



# PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

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## newsletter

# THE HEALING DOCTRINE

## YES, GOD DOES HEAL TODAY, YET, NOT ALL ARE HEALED

by Chuck Smith

Recently a woman, struggling awkwardly with her aluminum crutches, came up to me. An unfortunate victim of multiple sclerosis, she had tear-filled eyes that mirrored the pain in her heart. She asked, "How can I explain to my Christian friends that I still love the Lord and am not hiding sin in my life though I'm crippled like this?" My heart ached for her as I realized that she was one of the thousands of victims of the latest wind of doctrine sweeping across the Church body today — the "Healing" doctrine.

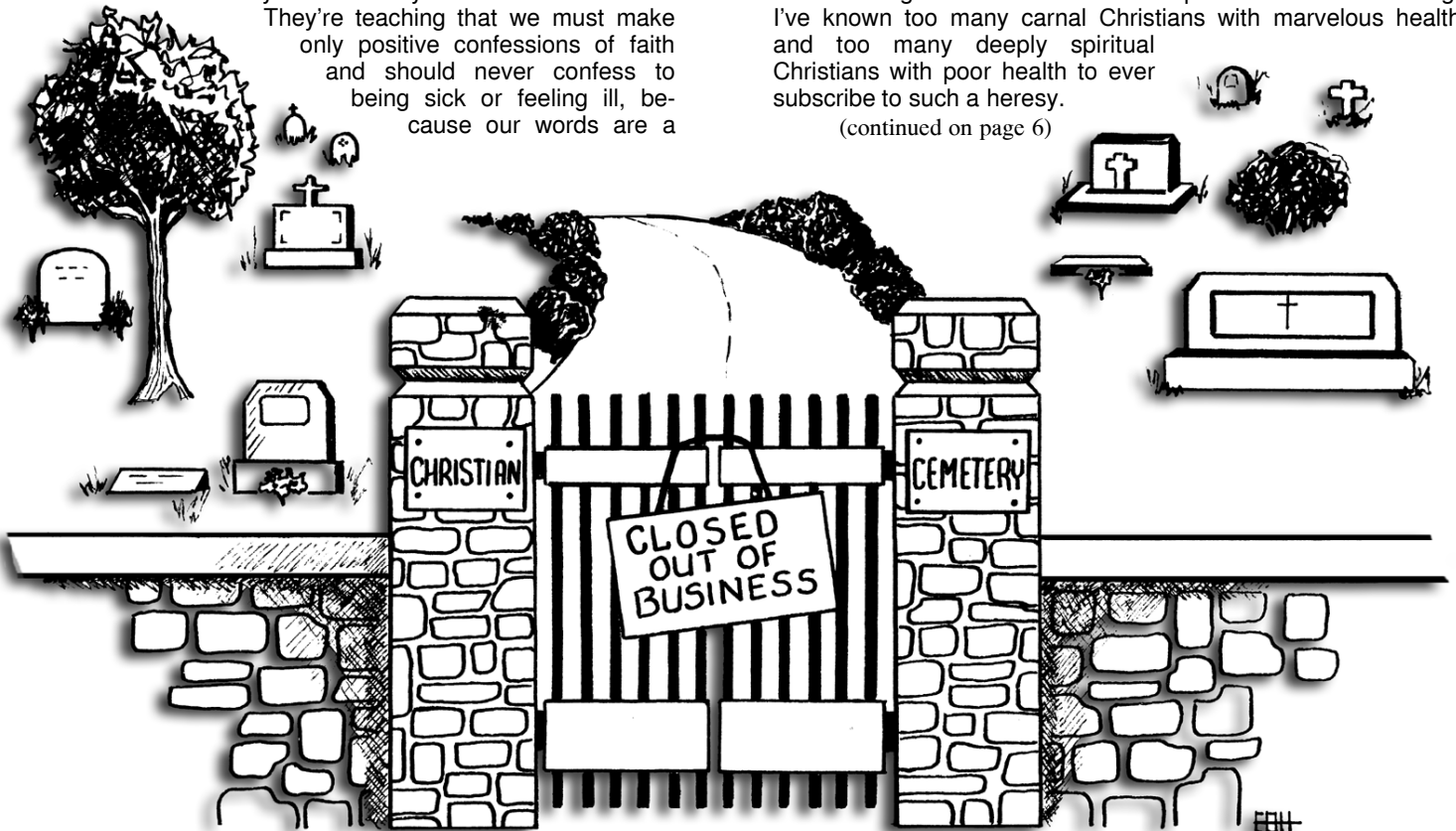
Many evangelists and ministers have begun to proclaim a new doctrine that sounds more as though it came from the pen of Mary Baker Eddy than from the Bible.

They're teaching that we must make only positive confessions of faith and should never confess to being sick or feeling ill, because our words are a

powerful creative force and we become what we say. Thus, no matter what our sickness, if we make a confession of faith, we will become well. All illness, they assert, is a result of our negative confessions or lack of faith.

