

The Discerner



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AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

Our Issue of The Discerner this time is composed of a number of short articles. We include the last of three articles by Sharon Lindbloom in her series on Mormonism. Mrs. Lindbloom and her husband are involved in a ministry to assist Mormons and ex-Mormons to come to a Biblical relationship with Christ. They reside in the Twin Cities area in Minnesota.

Another short item is an extract from an interesting letter sent to us by a woman whose brother left the Worldwide Church of God after many years in that cult. We obtained permission from both individuals to share this letter with you.

Also included in this issue is an excerpt from a pamphlet by Russell George. Rev. George is a missionary temporarily back in this country on furlough. He has written of what he is observing among professing American Christians.

Because of its timeliness, we are repeating an article by Berit Kjos which appeared in an earlier issue of The Discerner.

I invite your attention to the book reviews by two of our Board members of recent books receiving some attention currently. From time to time we request members of our Board to review books which are sent to our office, then to write an evaluative summary to share with the readers of The Discerner or with those who might

telephone or write us inquiring about these books. Sometimes we especially appreciate King Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 12:12, "...of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." However, literature is a primary part of our ministry and we really do not "grow weary in the work of the Lord." But there are times when the "spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We are encountering a problem we should share with you. There are a number of good books on the cults which are out of print and for one reason or another are no longer available. Sometimes a printer/publisher has gone out of business and no one has picked up the copyright. Sometimes the author has died and a dated book cannot be revised. Sometimes a publisher decides sufficient copies will not be sold to warrant a reprint. Again, there have been books privately published by an author, but they cannot afford a reprinting. In a few cases, we have obtained permission from an author or publisher to reprint selected works. Generally these have been booklet or pamphlet size reprinted in limited quantities. I trust you will remember these factors when you order literature and we are forced to inform you an item is out of print and no longer available. We do contact all the sources we have when we have a request for a book we don't have in stock, but at times these works are no longer available anywhere for sale.

Another subject has been brought to our attention, probably because it involves one of our family members. One of our daughters walked into a classroom in the University of Michigan, Flint, where she is team teaching a course with another faculty member, and found the other teacher conducting it as a New Age seminar. My daughter assured me this approach was not in the course syllabus for this course in nursing. I don't know how many of these student nurses recognized they were being taught the New Age Movement, but I'm grateful our daughter recognized it. I sent her a copy of some articles we have in the office of how the New Age is infiltrating the medical field. We also have books in stock by medical doctors dealing with the New Age in the medical field. Maybe my daughter will order copies.

Some of the interest in the New Age Movement among Christians seems to have died down. It is not receiving the attention it once did. I assure you the New Age Movement has not disappeared, even if Shirley MacLaine is not arousing public interest as she once did. As Marilyn Ferguson, a new ager, titled her book The Aquarian Conspiracy, we need continually to be alert that their method is that of a "conspiracy." If you need to update yourself or others on the New Age Movement, we have a number of good books and booklets in stock. Check our catalog. If you do not have a catalog, call our 800 number and request one. Incidentally, we are now working on preparing a new catalog.

One other item I need to call to your attention. As all Americans probably know by now, U.S. postal rates were increased January 1st. At our last Board meeting we reviewed this situation. We learned we have not increased our subscription cost for The Discerner since October 1990, which means we absorbed the postage increase in 1992.

First class postage rates increased about 10%, but bulk mail rates, which is the way we mail The Discerner, newsletters and catalog, increased about 40%, as did the rates for mailing our literature. Foreign mailings will also cost more but we have not as yet been informed of the exact amounts.

We regret that we must increase our prices and hope it will not be a hardship on any of our subscribers. Effective with the April-June 1995 issue of The Discerner, a new or renewal subscription will be \$4.00 per year. We also have to increase our prices for mailing literature. Effective April 1, we will charge a minimum of \$1.50, or 10% of the cost of the literature. This goes to cover the cost of postage and handling for all literature we mail. (We also have to charge 6.5% state tax from all Minnesota residents). There is a special notice in this issue of The Discerner calling attention to these charges.

Please continue to pray daily for the ministry of R.A.S.

ITINERARY

Dr. and Mrs. BeVier
July 16 - 20
North American Christian Convention
Hoosier Dome
Indianapolis, Indiana

WHICH BIBLE?

By William A. BeVier

There is currently much discussion in Christian circles today about English translations of the Bible. R.A.S. has received a number of telephone calls and letters recently on this issue. The issue clearly is causing dissension among Bible-believing, true Christians.

At our most recent Board meeting we discussed the issue. Our decision was that R.A.S. is not taking an official position on which English Bible translation we will promote. It is realized this position will not please many people.

Most of us on the Board preach and teach from the current King James Version, but none of us is a "King James Only" advocate.

