

The program was one of my goals as exit strategy, together with the sending of a 6 pages letter to over 300 JW delegitimizing the JW baptism and the FDS as the entity used by God to communicate with men, the launching of my internet site (basically in Italian) and the organization of Barbara's European trip, where I acted as translator of her two conferences on pedophilia and the dangers of associating with Jehovah Witnesses.

The judicial committee had invited me to attend on May 20th of 2009. That same day, instead of me showing up at the JC meeting, my letter was received by over 300 people and my internet site went online.

Right after, I have contacted the Swiss Television national channel and lobbied the airing of a new program on JW, as a follow-up to the previous Swedish program on pedophilia, which was aired in Switzerland 5 years ago in July 2005. The idea was discussed with the TV program management and for a number of months, I had to meet with several representatives to tell my story and what the subject could be for a new program.

After a while, the project was accepted. At first they just wanted to allow me to tell my story for about 10 minutes, but when they heard the different aspects of the subject I would have loved to see discussed in the program, they ended up giving it the maximum time allowed for that national Swiss French program, viz. 55 minutes!

I suggested that the program included Ray Franz, Barbara Anderson and Bill Bowen and I gave the journalists their contact details. Their participation would have given more weight to what the program wanted to demonstrate. Unfortunately, Franz declined the offer, because he did not feel well physically, but gave me his agreement to use, if needed any of the tapes available of his different trips in Europe. At the end, the journalists discarded this option, but retained the participation of Bill and Barbara. This is how their interview has finally ended up in the program.

The shooting and the collection of the information from which to compile the program took over three months and has cost, according to the journalist, over 200'000 dollars.

The whole thing was completed end June, and we were just waiting for the program to be put on the agenda. Finally, it has been aired on November 11th, and will be aired again tomorrow afternoon by the Swiss TV and will, later, be aired by TV5 all over the world, but we do not have the dates yet.

The Swiss TV opens a forum for each program it airs, every week, to give the public the opportunity to comment, ask questions or ... bitch about it.

The reactions on the forum are very interesting. You have had the chance to read the translation done in Queben and posted by Barbara. Unfortunately, translating the whole forum is just impossible. Right now, there are over 120 threads open, each one with its own discussions, which can be 1 to over a dozen posts each. It is just unbelievable the echo this program is having over here.

Geneva is not a large town, just over 300'000 people. You normally know several people who know several others, and at the end one can say that you are ... known around, specially if your professional activity touch hundreds of people, such as the internet business of Fulvio, my son, the bank business of Amanda, my daughter or my job at DuPont, one of the American multinationals around here where I spent 38 years.

Therefore, the comments coming from Geneva, are very very personal. Many people have appreciated and applauded our courage to come in the open, not hiding our name or our face. Some of these know us personally. Others have recounted their miserable experiences as JW.

Many active, inactive or ex-JW whom we know very well, even when we read their anonymous posts on the forum, have been widely violent, attacking personally my kids and myself. Fulvio and Amanda have responded, I didn't.

I am waiting for the activity on the forum to die out and then I will post my reply and comments.

I have already prepared it (in French) and it is just waiting for the right moment to be posted.

It is 4 pages long, and covers

- a) distinction between people and the Organization and its teachings
- b) why I left the Organization (which was obviously one of the questions many people had knowing that I had been a witness for 59 years, and an Elder for 27 years)
- c) what I am doing now (some have alleged that I am a guru leading a new cult)
- d) what I think of the outrageous and despicable comments made by many witnesses and ex witnesses.

I will be translating the document into English and post it right here.

Well, this is where we stand now.

Roberto DI STEFANO – alias Nick!

Just a couple of words of translation about Philippe Mayor, the Public Relations Representative for the French zone of Switzerland (by the way, in Switzerland we have four national languages, and therefore PR is by native language), participation.

He did a good job, until he was asked by William, the journalist, about the JW policies on child abuse. On pedophilia, instead of telling the audience what the internal instructions are, he said that it was the parents responsibility to report the abuse to the authorities, whereas, in Switzerland, reporting known crimes to authorities is compulsory and not limited to “parents responsibility”. But he got into trouble with the next question, “and what about if the abuse was perpetuated by the parents themselves?”. At that point, the poor Mayor didn’t know what to say as his previous justification would not hold anymore. He started, nervously, by taking the time to think about an acceptable answer which would not violate the Watchtower mandate, and, as he could not find any, he dismissed the question by a diversionary move, replying “I cannot tell you, I have never had the case”! But he was not asked about his experience with child abuse cases, he was being questioned about the Watchtower’s official position on child abuse and incest.

