

---

---

The Quarterly

# JOURNAL

---

---

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH



---

VOL. 9, NO. 2

APRIL-JUNE 1989

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

---

## New Light – Old Darkness

### The Dilemma Facing Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses

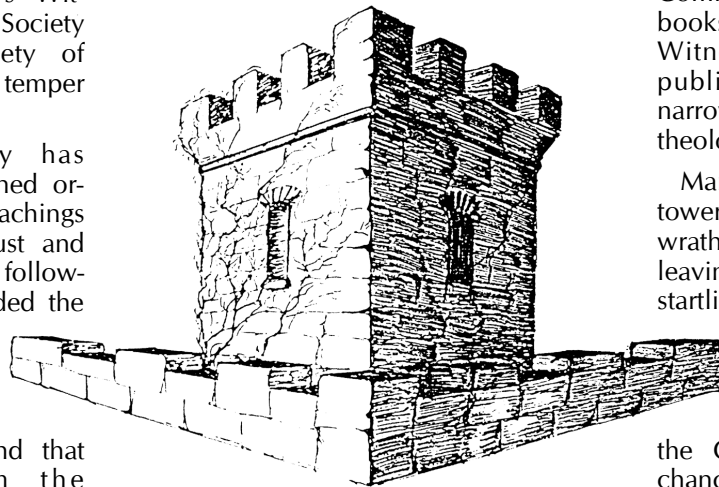
by Paul R. Blizard

Many hundreds of Jehovah's Witnesses have left Watchtower Society in recent years for a variety of reasons. Yet there is reason to temper our rejoicing.

The Watchtower Society has throughout its history condemned orthodox Christianity and its teachings and has put a spirit of distrust and suspicion into the minds of its followers. The Watchtower has branded the Christian Church a major part of "Babylon the Great," the harlot of Revelation. Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that religion is evil and that truth comes only from the Watchtower Society.

People who leave the Watchtower are dogged by a sense of distrust. Many dissidents looking for answers turn to former leaders in the Society who also have escaped. Many of those who have embraced orthodox Christianity and have helped others come to repentance and saving faith in Christ.

However, there is a growing movement of former Watchtower leaders who carry out of the Society that same distrust of anything in the Christian Church and who establish



themselves as theological authorities. Actually, all they have done is repackage Watchtower theology and present it as Christianity to their own groups while remaining cool toward ex-Witnesses who have embraced Christian orthodoxy.

Perhaps the best example is Raymond Franz, former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Ousted from the Watchtower Society in 1981, Franz now lives in Atlanta and operates Commentary Press, his own publishing business.

Commentary Press also publishes books by other former Jehovah's Witness authors that cannot be published elsewhere because of narrow market appeal or ambiguous theology.

Martin Merriman, an Irish Watchtower elder who incurred the Society's wrath for visiting with Franz before leaving the Society in 1982, has some startling things to say about the former Governing Body member. For example, Merriman pressed Franz for an answer as to whether he would go back to the Governing Body if he had the chance. After much prodding, Franz said: "I probably would have been better off." Franz, like some other former Watchtower leaders, will not embrace historic Christianity or fellowship with Christians. Franz's **Crisis of Conscience** seems to be more about a crisis of leadership in Watchtower Society than an admission that the system is heretical.

Franz formed an organization called Biblical Research and Commentary International. It originally was set up, for tax purposes, as a corporation for his publishing enterprises, but it has grown into an organization that holds

(continued on page 9)

# EDITORIALS

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CHURCH?

Almost everyone can come up with at least a handful of complaints against the Church. The cults are quick to condemn the Church and many things it stands for. People leaving the cults hesitate to have any contact with the Church even after seeing the truth of what God's people believe. The media are quick to Church-bash. J.K. Van Baalen even popularized the assertion that the cults are the "unpaid bill of the Church."

It is true that there are scores of problems with the Church, including back-biting, immorality, gossip, coldness, talk about money and so on. Even so, the Church receives more criticism than it is due. The criticism it gets is caused by two things.

The first cause can be traced to what the Church consists of. The Church would not be so bad if there were not people in it. Problems with the Church boil down to the one problem all people have — sin. We must constantly remind ourselves of the truth of Jesus' words, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." (Matthew 15:19)

The Church isn't the only human organization with sin in it. Every organization that has people will have sin, people who speak against it and hypocrisy. And where there is sin, there will be hurt.

This brings us to the second cause of criticism of the Church — judgmentalism. Jesus Christ said, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1), simply because we are so quick to criticize and so slow to love and encourage. If you pick up the newspaper or listen in on conversations at work or in the neighborhood, it should be obvious that we all love to criticize. The more visible a person is, the more criticism he or she receives. Accordingly, the pastor and the Church are prime targets for accusations.

Why are we so quick to criticize? Above all, we criticize because we have not learned to love unconditionally as God does. I have many who criticize me, but few who love and accept me as I am. It is easier to criticize than to support and stand with a person, for the more needy a person is, the harder he or she is to love. Our judgmentalism frequently points to our own pride, selfishness, immaturity or lack of love.

A master plan underlies all these causes of criticism against the Church: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12) The Church's adversary is called "the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night." (Revelation 12:10) The names "Satan" and "devil" can both be translated as "accuser." Satan's favorite pastime is accusing the Church and its ministers. The cults follow suit. The cults have all been more effective at separating people from the Church than they have at building their own groups. Sadly, people in the Church ignorantly do

Satan's work when they accuse the Church, its people and pastor.

What does Satan have to gain by criticizing the Church? He sees the great good that God has designed the Church to accomplish. He wants to frustrate God's plan and harm us by separating us from the Church. He takes seriously what we take for granted or have trouble accepting — that faith does grow and people's needs are met in the Church. The less involved we are with other believers, the less our faith grows, the less able we are to serve them, and the less they are able to serve us. Everyone loses due to our criticisms and selfishness.

Can a believer fully please God while being separate from the other believers, worshiping God at home or in the woods? Jesus and the apostles are our example — they were continually gathering in the synagogue, temple and home. Each of the major Old Testament festivals — Passover, Pentecost, Booths — required that people gather together. Jesus promised his special presence whenever at least two or three gathered together. The apostles commanded us to maintain unity and to serve each other with our spiritual gifts as the body of Christ, neither of which one can do alone at home. The repeated commands in the New Testament to maintain unity are a sad commentary on our sinful inner drive to constantly criticize and separate from each other.

The Church is God's primary training center. Most of all, God trains us to love each other, which does not come easily or in isolation from each other. While learning, expect to be hurt as well as loved. In fact, risking hurt is the only way we learn essential skills: to confess our sins to each other, to forgive those who have hurt us, to love those who don't love us or deserve our love, to support the weak and sinful. All of this comes naturally to God, but not to us.

