



PERSONAL  
FREEDOM  
OUTREACH

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newsletter

# WHERE IS PARADISE? WHAT WILL CHRISTIANS FIND BEYOND DEATH'S DOOR?

by REV. G. RICHARD FISHER

When pondering the subject of paradise, Christians might recall Jesus' words to the dying thief, "today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The passage implies that upon death, the man was immediately to go to another place and be with Christ.

Not so, says the Watchtower Society, which presents a much different view of paradise and misinterprets Jesus' pledge to the thief. In the Watchtower publication *This Means Everlasting Life*, paradise is described this way:

"The name means 'garden' ... Outside the paradise of pleasure [Eden] all the land was left uncultivated. Not to remain that way forever, but within seven thousand years of time it was to be brought everywhere to the perfect state of cultivation that obtained in the paradise of Eden, and to be fully enjoyed by human inhabitants. ... 'Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you today, You will be with me in Paradise.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Society teaches that faithful Jehovah's Witnesses will be taught how to plant and tend the garden after they are resurrected from their "soul sleep," an unconscious state that Witnesses believe all dead people are in.<sup>2</sup> Is that really all there is to it? Does God promise His chosen just some future earthly park or garden, as Witnesses teach?

A study of the word "paradise" (Greek: *paradeisos*) reveals that the Society's interpretation of the word is wrong. The Society tries to establish paradise as some future garden on Earth because the biblical alternative, a heavenly spiritual paradise, contradicts the Society's false doctrine of soul sleep and "conditional immortality," the idea that only the righteous will be revived from unconsciousness. The

Watchtower Society must misinterpret Luke 23:43 because it has already ruled out the possibility of man's existing as a spirit. The Society does teach, however, that this is what angels, demons and Jesus are.

*Paradeisos* in the ancient Greek (3rd to 2nd century B.C.) did mean garden or park. Before that, the Persians saw paradise as an enclosed hunting ground.<sup>3</sup> Jews in the time of Christ taught a hidden, spiritual paradise where the souls of the departed Patriarchs had their abode.<sup>4</sup>

The Jews of Christ's time taught that the souls of the unrighteous dead went to a place called "sheol" and that the souls of the righteous dead went to paradise. Christ's own teaching in Luke 16 reflects this belief. First-century Jews saw paradise as an intermediate state before the final paradise of the New Jerusalem. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:4, located paradise in the third heaven. When the word "garden" appears in the New Testament, the Greek word *kepos* is used. The Garden of Gethsemane in John 18 and the garden tomb in John 19:41 both are referred to as *kepos*, not *paradeisos*.<sup>5</sup>

Jewish literature written during the intertestamental period — the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. — portrayed paradise as a heavenly place with sweet-singing angels and occupied by the souls of the departed.<sup>6</sup> Jesus never corrected or disputed this idea. His use of the word "paradise" must be understood in the same sense as it was understood and used in His day.

Obviously, the Witnesses would like to try to escape the impact of Luke 23:43. It seems clear that Christ was promising His personal presence and would enter into a spiritual heavenly kingdom upon death.

The Witnesses try to deny the obvious implications of Christ's words by distorting the meaning of those words. By moving the comma, they make it appear that Jesus is saying, "Verily, I say to you today, shalt thou be with me in [some future garden] paradise [on the earth]."<sup>7</sup> There would have been no need for Christ to say, "Verily I say to you today," since the dying man already knew it was today.

Because that passage provides such strong evidence of conscious existence after death, the heretic Marcion and company in the 2nd century A.D. deleted Luke's Gospel from their Bibles. Although Jehovah's Witnesses have not gone that far, they have reinterpreted the passage in a way that the Greek text will not support.

The Seventh-day Adventists and other conditionalists use the same ploy in their handling of the Luke 23 passage. Walter Martin comments on the Adventist reasoning:

"The reason is that Christ's statement calls in serious question their doctrine of soul sleep. Moreover, Adventists seem to overlook the important fact that wherever Jesus used the words, 'verily, verily, I say unto you,' He never qualified them because qualification was unnecessary. It would have been redundant for Jesus to say, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, that is, today I am saying to you. ...' By this type of interpretation, the Adventists violate the plain sense of one of Christ's favorite expressions of emphasis."<sup>8</sup>

It is not surprising that Witnesses believe as the Adventists do on this point since Watchtower Society founder Charles Taze Russell was strongly influenced by Adven-

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# EDITORIALS

## THE GENERATION — IT IS A-CHANGING

Watchtower watchers have waited eagerly to see how "Jehovah's prophet" would handle its teaching about the 1914 generation — the one that, according to Watchtower teaching, would not pass away. Watchtower publications repeatedly have claimed that within one generation of 1914, the end of the present wicked system would come to a close (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, pg. 95).

