



# PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

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EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

## newsletter

# THE RETURN OF THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

by WESLEY P. WALTERS

Visitors at last summer's Michigan State Fair may have encountered a group believed to have been extinct — the Christadelphians. Importing most of their free promotional literature from Australia, the group appears to be trying a comeback in its native country.

The sect was founded by a British physician, Dr. John Thomas, the son of a non-conformist minister. He came to America in 1832 and for a while became a follower of Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell, the leading figures in establishing the Disciples of Christ movement.

After becoming convinced that the Disciples movement was not the true restoration of primitive Christianity it claimed to be but rather the apostate Church predicted by Scripture, he broke with the movement and in 1848 began to establish his own local groups, each of which he called

"ecclesia." They bore no formal name until their doctrine of nonresistance during the Civil War led to their adoption of the name Christadelphians, the "Brethren of Christ." As with members of many other sects, the Christadelphians came to believe that they were the only true people of God.

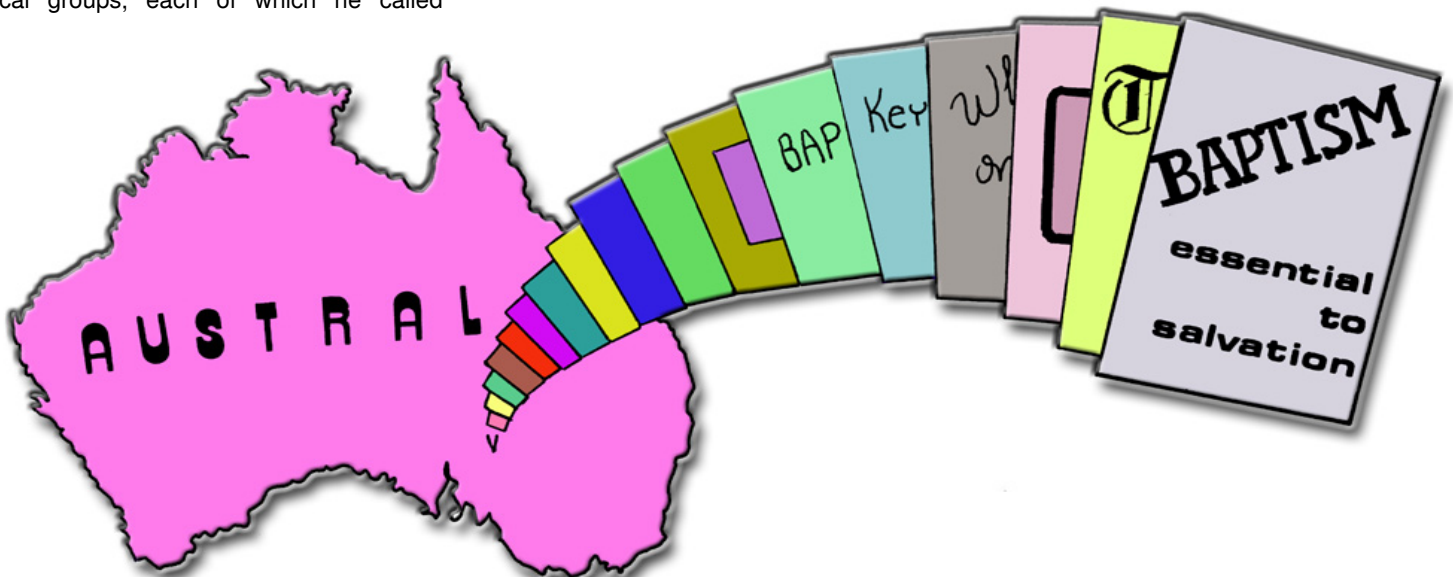
### GOD AND IMMORTALITY

While zealous to restore what he perceived to be primitive Christianity, Dr. Thomas succeeded only in compiling some of the leading theological errors of his day into a system that overthrows the Bible's teachings. He rejected the biblical doctrine of the Trinity (taught in such passages as Matt. 28:19), and adopted the old heresy that Jesus was the son of God but not God the Son. Jesus "had two sides: Deity and humanity. The man was the Son whose

existence dates from the birth of Jesus; the deity dwelling in Him was the Father" (*The Declaration or The Truth Defined in a Series Of Propositions*, pp. 19-22). The Holy Spirit in such a heretical construction is necessarily reduced to a term that refers to the power of God. The Spirit accordingly is stripped of personal qualities, such as speaking, grieving, willing, interceding, which are ascribed to Him by the Bible.

Thomas also taught conditional immortality, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, who later adopted the same erroneous idea. Thomas taught that the soul has no separate existence apart from the body. Thus, when a man dies, he simply ceases to exist, Thomas taught. Only the righteous and those who had been extremely wicked and

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# EDITORIALS

## VICTOR PAUL WIERWILLE — THE HANDICAPPED HEALER

The Way International's Rock of Ages convention has served as a yearly reunion for followers and homecoming for its Word Over the World Ambassadors since 1971.

