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The Lamsa Connection

The Origin of Wierwille's False Christ

by Douglas V. Morton

"In other words, I am saying that Jesus Christ is not God, but the Son of God. They are not 'co-eternal, without beginning or end, and co-equal.' Jesus Christ was not literally with God in the beginning; neither does he have all the assets of God."¹

The above denial of the deity of Jesus Christ is made by the late Victor Paul Wierwille, founder and First President of The Way International, a group that denies the Trinity, the personality of the Holy Spirit and the deity of Jesus Christ. Wierwille made the above statement in 1975 in the first edition of his book, **Jesus Christ Is Not God**.

Just a few pages before, Wierwille wrote:

"If 42 years ago or 30 or maybe even 20 years ago someone had postulated to me that Jesus Christ was not God, I too would have been taken back. But for me it has been a gradual learning and, therefore, an unlearning process as I've progressively gained a knowledge of God and His Son."²

It is a fact that 20 years before, in 1955, Wierwille believed and taught the deity of Jesus Christ. His first book, called **Victory Through Christ**, written in 1945, speaks of Jesus as "Eternal Son of God," "the All Wise One," "The Almighty in human form" and "the Eternal One."³ Wierwille even offered prayer to Jesus



in the book.⁴

As late as 1957, Wierwille still spoke in Trinitarian terms and used words that referred to Jesus' deity. He noted that the word "spirit" is used "in combination with divine names" and then gave one of these combinations as "**pneuma Kristou**, 'Christ's Spirit,' ..."⁵ He wrote that the word 'Spirit' is "used of all the God-head. **Pneuma**, 'Spirit,' is used of God, John 4:24; Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:17;

Holy Spirit, Acts 5:3."⁶

By the early 1960s, Wierwille had made his break with biblical teaching on Jesus. He rejected both the Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ. In a 1964 article in **The Way Magazine**, Wierwille declared his own war on the deity of Christ. In this article, Wierwille stated:

"The Bible teaches that there is only one God and that God was in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:19) The Word also teaches that God was from the beginning. (Genesis 1:1). If God was from the beginning, and if God is what the Bible says He is, Spirit, (John 4:24), then God cannot be born. God cannot be born because God is Eternal."⁷

Wierwille now considered the teaching of Christ's deity as a heretical doctrine with roots dating from the third and fourth century A.D.⁸

Wierwille's Contact With George Lamsa

What really caused Wierwille to break with the teaching of Jesus' deity? Wierwille, who died in 1985, isn't here to tell us. However, there is good evidence to show that it was not so much "what" as "who" caused Wierwille to reject the biblical teaching on Christ's deity. It was during this critical time in the development of Wierwille's thinking (1957-64) that he

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EDITORIALS

KURT KOCH'S WARNING TO EXORCISTS

People involved in so-called "deliverance" ministries, those which purport to cast invading, indwelling demons out of Christians, often quote from the writings of Kurt Koch to buttress their teachings and give their theories an air of scholarship and respectability. It is as if they are saying, "It has to be true. Kurt Koch said so!" We want to go beyond the limited citations of Koch that these "deliverance" teachers use and look more closely at what Koch wrote and believes.

"Deliverance" ministers claim that their dozens or even hundreds of purported demon expulsions are proof that Christians can be demon-possessed.

Do hundreds of cases really prove anything? Koch, a German Lutheran pastor who wrote about dealing with the occult and counseling people who had been involved in the occult, does not think so. Koch wrote "We must also raise the question whether 600 spontaneous cases of occult subjection are sufficient as a basis for building up a thesis." (**Christian Counselling and Occultism**, Kregel Publishing, pg. 167) Koch wrote that we are not to be impressed by numbers and quantity and that building a premise on even 600 cases would be risky.

Koch had some interesting, if not controversial, views. Those who quote him probably would not consider him as being in their theological camp. Koch believed in ongoing direct revelation and in loss of salvation. His view on the latter made room for the idea that the Holy Spirit could leave a true believer who fell into gross sin or occultism, leaving a vacuum that demons could fill. Koch taught that believers can stay demon-free by repeated bestowals of the Holy Spirit through the sacraments. Koch's method of expulsion was confession, renunciation and absolution, which he described as pastoral assurance that sins are forgiven.

Koch believed strongly in modern psychiatry and saw the need to integrate the teachings of Freud, Adler and Jung, who was a spiritist, into the process. He saw the best exorcist as one with a combination of charismatic gifts and the latest psychological techniques. It is impossible to know what Koch, who has been dead for several years, would say about the morass of psychological theories that exist today and what he would use and what he would leave out.

Since the Bible does not teach that a believer can be demon-possessed or demon-invaded, let's approach Koch and extract from his writings what fits into that biblical reality. In his book, **Christian Counselling and Occultism**, he gave strong warnings to budding exorcists regarding errors in their data-gathering and interpretation. In the chapter titled "The Critical Testing of Cases," he wrote

about causes of error in observing and collecting material. All of the current phenomena of claimed demon possession of believers can be viewed from Koch's delineation and description of errors that exorcists commit. His lists of errors could be a model for an explanation of even the excesses seen in modern-day deliverance.

Here are three sources of confusion Koch gave, along with warnings from his book, **Christian Counselling and Occultism**:

1. Medical information misinterpreted

Koch called for "investigation of reliability and reality of the proffered material." (pg. 63) In short, are some interpreting the external data properly? He wrote that there can be "Sources of error in the statements of confessors and the evaluating pastoral counselor and, finally, those lurking in the method of exploration." (pg. 163) He was saying that often counselors operate on subjective impressions, not hard facts. He then cited an example of a pregnant woman who reported a "spook apparition." Koch wrote that there was a "fateful pastoral error" in not checking out medical facts and in assuming occultic roots. (pg. 164) In other words, always look for medical causes. After the birth of the baby, it was shown that the root causes of the problem had to do with changes in body chemistry during pregnancy (called "bodily psychical condition" by Koch) and that the delivery ended all the symptoms. So many problems can be physical and chemical, Koch argued. His comment: "From the psychiatric view this case must be interpreted as an illusion. Sense stimuli reach the sense organs but are interpreted wrong and are inverted." Reye's syndrome has bizarre manifestations that would be surely seen by some as "demon inhabitation." Counselors need to work closely with a physician. Koch went on to mention numerous diseases (pp. 168-169) that can create delusions and hallucinations.

2. Misinformation because of the counselor's perception being colored (biased), distorted or suggestive

Koch feared that a pastor may unknowingly mislead "in his use of suggestive questions." (pg. 164) We might call this prompting or priming. This suggestive prepping can create all kinds of bizarre behavior in a counselee. Koch concluded that personality disturbances can occur as a consequence of suggestion of possession. "Suggestive questions that are carefully aimed usually produce the desired results." (pg. 165) So how much of all of this is unwittingly staged? Koch was certain that a priori disposition on a researcher's part can influence technique and results. In other words, we can create what we assume.

