

# DISCERNMENT RESEARCH ARTICLES

by Various

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*A collection of research articles on spiritual discernment, examining popular Christian programs and movements to determine their faithfulness to Scripture. Includes critical analysis of the Alpha Course and other contemporary phenomena.*

42 Chapters

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## Discernment Research Articles

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## The Alpha Course - by Chris Hand

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Is the popular Alpha Course leading people astray?

Many people have been greatly impressed by the Alpha course. Designed to be an introduction to the Christian faith through talks, video presentations, small-group discussions and a special weekend-away, lots of churches are now employing it as part of their outreach.

In the eyes of many it has been a run-away-success and its fame has spread far beyond the UK, and Holy Trinity Brompton, the London church where it originated.

It is no exaggeration to say it has spread right across the world and is now finding friends in several continents. It has been adapted so as to be accessible to young people and has also proved versatile enough to be used in prisons, schools and places of work.

Churches in inner cities and rural areas have found it sufficiently flexible for their needs. Future plans for expansion suggest that Alpha is very much here to stay. What is more, many people claim to have been helped through going on the Alpha course and believe it has ought them an understanding of God and how to respond to Him. Testimonies and accounts of wonderful things that have happened to individuals abound; In the light of all this, surely there cannot be anything wrong with it?

With so many in today's society gripped by materialism and atheism, can Alpha be anything other than a good thing? As young people become hopelessly enmeshed in a godless culture, should we not applaud the efforts of Alpha and help make it a success?

We wished that the answers to these questions could be an emphatic Yes. But closer examination of Alpha prevents such a clean bill of health being given to it. Why this concern? There are six vital reasons we would like to bring to your attention.

### 1. The God of Alpha is not the God of the Bible.

Alpha quotes from the Bible a lot. It cannot be faulted on that. But for all this it does not present us with the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible. There is much we could say about the God of the Scriptures. He is the Creator of the universe and the one who upholds it and maintains it. He is a great King and Sovereign over all He has made. We are challenged to ponder:

" To whom then will you liken me. Or to whom shall I be equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of his might and the strength of his power; Not one is missing." (Isaiah 40:25-26)

He is high and holy. He dwells in heaven and is all-glorious. Nothing impure can live in His presence. For those that fall short of His glory and perfection, there is judgement that follows (Romans 6:23)

Now of course much more could be said. But you will have to search hard and long in Alpha to find a God that resembles the One just described. Nothing about Him as Creator, nothing about Him as a great King. He is assumed rather than described. The Bible tells us "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). But we would not be any wiser of this from going on the Alpha Course. It simply fails to tell us anything we need to know about God.

## 2. The plight of man in Alpha is not as serious as in the Bible.

Man's state until he is reconciled to God is not a happy one. Psalm 7:11 tells us God is a just judge, And - "God is angry with the wicked every day". The gospel of John makes this abundantly plain: He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36) Man without God is subject to the wrath of God. We are not slightly displeasing to Him. It is not that we have occasional faults and foibles that surface. It is what we are by nature.

The apostle Paul explains that we are "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). This is very strong language and leaves us in no doubt. We have offended against God and broken His holy law. We are sinners in His sight and deserve condemnation. It is as straightforward as that.

By contrast, Alpha does not use strong terms and leaves us rather unclear about where we stand. As one follows its argument, sin is more to be seen in the way we have messed up our lives (Gumbel 1994: 44,47). It is an inward-looking description of man's state that majors on his feelings of fearfulness (Gumbel 1994:22). It is a picture of man predominated by his feelings of sadness and unhappiness (Gumbel 1994:12-22). sup1/sup.

Now of course these things are all true. This is what life is like for sinners. It is a miserable life for them. Yet this is to major on the consequences of sin rather than sin itself. These are the miseries that follow inevitably because we are sinners. The problem, however, is more serious than simply sin's consequences. Alpha fails to tell us that ultimately we have offended God and courted His displeasure. We have sinned against God and are justly under His judgement. We are people "...having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). For all the gravity of sin, Alpha never allows us to feel too bad about ourselves. It never permits us to see ourselves in God's sight. That is a big omission.

## 3. The Jesus Christ of Alpha is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

This may surprise us. Alpha appears to have quite a lot to say about the Lord Jesus. It tells us what He did, what He said, the claims He made about Himself and establishes beyond doubt that the resurrection actually took place.

But despite having part of the course entitled 'Why did Jesus die?', it is unable in the final analysis to answer this question. This is a core issue.

Christ died because God's holy justice required it. Our lives were forfeit. We had sinned and were helpless. Christ had to die in the place of sinners who truly deserved to bear the penalty for their sin. Christ's death propitiated or appeased the wrath of God (Romans 3:25,1 John 2:2). Alpha has not described God to us and therefore has no meaningful place for God's wrath. Christ's death ends up having to satisfy some abstract principle of justice that has somehow become detached from God Himself.

Alpha's own illustrations and attempts to explain get us no closer to the heart of the matter (Gumbel 1994:19-20;47-48). Christ's death upon the cross becomes an act of love but without any real connection with the reality of judgement and God's wrath. All we are left with is the impression that Christ has sacrificed Himself to rescue us from the consequences of sin because that was required by some impersonal and rather arbitrary justice system. It is all rather mysterious. This is not the Christ of Scripture.

#### 4. The love of God in Alpha is not the love of the God of the Bible.

The Bible is clear that 'God is love' (1 John 4:8). Alpha tells us this too. There is a difference, however. In Alpha God is love and little else. There is not much else that He can be as the course has missed all the aspects of His great character that refer to His holiness and glory. We are left with love.

The God of the Bible is love but it is love that is seen in His willingness to save sinners. We are told, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Why did the Lord come? To save sinners. What moved God to do this? His love. This is what makes His love so special and wonderful. It is that such a holy and glorious God should save sinners. This is clear from Romans 5:8 as well, But God demonstrates his own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God's love is evident in that He acted to save sinners. Here we see the glory of Christ's love. But without the context of God's holiness and absolute perfection, the meaning of that love is lost to us. Instead God merely becomes an emotional being of unconditional love divorced from any true understanding of His true nature and being. Alpha's God will give us an emotional high and make us feel special. The God of the Bible will give us eternal life. There is a big difference between the two.

#### 5. The Holy Spirit of Alpha is not the Holy Spirit of the Bible.

There is more space in Alpha devoted to the Holy Spirit than to the Lord Jesus. This is surprising given what Scripture says about the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14). Why does Alpha do this? It is because Alpha's 'Holy Spirit' is the agent for giving to people an 'experience' that is going to make God real to them.

The main focus for this is the 'Holy Spirit Weekend-Away'. People doing Alpha are told to expect all manner of things might happen to them. We are told, Sometimes, when people are filled, they shake like a leaf in the wind. Others find themselves breathing deeply as if almost physically breathing in the Spirit. (Gumbel 1994:136). It is not restricted to this, however.

Physical heat sometimes accompanies the filling of the Spirit and people experience it in their hands or some other part of their bodies. One person described a feeling of 'glowing all over'. Another said she experienced 'liquid heat'. Still another described 'burning in my arms when I was not hot'. (Gumbel 1994:136)

This is all very interesting but it has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit as known through the pages of Scripture. Nowhere are any phenomena such as these attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. Alpha's 'Spirit' appears to work in ways that lie outside the confines of Scripture. Whoever it is that people are 'introduced' to at the Alpha Weekend, it is not the Holy Spirit. But whoever the

mysterious guest is, he is equally at home among the ecstatic gatherings of New Age enthusiasts and non-Christian religions alike.

#### 6. Conversions in Alpha are not like conversions in the Bible.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter's hearers were '...cut to the heart...(Acts 2:37). The Philippian jailer asked urgently 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' (Acts 16:30). They understood that they were sinners. They realised that they needed mercy. It was clear to them as it was to the believers in Thessalonica that the gospel was '...in truth, the word of God...' (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Conversions in Alpha come differently from this. More often than not it is an emotional experience about the love of God but without any understanding of holiness or the need to be saved from our sins. There is no recognition of the need to repent and to turn to God as a matter of life and death. People feel forgiven but do not seem to have realised the depth of their sinfulness or repented of their sin. People feel cleansed without having consciously put their faith in Christ. Often this happens when people are in some ecstatic state. Alpha may regard this as conversion but it is not what we find in the Bible.

For all its efforts, Alpha does not help us to know God. It does not describe the true and living God for us. It does not diagnose man's condition accurately enough. It is unable to adequately account for Christ's death and substitutes an unbiblical view of God's love and God's Holy Spirit in its place. To cap it all, the whole issue of conversion is grievously misunderstood. By sparing us the 'bad news' about ourselves, it is unable to supply us with the 'good news'.

The needs of our souls for biblical and life-saving truth are far too precious and important to be ought down to this level. It needs the unvarnished truth of the Scriptures. We may merely succeed in adding people to our churches who have never been converted. That will be no help to them and no help to our churches either.

To leave someone believing they are converted when they are not is an awful prospect. Yet that is what we are risking using defective tools such as Alpha, 'having a form of godliness but denying its power' (2 Timothy 3:5). We must do better. Failure is too high a price to pay.

## Understanding the New Gnosticism - by Don Clasen

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don't know if this holds for you as well, but for my part, one of the greatest challenges to my Christian faith that I have to face on a daily basis is accepting that the discovery and application of God's truth is sometimes very elusive and subtle.

I honestly wish at times that He had sent down some kind of manual from heaven decisively laying out all His doctrines from A to Z, and His values and priorities in their proper hierarchies of order. I feel that way He would have at least given us a better chance.

But He didn't do it that way. Instead He requires us constantly to discern and balance the two sources of truth He's given us--His Word and His Spirit. The Word relates to that truth which is objective and conceptual, the Spirit to that which is subjective and experiential.

The first [the written word] consists of a collection of writings, most of them historical, some prophetic, some correspondences, some polemical and didactic, [1] and some allegorical and symbolical known as the Holy Scriptures.

The second [the Holy Spirit] is the influence of the Spirit who is invisible--Someone we can't see where He's coming from and where He's going (both literally and figuratively--Jn 3:8).

Furthermore, He comes to reveal an infinite God to our finite minds, a goal that it is not possible ever to fully attain. And we are left to put these two sources together and figure out the meaning of it all from moment to moment!

Add to that the constant battle we have with unseen malevolent beings who are very cunning and who have millennia of experience over us. Then couple it with the fact that we are living at a time in history when knowledge truly has increased (Daniel 12:4), when everyone has to be a specialist, and there is so much to learn, and you can understand how incredibly frustrating it can all be at times.

### Theodicy

In the last century, there was a branch of popular theology called "theodicy". It dealt with those doctrines and apologetics that focused on vindicating God before the eyes of men. As a Christian, my responsibility is to justify God; like Elihu, to ask to be allowed a moment while I ascribe righteousness to My Maker (Job 36:2,3).

Yet as a human being I know the agonising people have to work through in trying to understand God's truth, in trying to know His will for our lives, in trying to walk in the Spirit, to get His leadings and to get His counsel. And I don't know why God has made things so hard in this way. I can't explain centuries of controversies that are to this day unresolved in the Church world and in life in general. Nevertheless, I must press on.

What these processes all relate to is the paradoxical problem of knowledge in human life. The gaining and utilization of knowledge is one of the most central and all-encompassing foundational

needs in human existence.

And knowledge, according to the Bible, is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand it is so important that it is eternal life. Jesus at the Last Supper prayed, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Jn 17:3). "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor 4:6).

Paul prayed at the end of a life marked by as much knowledge of God as anyone could ask for that he might "know him [Christ], and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings..." (Philippians 3:10).

Indeed, the end goal of God's redemptive plan is that we might know Him as He is and make Him known to others, that they might have life too. To miss that mark is such pitiful failure as to be referred to in the Bible as a condition of "not knowing the Lord".

Of the two sons of Eli who fornicated with the women at the tabernacle and who extorted offerings from the people, the Bible has this curt yet succinct evaluation of them--"Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord" (I Sam 2:12 ff.). Jesus likewise said to the Jews of His day, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (Jn 8:19).

He could have just as easily said that if they really knew the Father like they claimed they did, they would have recognized His marks in Christ as well. But as it was, they had such a low view of a legalistic and petty God that Christ's behavior and ways went right over their heads.

### Growing in Knowledge

But this pursuit of knowledge is not just limited to knowledge of God Himself. Peter said that having faith was wonderful, but it was no place to stop. Rather, we are to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.

Knowledge here refers to "getting educated in the things of God." It means to know the Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation (II Tim 3:15).

It means to know the will of God as revealed therein (Colossians 1:9), to "no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). It means to "be not children in understanding:...but...[to] be men (Romans 16:19), and to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Ro 16:19).

It means to get off the milk and on to the meat because, "every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:13). It means to at least become as "young men," if not as fathers, "because [they] are strong, and the word of God abideth in [them]" (I Jn 2:14).

### Abuse of Knowledge

Yet knowledge has its down side as well. Paul said knowledge has a tendency to "puff up" if it's not mixed with love (I Cor 8:1), or if it's sought for the sake of being known as "Rabbi, Rabbi" (Mt 23:7). And we all know why this is. Knowledge is power. To gain knowledge is to have an edge

over others. It puts us in a special class and ministers to the pride of life.

This is the main reason people fall into cults or the occult, because those phenomena always appeal to human pride by offering esoteric "secrets" that ordinary mortals are not privy to. They tell us, "You were part of the lost world of Atlantis in another life", or "You're an old spirit", etc.

The Gospel in contrast does anything but minister to human pride and curiosity. Rather it is very deflating, almost demeaning it would seem. While the self-opinion of the average person in our day is one of their being a "pretty good person", God's opinion of the human condition is far more unsparing, yet very liberating when received as truth (Ro 1:29-32; II Tim 3:2-4; Titus 3:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 33:31,32; Isaiah 58:2; Psalms 39:5, etc., etc.).

Paul said that in the last days there had arisen and would arise men who had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof. They would creep into houses and lead away silly women laden down with their own sins, and they had this characteristic--that they were ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim 3:5-7). This learning can consist of learning true truth but not living it, or it could mean learning a kind of pseudo truth that appears to be real knowledge but isn't.

Paul spoke of these latter saying that they do not hold onto the Head [Christ] but instead seek for deep visions or esoteric experiences because they have been "vainly puffed up by [their] fleshly mind" (Colossians 2:18,19), what the NIV calls the "unspiritual mind". It means a mind given to "vain reasonings" that we are to "war against" with the weapons of the Gospel (II Cor 10:5). [2] It is a mind that has "the understanding darkened", full of "ignorance," and all because of the blindness [or dishonesty] of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18).

### The Precarious Balance

As one can see, the subject of knowledge is a very big one, with many good and many bad aspects.

The subject is like that of "judging", or "money", about which the Bible has so much to say - because they are not simplistic matters either. This is so because knowledge has to do with reality, the reality of a world naturally complex but made much more so by the introduction of sin into its affairs.

In addition, knowledge is very important because it is the seeking of the truth about this reality. And truth is important because Jesus said it was His truth that would make men free (Jn 8:32).

Now I know that since I have this teaching motivational gift, it may be that I naturally put more emphasis on the value of truth for its own sake than others might. But nonetheless, I keep coming to this very conclusion, that so much of the ministry of God is to enlighten His people as to the truth, that they might no longer "walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (Jn 8:12). Indeed, although knowing God is the ultimate goal, the means to getting there is to discover the truth, to "get wisdom, and with all [our] getting, get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7).

And it isn't a mysterious thing to "get". It is "not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven...Neither is it beyond the sea...But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.." (Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Ro 10:6-8). The problem is that its

discovery does not minister to our pride.

Does the End Justify the Means?

In our day, I often hear that the important thing is not the truth itself, but living it out. Well, I agree with that. The ultimate goal is not just to learn truth but to live it.

Yet how can you have one without the other? It's like saying we're going to build a big building but we don't care what kind of materials we're going to use. Or we want to get to such and such a city but we're not going to worry about what roads to take to get there. Yet how can you reach your goal if you use the wrong materials or take the wrong route?

We probably should stop and put a big *selah* [3] here. Think about this for a moment. Church people nowadays seem to think that the way of deliverance is one of sheer will power. But I contend that the problem is, we don't always know what it is God wants of us, we don't always know what to repent of. We see a lot of energy and interest in having "revival" for instance. Yet how can you have revival if you don't know what you're doing wrong? Beyond the obvious sins, this takes discernment, wisdom, understanding, and the knowledge of God and of His will.

Well, just as we have this sort of an argument regarding knowing the truth versus doing it (when there really is no such dichotomy), so likewise, the same sort of argument is heard in the area of knowledge.

It is often said, the important thing is not knowing things about God, but knowing Him directly. Well in essence I would agree. The ultimate goal is to have an experiential walk with the living God, yet how can you know God without knowing things about Him?

Perhaps my peevisness with this problem reflects the circles in which I have traveled all my Christian life, which have been Charismatic/ Pentecostal. Perhaps it would be different if I were of a Baptist background, say. In presenting their convictions to the Church world, Charismatics and Pentecostals are always taking issue with those churches that are so suspicious of spiritual experiences, and which end up in a dead orthodoxy with none of the life of God moving within them.

But the problem is, Holy Spirit circles can be guilty of exactly the same sort of problem from the other extreme.

That is, they can be so enamored of subjective experiences that they do not realize they are moving beyond the basic spirit of the Biblical revelation of God and His Kingdom. As a result, they end up developing an attitude and a walk that can only be described as "super spiritual":

They "never do anything but by the 'leading of the Lord'".

They're always seeking for the novel and the flattering.

They don't care much about doctrine, sound or otherwise, because that's all just boring "head knowledge" anyhow. Yet therein they show a contempt for God's truth, and an unwillingness to really learn from and serve God in patience and humility.

They're always pushing the envelope, vying amongst one another to be on the supposed "cutting edge" of "what God is doing" lately, or to come up with some new revelation to impress their peers.

They show little concern for what the Bible condemns as "private interpretations" (II Pet 1:20), and their views of things are often not susceptible to an objective measure.

They're always seeking for some newer and deeper revelation of God and His Kingdom.

They often come up with prophecies or predictions that turn out to be patently false, but it never seems to bother them or their supporters very much.

Very often you find that their ways are unstable and that the path behind them is strewn with the wreckage of erratic and impulsive decisions that were supposedly made by the leading of God but really make little sense to anyone else. And when you question their judgment, what you get is a "spiritualized" explanation, that in some mysterious way "God was in it all", or whatever.

I call this problem the New Gnosticism of our day. And though I realize that what I'm talking about is not necessarily the exact same "damnable heresies" (II Pet 2:1) that so plagued the early Church, what I am talking about are several characteristics or principles of ancient Gnosticism that linger to this day and are a trap to spiritually-minded people.

In contrast to all this, God tells us in His Word that our job is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was, (literally), 'once-and-for-all-delivered' to the saints" (Jude 4). He warns us to be ready to hold ground against the inevitable onslaught of false teachers to come (II Pet 2:1). In short, we are to understand the value and place of plain old knowing things about God.

This of course includes things like the place of sound doctrine and the importance of staying within the bounds of the revealed Word, things that Holy Spirit churches generally do not dispute in theory. The problem is, it's something bigger than that. It goes to the issue of our general philosophy of Christianity, and our sense of not just what the Bible is saying, but what a proper interpretation of it means. It has to do with our general sense of what God is like, what He wants from human beings, and what it means to be spiritual.

### The Ancient Problem

Gnosticism was, as was said, probably the most prominent heresy mentioned in the New Testament. Its name comes from the Greek word gnosis which means "knowledge", but what the Gnostics were promoting was not the true knowledge of God as taught by the Apostles, but a sort of esoteric pseudo-knowledge or mysticism derived from personal, direct spiritual experiences which they took to be Divine revelation.

Some of the most prominent characteristics of this ancient heresy that so destabilized so many early Christians included the following:

1. A disdain for and impatience with the orthodox process of presenting God's propositional truth to the believer for him to understand and process with his reason, in favor of direct, intuitive insight gained by experience. The effect this had was to produce a sort of intellectual anarchy wherein the spectrum of Gnostic belief, though always having certain characteristics, was so broad as to almost defy definition, since its beliefs were determined by individual speculation.

Now to be sure, receiving spiritual insight and revelation directly from the Holy Spirit is very Biblical (if you'll forgive the paradox here!). We need to remember that the heroes of the faith all got what they did directly from God long before there even were any holy writings. Moses and Paul for instance, received truth from God this way and what they got became what we now today call the Holy Scriptures. Abraham likewise was willing to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering based solely on a subjective experience (Gen 22). If that were you or I, we would probably have said, "I rebuke you Satan in Jesus Name!"

But today we have a "more sure word of prophecy" (II Pet 1:19), the Word of God, and the Word and the Spirit agree. Therefore whatever we get by revelation must agree with the basic revelation of God as already given in the Scriptures. And it is here where the Gnostic error manifested, because for whatever reason, they would either take this principle too far or they would just come to the wrong conclusions.

Whether it was out of vanity, stubbornness, a desire to be different, an honest misunderstanding or whatever, only God knows the motives lurking within the human heart. But regardless, it must be one of the great ironies of the Scriptures to read the Apostle John telling the believers that they can overcome the subversions of the Gnostics because "ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (I Jn 2:20), such an unction in fact that they didn't even need a man--even John himself--to teach them (vs. 27)!

2. A tendency to spiritualize the Scriptures, always looking for deep symbolic and allegorical meanings to everything. [Click [HERE](#) for an example of grossly over-allegorised scripture!]

For the same reasons the Gnostics were given to myth and poetry more than to literal meanings and historical accounts of things. In so doing they were turning on its head the orthodox dictum of, "Be literal where possible, and allegorical when necessary" in favor of, "Be allegorical as much as possible. It sounds more impressive."

What we have to understand about this factor is the paradoxical nature of so much that we find about Biblical truth. For instance, First Corinthians 2:10 speaks of "the deep things of God" that the Holy Spirit "searches out", so there is a valid concept involved here. The works of say, Kevin Connor, who has written much about the types and symbols found in the Bible is an example of the good side of this.

But there is a bad side too, a kind of "deep things" that are so deep and "spiritual", no one can understand what's being talked about! The Gnostics were given to this sort of thing in such extremes or in ways that were so out of bounds as to take a good concept and turn it into a bitter poison. In fact, the Gnostics had a phrase for this--"the depths of God". But their version of such things was so perverse as to prompt Jesus in Revelation 2:24 to sarcastically refer to them as, "the depths of Satan, as they speak."

3. A penchant for apocryphal sources because such were more mystical. If they adhered to the true Scriptures they often would reject the Old Testament altogether and accept only the Gospels and a few selected Pauline letters (such as Marcion did). Many Gnostics had become so deceived that they believed that the God of the Old Testament was not the true Father of the Lord Jesus Christ but a usurping "demiurge". Thus they believed that Christ either came from the true God Who preceded Jehovah or was a man upon whom the "Christ spirit" came while on the cross. This

latter concept has affinity with modern New Age concepts of Christ being just one of many "masters" or adepts who come on the scene at key points in human history.

The Gnostics also regularly claimed that their teachings did in fact come from the Apostles, but were secretly handed down to them because only the very spiritual could handle such deep things. I imagine they used Jesus' words to great effect here when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (Jn 16:12), as well as similar sentiments (Mt 13:11; 19:11, etc.).

4. A belief in dualism. Dualism proposed a radical distinction between the physical and the spiritual worlds, such that the former was evil while the latter was good. This differs from the Christian concept which says that the physical world may be fallen and under a curse but is not evil per se. Moreover, the spiritual world has been tainted itself in that demons exist in it as well as God and the good angels. Nevertheless, the things of the human spirit, the Holy Spirit, the spiritual world and heaven are symbolic of "things above," while the earth, the flesh and the like are symbolic of things more carnal in general.

The Hebrew culture generally understood this precarious balance. They understood that the things of this world were not unimportant or taboo to the covenant believer, even though they may not be as important as the things of eternity. But the Greek culture perverted this with the popularity of the dualistic explanation.

The upshot of all this was that Gnostics generally tended then to one of two extremes in dealing with life. Either they became ascetics, in an attempt to starve the flesh to death so to speak. Or they became libertines because since the flesh was evil, it is not part of the "real you" which is spiritual because it's been "enlightened" by Gnostic "revelation". Therefore the flesh is something that can be indulged in all one wants.

An example of this second type is found in Second Peter and Jude, where the apostles are strongly condemning the ways of these false Gnostic teachers who are "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness", who "walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness", (Jude 4,8,16; II Pet 2:10, 14, 18), etc. etc. An example of the first can be found in Colossians, where Paul speaks of those who follow practices which have "the appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (Colossians 2:23 NKJ). In other words, here we have another great irony, (something Paul especially loved to savor), in that although these people go to great lengths to deny their physical flesh, they're walking in a kind of "spiritual flesh", that is, a kind of spiritual pride or showboatism.

5. The belief that every man has a spark of the Divine within him. The Gnostics believed that the human spirit was a part of the uncreated God and that it needed to be awakened out of its dormancy into a state of raised consciousness or gnosis of this fact. They believed that to become thus enlightened to this "knowledge" was man's salvation. True Christianity in contrast said that such a belief was a false knowledge anyhow (e.g., I Tim 6:20), and that even recognition of any true knowledge was not man's salvation by itself. Unless and until he acted on it as well, by appropriating the cross to his account, and by submitting to the sanctification process of God thereafter, it still remained unefficacious, it remained "head knowledge" as it's popularly called.

The Example of John

These last two characteristics form the central doctrinal foundation of the ever-evolving and ever-individualistic Gnostic dogma, and you'd be amazed at how much of the New Testament is directed at correcting Gnostic ideas. But it's like listening to a phone conversation. You only hear one person talking and you have to speculate or ask for more information before you can find out what the other party was saying.

The writings of John for example, were much given to dealing with this error. John did not write until toward the end of the first century, by which time the Gnostic influence was tearing apart the churches of the empire. In his Gospel for instance, when he said that Jesus is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," (Jn 1:9), he was making a concession to the Gnostics about that last characteristic. He was stating that, in essence, there was a half truth involved here, that the Holy Spirit can bear witness to every man's human spirit to bring that Light Who is Christ Jesus into a person's heart. But the thrust of his words is that Jesus is that uncreated God; not the human soul.

Likewise, the First Epistle of John is almost totally devoted to helping people deal with the seductive Gnostic error in their midst (I Jn 2:26). When John writes, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1:8), he is actually addressing that Gnostic lie that there is no sin, only ignorance. In other words, what the second "we" in the verse is referring to is not "we Christians", but "we, the human race". I don't know how many times Bible teachers have used this verse to excuse sin in Christians, but they are always hard pressed to explain then John's obvious contradiction in 3:6-9 where he says among other things, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed [i.e., the believer] remaineth in him; and he cannot sin [in good conscience, at least], because he is born of God."

Then in chapter 2 verse 2 John addresses another Gnostic error. Like the Calvinists years later, Gnostics taught that Christ did not die for all men, but only for the elect (i.e., those who come into this wonderful "knowledge"). But John says here that, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." In other places, John accuses the Gnostics among them of professing much love, but in reality "hating" the believers because they are trying to seduce them away from the true faith into a pseudo knowledge of God . He calls them "murderers" for this (3:15), following in the example of Cain who brought an offering that God did not accept (3:12). Yet their apparent superior "knowledge" was causing the believers to feel very inferior and condemned (3:20). John says these Gnostics were operating under the influence of deceiving spirits (4:1), and that they denied Christ was God in the flesh, but rather an enlightened adept who learned the gnosis way and upon whom the "Christ spirit" came while He was on the cross (4:2).

### Gnosticism Today

To be sure, the early Gnostic heresies were serious errors, serious enough to damn the soul according to the Apostles (II Pet 2:3,12,17; I Jn 2:22,23; II Jn 9, etc.). If any of these doctrines are still around today, they're found in outright cults and New Age circles. But what I am alarmed at are the tendencies of similar principles to be found within orthodox Charismatic and Pentecostal circles today. And these principles follow the sorts of patterns outlined in the first two characteristics mentioned above.

When applied to one's walk with the Holy Spirit, they have to do with the abuse of the direct revelation process, and the tendency to misinterpret life's spiritual experiences. When it comes to dealing with the Word of God, they have to do with a tendency to excessively spiritualize it, and a desire to find deep allegorical and symbolic meanings when they should be taken literally, and at face value.

Why some people are this way must be locked up within the secret counsels and omniscience of God somehow, for only He knows what the hidden motives of men's hearts really are (1 Cor 4:3-5). To even dismiss it with something like, "They just take things too far" is too simplistic, because people should be able to have spiritual experiences all day long without it leading them into error or self-delusion. It may be the problem is somewhat akin to what I see in people who feel called to be prophets, Many seem to think that being a prophet means to be constantly hearing from God. I don't know if you've run into people like this. A lot of them have major pulpit ministries, and they act like God is running off at the mouth 24 hours a day and that it's their duty to blab all they hear (especially when they're "told" to take up an offering!)

But a prophet to me is someone who first and foremost operates out of a certain state of mind. That is, they don't just have a prophetic gift, but they are willing to deal with something called facts as well. That is, they know God well enough from the Scriptures, and pay enough attention to current events happening around them as to be able to not just hear God, but discern what's from God and what's not. They don't just try to pull words out of thin air from some amorphous sea of notions devoid of any context. That almost invariably gets people into trouble because there are so many voices out there and a lot of them sound just like the Holy Spirit at times.

So although I cannot judge men's hearts, I can perhaps offer some theological understanding that may clear up some of the misconceptions people have as to why they think this "way" is so spiritual in the first place. Specifically, it would seem to me that much of this mentality owes its origins to a certain teaching about the Garden of Eden that serves as a fountainhead for spiritualizing the rest of the Bible. This has to do with the meaning of the two trees in the Garden--the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:9, 17).

This teaching, which first surfaced amongst the Keswicks and other "deeper life" groups, goes something like this. The knowledge of good and evil is itself evil, because it sets man up as the judge of what's right and wrong, good and evil, true and false. It's much better to choose the Tree of Life, meaning Jesus Himself, and "only do those things that He tells us to do" by the Spirit. To try to "figure it out" all the time leads to "reasoning", to thinking and other kinds of soulish functions. The spiritual way is to hear from God directly and only do what He says. To do it the wrong way is to get stuck in the law, in moralizing, in dead and dry theology, in "stinking thinking", and suspicion of spiritual experience.

Now, as is so often the case with error, people often have a valid principle in mind, but when they misinterpret the Scriptures in their attempt to validate it, they distort truth and invariably push people into extremes. In this case here, it is true that some people do need to learn to walk by faith through the subjective leading of the Holy Spirit. But this teaching's interpretation of what's happening here in the Garden is all wrong, and it sets them up into an extreme frame of mind.

First of all, we need to fix the meaning of the phrase, "the knowledge of good and evil". As we said in the beginning, there are two sources for knowledge in life, one subjective, the other objective. Subjective knowledge is that which is gained from personal experience. Objective knowledge has to do with abstract concepts or ideas which exist apart from our experience or opinion of them. They are discovered by intuition, and we compare them to other concepts through the intellectual or reasoning process. And obviously, for the Christian, it is God Who establishes these truths and obligates us to discover them.

Now as we move into this, we need to understand that we are treading on the ground of ancient debates which deal with the mysteries of human consciousness, a place where we cannot speak without some degree of speculation. But I think it accurate to say that when babies are born into this world, they, generally speaking, have next to no conceptual knowledge. Everything they get is by experience. Now they may also have some very primitive intuition, even as early as the womb. [4] But they can't do much with it because their little minds have not developed sufficiently to be able to grasp abstract ideas and compare them one against another.

But what they do get with time is a growing catalog of experiences of the world around them--things that are hot, cold, soft, hard, etc. Only as they grow do they start to think abstractly and develop language skills. In time they will experience, say, a lot of different kinds of dogs, maybe some varying as much as a Chihuahua does from a Great Dane. But eventually the idea of "dog" as an abstraction hits them, and they are able to identify dogs thereafter that they may have never encountered before.

As children grows older, they come into what we call, the "age of accountability" (Ro 7:9), some mysterious point, (determined by God on an individual basis) where they not only know what's expected of them morally, but why. That is, they start to understand the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, grace and law, mercy and justice, love and hate and the other abstract concepts through which God communicates His will to human beings.

Now with Adam and Eve, we have a most unusual case. For whereas everyone else has gone through this long process of growth into adulthood, taking experiences and transforming them into conceptual knowledge or understanding, Adam and Eve are the only two people in history who came into this world fully grown.

Yet what they lacked in experience they made up for in intuition. That is, Adam and Eve were undoubtedly magnificent human specimens. They probably had 100% use of their brain power, whereas we nowadays, because of the effects of the death process on the human body, only use about 15% now. Thus God could take Adam to the animals and he could name them all, remember their names, and probably do it all through some sort of an intuitive understanding of each one's unique nature.

### Some Kind Of A Tree

Well, what is the meaning of this mysterious phrase, "the knowledge of good and evil"? According to "deeper life" neo-gnosticism, it refers to conceptual knowledge of good and evil which in itself supposedly makes us independent of God. But I believe what it's talking about is experiential knowledge of good and evil in the sense of "good and evil consequences."

In other words, this was a tree of testing. As long as they obeyed the commandment they would continue to "know good" (i.e., no death, an idyllic paradise, the glorious presence of God, no hardships, etc.). But the day they disobeyed, they would "know evil" (in the sense of death, the loss of the presence of God, expulsion from the Garden, curses on them and on the earth, etc.)

H. C. Leupold in his Exposition of Genesis has the right interpretation I believe when he says, "The second tree is called, 'the tree of the knowing of good and evil.' We have used 'knowing' instead of 'knowledge' because the infinitive da'ath functions chiefly as a verb and takes a double object." [5] The New Bible Commentary sheds further light on it by putting it this way:

These trees need not be regarded as mysterious or as possessing any physical or material power of conveying life and knowledge. Their place here is as symbols of man's loyalty and obedience to the will of his Maker. The meaning may simply be that the presence of this prohibited tree made man aware of the distinction between good and evil. But there would seem to be something more in it than this, especially in the light of iii.22. It may therefore be that, by the ethical test imposed through this forbidden tree, man has to grow into moral maturity: he would acquire an experiential knowledge of good or evil according as he was steadfast in obedience or fell away into disobedience. [6]

In the light of this interpretation, it is interesting to note that the very argument that the devil made to Eve was the exact opposite idea. That is, the Devil, having transformed himself into a snake, claimed that by eating of this tree she could gain a special knowledge, a conceptual knowledge of good and evil that she supposedly did not already have. Look at it:

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4,5)

Do you see the Devil's tactics through this? First of all he flatly contradicts God's warning, saying they shall not surely die. Then he attacks God's motives in giving the prohibition--"For God doth know...your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods..."

In other words, according to the serpent, God knew this tree would make them wise and make them divine, with the implication being that that would be competition to Him. So He wanted to leave them naive, ignorant and very human, and that's why He gave the commandment!

As far fetched as this sort of a character assassination was--(the word "Devil" means "slanderer", one of Satan's main tactics)--it nonetheless worked. It confused Eve, it "beguiled" her. Yet Paul says that Adam, who was "with her" there (Genesis 3:6) was not beguiled. That is, he was "not deceived", but saw right through the argument, yet still went ahead and ate too! Perhaps he did it out of sympathy and loyalty towards his wife, being willing to commit spiritual suicide lest she be left alone in her misery. But regardless, this made him more culpable than her, even though the woman was "in the transgression" too (I Tim 2:14).

Nevertheless, the point is that what the Devil was holding out to them was a conceptual knowledge that he convinced the woman she did not already have. But it's obvious she must have had some sort of an idea of good and evil already or else she would not have understood the significance of God's commandment. (The fact that the couple was said before this to be "innocent" means

innocent in a judicial sense, not in a sense of naiveté.) And what the Devil was offering here is something he has been subverting people with ever since--the hope of eating from a forbidden tree that claims to offer esoteric, mysterious "knowledge" or gnosis that really is no knowledge at all, but a lie and an illusion; a "wisdom" that will not make one wise at all, but a fool (Ro 1:22). Yet the promise is that "ye shall be as gods," and it is a promise that every cultic or occultic group has offered ever since.

Can you see the irony in all this? The Devil here is telling Eve she's naive when she isn't, ignorant when she's actually very informed, lacking revelation when she already had it. But it was one of those, "Slap-your-forehead-with-the-palm-of-your-hand / I-already-knew-that" kinds of revelation. It wasn't the kind that puffs you up but humbles you! And yet here is this teaching on the two trees which is itself an example of a "deeper", esoteric knowledge such as the snake was tempting Eve with!

In an attempt to avoid self-will, this teaching promotes a kind of mindless "know nothingism" through a (if you'll forgive the term) reasoning that misinterprets what this story is actually teaching.

It misleads its advocates into thinking that gaining a greater knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong itself have to conflict with being led by the Holy Spirit in a personal way. Yet growing up and not remaining children in understanding or discernment is part of the deepest desire of God's heart for us. This involves a very real walk with the living God, an experiential walk with Him, it is true.

But it is also one that is a constant interaction between His Spirit's leading and His expecting us to both use our heads and develop our understanding as well (Ephesians 4:17,18; Proverbs 4:7, etc.). You can't have one without the other.

It's interesting to note that after Adam and Eve ate of the tree, the first thing they noticed was that they were naked and they hid themselves. The implication is that until then they had the glory of God clothing them, the very presence of God. That removal of Himself from them was when they spiritually died, as it ruptured their walk with Him.

But it also had another consequence. They now were stuck with an undue self-consciousness, a consciousness of their own selves. Before this, they were conscious of themselves but the presence of God was an even stronger consciousness. And to this day, people partake of an endless quest to "get back to the Garden". They will take drugs, meditate, dance, chant--do lots of repetitious things, in order to enter into an "altered state of consciousness".

Why? Because they want relief from the tyranny of self-consciousness for a while. Perhaps it's because we instinctively know we're unworthy, and that there's Someone or something out there worth plugging into.

Ironically, people who adhere to this teaching understand this cry of the human heart, and they understand the importance of a real experiential walk with God. The problem is that in their zeal to find this in the Scriptures they find it in a most seminal story, and their misinterpretation of what was going on with the trees sets up all the strange excesses listed near the beginning.

Making Application

Trying to sum up the effect of this sort of a spiritual influence in the midst of a church is really hard to do. Every group and individual has different callings, backgrounds, giftings, personalities, character, distinctives, and understanding of what the Bible is saying. But several things about my own generation bother me.

For one, these deeper life teachings on the soul and spirit have led to a general dislike for and impatience with things intellectual, conceptual, doctrinal or rational. Apparently, people taken up with this neo-gnostic attitude do not like to deal with facts so much. Such things are just not that esoteric enough for them I suppose. But those are the very sorts of things our faith is built upon, and good judgment is dependent upon.

The practical effect of this has been to insulate many Christians in a world of "church culture". People with this sort of mindset spend a lot of time seeking deep things to impress their friends. Meanwhile they neglect or discount the discipline it takes to develop a sound Biblical and theological understanding of the Christian faith. They can end up with less and less of an ability to relate to the real world, or a disregard for current events and an inability to recognize the fulfillment in these events of specific Bible prophecies. They put little effort for instance, in seeking to understand the nature of the New World Order and thus have little ability to discern what's going on around them.

The result of this in turn is that evangelism suffers because, for the most part, the people of our world are very hardened today towards the Church. They think we are very backwards people already, but weird Christians just make it all the worse. And here we are, sitting on the truth of the ages!

But if we can develop our ability to grow in the true knowledge of God, of understanding of the Word and discernment of the Spirit's leading, of eschatological awareness, and pursuing an intelligent, wise approach to life, one day when their New Age dream is falling apart around them, they will think to themselves, "You know, these people seem to understand more of the nature of our times than we thought. Maybe this Jesus is coming back soon."

At least I hope and pray that may be the outcome!

## How NOT to Interpret the Bible - by Tricia Tillin

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Many Christians read the bible without realising that there are different ways of interpreting it. Perhaps the most common mistake is thinking there needs to be no interpretation at all, and the second mistake is in accepting ANY interpretation as equally valid.

In fact, the method most conducive to sound doctrine, the one that has been the consistent choice of all well-grounded evangelical scholars for centuries is that of LITERAL interpretation. In other words, there is no need to look for, or force into the bible, a symbolic meaning when the literal words are quite plain.

But scripture is not always totally literal. Jesus and the writers of the New Testament made reference to literal events but gave them a prophetic or symbolic meaning. (See Paul's treatment of the Red Sea Crossing in 1 Corinthians 10:1-7)

Therefore, beyond the literal interpretation, and parallel to it, there is often an underlying prophetic meaning, or spiritual application to the believer, especially in the Old Testament.

The people of God came out of Egypt literally, but the spiritual application is that man must forsake the world in order to commit himself to the kingdom of God; therefore "Egypt" comes to mean "the world" throughout the bible.

We often see the use of types and symbols in the bible where certain objects or events stand for certain truths, and these truths are consistent throughout the entire word of God. The lamb sacrificed in the OT worship was a type of the coming Lamb of God for instance.

No New Doctrine Established

HOWEVER, the really important principle in biblical interpretation is that no new revelation or truth is established by the use of hidden symbols or allegory in the bible.

Allegory, when it is found, merely CONFIRMS KNOWN TRUTHS that have otherwise been established on literal scriptures.

The New is in the Old concealed;

The Old is by the New revealed.

For example, we would be justified in seeing the agony on the Cross foretold in this verse from Psalm 22 "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." even though literal bulls were not involved in the crucifixion.

Firstly the context of the psalm is one of prophecy of the Lord's death.

Secondly, the surrounding verses are all consistent with the crucifixion; many were actually quoted by the Lord or other people in connection with his crucifixion.

Thirdly, there is another established biblical principle that dovetails with this interpretation and confirms its meaning. That is, the prosperity of the highly-fertile Bashan district had become in OT days a symbol of selfish indulgence and arrogant pride, and was used in a derogatory manner (see Amos 4:1) and the wild bulls in the region of Bashan were known for their fierce aggressive manner, and are therefore a known symbol of merciless opposition.

In other words, no NEW meaning is introduced into the New Testament scriptures by the use of the term "bulls of Bashan" because this term can be deduced by the literal and symbolic meaning ALREADY established in the rest of scripture.

We would be perfectly justified in saying that bulls of Bashan referred to in Psalm 22 were the jeering crowd who surrounded Jesus at his trial and death. This is a correct interpretation of scripture. Psalm 22 therefore only CONFIRMS known scriptural truths.

The INCORRECT interpretation would be to establish a new revelation or doctrine by reading BACK into the term "bulls of Bashan" something that was not previously known to be there.

For example, say we have a prophet whose teachings are being opposed by neighbouring church pastors. He might use the verse in Psalm 22 to support his own position, saying that the "bulls" are in fact "Baals" - idolaters and evildoers - that will surround the faithful of the last days church and attack them.

## THE KING AND THE GATES

This short article is not intended, however, to explore methods of interpretation, but to give just one glaring example of the worst kind of error. This error is rampant in the churches today, and most prevalent in the "prophetic" circles where almost any and every word of the bible is taken to be a symbol or allegory.

(An allegory = story or dialogue that has a hidden meaning about something else.)

This example is based upon one passage of scripture:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." (Psalms 24:7-8)

Before looking at the way one prophetic writer deals with this scripture, let's take a quick look at the normal, classic interpretation, the one that gives a plain honest and reasonable meaning to the verses.

This Psalm was intended to be used on the day of dedication of the new Temple. Some say it was used on the occasion of the Ark returning to Solomon's temple. According to Jewish writers the Ark was destined to be removed from the Temple and then returned through the gates at the time of the Second Temple; therefore it is a prophecy of the time of Messiah.

The gates of the dwelling place of God (the "everlasting gates") are commanded to open to allow the Ark (typical of the presence of God, or the incarnate Messiah, "God With Us") to enter in. He is worshipped as not only "the glory" of the Temple - the literal presence of God upon the Ark - but the ultimate KING of Glory, God himself in person.

This God and King would enter in through the gates as mighty victor, to defeat all his enemies and establish his reign of righteousness.

Psalm 24 was chosen by the rabbis as the "song of the day" for the first day of the week - the day on which Jesus rose from the dead! Sadly, the King of Glory did enter in at the gates but they did not recognise their Messiah, and crucified him. Therefore we look for a second coming, when the KING will return in glory to Zion and enter into his everlasting temple as described in the book of Revelation.

That is the literal and prophetic meaning of the verse. There is also a spiritual application to mankind, who are commanded to open the door of their lives and hearts to allow Jesus the Saviour to enter in. For he stands at the door and knocks:

Revelation 3:20-21

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

#### AND NOW THE INCORRECT INTERPRETATION

The writer says:

"Lift up your heads": the head usually speaks of authority and also mentality/ understanding.

You see, you and I are gatekeepers of the Kingdom, we are commissioned to bring men and women from the limited, finite life of the natural realm into the infinite eternal life of the unlimited heavenly realm. We must actively lift up our heads, raise our perception and understanding to the authority we have as gatekeepers.

From the word 'go' this teacher reinterprets single words out of the context of the verse or psalm as a whole. Instead of accepting that "heads" has to do with the "gates" he gives a novel and unheard-of interpretation that certain people as "heads" or leaders are to be exalted!

"Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!"

Yes, we are gates of heaven whereby people are brought to the eternal Life of the spiritual realm, but the Father also desires to exalt us as everlasting (eternal) doors whereby heaven is brought to bear in the earth.

Yes, when we pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) we must understand that WE are the vessels through which He will accomplish this.

Notice here that a new and unwarranted interpretation is given to the words 'head', 'gates' and 'doors' in which these terms supposedly refer to ministers in the endtimes. Not only does this abuse the literal interpretation of scripture in the first place, but nowhere in the bible are gates or doors references to people EXCEPT in the case of Jesus who is (literally) the "Door to Heaven" (John 10:7-9).

Psalms 24:7-10

Lift up your heads, O you gates!

And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!

And the King of glory shall come in.

And what is the purpose woven into this visually stunning prophetic picture?... That the King of Glory shall COME IN! The Lord has declared that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14) He has also declared, Arise, shine (that sounds like lift up your heads) for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (Is. 60:1)

As you go to your workplace, school, home, market place, etc., you are a gatekeeper sent to usher people into the Kingdom. You are also a door whereby the Kingdom gains entrance to the workplace, classroom, etc. The word translated as doors, pethach in Hebrew, means to open wide, to loosen, break forth. The word translated as everlasting is olam in Hebrew, meaning time out of mind - past OR future, eternity.

