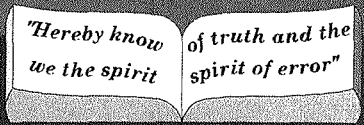


The Discerner



Volume 21, Number 2

April • May • June 2001

AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

Editorial	2
<i>William A. BeVier</i>	
Arnold Murray and The Shepherd's Chapel	4
<i>William A. BeVier and Steve Lagoon</i>	
Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and Michael the Archangel	10
<i>Steve Lagoon</i>	
The Deception of Religious Dress	20
<i>Roy E. Knuteson, Ph. D.</i>	
Book Reviews	24

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EDITORIAL

By William A. BeVier

In this issue of THE DISCERNER we present three articles, which we believe, are of current interest.

Due to his TV, radio, and tape ministries Arnold Murray is attracting a large audience. Because in many places his programs are aired late at night, much of his audience is composed of people who cannot sleep, especially older people. Older people seem to respond more to Murray because he is an older man. His frequent references to the Bible enhance his attractiveness to some people. It takes an astute student of the Bible to perceive many of the errors in his presentations. It is hoped our article will aid in this perception.

Our second article is intended to assist the believer who encounters members of the Jehovah's Witnesses and desire to reach them spiritually to lead them to a realization of the true Jesus Christ of the Bible. The end purpose being to have such people accept Jesus Christ as their personal and complete Savior and to free them from the control of the Jehovah's Witnesses. The article is intricate, because as anyone who has ever attempted to reach a JW for Christ realizes, this ministry is not an easy one.

The third article in this issue, by Dr. Roy E. Knuteson, could be considered humorous if the affects on those involved were not so deceptive and destructive.

Roman Catholics have many traditions, which are not Biblical, but they believe lead to their acceptance by God or in some way improve their spirituality. As many of you know, these traditions can change over time, as has aspects of the scapular. One can remember how the Roman Catholic concept of "St." Christopher has changed. For many years Roman

Catholics were taught that Christopher was the patron saint of travelers and would protect them in their travels. When I was an Army Reserve division chaplain my assistant was a Roman Catholic priest. He kept a small plastic statue of Christopher on the dashboard of his car (as many used to do). One night he was involved in a minor traffic accident, during which the statue fell off the dashboard and the upraised arm of Christopher was broken off. The priest put the statue back up on the dash. When the chaplain picked me up in his car the next morning for the ride to our chapel I noticed the statue's broken arm and called it to his attention that apparently Christopher had failed in his duty. Shortly after that the Roman Catholic Church declared that Christopher was not a saint at all, therefore he couldn't be counted on to guard travelers. Christopher statues and Christopher medals lost their value. However, one can still occasionally see a statue on a dashboard (traditions die hard).

Non-Mormons sometimes facetiously call special Mormon underwear "Angel pants," and some of you may have heard such references. I remember seeing a Mormon-produced film some time ago presenting their missions efforts in Central America. One episode showed a Mormon missionary entering a shower wearing his underwear. I thought it strange at the time, but it is one way to wash one's undergarments. Devout Mormon women continue to wear this garment even when giving birth.

Our issue closes this time with two book reviews. It should be pointed out that not all books that are called to our attention are such that we can recommend. One of these reviews bears this out.

Inquires have been made about when our next catalog is being published. It is currently being prepared and should be available in a few weeks. A number of changes have had to be made. A free copy will be sent to each person on our mailing list, including all subscribers to THE DISCERNER.

As summer approaches, please do not forget Christian ministries. It seems each year during the summer contributions decline, though the expenses of these ministries continue, including those of R.A.S. We are grateful to those of you who regularly support this ministry. It would not have continued for almost 54 years without such support as yours.

One last note, if your label reads XXI-2 or your volume reads Vol. 21, Nr. 2 your subscription expires with this issue. Because of rising costs, we will soon have to announce a price increase. This may be your last chance to subscribe in the U.S. for \$4.00 (Canada \$6.32, Mexico \$6.04, other foreign \$6.80).

Arnold Murray and The Shepherd's Chapel

By William A. BeVier and Steve Lagoon

For some time we have been receiving inquires about the ministry of Arnold Murray and his "The Shepherd's Chapel."

It has taken some effort to collect reliable information about this man and what he teaches. At times he has been reluctant to answer direct questions about himself and his ministry. We wrote directly to The Shepherd's Chapel in Gravette, Arkansas following a telephone conversation with Dennis Murray, Arnold Murray's son. Dennis Murray promised to answer questions we had about the ministry. Subsequently we received a response by telephone from Dennis Murray that they would not respond to our questions. Our questions in the letter were based on their "Our Statement of Faith" and "In Answer to Critics by Pastor Arnold Murray."

At one time Arnold Murray claimed to have an earned doctor's degree. Investigation has proven this not true. It is known he was once an employee of the U.S. Postal Service in western Arkansas where his ministry is located.

His distribution of his taped messages and observations of his television programs have provided the opportunity to carefully analyze what he teaches. His "Our Statement of Faith" appears on his web page, available for public reading. Also, lengthy discussions with some of his local followers have revealed what they understand of what he says. His claim that none of his critics really have made the effort to study his teachings is not true.

Murray repeatedly refers to Hebrew and Greek words from the Bible in his messages as if he knows the Bible's original languages. It is apparent he has done word studies with the help of writers who do know classical Hebrew and Koine Greek. However, he shows no evidence of knowing the grammar, syntax, or exegesis of these languages. He has not studied these languages academically.

