



Books in Review

CHRISTIAN FAITH 101

The Basics and Beyond

by Steven Tsoukalas

Judson Press, 107 pages, \$12.99

Most Christians can easily find a surplus of publications which describe the errors of cultic and aberrational groups. These volumes are invaluable — and even necessary — to help unsettle a mindset mired in false teaching. However, many of these books only tell what's wrong with a particular group or belief. While systematic theology works are available, most are quite detailed and academic, and beyond the grasp of new believers and those recently converted from a cult background.

Christian Faith 101 by apologist Steven Tsoukalas helps to bridge that strategic gap. Tsoukalas delivers the essentials of the Christian faith in a clear and effective manner. His simple, yet basic, approach should whet the theological appetite of any new convert, young believer, and perhaps even one fearful of the study of theology.

The book consists of four major sections. Part one examines the person and nature of the triune God. Part two explores the work of the Savior including His birth, life, death, atonement, resurrection and ascension. Part three defines man's salvation detailing the new birth, adoption, justification, sanctification, our own resurrection and eternal reward. Part four briefly surveys the Church and the importance of fellowship.

The book is enhanced with a glossary of key words and terms, which are boldfaced in the book's text itself. Each section contains questions for discussion and review making it worthy for small Bible study groups or for an addendum to a Sunday school curriculum. In addition, every section closes with a "Meditation," lending to the value of the work for personal, private study. In all, Tsoukalas has provided one of the most user-friendly volumes on theology available.

In a day and time when doctrine is *out* and endtime biblical fiction, Christian romance novels and spiritual quick fixes are *in* — Hosea 6:4 still applies. The cults and

aberrational groups proliferate because of the ignorance of believers. Tsoukalas' book practically communicates the Christian faith and is a great work in which to teach the new or unlearned Christian.

—MKG

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CULTS AND NEW RELIGIONS

by John Ankerberg and John Weldon

Harvest House Publishers, 731 pages, \$19.95

John Ankerberg and John Weldon come up big with their *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions* — really big. Weighing in at over 2.5 lbs. and over 700 pages, this massive volume is one of the most exhaustive and up-to-date investigations of non-Christian sects ever published. It even delves into some world religions and occultic groups that have transformed into contemporary movements.

The book surveys over 50 easily recognized groups. While some entries are brief, several others such as the Watchtower Society, Latter-day Saints and Freemasonry are thoroughly detailed in sections of 60 pages or more.

The book's layout makes for quick information retrieval. The shorter profiles contain "Info at a Glance" and "Doctrinal Summary" sections. These segments list fundamental, historical and theological facts about the group. The larger profiles contain extended descriptions of the group's history and doctrine, critical analysis, biblical refutation of unorthodox beliefs, false prophecies, witnessing suggestions, and comparison charts.

A 66-page "Doctrinal Appendix" is really a book within the book. It presents and biblically defines all the major tenets of the Christian faith, including the Trinity, the deity of Christ, salvation, death and the afterlife, and much more.

Ankerberg and Weldon have brought together thousands of hours of research into this one volume. It may well prove to be a "one-stop" reference work to assist in the struggle against the onslaught of non-Christian cults and new religions.

—MKG

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