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The Cult of Unbelief

A Christian Response to Atheism

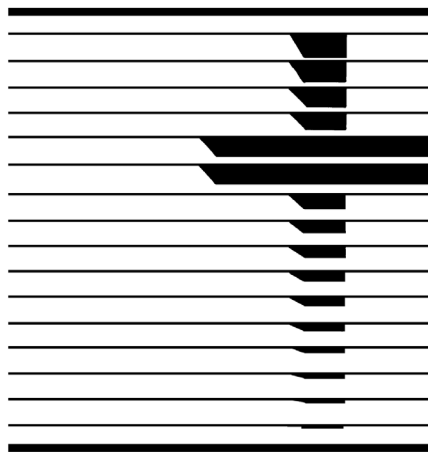
by Edgar L. Haviach

Many Christians who are eager to witness to members of traditionally recognized cults shudder at the thought of witnessing to atheists. Yet atheists are much like people who belong to cults in that they take positions on many theological and doctrinal subjects such as God, Christ and the Bible. Once it can be shown that atheists, like cultists, argue from certain presuppositions, the idea of witnessing to them can be made less intimidating.

Many people conclude that anyone who does not believe in God is an atheist. Yet some such people who do not call themselves atheists. Some call themselves freethinkers, people who base their opinions about religion on reason. Some call themselves rationalists and argue that human reason is a sufficient tool to find truth. Humanists find "insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural, it is meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race." (**Humanist Manifesto I and II**, pg. 16) Whatever title these people choose for themselves, it is safe to call them non-theists.

What Atheists Say About God

Some atheists consider the existence of God intellectually impossible but they deal with the subject passively. They prefer to not believe in God. To them theism is like chicken soup: It



won't do any good, but it can't hurt.

More dogmatic atheists say God does not exist and that belief in God is harmful. They want to bring atheism into the forefront and take issue with any public display of allegiance to God.

Not all atheists reject God for the same reason. Some were reared in homes devoid of spiritual or religious training. They have no view or a distorted view of God. Some had a traumatic experience and believe that no God could exist who would have allowed to happen what has happened to them. Some reject belief in God because they do not want to believe in a day of reckoning for their sins. They

choose their lifestyle over one of feeling responsibility to anyone else. Some reject belief in God on grounds of insufficient evidence.

Among the Christian's biggest fears about witnessing to an atheist is: "What if he asks me a question I can't answer?" Questions such as "Can your God make a rock so big that He can't lift it?" are usually asked to trap the Christian and undermine belief in theism.

Of course, Christians must be prepared to answer these questions. Not all atheists ask questions for the same reason. Some are looking for answers, while others are convinced that atheism is their only option. Perhaps the best way to handle questioning atheists is to turn the tables on them and ask them a question. Say, "Why are you an atheist?"

One atheist comes to this writer's mind. After declaring herself an atheist, she braced for a tongue-lashing. Instead, she got a simple question: "Tell me about the God you don't believe in." At that point she recounted atrocities from the Crusades of the Middle Ages to Jonestown. Then she spoke of personal experiences.

This woman considered herself someone who had risen above child-

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EDITORIALS

A TRIBUTE TO WESLEY PRESTON WALTERS

On Nov. 9, 1990, The Rev. Wesley P. Walters, a PFO director, was called home to be with the Lord. He died of heart failure at age 64. Walters was with Personal Freedom Outreach from its infancy. He helped shape the organization and gave it direction.

Rev. Walters was also pastor of the Marissa Presbyterian Church in Marissa, Ill., since 1957. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Bachelor of Divinity degree from Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia and a Master of Theology degree from Covenant Seminary in St. Louis.

Rev. Walters is survived by his wife, Helen, and three sons, David, Thomas and Stephen. Two other children, son Victor and daughter Alice, preceded him in death.

Rev. Walters is best known in the counter-cult mission field for his research into the early history of the Mormon church. His investigation and discovery of Palmyra, N.Y., church records from the years 1820 and 1824 proved that the declaration upon which Joseph Smith Jr. built the Mormon church to be fraudulent. He also is credited with the discovery of an 1826 Bainbridge, N.Y., court trial bill that documented the conviction of Joseph Smith Jr. for glass-looking, an occult practice.

At his memorial service, fellow PFO director M. Kurt Goedelman was asked to speak about Rev. Walters' impact on the field of cult evangelism. Here is a condensation of his remarks:

"On Saturday, Helen called and asked if I would share briefly at Wes' memorial the impact he had upon my life. I am honored to do so, yet I do so with an extreme heaviness of heart. I feel like an adopted son of the Walters family.

I had the pleasure of meeting Wes 12½ years ago. In 1973, I became a Christian and two years later, in 1975 married the girl who was instrumental in leading me to the Lord. So not only did I receive eternal life, but I got a beautiful wife in the process.

Shortly after our marriage, Angela and I began to develop a ministry in cult evangelism and education. We sought to acquire each and every type of material available, including books, cassette tapes and so forth, that would help to school us in this mission field. Some of the literature acquired was authored by Walter Martin, James Bjornstad, Edmond Gruss, Bill Cetnar and a Presbyterian minister named Wesley P. Walters.

One day in the spring of 1978, while at work at a secular job, I received a phone call from Angela inquiring, 'Guess who just called looking for you?' She responded to her inquiry with 'Rev. Wesley Walters.' Now for many, a phone call from Wes would probably be no big deal, but to me it was a phone call from a 'celebrity.' It was far better than receiving a call from the president of the United States.

For two 'nobodies,' such as Angela and myself, who were working to establish a counter-cult ministry, receiving a

phone call from Wesley Walters was a major event in our lives. Somewhat akin to an aspiring young actor receiving a call from a veteran, Oscar-winning actor.

Another question posed by Angela to me after receiving Wes' call was, 'Do you know where he lives?' to which I responded, 'From the nature of his research, he either lives in upstate New York or in Utah.' However, I was informed that he lived just an hour's drive from us, in Marissa, Illinois. It did not take long before we made that hour drive to Marissa from St. Louis. In fact, it took less than a week. And then we kept making the trip again and again and again. We became fast friends. And I think our friendship ran even deeper than just friends or colleagues. Perhaps with Wes' deep spiritual commitment and insight and my inexperience in advanced biblical studies and systematic theology, having been a Christian for only 5 years, our friendship was more of a Paul and Timothy relationship.

Nonetheless, I think Wes may have gotten more than what he bargained for when we became friends. In addition to his tremendous insight and direction of the cult ministry we were engaged in, my life was to become a complete roller coaster of events during the next few years. Our first low was Angela's mother dying of cancer, then we began to peak as Angela was pregnant and gave birth to our first child, Michele Kimberly. Then another crash to a low point as we learned that Michele was born with a rare birth defect and had only months to live. Following Michele's departing to be with Jesus, Angela again became pregnant which started again to peak our spirits. However, just weeks before our next child was born, my father suffered a stroke and died following open-heart surgery.

Through all of this Wes remained one of the best friends a Christian could have. Whether it was stopping by Angela's parent's home on a trip to St. Louis to pray for and with her mother or from the comfort I gained from him knowing that he too experienced the pain of having children depart this world to be with our Lord, Wes' love for the Lord always seemed to have him in a place to be able to minister to those in need.

The ministry which Wes, Angela, myself and several others are associated is well-respected within the body of Christ. And the respect and integrity we have earned is in a major way because of the efforts of Wes. To those involved in counter-cult ministry work, the name Wesley Walters is a well-known one. For those who are not familiar with his name, it is only because he unselfishly gave of his time and energy to provide research and documentation concerning cults which others then used and published, and failed to give to him the credit due. As Helen and I spoke at the funeral home last evening, she told me of a wise man who told Wes many years ago that 'There is no amount to the good that you can do, if you don't look to receive credit.' There is no one who better demonstrated this than Wesley P. Walters.

It is with an extreme responsibility that I stand in this pulpit today, because not only do I stand here and speak for

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NEWS UPDATE

ON-LINE WITH PFO

Personal Freedom Outreach's newsletter is now available on floppy disk to readers with IBM-compatible computers. All newsletters, from the first one published in 1981, will be available.

Subscribers will now have immediate access to material on such topics as Dr. Rebecca Brown, the Boston Church of Christ, backward masking, reincarnation and hundreds of other items of cultic and apologetic interest. This new media will provide an easy avenue for the retrieval of PFO's research for sermons, lectures, your own research articles or in addressing personal correspondence.

Over 400 files are contained, including all major research articles, editorials, news updates and book reviews. (See the index in this issue of **The Quarterly Journal** for a complete listing of all published articles from 1981 through 1990.)

These files are made available in ASCII format and may be obtained on either 3.5" or 5.25" disks. The cost for the entire set is \$29.95 (plus \$2.00 shipping). When ordering, please specify disk size requested.

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—MKG



DEATH SENTENCE FOR CULT LEADER LUNDGREN

Jeffrey Don Lundgren, self-proclaimed prophet and leader of an Reorganized Latter-Day Saints splinter group, has been convicted of five counts each of aggravated murder and kidnapping.

The convictions, which were handed down Aug. 29 in Lake County, Ohio, stem from the April 1989 killings of Dennis Avery; his wife, Cheryl; and their three daughters in Kirtland, Ohio. Lawyers for Lundgren admitted that he had lured each of the Avery family members into a barn where they were gagged and bound, shot and then placed into a common grave.

