

# A 'Crisis of Conscience' opens eyes

*This article is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's Web site, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Aug. 15-16, 2009.*

**By Dave Havir**

BIG SANDY, Texas—Since I like to help people who have been traumatized by domineering religious organizations, I would like to recommend a particular book to readers of this article.

*Crisis of Conscience* is a book about the struggle between loyalty to God and loyalty to one's religion. The author is Raymond Franz, a former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although he wrote the first edition in 1983, I read the fourth edition from 2002.

This book has 408 pages with another 20 pages of appendixes. There are 13 chapters. If you are pressed for time, you can consider reading only the first three and last three chapters.

This book is advertised as a penetrating view of a religion's supreme council and its dramatic power over people's lives.

## **What's the issue?**

Let's go to the beginning of the book and identify Mr. Franz's main issue.

On page 1 he writes that the examples found in his book "may have little of the high drama found in the heresy trial of a John Wycliffe, the intrigue of the international hunt for an elusive William Tyndale, or the horror of the burning at the stake of a Michael Servetus."

From page 2: "The people I write of are from among those I know most intimately, persons who have been members of the religious group known as Jehovah's Witnesses. I am sure, and there is evidence to show, that their experience is by no means unique, that there is a similar stirring of conscience among people of various faiths. They face the same issue that Peter and John and men and women of later centuries confronted: *the struggle to hold true to personal conscience in the face of pressure from religious authority*. [All emphasis is Mr. Franz's.]

"For many it is an emotional tug-of-war. On the one hand, they feel impelled to reject the interposing of human authority between themselves and their Creator; to reject religious dogmatism, legalism and authoritarianism, to hold true to the teaching that Christ Jesus, not any human religious body, is 'the head of every man.'

"On the other hand, they face the risk of losing lifelong friends, seeing family relationships traumatically affected, sacrificing a religious heritage that may reach back for generations. At that kind of crossroads, decisions do not come easy."

Mr. Franz continues by showing a remarkable contrast about conscience.

On page 6 he writes: ". . . They [Jehovah's Witnesses] have taken some fifty cases to the Supreme Court of the United States in defense of their freedom of conscience . . . In other countries they have experienced severe persecution, arrests, jailing, mobbings, beatings, and official bans prohibiting their literature and preaching.

"How, then, is it the case that today any person among their members who voices a personal difference of viewpoint as to the teachings of the organization is almost certain to face judicial proceedings and, unless willing to retract, is liable for disfellowship? . . ."

Mr. Franz expressed his understanding for the need of unity, of order, of protection from pernicious teaching and of a proper respect for authority.

But on page 7 he asks some good questions:

- What is the effect when spiritual "guidance" becomes mental domination, even spiritual tyranny?
- What happens when the desirable qualities of unity and order are substituted for by demands for institutionalized conformity and by legalistic regimentation?
- What results when proper respect for authority is converted into servility, unquestioning submission, an abandonment of personal responsibility before God to make decisions based on individual conscience?

### **Hating sin, not sinners**

At this time I want to cite for you some references to show that Mr. Franz's stated motivation is not bitterness. I believe his approach is to hate the sin but not the sinner.

Mr. Franz says on page 346 that his understanding of the root cause of the problems he has encountered "enables me to be free from brooding or harboring bitterness toward the persons involved, either individually or collectively."

On pages 347 he writes: "Bitterness is both self-defeating and destructive. I do not know any person among those men [who participated in his disfellowship] that I would not be willing to express hospitality to in my home, with no questions asked, no issue of apology raised . . ."

Let's look at the preceding page to see why he gives these people some slack concerning their actions. He claims to understand why the religious organization shields people from personal responsibility in hurting other people.

- He describes how the organization seems to take on a life of its own that

supersedes in importance the actions of any individual. "It was *the organization* that did it, not us," seems to be the thinking. People do not feel a keen sense of personal responsibility for whatever hurt might be caused.

■ He continues on page 346: ". . . And, believing that 'the organization' is God's chosen instrument, the responsibility is passed on to God. It was His will—even if later the particular decision or the particular authoritative teaching is found wrong and changed. People may have been disfellowshipped or otherwise hurt by the wrong decisions. But the individual member of the Governing Body feels absolved of personal responsibility."

Mr. Franz seeks not to condemn the people involved.