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NEWS UPDATE

NO RAPTURE IN 1988

Late last summer, rapture forecasters once again were watching the eschatological clock. Most notable was Edgar C. Whisenant, Jr. of Little Rock, Ark., whose 92-page booklet, **88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be in 1988**, said Christ would return for His Church during the Jewish Feast of Trumpets (Rosh-Hash-Ana), Sept. 11-13.

The Whisenant booklet was circulated throughout the United States. The World Bible Society, the book's publisher, said 4 million copies of the booklet have been printed: 2 million copies by that firm, and 1 million each by Whisenant and another individual. Permission to reproduce the book was granted to anyone wishing to give copies to friends and loved ones. The October issue of the **Bookstore Journal** said the book was the No. 2 seller among Christian paperbacks.

Whisenant also made predictions on radio and television broadcasts. As Rosh Hashana came and went, some called Whisenant a false prophet. Others accused him of confusing the brethren. Whisenant refused to speak to the secular press. The World Bible Society, undaunted by the failed prophecy, claimed the book had sparked a major revival with many committing or rededicating themselves Christ.

While the claims of revival are difficult to document, several reports of behavior, ranging from the amusing to the bizarre, were reported. Some who believed the book's predictions were reported to be asking neighbors and friends to take care of pets left behind in the rapture. In Gibsonville, N.C., an armed man barricaded himself in a house for more than 30 hours, firing shots at passing motorists and a police officer. Ricky Odell Chavis, 27, who was convinced the world was coming to an end, was arrested after negotiators were able to get him to step outside his back door. Sheriff's deputies then hurled concussion grenades at the man, stunning him and allowing police to arrest him. Chavis' aunt, Joy Cassell, said Jehovah's Witnesses were involved in convincing him of the end time's imminence, but other indications suggest the Whisenant booklet.

—MKG



FORGER HOFMANN ATTEMPTS SUICIDE

While Robert Lindsey, author of **A Gathering of Saints**, a book about the Salt Lake City bombing murders committed by Mark David Hofmann, was on a Salt Lake City radio talk show, Sept. 15, the program was interrupted for a news bulletin on Hofmann's suicide attempt with an overdose of tranquilizers.

Someone had smuggled the drugs to Hofmann, who then told prison guards he did not want breakfast because he was sleeping in. At noon, the guards found Hofmann unconscious and rushed him to a hospital. He survived the suicide attempt, but needed a skin graft on his arm. Lying on his motionless arm cut circulation to the limb and caused the death of some tissue.

Authorities had recently turned up evidence that Hofmann was offering to pay someone to kill the three parole board members who last summer rejected his appeal for a reduction in his life sentence.

Hofmann was given a five-years-to-life sentence and Utah's parole board periodically reviews the term. The board members had reportedly expressed the opinion that Hofmann should spend his life in prison.

—WPW



EX-JEHOVAH'S WITNESS CONVENTION MARKS TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Blue Mountain Christian Retreat (New Ringgold, Pa.), once again was the site of the annual Witnesses Now For Jesus Convention, Oct. 21-23, 1988.

The annual conventions feature expositions of Watchtower theology vs. the Christian Gospel, teachings about how to witness to Jehovah's Witnesses and the testimonies of former Witnesses who became Christians.

Convention hosts and coordinators Bill and Joan Cetnar were presented with a plaque in honor of 10 years of service in organizing the meetings.

The 11th annual convention is scheduled for October 20-22, 1989. For more information, contact Bill and Joan Cetnar, PFO-East, Box 127, Kunkletown, Pa. 18058.

—AMG



BROOKLYN HEIGHTS OPPOSE WATCHTOWER EXPANSION

The Watchtower Society has met opposition to a major expansion of its Bethel headquarters in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

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A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE WRITINGS OF HANNAH HURNARD

by G. Richard Fisher

On a trip to the Golan Heights in Israel I noticed signs warning people not to stray off the roads. Hidden in the fields around those roads are land mines, left from the Syrian occupation prior to 1967. Those signs have saved many a life.

Christians face hidden dangers in another kind of minefield, Christian bookstores, and there are no signs warning against dangerous books.

After all, most people assume that all books sold in Christian bookstores adhere to good Christian doctrine. Unfortunately, that is not so.

These literary mines are not laid by managers of Christian bookstores. These folks face an almost impossible task. They cannot keep up with the flood of books that are published each month. They also must trust salesmen, who sometimes are more interested in their sales commission than the Great Commission, to help guide them through all the titles. Finally, bookstore owners now find that once-trusted publishers will print almost anything they think will sell. Some so-called Christian books border on Gnosticism. One publisher has an author who writes things he says he discovered about demons apart from Scripture. Demons, he claims, have given him information on Christian living and sanctification.

Also appearing on the Christian best-seller lists are books by Hannah Hurnard. A least a dozen titles are available. No bookstore owner or employee PFO contacted knows anything

about her background or beliefs. She is expected to publish a book soon that is supposed to be partly biographical. It may tell readers something about her.

In Hurnard's book, *Eagles Wings To The Higher Places* (Harper & Row, 1981), she announces that the love of God will ultimately deliver all men universally from hell. Her fictional character Aletheia discovers this higher truth from an encounter with one she assumes to be Jesus:

"Then like great waves and billows the homesick longing for the Higher Places broke over Aletheia's soul. ... No, it was not sorrow for the hopeless plight of the poor people in the dark places which caused her grief; it was anguish at the thought of the hopelessness of the only message which she had to give them. Lost forever with no hope if they rejected it! Cast off by the God who had brought them into existence, if they rejected His call now. All her unacknowledged doubts and questions arose again concerning a God who called Himself Love and who brought myriads of souls into existence without being able to prevent them from condemning themselves to an eternity of helpless darkness and suffering, lost to Him forever. How could he possibly love them, if He let this happen to them? How could He possibly be good, if he brought them into an existence where it was possible for them to separate themselves from His love and joy and goodness forever?" (pp. 21, 22)

Aletheia goes on in confusion:

"Oh, how terrible and hopeless to be a God who loves goodness and cannot save His own creatures from preferring evil. If he did not call Himself a God of Love it would be different. A devil might create living souls capable of tormenting themselves forever. Oh, what agony to love the souls brought into existence enough to go to the cross in a last supreme effort to save them

and not be able to do so. To proclaim, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw **all** men unto Myself,' and to be unable to do it! To find that the Devil is stronger than Goodness and could gloatingly and triumphantly succeed in damning at least ninety percent of God's creatures, leaving only a pitiful ten or even smaller percent to respond to His love — a handful of souls for Him to rejoice over for ever and ever, while all the others were tormented in hell. Oh, what hopelessly bitter Bad News this was. How could she ever believe in and trust such a God again?" (pp. 22-23)

Then, one called The Good Shepherd comes to her:

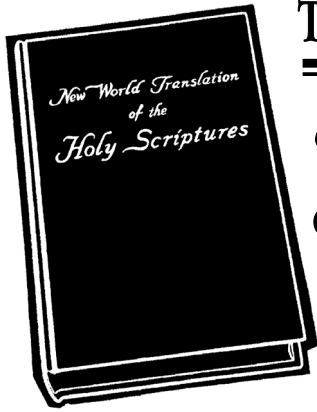
"He took her hand, saying gently, 'God is an infinite ocean of Love and Goodness. In Him there is no wrath at all. What men call His wrath and judgment is the inexorable determination of the love of the skilled surgeon to heal the sickness and suffering of a beloved son, no matter at what cost to Himself and to the son, so that no trace of anything that can hurt or harm the beloved one remains. I will lead you to a place where you will behold the higher truth which will solve completely all your sorrowful questioning.'" (pg. 28)

The answer to her questioning is that it is all going to turn out right for everyone in the end:

"'He is the Saviour of all men!' (1 Timothy 4:10) ... He is lifted up and nailed to the cross with us. As Jesus revealed when He hung between the two thieves and murderers, He **will** 'draw **all** men unto Him.'