The jury took just over three hours to deliberate and return verdicts. Earlier, Lundgren's wife, Alice, was convicted on five counts each of conspiracy, complicity to commit aggravated murder and kidnapping. She was sentenced to five consecutive life terms for her role in the killings. Lundgren's son Damon, 19, also was tried for his role in the execution-murders.

Following Lundgren's convictions, the six-man, six-woman jury was asked to recommend sentencing for the crimes. During the sentencing phase, Lundgren was given the opportunity to present unsworn statements. Since he did

not testify, it was the first time he spoke publicly during the trial.

Lundgren delivered a five-hour sermon-style address to jurors. Lundgren told the court: "I am a prophet of God. I am even more. I am not a false prophet. I am not worthy of the penalty of those who seek my death. ... It's not a figment of my imagination that I can in fact talk to God, that I can hear His voice... All the prophets were commanded to specific acts."

Lundgren said that as a prophet he was entitled to kill the Avery family because of their unbelief and distrust of his declarations. Lundgren said he believed that passages from the biblical books of Isaiah and Matthew, and passages from the Mormon book "Doctrine and Covenants" instructed him to dig a pit, bind the Avery family, kill them and bury the bodies in a common grave under stones.

Following Lundgren's statement, jurors took two hours to recommend the death penalty. Juror Susan Bailey said afterward "We thought the longer he talked, the more he hurt himself." Jurors also said that Lundgren's lack of remorse and twisted scripture interpretations weighed heavily in their decision.

Under Ohio law, Lundgren is entitled to an automatic appeal of his convictions.

—MKG



BETHEL DEMONSTRATION 1990

Over sixty Christians from around the world gathered Oct. 18, 1990 at the International Headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, N.Y. The demonstrators gathered to proclaim salvation in the person and work of Jesus Christ, not the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

The group included former Jehovah's Witnesses and people with no Watchtower background. The former Jehovah's Witnesses in attendance represented over 500 years of dedication and service to the Watchtower. The demonstrators prayed, preached and evangelized. They distributed pamphlets and carried picket signs. The demonstration lasted three hours.

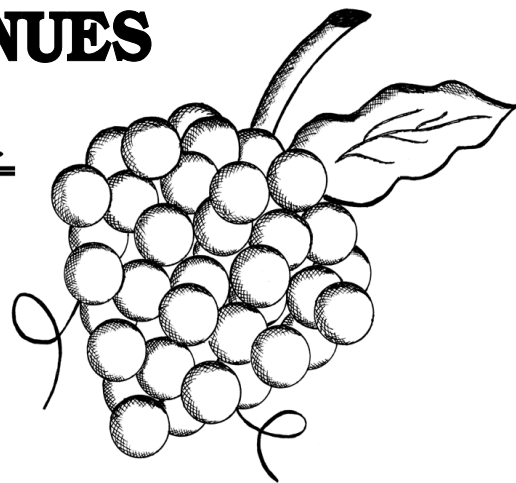
Members of the protest group sought further to draw attention to the Watchtower's disruption of families through its harsh and unbiblical interpretation of disfellowshipping and its practice of shunning. All former members and those who actively oppose the Watchtower, are branded as apostates. Disfellowshipped or disassociated members of the sect are forbidden from any communication with active Witnesses. Couples frequently get divorced when one Jehovah's Witness becomes disillusioned with the faith and the other remains firm.

The demonstration prefaced the 12th annual Witnesses (continues on page 14)

Kansas City Fellowship Revisted

THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

by Stephen F. Cannon



The controversy at Kansas City Fellowship (now officially a Vineyard Fellowship) continues. [See PFO's **The Quarterly Journal**, Vol. 10, No. 4, Oct.-Dec., 1990]

The chief participants are Mike Bickle, senior pastor of Kansas City Fellowship; Paul Cain and Bob Jones, "prophets" associated with KCF; John Wimber, overseer of Vineyard Ministries; and Ernest Gruen, pastor of the Full Faith Church of Love in Kansas City.

In **Ministries Today** magazine (September-October 1990), Lee Grady chronicled Gruen's concern over KCF's aberrant teachings, which go back to 1984:

"After making several attempts to bring correction — once in private with Bickle and twice with a group of KCF leaders present — Gruen says he 'lost patience.'" (pg. 50)

This led Gruen to "tell it to the church" as instructed in Matthew 18. He did this from the pulpit on Jan. 21, 1990, with the sermon "Do We Keep Smiling and Say Nothing?" In it Gruen pointed out false prophecies and aberrant teachings. Gruen taped the sermon and distributed it nationally. The battle was on.

Stung by Gruen's sermon, Bickle wrote an open letter on Jan. 22, 1990 responding to the charges. The response was: "...you don't understand our church structure ... nor the nature of our prophetic ministries." "...most of what you shared was not based on factual information and the rest was colored in an untruthful and negative way to seriously misrepresent the truth."

After making these comments Bickle said: "I open my heart to any correction that you have to offer that relates to any of our practices. I only first request that you take time to understand them accurately, thus, enhancing a more meaningful correction to us."¹

So, while the letter had a veneer of loving submission — "...we do not in any way charge you with insincerity or purposeful malice. I continue to receive you as a man of sincerity and integrity. ...Our desire is full and immediate reconciliation." — its underlying mood was: "You don't understand, you are misinformed, and your misinformation is used in a negative way that misrepresents the truth." This attitude is consistent with the teaching of Mike Bickle on the general low level of understanding of the church today.

In a cassette tape message called "Divine Appointment," Bickle says:

"At this point in time, because of the pride of the church (just like the Scribes and the Pharisees) we have such a sense that we understand ... when we are not even the beginning of novices." We have ... "the church with absolutely no insight, judging the works of God with no understanding and missing out on the works of God."²

Evidently, Gruen interpreted the letter similarly. Correspondence proliferated between Bickle, Gruen and others in the controversy. The staff at Full Faith compiled 233 pages of tape transcripts, writings of KCF leaders, letters of former members and area ministers that documented Gruen's allegations. These teachings included "Charismatic heresy" and "prophecy through familiar spirits." Again, copies of this document were distributed nationally.

Bickle and Gruen finally agreed to a July meeting with other prominent members of the Charismatic movement to be present to mediate, but before the meeting, John Wimber intervened:

"In a surprise announcement, he [Wimber] said that Bickle and his associates had agreed to submit themselves to his oversight and become part of Wimber's Vineyard Ministries. The KCF network of fellowships would become Vineyard churches."³

Because of his interest in supernatural signs and wonders, and his acknowledgement of Paul Cain as a Prophet of God, Wimber already had strong ties to KCF (see PFO Journal cited previously). It was natural that Bickle would turn to someone with the national ministry recognition of a John Wimber for help in this time of growing crisis. Once Wimber acknowledged that there were excesses at KCF, Gruen was more disposed to allow him to mediate the controversy. The meeting was called off:

"In a letter to Gruen, Wimber promised to address some of the errors and declared, 'I am satisfied that we will not see these problems arising again in the future.'⁴

Bickle, Wimber, Gruen, et al met June 28, 1990 to examine the charges and documentation made by Gruen. **Charisma and Christian Life** reports:

"They had found only a couple of areas of agreement, according to Wimber, but he said, 'I am glad to announce that there is a truce.'

"Gruen, who had distributed a cassette tape and a printed book of accusations, acknowledged that he had no authority to question or examine the validity of KCF's teachings and practices. He said he had full confidence that Wimber and the Vineyard team will properly correct any problems. However, both to Wimber in person and in a letter released a week later, Gruen held fast to his conviction that KCF had made serious errors."⁵

At a KCF-sponsored conference that
(continues on page 7)

MOHAMMED RETURNS

ISLAM – A Clear and Present Danger

by G. Richard Fisher

Christians are in danger from the spread of the doctrines of Islam. Islam means "submission." A Moslem is one who submits to the "revelations" and teachings of Mohammed, a 7th century visionary and mystic who took great pains to change and distort the Bible. He claimed to be the "comforter" of John 14 in spite of the fact that scripture says this "comforter" would be in the apostles and is a spirit being. Mohammed came 600 years after Pentecost and the descent of the real Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

Warnings of the danger have been sounded emphatically by J.J. Davis:

"During the 1980s and 1990s, issues posed by the study of comparative religions are likely to move higher on the agenda of evangelical theology. A resurgent Islam, whose evangelistic efforts will be financed by a steady stream of petrodollars, will highlight the need for a Christian apologetic articulated in a global context."¹

This assessment is being confirmed everyday by the appearance of articles discussing not only aspects of religious Islam but the radical (terrorist) elements as well, which are gaining front-page coverage every day. Consider the information given in the May 17, 1985, **Christianity Today**:

"If the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the pursuit of 'jihad,' Islamic holy war, has shaken the citadels of international power, the movement has endured some shaking of its own from an unexpected force: evangelical Christianity.

In recent years, as Islam has ascended to power in several countries, Christians have been gearing up for a spiritual 'counter-revolution.' Organizations such as the Samuel Zwemer Institute and the U.S. Center for World Mission have alerted the church to the magnitude of the Moslem challenge. The world's Moslem population represents an unreached group of nearly 900 million people.