We have books in stock where the authors use the King James ("AV"), the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, or the New King James Version, and sometimes all four. If we limited our literature to writers who use only one of the four mentioned "translations," we would be depriving people of many otherwise good books, pamphlets, etc.

The first paragraph of R.A.S.'s Doctrinal Statement reads:

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and the New testaments as verbally inspired of God, inerrant, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life (catalog, p.4).

We believe this without any mental reservation. However, nothing in this statement says anything about translations.

A great deal of the discussion and dissension about Bible translations has developed because of Gail Riplinger's book,

New Age Bible Versions (1993). Reviews of this book have been pro and con, depending on the reviewer's position on English Bible translations. "King James Only" advocates laud the book. Those of any other persuasion are critical. H. Wayne House (Christian Research Journal, 1994 Fall, pp. 46-48) and the John Ankerberg News Magazine (vol I, nos. 1, 2, and 3, Oct., Nov., Dec. 1994) have produced careful negative critiques of Riplinger's book.

It is obvious Riplinger has made some untrue statements and has quoted sources out of context (this has been documented by reviewers). It also is obvious that she, though widely read, has no professional training in the Bible or its original languages.

The accusation that the translators of the NASB and the NIV are "New Agers" or New Age sympathizers is, in my opinion, totally unwarranted. I personally know too many of the translators to believe this accusation.

Riplinger's book has much of value in it, but her bias should be recognized. She already has revised her 1993 edition after stating she worked six years preparing it.

Predictably, in a short time, copies of Riplinger's original book will be difficult to obtain. Incidentally, we have a few copies of this edition in stock, but we do not plan to replace them. "When they are gone, they are gone."

I personally have talked with editors of both the NIV and NASB to point out what I believe are shortcomings in their translations. Both men basically agreed with my suggestions and both stated that the NIV and the NASB are scheduled for revision.

Understandably, I have not been able to talk with translators of the King James Version. However, every time I read "Holy Ghost" in my KJV for *hagion pneumatos* I realize the King James' translators were not "inspired." Anyone with a basic knowledge of Koine Greek knows that Ananias did not give up the "ghost" (Acts 5:5). The Greek states Ananias "breathed out" or expired.

Misprints also occur in the King James Version, even after all the centuries of printing. I have in my possession an "Authorized King James Version" printed by Oxford Press in Great Britain which I purchased in 1973. On page 180, Num. 29:16, reads "conitnual" for continual. On page 736, Jer. 31:15, reads "Rahel" for Rachel. On page 751, Jer. 44:30, reads "al" for all. In 1983 I purchased another copy of the KJV printed by Oxford Press, and it had the same three typographical errors.

We need to be realistic that humans make mistakes and translators and printers are

humans. According to the Bible, only the Scriptures themselves are inspired (2 Tim. 3:16), not the men who wrote them and certainly not the translators. Admittedly, some translations and some translators are better than others and the biases of translators generally affect their work. One of the worst translations, in my opinion, currently on the scene is Eugene Peterson's The Message (Nav Press, 1993). It has sold over 100,000 copies and received acclaim by some noted "evangelicals." The Message, at best, is a paraphrase and not a translation, putting it in the category of Kenneth Taylor's Living Bible. Berit Kjos has prepared a good review of The Message.

Also, in view of some of the current discussions and dissensions over the relationship between some "evangelical Protestants" and the Roman Catholic Church, we might note the point recently made by Woodrow Kroll in his article "The Bible's Authority Over the Church" (Back to the Bible Today, Winter, 1995, pp. 2-4).

DEAD WORKS

By Sharon Lindbloom

On November 10, 1483 a child was born who would, in his lifetime, challenge the way the 16th century world understood God. The child was Martin Luther; the challenge centered upon the issue of God's grace.

Luther claimed that as a monk, "...I actually hated the righteous God who punished sinners.... Thus a furious battle raged within my perplexed conscience,..." As he studied Scripture he struggled to grasp what God had revealed. Luther said, "God had mercy on me, and I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that gift of God by which a righteous man lives, namely faith,...the merciful God justifies us by faith,.... Now I felt as though

I had been reborn altogether and had entered Paradise." Luther had recovered the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone through grace; he had also been "born again."¹ However, unbeknownst to the man, another spiritual "rebirth" lay ahead for him.

