



PERSONAL  
FREEDOM  
OUTREACH

VOL. 6, NO. 4

OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1986

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newsletter

# A Wrinkle In Christianity...

Christians need not go out into the world to fight the battle for our children's minds. The battle can begin in Christian bookstores.

Authors such as Robert Siegel, George McDonald, Stephen R. Lawhead and Madeleine L'Engle are found in many Christian bookstores. Under the guise of fantasy and "Christian" allegory, these books teach values and doctrines that undermine the Biblical values Christians should want youth to learn.

The most dangerous of the youth fantasy book, sold in Christian bookstores are those in L'Engle's time trilogy. These books even are found in church libraries and have been around for more than 20 years. The titles are *A Wrinkle in Time*, *A Wind in the Door* and *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*.

The first book contains a good summary of L'Engle's philosophy and theology. The latter two develop them more fully. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, three children named Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin are whisked off through time and space to the planet Camazotz to rescue Meg and Charles Wallace's father, who is being held prisoner by the powers of darkness. The children's escorts are three far-from-perfect guardian angels who stop off with the children on an intermediate planet to visit the "Happy Medium" and to explain the history of the universal fight of good against evil.

In explaining this contest between darkness and light, L'Engle states her theological position; this alone would be enough to condemn her works. Mrs. Whatsit, one of the guardian angels — the others being Mrs. Who and Mrs. Which — starts the explanation:

"...some of our very best fighters have

by Eloise Haven

come right from your own planet, and it's a little planet out on the edge of a little galaxy. You can be very proud that it has done so well.

'Who have our fighters been?' Calvin asked.

'Oh, you must know them dear,' Mrs. Whatsit said.

'Mrs. Who's spectacles shone out at them triumphantly. And then light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.'

'Jesus,' Charles Wallace said. 'Why of course, Jesus.' 'Of course,' Mrs. Whatsit said, 'Go on Charles, love. There were others. All your great artists. They've been lights for us to see by.'

'Leonardo da Vinci?' Calvin suggested tentatively, 'And Michelangelo?'

'And Shakespeare,' Charles Wallace called out, 'And Bach and Pasteur and Madame Curie and Einstein!'

Now Calvin's voice.... 'And Schweitzer and Gandhi and Buddha and Beethoven and Rembrandt and St. Francis!'

'Now you Meg,' Mrs. Whatsit ordered. 'Oh Euclid, I suppose...' 'And Copernicus...'" [*A Wrinkle in Time*, pages 84-85].

L'Engle sees Jesus only as Jesus the man, not as Jesus Christ the divine Savior. She sees Him as no different from the human philosophers and religious leaders mentioned, most of whom did more to add to the darkness than to fight it. She gets even more specific in *A Wind in the Door* when her Christ figure, Blajeny, says, "I am only a Teacher, and I would not arrange the future ahead of time if I could." [*A Wind in the Door*,

page 65]. This is in response to Meg's question as to whether Blajeny knew what tomorrow would bring. L'Engle goes out of her way to deny her symbolic Jesus the divine attribute of omniscience. Her Jesus is merely a teacher, as are some others in the second book, including a snake named Louise the Larger. The use of a snake on the same level as Blajeny is itself thought-provoking.

Ironically, L'Engle quoted the Apostle John in that passage of *A Wrinkle in Time*. John is the apostle who, in his first epistle, wrote that one cannot know the Father without knowing the Son and cannot deny the Son without denying the Father.

Up to this point in the story, Mrs. Who, who being accustomed to communicating telepathically finds it easier to borrow words than to make up her own, has quoted human philosophers 13 times while the above is only her second biblical quotation. Not only does L'Engle see Jesus Christ as only man, she sees God's Word as no more important or inspired than the writings of Pascal, Dante, Horace, Euripedes, Cervantes and others. In the second work of her trilogy, a cherubim, trying to explain to Meg what Ecthroi are, states — telepathically of course — that "I think your mythology would call them fallen angels." (Italics mine) [*A Wind in the Door*, page 97.]

Having thus lightly dismissed the divine nature of Jesus Christ and described the inspired Scriptures as myth, L'Engle goes on to misdefine the great evil. To L'Engle the evil that exists in the universe is not rebellion against God, not Satan or sin or even immorality, but

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## PROTECTING THE FRAGILE TRUTH OF THE CULTS

Fifteen years ago, cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and Armstrongites had "it made in the shade," so to speak. Leaders of these groups could rewrite or cover up the organization's history and doctrines with little or no question from devoted followers.

Today, it's different. Counter-cult groups screen and analyze every word proceeding from the mouth of these "prophets," witness to cult members and produce literature aimed at winning cultists to Christ and warning others about cults.

Cultists who call such literature "hate material" need to stop and examine it, for much of this "hate material" has come from the writings of the very organization to which they pledge their allegiance. Every cult's worst enemy is itself. The discovery of lies, false prophecies, doctrinal changes and Scripture misquotations found within cultic publications has spurred many an exodus from a cult.

John L. Smith has called **The Book of Mormon** one of the greatest pieces of anti-Mormon literature around because it does not teach one doctrine that is exclusive of Mormon theology today. The Jehovah's Witnesses face the same problem. Earlier this year, I chased four Jehovah's Witnesses down my street in an attempt to show them in their own **Watchtower** magazine that the Society teaches that Jesus Christ is not their mediator. These ladies were afraid of reading from a magazine similar to the one that they were trying to sell me because I was going to show them something they didn't think the Watchtower Society would teach.