'As in Adam (poor fallen Mankind) all die, so in Christ, the Second Adam, shall **all** men be made alive' (1 Corinthians 15:22). Oh, what a victory! The only victory truly worthy of the Great God and Creator Who 'did not make anything in vain but in the end

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The Watchtower's Bible is Correct ...

“Before Abraham came into existence, I have been.”

John 8:58

by Wesley P. Walters

Christians see in these words a claim by Jesus to be Yahweh. In Exodus 3:14, when Moses asked Yahweh who he should tell the Israelites had sent him, Yahweh replied, “I AM that I AM; tell them, I AM sent me to you.” Thus when Jesus claims to have “existed” (Greek: **Ego eimi** = I am, I exist) before Abraham came into existence (Greek: **egeneto** = became), it seems evident to Bible believers that Jesus’ words are nothing less than a claim to be God.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are unwilling to allow such a claim and have put a different meaning upon the words “I AM” (**ego eimi**). In fairness it must be admitted that the Greek words **ego eimi** do not automatically mean someone is claiming to be God. In John 9:8-9, for example, when the blind man Jesus had healed was questioned as to whether he was the same man who previously had sat and begged, he replied, “**Ego eimi.**” This is a normal way of saying, “I am the man” (New International Version) or, “I am he” (King James Version). No one believes that this man was claiming to be Yahweh.

But in John 8:58 there is a time factor introduced that forces a different understanding upon these words: **Before** Abraham was, I AM. The Watchtower translates these words: “Before Abraham came into existence, **I have been.**” A footnote in their original **New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures** indicated that the tense of the verb here is “perfect indefinite.”

Much ink has been spent by Christians claiming that there is no such tense in Greek. But the Watchtower undoubtedly was referring to the English term for verbs that use “have been.” Following the archaic

terminology found in W.H. Weseen’s **Crowell’s Dictionary of English Grammar**, the Watchtower labeled the tense “perfect indefinite.” The modern accepted terminology for this tense is the “perfect indicative.” When criticism was raised about the perfect indefinite, the Watchtower changed its footnote to perfect indicative. (See **New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures**, 1971, Large Print Edition.)

The objections did not end here, however. Even when the Watchtower modernized its terminology, Christians questioned whether its translation was correct. They pointed out that “I AM” in Greek is present, not perfect, tense. While this is true, it is still proper to translate a present tense, when linked with a temporal clause, by the English perfect tense, that is, “have been.” Thus, John 14:9 in Greek reads, “Am I (present tense) so long with you and you do not know me?” But in English, most translators render it, “Have I been (perfect tense) with you so long... ?” John 15:27 reads, “From the beginning you are with me,” but the sense is “you have been with me from the beginning.” Other examples are found in Luke 13:7; 15:29; John 5:4; and Acts 15:21.

In fact, every major Greek Grammar points out this feature. G.B. Winer (pg. 334), E.D. Burton (pg. 18) and C.F.D. Moule (pg. 8) and others refer to it. Some, such as A.T. Robertson (pg. 879) and Dana & Mantey (pg. 183), call it “the progressive present”, while Moule calls it the “present of past action still in progress.” The authoritative Moulton/Turner Grammar (Vol 3:62) speaks of this feature as:

“The present which indicates the continuance of an action during the past and up to the moment of speaking ... the action is conceived as still in

progress.”

Winer has a similar comment, saying that the present tense has a past sense to it where “the verb indicates a state which commenced at an earlier period but still continues.” He cites John 8:58 as an example, as does Moulton/Turner.

The Watchtower translation is therefore an accurate translation. The passage does have the sense that Jesus had existed before Abraham ever came into existence, and he has continued to exist right down to the moment he is speaking with the Jews.

The error of the Watchtower is not in its translation but in its attempted explanation of how Jesus, who was less than 50 years of age, could have continuously existed from before the time of Abraham right down to the first century. If Jesus was Yahweh, who took on human flesh and a human nature, then it is true that He existed before Abraham ever came into being, and he continued to exist right down to New Testament times and still does today. This biblical truth is further exemplified by various New Testament authors (see further 1 Corinthians 10:4; Hebrews 11:26; and 1 Peter 1:11, 18-20).

However, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not want to acknowledge Jesus’ deity. They do not want to admit that Jesus is Emmanuel, which Matthew tells us means “the God with us.” (The definite article occurs here with the term “God.”) Consequently, they have invented a story that Michael the archangel was turned into Jesus by Yahweh. However, even their own teachings contradict this idea.

The Bible teaches that man consists of a soul or spirit residing in a physical body. However, the Watchtower teaches that the soul or spirit is just the name for a life-force that makes the body alive. When a person dies, the life-force, like the human breath, just disappears.

If Yahweh had taken the spirit creature Michael and placed him into a human body to form the human Jesus, then Jesus might have truthfully claimed to have existed before Abraham came to be. But that would mean he was a spirit living in a physical body, and therefore very different from every other human being.

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Instead, the Jehovah's Witnesses, to be true to their teaching about the nature of man, have to believe that Yahweh terminated Michael's existence and made a new creature, Jesus. Watchtower doctrine at this point approaches being the concept of reincarnation. There is no connection, therefore, between Jesus and Michael other than that when Yahweh annihilated Michael he created Jesus. No part of Michael was used to form Jesus, so Jesus could in no sense be said to have existed as Michael before Abraham's time.

The Greek grammatical principle the Witnesses depend on for their translation requires that the existence be understood as an unbroken, continuous existence from before Abraham's day down to the moment Jesus spoke those words. But in the Watchtower's teaching, Michael's existence was interrupted and Jesus' existence began. Thus, while the Jehovah's Witness' translation is accurate, their attempt to explain how Jesus could have existed since pre-Abrahamic times does not provide a biblical explanation.

Furthermore, all the evidence from contemporary Jewish writings shows that when the Jews spoke about the one who continued to exist over the centuries, in their minds this was Yahweh God.

First of all, let us notice that the Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek 200 years before Jesus' time on Earth, understood "I AM that I AM" as expressing God's continuous existence. They rendered that phrase in Greek as **Ego eimi ho on**. This phrase literally translates as "I AM the one who keeps on existing." The use of the present participle (**ho on** = the existing one) stresses the continued existence of Yahweh.

