



PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 6, NO. 2

APRIL-JUNE, 1986

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

newsletter

THE PLAIN TRUTH? – OR – NOTHING OF THE TRUTH?

A Christian Look at the Worldwide Church of God

by M. Kurt Goedelman

It's everywhere. And it's free. It can be found in supermarkets and airport terminals. It can be obtained by mailing a postcard or by calling a toll-free phone number. It's *The Plain Truth* magazine of Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God. A magazine of humble beginnings, like the church that produces it, it claims its purpose is to spread the real Gospel to all nations.¹ While many Christians recognize Armstrong's name and face and have heard of the WCG, few are aware of the history and teachings of the man and his religion.

The Humble Beginnings

Herbert W. Armstrong was born July 31, 1892. He did not get involved in religion until 1926, when his wife "discovered" that Christians were keeping the wrong day of the week as the Sabbath. Angered at her "religious fanaticism," Armstrong threatened divorce. But rather than divorcing her, he developed an interest in the Bible himself and, as his business failed, he spent more time reading the Bible. This study, Armstrong claimed, led to his conversion to sabbatarianism, the belief that God's people should worship on Saturday, rather than Sunday.

He continued his religious work and in 1932 became a licensed minister in the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, a spinoff of the Seventh-Day Adventists. In 1933, Armstrong began delivering a 15-minute morning devotional from a radio station in Eugene, Ore. The next year, it was expanded to 30 minutes and Armstrong began calling it "The World Tomorrow," the name the show carries today.

Armstrong also began printing *The Plain Truth* magazine that year. Its first printing was 250 copies, run off by hand on a mimeograph machine.

Armstrong's communications empire has come a long way. In 1985, his radio and television broadcasts reached every part of the United States, Canada and Australia and parts of other countries. *The Plain Truth* now boasts a press run of 7.5 million copies per issue. Armstrong considered himself Christ's sole true Apostle on the Earth.

Armstrong's name made the news from time to time. In 1984, his church lost a \$1.26 million libel and slander suit that had been filed by the former wife of a church executive. She claimed in the suit that Armstrong and other church leaders had tried to smear her reputation after her divorce in 1976.

That same year, Armstrong divorced his second wife, Ramona, after seven years of marriage. The case reportedly cost the church more than \$5 million in legal fees before finally being settled in 1984.

The church was wracked during the 1970s and 1980s by defections, personnel changes and allegations by several ex-members that Armstrong and other leaders had diverted millions of dollars in church money for their own use.

These dissidents succeeded in getting the California attorney general's office to place the church's finances under control of a church-appointed receiver in 1979. But the allegations were never proved and the charges were dropped in 1980.

All this transpired shortly after Armstrong's son, Garner Ted, once an eloquent and dynamic spokesman for the church and heir-apparent to his father's position, was excommunicated. Garner Ted then founded his own church, the Church of God International, in Tyler, Texas.

While no one can deny Armstrong succeeded in disseminating what he called the "true original Gospel," one can easily question his claim to its fidelity.

The True Original Gospel

Armstrong's gospel can be found in Scripture, but only in Paul's warning about the "different gospel" given in II Corinthians 11:4. Armstrong's gospel is one of heavy legalism and a "different Jesus" and a "different Spirit" than that of Christianity.

Armstrongism is a smorgasbord of unorthodox doctrines borrowed from the Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Scientists and others. Much of the legalism, such as adherence to dietary laws and observance of Jewish feast days, is taken directly from Judaism. Let's take a look at how the WCG differs from Christianity on some key doctrines:

The Trinity

Armstrong, as do Jehovah's Witnesses, went to great lengths to try to show the Trinity was a pagan-derived doctrine. "The doctrine of the Trinity is false," he wrote. "It was foisted upon the world at the Council of Nicea. It is the pagan Babylonish trinity of father, mother and child —

(continued on page 6)

EDITORIALS

IS THE 1826 BAINBRIDGE TRIAL BILL A FORGERY?

In 1971, Fred Poffarl, a former member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and this writer stumbled upon the bills of expense for arresting and trying Joseph Smith Jr. in Bainbridge, N.Y., in 1826 and again in 1830. These bills, except for the 1830 constable's bill, are now in the Chenango County Supervisor's office in Norwich, N.Y.

Recently, Ron Jackson, a pro-Mormon historian from Bountiful, Utah, appeared on KSL-TV in Salt Lake City and claimed that the 1826 justice of the peace bill had been altered. He claimed that when this writer was lecturing in Salt Lake City in 1976, a friend had inadvertently picked up some of this writer's notes and kept them. Accompanying the notes, he claimed, was a reproduction of the trial bill as it originally read. Jackson said that instead of reading the people "vs. Joseph Smith the glass looker," it originally read, "vs. Josiah Stowell the glass looker."

The reproduction bearing the name Josiah Stowell and purportedly obtained from this writer's notes shows signs of forgery. Someone has obliterated parts of "Joseph" and in a sloppy hand tried to change this to read "Josiah." He has left the "S" of "Smith" but obliterated the remainder and placed the name "Stowell" into that space. The final "ell" in Stowell appears to have been taken from the name Darnell, which appears further down in the same manuscript, and inserted as the final letters of Stowell. Moreover, the letter "a" in Josiah and the "o" in Stowell do not match the way these letters are formed in the rest of the document, and the crossing of the "t" is quite different. Furthermore, this entire alteration is made on a reproduction of the 1826 bill, which exactly matches copies of the document fellow researcher Jerald Tanner had printed in 1976, right down to the flaws in his plate contained at the time of printing.