'If we don't go to the Moslems with the Gospel in love, God will bring them against us in judgment,' says J. Christy Wilson Jr., a professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a former missionary to Moslems. 'Moslem eschatology teaches [that] they will conquer the Earth. They consider themselves in a holy war to take over the whole world.'²

Though written some years ago, it could have been written today. It was relevant in 1985, it is even more so today.

Islam is the world's second-largest universal religion, trailing slightly behind Christendom. Islamic belief controls the government and culture of people all across North Africa, throughout the entire Mideast, extending eastward through Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan. Islamic centers are being established in the U.S. with incredible rapidity. Islamic revival and revolution is a phenomenon widely recognized since the early 1970s.³

We must consider four things:

First — The Predominance of Islam

Consider the fact that the Soviet Union has 50 million Moslems. By the year 2000 that number will double. This is seen by the U.S.S.R. as a

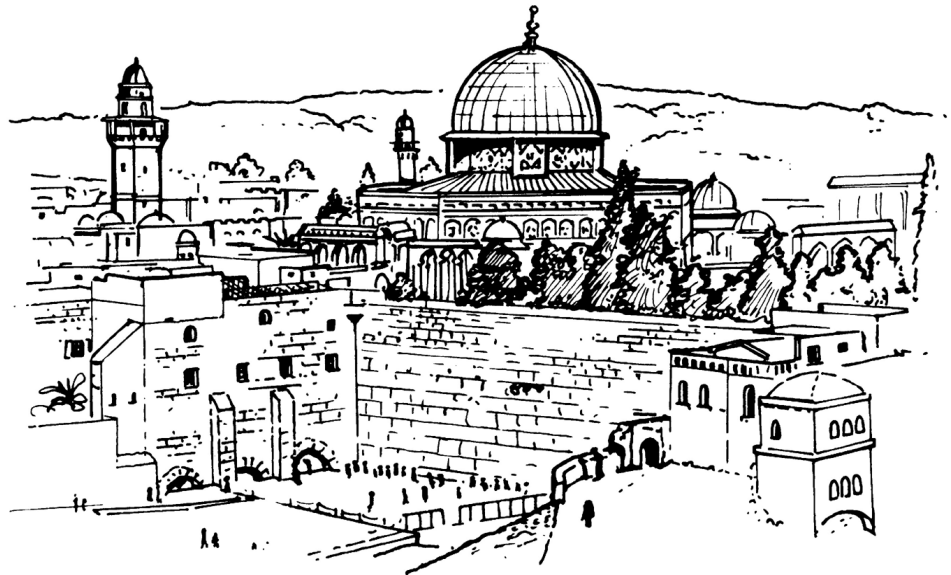
demographic time bomb. Maixin Zonis of the University of Chicago observes that "Islam is being used as a vehicle for striking back at the west."⁴ Consider the chilling words of Martin Goldsmith:

"Only an ostrich can ignore Islam today. The bastion of Islam stands in the sure knowledge of its immense political economic power. In the United Nations the Moslem nations control a sizable slice of the Third World vote. Their oil wealth gives them untold influence over other nations too; their carrot of vast sums of aid is balanced by the threatening stick of a possible rise in oil prices or perhaps a total oil boycott. Even nations like the United States and Canada sigh with relief when Sheikh Yamani gives a conciliatory smile, and we shudder down our economic spine whenever he frowns in displeasure at an unwise political statement by our leaders or at an offensive television film about the death of a princess. In days of recession and unemployment we all desperately need the goodwill of the oil-rich Moslem nations of the Middle East."⁵

More than 2 million Moslems live in the United States. Students from Islamic countries constitute the largest group of international students in North American Universities and colleges.⁶

Islam is never far away from our news broadcasts and the front pages of our newspapers. There is great pressure on the Church of Jesus Christ. Christians need to know more about the teachings of Islam, as well as the theological nuances among Moslems. We also need to study ways to present the true Gospel in a more relevant way

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to these people.

It is hoped that the endnoted books and the bibliographic material will provide a good study ground to help Christians assemble a more effective apologetic as suggested in I Peter 3:15.

Second — The Prophet of Islam

According to Islamic tradition an ignorant young goat herder sitting in an Arabian cave had an encounter with the angel Gabriel around the year 610 A.D. He was given revelations and a command to proclaim.

Born in Mecca, Arabia, Mohammed was exposed to the polytheistic religion of his people as well as the Christian and Jewish debates in the Mideast. Shortly after his conversion, at age 25, he accepted the proposal of a rich widow, which gave him instant status and a larger audience for his teachings. In 622 A.D., hounded by opponents, he and some followers fled to Medina in what is known by Moslems as the "hegira" or flight. The Moslem calendar is dated from this event.⁷

Islam is not a unified religion. Various relatives and descendants of Mohammed claimed rulership, resulting in power struggles and factions. There are Shi'ites (Shi'a means "faction") purporting direct lineage from Mohammed's son-in-law. They are radical and extreme. They make up about 15 percent of all Moslems and believe that terrorist acts can earn one entrance to paradise. They are divided into three lesser sects, the Isma'ilis, the Zaydis and the Twelvers.⁸ There also are Sunnis, the majority group; Sufis, who are mystics; and other lesser offshoots.⁹

Mohammed taught a religion contrary to all the basic tenets of Christianity, which leads us to our third point.

Third — The Pronouncements of Islam

The "Bible" of Islam is called the Koran. Islamic scholars say it was handed down from heaven directly from God to Mohammed. It claims to correct the "corrupted" Hebrew Old and Greek New Testaments.¹⁰

In short, Islam believes and teaches that Mohammed was the greatest and final prophet. Moslems hold as their basic creed: "There is no God but Allah; Mohammed is his messenger."

Good Moslems pray five times a day

and base any hope of paradise on their works. They see no need of conversion since they believe man is only weak and frail — not depraved with a fallen sin nature — and can change himself for the better. The Islamic lifestyle is extremely legalistic. Islam forbids the eating of certain foods. Friday is its holy day. Moslems pay ritual alms, fast during the month of Ramadan and make a pilgrimage to Mecca if they can afford it.¹¹

Moslems deny the doctrine of the Trinity and Christ's atonement. Moslems believe that Judas, not Jesus, was crucified in a mistake by his executioners. Other Moslems believe someone else was substituted for Jesus.

Fourth — Posture of Christians

Christian evangelists who work among Moslems say there is no easy program. However, they make suggestions gleaned from scripture and personal experience:¹²

1. Much prayer.
2. A consistent life of demonstrated ethics.
3. A solid doctrinal base.
4. The ability to give a reasoned and loving presentation of the facts of man's fall and of the Gospel.
5. Knowledge of Islamic belief and counterarguments.
6. Use of illustrations because of the Arab mind set
7. Patience in pre-evangelism.
8. Avoidance of food or drink that would offend.
9. Willingness to establish friendships.

One of the best recent studies available is Josh McDowell's **The Islamic Debate**. It is the best single volume for getting insight and developing an apologetic. McDowell says we should take the growing threat of Islam seriously:

"The impact of Islam in world affairs is steadily on the upswing, and in order to present the Gospel effectively, we must have a good background knowledge of Islam.

Moslem countries presently (1) through OPEC have a great deal to say about world economy, (2) play a powerful role in the social stability (or instability) of various governments, (3) are the political focal point for numerous potentially serious situations for

war, and (4) are growing in their religious influence.

Politically, economically, religiously, and socially Islam affects the world on several fronts: Most important for the Christian is Islam's spiritual impact, which has been great in recent years. To this Christians are called to respond in love, and with truth, realizing Christ loves Muslims and desires them to come to salvation."¹³

Endnotes:

1. John Jefferson Davis, **Foundations of Evangelical Theology**, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1984, pg. 36.
2. Sharon E. Mumper, "New Strategies to Evangelize Muslims Gain Effectiveness," **Christianity Today**, May 17, 1985, pg. 75.
3. Eugene Fisher and Cherif Bassiouni, **Storm Over the Arab World**, Follet Pub. Co., Chicago, Ill., 1972.
4. "The World of Islam," **Time** magazine, April 16, 1979, pg. 40.
5. Martin Goldsmith, **Islam and Christian Witness**, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 1982.
6. *Ibid*, Goldsmith, pp. 9-11.
7. Wallace Ferguson, **A Survey of European Civilization**, Vol. 1, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 1958, pp. 128-137.
8. Itamar Tabinovich, **The War for Lebanon**, Cornell Univ. Press, N.Y., 1984, pg. 234.
9. James and Marti Hefley, **Arabs, Christians, Jews**, Logos International, Plainfield, N.J., 1978, pp. 35-120. See also, Bernard Palmer, **Understanding the Islamic Explosion**, Horizon House, pp. 101-104.
10. Ray Register, Jr., **Dialogue and Interfaith Witness with Muslims**, W.E.C. Muslim Ministries, Fort Washington, Pa., 1979, pp. 30-38.
11. C.R. Marsh, **Share Your Faith with a Muslim**, Moody Press, Chicago, 1975, pp. 14, 15.
12. Samuel Zwemer and others labored for years in Moslem countries with small results. It is a difficult and dangerous field of labor and converts may be put to death.
13. Josh McDowell and John Gilchrist, **The Islam Debate**, Here's Life Publishers, San Bernardino, Calif., 1983, pg. 32.

Editor's Note: For additional reading, we recommend **A Christian's Response to Islam** by William M. Miller (\$3.95) and **The Cross and the Crescent** by Phil Parshall (\$10.95). These publications are available from PFO - Saint Louis. Please add \$1.00 postage.

