

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

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# The DISCERNER

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## SPECIAL BIBLICAL DOCTRINES REJECTED BY THE CULTS

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

During recent years, I have provided pertinent information on a number of cults and their false systems of religion actively at work in our generation. The expanding activities of the cults are a spiritual threat to millions of people in our time. Undoubtedly, the series of articles of mine have been illuminating and profitable to many of our subscribers, who constitute the reading constituency of *THE DISCERNER*. Strange as it may seem, a large number of people, generally considered, are unaware of the continuous invasion of the cults in our country and in many other areas of the world. It is fortunate, however, that informed Christians are successfully resisting the work of the false systems of religion. We must not forget that these active cultists are successful in gaining followers in most areas in America. These emissaries, who represent spurious organizations, are fully committed to their tasks, and their influence on people is very considerable.

We will begin our discussion on distinct Biblical doctrines which the cults do not uphold. One of primary significance is the Divine Inspiration and the Inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. This doctrine is of fundamental importance to Bible-believing people

in every generation. The deviation from this doctrine is inexcusable in the light of the truth revealed in God's Word. The cults and the theological liberals are in direct conflict with this vital doctrine. It is a foundational pillar in Biblical Christianity. With the denial of inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures, the rejection of other basic doctrines will inevitably follow. I have never found an exception to such a development.

We must not be misled by the claims of the cults and the liberals, that the Bible is inspired truth in the same manner as Shakespeare, Milton, and other eminent authors that are believed to be inspired in their magnificent writings. It is erroneous to compare their literature with the Divinely-inspired truth of the sacred Scriptures. The brilliant authors mentioned were motivated and stirred intellectually at the time of their writings of their very famous literature, but they were not Divinely inspired and infallible in their authorship of the famous works ascribed to them a few centuries ago. The Divine inspiration is limited to the 66 Canonical Books of the Bible. The Biblical authors were controlled by God and were incapable of error. The Holy Spirit superintended their vital work with His power. Actually, the

Holy Spirit is the real Author of the Scriptures, while using human personalities as agencies in such writings. This is a very fundamental difference between those who produced famous literature, and those who were Divinely inspired in writing the Holy Scriptures. It is necessary for us to understand this important distinction between the works of literature produced, and that of the Divinely-inspired Scriptures, which bear the evidence of direct inspiration.

The Bible speaks with authority on the subject of inspiration of the Scriptures. This obviously covers the Books of the Old and the New Testaments. The Divine inspiration has been brought to our attention in the following Scriptural passages: "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness that the name of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Peter also states it in these words: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation, for prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:16-17). The Psalmist adds this statement: "Forever thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89).

I believe in the verbal inspiration in all of the Scriptures: Not only were the thoughts of the authors Divinely inspired, but the words also were. Plenary inspiration is often used, when inspiration is referred to. This means full and complete inspiration. This lofty position is not held by the cults and the liberals.

Another faulty view is held by the cults, namely, ongoing inspiration

and revelation. Conservative Bible-believing groups reject this position as being unBiblical and false. Some denominations, but mainly the cults, have come out for continued revelation. During my entire ministry, I have rejected completely the often-held view of continued revelation. It has no Scriptural support, and hence, it is false!

I fully agree to that evaluation. Let us consider very carefully the following statement from the Word of God: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:19); and just prior to this statement are the words "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rev. 22:19). The context makes it clear that God's judgment will come upon those who tamper with God's revelation. These statements constitute a clear rejection of that position; and with that, it refutes the concept of continued revelation. The verses just referred to forbid subtracting or adding writings to the holy Scriptures. This does not include Divine guidance in life's many situations through His Word, and by the Holy Spirit. Many groups, however, have continued to teach and preach on-going revelation. This doctrine is not supported by the Scriptures. Such revelation may sound appealing, but it is erroneous according to God's Word.