He continues: "I express the points above, not as a means of condemnation but as a means of explanation, an attempt to understand why certain men that I consider to be honest, basically kind individuals could be party to what I feel that they, in their own hearts, would normally have rejected."

Although Mr. Franz does not condemn the people involved, he still denounces their behavior.

He continues: "I think the concept earlier described is tragically wrong, as pernicious as it is tragic. I believe the drastic actions taken toward those persons accused of 'apostasy' were, in almost all cases, not only unjustified but repugnant, unworthy not only of Christianity but of any free society of men. Yet this effort at comprehension enables me to be free from brooding or harboring bitterness toward the persons involved, either individually or collectively . . ."

Earlier in the book Mr. Franz gives some insight concerning why he has compassion for those who perpetuate certain myths.

On page 274 he writes: ". . . In a long-distance phone call, a former Witness said to me, 'We have been followers of followers.' Another said, 'We have been victims of victims.' I think both statements are true . . . In place of rancor, I feel only compassion for those men I know, for I too was such a 'victim of victims,' a 'follower of followers.' "

### **Not stuck in the past**

Now let's go to the end of the book and see a glimpse of his conclusion. On the last page Mr. Franz recommends that mistreated people not stay in the past.

On page 408 he writes: "Life is a journey, and we cannot make progress in it if our focus is mainly on where we have been; that could lead to emotional inertia or even spiritual decline. What is done is done. The past is beyond our changing, but the present and future are things we can work with, focus on. The journey inevitably contains challenge, but we can find encouragement in knowing that we are moving on, making at least some progress, and can feel confident that what lies ahead can be fulfilling."

### **Why write the book?**

Someone could say: If Mr. Franz were really willing to move forward, why did he write about the past in his book?

We'll let him answer the question.

On page 33 he mentions that, after nine years on the "Governing Body" of the Jehovah's Witnesses, he resigned. For two years he maintained his silence about the reason and details of his decision.

On page 34 he writes: "During those two years, the motives, character and conduct of persons who conscientiously disagreed with the organization were portrayed in the worst of terms. Their concern to put God's Word first was represented as the product of ambition, rebellion, pride, as sin against God and Christ. No allowance was made for the possibility that any of them acted out of sincerity, love of truth or integrity to God."

He was disappointed about the approach of the leadership toward people of conscience. He described their behavior in the following ways.

- Any misconduct or wrong attitude on the part of some who had left the organization was attributed to all who have left.
- For those who did display a wrong attitude, no effort was made to appreciate the part that frustration, disappointment and hurt may have played in that conduct.
- An enormous amount of rumor and even gutter-level gossip circulated among Witnesses.

Still, on page 34 he writes: "The only ones who could have restrained such talk . . . in reality contributed to the spread of rumor by what they published."

Mr. Franz shows some excerpts of what the church's headquarters said about people who left the Jehovah's Witnesses.

On page 35 he analyzes the official material this way: "Thus, in one paragraph, persons are described as *like Satan, independent, faultfinding, stubborn, reviling, haughty, apostate and lawless*. What had they actually done to earn this array of charges? Among the 'wrongs' mentioned is that of disagreeing in some unspecified way with some unspecified part of the organization's teachings . . ."

Mr. Franz describes his motive. On pages 37-38: "This *feeling for others* is, I believe, a decisive factor as to the genuineness of motive . . . I know many persons who clearly evidence such [conscientious] concern, yet who are labeled as 'apostates,' 'antichrists,' 'instruments of Satan.' In case after case, the sole basis for such condemnation is that they could not honestly agree with all organization's teachings or policies."

Mr. Franz describes how the practice of disfellowship was used.

On page 38 he writes: ". . . After the reading of that [disfellowship] announcement no Witness was supposed to talk with the persons disfellowshipped, thereby shutting down any possibility of their expressing themselves by way of an explanation to friends and associates. For them to have done so *before* the disfellowshipping would have been counted as 'proselytizing,' 'undermining the unity of the congregation,' 'sowing dissension,' 'forming a sect.' For anyone to talk to them afterward would jeopardize that person's own standing, make him liable for similar disfellowshipment."

Mr. Franz mentions how disfellowshipped people found out they did not have as many true friends as they thought they had.

