

Missionaries To America?

by L.L. (Don) and Joy A. Veinot

When we think of missionaries, we tend to think in terms of PLACE. Missionaries go places, like foreign lands, don't they? We call them mission fields. They exist in exotic faraway places like Zaire, Ghana, and today, even rather amazing (to those of us raised in the cold-war decades) new places like Russia and Romania; "fields" which traditionally have been closed to missionary endeavors. But still, they all revolve around PLACE — a country or, maybe, a continent. "He's a missionary to Africa," we might say, or "She has been called to Botswana."

One of our Branch Directors, Bill Althaus, is on his way to the Czech Republic on a short-term mission. But isn't "missionaries to America" a contradiction in terms? Isn't it Americans *who send* missionaries *elsewhere*?

In actuality though, there is a huge mission field right here in the good ole USA — big and getting bigger. I am talking of the mission field of the cults, the occult, and false religions. They're not foreigners in the traditional sense, but their practices and beliefs are just as foreign to biblical Christianity as any traditional mission field in a foreign land. Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs)* and Mormons** are just two examples of "Made in America" cult groups that prey on Americans and American churches, as well as the world.

"What *are* you talking about?" some may ask. "Foreign? What is foreign about JWs and Mormons? Aren't they just Christian sects with a few peculiar beliefs?" No, they are not. That misperception, especially by Christians who should know better, is a large part of the problem. Even many born-again believers do not recognize the cults for what they are. The adherents of most cult groups look just like us. Many of them are as American as apple pie, and the psuedo-Christian varieties of cults even carry Bibles.

Well then, can it be that we are exaggerating by calling them

cults? Aren't cults led by weirdos like David Koresh and Jim Jones? No, because what makes a cult is not weirdness but unbiblical life and death control over their members. Weirdness is in the eye of the beholder, isn't it? Jim Jones may or may not have seemed "weird" to you or me, but his adherents drank poisoned Kool-Aid at his command. Now that's unhealthy control! By the same token, Jehovah's Witnesses would not appear weird at all to most of us, yet their leadership exercises dangerous control over the lives of the rank and file JW.



For example, Gentle Reader, did you know that the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS, known as Jehovah's Witnesses) has, with their ban on blood transfusions, been responsible for far more deaths over the years than Jim Jones and David Koresh put together? Needless deaths, year in and year out; yet, they are not allowed to question (and, indeed, most would not even *think* to question) the directives from their Brooklyn headquarters on this issue. Many lives could be saved if these people were reached with the truth of the gospel.

The Field Is Expanding

Well, how can we reach them?

Can't we just tell them they need a Savior and haul them in? Quote some Bible verses to them and tell them to repent? Well, I'd love to tell you that it is just that easy, but it is not. There is a communication problem not very much different than the one you would encounter being an American trying to share the gospel with an Ethiopian who has no more knowledge of English than you do of Ethiopian. There is the language barrier. You might be saying to yourself, "Language barrier? What do they speak if not English? These folks are Americans, aren't they?" Yes, that's true, but RELIGIOUSLY they just don't speak our language at all. Their authority figures have given new MEANINGS to the same good old words and phrases that we all hold so dear. For instance, the simple phrase

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"Missionaries" (Continued from page 1)

"salvation by grace." To us — salvation is something that God has *secured for us*, a free gift He has *given us*; but to a Jehovah's Witness — Jesus died to give one the *opportunity to save oneself* through one's good works. It's a free gift all right, so long as you deserve it!!! The very word "grace" means "undeserved favor or kindness," but look how this concept is perverted in a recent *Kingdom Ministry*, which is the WTBS "insider" publication. In the December 1993 issue (p.7), they remind their followers that:

"We want to give *deserving ones* the opportunity to learn of Jehovah's *undeserved kindness*." (What???)

Do you know what's sad, though, friends? They don't even SEE the contradiction in that statement. So, in order to witness effectively to Jehovah's Witnesses, you must know their "language," understand *what they mean by what they say*, and how it differs from how we would understand the same word.

It is essentially the same for the Mormons. The Mormon Church has done an excellent "sales job" here in America, convincing the average Christian that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, also known as Mormons) is "just another Christian denomination." They will tell you they believe in Jesus, and they also believe in the Bible. "Wow," you may think, "They're Christians, just like me! That Joy! You can't trust a thing she says!" But here is the problem. *The Mormon Jesus* is the spirit brother of Lucifer (The Jesus of the Bible *created* the angel Lucifer!), and the Mormon leadership has told their followers they can *only* trust the Bible "as far as it is translated correctly."¹ Just who *can* we trust to translate it, you may wonder? You needn't wonder long. Of course, *only* the Mormon hierarchy. The attractive "Christian coating" masks a very bitter pill.

And what about New Agers? Well, of course, they believe in the Christ consciousness, and peace on earth, good will towards men. Didn't Jesus say He was the way-show-er? He showed us the way, now we must do the work to get there — alter our consciousness, work out our karma. When you look at the New Age up close and personal, you will see that the Bible, when referred to at all, has been twisted out of its context and given new, mystical understandings.

True Christians believe in the *person*

of Jesus Christ, not a mystical "Christ consciousness" which comes upon enlightened souls causing them to realize the truth of their inherent godness. Peace on earth will come when *the* Prince of Peace returns. Jesus is the *Way*, not the way show-er; and we believe in salvation by God's grace, not by eventual release from the karmic wheel. It is evident that we must understand the language and the mindset, if we are to win these dear souls to the Savior.

Just like missionaries to foreign lands, we must learn the language of the different groups in order to communicate effectively with them. Our mission, however, is two-fold. While we reach out to the cultist, we must also help pastors protect the flock entrusted into their care from the wolves who would eat them for breakfast, given half a chance. And the flock today friends, here in America, is being decimated as never before. It is estimated that there are between 3,000 and 5,000 cults in America claiming between 20,000,000 and 60,000,000 members. Dr. Ron Rhodes, in his book *The Culting of America*, says of cult members that:

... some 25 percent formerly attended evangelical or fundamentalist churches, and over 40 percent had backgrounds in the large, more liberal Protestant denominations."²

It's The Culture, Stupid . . .

We call our ministry a countercult ministry, because we identified cults as being a grave danger to the Christian church and hoped to do something to *counter* their influence and success. However, we found out very quickly that our *culture* presents just as large a challenge (if not larger) as any individual cult group and, perhaps, all of them rolled into one, big, heretical lump! JW's and Mormons are little fish, indeed, when compared to the cultural shark of "relative truth."

