



Watchman Fellowship, Inc.

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Monday, December 10, 2012

Dear Friends,

Here is your final Profile for 2012. If you have not done so already, it is *very important* that you renew your Profile membership for next year. You may renew now by making an [online donation](#) of any amount. Your gift will automatically upgrade your subscription to receive *both* the printed edition of our Profiles by US mail *and* the email version (USA only).

### **NEXT PROFILE: The Antichrist Revealed?**

Renew today and you will not miss our first new Profile of 2013. It is an expose of a self-professed new "Jesus" based in Florida named **José Luis de Jesús Miranda**. Unbelievably, this man claims to be both the Christ *and* the Antichrist, having tattooed the number 666 on his forearm. Why is he attracting thousands of followers and what has he prophesied? Find out by renewing your Profile membership for 2013 now.

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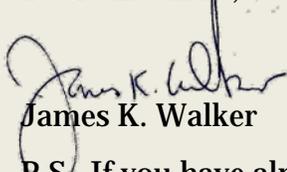
Please consider a generous end-of-year donation to Watchman Fellowship. Your donation is so much more than a tax-deduction. Your gift literally makes all of our apologetics, evangelism, and missions possible. Up to 25% of our support comes in during December so this is truly a "make it or break it" time for our staff and their families. Would you help?

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Yours in Christ,



James K. Walker

R.S. If you have already made a recent donation in the last two months, THANK YOU. Your membership is already renewed!

## Joyce Meyer



### **Why This Profile?**

For 19 years now we have been publishing 4-page Profiles. As a ministry of Christian discernment, Watchman Fellowship not only researches cults, the occult, and non-Christian world religions, we also address controversial teachers and doctrines broadcast on *Christian* radio and television.

We prayerfully choose research topics for potential Profiles based in part on the amount of inquiries we receive. For many years we have been inundated by a growing number of requests to evaluate the teachings of Joyce Meyer. The sheer volume of questions eventually led to your enclosed Profile.

Please know that in all our Profiles we make every effort to be fair and accurate. This included contacting Joyce Meyer's ministry for comments and clarifications on specific teachings.

### **Some Good News on Joyce Meyer**

Here is some good news on Joyce Meyer. She has now discontinued the false teaching that Jesus had to pay for our sins in Hell rather than on the cross (see Profile for details). This is encouraging as it gives us hope that she may continue to reevaluate and repent of other errant teachings. With this hope in mind, please join us in praying for Joyce Meyer.

## Joyce Meyer

By Tim Martin

**Birth:** “Meyer was born Pauline Joyce Hutchinson on June 4, 1943.”<sup>1</sup>

**Publications and Media:** Meyer hosts a television and radio program originally named *Life in the Word*, later named *Enjoying Everyday Life*. Meyer “has authored over 80 books, which have been translated into over 80 different languages.”<sup>2</sup>

### HISTORY

Joyce Meyer explains that she “grew up in a dysfunctional home filled with violence, alcoholism, and incest.”<sup>3</sup> She reports that she was sexually abused by her father for many years.<sup>4</sup> Due to the abuse, Meyer faced many personal struggles. “I was manipulative. I was controlling. I was obnoxious. I was frightened. I had all these different things inside.”<sup>5</sup> She explains that as a young child she began stealing “about anything [she] could get [her] hands on.” This practice continued into her adult years. Looking back at this period of her life, “she believes...that it was her way to exert some control over a life in which she felt largely powerless.”<sup>6</sup>

Her first marriage was short and disastrous. After their first child was born, “she could no longer tolerate her husband’s infidelities and trouble with the law. She took her son, anything else she could carry and walked out.” Less than a year later (Jan. 7, 1967), she married her second husband, Dave Meyer.<sup>7</sup> She began going to church with him, but “neither marriage nor church solved her problems. She was filled with self-pity and was verbally abusive, depressed and bitter.”<sup>8</sup>

