

# The Discerner

"Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"

Volume 23, Number 3

July • August • September 2003

## AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL HERESY-EXPOSING QUARTERLY

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## EDITORIAL

*By William A. BeVier*

Our lead article in this issue presents Arnold Murray and his Shepherd's Chapel. For some 20 years he has been preaching from the small town in northwest Arkansas of Gravette (population 1400). His congregation in Gravette is rather small, but he has a television audience of devoted followers in the millions. To criticize Murray on the Internet brings an immediate response by e-mail in his defense from his followers. In our article we will let the documented facts speak for themselves.

We like to keep our readers informed of current events and developments in the cults and other aberrations of Biblical Christianity. One presentation in this issue is by Walter Rea, author of The White Lie, on Ellen White, "prophetess" of Seventh-day Adventism. Rea for many years was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and a faculty member of their Loma Linda University in California.

Our second current development is a short presentation from a variety of sources, which serves as a warning about the Alpha Course.

On rare occasions a cult moves more toward Biblical Christianity, such occurred in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) after the death of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. But when this does happen, there are some within the original

group who reject any changes. They then form their own group. These divisions occurred in the WCG (as it did with Mormonism and the Jehovah's Witnesses after the death of the founders, but for different reasons). One of the break offs from the WCG is led by Gerald Flurry and has taken the name Philadelphia Church of God. The group claims to be the true successors of Armstrong and now is republishing many of his books and booklets.

From time to time RAS receives books from authors and publishers with the request that we review the books, and then decide to carry them in our catalog. Some of these books do not fit our ministry, so are not reviewed in THE DISCERN-ER. Some books we do decide to carry and we call these to your attention. There are other books for which we give favorable reviews, but for one reason or another we decide not to carry them in quantity. In this issue we have three book reviews in this last group. Along with the reviews we do provide the source from which these books can be obtained.

In closing, as with many ministries, summer brought a decline in contributions to RAS. We also are in great need of your prayers in behalf of this ministry, especially for guidance for the Board. Would you pause right now and pray for RAS? Eph. 6:18.

# ARNOLD MURRAY AND HIS SHEPHERD'S CHAPEL

*By William A. BeVier*

For some time we have been receiving requests for information about Arnold Murray and Shepherd's Chapel. For the same period we have been constructing a file on these subjects. Gradually the file had grown to major proportions.

Several ministries have published information and critiques about the man and his activities (some of these ministries are listed at the end of this article). Efforts to obtain specific information directly from Murray and Shepherd's Chapel are largely unanswered, as several have found. The stock response is "Watch my TV program and listen to my tapes." Many have done this and reported on their findings.

Many of his TV programs are presented in the wee hours of the morning (when TV time is less expensive) and on less than major outlets (again, a financial factor). Only a select audience, e.g., people who can't sleep or are up late nights have viewed his program. We have obtained several of his tapes that give a limited perspective on his total beliefs. However, one source reports he has a listening audience of 150 million, is on 150 TV stations, on satellite, and short-wave radio.

Over time data has been collected from a variety of sources so the man and his beliefs are becoming known.

About the man personally, he was born in 1927 in Oklahoma. He claims to have served with the U.S. Marine Corps in Korea. He was once a farmer, and then was employed by the U.S. Postal Service in Gravette, Arkansas, where he still resides and is the location of his Shepherd's Chapel (actually, a somewhat small metal building). Reportedly services are held at Shepherd's Chapel (the building) on the first and third Sundays of the month (enough to qualify it as a "church"). Murray's real outreach is his daily hour-long TV broadcasts and his tapes. During the TV programs he is seated at a desk in front of the American flag. He also conducts "Passover" conventions each year in Gravette.

At one time there were claims he had a doctor's degree from a seminary or university.

No evidence of this has ever been found by researchers. More recently Murray has instead claimed that he has the anointing of God and that's all he needs. It is obvious from his programs and

tapes he has no formal theological training. He repeatedly refers to Biblical Hebrew and Greek words, but it is obvious he does not know the languages. He mispronounces Biblical words, especially proper names. His resources seem to be a King James Bible and a Strong's Concordance. He evidently has read other sources, based on the ideas he expresses. They didn't come from God or the Bible.

The man's theology is the greatest concern.

