

Jewish businessman now a minister

By Carol Axilzen
staff writer

Stan Telchin had reached the pinnacles of his business career in 1971 when he heard the earth-shattering news.

"I had it absolutely made," he recalled. "I had a wonderful wife and two daughters. I had a magnificent home — four cars, a swimming pool, a full-time housekeeper."

"I was at the height of my career professionally and financially. As a character in life, I was in a group called the 'Top of the Tower' of the top 300 salesmen in the country, the creme de la creme."

A leader in the Jewish community and a member of the most prestigious synagogue in Washington, D.C., he had been honored by several prominent Jewish organizations.

Telchin's world came in shortly after his 50th birthday. His daughter, Judy, then a student at Boston University, called to tell him that she had accepted Jesus as her Messiah.

Shocked by her announcement, he was convinced Judy had been brainwashed. Determined to "win her back," he studied the Bible for a three-month long study of the Bible that completely changed the course of his life.

THAT WAS nearly eight years ago. Now the pastor of an inter-denominational congregation in Bethesda, Md., Telchin occasionally gives his testimony to churches around the country.

He has written a book, "Betrayed," chronicling his experience and has appeared on major Christian broadcasting networks in the United States and Canada.

Last week, he told his story to the

Birmingham-Bloomfield chapter of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship. And, he conducted the Sunday service at Bloomfield Hills Christian Church. The church has offices in Southfield.

"I set out to disprove the messiahship of Jesus in order to get Judy back, because I thought she couldn't believe in Jesus and remain a Jew," Telchin explained.

"I was terribly shocked in view of my knowledge of what Christians had done to the Jews over the last 2,000 years. I was very upset and heartbroken. My wife and I cried bitterly."

"I thought the cost of remaining in Judaism and really be part of our lives any longer because to believe in him was to deny everything we had come to believe in our lifetime."

The son of Jewish immigrants, Telchin was raised with a deep awareness of Jewish history, culture and religion. "My parents were ultra-Orthodox Jews from a tiny ghetto town just outside of Minsk (in Russia)," he said.

There was a tremendous desire to remain true to God and a tremendous awareness of the Jewish community because their survival ultimately depended upon their ability to care for one another. People outside certainly weren't going to care for them. They were the enemy."

AS A CHILD growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y., Telchin's main interests were Jewish causes and organizations. He joined a Zionist youth group and collected money for the Jewish National Fund.

When World War II broke out, he enlisted in the army. Returning home,

three and a half years later, Telchin decided to go to college. He enrolled in George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Shortly afterwards, he married a longtime friend, Ethel David.

After earning a bachelor's degree in drama, he continued his studies at Catholic University of America. Joining the university's graduate touring company, he played Macbeth in "Macbeth" and Leontes in "Much Ado About Nothing."

Telchin's wife was hired as the company's wardrobe mistress and stage manager. The couple toured throughout the United States and Canada before moving to New York City to seek fame and fortune on Broadway.

Economic conditions forced them to abandon their theater careers and find other jobs. Telchin worked for United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York before returning to Washington, D.C., in 1945.

While in Washington, he did public relations work for the State of Israel bond program. Later, he joined a public relations firm as an account executive, handling campaigns for Brandeis University, Elton Britt and other Jewish organizations.

Telchin later switched careers, becoming a chartered life underwriter and member of the "Million Dollar Round Table."

He was a member of the Washington Hebrew Congregation — a most prestigious synagogue in Washington D.C. Both his daughters — Judy and Ann — were enrolled in Hebrew schools.

He was a trustee of the United Jewish Appeal and had been named "Man of the Year" by Hebrew Home for the Aged.

CONSIDERING his commitments to his family, the community and the professional world, Telchin was more determined than ever to "prove the Bible was false."

Responding to his daughter's challenge to study the scriptures, he began reading the New Testament.

"I considered the Bible to be the story of the Jewish people," Telchin said. "I had never read the New Testament. I thought it was the source of all the hatred toward the Jewish people."

