

THE CULTS

How to Respond
Updated Edition

Hubert F. Beck

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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1 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTS

DEFINITIONS

The difficulty in defining a “cult” can be illustrated by a sampling of definitions:

“A cult is a religious perversion,” says Dave Breese. “It is a belief and practice in the world of religion which calls for devotion to a religious view or leader centered in false doctrine. It is an organized heresy.”¹

Ronald Enroth quotes Margaret Singer, who stated that the word cult itself “has been variously applied to groups involved in beliefs and practices just off the beat of traditional religions; to groups making exploratory excursions into non-Western philosophical practices; and to groups involving intense relationships between followers and a powerful idea or leader.”²

Dr. Walter Martin emphasizes the importance of a central figure to a cult. He says that “a cult might also be defined

as a group of people gathered about a specific person or person's misinterpretation of the Bible."³

Broad definitions are necessary when defining a cult. Cults clearly offer religious options that vary significantly from those expressions with which people are normally acquainted. Yet it is sometimes difficult to determine just when a group is or has become a cult.

The cult often begins as a fringe group to an accepted religion. Then, under the influence of a strong central figure, it moves away from its original roots and takes on a life of its own. Its teachings always vary considerably

from those of its parent body and often are a twisted distortion.

Cultic deviations can come from any religious grouping, not just Christianity. Cults exist in virtually all world religions. Baha'is and Black Muslims are cultic deviations from Islam. The Hare Krishna religion is an altered form of Hinduism.

Cults, then, are not merely marginal statements of their original religious patterns. They totally depart from the religious thought out of which they sprang. Their way of speaking may sound familiar, and a person might recognize some parts of their

religious roots. Yet they warp and twist their expression

of those roots so that the original intentions are no longer present. Something altogether different has come forth.

CULTS—THE UNPAID BILLS OF THE CHURCH

Cultic language springs from the orthodox language of its parenting body. That is one reason they confuse Christians so easily. Cults use language recognizable, at least in part, by people rooted in major religious systems. It is difficult to sort through what they brought *from* the orthodox parenting body and what has been manipulated and twisted *out* of its original intentions. Orthodox words and thoughts are constantly given new and different understandings. A confusing sort of double-talk has evolved.

Examples abound. Jehovah's Witnesses speak of "everlasting death," by which they mean "annihilation," a denial of the resurrection of all flesh. They speak reverently of Jesus as "a created individual; a god," thereby denying Jesus' coequality with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Normal dialogue, filled with such alterations of meanings, is almost impossible.

Those twisting the terms can sound so persuasive. They are very knowledgeable, both about the orthodox understandings *against* which they speak and the new way

they have of presenting those understandings. They present their case as though there were no other explanation. This very confidence makes them sound absolutely convincing.

Although the job is difficult, Christians need to engage members of these cults in dialogue. On the one hand, we

“In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

need to challenge their definition and use of terms. On the other hand, we need to witness to the full force such terms have in their historic usage in the Church. The cults’ perversions of the timeless truths of God challenge the Church to be faithful in presenting its message to the world more clearly and

aggressively. When we do so, cult members are called to respond to the actual message and mission of the Church. Because we have not always done our job, one author has called the cults “the unpaid bills of the church.”⁴

THE MENTALITY OF THE CULTS

- 8 There is, then, not one umbrella under which all cults may be placed, and we must avoid overgeneralization. Yet

some marks of the cults are common enough that a “mentality of the cults” can be identified.

The doctrine of the last days and last things is a frequent theme among cults. Cults emphasize signs pointing to the imminent end of the world in their teachings. For example, the “thousand-year reign” of Jehovah following the great battle of Armageddon is stressed among groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists. Signs and warnings of how rapidly the world is falling into judgment take on a flavor and intention all their own in the cults.

Prophecy and fulfillment themes also reveal the mentality of the cults. Quoting selected prophecies and coupling them with selected “fulfillments” in world events often exerts tremendous influence on people. This use of Scripture is highly selective and very manipulative.

Special revelations (often specifically to the cultic leader) frequently form the basis for “correct” interpretation of a particular prophecy and its fulfillment. This, of course, makes dialogue with such groups extremely difficult. How can one reasonably disagree when special revelations have been given from God to a particular person? There is no space for reason. All discussion is based on

THE LODGE

 How to Respond
Updated Edition

L. James Rongstad

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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INTRODUCTION

While this book wants to help you speak to the problems that the Lodge creates for biblical Christianity, we would be remiss if we ignored the Lodge's many positive aspects. In some ways, the Lodge and its members remind us that we could do more in serving our neighbor.

Fraternalism

Americans are joiners. No matter what interests a person may have, a quick Internet search reveals that someone, somewhere, has formed the right organization for him or her. Americans want to associate with other people and be a part of movements. The Lodge provides a close-knit group of people with similar backgrounds and interests. True concern for one another is often expressed in a variety of ways, such as defending one another and caring for families and aging fellow members. Knowing that other Lodge members will come to your support provides a great incentive to maintain a good standing.

Loyalty

Seldom, if ever, do Lodge members bad-mouth their organization, their leaders, or their fellow members. They stick together. They handle internal differences discreetly. Christians could learn much here. Often, it seems, we not only find reason to “knock” our pastor or fellow members, but we do it openly, too, in the public press. We need to watch our tongues, not bear false witness against our neighbor, and always speak the truth in love.

Patriotism

Although it is now a generation and a half in the past, the war in Vietnam negatively affected patriotism. The politically correct attitude continually finds fault with American policies. However, this is still the world’s greatest free country. Respect for our heritage must be increased. If not, it will decrease, and with it our determination to retain our freedoms. We admire Lodges for their patriotic emphasis.

Moral Teachings

With the collapse of public morality, we can only praise the Lodge for teaching and inculcating moral values in harmony with the Ten Commandments. We commend the Lodge’s stress on the importance of a virtuous life.

Humanitarianism

The Lodge spends a great deal of energy, time, and money to support hospitals and homes for the aged. They devote much time and effort to circuses, postseason football games, and the like in order to raise funds for charitable causes. These are magnificent gestures of human compassion. We thank God for these works and acts of charity. Over the years, many Christians have been helped and healed by these charitable endeavors. Christians, again, could be doing much more in comparison.