All who have studied Murray's theology agree he is a Modalist. That means God exists in three modes, not in three Persons, the Trinity, revealed in the Bible. Modalism was declared a heresy by the ancient church, but it has reappeared at various times and in various forms in church history. Oneness Pentecostals maintain the same concept today. Murray claims the Godhead is three offices, not three Persons. Those who believe in the Trinity are called "yo-yos" by Murray (Broadcast, 6-4-91).

Murray also claims we were with God before being born on this earth (Tapes #146 and #436). This is similar to the concept held by the Mormons.

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**Murray also holds to Anglo-Israelism—the same view that was held by Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God.**

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Murray also holds to Anglo-Israelism, a.k.a. British-Israelism. The same view was held by Herbert W. Armstrong formerly of the Worldwide Church of God (who incidentally appeared on his TV program seated behind a desk). British-Israelism claims in one way or another that the ten northern tribes of Israel migrated to northern Europe, and eventually a portion came to North America.

This view makes a distinction between Israel and the Jews (though the terms were used interchangeably in the Post Exilic books of the Old Testament, e.g., Ezra and Nehemiah). They further claim the British and Americans are descendants of the ten "lost" tribes and by implication superior to the Jews and usually to the blacks. Murray makes a distinction between "whites" and "nonwhites." Again, incidentally, the term "ten lost tribes" never occurs in Scripture. Paul and James did not know about any "ten lost tribes" (see Acts 26:7; James 1:1). Jesus sent His apostles to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:5-6) and they stayed right in the land, Judah and Galilee.

Murray teaches the false doctrine of the "Serpent Seed" and he connects this with the Kenites in the Old Testament. According to this teaching, Satan had sexual intercourse with Eve in the Garden

of Eden and Cain and his descendents resulted. Cain's descendents, according to Murray, are the Kenites. A study of all the references to the Kenites in the O.T. reveals this is not true (Strong's Concordance lists 14 references to the Kenites). One source quotes Murray as saying the Kenites (Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah, i.e., Christ) established the nation in Jerusalem in 1948.

If, as Murray claims, the Kenites are descendents of Cain, they would have been wiped out in the flood of Noah's day. Murray tries to avoid this conclusion in two ways, either one satisfies his belief. Scripture contradicts both. He speculates since Noah took "two of each kind" on the ark, he took two Kenites. The other possibility Murray sees is that the flood of Noah's day was not universal and Kenites were among the survivors.

Murray also holds to the "gap theory" of creation. He maintains there is a gap of indeterminate time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. This view was widely held by many otherwise Biblical Christians in the past, e.g., in the first edition of the Scofield Reference Bible. Murray claims there were "men" (angels, he terms them) inhabiting the earth in Genesis 1:1. They disobeyed God, e.g., Satan's rebellion, and God destroyed the existing earth, and started over in Gen. 1:2. But the Bible states Adam was the "first man," and that sin entered the earth with Adam and Eve. Further, the Hebrew text of Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 connects the two verses with the Hebrew word waw ("and"), indicating a continuation of the thought. The same word is used in Gen. 1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, etc. Russell Grigg in 1997 made a convincing eight-page presentation on the Internet refuting the Gap Theory ([www.answersingenesis.org/does/1132.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/does/1132.asp)).

Murray, like most cult leaders, denies the Biblical revelation of eternal punishment, instead believing annihilation of the ungodly. He does at times indicate a second chance in the future for some (contradicted by Heb. 9:27).

Arnold Murray maintains that those who believe in the rapture of the Church are cultic (TV program 5-16-91 and Shepherd's Chapel "Our Statement of Faith," p. 2).

Murray claims all who believe in a literal six-day creation are going to hell (The Shepherd's Chapel Newsletter #126, 4-89). He once claimed the Antichrist would appear in 1981 ("Seed of the Serpent," taped in 1979). This failed prophecy is enough to identify him as a false prophet. It should be said, that since 1981 Murray has avoided setting dates for predicted events.

In spite of his repeated doctrinal errors, Murray states: "I am a servant of the living God that carries the end time message and it's either time to wake up now, or go down with your boat, friend" (The Shepherd's Chapel Questions and Answers Period, aired 5-16-91). It

can be remembered that Herbert W. Armstrong also claimed to be the “end time” messenger.

One researcher wrote:

I have personally watched over 50 hours of Arnold Murray’s programs and conclude that only a Biblically ignorant person could ever possibly believe this false teacher, who recently on TV pulled a plaster cast of a foot print out of his desk and claimed it was the foot print of an angel, 10-15 million years ago. The amount of Murray’s false teachings could fill volumes (“Jesus People Newsletter,” Vol. 28, Issue 1).