The Watchtower message rests on the 1914 date, which it says is the time that Jesus began his invisible second presence and established his kingdom. As the years go by with no Battle of Armageddon to usher out the present age, fewer and fewer people remain from that generation.

According to Ray Franz, in his book *Crisis of Conscience*, the Jehovah's Witnesses' Governing Body once discussed moving the date of Christ's return up to 1957, the year the Soviet Union launched its Sputnik satellite, saying the launching would "fulfill" the prophecy in Matthew 24:29. However, not even the Governing Body could swallow that one and eventually it rejected the idea.

Franz also tells of his experiences writing the "chronology" section for the Society's *Aid To Bible Understanding*. Months of research were spent trying to support the 607 B.C.E. date, which the Watchtower Society purports to coincide with the desolation of Judah. However clear evidence shows otherwise. Franz says his research "found absolutely nothing in support of 607 B.C.E." Franz also says that did not cause the Society to change its chronology. It is also of interest to note that even with the obscure weakness of the Watchtower chronology, the "chronology" section is the longest one in the *Aid* book.

Now, a new series of articles in recent Watchtower magazines may indicate how Society leaders will explain away the dwindling 1914 generation.

First, it appears that the Society is now content to stick with the 1914 date. The May 1, 1984, *Watchtower* says on page 7, "All things prophesied by Jesus will occur during the lifetime of at least some of the generation of 1914." Although it admits that it is the "fast disappearing generation of 1914," it contends that Jehovah soon will intercede and bring about the events yet to be fulfilled.

However, in the May 15, 1984, *Watchtower*, the Society appears to have given itself an escape route, just in case its previous prediction fails. Citing Robert Wohl's book, *The Generation of 1914*, Watchtower writers are giving a new meaning to the word "generation:"

"A historical generation is not defined by its chronological limits or its borders. It is not a zone of dates ... It is more like a magnetic field at the center of which lies an experience or a series of experiences ... What is essential to the formation of a generational consciousness is some common frame of reference that provides a sense of rupture with the past ... This frame of reference is always derived from great historical events like wars, revolutions, plagues, famines, and economic crises" (pg. 4).

The Society then blends Wohl's concept into its own new teaching, saying: "But what did he [Jesus] mean when he spoke of a 'generation that would not pass away'? Some have interpreted 'generation' to mean a period of 30, 40, 70 or even 120 years. However, a generation is really related to people and events, rather than to a fixed number of years" (pg. 5).

This idea does not square with previous Watchtower teachings. *Aid To Bible Understanding*, on page 641 under the heading "Generation," states that the time frame "would fall within reasonable limits. These limits would be determined by the life expectancy of the people of that time or of that population."

Likewise, the Oct. 8, 1968, edition of *Awake!* magazine, on pages 13-14 says in support of the 1975 prophecy that the "generation" of 1914 could have then been 15 years of age and understood the events of the day. The Oct. 1, 1978, *Watchtower* states that the generation would not apply to babies, which conflicts with the current teaching that infants are included in the 1914 generation.

No matter how the Watchtower Society redefines the word "generation," it still will be a false prophet. This "new light" will not fare any better than Society founder Charles Taze Russell's original teaching that placed Christ's return in 1874 and Armageddon in 1914.

—MKG



## HERE COME THE EBIONITES

A pastor called recently and asked, "Why would a Hebrew Christian lady in our congregation invite some of our people to her Passover celebration, insisting that everyone in the church should celebrate Passover and that the communion service is not complete or meaningful without it?"

My first response was, "The Ebionites have returned!"

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### PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

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## TROUBLE FOR THE MOONIES

July was a bad month for the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.

The church's most notable setback was Moon's imprisonment on a tax-evasion conviction. Moon entered a federal prison in Danbury, Conn., on July 20 and began serving an 18-month sentence. With good behavior, he could be out by next July.

Just a few days before Moon's imprisonment, the city of Norfolk, Va., seized 83 church fishing boats for failure to pay property taxes on them. The boats belonged to the church's Ocean Challenge program. Norfolk officials considered the boats business property. The church maintained they were used solely for religious purposes and therefore were tax-exempt. Before the city could sell the boats, however, the church paid more than \$41,000 in back taxes and penalties and regained possession of the boats.

