

Assemblies of Yahweh

By Phillip Arnn

Founder: Jacob O. Meyer

Date: 1969

Headquarters: Bethel, Pennsylvania

Publications and Media: Magazine *The Sacred Name Broadcaster*, *The Narrow Way Newsletter*, *The Sacred Scriptures*, topical booklets and monographs. The ministry is on television as *The Sacred Name Telecast*, and on radio as *The Sacred Name Broadcast*.¹

Unique Terms: nominal ch-rchianity, True Worshiper

HISTORY

Jacob O. Meyer was born in Pennsylvania on November 11, 1934. His family had been affiliated with the Church of the Brethren (German Baptists Brethren) for generations. He married a girl he had met in high school who had been raised in the Mennonite faith. They have nine children.²

In an autobiographical account of the founding and growth of the Assemblies of Yahweh, Meyer discussed his early religious struggles. Meyer once asked his grandfather why the family ate pork when it was contrary to the Bible. He was told that in Acts 10 God made all meat clean to eat. Meyer felt his grandfather's explanation was "...a rejection of the plainly spoken commandment of Yahweh..."³

Meyer was introduced to the Sacred Name teaching by a college professor and later in the fellowship of a Bible study group. Meyer and his wife ultimately accepted the Old Testament and the Mosaic Law as the foundation of their faith and practice. The Meyers aided their studies with a Seventh Day Adventist correspondence course and began to fellowship with like-minded people in the Sacred Name movement.

In 1964 Meyer moved his family to Idaho and assumed editorship of a small Sacred Name publication.⁴ They returned to Pennsylvania the next year. The Meyers found fellowship with like-minded people in New Jersey, and several small groups in Pennsylvania, and in Washington D. C. In 1966 Meyer went on the radio. His first show was on a small Maryland station. Within months he had obtained the finances to buy time on an Iowa station and then a large station out of Mexico that covered the central and mountain states.

Meyer started holding regular meetings for Sacred Name followers in 1968. In 1969 he made a trip across the United States visiting small groups of people who had written to him requesting more information. The Assemblies of Yahweh was incorporated later that year. That fall he sponsored his first feast of Tabernacles gathering.

In 1971, the Assembly purchased a motel and converted it to offices, meeting room and printing center. Within a few years he had started a member's newsletter, a Bible

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school, purchased more property and inaugurated a television outreach.⁵ Meyer has continued to expand these outreaches both at home and abroad to the present day.

DOCTRINE

The Meyers came to believe that the Creator had to be addressed only by the name Yahweh, and the Son as Yahshua the Messiah. They adopted the Saturday Sabbath, kosher food laws and Jewish feasts days. Many doctrines espoused by the Assemblies of Yahweh are very similar to those taught by the late Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Meyer admits to visiting the headquarters of the WCG. In correspondence he also acknowledges a long-standing relationship with Herman Heoh, a leading theologian with the WCG.⁶

Trinity: The Assemblies of Yahweh rejects the doctrine of the Trinity, teaching that it has pagan origins. They believe the concept of a triad in deity worship began in Babylon and was patterned on Nimrod, his wife Semiramis and their son Tammuz. Later cultures, for example the Egyptians, adopted the belief that can be seen in their worship of Osiris, Isis and Horus.⁷

Jacob O. Meyer defines one of the Old Testament names of the Creator as “Elohim (a masculine, plural word), a family composed of several spirit beings working in unity...”⁸ (This heretical doctrine was taught by Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God).

Jesus Christ: The Assemblies of Yahweh teach that in eternity past, the Father created the Son. Meyer states, “In Revelation 3:14 Yahshua makes a striking declaration to the Laodicean assembly. We read there, ‘These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of El.’ ...The word beginning translates the Greek word *arche*. ...The Greek word *arche* means the beginning or the first, the prime. ...Therefore, Yahshua the Messiah wants us to understand that He was the first, primary or the beginning of the creation of Yahweh. ...If Yahshua the Messiah was Yahweh’s first or original creation, then he was created somewhere in eternity, before time came into existence.”⁹

The Holy Spirit: Meyers denies the personality of the Holy Spirit.

The term translated *Holy Spirit*, found in the Old Testament Hebrew text, is *ha ruach ha kodesh*. ...In the Old Testament, the word *ruach* cannot be construed as a person. It is a force. It is invisible. It is like wind, because it can be felt or experienced, but not seen. It is intelligence, mentality, life. It never portrays a person, however. It is Yahweh’s *personality*, but not His actual person dwelling in the hearts and lives of His True Worshipers.¹⁰

Scripture: Contrary to Christian teaching, Meyer claims, “The Old Testament is actually the basis of our Faith, the very foundation upon which we must erect our salvation. The Old Testament actually compliments and explains the obscure passages in the New Testament...”¹¹ Meyer’s early affinity for the Old Testament has led him to deny the faithful transmission of the New Testament.

...there is no such thing as an INSPIRED TRANSLATION. Therefore...we must base all doctrine on the Old Testament. We should...always allow the Old Testament to interpret the New. Yes, we believe that every word of the New Testament was Yahweh breathed in its original Hebrew or Aramaic purity...It should be obvious that any faith based on the so-called ‘inspired Greek New Testament’ is a faith not founded upon a solid rock.¹²

Meyer publishes his own Sacred Name Scriptures.

Salvation: The foundational doctrine of the Assemblies of Yahweh is the belief that the use of the Sacred Names for the Father and the Son are vital to our salvation. Meyer asserts,

Is there salvation to be found in a group that doesn't use the true Name of the Messiah? The obvious answer is NO. ...What must we do to be saved? The answer is obey what the Bible teaches! Believe on the Name of Yahshua the Messiah, and be baptized in that Name...¹³

The Holy Spirit is confirmed upon the believers by the laying on of hands of the presbytery. The Holy Spirit is received following baptism...¹⁴ Meyer claims the only presbytery with this authority is within the Assemblies of Yahweh (see below).

