

Examining the Watchtower Publication “*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*” Part Two

By Lorri MacGregor

In part one we examined methods used by the Watchtower Society to attack belief in the Trinity. In this publication, *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, in their quotes, they deliberately left off page numbers, authors, publishers, and edition years. They quoted out of context to make it appear that the quotes supported their views. They did not. The Watchtower also carefully picked among all ideas in reference books, rejecting the ones they don't agree with, perusing even radical ones, to find some small phrase that does agree with them. Here is an example of this “phrase picking.”

Here is their quote from page 6, “The *Encyclopedia of Religion* admits: ‘Theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity.’”

The very liberal and controversial *Encyclopedia of Religion* in this same article suggested, “The fatherhood of God should be rethought in light of the critique of feminist theologies.” The Watchtower sure didn't like that one!

How about this one? “Trinitarian doctrine cannot be christomonistic, excluding persons of other faiths from salvation, nor can it surrender its conviction that God is fully present in Christ.” Jehovah's Witnesses hated that one! So why choose among them for one radical one that did agree?

Trying to make it appear the Trinity is not found in the Old Testament, the Watchtower presents this quote: “And the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* also says: The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not taught in the O(ld) T(estament).” Again, let's finish the quote to get at the truth of the matter: “In the NT the oldest evidence is in the Pauline epistles, especially 2 Cor. 13: 13, and 1 Cor. 12: 4-6. In the Gospels, evidence of the Trinity is found explicitly only in the baptismal formula of Mt. 28, 19.” The article continues, “In many places of the OT however, expressions are used in which some of the Fathers of the Church saw references or foreshadowings of the Trinity.”

This paragraph continues with disjointed quotes from Jesuit Edmond Fortman, making it appear that he supports the Watchtower view, when he does not: “Jesuit Fortman states: The New Testament writers... give us no formal or formulated doctrine of the Trinity, no explicit teaching that in one God there are three co-equal divine persons.... Nowhere do we find any trinitarian doctrine of three distinct subjects of divine life and activity in the Godhead.”

The sentence quoted actually ends after the word “persons” (note the...). The very next sentence in the introduction of Fortman's book reads: “The doctrine of the Triune God has had an amazing history, Convinced that this doctrine is a Christian doctrine that did and could originate only from divine revelation, I start the study from the authentic record of divine revelation that is found in the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments:...”

Now I ask you, does this sound like someone who is attempting to show that the Trinity is not a correct Christian doctrine as the Watchtower implies?

The Jehovah's Witnesses are the modern day Arians, or heretics of this century. They

need to be corrected as was Arius in 325. Jesuit Edmund Fortman does a credible job of describing these events in the article the Jehovah's Witnesses quoted above, so we have quoted a scholar of their choice to correct their false doctrine that Jesus Christ is a lesser, inferior god to Jehovah, and the Archangel Michael to boot!

The Watchtower also attempts to show the pagan nature of the Trinity by showing pictures of pagan trinities. They have it backwards! For every truth of God, Satan has a counterfeit. For the true Triune God, Satan has counterfeited false triune pagan deities. This merely proves that there is a genuine article if there is a pagan copy.

The entire Watchtower theology is a counterfeit of true Christianity. Counterfeit salvation, counterfeit Jesus Christ, a counterfeit organization replacing the true body of Christ etc. Not to mention this counterfeit booklet we are discussing! It is as false as its quotes!

Several pages later, sixteen in fact, we find the remainder of this quote of Fortman's used by the Watchtower, joined by four dots to the original—talk about sneaky!

Thus two currents of thought and belief began to stand out. One read the Biblical witness to God as affirming that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three who are equally God and somehow one God.

The other read the Biblical witness differently and concluded that Christ although divine to some extent, was not equal to the Father in divinity but somehow an "inferior god"... (therefore) ..." the Council of Nicea in 325, the first ecumenical council rejected Arius' doctrine that the Son is not true God but is a creature, and declared solemnly. "We believe... that Jesus Christ is the Son of God born of the Father; i.e. of the substance of the Father, true God from true God begotten not created, co-substantial with the Father; through him all things were made."

The Watchtower is quoting a firm believer in the Trinity, trying to make him appear in their camp. Shocking and dishonest.

Here is a quote the Jehovah's Witnesses use as a "conclusion" to their misquoting on page 6 of *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*: "The *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* observes: "Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament."

Ahah! Another period where there is actually a comma in the original. The article here goes on at some length to support the Trinity, and concludes with these words: "Thus, the New Testament established the basis for the doctrine of the Trinity." Again, The Watchtower is guilty of inventing punctuation to alter quotes, and ignoring the context.

Also on page 6, we find another snappy quote: "Bernhard Lohse says in *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*: "As far as the New Testament is concerned, one does not find in it an actual doctrine of the Trinity."

However, as expected, matters get clearer as the article continues on page 39, "In other passages of the New Testament the predicate 'God' is without a doubt applied to Christ. With these affirmations, which for Jewish monotheism were utterly offensive. Christians expressed their faith that it was not merely some heavenly being which encountered them in Jesus Christ, but God himself and that because of this his coming, especially his cross and resurrection, had meaning for the entire world."

Moving on to pages 6 and 7, we find an interesting quote with offending key phrases removed (as usual). "At first the Christian faith was not Trinitarian.... It was not so in the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages, as reflected in the N(ew) T(estament) and other early Christian writings. —*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*."

Now let's read the whole quote: "The transition from the Trinity of experience to the Trinity of dogma is describable in other terms as the transition from the economic or dispensational Trinity [Greek words inserted] to the essential, immanent, or ontological Trinity [more Greek words]. At first the Christian faith was not Trinitarian in the strictly on theological reference." While this full quote is difficult for one not a scholar, the true intent of the author is shown to be at odds with the Watchtower's partial quote.

Moving on to page 7 of *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, we find the ever-popular dots again! What could they be hiding this time? "The formulation 'one God in three Persons' was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century.... Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective. —*New Catholic Encyclopedia*."

Often, Watchtower dots hide words like "but", "however", "therefore", and a completely different point follows. Here is what the dots are hiding. Let's finish the sentence, "But it is precisely this formulation that has first claim to the title the Trinitarian dogma."

Now proceed to the balance of the Watchtower quote which actually ends not with a period but a semi-colon and continue reading: "among the 2nd- century Apologists, little more than a focusing of the problem as that of plurality within the unique Godhead." No denial of the Trinity here!

WHAT ARE WE TO CONCLUDE REGARDING THE *SHOULD YOU BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY?* BOOKLET?

We can only conclude that if you read the entire quotes from the articles used by the Watchtower Society, and ignore their very slanted opinions and scholastic dishonesty, you too, will come to believe in the Trinity, as did the apostles, early church fathers and early Christian Church.

If you are beginning to wonder if Jesus Christ really is Almighty God manifest in the flesh, why don't you visit our website, www.macgregorministries.org. You will be referred to scriptures the Watchtower prefers to ignore, but they are in the Bible.

How important is it that you have the right Jesus Christ? Jesus Himself said it best, "Unless you believe that I AM you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Acts 20:28 says that God purchased the church with His own blood. Won't you check these things out? Your eternal life will depend on it. If you have the right Jesus Christ, you are right for all eternity. If you have the wrong Jesus Christ, you are wrong for all eternity.