The July 18 firing of James Whelan, editor of the church-owned Washington Times, prompted accusations that the church had taken control of the newspaper. Unification Church officials denied the charges and said Whelan was fired because of outrageous salary demands. Other executives at the paper expressed their support for the firing. Since the Times was started in January 1982, the church's leadership has insisted that it exercises no power over the paper's editorial policies.

—KAM



## WATCHTOWER WARNS WITNESSES TO AVOID CHRISTIAN MATERIAL

Christians may find it increasingly difficult to give Jehovah's Witnesses Gospel tracts and tracts specifically written for Witnesses.

In the "Questions from Readers" section of the May 1, 1984, *Watchtower* magazine, Jehovah's Witnesses were told to refuse religious literature offered by people they meet. The article said: "Hence, it is out of wisdom and respect for God's counsel that Jehovah's Witnesses do not make a practice of exchanging valuable Bible study aids containing Scriptural truth for religious literature that disseminates error or apostate views."

The article went on to say that "it would be foolhardy, as well as a waste of valuable time, for Jehovah's Witnesses to accept and expose themselves to false religious literature that is designed to deceive" and that "some of the religious literature that people may urge Jehovah's Witnesses to read is written by, or contains the thoughts of, individuals who have apostasized."

The advice given to Witnesses makes one wonder if Watchtower leaders know that their doctrines will not stand up when compared with those of orthodox, evangelical Christians, despite the bold pronouncement on page 13 of *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* that Jehovah's Witnesses have nothing to fear from an examination of the facts.

What is ironic is that much of the material Christians give Jehovah's Witnesses consists of reproductions and quotes from previous Watchtower publications. These reprints and citations often reveal outdated teachings (read "old light") that Society officials would prefer remain unknown by the membership. Thus, the Watchtower regards its own material as "religious literature that disseminates error or apostate views" and literature "that is designed to deceive."

Witnesses often refer to anti-Watchtower tracts as "hate material." It should be pointed out that the "hate material" often comes straight from Watchtower headquarters.

Christians, when encountering Jehovah's Witnesses who refuse their material, should emphasize that the Watchtower Society is its own worst enemy when it comes to exposing its inability to reveal Scriptural truth. Along with prayer and the witness of the Holy Spirit, it is the conflicting statements given in Watchtower books and magazines that cause so many to leave the Watchtower and enter the light of Christ's Gospel.

—MKG



## ANOTHER MORMON LETTER SURFACES

The existence of another important letter pertaining to Joseph Smith Jr. has been found, it was learned at a Mormon History Association meeting in Provo, Utah. From what could be learned from those who knew about the letter and its contents, it was acquired by the Mormon Church the latter part of last year.

The letter apparently is a reply by Smith to Josiah Stowell concerning some treasure whose location Stowell believed he had found. Smith, who had on other occasions claimed to locate hidden treasures by gazing into his seer stone, reportedly informed Stowell that such treasures were guarded by crafty spirits. Smith, according to sources, also instructed Stowell on how he could be certain the treasure was really there. If treasure were present, a split hazel stick held over the site would be rejoined.

The letter reportedly dates from the summer of 1825 and is therefore the earliest known letter in Smith's hand. If the contents are actually what people are being led to believe, it will be further evidence that Smith was involved in occult practices before he founded the Mormon Church. It sounds much like the "salamander letter," reported on in the last PFO newsletter, in which Smith said he had knowledge of and contact with treasure-guarding spirits.

—WPW



## TONY ALAMO REMARRIES

Tony Alamo, head of the Alamo Christian Foundation, who upon the death of his wife Susan in 1982 began a prayer vigil and called on followers to pray that God would resurrect her, has remarried.

Alamo, 49, said July 7 that he is reconciled to the fact of "Sue's death."

While Susan Alamo was alive, she did most of the preaching for the foundation, while Tony Alamo concentrated on singing.

The new bride, Birgitta Gylennhammar, is a 42-year-old Swedish native who owns a Western-style clothing firm in Southern California. Tony Alamo has an interest in a Western-style store in Nashville, Tenn. They were married on June 23 in Las Vegas and repeated the ceremony in a church on June 30.