Beginning with the book of Matthew, Telchin read all the gospels within a week.

"Instead of a book of anti-Semitism, I found a book of love, a book written by a Jew to other Jews about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Messiah," he said.

"A major problem came to me in the 10th and 11th chapters of the book of Acts. That's the point in time when Peter goes to Cornelius and is reluctant about sharing the Messiah with the gentiles."

"Jewish believers were amazed when they found out that the Holy Spirit fell upon the gentiles. In the 11th chapter, when Peter goes back to Jerusalem and speaks to the Jerusalem council of Jewish believers, they are upset with him for sharing the good news with the gentiles."

The irony of the situation was that at the time, Jewish believers felt it was impossible for gentiles to come into a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and with the Messiah of Israel.

By contrast, today, the Jewish people believe it's impossible for them to come into a personal relationship with God and the Messiah. How could it have been only for the Jews then and how can it be only for gentiles now?"

Parents victims, too

Continued from Page 4

ALTHOUGH THEY can't at least speak in public with acceptance about the deaths of their children, Lisewski and Nelson admit they and their families worked hard to arrive at this point.

"If there are other children in the home, it's hard for them to understand why the baby isn't there anymore," said Braniff.

Telling the surviving children that the baby was so good God took him to heaven or other euphemistic explanations can lead to sleep or behavior problems. Parents are advised to make an effort to speak about death in terms the child can understand.

Unusually bad behavior can stem from a child's efforts to avoid being so good that God takes him, too. Children may tend to blame themselves for the death.

"It's normal for children to hate siblings. The surviving ones may feel their wishes caused the death," Nelson said. After her daughter died, her older son, 7, blamed himself. "He wanted to dig her up for a year afterward," she said.

LOOKING BACK, she thinks it was a mistake to isolate her son from the funeral arrangements and refuse to take him to the services.

In her case, she and her husband

people at home when their daughter died. "We missed her death by five minutes. To this day, the baby-sitter still won't talk about it. We've sent her literature and meeting notices and she won't talk about it," Nelson said.

Friends incorrectly may think their infants could "catch" whatever caused a baby's death.

"One of my girlfriends had a baby last spring. She's just getting around to talking to me now. I guess she thinks it's safe, now," Lisewski said.

No matter what the attitude of family and friends, parents who face coping with an infant's death ought to talk to other people who have gone through the same kind of grief as soon as possible. Nelson recommends getting in touch with the SIDS Center in Detroit within 24 hours after the death. Their phone number is 494-0222. A visiting nurse will be sent out to counsel bereaved parents. Or they can call Lisewski at 322-3568.

"You really think you're not going to go on," Nelson said. "You're in a dream world."

Lisewski said, "I had all the same questions about the death as everyone else. Fortunately before the baby died I had done some reading and I knew about SIDS. If your own child dies, there's still a lot of guilt. No matter how convinced you are that it was SIDS."

Birth of a tragedy: What will happen to Tommy?

Continued from Page 3

Attorney Schwartz contends that such a limitation would be grossly unfair. "Let's take the case of a brain-damaged child," he said. "The child is left unattended. The mother has to quit work. Father has to take on two to three jobs to pay the bills. In order to allow the parents some freedom, you have to allow for registered nurses. The cost of the care and the treatments and medical attention this child will require can run into millions of dollars over the course of his lifetime. How can you limit what he will need to \$500,000?"

Schwartz said he patterns his presentation on that of New York attorney Meo Levine, under whom he clerked. Levine taught him, Schwartz said, to convey to the jury "the whole person, spiritually, emotionally, physically damaged. I introduce them to how he is affected as a whole person."

It is not a pretty picture that has to be painted for the jury, he said. "The child who is cute at 3 won't be cute at 70, but he will still need care," said Schwartz. It is so important that the jury gains a feeling for the psyche of the injured child, he said, that he has the child in the courtroom when the jury is selected.