Founder Victor Paul Wierwille is always at the center of attention at these gatherings. Imagine members' disappointment when Wierwille had to cut short his appearance at the August 1983 convention because of illness. Wierwille struggled through teaching the first evening before 15,000 admiring followers, then threw in the towel.

While we do not expect a man of 66 years to have the vigor of a youth, Wierwille's illness points out a contradiction in his own teachings.

Wierwille has long taught that healing and health are available to every human who believes he can have it — even the non-Christian. Way literature directs members to each day "stay your minds for 15 minutes on the things you want to accomplish," expecting that this exercise will assure it (1983 brochure to *Power for Abundant Living* graduates).

The shallowness and unscriptural basis of this "positive confession" brand of teaching, which has little place for a decision-making God, become painfully apparent as age takes hold of a person and his body battles — rather than bolsters — these ideas. Now Wierwille, the "healer" and "master teacher," must face the brunt of his man-centered, shortsighted teaching.

—JPJ



## DO ALL JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SET THE SAME VALUES?

Independent thinking and behavior are not encouraged in the Watchtower Society. We at PFO know of one man who says he was disfellowshipped for wearing a beard. The Society's reason was beards draw attention to the individual.

One of the Society's latest publications, *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*, says on page 8, "This is no time for independent thinking." Other Watchtower publications have laid out the same philosophy: "Conform to our standards or get out."

A recent newspaper story about pop music star George Benson, titled "George Benson Believes in Keeping It Clean," told how Benson "won't sing sexy songs, not even vaguely suggestive ones." The story continues: "He's not a prude. It's just that for him to sing such a song violates the tenets of his religion. You see, Benson is a Jehovah's Witness."

The article says Benson "recalled tangling with [record] producer Quincy Jones about singing certain songs during the sessions for the 1980 album, "Give Me The Night." Benson continued, "He (Jones) knows if you put sex into a song, you have the chance to get a lot of airplay. He didn't see anything wrong with songs that suggest bedroom-type stuff. But I did. I'm a preacher. I can't do that kind of stuff."

Given the state of much popular music today, one might wonder how Benson continues to be a success. However, his approach certainly is within the Watchtower frame of mind, and we have no quarrel with his refusal to perform such songs. But do all Jehovah's Witnesses follow this example?

Michael Jackson, a superstar in the pop scene today, reportedly has followed "in his mother's faith and become a practicing Jehovah's Witness," according to the Jan. 10, 1983, edition of *Newsweek* magazine.

*Rolling Stone* magazine (Feb. 17, 1983) says of Jackson, "Religion is a large part of his life, requiring intense Bible study and thrice-weekly meetings at a nearby Kingdom Hall."

Jackson's devotion to the Watchtower Society and its standards would appear to be at least as deep as Benson's. However, at least one thing leads us to believe that Jackson's convictions do not run as deep.

According to the *Newsweek* article, which commented on his hit album, "Thriller": "His most seductive new song, 'Billie Jean,' is about a paternity suit pressed by a cunning temptress. 'Billie Jean is not my lover,' wails Michael, singing as if his life depended on it; 'the kid is not my son.'"

*Rolling Stone* says Jackson "has borne, with patience and good humor, the standard rumors of sex-change operations and paternity accusations from women he has never seen. But clearly they have affected him. 'Billie Jean,' on 'Thriller,' is a vehement denial of paternity."

Now, one might argue that under Jackson's circumstances, a song such as "Billie Jean" is merely autobiographical, recounting the woes of being hit with paternity reports by women he has never met. However, the casual listener may not be privy to that information and may see the song in an entirely different light.

Certainly, a good Jehovah's Witness would not want to present himself in that kind of light.

It also should be noted that Jackson's producer on several of his hit albums is none other than Jones, the producer Benson dismissed.

While the Mormon Church has made excellent public relations use of the Osmond family, the Watchtower has carefully avoided any promotion of Jackson and Benson. The Society has a history of discouraging those with talent from pursuing careers that will make them famous. One recent instance involved Dave Meyers of the National Basketball Association's Milwaukee Bucks, who left at the peak of his professional career to become a full-time minister for the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Perhaps the Society does not have the hold over every member that it would like to have. Perhaps the smell of success lures some members from the Society's "straight and narrow."

—MKG



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# NEWS UPDATE

## PFO TO EXPAND

Personal Freedom Outreach is establishing chapters in Phoenix, Ariz., and Tustin (Orange County), Calif.

Steve Cannon will serve as director of the Southwest (Phoenix) office. Steve has served in cult evangelism for many years and has an Associate of Arts degree in Biblical Studies from Antioch Baptist Bible College in Marietta, GA.

Steve Ignatius will direct the West (Tustin) office. Steve studied with the Jehovah's Witnesses for nearly two years. However, after he was shown the many contradictions within the Society, he broke fellowship with them and gave his life to Christ.

Each PFO office is ready to provide material on the Christian faith and on witnessing to cultists. Samples of tracts and booklets may be ordered from any of our offices. However, bulk orders of tracts, audio-visual material and newsletter correspondence should be directed to our Midwest office.