The Latter Day Saints are in the very front ranks among those who claim the validity of continued revelation. The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

have openly and dogmatically said that their founder, Joseph Smith, by divine revelation had discovered the Golden Plates in the state of New York miraculously, and this, in turn, made possible the securing of the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith also stated that only his three associates ever saw these Plates. Later, Joseph Smith repudiated them as being liars. This left no other witness to the claims by the founder of Mormonism and the story of those golden plates, which also have become so famous by the Mormon church. In Joseph Smith's so-called revelation, a considerable number of people had migrated from the Middle East to the Western hemisphere before the Christian era in history. I inquired of the fantastic claims of the Mormon church regarding that alleged migration from the Middle East. The famous Smithsonian Institution informed me that there is no verified record in history of such an event. This actually strips the Mormon church of one of its most impressive historical claims. It becomes a myth—not history. When a religious group believes in such an unreliable record they could also believe there is an abundance of cheese on the moon. Such claims bring to the forefront the extent that continued revelation will lead people in making false statements.

Herbert W. Armstrong had also made extraordinary claims which are common to those who propound the theory of continued revelation. Armstrong dogmatically stated that God gave him divine revelation of the true Gospel in the year 1934, and that the gospel had been lost since the latter part of the first century. It was in the year mentioned that he received the

revelation to restore the true Gospel to the world. The statement of Armstrong is another example of the folly of insisting on the theory of continued revelation of God.

Mary Eddy Baker, the founder of Christian Science, boldly made the claim that what she had received was the revelation from God on her religious system. This, too, which she introduced in the last century, may serve as an example of on-going revelation as claimed by cultic groups.

Still another example of one who was supporting the doctrine of continued revelation of God was Ellen White, the founder and the leading personality in Seventh Day Adventism. Her successors have continued to regard her as being inspired by God in her writings. In actuality, it is continued revelation. It means more than being inspired by God, and her writings have been regarded as completely authoritative in Adventism. Essentially, it is a belief in continued revelation.

The following incident took place about a decade ago. Several of the Adventist scholars decided to investigate the major writings of Ellen White. This had been neglected for a century. The scholars discovered that a large part of her writings had been taken from other authors without any credit given to such writings. They simply were incorporated as her own. This is considered unacceptable by present-day standards. It cast a shadow upon the writings of Ellen White which had been accepted as the genuine writings of the founder of Seventh Day Adventism. Her action is widely known as plagiarism, or literary thievery. Soon thereafter,

these scholars were dismissed as a group by the leaders of the Adventist organization, without even a hearing or a fair trial. Obviously, those with authority in Adventism, had to protect the writings of Ellen White at all costs. This development among the Seventh Day Adventists was another blow to those who believe so strongly in continued revelation of God, and in special Divine inspiration.

The Jehovah's Witnesses also have experienced a great deal of difficulty by their numerous date-setting arrangements on prophetic events of the future. It has often necessitated changes and revisions in their writings, which to them have been considered as on-going divine revelation. It has been difficult for them to reconcile many historical events, past and present, with the contradictions of their predictions. Their theory of continued revelation has had a faulty record of many events.

Thirdly, the major cults have been unable to defend their Religious Dictatorship in the light of the Scriptural teachings. All the major cults practice complete dominance by the leaders over their followers. Nowhere in the Scriptures is such authoritarianism sanctioned over the organization and the people. God never gave His church such dominance and dictatorship as that being practiced by the cultic leaders in our time. We read in Hebrews 2:11 that "He (our Lord) is not ashamed to call them brethren." We also read that Paul, the leader in New Testament Christianity, said, that he was the least of the apostles, and the least of all the saints [See I Cor. 15:9; Eph. 3:8]. He recognized no hierarchy or lordship and dominance over the

church and his fellow-believers.

This did not prevent the church in arranging for such positions as pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, and also evangelists. These rendered service to the church, but no dictatorship is arranged in the New Testament Scriptures. Service agencies were needed in the church then and now, and this was arranged.

My presentation is an attempt to come to grips with vital matters often misunderstood in our time. I have pointed out where cults are wrong in doctrine, also in leadership, and practices. We must reject the areas where they are unScriptural, and do this unequivocally. We are consistently warned in Scripture to be aware of the false systems of religion and practices.

We have pointed out where the cults are constantly maneuvering and spreading their false teachings, and also being engaged in propaganda in order to gain followers. Mormon leadership provides us with a good illustration: Throughout their history, up until the recent decade, black men were not qualified for the priesthood. A decade ago, however, the president of the Mormon church, as an authoritarian leader, proclaimed a new revelation from God, that of priesthood for black men. It is now allowable within the Mormon church. Most writers have felt that political and social pressures lately were strong against segregation; and discrimination was so compelling that the president of the Latter Day Saints had no alternative but to act, and it was not divine revelation given to the leader of this cult of 5-million people, and this led him in making the new arrangement.

