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Oahspe: The Gospel of Angels

An Examination of a New Age Scripture

by Joel Bjorling

In recent years, trance channeling has become chic among seekers of spiritual enlightenment. Popularized by actress Shirley MacLaine's book and TV miniseries, **Out on a Limb**, and by lectures and seminars by modern-day mediums such as Ramtha and Lazaris, trance channelers have drawn a wide, enthusiastic following.

In addition to lectures, a number of books have been published which were channeled by discarnate intelligences. Such books include **The Urantia Book**, **A Course in Miracles**, and **The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ**. One of the earliest channeled revelations was entitled **Oahspe** (pronounced "Oahs-pee"). It was conveyed by automatic writing in which spirit entities guided the hand of the writer. The word "Oahspe" means "earth, sky, spirit."¹ It purports to be a revelation that supersedes all previous ones, including the Bible. It states that Jesus actually was the Jewish teacher Joshu, and that many of the writings attributed to Jesus were plagiarized from Joshu. **Oahspe** is a popular book among New Age and psychic enthusiasts. It first was published in New York in 1882.



Oahspe was revealed to Dr. John Ballou Newbrough, a New York dentist. He was born in Wooster, Ohio, on June 5, 1828. He went to California during the Gold Rush of 1849, but returned to New York and practiced dentistry.² He became involved in spiritualism and probably had his first psychic experience in the 1850s. He was a trustee of the First Society of Spiritualists of New York City.³ He began experimenting with automatic writing. In a letter to the periodical

The Banner of Light (June 2, 1883), he wrote:

"In my own case I discovered, many years ago, in sitting with circles to obtain spiritual manifestations, that my hands could not be on the table without flying off into these 'tantrums.' Often they would write messages left or right, backward or forward, [and I could not] control them in any other way than by withdrawing them from the table."⁴

Newbrough studied spiritualism for about 15 years, but became dissatisfied with it. Rather than receiving messages from departed friends and loved ones, he wanted "to learn something about the spirit world; what the angels did, how they traveled, and the general plan of the universe."⁵

To enhance his spiritual receptivity, Newbrough became a vegetarian and spent time in meditation. His weight fell from 250 to 180 pounds, his rheumatism was gone and he had no more headaches.⁶

Early one morning in 1870, Newbrough was awakened by a striking

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EDITORIALS

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JESUS

Did you know that Jesus:

- Would buy you lunch if He came to town?
- Had 12 "full-time staff members?"
- Had "advance teams" for His meetings?
- Had a nice house; big enough for overnight company?
- Ran "a powerhouse operation" with an abundance of finances?
- Wore "designer clothes" and "dressed like a king?"

So says John Avanzini in the July/August 1991 issue of Kenneth Copeland's **Believer's Voice of Victory** magazine. Avanzini further contends that believers should "Go to the Word and see for yourself. Use the Scriptures to uproot the false traditions and get a revelation of the truth." Christians are petitioned to rid from their "subconscious mind" the thought of "poverty theology," and realize that Jesus, while on earth, was our "prototype" of prosperity.

Avanzini's article, "Was Jesus Poor?", is a hollow attempt to modernize the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one that surely will tempt the human lust of material concerns. In reality it is an intermingling of bad hermeneutics and eisegesis.

The Apostle Paul's statement recorded in 2 Timothy 4:3 sounds as though it could have been written on this very subject today:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

—PRB

PROSELYTIZING IN ISRAEL PUNISHABLE BY IMPRISONMENT?

There is so much misinformation published which in turn confuses people and has Christians spreading lies instead of truth. One such bit of misinformation is found in **Media Spotlight**, January, 1991. Albert James Dager says on page 4 of an article - "The Gulf Crisis: The Beginning of the End for America?":

"Under Zionist control, many religious Jews have suffered, as have those who have converted to Christ. It is against the law in Israel to proselytize for Christianity, punishable by up to five years in prison and heavy fines. Anyone who converts to Christ is subject to three years in prison."

Nothing could be further from the truth! Missionaries, known to this writer, have been working unabated in Israel for 25 years. Where is the documentation for such a statement that converts in Israel go to jail?

Consider the following:

1. From the first day of its birth the leaders of Israel dictated how it would conduct itself toward religious minorities there by these words in their State Charter:

"THE STATE OF ISRAEL... will be based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace as conceived by the Prophets of Israel; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex; will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture; will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and will loyally uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter."

2. In June of 1967 a law was passed to protect all holy places and gives prison terms to any desecration of a religious building or prevention of free access.

3. Kol Israel (Israel Radio) broadcasts religious services for churches on days of important feasts or festivals.

4. After the '67 War the government's concern for churches was evidenced by payment of over 1 million dollars for compensation for damage resulting from the conflict. (See **Christianity In the Holy Land** by Saul Colbi, pg. 162.)

5. In my 20 tours to Israel our group was able to freely witness to Jewish guides and hotel staff as well as distribute tracts and Bibles and publicly hold worship services at all the major sites and churches.

6. The Baptist Church in W. Jerusalem functions in an all Jewish neighborhood.

7. Churches of all denominations are advertised in the Israeli news and Israeli guidebooks.

8. Some of the Israeli schools study New Testament for historical reasons. It is not a banned book.

9. Hebrew Christians (Messianic Jews) function in assemblies all over Israel. True, it is difficult for Christians

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NEWS UPDATE

CULT LEADER ALAMO ARRESTED

Cult leader Tony Alamo was arrested July 5 on charges of threatening to kidnap and murder a U.S. District Judge.

Alamo, leader of the Alamo Christian Foundation, was arrested in south Tampa, Fla., on an Arkansas warrant of federal indictment. The judge he had threatened had ordered him to pay \$1.6 million to six former supporters for labor violations.