Some cults now are mounting a counteroffensive. In response to the success of the film and book, **The God Makers**, Mormons have circulated a 408-page book, a cassette tape and several letters and pamphlets purporting to expose the film's and book's "inaccurate portrayal" of the Mormon church.

The Latter-day Saints also have beefed up security at the church archives. Those who spend time reviewing LDS history there now must sign a letter of agreement which gives the church authority over the use of the materials that a scholar has been given access to. In addition, the letter is retroactive, in that any information seen on a prior visit (before the letter was written) also is under LDS control. Anyone who refuses to sign the letter will be denied entrance to the archives.

The Watchtower Society also is reacting. A few years ago, the Society stressed in the Watchtower that "out of wisdom and respect for God's counsel," Witnesses should not exchange their "valuable Bible study aids" for other religious literature (**The Watchtower**, May 1, 1984, pg. 31). How fragile the truth of the Watchtower has become. I know of no true believer who would not gladly exchange a Gospel tract or Christian booklet for a

**Watchtower** or **Awake!** magazine. Why? Because he has the truth of God's Word on his side and the love and compassion of the living Savior. Jehovah's Witnesses need to be challenged to realize that if they have the "Good News," then they should stop at nothing to let the truth shine forth, even if it means exchanging "religious literature" with someone who is not a Witness. Jesus said we should not hide our light under a bushel.

Those who have distributed tracts recently at District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses no doubt found it more difficult than ever to get Witnesses to accept the literature. Many Jehovah's Witnesses have become belligerent in their refusals. One member of our witnessing team shook his head in disbelief at the treatment he received from the Watchtower's "Christians."

In other locales, action taken by Witnesses to prevent literature distribution has been costly to the reputation of the Society and the pocketbooks of the members involved. Recently, a judge in Riverside County, Calif., found in favor of plaintiffs Mark Pyle and Gary McCready, ruling that Jehovah's Witness elder Thomas Moore had to pay damages of \$553 and court costs. Moore allegedly assaulted McCready while putting leaflets on automobiles parked near a Kingdom Hall.

While many Jehovah's Witnesses proudly tell how door-to-door or street corner contacts were nasty and mean to them, they fail to see that they are guilty of the same conduct. Why? Could it be because they have just had to sit through four days of boring lectures and had to keep constant control of their children in an attempt to have them do the same? Could it be that they no longer are "lovers of the truth" and God has caused a spirit of delusion to come upon them? Could it be because they are scared and hurting people?

Whatever the reason, Christians must not give up. The cults will continue their attempt to protect their fragile "truths." Christians need to keep exposing it and trying to gain the attention of the cults' followers. We must continue to earnestly contend for the faith and snatch souls from the fire. For every 99 Jehovah's Witnesses who curse at us there will be the one who realizes The Watchtower is not God's organization, but does not know where to turn to for help. For that person, we will be there and pointing them not to a church or religious organization, but to Jesus Christ, who will give them peace, security and eternal life.

—MKG

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This newsletter is published quarterly by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136.

## GRAND JURY STUDIES KRISHNA LINK TO KILLING

A federal grand jury began an investigation last month to determine if members of a Hare Krishna community conspired to murder an excommunicated member who accused them of crimes.

Steven Bryant, a Krishna devotee of 13 years, was killed May 22 in Los Angeles. The jury also probably will investigate charges Bryant made regarding drug dealing and child abuse at the Krishna community of New Vrindaban, W.Va.

About 30 Hare Krishna members, including some top officials of the New Vrindaban commune, have been subpoenaed to testify.

The investigation could take up to a year.

—KAM



## MORMONS DEBATE LIVELY ISSUES

Whenever the Mormon church's Sunstone Theological Symposium meets, one can expect lively discussions on sensitive issues. This year's meeting in Salt Lake City, held August 20-23, lived up to that expectation.

Leading Mormon thinkers and writers, many from the more liberal element of the LDS church, discussed topics that ranged from nuclear war to the need for revision of temple ceremonies.

David Buerger was brave enough to consider the latter subject in his paper, "The Evolution of the Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony." Although refused access to temple statistics by church leaders, Buerger was able to gather enough independent statistics to conclude that temple work is not keeping pace with the rising number of members in the church. He proposed changes in the ceremony that would both shorten and enliven temple work. He was careful not to read the text of the present ceremonies to avoid offending some who had threatened not to attend the symposium if he did so.

Dan Vogel, a senior history major and author of the recently released **Indian Origins and The Book of Mormon**, presented a critique of the "limited geography" view of **The Book of Mormon's** events, which tries to avoid anomalies such as having two nations living in South and Central America fight their final battles in New York State. This view limits **The Book of Mormon** lands to a small area in southern Mexico. Vogel pointed out that this view not only did not do justice to **The Book of Mormon** text, but also ignored the traditional position of the early Mormon church that **The Book of**

**Mormon** peoples covered the entire continents of North and South America. This traditional view had been held by Joseph Smith, Jr. himself and was based on Smith's own purportedly divine revelations.

