



PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 4, NO. 2

APR. - JUNE, 1984

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newsletter

ONE GOD OR THREE?

A SCRIPTURAL LOOK AT THE NATURE OF GOD

Throughout the history of the church, no issue has caused as much strife as that of the nature of the Godhead. And, despite all the energy expended, no consensus has been reached.

Much of the problem apparently stems from the unwillingness to interpret the language of Scripture as the writers intended it to be understood. The biblical writers were writing in the realm of revelation, putting down what God revealed to them. When it came to the nature and attributes of God, they wrote passages that are true, but not exhaustive. A glimpse of God's nature can be found in one passage, another glimpse can be found in a second passage. Some of the data overlaps, some of it does not.

Some men, however, in their thirst for "knowledge," are uncomfortable with the doctrine of the Trinity as it is understood. So, they embark on the task of constructing what they consider to be a proper definition of the Nature of God. Thus, we have numerous attempts at answering the question "One God or Three?"

One of the major components of the problem of defining the nature of God is the attempt of finite human beings to reduce the infinite God to a series of propositions.

Orthodox Christians believe through the Bible God has revealed to us everything about Himself that He wants us to know at this time. Although we may not always understand completely what the apostles were saying — and there is ample evidence that they were many times at a loss themselves — we must take the language that they used and not go behind it to try to dig out some hidden meaning.

When people take the language of the Bible and try to explain that what it says is not necessarily what the original writers

by Steve Cannon

intended it to say, the problem of esotericism arises.

Many of those who develop an unscriptural view of the Godhead see an esoteric, or hidden meaning to the words of the Bible. Fanciful definitions usually are given for the clear words of Scripture to back up the particular view presented. When esotericists are confronted with linguistic scholarship that proves their definitions and conclusions incorrect, they retreat behind the mantle of special revelation.

The argument may go something like this: "You know, that passage of Scripture used to give me considerable trouble. It wasn't clear at all but last night while I was praying, the Lord Jesus came to me in a vision and explained to me just what that passage means. Now, if you disagree with that, you're not disagreeing with me, you're disagreeing with God." This is supposed to settle the argument.

Once this approach to interpreting Scripture is taken, any fanciful doctrine can be accommodated.

THREE AND ONE

That the nature of God somehow incorporates a threeness and a oneness usually is not at issue among groups that claim to base their beliefs on the Bible. It is the interrelatedness of the one and the three that causes the problems.

Many Christians today — some openly but the majority unwittingly — believe in a concept of the Godhead that is a mixture of the thoughts of the early churchmen Sabellius, Marcellus and Nestorius. This concept has popularly been called the "oneness" doctrine or the "Jesus Only" doctrine. It is most openly promulgated by certain Apostolic and Pentecostal groups.

MODALISM MATERIALIZES

In the second century A.D., a man named Sabellius postulated that there is only one person in the Godhead who manifests Himself in three modes (hence the term modalism). The Trinity, he said, is not of distinct persons, but of action and office.

In the fourth century A.D., Marcellus of Galatia expounded on this theory. He taught that instead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit being manifestations of the one God, they were expansions or dilations of one Being.

Then, in the early fifth century, Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, taught that the Body of Jesus was inhabited by two personalities. These were the Word (divine) and the human. As we shall see, the modern modalists, or "oneness" teachers, have synthesized the teachings of these three men into one doctrine.

NEW REVELATIONS

James Bjornstad gives us a succinct history of the birth of the "Jesus Only" doctrine:

"In 1913, a new form of modalism was born during a worldwide Pentecostal camp meeting at Arroyo Seco, near Los Angeles, California. John G. Scheppe, an immigrant from Danzig, Germany, tarried in prayer one night, and in the early morning experienced a revelation of the power of the Name of Jesus. Following this experience, Scheppe shared his revelation with many at the camp, which resulted in a study of the Scriptures concerning the name of Jesus. such passages as Matthew 17:8, John 10:30, 14:13, Philipians 2:9, Colossians 3:17, etc., led Scheppe and his followers to adopt the modalistic interpretation of the God-

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EDITORIALS

ORGANIZED TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MINISTRY

Hundreds of thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses around the country plan to attend the Watchtower's District Conventions this summer. The conventions are an excellent opportunity for Christians to evangelize Jehovah's Witnesses.

We urge Christians to spend at least one afternoon this summer in active witnessing and tract distribution at the Watchtower District Convention in their area.

Efforts can begin now with prayer for the evangelizing of Witnesses at the conventions, spreading the word at churches and engaging others' help.

One need not be a cult expert or scholar to participate. First of all, the Witnesses might well be afraid to talk to anyone who

questions their teachings. However, many Witnesses are taking a second look at the Society's doctrines and finding that they do not square with God's Word. Every opportunity to reach these people should be taken.

Listed below are some of the dates and places of Watchtower conventions and the ministries that should be contacted for information on witnessing materials and procedures. In most cases the ministries will supply the materials. All you need add is love for Jehovah's Witnesses, a desire to win souls for the Lord Jesus and a small amount of time.

For cities not listed, contact the ministry nearest you for information or write to Personal Freedom Outreach - Midwest.