We also recommend the October/November 1990 issue of **Israel My Glory** (the magazine of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.) which contains several noteworthy articles on the Islamic faith.

evening Bickle confessed to 15 mistakes KCF leaders had made. Most of these points addressed the leaders' elitist spirit and lack of accountability. While some of the admissions are significant, they do not deal with most of Gruen's accusations. Most telling was that there was no repudiation of any of the movement's prophets.

While Bob Jones has been asked to limit his **public** ministry and prophetic teacher John Paul Jackson has been asked by Bickle to undergo some training from Wimber, none of their prior aberrant teachings has been renounced.

Wimber is on record as saying that while he disagrees with the City Church concept of KCF, he finds nothing else "reprehensible." Wimber describes Bickle's confessions as the type a gardener ought to make when he lets a shrub get misshapen, but not a questioning of what God is doing at and through KCF."

"We are not about to lay an axe to anything," Wimber said. "long live a prophetic voice. We need to hear from God."⁶

After the June 28 meeting, Gruen summarized where Full Faith stood on the controversy. Although he defended the overall accuracy of his documentation on the aberrant teachings of KCF, Gruen conceded that it may have been faulty on three counts where complaints from former disgruntled KCF members were specified. He also withdrew all charges against Cain, saying he found him to be godly and a man of integrity.

Gruen then essentially took himself out of the fray by stating:

"Finally, we release the entire situation of Kansas City Fellowship into your hands. We recognize that it is not now our responsibility to provide either correction or approval of Kansas City Fellowship. We believe that you are sincerely trying to bring the balance and correction that is needed. We also understand that this will involve a process that will take some amount of time. We again wish to express our confidence in you, John, and state publicly that we completely and fully trust in your integrity."⁷

John Wimber now believes that "... with the public 'rebuke' of Bickle on

the 15 points and the willingness of Gruen to discontinue public pressing of additional charges as of July 30, 'the process has been completed,' and Bickle and KCF have 'joyfully' been welcomed into the Vineyard coalition of Churches."⁸

Do We Return to Smiling and Saying Nothing?

In this writer's opinion, the process is far from complete. Nothing more than a bandage has been applied to a wound in the Body of Christ. If left untreated, the wound will fester and erupt with greater virulence later.

At issue is crucial doctrine. The outcome of this controversy will determine source of doctrinal and practical principles for many Christians. The struggle is not new. It has been raging since the Canon of Scripture was closed. It is not an internal battle between a "jealous old guard against a new move of God." The issue is not even a question of whether there are prophets in today's church.

Reduced to its lowest unit, the controversy centers around a primal question, "Yea, hath God said?"

Is the bottom line rule for the faith and practice of Christians the written objective Word of God or is it the subjective personal prophecies of a group of elite Apostles and Prophets? Are all personal spiritual revelations to be judged by the Word of God or is the Word of God to be "interpreted" through personal spiritual revelations? It is on this level that KCF and if necessary all of the Vineyard Ministries must be called to task.

Teachers who make erroneous statements in a national forum to the effect that their fellowship will disciple the nations, that out of their leadership will come the new breed of Manifest Sons who will conquer death, that through their prophets will come a new definition of what Christianity is and say these statements have the Divine Imprimatur of "Thus Saith The Lord" cannot gloss over these statements with an "Oops, sorry, these were just the statements of a young and immature ministry."

When one prophesies with a "Thus Saith The Lord" to a committed Christian, something important has occurred. The person that has spoken has in effect said "That was not me talking, that was God talking through me." The

first question that should be asked at that point is not "Is this man a prophet?" But, does he speak according to the Word of God? If he does not, then Isaiah 8:20 tells us that there is no light in him.

The men who wish to be known as apostles and prophets must realize that once those titles have been acquired, many people take their words seriously. Lives and families have been devastated by a few ill-chosen words. The weight of this responsibility precludes any casual apologies.

In spite of the fact that Gruen apparently has thrown in the towel and Wimber has declared the correction to be complete, the controversy has not been settled. Hard, detailed questions should still be asked of both KCF and Vineyard.

Too often in the past when unscriptural doctrines are challenged in a particular group, a superficial apology has been offered by the offender to take the focus off the controversy. Then the group repackages the doctrines and returns to disseminating them. This has been the tactic of Latter Rain proponents and others for the last 50 years.

Hard Questions

Because many erroneous KCF teachings were proclaimed publicly and people all over the world were affected by them, why doesn't KCF repudiate them publicly?

One of the 15 errors acknowledged by Bickle was: "Calling John Wimber, or others, apostles and prophets versus using the terms "apostolic leadership" and "prophetic ministry." Does this mean that Paul Cain and Bob Jones will no longer be called prophets? If they are not now prophets, were they ever? Is saying that someone operates in prophetic ministry the same as saying that he is a prophet? How do they differ? If Bob Jones is a true prophet, then why was he asked by Bickle to limit his public ministry? If Jones is not a true prophet, then why haven't his bizarre prophecies been publicly repudiated?

In light of the many unscriptural doctrines legitimized by Jones' prophecies — Manifest Sons of God, the power to forgive sins, etc. — how could Wimber say that he could find nothing reprehensible in the teachings of KCF? Does that statement signify that Wimber believes in these doctrines?

In his open letter to Wimber, Gruen said: "He (Paul Cain) does not hold to the doctrine of Manifested Sons, but totally denies ever having believed in that teaching." How can Gruen make that statement when in his own document exposing the aberrant teachings of KCF, he includes unmistakable proof that Cain does teach that very doctrine:

"... This army is also in the New Testament. It's referred to as the man child. I know some of you's gonna disagree with this; don't you even stop to disagree. Revelation 12:25, if you disagree, just file it in "miscellaneous" and don't bother with it. When you get to heaven we'll check it out, and you'll find out I'm right. Here it is — this great army in the New Testament is a man child, Revelation 12:5; the overcomers, Revelation 2 and 3; the 144,000 servants, Revelation 7:3; the bride of the Lamb's wife — see why they call me in on the carpet?...the revelation of the Lamb's wife, Revelation 19:7 and 21:9; and the white horse, Revelation 6:2; the first fruit, Revelation 14:4; the precious fruit, James 5:7; the wise virgins, Matthew 21:1-13; the manifested sons of God, Romans 8:19-23, and it's certainly a remarkable fact that none of these names are expressions applied to the saints of God at any other time in history, but all of them are in their context and promises showing undeniably that they belong to the end time. The end time, let's say the end time. They belong to the end time to this present generation, Matthew 24:34 ... this is the end time and God wants us to realize once and again, in closing, that there's gonna be a great company of overcomers prepared for this mighty ministry which I call the prize of all ages ..."⁹

If Paul Cain is a prophet of God, how can he call William Branham "the greatest prophet that ever lived," when Branham taught that the doctrine of the Trinity was "of the Devil?"

According to the September **Charisma and Christian Life** news article, Gruen "acknowledged that he had no authority to question or examine the validity of KCF's teaching or practices." If the pastor of a church whose members are being hurt by aberrant doctrines of a neighboring church doesn't have the authority to examine or question, then who does? Should Gruen have just smiled and said nothing?

These and many, many other ques-

tions should be asked of all the participants of this controversy. If we have misunderstood what these men are saying, they should take the time to clear up our confusion in public forums such as **Christianity Today**, **Charisma and Christian Life**, or **Ministries Today** magazine.

Is Vineyard Ministries the Proper Mediator?

Gruen has the confidence that Wimber and Vineyard Ministries will be able to correct the doctrines of KCF. However, one doesn't have to delve very deeply into Vineyard study materials to see that Wimber may be the wrong man for the job.

The first problem area is that of the close association between Wimber and Cain. The two men have become almost inseparable:

"In addition to his fathering relationship to KCF, Paul has come into a deep friendship and working relationship with John Wimber ... Paul has made a special commitment to traveling with John and to support the vision that God is currently unfolding to him."¹⁰

The question of who wields the most influence over whom is valid. Already Wimber is showing signs of accepting Cain's doctrine of The Manifest Sons:

"I think that what God is doing is raising up a new breed of leaders. And I believe that He's inviting us in this room to participate in that new breed."

"Now that's a term you've become familiar with this week. It's been prophesied by Paul Cain and I think it's a very important concept."¹¹

He also speaks favorably of the Latter Rain movement:

"And I believe the Church of Jesus Christ that we are a part of (the larger body of Christ the world over) has been weighed and judged in this generation. That instead of learning from our predecessors from the Latter Day Rain movement, from any number of movements of God that have occurred in this century, we have allowed the enemy to come in and distract and take away the passion of God, and rob it out of our lives."¹²

Another disturbing factor in looking to Wimber to bring balance to KCF is his weak view of the authority of The Bible. He has trumpeted the fact that his

theology goes beyond scripture and is based more on experience.

"Now I don't want to, in any way, erode your confidence in the Word of God, but listen very carefully to what I am about to say. It (the Bible) is not God; it is the word from God. Don't worship the book. Evangelicals all over the country are worshiping the book. They have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Book. They took the very workings of the Holy Spirit and placed it in the Book."¹³

This statement seems to be saying that the Holy Spirit works outside the Word of God and would be consistent with the "God is greater than His Word" attitude.