That the documents we found in 1971 read "Joseph Smith" is established in several ways:

- First, Mrs. Marjorie Poffarl, wife of the co-discoverer of the document and at the time a believing member of the Reorganized LDS Church, saw the document within an hour of our discovery and can testify that it read "Joseph Smith."
- Second, the documents were copied the morning after they were found and copies were mailed to several people, including Tanner and his wife Sandra, also a researcher of Mormonism. The Tanners immediately put the document into print. Furthermore, photostats soon were made and copies sent to the County Clerk's office and to Dr. Marvin Hill, one of the LDS church's leading historians at Brigham Young University.
- Third, the document can be examined at the Chenango County Supervisor's office and still reads, "Joseph Smith the glass looker." A microscopic examination will show that no tampering or alterations have taken place.

Jackson, we understand, has forwarded his libelous material to Robert and Rosemary Brown, of Mesa, Ariz. The Browns are authors of the volumes *They Lie In Wait To Deceive*, publications that attempt to counter anti-Mormon writings. Jackson himself is also planning to publish a book outlining his claim.

We at Personal Freedom Outreach are obliged to alert our readers to this attempt to fool the public into thinking that Christian researchers have knowingly used an altered document to advance our ministry. Furthermore, we believe that this attempt to exonerate Smith through forgery should be exposed.

— WPW

CARL AUSTIN - CLARIFICATION, UPDATE AND INSIGHT

In a letter received from Don Phillips of the Carl Austin Foundation, Phillips objected to the critique of Carl Austin and the Austin "Bible" in the April/June, 1985, PFO Newsletter, titled "Turmoil in Translation Land." He was especially critical of the statement that Austin received his insights from a "voice in his head," stating that it was not Austin but rather someone else.

Austin's book, *Keys of the Kingdom*, did not make this clear, so we responded to Phillips, asking him to identify the unnamed man. We stated clearly, however, that regardless of who received the voice, we did not think it was a valid revelation for today. We also thought it would be helpful to know more of Austin's sources.

In a letter dated Aug. 5, 1985, Phillips gave us an answer, writing:

"Your request for the name of the 'author' quoted in that Prologue to which Rev. Austin referred needs no such 'clarification' as you suggest other than already reported in the N.Y. Times and other newspaper articles that described the inspiration provided Richard Bach in his best-seller *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. Perhaps had you been among the millions who read this obviously inspired book, our 'Allegory' on page 5 would not have seemed so 'garbled.'"

In PFO's tract, *Reincarnation: Is It Compatible with Christianity?*—which is available from PFO—there is a comment on Bach:

"In the late 1960s and early 1970s, books such as Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and Ruth Montgomery's *A World Beyond* sold briskly and planted the seeds of Hindu and occult philosophy, from which the doctrine of reincarnation springs, in the minds of readers."

Reviewer J.C. Lyles says this of Bach and his book:

"There's enough symbolism and allegory in the story to delight the most avid symbol hunter. Moby Dick it's not, but symbols it's got. And the great virtue of this book is that it means precisely what you want it to mean. No matter what your age, sex, race, annual income, religion or politics, somewhere in the context of your life you can find a use for Jonathan's message that there are no limits. Obviously, the aggressive insurance salesman interprets that message somewhat differently from a youth absorbed in mind-expanding psychedelics. What Bach has done in essence is to market that panacea of the 50s, the power of positive thinking, in the packaging of the 70s."

Time magazine (Nov. 13, 1972) says,

"The book owes something to science fiction (thought movement for example). It is a melange of contradictory religious messages. One is Hinduism (the goal of life is absolute perfection). Yet Jonathan emphasizes the self over all else, and that runs counter to Eastern religions. Insistence on the power of self also undercuts the book's Christian overtones."

Austin also says Bach has refused to meet with him or confer with him. It would appear that Bach has no interest in Austin's views. Bach himself is a good study in spiritual rootlessness. He teaches in his parable of the seagull that there is no heaven and no death, only self-perfection through various levels of consciousness. He is a former Christian Science reader, which is apparent from the threads of thought that run through his book. He says he believes in pantheism and that he hates all religious labels.

(continued on page 7)

CHARGES IN SALT LAKE CITY BOMBINGS

Mark W. Hofmann of Salt Lake City has been formally charged with two counts of first-degree murder in last fall's bombings that killed two people. Hofmann, a businessman and dealer in antique documents, himself was seriously injured when a bomb exploded in his car.

Hofmann also was charged with making and placing explosive devices, 11 counts of communications fraud and 12 counts of theft by deception. The theft charge stems from Hofmann's alleged sale of fraudulent documents to the Mormon Church and its members for amounts in excess of \$1000.

