

The DISCERNER

“HEREBY KNOW WE THE SPIRIT OF
TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR”

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EDITORIAL

by Dr. Wm. A. BeVier

One of the growing cults today is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, e.g., Mormons. They claim a membership of four and one-half million in this country and over eight million in the world. In the U.S., they have far more members than several of the traditional main-line Protestant denominations.

Like the Seventh-day Adventists, the Mormons also are making a concerted effort to be recognized and accepted as evangelical Christians. Many evangelical Christians seem to know little about the Mormons, except they once advocated and practiced polygamy. We need to know much more than that, and abundant information is available to those who seek it from a variety of sources, including Religion Analysis Service (see our Catalog).

The Mormons continue their aggressive missionary efforts, at which they appear more successful than Bible-believing Christians. Most of us have had encounters with the "nice" well-groomed young men dressed in suits, ties, and white shirts who come to us two-by-two with *The Book of Mormon* wanting us to prayerfully decide if what they say is true.

I recently was exposed to a new approach by this group. Twice I have been telephoned at my home by Mormon missionaries who wanted to make an appointment to talk with me. Apparently my name was left at a local Mormon church by one of my

students, and the missionaries were following up on what they thought to be an interest on my part. In both cases, after a few minutes of telephone conversation, both of the Mormons decided further contact would be fruitless for them.

It is suggested that if one is going to be effective for Christ in encounters with Mormons one needs to be familiar with the history of Mormonism, their primary books *The Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants - Pearl of Great Price* (bound in one volume now), and especially the Bible. Argumentation will probably accomplish no good, following the advice of Paul in I Cor. 2:1-5, but knowledge and the Spirit of God will.

In this editorial it is impossible to give a full presentation of Mormonism, but I would like to remind us of some basic facts.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints claims as its founder Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844). Smith was raised in upstate New York and had little formal schooling (as is evident in his earlier writings). His father, Joseph Smith, Sr., was known as a "neer 'do' well," once charged with counterfeiting gold coins, among other crimes, but was freed when he agreed to testify against his associates. This was the home environment in which Joseph Smith, Jr. was raised. Joseph Smith, Jr.'s mother, with help from a Mrs. Coray, wrote a book which,

among other things, reported the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.'s home life, background, and religious heritage (Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 1985 ed., p. 170).

In 1820, during religious revivals in upstate New York, Joseph Smith claimed to have visions and revelations from God, including having both God the Father and God the Son appearing to him simultaneously telling him not to associate with any existing church and that he was to restore the true church. Smith later reconstructed a history of the events of his earlier "revelations" which occurred between 1820 and 1829, but he didn't write about them until after 1835, several years after *The Book of Mormon* was published (1830). A characteristic of Mormons has been to write or rewrite after the supposed events take place.

In 1823 was the first supposed appearance of the angel Moroni (son of Mormon) to Joseph Smith. He told him about the golden plates and the "spectacles" Urim and Thummin buried on "Hill Cumorah" near his home. The spectacles were to assist Smith to translate the writing on the golden plates which was in "Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics." The reference to "Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics" has caused much ridicule of the Mormons and disbelief of the entire movement by scholars. No Egyptologist has ever encountered such writing, and most deny its existence. The *Mormon Pearl of Great Price* (p. 28, 1979 ed.) has a cut titled "A Facsimile From the Book of Abraham." Abraham, according to the Mormon explanation, is on an altar and idolatrous priest of Elkenah is about to offer him as a sacrifice. Pharaoh is depicted, #4, as standing nearby. Many Egyptologists have viewed this cut, compared it with other ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, and determined it depicts the Egyptian god of

death preparing a dead pharaoh (not Abraham) for translation to the other world. What the Mormons identify as "The Angel of the Lord" in the cut, #1, is actually the departing spirit, in the form of a falcon, of the pharaoh.

The Book of Mormon itself is impossible for a knowledgeable person to believe. It was supposedly written in A.D. 420 and buried by Mormon in Hill Cumorah. However, it has over 10,000 quotations from the King James Bible which wasn't published until A.D. 1611 (see Martin's *The Kingdom of the Cults* for details). The plates were taken to heaven by Moroni after Smith "translated" them, so there is no way today to check or verify what they said.

The Book of Mormon is attested to in its published Preface by three "witnesses": Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. All three later "apostatized" from the Mormon Church. Later, eight more witnesses were added (and the "testimony" of both the three and the eight appear in published copies of *The Book of Mormon*). Of the second eight, five "apostatized," i.e., left the Mormon Church, and one of them testified in court under oath that he saw the plates only "with the eye of faith." His testimony in *The Book of Mormon* is that he had "seen and hefted" the golden plates.