On page 38: "The Scriptures tell us that, 'A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress.' I once thought I had many, many such genuine friends. But when the crisis reached a decisive point, I found I had only a few. Still, I count those few precious, whether they said little or much on my behalf . . ."

Mr. Franz said he believes his discussion of the absurdities that marked his time on the Governing Body is more valuable than anything he might have accomplished while he was a member of the body.

On page 39 Mr. Franz writes: "If my past prominence could now contribute in some way to the conscientious stand of such persons being considered with a more open mind and could aid others to revise their attitude toward persons of this kind, I feel that such prominence would thereby have served perhaps the only useful purpose it ever had."

Although Mr. Franz mentions that he did not intend his book to be some kind of expose, some of the material would be shocking to unsuspecting Jehovah's Witnesses.

On page 40 he writes that his presentations of certain details "demonstrate the extremes to which 'loyalty to an organization' can lead, how it is that basically kind, well-intentioned, persons can be led to make decisions and take actions that are both unkind and unjust, even cruel . . ."

Mr. Franz shows that he understands the difference between condemning people and discussing their actions.

On page 41 he writes: ". . . Undeniably, He [God] alone can fully and finally right all wrongs committed . . . Does this, however, call for maintaining total silence about injustice? Does it require keeping silent when error is propagated in the name of God? Is, perhaps, the discussion thereof evidence of 'disrespect for divinely constituted authority'?"

On page 42 Mr. Franz reminds the reader that the apostles and disciples spoke up against "the very authority structure of God's covenant people—its Sanhedrin, its elders, and the divinely constituted priestly authority."

He writes: ". . . Those publicizing the wrongs did so out of respect for, and obedience to, a *higher* authority, and in the interests of the people who needed to know."

Mr. Franz reiterates his desire to help other people.

On page 43 he writes: ". . . My hope is that what is presented in this book may be of help and I feel it is owed to them . . ."

### **Protecting the organization**

In the past decade many people have been appalled to watch the Roman Catholic Church ignore the children wounded by their priests as they sought to protect the image of the church and the priesthood.

Mr. Franz describes this kind of justification among the Jehovah's Witnesses. He describes the words of a leader in the organization that reflected the thinking of others.

On page 118: ". . . In this particular session he [Ted Jaracz] acknowledged that 'the existing policy might work a measure of hardship on some individuals in the particular situation being discussed,' and said, 'It is not that we don't feel for them in the matter, but we have to always keep in mind that we are not dealing with just two or three persons—we have a large, world-wide organization to keep in view and we have to think of the effect on that worldwide organization.'

"This view, that what is good for the organization is what is good for the people in it, and that the interests of the individual are, in effect 'expendable' when the interests of the large organization appear to require it, seemed to be accepted as a valid position by many members."

### **His view changes**

In his book Mr. Franz gives many informative details about the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Along the way he describes how he previously believed that the organization was the official channel of knowing God's will on the earth. Through time his belief changed.

Even though his view about government changed, notice that he was not opposed to authority, organization and teaching.

### **Not opposed to authority**

On page 274 he writes: "I was not opposed to authority. I was opposed to the extremes to which it was carried. I could not believe that God ever purposed for men to exercise such all-pervading authoritarian control over the lives of fellow members of the Christian congregation. My understanding was that Christ grants authority in His congregation only to serve, never to dominate."

### **Not opposed to organization**

On pages 274 he continues: "Similarly, I did not object to 'organization' in the sense of an orderly arrangement, for I understood the Christian congregation itself to involve such an orderly arrangement . . ."

On pages 274-275 Mr. Franz uses some interesting phrases to discuss organization.

- The organizational structure "was only as an aid for the brothers; it was there to serve their interests, not the other way around."
- "It was to build men and women up so that they would not be spiritual babes, dependent on men or on an institutionalized system, but able to act a full-grown, mature Christians."
- "It is not to train them to be simply conformists to a set of organizational rules and regulations, but to help them to become persons 'having their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.' "

■ "It must contribute toward a genuine sense of brotherhood, with the freeness of speech and mutual confidence true brotherhood brings—not a society composed of the few who are the governors and the many who are the governed."

■ It must not be "by 'making people feel the weight of one's authority' in the way the great men of the world do. It must be in the exaltation of Christ Jesus as the Head, never in the exaltation of an earthly authority structure and its officers."