Relative truth, culturally defined, means that any one religion or belief system can be no more "right," "correct," or "true" than any other religion or world view. To persons holding this view of truth (and that is most of our society at present), it is the height of arrogance for someone to hold their own version of truth as being truly true. Why is the American god of "relative truth" (as worshiped by Oprah and Phil) and the "tolerance gospel" that is preached, so dangerous to true Christianity? It's not dangerous because Oprah believes it [She really doesn't. Just ask Oprah

if Christians are just as right in thinking Jesus is the *only true* spiritual path as she is in thinking that there is truth in *all* spiritual paths.] or because JW's and Mormons believe it. (*They certainly don't!!!*)

It's dangerous because all too many *Christians* have bought it! The bait was juicy, and we've swallowed the hook. It has caused Christians to be timid in sharing the gospel for fear of being seen as "arrogant, narrow minded, or intolerant." After all, in late-20th-century America, to say that someone is "wrong" in their moral choices or their personal beliefs is labeled "hate speech." This is a sad commentary on where our society is, but it is even worse to realize that many Christians believe it too. And, if Christians cannot bring themselves to talk about sin, they will not be able to talk about forgiveness of sin, and reconciliation to God.

You know what? People might "feel bad" if they come to realize that they are separated from God by their sins. In fact, the two reactions I've gotten from people, when I've shared this particular truth, are that they either feel *bad* or feel *mad*. Maybe a little of both . . . but if they never come to the realization that they are separated from God, and they never accept His gracious provision, they will be eternally lost. At times, the only loving thing to do is to point out a problem, especially if you can offer a solution!

How Big Is The Problem?

Seventy-six percent of Americans *who attend church* do not believe in absolute truth! Well, okay, but that figure probably includes a lot of church-going liberals, right? But sadly, evangelicals do not fare much better with sixty-seven percent of them holding the same view of truth. Want more stats? According to the latest Barna Poll, there were nine-percent fewer people attending evangelical churches in 1998 than in 1997. You see, there is no such thing as standing still. We are either gaining or losing ground. One thing that I wish Christians would realize is that the highly "spiritual" content of Oprah and other shows, though false and vacuous, proves that there is a tremendous spiritual hunger in the land of the free — and perhaps, even in our own churches — which *someone will fill if we are too timid*.

Meanwhile, the Mormon Church, which calls itself Christian but is not, appears to recognize the true hunger that is out there and has aggressively trained a missionary force to meet the need. The result has been growth of 5.5 percent last year compared with 2.3 percent for the evangelical church. JW's have become sort of a "revolving door" religion, at least here in the US. (They are far more successful abroad where their *true* history is unknown.) About as many are leaving out the back door as are coming in the front,

but their *influence* is far greater than their numbers, at any one time, would indicate. Why is that? It's because many people have walked out of the WTBS, but the Watchtower Society has not walked out of them! They deserve our help, but we are barely keeping our own. We dare not continue to look the other way.

The cults have a twisted understanding of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. They grow dramatically because many Christians either cannot (out of ignorance) or will not (out of fear or apathy) counter the misinformation that has blinded these folks. Thirty-five percent of the evangelical (born-again) community do not read their Bibles.³ Biblical illiteracy makes even Christians into nothing more than "spider-bait" and certainly ill-equipped to come to the rescue of someone else that is caught in the web of the cultic spiders.

We need to be training Christians to know not only what we believe, but also *why we believe it*; and preparing them to make a solid defense of the core doctrines of the faith. This is especially true with our young people. They are being bombarded daily with "sensitivity" and "diversity" training at school and seduced in their own homes by the "spirituality sirens" on television. The church has the opportunity to equip these young people on the average of from one to four hours per week. School, radio, television, and peers have them for over 100 hours per week. The pressure is great on our young people. It is not easy, as we all know, to stand against the tide. Unless they are given solid reasons to believe that truth *can* be known, and that Christianity *is* true, they will either conform or hide. Friends, it's a very sad story that we hear all the time from Christian parents who are grieving. "My daughter is involved in witchcraft . . . My son is becoming a Mormon . . . How could this happen? . . . They were raised to believe."

I say this with great heaviness of heart, and no criticism is intended to parents who are hurting. Kids who are "raised to believe" are shipwrecked every day. More today than ever, because they are being bombarded on all sides, our kids need to know exactly *what Christians believe* and why *they* should embrace it too. They may still go their own way, because every person has that choice to make, but at least we can give them a "home" to come back to.

Support Your Local Missionary

We all have heard that missionaries "receive a call." This is just as true for us as for any others. God is the one who gives us this desire to reach JW's, Mormons, and others, just as surely as He gives a "call" to a foreign land to other folks. What exactly *is* a

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Sola Scriptura:

Modern Misconceptions of Luther's Intentions

by Steve Berg



In a recent debate between two apologists (a Catholic and a Protestant) over the issue of *sola scriptura*,* the Catholic defender, Gerry Matatics, argued that Luther invented the concept of *sola scriptura* in the early 16th century. He claimed Protestants today are holding to a doctrine that, by its very nature, is self-refuting and even unscriptural. Matatics accused his Protestant opponent of “biting the hand that feeds him” because he is holding in such high esteem a collection of documents whose own authority rests upon the decision of the very church whose authority he rejects.

“The only way that Mr. White [his Protestant opponent] knows that he has the right books, that these are the books coming to him by the Apostles is by the Tradition of the Church, by the oral Tradition and by the teachings of the early church outside of Scripture. There is no inspired Table of Contents in the Bible. There is no statement in the Bible that says that Matthew wrote Matthew and therefore we should accept it as inspired, apostolic and canonical.”¹

This is a common criticism against “Bible-alone” Christians. Catholics argue that Luther created *sola scriptura* as a means of promoting his made-up theology, *sola fide*.** A significant number of the most ardent defenders of Catholic Tradition are, themselves, former evangelicals trained in well-renowned evangelical schools.² Undoubtedly, a primary reason for their defection (or, as they might prefer to phrase it, their “return home to Rome”) is due to such insufficient evidence to back up *sola scriptura*.³ The nature of this brief study is to explore the veracity of Luther’s “invention.”