Swiss TV Program – My reaction to the TV forum participants

This afternoon, William Heinzer, the journalist who, together with Florence, were responsible for the Swiss TV program called me and confirmed that, although this program on Jehovah’s Witnesses has been the one which had the highest number of interventions in the TV forum, they had to withdraw the forum, because of the atrocious allegations made against myself and my two kids, Fulvio and Amanda. I planned to copy and publish on my site, a selection of the JW and ex.JW posts, just to show the low moral of these people, who pretend to worship the true God. Even ex-JW, whom I know pretty well, and who were expelled for immorality, but still believe the JW are Jehovah’s only people, have spit their venom against us. Most of these ex-JW were just nothing in the congregation, people who usually don’t turn in any monthly report, seldomly attend meeting, but were between the first ones to bitch about us, attacking us personally, instead of debating the subjects covered by the TV program. Just before the forum was closed by the TV Program management, I was able to post a kind of “press release”, addressing some of the legitimate questions and, on the other hand, the despicable reaction of the Witnesses. The next post is the one I posted on the TV Program forum, now unavailable, and on my internet site.

Being the promoter of the program, I felt I needed to answer the legitimate questions asked by participants to the forum of the Swiss TV Program “Temps Présent” of November 11th, 2010 and to add certain observations, opinions and conclusions.

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS AND ALLEGATIONS OF SOME FORUM’S PARTICIPANTS:

Clarifications:

To avoid any misunderstandings, I need to distinguish first a few notions such as, Jehovah Witnesses as individuals, their moral teachings, their internal problems, their beliefs and what we could call their internal regulations.

1. Jehovah’s Witnesses as individuals: My opinion is that they are honest, sincere believers, firmly engaged in the tangible expression of their faith, but surely not the only ones on Earth.
2. Their moral teachings: They are, in general, Christian teachings, of which they do not have neither the exclusivity nor the monopole.
3. Their internal problems: My opinion is that they suffer, neither more nor less, of the same problems as other religious movements, such as divorce, suicide, tax and social fraud, depressions and metal diseases, rebel children, addiction, fornication ... As far as pedophilia is concerned, exposing the problem Jehovah’s Witnesses have with it, and not the assigning of the hit parade award, was the real intent of the program. The problem is not the presence of pedophiles within their own members. Logically, they probably and proportionally have a similar number of pedophiles as any other religious group. The problem Jehovah Witnesses have are their internal regulations which govern all aspects of the daily life of their members, not least, the handling of cases of child abuse.
4. Their beliefs: Jehovah Witnesses, as any other religious movement, have the right to have their own beliefs, as long as these do not hinder public order or violate the Law. Their beliefs can include, such as those

they had , the resurrection of the faithful men of the past, such as Noah, Moses and David in 1925, that Jehovah resides in the constellation of the Pleiades, that the creation days are six thousand years long or, still a current belief, that none of the billions people who will be resurrected after Armageddon, according to their teachings, will have a chance to marry, since this is what Christ said and, contrary to the previous teachings, that the stillborn now have the right to be resurrected. This to mention just a few examples.

5. Their internal regulations: These are not the moral Christian principles already mentioned above and about which there is no discussion. These are the countless civil rights which are limited, discouraged, negated or clearly condemned, by applying the extreme discipline of ostracism, that is to say the social death sentence. Many of these rules, written or not, are surrounded by ambiguity, the preferred technique used by the leadership to impose their line of conduct without having to bear the legal responsibility, as, for example, the multiple cases of death caused by blood transfusion refusal which are, supposedly, a free individual choice, not the teachings imposed on the cult members by the ungodly interpretation of the Bible by their leadership. If it really were the case, how can they explain that, only about them, Jehovah's Witnesses, have such a collective conscience but none of the members of other religious communities, who base their beliefs on the Old Testament, such as the Jews, nor those who base themselves on the New Testament, as the majority of the Christians? How is it possible that, from one day to another, seven million people or so, who up to then refused any trace of blood in both their food or the medical treatments, start to accept some specific fractions of blood but not others, on the day the leadership publish this new position in their official magazine? One cannot pretend that this sudden and unexpected change in policies is not the trigger of the new "free individual choice" on the matter.

All these internal regulations are nothing else but fallacious interpretations of God's Word for who, life is sacred!

Hereafter, now, I would like to comment on the following subjects: Why I left the Jehovah's Witnesses Organization, what is my current mission, and what do I have to say about the allegations and defamatory accusations of certain TV forum participants.

Why I left the Jehovah's Witnesses Organization:

This is a legitimate question when one happens to know that I spent therein the first 59 years of my life, and almost 30 serving as an 'elder', that is to say a spiritual pastor.

Being born in the cult, I would have never questioned the legitimacy of the spiritual authority same as no one would, in his sane mind, and without any serious reason, the parental legitimacy of his parents.