*Comforters, Old and New.* As with all false teachings, much of what this healing doctrine says is true. Many Christians today are guilty of harboring negative attitudes and defeatist complexes. I cannot deny that many people have been helped and healed by making a positive confession of faith. Yet, to say that it is God's will that none of His children be sick is wrong. And to say that they're sick because of a lack of faith, sin in their lives, or something amiss in their relationship with God is also wrong. I've known too many carnal Christians with marvelous health and too many deeply spiritual Christians with poor health to ever subscribe to such a heresy.

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# NEWS UPDATE

## REV. MOON CONVICTED ON TAX CHARGES

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church, was convicted May 18 of filing false income tax returns in a conspiracy to evade taxes on about \$162,000 in personal income.

Moon's conspiracy involved failure to report \$112,000 in interest earned on \$1.6 million deposited in his name at the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York and failing to report the receipt of \$50,000 worth of corporate stock as taxable income.

The maximum sentence for the crime is 14 years. Moon's sentencing is scheduled for July 14. Moon's lawyer said an appeal is planned.



## HOW IT ALL ADDS UP

Throughout the Watchtower Society's history, it has constantly impressed upon its followers the necessity of reading its publications. The founder of the organization, Charles Taze Russell, told members that they could not see the Divine Plan by studying the Bible alone (see "Charles Taze Russell Disfellowshipped," pg. 4).

Jehovah's Witnesses today shy away from Russell's statement, claiming he was not attempting to place his works above the Bible. However, the Society tells its followers essentially the same thing today. For example, the Dec. 1, 1981 *Watchtower* magazine says on page 27: "Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using [Jehovah's 'visible organization,' i.e., the Watchtower Society] we will not progress along the road to life, *no matter how much Bible reading we do*" (emphasis added).

Faithful Witnesses who keep up with the Society's suggested program of personal study found that in 1981 they were instructed to read:

- 1536 pages of *Watchtower* and *Awake!*
- 208+ pages for *Watchtower* study
- 48+ pages of *Our Kingdom Service*
- 384+ pages for Tuesday Book Study
- 384+ pages of *1981 Yearbook*
- 360+ pages for Theocratic School
- 258+ pages of Assembly releases
- 3178+ TOTAL PAGES

Compare this to the Watchtower's suggested Bible reading for 1981 or Jeremiah 39 through Matthew 24, which amounts to approximately 197 pages of their *New World Translation of the Bible*, which they claim is God's Word.

The Society's emphasis on its own printed word helps document the fact that in order to become a Jehovah's Witness one must read Watchtower material.

And so it is, that the Witnesses are taught that they cannot interpret the Bible on their own.

(Editor's Note: Special thanks to David Reed of *Comments From The Friends* for allowing us to reprint and expound on his research.)



## UNIFICATION CHURCH EXEMPT FROM PROPERTY TAX

New York's highest court ruled on May 6 that the Unification Church must be treated — for property tax purposes — as a religious organization.

This decision should save the church millions of dollars annually, as it owns much property across the United States.

The New York Court of Appeals said in its unanimous decision that it is not up to the courts to "indulge" in rating the value of a religious organization's beliefs, as long as the group is not "insincere or sham."

Much of the doctrine, dogmas and teachings and a significant part of other church-sponsored activities are religious, the court said.



## MANY HOURS – FEW CONVERTS

Herodotus write: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Although this quote has been applied to the United States Postal Service, it could well be applied to Jehovah's Witnesses, who according to their 1982 Yearbook logged 358,581,547 hours of door-to-door visitation and home Bible studies in 1981.

However, all these hours of work yielded only 119,836 converts, resulting in an average of about 2992 hours spent per convert. In addition, membership in 1981 increased by only 72,083. This means that 47,753 either died or dropped out during this same year.



## DEEP THROAT IN THE MOONIES

Reminiscent of Watergate days, the Moonies may have their own "Deep Throat" revealing the inner secrets of the organization. According to an article in the *New York Post* someone sent the editor an anonymous letter purportedly presenting a talk by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, addressing his senior staff. According to the report Moon plans to organize his own CIA from ex-CIA men and will also start his own FBI. He also, according to the informant, ordered his staff to investigate buying stock in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. These charges may be groundless, but they certainly bear careful watching.

According to an article in the February 3 *Wall Street Journal* Moonies are known to have established connections with a number of business enterprises — the Diplomat National Bank, the Go 'N Joy Chain, the Original World Products Company, etc. The Unification Church still seems to be pursuing a goal of political and economic supremacy.



## MORMONS REDUCE MISSIONARY STINT

During their April Conference, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reduced the amount of time young men must serve as missionaries from two years to 18 months.

Church officials said the missionary term was reduced because of increasing difficulty in getting 2-year visas in foreign countries.



