

# Answering JW Objections to the Deity of Christ

By Joy A. Veinot

**I**n our last *Journal*, we discussed the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's (WTBS's)\* *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*<sup>1</sup> booklet, especially looking at how that publication intentionally misrepresents and misquotes scholars in order to make their case that the Deity of Christ/Trinity doctrine is an unreasonable and false teaching "borrowed" from and rooted in pagan sources. We showed that they deliberately misrepresented the views of Christian scholars—from the early Church "Fathers" to modern-day academics—and that they also used many scholars of a liberal bent (many who even reject the validity of the Bible as the infallible Word of God), as well as Unitarians, and others to give supposedly scholarly support for their erroneous view on the nature of God and Jesus Christ.

In this *Journal*, we intend to examine and refute some of the ostensibly Biblical and/or rational arguments against the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity/Deity of Christ that are advanced by the WTBS and employed by Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) in their discussions with Trinitarians.

Most Christians, when discussing (or attempting to discuss ☺) the Deity of Christ with a JW, will first bring up John 1:1, which, in their minds, should settle the matter all by itself. After all, John 1:1 clearly states:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (NASB)*

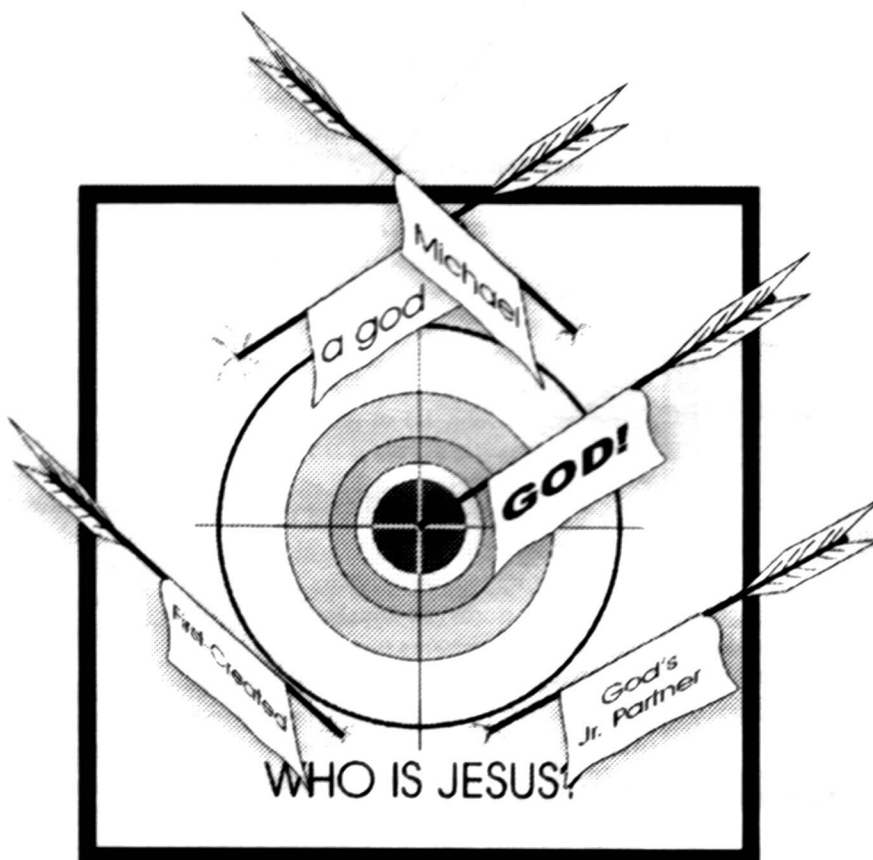
But nothing is as easy as it seems when dealing with the JWs as countless unwary Christians have found to their consternation. Where the Bible is extremely clear about the Deity of Christ, the Bible must be changed; and in the WTBS's New World Translation (NWT), it is! John 1:1 in the NWT states:

*In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God and the Word was a god. (NWT)*

Voila! Jesus isn't the true God but is merely a god. Not the true God—not really a false god either—but something in the fuzzy wuzzy twilight zone between. ☺ They justify this monumental alteration

of the text by claiming to use the following principle: The first instance of *theos* (the Greek word for *God*) used in John 1:1 has the definite article *ho* (or *the*) in front of it, so it must be translated as big "G" *God*; while the second instance of *theos* is anarthrous (does not have the definite article *the*), which indicates, they claim, that this is not *THE* God but merely a god.

The WTBS translation of the verse is untenable on several  
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grounds. The most serious problem with their rendering, aside from the fact that it robs Christ of His full deity, is the fact that it makes the Apostle John a polytheist! There is only ONE God (Isaiah 43:6)! Robert M. Bowman Jr. writes:

... by translating "a god" the JW's have made the Bible contradict itself ... the Bible flatly denies over and over that there are any other real, true gods besides the one true God. Since the Word is clearly not a false god, he must be a true God—that is, the *only* true God, Jehovah.

... the context actually supports very strongly the conclusion that the Word was God, not a secondary, inferior god. The verse begins by saying that the Word was existing "in the beginning," meaning that the Word was already in existence when time itself began. Thus, the Word was not a creature, but was in fact eternal.<sup>2</sup>

There are numerous good books available that explain *all* of the whys and wherefores, grammatically and theologically, about the proper way to translate this verse, and I strongly recommend that you do pick up and read what knowledgeable and learned men have to say about this and other pertinent issues from a scholarly perspective. The more you learn, the more confident you will feel to discuss the issue with a JW.

Additionally, you can and should point out to the JW that the *vast majority* of Biblical scholars *disagree* with the WTBS's rendering of John 1:1 in their NWT and translate the verse as *"the Word was God."*

But one obstacle you will encounter is this: JW's are very accustomed to disputing John 1:1 and, generally speaking, have very little respect for scholars anyway—unless their words can somehow be twisted to make them appear to support the NWT's position (as the WTBS has done with Dr. Julius Mantey<sup>3</sup> and so many others). So rather than go round and round on that point, I like to get them off their game plan a little bit in the hope of actually causing them to *think* rather than just regurgitate their usual, well-practiced spiel. And, being a simple person, I like a simple plan. ☺

So I generally direct their attention right down the page to John 1:6 in the WTBS's own *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* (KIT)<sup>4</sup> where the definite article *ho* is likewise absent preceding *theos*; and yet, this verse is translated correctly to say that John the Baptist was "... a man that was sent

forth as a representative of God ..." *no* sent as a representative of "a god." Why didn't the WTBS translating committee (none of whom is a Greek Scholar, by the way) remain faithful to their John 1:1 principle here in this verse?

The answer is simple, of course. They make and break "rules" based on what they are trying to prove at the moment. About this issue, Robert H. Countess observes in his book, *The Jehovah's Witnesses' New Testament*:

In the New Testament there are 282 occurrences of the anarthrous *theos*. At sixteen places the NWT has either a *god, gods, or godly*. Sixteen out of 282 means that the translators were faithful to their translation principle only six percent of the time. *To be 94 percent unfaithful hardly commends a translation to careful readers!*<sup>5</sup>

At this point, the JW will likely try to change the subject by asking you just how it is possible for the Word to *be* the person whom he is *with*. Always keep in mind, when they begin their bobbing and weaving, that John 1:1 is teaching that Jesus was *with God the Father*, not with Himself! And even though the Person Jesus is not the Person of the Father, He possesses the *very nature of God!* To say that you are "human" does not mean that you are a *particular* human, but that you possess *human nature*.

Remember in our last *Journal* article on the Trinity booklet, I used the analogy of the nature of fire to show that God's nature does not have to be like ours to be reasonable or "possible." Fire is possible, wouldn't you agree? Yet, it possesses a very different nature than ours—one flame can generate another, and yet, the first is not diminished; the two flames can then become one fire again very easily. I find that parallel to be useful here. Applying the analogy to John 1:1, it looks like this:

*In the beginning was the flame,  
and the flame was with fire and the  
flame was fire.*

Of course, I am not suggesting that God is fire. God is God! Fire is merely one of God's creations. It is interesting, though, that the Bible likens God the Holy Spirit to fire in the Book of Acts to convey the truth that the Holy Spirit was upon all of them as *"tongues of fire"* or flames (Acts 2:3-4).

**Playing Twenty Questions**

So many of the WTBS's ostensibly rational objections are based (like their argument above) upon willful ignorance of

the Trinitarian teaching that God exists fully and equally as *three* persons. Jesus could, indeed, be with God the Father, because they are *not the same person*.

Some (but by no means all) of their similar arguments are as follows: Who was Jesus talking to in the Garden of Gethsemane? Was He praying to Himself? Jesus claimed to be sent from God—did He send Himself? Jesus said the Father was His God? Could God have a God?

Again, all of these things can be easily understood in terms of the tri-personal nature of the Godhead and also in the Incarnation of the Son—Jesus was fully human as well as fully God. As man, Jesus prays to His God—the Father (Mark 14:36). Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, did not send Himself to Earth—He was sent by the Father (1 John 4:14). The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father (John 14:26) and the Son (John 15:26). And while the Son glorifies the Father (John 17:1), the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:14). Equality of nature does not necessitate that all three Persons have the same role within the Godhead.

### The “Mystery” of the Incarnation

I once heard Robert Bowman characterize the Incarnation something like this: IF Jesus were fully God and fully man, would you expect the alloy to be a straightforward and uncomplicated personage, or would you expect to find some contradictions in the admixture? IF Jesus were both man and God, he would, indeed, be a paradox! You would find Him easily capable of feeding 5000 from a basket of bread and fish, yet also capable of experiencing hunger and thirst. You would see Him exercising power over death by raising Lazarus, yet dying Himself. He would obey God’s law perfectly and, yet, identify Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath—putting Himself above the Law! He would foretell the future, yet claim not to know the day and hour of His return to Earth. A paradox, indeed! Some other interesting conundrums concerning Jesus are as follows:

- ☞ James 1:13 teaches that God cannot be tempted, and yet, Jesus was tempted.
- ☞ Habakkuk 1:12 states that God cannot die, yet, Jesus died.
- ☞ John 1:18 says that no man has seen God at any time, and yet, Jesus was certainly seen and handled by the people of His day.

Yet, Jesus was called God by the disciples (John 1:1, John 20:28, 2 Peter 1:1), the Apostle Paul (Colossians 2:9), and Isaiah (Isaiah 9:6). He identified Himself as the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14 (John 8:58), was worshipped by His disciples (Matthew 28:17) and all of the angels (Hebrews 1:6), was identified as the Creator of everything (John 1:2, Colossians 1:15-18), and is given all of the titles of Jehovah God in the Old Testament—Savior (Isaiah 43:11, Titus 1:4), Shepherd (Psalm 23:1, John 10:11), King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1Tim. 6:15, Rev. 17:14), and so on. He also possesses God’s attributes such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

The JW’s rationalistic rejection of these Biblical enigmas blinds them to the beauty, the compassion, the wonder, and the very purpose of the Incarnation! God became human so that God as man could be seen, so that God could be tempted, so that God could die.