Utah documents authority George Throckmorton has declared as a forgery every major document sold by Hofmann over the past five years. This includes the so-called "Anthon transcript," the "Joseph Smith blessing on his son," the 1825 Joseph Smith letter to Josiah Stowell, and the 1830 letter to Martin Harris, better known as the "Salamander letter." Throckmorton reportedly has developed a process that shows the paper on which these documents are written has been artificially aged. The "blessing document" and the Harris letter have been tested by other experts, including the FBI, who have found no signs of forgery. Hofmann's trial on the theft charges no doubt will include a battle of expert testimony on the authenticity of these documents.

Police also claim to have witnesses from whom Hofmann received thousands of dollars to buy non-existent documents. Among the witnesses are people to whom Hofmann reportedly admitted communications fraud.

Authorities apparently will try to establish the homicide charges by showing that the bombing victims had learned of the fraud and that Hofmann killed them to prevent them from exposing his scheme.

A trial date had not been set as of our press time. Hofmann is free on \$120,000 bond.

— WPW



ARMSTRONG'S LAST BOOK PUBLISHED POSTHUMOUSLY

Mystery of the Ages, the last book written by Herbert W. Armstrong before his death in January, sums up the cult leader's teachings of the past 55 years.

Armstrong wrote in the introduction that "Vistas of knowledge and understanding that have remained the chief mysteries of life to most people were opened to my astonished eyes and mind." He went on to write that the Bible is a "coded message" that has been hidden and "not allowed to be revealed and decoded until our time."

Armstrong wanted people to believe this elitist view of himself and his church as the sole channel for salvation and that Christ's Gospel had been lost from apostolic times until 1931, the year the Worldwide Church of God was founded.

In one way, this book is a blessing for cult researchers, it compiles Armstrong's entire theology in one book, thereby saving one the trouble of compiling a whole library of his works.

— GRF

SCIENTOLOGY FOUNDER HUBBARD DIES

L. Ron Hubbard, the science-fiction writer who founded the Scientology cult, died Jan. 22 at his home near San Luis Obispo, Calif., according to the church.

Hubbard had not been seen in public for several years, leading some to believe that he had been dead for some time. But a physician who says he was at Hubbard's side when he died and the San Luis Obispo county coroner confirmed the report. The coroner rejected a request for an inquest into the death, saying there was no reason to doubt the 74-year-old man had died of a stroke.

The inquest had been sought by Ron Dewolf, Hubbard's estranged son, who in recent years had become a severe critic of Scientology and his father.

Hubbard left an estate estimated in the millions of dollars. Most of it was turned over to the Church of Scientology. Hubbard's body was cremated and his ashes scattered, according to the church.

— KAM



SUIT COULD SHED LIGHT ON CULT'S BELIEFS

The trial of a lawsuit by a man against the Church Universal and Triumphant of Elizabeth Claire-Prophet is expected to include testimony by the cult's leader and could include detailed descriptions of the church's beliefs.

Gregory Null, of Westlake Village, Calif., claims the church reneged on business agreements and spiritual confidences he made. Null's suit seeks \$250 million in damages.

Prophet's church teaches reincarnation and other mystical beliefs. Prophet says she once was Queen Guinevere and that Jesus and Buddha now dictate their wisdom directly to her.

— KAM



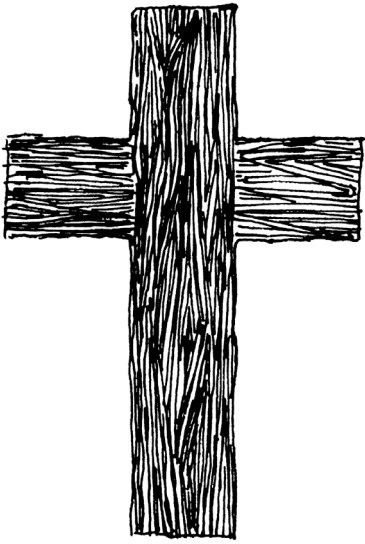
INJURED KRISHNA LEADER RECOVERING

Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada, who was beaten about the head and back with a metal pole last fall by a disgruntled member of the Hare Krishna sect, has partially recovered from his injuries and made a trip to India in January.

However, Bhaktipada, 48, will be left with a permanent hearing loss in his left ear and paralysis in his left vocal cord, according to a Hare Krishna spokesman. Rehabilitation of Bhaktipada's arms and legs has been hampered by the fact that he had suffered polio as a child, which left his limbs already weakened.

The attack on Bhaktipada was an outgrowth of a split within the sect. Some accused Bhaktipada of making a power grab and claim he and his assistants have been involved in illicit sex and drugs.

(continued on page 7)



Did Christ Arise on Sunday?

by Dr. Robert A. Morey

The issue of which day Christ arose from the dead should not be dismissed as being trivial. The phrase "The Lord's Day" refers not only to the day Christ was resurrected, but also to the day the early Christians set aside to worship the risen Christ. The late Herbert W. Armstrong and followers of his Worldwide Church of God deny both.

Armstrong, in his booklet *The Resurrection Was Not On Sunday*, claims the Sunday resurrection is "merely tradition ... taught from childhood and carelessly assumed!" (pg. 6). Armstrong wrote that "wise and prudent theologians ... do not know" where Christians get the idea of a Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection. Why? Because, he states, "it is not true" (pg. 6).