Continuing on page 275 Mr. Franz writes: ". . . As it was, I felt that the role of Christ Jesus as active Head was overshadowed and virtually eclipsed by the authoritarian conduct and constant self-commendation and self-praise of the organization."

### **Not opposed to teaching**

On page 275 he continues: "Furthermore, I did not deny the value and need for teaching. But I could not accept that organizational interpretations, based on shifting human reasonings, could ever be made equal in authority to the actual statements found in God's unchangeable Word. The great importance given to traditional views, the bending and slanting of God's Word to accommodate it to those views, and the inconsistencies that resulted in double standards were a source of serious emotional upset to me. What I found unacceptable was, not teaching, but dogmatism."

### **Not gaining physically**

Mr. Franz gives many details leading up to his resignation and his ultimate disfellowship.

It is interesting to note that he did not gain materially by his decisions.

On page 276 he writes: "If security and comfort were my aim, I certainly would have opted for staying where I was, for all our physical needs would have been provided us as part of the headquarters staff."

On page 277 he writes: "If prestige or prominence were what was sought, I could not reasonably have asked for more . . . As for the Governing Body itself, it was quite evident to me that esteem from one's peers on the Body could be assured simply by voicing total support for the organization . . ."

### **Religious inquiry**

On pages 296-297 Mr. Franz explains the method that many church organizations use to build their case against an errant member.

He writes: "An inquisition, in the religious sense, is an *inquiry* into individuals' personal convictions and beliefs.

"Historically, its aim has been—not to aid the individual, or to provide basis for reasoning with him—but to incriminate, to convict as heretical.

"The initiating cause for the inquiry often has nothing to do with the individual's being disruptive, malicious or even being particularly vocal about his

beliefs. Mere suspicion is sufficient cause to set in motion the inquisitory action. The suspect is viewed as, in effect, having no rights: even his personal conversations with intimate friends are treated as something the inquisitors have full right to delve into."

Mr. Franz describes his disappointment about how the leadership of the Jehovah's Witnesses investigated allegations against its members.

On page 320 he writes: "I do not think it was wrong for the headquarters to make at least some inquiry into the matter as a result of the information that was brought to their attention . . . What I find very difficult to understand and to harmonize with Scripture is the *manner* in which this was done, the precipitous reaction and hastiness, the methods employed."

Here are phrases Mr. Franz uses to describe the methods used.

- "Covering over and withholding information from persons whose life interests were intimately involved, whose good name was at stake."
- "The devious approaches employed to obtain damaging information, of coercion through threat of disfellowshipping to obtain 'cooperation' in getting such incriminating evidence."
- "And, above all, the spirit shown, the crushing despotism, the unfeeling legalistic approach, and the harshness of the actions taken."

Mr. Franz makes a comparison on page 320: "Whatever injudicious statements may have been made by a few of those 'put to trial,' I think the facts show them to have been far surpassed by the means used to deal with the matter."

Mr. Franz again mentions the similarities of earlier history: "As in the Inquisition, all rights were held by the inquisitors, the accused had none. The investigators felt they had the right to ask any question and at the same time refuse to answer questions put to them . . ."

### **Interrogating Nestor Kuilan**

Mr. Franz describes the experience of a friend being interrogated by an investigating committee.

On pages 301 he writes: "The objective of the investigating committees was evident from the direction their questionings took. The committee investigating Nestor Kuilan asked him to describe his personal conversations with Ed Dunlap and myself. He replied that he did not think his personal conversations were something others had a right to inquire into. He made clear that if he felt that anything wrong or 'sinful' had been said he would not hesitate to inform them, but that this was certainly not the case . . ."

Mr. Franz describes the pressure the investigators put on Mr. Kuilan.

On pages 301-302 he writes: ". . . His questioners told him he should 'cooperate or he would be subject to possible disfellowshipping.' His response was, 'Disfellowshipping? For what?' The reply was, 'For covering over apostasy.'

Kuilan said, 'Apostasy? Where is the apostasy? Who are the apostates?' They answered that this was still being determined, but that they were quite sure that such existed."

Mr. Franz continued by showing the outrageousness of this approach.

