
The Quarterly

JOURNAL

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH



VOL. 14, NO. 3

JULY-SEPTEMBER 1994

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

Ready for Failure?

The Further Prognostications of Harold Camping

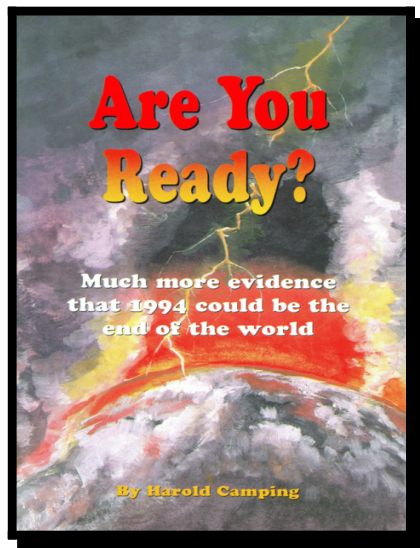
by G. Richard Fisher

The field of prophecy is littered with false prophets and failed date-setters. The sad history of the "dating game" can be found in William Alnor's excellent book, *Soothsayers of the Second Advent*. I'm sure Camping's folly will make it into any revised updated editions of that book.

Camping's new book, *Are You Ready?* (402 pages) purports to verify a September 1994 date for Christ's return. Camping claims that the book, a follow-up to his *1994?*, offers "Significant corroboration that the year 1994 in all likelihood is the year that ends the world" (back cover).

In the introduction, Camping offers some strange twists on Scripture in trying to make his point that we can in fact date the Second Coming of Christ. He first "correctly translates" (his words), the passage from Acts 1:7 and gives it a whole new meaning. He tries to convince us that "translated from the Greek it does not say, 'It is not for you to know the times....' Rather, more correctly it should have been translated, 'It is not of you to know the times....' That is, any knowledge we might receive does not come from our own thinking. It must come from God. If it comes from God it must come from the Bible" (pg. xix).

In fact, Camping's new spin on Acts 1:7 seems to be entirely from his own thinking. The "not for you to know," of this verse is (Greek: *ouch humon estin gnonai*), literally "not yours to know."



One of Camping's fatal flaws and fundamental weaknesses is that he seems to be dependent on only himself. We never find him consulting good resources, reliable commentaries or showing documentation.

The word know (*gnonai*) is an aorist infinitive, which means it is an ongoing action. It literally means, it is never, ever for you to know or there is not a time you would ever know. This has been the historic view of the Church and is backed by all major translations and commentaries. Sumner's *Essentials of New Testament Greek Grammar*, page 133, verifies that knowing this

information is not something that you can ever do.

The meaning of this is clearly explained in the *Greek New Testament of 1831*: "The sense then of this verse is, that God, by His own power, hath appointed certain times for all things, and in determining them made use of no one as an assistant; and that therefore it was not becoming that men should too solicitously and curiously pry into those things, which it did not please the divine wisdom to reveal to them" (Vol. 2, pg. 132).

The time of Christ's return and Kingdom is unrevealed (Matthew 24:36, 42) in spite of Camping's new and strange twisting of Scripture.

Camping pulls Ecclesiastes 8:5 out of context (pg. xix), to support his idea that he knows the exact time of the return of Christ. The verse in Ecclesiastes ("a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment") has nothing to do with the return of Jesus in any sense or in date setting. It is foolish to suggest that it does. The verse in its larger context has to do with using time wisely and exercising discernment in the carrying out of the King's commands. (See further, *Ecclesiastes*, Charles Bridges, pg. 189.)

We are to use the present time responsibly since verse 7 reminds us that we cannot know the future nor do we have the future. We only have the present. Camping should have read on to verse 7: "For he knoweth not which shall be: for

(continues on page 12)

Editorials

PROMINENT ENDORSEMENTS FOR SPENCER'S HERESY HUNTERS BOOK?

The March issue of *Bookstore Journal* contains a full-page promo of James R. Spencer's **Heresy Hunters**, the publication which accuses numerous major counter-cult ministries, including PFO and the Christian Research Institute, of having "destroyed both families and ministries."

The advertisement featured an endorsement for his book from the *Bookstore Journal* itself, as well as approval from several notable personalities from within Christian circles. Those who support the author and his publication include: Jack Hayford, Ron Mehl, Ed Decker and even Dr. Walter Martin. *The Dr. Walter Martin? Yes, the Dr. Walter Martin!*

The same Walter Martin who founded the Christian Research Institute, one of the ministries attacked in the book? Yes! The same Walter Martin who died in June 1989, four years before the publication of the **Heresy Hunters** book? Yes! The same Walter Martin who repeatedly spoke out against the aberrational and heretical doctrines of the word-faith teachers defended by Spencer? Yes! "It can't be," you say. But it is.

CRI spokesman Elliot Miller addressed the dubious endorsement during a radio broadcast of *The Bible Answer Man* following the magazine's publication: "It's very well known where he [Walter Martin] stood. Hank Hanegraaff's book, **Christianity in Crisis**, is completely in keeping with [Martin's] concern. ... If Walter had still been with us he would have written that book. It was a concern that was very heavily on his heart before the time that he died. It would have been the next book he would have written. For this author [James Spencer] to take a quote from Walter Martin, as though implying that he would support the book, is intellectually dishonest. ...he's using whatever he can to create a false impression."

Highlights of Martin's past condemnations of the word-faith movement also were featured on the radio broadcast.

With the advertisement, Spencer, who asserts that the major counter-cult ministries show "sloppy, irrational disrespect for reasoned truth" and "delight in quoting out-of-context statements" again establishes *himself* as guilty of the very practices he condemns.

—MKG

A CULT BY ANY OTHER NAME...

The symptoms are all there: a runny nose, sore throat, hoarseness, a cough, low fever, fatigue, watering eyes and appetite loss. "Cold? What cold?" is the response from one advocating a positive confession theology. "I don't have a cold, it's just those lying symptoms. My words are a powerful creative force to become what I say," the warped conviction is further defended.

Within the confines of Christianity very few statements may seem as

incongruous and foolish. Then there's the Feb. 15, 1994, edition of *The Watchtower* magazine. Its gist is hard to miss. The magazine's cover undauntedly queries, "Jehovah's Witnesses A Cult or Ministers of God?"

Even the most simple-minded would have little trouble in guessing what the Watchtower's answer will be. No religious organization would ever pose such a question only to answer, "Yes! Beware! We are a dangerous cult!"

During the past three decades, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has made tremendous stride in shedding the "cult" image. The slick television, radio and magazine advertisements have cost millions of dollars but Mormon missionaries have gone from "No ma'am, we are not Christian, we are Mormons," to "Yes, ma'am, we are Christians. We believe we are Christians above all other denominations because we have the total Gospel."

A decade ago, Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church started a similar campaign by distributing to Christian pastors and others in the field of Christian education three 2-hour video tapes that explained Unification Church theology. Moon had much less success than the LDS, which launched its program well over 100 years after the death of its founder, who was no less unorthodox than Moon.

Now the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has taken its turn. Like the LDS church, it has time and money on its side. Unlike the LDS, however, the Watchtower would never invest millions of dollars in advertising. Instead, it uses in-house publications and its own members to spread the message.

The recent *Watchtower* magazine identified a cult by way of several incriminating characteristics: a brazen misuse of Scriptures, leaders who boast of having been divinely chosen, isolation of its members from family, friends and even society, and manipulative methods of mind control by leaders. The Watchtower claims to lack all these characteristics, saying, "It is clear that Jehovah's Witnesses are as far from being a cult as Jesus was from being a glutton and a drunkard."

Yet the facts leave little doubt that the Watchtower Society is, by its own definition, a cult.

The Watchtower Society is unequalled in its "brazen misuse of Scripture." (See **Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses**, by Ron Rhodes.) The Watchtower, by distorting the Word of God, denies all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Dr. Edmund Gruss' work, **Apostles of Denial**, is a fitting name for Jehovah's Witnesses, who deny the Trinity, the personage of the Holy Spirit, the deity of Jesus Christ, His bodily resurrection and visible Second Coming, the existence of hell, a heavenly home for all believers, and man's eternal soul.

Moreover, the Watchtower's Scripture twisting has sent countless people to premature graves by forbidding blood transfusions. There is no law in God's Word that forbids blood transfusions. The apostle Paul writes in Romans 4:15, "But where there is no law, neither is there violation." If all the lives cut short by the Watchtower's erroneous interpretation of Scripture

(continues on page 14)

News Updates

PAUL BLIZARD RESIGNS AS PFO DIRECTOR

After much prayer and consultation, Kentucky-state Director Paul R. Blizard has resigned from PFO's Board of Directors. Paul cited "ever-increasing demands of pastoral and administrative responsibilities" led to his resignation. In March 1993, he was called as pastor of the 1100-member Reidland Baptist Church in Paducah. As a result of the "greater responsibilities and demands" of his new pastorate, his investment into the PFO ministry had to be curtailed to "a bare minimum."

"To be honest, it is not fair to PFO for me to maintain the title of *Director* when I cannot practically fulfill that role," Paul said of his decision.

He expressed good wishes for PFO's ministry by saying: "I wish to maintain a good, friendly relationship with PFO and its directors. I have enjoyed my friendship and fellowship with you. ... I also thank God for what He has done and will continue to do through the ministry of PFO."

Paul was appointed a PFO director on Jan. 1, 1989. His resignation took effect April 1, 1994, at which time he terminated office operations in Kentucky.

—MKG

COUPLE'S OFFERING RETURNED 400-FOLD

A jury recently awarded a Tampa, Fla., couple \$1.5 million in damages stemming from their lawsuit against television evangelist Robert Tilton, his former wife and his Dallas-based church. Mike and Vivian Elliott had accused Tilton of exploiting them on his *Success-N-Life* television program and misusing a \$3,500 donation the couple had made.

The Elliotts alleged that Tilton's organization had wrongly credited the prosperity preacher with preventing a suicide attempt by Mrs. Elliott. Mrs. Elliott also had told a member of the *Success-N-Life* staff about other crises in her life, but refused to reenact them for the evangelist's program. A producer then found actors to stage the reenactment, forged permission forms, and repeatedly broadcast the segment despite the Elliotts' objections. The couple also believed that their contribution would help fund a crisis center. However, according to attorney Gary Richardson, the gift was used for "nothing more than Tilton's lavish lifestyle."

