dean of Students from Pasadena, a man I respected and appreciated very much, but somehow he had some of the same approaches to theology and to the Church, that these young men did. And, later I discovered the common denominator was they'd all been raised in the Church from all their years of growing-up. They had been pretty limited in their exposure to things outside the Church, they had all gone thru Imperial Schools, they had certain bitterness and resentment toward the way they had been treated, probably abused by certain people, in the sense of today's term: dominance, correction and public humiliation. Some times that kind of thing was a factor inside the Church and the school. And so, these men had grown-up with a certain amount of resentment. They deny my analysis, but I happen to know that they did confess at one point that there is a good bit of that in their motivation.

These men were very bright, all academic, philosophical, very capable people! Joe Jr. was a capable man. Mike Feazell was a capable man, Greg Albrecht was a capable man. All of them quite bright, quite capable. And for a long time, some of the rest of us working in Pasadena did not

² This 'friend', in his youth, actually lived in the Tkach household. His mother being a church member with 'problems', the Koch's took him in!

know that there actually was a 'behind the scene' plan of attack: a behind the scene **agenda**, to change the Church from what it was to what they wanted it to become.

One of the first things that happened was that the whole concept of prophecy began to be downplayed, because after all they had some 'hard facts'! You know, Mr. Armstrong wrote a book entitled *1975 in Prophecy*, and here we are in 1989. And, so they began to take pot shots at some of the things the Church had said down thru the decades, and began to pick those apart, and began to use them to claim Mr. Armstrong, as Joe Jr. actually said, in conference with 100 ministers, "I can't call Mr. Armstrong a false prophet, because he never claimed to be a prophet! But, in fact, everything he prophesied, was false!"

And so, it began to be this undermining of the traditions and the teachings of the Church, starting with what you might call, non-doctrinal material, because in some ways, prophecy isn't hard doctrine. We know the framework of prophecy, but there's a lot we don't know. So prophecy isn't hard doctrine in the sense you can say, If you don't believe this, you're a heathen, or you're a rebel or something of the sort. Prophecy doesn't fall in that category, so I found it interesting that it sort of started with manipulation of prophecy. And an undermining of the confidence and the trust in what God had put in the Church over a period of years.

We had doctrinal meetings every week, and we'd sit around this big round table up in one of the conference rooms, and discuss various aspects of what the Church was teaching and preaching and how to refine it, and fix the booklets, and so forth. These things were sort of like the frog in boiling water. It started at room temperature, then they'd heat it up a bit. By the time it boiled, the frog didn't know he was cooked. It sort of started slowly.

Somewhere along in this period of time, Mr. Fezell called me to his office, this was late '86 I believe, He said, I need your help. I said, OK. He said, I need you to sign this document. Well, the document was his application to Azusa Pacific University. Of course, a religious university, and Mike was applying to get into their theology program and he said, I need an evaluation from a superior. I'm not going to ask Mr. Tkach to do this, so you're the logical source, Would you fill out this thing for me? Well, it was easy to do. Mike was a good student, he was a hard worker. I filled-out the thing just fine. Well, then Mike pulls out the next sheet. He says, Now, I've also got this situation, I want you to be aware of. Azusa Pacific requires that to be a student there, you have to confess that you believe in the Trinity! He says, But the way they've written it, it says, I believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and so he said, I do believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, so, I'm going to sign it because, even though what they mean by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is different than what I mean by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I don't have a problem with that, and I'm going to sign it! So, he signed it! And so, he got into Azusa Pacific, and only a couple of years later did we realize, he actually did believe in the doctrine of the Trinity!... But Mr. Fezell became a believer in the Trinity.³

It wasn't too long after that, if you recall, that the doctrinal booklets and the program began to attack the subject of 'Born Again'. Now, all scholars know, you and I know, that the Bible gives several different analogies about Christians, and that we are in some ways described as having a 'new birth' when we are baptized. We come up out of the water a new creation. We know that we are 'babes in Christ', et cetera. So, there is an analogy that says that we no longer have Satan for our father, as Christ described him to the Pharisees in John 8:44, but we have rather, God as our Father, and Christ as our elder Brother, and so there is an analogy that says we are, quote, "Born Again". But that was NOT the analogy Mr. Armstrong was attacking or his intent when he attacked the doctrine of Born Again, in the sense that you are now 'saved' and your salvation is assured at the time you are converted or you confess Christ. That was the Born Again that has to do with John 3, where Christ is talking about actually becoming Spirit Beings!