William M. Alnor, a researcher and viewer of Murray’s programs in the Philadelphia area, stated he was “put off” by Murray’s “frequent insults and crass language” (“The Christian Sentinel,” 1994). The same viewer said: “The message Arnold Murray is preaching is cultic and lethal of one’s soul.” Alnor added the “serpent seed” doctrine has been linked to various identity “Christian” and right-wing neo-nazi groups. Others have come to the same conclusion. This relates to Murray’s doctrine about the Kenites, whom Murray says includes the Jews. This is not to say that Murray belongs to any of these groups, but his teaching fosters and encourages them.

To our knowledge, there has been no book-size critique of Arnold Murray and Shepherd’s Chapel, only articles. One of the most complete and recent articles about Arnold Murray and Shepherd’s Chapel is found in “The Quarterly Journal,” Apr-Jun 2003 published by Personal Freedom Outreach (17 pages). In addition to some new materials, it brings together a compilation of findings of earlier researchers, e.g., Randall Price, B. J. Oropeza, William Alnor, Ron Rhodes, and Robert Morey. The Personal Freedom Outreach article is documented by 100 endnotes, many from Murray’s own tapes, newsletters, and broadcasts.

What some might consider minor faults is that Murray advocates keeping the Passover (he has “Passover Conferences”), tithing, and keeping a “Christian Sabbath.” This indicates his lack of understanding the differences between the Old Testament (Mosaic Law) and the New Testament. He also believes if one does not maintain good works, one can lose his salvation. Murray also claims there is a “Bible in the stars,” and that he is able to interpret it (“Personal Freedom Outreach Journal,” Apr-Jun 2003, p. 8).

In 2001 Murray put on the Internet “In answer to Critics by Pastor Arnold B. Murray” ([www.shepherdschapel.com/answers.htm](http://www.shepherdschapel.com/answers.htm)). All of his tapes list “Dr.” Arnold B. Murray, but he used “Pastor” on the Internet. In this message Murray denies things that others have documented with quotations from his TV programs, tapes, and newsletters. He does affirm and seek to explain by his interpreta-

tions of Scripture such of his beliefs as the Godhead (non-Trinitarian). He terms his critics at this point “witch hunters.” He defends his concept of “Serpent Seed” with such verses of Scripture as Mt. 13 (the “tares” are the Serpent Seed); Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:9. He defines “Kenites” as meaning “sons of Cain.” The Hebrew word Kenite and Cain are related in their roots, but “Kenite” doesn’t mean the “son of...” If Murray had studied his Strong’s Concordance he should have realized this.

He also refers to a supposed “Doctorate of Religious Education,” but declines to name its source. Researchers, as noted above, have found no such doctorate held by Murray.

He concludes his Internet message by affirming that anyone who really studies God’s Word will agree with him. But he acknowledges some disagree with him. In this Internet message he makes no effort to respond to many other of the criticisms of his theology, e.g., Anglo-Israelism, our supposed preexistence with God before our physical birth, the Gap Theory.

On one tape Murray states:

Bless your heart if you have ever been deceived by the Kenites, and I am speaking now in the spiritual level, if you have ever really believed that group was the chosen of God you were deceived by Satan. Repent of that even more so than your personal sins in the personal sense” [sic.] (“Grace: Baptism,” tape #406).

Remember, Murray equates the Kenites with the Jews and he affirms the “Jews” killed Christ.

In view of the teachings proclaimed by Murray over a period of 20 years, it is apparent Christians who know their Bibles will avoid this man and his followers, except to attempt to point out to them the truths of Scripture. Many of his followers are zealous defenders of the man and his ideas, but one is reminded to Rom. 10:2 (“...a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge”).

### **Some Sources**

Christian Research Institute International, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA

Jesus People Newsletter, Sacramento, CA

Watchman Fellowship, Arlington, TX

The Christian Sentinel, <http://cultlink.com/sentinel/murray.html>

Russell Gripp, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/does/1132.asp>

Personal Freedom Outreach, Apr-Jun 2003, St. Louis, MO

Let Us Reason, <http://www.letusreason.org/Poptea4.htm>

The Watchman Expositor, <http://www.watchman.org>



## UPDATES

*Walter Rea on Ellen White*

Perhaps no other person, unless it would be Dr. Fred Veltman, has done more research on the writings of Ellen G. White than Walter Rea. In the 1980's, Walter Rea, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and ardent supporter of Ellen White discovered that a large portion of her writings were plagiarized. Here is the report of his latest research. A cassette tape of his presentation on this subject may be obtained from the San Diego Adventist Forum by calling (619) 561-2360.