In February 1976, while driving to work, “out of frustration and desperation, she began crying out to God. She said she heard God call her name. He asked her to be patient... ‘From that moment’ she said, ‘I knew with certainty that God was going to do something.’”<sup>9</sup> Soon after, Meyer began a woman’s Bible study on Wednesday mornings, which grew to 400 women after five years.<sup>10</sup>

In 1982, she left her Lutheran church to join Life Christian Center where she became an assistant minister. In 1983, she started a radio program. “Soon after, her ministry [bought] time on six radio stations from Chicago to Kansas City.” Two years later, her ministry *Life in the Word* was organized, which started its television debut in 1993.<sup>11</sup> Ten years later, the program’s name changed to *Enjoying Everyday Life*. In 2012, the program could reach a “potential broadcast audience of more than 4.5 billion.”<sup>12</sup> Joyce Meyer Ministries receives over 100 million dollars in donations yearly.<sup>13</sup> According to the ministry,

... more than 80 percent of total operating expenses ... are used directly on core outreaches and programs to reach millions with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and meet the physical needs of underprivileged children and families worldwide. Each year, this includes providing millions of meals, free medical care to thousands, building children’s homes and battered women shelters, robust prison ministries and providing a host of other disaster, missions and humanitarian aid.<sup>14</sup>

### DOCTRINES

**Message:** Meyer’s central message revolves around the theological category of sanctification: growing in one’s relationship with Christ and the abandonment of former, worldly ways of dealing with life’s issues. She often draws from her painful past to demonstrate how a person can accept where they came from, heal, and grow in a relationship with Christ.

**Word Faith/Prosperity:**<sup>15</sup> Meyer often distances herself from the designations “Word Faith” or “Prosperity teacher.” When discussing these labels with Larry King, she said, “I hate all these characterizations.”<sup>16</sup> It is understandable why she may react to such a label. First, many people react against the Word Faith movement due to Word Faith preachers who have been caught in scandals.

Secondly, the content of Meyer’s preaching is very different from many of the Word Faith teachers. This is due to what this author describes as the difference between the “old school” and “new school” Word Faith teachers. The old school Word Faith preachers are those whose message almost always centers on financial prosperity or physical healing. Examples would be Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Benny Hinn and Creflo Dollar. The “new school” teachers all agree with Word Faith theology, but don’t teach these distinctions all the time or even often. Examples would be Joel Osteen,<sup>17</sup> John Hagee and Joyce Meyer.

Hence, Meyer does not fit the typical persona exhibited in many of the Word Faith preachers. She does, however, agree with and teach almost every distinct Word Faith doctrine.

**Positive confession:** As with other Word Faith teachers, Meyer believes that words are spiritual, and release creative energy. This is sometimes called the “power of words,” or “faith filled words.” According to this doctrine, God created the universe using the power of words, and we have the same ability: “He created the world with faith-filled words (see Genesis 1). We are created in His image, and we can also call things that are not as though they are [Rom. 4:17]. We can speak positive thoughts about ourselves into the atmosphere and thereby ‘prophesy our future.’”<sup>18</sup>

*Requirement #1:* In order for words to have power, one needs to more than to merely speak them – they need to be growing in their relationship with God. Commenting on 3 John 2, Meyer explained, “I believe what that means is that according to your level of spiritual maturity, [God] want[s] you to have everything that you can handle and keep God first.”<sup>19</sup> She credits her rapid ministry growth to her spiritual growth/maturity: “I can say very definitely that the size and power of our ministry has increased in direct proportion to our personal growth in the Lord... and I expect that trend to continue as long as I am on this earth.”<sup>20</sup>

*Requirement #2:* A second necessity is this: “Words have power... Whatever you want from God, you got to [sic] believe it in your heart, confess it with your mouth.”<sup>21</sup> When Meyer said, “believe it in your heart,” she is in agreement with how Kenneth Hagen (the father of the Word Faith movement) defines it: “Real faith...believes the Word of God regardless of what the physical evidence may be.”<sup>22</sup> Meyer once was explaining some of the early confession that she used for herself and children. She stated, “when I started confessing these things, none of them were true.”<sup>23</sup>