The jury's April 21 judgment awarded the Elliotts \$500,000 in actual damages and \$1 million in punitive damages. Rhonda Johnson Byrd, Tilton's lawyer, said a motion would be filed with the judge to "correct the jury's verdict." If the judge allows the verdict to stand, Byrd said Tilton would appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

Tilton said of the judgment: "Remember these words: The sun is always shining no matter where you are as long as you keep your eyes on Jesus."

Meanwhile, Tilton's own lawsuit against ABC television's Diane Sawyer was dismissed March 16 by U.S. District Judge Robert Maloney. Tilton had filed a \$61 million suit against Sawyer and others following a critical expose' of the evangelist's ministry featured on *PrimeTime Live*. Tilton alleges the unfavorable conclusions drawn by the news program devastated his television ministry.

The *Success-N-Life* program was carried on 200 cable and local television stations prior to its cancellation last October. At its peak, the ministry employed over 780 people and had an \$80 million annual income.

—MKG

VERDICT IN ON DENVER APPARITIONS

For the past three years, followers of Theresa Lopez have gathered on the second Sunday of each month at the Mother Cabrini Shrine. Lopez claims to have seen the Virgin Mary on a hillside above the shrine, which is located about 20 miles from downtown Denver.

Since the time of the first apparition, Lopez has stated that she has had many visions of the Virgin, not only at the shrine but at her home and at various churches in the area. Her claim is that Mary instructs her to bring Catholics back to church and to work for peace. Lopez has taken the Virgin's message to groups both domestic and abroad.

In 1991, Denver's Archbishop J. Francis Stafford appointed a committee to investigate the claims. The council, after months of investigation, has reported that Lopez never saw the Virgin Mary. In a statement issued March 8, Stafford indicated that "anyone encouraging devotion to these alleged apparitions in any way is acting contrary to my wishes."

There have been a growing number of individuals from around the world who have purported to have had apparitions of the Virgin Mary. Most recently, Ray Doiron, 58, claims to have seen Mary on the 13th of each month since January 1993. The visions take place at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Ill., twenty miles east of St. Louis. In mid-March, nearly 2,000 people gathered to follow the Virgin's instructions to pray for peace.

—AMG

SCIENTOLOGY CHURCH GAINS RUSSIAN RECOGNITION

After years of struggling to gain public acceptance, the Church of Scientology is seeing major advancements in its quest for the mainstream. Late last year, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service granted the church tax-exempt status to more than 20 Scientology organizations. The IRS

(continues on page 15)

Angels We Have Heard on High?

What Are We Really Hearing in the New Obsession with Angels?

by G. Richard Fisher

When *Time* and *Newsweek* carry cover stories on the same subject — angels — in the same week, one gets the idea there is a trend afoot.

The United States is the scene of a renewed and intense interest in angels. The Dec. 27, 1993, *Newsweek* reported: "Angels are appearing everywhere in America" and mentioned workshops to help people release their "inner angels."

Time magazine on the same date said on its cover: "The New Age of Angels - 69% of Americans believe they exist. What in heaven is going on?" It reported that there are "angel-only boutiques, angel newsletters, angel seminars and angels on [CNN's] *Sonya Live*." It says that bookstores have had to establish angel sections and that Publishers Weekly is reporting that 5 of the 10 religious best-sellers are about angels.

Last December, Doubleday Book Club offered its members **Touched By Angels - True Cases Of Close Encounters Of The Celestial Kind**. The book purports to be filled with first-hand reports of angelic intercessions and interventions. In March, Doubleday advertised **Where Angels Walk**, by Joan Wester Anderson, saying "White winged Saviors and Angels" are appearing on highways and, as well, are healing people.

Bell Publishing released **Out Of The Angel's Hand**, by L.D. McGann, a novel that describes the author's speculations about angels' interactions with each other and humanity. It speculates about angelic involvement in Stonehenge, the Great Pyramid and Easter Island. It is advertised in the *Bookstore Journal*, so an assumption will be made that it has to be Christian.

Charisma magazine got the jump on the trend in February 1993, when it published an article by Judith MacNutt. MacNutt says angels are usually 8 to 9 feet tall, dressed in loose-fitting robes and appear youthful (pg. 50). She also attributes very

unusual powers to angels in saying "They ... bring us healing" and, as well, change our flat tires! They also give money in desperate situations (pg. 51). MacNutt wrote that an angel sat in the rafters at one of her meetings and watched.

Faith healer Benny Hinn has long had an infatuation with angels and is representative of a number of evangelists (Kenneth Hagin, Marilyn Hickey, and the late William Branham) with similar stories. Hinn has reported angelic sightings from childhood, up to and after his conversion. On a Dec. 13, 1993, show on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, he described how intense his involvement is and what he thinks people should look for. "We are about to see the activity of angels on earth as we've never seen before," he said in a message titled, "The Coming Angelic Visitation."

Working off the premise that every prophetic event fulfilled is preceded by the visible manifestation of angels (and he sees certain modern events in Israel as direct prophetic fulfillment) Hinn continued, "When prophecy is fulfilled, angels manifested themselves and become visible to the human eye. We're seeing prophecy fulfilled. Get ready — your eyes are about to see angels."

Not every prophetic fulfillment in the Bible had angelic manifestations. Hinn may be preparing his audience for more than they bargained for.

Hinn added: "Every time I've seen angels they had blond hair. ... If it wasn't for angels you'd all be dead right now. It's the power of angels that has kept you safe all these years. ... Get ready for the day when you'll know the absolute definite guidance of an angel in your life. ... Don't you doubt the fact that they may come and you'll be in a spot and someone will say follow

me. ... It's going to happen. It's going to happen. It's going to happen! ...get ready to know the activity of angels. ... Each one of you can have 6000 angels at your disposal. ... Every time angels ever appeared in my room they always looked puzzled. ... I'm telling you the truth. ... I'll never forget 1974, a whole year of glory in my bedroom. Every night for a whole year. Now I'm telling you the truth. I'm not lying. Every night for a whole year angels appeared in my room."

On a Dec. 6, 1993, broadcast Hinn even dusted off the old myth in which an angel is picked up as a hitchhiker, announces the Second Coming and then vanishes. This tale, which dates back to at least 1876, has been shown to be one of the great Christian rumors. (See further, *The Great Christian Rumors*, by Rich Buhler, pp. 3-4).

THE OBSESSION

Time in its article did admit, "The rising fascination is more popular than theological. ... In their modern incarnation, these mighty messengers and fearless soldiers have been reduced to bite-size beings, easily digested. The terrifying cherubim have become Kewpie-doll cherubs. For those who choke too easily on God and His rules, theologians observe, angels are the handy compromise, all fluff and meringue, kind, non-judgmental. And they are available to everyone like aspirin. ... Only in the New Age would it be possible to invent an angel so mellow that it can be ignored" (pg. 56).

Anyone who thinks that the current angel mania has anything to do with Scriptural accounts of angelic revelations and visitations is misinformed. Those who see angels as mediators are displacing Christ from his role. Those who see angels as "sympathetic and merciful" only, may be supplanting Christ from his role as our High

(continues on page 10)

End-Time Handmaidens

Ministry for the Last Days or "End Time" Delusion?

by M. Kurt Goedelman
with G. Richard Fisher

Settled in the Ozark mountains of Arkansas is a Pentecostal organization with worldwide impact. Billed as "A ministry for the family, a ministry to the nations," the End-Time Handmaidens is an organization that sees its primary purpose as sending missionaries worldwide to "redeem the land" and preach the Gospel. Another distinctive of this group is urgency. Little time remains before the Second Coming of Christ and the Lord has regularly told them so. The Gospel (as they see it) must be preached now!

Yet, despite the intense and widespread efforts of the ETH, little information, outside the sect's own literature, is readily available. Mention of the ETH is absent from the major religious encyclopedias and reference sources of denominations and organizations, including the **Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements**. A rather peculiar oversight since ETH claims to regularly receive prophecy and heavenly directives for believers and the Church in the "last days."

ETH'S BIRTH AND MINISTRY

According to ETH literature, the inception of the movement was in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1966 when Gwen Schmidt, a 42-year-old itinerant missionary, asked God "to send women into the harvest fields." She claims that God had "supernaturally" used her on the mission field, and since men would not answer the call as missionaries, perhaps women like herself were willing to answer the call.

For four years her petition continued. Then, she claims, she began to see God's answer to her prayers. The Lord began sending women laborers to her newly founded ministry. She maintains the organization's name, End-Time Handmaidens, is a "very scriptural one" based on Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18.

The ETH founder was born Gwen Bergman in Canada in 1924. She was raised in a Mennonite family and claims her conversion to Christianity at age 17. Following her conversion, Bergman submitted an application to Moody Bible School in

Chicago. However her petition was refused because the school's enrollment had been filled for the year. Bergman subsequently enrolled at the Ontario Pentecostal Bible School. In 1943, just shy of her 19th birthday, she met and married her first husband, Dave Schmidt. She then, along with her husband, enrolled at the Bible school operated by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Following their graduation the Schmidts set out in 1947 as missionaries to China. As a result of the fall of China to the Communists in 1949, the couple then ministered in Taiwan and Hong Kong. They had three sons in the first 16 years of marriage. Then a few years after the birth of their third son, the couple began to drift apart.

The ETH founder said her marriage to Schmidt was "the greatest mistake of my life." She claims: "I married out of the will of God. I didn't do it in rebellion or in sin or in weakness, just plain ignorance." Following more than 25 years of wedlock and nearly a decade of separation, the Schmidts divorced.

In the early 1970s, Mrs. Schmidt met a retired Air Force officer, Lt. Col. James Shaw. Schmidt told Shaw, "The Lord has told me that I can marry you" and the framework of the ETH ministry became a family affair. "Sister Gwen" is founder and president of the missionary group, while "Papa Jim," her second husband, is vice-president. In 1975, the couple moved the organization to Jasper, Ark.

The town has grown from a population of 400 to just over 500 in the intervening years. The ministry, with its headquarters just south of Jasper has grown more substantially. Its headquarters sit on 340 acres of wooded land where its operations are carried on in five houses, a large dormitory with chapel and dining room/kitchen, a barn, two garages, and a pasture for livestock.

With the growth of the ministry, the necessity for its dispersed members to have "fellowship and

close coordination" was experienced. The remedy came through local groups known as "Branches" which place "three to five of their own members in a position of leadership and responsibility."

Despite all the ministry's prosperity, its growth has not been without misfortune. In November 1990, disaster struck as fire incinerated a key structure, called "Qumran," on the property. The large building which housed the offices, warehouse, printing and tape duplicating facilities, as well as the shipping and receiving departments, burned completely.