If the Lodge were to confine itself to these matters, Christians would have no quarrel. The Lodge, however, continues to stress the importance of religion in its organization—and has official doctrines about the core issues of Scripture and the whole Christian Church. As a religion, it must be evaluated on the basis of all that God has revealed to us about our faith and life.

THE CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANITY

Søren Kierkegaard said, “Christendom has done away with Christianity without being quite aware of it.”¹ Many twentieth-century Christians are, and have been, giving away their heritage to the modern philosophy of

liberalism with its distorted ideas of tolerance and compromise. Moral values, the basis for establishing lifestyles, are being determined by public opinion rather than God's Word. Our declining self-discipline and rising self-indulgence can be compared to sinking ground and shifting sand. The Holy Bible, the only sure and reliable foundation for moral and ethical values, is being undermined. Scriptural authority is now called into question. What was once clearly identified as the "Voice of God," the Holy Scriptures are often considered merely the opinions of those who wrote them. The Bible, for many Americans, is just another book.

While not a new organization, the Masonic Lodge clearly promotes a philosophy of theological liberalism. Its goals demonstrate distorted ideas of tolerance and compromise that ignore the clear truth of God's Word. "The goals of Masonry are to unite the world under the umbrella of Masonic doctrine that teaches the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the immortality of the soul. Masons foresee the day when all religious division and sectarianism . . . will be wiped away, and a new era of universal peace, brotherhood, and religious faith will emerge."² Such goals certainly do not stand firm on the truth of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The time has come to stand against man-made religious theories. We need to return to the Holy Bible as the authoritative Word of God. This volume is written in order to preserve our priceless heritage of a people saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. May you be ready to give an answer to the Lodge.

1 HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE LODGE

The Lodge has a colorful history. Many people think of it as a secretive organization, especially in light of movies such as *National Treasure* or books like *The Lost Symbol*. The truth is much less interesting, and it is often distorted through these popular books and movies.

As an organization, Freemasonry began in AD 1717. Two clergymen, Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian, and Dr. John Theophilus Desaguliers, a French Huguenot turned Anglican, convinced others to form a select group. This inspired four London speculative lodges to come together to form the first Grand Lodge.

Negro Freemasonry started in the United States on March 6, 1775, in Boston, when the degrees of Masonry were conferred upon Prince Hall and fourteen other black men in a military lodge (No. 441 on the Irish Register) in the English Army attached to the 38th Regiment. It is alleged that Prince Hall was born in Barbados, British

West Indies, that he came to Boston and became leader of “free” Negroes of that city, and was ordained a minister. On September 9, 1784, the Grand Lodge of England issued a charter for African Lodge No. 459 of Boston. It was instrumental in forming the first Negro Grand Lodge in the United States.

These historical facts, however, do not stop the *Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons* from teaching prospective members that their origin is thousands of years old. For example, Masonic teaching states that Hiram, king of Tyre, aided in the building of the Jerusalem temple at the time of Solomon. He supplied trees, carpenters, and masons for this project and had close relations with King Solomon concerning problems of mutual interest. *New Age*, the official organ of the Supreme Council Southern Jurisdiction, claims this relationship “tends to confirm the belief that there was some close Masonic tie between them” (April 1961, p. 30). The Bible (1 Kings 5) does report that Hiram provided materials to Solomon for the building of the temple, but that the two rulers had a “Masonic tie” is beyond any credibility.

The Holy Bible—Masonic Edition says, “It is admitted that Masonry is descended from the ancient mysteries. These were first arranged when the constellation Leo was at the

summer solstice. Thus the antiquity of Masonry was written in the starry heavens."¹

Masonry, with its teachings, rituals, customs, practices, and secrecy, has impacted its auxiliary organizations such as the Eastern Star and Job's Daughters as well as other Lodge organizations such as the Moose, Eagles, Elks, and National Grange.

without distinction of caste, who felt themselves inspired by God to instruct men."²

Albert Pike says, "The first Masonic Legislator whose memory is preserved to us by history, was Buddha, who, about a thousand years before the Christian era, reformed the religion of Manous. He called to the Priesthood all men, with-

On May 17, 1963, the *Birmingham News* (Alabama), in a special edition dedicated to the Masonic Order, reprinted a statement of T. G. Brabston, the late distinguished leader of the Southeastern Shrine Association: "The origin of Freemasonry is lost in the nebulous mist of unrecorded history. It has been identified with the building of King Solomon's temple. The reliable history of Masonry covers the past 250 years."

Whatever the true facts, the Lodge continues to rewrite history. Some would have us believe that the use of the word *lodge* in AD 1278 to refer to a hut or shed for

shelter at a construction site was really a “lodge” like the organization we have today. Such temporary buildings housed tools and served as workshops, offices, and sleeping quarters for the workmen, some of whom were stone masons, while they were away from their homes. These ancient “lodges” would compare today with the oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico that serve as temporary homes for the men at work.

Occasionally a Mason may claim that great men of the past have been fellow Masons—men such as John the Baptist, the evangelist John, and Noah. These particular claims are, at best, the fruits of fertile imaginations and pride in the order. However, it is true that a number of famous American men have been Masons. *The Holy Bible—Masonic Edition* claims fifteen presidents have been Masons: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Johnson, Garfield, McKinley, T. Roosevelt, Taft, Harding, F. D. Roosevelt, and Truman. Some think Pierce and Taylor were also in the number. Furthermore, it is claimed that Lincoln and Grant had proposed to become Masons, but death came to both before they took the vows. In addition, many U.S. senators and congressmen have been and are Masons. The American name most cherished by Masons is that of George Washington.

In the absence of documentary evidence to link Freemasonry to any time prior to AD 1717, those who claim ancient origins for the Masonic Lodge simply ignore the facts. The more reliable, honest, and respected Masonic leaders of today freely admit the truth and are not anxious to support a lengthy history.