A key issue of the conference centered around the question of whether **The Book of Mormon** represented real history or was entirely a 19th century piece of fiction writing. Most of the scholars present seemed prepared to admit that Joseph's 19th century background shaped parts of the book. This has led many of this group to propose adopting the methods used by liberal biblical scholarship, such as "form criticism," "genre criticism" and "redaction criticism" to try to figure out which parts of **The Book of Mormon** represent an ancient text and which parts were added from Joseph Smith's 19th century theological background.

This shift to liberal methods in Mormonism is accompanied by a shift in definition of what "revelation" is. Like their liberal counterparts in Protestant and Roman Catholic camps, they reject revelation as propositional, that is, truth cannot be stated in propositions such as "God is righteous, or unchanging, or omnipresent." Instead there is a move to regard revelation as impressions growing out of our experience.

If this view is adopted, Mormonism must become less dogmatic and more uncertain as to what its message is to the world. After all, on this position all religions must be regarded as having genuine encounters with God — an acknowledgement openly granted by its proponents. Such a view, which is now growing in popularity among intellectual Mormons, could well change the shape of Mormonism for future generations.

—WPW



## COUNTER-CULT DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

Cornerstone magazine's Eric Pement has completed **The 1986 Directory of Cult Research Organizations**.

The volume is divided into two sections. The first is a list of ministries "formed with the purpose of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people trapped in the cults." The second section lists non-evangelical agencies.

Entries are listed by state and give the readers the primary emphasis of the ministry, as well as the services offered (newsletters, tapes, tracts, etc.). Foreign ministries also are listed.

To get a copy, send \$5.00 to: Cornerstone Press, 4707 North Malden, Chicago, 111. 60640.

—MKG

# The Presumptuous Teachings of the Word-Faith Movement The Presumptuous Teachings of the Word-Faith Movement The Presumptuous Teachings of the Word-Faith Movement

by Steve Cannon

If one were to sum up the teachings of the Word-Faith movement in one word, *presumption* would be a good choice. Larry Hargrave, who developed a Christian counseling course, defines it as such: "To take a stand without proper authority — to take for granted — to have an attitude or appearance of power without actual power. To be overconfident." [*Beyond Not Caring*, page 4]. He then goes on to cite Proverbs 13:10 to show that presumption produces "nothing but strife."

The Word-Faith movement has done more than its share of producing strife in the body of Christ. Scores of well-meaning Christians are in bondage to this unscriptural philosophy. The pastor of one well-known charismatic church in the South, who has a large counseling center, once said he could tell whenever one of the Word-Faith teachers had been in town just by looking at his caseload. It would double as it filled with people full of confusion, guilt and fear — the very things that the Word-Faith movement professes to eradicate.

The reason for this is that the Word-Faith message simply does not work. It is a body of presumptuous teachings that lacks the authority of the Word of God. It is a system of thinking that has been generated by a group of men drawing from each other's teachings with an amalgamation of Christian theology, mysticism and Gnosticism bound together by one of the most fanciful methods of Scripture interpretation ever devised. All of this is buttressed by a mutual admiration society among the most popular of the Word-Faith teachers that admonishes critics to *touch not the Lord's anointed*, often under dire threats of divine displeasure.

A classic example of this can be seen in a quote from Word-Faith teacher Kenneth Hagin: "When the Lord was dealing with me concerning the prophet's ministry, He said that if a church doesn't accept my ministry, then I should go my way, shake the dust off my feet against them so to speak; but He would remove their candlestick. He would take away from them what power they had left. ... He said that judgment must begin in the house of God, and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear. If a church won't accept this ministry, then they wouldn't accept His Word and He can't help them." [*The Ministry of a*

*Prophet*, page 19].

Often when a Word-Faith teacher or teachings are criticized, there will be allegations of *sowing division in the body* or lack of belief in healing or demons or the miraculous. This writer believes in divine healing, both instantaneous and gradual; the existence of demons and deliverance from them and that the gifts of the Spirit are for the Church today as they have been since its beginning. Criticizing a body of teachings is not the same as judging one who accepts those teachings. However, Christians are told to compare any teachings to the Word of God and to cast off any that contradict Scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

If a person reads into the sacred text something that does not belong there, then we have a right to challenge, expose what we see as error and point out to our brethren who these mistaken teachers are (Acts 20:28-31 & 2 Timothy 2:16-18). It does not mean that these teachers are not true brethren, although they may not be. It does not mean that we should love them any less. It simply means that an error has been found and exposed and should be dealt with in love and compassion.

## WORD-FAITH'S BEGINNINGS

The Spiritual mentor of today's Word-Faith teachers is Essek W. Kenyon, who apparently received his theological training not from a seminary, but from the Emerson School of the Oratory in Boston, Mass.

The founder of that institution, Charles Wesley Emerson, is on record as being a member of the Mother Church of Christian Science from 1903 to 1908. As Christian Science is nothing more than Gnosticism in modern garb, it is possible that Kenyon learned some of his Gnostic ideas during this training.

After leaving the school — it is not clear from records whether or not he graduated — Kenyon settled in Seattle, Wash., where he was pastor of the New Covenant Baptist Church and broadcasted a radio program *Church of the Air*, until his death in 1948. Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society publishes materials from his writings and broadcasts [see further, *The Born-Again Jesus of the Word-Faith Teachings* by Judith A. Matta, pages 25-26]. It is from these publica-

tions that most of the presumptions of the Word-Faith teachings are drawn.