### **The Letter from Walter Rea dated May 2003**

Dear Friends: For over one hundred and fifty years many people of good character and high position in the S.D.A. Church questioned what was being promoted by the church concerning Ellen White and her claims of divine revelation.

Most, if not all, of the criticism was either dismissed as unfounded or the evidence of such criticism was covered from view. As late as a Bible Conference in 1919, many leaders including Bible teachers, ministers and conference officials were voicing their concerns over the way her written materials were being misrepresented.

The mythology promoted was that by her own admission Ellen White did not read other's written materials, was not influenced in any way by human beings when she wrote, and God Himself was the only author of her material.

It was during the mid 1970's that some of the secrecy and mythology that surrounded Ellen's writings were exploded. For the first time in over a hundred years or more some of the mechanics used in her writings were revealed. Also, some of the names of those who helped in manufacturing her books became known. The amount of human help emerged in the January 1980 where the committee reviewing past evidence of human involvement announced that such evidence was shocking. It was also declared at that Glendale meeting that "if every paragraph in the book *The Great Controversy* was footnoted in reference to its original source, every paragraph would be footnoted." Thus it would acknowledge that the book was of human ideas and not divine inspiration. During the last several years, seeking to verify or disprove that statement, I have spent hundreds of dollars and thousands of hours accumulating and studying many of the books that have now been admitted by the White Estate as having been used in the compilation and revisions of the book, *The Great Controversy*.

This material is now available to all in its three forms:

- (a) A copy of the early 1887 edition where no credit of any kind was ever given to any human source. The footnotes—added in later editions—are included as well as some of the 1,100 Bible texts used.
- (b) Having obtained many of the now admitted sources, we have photocopied the original materials from such authors as D'Aubigye, Wiley, Bliss, Wellcome and others, some often paraphrased.
- (c) Set three seeks to show the evolution of admission to plagiarism from the early editions to the most recent.

Many of these studies have been made available to the church and its educational institutions, wherefore it is now offered to the public through the internet and other means. As always the church refuses to dialogue and often turns from the issues to the one presenting them. It is very clear that whatever inspiration Mrs. White had, it did not come from God but from the sources she read and copied, though she denied copying until the end of her life.

Sincerely, Walter T. Rea

### **The evidence of Ellen White's denials**

1. "I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts* Vol. 3 & 4, *Appeals to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of *How to Live.*" *Review and Herald*, Oct 8, 1867.
2. "My views were written independent of books or of the opinions of others." *Manuscript* 7, 1867.
3. "And here I would state that although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless in marks of quotation." *Review & Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867.
4. "You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision the precious rays of light shining from the throne." *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 67.
5. "McCullagh stated in a large congregation that it was reported by one who knew that I picked up things written in books, and sent them out as something the Lord had

shown me.” *The Fannie Bolton Story*, White Estate, 1990, p. 77.

6. “I have not been in the habit of reading any doctrinal articles in the paper, that my mind should not have any understanding of anyone’s ideas and views, and that not a mold of any man’s theories should have any connection with that which I write.” Ellen G. White Estate, 1887, vol. 1, p. 21.
7. “If Mrs. White has gathered the facts from a human mind in a single case she has in thousands of cases, and God has not shown these things which she has written in these personal testimonies.” *Life Sketches of James and Ellen White* S.D.A. Pub. Assn., 1880, p. 328.
8. “When I presented to Mother questions as to what we should do regarding the quotations from historians and the references to these historians, she was prompt and clear in her opinion that we ought to give proper credit wherever we can.” W. C. White to A. O. Daniells, June 20, 1919, File 83b.
9. “I think that you and Sister White should make a clean, clear-cut statement with reference to this question of plagiarism. Give the exact reasons why there was a failure to give proper credit to the authors quoted.” A.G. [sic.] Daniells to W. C. White, June 24, 1909, File 389.
10. “It seems clear to me that Ellen White was worried over the danger of emptying the messages of their power through her dependence upon the writing abilities of others.” Fred Veltman, Washington, D.C., 1988.