—MKG

CHICAGO (CICERO), IL
June 14-17, 1984
June 21-24, 1984
June 28-July 1, 1984
July 5-8, 1984

CARIS in the Midwest
Jim Valentine
(414) 771-7379

DES MOINES, IA
July 12-15, 1984
Mel Richtsmeier
(515) 255-4754

FORT WORTH, TX
July 26-29, 1984
August 2-5, 1984
August 9-12, 1984
Watchman Fellowship
James Walker
(817) 465-0813

GREEN BAY, WI
June 28-July 1, 1984
CARIS in the Midwest
Jim Valentine
(414) 771-7379

HOUSTON, TX
July 5-8, 1984
July 12-15, 1984
July 19-22, 1984
Dayspring Evangelism
Larry Wessels
(512) 445-4382

HUNTINGTON, WV
June 21-24, 1984
June 28-July 1, 1984
Dan Corner
(412) 757-2157

LOS ANGELES, CA
June 14-17, 1984
Christian Witnesses
Walt Davis
(714) 825-5256

— or —
Personal Freedom Outreach West
Steve Ignatius
(714) 832-9385

MACON, GA
June 28-July 1, 1984
July 5-8, 1984
Watchman Fellowship
David Henke
(404) 561-1760

MADISON, WI
June 21-24, 1984
June 28-July 1, 1984
CARIS in the Midwest
Jim Valentine
(414) 771-7379

NEW YORK (ELMONT), NY
August 2-5, 1984
August 9-12, 1984
August 16-19, 1984
August 23-26, 1984
Narrow Way Ministry
Kathy Adler
(516) 467-1587

PORTLAND, ME
June 21-24, 1984
June 28-July 1, 1984
Gospel Truth Ministries
Gordon Bryden
(617) 563-7692

RICHFIELD (CLEVELAND), OH
July 19-22, 1984
July 26-29, 1984

To Every Man An Answer Ministry
Ed Havaich
(216) 652-3713

— or —
To Us There is One God Ministry
Neal Farrell
(216) 251-9567

SAINT LOUIS, MO
June 14-17, 1984
Personal Freedom Outreach
Midwest
Kurt Goedelman
(314) 388-2648

SAN DIEGO, CA
July 12-14, 1984
The Equippers
Peter Barnes
(619) 270-2991

— or —
Good News Defenders
Leonard Chretien
(619) 457-4525

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
June 21-24, 1984
June 28-July 1, 1984
July 5-8, 1984
July 12-15, 1984
July 19-22, 1984
Witness, Inc.
Duane Magnani
(415) 672-5979

SPRINGFIELD, MA
June 28-July 1, 1984
July 5-8, 1984
July 12-14, 1984
Gospel Truth Ministries
Gordon Bryden
(617) 563-7692

TUCSON, AZ
June 14-17, 1984
June 21-24, 1984
Personal Freedom Outreach
Southwest
Steve Cannon
(602) 867-0538

WHEELING, WV
June 21-24, 1984
June 28-July 1, 1984

To Every Man An Answer Ministry
Ed Havaich
(216) 652-3713
— or —
To Us There is One God Ministry
Neal Farrell
(216) 251-9567

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NEWS UPDATE

CETNAR JOINS PFO STAFF

Bill Cetnar is joining the staff of Personal Freedom Outreach, becoming director of PFO East.

Cetnar and his wife, Joan, live in Kunkletown, Pa.

Cetnar, who was a high-ranking member of the Watchtower Society, is an internationally known speaker on the Christian response to the cults. His 22-year involvement with the Watchtower Society included full-time pioneer service in California, 8-1/2 years at the Bethel Service Department and service with the Bethel speaker staff.

Cetnar has published several books, including *Questions for Jehovah's Witnesses Who Love the Truth*, and is a frequent guest on The John Ankerberg Show seen on the PTL and CBN cable networks.

PFO East correspondence should be addressed to The Cetnars, Route 3 Weir Lake Road, Kunkletown, PA 18058 (215) 381-3661.

—MKG



RAJNEESH CLOSER TO PERMANENT U.S. RESIDENCY

Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh moved a step closer to permanent U.S. residency Feb. 15 when the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service gave him immigration preference.

According to an INS official, Rajneesh has been given "third preference status." The decision does not give Rajneesh permanent residency, but is a prerequisite, the official said.

The official said he was not sure when the permanent-residency question will be decided.

Rajneesh entered the country in 1981 on a medical visa. He was to be treated for asthma, diabetes and a slipped spinal disc. He then settled in central Oregon, where his followers bought a ranch and incorporated a city.

The guru has been fighting to gain permanent residency status for about three years.

—KAM



MORMON LEADERSHIP AILING

Health and aging problems continue to plague the Mormon Church's council of 12 Apostles.

Two leaders died recently, and President Spencer W. Kimball, his first counselor and two others are ill. Kimball has yet to name anyone to succeed the two members who died.

Elders Mark E. Petersen and LeGrand Richards died on January 11, 1984 and 1983 respectively. Petersen was 83, Richards was 96. Elder Bruce R. McConkie was released from a hospital in early February after undergoing colon surgery. Theodore M. Burton, of the subordinate First Quorum of the Seventy, underwent gall bladder surgery recently.