Resurrecting the organization's vital components lost in the blaze has been an extended process. In early 1994, work continued on the group's new administration building to be called "The Ark." A shortage of money recently caused the ministry to pressure the faithful of the sect: "Please pray for the finances to continue to come in! ... When I appealed for 1000 people to give \$100.00 your response was tremendous (and we're grateful for each one), but still less than 500 responded. The Lord has spoken to some 500+ others, but they have not obeyed Him. He wants to open the windows of Heaven to them this year."



Other major aspects of the ETH ministry include End-Time Servants, the male counterpart of Handmaidens; Junior End-Time Handmaidens and Servants, for youths age 10-17; International School of Ministry, founded in 1987 to "provide advanced training in the Word of God under qualified teachers"; Rainbow House in Niagara Falls, N.Y. which is the group's missionary outreach into Canada; and Engeltal Press, the publishing arm of the ministry.

According to ETH, "much of the success of the ministry is based on its extensive publishing work." Engeltal Press is responsible for publishing 30 titles and 17 Bible studies, most of which have been written by Mrs. Shaw. In addition, the printing division "publishes several anointed music books, which contain songs written by Sister Gwen and other members of this ministry," as well as the semiannual *End-Time Handmaidens Magazine* and bimonthly newsletters called "Angel Letters." These latter publications purport to contain "much detailed information about world affairs and the moving of the Holy Ghost worldwide."

Workers at the group's headquarters, which is also called Engeltal (German for "Angel Valley"), are said to be "dedicated" to the ministry's vision. They "live by faith," receive "no salary," and "serve God in many ways." Mark Scheiderer, a former Engeltal staff member with more than four years of service, reported that "work went on 6 days a week, (many times 7), and often lasted until midnight or later."

A highlight for Handmaidens and Servants is the group's annual World Convention, attended by 1,500 to 2,000 people. The first one was in 1976. Since 1980, they have been in St. Louis. This year's convention is in Dallas.

Heavy emphasis is placed on attending the ETH World Conventions. Following the 1993 gathering, Shaw, in her July/August "Angel Letter" admonished those unable to attend: "...if you could have come and allowed things to interfere and keep you away, I fear for you. You may have lost your first love. Be honest with yourself and search your heart. What kept you away? God doesn't accept excuses — He only accepts justifiable reasons. He sees the heart. You cannot deceive Him. He made this feast for you and you grieved the Holy Spirit by not accepting His invitation."

Regional ETH seminars and retreats; missionary tours, where "ordinary people have received a greater vision and burden for the nations"; annual pilgrimages to Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles; and an intercessory prayer line are a few more of the different endeavors promoted by the Handmaidens.

The Handmaidens appear to draw the bulk of their membership from those seeking personal growth and spiritual fulfillment, but because of polarized friendships, broken marriages or disrupted family relationships have failed to realize their desire. Former End-Time Servant Mark Scheiderer observes:

"The largest percentage of people involved in this cult are women who are either divorced, married to unsaved husbands, are in rebellion to their Christian husbands, 'church-hoppers,' unsubmitive to spiritual authority, are domineering towards their husbands, or are bitter toward men. Mrs. Shaw's preaching encourages women (and men) to do what they feel God wants them to do, regardless of what marital or family obligations exist. As a result, divorce and division within families and churches are prevalent. Since leaving this cult, God, through His Word, has helped me to see in exactly what areas this cult strays from the Bible. In regard to the attitude Mrs. Shaw conveys to women and their relationship to their husbands, I would have to say that it is the complete antithesis of 1 Peter 3:1-2 and Titus 2:3-5."

During the annual World Convention of ETH, its new members go through a vow ceremony in which Shaw prays for and lays hands on each initiate. At the 1993 conference, more than 70 people took vows to become End-Time Handmaidens and Servants. Any believer over the age of 18 may join, but a prerequisite for initiation is a 21-day liquid fast before taking vows. Children wishing to become Junior ETH go on a three-day fast.

Scheiderer notes: "Those involved in this cult fast frequently and, when coupled with the fact that the pace of these meetings [World Convention] is exhausting, it is only a matter of time before one's physically weakened state places one in a very vulnerable spiritual condition. Deception occurs much easier."

DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES

The "Doctrinal Statement" of the Handmaidens, by orthodox standards, is vague and obscure. At best it has only one essential of Christian belief, the nature of God and even that is not clear. There is no distinct presentation of the Trinity. This factor, along with the group's propensity for the mystical, may well contribute to the ETH being able to draw from and be readily accepted across the thinly distinguishable lines of various Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations and extremes.

According to ETH doctrine, God the Father is

designated as the "eternal Creator," "Sustainer" and "Judge of His universe." Yet these positions and attributes assigned to the Father by the Handmaidens are clearly marked in Scripture as functions of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Strangely, several of the accompanying Bible verses cited by the ETH in its doctrinal statement, pertain not to the Father, but to the Son. Shaw's publication, **Love The Law of the Angels**, further muddies the divine character by describing the "male-female" nature of God:

"This feminine aspect of the eternal God is the 'El-Shaddai,' the mother-nature of God. ... If God created man male and female, it was because bisexuality somehow belongs to His own nature. The fact has been recognized by early rabbinic commentators that this is true. One even concluded that God had made Adam androgynous, and later separated him into Adam and Eve. ... This beautiful aspect of the mother-nature of God is one which we need to meditate more upon" (pp. 165-166).

While ETH's doctrinal confession of the person of Christ takes on a veneer of orthodoxy, it is found lacking when compared to the Christ revealed in Scripture. First, no explicit mention of His deity is presented.

And, secondly, the writings of Shaw only further complicate an orthodox understanding of Christ:

"It is impossible to receive Glory without the price of suffering. We know that, of all beings on earth, there never has been one who has been so glorified as Jesus was. Originally He had shared the glory of the Father in heaven, and now He could only return to it through the gateway of suffering. It is significant that He had to suffer to receive back the Glory which was His rightful inheritance" (ibid., pg. 168).

At the very least this idea is confusing. Jesus did not suffer to earn back an inheritance. He suffered for mankind, so that people could have an inheritance.

Additionally, the ETH, like many others in Pentecostal/Charismatic circles, espouse the belief that our physical healing for now is a part of the atoning work of Christ. Shaw teaches:

"By His stripes we are healed. Every emotional and physical pain or wound has its source of healing in Jesus' great work of redemption. ... Yes, Jesus bore our incurable diseases and plagues such as AIDS, cancer, Alzheimer's and any name that is named" (**Redeeming the Land**, pg. 176).

Not surprisingly, the writings and practices of faith-healers such as John G. Lake, Aimee Semple

McPherson, Smith Wigglesworth, Maria Woodworth- Etter, Kathryn Kuhlman and Benny Hinn all meet with the approval of and are promoted by the Handmaidens. In the Bible, ultimate healing is in the atonement, but only in the sense of ultimate resurrection bodies when all suffering and sin will finally be eradicated (Revelation 21:1-5).

Mrs. Shaw's theology of divine healing includes a new twist. She extends the healing power beyond that of just the human race: "This healing power avails not only for us (it is the children's bread—Mark 7:27), but for the whole animal kingdom, and even for the redemption of the earth. All creation is waiting for us to set them free" (ibid.). Now, evidently, pets, farm animals, other domesticated and non-domesticated creatures, and the earth itself can likewise claim the promises of Isaiah 53:5, "by His stripes we are healed."

Yet there's the certain reality of sickness and disease which enters a Christian's life. Shaw, like other proponents of the "health" gospel, offers a rationalization for a believer who is struck with a physical affliction:

"There must be a reason why so many of God's children are sick when His atonement has provided healing for us. ... Why are so many Christians sick, when the Word says, '...and with His stripes we *are* healed?' (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24). And God gave him [the apostle Paul] the reason: they approached the table of God with unconfessed sins, unrepentant hearts, and with unforgiveness to their fellow man" (**The Power of the Precious Blood**, pp. 36-37, italic in original).

Misuse and abuse of the Lord's Supper is certainly a valid reason why sickness, or even death, could befall a Christian. Yet one can easily find godly men and women, who do not partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily, afflicted with a physical ailment. Living a deeply spiritual and holy life does not provide immunity from sickness or death.

Shaw also supports a superstitious and mystical fascination with the literal blood of Christ. An advertisement for her book, **The Power of the Precious Blood**, suggests that "it was personally revealed to her how much Satan fears the power of Jesus' Blood." Naturally the alleged fact that "Satan fears the power of Jesus' blood" had to come by way of personal revelation for nowhere in the pages of Scripture can this premise be found in the way she uses it. Shaw's extrabiblical insights into the "blood" push her to claim that believers can "overcome and destroy the works of

Satan in [their] life and the lives of loved ones."

Using the word "blood" as a magical "power word" misses the impact of the biblical meanings of Christ's blood. One may miss or sidetrack the truths of substitution and atonement by focusing on "blood" as a mantra.

An integral particular of ETH's Christianity is one's attitude towards the blood. Shaw writes:

"If you go to a church where the Blood is not honored, you better start seeking God's face about whether you are doing His will. And if you support financially a ministry that is silent concerning the greatest truth of the Holy Scripture, you better know you are paying the way for that which is not God's pattern or religion. ... Only the man of God who teaches the true Blood message has the authority of God in his ministry and on his life" (**The Power of the Precious Blood**, pp. 28, 30).

Shaw further contends: "I believe that the Blood of Jesus is going to become more powerful in the end-time, more powerful than in the day it poured from His veins, until it will touch our very bodies" (ibid., pg. 50).

The ETH visionary's commentary on blood then goes beyond even the more mystical concepts which have been introduced into the Church:

"What type of Blood flowed in His human body if Jesus did not have an earthly father? He *must* have had the Blood of deity. For centuries classical mythology has believed that ICHOR, an ethereal fluid, flowed in the veins of the gods. It was a mixture of blood and water. Was it any wonder then, that when the Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side and there flowed from the wound a gush of blood and water the centurion cried in great alarm, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' It was more than the earthquake or the darkened sky that convinced him. I believe it was the sign of water in the precious Blood of Jesus — the Blood of God" (ibid., pp. 33-34, italic in original).

To force "classical mythology" into God's Word in an effort to ascribe a greater metaphysical understanding to Christ's death is more akin to New Age philosophy than Christianity. It adds to and challenges the revealed word of God.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke each record the confession of the centurion. However, none of these Gospel writers includes the account of Jesus' side being pierced. Only John did — and he omitted the soldier's admission. Therefore, nowhere in Scripture is it stated that "the sign of water in the precious Blood" convinced the centurion.