The Alamo Foundation has generated controversy over the years. Some former members accused the group of brainwashing its members and forcing them to surrender all their possessions to the foundation.

—KAM

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# Deliver Us From Deliverance!

## SEPARATING RESPONSIBILITY AND THE DEVIL IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER



by REV. G. RICHARD FISHER

Christians must be aware of sin and the devil. Our Lord's Prayer includes the petition, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13). The Apostle Peter warns us of our adversary, who "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

But Christians also can become obsessed with sin and the devil and develop an exaggerated concept of their power over the believer. The resulting confusion is an evil we should pray the Lord delivers us from.

One teaching is "ancestral bondage," the belief that a person's troubles can be traced to the unconfessed sin of an ancestor. Purveyors of this idea cite Exodus 20:5, which says, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations..."

Don Rogers, of the Associates for Biblical Research, adds his own twist to ancestral bondage by saying believers can be possessed by ancestral demons and be exorcised — or "delivered" — of them to be free of the influence. Rogers says: "Ancestral bondage is a claim that Satan has on a family. It begins with some grievous sin that brings a curse on future generations. ... Once the child reaches the age of accountability before God, (whatever that may be) the repeated sinful activity would now open him up to the entrance of the same spirits, as the parent. Now they become SHARING SPIRITS moving back and forth manipulating parent and child."<sup>1</sup>

Rogers then lists many things that the Bible calls sin or sinful habits, such as anger, desire for alcohol, and sexual perversion, and attributes them to ancestral demons. He clearly states his belief that this control extends even to Christians. He teaches that demons can do "strong ancestral work" for two or three generations in a family. Rogers says these ancestral demons must be brought out by counseling or through his recently developed "warfare prayer," kind of a do-it-yourself exorcism.

Rogers admits he did not derive these teachings from the Bible. In a letter to this writer, Rogers said, "It is true that ancestral bondage is not explicitly taught in the Scriptures," and later admitted he approaches the issue "from a case history point of view."

Noted evangelist James Robison, a Southern Baptist minister, adheres to a teaching similar to Rogers' and claims to personally have been delivered from demonic bondage.

Bill Gothard also teaches ancestral bondage with a determinative effect. By determinative, Gothard means that a particular kind of sin will be passed from generation to generation. He also cites Exodus 20:5. He teaches that Christians must agree with God about their forefathers' sin, confessing it and asking Him to "remove its consequences from us and our children."<sup>2</sup>

In the case of adopted children, Gothard says the sins of the biological parents must be researched and then confessed so as to cast the consequences off the child.<sup>3</sup>

The teaching of ancestral bondage raises all kinds of questions: Which ancestors? Which sins? The biggest question is, "Where did this teaching come from?"

Certainly no record of it can be found in the annals of orthodox Christianity. A form of ancestral bondage did appear up in an 11th century cult called the Cathari (from the Greek, meaning "pure ones"). Its roots were in gnosticism, not Scripture. In southern France the Cathari were called Albigenses. In Milan, Italy, this sect was known as the Patarenes. The Cathari rejected the Trinity, pronounced marriage unclean and taught that God and Satan were equal. They practiced a ritual called "consolamentum," which gave absolution to their sins and previous sins inherited from their ancestors and because some believed in reincarnation they believed that they were their own ancestors.<sup>4</sup>

A closer look at Exodus 20:5 and other passages on the subject shows the magnitude of error in the teaching of ancestral bondage.

Literature offered by teachers of ancestral bondage often says nothing about the concluding phrase of Exodus 20:5, which reads, "of those who hate Me." The literature usually ignores the next verse, which says, "but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

The "visiting" of verse 5 has been seen in terms of environmental and social consequences. One author states, "The law relates, however, only to the consequences of sin, not its guilt."<sup>5</sup> That we suffer the guilt of original sin is another issue. Salvation in Jesus overcomes that guilt, as Romans 5:11-15 teaches.