Kimball, 89, and first counselor Marion G. Romney, 86, have been ill and weak for some time and rarely leave their apartments, sources say.

According to a Mormon spokesman, others are picking up the slack for the ailing leaders. Second counselor Gordon B. Hinckley, 73, is handling the day-to-day operations of the

church. However, the spokesman said, Kimball is consulted on all major matters of the church.

—KAM



POLICE KEEP MOONIES IN CHECK

Police in Macon, Ga., have found a way to keep flower-peddling members of the Unification Church off their streets: ticket them for causing traffic problems

Macon Police chief Jim Brooks said the crackdown on Feb. 9 came after Georgia Department of Transportation officials complained about the high number of rear-end collisions caused by drivers stopping to look at or buy flowers sold by Moonies.

The flower peddlers were cited on charges of violating state and city laws that prohibit the solicitation of rides and business by pedestrians on public roads.

While the Moonies had peddler's licenses to sell the flowers, the licenses did not permit them to sell on the streets, Brooks said.

At least 21 Moonies were cited on the misdemeanor charge, which brings a maximum penalty of 12 months in jail and a \$1,000 fine upon conviction.

—KAM



WATCHTOWER SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP UP 6.8%

The Watchtower Society's membership increased by 6.8% in 1983, the fifth straight year it has posted a gain, according to the Society's 1984 Yearbook.

According to the yearbook, the Society baptized 161,896 new members and lost only 2,808 to deaths, resignations and disfellowshippings, resulting in a net gain of 159,088. If the Watchtower figures are accurate, this marks the largest percentage of increase and smallest loss of members in recent years. In 1980, for example, 35,363 reportedly left the Society for all manner of reasons, (i.e., death, disfellowshipping and disassociation). In 1979, 103,300 left.

The Witnesses spent 436,720,991 hours in recruiting. Therefore, Witnesses spent an average of 2,697 hours in field ministry for each convert.

Attendance at the Watchtower's 1983 Evening Meal Memorial was a record 6,767,707. However, only 9,292 partook of the elements in the Society's version of the Lord's Supper (see article on page 4).

—MKG



COPELAND PLANS TO BUILD AMUSEMENT PARK

Television evangelist Kenneth Copeland, noted preacher of the "prosperity" doctrine, plans to build a Christian "amusement park" outside Dallas.

"Kingdom Park" will be modeled after Florida's Disneyworld and is aimed at family entertainment and education, according to a spokesman for Copeland. The rides will be biblically oriented. One will be patterned after Noah's Ark, another after Jonah and the whale, the spokesman said.

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The Lord's Evening Meal Offers No Food to the Hungry

by JOHN P. JUEDES

Once a year, Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate the Lord's Evening Meal, which is the Watchtower Society's equivalent of the Christian Lord's Supper, or Communion. The date varies each year (as Easter does) because the Watchtower Society sets the event on Nisan 14 of the Jewish lunar calendar. Jehovah's Witnesses view the meal as an important ceremony. Witnesses invite non-Witnesses and even many inactive Witnesses manage to attend.

The celebration begins with the singing of "The Lord's Evening Meal." An elder then lectures on why the commemoration is held, why so few partake of the "emblems" and what the emblems symbolize. After another Witness prays a blessing over the unleavened bread, which is inappropriately called the "loaf," it is passed down every row. The routine is repeated with the wine.

One striking aspect of the ceremony is the number who actually partake of the bread and wine. In 1983, only 9,292 baptized Jehovah's Witnesses, the remnant of the anointed class, received the emblems. Last year, a record 6,767,707 people attended the service. Thus, less than four-tenths of 1 percent of the Jehovah's Witness body — or less than fourteen hundredths of 1 percent of all in attendance — partook of the bread and wine.

Many of those who actually partake of the emblems live at Bethel, the Watchtower Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, N.Y. Most Kingdom Halls have not a single member who may partake of the bread and wine.

Why are Witnesses not allowed to do what Jesus said believers must do in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19)? The Watchtower Society rationalizes that only a few Witnesses are qualified to partake of the emblems, since they alone are Christ's spiritual brothers and joint heirs, spiritual sons of God who will rule over the Earth in the coming kingdom.

Jesus warned against such teachings in Matthew 23:13, when he said:

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the Kingdom of Heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."

If a Christian speaks with a Witness, it may be best not to address the issue of whether or not all followers of Christ should take part in the Lord's Supper. Instead, it might be better to address the core issue, which is the Watchtower's separation between the "heavenly class" of 144,000 and the larger "earthly class." Scripture assures us that the Lord has not shut the door to heaven and to the Lord's Supper to all but 144,000 people, but instead promises overflowing blessings to all His children.

The Watchtower rationale for commemorating the meal only once a year is that it is an anniversary, like the Jewish Passover, and so should be an annual event. The Watchtower's *Aid To Bible Understanding* quotes 1 Corinthians 11:25, "keep doing this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me," as a description of how frequently the meal should be held. The group then insists that "often" can refer to something done only once a year, because members of the anointed class would partake many times over the span of his life.