The Book of Mormon is replete with factual errors. For example, it confuses the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. with the fall of the southern kingdom of Judah to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. This relates to the erroneous view of Joseph Smith and many of his contemporaries that the American Indians are the descendants of the "ten lost tribes of Israel." These "ten lost tribes" supposedly fled from Jerusalem, sailing across the Atlantic in a boat with glass windows (centuries before

glass had been invented—though glass was known in Joseph Smith's day). The boat also had holes in both the bottom and the top (Ether, ch. 2, verse 20). Most sailors prefer not to have holes in the bottom of their boats. According to the "Book of Ether" (a chapter in *The Book of Mormon*) the holes were so air could circulate. A story is that when a Mormon was once asked about the holes in both the top and bottom, he replied that the hole in the top was to let out the water that came in the hole in the bottom. Most of us put this in the same category as the early Mormon Apostle Parley Pratt's explanation of the Holy Spirit. He stated the Holy Spirit is a "fluid," that is how He could "fill" people.

Ether chapter 9 also details some of the animals the "house of Emer" could eat in this land. Among them were "all manner of" "oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine . . ." (remembering, these are supposed to have been Jews—eating "swine"?). They also had "horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms" (Ether 9:19). Paleobiologists today all agree that if elephants, cureloms and cumoms (whatever these latter were) ever existed in North America, they all disappeared without leaving a trace.

Alma 7:10 (another part of *The Book of Mormon*) states the Son of God shall be "born of Mary at Jerusalem . . ." Micah 5:2, Mt. 2:1, and Lk. 2:4-7 all state Jesus, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem. I once asked a Mormon missionary about this contradiction and was told Bethlehem is a suburb of Jerusalem. Anyone who has been to the two places knows this is not true.

Most non-Mormons who have studied the matter agree the primary source of Joseph Smith's *The Book of Mormon* was the Rev. Solomon Spaulding's stolen novel *The Manuscript Found* (not the draft of

Spaulding's: *The Manuscript Story*, now in the library of Oberlin College in Ohio). Spaulding wrote both *The Manuscript Found* and *The Manuscript Story*. Walter Martin and others believed the original copy of *The Manuscript Found* is in Mormon hands (see *The Kingdom of the Cults*, pp. 191-195). Also, Smith may have had the help of one of his long-time associates, Rev. Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), in the preparation of *The Book of Mormon* for publication.

Even if there is no relationship between Solomon Spaulding's writings and *The Book of Mormon* (though most students of the subject believe there is), it still does not mean *The Book of Mormon* is an inspired revelation from God as the Mormons claim. They state in their "The Articles of Faith" (supposedly written by Joseph Smith); "8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God" (*Pearl of Great Price*, p. 67). It is interesting, the Mormons believe the Bible must be "translated correctly" to be the Word of God, but this apparently is not necessary for *The Book of Mormon*.

Smith also did an "inspired translation" of the Bible published in 1838, supported by Rigdon, and neither of them knew Greek and Hebrew. (The result was a "revised" King James Version.)

As early as 1842, Rigdon began to take exceptions to some of Smith's continuing revelations, especially those relating to polygamy. However, when Smith declared himself a candidate for President of the United States in 1844, Rigdon was his candidate for Vice-President. Smith's untimely death at the hands of a mob in Carthage, Illinois in 1844 ended his plans to be the nation's president.

Smith had made no plans for a

successor, but at his death Rigdon sought to take control of the some 20,000 Mormons then living in Nauvoo, Illinois, near Carthage. In the struggle for leadership that followed, Brigham Young won, and Rigdon with his followers were forced to leave Nauvoo. Some Mormons believed Joseph Smith's successor should be one of his male descendants. But since his oldest son, Joseph Smith 111, was only eight years old in 1844, he was not ready or capable to succeed his father. Joseph Smith III later joined the Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints, whose headquarters is in Independence, Missouri. This group never sanctioned polygamy, has never been polytheistic as is the Salt Lake City group, had never accepted Joseph Smith, Jr.'s later writings, and, in fact, consider him "a fallen prophet" after 1838. This group has made their leadership hereditary in the family of Joseph Smith, Jr. However, they appear ready to have a new "revelation" on this subject because their current leader, W. Wallace Smith, is nearly 93 years old and has no living son.

If one is interested in pursuing Joseph Smith, Jr.'s marital life further, Fawn Brodie in her *No Man Knows My History* (rev. 1983) on pp. 457-458 lists the known 48 wives of Joseph Smith with the dates of the "marriages." Mrs. Brodie, trained in history, was herself a Mormon until she published her book. Other former Mormons, such as Jerald and Sandra Tanner, of Salt Lake City, have provided us with much information about Mormonism.