A H. McNeile says:

"The study of natural science is daily making it clearer that God works by and in natural laws, so that causes produce results and the suffering of children by reason of their fathers' sins is a daily spectacle. It must be remembered, however, that to the Hebrew writer the words had reference only to the external consequences of sin and not to any feeling of anger on God's part against innocent sufferers. At the time of the exile, Jeremiah (31:29f) and Ezekiel (18:20) taught the complementary truth that every man must suffer for his own sins. Unto thousands of them, etc. This can hardly mean into a thousand generations in direct descent but into an indefinitely large number of those who, by family or other ties, belong to those connected with, them that love me."<sup>6</sup>

John Peter Lange says:

"That the hereditary guilt thus contracted forms no absolute fatality, is shown by the addition of, them that hate me."<sup>7</sup>

John Calvin says the punishment of sin is one:

"...extending to the third and fourth generation of such as imitate the impiety of their progenitors. In a like manner he declares his constant mercy and kindness to the remote posterity of those who love him and keep his law. The misery which they suffer in time and the destruction to which they are finally doomed, are thus punishments inflicted by divine justice not for the sins of others but for their own iniquity."<sup>8</sup>

Scripture agrees with all three commentators. Ezekiel 18:20 says: "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."

Jeremiah 31:30 says: "But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge."

And, in perhaps the most pointed scriptural refutation of this teaching, Deuteronomy 24:16 says: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin."

An equally unscriptural teaching is that of demonic possession of the believer. There is no record in the New Testament of a believer's being demonically possessed. Those who believe in it are, in effect, saying that Satan is as strong as or stronger than God. Those who believe that the Holy Spirit and demons can occupy the same temple need to read 1 John 5:18, which says, "he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him," meaning that "the wicked one" cannot possess the believer.

When presented with this evidence, some "deliverance" adherents will say they are really talking about "spiritual oppression." They are on no firmer scriptural ground. Acts 10:38 mentions people being "oppressed of the devil" but only in the context of Jesus' ministry to the ungodly before His death and resurrection. Satan can tempt and deceive but, according to James 1:14, responsibility for sin remains the believer's.

Part of the deliverance doctrine's appeal is its denial of personal responsibility. A Christian's proper response to sin is a combination of confession, repentance and godly action, not an exorcism. We sin like our parents because we have been sinners like our parents, not because our ancestors forgot to confess a sin or a demon still has a claim on us.

Christians should heed Paul's advice:

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility,

meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:5-17).

"That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another. 'Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not

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## PARADISE

(from page 1)

tist teaching and once was assistant editor of an Adventist magazine.<sup>9</sup>

John Calvin goes into great detail in his *Institutes* regarding the matter of conscious existence after death:

“If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God,’ and, ‘Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1, 6). Did not the soul survive the body, how could it be present with the Lord on being separated from the body? But an Apostle removes all doubt when he says that we go ‘to the spirits of just men made perfect’ (Hebrews 12:23) by these words meaning, that we are associated with the holy patriarchs, who, even when dead, cultivated the same piety, so that we cannot be the members of Christ unless we unite with them. And did not the soul, when unclothed from the body, retain its essence, and be capable of beatific glory, our Saviour would not have said to the thief, ‘Today shalt thou be with me in paradise’ (Luke 23:43). Trusting to these clear proofs, let us doubt not, after the example of our Savior, to commend our spirits to God when we come to die, or, after the example of Stephen, to commit ourselves to the protection of Christ, who, with good reason, is called ‘The Shepherd and Bishop’ of our souls (Acts 7:59; 1 Peter 2:25). Moreover, to pry curiously into intermediate state is neither lawful nor expedient (see Calv. Psychopannychia). Many greatly torment themselves with discussing what place they occupy, and whether or not they already enjoy celestial glory. It is foolish and rash to inquire into hidden things, farther than God permits us to

know. Scripture, after telling that Christ is present with them, and receives them into paradise (John 12:32), and that they are comforted, while the souls of the reprobate suffer the torments which they have merited, goes no farther. What teacher or doctor will reveal to us what God has concealed? As to the place of abode, the question is not the same as that of the body. When the abode of blessed spirits is designated as the bosom of Abraham, it is plain that, on quitting this pilgrimage, they are received by the common father of the faithful, who imparts to them the fruit of his faith. Still, since Scripture uniformly enjoins us to look with expectation to the advent of Christ, and delays the crown of glory till that period, let us be contented with the limits divinely prescribed to us – viz. that the souls of the righteous, after their warfare is ended, obtain blessed rest where in joy they wait for the fruition of promised glory, and that thus the final result is suspended till Christ the Redeemer appear.”<sup>10</sup>

The Apostle Paul said, “To die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). What possible gain would there be in lying unconscious waiting for the garden to open? Paul also said, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5.8). This tells us where paradise really is.