On October 10, 1922-376 years after his death-Martin Luther was baptized into the Mormon Church. The following year he received his LDS endowment, and 46 years after that Luther was sealed to his wife and children for all eternity in another LDS temple ceremony.²

The Mormon Church teaches: "To live with our Heavenly Father and with our

families forever, we must be baptized. We must also receive the ordinances of the temple. This is true for everyone who has ever lived on the earth. However, millions of people have died without hearing the gospel and receiving the necessary ordinances. What will happen to them?"³

The Mormon doctrine of Eternal Progression explains that the spirits of the dead leave this earth for the spirit world. This world is divided into two parts: Paradise and Spirit

Prison. Righteous spirits (LDS) occupy Paradise and are busily engaged in the work of visiting Spirit Prison, preaching to that community (made up of spirits who have not yet received the LDS gospel). "After spirits in prison accept the gospel and the ordinances performed for them in temples, they may prepare themselves to leave spirit prison and dwell in paradise."⁴ However, Joseph Fielding Smith, the 10th Prophet of the Mormon Church, disclosed, "If a man cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism, then the dead must be baptized. But how can they be baptized for the remission of their sins?...water is an element of this world, and how could spirits be baptized in it, or receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost? The only way it can be done is vicariously, someone who is living acting as a substitute for the dead."⁵

Thus, kindhearted Latter-day Saints performed the saving ordinances for Martin Luther, and perhaps one day will do the same for you.

Joseph Smith, Mormonism's founder, taught: "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead."⁶ And seek after them they do.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints operates the most sophisticated genealogical society in the world. Records of births, deaths, christenings and marriages of more than 147 million deceased people are kept in large tunnel vaults which have been drilled in a granite

mountain southeast of Salt Lake City.⁷ The Church updates and expands these files on a continuous basis. This information is accessible all around the world through LDS Family History

Centers. The purpose of such extensive records is to allow LDS people to positively identify their ancestors and request or perform temple ordinances for them.

This is consistent with the stated mission of the Church which is "...to save souls by proclaiming the [LDS] gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead."⁸

Why do Mormons spend so much time, money and energy on their dead ancestors? Aside from the LDS belief that they can be "vicarious saviors"⁹ and mercifully rescue their relatives from Spirit Prison, there is an additional, self-serving motive. Joseph Fielding Smith said, "...if we wilfully (sic) neglect the salvation of our dead, then also we shall stand rejected of the Lord, because we have rejected our dead; and just so sure their blood will be required at our hands.... Moreover, we cannot be made perfect without our faithful dead who are also heirs of celestial exaltation.... Therefore our salvation and progression depends upon the salvation of our worthy dead with whom we must be joined in family ties." Smith also claimed that temple work for the dead is the "greatest commandment given us" by God.¹⁰ How contrary that is to God's Holy Word!

We are only redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ

In Mark 12:29-31 Jesus said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. *There is none other commandment greater than these*" [italics author].

The Bible also speaks plainly to the idea of a second-chance salvation-after-death opportunity. Second Corinthians 6:2 states, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Nowhere in the Bible are we told to perform any rituals in behalf of the dead, or that any work done for a deceased person will be of any benefit to anyone. In fact, Psalm 49:7 says, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him;..."

Even Martin Luther himself said, "Whatever it is that you want to do for the saints, turn your attention away from the dead toward the living."¹¹

In the face of numerous biblical texts which contradict the important LDS doctrine of vicarious ordinance work, Mormons do not waver in their steadfastness. They claim that the Apostle Paul taught baptism for the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:29. Taken out of context this verse has caused many a Christian to sit up and take notice. However, if one takes time to read the entire chapter it becomes evident that Paul was teaching, not on baptism for the dead, but on the truth of the resurrection. Paul made it clear from his choice of pronouns that neither he nor those to whom he spoke were included in the group to whom he made reference: those involved in baptizing for the dead. By twisting this verse and ignoring the rest of Scripture the LDS Church has built a doctrine which

contradicts the truth found in 1 Peter 1:18 and 19: that we are only redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine Martin Luther rejoicing at someone performing a proxy LDS baptism in his behalf? He revealed his plans for his afterlife when he said, tongue-in-cheek, "When I die I want to be a ghost and pestor (sic) the bishops, priests, and godless monks so that they have more trouble with a dead Luther than they could have had with a thousand living ones."¹² If the LDS claim were true that one must wait in Spirit Prison for the living to save the dead Luther may very well have realized his desire! But only Jesus saves; Mormons need to understand that. They must be challenged with the truth of Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement."

On the night of April 18, 1521, preceding his final stand at his heresy trial, Martin Luther prayed in confidence, "O I will never separate myself from Thee, neither now nor through eternity!...Yes, I have the assurance of Thy word. My soul belongs to Thee! It shall abide forever with Thee."¹³

Indeed, Martin Luther now rests in the arms of the Lord—and has from the instant of his death with no help from the Mormons.

