

Children's Healthcare Is a Legal Duty, Inc.

Box 2604
Sioux City IA 51106
Phone 712-948-3295

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Written and produced by
Rita and Doug Swan

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Convicted Faith Assembly parents agree to medical care

On September 23, Faith Assembly members Max and Fran Hathaway of Goshen, Indiana, were convicted of reckless homicide in Elkhart Superior Court for allowing their 13-year-old son Ira to die without medical care. On November 16 they were sentenced to eight years' probation and ordered to seek needed medical care for their seven other children.

Courts have asked previous Faith Assembly defendants if they were willing to provide medical care in exchange for suspended sentences. The defendants have always declined, and several have then appealed. Judge Donald Jones, however, presented the terms to the Hathaways somewhat differently. He ordered them to obtain the medical care, thus saving them the moral burden of decision making, and then asked them if they would comply with the order. Both agreed to obey the law.

Ira died October 24, 1985, of juvenile-onset diabetes. The parents observed his sudden weight loss several weeks before his death. They also acknowledged that he was very thirsty and urinated often. Two days before his death he became extremely weak and vomited repeatedly.

At the grand jury hearing in 1985, the Hathaways said they would not have provided their son with insulin even if they had known his problem was diabetes. Prosecutor Michael Cosentino also pointed out that diabetes is hereditary and asked them what they would do if their other children showed similar symptoms. "I would still trust the Lord," Mrs. Hathaway said and added, "I don't believe it will happen again."

The Hathaways had removed their children from public school earlier that summer because of threats from other children and "secular humanism" in the curriculum. Also a school nurse had demanded a vision check of one Hathaway child. The parents finally bought him glasses, but would not allow them to be worn at home.

Their religious beliefs appear to have changed between the grand jury hearing and the trial. Unlike other Faith Assembly defendants, they retained an attorney. And they said at trial that they would seek a doctor if they were not "receiving treatment through prayer to the Lord." Mrs. Hathaway testified that it was a "grave mistake" for them not to have gotten medical care for their son.

However, she also said at trial, "I don't believe Ira died because of our choosing to take him to the Lord rather than to a doctor" and said the basic problem was they were not in "a position" to receive divine healing.

Max Hathaway testified that sickness comes from Satan, and a Christian may be healed through Christ. If not, that person will still go to Jesus. Doctors, nurses and medicine are necessary only for those who do not fully understand divine salvation. "They are for the world's use, not for the Christian's," he said.

The couple has not obtained any medical care for their surviving children since Ira's death, nor has Mrs. Hathaway sought obstetrical care for her unborn child.

Taken from articles in the Elkhart Truth and Goshen News.

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Winkelmans reconvicted, given probation

On October 23 Faith Assembly parents Joyce and David Winkelman of Huntington, Indiana, were convicted of criminal neglect a second time for allowing their three-week-old son Joel to die of untreated pneumonia in April, 1985.

They were convicted of the same charge two years ago. Although they declined legal representation at trial, they used the services of a court-appointed attorney in an appeal that won them a new trial on a technicality.

At their second trial, Huntington County Prosecutor John Branham bore home on that point. "When it comes to saving their own skins, they had professional assistance. If it was good enough for them, why wasn't it good enough for Joel?" he said.

During the second trial, the Winkelmans seemed to have moderated their attitude toward medicine. They testified that they would have taken their baby son to a doctor if they had known he was dying. But on crossexamination, they said that they would never have conceded their son was seriously ill because of their religious beliefs.

At their sentencing, Judge Mark McIntosh asked both if, in return for a suspended sentence, they would provide "medical, dental, optical, hospital, or pharmacological" care for their four surviving children at home and allow county officials to monitor such care.

"Your honor, I just can't do that," David Winkelman replied, his voice breaking. His wife also refused.

Earlier in the hearing they stated they would provide "treatment by spiritual means of prayer" in "place of medicine."

The judge then sentenced them each to two years in jail and ordered them to pay court costs. The Winkelmans said they would not appeal again, and Mr. Winkelman began serving his jail sentence November 16.

Nine days later, however, their sentences were suspended in a surprising turn of events. By chance, another county jail prisoner told the judge that Winkelman would allow medical care of his children if the court ordered it because his religion required obedience to state law.

The judge called a hearing and ordered the Winkelmans to provide medical treatment for their minor children and to allow health officers to make spot checks in their home. The Winkelmans agreed to obey the law.

"I have no problems with you as outstanding human beings," the judge said. "I know you love your children." He also said that his order was not intended "to tell the Winkelmans how to practice their religion," but to protect their children.

Taken from the Warsaw Times-Union, October 24, and Huntington Herald-Press, November 16 and 25.

Faith bars calling aid for injured Oregon boy

The family of a 3-year-old boy killed in an accident August 2 near Cornelius, Oregon, did not summon medical aid for him because of their religious beliefs, authorities said.

But an autopsy indicated that even emergency medical help probably could not have saved the boy, Luke James.

After the accident, his older brother went to a nearby house to summon aid. He told deputies he first tried to call the bishop of his church, the Church of the First Born in North Plains, but could not reach him. He then called an uncle who apparently provided transportation to their home.

A passing motorist alerted the sheriff's office and deputies went to the James home. They asked the uncle why medical aid had not been sought for the children and were told that the Church of the First Born did not believe in it.

The deputies ordered an ambulance for Melinda James, 4. She was taken to the hospital and treated for multiple cuts, scrapes, and a possible head injury. Surgery was done under court order after the family refused to sign consent forms.