Please make note of our addresses: PFO Midwest, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136, (314) 388-2648; PFO Southwest, P.O. Box 30073, Phoenix, AZ 85046, (602) 867-0538; PFO West, P.O. Box 15085, Santa Ana, CA 92705.

PFO does not draw its sole support from any individual church, denomination or other religious organization, but looks to those who believe in the ministry the Lord has entrusted us with. Remember, all financial support of PFO is tax-deductible.

—MKG



## CLEAVER SPEAKS AT EMPORIA

Eldridge Cleaver, whom the *Wittenburg Door* has labeled a "religious gypsy," appears to have done it again, this time speaking before students at the Way College in Emporia, Kan.

The Sept. 23, 1983, Emporia Gazette carried a front-page photo of Cleaver addressing a crowd at the school, which is run by Victor Paul Wierwille's Way International.

According to the photo caption, a photographer for the Emporia paper was asked to stop taking pictures when Cleaver began speaking. An official for the Way College said the request was made only as a courtesy to Cleaver.

Cleaver, a one-time Marxist-Leninist who once advocated the violent overthrow of the United States government, at one time claimed to be a born-again Christian. Since his reputed conversion, however, he has at various times been associated with the Mormon Church and Unification Church as well.

—KAM



## CALIFORNIA CULT CONFERENCE CONSTANCE CUMBNEY UPDATE

A presentation and panel discussion centered around Constance Cumbney's research into the New Age movement occurred at the cult conference on November 18 in El Toro, Calif. Eric Pement (*Cornerstone* magazine), David C. Hunt (author of *Peace, Prosperity and The Coming Holocaust*), Elliot Miller (Christian Research Institute), and Brooks Alexander (Spiritual Counterfeits Project) were on the panel. James Bjornstad (Institute of Contemporary Christianity) was the moderator.

The 3-hour event apparently generated more heat than light.

Cumbney said in her opening remarks that those who opposed her findings only set up "strawmen" and attacked her rather than refuting arguments. She further accused another publication of falsely stating that she set dates for the New Age takeover and the revelation of the movement's "Christ". Articles which appeared in both *Cornerstone* magazine (Vol II, Issue 64) and *PFO Newsletter* (Vol. 3, No. 3) cited Cumbney for incorrect conclusions drawn from her research. In addition, a reexamination of the transcripts made by Cumbney during the Southwest Radio Church interviews shows that she did set dates. In *Interview Five* Cumbney repeatedly cites reference upon reference alleging to the 1982 date. In *Interview Seven* she states that, "This program has established a time table for taking over the world by summer solstice of June 21, 1983 ... However, I believe that 1983 is a smoke screen based on what I have seen. I think they plan to put their plans into effect even sooner than that."

While many members of the panel complimented Cumbney on warning Christians about New Age philosophy, panel members opposed her conclusions. Elliot Miller questioned Cumbney about Christian publications she had quoted in a way making it appear the authors were part of the "New Age Network." Cumbney's response, when shown how the quotes she used looked when they were in context, was that "blinds" had been placed within these Christian publications to mislead readers from their association with the New Age movement.

Kurt Van Gordon (PACE Ministries), asked from the audience what Cumbney's definition of a Bible scholar was, since she said "that in my spare time I'm a first rate Bible scholar." She replied, "I don't think it takes a degree in theology... If I remember my Bible correctly, none of the original Apostles were Bible scholars either or were studied theologians, except for Paul." She claimed her Bible scholarship comes from her having "read that Bible many times forward and backward" and from the reading of numerous commentaries.

While the audience seemed equally divided in its opinion, it still remains clear that cult researchers, countercult ministries and major Christian publishers disagree with her numerous attacks on Christian organizations and Christian brethren.

—MKG



## THE WAY GRADUATES NEW CORPS MEMBERS

The Way International graduated 353 Corps members and 152 Family Corps (including 63 children) in July 1983.

This class was the largest ever and brought to 2,502 the number of graduates since the Corps' inception in 1970.

The same month, 1,300 students took the *Power for Abundant Living* course.

In September, Way founder Victor Paul Wierwille mailed to each PFAL graduate seven frames from the original 16mm PFAL film (produced in 1967), suggesting that each person keep it in a place in which it most "blesses" him. The letter also mentioned Sound-Out '84, scheduled for Jan. 3-6 at Opryland, USA, in Nashville, Tenn. The Way will offer a series of teachings and film the last of a series of television productions.

Construction of the Victor Paul Wierwille Word Over the World Auditorium in New Knoxville, Ohio, apparently has been progressing well. The 1,455-seat auditorium will be equipped with a main stage, two side stages, an orchestra pit, and sophisticated recording equipment.

—JPJ

# WITNESSES NOW FOR JESUS CONVENTION REPORT

# TURMOIL IN IRELAND

## PFO INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MAY AND MARTIN MERRIMAN

by M. KURT GOEDELMAN



Those attending the 1983 Witnesses Now for Jesus Convention had the privilege of meeting and hearing John J. May and Martin Merriman, two former Witnesses from Dublin, Ireland. May and Merriman first came to the United States a few years back to check the validity of reports being heard in Ireland of mass defections from the Watchtower Society.