The Worldwide Church of God teaches a Wednesday crucifixion in a week that contained an additional Sabbath day. This "Wednesday crucifixion" error also has been picked up and is taught by some Christian groups. Armstrong further taught that Saturday is the proper day for worship and argued that Christ arose on that day. Therefore, he maintained, Saturday is the Lord's Day. Armstrong said that Christians who gather at Easter sunrise services are, in spite of their sincere intentions, offering worship that is not acceptable to God. Armstrong also taught that anyone violating the Saturday Sabbath would bring eternal death upon himself.

The proof that Christ arose on the first day of the week, which according to the Roman calendar was called Sunday, is not as easily established as some would suppose. The opening verses in the resurrection accounts in all four Gospels do not say enough to answer the question.

Matthew wrote that the women started out to visit the tomb just as the Sabbath

was ending and the first day of the week was about to begin (Matthew 28:1).

Mark wrote that the women did not get to the tomb until the Sabbath was over and the sun was just beginning to rise on the first day of the week (Mark 16:1-2).

Luke and John omit any reference to the Sabbath and simply state that the women arrived at the tomb during the early dawn of the first day of the week. John adds that the light of this early dawn was still dim (Luke 24:1, John 20:1).

If this were all the data available on what day Christ arose from the dead, there would be no way logically or exegetically to pinpoint whether it was on the Sabbath (Saturday) or the first day of the week (Sunday) that Christ arose. All that is said in the opening resurrection accounts is that the women found the tomb empty when they arrived on the dawn of the first day of the week.

However, Dr. Luke comes to our rescue. He is the only Gospel writer who gives the additional date that conclusively demonstrates that Christ arose on the first day of the week.

In Luke 24:1, Luke wrote that the women arrived at the tomb "On the first day of the week." In Luke 24:13, it is written that two of Christ's disciples were traveling to Emmaus, "on that same day."

The day of the disciples' traveling was the same day that already had been mentioned in verse one, the first day of the week. This is clear from the content.

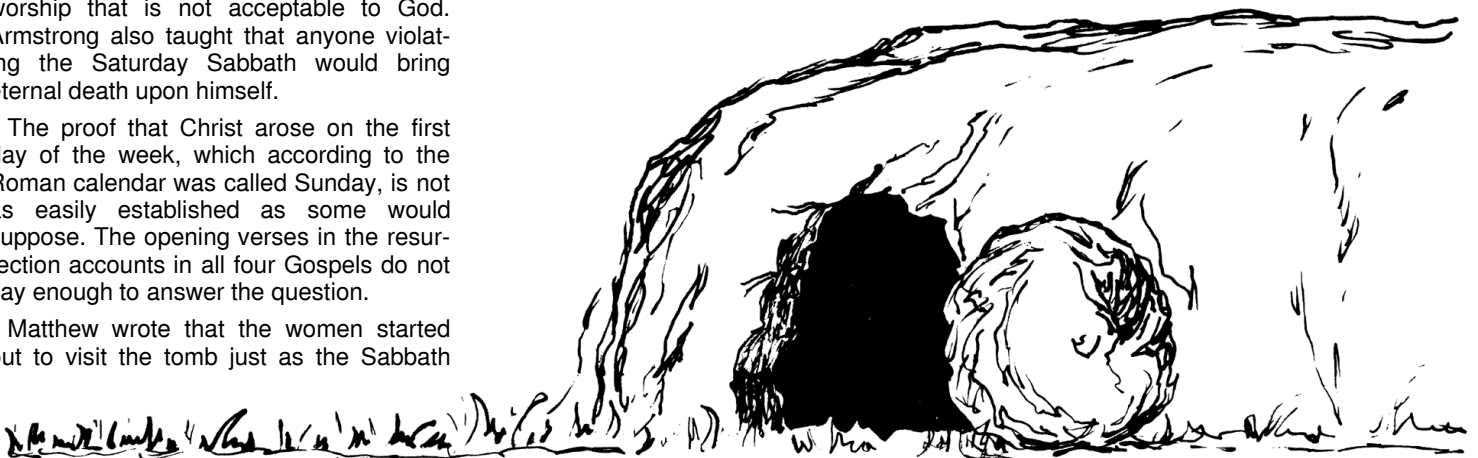
In Luke 24:17-21, the two disciples explain why they were so sad. They had hoped that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, but He had been crucified by the chief priests and the rulers. They expressed surprise that this stranger did not know about all this because, "today is the third day since these things happened."

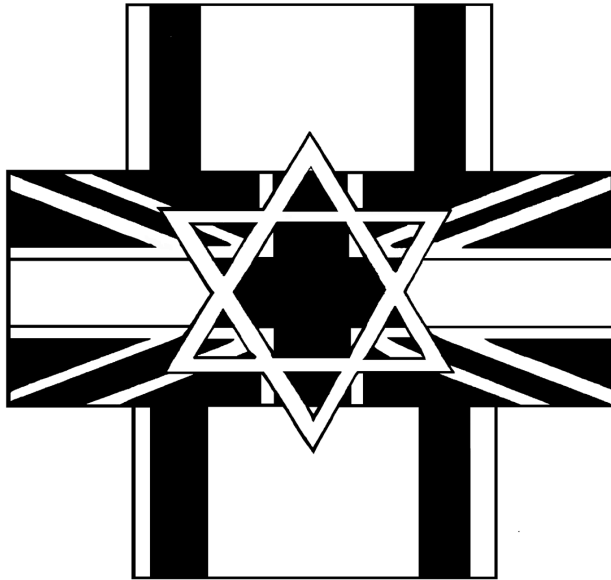
The disciples clearly identified the day of their travel as "the third day" since the crucifixion. The identity of this day already has been given by Luke. Christ appeared to these disciples on "the same day" on which the women had visited the tomb. Thus, the "third day" was the "first day of the week."