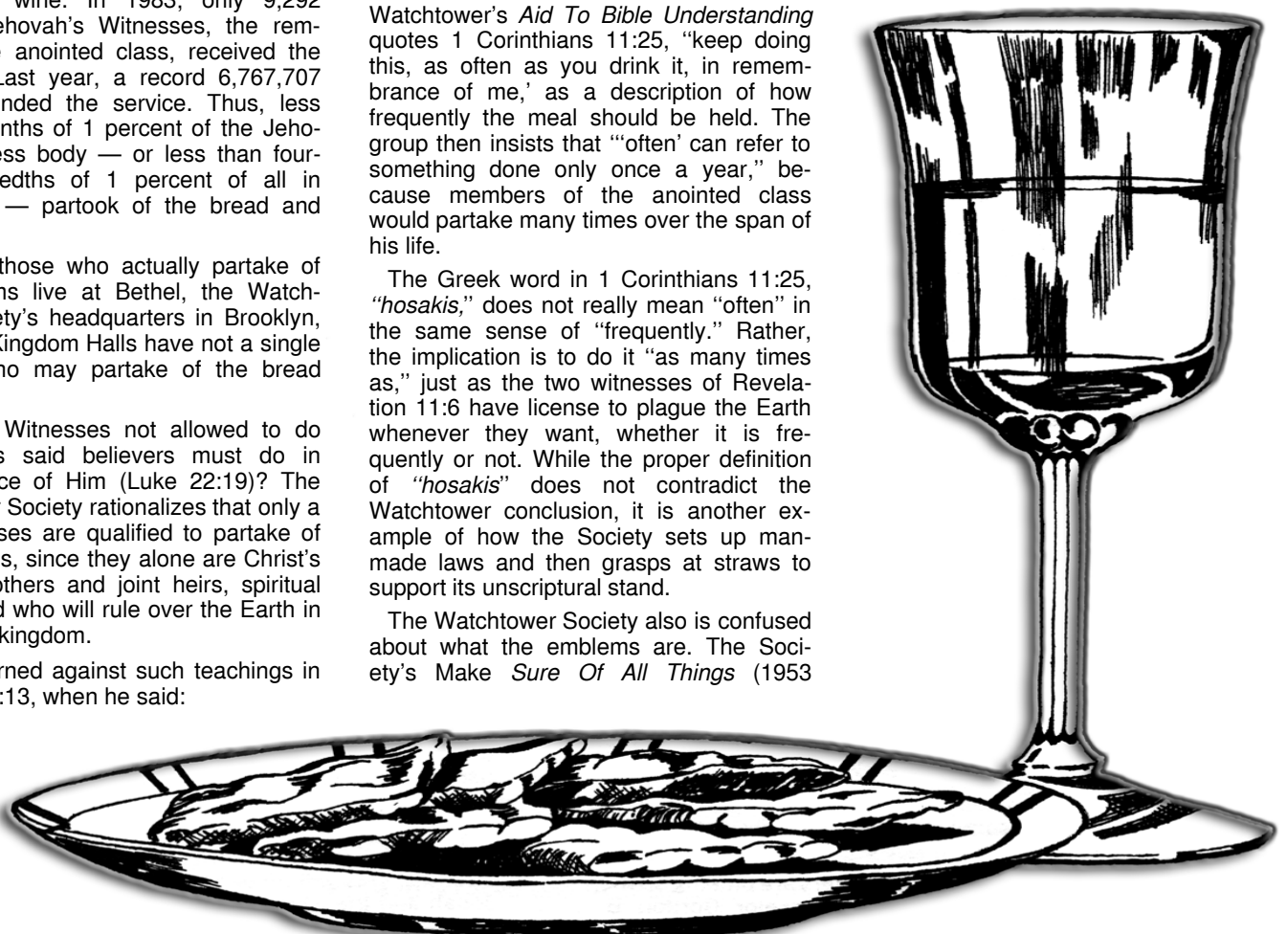
The Greek word in 1 Corinthians 11:25, "*hosakis*," does not really mean "often" in the same sense of "frequently." Rather, the implication is to do it "as many times as," just as the two witnesses of Revelation 11:6 have license to plague the Earth whenever they want, whether it is frequently or not. While the proper definition of "*hosakis*" does not contradict the Watchtower conclusion, it is another example of how the Society sets up man-made laws and then grasps at straws to support its unscriptural stand.

The Watchtower Society also is confused about what the emblems are. The Society's *Make Sure Of All Things* (1953

edition, pg. 261), says that Jesus meant "body" to be the church, the Christian congregation. However, the 1965 printing of this same work states that the bread represents Jesus' own flesh and blood, which is the view currently taught. Likewise, the March 15, 1954, Watchtower claims that the bread is the church. Then, less than two years later, Witnesses were told that the loaf represented Jesus' own body (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 15, 1956, pg. 49). These positions further show the inconsistency that pervades Watchtower teaching and proves that Witnesses allow themselves to be blown about by "every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

The Society's concept of the Evening Meal contradicts other aspects of Watchtower theology. The Witnesses claim that Christ's second coming (or presence) took place in 1914. However, the Apostle Paul echoes Jesus' command that all believers partake of the bread and cup, proclaiming

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Bible Numerology ~ HELP OR HOGWASH?

by G. RICHARD FISHER

Reading pages 235-237 of Harold Camping's book *Adam When?* and trying to understand what he is suggesting about the deeper Biblical meaning of the number 153 is a struggle.