Second, the Aramaic translations of Jesus' day stress this same idea of continuous existence. Most Jews in Palestine during the time of Christ had lost the ability to speak and read Hebrew. While in captivity in Babylon, their forefathers had come to speak a related Semitic dialect called Aramaic. Consequently, several Old Testament Aramaic translations, which were called Targums, were made and used by these Palestinian Jews. The

Targums were not strict translations; at times explanatory materials were added. They were similar to our present-day paraphrase, The Living Bible.

Thus, in the first/second century Targum of Jonathan, the words "I AM" in Ex. 3:14 were not simply translated by the Aramaic words for "I AM." Rather it was paraphrased as:

"Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM He who is, and who will be, hath sent me unto you." (J.W. Etheridge, **The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan**, pg. 450)

The related Palestinian Targum, a copy of which is in the Vatican Library and known as Neophyti I, elaborates further:

"He who said, and the world was from the beginning, and is to say again to it, Be!, and it will be, has sent me unto you." (A.D. Macho, **Neophyti I**, pg. 412)

Here, not only God's continuous existence is expressed, but his creative power is introduced. He is the continuously existing creator.

The later interpretive commentaries of the rabbis, found in **The Midrash Rabba**, also stress that this continued existence of Yahweh is found in the words "I AM." Rabbi Isaac gives the meaning of "I AM" in these words: "Tell them that I AM now what I always was and always will be, for this reason is the word **Eheveh** written three times." (Freedman & Simon, ed. **The Midrash Rabbah**, pg. 64)

The mention of **Eheveh** being written three times refers to the fact that "I AM" occurs three times in Exodus 3:14. **Eheveh** is the Hebrew verb meaning "I AM" (Hebrew: **Eheveh asher Eheveh**) and it occurs a third time when God says to Moses, "Tell them I AM (**Eheveh**) sent me unto you."

Eheveh asher Eheveh was regarded by the Jews as one of the divine names. The Talmud, which records the rabbinic interpretation of the Jewish laws, makes this clear. In Aboth D'Rabbi Nathan, it expressly gives it as one of the "ten terms of praise" by which the Holy One is designated. (A. Cohen, ed. **The Minor Tractates of the Talmud**, Massektoth Ketannah I:163)

In Sefer Torah, the first rule is that letters of the divine names, once

written, cannot be erased, and it gives **Eheveh asher Eheveh** as one of those names. (ibid., II:640)

In Baba Bathra, it mentions that sailors believed that when a wave that would normally sink a ship was struck with a club bearing the name **Eheveh asher Eheveh**, the wave would subside. (I. Epstein, ed., **The Babylonian Talmud**, Seder Nezikin. II:288)

In several of the existing Targums, the first reference to **Eheveh asher Eheveh** is written out in Hebrew and not given an Aramaic rendering, showing that the writers of the Targums regarded it as a divine name just as they did Yahweh.

In the light of this Jewish background where Yahweh was repeatedly thought of as the continually existing one – and where there are clear historical indications that the Jews regarded "I AM" as one of the names of God – it is clear that when Jesus said "Before Abraham came into existence I AM," the Jews could not help but understand him to be laying claim to deity.

In John 5, when Jesus said that in healing on the Sabbath he was simply doing what his Father did, and he could do whatever the Father does (vv. 17, 19), the Jews made a strenuous effort to kill him. The reason was that "he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God." (v. 18)

Likewise, in John 8, it was at the moment they heard his claim that "Before Abraham was, I AM" that the breaking point was reached and "At this, they picked up stones to stone him." (8:59) Had they understood Jesus merely to be saying he previously existed as an angel before he became a human, they might have thought him crazy, or even demon-possessed, but they would hardly have thought him worthy of death.

Only by understanding how completely the Jews of his day identified a claim to continuous existence and the use of the term "I AM" as being a claim to deity, can the Jews' violent reaction be explained. The Jehovah's Witnesses, like the Jews of Jesus' day, may violently reject Jesus' claim to deity, but they should at least be as perceptive as those Jews were and not try to suppress Jesus' clear claim to be Yahweh come in the flesh. ❀

came in contact with a man by the name of George M. Lamsa. Lamsa was a Nestorian Christian, born in 1893 in Kurdistan, Turkey.⁹ Wierwille's association with Lamsa began in 1957. In May 1958, Wierwille resigned as a minister in the Evangelical and Reformed denomination. Lamsa and Wierwille appear to have worked closely together during this time, with Lamsa finishing his English translation work on the Syriac Peshitta text of the Bible in Wierwille's home.¹⁰ Wierwille also claimed that he and Lamsa "together produced the first American grammar in 1960 for the study of biblical manuscripts with the ancient Estrangelo letters."¹¹ Lamsa also taught a class at The Way Summer School in 1962.¹²

Lamsa and Nestorianism

Any two such people who worked closely together could be expected to have discussed various beliefs with one another. Since Lamsa was a Nestorian Christian, it is likely that he discussed with Wierwille the beliefs of this group. Wierwille's rejection of the deity of Christ would have easily followed if he accepted Lamsa's radical Nestorianism.

Nestorianism is a heresy condemned by the Church at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431.¹³ This heresy accepts the two natures in Christ, the divine and the human, but defines these two natures so that they have no communication between each other. Instead of two natures in one Christ, they end up with what amounts to two persons in Christ. Nestorianism "so emphasized the duality of natures, and the continued distinction between the human and the divine in Christ, as to lose sight of the unity of person, and to substitute for a real Incarnation a mere conjunction (**Sunapheia**), a moral union or intimate friendship between the Divine Logos and the man Jesus."¹⁴ In Nestorianism, the Word does not actually "become flesh," as John writes in John 1:14. Rather, the divine does not participate with the human nature or vice versa. The scriptural teaching concerning the union of the two natures in Christ "permits neither confusion nor separation of the natures."¹⁵ Nestorianism has a difficult time with

this orthodox concept of union.

Christian theologian John Theodore Mueller observes that Nestorianism leads "to Unitarianism (Modernism), or to the error that Christ was a mere man."¹⁶ It seems almost certain that Lamsa's Nestorianism led Wierwille to the denial of Christ's deity.

By 1949, Lamsa's Nestorianism had led him to make some erroneous remarks about Jesus and Christianity. Lamsa considered the Nestorian churches to be the true churches of the East. He praised the Nestorian Christians for their rejection of the early Church's teaching that Mary was the Theotokos, the God-bearer, or the Mother of God.¹⁷ He rejected the idea that "God was born from the virgin Mary and died on the cross."¹⁸ He stated that "Jesus was a man, but Christ in him was God."¹⁹ Immediately after this, he wrote that "The human and the divine were united."²⁰ But the reader should remember that the unity Lamsa spoke of is not a true unity of two natures in one person. Christ, for Lamsa, was the divine nature, separate from the man Jesus and this Christ was "in him,"²¹ "manifested in him."²²

Lamsa, Nestorians and the Trinity

Lamsa wrote that Nestorians teach that "... God, being the Eternal Spirit, life, and truth, cannot be born from a woman whom He had created, nor is He subject to death, nor can he be divided into three persons."²³ He considered the term "three persons in God" as implying "three gods" to the average Semitic mind.²⁴ He wanted rather to use the phrases "there is one God with three **Kenomey** attributes, instead of three persons."²⁵ Lamsa then explained that the word "'Kenomey' is an Aramaic word, the nearest English equivalent for which is 'substance.'²⁶ Lamsa's "Aramaic" is ancient Syriac.