In Luke 18:33, Christ said that He would be killed, but He would rise from the dead on "the third day." Christ clearly stated that His resurrection would take place on the "third day" after His death.

Once all the data is put together, it reads like this: The "day" of Christ's resurrection would be the "third day" after His death. The "third day" after his death, the disciples were on their way to Emmaus. This "third day" was the "same day" on which the women went to the tomb. That "day" was "the first day of the week."

Only one logical and exegetical conclusion is possible: Christ arose on the first day of the week, which was the third day after His death. Sunday, not Saturday, is the Lord's Day and the proper time to worship Him.





British-Israelism: Let's Bury It

by Rev. G. Richard Fisher

British-Israelism, an antique error that was held by the late Herbert W. Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God, should have been buried along with the aging cult leader after he died earlier this year.

Richard DeHaan defines British Israelism as follows:

"A theory that has received wide publicity sets forth the claim that the ten tribes, called Israel, are the Anglo-Saxon people, and the present-day Jews represent the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin only. These theorists tell you that the ten tribes, after being taken into captivity, migrated to Great Britain, and that England and the United States are Ephraim and Manasseh. This whole system of thought leads to utter confusion and is hardly worthy of consideration. ... The whole concept rests upon the supposition that the ten tribes were lost."¹

As will be shown, British-Israelists go far beyond the limits of the Bible and turn to speculation and grossly distorted information to support their claims. Faulty scholarship can be found at the bottom of British-Israelism. This article will address four of those faults:

- British-Israelism is based on faulty linguistics. Those who promote the theory play upon words in a ridiculous way. For instance, we are told that the word "British," when transliterated into Hebrew, means, "Man of the covenant." What British-Israelists don't mention is that the word "Britain," when transliterated into Hebrew, means "without a covenant."

The verbal games continue: *Danube*, *Dardanelles*, and *Denmark* are cited as evidence that the tribe of Dan left its mark across Europe. This is just more nonsense. There is a *Danakil* tribe in Africa, but the British-Israelists do not claim Dan

left its mark across Africa. Then there is *Danbury*, Conn., and *Darville*, Ill. It takes little reflection to see that this whole line of thinking is misleading.

- British-Israelism is based on faulty ethnology. Anglo-Saxons can in no way be classed as Semitic peoples, a fact pointed out very vividly some years ago by Horatius Bonar and recorded in Anton Darms' book, *The Delusion of British-Israelism*:

"Yet if the Anglo-Israelite theory be true, the Ten Tribes poured in upon Great Britain and settled themselves there, drove back the Aborigines, but left their religion, their books, their priesthood, their language, their names behind them like cast-off clothes, in order to prevent themselves from being identified, as if ashamed of their ancestry. ... There is no evidence in the Bible, or in history, or tradition, for any such Israelitish emigration. Such a flood could not have passed over Europe, either north or south, without leaving some trace or being mentioned in history. ... Noah's prophecy stands out clear and sharp with its threefold ethnology; Shem, Ham, and Japheth are the roots of the nations, and God kept them distinct: let us beware of confounding them. History tells us that our pedigree is to be traced to Japheth. The modern discoveries in ethnology confirm this beyond a doubt; Eastern monuments, whether of Assyria or Egypt, tell the same story."²

- British-Israelism is based on faulty Hermeneutics. For teachers such as Armstrong to come along and translate Old Testament prophecies made to Israel as prophecies to and about England and America is nonsense.

In the Bible, Israel is Israel. Otherwise it is anybody's guess what the name Israel

might refer to. Even the spiritual seed of Abraham, that is Christ's church, never is identified as "Israel" but is recognized as only spiritual offspring of the ancient Patriarch. The two concepts of literal Israel and spiritual seed are never mingled and confused in Scripture.

One of the fundamentals of a sound interpretive system is:

"The grammatico-historical sense of a writer is such an interpretation of his language as is required by the laws of grammar and the facts of history. Sometimes we speak of the literal sense by which we mean the most simple, direct, and ordinary meaning of phrases and sentences. By this term we usually denote a meaning opposed to the figurative and metaphorical. The grammatical sense is essentially the same as the literal, the one expression being derived from the Greek, the other from the Latin."³

In other words, the words of Scripture mean what they say, unless there is strong direct evidence in the text that we are dealing with a simile, a metaphor, or another figure of speech. There is no reason to think that, in the Bible, Israel is anything other than Israel. Scripture means what it says, not what people imagine what it means.

- British-Israelism is based on the faulty premise that some of the tribes of Israel — at least 10 — were lost after the Assyrian captivity. If it can be proved from the Bible that no Jewish tribes were ever lost, then British-Israelism can be shown to have no truth in it.