Contrary to common misconceptions, when Martin Luther posted his *95 Theses* on the Wittenburg Castle Church door in 1517, it was not out of protest against indulgences themselves.⁴ It was hardly his intent to stir up the masses against the Roman Church, which he still held in high regard, but to arouse scholarly debate. The *95 Theses* were written in Latin, the language of academics, not of those sitting in pews and walking the streets. His initial concern was pastoral. Luther found the abusive selling tactics of Tetzel to those in his congregation to have an overall negative effect, and it was merely his intent to arouse awareness of such abuses.⁵ His writings this early in his career are surprisingly irenic and deferential, compared to the later vitriolic tone for which he has come to be known.⁶ However, while Luther may have only intended a subdued appeal for change in methodology, he soon found himself surfing high atop a surging tidal wave of growing

dissension toward the Church. By this time simony and moral hypocrisy had so pervaded the Roman Church, that people had come to regard it as an oppressive force instead of a source of refuge. Luther’s willingness to publicly criticize the Church was destined to find eager support.

While probably hoping for a positive (or at least thoughtful) response from the Church, Luther was met instead with various attempts to silence him.

“But the Pope preferred to extinguish the friar with a clandestine snuffer and appointed a new general of the Augustinians that he might ‘quench a monk of his order, Martin Luther by name, and thus smother the fire before it should become a conflagration.’ ”⁷

Such action on the Church’s part failed to evoke Luther’s sympathies.

Another significant factor propelling Luther to question the judgment of the Roman Church was theological in nature. His disappointment with the Church further increased as his understanding of the Bible also increased. With his growing command of the original biblical languages, Luther’s confidence in his own ability to interpret Scripture apart from the pope and the Church also developed.⁸ As a result, he became more acutely aware of the Bible’s presentation of grace which he found to be in opposition to the Church’s understanding. The free gift of eternal salvation, based solely upon the grace of God, left no room for human merit and temporal punishment for venial sins. Hence, with the consequential obsolescence of purgatory, it was clear that indulgences, themselves, must have been nothing more than the contrivances of men. Based upon his exegesis of Scripture, as well as his discovery of a mistranslated verse from the Vulgate,⁹ Luther became convinced of justification by faith alone. This obviously meant that the Roman Church’s teachings were vastly distorted and that she could not be trusted. The only trustworthy source that remained was the Bible itself. Luther clearly explains his rationale before the Diet of Worms in 1521:

“Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the Word of God.”¹⁰

With that, Luther was soon excommunicated as a heretic, and his beliefs were condemned. Any hopes of reparation were dashed, and Protestantism was well on its way to becoming established. But what was it about Luther’s words here that were so out of line with the sacred Tradition of the Church? What was the exact hor-

ror of his statement in the ears of those present and in the wake of the giant ripple it caused throughout the Roman Church's domain? Was it simply because Luther had become some sort of biblicist who was deifying the Scriptures, or is there another explanation which is largely ignored in modern debates?

Luther actually provides his rationale for holding such a supreme view of Scripture in this very statement made at the 1521 Diet of Worms. For centuries, it had been assumed that the teachings of the Roman Church were also the teachings of the Bible. It was impossible, indeed absurd, for the two to be in opposition to one another.

“. . . the patristic writers saw so intimate a union between Scripture and Tradition that they were virtually indistinguishable from one another.”¹¹

The Church was the receptor of the Scriptures, and hence, it was her responsibility alone to properly interpret them. While it was the role of the Church to disseminate the truths of the Bible, the former is always seen as the servant of the latter. Catholic scholar, George Tavard notes the interesting situation presented by Cardinal Cajetan (1468-1538).

“John the Apostle and Clement the Pope lived at the same time. Who was superior to whom? ‘It perfectly stands together that neither John nor Clement could err, yet one was superior to the other. For two thoroughly excellent elements may be subordinate to each other. This is clear as regards the universal Church of today and Sacred Scripture . . .’ John was above Clement; and his gospel today stands above the Pope. In other words, ‘the ultimate definition of faith belongs to the Pope, though at his own place and rank, namely, under Sacred Scripture, whose author is the Holy Spirit.’”¹²

The precise nature of the relationship between Church and Scripture has been the center of a complex debate within Catholic circles for centuries. Suffice it to say for our purposes, however, Luther's elevation of the Bible over the Church was not without historical precedent. According to Catholics with Tavard's perspective, it is Scripture that is the fount of religious truth with sacred Tradition flowing out of it. Tradition plays an interpretive, albeit infallible and necessary, role of that which already had been revealed, i.e. Scripture.

With the issues raised by Luther, the Church faced a new theological challenge. If the Roman Catholic Church's authority maintained a level inferior to that of Scripture, then the possibility of its interpretation of Scripture being absolutely accurate could be in question. This was obviously an unacceptable consequence. One of Luther's early opponents, John Eck, a dominant Catholic defender at this time, originally held to the supremacy of Scripture over Tradition. He made the startling realization, however, in the very midst of his debate with Luther at Leipzig, that his own view was perilous to the integrity of the Roman Church's authority. Tavard recounts what happened:

“Eck's new solution to the problem of Scripture forced him to revise his vocabulary. He formerly did not mind calling the decisions of Councils ‘Traditions of men.’ Now that he stresses the presence of the Gospel to the various organs of the Church, Eck reverses his position . . . Eck had started with the superiority of Scripture over the Church. He ends at the opposite pole: superiority of the Church over Scripture.”¹³

This is an amazing admission. While we must remember that, in the mind of the Catholic, Church and Scripture were not really

viewed as distinct and separate entities as we see them now; it was still the *tradition* which was the outgrowth of Scripture.