"Before we go to court," he said, "we prepare a presentation of a day in the life of whoever that child is. We make films from morning to night so that the jury can see how the baby is dealt with, what it takes to care for him. We do demonstrations to help the jury understand. I have the child in the courtroom because I can't talk about the child if the jury can't picture who the child is."

THE AWARD of \$28 million he is asking in the Smith case, Schwartz contends, is not unreasonable considering the extent of the negligence and malpractice that was involved during the delivery of the baby.

"The tragedy of Tommy in his present existence is accentuated many fold by the knowledge of its complete preventability," he said.

The enormous amounts of compensation being asked may strike people as absurd, said Schwartz. But they are not emotionally arrived at figures, nor are they the result of anyone's greed.

And, added Schwartz, angry as he

gets when he realizes the extent of some doctors' malpractice, the suits are not meant to punish the offending medical facility or doctor unfairly.

Said Schwartz, "In my opinion, the medical and legal fields are not that far apart." The doctor is there to physically repair an injury to the extent that is possible. The lawyer is there to economically rehabilitate the injured individual. "We can't restore the individual to real health," he explained. "But, we can give that person peace of mind and monetary security."

IF THE proposed bill is passed and limitations are placed upon the awards' plaintiffs can expect, he said, "What happens to that injured person as time goes on? What happens if parents disavow that child? Will he land up in an institution? Who's going to care for that child? Can the parent raise the kind of money that is going to be needed to care for him after they are gone?"

Schwartz said the awards he requests are worked out by economists and medical experts to reflect the actual costs that can be anticipated over the lifespan of the child. Accounted for are the cost of 24-hour professional care, occupational, physical and speech therapy, which can be expected to increase in price over the years, and an adjustment for inflation during the course of the child's lifetime. There is

also a request for an amount to compensate for intangible damages such as physical pain and suffering, mental anguish, denial of social pleasures, embarrassment, humiliation and mortification, and disability and disfigurement.

"Over the lifetime of these children it costs \$12-15 million to have nursing care. Last year there was a 9 percent inflation rate. You have to plan for that."

Tommy Smith's lifetime expectancy, he said, is 70 years with a work life expectancy of 47 years. Based on estimates of what it will take to care for him during that period an award of \$28 million is warranted.

Returning to the subject of greed, Schwartz said, there is the common belief that these awards are being asked to make instant millionaires of the injured child, his family, and the lawyers. That's impossible, he said.

"The money is in the name of the child," he said. Probate Court supervises these funds. Any time the parent wants to spend a portion of it he has to get permission from the court."

The money has to be used for the benefit of the injured child, continued Schwartz. To illustrate his point he described a birth damaged child who was constantly ridiculed by his neighborhood peers. His parents requested permission from the court to use a portion of his award to purchase property in a

rural area where they felt the child would be happier. "The court had to grant permission for the purchase, but the property had to be purchased in the child's name," he said.

"Nobody is going to come out of this with a mint coat or a fancy car," insisted Schwartz. The reward for the family, he added, is that they are given relief from the constant needs of the child by being able to hire outside help to assist with the child's care.

Schwartz explained that his own interest in birth trauma litigation developed seven years ago when he was asked to handle his first case. He won the case, he said, but he realized after it was concluded that if he intended to continue with this type of case he would have to develop greater expertise.

"To deal with that kind of injury you have to know as much as you can, not as much as the doctor, but almost as much. You train yourself accordingly," he said.

The staff of his firm, he said, consists of 40 attorneys, six of whom specialize in birth trauma cases. In addition, the firm employs four registered nurses who screen prospective clients and recommend action. The firm also houses an enormous medical and legal library devoted to the subject, which Schwartz augments with his own extensive medical and legal library. The services the firm renders its clients, he added, will

go on long after the case is disposed of in court.

"It is our position," he explained, "that the family is going to need ongoing assistance with protecting the value of the award, as well as decision making and planning for the future," he said.