THE TERM *FREEMASON*

The term *Freemason*, according to Masonic sources, predates the organizational origins of the Lodge. A number of explanations are suggested. (1) Masons worked in free stone, which could be carved, and hence were called “freestone masons,” later shortened to “freemasons.” (2) They were free men, not serfs. (3) They were free to move from place to place as they might desire. (4) They were given the freedom of the towns or localities in which they worked. (5) They were free of the rules and regulations that were usually imposed on members of guilds.

These “freemasons” are referred to as “operative” because they worked at their specific trades—builders, stone masons, and architects engaged in construction work. Because they usually worked closely together and because they frequently were away from home, they formed a tight-knit group in which they shared discussions on philosophy, politics, religion, and other interests

of their society. Gradually these “operatives” were joined by others who were not of their craft. Because these others were interested in the background and teachings of the operative fraternity, they were considered to be “accepted” masons. Eventually the “accepted” masons outnumbered the “operatives” and took control of the “speculative” symbols and secrets of the Lodge. Now all members are accepted as “speculative masons.” Hence the name “Ancient, Free, and *Accepted* Masons.”

HISTORIC INFLUENCES ON CHRISTIANITY

Even as Masons have influenced American politics and history, so also has Masonry influenced American religious life. In 1769, the first Knights Templar degrees were conferred by the Lodge. Freemasonry assumed this group of Christians and made it a part of the York Rite in order to make the Lodge more acceptable to professing Christians. The Knights Templar are inspired by the Crusaders of medieval times and are supposed to be militant supporters of Christianity. Some members think that the Knights Templar, also called the “Christian Degree,” is not objectionable and even point with pride to their Order. They forget, however, that by their association with this degree, they also support the teachings of the whole Lodge.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

 How to Respond

Updated Edition

Herbert Kern

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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1 WHO'S THAT KNOCKING AT MY DOOR?

The average Jehovah's Witness spends ten hours a month going from door-to-door. In the United States there are over one million such zealous Watchtower slaves. That's not all! Another one hundred thousand "pioneers" in our country devote *one hundred* hours a month to their witnessing work. No wonder the organization is growing at the rate of 2.25 percent a year (according to Pew Forum) and is building new Kingdom Halls each week worldwide!

Some Jehovah's Witnesses are sincerely concerned about our spiritual welfare, but for all of them, door-to-door witnessing is one of the most important requirements for their salvation. It is the only record kept of their Kingdom Hall membership.

Jehovah's Witnesses are well-trained. They devote about 85 percent of their study time to Watchtower publications

and 15 percent to their version of the Bible, the *New World Translation*.

Despite all their study, Jehovah's Witnesses have no personal relation to Jesus and therefore no assurance of salvation.

All Jehovah's Witnesses must attend five hours of meetings a week. The two-hour Sunday public meeting includes the study of an article in *The Watchtower* magazine. There

is a one-hour meeting (usually on Tuesday) to study a Watchtower book and a two-hour meeting (usually on Thursday) for the service meeting and the ministry school. At the latter meeting, Kingdom Hall members present talks on books of the Bible and Watchtower articles, as well as demonstrate how to discuss various topics with the non-Jehovah's Witness. At meetings people in the audience do not ask questions because they believe that would arouse suspicion. Jehovah's Witnesses are told to "avoid independent thinking"¹ and to accept Watchtower Society teachings without question.

WHAT JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BELIEVE

Jehovah's Witnesses come to our door with their own particular beliefs. We will look at these in detail in later chapters, but at this point an overview is helpful.

- Jehovah, according to the Watchtower Society, is the only proper name for God.
- Jesus is not the true God who assumed our human nature to become our Savior. He is the created Son of God, Michael the archangel, and a lesser god (see chapter 2).
- A key teaching of the Watchtower Society is that its governing body is God's only channel of communication on earth today.

A key teaching of the Watchtower Society is that its governing body is God's only channel of communication on earth today.
- Jehovah's Witnesses can't pray to Jesus. If they are found "guilty" of worshipping Him, they are disfellowshipped. They are then ostracized by their Jehovah's Witness family and friends.
- The Holy Spirit is an impersonal force.
- Only 144,000 will go to heaven. Less than 9,000 of the 144,000 live on earth today. Jehovah's Witnesses not belonging to the 144,000 will live in a restored paradise on earth.
- The "good news" is that in 1914 Jesus became the invisible ruler of God's kingdom in heaven, with the Watchtower Society, headquartered in Brooklyn, New York, as His visible agency on earth.

What about the rest of us who don't believe the special revelations that the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses supposedly received from God? Jehovah's Witnesses think we belong to the devil's organization and will be annihilated at Armageddon. Here is how David Reed, a former Jehovah's Witness elder, worded it:

To a Jehovah's Witness, a church is just as foreign as a Hindu temple. In his mind a church is a demon-infested building surmounted by a pagan symbol (the cross) . . . filled with immoral people who worship a three-headed false god (the Trinity) and salute an idol made of cloth (the national flag).²

Do not be fooled. The Watchtower organization is not a zealous and fundamentalist Christian group. It is rather a non-Christian cult whose beliefs are shaped by its governing body. This handful of men maintains that there is no salvation outside the Watchtower Society.

MORMONS

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Edgar P. Kaiser

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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1 FROM PALMYRA TO PARADISE

You've seen the young men dressed in white shirts and ties, a stark contrast with what most young men wear today. They walk down the street or ride bicycles. If you engage them in conversation on a street corner or at your door, you will find them to be well mannered and courteous. You recognize them as Mormon missionaries.

They seem to be everywhere. You can find them throughout the United States and in many countries around the world. A feature article in *U.S. News & World Report* stated:

Today The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, better known as the Mormon Church, is one of the world's richest and fastest-growing religious movements. Since World War II, its ranks have quadrupled to more than 8.3 million members worldwide with 4.5 million U.S. members. . . . What ultimately attracts new converts to Mormonism, Mormon leaders and religion

experts outside the church agree, is distinctive teachings that, on the one hand, seem comfortingly familiar to people of Christian background but that often go dramatically beyond the tenets of traditional Christianity.¹

Who are these “Mormons,” as they are popularly known? What do they believe? How did their “distinctive” yet “comfortingly familiar” beliefs and their organization come to be?