Another warrant, from California, charges Alamo with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution resulting from a child-abuse charge there. Alamo has been accused of ordering four men to strike an 11-year-old boy 134 times with a wooden paddle. The cult leader fled the state in 1989 after the abuse charges were filed. He has been living a fugitive the past two years. (See further, **The Quarterly Journal**, Vol. 9, No. 4, pg. 3.)

Following his arrest, U.S. Magistrate Thomas Wilson agreed with evidence presented at a July 12 hearing which demonstrated Alamo was again a high risk to flee to avoid prosecution. Alamo was ordered held without bond. Prosecutor David Jennings said, "No amount of money will ensure this individual's presence in a courtroom. He's got a tremendous nationwide support group and his followers make it difficult to find him." Alamo had used several aliases during the past two years to elude discovery by law officials.

Authorities stated he would be extradited to Arkansas as soon as possible, but no date was given.

—MKG

HERSHISER ADVERTISEMENT ATTEMPTS TO SET RECORD STRAIGHT

Baseball fans might recall Orel Hershiser's kneeling on the pitcher's mound offering a prayer of thanks following one of his victories in the 1988 World Series and know that he sings to himself the Doxology and other hymns during games. The Los Angeles Dodgers star never has been ashamed of being a Christian.

Hershiser's dedication to Christ and the seriousness in which he practices the Christian faith became apparent once again to baseball fans. During summer 1990, a baseball memorabilia product called "Collect-A-Books" was released. These baseball card-sized, 8-page booklets feature photographs, facts and statistics of some of baseball's superstars. Orel Hershiser was one of those spotlighted.

Amid all the data was one item Hershiser called "a significant and material error." On page 4, Hershiser's

"Personal Story" said he "is a religious Mormon who says he never loses sight of the fact that his ability is God-given..."

In an effort to correct the error, a half-page "Paid Advertisement" appeared in the March 1991 issue of **Beckett Baseball Card Monthly**. The advertisement announced: "CORRECTION." It was Hershiser's attempt "to set the record straight."

Over his signature, Hershiser wrote the following: "The COLLECT-A-BOOKS product describes me as 'a religious Mormon.' That is not true. I am not presently, nor have I ever been, a member of the Mormon religion. I am an evangelical Christian and a member of the Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena, California." He further stated, "Neither I nor my agent had an opportunity to inspect the product before it was released to the general public."

Hershiser also said that he owed to his Lord his effort to have his religious affiliation and beliefs accurately stated.

—MKG

AMERICAN ATHEISTS CHAPTERS TO CLOSE

The American Atheists, the group founded by Madalyn Murray O'Hair, announced July 11 that it will close 40 chapters in the United States by the end of the year, according to Don Sanders, the group's national chapter coordinator in Houston. The closures are blamed on poor recruiting.

During the group's annual meeting last April in Phoenix, O'Hair solicited financial reports from each of the organization's chapters. According to a UPI report, the records revealed that \$150,000 had been spent by 29 chapters to recruit 34 members during 1990. O'Hair said, "The report revealed to me that the chapters were investing money in supporting a group of members that already existed." The group's national headquarters will begin a new recruiting effort by the end of the year.

The Austin, Texas-based group plans to invest more money and effort in updating its magazine, **The American Atheist**, returning to radio and television broadcasts, increasing the number of books it publishes annually, and buying advertising in major newspapers across the country. Sanders said, "We are closing the chapters down because it is the right business move. ... We are not broke."

O'Hair says the organization is "more effective at recruiting at the national level with a television show. A

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From the Mailbox...

Questions on The Way International

by John P. Juedes

Many followers and ex-followers of The Way International have written us with questions during the past 10 years in which we have been publishing articles critical of the organization. Here we offer brief answers to some of the more prevalent and important questions.

What motive do you have for continuing to publish material critical of The Way Ministry?

Our motive is simple: We care for people who have been hurt by The Way International, a number which has been rapidly increasing since Victor Paul Wierwille's death, Chris Geer's actions and the clergy firings. This author receives no pay for most of the booklets and articles written and expenses far exceed any income. The articles are written as a ministry, not a business. We respect the accuracy and integrity of the Word of God and so feel compelled to respond to the way Wierwille has wrongly taught and divided it, leading his followers into severe error. We believe in and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Your publications make a big deal of the fact that Wierwille plagiarized many authors' books. Many people I know in The Way recognize that he and at least one other Way leader did so, but we do not consider this a major error.

A person better understands the

severity of plagiarism when he realizes that plagiarism is both lying and stealing. Ephesians specifically instructs us, "you must put off falsehood" (4:25) and "he who has been stealing must steal no longer" (4:28), while Jesus states that the Adversary is the father of lies. Wierwille stole others' words when he placed them in his books and then lied by placing his own name on the books, asserting that all words in them were his alone. By selling his publications, Wierwille also made money from other men's work. He therefore obtained a degree of prestige and money at others' expense. Many lawsuits initiated by the entertainment industry and business have established that theft of other peoples' words, ideas and work are criminal offenses. Surely Wierwille's extensive plagiarism indicates that he has stolen words and ideas and lied about their source, demonstrating a lack of integrity.

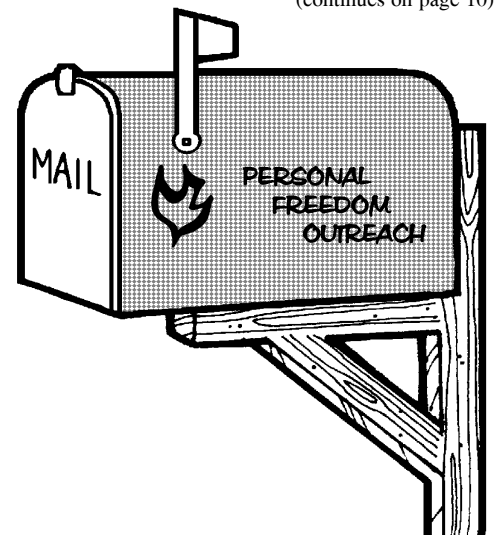
My experience with The Way International has left me suspicious and distrustful of any organization. How can I trust any denomination or rely on orthodox tradition, which has a very poor track record?