In this article I have endeavored to summarize what the false teachings will likely do to our country in the years ahead. They are committed to the doctrine of continued revelation,

a biased interpretation of the Scriptures, and religious dictatorship and tyranny by their leader. Their teachings have an expansion with a rapidity that is astonishing.

## MAINTAINING SPIRITUAL BALANCE

Our age is a time of incomparable restlessness with reference to religious issues. The lack of stability on the part of many people has led them to grasp for new formulas which are being propounded these days. In my wide ministry, which has extended over six decades, I have never seen greater pressures on people than now to turn from the old paths and accept new teachings. We have in this issue of *The Discerner* a major article on the forms of deviations which we witness these days. My other article written for this issue is to alert the readers with regard to the peculiar patterns which are being promoted, and the background causes for their appearance in these perilous times in which we live.

What we need, more than anything else in these days, is a reliable spiritual stabilizer. Ship builders have worked tirelessly for decades in seeking to provide the ocean-going vessel with a stabilizer which will respond quickly to the tempest which often besets the vessel at sea. The airplane industry is even more actively involved in devising the kind of stabilizer which will keep the aircraft on an even keel in times of atmospheric turbulence.

The religious sphere is definitely in need of stabilization these days. Very few organizations remain consistent anymore. Old institutions are crashing down, as it were. Society

itself is being shaken to its foundations. There is a very real danger that even Bible-believing people will lose their balance and get thrown off their course. The pull of many strange voices are clamoring to be heard these days. The author of Hebrews has a timely exhortation for all who are living in days of perplexities. He writes "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering for He is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:23-25). Paul, the Apostle, also points to God's arrangement for maintaining stability and how we might be kept from drifting hither and thither: "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14).

Inspiringly, the Scriptures reveal that by faith Moses was kept on an even keel during 40 years of turbulence caused by the rebellious people whom he led. He became one of the most enduring monuments of stability that history has recorded. This he achieved by keeping before him the eternal values and by refusing the transitory things which glit-

tered. Faith is the reliable stabilizer, and hence, all the heroes mentioned in Hebrews, Chapter 11, qualified for a place in God's picture gallery of the faithful because each one of them remained steadfast during extremely difficult days.

A development which has unhinged denominations and organizations from the historic moorings is the liberal theological emphasis in the past generation. The rejection of Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures and Biblical authority has done immeasurable damage in that it has removed the needed spiritual stability of Christians. When Scriptural truth is rationalized, in a wide manner, it is obvious that the minds of people will be exposed to all kinds of error. This is precisely what has happened during this generation. If there are no absolutes, and if the Bible is no longer authoritative in all matters, it is understandable that daily living will be influenced adversely. Liberal theology, when applied, allows divorce and remarriage, abortion

when so desired, social drinking, acceptance of homosexuals in the churches, and other practices which were disallowed in former decades. Obviously, there are some variations among liberals as to the extent that these accommodations may be practiced in the church. To put it properly in focus, it must be said that liberal theology is bankrupt when it comes to providing stability in living. In dealing with homosexuals and the Church, Dr. Harold Lindsell writes in *Christianity Today*, "A church that decides to show compassion toward the homosexual by admitting him to full rights and privileges, shows a false compassion that confirms the sinner in his wicked way." And he goes on to say, "It is dangerous to permit within the churches those who insist upon diminishing the Biblical standards and compromising the law of God." The above statement is a timely one and is on the side of those concerned about maintaining a spiritual balance.

J.E.D.

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

*Dr. Allen Streett, Dallas, Texas*

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, better known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, was founded by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) in 1879. Nine years earlier, when Russell was only eighteen years old, he started conducting an area-wide Bible study in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The class grew into a church-like organization with Russell taking the title pastor, although he was never ordained.

The Watchtower Society has had only four presidents. In addition to Russell (1879-1916), there has been

"Judge" Joseph F. Rutherford (1916-1942), a self-taught lawyer who preferred to be called judge, Nathan H. Knorr (1942-1977), and Frederick Franz (1977-present).

Under Rutherford's reign the name "Jehovah Witnesses" was adopted, based on Psalm 83:18; I Cor. 8:5, 6; and Acts 15:14.

### DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

The Watchtower Society promotes a whole array of bizarre doctrines. Let's examine some of the more interesting ones.

1. **SPIRITUAL ISRAEL.** Jehovah's Witnesses believe themselves to be the "Israel of God" on earth today. In this capacity they serve as God's channel or mouthpiece for revelation. All yet-to-be fulfilled Old Testament prophecies made to the nation of Israel will find their completion in the Jehovah's Witnesses.

2. **THEOCRACY.** Like Israel of old, the Jehovah's Witnesses operate as a theocracy. God is the Sovereign. He operates through a governing board of seventeen life members, who reside at "Bethel," the group's headquarters, located in Brooklyn, New York.

3. **THE GREAT APOSTASY.** Russell, who was greatly influenced by the teachings of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, taught that the normal Christian church had fallen into apostasy. Only the Russellites possess the unadulterated truth—(this is the same claim the Adventists make for themselves. Many of the JW's beliefs are borrowed from this movement).

4. **THE 144,000 ELECT.** Russell originally taught that the Watchtower membership composed the 144,000 elect of Revelation 7 and 14. In his wildest dreams, Russell never envisioned a day when his followers would exceed that number. The unexpected happened in 1914. This dilemma forced the "pastor" to divide his disciples into two classes: those who joined his movement prior to 1914 (there are nearly 6,000 of these people still living today) and those who joined after 1914. The first group he dubbed the "Bride of Christ," born of the spirit, who would reign with Christ from heaven during the millen-

nium. The second group, Russell proclaimed, had to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. If successful, they would inherit the earth. The latter would serve the former.

5. **THE END OF THE WORLD.** Taking a cue from William Miller, the forerunner of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, Russell tried his hand at setting the date for the Lord's return. "1874," Russell predicted! When nothing notable occurred, the self-styled prophet explained that Christ returned "invisibly." He later announced that 1914 would produce the Battle of Armageddon, the end of the age and the millennial reign of Christ. This second failure forced Russell to offer an elaborate explanation which included the casting down of Satan from heaven, and the enthroning of Christ invisibly in His temple. Numerous other prophecies have been uttered regarding the end of the world. The dates have included 1918, 1925, 1941, 1975, 1984. The end must come, according to JW theology, before the last of the 144,000 company dies. Not much time is left!

6. **THE NEW WORLD TRANSLATION.** While believing the Bible to be the Word of God, the Jehovah's Witnesses hold that all present translations are corrupt. For this reason a group of Watchtower scholars was assembled to produce a reliable translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. The end result came in 1961 with the completion of *The New World Translation of Holy Scriptures*. In reality the NWT is a poor translation which attempts to purge our English versions of any embarrassing doctrines, i.e., heaven, hell, trinity, etc. .



## 7. OTHER STRANGE BELIEFS.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not pledge allegiance to the flag, sing the National Anthem, hold public office, vote in elections, serve jury duty or express any patriotic sentiments. Such actions are interpreted by JW's as being idolatrous.

Believing that the Bible forbids the eating of blood (Lev. 17:10-15), the Witnesses refuse to donate blood or receive blood, even under emergency conditions. Many JW's have died as a result.

The life of a Jehovah's Witness is a hapless one. Christmas, Easter, and birthday celebrations are forbidden. Such activities are labeled as pagan.

Over two-million people call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses. Each week they meet in Kingdom Halls, located in 205 countries around the world. Those who give faithful attention to JW practice and doctrine, spend at least 100 hours per month selling *Watchtower* magazines door to door, and otherwise prove themselves worthy, may become eligible to serve four years at Bethel, the headquarters located in Brooklyn, New York. Only 2,000 workers reside at Bethel. Each receives a \$15 per month stipend, plus room and board. Assignments range from janitorial duties to office supervision. The *Watchtower*, translated into 79 languages and circulated to 8-million households, is printed on one of the world's largest printing presses at Bethel.

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society preys on nominal Christians and babes in Christ. Very few JW converts are outsiders to the church. The typical JW approach to witnessing includes a cold call to the home of

an unsuspecting and ill-prepared person. If the JW receives a listening ear, he proceeds to explain that the modern-day Christian church teaches doctrinal error. Following a prescribed formula, the JW quotes scriptural passages out of context, attacks the doctrine of the Trinity, and proclaims the Watchtower Society to be God's channel for truth on earth today. If this argument is well accepted, the proselyte is encouraged to open his home for a JW Bible study. Usually it is only a matter of time before a convert is made.