Wimber even disparages those who hold to a high view of the authority of scripture. Speaking of those from Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel (of which Wimber was once a part) he says "Calvaryites are sometimes a little too heavily orientated to the written Word. I know that sounds a little dangerous, but frankly they're very pharisaical in their allegiance to the Bible. They have very little life and growth and spontaneity in their innards. Sometimes they're very rigid and can't receive much of the things of the Lord."¹⁴

This attitude led one researcher to observe, "Aside from these questions about Wimber's grasp of intellectual questions, there are some serious difficulties in his theology for a thinking evangelical. In the first place, his use of scripture is highly problematic. His starting place seems to be his own experience and scripture is drawn in to proof-text his own position."¹⁵

Christian Research Institute published a fact sheet on Vineyard that includes these comments: "There appears to be little emphasis on teaching the Bible per se ... While Bible teaching is not emphasized enough, the role of experience in the Christian life appears to be overemphasized. People in the Vineyard seem to be willing to allow their spiritual experiences to be self-authenticating."¹⁶

The above attitudes force us to ask "is Vineyard Ministries the proper mediator in this controversy, or, have Gruen and others placed their confidence in someone who believes essentially the same things as those to whom he is supposed to bring correction?"

Accusers of the Brethren?

Since the correction process for KCF is, in the opinion of many, completed, the fellowship is striking back at its critics.

Instead of dealing openly with the documented issues, KCF — at least for now through Grace Ministries Associates — is trying to cast doubt on the process of questioning and exposing aberrant doctrine. They are also seeking to vilify those engaged in that process as “accusers of the brethren, self-appointed heresy hunters, and those possessed by fault-finding demons.”

The two most blatant examples of this is in an article by Grace Ministries associate Francis Frangipane and a portion of an article by Rick Joyner.¹⁷

Frangipane writes:

“Satan has sent forth against the Church an army of fault-finding demons... How is the fault-finding demon manifested? It incites people to spend weeks unearthing old faults or sins in their minister of church... Beguiled by this demon, we circulate its accusations through a congregation or city, stimulating suspicion and fear among the people... But this enemy is not limited to attacks on local churches. Its attacks are also citywide and nationwide... To mask the diabolical nature of its activity, this fault-finding demon usually garbs its criticisms in religious clothing. Under pretense of protecting the sheep from a gnat-sized error in doctrine, it forces the flock to swallow a camel-sized error of loveless correction... In the final stage of this process we become crusaders against the other person. No defense he or she offers will satisfy. We are convinced the person is deceived and dangerous; it is up to us to warn others. Yet the truth is we who have succumbed to the fault-finder spirit are the ones who are deceived and dangerous... When the accuser comes, he brings distorted facts and condemnation. Satan never offers hope nor extends grace for repentance. Those who are trapped by this spirit never research the virtues in the organization or person they are attacking. Their goal is not to heal but to harm.¹⁸

Joyner writes:

“It seems inevitable that the self-appointed ‘heresy hunters’ will always do more damage to the church than the actual heresies... The free associations and wild overgeneralizations of those whom Jude called ‘fault-finders’ are a

destructive force that has ensnared and destroyed the effective spiritual life and witness of larger portions of the church than possibly any false teachings... We consider the callousness with which we have been prone to falsely accuse one another and over generalize in our references to one another’s teaching or ministry a far more serious and destructive matter in the church than these particular doctrines... There are presently two ministries going on before the throne of God: one is intercession and the other is accusation. These are primary distinguishing characteristics of those who are walking by the spirit of Christ and those who are of the spirit of the evil one... Those who are of the nature of the evil one are the ‘fault-finders’ Jude warned about. ‘Free association’ and ‘overgeneralization’ are two of Satan’s most effective tools in promoting innuendo and slander in his role as ‘the accuser of the brethren.’ These are the ones who

‘cause divisions.’... One who has right doctrines and a spirit of pride or the accuser will devour far more sheep than those who just have some wrong doctrine.”¹⁹

To accept the above arguments as true would put the Apostle Paul in jeopardy of being accused of having a fault-finding demon. In Galatians 2:11-20, Peter (a Christian brother and Apostle, not a heretic) was teaching false doctrine. Paul knew Peter was incorrect and challenged him publicly on the subject. Until that controversy was resolved, the Judaizers no doubt wondered who that upstart Paul was that was causing division in the church. In II Timothy 2:15-18 Paul again mentions false teachers by name so that believers would not fall prey to their teachings and again in Acts 20:29. Paul kept on warning the church to beware of false doctrine for “three years.”

The simple truth is that the New Testament is full of examples of public correction of false teachings both inside and outside the church. The key word in the process set forth in I Thessalonians 5:21 is “test” (from the Greek **dokimazo** — to test, examine, prove, scrutinize). This test applies to men, messages, and ministries. The basis of the test is the sure objective Word of God, not the unreliable word of today’s prophets.

It is true that there are minor points of doctrine (whether the Rapture is Pre, Mid or Post; whether you do or don’t

have instrumental music in the church; or even how many angels can dance on the head of a pin) that we will never agree on. With these we should agree to disagree agreeably.

However, when it comes to such watershed doctrines as the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the accuracy and absolute authority of the Bible, we can and must challenge each other when our teachings denigrate either. This should be done with a spirit of grace and love. The motive of such a challenge should be to seek restoration and repentance — for both sides if necessary).

The time has come for Christians to stop being browbeaten into silence by those who have set themselves up as modern day apostles and prophets.

Endnotes:

1. Letter on file.
2. **Divine Appointment** (Introduction), Mike Bickle, 3/29/89, cassette tape.
3. “Resolving the Kansas City Prophecy Controversy,” Lee Grady, **Ministries Today**, Sept.-Oct., 1990, pg. 51.
4. *ibid.*
5. News Section, **Charisma and Christian Life** magazine, Sept. 1990, pg. 42.
6. *ibid.*
7. Letter from Ernie Gruen to John Wimber, dated July 1, 1990. Letter on file.
8. **Charisma** magazine, *op. cit.*
9. **Documentation of the Aberrant Practices and Teachings of Kansas City Fellowship (Grace Ministries)**, Pastor Ernie Gruen, n.d., published by author, pp. 220-221.
10. “Paul Cain: A Personal Profile,” Terri Sullivant, **Grace City Report**, Fall 1989, pg. 2.
11. John Wimber, **Unpacking Your Bags**, n.d. cassette tape.
12. *ibid.*
13. John Wimber, **Healing: An Introduction**, n.d., cassette tape no. 5, emphasis added.
14. John Wimber, “Church Planting Seminar,” cited in **Testing the Fruit of the Vineyard**, by John Godwin.
15. Dr. Donald Lewis, **Assessing the Wimber Phenomenon**, Reagent College, June 1985, pg.3.
16. Elliot Miller & Robert Bowman Jr., “The Vineyard,” Christian Research Institute, San Juan Capistrano, February 1985.
17. Francis Frangipane, “Exposing the Accuser of the Brethren,” **Charisma and Christian Life** magazine, October 1990, pg. 89-94 and Rick Joyner, “Our Resolution for the ‘90s,” **The Morning Star Prophetic Newsletter**, September-October 1990 pp. 10-13.
18. **Charisma** magazine, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90, 92.
19. **Morning Star** newsletter, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

hood superstitions to become a free-thinking rationalist. Actually she answered the question not like someone who didn't believe in God but like someone who was angry at God.

Atheism Demands Faith

Atheists can be dogmatic and their positions on God's non-existence can require a great deal of faith. One man this writer talked to dared me to prove God's existence. The discussion went along these lines:

ATHEIST: There is no way you can prove the existence of a god. It's a myth, a big fairy tale.

ME: It seems to me that there are at least two possibilities, either someone made all this or this whole cosmos is the product of chance. Look around you, we see design, order and adaptations.

ATHEIST: That doesn't prove that a god exists. And even if it did, it tells us nothing about this so-called god.

ME: You are right that it doesn't prove the existence of God but it does give us grounds for belief. I see design, which gives me the basis for a designer. I see order, which gives me the basis for an organizer. The competing view is that of chance.

ATHEIST: It [chance] is more reasonable than attributing all this to some god that you can't see.

ME: I heard it said once that the probability of the cosmos coming into existence by chance was analogous to a dictionary resulting from an explosion in a print shop. All the elements for a dictionary are present. All you need is the force to put it all together, and an explosion could certainly provide that. However, a dictionary shows that some intelligence was behind it.

ATHEIST: Not so fast, I think given enough print shops, enough explosions. You would eventually get a dictionary.

ME: I don't have enough faith to believe that.

The atheist was not convinced but he was shown how ridiculous a conclusion is reached when the idea that the universe occurred by chance is taken to its logical extreme. It also is a starting point to offer other evidence.

There is not exhaustive evidence for the existence of God but there is sufficient evidence. Just because God cannot be empirically verified does not mean He cannot exist. Sensory perception is not the only way to find truth.

Beyond seeking evidence for God is the question of what the existence of God means to human existence. Without a creator, man is alone. If life is a cosmic accident and there really is no God, then the human quest for life's meaning, and the concepts of morality, and ethics become difficult to explain and justify.