Some of the deepest hurts I have received have come from within the Church, usually at the hands of well-meaning people. As a church leader, I've been hurt much more than as a member. If I wanted to list reasons to separate from the Church, I'd have a bookful.

However, I continue in the Church for two main reasons. First, Jesus Christ wants me there. I could write a book of all the good Jesus has brought about in me and through me in my time in the Church. Second, my greatest pleasures, accomplishments and growth have occurred in the Church. I have received great acts of love from caring believers. I've grown in knowledge, faith and character. I've made intimate and lifelong friends. I've learned to serve. And some people's lives have changed radically for the good because God condescended to help them through an ignorant weakling like me!

What's wrong with the Church? Don't bother to make a list — that's Satan's business. Instead, respond to Jesus Christ's command to be an intimate, active member of His Body, the Church, and you, too, will give and receive great blessings as a result!

—JPJ

# NEWS UPDATE

## BLIZARD JOINS PFO STAFF

Paul R. Blizard, a third-generation Jehovah's Witness who left the Watchtower Society and is now a Christian, has joined the staff of Personal Freedom Outreach. Blizard has established and operates a new PFO office in Louisville, Ky. His appointment to PFO's Board of Directors was effective Jan. 1, 1989.

Blizard served at the Brooklyn Bethel headquarters of the Jehovah's Witnesses during the mid-1970s. He and his wife Patricia's exodus from the Watchtower began when the Society forbade them from getting a life-saving blood transfusion for their infant daughter, Jenny. This led the Blizards to Bible study apart from Watchtower publications, which led to their conversion to Christianity in 1982.

Blizard has appeared on "The 700 Club," "Straight Talk," "Donahue" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show." His testimony also is featured in the documentary film and book, **Witnesses of Jehovah**. (Blizard's conversion story was also featured in PFO's April-June, 1988 Quarterly Journal and is available in tract form from PFO.)

Blizard has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in biblical studies from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas. He is enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He is an ordained Southern Baptist minister and is Associate Minister at Shively Heights Baptist Church in Louisville.

A 24-hour recorded message line, "Jehovah's Witnesses Anonymous," and subsequent monthly support group meetings have also been established. The recorded message line number is (502) 449-1914. PFO's Kentucky office may be reached at P.O. Box 16354, Louisville, Ky. 40216.

—MKG



## WHISENANT TRIES AGAIN

Edgar C. Whisenant, author of **88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988**, has revised his end-time calculations and given a new date for the rapture, saying it will occur this year. In 1988, Whisenant said the rapture would occur during Rosh Hashana, the Jewish new year celebration, Sept. 11-13. (PFO Journal, Jan.-Mar., 1989, pg. 3).

In an interview published in the February issue of **Charisma & Christian Life** magazine, Whisenant admits he erred in his prediction because he "did not realize

there would be a shout ... before Jesus arrived for the rapture." He added that his book is the "shout" that precedes the rapture.

Whisenant's revision is the addition of one year to his original count "because Rome left out the zero year and had only 99 years in the first century." He further reasons that "our calendar today is one year removed from God's true count." Thus, Whisenant's revised conclusion is that the rapture is still to occur in 1988 but that, "the true year of God 1988 is 1989 because of the zero year."

Whisenant defended his book, saying that because of it, "100,000 people were saved or returned to God from a lackadaisical walk." He claims 4.5 million to 6.5 million copies of the publication were distributed in a five-month period last year.

Whisenant further claims in the interview that he has spent "10-14 hours a day, seven days a week for 10 years" studying the Bible. **Charisma & Christian Life** magazine issued a disclaimer concerning the article, stating that the interview is for "the purpose of providing information only... [the publication of] this interview does not imply even the slightest endorsement of Whisenant, his books or his predictions."

—MKG



## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARRESTED TRYING TO PREVENT BLOOD TRANSFUSION

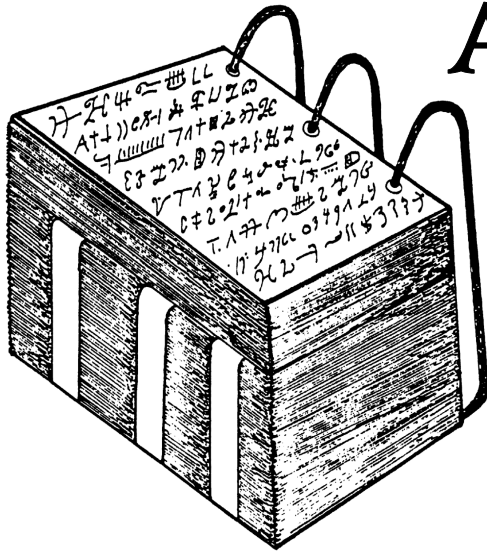
Three Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested Dec. 30, 1988, and charged with criminal trespass as they tried to prevent a fellow Witness from receiving a blood transfusion.

Denise Nicoleau suffered from complications of childbirth and needed a transfusion. A lengthy confrontation followed between Brookhaven Memorial Hospital officials and the woman's husband, Herriot Nicoleau. The dispute culminated in 15 Witnesses surrounding Nicoleau's bed. Hospital administrators had secured a court order earlier in the day after her husband first refused to permit the transfusion.

Arrested were Herriot Nicoleau, of Moriches, N.Y.; Gary DeCanio, of South Setauket; and David Peele of Centereach. All were released on bail and ordered to appear in court in February. Charges were later dropped.

The hospital in East Patchogue, N.Y., listed the newborn baby girl in good condition.

—MKG



# A GOLD PLATED STORY

## THE MORMONS' ATTEMPT TO LIGHTEN A WEIGHTY PROBLEM

by Wesley P. Walters

Arthur Budvarson, who left the Mormon church when he became a Christian, had a lead replica of the gold plates of The Book of Mormon. Following the description given by the church's founder, Joseph Smith Jr., the plates were 6 inches by 8 inches and piled 6 inches high. Lead has about half the density of gold but still the replica weighed more than 200 pounds.

Budvarson and friend Hal Hougey offered a \$1,000 reward for anyone who could do something Joseph Smith was reported to have done. According to Joseph Jr.'s mother, Joseph, after acquiring the plates, tucked them under his arm and ran with them about two miles to his home. Along the way he jumped over fallen trees and fought off adversaries with his free arm. Several tried to run Joseph's course and claim the prize, but none finished.

Defenders of the story, aware of the problem, sought a way to reduce the plates' weight. After all, Smith is reported to have handed the plates to his mother; his wife Emma is reported to have moved them from place to place while cleaning house. At a weight well over 200 pounds, one wonders whether these women could have even budged them.

Mormons are now depending upon recent studies that show some pre-Columbian people in the Andes Mountains of Peru and in Central America had developed processes of what can be called gold-plating. These early American metallurgists apparently

had mastered techniques that fused a covering of gold onto a copper core. (*Scientific American*, June 1984, pp. 56-63) Such gold-plated metal was called "tumbago."

