



PERSONAL
FREEDOM
OUTREACH

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EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

newsletter

Eisegesis and Plagiarism

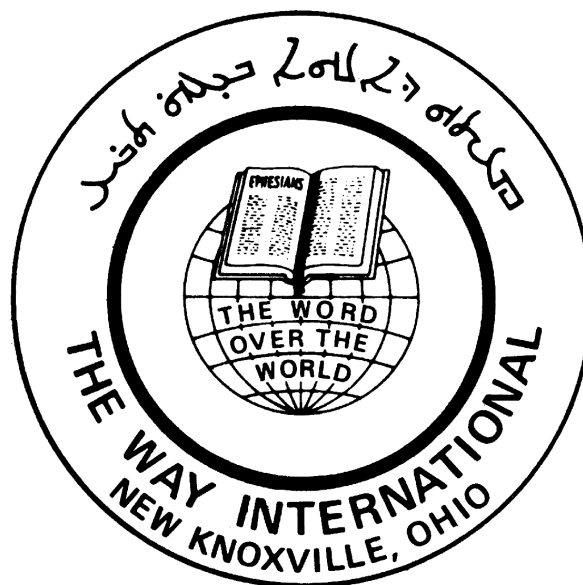
A FURTHER LOOK AT THE WRITINGS OF VICTOR PAUL WIERWILLE

by JOHN P. JUEDES

Members of The Way International hold in high esteem the writings of founder Victor Paul Wierwille. His teachings embody the group's theology and practice, and are the primary rule by which The Way's researchers decide which verses of the Bible may be deleted or revised (*The Integrity at the God-Breathed Word*, May-June 1975, pg. 7). The courses Wierwille teaches (via video tape), including *Power for Abundant Living*, are essentially required for acceptance by anyone who wishes to participate in The Way International.

Wierwille's followers produced a book, *The Living Word Speaks*, which lauded the quality and volume of his writings with a chronological bibliography. His followers also value his writings as unique and original in our day, being based entirely on his own biblical research with God Himself as mentor (*The Way Living In Love*, second edition, 1972, pg. 178).

When one understands the nature



—THE PRESIDENT'S FLAG EMBLEM—
formerly served as the seal for
THE WAY INTERNATIONAL

and origin of Wierwille's writings, one also understands something about him as a man. Further, when one understands the writings, one realizes that Wierwille does not deserve the esteem bestowed upon him.

Categorizing His Work

Wierwille's writings fall into three categories of character and origin: transcribed sermons and teachings, books actually written by him and books written by others in his name.

The majority fall into the first category, including the *Studies in Abundant Living* series, *Victory in Christ*, parts of *Jesus Christ is Not God*, and most magazine articles. The style is sermonic; Wierwille alternately quotes a few verses of Scripture and then follows with commentary.

It is easy to "write" a book in this manner. All Wierwille needed was an audience to discipline him to give regular teachings, a tape recorder and a transcriber. Rhoda Wierwille, Wierwille's secretary since 1947 (and who later became his sister-in-law), remembers transcribing the tapes of his *Power for Abundant Living* teachings into a 900-page manuscript that later was edited into a book of the same name. Any

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EDITORIALS

CONTEMPORARIES HAD LOW VIEW OF MONEY-DIGGER SMITH

It is known that from 1820 to 1826, Mormon church founder Joseph Smith, Jr. searched for buried treasure using magical means. Some of it was done in central Pennsylvania with Josiah Stowell, a farmer of the Bainbridge area and a Presbyterian deacon. Stowell financed Smith's activities in hope of having him show Stowell and his company where to dig.

It is also known that Smith did this in the Palmyra, N.Y., area. However, no one knew the name of his patron until a document from the archives of Princeton University came to light.

In addition to naming Smith's Palmyra patron, this three-page letter, answering an inquiry from a young Methodist minister regarding the "Mormonite" movement, gives us insight into how Smith was viewed by his contemporaries.