Only lifesaving care allowed

The next day, the James family and church officials went before Katherine English, a Multnomah County Juvenile Court referee, asking for the return of their daughter. English issued an order prohibiting the hospital from giving anything but lifesaving medical care to the girl.

Later that night the hospital released the girl to her parents. A doctor told the parents how to change the dressings, how to remove tubes inserted during surgery, and how to remove stitches. He also asked the family to bring Melinda in for an office call in three weeks.

"I don't feel condemned in doing that," the father said. It will ease the doctor's mind to see her." But there will be no medical treatment.

God's will

"I know the Lord's going to take care of her through prayers and obedience to God," he said. James also said of his son Luke that "everything points to the fact it was God's will he be taken."

Taken from The Oregonian, August 3, 4, and 5, with thanks to CHILD member Boulden Griffith.

Another faith death in Oklahoma

Dean and Sheila Camren of Cushing, Oklahoma, have been charged with second-degree manslaughter in the death of their three-month-old daughter, Desiree Camren. Members of the Church of the First Born, the Camrens did not obtain medical care for her. Their trial is scheduled for April.

The physician who pronounced the child dead on February 14 said he was told that the child had been sick for about a week. The cause of death was acute pneumonia.

Cherri Scanlon, a supervisor with the state Department of Human Services, described Mrs. Camren as "very open and cooperative during an interview in March." The baby had a fever, would not eat, and had difficulty breathing, Scanlon said the woman told her.

Scanlon testified Mrs. Camren told her she knew the child was dying, "but there was a calm acceptance that God meant this to happen."

Scanlon testified that the Camrens believed God was punishing them because the father had not been attending church.

Mrs. Camren said that "even if she could do it again, she would not call for a doctor," Scanlon said.

Many present at death

On the night of the baby's death, her grandparents and several elders in the church were present, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation reported. The elders laid hands on the baby, anointed her with oil, and prayed over her.

One of the elders, Jerry Pruitt, testified at the preliminary hearing that if his child asked for a doctor, he would get one, but if the child was too young to talk and the decision was Pruitt's alone, he would not seek medical help even if it meant his child would die.

"Does that make sense?" Payne County District Attorney Paul Anderson said. "If you can talk, you can go to a doctor; if you can't, you can't?"

Children taught "strongly"

Pruitt seemed confident that Desiree would not have asked for a doctor when she was older. "I don't know of any cases where the child [of a church member] asked to go to a doctor," he said. "We teach them very strongly."

The Camrens are in their midtwenties. Dean Camren works at a service station and the family income is about \$50. a week. They have other children living.

In 1982 other Church of the First Born parents, Dean and Patsy Lockhart, were acquitted of manslaughter charges in Enid, Oklahoma. They had deprived their son of medical treatment as he died of a ruptured appendix. The judge instructed the jury to return an acquittal because of Oklahoma's religious immunity law. An outraged public and legislature got the law changed the following year.

At least seven children have died in Oklahoma during the 1980s because of religious beliefs against medical care.

Taken in part from the Tulsa Tribune, September 9 and 10, 1987.

Woman faces charges for childbirth assistance

Vicky Newman, 37, of Bethany, Indiana, has been charged with unlicensed medical practice and involuntary manslaughter in the death of a baby she helped deliver.

Newman said she had assisted in the births of almost 400 children. She describes her work as a Christian ministry to which the Lord has called her.

Newman belonged to the Indiana Midwives Association until about five years ago when she developed views against state licensing. Four years ago an injunction was issued to prohibit her from delivering babies. She has continued to assist in home births on grounds that the Lord requires people to "be fruitful and multiply" and that she is called to her ministry.

Religious objections to licensing

Newman said she doesn't believe in marriage licenses, driver's licenses, etc. And without a license, which she defines as a contract to agree to follow the rules of the state, one is not under any obligation to obey those rules--such as stopping for a red light, she said. Her son has been charged for driving without a license.

"Paul and Silas in the Bible were always getting thrown into jail because they were asked: 'Do you have the authority to preach? Do you have the authority to do this and that?' I don't believe you need permission from the state," she said. "A state should not have a say in people's lives, though people should be held responsible to the utmost if they damage property or kill someone."

Newman said she does not have religious beliefs against medical care, but simply wanted to help women have the joy of home births. She claims she is a labor coach, not a midwife.

Factors in baby's death

The baby, Titus Rumble, died of an intraventricular hemorrhage due to a streptococcal infection, which suggested less than sterile delivery conditions, the coroner's investigator said. He also charged that Newman delayed treatment for the baby by taking him to Dukes Memorial Hospital in Peru, where she knew a doctor who was sympathetic to home births, instead of to a nearby Muncie hospital.

Newman attends the Barrister School of Common Law in Indianapolis where students study the nation's founding documents as the "only binding law" on citizens. Her request for counsel from the school was denied when her choice, Jeff Weekly, refused to tell the judge whether he was accredited to practice law in Indiana. Newman has repeatedly argued that the court has no jurisdiction over her.

As reported in the CHILD newsletter of summer, 1987, a California appellate court has ruled that Church of the First Born midwives cannot be charged with unlicensed practice of medicine because of a religious exemption. Indiana law likewise provides a religious exemption from medical practice requirements and licensing.

Taken in part from articles in the Muncie Star and the Bloomington Herald-Telephone.

No charges filed in stillborn baby's case

In Elkhart, Indiana, Jeffery Micah Collins was stillborn October 8 at the home of his parents, Arthur and Annette Collins. They are members of Faith Assembly and had no medical care for the pregnancy or the birth.