...We are doors whereby the eternal purposes of God break forth upon the earth. A people not limited by the chronos (natural) time, but bringing the kairos (appointed) due-time of the eternal to invade and subdue the chronos, that the King of Glory shall come in.

First, this teacher places an entirely NEW interpretation on the word gate or door; then on the basis of HIS own novel interpretation, he sets about APPLYING his own teaching to Christians.

So he is able by this method to teach AS FROM THE SCRIPTURES, that Christians are doors that must allow the glory of God to flood the earth. He then moves on from his faulty foundation to erect another house of cards: one that says the glory of Christ is to appear here and now in a lastdays manifestation through believers. Watch how he does this:

When Christ, who IS OUR LIFE, shall appear, then shall ye also appear WITH HIM in glory. (Col. 3:4) The way that passage is worded in many translations, using when and shall appear, it is easy to mentally relegate it to a future tense. It is important to note however, that the word translated as when, hotay in Greek, really means WHENEVER; and the word shall is not in the original text. The Literal Bible translates that passage thus, "WHENEVER Christ is revealed, the life of YOU, then also YOU WITH Him will be revealed in glory". Although yes, there may well be future implications, this puts quite a different light on it for the present tense .

WHENEVER Christ appears...and where is one place we can definitely look for His appearing? In the MIDST of the candlestick, the Church; ·in the MIDST of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of man... the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Rev. 1:13, 20)

Yes, we are doors whereby the eternal King of Glory comes in WHENEVER Christ is revealed in our lives, as He reveals His glory / nature THROUGH us to bring His Kingdom to bear in our surroundings.

It's always impressive when teachers state the Hebrew or Greek of a word and pretend to give the real meaning. This only works if the teacher intends to expand on the true meaning of scripture,

not to CHANGE IT. In this instance, the meaning of a simple word and phrase is completely changed and obscured. At face value (the way we should read the bible) this verse in Colossians is a prophecy of the Lord's coming. Is it not? Read it for yourself in your own bible and note the context and surrounding verses.

Colossians 3:1-4

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Heaven "above" where Christ sits in glory is contrasted with "the earth" isn't it? The two are not identical as the false prophet tries to teach! Nor is there any hint at all in this scripture that it refers to a present-day condition rather than a future event!

Our spiritual lives and glory are "hid in Christ" not yet fully apparent because we do not have our glorious resurrection bodies as yet. But in that Day, when Jesus Christ returns from heaven above in his glory, then we will also be glorified in the resurrection! This interpretation is confirmed by scriptures such as: 1 Thess 4:16-18 and Philipians 3:20-21.

Again, an entirely NEW REVELATION is being presented by the twisting of scripture, to make it fit with a particular interpretation that is unsupported by the bible as a whole.

How truly did the prophets speak when they warned of those who twist the scriptures "to their own destruction" and to the destruction of those they teach! (2 Peter 3:15-18)

CONCLUSIONS - Right and Wrong!

First look at the summary of Psalm 24 given in the teacher's words:

"Let us lift up our heads that we may understand our authority as He lifts us up [exalts us] as doors through which the King of Glory comes in!"

How he got from A to B on this one is hopefully a little more clear to you now, and a warning to any who are inclined to accept so-called bible studies and tapes of 'scriptural teaching' as valid. Without a good grasp of the correct methods of biblical interpretation many might applaud this man for presenting an exciting new view of our role in the endtimes!

But now you have been warned, I pray you'll be able to spot and reject such false teaching and false methods of bible interpretation for yourselves.

2 Peter 3:15-18

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him.

He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen. (NIV)

## Can There be Revival without Repentance - by Sarah Leslie

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"God is going to take over the White House... He is going to take over the Oval Office... because it belongs to Him and He is going to bring all things summed up into the fullness of Christ. He is going to take that Supreme Court. He is going to turn that inside out. He is going to pray that strong man off that thing and He is going to bring the synergistic anointing of intercession and the prophetic anointing to break, to judge, to decree.... I will march into that place and declare a decree the word of the Lord boldly... He is joining the kingly and the priestly anointing." --Dutch Sheets, School of the Prophets.

In the early 1980s we were led by the Lord to work in the right to life movement. From the beginning we knew that we could not become entangled in the popular dominionist ideal of saving America through politics. But we had discovered through our research that the public had not been told the truth about abortion: its history, its methods and procedures, and its consequences. This was due to a well-documented conspiracy of silence on the part of the mainstream media and medical community. We naively thought that it would just be a matter of education – if people knew the truth they would repent.

Doors opened and opportunities presented themselves to us, in ways that we could have never dreamed. We stood before governors, presidential candidates, senators, representatives, pastors, doctors and other leaders. The Lord charged us to plainly present the truth. We quickly learned that speaking the truth made us a lightning rod. Some hated us because of our message. Some realized their sins and repented. We stood on a spiritual fault line -- one could not be neutral in the face of life and death truth. A decision had to be made after hearing the truth.

But what came of our efforts? Why have you heard of no revival where multitudes repented during the mid-'80s in a midwestern state? There was no revival.

There can be no revival without repentance.

When we told Christians in the churches the truth about abortion we began to hear stories:

Professing Christian women went to the abortionists, some more than once. One Christian woman explained that she had to cover up the sin of adultery. She feared harm to her reputation in her small town community. Another Christian woman asserted that her career, and the career of the baby's father, would have been damaged if their affair had become known.

A highly respected evangelical leader, who had been a prayer partner of ours, shared that she had previously worked in an abortion clinic. Startled by this admission, we inquired about her repentance. She believed that this was a ministry, she said, because she held the hand of the lady undergoing the procedure and prayed for the baby that was dying. Another abortion clinic worker told us that she was helping women who were needy. She felt we were in the wrong by being so "judgmental."

One day a troubled minister confessed that he had taken his girlfriend to an abortion clinic because he thought it was his duty as a good man to support his woman during this time of trial. It had never occurred to him that he had directly assisted in the killing of his own child. He was devastated for many days, but later backslid into the same sins that had led to his original act of immorality – pornography and fornication.

We heard reports of Christian mothers who coerced their daughters to undergo abortions to camouflage their promiscuity. In several churches elders relied on abortion to cover secret sins in the church leadership. There were Christian counselors and pastors who recommended abortions. Some were simply silent. They didn't speak out to defend the baby's life, following the humanistic model for non-directive psychology.

Occasionally we counseled women who had undergone abortions, but who had never been told the truth. Many of these women were emotionally devastated and experienced great loss. This included Christian women who had relied on IUD's, abortifacient birth control pills, or otherwise consented to a medical procedure which caused their fertilized embryo baby to die before implantation in the uterine wall. Despite the obvious loss of life, we knew of only one Christian doctor who didn't routinely prescribe these abortifacients. Other Christian doctors made referrals for abortions. One doctor privately told me that she feared the pressure of her medical peers.

Christian teachers in public school classrooms believed it was their duty to teach children the intimate details about sexuality, including abortion -- how to obtain one and the location of the nearest clinic.

These examples are noteworthy and astonishing for one reason: these people all claimed to be "pro-life." They voted for pro-life candidates and supported pro-life legislation. Some believed themselves to be prophets, having a special anointing from the Lord for spiritual discernment. We were alarmed. Something was going terribly awry. People who were supposed to be against abortion were participating in the very sins that contributed to the problem. What had gone wrong?

We searched for answers. Gradually over a period of many years we began to understand that abortion was merely the tip of a massive iceberg. What was underneath the church's participation in abortion? Some Christians were engaging in flagrant sins such as adultery and fornication. Lurking under those sins was often concupiscence, lasciviousness, uncleanness and inordinate affection. But we also found other, more troubling answers.

### The Leaven

We walked into the home of some friends shortly after the dinner hour. A TV was blaring in the dining room. Several comic actors were making jokes about physical characteristics that we are ashamed to mention here. The routine progressed and the woman took off her shirt to reveal her underwear. Our friends continued on as if nothing was amiss. Because we don't watch popular TV shows, we reacted to this. Was this the diet that Christians were feeding on routinely? Couldn't hearing these things with their ears and seeing these things with their eyes tempt them to sin in their heart? (Take heed what you hear Mark 4:24). Didn't Scripture command us to "mortify our members" (Col. 3:5)? And, this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication (I Th 4:3)? Even if it was just a TV show? Our friends replied that they responded to the evil in TV shows by sending money to a Christian organization that fought bad TV

programming. They wrote letters to their congressman and lobbied against Hollywood.

A friend of ours left the gay movement, repented, accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior, got married and had children. Several years later he began to minister to others, telling them how they might be saved and helping them out of the lifestyle. He soon learned that there was a great deal of money to be made if a Christian group fought anti-gay crusades in Washington, but little help was provided to ministries like his, that led men to the cross and salvation by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Christians loved to wage war against those “bad guys,” but neglected their duty to present the gospel to these tragic sinners. Our friend ultimately fled a large charismatic church which tolerated a gay pastor, covering up his sin, while publicly supporting anti-homosexual political agendas. We fled, too.

These two examples illustrate the extent to which Christians became influenced by the doctrine of dominionism. This doctrine is a leaven, permeating everything. Rampant in Christian organizations and media for the past two decades, especially because it is a lucrative and patriotic theme, dominionism is best known for teaching that America is a Christian country and that if we could only “fix” America politically everything would be a rose garden. As a consequence of this teaching, Christians began to work to restore the Ten Commandments and prayer in the schools, write letters to stop abortions, send money to stop pornography, and so forth.

According to author Al Dager, “Dominion theology refers to any number of philosophies of dominion within the churches which suggest that the world will be won to Christ by a revived Church before the Lord returns. It states, in essence, that Jesus cannot return until the Church has taken dominion over the temporal powers of the world system.” (The World Christian Movement, p. 114)

Dominionism is taught by various branches of the church, including Reformed and Reconstructionist, with different nuances and emphases. Its tenets can include the ideas that the church must 1) conduct spiritual warfare in the heavenlies, 2) establish the King and His Government on Earth, 3) make disciples of all nations (including by coercion or consensus), 4) and the Church must exhibit unity or perfection before the King will return.

Dominionism was never a traditional doctrine of Pentacostalism, but gradually its leaven infiltrated everywhere. Dutch Sheets explained it:

“Ephesians 4 is literal, before the coming of the Lord Jesus. We will fully express Him in the earth. All things will be summed up in Him. They will come back under their proper headship. They will come back into order. The earth, the fullness of the earth, the eons, the times, the seasons, they are all marching toward an appointed end where they are literally summed up in Christ and I’ll tell you what blows me away – He is doing it in us and through us.”

At a recent “School of the Prophets” conference much was said about conducting spiritual warfare in the heavenlies. C. Peter Wagner boasted that huge quantities of new written materials are being published to promote the new doctrines for a planned “2nd Reformation.” He claimed that there are many apostle/prophets who have a “high level of contacts in the spiritual and natural world.” It was asserted that once these people are “aligned” in “government” then the church would be restored, revived and gifts would be “released.”

Revival, please note, would not come through personal repentance. Instead, revival would come by the church being “restored” to its proper “order.”

Dutch Sheets clearly stated: “He (Christ) is not talking about us having to be perfect in the sense of sinless, but we are to reach full or mature. It is a word used of coming into adulthood.” The chief sins mentioned were disunity and divisiveness – referred to as a “Jezebel” spirit. The battle against evil was portrayed as a corporate battle to fight a big, bad spiritual enemy “out there.” Barbara Yoder explained this new focus: “...one of the things that God is wanting us to do is He is wanting us to change our center of thinking from self to corporate...”

## The Salt

Historical Christian doctrine, employing traditional methods of exegesis, has taught that the enemy of every believer is personal sin, which is to be resisted. Two kingdoms are in constant conflict in this world – the “prince of the power of the air” and the kingdom of the Son of God. Each individual believer is required to take a stand in one kingdom or another. One kingdom leads to eternal life and the other leads to an eternal damnation in hell. The spiritual battle is against sin and darkness in the believer’s life. This principle is made crystal clear in Eph. 2:1-5:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

A worldwide group of self-anointed, self-appointed apostle/prophets are conducting “strategic level” spiritual warfare, casting down “powers and principalities” they claim to have identified. The Scriptures, however, portray a different spiritual battle – one with eternal consequences for the believer.

Christians are to resist sin found in this world: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Christianity has traditionally emphasized the sanctification of the believer, a doctrine firmly rooted in the Word of God. Jesus Christ prayed that his followers would be kept from the evil one (John 17:14-16): I have given them thy word and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

## When Salt Loses Its Savour

Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (Matt. 5:13)

During the years we spoke against abortion many Christians entered politics. They fervently believed, and often quoted, 2 Chronicles 7:14: If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. This verse, under the influence of the leaven of dominionism, took on a political meaning, Notably, it is often quoted with these important words omitted: “and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways.”

What happened to the Christians who entered politics? Most soon compromised their highest ideals. Some even backslid into their old sins. They became salt that lost its savour. They started with earnest hopes of witnessing of Christ to others, but soon political realities realigned everyone into an “us versus them” world, where political opponents on issues became enemies. Would someone who truly stands consistently for Christian principles ever get elected (or stay in office) in our secular and pluralistic society? The political process demands coalition building, consensus, compromise, cutting deals, agreeing to take only a half loaf instead of a full loaf, agreeing to take the lesser of two evils, and supporting issues with which one disagrees.

Political dominionism puts false hopes in coalition building. It teaches that that our depraved society will be changed simply by changing a few laws, or planting a few leaders in key positions. It trusts in horses and chariots -- methods of man, not God.

## The Prophet Who Couldn't Warn

A prayer partner began urging us to attend some revival meetings at the home church of a major signs and wonders leader. She believed that this man was a prophet with an extraordinary gift of revelation. He was setting up a model city-wide church in his area. We didn't know about the Latter Rain at the time, but there was a check in our spirits. Several weeks later the story of a persecution of a Christian family who lived in this man's hometown hit newspaper headlines across the state. The persecution was of such a nature as to establish a legal foothold from which to harshly persecute other Christian believers with similar convictions. Sarah phoned our friend. Surely this prophet had seen the significance of this man's persecution! Surely he would rush to this family's defense in their hour of trial! Our friend replied that the prophet only concerned himself with “deep spiritual matters.” Sarah replied sarcastically, “He must have both his head and his feet in the clouds.”

Only later did we learn of the new brand of hyper-spiritual gnosticism that kept Christians fighting imaginary “principalities” (Acts 8:4-6) but ignoring real life sins and dangers.

Had this “prophet” supported the persecuted believer (who was a man of strong biblical convictions), he would have risked alienating other churches in his newly forming city-wide group of pastors. Spiritual dominionism, as taught by the apostle/prophets, offers the false hope of unity on earth. This unity requires that the gospel of salvation be watered down so that no member of the fragile coalition will be offended. Just like political dominionism, spiritual dominionism caters to the lowest common denominator.

2 Peter 2:7-8 contains an intriguing reference to Lot. And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) Lot lived among the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. He was continually bombarded and inundated with the perversity of that city's heathens. Not unlike our culture today as it comes across undisciplined TV and computer screens, magazines and videos. Lot, was charged by the angels to warn, the classic duty of a prophet. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law (Genesis 19:14). Lot failed utterly to communicate his message, resulting in the deaths of his two sons-in-law.

The New Testament reference is very respectful of Lot, calling him righteous. Even so, he was unable (to use the lingo of the signs and wonders crowd) "to operate fully in his spiritual gift." He had become ensnared and entangled in his seductive culture, the sins of the world.

Jesus referred to this condition as thorns: He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22) Immersing oneself in a culture of carnality and sensuality does not produce fruit in the believer. It is a stumbling block to declaring the Gospel and warning of the wrath to come. Perhaps there is a reason so many are rushing to embrace the new doctrines. Our flesh always finds it easier to fight battles outside ourselves. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (Matthew 7:5)

There is a reason why the new super-apostle/prophets have trouble sounding a real warning. Dutch Sheets explains: "We are on a journey now with that unfolding where... all that has been messed up through the Fall, all that has happened to try to get things off its path, it is on an assured, definitely assured, path of restoration -- till we get back to the right constitution of this -- the way that we were made, and intended to be, from the start. So we are in a process of all things being restored, reconstituted to this stated declared order and purpose." This utopian doctrine does not sound the warning to flee the wrath to come. This message promises the false hope of a "restoration" of the King through a "revival" that refuses to teach repentance. In spiritual dominionism there is no wrath to come! (Except a judgment to be executed by the new super-church on those who don't "bow the knee" to whomever they deem to be "King Jesus.")

The message of the new apostle/prophets and other dominionist teachers tickles the ears. It creates an enemy "outside" rather than confronting personal sin. It is an inevitable consequence of a church saturated for years with a psychologized gospel, which turned tables on sin and began to look for excuses, compromises and rationales. The new "sins" include insufficient faith, disunity, divisiveness, poverty, unhappiness, and disease. We did not witness a single example of heartfelt repentance of a concrete biblically-based sin while watching some excerpts of the "School of the Prophets" conference. Yet a vast group of prophets-in-training were being "activated" to "restore."

"See, This Is New" (Eccl. 1:10)

A pivotal doctrine taught at the "School of the Prophets" conference holds that the church is evolving. The claim was made that there is a progressive revelation of God throughout church

history. The 20th century which began with speaking in tongues, progressively received new revelation each decade thereafter: latter rain, deliverance evangelism, charismatic movement, faith (name it and claim it) movement, the prophets, then the apostles, and a coming “saints” movement for the new millennium. The leaders claim that there is new “knowledge” with each successive generation that supercedes old knowledge, and a “reconstitution” of all things. They call this new doctrine “synergy,” which is the occult term for precisely the same concept of attaining to a new order on earth (the New Age).

A related doctrine taught at the “School of the Prophets” conference is also a prominent tenet of the New Age movement. Popularized by Thomas Kuhn in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which is widely cited in New Age literature, the philosophy states that not only is our knowledge of truth evolving, but truth itself is evolving.

The apostle/prophets have adopted this doctrine. They claim to possess new revelation -- that their knowledge of God’s truth is evolving. Their mantra is “God is doing a new thing.” But, significantly, they have adopted doctrines that are so far removed from orthodox Christianity, that it is apparent that they also believe God’s truth itself is evolving. They employ a bizarre method of exegesis, taking partial Scriptures wildly out of context and making preposterous applications. To back up their new doctrines, they have resorted to citing gnostic sources. This is the ultimate consequence of placing a higher emphasis on personal revelation than God’s Truth -- the Bible.

Many rock-solid Scriptures refute these false apostle/prophets. The Bible teaches that God and His Word do not change.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Is 40:8)

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)

Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever. (152)

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter 1:23-25)

Are These Guys Serious?

The bride of Christ, according to these new doctrines, is wearing combat boots. She is to gear herself up for military/spiritual warfare. “We are up against the greatest war that we have ever been up against and we ain’t seen war yet,” proclaimed Barbara Yoder at the School of the Prophets. There is no mention of the bride wearing white. There is no intention of sanctification by cleansing and washing with the water of the Word. Rather, these leaders are building an army. Their rhetoric is filled with military words and analogies.

Perhaps this wouldn't seem so alarming if it weren't for the realities we see each day on TV, of a religious/political group who took violent doctrinal rhetoric to the next step. C. Peter Wagner's statements after the terrorist attack on September 11th are downright chilling. He aligns the spiritual warfare activities of his strategic apostolic command with the real warfare activities on earth at NORAD in Colorado Springs and boldly pronounces "apostolic declarations" about war.

Enough is enough. These so-called apostle/prophets are scary. They are also deceiving the sheep with their leaven. It is time to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 3,4)

Are these new apostle/prophets "denying Jesus"? It is becoming increasingly evident that they are following a Jesus of their own imagination. They are putting obstacles in place of worship – pillars of self-anointed, self-appointed apostles and prophets who claim to possess extra-biblical divine revelation, and to whom every local church must eventually bow. They are building databases on believers, enabling them to have confessional booth knowledge of private lives. They are forging alliances with leaders in government, including the United Nations. They are building ecumenical structures with interlocking boards of directors. They are laying the foundation for a state church.

Make no mistake about it: this foundation is not the Rock, Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone. These apostle/prophets are setting up a new priesthood which interferes with the priesthood of all believers. Their 2nd Reformation will reverse the first Reformation and turn the church back towards bondage. Believers are taught that they need super-charged anointings from select leaders in order to become mature in the faith. The apostle/prophets claim to have new divine revelations from the Lord which supercede the Word of God. These leaders are building upon the sand, not the Rock.

Isn't it time to renounce these leaders? Isn't it time to put a huge divide between them and us? Isn't it time to tell the world that these people do not represent authentic biblical Christianity? Do we have to wait for them to actually put on combat boots before we realize the horror of what could happen if their war rhetoric turns into reality?

It is time to gird up our loins and be prepared to turn the other cheek. Much of their war rhetoric is directed against those who oppose them on biblical grounds. These men are on record, making threats against those who are not in agreement with them. Dutch Sheets "prophesied" that the "Jehus are coming!" against the Jezebel spirit. That so-called "Jezebel spirit" is anyone who still stands on the pure, unadulterated Word of God – especially anyone who dares write or speak against the self-anointed, self-appointed "elect."

The Case of the Missing Doctrines (or, How To Be A Salty Christian)

30 years ago we were saved in the midst of a genuine revival. It was called the "Jesus Movement" because it focused on Jesus and the cross. Although there is evidence that the revival may have been "engineered" in the beginning, it grew rapidly because it taught a gospel of repentance. This revival was characterized by hippies turning away from a life of sin (drugs, alcohol and promiscuity) to Christ.

When we were first saved we were taught several doctrines which are no longer widely taught in evangelical and charismatic churches today. We were taught that we would be tempted to go back to our old life of sin unless we began practicing these doctrines. They would protect us from evil, guard our faith, and keep our walk holy. These doctrines stemmed from a proper understanding of the believer's place in the world. Here are some examples:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. (Romans 6:11-12)

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. (James 4:4)

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-13)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Col 3: 1-3)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. (I Peter 1: 14-15)

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (II Cor 7:14-18)

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Romans 13:12-14)

These Scriptures have to do with separation and non-conformity. A believer is to be separated from unbelievers and idolators, and be consecrated holy unto the Lord. A believer is not to conform to this world, with all of its lusts, but is to conform to the perfect will of God. These two principals kept many a baby Christian from returning to their former friends, former lusts, spiritual

errors and previous manner of sinful life. Please note the last Scriptural reference above. Here is a clear example of spiritual warfare. These verses do not call for a believer to cast down high powers and principalities, or to set up governments and kings, but to cast off the works of darkness (sin) and put on holiness, which is an armour against the lusts of the flesh.

How does one put on holiness? It is time to return to a simple faith and trust in your first Love, Jesus Christ, who died on a cross so that your sins might be forgiven. Read the Bible every day employing traditional methods of Bible study. Stay away from the wacky exegetical style of "replacement" theology employed by the signs and wonders prophets. Instead take each verse and ask the Lord to show you in your heart where you need to apply it to your life. What is God plainly saying? Are you convicted? Do you need to ask the Lord for forgiveness? Do you need to make some changes in your life? Even if you look "peculiar" in the eyes of a worldly church? Are you willing to walk the narrow way, even if you are very alone on that path? Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Ps. 119:105)

### The Revival That Wasn't

During the last half of the 20th century, at the same time period the apostle/prophets claim God was doing mighty restorations and revivals, America aborted tens of millions of babies. Babies became inconveniences, not blessings. There was a moral landslide into filth. And, as we poignantly documented at the beginning of this article, Christians slid right along with the rest of culture. Old doctrines that used to be taught disappeared, or evolved to become more palatable for modern life. The culture became de-Christianized, and in many cases outright pagan. Christians gradually stopped acting as salt and light, by saturating the culture with their positive effect of holy living and righteousness. Instead they adopted the leaven of spiritual and political dominionism, which may have assuaged their guilt, but did little to spread the gospel message.

There was no revival. There is no revival. There can be no revival without repentance.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Joshua 24:15)

## "Tommy Tenney and the God Chasers - A Review" - by Mike Taylor

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### 1. TOMMY TENNEY

The book *The God Chasers*[TGC] was published in February 1999 by Destiny Image of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> The author is Tommy Tenney, an annual speaker at Dave Markee's church, Follys End, in Croydon, southern England. Tenney has raised a number of issues as a serious challenge to the Church of today, many of which are valid. The radical solution to the Church's malaise which he proposes is examined in this survey. The issues Tenney raises are rightly disturbing to those who are willing to think seriously about the real state of today's Church, particularly in the USA and UK.

One problem area in the Evangelical Church concerns our attitude to the Bible, which is the written Word of God. In our experience-oriented culture, there is always the danger of people seeking spiritual experiences almost apart from the Bible and then pulling out Biblical texts to try to justify their experiences. There is a lack of testing things by the Word; people prefer to judge by other criteria, such as their reason, or their gut feelings, or whether it is in line with the way they perceive the purposes of God in what they see as the Endtime generation. For this reason some people, particularly those frightened of fanaticism, treat the written text as if it has nothing to contribute to our daily life in God apart from the bare written text. This Word-only approach to the Christian life seems to provide an answer for the timebeing, but, in the longterm, Christians who want to know God intimately find it barren and frustrating. In this way, pressure builds up within and some believers, once thought to be so "sound", suddenly "break out" and join strange Christian groups or give their support to strange emphases within Church circles.

Our meditation on the text of God's Word should always be combined with a positive seeking of God in the Word. It is not enough just to read the Bible each day. Our reading should be combined with a spiritual intensity which seeks God's presence and voice in His written Word. Of course, the devil can try to apply the Word to us to bring under his control, so we always need to test everything that comes to us with power by praying, "Lord, if this is of You, I accept it. But if it is from the devil, I reject it in Jesus' name". It should not be forgotten that devil quoted the Bible to Jesus Himself and he replied by wielding the Word. God the Father empowered Him to use a particular part of the Bible to oppose the satanic lie.

Another issue is the presence of God in our Christian gatherings. Often Christians do assume that God is present in their gatherings simply because of Jesus' words that He would be among us. But what is overlooked is that He said, "in My name".

Christians holding a meeting is not the same thing as gathering in His name. When we gather, it should be with the awareness that we are, on that occasion, gathering in or with His authority. Then we should ensure that we come with a right attitude: not just to meet with each other, but to meet with Him.

This means that we are expecting Him to be present in way He would not be present if we are meeting with unbelievers. There should be different feeling to the meeting, a sense or awareness of His presence. But this sense of His presence should resonate with what we know of God already in our spirits, if we have been truly born again and the Spirit of God lives in us. This has nothing to do with shakings or jerks or other bizarre phenomena.

Then again, to what extent should we expect God to “redefine the Church”? Naturally, it all depends what is meant. Certainly if it means that we should reconsider the way we do things and not just keep up traditions as if they have acquired some intrinsic sanctity by virtue of having been done that way for generations, then it is true that rediscovering the Biblical definition of the Church is necessary. The Lord should be the One who directs us in all we do.

Furthermore, it is understandable that He may not wish us to continue forever in some of our traditions. However, this does not justify the attempt to impose manmade structures on to the Church ‘in the name of God’. Much of what is touted today as “redefining the Church” is merely a sales-pitch for the agenda of a group of people who want to be accepted as “apostles” and “prophets” by the Church as a whole.

The agenda of pastors signing cross-denominational covenants, and submitting to the control of super-apostles has to be promoted by threatening people that, if they do not go along with it, they may miss what God is doing today.

Whereas there are good Biblical grounds for decisively rejecting the claims of these men who claim today to be “apostles” and “prophets”. The whole issue of reconsidering the way we “are church” or “do church” is important, but it is something that should be examined independently by each local congregation before the Lord. Another key issue raised is that of brokenness before God. Our obligation to walk the way of the cross is a teaching which is largely lacking in modern Evangelical and Charismatic circles.

However, it is a fact that the cross is God’s remedy for self-righteousness, and even for self-consciousness, self-will and self-determination. Everything we are and have must be placed on the altar before God for Him to resurrect as He chooses. Our real enemy is sin and those legitimate aspects of us tainted by sin need cleansing, not destruction. Our understanding of what needs to be dealt with in our lives is usually distorted, which is why there can confusion and why teaching on the cross must be applied by the Holy Spirit and not enforced by the will of our human mentors. Warped teaching in this area can be highly destructive to our spiritual lives.

It is as if a surgeon in the course of his operation removed some healthy organs from our physical bodies. There is no teaching in the Bible, rightly-understood, which encourages us to desire the destruction or setting aside of natural aspects of ourselves in order to penetrate the spirit-world.

Tenney raises all these issues for debate, and rightly so. However, the real question before us is whether Tenney’s verdict on these issues really is God’s verdict on these issues. Accordingly, his proposed solutions will now be examined.

## Background

Tommy Tenney referred in *The God Chasers* to his father as “a national leader in a Pentecostal denomination in America”.[TGC29] although the identity of this denomination was not disclosed in

that book. Tommy Tenney's father, the Rev. Tom F. Tenney, is in fact the District Superintendent of the Louisiana District United Pentecostal Church [UPC], a position he has held since 1978. He is based in Tioga, Louisiana, and is regarded by the UPC International [UPCI] as "progressive and visionary".<sup>2</sup> T.F. Tenney is married to Mrs Thetus Tenney, a much-travelled international speaker and Coordinator of the World Network of Prayer, an international prayer service sponsored by the UPCI.<sup>3</sup>

The UPC is the largest denomination of Oneness Pentecostals in the world. Altogether there are an estimated 17 000 000 Oneness Pentecostals worldwide and about 2 100 000 of them in the USA. They are divided into many denominations and splinter groups, the largest being the UPC, which in 1997 had grown to around 700 000 members in the USA. Five years earlier, in 1992, the membership figures for the largest Oneness Pentecostal denominations were as follows:

United Pentecostal Church International (400 000)

Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (200 000)

Bible Way Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ (100 000)

United Church of Jesus Christ (100 000)

Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith (45 000)

Pentecostal Churches of Apostolic Faith (25 000)<sup>4</sup>

Oneness Pentecostals sometimes call themselves "Apostolic" to distinguish themselves from trinitarian Pentecostals.

Oneness Pentecostals accept the Deity of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture. But they reject the doctrine of the Trinity and insist that people should be immersed in water "in the name of Jesus" and not "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." T.F. Tenney (senior) himself insists that Oneness doctrine does not contradict the Bible.<sup>5</sup>

Other problems with Oneness Pentecostalism are legalism, elitism, and judgmentalism towards orthodox Christians. Oneness groups tend to regard people who have not been immersed "in Jesus' name" as unsaved and the UPC itself goes as far as to insist that people who have been immersed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be reimmersed "in the name of Jesus", because otherwise they will remain unsaved. This encourages UPC members to think that their admittance into heaven is decided by their own performance rather than by simple faith in Christ's atonement.

Oneness Pentecostals, including the UPC, insist that the reception of the Holy Spirit must be accompanied by speaking in tongues. As a result, many of them maintain that Christians who do not speak in tongues are not even saved.

Hardline Oneness adherents believe that they are into higher truth because of their superior doctrine and strict holiness standards. The UPC official holiness code presents to its members a long list of 'dos-and-don'ts'. They are urged not to watch television or go to cinemas, or sports events. Women are instructed not to wear makeup, jewellery, trousers, or short hairstyles. Indeed, members of hardline UPC churches are taught that Christians who are not UPC members are

hellbound because they watch television or wear jewellery.

The overall effect is that UPC members believe that they are saved by their works rather than by grace alone. One pastor, interviewed for Charisma & Christian Life Magazine, who wished to remain anonymous, said:

“I was taught in the UPC that we were the body of Christ – that we had the whole gospel and everyone else just had a part. No one actually came out and said that other Christians aren’t going to heaven, but that attitude was implied.”<sup>6</sup>

Many prominent leaders have broken ranks with the UPC over the years. In 1976 Pastor C.G. “Jabo” Green of Houston, Texas, was elected to lead a network of dissident UPC leaders who wanted more grace and less sectarianism. This organization represents about 430 US ministers.<sup>7</sup> However, most pastors in this network still hold to the Oneness position on the Godhead, although they do not require new members to be reimmersed “in Jesus’ name” or expect conformity to a set of holiness standards. Neither do they teach that trinitarian Believers are unsaved.<sup>8</sup>

#### Tommy Tenney and the UPC

Tommy F. Tenney was born in 1956 and began preaching when he was 16. He spent almost 10 years pastoring in the UPC until he became an itinerant UPC evangelist in the early 1980s and continued in that role until he left the UPC in 1992. His departure was made difficult because of his father’s prominence in the UPC. With commendable integrity, Tenney (junior) said:

“Many UPC pastors preach against television, but they have their TVs at their homes on the lake. I can’t live like that.”<sup>9</sup>

He added that, when he left the UPC, his eyes were opened to “how big the body of Christ really is.”<sup>9</sup>

There is no indication that Tenney (junior) has renounced the Oneness error. Indeed, whatever his personal beliefs in regard to the Godhead, it is evident that he does not see Oneness as error as he and his father, who is still a UPC official, have coauthored a book entitled Secret Sources of Power.<sup>10</sup> It would be difficult to coauthor a book on a spiritual topic with someone who was deemed to be in serious error, yet this book is advertized on The God Chasers website, along with other books by Tommy Tenney.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, T.F. Tenney’s support for his son’s present ministry and The God Chasers book is printed within the book itself:

“This book points you in the right direction. I commend my son, Tommy, and this book that matches the times.”[TGCviii]

Either Tenney himself still holds to the Oneness error or else, unlike orthodox Christians, he considers it an issue of only secondary importance.

Significantly, he also claimed to have received a genuine experience of the Holy Spirit within the UPC:

I am a fourth generation Spirit-filled Christian, three generations deep into ministry ...[TGC2]

However, unlike many Oneness Pentecostals, Tenney claimed to accept justification by faith:

I am not implying that we are saved by our works. Salvation is a work of grace alone through the finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.[TGC33]

Tenney's spiritual quest

Around the time he left the UPC, Tenney was dissatisfied with his religion. He testified:

"I am a fourth generation Spirit-filled Christian, three generations deep into ministry, but I must be honest with you: I was sick of church." [TGC2]

This attitude persisted for some time after his departure from the UPC. Bishop Joseph L. Garlington, Sr, pastor of Covenant Church of Pittsburgh (CCOP), Pennsylvania, testified:

"I first met Tommy Tenney four years ago [c1994] at a pastor's conference in Beaumont, Texas. He was hungry for God – I recognized the look. It was the same one I had before going to Toronto a few months earlier. We prayed together, and didn't see each other for about two years." [TGCix]

After this two-year break, they met up again:

"When I saw him again, he had found God in a very profound way – so much so that just listening to him appealed to something so deeply imbedded in our spirits that we were almost instantly in the presence of One whom this man had been 'chasing.'" [TGCix]

What changed things for Tenney was a series of dramatic events on Sunday October 20, 1996, at Christian Tabernacle, Houston, Texas, where Richard Heard is Senior Pastor. Tenney wrote:

My life changed forever on the October weekend in Houston, Texas, when God's presence invaded the atmosphere like a thunderbolt and split the podium at the Sunday service. [TGC83] Tenney had been invited to take the service. After a tremendous buildup of a spiritual presence within the building during a time of worship, Heard asked him if he was ready to speak to the people and Tenney replied:

"Pastor, I'm just about half-afraid to step up there, because I sense that God is about to do something." [TGC6]

As Heard himself went to the platform "he appeared visibly shaky" [TGC6]. Tenney walked to the back of the auditorium and stood by the sound booth to see what would happen. Heard first read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and then said:

"The word of the Lord to us is to stop seeking His benefits and seek Him. We are not to seek His hands any longer, but seek His face." [TGC7]

Tenney reported what followed in these words:

"In that instant, I heard what sounded like a thunderclap echo through the building, and the pastor was literally picked up and thrown backward about ten feet ... . When he went backward, the pulpit fell forward. The beautiful flower arrangement positioned in front of it fell to the ground, but by the time the pulpit hit the ground, it was already in two pieces. It had split into two pieces almost as if lightning had hit it! At that instance the tangible terror of the presence of God filled that room." [TGC7]

Tenney reported that it was 2½ hours before Heard could get up again. While in this cataleptic state, the only sign of life was the trembling of his hand.

The two pieces of the pulpit are now proudly displayed in the church. Apparently it was made of hi-tech acrylic plastic said by engineers to be able to withstand tens of thousands of pounds pressure per square inch.[TGC16]12

There is clearly a problem with manifestations of this kind. This can be seen by comparison with miraculous healings. When someone is healed miraculously, anyone, Christian or not, can connect it to the grace of God. A healing genuinely from God clearly reflects His kindness and concern for suffering humanity. In this way, the miracle has a message. It is the same with any true miracle of deliverance. All of them reflect the grace of God in a comprehensible way. This is always true of such works of God, whether miraculous or otherwise.

However, sometimes God administers punishment to people in this life in judgment against their sin. This is actually more common than is generally acknowledged in modern Christian circles. In some cases, this is done in a miraculous way to produce maximum shock and fear in the observers. In the Book of Acts, there are clear examples of this. One case involved Ananias and Sapphira who sold a field and gave a portion of the proceeds to the apostles for distribution among poor believers. Their sin was that they pretended that the sum they were presenting was actually the full amount which they had received for the sale of the land. The Holy Spirit showed Peter what was going on and he rebuked both husband and wife for lying to the Holy Spirit. They died on the spot (Acts 5:1-11).

Another case is that of Herod giving a speech, when his audience said that they had heard the voice of God and not a man. Because Herod failed to give the glory to God at that point, he was instantly eaten by worms and he died on the spot (Acts 12:20-23). Tenney often refers to Uzzah who tried to steady the ark of God while it was being transported on an oxcart to Jerusalem. As soon as Uzzah touched the ark, God struck him so that he died on the spot (2 Samuel 6:6-7). There are many other Biblical examples.

However, the message of all these interventions is very clear: God was displeased with some thing the people involved did and acted in judgment against them. They all carry their own message and no one is any doubt as to their meaning and purpose.

But what is to be made of this strange phenomenon: the splitting of a pulpit? I would like to suggest that any unbiased reader told of the incident and without reading the spin put on it in The God Chasers would come up with only two options.

At first sight, the incident sounds like an act of God's judgment: a loud bang, the pastor being thrown 8-9 feet backwards and landing on the floor, a virtually unbreakable pulpit being split by a jagged break and falling forward, the flower display being scattered...

If this is from God, it certainly looks like judgment. People would normally ask whether the pastor had displeased God in some way and whether God was about to cast off that church.

However, the message of this incident is not so clearcut. Why is this? First, the pastor was unharmed, being perfectly well afterwards. If God had been judging him of some sin, it would have to be really serious to warrant such a dramatic judgment and it is likely that he would have died on

the spot, just as in the examples we have seen already.

Furthermore, there is no evidence that the pastor had been involved in serious sin of the kind which would warrant a public judgment of so dramatic a nature.

Then again the pastor himself claimed that a number of apparently beneficial miraculous events occurred on the days following this strange phenomenon. And perhaps most importantly, there was no prophetic warning of coming judgment or prophetic explanation in terms of judgment immediately after the event to warn other people that if they engage in similar sins, they would be likewise wiped out. So, although to any normal observer, the scenario looked like an outpouring of God's judgment, there are anomalies which seem to contradict this possibility.

The second possibility is a poltergeist-type phenomenon. "Poltergeist" is the German for a "noisy" or "boisterous" spirit or "ghost". It is the term used to denote spirits, or demons, which enter homes or other buildings to cause observable chaos. While the spirits remain invisible, they cause visible phenomena, such as objects floating around in the air and push objects off shelves to the ground. Although these phenomena are frightening, people are seldom hurt and objects seldom damaged. However, permanent damage does sometimes occur.

If the phenomena at Houston were not an action of God's judgment (which they clearly were not), then it would seem that it must have been the activity of deceiving spirits.

Tenney would clearly not agree with either of these and suggested, instead, a third possibility:

"I'll never forget telling my friend, the pastor, 'You know, God could have killed you.' I wasn't laughing when I said it. It was as if God had said, 'I'm here and I want you to respect My presence.'"[TGC83]

God repossessed His church for a period of time and He wouldn't allow anything to happen that He hadn't specifically ordained for that service.[TGC 83]

The implication of this is that God did not possess His church before, or even after, these phenomena for any significant length of time. Did God otherwise disown that church at other times? What Tenney seems to be getting at is that God is not sufficiently present in church meetings in general. This is illustrated by a statement which Tenney made to Charisma reporter James Rutz in Houston. Tenney told him that he believed God had zapped the podium in two "as a symbolic slap in the face for the tight human control of the church across America."<sup>13</sup>

There is no denying that a hallmark of many churches in the USA is tight human control. Americans are very good at organizing and this can easily dominate church-life.

So when an unusually strong spiritual presence took over, it seemed obvious to Tenney that God was, as it were, 'repossessing' the church as if He had disowned it before. But this conjunction of human control and wild phenomena does not prove the truth of Tenney's interpretation. In reality, Tenney's attempted explanation is confused and highlights a general tendency throughout The God Chasers to attribute to God phenomena which actually have the marks of some source other than Himself. Indeed, what Tenney actually does is to take as normative phenomena which he had encountered either in the course of his Oneness Pentecostal background or in some other meetings he attended since, and then attribute these to God. In one case, he actually

superimposed a phenomenon on to his reading of Scripture.

He stated that “Moses kept the veil over his face after the shine of ‘glory dust’ faded.”[TGC20] In fact nowhere does the Bible ever speak of “glory dust”, although this is a phenomenon which certain more extreme Pentecostal groups claim from time to time. The Bible just says that the skin of Moses face shone. It would seem that Moses’ skin became charged with the glory of God and functioned as a kind reflector for the glory.

But there is no evidence that any shining physical-type substance was attached to the surface of his skin. The use of the phrase “glory dust”, although seemingly no more than a detail in Tenney’s book, is actually very revealing and serves to illustrate a thread running through his entire approach to spiritual phenomena.

Argentinian ‘revival’: the issue of discernment

Tenney’s discernment is seriously brought into question by his embracing the 1951 Argentinian ‘revival’ described by Dr R. Edward Miller in his books Thy God Reigneth and Cry for Me, Argentina. [TGC 52-53, 147]

On June 4, 1951, a Latter Rain style ‘revival’ in Argentina was heralded by a supposed ‘angelic’ presence. It was reported by Dr R. Edward Miller in his book Thy God Reigneth.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, on that day (June 4, 1951), Alexander, a Polish teenager attending the Bible Institute in City Bell, a small town near Buenos Aires, had felt the heavens with its stars to be pressing down on him causing him to cry out. The stars seemed to change into great orbs of fire, becoming ever brighter.

Then in their intense light a greater light appeared. A Being from the heavenly world drew near until it enfolded him.<sup>15</sup>

Trying to escape this “Visitor”, Alexander fled to the Institute. However, “the Heavenly Visitor entered with him.”<sup>16</sup>

The following day, the “Heavenly Visitor” stood by Alexander, who was transported in spirit to far away countries and began to make journeys over the face of the earth, looking down, seeing many cities and knowing the name of each of them. Beginning in Argentina, he began to ‘travel’ over foreign countries, apparently naming cities which “the Lord promised to visit before the end comes”.<sup>17</sup> Although barely educated, he was enabled to reel off the names in the native languages of the inhabitants of each city.<sup>18</sup>

The next morning, the “Visitor manifested Himself and stood by the side of Alexander. He could not be seen in human form, but manifested Himself so markedly that we all knew that He had come. In spirit He was seen by Alexander who talked to Him.”<sup>19</sup> The “Angel” then began to speak in a language unknown to Alexander, who repeated all the words.

Then another lad, Celsio, a local and even less educated than Alexander, was given the meaning of the statements in Spanish. Every time he tried to repeat these, he had a choking sensation and could get no words out. However, he was able to write out the words.<sup>20</sup>

One student felt that the manifestations were demonic: “This is of the Devil and must be stopped!”<sup>21</sup> However, when he saw the messages, he changed his mind and concluded: “I know Celsio and

his lack of education and literary ability. Only God could cause him to write in a style like this.” 22

Although the sample of the writing provided would certainly seem to indicate that the writings came from a spiritual source, they do resemble spiritistic productions more than anything originating from the Holy Spirit. 23 The following thoughts on Dr Miller and the Peniel Revival teaching by Char Stucki who was strongly influenced by him at a crucial stage in her spiritual life will be of interest. Stucki wrote:

My husband and I met Ed Miller in 1963 at the Peniel Bible Institute in Mar del Plata. We lived in Argentina for the next three years and worked in affiliation with the Argentine Bible Assemblies, which he founded. The last year, we lived at the Institute and were in close contact on a daily basis with him, sitting under his teaching in day time classes and nightly meetings.

I have to acknowledge that I was personally “bowled over” and “awed” by the mystique of this man. I venerated him deeply as a person of intimate acquaintance with God. I believed that he had “penetrated” into a place in God far beyond the average run of the mill Christian, and having a very mystical bent myself, I wanted to discover the secrets of the Kingdom that he seemed to have discovered. I would often weep when he spoke about God, and then be alternately frustrated because his “gnosis” seemed to be so far beyond mine and so out-of-reach.

It took many years to unravel the knot that the Peniel teaching that was perpetrated by Bro. Miller and his sons produced within me.

The name of their ministry, Peniel, perhaps best summarizes the focus of their teaching. Peniel was the place where Jacob, alone, wrestled with the angel of God and his thigh was finally disjointed and he declared, “I have seen God face to face and my soul is delivered.” Brother Miller himself claimed to have had such an “experience of God” years before in Mendoza, which he wrote about in his book, Thy God Reigneth, now published as The Flaming Flame. After an intense period of seeking God in prayer and fasting, God revealed Himself to him, and he heard things that were “unspeakable to utter”. Things that he said that he could never tell anyone, not even his wife. Secrets, hidden things, mysteries of God that could not be shared.

Looking back on those years when my young, yearning heart longed to also be one of the “enlightened ones”, I realize that this was nothing less than mysticism, a christianized version of gnosticism, in which there are those with a higher knowledge of spiritual things, people who have met the conditions, have pressed through into deeper spiritual realms and acquired an understanding that only comes to those who “strive to enter” and “battle through all of the opposition” into that heavenly dimension where God manifests and reveals himself.

Besides this mystical knowledge of God that he possessed, and which others who were willing to belong to God’s inner circle could also possess, there was a strong emphasis on “holiness unto the Lord”. The church which Edward Miller founded in Atlanta, Georgia bears that writing on its pulpit.