The Rev. Ancil Beach was serving circuits in 1831 and 1832 in Connersville, Ind., south of Richmond, and in New Castle, northwest of Richmond. That circuit put him within about 20 miles of Winchester, where there was a growing Mormon community. It is likely that this precipitated the letter to the postmaster of Canandaigua, N.Y., in Ontario County. A reply was drafted by Walter Hubbell and signed by him as the master and chancery of the court of Ontario County. Accompanying his name were those of Nathaniel Howell, chief justice of the court; Henry Chapin, the commissioner of the judiciary; Jerod Wilson, surrogate judge; Lewis Jenkins, postmaster; and the Rev. Ansel D. Eddy, the Presbyterian pastor in Canandaigua, N.Y.

Their letter to Beach told what they knew about Smith and Mormonism. Hubbell kept a copy of the letter and dated it January 1832. The statements in the letter are in complete agreement with the interviews that were obtained almost two years later by Dr. Philastus Hurlbut and published in 1834 in Eber D. Howe's book, *Mormonism Unveiled*.

Part of the letter reads: "Joseph Smith has lived in and about Manchester for several years an idle, worthless fellow, previous to the Mormon project he had been engaged for some time in company with several others of the same character in digging for money. They were poor as well as worthless and for a time were supported by a Mr. Fish an illiterate man of some property who was duped by them, and when he found that his money diggers were like to consume what he had gathered by his industry he turned them off. Joseph Smith then pretended to have found a box, in digging in the woods, containing some gold plates with characters upon them which none but himself could decipher."

This "Mr. Fish" apparently is Abraham Fish. In *The Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism*, Pomeroy

Tucker mentions two individuals from the Manchester area who were pioneers in the Mormon movement. One was David Fish and the other Abraham Fish. There are references to Abraham Fish in connection with Smith in other documents of the period.

For example, in the estate papers of Lemuel Durfee, Durfee had loaned about \$37 to Smith and Fish. After his death, his son Lemuel Durfee, Jr. sued Smith and Fish. The document from Princeton University archives indicates that Fish was an illiterate man. The signature of Smith appears in the local Justice of the peace's (Nathan Pierce) docket book of this trial. Abraham Fish's signature appears as an "X" with the words, "Abraham Fish his mark."

It is apparent that this Abraham Fish is the same man who was financing the digging activities of Smith in the Palmyra area. There is also in the Joseph Smith collection, in the Mormon archives in Salt Lake City, a note credit with the names of A. Fish and Joseph Smith. Now for the first time we know who his main patron was whom he found support from in his money-digging activities in the Palmyra area.

We also have further evidence as to the character and activities of Smith prior to his being called out as "God's prophet" as the Latter-day Saints would have the world believe.

—WPW



DAVE HUNT ANSWERED??

Authors Thomas Reid, Mark Virkler, James A. Lame and Alan Langstaff have combined on the 166-page *Seduction?? A Biblical Response*. This publication appears to be the first in what probably will be a long line of "answers" to Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon's *Seduction of Christianity*.

The book consists of several critiques of *Seduction*, followed by four "concordance" studies that try to show that Hunt and McMahon's allegations are unbiblical.

It is clear from the outset that the writers of these critiques are of the "Charismystic" tradition, which Hunt and McMahon seek to turn Christians away from. Accused of reaching false conclusions through inadequate research, incorrect analysis, and faulty presuppositions (pg. 9), Hunt and McMahon are said to have written a book that is "doing more to divide the Body of Christ than any other single event of modern history" (pg. 1). Hunt and McMahon are called "Christian pharisees" (pg. 48) and "the accuser of the brethren" (pg. 40).

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NEWS UPDATE

EX-PEOPLES TEMPLE MEMBER GETS JAIL TERM

Nearly a decade after the murder of California Representative Leo Ryan and the mass murder-suicide of the followers of the Rev. Jim Jones, a judge sentenced, on March 12, former Peoples Temple member Larry Layton, 41, to life in prison.