Schwartz said his firm is currently litigating 150 cases, 20 of which are being heard outside Michigan. Another 100 cases are being considered. He said that few of the cases ever reach the jury. "Of the four cases we get each week we're lucky if we take one. We reject about 85 percent of the cases that are sent to us." Of those the firm accepts, he said, about 90 percent are settled out of court.

"DEFENSE ATTORNEYS are justifiably afraid of these cases," he said. Schwartz said that about 70 percent of his time is devoted to birth trauma

clients. "You can't get up, say that the child has cerebral palsy because of birth trauma, ask for \$10 million and sit down," he said. "You have to show the extent of her injuries. I have to tell the jury that what you must do for her here today must take care of her for the rest of her life. You have to make the jury see that child as an adult of 70 when she isn't cute anymore."

In defense of the lawyer's role and the huge rewards that he accrues from winning multi-million dollar settlements, he said, "You cannot try a lawsuit unless you believe in your case. The cost to the lawyer to try one of these cases is horrendous. We have 40 attorneys, and 12 partners, in addition to the nurses and support staff. We have spent \$2 million dollar year on behalf of the plaintiffs. The average cost to this firm for one of these cases is \$20,000 to \$50,000."

BORGO SISTERS
DANCE & GYMNASTICS
ENROLL NOW
Boys, Girls
& Adults
(Pre-school
and up)
Members of D.M.A. D.M.G.
224 N. WASHINGTON, ROYAL OAK
547-2877

Selection
We're the ones with 75 model
rooms of fine bedroom furniture
bedland
FALL CLEARANCE SALE
50% Off
park west plaza
29499 northwestern Hwy.
Southfield
352-2530

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS
50% OFF
Retail Price
ENTIRE STOCK
Down Comforters • Place Mats
Sheets • Blankets
Throw Pillows • Etc., Etc.
PILLOWS, ETC.
35520 Grand River
(at Drake in Midwood)
Shopping Center
Farmington Hills
477-7520

For an outstanding selection... from
fine furniture to unusual gift
accessories... visit the all-new
Sherwood Studios. It's worth it.
Open 7 days, daily 10-9 Sundays
12-5. We're one of Michigan's
largest design studios. 20% off
all accessories all the time.
20% off all stock and
special orders.
Special orders under \$500,
10% off.
Tel-Twelve Mall
12 Mile & Telegraph
Southfield, 354-9060

"Just Marilyns"
SPORTSWEAR BOUTIQUE
30% OFF
ENTIRE FALL INVENTORY
ONE WEEK ONLY
NO LAYAWAYS
ALL PRIOR SALES EXCLUDED
VISA • MASTERCARD
Oct. 24th THRU Oct. 29th 10 AM-5 PM
COUNTRY VILLAGE MALL
TWELVE MILE AT EVERGREEN
356-0493
SOUTHFIELD

VALUABLE COUPON
50% Off
On ALL Drycleaning
3 locations
to serve you
22185 Cooldige
at 8 Mile, Oak Park
22043 Beech
at 8 Mile, Oak Park
31555 W. 10 Mile
at Orchard Lake, Farmington
Coupon Must Be Presented With Order — Expires 11-5-83

A Scoop or More
BULK FOODS
OCTOBER Specials
Cashews \$3.39 per lb.
Pistachios \$3.39 per lb.
Dried Peaches \$2.19 per lb.
Wild Rice \$4.99 per lb.
Salt-Free Cheddar Cheese Crackers \$9.99 per lb.
Sugar-Free Jelly Powder \$1.19 per ounce
(an ounce makes 1 1/2 pints)
Coffee Candy \$1.19 per lb.
Raisins \$1.09 per lb.
Tootsie Pop Drops \$1.19 per lb.
Raw Sunflower Seeds... \$9.99 per lb.

SCOOPY SAVER COUPON
10% OFF
On any purchase of
\$10.00 or more
Coupon Expires Nov. 10, 1983
MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME
OF PURCHASE
PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS
Saturday and Sunday