THE RELIGIOUS CLIMATE

The history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) takes us back to the early 1800s. The name “Mormon” is a nickname that has become widely adopted to refer to the LDS; it comes from the prophet Mormon, who supposedly wrote the chief scriptures of the Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon. The spiritual revival that began in the mid-1700s under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards and others had died down. The spiritual condition of people in the United States was at a low ebb. Then in the early 1800s came the Second Great Awakening. This revival, centered around the “camp meeting,” tended to stress emotional responses. Those who became fired up gave special attention to spreading the revival to western New York State. Evangelization

of this area of the newly formed United States of America was so intense it became known as the “Burned-over District.” One evangelist after another visited it, and revivals were held almost continually in one community or another throughout the area.

Charles Finney had set the country aflame with his so-called “New Measures” and his dramatic revival methods. In addition, Alexander Campbell (Disciples of Christ), Jemima Wilkinson (or Wilkerson—the Shakers), and many others were active evangelists at this time. They emphasized what a human being could accomplish to bring about eternal salvation for one’s self.²

JOSEPH SMITH JR.

In this religious climate of fervent evangelistic activity, Joseph Smith Jr. grew up near Palmyra, New York. He was born in Vermont on December 23, 1805. Around the age of eleven he moved with his family to Manchester, New York. The Smiths were of solid Yankee stock. Joseph’s maternal ancestors, the Macks, were of Scotch Dissenter stock. Both families had lived in New England since the 1600s.

Joseph seems to have been an agreeable and likable young man. He was intelligent and loved adventure.

Some, though, considered him an idle young man who spent his days digging for buried treasure. Since treasure hunters were often impacted by “evil influences,” Joseph used a “peepstone”—an egg-shaped stone he had found—supposedly to locate the treasures. Such “innocent” occultism seems to have occupied much of the life of the young Joseph Smith Jr.

As a teenager, Joseph could hardly have escaped exposure to the religious fervor of the times. By his own account, he was much disturbed by the religious confusion of his day. Which of the many evangelists was correct? Accepting literally the words of the letter of James in the New Testament, Joseph went into the woods to ask God for wisdom. He claims that God the Father and His Son appeared to him there. They advised Joseph not to join any of the religious groups active at the time, for their creeds were all an abomination before the Lord. Instead, he was told to await further word. According to the official version published by the Mormon Church, Joseph was fourteen when he received this vision in the spring of 1820.

THE GOLDEN PLATES

- 8 Smith then claimed he received a series of revelations beginning in 1823 in which he was visited by the angel

Moroni. He told Joseph about some golden plates hidden on a little hill near Palmyra (now called Hill Cumorah). These plates, written by Moroni's father, the prophet Mormon, contained important writings, but Joseph was forbidden to remove these plates at that time. He was also told of a "magical" means for translating the writings on the plates. After four years of temptations and trial, the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph again and this time allowed him to take the plates.

Moroni's instructions to remove the plates from their hiding place in Hill Cumorah came in 1827, after Joseph had married Emma Hale. On September 22, 1827, the translation of the writings on the plates began. Many difficulties were endured before the translation was finished in June 1829. This translated document became the Book of Mormon.

Many difficulties were also encountered in printing the book. Some printers wanted cash. One prospective printer was threatened by Joseph's enemies. Finally, a friend, Martin Harris, sold part of his farm to get some cash so the printing could begin. (Chapter 5 will provide more details regarding the translation and contents of the Book of Mormon.)

In 1830, the Book of Mormon was finally published. Smith claimed it was a new revelation to meet the demands of a changing society. Here was a final word from God to end the religious confusion of the day.

A CHURCH FOUNDED

Two other important events took place during the translation of the golden plates. In May 1829, Joseph Smith and a companion, Oliver Cowdery, claimed they received the *Aaronic* priesthood from John the Baptist. Later these same two men said that Peter, James, and John visited them and gave to them the *Melchizedek* priesthood. The official power of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests in these two priesthoods.

By the time the Book of Mormon was published, Joseph Smith had gathered a small number of followers. The time had come for the formal incorporation of the new church. The Book of Mormon and the two priesthoods formed the foundation for the new organization. Joseph Smith Jr. was named “seer, translator, prophet, and apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church.” He was ordained by Oliver Cowdery. Oliver Cowdery was ordained an “elder unto this church of Christ.” The other men present were received into membership by the laying on of hands. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came into

being on April 6, 1830, at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., in Fayette, New York.

PERSECUTION BEGINS

The road for the new church was not easy. Many folks in the community remembered Joseph's past. Some believed him to be nothing more than a fraud and a blasphemer. Many of the new church's religious activities were challenged. Various misfortunes fell on members of the Smith family. The harassment the group experienced frightened Joseph's wife, Emma. At first she refused to officially join the new church. She urged Joseph to return to farming, since it offered security for their marriage. Several weeks passed before Emma finally joined her husband's church. She did so only after Joseph informed her of the following "revelation" he received in answer to her concerns:

Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God,
while I speak unto you, Emma Smith, my daughter. . . . Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen. . . . And the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, junior, thy husband. . . . And thou needest not fear, for thy husband shall support thee from the church. . . . Continue in the spirit of meekness

and beware of pride. Let thy soul delight in thy husband, and the glory which shall come upon him. Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come.³

A significant event now took place in the history of the new church. Oliver Cowdery and three other men were sent on a mission to convert American Indians. In Ohio they met Sidney Rigdon, a Campbellite revivalist. In less than three weeks, Rigdon and his entire communal col-

“Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground.”

(Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954], 1:188)

ony in Kirtland, Ohio, were baptized by the Mormon missionaries. Steeped in the piety of the Campbellites, Rigdon brought education and theological background into the Mormon group and contributed to its theological development.