Although the prosecution asked for a parole eligibility date of 20 years, according to Chief U.S. District Judge Robert Peckham, Layton will be eligible for parole in four years because "consideration of the environment in which Layton and others members were virtually imprisoned" was given.

Layton was convicted December 1 of conspiracy and aiding and abetting in the murder of Ryan and for the attempted murder of U.S. diplomat Richard Dwyer.

In November 1978, hours after the murders of Ryan, three newsmen and a Peoples Temple defector, the Rev. Jim Jones and 912 followers died by poison and gunfire at the sect's jungle headquarters, known as Jonestown, in Guyana, South America.

—MKG



PHONE SERVICE PROMOTED WITCHCRAFT

Youngsters who dialed a telephone conference line dubbed "CHAT" received a recorded message urging them to dial another number to learn about black magic, witchcraft and spells, according to the San Jose Mercury News newspaper.

The March 4 edition carried a report that its inquiries into the matter put an end to the message referring to the line known as "CULT."

The CHAT line, which is aimed at teen-agers connects callers with one to eight other youngsters for a maximum of three minutes.

San Francisco Bay area callers dialing the number also heard this promotion: "And if you're into black magic, why not try" and then gave a Los Angeles area number. Callers to that number were told: "Hello and thanks for calling (the number), a dark passageway full of ancient secrets and mystic rites. Welcome to the old religion, the new sacred line for modern practitioners and believers."

Callers then could speak with an operator or other callers on subjects such as Satanism, witchcraft, spells, demonology, communication with the dead and sorcery, according to a CULT line operator and professed witch.

Both lines, which cost \$2 a call plus toll charges, are run by Friendship Network Inc., with offices in San Francisco,

Los Angeles and Seattle. The CHAT line is advertised on San Francisco Bay area TV and radio stations, but the CULT line was not promoted.

The CULT line promotion has since been changed to a promotion for the company's rock 'n' roll information number.

—KAM



MORMONS OWN UP TO JOSEPH SMITH'S OCCULTISM

Mark Hofmann, the Salt Lake City documents dealer on trial for murder, recently admitted in court that he planted the two bombs that killed Steven Christensen and Katherine Sheets and that he forged at least two documents purported to be key pieces in the puzzle of early Mormon church history.

This affair has dealt a great blow to the reputation of the Mormon church. The church has had to admit that it was buying documents from Hofmann to prevent their publication. The documents dealt with Mormon prophet Joseph Smith's money-digging and involvement in occult practices. The church, in its zeal to keep the purchases secret, played right into Hofmann's hands by not having the documents examined for authenticity. Sure enough, the documents later were found to be forgeries.

Despite this, the documents forced Mormon scholars to own up to Smith's background in occult practices and acknowledge that, the documents aside, there was enough evidence to prove Smith's occult involvement.

Therefore, Mormon scholars have begun trying to justify Smith's practices, saying that he wasn't any worse than anybody else living at that time because belief in and practice of magic was pervasive in 18th and early 19th century America.

The scholars go on to say that it was the coming of the enlightenment and rationalism that changed people's outlook on occult practices. These scholars say that since we don't live in that culture any longer, it's hard for us to put ourselves in those people's shoes.

However, research shows that as early as 1788 in New York, and equally as early in Vermont, there were laws against occult practices such as palmistry and witchcraft and that the press was generally unfavorable to such claims.

Undaunted by that, Mormon scholars are now trying to find a rationale for Smith's occult practices. Mormon scholar Dr. Richard Anderson conceded in his latest *BYU*

(continued on page 7)

THE TORTURE STAKE THEORY

How Cults Have Staked Their Claim on Shaky Ground...

by PAUL WEATHERS

“For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” (Philippians 3:18, NIV)

Many cults today attack the Christian cross. The allegation often has been made that Jesus Christ did not die on a cross, but on a “torture stake” or “pale.” It is also said that the Christian cross is of pagan origin.