Brother Miller believed and taught that a Peniel-type encounter with God would also produce holiness of life and that a believer who had seen God face to face would manifest godliness of life and be a person of prayer, devotion, service, worship, separation from the world, etc. He believed that a genuine revival would bring believers into that kind of a life-style. He was passionate about

urging people to “experience the manifest Presence of God” where they would have a face to face meeting with God that would result in a changed life. Who could argue with a goal like that, especially when as a minister, one is surrounded by people who often seem indifferent to God, or who struggle with sins in the flesh, or who manifest other carnal behaviors and attitudes?

I cannot argue with the desire for genuine godliness or the fruit of the Spirit to be borne in the life of a believer. My contention is not as such with the “what” as it is with the “how” of the Christian life as it was taught at Peniel. (Though I would be careful to say that prayer, devotion, worship, separation from the world, etc., characterized the Pharisees and that all that glitters is not gold.)

Romans 10 speaks of the people of God who had a “zeal for God but not according to knowledge.” A people who “being ignorant of God’s righteousness went about to establish their own.” A people of whom Isaiah said, “they seek Me day by day, and desire knowledge of My ways. As a nation that has done right, and not forsaking the judgment of their God, they ask Me about judgments of righteousness; they desire to draw near to God.”

What was the problem? The problem according to Romans 10 is that they “sought righteousness, but not by faith.” They sought a righteousness that one had to “ascend into heaven to bring down.” Or alternately, to “descend into hell to bring up.”

One of the major emphases in the Peniel teaching was that two pronged mysticism. We were taught that “high praise” would bring the manifest presence of God into a meeting. That when the level of desire and intensity reached a certain point, God would descend and “manifest Himself” and then people could experience Him. On the other hand, we were taught that God could only reveal Himself to a broken and contrite people, so other meetings would be a “descent” into agonizing prayer and weeping and repentance over sins, and when the contrition and repentance was ‘deep enough’, God would also respond. The focus was always on the subjective conditions that God required from the soul in order for Him to accomplish His inward work. I NEVER heard the objective proclamation of the Gospel facts which are to be believed and received in simple child-like faith, or again as Romans 10 says, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we proclaim)”. It took many, many years before the mental garbage and clutter could be swept out of my mind, and my heart could begin to rest in the finished work of Christ, the righteousness that has been given to every believer, that does not depend on my fickle feelings or subjective experiences, or some inner work that the Spirit does “in me”, but rather is a righteousness that is “in Christ”, forever settled in heaven - the righteousness that is based on believing the Truth of Christ and Him crucified, not upon my “experience.” And that it is as true of the weakest believer as it is of the most “mature” one. (Whatever that means.)

This teaching was carried to its extreme, but probably logical, conclusion several years ago in Atlanta when Brother Miller was still pastoring there. I am hesitant to write about it, because I was not personally present, and only have the stories of a number of very disillusioned people who were there. The church experienced a ‘move of God’ which originally began in Holland. What characterized this ‘revival’ was that people began to have terrifying experiences of hell and judgment and their lostness. These were people, many of whom had been believers for many years. I am told that they would literally at times, feel the flames of hell, feel themselves hanging over a pit ready to fall in, would “see” scenes of the Crucifixion, would feel their guilt for having killed the Son of God. They would lie prostrate and scream and wail and weep, sometimes for

hours, in agony. And then, for the fortunate ones, relief would come and they believed that they had been truly “converted” or “born again”.

This became the standard for an authentic conversion, and those who did not pass through an experience of this nature believed that God had by-passed them and that they were not really saved. I have personally talked to at least eight people who were not among those who had this experience, and one who did, and they are all totally disillusioned and have been unable to recover from the damage that this wreaked upon their faith.

There are so many ramifications to all of this, and I personally have spent years re-discovering the truth of the Gospel which I lost during those Argentina-seeking-for-revival years. The essence of it all, however, boils down to this:

The Gospel makes our starting point what religious zeal makes the destination. The believer who does not understand the Gospel of God's grace is constantly striving to ‘arrive’ at some higher level of spirituality. Always trying to find a way to fix his sinful flesh. To become more devoted or godly. The Gospel justifies the ungodly and sanctifies the sinner and makes him “in Christ” as righteous and holy as he will ever be, because his righteousness is not in his flesh, but in the Man Christ Jesus. The Gospel freely gives a man who believes a perfect standing in the presence of God. And now, because we are justified, we are sanctified, we are cleansed, we are free, we can walk in love and the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us by the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. It is a life of rest and peace, not constant striving to “become.” It is a life of quiet “abiding in Christ”, not trying to get “into Christ”.

It is a life of believing, not achieving or trying to meet conditions of intense prayer, warfare, break-throughs to reach a God who is afar off. It is a life of being identified with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension, not a life of agonizing for that mystical moment when God sees that I have met the conditions and comes and “visits” me. 24

The menace of failed discernment

It is significant that Tenney commends both this Argentinian ‘revival’ and the Hebrides Awakening of 1949-1953. The Hebrides work was clearly a work of the Holy Spirit and, despite the extraordinary phenomena accompanying it, few orthodox Evangelicals would have any difficulty accepting it as a work of God. Nothing in it contradicted the Bible or what might be termed ‘received Evangelical wisdom’!

This is quite different from the sheer alienness of the Argentinian ‘revival’ which requires a fundamental paradigm-shift among orthodox Christians before they would be able to accept it. However, this seems to be no problem for Tenney in his present phase as he lumps the true and the false together without hesitation. Someone whose discernment is as confused as this is simply not qualified to deliver a trustworthy interpretation of spiritual phenomena which he encounters. It is worth noting also that many of these churches in which unprecedented phenomena of this kind occur are those which have already embraced the kind of spirituality associated with the contemporary “River Revival”.

Failure in discernment is not necessarily a reflection on a person's character. He may be a true Christian brother. He may be the most gracious, humble Believer in the history of the Church, but if

his discernment is confused by exposure to wrong teaching and acceptance of deceiving spirits, he cannot be trusted in this matter. In this area, uncomfortable facts must be faced. Only then can we help our confused brothers and sisters.

In the case of Tenney, he was brought up in a Pentecostal tradition which is clearly flawed in many areas, enshrining both first-rank error and failure in discerning the source of spiritual phenomena. UPC churches are noted for the great exuberance of their services and for working up emotions. They believe that all members should “speak in tongues”. In Biblical teaching, “the gift of languages” is something which God gives to people in His sovereignty as and when it is needed. It is not something which people can imitate and use whenever they choose. Therefore, in any denomination, sect or cult, which encourages every member to “get the gift” in order to attain a particular level of spirituality or a particular anointing for ministry, it is clear that the majority will find themselves experiencing a manifestation which does not originate with the Holy Spirit.

A book published by the UPC and widely read in Oneness circles is J.T. Pugh’s How to Receive the Holy Ghost. Pugh encourages a person to adopt the right psychological attitude when seeking to receive the Holy Spirit. The seeker must “condition himself in much the same manner” as a “person being instructed in the process of diving into water” in that he must “[yield] himself over to an element and influence he is not well acquainted with”.<sup>25</sup> Then he suggests that the seeker try repeating a word or phrase over and over again as part of his effort to loose himself from “the fleshly process of thought”.<sup>26</sup> This is to help him “suspend himself in the state of willingness and yielding”.<sup>27</sup>

He further suggests that the seeker should “deliberately ... move away from our own language” and “go backward to the babblings of a baby”.<sup>28</sup> Pugh admits that such babblings may not initially be Spirit-inspired, but if the seeker “continues in the state of spiritual suspension and yielding” to the place when he comes to “a psychic zero,” he will be filled with the Spirit.<sup>29</sup> According to Pugh, this “cannot fail”.<sup>30</sup> So much for the Lordship of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Believer!

Yet even in trinitarian circles, where people would be expected to know better, most “tongues” are a psychological phenomenon which anyone, even a nonChristian, can learn to do, provided he or she becomes sufficiently disinhibited. There are also demonic counterfeits of “tongues” or “languages”, which occur less often. It is a sad fact that some demonic counterfeits are actually authentic languages, whereas most Pentecostal “tongues” are no more than gibberish.

A person brought up in the Oneness tradition, which is blatant and utterly unapologetic about such psychological manipulation, yet still calling both his forbears and himself “Spirit-filled”, clearly accepts all such manifestations as true products of the Holy Spirit. But unless such a person repents of all counterfeits which he has experienced or accepted, he will remain undiscerning in such matters. His discernment will always be compromised until he stands in clear judgment against past false experiences.

## "The Reproach of the Solemn Assembly" - by David Wilkerson

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(Transcribed from a audio tape recording  
of a Message at Times Square Church)

Zephaniah 3:18 - "I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. "

This is a dual prophecy by Zephaniah. It has to do with the children of Israel . . . and also with spiritual Zion (which is the church of Jesus Christ of the last day). First of all, he was speaking to Jews - that God was going to gather together the dispersed . . . but He was only going to bring back those who had a broken heart for the sad condition of Israel. . . . He would remember all who carried the reproach. . . all of the horrible things that were going on in God's House. Those who carried the burden of it, He said, "I am going to gather you". He made great promises to these. . .

This prophecy is also to the Church of Jesus Christ in the Last Day. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were called to their festivals for seven days. On the eighth day - it was called an Solemn Assembly. That was when they met especially together - putting everything aside in focused worship and praise to the Heavenly Father. The scripture says, "On the eighth day you shall have a Solemn Assembly". This Solemn Assembly is all through the Old Testament representing the congregation that is separated unto God needing to meet the Lord.

This is the Church of Jesus Christ in the Last Day. According to Zephaniah, the House of God in the Last Days is going to be under reproach. The Hebrew word hear means "shame and disgrace".

There is going to be shame and disgrace in the House of God. We are not talking about the backslidden, liberal modern church. . . . The Lord said on the Judgment Day, He will deal with that Church. We can pray for them, but we are not spend any of our grief on that which is not really the Church.

God is looking for a people who will sorrow and grieve over the reproach that is being fostered on the Church of Jesus Christ in these last days. I am talking about the Church that was born at Pentecost. I am talking about the Church that was born in the teaching of the Apostle Paul and the Apostles. The Church born in the doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus Christ. That born-again Church is under attack. That Church is suffering reproach.

It has been prophesied that in this day of reproach, shame and disgrace, God is going to raise up a holy remnant who are going grieve and weep over this defilement. . .

God will have a remnant that will not sit idly by while all of these things invade the Church. God says, "I will have a people that are not going to be satisfied to go their merry way and just ignore what is happening as Charlatans and money-mad false prophets are coming into the House of

God and destroying everything in sight."

God is going to gather a people who grieve over this. . . . If you truly love the Lord and you love His Church, you can not look honestly at what is happening today (and I am going to name these reproaches this morning). If after you hear what I have to say about this reproach, and you can walk out of this Church and you can say, "I just stand on Matthew 18 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church', I am not going to worry about, God has everything under control".

That is not enough. God uses people. God uses people to perform His work. He does not send angels. Angels weep over it, but God does not use angels to accomplish His purposes. He uses burdened broken-hearted weeping men and women. . . . Judgment is at the door, Jesus is coming. The Day of the Lord is at hand.

Wake up elders. Wake up pastors. Wake up shepherds. Take a look at the Church. Get the burden. Carry it. Why should we take on the burden of the reproach of the Solemn Assembly? Joel said, "because there is a rotten seed being planted."

A gospel is being preached that is withering everything that is in sight. Everything that is green and Godly and pure is being withered. The seed is rotten . . . . there is a famine of hearing the pure Word of the Lord. . . . there is no pasture. The flocks are desolate and hungry. The rivers are drying up. A strange fire is devouring the pastors. Ezekiel says that Shepherds are trampling down the good pasture and eating the best for themselves. What are the shameful disgraceful things that are happening in the Church of Jesus Christ today?

First of all it is the rotten seed that is being preached by covetous Shepherds. This is known as the PROSPERITY GOSPEL.

This is one of the greatest reproaches that the Church of Jesus Christ ever perpetrated since Christ. This perverted gospel is poisoning multitudes - even in China, Africa and all over the world. It is an American gospel invented and spread by rich American evangelists and pastors. Rich!

It alarms me that so many people can hear the tapes and see videos that are coming out of these prosperity conferences and not weep over them. This poison has spread all over the world. Cuba is about to open and they are itching to get in there right now with their Prosperity gospel to tell them, "you have been poor enough now, God wants all Cubans to be rich."

This past week I was given a video tape recently recorded in Kenneth Copeland's meetings. I listened to the speakers and I was dumbfounded.

Folks, you read the New Testament, you will find that Paul the Apostle named those who he believed were false prophets. He warned and he named their names. I am telling you now that if you can listen to what I am about to tell you, and not be grieved, then you are blind. You are spiritually blind. You have a hard heart. A heart with a shield on it so that the pure gospel can not penetrate it. The mind has been so saturated with this unbalanced gospel that you can not come to many of them. You can not preach the truth. You can not show them anything else in the scripture because they have a shield over their hearts. Hard hearted.

Some of you will not receive it. If you have been feeding your soul on Copeland or Hagin's tapes, you are not going to like what you hear. Folks, I am a Shepherd, I've been called by God. I made

this church a promise. As long as we are in this pulpit, if we saw wolves in sheep's clothing coming to rob the flock, we would stand up and cry out against it. It is up to you to do something about it.

I sat this week and listened to the speakers at this conference and I was so shocked and hurt. The burden of the Lord came on me. That is why I am preaching this message. Grieve over it.

I quote word for word what was said. All the speakers could hardly get by because all of the people were running up stuffing their pockets with money. The reason they do that is a new doctrine that has just come out that says, "if you want to be blessed, you have to find the most blessed evangelist or pastor you can find because he that has been given much receiveth much, he that has little, even that which he has will be taken from him. If you find the most blessed prosperous preacher and give him money, then you will be blessed. The more blessed he is, if you give you to those that are most blessed. . . ". it is a pyramid scheme. If these men were in the secular world, they would be in jail. Ponzie schemes. Pyramid schemes. The man at the top who appears to be the holiest and speaks the loudest. Hundreds of people were running up until the pockets were bulging. The sinner says, "is this the free gospel? Dollar bills?"

Listen to what was said. The speaker got up and he said, "if a poor widow on welfare hands you \$5.00, you better take it. Elijah took the widow's last meal. You are the anointed one, you deserve it, you take it."

The same speaker said, "I live in a 8,000 square foot house. I am going to build a bigger one now. One that King Solomon would be proud of. I just paid \$15,000 for a dog. You see this gorgeous ring on my finger, I was in Jamaica and just paid \$32,000 for it. I want you know that when the people in my town come past my mansion and they see my Rolls Royce sitting in the driveway, they know there is a God in heaven."

Now, you tell me, that is the gospel? You tell me that you can't weep over that.

One of the speakers got up and said, "We made a covenant along with Brother Copeland that for the next 365 days none of us are going to suffer for a single day. We will not know a moment of discouragement. We will never be sick or in need. We are going to enjoy all the blessings. We reject all suffering, all pain, all financial problems." That is fine if you are on the top of the heap.

Here is what grieves me most. This was preached. "The Holy Spirit can't be poured out upon you until first you are in the money flow. Until you are prospering, the Holy Ghost can not do His work."

Think of it! How does this affect you? What does it do to your spirit when you see poor people who are living from pay check to pay check and suddenly he says, "run for the money" and people are running wildly everywhere and they say as they run, "they are claiming the riches".

Then I see people withering like snakes out of their seats onto the floor. I see the evangelist going up and hissing like a snake and people falling everywhere. Folks, what is going on?

The Reproach of the Solemn Assembly! The prophet called them "greedy dogs, ungodly watchmen". Folks, if you had the heart of God and the burden of the Lord you would be crying out with Isaiah, "they are blind watchmen, ignorant, dumb dogs, sleeping, loving to slumber, yea, greedy dogs which can never have enough."

"I've got 8,000 square foot but I am going to sell it and I'm going to make one now that King Solomon could live in...." Never getting enough.

He said, "Shepherds that can not understand, they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain from his quarter. Jeremiah spared no words. He said, "My people are lost sheep. Their Shepherds have caused them to go astray. " You say, "Pastor, you have no right to speak so strongly on this subject." If you think I'm strong, listen to Ezekiel 34:1-10. [read this scripture]

You take \$5.00 from the widow and you buy a \$15,000 dog. You take the pay check from the widow and the poor and you tell them that they do not have enough faith - that is why they are prospering. You take the very wool from off the back of the sheep. You are not out for souls, you are out for money.

"The Shepherds fed themselves and fed not the flock, therefore O you Shepherds, hear the Word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against the Shepherds and I will require my flock at their hand and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Neither shall the Shepherds feed themselves any more, for I will deliver my flock from mouth that they may not be meat for them anymore".

I am going to deliver my flock from the teeth of these men. My God, help us.

Second, the misrepresentation of the blessed Holy Ghost. This is the worst reproach. It should make us fall on our faces. The way and the manner in which the Holy Ghost is being represented to the whole world.

Sad to say, there is so little discernment left in the church among so many pastors and even church leaders. They don't even know when the Holy Ghost is being misrepresented or blasphemed. There are thousands of Christians that go to crusades and they see things that they think is the Holy Ghost and they don't even know what they are sitting under. They are clapping and praising God while a man stands up there blaspheming and misrepresenting the Holy Ghost and they don't even know it.

Entire Charismatic denominations, including the Assemblies of God, are being torn apart, literally torn apart by pseudo revivals. All kinds of things that are happening - there is something new being introduced almost every week. The leaders don't whether to embrace it or to curse it. They don't know what to do. We get letters from hundreds and hundreds of pastors from all over the world. They say, "what is right and what is wrong?" Where are the leaders? Where is somebody to tell us?

Folks, what we are seeing today in what is called so many revivals and things that are happening attributed to the Holy Ghost can not be found in the Scripture. Anything that can not be found in this Book has to be rejected outright. Totally rejected!

I weep when I see these videos that are sent to me from all over the country. Whole groups of bodies jerking out of control, falling on the floor, laughing hysterically, staggering around like drunkards, writhing like snakes, howling like wild animals. We have evangelists that stand and blow on people to knock them down, as if the breath of the Holy Ghost is now incarnated him. Throws his "designer" jacket at people and says that is the "hand of the Lord".

Now a new Gospel has just hit South America. Folks, it is rude and crude, but I have to tell you. When you get away from the parameters of Scripture, when you get up and say: "Oh, it is a New Thing, God is doing a New Thing? I don't understand it, it is not in the Scripture, but I don't want to stand against the Holy Ghost".

Folks, if it is not in this Book, you must stand up against it. Now the New Thing is that you can't enter the Kingdom of God except you come as a little babe. The people come with diapers under their outer clothing so that they can defecate and urinate in the meetings. This is the New Thing. Folks, where does it end?

A pastor said, "Is it come down to this, that one day some evangelist stands up and says, 'I've got a revelation from the Lord, it is time to add Mary to your worship'. That is what it is going to come to.

Another evangelist calls himself the Holy Ghost Bartender. He says, "Belly up to the bar and take a drink of the Holy Ghost." They call that drinking the new wine. I hear ringing in my ears the prophet that said, "The day of the Lord is at hand. Wickedness abounds. Weep between the porch and the altar. Put on sackcloth. Fast and mourn for the backsliding of my people."

Jesus is about to come. The masses are unreached. When I see Christians belly up to what is called the "Holy Ghost Bar", staggering like drunkards, Joel's words come to me loud and clear, "Awake you drunkards and weep all you who drink new wine because the harvest in the field is perished."

Souls are dying by the thousands, what are you laughing about? Anything of the Holy Ghost has to work anywhere on the face of the earth. You have to be able to take it into the most vile wicked places. You have to take it into poverty nations. You have to take it to the dregs of humanity and it has to work there. It can't work just in prosperous America. It has to work everywhere on the face of the earth.

I dare these men take this gospel, the laughing gospel into the Balkans now. Go into the refugee camps where wives are crying because they saw their husbands shot. Their daughters have been raped. Their children are hungry. They have lost their homes and go in there and ask them to "belly up to the bar" - the Holy Ghost wants you to laugh. This so-called revival is coming to Madison Square Gardens this summer. Knowing what you know about the Scripture, carrying the grief and the burden for the Solemn Assembly, how can you even conceive of embracing such a doctrine?

Let me tell you who is laughing. The world. The ungodly, the heathen. It has become a spectacle. In a time so close to the coming of the Lord when the Church of Jesus Christ ought to be shut away in a secret closet of prayer. Where it ought to be weeping for the lost. Where it ought to have the desire to forsake all and follow Jesus. Where there should never be a mention of the dollar bill. The American god. The American idolatry. We have the world looking at this foolishness and do you know what they are thinking now - that the Holy Ghost is a Ringmaster. It is a Charismatic Circus.

I don't care what anybody thinks any more. I don't care if people drop off the mailing list. I care for their souls and the fact that many are into this blindness. I have a duty before God to stand before

the congregation that He has called me to minister to and warn you and tell you that these are reproaches of the Solemn Assembly and the Bible says that you are to be sorrowful about it. The elders are to be sorrowful. The congregation, the Pastors, the Ministers, the Evangelists, We should be praying down these strongholds.

Finally, the reproach of downgrading depravity in the Church. Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil - that put darkness for light and light for darkness. They put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. (Jer. 23:15).

I've seen in the prophets a horrible thing. They commit adultery, they walk in lies, they strengthen also the hands of evil doer and non returns from his wickedness."

I received a letter this past week from an irate Christian woman. She said, "My husband, who is supposed to be a Christian, is a big time gambler, in the millions." She said, "I've been so concerned with the crowd and the danger he is in". I thought, "I'll urge him to go to the pastor."

She said, "Brother Wilkerson, you will not believe what happened. I am so angry, hurt and confused. I sent my multi-million dollar gambling husband to my pastor."

He said, "I have searched the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation and I can't find one thing in the scripture against gambling. I see no sin in it, enjoy yourself." She was dumbfounded, "How can a man of God say such a thing to my husband?"

This is exactly what Jeremiah meant, "the pastors strengthen the hands of evildoers that none doth return from his wickedness." He explains why they have downgraded depravity in their congregation and why they are calling evil good and good evil and bitter sweet and sweet bitter.

He said, "The prophets have committed adultery and are walking in lies." Any man that has sin in his life is not going to get up and talk about sin in the camp. He is convicted by his own adultery, his own sin and his own evil mind.

I am not painting every minister in the country with this brush. The majority of ministers are on fire for God. There young ministers so clean and so pure in this wicked day and age. I've met many of them and I thank God for them. Even in this City I've met some of the most righteous preachers I've ever met in my lifetime.

Multitudes of ministers feel just like I feel this morning and they are looking and waiting for voices to expose that which is evil. "If they had stood in my council and had caused my people to heard my words. . if they were speaking what I really have in my heart. If they were speaking the mind of God, they should have turned the people away from their evil ways and from the evil of their doings"

You can tell if a man knows the Lord. God says of the others, "I didn't send them, I didn't speak to them. They speak their own mind out of their own imagination. Out of the evil of their own hearts."

"They speak of vision of their own heart, I sent them not. I have not spoken to them. They say unto them that despise me, 'the Lord said, you shall have peace' and they say unto every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, 'no evil shall come upon there.'"

The reproach upon the Solemn Assembly should be the greatest sorrow to every one who loves Christ and His Church. This should be the greatest sorrow in our heart - these reproaches on His name and on His Church. Weep over the condition of the Church.

When you take your stand and when you take on the burden of the Lord, by fasting and prayer. Every child of God needs to be praying that everyone in this snare will be delivered. Don't touch it, don't go near it, if you go in just out of curiosity it will grab you because it appeals to everything of the flesh.

Until you know how to deal with the flesh with the power of the Holy Ghost, stay away from it. Jeremiah said, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is Mighty. He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in His love. He will joy over thee with singing."

Why? Because He has found a people who are sorrowful over the things that sorrow His heart. Who carry the burden that He carries, the Reproach of the Solemn Assembly.

This is going to become a "love-trap" . You will hear this: "We love everybody. It doesn't matter what you preach. It doesn't matter if you are in prosperity. It doesn't matter what your gospel is - or anything else. God is love. Let us all just get together and embrace one another."

How can two walk together unless they be agreed. How can you walk with those when you don't agree with the unscriptural practices, you can not. That is a love trap. They say, "Don't condemn anybody. Don't judge anybody."

That is not what the Bible says. It says that we are to judge righteous judgement. Reprove and rebuke with all longsuffering. I am not on a soapbox, I am on a Rock. God is trying to save you, Church.

What are the riches of God in Christ Jesus? The peace of God, the wisdom of God, the nearness of Christ, all that is in Christ is ours. . . . .

Folks, beware! Beware! Have I scared you? Are you ready to take on the burden of the Lord. You can't do that in your own flesh. Get alone with God!

The time has come to call a Solemn Assembly. If you have any of these tapes or books, get them out of your house. Don't give them away, burn them. If somebody invites you to go to these things, say, "I'm sorry, I don't want a famine of the Word and I don't my heart to wither and dry. I want the pure Word of the Lord that will cause me to grow. I don't want any message that is going to appeal to my flesh or to foster covetousness in my spirit."

God does supply needs and He is a miracle working God, but He does it only His way. Not by misappropriating and not mis-using the scripture.

Abraham was not looking at things on earth, He was looking for a City whose Builder and Maker is God.

## "A Second Pentecost?" - by Orrel Steinkamp

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You may not have realised that plans for the structure and government of the World Church are already in place!

Ministries, organisations and fellowships are networking together like never before, forming major new allegiances, and meeting to formulate the doctrines, structure and leadership of an entirely NEW global church. The denominations of today are seen as obsolete, and UNITY is the key - the unifying force being revival and spiritual manifestations rather than biblical doctrines.

For years now, organisations have been gathering in Colorado Springs, Denver and Boulder, Colorado to create a Centre for World Christianity - a Vatican City of the new church if you will. There you will find the World Prayer Centre and many different Christian organisations, (such as AD2000, COR and Promise Keepers) all intent on reaching the world with their unifying vision.

Peter Wagner of the Church Growth Movement is totally dedicated to the idea, and heads up a great part of it.

In May '96 he said this:

For about three years now I have felt that we were watching two remarkable missiological phenomena relating to church growth: (1) A new cutting edge of the extension of the global Christian movement was being installed by God, and (2) The most radical change in the way of doing church since the Protestant Reformation was taking place in many diverse parts of the world.

After the outbreak of "revival" in early 1994, Peter Wagner had perceived a new wave of church growth and a new structure for the Church that he labelled "Post Denominationalism". This term was then dropped in January 1996 in favour of "New Apostolic Paradigm".

Although at first wary of objections to the use of the word "apostle" in today's Church, Wagner quickly found that, on the contrary, new apostles and prophets were popping up everywhere. It seemed that the new apostle was a de facto part of the new church anyway, so the terminology was very apt.

Wagner then sponsored a National Symposium for the emerging World Church in Pasadena in May 1996, incorporating Ed Delph's organisation N.A.T.I.O.N.S. which stood for Networking Apostolic Thrust Internationally Or Nationally.

Networking they indeed were, as leaders as diverse as Morris Cerullo, Bill Hamon, Ted Haggard, Roberts Liardon, Bobbye Byerey and Ralph Neighbour (and many, many more) gathered to plan the Church of the twentyfirst century.

This Church is based upon new paradigms: the restoration of the Church to a (supposed) Early Church ideal; spiritual gifts and manifestations; and the doctrine of the christianisation of the world before the return of Jesus Christ.

Most worryingly, it proposes Church Government of apostles and prophets now being created out of the charismatic leadership of the revival fellowships.

Here now is Orrel Steinkamp's overview of Peter Wagner's New Apostolic Reformation.

The Second Pentecost leads to the World Church?

by Dr. Orrel Steinkamp, D. Min

C. Peter Wagner is attempting to will into existence what he calls a "New Apostolic Reformation." He tells us in a book he has edited called "The New Apostolic Churches" of the struggle he had with naming his new reformation:

"I needed a name. . . For a couple of years I experimented with 'Post-denominationalism.'. The name I have settled on for the movement is the New Apostolic Reformation." [1]

Donald Miller, a colleague of Wagner, calls this movement "The New Paradigm Churches." [2] This is advertised as a reformation greater in scale than the reformation of the 1500's.

It is suggested that this "new reformation" is something entirely new. Wagner outlines his article with sections such as "new name", "new authority structure", "new ministry focus", "new worship style", "new prayer forms" etc. The centerpiece of this New Apostolic Reformation is the launching of new apostles and prophets.

The restoration of modern day apostles and prophets is promoted in the book "The Gift of Apostle" by David Cannistraci. This book was offered to those attending a conference organized by Wagner called "Churches in the New Apostolic Paradigm." Among the list of topics and presenters for the conference was Bill Hamon. (Can we really refer to the Bill Hamon's teaching as new?) Bishop Hamon has been promoting restoration and Manifest Sons of God teaching for decades.

Can it be argued that this "New Reformation" is something that God has just recently dropped new from heaven like the baby Superman from Krypton? I suggest that there is nothing new here at all and for anyone willing to do the study they will find it a mere cutting edge version of something at least 100 years old. G. Raymond Carlson, former General Superintendent of the AOG, had this to say regarding the new apostles and prophets:

"I saw it in the New Order of the Latter Rain in the late 40's and early 50's. Before that, it made its presence felt in the early days of the century among early Pentecostals." [3]

The only thing new about this movement seems to be the new personalities who are promoting it and their creative marketing techniques. It is interesting that those promoting this end of the age global revival visualize and allegorize it as a "Mighty River."

In the last "Plumbline" [newsletter] I asked the question if the "River Boat Captains" knew the direction the current river is flowing. Now I would like to ask further questions. Do the gleeful riverboat passengers know where "the River" originated? Do they know that this river has been flowing for many years? Do they know the original channel that still determines where the River will eventually flow?

We all know that the source and the course of a river determines its direction no matter how many tributaries may enter into it along the way. So it is with what is currently called the "River of Revival." Provided people think logically, the underlying core paradigm will eventually play out according to the original vision much like the rules of chess determine what is a valid move and what is not.

G. Raymond Carlson was right. This much publicized new paradigm can be traced to the Latter Rain movement of 40's and early 50's.

Even though the Latter Rain of the 50's faltered and fell into disrepute with the tragic death of William Branham and the repudiation by the Assemblies of God it was kept alive by certain survivors and reintroduced in a veiled manner into the Charismatic Renewal of the 60's and 70's.

Few people have realized just how influential the Latter Rain movement was and how effectively Latter Rain concepts were introduced into the Charismatic Renewal. Ern Baxter who was instrumental in the Shepherding Movement, worked with William Branham during the 50's Latter Rain. George Warnock, who wrote the only systematic teaching from the Latter Rain (The Feast of Tabernacles), was Ern Baxter's personal secretary.

In the midst of the Charismatic Renewal I remember well the teaching of the fivefold ministry and at that time assumed it was a new revelation to the church not knowing it had been imported directly from the Latter Rain. But is the mid-century Latter-Rain the headwaters of the current River of revival? Not really. Rather than the headwaters it is a major tributary. We must travel further upstream to find the actual source. Dr. Raymond Carlson again is correct in asserting that some of the early Pentecostal pioneers of the turn of the century also were involved. Before we stop with the early Pentecostals, we must go just a little further and find the headwaters in the Holiness movement of the late 1800's

#### The Holiness Movement

Holiness enthusiasts of the late nineteenth century searched the scriptures for reference to the revival they were experiencing. One popular scripture was Matt. 24:14, "And this gospel shall be preached in all the world and then the end come." Holiness teaching served as a prelude to missions and missions a prelude to the second coming.

They identified their holiness experience as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the enablement to take the gospel to every nation and then Jesus could return. Holiness preachers searched the scriptures for this worldwide revival and interestingly enough the best they could find was a teaching they called the "Latter Rain."

This Latter Rain allegory was pieced together from scripture references of the early and latter rains of the Palestinian growing season. (Deut. 11:10-21 and James 5:7-8). These Palestinian rainfall patterns metaphorically became a sort of lens through which to view all of church history.

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was seen as the early rain in which the church was planted and the end of age revival was the latter rain, a divine preparation of a last days harvest and the signal of the soon return of Jesus.

Wesley Myland (1858-1943) who began his career as a holiness preacher was the first to put in writing the Latter Rain scheme which he titled "The Latter Rain Covenant." [4] He is also credited with writing the first Pentecostal hymn "The Latter Rain." The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements also refer to his book, "The Latter Rain Covenant" as the first definitive Pentecostal theology.

### The Latter-Rain and the early Pentecostals

It was Charles Parham, a Methodist Holiness preacher who broke with traditional Holiness teaching and linked the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with a Latter-Day Pentecost. His new discovery was that tongues was both a sign of this Spirit Baptism and also the signal of the end of the age.

The early Pentecostal pioneers initially accepted this Latter Rain motif. Spirit Baptism was an end time repeat of the first Pentecost. Tongues was seen as an eschatological sign signifying that a second and final Pentecost was taking place, bringing the church into a new and final dispensation. This second Pentecost would bring a final world revival in which the nations would have one last opportunity to hear the gospel and then the end would come.

Tongues were at first perceived as actual missionary languages to enable the Gospel to be quickly preached throughout the whole earth. Indeed many at that time went to China assuming they had been given a Chinese tongue to announce the gospel. Most returned disillusioned.

The term "Latter Rain" was used freely by the early Pentecostal pioneers as well as the term "apostolic." The early Pentecostals were convinced that not only would there be a Latter Rain global revival but the last days church would be restored to the apostolic pattern. Joined to the Latter Rain teaching was a complementary truth called restoration.

### Restoring the Apostolic Church

The basic principle of restoration teaching is that there is a fundamental discontinuity, historical and spiritual, between the church today and the New Testament church. In the restoration agenda, God will end the church as He began it.

Events, however, caused the early Pentecostals to dispense with restorationism and the Latter Rain motif. In 1914 and later the founding fathers of the AOG turned their back on Latter Rain Apostolic Restoration thinking and espoused the current premillennial eschatology. The Latter Rain motif then sat more or less dormant for decades until 1948.

In Canada the Latter Rain paradigm erupted again. Impartation of spiritual gifts by the laying on hands was instituted as well as traveling prophets giving personal prophesy.

This time there was added the restoration of the apostolic office gifts of apostles and prophets. Indeed to restore the apostolic church without restored apostles and prophets would be a limited restoration of the apostolic church.

### Restored Apostles & Prophets

To Latter Rain teachers it seemed obvious that if there was to be a repeated apostolic Pentecost that Apostles and Prophets must be restored as well.

These teachers then devised a historical scheme of restoration. Church history was understood as a succession of recoveries of lost or neglected truths. Luther recovered justification by faith, Baptists believers baptism, Wesley holiness, A.B. Simpson healing and the early Pentecostal pioneers the gifts of the Spirit. The recovery process was now extended further. The endtime body of Christ must go on to maturity and restore the apostles and prophets and these restored ministries must lead the church to a new and final dimension of power and authority not only bringing in the final harvest but establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

### Kingdom Now Teaching

Now we are introduced to another major feature of the current move namely Kingdom Now Dominionism. Previously Latter Rain teachers saw a second and repeated Pentecost as a final harvest of souls before Christ could come back. Now there is a major addition to the LatterRain/Restoration concept. The restored apostles and prophets will lead a new and reconstituted body of Christ in conquering the kingdoms of this world and establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

This dominion mentality is conceived as a gigantic end-time revival that will sweep the whole earth in its wake. Some even refer to a billion souls being swept in to the kingdom. An elite company of overcomers from out of the larger church will subdue all things and will be so endowed with supernatural power that the first church apostles will be envious of the latter day apostles.

The church isn't going sit and take it any more. The Church isn't going to wait to be helicoptered out of the world in some rapture rescue plan. The Church will stay right here and by its spiritual authority even defeat the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, dragging them to earth and putting them under their heel.

Paul Cain, a survivor of the Latter Rain (1950) is currently marketing a vision of an elite company of overcoming spiritual warriors called "Joel's army." This end-time spiritual seals unit will be an invincible band who lead the church in dominion on the earth. A purging of the wider church of those who will not follow the new order is necessary to constitute a unified global church.

Teachers of the new order tell us that all this has been prophesied. This is an end-time fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. These teachers assert that Passover found fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The Feast of Pentecost was fulfilled in the outpouring of Spirit, and now the only remaining feast is that of Tabernacles to be fulfilled in the last days church. It is a second Pentecost with restored apostles and prophets. This endtime spiritual army will put all God's enemies under its feet, yes even the last enemy death itself. This introduces us to another added teaching of the Latter Rain (1950).

### The Manifested Sons of God

The body of Christ coming to spiritual maturity will be able to defeat death itself. This teaching became known as the "Manifest Sons of God." Taking childish cues from Paul's teaching in Romans eight and misunderstanding them, they suggested that a company of overcoming believers "the sons of God" will be manifested upon the earth with never dying spiritual bodies before the return of Christ. This would have to be the ultimate in dominion teaching.

Bishop Earl Paulk has stated the Manifest Sons teaching very clearly without ever using that unpopular term. Listen to his unmistakable teaching:

"Jesus Christ, as the first-fruit of the Kingdom, began the work of conquering death on an individual basis, but we, as His church, will be the ones to complete the task. Jesus said (Matthew 28:18), "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and the church today has that same power. Death will not be conquered by Jesus returning to earth. It will be conquered when the church stands up boldly and says, "We have dominion over the earth." [5]

Obviously the church has not yet matured to the place of defeating death. Bishop Paulk counsels Christians not to accept death unless they get a specific revelation from God otherwise.[6]

There is a companion truth that often accompanies the Manifested Sons teaching namely the birthing by the church of a corporate Christ. This corporate Christ is said to be a fusing together of the spiritual Christ within His many membered body upon the earth. The end-time glorious church is supposed to give birth to this corporate Christ. Though it is not always stated this view assumes and some teach (not all) that the literal physical resurrected Jesus will not need to return as such. Rather His second coming will happen when He is spiritually incarnated into his church which will then be able to conquer death itself. This teaching has been expressed in various ways.

"Jesus was God in the flesh. We must be as He was in the world, even greater in volume and influence." [6]

"The completion of the incarnation of God in the world must be in His church...Jesus Christ is the firstfruit, but without tile ongoing harvest, tile incarnation will never be complete." [7]

"The living Word of God, Jesus Christ, was conceived in the womb of a virgin. The Word became flesh in the God-Man Jesus Christ (John 1:1). Likewise, tile Word of God must be made flesh in the Church in order for us to bear witness to the Kingdom which God has called us to demonstrate." [8]

"We are on earth as extensions of God to finish the work He began. We are the essence of God, His on-going incarnation in the world." [9]

This is saying far more than the orthodox view that Christ indwells His Church by the Holy Spirit. The question arises: how can Jesus, with his current resurrected body in heaven, be incarnated into the church that is still upon the earth? Some have seen this problem and solve it by adjusting their Christology.

"He [Jesus] entered a higher realm of restoration and love by becoming an indwelling Spirit." [10]

We must oppose this view. Jesus has not become the Holy Spirit. It is rather the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer. The Resurrected Jesus is at the Father's right hand and in His glorified resurrected body He will return bodily to the earth. Obviously an indwelling spirit would not need to return from heaven.

It is on this basis that some Dominion teachers assert that Jesus can be an on-going incarnation of God in His body (church) upon the earth. Consequently scriptures pertaining to Christ's ruling on earth are often seen as referring the Church rather than Jesus. The Church is viewed as a kind of

virgin Mary who must give birth to Jesus the indwelling spirit.

Francis Frangipane teaches a similar a message:

"When the Spirit of Christ comes into the physical world, He must enter through a physical body. When Christ first entered our world as a child, it was Mary whom God chose to give Christ birth. Mary's life symbolized the qualities the church must possess to walk in the fullness of Christ. God is preparing us as He did Mary to give birth to the ministry of His Son. Even now, in the spiritual womb of the virgin church, the Holy purpose of Christ is growing, awaiting maturity, ready to be born in the power and timing of God. The virgin church is in labor and in pain to give birth (Rev. 12:5) even now hell trembles and the heavens watch in awe for I say to you, once again, the virgin is with child." [11]

Latter-Rain teachers have long used Rev. 12, teaching that the woman in this passage is the church and the "Manchild" to be birthed is a spiritual second coming of Christ into His corporate body. When Latter Rain Prophet Paul Cain describes, in passing, the church as the "Manchild Company" he has this teaching in mind.

Marc Dupont of the former Toronto Vineyard claims to have received a significant prophecy in which he states the following:

"This move of the Spirit in 1994 in not just a Charismatic and Pentecostal experience, concerning power and gifting. It is one thing to be clothed with power; it is another to be indwelt with the Person of God." [12]

Old Testament scriptures are spiritualized to see birthing as the return of the ark to the temple, that is the coming of Christ invisibly into His living temple the church. This will occur when the Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled which celebrates the Lord dwelling among His people. "When this happens, no longer will it be the Head (Jesus Christ) in heaven and the body (believers) on earth - but one Perfect Man filling both heaven and earth." [13]

This teaching of a spiritual second coming of Jesus into His body is rarely advertised. Rather the more palatable teaching of a final global revival and restored apostles prophets is the public teaching most emphasized. How can the present Charismatic/Pentecost Church even entertain elements of this teaching that originated from such a small group that operated on the fringes of the Pentecostal movement in the early 50's?

When the Charismatic Renewal exploded in the 60's and 70's certain Latter Rain holdovers found a new and indiscriminating audience. Charismatics had never heard of the Latter Rain and received the new teaching as part of their new wine experience. Consequently Latter-Rain/Restorationism received a greater hearing within the Charismatic renewal than it ever did in the Classic Pentecostal tradition.

Through the Charismatic Renewal Latter Rain teachings were renamed and finally homogenized sufficiently so that today Latter Rain ideas float freely on "the River" without anyone detecting their true identity. Furthermore the Charismatic Renewal has been mainstreamed into wider evangelical circles through John Wimber and Vineyard conferences, signs and wonders teachings, etc.

Indeed some of the more extreme parts of the paradigm are not put out front, nevertheless, little by little the wider church is coalescing around what, when thoroughly analyzed, are Latter Rain core beliefs.

Without unwarranted employment of the Latter Rain allegory there is not even a hint in scripture of an end-time global revival and second Pentecost. Not everyone in the River uniformly accepts all the parts of the paradigm. But as time goes by more and more Latter Rain tenants exert a gravitational pull that draws participants to logically espouse more and more of the paradigm.

When Peter Wagner calls for and attempts to network a world wide apostolic reformation does he espouse the whole of the Latter Rain/Restoration paradigm? I don't really know. In fact I doubt that he does. I do know, however, that by bringing Bishop Bill Hamon to speak at his conferences he is bringing the whole paradigm mentioned above. There must be at least an openness on Wagner's part and many others because they without qualification recommend Bill Hamon's books with its full blown Latter Rain and Manifested Sons teaching.

Wagner's "New Apostolic Reformation" is nothing more than warmed-over Latter Rain teaching. G. Raymond Carlson from his vantage point of history knew that all this has its source in a second end-time Pentecost, first articulated at the turn of the century and restated and expanded in the New Order of the Latter Rain 1950 and now imported and marketed into the wider church by means of the Charismatic renewal.

When much is made of a sweeping revival that will overflow the earth in the last days with billions of converts you should be aware that this popular idea comes not from scripture but from a view of church history that has been running now for over a century.

Take away the fraudulent allegorical use of "Latter Rain" scheme and there remains no other biblical support for this elaborate view of the end-times.

Rather it was Jesus Himself who asked the question: "When the Son of Man comes will He find faith upon the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

The Scripture leaves no doubt that Jesus will return bodily to earth and when He does His "body" upon the earth (the full compliment of his church) will be raptured up to meet Him in the air (I Thess. 4:17). It is then and only then that He will change our corruptible bodies in a twinkling of an eye. It is then that Jesus will rule earth in His glorified and resurrected body. It is then that the Sons of God will be manifest.

Rather than sensationalizing a false and unbiblical agenda, the church must occupy until He comes and His body is completed. Faithfully this Gospel must be preached to every nation and then the end will come. Even so come quickly Lord Jesus.

## **"The Apostles are Coming to your City, Ready or Not" - by Orrel Steinkamp**

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In a previous issue of PLUMBLINE, I described the efforts of C. Peter Wagner to create a New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) which he predicts will be even greater in scope and significance than the Protestant Reformation of the 1500's. The centerpiece of the movement is the purported restoration, by God, of the NT office-gift of 'Apostle' to the end-time church.

Now Wagner and his apostolic buddies are attempting to move from vision to reality. In an article titled, APOSTOLIC REFORMATION on his Website Global Harvest Ministries he reveals moves that are currently underway, to implement his apostolic reformation. In this article he restates the goals and also the preliminary means to implement them.

### Goal:

Wagner asserts: NAR is an extra-ordinary work of God at the close of the 20th century that to a significant extent is changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world. For almost 500 years Christian churches have largely functioned with traditional denominational structures of one kind or another. Within this reformation, Wagner sees a growing recognition of present day apostolic ministries who are giving birth to their own family of leaders and churches to whom they have a relational commitment. Within New Apostolic Christianity, this governmental authority is being exercised in the local church by the pastor and on a translocal level by apostles who operate with a relational authority. Wagner sees what is happening in the NAR as key to world harvest.

Wagner sees apostles as being at the peak of their (own) networks and the people in their networks as accountable to them. It is here in the article that the accountability of the apostles is addressed and Wagner begins to refer to the means of implementing the apostolic structure.

### Implementation:

#### The New Apostolic Roundtable:

Wagner is personally involved in an accountability structure called the "New Apostolic Roundtable." Twenty-five apostles were invited to join as members and they plan to meet together annually, the week after Easter. Eventually, the names of the roundtable will be made public.

#### The International Coalition of Apostles:

Because this movement is growing so rapidly around the world, Wagner also sees a need for a larger kind of structure. As a result he and a number of others have formed what they call the International Coalition of Apostles.

They have sent out their first invitations in January of this year (2001) and have just passed one hundred and fifty members. Wagner expects that they will ultimately attract from five hundred to one thousand members (solicited by invitation only). They plan to hold an annual meeting along

with occasional regional summits across America and around the world.

Apostles to the Cities:

In Wagner's new book, *APOSTLES OF THE CITY: HOW TO MOBILIZE THE TERRITORIAL APOSTLES FOR CITY TRANSFORMATION*, he attempts to describe what the local role of these apostles might be. He defines Apostles to the City as those "whom the Holy Spirit gives an anointing for extraordinary authority in spiritual matters over the other Christian leaders in the same city." While not excluding others, Wagner hypothesizes that the most extensive pool for identifying apostles of the city is among the mega churches.