Consider the following comment by Steve D. Schwarz:

"Is existence ultimately meaningful, or is it ultimately absurd? If God is, He represents the ultimate meaning of existence, the sufficient reason why it came into existence and the final end toward which it moves as its destiny. If God is not, existence is an accident, a momentary flicker of light between an infinite darkness and void before, and after." (**The Intellectuals Speak Out About God**, pg. 110)

Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody, in **I'm Glad You Asked**, write:

"The human heart cries out for meaning, value, and purpose, but these are precisely the things that are denied in an atheistic cosmos. The universe is expanding, and left to itself, the galaxies will grow farther apart and the stars will eventually burn out. All will be cold, dark, and lifeless. On the scale of cosmic time, the human race (let alone the life of a man) flashes into existence for the briefest moment before passing into oblivion. From an ultimate standpoint, all that we do is meaningless — no one will be left to remember in the endless cosmic night."

Atheists and Bible Difficulties

Many atheist and free-thought groups publish lists of things about the Bible they say are absurd and contradictory. As Christians we need not fear honest examination of Scripture. Many groups publish these lists because they think Christians are unaware of them.

The following are a few guide lines that were written by the R.A. Torrey nearly a century ago in the handling Bible difficulties:

"Before taking up those specific diffi-

culties and 'contradictions' in the Bible which have caused the most trouble to seekers after truth, let us first consider how difficulties in general should be dealt with.

1. DEAL WITH THEM HONESTLY. Whenever you find a difficulty in the Bible, frankly acknowledge it. Don't try to obscure it; don't try to dodge it. Look it square in the face. Admit it frankly to whomever mentions it. If you cannot give a good, square, honest explanation, do not attempt any at all. Untold harm has been done by those who in their zeal for infallibility of the Bible have attempted explanations of difficulties which do not commend themselves to honest, fair-minded, man. People have concluded that if these are the best explanations, then there are no explanations at all. And the Bible, instead of being helped, has been injured by the unintelligent zeal of foolish friends. If you are really convinced that the Bible is the Word of God, you can far better afford to wait for an honest solution of a difficulty than you can afford to attempt a solution that is evasive and unsatisfactory.

2. LET US DEAL WITH THEM HUMBLY. Recognize the limitations of your own mind and knowledge, and do not for a moment imagine that there is no solution just because you have found none. There is, in all probability, a very simple solution, even when you can find no solution at all.

3. DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTIES DETERMINEDLY. Make up your mind that you will find the solution if you can by any amount of study and hard thinking. The difficulties of the Bible are our Heavenly Father's challenge to us to set our brains to work. Do not give up searching for a solution because you cannot find one in five minutes or ten minutes. Ponder over it and work over it for days, if necessary. The work will do you more good than the solution does. There is a solution somewhere, and you will find it if you will only search for it long enough and hard enough.

4. DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTIES FEARLESSLY. Do not be frightened when you find a difficulty, no matter how unanswerable, or how insurmountable, it appears at first sight. Thousands of men have found just such difficulties before you were born. They were seen hundreds of years ago, and still the old Book stands. The Bible that

has stood eighteen centuries of rigid examination, and also of incessant and awful assault, is not likely to go down before your discoveries or before the discharges of any modern critical guns. To one who is at all familiar with the history of critical attacks on the Bible, the confidence of those modern destructive critics who think they are going to annihilate the Bible at last, is simply amusing.

5. DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTY PATIENTLY. Do not be discouraged because you do not solve every problem in a day. If some difficulty persistently defies your very best efforts at a solution, lay it aside for a while. Very likely when you come back to it, it will have disappeared and you will wonder how you were ever perplexed by it.

6. DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTIES SCRIPTURALLY. If you find a difficulty in one part of the Bible, look for other Scripture to throw light upon it and dissolve it. Nothing explains Scripture like Scripture. Time and again people have come to me with some difficulty in the Bible that had greatly staggered them and asked for a solution, and I have been able to give a solution by simply asking them to read some other chapter and verses, and the simple reading of that verse has thrown such a light upon the passage in question that all the mists have disappeared and the truth has shone out as clear as day.

7. DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTIES PRAYERFULLY. It is simply wonderful how difficulties dissolve when one looks at them on his knees. Not only does God open our eyes in answer to prayer to behold wonderful things out of His law, but He also opens our eyes to look straight through a difficulty that before we prayed seemed impenetrable. One great reason why many modern Bible scholars have learned to be destructive critics is because they have forgotten how to pray." (**Difficulties in the Bible**, pp. 26-28)

With these thoughts in mind we can face any problem passages we find. When someone introduces us to a certain passage that they claim is contradictory he is arguing for an interpretation the same as any cultist would. We can respond by showing that the passage, even though difficult, can have a variety of ways of harmonizing it. Atheists this writer has know will say that that is rationalizing no matter how clearly they are shown their understand-

ing of the passage is faulty. As Christians who love the Bible we can welcome all the problem passages they can muster. For in the end, the Bible will be vindicated when all the facts are in. The Bible has stood the test of scrutiny by the very best skeptics, the assault on Holy Writ has been ceaseless. Yet the Bible is still loved, read and promoted. If we truly believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God we have nothing to fear from questions and examinations.

Jesus Christ and the Atheist

Atheists, like cultists, must explain who Jesus Christ is. To some He is a myth. For others He was a good man whose claims were exaggerated. Others say He was a good man who was deified by gullible followers. Others say Jesus was mistaken about who He was.

If the Christian quotes extrabiblical writers, historians, and references to Christ outside the biblical account, his sources are attacked as unreliable. The story of Jesus, we are told, was built from legends about other religious leaders. Sometimes it is implied and sometimes it is outright stated that the biblical record is biased and to quote it is to commit the fallacy of circular reasoning.

Yet in spite of atheists' opposition to the Bible, this is exactly where a study of Christ's identity must begin. It is the primary source of information concerning the life and times of Jesus Christ. From Scripture we can get a clear picture of what Jesus and His followers taught and said about Him.

Paul warns in II Corinthians 11:4: "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

The cultist and the atheist both must come to grips with the person and work of Jesus Christ. Both the cultist and the atheist have a distorted and unscriptural view of Christ. Both deny His deity. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus is Michael the archangel. Rev. Sun Myung Moon says Jesus failed because he didn't get married and father children. Modern liberals believe Jesus to be a great teacher, a moralist, the flower of humanity who was deified by gullible followers. Mormons say Jesus was one of many gods. Hindus teach

Jesus was a guru. Spiritists say Jesus was a medium. Witches say He was a witch. Christian Scientists say Jesus was a man who demonstrated the Christ principle. Moslems say Jesus was a prophet, but not even equal to Mohammed. The atheist calls him everything from a myth to a man with delusions of grandeur.

Jesus Asks the Question, "Who Do Men Say I Am?"

Matthew 16:13-18 "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.'"

The identity of Jesus Christ is of paramount importance. Notice that Jesus doesn't ask them what they think of what He said. The person, nature, and work of Christ is crucial in three specific areas. Worship, Evangelism, Salvation.

Who Is Jesus?

One can divide all there is into two categories: Creator and creation. If Jesus isn't the Creator, He is a creation. The creation must worship and serve the Creator. A creation cannot worship another creation. According to the Bible, such a practice is idolatry.

Jesus Is God

The Bible clearly identifies Jesus as God in Human flesh. Cultist and atheist deny that. Yet the record is clear Jesus Christ is God.

The following Scripture references are some good examples:

John 1:1 — In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 5:18 — Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but

said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 10:30-33 — I and [my] Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

John 20:28 — And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.

Hebrews 1:8 — But unto the Son [he saith], Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of Thy kingdom.

Revelation 1:8 — I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 22:12,13,20 — And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Claims of Deity Are Rare

Some atheists say Christ's claims are not extraordinary. "Many people have claimed to be God," they say. "We reject their claims. Why then should we take Jesus seriously?"

A.J. Hoover makes this observation:

"If Christ had never made a claim about His person, many people would still be asking, 'For goodness sake, whom do you represent — God or the devil?' As a matter of fact, however, Christ did make claims about His person, very explicit claims. His claims make Him unique among religious leaders of the world. There is a false theory going around that many people in history have made such claims to deity. This is simply not true. Apart from Jesus Christ, such claims are rare, so rare that they usually suffice to prove the person demented. Moses didn't claim to be Yahweh; Socrates didn't claim to be Zeus; Zoroaster didn't claim to be Ahura Mazda; Mohammed didn't claim to be Allah; Buddha didn't claim

to be Brahma. Only Christ claimed to be one with the God who sent Him (John 10:30). Familiarity has dulled our ears to the wonder of His claims." (**The Case for Christian Theism, An Introduction to Apologetics**, by A.J. Hoover, pg. 169)

No Man Spoke Like This Man

Jesus said things that could only be interpreted as claims of deity. Keeping in mind that the only two categories under consideration are Creator and creation. Jesus spoke and laid claim to things that only belonged to God. If Jesus was only a creation, or good man as some allege then He could have never said the things that He did, because a creation is not the object of honor, praise, or worship.

The following are just a few examples: John 7:46, John 5:23, John 8:19, John 14:9, John 14:24, John 16:15, Luke 19:40, Matthew 18:20, John 6:48, John 8:12, John 10:7, John 10:11, John 11:25, John 14:6, John 15:1.

The Identity of Jesus has an Impact on the Following Areas

1. SALVATION. Jesus uses an Old Testament name for God (I AM, Exodus 3:14) and applies it to Himself. He then adds that unless we believe that He is the I AM we will die in our sins. We must also believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead Romans 10:9-10.