An examination of William Jennings' **Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament**, shows that the word **Kenomey** means "solid existence, substance, Hebrews XI (as distinct from the shadow); **person**, so the **self**, **-self**."²⁷ The word is used in the Syriac (Lamsa's Aramaic) translation of John 5:26. Here John writes that the Father has life "in himself." He also states that the Father grants to the Son to have life "in himself." Thus, it would seem that **Kenomey** could be used not just as "substance," but as "person," as

Jennings indicates. It is also important to realize the fluidity and interchangeability of words used for the three persons of the Trinity by the early Church. Various words such as the Greek words **hypokeimenon**, **hypostasis**, **prosopon** and even **ousia**, as well as Latin words such as **persona** and **substantia** were used to designate the three members of the Trinity.²⁸

Lamsa was not known for his consistency. He could speak disparagingly of the Greek concept of the Trinity as has been shown above. He could say that "The doctrine of the Trinity, three persons in one, was a new concept – a Greek concept of God."²⁹ and that "The Eastern Christians believe in one God with three attributes, instead of three persons."³⁰ Yet, he could speak approvingly of a Nestorian prayer that says "there are three Persons in one Deity."³¹

Not only was Lamsa inconsistent, he was unable to understand the aspect of Church history that relates to the refining of the terms in the doctrine of the Trinity. One wonders what Lamsa meant by "one God with three **Kenomey** attributes." The word "attributes" might lead one to speculate that Lamsa was a modalist, one who held to one God in one person. It is important to note that Nestorianism in itself does not reject the Trinity. Mar Abd Yeshua, 13th century Nestorian Metropolitan of Nisibis and Armenia, spoke in favor of the Trinity. For him, "The 'Holy' thrice repeated in the seraphic hymn, as mentioned by Isaiah [Isaiah 6:1-3], joined with one 'LORD,' attests Three Persons in One Essence."³² Those who railed "at the truth of the Catholic Church, on account of her faith in the Trinity," he wished to "be confounded and put to shame."³³

Lamsa's inconsistency is probably best understood in light of the Nestorian idea of the Trinity. Nestorianism does not reject the Trinity. It does, however, use different terminology to describe the doctrine. Lamsa appears to be unique in his dislike for the term "Trinity." Nestorians in general do not appear to share Lamsa's dislike. Lamsa's dislike for the term probably resulted from his dislike of anything Greek.³⁴

Lamsa probably was a Trinitarian, even though he disliked the word "Trinity." To dislike a word does not mean that one disagrees with the con-

cept behind the word. St. Augustine disliked the word "persons" when speaking of the Trinity. He thought it was too easy to misunderstand the word and think of it as meaning separate individuals, therefore destroying the divine unity of the Godhead. However, he adopted the word "because of the necessity of affirming the distinction of the Three against Modalism."³⁵ When asked what three were within the divine unity, Augustine would answer that "human language labors altogether under great poverty of speech. The answer, however, is given three 'persons,' not that it might be (completely) spoken, but that it might not be left (wholly) unspoken."³⁶

Nestorian writers often distinguished the three in the Trinity not by the Persons but by the characteristics or attributes that made each person unique. Thus the characteristic that made the Father unique was the fact that He is the begetter and not the begotten. What made the Son unique was the fact that He is begotten and not the begetter. What sets the Holy Spirit off from the other two Persons is that He proceeds.³⁷ Nestorians, in saying this, are not denying the persons. They even use the word Person in describing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, it is the special characteristics or attributes that set the persons off from one another. This is possibly what Lamsa meant when he described God as "one God with three attributes, instead of three persons."³⁸ However, even if Lamsa was within the fold of Trinitarianism, his explanation of God would be easily misunderstood by Western Christians and mistaken for modalism. This may have been the case with Wierwille.

Lamsa Misinterprets Church History

Be that as it may, Lamsa believed the Byzantine Church had tampered with the biblical theology and come up with new doctrines, not just the "new doctrine" concerning Christ, but also the "new doctrine" concerning the Byzantine concept of the Trinity. He believed these "new" doctrines were forced upon the Church by the "emperors and their representatives."³⁹ It is interesting to note that Wierwille taught something similar to Lamsa's view, suggesting that he may have borrowed this belief from Lamsa. Wierwille wrote:

"The doctrine that Jesus Christ the Son of God was God the Son was

decreed by worldly and ecclesiastical powers. Men were forced to accept it at the point of sword or else. Thus, the error of the trinity was propounded to the end that ultimately people believed it to be the truth."⁴⁰

Lamsa's dislike of the Byzantine Christian Church's teaching on the Trinity and the two natures in the one Christ caused him to praise Mohammed as a prophet of God and defender of biblical monotheism.⁴¹ He held that new methods of missionary work among the Islamic people would be necessary. What were these new methods? They were "to look on the Mohammedans as a Christian sect and to seek their full co-operation in both communal and ethical endeavor."⁴² He wrote, almost with a sense of approval, that, "Thousands of Syrian and Assyrian and Palestinian Christians chose Islam rather than the corrupt Byzantine Christian Church (the Monophysite Sect)."⁴³ To imply that the Byzantine Christian Church was Monophysite is a false accusation on Lamsa's part. The Byzantine Church did not teach the heresy called Monophysitism. This heresy said that Christ had "a composite nature ... but not two natures."⁴⁴ This made Christ a kind of superman. The Byzantine Church said there were two natures in the one Christ. This was reinforced at the council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). The Council declared:

"This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son (of God) must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably (united), and that without distinction of natures being taken away by such union"⁴⁵

For the Byzantine Church, Monophysitism was just as much a heresy as Nestorianism. It is interesting to note that many of the Syrian monks who rejected the Council of Chalcedon saw it as "a rehabilitation of Nestorius."⁴⁶ Those who rejected Chalcedon in favor of Monophysitism were greater in number than those who accepted Nestorianism. To this day there are large numbers of Monophysites in Egypt, Ethiopia and the Middle East. However, it must be emphasized that their teaching is considered heresy by both Western and Eastern churches.