## ORTHODOX DOCTRINES DENIED BY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

1. THE TRINITY. The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the Father alone is deity. They designate the Holy Spirit to be an impersonal force that emanates from the Father. They relegate Jesus to the category of a created being. He was the first of God's creations. Prior to coming to earth he was Michael the archangel. Hence, Jesus was less than God, but higher than man in his pre-incarnate state. This heresy, known as Arianism, was prevalent in the second century church. At the Council of Nicea (325 AD) this heresy was laid to rest when Jesus was proclaimed to be "fully God" and "fully man."

2. THE ATONEMENT. Whereas present Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ's atoning death alone is sufficient payment for sins, JW's proclaim that man must work off his sins through door to door solicitation and faithful execution of other JW duties. After all, how can an angel atone for mankind's sins?

3. THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. Accord-

ing to the JWs, Jesus was raised a "spirit" being. His body was not raised from the dead. One piece of JW literature states, "Whether it dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere no one knows." Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus there is no gospel, no hope for eternal life and no meaning in the present life (I Cor. 15:1-8; 14-18; 19).

4. HEAVEN AND HELL. The Bible clearly teaches "to be absent from the body" means "to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:6). The JWs teach the soul and the body are one and inseparable. When the body dies, the soul sleeps with the body in the grave. There is no eternal heaven for the saved of the ages, nor an eternal hell for the damned. At the last trump all persons will be raised from the dead to face the judgment. Faithful JWs and others who accept their gospel at that time will inherit the earth. The remaining masses will be annihilated. They will literally go up in a puff of smoke.

## THE TRAGIC STATE OF MOST JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Most Jehovah's Witnesses are deceived souls. Blindly following the teachings of their leaders, they strive to gain God's acceptance through the sale of JW literature. Few, if any, have ever known the love and grace of God. Having no forgiveness of sins, they are without assurance of salvation. Such a condition ultimately leads to frustration, depression, and bitterness.

Jehovah's Witnesses are to be pitied. Their religion involves mental gymnastics and debates. But it does not provide a personal relationship with God. For most JWs God is a far-off celestial Being who is ready to send wrath upon the earth.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are disillusioned. They can be won to Jesus Christ. You may be the person God uses to bring one of these precious souls to the Savior.

## WHEN CHRISTIANS MEET MUSLIMS

*by Victor and Deborah Khalil*

North Americans may think Islam began with Mohammed in the 600's, but if you ask a Muslim, you would probably get a different answer:

"It is as old as time; it is as old as God's creation; as old as Adam and Abraham and Moses. Was not Abraham himself a Muslim, and his son Ishmael the father of the Arab race? Did not Hagar find water for Ishmael at the well Zamzam in Mecca, which would become the very heart of the Muslim world? Does not the Koran contain the unchangeable and eternal word of God, which was revealed in the Arabic tongue?"

Some of those claims, of course, are highly open to question. But they demonstrate how sure Muslims are that theirs is the only religion, the final revelation from Allah and the only way to receive eternal life in paradise.

The word *Islam* means "submission," that is, submission to the will of Allah. To become a Muslim, one must only recite the creed with all his heart: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." Yet Islam regulates every aspect of life, to the point that culture, religion and politics in a muslim country are practically inseparable.

The central point of Islam is the unity of Allah. He can have no equal, no partner. Thus Muslims deny the Trinity and the lordship of Jesus Christ. They think Christians believe that the virgin Mary had relations with God in order to bear Him a son.

The Koran depicts Jesus as a great miracle worker and one of the greatest prophets. But did he die on a cross? No. Muslims believe that when the Jews sought to crucify him, God called him up to heaven and threw his likeness onto someone else, who was crucified by mistake. Traditions add that Christ is to come again—and acknowledge Islam.

The Allah of the Koran is a god of judgment and justice, demanding that human conduct receive due reward or punishment. On the Day of Judgment, each man will be held accountable for his works. The righteous will enter paradise, where all material gifts and pleasures will be lavished upon them. (What the women receive is not mentioned!) The unrighteous will fall into the fires of hell.