Murray makes a point of claiming there is a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. This is a view long held by many evangelicals (and avoids having to hold to a 6,000 year old earth). Even the Scofield Reference Bible, original and new editions, supports this view (see notes at Gen. 1:2 and Isa. 45:18). However, scholars in the Hebrew language reject this view. It is rejected because of the use of what's called the "waw consecutive" between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. The Hebrew "waw consec-

utive” is equivalent to the English word “and” and indicates a continuation of thought, not a break. For example, in Gen. 1:1 God “created the heavens and the earth,” waw consecutive. It is the same construction between verses one and two. It is interesting to note that Exodus 1:1 begins with a waw consecutive, denoting that Exodus is really a continuation of Genesis. It also is interesting to note that Tregelles in his Hebrew and English Lexicon cites Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 as an example of the “waw” used as a copulative (a word connecting coordinate words) and indicates it is used “especially in continuing a discourse.” So much for the “gap theory.” Murray builds much on this supposed “gap.” With no “gap” everything he builds on it, e.g., Satan’s background, is false. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 tell of Satan’s background, not a gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2.

Murray rejects both macro and micro evolution (“Three World Ages,” Tape 506). To reject micro (small) involution infers that Noah took all types of animals into the ark, e.g., Chihuahuas and Great Danes, Shetland and Arabians. Since the exact dimensions of the ark are given in Scripture, the space was limited. Thought should be given to how many varieties of animals exist in the world today. Apparently Murray hasn’t thought through the implications of rejecting microevolution and is not familiar with genetics and the breeding of animals. In the same tape he talks about “Noah’s little old flood,” such wording is typical of Murray. He does not believe the Noachic flood was worldwide. But see the Lord Jesus’ words in Mt. 24:39.

Murray refers to the “incarnation of all souls” (Tape 506), i.e., souls existed with God before physical birth. This is a belief shared with the Mormons (or as they now want to be called “The Church of Jesus Christ”).

Murray has stated “the rapture theory leads people to the Antichrist” (Tape 506). He repeatedly makes the point of his rejection of the Rapture of the Church.

Murray declares that Paul “taught on three levels.” Origen taught the same thing in the third century, was typical of Gnosticism, and has been rejected by most Christians during the history of the Church. The Bible is in plain language as a revelation from God, and does not depend upon some individuals with a higher spiritual knowledge being the only ones who understand the real meaning of Scripture. In the three-level scheme the third level is the allegorical or “spiritual” level.

An example of Murray ignoring the contexts of Scripture is his reference to Jeremiah 4 and interpreting the word “destruction” in Jer. 4:20 as referring back to what happened between

Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 (Tape 506). The context of Jer. 4 clearly refers to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Murray even sees the Noahic flood in Jeremiah 4 (Tape 506).

During his radio broadcasts Murray rapidly moves from one Bible text to another, too fast for the average listener to follow his line of thinking. Because he repeatedly quotes Scripture, some will think this man is Biblical, so must be all right. When a person has copies of Murray's tapes there is opportunity to stop the tape at any point, check his Scripture references, and give thought to what he is saying. Then his faulty hermeneutics, lack of proper exegesis, and theological errors become evident. Murray also keeps repeating himself to emphasize his points. Wasn't it Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, who said that if you keep repeating anything enough times people will believe it to be true? Repeating is an important element of teaching, but the truth or error of what is being taught is more important.

Murray apparently assumes a word means the same thing each time it is used in Scripture. Here again, we see he doesn't observe the basic hermeneutical principle of context and he doesn't understand that context can determine how a word is used. Many examples can be given in the use of the English language. Take the common word "dog." It can mean a domesticated four-legged mammal. It can mean a prairie dog (totally different animal). A person sometimes is called a "dog," in a derogatory sense. It can be used as a metal device to hold objects, as the "dog" on a ship's hatch (door). Then in astronomy there is a sundog. In Scripture "dog" is used to refer to Gentiles (see Psa. 22:16; Mt. 15:26). Context frequently determines meaning. In the Greek New Testament the word for "wife" and "woman" is the same, context determines the meaning. Jesus addresses Mary as "Woman" in John 2:4, it is the same Greek word used in Ephesians 5:25, husbands, love your "wives." Obviously a difference is meant. There are many cases in Scripture where context determines meaning and Murray doesn't seem to realize this, so leads others astray.

Murray states "God came in the form of the Messiah." Not so, Jesus is God; Jesus is the Messiah - He was not and is not in the "form" of the Messiah. More on this later when we consider the persons of the Godhead. Murray also refers to Satan's "curly locks" (Tape 506). A "Murrayism."

In another tape he discusses the "Millennium." He makes the point the word "millennium" isn't in the Bible; this apparently gives him freedom to interpret what it means. Murray obviously doesn't know Latin either, or he would know "millen-

nium” is the Latin word for 1,000 years, as the Greek word chil-ia with the Greek word ete means 1,000 years (Rev. 20:2). He states more people will be saved during the millennium than any other age. How does he know this? Incidentally, he divides human history into three ages.

In Revelation 20:1 he identifies the “angel” as Michael. Elsewhere in Revelation Michael is identified by name and is an archangel.

In one of his messages on Revelation he states the “Rapture Theory” is part of the “mark of the beast.” He repeats the error that Margaret MacDonald is the one who began to teach the “rapture theory” and that it really originated with the Devil. Murray states: “...the mark of the beast can be your church,” that is if it holds to the “rapture theory.”

Murray claims the English word “mortal” never applies to a physical body in the New Testament. But see Romans 6:12; 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:11; etc. for a refutation of this false teaching.

Other conclusions reached by Murray include that the soul is “mortal.” Mortal, by definition, means subject to death. In the Bible the body is mortal but the soul continues to exist after physical death. Murray concludes hell is “eternal.” A reading of Revelation 20:14 shows this is not true. Hell (Hades) is to be cast into the Lake of Fire, which is everlasting. See also Mt. 25:41. Murray defines Gog and Magog as “east and west,” a unique interpretation. Also, Satan is Antichrist to Murray. Revelation 20:10 clearly makes this wrong. He teaches there is a “second chance” at the beginning of the Millennium for all souls. A number of the cults teach the same concept, e.g., Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons.