Undoubtedly, there are bad aspects of denominations and tradition. The Way embodies the worst of these aspects. It emphasizes tradition (the yearly anniversary, the founding trustees and president, rigid theological standards as recorded in Wierwille's writings, etc.) and denominationalism (fellowshipping with and allowing

teaching by no one outside its own circles).

Nonetheless, tradition in a good sense is simply God's track record of working in and with believers in all cultures in all centuries. Everywhere we go (and in all centuries past) we find believers who take the Bible literally, preach salvation by grace through faith, worship one God and are filled with the Holy Spirit. At their core, denominations are an expression of unity among Christians, because they provide a framework in which believers work together to train workers, provide publications, help the poor, send missionaries, fellowship, confront problems and the like. Wherever two or more human beings are together, there are "politics" and interpersonal problems. Yet the fact remains that healthy denominations are

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Black Cats and Sidewalk Cracks...



Superstition: The Reverence of Fear

by Edgar L. Havaich

Most people believe in one superstition or another. From early childhood, people acquire notions about the influence on events of certain rituals or objects.

For example, a child will walk along a sidewalk but not step on any cracks, convinced that if he does step on one, his mother's back will break. Young boys often carry a rabbit's foot, a token of good luck.

Some adults trying to sell their house seek help from St. Joseph, Roman Catholicism's patron saint of families and households. An Akron, Ohio, couple were having trouble selling their house. Their real estate agent, feeling desperate, buried a plastic statue of St. Joseph — head first, facing the house — in the front yard. One week later, the house was sold. The statue got the credit. Since then, demand has risen dramatically among real estate agents for St. Joseph statues. Suppliers have not been able to keep up (**Akron Beacon Journal**, April 10, 1991, pg. 6).

With autumn here, we face Halloween, the "mother of all" superstition. While considered by most Americans to be a day to indulge children harmlessly, Halloween is a holiday with pagan and sinister roots. Even the term "sinister" is rooted in superstition. It is the Latin word for "left," which was considered the side or direction of evil. From the "jack-

o-lantern" to the giving of candy, Halloween is a pagan event.

While juvenile superstition may be attributed to youthful gullibility and excused, such behavior among adults is less easily tolerated. A recent Gallup Poll noted that "Fewer than one out of five Americans (18 percent) admits to being very or somewhat superstitious. Another one in four claims to be 'not very' superstitious, with over one-half — 56 percent — saying that they are not at all superstitious" (**The Gallup Poll Monthly**, August 1990, pg. 37).

It is difficult to find someone who is proud of being superstitious. The very word gives the impression of a person being gullible. Superstitious people can't face the fact that their little ritual or token has no influence over events.

While few Americans admit being superstitious, many behave as though they are. Superstition comes from the Latin **superstio**, meaning to stand in terror of the deity. Superstitious beliefs and practices cut across ethnic, economic, and social lines. Each has one or more explanations of how it became popular.

When discussing or anticipating good fortune, a person often will say, "knock on wood." Ask the person why he says that and he is likely to reply, "I don't know." This habit has several possible origins. **The Encyclopedia Britannica** says:

"Fear often haunts man, not least in moments of happiness. He is afraid that some jealous agency, real or imagined, may try to deprive him of his good fortune. To talk of personal good luck became almost a challenge of fate, and that in turn gave rise to many precautionary measures, some belonging to the psychopathology of everyday life. One of these is the custom of touching wood.

The usual explanation associates it with the cross of Christ. Churches all over the world treasure pieces of wood they believe once were part of the real cross. To touch them would assure sustained happiness. Touching any kind of wood, in memory of the cross, was an obvious further development of the custom.

Another interpretation, still in the realm of religion, recalls the ancient days when a church offered sanctuary. Once a pursued person reached the holy precinct and touched the church's wooden door, nothing could happen to him. He was under the protection of the cross. No one would have dared to apprehend him there as that would have been tantamount to sacrilege.

Yet a further explanation dates back to the more distant past, when people lived in wooden huts. Those who were prosperous were afraid of talking about

it, lest evil spirits would envy their luck and try to interfere with it. Thus, when discussing their good fortune, people knocked loudly on their wooden walls. The noise was meant to drown their conversation and prevent any ill-meaning eavesdropper hearing what they were saying about their luck.

However, the custom most probably stems from pagan times, when trees were deified. The fact that lightning often struck trees led to a belief that divine power had entered them, and they were soon identified with particular deities. It was thought, for example, that the oak was the dwelling place of the god of lightning and thunder. Hence to touch its timber would get magic results.”

Another familiar superstition is saying “God bless you” to someone who has sneezed. Sneezing carries different meanings in different cultures. The Romans may have used this as an expression of sympathy at the news that someone had caught the plague. “Italians for their part, say, ‘God be with you,’ believing that the ‘soul’ or ‘self’ leaves the body momentarily when someone sneezes, and this will ensure its safe return.” Notwithstanding the significance of the sneeze itself, but the direction of the sneeze is also significant. “To sneeze to the right is lucky, but to the left is unlucky” (**The Dictionary of Omens and Superstitions**, pg. 212).

Superstition is linked to insecurity. Clifford Swensen, a clinical psychologist at Purdue University, says: “People who are superstitious usually are trying to control every aspect of their lives — afraid of what will happen if they don’t” (**USA Today** magazine, April 1984, pg. 9). In attempting to do this people often resort to rituals, charms, and other superstitious relics in an attempt to govern everything that happens. The compulsion to control aided by rituals has its origin in the fear of the unknown. The fear that either doing something, or failing to do something will result in either a favorable or unfavorable outcome. When confronted with superfluous expressions I have had people in

essence agree that it is an unintelligent thing to do, but would rather not take chances.