Other examples are: John 8:24, Exodus 3:14, John 8:58-59, Romans 10:9-10.

2. EVANGELISM. Jesus said many false prophets would come in His name and deceive many. Paul warned that there would be another Jesus, another gospel, and another spirit. We need to know who Jesus is so we can spot the false christs that Jesus said will rise up and deceive. We are to invite the lost to come to Jesus. If their knowledge of Jesus is incorrect, they will not put their trust in Him as He said they should.

Other examples: II Corinthians 11:4, Matthew 7:15, Hebrews 7:25, John 3:16, John 3:18, John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:29, John 6:40, John 6:47, John 6:54, I John 5:10-13, John 20:31.

3. WORSHIP. Scripture clearly teaches that only God is to be worshipped. We are never to worship another creation, or creature. If Jesus is

only another creation then we have no business worshiping Him. However on the other hand if He is the creator, and one with the Father as He said He was, then not worshiping Him would dishonor the Father. (John 5:23) The following scriptures which say that only God is to be worshiped, yet we find time after time in the New Testament all kinds of people worshiping Jesus. Now, if Jesus was not God, and someone started to worship Him, He has an obligation to stop them. Peter did, (Acts 10:25-26) but Jesus never once told people not to worship Him. This would indicate that He approved of it, which lends support to the claim that He is God.

Examples: Exodus 34:14, Nehemiah 9:6, Isaiah 42:8, Matthew 2:11, Matthew 8:2, Matthew 14:33, Matthew 15:22-25, Matthew 20:20, Matthew 28:9, Matthew 28:17, Mark 5:6, John 9:38, Revelation 19:10, Revelation 22:8-9.

Jesus Is the Savior of the World

The very reason that Jesus came into the world was to save us from sin, separation from God. All those who will put their trust in Him will have everlasting life. He is the Savior of the world. No man has ever spoken like this.

Examples: Matthew 1:21, John 1:29, Romans 5:8, I John 2:2, I John 4:14.

Both the atheist and the cultist operate from an unbiblical understanding of who Jesus is. We need to be just as prepared to talk to atheists as we are to any other cultist who denies person, work and nature of Christ.

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**Editor's Note:** For additional, in-depth, information concerning the subject of atheism and Christian apologetics, PFO recommends the following publications:

**The New Atheism and the Erosion of Freedom** by Robert A. Morey (\$6.95)

**I'm Glad You Asked** by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody (\$9.95)

**Prepare to Answer — A Defense of the Christian Faith** by Rubel Shelly (\$9.95)

**When Skeptics Ask — A Handbook on Christian Evidences** by Norman Geisler and Ron Brooks (\$19.95)

These books are available from PFO - Saint Louis. Please add \$1.00 postage to each order.

the ministry which I am directly associated with, but I also am here representing many other counter-cult ministries and individuals on whom Wes had a great impact. It seemed he was always giving his time and effort to check or critique someone else's work for publication rather than investing his time in the preparation of publication of his own, something he longed to do. Yet, Wes did not let that discourage him because he felt it was all the Lord's work and desired to see the lost saved whether through his own efforts or through someone else's. However, I know that right now our Lord is giving to him his rewards for his unselfishness in his service to the Body of Christ.

Let me now close, and this will be the difficult part for me. Just a few days ago Angela took an early morning phone call, she came into the room where I was, trembling and fighting to hold back the tears, she could muster only two words, 'Wes died.'

Those two words left an emptiness in our lives that will never be filled this side of glory. It is with tremendous sorrow that we say good-bye to Wes. But our lives and walk with our Lord are better for having been his friend. We thank God for the promises He has given us in His Word and that we know our separation from Wes and other family and friends who have departed to be with the Lord is only temporal, an instant in time when compared to eternity."



## SPEAKING THE TRUTH HAS ITS RISKS

Since the time of Jesus and the Apostles the Holy Spirit has given orders to "watch out" for those who would deceive God's flock. Paul charged Timothy "in the presence of God and of Christ" to "Preach the Word" to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort." The Word of God is the only criterion by which we judge true teaching from false. It also is the gauge by which we discern false prophets from true ones. Without this divine treasure of truth we would be without light to guide us.

Making a defense of the Gospel is as much a part of the divine mandate of Christ as preaching it. The Word compels us to defend its truth. We at Personal Freedom Outreach affirm the inerrancy and power of the Word of God and submit to its mandate to make a defense of the Gospel and equip others to discern truth from error.

In doing so, we risk disapproval. When we expose darkness and error with the light of the Word, some may be offended or angered, but we cannot let that deter us.

Our staff takes Paul's charge seriously. We know from the Bible that false gospels lead people away from the love of God and into eternal separation from Him. That is why all that we publish is bathed in prayer, meticulously verified and documented. While our materials usually deal with cults that are opposed to God's Word, we also expose false teachings that infiltrate the Body of Christ. For example: the Word-Faith movement.

We do not regard the Pentecostal movement as heretical

but we have critiqued some of the movement's leaders who have strayed from orthodoxy. Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, and Charles Capps are prime examples of men who have gone into heresy by saying Jesus took on Satan's nature and had to be "born-again." This and other Word-Faith teachings are extrabiblical. Some have written to us in support of these teachers and have rebuked us for our stands. We expect criticism and receive some. However, the positive comments far outweigh the negative.

Another example occurred in 1989, when PFO exposed Dr. Rebecca Brown, Jack Chick's latest sensation. Brown has distributed through Chick Publications books that present her as an expert on the occult and "deliverance." Our evidence found the Brown story to be a lie.

We have received criticism from a few who still believed Brown's story. We also were threatened with a \$4 million lawsuit. But despite all that we have received numerous phone calls and letters from around the world praising our work. We believe that the Lord led us to obtain the information that exposed this false teacher.

Simultaneously, the Lord was exposing another fraud through **Cornerstone** magazine: Lauren Stratford. Stratford, like Brown, had pawned herself off as an "expert" on the occult, claiming to have lived a life of satanic ritualistic mayhem. It was all fabricated. This writer was personally contacted by Stratford when our investigation on Brown was near completion. Stratford seemed to be thrilled that Brown was to be exposed. She never dreamed she was next.

Cornerstone, like PFO, has received its share of criticism, but overwhelmingly has received high praise for its efforts.

However, one author and radio personality has taken offense at the work of PFO and Cornerstone. Hal Lindsey, noted for his marketing of end-times theology, on his national radio program, "This Week in Review," tried to link **Cornerstone** and PFO to the secular humanists.

Many who have endorsed Stratford in the past now have realized that she is a fraud and have disassociated themselves from her. However, Lindsey has a vested interest in Stratford because he has endorsed her book and had her as a guest on his national program. In a Harvest House Publisher's promotional flier on **Satan's Underground**, Lindsey is quoted: "I rarely recommend books. However, this one needs to be put before the public. In Lauren's story lies a tremendous ministry to individuals caught in abuse."

Also involved in this smear of Cornerstone and PFO is Lindsey's sister-in-law, Johanna Michaelsen, Christian author and lecturer on the New Age movement and the occult. Michaelsen also has strong ties to Stratford. On the cover of **Satan's Underground** Michaelsen's name is prominently displayed as the writer of the foreword. This is a major embarrassment in that documented evidence has proved the book's claims to be a hoax. Harvest House has stopped publishing and distributing the book.

Michaelsen also has praised Stratford in her new book, **Like Lambs to the Slaughter**, for which Lindsey wrote a foreword. On page 191, Michaelsen referred to Stratford's book as "powerful and important."

Lindsey and Michaelsen, who repeatedly call for discernment in the Church, have missed the mark on this one.

Instead of acknowledging the documented evidence and admitting that they backed a fraud, humbly cleaning the egg off their faces, they launched a subtle attacks and innuendoes on our ministries via national radio, trying to call us bedfellows with secular humanists. It is sad that nationally renowned radio ministers take the low road rather than admit they were duped.

Will we be swayed? No! Speaking the truth has its risks but pleasing God is more important. The mandate to speak truth and defend the Gospel is paramount. We will continue despite the opposition from the cults and even evangelical cliques.

—PRB

News Update

(continued from page 3)

Now For Jesus convention held in New Ringgold, Pa., on Oct. 19-21. An audiocassette recording of the demonstration events is available from PFO-Saint Louis for a cost of \$2.50 postpaid.

—MKG



### THE WAY SEEKS BUYER FOR EMPORIA CAMPUS

The Way International, which says it is recovering from a five-year period of decline and internal strife, has entertained purchase offers for its college campus in Emporia, Kan.

The Way suspended classes there in fall 1989 because of declining enrollment. Only 20 students had enrolled for the 1989-1990 school year. In the peak year of 1980-81, there were 578 enrolled.

Last summer, the Federal Bureau of Prisons began considering the campus as a site for a minimum-security prison and a teachers group considered putting its National Teachers Hall of Fame there.

By autumn the teachers group's interest had waned, leaving the prison bureau as the only potential buyer.

The decision that The Way College could house a minimum-security prison has drawn mixed responses from local residents. **The Emporia Gazette** reported that the "prison issue has grown into a fierce community controversy." Opponents to the planned prison cited a survey which indicates a decline in enrollment at nearby Emporia State University would take place should the prison be located there.