Another of Joseph Smith's revelations appears both amusing and pathetic to a student of the Bible. Smith claimed that on one occasion Elijah and Elias appeared to him at the same time. It is evident that Elijah (Hebrew Old Testament) and Elias (Greek New Testament) is one and the same person in the Bible,

just as Isaiah (O.T.) and Esias (Rom. 10:20, N.T.) is the same person. Joseph Smith did not recognize this. He made the same mistake in *Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 27:6 and 9, when he refers to both Elias (27:6) and Elijah (27:9). This same passage (Sec. 27:11) refers to "Michael, or Adam, the Father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days; . . ."

Mormons also claim, based on supposed revelations to Joseph Smith, that they have and can confer both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods on male Mormons. The Bible makes it clear that to be a part of the Aaronic priesthood one must be a literal, physical descendant of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi (e.g., Ex. 28:1). Hebrews 5-7 makes it plain that only Jesus Christ has the Melchizedek priesthood, and since He is alive forevermore, there is no need for anyone else to serve in this unchanging priesthood. He alone is the Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:17).

On the subject of salvation, the Mormons believe salvation is by a combination of faith, ordinances, good works, "etc." Their Articles of Faith (13 articles) has two "etc." (arts 6 and 7). Article 7 is of interest today in view of the charismatic discussions. Article 7 reads: "We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc." This indicates the Mormons are "charismatic." Also, their's is the only doctrinal statement of which I have knowledge that contains "etc." This, of course, leaves it open for any later additions their leadership, e.g., "Prophet, Seer, Revelator" (official title of their President), cares to make.

If more information is desired about the Mormons, including their theology, their vast financial holdings, and their political power and influence, contact our office in Brainerd, Minnesota.

* * * * *

THE ISLAMIC PROGRAM FOR AMERICA

by Fred Hartman

Most Americans older than 40 years of age probably consider Islam to be a religion confined basically to the Middle East, and thought of only in connection with the Arab world, *The Arabian Nights*, or Lawrence of Arabia. While the recent Gulf War drew much attention to that part of the world where the Muslims are predominant, it seems almost foreign to older Americans to consider the Islamic movement a viable religious, political, and social force in the United States.

The younger generation of Americans (particularly those who have attended secular colleges), however, are well aware of the extremely rapid development of the Muslim movement in this country. They have been confronted by an ever-increasing number of Islamic students from abroad, along with a growing number of Black Muslim students from our own nation.

Unknown to many of God's people, the Islamic movement is the fastest growing religion in the world, claiming more than one-fifth of the world's population (more than one billion people) as adherents. In the United States, there are now more than 1,300 mosques and/or Muslim training centers, several colleges, scores of weekend schools, and many publication houses, book distribution centers, and radio stations.

In 1980, it was conservatively estimated that there were four million Muslims in America. Scholars now maintain that their number has grown to almost five million. Their membership is larger than that of the Episcopal church in the United States and is about to outnumber several other major denominations. Yvonne Haddad claims that by the year 2015 this group will be larger than the Jewish population of Amer-

ica.

The Background of the Islamic Movement in America

IMMIGRATION

The first sizable group of Muslims came to the United States between 1860 and 1870, and within a few years they had become fairly well assimilated into American Society. They held to their religious beliefs but Americanized some of the seventh-century codes of dress and other customs.

Before World War I, most Muslims coming to America were from the Middle East, but a few came from the Punjab region of India. The Indian group was scattered across many areas of the country; hence they were not a strong political, economic, or social force.

In the 1920s and 1930s, many Lebanese and Syrian Muslims came to America because of the political unrest and instability in the Middle East. At that time, a considerable change developed in their influence as they began to build Muslim communities. With the advent of these entirely Islamic sectors, Muslims began to influence the politics and economics of their geographic regions.

By the 1950s, Muslims began immigrating from the Middle East to the United States in ever greater numbers, and that trend has continued to the present time. Added to the number of immigrants is the ever-increasing number of Islamic students coming to this country to receive an education, in large measure the result of the huge influx of money gained from the Middle East oil exports. These students and immigrants have become a force that must be reckoned with.

The Black Muslim Movement

As we consider the Islamic program for America, we must recognize another very strong force made up of people born within our own shores. They are known as Black Muslims. This movement was founded by Elijah Poole, who was born in 1897. His father was a Baptist pastor who sought to raise his children in the Christian faith; however, Elijah was greatly influenced by a very colorful white religious teacher, Wallace D. Fard, who was a peddler of "African" clothing and claimed to be "a brother from the East." Some even claim that he was born in Mecca.

Fard's knowledge of the Christian church was from the Jehovah's Witness perspective, causing him to deny the Trinity and many other essential teachings of Christianity. In Fard's view, Jesus was a mere man. Going house to house selling his wares, he used Watchtower literature and techniques. He tore down any of his African-America followers bent toward Christianity, mocking it as "the white man's religion." He used racism to pull many black people into a pseudo-Islamic religion. Seeking to give his followers African identity and pride, he urged them to take Muslim names and wear Muslim dress. Interestingly enough, he was the one who sold them these clothes.