Much of the evidence used in support of this argument is misquoted. An excellent example of this is the often used partial quote from the book *De Cruce Liber Primus* by Justin Lipsius. This misquotation has been exposed by PFO East Director Bill Cetnar in his book *Questions for Jehovah's Witnesses Who Love the Truth* (pg. 14). Such faulty evidence need not be addressed here, since a prudent person is able to ascertain the difference between actual evidence and mere quotes of unresearched opinions (Proverbs 14:15).

Those who hold to the “torture stake” theory usually base their conclusion on three arguments:

Argument #1: “Prior to the time of Christ, various crosses were used as religious symbols to represent the sun god or even ‘Tammuz,’ the false messiah of Babylon. This proves that Christianity derived its cross from paganism.”

Rebuttal: The Babylonians also believed that Tammuz died and was resurrected from the dead (see *A Dictionary of Non-Christian Religions* by Geoffrey Parrinder, pg. 273). But rather than conclude that the Christian belief in Jesus and his resurrection originated in paganism, Christians can conclude that Satan counterfeited the birth and resurrection of Jesus just as he counterfeited the Christian cross in pagan religions. One of Satan’s most effective schemes is to counterfeit God’s truth (Exodus 7:8-12).

Argument #2: “The cross did not become a permanent symbol of redemption until Edict of Milan in A.D. 313.”

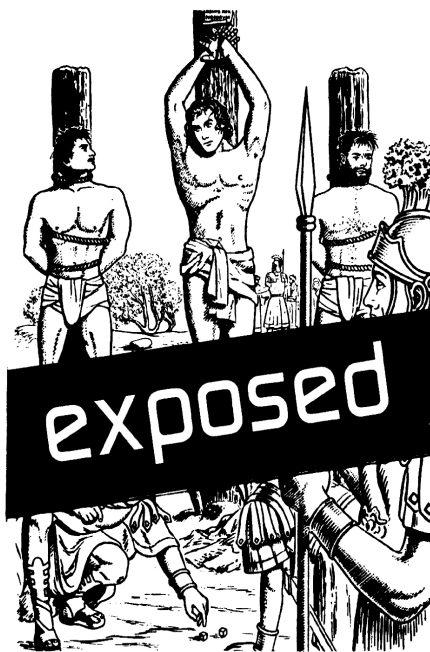
Rebuttal: The Edict of Milan removed the need for secrecy among Christians which had stood in the way of open symbols and worship (see the *Handbook to the History of Christianity*, pp. 38, 150).

Argument #3: “The Greek word *stau ros* means ‘stake’ or ‘pale.’ This proves Jesus was impaled on a torture stake rather than crucified on a cross. Bible translators are being dishonest in rendering *stau ros* as cross.”

Rebuttal: Early usage of the word *stau ros* together with research into the manner of Roman executions shows that Jesus died on a cross, and *stau ros* can refer to either a stake or a cross, depending on the context.

Roman crucifixion went in this manner: The condemned man was forced to drag his own *stau ros* (John 19:17) to the place of punishment where the other *stau ros* already was upright in the ground. The victim’s arms then were outstretched to the stake, or crossbeam, that he had dragged, and then nailed to it through the wrists. The crossbeam then was lifted up, with the body on it, to the vertical *stau ros* and attached by a long spike. Last, the feet of the condemned man were nailed to the upright post (see further *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 6, 1973, pg. 825; *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 8, 1984, pp. 260-261; *Jesus and His Times*, Daniel Rops, 1954, pp. 540-541).

Thus, the two stakes together make a cross. *Stau ros* is used in the Bible to describe the crossbeam (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26; and John 19:17). It also is used to describe the cross after both stakes were joined (Matthew 27:40, 42; Mark 15:30, 32; and John 19:19, 25, 31).