The words of James Boyce make a fitting conclusion:

“‘To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ But the location of Paradise, as made known by the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 12:1-4, taken in connection with this first passage, makes it more than probable that it is the place where the saints are with Christ. The Scriptures teach that ‘Christ was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand

of God.’ ... Now, in the account Paul gives of his ecstatic vision in 2 Cor. 12:1-4, he tells us that he was ‘caught up even to the third heaven,’ and ‘caught up into Paradise,’ which locates Paradise either in or above the third heaven, or makes the two identical. ... The place of the abode of the saints is with Christ, who is in the heavens with God. It is to that place that most probably the name of Paradise is given in Scriptures.”<sup>11</sup>

### Endnotes:

1. Anonymous, *This Means Everlasting Life*, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1950, pp. 277-278, 282.
2. Anonymous, *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1958, pp. 220-226.
3. Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1966, pg. 480.
4. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 5, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1967, pp. 765-773.
5. W.E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, Minn., 1984, pg. 471.
6. Nigel Turner, *Christian Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tenn., 1981, pp. 308-312.
7. *The Watchtower*, Oct. 15, 1980, pp. 8-9.
8. Walter R. Martin, *The Truth About Seventh Day Adventists*, Zondervan, 1960, pp. 128-129.
9. Raymond Franz, *Crisis of Conscience*, Commentary Press, Atlanta, Ga., 1983, pp. 142-163. (Franz is a former member of the Governing Body of the Watchtower Society. He spent the first 60 years of his life among Jehovah's Witnesses working at every level of the Society's structure.)
10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 11, William B. Eerdmans, 1957, pg. 267.
11. James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, Christian Gospel Foundation, Carlisle, Pa., pg. 449.

## NEWS UPDATE

(from page 3)

### MISCELLANEOUS AND ET CETERA

• The fame of singer Michael Jackson continues to trouble the leadership of the Watchtower Society. A recent *New York Times* article quoted Gary Botting, a former Jehovah's Witness and author of *The Orwellian World of Jehovah's Witnesses* as saying that even though Jackson has attracted contributions and brought credibility to the organization, leaders now must deal with a Michael Jackson “cult” among some Witnesses. Botting says these people believe that Jackson is Michael the Archangel, who has come to deliver God's people. The Watchtower Society teaches that Michael the Archangel is Jesus. The Society may have been trying to quell disbelief in the October 15, 1983 *Watchtower* where it criticized personality cults.

• Adams joins PFO's Board of Reference. Dr. Jay E. Adams, professor of Practical Theology at Theological Seminary, Escondido, Calif., has recently been added to PFO's Board of Reference. Author, world-known lecturer and editor of *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Dr. Adams lives in Valley Center, Calif.

• The 6th International Witnesses Now for Jesus Convention will be Oct. 19-21 in New Ringgold, Pa. Speakers will give testimonies of their former involvement with the Watchtower Society and offer instruction in Christian doctrine. There also will be plenty of time for Christian fellowship. For information and reservations, contact: Blue Mountain Christian Retreat, Box 118A RD #2, New Ringgold, Pa. 17960, (717) 386-2154.

• PFO's Contributing Newsletter Editor G. Richard Fisher will direct his 17th annual tour of Israel March 10-21, 1985. For information, write: The Rev. G. Richard Fisher, P.O. Box 514, Brick, N.J. 08723.

• Copies of the court transcript from Olin Moyle's lawsuit against Watchtower Society President, “Judge” Joseph Rutherford are available from PFO-East Director William Cetnar. Moyle sued Rutherford for libel after being disfellowshipped in 1940. Moyle won the case and received an award of \$15,000. To get the 338-page book, send \$11.25 to: Bill Cetnar, PFO-East, RD #3, Weir Lake Road, Kunkletown, Pa. 18058.

• Coming next issue: PFO-Southwest Director Steve Cannon will file a report on Maranatha Campus Ministries. Contributing Editor G. Richard Fisher will examine the Arian heresy — Watchtower style. \*

## EDITORIALS

(from page 2)

In the early 1970s, a movement called Messianic Judaism sprang up and suggested that Hebrew-Christian converts continue observing Jewish holidays. One leader suggested starting what he called "Messianic synagogues." Another suggested participation in Jewish festivals and feasts, such as Passover, Shavuoth, Channukah and Yom Kippur. He explained what he called the advantages of this and told how to rework some of the services.

The roots of Messianic Judaism are found in the 1st and 2nd century in a Judaizing, pseudo-Christian group called the Ebionites. Another sect followed what was called Nazarenism and adhered to Jewish practices even after the destruction of the temple and national customs of Judaism.