From Old Testament Scripture we can firmly establish the following picture:

After Solomon's time, ten tribes grouped

(continued on page 7)

substituting the Holy Spirit for the mother, Semiramis, and calling it a 'person.'"² He used the same tactics the Watchtower Society does in denying this doctrine: namely a misstating of the Christian position. For example, Armstrong led his readers to believe that "Because of false teaching — including that of the 'Trinity' — nearly all of us have been reared from childhood to assume that God is one individual Person."³ What then is Mr. Armstrong's idea of God? "God is not merely one person, nor even limited to a 'trinity,' but GOD is a FAMILY," he wrote.⁴

Armstrong's theology of a family of God also lends itself to a defective Christology. While Jesus is acknowledged as God (one of the two persons currently composing the "God Family"), Armstrongism appears to borrow from Mormonism, as it says that when one is born again, he "will possess the same power, glory and holiness of God!"⁵ Thus, one finds the WCG teaching that there is not one God, but two. One is God the Father, the possessor of Heaven and Earth, the Father of Jesus Christ. The other is the God of the Old Testament, the creator of Heaven and Earth, the one who became Jesus Christ.

Armstrongism's doctrine leaves no place for the personage of the Holy Spirit. So, as in Watchtower theology, the Holy Spirit becomes an impersonal force or power. WCG writings consistently refer to the Holy Spirit as "it."

Christ's Resurrection

Here, the WCG departs from biblical Christianity in two major areas. First, Armstrongism teaches that Jesus Christ himself was born a second time — "born again" — by his resurrection from the dead.⁶ Next, one finds Armstrongism teaching that "the Son of God, [was] now no longer human, but composed of SPIRIT — a Spirit Being," and that "Christ's body did disappear. Christ was raised as a divine spirit being!"⁷

Salvation

Armstrong continually redefined terms as he gained new "insights" into the Bible and nowhere did this happen more often than with his doctrine of salvation. He taught that true Christians are only "begotten" sons now and are not yet born again.⁸ The term "born again," Armstrong taught, means "changed into spirit." Thus, it is taught that, like Jesus, believers will be born again — changed into spirit — at the resurrection. Further, salvation in the WCG includes godhood. Once again we see Armstrong's teaching: "There are only two members in the God Family or Kingdom at the present time — God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. But God is increasing His Family! And YOU can be 'born' into it!"⁹

Baptism

Armstrong taught that Christians are wrong to "think they were 'born again' when they 'accepted Christ' and were 'baptized.'"¹⁰ Armstrong denied the doctrine of the nature of the new birth and misrepresented the Christian position on baptism. Christians do not regard baptism as a requirement for salvation. Tied to the WCG's gospel is baptism and Armstrong reasoned the works-faith salvation by saying: "You shall be saved by grace, but God does lay down conditions. You can comply, and receive glorious grace — or you can rebel, and pay the death penalty — for eternity!"¹¹ The seriousness of not submitting to sabbatarianism, Armstrong told his followers, that it is impossible for Jesus Christ to dwell in a person if he profanes His Holy Day by observing a pagan day.¹² Of course, while there are several different religious groups who keep the Sabbath (Saturday) worship, Armstrong maintained that there is only one true church: the WCG.

According to WCG teachings, those who reject its "true original gospel," will not suffer eternal punishment in hell, but an all-consuming fire that will annihilate unbelievers. The church's Ambassador College Correspondence Course on hell says: "The 'hell fire' that the Bible speaks of will be thousands of degrees hotter than the imaginary 'hell fire' of most preachers — which is only hot enough to torment. The biblical 'hell fire' will totally consume the disobedient! Never will they exist again."¹³

Although Armstrongism teaches that "Salvation will be open to all then resurrected, just as in the thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth, only now there will be many more to accept it." But it turns out not to be a second chance at redemption, for Armstrong reasoned, "If they were blinded when they formerly lived, they never had a first chance."¹⁴

One can find more beliefs that separate Armstrongism from biblical Christianity: denial of man's immortal soul, soul sleep, British Israelism (see accompanying article on page 5), a rejection of holidays (Christmas, birthdays and so forth), and a disapproval of medicine and physicians.

What Does the Bible Say?

Christianity is a monotheistic faith and Armstrong's "God Family" concept is not found in the Bible. The Bible does not teach the existence of two Gods with additional "gods" to be added to the "God Family" upon their resurrection from the dead. Scripture clearly says there is one God and that there are three persons who are addressed as God. The attributes of God are ascribed to each member of the Godhead. While Armstrong was right in saying that the appearance of God in the Old Testament was the Second Person of the Trinity, namely Christ, the old man clearly was preaching "another Jesus."

Armstrong's distorted theology of God's nature again is demonstrated in his denial of the personality of the Holy Spirit. Scripture presents clear evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force. The Holy Spirit creates and gives life (Job 33:4). He works according to His own will (1 Corinthians 12:11). He appoints and commissions ministers (Acts 13:2, Acts 20:28). He teaches (John 14:26). He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).