Defenders of Joseph's claim to have real plates of gold note that his story only say they had "the appearance" of gold. Further, after listing copper, silver and gold, The Book of Mormon only says Nephi made his plates of "ore." (1 Nephi 18:25-19:1; RLDS 1 Nephi 5:217-218) Granting that Ether's plates are said to have been "pure gold," they argue that the final Book of Mormon plates must have been made of tumbago. On this conjecture they are able to reduce the weight of the pile of plates to between 49 and 86 pounds, depending upon the percentage of gold involved. (The Improvement Era, September 1966; The Witness, October 1988)

This is still a considerable weight to be casually handed to Joseph's mother or blithely moved about by Emma. However, in fairness, Mormon opponents should concede that this is a possible explanation and back off from insisting that the plates were almost impossible to carry.

However, if one is to grant the possibility of 50-pound plates, there should with this be an insistence on some other features of this gold-plated story.

First of all there should be the insistence that there was no need for any such plates for Joseph to have produced **The Book of Mormon**.

Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley noted this in his recent work, **Abraham in Egypt**. (pg. 4) Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer who had ample opportunity to observe Joseph at work translating while at the Whitmer home, was emphatic that Joseph never used the plates while translating. (**The Kansas City Daily Journal**, June 5, 1881) Joseph's father-in-law was quite puzzled by this feature and in his notarized statement wondered how Joseph could be in the house translating while the plates were buried out in the woods.

The reason he supposedly did not need the plates was because originally he claimed that he was able to translate in the same manner he had searched for buried treasure. Joseph's close friend and patron, Joseph Knight, in an early document, describes the method as one of putting his Urim and Thummim (i.e., seer stones) in a hat, burying his face in the hat and reading the translation off of the stone as it divinely appeared there. Both Whitmer and Martin Harris, key witnesses to the process, affirm the account. Whitmer even added that the translation would remain on the stone until the scribe to whom Joseph was reading the words had written it down correctly.

Secondly, granting that the reputed gold plates could have been made of "tumbago," one is forced to face two other considerations.

The first is the fact that the Andean tumbago artifacts were found encrusted with green corrosion. They had to be cleaned before they had any "appearance of gold." This green patina was the result of long burial and dampness affecting the copper core. The gold plating on the tumbago surfaces of artifacts found thus far range only from one half to two microns thick. This is less than the thickness of an average dust particle. The slightest scratch or incision would expose underlying copper to the air and moisture, which would cause corrosion. But we are led to believe the gold-inscribed plates of Smith lay buried for 14 centuries without the slightest deterioration and retained their pristine "appearance of gold."

An even more significant result of accepting the gold-plated story as

(continued on page 11)

# *The Boston Church of Christ*



## Has Mind Control Come to Bean Town?

by Stephen F. Cannon

For two decades this writer has been intrigued by the rise and fall of mind-control groups. A study that began with mind control in clear-cut cults such as the Unification Church, Peoples Temple, and the Divine Light Mission has over the years found the same kinds of practices in the discipling, or shepherding, movement,<sup>1</sup> and in some charismatic churches.

A committee that investigated Maranatha Campus Ministries from 1980 through 1983 got an intimate look at the inner workings of an aberrational Christian group that many believe uses heavy-handed tactics to manipulate its members. Maranatha is a campus ministry teaching basic Christian doctrine and using tactics similar to those of mind-control groups to recruit and subdue members.<sup>2</sup> With the discovery of Maranatha, the issue no longer was black-and-white, cult-or-Christian. Now, it appears that heavy-handed discipleship has again jumped theological lines and shown up in the independent Churches of Christ.

### **Churches of Christ at the Crossroads**

In the early 1800s, there arose an unrest in the frontier American Presbyterian Church. Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone and others reacted against sectarian religion and urged a union of all Christians based on a restoration of New Testament Christianity. The doctrines promoted by these men were: adult baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, and autonomy of the local congregation. The movement that grew out of these doctrines became known as the Restoration Movement.

The **Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions** states on page 168:

"During the second half of the nineteenth century disputes erupted, and by 1906 a separately recognized group called the Churches of Christ had

emerged, distinctive in their rejection of the use of musical instruments in worship. They are conservative, interpreting the New Testament as the source of all that is permissible for worship and belief. They also believe that there is no biblical justification for organizations beyond the local congregation."

Although the Churches of Christ are extremely mindful of the autonomy of the local congregation, the independent churches do work together loosely in a brotherhood. It was from this brotherhood in the late 1960s that a college outreach group, "Campus Evangelism," was formed. Active in the outreach group as well as his local congregation was Charles Lucas.<sup>3</sup> Church of Christ minister Maurice Barnett writes:

"In 1967, Chuck Lucas began work with the 14th St. Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida. He led the effort to put into effect the Campus Advance principles. When 14th Street built a new building, they changed the name to Crossroads Church of Christ."<sup>4</sup>

These principles caused a furor within the Churches of Christ and were to evolve from the Crossroads Movement into the Boston Church Movement.

### **Crossroads Church and the Discipling Movement**

According to Barnett, the above-mentioned principles had their beginnings in several books on discipleship, the most influential being Robert Coleman's **The Master Plan of Evangelism**.<sup>5</sup> Flavil Yeakley cites the influence of the Florida Shepherding group (Christian Growth Ministries), Juan Carlos Ortiz (**Call to Discipleship**), and elements of Watchman Nee's thought.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the major influence, Crossroads Church did adopt a discipleship program. This created a controversy that swept through the Churches of Christ worldwide.

Called by various names: Crossroadism, the Crossroads Movement, the Discipling Movement, Multiplying Ministries, the teachings instituted by Lucas began to spread across the country. Because of their evangelistic zeal, the movement began to show success in conversions. Soon other churches began to want people trained at Crossroads. This caused polarization, church division, and whole congregations rebuilt along the lines of the Florida Church.<sup>7</sup>

It was during this time of growth and turmoil, that a University of Florida student named Kip McKean was converted and trained by Chuck Lucas. After leaving Gainesville, it is reported that McKean tried to start discipling ministries in several different congregations.<sup>8</sup> The degree of opposition that he encountered is evident in a letter dated April 4, 1977, from the Memorial Church of Christ in Houston to Heritage Chapel in Charleston, Ill. The letter in effect "terminates" Memorial's support for McKean and another man at the Charleston congregation. This severance of association came about because:

"... Brother McKean has brought unbiblical practices, peculiar language, and subtle, deceitful doctrines to Charleston from the Crossroads Church at Gainesville, Florida."<sup>9</sup>

Fourteen points of departure from Church Doctrine were cited among which were: "...confession of sins, peer pressure to conform to human judgemental standards and intimidation. ... The judgement of humans that mature knowledge must be gained before one is allowed to be baptized. ... elitism."<sup>10</sup>

### **The Boston Church of Christ**

In 1979, Kip McKean, age 25, and his wife, Elena, moved to the Boston suburb of Lexington. The growth of

(continued on next page)

the small Lexington Church of Christ was phenomenal. Soon the congregation was meeting in rented quarters in Boston. It then became known as the Boston Church of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the standard Crossroads shepherding/discipleship format, the Boston Church (BCC) began adding some new doctrines. With these doctrines, BCC began consolidating its power base and soon became the seat of authority for "multiplying ministries" worldwide. Even though McKean revered the Crossroads Movement to the point of acknowledging that he owed "... my ministry, my marriage, and my very soul" to that church,<sup>12</sup> he soon would implement programs that would take over most of the Crossroads type churches, and plunge the whole movement into deeper controversy.