Indeed, we worship a God who shares our sorrows, experienced our physical weaknesses, was stung by betrayal, bore our sins, and tasted death *for our sake!*

That’s where our love and adoration of Jesus comes in. The JW god did not *personally* suffer, and does not *personally* save, but sent his inferior “junior partner” (Michael the Archangel) to Earth to suffer and die. Michael’s supposed sacrifice does not save anyone, but merely offers mankind the opportunity to *save themselves through their own efforts*. No great gift here.

### The “Whys” and “Hows”

JW objections are often presented as “whys” and “hows.” *Why* did Jesus say this, and *how* did he do that? It is important to stress at some point in the discussion that Christians believe what the Bible teaches—whether or not we always understand the “hows” and the “whys” of everything stated therein. You might point out to the JW that he also believes many things he would not be able to fully explain

to an inquiring skeptic, since he, like you, is a finite human being attempting to comprehend and explain the infinite. For one example, he and you both believe that God parted the Red Sea, but neither of you can even begin to explain HOW He did it to a skeptic. The skeptic may reject the Bible teachings he cannot fully understand, but as a Bible-believing Christian, you do not.

The “hows” and “whys” that the JW are taught to throw at you are similarly based upon a *rejection* of a Bible teaching that he cannot understand or does not want to accept and are intended to confuse the issue or throw you off your footing. Let’s examine some of them.

Why does  
1 Corinthians 15:28  
claim that Jesus is  
in subjection  
to the Father...?

**Why did Jesus say He did not know the day or hour of His return, but the Father did? (Mark 13:32) If Jesus was God, wouldn’t He know all things?**

In reference to Mark 13:32, the Trinity booklet argues (on page 19) that Jesus cannot be God because He had limited knowledge:

**Had Jesus been the equal Son part of a Godhead, he would have known what the Father knows. But Jesus did not know, for he was not equal to God.**

Again, Jesus is also a man, and he was speaking as a man. But besides this, it is ludicrous that the JWs use this argument against Christ since *they do not believe that God the Father knows all things!* Their “Jehovah” is a limited (finite) god who chooses to be ignorant of some things, such as the choices and the ultimate fate of His creatures. Their god is not omniscient; he is only a pretty good guesser of what is going to happen. Duane Magnani of Witness Inc. refers to the JWs god as “the Heavenly Weatherman,” who does his best to forecast what may happen, based on certain calculations he makes. They even go so far as to assert that if God knew the future, he would be responsible for all the evil in it! The WTBS 1985 book, *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, states on page 142:

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**"Deity" (Continued from page 3)**

If God foreordained and foreknew Adam's sin and all that would result from this, it would mean that by creating Adam, God deliberately set in motion all the wickedness committed in human history.

Obviously, the WTBS does not know the difference between *foreordination* and *foreknowledge*. Even I, as a finite human being with no power to foretell the future, knew before my children were even born that they were going to commit sins and do wrong things. Does that make me responsible for the wrong choices they made of their own free will?

As another example of their teaching in regard to God's omniscience, the July 15, 1984 *THE WATCHTOWER*\*\* states on page 5:

**If God knew that Adam and Eve were doomed to failure, placing everlasting life before them would have been a cruel hoax.**

It is a terrible shame they do not understand God's gracious provision for mankind's predicament—how sinful men and women can receive by faith the imputed righteousness of Christ and, indeed, inherit eternal life despite their many failures. But I digress ...

The WTBS theology book *Insight on the Scriptures*, vol. 1, page 853, asserts:

**The argument that God's not foreknowing all future events and circumstances in full detail would evidence imperfection on his part is, in reality, an arbitrary view of perfection.**

To deny Christ's Deity on the basis of what they themselves claim is "**an arbitrary view of perfection**" is inconsistent, to put it mildly. But consistency is not their strong suit! The Trinity booklet goes on to say:

**Similarly, we read at Hebrews 5:8 that Jesus "learned obedience from the things he suffered." Can we imagine that God had to *learn* anything? No, but Jesus did, for he did not know everything that God knew. And he had to learn something that God never needs to learn—obedience. God never has to obey anyone.<sup>6</sup>**

I wonder what goes through their heads that they can "forget" that is exactly their own teaching—that *God the Father learns things as He goes!* And then, He plans accordingly! The January 5, 1964 *THE WATCHTOWER*, on page 52, says concerning the fall of Adam and Eve:

**But as soon as that first human pair sinned God knew it or learned it, because now they felt guilty and hid themselves from sight ... Immediately he formed his purpose of ransoming the world of Adam and Eve's descendants.**

But what about their second claim—that if Jesus is God, He would never have had to learn obedience. Think about it—obedience is precisely the thing that Jesus as God incarnate *would* have to learn at least in an experiential sense. This proves that Jesus could *not* have been a creature prior to His Incarnation, or He would've already experientially understood the concept of obedience. In order to completely identify with us and be our High Priest, he became a man and learned firsthand what it means and how it feels to be obliged—to be obedient—to God, even through suffering and at great cost.

**Why does 1 Corinthians 15:28 claim that Jesus is in subjection to the Father, even after His resurrection to glory? And 1 Corinthians 11:3 says that God is the "head of Christ." Isn't the head always superior to the one over whom he exercises headship?**

Ron Rhodes, in his excellent book, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Jehovah's Witnesses*, explains:

Jehovah's Witnesses try to make much of the fact that even now, in the glorified state, Christ is in subjection to the Father. They thus imply that Jesus is not God in the same sense that the Father is. This position assumes, however, that Jesus did not retain His human nature ... Because Christ still possesses His human nature, then, Christ is *still* in submission to the Father. But in no way does this make Jesus lesser than the Father in terms of

His divine nature. Christ is the **God-man**. On the human side, Jesus is lesser than the Father.

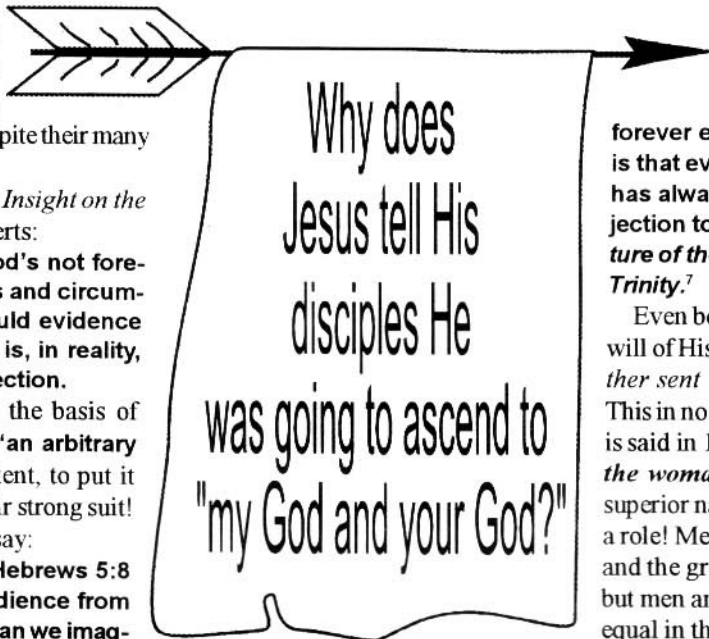
But on the divine side, Jesus is forever equal to the Father... Another point is that even apart from His humanity, Jesus has always been and always will be in subjection to the Father because *this is the nature of the relationship of the Persons in the Trinity*.<sup>7</sup>

Even before Christ's Incarnation, He did the will of His Father. Just as one example, *the Father sent the Son* into the World (John 3:16). This in no way implies inferiority of nature. Mary is said in 1 Corinthians 11:3 to be "*the head of the woman*," and yet, men do not possess a superior nature. No, they really don't! ☺ It's just a role! Men hold a position of greater authority and the greater responsibility that goes with it, but men and women are human and completely equal in the sight of God. Women are not some inferior genus, as is brought out so eloquently

by Paul in Galatians 3:28 where he states that, "*there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*." This issue poses no problem for the Persons of the Trinity Who delight in bringing honor and glory to Each Other, and do not haughtily condescend nor resentfully chafe in Their respective roles. It is fallen human beings, filled with unholy pride, who have such difficulty with the idea. Many JW's (at least the ones I have talked to about this) *do* seem to think women are some inferior species to men, so this line of reasoning may be difficult for them to grasp. ☺ So point the JW's attention to Luke 2:51, where Jesus is said to be in subjection to His earthly parents. Does this, therefore, mean that He was also inferior in nature to Mary and Joseph? Of course, not.

**Why does Jesus tell His disciples in John 20:17 that He was going to ascend to "my God and your God?"**

As the Witnesses continually "misunderstand," Jesus is both God and man. Speaking as a man, it is perfectly proper for the Son to address the Father as God. The Father likewise addresses the Son as God at Heb. 1:8, which reads, "*Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ...*" But this verse has been "fixed" in their *New World "Trans-*





lation" to read, "God is your throne forever and ever ..." While it is possible to translate the Greek words this way, the context does not support it at all. Hebrews 1:6 commands all of God's angels to worship the Son, and worship belongs to God alone (Matthew 4:10)! Then in Hebrews 1:10-12, we have Jesus directly identified with YAHWEH of the Old Testament! (Compare with Psalm 102:24-27.)

I always like to take this opportunity to point out to a JW the curious fact that at Hebrews 1:8, the NWT reads *precisely the same* as the egregious "New Testament"<sup>8</sup> translated by spirit-medium Johannes Greber, who received his "translation" from "God's Spirit World." Now I have a "why" question of my own: WHY would the WTBS's translation agree with a demon-inspired one? Is this a "coincidence?" No, not at all. The WTBS has actually cited Greber's "translation" to back their own, on at least eight different occasions, *knowing full well* that Greber was a demonically inspired spirit medium!<sup>8</sup> They only stopped citing Greber after counter-cult ministries started bringing this embarrassing fact to the attention of JWs who crossed their path. The WTBS then shamefully attempted to whitewash this whole sordid bit of history by implying that they only came to realize Greber was a medium in 1980. Perhaps the "Spirit World" helped them concoct this lame excuse. ☹ It is, of course, an out and out lie, as is proven by the fact that they, themselves, had exposed Greber in their own WATCHTOWER as a spirit medium who trafficked with demons as far back as 1956!

### Why did Jesus say at Mark 10:18 that there is "none good but God alone?" Wasn't He, therefore, acknowledging that He was not God?

Jesus did not at all deny His Deity, anymore than He denied that He was good. He was saying in effect, "I am not just a 'good teacher.' If I am truly *good*, I am God; since only God is good." He was affirming His Deity. The man wanted to relate to Him as just one "good man" to another—just the way so many want to relate to Him today. Among mankind, there is *no one* who is actually good (Psalm 53:3). All of us are sinners by nature (Romans 3:23). Jesus is truly good (Hebrews 4:15), and is, therefore, God.

### Why did Jesus say, "...the Father is greater than I" at John 14:28?

This is the old standby, the one objection I have heard from every JW I have ever talked to. It is embarrassing that they can catch Christians off guard with this lame protestation. Sigh ... *Greater* does not mean *better* or *superior* in nature. It says nothing at all about *nature*. George Bush is "greater" than any of us because of his *position* as our President; yet he is not *better* than the least of us. We all are human; none of us is inferior to any other of us.