According to the sheriff's report, fellow church members Donald and Naomi Berkey arrived at the Collins' home at 9:30 p.m. assist with the delivery. They suctioned the baby's mouth and nose with a syringe. After they discovered the baby was not breathing, they massaged him for some time.

Mrs. Berkey said she then bathed the baby and dressed him. She gave him to his parents to hold.

Police were eventually notified at midnight. Those present said they were too busy taking care of Mrs. Collins to notify police any earlier. Mrs. Collins refused medical treatment.

No charges were filed because the baby was not born alive.

Taken in part from the Goshen News, October 9.

Day care teacher requests exemption from tb test

Liberty School District of Petaluma, California, received a request this fall for a religious exemption from the tuberculosis tests required of school employees. The request was made by substitute day care teacher Karen Battenberg, a Christian Scientist, the Argus-Courier reported October 10.

"Christian Scientists," said the newspaper, "rely on prayer to heal illnesses. They also believe death, disease and sin have no real existence because they are not created by God."

CHILD wrote the school district and strongly urged that the request be denied. We related the case of another Christian Science teacher in California, Cora Louise Sutherland. Ms. Sutherland died of tuberculosis in 1954 in Van Nuys after exposing thousands of school children to the disease. She had refused to have a chest x-ray and instead submitted an affidavit certifying herself free of infectious disease. Meanwhile, she was having prayer treatments from a Christian Science practitioner for "living congestion and overactivity" at a cost of \$65. per month.

Recently, we learned that Karen Battenberg has taken a job with the police department and resigned her position at the day care.

Christian Scientist asks for religious exemption from health instruction

Christian Science parents have requested that the school district in Timberlane, New Hampshire, exempt their child from instruction in health, the Haverhill Gazette reported October 8.

CHILD has discussed this matter with the school superintendent and has also written to the press, raising the following points.

"Providing children with basic information about health and disease is in the best interests of society as well as the individual child.

Christian Science has caused many tragedies by encouraging members to be ignorant of disease. A recent AMA report tells of 128 students at a Christian Science preparatory school in Connecticut who contracted poliomyelitis in 1972; four children became paralyzed.

In 1982 a Christian Science girl died of diphtheria. The state of Wisconsin had to spend about \$20,000. tracking down and culturing more than a hundred children and adults with whom she had been in contact.

In 1985 there were nearly 200 cases of vaccine-preventable measles at a Christian Science camp and college, including three deaths of young people. Colorado Public Health officials attempted to speak to the youngsters, but camp officials insisted, through their lawyer, that they had religious exemptions from learning about disease.

Are children chattel? Or do they have the right to learn a few facts about diseases that could threaten their lives and about the medical care available to prevent or treat them?"

Christian Science church founds Institute to monitor legislation

In the January, 1987, issue of their Journal, the Christian Science church announced its formation of the Institute for the Study of Christian Healing.

"The purpose of the institute," it says, "is to serve as a focal point for research and study of the preservation and development of Christian healing. The institute will provide a forum for exploring relevant issues of public policy and their relation to the availability of Christian healing. It will serve a modest role in heightening public awareness of Christian healing."

Studying public policy is shorthand for furthering their lobbying efforts and dealing with negative publicity. Speaking for myself, I suspect that the Institute may invite legislators and other public officials to all-expense paid seminars as the Unification Church does through its various front organizations. If anyone hears of an Institute activity, please let us know.

Quarks and "typical healings" used to deal with Matthew's death

In November, 1979, after a year of trying to get press coverage, we were invited to appear on the Phil Donahue program to tell the gruesome facts of the death of our son, Matthew. For twelve days, he was extremely ill with h-flu meningitis while Christian Science practitioners claimed they were healing him. Then one practitioner told us that Matthew's problem might be a broken bone in his neck and pointed out that Christian Scientists are allowed to go to a doctor for setting of broken bones. We immediately went to a hospital where Matthew died despite emergency neurosurgery and a week of intensive care.

The next year the church asked members to submit accounts of Christian Science healings of children that had been medically documented. This was ironic since their leader, Mary Baker Eddy, teaches that a medical diagnosis causes disease and should be avoided.

Church member Robert Peel has just published a book making use of these accounts (along with several about adults). Titled Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age, it is published by Harper and Row at \$19.95. The church has distributed several copies to Ohio legislators.

Harvard-educated Peel has been called the best scholar the church has, but this book is far removed from honest scholarship in my judgment. First he says modern Christianity has been emasculated by science and needs the scientific healings of Christian Science, where religion and science intersect, to regain power and prestige. His exposition, however, lacks scientific method and logic.

Quantum physics used to show need for avoiding controlled studies

He claims quantum physics supports the theories of Christian Science. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle of quantum physics shows that completely precise measurements of the smallest particles of matter (e.g. quarks) are impossible because light photons used by the observer impact upon the objects.

Peel thinks this discovery supports the basic proposition of Christian Science that "there is no life, truth, intelligence, or substance in matter." Matter is only a figment of the mortal mind's imagination. He bemoans the failure of molecular biology with its "materialistic determinism" to catch up with the advanced insight of quantum physics.