Wagner notes that extra-denominational alignments are already occurring, which provide the ideal structure for recognizing the Apostles in the city. He sees it highly probable that we will begin to see the development of spontaneous territorial spheres which will rise to a higher importance than traditional denominational affiliations. When asked what he thought the main stumbling block would be, that would keep leaders from embracing the Apostolic Reformation, Wagner cites "a commitment to tradition amongst ministers." Wagner states: "I think that some are bound by religious forms and functions that are ineffective and I think in many cases it is demonic influence."

Pastors: are you ready to be placed under certain translocal apostles who are identified by other translocal apostles? I think I feel a college of Cardinal/Apostles coming on.

Church members: are you ready to implement what these apostles pass on to you, via you pastor?

District superintendents: are you ready to move over for a newly appointed apostle?

I am sure many of you tire of denominational Christianity with its penchant for politics and power and parochialism but are these new apostles immune from these very forces? Are they somehow unaffected by the same fleshly forces that create some of the undesirable features of denominationalism?

Does not the NAR smack of an attempt to replace one power structure with another? We already have a denomination called the Apostolic Church. I noticed that the new apostles are to be recognized by "invitation only." Is not this already a sort of insider 'good ole boys club' in the making?

I wonder if they have been free of politics even to this point. There will, of course, have to be a "preeminent" or "leading" apostle. How will he be recognized?

Will these cloistered apostles meet in secret and send out the message by smoke, ala the Roman Catholic College of Cardinals, that a new preeminent and leading apostle has been chosen? I have seen the rumored statement on the Internet that Wagner has been designated the pre-eminent Apostle. It figures, for it was his baby from the beginning. [NB 2003: Peter Wagner has indeed been recognised as "Leading Apostle" of the group]

It amazes me that virtually no one is challenging Wagner and his apostle buddies. Perhaps you have not known about it or perhaps you don't take it seriously, assuming it will just go away. The Apostles will not just go away and one day they will possibly arrive in your area. Will you accept them or will you respectfully challenge this NAR on Biblical grounds?

## Paul, The Last Apostle

Today we often refer to some people as apostles, when speaking of an effective church planter (for example, William Carey was an apostle to India). In this sense, we all agree that there are still missionary apostles with us today.

The NT also refers to this broad use of the term "apostle." In this instance, 'apostle' simply means 'messenger' or 'one sent' on a specific mission (John 13:16; 11 Cor. 8:3; Phil. 2:25).

These references, however, are never confused in the NT with the restricted and special meaning of the office of apostle. These 'apostles of Christ', along with those who held the prophetic office, were part of the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ, himself the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Walter Martin described their foundational role in this way: "We do not have 20 incarnations of Christ, one for each century since the founding of the church and neither do we have apostles with this function identical to these foundational apostles." (Martin, *New Cults*, p. 279)

### NT Qualifications for Foundational Apostles:

1. NT apostles were required to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus. This is indicated in Acts 1:22 when Peter insist that the replacement to Judas "must become with us a witness to His resurrection." Paul in defending his apostleship says: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen our Lord?" (I Cor. 9:1) In recounting those to whom Jesus appeared Paul says: "After He was seen by James and then by all the apostles, then last of all he was seen by me also as one "born out of due time." (I Cor. 15:7,8 NKJV) Christ had ascended before Paul was converted but through a miraculous appearance Christ revealed himself to Paul. Last of all the apostles, Paul saw the risen Jesus. "Last of all" can only be an adverb describing something that is last in a series (this is especially true when there is a serial presentation, such as then ... then). Paul is thus the 'last of all' apostles. Those who assert that God has restored this office of apostle to the endtime church will have the apostle Paul to contend with.

2. Foundational Apostles were directly commissioned by Christ Himself Paul repeatedly asserts that his apostleship was by direct divine appointment (Rom. 1: 1; Gal. 1: 1).

### Who were these foundational Apostles?

First there were the initial twelve with Matthias replacing Judas. So important are these charter members that we read that their names will be inscribed on the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14).

Second, there apparently were a very few more who had also seen Jesus and been commissioned by Him. Acts 14:14 calls both Barnabus and Paul apostles. James the brother of Jesus is called an apostle in Galatians 1:19. Andronicus and Judas were called apostles in Romans 16:7.

Wayne Grudem, a sometimes ally to current prophetic utterances, however, is absolutely convinced that there are no NT apostles today. He states: "Since no one today can meet the qualifications of having seen the risen Christ with his own eyes, there are no apostles today. In place of living apostles present in the church to teach and govern it, we have instead the writings of the apostles in the books of the NT. Those NT scriptures fulfill for the church today the absolutely authoritative teaching and governing functions which were fulfilled by the apostles

themselves during the early years of the church." (Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in the NT and Today, p. 276).

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## The Ministry of the Apostles in the Early Centuries - by Don Clasen

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In Spirit-filled circles today, there is much talk about the need for restoring apostles and prophets in the Church, based on the idea that over the centuries the importance and centrality of these ministries were lost in the wake of Church history.

These proponents point out that the huge and varied denominational system of today does not follow the Biblical pattern for Church structure and function, but represents a formless hodgepodge that can in no way express the kind of higher level unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17.

Some even say, based on Ephesians 2:20, that the entire household of God is "built upon the foundation of [these present-day] apostles and prophets...", who must come forth to "put the Church in Divine order." They claim this unity cannot take place until these offices are restored to the prominence and pre-eminence they once had in the New Testament era. In other words, the role of the apostle is so important that it actually is the linchpin that brings the Church into unity.

As if to put flesh on the bones of this kind of thinking, quite a few ministers in the Charismatic Church today are participating in the quiet formation of large international apostolic networks.

This development, in conjunction with the spread of cell churches, seems to be resulting in the emergence of a huge hierarchical "post-denominational" (non-denominational) Church system, with units as small as a local cell, overseen by a local church, who are in turn overseen by city-wide boards of elders, then regional, national, and international apostles. The net effect of all this could be a radical restructuring of the Church into a vast hierarchical form that will be virtually defenseless against the logic of Rome to "go all the way" and come back into her fold.

What surprises me about this development is that this movement apparently ignores the fact that "apostolic church" denominations structured like this have already emerged out of the Reformation, yet they have had no apparent special blessing of the Spirit on them in a way that would indicate that these issues are all that important to God.

On the other hand, this is not to say I am unconcerned with being as "Biblical" as possible in as many areas as I understand. I am not unsympathetic with some of the concerns behind this whole phenomenon. I agree that the Church world of today is characterized by many positions and titles that are nowhere to be found in the Bible's lexicon.

We have "regional directors", "superintendents", "metropolitans", "rectors" and a whole host of other terms and titles that are unbiblical. Yet I cannot conclude that questions of "church polity" (governmental structure) are really that pivotal. It's true that some offices may be more or less efficient and practical than others, but they are not at the heart of the Church's disunity today.

I say that for several reasons. For one, what a lot of people call the great "disunity factor" hindering the Church is actually more a problem of carnal competition, prejudice, jealousy and the like among groups and a subsequent duplication of efforts than a disunity problem. The present-day ecumenical / unity movement is doing more than enough to purge the Church of such duplication.

In fact, it seems to me there's a danger of going too far the other way by being tempted to look to a quick-fix shortcut i.e. a uniform church structure solution to paper over deeper problems.

You see, on the one hand, the Church--the true Church, the mystical Body of Christ--already is united by virtue of its common faith in Jesus Christ. But the kind of unity Jesus prayed for in John 17 refers to a deeper knowledge of God akin to the charge of Paul to the Corinthians--"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (Gk. schisma) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor 1:10).

Now that's a tall order!, and I know of no quick route to that except the slow process of the Holy Spirit and His anointing "teaching us all things" (I Jn 2:27). And it is made all the more near-impossible because the fact of the matter is, at any given time the Church is always made up of "infants, young men and fathers" in the faith, that is, people at different levels of knowledge and maturity (I Jn 2:13,14). Moreover, the same principle also applies somewhat to different churches and groups.

And for yet another reason, just as our larger society finds it fashionable to bash the Western Christian heritage as being the fount of all evil, so likewise it is wrong for Christians to assume that the denominational system has arisen from nothing but the basest of motives (i.e., "divisiveness").

Denominations often arise because people hold to different convictions, distinctives or emphases, and one of them is the question of different types of church polity (church government). These polities range from the centralized, hierarchical authoritarianism of Roman Catholicism to the extreme democratic practices of the Quakers, Congregationalists and smaller sects. In my opinion, a middle ground primitive form of Presbyterianism is most Biblical, but I stick with the contention that church structure is not at the heart of the disunity problem in the Church today.

Now on the other hand, I too look forward to God bringing us all into a greater "John 17" unity before Christ returns to the earth, but it's a process that can only be pursued the Biblical way of Ephesians 4--"speaking the truth in love", etc. This will entail a greater level of doctrinal unity (but never to the point of violating personal convictions of truth or particular leadings of the Spirit according to cultural vagaries or whatever.)

And this is why in last year's series, I attempted to make the case that a more uniform eschatological vision is going to be necessary because, as the last of the last days unfolds, we cannot afford the luxury of greatly differing opinions on this.

If we do not have the "rhema word" here, and the discernment to recognize what is happening around us and where both Christ and the Devil are headed, how can we say we have any vision at all? And I find this to be especially important because, coming from a Classical Pre-Millennial interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures, the identity of Mystery Babylon becomes all-important.

Does it entail in whole or in part a last days false Christianity? I say yes, and if that's true, how can we ignore the compromise that is happening all around us?

There is a lot of talk in the Church lately about giving birth to a new movement. I believe this new move will be a people who punch a hole in the wall of the ecumenical prison and say, "Enough of this! This is the truth of God, and this is where He is headed. God's not a beggar Who has to put

up with the lowest common denominator just to keep everybody happy! The cloud is moving on, and we're going on with or without you!"

### What Is An Apostle?

In the "Last Days Leaven" series, I said that if someone were to ask me if I believed in the "restoration of the apostles and prophets" I would say, "Both yes and no." "Yes" in the sense that these ministries could stand some better definition, functionality and status in the Body. But "no" in at least two senses. Firstly, I don't think these functions have been as lost as people think they've been. The titles may have been missing and the skills underdeveloped, but they haven't been absent altogether.

And secondly, what they were like in the early Church is not what I hear people implying they were. The ministries of the apostle and prophet in the early days were, paradoxically, of a higher status than they are today, yet what I hear being proposed is their restoration to a governmental position that ordinary apostles never had. And the upshot of it all is that if this idea persists, it could, when applied to a false Church with a false image of itself and its mission, create a class of very intimidating apostolic and prophetic leaders leading the Body of Christ astray with false revelations and guidance.

Yet in spite of all this, some of the literature and teachings I have looked at in regards to the idea of restoring the function of the apostle in the Church today I find to be fairly sound. They seem to dwell upon the idea of the apostle being a "sent one", a church planter/missionary, a foundation-laying ministry, one who ordains elders and other ministries, who moves in signs and wonders, a father/spiritual advisor to pastors and other leaders, and the like.

The concerns I have with it though are mostly oriented around the whole issue of apostolic authority and the issue of authority in general. And I don't count these problems to be trivial. To me the entire Reformation seems to be at stake, for it seems that there's a central concern in this movement to re-establish the apostle to what they conceive to have been the ultimate governmental position in the Church. If this issue is not understood on a deeper level, this movement could serve to lead the Church even further into the arms of the Vatican, as it repeats the mistakes made in the first few centuries of Christianity.

### What Is Spiritual Authority?

What this deals with is a story that is quite tragic, and took the Church centuries to even begin to recover from. In fact, it seems to me that to this day, we little recognize or appreciate the significance of what really happened. The reason why is because it involves one of the most baffling and elusive concepts ever grappled with in Christianity or any religion, and that is the issue of authority.

In fact, the issue of authority is so profound that it's a foundational question even of life itself because it deals with the a priori assumptions we make about truth and reality in general, and what we take to be credible explanations for such. As theologian Dr. Bruce Shelley so well put it, "No more fundamental religious question can be raised than, 'By what authority?' It is antecedent to all other questions about living and thinking." [1]

The somewhat naive and simplistic answer given by the average Christian to this question might be something along the line of, "Well, the Word of God is our authority". But that is a Protestant answer. The Roman Catholic would say it's the living revelation of the Church wherein "the Church" is defined as the hierarchical leadership. This "living revelation" started with the Church's "oral traditions" (eventually preserved as the Scriptures), and continues to today with the ongoing traditions promulgated by the Pope and the teaching magisterium. To the Eastern Orthodox, it would be the Scriptures plus tradition, especially that tradition as set forth in the first seven early Church councils.

To the first century Jew what was authoritative was the Law of Moses (corrupted and superseded of course by the rabbinic traditions). Thus it was that when Jesus came along doing miracles, they concluded He must be doing them by the power of Beelzebub! Their attitude was, "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is" (Jn 9:29). Yet Jesus set the pattern promised to all believers, that the Lord would work with them, "confirming the word with signs following" (Mk 16:20). And to this the Protestant philosophy of authority agrees, saying that the Holy Spirit has been sent to bear witness of Christ and His Word, and that the Spirit and the Word agree in one.

But what are we to make of human authority? Does God, or even can God, delegate to men some or all of His authority?

Let's start by taking a look at the connotations found in the term. In the New Testament, the Greek word most often translated "authority" is *exousia* which, according to the Scriptures and extra-Biblical sources conveys the following senses.

First of all, the idea of understanding or knowledge. When someone is seen as having gained a lot of knowledge or expertise on a given subject, they are said to be an authority on it. Moreover, the root of the English word comes from the Latin *auctor* which means "author", and obviously the most knowledgeable person about something is its author.

Secondly, "authority" conveys the idea of certainty or confidence. Someone who speaks or acts with authority is someone who knows what they're talking about or what they're doing. It was said of Jesus after the Sermon on the Mount that He "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" who only gave guesses or opinions (Mt 7:29).

Thirdly, "authority" conveys the idea of power, or the ability to see one's will, or another's will, done. This usage is similar to the Greek word *dunamis* which refers to a demonstration of power such as a miracle. But the emphasis in this use of "authority" is less on physical power than on the ability to resort to it if need be. A policeman, for instance, is physically only one man, but he represents potentially the entire authority or power of the state behind him. This kind of power can be either self-endowed (as in God's case), or something delegated to another.

The fourth aspect is the idea of a conferred privilege or a right bestowed on another by someone greater. In Revelation 22:14 it is said, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right (*exousia*) to the tree of life..."

So what we are talking about here is someone who either is an authority, who speaks and acts with authority, who has authority, or who is given authority. The first two relate to the qualifications

for authority, while the last two to the exercise of it.

I think it is obvious then as to how God fits into all this. He is certainly the Author of all creation with undoubted expertise as to how to run it. "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" wrote the psalmist (Psalms 147:5). Secondly, because He is omniscient He can speak and act with certainty and confidence, since He knows infallibly all that is going on at any given time. And thirdly, as for power--well, God is omnipotent. What can we say? And fourthly, as for rights, God has conferred them all onto Himself. It's His creation and He in His sovereignty can do with it as seemeth good to Him at any time.

Because of these realities, there are a number of conclusions we must infer (which the Scriptures bear witness to also.) The first is that it was never God's highest goal to merely rule on the basis of His power. Although He put on just such a fearful display of power at Mt. Sinai when He gave the Law to Israel, it is obvious that He didn't stop there, but went out of His way to establish His authority over us on the basis of His character qualifications and benevolent intentions. This is the entire story of the New Testament, that, far from wanting to rule through fear and obligation, He actually became weak and died on a cross in our place, that we might have faith and trust in the One Who showed love to such an "nth" degree.

Secondly, the reason He did this is because the Old Covenant did not allow Him to have enough personal rulership over the average believer, nor did it provide the level of intimacy He wanted to have with each of us. Thus He was not content to remain so removed from His people, stuck in a physical Temple and only approachable through a mediating priesthood. He wanted to be in us, making of us a living Temple of many living stones with, as John Wesley put it, all of His people being priests and the world as our parish (I Pe 2:5,9).

Thirdly, and I know this runs contrary to about 50 years now of "pop theology", but we must face the fact that God cannot delegate to men any "spiritual authority" at all. This is so because spiritual authority is something only God can have, seeing it is based on attributes such as His omniscience, sinless character, perfect heart and other qualifications that no creature can have. Men can no more claim to possess spiritual authority than they can claim to have gifts of healing in their back pocket, or an infallible word conjured up from their own finite understanding.

Now the Holy Spirit can work miracles through a man or speak or act through him at times, and to that degree he can be said to be moving in "spiritual authority". But he himself will not have that authority; it can only work through him. The various "gifts" of the Spirit by which God operates His spiritual authority through all Christians also takes an operation of the Spirit called "the witness of the Spirit" (Ro 8:16) in those who receive the ministry. But what God can and does delegate to men though is what I would call a certain functional authority or limited ecclesiastical powers that relate to the exercise side of authority.

He does this because the Church has a corporate life, and certain corporate decisions must be made by those who have been chosen to rule or oversee the local congregation. But it's something that He wants kept to a minimum, lest men encroach upon God's prerogatives in His rule over His individual subjects.

This understanding formed the basis of the political philosophy the Founding Fathers of America developed. To their credit, they understood that while human government was necessary they still

didn't trust fallen human nature. So to help public officials deal with the temptations of power, they strictly spelled out and limited in the Constitution what powers had been delegated to them.

It's the same in the Kingdom of God. God knows that church government is necessary, but its oversight will be in accord with the spiritual maturity of the people. A truly altruistic church will seek to maximize God's prerogatives by minimizing human ones, because the essence of the Kingdom is a very spiritual and personal relationship with the living God. What the corporate life of the Church expresses is a community of people of like precious faith, all of whom have different ministries, and through some of which operates the ministry gift called "governments" (I Cor 12:28).

### What Is The Church?

All this may seem like nit-picking to you, but this question of authority is a very important matter. Getting it wrong has been the source of much confusion and abuse within Christendom throughout the ages. It also begs at least two other questions that we need to answer.

One, was the Protestant Reformation just a protest movement, a reaction or over-reaction to some authoritarian excesses in the medieval Church such that it has now bred so much individualism and "freedom" that it won't let go of it? Or was it really complete in itself, and a genuine attempt to at least get started on the road back to New Testament Christianity?

And number two, just what is "the Church? Is it the visible Body of Christ on the earth, or the invisible Body of Christ in the spirit?

I'll begin my answer with the second question. According to First Corinthians 12:12-27 and other passages, "the Church" in the New Testament is, in its essence, an invisible, mystical "Body" wherein Christ is the head, while the sum total of all those truly "accepted in the Beloved" make up its various members. In keeping with the sometimes-mysterious language of the Bible, it is something "in the Spirit" (meaning the Holy Spirit), or "in the spirit" (that is, of the non-physical, invisible world). In other words, the Church is not essentially an institution, it's the people, a group of people known ultimately only to God. It's a spiritual Temple of living stones (believers) for an habitation of God through the Spirit (I Pe 2:5; Ephesians 2:21).

This is the great error of the Roman Catholic Church, whose many errors begin with her own self-conception as being "the Mother Church". In her eyes, she is the one "catholic" (universal) church by virtue of one institution, one Pope, one sacramental system, one priesthood who alone are truly ordained to mediate the grace of God, etc., etc. It has been Rome that has initiated and guided (ever so gingerly) the current ecumenical movement, breaking down the theological and philosophical defenses of the Protestant churches in her attempt to fulfill Jesus' command for greater unity.

Now because people do live in flesh-and-blood bodies on a physical earth, the Church does have a visible side, expressed through local Christian communities, local assemblies, denominations and the like. But this is a very secondary, imperfect representation of "the Church". Some groups and denominations consist of almost all believers (Revelation 3:7,8), some are lukewarm (Revelation 3:16), and some are downright dead with but a few believers at all (Revelation 3:1-4). In essence therefore, the Kingdom of God is a very spiritual Kingdom, a very personal walk with a

Living Being Who alone knows the hearts and lives of men, Who alone is qualified to judge who is in, who is out, who is faithful, who is fruitful and how much, etc. (I Cor 4:1-6; Romans 14:7-10; Mt 13:8). In this way it is not inferior in the least to the experienced-based spirituality of mystical cults, Eastern religions and the like who often caricature Christianity as a mere cultural or political phenomenon, or a religion obsessed with a certain kind of moralism. Yet whenever the Church has sought to portray itself primarily as an institution, it has all-but invited such caricature.

Now within the language of the apostolic movement there is a fondness for slogans like, "God is building an army", and "this army needs generals". For the most part, there is a lot of emphasis on the "corporate" side of the "work of the Church". (See the "Last Days Leaven" series for more on this.)

And as we've admitted, there is indeed a legitimate and visible side to "the Church". Thus it is that churches pool their resources to send out missionaries, feed the poor, evangelize the lost and the like. None of these things can be done by individuals acting alone.

But once again the question arises, just what is the "work of the Church"? Ideally it should be "the work of God Himself," and the work that God accomplishes through His people is so often such a hard thing to evaluate and identify, for it all takes place in the Spirit (spirit). Most of us have probably caught the tail end of a circumstance wherein we were being used by God in something we said or did without even realizing God was working through us, to communicate or model the knowledge of God to someone.

This, it seems to me, is the most effective and powerful way God accomplishes His work. This is why Paul said he'd rather glory in his limitations than have the support of an entire army behind him (II Cor 12:9,10). There is a limitation to the value of professionalism, beyond which it becomes so efficient and "human" that God can hardly do a miracle and get the glory. He loves to get things done with a Gideon's army or a David's slingshot rather than a Saul's armor.

Jesus expressed the same sort of thinking in His encounter with Nicodemus. "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but you don't know where it's coming from or where it's going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). This was said to explain the meaning of being "born-again"--that it's a person so under the influence of the Spirit that, although they may seem to a hard-bitten world as flighty as the blowing wind, they are really being led by God. And Nicodemus, a man used to finding his identity in a no-nonsense religion that "gets the job done", no doubt would have sympathized with a modern-day mindset that looks forward to seeing every member of the Body of Christ "mobilized" according to the strategies, ambitions and control of men. [2]

The reason people can't see the already-existing "army of God" is because the Body of Christ is a mystical, invisible entity whose members already operate in the Spirit. Now they may not function very efficiently or effectively in their giftings in this, and that is why God has given to the Body the five-fold ministries, to help equip the army for the very spiritual nature of this battle. But this is an army wherein The General does not usually operate according to a chain-of-command, because He's omnipresent and in each of His troops.

This brings us to the question of the Reformation. Was it just a reaction? A protest against excesses? Or was it complete in its germ, and the beginning of a long process of the restoration of

the New Testament Church? For one of the great distinctives that the Reformation sought to establish was the priesthood of all believers, the idea that, although we may have different roles and functions in the Body, we are all brethren (Mt 23:8) and priests (I Pe 2:9; Revelation 1:6), and the world is our flock. It was the affirmation of the idea that the Church exists and operates in the spirit, and that human government, though somewhat necessary, was a lower level concern in the work of God, and not the ultimate one.

Moreover the Reformation declared that since God alone has spiritual authority over his people, that that authority is only perfectly represented by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit Who is in the midst of His people. It declared that, even though for instance education is good and useful, that still, God could work through nearly illiterate people, sometimes more effectively than through those who should know more, all according to where the heart of a believer was at. It declared that the Roman Catholic system not only overplayed the role of human authority, it totally misunderstood its place and did not comprehend how the work of God went forward.

### Taking The Historical Route

As I said at the beginning, although I believe that much of what is being said about re-establishing the role of apostles and prophets in the Church is good and legitimate, still, there are a number of grave problems with the current trend. The main one seems to be the assumption that what needs to be restored is the apostle as a governmental office in the Church, and the highest one at that. But the apostleship is not an office, it's a ministry.

In the Kingdom of God, everyone has a ministry and those ministries operate by means of various divine gifts divided to His people as God endows and wills. These "gifts" include various "manifestations of the Spirit" (I Cor 12:7-10), and what have been called the "ascension gifts" of Christ given to the Body --what are called the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4:11. But the thing to note is that these are ministries, not offices. In I Cor 12:5 it says, "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord (i.e., Christ)". That word translated "administrations" is diakonion, where we get "deacon" or "minister" from. In other words, there are different ministries given by Christ Himself as gifts to His Body. A ministry describes a function in the Body; an office describes a position or title.

Now each of these things have their place, but we should not assume that a ministry is inferior in importance to an office. The problem is that over the course of the centuries since the early Church, the two categories often became intertwined and thereby confused. And while good hearted men have debated forever it seems, over what is "biblical" or "New Testament" in the area of proper Church structure and authority patterns, it seems to me that a look at the earliest centuries, especially those right after the "Apostolic" era when the New Testament was being written, will give us some clues as to what went wrong and why.

Some twenty years ago, when I felt a personal need to come to grips with a series of questions on authority that were being raised by the Shepherding controversy, I did a study and ran across a turn-of-the-century book that has proven to be one of the most informative and helpful things I've ever read. It's called, "The Church and the Ministry In The Early Centuries" [3] by a Thomas M. Lindsay, a Free Church of Scotland scholar on Church history. It was actually a series he gave called the Cunningham Lectures wherein he presented 2 or 3 years of research into early

sub-Apostolic literature to determine what happened to the ministry in its evolution into the hierarchical Roman system.

Perhaps "devolution" would be a better term to use, for Lindsay traced a marked deterioration in the Christian ministry as the centuries proceeded from the earliest days. And it seems to me that what he was describing in essence was a mix-up over the two different kinds of authority--spiritual vs. functional--that we talked about above, and how this corrupted the ministry's conception of its own mission.

To help you understand what happened, it is important to give you some of the historical context of what was going on. As we said earlier, there is no more important issue to establish in religion than, "By what authority?", and as long as the Twelve Apostles (and Paul) were alive, the Church could always turn to these men who had personally been trained by Jesus Himself for the answers to any questions.

But as they began to die off, a real crisis of authority quickly arose in the Church. This development was precipitated by the rise of the Gnostic heresies which were taking the Gospel and reinterpreting everything in terms of Eastern mystical thought forms. This proved to be a great problem because it was so close to the original, and yet so twisted. This coupled with the pressure of periodic persecutions was creating no small crisis of authority in the churches.

The solution they seemed to come up with was the rule of thumb that the bishops (the senior pastors) of the churches, especially those of the larger cities of the empire, were the ones who had inherited the authority of the Apostles by succession from generation to generation. This theory of "apostolic succession" evolved with time into the idea of a "bishop of bishops" or a Pope out of Rome (the seat of the Empire) who claimed to inherit the ability, like his apostolic predecessors, to promulgate new revelation on almost every matter as long as he was speaking *ex cathedra* ("out of the office or chair" of the papacy). As the centuries unfolded, this theory of authority began to reap the ugly consequences of its wrong assumptions, as the Church, following the pattern set by the Pharisees and rabbis of Jesus' day who had so encrusted the Law of Moses with stifling traditions, weighed down the Church with every wrong idea and practice imaginable.

Eventually the Reformation proposed the suggestion that the early Church had missed what God was doing. That is, because the theory of apostolic succession arose and took root before the canonization process of the New Testament was completed, the Church failed to see that the authority of the Apostles had stopped with, and been deposited by God into, a completed New Testament.

This Protestant "philosophy of authority" also felt it necessary to distinguish between different classes of apostles. In a special category were the Twelve Apostles trained by Jesus who were the indisputable leaders of the early Church. Although they were at first the sole form of "government" over the Jerusalem church, in time the system of seven elders emerged (Acts 6), copied no doubt from the synagogue system of their day. But the real call of these Twelve was doctrinal, to be the standard for the truth of the Gospel. And to ensure the survival of this standard, unbeknownst to them, they were also called, along with Paul and other men associated with them [4] , to write the New Testament.

Beyond them were the "ordinary" apostles. What this means is that as the years began to pass and the Gospel spread, the ministry of the apostle came to settle down into what was essentially a missionary. Paul, although he helped write a large proportion of the New Testament, also fulfilled this kind of a calling and the patterns he set in this area became something of a standard. Yet the apostolic ministry was never essentially a governmental position, except for that short period of time when a missionary was founding a church and before he had ordained elders to rule over it.

### The Two Classes of Ministry

Lindsay in his lectures states that what eventually became "the clergy" of the Church had always been divided into two categories--what he called the "Prophetic Ministry" (or the "Spiritual Ministry"), and what he called the "Local Office Bearers". He said the Prophetic Ministry consisted of three gifts that were often linked together. They were the apostle, the prophet, and the teacher.

These people were regarded to be the most important and "prestigious" ministries in the Body because they all were involved in the speaking forth of the Word "as the oracles of God" (1 Pe 4:11). This Scripture goes on to present a second broad category of ministry in contrast--the office holders who were to "minister...as of the ability which God giveth".

Paul bears witness to the importance of the Spiritual Ministry in 1 Cor 12:28 when he wrote, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..." What this means (and what the sub-apostolic literature confirms) is that within this collection of preeminent ministries, the ministry of the apostle was regarded as the most preeminent of them all. This was so because he had to be either a prophet or a teacher (or both), as well as a skillful evangelist, pastor, apologist, administrator and about everything else it took to found a church. For the essential work of an apostle beyond the circle, calling and times of the Twelve was to be a missionary, a church planter.

In addition, he had to be, of course, very mature in the faith, to the point of being a spiritual father (1 Jn 2:13,14). Plus, as the ministry began to evolve with the passage of time, he had to make a big sacrifice by dedicating himself to a lifetime of service away from fellow Christians. [5]

Right below the apostle in status was the prophet who spoke by direct Divine inspiration. The operation of the Spirit that worked through him was considered by Paul to be the gift most to be coveted (1 Cor 14:5). Contrary to the fear and reluctance people have to referring to some as "prophets" today, in the early Church they were actually quite common, even though their reputation and demand would vary a lot one from the other. The next most important was that of the teacher who taught the people the meaning of the Gospel, the all-important doctrine of Christ., and how to live out the Kingdom of God.

Now this does not mean there were not offices in the Church, there were. In the early Church, the elders and deacons were what Lindsay termed the "local office bearers". The term "elder" (Gk. presbuteros) was a title, but they were also called "bishops" (episcopos) meaning "overseers", or shepherds or pastors (poimen), describing their function. [6] These men operated on the basis of certain powers delegated to them by the Lord for the purpose of administrating and ruling over the corporate life of the local churches. These elders along with the deacons who were elected by the people became known as the "local office holders".

This is not to say that these men were just mere administrators, for they were somewhat in the spiritual ministry themselves, being shepherd-teachers. First Timothy 5:17 says that some of them who ruled well were worthy of "double honor" (i.e., pay), "especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." Furthermore, their ranks were always being fed by those in the Spiritual Ministry who were often called upon to serve as elders too. In time this proved to be very problematic for the Church, for eventually a man came to be looked upon as moving in spiritual authority by virtue of his holding an office. This created a new mediating priesthood, a professional clerical class that corrupted the Church's proper functioning.

In the first century, the common pattern was for these elders to rule as equals and as a group. But by the dawn of the second century, the common pattern was for one elder to emerge as the preeminent one over the others. In our day, in this most common form of structure, this person would be called "the pastor" while the others would be called elders. But in the second century they were called "bishops".

Again in our day, in what's known as the "episcopal" system, a denominational leader would be called a "bishop" who oversees a region of pastors. In the early Church, local bishops would naturally yet informally turn to more prominent or mature bishops for guidance, similar to the fatherly role an apostle would play to the churches he established. But in time this became formalized until an episcopal system emerged, and eventually a "bishop of bishops" or a "Pope".

But in the years between this and the Apostolic first century, what happened was that over a period of time, people who were especially gifted in the far more important spiritual ministries of Ephesians 4:11 were naturally often elected to also be elders, until in time, the different types of authority involved became blurred and confused. This meant that there was a tendency to regard ministers as operating in spiritual authority by virtue of the office they held. This led to a mediating priesthood and the centralized Roman system.

### Bringing It All Home

Now the points I would like to raise in regard to all this are as follows.

Although I appreciate all the words of caution and assurances against abuse that I hear of in circles where restoring the apostles is advocated, I cannot help but be suspicious of either the motives or the apparent naivete or ignorance of church history being expressed by this movement. For the fact of the matter is, if we exclude the primitive and temporary Apostolic Council government in Jerusalem and the special calling of the Twelve and Paul to replace their doctrinal oversight of the first generation with the New Testament for all subsequent generations, then the role of the "ordinary" apostle in the early Church (and by implication today) was that of a man trying to work his way out of a job.

That is, as a missionary going about planting churches, he would seek to raise up elders as quickly as possible so that he could move on to found another church. His goal was to get them to a point of enough maturity that they could stand up on their own two feet and not need him anymore, because they've got the Lord.

In contrast, it seems that this movement is seeking to work certain people into a job. According to both the Bible (1 Cor 11:3) and the Reformation, the head of every man is Christ, not an apostle. Is

this progress? Or is this regression, back into a time in the history of local churches when they were spiritual infants?

The fact of the matter is, the vast majority of churches in the earth today were not founded by apostles. Maybe the pastor himself founded the church. Or maybe it was founded with or without an apostle, but that was several generations ago now. Or maybe they were founded by a denomination of some sort that has its own system of clergy training and oversight.

Are we to believe that all these churches are so immature that they need a formal spiritual father over them specifically called an apostle? I'm all for being "Biblical", but the sight of churches seeking for apostles to rule over them, or certain leaders proclaiming themselves to be apostles makes me wonder if what's happening here is the erection of a straw man argument as a pretext for seeking a title, or control, or both.

I am doubly concerned about this when I hear about certain apostles being over other apostles. One can make a case for Paul and others being "over" certain churches, especially at a time when the Holy Spirit was completing the New Testament. But there is no Biblical precedent for some apostles being over others. [7] Perhaps in a sense of influence, but not in the sense of a formal structure. What this basically is otherwise, is a replication of the Roman system, except with the idea of apostles instead of bishops.

On the other hand, I would like to make it clear here that I would not want to stand in the way of true visionaries coming forth to lead the Body of Christ into its end-time inheritance. It stands to reason to me that these visionaries are going to be found among the ranks of the apostles, prophets, teachers and the like, not mere local elders. (Unless in the sense that such men also serve somewhere as local elders too.)

But what has always bothered me about the issue of apostolic restoration is that the Church today already has apostles. These are the ordinary missionaries out on the field, and too often they are looked upon as they who "couldn't make it at home" or wherever. The early Church sent out its best, but in our day, the most "prestigious" positions are found in the "home nations".

To me, this sub-standard situation may be more an indication of our real spiritual need than any presumed structural solution could address. Are those who are clamouring for the fame of being an apostle willing to "step down to service" in more than a rhetorical way by becoming real church planters in a real foreign field, and not just the ironic purveyors of another denominational schism in Christianized lands? Are they willing to become those unappreciated nobodies, the despised, weak, foolish, defamed "offscouring of all things" that Paul described (I Cor 4:9-13)?

Why is it that the foreign missionaries and Third World leaders who "bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Galatians 6:17) are so often never taken seriously to be most honored in the Church?

I'll tell you what I believe the answer is. It's two fold. One, those who are most preeminent in the eyes of the Church may not be the same as those in the eyes of God. And two, the current "apostolic movement" is so soaked in dominion eschatology of one version or another that it is as blind to the true scenario of the last days and the true nature of apostolic glory as the young Apostles were (Lu 22:24; Mt 20:20 ff).

In my opinion, if God really wants a restoration of the apostolic ministry to a strictly Biblical pattern, there would have to be a resolution of the kinds of questions raised above, and the coming forth of an apostolic class that will have to be careful with its motives and purposes.

There would have to be a dovetailing of these sorts of considerations in a way compatible with true spiritual maturity and Reformation philosophy. Tactically, the success or failure of it would hinge on whether it's approached as a ministry or an office. And doctrinally, if the apostles and prophets use their influence to prophesy and direct the churches further into this ecumenical quagmire, I do not see how they can avoid disaster. If they turn out to be such, they will be showing that they are after power and control, a title and an office, that they are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

I hope this article has provided at the least some food for thought, and has shed more light than heat on a most complex and difficult subject.

## **Who is the Foundation of the Church? Christ or the New Apostles? - by Phillip Powell**

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Where do Peter Wagner, John Lewis, Mark Conners and Ben Gray Fit In? From Our Side, there are two basic texts, which establish the truth.

FIRSTLY Paul's statements in:

1 Cor 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;"

And SECONDLY

2 Cor 11:13: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

From The Other Side – There are two areas of confusion based on what Paul wrote in Ephesians chapters 2 and 4:

FIRSTLY

Ephesians 2:20: "{WE} are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"

And SECONDLY

Ephesians 4:11-12: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

Now our topic tonight begs two questions:

HOW HAS THIS ISSUE ARISEN? Why are we tackling it?

I need to give you a brief modern historical background report. Here's the background:

Peter Wagner was the slated main guest speaker and Head of a so-called New Movement at the Brisbane based National Apostolic-Prophetic Conference during the period Feb 10-12 last year (2000). The convenor was pastor Ben Gray who together with AoG pastor John Lewis is hosting another similar event entitled BURNING HEART here in Brisbane in August 2001, unless the Lord intervenes and the Conference is cancelled. As an aside I think it is not without significance that this stuff is imported directly from the United States of America where the false Signs and Wonders and the false Faith Prosperity Teaching Movements have largely developed. The advertising blurb of the earlier Apostles and Prophets Conference in February 2000, included the following amazing statement:

"The New Apostolic Reformation is an extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit that is changing the shape of Christianity globally. It is truly a new day! The Church is changing. New names! New

methods! New worship expressions. The Lord IS ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM. THIS FOUNDATION IS BUILT UPON APOSTLES AND PROPHETS...”[2]

Sadly good men are being carried away with this delusion. For example Bill Newman, one of Australia’s leading evangelical evangelists was quoted as being in support of the event, which included extremists, Mike and Cindy Jacobs who are products of the false Toronto revival as key-note speakers. Amazingly Bill Newman, who has the reputation of being orthodox and highly successful as an evangelist was quoted on the same advertising leaflet as saying: “This 21st Century Church Conference may well prove to be the most important investment of your time in light of your future ministry. This is one conference not to miss (just imagine if you had missed the day of Pentecost!)...”

As we pointed out in our journal entitled Contending EARNESTLY for THE Faith[3] “none of us is old enough to have been present on “the day of Pentecost” and I for one am glad I missed the advertised 21st Century National Apostolic-Prophetic Conference – why? It is because the whole thing is founded upon a false premise. It is sheer heresy. Here is part of their leading statements authored by of course Peter Wagner and those listed in the advertising brochure, who include many of the known promoters of the false Revival Now stuff in Australia, including Brian Houston, Phil Pringle, Mark Conner, John Lewis, Danny Guglielmucci et al. The words of Paul a true apostle are most apt:

2 Cor 11:13: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”

Just step back and look at the statement made by Wagner and Gray. It is totally heretical. Such outrageous heresy cannot possibly be a work of the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of truth and not of error. Furthermore it simply echoes the false teaching of Rick Joyner and Bob Jones of the defunct Kansas City prophets. Well known and internationally respected Prophecy Teacher, Clifford Hill of UK has identified Bob Jones as an occultist who used his so called “spiritual powers” to obtain sexual favours from a number of women.[4] Why men like Wagner and Joyner continue to rely on someone like Bob Jones is a mystery unless they themselves are also influenced by the occult.

All of that aside, the statement is false for the following reasons:

1) FIRSTLY true Christianity and the real Church will never change their shape. Our Lord promised that He would build His Church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. If Christianity and the Church are changed, in the way that Wagner and his associates suggest, then the gates of hell have prevailed and our Lord was wrong. What they are projecting is “their” Church and not Christ’s Church and therefore it is not TRUE Christianity.

2) SECONDLY the Bible clearly teaches that the foundation of the true Church is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul wrote in

1 Cor 3:10-11: “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

These men claim that it is modern end time “apostles” who form the basis on which the foundation of this new Church will be built. Their statement doesn’t make sense either logically or theologically. How can “the foundation” of the Church be “built upon apostles and prophets”? Scripture does not claim this even in respect of the original “apostles and prophets”. The clear meaning of Paul’s statement in Ephesians 2:20 in the light of 1 Cor 3:10-11, is that the apostles and prophets were chosen by God to lay the foundation of the Church. They were not the basis on which that foundation was laid, which is what Wagner and his gang claim regarding themselves. This is a fundamental heresy and one that the founders of historic Protestantism refuted to the point of martyrdom. Roman Catholicism teaches that the Church is founded upon Peter. The Reformers, relying solely upon the Word of God, taught that the true Church is founded upon Christ alone. Here is Paul’s statement in context:

Ephesians 2:19-20: “Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

These verses clearly refer to the work and witness of the New Testament apostles and the Old and New Testament prophets, who pointed to Christ in what they said and wrote. Christ is the corner stone and the capstone of the building that is His Church for He is “the alpha and omega, the beginning and ending”[5] and for anyone to claim to replace Him in any capacity is not only arrant nonsense but also arrogant heresy. This teaching of Wagner, which is supported by so many Australian Pentecostal leaders, including the President of AoG and the Australian Christian Churches, Brian Houston, must be rejected totally no matter who endorses or supports it.

Sadly good men like Bill Newman, who are unaware of the enormous back-ground intrigue that is going on in the Revival Now camp[6] and who sadly lack the spiritual discernment that is required to avoid deception are being sucked in by all this nonsense, which is simply adding to the current apostasy that is rampant within the Church. We are witnessing exactly what the Bible in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 warns us about namely the great falling away otherwise referred to as the Great Apostasy. We read in

2 Thess 2:3 “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”

At times it feels that the enemy is deploying a blitzkrieg attack on faith and on the faithful just as Revelation 12:12 implies: “. . . for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.”

Paul, a true and real apostle taught in:

2 Tim 3:12-17: “Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But you continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Peter another real and true apostle wrote in

2 Peter 2:1-3: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time will not linger, and their damnation will not slumber."

The confusion of this so called New Movement of which Peter Wagner is the self appointed head is linked to the fact that it fails to define and/or understand the biblical significance of the word "apostle", which unlike most words translated from the original Greek of the New Testament manuscripts is strictly speaking a transliteration and not a translation. The word "apostolos" simply means one who is sent as a representative with authority; in other words an ambassador or envoy. He represents the One who sent him in his unique mission and work. This means that he must be of the same nature and general disposition of the one he represents. If he portrays something different from and foreign to the ONE he purports to represent that very fact marks him as false. In the words of the great apostle himself

"Now if any man have not the Spirit {i.e. the nature or disposition} of Christ, he is none of his." Or as J B Phillips renders it "He doesn't belong to Christ at all" - Romans 8:9.

This is a great test that we can and should apply to anyone who names the name of Christ. One of the obvious characteristics of these so called end time apostles is their aggressive domination and control of others and their careless indifference to the needs and heart cry of those whom we may describe as Christ's "little ones" whom they so frequently ignore, despise and even spiritually abuse.

Shortly after the Brisbane Conference in February 2000 I was preaching in Melbourne when an elderly and godly looking couple approached me to tell their heart-rending story. Their pastor had attended National Apostolic-Prophetic Conference in Brisbane, only to return to demand that all his parishioners sign a pledge of loyalty to him as their "apostle". There were to be no strings attached. The covenant was to be unconditional. The response of this particular couple was a willingness to comply with just one proviso - the pastor must remain biblical in his teaching and demands. They were told there were to be NO conditions. Their commitment must be absolute. They refused and walked away from the local Church, which had been their spiritual home for many years. Anything that begets such arrogance and totally unbiblical practice as was evidenced by that pastor who wanted the title of "apostle" cannot be right.

Had the term "apostolos" been translated rather than transliterated this grandiose idea of authority and control may have been avoided. But Wagner and his followers fail to grasp the significance of this fact. Their failure is spawning a group of leaders who no longer represent the meek and lowly Nazarene who Himself is "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" to whom the writer to the Hebrews calls our constant attention (Hebrews 3:1). Every one of the New Testament apostles refers to himself as "a bond slave of Jesus Christ." The emphasis in their cases is NEVER on authority and control, but on relationship and association with the Lord Jesus Christ, which produces a nature commensurate with His and moulds character and disposition so that it is clear

whom they represented.

This really leaves just the one other Ephesians chapter 4 passage to consider and of course it raises the question as to whether there are true apostles of Christ in Church history and our present time. Accepting our definition, which makes an apostle an ambassador or envoy i.e. a man who has delegated authority to carry out a special task, it would be hard to deny their on-going ministry. Ephesians 4:11 speaking as it does of the five or four-fold (depending on your view about the term “pastor-teacher”) ministry gifts of the ascended Christ for the “equipping of the saints unto the work of ministry” certainly appears to support the view that they could be current for two fundamental reasons.

FIRSTLY if we allow for pastor-teachers and for evangelists it would appear to be inconsistent to argue the complete end of “apostles and prophets” seeing they are all spoken of in the same breath so to speak.

SECONDLY the needs of the on-going and present day Church are the same as those of the early Church. In other words saints still need to be equipped for ministry; the body of Christ still needs to be edified i.e. built up and we haven’t yet reached the unity of the faith or the “stature of the fullness of Christ.” Paul tells us that Christ gave these ministry gifts to the Church, which is His body with these objects in view.

BUT and here’s the rub – the apostles and prophets of Ephesians 4: 11 do not perform the same function as those of Ephesians 2:20 and this is where Peter Wagner and his followers make their fundamental mistake. In Ephesians 2:20 we are presented with an exclusive group of men to whom was committed the task of laying the foundation of the Church. Their work is done once and for all time. It will not and cannot ever be repeated. The apostles and prophets of Ephesians chapter 2 verse 20 have established THE FAITH, which is once for all committed to the saints. Those who follow, irrespective of what their ministry calling is, are called to contend earnestly for that faith. It is not a developing faith so there can never be anything new. It is a delivered faith and it is delivered once and for all. What Peter Wagner projects and what Ben Gray and John Lewis promote is another gospel. We respectfully and unequivocally call on them to repent and stop misleading the Church.

Let me conclude then with these two scriptures:

Ephesians 4: 7-16: “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (8) Wherefore he says, ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.’ (9) (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (11) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted

by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Jude verse 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

We make no apology for naming men. The Old Testament and the New Testament provide us with precedents for so doing. In fact in these days of faith destroying teaching and practice, when men are more concerned about their own position, possessions and persons it is vital that believers in Christ should be so alerted. We must examine what men teach in the light of scripture.