### Why is Jesus referred to as the "firstborn of all creation" at Colossians 1:15? Doesn't this prove that Jesus was a created being?

*Firstborn* does not mean *first-created*. It is a title, a station, a position. Let's look at some other passages of Scripture where the term *firstborn* is used.

☞ In Exodus 4:22, the nation of Israel is called by God the *firstborn* [though it was hardly the first nation in existence (Genesis 10:32)], because it was the pre-eminent nation as far as God was concerned—God's chosen one.

☞ In Psalm 89:27, David is called the *firstborn*, although he was the youngest—the last born son of Jesse (1 Samuel 17:13-14).

☞ First Chronicles 5:1 and Hebrews 12:16 show us that *first-born* is a title, a birthright, which can be lost or forfeited.

Reuben forfeited his rightful place for evil behavior, and Esau sold his birthright as "the first-born" to Jacob.

☞ In Genesis 41:51-52 and Jeremiah 31:9, Ephraim is called

the *firstborn*, although Manasseh was Joseph's firstborn son.

If Paul had wanted to call Jesus the "first-created one," he could have done so, because there is a Greek word for *first-create*—*protoktisis*. But Paul did not teach that Jesus was created at all! The *firstborn* is the Heir of Creation (Hebrews 1:2), the One with the right to rule, which fits exactly with the context. Jesus has the right to rule over all because, as the text goes on to say, "*He created all things.*" All things! Which very handily brings us to our next point ...

### God's "Junior Partner"

The WTBS teaches that Jesus is a mere creature. He was the very first creation of Jehovah God, and through Jesus, God's "junior partner," all other things were created. The Trinity booklet states, on page 14:

**So it was by means of this master worker, his junior partner, as it were, that Almighty God created all other things.**

Now this presents us with an opportunity to employ a few choice "how" and "why" questions of our own! HOW did a mere angel, Michael, create *everything* in the Universe? That is a pretty tall order! It's all very confusing to me, Mr. Elder, and since you say that the Trinity doctrine cannot be true because it is confusing and contrary to reason, could you explain to me just how Michael the Archangel accomplished that? In detail?

And WHY would God create only one creature and then use him to create all other creatures? Doesn't that seem silly? WHY wouldn't God just create all things, all alone, by Himself? And WHY does the Bible teach that this is exactly what He did? In Isaiah 44:24, YAHWEH (Jehovah) states:

**Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself, and spreading out the earth all alone ..."** (NASB)

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Didn't YAHWEH know that He was *not* alone, and that He did not create everything *by Himself*? Didn't He notice the little "**master worker, his junior partner**" was there with Him and doing all the creation work? This is puzzling! And WHY did the Apostle John flatly state in John 1:3 that:

*All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being.* (NASB)

If NO THING came into being apart from Jesus, and if He is a created "thing," he had to have created himself! Now that is a REALLY tall order! Could you explain *that* to me, Mr. Elder?

And WHY does this all sound just like Gnostic teaching?

### The Jesus/Michael Connection (or lack thereof)

The WTBS teaching is that Jesus is a created angel—Michael the Archangel, to be exact—although Jesus is not identified as Michael in the Trinity

Isn't it rather odd that this publication spends 31 pages to tell us who Jesus is *not* and does not mention who they believe He *is*? It's not as if they had no opportunity in the booklet to identify Jesus as Michael, but instead, they slither around the issue like the sneaky serpents they are. On page 14 of the Trinity booklet under the heading "Jesus a Separate Creation," they say;

**While on earth, Jesus was a human, although a perfect one because it was God who transferred the life-force of Jesus to the womb of Mary.**

Now this is very devious. Because you see, according to WTBS dogma, it was *not* the life-force of Jesus that was transferred—it was the life-force of *Michael the Archangel* that was transferred into the womb of Mary. (See *THE WATCHTOWER*, March 1, 1960, page 133.) The *Person* Jesus, in their teaching, *did not exist* in a pre-human state to be transferred anywhere!

The WTBS's Michael/Jesus doctrine is as strange as it is illogical. Although the WTBS teaches that Michael *became* Jesus, who *became* Michael again after his crucifixion; their dogma will not logically support this. *Nothing personal* of Michael transferred to the womb that day, since (according to the WTBS) a *life-force* is an *impersonal* force—like electricity—that merely animates a body. No personal qualities or attributes are contained therein. And a person ceases to exist when his so-called life-force leaves his body. Again, this is according to the WTBS. So the angelic person Michael *ceased to exist* when his life-force (now there is a good New Age term) left his angelic body to enter the womb of Mary. Jesus was a man who received nothing *of Michael* from the impersonal life-force and who himself completely ceased to exist when he died on Calvary, and his life-force left *his* body! The July 22, 1979 *Awake!*, on page 27, declares:

**Jesus was dead, he was unconscious, out of existence. Death did not mean a transition to another life for Jesus; rather, non-existence.**

The WTBS teaches that at the Resurrection, Jehovah *recreated* His Son as Michael the Archangel again, and he implanted the

first Michael and Jesus' memories into his brain. Jehovah God had made a "record" of Christ's (and the first Michael's) life-pattern, his memories, personality type, and such, and stored the copy in his own brain until they were needed to recreate Jesus as Michael. I kid you not—this is what they teach!<sup>10</sup> There is no real "personal" connection between these three entities, because ... remember ... life-forces are impersonal. About this, the August 8, 1978 *Awake!* states on page 27:

**Thus the spirit could not have personality but must be an IMPERSONAL force. The invisible spirit or life force active in both man and animals might be compared with electricity, also an invisible force. Electricity may be used to run various types of machines and appliances...The same invisible force that produces sound in one appliance can produce heat in another. The electric current, however, NEVER TAKES ON THE CHARACTERISTICS of the machines or appliances in which it functions or is active.**

So, apparently Jesus and Michael are no more *the same person* than a stove or a fan are the *same appliance*. Electricity (or a force similar to it) empowers both. That is their only "connection." Jesus is dead and gone forever, and so is the first Michael; while the newly created Michael gets all the glory and put forth none of the effort. New Michael never suffered and died for you and me; he just has an implanted memory of Jesus doing so. And they say that the Trinity Doctrine is unreasonable?

### Another divine name in need of restoration?

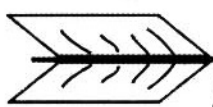
Now, laying aside for a moment the glaring fact that there is no such "life-force transferal" humbug to be found in the Bible, wouldn't this have been a golden opportunity to educate the public about the TRUE identity of Jesus; that rather than being God in his pre-existence, he was the Archangel Michael? One would think that folks who make so much of knowing and proclaiming correct names would be proclaiming Jesus' *real* name (Michael) from the housetops? But no, not a peep.

Well, does it really matter what the pre-existent name of Jesus was? Is it perhaps more important, as far as the WTBS is concerned, that we know what his name is *now* rather than what it was prior to his coming? No, that cannot be the excuse either, because Jesus' name is *no longer Jesus!* His name is Michael again, according to the WTBS. The 1974 book, *God's Eternal Purpose Now Triumphant for Man's Good*, on page 155, states,

**He (Jesus) resumed his prehuman name, Michael, so again there was a 'Michael the Archangel' in heaven.**

So IF Jesus "resumed" the name Michael *after* the Resurrection, why isn't he called that name in this booklet? Wouldn't it dishonor Michael to call him by his former name—Jesus—when he existed in pitiful weakness and mere humanity?

With tongue firmly in cheek, I have to say—perhaps the name Michael was *originally* all throughout the Christian Greek Scriptures until some big, bad, old paganized church father took it out of the manuscript? For example, the original manuscript *might* have read at 1 Corinthians 1:2:



Why is Jesus referred to as the "firstborn of all creation?"

... to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Michael the Archangel, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Michael the Archangel, their Lord and ours.

After all, by the time 1 Corinthians was written, the Lord Jesus no longer existed! Just because there currently are no available autographs or copies that read this way doesn't mean some copies may not just turn up in the future. Some people could be induced to believe this—if it is repeated often enough. Maybe *that* divine name should be “restored” also, as the WTBS has “restored” the name Jehovah into the Greek New Testament, just in case we ever do find ACTUAL PROOF. ☺ In any case, unless and until the name Michael is “restored,” however, the Christian Greek Scriptures do not teach that Jesus is any angel named Michael.

## Be Prepared

*Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.* (Jude 3)

*For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.*

1 Timothy 1:6-7)

*... but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence ...* (1 Peter 3:15)

JWs are often admired for their zealous “preaching,” which is a terribly misguided approbation since they *must* do this “field service” (among many other fruitless works) to *earn* everlasting life on what the WTBS calls “Paradise Earth.” Also, because they seem very confident in their ability to wage Bible battle against those whom they meet at the door, and seem to have “Bible” answers for everything (though these “Bible answers” are really just memorized proof-texts), people wrongly assume that JWs really know their Bibles. They don't!

Simply put, the average JW makes mincemeat out of the average Christian in a Bible discussion, because they have been well trained in *offense*. The reason they all raise identical objections is because they have been taught *exactly what to say* and how to make your beliefs *sound* silly or irrational by means of their well-rehearsed attacks. They carry a little brown book around with them (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985) that gives them prepackaged responses to any defense you may try to make. Most Christians are not even well prepared to make a defense of their faith, much less capable of going on the offensive with JWs. WTBS dogma is a *very* complex belief system, filled with logical contradictions, and in a state of constant flux. JWs are often confused and uncertain about what their own organization teaches at any given time (since the “truth” can change from day to day), but they are rarely *challenged* to defend their beliefs or the fraudulent orga-

nization upon which their true faith rests! Christians do not know the questions to ask that would bring this confusion and insecurity to the surface, where it could be probed. As a consequence, the JW usually controls the conversation with ease—which only reinforces in his mind that he has “the truth.”

This is important because these poor souls are lost and blind. However confident they may appear, they are really babes in the woods, going the wrong way on a one way street. They have no idea of the grace to be found in the Scriptures, no idea of salvation by the mercy of God. They have been caught, deceived, and trapped. So what is the answer?

Out of *love*, Christians need to learn how to defend their faith from spurious attack, and hopefully even to bring the battle to the JW, making him defend his own quite indefensible beliefs.

In this article, we were certainly not able to address every objection that the WTBS teaches JWs to raise against the Deity of

Christ, but there are some excellent books out there that can equip you to defend your faith against these and other objections to Biblical faith. One excellent

book is *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Jehovah's Witnesses* by Ron Rhodes.<sup>11</sup> Another is *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity* by Robert Bowman,<sup>12</sup> which answers most of the objections raised in the WTBS's Trinity booklet. I am well aware that it takes time and effort to prepare oneself to witness to Jehovah's Witnesses. And it will take patience and much prayer to use the knowledge effectively when you are sitting across the table from a person who probably will not wish to hear what you have to say.

If you are stumped by an objection that is thrown to you by a JW or other cultist, you can call our office and receive help and support. We will be glad to make available the documentation that is cited in this article as well as documentation that will answer other common

objections you may encounter.