In Ezekiel and Revelation Murray concludes the 144,000 are “Levitical priests.” He spiritualizes Ezekiel 44 by saying the Levites in the chapter are the righteous people today. Expounding Ezekiel 44 on one of his tapes he does say such things as “would appear,” that he “can’t document,” and similar statements. But he claims that today some people are of the “priesthood of Zadok.”

He once defines “resurrection” as meaning “stand up for Christ,” a novel interpretation.

Murray claims that during the Millennium every person will be in immortal bodies. But Ezekiel 44:22 and Isaiah 65:20 declare people on earth will die during the Millennium.

As many cult leaders, Murray finally gets around to the statement that he is the only one today teaching the “truth” (Tape,

“Millennium”). He asserts pastors who teach the truth would lose their pensions, so they teach the “Rapture Theory.” He doesn’t seem to know that most pastors in the mainline denominations who have pensions do not teach about the Rapture, while many other pastors in other groups who frequently do not have pensions are the ones who teach about the Rapture.

Murray interprets the statement in Revelation 21:1 “there was no more sea” to mean that even the Lake of Fire dries up. This is an example of his understanding, or lack of understanding, of the Scripture. Revelation 20:10 is sufficient to refute his interpretation.

Murray, like others who reject eternal punishment by God, has to spiritualize or ignore God’s revelations on the subject. On this point Murray is in company with the Seventh-day Adventists, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, The Mormons, Christian Science, and many people who have no religious preferences at all. Murray views “death” as annihilation, whereas in the Bible death is separation, both physical (soul from the body) and spiritual (soul from God – the “second death”).

Several relevant questions were asked of Arnold Murray in our letter to him, which he declined to reply.

Critics of Arnold Murray have repeatedly charged he teaches a Modalistic view of God, and thus denies the Biblical revelation that the one Godhead exists in three distinct persons, i.e., the Trinity. Murray’s type of Modalism has been termed Noetian type, i.e., God is one person and that the words “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” are titles for the one God.

Quoting Arnold Murray in his “In Answer to Critics by Pastor Arnold Murray,” he writes: “I do teach all souls were created by our father.” In the Bible only Adam was created, all the rest of us have been born, descendants of the physical Adam after he had sinned. Genesis 5:1 states God created Adam in the likeness of God, but Genesis 5:3 states Adam “begat” (became father of) a son in “his own likeness, after his image,” not in God’s likeness and image. This is another error in Murray’s theology.

Murray seems to misunderstand God’s foreknowledge as stated in Jeremiah 1:5 and Ephesians 1:4 to believe that we existed before we were physically born. God “knowing” us before we were born does not mean we existed before physical birth. Murray appears not to understand the Biblical revelations of God’s omniscience. In Romans 4:17 we read God “...calls the things which do not exist as existing” (Greek text).

Arnold Murray holds to the teaching known as “Serpent Seed,” i.e., Eve had sexual relations with the Serpent (the Devil,

Satan, Rev. 20:2) and Cain was produced. Murray claims Cain's descendants are known as the Kenites. Adam was the father of Abel, but not Cain (according to Murray), in spite of what the Bible states (Gen. 4:1).

Before accepting Murray's view of the origin and history of the Kenites, one should trace the use of the name through the Old Testament. The word first appears in Genesis 15:19 as one of the groups of people living in present day Palestine, the land promised to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 15:18). In no way are the Kenites connected to Cain in the Bible. In Judges 4:11 the father-in-law of Moses (elsewhere termed a Midianite) is called a Kenite. Back in Judges 1:16 some descendants of Moses' father-in-law, themselves termed Kenites, accompanied Judah when they left Jericho and settled in the south of Judah's land. Heber, husband of Jael, is identified as a Kenite (Jud. 4:11, 17) and it was Jael who killed Sisera, the enemy of the sons of Israel (Jud. 4:21). In 1 Samuel 15:6 King Saul warned the Kenites to separate from the Amalekites he was about to destroy. The reason being "for you showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt." Balaam prophesied that the Kenites would live in peace until the Assyrians carried them away in captivity (Num. 24:21-22). Certainly they have disappeared from history as a people. They are not the Jews of today (as Murray claims), and there is no means to directly relate them to Cain, the son of Adam.

Murray, having adopted "British Israelism," claims the real Jews today are the Caucasian people residing primarily in Europe and North America. British Israelism has been refuted by so many so many times we won't consider it in this article. It was a view held by Herbert Armstrong when he led the Worldwide Church of God and was disproved by many at that time (though it still is propagated by such as the Philadelphia Church of God).

A cursory reading of Shepherd's Chapel's Statement of Faith on the Internet will probably reveal not much wrong with it. It is what is not included that raises questions from a Biblical perspective. In addition, it is what Arnold Murray has said in his television and radio messages that raises serious questions about what he believes from a Biblical perspective.

We at R.A.S. have collected a rather extensive file of material about Arnold Murray and his ministry from a variety of sources. We do not stand in judgment of his theology without firm documentation. Christians are advised either to avoid this man's ministry or approach it with spiritual discernment and prayer.

Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and Michael the Archangel

By Steve Lagoon

Witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses can be a frustrating experience for the Christian who wants to share his faith, but can't seem to get anywhere.

The purpose of this article is to offer information on how to be a more effective witness to the "Witnesses," especially in the vital area of the person and work of Jesus Christ. I want to share with you an approach that has been effective in showing Jehovah's Witnesses the impossibility of their claims concerning Jesus Christ. Along the way, I will offer some witnessing tips that have been helpful to me.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

We begin by reminding ourselves what the Scriptures teach about Jesus Christ. God has revealed to us in His word that Jesus Christ is both God and man (Romans 1:3-4). As God (John 1:1, 20:28), Jesus has existed forever (Micah 5:2), with the Father (John 17:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6), and the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14; Romans 8:26) within the triune nature (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) of the one being of God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 2:5). The Scriptures also teach that the Son of God became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:23; John 1:14; Colossians 2:9). So Jesus was unique in all of history, being truly God and man at once.