The WCG's account of Christ's resurrection is like every other false religion's: a spiritual resurrection which is no resurrection at all. That which separates Christianity from other religions is that its founder made good his claims. Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up," in reference to His body.¹⁵ Armstrongites, like the members of the Unification Church and the Watchtower Society, have nothing that distinguishes their "Jesus" from any other religious founder. Christians have a Jesus who died and whose body then was reunited with His spirit, got up and left the grave. Scripture testifies that the Jesus who came out of the tomb and now dwells in heaven has a body of flesh and bone.¹⁶

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Eternal life with God rests not on any works or keeping of the law. Ephesians 2:8-9 says: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." Furthermore, baptism does not save us. Paul told the Corinthians that Christ did not send him to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.¹⁷ To these same people Paul makes known the Gospel by which we are saved, as he says, "For I delivered to you of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."¹⁸ The Christian Gospel does not require baptism, Sabbath observance, triple tithes, or law-keeping for salvation. It requires only belief in the atoning work of Christ's death on the cross. Armstrong's followers should examine Paul's letter to the Galatians and see what he had to say about legalism.

A Final Word

Jesus warned that "false prophets" would come as wolves in sheep's clothing. Armstrong fulfilled Christ's words as he hid his false doctrines behind a Christian image and Christian terminology. He also proved he was a false prophet by making predictions that went unfulfilled.

For example, in the 1956 WCG publication, *1975 In Prophecy*, Armstrong wrote: "But now you're going to peek into the surprising future, exactly as it will happen! Not what men PLAN — but what GOD SAYS! ... very soon — of this very present generation — of all people you know now — ONLY ONE THIRD of them will be left

alive!" He went on to say that this surviving third could be "uprooted from their homes like cattle as slaves to Europe, and probably some to South America," and "Yes, millions of lukewarm, inactive professing Christians will suffer martyrdom — and before the anticipated push-button leisure year of 1975 draws upon us!"

Armstrong's prophecy did not come to pass. Neither did the nations return to an observance of "Almighty God and His Laws and Ways" as Armstrong said they would.

Those who take God's Word seriously will remember Deuteronomy 18:20-22 and conclude that Armstrong does not meet the biblical requirements of a prophet.

Herbert W. Armstrong died Jan. 16. But Christians should not regard this as the beginning of the end for his church. The WCG probably will continue to mislead many with its appearance of biblical au-

thority unless Christians pray for its members and potential victims and witness more effectively against its lies.

When Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Watchtower Society, died in 1916, one Christian magazine said: "With the passing of its founder, the movement he created and organized will probably drift along for a time, to sink finally into the limbo of things forgotten." Christians should have learned their lesson by now. When fighting the cults, we are not fighting flesh and blood, but demonic forces. We cannot afford to rest because one person has died. We must continue to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."¹⁹

Endnotes:

- 1. This claim is made and found within the front cover of all current issues of *The Plain Truth* magazine.
- 2. Armstrong, Herbert W., *The Missing Dimen-*

- sion In Sex*, pg. 32.
- 3. *Ibid.*
- 4. *Ibid.*, (emphasis in original).
- 5. Ambassador College Correspondence Course, Lesson 8, pg. 9.
- 6. Armstrong, Herbert W., *Just What Do You Mean ... BORN AGAIN?*, pg. 18.
- 7. WCG Reprint, "If You Die...Will You Live Again?," pg. 5.
- 8. Correspondence Course, op. cit., pg. 11.
- 9. *Ibid.*, pg. 10.
- 10. *Ibid.*, pg. 3
- 11. Armstrong, Herbert W., *Which Day Is The Christian Sabbath?*, pg. 107.
- 12. *Ibid.*, pg. 103.
- 13. Correspondence Course, Lesson 6, pg. 10.
- 14. WCG reprint, "Is This The Only Day Of Salvation?," pg. 4.
- 15. John 2:19-21.
- 16. Luke 24:36-49, Colossians 2:9.
- 17. I Corinthians 1:17.
- 18. I Corinthians 15:1-4.
- 19. Jude 3.

BRITISH-ISRAELISM

(from page 5)

in the north of Israel with Samaria as their capital and called themselves Israel while two tribes grouped in the south with Jerusalem as their capital and called themselves Judah.

Second Chronicles shows that many in the north, seeing that true religion existed in the south, migrated and stayed. In II Chron. 11:13-17, the migration of the northern Levites to the south is recorded. In II Chron. 15:9, it is written: "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and all the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance when they saw that the Lord his God was with him." More migration is talked about

in II Chron. 30:18-26. There were so many people from the northern tribes joined to the south that in II Chron. 21:1-2, Jehosaphat, King of the southern tribes, is called King of Israel.

The merging and intermingling continued until all 12 tribes were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. After 70 years, the exiles began to return under Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra 2:70 and 6:17,21 and Nehemiah 9:38 establish this fact. There were no tribes lost.

The New Testament as well recognizes Jews as Israelites and makes the term interchangeable. James 1:1 mentions "The Twelve Tribes." Peter, in Acts 2:22, addressed the "men of Israel." At no time does the Bible record the disappearance of any tribe of Israel, nor do any Bible figures acknowledge such an occurrence.

The Apostle Paul warns against "vain jangling" (I Tim. 1:6) and "fables" (I Tim. 1:4). British Israelism qualifies as both.⁴

Endnotes:

- 1. Richard W. DeHann, *Israel and The Nations In Prophecy*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1968, pg. 51.
- 2. Anton Darms, *The Delusion Of British Israelism*. Loizeaux Brothers, New York, pp. 138-139. This book is a most exhaustive work on the subject ever printed.
- 3. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964, pg. 203. This 782-page classic is a standard on the history and principles of proper Bible interpretation.
- 4. A strong critique of British-Israelism, with extensive documentation, can be found in William Irvine's *Heresies Exposed*, Loizeaux Brothers, New York, pp. 34-43. This publication is available from PFO-Midwest for a cost of \$4.25 postpaid.