In addition, there is no need to add a mystical interpretation to the flow of blood and water from Jesus' side. The March 21, 1986, installment of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published an article on the crucifixion and death of Christ. Commenting on the discharge of blood and water, the *Journal* concluded:

"Therefore, the water probably represented serous pleural and pericardial fluid, and would have preceded the flow of blood and been smaller in volume than the blood. Perhaps in the setting of hypovolemia and impending acute heart failure, pleural and pericardial effusions may have developed and would have added to the volume of apparent water. The blood, in contrast, may have originated from the right atrium or right ventricle or perhaps from a hemopericardium" (Vol. 255, No. 11, pg. 1463).

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible likewise sees no parallel in the event with that of classical mythology. Concerning the "blood and water" of John 19:34, the commentary notes: "It may be naturally supposed that the spear went through the pericardium and pierced the heart; that the water proceeded from the former, and the blood from the latter" (pg. 951).

Clarke does permit symbolism in the occurrence yet his conclusion does not allow for the "mystical" that Shaw sees: "Ambrose, Augustine, and Chrysostom make the *blood* an emblem of the Eucharist, and the *water* an emblem of baptism. Others represent them as the emblem of the old and new covenants. Protestants have thought them the emblems of justification, which is through the *blood* of the Lamb, and sanctification, which is through the *washing* of regeneration; and it is in reference to the first notion that they mingle the wine with water in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The issuing of the blood and water appears to be only a natural effect of the above cause, and probably nothing mystical or spiritual was intended by it. However, it affords the fullest proof that Jesus *died* for our sins" (ibid.).

Other precepts of Shaw's teaching on aspects of blood parallel Watchtower beliefs:

"A punishment of death was decreed on the one who would eat the blood (Genesis 9:6; Leviticus 17:14). ... This law was one of the greatest laws that was carried over into the laws of the church in New Testament times. When the church elders counseled together in Jerusalem for guidelines they could give the many new converts among the Gentiles, ... They were commanded to abstain from 1) pollution of idols, 2) fornication,

3) eating things strangled, and from blood (Acts 15:20). This law is still valid today. We have no freedom or right to annul it" (**The Power of the Precious Blood**, pp. 18-19).

Shaw's pronouncements stem more from the Watchtower Society than from the pages of Scripture. There is no "punishment of death" imposed upon an Israelite who drank blood. Leviticus 17:15-16 shows clearly that the punishment for violating God's law on blood is to be outlawed for a short time. The violator becomes outlawed (or cut off) from his people, must wash himself and his clothing and will be unclean until evening, but then will be clean.

The Acts passage has been equally misinterpreted. Gentiles were to refrain from things strangled and from blood, practices which could be offensive to Jewish believers. The abstinence from blood was a matter of Christian fellowship, rather than a divine command. Even the apostle Paul recognized exceptions to this ruling (see 1 Corinthians 8:4-13; 10:25-30).

Shaw also uses the ludicrous in her blood analysis:

"A professor of one of the most well-known European Bible schools said people have discovered that after major blood transfusions the character of the recipients was completely altered and permanently affected. These cases have been studied and the fact has been scientifically proven. What else could this be than the curse in the blood stream handed down or transferred by blood transfusion" (*ibid.*, pg. 44).

The Watchtower offered the same ridiculous conclusion in the July 8, 1969, edition of its *Awake!* magazine:

"Some say blood transfusions are harmless. Do you believe that? For 40 years Robert Khoury was known as an honest man. Then he was given a blood transfusion after a fall. 'I learned the donor was a thief,' Khoury told police. 'When I recovered I found I had a terrible desire to steal.' And steal he did. He confessed to stealing £10,000 in six robberies in three months. Khoury threatened to sue the doctor who arranged the transfusion, if he receives a severe sentence for his thievery" (pg. 30).

Maurice Barnett offers the following comments concerning the Watchtower conjecture, which can be effortlessly applied to Shaw's premise:

"This is utter nonsense. There are no acquired characteristics possible through transfusions. The man was simply trying to get out of the consequences of his stealing. A pint of blood from

a genius would make the receiver one also, or how about a transfusion from a great musician? Or, even a transfusion from a great Bible scholar would be a beneficial transfusion!" (**Jehovah's Witnesses**, Vol. 1, pg. 31).

Various aspects of the blood fetish have been around for centuries. Shaw's imagination and mysticism help her join ranks with Benny Hinn, H. Maxwell Whyte and others in promoting a theology which, for believers, creates false expectations under the guise of consecrated spiritual warfare. (For more information, see "Christ's Blood: Relic or Reality?" *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 1994.)

The third person of the Trinity fares no better in the Handmaidens' doctrinal statement. Similarly, no precise definition of the Holy Spirit is offered. Absent is any admission as to His deity, personality or relationship to other persons of the Godhead. He is said only to be given by Christ to believers "with power from on high to enable them to be witnesses."

Shaw's teaching on the demonic also far exceeds the parameters set by Scripture. The ETH founder claims that Christians can be inhabited by demons: "Never go to sleep without confessing your sins. Unconfessed sins, even in the heart of Christians, can give the spirits a legal foothold. ... Satan has every right to strike us with sickness or demon possession" (**Redeeming the Land**, pp. 99-100).

Authors Thomas Ice and Robert Dean strive to abate this unbiblical teaching. The pair state that those who maintain a believer can be demon-possessed develop their "own autonomous definition of demon-possession based on human experience and then reading it back into the Bible. It is this type of invalid methodology that usually leads people to the conclusion that Christians can be demon-possessed. Once a person moves beyond Scripture as his authority, anything becomes possible if carried to further extremes. ... We do not believe that the Bible teaches that a Christian can be possessed or indwelt by a demon" (**Overrun by Demons**, pp. 117, 119).

The ETH also champions those who purport supernatural and mystical experiences, particularly individuals who describe visits to heaven or hell. The questionable heavenly sojourns of Percy Collett, Roberts Liardon, Richard Eby and others are given significant attention within the ranks of the Handmaidens. One will not find even the slightest hint of condemnation within ETH literature in connection with these bizarre and esoteric visions, no matter how incredible and

unorthodox they may be. (For more information on "Heaven Hopping," see *PFO Newsletter*, Oct.-Dec., 1985 and *Christian Research Journal*, Spring 1993.)

Another supernatural aspect that receives high praise and blessing from the group are those who say they have had angelic visitations or intervention. Benny Hinn, the late Roland Buck and his daughter, Sharon White, are just a few who receive ETH's endorsement and commendation, in part, because of their self-proclaimed supernatural experiences. (See further, "Angels We Have Heard on High?" in this issue of the *Journal*.)

The quest for and furtherance of heavenly and angelic confrontations are an unhealthy preoccupation at best, leading to speculation apart from the revealed Word of God. Yet, the ETH venerate the aberrant noting: "Not only do they publish books, they also search the nations for *the best anointed literature* and make it available through their magazine. In this way, the most unique, anointed and 'impossible-to-find' books have been discovered and made available to the public" (emphasis added). No questions asked, any bizarre experience can become grist for the ETH mill.

Their "anointed" book list is not limited to just the elite few with angelic and celestial revelations, but as noted earlier sanctions the unsubstantiated miraculous claims of numerous faith healers. Others, with unorthodox theology, whose publications are featured by the ETH include: Paul Billheimer, Paul (David) Yonggi Cho, Watchman Nee, Bob Weiner, E.W. Bullinger, Alexander Hislop and J.R. Church. And the heresy is not limited to just the Handmaidens' mail order service. A visit to the numerous book tables featured at the ETH's World Conferences could be best described as "what not to sell as Christian literature."

Shaw's writings also emphasize the need for spiritual warfare. Her book, **Redeeming the Land** is advertised as an "important teaching [which] will help you know your authority through the Blood of Jesus to dislodge evil spirits, break the curse, and restore God's blessing upon the land." In their missionary work, the Handmaidens see the need not only to preach the Gospel, but to also "redeem the land." Though PFO cannot endorse all of Mike Taylor's book, **Do Demons Rule Your Town?**, he has done a significant job in taking on and refuting all aspects of the territorial demons teaching.

Regions and territories are said to be in need of reclaiming or redeeming because they have

fallen under the custody of evil spirits who have been given a legal right to the particular area. These territorial demons may control a region as large as an entire country or area as small as a city or even a neighborhood. Shaw instructs her faithful to redeem the land thereby gaining authority away from the demons. In **Redeeming the Land**, she writes:

“Our lands are sick. The time has come for God’s people to go forth in simple faith and obedience and redeem the land. ... It is time to redeem the lands that have been defiled by witchcraft, abortion, murder, idolatry, etc. by holding the Lord’s Supper in the areas that God shows us need redeeming. It is time to break the curse and the power the evil spirits have over an area. ... we need to pray over the cursed land, cast out the powers that have ruled over the areas, and hold Holy Communion over those areas—reminding Satan that they have been redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus and he has relinquished his hold over them” (pp. 178-179).

Yet Shaw’s principle to recover what has fallen under Satan’s domination doesn’t always appear to work. The Handmaidens were informed that the great Midwest flood of 1993 was caused because “Tibetans went around putting curses in the rivers.” To overrule these curses, many “End-Time Handmaidens went around redeeming the rivers, redeeming the waters and redeeming the land.” Nevertheless, the floods prevailed. When the Lord was questioned as to why, after the “Saints of God had prayed so much and redeemed the land,” the devastation continued. The response claimed that “the understanding was given... that the Lord allowed this to happen to make you understand the power of the enemy. This evil power was not something that we can just easily take dominion over” (“Angel Letter #4,” 1993).

One must twist Scripture unmercifully to try to “prove” the territorial demon teaching. Demons work through people, not property. This is a subtle diversion moving people away from the normal daily warfare using faith, Scripture, prayer and fellowship.

PROPHETIC PERSUASIONS

Within the ETH ministry is a heavy emphasis on personal revelation. Prophetic abilities are not limited to the leadership of the movement. Its bimonthly “Angel Letters” and semiannual *ETH Magazine* are replete with utterances from the Lord given not only to “sister Gwen” but to anyone sympathetic to the ETH mindset. Much of the prophetic in the Handmaidens literature

contains predictions and visions which call the Church from its decadence, warn of the wrath ready to befall the United States, issue some political mandate, or proclaim the imminence of the return of Christ.

In the March/April 1993 Angel Letter No. 2, Shaw italicizes a “Word of Admonition” given to her by the Lord in January: “If you, My people, who have hated My servant Bill Clinton will turn around and forsake that hatred and prejudice against him with the Love of God, I will turn him around also and change his heart, and cause him to do good instead of evil. But if you don’t, he will become bitter and angry and he will do all the evil he has promised to do – and more.”