Today, Messianic Judaism is alive and spreading. But that does not mean it is of God. Marvin Rosenthal, himself a converted Jew, says of Messianic Judaism: "From the Rabbinical point of view, the movement is not Jewish; but more significantly, from a biblical perspective it is not Messianic. Though neither "fish" nor "fowl" it has enamored and gathered to itself in a growing company of followers. Its appeal lies in the fact that Jews are invited to remain Jews and simply accept the Messiah (without conversion). They are encouraged to observe Jewish holidays and in some instances to attend the synagogue as a form of worship."

Such blatant Judaizing violates Colossians 2:16-17, which says, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a

festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."

The Messianic Jews are not the only offenders. Seventh-day Adventists and Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God try the same thing — imposing Jewish practices on Gentiles in violation of Acts 15. It is not good to ignore our Jewish heritage or to be ignorant of the Jewish roots of our faith. But the opposite extreme is no more acceptable.

Paul says in Ephesians that when a Jew or Gentile is converted to Christ, he at once is part of the Church. The "middle wall" is forever torn down (Ephesians 2:14) and Jew and Gentile are one in Jesus Christ. It is the responsibility of saved Jews and Gentiles to take their place in a sound local church. They are "fellow heirs of the same body" and "partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6). Together they are "one new man" (Ephesians 2:15), they are "the church" (Ephesians 1:22).

Conversion means conversion. Messianic Judaism leads one to believe that conversion is "continuation."

The books of Galatians and Hebrews underscore the believer's liberty in Christ. Christ is greater than Moses, greater than the Law, greater than the old system. A thorough knowledge of the New Covenant corrects this error. The law came by Moses, grace and truth by Jesus Christ.

—GRF

For further study, see *Messianic Judaism or Judaizing Christianity* by David Baron, available from the American Messianic Fellowship, 7448 North Damen Avenue, Chicago, IL, 60645. Add \$2.00 for copying and postage.

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

(from page 8)

The Parkers show how the "poor preachers" model led to an emphasis on works over grace. Salvation was offered as a result of poverty, sacrifice and homelessness. Later, the sect dictated only that the ministers be homeless — a change brought about by necessity. In 1903, Irvine enforced rigid asceticism and celibacy on his followers.

The Parkers follow Irvine up to his death in Jerusalem in 1947, where he is buried on Mount Zion. He was rejected by the sect's leaders and excommunicated in 1914 because of his overbearing tactics, his accumulated wealth and his view of himself as the second witness of Revelation. According to the Parkers, he was known to be immoral and died an outcast from the cult he founded; however, the cult retained his early teachings.

Cooney, Irvine's successor, also was excommunicated. He died in 1961. George Walker and Jack Carroll emerged as the leaders of the movement in the United States. They perpetuate Irvine's and Cooney's teachings while acknowledging no debt to either man. Instead, Walker and Carroll teach that the group has a 1st-century origin.

Today, these "No Name Christians" are a growing cult and the Parkers' book sounds a necessary alarm to true believers. The details of this sect's doctrines, history and coverup make for interesting reading.

—GRF

Author's note: In 1917, William C. Irvine (not to be confused with cult founder William Irvine) edited a book now titled *Heresies Exposed* with a chapter on the Cooneyites. This handbook on heresies and cults is available from PFO Midwest. The cost is \$4.15 postpaid.

## DELIVERANCE

(from page 5)

grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:22-32).

### Endnotes:

1. Don Rogers, *Spiritual Warfare Report* newsletter, Warrington, Pa., February. 1984, pg. 2.

Rogers uses tapes of Ernest Rockstad to bolster his position.

2. Bill Gothard, Supplementary Alumni Booklet, *Conquering Impossible Mountains*, Vol. 9, Institute of Basic Youth Conflicts, 1983, pg. 15.

3. Bill Gothard, notes, Ten Reasons Why Adopted Children Tend to Have More Conflicts, I.B.Y.C., 1982, pp. 1-2.

4. M.L. Cozens, *A Handful of Heresies*, Sheed and Ward, New York; n.d.

5. J.R. Dummelow, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, MacMillan Co., New York, 1958.

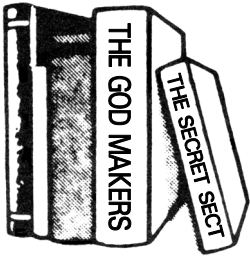
6. A.H. McNiele, *Book of Exodus*, Methuen, London, England, 1908.