The Reformation sparked an in-house debate within Catholicism regarding the exact relationship between Scripture and Tradition, which is still a major issue today. Despite the efforts of the Council of Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II to resolve it, no conclusive definition has been put forward.¹⁴ The issue has been regarding the proper placement of each. Are Scripture and Tradition two *separate* sources of revelation, or is there just one? If there is only one source of revelation, which one takes priority? Does Tradition merely interpret Scripture, or does Scripture actually fall within the realm of Tradition? While this issue does not relate directly to *sola scriptura* (since both positions would reject *sola scriptura*), it does color the current debate between Catholics and Protestants. Prior to the Council of Trent, where both vessels were distinguished as legitimate vehicles of truth, it certainly was not out of line with the sacred Tradition of the Church to regard Scripture as supreme. The now-famous articulation of Trent that, “. . . truth and discipline was to be found in the written books *and* in the unwritten Traditions” was chosen instead of the also proposed “*partly* in written books and *partly* in unwritten Traditions.” Catholic scholars today insist that the rejection of “*partim . . . partim*”*** in support of “*et*”† affirms the Catholic Church's *Tradition* that there is only one source of revelation, the Gospel; but that it is dispensed in two modes.¹⁵ Interestingly, Congar and Tavard both consider Trent's thesis as still placing Scripture in the unique position of containing “all the truths necessary for salvation.”¹⁶ Tavard concludes:

“It finally respects the classical view: Scripture contains all revealed doctrine, and the Church's faith, which includes apostolic Traditions, interprets it.”¹⁷

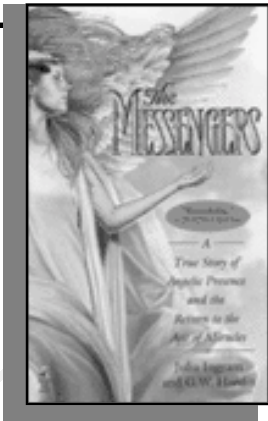
In upholding the supremacy of Scripture, Luther certainly was not inventing something new in this regard. In fact, many bishops at Trent were appalled at the notion that Scripture and Tradition would be put on an equal par. Bishop Nacchianti's comments, though representing a minority view at the time, are reminiscent of some of Luther's own statements,

“As I have often said, I cannot suffer that this Synod should receive Traditions and the Sacred Scriptures with an equal adhesion of faith. For this, to speak my mind, is impious.”¹⁸

And Angelo Bonuti adamantly concurs, “I consider that all evangelical truth is in Scripture, not therefore *partly*.”¹⁹

Catholics today, who regard Tradition on equal or greater footing than Scripture, accuse the Reformers of “inventing” something (i.e. a superior view of Scripture) which, as we have seen, *was not* a foreign idea in the Tradition of the Catholic Church during the church's earlier history. This was not the “heresy” for which it condemned Luther. His condemnation was based upon his *rejection* of the Roman Church's *authority*, not upon his view of the Bible. It is even doubtful whether the phrase “*sola scriptura*,” in and of itself, would have been so offensive to the hard-line Catholics of Luther's day as it is today.²⁰ As mentioned earlier, they believed that Scripture and the Church were in perfect harmony and that all Church doctrine could at least be found in seminal form in the Scriptures. The outrage of Luther's position was his belief that, despite the fact that Roman Catholics (many of them, at least) upheld the Scriptures as the ultimate authority, the *Roman Catholic Church* was wrong for promoting its “Traditions of men” as infallible and claiming an exclusive authority to interpret the Bible. Instead of the truth of Scripture being found in the light of

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The MESSENGER

Deceit

by Sarah Flashing

Angels have spoken. Well, supposedly. Nick Bunick, subject of the 1996 book *The Messengers*, claims to have received messages from angels encouraging him to reveal the transcripts from his past-life, regression-therapy sessions. How did they encourage him? Did they stop by and have coffee? No, they used a sort of numerology by sending messages through the number four. Friends were awakened at 4:44 A.M. and moved to write down messages to him through channeling and automatic writing. Whether these angels are a product of fiction or demonic forces in disguise, it is hard to know. Bunick came to believe the number four had tremendous spiritual significance.

Nick Bunick claims to have discovered (through regression therapy) that he is the reincarnation of the Apostle Paul. Although he claims never to have read the New Testament and never to have received any Christian training, Christian doctrines such as sin, salvation, and the after-life are addressed with overwhelming contradiction to the Bible. The number four is important because, according to Bunick, the apostles and early Christians got it wrong. There isn't a trinity but a quadrinity consisting of Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and man. Co-written by G.W. Hardin and hypnotherapist Julia Ingram, *The Messengers* is a distortion of biblical truths shaded with the ideologies of the New Age Movement.

This fictitious account of the life of the Apostle Paul is very disturbing. The conversion of Paul from an adversary of Christians to a great defender of the faith holds a major portion of the New Testament. *The Messengers* completely twists Paul's life story, turning him into a follower of Jesus and His teachings during His earthly ministry. However, the historical New Testament account presents a very different picture. Acts chapter nine states that it was on a trip to Damascus, with the purpose of returning with Jewish believers in Jesus to put on trial before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, that Saul (who became Paul) had his encounter with the *resurrected* Jesus and his conversion occurred.

The authors of *The Messengers* even go so far as to say: "Paul's writings . . . have been construed as the word of God" (p.185).

It is not as if this claim (that Paul's words are Scripture) isn't made by the Biblical writers. For instance, Peter states:

" . . . as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which

untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:14-16, NKJV).

Peter is equating Paul's writings with "the rest of Scripture," which indicates that his writings are, indeed, inspired. He is able to validate them as Scripture because he had asserted:

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 2:16).

The implication of Bunick's use of the term "construed" also implies that Scripture can't be trusted, and over the years, layers of tradition have imposed themselves over the original teachings. The fact remains that Paul's letters were all written prior to 70 A.D., and there is less than one percent of textual variation in any of the numerous New Testament manuscripts. Peter shares that his teachings are first-hand and are not tainted by the distortions of false teachers. Combining these facts with the accuracy among the manuscripts, we can know that Scripture can be trusted.

The teachings of Christ are subtly and, in some places, boldly altered in words and meaning. It seems as though Bunick, under hypnosis, has clarified for us that "karma" was originally one of Christ's teachings. Of course, Bunick doesn't cite any reference for this. Perhaps, this was found in the *Book of "Delusions"* but was misplaced, and today, that's why it can't be found within the sacred Scriptures! Possibly, an evil monk removed it from the sacred text (as evil monks are known to do) and used it for fire starter.

As defined, karma is the force generated by a person's actions to perpetuate transmigration and, in its ethical consequences, to determine the nature of the person's next existence. This definition closely resembles that which Bunick states is Jesus' view of punishment.

"But we are responsible for the things that we do that are wrong, and we will have to atone for them and pay for them until we have counterbalanced the wrong we do . . . Everything that we do, whether it's good or bad towards others, will someday, in this lifetime or a future lifetime, be repaid" (p.158).

This teaching leads into a further twisting of essential biblical truths. The term "born again" has been conveniently transformed

to “rebirth” (p.159) and that:

“we experience rebirth continually until we reach that level” [where rebirth is no longer needed] (p.159).