The testimony of two early historical witnesses is quite strong in favor of the Christian cross. Irenaeus spoke of the cross of Jesus as having five ends as follows: two longitudinal, two latitudinal, and a fifth to support the weight of the victim (see *Adversus Haereses*, II, 24, 4). Barnabas testified that the cross of Jesus was in the shape of the Greek letter *Tau* (see *Epistle of Barnabas*, X, 8).

Finally, an examination of this subject would be incomplete without the testimony of the Apostle Thomas. Had Jesus been impaled on a stake, there would be only *one nail* through both hands (see *De Cruce Liber Primus*, pg. 1155; also *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1965, pg. 211). Yet Thomas stated: “Unless I shall see in his *hands* the imprint of the *nails*, and put my finger into the place of the *nails*, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25, NASV). Thomas’ statement clearly indicates a cross!

The weight of the verifiable evidence has buried the “torture stake” theory. Jesus did in fact die on a cross. The defense of the Christian cross rests.

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Paul Weathers serves on the Founders Board of Mount Carmel Outreach - Institute for Christian Apologetics, Inc.

Observing EASTER: PROFITABLE or PAGAN?

by REV. G. RICHARD FISHER

Jehovah's Witnesses say that Easter and the celebration thereof is pagan. They cite the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons* to prove that the Easter celebration is a pagan custom with origins in Babylon and the goddess Astarte (see *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, pp. 179-180).

Further, the *Encyclopedia Americana* states: "Easter, Pagan. According to the Venerable Bede, English historian of the early 8th century, the word is derived from the Norse Ostara or Eostre" (pg. 506).

No one can dispute the word's pagan origin. Yet neither can we dispute the propriety of celebrating Christ's resurrection. It is a practice written all over the book of Acts and the epistles. Everywhere the apostles went, they spoke of the resurrection.

Therefore, the question Christians need to answer is: "Should we call the celebration of the resurrection *Easter* and are we compromising with paganism in doing so?"

We can call our celebration of Jesus' resurrection *Easter* for two strong reasons:

Reason #1: The precedent of history in investing old words with new meaning. Many modern words and practices have some connection with past, pagan meanings. However, we have invested entirely new meanings into these words and practices. Words change and become the vehicle to communicate the meaning that we give them.

The names of all the months on our calendar have pagan origins in that they relate to pagan gods or pagan practices. Yet it is not a sin to have a calendar or to date a check by the name of the god Janus, the root of our *January*. Even Jehovah's Witnesses do this. The key is in the intent. If there is no intent to use the word in its



pagan meaning, then its pagan origins are of no account.

If Christians followed the "guilt by ancient association," we would have to check out of daily living. Each day of the week derives its name from Germanic, Roman or other pagan roots (see *Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia*, pg. 1450).

Reason #2: The precedent of the biblical principle of investing old words with new spiritual meaning. When Israel marched into Canaan in the 14th century, B.C., the Canaanites were practicing pagan betrothal ceremonies (see *The Holy and The Profane*, Theodor Gaster, 1980, pg. 82). Yahweh elevated that practice and betrothal became an integral part of Jewish life. Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, and his mother Mary were betrothed. Do we dare say: "Betrothal — pagan. Throw it out?"

The Apostle Paul made a habit of seizing current words, elevating them and pouring into them new spiritual meaning. Take for instance the word "propitiation." Paul took a raw pagan word, not a neutral word. He used the Greek word *hilaskomai*. Listen to Vine's explanation of that religious, pagan word and its root meaning:

"*Hilaskomai* was used amongst the Greeks with the significance to make the *gods propitious*, to appease, propitiate, inasmuch as their

good will was not conceived as their natural attitude, *but something to be earned first*" (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pg. 220, "Propitiation," emphasis added).

Can anything be more contrary to the Gospel and grace? Can anything be more blatantly pagan? Yet, Paul captures this word, uses it, pours into it new content. Paul elevates this word and carries it from the depths right into the throne room of God. Now listen to Vine as he shares Paul's inspired usage:

"It is God who is propitiated by the vindication of His holy and righteous character, whereby, through the provision He has made in the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, He has so dealt with sin that He can show mercy and the remission of his sins" (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pg. 220).