As further evidence that Bill Clinton is God’s “servant” the Angel Letter recognizes a “prophetic dream” allegedly give to Paul Cain of Kansas City Fellowship fame. Shaw writes that Cain “has had a very significant prophecy concerning President Clinton.” This prophetic dream was the sole subject of the January 1993 edition of Rick Joyner’s *The Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin*.

In the Joyner newsletter we are told: “The Lord said that He was giving us a new president who is better than we deserve. He [Clinton] represents a reprieve from a New World Order that the church is not prepared to face at this time. If we do not stop complaining we will end up with something to grieve about, not just complain about.”

The Cain revelation also informed the Church: “Why did the Lord choose Bill Clinton? Because He intends to put His spirit upon him and make him into a new man. He is going to give him the power of the Holy Spirit to lead this country. What some people in the church regarded as a defeat is actually a blessing from the Lord. If the church will pray for this it will come to pass.”

Yet not all from within Pentecostal/Charismatic circles are as willing to approve of the Cain revelation as is Shaw. When the March 1993 *Charisma* magazine cited the prophecy, several readers took issue with Cain’s oracle. One reader wrote: “Mr. Cain’s message is short on truth and long on accusation. I challenge him to apologize to the multitudes of believers who are concerned enough about the spiritual condition of society to just not rest in the sanctuary, but get involved.” Another reader admonished: “The only thing more scary and dangerous than Clinton in the White House is Paul Cain in the pulpit” (*Charisma* magazines, May and June 1993).

In a 1990 message, Shaw gave credit to the Handmaidens for obeying a call of God which

supposedly brought safely home the 52 American hostages from Iran. The ETH leader wrote: “When the 52 Americans were taken hostage November 1979, God called the End-Time Handmaidens and Servants to fast 20 days. Many did, binding such spirits as false religious spirits which cause religious war; binding spirits of hate, retaliation, vengeance, lust to kill, and every messenger spirit to frustrate every plan that would otherwise come through. At the end, God spoke to me: ‘**Because you have obeyed Me, I will spare everyone. Not one life will be lost. They will all come home.**’ And they did! It was a miracle! God saved each life, even though they were in the midst of a blood bath which took the lives of tens of thousands” (emphasis in original).

Yet in this same 1990 letter, divine directives are given as the United States prepared to enter the Gulf War. In a “Prophecy for the Church and America re: Persian Gulf/Iraq-Kuwait Emergency” the faithful were informed:

“Yea, and I say unto thee that thou shall perish in the desert, if thou dost not reverse thy ways and come back to Me, America. I call upon you. Return to Me, America. Return to Me! ... Oh, My people, thou that didst think that thine enemies shall be slain, but oh, I say unto thee that many of thine own shall die if thou dost not turn thy face to Me.”

In January and February 1991, the United States and its allies defeated Iraq and liberated Kuwait which Iraq had overrun in August 1990. U.S. forces returned home victorious with a minimal loss of its military personnel. Despite America’s failure to reverse its ways and return to the Lord, God was gracious to this country in its success at emancipating Kuwait.

While Shaw’s urgent prophetic message fit into the framework of the days preceding the actual war, on the basis of America’s spiritual condition, the outcome was vastly different from that prophesied. As so many times before, time has proven to be the enemy of a false prophet (see Deuteronomy 18:21).

All in all, with its doctrinal ambiguity, theological aberrations, unscriptural emphasis on the supernatural experiences and prophetic and mystical leanings, the End-Time Handmaidens is an attraction for the spiritually naive and undiscerning. The foundation of the group is far-removed from the bedrock of Christian orthodoxy. ETH is just another “end time” delusion. It has a confusing message of salvation, with people only committing to Gwen Shaw’s control and her plethora of false teachings and teachers. ❖

Priest. John Calvin alerted his readers to the dangers of angel-mania:

"It remains to give warning against the superstition which usually begins to creep in, when it is said that all blessings are ministered and dispensed to us by angels. For the human mind is apt immediately to think that there is no honour which they ought not to relieve, and hence the peculiar offices of Christ and God are bestowed upon them. In this way, the glory of Christ was for several former ages greatly obscured, extravagant eulogiums being pronounced on angels without any authority from Scripture. Among the corruptions we now oppose, there is scarcely any one of greater antiquity" (*Calvin's Institutes*, Vol. 1, pp. 148-149).

Calvin, of course, was being consistent with the flow of things in Church History since the Council of Laodicea (343-381 A.D.) had forbidden invoking or even naming angels. Later councils reiterated this stand. (See further, *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff, Vol. 14, pg. 150).

Turning angels into fast friends, best buddies, Boy Scouts, financiers, auto mechanics or household pets reveals a cut rate, counterfeit, 20th century religiosity devoid of any recognition of the biblical picture of angels as awesome, powerful creatures and ignores their major role in the direct revelation of the Bible. In Genesis, they carried flaming swords and in Revelation they are described as battling Satan and meting out judgment.

The current obsession with angels is at best a digression to the diluted, philosophy-tainted, imaginative Judaism of the Hellenistic Intertestamental period. Gnosticism for a time dealt in angelic fantasies as well. In the Middle Ages there was a resurgence of mysticism and angelic obsession for a time, with Thomas Aquinas speculating on angels and Jewish Kabbalists claiming the exact number to be 301,655,722 (see *Newsweek*, *ibid.*, pg. 57).

THE ORIGINS

The body of material generated by the current angel phenomenon is contradictory and confusing. The new angel teaching comes from a wide spectrum of people and it has to be classified accordingly. There are at least these categories, perhaps more.

1. Those who seek authority for their "ministry" from wild stories of angelic encounters.

This is the most subtle because it has a ring of biblical truth. The experiences and reports are highly subjective and impossible to verify. We only have the person's word for it. If the person has been untruthful and manipulative in the past there is a high degree of possibility that he is telling tall tales to enhance acceptance and give an appearance of spiritual authority. With all the hype, these people are doing more than just suggesting that they are privy to direct divine knowledge.

2. New Age proponents and neo-Gnostic teachers.

3. Misguided people who may be hallucinatory or seeking attention. Include in this group those that may be having prescription and/or illegal drug reactions or extended sleep loss.

4. Charlatans, manipulators, fakers and liars.

5. Sincere, naive "religious" people caught up in the euphoria and faddishness. Angels are trendy and some just follow the lead of any new books that are popular.

6. Those wittingly or unwittingly who are deceived and caught up in spiritism. This becomes very obvious when occultic practices are enjoined and taught. Some of the new angelology is clearly and blatantly occultic. If people are going to seek higher intelligences to guide them they had better find out whom they are following. The root meaning of the word *demon* is intelligence.

In the teachings of spiritism there is the encouragement of communication between angels and humans, according to Arndt, Graebner and Mayer, in *Popular Symbolics* (pp. 40, 397, 418, 476. As cited by Raymond Surburg, *The Christian News*, Jan. 3, 1994, pp. 9, 11).

7. Those motivated by money and sales of books and paraphernalia. The sale of angel-related items has become a multimillion-dollar enterprise.

8. Those who try to share the biblical doctrine of angels. Billy Graham's book on angels (*Angels: God's Secret Agents*, published in 1975 with 2.6 million copies sold), is an example of this but has a few problematic parts. The best source is probably a good systematic theology or doctrine book. But that takes too much time, effort and study for many. A reliable study is the 12-cassette series by Dr. Renald Showers titled *Angels, God's Invisible Agents*, (distributed by Friends of Israel, Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08031). Following reputable, born-again exegetes is the only way to go.

9. Any mixture of the above 8, which makes

analysis all the more complicated.

C.S. Lewis said that truth is often found between two extremes. 18th-century rationalism denied the existence of angels while some 20th-century people say there are sightings everyday or that angels are making regular house calls.

Surely we must find the biblical middle. Since we believe firmly in all that the Bible reveals and teaches about angels and their historic appearances we will now turn to the Scriptures as the final word on the issue.

The word angel comes from the Greek word, *angelos*, which means "messenger." Depending on the context, the messenger can be a human (see *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, H.E. Vine, pg. 55).

However, the angels we are discussing are special spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14) created by God (Colossians 1:16) to worship and serve Him (Isaiah 6) and to act as His special messengers. Angels are not glorified humans or former humans as occultist Emanuel Swedenborg taught, nor are they the spirits of the dead. Hebrews 12:22-23 shows a sharp difference between angels and the "spirits of the just."

We should not be confused by the fact that in Psalm 8:5, angels are called once in the Hebrew, *elohim* (a name used of God). The root word has to do with might and in another context is even used once of man (Psalm 82), as the representative of God having authority to bear God's name. It is also used of pagan gods and the context is always clear. Angels are mighty and only in that sense can they be designated as *Elohim*. When *Elohim* is used of the true and living God the context is that He is the Mightiest One (see *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 1, pp. 28-29). All the other designations, titles and incommunicable attributes of God are never applied to angels.

In the Hebrew Old Testament angels are once referred to as *abbir* and *elohim* (mighty). They appear most often (over 100 times) as *malak* (messengers or agents). They are also seen as *shinan* (many or a great multitude) once. In the New Testament they are only angels or messengers as mentioned.

Angels had a special guardianship over Israel (Daniel 11:1, 12:1, Ezekiel 9:1) and only two are named, Michael and Gabriel. They often protected God's people (1 Kings 19:5-8). They were used as agents of direct revelation all through the Bible. They accompany Christ at His Second Coming (see, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, William

Evans, pp. 215-220). Except for the angels who fell (Satan and his angels) they are called holy (Mark 8:38).

They have assumed human-appearing bodies in the biblical past to bring special messages as in the Resurrection of Christ. They do have ministries to the Church, but since these ministries are unseen, we do not have a lot of vivid detail or detailed explanations. They are presently, as Dr. Renald Showers suggests, "God's invisible agents." We must emphasize "invisible agents" for very good reasons that we will state.

Books like the novels by Frank Peretti are high on bookstore sales lists, but even higher on literary license and imagination. The format is helpful but we must remember they are fiction and not Systematic Theology. They cannot be pressed too literally. Authors often take artistic license and artistic liberties.

It is important to remember that angels were agents (among others) for new direct revelation from God. Visible ministry often happened in regard to this new revelation. It was in fact the confirmation that the message was from God since they had no completed Scripture. This is crucial to understanding angelic ministry for this age, which this author believes is real, continuous and vital but unseen. It is not necessary to see angels to believe in them. It is necessary to believe the Word of God. The existence of angels is a principle of faith so if we see them we no longer need faith. Faith is the confidence or foundation for things not seen, Hebrews 11:1 (see **An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words**, H.E. Vine, pg. 225, *Hupostatisis*).