Let the reader see for himself:

"Theologians have struggled with the number 153. They have rightly sensed that it was somehow symbolically important. How does it figure in God's revelation? ... What then is the significance of 153? Since no facts in the Bible are accidental, what was God's purpose in stipulating the number of fish? At least one answer is suggested. If we remember that Jesus is our eternal high priest, who was foreshadowed by the Aaronic priesthood, we can see how God relates these two generations through the number 153. The Aaronic generation or priesthood continued 1530 years. It was symbolic of the present age. ... It is followed by the generation of Christ as we know it today and which will continue until Christ returns."

"The ingathering of souls who become a kingdom of priests to Christ during the entire New Testament period, symbolized by the 153 fish, and the unbroken net is to continue throughout Christ's generation. Not only is Christ's generation foreshadowed by the Aaronic generation which preceded it but also through the common use of the number 153. A very important question arises at this point. Is there Scriptural warranty for relating the two events by the numbers 1530 and 153, as the Bible teaches, a period of 1530 years and about 153 fish? I believe there is."

Certainly there is no suggestion in John 21 — or anywhere else in the New Testament — that the 153 fish mean anything but 153 fish. Of course, the larger question involves Bible numerology in general.

Does the mystical or symbolic interpretation of numbers have any place in a sound system of Bible interpretation? Is the assumption that there is open and hidden design, as well as theological significance, in the Bible's use of numbers a premise that can even be questioned?

As a young Christian, this writer assumed that "Gematria" (numeric patterns giving insights into Scripture) was a method of Bible study giving deeper insights than could be obtained otherwise. If Ivan Panin¹ of Harvard, E.W. Bullinger,² and F.W. Grant³ wrote books on the subject, it had to be right! I was not deterred by the realization that given enough patience, one could find numbers in quantity in almost any lengthy document, nor by the fact that nowhere in Scripture are we directed to pursue numerical meanings.

What eluded me was that the system is speculative and that the various writers disagree as to the exact meaning of numbers. Probably a dozen-and-a-half different interpretations have been offered for the 153 fish in John 21:11. They vary from a radio preacher's comments that they stand for the 153 nations of the United Nations, to Augustine's view that they stand for all that are moved to come to Christ either by law or by grace, to Barclay's view that they somehow stand for the universality of the Church.⁴ It appears that it is anybody's guess what the real meaning is.

Whether it be Hartill,⁵ Lange,⁶ Terry,⁷ Panin,⁸ Bullinger⁹ or Grant,¹⁰ none discusses the origin and roots of mystical numerology. Troublesome as well is the fact that the mystical meaning of numbers has played an integral part in cult development and the theory of pyramidology.¹¹

The facts, and they are well-documented,¹² are that interpretation by numbers and numerical systems of Bible interpretation are a post-apostolic development pursued by some church fathers with roots in the Greek paganism of the third and fourth centuries B.C. It was Augustine who gave his final stamp of approval to number symbolism. Augustine was caught up in the numerological speculations of the ancient Greeks. Philip Schaff shows us Augustine's belief that somehow 7 was "the number of the Holy Spirit" and "20 the number of the Law,"¹³ as well as his other speculations. One cannot miss their similarities to the teachings of Pythagoras. Medieval numerology simply followed the numerology of Augustine. The Kabbalistic literature of the Jews carried this whole area to an extreme.¹⁴ There are as many interpretations of numbers as there are interpreters and really little agreement in the entire field. We can carefully research the New Testament and find that no writer ever reaches back to the Old Testament to elaborate on the meaning of any number.

If, as has been shown, the giving of value to numbers is of pagan Greek origin and was "baptized" in post-apostolic development, it is very clear that this practice does not belong in any sound system of proper Bible interpretation.

The gross silence as to origin by men promoting this system is deplorable. They give no credit to Pythagoras or the gnostics, acting as if they are proposing some-

thing totally new and helpful. LeBarron W. Kinney even suggests that F.W. Grant's Numerical Bible uncovers meanings never known before!¹⁵

Jerry Lucas subtitles his book *God's Best Kept Secrets Revealed* and says his book is a key that should "multiply your faith."¹⁶ So-called "divine numerics" is not a new discovery. It is certainly not a "key" to deeper Bible truth. It is a speculative pursuit. Since it is so arbitrary and so subjective as to methodology, it dare not be introduced as a method of interpretation. Its roots are suspicious, its history confused, and its fruit a form of gnostic pride. Bible numerology is not a help, but rather a speculative morass that should be avoided.¹⁷

ENDNOTES:

1. Ivan Panin, *Bible Numerics*, Things to Come Magazine, Vol. 17-18; 1911-1912.
2. Ethelbert Bullinger, *Numbers in Scripture*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1967.
3. F.W. Grant, *The Numerical Structure of Scripture*, Loizeaux Brothers, New York, N.Y.; 1956.
4. William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 2, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa.; 1975.
5. Edwin Hartill, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1960.
6. John Lang, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1915.
7. Terry Milton, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mich.; no date.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Charles Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vols. I & III, Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, N.J.; 1949. (A thorough refutation of pyramid dating can be found in "Egypt in Bible Prophecy" by Wilbur Smith.)
12. John Davis, *Biblical Numerology*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1968, pp. 103-149.
13. Phillip Schaff, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, The Christian Literature Co., Buffalo, N.Y.; 1886.
14. Nathan Ausubel, *The Book of Jewish Knowledge*, Crown Publishing, New York, N.Y.; pp. 66-70.
15. LeBarron W. Kinney, *The Greatest Thing in the Universe*, Loizeaux Brothers, New York, N.Y.; 1939.
16. Jerry Lucas and Del Washburn; *Theonomics, God's Best Kept Secrets Revealed*, Stein and Day, New York, N.Y.; 1977; pp. 12-13.
17. Walter Price, *The Coming Antichrist*, Moody Press, Chicago, Ill.; 1974.

(A related theme is the various identifications of the Antichrist and 666 in church history. Price's chapter on "History's Futile Attempts to Identify the Antichrist" is well worth reading, pp. 15-43.)

ONE GOD OR THREE?

(from page 1)

head which, unlike Sabellius, made Jesus, instead of the Father, the one God. Here it was Jesus who manifested Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. R.E. McAlister preached a sermon on "Baptism in Jesus' Name," which led many to go out and baptize only in the Name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), and denounce historic Trinitarian theology as unbiblical."

"It is chiefly through the efforts of Scheppe's followers — Frank J. Ewart, Glenn Cook, G.T. Haywood and others — that the 'Jesus Only' or 'oneness' movement began to spread, primarily in the Holiness and Pentecostal groups. Today, such denominations as the United Pentecostal Church, the Apostolic Church, International Ministerial Association, General Assembly Church of Jesus and others adhere to the basic tenets of the 'Jesus Only' movement, and these teachings can be found in the writings of such men as C. Haskell Yodon, John Pater-son, Nathaniel A. Urshan, A. McClain, and others."¹

Out of these and other revelations have evolved the complex doctrine to which "oneness" believers now adhere. Gene Frost says this about the "*Oneness Doc-trine*:"

"The overall concept pictures God as being expanded throughout the uni-verse and beyond, without any entity or form, He is so vast that he cannot know what he is about in every area except as he can communicate within Himself. God has an 'image' that emanated from Him as He spoke; His words in creation came out in an image outline of a man. With this pattern, God made angels and man. In redeeming man, He took this image, His speech pattern, and with it formed the flesh of Jesus, who was then born of Mary. With the human spirit of the man Jesus, God moved in and shared the body. Thus, the Sonship began at the birth of Jesus and ceased or will cease, just when, Pentecostals have not yet decided. God also moved into the bodies of Christians and in this action is known as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, within each person, is exclu-sively his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent only as He employs the communication system within Deity to communicate with Himself in every other place."²

As stated above, this view of the God-head cannot be extrapolated from Scrip-ture. One must present an esoteric view of interpretation to read this oneness doctrine into the Word of God.

Oneness theologian K.V. Reeves, in his book, *The Godhead*, says that if we accept the language of the Scripture writers, we will be led to accept a plurality of persons in the Godhead:

"The variety and diversity of God's self-revelation forces Him to use lan-guage that may seem to imply plurality of persons, but if such is accepted literally, the effect would be a belief in a plurality of Gods."³

Therefore, in Reeves' estimation, we must look for the hidden meaning behind the actual words:

"It is only when we search for the reality behind the words used, that understanding can be obtained."⁴

In opposition to this method of interpreta-tion, the Bible teaches that what has been revealed by God through men such as the Apostle Paul can be read and understood! In Ephesians 3:4, Paul says, "And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ."

We are to go in the direction that the language of Scripture takes us, even if it disagrees with our pet theories or church traditions. We are not required or equipped to understand totally one so vast as God. We are required to accept all that He has revealed of Himself in His Word.

ONE GOD OR THREE?

The answer to this question could not be more clearly stated in the Bible. There is only one God: Deuteronomy 4:35,39; 6:4; 32:39; Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6,8,24; 45:5-6; 46:9; and many other passages. So, if we take the language at face value, we come to the conclusion that there is one God! To try saying that there are three Gods goes beyond the words here.

However, we also go beyond the words if we say that these passages mean there is only one personality in the Godhead. In reality, the Scriptures cited do not clearly teach one way or the other about the number of persons in the Godhead (al-though the Hebrew grammar implies a composite unity). The number of persons must be gleaned by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

When we do compare those Scriptures, we see that the Bible teaches: 1) There is only one God (passages already cited). 2) There is a person called God the Father (2 Peter 1:17). 3) There is a person (Jesus) known as the Son of God, who also is called God (John 1:1, John 20:28). 4) There is a person called the Holy Spirit who also is called God (Acts 5:4).

Therefore, within the nature of the one God, there exist three separate and dis-tinct persons.