Peel presents his collection of healings as scientific proof that Christian Science is safe, effective treatment for all diseases of children and adults. But he does not want them subjected to the rigors of scientific verification. For example, when he "answers" the complaint that Christian Science has no controlled studies, he says that its method depends on purely spiritual communion with God and would be "modified by the deliberate introduction" of a medical researcher's "alien" observations. "The physicist," says Peel, "recognizes that the very act of observing a subatomic event affects the event and thus puts limits on his knowledge." Therefore, medical researchers cannot look at Christian Science healings. The healings are big secrets that we must accept on the church members' say so. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle has never been put to stranger uses.

Einstein's visit

Peel reports that Einstein once visited a Christian Science church service and called it "a wonderful thing." He spends a fat paragraph documenting in detail that such a historic event really happened "in 1953 or 1954." He says the documentation is in the archives of the Mother Church. By the way, only "qualified scholars" are allowed to look at material in the archives. To my knowledge, Lyman Powell is the only non-Christian Scientist who has been allowed access to this material.

Dogmatism vs. empiricism

Predictably, Peel makes extensive use of some physicians' criticisms of medical practice. Simultaneously, however, he blames the medical profession for dogmatism, arrogance, and unwillingness to admit mistakes.

While conceding that nobody is perfect, Peel does not tell us about the shortcomings of the Christian Science system nor does he perceive that Eddy's methods for treating diseases might need updating. He quotes the dictate of his church that members do not "blame the perfect Principle" of their theology when people die under Christian Science treatment, but instead seek to "grow in understanding and obedience to divine law." He claims that medical doctors deal with deaths of patients analogously, but the directive is obviously the very opposite of what an empirical, inductive science does.

References to critics omitted

Peel provides no names or footnotes for the critics of Christian Science. One group is identified only as "some members of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health." He calls us "Mr. and Mrs. S", who have waged "an intensive campaign against Christian Science," but has no footnotes for those who might like to know what Mr. and Mrs. S have said on this subject.

"Militants" and "extremists" in other religions discussed

Peel refers to "the shocking incidence of child deaths in several belligerent faith-healing groups," but is not shocked by the unnecessary deaths of Christian Science children.

Referring to "militant" Faith Assembly parents who have been prosecuted in Indiana, Peel says that "even these extreme cases raise questions of constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and statutory recognition of parental rights. But such questions become a good deal more acute when the same sort of punitive court action threatens intelligent, responsible people who have turned to a system of Christian healing that over the past century has gained increasing recognition as an effective curative agent." Always the church wants a special set of laws for Christian Scientists.

Blank references to physicians

Peel says that hundreds of Christian Scientists "spontaneous[ly]" sent notarized affidavits about their medically verified healings after our appearance on the Donahue show. Following his leader's injunction not to be "uncharitable" or "impertinent" towards physicians, he magnanimously decides to leave out their names in most cases to spare them "embarrassment." So we have many lengthy accounts about what Dr. _____ on _____ Street said.

He reprints what he calls "several typical examples of healings" of spinal meningitis because of our "young son's death" from the disease. Yes, indeed, eight years after the Donahue program and several deaths later, the Christian Science church is still claiming that it "typically" heals meningitis.

Meningitis: bacterial or viral?

None of Peel's examples mention the h-flu meningitis that our baby and the three Christian Science children in California died of. In one account the parents decided to take their extremely ill child to a physician for a diagnosis because they thought the disease might be reportable. The doctor diagnosed the condition as meningitis and "tried to prepare [them] for the child's passing on that evening." The boy was put in the contagious ward for children. The parents do not say how they rationalized his hospital stay, but do say "there was absolutely no medication given." The next morning the boy went home well.

Peel says that the doctor "expressed his total conviction that the healing came directly from their trust in God," but would not allow his name to be used.

If this child did have meningitis, I submit that it must have had been a viral form, which can be fatal, but more often runs its course without leaving permanent damage. It also is not treated with antibiotics, while h-flu meningitis and other bacterial forms of the disease require prompt antibiotic therapy.

Unnecessary and painful risks praised

Another account that disturbed me was about a newborn baby with inflamed lungs and pneumonia. Doctors told the parents that the baby must be transferred by helicopter or ambulance to intensive care facilities at a larger hospital or he would be dead by morning. The Christian Science parents refused consent for the transfer. They also rejected the antibiotics prescribed, but did allow the baby to stay in an incubator at the local hospital and to be fed with tubes. One doctor twice resigned from the case because of the foolish risks the parents took with the baby's life. After eight days, the baby went home well.

As with all of these anecdotes, one has to wonder how accurately the doctors' language is reported. Did the doctors say the baby would die or that he could die? Were the antibiotics prescribed because of a life-threatening bacterial infection or as a precaution and preventive? Most physicians would want to take every possible precaution with a newborn baby. Yes, the parents deprived the baby of the recommended intensive care and medication, had Christian Science treatment instead, and yes, the baby got well. But without the medical records, there is no evidence that Christian Science accomplished anything remarkable.

My physician has told me that there is nothing miraculous about the baby's recovery from inflamed lungs, depending on the underlying cause. He also said it is an extremely painful condition. It is frightening to think of parents making life and death decisions for their baby without any knowledge of what is happening to him.

Could a court order be obtained?

Another alarming aspect is that the baby's father is Judge Thomas Russell, the juvenile court judge for six counties in Illinois. His district includes Jersey County where Principia College, a Christian Science community of about a thousand persons, is located.

After a hundred pages of stories about what Dr. _____ said, Peel adopts a very different tactic to tell about a healing of eczema. He lists seventeen doctors by name, specialty, city, and date, who treated a boy's eczema over a 22-year period. Later he was "healed" by Christian Science though Peel doesn't say when. There is nothing extraordinary about the disappearance of eczema over time. And one has to wonder why Peel chose to be so "uncharitable" as to "embarrass" all these doctors.