He writes: "This is somewhat like a man's being threatened with imprisonment unless he cooperates by giving information about certain persons, and when he asks why, he is told that the imprisonment would be for complicity in a bank robbery. When he asks, 'What bank was robbed and who are the robbers?' he is told, 'Well, we don't know yet what bank was robbed or who did it, but we're quite sure there was a bank robbery somewhere and unless you answer our questions we will find you guilty of complicity and you will be subject to imprisonment.' "

### **His Sanhedrin experience**

Mr. Franz describes his meeting with leaders of the JW organization as his "Sanhedrin experience" (page 323).

One of the issues discussed was his view of the kind of leadership in the organization.

On page 326 he writes: ". . . The issue was not whether God had an 'organization' on earth but *what kind* of organization—a centralized, highly structured, authoritarian organization, or simply that of a congregation of brothers where the only authority is authority to help, to guide, to serve, never to dominate? Thus my response was that I believed God had an organization on earth in the sense that He had a congregation on earth, the Christian congregation, a brotherhood."

Mr. Franz gets more specific that God's involvement in leadership was conditional.

From page 326: "The issue was not whether God had guided (or would guide) those forming this Governing Body, but to what extent, under what conditions?

"I did not doubt or question that God would give His guidance to these men if that was sincerely sought (I felt that some of the decisions made, particularly in earlier years, had been good decisions, compassionate decisions), but I certainly did not think this was automatic; it was always conditional, contingent on certain factors.

"So my response included the statement that I believed such guidance always was governed by the extent to which God's Word was adhered to; that to that extent God grants His guidance or withdraws it. (I think that is true for any individual or any collective group of people, whoever they are.)"

After the long interrogation of Mr. Franz, the Governing Body made its decision. Since the body did not have the necessary two-thirds vote to disfellowship Mr. Franz, members of the body asked him to resign.

On May 22, 1980, Mr. Franz resigned from the Governing Body.

## Questioning Ed Dunlap

Mr. Franz describes how his friend Edward Dunlap dealt with the inquisition directed toward him.

On page 336 Mr. Franz writes: "The judicial committee wanted to know if he [Edward Dunlap] would talk to anyone else on these points. He replied that he had no intention of 'campaigning' among the brothers. But he said that if persons came to him privately seeking help and he could direct them to the Scriptures for the answers to their question, he would do so, would feel an obligation to help them.

"In all likelihood, this was the determinative factor [in Mr. Dunlap's disfellowship]. Such freedom of private Scriptural discussion and expression was not acceptable, was viewed as heretical, as dangerously disruptive."

Mr. Franz quotes committee members as saying to Mr. Dunlap: "Wait on the organization . . . Who knows? Perhaps five years from now many or all of these things you are saying will be published and taught."

Mr. Franz asks rhetorical questions.

- If the judicial committee was willing to accept the possibility that the organization's teachings on these points might be no more solid and enduring than that, how could they possibly use them as the basis for deciding whether this man was a loyal servant of God or an apostate?
- If they advised Mr. Dunlap to wait five years to see if these teachings might change, why couldn't the committee postpone any judicial action toward a man who had given half a century of service to the organization?

Mr. Franz writes about the justification to their approach: "The logic of such an approach can be understood only if one accepts and embraces the premise that an individual's interests—including his good name, his hard-earned reputation, his years of life spent in service—are all expendable if they interfere with an organization's objectives."

In May 1980 the Governing Body disfellowshipped 69-year-old Ed Dunlap. He moved to Oklahoma City and supported himself and his wife by hanging wallpaper. He died Sept. 1, 1999, at the age of 88.

## Believing differently

On page 338 Mr. Franz writes: "There is an old expression, 'An iron hand in a velvet glove.' I do not believe that the events of the spring of 1980 produced the hardhandedness manifested by the authority structure. I believe the hardness was already there, that history shows it was. What took place in the spring of 1980 merely caused the velvet glove to be removed, exposing the unyielding hardness underneath."

On Sept. 1, 1980, *The Watchtower*, the flagship magazine of the Jehovah's Witnesses, ran an article under the heading "Protecting the Flock." That article is reproduced on pages 341-342 of Mr. Franz's book.

On page 342 Mr. Franz summarizes the letter: "The letter represents an official policy. It actually says that a person's believing—not promoting, but simply *believing*—something that differs from the teachings of the organization is grounds for taking judicial action against him as an 'apostate'!"