## MORE "ACCURACY OF GOD'S WORD" FROM WIERWILLE

It has been said that a more dangerous deficiency for the Bible commentator than ignorance of Greek is ignorance of language.

# NEWS UPDATE

Victor Paul Wierwille shows ignorance even of English as he attempts to distinguish between the words "thoroughly" and "thoroughly."

"Thoroughly," he insists, "implies an inside job, whereas 'thoroughly' is for the external" (*Power for Abundant Living*, pg. 91). Apparently, Wierwille doesn't know that "thoroughly" is merely an outdated form of "thoroughly." Both words mean the same thing.

Wierwille shows his incompetence again when he states that John 1:13 ("which were born not of blood...") should read "who," not "which," as the King James Version reads (*Jesus Christ is Not God*, pp. 99-100). Wierwille does not realize that 17th-century English often used the word "which" to refer to people, as in John 1:13 and Matthew 6:9 ("Our Father, which art in Heaven"). So, in the KJV, the two words mean the same thing and stand for the same Greek word.

Unfortunately, Wierwille is ignorant of New Testament Greek even more frequently than he is of English.

His teachings show evidence of much slipshod or deceptive work. For more information on this cult's deceptive teachings, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Personal Freedom Outreach.



## HERBERT ARMSTRONG SEEKS DIVORCE

Herbert W. Armstrong, 89, founder and leader of the Worldwide Church of God, is seeking a divorce from his 44-year-old wife of five years, Ramona, according to the May 10 issue of *Time* magazine. Armstrong married her one year after he changed church laws which had forbidden divorce and remarriage.

## NEW WITNESSING MATERIAL

### Now Available In Tract Form:

*A Faithful Witness Will Not Lie: But A False Witness Uttereth Lies.* Our feature article from a recent Newsletter. This tract deals with the Watchtower's use of a spirit medium, Johannes Greber, to endorse its "a god" theology of Jesus Christ. Most effective, as it proves the Watchtower Society lies to cover the facts concerning the identity of Greber. This tract also contains material on the four translations of Scripture which render John 1:1 as "a god." The cost on this witnessing tract is \$7.00 per 100 copies and should be ordered with the item number of WT-119.

### New LDS Booklet:

*The Use Of The Bible In The Book Of Mormon and Early Nineteenth Century Events Reflected In The Book Of Mormon* by H. Michael Marquardt. This booklet gives conclusive evidence that the Book of Mormon is really a 19th-century fictional writing. The author is a former 15-year member of the LDS Church. His intense research of the Mormon Church led him to discover mass contradictions, confusion and suppression of information (65 pages).

Order as item number BK-103. The cost is \$1.50 per copy.



## LEARN THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WATCHTOWER'S KINGDOM

Once again, Jehovah's Witnesses are being exhorted to attend the annual district convention in their area. Witnesses spend four days at these conventions, listening to "Bible instruction" straight from Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn.

This year's theme is "Kingdom Truth."

Cities where these conventions take place are also the scene of extensive Witness evangelizing. If a Jehovah's Witness comes to your door, preaching about "the Kingdom" — the Kingdom that the Watchtower preaches — be prepared to show him some real truths about the "Kingdom" he is preaching.

One way to prepare would be to see Personal Freedom Outreach's new audio visual program, *Cracks in the Watchtower*. This presentation exposes several aspects of Watchtower theology and history that few Jehovah's Witnesses know about today.

If a Jehovah's Witness could hear about some of these things, he might just reconsider his commitment to an organization not only of erroneous beliefs but of devious practices.

If you order now, you probably will still have time to view this presentation and be prepared to tell any Witness who comes to your door about these "cracks in the Watchtower." Better yet, invite him to see the program for himself.

To order the program, send \$18.95 for the filmstrip version, or \$45 for the slide version to Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, St. Louis, Mo. 63136. The 48-minute, 88-frame program includes a cassette narration tape. Please add \$1.25 per order for shipping.

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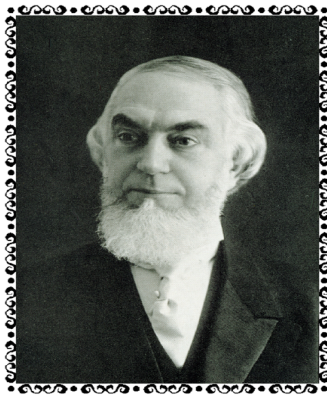
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# CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL:



## DISFELLOWSHIPED!

It is surprising how few Jehovah's Witnesses know who the founder and first president of their organization was. Even fewer know that if Charles Taze Russell suddenly came back to life today and began teaching his theory to members of the very group that he founded, he would be disfellowshipped. The grounds for this disfellowshipping would be called "apostasy" — the teaching of doctrine that opposes God's revealed truth.

Russell founded the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in 1884. He called his followers International Bible Students. The corporation that published Russell's books and tracts has retained the Watchtower name, but in 1931, followers of the Society became known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

Russell claimed to be revealing God's divine truths and, in the Society's own publications, was regarded as highly as the Apostle Paul.