7. John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scripture*, Exodus, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mich.

8. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1, Wm. B. Eerdmann Co., Grand Rapids, 1957, pp. 331-333.

For further study, read *Casting Out Spirits God's Way*, by Grace Munsey, 324 South J Street, Lake Worth, Florida 33460; *All Things Weird and Wonderful*, by the Rev. Stuart Briscoe, Scripture Press, pp. 90-93; and *I Was Delivered from Deliverance*, by Jason Vinley, The Tabernacle, 4141 DeSoto Road. Sarasota, FL 33580.

*I Was Delivered from Deliverance* by Jason Vinley is available from PFO-Midwest for \$1.25 postpaid.



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## THE GOD MAKERS

by Ed Decker and Dave Hunt

Harvest House Publishers, 263 pages, \$6.95

After viewing the film *The Godmakers*, an exposé on Mormonism, a relative of mine said of the film, "It needs documentation." This book of the same name is an attempt to fill that need. Its authors have culled from other works some of the most startling quotes by Mormon leaders and have added a number of their own.

Some of the authors' theological observations show perception and original thinking, although the biblical exposition at times leaves something to be desired. What is bothersome are some of the authors' observations and perspectives. For example: Decker and Hunt say on page 192 that a Mormon's taking of temple oaths puts that person into Lucifer's kingdom. The Bible teaches in Colossians 1:13 that all persons are a part of Satan's kingdom until they enter God's kingdom through Jesus Christ.

Another example: Hunt and Decker conclude that because Lucifer's lambskin apron in the temple ceremony represents his own power and priesthood, the fig leaf aprons also have the same Satanic significance and point to a "Luciferian legacy" — a term that appears all too frequently in this book.

The most disappointing feature of this book is the intrusion of the "New Age conspiracy" concept, which was made popular by Hunt's book *Peace, Prosperity and the Coming Holocaust* and Constance Cumbey's *Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*.

The authors try to forge a link between the Latter-day Saints and the Unification Church (pp. 254-255) and offer only one piece of evidence: the cooperation between the LDS' Freeman Institute and the Unification Church's CAUSA in fighting communism. This logic would lead one to believe that since some "Christian anti-communistic crusaders" (pg. 255) also have cooperated, evangelical Christians also are part of this purported worldwide conspiracy.

There are some minor but regrettable errors that should be

corrected in future editions to minimize criticism of the book by Mormons. Among the errors:

1. The letter by a Mr. Ferguson (pg. 91) was not written to Jerald and Sandra Tanner.
2. The diary reference (pg. 100) should be May 1, 1843, not 1844.
3. The First Presidency of the LDS (pg. 114) has two, not three, members in addition to the "Living Prophet."
4. The drawing of the Moroni figure (pg. 117) was taken from the Nauvoo, Ill., Visitors Center, not the Salt Lake City one.
5. It was nearly a year before Joseph Smith became a Master Mason, not right after, that he began teaching that there was a plurality of gods.

In spite of these weaknesses, the book can provide people with much useful information on the structure, teachings and workings of the Mormon Church.

—WPW



## THE SECRET SECT

by Doug and Helen Parker

MacArthur Press, Sydney, Australia, 125 pages, No price given.  
(distributed by Book Sellers, U.S.A., Richland, WA 99352)

In their book, Doug and Helen Parker have done an admirable job of uncovering the mysteries of the "Cooneyites," a sect that has no formal structure, no permanent headquarters, no printed literature and no official name.

Members of this group, also known as the "Go-Preachers," the "Nameless Ones," and the "Two-by-Two Preachers," meet in homes for worship. The sect goes to great lengths to conceal its identity. Doug Parker belonged to the sect as a boy by virtue of his parents' involvement. One of the leaders, Edward Cooney, was alive during Parker's early years in the sect.

The book represents 30 years of research and recorded interviews with a number of the original Cooneyite preachers and the Parkers used the research of a number of former members in the United States, England, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and Germany.

The Parkers trace the sect's origins to around 1897 when, on the basis of Matthew 10, founder William Irvine, a Scotsman born in 1863, rejected the idea of a paid clergy in favor of an unpaid, itinerant one.

(continued on page 7)



PERSONAL  
FREEDOM  
OUTREACH

## NEWSLETTER

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