Furthermore, Jesus died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead after three days (1 Corinthians 15:1-6). After His resurrection, He ascended bodily into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3).

WHAT THE WATCHTOWER TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

In contrast to the clear teaching of Scripture, the following is the teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses concerning Jesus Christ. They deny that Jesus Christ was God, but instead, believe He was a created angel. In fact, the Watchtower says that in Jesus' preexistence, He was Michael the Archangel. The Watchtower teaches that Michael the Archangel was the first and highest of all the beings God created, and that once God created him, Michael created everything else.

Then, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses, Michael the Archangel gave up his existence as an angel, and God transferred Michael's Spirit (life-force) down to earth where he became Jesus Christ. While on earth, Jesus was a man and a man only. Later, Jesus was crucified on an upright stake, died, and was buried in a tomb.

However, the Watchtower does not believe that Jesus rose from the dead in His body, but rather only His spirit (life force) was raised and transferred to heaven where He again took up His existence as Michael the Archangel (no longer human). For documentation see *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, pp. 209-220, 405-426.

THE CORRECT IDENTITY OF JESUS CHRIST IS ESSENTIAL

Now these are two very different pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ. One is Biblical and the other is a heretical falsehood. The consequences of the Jehovah's Witnesses' error are very serious indeed. The apostle Paul said:

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:8-9, all Biblical quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version, International Bible Society, Colorado Springs, 1984).

So it is of the utmost importance that we help Jehovah's Witnesses escape the trap of the Devil and find the real Jesus.

WHY IT IS DIFFICULT TO WITNESS TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Now to us, the truth about Jesus seems so clear. Perhaps you wonder why you can't just show Jehovah's Witnesses the Scriptural support concerning Jesus Christ, and they will see whom the real Jesus is. Oh, that it were so easy; but something more is going on in the mind of most Jehovah's Witnesses. They have been conditioned to believe that there is only one source of truth in all the world, and that source is the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, and more specifically the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" and the literature they provide (i.e., the Watchtower and Awake magazines, etc.) at the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses.

They have been taught to trust the Watchtower, even when it appears to them that the Watchtower is wrong. When a Christian tries to witness to a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, they have to

overcome this huge barrier. Even though you may make an airtight case from the Scriptures concerning who Jesus Christ is, it may have little impact, because the Witnesses' first allegiance is to the Watchtower, and not the Scriptures (despite their protests to the contrary).

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DISCUSSION

There are many methods for witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses and each have its merits. I want to share one approach that has been very effective for me. One of my goals when witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses is to be on the offense. I don't have time to be on the defense. I may not have the opportunity again, so I want to make the most of it. I must not let the Witness guide the discussion, or he is likely to preach his false doctrine as long as he can, and then call it quits just about the time I want to share my information.

That is, instead of letting the Jehovah's Witness spend the time hitting me over the head with their favorite attacks on Christianity (of which I am already aware), I want to make sure they leave having heard the truth, and nothing but the truth.

In setting the stage for the discussion, I like to keep Jehovah's Witnesses off balance, while at the same time building a good relationship with them. I do this by focusing on them as real people. I don't mind spending a half hour just talking to them about their backgrounds. Here are some suggested topics of conversation for this point in the discussion.

"Are you married?" "Where did you grow up?" "What is your line of work?" "How did you become a Jehovah's Witness?" "Do you have any brothers or sisters?" "Is your whole family in the Jehovah's Witnesses?" "If not, how do they feel about your involvement?" "What is it that drew or draws you to the Jehovah's Witnesses?" "Is there anything you don't like about Jehovah's Witnesses?" (Watch them squirm as they answer this one!). You get the idea. All the while, you will be answering the same questions about yourself, which will give you a quick opportunity to share how you came to faith in Christ.

WHICH JESUS DO YOU BELIEVE IN?

Now once you get down to business, I start with a question like this: "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" A normal Jehovah's Witness response would be to answer "Yes" with a watered-down version of their beliefs in Jesus Christ thrown in for good measure. At this point I surprise them with the question: "Which Jesus do you believe in?" This is usually greeted by a confused look while fumbling for an answer. I'll say:

Let me explain myself. In 2 Corinthians 11:4 [which I read to them], the apostle Paul chastised the Corinthian Christians for putting up with a different Jesus. All through the New Testament [which they prefer to call "The Christian Greek Scriptures"], Christians are warned about false teachers and their distortions concerning Jesus Christ. So you see there is the real Jesus, but there is also "false Jesus" out there as well [you might point to another cult's teaching concerning Jesus]. So what I am asking you is this: "Are you sure that the Jesus you believe in is the *real* Jesus?" I follow that up with this: "Would you agree that the only way to know the truth about the real Jesus is by a careful study of God's Word?" They are glad to agree with this.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

With all the preliminaries out of the way, we can begin to show them that their "Watchtower Jesus" is impossibility, and help them to see the real Jesus! At this point you want them to help you understand what they believe about Jesus by clarifying some things about their view that don't make sense to you.

WAS JESUS MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL IN HIS PRE-EXISTENCE?

For instance, the Watchtower teaches that before His human existence, Jesus existed as Michael the Archangel:

Scriptural evidence indicates that the name Michael applied to God's Son before he left heaven to become Jesus Christ and also after his return.... In his prehuman existence Jesus was called "the Word" (John 1:1). He also had the personal name Michael. By retaining the name Jesus after his resurrection (Acts 9:5), the "Word" shows that he is identical with the Son of God on earth. His resuming his heavenly name Michael and his title (or, name) "The Word of God" (Rev. 19:13) ties him in with his prehuman existence (*Aid to Bible Understanding*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1971, p. 1152).

Also,

So the evidence indicates that the Son of God was known as Michael before he came to earth and is known also by that name since his return to heaven where he resides as the glorified spirit Son of God (*Reasoning from the Scripture*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1985, p. 218).