This article addresses only the WTBS objections to the Deity of Christ. In a future article, I plan to outline a way of showing a JW that Jesus is Yahweh God from the Bible, utilizing infrequently used Bible passages and arguments that we use when discussing the Deity of Christ with JWs—arguments that the average JW has *not* been trained to counter and that hopefully will cause him or her to have to do a little thinking on his own. God bless you as you witness to the lost. ☪

Love to all,

*Jon*

All bold, italic Scripture quotes are from the NASB version.

\*Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBS) is the clergy or government of the group known as Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs).

\*\* *THE WATCHTOWER* and are the bimonthly publications of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

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# CAN THE LEOPARD CHANGE HIS SPOTS?

An Analysis of the Turbulent ICC

By Adam C. Dixon

## Introduction

The International Churches of Christ, popularly known as the Boston Movement, has been one of America's fastest growing religious groups for two decades. Leader Kip McKean's version of discipleship provides the structure for the movement at every level and spreads a simple heresy to hundreds of thousands of people. Boston Discipleship is an extra-biblical practice that has brought psychological pain to a multitude. It initially appeals to new or discontented believers and then becomes a means of controlling them. Evangelical churches and ministries are encouraged to avoid similar pitfalls.

## The Background of the International Churches of Christ

The Boston Movement is a shooting star in the sky of American cult Christianity. It boasts church plants in 170 nations over the last 23 years.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, not shining as brightly as it once did. By God's grace, it may soon burn out.

The 14th Street Church of Christ of Gainesville initiated the ministry at the University of Florida in 1967. The founder, Chuck Lucas, placed a strong emphasis on aggressive evangelism.<sup>2</sup> He had previously worked with another Church of Christ outreach named Campus Evangelism. Flavil Yeakley states:

**In the late 1960's and early 1970's, it seemed that what was working in campus ministry was an authoritarian approach. The scene on secular university campuses was one of anarchy, rebellion, lawlessness, and rejection of all authority. What seemed to be the answer was to face the times with frontal attacks using crusades, blitzes, and militancy. This kind of environment led Campus Evangelism and its successor, Campus Advance, to adopt an aggressive "total commitment" stance.<sup>3</sup>**

Yeakley cites five movements that influenced Lucas's method of discipleship. They include Roman Catholic Spiritual Directors, Pietism and Wesleyanism, Watchman Nee, the charismatic Shepherding Movement, and parachurch organizations.<sup>4</sup> He states:

**Because of abuses, the Roman Catholic Church built in a safeguard in their Spiritual Director arrangement. They found that personal domination and manipulation can easily run out of control when one person is both the confessor and the Spiritual Director. They began to require, therefore, that the confessor and the Spiritual Director could not be the same person. In this regard, the**

**modern discipling movement is about where the Roman Catholic Church was almost 1,500 years ago.<sup>5</sup>**

Lucas picked up Watchman Nee's emphasis on delegated authority and, interestingly, Nee's teaching that there should only be one church in each city.<sup>6</sup> The Boston Movement usually takes the name of the city when they establish a new church such as, "The Austin International Church of Christ." The charismatic Shepherding Movement was centered in Ft. Lauderdale. Juan Carlos Orteiz, a speaker for the movement, held views similar to Watchman Nee. The parachurch ministries to which Yeakley refers are the Navigators, Maranatha Ministries, and Campus Crusade for Christ.<sup>7</sup> Maranatha was headquartered in Gainesville, Florida, at the time,<sup>8</sup> and one of Campus Evangelism's leaders, Jim Bevis, trained with Campus Crusade.<sup>9</sup> In an article that traces the history of the movement Kip McKean states:

**The Churches of Christ ... initially modeled their efforts after Campus Crusade and called this program "Campus Advance." A section entitled "Who We Are" on their web site states, "As disciples of Christ, our lives are committed to bringing his church to every nation within this generation."<sup>10</sup>**

Robert Coleman's *The Master Plan of Evangelism* was also very influential.<sup>11</sup>

Lucas's discipleship included a deep personal interaction that complemented the cold, extreme fundamentalism of the Church of Christ.<sup>12</sup> Legalism flourished; and an authoritarian hierarchy took shape.

One of the students Chuck Lucas disciplined at the University of Florida was Kip McKean. Upon his graduation in 1975, McKean took a job as a campus minister for a college near Philadelphia and then moved to begin a campus ministry at Eastern Illinois University.<sup>13</sup> In three years, his ministry grew to three hundred students,<sup>14</sup> and his attitude toward churches in his denomination soured. He states:

**The spiritual condition of most of the Churches of Christ ranged from lukewarm to disgusting.<sup>15</sup>**

Similar movements from the church in Gainesville and many patterned after them grew exponentially and came to be known as "the Crossroads Movement." Relationships between established Churches of Christ and the movement worsened. A number of churches split. In 1977, Memorial Drive Church of Christ in Houston, Texas withdrew financial support from McKean, stating:

**We believe that Brother McKean has brought unbiblical practice, peculiar language, and subtle, de-**

ceitful doctrines to Charleston from the Crossroads church at Gainesville, Florida.<sup>16</sup>

In 1979, McKean left the campus ministry in Illinois and took a small church near Boston. He required the 30 members of Lexington Church of Christ to vow total commitment<sup>17</sup> and began teaching them his "First Principles" Bible studies. He required them to memorize these nine studies so that they might teach others "to become Christians."<sup>18</sup> They began to proselytize students in Boston-area colleges and the church grew to 300 members in two years and began planting other churches. They established churches in New York in 1981 and Chicago and London in 1982.

In 1985, Crossroads fired Chuck Lucas. Brian Ritt states:

**I was serving on the ministry staff that assisted in covering up the real reason for his termination—sexual perversion and homosexual activity with younger men in his ministry. Irrefutable evidence was presented to the elders of the Crossroads Church clearly depicting a pattern of sexual liberties taken by Lucas over an extended period of time.**<sup>19</sup>

In Lucas's absence, McKean became the unquestioned leader of the movement, and he began a move that would later be termed "The Great Reconstruction." He states:

**In late 1986, because so many leaders from so many different elements of the Church of Christ had moved to Boston or our plantings, we decided to call to repentance all types of mainline and all types of campus ministry churches who were willing to pay the price to multiply disciples. First, we would ask the interested church's lead minister to move to Boston to be disciplined and further trained. We replaced them with a Boston-trained evangelist to serve the church.**<sup>20</sup>

Most of the Crossroad churches capitulated.<sup>21</sup> New leadership was moved in, and many autonomous Church of Christ churches became part of the hierarchy of the Boston Movement overnight. McKean also asked all "true disciples" to move to his churches. He states:

**Thus, we purposefully set about to glean the remnant into what now was clearly a new, modern day movement of God.**

It was around this time that McKean began to teach a new soteriology as well, and thousands of people—including some of the top leadership of the movement—were rebaptized.

McKean moved the headquarters of the movement to Los Angeles in 1990.<sup>22</sup> By 1993 the Boston Movement claimed a membership numbering 45,000 in 139 congregations among 55 different nations.<sup>23</sup> The New York church had grown to 4000, the Chicago church to 2500, and the London plant to 1500. Boston was up to 5000, and they were meeting in Boston Garden.

As of January 2002, the membership was approximately 134,259. Sunday attendance was 192,169 in 430 churches among 170 nations.<sup>24</sup>

On Wednesday, November 6, 2002, Kip McKean abruptly announced his retirement. The next day the elders of the movement released a letter stating

**Unfortunately, there have been sins in Kip's leadership that over time have seriously compromised his ability to continue to lead in his present role.**<sup>25</sup>

In early February 2003, the leader of the London church, Henry Kriete, sent a 22,000-word letter to the leadership of the movement calling for public repentance from abusive practices and for an autonomous structure for the organization.<sup>26</sup>

It is currently unclear whether an individual or council will rise to take McKean's place. Regardless, the movement is still characterized by his soteriology. Further, ex-member Keith Stump states:

**As long as the ICC maintains its interpretation of discipling, leadership and submission, the abuse and domination over the common member will remain. It is at the individual level where most of the damage is done... Discipling is inherently harmful because it robs people of the hallmark of adulthood—the ability to make choices and live with the consequences.**<sup>27</sup>

## An Unbiblical Authority Structure

Kip McKean mandated that everyone in the Boston Movement be disciplined by a superior. Until retiring recently, he was at the top of the pyramid. Submission to extrabiblical authority was encouraged, and the questioning of authority was strongly discouraged. A feeling of spiritual elitism is common among those who stay in the movement.

## Delegated Authority

Discipleship in the Boston Movement is authority delegated from the top down; and it is mandatory. A *Boston Church of Christ Bulletin* from 1987 states:

**In Boston, we elders delegate authority to zone leaders, house church leaders and Bible talk leaders in limited ways. This limited authority enables them to hold those under their charge accountable for working and growing in the Lord Jesus.**<sup>28</sup>

At a conference in 1988, Kip McKean taught:

**We need to make it abundantly clear it that every brother in the congregation needs to have a discipleship partner. To not have a discipleship partner is to be rebellious to God and to the leadership of this congregation.**<sup>29</sup>

Scott Green's teaching at the same conference reveals a distorted theological premise:

**We see that Jesus himself was disciplined by His Father. Why was that important? Because discipleship is an eternal spiritual plan. It is not an invention of the Boston church... I have been in the church of Christ all my life. I have never seen anything like what is being done in this movement and it is because we are restoring an eternal plan. Amen! An eternal plan. Jesus himself was disciplined by the Father.**<sup>30</sup>

## Unbiblical Leadership

Boston Movement discipleship is characteristic of the authoritarian practice popularized by Watchman Nee and the charismatic Shepherding Movement in 1960s.<sup>31</sup> It is authority that extends beyond Scripture. McKean recounts:

**I came to differ with the Churches of Christ whose creed is "to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." This creed dictated that one must have specific authorization by command, example or necessary inference from the Bible to do anything... From the Scriptures I came to believe the opposite. I believe that we should be silent where the Bible speaks and speak where the Bible is silent... In building a life, a church or a "system" for a movement, we are "free" to do anything the Scriptures do not specifically, by command, by example or by necessary inference prohibit (Colossians 2:6-23).**<sup>32</sup>

Submission to the movement is stressed right alongside sub-

*(Continued on next page)*



*"Leopard" (Continued from page 9)*

mission to Christ. Consider these statements from the *Boston Church of Christ Bulletin*:

**Open Up To God.** It is easy to trust God when you agree with his will. It is easy to submit to your discipler's advice when it is what you would have done anyway. However, the true test of our trust and submission comes when we are called upon to trust and obey a decision contrary to what we would normally do or think.<sup>33</sup>

Often we rely on our own ideas and perceptions instead of listening to those who are discipling us. Peter let down the nets not knowing what would happen because he trusted his teacher. Do you trust those discipling you? Do you trust beyond the point of your own understanding?<sup>34</sup>

Often we are afraid to submit to authority, because it might be abusive. Jesus was not afraid of abusive authority; he was even willing to submit and obey authority that was abusive... Jesus was willing to submit to the ultimate abusive authority, because God can work through it as well. When we trust God, we do not have to be afraid to submit to abusive authority.<sup>35</sup>