In 1934, Fard suddenly disappeared, and Poole, who had by then changed his name to Elijah Muhammed, took over the reins. Elijah wrote many books, and under his leadership the movement grew and became very wealthy.

Malcolm X entered the movement in the 1950s and made a pilgrimage to Mecca. He soon recognized Muhammed's sins of immorality, greed, and jealousy and, realizing that Elijah was not of Allah, he began to speak out against him. But in 1965 Malcolm X was murdered. Not long after his death, Louis Farrakhan, who claimed to have had

many visions and dreams, became the leader of the sect. As Farrakhan tried to control the movement, a dramatic event occurred—the rise to power of Warith Deen Muhammed, the son of Elijah Muhammed. Although he had earlier been expelled from the movement, he was Elijah's favorite son and, on his deathbed in 1975, Elijah reclaimed his wayward son and made him his successor.

Warith Deen moved systematically and tirelessly to transform the Black Muslims into a mainstream Islamic community. He declared that his father was not a prophet and began replacing his theology with more orthodox Muslim views. Racial hatred was no longer proclaimed, and strict rules were instituted. Through his moves, Warith Deen Muhammed succeeded in making his father's group acceptable to the international Muslim community.

Farrakhan, however, eventually gained control of the movement, which for a long time was denounced by the Islamic world. It has been only recently that the majority of Black Muslims in America have turned to the traditional Islamic position and have been accepted into Islam. The movement under Farrakhan has splintered and is much smaller than in the past.

What Draws Americans Into the Islamic Religion?

Muhammad never claimed to be God, nor did he claim to have written the Koran. After his death, there was no established hierarchy to assume leadership of his movement. What, then, has caused the Islamic movement to grow to over one billion people? And why is it considered to be the fastest growing religion in the United States?

The appeal of Islam in America is based on the moral corruption of the Western nations. Muslims teach

Christianity has failed and that church has just about lost its place on national life. They point out that the Christian holy Sunday, has been given over to sports and fun, and they state that the celebration of Christ's birth has become commercialized to the point that it is one of the greatest travesties of all time. They further maintain that His name is most commonly used as a form of swearing.

The Muslim program purports to offer salvation from drunkenness, immorality, political corruption, violence, and other appalling characteristics of the lifestyles of "Christian" nations. They contend that "It is the Islamic revolution that holds the greatest promise for the American continent and the world." They also report that Islam is the answer for those who are disgusted with godlessness and materialism.

To gain some idea of the expanding network of Muslims in America, one need only look at the Chicago :

With a university, an Islamic and Arabic studies college, a girls' high school, an elementary school, 43 mosques and Islamic centers, 19 organizations and institutions, four magazines, four community newsletters, five publishing houses and bookstores, and more than 40 small and medium size businesses, Chicago's over a quarter-of-a-million Muslims can rightly claim to be the nation's most dynamic and thriving Muslim community (*The Minaret*, Summer 1989 edition).

This gives some idea of the tremendous foothold the Islamic movement is gaining in America. Its goal is to continue growing as rapidly as possible, which they believe will—for starters—force gov-

ernment to bend to meet their needs and schools to allow Muslim students to take breaks for their stipulated prayer times. Needless to say, the push is on for maximum growth. Would to God that we were seeing such growth in Bible-believing churches.

The Islamic movement claims to offer African-Americans dignity and respect. Its strict code of ethics forbids alcohol, illicit drugs, and pork or any other non-kosher meat. Premarital sex is forbidden, as well as dating, but polygamy is permitted. It does not allow gambling and it requires public modesty for its women. This strict regimen often conflicts with the more open American lifestyle. On the surface, this all looks good and draws many people to the movement, but the Islamic movement is not as utopian as it appears to be.

Islam's Program for America

Many factors are involved in the Islamic program for America. Its first objective is to continue expanding the movement by bringing new immigrants into the United States. At the present time, between 25,000 and 35,000 Muslims arrive here each year. In their former countries, these people were very passive, but when they settle in America many become activists, both politically and religiously. They often push vigorously to change the society in which they now reside.

The second objective is to fill the colleges and universities with as many students as possible in an attempt to master the fundamentals of communication. Their goal is to make Islam relevant to all contemporary issues in our society (e.g., the nuclear age, unemployment).

The third objective is education and training. Muslims are developing bookstores and teaching centers across the United States under the Islamic Society of North America,

which is the umbrella organization for all of their activities. The Stated aim of the Islamic Information Center, located in Prospect Heights, Illinois, is, "To deliver the message of Islam in its totality and purity to the American people—to inform non-Muslims about Islam—to aid Americans who embrace Islam in delivering the message to others."