Mr. Franz mentions that this writing of the policy did not raise much dust among Jehovah's Witnesses.

On pages 344-345 he writes: "It is the concept of 'the organization' that produces this [lack of response]. That concept creates the belief that, to all intents and purposes, whatever the organization speaks, it is as if God Himself were speaking . . ."

Mr. Franz does mention that, in spite of apparent evidence to the contrary, many Witnesses are thinking people.

Continuing on page 345: "True, there are many thinking Witnesses who are repelled by such blatant expressions of blind faith. Yet most are still willing to conform, even to take 'judicial action' against any who express doubts about the Society's interpretations. Why?"

Here is a portion of his response: ". . . Based on my own experience among them, I believe that they are, in effect, the captives of a concept . . ."

As I quoted earlier from page 346, the organization seems to take on a life of its own that supersedes the actions of any individual. Plus, when the organization is viewed as God's chosen instrument, the responsibility for all decisions and actions—however apparently sensible or absurd—is passed on to God.

### **Disfellowshipped on a technicality**

According to Mr. Franz, some of the leaders of the Jehovah's Witnesses were involved in setting in motion the procedures to disfellowship him.

On Nov. 6, 1981, the judicial committee wrote him a letter to set up a meeting to discuss his "continued association with a person disassociated from the congregation."

Mr. Franz met with the committee on Wednesday, Nov. 25.

After a series of letters back and forth, he wrote a letter on Dec. 23, 1981, informing committee members that he was dropping his appeal of their decision to disfellowship him.

Mr. Franz gives his opinion that there were other reasons for his disfellowship than having "one meal with Peter Gregerson."

On page 376 he writes: "Do I personally believe that this was the true reason for their taking the action they did? No. I believe it was simply a technicality used to achieve an objective. The end justified the means in their minds. That an organization would make use of a technicality of such pettiness, to my mind betrays a remarkably low standard for conduct and a great insecurity."

Based on his experience in the organization, Mr. Franz offers this opinion about his disfellowship: ". . . My personal belief is that it was considered 'advantageous' that I be disfellowshipped so as to eliminate what they considered a 'threat' . . ."

He writes about the committee's apparent insecurity.

He writes: ". . . If so, then this too, I think, reveals a very great sense of insecurity—particularly so for a worldwide organization that claims to be God's chosen instrument, backed up by the Sovereign power of the universe, the reigning King's appointee as supervisor of all His earthly interests. This would surely *not* be the action of an organization fully at ease with its own teachings, calmly confident that what it presents is truth, solidly supported by God's Word."

Mr. Franz mentions the leadership's lack of confidence in the membership.

He writes: "Nor is it the action of an organization having genuine confidence in its body of adherents, confidence that the instruction and training given have produced mature Christian men and women who do not need some maternal *magisterium* to prescribe what they shall read, discuss or think about, but who are instead capable of discerning for themselves between truth and error, through their knowledge of the Word of God.

"The action *is* typical, however, of many religious organizations of the past, all the way back to the first century, organizations that felt a compelling need to eliminate anything that, *in their view*, threatened to diminish their authority over others."

## Final chapter

The final chapter is chockful of interesting information.

- Will there be a mass exodus from the Jehovah's Witnesses? Mr. Franz does not promote it and he does not expect it.
- Why is it hard for Witnesses to leave the organization? Mr. Franz mentions a number of reasons, but he focuses on a particular one.

On page 382 he writes: ". . . Above all, the teaching that they are, exclusively, the one people on earth with whom God has dealings, and that the direction they receive from the Governing Body is from a divinely appointed 'channel,' helps produce a sense of cohesion, of specialness. The view of all other persons as 'worldlings' contributes to this feeling of a close-knit relationship."

- Will a "grass roots" movement exert change upon the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses?

On page 384 he writes: "Having attended many hundreds of these [governing-board meetings], I know the disregard, often approaching disdain, with which questioning and objections from the 'rank and file' are considered."

- Will the Jehovah's Witnesses organization continue to have the two-class system?

On page 391 he writes: "The organization could not actually introduce 'non-anointed' men into the Governing Body itself without critically weakening its claims regarding a 'faithful and discreet slave class' composed solely of 'anointed' persons . . ."