So, there are two different analogies. One is the analogy that we are changed from having Satan as our father, to having God as our Father, at the time we're converted. And, we are babes in Christ, who must grow to full maturity. The other analogy is that we are begotten by God, we are in

³ The WCG produced three rapid-fire evolving versions of the booklet: "**God Is...**" in the late 1992, early 1993 time-frame! Each increasingly supportive of Trinitarian concepts.

the womb of the mother, the Church, and that we are going to be born into the Family of God when we are changed at the resurrection. 'Born Again' began to be attacked, and it was attacked rather subtly, and much of the ministry bought into it! ... That became a divisive issue in the Church, and I began to get calls and letters from the directors of the ministers overseas, the regional directors, the regional pastors and so forth, who were saying, What are we supposed to do with this? And so, it began to be the first division that began to develop.

Shortly after that, it was 'salvation by works', and that we *supposedly* taught a gospel of salvation by works, which we never did. And then, it was a matter of was Christ immune to sin? ... I left Worldwide in February of 1994. A lot of things happened after that, and I'm not as familiar with some of those things. But the doctrine of Christ being immune to sin came up. ⁴ Christ could have never been tempted like we are because he was the Son of God, no matter what the Bible says! And what was used, Well, you mean Christ would have been tempted to rape and pillage and burn, like all the rest of us carnal human beings? And so, they painted this '**straw man**', which was a very common approach. Paint a straw man ⁵ that is ridiculous, and then cut it to pieces with your sword, and say, See there, we've conquered the Beast! The false doctrine is obliterated! But, in most cases, the 'false doctrine' had been painted falsely to begin with, and in some cases, fabricated out of whole cloth! Later, of course, the 'Nature of God' thing began to develop.

In 1992, I had been dealing with a number of these doctrinal issues, particularly 'born again' and Christ's immunity to sin, and there were other elements, and in 1992, **the distress levels had reached such a point that it was very difficult for me to even go to Sabbath Services**, and it was certainly difficult for me to do my job, and it wasn't fair to the regional directors around the world who were looking to me to be their man in Pasadena, who was sort of co-coordinating their frustrations in trying to get answers for them. And so, in 1992, (On my way to summer camp in Orr, Minnesota) I called Randall Dick, my new assistant by that time, who I respected highly, and he said, by the way, you know, you've been saying for several months now that you'd like to get out of here, he said, Are you serious about that?, and I said, Yes, I am serious about that! Why? And he said, Well, Mr. Meeker is retiring in St. Louis, and that's going to be an opening, and he said, If you really want to get out of here, I'd suggest you put your name in the hat! I said, Well, go up to Mr. Koch's office right now for me and put my name in the hat and tell him I really would like to have that job. I called him back about an hour later down the highway, and said, Randall, What did you find out? And he said, Mr. Tkach said, If you want to go to St. Louis, you can go to St. Louis! And I thought, What a relief for both of us. He's tickled pink to have me out of there, and I'm tickled pink to be gone.

But you know, I was stupid? (Well you know that anyway.) But I was stupid even at the time. I thought, I can go to St. Louis, I'll be the pastor, I'll have a couple of small congregations: St. Louis and Minceville, MO, And, I will go there, and I will teach the Truth, and I will kind of wait thru this, because God IS GOING TO FIX THIS! How many of us thought that? God is going to fix this! So, I went off to St. Louis believing that I could preach the Truth and live in my own little world there. And we went to St. Louis. Well, things were not good, but they were OK.

In the spring of 1993, a remarkable thing happened. Joe, Jr. called me on the phone, along with Randall Dick and Vic Kubik, "Got a question for you, Larry!" Yeah, What's that Joe? Well, my dad finally gave me permission to create regional pastors around the country, and I would like for you to be one of the regional pastors. And I said, Joe, That's ridiculous! He said, what do you mean? **I said, Joe, You know that I don't even believe what you're teaching! I'm not even teaching in the Church here what you guys are teaching! How can you ask me to be a regional pastor?** He said, Well, Larry, The job has two elements. The one element is, to just go out and visit and help the Churches, and encourage them and preach to them, and resolve difficulties that come up

⁴ This very issue caused a flap during services in Hartford Connecticut (UCG) in about 1998, about the time of the Dave Hulme split off. It's contaminating effect even carried over into 'separated' congregations.