Many tactics are being used to accomplish these goals. One is trying "to force California schools to revise their Social Studies textbooks to clear away what they regard as offensive stereotypes of their faith. The fight, if successful, could ignite more Moslem activism elsewhere in the U.S." (*Wall Street Journal*, Vol. CCXVI, No. 68). Another method is giving a hard push to reach deeper into the African-American community and the inner cities of America. They claim that the Christian church has deserted these people, allowing the Islamic movement to fill the void left when the churches moved to the suburbs.

The fourth objective should stir every Christian to prayer and action. A booklet entitled Muslim-Christian Alliance, by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, was recently translated from Turkish into English. In it, Nursi claims that the Western world has gone after atheism and Communism. In short, he believes that the Antichrist will soon rise to prominence. To put down these forces of evil, Islam and Christianity will have to unite to rid the world of these enemy forces. In his booklet Nursi states, "Eventually, Christianity will be purified and will get rid of all superstitions and misbeliefs and will unite with the true Islamic religion. Thereby Christianity will be in a way transformed into Islam, and by adopting the Koran, will be the follower of Islam, and the Islamic religion will be in the leadership position."

It is obvious that the Islamic

goal and purpose is to reach out to the entire world. The Arab word for their missionary activities is Da'Wa, meaning to call or to unite. Their goal is to invite everyone to submit to Allah. The current direction of the Islamic movement can only lead to a religion of enormous proportions that is still bound by ancient, seventh-century practices.

The Dilemma

The Word of God declares that believers in Christ are to reach out to the whole world with the gospel. But how can that be accomplished when relations between Christians and Muslims are not always good? Of course, the blame for those poor relations can be placed on both groups because of the vast differences in their philosophies of life and viewpoints. Yet one-fifth of the world is Muslim—they make up a great portion of the world to which God's people have been sent.

The Solution

Muslims need Christ. Although it is true that ministering to them is very difficult and many years of work among them may produce little fruit, that does not excuse us from taking the gospel to these people for whom Christ died. In fact, it should make us seek the face of God more diligently as we labor in the task to which He has called us.

We have a little motto here at The Friends of Israel: "Love them to life." Regardless of the goals of the Islamic movement for America and the world, our responsibility in fulfilling our Lord's great commission is to take the gospel to all people, including the Muslims. Beloved, what are we doing about it?

Fred Hartman is the National Director for The Friends of Israel. Presented first in *Israel My Glory*, June/July 1993, and used by permission.

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BOOK REVIEW

by Ewald Eisele

CHRISTIANITY IN CRISIS—

Hank Hanegraaff, President of the Christian Research Institute, Eugene OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993. 448pp, Cloth \$17.00.

This is a book which has been needed for a long time. It meets needs that many Christians have felt and have requested to be met. Most of those involved in a ministry concerned with cults, non-Christian religions, heresy in the church and outright apostasy, have lacked the time and resources to research the subject of this book adequately. Now the author has presented to us, and you—a concerned Christian, the most thoroughly documented manuscript imaginable which covers one of the most dangerous cultic groups to attack orthodox Christianity. The deceptive and false doctrines of the present Faith Movement, in all of its ramifications, is the subject of this very important offering.

The body of Christ has been under attack by those involved in this movement which is espousing heresies that the Fathers of the Church would have never imagined possible.

Part One begins with a nine-page essay which bears the title: **Turning the Truth into Mythology**. There is a short paragraph under the title to explain what is to follow. It states: "The following tale is a composite of the erroneous teachings of individuals like Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Frederick Price, and many others. While not all the Faith teachers hold to every aspect of this tale, they have all made substantial contributions to both the production and proliferation of these aberrations and heresies." If this "composite tale" does not shock you, the author's comment at the end of it may: "What you will discover as you

read on is so horrifying that your natural inclination may be disbelief or even denial. But I assure you that what I am communicating is not based on hype or sensationalism. Rather, it is painstakingly accurate and thoroughly documented."

There are twenty-nine chapters, three appendixes, and Epilogue, the documenting notes (39 pages), a Bibliography (17 pages), a Scripture index and a subject index. The nine-page essay at the beginning has 59 footnotes, most of which document statements in the text.

Those whose false teaching is exposed in this book, have led multitudes away from the pure Word of God and the salvation that it proclaims. The author writes: "In recent years, multitudes who name the name of Christ have adopted a wildly distorted perception of what it truly means to be a Christian. Perhaps even more alarming, millions more have been kept from seriously considering the claims of Christ because they perceive Christianity as a con and Christian leaders as con artists" (page 10).

Later, after explaining the reason for regarding the Faith Movement as cultic, he states: "You, the reader, will inevitably need to decide whether you think the Faith Movement is cultic or Christian. You must decide whether these doctrines are true or false or some muddy mixture of both.

"If you decide that this movement is a valid expression of Christianity, then in all fairness you should also embrace as fellow believers the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Christian Scientists, and a host of other groups normally thought of as cults. That is the choice before you" (page 46).