Upon their arrival in America, they were greeted with open arms by former Witnesses and spurned by the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Upon returning to Ireland, they were rebuked by Watchtower officials for trying to be "knights in shining armor." Further examination into the organization led to their resignation from the Society.

PFO Executive Director Kurt Goedelman spoke with May and Merriman. Here are excerpts of the discussion.

**PFO:** How long were each of you members of the Jehovah's Witness organization?

**MAY:** I was 15 years an active member. My father became one when I was 9 years old. He got cancer in 1967. I had never taken an interest in his religion and the night he died I wanted to be like him.

**MERRIMAN:** I was 18 years of age when I started studying with Jehovah's Witnesses and I had been active, up until last year, for 13 years.

**PFO:** What positions did you hold while you were members in the Watchtower Society?



MAY — "Mexican Jehovah's Witnesses are in the army."

**MAY:** This time 18 months ago, I had 11 positions. I was an elder, book study conductor, involved with the news. I did some writing. I was a regular pioneer and held most of the positions at one time or the other in the congregation. I was very active for those number of years. I had a number of Bible studies and was involved with the Kingdom Educational Fund, which was set up to help special pioneers and poor Witnesses. I believed what I was doing was right, that it was God's work.

**MERRIMAN:** For the past seven years, I was an elder in the congregation. I pioneered on and off. I held all the varied positions from presiding overseer, Watchtower study conductor, school overseer, book study conductor and at big conventions I was over the field service. I organized the preaching activity and at the circuit assemblies I was the literature servant. If there was a need around the country, if congregations needed our help, John or I would go.

**PFO:** Were you both associated with the same congregation?

**MAY:** Yes, we were in the same congregation.

**PFO:** How many Jehovah's Witnesses are in Ireland?

**MAY:** There are 2,200 workers. There are about 4,000 that attend their meetings.

**PFO:** How many congregations are there?

**MAY:** There are 66 congregations throughout Ireland.

**PFO:** When did you first want to leave the Watchtower organization?

**MAY:** I began to feel within my heart there was something wrong a number of years ago. Martin and I were personal friends. We would discuss these things without any fear. But at elders' meetings I'd say unusual things and he would try and cover up for me knowing what I meant. I felt that we had the truth and I was astonished that people were writing books against us.

So I started reading those books and things began to lodge. But what really triggered both of us was we read the Ray Franz *Time* [magazine] article and we were shocked that a man could be excommunicated for having one meal with his boss and landlord. So Martin and I flew to

Alabama as two active elders — I was still a pioneer at the time — and we met with Peter Gregerson and Ray Franz. We were shocked at what we discovered, the corruption at (the Watchtower) headquarters. When we tried to speak to the Governing Body our 40-minute phone conversation was tape-recorded.

**PFO:** Were you denied the opportunity to speak with the Governing Body?

**MERRIMAN:** We were of course, yes.

**MAY:** Martin pleaded with Lyman Swingle (a member of the Society's Governing Body).

**MERRIMAN:** He just kept telling me to put it into writing. You spend all your money to get there, your savings and so forth, thinking that you're part of a loving organization, with loving shepherds, who would sort you out if they could, and they weren't interested.

**PFO:** After the Governing Body refused to speak with you, what was your next move?

**MAY:** We flew back home from New York. Martin and I took sort of a vow that we wouldn't broadcast what we had discovered. We knew it was a bombshell, so we keep silent for six months. And funny enough, when the six months were up my brother's child was born with a diaphragmic hernia, it was a blood issue. I told my brother I felt Jehovah's Witnesses had it wrong on blood, because Ray Franz had revealed to us that he felt that some up in Brooklyn (some of the Governing Body)

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MERRIMAN — "They have endeavored to change the date 1914 to 1957..."

# ARE BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS A VIOLATION OF GOD'S LAW?

## WATCHTOWER OKS ORGAN TRANSPLANTS – COULD BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS BE NEXT?



The Watchtower Society at one time imposed upon its members three rules that often put their health or even their lives in jeopardy: a ban on vaccinations, a ban on organ transplants and a ban on blood transfusions.

The Society has since withdrawn two of the prohibitions, those against vaccinations and organ transplants. Only the ban on blood transfusions remains. Reports from "Watchtower watchers" indicate that the transfusions ban may be cast aside some day, too.

Older members of the Watchtower Society will remember the ban on vaccinations. Some even may have gone to jail for refusal to receive a vaccination. *The Golden Age* magazine (predecessor of *Awake!*), of Feb. 4, 1931, gave "reasons why vaccination is unscriptural." Of the reasons listed we are told "vaccination is a direct violation of the everlasting covenant that God made with Noah after the flood" (pg. 293), and the totally unscientific statement that "Vaccination has never saved a human life. It does not prevent smallpox."

However, the Society now takes a different view of vaccinations, stating "There can be little doubt that vaccinations appear to have caused a marked decline in the number of people contracting certain contagious diseases. During the first thirty years of this century there were thousands of smallpox cases in the United States. From 1920 to 1930 alone, they ran 30,000 to 100,000 annually, but in recent years there have been only about 55 cases of smallpox annually, with no deaths." Today Witnesses are encouraged to receive vaccinations, according to the Aug. 22, 1965, *Awake!* magazine.