Since Russell controlled the Society's publications, it is obvious he had a high opinion of himself and his "Studies in the Scriptures."

In the Sept. 15, 1910, *Watchtower* magazine (pg. 298), Russell said: "Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the Divine Plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the Scripture Studies aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years — if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the Scripture Studies with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures."

It may seem strange that Russell, for all his claims of spiritual authority, would be kicked out of the very organization that he founded. However, a quick look at some of Russell's teachings will prove beyond doubt that, in the eyes of Jehovah's Witnesses today, he would be guilty of apostasy.

### 1) CHRIST'S RETURN TOOK PLACE IN 1874

Russell taught that the second presence of Jesus Christ began in 1874. He claimed to have based this belief on the Bible (*The Time is at Hand*, pg. 170 — Vol. 2 of "Studies In The Scriptures"): "The next chapter will present Bible evidence that 1874 A.D. was the exact date of the beginning of the 'Times of Restitution,' and hence of our Lord's return." This "Second Coming" doctrine continued not only throughout Russell's reign as president, but also well into the term of the Society's second president, "Judge" Rutherford. Even in 1929 — 13 years after Russell's death — the 1874 date was still being promoted by the Watchtower organization (*Prophecy*, pg. 65).

However, the Watchtower Society now considers this doctrine heretical. The Dec. 1, 1981, *Watchtower* magazine says that "millions of persons around the world have come to recognize Christ's presence since the eventful year 1914" (pg. 8). With this "new light" from the Society, those endorsing the 1874 date are guilty of promoting false doctrine.

### 2) RUSSELL WAS THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE

Early Watchtower publications abounded with references to Russell as the "faithful and wise servant" of Matthew 24:45. One notable mention of this is found in the Dec. 15, 1916, *Watchtower* magazine (pg. 6024) where it is stated that "We must make the distinction between Brother Russell as a creature and his official capacity as that servant of the Master to give out the 'meat in due season.' To disregard the message would mean to disregard the Lord." In spite of the many early references, this belief now is also considered false doctrine. The Jan. 15, 1969, *Watchtower* magazine (pg. 51) presents the current Watchtower view on this subject.

"Jesus foretold that among his people there would be a 'faithful and discreet slave class.'" Watchtower doctrine no longer supports the idea that the office of faithful and discreet slave be held by one man, but rather a group. The importance given to this "servant" title that Russell held was taken to the point where he was virtually worshipped by his early followers, as the Society admitted in the *1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* (pg. 88).

Also, it is interesting to note an apparent cover-up by the Society regarding Russell. In the Society's history book, *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* (pg. 63) it is claimed that there was never a biography of Russell published because if the Jehovah's Witnesses were "to give the honor and credit to Pastor Russell, we would be saying that the works and success were his."

However a look into Russell's Scripture Studies series disproves this assertion. In the 1925, 1926 and 1927 editions of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, Vol. 1 of Russell's series, we find a biography of Russell. This biography contained the now-embarrassing teaching — believed by thousands of Watchtower readers at that time — that Russell filled the office of the faithful and wise servant. Watchtower writers continue trying to hide the facts from current members.

### 3) CHRISTMAS WAS A PART OF CHRISTIAN CELEBRATION

Anyone confronted by a Jehovah's Witness today will find the Witness adamantly opposed to the celebration of Christ's birth. The Dec. 15, 1978, *Watchtower* magazine (pg. 5) says: "Jesus was not born on December 25, but in the fall when shepherds were with their flocks out in the open field." It further states that "Christmas has nothing to do with Christ. It is saturated with demonism. Neither of these facts will cause its demise. It survives and spreads because it is commercial. More and more, Santa Claus and Saint Nicholas are becoming 'Saint Gimme.'" But here again we find Russell's "truths from God" differing from the Watchtower Society's "divine truth" of today.

Russell said concerning Christmas: "The event is so important that it is always appropriate to call it to the minds of the people regardless of the date." Further, Russell used Christmas as a time to promote and sell his "Studies in the Scriptures" series as Christmas gifts, which in essence is commercializing our Savior's birth.

### 4) MILITARY SERVICE WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD

Jehovah's Witnesses today are also quick to condemn anyone who serves in the military. But they are unaware that their founder taught his followers: "Obedience to the laws of the land might at some time oblige us to bear arms, and in such an event it would be our duty to go into the army, if unable in any legal and proper manner to obtain exception. But it would not be our duty to volunteer ... There could be nothing against our conscience in going into the army. Wherever we would go we could take the Lord with us, the Captain of our Salvation, and wherever we would go we would find opportunities to serve Him and His cause ... All the Army service would come under this heading, 'Render to all their dues.'" (*The Watch Tower*, 4/15/03 [reprints], pp. 3179-3180).