THE OBJECTIONS

Is it logical and biblical to believe (with the historical Church for the last 1900 years) that the **visible** ministry of angels came to an end with the ceasing of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration at the close of the Canon (and the completion of the Book of Revelation)? Has everyone, including the Reformers, been wrong on this? There are strong reasons why the Church always believed this.

1. The total absence of instruction and teaching in the Epistles indicating such visible activity. Something so crucial would have been discussed. We are not taught to expect or respond to the visible ministry of angels anywhere in the Letters of the New Testament. The Epistles are silent on intimate details about angels even though some would insist they know the height, dress, weight, and hair color of angelic beings. Most references in the Epistles discuss their past activity or their

unseen activity. We know their ranks but not their serial numbers.

Why is their less attention to angels by Paul than the Gospel writers? Gerhard Kittel addresses this and states the main reason: "There corresponds a tendency, particularly evident in Paul, to emphasize the comparative unimportance of angelology. The positive thought of the angel, the messenger of God, as found in the Gospels and also in Acts, is relatively little-used in his Epistles. For him the whole stress falls on the complete overshadowing of angels by the fact of Christ" (**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. 1, pg. 85). With Christ, the greater, there is no need for angels, the lesser.

2. There are definite warnings not to seek such things or to try to intrude into the unseen realm (Colossians 2:18). Paul says "Off Limits!" Although it is the worship of angels discussed in Colossians, when Christ is displaced in any way Christians are a step away from idolatry. Hebrews 1 indicates that Jesus is so far superior to angels that they are insignificant by comparison.

Timothy Jones amplifies Paul's objections in Colossians: "Paul faces off here against an incipient heresy that would allow the majestic God to be worshipped only in the form of angels he had created. A full blown version of this heresy, called Gnosticism, later developed a list of spirit beings through whom God had to be approached. Paul would have none of this. When people suggest relating to angels, they repeat and yield to the medieval Catholic temptation to multiply mediators. 'There's Mary, the saints, now the angels,' explains theologian J.I. Packer. 'In the end, the glory of Christ is diminished'" (*Christianity Today*, April 5, 1993, "Rumors of Angels," pg. 22).

In fact, Paul's statement in Colossians 2:18, not to intrude is literally "don't dwell on angels or even seek them" (see Marvin Vincent, **Word Studies In The New Testament**, Vol. 3, pg. 496). This is the exact opposite of today's trend. Today's *angel mania* is a direct violation of Scripture.

3. The distinct possibility is that those who seek such things may be duped. So many have been. Satan can disguise himself as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14, Galatians 1:8). The possibility of that deception should cause one to run from these pursuits. Islam and Mormonism sprang from purported angelic visitations.

Other heresies have sprung from these encounters. Again Timothy Jones: "But the cultural fascination has a dark side. Books like **Ask Your**

Angel demonstrate that not all that purports to be angelic is necessarily Christian" (*CT*, *ibid.*, pg. 20).

The book, **Ask Your Angel**, claims to bring the channeled messages of Abrigrael, an angel-like being. Somebody is being snookered. **Ask Your Angel** blatantly admits that conversing with angels is another tool for "divination," a practice strictly forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) that can have disastrous consequences (1 Chronicles 10:13).

4. The guidance system for the Christian is clearly an internal guidance system through the indwelling Holy Spirit applying the external Word of God. The New Testament teaches that this is enough for our Sanctification (John 17:17, 1 Peter 1:3-4, 2 Timothy 3:16).

In his **Systematic Theology**, Lewis Speery Chafer notes: "Thus it is seen that the relation of the angels to the incarnate Son of God is one of the major features of Revelation and upon these disclosures the devout mind may dwell with profit. In the plan of God, the present age is evidently devoid of angelic manifestations. This could easily be due to the fact that, as in no other age, the saints of God are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are subject to His leading which is more constant, vital and exalting than angelic visitations could possibly be" (Vol. 2, pp. 23-24).

Picking up on this biblical truth the **Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible** offers: "The visible activity of angels has been superseded by the Holy Spirit who now guides Christians into all truth (John 16:13)" (Vol. 1, pg. 166).

Louis Berkhof, a reformed theologian and scholar, writes: "When the period of God's special revelation closed, the extraordinary service of the angels ceased, to be resumed only at the return of the Lord" (**Systematic Theology**, page 148). Berkhof makes a distinction worth noting. He says that there is ordinary service of angels (praising God, guarding Saints, and so forth) that is real but unseen and extraordinary service in mediating the special revelations of God in the past.

5. The current plethora of "angel" messages are mixed, confused, New Age, sometimes heretical and so contradictory they cannot be confused with truth. God is not the author of confusion and contradiction but Satan is the father of lies.

6. To confuse the messages of direct revelation in the Book of Acts, as an example, with some need or requirement for today is to miss entirely the necessity of a period of special Divine

revelation as a supernatural means to the Bible's completion. We do not expect the exact type of direct divine intervention as needed and used by God to inspire the authors of Scripture. God works today primarily through the completed sufficient Word illuminated by the Spirit.

7. The Great Commission in Matthew 28 contains the marching orders of the Church. This commission mandates that human messengers, not angels, teach all that Christ has commanded until the end of the age. It is an age-long job for God's people. There is no new commission. The job cannot be passed to angels. Having never experienced salvation, the angels cannot be witnesses of this to others. Not needing sanctification they have nothing to teach on this. We are not to look to angels but to good pastors and teachers in our churches. According to Ephesians 3:10, angels are now learning things from the Church, not the other way around.

8. Realizing our exalted position in Christ keeps us from giving undue attention to angels. We are seated with Christ and share a position angels never dreamed of (Ephesians 2). We are said to be "in Christ," indicating that we share His position and eternal wealth. Positionally we died with and ascended with Christ (Ephesians 2:5-6, Romans 8:30). In that position we are far above angels (Ephesians 1:20-21). In God's future Kingdom we will rule with Christ and consequently rule and judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). This perspective keeps us from exalting angels beyond their due. Kittel again observes: "As the Son is more and other than all categories of angels, so is the believer with and by Him" (ibid., page 85).

9. Both the Bible and historic orthodoxy assert the absolute centrality of faith and faith as the

operative principle for the Church Age. Jesus said "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Believing in angels by faith, not seeing them makes one blessed. Paul exhorts, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Hebrews 6:12 admonishes that it is through "faith and patience," that we inherit the promises. One of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 is "faith" not sight. In 1 John 5:4, we overcome the world by "faith" not sight. The seeing mania is demonstrating a lack of faith. In 1 Timothy 1:19 we are urged to "hold faith," not sight. Faith comes by the Word of God (Romans 10:17), not angels. The angel proponents cut away at the tap root of the Christian's life. They are robbing us of faith and trust in God and His Word.

10. Paul's words in Ephesians 6:12, that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood" is a strong indicator that the unseen realm is just that. What is going on in the heavenlies is a real, spiritual, unseen conflict removed from physical contact and the physical eye. As this real conflict bears upon our mind, heart and emotions, we are to gather strength and sufficiency from truth, from the Gospel, from the Word, from faith and from prayer (Ephesians 6:13-18). No suggestion that an angel's appearance is needed. That is not even hinted at. Angelic messages are not part of the armor.

The massive tome on Ephesians 6 by William Gurnall (**The Christian In Complete Armour**) was written in 1650. It is balanced and biblical and shows the Reformed view and the accepted Puritan view, which puts us in good company. Gurnall holds to the centrality of faith and views the angelic realm as real but unseen. He expands

the practical use of the armor of God to an extent that no one else has ever done.

Faith will be our "method of operation" until we step into heaven and no longer need faith. In the **Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament** we find these thoughts on faith: "Only when human existence ceases to be earthly and human will vision take the place of knowing faith or believing knowledge – the vision which no longer refers to the glory of the Son concealed by the flesh, but which has this glory as its immediate object" (Vol. 6, pg. 227).

We firmly believe in the past activity of angels both seen and unseen as reported in the Bible. We cannot state that strongly enough. We believe with the historic Church and because of obvious biblical persuasions elucidated above, in the very present and very real but **unseen** ministry of angelic beings. Some of this unseen activity is revealed in the Bible.

The angels' work of interpreting God to man (direct revelation) has been overshadowed by an all-sufficient Christ, the Holy Spirit, a completed Bible, the Church's human messengers (Ephesians 4, Matthew 28), and by the faith principle of the New Covenant. The current mysticism, spiritism and neo-Gnosticism is dangerous, misleading and devoid of understanding. It will dull discernment, take people astray and should not be appealed to or accepted by Christians.

The historic biblical position keeps us safe and out of the mire of the new angelic fetishes and heresies. It also keeps us out of the clutches of deceivers and away from the door of occultism. We are not really hearing angels from on high but rather hearing messages from beneath and maybe even from below. ❖

READY FOR FAILURE?

(continued from page 1)

who can tell when it shall be." We cannot even get out of the Preface before Camping has subjected us to personal, private, subjective, misinterpretations of God's Word.

Camping states one of his major "hermeneutical" principles on page 1: "...once we have come to understand the calendar given in the Bible." We are supposed to understand that there is a calendar given in the Bible, not because there is one necessarily, but because Camping says there is one. There is no biblical statement, principle, or even allusion that there is a calendar within the Bible that precisely dates the return of Christ.

There are calendar dates in the Bible, but they

are not there for what Camping suggests. What is obvious is that Camping takes calendar dates in the Bible, which are used to precisely date things, and forces his own meaning on them.

There are types and symbols in Scripture. The Tabernacle Menorah and bread point to Christ. At least we have Jesus referring to Himself as bread and light. There is biblical justification in showing elements of the Tabernacle as being typical or symbolical. Yet, where are we ever taught that calendar events in the Bible have a secret meaning.

Milton Terry, the dean of biblical hermeneutics, warns: "There must be evidence that the type was designed and appointed by God to represent the thing typified. ... It is essential to the type, in the

Scriptural adaptation of the term, that there should be competent evidence of the divine intention in the correspondence between it and the antitype – a matter not to be left to the imagination of the expositor to discover, but resting on some proof from the Scripture itself" (**Biblical Hermeneutics**, pp. 337-338).

Camping will make the same massive, major mistake in imposing contrived meanings on numbers as we'll see.