### Defining a Doctrinal Position

Throughout the Churches of Christ, there is a reluctance to commit anything doctrinal to writing. The rationale is that "we follow the Scripture, not the doctrine of men. When the Bible speaks, we speak, when it is silent we are silent." Unfortunately, the BCC follows this belief rather strictly.

Pastor Eugene Borlund of the Evangelical Free Church of Waltham, Mass., has had many confrontations with the Boston Church. He comments:

"As I have met with leaders in the group oftentimes they would say, 'Well, we don't put anything into writing because once you put it into writing then it is man's works. Anything that has to do with man's works, whether it's his works or denominationalism, is false and it quickly degenerates into heresy.'"<sup>13</sup>

The upshot of this is that: 1) It is difficult to document what the BCC is teaching in some important areas and 2) BCC uses this to their advantage to teach one thing publicly and teach another privately. Flavil Yeakley comments:

"There are significant differences between what the discipling churches teach publicly and what they communicate privately to their members. There are significant differences between what the discipling churches communicate verbally and what they communicate non-verbally. You cannot get a book that teaches you the Boston system. You have to go to Boston and be trained for

at least a year. The reason for this is that the real message in the Boston Church of Christ is not the public message that is verbalized; it is the non-verbal message communicated privately by the nature and emphasis of the discipling hierarchy."<sup>14</sup>

This is the reason why, to get a handle on what Boston is teaching, one has to study sermon tapes, BCC bulletins, newspaper interviews with BCC leaders, a few booklets that have been written by current and past members, and personal interviews with current and past members.

### BCC and Discipling

The central doctrine of the BCC/Crossroads movement, and the one that has drawn the most criticism both in and outside of the Churches of Christ is "one-on-one" discipling. This is the practice that has drawn charges of mind control.

Essentially, the framework of the BCC/discipling system is one of total submission to authority. Any new convert must submit himself to one who is "more mature in the Lord," that is, one who has been in the movement longer than the convert. That submission is absolute. Not only does the new member have his discipler, but the discipler has his discipler, and so on up the chain of authority.

"New converts are disciplined by older converts. The older converts are disciplined by Bible talk leaders. The Bible talk leaders are disciplined by zone evangelists. The zone evangelists are disciplined by Kip McKean and the elders."<sup>15</sup>

McKean, the evangelist, is the absolute leader:

"The Evangelist will determine how far a congregation will go in obeying the scriptures by how consistently he corrects mistakes, rebukes sin, encourages obedience and by impartially carrying the instructions of God even when it is not the popular thing to do ... the evangelist must know where the church is in the eyes of God, where it is headed and what it will take to get where God wants it to be."<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, according to McKean, the one who "impartially carries the instructions of God," discipling is the only way to do God's will.

"Discipling is the only way the world will be won to Christ in our generation. It's the only way to do it. ... But when it comes to the biblical principles themselves, about how to take the world for

Christ, there's only one way to do it. ... Get disciplined by men. Most of you have discipling relationships, some of you don't and you need to find them. It's biblically commanded! How could you not have them?"<sup>17</sup>

The impact of this statement is enormous! McKean as "the evangelist" is saying that he knows where the church is in the eyes of God, he knows where it is headed, and what it will take to get where God wants it to be. Despite BCC's protestations to the contrary, if language means anything, these statements make the evangelist the oracle of God. Since the doctrine of the authority of the evangelist precludes dissent, then that evangelist becomes the unquestioned oracle of God!

Scripture is clear that there is "one mediator between God and Man, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5) Despite what BCC is teaching, there is no middle man, be he called Apostle, Prophet, or Evangelist, between the mediator Jesus and the individual. As BCC grew and began to eclipse the Crossroads Movement, the power of the discipler began to evolve beyond just spiritual matters. After interviewing a large number of former BCC members, Flavil Yeakley reports:

"Many of these individuals told me that their disciplers required total submission without question. A large majority of those individuals told me their disciplers often gave orders that had nothing to do with spiritual matters. Those being disciplined were told what courses to take in school, what field to major in, what career to enter, whom to date, and even whom to marry or not marry."<sup>18</sup>

A former member testified: "Submission meant blind obedience to theirs and your discipler's advice; otherwise one was branded weak spiritually and rebellious."<sup>19</sup>

The picture begins to develop of just how much one is controlled by the leaders of the group. The chief tool to keep the flock in line seems to be the doctrine of personal confession to one's discipler.

Working on a faulty interpretation of James 5:16, the BCC has developed a program whereby disciplers and disciples meet weekly to study, pray and have confession sessions. Unfortunately, confessed sins are not kept confidential between these two parties. Yeakley writes:

"All too often in the Boston system, however, things disclosed to a discipler one day are known all the way up the discipling hierarchy the next day. The discipling hierarchy thus becomes a glorified network."<sup>20</sup>

Former member Karen Gray confirms this statement:

"I confessed my sins not only to God, but also to my discipler, even when she was totally uninvolved. These confessions could be made known to others in the group by her if she deemed necessary."<sup>21</sup>

In December 1988, I had an extended conversation with Buddy Martin, minister at Cape Cod Church of Christ. Martin has been monitoring the BCC and Crossroads for over a decade. In that conversation, Buddy (who has been instrumental in exit-counseling numerous BCC converts) told me that almost everyone in the BCC tells their secrets. He further confirmed that those secrets are often used against the person if they don't follow the "party line" and do what the elders want them to do.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, it is these tactics of manipulation through absolute submission and unethical use of confession (as well as others listed below) that give substance to the serious charges of mind control.<sup>23</sup>

### **BCC and Elitism**

A prevalent attitude among cults and aberrational Christian groups is the idea that members of that group are God's elite. This ranges in severity from the attitude of Maranatha Campus Ministries, "although there are other churches that are valid, we are the most committed," to the Boston Church, "we are the only true church on earth". Karen Gray says she was, "... indoctrinated with the belief that nearly all outside the group were hell-bound, and their personal Bible studies were not sufficient to reveal the truth."<sup>24</sup>

An editorial titled "Second Thoughts on Boston," which appeared in a Church of Christ periodical, **The Christian Chronicle**, states:

"... these brethren do not really believe that there are any faithful churches except the ones in their sphere of influence. They consider themselves to be the 'faithful remnant.'"<sup>25</sup>

One clear indicator that this or any group has exclusive rights as the only "true remnant church" is the practice of rebaptism. Any group that questions the validity of one's Christian experi-

ence because one didn't follow a certain ritual conducted by "one having proper authority;" and preach that it has to be done over under their aegis, demonstrates the presence of elitism. Boston has indeed taken this step.