⁵ Other examples of a 'straw man' was that we were accused of teaching that Hitler was still alive, and that we would be sinning if we wore clothes made of two different kinds of fiber! Things we long since had discarded (many decades before), but it was spoken of as though it was still firm doctrine! Stabbing these straw men gave them credibility to overturn Truths!

between ministers and brethren, and between, well, like at basketball tournaments and so on, you kind of become the local appeal process. And, you try to keep everybody happy. And, you're good at that. And I said, You know what, Joe, I am good at that. I can do that part of the job. What's the other part?

He said, The other part is we really need the regional pastors to help the ministers to understand where the Church is going. And I said, BINGO! How do I do that? I said, Joe, I can't go and tell the pastors to preach and teach something that I won't preach and teach, and **I can't do that.** And he said, Well, let me make you a deal. I said, What's the deal? He listed off the regional pastors: guys whom, if you had kept up with the Church, you would know: people like Bob Dick, and Roy Holliday, and Doug Horchak. He went thru this whole list of people. He said, These are going to be the regional pastors. I thought, Man, all of these guys are of the same mind that I am, because I talked with them before. He said, What we're going to do is bring you all into Pasadena, we're going to get in a room, I don't care if it's from 7 'o clock in the morning to 7 'o clock at night, and we're going to argue these doctrinal points, until we're all in agreement, before we go out to do anything! I said, Well, that's a novel approach. Are you sure we're going to do that? Oh, yes! So, I tell you what. I'll take it on that condition, because if there's going to be a solution to the problem, I don't want to be sitting out here, crying in my beer, I want to be part of the solution! So, I'll take the job.

So, I was made a regional pastor in the late spring of 1993. We had our first conference in the summer of 1993. So I went in to Pasadena, we were supposed to have this BIG confab. What do you suppose happened? I'll tell you what happened. **We were subjected to five days of Dr. Stavrinides teaching us the Trinity! Because, in Joe's mind, that was the solution.** If we all accepted this foundation, then all of these other doctrines would fall into place! It was absolutely amazing! I went in there thinking we were actually going to start to solve the problems, and we received a bigger dose of false doctrine that we'd had throughout all the time we'd been fighting it!

And so, before we left Pasadena, some of us regional pastors, all of whom were there together, went in to see Mr. Tkach, and we made it very clear, that this information **MUST NOT** go out to the Churches, that it needed much further discussion and study and so forth, and under no circumstances should this stuff be dumped on the Church. Mr. Tkach agreed to that. Absolutely agreed to that!

We went home, a couple of months later, August or September of 1993, out came, first of all the *Ministerial Bulletin*, with the material on the Trinity printed in it. Three different installments. Right behind that, two weeks behind each one came *the Worldwide News*, in which were the installments on the Trinity. And so, the Trinity doctrine was dumped on the Church, with the total DIS-agreement of the regional pastors who said, We don't even believe this, Why are you doing this?

I can remember getting all of my deacons and elders together, we had about 14 of us. We sat around my living room. We went thru the papers and discussed them all and came to the conclusion we didn't agree with any of it. Except for one man, who was my associate pastor, and the factor I hadn't considered when I went to St. Louis to be an island. And, my associate pastor was on the phone with Pasadena explaining that none of us in St. Louis believed in this Trinity junk. And so, you know where that went eventually.

Again, I didn't get fired, believe it or not. In fact, I'll tell you that in a moment. But this 'conference' was laying out the Trinity, we were expected to accept that and go teach it, and of course, most of us could not do that, though some of the fellows felt they could keep working to change what was being taught. Consequently, some of them stayed until May of 1995, when the United Church of God was actually formed. I left in February of 1994, as I said earlier, because after continual discussion with headquarters, I was not able to resolve some of those issues, and I finally called Mr. Tkach, and wrote him personally, and said, I am resigning from the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God, I can not teach the things you are teaching, and so forth. And, that was the end of my association with Worldwide, they actually disfellowshipped me a month or two later, and that was the end of my association.

Now, when I sent my resignation in, Mr. Tkach called me personally, talked with me for two hours on the telephone, trying to convince me that all these changes weren't really happening, and weren't as serious as I thought they were. And I honestly think today that he was sincere. That **he didn't really even KNOW** how much was happening in the Church. The next day, Joe, Jr. called me, from Australia, of all places, and talked to me for over two hours, which must have been a significant expense to the Church, to try to convince me that I should 'hang on' and stay with it, because, sooner or later, I would understand it! Think that didn't scare me? I wasn't prepared to understand it.