There are Old Testament Feasts, such as Passover and Pentecost, that point to New Testament events. However, only some of the Feasts are seen as prophetic by the New Testament. The ones clearly seen as prophetic by the New Testament are prophetic. There is no

reason to believe that others are, unless clearly stated in the New Testament. Otherwise, we could make anything and everything prophetic at our own whim. The Bible itself must determine what is typical and prophetic. Anything else imposes man's system on the Scriptures.

To insist that the Jubilee year (Chapter 2) offers a prophetic scenario and calculation is not biblical or in any way warranted by Scripture. Camping says, "we wonder what God's application of this event might be in the New Testament era?" (pg. 22) It is not God's application but Camping's speculation that prevails. He offers no New Testament support of "God's application" of the Jubilee year at all but a hodgepodge of numbers along with the 13 encirclements of Jericho and the fact that the conquerors of Jericho shouted, which of course all points to 13,000 years and the shout of 1 Thessalonians 4 (pg. 31).

But all in all, Camping says that the end of the world will occur "in all likelihood... from the earliest on Sept. 15, the day of atonement, to no later than September 27, the last day of the feast of tabernacles" (pg. 32). Camping's question on page 35, "Must I be limited to blindly following a teacher, knowing that he is a fallible human being and therefore subject to error?" ought first to be applied to him.

Camping can hardly contain his praise for his book **1994?** On pages 12 and 13 he indicates that the teachings of that book fulfill Daniel 12:4 and have "taken the lid off of a greater understanding of the Word of God." He should blush at his suggestion that all the incredible writings of the Reformers, Puritans and modern-day exegetes have not done this. Camping's writings pale into total insignificance against the great body of helpful, practical Bible insights produced by the historic Church. Pride and boasting are pitfalls that Camping may be unaware of.

Though he "tips his hat" to the Reformers on pages 15-16, he proposes that "God had set a limit on how much Bible knowledge would be understood during most of the history of the Church" (pg. 15). But guess what? Page 16 informs us that God's plan to increase knowledge through "new insights" and Bible numbers has at last arrived. Of course we know who is giving this new insight and unfolding the mystical meaning of numbers. It is Harold Camping in **Are You Ready?** Camping is so bold to say (pg. 16) that he has come up with "additional truth" undiscovered throughout Church History. Hasn't every sect, every cult, every schism, every "ism" and aberrational group made the same claim? Mr.

Camping, like many before him, is trying to read his own personal destiny into a few misinterpreted Scripture verses.

Camping finally reveals his fundamental and foundational error in Chapter 5. He says that Scripture has a "third level" of meaning below the historical and moral level. This third level has "hidden aspects" (pg. 96), and a "deeper spiritual meaning" (pg. 108). This level also contains "deeper spiritual truth" (pg. 109). But since there is no objective way to check your understanding of this "deeper spiritual truth," how does one ever know if they are not just seeing something that is not really there? Certainly no one would agree with Camping's findings unless they take him at face value. I have never "seen" what he claims to "see."

In his chapter, "God's Use Of Numbers In The Bible," he proposes: "many times the words and phrases are allegorical in nature so we must discover the spiritual message conveyed by them." However, the discovery seems to end up just being a taking of Camping's word for it.

Camping's test for the deeper level is that the "spiritual meaning" must relate to the Gospel (pg. 107). That is very vague and could, in some sense, say that all findings and misinterpretations "relate to the Gospel." That hardly seems to be a definitive objective or final way to check a private interpretation.

As well, one cannot appeal to the fact that Scripture uses parables, metaphors, types, allegory, and so forth, as Camping maintains, as a justification for secret hidden meanings. The figures of speech in Scripture are clearly seen and understood as just that and in those cases alone one is justified in getting the meaning below the figures. The meanings, however, will be clear and the hard truths of those meanings supported by Scripture and not just speculation.

In Chapter Six, Camping spends 50 pages reconciling the dates, years and reigns of the Kings of Judah and Israel, then comes up with "hidden meanings" that have those dates pointing to the year 1994 (pg. 176).

Camping is into esoteric and subjective Bible numerology. He lays down a premise on page 184 that "numbers [are] placed in the Bible to enrich the Gospel message" and "through the use of numbers, He teaches spiritual truth." However, not one shred of biblical support is offered by way of a command or directive to prove his statements.

Numbers don't enrich the Gospel message or

teach spiritual truth simply because Camping says so. There is no biblical support for such statements. All Camping can do is tell his readers what he thinks they mean, but he has not shown his idea to be biblically supportable. None of the numbers consistently mean what Camping says they mean. Every numerology teacher (Grant, Bullinger, Panin, McKinney, Camping, etc.) all disagree with one another about the meaning of the numbers. In some cases they say the opposite. There is no objective basis for what Harold Camping does.

John Davis, in his book *Biblical Numerology*, shows the correct hermeneutic for dealing with numbers (pp. 155-156). To summarize, first we must take numbers at face value as conveying a mathematical quantity. Secondly, all numbers should be considered dependable unless there are strong comparative textual reasons for assuming otherwise. Thirdly, all numbers should be regarded as having literal mathematical value unless strongly suggested otherwise by the context.

The hermeneutical process for numbers is essentially the same as the study of other parts of the Bible. We determine how the number is used in the verse (*usus loquendi*), and in the setting, and recognize the simple purpose of the author for that number. Anything more is wild guesswork and mysticism. We never find Jesus or the Apostles cogitating or speculating over numbers. Surely something so important would have been at least suggested by our Lord, or by Paul in his Epistles, or by Peter or John.

For instance, the number 3 means God's will, so says Camping, even though there is not a verse in the Bible to prove that. We could slip and slide and say (even with 3 bad things) that everything could be seen as at least the permissive will of God. There are many things that come in threes in Scripture that are totally neutral or totally sinful (three tabernacles in the Transfiguration, the trinity of evil, Antichrist, Satan and False Prophet of Revelation, and so on).

But how about the number 2? Camping says it signifies the Church or true believers (pg. 186). Is that anywhere stated in Scripture? What about the two thieves next to Christ on the cross? Were they both in the Church? Or does two only mean Church where Camping wants it to mean the Church? What about the two mules in 2 Kings 5:17? Are they in the Church? What about the two angels in Genesis 19:1? Are angels ever considered the Church? What about the two posts in Exodus 12:7? The two kidneys of Leviticus 4? This can be taken to nonsensical extremes. It boils down to selective and subjective nonsense. There

must also be a **selective inattention** or **selective avoidance** of many passages in the Bible that have a context where the numbers mean the exact opposite.

Maybe after all it is just as simple as Camping makes it on page 179, where he observes: "Yet, as we live in this world, every human being must deal with numbers to some degree whether he likes it or not. The moment he buys food or clothing, he must deal with numbers."

Numbers are in the Bible because the Bible reflects and talks about real life. Things must be listed, reports given, tallies made in numbers not because there is mystical meaning lying underneath waiting for 2,000 years to be discovered by Harold Camping, but because God gives us accuracy in reporting. Numbers are there for

precision and dates are given to show the historicity of the text because that's how life works.

Camping recently told PFO, "You can rest assured that if, in that outside possibility that it doesn't happen, we'll be talking about it every night on the *Open Forum* [radio broadcast]." When asked if contingency plans were being made when the September date failed, Camping responded: "Of course not. There is no backup date. All we'll do is drop any more reference to 1994. Somehow an error was made. Maybe by that time we'll know what the error is."

Time will tell. It seems that some never learn a thing from history. The great disappointment of the Adventists in the 1800s, the disenchantment of the failed dates of the Jehovah's Witnesses

throughout the 1900s, and the more recent letdowns of Edgar Whisenant ought to at least make people cautious. Camping's failure may make some more cautious but it also may throw others into skepticism and ridicule of the Christian message. That will be the tragedy of it all.

Christians must be ready to always do responsible exegesis and prayerfully and carefully check research and findings through others. We must pray for God's grace to be careful not to distort truth with our own imaginations.

These are sad and confusing days but we must be ready to walk with our Savior and keep speaking out against falsehood and error in spite of the pressures. Our prayer is that our God will ready Harold Camping for genuine repentance and a renouncing of his bizarre extremes. ❖

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

could be tallied, the lethal junctures of Jim Jones and David Koresh, which justifiably gained widespread media attention, would pale in comparison.

And then there is the heavily emphasized argument of the article, the claim not to isolate its members "from friends, family, and even society in general." For the scores of former Jehovah's Witnesses, those who monitor cults, and even some current members, this assertion is nothing short of ludicrous. The Watchtower organization's isolation of members may be more subtle than the conspicuous seclusion of other, smaller sects employing communal living, but it's no less dangerous. In fact, this subtlety makes the Watchtower's techniques even more insidious and guileful. A sampling of its publications leaves no question as to the Watchtower organization's insisted detachment imposed of its members.

The Watchtower, Feb. 15, 1960, warned its readers: "There is to be no *partnership*, no *fellowship*, no *portion*, no sharing with unbelievers. In other words, no association with them if one is to associate with God. ... Even if such acquaintances are not dishonest or immoral, their first concern is not the worship and service of Jehovah. One who associates regularly with them will soon think as they do. Expose the mind to their thoughts and one's faith in the new world will become weakened, zeal will be quenched, integrity will collapse, and the conscience will be dulled so that one does not take Jehovah's requirements of study and service seriously" (pg. 112, italic in original).

Jehovah's Witness youths fare no better. The Feb. 1, 1974, *Watchtower* instructs parents: "The ideal situation is for parents to have such a fine program outlined for their children that little or no time remains for outside activity" (pg. 93).

Other Society publications stress for youth the organization's interest of "placing" books and magazines over personal activities: "Concerning this principle of putting Kingdom interests first, as well as the one regarding right association, how should a young witness of Jehovah view after-school-hour sports? Ask yourself, Would involvement in such sports tie

me down to a program requiring me to spend evenings and weekends playing on the school team when I should be at a meeting of the Christian congregation or out in ministry pursuing my real purpose in life? ... why spend a lot of time on sports that could be more profitably spent in building up your spirituality? ... Study of God's Word and taking care of Kingdom interests is more important than participating in any after-school athletic activities" (*The Watchtower*, Sept. 1, 1964, pg. 535).

Then return to the Feb. 15, 1994, magazine. Just a few pages after declaring itself innocent of promoting isolation of members, the Watchtower says: "We must also be on guard against extended association with worldly people. Perhaps it is a neighbor, a school friend, a workmate, or a business associate. We may reason, 'He respects the Witnesses, he leads a clean life, and we do talk about the truth occasionally.' Yet, the experience of others proves that in time we may even find ourselves preferring such worldly company to that of a spiritual brother or sister. What are some of the dangers of such a friendship? We could begin to minimize the urgency of the times we live in or take a growing interest in material rather than spiritual things" (pg. 24).