MUSLIMS

How to Respond

Updated Edition

Ernest Hahn

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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PREFACE

The book you are holding began its publication journey in a short form as the chapter “Islam: Followers of Another Prophet” in *Share Your Faith: Christian Witness and Other Religions* (Toronto: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1984). In December 1987 (and again in 1991), it was reprinted in separate form with the title “How to Share Your Christian Faith with Muslims” in *Inter-Connections* (December 1987), a publication of the Office of Campus Ministry, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri. In 1993, after the author added the chapter “Muslim Presence in the United States and Canada,” it was published with the same title by Fellowship of Faith for Muslims (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) and *Philoxenia/Hospitality Ministry: Fellowship with Asian Neighbours* (Mississauga, Ontario, Canada). That book has been slightly expanded to form this book of the How to Respond series.

Chapter 2, “Muslim Presence in the United States and Canada,” draws freely from Yvonne Y. Haddad, *A Century of Islam in America* (Washington DC: American

Institute for Islamic Affairs, 1986), and Yvonne Y. Haddad, *The Muslims of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Many readers will be interested in Larry Poston's book *Islamic Da'wah in the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). The author is chairman of the Department of Missiology at Nyack College in Nyack, New York. All three works contain valuable bibliographies. I am also grateful to Professor Donald S. Tingle of Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary for his helpful comments on Muslim presence in the United States.

1 INTRODUCTION

A part of a verse in the Qur'an, Islam's holy book, reads: "We (God) caused Jesus son of Mary to follow and gave him the Gospel (*Injil*), and placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him" (Qur'an 57:27).

Today's Muslim might add: ". . . in the hearts of those who followed him; the tense is past! But what of those disciples of Jesus of more recent generations or of the present? What evidence do we Muslims have that God has placed compassion and mercy in their hearts?"

This hypothetical Muslim query is more than hypothetically significant for Christians today. If we are to take the Gospel seriously, we must be aware of our obligation to the vast multitude of Muslims throughout the world.

The obligation of Christians to Muslims is indeed tremendous. In fact, does the Church have any greater and more urgent obligation than to call to the Gospel those who deny Christ? Our contribution in this book toward measuring and implementing this obligation is modest. We

limit ourselves to the following four considerations, with the prayer that God would begin to kindle in the hearts of more Christians compassion and mercy for Muslims:

1. "Understanding Islam and Muslims"
2. "Muslim Presence in the United States and Canada"
3. "Islam and Christianity: Comparisons and Contrasts"
4. "Toward a More Effective Christian Witness among Muslims"

1 UNDERSTANDING ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

Islam is the religion of Muslims. The Arabic word *islam* simply means “submission” or “surrender” to God. A Muslim, by definition, is one who “submits himself or herself to God.” The same Arabic word root (S-L-M) stands behind *salaam* (peace), similar to the Hebrew *shalom*.

ORIGIN AND EXTENT

The origin of Islam, Muslims say, goes back to the dawn of human history, to Adam himself, whom most Muslims consider to be the first prophet. All messengers and prophets proclaim the essential message of Islam: “And verily We (God) have raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming): Serve Allah and shun false gods” (16:36). According to the Qur’an, Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a Muslim (3:67). In this sense, then, the religion that we know technically as Islam is believed by Muslims to be only a reiteration of the previous religions in the original form that the prophets had established.

Like the other messengers, Muhammad encountered severe opposition from his fellow citizens when he first summoned them to Islam. Only when he emigrated from his hometown of Mecca to Medina (AD 622), where he became the sole religious and political leader of the community, did he taste success in his mission. It is hardly coincidental that the Muslim calendar begins with the year of this emigration (*Hijrah*).

Eight years later Muhammad returned to Mecca as a conqueror. Proceeding to the *Ka'bah*, the central sanctuary in Mecca, he ordered all its idols to be destroyed. The *Ka'bah*, according to Muslims a sanctuary originally built and dedicated by Abraham and Ishmael to God alone, was purified and rededicated to Him. Once more God had vindicated His messenger and the religion of Islam.

Islam summons all peoples into the fold of Islam. It has never really known geographic or ethnic barriers. Serious Muslims must be seriously mission minded and share their Muslim faith with non-Muslims. Thus, soon after the death of Muhammad (AD 632), Islam began its phenomenal world expansion. Within a century it moved westward throughout North Africa and into Spain and France, while eastward it reached as far as present-day Pakistan.

Some estimates today suggest that Muslims now number about 1.57 billion, one person in five or six on the face of this earth.¹ Of course, many of them are only nominally Muslim.

Islam is especially entrenched in equatorial regions from North Africa east to the Philippines. Its numbers are most heavily concentrated in the Asian subcontinent countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country. In recent decades Muslims have immigrated into countries of Northern Europe and the Americas. Perhaps some twelve million reside in Europe, about 2.5 million or more in the United States, and about seven hundred thousand in Canada.² Although some might dispute the statement, it appears that, proportionately, Islam is growing faster than any other major religion, especially because of the relatively high birthrate of Muslims.

SOURCES OF ISLAM

Islam is founded on four sources: the Qur'an, the *Hadith* (canonical traditions), *ijma'* (community consensus), and *qiyas* (analogy). The first two are especially important.

Most Muslims hold the Qur'an to be the eternal, infallible, and unalterable Word of God, inscribed on the Preserved

Tablet in heaven and mediated by inspiration through the angel *Jibril* (Gabriel) to Muhammad. It is the Word of God, not the word of man; Muhammad is only its vehicle. Some twenty years after the death of Muhammad it attained a form and content that approximates the Qur'an of today.

The Qur'an, for Muslims, is the Word of God, not the word of man; it is God's final revelation for all humanity, superseding all other revelations. Muslims generally consider Qur'an 96:1–5 to be God's first revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad:

“Read: In the name of thy Lord
who createth,

Createth man from a clot.

Read: And thy Lord is the Most
Bounteous,

Who teacheth by the pen,
Teacheth man that which he
knew not.”

For most Muslims the words and deeds of Muhammad, the recipient of revelation, are also inspired. Various collections of his words and deeds, carefully scrutinized by pious Muslims to separate the true traditions from the false ones, are called the *Hadith*, or accounts of the canonical traditions. They are indispensable for interpreting the Qur'an.