Lamsa's account of the early Church is certainly one-sided. He misunderstood the beliefs of the early orthodox Church. The early Church, in asserting

that God was one God in three persons (Latin: **persona**; Greek: **proson**), by no means meant that there were three separate Gods. The Athanasian Creed, while a product of the Western Church, expresses the early Church's abhorrence of the idea that there could be more than one God:

"15. Thus the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God; 16. and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. 17. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord; 18. and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. 19. Because just as we are obliged by Christian truth to acknowledge each person separately both God and Lord; 20. so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to speak of three Gods or Lords."⁴⁷

In the East, St. Gregory Nazianzen could write:

"When I say **God**, I mean Father, Son and Holy Ghost; for Godhead is neither diffused beyond these, so as to introduce a multitude of gods, nor yet bounded by a smaller compass than these, so as to condemn us for a poverty-stricken conception of deity, either Judaizing to save the monarchy, or falling into Hellenism by the multitude of our gods."⁴⁸

John of Damascus (died ca. A.D. 780), known as the greatest of the Eastern theologians, stated emphatically in his **Exposition of the Orthodox Faith**, "that God is one and not many is no matter of doubt to those who believe in the Holy Scriptures."⁴⁹

Neither the Eastern Byzantine Church, nor the Western Church confessed more than one God. The early Christian Church was monotheistic in belief. God was One, yet in another sense He was three. This was doing justice to the biblical texts that spoke of the oneness of God, and at the same time to the texts that spoke of the Father as God, the Son as God and the Holy Spirit as God.

Mary, the THEOTOKOS

The reason the early Church declared that Mary was the Mother of God (Greek: **Theotokos**; Latin: **Mater Dei**) was to safeguard the biblical teaching that "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14) and that in Christ "all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form." (Colossians 2:9) The question for the early church was: "Did the second person of the Holy Trinity assume into Himself a human

nature and truly live among us, or was it that he simply adopted a man in whom He dwelt in a special way?" If the answer was the second, then God did not truly become man in Christ and John 1:14 is wrong. However, Scripture certainly teaches that God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. While God cannot be born, the divine nature was so united with the human nature in Christ that one could truly say that Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ, who is both God and man together. He who cannot be born assumed into unity with Himself a human nature even in Mary's womb.

Consequently, Mary gave birth to Jesus, who at birth is fully God and fully human. This is the divine mystery (1 Timothy 3:16) and the sense in which the early church spoke of Mary as the "Mother of God." Certainly the word "Theotokos", Mother of God, can be misunderstood. However, the early Church was correct in using it. Martin Chemnitz, a 16th century theologian, reminds Christians how important this teaching is concerning Mary giving birth to Jesus, the God-man:

"This teaching is not idle sophistry, for it is an article of faith that Mary did not beget a man in whom God dwelt in the way that Elizabeth bore John the Baptist, in whom the Spirit of God dwelt. Rather she bore the only Son of God by receiving his flesh, as Augustine says, 'He was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary who for this reason and in this sense is correctly called the God-bearer.'"⁵⁰

The Logical Conclusion to Lamsa's Brand of Nestorianism

Lamsa's radical rejection of this biblical teaching logically leads to a denial of the deity of Christ.⁵¹ Christ thus becomes a man – even though he may be a perfect man – in whom God dwelt. Wierwille was a theological pack rat and borrowed heavily from other writers such as J.E. Stiles, E.W. Bullinger, and Glen Clark. His borrowing from Lamsa would fit in well with what we know of his habits. If so Wierwille did not have very far to travel to reach the logical conclusion to Lamsa's radical Nestorianism. This we see happening sometime in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Wierwille borrowed other ideas from Lamsa such as his belief that the original manuscripts of the Bible (Old and New Testaments) were written in Aramaic.

Lamsa's Nestorianism was based upon man's reason taking preeminence over the Word of God. Reason said God could not be born, suffer or die. Thus, when Scripture tells us that "the Word became flesh," a new explanation had to be invented that goes against Scripture. When Scripture tells us that the rulers of this age "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8), human reason once again reared its head and said that it was "only the man Jesus who suffered and died." However, Scripture does not say that only the man died. It says Jesus suffered and died. Who is Jesus? He is the God-man. Certainly God cannot die, but somehow God participated in the suffering and death through the union of the two natures in the one Christ.

At the beginning of this article it was said that Lamsa's influence on Wierwille and Wierwille's final denial of the deity of Christ was speculation. It will only become firmly established if evidence, such as letters between the two, can be discovered. However, the available evidence does make it highly probable that Wierwille's association with Lamsa helped produce his heresy. It is for this reason that we are urged by the Apostle Paul to "watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them." (Romans 16:17) Wierwille would have been wise to take this warning to heart.

—Endnotes—

1. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Is Not God*, 1st edition. New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1975, pg. 5. The statement can also be found in the 2nd edition of the book printed in 1981.
2. *ibid*, pg. 3.
3. Wierwille, *Victory Through Christ*, Van Wert, Ohio: The Wilkinson Press, 1945, pp. 21, 47, 136, 29.
4. *ibid*, pg. 47.
5. Wierwille, *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today*, 3rd, revised and enlarged edition. Van Wert, Ohio: The Way, Inc. 1957, pg. 144.
6. *ibid*.
7. Wierwille, "The Word Speaks! One God," *The Way Magazine*, October 1964, pg. 4.
8. *ibid*.
9. Christine Nasso, Editor, *Contemporary Authors*, Permanent Series, Volume II. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1978, pg. 302.
10. Wierwille, in the Preface to *The Aramaic New Testament: Estrangelo Script*, New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1983, pg. vii. Lamsa had completed his translation of the four Gospels in 1933. He completed Psalms in 1939. In 1940, the finished translation of the New Testament was ready, and the Old Testament was ready in 1955. The Holy Bible from the Peshitta, published by A.J. Holman, was printed in 1957. The 5th edition was released in 1961. (Nasso, *Contemporary Authors*, pg. 303)
11. *ibid*.

12. Elena S. Whiteside, *The Way: Living In Love*, 2nd edition, New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1972, pg. 220.
13. For a full account of Nestorianism as it is related to Nestorius, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Revised Edition, San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978, pp. 310-317; and Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., *Christ In Christian Tradition*, Vol. I: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451), 2nd revised edition, translated by John Bowden, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975, pp. 443-472. Many Scholars are convinced that Nestorius did not believe the heresy that has been named after him. For Nestorius' defense of his teaching, see Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, translated and edited by G.R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925.
14. Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of the Greek and Latin Churches*, Volume 2 in *Creeds of Christendom*, Harper and Brothers, 1877; reprint edition: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1977, pg. 65.
15. Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, translated by J.A.O. Preuss. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971, pg. 158.
16. John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934, pg. 267.
17. George M. Lamsa, *The Shorter Koran*, Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., 1949, pp. 12-13.
18. *ibid*, pg. 14. Roman Catholic writer Donald Attwater, writing in 1937, observed that "Presumably the Nestorians still profess the errors associated with that word ... , but it is beyond doubt that none of them except a very few of the higher clergy understand or care anything about their heresy concerning the Incarnation: they believe that from the first moment of His conception our Lord was perfect man and perfect God, but they still refuse to call Our Lady 'Mother of God.'" *The Dissident Eastern Churches*, Milwaukee, Wis.: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1937, pg. 228.
19. Lamsa, *New Testament Commentary*, (A.J. Holman, 1945), pg. 177.
20. *ibid*.
21. *ibid*, pg. 547.
22. *ibid*, pg. 546.
23. Lamsa, *The Shorter Koran*, pg. 15.
24. *ibid*.
25. *ibid*.
26. *ibid*.
27. William Jennings, *Lexicon To The Syriac New Testament (Peshitta)*, Revised by Ulric Gantillon, Oxford University Press, 1926; Reprint Edition: New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1979, 195.
28. Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 3rd revised edition, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970, pp. 332-333.
29. Lamsa, *Old Testament Light*, Philadelphia, A.J. Holman Co., 1964, pg. 39.
30. *ibid*.
31. Lamsa and William Chauncey Emhardt, *The Oldest Christian People*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926, pg. 56.
32. George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals*, Volume 2. London: Joseph Masters, 1852; Reprint Edition: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1969, pg. 387.
33. *ibid*.
34. For example, see Lamsa, *New Testament Origin*, St. Petersburg, Fla.: Aramaic Bible Society, Inc., n.d.
35. J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised 5th edition; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978, pg. 274.
36. Augustine, *On The Trinity* 5.10, translated by Arthur West Hadden in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, Volume 3, edited by Philip Schaff; reprint edition, Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978, pg. 92.
37. Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals*, Volume 2, pp. 62-64. See also Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (600-1700), Volume 2 in *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, pp. 44-45.
38. Lamsa, *Old Testament Light*, pg. 39.
39. Lamsa, *The Shorter Koran*, pg. 14.