In other words, if you want to be healed, do not focus on the fact that you are ill. “Don’t let your circumstances cause you to doubt. Believe that God’s healing power is working in you, even if you don’t feel or see any change yet.” Or, if you do not have any money, Meyer recommends, “Don’t say things like: ‘I can’t afford that.’” Instead, “Begin to say what God says you can have, not what you have right now.”<sup>24</sup> On her television program, she explained how this works:

Maybe you need to get your checkbook out say ‘oh you checkbook, hear the word of the Lord, you are not going to stay empty all of your life... The first ten percent of everything that goes into you is going to God’s work and you are going to be full to over flowing, and I am going to be blessed, and I am going to be a blessing.’<sup>25</sup>

This concept of words having creative power is often referred to as a “spiritual law.”<sup>26</sup> God setup this system, and now cannot intervene in His people’s lives unless they “release” Him or the angels to work on their behalf.<sup>27</sup>

**Negative Confession:** Words will also produce bad things in our lives:

We will not see positive results in our daily lives if we speak negative things. We should remember that what we are speaking, we are calling for. We are reaching into the realm of the spirit and drawing out according to our words. We can reach into Satan’s realm, the realm of curses, and draw out evil, negative things, or we can reach into God’s realm, the realm of blessings, and draw out good, positive things. The choice is up to us.<sup>28</sup>

**Meyer's contribution on words:** As demonstrated above, Meyer certainly agrees with the other Word Faith teachers concerning the power of words. Interestingly, even though she agrees that one must believe in their heart before their words will produce power, she has also taught that the opposite principle works: lack of belief plus words cause belief. Here is how she explains it:

In Psalm 45:1 David said that his tongue was as the pen of a ready writer. And in Proverbs 3:1, 3 the Word states that we should not forget God's laws but write them on the tablet of our heart. We see from these two Scriptures that our heart is the tablet and our tongue is the pen. When we confess God's Word out loud, we write it on our own heart, and it becomes more firmly established both in our heart and in the earth. God's Word is forever settled in heaven (see Psalm 119:89), and we establish it in the earth each time we speak it.<sup>29</sup>

**Health and Wealth:** As evident above, Meyer and the other new school Word Faith teachers certainly agree with the old school teachers that health and wealth were purchased in the atonement. Often, however, the "new school" teachers will emphasize that the atonement is more encompassing. "Our healing was bought and paid for in the atonement, the same as our sins. Atonement means reconciliation, and it means *at-one-ness*, which I love to ponder. Jesus died for our wholeness – body, soul, and spirit, mind, will, and emotions."<sup>30</sup>

**Spiritual Death of Jesus:** Word Faith teachers explain that after Jesus was crucified, he descended to hell, became sin and suffered for our sins. Meyer originally believed and taught this doctrine. In the 1993 edition of her book, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make*, she made very clear statements about it: "He entered hell, where you and I deserved to go (legally) because of our sin." The demon powers "tormented" Jesus there, then he conquered them. According to this edition, to be born again one "must" believe "He went to hell in your place and gained victory there, triumphing over the enemy."<sup>31</sup>

Since the 1993 printing, the book has been reprinted at least four times. In each subsequent edition, this doctrine has slowly disappeared. In the most recent edition (2005), there is no mention of Jesus suffering in hell for our sin. When asked about this change, Joyce Meyer Ministries reported that "we do not believe that Jesus had to be tortured in hell to pay for our sins. When He said 'It is finished!' on the cross, the price for salvation was paid."<sup>32</sup>

## CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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**Health and Wealth:** Though God does heal and provide financially in this life, the guarantee of total healing and material provision comes afterwards. In 2 Corinthians 4:16, Paul explains "though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." As their physical bodies are growing old and wasting away, their spiritual life is increasing. This is opposite from Word Faith theology. As discussed above, Meyer believes that we should increase in prosperity as our spirit increases.