The bedrock of Word-Faith doctrine is what Kenyon calls "new creation realities." For the rest of the Word-Faith assertions to work, man first must be exalted to a high position. Word-Faith teaching puts him on the same level as Jesus Christ. This is done by assembling Scripture passages to purportedly prove that once a man is in Christ, then the "new creature" spoken in II Corinthians 5:17 is re-created as a new species of being.

Kenyon writes: "You see, man is a spirit being. He is in the same class with God. He was created in the image and likeness of God. He had to be in order to become a partaker of the Divine Nature. When he sinned he became a partaker of Satan's nature, selfishness. ... The part of man that is re-created in (sic) his spirit. God imparts to our spirit His own nature, Eternal Life." [*The Hidden Man*, page 121]. When that happens one is "a new species of being that never existed before." [Kenneth Copeland, *Now Are We In Christ Jesus*, page 5]. Hagin says "the believer is as much an Incarnation as Jesus Christ." [*Faith Food*, page 23]. Kenneth Copeland says, "Jesus is no longer the only begotten son of God." [*Now Are We In Christ Jesus*, page 24].

In the Word-Faith teaching, Jesus loses his uniqueness. The believer is elevated to the position of being a God-man the same way Jesus was a God-man. The only difference is Jesus obtained his position by birth and the rest obtain it by a re-creation of the spirit.

A further denial of the uniqueness of Jesus occurs in Word-Faith teachings on the atonement. According to their interpretation of Scripture, much more happened during Christ's crucifixion and death than is usually taught.

"When [Jesus] said 'it is finished,' on that cross, He was not speaking of the plan of redemption. The plan of redemption had just begun. There was still three days and three nights to go through ... [in hell], He suffered punishment for three horrible days and nights." [Kenneth Copeland, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, cassette tape].

"Jesus died as our substitute. He who knew no sin was made to be sin. He took upon Himself our sin nature. And he died — He was separated and cut off from God. He went down into the prison

house of suffering in our place. He was there three days and nights." [Kenneth Hagin, *Made Alive*, April 1982, page 3].

"He's [Jesus] separated from His God and in that moment He's a mortal man: capable of failure, capable of death." [*What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, cassette tape].

"He suffered in His own body, and more important, in His spirit. Jesus experienced the same spiritual death that entered man in the Garden of Eden (i.e. He took on Satan's nature)... After Jesus was made sin, He had to be born again... Jesus was a born-again man." (Gloria Copeland, *God's Will For You*, page 5).

"Not only was He physically resurrected — His body resurrected — but His spirit was made alive unto God again. He had died spiritually. He took upon Himself spiritual death — for us. And He is the first one who was ever born again. His new birth is our new birth." [*Made Alive*, page 3].

In summary, the Word-Faith plan of redemption says: man was created as the "same order of being as God." A spirit temporarily housed in a body. He was given dominion over the Earth. When he committed "high treason" by following Satan instead of God, man then gave up the divine nature and took on the nature of Satan. Satan then became the god of this world and man thereafter was born with the satanic nature. "Suddenly, God was on the outside looking in." [Kenneth Copeland, *Our Covenant With God*, page 8].

Jesus came so that man's spirit might be re-created (i.e. man might reclaim the divine nature). On the cross, the plan of redemption merely began. It was there that Jesus took on the nature of Satan, lost his divinity, became a mortal man, and went to hell. There he suffered torture at the hand of Satan until God said "enough." Having kept the Law of God perfectly, the man Jesus was declared to be "illegally" in hell. At that point, Jesus' spirit was re-created. He again had the divine nature — Jesus was then born again!

The way was then clear for man to have his spirit re-created — to receive the divine nature! To become as much an incarnation as Jesus was! Re-created

men "now have the nature of God ... the ability of God." [E.W. Kenyon, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, page 82].

This scenario is read into the Bible so that it may be extrapolated again. This is done several ways. The first is a fanciful system of Scripture interpretation that arbitrarily assigns new meanings to words and has no regard for the context of passages. For example, Kenyon says:

"Adam gained an education through his five senses. His spirit was being made prisoner of his five senses. The psalmist cried, 'Bring my soul out of prison' (Psalms 142:7). The Hebrew word should have been translated 'spirit' instead of 'soul'" [*The Hidden Man*, page 8]. However, a Hebrew lexicon will show that the word for "soul" (*nephesh*) and "spirit" (*ruach*) are two different words. The psalmist in 142:7 uses the word *nephesh*. It cannot be translated "spirit."

Word-Faith teachers also redefine terms II Peter 1:4, a key verse in their doctrine. The phrase, "you might become partakers of the divine nature," means that people actually take on God's nature, they say. "A man is re-created by receiving God's nature into his spirit, which makes him a New Creation and gives him a new self." [*The Hidden Man*, page 8]. The Greek word translated "Partakers" is *koinonos*, which when used as a noun means "partner." [see W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, page 161]. Peter was saying that Christians are made partners with the divine nature. The Holy Spirit now bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Many other ploys are used to read Word-Faith doctrine into the Bible. Space allows examination of only two of the most outrageous. The first is that of interpreting certain verses to mean the opposite of what the writer intended.