"... the churches' definition of a valid baptism is extremely narrow, and it believes a valid baptism to be necessary to salvation."<sup>26</sup>

"They keep careful records of how many they baptize ... one thing they don't tell is that some of the number they cite as baptisms are re-baptisms of their members."<sup>27</sup> and:

"It even baptizes people who have been baptized in other Churches of Christ."<sup>28</sup>

Yeakley agrees that this serves to "... deny the validity of the previous religious experience of those involved."<sup>29</sup>

The framework that BCC has established is the classic top-down pyramid organization. The absolute leader that stands as God's "man of the hour" and dispenses God's will to the hierarchy, who in turn brings the truth to the laity. A strict unquestioning attitude must be present in the laity or they might be expelled from the only "faithful remnant" on the earth. Anyone who dares to walk away from this "remnant" is in effect walking away from God.

"The leaders teach that those leaving the church do so because they have sin in their hearts, a bad relationship with God, and are deceived by Satan. ... If I do not return to them then I am fallen away and God will no longer allow me to enter His Kingdom eternal."<sup>30</sup>

These doctrines of elitism and absolute submission administered from the top down through a strict discipling hierarchy produce tremendous pressure to conform to the group norm. It is this pressure through manipulation that demonstrates the presence on mind control.

Although this charge of mind control has been leveled against shepherding/discipleship organizations for more than a decade, it wasn't until the BCC that a scientific study of the phenomena was authorized from within one of the groups.

### **BCC and MBTI**

Because they felt a need to chronicle the group's rapid growth, the BCC leaders decided in 1985 to have a study conducted by a recognized church growth researcher. It was also

decided that the study would be much more credible if conducted by someone outside the discipling movement. Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr. of Church Growth Institute at Abilene Christian University was given the assignment.

Commencing his study in April 1985, Yeakley interviewed all strata of BCC members, ex-members, and leaders of other churches in the Boston area. He writes:

"What was being investigated in this research was simply the overall group pattern. The focus was not on any individual, but on the dynamics of the group."<sup>31</sup>

Because much of the criticism against Boston had been that of manipulation and mind control, Yeakley decided to conduct personality profiles as part of his research. He tested about 900 members:

"The personality assessment tool used in this study was the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI is one of the leading non-psychiatric personality instruments in use today. Unlike tests used to diagnose mental or emotional problems, the MBTI identifies normal healthy differences."<sup>32</sup>

Research has determined that "... a person's true (psychological) type does not change. ... Changes in psychological type do not indicate normal healthy growth. Such changes indicate some changes in the environment that causes people to deny their true type and become like someone else."<sup>33</sup>

With the MBTI, a personality type and subsequent changes in that type are determined by answering a series of questions three separate times. Questions were to be answered first as one would have five years past (or before conversion, whichever came first), then answered as they would at time of testing, and finally as they would answer five years in the future.

After the tests were given and before any conclusions were drawn, Yeakley did MBTI comparison studies with five mainline denominations (Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian) and six "manipulative sects" (Church of Scientology, Hare-Krishna, Maranatha Campus Ministries, Unification Church, The Way International, BCC).

With the first group: "Results were the same as those observed in the Churches of Christ that are not identified with the discipling movement. There were no significant changes in

psychological type scores. There was no pattern in the few changes that were observed."<sup>34</sup> And with the second group: "Results of this study showed a high level of change of psychological type scores ... [with] ... a clear pattern in the observed changes ... [which showed] ... a clear convergence in a single type."<sup>35</sup>

The detailed statistical results are presented in the excellent book **The Discipling Dilemma** edited by Yeakley.<sup>36</sup> His conclusions are summarized: "... those six groups that I have chosen to call 'manipulative sects' are clearly producing unnatural and unhealthy personality changes. ... the Boston Church of Christ is producing in its members the very same pattern of unhealthy personality change that is observed in studies of well-known manipulative sects. Whatever they are doing that produces this pattern needs to be changed."<sup>37</sup>

The data gathered proves "... that there is a group dynamic operating in that congregation (Boston) that influences members to change their personalities to conform to the group norm."<sup>38</sup>

Needless to say, that when Yeakley presented his findings to the BCC leaders they were less than pleased. Several explanations for the type changes were posed by these leaders. These reasons are listed and aptly countered in the aforementioned book. Space permits the examination of only one example.

"Kip McKean argued that all the Boston Church of Christ is doing is making people over after the image of Jesus Christ. He concluded that this research simply proves that Jesus was an ESFJ" (a particular personality type defined by the testing).<sup>39</sup>

Yeakley counters, "Christianity, of course, requires one kind of change in personality. Christians are being made over after the image of Jesus Christ. His divine nature, however, is reflected in individuals whose gifts differ. Christian growth does not require falsification of type. Indeed, spiritual growth is hindered by any effort to deny one's true type and become a copy of someone else."<sup>40</sup>

#### Those Who Do Not Remember...

In November 1978 the world witnessed the horrible tragedy of the mass suicide of more than 900 people at Jonestown, Guyana. Behind the empty throne of Jim Jones was a sign with

the well-known saying "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." These words stand as a warning to all those who would blindly follow a man, no matter what title he may have been given by himself or others.

That is not to say BCC is another People's Temple. But where there is manipulation through mind control and the doctrine of absolute submission to a leader exists, there is potential for tragedy.

BCC and others say that they are merely teaching New Testament doctrine when they "offer discipling as Jesus did to the Twelve". They would be wise to heed the words of Michael Harper:

"The master-disciple relationship is, of course, used frequently to describe the relationship that Jesus had with others on Earth, and, therefore, can equally describe our relationship to the Lord today ... But it is never in the New Testament used to describe the relationship which Christians have with one another. ... It is best not to use the 'discipling' terminology at all. Not only is it biblically unsound, but it also injects into this area an authority factor which is inappropriate."<sup>41</sup>

In a position paper issued in 1976, the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God took the position:

"It is true that many new converts look to someone to keep them from error and to guide them into truth. However, where the individual relies altogether on another person to protect him from all error, he will cease searching the Scriptures and fail to develop his own ability to withstand false teaching. ... Some find the pattern for their new order of discipleship in the relationship of Jesus with His disciples, forgetting this was done within Judaism before Jesus began to build His Church. Instead they should seek guidance for church patterns in the Acts and Epistles. ... Along with this there is a tendency to downgrade democracy in the church in favor of submission to authority. ... Jesus must be kept central. He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep. The only covenant we need is the one sealed in His blood."<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, the question asked in the subtitle of this article must be answered in the affirmative. Truly, mind control has reared its ugly head in Beantown. Until such time that the Boston Church of Christ disavows the

"authority of the evangelist," one-on-one discipling, and the elitist stance of being the "only faithful remnant," I must advise all to avoid what is, in my opinion, a destructive organization.