**Walter Rea** writes from Patterson, California.

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# ALPHA COURSE

*By Jo Ann BeVier*

The Alpha Course is sweeping across the country, and across the world, crossing denominational divides. Many recognized church leaders have endorsed it, which is not necessarily a standard measurement of a movement or course. It has also been examined and alerted on by a number of Christian organizations and leaders.

The Alpha Course is the creation of Nicky Gumbel, curate of Holy Trinity, Brompton, England. Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) is an Anglican church, which should be of concern in view of that church's recent stance on the Episcopal Church in America (having come historically from the Anglican Church) on the homosexual issue of installation of a "gay" bishop. Also the Anglican Church has embraced the mass (non-bloody sacrifice of Christ), permitted men who have denied the Virgin Birth, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and in fact have no knowledge of the spiritual rebirth to minister as clergy. Such an affiliation does not speak favorably for one who is a spiritual leader, teaching others what to believe. It is true, one cannot "brush" the entire Anglican Church with one broad brush, but affiliations should be considered.

One must also remember that Holy Trinity Brompton became the center of "holy laughter" (Toronto Blessing) for England and Europe. This movement embraces the "second blessing" teaching, along with being "slain in the spirit," animal noises and uncontrolled laughter. Nicky Gumbel was indoctrinated into the Toronto Blessing and was instrumental in the spread of this experience-driven movement.

There is also the embracing of Roman Catholicism's teaching, including enthusiasm for the mass and refers favorably and often to Roman Catholicism and to the pope.

While Gumbel has some truth, there is also much error in the light of Bible truth. A dangerous mix. Bible believing Christians need to be beware.

# SHADES OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG: THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD

*By William A. BeVier*

When Herbert W. Armstrong died in 1987 changes began to take place in the Worldwide Church of God. These changes were led by Joseph Tkach, Armstrong's successor, and later by his son, Joseph Tkach, Jr. The changes were so radical that recently the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) has accepted the Worldwide Church of God into membership (in spite of many believing the organization still holds many non-Biblical ideas).

The changes also produced divisions within the former leadership and membership of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG). Many left the WCG, some forming new organizations. The most prominent new organization took the name "Philadelphia Church of God" and is led by Gerald Flurry, a former leader in the WCG. The headquarters is in Edmond, Oklahoma. The word "Philadelphia" was taken from Revelation 3:7-13, the church at Philadelphia being one of the seven churches of which Christ leveled no criticism (Rev. 2-3).

Flurry claims to be the real successor of Herbert W. Armstrong and remains true to Armstrong's beliefs. Their primary publication is a periodical named "The Philadelphia Trumpet," and like Armstrong's periodical, "The Plain Truth," is distributed free of charge.

"The Philadelphia Trumpet" is a slick 30-page, colorful magazine published monthly. It features an editorial by the Editor-in-Chief, Gerald Flurry, followed by articles of contemporary interest. Recent issues have featured articles titled "Prophecy Comes Alive in Iraq"; "Is Iraq About to Fall to Iran" (Flurry believes this will happen); "SARS and Rumors of SARS"; "Cuba: From Communism to Catholicism"; "The French Betrayal"; "Failing to Bring Peace" (the U.N.); "Making Modern Mittelfrika" (European Union's, led by Germany, exploits in Africa); "Resurrecting the Gestapo"; "The Cause of Weather Crisis." As seen by the titles,

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**Flurry maintains  
Armstrong's belief  
in Anglo-Israelism,  
stating British and  
Americans are  
descendants of the  
"Ten lost tribes of  
Israel."**

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these topics are important to many people today. The twist on most of these articles is that Herbert W. Armstrong, in one way or another predicted all these events would happen.

Flurry maintains Armstrong's belief in Anglo-Israelism, repeatedly stating that the British and Americans are descendents of the "Ten lost tribes of Israel." By his understanding of the Old Testament, following Armstrong, modern Germany is Assyria and if the British and Americans don't "repent," they will be destroyed by Germany and its revived Roman Empire that will be supported by its associate, the Roman Catholic Church. Even if the European Union becomes a revived "Roman Empire," the German people aren't Assyrians. Neither are the British and Americans descendents of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (as Armstrong claimed). To my knowledge, no one has explained how the British (tribe of Ephraim) can become a member of the tribe of Manasseh by immigrating to America.

Flurry also follows Armstrong in conducting TV and radio programs, including short-wave. From the "letter" included in each issue of "The Philadelphia Trumpet" it is seen the publication has a readership around the world. Because of the expenses of the lengthy lawsuits with the Worldwide Church of God (explained below), Flurry had to cancel most of his TV outlets, but hopes to reestablish them now that the litigation is over.