¹ *Tabletalk*, 10/92, p. 7

² *Lutheran Witness*, 1985 (as reprinted in *Saints Alive Newsletter*, 1/86)

³ *Gospel Principles*, 1988, p. 248

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 278-280

⁵ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1955, 2:141

⁶ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1976, p. 356

⁷ Welcome to the Family History Center (handout), 1991, Mpls. Stake

⁸ Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, 10/92, p. 5

¹¹ *Tabletalk*, 10/92, p. 16

⁹ James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 1968, p. 152

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁰ *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:145, 147, 149

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 49

Sharon Lindbloom's ministry, Word for the Weary, publishes a quarterly newsletter, The Word In Season. To receive a free subscription to this educational resource, call (612) 937-0934 and leave your name and address after the recorded message.

SELF CENTERED CHRISTIANITY

By Missionary Russell George

A few years ago we heard a lot of talk about being "Christ centered." It wasn't Biblical terminology and no one was certain about what it meant, but it sounded good. We went from that to talking about being a "Committed Christian." Again it wasn't Biblical terminology and it meant a lot of things to a lot of people.

What we have today could best be called "Self centered Christianity." Multitudes of Christians aren't aware of the fact that that's what they have fallen into. Most people today don't get their Christianity from the Bible. They are getting it from the radio, the television, and slick cover magazines. We have succumbed to the philosophy of humanism and the New Age movement. It's the teaching that you need to feel good about yourself. They tell us, "If you feel good about it then it's all right for you." Most people are looking for a Christianity that makes them feel good about themselves.

A few years ago all the humanists had to do to get a lot of wavering Christians off the

track was to say, "You Christians aren't doing anything to meet the social needs of people." The result was that Christians everywhere said, "Oh yes we are, just watch what we can do." That gave birth to the "Social gospel." Now what we are hearing from the New Agers is, "Christians don't do anything for the emotional needs of people." To counteract that we have given ourselves over to "Christian psychology."

Modern Christians are showing a great lack of discernment. Either they don't realize that it's their duty to discern between good and evil, or they are not capable of doing so. I fear that, with the great majority, the later fault is to blame. They think they are discerning but they aren't making good judgments. Hebrews 5:13-14 says:

For everyone that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe, but solid food belongeth to them that are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Most Christians aren't basing their decisions on Biblical knowledge. Many of them don't have much Bible knowledge to work with. Even if they do, they don't accept it as an absolute standard of truth.

In the early days of our country Biblical Christianity was ravaged by the devastating philosophy of rationalism. They were saying, "If it isn't rational you don't have to believe it." In our day they are saying, "If you don't feel good about it you don't have to believe it." In either case, man has set himself up as the ultimate standard of truth. No, my friend. If the Bible says it's sin, it's sin, no matter how you or I feel about it.

Some will say, "But doesn't Christianity meet the social and emotional needs of people?" Of course it does. The problem we have today is that people are being told to turn to Christianity to find a solution to their own personal needs. That's self centered Christianity. It's not Biblical Christianity. We are overlooking the plain teaching of Christ when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you" Matthew 6:33. We've got it backwards. We are seeking "All these things"; things like self esteem, stress management, prosperity, exciting emotional experiences, etc. We can't seem to get our eyes off of self and get them on God. We misappropriate the promises of God. We come to promises like Luke 6:38, "Give and it shall be given unto you," and we say, "Ok, I'll give to see what I can get." We read 1 Peter 5:7 that says, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you," and we put the stress on "He careth for you."

I'm disgusted with much of what I hear on Christian radio. I hear very little about Biblical Christian living. Most of it deals with telling people how to handle stress or how to feel good about themselves. I'm afraid altogether too many Christians are

having their personal devotions by listening to so called "Christian radio" on their way to work in the morning. That won't take the place of your own time alone with God reading the Bible and praying.

Many, in a vain attempt to "Save their life," find themselves in increasingly more desperate emotional problems. Have you ever noticed that we are having more emotional and psychological problems than we ever had in spite of all the stress placed on psychology?

Colossians 3:1-3 says:

If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

A Biblical Christian is said to be "in Christ." To be "in Christ" is to partake of all He purchased for us when He died on the cross for us. Genuine Biblical Christianity is to be constrained by our love for Christ as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. To realize the awful price He paid for us should give us reason to love Him with all our being. That alone should be all we need to give us self worth. Therefore, Paul says, we should not henceforth live unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

God has promised to supply our need but only if we stop fussing about our feelings and lose ourselves in Him and get involved in His work. Some have departed so far from Biblical Christianity that such teaching sounds almost heretical to them. They dismiss it as legalism or radical fundamentalism.

When people come to us seeking help with their emotional problems, we need to know how to help them. First we need to be understanding listeners. We need to be

sympathetic. We need to show them love. But sooner or later, and the sooner the better, we need to open the Word of God with them and show them that their real and basic need is to have the right relationship with God. You may not convince them the first time but keep the door open so you can talk to them again with the open Bible. Assure them that God cares and can help, but that we have to put first things first. We have to get at the basic problem.