A church manifesto

With its affluent, captive audience, this book will make money for Harper and Row, but the publisher should certainly not be describing it as "skilled, objective scholarship." The book was written to support the proposition that Christian Scientists should have the legal right to deprive their children of medical care for all diseases.

Peel says that the physicians who witnessed these healings would not allow their names to be used because their medical colleagues would ridicule them. I hope that their refusal actually represents a decision not to encourage unnecessary deaths of children.

As its usage in Ohio shows, this book is designed to be a weapon. It is the church's manifesto in response to the massive national publicity Matthew has received. It dismisses his death as irrelevant and claims that they should be allowed to continue substituting prayer-treatments for medical care with the next baby who has h-flu meningitis.

Families sue for religious exemptions from immunizations

The New York Supreme Court has recently ruled that the state's religious exemption from immunizations cannot be limited to members of recognized churches.

Two families sued the Northport-East Northport school district on Long Island, New York, for \$4 million each because their unimmunized children were barred from school. The school district refused to grant religious exemptions from immunizations because the families were not "bona fide members of a recognized religious organization" as the New York statute requires. The district argued that it "should not be put in the position of deciding what is religion."

One of the families, Alan and Claudia Sherr, explained their religious beliefs as follows: "This universe includes everything good being called God. Health is the unhindered expression of life moving through the body, mind and heart.... Immunization hinders life and thus is contrary to God. To deviate from this natural order would be to sin." Alan Sherr is a chiropractor.

The Sherrs submitted a letter from a Florida organization called The Missionary Temple in support of its beliefs, but the school district investigated and found that the Temple had no formal structure or services and operated out of the home of its "Minister."

In 1985 the Sherrs' older son was also denied admission to school for lack of immunizations. The Sherrs then submitted a letter saying they were members of "The American Hygiene Society Inc.," based in Tampa, Florida, but the district attorney determined that it was not an organized religion. The Sherrs got immunizations for the boy. They say they did not realize at the time that they could sue.

The other family, Louis and Valerie Levy, said in explanation of their religious beliefs that "vaccinations and other forms of medical intervention do not take into account the spiritual nature of disease, and therefore they are a violation of God's natural and spiritual laws." They said they do not practice organized religion, but hold beliefs similar to Christian Science.

In 1980 the New York Supreme Court had granted a similar extension of the exemption to a child named Ysreen Brown.

By contrast when Charles Brown, a Mississippi chiropractor, sued a school board to get the religious exemption extended to his beliefs, the court ruled against him. And when he appealed to the state supreme court, it ruled that the religious exemption itself was unconstitutional. (See Brown v. Stone, 378 So 2d 218 (Miss. 1979).)

CHILD hoped that the defense in the New York suits could raise the question of whether any religious exemption to a healthcare requirement of proven value is constitutional. However, the school board's interest was in getting guidelines for granting the exemptions, and it does not intend to appeal the ruling.

Taken in part from Newsday, October 7, 1987.

Girl's death may be linked to cultic discipline

More than 2,000 children in America die annually of abuse. The death of six-year-old Lisa Steinberg in New York City November 6th, however, attracted a national outpouring of grief and outrage. The mother who gave her up for adoption fought for custody of her remains. Lisa was found savagely beaten, naked, and comatose in the filthy apartment of her adoptive father, lawyer Joel Steinberg, and his live-in lover, Hedda Nussbaum. A 16-month-old boy, also adopted, was found strapped to a chair and was taken into custody. Neighbors say they had called the police several times about Lisa's plight to no avail.

Police are now probing reports that the pair were members of a cult that advocated strict discipline of children. The Long Island-based group was called Shores Yishai. In the early 1980s it claimed more than 2000 members, who transformed themselves from mainstream Christians to Orthodox-style Jews who believed in Jesus.

Most Shores Yishai members left the group in 1982 when they learned their leader was homosexual. Exmembers have reported bizarre sexual incidents involving youngsters.

Taken from the New York Post, December 2.

Lawsuit challenges religious exemption from licensing

A lawsuit has been filed against the state of Missouri for its religious exemption from licensing of child care facilities. The plaintiffs are owners of secular day care centers. They charge that the state is discriminating against them by requiring them to go through the expense and trouble of meeting licensing standards, while exempting church-related child care facilities from the requirement. They charge that they have been denied due process and equal protection and that the exemption constitutes governmental establishment of religion. They are represented by St. Louis attorney Irvin Dagen.

As mentioned in CHILD's summer issue, the Lester Roloff homes for troubled children were moved from Texas to Missouri in 1986 because of Missouri's religious exemption from licensing. "We don't need to be accredited by a failing humanistic system that has no Christ, no Bible, no God and no standard," Roloff said before his death. "I don't run a state home because I don't take money from the state. No one can license my faith."

Within two months after the homes moved to Kansas City, local law enforcement and Family Services began meeting frightened teenagers with stories of isolation cells, denial of medical treatment, and brutal punishments.

Physical abuse

"Licks" with a wooden paddle are regularly administered, runaways said, for talking back, failure to keep rooms perfectly clean, thinking bad thoughts (such as wanting to run away or to meet members of the opposite sex), humming any kind of popular music, going out of a room or a line without permission, and not reporting other sinners.

Locking up youths in a windowless room with nothing but a mattress is also common. When Melissa Snider first arrived at the Rebekah Home, she saw a girl who had just been released from lockup.