Both the Qur'an and the *Hadith* form the basis of the *shari'ah*, Islam's holy

law and the perfect manifestation of God's will and guidance for humanity. For orthodox Muslims the *shari'ah* is where God and people meet. It molds Muslims into the truly Islamic community, "the best community that has been raised up for mankind" (3:110). It is God's law versus all other human codes of law; God's law, regulating all aspects of life and allowing for no separation of sacred and secular; God's law, offering solutions for all the world's problems.

Some Muslims would insist that Islamic law has been fixed for all places and all times. Islam without Islamic law is no longer Islam. Islamic law brings order out of chaos. That is why political sovereignty must be in Islamic hands. Others would contend that Islamic law must be adjusted to conform to changing times—what is important is the spirit rather than the letter of the law. Thus the actual existence and implementation of the *shari'ah* remain points of serious difference between "orthodox" and "liberal" Muslims today.

Today many Muslims are frustrated with the present status of the Muslim community. They press for community renewal, for the imposition of the *shari'ah* (the rule of Islamic law in the world), and, if necessary, for revolution. They continue to promote the spread of Islam throughout the world.

BELIEFS

The following Qur'anic verse, frequently quoted in Muslim publications, alludes to the principal Muslim beliefs and some of their principal practices:

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West, but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing. (2:177)

God (Allah)

Fundamental to Islam is belief in God. Muslims believe that He is one—the sole Creator and Preserver, the Merciful and Compassionate, the Lord of the Day of Resurrection and Judgment. God has no partner, no equal, and nothing is like Him. People of perception recognize Him through signs in nature and history.

The faithful call God by His “99 beautiful names” such as the One, the Living, the Merciful, the Judge, etc. You will not find the word *Father* in such lists (though some Sufis [mystics] do use it on occasion). *Allah* is the word used for God; however, it is not used solely by Muslims. *Allah* is the pre-Islamic Arabic word for “God” and is the cultural possession of all Arabic-speaking religious communities. The Holy Bible in Arabic, like the Qur’an, always uses the word *Allah* for God. There is no other word.

Angels

Angels are servants of God. Prominent among them is Gabriel (*Jibril*), often called “the Holy Spirit” by Muslims, through whom God mediates especially His verbal revelations to apostles and prophets.

Messengers

God speaks to humanity through prophets and apostles. All of them are human, yet divinely inspired. The

The Bible reader will recognize many persons and events noted in the Qur’an. All Muslims must believe in Jesus—as a prophet but not as Savior and Lord. All Muslims must believe in the *Injil*, but, many Muslims would add, as it was originally given to Jesus, not in its present corrupt state.

Qur'an refers to several biblical characters as messengers of God. For Muslims, most prominent among them are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Last but not least is, of course, Muhammad.

The Qur'an reverently portrays Jesus as the son of the Virgin Mary (the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an). He is sinless, a servant, an apostle, a prophet, the Messiah, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. He heals the leper, gives sight to the blind, and raises the dead. Yet He is never more than human. He is not the Son of God, nor did He die on the cross and rise from the dead on the third day. According to the Qur'an, God saved Jesus from death on the cross and raised Him to heaven, where He continues to reside. Tradition reports that He will come to earth again before the end of the world, that He will marry, die, and be buried in order to await the Day of Resurrection. He is a guide, not the Redeemer.

Muhammad is the final messenger, "the seal of the prophets" (33:40) and "a good example for him who looketh unto Allah" (33:21). Although he is always portrayed as only a man, belief in him is incorporated into the fundamental confession of Islam: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is God's messenger." As the final messenger, some Muslims would add, Muhammad is the greatest.

Scriptures

The Qur'an states that as Muhammad received the Qur'an, so Moses received the *Tawrat* (Torah), David received the *Zabur* (Psalms), and Jesus received the *Injil* (Evangel, Gospel). Muslims acknowledge all Scriptures to be the Word of God, but they believe that previous Scriptures have been corrupted or abrogated and hence are no longer trustworthy. The Qur'an alone suffices for all people.

The Day of Resurrection and Judgment

The Qur'an continually commands faith and good works by all people. It informs them of God's awareness of their thoughts and actions and warns them of their responsibility to God and the consequences of their actions. As the author of life and death, God also raises all humanity from the dead in order to judge them. The Qur'an vividly and graphically portrays the joys and pleasures of heaven for the pious and the sorrows and torments of hell for the wicked.

In order to be saved, Islam teaches that each person must bear his or her own burden. The unforgivable sin is idolatry (*shirk*). Most Muslims hope their faith and good works will outweigh their evil works and will find acceptance with God. They may seek the intercession of Muhammad

SATANISM

How to Respond Updated Edition

Bruce G. Frederickson

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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1 SATAN IS REAL

Despite the crowds and noise, contestants in a race must focus on the goal, the finish line. Christians must, too, for they are participants in the most important race: the race of life. St. Paul describes some of the difficulties of this race as he characterizes the followers of this world:

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. (2 Timothy 3:1–5)

A mother was afraid because her children were home alone when a severe weather alert announced that a tornado was sighted near their home. She drove home

rapidly through a torrential rainstorm only to find her children calmly watching television. “Didn’t you see the warnings? Why didn’t you take cover?” They calmly replied, “We were playing video games, Mom. We didn’t know there was any danger.” We, however, have no such excuse. We know the signs of the times and that the end is fast approaching.

In this book you will learn more about the devil, where he came from, and how he affects you. You will learn what Scripture says about Satan, and, more importantly, you will learn about God Himself. You will learn to avoid dangerous practices and to challenge things that others may consider harmless.

The end is near!

THE REALITY OF SATAN

Do you believe in a real devil as described in the Bible? Some think that the devil is just a leftover remnant from the Middle Ages. Others believe he is a myth—that he doesn’t really exist. What do *you* believe?

There is a power that moves in our world today.

Evidences of evil, present throughout history and now liberally sprinkled throughout the daily paper, must either be dismissed or accepted as real. Some people ask, “Where

does such evil come from? Why do such terrible things happen? How can people be so mean?" The answer is plain: These accounts of evil—along with the testimony of the Bible—leave little doubt that the devil is real. The presence of evil illustrates that Satan is very active in this world, trying to gain a foothold in people's lives (Ephesians 4:27).