...when someone is born from above, when he is born of the Spirit, he becomes spirit. He receives a spirit body at that time... Clearly, we are not born again when we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit... We are born from above at the resurrection of the dead.¹⁵

This was a doctrine unique to Herbert W. Armstrong and now is taught by Meyer.

End-Times: Meyer is among a long list of spiritual leaders that claim to be the heading up the only group of true believers on the earth. He boasts,

HERE IS THE PRIMARY LOCATION WHERE YAHWEH HAS PLACED HIS NAME IN THESE END TIMES...The Assemblies of Yahweh represents the family of the Most High... Yahweh's true spiritual organization on earth today.¹⁶

And again he claims, "We believe that the Assemblies of Yahweh is the only organization on the face of the earth today that can provide the accurate answers to the questions on Bible doctrine."¹⁷

BIBLICAL RESPONSE

Jacob O. Meyer is a modern-day Judiaizer. His insistence on the use of Hebrew names for God and the observance of the Mosaic Law as a condition for salvation is blatant in his teaching and preaching. His denial of the Triune essence of the Godhead, the denial of the deity of Christ and the co-essentiality of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead highlight his anti-Christian doctrines.

Trinity: Yahshua is Yahweh. In Zechariah 12:10 the Hebrew text is explicit in showing that Yahweh is speaking, "they shall look upon me." Thus, Yahweh is the object of the subsequent action of "whom they have pierced" (See also John 19:37 and Revelation 1:7).

Compare the attributes of Yahweh with the same attributes ascribed to Yahshua in these verses: Acts 4:12 and Isaiah 43:11; Hebrews 1:8 and Isaiah 43:10; Revelation 1:17, 22:13 and Isaiah 44:6; John 8:58 and Exodus 3:14; John 1:3 and Isaiah 40:28; John 1:9, 8:12 and Psalms 27:1; Joel 3:12 and 2 Cor. 5:10. John 1:1 is explicit in its declaration that Yahshua is Yahweh.

The Holy Spirit: Both are "the Wisdom of God," (I Cor. 1:24 and Isa. 11:2). Both are "the power of God," (Micah 3:8 and I Cor. 1:24). Both were involved in creation, (Gen. 1:2 and John 1:3). They are both God yet both are distinct from the Father.

Matthew 28:19 says, "Go ye therefore...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The word "name" as it is used here means authority and power, which are expressions of personality. If the personality of the Holy Spirit is denied, then so must the personality of the Father and Son.

Salvation: Meyer claims that Hebrew is the language of heaven and that the Hebrew names of Yahweh and Yahshua are mandated as essential for salvation. F.F. Bruce, the noted biblical language expert, stated that Hebrew was a dialect of the Phoenician language spoken in numerous adjacent lands. Thus, it was a man-made language of pagan origin, and not the tongue of heaven. The Old Testament was translated into Greek in the second century B.C. It was the universal language of Jews throughout the Mediterranean world. They used the title *Adonai* (Lord) when speaking of the Creator.

Meyer says God and Lord are pagan names and must not be used. Yet, they use the word El when referring to the Creator. El was a Canaanite deity, the father of Baal. The Sacred Name was not used in the New Testament despite the claims of Meyer. He claims the New Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Although there is some evidence that Matthew and the epistle to the Hebrews were written in Hebrew, the rest were written in Greek to a predominantly Greek speaking, largely Gentile church.

End-Time Work: As mentioned earlier, Jacob O. Meyer claims that the Assemblies of Yahweh are the only work of Yahweh on the earth where salvation is obtained. The Church is a spiritual body, not a man-made organization (1 Peter 2:5). No city or organization is the mandated place of worship (John 4:20-24).

RECOMMENDED READING

Sabbath in Crisis by Dale Ratzlaff: A thorough biblical response to the Sabbatarian argument. 345 pp., Index.

Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction by Russell Tardo: Provides 25 reasons why the Christians worship on Sunday. 144 pp., Endnotes.

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? By F. F. Bruce: Bruce clearly documents the origins and canon of the New Testament books and gives convincing proof of their trustworthiness. 128 pp. Index and fnnts.

The Trinity by Edward Bickersteth: This book compares page after page of scriptural evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity. 182 pp. Index.

Notes

- ¹ Contents, *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, May 1999.
- ² Jacob O. Meyer, From the Editor's Desk, *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, February 1976, 1.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid., 2-3.
- ⁵ Ibid., 11-17.
- ⁶ Meyer, "Editorially Speaking," *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, August 1998, 3 (also correspondence between Meyer and Heoh on file).
- ⁷ Meyer, "Trinity, Duality, or Oneness," monograph, 1983.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Assemblies of Yahweh, "Lesson 1, The Basis of Our Faith," *Correspondence Course in the Inspired Scriptures*, 1, (Bethel: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1971), 5.
- ¹² Meyer, Jacob B., *Exploding the Inspired Greek New Testament Myth*, 2-3, monograph, (Bethel: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1978).
- ¹³ Meyer, "What Must We Do To Be Saved?, Part 6," *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, March 1990, 11, 17.
- ¹⁴ Meyer, "What Is The Holy Spirit?," *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, May 1989.
- ¹⁵ Meyer, "An answer to a question about the 'Born Again' Doctrine," monograph, (Bethel: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1977).
- ¹⁶ Meyer, "What Must We Do To Be Saved? Part 8," *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, October 1990, 8-9.
- ¹⁷ Meyer, "Editorially Speaking," *Sacred Name Broadcaster*, October 1992, 1.



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