In chapter four, "Charting The

Course," there is presented an outline of the balance of the book using, "the acronym F-L-A-W-S to contrast 'four spiritual laws' of the Christian with 'four spiritual flaws' of the Faith Movement." The next five parts take their individual subjects from this acronym.

Part Two is "F" and the main topic, divided into four sub-topics is "Faith In Faith." Part Three is "L" and the main topic is "Little Gods or Little Frauds?" This section or part is also divided into four sub-topics. Part Four is the "A" and the main topic is "Atonement Atrocities" and is also divided into four sub-topics. Part Five is the "W," Wealth and Want with also four sections. Part Six finishes up the acronym with "S," which is Sickness and Suffering and, again, four explanatory sections. Each of these parts are about thirty pages.

The last major section, Part Seven, has the title "Back to Basics."

It includes, beside the Epilogue, mentioned earlier, Appendix A, B and C, the Notes, Bibliography and Scripture and Subject Indexes, five short sections. These are lettered A, B, C, D and E: Amen, Bible, Church, Defense and Essentials.

This is NOT a negative book. In fact, not only does Hank Hanegraaff put the finger on the error of the Faith Movement, he also puts the finger on the Scripture and points out the RIGHT way of faith. There needs to be a greater faith movement in the True Church than there is in the false Faith Movement. When there is, individual Christians will begin to see the united Body of Christ making an impact for righteousness that is so needed today.

You may order this good book from our office, \$17.00 plus the postage charge of \$1.91, \$18.91 total. That is less than five cents a page for truth!

* * * * *

MYTHICAL ART AND EARTHY SPIRITS

by Berit Kjos

"All across the land, the basis for a new earth earth-centered culture is being cast. Artists and poets are turning back to the earth as a source of inspiration . . . People are creating new kinds of personal and community rituals to express their bond to the earth, viewed once again as the nurturing mother of all life." (Brian Tokar in *The Green Alternative*).¹

Jonah stared proudly at his contribution to a large scale mural of the earth. He had stopped for a moment to join a group of elementary students participating in a two-day art project called Weaving The World Together. Like the others, Jonah simply connected two parts of

the world with a piece of string. The message behind the project was obvious—it had already been drilled into his mind through multicultural and environmental teaching in his school: all the people and nations of the world are interconnected. All are irrevocably joined together into one planetary family with one common purpose: to save the earth.

From Jonah's neck dangled a new amulet (ornament traditionally worn as protection against evil spirits). A workshop called Tribal Neck Ornaments, had taught him and many others to "design personal amulets" decorated with feathers and beads. Standing nearby, Jonah's mother was carefully balancing paper plates carrying a bright, feathery Amazon Rain Forest Bird and a grotesque tribal Clay Mask.

Earth Day 1993 had come and gone, but students from every elementary school in Sunnyvale, California (in the heart of the Silicon Valley), were still celebrating nature and its earth-centered people. At the May 15 and 16 Hands on the Arts Festival they could choose between 42 arts and crafts workshops. The grassy hills around the Sunnyvale community center were dotted with booths and tables where students could reach out and touch the cultures of the world through native art and ritual. From Indian Totem Poles to Chinese Dragons—from South India Dancers to African Drumming—the environmentally and politically correct renditions of the world's beliefs and practices beckoned, "Come, try, experience . . ."

The children—hundreds of them—loved it. They wore their personalized Mexican Spirit Beads. They designed their own American Indian Dreamcatchers (to filter out bad dreams and invoke good dreams) and Medicine Shields (family shields that identify and invoke their personal spirit animals and helpers). They made "mythical figures and animals" called Panamanian Paper Molas. They hugged Indian Corn Husk Dolls and some Kachina-like "magical figures" called Southwest American Indian Dolls.

Throughout the two-day festival, families could relax on grassy slopes and listen to songs, chants and rhythms from around the world. A musical group called "The Coyote Kids" taught Native American songs and Afro-American Hand Jive. Los Dos Caracoles's music and theater "stressed the importance of taking care of the earth." Shanachie used folk music to dramatize legends of people and nations around the world.

Everyone had fun. The ethnic food tasted great. Children learned to appreciate distant cultures. But some of the delights brought sobering concerns. The ease with which

the children embraced the mythical art and ritual practices of pagan cultures shows their vulnerability to deception. Their readiness to experiment with the world's earth-centered religions (various blends of pantheism, monism and polytheism) opens their minds to spiritual compromise and syncretism—the same process that has turned God's people from His truths to pagan myths since the beginning of time.

The multicultural lures of the Sunnyvale fair are multiplied in classrooms and communities nationwide. After all, argue well-meaning educators and community leaders, students facing a global society need to feel their oneness with the rest of the world. So when schools and communities (which are fast joining forces in re-directing the beliefs of children)² present earth-centered religions as models for environmental healing and global harmony, few students dare refute them.