The superstitious will connect certain actions with certain consequences. Superstition is an attempt to explain those events. For example, a student who wants good grades might use a “lucky pen” when taking an examination. Use of the pen has no effect on performance on the test, but is perceived to be an amulet that can give the student an edge. The pen’s value as a talisman will not suffer from a lower-than-expected grade on the test. The poor grade will be blamed on something else neutralizing the pen’s effect.

An example of superstition being institutionalized is the absence in buildings of rooms and floors numbered 13, a number associated with bad luck. **The Dictionary of Omens and Superstitions** says:

“The number 13 has a special place in superstition, and fear of its effect is known to have existed from the earliest times, although the main reason given for its ill-omen is its association with the Last Supper, which was attended by 13 — Christ and his twelve apostles. Only the bravest soul would try to hold a gathering to which thirteen people were invited, and no host worth his salt would want a dinner party for the same number. According to the tradition, one member of such a group — the first to rise from the table — will die before the year is out. The number is rarely found on offices or ships, and even more infrequently on the rooms of a hotel or guest house. Airlines avoid the number for their flights and for the seats on board their aeroplanes, and there are whole cities, such as Paris, where there is scarcely a single house which bears the ill-fated number. (With typical aplomb, the French get around using the number by calling the designated property ‘twelve bis’ — twelve twice.) Friday the Thirteenth is, of course, a day when you are very careful chancing your luck in any way. Indeed, there seems little doubt that anything associated with the number

should be avoided, according to superstition!” (pg. 229).

Jesus selected 12 disciples and chose to travel and associate with these men for the better part of three years. Since Jesus chose to reside in a group of 13, this should give us confidence that there is nothing harmful about the number. Further, according to tradition the number 13 is associated with the Last Supper of Jesus and His disciples. Since Jesus had been with the disciples under many different occasions and no calamity befell them, it is not the number 13 in and of itself that should be viewed as “unlucky.” It would seem that the Last Supper would be viewed as the culprit, because that is the element that changed. Such, however, is the illogic of superstition.

Even when we know something is superstitious we sometimes play along because it is so much a part of our culture. For example not asking a woman her age has been thought to be the respectable, and polite thing to do. While many women follow this practice, few have any idea of its origin. This idea stems from the taboo of numbering things. It is believed that by numbering things one runs the risk of becoming identifiable to evil spirits. (See further, **The Dictionary of Omens and Superstitions**, pg. 15.) Some can remember being admonished not to count the cars in a funeral procession lest one or a family member be the next candidate for death.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a religious mindset and a superstitious mindset. The demarcation line is blurred by the kindred actions of the indulgent. For example, an open Bible in someone’s home does not always indicate someone is studying God’s Word. The Bible can be used as an object of divination, as when it is viewed as an instrument to keep evil spirits away. “Lucky dipping” is another example: a person looking for an answer drops the Bible and lets it fall open, then drops an object onto the page to mark a verse, which is then interpreted as the answer to the question.

Even Christians get conned into a superstitious mode. Superstitions saturate the wedding ceremony. Even

the strictest believer will find it difficult to get married in a ceremony free of superstitious practice. Nearly every bride has subscribe to some form of the folklore, "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue."

Other examples include: the bride's veil, which is said to "veil" the bride's features from evil spirits until she is in the confines of the Church and under the safety of her new husband; the bouquet carried by the bride as a symbol of sex and fertility; the groom seeing the bride on the day of the wedding prior to her processional; the throwing of rice; and the throwing of the bride's bouquet and garter.

"Christian" superstition does not stop at the wedding altar, but often infiltrates the believer's faith. Unaware

or unable to accept the unconditional love of their heavenly Father, these Christians become prisoners of a lifestyle meant to hold off the wrath of God created by their unconscious slips of the tongue.

PFO's Steve Cannon wrote of the Word-Faith Movement: "Fear comes from two areas. First is the obsessive compulsion to be positive in every word. Even use of phrases such as 'I'm just dying to do that' or 'that joke just tickled me to death,' release satanic powers, say the Word-Faith teachers (**The Tongue - A Creative Force**, pp. 90-92). People become afraid that they are going to slip up, utter a negative and give a place to Satan. Secondly, fear is a corollary to the guilt mentioned above. Fear and guilt usually work in a downward spiral. One feels guilty because of a supposed lack of faith, then afraid

because their confession is not 'working.' Then there is more fear, then more guilt, and so on down. This cycle can be spiritually and physically debilitating" (**PFO Newsletter**, Vol. 6, No. 4).

Whenever a Christian believes that the thing he does affects his stand with the Lord, he has crossed into superstition. Christians are complete in Christ, because of what He has done. Christians are called to rest in Him. Yet too many Christians believe that activity is the basis for the relationship.

The superstitious mind is in bondage to what it has granted the power to influence events. As Christians we need not live in superstition. Our trust in Christ should cause superstition to disappear from our lives. Christ came to set us free, and those who put their trust in Him will be free indeed. ✪

Oahspe

(continued from page 1)

vision. His room was flooded with "pillars of soft light" and there were "great numbers of beautiful spirits and angels." One of them asked him, "Do you want to perform a mission for Jehovih?" (**Oahspe** spells the Divine Name "Jehovih" rather than "Jehovah"). Newbrough was to produce a book, through automatic writing, which would inaugurate a new era of mankind. The new era was called the "Kosmon era." It was the seventh age and was characterized by non-violence. In it, wars would cease voluntarily.⁷

The angels imposed a beam of light on Newbrough's hands as he sat at a typewriter. The angels appeared an hour before dawn and the typing continued for fifty weeks.⁸ The purpose of **Oahspe** was:

"To teach mortals how to attain to hear the Creator's voice and to see the heavens in full consciousness whilst still living on earth; and to know of a truth, the plan and condition awaiting them after death."⁹

The first edition of **Oahspe** was

published in 1882 and a second edition was published in 1892. The 1892 edition contained portraits of great spiritual teachers which were painted by Newbrough while in a trance.¹⁰