Charges of abuse led McKean to offer a retraction in 1992. He stated:

**I was wrong in some of my initial thoughts about biblical authority. I had felt that church leaders could call people to obey and follow in all areas of opinion. That was incorrect.**<sup>36</sup>

Extra-biblical authority, however, is still widely and repeatedly expressed in such areas as mandated times and methods of dating for singles,<sup>37</sup> of giving,<sup>38</sup> and, especially, of evangelism.<sup>39</sup> In his recent letter to the headship of the movement, Henry Kriete states:

**Perhaps more than all else, our discipleship hierarchy with all its 'little leaders' has caused more damage, heartache, and criticism than any other thing. Among the tens of thousands of untrained and 'unspiritual' disciples, advice has become permission, opinions have become orders, and the dignity and 'right' of our God-given freedom has been denied.**<sup>40</sup>

Jerry Jones earned a doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1974 and began serving as Chairman of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Harding University in Memphis, TN. He joined the Boston Movement in 1984 and rapidly advanced to the role of elder but then left in 1986, citing a number of doctrinal and ethical issues. He states:

**When the Boston Movement is confronted with their wrong teachings, its practice is to attack the character and life of the questioner ...**<sup>41</sup>

Rick Bauer was a leader in the movement for 15 years. In his own words:

**I had witnessed the spectre of someone walking into a meeting, presumably a personal meeting with a leader, and being confronted by eight or more leaders, all of whom are united in making the individual's character or previously-confessed sin, regardless of how little it may have to bear on the problem, become the issue.**<sup>42</sup>

Bauer himself was "marked" by the movement for bringing up doctrinal questions. Poor reactions to questions are not reserved for the upper levels of the movement, though. They are a means commonly employed to keep things under control.

In 1993 and 1994, several television reporters questioned two prominent leaders in the movement when news surfaced that the

organization kept "sin lists" and practiced "breaking sessions."<sup>43</sup> In one interview, John Stossell said:

**But we hear stories about people being broken by confrontational interviews; their secrets thrown at them until they break. Doesn't happen?"**

Al Baird did not deny the accusation. He replied:

**I would never say something never happens. And when you're dealing with 70,000 people, it'd be naive to say nothing never happens."**

Stossell continued:

**It's not common practice to break people?**

Baird evaded his question, stating:

**But I can tell you it is not what the leadership approves of in doing anything that Jesus wouldn't do."**

A multitude of former followers testify to the reality of "breaking sessions."<sup>45</sup>

McKean's mandatory Bible studies require new initiates to confess every sin they have ever committed. Disciples are trained to probe. Those confessions are catalogued, and later they may be used to force people into submission. This abusive practice seeks to make people obey requirements by lowering their self-esteem. It contrasts sharply with Paul's admonishment of the Corinthian church. He motivated his audience by speaking of the transformation they experienced when they trusted Christ.<sup>46</sup> He distinguished them from wicked, ungodly people, stating, *"And that is what some of you were."* He taught, *"... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!"* Jesus stated, *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you."*<sup>47</sup>

## Spiritual Elitism

To join the Boston movement one must go through an intensely emotional process and arrive at the conclusion that the Boston Movement is the only true church. Spiritual elitism is a natural result of the experience. Members and leaders in the organization regularly compare themselves with "denominational" churches. At a conference in 1995, McKean stated:

**When you preach who is really saved: that you gotta have faith, you gotta repent, you gotta become a true disciple of Jesus, and then you gotta be water immersed for the forgiveness of sins received through the Holy Spirit, that excludes all other denominations... everybody else that's out there.**<sup>48</sup>

Members of the movement refer to it as "God's Modern Day Movement," "God's One True Church," and "the Kingdom." They claim to be "defining Christianity for this generation."<sup>49</sup> McKean further states:

**I believe with all my heart that the Boston Movement is God's modern-day movement. For the past several years, through love, prayer, Bible study and intense conversations, we have tried to pull into God's movement the remnant of all those who are surrendered to the Scriptures and who believe God's dream is to evangelize the world in one generation. We will continue to seek other isolated disciples who may be members in false churches.**

## More Concerns with Boston Discipleship

Every member of the Boston Movement is trained to lead others through Kip McKean's "First Principles" Bible studies. These studies define the movement. The second study is a lesson on discipleship. The term "disciple" is said to be synonymous with "Christian." The



diagram "Disciple = Christian = Saved" is almost always used. McKean composed this equation to convince people from other denominational backgrounds that they are not true Christians.<sup>50</sup> Next, the lesson teaches that one becomes a disciple by forsaking all to follow Christ, denying self, being discipled, praying daily, and proselytizing others. Finally, it is revealed that those who do not fit the criteria are not eligible for baptism and, therefore, are not true Christians. More studies follow and continue to build on this concept.

Joanne Ruhland lists nine general prerequisites before an initiate may be considered eligible for baptism. She states:

**The prospective convert must complete some or all of a series of studies with one or more ICC members, agree to attend all services, promise to read the Bible daily, begin recruiting others, agree to obey the church leaders, and give tithes weekly. Also, the individual must list all the sins he or she has ever committed, confess these sins to one or more members, and be 'cut to the heart' by the severity of Christ's death on the cross as atonement for our sins.**<sup>51</sup>

One Boston missionary's words are insightful:

**Every single member of every congregation must be committed to making disciples. If any are not, then they are not disciples themselves. And if they are not disciples themselves, then they will not be going to heaven.**<sup>52</sup>

## Soteriology

The Boston Movement has never taught a correct soteriology. Chuck Lucas' Campus Advance and the subsequent Crossroads ministries all held to baptismal regeneration. That is why the movement was shocked when two of its highest leaders, Roger Lamb and Al Baird, were rebaptized in 1987. Though he has never admitted to a change in his teaching regarding the requirements of salvation, that is the point to which McKean's twist on Church of Christ theology can be dated. McKean's words at a women's retreat in 1987 are insightful:

**In Matthew 28:19 when Jesus appeared to the eleven on the Mount before he ascended, he said, 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them (there they are) baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey my Father's commands.' I really believe, sisters, we need to get it straight who is a candidate for baptism. It is the individual who is a disciple. You say, 'Well, now, brother, that's not been taught through the years so often in the Church of Christ.' What does the book say? You say, 'Well, now, brother, we didn't even use that terminology back in the early days at Crossroads.' What does the book say? ...You've got to understand that we are in a process of restoration. The Holy Spirit is working and it is not that new truths are being revealed, but the old truths are becoming clearer. A lot of people in the Church of Christ say, 'Well, we can't get along with you folks because your methodology is different.' That's the word. Listen, I am seeing there is a lot more than methodology that is different. There has become an innate doctrinal difference, but they don't recognize it because it looks like a methodology. I think not. It is a scriptural imperative. If it is a scriptural imperative, then it is not a humanistic methodology; it is a command that we must obey. Then, the Bible says that after they are baptized (and you only baptize disciples), then you are to teach them to obey everything the Lord has commanded... You must respond to Jesus with**

**the commitment of a disciple and then and only then can you be baptized to be saved.**<sup>53</sup>

Kip McKean placed a heavy emphasis on his own technical definition of discipleship and then combined it with an errant interpretation of Matthew 28:19 to form a new soteriology. Following the order of words in the English translation, he decided that the command to make disciples must be accomplished before a command to baptize could be administered. Discipleship, as he understood it, became the criteria for baptism. The grammar of the sentence, however, does not allow for such an interpretation. The three participles—Πορευθεντες (Gr.: poreuthentes, Eng.: go), βαπτίζοντες (Gr.: baptizontes, Eng.: baptizing), and διδασκοντες (Gr.: didaskontes, Eng.: teaching)—all modify the verb μαθητεύσατε (Gr.: mathēteusate, Eng.: make disciples). One participle—Πορευθεντες (Gr.: poreuthentes, Eng.: go)—may be taken as a command, because it is an aorist participle functioning in attendant circumstance with the aorist verb. But the other two participles—βαπτίζοντες (Gr.: baptizontes, Eng.: baptizing) and διδασκοντες (Gr.: didaskontes, Eng.: teaching)—are present tense; and they come after the verb, not before. They cannot function as commands. They may best be understood as participles of means.<sup>54</sup> In other words, the terms translated "baptizing" and "teaching" probably tell us how to "make disciples." There is no way they can legitimately be interpreted as separate commands following "make disciples." This is a simple mistake that easily could have been corrected, but questioning of leadership in the Boston Movement is not permitted. McKean's new soteriology permeated the ministry at every level.

Another leader of the movement expressed it this way when speaking of his past experience as a student at Abilene Christian University:

**My professors, I was impressed for awhile with the teaching, you know, learning Greek and all that stuff. I felt sort of vulnerable there. I didn't understand because of all the people at least I came in contact with there was only one teacher that I knew who was out there knocking doors and getting in Bible studies and trying to lead the lost there to Jesus. I didn't understand that. That confused me. Do you understand? That was confusing. I am not confused anymore. It all makes sense. They were not disciples! They were not Christians! They were not saved according to the Bible. You know, I don't really look down on those people. I don't believe they were even instructed right.**<sup>55</sup>

Gordon Ferguson stated:

**For years I have been puzzled by 'Christians' who were resistant to sharing their faith and to doing other things taught in the New Testament. I am no longer puzzled... And my personal conviction is that many of those in 'churches of Christ' have never biblically repented, have never become disciples, and are thus not Christians.**<sup>56</sup>

Leaders like Ferguson, Baird, and Lamb forged the path, and thousands of people were baptized for the second time in 1988. Even that baptism, though, is less than enough. McKean states:

**Certainly to leave the family of God, the true church, is to leave God.**<sup>57</sup>

Al Baird taught:

**If you walk away from the church, you're leaving Jesus, and you absolutely lose your salvation.**<sup>58</sup>

This is a radical departure from the biblical concept of salva-

*(Continued on page 7)*

## **"Leopard" (Continued from page 11)**

tion. Ephesians 2:8-9 describes salvation as a gift graciously given by God, not earned by a ceremony or lost by the efforts of men or women. Further, the Holy Spirit Himself guarantees the eternal salvation of all those who believe in Christ.<sup>59</sup>

## **Ecclesiology**

The Boston Movement's authoritarian structure is particularly offensive to the strictly autonomous Church of Christ. McKean appointed nine World Sector Leaders in 1988. Most of the World Sector Leaders also served as the pastor of a "Pillar Church" that supervises smaller churches. Each congregation is broken down further into sectors or quadrants. Those sectors are divided into zones. Zone leaders are accountable to the Sector or Quadrant Leader. A number of Bible Talk Leaders are accountable to each Zone Leader. The Bible Talk Leader oversees the disciples in his or her group and regularly drives them to find disciples of their own.<sup>60</sup> There is no peer accountability. Everyone is directly accountable to a superior.