Same as I accepted and practiced Jehovah's Witnesses teachings and, as an 'elder', enforced them on those assigned to my responsibility, I expected the same from their leadership. When they refused abide by their own principles, I started to question the spiritual legitimacy of the leadership who claims to be the sole communication channel with God. The Bible clearly says "do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching 'Do not steal', do you steal?" - Roman 2:21

That is when, for the first time in my life, I took the time to examine the leadership's claimed evidences demonstrating the legitimacy of their position of authority and I finally came to the conclusion that, their own arguments delegitimized their claims on this subject.

One could dismiss the subject classifying it as a simple theological opinion, which should not influence the rest of the beliefs of the cult, but we are talking about the core doctrine of the cult, since, once you reject it, you delegitimize it, as I did, all their other teachings are mere human random interpretations of the Bible. The constant change of interpretations of their key beliefs, such as the meaning of 'generation' which would have witnessed the last days of this world, which has changed six times since the foundation of the cult; the eschatological calculations which gave 1914 as the year of the end of the world, postponed to 1925 and finally expected in vain for 1975, are nothing else that the result of pitiful flights of human fantasy and not God's revelations through his only communication channel.

What is my current mission:

No, I am not heading a dissidents' movement, and, all the less, I consider myself the guru of a new cult; I have already wasted enough time on this kind of adventure!

To the contrary, as Observer and Critic of the religious movement of Jehovah's Witnesses, I claim for myself the same rights as Jehovah's Witness claim for themselves to divulge the results of my researches on the movement. It is my constitutional right and I intend to use it fully. I simply asked the local leadership and the leadership in Thun (where the Swiss branch office is) to leave me alone. They did so for about five years and I respected their silence but, they couldn't resist the temptation to eliminate me socially and the moment they wanted to clamp me down by announcing publicly my official expulsion (disfellowship), preventing me to say a simple hello to those I had associated with during a whole life, I couldn't anymore stay still.

The intransigent and discriminatory attitude assumed by the leadership of this organization, who ignores the fundamental freedoms granted by the Universal Declaration of Human rights, subscribed the 10th of December 1948 by the representatives of the civilized world , an organization which claims for itself the respect of its religious rights, but steals the individual rights of their members "[to change \[their\] religion or belief](#)" (article 18) or to exercise their own "[freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek,](#)

receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (article 19). These facts cannot remain undisclosed - <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Ostracism and shunning, in violation of human rights, must be denounced!

What about the defamatory and insulting allegations made by certain participants to the TV Forum?

I deplore the hate and aggressiveness of certain Jehovah's Witnesses and ex-Witnesses who participated to the discussion forum of the Swiss TV program "Growing up with Jehovah" which tarnish the reputation of Jehovah's Witnesses. No true Witness would ever dare attacking personally an individual in such a sick way instead of discussing courteously the arguments. Their interventions denote a dishonorable morality which has nothing to do with the ethical principles taught by the Witnesses who, usually, apply the apostolic rule expressed by Peter in his first epistle chapter 3 and verse 15 which says be 'always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of YOU a reason for the hope in YOU, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect'.

The program did not attack anyone personally. It only presented the facts and, in certain cases, opinions, but never has it attacked any individual in particular in the way many of the members of the forum have done, vomiting their venom against the participants to the program, in violation of the human fundamental rights, in particular article 8 of the Convention of the European Court of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life" - http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/D5CC24A7-DC13-4318-B457-5C9014916D7A/0/ENG_CONV.pdf

As for the accusation of 'apostasy' that certain members of the forum have launched against the program participants, they forget that changing religion or belief is a constitutional right. Negating this right, by calling them 'apostates', is a demonstration of intolerance and a violation of the human rights that we just considered and which state that 'no one should interfere with his opinions'.

Jehovah's Witnesses should be honest, and respect their own principles as when they state in their "Awake" magazine article of July 2009, page 28 titled "Is It Wrong to Change Your Religion?" which claims that "No one should be forced to worship in a way that he finds unacceptable or be made to choose between his beliefs and his family". Or is it only a one way argument valid solely for those who leave their previous beliefs and enter the Jehovah's Witnesses cult, but not the other way round?

If the right to leave their cult is an 'apostasy', according to the terms used by Jehovah's Witnesses, then they should stop their activity of proselytism which prompts people to become 'apostates' by using the same right of abandoning their previous faith.

Not having been the object of a personal attack, they attack simply to defend their 'clan'. Their reaction reveals their intimate feelings that are nothing else but the feelings of fanatics, as we know many of them, who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their clan even if this means appearing as the worse people on earth (see the definition given by Lee Harris in his book 'The suicide of reason'). This is what is most appalling!

Conclusion:

I hope I have given, although only briefly, an answer to those who ad legitimate questions.

However, I will not waste my time embarking in any sterile discussion with those who do not have the courage of their opinions and hide anonymously and vilely behind a screen giving a pathetic spectacle of themselves.

Roberto di Stefano: Promoter and participant to the TSR Swiss TV Program of November 11th 2010, 'Temps Présent' on the subject "Growing up with Jehovah".