Oahspe gives an account of the origin of man on earth. It covers a period of 48,000 years from the creation of man to the submersion of the continent of Pan. Pan was in the Pacific and sank 24,000 years ago. The sinking of Pan is referred to by the ancients as the Deluge or Flood.¹¹ Before the sinking of Pan, man was guided by angelic revelation. Man often lapsed "into degradation and bestiality, but [he was] ever in the aggregate [of] making progress toward something more noble."¹² The survivors of Pan founded such countries as Japan, China, India, Peru, Egypt, Yucatan, and Mexico.¹³

According to **Oahspe**, Jehovih is the Great Spirit of the universe. He consists of "earth [corpor], sky, and spirit."¹⁴ Jehovih states,

"I am the soul of all; and the all that is seen in My person and My body. By virtue of My presence, all things are. By virtue of my presence is life."¹⁵

Oahspe states that:

"Jehovih is Life, Motion, Individuality, Person. In proof of which He gave unto thee life, motion, individuality, person. To develop these four entities is resurrection toward Him, more and more, which is heavenly."¹⁶

As Jehovih is the Great Spirit, the word "God," and "Lord" refers to angelic beings. A "God" is one who "is sufficiently wise and powerful to take charge of a planet and the atmospheric heaven." He is assisted on the throne by a "Vice-God."

Angels work intimately with humanity. **Oahspe** states that:

"Man was helpless [and] understood not the voice of the Almighty, neither stood he upright. And Jehovih called His angels ... and He said unto them: 'Go ye, raise man upright and teach him to understand.'¹⁷

The angelic ministry among humanity was disrupted by the appearance of a Beast. The words of the Beast are those of Jesus in Matthew 10:34-36: "Think not I am come to send peace on the earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword; I come to

set man at variance against his father; and a daughter against her mother.”¹⁸ The Beast divided itself into four Heads “and possessed the earth about, and man fell down and worshipped them.”¹⁹ The names of the Heads were Brahmin, Buddhist, Christian, and Mohammedan. Each Head had its own army and their “trade was killing man.”²⁰

To end the violence and confusion which was perpetrated by the Beast, Jehovah sent His angels to earth. He proclaimed that:

“The four Heads of the Beast shall be put down; and war shall be no more on the earth. Thy armies shall be disbanded. And, from this time forth, whosoever desireth not to war, thou shalt not impress; for it is the commandment of thy Creator.

Neither shalt thou have any God, nor Lord, nor Saviour, but only thy Creator, Jehovah! Him only shalt thou worship henceforth forevermore.”²¹

Jehovah concluded that:

“To as many as separate themselves from the domain of the Beast, making their covenant with Me, have I given the foundation of My kingdom on earth.”²²

According to **Oahspe**, Jesus was the Jewish teacher Joshu. He was born in Jerusalem and he “labored to bring the Jews back to their pristine purity.” **Oahspe** states that he was “a law-giver of sub-cycle ranks.”²³ He was denounced as a heretic and was stoned to death at Jerusalem.²⁴ **Oahspe** states that the word “Christ” and “Kriste” means “wisdom, knowledge, [and] education,” and it is also synonymous with a “warrior.”²⁵ It states that Christians, or Kriste, were a brotherhood of warriors. They were given that name by the Hebrews and it meant “one who rushes into a multitude of rioters and, with a sword, enforces peace ...”

The word “Christian” is synonymous with words as “Brahmin,” “ash-aroath,” “vishnu,” and “manito.”²⁶

Oahspe states that Christians worship a “drujan,” a lower, mischievous God. In the Book of Es, **Oahspe** states that when Christians go to heaven and say, “I want to go to Jesus, I want to go to Kriste, he [is] shown the drujan God, and [is] told: ‘That is he!’”²⁷ The “drujans” were lost spirits who, instead of following Jehovah’s Plan, were enticed by earthly attractions.²⁸ The drujan Gods also inspired the Mormon, Shaker, and Swedenborgian religions, as well as the divisive competition among Christian churches.²⁹

Salvation, according to **Oahspe**, is based upon giving. It states, “If ye have great learning and ye give of it, then shall more learning be added unto you; if ye have goodness of heart, and gentle words, then, by giving this away, more shall be added unto you.”³⁰ However, “he who locketh up the light of the Father that is in him cannot obtain more light; he who locketh up goodness of heart cannot obtain strength of spirit.”³¹ **Oahspe** states that one should not concern himself with his own salvation, but with the salvation of others. Jehovah declares that:

“Mine shall not concern themselves as to their own self’s salvation; for having their faith in Jehovah, that if they raise others up, with their own wisdom and strength, they are already saved, and without fear.”³²

Oahspe demands of the clergy and the churches that they “prove that [they] have a good and sufficient doctrine for the salvation of souls.” It accuses them of serving man more than Jehovah. It admonishes churches to divide up their possessions and give to the poor.³³ It charges churches with professing a gospel of words and of divisive doctrines.³⁴ Salvation, according to **Oahspe**, is through good works:

“Because ye have learned words, and practice only in words, behold, I come in this day to command practice in works... Even the infidel shall accept the Creator and good works.”³⁵

Oahspe teaches that life continues to progress in the spirit realm. It affirms the practice of “communing with angels,” and conversing with the “dead.”

“From east to west, and north to south, the communion of angels and a multitude of miracles have stirred up thousands and millions to know that the souls of the dead do live.”³⁶

Oahspe declares, “Behold, I have seen my father and mother and brother and sister who were dead; they have spoken to me, [and] there is no devil nor place of hell.”³⁷ **Oahspe** states that:

“It hath been shown thee that not only the seer, prophet, su’is (i.e., clairvoyant), and miracle worker, but that all people are subject to the influence of the spirits of the dead, even though unconsciously to themselves.”³⁸

Oahspe claims that the reality of spirits testifies to the iniquities of earthly religions.