In his letter demanding change for the organization since McKean's retirement, Henry Kriete states:

**It is almost a truism that each new evangelist that takes over a ministry will prune and purge. Why does this happen, really? We all know. It is the need to look good from 'your' new beginning, or not to be blamed for 'their' weak ministry in the future... The deeper we go with these questions, the more obvious our systemic evils become.<sup>61</sup>**

He is referring to a practice of cutting off members who do not recruit new members fast enough. Later in his letter he states:

**Look at us. In just over 20 years, we have gone from 'the happy few' to a full-blown denomination. And even more so, to a corrupted hierarchy with more personal control mechanisms than the modern Catholic Church, and with more bravado than the Pharisees themselves.<sup>62</sup>**

Yeakley observes:

**Critics state that hierarchical delegated shepherding gives too many pastoral functions to young people at the bottom of the pyramid who are not qualified to be pastors.<sup>63</sup>**

It also lets high leaders command the beliefs and actions of multitudes and allows for no checks and balances, insuring that simple problems are repeated thousands of times.

## **Psychiatric Concerns**

The movement hired Flavil Yeakley, director of the Church Growth Institute at Abilene Christian University, to document their growth in 1985. They granted Yeakley access to every level of the movement. He interviewed 100 new converts and had 900 members fill out personality assessment tools from three perspectives.<sup>64</sup> He applied the same test to 300 members of the mainline Church of Christ and to 30 members each of Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. He also tested 30 members each of six well-known manipulative sects including the Church of Scientology, the Hari Krishnas, Maranatha, the Children of God, the Unification Church, and the Way.

Yeakley's tests did not indicate any significant personality changes for the mainline Churches of Christ or the other denominations. Results of the six cults, however, showed a high level of change and demonstrated a clear pattern of change toward one particular personality type.<sup>65</sup> Much to his surprise, the results of the Boston study followed the exact same pattern. Changes were

observed that converged on the same personality type in the same way. **"What all of this means,"** proposed Yeakley:

**...is that the Boston Church of Christ is producing in its members the very same pattern of unhealthy personality change that is observed in studies of well-known manipulative sects.<sup>66</sup>**

The Boston Church offered two responses in 1985. First they argued that their members simply were taking on Jesus' personality. Later, they argued that their test scores were indicative of a high number of radical conversions. Yeakley agreed to re-analyze the data and to do more testing. He concluded:

**Results of the various follow-up studies show that the alternative explanations offered by leaders of the Boston Church of Christ and others should not be accepted. These changes cannot be explained by arguing that Jesus was an ESFJ. They cannot be explained as exaggerations caused by the effects of radical conversion from non-Christian backgrounds... There is something in the discipling methodology producing this unhealthy pattern. Whatever it is, it should be changed.<sup>67</sup>**

In the wake of the Boston Movement's nearly 200,000 committed followers lays a larger group. At a leader's conference in 1994, Al Baird stated:

**Brothers and sisters, we are far beyond the problem stage, we are in the crisis stage. How many of you look at the kingdom stats every month? Some of you are liars. We can't wait to see where we stack up on the kingdom stats. You look at 1994: there were 30,000 baptisms in the kingdom of God – I praise God for 30,000 baptisms, it's the most in modern-day times in the kingdom of God. But also look below that: in addition to 30,000 baptisms there were almost 20,000 fallaways. You heard it right: 30,000 baptisms, 20,000 fallaways...<sup>68</sup>**

Evidence indicates that is the tip of the iceberg. The organization posted detailed information regarding the status of the movement from 1999-2001 on the Internet,<sup>69</sup> probably for leader's eyes only. The statistics revealed more than four people left for every five they baptized during those three years.<sup>70</sup> In his letter to leadership, Henry Kriete cites a quarter-of-a-million "fallaways." He states, **"there is now an entire sub-culture of enemies and critics that simply will not go away."<sup>71</sup>**

## **Conclusion**

The Crossroads Movement experienced exponential growth during its brief existence and the Boston Movement has encompassed the world. To their credit, everyone involved in those movements has taken the Gospel seriously. They have applied tremendous effort to spread the name of Jesus. However, their unteachable, heavy-handed authority structure has allowed a simple exegetical error to drive the entire movement from the heresy of baptismal regeneration to the greater heresy of extreme baptismal regeneration. They promote a false gospel. They also promote extra-biblical authority and require every member to submit to a potentially abusive discipler. The Boston Movement is a prototypical example of what can happen when one gifted leader exalts himself above Scripture and trains others to do the same.


This organization can serve as a warning to sincere evangelistic ministries. Ministers authoritatively cite their own experience or opinions alongside the Bible in some of the best ministries. The Bible is often used to substantiate beliefs and persuasions that arise from other sources. Young leaders often express authority in heavy-handed ways instead of setting an example and serving others. There is a



temptation in every growing church for members to believe that they are at the best fellowship; the right one.

Though he still holds to a broken soteriology, Henry Kriete's words are insightful:

**We have our own names and terminologies. We have our unique theology and we know - exactly - who is in and out of our membership. With minor variations we follow the same patterns and traditions in all of our churches.<sup>72</sup>**

May those charges never describe an authentically Christian organization. 

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3. Yeakley, F. R. (1988). The Discipling Dilemma. Nashville, TN, Gospel Advocate Company.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. McKean, K. (1992). Revolution Through Restoration. 2003. The author states, "We always renamed the church after the metropolitan (city) area in which the church was located. First of all, we did this to be biblical..."
7. Ibid.

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(Continued on page 19)

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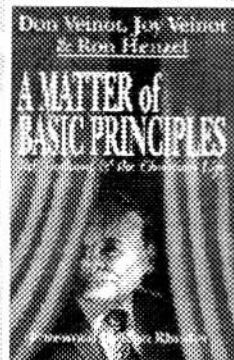
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# Who Is Israel?

## (And Why You Need to Know)

A REVIEW OF BATYA WOOTEN'S "Who is Israel?"

By Jonathan Miles

**T**his is a book review. Why do I say this? You knew that if you perused the title of the article. So why do I state the obvious, dear reader? It is as much for me as it is for you. I want to head off expectations. Many of our readers have wanted MCO to do an analysis of the burgeoning Hebraic Roots Movement which is, at present, an amorphous conglomeration of those who run the gamut from simply wanting bring into relief the Christian dependence on Jewish heritage on the one hand, to those who would redefine what it means to be a follower of Jesus by jettisoning terms like "church" and "Christian" and calling for a restoration of a more Hebrew Christianity. This movement is, at present, loosely associated with pundits who also run the gamut from Ralph Messer, who holds a heretical view of the Deity of Christ by denying the Trinity, to orthodox Jewish believers who simply want to celebrate their Jewish connection to Christianity. A thorough analysis of this movement is needed.<sup>1</sup>

Somewhere in the middle of this "movement" are Batya Wooten and the Messianic Israel Alliance.<sup>2</sup> And somewhere in the middle of Wooten's teachings is this book, which I will review and ask that you be patient and forgiving because this is not a full-fledged analysis of Wooten's teachings—which I so much want to give you.

Wooten is orthodox on the Trinity. Unlike Messer, she affirms both the Deity and Humanity of Christ. What's wrong with her scholarship is more subtle. The problem is that what ever teachers teach, they must know that their followers will take what they say and go beyond it. Usually the teacher is grounded enough so that those that do go beyond it don't go too far off the reservation. However when the teacher starts off at the limit of good scholarship, the students who go beyond have no where to go but off the reservation. Wooten begins close to the limits of good orthodoxy. I'm not prepared to say her teachings are heretical, but they do push the limits of good exegesis (as I will show); and I shudder to think what warped theology might follow from someone who buys into her method.

*Who Is Israel and Why You Need to Know* is representative of Wooten's teachings which she and her husband Angus publish in the *House of David Herald* and on the internet. It attempts to answer the question posed by its title: Who is Israel and why should you need to know? Now that question is an important one. It is what ostensibly divides much of Christian theology into the camps

of Dispensational and Covenant theology (sometimes called Replacement theology—usually by its critics). Briefly, Covenant theologians hold that Israel as a nation has been replaced in God's plan by the Church and any Semitic heritage is subsumed under the new identity of the Church. Dispensationalists say that God still has a place for the nation of Israel, as a race, in the coming tribulation. Wooten is vehemently against the Covenant idea of Israel being replaced by the Church.<sup>3</sup> She says:

... To assume they are chosen to **replace Jewish Israel** is to violate Paul's Romans 11:18 warning that they are not to be "arrogant" toward the Jewish branches. And one definitely finds a taste of arrogance in the bitter fruit of Replacement theology. Moreover, this insidious ideology added to the fuel of Hitler's Holocaust flame. By leading people to expect persecution of the so-called "rejected" Jew, it encouraged a condescending placidity in the presence of gross evil.<sup>4</sup>

Now, I don't know the intricacies of German sociology in 1933, but I do know this is an oversimplification. (And, therefore, I think a cheap shot.) I challenge Mrs. Wooten to provide some substantive lines of historical argument to back up such a claim. She would need to provide clear causal links and historical documents to show that Replacement theology directly contributed to the anti-Semitism of Germans during Hitler's reign of terror. I suspect that when historical investigation is done about the motivations of Germans, what we will find is that a lot of Germans were simply secular; and that apathy and hatred was under girded by A LOT more than Replacement theology. To argue that it contributed to the Holocaust is at best a hasty generalization and at worst a misrepresentation.

Wooten is not a Dispensationalist either. The theology present in this book is something new. It holds that the Church is part of Israel, rather than Israel is part of the Church. The book has two primary goals. It argues against Covenant ideas of Replacement theology and it seeks to redefine Israel as something that is neither Jewish nor Gentile.

The essential argument in this book is that the nation of Israel—all twelve tribes—is still the core of God's plan. In Wooten's own words:

**Long ago the Father divided Israel into the two houses of Ephraim (Israel) and Judah; as His 'two witnesses' they were sent in different directions to accomplish different purposes, and, in this last day**

**He would have the two come together, that they might serve to confirm His truth in the earth.<sup>5</sup>**

Wooten doesn't think Israel, as a race, has a mere part to play in the coming Kingdom of God; she thinks it has THE part to play in that Kingdom.

Israel is not the Church; and Israel is not just the Jewish remnant. The so-called ten lost northern tribes of Israel<sup>6</sup> are not lost; they are, in fact, made up of the so-called Gentiles who are coming to Christ. Wooten, in a particularly convoluted argument, says that most of the so-called Gentiles who are coming to Jesus are, in fact, blood Israelites; they just don't know it. They are called "Ephraim" to distinguish them from the "Jews" that are made up of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. She does not, however, argue that ALL such Gentiles are genetic Israelites who don't know their heritage. This is a misunderstanding of her teaching, and we need to be careful not to misstate her position. She concedes that there are some true Gentile converts or proselytes. However, these are described as coming into the Kingdom only in the context of what God is doing with Israel.

One of the major problems with Wooten's teaching is simply bad exegesis. She does bad Bible study. In order to lend credence to her argument that the Church comes into the Kingdom as part of Israel, she cites Revelation 21:12, noting that:

**Yeshua invites His people to come into the New Jerusalem—through gates named after the Twelve tribes of Israel. And these are the only entrances.<sup>7</sup>**

Now there certainly may be significance to the twelve gates, but to use this verse as proof that Israel is the only way into the Kingdom is to read A LOT into what the Apostle John recorded. It also negates Paul's theology that *"there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor slave."* (Galatians 3:28, NASB) What it does, in effect, is contradict Paul's argument that *in Christ*, there is no distinction between Jew, Gentile, or any other group—such as the barbarians, Scythians, etc. It is just the reverse of what many Gentiles have done in the Church—they ignore the Hebrew heritage in favor of Gentile culture.