### 5) CHRIST DIED ON A CROSS

Jehovah's Witnesses also attack the Christian symbol of the cross. Watchtower publications currently ridicule Christians for believing that Christ died on a cross, and say that he was nailed to a "torture stake." The Witnesses provide their readers of

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# THE HEALING DOCTRINE

## Michele's Story: A Firsthand Account

The belief that God will heal every disease in every case is one of the most damaging beliefs a Christian can hold. This can be demonstrated from our firsthand experience.

When our first child, Michele, was three months old, her doctor requested tests because of her continued jaundiced condition. After a week, we were told that she had been born with neither a gall bladder nor common bile ducts from the liver, which are essential to life.

During the course of the tests, we relied fully on the Lord, praying earnestly that her illness was not serious. It was a time when everything we prayed and wept for was answered in a way opposite to our requests.

When we were told that Michele only had a few months to live, we continued to seek the Lord's will, praying that He would heal Michele. We asked for two signs of a healing: that her eyes would clear of their yellow color from the jaundice and that the scar from an unsuccessful operation would vanish. These signs never took place, and little by little, God supplied the grace for us to accept this.

People who believe in the healing doctrine would have told us to stop praying for a healing, claim it, and use our prayers to thank God that the healing had taken place in her life despite contrary signs.

Had we endorsed this doctrine and put our trust in it, and then watched our child's life slowly being snuffed out, it would have destroyed us spiritually.

It is cruel of Christians who endorse this teaching to say that we are not healed because of some sin in our lives or because of a lack of faith or lack of love for the sick person. We firmly believe that this can cause spiritual suicide.

We did not want our daughter to die. However, our first wish was that God's will be done. Everything that we have is on loan from God. We believe that Christians must be open to this in all circumstances. Throughout Michele's illness, Job 1:21 became special to us: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

*"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."*  
— Job 1:21

Michele was very special to us. Although she was with us only ten months, her life was a great joy to us and we do bless the name of the Lord for her. We do not yet know why she was taken from us so soon, but we do know that her life was in the hands of her maker.

We know that good will come from it. We remain in prayer that Christ's name will be glorified through her.

We think Walter Martin said it best in response to the doctrine that God wants everyone to be healed: "There is one illness that God will not heal you from — the last one!"

**Angela and Kurt Goedelman**

(Editor's Note: Nine months, 15 days after the passing of Michele, God presented to Angela and Kurt a son, Micah Kenneth.)

.....  
"OH NO, NOT ANOTHER  
TELEMARKETER!"

"MAKE UP YOUR MIND —  
WHAT FLAVOR DO YOU WANT?"

MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER



When I see the bad fruit from this doctrine, I can judge it to be *false*. I feel sorry for the couple who, at the encouragement of a healing evangelist, took their diabetic child off insulin and by faith began claiming his healing. When their child died they were charged with manslaughter, but the evangelist went free.

This doctrine has also led some beautiful saints of God to doubt their salvation because of their cancer. I've seen arthritics lose the joy of Christ because they were told something was lacking in their lives or faith which kept them in that painful condition. Tragically, those who are sick and in need of the greatest encouragement suffer the most from these extremist teachings.

Although in *some* cases a lack of faith may result in poor health, some of the Christians with the *greatest* faith and most positive attitudes have suffered physical maladies with no relief. Unquestionably, God does heal people today. Yet not *all* are healed.

I know of sinners who've received marvelous healings and of true saints who've died of cancer. I don't believe that death from a disease is necessarily a defeat; nor do I believe that if someone had offered the prayer of faith or had held on in faith then death would have been averted. Being a Christian or serving the Lord doesn't provide us with an immunity from sickness, the natural aging process, or death.

Since the time of Job, and perhaps before, men have sought to understand the problem of suffering and sickness and how it relates to our relationship with God. Job's friends, who came to comfort him, may have been gifted in worldly wisdom and philosophy, but they were ignorant of the ways of God. In the end, God rebuked Job's comforters for their counsel without knowledge and declared His anger against them, because what they said about God wasn't true.

They had been telling Job that his problems came upon him because of a wrong relationship with God. If Job got right with God then all would be well in his life. But they failed to recognize, as do these modern false comforters, that God often allows suffering to work His purposes in our lives. I agree with Job: "Miserable comforters are ye all!"

It is heartless, unscriptural, and cruel to tell a person with a chronic sickness that he's not right with God, his confession of sickness is wrong, or he lacks faith. A couple whose son died of leukemia was told that if they'd only held on in faith their child would have been healed. They were told that their surrender to God by praying "Thy will be done" made them responsible for their son's death. Another couple whose child had leukemia was encouraged to make positive confessions. They claimed the healing and refused to acknowledge the child's illness. When their child died they were spiritually destroyed.

*Some* sicknesses persist because of a lack of faith, but not all.

*Some* situations are helped by positive confessions, but not all.