In the May 2003 issue of "The Philadelphia Trumpet" Flurry wrote:

Mr. Armstrong's writings are the foundation of all that we believe. We teach his messages to our people quite diligently. However, we have been unable to teach them to the world. These works were blotted out by the WCG. We could not offer them to a deceived humanity—until now! (p. 1)

Flurry's reference here is to the long struggle the Philadelphia Church of God had with the Worldwide Church of God over control of Herbert W. Armstrong's writings. The WCG claimed ownership of all of Armstrong's writings as part of his estate. After the WCG began to make changes in their beliefs, they either revised Armstrong's writings or withdrew them from publication. The PCG began to publish Armstrong's original works on their own. The WCG sued alleging infringement of copyrights. The Philadelphia Church of God took the Worldwide Church of God to court in a counter suit to gain control of Armstrong's publications. Early court decisions supported the Worldwide Church of God. The Philadelphia Church of God kept appealing. The lawsuit dragged on for six years. The lawsuit was expensive for both groups. The WCG had lost much of its membership; it had closed both of its colleges (Pasadena, CA and Tyler, TX);

and no longer offered its magazine free of charge. The WCG finally contacted the PCG agreeing to settle the lawsuit by the PCG paying the WCG a fee in exchange for being given ownership of the copyrights to 19 of Armstrong's publications (the "fee" was about two million dollars). Flurry termed this a "Miracle Victory!" ("The Philadelphia Trumpet," June 2003, p. 1).

Flurry has now opened his own college, named Imperial College. He again is following the steps of Herbert W. Armstrong. He, too, realizes the benefit of teaching young people his ideas. Flurry believes that now the PCG owns the copyrights to many of Armstrong's works, they can "teach that message to the world" (Ibid, p. 1).

Bible prophecy was one of the hallmarks of Armstrong's ministry as it is of Gerald Flurry. This is a very popular topic with many people and certain to gather a response. Unfortunately this includes those who have little or no personal knowledge of the Scriptures from individual study.

It should be remembered, that Gerald Flurry has stated all he and the Philadelphia Church of God believes is based on the "foundation" of the writings of Herbert W. Armstrong. RAS still has in stock five published works pointing out the Biblical errors of Herbert W. Armstrong.

After Armstrong's death the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God did well to recognize his errors and withdraw most of his writings from circulation. But individuals such as Gerald Flurry have fought to perpetuate Armstrong's ideas, though not patterning themselves after his personal life. If one is familiar with the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong, that person should have a good understanding of the teachings of Gerald Flurry and the Philadelphia Church of God.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### TheoPhostic Counseling Divine Revelation? Or Psycho Heresy?

By Martin and Deidre Bobgan

Santa Barbara, CA 93110: East Gate Publishers, 1999

*Reviewed by William A. BeVier*

“**T**heoPhostic Counseling” may be a new term to many. It is the name given to a method of counseling which Dr. Ed M. Smith, a psychologist, coined. Smith has since retitled his method “Theophostic (lower case “p”) Ministry.” The term “counseling” has come to have legal ramifications, e.g., “Counselors” increasingly need state government certification. Smith seeks to avoid governmental involvement with his method. He even discourages ministers from using the word “counseling.”

The Bobgans have been writing books in the area of psychology and its relationship to the Bible and Christian living for some years (this is their fifteenth coauthored book). This one deserves a careful reading by concerned Christians.

After studying Smith’s teaching manual (he apparently claims most anyone can learn his method) and listening to his tapes, the Bobgans have concluded TheoPhostic counseling is a combination of “many existent therapies, including psychoanalytic, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and cognitive-behavioral therapies” (back cover of book). They conclude it also has elements of inner healing movements, guided imagery, visualization, and hypnosis. The Bobgans document these concepts in the book from Smith’s own manual and tapes.

Smith claims his method came to him as a divine revelation from God. The clear implication is that God still is giving revelations to individuals apart from or in addition to the Bible. The Bobgans and many of us have difficulty accepting this idea.

Smith further claims cures of all sorts of emotional problems from use of his method. He repeatedly states in his manual that problems come from past traumatic experiences which Smith terms “lies.” A person needs to return mentally to these experiences and think upon them until Jesus speaks to them. The method, says Smith in his manual produces “...divinely accomplished miracles” (Ed M. Smith, Beyond Tolerable Recovery: Moving beyond tolerable



existence into genuine and emotional inner healing.