It is here that we have disagreements with the "oneness" viewpoint. It goes

beyond the actual meaning of Scripture to maintain that there is only one person in the Godhead who has expanded or dilated himself into three different modes. One has only to consult a few passages to see that the Bible will not support that asser-tion:

- Mark 13:32 tells us that only God the Father knows the time of the Second Coming. If the Father and the Son were one and the same person, this would mean that that person would know some-thing without knowing it at the same time. If the oneness people argue that the Son here is the human spirit and that Jesus is the eternal spirit, then you have two spirits in one body. This is Nestorianism. The conclusion that must be drawn from the language used is that the Father who knows is a separate and distinct personal-ity from the Son who does not know. the Son is not the Father.

- Matthew 12:31-32 speaks about blas-phemous against the Holy Spirit. The logical conclusion that is drawn from this passage is that if blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Son will be forgiven, then the Son is not the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the Son is not the Father, the Son is not the Holy Spirit and yet the Son is God. However, Scripture tells us that there is only one God. Answer? Within the nature of the one God there exist three separate and distinct persons. There is no way around this.

- In John 6:38, Jesus says He came to earth not to do His own will, but to do the will of the Father. This would be impossible if Jesus and the Father were the same person. You would only have one will, not two.

- In John 8:16-18, Jesus speaks of two witnesses: Himself and His Father. If Jesus and the Father were the same person, then there would not be two witnesses. It oneness theology is correct, then Jesus was lying in this passage.

Of course, one could opt for the position that the human Jesus was one witness and the divine Spirit within (i.e. the Father) was the other witness, but this creates some impossible problems and certainly the Bible in no way supports this view.

- In John 12:49-50, Jesus says, "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a command-ment, what I should say and what I should speak." If Jesus and the Father are the same person, then Jesus spoke of Him-self. Unmistakenly, there are two persons spoken of here.

These are only some of the passages that provide glimpses into the nature of the Godhead. It is true that no one single verse spells out everything about the nature of God. But when the pieces are put together

like a mosaic, we get the picture of God's nature that He has revealed to us.

Doctrinal decisions must be made on scriptural content, not on "special revelation." The former leads one to the bedrock of Christian truth, while the latter produces strange doctrines, such as legalistic

baptismal rules and supernatural signs that a baptism is valid (i.e. coming out of the water speaking in tongues), which have no place in Christianity.

ENDNOTES:

1. Jim Bjornstad & Waiter Bjorck, *Jesus Only, A Modalistic Interpretation*, Christian Research

Institute; 1970, pg. 1.

2. Gene Frost, *The Oneness 'Doctrine' of Pentecostalism and The Bible Doctrine of the Godhead*, Preceptor Publications; 1974: pp. 4-5.

3. Kenneth V. Reeves, *The Godhead*, published by author; 1971, pg. 29.

4. *Ibid.*, pg. 38.

EVENING MEAL

(from page 4)

the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). Either the Watchtower's view of the Second Coming is wrong or its celebration of the Evening Meal is opposed to the clear teaching of Paul.

The Lord's Evening Meal is vivid proof that the Watchtower Society tries to deny the gift of God's Son to Jehovah's Witnesses. Those who do not belong to the anointed class are not only denied participation in the Lord's Supper, they also are denied His mediation and ultimately, the

grace made possible by His sacrifice on Calvary.

It is Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary that is commemorated. Paul, quoting Jesus, said in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25, "this do in remembrance of me." In verse 26, he says, "for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

The Lord's Supper should be a time when a Christian re-examines his relationship with other Christians and with the Savior, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:28. The seriousness of the matter is underscored when Paul said that "many among you are weak and sick and a

number sleep," in reference to those who did not approach Communion with the proper attitude. Christians who partake in Communion after adopting the Scriptural attitude find great blessing.

Sadly, the Watchtower Society's version of the Lord's Evening Meal is a "meal" at which almost no one eats and no spiritual food is offered.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst." By denying access to Jesus, the "bread of life," we see just one more example of the Watchtower Society leaving its members spiritually hungry.

NEWS UPDATE

(from page 3)

Copeland says the inspiration for the amusement park and evangelism center came to him one night while he was alone on a plane. The voice, sounding "as clearly as if it were coming over the radio," Copeland said, advised him to build a place that would put evangelism on the map, as Hollywood did for entertainment and Washington did for politics.

In addition to an amusement park, the "evangelism center" will have an airport for private jets, headquarters for Copeland's staff of 200, a convention center for 20,000 people, a "Hilton-sized" resort hotel with a "closed-circuit ministry system" in every room, a recording studio and apartments where ministers of Copeland's International Church of the Word and Faith may come for rest and recreation.

—KAM



SCP GEARS UP FOR COURT BATTLE WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

The three-year battle between Spiritual Counterfeits Project and Witness Lee and The Local Church rages on. The Local

Church again is suing SCP for libel.

Late in 1983, an attorney for Witness Lee stated his intention to take the depositions of 18 more people before going to trial. As of this writing, four of those already have been subpoenaed and had their depositions taken, according to an SCP news release. The trial could be set for later this year.