"I freaked out real bad," she said. "She'd been in lockup for three weeks. She was black and blue from the small of her back down to her knees."

Supervision of menstruation

The homes' attitude toward the menstrual cycles of girls is much discussed by former residents. Girls are not allowed to use tampons, and sanitary napkins are dispensed only by staff members. In addition, girls receive handfuls of pills each day, but are told only that the pills are unspecified vitamins. Five of the six female teenagers interviewed by The Kansas City Times said they stopped menstruating almost immediately after they arrived at the home, and some suspect their disrupted cycle was related to the "vitamins."

An incident reported by several former residents involved the strip searching of more than a dozen girls by a female supervisor. Reportedly, a sanitary napkin was found in the restroom, and the staff was determined to find the culprit. The girls were taken to the gym repeatedly for two weeks, made to remove their clothes, and then examined by the supervisor to determine who was menstruating.

Medical care problems

Many girls reportedly contracted yeast infections at the home. "At first, they would not take us to the doctor," Snider said. They treated the girls with yogurt and vitamins. Snider said her infection persisted for two months until she could not stand it any longer and told her father. After her father called the school, the girls were taken to a doctor and "a lot of people were told not to say anything."

Two boys said the staff rejected their requests for medical care after they were kneed in the groin. One later had to have half a testicle removed by surgery.

A local prosecutor called the reports of child abuse "frightening," but was frustrated by parental unwillingness to press charges. "You wonder what's going through the mind of the parent," he said.

Taken in part from The Kansas City Times, July 18.

Canadian commune pastor convicted of assaulting son

A 57-year-old mother and founding pastor of a fundamentalist commune was convicted in July of stabbing her teenage son when he wouldn't have sex with her.

Her third husband, a 34-year-old commune member, was also convicted of assault for hitting the boy with a cane because his jeans were too tight and his room was messy.

The pastor maintained throughout her trial that her son had played the game Dungeons and Dragons and that Satan had overtaken his soul to such a degree that he accused his own pastor and mother of being the devil.

The boy, whose name was not released, said he was taken out of school by his mother in grade 6 "because of the bad atmosphere" and kept on the grounds of His Rest Christian Fellowship near Scarborough.

The boy said that when he was sixteen his mother came into his room one night and told him he was to have sex with her. "She said it was God's will we do this. I was very scared," he testified.

When the boy didn't respond, she took a knife and stabbed his right hip to let the blood flow and release the devil, he said.

He tried to run away, but was caught by his mother and fellow commune members. When he again refused to have sex with his mother, he said, she cut him on the back and shoulders with the same knife.

A few weeks later he managed to call his father and crawled out a window to meet him and escape.

Taken from The Toronto Star, September 10, 1987.

Hare Krishnas charged with child abuse

Several extensive accounts of child abuse and neglect at Hare Krishna communes have appeared in the press this year. On August 14, the Boston Phoenix ran "Hell in the Hare Krishnas" about Susan Murphy's experience in the group.

In May Susan was awarded damages of \$1.3 million by the Massachusetts Superior Court in Dedham. Susan charged that the Krishnas had drawn her into their membership when she was 14, subjected her to rape and abuse, encouraged her to lie and steal, deprived her of an education, and convinced her that all nondevotees, including her mother, were "meat-eating demons," who wanted to destroy her.

On June 21 and 28, West magazine, a Sunday supplement, ran major articles on "How the Krishnas turned bad." Author John Hubner says that "the movement's founder wanted to win the West from its materialism." But "twenty years later, his disciples stand accused of running drugs and guns, abusing women and children, and even committing murder."

On March 21, the San Jose Mercury News ran "Suffer the children at Hare Krishna commune?" It describes forced, multiple marriages of girls as young as twelve, child sexual abuse, unsanitary conditions, and grossly inadequate education, especially for women.

According to the West Virginia Health Department, 54% of the children at the Hare Krishna commune in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, were infested with parasites as of November 1985 and in 1986, there were at least 25 cases of hepatitis, including one hepatitis-related death. An epidemiologist who investigated the commune reported that "some of their traditions, particularly those related to toilet habits, are incompatible with Western sanitary facilities and are not conducive to good community sanitation." He also described the Krishnas as eager to cooperate with state health officials.

According to a November 14, Washington Post article, the Krishnas have announced plans to build a 300-acre walled "city of God" near Trenton, New Jersey, as a home for 12,000 followers.

Preacher fights for right to hit children

Rev. Steven White, pastor of the Faith Baptist Church in Gloucester, Ontario, has been charged with assaulting his eight-month-old son and with counseling assault.

Last year he delivered a sermon entitled "How to Raise Rotten Kids" expounding upon his belief that corporal punishment is ordered by the Bible. Someone tape-recorded the sermon and complained. Authorities went to the White home and found a bruise on his baby's buttocks.

Rev. White said the baby had been crying and he and his wife had done everything they could think of to calm him. Believing the baby was crying in anger, Rev. White administered a spanking. He said that it worked, the child settled down, and the bruise disappeared a day later.

Rev. White has said "the Bible" is "on trial" in the case. In a recent letter-writing campaign, Rev. White uses the salutation "Dear Friend and Fellow Soldier in Christ" and urges them to "send some monetary soldiers" to continue the fight against "the state trying to take over the role of parents."

The Canadian Criminal Code allows teachers and parents to use force "by way of correction" if the force is reasonable. Some recent court decisions have sharply limited the meaning of reasonable force. For example, hitting children with leather or wooden implements is not reasonable force, reports Paul Pellman, a Canadian attorney who belongs to CHILD.