We invite that you apply that same standard to us. Some of the things that we will be addressing and some of the names that we will be mentioning pain both Jacob and me greatly. For myself it impinges upon those who have been my friends and colleagues for a number of years. It would be much easier for me to go away and ignore the problem, but before the Lord I cannot do that. When I chose to follow Christ as a child and throughout my youth and ministerial life that now stretches to 41 years in full time ministry I learned to count the cost. Our Lord said that if any of us put anyone before Him and His Kingdom then that person is not worthy of Him. We are not in a popularity contest. We as servants are called to serve the Lord Christ – He is LORD of all.

## **Promise Keepers: Should Fundamentalists Get Involved? Compiled by Miguel Betancourt**

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In the summer of 1990, while traveling in a car from Denver to Pueblo, Colorado, for a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting, University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney spoke with a friend, Dave Wardell, about the need for a men's ministry (David Halbrook, "Promise Keepers Looks Ahead," *Ministries Today*, March-April 1995, p. 61). After a brainstorming session in July with several invited friends, Promise Keepers (PK) was born. Although credited with the founding of the movement, Bill McCartney is only a figurehead. The administrative duties fall upon the president of the organization, Randy Phillips. Approximately eighty people are employed full-time.

This movement has seen explosive growth since its beginning. A crowd of 4,200 men attended the first convention at the Coors' Event Center in Boulder in 1991. In 1992, 22,000 men gathered together for a convention. A 1993 National Men's Conference at the Univ. of Colorado's Folsom Stadium drew a capacity crowd of 50,000 ministers, priests, and laymen. Seven conventions held in 1994 had around 300,000 in attendance. Some estimate that nearly 3/4 million men will attend the conventions this year. A national conference is scheduled for June 30-July 1 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. Plans also include the production of daily radio broadcasts and occasional TV programs. Promise Keepers plans to have one million men in attendance for a rally in Washington, DC in 1996.

Much of the success, humanly speaking, seems to be attributed to a few prominent individuals such as Bill Bright (Campus Crusade for Christ), and psychologists Dr. Gary Smalley and Dr. James Dobson (Focus on the Family) who have given their whole-hearted endorsement. Those who actually take the Promise Keepers program into the churches are called Point Men and Ambassadors. Point Men are the primary contacts with the churches that inform the congregations of upcoming conferences, training seminars and resources, and organize the promotion of PK conferences. Ambassadors introduce Promise Keepers to the churches in the community and recruit Point Men (Albert Dager, *Media Spotlight Special Report*, "Promise Keepers: Is What You See What You Get?", p. 2).

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Promise Keepers operates on the basis that God wants men to be responsible leaders in the church, home, and community. McCartney says that men must commit to what he describes as "the three non-negotiables of manhood: integrity, commitment and action" (Bill McCartney, *What Makes A Man? Twelve Promises that Will Change Your Life*, Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing, 1992, p. 11). He goes on to state,

"If you were to take the word integrity and reduce it to its simplest terms, you'd conclude that a man of integrity is a promise keeper. He's a guy who, when he says something, can be trusted. When he gives his word, you can take it to the bank" (ibid., p. 12).

The philosophy of PK can be found in the "Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper":

Promise #1. A Man and His God: A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Promise #2: A Man and His Mentors: A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

Promise #3: A Man and His Integrity: A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

Promise #4: A Man and His Family: A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.

Promise #5: A Man and His Church: A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources.

Promise #6: A Man and His Brothers: A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.

Promise #7: A Man and His World: A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Conventions and rallies will give little more than a cursory explanation of the seven promises and challenge men to commit to them. To get to the heart of PK, one has to review their literature.

## PUBLICATIONS

Although there is no official PK publishing house yet, their books are published by others--primarily Focus on the Family and NavPress. However, other publishing houses have begun to produce titles also. For example, Multnomah published Stu Weber's Tender Warrior, and Word Publishing produced Archibald Harts' The Sexual Man. PK's bimonthly magazine, A New Man: For Men of Integrity, is published by Strang Communications, publishers of Charisma, a magazine that is the official voice of the Charismatic movement. These publishers represent some of the strongest promoters of "Christian" psychology and errant doctrine. The following books are officially endorsed by PK and used by them:

What Makes A Man? Twelve Promises That Will Change Your Life, NavPress, 1992

Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper, Focus on the Family Publishing Co., 1994

The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood, NavPress, 1993

Brothers! Calling Men Into Vital Relationships, Promise Keepers manual, 1993

Daily Disciplines for the Godly Man: Practical Steps to an Empowered Spiritual Life, NavPress, 1993

## KEY SPEAKERS

1. DR. E.V. HILL

Pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist, in the Watts section of Los Angeles, CA.

Church affiliated with the National Baptist Convention & member of the National Council of Churches (which rejects orthodox doctrine; they are fully apostate.)

Board member of Los Angeles NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (which sponsored the Gay Rights march on Washington in the summer of 1993), Los Angeles Urban League, and Billy Graham Association Endorsed 1984 candidacy of Jesse Jackson for Democratic nomination for the presidency.

Guest speaker on various charismatic and new-evangelical platforms -- May 1991 commencement speaker at charismatic Kenneth Hagin's Rhema Center, speaker for Billy Graham 1992 School of Evangelism, 1991 Moody Bible Institute, etc.

## 2. EVANGELIST LUIS PALAU

Native of Argentina; internationally known as "the Billy Graham of South America".

Cooperates with new-evangelicals, liberals, charismatics, and Roman Catholics in crusades and conferences.

Participated in "Methodist Congress on Evangelism" held at Oral Roberts University. Also featured was Dr. Charles Allen, First United Methodist Church of Houston, along with other Methodist bishops. This demonstrates his willingness to cooperate with apostate Methodism or the radical fringe of Charismaticism.

His ecumenical message is filled with Arminian easy-believism and pop psychology.

## 3. JACK HAYFORD

Hyper-charismatic pastor of the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, CA.

Senior editorial adviser for Ministries Today, a pro-charismatic magazine published by Strang Communications.

## 4. ROBERT HICKS

Professor at the Seminary of the East; teaches pastoral theology.

Author of The Masculine Journey.

5. And many others such as James Dobson, Chuck Swindoll, Gary Smalley, etc.

## CONCERNS:

### 1. CONTRADICTION OR HERETICAL STATEMENTS IN THEIR PUBLICATIONS ON VARIOUS ISSUES OR DOCTRINES

#### A. ISSUE OF SELF-LOVE

One analyst who has read PK's writings found "a preponderance of advocacy favoring self-love over self-denial, the latter of which is the biblical admonition" (Al Dager, Media Spotlight Report, p. 3). Oddly enough, both sides of the issue can be found in the same book without any comment as

to which is correct. For example, Don Osgood's statement in *What Makes A Man?* reflects the biblical side of the issue (p. 97), but psychologists Gary Smalley and John Trent offer advice (which amounts to self-love) which is drawn from humanistic psychology (pp. 44-45).

## B. FEMINIZATION OF THE CHURCHES

Dr. Tony Evans in *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, challenges men to be men and to take back leadership roles in churches and homes. He also laments the fact that our nation is full of "sissified men who abdicate their role as spiritually pure leaders, thus forcing women to fill the vacuum" (p. 73). Evans' sound advice to men is offset by the unsound advice of Gary Smalley (given in the same book, pp. 105-106) whose ideal of a man is one pictured in a family scenario where the father overcomes the "dysfunctional elements" of his own background to raise "three emotionally- healthy children." Smalley's mindset seems to be more towards rearing "emotionally healthy children" with "unconditional acceptance" and "sensitivity" than instilling biblical principles through genuinely loving confrontation and discipline. Instead of of condoning his son's rebellion, a biblically oriented father would teach his son the necessity of honoring parents, standing his ground for godly values, and correcting his son in a Scriptural manner.

Again, the diverse approach PK uses confuses people who try to discern truth from error. On the one hand, men are challenged to be men while on the other, they are presented with "truths" that are lies based upon a "feminizing requirement for unconditional acceptance and sensitivity" (Ibid., p. 5). With all the talk one hears about the need for being men of integrity, Promise Keepers allow teachings that lack the integrity they desire men to have. Note Albert Dager's discerning insights:

"Male leadership in and of itself is insufficient for adherence to the biblical mandate that demands doctrinal purity and unity in the bond of love. Men who teach error within the Church lead it nowhere closer to obedience to the Lord than women who teach, whether truth or error. Both operate outside the biblical mandate" (Ibid.).

The answer to the problem of the feminization of the church does not lie in just putting any man into a leadership position. Many more problems could come as a result. Male leadership must be doctrinally sound and biblically grounded if they are to effectively direct the church and home along God's pathway.

## C. VIEWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

In a fax dated 12/8/93 to Greg Dixon, pastor of Indianapolis Baptist Temple, Promise Keepers stated that it "shares the same historic and biblical stance taken by Evangelicals and Catholics." But then PK takes a soft, worldly stance on the issue by recognizing it to be "a complex and potentially polarizing issue" to be understood in the context of psychology and genetic research. Robert Hicks seems to reinforce PK's tolerant attitude:

"Some of my early `counselees' were individuals who I once thought were logical contradictions. God brought me to Christians who were homosexuals and Marxists. I listened, tried to understand, debated back and forth, but was left with the conviction that they were sincere about both their faith in Christ and their views on sexuality and politics, though these differed from mine....I have learned that the way to look at God or the world is not necessarily through the lens or categories I currently believe are the correct ones. The labels don't matter all that much, whether they be

Communist, Democrat, New Age, feminist, fundamentalist, or hookers-married- to-crossdressing codependents" (Robert Hicks, *The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood*, Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993, pp. 133,34).

Several things need to be pointed out about the fax sent to Greg Dixon and this statement from Hicks' book. (A copy of the fax to Greg Dixon as well as a fuller analysis of Hick's position can be found in the Media Spotlight Special Report, pp. 5-6.)

1. Seemingly, Hicks and others are convinced that a person can be content to remain an unrepentant homosexual and still be a genuine child of God. When one ceases to look at a particular sin from a scriptural perspective, he is left with only the darkness of human reasoning. God's word is clear: no unrepentant homosexual will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Further, Paul commands that those who profess Christ and yet openly practice sin should be removed from fellowship ("with such an one, no, not to eat" Cf. 1 Cor. 5:9- 11).

2. Biblical truth is timeless; it is not dependent upon the circumstances or cultures of the day. If one looks at God or the world through the eyes of his religious tradition or experience, then views can easily change. But if one's vision of God and the world comes from explicit Scriptural teaching, then those views cannot change without first rejecting divine revelation. (Hicks should have said that his counselees' views differed from God's word rather than his own.)

3. Labels ARE important. A person cannot identify himself with an anti- Christian philosophy (Communism, feminism, New Age-ism, homosexuality, etc.,) and still genuinely identify with Christ and true biblical faith.

4. Albert Dager summarizes the situation as follows: "While calling for strong male leadership in the churches, Promise Keepers has wimped out on an `issue' (read `sin') that strikes at the very heart of masculinity and presents an affront to God by its militant in-your-face challenge to accept sexual perversion or risk being called `unloving'" (Ibid., p. 6).

#### D. HERETICAL VIEW OF CHRIST

1. Jesus: a man personally tempted with homosexuality?

Even more shocking (and perhaps the explanation for his compromising stance) is Hicks' belief that Jesus was personally tempted with homosexuality. The following is taken from his book, *The Masculine Journey*, p. 181, which has been officially sanctioned by Promise Keepers as being "biblically-centered, frank, and honest." Promise Keepers issued a seven- page defense of Robert Hicks' book, *The Masculine Journey*, in which they responded to various concerns that were raised regarding its distribution, endorsement, and the ideas presented in it. It can be obtained by writing to Promise Keepers at P.O. Box 18376, Boulder, Colorado 80308. Martin and Deidre Bobgan have also written a rebuttal to this statement in their book *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy*, pp. 31-44. The Bobgan's *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy* is a scholarly analysis of Hicks' work in which the meanings of six Hebrew words are distorted to support his psychological presuppositions.

Hicks' book and its accompanying study guide were distributed to each man who attended the 1993 convention in Colorado.

"I believe Jesus was phallic with all the inherent phallic passions we experience as men. But it was never recorded that Jesus had sexual relations with a woman. He may have thought about it as the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* portrays, but even in this movie He did not give in to the temptation and remained true to his messianic course. If temptation means anything, it means Christ was tempted in every way as we are. That would mean not only heterosexual temptation but also homosexual temptation! I have found this insight to be very helpful for gay men struggling with their sexuality" (Hicks, p. 181).

Again, several things should be noted [the following observations come from Bobgan and Bobgan, pp. 12-13]:

a. To refer to *The Last Temptation of Christ* as evidence that Jesus may have been tempted with lust for Mary Magdalene is as blasphemous as that movie was. It portrayed graphic sexual desire (lusting in the heart) which Christ identified as sin (Matt. 5:28). Hick's statement embraces the movie's blasphemy.

b. Hick's concept of a "phallic Jesus" is offensive when offered in the context (in his book) of the various seasons of a man's life. The "phallic stage" of a man's life is one season during which his sexual energy is the dominant force. No where in Scripture are we presented with the concept of a "phallic Jesus." The idea is not only insulting but also absurd.

c. Hicks reveals a faulty grasp of the nature of temptation and a total misunderstanding of Heb. 4:15 with his statement that Jesus was tempted in every way (with every possible temptation??) as men are. To say that He was sexually tempted as men implies that the experience of temptation was identical--that Jesus had the same inward inclination to lust as men do. Jn. 14:30 makes it clear that nothing inside of Christ responded to sin or a solicitation to do evil. It was absolutely impossible for Him to have sinned.

d. These and many other statements in *The Masculine Journey*, afford a prime example of humanistic psychology being used to strait-jacket Scripture into supporting "Christian" psychological theory. In reality, his position is nothing more than an heretical view of Christ. [Compiler's Note: Hicks' "Christianized" psychological theories find their source in two influential psychiatrists--Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Both of these men rejected Christianity. Freud was a sex pervert; Jung (who broke ties with Freud) dealt heavily in the occult. Quoting from Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections* (1961), the Bobgans reveal Jung's involvement with necromancy. Jung claimed to have daily contacts by a familiar spirit he called "Philemon" which he credits for some of his psychological theories. Hicks' use of the term "archetypes" is borrowed from Jung who used it to refer to disembodied spirits with which he also claimed to have daily contact.]

e. Under "Exploring the Issues with Other Men," (p. 21) the following question is asked in the Study Guide to *The Masculine Journey*: "What were your male models like as you were growing up, and how did Jesus compare as a man?"

One of the suggested points of discussion is: "Both were regular guys sexually tempted as men are."

The statement infers that Jesus was a "regular guy" and that He was "sexually tempted as men are." Use of the slang expression "guy" is hardly fitting for the God-man. It's disrespectful and contemptuous. As one writer put it, "Using the words 'regular guy' in relation to sexual temptation reduces Christ to the lowest common denominator of masculinity (Bobgan, p. 13).

## 2. Jesus: the non-confrontive encourager as a pattern for Promise Keepers

a. Geoff Gorsuch, in the PK manual, *Brothers! Calling Men into Vital Relationships*, presents a distorted view of Christ. For example, note the following quotations:

"Jesus didn't view men as losers. He saw them as lost" (p. 49).

"...Jesus always asked those who came to Him what he [sic] could do for them" (p. 63).

1. With regard to the first statement Gorsuch makes, Christ seems to prefer looking at men in an unoffensive and positive manner. Mankind is not to be thought of in a demeaning term such as "loser," but as individuals who just need a little help to find their way. The truth is that all men are losers AND lost. A loser is one who does not triumph. Since no man can by himself overcome sin much less its penalty, he cannot be said to be just neutrally "lost": He is a loser as well. Apart from God's grace we will all remain desperate losers condemned and under the curse of sin. In man-to-man associations, some are winners and some are losers. But in man-to-God relationships, every man is a loser of the worst sort. Our victory can only come through the Holy Spirit as the merits of Christ's finished work on the cross are applied.

2. With regards to the second quotation above, Jesus did ask blind Bartimaeus what he wanted, and possibly there may have been other similar instances that the Scriptures do not record, but the fact is Jesus did NOT always go around asking what He could do to help people. Jesus was most concerned about their deepest need (deliverance from sin) rather than mere material or physical needs.

b. Author Bob Beltz's description of Christ also adds to an erroneous view of Him: "Jesus Christ is challenging and exciting! He was and is the most attractive and winsome personality in all of human history" (Bob Belz, *Daily Disciplines for the Christian Man: Practical Steps to an Empowered Spiritual Life*, Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993, cited by Dager, p. 10).

As a model for the PK, the stereotype of a godly man seems to be more Mr. Personality than one committed to holiness regardless of the cost. There was nothing about Christ physically (personality or otherwise) that was the secret of His popularity, and that attracted people to follow Him. Isa. 53:2 tells us "he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Many followed Jesus not because they were attracted to His personality, but because of the supernatural miracles He performed. When Christ pressed them to submit to His demands for discipleship, many stopped following Him (Cf. Jn. 6:66-68).

It is interesting to note that as our Lord came to the close of His earthly ministry, His popularity dwindled and the very crowds that earlier praised Him cried out for His death (Cf. Matt. 27:20-25). Does this mean He lost whatever it was that made Him so attractive and winsome?? Albert Dager sums up the situation accurately

"There are many human concepts of Jesus, but there is only one biblical truth about Him. It is not sufficient to hold onto a close facsimile; one must hold onto the biblical Jesus. Beltz presents an unbiblical Jesus--a Jesus viewed through the romantic eyes of nostalgia. This is the feminized, "sensitive" Jesus, not the true Son of God who [sic] will appear in flames of glory to bring judgment upon an unrepentant humanity" (Dager, p. 10).

#### E. UNSCRIPTURAL ECUMENISM

1. Promise Keepers is a charismatic-led organization that was started by members of John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship. Coach McCartney, his pastor James Ryle, and president Randy Phillips are members of the Boulder Valley Vineyard. The Vineyard fellowship witnessed the so-called "Toronto Blessing" on Oct. 20, 1994 during South African Evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne's meetings. When members were "slain in the Spirit," they began to roll on the floor and laugh hysterically. Some lay on the floor for long periods of time giggling uncontrollably. At Oral Roberts University, Oral Roberts heralded the "laughing revivals" and Rodney Brown's ministry as signaling an "arrival of another level in the Holy Spirit." A September 1994 issue of Charisma magazine pointed out that John Wimber and his Vineyard churches had been largely swept up by the strange incidents. (The "laughing revivals" first broke out in January 1994.) (See David Cloud, *The Laughing Revival and The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement*, Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature, 1995; for further information about the Vineyard movement and its beliefs see another Media Spotlight special report, *Latter-Day Prophets*, and the book *Wonders and the Word*, Kindred Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba).

2. As so often is the case among charismatics and those who reject the biblical doctrine of separation, they press for a physical expression of unity [among Christians], regardless of doctrine. Promise Keeper's stated goal is the unifying of all who love Jesus and claim to be born again, regardless of denominational affiliation. In keeping with the current craze of cooperation with Rome is the attempt to unify non-Catholics and Catholics. Albert Dager sizes up the problem:

"The weakness seems to lie more in Promise Keepers' official hands-off policy. While Promise Keepers does not overtly endorse Catholicism, they fall short in not addressing those doctrinal issues that essentially nullify the doctrines upon which unity for Promise Keepers is based. This coupled with their admonition not to judge or confront per their manual for men's groups, leaves those who wish to minister the truth to Catholics without a leg to stand on within the Promise Keepers' format. By not taking a stand on doctrinal issues, Promise Keepers overlooks the doctrinal differences not so much among non-Catholic denominations but between these and Roman Catholicism" (Dager, p. 12).

Such a passion for visible unity obligates them to refuse to stand up against the heresies of Rome. Even in their literature, there seems to be a willingness to accept the Catholic system as legitimate: "One of the core values of Promise Keepers is honoring the pastors and priests of our local congregations" (Dager, p. 12)

Acknowledging the legitimacy of Rome's priesthood is an act of treason to God and Scripture. It not only discredits the sufficiency and untransferable nature of Christ's priesthood, but also the scriptural truth of the priesthood of the believer. Promise Keepers is playing right into the Vatican's hands as the "Mother Church" seeks to accomplish its goal of incorporating all erring sheep back

into the fold (Ibid.).

3. Fundamentalists should not participate in the Promise Keepers movement because of its ecumenical tendencies. This can be seen in its willingness to broadly accept any religious denomination or system of religion that calls itself Christian (regardless if there may be different meanings for the terms "Christian," "saving faith," "salvation by grace," etc.). A recent issue of *Ministries Today*, quotes Carl Schmidt's insightful observation of the Promise Keepers' mindset in his article in *Christian Century*. [The magazine *Christian Century* proudly advertises that it offers the Christian community material that is written from the moderate to liberal perspective; Carl Schmidt's comments about the absence of fundamentalists' nonnegotiables in Promise Keepers speaks volumes.]

"There is scant evidence of the fundamentalists' nonnegotiable principles of faith. Descriptions of Christian belief are framed in broad rather than narrow terms" (emphasis mine) (Halbrook, p. 60).

4. The Promise Keepers Movement violates the Bible doctrine of separation.

a. Ephesians 5:11 admonishes the believer to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." PK demonstrates its refusal to obey God's command to reprove (expose) apostate systems for what they really are. There is nothing Christian about Catholicism: it is paganism in Christian garb. To showcase key speakers who are professing believers but identify with apostate denominations, and who refuse to take a strong stance against Romanism, is treasonous to the cause of Christ.

Neither Catholicism nor any apostate denomination is to be accepted as a legitimate expression of biblical Christianity. It is one thing to make an honest mistake in one's associations, but quite another to willingly and continually form unscriptural alliances as PK speakers and leaders do. If the men who are known as Promise Keepers are sincere in their commitment to honor Jesus Christ through obedience to God's Word (Promise #1), and to practice spiritual purity (Promise #3), then let it be demonstrated by their loving loyalty to the Scriptural mandate to separate from error and compromise. As one author observed:

"The only genuine measure of any person's or group's integrity with God is strict adherence to the purity of His Word. Promise Keepers' acceptance of anything called 'Christian'--unless it is perceived as 'unloving'--neutralizes the effects of those changed lives" (Dager, p. 15).

b. God commands the believer to "come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17), yet some think it better to "stay in", "infiltrate," "accommodate," "dialogue with" and yoke together for a good cause in spite of error, compromise, and infidels.

c. Passages such as Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:11, 1 Tim. 6:3-5, 2 Thess. 3:6, and Rom. 16:17 instruct believers how to treat brothers in Christ who willingly disobey the truths of God's word. "The person who bears the responsibility of dividing the body of Christ (in an organizational sense) is not the Christian who militantly and correctly insists on obeying Scriptural precepts, but the believer who rejects the Bible doctrine of separation and insists on fellowshiping out of bounds" (John Ashbrook, *Axioms of Separation*, Mentor: OH: Here I Stand Books, pp. 12-13). [O Timothy Editor: We don't believe the term "the body of Christ" should be applied to any worldwide grouping of professing Christians today.]

d. Why not join together for a good cause? If no portion of scriptural truth is compromised, then it may be a good thing to do. However, with Promise Keepers, the situation is different. Biblical truth is compromised.

In 2 Chron. 18, the pagan king Ahab conned a righteous king, Jehoshaphat, in a "good cause syndrome" (Ibid., p. 17). The Syrians had taken the border town of Ramoth-Gilead and for the best interests of both Judah and Israel, the two kings planned to join forces to fight a common enemy and regain the town. When Jehoshaphat asked for God's will to be consulted on the matter, Ahab's false prophets gave their counsel. Micaiah was the only true prophet of the LORD present that gave the truth. But Jehoshaphat listened to the voices of the majority and sided with Ahab. Upon return from a disastrous set of circumstances, Jehoshaphat was greeted by Jehu the prophet who delivered this message from God:

"Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord" (2 Chron. 19:2).

If questioned, Jehoshaphat probably would have denied loving Ahab. But from God's perspective, his cooperative venture (though it seemed like a good thing to do) was seen as traitorous and worthy of chastisement from God.

Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "It is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right." Today, modern day Ahabs and Jehoshaphats are joining forces to fight a common enemy in the good causes of winning souls, moral issues, etc. God's disapproval of Judah's king is a lesson modern day Christians need to remember.

e. More applicable to the majority of laymen who associate with Promise Keepers is the lesson taught in Ezra 4:1-4. The people of the land that had been transplanted there by an Assyrian king had approached Zerubbabel and the Jewish leaders about cooperating together in the good cause of rebuilding the temple. They claimed to worship the same God the Jews did and professed to serve Him faithfully for many years. Yet, Zerubbabel saw through their claims and rejected their offer of cooperation. His "no" cost him a lot of adversity (the withholding of supplies, accusations lodged with Ahasuerus and Darius, etc.), but it kept God's blessing upon them and their endeavor. The Jewish leaders did not "love them that hated the LORD."

"Promise Keepers is one of the latest and most subtle attempts to break down the biblical line of demarcation between ecumenism and biblical Christianity under the honorable purpose (the good cause) of building strong men and families" (The Fundamentalist Digest, Vol. 3, No. 5, September-October 1994, p. 4). Like Zerubbabel we must be on guard against being drawn into an unholy union and a false public display of unity with compromise.

#### F. WHAT ABOUT THE RESULTS THAT ARE SEEN?

1. Though we can rejoice that men may get saved and their lives turn around for the good, yet results in and of themselves do not necessarily mean the movement has God's approval or that the methods Promise Keepers uses are right and in conformity to the will of God. Numbers 20 provides a classic example of this. Moses was commanded by God to strike the rock (Ex. 17:5) and speak to it (Num. 20:8) and water would come forth miraculously to supply the needs of the Israelites and their animals. In a fit of rage and frustration over the rebellious attitudes and

complaints of Israel, Moses angrily struck the rock twice and water came out of the rock in abundance to quench the thirst of millions of people and animals. God graciously displayed His supernatural power and performed a miracle in the presence of the entire assembly. Yet, did God approve of Moses' methods? Did the visible result of water coming out in abundance demonstrate God's hand of blessing was upon Moses' work? No, his disobedience was noted and as punishment, he was forbidden to enter the Promised Land. "The good results that were publicly displayed did not justify the wrong way in which God's will was carried out" (Axioms of Separation, p. 14). The same is true about Promise Keepers.

2. Coach McCartney credits the recent phenomenal growth of the PK movement to the fact that "we've tapped into something that is at the very heart of God, which is why it knows no boundaries" (Halbrook, p. 61).

The Scripture is unmistakably clear: the primary attribute by which God wants to be known is holiness--He is totally separate from all that is sinful or defiled.

Fifty-five times God refers to Himself in Scripture as the "Holy One." Fifty-nine times He is called or described as being holy. There are only forty-three times where God is said to love or that He Himself is love.

Interestingly enough, the word "holy" (or a form of it) occurs 651 times in Scripture. The word "love" (or a related form) whether human or divine is mentioned only 546 times. Although no attribute of God is mentioned more frequently in the Bible than that of holiness, there is perhaps no other characteristic so ignored and misunderstood as this one. Many seem to view holiness and love as being contradictory: holiness is too negative and divisive while love seems to be positive and accepting. But contrary to God's nature is the notion that love must tolerate or even refuse to expose error. God's love is compatible with His holiness. As believers follow the command to imitate their God (Eph. 5:1), they are not free to pick and choose which characteristics to copy. The modern day definition of love largely sets aside God's demand to His children, "Be ye holy for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:15,16).

Holiness is the hub of the wheel from which all other divine attributes radiate. Anything that is genuinely at the heart of God should primarily reflect that same characteristic of holiness. With the blatant rejection of the Bible doctrine of separation (which finds its foundation in the holiness of God), Promise Keepers cannot be legitimately considered "at the very heart of God." Whenever a movement becomes engrossed in compromise with error, it ceases to reflect that core attribute which God has chosen as His name (Isa. 57:15).

3. Still some would try to ignore the wrong of compromising methods and point out only the good that is seen. Some would even say that those who dare criticize a movement (as PK) which has enjoyed such phenomenal success are being nit-picky. If there can be an agreement on the "major" doctrines of Scripture, then why not get on the bandwagon of a good cause? To this Albert Dager makes the following remarks:

"The evidence of God at work is not outward results, but conformity to Scripture, which in turn results in outward change. Outward change without conformity to Scripture is merely human righteousness. Change of mind does not always equate to change of heart. A genuine change of heart results in the holding of Scripture in high esteem. Nor does it distinguish between so called

`essential doctrine' and `secondary doctrine' ... (2 Tim. 3:14- 17)... When the Holy Spirit says that all Scripture is given for instruction in righteousness, He isn't speaking only of the so-called `Big Five' doctrines the ecumenists are claiming as reason for unity. He means all of Scripture itself is the essential doctrine of the Faith" (Media Spotlight Special Report, p. 14).

He then continues with these comments:

"The end does not justify the means. The proper focus must be on the means itself, as well as on the end. . . Results are not the final arbiter of truth; one's pious demeanor is not the final arbiter of truth; one's ability to call fire down from heaven is not the final arbiter of truth. God's Word is the only and final arbiter of truth" (Ibid.).

## Promise Keepers: The Seven False Premises By Jack Stephens

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What an exhilarating scene--an arena jam-packed with thousands of sincere men standing together to declare their allegiance and devotion. Before the main event ever takes place a crescendo of praise erupts. Everyone is caught up in the evident power of the moment and they sense that they are part of an invincible force. Men who had previously been cool or lackadaisical in their worship are invigorated, renewed in their devotion, and leave with new determination to be faithful in their vows and worship.

Can you place this event? It occurred in Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey. But if you guessed this was describing a Promise Keepers conference, you would be right as well. Promise Keepers (hereafter referred to as PK) is a mushrooming mens' movement begun in 1990 by former football coach Bill McCartney of the University of Colorado. His burden was to restore strong male leadership to our homes and churches. A noble goal in light of the sad facts that 22% of white children and 68% of black children in our country are born to unmarried mothers and 5.6 million children under the age of 15 are being raised without a father (Edward Gilbreath, "Manhoods Great Awakening," Christianity Today, 39, No. 2, Feb. 6, 1995, p. 25).

So what could possibly be wrong with an organization whose purpose is to develop Christian men? Who can fault the Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper? Read them for yourself:

1. A PK is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. A PK is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
3. A PK is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.
4. A PK is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.
5. A PK is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources.
6. A PK is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
7. A PK is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission (Mike Betancourt, ed., "Promise Keepers: Should Fundamentalists Get Involved?" O Timothy, 12, No. 4, 1995, p. 8).

Isn't that tremendous? Shouldn't every pastor rejoice and throw his support behind PK? In a word No. In the next few pages, observe the many fatal flaws in the foundation of this movement--flaws that we will call THE SEVEN FALSE PREMISES OF THE PROMISE KEEPERS.

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FALSE PREMISE #1 - If it works, it must be right.

This is the philosophy of pragmatism. One of the key defenses of PK is its claim of results. Men return from the conferences changed, committed, and actively involved in their churches and families. They have committed themselves to the Seven Promises, yet God declares that vows should not be made hastily because God holds us accountable for every vow we make (Ecclesiastes 5:2,4,5). In addition, the "need" to be held accountable to "brothers" who are "to help him keep his promises" is an unscriptural, humanistic addendum to the vowing process. Rather, every member of the Body of Christ is to consider one another to provoke one another to good works (Hebrews 10:24). Surely, committing to vows during a highly emotional mass rally of "pumped" men is questionable at best and dangerous at its worst.

The results from such a gathering have all the marks of being short-lived, shallow, and humanist. Mob psychology rules. The atmosphere is anything but spiritual. Published reports relate the prevalence of Frisbees, paper gliders, beachballs, and footballs being tossed throughout the stands. Blaring rock music pounds to increase the hype. In some meetings, popular new evangelical leader Chuck Swindoll has ridden in on a motorcycle to the accompaniment of the rock song, "Born to Be Wild" (Gilbreath, "Manhoods Great Awakening," p. 23). One pro-PK observer noted that "at times the... crowd seems excited not so much by what is being said as by the opportunity to 'hang' with other men" (Gilbreath, p. 23).

With all this hype, glitz, and gimmickry, isn't it clear that PK has substituted what God can do through the Word for what man can do through worldly means? It is virtually impossible to achieve true lasting spiritual results through the artificial, ungodly means of men.

Regardless of the results, pragmatism has never been the measure of spiritual success. If any men are truly changed to lives of solid commitment rather than to lives of flash-in-the-pan decisions, it will be in spite of, not because of, PKs methods.

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FALSE PREMISE #2 - If it moves me, it must be right

The reason PK is so entrenched in experiential influence may well be traced to the charismatic roots of its founder and leadership. Founder Bill McCartney and PK president Randy Phillips are both affiliated with the Vineyard Christian Fellowship (Betancourt, "Promise Keepers: Should Fundamentalists Get Involved?" p. 12). At least one third of the 15 men on the PK Board of Directors are openly charismatic (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, "Promise Keepers Board Members and Church Affiliation," Psychoheresy Awareness Letter 3, No. 3, May-June 1995, p. 8). Strang Communications, publisher of Charisma magazine, "the official voice of the Charismatic movement," publishes New Man magazine as a partnership endeavor with PK (Betancourt, p. 9). Charismatic speakers such as Jack Hayford and Greg Laurie are often featured (Rick Miesel, "Promise Keepers, Ecumenical Macho-Men for Christ?" Biblical Discernment Ministries Notebook, Nov. 1994).

While not dedicated to converting its participants to charismatics PK is committed to creating unity based on a common experience at least as heady as the "signs and wonders" of the charismatics.

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FALSE PREMISE #3 - If it combines Gods truth with mans truth, it must be right

There is a burgeoning market for PK-endorsed books on ways to revive the role of "Christian manhood." The views and methods may differ but they share the flaw of attempting to combine Scripture with the psychological theories and methods of man. Robert Hicks book, *The Masculine Journey*, is a prime example. Hicks twists the meaning of six Hebrew words for "man" to fit his own psychological theories of manhood. He "follows the predictable pattern of the integrationist. He takes a psychological theory, believes it to be valid... and then considers what the Bible might add" (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, "Promise Keepers and Psychoheresy," *Psychoheresy Awareness Letter* 2, No. 4, July-August 1994, p. 4).

He blasphemes the Lord Jesus by declaring that He was tempted to be homosexual and that He lusted sexually (Albert James Dager, "Promise Keepers: Is What You See What You Get?" *Media Spotlight*, 1994, p. 6). He speaks of man's need for "celebrating the experience of sin" in adolescence as a "rite of passage" (Bobgan, "Promise Keepers and Psychoheresy," p. 6).

Additionally, PK finds itself on the horns of a dilemma in regard to its treatment of homosexuality. PK officially declares that it "shares the same historic and biblical stance taken by Evangelicals and Catholics (Fax, "Promise Keepers Statement," sent to Pastor Greg Dixon, Indianapolis Baptist Temple, Dec. 8, 1993).

Yet in trying to placate as many people as possible they conclude just as officially that this abomination is "a complex and potentially polarizing issue to be understood in the context of psychology and genetic research" (Ibid.).

They state that "homosexuals are men who need the same support, encouragement and healing we are offering to all men.... We, therefore, support their being included and welcome in all our events" (Ibid.).

Whatever happened to condemning sin and calling for repentance and receiving the Gospel?

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FALSE PREMISE #4 - If it brings us all together, it must be right

Their conference speakers are indicative of their ecumenical position: Chuck Swindoll, president of Dallas Theological Seminary; Luis Palau, ecumenical evangelist; Bill Bright, director of Campus Crusade for Christ; E.V. Hill, ecumenical charismatic pastor aligned with the National Council of Churches (Rick Miesel, "Promise Keepers," pp. 5-6); Joseph Stowell, president of Moody Bible Institute; and Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church (National and International Religion Report, 8, No. 13, June 13, 1994, p. 2) to name a few.

No fundamentalist in his right mind would ever associate with the hodgepodge of men and ministries involved with PK. God has declared for us to come out from among them and be ye separate (11 Corinthians 6:17).

FALSE PREMISE #5 - If it reconciles us to Rome, it must be right.

The outcome of the previous premise of ecumenicity is the acceptance of Roman Catholicism along with new evangelical and apostate Protestantism. Martin and Deidre Bobgan quote Father Christian Van Liefde's evaluation of PK in an archdiocese periodical, The Tidings:

"... there is no 'doctrinal issue which should cause concern to the Catholic Church.' Promise Keepers places a very strong emphasis on returning to your own church congregation or parish and becoming an active layman.... There is no attempt at proselytizing or drawing men away from their faith to another church" (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, "Promise Keepers, Catholics, and Mormons ... Together," Psychoheresy Awareness Letter 3, No. 3, May-June 1995, p. 3).

PK rallies "have attracted a significant number of Catholics, including some priests" (Carl Crawford Schmidt, "Promise Keepers, Message to Men," Christian Century, Sept. 7-14, 1994, p. 806). McCartney himself has said, "Hear me: Promise Keepers doesn't care if you're Catholic" (Dager, "Promise Keepers," p. 12).

Was Paul mistaken, then, when he declared: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"? (Galatians 1:9).

Of course not. Active evangelism--the proclamation of the true Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ--referred to above as proselytizing, is the duty of every believer. Catholics are still one of our mission fields. We can never reconcile with the false gospel of Romanism.

I am told that when "oleo" was first sold it came in white, bland-looking sticks. A separate packet of yellow dye was included with your purchase and had to be kneaded into the oleo to give it a "butter" color. PK is like that old oleo. It is totally colorless regarding any true doctrinal substance. Anyone involved with it can add whatever doctrinal coloring in whatever amount they choose in order to make it personally palatable. But no matter how much you attempt to color it, PK still isn't butter. It is simply a bland carrier for ecumenical and Catholic dialogue and cooperation.

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FALSE PREMISE #6 - If it purports to help the church, it must be right

PK declares that its purpose is to "celebrate biblical manhood and motivate men toward Christlike masculinity." But doesn't Ephesians 4:11-16 tell us that God has provided for these things and all else we need by the ministry of the church? Is it not the church's responsibility to feed the flock (Acts 20:28) rather than relinquish such areas of ministry to "parachurch" organizations?

What pastor doesn't appreciate encouragement in the midst of his trials and disappointments? In some PK rallies, thousands of pastors are called to the front to receive applause and great swelling cheers of "WE LOVE YOU! (David Halbrook, "Promise Keepers Looks Ahead," Ministries Today, March-April 1995, p. 61). Pastors exposed to this attention are often moved to tears as roars of affirmation reverberate from the sea of men around them. How exciting! How uplifting!

But wait a minute. Think about it. Do these pastors understand the condescending connotations of these mammoth pity parties? PK purposes to do what churches and their leaders have failed to

do. PK is in effect saying,

"You poor guys. You have beaten yourselves silly trying to do this job. We truly appreciate your efforts, but you are so tired and ill-equipped. Why don't you just step aside and let us handle the job? We love you because your failure to do your job effectively has given us a reason to exist."

These pastors were also being cheered for renouncing their "denominational barriers" as sin (Mark Nispel, "Promise Keepers 1994," Christian News, 32, No. 34, Sept. 19, 1994, p. 7). This indicates that PK not only embraces the false doctrine of inclusivism, but strongly opposes the Bible doctrine of separation. This is blatant blasphemy against God's Word. God pronounces woe on those who are guilty of it (Isaiah 5:20).

McCartney has said "that he thought perhaps the Lord's main purpose for Promise Keepers was to gather his clergy" and in 1995 he hopes "to gather 75,000 of them in Denver." Pastors, if you love the Lord and honor His Word, keep yourself and your men far from PK.

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FALSE PREMISE # 7 - If anyone disagrees with us, they must be wrong.

Albert James Dager, in a special report on PK, describes "its militant in-your-face challenge to accept sexual perversion or risk being called 'unloving'" (Dager, "Promise Keepers," p. 6).

This same attitude pervades all of PK as it grows: 4,200 in 1990; 22,000 in 1991; over 52,000 in 1993; 234,000 in 1994; and projections of over 750,000 for 1995. Next year PK hopes to gather one million men for a rally in Washington, D.C.

With its pragmatic approach, its emotional hype, its snowballing attendance, its ecumenical appeal, and its condemnation of separation, the PK juggernaut seems intent on steamrolling its opposition. Although some of its goals, if interpreted within a separatist context, may be commendable, PK fails (in the same way as have the Moral Majority, Concerned Women for America, Right to Life, and other crusading movements) to meet the Bible's criteria for a Christian's involvement.

Any movement that leads men away from their need to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ and draws men to any other means of reform, religion, or referendum is wrong, regardless of its size and strength. Brethren, we stand opposed to Promise Keepers. Where do you stand?

## Promise Keepers - A Militant Unity? By Ed Tarkowski and Sarah Leslie

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Promise Keepers, a rapidly growing ecumenical men's movement, may be the best tool for those holding the Manifest Sons of God doctrines to market their beliefs to the rest of the American church. These beliefs, which are foundational to the Laughing Phenomenon associated with Rodney Howard-Browne, are now entering mainstream churches of all denominations via Promise Keepers. The Manifest Sons of God believe that Christ cannot incarnate in a divided body; therefore, it's crucial that the Church be united. Another term for this is "Joel's Army". Promise Keepers has been likened to this army. An article in Jewel van der Merwe's Discernment newsletter states:

In a recent interview in response to a question as to whether the Promise Keepers could be fulfilling the prophecy in Joel of raising an army, [Pastor] James Ryle answered, "Yes... 300,000 men have come together so far this year under Promise Keepers... Never in history have 300,000 men come together except to go to war. These men are gathered for war."

According to the O Timothy newsletter, "Promise Keepers is a men's movement started... by members of John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship." Ryle, who has ministered with John Wimber and Paul Cain, is pastor of the Boulder Valley Vineyard and, in association with Boulder member Bill McCartney, founded Promise Keepers in 1990. Ryle is presently a member of the Board of Directors of Promise Keepers, a 'non-denominational,' parachurch organization [whose stated goal] is to celebrate biblical manhood and motivate men toward Christlike masculinity." Vineyard head John Wimber has given his wholehearted approval to the Laughing Phenomenon.

Ryle isn't the only one to promise endtime warriors. During a Pastors' Meeting at the Airport Vineyard in Toronto, where the Laughing Phenomenon is ongoing, Rev. John Arnott said:

And so now we're starting to see people prophetically acting like lions and oxen and eagles and even warriors...it's a wonderful thing and we've seen it spontaneous... We had all four of those manifestations happening at the same time. So what did the man look like? He looked like a warrior, just yelling Ahhhhh!!!! ...[It] just may be the Holy Spirit putting an empowering, like a warrior, on them.

Promise Keepers has incorporated key doctrines of the Manifest Sons of God into their material. The February 1995 issue of Suitable Helpers, a newsletter for women participating in Promise Keepers expresses that believers can become Christ Incarnate: "Our Lord is calling out a great host of men ready and willing to become 'Christs' in their homes: Promise Keepers. In grand, bold sweeps, God has mustered an army."

Noticing the potential political nature of this men's movement is none other than The New Age Journal, which ran an article favorable to Promise Keepers in its April 1995 edition. Writer Jeff Wagenheim noted the odd combination of New Age men's movement ideology (Robert Bly's

pantheism) combined with the political evangelicalism of Pat Robertson:

...despite the group's assertions to the contrary, Promise Keepers is an organization with vast political influence. The fact that hundreds of thousands of men are being actively encouraged to adhere to a highly conservative set of values and to work to instill those values in their communities and nation should not just be a matter of theological interest.

An historical precedent for a military-style political/religious movement such as Promise Keepers can be found in Germany during the 30's. According to author Richard Terrell in his provocative book, *Resurrecting the Third Reich* (Huntington House, 1994), orthodox Christianity was supplanted by the German Volkish faith:

What was to take possession of the German consciousness was a militant romanticism... According to this way of thinking, the Divine Spirit is manifested in the spirit of a people, in their collective genius and total culture or Volkgeist... Germany developed a kind of communal mysticism which contained its own Teutonic concept of a chosen people, called to redeem civilization from its decadence.

Nazism arrived with the full trappings of a full-blown religion. Nazi rallies were glorious pageants that stirred the emotions, which, according to Schleiermacher, were the very well-springs of spiritual truth. The faith to which Hitler called the German people depended not on any revelation of Scripture, but on pure feeling. The Nazi mixture of flags, rich and heroic music (especially that of the fanatically anti-Semitic genius Richard Wagner), and the message of national destiny had the effect of religious festivals. Even today, still photographs of these meetings have a powerful and gripping presence, and one can imagine the great impact that such a piece of cinematic propaganda as *Triumph of the Will* must have had through its showings in German theaters (see chapter 5).

Terrell describes the advent of this full-blown religion:

The Volkish concept of the social organism was effectively symbolized in mass meetings that expressed a sense of eternity, awe, and mystery, effects stimulated by a "cathedral of light" nighttime mass meetings in which anti-aircraft lights sent brilliant shafts of illumination into the darkened sky. In his speeches, Hitler would frequently characterize his career in politics as a divine calling led by God and insisted that nazism was more than just a social movement. It was a total worldview, a spirituality, supported by an energetic use of traditional religious words that had, however, become detached from their orthodox, historic meanings. His references to a "thousand year Reich" carried the ring of the biblical millenium.

Is Promise Keepers creating a new "folk" religion? The large mass rallies, the exaltation of emotion over reason, the lack of doctrinal integrity, the taking of oaths (the 7 promises), the focus on fatherland and fatherhood, and the ecumenical inclusion of aberrant esoteric doctrines bears a disconcerting similarity to an era which gave rise to one of the most dreadful armies in history. The infiltration of Manifest Sons of God doctrines into PromiseKeepers (via Vineyard) combined with New Age ideologies (via Robert Bly and Robert Hicks) appears to create a new American folk theology: pantheism, the idolatry of self, the belief in a divine mandate to take the land, the superiority of a group, a divine millenium, and the necessity of group hysteria.

While many in the church are jumping wholeheartedly into the Laughing Phenomenon and Promise Keepers, it behooves the rest of the Church to take a sober, steady look at the historical, theological and philosophical underpinnings of these popular movements of our times.

## **Are you really a Promise Keeper?" - an open letter from Mitchell V. Casler:**

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Dear Promise Keeper,

Greetings from a man who has walked in your shoes. I attended the Boulder '93 PK Conference. I was a counselor at the conference in Denton, Texas and then attended the conference at Texas Stadium. I have been to several Leadership Seminars and rallies. I will not hesitate to say that I had a blast. There were many things that troubled me about the whole movement, but I was on such an emotional high that I refused to investigate those stirrings. I did not want to believe that there could be anything wrong. These conferences were like a football game, a motivational seminar, and a great sermon all rolled into one. I did not care to hear anything that would put a damper on that. It finally became so obvious to me and those I knew that there were some real contradictions to God's Word, that I just couldn't ignore it any longer.