Emporia residents held an advisory election in November to express public consensus to prison officials. The mail ballot election results showed those opposing the prison winning by a 56% to 44% margin. However, the election is not binding and the possibility of converting the campus facility into a prison site may yet be realized.

The campus site has an appraised value of \$8 million.

—MKG

### ROCK GROUP CLEARED OF CAUSING SUICIDES THROUGH SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES

Judas Priest, a heavy metal rock band from England, and CBS Records have been exonerated in a civil suit that held them responsible for the deaths of two young men. The victims' families said the two had shot themselves as a result of subliminal messages contained on the group's "Stained Class" album. The families sought \$6.2 million in damages.

Washoe District Judge Jerry Whitehead dismissed the allegations following a 17-day trial in Reno, Nev. Whitehead said the families failed to substantiate that hidden messages caused the suicide deaths of Raymond Belknap, 18, and James Vance, 20. In December 1985, the youths spent six hours listening to the band's album, smoking marijuana and drinking before shooting themselves in a church playground. Attorneys for the families contended that the album's repeated hidden phrase, "do it," prompted the suicides. Belknap died instantly from his gunshot wound. Vance was seriously injured but survived. He died three years later.

The judge's ruling disclosed that the families had not lost the case because the defendants were able to prove that subliminal messages cannot affect human behavior. "Rather," he said, "the plaintiffs lost this case because they failed to prove that the defendants intentionally placed subliminal messages on the album and that those messages were a cause of the suicide and the attempted suicide in this case."

While judgment favored the rock group and its record company, Whitehead did impose a \$40,000 sanction against the record company for its refusal to comply with a court order directing it to supply certain material for the case.

The families are deciding whether to appeal the ruling.

—MKG



### "GOD" CAUSES BOY SCOUTS TO LOSE GRANT

The Genoa-Kingston, Ill., chapter of the United Way has terminated funds to the Boy Scouts of America after atheists protested. The atheists consider discriminatory the scouts' oath of duty "to God and country."

A letter, dated Sept. 15, 1990, from the United Way board to the Boy Scouts stated: "It is the opinion of the board that there is sufficient reason to question the Boy Scouts' compliance with the United Way Charter, which prohibits support of agencies that discriminate on the basis of religion."

A \$1,250 grant will be withheld by the Genoa-Kingston United Way chapter. Despite the judgment, the ruling will not have a major impact on the local scouts. Boy Scout spokesman Dennis Cook stated, "We have an \$800,000 operating budget. This decision won't curtail the two scout troops and the Cub pack in the area."

Cook also stated that about \$225,000 of the Two Rivers Council's budget comes from United Way agencies.

However, "to my knowledge no other United Way agency has followed suit, so there will be no major effect," he said.

Officials at the Boy Scouts of America indicated that they had filed an appeal with the local United Way chapter.

—MKG



### NO TRANSFUSION MEANS DEATH FOR JEHOVAH'S WITNESS WOMAN

The September 1990 issue of the **Journal of the American Medical Association** released a report by doctors at Nashville's Vanderbilt University of Medicine stating that a 20-year-old, white female had lost weight, developed headaches, increased fatigue and became easily bruised several weeks after taking suntanning pills which contained the drug canthaxanthin.

The unidentified woman developed a rare type of anemia, called aplastic anemia, and, several months after using the drug, was hospitalized in June 1989. Doctors sought to treat the woman's condition through the use of blood products because the anemia causes the bone marrow to slow its production of blood cells.

However, the woman was a Jehovah's Witness and refused the medical procedure. After being hospitalized for 15 days, she was released, returned home and died within 48 hours.

—MKG



### HOFMANN MAKES SECOND ATTEMPT AT SUICIDE

Mark Hofmann, convicted killer and dealer in counterfeit Mormon documents, made a second suicide attempt in his Utah State Prison cell last Aug. 22. Hofmann is serving a life

sentence for the 1985 pipe-bomb murders of Steven F. Christensen and Kathleen Sheets. Hofmann had also pleaded guilty to theft by deception in the dealing of the counterfeit Mormon historical documents.

Prison guards delivering lunch to inmates found Hofmann semiconscious in his cell. He was taken to the University of Utah Medical Center where doctors pumped his stomach. Found were toxic levels of Tricyclic anti-depressants, the same type of medication taken in his first suicide attempt in September 1988.

Prison investigators searched Hofmann's cell for evidence of the drugs or a suicide note. Nothing was found. Officials also questioned four inmates who were taking the anti-depressants and had contact with Hofmann. All denied giving Hofmann any drugs.

—MKG



### NO JEWISH TEMPLE ANYTIME SOON

For those who doubted the thrust of the article, "Rebuilding The Jewish Temple: Imminent or Imaginary?" in the Oct.-Dec., 1990 issue of **The Quarterly Journal**, the events of Oct. 8, 1990, should dispel those doubts. The article said the Israeli government was leery of any Jewish lunatic fringe trying to change the Moslem status of the temple mount "because of the potential explosion and bloodbath such an action would provoke among the Arabs."

The thesis was tested just a few weeks after the release of the article. **The New York Times** said: "Palestinians continue to insist that they turned out in force, with rocks and bottles, only to defend their mosques against Jewish militants who had proclaimed their intention to lay a symbolic cornerstone near the mosques, on what the Jews call the Temple Mount." There were at least 19 Arab deaths, 150 injuries, plus massive rioting and a subsequent curfew on Jerusalem.

—GRF

## PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH



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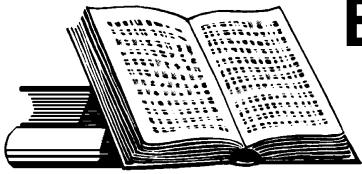
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# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## MIRACLES, DEMONS, AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

### An Urgent Call for Discernment

by Edward N. Gross

Baker Book House, 174 pages, \$9.95

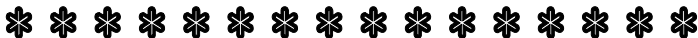
With the great number of questionable and unscriptural books examining demonology today, it is refreshing to find one that contains careful biblical exegesis. **Miracles, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare** is one such publication.

Gross' work contains 14 chapters and 6 appendices, most of which are 10 pages or less. Although brief, the author's conclusions found in these chapters are full of scripture references and citations from respected theologians. The book is divided into three major sections: 1) defining biblical parameters, 2) examining contemporary claims and 3) defeating demons and discerning true faith. The appendices scrutinize open revelation, speaking in tongues, ecumenicalism between charismatics and Catholics, demon-possession of Christians and other topics.

In the section examining this century's rise of movements that focus on spiritual gifts and "signs and wonders," Gross calls into question the writings of such charismatics as John Wimber, Peter Wagner and Kenneth Hagin.

We appreciate Gross' study on the supernatural and hope it will get the wide reading it deserves. As the subtitle of his work contends, the Christian body is certainly in need of "an urgent call for discernment." **Miracles, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare** will greatly aid the Christian in his discerning.

—MKG



## CONFRONTING THE CULTIST IN THE NEW AGE

by Jay Howard with Timothy Fink and Nathan Unseth

Power Books, 177 pages, \$7.95

Jay Howard's offering is an easily read volume about understanding the faulty theologies of prominent cults. Because it is devoid of weighty dissertations, it is suitable for laypeople seeking a concise study of pseudo-Christian sects.

Howard and researchers Nathan Unseth and Timothy Fink offer a one-two punch in knocking out cultic beliefs. First they expose how cults err in the interpretation of a particular Christian doctrine. Then the writers follow with a biblical explanation of the Christian position on the same belief. Subjects include the authority of God's Word, assurance of salvation, the deity of Christ and the triune nature of God. Because the book examines subjects rather than individual cults, commentary on the various cults is found throughout the publication, not in separate chapters.

The only defect of the work is its title. The publication has nothing to do with the "New Age" or its theology. At first glance the book might disappoint the reader who thinks the authors are trying to link groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, The Way International and others with the New Age movement. Perhaps the publishers felt that adding "New Age" to the title would help increase sales because "New Age" critiques are currently better sellers. Author Howard has expressed dismay with the publisher's choice of a title, which was not the one he submitted.

—MKG



## ARE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS FALSE PROPHETS?

### A Former Insider Speaks Out

by Wallace Slattery

60 pages, Presbyterian & Reformed Publishers, \$4.95

Slattery, an ex-Adventist, cuts through all the smoke and confusion and shows just where Seventh-day Adventism is today. He shows the polarization within the movement over founder Ellen G. White. He shows through careful documentation that she was not a prophetess but an eccentric plagiarizer who simply regurgitated the Victorian peculiarities of that era. She made many mistakes and published contradictions that were passed off as direct revelations from God. Slattery shows the embarrassed attempts of the SDA hierarchy to answer recent criticisms of White.

This small booklet is packed with biblical data overturning Adventists' peculiar and lesser-known doctrines. Many of White's statements are in direct conflict with the Bible and in conflict with crucial doctrines of the New Testament.

Some total abstainers may object to pages 47-48 but this will not take away from the impact of the book. This little volume is a bit overpriced for its size, but the material is well worth it. Anyone at all interested in the current status of Seventh-day Adventism will have to read this book. Most will agree that even though the Walter Martin era brought Adventism into a more favorable light, the present tricks and machinations of the Adventist hierarchy have shown the movement to be entrenched in cultic doctrine.

—GRF



**Editor's Note:** The above publications are available from Personal Freedom Outreach - Saint Louis. 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.



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