No one can be right with himself without being right with God. If one "feels good about himself" it's almost certain that he has overlooked a lot of sin in his life or is

rationalizing it away by saying, "It's not serious. Everyone does it." The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10). The only way you or I can be righteous is to be in Christ and partake of His righteousness.

I don't need to feel good about myself but I do need to feel good about Christ. Then all the good I do is done to please Him who died for me. May God deliver us from self centered Christianity. It's a diversion from the real thing and we sell ourselves short when we go after it.

Written by missionary Russell George, 311 N. Jefferson, Sigourney, IA, 52591

CLINTON'S QUEST—CHRISTIAN OR OCCULT?

By Berit Kjos

President Clinton has demonstrated his interest in spiritual things. The media has shown him praying, singing hymns, carrying his family Bible and participating in Christian worship. During the Larry King Live show on inauguration night, a high school friend and neighbor described him as "deeply spiritual." Yet, his ready references to New Age concepts like "centering" and "channeling" creative personal energy¹ raises questions about the nature of his deity. More important, his actions suggest both a preference for the global, politically correct spirituality touted by Al Gore as "the wisdom distilled by all faiths"² and a radical, anti-Christian philosophy which contrasts sharply with the Baptist image that helped him win the election.

Clinton's model for educational "progress," the Governor's School of Arkansas,³ opened a window into his liberal agenda. Founded and established by Clinton, it introduces students to a global spirituality, which embraces every non-Biblical path to God—but despises the God of the Bible and those who follow Him.

Sidwell, the Quaker school which President and Hillary Clinton chose for their daughter, fits right in. Its own promotional literature describes it as "inescapably religious."⁴ Chelsea attends a weekly "meeting for worship" with her classmates. But, like many New Agers and Universalists, the Society of Friends view their deity as a "divine inner presence" (or "That of God in everyone" or "Christ Within" or "Inward Light") immanent within every person regardless of doctrine or specific beliefs. For those who wonder if Quakers are Christians "or whether they might more properly be classified within the Universalist traditions," Quaker Stephen Cary has a ready answer:

If it means commitment to a range of theological doctrines that are central to much Christian thought—doctrines such as the Virgin Birth, Original Sin, and the Atonement, then a large number of Friends would say they are not Christian. But if it means...the adherence to the teachings and the example of Jesus of Nazareth, then I believe all Friends could unite in affirming our Christian basis.⁵

In other words, Jesus, like Buddha, becomes a good teacher who models the path to “union with God”—and quells any conscious need for the cross.

Aligning himself with the liberal National Education Association, Clinton opposes the kind of school choice that would provide vouchers for Christian schools. He favors Charter schools. According to The Progressive Policy Institute’s Mandate for Change, which Clinton endorsed as a book that “tries to move us toward a better future,” Charter schools “seek to foster healthy competition within the public school system by enabling administrators, teachers, and even other groups or individuals to create new schools, chartered by the state, which compete for students and the public funds that flow with them.”⁶ The basic qualifications for incorporation into the public school system are simply: the Charter school cannot charge tuition, discriminate, or be religious. Even so, Minnesota’s Department of Education has granted charters to two Montessori schools, which blend hands-on teaching with the pantheistic spirituality that characterizes global education.

No one appreciates the Montessori philosophy more than Robert Muller, a New Age mystic and a champion for global education and world government. The current Chancellor of the U.N.’s University for Peace in Costa Rica declared in 1982,

We need the cosmic education foreseen by the religions and by people like Maria Montessori. We need a holistic education, teaching the holism of the universe and of the planet...⁷

This holistic, all-inclusive mask for ancient occultism touts tolerance but demonstrates inordinate intolerance toward genuine Christianity. Already permeating public schools and curriculum from coast to coast, it encourages students to trade truth for

myth and facts for personal speculation under the guise of “critical thinking.” In other words, the educational philosophy promoted through Clinton’s Governor’s School has already been established through America 2000 under the leadership of Bush education appointee, Lamar Alexander.

This transformation will accelerate under Education Secretary, William Riley. He will undoubtedly be encouraged by Hillary Rodham Clinton and Donna Shalala, both champions for liberal social policies, “children’s rights,” and educational transformation. “We’re looking at a team approach in the Cabinet,”⁸ Riley announced recently. The planned merger of public schools with health clinics, welfare services, child care and politically correct family counseling is opening the door to an ominous alternative to the traditional family: the “brand new American school.”