These things were happening. The first shots across the bow actually happened in terms of doctrinal deviations, started happening in about 1988. You wouldn't have known anything about that, probably. 1989, you probably still wouldn't have known, 1990, 91, 92. By the time I left in 1994 there was severe things going on behind the scenes, but the Church had been only 'nibbled at' with 'born again' and a little bit of 'Christ couldn't sin' type things. And so, the intent was to undermine the tradition and the history of the Church. The great crisis in the Church was not caused by any one specific doctrinal change. The Church could have weathered a change like that, even as we had weathered Pentecost and Divorce and Remarriage, and things like that. We could have weathered that.

No, the crisis was the breaking of **trust** between the ministry and the brethren, between the ministry and each other, between the ministry and the administration, between brethren and brethren, and even within families. And today, some of us have families, parts of our families, who are in other groups, other organizations, who believe significantly different than we believe. The great crisis in the Church was fomented by sowing seeds of discord, which God says He HATES! The antithesis of sowing seeds of discord is sowing love, and care, and outgoing concern and unity and peace thru the Spirit of God working in the mind, and in the Law of God working in our minds to accomplish His purpose. When there was no longer credibility in the Truth, people scattered to the four winds, looking for a haven. Looking for a place to hide, looking for a place to sort of regroup.

In a thumbnail sketch I'll give you. I left Worldwide in February of 1994, having been in St. Louis 18 months, and seeing that that wasn't going to work, I resigned. At the same time, others were leaving the Church, not because of me. I did not stand up in the pulpit and say, Come and follow me, at all. In fact, the next Sabbath, I met in the home of another person who had seven or eight people there and we sat around and visited for the Sabbath Day. The next week we had 16 or 20 people who met for a little Bible Study, and after 2 or 3 weeks, we were up to about 25 or 30 people who were looking for a place to 'flee' Worldwide in the Spring of 1994! That was because we had been preaching the Truth in that area. And so, ultimately, we ended up with meetings in my house. We did not organize any sort of organization, we did not create any kind of leadership structure, we simply met in my house and built our numbers up to about 45 co-operative brethren, and then we said to ourselves, You know, we can't be God's whole Church. We can't be the only people who are living by the Truth. There must be other people living the Truth, Let's go find them.

So, we did some research and we looked about, and we saw people that were doing various things, and we found those with whom we could not agree with. We did think that we could agree with, and certainly agreed with the doctrinal positions of the Global Church of God under Dr. Meredith. And so, after going and interviewing him personally and discussing his purpose and plans, we chose, entirely, all 45 of us, to become part of the Global Church of God. Well, immediately they offered me a pastorate, and I began to work for the Global Church of God and served the entire Midwest... I worked with the Global Church of God until 1998, when Mr. Meredith then, and our Council had significant problems. I won't go into those, but we parted company. We retained the name Global Church of God, and Mr. Meredith started the Living Church of God. And, we continued the Global Church of God for another year, before we went bankrupt, folded that corporation up, and then started a new organization called the Church of God – A Christian Fellowship, and immediately began to look to how can we find other brethren who are serving God so we can become a part of, so that we can all work together and share the Truth and the love that God has given us. And we ultimately discussed that with the United Church of God, and decided that we were in harmony. There were a few conflicts, and we ironed those out, and

we threw our lot in with the United Church of God, and since that time the Church of God – A Christian Fellowship ceased to exist and we became part of United. So, that's how we got here. It's a long funny route, but I wanted to share with you some of the events and the pain of what was going-on in Pasadena long before whatever time you ended up with your legendary conflict, here in Grand Junction, at the Feast in 2002.

Let's conclude with 1st John 1:5, "This is the message that we have heard of Him, That God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, cleanses us from all sin."... If my fellowship is with God in Christ, then I ought to be able to have fellowship with everybody else who has fellowship with God in Christ. In other words, that love and unity that we talked about earlier comes thru that fellowship with the central source. In Ephesians 4:13 "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." That's where we must get to... And we've all been thru the next verse, "That we be henceforth no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men in cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Was there some of that? Oh, you bet there was! You and I were deceived and lied to and dragged along, manipulated and confused, until we weren't quite sure what to believe. But, that isn't God's way. We need to instead, verse 15, "Speaking the Truth in love and grow up in Him in all things which is the head, even Christ."... Satan the Devil, thru men, tried to take our crown...