Referring to the King James Version's John 14:14, where Jesus says, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Hagin says: "Here, the Greek word translated 'ask' means 'demand.'... You're not demanding anything of the Father... You're demanding of the devil." [*Faith Food*, Winter Edition, page 58]. The Greek text of John 14:14 or a

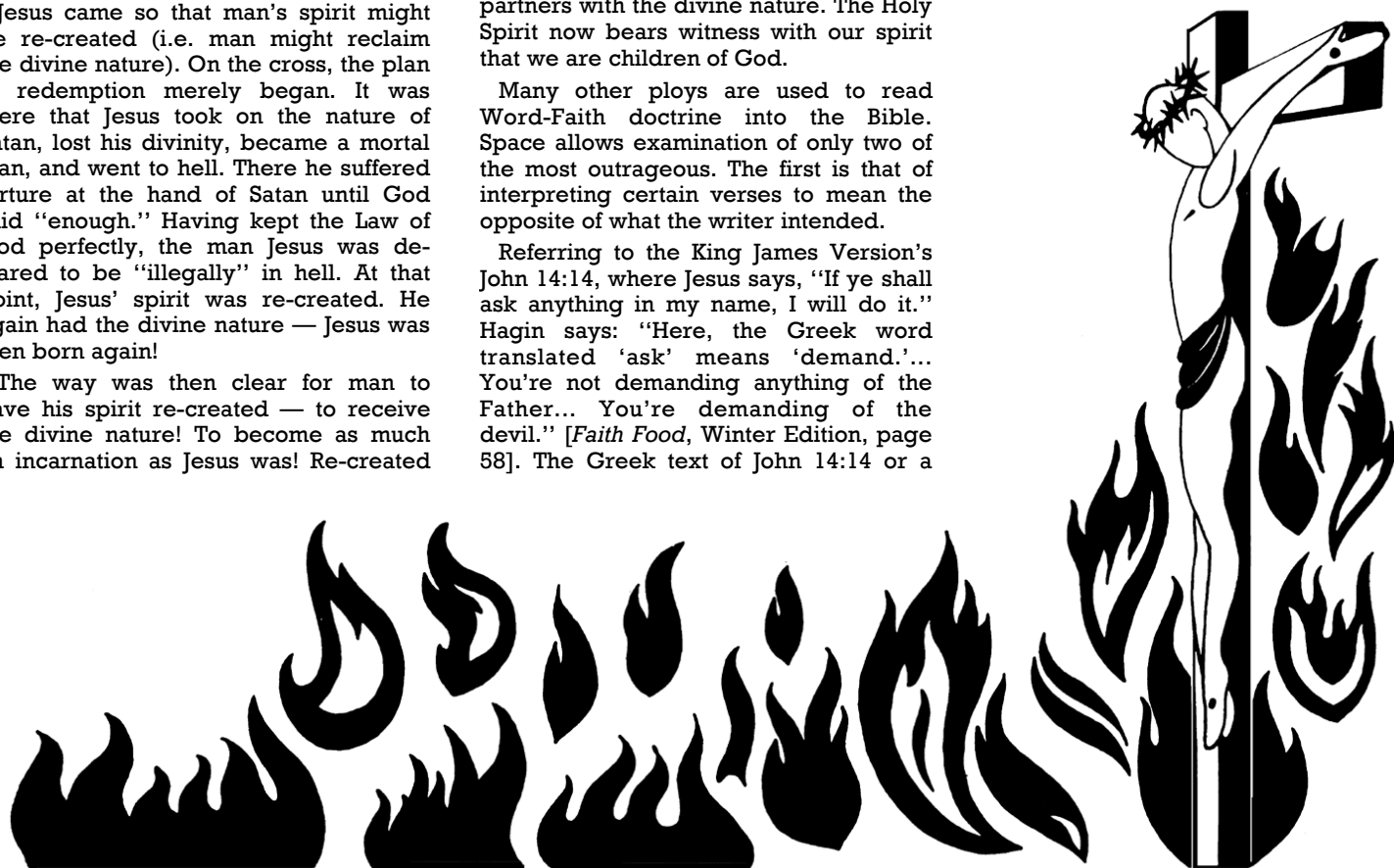
modern translation based on the Greek text has Jesus telling His disciples, "If you ask ME anything in My name, I will do it."

The second ploy is that of denying the validity of a passage that does not square with Word-Faith teaching. Concerning the statement of Job 1:21, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away," Word-Faith teacher Charles Capps says, "Job did say it, but it is not a true statement. It is a lie... Job sure was not under the anointing when he made that statement." [*The Tongue — A Creative Force*, pages 8-9]. When this kind of fanciful Bible interpretation is used, the Scriptures can be made to say anything.

Clear Scripture passages are altered to fit the Word-Faith system to establish the believer as one who possesses the divine nature so that he can realize his "legal authority". With this realization comes the knowledge, power, and ability of God. Kenyon says you can "...walk as Jesus walked, without any consciousness of inferiority to God or Satan." [*The Hidden Man*, page 24].

Once the position of being "the same order of being as God" has been established, then it becomes necessary to demonstrate that this "re-created spirit" has unlimited power to create his own reality through positive confession. Capps, in his publication *The Tongue — A Creative Force*, explains:

(continued on page 6)



“God’s Word is spiritual law. It functions just as sure as any natural law. Words governed by spiritual law become spiritual forces working for you. Idle words work against you... The natural world is to be controlled by man speaking God’s words.” [pages 8-9].

“You have to believe that those things that you say — everything you say — will come to pass...” [page 24].