NEWS UPDATE

(from page 3)

Steve Bryant, a Berkeley, Calif., man who leads the faction opposed to Bhaktipada's, says he hopes to return the sect to its Hindu roots.

— KAM



DEAL STRUCK IN WAY DEPROGRAMMING CASE

The mother and brother of a man allegedly kidnapped to be "deprogrammed" from his involvement in The Way International agreed Feb. 10 to spend 100 hours in community service in exchange for dismissal of the criminal charges.

But charges of false imprisonment remained against six others the family hired to deprogram the 19-year-old.

Marilyn and David Simpson, both of Reading, Mass., had faced charges in a Bellingham, Wash., court.

The Way International was founded by Victor Paul Wierwille, who died last year.

— KAM



EDITORIALS

(from page 2)

After abandoning his wife and six children, he became interested in the occult and the work of Jane Roberts, who wrote *Seth Speaks*, a book about her experiences as a medium. Bach says Roberts' spirit-revealed cosmology parallels his own. Thus, it is obvious that Austin has chosen a spiritist for a source of revelation.

Bach also said that Seth, the spirit who speaks through Roberts, told Bach not to worry about religions claiming that his book was preaching their doctrines. He apparently is heeding that advice with regard to Austin.

— GRF



BOOKS IN REVIEW

UNMASKING THE NEW AGE

by Douglas R. Groothuis

InterVarsity Press, 192 pages, \$6.95.

We have been looking and waiting and have finally found the book on the New Age Movement. *Unmasking the New Age* has to be the best thing released on this subject yet. It is balanced and avoids the extremes of Constance Cumbey and others, who see the New Age Movement as an all-embracing conspiracy poised to take over the world.

In the first chapter, Doug Groothuis discusses, dissects and finally lays to rest these conspiracy theories. In the second chapter, he shows that New Age "theology" is not new. Pantheism — the broad ideological connection for all New Agers — is the "permanent natural bent of the human mind."

He continues and does an excellent job of showing that the New Age Movement is better viewed as a "world view shift rather than a global conspiracy" (pg. 35). The book keeps a positive focus and is directed toward developing a strong doctrinal base, first as protection for Christians and then as a weapon with which to confront New Age philosophy.

Groothuis documents his claims, something other authors on the subject have not always done. His chart on page 167 detailing the differences between Secular Humanism and New Age belief (cosmic Humanism) is perceptive and especially helpful.

Groothuis is to be applauded for his balance and avoidance of the paranoia that has characterized other efforts to write on this

subject. For an in-depth view of the New Age Movement no other book is needed or is as helpful.

Get it. Read it. Reread it! We recommend it.

— GRF



THE MORMON EXPERIENCE

by Jolene & Greg Coe

Harvest House Publishers, 189 pages, \$5.95

Those who have seen the film *The God Makers* will be familiar with the faces of Jolene and Greg Coe. What many do not know is that after the release of the film, the Coes returned to the LDS Church. The Latter-day Saints then sought to use their backsliding to discredit the film. In *The Mormon Experience*, the Coes discuss why they backslid and then set the record straight.

Jolene explains: "We were Christians who knew better than to accept the Mormon way, yet we were blinded. The intense desire for peace with my family, for acceptance of friends and for friends who might not reject or disappoint us somehow kept us blind to the significance of what we were doing."

Christians are alerted that the satanic influence of the Mormon church is ever-present as a swift undercurrent attempting to pull former members back. The Coes rationalized their return into Mormonism as a desire to have a personal relationship with Christ within the LDS Church. However, Mormon leaders who at first encouraged this dual commitment quickly discouraged it once the Coes were reinstated.

The Coes conclude their book with a summary of Mormon doctrine and compare it with biblical Christianity.

The Coes' insights are profitable to both the active cult watcher and those unfamiliar with Mormonism.

— MKB

Editor's Note: *Unmasking The New Age* and *The Mormon Experience* are available from PFO-Midwest. When ordering please add 70 cents to cover the cost of postage.

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

OFFICERS

M. Kurt Goedelman..... Executive Director	Wesley P. Walters..... Midwest Director
William I. Cetnar..... East Director	Stephen F. Cannon Southwest Director
Stephen W. Ignatius West Director	Angela M. Goedelman Secretary/Treasurer
Keith A. Morse Director/Newsletter Editor	

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Beth P. Morse Copy Editor	G. Richard Fisher Contributing Editor
Beth Heitmann Art Director	

BOARD OF REFERENCE

Stephen Board Elgin, IL	Prof. Edmond C. Gruss Newhall, CA
Rev. John P. Juedes Rosemead, CA	Rev. Philip H. Lochhaas St. Louis, MO
Dr. Jay E. Adams..... Valley Center, CA	



PERSONAL
FREEDOM
OUTREACH

NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 26062 † SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63136

Non-Profit Organization
Permit No. 4130
Saint Louis, MO