According to the Watchtower's principle of "pagan origin equals guilt," we should abandon many Biblical concepts along with propitiation.

What we call Easter, the annual feast of the Lord's resurrection, was kept from the earliest centuries of the church's history. It originally was called "pascha" because of its association to Passover (see *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, pg. 175, "Easter"). The celebration was talked about by Polycarp as early as 154 A. D. (see *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, pg. 180, "Easter").

Belief in the resurrection soon overpowered the early paganism. The name Easter would be captured and invested with new and higher meaning. Pagan festivals gave way to the celebration of Christ's resurrection and eventually were obliterated. The two stated principles were in place. The church had captured for all time an old word and filled it with new content. Happy Easter!

pastor who preaches regularly could produce a 500-page book every year using this method.

Wierwille made his output seem even larger by printing certain articles several times, as chapters of books and in several different issues of his magazine. This is apparent from identical titles listed in the bibliography of *Writings of Victor Paul Wierwille in The Living Word Speaks* (1981, pp. xv-xxx).

The greatest weakness of this method is that it is easy to say inaccurate things in a live situation. For instance, when Wierwille gave his *Power for Abundant Living* teaching on Hebrews 11:5, he stated that the word "see" in Greek is *anablepo*, which, he said, means to see with one's eyes (see *Power for Abundant Living*, 1971, pg. 191). *Anablepo* was changed to *eidon* some time after the second printing, though the text around the word was left unchanged — a sign that Wierwille's interpretation of the verse would be the same no matter what Greek word was used.

No one has ever found a Greek manuscript with the word *anablepo* used there. However, Wierwille was using his English Bible, guessed wrong on what the Greek word was and built his whole case against the orthodox interpretation of this passage on a false statement. As one reads some of his teachings, it appears that he did not do any significant research before his presentation. Consequently, Wierwille's exegesis, exposition and applications often are superficial.

Examples in the second category include portions of *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today* and *Are the Dead Alive Now?* It takes more time and effort to sit down and write than it does to merely speak and have someone else transcribe a tape, and it usually makes a person more careful in what is put into print.

However, there is a temptation in written work to plagiarize and Wierwille succumbed to it. He copied some parts of J.E. Stiles' book, *The Gift of*

The Holy Spirit, published in 1948, into his *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today*, published in 1954, almost word for word. Wierwille also incorporated every section of E.W. Bullinger's book, *The Giver and His Gifts*, published in 1905, into this book, copying some sections almost word for word (see PFO Newsletter, Jan.- Mar., 1983, pp. 1, 10-11). In fact, if one were to delete from *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today* all the words and ideas that he took from Stiles' and Bullinger's books, little would remain.

Wierwille also included some sections of Bullinger's works in his book, *Are the Dead Alive Now?* This will be dealt with in more detail in a later article. It is likely that more plagiarism will be brought to light, too. Plagiarisms are most noticeable in the earliest editions of Wierwille's books, before rewritings obscured them.

One cannot overemphasize how dependent Wierwille was on the ideas of other men to fuel his teachings. He absorbed teachings from many men, including Glenn Clark, Albert Cliffe, Rufus Mosely and George Lamsa, none of whom are Christian teachers according to the standards of either evangelicals or The Way International.

The many willing writers found among Way membership as it grew in the 1970s gave birth to the third category of Wierwille writings. Examples are *Jesus Christ Our Passover*, *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* and portions of *Jesus Christ is Not God*. One photo in *The Way Magazine* showed his eight-person research team working on a manuscript of *Jesus Christ Our Passover* (President's Newsletter, *The Way Magazine*, Nov.-Dec., 1979, pg. 28).

