



STATEMENT DR112

The Reincarnation Sensation

by Norman L. Geisler and J. Yutaka Amano

(Tyndale House Publishers, 1986)

What do producer George Lucas, actress Shirley MacLaine, actor Sylvester Stallone, singer Loretta Lynn, industrialist Henry Ford, philosopher John Hick, and “prophet” Edgar Cayce have in common? They — along with about 25 percent of all Americans — believe in some form of incarnation. According to Norman Geisler and J. Yutaka Amano, there are ten versions of this afterlife doctrine available in the world’s marketplace of ideas. These evangelical authors explain and evaluate those versions in their recent book *The Reincarnation Sensation*.

Simply put, reincarnation is “the belief that the soul after death passes on to another body” (p. 183) — a process that could repeat thousands of times through numerous worlds.

This teaching has been around for centuries in both the East and the West, but it wasn’t popular in Europe or the United States until well into the 1900s. Geisler and Amano point out that our society’s interest in reincarnation has grown largely for three reasons; (1) our fascination with Eastern thought; (2) our preoccupation with death; and (3) our increasing acceptance of the validity of past-life therapy.

Geisler and Amano have done the Christian community a great service. They have delved into the morass of reincarnationist literature, music, and movies and provided us with the most comprehensive, concise, and clearheaded treatment currently in print. They have given us an appendix that illustrates the ten reincarnation models, a glossary that defines key terms simply, and -a bibliography of both pro and con reincarnation materials.

Perhaps the greatest help we receive is from their reasoned critique of reincarnationists’ teachings. With the precision of skilled surgeons, they cut through the rhetoric and lay bare reincarnation’s essential tenets. Then they slice deeper with the instruments of logic and Scripture, thereby causing the doctrinal pus of reincarnation to ooze into the light where we can see it for what it is. Finally, they complete their task by telling us how we can operate gently, lovingly, and effectively on reincarnationists who cross our path.

Aside from some minor disagreements with a few of the authors’ conclusions, I find their book insightful and trustworthy. I’m disappointed, however, with some of the editorial decisions Tyndale House made. Rather than permitting the authors to retain their extensive documentation, Tyndale House stripped the book of about 600 footnotes while leaving much of its quoted matter alone. Consequently, numerous quotes occur without adequate notations regarding their source or location (pp.38, 39,52,53,79,92,106, 108,109,118,124). As any critical reader knows, Tyndale House’s deletions make this book less valuable than it otherwise would have been, for they have made it extremely difficult to check out some of the book’s most important references.

Despite this drawback, *The Reincarnation Sensation* provides Christians with a surgical tool of information and evaluation sorely needed in a society infected with Eastern beliefs.

— William D. Watkins

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