Most parents and teachers seem oblivious to the occult dangers. Our materialistic culture has blinded us to the ritual significance of pagan arts, dolls, amulets and symbols. Our secular view of life has closed the curtain on the vast, powerful spiritual dimension behind the visible physical world. But to native people around the world who embrace animism (the belief that all parts of nature are infused with spiritual life), these physical objects represent good and evil nature spirits. These spirits—demons to Christians—are part of a powerful spiritual hierarchy which must be appeased and manipulated to obtain healing, fertility, protection and other favors.

To stay spiritually safe and alert to deception, our children need to . . .

1. Know God and His Word—the only basis for spiritual discernment.

2. Heed His Warnings. Scriptures like Ephesians 2:20-22 and 6:10-13 draw back the veil that hides

vast unseen spiritual realms—the hierarchical armies of Satan and the mighty angelic warriors of God.

3. Trust His Promises, which equip them to appropriate His strength and peace.

4. Realize that faithfulness to God once again invites rejection from the world. After all, persecution is part of the normal Christian life. Jesus said, "If they persecute me, they will persecute you" (John 15:20). With the erosion of America's Biblical foundations, our two centuries of religious freedom are ending. Once again, God's people must be prepared to live in a pagan world that tolerates all earth-centered religions but abhors Biblical Christianity.

5. Discern The Schemes of the devil—(Ephesians 6:11; Genesis 3:4). Since Satan first deceived God's people, pagan religions have perpetuated the original lie: forget Truth, follow your feelings, satisfy your senses and become like God. Today, all these earth-centered religions are merging and converging in the Western world.

6. Remember that paganism with all its mystical expressions

brings disharmony and destruction instead of peace and healing. Only God enables people from different cultures to love and care for each other.

"Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts . . . to shameful lusts to a depraved mind . . . They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice . . . They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil" (Romans 1:22-30).

Notes

¹ Brian Tokar, "*The Green Alternative*" (San Pedro, California: R. & E. Miles 1987), p. 150.

² "*Community As Parent*," Free World Research Report (Box 4633, Des Moines, IA 50306), March 1993.

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SOON TO COME: A NEW BOOK

WORSE THAN WACO: Jehovah's Witnesses Hide a Tragedy—David A. Reed.

MORE DEAD THAN WACO! About 90 followers of David Koresh perished over a 51-day period in Waco, Texas, this year. More than 900 loyal to Jim Jones obediently drank poison and died in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978. Jehovah's Witnesses have been dying one at a time: refusing vaccinations between 1931 and 1952, refusing organ transplants between 1967 and 1980, and refusing blood transfusions and cer-

tain blood fractions since the mid-1940's.

No one seems to have kept statistics on the number of JW deaths. And, because they have happened just one at a time, they haven't captured world headlines. But with the steady accumulation of a man dying here, a child there, a woman in another place, an infant somewhere else—for nearly 50 years—the JW death toll keeps adding up. How many, altogether, have followed the Watchtower to their deaths?

American Red Cross figures published in 1980 indicated that "100 people per thousand or 10% need blood in some form every year." With today's Watchtower organization drawing 11.5 million people to its meetings, 4.5 million being active Witnesses and the rest in the process of joining, that would mean between 450,000 and 1,150,000 of these "need" blood in some form every year. How many would actually die without it? Again, no one has kept statistics.

If the average is 1 out of 1000, that would mean between 450 and 1150 JW deaths annually. But even if we conservatively estimate that only 1 in 10,000 who "needs" blood would actually die without it, that would still mean between 45 and 115 deaths each year attributed to this Watchtower policy alone—a policy that has been in force almost 50 years—not to mention deaths due to earlier prohibitions on vaccinations and organ transplants. It does not take a mathematical genius to see that the Watchtower Society has caused more deaths than David Koresh and Jim Jones put together.

Adding to the JW tragedy is the fact that the Watchtower Society has changed its mind on medical matters and can be expected to change its mind again. Perhaps Koresh, Jones and their victims were survived by other followers who believed them to be right. But Jehovah's Witnesses who lost loved ones due to their organization's past teachings banning vaccinations and banning organ transplants suffer the added pain of knowing that their loved ones died in vain—for nothing! The organization stopped teaching that vaccinations and organ transplants are sinful. Witnesses today are free to receive them.

Imagine the sorrow of a son or daughter who now looks back on the 1970's as the time when a beloved parent suffered painful dialysis

treatments and eventual death rather than accept a kidney transplant. Or, the sorrow of one whose parent spent his or her final years groping about in blindness after refusing a cornea transplant in obedience to the Watchtower.