*Scriptural Comfort.* In seeking to discover the truth about a doctrine we must turn to the Bible. When attempting to use the Scriptures to prove that God wants all of us to be healed, these false comforters point to 3 John 2:2. "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." In context this verse is not an expression of God's will for all His saints. Rather it is John's personal wish for his friend, Gaius.

In Mark 11:22-23 we read, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, 'Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.'" This is the basis for teaching the importance of someone making the right confession, with the emphasis on having whatever "he saith."

These questions then arise in my mind: Where does God's will come into the matter? Can I command God to work contrary to His own will? Is the purpose of prayer ever to get my will done? What kind of God would acquiesce to my demands — doing for

me what is contrary to His own will and what He knows to be bad for me, simply because I'm persistent to my demands?

Still, these modern-day "prophets" would have us feel guilty and accuse us of a lack of faith when we pray. "Thy will be done." But this prayer of commitment — resting my case with God's will — takes much *more* faith than demanding my own will to be done. If we're wrong in praying "Thy will be done," we're in good company. Jesus prayed it!

When we consider the relationship of our health to our faith, it is enlightening to look at Elisha, that Old Testament prophet of great faith. I don't know any other Old Testament saint who had more miracles of faith surrounding his life. Yet, we read in 2 Kings 13:14, "Now Elisha has fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died." Men of great faith also get sick. Paul wrote to Timothy not to drink water but to use a little wine for his stomach's problem and his constant weakness (1 Timothy 5:23). Paul also spoke of Epaphroditus, his brother and companion in the Lord's work, who was so sick he was "nigh unto death" (Philippians 2:27).

Although some of the Gospels speak of occasions where Jesus healed all that were sick, Mark's Gospel speaks of occasions where "many" were healed (Mark 1:32-34, 3:10). The inference is that not all were healed.

*Paul's Thorn in the Flesh.* In the history of the Church one of the greatest leaders and men of faith was Paul the apostle. Yet, he testified of his own infirmity, his "thorn on the flesh" — (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). During his ministry, Paul had undergone a "life-after-death" experience. Paul himself says that he wasn't sure if he'd had a vision or if he'd really died. But Paul did know that he was caught up into heaven where he heard things so marvelous that it was unlawful for him to try to relate them in human language (2 Corinthians 12:14). As a result of the abundance of revelations, Paul also received a thorn in the flesh to keep him from being exalted above measure.

There is a constant danger for the man who is being used by God to begin to look for himself for the cause of God's blessings in his life. God is the source of every blessing that we receive — not because we're worthy or deserving, or because God can trust us. God bestows upon us such abundant mercy, grace and power only because He is gracious and merciful.

Paul warns everyone "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly" (Romans 12:3). Whenever God begins to use us there's always that tendency to say, "I finally discovered the secret of faith!" (or the secret of commitment, or the secret of positive confession). We're always trying to point back to *ourselves* rather than to God's abundant overflowing grace.

Pride is a very dangerous trap. In fact, it tops the list of things that God hates (Proverbs 8:13). It's also the sin that caused Satan's downfall. Proverbs warns, "Pride goeth before destruction" (16:18). Spiritual pride is the most damnable of all. "I'm holier than you. That's why God is able to use me. That's why God has touched me and blessed me. I've done things right. You've done things wrong. That's why you're in the bad shape you're in." That concept is horrible and ugly!

If you receive any blessings from God — good health or a healing — don't look to yourself as the cause. The grace of God is the *only* cause of blessing. It's not because you believed or trusted. It's because God is gracious. Remember that.

Because of the abundance of revelations in Paul's life, God put a thorn in his flesh to keep him from being puffed up. What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? The word "thorn" in the Greek actually means "a stake," a reference to a big tent stake. Don't think of Paul as having a little pesky thorn in his side. He had a tent stake driven in! It wasn't a minor irritation — it was a major disability!

Paul refers to his thorn as a "messenger of Satan to buffet me." The word "messenger" in Greek is *aggelos*, which literally means "an angel." Paul had an angel of Satan to buffet him. His thorn in the flesh may have been a very painful eye disease causing his eyes to run continually. There are several allusions to this in the Scriptures (Galatians 4:15, 6:11). But whatever Paul's thorn was, it was an emissary of Satan who was continually buffeting him.

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## THE HEALING DOCTRINE

(from page 6)

And Paul prayed for deliverance.

When Paul's thorn in the flesh originally came, he probably didn't think too much about it. "After all, I can always pray and trust God to heal me." But after he prayed and the problem still hung on, he began to think twice. "Lord, I asked You to heal me. Maybe You didn't understand, Lord. Get rid of this messenger of Satan? Stop him, Lord!" Paul prayed three times. But the weakness continued to persist. After the third prayer Paul received his answer. Was it deliverance from the thorn? No! He got something better. He received God's all-sufficient grace, power, and strength in his life!