Let me explain to you before I go any further that I desire nothing from you. I do not want you to believe anything I say, just because I said it. I will not even attempt to answer every question I ask. My heart's desire is that you question and prove everything I say and that you question and prove everything anyone ever has or ever will say to you. Please do not let the title Preacher, Pastor, Minister, etc. numb your senses. Please do not let the fact that scriptures are quoted, keep you from proving everything for yourself. Remember that the Devil quoted scriptures to the Savior. The Word of God was given to us for a reason. The answers are all there.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 says, "Test all things; hold fast what is good." I started doing that as I took a good hard look at this rapidly growing ministry. The first thing I did was to consider the things that troubled me from the start. Why were men, who ten years ago would have called each others' doctrine and theology either dead or heresy, so willing to share the stage with one another? Why all the promises of a better life and rewards on this earth by keeping 7 promises? What is all this talk of a great revival that can turn this country around then turn this world around?

I could list many more questions, but my intention is not to write a book. My intention is to inspire you to "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." as 2 Timothy 2:15 states.

Who are the preachers who speak at Promise Keeper events? Do you really know who you are listening to and following? What motivates them? Do they agree with and support each other and if not why are they so willing to link arms in this movement?

I think many of you would be amazed just how different the beliefs of many of these preachers are from your own beliefs. There are Baptist, Charismatic, Bible Church, the Inter-Denominational and the Non Denominational denomination, etc. Let me first say that there is only one Faith and one Church whose membership is added to, by and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read chapters 4 & 5 of Ephesians and the prayer of the Lord in John 17:20-26 and try to defend denominations or sectarian churches. Unity is not common these days among those who profess to be Christians. Even the counselors who work at PK conferences can give different advice. If a man came to the front because he was struggling in his relationship with God, he might be given one of several answers.

One counselor might say, "You need to pray more and read your Bible more." And another might tell him, "Hey buddy, you need to get the Holy Ghost!"

Why do the preachers of PK package themselves in a way that is acceptable to all who attend? Why do some not speak the same things at conferences that they speak from their own pulpit? I cannot judge the hearts of these men but I can sure see many things that concern me.

Write down the names of every preacher you know who have spoken at a PK conference and then take a trip to the local religious book store. How many of them have books for sale? How many have calendars, videos, tapes, etc. for sale? How much of this merchandise do you think they sell per year? What kind of money are they making?

If you knew something from the scriptures or from your personal life that would help me as a Christian brother or lead me to the Savior and Salvation if was not a Christian, would you charge me for it? You may say, "They have to make a living." We all have to make a living. What kind of living are we making?

All the answers we need are in the Bible, not in libraries of books these men are marketing. What would Christ think of these "Merchants of the Gospel"? Just as Christ cleared out the temple in Mark 11:15-17 of those who were there for personal profit should we not clean out the temple of the Holy Spirit which is our body as 1 Corinthians 6:19 & 20 explain. Will you walk as the disobedient Israelites did in Jeremiah 2:25 and follow strangers? These speakers are entertaining and they motivate just like all the great salesmen in the world. But, what is their life out the spotlight about? How much do you know about them besides the person they display on stage, radio, or TV? Titillating entertainment and self-motivation are of this world.

I shudder to think that just a few years ago I fell head first into the hype and screamed at the top of my lungs along with the speaker in Boulder, "COME ON DEVIL! HIT EM! HIT EM! HIT EM!"

Do we dare to contend with the Devil? Do we dare to compromise with him?

Did God promise us success or riches in our life on this earth? Did he promise that friends, family and those we work with and for would all love us because we are such good men if we keep 7 promises or even 777 promises?

The Lord states in John 15:19, "If you were of the world, the world would love it's own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." and in Matthew 10:34 & 35. "do not think I came bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-n-law against her mother-in-law;"

Please read 1 Peter 4:12-19 also. There are many other verses that show us the same thing and they easy to find. Did Peter, Paul or any other Christian in the Bible have an easy life? Did the

world love them? Did they profit materially with a big house, promotions and worldly riches?

What about Stephen in Chapter 7 of Acts? No worldly acclaim, but you would agree that he got the ultimate promotion? Were these Christians' lives better because they became Christians? I guess that depends on how you judge success.

Read 1 John 2:15-17 and examine your own life. Do Christians have to live in poverty? The Bible does not say that at all. What are your priorities though? How do you judge success in your life? There are many who approach everything they do including worship of the Almighty with overriding thought always in their mind, "What's in it for me?" There are many who prey on that selfish philosophy. When anyone calling himself a "minister of God" tells you that you are guaranteed anything on this earth, you might better check up on him and get a good quick grip on your wallet.

Does the Bible tell us there will be an improving situation in this world between the time Christ came and left the first time and his second coming? Will there be a Great Revival? See if you can find in the scriptures where this is promised before Christ returns and establishes His Kingdom on earth. See how many verses call for a continued degeneration of man.

Why do these preachers preach that somehow through this PK movement or any other ministry that the words that Jesus spoke in Matthew 7:13 & 14 will change and the way which leads to life will become broad? I believe I can tell you. Possible persecution, trials and infirmities do not sell. Cleanse anything that does not honor and glorify God out of your life completely by adhering to the Scriptures and changing anything that does not fit. That doesn't sell.

I could go on and on. Please read Colossians 2:8.

Consider a few things. In 1994 there were 10 PK conferences across the country with 50,000 plus attendance at each conference, where \$50.00 plus was charged per person at each. 10 times 50,000 times \$50.00 = \$25,000,000.00. There were many more than 500,000 that attended and I do not know of any conference that only cost \$50.00. I am sure that there were many expenses involved. I also know that they sell millions of dollars in merchandise at the conferences, at book stores, and through the mail. They consistently mail requests for pledges and money.

There are frequent Leadership Seminars being conducted across the country. They are not free. I have never witnessed anything involved with PK that was free, even for the lost and dying. I am sure there are financial statements from Boulder, but if have ever looked at a "Nonprofit Organization's" financial statement, you know that it is impossible to decipher exactly where all the money went. Salaries, expense accounts, and travel are profitable to those who receive them.

I do not believe that everyone who is on the payroll of PK is a crook by any means. I do believe that there is an amazing amount of money being poured into this organization though. It is not a peculiar situation with PK though. Take a good hard look at all the Mega-Ministries in this country. They are truly money making machines, just like any large corporation.

There are several of my kin who are involved in PK. There are many of my brothers in Christ that I have never met who are involved in PK. I do not wish to hurt the feelings of anyone. I desire that they wake up and turn to the Lord.

We will never be perfect in this body. Psalms 103:14 &15 says, "As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust." However, we can live a life that honors God by giving him our life. 2 Corinthians 6:17 &18 says,

"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Do you want the Lord to be a father to you? Look very closely at those you allow to lead you. Do not judge them by your own wisdom. Know them by their fruit. We are given scripture to judge those who would be over us in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9.

If any leader calling himself a minister, elder, bishop, deacon, etc. is not willing to answer your questions and go to the Word of God to prove everything he believes, it is time to WAKE UP!

Ask yourself: "Am I following a man-made religion or am I following Christ?" Do not let anyone quote out of context and deceive you because you did not check up on them. If anyone gives you a verse or two to prove a point, even as I have in this letter, please check the context. Throw away the commentaries. Do you know the men who wrote them?

Please read 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17.

Read the whole Bible with an open mind for yourself. Be willing to investigate anything that challenges the things you have always believed through the direction of man. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you read The Word. I suggest you read Ephesians, Phillipians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon to get an accurate picture of where you should be in relation to your family, The Church, and especially The Lord. These were the last letters Paul wrote and the most applicable to our lives in these times.

Remember the story of Cain and Abel? Both offered sacrifices to the Lord. Only one was acceptable. Abel offered what was pleasing to the Lord. Cain offered what was pleasing to Cain. Please read John 15:9-17 and 1 John 1:5 thru 2:11.

Christian men can lead a successful joy-filled Christ honoring life. They can keep their promises. The Lord has spelled out very clearly in His Word how we can do that. If you want to scream and yell, hear jamming music and knock around a beach ball, go to a football game or a rock concert. If you want to live your life to honor the Lord, obey his commandments. Jesus doesn't need or want cheering. He's already won the victory on the cross. He wants obedience.

In closing, I exhort you to come down out of the stands and run the race as if to obtain the prize and please, be careful who you follow.

In His hand,

Mitchell V. Casler

## Resurrecting Pagan Rites" Part 1: The Men's Movement

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Promise Keepers and the Men's Movement

### RESURRECTING PAGAN RITES

#### Part 1: THE MEN'S MOVEMENT

(From the December 1995 issue of Christian Conscience magazine)

The popular, separatist, men's movement uses pagan rituals to define manhood.

How could a book become so controversial? It all began with a mass distribution. Every man who attended the 1993 Promise Keepers convention in Boulder, Colorado, received a copy of "The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood" by Robert Hicks. Promise Keepers went on from there to become the most rapidly growing national, ecumenical men's movement in the history of the church in America. Promise Keepers has steadfastly continued to "endorse" "The Masculine Journey", even though they no longer distribute it. NavPress, a well-respected Christian publishing house, has continued to aggressively market it.

Perhaps the book would have gathered dust on the back shelves of Christian bookstores if it hadn't been an integral part of a broader ministry. But, that was not to be. The book was destined for controversy from its very inception. Its unorthodox approach to Christian manhood, including references to a "phallic" Jesus, set it apart from mainstream evangelical publications. Its uneasy association with the secular men's movement, its use of contemporary Jungian jargon, and its use of motifs like "sages", "warriors" and "rites of passage" raised the rankle of a number of national ministries.

To date, only the more fundamentalist, discernment-oriented ministries have dared to crack open "The Masculine Journey" for critical comment. Much of the criticism has centered around its use of psychology and the offensive content. The book's association with Promise Keepers, the stunningly popular men's movement, has led to a "hands off" approach by many who would normally be more critical of the book. Also, most of the recent PK recruits have had little or no exposure to the book and simply slough off any criticism of the book as not relevant to their own personal experience.

The book continues to be prominently featured in NavPress catalogues under the Promise Keepers supplies, and can be found in Christian bookstores across the country in the Promise Keepers section. Robert Hicks credits both NavPress and Promise Keepers "for having a vision for this project" (p. 11), a statement which indicates the original depth of support given this work by the Promise Keepers ministry. The form letter issued by Promise Keepers in defense of "The Masculine Journey", which has been distributed widely across the country, states:

"Promise Keepers desires to lead men into God's Word and to lift Jesus Christ up as our model through the resources that we develop or sponsor. In 1992, Dr. Hick's manuscript for 'The

'Masculine Journey' was presented to NavPress and Promise Keepers as a candidate for inclusion in our line of books. What we discovered was a biblically-centered, frank and honest account of a man's journey with God. We were convinced that it would help men pursue Jesus Christ amidst the challenges of the twentieth century."

"The book was not designed, nor was it written, to be an inclusive statement of the values and distinctives of the ministry of Promise Keepers. We endorsed it because we believed that it would be a tool that challenged men to grow in Christ likeness, to become 'zaken' - or 'wise men of God' - as Hicks writes.

In the January 1995 issue of "The Christian Conscience" we reviewed a study guide accompanying "The Masculine Journey," written by Robert Hicks and Dietrich Gruen. It was subtitled "A Promise Keepers Study Guide". In our widely distributed review of this, "Encountering Men at Risk", we contended it was offensive because of its content and its use of encounter group techniques to facilitate change in men. We also expressed a concern about the repeated references to the men's movement. We felt that some men could be led into this movement via reading "The Masculine Journey". We have since come to have an additional concern that Promise Keepers, by endorsing Hicks' book, might be associating itself too closely with the men's movement and may in fact have doctrinal agreement with it at some level. A summary of this concern was expressed in a sidebar in the April issue, entitled "Promise Keepers: A Militant Unity?"

#### Defining Manhood As A Journey

While evangelical Christianity first balked at and then vilified the feminist movement and all of its trappings, this is not true of the men's movement. Numerous magazine articles and accounts of the success of Promise Keepers refer to it in the context of the "secular" men's movement, one which superficially appears to be a move toward "kinder, gentler" men. This "secular" men's movement, which has increasingly grown in both prominence and impact over the last decade, is introduced to Christian men via Robert Hicks' books. After reviewing the research, it is our contention that "The Masculine Journey" represents a major philosophical and theological shift away from the orthodox Christian view of maleness. And further, the "secular" men's movement is anything but "secular."

Robert Hicks began with the challenge to "define" manhood - a big task.(p. 18) Using the "lengthy adult life cycle for men" as a model (p. 18), he credits his ideas for the stages of this masculine journey to Daniel Levinson's book, "The Seasons of a Man's Life".(p. 19) While on an airplane trip, Hicks records that he wrote down the Hebrew terms for these stages of a man's life on a napkin. Hicks noted that the words he chose "also seem to reflect the same seasonal or developmental aspects that have been demonstrated in so many of the recent men's studies."(p. 19-20)

To review, there are six Hebrew terms and descriptive phrases to describe the six stages of adult male development according to Robert Hicks:

Creational Male-'Adam-: The Noble Savage

The Phallic Male-Zakar: The Mysterious Taskmaster

The Warrior-Gibbor: The Glorious Hero

The Wounded Male-Enosh: the Painful Incongruency

The Mature Man-Ish: The Reborn uler

The Sage-Zaken: The Fulfilled Man

We found this list of adult male life cycle terms to be more puzzling than helpful. We were perplexed by the many strange-sounding terminologies. The references to the male "phallus" and referring to men as "sages," for example, are not terms found in a traditional Christian view of manhood.

Customary biblical models on manhood are drawn from passages in Proverbs, regarding a young man's chaste sexual conduct; from Boaz, a businessman of integrity and exceptional moral conduct; and from passages in the New Testament on the holy manner of life (conducted in such a way over many years) of a biblical elder. And, while being a warrior was an honor in the Old Testament and a distinctive stance for the believer in the New Testament, the biblical references are not specific to the male gender but include all believers. Equally true in this regard is the potential for wounding that is common to all believers, and the biblical admonition for maturity in the life of all believers.

In order to understand the rather unorthodox terminologies utilized by Robert Hicks to describe "The Masculine Journey" model of manhood we learned that one must read the authors and experts he cites. The terms can be readily found in the works of the leaders of the men's movement. There are repeated references to both the men's movement and its leaders in "The Masculine Journey" and its accompanying "Study Guide".

Many Christian men will not have had exposure to the men's movement prior to reading Hicks' books. It is possible that men may be encouraged to delve deeper into the men's movement, or be curious about it, after reading Hicks' books. For example, in the "Study Guide" to "The Masculine Journey", men are asked,

"Perhaps you, or someone you know, do not have enough fight left in you to advance or defend yourself at work. Such men defeated by life do not even work for a better family, much less the cause of social justice. What about the growing men's movement could help such men?"

"-Warrior weekends (don't forget to bring your drums)"

"-Light a 'fire in the belly' by recalling good warrior myths."(p. 42-43)

The "Study Guide" also suggests that men "review 'The Masculine Journey' and its endnotes, which may spur you on to study the men's movement further." (p. 90)

This, in our estimation, is direct encouragement for men to become involved in the men's movement. We decided to do exactly what was recommended in this sentence: we read the original sources referenced in the endnotes to see what Christian men might find.

The Men's Movement

The men's movement, a response to the women's movement, arose during the mid-80's, supposedly to combat "wimpiness" in men. This movement is a conglomeration of current Jungian

psychology, New Age mysticism, beating drums in the wilderness, initiation ceremonies, and occultic rituals. It has been characterized in the press clippings as "Men Seeking `Different Drummer," "Modern Men Turning to Ancient Ritual," "The New Masculine Mystique," and "A Kinder, Gentler Gender."

Robert Bly is credited with "founding" the men's movement in America. As early as 1982 "The New Age Journal" conducted an interview with this famous poet. Bly told the interviewer, Kevin Thompson, that men needed to 'visualize the wild man that is part of every modern male." To do this, he recommended that men "go back to ancient mythology, you find that people in ancient times can help us to visualize the wild man."

"Just as women in the '70s needed to develop what is known in the Indian tradition as Kali energy - the ability to really say what they want, to cut relationships when they need to - what males need now is an energy that can face this energy in women, and MEET it. They need to make a similar connection in their psyches to their Kala [sic] energy - which is just another way to describe the wild man. If they don't they won't survive. (quoted in "Connecting With the Wild Man Inside All Males," "Utne Reader", Nov./Dec. 1989, p. 58)

"Utne Reader", a leftist counter-culture magazine, can also be credited for exposure of the men's movement during the mid-80's. In 1989 they ran a descriptive piece titled "Of Hawks and Men: A Weekend in the Male Wilderness" in which reporter Jon Tevlin details his account of attending a seminar to "reunite the modern man with the wild man." Some of the activities of the men that weekend are too vulgar to recount; however, the promotional material promised that "We will become animals and heroes," and Shepherd Bliss, well-known New Ager who conducted the seminar promised: "You may find yourself behaving like these four-leggeds; you may be scratching the earth, getting in contact with the dirt and world around you." ( p. 53) Suffice it to say that the men at the seminar gurgled, bleated, butted heads, made wolf calls, shrieked like hawks, and performed other more unseemly activities common to animals but bizarre when imitated by humans.

Robert Bly popularized his "wild man" concept in his 1990 book "Iron John", a mythological fairy tale of the wild, hairy man who helps turn a young boy into a prince. A "San Francisco Chronicle" article ("Men Seeking `Different Drummer" by George Snyder) credits Bly with mainstreaming the men's movement:

"The phenomenon, once largely confined to the New Age underground, has recently gained mainstream respectability, in part because of author Robert Bly, whose recent best-seller, `Iron John', urges modern males to rediscover a profound and spiritual masculinity through the ancient tools of mythology, ritual and initiation. Only then, says Bly, can men truly come to find common cause with women and ultimately, with themselves and the universe.

Robert Bly can still be found frequently in the pages of "The New Age Journal", and is a regular speaker on the New Age conference circuit.

By the early 90s the men's movement came to be associated with drumming, where "men try to rediscover their primal instincts through ancient rituals," (Ibid.) performing Native American rituals on wilderness weekends in such places as sweat lodges, and using talking sticks. The most frequently cited movie illustrative of the men's movement is Kevin Costner's "Dances With

Wolves".

We reviewed two randomly selected publications originating from the men's movement, "The Green Man: A Magazine for Pagan Men", (Spring 1993, Premiere Edition, published by Alan and Anne Niven), and "M.E.N. Magazine", a publication of the Seattle Men's Evolverment Network (Vol. 6, No. 4, April 1995). In these, we found advertisements for psychotherapy, therapy and spirituality for gay men, circumcision support groups, rolfing, "New Moon Rising: Journal of Magick & Wicca", an invitation to join Odd Fellows, and ads for little god statues. We found workshops for "Foreskin Fairy Tales: Stories of Denial about Infant Circumcision," "Jungian men's group," "Healing the Mother Wound," "Mythos: Myth and Life Stages," and "Ritual Healing, Power & Community." Articles included "Mythic Images for Remembering the Earth," "Interview With A Druid," "Men for the Earth: A Call to Action," "Shadow of Initiation," and "An Interview with Shepherd Bliss."

This cross-section of the separatist men's movement included men's rights, gay men's rights, divorced men's rights, minority men's rights, men in search of spiritual or personal growth, Marxists, and environmentalists. We found no positive references to Christianity in these publications. To the contrary, we found numerous references to alternative, pagan, New Age, and occultic spiritualities.

Both the Old and New Testaments warn strongly against engaging in the activities promoted in this sampling of the men's movement literature:

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." (Ex. 20:2-6)

"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure hearts." (2 Tim. 2:22)

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou has learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou has learned them; And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:13-15)

### The Jungian Influence

Robert Hicks has stated that "the Jungian definition of manhood doesn't work for me." (p. 17) However, we found, much to our consternation, that the model employed by Hicks in "The Masculine Journey" has all of the trappings found in the currently popular Jungian architects of the men's movement, including their common use of terminologies and concepts. In fact, the entire men's movement seems to be the creation of the Jungians. There are several key works cited by Hicks that bear further scrutiny.

But first, what do we mean by Jungians? We mean the followers of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) who pioneered a psychoanalytical model based on the interpretation of

unconscious symbols and mythology. Jung's use of mythological metaphors is attributed to his obsession with the occultic doctrines predominant in Germany at the turn of the century. Jungian psychology is founded on an evolutionary worldview of man.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of popularity of Jungian psychology, especially in New Age circles. Jung's ideas, like many other "schools of thought" have been plundered and widely diluted by modern movements, and the men's movement is no exception. Of special note is the excessive emphasis that the men's movement places on mythology, a revival of the ancient legends of gods and goddesses, to explain the inner psychology of man.

Robert Bly's "Iron John", frequently cited by Hicks, is based on a Grimm's fairy tale. This is clearly noted to be in the Jungian tradition of using mythologies to define reality. In fact, one "Jungian scholar, Marie-Louise von Franz, often quoted by Bly, puts it: "Fairy tales are the purest and simplest expression of collective unconscious psychic processes." ("On The Issues", Summer 1991, p. 18)

"Iron John", like "The Masculine Journey", speaks about the stages of a man's life. The book is about male initiation, a path of eight stages which follows the story line of "Iron John" the fairy tale. (pp. x & xi) The modern male needs to find the "wild man" within, according to Bly. He defines this wild man: "The Wild Man, who has examined his wound, resembles a Zen priest, a shaman, or a woodsman..."

Elsewhere, Shepherd Bliss reiterates this characterization of the men's movement's new (Age) wild man:

"By a wild man, I don't mean a savage man. I don't mean a brutal man. I don't mean a man of malice. I mean maybe a Zen monk" ("Utne Reader", p. 54)

#### Rites of Initiation

"Iron John" is a treatise on the need for men to experience the ancient, occultic rites of initiation. This agenda is not hidden, but rather the entire theme of the book. Pagan rites of initiation are a cross-cultural phenomenon common to primitive societies past and present, and are also a component of secret male societies such as the Freemasons. In "Iron John" it becomes evident that the life stages or cycle of the male journey is defined in terms of the stages of the rite of initiation. Initiation can be defined as:

"The methodology of the ancient Mysteries: long and intensive training with the aim of elevating the one who undergoes it to begin (initiate) living a new, higher life, often described as being on the level of Godhood, above and beyond the state of ordinary mortals - hence, the initiates of former times were viewed as incarnate Gods by ordinary people. ("Seekers Handbook", p. 297.)

An initiate is:

"someone who underwent the full course of training in the Mysteries, and who thereby became elevated to a superevolved or God-like state, gaining powers of knowledge and extraordinary faculties that allowed him to assume responsibility for teaching and guiding the human race, and specifically for initiating culture." (Ibid.)

Robert Bly writes that young boys "in our culture have a continuing need for initiation into male spirit, but old men in general don't offer it... the active intervention of the older men means that older men welcome the younger man into the ancient, mythologized, instinctive male world." (p. 14-15)

He describes this initiation on pages 80 and 81 of "Iron John" in clear, unmistakably pagan terms: "The boy between eight and twelve years of age, having been taken away from the mother, passes into the hands of the old men guides who cover his face and sometimes his whole body with ashes to make him the color of dead people and to remind him of the inner death about to come. He may be put into the dark for hours or maybe days, introduced to spirits of dead ancestors. Then he may crawl through a tunnel - a vagina - made of brush and branches. The old men are waiting for him at the other end, only now he has a new name."

Bly's second stage of manhood involves a wound. This wounding is to occur during the process of the rite of initiation. It is clear from the description that the unfortunate young boy is severely traumatized and immensely frightened as he is forced to undergo this pagan ritual. Bly weaves back and forth between describing inner (psychological) and outer (physical) wounds. This is characteristic of Jungians, and accounts for how they can later distance themselves by saying that they intended the entire description to be interpreted as merely "psychological". But Bly makes it clear that "Ancient initiation practice" gives a new wound." Indeed, the wounds necessary for initiation in pagan cultures are real!

Two Jungians, Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, who are noted leaders in the men's movement, and closely associated with Bly, describe this wounding in vivid detail in their book "King, Warrior, Magician, Lover". They define initiation as a "genuine transformation of consciousness." (p. xvi) Their description of the rite of initiation is similar to Bly's:

"A good, explicit example of this can be found in the movie 'The Emerald Forest'. Here, a white boy has been captured and raised by Brazilian Indians. One day, he's playing in the river with a beautiful girl. The chief has noticed his interest in the girl for some time. This awakening of sexual interest in the boy is a signal to the wise chief. He appears on the riverbank with his wife and some of the tribal elders and surprises Tomme (Tommy) at play with the girl. The chief booms out, 'Tomme, your time has come to die!' Everyone seems profoundly shaken. The chief's wife, playing the part of all women, of all mothers, asks, 'Must he die?' The chief threateningly replies, 'Yes!' Then, we see a firelit nighttime scene in which Tomme is seemingly tortured by the older men in the tribe; and forced into the forest vines, he is being eaten alive by jungle ants. He writhes in agony, his body mutilated in the jaws of the hungry ants. We fear the worst."

"Finally, the sun comes up, though, and Tomme, still breathing, is taken down to the river by the men and bathed, the clinging ants washed from his body. The chief then raises his voice and says, 'The boy is dead and the man is born!' And with that, he is given his first spiritual experience, induced by a drug blown through a long pipe into his nose. He hallucinates and in his hallucination discovers his animal soul (an eagle) and soars above the world in new and expanded consciousness, seeing, as if from a God's-eye view, the totality of his jungle world. Then he is allowed to marry. Tomme is a man. And, as he takes on a man's responsibilities and identity, he is moved first into the position of a brave in the tribe and then into the position of chief."

"It can be said that life's perhaps most fundamental dynamic is the attempt to move from a lower form of experience and consciousness to a higher (or deeper) level of consciousness..." (p. 4-5)

For some in the men's movement, then, the definition of manhood is clearly rooted in the rite of initiation, and it involves a change in consciousness. Moore and Gillette describe it graphically as "Death - symbolic, psychological, or spiritual - is always a vital part of any initiatory ritual." They advocate the use of active imagination as a psychological technique, but caution that it can cause one to possibly "encounter a really hostile presence..." (p. 147).

The change in consciousness that results from these rites of initiation may in fact be demon possession, which is the ultimate intention of pagan rituals. The Scriptures clearly warn against the use of drugs to alter consciousness, commonly associated with sorcery and translated as "witchcraft" in the King James version.

"5331. pharmakeia, far-mak-i'-ah; from G5332; medication (pharmacy), i.e. (by extens.) magic (lit. or fig.): - sorcery, witchcraft." ("Strong's Concordance")

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft [pharmakeia], hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21)

In the Scriptures God consistently warns the Hebrews to stay away from the pagan, occultic practices of their neighboring nations.

"When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." (Deut. 18:9-14)

Robert Hicks references the Moore and Gillette book on page 77 of "The Masculine Journey" in his chapter "The Warrior - Gibbor: The Glorious Hero." Hicks states: "Therapist Robert Moore has observed that behind every creative artist, competent author, or successful student, there is an active warrior at work who recognizes transcendent values and relativizes temporary needs or immediate needs."

This quote is footnoted, and it references the pages in a chapter in the Moore and Gillette book also called "The Warrior." It is one of their four archetypes of manhood. Moore and Gillette agree in their book with Robert Bly - that a man is a warrior in an eastern mystical sense:

"The characteristics of the Warrior in his fullness amount to a total way of life, what the samurai called a do... These characteristics constitute the Warrior's Dharma, Ma'at, or Tao, a spiritual or psychological path through life." (p.79)

These two Jungians talk about "transpersonal commitments" to "a cause, a god, a people, a task, a nation - larger than individuals." (p. 84) To Moore and Gillette, it transcends individuality.

"This transpersonal commitment reveals a number of other characteristics of the Warrior energy. First, it makes all personal relationships relative, that is, it makes them less central than the transpersonal commitment. Thus the psyche of the man who is adequately accessing the Warrior is organized around his central commitment." (Ibid.)

In their modern Jungian version of masculinity Moore and Gillette include a bad ("shadow") side of the warrior (the "sadist" or "masochist") which can be exemplified by "Yahweh," who in the Bible "orders the fiery destruction of whole civilizations. Early in the Old Testament, we see this angry and vengeful God reducing the planet to mud through a great deluge, killing off nearly every living thing." (p. 89)

This is a gnostic-sounding interpretation of the God of the Bible, which demonstrates that Jehovah God is not who the occultic Jungian analysts would recommend for a warrior's "transpersonal commitment."

Robert Moore is a "friend and consultant" to the New Warriors Network. This is described as:

"an order of men, called to reclaim the sacred masculine in our time through initiation, training, and action in the world." (fundraising letter from Dr. Robert L. Moore, Ph.D.)

Moore continues:

"I believe strongly that the New Warrior Network has the potential for making the decisive contribution in the task of transforming masculine leadership and stewardship of masculine power in the world."

New Warriors, like Promise Keepers, also sponsors weekends for men. New Warriors are trained "to initiate and empower men to take on the courageous task of expressing themselves authentically and stepping into a life of genuine service." The men are trained in the "Four Quarters" model of the male psyche, Moore and Gillette's modern theory of Jungian male archetypes. On these adventure weekends (sometimes called "shamanic retreat[s]"), men can participate in sweat lodges, fire pit ceremonies, mask making, spiritual cleansing, vision quests, solo fasts, and bow hunting. Men in New Warriors often acquire an Indian name for their middle name, such as "Sun Bear" or "Moose walks with Polar Bear." (Information quoted from conference promotional literature)

### Christian Rites of Initiation

Returning to Robert Hicks, we find that his view of the rite of initiation in "The Masculine Journey" is strikingly similar to that of Robert Bly. However, his view is "Christianized", which inserts Biblical stories where Bly references pagan myths. An indication of this is Hicks' comment about the necessity of shedding blood: "To be a successful warrior, blood must be shed. The blood of enemies is always mixed with one's own blood. The life of the warrior, necessary as it is for developing manliness, has its liabilities." (p. 91-92) Hicks does not dispute the men's movement's emphasis on the necessity of wounding as part of a rite of initiation. In fact, he appears to agree with it:

"Men must win some battles to prove to themselves that they are men. In past cultures this was ritualized but, unfortunately, today men must fend for themselves and almost declare themselves men. But it still involves blood, risk, and sacrifice. Just as in times past, whether through circumcision or other cutting of the body, the passages to manhood involve the shedding of some blood."(p. 92)

We must hasten to point out to the reader that circumcision was not a passage to manhood in the Bible, but rather an expression of obedience to God, sanctioned by the parents of an infant. An eight-day-old male child is hardly at the suitable age for passing from boyhood into manhood. Circumcision was simply a sign of the Abrahamic covenant between God and His chosen people; a sign which distinguished the Hebrews from the surrounding pagan culture! Further, we know of no credible reports of circumcised men who can vividly recall this "passage into manhood" during their infancy. This suggestion seems to arise from the currently popular "repressed memory" psychology.

Hicks also quotes from Sam Keen, another men's movement leader:

"Sam Keen states more bluntly: `Masculinity requires a wounding of the body, a sacrifice of the natural endowment of sensuality and sexuality."

"What Keen is alluding to is the almost universal history of primitive societies whereby the males went through a formal puberty rite that required the experience of pain and wounding of the body. Circumcision is a permanent wounding of the body that reminds the Jewish (and now Gentile) male that he is what he is - male. Other societies have their tattoos or cutting of the body. American Indians bond through blood. Young boys even today emulate the old rite of cutting the fingers and mingling the blood to become `blood brothers.'" (p. 101-102)

Is this view really biblical? Or, has Hicks superimposed pagan views of manhood onto Scriptural themes?

Circumcision reminds the Jewish male that he is what he is - Jewish, i.e., a set-apart person with a unique and blessed covenant relationship with God!

Hicks continues:

"From our first hours of maleness until we become adult, pain seems to be the doorway to manhood. Thus, the wounded male experience is common among most civilizations, but contemporary Western men have either denied or forgotten it. Consequently, when pain arrives we Westerners struggle against it. The emerging men's movement may be, at its roots, the attempt to reframe the wounding experience for men and give it a new and more honorable meaning."(p. 102)

Sam Keen, whose book "Fire In the Belly" is cited six times in footnotes to "The Masculine Journey", more honestly tells us the men's movement's purpose for the rite of initiation:

" The purpose of the tortuous rites involved in severing the boy from WOMAN and nature was to deprogram, brainwash, break down the childish identity so that he could be given a new self-understanding." (p. 31)

Keen's passage to manhood involves separation, initiation and reincorporation. This is very similar to Levinson's four seasons of the male life cycle, expounded upon in Levinson's book "The Seasons of A Man's Life", which Robert Hicks used as his model. Levinson's four stages are: separation, initiation, transition, and temporary confusion. This similarity begs the question: what exactly is "the masculine journey"? There clearly are occultic stages, or levels, that seem to closely parallel the psychological life-cycle models. Because Carl Jung viewed psychotherapy as a type of initiation this may provide a partial clue to the answer of this question.

In Keen's chapter, "The Initiation and Mutilation of Men," he describes an identical scene to the ones discussed earlier. Keen tells us that

"In many tribes, the men kidnap the boys and take them to live in the men's clubhouse where they are subject to hazing, discipline, and teachings of the elders."

"Some form of painful ordeal inevitably accompanies and dramatizes the separation from the world of WOMAN. The list of minor and major tortures imposed upon initiates reads like a page from the fantasy life of de Sade and includes: lip piercing, scarification, filing or knocking out of teeth, scourgings, finger sacrifices, removal of a testicle, bitings, burnings, eating of disgusting foods, being tied on an ant hill, subincision of the penis, solitary confinement, exile in the wilderness for long periods, sleeping naked on winter nights, etc." (p. 29)

Keen also trivializes the significance of circumcision. He says:

"That so primitive and brutal a rite continues to be practiced nearly automatically in modern times when most medical evidence indicates that it is unnecessary, painful, and dangerous suggests that circumcision remains a mythic act whose real significance is stubbornly buried in the unconscious."

We have already stated the biblical significance of circumcision. Is Keen inferring that the Bible and all its contents are merely myth?

Robert Hicks has apparently bought into the men's movement's dislike of circumcision. In the "Study Guide" to "The Masculine Journey", men are asked to explore this issue with other men:

"1. For Robert Hicks the first memorable experience of wounding was as a five-year old when his granddad took him fishing and the fishing hook pierced his finger. For you, what memorable flesh wounds signaled a passage to manhood?"

The first possible answer to this guided question is:

"Submitting to circumcision (as an infant or an adult)." (p. 52)

The last chapter of "The Masculine Journey" lays out the plan for "A New Male Journey" which involves beginning to find "appropriate initiation rites which might fit each of these stages." (p. 176) Hicks states:

"I'm sure many would balk at my thought of celebrating the experience of sin. I'm not sure how we could do it. But I do know we need to do it. For example, we usually give the teenagers in our churches such a massive dose of condemnation regarding their first experiences with sin that I sometimes wonder how any of them ever recover. Maybe we could take a different approach.

Instead of jumping all over them when they have their first experience with the police, or their first drunk, or their first experience with sex and drugs, we could look upon this as a teachable moment and a rite of passage. Is this putting a benediction on sin? Of course not, but perhaps at this point the true elders could come forward and confess their own adolescent sins and congratulate the next generation for being human. Then they could move on to the all-important issues of forgiveness and restoration, but this time on common ground, with the young person as a fellow sinner!"

Hicks also proposes other possible times for initiation rites: wet dreams, pubic hair, the wedding night, spiritual victories; wounds like "a man's divorce, or job firing, or major health problem, or culpability in some legal or sexual indiscretion," (p. 177-178) To underscore this, the "Study Guide" concludes with a suggestion for an "Awards Night" which celebrates the "growth within each man and" progress along the masculine journey." (p. 88)

A New Christian "Order"?

Many would argue at this point in our article that surely Christian men would not get involved in pagan rites. We would sincerely hope that this is the case. Yet, in the past several months several examples have come across our desk.

One noteworthy example comes from Boulder Valley Vineyard, home church of Pastor James Ryle who sits on the Board of Directors of Promise Keepers, and who is the pastor of Bill McCartney, founder of Promise Keepers. According to a conference brochure, this church sponsored "Rites of Passage: The Defining Moment of Manhood" on August 25-26, 1995. The brochure states:

"Rites of Passage. The boy Samuel prophesying at the tabernacle of Shiloh, young Samson fighting the lion at Timnath, the lad David slaying the giant Goliath, the youthful Solomon ascending the throne of Israel, the boy Jesus confounding the lawyers in the Temple... Every boy dreams of becoming a man."

"Join the Executive Pastors of the Boulder Valley Vineyard for a time of teaching on what true manhood is for a Christian.

Ryle's church has apparently created "orders" or levels of initiation for Christian men, because the brochure states:

"Special: New This Year, The Order of Joseph: A Call to Servanthood. This is especially designed as the next level of commitment within the Rites of Passage ceremony for those who have already experienced the initial ceremony."

Like its pagan counterparts, this Rites of Passage which is so closely associated with Promise Keepers' leadership, uses the rites to "define" manhood and create "orders." This use of "orders" is common to esoteric groups and secret societies such as the Freemasons. No such example can be found in Scripture. But, the hard question does need to be asked: Is this where Promise Keepers is headed?

The Cross vs. the Rites

The assumption that the men's movement is a credible venture, full of good ideas to incorporate into modern Christianity, is abhorrent and foolish! It can be argued that the Scriptural warning to "Abstain from all appearance of evil"(1 Th 5:22) would include mimicking pagan rituals, including rites of initiation.

Likewise, paganizing God's divine plan is also fraught with peril. Satan's desire is for all creation to worship him as God and he has done much to delude mankind into devising their own plans for redemption, including blood rituals (Satan's substitute for Christ's death on the cross) and rites of initiation (Satan's counterfeit for salvation). Throughout the centuries pagan societies have taken the things of God and skewed them into ungodly schemes. The ugly nature of these false religions is ultimately revealed by open idol worship, which is already demonstrably happening in today's men's movement.

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. "(Rom. 1:22-25)

The men's movement would create a "new man" for the New Age. Yet scripture makes it quite clear how the passage to a truly "new" man is attained.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" (Rom. 3:23-25)

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17)

There is no alternative route to becoming a new creation. There is only the Cross of Jesus Christ and the blood that He shed. The emphasis that the men's movement places upon woundings, shedding blood, rites of initiation, and the like is merely the world mimicking God's plan of redemption. The celebration of sin, and false redemptive acts, runs directly contrary to the teachings of the Bible:

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14)

Just as circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (and Abraham's descendants), the "sign" of the new covenant in Jesus Christ is the new creature that we are because of our relationship in Him.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."(Gal. 6:15)

Clearly, none of the acts or rites to which the men's movement ascribes can do anything in and of themselves to perfect men. This is truly a myth!

Men would do well to avoid the men's movement and all of its trappings. In these perilous times, it is increasingly important that Christian believers deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. For if we yield to temptation and become immersed again in the things of the world, the consequences will most certainly be disastrous for us!

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:20-22)

## **Resolution on Promise Keepers by the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America:**

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Resolution on Promise Keepers

Passed at the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America

Annual Conference in Seattle, 20-22 June 1995

The following resolution was passed at the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America annual conference in Seattle, June 20-22, 1995:

Recognizing that Christians are commanded by God's Word:

TO "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God..." (Ephesians 4:13);

TO "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers .. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? ... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:14,16,17).

AND TO "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

AND WHEREAS there is a high profile movement known as Promise Keepers, aggressively seeking to involve men from fundamental Baptist churches;

AND WHEREAS Promise Keepers' official sounding Doctrinal Statement is crafted so those with theological and ecclesiastical persuasions of belief and non-belief including Catholic, Mormon, Charismatic and New Evangelical may and do participate;

AND WHEREAS one of Promise Keepers' goals is to have representative involvement in local churches throughout North America;

AND WHEREAS we understand and agree that men ought to be men and ought to be faithful to their wives and families;

AND WHEREAS Promise Keepers leaders, speakers and participants hold a multitude of unbiblical doctrines such as sign gifts, Arminianism and psycho heresy, and furthermore Promise Keeper participants are strongly encouraged to ignore Bible doctrine and propound methods that undermine church autonomy and pastoral authority;

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE and do hereby encourage pastors and laymen to take a clear stand and reject any participation with Promise Keepers lest God's command against compromise be dishonored and churches succumb to ecumenism;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, meeting in Annual Conference, June 20-22, 1995, in Seattle, Washington, teach our congregations the lessons of Scripture and experience which clearly warn against co-operation in spiritual efforts, though noble-sounding, when such are undertaken in ways which conflict with God's Word.

## Is What You See What You Get? by Al Dager

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Anticipation hangs heavy over the stadium as some 27,000 men make their way to seats becoming increasingly sparse. The mood is festive as large beach balls are punched with vigor, sending them on a never-ending course throughout the crowd. A Styrofoam glider wafts its way from the upper regions, accompanied by ooohs and aaahs. Appearing to nose toward a crash, it suddenly catches a small thermal and lifts itself a little higher. Each time it descends into the crowd it is caught by someone and again sent on its way.

A small group of men on one side of the stadium begins to chant: "We love Jesus; yes we do! We love Jesus, how 'bout you?" The shout grows louder as more voices join in. Soon the other side of the stadium picks up the challenge. No one wins, it's a tie as to which side shouts loudest.

An announcement goes out over the speakers, asking the men to stop flying paper airplanes as a precaution against possible eye damage.

A ripple begins to form in one corner. Before long it makes its way into a wave, circling the stadium, as men rise from their seats, arms raised, to shout. At first those on the stadium floor can merely pivot in place, watching the wave encircle them. Then, they, too, join in as a group at the end of the circle rises, sending the wave diagonally across the stadium floor.

The appointed time to begin the program has come and gone, but there is no impatience as the men are caught up in their boyish festivities. It's a warm summer day, everyone is having fun. So what's the rush?

About 20 minutes go by, most everyone oblivious to the delay. Suddenly a low rumble (is it thunder?) begins softly and becomes louder. It's the sound of a jet aircraft piercing the stadium from the huge speakers strategically placed for maximum effectiveness. The large screen displays the takeoff of a jumbo jet as the announcer welcomes the crowd to the flight for restored manhood.

The stadium, full now, erupts in a cheer. These men have come for something special; they have come to the Promise Keepers convention in Portland, Oregon. They expect to hear words that will kindle in them a zeal for commitment to their role as men at home, in their church, and in their community.

### A CALL TO ACTION

The first speaker, Greg Laurie, gives an impassioned message, calling for response to the offer of salvation or recommitment to Christ. To thunderous applause, about 3,000 men stream from every area of the stadium to take their position in front of the stage. A good beginning to an emotionally charged day just getting under way.

Speaker follows speaker, building on the Promise Keepers' theme to "Seize the Day!" Men are encouraged to take their rightful position of leadership and involvement in their churches, in their homes, and in their communities.

Closing the festivities, the founder of Promise Keepers, Bill McCartney, displays his talent for motivating men---a talent that has won him national acclaim as head football coach for the University of Colorado. Toward the end of his pep talk, McCartney calls for all the pastors present to come forward for prayer. Thousands of men respond, demonstrating the pastoral support for this new and unique outreach. When McCartney urges the crowd to demonstrate their appreciation for them they are rewarded with such prolonged, enthusiastic cheering that one might suspect it could be heard in Vancouver, Washington.

The men are dismissed to their homes, charged with excitement, determined to be "men of integrity." They have renewed their commitment to their role as husband, father, church member, and American. Some have determined to become Point Men or Ambassadors, taking the Promise Keepers program into their churches.

Point Men are the primary contacts with the churches. They inform of conferences, training seminars and resources, and organize promotion of Promise Keepers conferences. Ambassadors introduce Promise Keepers to the churches in the communities, and recruit Point Men.

No matter what one may think of Promise Keepers, one must be impressed with the sheer energy, organization and ability to move men to action that is characteristic of a Promise Keepers convention. A movement of this magnitude, having arisen in the course of four short years, warrants study. The enthusiasm expressed by virtually everyone who has heard of Promise Keepers demonstrates that something of importance is occurring. Nearly everyone to whom I've revealed that I am doing a study of Promise Keepers has reacted in the same manner: screwing up their faces they exclaim, "Don't tell me there's something wrong with Promise Keepers!"

Can anything really be that good? Is any organization so without blemish that it merits blind loyalty and rejection of any fair criticism? The Lord promised that at the end He would present to Himself a church without spot or blemish. We know that the church is nowhere near that condition. So why would we expect that any organization whose aim is to impact all the churches with their philosophy would be without spot or blemish---especially in view of the diverse and numerous contributors to the organization's messages?

It's precisely because Promise Keepers promotes the messages of varied teachers---from psychologists to charismatics, to fundamentalists---that discernment is essential. Let us be encouraged that today there is a genuine desire among men to take seriously their responsibilities before God. But let's not be blind about the frailties of men-even men who hold all good intentions for the pursuit of excellence in their Christian walk.

## A HISTORY OF PROMISE KEEPERS

While on an automobile trip from Denver to Pueblo, Colorado in 1990, University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney was speaking with a friend about the need for a men's ministry. During a luncheon at which he spoke, he noticed several fathers in attendance with their sons. This brought to mind Proverbs 27:17: Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

Within weeks, McCartney brought several others together for prayer and a brainstorming session, and Promise Keepers was born.

Writing in the Promise Keepers' book, *What Makes a Man?*, Leighton Ford conveys what Bill McCartney told him was his number one goal in life.'

What he said has stuck with me to this day. He said, "We want to beat Notre Dame and want to be number one. But my real goal is to use what influence I have to help raise up a generation of promise keepers. I think we need people in our country who will be promise keepers---in our families, in our businesses, in our public life, in everything (Leighton Ford, *What Makes a Man? Twelve Promises That Will Change Your Life*, Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 1992, p. 18).

Promise Keepers growth has been phenomenal. 4,200 men attended their first convention at the Coors' Event Center in Boulder, Colorado, in 1991. Their next convention in 1992 drew 22,000 men. 1993 saw 50,000 men attend the Promise Keepers convention. The total for 1994 will near 300,000 men at seven conventions, representing a growth rate of 600% in one year alone! It is projected that, in 1995, up to 750,000 men, including 60,000 pastors, will attend Promise Keepers conventions. The goal for 1996 is for one million men to meet in Washington D.C. as a witness to the nation of God's power in the lives of men.