The ban on blood is still in force among Jehovah's Witnesses, but it, too, may be dropped. In the meantime, however, JWs continue to see the ban as God's law—just as followers of Jim Jones and David Koresh truly believed their leaders spoke for God. Little does it matter to them that the Bible verses their leaders use in promoting the teaching actually refer to dietary laws rather than medical emergencies; or that verses excluding blood from the diet also exclude fat (Lev. 3:17) which JWs are allowed to eat; nor that the Watchtower's modern interpretation goes even beyond that of orthodox Jews who insist on Kosher food but who accept blood transfusions.

Brainwashed believers are understandable. But perhaps the most frightening aspect of the JW tragedy is that the general public is unaware of its scope. As a result, nearly a thousand new converts are joining the sect every day—more than 300,000 were baptized last year—ordinary people who would flee from known "cult" recruiters.

The new book, *WORSE THAN WACO: Jehovah's Witnesses Hide a Tragedy*, is being rushed into print. It will expand on the brief information given in this preview. Put your order in for it from our Brainerd Office and Store, POB 806, Brainerd, MN 56401, and you will be sent your copy as soon as it comes off of the presses, hopefully in August—\$7.95 plus \$1.05 postage. It is being published by COMMENTS FROM THE FRIENDS (who also gave permission to use this preview), David A. Reed, CEO, POB 840, Stoughton, MA 02072.

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NEW BOOKS

The Coming Darkness: Confronting Occult Deception—John Ankerberg and John Weldon.

This book from a best-selling author-team provides clear and understanding scriptural help for people trapped by occult activity, for people who want to help them, and for all believers who want to be equipped to face the present-day deception. Even Christians are embracing the widespread belief that psychic practice involves the use of "natural" abilities. The history of and reasons for this modern occult revival are examined, and current occult activity is probed, including channeling and parapsychological experiences, Satanism and witchcraft. Scripture's view on the occult is studied, with a complete appendix of Biblical references. A truly helpful tool in uncovering the dangers of the occult.

\$8.95 + \$1.05 postage

What You Need to Know About the New Age Movement—F. LaGard Smith.

Like the others in this popular series of books whose titles begin with "What You Need to Know . . .," this new book on New Age beliefs from our popular author is presented as a dialogue. In today's New Age scene, 25-year-old Sara becomes involved in more than she bargained for and sets out to find the truth about the New Age movement. In the midst of her astonishing journey through the cosmic intricacies of New Age thinking, Sara discovers the hidden dangers and deceptive beliefs of this movement.

\$6.95 + \$1.05 postage

Angels of Deceit—Richard Lee & Ed Hindson.

Cults are making increasingly subtle inroads into our everyday lives. This book provides the most up-to-date information available on

the teachers and leaders behind the cults, their extrabiblical revelations and interpretations, and probes these false prophets and their followers. Your eyes will be opened to the growing danger of spiritual deception that surrounds us, and you will be strengthened with information and Biblical reasoning to stand against the lies of cults such as Christian Science, Mormonism, Unity, New Age and occult movements, as well as contemporary false teachings that have taken root within the Christian Church. This is a valuable tool for anyone seeking to help a family member or friend see the slavery of the cults and the freedom available in Christ.

\$8.95 + \$1.05 postage

Satan's Devices: Free From the Schemes of the Enemy—Robert Morey.

In this timely book, noted author Robert Morey makes a comprehensive investigation into the nature of Satan: his attributes, powers, abilities, strategies, and tendencies. Drawing on the extensive body of Scripture that refers to Satan, Morey provides a clear picture of how the devil works today that neither exaggerates nor minimizes his power. The book includes specific instruction on spiritual warfare and offers believers a solid and much-needed grasp of Satan's role in the larger picture of history and Scripture.

\$8.95 + \$1.05 postage

The God Makers II—Ed Decker & Caryl Matrisciana.

This is a follow-up to the movie and book that caused mayhem a decade ago within the Mormon empire. This new book documents the surprising metamorphosis that has occurred since then. Mormon leaders have been busy modifying "unchangeable" doctrines, including the most violent parts of the temple ceremony. They have also redoubled their efforts to repair the image of

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the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) as a bastion of "Christian" values. The book also documents the hierarchy's concern over the involvement of members in satanic rituals, Utah's social statistics reflecting the fruits of Mormonism, and the massive wealth and political and media influence exerted by the LDS. This book is THE vital tool against this cult for the '90s.

\$8.95 + \$1.05 postage

**Sodom's Second Coming:
Equipping You and Your Family
for the Coming Homosexual
Assault**—F. LaGard Smith.

How should Christians respond to the militancy of the gay rights movement? How will this movement

affect our families? Our children? Here we are provided a concrete evaluation of the social and moral context of today's gay rights controversy. This best-selling author of over a dozen books examines the issues, providing a Biblical and legal framework for rational discussion. Smith delves into the fray of biological need versus personal choice, special rights versus discrimination, sin versus preference, law and justice versus morality. Here is an essential background for responsible Christian thought and action concerning every aspect of the sodomite movement.

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