Taken in part from the Buffalo News, October 25, 1987.

Defectors tell of brutality in missionary group

Several defectors have recently left an evangelical organization in Japan with reports of savage beatings and starvation diets. One was Michael Yoshinobu Crawford, 17, whose parents left California to found the gospel mission in Japan nearly four decades ago.

His parents and other families within the New Tribes Mission group adopted Japanese orphans to build a settlement of about 200

people. They established a kindergarten to teach English for hundreds of Japanese pupils whose tuition provides a steady cash flow to the mission.

Grueling schedule

During middle school years, Michael recalled, he was forced to wake up at 4 a.m. and perform chores, then attend a class from 5 to 6 in Chinese. (The group was preparing for a mission to China.) Mistakes resulted in mandatory beatings, he said. Meals consisted of powdered milk, bread heels discarded by Japanese stores and a whole wheat cereal.

Chinese language classes resumed from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., after which he would go to public school. Classmates were encouraged to watch each other for infractions of mission rules. After returning from public school, the mission children had to write on a blackboard their transgressions of the day.

They studied Chinese again from 3:30 to 5:30. After dinner was a class in English using the Bible as a textbook. Still later they did homework for both the Chinese class and public school and then collapsed in exhaustion, Crawford said.

At the age of 15, regular schooling ended and missionary children were assigned either to work with caravans of preachers or to work at the mission. Michael was sent on caravans that went out for a month at a time to evangelize. During religious holidays, the group would set up outside a popular shrine and broadcast preachings through a loudspeaker.

Beatings for wanting to leave

Crawford and others have described brutal beatings, especially for those who wish to leave the group. One said the stick used was a yard long and an inch in diameter. He said five men held him down and his father beat him over 100 times. He was forced to apologize for wanting to leave and was starved for four days.

The U. S. State Department has warned the group that it must discontinue such practices against American citizens. The elders became Japanese citizens many years ago, but their children, although born in Japan, have the right to retain American citizenship.

Taken from the Fresno Bee, October 25 and November 20.

Child abuse at the Presidio: linked to religion?

Officials have determined that at least 58 children were molested at the day care center of the Army's Presidio in San Francisco. Gary Hambright, a former Southern Baptist minister, has been charged with the molestation of ten of the children.

Several children report being molested in bizarre settings indicating ritual sexual abuse. One child identified Lt. Col. Michael Aquino, founder of the Satanic Temple of Set, as a molester along with Hambright.

Aquino is highly decorated for his service in Vietnam. He has served with the Green Berets and specializes in psychological warfare. He has a top secret security clearance. He holds a doctorate in political science and two master's degrees.

Aquino joined the Church of Satan, but left it when its founder started selling priesthoods. Aquino founded his own Temple of Set and has registered it as a tax-exempt religious organization with state and federal governments. He describes it as a sort of Mensa occult group and claims to have many members of Mensa, the high IQ society. His wife is a vampire priestess in the Temple.

Aquino has denied participating in child molestation, saying that his Temple does not recruit members under 18 and does not permit children at any of its meetings or rituals. He has also filed a million-dollar claim against the city for searching his home and seizing materials (with a warrant).

The Army announced it is closing and demolishing its Presidio child-care center. The Army has also launched an investigation of its nearly 300 day care centers worldwide. There have been allegations of child sexual abuse at more than 10 percent of those centers since 1984.

Taken in part from the San Francisco Chronicle, October 31, and San Jose Mercury News, November 8.

Enough! founded to fight ritualistic abuse

About 400 people met in San Francisco November 8 to found an organization called Enough! that will fight ritualistic child sexual abuse. They plan rallies in at least nine cities nationwide in April to force lawmakers to deal with this crime against children.

Ritualistic abuse of children, as alleged in the McMartin PreSchool and other cases, often is based on a parody of the Catholic Mass. It has included such acts as forcing children to eat human excrement, in addition to rape and sodomy. Experts say it is a systematic attempt to destroy the child's innocence.

Dr. David Corwin, president of the California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, told the group that unsuccessful prosecutions, such as in Kern County, California, and Jordan, Minnesota, do not prove that a child's tale of horror did not happen or that the child was programmed by therapists or parents. Several speakers urged parents to believe their children and to notice their pain.

The group described many frustrations with the legal system. One mother reported that her two girls were molested in a Gilroy day care facility. The perpetrator was sentenced to 270 days in jail, but has not served one day and his wife can legally babysit up to five children, she said. A federal judge in Berkeley rejected prosecution following an FBI investigation of charges by Felix and Susan Polk that their son had been sexually molested in satanic rituals at a day care. A survivor of the Nazi holocaust, Felix Polk called ritualistic child sexual abuse "an American holocaust."

Taken from the San Jose Mercury News and Oakland Tribune, November 9.

Special report on ritual abuse

On November 8, the Fairfield, California Daily Republic published a four-page special report about ritual abuse of children. It is entitled "In the name of Satan" and written by Katherine Kam. A copy may be ordered from CHILD for \$2.00.