To the Muslim, life is preordained, and everything depends upon the will of Allah. As the Koran says, "Allah wills what he wills." More than anything, the Muslim is afraid of Allah. He is taught not to try to escape Allah's will, even by working for a better life than the one into which he was born. He diligently obeys the laws and decrees, hoping that in the Day of Judgment his good works will outweigh the bad.

He's expected to recite the creed, perform the ritual of prayer five times a day (with more merit if in a mosque), fast during Ramadan (no food or drink from sunrise to sunset during

the ninth month of the Muslim calendar), give alms and make at least one *hajj*—pilgrimage to Mecca.

### The Appeal of Islam

Islam is actively seeking converts, especially in the West. Its appeal, however, is often the material incentives offered to those who will convert. In Egypt, for example, where housing is extremely tight, a convert to Islam will be given not only an apartment but a car and a wife as well.

Meanwhile, the truth about Islam is often misrepresented. While Islam claims to offer common brotherhood for all Muslims, it has more sects than Christianity, and news accounts show obvious tensions between them.

Muslims pray at the same time, all facing Mecca, and recite their prayers in Arabic, the language of the Koran (and, they say, of heaven). Muslims who don't speak Arabic recite without understanding the words. They say, "Allah knows."

Islam also appeals to the intellect. Muslims claim that Christianity cannot be proven; Christians must simply accept doctrines such as the Trinity and the deity of Christ. On the other hand, Islam says its fundamentals are purely logical.

However, if a Muslim takes a question about the Koran to his imam (leader) he will undoubtedly hear, "This is the excellency of the Koran—that we cannot understand everything Allah has written in it."

A member of one Islamic sect was challenged by his daughter to compare the Bible and the Koran after she became a Christian. As an engineer, he could not accept the illogic of the Koran and found himself

taking seriously the new truths he read in the Bible. The changes he observed in his daughter and his wife as she too accepted Christ confirmed the power of the Word of God to save. He became a Christian as he saw that faith is the beginning of a living relationship with God beyond logic.

Men are usually attracted to Islam first, and their families follow. Women in the West, however, are being drawn into Islam through marriage. They meet a Muslim man who gives them romance and attention, but they are unaware of the life that lies ahead. Romance ends very abruptly when the wedding ceremony is over, and the woman finds herself married not just to a man from a different culture but to his whole family—and Islam grants her very few rights. Perhaps she will be treated wonderfully for the first year or so—as long as it takes her husband to get an immigration card. Then he suddenly files for a divorce.

Or worse yet, a man will take his American wife and children back to his home country and divorce her there; in the Middle East, the father keeps the children. She returns home alone and brokenhearted. These things happen far too often.

American blacks have been widely wooed by Islam, but through misinformation. They hear, "Christianity is the white man's religion; Islam is the religion of all mankind." They are told that Allah and Mohammed are black. In reality, Muslims in the Middle East still regard blacks as slaves. It would be worse than blasphemy for them to believe that either Allah or Mohammed were black.

Islam's greatest growth comes through population increase, en-

hanced by the polygamy allowed in Eastern Islam. Statistics are hard to confirm, since converts to Christianity are still counted as Muslims in the belief they will eventually return to their true religion.

A Muslim will say to a Christian, "There is much we agree on. We both believe in one God who created everything. We believe in doing good and being obedient to God. If you Christians got rid of the Cross, we would be alike."

But that's not the whole story. In addition to denying Christ's deity, crucifixion and resurrection, the Koran also withholds forgiveness of sin. Because the Muslim believes he will be accountable for all deeds, he seeks salvation by works alone.

The Muslim prays, but Allah is distant and impersonal. The 99 names of Allah include "Great," "High" and "Holy." But not one is "Love." Because the Muslim has never known unconditional love, he finds it strange. Even new converts need time to grasp the reality of God's grace.

### Presenting the Gospel

The leader of an Islamic terrorist group was delivering drugs to the States when he was arrested. Confused and broken, he began reading an Arabic Bible brought to the prison by a Christian lay minister. As he discovered the forgiveness of Jesus, the change in his life was miraculous.

"Anyone who could forgive me for all I have done has to be God," he said.

We have found that sharing one-to-one is a most effective way to build relationships. Arguing about doctrine causes them to dig deeply into

their Koran, but the teachings of Christ draw them out.

Mohammed picked up stories and traditions from nominal Christians. As a result, Muslims think Christians worship three gods—the Father, Mary and Jesus—and also worship statues.