MICHAEL'S LIFE-FORCE TRANSFERRED TO MARY

Furthermore, the Watchtower teaches that Michael the Archangel set aside his angelic existence in order that his "spirit"

or "life-force" could be transferred to the womb of Mary and become Jesus Christ. For instance:

Since actual conception took place, it appears that Jehovah God caused an ovum, or egg cell, in Mary's womb to become fertile, accomplishing this by the transferal of the life of his firstborn Son from the spirit realm to earth (Gal. 4:4). Only in this way could the child eventually born have retained identity as the same person who had resided in heaven (*Insight on the Scriptures, Volume 1*, Watchtower and Bible Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1988, p. 56).

Also,

He has rightly been called Michael the Archangel. His life-force having been transferred to Mary's egg cell by Almighty God's power that overshadowed Mary meant that he, Michael, disappeared from heaven. By human birth from Mary, the Jewish virgin, he was to become a human soul (*God's "Eternal Purpose" Now Triumphant For Man's Good*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1974, pp. 137-138).

When the Watchtower says that Michael "disappeared from heaven," we can only conclude that Michael died, because his "body" is gone and his life-force sent to Mary's womb.

LIFE-FORCE IMPERSONAL?

We have established that the Watchtower's view is that Jesus pre-existed his life on earth as Michael the Archangel. Further, they say that when God the Father sent Michael to earth, that Michael gave up his existence as an angel, and that it was only his "life-force" or "spirit" that was transferred to the womb of Mary, to become the human Jesus Christ. One very big problem for the Watchtower is their teaching concerning what the "life-force" or "spirit" is, and is not. They teach that the life-force is impersonal; that is does not carry personality.

In other words, if the "Life-force" is impersonal, and that is all that was transferred from Michael the Archangel to the womb of Mary, then how can it be maintained that Jesus is the same person as Michael the Archangel?

The following quotations from Watchtower literature show their view concerning the "impersonal" nature of the "Life-force" (spirit).

For instance,

So, then, God's Word shows that man is not superior to the animals insofar as the spirit or life-force is concerned. The same invisible spirit is common to both. Thus the spirit could not have personality but must be an *impersonal* force. The invi-

ble spirit or life-force active in both man and the animals might be compared with electricity, also an invisible force. Electricity may be used to run various types of machines and appliances. Stoves can be made to produce heat, fans to produce wind, computers to solve problems and television sets to reproduce figures, voices and other sounds. The same invisible force that produces sound in one appliance can produce heat in another. The electric current, however, never takes on the characteristics of the machines or appliances in which it functions or is active.

Likewise, the spirit or life-force that makes it possible for man to carry on functions of life in no way differs from the spirit that enables animals to carry on functions of life. On leaving man's body at death, the spirit does not retain any of the characteristics of the cells....

That the spirit or life-force is impersonal is evident in the case of persons that were resurrected from the dead. Nowhere do we read of their remembering a conscious existence during the period of their death....

Thus even the Son of God provided testimony to the effect that the spirit is an impersonal life-force (*Awake*, 8/8/1972, pp. 27-28).

Also,

The word "spirit" is translated from the Hebrew word *ru'ach* meaning the life-force that animates all living creatures, human and animal (Ecclesiastes 3:18-22). However, the important difference is that *ru'ach* is an *impersonal* force; it does not have a will of its own or retain the personality or any of the characteristics of the deceased individual (*Mankind's Search for God*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1990, pp. 153-154).

So the Watchtower teaches that Michael the Archangel gave up everything in his existence except his life-force, and also teaches that the life-force is impersonal. In this view, there is simply no way to maintain a personal identity between the preexisting Michael (an angel by nature), and Jesus Christ (a man only by nature, according to the Watchtower).

WAS THE LIFE-FORCE THE ONLY PART OF MICHAEL TRANSFERRED TO EARTH?

With this problem in mind, you will occasionally find some sort of vague reference to Michael's "personality pattern" being transferred to Mary's womb on earth. For instance,

God did not send some angel to rescue mankind. He made the supreme sacrifice of sending his only-begotten Son, "the one he was specially fond of" – Proverbs 8:30; John 3:16. By his willing participation in the divine arrangement, God's Son "emptied himself" of his heavenly nature (Philippians 2:7). Jehovah transferred the life-force and the personality pattern of his firstborn heavenly Son to the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary (*Watchtower*, 2/15/1991, p. 14).

To begin with, this contradicts the Watchtower teaching that is was only his life-force (spirit) that was transferred.

"That the heavenly Word of God divested himself of everything as a God-like spirit except his life-force..." (*The Kingdom Is At Hand*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1944, p. 4).

Also, what is this mysterious "personality pattern"? If it is not part of the life-force, then why transfer the life-force? If it does indeed carry the personality of the person (in this case Michael the Archangel), then the Watchtower is admitting that the personality can survive apart from the body, the very thing for which they criticize orthodox Christianity.

Furthermore, if Michael's personality was transferred into the person of Jesus Christ, then Jesus has the personality of an angel since that is what Michael was.

THE WATCHTOWER VIEW OF THE NATURE OF JESUS WHILE ON THE EARTH

The next phase of Jesus Christ's existence, according to the Watchtower, was as a man and a man only, while on the earth, as the following quotation indicates.

The man who could be the ransom had to be a perfect human of flesh and blood—the exact equal of Adam (Romans 5:14). A spirit creature or a "God-man" would not balance the scales of justice. Only a perfect human, someone not under the Adamic death sentence, could offer "a corresponding ransom," one corresponding perfectly to Adam (1 Timothy 2:6) (*Watchtower*, 2/15/1991, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn NY, p. 13).

It is important to note what the Watchtower teaches concerning the nature of human beings. The historic position of the Christian Church, based on the Word of God, is that man is composed of two basic elements, the material (the physical body), and the immaterial (soul/spirit).