Use of a writing team expedites larger volumes and makes possible deeper treatments of a topic. However, to conform to the rules of scholarly practice, Wierwille should have listed himself as the general editor of these works, rather than author. One is left with the impression that the writing was done by him rather than by others. The material does reflect Wierwille's theology, since he picked the writers, approved the production and contributed material.

Wierwille the Author

All this suggests that Wierwille's primary talents did not lie in writing. Apparently, he rarely took the time or care, or perhaps just did not have the ability. It may be that this also reflects shallow research abilities and a tendency to "shoot from the hip" in teaching, which led to inaccuracies.

Wierwille combined a lack of original research with a tendency to grab unusual ideas from others and publish them as his own. The most alarming facet of this was Wierwille's plagiarism.

The Way International rests its teaching primarily on the integrity and authority of Wierwille, its founder. When the founder's lack of integrity and authority is demonstrated, it calls the foundation of the group into question. Those wanting to witness to members of The Way should be ready to demonstrate just how faulty a foundation The Way is built upon.

This article will continue in the next PFO Newsletter.



Rev. John P. Juedes is the pastor of the Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Riverside, California and serves on Personal Freedom Outreach's Board of Reference.



For More Information Concerning
THE WAY INTERNATIONAL
We Recommend:

- *The Integrity and Accuracy of The Way's Word* by Douglas V. Morton and John P. Juedes (\$1.50).
- *From 'Vesper Chimes' To 'The Way International' — The Founder, History and Activities of The Way Ministry* by John P. Juedes and Douglas V. Morton (\$3.00).
- *Trinitarianism — A Pagan Creation? — An Examination of Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille's Claim* by John P. Juedes (\$1.00).

The above publications are available from PFO-Midwest. Please add 70 cents postage to each order.

EDITORIALS

(from page 2)

While the authors set out to prove that what Hunt and McMahon call "New Age-oriented teaching" is in fact biblical, they wind up doing more to prove Hunt and McMahon to be correct.

A most telling point is that the authors decry Hunt's assertion that through their teachings they are helping New Age philosophy make inroads into the Church. However, one of the critiques (*In Defense of Inner Healing*, pg. 48-49) is written by William L. de Arteaga, who in 1983 wrote a book called *Past Life Visions, A Christian Exploration*. In this book, de Arteaga postulates a form of "Christian" reincarnation. This fact alone speaks volumes about the discernment these authors have.

The studies that supposedly marshal "...over 1100 Scriptures to back (the book's) stand" do not live up to the claim. For example, 107 references are given from Acts to Revelation to try to prove that believers are expressions of God" (pp. 102-108). A careful reading of these verses will show that the believer shares spiritual communion with the indwelling Christ, but they do not state or imply that we are in any way "divine" as Virkler would have us believe.

This book should have been called *Seduction?? An Emotional Response*. It is anything but biblical. Its diatribes against Hunt and McMahon are charged with a "catch in the throat" emotionalism prevalent in much of "Charismatic" literature.

—SFC



SPIRITUAL GADFLIES

It is unfortunate that many Christians become curiosity seekers like the Athenians of old, spending time "in nothing else but either to tell, or hear something new." There are spiritual gadflies who are never satisfied with the tried and true doctrines of Scripture but seek excitement in some new speculation, date-setting scheme or twist of the normal. One leading teacher now tells us

that Cabbage Patch dolls are the cause of child misbehavior and that the dismemberment and destruction of these little monsters brings spiritual wholeness. This fad leaves no one safe. Barbie and Teddy Ruxpin may be next.

Others tell us that the Jewish Temple is about to be rebuilt, in spite of what major archaeologists and Israeli government figures say (see *In the Shadow of the Temple*, by Meier Ben Dov). Someone might have us believe that they know the Antichrist is living on the next block.

If Christians indulge in every opinion, every speculation, every carnal notion, they may turn into skeptics and settle on nothing as truth. Augustine says he entertained so many delusions of the Manacheans that he became afraid of truth. Those who accept anything may end up believing nothing. Christians must seek God for established truth and Judgment (and be satisfied with it) and reject the Athenian spirit.