Wooten would agree that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; the problem is that she redefines what a Gentile is. Here again, we find some really bad Bible study. She refutes the idea that in Scripture, non-Jewish Christians are called Gentiles in the sense of being non-Hebrew. She wants to redefine *Gentile* simply as meaning *those of the ten lost tribes*, who she calls *Ephraim*. She cites Ephesians 2:11 as a text to support this:

**Ephesians 2:11 says that they are "former" Gentiles.<sup>8</sup>**

The problem is that, once again, a verse is taken out of context and chopped up. I quote the full verse and some of next for clarification:

***Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the Flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel ... (Ephesians 2:11-12a, NASB)***

Now if Paul is making a distinction between Gentiles (uncircumcised) and the commonwealth of Israel, is this not tacitly implying that, for Paul, the circumcised Jews were Israel? They are not "former" Gentiles but rather formerly separated.

Wooten does more damage in verse 19. She says:

**Specifically, verse 2:19 states, "You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household [of Israel]."**

Beware, gentle reader, of writers bearing brackets. Those last two words are Wooten's interpretation not Paul's. And it begs the question because God's household being made up of Israel alone is what she is trying to prove. This is circular reasoning.

Wooten skips over verses 12-18 which establish that through the cross, Christ has not only reconciled the circumcised with the uncircumcised, but He has created a relationship. Verse 13 says of these uncircumcised:

***But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."***

Christ becomes the *shalom*—the *"peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall"* (v. 14). My question is: *If Gentiles are really the lost tribes of Israel, then why are they being referred to as "uncircumcised" in the flesh no less?*

Also, it seems unlikely the "enmity" that needs reconciling is the centuries-old civil war between Ephraim and Judah as Wooten claims. IF Paul was referring to this ancient rivalry, what about the thousands of truly non-Hebrews who were reading Paul's letter to the Ephesians who had little understanding of this Hebrew rivalry? I suppose they could have been told by the small Jewish population in the Church, but that they would even make that connection is doubtful.

Once again, there is this problem that creeps up time and again with new movements that herald themselves as having the vital teaching needed for Christians. They attempt to argue that we all should be following this new teaching, but there is a conspicuous and curious silence of the New Testament on this "vital" teaching.<sup>9</sup> If Wooten's teaching about Israel was so important to the identity of Christianity, why do we not have ANY verses where Paul, John, or Peter explains that most Gentiles are really part of Israel and just don't know it? Where do we find ANY explanation to those true, non-Hebrew converts that explains: *When we talk about Gentiles, we are not talking about you but rather the ten lost tribes of Israel?* Wouldn't we expect this if Wooten's argument is true? I think so. We would expect Paul to describe his missionary journeys in terms of going to the Hebrews who were lost to Assyrian assimilation. We would expect Jesus to say when He sends out His disciples: *"Go to the lost sheep of the house of Judah but not to Ephraim because you know they are not the same thing."* However, He doesn't and neither does Paul. IF it is so vital, then why isn't it there?

Wooten wants to redefine *Gentile* into a term whose meaning is one of derision. To do this she cites *Webster's Dictionary* which defines *Gentile* as *heathen*. She cites *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* as defining the Hebrew word *goy/goyim* as *foreign, heathen, Gentile*. So far, so good. It's where she goes with the information that is the problem:

**Those who believe in the God of Israel and in His Messiah are not *foreign* to Him. If they are true to Him, they are no more heathens.<sup>10</sup>**

This is simply bad use of the concordance. She has taken the word *foreign* meaning *not native to Israel* and imported a theological idea of being "not natural" or "estranged" in relation to God. The word *goy* has a range of meanings. Sometimes it has moral connotations—describing the nations and their practices—and sometimes it just means *not native, not a descendant of Abraham or Jacob,* etc.

*(Continued on Page 16)*



I wish I could say that this was the only time Batya Wooten misuses the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* or the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. I can't. In fact, what is conspicuous in Wooten's writings (as well as many others in the Hebraic Roots Movement) is the bad use of these resources. Mrs. Wooten doesn't understand how language and meaning work. An example:

**Abraham would father a multitude of nations, a *hamon goyim*. *Goyim* means Gentiles, or nations, and *hamon* means a noise, a tumult, turbulence, wealth, multitude, company. With these words, the Almighty decreed that from Abraham would come a "multitude of Gentiles," specifically, a people who would cause a tumultuous commotion, or a great noise (about Abraham's God) throughout the world.<sup>11</sup>**

What wrong with this picture? A dictionary, even the good one at the back of the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, gives a range of how the word is used. Context determines how it is used in any given verse. The word does not "carry" all of those meanings into each context. You cannot simply list all the possible usages of a word and then extrapolate from it that when God uses *hamon*, He means a *tumultuous commotion* when describing the nations. If so, why isn't the word *wealth* included in Wooten's extrapolation? *Wealth* can mean *a lot of something* or it can mean *monetary value and purchasing power*. Would these *hamon goyim* be a noisy commotion of wealthy people? I think not.

In addition to the bad exegesis in this book, we see some familiar bashing of the traditional Church—but with a twist. One of the most significant features of the entire Hebraic Roots Movement is the emphasis on the feasts of ancient Israel. There is nothing wrong with that. However, when it becomes THE feature of Christianity, we have a problem.

In her book, the traditional Church is once again ridiculed for changing the feast days and the Sabbath. All believers should follow the deuteronical feasts and the Sabbath. Wooten senses a charge of legalism and counters that such observance shouldn't be done "in a legalistic sense."<sup>12</sup> However, her definition of *legalistic* is any attempt to try to "keep exactly" the feasts on the exact feast day. Since the temple has been destroyed, there is no way to do this. The actual feasts should be kept regardless of the fact we can't know the exact day. This would, in Wooten's mind, be legalism—trying to calculate some specific day, not commanding the observance of said feasts.<sup>13</sup>

Here the Church is subtly targeted once again as the end-times culprit that will and does persecute true believers. She says that while some within the "church system" are true believers, there are many who are not. Again, so far, so good. I don't dispute this, but what is subtly taught is that the ones who are not true believers are seen as part of the end-times apostasy. This is simply not true. She refers to Revelation 3 to associate this "church system" with the end-times apostasy.<sup>14</sup> She wrongly associates the "synagogue of Satan" that opposed the Church of Smyrna in Revelation 2 with those who would oppose Messiah. But what she doesn't note is that most scholars associate this "synagogue of Satan" with the Jewish presence in the city—the Jewish persecution of Christians after the break Christianity made with the Jewish religion. It is not simply all who oppose Messiah's claims.

This not-so-subtle bit of exegesis sets up a kind of catch-22. One either has to agree with Wooten or be labeled part of the

"church system." If anyone takes issue with Wooten's rehashing of Christian theology, then they are part of this "church system" that opposes Messiah's teachings (which are, of course, synonymous with Wooten's). This is the stuff that breaks churches apart. If we disagree with the "head cheese," then we are seen as part of the "whore of Babylon" that opposes the "true work" of Christ; because anyone who doesn't go with the new teaching is part of the "world system." It is disingenuous to set up a false dilemma in which one either agrees with the position being presented or is part of some end-times conspiracy. [As an aside: Just once I would like to hear some leader of a new movement say: *If you disagree with me, you are not evil. You are not the Whore of Babylon (or even the Trollop of Bithynia). You don't eat at the table of demons. You don't have Satanic rabies. You're not headed for cell block Alpha in spirit prison. We just disagree, and I think you are wrong.*]

To sum up, what good is there in this book? You shouldn't be surprised when I say: *Not much*. This book fails in its attempt to refute Covenant theology. There are much more compelling books that use good scholarship and good exegesis of Scripture to argue that Covenant theology is wrong if that's what you want to argue.<sup>15</sup> This book fails in its attempt to provide reconciliation between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians by redefining what a Gentile is. I'm not so sure the problem is so bad that we need reconciliation; but even if we do, the way to go about it is not to redefine what Gentiles are. I think a sense of common unity might come by engaging in appreciation for the Jewish roots of our Christian heritage, while at the same time realizing that we are part of Someone Who *transcends* the distinction between Jew and Gentile. It is Jesus—Light of the Gentiles and a Glory to His people Israel (Luke 2:30-32). It certainly isn't going to come from reading this book.

#### ENDNOTES:

1. The problem is that much of the material is in the form of sermons and not books. This makes it more difficult to track their teachings than, for instance, the ideas of the WTBTS who publish a book or pamphlet faster than you can say "faithful and discreet slave."
2. Hereafter known as the MIA.
3. Batya Wooten, *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David Publishing, 1998), p49 [Cf. footnote 81]
4. *Ibid.*, p92.
5. Wooten, xxx.
6. To clarify: As punishment for their sin, the ten northern tribes of Israel were carried off into captivity by the Assyrians and never returned to Israel—unlike the two southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) who were carried off by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., but who later returned 70 years later.
7. Wooten, p42.
8. *Ibid.*, p93.
9. Now before you go thumping your logic text books at me and accusing me of making an argument from silence, please realize that an argument from silence is not always a bad thing. To argue that something couldn't have happened because of the lack of evidence is not bad arguing, if what we are arguing against having happened would show some evidence. For instance: If I argued right now that a bomb had NOT gone off in my study, and you asked me how do you know; I would legitimately cite the lack of evidence, since if a bomb had gone off, there would jolly well be some evidence.
10. Wooten, pp93-94.
11. Wooten, p3.
12. Wooten, p182.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p42. [footnote 74]
15. Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1996). See this reference, for starters. Note for the record: I'm not arguing that Covenant or Replacement theology is bad or good. I am a proponent of Dispensationalism. Good natured and erudite Christians differ over this idea. Note also for the record that I don't think Covenant theologians in any way resemble the Whore of Babylon (or even the harlot of Toledo) just because they don't agree with me.



**ENDNOTES:**

1 [WTBTS], *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* (Brooklyn, NY: WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., 1989).

2 Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), p94.

3 Dr. Julius Mantey, letter to WTBTS, 11 July 1974. Dr. Mantey wrote the WTBTS, threatening to sue them if they did not quit trying to use his works to prove their spurious dogma.

4 [WTBTS], *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (Brooklyn, NY: WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC., 1969). Note: If you cannot get your hands on a *Kingdom Interlinear Translation (KIT)*, we will be more than happy to send you a photocopy of this page so you can be prepared to show it to the JW. The KIT is a very valuable resource for witnessing to JWs on a vast array of topics. I have recently seen several copies of this interlinear on sale at ebay.com if you want to buy a copy for yourself.

5 Robert H. Countess, *The Jehovah's Witnesses' New Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.) pp54, 55. Robert H. Countess holds the degrees B.A., M.A., Ph.D. from Bob Jones University, the M.L.S. from Georgetown University, and the D. Min. from Drew University. He was the Instructor in Greek and Chairman of the Foreign Language Department of Covenant College, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Tennessee State University, Instructor in Greek at University of Tennessee at Nashville.