In his previous letter, Paul revealed the timing of when we could expect the complete healing of our bodies: when we are resurrected (1 Cor. 15:42-43). He describes our pre-resurrected bodies as perishable, sown dishonor and weakness. The resurrected body will be imperishable, raised in glory and power. Though the Bible clearly provides many accounts of God's healing power, his people are not, however, guaranteed total health or permanent healing in this life.

**Power of Words:** This doctrine is fraught with internal inconsistencies. For instance, Word Faith teachers have often explained that one does not have to be a Christian for their words to have power.<sup>33</sup> However, as already stated above, they also teach that we have to be spiritually growing before our words can have power. But, how can unbelievers use the power of words when they have not even begun to grow? These ideas are incompatible. Another contradiction is found in Meyer's unique contribution explained above. But, if words can cause one to believe, then why emphasize that one must believe before their words will have power?

This "power of words" teaching has more in common with magic than Biblical teaching. "Magic is the art of producing a desired effect or result through the use of incantation, ceremony, ritual, [etc.]."<sup>34</sup> The practitioner uses magic to manipulate the spirit world to influence the physical world.

Though the Word Faith teachers do not use rituals and other techniques utilized in witchcraft, its teachings are remarkably similar to it. This does not mean that Word Faith teachers are trying to promote witchcraft. Still, the similarities are difficult to ignore. The nuance that Word Faith brings to magic is the teaching that a personal God setup this system. Even so, their explanation that the power of words concept is “spiritual law,” equates this belief and practice with the concept of magic.

The verses used by Meyer and the other Word Faith teachers to support this doctrine are often misrepresented by ignoring the context. For instance, Proverbs 18:21<sup>35</sup> is often appealed to: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” There is no argument that this verse is saying that words have power, but what is the power? The context demonstrates that it is not a magical power that manipulates the spirit world, but the power to influence people. Verse 19 explains, “a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.” Our words have the power to offend our siblings to the point where reconciliation is nearly impossible. This is not because we released magical power with our mouth, but we hurt their feelings with callous or caustic conversation.