“Man was created in God’s class..., a spirit being, very capable of operating on the same level of faith as God... This is not theory. It is fact. It is spiritual law. It works every time it is applied correctly. To imitate God, you must talk like Him and act like Him...” [pages 130-131].

“The Word of God conceived in the heart, formed by the tongue, and spoken out of the mouth is creative power... The spoken word will work for you as you continually confess it.” [page 148].

The Scriptures used to support this position are selectively chosen from verses affirming that God will give believers what they ask (demand) from Him (Mark 11:23-24, John 16:23-24) to the exclusion of the verses that put these answers in the perspective of God’s sovereign will (Matthew 6:10, I John 5:14).

In Word-Faith teaching, man is given the position of a god on Earth. “...Well, now, you don’t have a human, do you? No, you are one. You don’t have a God in you. You are one,” Kenneth Copeland declares. [*The Force of Love*, cassette tape]. Once man has been given that position, then with his positive confession he can create his own reality.

The implications of these presumptive teachings are horrifying. The sovereignty of the infinite God is replaced with the sovereignty of finite man. To teach that man can “demand” from God and have everything that he says presupposes that man knows what is best in every situation. The only way that could be true is if man is all-knowing.

Man is not all-knowing and because of that cannot know what is best in every situation. Only God is omniscient. That’s why we have to rely on His judgment as a loving Father to give us what is best even if it seems harsh at the time. This is what it means to pray “Your (God’s) will be done.” This is true faith!

Despite all the fantastic convolutions that Word-Faith teachers go through to try to explain the nature of Paul’s thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7), it is a clear-cut situation where Paul prays and God answers in the negative. Even though it seemed harsh at the time, it

was the act of a loving Father and worked ultimately to Paul’s benefit. Concerning this situation, Larry Bishop astutely observes: “Once it is established that God will refuse some requests, then the whole idea of faith as a ‘force,’ operating unalterably in accordance with a formula, can no longer be sustained. Further, once we have affirmed that requests must be evaluated, in some way, then we have put it back in the hands of God to evaluate all requests. No longer can faith be considered a tool to create realities in accordance with our will, but a trust that God will answer our requests in accordance with His will. (I John 5:14)” [*Cornerstone* magazine, Vol. 10, Issue #54, page 13].

In counseling those who have been caught up in the Word-Faith doctrines and then have been disillusioned, one finds many who have a difficulty breaking free of these teachings. A certain consistent pattern of behavior can be observed in these people.

First, it is this writer’s experience that no one has ever come up with this teaching through Bible study alone. People generally find it at home prayer meetings, a Word-Faith church, through Word-Faith literature or at a meeting where a Word-Faith teacher is speaking. At these exciting meetings one hears a vibrant message delivered with great authority, seemingly backed by Scripture, and buttressed by claims of the miraculous.

Next comes an in-depth study of books, tracts and cassette tapes of a Word-Faith teacher. These materials contain cautions against those who would criticize the doctrines. Such people are called “nay sayers” and negative influences. If such people cannot be won over to Word-Faith teachings, the listener or reader is told, they should be avoided. At this level, strong indoctrination takes place.

It is through the literature and seminars that people become “positive confessors.” At this point, no negatives are allowed. God wants you healthy, wealthy and wise. Sickness, poverty and want are signs of spiritual weakness. If something does not go right, lack of faith is at fault. At this stage, Word-Faith adherents often gain an attitude of superiority. Word-Faith adherents consider any criticism of their doctrine to be an attack by those who are not “spiritually mature,” and have not had this “higher revelation.”

Then, some time later, after all the teaching, confessing and testifying, reality begins to rear its ugly head. Common human suffering teaches Word-Faith adherents that their system just does not work! Once faced with this, they either admit that Word-Faith teachings are fal-

lacious and throw themselves into the arms of a loving, sovereign God, or they begin to consciously deny reality.

Word-Faith victims who seek counseling often display three characteristics: confusion, guilt and fear. The confusion is usually the result of inner conflicts set up by contradictions between what is taught by Word-Faith teachers and what is in the Bible.

Guilt is generally brought about by the tension generated when one was positively confessing, but getting no results. According to the Word-Faith position, no results equal a lack of faith or open sin in one’s life. This can, and usually does, cause excessive introspection and a tremendous guilt feeling. Sometimes the guilt is real and needs to be dealt with, but often there is no reason for the feelings. Whatever the person was positively confessing was not in God’s plan and He is not going to bring it about.

Fear comes from two areas. First is the obsessive compulsion to be positive in every word. Even use of phrases such as “I’m just dying to do that” or “that joke just tickled me to death,” release satanic powers, say the Word-Faith teachers. [*The Tongue — A Creative Force*, pages 90-92]. People become afraid that they are going to slip up, utter a negative and give a place to Satan. Secondly, fear is a corollary to the guilt mentioned above. Fear and guilt usually work in a downward spiral. One feels guilty because of a supposed lack of faith, then afraid because their confession in not “working.” Then there is more fear, then more guilt, and so on down. This cycle can be spiritually and physically debilitating.

All of these spiritual and psychological difficulties can be directly attributed to elevating man to the false position of being a god and saying that he has powers far greater than he really does.