A more recent change in Watchtower policy is its reversal on the ban on organ transplants. Witnesses once were told that organ transplants were "cannibalism, a practice abhorrent to all civilized people." Further, "Jehovah God did not grant permission for humans to try to perpetuate their lives by cannibalistically taking into their bodies human flesh, whether chewed or in the form of whole organs or body parts taken from others" (*The Watchtower*, Nov. 15, 1967, pp. 702-703).

The Watchtower, in 1980, carefully side-stepped its former position when it said: "Some Christians might feel that taking into their bodies any tissue or body part from another human is cannibalistic." It went on to say: "Other sincere Christians today may feel that the Bible does not definitely rule out medical transplants of

by M. KURT GOEDELMA



human organs ... It may be argued, too, that organ transplants are different from cannibalism since the 'donor' is not killed to supply food ... While the Bible specifically forbids consuming blood, there is no Biblical command pointedly forbidding the taking in of other human tissue. For this reason, each individual faced with making a decision on this matter should carefully and prayerfully weigh matters and then decide conscientiously what he or she could or could not do before God. It is a matter for personal decision" (*The Watchtower*, March 15, 1980, pg. 31).

The teaching on blood transfusions is the most appalling of the three Watchtower bans. The world was shocked at the horror of the more than 900 deaths in the name of "religion" in Guyana under the Rev. Jim Jones. However, little is said about the countless lives lost because of the Watchtower's ban on blood. If the totals were added up, no doubt the Jonestown death toll would pale in comparison.

Is the Watchtower's prohibition on blood transfusions scriptural? Is violation of "the eating of blood" scripturally punishable by death? One needs only to examine verses used by the Society to show that it is not. Jehovah's Witnesses are quick to point out Leviticus 17:13-14, which says that anyone who eats the blood of any flesh is to be "cut off." Being "cut off," the Witnesses explain, means being put to death. However, this is only their interpretation of the term, for the context of the passage clearly shows that the violator becomes outlawed from his people, must wash himself and his clothing and will be unclean until evening, but then he will be clean (Leviticus 17:15-16).

A Biblical formula, prepared by William Cetnar (a former Witness himself who left the Society over the question of blood transfusions) proves further the shallowness of the Watchtower's argument. Leviticus 17:15-16 shows clearly that the punishment for violating God's law on blood is to be outlawed from one's people for a short period of time. However, if one examines Exodus 31:15 (also Numbers 15:21) one finds the punishment for picking up sticks (working) on the Sabbath was death. Thus the Bible emphatically shows the sin of picking up sticks on the Sabbath was more serious than that of the drinking (or eating) of blood.

God has provided that certain laws override one another. For example, in nature, the law of gravity is overridden by the law of aerodynamics. This is what enables a 200-ton metal mass (called an airplane) to fly. We find the same principle in the New Testament (Matthew 12:1-12) as we see the Lord Jesus in confrontation with the Pharisees, who tried to find fault in His activities on the Sabbath. Jesus' response to the Pharisees' accusations is most revealing. He asks that if a sheep were to fall into a pit on the Sabbath, would they not immediately work to free the animal? His answer becomes even more clear as He states, "How much more value then is a man than a sheep!" Jesus further drives home this point in Luke 6:9, where He asks, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to harm, to save a life, or to destroy it?" Jesus stresses that the law of life is far superior to the law of the Sabbath. And since the law of the Sabbath is far above that of the eating of blood, it leaves little doubt as to its relationship to the law of life.

There is no law in God's Word that forbids blood transfusions. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 4:15, "But where there is no law, neither is there violation."

One can only pray that the Watchtower leaders will truly open themselves to the light of God's Word and, as in the case of reversed decisions on vaccinations and organ transplants, seek to save a life rather than to destroy it.

Satan's goal is to "steal and kill." The Watchtower has followed Satan's pattern as it requires its members to destroy lives. Worse yet, is the Watchtower's doctrine of the person of Christ. The ban on blood transfusions could at most take from you only your earthly life, while the denial of Jesus' deity will cost everlasting life. \*

## TURMOIL IN IRELAND

(from page 4)

knew that the question of blood transfusion, that there is something wrong with it.

**PFO:** *Do you think the Society will ever reverse its stand on the ban of transfusions?*

**MERRIMAN:** I think a number of them want to change it on the Governing Body, but they are trapped in a vicious circle, because people have lost their lives due to refusing to accept a blood transfusion. That is a fact of life. We know that some would like to change it, but whether they could have the courage to admit their guilt, I just really couldn't answer that. I would like to think they would for the Witness' sake.

**MAY:** According to Ray Franz, it's Freddie Franz that's blocking any change on the blood question. He is the one that is totally committed to this position.

**PFO:** *Do you feel the Society is wrong both in prophetic speculation and other doctrines?*

**MERRIMAN:** Certainly they are what a lot of people are saying today, false prophets. There is no doubt about that, you just have to read their literature. Even if you weren't anti-organization, as a lot of people are, simply by reading their literature, you will conclude that they are definitely wrong.