God doesn't always give us what we ask. He oftentimes gives us *more* than what we ask. Many times the things we ask God to remove are the very instruments He uses to accomplish His purposes in our lives. God gave Paul an understanding of the thorn. "Paul, I'm going to allow you to be weak that you might constantly rely upon My strength. I'm going to allow this messenger of Satan to buffet you so that I might bestow upon you my all-sufficient grace."

As we look at Paul we think, "What a shame. That's tragic. I don't know how you endured that Paul." We offer our sympathies to Paul for this ugly thorn in the flesh. But Paul answers, "Don't feel sorry for me. I take pleasure and glory in this weakness!"

Sometimes, you feel you've entered into real victory because you've learned to tolerate a condition in your body or in your own life. But God has something better for you. Don't just learn to live with it. Let it become the instrument of God's grace and power in your life. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities ... for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

*Your Thorn.* Maybe today you're plagued by some thorn in your flesh. Maybe today you have comforters, as did Job, who are telling you to stop making negative confessions and to start making positive ones. "Then things will be okay."

They say, "If you'll just believe and have enough faith, you'd be healed! Surely there's something wrong with you to be afflicted like this. Confess it to God and forsake your sin!" So you've confessed everything you can think of and you've made your positive confessions of faith — yet the thorn is still there.

Now Satan comes in and says, "God doesn't love you ... if God loved you, surely you'd be well. If you were in the will of God this wouldn't be happening to you." So you being to feel guilty, unloved, discouraged, and defeated because you don't know what's wrong. You don't know why the weakness persists.

Listen, God is saying, "Just trust in Me. My grace is sufficient for you, and My strength is made perfect in your weakness. I've got more for you than healing. *Receive today My abundant all-sufficient grace.*"

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## DISFELLOWSHIPED!

(from page 4)

graphic illustrations of the event as they say it took place on Calvary. However, here again Russell is guilty of "apostasy," as he not only believed Jesus died on a cross, but even chose this so-called "pagan symbol" as a logo for the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

As with Russell's teaching on the date of Christ's return, this belief continued well past Russell's death. Many publications that appeared after Russell's passing contain references — with illustrations — to Christ's death on a cross at Calvary.

Further, a monument at the site of Russell's grave in Rosemont United Cemetery in Pittsburgh, Pa., bears the aforementioned original symbol of the organization — the cross and a crown — leaving in stone a remembrance to Russell's (and his organization's) belief in a "pagan symbol."

### 6) RUSSELL, THROUGHOUT HIS PRESIDENCY, HAD A BEARD

The Watchtower Society has in the past several years disfellowshipped members for growing beards. Beards are strongly discouraged, allegedly because they draw attention to the wearer.

The Witnesses feel so strongly about this that they have in the past attempted to suggest that Jesus himself had no facial hair. Drawings of Christ have appeared in several Watchtower

publications, depicting Christ without a beard (for example, *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained, Life Everlasting in the Freedom of the Sons of God, and Things in Which It is Impossible for God to Lie*).

More recent Watchtower publications correctly say that Jesus did have a beard, but attempt to reinforce their current teachings by stating that he wore a beard only because of His Jewish customs.

Once again we find the Watchtower Society's founder in opposition to current Watchtower doctrines. There are irreconcilable differences between Russell's teachings and present Watchtower beliefs. If Russell were alive today, he undoubtedly would be disfellowshipped.

In the past few years, the Watchtower Society has been under tremendous pressure and has had to excommunicate many members. Some have been from the top ranks of the organization, including key writers and editors of Watchtower doctrinal material.

The Watchtower Society has, throughout its history, claimed to reveal God's truth to the world, but has failed to make good on this claim by its many contradictions and changes in theology. If you are a Jehovah's Witness who has realized the vast gap between the Society's teachings today and those of its founder, and would like more information on this subject and on the Biblical plan of salvation, write to: **PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH, P.O. Box 26062, St. Louis, MO 63136.**



## MOONCHILD & HEAVENLY DECEPTION

Two recently released movies, Evangelical Films' *Heavenly Deception* and *Moonchild* each deal with the true story of a young man who joined the Unification Church and later escaped.

Much of the similarity ends there.

In terms of background, motivation for joining and leaving, and experience within the cult, the two lead characters are quite different.

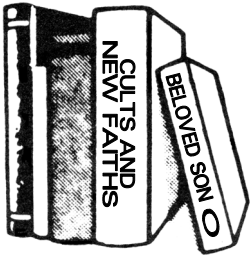
In *Heavenly Deception*, Chris Elkins (played by David Ellzey) is a college upperclassman, president of his fraternity, involved in the Young Republicans, and, by all appearances, a budding success. *Moonchild's* Chris Carlson (played by himself) is a recent college graduate who has drifted into San Francisco.

Elkins' first encounter with a Moonie comes when he defends one from a heckler. Carlson is befriended by a friendly young lady in a park.

