



# Books in Review

## OUR SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST

by John F. MacArthur

Crossway Books, 282 pages, \$12.99

John MacArthur's volume, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, is another of those books which has not received the distinction and wide reading audience it deserves. In a time when fictional and apocalyptic writings, or 30-day-wonder prayer formula books top the Christian best-seller lists, a book such as MacArthur's, which presents a sane and biblical understanding of a believer's position in Christ, all too often goes unnoticed and unread.

Sadly, Christians go looking for truth in all the wrong places. They dig through the garbage cans of psychology, mysticism, spiritual gimmicks, and supernatural quick fixes. "As a result," the book says, "they wallow in a watered-down, pseudo-Christianity that has been drained of its vitality, effectiveness, and security."

MacArthur tackles a wide range of issues in the book. And he clearly shows the complete sufficiency of Scripture. The Word of God need not be supplemented with psychology or other man-made therapies. He writes, "The Bible is like a lion. You don't need to defend it. Just open the door and let it out. It'll take care of itself" (pg. 141). Scripture, he stresses, provides reliable answers for life's hardest questions. And he's right on target. If more Christians were taught and believed this basic truth, they would not be so easily deceived by Satan or search in vain for spiritual truth. "Scripture hasn't failed them — they've failed Scripture," MacArthur writes (pg. 89).

MacArthur also surveys the issue of spiritual warfare and presents a solid case for the sufficiency of God's grace. The biblical principles and understanding he sets forth in both these chapters are extremely helpful in combating the current wave of deliverance ministries and health and wealth theologies.

The book has Scripture and Topical indexes. The latter

is expanded to include entries for several of the illustrative stories MacArthur uses.

This book was first published under the same title by Word Publishers in 1991. Crossway Books (beginning in 1998) is now publishing the volume. They should be commended for keeping this important work in print.

—MKG

## THE NATION OF ISLAM Understanding the 'Black Muslims'

by Steven Tsoukalas

P&R Publishing, 211 pages, \$14.99

As the Nation of Islam continues to grow rapidly, it is imperative for Christians to know and understand the workings of this group. Steve Tsoukalas has definitely done his homework to bring to believers a clear picture of the movement of new-found identity and pride from three perspectives; political, social, and religious.

This explicit study is meticulously documented. The first chapter alone has 102 endnotes. The seven-page index is also helpful in retrieving information. A summary at the end of each chapter is an added enhancement to the publication.

The first six chapters deal with the history of the movement, which makes a fascinating read. The fathers of black nationalism, Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali affected the life of W.D. Fard, who "started a massive black nationalist movement from humble beginnings of a silk peddler." His successor, Elijah Muhammad, believed "that Fard was and is God in the flesh" and led the movement until his death in 1975. The two other more recent — and highly visible — leaders are Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan, both of whom "were groomed to succeed Elijah Muhammad."

The Nation of Islam is not to be confused with traditional Islam. Tsoukalas explains, "There are significant differences between the doctrines of the NOI [Nation of Islam] and those of traditional Islam ... First and foremost is that Islam considers it blasphemy to call any man Allah in the flesh" (pg. 70).

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Network (EWTN) web site, "the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith determined that the faith of Mormons is sufficiently different from Christian doctrine so that the baptism conferred by that sect has a different significance."

Catholicism teaches that the legitimacy of the sacrament of baptism does not rely upon the virtue of the person administering the ordinance. The Council of Trent, held in the 16th century, determined that anyone, even a heretic, could bestow a valid baptism if it was executed "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," and with the intention of baptizing the individual into the Christian faith.

Father Luis Ladaria, a Jesuit theologian, indicates the judgment of the church is "a change from the past practice" wherein Catholics consider Mormon baptism as acceptable. The committee cited the LDS belief that God the Father is an exalted man with a celestial wife who procreated Jesus Christ. "The Vatican concluded, therefore, that 'this is not the Baptism that Christ instituted,'" the EWTN report stated.

Members of the Mormon faith have also been proxy baptized for Roman Catholic saints, including Saint Francis of Assisi and Joan of Arc. However, the church's decision made no direct verdict concerning the LDS baptisms for the dead. In April 1995, the LDS church agreed to remove from its baptismal records the names

of 380,000 Jews who died in the Nazi Holocaust and who had been baptized by proxy in Mormon temples.

—MKG

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The NOI's holy book is the Qur'an. Although the Bible is considered to be a book of poison, "both can teach truth if interpreted by Elijah Muhammad, who in turn received proper interpretation from Allah (Fard)" (pg. 111). The white race is looked upon as being the devil. The NOI teaches the white race was "made (grafted) from the original black race by the will of Allah, who desired to test his people and then destroy the wicked whites" (pg. 118). It claims that "Christianity is the religion of whites and not the true religion of Allah" (pg. 124).

The last chapter, "A Christian Answer to the Nation of Islam," gives helpful, practical advice on how to knowledgably respond with understanding and truth. This work is a must read for those seeking to reveal God's Word effectively to people involved with or interested in the Nation of Islam.

—AMG

## PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.