The Scriptures say otherwise:

“*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (Hebrews 9:27).

The Bible directly *refutes* the teaching of karma! Conveying the idea that the individual has the power or the ability to be a “good person” is all that is important allows one to rely on oneself rather than seek God. This puts the individual in a very dangerous place.

“He [Jesus] teaches them that they can have God within them, and that they can forgive themselves for their sins” (p.187).

The danger here is that there is no good in us capable of divine forgiveness. Paul makes this quite clear.

“*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells . . .*” (Romans 7:18).

But in Scripture, the Apostle Paul also addresses how we *do* receive forgiveness for sin. Obviously, it isn’t achieved on our own. In Ephesians he writes:

“*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*” (Ephesians 1:7).

Further explanation of “the Lord’s” teachings by Bunick under hypnosis brings us to “punishment.” As Christians, we understand that “punishment” is a consequence of sin. We also understand that decisions have eternal ramifications, and that Hell is a consequence for those who deny Jesus as Lord and Savior. In the words of Jesus himself:

“*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*” (John 3:18).

More New Age notions are revealed in *The Messengers* at this point. In view of the misconception of punishment, the assumption that Christianity teaches punishment is handed out unjustly and it has nothing to do with the actions of the person, New Age thinking reasons that

“God doesn’t punish. God is a loving God” (p.161).

This is intended to make the Christian doctrine appear as being self-contradicting. Bunick continues, sharing more of the teachings of his “Jesus” saying

“we’re all part of God, that He would not hurt us” (p.161).

This is a popular and twisted philosophy. Yes, He is a loving God, but He is also just. In order to exhibit His love and remain just, He provided a perfect sacrifice for all people, the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18). One must choose to accept that sacrifice, to allow Jesus into their lives — to believe in God’s boundless love toward undeserving sinners.

The New Age teaching that “we’re all part of God” is also of primary importance to this book. For an individual to have the power to atone for one’s own sins would make *them* God with no need for the Savior. Under this New Age guise, all power for atonement is with the individual and not with Jesus who is necessary because it is He who atoned for our sins, the spotless lamb.

The apostle John said,

“*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7).

However, Bunick shares that there is part of us that *is* God (p.173). He also states “God and nature are one” (p.173). This is pantheism, which is the belief that god is everything and everything is god. The Scriptures are quite unequivocal that nature is part of God’s *creation*, and itself is not God, the *creator*. According to the view of Bunick and his spirit guides, nature is God or part of God, and thus, nature is it’s own creator.

The identity of “Jesus” (according to Bunick in more regression therapy) is quite fascinating. Scattered throughout the book are tidbits as to who this other Jesus is. Bunick believes Jesus . . .

“has knowledge of who he has been in previous lives . . .” (p.174).

We have Jesus the reincarnated! Furthermore, he states, regarding healing:

“he can’t do it if they don’t accept what he’s saying” (p.188).

Now we are introduced to a limited God. Bunick also says Jesus taught that by doing healings, credibility is established in getting people . . .

“to accept Jeshua as the medium between the part of God that is within them and our creator. Jeshua is to be the messenger between that part of God which is in all of us and God who is the Father and Mother of us all” (p.269).

I imagine the Apostle John would be quite surprised by this since he wrote:

“*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*” (John 1:3).

Jesus is not part of *creation*; He is the *creator*. According to *The Messengers*, Jesus is only a messenger, and the deity is twisted to include the politically-correct female figure.

Finally, in understanding who Jesus is in relationship to God, Bunick says Jesus taught that . . .

“we’re all children. We’re all sons and daughters of God. We all are, and we all have God within us. A part of God . . . He says that we should get in touch what’s inside of us and have God become part of our daily life” (p.173).

No matter how true some of this statement may sound, Jesus is the Son of God, and even believers are only *adopted* as sons and daughters (see Ephesians 1:5). Of course, we should have God as a part of our daily life; but until a person accepts Jesus as one’s Savior, one *is not* a child of God.

“*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*” (John 1:12).

Salvation is another essential doctrine that has been seriously distorted. In continued hypnosis sessions, Bunick speaks of the disciples, saying that he’s . . .

“not too enthusiastic about what they’re doing right now or the way they are going about it” (p.247).

When asked about what he’s unhappy about, he responds, “For one thing, they’re saying that unless you accept Jeshua as the Messiah, you cannot have salvation. But there are many, many lands, many places far from here where the people will never come in contact with Jeshua or with his teachings. Are we to believe that these people will not have salvation even though they have lived a good life, as far as honoring the laws of God . . . They’re putting fear in people’s hearts . . .” (p.247).

(Continued on next page)

"Messengers" (Continued from page 7)

This is an argument I have heard many times from skeptics and those with a New Age way of thinking. Deeply humanistic people, with universalistic beliefs, confusing reverence and fear. No matter how unappealing they believe it to be, salvation is found only through Christ.

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, cf. Acts 16:31).

"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).


Bunick takes this even a step further.

"I also understand that they're having people sell all their possessions and donate it to their cause. I understand that this is providing them with the wealth they need to continue spreading . . . the Good News" (p.247).

This makes the disciples appear as if they are becoming rich through ministry!

The Messengers is guilty of the unbiblical teachings of the New Age and Word-Faith movements. It does not define impor-

tant terms: terms like salvation, Messiah, or Savior. It tiptoes around the subject of sin. It does not teach that the Bible says the wages of sin is eternal separation from God. It does not teach that Jesus is the only way to God. Of course, it removes the doctrine of Hell. Most of all, it attempts to turn the Bible into a work of fiction based on the testimony of "angels" during hypnotherapy.

I end with a final thought. Bunick's recollections of his past life as the Apostle Paul contradict so much of what has been documented, is that to say that the thousands of Bible manuscripts are inaccurate? In the sacred words of Paul, "May it never be!" 

*All Bible quotations are from the NKJV (New King James Version).

Our thanks go to Sarah Flashing for her review of *The Messengers*. Sarah is married and the mother of three little boys. She and her family reside in Brookfield, IL and are members of LaGrange Bible Church. In addition, she attends Trinity International University majoring in Christian Ministry. Her interest in apologetics/countercult ministry developed over many years of attending different Christian and cult organizations. She has a personal ministry vision to aid in equipping the church with the knowledge to counter the secular humanism/relativism of our popular culture for the purpose of evangelism.