40. Wierwille, "Forgers Of The Word", in **Bibliography: Jesus Christ Is Not God**, New Knoxville, Ohio, n.d., pg. 20. Later copies of the **Bibliography** leave out the article.

41. Lamsa, **The Shorter Koran**, pg. 16.

42. Lamsa, **The Secret of the Near East**, Philadelphia: The Ideal Press, 1923, pg. 106.

43. Lamsa, **The Shorter Koran**, pg. 17.

44. Schaff, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity," Vol. 3 in **History of the Christian Church**. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910; Reprint Edition: Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, pg. 763.

45. "The Definition of Faith of The Council of Chalcedon," in **The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided**

Church, Volume 14, translated by Henry R. Percival. In **A Select Library Of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers**, Second Series, Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, reprint edition: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988, pp. 264-265.

46. Alexander Schemann, **The Historical Road Of Eastern Orthodoxy**, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977, pg. 138.

47. J.N.D. Kelly, **The Athanasian Creed**, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964, pg. 18.

48. Vladimire Lossky, **The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church**, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimire's Seminary Press, 1976, pg. 47.

49. John of Damascus, **Exposition of the Orthodox Faith**, Volume 5, Chapter 5 in Volume 9 of **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers**, Second Series, translated by the Rev. S.D.F. Salmond, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983, pg. 4.

50. Chemnitz, **The Two Natures in Christ**, pg. 102.

51. For other exotic beliefs held by Lamsa see John P. Juedes and Douglas V. Morton's **From "Vesper Chimes" to the Way International**, (Milwaukee: C.A.R.I.S., 1983), pg. 69, n. 69. See also: John P. Juedes, "Looking At Lamsa," **Personal Freedom Outreach Newsletter**, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January-March 1987): pp. 1-2, 7.

Editorials

(continued from page 2)

3. Distorted information from the counselee and the actual motives of the counselee

In Koch's opinion, only rarely do people with an actual demon problem seek pastoral care. The demon-possessed naturally would stay away from a pastor and a church.

Koch warned that counselees can overreach and exaggerate and even "spin fables." Delusional patients could not be trusted to tell the truth, he wrote. An unstable and gullible person could be obsessed with false ideas. Counselees are not always sober in judgment and are not

always objective.

Scripture nowhere hints at the demon inhabitation of a Christian. Deliverance teaching is a departure from the clear biblical teachings of the sanctification of the believer. Therefore, it makes much more sense to interpret all of the phenomena of the exorcists when dealing with a believer in terms of Koch's warnings. In fact, Koch himself quoted William James, who said, "It is obvious that no mystical explanation ought to be invoked so long as a natural one remains plausible."

—GRF

Editors Note: The citations from **Christian Counselling and Occultism** have been taken from the 1965 edition.

News Updates

(continued from page 3)

The Watchtower's proposed 20-story high-rise dormitory with room to house 1,000 employees and a 247-car garage ran up against a major campaign by the Brooklyn Heights Association, a residents group. The BHA opposed the Watchtower Society's request to rezone the proposed site for its project, which has an estimated price tag of \$50 million.

The BHA also charged that the zoning change would set the stage for future Bethel developments such as a cluster of 15-story towers. The BHA claims that it is not "anti-Jehovah's Witness," but that area residents do not want Watchtower or any other buildings "overwhelming the Heights."

The Association further contended that the new structure "would not benefit the adjacent communities in any way. It will not generate jobs (outside the Society), nor revitalize the local economy, nor attract commerce to Brooklyn, nor contribute to its tax base, nor will it provide public services or amenities."

The Watchtower received early support in its proposal as the City Planning Commission unanimously voted in favor of the building. However, the final step of approval required a six vote majority by the eight-member Board of Estimate. Three members have two votes apiece, the remaining five cast single ballots. On Sept. 29, the Board voted 9-2 against the Watchtower project. New York Mayor Edward I. Koch was the only board member casting in favor of the Watchtower.

Elsewhere, in Baltimore County, Md., the Jehovah's Witnesses received another construction setback. In September, the Baltimore County zoning commissioner ruled

that the Witnesses could not erect a Kingdom Hall on property they bought in 1984 because it would be "overintensified development of the land."

—MKG



WATCHTOWER RELEASES UPDATED AID

Insight On The Scriptures, a two-volume biblical encyclopedia work, was released during the Watchtower Society's summer "Divine Justice District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses."

The work appears to be little more than an updated reprint of the Society's 1971 publication, **Aid To Bible Understanding**. Larger, more readable type accounts for the expansion to two volumes. The increase also permits the Watchtower to charge \$14 for the new printing, compared with \$7 for the original **Aid**. In addition, several "Special Features in Color" have been inserted.

The first printing in English was said to be 1,000,000 copies. However, distribution at the district conventions appeared limited. Scores of Witnesses left conventions without their own copy.

Much of the Watchtower's original research has gone unchanged in the **Insight** volumes. For example, readers will find the definition of "Lie" remaining as "generally involves saying something false to a person who is entitled to know the truth ..." However, both citations of spiritist Johannes Greber have been removed. The Greber connection has been a major embarrassment to the Watchtower since its revelation in the early 1980s.

—MKG

restores **all** things unto Himself (Acts 3:21)." (pp. 35-36)

In Hurnard's "garden" man only fell from "God consciousness," so Hell turns out to be only Purgatory! (pg. 123) This doctrine of Universalism (that hell is restorative, or as she would say, "Hell is Heaven," pg. 142) has always been viewed as heresy and soundly condemned and refuted all through church history. (See **Baker's Dictionary of Theology**, pages 539-540 and **Death and the Afterlife** by Robert Morey, Chapter 9.) However these teachings are now on the shelves of our Christian bookstores. **Mine Fields.**

In **Eagles Wings** it appears that Hurnard's character believes in the eastern mystical doctrine of Pantheism. An angel speaks to Aletheia as follows:

"See, the little 'Son of Man' is born amongst them in order to show that he represents all the birds, beasts, and other living creatures — not just the fallen sons of men. ... For He is the Divine Love and Life of God immanent in every living creature in the One Great Body of Creation. Now look, Aletheia, lover of the Truth. Look and behold the Truth." (pg. 86, 87)

This book should sell very well in India!