“I have drawn aside the veil of death, [and] your sons and daughters, your fathers and mothers, the dead and the living, stand face to face.

And the angels are testifying unto you that your doctrines, as you practice them, are a blasphemy against the Almighty.”³⁹

The spirits reveal the truth of heavenly existence. **Oahspe** contends that:

“Ye have no personal knowledge of heaven, and, in stubbornness of heart, ye dispute with my seers and prophets, who can prove before you [that] they have powers to see unseen things, and to hear that which ye cannot hear.

Ye study spiritual things with your corporal [physical] senses; neither have ye capacity to see and hear the spirits of the dead. How much less, then, shall ye presume to interpret Jehovah

and His kingdom.”⁴⁰

Oahspe charges the Christian faith with professing doctrines, rather than beneficial works, and of denying the reality of spirit existence. It characterizes churches as being benefactors of wealth. It declares, further, that “the selfishness of man hath made the world a place of wretchedness. The people are in misery and want.”⁴¹

The “new religion” proposed by **Oahspe** not only encouraged spirit communication, but also social reform. This reform was implemented in an **Oahspe**-based community called “Shalam,” located near the Rio Grande in New Mexico.

Newbrough and his followers began an orphanage in New York City. **Oahspe** envisioned a “new kingdom of man” and a prophet named Tae was given the responsibility of establishing this kingdom. Jehovah commanded Tae to:

“Go, seek, and bring out of Uz (i.e., the world) babes and cast-away infants and foundlings, and these shall be thy colony, which shall be a new kingdom on earth.”⁴²

The word “Shalam” meant “a land of peace and plenty.”⁴³ It began in 1884 and was incorporated in December 1885.

At Shalam, no one was to rule over another. However, dissension began after Newbrough and his associate Andrew Howland tried to impose autocratic control over the members. Several were evicted and many others left voluntarily. Newbrough died at Shalam on Aug. 22, 1891. The community continued to decline and the property was sold Sept. 30, 1907. Several communities were begun, but none survived.

Currently, the major **Oahspe** organization is the Universal Faithists of Kosmon in Salt Lake City. “Faithist” is the name for **Oahspe** students. A Global Council, also based in Salt Lake City, was organized in 1982-1983 and it elected its first officers in

1986. The Council is a consortium of **Oahspe** readers.

Oahspe sharply criticizes the Christian faith. Its claims about the life of Jesus, the Bible, and the historical Christian faith likely cannot stand the scrutiny of critical Biblical or historical analysis. Like any other channeled work, its content is of questionable origin. Some may conclude that it is the product of demon spirits, and others will presume that it is the result of the author’s subconscious mind.

Historically, **Oahspe** is probably the first channeled revelation. Apart from other channeled writings, it puts itself on the level of the Bible, purporting to be a work which is even greater than the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Channeled works often claim that the New Testament has distorted Jesus’ actual teachings, or that it does not contain his real teachings. Claims of this sort must be evaluated according to the soundest Biblical, theological, and historical evidence. Regardless of what **Oahspe** or any similar writing may boast about its own authenticity, its claims must coincide with the most accurate Biblical and historical sources available.

Readers of **Oahspe** are likely persons who have had negative experiences with churches and with Christianity. In talking to them, listen carefully and do not judge. A personal witness of love is the greatest testimony.

Oahspe makes no claims of infallibility. It does not profess to be a final revelation. Its stated purpose is to enable mortals “to hear the Creator’s voice.” Multitudes of people are earnestly striving to hear the voice of the Lord. As we are able to share our experience with God in a loving, compassionate, and patient way, the light of God’s truth will surely shine forth and give direction to wandering souls.

Endnotes

1. **Oahspe**, Book of Oahspe, 1:26.
2. Gustav Percival (Percy) Wiksell, “Oahspe and Shalam, New Mexico, Information,” in

Oahspe and Shalam History Materials by Jim Dennon; Seaside, Ore., by author, 1987, pg. 1.

3. Jim Dennon, **Oahspe and Shalam History: According to Those Who Were There**, Seaside, Ore., by author, 1985, pg. 6.

4. “The Origin of ‘Oahspe,’” letter written by John Ballou Newbrough to the editor of **The Banner of Light**, Boston, Mass., January 21, 1883, pg. 2.

5. *Ibid.*, pg. 3.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Letter to author from E.J. Lee, Universal Faithists of Kosmon, to author, November 25, 1987.

8. “Origin of ‘Oahspe,’” *op. cit.*, pg. 3.

9. **Oahspe**, Book of Oahspe, 1:24.

10. “Origin of ‘Oahspe,’” *op. cit.*, pg. 4.

11. **Oahspe: The Wonder Book of the Age**, Salt Lake City: Universal Faithists of Kosmon, n.d., pg. 1.

12. **Oahspe: The World’s Teacher**, Salt Lake City: Universal Faithists of Kosmon, n.d., pg. 6.

13. *Ibid.*, pg. 1.

14. **Oahspe**, Definitions, New York and London: Oahspe Publishing Association, 1882, 1892, pg. vi.

15. **Oahspe**, Book of Jehovah, 1:3-4.

16. **Oahspe**, God’s Book of Eskra, 4:9-10.

17. **Oahspe**, Book of Oahspe, 1:2.

18. *Ibid.*, 1:9.

19. *Ibid.*, 1:11.

20. *Ibid.*, 1:13.

21. *Ibid.*, 1:17-18.

22. *Ibid.*, 1:17.

23. **Oahspe**, List of Portraits, New York and London: Oahspe Publishing Association, 1882, 1892, pg. xiv.

24. *Ibid.*

25. **Oahspe**, Definitions, *op. cit.*, pg. xv.

26. *Ibid.*, pg. v.

27. **Oahspe**, Book of Es, 18:6.

28. **Oahspe**, Book of Sesthantes, 23:14.

29. **Oahspe**, Book of Es, 18:6-14.

30. **Oahspe**, Book of Osiris, 6:13.