"Luther" (Continued from page 5)

Church Tradition, Luther was now claiming that it could be sought apart from Church Tradition. This was the scandal of his position; not that Scripture stood supreme. Wood writes,

"Luther's conception of biblical authority therefore, was revolutionary in that it denied that the teaching of Scripture and the teaching of the Roman Church were necessarily identical, and that the pope or a council as representing the Church must ultimately determine the meaning of the Word."²¹

To lend further credence to Luther's historic view of Scripture, a number of interesting observations arise upon even a cursory reading of his early writings regarding the relationship between the Church and Scripture. First, it is remarkable to note that in many debates and writings, he frequently would demand Scriptural support on the part of his Catholic opponents or criticize them for not demonstrating a shred of Biblical evidence to back their position. For instance, in response to the Papal bull (a decree by the Papacy), *Exsurge* (that condemned Luther's views as heretical and excommunicated him), Luther writes:

"Having given my testimony I proceed to take up the bull. Peter said that you should give a reason for the faith that is in you, but this bull condemns me from its own word without any proof from Scripture, whereas I back up all my assertions from the Bible. I ask thee, ignorant Antichrist, dost thou think that with thy naked words thou canst prevail against the armor of Scripture? Hast thou learned this from Cologne and Louvain? If this is all it takes, just to say, 'I dissent, I deny,' what fool, what ass, what mole, what log could not condemn? Does not thy meretricious brow blush that with think inane smoke thou withstandest the lightning of the divine Word?"²²

It appears here and many places elsewhere, that Luther was assuming the supremacy of Scripture. It seems to function as a missing premise in his arguments against the Papacy. He believed in order for Rome to justify its positions, it must appeal to the Bible – not just to the Fathers and Aquinas. Since the Roman Catholic Church does not do this, by *their own* authority their words are meaningless. If Luther's disapprobation against Rome's lack of

Scriptural backing was not considered a legitimate, universal criticism against the Roman Church (as he would surely have known it not to be), his advancing it would have been futile if not accompanied by any justifying support. Had the foundation of Tradition provided the framework for Scripture instead of the reverse, the Catholics could have easily responded (as they do today) that direct Biblical support was not necessary. The authoritative teaching of the Church would have itself sufficed.

But history shows no such retort on their part. Moreover, in the various disputations, which occurred later between Catholics and Protestants, one of the ground rules actually laid down by the latter was the exclusive usage of the Bible in the debate.²³ References to Church Fathers, Tradition, and the rulings of councils were not allowed. If the authority of the Church and Tradition were at least on par with the Bible and had been since the Church's inception, then one would have to wonder why the Catholic debaters would even succumb to such unfair guidelines and biased tactics. We would expect to see virulent protests on the part of the Roman representatives, but such is not the case. Hence, in Luther's mind the supremacy of Scripture appears to be a given which, oddly enough, his opponents originally do not see fit to contest. If Luther were faced with Catholic polemicists today, however, he would be met with somewhat different and misguided charges.²⁴

An example of a modern Catholic criticism, that misses the intent of Luther's position (yet, was not misunderstood by those of his day), attempts to render his position fatal. Thinking that Luther promulgated *sola scriptura* in a positive, exclusive sense, many Catholics today discredit *sola scriptura* on the basis that it is not commanded in the Bible. "It is unbiblical because the Bible nowhere teaches or assumes it . . ."²⁵ This is a ludicrous allegation, however, because it assumes a meaning of *sola scriptura* that Luther never intended. The simple fact of the matter is that *sola scriptura* is not so much a positive assertion as it is a negative one. In other words, it is not that Protestants are not open to the idea that there might be other sources of infallible revelation, but they believe that the only trustworthy source available is the Bible. The question here is not one of ontology (dealing with the nature of

(Continued on next page)

"Luther" (Continued from page 8)

being, reality or ultimate substance) as it is of epistemology (dealing with the study of the origin, nature, methods and limits of knowledge).

The only source of reliable revelation we can know of, with any degree of certainty, is what we have contained in Scripture. It *alone* is the standard by which all truth claims – theological, scientific, philosophical, etc. – must be measured, because we know of no other. This does not mean all truth is contained in Scripture, nor does it mean that any truth claim not negated by Scripture is necessarily true. All it means is that any truth claim made by Scripture must be true, and any truth claim that is not in harmony with Scripture must be false. Contrary to the manner in which Catholics caricaturize "Bible-only" Christians, Protestants do allow for the possible existence of other authoritative sources. We just don't know of any. Hence the emphasis is "Scripture *alone*" not "Scripture alone." By implication, the controversy at hand is not whether there is only one infallible authority, but rather whether the Catholic Church truly is the only infallible *interpreter* of Scripture. While Protestants believe the Canon is closed, they do not believe it is "sealed" in the sense that it is impossible for further revelation to be found. Therefore, the charge that *sola scriptura* is self-refuting is invalid.

This leads to another common misconception of *sola scriptura*. Catholics see this decree of the Reformers as finding its residence in a vacuum. Since the Canon itself is dependent upon the decision of the Church (more precisely, the sacred Tradition of which the Church, itself, was a product), it must carry equal if not more authority than the Scriptures. Modern Catholic apologist, Patrick Madrid explains the supposed dilemma:

"There is no 'inspired table of contents' in Scripture that tells us which books belong and which ones do not. That information comes to us from outside Scripture. Moreover, the knowledge of which books comprise the canon of the New Testament must be infallible; if not, there is no way to know for certain if the books we regard as inspired really are inspired. Further, this knowledge must be binding; otherwise men would be free to create their own customized canon containing those books they value and lacking the ones they devalue. This knowledge must also be part of divine revelation; if not, it is merely a *Tradition of men*, and if that were so, Protestants would be forced into the intolerable position of championing a canon of purely human origin . . . *Sola Scriptura* becomes 'canon fodder' as soon as the Catholic requires the Protestant to explain how the books of the Bible got into the Bible. Under the principles implicit in *sola scriptura*, Scripture is placed in an epistemological vacuum, since it and the veracity of its contents 'dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church.' If that's true, how then can anyone know with certitude what belongs in Scripture in the first place? The answer, of course, is that you can't."²⁶

This is the same argument that Gerry Matatics used in the aforementioned debate. What he, Madrid, and others are essentially saying is that Matthew, Romans, James, Revelation, and the like are only authoritative because the Catholic Church has declared them to be so. Hence, according to the Catholic, Luther and the Reformers' dependency upon Scripture alone is absurd, since Scripture's authority is dependent upon the Catholic Church. If the authority of the Catholic Church is abdicated, then so too must

the authority of the Scriptures. On the surface, such a charge appears to be sound, but it neglects to consider two critical points.

