



Books in Review

THE COST OF DECEPTION

The Seduction of Modern Myths and Urban Legends

by John A. Williams

Broadman & Holman, 211 pages, \$9.99

We need more books like this one. With Christian bookstores being deluged with heresy and our Internet mailboxes being glutted with mythical stories and urban legends, we need sources to offset the insanity.

This handy volume has debunked an accumulation of phony stories and Christian myths both from the Internet and circulating on Christian television broadcasts and via church bulletins.

There is an enormous waste of time following the fabricated, which only heaps scorn and ridicule on duped believers. As Williams asserts: "In this information age where knowledge abounds and where the Internet can spread a myth or legend at the 'speed of lies,' we must become more prudent in our assessment of the truth. It is crucial that our testimony to the world not be tainted with exaggeration, fabrication, or fear" (pg. 10).

Williams has a chapter on the history of Antichrist-naming that is a good antidote for newspaper theology. There is another helpful chapter on the end of the world scenarios from A.D. 156 until the present. Thankfully, Williams is not afraid to name names. Yet another chapter covers millennium fever that seems to hit the local churches and the airwaves after times of crisis. Still another chapter covers angel mythology. And there is a lot more.

Williams has not missed many of the past and present e-mail myths and urban legends. If there is a very small weakness, it is the absence of an index for easy retrieval. However, the scope and contents make up for that.

Finally, there are two points of irony with the author and his volume. Williams' brief biography (found on the book's back cover) says that his accomplishments include "work with the Trinity Broadcasting Network." TBN is one of the leading promoters of bizarre and undocu-

mented supernatural myths and legends. Also, Jack Taylor wrote the book's Foreword. Taylor is a frequent speaker at the Toronto Airport Fellowship Church in Canada where the myth is purported that God is dispensing gold tooth filings. Taylor also claims to have "an apostolic insight into the word of God."

These ironies show just how prevalent "the cost of deception" really is. Yet if one can overlook these incongruities, then this work is a valuable resource for a thinking Christian. A book like this should be in the hands of discerning Christians.

—GRF

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: THEIR CLAIMS, DOCTRINAL CHANGES AND PROPHETIC SPECULATION

by Edmond C. Gruss

Xulon Press, 357 pages, \$18.99

Nearly three decades ago, the definitive works examining the history, doctrines, and prophetic speculation of the Watchtower Society were authored by Ed Gruss. More recently, a host of publications by a variety of new authors have addressed the Jehovah's Witness religion. Few of these equaled the pioneering works of Gruss. However, regrettably, Gruss' original works were allowed to go out of print. They have now, in part, been updated and returned in *Jehovah's Witnesses: Their Claims, Doctrinal Changes and Prophetic Speculation*.

This oversize book is loaded — 40 chapters in all. It is effectively a catalog of nearly everything you always wanted to know about Jehovah's Witnesses, tracing the organization from its ancestry in the Adventist movement to the sect's recent reorganization in 2000. Many of the chapters are arranged in a timeline format and are loaded with excerpts and documentation sources from the Watchtower's publications. This arrangement clearly shows that the most consistent factor of the Watchtower Society is its inconsistency.

Spread throughout the book are several chapters titled,

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