The time has come for Christians to take a serious look at the teachings of the Word-Faith movement. Occasionally an article will appear in a Christian periodical, or one of the more well-known cult researchers will give a lecture against these non-biblical doctrines and a cassette tape will be produced that presents Word-Faith in a negative light. However, these usually confront only the aspects of physical healing and prosperity. Very little has been written or said about the defective Christology of Word-Faith believers.

We criticize such groups as the United Pentecostal Church, Jehovah’s Witnesses and The Way International because of their unscriptural views of the Godhead. We expose the Mormon teaching that declares men can become Gods. Can we do any less when the Word-Faith groups start introducing their presumptive teaching into the Body of Christ?

conformity; conformity to a mediocre and oppressive society whose greatest sin is its non-recognition of the elite. The society despises and destroys that which is different from itself, what it cannot understand, and makes of humanity one congealed mass instead of separate and unique individuals. It is what is called in *A Wind in the Door* an "unnaming," something which the Ecthoi would like to do to all beings. When everyone is unnamed, then the darkness will be complete. L'Engle demonstrates in *A Wrinkle in Time* with two examples. One is our own society, existing on a partially darkened planet where a few elite individuals are still fighting to ward off the darkness. The second is Camazotz, a fully darkened planet hosting a society which is an exaggerated symbol of the conformity that she despises.

The faults of our own society are summed up in two sets of people. The first is a finite set consisting of twin brothers of Charles Wallace and Meg. The second set consists of all the authority figures that L'Engle describes.

The twins survive well in the society because they do not do anything outstanding or spectacular. They are content to conform to the ordinary.

The twins didn't have any problems. They weren't great students, but they weren't bad ones either. They were perfectly content with a succession of B's and an occasional A or C. [*A Wrinkle in Time*, page 14].

The twins are members of Little League, raise a healthy vegetable garden and think they can solve their problems with their fists. As Meg describes them: "We're all different, our family, except the twins. They do all right because they're normal. Or know how to act it." [*A Wind in the Door*, page 27]. They have condescending attitudes toward the elite, including their own mother.

The second set of people, the authority figures, show a number of problems. They are hypocritical and unloving and they despise the elite. These things are true of all the authority figures in the book: the postmistress, the teachers, the principal and the non-elite parents. Not one of them has a redeeming quality. The school teachers have no sympathy for the family whose father is missing. They have no understanding at all and one even has the audacity to insist that Meg learn things she is not interested in, such as geography, and even that she show respect to her teachers instead of resentment and sullenness. Her teacher and school principal, and even the postmistress feign sympathetic interest in

her problems but are really trying to glean juicy little tidbits of information about the missing father so that they can gossip. And, the greatest sin of any of them, is that they do not recognize and respect the uniqueness of Charles Wallace, Meg and their parents.

Together, these two groups represent a society that hates those who rise above the average. It either destroys them or forces them to hide their uniqueness to survive.

On Camazotz, we are introduced to a society that is a symbolic exaggeration of our own. The children are tessered (that is, they are sent by means of a wrinkle in time) to a spot in the suburbs on Camazotz. They come upon a row of houses all exactly alike, in front of which are children all playing ball and jumping rope in exactly the same rhythm. All the doors of all the houses open at exactly the same time and out come women from the houses all at exactly the same time to clap all at exactly the same time at the children who are playing with balls which they catch all at exactly the same time and the children who are jumping ropes all of which they gather and fold all at exactly the same time. Except there is one little boy in front of one little house who just can't seem to get the hang of the rhythm and keeps dropping the ball until his mother, terrified, rushes out, grabs him and pulls him into the house. As the children inquire at the little boy's house, they are told by the mother that the ball he has left behind does not belong to her son. "Oh no," she replies. "The children in our section never drop balls! They're all perfectly trained. We haven't had an Aberration for three years." [*A Wrinkle in Time*, page 99].

Once having defined evil as conformity to a mediocre society that fails to recognize the elite, it is necessary to know who comprises this elite. The three children, along with Meg's mother and father, represent stages or classes of the elite. The parents of Meg and Charles Wallace are the first stage, what Plato would have called the intellectual elite. They are brilliant scientists who, while not among the higher elite, recognize and admire the qualities they possess. And, most importantly, they do not expect them to conform. The mother does not even seem to expect Meg to stay out of fistfights or honor her teachers or learn anything she does not care to learn.

Calvin and Charles Wallace are of the class we might term the Psychic Elite. They are recognizable as such by the especially bright blue of the eyes. They are elite because they are highly intelligent and because they possess a special quality. Says Meg:

"You mean you read our minds?"

Charles Wallace: "...I don't think it's that. It's being able to understand a sort of language, like sometimes if I concentrate very hard I can understand the wind talking to the trees. You tell me, you see, sort of inad—inadvertently." [*A Wrinkle in Time*, page 34].

"Calvin says, 'When I get this feeling, this compulsion, I always do what it tells me. I can't explain where it comes from or how I get it, and it doesn't happen very often. But I obey it.'" [*A Wrinkle in Time*, page 37].

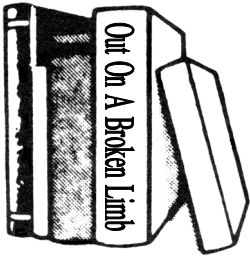
"Poor Meg is somewhere in between. She is brilliant in math, she does not have the extra ability, but she has the potential to develop it and she does so in the second and third volumes of the trilogy. As Charles Wallace says, 'Meg has it tough.' 'She's not one thing or the other.' 'Neither flesh nor fowl nor good red herring.'" [*A Wrinkle in Time*, page 37].