31. *Ibid.*, 6:14.

32. **Oahspe**, Book of Discipline, 7:20.

33. **Oahspe**, Book of Judgment, 18:5-7.

34. *Ibid.*, 18:12.

35. *Ibid.*, 18:21.

36. **Oahspe**, Book of Discipline, 2:2.

37. *Ibid.*, 2:4.

38. *Ibid.*, 2:10.

39. **Oahspe**, Book of Judgment, 19:15.

40. *Ibid.*, 19:19-20.

41. *Ibid.*, 19:12.

42. **Oahspe**, Book of Jehovah’s Kingdom on Earth, 1:9-10.

43. *Ibid.*, 4:3.



one valid way in which Christians can band together to accomplish some things which individual Christians or fellowships cannot do alone.

In one of your articles you claim that The Way's Aramaic work is a "needless effort." Isn't this too strong of a criticism against a ministry which was founded by Dr. Wierwille as a research ministry, and which has even organized its own research teams?

Much of what Wierwille called research was simply plagiarizing words and concepts from others without identifying sources. (Fully half of **Receiving the Holy Spirit Today** is plagiarized.) Some teachings he appropriated from men who were not Christians by either orthodox or Way standards (e.g.: Albert Cliffe, Glen Clark). The Way's Aramaic work is more serious research than Wierwille attempted. Nonetheless, it is an example of the shortfalls typical of Way research. First, it does not document its sources, only stating that its text "is similar to the Peshitta version." This raises more questions than it answers, for if it is similar — then how is it different? Second, it is based on the inaccurate assumption held by Wierwille (which he accepted uncritically from George Lamsa) that the New Testament was written in Aramaic. Third, it seems unaware that Christian scholars have already closely examined old Aramaic texts and cited the results in detail in the United Bible Societies/Nestle Greek text which can be found in most any pastor's library. Most Way researchers are not even aware of common biblical research tools used by beginning seminarians.

I have discovered several errors in The Way and have begun to discard some of its practices. The Way emphasizes speaking in tongues so heavily that I wonder if I should stop this, but I believe the Bible does not condemn it. What should I do?

There is room for difference of opinion on this question, but consider this: Most Way members were com-

mitted believers before they were led astray. The Apostle Paul presents an excellent description of this in his second letter to the Corinthian church:

"I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough... Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 11-13).

Return to the practice you had before joining the Way. If speaking in tongues was beneficial, then continue it if you wish. If, however, you began speaking in tongues during **Power for Abundant Living** or under Way tutelage, then do not continue this practice, because The Way is promoting a "different spirit" and counterfeit manifestations, as 2 Corinthians 11 describes. One finds evangelical believers who speak in tongues and others who do not.

It has been some time since I left The Way International, but I can't seem to get it out of my mind. What can I do?

It is common for ex-followers to experience negative effects long after leaving the group. Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman published a survey in which ex-Way members reported frequent depression, loneliness, weight loss, feelings of guilt, embarrassment, violent outbursts, disorientation, nightmares and psychic phenomena.

Some feelings may express grief and loss similar to that which we feel when a loved one dies. It is common to have feelings of denial ("Wierwille can't really be a liar and adulterer, can he?"), loss ("I'm going to dig up all the errors I can find!"), and depression (often marked by listlessness) and so forth.

It will help you to read articles refuting Way beliefs, hear from other ex-Way members, dialogue with informed critics of International, establish new friendships outside The Way, find an understanding and empathetic counselor and help others recover from involvement in the group. Spiritually, remember that you are still a branch attached to the Vine, Jesus Christ, who is able to provide power to aid your growth and bring about fruitfulness in your life again (John 15). Persevere, for in time you will experience the abundant life ahead!

Most books on the cults offer only brief, superficial treatment of The Way International. Where can I find more in-depth treatments?

PFO has available four paperbacks, numerous newsletter articles and an audiovisual filmstrip program which offer thorough, well-documented (about 500 footnotes on a total of 240 pages) research. The above items examine topics including Wierwille's plagiarism, unfounded claims, history, sources and evolution of Wierwille's teaching, statistics, leader defections, examples of Wierwille wrongly dividing the Word, mistranslations, abuse of Greek, false teachings, use of Aramaic, Lamsa, origin of Trinitarianism and inept Way scholarship. The booklet titles may be ordered separately or as a set. The 4-publication set is \$9 postpaid. The 108-frame filmstrip with 48-minute narration cassette is \$26.20 postpaid. (Please direct all orders to PFO-Missouri.) You will find this wealth and depth of research unavailable elsewhere.

Of course, the questions above just scratch the surface. (They have been paraphrased from a number of letters we received.) We welcome your questions and comments, including any which arise as you read our publications. ★

to function in ultra orthodox communities; that would be true in the U.S.A. However, the government is not involved in any systematic repression of Christianity.

10. **The Jerusalem Post** (Israel's English daily news) on a regular basis prints articles regarding Christians, Christianity and other related subjects. True, Christians can't be citizens of Israel, but that's a far cry from Dager's unfounded statement that proselytizing in Israel is punishable by imprisonment.

God help us to "spread the truth" and always reflect the Savior who is the Truth.

—GRF

ANOTHER "BORN AGAIN" JESUS?

Was Jesus Christ born again? Yes, says Kenneth Copeland and a host of other prominent teachers within the Word Faith movement. However, unbeknownst to most Christians another sect outside the realm of Orthodox Christianity espouses a similar theology. That sect is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons.

The Bible is emphatic in its teaching that one's righteousness will not save, one must be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus, "...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Jesus explained in verse 6, "That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Nicodemus was in the flesh — so he needed a spiritual birth!

While Mormons claim to believe the Bible is the Word of God, their eighth Article of Faith qualifies that belief by saying the Bible is the Word of God, "as far as it is translated correctly." And it is very hard, if not impossible, to find a Mormon who believes the Bible is correctly translated. Further, the second book of Latter-day Saints' scripture and "word of God," without any qualification, is **The Book of Mormon**.