Satan is first mentioned in the third chapter of Genesis as a creature who tempts Adam and Eve to disobey God. In the third to last chapter of the Book of Revelation, Satan's defeat is announced. He is sent to darkness and despair

where he belongs. His time is short. Satan, defeated and with his dying gasps, frantically tries to lead people away from God. The closer you get to Jesus, the harder and faster Satan works on you. Of course, not everyone reads the Bible, and those who do don't always believe what it says. Yet the end of all things will overtake everyone just the same. As Judgment Day approaches, you can count on Satan to work even harder to drag you away from your Savior.

Even if you can't see spiritual dangers, they still exist. One of Satan's most powerful tricks is his cloak of invisibility. But you, soldier of Christ, are armed with the Word of God. Nothing is stronger.

BATTLING THE UNSEEN

As a way to help her students learn to be wary of the unseen, a teacher once told her students that she was going out into the hallway and would close the door behind her. She warned the students that no matter what happened, they were not to open the door or peek out. She then made a commotion in the hallway. When they could stand it no more, the students carefully turned the knob and opened it just a crack. Suddenly the teacher grabbed one student's wrist and jerked him out into the hallway, scaring him. While we may disagree with that tactic, her point was valid—curiosity about the unknown can lead us through all kinds of doorways into strange and dangerous activities.

Like children who don't hear or ignore a weather warning, not everyone knows or cares about the reality of this spiritual warfare. St. Paul, however, reminds us of its seriousness: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Satan's name means "adversary." Before a game, athletes often study films of their adversaries to discover flaws or mistakes that can be used to their advantage. Similarly, Christians can use the Bible to learn of Satan's trickery and craftiness and to become skilled at resisting him.

Each of us is like a chain. No matter how strong, everyone has at least one weak link. Satan tries to use that weak link to destroy people who are precious to God. His methods vary. Evil spirits trouble and possess people (Matthew 8:28). With trickery and deceit Satan seeks to snatch the seed of God's Word from people's hearts (Matthew 13:19). He was so bold as to even tempt the Son of God (Matthew 4:1).

However, don't miss the victory of Jesus. Signs of the power of God and of His Anointed also fill every page of Scripture and are all around us. In this battle, the final results are already determined. The Father gave His Son a "name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9)—the name "Jesus," which means "the Lord saves." He did save; Christ has won!

Satan does have one advantage: he has more experience in tempting than we have in resisting him. On the other hand, we have the advantage of Jesus at our side. Satan knows and fears Him. Jesus has already met Satan

NEW AGE MOVEMENT

 *How to Respond*
Updated Edition

Philip H. Lochhaas

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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1 OLD LIES FOR A NEW AGE

Beginning in the 1980s, the phrase *New Age* increasingly came to the attention of many people. However, the ideas and concepts of the New Age Movement have existed in one form or another for a long time. In fact, it has been around almost since the beginning of time. Its lies are as old as those of Satan in the Garden of Eden (see chapter 2). The impression that it is *new* has been created by the media, which often focus on its strange practices and overlook its philosophical or religious side.

The New Age Movement is a *movement*, a network of many organizations. Popular writers like Constance Cumbey, Texe Marrs, and M. Scott Peck made the New Age Movement appear to be widespread and organized. Sociologist Marilyn Ferguson, in her work *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, gives the impression that the New Age Movement is larger than it is.¹ On the other hand, among those involved in New Age ideas and practices, there is enough agreement to identify a specific and distinct belief system.

The New Age Movement may be defined as a network of otherwise dissimilar people intent on replacing the reality of a personal God with the idea that humanity is the center of all things. Indeed, some claim that each person is God, one with a universal energy, and only needs to develop the potential of divinity to the fullest. But no brief definition can explain the rapid spread of the movement in American society. This can be understood only by giving attention to the history of the movement as well as the basic principles of the New Age philosophy.

AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

The New Age Movement appears to be a confusing and contradictory mix—until one understands that there are two distinct expressions of the movement: there is the occult and there is the humanistic. The *occult* expression involves such ideas and practices as reincarnation, the power of crystals, channeling spirit guides, UFO phenomenon, and the worship of self. The *humanistic* expression focuses on developing unlimited human potential and an ethical system centered in responsibility only to one's self.

The occult expression of the New Age Movement attracts those interested in the latest fad. For that reason it is often dismissed as trivial. While the practice of some New Age fads—the use of crystals, sitting under a pyramid,

looking for ways to contact personal guardian angels—may decrease, the occult New Age is not trivial. It has left behind a trail of spiritual death, and it continues to endure because of the great number of its participants.

The humanistic New Age Movement has been around ever since Satan convinced Adam and Eve that they could be God's equal. Down through the centuries, like a chameleon, it has changed its colors in order to blend into a new environment. Today it continues to promote Satan's agenda as it seeks to involve every social, cultural, and religious aspect of life in his deceptive lies. Since New Age humanism is synonymous with the fall of humanity, it will remain until Jesus comes again.

Because it attracts the sinful human nature and because of its subtle deceptiveness, the New Age Movement has become a major challenge to Christianity in

Referring to the New Age penetration into politics, Dr. Walter Martin of the Christian Research Institute wrote: "The New Age political agenda is dangerous because it completely ignores man's greatest problem—*sin*—as well as God's provision for this problem—the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ." (Walter Martin, *The New Age Cult* [Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989], 74.)

our time. Both the occult and the humanistic expressions of the New Age Movement see themselves as offering “salvation” to humanity. New Age proponents identify salvation as personal enlightenment (transformation) to the divinity within. Such enlightenment will, in turn, lead to humanity’s evolutionary leap into a new world order of peace and harmony.

It is easy to confuse the New Age philosophy with the secular humanism (deification of humanity) of the past. However, despite some similarities, the New Age Movement is not the same as modern secularism (the separation of church and state). Nor is it the same as Eastern mysticism. It borrows freely from both sources while also drawing Western occultism, humanistic psychology, ancient and medieval witchcraft, and pagan pantheism into the mix. It represents a relentless quest toward self-deification and the integration of all knowledge and spirituality to create a utopian society.