Further Hurnard teaches vegetarianism because she believes God is in animals (pp. 91-95, 117). She suggests that human suffering atones for sin, (pp. 121, 122) which really makes man his own savior. "All suffering is atoning," she says. The capstone of her heresy is her low view of Jesus Christ. On page 124 she teaches that Jesus rose through an "angelic" level to "God consciousness" which is where all mankind is headed anyway. Her Christology is no better than that of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Never have I seen more heresy, old and new, compressed into one system and in so little space.

In another of Hurnard's books, **Way of Healing**, a man by the name of Othniel receives a visit from Peter and Mark (back from the dead?). On mount Zion there is a secret truth (new truth!) given to Othniel by the two Apostles. There is a straying from sound Biblical truth and a reinterpret-

tating and restructuring of the gospel accounts. With vision and guided imagination they are transported in time travel fashion to the time of Christ. We find that Jesus did not turn water into wine. Hurnard has the Apostles saying that Jesus secretly waved a heavenly wand (whatever that is) and changed his listeners' thoughts and attitudes so that they **thought** they were drinking wine. Kind of a mass hypnosis, I guess. This would make for comedy if it were not so serious and tragic. So, some miracles are not literal but only contain principles that Hurnard must explain.

What we are actually dealing with here is a neognosticism that she calls "new consciousness" and "Holy Wonder."

But, it gets better (or worse). We are told that Jesus did not really feed the 5000. That is the old orthodox view. The real scoop is that there may have been some kind of mob psychology that made selfish people actually want to take out the lunches that they were hiding and share! There is also the possibility that some Bedouin showed up just in time to sell them some bread and goat cheese! The Apostles are not too concerned about the exact details and they let Othniel take his pick of either or both stories. (pp. 59-64)

In the Preface of **Way of Healing** we have a cryptic summary of the book's teachings that would outdo any possibility thinker. Under the title **The Holy Miracles** we find this:

- "1. The miracle that transforms things: You can change anything if you accept it with thanksgiving.
2. The miracle that opens all doors: You can make anyone receptive if you serve them.
3. The miracle that makes all your wishes come true: You can obtain anything if you have the right motive.
4. The miracle that supplies everything you need: You can meet any need if you share all that you have.
5. The miracle that calms all tempests of hate: You can destroy every wrong if you forgive it.
6. The miracle that takes you anywhere: You can get anywhere if you risk everything.
7. The miracle that makes you in-

vulnerable: You can make anything harmless if you make friends with it.

8. The miracle that withers up falsities: You can destroy falsities if you waken love for the truth.
9. The miracle that delivers from evil influence: You may open any hell if you share it.

Another strange suggestion, on pages 44-45, is that the miracles of Jesus, along with truth, direction and instruction can be found in fairy tales and fables. Along the way, the Apostles instruct Othniel in Jack and the Beanstalk, King Midas, The Golden Egg, Ali Baba, and Beauty and the Beast.

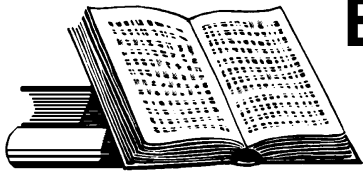
Just Incredible! This is the direction that Hannah Hurnard has taken and no one seems to care. **It is a spiritual mine field out there!**

In Hurnard's **Wayfarers in the Land**, she claims that she has gone all over the land of Israel over a number of years making a great spiritual impact. With the above distortion of doctrine that is really hard to believe. In my many trips to the Holy Land I cannot find one church leader who has heard of her. Perhaps she thinks of herself "more highly than she ought to think" and has overstated the case. Maybe she **thinks** she made an impact. Over statement, however, can border on deception. On this last point I would be glad to stand corrected if anyone would produce some valid information from Israel of Hannah Hurnard's spiritual impact there.

Spiritually speaking, a Christian Science Reading Room is a dangerous place. We expect it to be. Unfortunately, the least expected places can be dangerous nowadays. Tread with extreme caution and discernment in your local Christian bookstore.

There are mine fields out there! Universalism, Gnosticism, relationalism, Pantheism, Self-Atonement, defective Christology — all available at your Christian bookstore. Beware of mine fields.

Author's Note: Othniel was told that the Apostle John had deeper mysteries that would be opened to him as he grew in understanding. That sounds like a sequel for the near future! ✨



BOOKS IN REVIEW

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

by Dan R. McConnell

Hendrickson Publishers, 195 pages, \$7.95

In a fascinating, hard-hitting and powerful style, Dan R. McConnell lays bare the true roots of the modern faith-confession movement. McConnell proposes rightly that end-time deception will take place within the Church and not just outside.

The book exposes in detail the connection between New Thought proponent E.W. Kenyon and Kenneth Hagin, Sr. Believing that Hagin's gospel is cultic, metaphysical, Gnostic and a snare, McConnell warns against it. The book documents Hagin's extensive plagiarizing Kenyon's work.

Even though McConnell is a charismatic, he admits: "The historical origins of the faith movement are not primarily Pentecostal or charismatic. The faith movement can be traced to cultic sources." (Preface, pg. 18)

The book is brutally frank and meticulously documented. The author has done his homework. McConnell may well achieve his stated purpose of turning charismatics back to orthodoxy.

This book fills in many gaps in our view of the faith movement and is a devastating and definitive history of that movement's departure from the Scriptures.

McConnell shows that Hagin's view of Christ's atonement is unsatisfactory. The "identification" view — that Jesus had to literally become a sinner, go to hell, suffer and be born again — contradicts the scriptural view of

Christ's death and substitutionary atonement and is "a different gospel."

I would urge three things in regard to this book:

- 1) Buy it right away.
- 2) Read it as soon as possible.
- 3) Tell others about it; their souls may hang in the balance.

—GRF



THE HEALING EPIDEMIC

by Peter Masters

The Wakeman Trust, 227 pages, \$6.95

Peter Masters, pastor at Metropolitan Tabernacle in London for nearly two decades, comes out fighting in his effort to expose false teachings such as inner healing and demon-possession of Christians.

Each blow he delivers lands solidly and with biblical authority. Most of his blows are aimed at the teachings of Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church, in Seoul, South Korea; and California pastor John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard movement.

Masters contrasts the directions for divine healing found in James' epistle with those of current charismatic "faith healers." His book closed with a "medical view of miraculous healing" by Dr. Verna Wright.

The book's only drawback is its shortage of footnotes for numerous citations of Cho, Wimber, and others.

It is hoped that Masters' publication will get the attention it deserves. It gets this reviewer's nomination for "book of the year."

—MKG



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