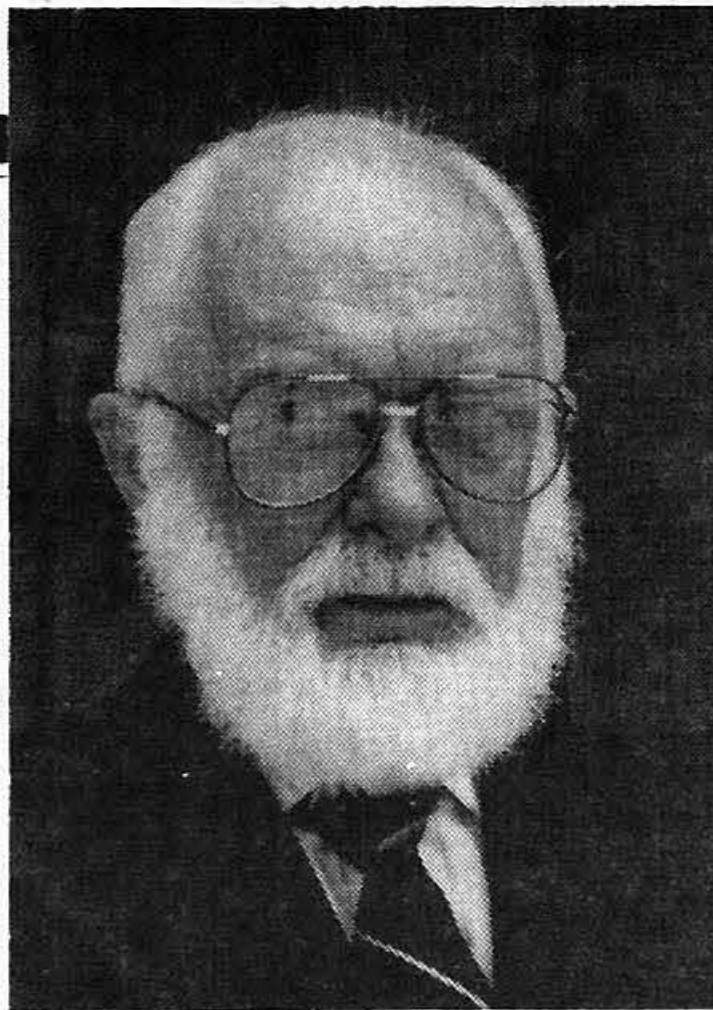
T H E A R T S

The Fine Art of Quackbusting

The Faith Healers. By James Randi. 314 pages. Prometheus. \$18.95.

When a book's foreword—in this case by Carl Sagan—terms it a "tirade," who could resist reading on? Stage magician-turned-quackbuster James Randi's investigative account of what he doesn't scruple to call "the faith-healing racket" is the real, unself-conscious thing: he even reprints the angry letters he wrote to all and sundry, which they *didn't even bother to answer*. But only as a writer is Randi artless. "As a conjuror," he says, "I possess a narrow but rather strong expertise: I know what fakery looks like." This expertise has made him both a connoisseur of honest fakery and the scourge of flimflam. In 1986 his investigation of "psychic" spoon-bender Uri Geller won him a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant.

Randi's hands-on debunking of California healer Peter Popoff is a masterpiece. Popoff was known for "calling out" audience members—whom he hadn't met—and reeling off names, addresses and afflictions.



The scourge of flimflam: Author Randi

Confederates, says Randi, wormed the information out of them beforehand and steered Popoff with radio transmissions into a tiny earpiece. Randi describes intercepting and recording them—then going on Johnny Carson's show with a videotape of a Popoff service, complete with sound track. By Randi's estimate, Popoff's donations soon dwindled from \$1.25 million a month to a comparatively mere \$200,000.

Another of Randi's targets, W. V. Grant

of Dallas, also specialized in "calling out." Information extracted from friendly chitchat, says Randi, went onto crib sheets, which Grant memorized. (Randi reproduces such a sheet; it was found, he says, in Grant's trash.) Grant's services were known for people leaping out of wheelchairs and walking. Randi claims that Grant himself provided the wheelchairs and placed in them people who were infirm but ambulatory. Why didn't they make a fuss? Some told Randi they thought Grant had misunderstood their condition and didn't want to embarrass him.

Simple folk: This book, unfortunately, may alienate those it could help most: simple folk whose piety makes them patsies. Randi goes out of his way to twit religion as an outmoded "superstition," yet his own Kennedy-era credo ("We have been to the moon. Because of our very nature, we will be going to the stars") sounds a little quaint in an age of down-sized expectations. And his professional sensitivity to flimflam and double-talk makes him contemptuous of genuine theological subtleties. Still, Randi's tirade is grounded in compassion. "The Faith Healers" is dedicated to a little boy on crutches who hobbled away, unhealed, from one "miracle" meeting—and to the many others "robbed of hope and dignity."

DAVID GATES

Newsweek, December 14, 1987 Reprinted with permission

Man charged in rape reveals Satanism ties

An 18-year-old man charged October 16 with raping a 15-year-old runaway girl in Minneapolis told police he belongs to a Satanic coven that directed him to drive a knife through the girl's heart and bury her.

The victim told police that the man took her to a tent in a wooded area, tied her up with wire and then threatened to cut off her fingers, gouge out her eyes and kill her. Instead, however, he allegedly raped her and released her, detectives said.

The man, identified as John Aaron Lukach, told law enforcement authorities he lives on the streets and is a follower of national Church of Satan leader, Anton LaVey. He said he took the girl away from the tent before other members of his coven arrived. According to sources, a ritual murder had been planned in which she was to be stabbed with a 500-year-old dagger and buried. The deed allegedly was to earn Lukach a "death star" to wear around his neck that would give him supernatural powers.

Taken from the Minneapolis Star, October 17.