**PFO:** *Because of the constant change in policies, do you feel the Watchtower is its own worst enemy?*

**MERRIMAN:** I agree with that.

**PFO:** *What were some of the other things found in your quest for the truth?*

**MAY:** How many Jehovah's Witnesses know there was no governing body until 1975? That it was a "Knorrocracy"? Ray Franz never put anything on the agenda; neither did anyone else. It was only what the president [Nathan Knorr] decided. A phantom governing body existed until 1975. How many brothers know that when the zone overseers go around the world, they visit the branch offices, circuit officers, district officers, missionaries, but they never invite the so-called anointed faithful and discreet slave to consider their views. The truth of the matter is that there are 21 men up in Brooklyn — 15 on the governing Body and a few more in the service department — who are doing all the writing. And when some of the "anointed" write in, their manuscripts are thrown into the trash baskets.

**MERRIMAN:** How many people know that on the Governing Body agenda, which we have in our possession with signatures, that they have endeavored to change the date 1914 to 1957 on the basis of Sputnik's going into outer space? The sign of the sun, moon and stars — that's their reasoning. We have exposed this and I believe we have fouled up the change by

our discussion [with members, media, etc.]. They didn't like that. And there are many other scandalous things. The bribery going on in Mexico that the brothers don't know about.

**MAY:** Mexican Jehovah's Witnesses are in the army.

**MERRIMAN:** They carry a marching card, which they bribe officials to stamp to state that they have done their marching time in Mexico. Anyone can check it. That means they are part of the Mexican Armed Forces in reserve.

**PFO:** *What became the determining factor for your decision to leave the organization?*

**MAY:** There was no "faithful and discreet slave." You can prove to a Jehovah's Witness that any amount of their doctrines are wrong, but so long as he feels God is using 15 men in New York City, then he will accept that some things are wrong.

**MERRIMAN:** There are just so many other revolutionary things that we uncovered that devastated our loyalty to the organization. It's a man-made organization and that was the catalyst, that's the thing which got us moving. We left and were never disfellowshipped.

**PFO:** *To this day, you have never been disfellowshipped?*

**MAY:** We have never been disfellowshipped. We have resigned.

**PFO:** *What effect have your resignations had upon the local congregation?*

**MAY:** Devastating.

**MERRIMAN:** In the congregation we served in, there were around 150 people attending, and they are down to about 20 left in that congregation.

**MAY:** We have discovered that the American brothers seem to be terrified of the Governing Body in Brooklyn and they're accepting this splitting of families. When an elder in Dublin City does anything against one of our friends — whether he claims to be a lover of Jesus or not, if he's in that organization and he's on his way out — we get a group of friends and we go work on that elder's house and we call and tell him what we're going to do. (We ask him) does he retract what he said about a resignation or disfellowshipping for questioning? And if not, then we tell all his neighbors and we go to their jobs with placards. We will not allow the elders of Jehovah's Witnesses to carry out the instructions from the men in New York City, without paying a price, because that is our duty as Christian shepherds.

**MERRIMAN:** Just this week we went to Brooklyn, N.Y., and we confronted four of the Governing Body and they ran like rabbits.

**PFO:** *Here in America when an elder makes a false charge against a brother who is questioning the organization, the congregation lends its support to the elders, so it is the opposite in Ireland?*

**MAY:** Well, it's getting that way in Ireland because of the fear that's been generated. But it wasn't like this years ago, it was fairly smooth in Ireland. There wasn't that many disfellowshippings. We have extracted 10% of the witnesses. 200 have left, resigned, a couple have been disfellowshipped over this. They haven't all accepted Jesus as their Savior, but they still realize the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is a joke.

**PFO:** *Where do the former Witnesses meet for fellowship?*

**MAY:** We meet in my home each Wednesday night. We break bread, we celebrate the Lord's Supper once a month.

**MERRIMAN:** A number of the people that have left are so burnt and broken and hurting at the moment, that they don't know if they even believe in God, let alone Jesus or the Bible. We're trying to work with them, they're nice people and we're still trying to help them and we believe they'll come around in the end.

**PFO:** *What advice do you have for those who want to witness to the Witnesses?*

**MAY:** Forget doctrinal matters if you're starting with them. You have got to knock the stuffing out of the organization. The day that they no longer believe those men in Brooklyn are being communicated to by God, then you can build them up. No matter how many doctrines you prove or disprove to them, they will always have the organization to run to.

**MERRIMAN:** Just love them and don't fight with them, because they are trained to fight. Show them that you have reason to believe that their leaders are lying to them and that you have nothing to gain personally by showing them these lies.

