



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,

(continues on page 27)

Editor's Note: The publications featured in PFO's *Books in Review* section are available from **Personal Freedom Outreach** (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.75 to the price listed for shipping and handling. Due to occasional price changes by the publishers, the retail amounts listed are subject to change without notice. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.

“Selected Quotations from Watch Tower Publications for the Years... .” Almost all of these installments cover a ten-year period and further demonstrate the chronic incongruity of the Watchtower. Any Jehovah’s Witness — who is serious about truth — will be confronted with the indisputable fact that the Watchtower cannot be “God’s sole collective channel for the flow of Biblical truth to men on earth.”

As in the past, Gruss once again offers, with his updated volume, one of the most distinct works examining the history and beliefs of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

—MKG

OUT OF MORMONISM

by Judy Robertson

Bethany House, 215 pages, \$11.99

Out of Mormonism is the story of one woman and her husband’s involvement with the Latter-day Saint church. It tells of their spiritual emptiness which they tried to satisfy with the LDS faith, their immersed participation therein in leadership roles and as temple Mormons, and finally their exodus from the oppressive hold of this sect.

Robertson’s chronicle is divided into four main themes: the enticement of the LDS church, her life inside the church, her illumination to the Truth, and her new life in Jesus Christ. Each of these sections are made up of several, quickly-read chapters. Along the way the reader is given an overview of particular LDS beliefs and — more importantly — shown the prevailing undercurrent which keeps members captive. This book is a great resource for one trying to break free from the LDS church or for one who has a family member or friend involved in the sect.

Four appendices greatly add to the volume’s merit. These addenda provide solid, practical, and biblical advice for the LDS reader. The first reveals the false Jesus, false spirit, and false gospel of the LDS church. Robertson also gives helpful guidelines for how to get out and what to do after you’re out. She also succinctly presents the saving message of the Jesus of Scripture. The book concludes with a “Glossary of Mormon Terms” which is a further asset to the reader unfamiliar with the strange nuances of Mormonism.

Robertson and her husband, Jim, are actively involved in mission work to present the truth of the Gospel to members of the LDS faith. Her book is not only born out of a past personal experience, but is framed by her present outreach ministry.

—MKG

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.