In this book we find the prophet Alma declaring: "And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, **must be born again**; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27: 25-26, emphasis added). Likewise, Alma 7:14 reads, "Now I say unto you that **ye must repent, and be born again...**" (emphasis added).

Joseph Smith Jr., the founder of Mormonism, taught otherwise. Smith reversed the order in that he claimed as the "pre-existence," "All men and women are in the similitude of the **universal Father and Mother**, and

are literally the sons and daughters of Deity... offspring of celestial parentage" (**Man: His Origin and Destiny**, pp. 351, 355, emphasis added). These spirit children of deity must then come to this earth to receive a physical body. Spirit beings before being mortals, is opposed to what the Apostle Paul, who under inspiration, wrote, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:46).

Not in the way Christians view the second birth, but according to Mormonism's pre-existence, Jesus Christ was born again. First as a spiritual being and then as a physical being. In fact, if all men were born to God and one of his goddess wives, are they not born again when they take on a mortal or physical body? Is this not two births? According to Mormon teachings all men including Jesus Christ have already experienced a second birth.

The late Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie went further, asserting, "...our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh." He goes on, "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers" (**Mormon Doctrine**, pp. 546-547). The Bible says nothing of a physical union between God and Mary.

Further, the Bible says nothing of this "pre-existence." In Genesis we are told God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. If Adam had already been a living spirit this would be incorrect. And this also would lead to another problem. Why would Jesus tell Nicodemus he needed to be born again, a spiritual birth, if he had already been born as a spirit? Would that not mean a "third" birth?

No, Jesus, the perfect God-man, was only born once. We have all been born once in the flesh — but God offers us the opportunity to be born again as His spiritual children.

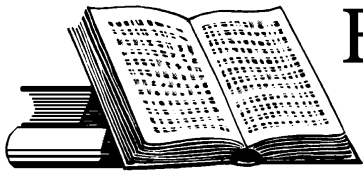
Someone once said, and it is Scripturally true, "If a man is born once, he will die twice, but if he is born twice, he will die once." The Bible tells us every man will die and after that the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Are you ready?

—CNR

new member costs us \$38, so why pay \$4,000? We can do much better." The American Atheists currently have a mailing list of 52,000, but according to Sanders, membership is about 35,000.

O'Hair is best remembered for her role in a legal case that led to the 1963 Supreme Court decision banning prayer in public schools.

—MKG



BOOKS IN REVIEW

ANSWERING MORMONS' QUESTIONS

by Bill McKeever

Bethany House Publishers, 127 pages, \$5.95

Bill McKeever has compiled a handy and valuable reference work in his **Answering Mormons' Questions**.

The author, founder and director of Mormonism Research Ministry, a San Diego-based, Christian outreach to Mormons, evaluates and gives biblical explanations to thirty-eight of the more prominent inquiries Mormons make to Christians. His examinations range from the alleged persecution of the LDS Church to biblical inerrancy to the triune nature of God.

The book is full of Bible references that strip the disguise away from these LDS queries. Also included is a handful of reproductions of LDS reference works and photographs. A scripture index further adds to the book's value.

McKeever has given believers another weapon to fight the erroneous claims and challenges of Mormonism. This book is a tremendous resource that can be read cover-to-cover or simply used when particular questions arise.

—MKG

ISLAM UNVEILED

The True Desert Storm

by Dr. Robert A. Morey

The Scholars Press, 179 pages, \$9.95

The recent war in the Middle East has raised questions among Christians about the religion of Islam. As Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein called for a Holy War against nations that challenged him, many believers sought an explanation for the religious basis of his action. Dr. Robert Morey's latest work succeeds in answering those questions in a forthright and balanced examination of Islam.

While Morey states and proves that claims of membership are extravagant, he admits to the steady growth of this religion and its tremendous influx of adherents into traditionally non-Muslim countries.

Morey first examines the nature and cultural background of Islam. In subsequent chapters he writes about the god (Allah), the prophet (Muhammad), and the

sacred book (Koran) of Muslims. Each chapter ends with a brief summary. The book's structure and author's writing style make for quick, easy and comprehensible reading.

Two appendices also add to the book's value. The second one, "The Legacy Of Elijah Muhammad," written by Colin P. Ackridge, examines the leader and history of what has become known as the "Black Muslim Movement." Ackridge points out that Jehovah's Witness doctrine and literature have contributed to the Black Muslim's denial and refutation of Christian theology.

The book's index makes for quick location of specific material.

Morey's book separates fact from fiction with respect to the world's second-largest religion and is an asset to any Christian seeking answers on the Muslim faith.

—MKG

THE COUNTERFEIT CHRIST OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

by Ron Rhodes

Baker Book House, 225 pages, \$9.95

As "Christian" responses to the "New Age Movement" continue to fill the shelves of local Christian bookstores, it is refreshing to find a publication that examines this system's Christology in a balanced and scholarly way.

Ron Rhodes' excellent book is divided into three sections: the Jesus of the New Age, the Christ of the New Age, and the biblical Jesus Christ. The first section delves into teachings about the so-called "Lost Years" of Jesus and refutes the idea that Jesus spent any time with the Essenes prior to his three-year public ministry. Rhodes introduces the reader to the writings of Shirley MacLaine, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, Levi H. Dowling and others. The author shows that New Age Christology is a hodgepodge of contradictory ideas from ancient Gnosticism that is promoted by many cults.

A second section traces the roots of the New Age heresy and its major advocates. The publication's final three chapters construct a proper scriptural understanding of Jesus.

Several appendices further compliment the book. Two examine Matthew Fox and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, two Catholic mystics. The book has 14 pages of endnotes. A glossary of New Age terms and a bibliography further enhance the book.

—GRF

Editor's Note: The above publications are available from Personal Freedom Outreach (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.25 to the price listed to cover postage costs. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.