

Diet Author Triggers Doctrinal Controversy

Thomas Nelson, the nation's largest publisher of Christian books, has cancelled the release of a book from best-selling diet guru Gwen Shamblin because of questionable statements she made about the doctrine of the Trinity.

Shamblin—founder of the popular Weigh Down Workshop and author of *The Weigh Down Diet*—presented her controversial views via a weekly e-mail communiqué to her supporters in August.

“As a ministry, we believe in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible does not use the word ‘Trinity,’ and our feeling is that the word ‘Trinity’ implies equality in leadership, or shared Lordship,” Shamblin wrote. “If God had wanted us to refer to Himself, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as the ‘Trinity,’ He would not have left this word completely out of the Bible.”

In response to Shamblin's comments, Thomas Nelson issued a prepared statement on Sept. 6 announcing the publisher's cancellation of *Out of Egypt*, the companion devotional to another Shamblin title, *Rise Above*.

“Gwen has touched the lives of untold thousands of people,” said Nelson publisher Michael Hyatt in a statement. “However, because of the recent controversy created by her doctrinal position, we do not feel that we can go forward with this project.”

The launch of Rise Above earlier this year was heralded by Nelson as "the biggest in its 200-year history," with an initial printing of 500,000 copies. Nelson had celebrated its acquisition of Shamblin after winning the bidding war that followed the stunning success of The Weigh Down Diet, Shamblin's million-selling book released by Doubleday in 1997. Nelson reportedly signed her for less than \$ million, according to Books and Bibles.

Shamblin maintains that the entire issue has been exaggerated. "My personal interpretation of the 'Trinity' doctrine needn't be an issue here, but I'll let people decide for themselves," Shamblin said. "Thomas Nelson simply made a business decision based on its analysis of the situation, that's all. To its credit, Nelson never pressured me to change my position."

Shamblin said that she has retained the publishing rights to Out of Egypt, which she described as a revised version of the Exodus devotional offered through her Weigh Down Workshops. As of press time, she was considering alternative methods of getting the book to market by January 2001.