TheoPhostic Counseling, 1996, p. 11, quoted by Bobgans).

Smith's method came to him after a session with women who claimed they had suffered sexual abuse.

The only way a person who claims to have a direct revelation from God can be evaluated is by comparing what they say and do with the known revelation in Scripture. The Bobgans do that and conclude Smith has taken various psychological methods developed by others and given them a veneer of Christianity.

The Bobgans summarize TheoPhostic theory and practice as being:

Present problems are due to past (usually early-life) events, early interpretation of those events ("lies"), and their accompanying emotions.... located in the "dark room," which must be accessed through "drifting" into the past in search of early "memory pictures" that feel the same as the negative feeling accompanying the present problematic situation. During this search, the client is encouraged to find Jesus and describe what he is doing and saying.

Those familiar with Freudian psychoanalysis see a similarity with Smith's method. Smith has been a practicing psychotherapist for over 20 years, and the Bobgans repeatedly document the various methods that influenced Smith in his "divine revelation" which results in a slightly new, but clearly eclectic method.

In his manual Smith cites cases where his method has produced "cures." The Bobgans point out there is no verifiable proof of Smith's claims.

The Bobgans document that Smith's method is directive, though he claims it is not (it is God directing the process and producing the "cure"). Smith's approach is deceptive at best, but can appeal to many people. Smith's TheoPhostic "counseling" is making inroads into many churches and influencing Christian people, though Smith claims it also works with unbelievers. He states he has "led" many people to Jesus using his method, but the Bobgans never make reference to the Gospel (believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for sinners) in their analysis of Smith and his method.

The Bobgans also cite in one of their chapters the repeated "Misuse of Scripture in TheoPhostics." Smith confesses he does not find the method in Scripture, but then attempts to use Scripture to support what he does (Bobgan, p. 37). The Bobgans state Smith's misuse of Scriptures should be enough to turn Christians away from TheoPhostic counseling (p. 48).

In several of their chapters (there are nine in the book) the Bobgans directly relate Smith's method to existing and older psycho-

logical methods. They repeatedly quote Smith to demonstrate this. Two complete chapters are devoted to Freud's psychoanalysis and how this has influenced Smith.

The Bobgans conclude their book with a chapter affirming God's sufficient provision for human needs is in Scripture. They ask the obvious question, if God really wants to help the human race, why did He wait to reveal it only a few years ago to Ed M. Smith?

The Bobgans assert TheoPhostic counseling is just another man-made attempt to meet human needs, rather than a reliance upon and belief in God's revelation in Scripture.

RAS does not plan to stock this book, but it is available from Psycho Heresy Awareness Ministries, 4137 Primavera Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93110.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement

By Dan Lucarini

Evangelical Press, 2003

*Reviewed by Jo Ann BeVier*

To begin with, Dan Lucarini was a rock star performer, arranger and composer. Following and during this time he was a worship leader for several evangelical churches in the U.S. In fact, the subtitle for his book is “Confessions of a former worship leader.” Evangelical Press published the book in 2002 and the fourth printing was in 2003.

The subject of music in the church may never have been as controversial as in the past 50 years. There is an extremely wide spectrum of views on the subject of what music should be used in worship. The author has a gracious spirit, which is evident in his warm and wise treatment of the subject of worship and ministry and his sharing of his own spiritual and musical journey prepares the way of what he sees to be a major problem in the church today. He makes it hard to deny that he is right.

In the first chapter the author’s wife likened the Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) movement to a mighty storm that had once blown hundreds of monarch butterflies on to a sandy beach and they had tried to rescue them without a great deal of success. Hence the title, “Saving butterflies from the storm.” In the 1990’s the movement blew into our church services by powerful forces and anyone who got in the way was like the butterfly, swept away and wounded and dumped to perish. Others were swayed by the immorality, deception and divisiveness that accompanied the CCM storm.

The author says he was not famous or well known but one who spent several years inside the movement acting as a CCM change agent, leading churches through the difficult transition from traditional services to contemporary praise and worship. He was convinced it was the right thing to do.

Two years ago he left the CCM movement after “God opened my eyes to the deception and dangers within it.” He also proceeds in the following chapters to warn churches considering a switch and to give answers and refutes arguments. He also states that others have

written on the subject who were never a part of CCM so contemporaries would not read their material, labeling them as fundamentalists or traditionalists holding on to dead traditions.