Although Bill McCartney is credited with founding Promise Keepers, today he is basically the figurehead. The administrative duties for the organization are in the hands of its president, Randy Phillips, who currently has 80 fulltime workers. According to McCartney, "it's growing by leaps and bounds (Bill McCartney, message given at Promise Keepers Convention, Portland, Oregon, June 18, 1994). Phillips attributes the growth to a new move of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Gary Oliver, master of ceremonies at the Promise Keepers convention in Portland, Oregon, stated that Promise Keepers receives 10,000 phone calls and up to 5,000 pieces of mail per day (Gary Oliver, message given at Promise Keepers Convention, Portland, Oregon, June 18, 1994).

In practical terms, much of the Promise Keepers success can be attributed to certain men who have given their wholehearted endorsement. These include Bill Bright, Gary Smalley, and psychologist, Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family. These men's influence within the Christian community touches millions of lives. Dobson has promoted Promise Keepers most effectively through his nationwide broadcasts over hundreds of radio stations. He urges wives to get their husbands involved. Almost since its inception, Promise Keepers has become a topic of mention on these programs several times. Today there is hardly a church---at least among those that would call themselves "evangelical"---that has not been impacted to some degree by Promise Keepers.

## THE PHILOSOPHY

Promise Keepers operates on the belief that God wants to reestablish men in leadership and responsibility in three areas: home, church and community. To accomplish this, says McCartney, men must commit to what he calls the three non-negotiables of manhood: integrity, commitment and action (Bill McCartney, *What Makes a Man?* op. cit., p. 11).

If you were to take the word integrity and reduce it to its simplest terms you'd conclude that a man of integrity is a promise keeper. He's a guy who, when he says something, can be trusted. When he gives his word, you can take it to the bank. His word is good (Ibid., p. 12).

But, as McCartney notes, being a promise keeper is easier said than done. It takes genuine commitment to fulfill one's promises, and that commitment must be translated into action.

The philosophy of Promise Keepers is best summed up in its "Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper":

Promise 1: A Man and His God: "A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit."

Promise 2: A Man and His Mentors: "A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises."

Promise 3: A Man and His Integrity: "A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity."

Promise 4: A Man and His Family: "A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values."

Promise 5: A Man and His Church: "A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources."

Promise 6: A Man and His Brothers: "A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity."

Promise 7: A Man and His World: "A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

(Various writers, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family Publishing Co., 1994).

Certainly on the face of it, no one can argue with any of these statements. Nor can anyone deny that the zeal inspired through the electrically charged atmosphere of a Promise Keepers convention appears to be an effective means to motivate men toward these ideals. Certainly men must take the role of leadership in their homes and church fellowships if they will be in obedience to God's Word. And male leadership in government and the community is to be desired. One evidence of a nation's fall from grace is that women will rule over it (Isaiah 3:12).

Promise Keepers has much to offer in affirmation of this truth. But a Promise Keepers convention isn't going to go far beyond a cursory explanation of, and challenge to commit to, the seven promises. In order to get to the heart of Promise Keepers, one must read extensively through their literature. This we have done. We also interviewed Randy Phillips whom we thank for much of the information contained herein.

While we find much with which we would be in agreement with Promise Keepers---even enthusiastic agreement---there are areas of concern that require consideration by anyone interested in involving themselves or their fellowship with Promise Keepers.

Since Promise Keepers does not have its own publishing house, their books are published by others---principally, Focus on the Family and NavPress. Their magazine, *New Man*, is published by Strang Communications, publishers of *Charisma* magazine. Sadly, these publishers represent

some of the strongest promoters of psychology and aberrant doctrine.

It should be noted that, inasmuch as Promise Keepers endorses and publishes the writings of a diverse group of men, there are some conflicting statements (some good, some bad) found from one person to another among Promise Keepers' materials and those they recommend. It's a mixed bag of human wisdom and biblical truth. Unfortunately, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. And it's difficult to say, Thus saith Promise Keepers. Randy Phillips has indicated that much is left to individual preference. There is no discernment offered from the top.

## ON SELF-LOVE

The issue of self-love is one on which we find some differences of opinion among Promise Keepers writers. On the biblical side of the issue we find Don Osgood's statement in *What Makes a Man?*

The reason love of possessions is wrong is that it is the way we get trapped into preoccupation with ourselves. Real love looks out for someone, wishes good for someone, gives to someone. But love of possessions is loving ourselves, taking care of us, wishing good for us, giving to us. A family where each one is acquiring something just for self is a bankrupt family, whether or not the money has run out. And it usually won't be long before the money runs out. If we truly love someone, we are willing to deny ourselves (Don Osgood, *What Makes a Man?* op. cit., p. 97).

But Osgood's teaching is in contrast to the teachings of Gary Smalley and John Trent, found in the same book!

The degree of self control you have in your life is in direct proportion to the degree of acceptance you have for yourself. Put another way, if you don't value yourself, you won't pull in the reins on actions and attitudes that will affect you for the worse.... If you're caught up in the first steps of any addiction or twenty miles down the road, there's a hole in your heart, an inner hurt, and dislike of self that can make you worthy of failure, but not successes (Gary Smalley and John Trent, *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45).

Osgood's advice is biblical; Smalley's and Trent's advice is humanistic psychology. The Holy Spirit tells us through the apostle Paul that no one really hates himself (Ephesians 5:29). It is not selfhatred, but selflove, that leads to aberrant behavior. Who is right---the Holy Spirit, or Smalley and Trent (as well as myriad other "Christian psychologists)?

Within Promise Keepers we have found a preponderance of advocacy favoring self love over self denial, the latter of which is the biblical admonition. The dichotomy between Osgood's position on self love and the Smalley---Trent position is merely one indication of the eclectic approach Promise Keepers takes toward teaching. This eclecticism is found in other areas as well.

## FEMINIZATION OF THE CHURCHES

On the subject of major problems with the churches today, we find an excellent statement from Robert Hicks regarding how the churches have become feminized:

I have seen too many good men leave the church, or church leadership, because they were tired of playing the games and they saw a lot of what the church was doing as a waste of time. We must

recapture the church for men, defeminize it, and make our appeals to men where it will cost them something more than their money or their time. Christ wants their lives (Robert Hicks, *Ibid.*, p. 155).

It's true that the churches have become feminized. Even many churches that stress male leadership have succumbed to the feminization process.

Most church ministries are geared toward women; churches may have as many as five or more women's ministries and nothing for men outside of a once-a-month prayer breakfast and an occasional retreat--much of the time for the latter being devoted to fun and games. Women's Bible studies abound both inside and outside the local body. Yet Scripture says that if a woman wants to learn anything she should ask her husband at home. Today, however, this biblical admonition is impractical for many couples. The reason is that the churches have let them down by withholding sound biblical teaching for the men, as well as proper discipleship. Consequently wives often know more (or think they know more) about the Bible than their husbands do. And not all they are receiving is biblical.

We must not lose sight of the dynamics within the modern church that have led to Promise Keeper's existence. It is the pathetic, feminized church that has created the conditions for such an organization to come into being. Unless men do take their rightful place, the churches will remain powerless, simply because the Lord does not bestow honor where the men are weak.

The problem of male weakness is not confined to the churches. In fact, it's because of the feminization of the churches that the nation as a whole has become feminized. Dr. Tony Evans, writing on "Spiritual Purity" for *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper* says it well:

I am convinced that the primary cause of this national crisis is the feminization of the American male. When I say feminization, I am not talking about sexual preference. I'm trying to describe a misunderstanding of manhood that has produced a nation of sissified men who abdicate their role as spiritually pure leaders, thus forcing women to fill the vacuum (Tony Evans, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, op. cit., p. 73).

Evans suggests a radical but proper approach to men reclaiming their role of leadership where they've abdicated it to their wives:

I can hear you saying, I want to be a spiritually pure man. Where do I start? The first thing you do is sit down with your wife and say something like this: Honey, I've made a terrible mistake. I've given you my role. I gave up leading this family, and I forced you to take my place. Now I must reclaim that role. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying here. I'm not suggesting that you ask for your role back, I'm urging you to take it back. If you simply ask for it, your wife is likely to say, Look, for the last ten years, I've had to raise these kids, look after the house, and pay the bills. I've had to get a job and still keep up my duties at home. I've had to do my job and yours. You think I'm just going to turn everything back over to you? Your wife's concerns may be justified. Unfortunately, however, there can be no compromise here. If you're going to lead, you must lead. Be sensitive, Listen. Treat the lady gently and lovingly. But lead! Having said that, let me direct some carefully chosen words to you ladies who may be reading this: Give it back! For the sake of your family and the survival of our culture, let your man be a man if he's willing. Protect yourself if you must, by handing the reins back slowly; take it one step at a time. But if your husband tells you he wants to

reclaim his role, let him! God never meant for you to bear the load you're carrying (Ibid., pp. 79-80)

Perhaps Evans could have advised the men to just start taking the lead without the preliminaries. But he is essentially correct in his position. Unfortunately, his sound advice is offset by notso-sound advice from Gary Smalley. Writing in the same Promise Keeper's book, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, Smalley relates the story of his friends, Jim and Suzette Brawler, and how they dealt with their son Jason's unapproved actions. Smalley tells us that although both Jim and Suzette came from families with dysfunctional elements, they managed to raise three emotionally healthy children. This quote is rather lengthy, but it's necessary to understand Smalley's unbiblical mind set which permeates many of his writings:

Recently Jason came home for the first time from college. He was unusually nervous because, as a part of his initiation into the swim team, he had been coerced into wearing an earring. None of the men in his family had ever worn an earring, and it just wasn't done among their circle of friends. Jason felt the roof might come off when Mom and Dad saw him. Jason pulled into the driveway and found his mom. She was so excited to see him that she gave him a big hug before she noticed his ear and gasped. Then she laughed. What a great joke! she said. I assume it's one of those stickon kinds? No, Mom, this is the real thing Jason answered. I had my ear pierced. Everybody on the swim team has an earring and I was the only one who didn't, so I gave in. Suzette became nervous, not because she was upset with her son, but because she wondered how her husband would react when he got home. After taking Jason's laundry and getting him something to drink, she called two friends. Then, while Jim was still at work, she made a trip to the home of one of those friends and discussed how she should handle the situation. Both Jason and his mother were anxious as Jim arrived home. When he walked in the door, Jason said, Hi, Dad, I'm home for the weekend. Jim immediately hugged his son---on the side opposite the earring---then said, Well, how's college going? He hadn't noticed, and Jason just kept waiting for the explosion. Finally, Dad saw it. Hey-y-y, what's this?' he said. Jason thought, Oh, no! He's going to rip it off my ear. Suzette gently suggested, Now, don't overreact. But Jim didn't react at all. Calmly and sensitively, he asked, 'What's going on?' Jason answered, Dad everybody on the swim team has an earring. I knew you'd be upset, but Dad, I was the only guy who didn't have one. The seniors said either I do it or, you know, I'm in trouble. If you want to wear the earring that's your business, Jim answered. It's not up to me. Only God knows how much I love you. Personally, I wouldn't wear an earring. but hey, I understand the pressure you were getting. Suzette calmed down immediately. I thought you were going to be mad, she told Jim. No, we need to support our son, he said. Actually, I'd like to do something about it, but I don't think anything would help (Gary Smalley, Ibid., pp. 105-106).

## PK Developments (ecumenism)

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How comfortable do the leaders of Promise Keepers feel with Roman Catholics? Are they really wary and concerned for sound biblical fundamentalist doctrine? Or are they - as we long suspected - hand in hand with Rome on a journey towards ecumenical unity?

Recently, PK was the subject of an article in a Catholic publication, Our Sunday Visitor. The article in question was entitled "Making New Catholic Men: Promise Keepers 'gospel for guys': Is it just the thing that Catholic Men need, or is it bound to loosen male bonds to the Church?"

This article demonstrates just how hard the Promise Keepers leaders have been working to accommodate Catholics in their organisation. The article suggests that Catholic involvement is already significant:

Mike Timmis, a longtime leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal, was welcomed to the Board of Directors of PK in March.

Promise Keepers has spotlighted Catholic evangelist Jim Berlucchi as a speaker at several rallies this year.

"In June, Promise Keepers hosted a 'catholic summit' at its headquarters in Denver, sounding out Catholic volunteers and leaders from around the country.

And earlier this year, Promise Keepers amended its statement of faith, revising the lines that Catholics had found offensive.

Read these quotes and judge for yourself the way things are going:

"Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney told Our Sunday Visitor recently that full catholic participation was his intention from the start."

"Back in 1992, at our first stadium event, we very clearly stated from the podium that we eagerly welcomed the participation of Roman Catholics..."

"While there are no hard figures, some say that 10-20 percent of those men [attending Promise Keepers conferences] are Catholic. And, recently, Promise Keepers, a largely evangelical movement, has taken steps to attract even more Catholic men to its events and principles of discipleship."

"As executive director of Christian outreach at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, [John] Sengenberger cites Promise Keepers as the inspiration of the men's conferences his own office has sponsored since 1995...."

"Sengenberger invited representatives from Promise Keepers to visit the university. 'We had some frank discussions and told them we needed to see some Catholic involvement on the leadership level.'"

"When Steubenville hosted its first men's conference in 1995, Sengenberger invited two Promise Keepers officials to attend: Dale Schlafer, who was at that time chairman of the board, and Glenn Wagner, a vice president."

'It was their first time in a Catholic evangelistic setting,' Sengenberger said. 'They were impressed. When they were leaving, we invited them to go through our bookstore and take out any books they wanted. They went home with all kinds of theology books, Vatican II teachings. ... Dale took a set of the Liturgy of the Hours. The following year, he told me he'd incorporated it into his daily prayer, so Glenn asked for one, too.'

"Both men returned to Steubenville for the 1996 men's conference, where Sengenberger took them to a Eucharistic holy hour."

"I took them aside and explained what we were doing, how this only makes sense if you believe in the Real Presence of Jesus. That night we were down by the stage, and I remember going down on my knees, then prostrate, down on my face - and right next to me was Glenn Wagner, doing the same thing.'

One of the most disturbing aspects of the Sunday Visitor article is the news that PK have altered their statement of belief to suit Catholics. Here are the very quotes:

"... earlier this year, Promise Keepers amended its statement of faith, revising the lines that Catholics had found offensive. "

"... profound differences remained between the evangelicals of Promise Keepers and Catholics who were sympathetic. Last year, Promise Keepers published a 'statement of faith' with lines that seemed to be crafted to exclude Catholics---or force them to reject their Catholic faith.

"Section five of the Promise Keepers credo read: 'We believe that man was created in the image of God, but because of sin, was alienated from God. That alienation can be removed only by accepting, through faith alone, God's gift of salvation, which was made possible by Christ's death.'

"'Faith alone' [says this Catholic magazine] is a key doctrine of the Protestant Reformation. Though the phrase appears nowhere in Scripture, it was inserted by Martin Luther into his German translation of the Bible.

"Concerned about this development at Promise Keepers, Sengenberger had several Catholic theologians review the statement and present their objections to Wagner last summer.

"Early this year, Promise Keepers revised the statement in a way that passed theological muster with those Catholics. 'Only through faith, trusting in Christ alone for salvation, which was made possible by His death and resurrection, can that alienation be removed.'

"Paul Edwards, Promise Keepers' vice president for advancement, explained that the statement of faith is a 'dynamic' document, and that Promise Keepers is open to change.

"'Truth and unity are equal, but in tension,' said Edwards, who was raised a Catholic but now attends a nondenominational church. 'We try to present truth, not washed down, yet not truth that devolves into denominational squabbles'" (Mike Aquilina, Our Sunday Visitor, July 20, 1997, pp. 10,11).

The changes in the above wording are so subtle that many fail to see their deep significance. However, what has happened strikes a blow against all that Christians hold dear - that salvation is obtained through and by NOTHING ELSE but the work of Christ on the Cross and faith in that finished work!

Roman Catholic dogma adds to that work the merits of their sacraments and good works as well as allegiance to the Mother Church! Once something is added to "faith alone", we are no longer obtaining salvation by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but by faith PLUS works! This important distinction is lost on many who have never been taught the basic elements of evangelical faith, and know little about the false doctrines of the Roman Church. But the fact remains, that Catholics (as reported above) cannot abide the phrase "faith alone" and have managed to substitute the watered down version of "through Christ alone".

Now, it is self-evident that salvation is "through Christ alone"! Indeed, many pseudo-Christian cults preach that salvation is obtained through Christ alone. However, only the true Christian churches teach that salvation is not only through and by Christ alone, but also BY FAITH ALONE, and NOT through works, liturgies, sacraments and obedience to the priesthood of the Church!

The RC Church teaches that salvation is "through faith", but not through FAITH ALONE. The difference is absolutely crucial. It is the difference between law and grace; the difference between faith and works!

Never have the boundaries been so battered, and the barriers been so flimsy! PK, like many other organisations, seems to have adopted the policy that "anything goes" in the name of brotherhood and unity in the Global Church. If PK are now prepared to see their doctrine as negotiable for the sake of unity, then where do they draw the line?

Confirmation of these extraordinary events is given in the magazine "Christianity Today" in a piece titled "CATHOLIC INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONED" (June 16, Page 58):

"Some Latinos also outlined opposition to formal involvement of Catholics in Promise Keepers. Misael Castillo, pastor of Jerusalem Baptist Church in Miami, noted that Hispanic Baptist pastors in that city have vowed not to participate in any event where Catholics are in leadership roles. Killings of evangelicals by Catholics in Chiapas, Mexico, are a sore issue for many Latino Protestants. This makes PK's recent appointment of Catholic Michael Timmis of Detroit to its board problematic. McCartney, who was raised Catholic and now attends a Vineyard church, says Catholics are welcome if they can abide by PK's "Seven Promises," mission statement, and statement of faith."

The above statement by McCartney is laughable. We now know that the Roman Catholics COULD NOT "abide by the PK Statement of Belief" as it stood, and with what outcome? PK altered the Statement to suit them! What hypocrisy!

## An Open Letter to Bill McCartney by Bill Randles

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From Pastor Bill Randles,

Believers In Grace Fellowship Church

August 22, 1995

Dear Mr. McCartney,

My name is Bill Randles and I am the pastor of Believers in Grace Fellowship Church that I founded in 1982. I am writing to express certain reservations and concerns I have about Promise Keepers.

The reason this is an open letter is because there are probably thousands of other pastors who have similar reservations. You know this also because you referred to this at a meeting in Detroit on April 29, 1995. In fact, I have listened to that message carefully, and heard you make some very emphatic statements about the reluctance on the part of pastors to ally themselves with Promise Keepers. You actually went so far as to say that any clergyman who isn't planning to go to your February 1996 Pastors' Gathering in Atlanta "needs to be able to tell us why he doesn't want to go."

Mr. McCartney, this is my response to your brotherly challenge. I welcome the opportunity to tell you what my reservations and concerns about P.K. actually are. First of all, however, in the interest of clarity, let me transcribe for you that portion of your speech which prompted the writing of this letter. You said in Detroit:

"We have a great army that we are assembling. They're the Christian men of this nation. However, our leadership, our clergy are not uniform. Our clergy are divided. Division is many visions. There's no unity of command. . . there is tremendous division in our clergy. We have to assume that responsibility. We have to say, 'Are we impacting our clergy in a way that's going to take them and make them all that they have to be in order to lead this army because the shepherds are the ones God's cho-sen to lead us out of here.' We are not to go out of here and lead ourselves. We're to go out of here and to go back to our bodies, our church bodies, and be led by our shepherd. God has hand-picked them, He's gifted them, He's trained them, He's invested in them, He's nurtured them.

. . .

"Now, I think many of you are in touch with the fact that we're having a pastors' gathering in Atlanta on February 12th, 13th and 14th. This gathering in Atlanta should exceed 100,000 clergymen. Why? Because we have many more than that, and every single one of them ought to be there. We can't have anybody pass up that meeting. If a guy says that he doesn't want to go, he needs to be able to tell us why he doesn't want to go. 'Why wouldn't you want to be a part of what God wants to do with His hand-picked leaders?' We need to understand that our clergymen, many of them, are reluctant to go. Many of you come from churches and your clergymen have never been to a Promise Keepers gathering because they're keeping a distance from us. You need to go

back and tell them: Promise Keepers wants to come along side you and be everything you need by encouraging [your] men and giving resources.

"Now listen to me, men. February 12th, 13th and 14th to me is not a coincidence that it comes over Valentine's Day. I think we're going to have another St. Valentine's Day massacre. I think Almighty God is going to rip open the hearts of our leaders. I think He's going to tear them open. And I think he's going to put them back together again as one. One leadership. We've got to have one leadership, one leadership only" (Promise Keepers, Detroit Silver Dome, April 29, 1995).

## ONE LEADERSHIP

Mr. McCartney, my response to that is a simple question. What do you mean when you call for the clergy to become one leadership? In fact, minutes after, you made another statement about the things that we could do "if we are in control, if we come together, if our unity of command responds." You said we can accomplish things like "pay off the national debt, and feed the poor, . . . we can dissolve gangs, . . . and be an impact in the inner city."

These kinds of statements underscore my initial reservations. I am very cautious when the call is made for "One Leadership" and "Unity of Command." On the one hand, I am troubled by this because in actual reality, the church already is under one leadership. Jesus Christ is Himself the Head of the Church! If you and I each submit to His headship through obedience to His Word, we are already in unity and don't need to manufacture it. Evidently, what you are calling for is one (human) leadership and one unity of (human) command.

Mr. McCartney, there already is an organization claiming that kind of leadership: the Roman Catholic Church under the headship of the Pope. Because of this "One human leadership and command," almost a billion people are locked in spiritual bondage.

The call for clergy to become one leadership and unity of command reminds me of the shepherding movement of the 1970s and 80s, which sprang out of the Word of God charismatic community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was nurtured by the Fort Lauderdale five: Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Don Basham, Charles Simpson and Ernie Baxter. You mention in *Ashes to Glory*, that you enjoyed fellowship with the Word of God Community. Have you perhaps been influenced by that particular vision of church government?

I have a threefold problem with a humanly centralized church leadership, and unity of command:

- (1) it has to be a man-made unity, and it denies the reality of the unity of the Spirit that all Christians currently partake of;
- (2) it concentrates a tremendous amount of influence into the hands of well meaning but sinful men;
- (3) finally, where there is a centralized, carnally unified command, it makes it easier for deception and manipulation of the Church by Satan.

Look at the dark ages under the Papacy! I am glad that the church doesn't have that kind of unity today (yet). Ours is a spiritual unity based on devotion to Jesus, not a political unity based on "Shepherding" principles. The way things are now, Satan has to deceive the Christians one church

at a time, but under a "unified command," all he has to do is deceive the leadership.

## ECUMENISM

Mr. McCartney, a second but closely related concern I have is with the ecumenical unity promoted by P.K. Of course, I believe in the true ecumenism: the communion of all true saints everywhere on earth, based on the truth of the gospel. But I am extremely wary of the "unity-at-the-expense-of-truth" movement. People are being encouraged to de-emphasize doctrines so they can come together as though doctrine is a meaningless detail. What is doctrine, but the body of the truth entrusted to the saints once and for all?

Doctrine divides because truth divides. There are many denominational barriers that should be kept in place. The whole basis for unity is the unity of the faith (truth), a faith which has a content and makes specific demands of people. Any other basis for unity, such as maleness, politics, social concerns, etc, will only prove to be a house built on sand.

Mr. McCartney, do you believe the following statement made by the Pope?

"On this universal level, if victory comes, it will be brought by Mary. Christ will conquer through her, because He wants the church's victories now and in the future, to be linked to her" (John Paul II, from "Crossing the Threshold of Hope").

How am I to find common ground with anyone who believes this way? What basis for fellowship is there? Scripture commands us not to fellowship or even wish Godspeed to those who deny the doctrine of Christ.

Another example would be this statement from the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church, page 128, section 460:

"The Word became flesh to make us partakers of the divine nature.....For The Son of God became man so that we might become God. The only begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in His divinity, assumed our nature so that He, made man, might make men Gods."

Mr. McCartney, we are to refute such heresies! How am I to find spiritual unity with people who worship Mary or believe they will become gods? While I can find all sorts of commonalities on the basis of being a human being, or the desire that a man be a better father, husband, have integrity, purity, etc., I would hardly mistake those things for Christian Revival. If P.K. is supposed to be a great move of God, doesn't truth and discernment count for anything? What is to stop the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses from starting P.K. chapters in their denominations? Why not? They can make identical promises.

## JAY GARY AND THE STAR OF 2000

Mr. McCartney, is Promise Keepers going to be used to mobilize worldwide support for a bimillennial celebration of Jesus' 2000th birthday and Jubilee? The reason I ask is because of the favorable review in the July/Aug 1995 New Man magazine (the official P.K. magazine) of Jay Gary's book, The Star of 2000. Gary's self-published book advocates such a celebration.

Are you aware, Mr. McCartney, that in a recent Spiritual Counterfeits Project article entitled, "Sign of the Times: Evangelicals and New Agers Together," Mr. Gary is the subject of much concern? Of

particular concern is his recent association with former assistant secretary general of the U.N. and well known New Age author, Robert Muller, who wrote "New Genesis: Shaping a Global Spirituality". This book amounts to a call to all religions to find common ground and work together for a one-world religion.

This S.C.P. article, which I am enclosing, should sober anyone who is taking Mr. Gary and his plans for a bimillennial birthday celebration for Jesus seriously. The article states that Gary invited Robert Muller to be a key adviser for his B.E.G.I.N. organization (Bimillennial Global Interactive Network). In Gary's book, "The Star of 2000", he cites a book by Muller called "First Lady of The World" in which Muller describes how the UN could prepare for the bimillennial celebration. In a March/April 1992 publication of Gary's Bimillennial Research Report, another of Muller's books, "The Birth of A Global Civilization", is recommended. Gary describes it as an "inspiring look at our emerging global system, including new global human rights, global networking, global core curriculum and global celebrations culminating in the year 2000. Just a paragraph at the end of this recommended book will give you an idea where Muller comes from:

"And God saw that all nations of the earth, black and white, poor and rich, from North and South, from East and West and of all creeds were sending their emissaries to a tall glass house on the shores of the river of the rising sun on the island of Manhattan, to study together, to think together, and to care together for the world and all its people. And God said that is good. And it was the first day of the NEW AGE of the earth" (Robert Muller, The Birth of a Global Civilization, p. 134; CAPS OURS).

Mr. McCartney, all I have to go by is what P.K. actually says or does. As far as I know, when New Man, the official voice of P.K., favorably reviews Jay Gary's book, they are indirectly promoting him and his ideas. Again I ask, is P.K. going to be used to mobilize worldwide support for a bimillennial celebration of Jesus' Birthday in the year 2000, a celebration already intertwined with the New Age movement?

#### ROBERT HICKS' "MASCULINE JOURNEY"

I would like to know why, Mr. McCartney, when you had 50,000 turned on, pumped up, spiritually hungry men, of all the books you could have chosen to offer for spiritual growth you chose "The Masculine Journey" by Robert Hicks? It is my understanding that 50,000 of these books were distributed at Boulder in 1993. The book actually has the P.K. imprimatur on it. Do you honestly subscribe to Hick's concept of the Phallic Male? Doesn't it bother you that Hicks quotes New Age authors Sam Keen and Robert Bly without any warning? Hicks sets off his chapter entitled "The Phallic Male" with a quote from Keen's New Age bestseller "Fire in the Belly". The quote is "The loins are the place of judgment" (p. 47).

Are you trying yet to implement Hick's statement on page 51? "We are called to worship God as phallic kinds of guys, not as some sort of androgynous, neutered non-males, or the feminized males so popular in many feminist enlightened churches. We are told by God to worship Him in accordance to what we are - phallic men."

This is growth for men? When did the apostles even remotely encourage anything like this? I could give you countless other examples of this kind out of Hicks book but I don't need to.

What were you thinking this book would offer when you promoted it? Was there some particular emphasis in this book that you thought would help men spiritually? Maybe you see the need for initiation rites as Hicks advocates in his accompanying workbook under the section, "Exploring the Issues with other Men":

"Our culture has presented many initiation rites or passages to manhood that are associated with the phallus. Which ones have you experienced? Do you have a story to share with other men about one such event?"

Do you lament, as Hicks does, that the church doesn't offer any alternative initiation rites, such as circumcision? In his "Masculine Journey", which P.K. promotes, Hicks teaches us that somehow or other we should celebrate the different passages of a young man's life - such as his first drunk or sexual experience (p. 177):

"I'm sure many would balk at my thought of celebrating the experience of sin. I'm not sure how we could do it. But I do know we need to do it. For example, we usually give the teenagers in our churches such a massive dose of condemnation regarding their first experiences with sin that I sometimes wonder how any of them recover. Maybe we could take a different approach. Instead of jumping all over them when they have their first experience with sex or drugs, we could look upon this as a teachable moment and a rite of passage. Is this putting a benediction on sin? Of course not, but perhaps at this point the true elders could come forward and confess their own adolescent sins and congratulate the next generation for being human. Then they could move on to all the important issues of forgiveness and restoration, but this time on common ground, with the young person as a fellow sinner!"

Mr. McCartney, do you believe in this kind of celebration? If not, why promote it? At the end of "The Masculine Journey" there's a P.K. promotion that states, "P.K. wants to provide men's materials (like this book)." And you wonder why pastors are reluctant to let you 'help them'?

#### JAMES RYLE AND THE VINEYARD

Frankly, Mr. McCartney, another huge reservation that I am having with P.K. is the fact that James Ryle, a man who claims that God told him the Beatles were anointed to bring forth a worldwide revival and 'usher in my (God's) spirit,' is your pastor and mentor. According to Ryle, it wasn't until 1970 that God removed his anointing from the Beatles. (Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was anointed by God? 1970 was the year the Beatles broke up!). I am leary of a 'prophet' who discerns the demonic as anointed.

Let's face it, although P.K. is rapidly growing and attracting an increasingly diverse portion of the Church, it is primarily led by Vineyardites. The 'Prophet' Ryle is on the board of directors, Randy Phillips is the president, and you go to Ryle's church (you told us to explain why I won't attend the Saint Valentines Day Massacre).

I need to tell you I have great reservations about the Vineyard movement. Your Pastor and mentor is one example, with his unscriptural prophecies. It is not my intention to paint every Vineyard Church with a broad brush.

I believe there are, no doubt, many fine Christians in the movement who want nothing more than the fulfillment of the Great Commission. But we have to remember that it was the Vineyard

movement who by and large promoted the Kansas City prophets and have kept them in circulation to this day.

The mystical "Toronto Blessing" is primarily a Vineyard phenomena although there are many Vineyard congregations who don't claim it. What makes P.K. different from the other Vineyard ventures? Mr. McCartney, do you believe in the validity of this "Laughing Revival?" Can a fountain bring forth both sweet and bitter water?

#### WHY NOT MEN OF DISCERNMENT?

I applaud your many charges for men to become "men of integrity," family men, "men of purity" and so forth, but I notice that there isn't that much of a call for men to be men of discernment.

If you truly want to know where many of us pastors are coming from, I'll tell you. A lot of us don't see the lack of physical unity, nor lack of social action, nor lack of signs and wonders, as the true challenge of the last days church. According to II Thess. 2, the ultimate issue facing us is "will we love the truth, more than the lie, in the face of a false 'revival' of lying signs and wonders?" This is why many of us are seeing truth as the ultimate issue, not tolerance.

Of course, I love all Catholics, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. All of these "name the name of Jesus"! But almost all of them worship a different Jesus. I can't claim most of the above as brothers in Christ. If a Mormon keeps all seven of your promises that could well make him a moral person, but that moral Mormon will go right to Hell. Why? Because in spite of his morality, unity, good fathering skills, marital fidelity, he's still doomed because he doesn't believe the testimony God gave of His Son. What I am saying is this: What a person believes shouldn't be downplayed as insignificant. We should rather preach the Word of God without compromise, no matter how much it divides.

#### SEEMS LIKE A BROAD WAY

"Broad is the road that leads to destruction."

Finally Mr. McCartney, I am wary of P.K. because it seems to be such a broad, inclusive way. Catholics, Mormons, and even homosexuals are encouraged to be "included and welcomed in all our events."

There are common denominators that anyone can stress that almost every human being can admit to. But when the true God-ordained organization, the Church, upholds the Word of God, it divides people either onto the broad way that leads to destruction or the narrow way that leads to life. A telltale sign that there is something wrong is the press being given to Promise Keepers by the worldly media. Why is the world promoting your organization when Jesus said the world would hate us as it hated Him? God has an organism already, the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the world rejects it. God's work is not based on being male or female, Jew nor Greek nor bond or free. Whosoever will, may come.

These are just a few of my concerns about P.K.

May the Lord inspire a healthy dialogue on this subject,

Bill Randles,

Pastor

## "Mainstream" Autumn/Winter 1995 Part 2 - Promise Keepers

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### PROMISE KEEPERS

#### Joel's Army in Formation?

A men's movement that is proving to be hugely powerful and popular in the States seems set to arrive here in the UK and Europe at any moment. Already, in preparation, the national media has reported on the phenomenon of thousands of men gathering in public stadia to listen to rousing sermons about male bonding and the need for unity. (We might make something of the fact that the normally anti-Christian media of this country seems to suspend its judgement when it comes to Promise Keepers.)

The magazine of the movement, "New Men" is already available for sale in some outlets, containing articles and advertisements that preach the Word-of-Faith ideology of "success in everything". Audio tapes are beginning to circulate aggressively promoting Promise Keepers and a few news reports have appeared in the Christian Press. These are the first few puffs of the hurricane to come!

#### WHAT IS PROMISE KEEPERS?

This massive movement sprang from a desire in 1990 to "raise up a generation of promise keepers" - men who would be honest in their religious, social, family and business lives.

It was the idea of Bill McCartney, a former Roman Catholic now associated with the Vineyard churches. Promise Keepers has Bill McCartney's pastor, James Ryle, on its Board of Directors. This man was part of the prophetic move centred on the Kansas City Prophets in the late '80s. So was Vineyard pastor, Randy Phillips, (another former Catholic) who is now Promise Keeper's President.

The first PK event in Colorado in 1991 was attended by 4,200 men. Since then it has ballooned enormously. The goal for 1996 is a million men marching on Washington DC as a witness to the nation and to ask God to restore America.

Much of this success can be attributed to PK's promotion through such men as James Dobson (Focus On The Family), Bill Bright (Campus Crusade) and Gary Smalley (Today's Family).

Speakers include Chuck Swindoll, Luis Palau, Jack Hayford, Gary Oliver, and Bill Hybels.

Organisation is tight at PK, with promotion carried on through Ambassadors (travelling salesmen?) who introduce PK to local churches. Ambassadors also recruit Point Men in each church to keep the members informed of seminars, resources and events. Men who join the movement give their allegiance to a small "accountability group" overseen by the Point Man, who in turn answers to the Ambassador. The Ambassador is in submission to the PK leadership. Thus a pyramid structure of command and control is established which removes individual men from the oversight of their own Pastors and places them in "mentoring" roles with other PK men.

There are several reasons for being wary of Promise Keepers:

1. It mimics new-age male bonding and self-discovery therapies, and was sympathetically reported in a new age magazine. It also endorses a book called "The Masculine Journey" by Robert Hicks which suggests levels of initiation to manhood and other new age ideas.
2. There is an undue emphasis on phallic symbolism, and Jesus is presented as a sexual male, as a role model. Hick's book does not clearly condemn homosexuality.
3. It is ecumenical. Leaders have no difficulties accepting Roman Catholics and Mormons as members, and denominational barriers are not recognised.
4. It uses "shepherding" techniques to disciple its members. It requires submission to leaders and employs a pyramid structure in its organisation.
5. It involves an intrusion into the privacy of a man's family life and sexual habits, with groups members obliged to share intimate family matters with each other.
6. It promotes Christian psychologists, and uses psychological methods for counselling. The Hicks book draws heavily from Jungian "archetypes".
7. It encourages male domination of women. Women are honoured but only as "Suitable Helpers" - which is the female version of PK.
8. It compromises biblical doctrine by suggesting that men cannot live effective Christian lives, nor grow as Christians, without male friends to help them.
9. With the use of loud music, emotional worship and chanting, and other such techniques, it encourages a group mentality where acceptance of false doctrine becomes easier.
10. It is rooted in the Vineyard ministry and has strong links with the Kansas City Prophets. PK is claimed to be the fulfilment of prophecies relating to the formation of a massive "Joel's army" that will be raised up to take the nations for God. Furthermore, it is being called one of the "many streams that feed into the River of God" now flowing as a result of the Toronto experience.

#### SEVEN PROMISES OF A PROMISE KEEPER

(Extract From An Official PK Booklet)

A Promise Keeper seizes the moment for Jesus by making commitments. There is no affecting the future without committing to change. A Promise Keeper makes promises and commits to carrying them through. These promises... are meant to guide us toward the life of Christ so that He might transform us from the inside out. The fact is that we are all in process until our physical death. Yet, Scripture clearly calls to enter the process of sanctification, to become who we are in Christ Jesus. Only then will we be godly influences in our relationships and in our world. We are seeking men who - in conviction, courage and humility - will commit themselves to the following seven promises.

- 1) A Promise Keeper is committed to honor Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- 2) A Promise Keeper is committed to pursue vital relationships with other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
- 3) A Promise Keeper is committed to practice spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.
- 4) A Promise Keeper is committed to build strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.
- 5) A Promise Keeper is committed to support the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources.
- 6) A Promise Keeper is committed to develop meaningful relationships that reach beyond racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
- 7) A Promise Keeper is committed to influence his world, being obedient to the great commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Full details from: Promise Keepers PO Box 18376 Boulder, CO 80308 USA

There are now many privately-circulated reports and small newsletters exploring PK and examining the implications. All these seem to be in the States, so far, but some will be listed at the end of this article, so that further information can be found if necessary.

Two of these reports will now follow.

The first is by Jewel Van Der Merwe, and it appeared in her newsletter "Discernment", for May/June 1995, available from PO Box 129, Lapeer, MI 48446-0129.

The second piece is an open letter written to Bill McCartney by Pastor Bill Randles. It can be obtained by USA supporters as a tract from Believers In Grace Church, 3336 Prairie Drive NE, Cedar Rapids Iowa.

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## MEN WITH A MISSION

### An Overview of Promise Keepers

By Jewel Van Der Merwe

Promise Keepers is a parachurch structure that unites men from every denomination for the purpose of inter-accountability, beyond what the local church may accomplish. It does not seek to exclude pastoral leadership, but desires that pastors become part of its framework. Often, the pastor's contact with Promise Keepers is initiated when a bright-eyed fired-up recruit (newly changed from a Promise Keeper rally) says, "Pastor, I'm praying for you. I want to be supportive in any way possible." What pastor would not be touched when hearing this from a member of his congregation?

Indeed, it is an awesome experience to be part of thousands of men lifting their voices in one accord, as in the Promise Keepers rallies. Men are suddenly becoming not only supportive of their pastors and churches, but are working to become the leaders of their homes as well.

Many testify of changed lives as a result of their contact with Promise Keepers. If the Gospel is preached, and even one soul is truly saved, then the efforts are worthwhile.

Should we not, then, examine Promise Keepers to understand its success? It is drawing very large crowds. Men are looking beyond their own limited spheres to something much more vast in scope. Just what is Promise Keepers? What makes it work? Where did it start?

## GROUPING FOR GROWTH

From the large rallies that are filling stadiums across the country, men migrate into small, intimate groups of 4 or 5. In these groups, men find that they begin to gain control of their lives by establishing bonds of accountability with other men. Approved Promise Keeper literature, videos and study guides assist men in seeing themselves more clearly through the eyes of others. They find other men who understand them. They see their struggles and responsibilities as not merely personal burdens to be borne alone, but as common experiences among men. Sharing and discussion moves a man from feeling that he is 'all alone' to identification with other men as a group.

The impact Promise Keepers is making is apparently a good one. But, aren't appearances often deceiving? What is the end to be accomplished? It is as hard to answer this as it is to define the doctrinal position of the group. Discussions relating to doctrine are carefully and markedly avoided, and only a positive image is to be projected.

The NEW AGE JOURNAL, April 1995 ran an article favourable to Promise Keepers:

"Writer Jeff Wagenheim noted the odd combination of New Age men's movement ideology (Robert Bly's pantheism) combined with the political evangelicalism of Pat Robertson:

...despite the group's assertions to the contrary, Promise Keepers is an organization with vast political influence. The fact that hundreds of thousands of men are being actively encouraged to adhere to a highly conservative set of values and to work to instil those values in their communities and nation should not just be a matter of theological interest."

An historical precedent for a political/religious movement such as Promise Keepers can be found in Germany during the 30's. According to author Richard Terrell in his provocative book, RESURRECTING THE REICH (Huntington House, 1994), orthodox Christianity was supplanted by the German Volkish faith:

"What was to take possession of the German consciousness was a militant romanticism. According to this way of thinking, the Divine Spirit is manifested in the people, in their collective genius and total culture or Volkgeist. ...Germany developed a kind of communal mysticism which contained its own Teutonic concept of a chosen people, called to redeem civilization from its decadence." (p.44)

Terrell describes the advent of this full-blown religion:

"rallies were glorious pageants that stirred the emotions, which depended not on any revelation of Scripture, but on pure feeling.. The Volkish concept of the social organism was effectively symbolized in mass meetings that expressed a sense of eternity, awe, and mystery, effects

stimulated by a 'cathedral of light' night-time mass meetings in which anti-aircraft lights sent brilliant shafts of illumination in the darkened sky." (p.59)

Is Promise Keepers creating a new 'folk' religion? The large mass rallies, the exaltation of emotion over reason, the lack of doctrinal integrity, the taking of oaths (the 7 promises), the focus on fatherland and fatherhood, and the ecumenical inclusion of aberrant esoteric doctrines bears a disconcerting similarity to an era which gave rise to one of the most dreadful armies in history.

The infiltration of Manifest Sons of God doctrines into Promise Keepers (via Vineyard) combined with New Age ideologies (via Robert Bly and Robert Hicks) appears to create a new American folk theology: pantheism, the idolatry of self, the belief in a divine mandate to take the land, the superiority of a group, and the necessity of group hysteria.

While many in the church are jumping wholeheartedly into the Laughing Phenomenon and Promise Keepers, it behoves the rest of the Church to take a sober, steady look at the historical, theological and philosophical underpinnings of these popular movements of our times". (CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE, Iowa Research Group, Inc. PO Box 17346, Des Moines, Iowa 50317~346, April, 1995).

Yes, it all appears so "right" -- but didn't even the folk movement in Germany "feel good" to the masses that gathered under the banner of "a great cause".. What better cause than "family" for men to rally to?

The Promise Keepers are dedicated to uniting men through vital relationships.

"Biblical unity spawns vital relationships: life changing, interdependent, living dynamic, face to face covenant relationship. Through vital relationships we can embrace one another's pains and triumphs. By this we express our honor for one another as equals while respecting our diverse heritages. We believe that vital relationships among men are the foundation for helping one another become promise keepers. We contend that this is best accomplished when a small group of men agree to pursue God face to face shoulder to shoulder and back-to-back and establish covenant relationships with one another to affirm, to be available for, and to pray for each other; to be honest with, to preserve confidentiality with, and to be accountable to each other.

"In context of covenant relationships, a man willingly grants other men the right to inquire about his relationship with God, his commitment to his family, his sexuality, his financial deals. Together they form a team that is committed to advance God's kingdom." (THE PROMISE KEEPERS Ambassador Training Manual).

It is imperative to look at the foundation and structure of the Promise Keepers. An honest appraisal is warranted, in lieu of a "follow the crowd" mindset.

The Foundation - THE VINEYARD AND KANSAS CITY CONNECTION.

Several years ago, emerging on the national charismatic scene were a group of men referred to as the Kansas City Prophets. This group became part of the Vineyard Fellowship (Anaheim, CA). Their emphasis was on visions and revelations with particular attention given to personal prophecy and prophetic "words from the Lord". There were prophecies given at this time regarding the fact that stadiums would be filled with people worshipping God. It was also prophesied that the evening

news would have reports on these tremendous events.

One of the "prophets", Paul Cain, said in 1989 that God was raising a new standard, and the understanding of Christianity would be radically changed in our generation. He believed that God had invited him to have a role in establishing this New Order of Christianity. He believed that God was offering something to this generation that he had never offered before.

"The 'prophets' promoted at that time a NEW THING that would soon happen. This NEW THING would be based on signs, wonders and miracles. A very clear warning went out to "beware the Old Order Brethren". The ones considered to be Old Order were obviously not part of the flow. Signs and wonders were to be seen as "God's endorsement of the right message and the right Messenger". (Paul Cain, School for Prophecy 1989).

James Ryle, Bill McCartney's pastor from the Boulder, Colorado Vineyard was, and is, part of the "prophetic" scene. (Bill McCartney is the founder of Promise Keepers.) Ryle ministers in "Dreams and Visions" conferences. One of his dreams involved the Beatles. Ryle interpreted it as the Beatles having the anointing for a new music. His interpretation of this dream was this:

"The Lord spoke to me and said, 'What you saw in the Beatles - the gifting and that sound they had - was from me... It was my purpose to bring forth through music a world-wide revival that would usher in the move of my spirit in bringing men and women to Christ.' And I want to tell you those four lads aborted something. They took what did not belong to them and used it in a way that was not intended by God to be used. It did bring a revival of music - but it brought it on the other side of the fence. And the Lord spoke to me and He said, 'In 1970 I lifted that anointing off of them. And it has been held in my hand ever since.' And the Lord said, 'The reason you saw it in the equipment room in that church [part of his dream] is because that anointing belongs to the church... Now I'm looking for those who I can place that anointing back upon. And as surely as I place it upon them, they will come forth with a sound that is distinctive... that will turn the hearts of men and women and capture their heart.'"

## NEW AGE SIMILARITIES

James Ryle believes that God is going to raise up a new music again, and when people hear this new sound they will fall on their faces. [For more information on dreams and visions see "Hearing God's Voice in the Night" by James Ryle, CHARISMA, May 1995]. In listening to a tape by James Ryle I found the simplicity of his style of ministry enjoyable and very effective. At the end of the message he prayed, "Lord, help us to graduate in our self-esteem".

Nothing is off-limits. Your family does not even have a right to family privacy. Here, in our area, on Woodward Avenue there is a SELF-ESTEEM book store. The store gives one the sense that it's a "cross-over" pulling together psychology and the New Age. On the shelf for Men's Movements, two books were together: "MASCULINE JOURNEY" (endorsed by the Promise Keepers) and "A CIRCLE OF MEN: The Original Manual for Men's Support Groups" by Bill Kaught (Co-founder of THE NEW WARRIOR TRAINING ADVENTURE). It was interesting to note the similarity of the two books; only one was dressed up with scriptural references to make it palatable for Christians. Robert Bly, the New Age guru for the men's movement, is referenced throughout both books and both books speak of small accountability groups set up on an encounter group format.