The new schooling is called Outcome-Based Education or Mastery Learning. It involves thematic teaching,⁹ Psycho-social sharing groups, and holistic or affective (feeling-centered) rather than factual learning. Grade-less classrooms and cooperative learning will replace tracking. The goal is to transform children into global citizens, aware of their physical and spiritual connectedness to the rest of the planet. Key to this process is teaching “tolerance.” This means demeaning Christianity as “judgmental” and “exclusive,” while idealizing pagan religions and teaching occult practices. By indoctrinating toddlers in pre-school learning centers, and by training parents to support this radical “restructuring” of schools, educational reformers can prevent opposing voices from blocking “progress.”

In Outcome-Based Education, students will have to pass standardized assessments that test predetermined outcomes—primarily beliefs, feelings and attitudes rather than

facts. Responses that reflect Christian rather than global beliefs won't pass. The surveillance of and discrimination against Christians will resemble that of communist idealists in the former USSR. These required assessments of students' beliefs and values will be stored in computerized data banks, which will be used to determine fitness for university entrance and employment. Unless God intervenes and concerned parents resist this plan, Christian schools and home schoolers won't be immune to the new standards for global citizenship.

Clinton's Georgetown University mentor, Carroll Quigley, hinted at these kinds of social controls in his massive historical tome, Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Times:

The individual's freedom and choice will be controlled within very narrow alternatives by the fact that he will be numbered from birth...and followed as a number through his educational training, his required military or other service, his tax contributions, his health and medical requirements, and his final retirement and death benefits.¹⁰

In his book, Quigley—whom Clinton credited in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention with helping form his political posture—traced with appreciation the power and influence of the secret “network” that is steering the West toward a one-world society. To pursue Quigley's path, Clinton merely needs to follow the steps already prepared by his fellow reformers within the educational and global establishment.

Clinton's actions, appointments and stated objectives suggest that his public identification with Christian beliefs is no more genuine than his campaign promises concerning taxes. It's time for God's people to wake up, prepare for persecution, and equip children with Biblical truth, so that they will recognize pantheistic beliefs, resist occult practices and trust God. Pray

for President Clinton, for Congress, for our nation. Trust God and stand together against the coming legal and spiritual challenges to peace and religious freedom in America. Remember: OUR GOD REIGNS!

- 1 Howard Fineman, “The New Age President,” Newsweek, January 25, 1993, 23.
- 2 Al Gore, Earth in the Balance, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992) 259.
- 3 Earlier article by Berit Kjos, “Clinton's Model for New Age Education.” Phone 800/886-8852 for documentary video on Clinton's Governor School.
- 4 “What Does a Friend's School Have to Offer?” Friends Council on Education, Philadelphia, PA.
- 5 “The Roots and Witness of Quakerism,” Friends Council on Education, Philadelphia, PA.
- 6 The Progressive Policy Institute, Mandate for Change, (New York: Berkley Books, 1993) 136.
- 7 “Executive Summary,” Global Education Project, The United Nations.
- 8 Carol Innerst, “Riley is planning government-wide education changes,” Washington Times, February 5, 1993.
- 9 Themes such as “American Indians” or “Ancient Egypt” thread through all subjects—art, math, science, reading, social studies....
- 10 Carrol Quigley, Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Times (Los Angeles: Angriff Press, 1966), 950.

For practical help in preparing your family for increasing assaults on our Christian beliefs, values and freedoms, read Under the Spell of Mother Earth and Your Child and the New Age (Victor Books) by Berit Kjos. They are available from R.A.S. for \$8.95 and \$9.95 respectively, plus postage and handling.

A LETTER OF "FREEDOM"

The following is a letter which is used by permission which we feel you will receive joy (and laughter) in reading. The names have been changed and a few details deleted.

Dear Sister,

When we were down for Thanksgiving, Sharon asked me if we were going to keep Christmas this year. I hinted that we were but shrugged off any explanation, saying that it was a "long story." Regardless, I thought I would write you a short letter to say a few things about it and related issues.

The simple answer to her question is that "Yes!", we are keeping Christmas this year. At least, to some extent. I haven't personally kept it since I was 6 years old (30 years ago!). Mary has never kept it. So, we are going to take our best stab at keeping it. In addition to knowing very little about how to keep Christmas, it also feels very strange to us. Consequently, we have decided to keep it in a very simple manner. We have no tree, although we do have some decorations for the mantle and a wreath for the wall. We have bought gifts for the kids. That's about it. (OK, we tried to have a tree, but we couldn't get the thing to stand up. We considered hanging it from the ceiling, but was afraid too much dirt would fall out of the roots as it dried. We bought a little ornament for Mary which says "Baby's First Christmas." It's a shame there's nowhere to hang it. And WHERE do you find dye for the eggs? We've searched all the stores and couldn't find any!).