The book is written in a “down to earth” style and not a theological discussion of music. He gives a key to terms that are used in the CCM movement. It is not a confrontational book, meant to offend, but one that will glorify God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just a look at some of the chapter titles gives a good idea what he covers:

“My Story”

“The Big Lie”

“Seducing the Saints”

“Splitting Churches”

“Isn’t it just a matter of personal preferences and tastes?”

“Isn’t music amoral?”

“But God made music—isn’t all music inherently good?”

“Show me where the Bible says that rock music is evil”

“Down the slippery slope of blended services”

“How do we choose acceptable music for services?”

In his chapter of “I Want my MTV!” he says one excuse for using CCM in church services is “we are trying to reach the Unchurched.” This goes with the “seeker sensitive” (or “seeker friendly”) movement sweeping churches today. A number of church leaders are quoted as the problems being the loss of God’s being central in the life and worship of the church and giving way to self or people-centered worship—worship of the created rather than worship of the Creator.

He gives some very practical solutions listing them with explanations. Lucarini closes with a call for a turning around—and getting on the right road.

The author also has endnotes and gives his e-mail address: [danlucarini@msn.com](mailto:danlucarini@msn.com)

RAS does not carry this book, but has a few copies on hand for \$12.00, plus postage and handling.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### Handy Dandy Evolution Refuter

By Robert E. Kofahl, Ph.D.

San Diego: Beta Books, 1980, 159 pp  
Creation-Science Research Center,  
PO Box 23605, San Diego, CA 92123

*Reviewed by William A. BeVier*

**T**his small size book (4¼" x 7") is a revised and expanded book written by Dr. Kofahl in 1977. The author's Ph.D. degree is from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). The contents are still relevant. Most evolutionists have not changed their ideas since 1980. It has been said the most evolutionists are persons who want to avoid being responsible to a sovereign Creator, who is God.

The book is probably best suited for young people, especially students being faced with the claims of materialist evolutionists.

The book is divided into twelve sections. The sections of the book deal with Science, Religion, Creation, and Evolution; The Failure of Darwin: Design in Nature; Life from Chemicals: Theory and Improbability; Would Evolution Violate Physical Law?; Can Mutations Supply Designs for New Species?; Fossils—Created or Evolved?; Fossil Man?; Fossils and Geology—Slow or Fast?; Evidence for Evolution; How Old Is the Earth?; Scientific Evidence for a Young Earth; and The World We Live In. There are also two appendices, a list of references (193 endnotes), an index, and a bibliography for further study.

This book is not being stocked by RAS, but it is available from Creation-Science Research Center, San Diego, CA. As the title indicates, it is a "handy dandy evolution refuter."

# CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO YOUR 2003-2005 CATALOG

## OUT-OF-PRINT or OUT-OF-STOCK

Martin Speaks Out on the Cults, G1-26, p. 2  
Facts on: Astrology, AK-2, p. 4  
Facts on: Hinduism in America, AK-6, p. 4  
Questions of the Charismatics, Ch-26, p. 6  
Principalities and Powers, D1-29, p. 9  
Great Asian Religions, ER-8, p. 10  
Enduring to the End, JW-6, p. 12  
Pilgrimage Through the Watchtower, JW-31, p. 14  
Unity School of Christianity: What They Believe, MS-33, p. 18  
“The Way” Seemed Right..., WI-4, p. 29  
Remove Not the Ancient Landmark, TBi-11, p. 36  
How Can a God of Love Send People to Hell?, TDH-8, p. 37  
Signs of the Last Days—When?, TP-19, p. 39

## PRICE CHANGES

Hypnosis and the Christian, D1-19, p. 8, to \$8.50  
Out of Darkness Into Light, JW-30, p. 13, to \$6.00  
Snare of the Fowler, MS-2, p. 16, to \$7.50  
Snatched Before the Storm, TDi-8, p. 38, to \$5.00

## BOOKS NOT LISTED IN THE CATALOG

Culting of America by Rhodes (1 copy), \$11.99  
Science and the Bible by DeYoung (1 copy), \$9.00  
This Little Church Went to Market by Gilley, \$10.00

I Just Wanted More Land—Jabez by Gilley, \$11.00

Unveiling Islam by Caner & Caner, \$10.00

(All prices plus postage)

VIDEO

Harry Potter: Witchcraft Repackaged, Jeremiah Films,  
\$16.75 plus postage.

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