**Conclusion:** Meyer has effectively used her painful early life circumstances to encourage people to likewise turn their life around and start serving God. It is very encouraging that she now rejects the “spiritual death of Jesus” doctrine after she so clearly believed and taught it. Still, the issues above are clearly problematic and need to be addressed. Until then, Christians should avoid Joyce Meyer Ministries.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Smith, Bill; Tuft, Carolyn “Meyer traces her fervor to early abuse, alcohol,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 14, 2004. Accessed online at [www.rickross.com/reference/meyer/meyer9.html](http://www.rickross.com/reference/meyer/meyer9.html).
- <sup>2</sup> “About Joyce,” Joyce Meyer Ministries, [www.joycemeyer.org/AboutUs/JoyceBio.aspx](http://www.joycemeyer.org/AboutUs/JoyceBio.aspx) (accessed November 2012).
- <sup>3</sup> Joyce Meyer, *I Dare You* (New York: FaithWords, 2007), 8.
- <sup>4</sup> Meyer traces her fervor.
- <sup>5</sup> Interview with Joyce Meyer, CNN Larry King Live, May 19, 2005. Transcript available online at [www.rickross.com/reference/meyer/meyer23.html](http://www.rickross.com/reference/meyer/meyer23.html) (accessed November 2012).
- <sup>6</sup> Meyer traces her fervor.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> “Timeline of Joyce Meyer’s Life,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 14, 2004. Accessed [www.rickross.com/reference/meyer/meyer12.html](http://www.rickross.com/reference/meyer/meyer12.html).
- <sup>9</sup> Meyer traces her fervor.
- <sup>10</sup> Interview and Meyer traces her fervor.
- <sup>11</sup> Timeline.
- <sup>12</sup> “At a Glance,” Joyce Meyer Ministries, [www.joycemeyer.org/MediaRelations/AtAGlance.aspx](http://www.joycemeyer.org/MediaRelations/AtAGlance.aspx) (accessed November 2012).
- <sup>13</sup> “Joyce Meyer Ministries,” ECFA, [www.ecfa.org/MemberProfile.aspx?ID=24404](http://www.ecfa.org/MemberProfile.aspx?ID=24404), (accessed November 2012).
- <sup>14</sup> “Press release about financial accountability,” Joyce Meyer Ministries, [www.joycemeyer.org/articles/media.aspx?article=2011\\_statement\\_in\\_response\\_to\\_us\\_senate](http://www.joycemeyer.org/articles/media.aspx?article=2011_statement_in_response_to_us_senate) (accessed November 2012).
- <sup>15</sup> This profile will use the terms “Word Faith” and prosperity” synonymously. A separate 4-page *Profile* has been published on this subject: Rob Bowman, “Word-Faith Movement,” *Profile Notebook* (Arlington, Texas: Watchman Fellowship, Inc. 1994-2012). A complete *Profile Notebook* (over 400 pages) is available at [www.watchman.org/notebook.htm](http://www.watchman.org/notebook.htm).
- <sup>16</sup> Interview. See also FAQ number 13 and 14 on Meyer’s website: <http://www.joycemeyer.org/AboutUs/faq.aspx>.
- <sup>17</sup> A separate 4-page *Profile* has been published on this subject: Rob Bowman, “Joel Osteen,” *Profile Notebook* (Arlington, Texas: Watchman Fellowship, Inc. 1994-2012). A complete *Profile Notebook* (over 400 pages) is available at [www.watchman.org/notebook.htm](http://www.watchman.org/notebook.htm).
- <sup>18</sup> Joyce Meyer, “Your Mouth is a Weapon,” *Life in the Word*, March 3, 1997, 2.
- <sup>19</sup> *Enjoying Every Day Life*, Television show. Broadcast September 13, 2008.
- <sup>20</sup> Joyce Meyer, *The Word The Name The Blood* (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1995), 78.
- <sup>21</sup> *Enjoying Every Day Life*, September 20, 2008.
- <sup>22</sup> Kenneth Hagin, *The Real Faith*, 2nd edition, (Rhema Bible Church, 1985) 10.
- <sup>23</sup> *Enjoying Every Day Life*, November 16, 2012.
- <sup>24</sup> Joyce Meyer, *I Dare You* (New York: FaithWords, 2007), 251, 243.
- <sup>25</sup> *Enjoying Every Day Life*, September 21, 2008.
- <sup>26</sup> Joyce Meyer, *Me and My Big Mouth*, (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1997) 64-65, 123-124.
- <sup>27</sup> *Enjoying Everyday Life*, 8/18/2008, 8/20/2008, 11/15/2012.
- <sup>28</sup> *Me and My Big Mouth*, 25-26.
- <sup>29</sup> Joyce Meyer, *The Secret Power of Speaking God’s Word* (New York: Warner Faith, 2004), xviii.
- <sup>30</sup> *I Dare You*, 249.
- <sup>31</sup> Joyce Meyer, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make* (1993) 35-36, 38, 40-41.
- <sup>32</sup> E-mail correspondence between the author and Joyce Meyer Ministries, July 30, 2008.
- <sup>33</sup> To support this teaching, the WF preachers often appeal to Mark 11:23. They say the “whosoever” is the phrase “whosoever shall say...” means everybody, saved and unsaved. See also *Enjoying Every Day Life*, Television show. Broadcast November 14, 2012.
- <sup>34</sup> Magic (paranormal), [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic\\_\(paranormal\)](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_(paranormal)), (accessed November 2012).
- <sup>35</sup> See *The Secret to True Happiness*, (New York: FaithWords, 2005) 191, *Me and My Big Mouth*, 6, 154.



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