First, while the recognition of the necessity for a higher status of Church authority over Scripture was still in its infancy Luther, himself, was presented with this supposed dilemma regarding *sola scriptura*. The following is his response which, despite its glib and sarcastic tone, is fairly astute and still useful today:

"The Church has approved only four Gospels, and therefore, there are only four. For if it had approved more, there would have been more. Since the Church has the right to accept and approve as many Gospels as it wishes, it follows that the Church is superior to the Gospels. What a splendid argument! I approve Scripture. Therefore I am superior to Scripture. John the Baptist acknowledges and confesses Christ. He points to Him with his finger. Therefore the Church is superior to them."²⁷

Luther turned the Catholic argument on its head by arguing that it does not logically follow that one who has an *ability* to recognize what is and is not authoritative must also have the same or greater authority to declare it so. Nor does it follow that such an authority is necessary. In other words, the early Church merely *recognized* the authority carried by the New Testament documents. They did not ascribe an authority to them that they did not already possess. The documents are authoritative in themselves. Whether the Church (or anyone else) recognized this authority is irrelevant. The authority of the documents is not dependent upon Tradition because of the fact that the authority of Christ and His apostles does not rest on tradition either. Therefore, Madrid's premise that, "This knowledge [of which are canonical and which are not] must also be part of divine revelation," is faulty, and his whole argument falls apart, as Luther so aptly illustrates.

Secondly, Roman Catholics must remember that it took more than just Church-wide acceptance of a document for its admission into the Canon. Reliable evidence of apostolic endorsement was also a major contributing factor in determining its canonicity.²⁸ Regardless of the *Church's* endorsement of the Scripture, it is the *Apostles'* endorsement that is authoritative and to be obeyed. Therefore, the process of canonization was not as subjectively determined as many Catholic defenders would argue. Wood provides various excerpts from Luther to illustrate this objective perspective he had of the Bible which Rome (at the time) did not contest either:

(Continued on next page)

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"Luther" (Continued from previous page)

"The priority of the Scripture over the Church is everywhere stressed in Luther. 'The Church is the creation of the Word, not vice versa.' 'The Scripture is the womb from which are born theological truth and the Church.' 'The Church is built on the word of the Gospel which the word of God's wisdom and virtue.' 'The Word of God preserves the Church of God.'"²⁹

Luther, through questioning the Church's authority, brought to light the dilemma it faced: In order for it to claim that it alone can interpret the Scriptures, it would have to officially claim an authority at least on par with the written Word. This was the issue at Trent. Whatever the exact relationship between Tradition and Scripture, the Church's elevation of itself was formally no less a novelty than Luther's contention that only Scripture was the ultimate authority.³⁰ Given this revised understanding of *sola scriptura*, the Protestant is no longer on the defensive with the Catholic to explain why he accepts the authority of Scripture. Rather, it is the Catholic who has the monumental task of providing sufficient proof for the need of an infallible interpreter in the first place. Secondly, he must then prove that not only is the Roman Catholic Church infallible, but that it is also the appointed interpreter. Until this is done, *sola scriptura*, though not necessarily without its problems, remains the more viable, if not palatable, option. 

**Sola Scriptura* is a Latin term meaning "scripture alone."

***Sola Fide* is a Latin term meaning "faith alone."

****Partim . . . partim* is Latin for "partly . . . partly."

†*Et* is Latin meaning "and."

Steve Berg was a second-generation Jehovah's Witness who loved being one of Jehovah's Witnesses. As a teenager, it was his desire to be the best defender of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (the official writer and publisher of Jehovah's Witness material). He came face to face with a youth pastor who cared enough to take the time to talk with him and to present the truth about this and other essential doctrines of the Christian faith. Steve accepted Christ as his personal Savior. He is a graduate of Trinity College in Deerfield, IL and is currently attending Trinity University in Deerfield, IL.

Endnotes

1. Gerry Matatics and James White, "Sola Scriptura Debate" (Transcript of public debate given in Omaha, Nebraska November 1992, p. 1).
2. A resurgence in aggressive Catholic apologetics has resulted in the fruit of such Protestant-educated converts including Philip Blosser (Westminster Theological Seminary), David Currie (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), and Robert Sungenis (Westminster Theological Seminary). While Evangelical apologetics ministries abound, very few are dedicated to the defense of strictly Protestant issues.
3. David Currie confesses, "If not for this issue, I might still be an Evangelical with strong Catholic sympathies . . . The Protestant problem with scriptural authority showed me why I could never remain a Protestant." David B. Currie, *Born Fundamentalist, Born Again Catholic*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), p. 51.
4. "He did not as yet deny the validity of indulgences or the sacrament of penance out of