However, the Watchtower rejects this understanding of man. They define the nature of man as follows: Man is a soul. A soul is composed of two elements: the physical body and the life-force (spir-

it). As shown above, the Watchtower teaches that the life-force (spirit) is impersonal and operates like an electric charge, which energizes the physical body, but in no way has personal existence. So the Watchtower believes that while on earth, Jesus Christ had a physical body, and an impersonal life-force, and that is all (they deny he was an incarnation of an angel in any sense).

THE WATCHTOWER DEFINITION OF A HUMAN SOUL

The following quotations from Watchtower literature define their view of the human soul.

How much clearer is the Biblical idea as expressed at Genesis 2:7: "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breadth of life"; and man became a living soul" (JP). The combination of the body and the spirit, or life-force, constitutes "a living soul." (Genesis 2:7; 7:22; Psalm 146:4) (*Mankind's Search for God*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1990, p. 224).

Also,

In a special act of creation, God made man a complete, whole person. When God blew into man's nostrils the "breath of life," man's lungs were filled with air. *But more than that that was accomplished.* God thereby gave life to the man's body. This life-force is sustained, or kept going, by breathing.

Notice, however, that the Bible does not say that God gave man a soul. Rather, it says that after God started man breathing "The man came to be a living soul." So the man was a soul, just as a man who becomes a doctor is a doctor (1 Corinthians 15:45). The "dust from the ground," from which the physical body is formed, is not the soul. Nor does the Bible say that the "breath of life" is the soul. Rather, the Bible shows that the putting together of these two things is what resulted in "man's becoming a living soul." (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1982, pp. 72-73).

Further,

A living human soul has two vital constituents: fleshly body plus life-force.... Separate the life-force from the body, and there is no living soul (*Victory Over Death*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1986, p. 12).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE WATCHTOWER'S VIEWS ON CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Establishing the Watchtower's position on the definition of what a human soul is becomes important when we turn to the question of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When you ask a

Jehovah's Witness if he believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he will answer in the affirmative. But they have redefined the word resurrection to mean something very different than is meant in the Scriptures.

Most importantly they deny the physical bodily resurrection of Christ, and claim He was only raised a "spirit creature." After being raised as a spirit, He ascended to heaven, resuming His existence as Michael the Archangel (for documentation see: *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1985, pp. 217-219, 334).

THE WATCHTOWER DENIES THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

There are a number of problems with this view, which we will address. To begin with, the Watchtower denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus:

"It follows that Christ could not take his body back again in the resurrection, thereby taking back the sacrifice offered to God for mankind" (*Aid to Bible Understanding*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1971, p. 1396).

WAS JESUS "SPIRIT" RAISED?

From the Watchtower's own definition then, all that is left to raise of their human-only Jesus is His life-force (spirit).

"As a spirit Son of God, Jesus Christ was able to ascend back to heaven on the fortieth day after his resurrection from the dead" (*God's "Eternal Purpose" Now Triumphant for Man's Good*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1974, p. 155).

However, as we noted before, the Watchtower says that the life-force is impersonal.

For instance,

"Thus, after a person dies, his spirit does not exist as an immaterial being that can think and carry out plans apart from the body" (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1985, p. 385).

Despite the quotation above that says, "As a spirit Son of God, Jesus Christ was able to ascend back to heaven..." ("Eternal Purpose," 1974, p. 155), the Watchtower also says:

"When that *Ru'ach*, or active life-force, leaves the body, the person's thoughts perish; they do not continue in another realm" (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1985, p. 383).

So if it was not His body that was “resurrected,” and the life-force carries no personality (and hence cannot be resurrected), then what was resurrected?

RESURRECTION OR RECREATION?

When confronted with this information, Jehovah’s Witnesses will sometimes respond by arguing that Jesus was not actually resurrected, but rather was retained in God’s memory and later “recreated.”

For instance,

Resurrection involves a reactivating of the life pattern of the individual, which life pattern God has retained in his memory. According to God’s will for the individual, the person is restored in either a human or a spirit body and yet retains his personal identity, having the same personality and memories as when he died (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, NY, 1985, p. 333).

But here they run into some more problems. If, as they suggest, God retained a perfect memory of Jesus Christ, and “recreated” Him just as He was, then Jesus would still be a human being because that is what He was!

At this point, some Jehovah’s Witnesses will counter that it was Jesus in His preexistence that God recreated, and since He was Michael the Archangel in His preexistence, when God recreated Him, He resumed His existence as Michael. This argument may escape the problem just mentioned, but creates another. For if God recreated Michael the Archangel, then He did not recreate or resurrect the crucified and buried Jesus Christ.

What is truly amazing, however, is that since the Watchtower denies that it was Jesus’ physical body that rose, and yet believes that His Spirit was raised (containing His personality), they actually believe the very thing they attack historic Christianity for: believing that man has an immaterial and personal existence that survives the death of the body!

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In truth, the Watchtower denies the resurrection of Christ, and has a false Jesus and a false gospel (1 Corinthians 12:12-19). We do well to point these things out to Jehovah’s Witnesses in a loving manner (Eph. 4:15). Now there is much good material to combat the Watchtower’s teaching concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. We carry many good titles on the subject at Religion Analysis Service, which are available for these who are interested in pursuing this issue further.

Happy witnessing!

The Deception of Religious Dress

By Roy E. Knuteson, Ph. D.

There is an old saying that: "Clothes Make the Man." Apparently they do, according to many religious groups who actually believe that the wearing of certain clothing can help make a person more spiritual. In other words, they teach and believe that special garments are necessary for acceptance by a holy God. Certainly that was true in the Old Testament for the priestly class according to Exodus 39 and Leviticus 8, but is it a requirement for today?