Let's consider seriously the words of William Gurnall:

"Beware of curiosity. He is gone into error that vainly covets novelties and listens after every newfangled opinion. We read of 'Itching ears' (II Timothy 4:3). This itch commonly ends in a scab of error" (*The Christian in Complete Armour*, pg. 302).

—GRF

NEWS UPDATE

(from page 3)

Studies article that Smith did indeed practice magic, but that he did so only up until 1826. When he dug up the gold plates, Anderson says, he realized that he had a serious mission and put his teenage follies behind him.

While this scenario is at best questionable, it does have one of the staunch defenders of the Mormon faith admitting that during the time Smith supposedly was being prepared for the life of a prophet, he was immersed in the occult and digging for money.

—WPW

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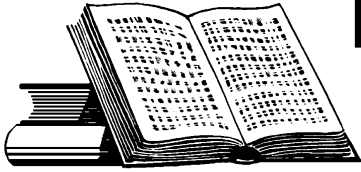
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BOOKS IN REVIEW

BEYOND SEDUCTION

by Dave Hunt

Harvest House Publishers, 282 pages, \$7.95

This book batters down the new "gospel" of selfism. A companion to *The Seduction of Christianity*, it calls for a return to a biblical view of sin and self. It is a good study of biblical anthropology and exposes the "health and wealth gospel," "visualization," "seed faith" and other seductive fads for the frauds that they are.

Dave Hunt is concerned about the quality of modern American Christianity, especially in the "electronic church." The subtitle, *A Return To Biblical Christianity*, is descriptive of the author's thrust.

His dealing with the phrase "touch not the Lord's anointed" (pp. 39-41) is especially helpful since it is used by some TV preachers who bristle at criticism.

Hunt's forceful documentation includes quotes from Charles Spurgeon, John Calvin, C.S. Lewis, J.I. Packer and many more. Many of the evangelicals that he quotes, however, would not agree with Hunt's apparent belief that charismatic gifts are for today if properly regulated (pg. 76). But one cannot accuse Hunt of not doing his homework.

It is good to see Hunt move a bit away from the conspiracy view laid out in his previous books. Rather than the reductionism of his earlier writings, he talks of a "cosmic conspiracy" (pg. 149), which is the age-old battle between Satan and the church. On page 239, he says that the issues he is dealing with are "last days apostasy," but he tones the statement down with the phrase "seems to be."

There are only two things to be regretted about *Beyond Seduction*. One, there is not an index for information retrieval. A book of this type should have one. The other is Hunt's appeal to the Azusa Street "prophecy" on page 260. Given the debatable nature of the Azusa Street revival, Hunt should not have used this. He could have made his point well without it.

Anyone trying to understand the current obsession with self-exaltation will find this book helpful and informative. The minor criticisms can be overlooked.

—GRF



REFUTING JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DEFENDING THE FAITH

by Randall Watters

Bethel Ministries, 2 Vol., 175 & 219 pages, \$14.00

Evangelical Christianity's version of the Watchtower's *Reasoning from the Scriptures* has arrived in Randall Watters' two-volume set *Refuting Jehovah's Witnesses and Defending the Faith*.

The first volume, *Refuting Jehovah's Witnesses* replies to the Watchtower's opposition to Christian belief through an examination of their superficial arguments and also exposes the faulty theology of major Watchtower doctrines. Other sections cover apostasy, brainwashing and Watchtower finances. An extended subject index and Scripture index further enhance the usefulness of the book.

The second work, *Defending the Faith*, is labeled as "a topical guide to Basic Christian doctrine" and is to Christians what the *Reasoning* book is to Watchtower adherents. Many of the same topics covered in the first volume are again discussed, this time from the position of orthodoxy. This book also has a subject and Scripture Index.

While each volume is a complete work in itself, they do cross-reference each other on numerous topics and are sold only in the set.

—MKG



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