

Walking with the Enemy: A Testimony

C. Read

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Walking with the Enemy is Read's story of a three-year engagement with a religious cult and the miraculous event that gave her the courage to escape.

Shortly after the 1993 standoff between law enforcement and David Koresh in Waco, Texas, C. Read went on local radio to break her silence about her own escape from a cult that was quite similar to Koresh's group. In *Walking with the Enemy*, Read provides her testimony about her involvement with a religious group that was marketed as a Bible study group, but was more nefarious in its mission. Read's use of an epistolary form to tell her story is creative and unique.

For three years, Read, who defines herself as a "naïve and unsuspecting, non-conformist woman," found herself involved with a cult led by a charismatic duo named Bill and Ira. The group was listed in a local newspaper as a church and met several times a week in members' homes, offering music and a youth ministry. For two years, the group met in Read's home and she grew to love the different members.

However Bill misused his power, seducing Read into a sexual relationship—calling himself her "spiritual husband"—and having sex with one of the other women in front of her following a Bible study meeting. She also learned that he had convinced the young daughter of one of the members that he should also take her as a spiritual wife. Read explains that during a Bible study gathering, she received the Holy Spirit in her body and began to prophesy about the evil intention of the group and its eventual demise. For Read, the experience of the Holy Spirit embodied delivered her from the hold Bill and Ira had on her. Her experience taught her to trust God rather than herself or other people.

In *Walking with the Enemy*, Read provides information about her life in the cult and her efforts to process all that happened after she left. Each chapter includes letters Read sent to Bill, her husband, and others. Transcripts of phone conversations and journal entries are also used to provide insight and additional information. Bible verses are used to support her views.

Read's purpose for the book was to use evidence to support her assertion that the group was being led by the spirit of the Antichrist. Unfortunately the book falls short of this goal due to a lack of organization. A variety of letters and scripture quotations are disjointedly compiled, which makes it difficult to follow the flow of the narrative. Additionally, the text that introduces and concludes these documents does little in terms of moving the story along or keeping the information organized.

Despite its organizational flaws, this book is an important narrative for any Christian believer, and might be of particular interest to anyone who is a survivor of a religious cult.

GABRIE'L ATCHISON (August 27, 2015)

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