In obedience to Ephesians 5:11, which says: "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them" (All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.). I want to examine and expose the heretical teachings and practices of two major cults regarding the unique religious garments that they believe have special powers for protection and eternal salvation. The first of these is Roman Catholicism, which I call "The World's Largest Cult " with its one billion adherents worldwide.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM'S SCAPULARS

Unknown to most evangelical believers is the fact that every Roman Catholic priest is required by Papal Edict to wear a special piece of clothing called a "scapular." It is a loose sleeveless garment hung from the shoulders that consists of two pieces of brown clothe on which are pictures of the Virgin Mary. The material is usually wool, but never silk, since it is claimed that Mary never wore silk.

An English monk named Simon Stock invented the scapular in 1287. This so-called "holy man" claimed that the Virgin Mary and thousands of angels appeared to him after twenty years of austere and isolated living. Holding up these two pieces of cloth, Mary allegedly commissioned him to take this garment as the outward symbol of the Carmelite Order to which he belonged. Other Roman Catholic orders soon adopted the scapular as a sacred part of their unique garb as well. ["Scapular" comes from the Latin word for shoulder, Ed.] Over the years eighteen varieties of these "blessed scapulars" have been officially approved by the Church of Rome (Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, p. 524). These scapulars, along with the distinctive dress of priests and nuns, are just another way of duping the gullible and ignorant of their supposed special status before God.

For lay Roman Catholics, the required scapular consists of two four inch squares of pieces of woolen cloth joined by strings and passed over the shoulders. In contrast to the priest's scapular, its secular counterpart is to be worn under ordinary clothing and next to the skin as a sign of religious devotion. It is to be worn day and night and never completely removed until death. Indeed, it is good, they say, to be buried with it in place.

During World War II a special metallic scapular called the "Scapular Militia" was issued to all Roman Catholic servicemen as a means of physical protection. It bore a picture of Mary and Joseph and St. Simon Stock on one side and the words: "St. Simon Stock Pray for Us" on the other side.

These unique holy garments and medals allegedly provide special protection to the wearer, which included freedom from accidents, disease, storms and fire. They also are claimed to ward off demons and the powers of witchcraft. Beyond that, wearers of the sacred scapular are promised reduction, and in some unique cases, the elimination of the Roman Catholic's allotted time in purgatory. For a soldier killed in battle, there was the extra guarantee that "WHOSOEVER DIES CLOTHED IN HIS SCAPULAR SHALL NOT SUFFER ETERNAL FIRE" (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 286).

What a gross example of Roman Catholicism's insistence on human works and the dependence upon such good luck charms as aids to obtaining eternal salvation. This is pure fetishism, similar to that used by primitive tribes in many pagan countries. By these means these poor deluded souls are being duped into believing that somehow they can, by personal effort and observances, alleviate or even eliminate future judgment. The Bible speaks to the contrary and promises full justification and no condemnation to those who sincerely trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation (Romans 5:1; 8:1).

MORMONISM'S UNDERWEAR

A well-kept secret of Mormonism is the special underwear that all good Mormons are required to wear twenty-four hours every day. Early Mormons took this requirement very seriously. Thelma Geer, a great granddaughter of Mormon pioneer John D. Lee, describes how conscientiously they obeyed this command. "They remove the garment, but a portion at a time when changing, partly slipping on the new before the old is entirely off" (Geer, *Mormonism, Mama, and Me*, p. 159).

Those considered prospects for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ("Mormons") are never told of this special requirement, along with many other related rituals, until they are pretty well enmeshed in the cult. It all begins when a person makes his first visit to a Mormon temple. Once inside, the candi-

date has to make many serious decisions in a very brief amount of time that have eternal consequences, or so he is told. These include a pledge of faith in Joseph Smith and his books and a ready submission to the still unknown ceremonies related to the "secrets of the temple."

Husbands and wives who go to the temple to have their marriages "sealed for eternity" are quickly separated and led to their respective dressing rooms where they are instructed to remove all their clothing. Then, each is partially covered with thin cotton "shield" that is open at the sides. Upon entrance into the "washing and anointing room," temple workers wash the candidate's body, reaching up under the cotton shield in order to touch all the physical parts of the body, while they "bless" aloud each part as it is touched. This initiation procedure is repeated as each person's entire body is anointed with oil. Sometimes Mormons will go through this same ritual on behalf of a dead person, just as they practice "proxy baptism" for the dead.

All of this is preparation for the issuance of the "Garment of the Holy Priesthood" which is considered now to be sacred underwear with almost magical powers. This underwear is said to represent the garment given to Adam after he discovered his nakedness in the Garden of Eden. Both men and women are therefore required to wear this underwear the rest of their lives.

Since the inception of this underwear requirement, dress fashions have changed and so has the design of the holy garment. The approved pattern adopted in 1916 was for long-john type of underwear that extended to the wrists, ankles, and throat of the wearer. Mormon women felt embarrassed to wear a long garment, which was soon becoming very conspicuous and incompatible with modern dress styles. Styles continued to change and so the pattern that Joseph Smith allegedly received from God was also changed. In the 1920's the hierarchy at Salt Lake City decreed that this magic underwear could now be made as a two-piece garment cut off above the knee and elbow. But even this drastic new style was hard to conceal. Soldiers and athletes were granted a special temporary dispensation to forego the wearing of this garment under certain specified situations.

The design patterns changed gradually with the change of dress styles until today the holy underwear is unnoticeable under normal clothing. The "unchanging doctrines" of the church keep changing with the dress styles of their constituents! This special approved underwear cannot be purchased in clothing stores and is available only through Mormon stores or mail order supply houses. [Ed. At one time the "holy underwear" could be ordered from a Sears, Roebuck catalog. That day is past.]

What is the purpose of this strange requirement of Mormonism? It is three-fold. First, it is an outward sign, along with the secret oaths and name they receive, of a person's devotion and commitment to the Later Day Saints religion. Second, like all the rituals of this cult, it supposedly bestows some spiritual merit, which will help to determine which of the three Mormon heavens that they will hopefully reach, and finally, it promises to provide a shield to protect the good Mormon from the powers and assaults of the Devil.