- which they had grown." Harold J. Grimm. "Introduction" to his translation of Martin Luther's 95 Theses. In *Selected Writings of Martin Luther, 1517-1520*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 45.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
6. In a letter to Archbishop Albrecht of Brandenburg sent along with the 95 Theses, Luther writes, "Father in Christ and Most Illustrious Prince, forgive me that I, the scum of the earth, should approach Your Sublimity." Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*. (New York: Mentor, 1977), p. 64.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
8. This is not to say, however, that the common man could not interpret the Bible as well. The emphasis here rests on Luther's realization that the Catholic Church did not possess exclusive rights to interpretation.
9. Matthew 4:17 reads as "do penance" in the Vulgate but correctly translated is "be penitent."
10. Bainton, p. 144. The allegation of contradictions pervading the Church was a common theme for Luther. In his debate with Eck, "I assert that a council cannot make divine right out of that which by nature is not divine right. Councils have contradicted each other, for the recent Lateran Council has reversed the claim of the councils of Constance and Basel that a council is above a pope." (Bainton, p. 90).
11. Peter Stravinkas "What is Catholicism's Official Doctrine on Scripture and Tradition?" In *Not By Scripture Alone*, ed. Robert Sungenis (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1997), p. 373.
12. George Tavard, *Holy Writ or Holy Church* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 113.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-123
14. Dewey Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), p. 109.
15. Congar even declares Trent's decision to be of "no significance." Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions* (San Diego, CA: Basilica Press, 1966), p. 168.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
17. Tavard, p. 209.
18. Tavard, pp. 205-207.
19. Tavard, pp. 205-207.
20. Tavard comments with the following qualification, ". . . we are led by patristic theology to consider that there is a sense in which 'Scripture alone' is an authentic expression of Catholic Christianity, inasmuch as, that is, the Scripture is, in the Church, the apostolic Tradition and vice versa." Tavard, p. 11.
21. A. Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word*. (Exeter, England: The Paternoster Press, 1969), p. 120.
22. Bainton, p. 125.
23. Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), p. 117.
24. For example, Catholic apologist, Robert Fastiggi, attempts to criticize Luther's adherence to sola scriptura by suggesting that because of the multiplicity of Protestant interpretations of Scripture and Luther's apparent insistence that his interpretation was the correct one, sola scriptura cannot possibly be sufficient. However, after quoting Luther's statement at Worms, Fastiggi utterly fails to address the very reason that Luther cited for endorsing sola scriptura, that is, the untrustworthy record of the Roman Church. He does not answer the burning question of, "What other option is one left with if Luther is accurate in his statement that 'popes and councils' cannot be trusted?" If Scripture itself is not sufficient and the Catholic Church cannot be trusted, what alternative would he suggest? Sungenis, pp. 325-368.
25. Philip Blosser, "What Are the Philosophical and Practical Problems with *Sola Scriptura*?" In Sungenis, p. 43.
26. Patrick Madrid, "Sola Scriptura: A Blueprint for Anarchy." In Sungenis, p. 23.
27. A. Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word*. (Exeter, England: The Paternoster Press, 1969), p. 124.
28. Cf. Milton Fisher, "The Canon of the New Testament." In *The Origin of the Bible*, ed. Philip Wesley Comfort (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992), p. 76.
29. Wood, p. 123.
30. This is not to say that there weren't exceptions. Tavard recalls the extreme position of Prierias who said, "the authority of the Roman Pontiff, when he passes judgement according to his right and functions, is greater than the authority of the Gospel, since because of it we believe the Gospel." Tavard also notes that this was not the majority opinion of the Church, ". . . Prierias could have burnt most Catholic polemicists of his own time. For even those who most upheld the privileges of the Papacy shied away from subordinating to them 'Scripture, whose author is the Holy Spirit.'" Tavard, pp. 116-117



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"Missionaries" (Continued from page 3)

"call?" It is a God-given love and empathy for a people who HE wants to reach, whether in a foreign land or right next door.

Why do we care and ask you to care for those trapped in the cults? Well, God cares for them. He has not written them off as we sometimes want to do with those who may be difficult to reach. He would not speak cruelly to them or slam the door in their face. Dear friend, aside from the religious differences, these people are no different than you and me. They love their children, have hopes and dreams; many of them are trying very hard to please God. In fact, some of them are your children, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. I say with the apostle Paul, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge" (Ro. 10:1-2, NASB). When people ask me why I do care about JW's and such, all I can say is, "You would care about them if you knew them like I do!" Lies and deception have ensnared them; they are lost sheep in need of the Shepherd.

If we are to effectively reach this mission field, we are going to need YOU. As with missionaries to other countries, we need your prayers and we need your support. Our life is meeting with cultists and training other missionaries to reach out to still more cultists. We are teaching in Christian churches, both to prevent their flock from being caught in the web of the cults, and to give at least some of them a vision for reaching out to those dear people who come right up to their door. Your prayers, calls, e-mails, and words of encouragement strengthen us in the daily work "in the field." The financial support of individuals and churches is a necessary element in this mission work. Up to this point, we primarily have funded this work ourselves with a few faithful and generous supporters. The wonderful group of volunteers, which have been trained over the last several years, makes the tremendous volume of things we do possible. My pastor recently reminded me that the

Scriptures teach that a soldier does not go to battle at their own expense. As the pagan culture increases around us, we ask that you consider backing the soldiers who are in the trenches daily.

When you think of "missionaries," we ask you to think of us who need your help as much here in America as those who go abroad. 

Love to all,



*Jehovah's Witnesses (a.k.a. JW's) are the followers of the teachings of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS) founded by Charles Taze Russell.

**Mormons are the followers of the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) founded by Joseph Smith.

Endnotes

1. Not surprising, this quote from the 8th Article of Faith of the LDS Church: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly . . ." instills doubts as to the reliability of the Bible and implies the LDS Church knows when and where the Bible is and is not translated correctly. Association with the group is essential to learn "truth" as set forth in this statement by John Taylor found in *The Gospel Kingdom*, pp.229-230:
Have you forgotten that you are associated with the Saints of God in Zion, where the oracles of truth are revealed, and the truths of God are made manifest, and clearly developed; where you and your posterity after you can learn the ways of life and salvation; where you are placed in a position that you can obtain blessings from the great Elohim, that will rest upon you and your posterity worlds without end?
These same types of Bible-doubling, only-we-have-the-truth quotes are found in many other cult groups including the following from the WTBTS in the *Watchtower* November 15, 1969 pg. 696:
"Because of digging down into the literal meaning of the original Bible language *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation* [conveniently compiled by the WTBTS to "aid" its members] can serve as a safeguard against error in these days when many religious leaders are teaching twisted things, even twisting the written Word of God."
and from the *Watchtower*, Dec. 1, 1990 p.19:
"Let us face the fact that no matter how much Bible reading we have done, we would never have learned the truth on our own."
From these statements, it is clear that both the LDS Church and the WTBTS have set themselves up as the sole arbiters of truth and the only authorities to interpret Scripture to their followers. Both groups publish their own materials using Bible words to clothe the group's teachings and doctrines. Thus, each group uses their own "language" which sounds "Christian," and this is how they are able to pass on their dangerous philosophies to their unsuspecting followers.
2. Dr. Ron Rhodes, *The Culting of America*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994), p.30.
3. Ibid. p. 41.

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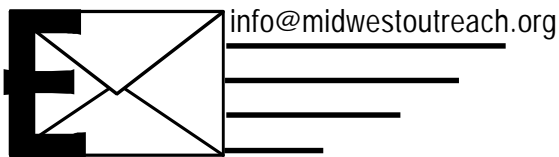

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