Elkins is later invited to a lecture by the young man he defended and is enthralled by the lecturer and his hold over his audience. Carlson is invited to a farm retreat and gets "love-bombed" by his female recruiter and the other members.

Elkins leaves the cult on his own, fed up with the deception — "heavenly deception" — that he sees the cult use. Carlson leaves the cult only after being deprogrammed.

(continued on page 8)



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## “Beloved Son — A Story of Jesus Cults”

by Steve Allen

Bobs-Merrill Company, Inc., 241 pages, \$12.95.

*Beloved Son* is a book that promises much, but never quite lives up to its potential.

Maybe it's that this reviewer expected more from a notable author and entertainer such as Steve Allen, former host of the *Tonight Show* and of PBS' *Meeting of the Minds*, and author of more than two dozen books on a variety of topics.

However, it is probably just a case of expecting one thing from a book and getting something else.

In 1971, Allen received a letter from his son, Brian, saying that he had joined a religious commune in Seattle, Wash., called the Love Israel family, also known as the Church of the Armageddon. He also said that he had changed his name to “Logic Israel” and that he wouldn't be seeing him or writing to him any more.

Allen, a curious man and one who didn't want to lose his son, kept in touch with Brian and eventually visited him. Allen has kept in touch with his son — now the second-ranking member of the “family” — ever since.

Allen has had ample opportunity to study this cult. The book is billed as the result of ten years of research. A man of Allen's talents, with such special access to the second-ranking member of a religious cult should be able to produce a definitive study.

*Beloved Son* is not that definitive study. Perhaps it suffers from too close a perspective. While Allen is generous with his criticisms of other cults, he plays down the shady dealings that have been attributed to the Love Family. Allen's paternal affection gets in the way sometimes, and the book suffers.

The book is not so much a critique of the Love Family cult as it is an attempt by Allen to workout his feelings about his son's involvement. Allen admits this in the book.

Allen is hamstrung by his own religious vagueness. It's impossible to critique any cult without having a firm point of reference. Allen tackles

this task with only vague notions from his Roman Catholic upbringing and a desire to be “open-minded.” The Christian trying to ascertain the Love Family's stand on the Trinity, Christ's deity, the nature of salvation and almost any other Christian doctrine is going to have to look elsewhere. Allen never tells us.

Allen is also never clear on how he feels about his son joining such a group. That may be because his feelings have changed over the years. By Allen's account, the Love Family appears to be less socially harmful than most cults (they have remained small and have avoided national attention, for the most part). About all Allen says is that his son is of age and free to do as he pleases.

The book isn't useless, however, Allen does give us a chronicle of the trauma a parent feels when a child joins a cult. He also tries to analyze what might cause a child to join a cult. The book reads easily and is worth checking out.



## “Cults and New Faiths — A Book of Beliefs”

by John Butterworth.

David C. Cook Publishing Co., 61 pages, \$12.95.

This slender hardcover volume gives a quick overview of 19 cults and “new faiths” — ranging from such well-publicized groups as the Unification Church to such lesser-known ones as Gurdjieff and Meher Baba.

John Butterworth, described on the book jacket as a newspaper editor in northern England, writes in a simple, journalistic style. Each of the two-to-four-page segments, which he calls “short articles,” briefly describes a group's history and teachings, and each includes a box listing key beliefs. At the end of the book is a glossary of significant terms. (However, the basis for the author's distinction between cults and new faiths is never made very clear.)

The book can easily be read in one or two sittings. The type is large, and much of the space is devoted to photographs and illustrations that enhance the text. Perhaps this accounts for the high retail price.

Although its conciseness makes for easy reading, the book suffers occasionally from the author's brevity. The account of the history of the Mormons, in particular, is flawed by some omissions and inaccuracies.

American readers may notice the British spellings and punctuation, and some minor errors such as the reference to the U.S. tax agency as the Inland Revenue Service.

A more serious flaw is the author's failure to include any footnotes or other references. *Cults and New Faiths* is fine as a brief introduction to some of the cults around today, but it is unfortunate that the reader isn't given any suggestions for a more in-depth look.

## MOVIE REVIEW

(from page 4)

Perhaps the most significant difference is in the two young men's fates. Elkins becomes a Christian, while the movie depicts Carlson only as leaving the Unification Church.

The acting in both movies is fairly good, with only brief lapses into melodrama. Many of the actors in *Moonchild* are former Moonies — a fact that lends credibility to some scenes that might seem otherwise

unbelievable.

Both films are good documents of the Moonie experience and should serve as fair warning to parents and young people alike to beware of groups of overly friendly people who are less than eager to reveal all the facts about the organization they represent.

The ending of *Heavenly Deception* could have been a little more clear in expressing that a personal commitment to Christ is essential to salvation. While the movie strongly implies that Christ is “the way, the truth and the life,” it doesn't tell us exactly how Elkins became a Christian.



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