All seriousness aside, let me explain why we've made this change in our lives. It all started a few years ago, really,

with many serious questions regarding the Worldwide Church of God (WCG). We did a lot of research into it and have concluded that it is a highly deceptive religious cult. Scary, huh? Well, it's true. Yes, we were both raised in a CULT!!! Oh, the members are highly sincere by-and-large, but they are also brainwashed and their thinking processes are very controlled. I don't know if you keep up with the WCG, but if you do you might be wondering if all that hasn't changed since Herbert Armstrong's death. Many cult-watch groups have even given the WCG their blessing of late because of the many changes the church has made. Unfortunately, the changes are merely a whitewash. They are simply designed to change the church's appearance to the rest of the world. The brainwashing goes on full force, as well as the mind control and the abusive treatment of many members. At the present time, Mary and I are in eminent danger of being "disfellowshipped and marked" by the minister in our area for our attempts to deprogram several of the members.

So, why keep Christmas? Doesn't it have pagan origins, as we have always been taught? Well, probably so. But our attitude about that is basically "So What!" No one in modern times thinks of it in those terms, and we have found it to be a valuable tool for teaching Joe about Jesus and giving to others. We got a name off of an "Angel Tree" at a mall and bought gifts for the child. We had the opportunity to explain to Joe that Christmas is mostly about giving to others, not just about getting something for ourselves. And, it's a lot of FUN for the entire family. I will admit, though, that I will be glad when we can take the lights down from the posts on our bed. They make it kind of hard to sleep at night.

In closing, let me just say that we are very sorry for any pain that our involvement in the WCG might have caused you over the years. I know that it has led to some division in the family, and possibly also caused you some worry for our sakes (worry no more!).

Well, Mary and I have been receiving a lot of information from a "WCG Exit and Support Network" on the issues of brainwashing and falling under cultic influences. We have learned a lot about why it happens, and who it can happen to. The simple answer to that is that it can happen to anyone, across the board. People in cults are NOT to be blamed -- they are victims. When you think about it, all of us are subject to mind control to some extent. The government and the media are two obvious examples of institutions which strive to control the way we think and feel about many current issues. Religious cults operate in much the same manner. Anyway, it is a complicated subject and too lengthy for me to discuss here. If you are interested I can recommend several excellent books for you to read.

We hope you have an enjoyable holiday season, and we will see you soon.

Love,

Bob, Mary, Joe & David

P.S. It just occurred to me -- perhaps "trimming the tree" refers to cutting the roots off. Sigh, there's so much to learn.

BOOK REVIEW

Jehovah Witnesses and the Problem of Mental Illness

by Jerry Bergman

Reviewed by David A. Cook

Jerry Bergman states his general purpose for writing this book when he says: "The focus of this study is to understand the witnesses as people" (p. 18). He wishes to inform his readers about the problem of mental illness among Jehovah's Witnesses. As Carl Thornton notes in the preface of Bergman's book, the author's real design is to "...provide the helping profession with an improved understanding of their J.W. and ex-J.W. clients, and therefore allow them to develop a better treatment program" (p. 8).

The author's primary readership market is basically twofold: 1. the general Jehovah's Witness population, and 2. the psychiatric field.

The author's specific proposition is there is a major negative relationship between the leadership (the Society) and its membership in terms of the high mental illness rate. The rate he reports is at least four times higher than the general population (p. 56).

Bergman's approach is sociological and not theological, a key issue in understanding the book.

The book has six primary sections. Section one (chapters 2-3) presents the older research on Jehovah's Witnesses' (J.W.'s) mental illness rates; section two (chapters 4-5) delineates the various social factors which cause emotional problems; section three (chapters 6-8) describes the J.W.'s elders poor counseling skills, subsequent disfellowshipping and shunning which deters mental health recovery; section four (chapters 9-12) discusses how these negative factors and social forces work in

the life-issues of a typical witness; section five (chapter 14) depicts the author's survival material for the recovering ex-J.W.; and section six (chapter 16) deals with Bergman's conclusions and where he summarizes twelve causal factors for J.W. mental illness.

Dr. Bergman is commended for contributing more literature on the subject of Jehovah's Witnesses and their social pathology. It also is appropriate to compliment the author for offering research material to the "helping profession." His examples of case histories does help toward a better understanding of the sociological- psychological factors involved in relating more accurately and tolerably to Jehovah's Witnesses as persons.

Specifically, rank and file J.W.'s do suffer from a multiple clash of psychological forces at work (see Bergman, p. 308). For example: 1. repeated changes of doctrines; 2. majoring on the minors; 3. excessive prohibitions; 4. social pressure such as the obligation to go door to door; 5. uniform authoritarianism originating from the headquarters in Brooklyn; 6. doctrinal contradictions and prohibition of honest open thinking; 7. doubts and fears caused by prophetic failures; 8. lack of sense of accomplishment (no J.W. ever does enough); 9. pressures to constantly reject harmless cultural structures, e.g. holidays; 10. status conflicts in moving up in the organization which contributes to backbiting; 11. boredom and lack of emotional rest; and 12. the conflicts, social and personal, caused by disfellowshipping, shunning, demon-paranoia; and the end of the world mania. These psychological

factors carried out by the leadership upon the members do affect and eventually worsen the mental state of many J.W.s.