Actually, to L'Engle, all of the elite have it tough, because society does not recognize that they should be above the mundane requirements of its ordinary members. — Society would even frown upon the guardian angels because Mrs. Whatsit steals sheets. And why does she steal them? "Well, I needed them, Charles dear." Besides, the owner had plenty of sheets. Isn't that reason enough? Another thing the society does not recognize is that the Elite is its means of salvation. They are going to save society from itself and the Darkness by use of their powers, by use of their anger and impatience and by use of their unity — (not with God, but with each other.) The emphasis is that they are going to save. L'Engle has to invent saviors because she has eliminated the real one.

In *A Wind in the Door*, L'Engle treats her society slightly more gently. She is easier on the twins and she even allows Meg's principal, Mr. Jenkins, to blunder into the class of the elite. But, she goes deeper into her admiration of occult practices. Tessering, or traveling by way of a wrinkle in time has been abandoned. Calvin, Meg, Mr. Jenkins and a most imperfect cherubim, named Proginoskes, travel inside the bloodstream of Charles Wallace to save him from the death of his mitochondria (i.e. structures within the protoplasm of a cell). They accomplish this through a sort of mass ESP called kything. It is exactly what the characters in the movie *Exorcist II* call being "in sync," which according to the priest played by Richard Burton, allows him to have an out-of-body experience that he calls "traveling on the wings of a demon."

In *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, a teenage Charles Wallace and a now-married (to Calvin) and pregnant Meg further perfect their skill at kything. Charles Wal-

(continued on page 8)



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## OUT ON A BROKEN LIMB

by F. LaGard Smith

Harvest House Publishers, 207 pages, \$6.95.

As this reviewer started this book, it looked to be just another volume on reincarnation. Wrong! Smith does an excellent job of sorting through the maze of mysticism and blowing apart its irrational belief system.

Of course, the book is written to examine the life and teachings of actress Shirley MacLaine by thoroughly examining her books **Out on a Limb** and **Dancing in the Light**. MacLaine has in fact become the new high priestess for the promotion of reincarnation, mysticism and occultism. Medium Kevin Ryerson is MacLaine's mentor and "channels" contacts from "astral" beings to her.

That there is no evil, that we choose to suffer, that we are "gods" in the making are just a few of the notions MacLaine teaches and which are examined and refuted by Smith. In the book he discusses some probable medical explanations of

**deja vu** (feeling we have been in a similar circumstance or environment before) and shows that these experiences are not "proof" of reincarnation.

It is hard to believe that any thinking person could take MacLaine seriously with her "astral plane entity," John, giving her information and with her belief that she can communicate with animals and trees. That people do take her seriously indicates the penetration that Eastern thought has made into the United States and how well Satan has blinded minds.

This book makes a major contribution to the field of demonology in that it relates what we know Scripturally to the field of the occult and occultic phenomenon. As a former district attorney and a current law teacher at Pepperdine University, Smith is able to subject MacLaine's material to the logic of the legal mind.

I do hope that this book gets a wide hearing among Christians. It is extremely profitable reading.

The book has one drawback that should be pointed out. On page 112, Smith appears to lean toward baptismal regeneration. In discussing John 3, he says, "It was spiritual rebirth through faith and the water of Baptism to which Jesus was referring." His later remarks make it unclear whether he actually believes this as stated. Perhaps he could clarify this issue, since baptismal regeneration is as big an error as the reincarnation that he is refuting. If one is able to read over that issue the rest of the book will prove to be very, very helpful.

—GRF

## L'ENGLE

(from page 7)

lace and another imperfect angel and teacher, who has the form of a flying unicorn, travel back in time to different periods in the history of the Earth to save mankind from a nuclear holocaust. A physically homebound Meg travels out of body with them to feed Charles bits of information that she gathers from the twins and Calvin's mother and to join her psychic powers with those of Charles Wallace. Charles Wallace accomplishes his tasks by going within — possessing the minds and bodies of — the people he finds in the past.

L'Engle's writings derive their danger

from the very brilliance of her art. She is a consummate storyteller. Her skill enmeshes the reader in a complexity of plot that neither the Narnian chronicles of C.S. Lewis nor any modern writer of political intrigue can match. Her faults reach from blasphemy and a misconception of sin to exaltation of occult powers to contempt for authority.

L'Engle's books are not the only problem books in our Christian bookstores. Among others, Robert Siegel, in *Alpha Centauri*, has his characters go out alone to their "dreamings" to meditate and to receive their secret names known only to them and on which they will then meditate throughout life; this is transcendental meditation. George McDonald teaches purgatory and the Big Bang

theory. Steven R. Lawhead's fantasies are a complex mixture of magic and a prophetic view that is a cross between evolution and the dialectic. None of these authors presents a biblical view of Christ or salvation.

Parents and youth leaders should discuss with youth the books they are reading. It is not enough to rely on the owners of Christian bookstores, who do not have the time to read all the books they sell and probably would not be inclined to read children's books if they did. If an objectionable book is found, the manager should be told. Those bookstore managers who are truly seeking God's direction, will not want to sell books that endanger anyone's spiritual well-being.



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## NEWSLETTER

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