The libel allegations center around the book, *Die Sonder Lehre Des Witness Lee Und Seiner Ortsgemeinde*, the German translation of *The God Men*, written by SCP researchers. The book is critical of the Local Church, citing what are believed to be unbiblical doctrines.

A similar suit was filed in Switzerland against SCP, but was dismissed. An appeal by the Local Church also was dismissed. To date, the Local Church has filed at least nine lawsuits against its critics and has threatened to file more.

The legal battle has to date cost SCP over \$159,000. The upcoming suit is expected to cost more than \$350,000.

To find out more about the legal battle and how Christians can help SCP, write SCP, P.O. Box 4308, Berkeley, CA 94704.

—MKG

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PFO welcomes the submission of cult-related items for possible publication in the News Update section. Please address all correspondence to PFO-Midwest.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

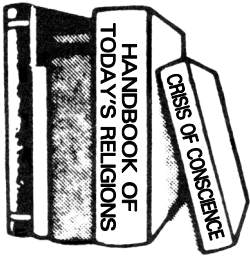
(from page 8)

promoting false doctrine, Franz says nothing about the major differences between Watchtower doctrine and that of orthodox Christianity. While he disagrees with the Watchtower eschatology and some of their minor teachings, he is silent on the major doctrines, such as Christ's deity, Christ's bodily resurrection, the Trinity, salvation solely through grace, etc. Therefore, Christ is not glorified and His Gospel is not proclaimed.

Another flaw in the book is Franz's failure to diagnose the Watchtower Society's major problem. Franz sees the Society as being run by men who depend on their own feelings rather than seeking God's counsel, when in reality, it is Satan who is motivating the organization.

As long as the reader understands this, *Crisis of Conscience* can be an effective tool in studying and even for use in witnessing to those trapped by the Watchtower Society.

—MKG



BOOKS IN REVIEW

HANDBOOK OF TODAY'S RELIGIONS

by Josh McDowell and Don Stewart

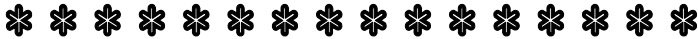
Here's Life Publishers, Inc. 567 pages, \$15.95.

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart have combined their four books on the cults, occult, non-Christian sects and secular religions into the hardback *Handbook of Today's Religions*.

Those who have not bought the individual books would be wise to buy this volume instead. People buying *Handbook of Today's Religions* get the advantage of hardback binding and pay a few dollars less than they would for the four individual books.

The book deals with major cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons; occultists such as Edgar Cayce; secular religions such as Marxism and Secular Humanism; and world religions such as Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. The book's 50-plus chapters and glossary make it an asset to any Christian's cults library.

—MKG



CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE

by Raymond Franz

Commentary Press, 375 pages, \$9.95

This book on one man's 44-year active involvement with the Jehovah's Witnesses might have been called "Watergate at the Watchtower," with its accounts of scandal at the headquarters of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

While Ray Franz's book is a fascinating study of the cult's inner workings, some of what he "reveals" about the Watchtower Society is either common knowledge among those in the cults ministry or was at least strongly suspected.

Ray Franz, nephew of current Watchtower President Frederick W. Franz, presents his biography, telling of how he began preaching for the Watchtower at age 16, his assignment to

missionary work in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Dominican Republic, and his 15 years of full-time service at Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn, which culminated in his 1980 resignation from the Witnesses' Governing Body and his disfellowshipping in 1981.

The second section of the book deals with the Society's double standards, false prophecies and other conflicts.

Finally, Franz gives a detailed account of the shake-up at Watchtower headquarters in the spring of 1980. His account illustrates the double standards, "Watergate" tactics and ungodly methods used by the Society. Franz publishes photocopies of key documents. Considering the way in which Franz was treated, this reviewer finds it amazing that he was able to escape from Bethel with his personal files intact.

Since Franz spent nine of his 15 years at Bethel on the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, he was privy to much inside information. Among the points Franz includes in his book:

Fred Franz was the principal translator of *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, a fact known by Watchtower watchers.

Fred Franz wrote *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God*, the 1966 book which first gave Witnesses the 1975 date for the end of the world.

Aid To Bible Understanding was written by Ray Franz, along with Lyman Swingle, Edward Dunlap, Reinhard Lengtat and John Wischuk, among others.

Members of the Governing Body have the authority to take vacations to points around the world at Society expense. Franz says that in 1978, he and his wife found themselves "boarding planes over 50 times in that one year," and that over the years they had traveled to places "most people can only dream about."

This ought to surprise the average Jehovah's Witness who is taught that all workers at Bethel spend countless hours in service and receive just \$14 a month.

According to Franz, a 1978 financial report to the Governing Body listed the assets of the Watchtower at \$332 million. This reviewer believes that figure to be low, considering all the prime bayfront real estate in Brooklyn, local Kingdom Halls, land, equipment and cash belonging to the organization.

Crisis of Conscience can fill in some of the gaps in the knowledge of a Christian who wants to know more about the Watchtower Society's inner workings. It also would open the eyes of any Witness who seriously considers its contents.

One thing that should temper a Christian's enthusiasm for the book is that Franz has yet to make Jesus Christ his Lord and Savior. While he is quick to point out that the Society is guilty of

(continued on page 7)



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