It is important for Christians to recognize that by replacing God with deified human beings, the New Age Movement is religious to the core and is fundamentally hostile to essential Christian beliefs. The Christian Church must not merely denounce the movement but also minister to the vacuum in people’s lives on which the movement feeds.

THE NEW AGE PRINCIPLES

There are many branches off the occult and humanistic forks of the New Age tree, but six broad principles form the roots from which the New Age philosophy grows. The importance that various New Age entities attach to one or another of these principles will vary, but the principles in one form or another express a kind of New Age "creed." At the same time, the interpretation of and additions to the following six principles often separate humanistic and occult New Agers from one another.

1. *All is one; therefore all is God.* This principle expresses the twin concepts of *monism* and *pantheism*, which have long been identified with the Eastern religions. The New Age god is impersonal and does not exist distinct from creation. "It" is a universal energy, the Force, the combined consciousness, the oneness (monism) of all living things. In this oneness, good and evil, life and death, are the same. Differences exist only in perception.

If all is one, then this universal energy, this impersonal god, is in all things (pantheism). Jane Roberts, channeler of the spirit entity Seth and author of *The Seth Material* (Manhasset, NY: New Awareness Network, 2001), describes the New Age idea of God: "He is not one individual, but an energy gestalt . . . and because its energy

JUDAISM

How to Respond Updated Edition

Erwin J. Kolb

A CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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1 A NEW SPIRIT

As I grew up in a Lutheran community in Bay City, Michigan, I did not personally know any Jewish people. The only Jews I heard about were those in the Bible—the nasty ones who opposed Jesus and plotted His death, and the good ones who followed Him. Today most of the Michigan Christians I talk to do know some Jews, hear a lot about them in the media, and have definite opinions about them.

There is a new awareness of the Jewish people today and a new spirit of concern about them. Jews are visible and vocal, and their numbers have increased, though they make up only 2.3 percent of the United States' population. Who does not know the names of prominent Jewish contemporaries such as statesmen Henry Kissinger and Rahm Emmanuel; scientists Albert Einstein and Jonas Salk; astronaut Judith Resnik; theologians Abraham Heschel and Elie Wiesel; violinist Jascha Heifetz; pianists Vladimir Horowitz and Arthur Rubinstein; composers Leonard

Bernstein, Irving Berlin, and George Gershwin; performers Victor Borge, Bob Dylan, Jack Benny, Barbara Streisand, and Paul Newman; movie director Steven Spielberg; and many others.

The number of Jews in America has increased roughly like this:

1776 2,000

1820 4,000

1880 280,000

1925 4,500,000

1992 5,800,000

2006 5,200,000

The quoted figures of the number of Jewish people in the United States or the world varies from source to source. The Council of Jewish Federations says there are 6.8 million Jews in the United States. The *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* lists 5.9 million Jews. The Center for Cultural Judaism reissued a study "American Jewish Identity Survey" (2001) that lists 5.3 million Jews in America. The states with the largest number of Jews, in order, are New York, California, Florida,

and Pennsylvania. There are approximately 12.9 million Jewish people in the world.¹

JEWISH AGGRESSIVENESS

As the American Jewish population increased, they became more visible and influential in many areas of American society. The Jewish community has become more organized, locally and nationally, in order to promote Jewish causes, oppose anti-Semitism, and most recently to seek support for the nation of Israel. In a pamphlet authored by Peter Y. Medding, the American Jewish Committee lists two of its priorities as the security of Israel and the welfare of Soviet Jews.²

In that pamphlet, Medding writes that Jewish Americans believe they must defend their status in American society against “two major hostile pressures”: (1) the threat of anti-Semitic prejudice and discrimination and (2) the threat of the incorporation of Christian symbols, practices, and values into public life. Because of the past history of persecution and repeated attempts at annihilation, as in the Holocaust, American Jews suffer, he says, from a “permanent sense of insecurity and vulnerability.”

As a result of this new spirit among American Jews as well as the rise of secular humanism (a philosophy

seeking to enable humans to live fulfilling lives apart from belief in God), one reads almost daily of efforts to eliminate the cross from public buildings. Recent years have seen an increase in efforts to remove Christmas carols and programs from public schools and manger scenes from public property. Religious News Service reported in August 1989 that a federal judge ordered the removal of a Latin cross that had been displayed atop a municipal water tower in St. Cloud, Florida, for more than twenty years because it was a symbol of Christianity. U.S. District Judge G. Kendall Sharp said that no federal court has allowed a Latin cross to remain on government property because "it is an obvious perception of Christianity to any persons of non-Christian faith." The complaint was made by a Jewish resident of St. Cloud who said that the cross reminded him of relatives who died during the Holocaust. The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) assisted the protester in the legal process.

Oddly, the judge ruled that St. Cloud could replace the Latin cross with a Greek cross because that was more neutral and was not perceived as a Christian symbol. This, too, was challenged, but the city dropped the issue because of the tremendous legal costs.

Yes, there is a new spirit abroad in the *goy* (Gentile) community and in the Jewish community. Jews have begun to

exert their views with more *chutzpah* (a Yiddish expression for “unmitigated nerve”). They press for toleration, emphasizing that in our pluralistic society no specific religion can be considered better than another, and that no one religion can be proclaimed as the “true” religion while another is proclaimed to be “false.” Jews insist that to say Judaism is false is prejudiced and anti-Semitic.

THE RESPONSE TO JEWISH AGGRESSIVENESS

Unfortunately, one of the ways in which people have responded to the new aggressiveness of the Jewish community is with an increase in anti-Semitism. In 1989, according to Abraham Fox of the Anti-Defamation League, there were fourteen hundred anti-Semitic incidents against Jewish institutions and property, the highest in eleven years of counting the incidents. Recently, however, the Anti-Defamation League reported that overall incidents have decreased over the last four years with 1,352 incidents occurring in 2008.

The increase in anti-Semitism is worldwide. In Japan, where there is only a small number of Jews, eighty anti-Semitic books were published in a one-year period, according to Mr. Fox. In Germany, resentment against Jews is growing. In Israel, in response to the rise in attacks on Jews all over the world, the Israeli Cabinet called on