Jesus often answered a question with another question, so we follow that example. First we ask what the Muslim knows about Christianity and what he thinks we believe.

Then we ask what he believes and, most importantly, why. The purpose is to make him think.

Victor once asked a Muslim, "Why don't you eat pork?"

"Because it is unclean," he replied.

"Well, you wash your hands and feet and face before you pray to make you clean," Victor said. "Why don't you just wash the pig to make it clean?"

His point was clear: What makes a person clean has more to do with the soul than the body.

The greatest witness, of course, is simply the life lived before a Muslim friend. The Koran speaks highly of the life of Christ, and Muslims expect the Christian to live accordingly.

But "Christian" nations in the West are shockingly immoral to Muslim eyes. That forces us to clarify that not all Westerners are Christians. When we visit Muslim friends, Debbie wears long sleeves, a high neckline and skirt below the knees. Women talk with women and men with men. (If a woman talks with a Muslim man, he thinks she is looking for a husband or has loose morals.)

Muslims expect us to respect the Bible—never putting it on the floor,

taking it into the bathroom or stacking anything on top of it. Furthermore, writing on the Bible's pages supports their claim that we have altered the text, so we take a clean copy when we visit. They do respect the teachings of Isa (Jesus), so we often start with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5—7. If we spend a year covering three chapters, that's all right; the listener is considering the words backed up by the life led before him.

The Muslim often fears what his family and friends will think if he begins to ask about Christianity, so we respect this. He must have time to consider what accepting Christ will cost him. In the Middle East, he will be persecuted; he may lose his job, his wife and children, and his inheritance. He may even be killed by members of his family, or as in Saudi Arabia, by the government itself. When a Muslim finally stands for Christ, his faith is strong because he hasn't made the decision lightly.

It is also a simple faith, trusting Jesus to protect and keep him. An educated Muslim woman asked her imam some questions that disturbed her about the Koran. When she heard she wasn't to question, she turned to the Bible and discovered its truth. She attended the Arabic church Victor was pastoring then and grew quickly in her faith.

One day when her husband came home with a migraine headache, she told him Pastor Victor often prayed for the sick in the name of Jesus. Since she couldn't reach Victor, she put her hands on her husband's head and prayed. The headache was gone almost immediately. The testimony of her changed life and the answered

prayer brought her husband to Jesus.

### The Power of the Gospel

During a recent trip to the Middle East, Victor saw a Pakistani man praying before eating. He approached him and discovered he and his companions were all ex-Muslims. The man said thousands of Pakistanis are becoming Christians. "They read the Bible, see the truth and turn to Jesus," he said. "It is the work of the Holy Spirit."

Other Muslims are responding as a result of visions or dreams of Jesus. Often they've had some contact with Christians or the Bible prior to these supernatural revelations. But the Holy Spirit is apparently responding to the prayers of God's people and opening Muslim eyes and hearts.

Many Muslims are becoming disillusioned with what they see happening in their countries in the name of Islam. The Ayatollah Al-Khomeini has actually driven many Iranians to Christianity. He promised them freedom; he claimed he would march to Jerusalem and establish Islamic rule; he was to be their Messiah. Instead, his policies have cost the lives of thousands of men and children. The more Muslims fight each other, the more illusive the promised peace

becomes. Many are open to an alternative.

In the West, where debate runs free, Muslims are even more open, and many, in fact, come to the U.S. looking for a better life. Students especially are willing to consider new ideas.

The greatest field, however, is among children. Even if they don't accept Christ right away, seeds are sown into impressionable minds that will bear fruit later. Women ministering to children in Dearborn, Mich., have used puppets, stories and songs in park meetings and home clubs. They start with games, but as trust grows (especially among the parents), they begin to share the truths of the Bible. Many of these children will return to their homelands and become more effective missionaries than any Westerner could be. And all because someone refused to believe they were unreachable.

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of the Authors

(Victor and Deborah Khalil and their 2-year-old son live in Dearborn, Mich. Victor, born in Egypt, is the founder and director of Muslim Ministries Int'l).

## NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM OUR OFFICE

*Ewald Eisele*

**UNHOLY SACRIFICES OF THE NEW AGE** — Paul deParrie & Mary Pride. Yes, another book on the New Age! Only this one reveals something of the dark side which is, for the most part, passed over by other writers on the subject. This book majors on the pagan sacrifices which are practiced today and what affect they may have on the future of the Church. This is

the first book on the New Age which reveals how New Agers plan to eliminate Christians and Christianity as well as any others (mentioned in other books are Orthodox Jews and Muslims) who stand in their way.

The book is in five sections each dealing with its subject in from two to nine chapters. The sections cover: 1) Those Old-Time Religions, 2) To

Live and Die in the New Age, 3) Cannibal Rites and Wrongs, 4) Prepped for the Sacrifice, and 5) Holy Sacrifices.

Author Texe Marrs, in the Foreword says, "What a shocking and scary—but extremely important—book this is! It is a gripping and breathtaking spectacular account of the darkness and evil that has taken a stranglehold on our society today. A whole generation is coming to love and desire death and to worship the destroyer."

This eye-opener is not to be read as a bedtime story! There are some shocking things for even the stouthearted at which to stand in awe! 340 pages, \$8.95

**FIFTEEN REASONS WHY I CANNOT BELONG TO A LODGE OR SECRET SOCIETY** — F. D. Whitesell. This is not a new publication but only a reprint of a tract that has been out of stock for some time. It is listed in our catalog on page 31. 6 pages; two for 25¢

**THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT ARMSTRONGISM** — Roger R. Chambers. This is an up-dated expose' of the Worldwide Church of God which was first printed in 1972. Although the doctrinal position of the cult remains the same, there have been many changes and these are discussed in this edition.

Included are Garner Ted's excommunication, the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, and the recent changes in the leadership of the organization. There is also some very interesting and valuable historical insights presented regarding the nation of Israel and the dispersions and wanderings to which they were subjected.

Present-day Armstrongism still agrees with H. W. Armstrong's claim that Jesus gave to him the "master key" to 90% of Biblical prophecy relating to the end time, and that the identity of true Israel was to be found in the Anglo-Saxon nations. 166 pages; \$7.95

**THE OMEGA CONSPIRACY — I.** D. E. Thomas. The sub-title of the book is, "SATAN'S LAST ASSAULT ON GOD'S KINGDOM." In this fascinating book the author deals with demons, visitors from outer space, the "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1-4, UFOs, and several other topics which deal with the end times. Not everyone will agree with all that he says, especially about Genesis 6, but that should not keep a reader from profiting from the information found in this book. I believe that we should always read with discernment, relating what is written to what is revealed in the Word of God. 240 pages; \$7.95

**HIDING IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING: The Roots of Liberation Theology** — William C. Standridge. This book will help you recognize the basic principles on which all Liberation Theology is based. If you are a Bible-believer you will be shocked to see how the Bible can be used to support false and dangerous political theory and action. An enlightening "study" of Exodus is recorded to show how Scripture can be twisted and misinterpreted to "prove" anything that a twisted mind desires. This class studied in Florence, Italy, but the principles used are the same as those used world-wide. The author is an American missionary who has lived in Rome, Italy, since 1953. 30 pages; \$2.00

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### PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*John E. Dahlin, Editor*

**QUESTION . . .** How do the cults succeed in deceiving so many people?

**ANSWER . . .** There are always potential disciples in every community. When the cultists come to your door they ask that they might speak to you briefly, and tell you that they have something different and new to relate. If you respond favorably, they will continue, and seek to convince you that what they present is of great benefit. They have literature also, and wish to share it. A certain number will listen as they are dissatisfied with their church association. Such are often led astray and become victims of the propaganda of the cultists and are ensnared by their talk. These representatives of the cults appear at thousands of homes, and are frequently successful in gaining followers. They express a willingness to return and be helpful to you in every way possible. Their deceptive work goes on and on in every community in our country. Do not extend hospitality to such false witnesses.

**QUESTION . . .** Will the cults achieve an actual take-over in our country with their false religious systems?

**ANSWER . . .** I do not believe a take-over is possible, but they will gain increasing strength in the years ahead. They now number 20-million in the U.S., or more than one-tenth of our population. More accurately, we might add that one-third of the population has no religious association at all. With this in mind, the cults have a very great strength in our country. It is not to be expected that the strength in number among the liberal denominations will provide an organized opposition to the cults. The present situation is a sobering situation, and constitutes a real challenge to Bible-believing people in our country for a bold action.