#### — Endnotes: —

1. Steve Coleman, "Christian, Who Is Your Covering?," **PFO Newsletter**, April-June, 1983, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 1, 6-7.
2. Dr. James Bjornstad, et. al., "A Statement of Evaluation Regarding Maranatha Campus Ministries / Maranatha Christian Ministries / Maranatha Christian Church, May 8, 1984. (Available from PFO, P.O. Box 26062, St. Louis, MO 63136.)
3. Flavil Yeakley, Jr., Ed., **The Discipling Dilemma**, (Nashville, Tenn., 1988, Gospel Advocate Pub. Co.), pg. 137.
4. Maurice Barnett, **The Discipling Movement** (Phoenix, Ariz., 1987, Published by author) pg. 2.
5. *ibid*, pg. 1.
6. Yeakley, pg. 138.
7. Barnett, pg. 2; Yeakley, pg. 5.
8. *ibid*, pg. 6.
9. Delbert Burkhardt, Elder, Letter to Heritage Chapel Church of Christ dated, April 14, 1977. Copy on file.
10. *ibid*.
11. Yeakley, pg. 7.
12. Kip McKean, Letter to Crossroads Church of Christ, (Appeared in BCC Bulletin, April 6, 1986).
13. Eugene Borlund, "Boston Church of Christ", (Cassette Tape). Tape on file.
14. Yeakley, pg. 68.
15. *ibid*, pg. 51.
16. Kip McKean, "The Role of the Evangelist," (BCC Bulletin, Aug. 9, 1987)
17. Kip McKean, "The Saints in the Kingdom of Light," (Cassette Tape, Gainesville, Fla., 1984, Crossroads Tape Ministry). Tape on file.
18. Yeakley, pg. 55.
19. Karen Gray, "Former Member Exposes Cult," (The Wellesley News, Wellesley, Mass., Sept. 18, 1987), pg. 3.
20. Yeakley, pg. 54.
22. Personal interview with Buddy Martin, Dec. 13, 1988.
23. For an excellent and detailed examination of cultic mind control, see: Steven Hassan, **Combating Cult Mind Control**, (Rochester, Vt., 1988, Park Street Press).
24. Gray, pg.3
25. Editorial, "Second Thoughts on Boston," Christian Chronicle, February 1987.
26. Charlene B. Hill, "Boston Church Grows Amidst Controversy," (New England Church Life, Dec. 1987, Vol. 7 No. 9) pg. 10.
27. Barnett, pg. 38.
28. Hill, pg. 10.
29. Flavil Yeakley, Jr., **The Hierarchy of Discipling Churches**, (Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 5, 1987, Gospel Advocate Periodical) pg. 650.
30. Gray, pg. 3.
31. Yeakley, **The Discipling Dilemma**, pg. 30.
32. *ibid*, pg. 24.
33. *ibid*, pg. 27.
34. *ibid*, pg. 33.
35. *ibid*, pp. 33-34.
36. *ibid*, pp. 34-35.
37. *ibid*, pg. 37.
38. *ibid*, pg. 37.
39. *ibid*, pg. 40.
40. *ibid*, pg. 27.
41. Michael Harper, **Let My People Grow**, (Plainfield, N.J., Logos, 1977), pg. 153.
42. General Presbytery, Assemblies of God, "The Discipleship and Submission Movement," Tract, n.d., pp. 13-14.

conventions around the United States for Jehovah's Witnesses who have come out of the Watchtower Society. Franz, in the great tradition of Governing Body members, has stayed in the background, letting others speak for the group.

BRCI held a conference July 31-August 2, 1987, in Arlington Heights, Ill. A panel of conference speakers held a question-and-answer session. Answers to questions posed by the audience revealed a lack of understanding of basic Christian theology on the part of the speakers. The transcript of this session bears this out:

"Q. When you say that 'the truth is Jesus Christ,' does that then mean that you believe that Jesus is Lord? Does that then mean we believe that Jesus is God, as in the Trinity teaching?"

A. I think there are several questions here, OK?

Q. I just want to — the people sponsoring this when you say — or are there different views among the people sponsoring this?"

A. Yes, that is true. We as Biblical Research Commentary International have no doctrinal stand on anything, really. We believe things as individuals very strongly, we have no official position like the Society would have a position, or the Watchtower would have a position — please Tim — I'm sorry go ahead Tim. I've got a mental block.

A. I think that the problem here lies in definition of terms. First of all, I don't think anybody here would agree that 'trinity' is not a biblical term, so perhaps the best thing we should do in discussing the nature of God or the nature of Christ is eliminate non-biblical terms, and strictly in biblical terms, and a funny thing that you will find when you talk with either trinitarians or non-trinitarians is that you come down to one central basic truth and that is: that Jesus is the Son of the Living God, which was the only thing that was required for discipleship when Jesus asked Peter, 'Who do men say that I am?' His response was, he didn't say 'You are Jehovah.' He didn't say, 'You are deity.' He didn't go through any of

those long theological things that some of us may agree with, but what he did say was, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' That's first and foremost, the foundation of the Gospel and all these other things that wise and scholarly and godly men came to conclusions on. But those are not things that are necessary to come to Christ. For example, missionaries in other countries when they are going into Africa, Central America, and are dealing with people who can't even read and write, cannot get involved with an intricate discussion of the deity of Christ. People have absolutely no idea of what they are talking about. It's not a necessary thing for salvation."

When asked what is necessary for salvation, the panel members gave the following answers:

"A. I would say trust in the guidance of the Lord. It would be simple for me to say just believe in the Lord Jesus, but I think that is a trite statement unfortunately. I think more important is believing in the guidance of God's Spirit.

A. I would probably differ from the majority from within the evangelical Church that say 'sign your name on the back of the tract, raise your hand, walk the aisle, ask Jesus into your heart.' That is not the scriptural view of discipleship. I believe that the scriptural view of repentance means turning around in your life. The confession of Jesus as Lord extends to all parts of your life and while we have security in Christ and we have assurance of Salvation, unfortunately it has been of recorded prayer and that is equated with salvation and that is not the biblical view of salvation and discipleship.

A. I don't know if I know the answer to that for myself or anyone else. I believe that having a personal relation with God and having a program of meditation and prayer and asking for guidance and his direction and help each day — simple things like viewing the scriptures as a source of comfort and the message of Christ being that of love and mercy and acceptance of others and trying to keep it simple and clear in our own minds those basic truths."