In applying other of its own expressed criterion for cultic behavior, the Watchtower is readily guilty of "leaders who boast of being divinely chosen." During the early history of the Watchtower, founder Charles Taze Russell claimed to be the **only** spokesman for God. The record clearly indicates that Russell believed and taught that he alone was the "Faithful and Wise Servant" of Matthew 24 who would dispense meat in due season. (See further, **Who is the Faithful & Wise Servant?** by Duane Magnani.)

The seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures* said: "The special messenger to the last Age of the Church was Charles T. Russell, born February 16, 1852. He has privately admitted his belief that he was chosen for his great work from before his birth" (**The Finished Mystery**, pg. 53).

More recently, they assert: "Jehovah's organization must henceforth be guided and directed by Jehovah's spirit **through the visible governing body** made up of those servants whom Jehovah himself would appoint" (*The Watchtower*, June 1, 1965, pg. 352, emphasis added).

Similarly, *The Watchtower* of July 15, 1965 boasted: "Through the

'faithful and discreet slave' class Jehovah now appoints the overseers and ministerial servants in his earthly organization. ... By reason of his placing his holy spirit upon the responsible Christians who form the 'faithful and discreet slave' class, it can be said that their appointment of servants comes from him" (pg. 429).

Finally, *The Watchtower* dismisses mind control as a cultic pattern found within its ranks: "Of the millions of non-Witnesses who are studying the Bible with Witnesses or who have studied with them at one time or another, we ask, Were there any attempts to brainwash you? Did the Witnesses employ mind-control techniques on you? 'No' would doubtless be your frank response. Obviously, if these methods had been used, there would be an overwhelming number of victims in contradiction to any argument in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses" (Feb. 15, 1994, pg. 6).

The fact is the Watchtower has placed words in the mouth of former members and would-be members with its "No" response. The truth is the Witness organization does employ key aspects of mind-control.

Dr. Jerry R. Bergman, in his work **Jehovah's Witnesses and the Problem of Mental Illness**, writes:

"The Witnesses use a number of techniques to produce conformity and compliance with their rules. Many of these are commonly known as *mind control*, or 'brainwashing' and some of these are as follows: 1. The Watchtower endeavors to reduce both the amount and type of dissident information Witnesses absorb by limiting fellowship, especially with dissidents, which Witnesses under the pain of disfellowshipping are not allowed to talk to. They prohibit Witnesses from reading anti-Witness literature, and even discourage them from reading *any* outside literature except possibly popular non-religious newspapers and magazines. They also strongly discourage association with *all* outsiders, again under the pain of disfellowshipping. They absolutely prohibit association with all critics, disfellowshipped or not. This, in essence, filters out of Witness awareness dissident information and concerns. They are thus indoctrinated by being exposed to one side, an important mind control technique. 2. Information that they are allowed is highly selective, designed to either distort, or openly present a false picture of the Witnesses and their organization, their work and activity, and what they are doing" (pp. 270-271, emphasis in original).

Bergman also notes: "Those with experience in the mental health field are becoming increasingly aware that both the mental illness and suicide rate tend to be high among Witnesses. When attending professional conventions, the writer has noticed that when the subject of religion and mental health is mentioned, the Witnesses are not uncommonly brought into the discussion. Cases of mental illness among the Witnesses are so common that printed discussions about religion and mental health often cover members of the Jehovah's Witness faith. In some areas, especially large inner-city localities, the problem of Witnesses are routinely dealt with by mental health personnel (Pearsal, 1981). One large mental hospital was nicknamed 'The Watchtower House,' partly because of the number of Witnesses in the hospital was high, but more because the number of Witness patients there were very visible, actively spreading their faith" (pg. 38).

Stanley Slater, Assistant Director of "Those Other Gospels" ministry, concurs with Bergman's assessment. He, along with Joy Westervelt, recently wrote a letter to PFO. In it, Westervelt explained that she recently studied

with the Jehovah's Witnesses by submitting herself "to one of their home book studies." She explained: "I went to the home of a so-called anointed sister, and we met with an Elder. During the first meeting, the Elder became so disturbed by my questions that he finally said, 'From now on, just write down your questions when you think of them, and when we finish the last chapter of the book [30 chapters] you can ask them.' Of course, I refused to subject myself to this bold-faced attempt to gain control of my mind."

Steadfast Witnesses manage no better. The repetitive charge to Witnesses to remain in good standing with the organization, and hence Jehovah, is to "avoid independent thinking." Personal deliberations, apart from Society influence and control, are tantamount to actions of the devil himself. The Jan. 15, 1983, *Watchtower* admonished: "From the very outset of his rebellion Satan called into question God's way of doing things. He promoted independent thinking. ... How is such independent thinking manifested? A common way is by questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization."

The magazine further chided the faithful:

"Such thinking is an evidence of pride. And the Bible says: 'Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.' (Proverbs 16:18) If we get to thinking that we know better than the organization, we should ask ourselves: 'Where did we learn Bible truth in the first place? Would we know the way of the truth if it had not been for guidance from the organization? Really, can we get along without the direction of God's organization?' No, we cannot! Compare Acts 15:2, 28, 29; 16:4, 5" (pp. 22, 27).

The Watchtower, by its own standards, convincingly bears the true nature of a cult – both sociologically and theologically. Clearly a cult by any other name is still a cult.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

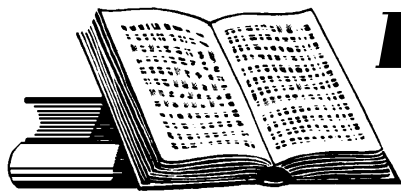
ruling ended a near 40-year pursuit by the church for tax-exempt recognition.

Now, official recognition as a religious organization has been awarded to the Los Angeles-based sect by the Russian government. According to a Religious News Service report, the church's certificate of registration was issued by the Moscow Department of Justice on Jan. 25. The announcement was made Feb. 9 by the Rev. Heber C. Jentsch, president of Church of Scientology International.

The certificate of registration is a first for the church in what was once the Soviet Union. According to Jentsch, the ruling "is a reflection of our growing membership in Moscow and other cities in the new Russia." According to figures given by the sect, the church and related groups are active in 15 Russian cities with about 3,000 adherents.

Jentsch said the Russian people are finding "workable answers" to life's questions through the principles of Scientology. The church claims 3 million followers in the U.S. and 8 million worldwide.

—MKG



Books in Review

BIBLE NUMERICS

by Oswald Allis

P&R Publishers, 24 pages, \$1.75

This booklet explores whether there are mysterious and marvelous patterns and meanings in the numbers of the Bible. Allis does a masterful job in showing the silliness of trying to find secret and esoteric meanings in the numbers of Scripture.

Using the mental gyrations of this speculative system, Allis shows meanings in historical dates in American history, the newspaper and even ordinary everyday statements.

With the resurgence of this very subjective pursuit, Allis' book is a welcome relief. His final statement on page 24 is worth quoting:

"The attempt to find mysterious numerical patterns and values in sentences, words, and phrases which have a plain and obvious meaning, whether the meaning is sublime or trite or trivial, whether it is found in the Bible, or in a masterpiece of secular literature, or in the commonplaces of ordinary life, is to say the least a tremendous waste of time and effort; and, what is far more important, resting as it does on principles that are demonstrably false, it may lead to serious and disastrous consequences. A man who rests his faith in the inerrancy of the Bible on Bible Numerics is trusting in a broken reed, which if he leans on it will go into his hand and pierce it."

Although brief, **Bible Numerics** is a handy publication to have on hand to combat the seemingly incessant trend by those who claim to "reveal" the secret of God's Word through an esoteric framework of numbers.

—GRF

CULT PROOFING YOUR KIDS

by Paul R. Martin

Zondervan Publishing House, 256 pages, \$9.99

This informative book is a must read for parents and youth leaders alike who are concerned about their children's spiritual and emotional well-being. Although one may raise children in an orthodox church, it does not automatically guard them from the lure of the cults.

Dr. Martin takes his readers step-by-step into areas such as spotting a cult, teaching and parenting cult-free children, what to do when a child joins a cult and how to help a child recover from a cult. Having been involved in a cultic "fringe" group himself, Martin is able to relate to the attraction of various organizations.

Other helpful information includes reasons people join cults, manipulative techniques of behavior and conduct and evaluation of a group doctrinally, psychologically and socially. In addition, a section is incorporated for further resource organizations and study.

The problem many parents are facing today is the lack of professional assistance once a child has joined a cult, particularly the aberrant Christian groups. Support to prevent or overcome such a happening comes from Dr. Martin not only with this excellent publication but also as a licensed psychologist who directs Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center in Ohio, a counseling center for former cultists.

Some readers may find objectionable Martin's apparent classification of alcoholism as a disease (pp. 164-165). However, this minor flaw should not diminish the otherwise effectiveness of this excellent publication.

—AMG

Editor's Note: The publications featured in our **Books in Review** section are available from Personal Freedom Outreach (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.25 to the price listed to cover postal 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.

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

PFO Offices:

Missouri P.O. Box 26062 St. Louis, MO 63136 (314) 388-2648	New Jersey P.O. Box 514 Bricktown, NJ 08723 (908) 477-6577	Pennsylvania Route 3 - Box 127 Kunkletown, PA 18058 (610) 381-3661	Ohio P.O. Box 493 Niles, OH 44446 (216) 652-3713	Arizona P.O. Box 2384 Peoria, AZ 85380 (602) 878-3370	California P.O. Box 15081 Santa Ana, CA 92705 (714) 832-9385
---	---	---	---	--	---

Board of Directors:

M. Kurt Goedelman.....St. Louis, MO	G. Richard Fisher.....Bricktown, NJ
Joan Cetnar.....Kunkletown, PA	Edgar L. Havaich.....Niles, OH
Stephen F. Cannon.....Peoria, AZ	Stephen W. Ignatius.....Santa Ana, CA
Keith A. Morse.....Fresno, CA	

Board of Reference:

Dr. Jay E. Adams.....Enoree, SC	Prof. James Bjornstad.....North Haledon, NJ
Dr. Edmond C. Gruss.....Newhall, CA	Dr. John P. Juedes.....Riverside, CA

© 1994—PFO. All rights reserved. The Quarterly Journal is the quarterly newsletter publication of Personal Freedom Outreach. Published by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, St. Louis, MO 63136. This Journal is also available in ASCII format from Cornerstone BBS, (312) 878-6030 or on floppy diskette for IBM-compatible computers by subscription from PFO. Please contact PFO-Missouri for details.