**PFO:** *In closing, what is your belief of Jesus Christ?*

**MAY:** That He is my Lord and Savior and I love Him with all my heart.

**MERRIMAN:** Jesus, for me, He's my Lord and Savior and the Holy Spirit walks in my life.

**PFO:** *Do you believe He is God?*

**MERRIMAN:** My belief is that He is of the same nature as God. That is the closest to an explanation that I can give.

**MAY:** No, I don't believe He is God the Father. I don't believe He is the Father. But, I do now worship Jesus. Whereas I didn't before. I now speak or pray to Jesus. I sing to Jesus. I glorify Jesus as my Lord and Savior. But I find great difficulty in reconciling a number of texts.

**PFO:** *I might add that Christians don't believe that Jesus is the Father, either.*

**MAY:** Yes, yes, that's interesting.

**Cassette tapes from the 1983 Witnesses Now for Jesus convention are available from Personal Freedom Outreach. See the "New For Your Cults Library" flyer for details.**

deserved punishment will be brought back into existence at the future resurrection; the rest of mankind simply ceases to exist at the time of death, Thomas taught.

Accordingly, Jesus' words that "all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth" is canceled out by Christadelphians through semantic manipulation. Building from the fact that the word "graves" in Greek was derived from the Greek word "remember" (because men bury their dead as a way of remembering them), this sect twists this etymology into meaning that only those whom God wants "to remember" will be resurrected. This ignores the fact that by Jesus' day the term had become a regular word for "tomb" (Matt. 8:28; Luke 11:47).

Thomas' erroneous teaching that man does not have an immortal soul or spirit that exists after death is the same error the Sadducees of Jesus' time had adopted. The Sadducees did not believe that any spirit existed beyond this life and extended this to deny any possibility of a resurrection (Acts 23:8). Jesus stressed the fact that they did "greatly err" and pointed out from the books of Moses (the only portion of the Bible the Sadducees would accept as authoritative) that hundreds of years after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had died, God still called himself their God. Since God is the God of living persons and not the God of nonexistent beings, He could only speak in such manner if those who had physically died were really still living (Luke 20:38).

Jesus further noted that people could kill a person's body without killing his soul (Matt. 10:28). This could only be possible if the soul continues to exist separately after death. If the soul merely were the life force animating the body, then to kill the body would be to kill the soul as well. Jesus' chronicle of Lazarus and the rich man narrates just such a premise of continued conscious existence after physical death has occurred (Luke 16:19-31). Both Lazarus and the rich man died and the Father Abraham had been dead for centuries, yet there is conscious activity taking place in the sphere beyond the earthly life. The rich man's great desire is to warn his brothers that death does not end man's conscious existence.

### **SALVATION BY WORKS**

For Christadelphians, salvation requires three steps — belief, baptism, and obedience. Belief for them is believing the story concerning the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham about the promised seed, the Messiah. Focusing on Gal. 3:8 ("God preached before the gospel unto Abraham saying: in thee will all nations be

blessed"), the gospel is for them therefore mainly a rehearsal of the events that led to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises.

There is little emphasis placed on a personal trust in Jesus for forgiveness. This doubtless is because of their teaching that forgiveness comes only through baptism by immersion. They depend heavily on Mark 16:16 ("He that believes and is baptized shall be saved"), oblivious to the fact that Mark 16:9-20 apparently was added to the Gospel in the mid-second century A.D. and is not an authentic part of Scripture. So tenacious is their belief that baptism is essential to salvation that they say the thief on the cross must have been baptized previously for Jesus to have offered him paradise (*Baptism Essential to Salvation*, pg. 13). Furthermore, "obedience to his commandments must follow baptism if we would attain unto life" (Ibid., pg. 2).

The stress on baptism as essential to forgiveness is accompanied by a diminishing of Christ's suffering on the cross. Jesus had led a sinless life, they claim, never giving way to the flesh with its lusts. He thus put to death the deeds of the flesh. "His nature was identical with that of all mankind, but he triumphed over it, in that he never gave way to its weakness. ... Yet, in spite of his sinless life, the Lord was required to lay it down in a sacrificial death! Why was that? He was teaching that men must die to the flesh if they would live eternally." (Ibid., pg. 11). Thus, "his crucifixion was a public dramatization of what men must try to do if they would attain unto salvation" (Ibid., pg. 9).

Given this object lesson of the importance of denying fleshly lusts and sacrificially dedicating one's life to God, the Christadelphian sees baptism as a symbolic recognition of this two-fold obligation. Without such an attitude of dedication, there is no forgiveness of sin, they claim, editing Heb. 9:22 to read: "without the shedding of blood (a dedication of life) there is no remission of sin" (Ibid., pg. 9). Those who receive baptism without such adequate understanding must be immersed again. "Those who are so baptized, and learn thus to deny themselves in order to serve God, are assured of a resurrection to life eternal at the coming of the Lord Jesus" (Ibid., pg. 10). Such self denial gives victory over the Devil, who has no real existence but is merely "the Scriptural personification of sin in the flesh."

### **MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**

Christ's Millennial Kingdom is an important part of Christadelphian thinking. They hope by a resurrection to be brought from a non-existent state (brought about by death) to an immortal existence. They

hope to serve as Christ's assistants, ruling over those who are still mortal during a millennial reign of Christ.