The next panelist went into a long discussion on whether retarded persons or others with disabilities would

be saved and concluded with a statement that, "We will be surprised at how merciful God is when all is said and done."

Rather than straightforward, biblical answers to two simple questions, these representatives gave loose, vague definitions even to the point of confusing the concept of regeneration with that of discipleship. One great problem with some ex-Jehovah's Witnesses is that they don't realize that as "elders" in the organization they were theologically wrong, following false prophets and propagating a Satanic Gospel. Rather than humbly accepting a new role as a learner, they insist on continuing as teachers. For the most part, these men believe the Watchtower Society is a "Christian" organization with some faults and that they have now moved into a better understanding of the Bible.

BRCI has a toll-free 800 number that former Jehovah's Witnesses may call. What kind of answers are at the other end of the line? This writer called and asked about the deity of Christ. The person who took the call replied: "I don't know anything about that. We don't get into religion."

A group with philosophy similar to BRCI is Christian Renewal Ministries, headed by Canadian M. James Penton. CRM has its own magazine called **The Christian Quest**. It looks like a reputable theological journal but, under closer examination, turns out to be nothing more than Watchtower doctrine in a different package. The first issue of **The Christian Quest**, dated winter 1988, on page 4 describes the mission of Christian Renewal Ministries:

"As someone who had long been associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, he [Penton] was greatly concerned that many of the people leaving that movement or being expelled from it were finding no satisfactory spiritual home ... and out of that meeting Christian Renewal Ministries was born."

It must be remembered that the reason some former Jehovah's Witnesses find no satisfactory spiritual home is that they have not abandoned the distrust of orthodox Christianity

and thus avoid the thousands of Bible-believing churches that exist across North America. Christian Renewal Ministries rejects the Watchtower hierarchy and authority that so many former Witnesses ran afoul of, but holds on to many heretical Watchtower doctrines. Spiritually, these people are no better off than they were inside the Watchtower Society.

CRM's Articles of Incorporation use the term "evangelical," and misrepresent that organization as evangelical.

"Purposes" section (a.) states:

"Plan, initiate and support **evangelical** outreach; that is the proclamation of the gospel of salvation and reconciliation to God, in Christ Jesus according to His holy scriptures." (emphasis added)

Section (c.) states:

"Foster Christian education for **evangelical** and pastoral purposes." (emphasis added)

Whether the use of the term "evangelical" is used to mean "evangelistic" is not known. Either the use of the term has been misunderstood or it is a deliberate misrepresentation. Jehovah's Witnesses certainly are evangelistic in propagating their own message, but they are by no means "evangelical." **Baker's Dictionary of Theology** defines "evangelical" as:

"The evangelical Christian faith is the 'good news' or the 'glad tidings' that God has provided redemption for man. It affirms that salvation from sin is obtained through the grace of God, not that it is earned by good works or given because of merit on the part of man. It sets forth the basic Christian doctrines, such as: the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, miracles, the substitutionary or vicarious suffering and death of Christ as an atonement for the sins of his people, his resurrection from the grave, his ascension into heaven, his personal and glorious coming again, the resurrection and judgement of all men, heaven and hell."

CRM does not sound evangelical when its own doctrinal statement is

compared with that of Baker's definition of the word. Page 9 of **The Christian Quest** states:

"What, doctrinally, does CRM stand for? As has already been indicated, it has been developed by a number of men and women who have come out of Free Bible Student and Jehovah's Witness backgrounds. Thus, in general, it would be fair to say that the members of CRM maintain certain beliefs from those traditions because they believe such to be both scriptural and historically defensible. Theologically speaking, they tend to be unitarian rather than trinitarian, are moralists or conditionalists who believe neither the doctrine of the immortality of the soul nor eternal conscious torment for the damned, ... Christian Renewal Ministries is very insistent that it has no creed. Its members accept all persons as brothers and sisters in Christ who regard Jesus as Lord and Savior and produce fruits in accord with the direction of his spirit."

It is clear that CRM stands apart from orthodoxy in denying doctrines clearly taught in scripture. **The Christian Quest** then is nothing more than a magazine for reformed Jehovah's Witnesses or for those who were just tired of organization, but still hold to the basic Watchtower theological system. If one has read Watchtower materials and reads **The Christian Quest**, one will find similarities in style and theology.

Along with articles written by former leaders in the organization (elders, circuit overseers, etc.) the magazine reports on BRCI conferences reviews books. **The Christian Quest** could be called the mutual admiration society journal of this movement.

Coming out of the Watchtower Society is a traumatic experience. Some never lose lingering doubts about their decision. The only way to be free of those haunting thoughts is to come to the real Christ. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

Those who come out of the Watchtower do not need a substitute Christ, or a revised version of Watchtower, they need to be told the truth. The Watchtower teaches another Jesus, an-

other spirit, and another Gospel. Many that come out of the Watchtower never come to realize the seriousness of this issue, believing that they now have a better understanding of things, rather than admitting that they were actually serving Satan as a Jehovah's Witness. The great failure of these "ministries" is that many of them believe that as Jehovah's Witnesses they were Christians. A classic example is in **The Christian Quest**. In a review of Franz's book, **Crisis of Conscience**, Penton says Franz tried "to turn Jehovah's Witnesses into a more honest, attractive and humane Christian movement." The apparent blindness to the true nature of the Watchtower organization is evident in Penton's comments.

Since its founding in 1879 by Charles Taze Russell, the Watchtower Society has been under the control of Satan himself. Perhaps Raymond Franz wanted to make it more honest, attractive, and humane, but he could not make it more Christian when its leadership and members have denied that salvation is through Christ alone. The Watchtower Society never has been and never will be a "Christian movement" because its foundation is not Christ, but the shifting sands of the teachings of Charles Russell, Joseph Rutherford, Nathan Knorr and Frederick Franz.

Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, used the strongest word in his Greek vocabulary to describe the condition of those who preach a different gospel. Paul said:

"But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8,9)

The English word "accursed" is translated from "anathema," a word that Paul used to drive home the grave evil of teaching and following a different Gospel.

"The controlling thought here is that of the delivering up to the judicial wrath of God of one who ought to be **anathema** because of his sin." (See,

**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Gerhard Kittel, Editor, Vol. 1, pg. 354)

Not only is the Watchtower Society accused for preaching a "different gospel," but at the judgement, all members and former members who have not repented of their sin and placed their faith in Jesus Christ will be condemned.

Christianity is not merely ethics, principles, or religion. It is a relationship obtained by adoption. Scripture teaches that all men are lost and in sin, "under the wrath of God" and need to know the true message of redemption to be saved.