Although Mr. Franz believes that there are scores of nonanointed men who are "far more capable" than many of the current members of the Governing Body, he doesn't believe the leaders will abandon the class system.

Continuing on page 391, he writes: ". . . But to admit them to that elite body would be to place spiritual 'foreigners' on an equality with the spiritual 'citizens,' move the spiritual 'non-Levite temple helpers' up to equality with the spiritual 'royal priesthood' class. That would blur and, in a practical sense, dissolve all the distinctions the Watch Tower's doctrine has called for during the past half century. I would think the Governing Body would resist doing that as long as it is humanly possible . . ."

■ Will the Jehovah's Witnesses organization change when some of the older men die?

On page 391 he writes: "A major mistake in looking for reform from the direction of personnel changes is, I believe, in thinking that the situation owes to the particular men in charge . . . Primarily, it is not the men. As stated, it is the *concept* that controls, the *premise* on which the whole movement is founded."

■ Why is it hard to reform a church organization?

On pages 395 Mr. Franz quotes from the book *The Myth of Certainty* by Daniel Taylor: ". . . Questioning the institutions is synonymous, for many, with attacking God—something not long to be tolerated . . ."

"Actually, they are protecting themselves, their view of the world, and their sense of security. The religious institution has given them meaning, a sense of purpose, and, in some cases, careers.

"Anyone perceived as a threat to these things is a threat indeed. This threat is often met, or suppressed even before it arises, with power . . ."

"Institutions express their power most clearly by enunciating, interpreting and enforcing the rules of the subculture. Every institution has its rules and ways of enforcing them, some clearly stated, others unstated but no less real."

■ Why do disfellowshipped people find peace outside the organization?

On page 395 Mr. Franz writes: "Whatever the initial distress—a distress that sometimes follows the demeaning experience of being interrogated by men who, in effect, strip one of human dignity, make the weight of their authority felt, and presume to judge adversely one's standing with God—however torn one may feel inside, afterward there does come a distinct feeling of relief, of peace.

"It is just knowing that one is finally outside the reach of such men, no longer subject to their ecclesiastical scrutiny and pressure. Truth, and the refusal to compromise truth, brings freedom in other fine and wonderful ways. The more responsibility one makes use of that freedom the finer the benefits."

■ How should people respond to separation from a large, pervasive organization?

On page 396 Mr. Franz writes: "Traumatic as the initial transition may be, it can lead to the development of a truly *personal* relationship with these two greatest Friends [the Father and the Son] . . .

"Whatever sense of 'belonging' that membership in some religious system may create, it can never compare with the power and beauty and strengthening benefit of the intimate personal relationship the Scripture presents . . ."

Mr. Franz explains how the organization often gets in the way of a better relationship with the Father and the Son.

On page 397 he writes: "Sadly, in the case of most Witnesses, the organization has so persistently pushed its own self to the fore, has occupied such a large place on the spiritual scene, focusing so much attention on its own importance, that it has kept many from the closeness of fellowship with the heavenly Father that should have been theirs.

"The figure of the organization has loomed so large that it has overshadowed the greatness of God's own Son, has clouded the vision of many from appreciating the warm relationship He invites persons to share with Him, has distorted their perception of His compassionate personality . . ."

Mr. Franz explains how people miss the security of the physical organization.

Continuing on page 397 he writes: ". . . It is not surprising, then, that many persons, if expelled from the organization, feel a sense of aloneness, of being adrift, floundering, due to no longer being tied to some visible authority structure, no longer having their lives channeled into its routine of programmed activity, no longer feeling the restrictive pressures of its policies and rulings."

## **Reality of God**

On pages 397-398 Mr. Franz expresses how the mistreatment by men helps people see the reality of the Father and the Son.

■ "In a sense, it seems that often one must undergo a measure of such painful adjustment to come to appreciate fully what complete dependence on God and His Son really means."

■ "They have realized more than ever before the intimate relationship they have with their Master and Owner as His disciples, whom He treats as personal friends, not like sheep that men have penned off in a mass enclosure, but sheep to whom the Shepherd gives individual, personal attention and care."

■ "Whatever their age, whatever length of time it took them to come to this realization, the feeling they have fits the well-known saying, 'Today is the first day of the rest of my life.' "

■ "Their outlook is both happy and positive, for their hopes and aspirations are dependent, not on men, but on God."