The Christadelphians teach that Christ will establish his rule quietly. "He will return unobtrusively (Rev. 16:15) and not as some great flaming spectacle descending from the sky" (*The Coming New World Order*, pg. 7). They add, "He will probably be viewed as a new and powerful Jewish leader when he first manifests himself in the earth, for he will reach the headlines by defeating a great Russian confederated army which will invade Israel" (Ibid., pg. 7). He will first take over Jerusalem, the new world's capital; then the entire world. The Jews will come to recognize him by his crucifixion scars. Thus the Millennium will quietly dawn upon this world and Christ will rule from the new world capitol, Jerusalem. The human, political and religious organizations will be swept away, including "all the false religions of the Christian, Jewish and Mohammedan persuasions" (Ibid., pg. 14).

To support this scenario, the noise and high visibility associated by the Bible with Christ's return are interpreted away by the Christadelphians. The noisy accompaniments of 1 Thes. 4:13-18 are silenced. The shout, they say, is really a silent "command"; the "voice of the archangel" is really a way of referring to Michael's (read "Christ's") being manifest in the earth (Dan. 12:2); and the "trumpet" is a symbolic reference to the trumpets associated with the Old Testament Day of Atonement and symbolizes the resurrection of "the responsible dead of past ages" (Ibid., pg. 9).

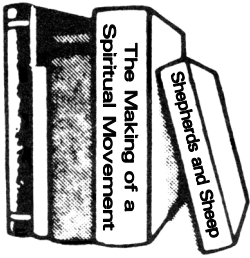
This is but a sample of the mental gymnastics Christadelphians must use in order to support the system of doctrine left them by their founder. While they may view themselves as "Brethren of Christ" it is doubtful if Christ would recognize their teachings as anything like those he imparted to his apostles. What vestiges of truth the Christadelphians have preserved in their teachings are overpowered by the errors in their thinking. Without meaning to impugn the moral character of Christadelphians, we believe their theological errors are serious enough that Orthodox Christians cannot regard them as "Brethren of Christ."

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For further reading see:

F.E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America*. St. Louis, 1956. pp. 518f.

McClintock & Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*. N.Y., 1894. IX pp. 937-939, IXX pp. 868f.



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

nearly verbatim passages in both Johnson's and Twitchell's books.

Another subject Lane examines is the false prophecies made by Twitchell in his "Talk to God" column in the Eckankar publication *Candid Press*.

Lane also reports on attempts by the Eckankar movement to cover up and deny his findings.

Lane's conclusion is introduced by a question — can a religion which employs so much lying and fabrication still embody the spiritual truth? — which he answers in the final chapter.

—KAM

## THE MAKING OF A SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

The Untold Story of Paul Twitchell and Eckankar  
by David Christopher Lane

154 Pages, \$9.95, Del Mar Press, 1983

Leaders of religious cults often present a fictional history of their movements to members and the public. A cult leader, claiming to be the one who has recovered truths lost or hidden for centuries, must often carefully cover his tracks, lest the truth be known that he only is recycling an old philosophy.

Lane's research into the origins of Paul Twitchell, who claimed to be the Living Eck Master of the Eckankar movement from its inception until his death in 1971, has turned up some of the most stunning evidence of prevarication and plagiarism by a so-called "spiritual master" ever seen.

Those who enjoyed the Spiritual Counterfeits Project's study on Eckankar several years back should note that much of their study was based on Lane's research.

Lane analyzes Twitchell's biography and finds conflicting accounts of his birth date and birthplace; Lane finds no evidence to back up Twitchell's claims that he traveled in France and India during his teen years and finds little evidence to support even the existence of one Sudar Singh, who Twitchell claims initiated him into the mysteries of Eastern religions.

Once Twitchell passed his teens, his trail becomes a little more clear. Lane is able to place him as a member of Swami Premenanda's Self Revelation Church of Absolute Monism in Washington, D.C., starting around 1950.

Lane also links Twitchell with L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology.

Lane's most shocking discoveries are of Twitchell's plagiarism of Dr. Julian Johnson, an American physician who went to India to study religions there. Lane cites sentence upon sentence of



## SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

A Biblical View of Leading and Following  
by Jerram Barrs

98 Pages; \$3.95, InterVarsity Press, 1983

Christians often find themselves swaying from the extremes of spiritual independence and blind obedience to a spiritual tyrant. Between them is a fine line which is true biblical submission to a pastor or group leader.

*Shepherds and Sheep* is an attempt to show people how to walk that fine line. After reading this little volume, readers should be equipped with a scriptural understanding of authority and its proper exercise.

After laying out the aforementioned problem in the first chapter, Barrs then examines the role of the Holy Spirit and His guidance in our lives.

Barrs then points out some danger areas (in a chapter appropriately titled "Some Danger Areas"), such as pyramidal authority structures, autocratic pastors and authority in marital relations.

Barrs is at his best when he lays out the New Testament guidelines for authority and discipline in the church and examines claims being made about gifts of prophecy.

Any Christian wanting to know how to submit to spiritual authority without stifling the creative work of the Holy Spirit could start with this book and prayerfully consider the conclusions arrived at by the author.

—KAM



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