This is just another example of the satanic deception that permeates all of these unscriptural religious groups, who somehow cannot accept the free offer of salvation through the eternal and complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. But, this is the "Good News" that these two major cults and all others need to hear and accept. The Bible's message is plain: "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

In the light of this widespread deception, everyone should heed the warning of Paul, lest we too become ensnared:

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

BOOK REVIEW

Share Jesus Without Fear

By William Fay, with Linda Evans Shepherd
Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999

Reviewed by Steve Lagoon

In my ministry as an interim pastor, I am occasionally given a book to read by kindly church members. Such was the case recently when I was given a copy of the book *Share Jesus Without Fear* by William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd. The gentleman who gave me this book told me that the book had been very helpful to him in becoming more effective at evangelism.

I have read many similar books through the years, but because of the recommendation of my friend, and the present popularity of the book, I decided to give it a reading. The book is very easy to read, and contains many stories and anecdotes to keep it moving at a fast pace. Fay's presentation style seems a bit sensationalistic at times, as he relates his evangelistic experiences. However, the book offers much practical advice on how to share your faith. It is a good reminder that we need to make evangelism a way of life, and not an occasional accident.

However, as I was working my way through the book I came across a glaring departure from orthodox Christianity. Chapter 8 of the book is entitled *Ready Responses To Common Objections*. Under the subheading of *Cults are the answer?* The authors are teaching their readers how to deal effectively with those deceived by cults. I will quote from this section on page 86:

Even in the face of this evidence, some cult members may have trouble understanding that Jesus is both God the Father and God the Son. Recently, Linda met a Jehovah's Witness and his young son at her front door. Linda explained to the dad, "You are both a son and a father, you are the same person. Much like you, God is both God the Son and God the Father, at the same time. He has different roles, but he is the same person. Linda reports, "At this explanation, I could see a small light blink on. They didn't respond, but I pray that they will someday be open to the gospel.

Now, I certainly applaud the efforts to reach Jehovah's Witnesses for Christ. But the teaching concerning Jesus Christ and God the Father contained in this passage is pure heresy. It is rightly defined as a type of Modalism. This type of Modalism denies the triune nature of God (the Trinity), and instead teaches

that Jesus himself is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit at the same time, and in the same person.

To clarify, the historic Christian Church, based solidly upon the Word of God, teaches that there is one God, and within the nature of the one God, there are three eternal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not "God the Father," but is God the Son, a distinct person from God the Father within the Godhead.

Now it could be that the authors were simply ignorant on this subject, or they are indeed Modalists. The most prominent group of Modalists today is known as *Oneness Pentecostals*, or the *Jesus Only Pentecostals*.

It is ironic that the authors are trying to teach how to combat cultic teaching, and yet are using cultic doctrine themselves.

This shows a breakdown at the publisher, which is an evangelical publisher (Southern Baptist Convention), as well as a breakdown in many who endorsed the book including the following: Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ; Dr. Edward Dobson, Senior Pastor, Calvary Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Martin R. De Haan II, President, Radio Bible Class; Vernon Grounds, President Emeritus, Denver Seminary; Bruce Schoeman, Lowell Lundstrom Ministries, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and others.

This appears to be another example of how Modalists are trying to be accepted by evangelical Christianity, and *discerning* Christians need to "have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather, expose them" (Ephesians 5:11).

So while there is much of a positive nature in the book, I cannot recommend it because of this serious error contained in it.

BOOK REVIEW

Rock Music VS. The God of the Bible

By David W. Cloud

Way of Life Literature, 2000

Reviewed by Steve Lagoon

This book is an extensive, if not exhaustive (438 pages), look at the spiritual dangers of modern popular music. It is among the best-researched and documented works on the subject of rock music.

Cloud begins the book by sharing his personal story and the place rock music played in his life before his conversion to Christ. Next Cloud gives an extensive history and background on the origins of rock music. He seems to include most forms of modern popular music under the category of "rock," including Pop, Adult Contemporary, etc. Cloud traces the origins of rock music to multiple influences including, "(1) black rhythm and blues, boogie-woogie, and jazz, (2) hillbilly boogie country music, and (3) black and Pentecostal spirituals and jazzed-up Southern gospel" (p. 16).

One of the running themes of this book is Cloud's thesis that the heavy beat in rock music is traceable to the African heritage of Black Americans, which heritage included the use of heavy drum beats in tribal religion. The other source Cloud points to is the use of drums by adherents to Voodoo. For these theories, he says he has been called a racist, a charge he denies (pp. 218-219).

A significant part of the book is the critical reviews of many of the most famous artists in rock music history. One is struck by a few common themes that recur in the lives of these musical acts. For instance, it is truly remarkable how many of these rock artists grew up in Christian homes. In fact, Cloud even offers advice to parents in order to help children avoid the pitfalls into which so many of the families described in the book fell (p. 347).

Another common thread is the incredibly destructive life-style of rock music entertainers. In fact, one of the truly frightening sections of the book is that called "*A List Of Rock & Roll Musicians Who Have Died Young*," which begins on page 362. The list is extensive and should serve warning to any seeking to live the "Rock & Roll" life-style. One point of criticism, however, is that he includes in the list people whose early death had nothing to do with their involvement with rock music. For instance, he included Buddy Holly, who died in an airplane crash, and former Beatle member, John Lennon, who was shot with a gun by a maniac.

The sections on the Beatles and Elvis Presley are especially well researched and offer a much more disturbing picture of these cultural icons than we have been treated to in the mainstream media.

The book offers much food for thought for those who want to keep one foot in the church, and one foot in the world. The book is well written, and highly informative. I recommend it to our *discerning* readers.

[R.A.S. stocks this book and it will be listed in our next catalog.]

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