But there are problems with this book which need to be addressed. The book portrays the matter of mental illness and Jehovah's Witnesses from a mere sociological-psychological perspective. This is Scripturally wrong. The theological must be interpreted into any sociological endeavor.

The Scripture in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 states:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (NASB)

The key issue to mental health is that Jehovah's Witnesses are no different than any other human who is in need of spiritual healing. The fact that Jehovah's Witnesses have a different Jesus, a different gospel, and a different spirit from that presented in the Bible prohibits them from having the true "wholeness" of God.

Thomas Schmidt in his *Introducing New Testament Interpretation* makes the point we must integrate sociology and theology. He writes: "Sociological Method does not require the conclusion that human behavior is determined solely by social factors" (p. 129).

Only the Gospel of the Bible has a true solution to sin.

Also, the issues of demonology in Bergman's book carries with it the same sociological bias against dealing realistically with spiritual oppression and its role in apostasy.

Bergman strongly implies all mental health or psychiatric problems should be referred to psychiatrists. It is this reviewer's belief that the elder-pastor arrangement in the context of a local church is God's best counseling base, not the psychiatric field (this excludes the J.W. leadership). Jay Adams in some of his writings deals with this issue. See Competent to Counsel (p. 66).

Berman's view of the need for self-love, self-esteem, and self-orientation should be evaluated from the perspective of the Apostle Paul's theocentric perspective seen in such Scripture as 2 Timothy 3.

Several typographic errors were noted in Bergman's book, e.g., pp. 76, 157, 165, 167, 202, 209, 223, 268.

While Bergman has done a significant job in acquainting his readers with the impact of social factors upon Jehovah's Witnesses mental health, one needs to critique his sociological method with open and cautious eyes.

[Ed. While R.A.S. would recommend this book, we will not be stocking it. It is not in keeping with the primary aims of R.A.S. because of its thrust.]

BOOK REVIEW

Embraced By The Light by Betty J. Eadie

Reviewed by Rev. Herbert Caneday

Mrs. Eadie had a near death experience (NDE) after surgery. This book contains extravagant details few can recall following such episodes. It seems either contrived or embellished by an overly active imagination rooted in native American heritage and occult philosophy. It teaches doctrines of demons commonly seen in spiritistic writings.

One can distinguish traces of Mormonism in her having "seen" pre-existing souls in the spirit realm that were waiting to be born into the human family. The "god" who embraced her is not the God of the Bible. Unlike Isaiah, Daniel, and John who had real visions of God, absolute in holiness, she reported no sense of sin when in his presence but found this "god" is one of many gods and he embraced her in an all-pervasive "love."

Satan beguiled Mrs. Eadie into seeing him as "...an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). Hers is a case of mistaken identity, for this angel of light had no nail-prints nor sword-pierced side. She called him "Savior." Since she felt no sense of sin in his presence, what did he save her from? She was convinced that death is a door way to a realm of sheer delight, much to be preferred over life on earth. Along with removing the fear of death, it denies the need of Biblical repentance and salvation.

Such misperceptions prepare unbelievers to face death with no fear, because supposedly they died once and found it

delightful. Satan wants people to believe that. Then they are tranquilized for their passage from this life into eternal torment with the damned. Satan is a liar (Jn. 8:44), a murderer (ibid), and is determined to keep people ensnared in his kingdom of darkness.

Satan's lie, "Ye shall be as gods" is seen when she says: "I wept openly, soaking in their [the spirits'] love and celestial music--hardly believing that an insignificant soul like my own could be the center of so much adoration...my spirit swelled with humility [sic] and gratitude" (pp. 120, 121).

Her veneer of false humility is plainly evident. She adored being adored but there was not one word of worship, adoration, or praise for the true, and living, holy God and Creator; nor did she see Him. She was deceived by Lucifer's lies, and she loved the experience. The Devil's subjective lies deceived her because she did not want God's objective truth about sin and God's remedy (II Thess. 2:10). NDE is a powerful, spiritual anesthetic!

[Ed. R.A.S. will not be distributing this book. In answer to Betty Eadie's book, Embraced By The Light, Richard Abanes (author and cult researcher) has written, Embraced By The Light and the Bible. This book looks into Eadie's claims and provides answers in the light of Scripture. We can order this book upon request. It is worthy of your reading.]

 N O T I C E 

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