6 *Should You Believe ...*, p19.

7 Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), p142.

8 Johannes Greber, *The New Testament* (Teaneck, NJ: Johannes Greber Memorial Foundation, 1980).

9 The forward of Johannes Greber's so-called New Testament informs the reader that Greber's "task [of translation] was not simple. Many contradictions between what appears in the ancient scrolls and the New Testament, as we have grown to know it, arose and were the subject of his constant prayers for guidance - prayers that were answered, and the discrepancies clarified to him, by God's Spirit World. At times he was given the correct answers in large illuminated letters and words passing before his eyes ... His wife, a medium of God's Spirit World, was often instrumental in conveying the correct answers from God's messengers." Greber, himself, claims in the "Introduction" on page 15 that "Many of the readers of this book who have sought to communicate with God's Spirit-world have had experiences similar to my own and found the same truths that I have." One religious organization that "found the same truths as Greber" from the Spirit World (much of what is taught even today by the WTBTS was received by Judge Rutherford as "new light" from "angelic messengers") and agrees with his translation on many important points is the WTBTS. The WTBTS exposed Johannes Greber in *THE WATCHTOWER*, February 15, 1956, page 111, as a spirit medium who relied on demons to translate the New Testament, yet they subsequently cited Greber's demonically inspired "New Testament" for support of its own horrifying mistranslation, the *New World Translation*. Greber's translation is cited in the following WTBTS publications: *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 1134 and 1669; *The Word—Who is He? According to John*, p5; *Make Sure of All Things*, 1965 ed., p489; *THE WATCHTOWER*, (September 15, 1963), p554; *THE WATCHTOWER*, (October 15, 1975), p640; and *THE WATCHTOWER*, (April 15, 1976), p231. All of these citations succeeded the Society's own exposure of Greber in the February 15, 1956 issue of *THE WATCHTOWER*, and none of these citations mentions the fact that Greber was a spirit medium, which would have identified him as an unreliable reference, to say the least.

10 [WTBTS], *Awake!*, (September 22, 1955), p7 states, "How is the individual, the 'soul,' with the personality, the life-pattern, resurrected? We might best answer that question by means of an illustration, that of a phonograph recording. The factors combining to make the life pattern are like the sounds recoded on a blank phonograph record that stands for the brain, primarily. At the same time God is having a

master disc made of the same life pattern on his marvelous memory. At death the phonograph record is broken, as it were, and what was recorded thereon would be forever lost were it not for the duplicate recording made by God. In the resurrection, God makes a blank record, a human body, and then stamps on its brain the life pattern he has recorded." And *THE WATCHTOWER* (January 1, 1983) states on p7, "Surely, the resurrection is an outstanding example of Jehovah's concern for the individual. Why so? Because it shows that He has kept a record, down to the most minute detail, of the personality of those who are to be restored to life. The Supreme Controller of the universe, with its millions of galaxies and stars, is undaunted by the need to recall all that personality data and to imprint it in a recreated brain and heart".  
11 Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993).  
12 Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989).

## Upcoming Events

### March 14-15

Sycamore Baptist Church  
Sycamore, IL  
Multiple sessions

### March 4 & 11

New Song Community Church  
Bolingbrook, IL  
Multiple sessions

### March 22-24

PFO (Personal Freedom Outreach)  
Discernment Conference,  
Parker Road Baptist Church  
Florissant, MO  
For more info go to [www.pfo.org](http://www.pfo.org)

### April 16-17

Mesa Baptist Church  
Mesa, Arizona  
Multiple sessions

### September 12 & 19

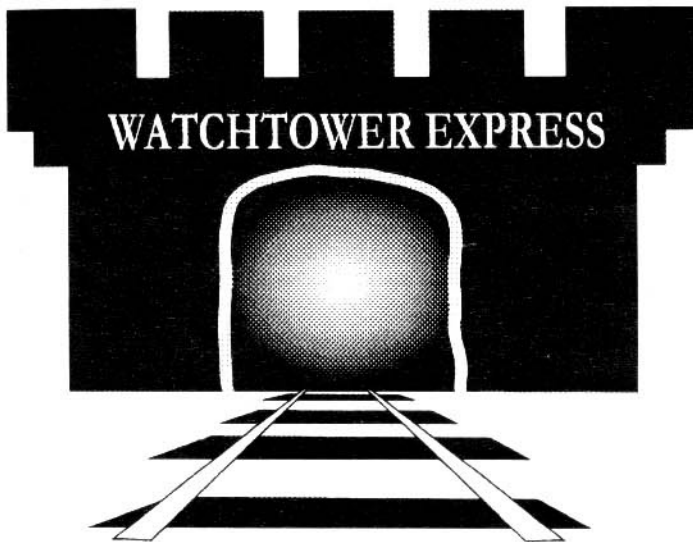
New Song Community Church  
Bolingbrook, IL  
Multiple sessions

### September 25 & 26

Word of Life Community Church  
Grandview, MO  
Multiple sessions

### October 8 & 9

Young Defenders Boot Camp  
Calvary Chapel  
South Denver, Colorado  
Contact us for further information and registration



## From the Artificial Light of the WTBS... To the REAL Light of the Lamb

I think the best way to start things off is with a Scripture:

***When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.*** (Exodus 33:22-23, NIV)

So what God is saying is: *You're not going to see Me coming ... but you'll know that I've been there.* And that's the case with my testimony; I didn't see God coming, but I sure know he has been here! Well I am/was a fourth-generation Jehovah Witness (JW). My dad is Catholic (by name only), my mother became a JW in October of 1985 (before that, she had no church affiliation). Her mother (my grandmother) became a JW in the 1950's, and her parents (my great grandmother and grandfather) became JWs before that time—I think in the 1920s. So, it was no wonder that my mom became one, the trap was already set in motion; but one day God would step in on my behalf.

That's where I come in. I was born on July 16, 1978. I also have a twin brother, he is a JW (by name only) just to be able to put something down on doctor/medical forms. Growing up wasn't bad, but I do remember a lot of fighting going on with aunts and uncles, etc. Yet, they all where JWs so to speak. You see, they would use the Bible as a weapon, or as an excuse not to talk to so-and-so, or to get their way. I think that's why my dad is still Catholic to this day. I would get gifts all year round from my dad, so I was never deprived in that area like some. I would go to meetings off and on with my mom. We moved a lot because of family problems—so much for Christian love, right?

Anyway, when I was 18 years old, I was at a mall shopping; and I got sick and passed out. I was taken to the hospital, where they said it was the flu. Later, I found out it was stress—it was a panic attack. I began searching for God, next thing I know I'm studying with Jehovah Witnesses. On April 22, 2000, I got baptized as a JW. Then things changed over night.

The love they showed to me in the beginning was gone. Friendships were based on how much time you put in their field service (door-to-door work). Some would say to me: *Jehovah will never grant your petitions or requests.* Many were very unloving and uncaring. The words from Matthew 21:22 have gotten me through some tough times. It states:

***If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.***

Remember ... to a JW, there is no such thing as *grace*—the word has been removed in their *New World Translation* of the Bible. It's a work-based salvation. Then on top of that, I started to see things in the WTBS magazines that didn't add up. For example: Every year there is a report that comes out as to how many of the 144,000 are left. They believe there are about 9,000 left. Anyway, I used the WTBS magazines to see how many were left—I used a 1995 issue and compared it with a 2001 report. I was shocked—the number of them remaining went up! It's *always* supposed to go down, or stay the same, but *never* up. So, I went out and got a computer, etc., and I did an internet search on "Jehovah Witnesses." The name came up under "cult!" I thought: *I would never be in or join a cult.* So, I read and read and after about an hour of reading, I said, "I'm in a cult, what do I do?"

I visited different web sites to get help; and with the help of Lorri and Keith MacGregor's ministry and Don Veinot, I got deprogrammed. I then wrote a letter to the WTBS to dissociate myself and to let them know I had seen proof from their own literature that they are liars and false prophets.

### My Testimony

By Michael Terran



I found a great church to go to—Bethel Community Church. On July 9, 2003, I attended my first real Christian meeting. There were people praying over me. That night when I came home, I said a born-again prayer and accepted the real Jesus of Scripture Who is THE GOD-MAN as my personal Lord and Savior. Seven days later (on July 16, 2003), I turned 25.

On Sunday, August 17, 2003, I got baptized as a real, blood-washed, born-again Christian in Christ—in the Name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, Amen. I now have a personal ministry to help people come out of the cults and bring them to Christ.

Well, that's my story. And since I opened with a Scripture, I'll end with one:

***Jesus answered, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*** (John 14:6, NIV)

Yes, Jesus is the The Way, The Truth, and The Life; and now am in HIS Light which is real and no longer in that artificial light of the WTBS. I'm so happy I found the real Jesus, but better yet—I'm so happy HE found me and never gave up on me. May the grace of God be with you all, Amen!

**"Leopard" (Continued from page 13)**

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Tim Neely, *It Was Five Years Ago Today* [Article Online] (Accessed April 15 2003); available from: <http://www.tolc.org/5years.htm>.
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The website states, "The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) instrument, now taken by at least two million people each year-and translated into sixteen languages-was developed over a period of more than forty years, progressing from Isabel Myers' dining room to a cottage industry, to the prestigious Educational Testing Service, and to its current publisher, CPP, Inc."

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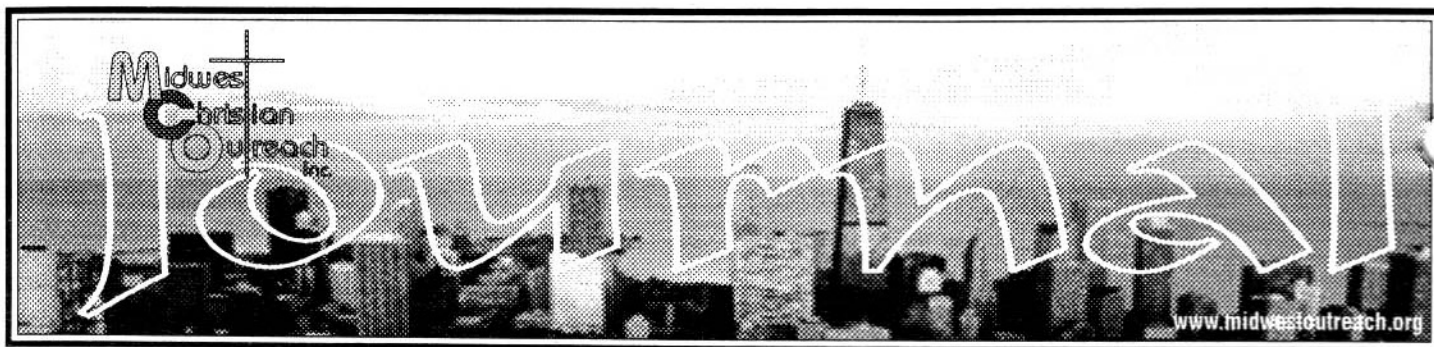


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***"Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?"***

- Galatians 4:16

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