Can a person come to Christ and be saved without having a clear understanding of His deity? Certainly. Christ takes us as we are. With simple faith and repentance, anyone, regardless of faulty theological background or understanding, can turn to the Lord Jesus and confess Him and be saved by grace. At that point as promised in the

Bible, the Holy Spirit will come in and lead and guide to the new Christian to all truth. With the Holy Spirit as a guide, He will show that one, through God's Word, who Jesus is. No truly saved person can deny that Jesus is God.

1. He is called God by the Apostle John. (John 1:1)
2. He is called God by the Apostle Thomas. (John 20:28)
3. He is called God by God the Father. (Hebrews 1:8)
4. He claimed to be God in that He was with the Father before creation. (John by God. (John 17:5)
5. He claimed to be God in that He was before Abraham. (John 8:51-59)
6. He received worship and only God is to be worshiped (Matthew 14:33)
7. He forgives sin; only God can forgive sin (Mark 2:5-11)
8. He is creator and maker of all

things. (Colossians 1:16,17)

9. He is sustainer of all things; only God can control the universe (Hebrews 1:3)
10. He claimed to have "all authority...in heaven and on earth;" God alone has all authority. (Matthew 28:18)

Those who have come out of the Watchtower and claim to be Christian, but continue to assault the doctrines of the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personality of the Holy Spirit, eternal judgment and who isolate themselves from the body of Christ are like those who Paul wrote of in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." ❀

Gold Plated

(continued from page 4)

requiring real and authentic tumbago plates is that it forces one to accept the existence of wagon loads of other plates in the hill Cumorah. According to **The Book of Mormon**, the Prophet Mormon hid up in the hill "all the records which have been entrusted to me." (Mormon 6:6; RLDS Mormon 3:8) Paul Thomas Smith, the LDS church's Director of Libraries and Academic Research, in 1980 rendered a service to students of Mormon history by collecting seven Mormon documents which deal with these voluminous records stored in a large room or cave in Cumorah.

According to Joseph Smith Jr., "that cave contained tons of choice treasures and records." It was here that Joseph Jr. and Oliver Cowdery deposited the gold plates when the translation of **The Book of Mormon** was completed. The testimony concerning this treasure trove comes largely from early Mormon leaders such as Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Whitmer and W.W. Phelps. Their information, it is claimed, came directly from Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Sr., and Samuel and Don Carlos Smith, all of

whom are reported to have visited these treasures and have direct knowledge of the matter.

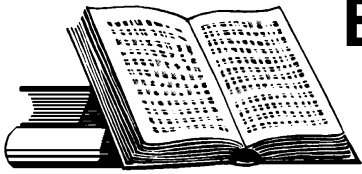
Summarizing the information supplied by these early Mormon sources, a picture emerges of a room in the hill Cumorah "about 16 feet square." When Joseph Jr. and Cowdery approached the hill to deposit the gold plates, "the hill opened" or more specifically, "a door opened" and "they walked into a cave." In this underground room, Cowdery reported, "it was just as light as day." The room contained "great volumes of records" and was a veritable "underground ancient library." There were "records upon records piled upon tables." Young reported that under the table on which Joseph Sr. and Cowdery deposited their gold plates, "there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high," and plates "were piled up in the corners and along the walls." Consequently, there were "more plates than probably many wagonloads." On one occasion Joseph Sr., Cowdery and others walked into the hill Cumorah and "walked from cell to cell and saw the records that were piled up."

This cave also contained "Aaron's breastplate" as well as "the Sword of

Laban." On one visit the sword was in its scabbard, hanging upon the wall. However, on a subsequent visit it was unsheathed. On it were inscribed the words, "This sword is unsheathed and will never again be sheathed until the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God and his Christ."

Cowdery declared that although divining rods or even modern science might conclude and testify that this room "filled with treasure" was there, no one shall ever see them or the treasure." This was undoubtedly thought to be so because of the presence of "an angel" or "a Messenger who was the keeper of the room."

Like the folk magic lore of Joseph Jr.'s early money-digging days, treasures were always thought to be guarded by spirit beings. No one could obtain them until the spirit guardian was ready to give them up. Thus those who defend the reality of the gold plates — whether tumbago or pure gold — must also defend the stories of tons of plates still buried in Cumorah and kept from our profane hands by the sacred messenger who guards this treasure. Such tall tales strain our credulity to its limits. ❀



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## WITNESSES OF JEHOVAH

by Leonard and Marjorie Chretien  
Harvest House Publishers, 219 pages, \$6.95

Harvest House Publishers finally has addressed the subject of Jehovah's Witnesses with Leonard and Marjorie Chretien's **Witnesses of Jehovah**.

The book complements and expands on the Chretiens' film documentary by the same name. Those familiar with the film will find this work echoes the documentation and testimonies featured in the movie.

**Witnesses of Jehovah** is an excellent survey of the Watchtower's history, prophetic speculation and cover-ups. Its style will attract the lay reader who otherwise would avoid some of the more weighty volumes on the Jehovah's Witnesses.

While it grows more difficult to break new ground in counter-Watchtower literature, the Chretiens introduce facts not found in other books. For example, examined are the Watchtower Society's hypocritical double medical prohibitions, specifically the use of Factor VIII by hemophiliacs.

The book is a well-balanced mix of documented evidence and personal testimony. While the historical expose' is found throughout the book, two full chapters have been devoted to personal testimony. One is of the Chretiens'. The other, titled "Jenny," relates Paul and Pat Blizard's struggle with the life-and-death choices forced on them by Watchtower doctrines. The latter appears to be an adaptation and expansion of Blizard's personal

testimony, "They Wanted Our Baby To Die!," currently published by PFO.

—MKG



## PREDATORS IN OUR PULPITS

by Phillip Keller  
Harvest House Publishers, 152 pages, \$6.95

Phillip Keller gives a stirring and earnest warning to God's people, pleading with them to be more discerning and appealing to broadcast ministries, publishers and other "pulpits" to be more responsible and biblical.

This book packs a wallop and opens our eyes to see how to discern whether spiritual leaders are indeed in the truth. He provides guidelines and actions to assess various ministries. He warns of those who would try to destroy us under the guise of Christianity. Keller concludes that the greatest threat the Church faces today is not from without but from leaders — or supposed leaders — within.

His chapter titles tell the story. For example: "The Lure of Leadership," "The Success Syndrome," "Misplaced Faith," "Love of Self-emotional Experience vs. Disciplined Obedience."

One section challenges leaders to honesty, genuineness and credibility. The other section challenges the laity to discernment, doctrine and discipline. Keller is brave in his censure of bogus leadership and false gospels. He touches on many of the current heresies infiltrating the Church. Documentation, footnotes and an index could have made the book even stronger; however, most Christians should recognize the people and problems that Keller is addressing.

—GRF

**Editor's Note:** The above publications are available from Personal Freedom Outreach - Midwest. Please add \$1.00 to the price listed to cover postage. These books are also available to those who help to financially support us this quarter. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.



PERSONAL  
FREEDOM  
OUTREACH

## The Quarterly Journal