The thought of Joel's Army came to mind when reading the following:

"Therefore, the only true warrior for God is the Messiah - El Gibbor, or the mighty warrior God. This waging of war by Christ is as redemptive as His dying on the cross. The warrior must be willing to shed blood, either his own or anothers', in order to accomplish anything worthy of redemption.. God the Father and Christ are examples of what it is to be a warrior. We must embrace the latent or rejected warrior within ourselves, not only for our own development but also for the sake of our society and the church..." (MASCULINE JOURNEY, study guide pg. 40).

"Prophets" also teach that Joel's Army is being raised up today. They base this army on a spiritualizing of Joel chapter 2. This is why James Ryle could answer in the affirmative that Promise Keepers was indeed "Joel's Army" that God was raising up. It is also important to note how often the term "warrior" is used in their materials.

The underpinnings to this mighty conquering army can be found in Kingdom Now/Dominion theology. Those who hold to Kingdom Now teachings believe that true revival is a Christian Parallel society. They believe we should have a political system totally controlled by Christians as the government is to be on His shoulders (the Church).

There seems to be a concerted effort on the parts of many parachurch ministries to swallow up all churches and denominations. "Discipleship Training" is part of a larger strategy. When all of the local groups are linked together they will form a very large mobilizable spiritual army ready to die for a cause.

#### SHEPHERDING-DISCIPLESHIP CONNECTION

Bill McCartney didn't just "happen" into a Vineyard church in Boulder, Colorado. He came from the Catholic Charismatic Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Much has been written about this group and as early as 1972 outside observers were alarmed at the degree of control that was being exercised over individuals. In spite of many excesses, Pope Paul VI endorsed this renewal movement during a massive rally in Rome in 1975.

The leaders in the Ann Arbor community believed that their system of training would radically reshape the follower's lives. Training manuals were developed to:

"...train a Christian guerrilla force to combat four movements the Word of God considered mortal enemies of Christianity: feminism, Marxism, secular humanism, and Islam. The course ended with a special secret oath that graduates were never supposed to reveal... 'we pledge our loyalty to all who fight with us. We are ready for every sacrifice, even death.. .we will be loyal to our commanders.. .we will keep our plans and movements hidden from the enemy and his agent'". (DETROIT FREE PRESS, September 20,1992).

There occurred a tremendous growth, within the community as well as a growing list of teachings. The levels of authority kept increasing. It mushroomed out of Ann Arbor to sweep around the world. Two things, though, remained constant: the same handful of men remained on top, and hundreds of married women were relegated to the bottom rung.

"The doctrine of wifely submission was no brief experiment; it was the bedrock of the community's way of life for nearly two decades." (Ibid.)

There was radical reform in 1992. Many lives of those involved were devastated and trying to find their way out of the community. Interesting enough, the Kansas City Prophets visited Ann Arbor and were conference speakers. The "prophet", Paul Cain, was acclaimed at this conference by those eager for the latest word from God. Now we find that in the Promise Keepers, men are strongly urged to get into accountability groups. "All of our success here is contingent upon men taking part in small groups when they return home." CHRISTIANITY TODAY February 6, 1995, pg. 28.

What is a model of this group? Four or five men come together as equals. They are to build up trust relationships. In other words, every aspect of your life must be laid bare, whether it is your marriage, personal finances, business activities and sexual matters (past or present). Nothing is off-limits. Your family does not even have a right to family privacy. They cannot object to what you divulge as they are "submitted" to you. If this submission is inculcated within the family, then there are five families in one group submitted to the Promise Keepers.

Yes, submitted to PROMISE KEEPERS, not the local Church. This small group of four or five is submitted to a POINT MAN. The POINT MAN links his church with the Promise Keepers.

It is important to note that while this network may be in the local church, it is networked from without. In this way it runs parallel to the vision and purpose of the local church (in spite of what you may be told). It is parallel because the men are encouraged not to address doctrinal issues. According to their manual, "we expect you to be committed to your denominational heritage, but this is not the time to proudly wear your colors."

Notably the mission is to unify men. Yet the Promise Keepers will swallow up men's ministries first in the local church, then within the regional structures, then ultimately on a national level.

#### NETWORKING AND SUBMISSION

According to the order in which the NETWORK works, all decisions would be made in Colorado Promise Keepers headquarters) then relayed to the AMBASSADORS which in turn relay them to the POINT MEN.

The foundation for Promise Keepers is firmly in place. Big names lend their support. Some of these already are involved with political action groups. If a pastor does not support the Promise Keepers there are several methods taught to win that support. Promise Keepers are admonished to be "positive" in order to draw in others. It all looks and feels good. Your family "will be restored". The commonality is the sharing of ecstatic emotional experiences that actually leaves one feeling drained at the end of a rally. Remember, however, the rallies are to psyche you up as a good pep rally does before that big game.

Psychologists who have their own following have found a new venue to sell their wares promoting a new brand of popular spirituality.

There are good men who do preach the gospel but they are also lending their names.

All caution seems to have been thrown to the wind. Across denominational lines, men are marching in step. Those with political motivations will not be far behind in setting up their strategies using this broad base of support. Already, James Dobson of FOCUS ON THE FAMILY fame has

been one of the staunchest supporters of Promise Keepers. It is certainly no secret that he heads up a strong political action group vis-a-vis the Community Impact Committees which are active in over 1,000 churches in Michigan alone.

Promise Keepers is working towards taking a million men to Washington DC in 1997. One junior legislator at a press conference recently regaling the CONTRACT WITH AMERICA, made note of the fact that he was a Promise Keeper. Contract! Promises! To say Promise Keepers is not political is as naive as sending your teenagers to a co-ed slumber party. If these tremendous rallies were preaching repentance from sin, trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and faith toward God ALONE -- AMEN! Men would go back to their church and be disciplined by the leadership God has raised up in the local church. They would get into the Word and become a light in their community. It would be tremendous to hear messages from these meetings where the GOSPEL truly is preached. However, there seems to be something else at work here, a leaven that will eventually affect the whole loaf if there is not a warning (to the pastors, especially). Leaders! Mind the flock which the Lord has set you over!

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#### AN OPEN LETTER TO BILL McCARTNEY

Dear Mr McCartney,

My name is Bill Randles and I am the pastor of Believers in Grace Fellowship Church that I founded in 1982. I am writing to express certain reservations and concerns I have about PK.

The reason this is an open letter is because there are probably thousands of other pastors who have similar reservations. You know this also because you referred to this at a meeting in Detroit on April 29, 1995. In fact, I have listened to that message carefully, and heard you make some very emphatic statements about the reluctance on the part of pastors to ally themselves with Promise Keepers. You actually went so far as to say that any clergyman who isn't planning to go to your February 1996 Pastors' Gathering in Atlanta "needs to be able to tell us why he doesn't want to go." Mr. McCartney, this is my response to your brotherly challenge. I welcome the opportunity to tell you what my reservations and concerns about Promise Keepers actually are. First of all, however, in the interest of clarity, let me transcribe for you that portion of your speech which prompted the writing of this letter. You said in Detroit:

"We have a great army that we are assembling. They're the Christian men of this nation. However, our leadership, our clergy are not uniform. Our clergy are divided. Division is many visions. There's no unity of command...there is tremendous division in our clergy. We have to assume that responsibility. We have to say, 'Are we impacting our clergy in a way that's going to take them and make them all that they have to be in order to lead this army because the shepherds are the ones God's chosen to lead us out of here.' We are not to go out of here and lead ourselves. We're to go out of here and to go back to our bodies, our church bodies, and be led by our shepherd. God has hand-picked them, He's gifted them, He's trained them, He's invested in them, He's nurtured them. Now, I think many of you are in touch with the fact that we're having a pastors' gathering in Atlanta on February 12th, 13th and 14th. This gathering in Atlanta should exceed 100,000 clergymen. Why? Because we have many more than that, and every single one of them ought to be there. We can't have anybody pass up that meeting. If a guy says that he doesn't want to go, he needs to be

able to tell us why he doesn't want to go. Why wouldn't you want to be a part of what God wants to do with His hand-picked leaders? We need to understand that our clergymen, many of them, are reluctant to go. Many of you come from churches and your clergymen have never been to a Promise Keepers gathering because they're keeping a distance from us. You need to go back and tell them: Promise Keepers wants to come along side you and be everything you need by encouraging [your] men and giving resources. Now listen to me, men. February 12th, 13th and 14th to me is not a coincidence that it comes over Valentine's Day. I think we're going to have another St. Valentine's Day massacre. I think Almighty God is going to rip open the hearts of our leaders. I think He's going to tear them open. And I think he's going to put them back together again as one. One leadership. We've got to have one leadership, one leadership only" (Promise Keepers, Detroit Silver Dome, April 29, 1995).

## ONE LEADERSHIP

Mr. McCartney, my response to that is a simple question. What do you mean when you call for the clergy to become one leadership? In fact, minutes after, you made another statement about the things that we could do "if we are in control, if we come together, if our unity of command responds." You said we can accomplish things like "pay off the national debt, and feed the poor,...we can dissolve gangs,... and be an impact in the inner city."

These kinds of statements underscore my initial reservations. I am very cautious when the call is made for "One Leadership" and "Unity of Command." On the one hand, I am troubled by this because in actual reality, the church already is under one leadership. Jesus Christ is Himself the Head of the Church! If you and I each submit to His headship through obedience to His Word, we are already in unity and don't need to manufacture it. Evidently, what you are calling for is one (human) leadership and one unity of (human) command. Mr. McCartney, there already is an organization claiming that kind of leadership: the Roman Catholic Church under the headship of the Pope. Because of this "One human leadership and command," almost a billion people are locked in spiritual bondage.

The call for clergy to become one leadership and unity of command reminds me of the shepherding movement of the 1970s and 80s, which sprang out of the Word of God charismatic community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was nurtured by the Fort Lauderdale five: Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Don Basham, Charles Simpson and Ernie Baxter.

You mention in "Ashes to Glory", that you enjoyed fellowship with the Word of God Community. Have you perhaps been influenced by that particular vision of church government? I have a threefold problem with a humanly centralized church leadership, and unity of command:

- (1) it has to be a man-made unity, and it denies the reality of the unity of the Spirit that all Christians currently partake of;
- (2) it concentrates a tremendous amount of influence into the hands of well meaning but sinful men;
- (3) finally, where there is a centralized, carnally unified command, it makes it easier for deception and manipulation of the Church by Satan.

Look at the dark ages under the Papacy! I am glad that the church doesn't have that kind of unity today (yet). Ours is a spiritual unity based on devotion to Jesus, not a political unity based on "Shepherding" principles. The way things are now, Satan has to deceive the Christians one church at a time, but under a "unified command," all he has to do is deceive the leadership.

## ECUMENISM

Mr. McCartney, a second but closely related concern I have is with the ecumenical unity promoted by P.K. Of course, I believe in the true ecumenism: the communion of all true saints everywhere on earth, based on the truth of the gospel. But I am extremely wary of the "unity-at-the-expense-of-truth" movement. People are being encouraged to de-emphasize doctrines so they can come together as though doctrine is a meaningless detail. What is doctrine, but the body of the truth entrusted to the saints once and for all? Doctrine divides because truth divides. There are many denominational barriers that should be kept in place. The whole basis for unity is the unity of the faith (truth), a faith which has a content and makes specific demands of people. Any other basis for unity, such as maleness, politics, social concerns, etc, will only prove to be a house built on sand.

Mr. McCartney, do you believe the following statement made by the Pope? "On this universal level, if victory comes, it will be brought by Mary. Christ will conquer through her, because He wants the church's victories now and in the future, to be linked to her" (John Paul II, from "Crossing the Threshold of Hope"). How am I to find common ground with anyone who believes this way? What basis for fellowship is there? Scripture commands us not to fellowship or even wish Godspeed to those who deny the doctrine of Christ. Another example would be this statement from the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church, page 128, section 460: "The Word became flesh to make us partakers of the divine nature..... For The Son of God became man so that we might become God. The only begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in His divinity, assumed our nature so that He, made man, might make men Gods."

Mr. McCartney, we are to refute such heresies! How am I to find spiritual unity with people who worship Mary or believe they will become gods? While I can find all sorts of commonalities on the basis of being a human being, or the desire that a man be a better father, husband, have integrity, purity, etc., I would hardly mistake those things for Christian Revival. If P.K. is supposed to be a great move of God, doesn't truth and discernment count for anything? What is to stop the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses from starting P.K. chapters in their denominations? Why not? They can make identical promises.

## JAY GARY AND THE STAR OF 2000

Mr. McCartney, is Promise Keepers going to be used to mobilize worldwide support for a bimillennial celebration of Jesus' 2000th birthday and Jubilee? The reason I ask is because of the favorable review in the July/Aug 1995 New Man magazine (the official P.K. magazine) of Jay Gary's book, The Star of 2000. Gary's self-published book advocates such a celebration.

Are you aware, Mr. McCartney, that in a recent Spiritual Counterfeits Project article entitled, "Sign of the Times: Evangelicals and New Agers Together," Mr. Gary is the subject of much concern? Of particular concern is his recent association with former assistant secretary general of the UN and well known New Age author, Robert Muller, who wrote "New Genesis: Shaping a Global

Spirituality".

This book amounts to a call for all religions to find common ground and work together for a one-world religion. This S.C.P. article should sober anyone who is taking Mr. Gary and his plans for a bimillennial birthday celebration for Jesus seriously. The article states that Gary invited Robert Muller to be a key adviser for his B.E.G.I.N. organization (Bimillennial Global Interactive Network).

In Gary's book, "The Star of 2000", he cites a book by Muller called "First Lady of The World" in which Muller describes how the UN could prepare for the bimillennial celebration. In a March/April 1992 publication of Gary's Bimillennial Research Report, another of Muller's books, *The Birth of A Global Civilization*, is recommended. Gary describes it as an "inspiring look at our emerging global system, including new global human rights, global networking, global core curriculum and global celebrations culminating in the year 2000." Just a paragraph at the end of this recommended book will give you an idea where Muller comes from:

And God saw that all nations of the earth, black and white, poor and rich, from North and South, from East and West and of all creeds were sending their emissaries to a tall glass house on the shores of the river of the rising sun on the island of Manhattan, to study together, to think together, and to care together for the world and all its people. And God said that is good. And it was the first day of the NEW AGE of the earth" (Robert Muller, *The Birth of a Global Civilization*, p. 134; CAPS OURS).

Mr. McCartney, all I have to go by is what P.K. actually says or does. As far as I know, when "New Man", the official voice of P.K., favorably reviews Jay Gary's book, they are indirectly promoting him and his ideas. Again I ask, is P.K. going to be used to mobilize worldwide support for a bimillennial celebration of Jesus' Birthday in the year 2000, a celebration already intertwined with the New Age movement?

I would like to know why, Mr. Mc Cartney, when you had 50,000 turned on, pumped up, spiritually hungry men, of all the books you could have chosen to offer for spiritual growth you chose "The Masculine Journey" by Robert Hicks? It is my understanding that 50,000 of these books were distributed at Boulder in 1993. The book actually has the P.K. imprimatur on it. Do you honestly subscribe to Hick's concept of the Phallic Male? Doesn't it bother you that Hicks quotes New Age authors Sam Keen and Robert Bly without any warning? Hicks sets off his chapter entitled "The Phallic Male" with a quote from Keen's New Age bestseller "Fire in the Belly". The quote is "The loins are the place of judgment" (p.47). Are you trying yet to implement Hick's statement on page 51: "We are called to worship God as phallic kinds of guys, not as some sort of androgynous, neutered non-males, or the feminized males so popular in many feminist enlightened churches. We are told by God to worship Him in accordance to what we are - phallic men."

This is growth for men? When did the apostles even remotely encourage anything like this? I could give you countless other examples of this kind out of Hicks book but I don't need to. What were you thinking this book would offer when you promoted it? Was there some particular emphasis in this book that you thought would help men spiritually? Maybe you see the need for initiation rites as Hicks advocates in his accompanying workbook under the section, "Exploring the Issues with other Men":

"Our culture has presented many initiation rites or passages to manhood that are associated with the phallus. Which ones have you experienced? Do you have a story to share with other men about one such event?"

Do you lament, as Hicks does, that the church doesn't offer any alternative initiation rites, such as circumcision? In his "Masculine Journey", which P.K. promotes, Hicks teaches us that somehow or other we should celebrate the different passages of a young man's life - such as his first drug or sexual experience (p. 177):

"I'm sure many would balk at my thought of celebrating the experience of sin. I'm not sure how we could do it. But I do know we need to do it. For example, we usually give the teenagers in our churches such a massive dose of condemnation regarding their first experiences with sin that I sometimes wonder how any of them recover. Maybe we could take a different approach. Instead of jumping all over them when they have their first experience with sex or drugs, we could look upon this as a teachable moment and a rite of passage. Is this putting a benediction on sin? Of course not, but perhaps at this point the true elders could come forward and confess their own adolescent sins and congratulate the next generation for being human. Then they could move on to all the important issues of forgiveness and restoration, but this time on common ground, with the young person as a fellow sinner!"

Mr. McCartney, do you believe in this kind of celebration? If not, why promote it? At the end of "The Masculine Journey" there's a P.K. promotion that states, "P.K. wants to provide men's materials (like this book)." And you wonder why pastors are reluctant to let you 'help them'?

#### JAMES RYLE AND THE VINEYARD

Frankly, Mr. McCartney, another huge reservation that I am having with P.K. is the fact that James Ryle, a man who claims that God told him the Beatles were anointed to bring forth a worldwide revival and 'usher in my (God's) spirit,' is your pastor and mentor. According to Ryle, it wasn't until 1970 that God removed his anointing from the Beatles. (Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was anointed by God? 1970 was the year the Beatles broke up!). I am leary of a 'prophet' who discerns the demonic as anointed. Let's face it, although P.K. is rapidly growing and attracting an increasingly diverse portion of the Church, it is primarily led by Vineyardites. The 'Prophet' Ryle is on the board of directors, Randy Phillips is the president, and you go to Ryle's church (You told us to explain why I won't attend the Saint Valentines Day Massacre). I need to tell you I have great reservations about the Vineyard movement. Your Pastor and mentor is one example, with his unscriptural prophecies.

There are, no doubt, many fine Christians in the movement who want nothing more than the fulfillment of the Great Commission. But we have to remember that it was the Vineyard movement who by and large promoted the Kansas City prophets and have kept them in circulation to this day. The mystical "Toronto Blessing" is primarily a Vineyard phenomena although there are many Vineyard congregations who don't claim it. What makes P.K. different from the other Vineyard ventures? Mr. McCartney, do you believe in the validity of this "Laughing Revival?" Can a fountain bring forth both sweet and bitter water?

#### WHY NOT MEN OF DISCERNMENT?

I applaud your many charges for men to become "men of integrity," "family men", "men of purity" and so forth, but I notice that there isn't that much of a call for men to be men of discernment. If you truly want to know where many of us pastors are coming from, I'll tell you. A lot of us don't see the lack of physical unity nor lack of social action, nor lack of signs and wonders, as the true challenge of the last days church. According to II Thess. 2, the ultimate issue facing us is "will we love the truth, more than the lie, in the face of a false 'revival' of lying signs and wonders?" This is why many of us are seeing truth as the ultimate issue, not tolerance.

Of course, I love all Catholics, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. All of these "name the name of Jesus"! But almost all of them worship a different Jesus. I can't claim most of the above as brothers in Christ. If a Mormon keeps all seven of your promises that could well make him a moral person, but that moral Mormon will go right to Hell. Why? Because in spite of his morality, unity, good fathering skills, marital fidelity, he's still doomed because he doesn't believe the testimony God gave of His Son. What I am saying is this: What a person believes shouldn't be downplayed as insignificant. We should rather preach the Word of God without compromise, no matter how much it divides.

#### SEEMS LIKE A BROAD WAY

"Broad is the road that leads to destruction."

Finally Mr. McCartney, I am wary of P.K. because it seems to be such a broad, inclusive way. Catholics, Mormons, and even homosexuals are encouraged to be "included and welcomed in all our events." There are common denominators that anyone can stress that almost every human being can admit to. But when the true God-ordained organization, the Church, upholds the Word of God, it divides people either onto the broad way that leads to destruction or the narrow way that leads to life. A tell-tale sign that there is something wrong is the press being given to Promise Keepers by the worldly media. Why is the world promoting your organization when Jesus said the world would hate us as it hated Him? God has an organism already, the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the world rejects it. God's work is not based on being male or female, Jew nor Greek nor bond or free. Whosoever will, may come. These are just a few of my concerns about P.K.. May the Lord inspire a healthy dialogue on this subject.

(PS: Thank you, Mr McCartney, for speaking out for the unborn!)

Bill Randles,

Pastor

## "Mainstream" Spring 1996 Part 3 - Promise Keepers in the UK

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### PROMISE KEEPERS UPDATE

It's Coming Our Way!

The Promise Keepers Men's Movement that has taken America by storm is about to be launched in the UK, if East Anglican Minister Tom Chipper fulfills his vision.

He says that God "led him on a journey", each part of which "pointed directly to Promise Keepers". At the end of that journey, Chipper contacted the American leaders of PK with regard to introducing the Movement over here.

Tom Chipper, of High Street Baptist Church, Isleham, Ely, is an influential leader who networks with many churches in his area. He says that he is "at present contacting national leaders from across the board, out of which a team will be gathered together" to float the start of PK. He adds that EA and CARE are "very much in the front line" with the launch of PK in this country.

### WHAT IS PROMISE KEEPERS?

Anyone unfamiliar with Promise Keepers should read the Autumn/Winter edition of "Mainstream" which exposed the Movement's connections to the Kansas City Prophets and its use of "mentoring" and initiation rituals, amongst other things.

However, as so often with powerful new movements, proponents will ignore the problems and point only to the "good" achieved as men attempt to become better husbands and church members by making seven vows before their peers.

No matter how innocent are the aims of those who join PK, it cannot be doubted that the Movement brings under the control of a few leaders the aspirations and energies of thousands of needy and compliant men. We have to wait and see what is moulded from this material and whether this gigantic pool of testosterone is really used for God.

The PK rallies themselves are not the real problem; these stay pretty free from anything that would trigger dispute. It is the follow-up, mentoring, and the Ambassador levels of discipleship that are alarming. The stated purpose is to have a Promise Keepers "Point Man" in every congregation in America in the next two years. This will enable them to disseminate their training materials, methods and philosophy into the entire church family. Under the guise of "coming alongside" the churches and pastors to "help" formulate men's ministry, they are actually planning to infiltrate the churches in order to recruit men to PK, and to involve them in what is called "shepherding", or as they call it, "mentoring". (See footnote)

["Point Men" are the primary contacts with the churches and are responsible for training and organising promotions of PK conferences . "Ambassadors" introduce PK to the community churches, and recruit the Point Men.]

## EXALTING THE CLERGY

Many of us are completely committed to the Bible's teaching on the priesthood of all believers. The artificial division between "clergy" and "lay-people" so beloved of the Roman church and its offshoots is just not found in scripture. If the concept of priesthood were to be injected into the main artery of the Body of Christ, then the old sickness of servile obedience to a remote and elitist priestclass would be re-established very quickly.

It would bring with it a renaissance of gnostic thought, in which understanding is restricted to an elite band of illuminati who have proved their loyalty through initiation, while the masses of unlearned peasantry sit at their feet snatching at the crumbs of their wisdom.

Unfortunately, there is a distinct undercurrent of this thinking in PK circles.

Bill McCartney [PK Founder] has said that a pastor "rightly divides the word of God and only our clergy are gifted by God to do that." ["The Grant Connection" radio broadcast, Denver, Jan 11, 1996.]

In a magazine interview, Bill McCartney was asked: "Why have you made support for pastors one of the seven promises of Promise Keepers? 'Support your pastor' doesn't seem like an obvious part of a movement for men". He replied:

"We believe in the vehicle that God is going to use to restore our land and to bring our people together: the church. The pastor is the shepherd that God has invested in. Pastors are the men of learning, the men of understanding. They have greater gifts."

Interviewer: "Have you sensed among lay people, men in particular, a dis-respect for pastors?"

McCartney: "It's more of an indifference... It's because our men are uneducated, and our minds are dulled. They don't understand that when they meet a pastor, they've come into the presence of royalty."

"What has started [in Promise Keepers] is a process to educate men how to come alongside their pastors... This is going to accelerate, to gain momentum to the point where pastors regain their rightful stature in the church, in the community, in the marketplace." [1995 Leadership Journal, Christianity Today, Inc.]

But what, according to the Bible, really is the "rightful place" of the elders of the Church of Christ? Should they be like the Jewish elders - "which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the upper-most rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers" (Mark 12:38-40)

Or should they be humble servants of the Church as Jesus Christ said:

"Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many". (Mark 10:42-45)

PK seems to be educating pastors to make much of themselves, to seek honour from their congregations and to believe that they are a cut above the common herd.

Now a massive meeting just for male clergy is being planned in Atlanta by the PK leadership. They hope to fill the Georgia Dome with 70,000 pastors on February 13-15, 1996, making the "the largest gathering of ministers in the history of Christianity".

When interviewed by "Leadership" magazine, Dale Schlafer, Vice-President of pastoral ministries for Promise Keepers was asked "Why are you planning a conference for male clergy?"

Schlafer replied that:

"History has shown that clergy-led revivals have a longer impact than lay-led revivals. Understanding that, we hope the Holy Spirit will move at the clergy conference--across denominational traditions and ethnic traditions--and bring 70,000 ministers together. We hope to see pastors go back to their churches revived and praying that God will revive their churches and bring the lost in their communities to Christ."

"If this event in Atlanta is catalytic, if we look back years from now and say this event was a major turning point in the Church of Jesus Christ to bring revival, it will have been worth it."

On the subject of follow-up to the conference, Schlafer said

"One of our aims is to have hundreds of pastors' groups around the country within months after this event. We see men coming together out of this common experience and giving each other support. God wants men from churches praying together across ethnic and denominational lines".

#### JOEL'S ARMY

Bill McCartney is reported as saying,

"We have a great army that we're assembling. They're the Christian men of this nation. However, our leadership, our clergy, are not uniform. Our clergy are divided... There's no unity of command... there is tremendous division in our clergy... One leadership. We've got to have one leadership, one leadership only. We've got to have everybody hitting on all cylinders.

What is this "great army" that Bill McCartney is assembling under its "one leadership"? Could it be the "Joel's Army" prophesied by the Kansas City Prophets and others - the invincible army that will bring world wide revival in the endtimes?

Recently Paul Cain shared a dream he'd received when he was 19 years old:

"I had a dream that became a recurring dream, and it was about all the stadiums... and I saw these stadiums and football fields, soccer fields and sports arenas, all of them filled with thousands of people, sometimes over 100,000 in each place" [Paul Cain, at Christ Chapel, Florence, Alabama, August 30, 1995]

Now Cain is definitely connecting his prediction to Promise Keepers, who regularly meet in sports arenas:

"I want to just stand up somewhere in one of these stadiums and say, 'See, I told you so... And I know the Lord is coming to His Church and he's going to prepare us... I don't make any apologies for believing such an outlandish thing. I really don't, and I'm not embarrassed by it... Who would think that there would be a group like Promise Keepers who'd already be setting the stage and filling stadiums with tens of thousands of people - they'll be over 100,000 in no time... So, what if God shows up at just one of those meetings? That could just be the kick-off for 'last day ministry'. Think about that. If 150,000 people get together in one place, like on the day of Pentecost... What if 120,000 get together and then the fire comes from heaven and the glory of God..." [Paul Cain, at Christ Chapel, Florence, Alabama, August 30, 1995]

Cain was possibly referring to the 100,000 pastors expected at the February Promise Keepers meeting in Atlanta, or possibly to the PK goal of a stadium-full in each of the fifty states in the year 2000. Notice that Cain believes the Church will be dramatically filled with the Glory of God before Jesus returns.

"I want you to know he's coming TO the Church BEFORE he comes FOR the Church. He's gonna perfect the Church so the Church can be the Image, BE HIM, and be his representation." [Grace Ministries tape, Nov 1988 "My Father's House" by Paul Cain]

Paul Cain has taught that this Army now in formation is the Manchild of Revelation 12:5, as well as: "The overcomers, (Rev. 2 and 3). The 144,000 servants, (Revelation 7:3), the revelation of the Lamb's wife, (Revelation 19:7 and 21:9), the white horse, (Revelation 6:2), the first-fruits, (Revelation 14:4), the precious fruits, (James 5:7), the wise virgins, (Matthew 25:1-13), and the manifested sons of God, (Romans 8:19-23)".

#### JAMES RYLE PREDICTS AN ARMY AND A WAR

Along with Bill McCartney, Pastor James Ryle founded PK in 1990, and presently sits on its Board of Directors. He also pastors the Boulder Valley Vineyard in Colorado, and has ministered with John Wimber and Paul Cain. James Ryle answered in the affirmative when asked whether Promise Keepers could be fulfilling the prophecy in Joel of raising an army. Ryle's reply was, "Yes, 300,000 men have come together so far this year under Promise Keepers... Never in history have 300,000 men come together except to go to war. These men are gathered for war." [As reported in "Discernment" newsletter, Jewel van der Merwe, September/October 1994, p. 7]

Talk of armies and war suggests an aggressive methodology that sits ill with the biblical Gospel. And just who is the enemy? Clues can be found in statements by Ryle and others, including the Toronto leadership. Predictions of a bloody civil war within the Church have been made as early as 1984. One such prophecy concerned a division or civil war within the Body of Christ between the "Blues" and the "Greys", and this was repeated and emphasised by Wes Campbell at Toronto. He said:

"In 1984 [Bob Jones had a vision] about the Church. And the Church was gathered in a large civil war-type big stately mansion, a big ballroom, and they were dancing. And they were dressed in colorful clothes and happy, and they were moving and they were laughing and they were dancing and they were just having the wonderful party of their life. And he looked at that and Bob began to laugh and he said 'Look at them dance, look at them have fun'.

"And an angel came and said, 'Wait. Not yet.' And then what happened is that strangely in the ballroom, the crowd began to change, and they began to take sides, and they began to have blue coats and gray coats, and in a moment civil war broke out. A bloody civil war broke out.

"James Ryle has had a similar vision. The Lord even showed him how the blue coats stand for the revelatory, the revelation, and the gray for gray matter, man's wisdom.

"And in this context the North [blue coats] fought the South [grey coats] and the South fought the North, and the South wanted to keep the people enslaved. They wanted their money. They wanted their bodies. They wanted their personhood to keep the system going. And the North said No! Freedom! Freedom! And they went into a terrible fight, and it was father against son, brother against brother, and a man's enemies were in his own house".[Excerpts from audiotape, Airport Vineyard, Toronto Friday, October 14, 1994 Speaker: Wes Campbell]

## THE TIME, THE PLACE

Rick Joyner also predicted, in 1992, an intense spiritual battle that would defeat the South as in the American civil war. He added two details - the time and the place! He said that "Atlanta in 1996 will be one of the greatest opportunities the church has had to engage and breakthrough some of the enemy's most powerful strongholds." He wrote:

"During the American Civil War it was prophetically spoken that 'the battle for Atlanta will decide the fate of the South.' This prophecy proved to be true. There were many more spectacular battles during the war, but possibly none that proved more strategic in deciding the war... The spiritual battle for Atlanta will be of the same kind of strategic significance."

"It is no accident that the Olympics are coming to Atlanta in 1996. Just as the Olympics represent the contest of the best athletes, or physical forces from all nations, cultures and races, what will be taking place in the physical will just be a reflection of what will be happening in the spiritual realm. The cultural and spiritual forces of the world are being assembled in Atlanta for one of the ultimate spiritual conflicts." [Rick Joyner, "Battlefields Of The Nineties" in Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin of September 1st 1992]

Although Rick Joyner when he wrote these words presumably did not know of the Promise Keepers' clergy gathering, his predictions will have added to the conviction of the PK leadership that 1996 in Atlanta was the right choice for their venue.

## RYLE'S TORONTO CONNECTIONS

Although there is not (yet) any overt attempt to introduce the Toronto Blessing at PK rallies, the PK leadership is nonetheless intimately involved in the Renewal movement.

One example of the cross-over between PK and TB was found at the Mott Auditorium, (Vineyard Pasadena CA, which is on record with children seeing angels, prophesying, having visions, and more). During the five days of the "Healing & Revival Conference", James Ryle and Randy Clark (who brought the TB to the Toronto Airport) both ministered, and John Arnott visited shortly afterwards.

One report was as follows:

At the Pasadena Church, James Ryle, chaplain of the University of Colorado football team, is telling the congregation how Jesus freed him from his own demons - growing up in an orphanage and serving jail time for selling drugs.

He tells many jokes about missing his middle finger, lost to a lawn mower. There are waves of tear-wiping laughter. Ryle makes sound effects, including some animal noises. He snaps his fingers, bangs the podium, paces and tells how God will appear here in suit of fire, oil, water. "You will feel! And the glory of the Lord will put you down!" ["A Rush of Ecstasy and Alarm" by Carol McGraw, Orange County Register, Washington Post 18/11/95]

#### HOW THE TEACHINGS SPREAD

James Ryle is Bill McCartney's Pastor. When asked: "How would you describe your relationship with your pastor" McCartney replied: "He's a mentor to me. He's taken me under his wing. Every time I have a question that confuses me, I call him." [Bill McCartney interviewed in Leadership Journal.]

It will perhaps be apparent now that "mentoring", given the background, beliefs and teachings of mentors like James Ryle, is leading to the infiltration of aberrant thoughts, false prophecies and even heresies from the top downwards. There is an overlap of thinking running throughout the Toronto, Kansas City Prophets and Promise Keepers organisations [and many other similar ones] that cannot be explained otherwise.

Taken singly, each movement appears to have its good side. Taken together, we have a combination of forces and influences that are bending the worldwide Church like a tree in the wind. They are all adding their own bit of pressure, all bending in the same direction - a global "kingdom" ruled by a bunch of despots! They all use the same tactics - the carrot and the stick: fun and friendship plus shepherding to keep the troops in line. It is a formula that has worked well before, and it will continue to work very well so long as Christians exhibit a group mentality and refuse to think for themselves. Authoritarian leadership in the Church could never succeed except for Christians who want to be led! Hero worship is a snare from which few will escape.

I have no doubt that Promise Keepers, if and when it appears in the UK, will be eagerly promoted by those whose interests lie in the area of power and influence, and who value quantity more than quality. I also (sadly) predict that many fine Christian men will be drawn or pushed into supporting PK.

As always, we are called upon to sound a warning note, and to try to alert believers to the dangers before it is too late. May God give discernment to all who pray about their involvement in PK.

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#### Footnote: MENTORING

##### All Part of The Plan?

The term mentoring refers to the Greek legendary figure, Mentor who was the faithful friend and advisor of Odysseus (also called Ulysses) the hero of the Trojan wars. The conclusion of his story (The Odyssey by Homer) is interesting in the light of the aims of such organisations as Promise

Keepers, AD2000 and the Restoration Movement in general.

It is an allegory of the battle for the kingdom, for the hero Odysseus returns to his own land, reveals himself to his faithful waiting Bride, and kills those who had been trying to seduce her. But it is only by the help of Mentor that peace and reconciliation finally come to the land. And not only Mentor, but by Athena, the goddess of wisdom and peace who takes the form of Mentor to bring civil war between Odysseus and his wife's suitors to an end.

On hearing of the strife, Athena asks her father Zeus whether he intends a war on earth. Zeus permits them to make a "treaty of peace to establish Odysseus as king in perpetuity...let the mutual goodwill of the old days be restored and let peace and plenty prevail". Thus encouraged, Athena takes the form of Mentor and commands an end to war.

Is this just coincidence? Or maybe the promoters of "goodwill" and peace" have deliberately decided that Mentoring is the path to reconciliation between nations. It is all part of The Plan!

## Rodney Howard Browne, a critical examination

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A Critical Examination of his Theology and Practice

By Stephen Sizer

Rodney Howard-Browne has been invited by some of the larger Charismatic churches in London to minister at an event called "Signs and Wonders 95" at Olympia.

Given his status as the "Controversial figure behind the Toronto Blessing" (Alpha, December 1994, p.3), it is important to examine his approach to ministry and theological understanding of this phenomena. There we find many disturbing parallels with other heretical "word-faith" teachers.

The following is an assessment of Rodney Howard-Browne's ministry based on an interview with him contained in Charisma Magazine in August 1994. The conclusions drawn are substantiated from material taken from videos of his ministry at Woodgate Church in Birmingham, England, in June 1994, and Kenneth Copeland's church in August 1994.

Rodney Howard-Browne claims to be the "Holy Ghost bar-tender", the man through whom God has been bringing an end-time revival to many parts of the world since 1989. He is also attributed to be the source of what has come to be known as the "Toronto Blessing".

### A DENIAL OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Howard-Browne clearly assumes he has the kind of relationship with God which enables him to order God about. Describing his "spiritual crisis" in 1979 he prayed, "Either You come down here or I will come up there and touch you." Suddenly he claims "his whole body felt like it was on fire. He began to laugh uncontrollably...I was plugged into heaven's electric supply, and since then my desire has been to go and plug other people in."

"Either you come down here or..." is certainly not the way the Bible instructs us to speak to the Lord God Almighty. In 1989 when he began his ministry in America, people began to fall out of their seats, laughing and crying. "The noise got so loud that Howard-Browne had to interrupt his sermon. "Lord, You're ruining my meeting," the evangelist complained. He says God replied: "The way your meetings have been going lately, they deserve to be ruined. I will move all the time if you allow Me to move."

So Howard-Browne believes his god is not only subservient but also dependent on him "if you allow me to move." This is not the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible.

### A DENIGRATION OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Howard-Browne claims to have tapped into "heaven's electric supply" and has apparently "amazed long-time renewal leaders with his knack for dispensing the Spirit's power." He understands his ministry as that of a "bartender" who acts as a "spiritual conduit" in which the presence of the Holy Spirit is defined in terms of a "high-voltage" power current. Such irreverent

language is distinctly contrary to the way Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit working through someone.

The article further claims that Howard-Browne's view of spiritual power is similar to certain 1940's preachers such as Norman Vincent Peale and Peter Marshall, who taught that Christians can tap into the Holy Spirit's anointing like a divine current." This view of the Holy Spirit as a "great power" appears remarkably similar to that of Simon Magus the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-25). These "power encounters" of Howard-Browne cause people to shake, fall at his feet and convulse in uncontrollable laughter. "Many people lie on the floor giggling, sometimes for hours after he has touched them on the forehead. Some of them stumble out of their church hours later, as if intoxicated."

In contrast the Scriptures teach that one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence is self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), something distinctly lacking in Howard-Browne's ministry.

#### A DISREGARD FOR THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

In what is a lengthy and detailed six page assessment of Howard-Browne's ministry there is only one reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is in the context of the claim that "He committed his life to Christ at age 5". In contrast there are eleven references to the Holy Spirit, and frequent mention of "revival" and "healing" .

For someone who claims to be an evangelist (that is who proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ), such an imbalance is disturbing when the express purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was to "glorify Christ" and make him known. (John 16:14; Acts 1:8). This however does not appear to be the emphasis of Howard-Browne's "evangelistic" ministry.

#### A LACK OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

Howard-Browne claims that "the proof that this is a move of God is that when I leave, it doesn't stop". He is merely the "Holy Ghost bartender. I just serve the new wine and invite them to drink." In fact all it "proves" is that there are spiritual forces at work.

Howard-Browne describes, for example, what happened at the Oral Roberts University. "One night I was preaching on hell and laughter just hit the whole place." "The more I told people what hell was like, the more they laughed...." Satan may laugh about hell, but not Jesus. The way Jesus spoke about hell was no laughing matter. There are several other references in the article to solemn liturgies and even sermons being "drowned out" by laughter, making "whatever is being said from the pulpit irrelevant." One advocate admitted that "laughter broke out during the consecratory prayer for the Eucharist (when we remember the body of Christ broken, and his blood shed), normally the most solemn part of the service." Are these the kind of things we should expect from a man who is full of the Holy Spirit, or an evil spirit?

#### THE DISPARAGEMENT OF THE MIND AND CRITICAL FACULTIES

He is also prone to criticise those who question his ministry. "Howard-Browne disparages those who try and apply a theological test to his methods." "You can't understand what God is doing in these meetings with an analytical mind," he says. "The only way you're going to understand what God is doing is with your heart." "Words have become meaningless in our society," he says,

"Signs and wonders are what must capture our attention."

This is in direct contradiction to what the Scriptures teach. For example,

"He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. (Matthew 12:39)

"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' " (Luke 16:31)

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders," (2 Thes. 2:9)

This uncritical attitude of Rodney Howard-Browne is very dangerous and opens believers to demonic deception. God tells us in the Scriptures very specifically to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1), to "accurately handle the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), to understand the will of God through the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2) and "refute" error (Titus 1:9).

#### THE ESPOUSAL OF THE "HEALTH AND WEALTH" ERROR

In 1987, when Howard-Browne went to America to continue his ministry he ran out of money and was confronted by a hotel manager who wanted payment for his room. Just in time a friend came to the rescue with an American Express card (the one with no limit). "From then on," Howard-Browne claims, "we've never known want." His over-confident attitude towards prosperity is right in line with the false "Health and Wealth" prosperity gospel.

#### IDENTIFICATION WITH FALSE TEACHERS

Howard-Browne was an associate pastor of Rhema church in Johannesburg, before moving to the United States in 1987, identifying with fellow Rhema Church leader, Kenneth Hagin, a person whose teaching has also been shown very clearly to be heretical (Hanegraaff :1993; Crenshaw: 1994). Oral Roberts is another "Word-Faith" teacher who espouses similar erroneous theological views.

Howard-Browne is happy however to identify with these people who rely on extra-biblical revelations, and distort the plain teaching of Scripture. For example, Oral Roberts has, according to Duin's article, "proclaimed that Howard-Browne's ministry signalled the arrival of "another level in the Holy Spirit." (p.24). One has to ask where in Scripture are we taught that there are "levels" in the Holy Spirit?

#### COMPARISONS WITH VODOO ACTIVITY

A number of video recordings of Rodney Howard-Browne's ministry have been circulating in Britain. These have caused a good deal of controversy and serious accusations have been made comparing his ministry with voodoo.

"Howard-Browne then began to work on the whole audience, rhythmically pacing up and down in front of the stage, using a strange tongue which was never interpreted. This gradually became a

mantra which climaxed in a piercing high-pitched sound which he held for a long time. Watching the video with me was an African pastor and a former missionary. Both immediately said they recognised this as identical with the voodoo call used by witch doctors in summoning up the demons." (Clifford Hill PWM Team Ministries Newsletter, 28 November 1994)

Danny Aguirre, and Warren Smith, writing in the Spiritual Counterfeits Project journal, SCP Newsletter (Fall 1994, Volume 19:2, p.14), make similar comparisons with phenomena associated with Ramakrishna, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, African Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari and Qigong - ancient Chinese practices.

"Indian Guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was affectionately known by his followers as the "divine drunkard" because he was reputed to have drunk so deeply from the well of the "Divine". As a former follower of Rajneesh I met hundreds of Sannyasins who had flown to India "to drink" from "Bhagwan's wine." When followers were physically touched by Rajneesh, or even if they were merely in his presence, they would often experience feelings of great exhilaration and joy. Disciples of Swami Baba Muktanada would often manifest uncontrollable laughter after receiving Shaktipat (physical contact) from the guru. (p.13)

#### EVIDENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION

Dr Gaius Davies is a Christian and consultant psychiatrist at King's College Hospital, London. He was interviewed at the Carey Minister's Conference in January 1995, following the showing of part of a video of Rodney Howard-Browne's ministry. The substance of his clinical assessment of the video and of the "Toronto Blessing" were published in Reformation Today, (March/April 1995). In that interview, Dr Davies claimed,

"The video shows classic manipulation of the audience, just as at Nuremberg....The audience is repeatedly urged to suspend critical faculties and be open and receptive to a "blessing" . Meanwhile the audience itself is shouting and laughing and crying out for more. This is epidemic hysteria....This can be explained in purely psychological terms. There is no need to invoke the supernatural....The leaders are wicked men to abuse power in this way. The clearest signs of drunkenness in these meetings are that the leaders are drunk with power. There is no sign or care or concern for the people.....At HTB (Holy Trinity, Brompton) I saw individuals with a "pill rolling" action of their hands and others with serious psychological problems. These people were not being helped...They had come with real needs, but were just being manipulated." (pp.13-15)

#### CONCLUSIONS

Howard-Browne through his teaching, brazenly denies the sovereignty of God, denigrates the Holy Spirit, disregards the centrality of the Person of Jesus Christ, despises the use of the mind, and identifies with false teachers. This convinces me that the source of his ministry and the manifestations associated with it are not the work of the Holy Spirit, but some other spirit.

Why then do such people as Rodney Howard-Browne gain such a following? John F. MacArthur has said, in the foreword to Crenshaw's, Man as God: The Word of Faith Movement.

"They do it by intimidation, trickery, lies and most powerfully of all, teaching that appeals to the common lusts of humanity. After all, who would not like to believe that health, money, affluence, and success are ours for the claiming? In a culture that is selfish, materialistic, and proud, the

Health and Wealth message is bound to be popular. People with itching ears heap to themselves teachers who make the promises they want to hear. Meanwhile, the tolerance for sound doctrine is dangerously low."

What are the "signs" of the authentic ministry of the Holy Spirit which should guide us in interpreting the "Toronto Blessing"?

"When the Holy Spirit comes to sinful men, he initially brings sorrow. ..There is much more to spirituality than a lifting of the spirits, an entering into the exuberant life, and in extending one's succession of thrilling experiences. Yet in many of the popular neo-Pentecostal societies you will look in vain for anything else. No one who has God's Spirit can walk through our world without deep groanings of sorrow and distress. When the stench of immorality fills his nostrils, the Spirit-filled man cannot be happy, happy, all the day....If the Spirit were to come powerfully [today] it would not be to make men clap their hands for joy but to make them smite their breasts in sorrow....He is not the "Jolly Spirit" but the Holy Spirit." (Chantry. 99-101)

Stephen Sizer

21 November 1995

## Shaken and Stirred - roughed up at RHB meeting

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Shortly after the laughing revival hit the UK, this group of Christians decided to warn others who were, unsuspecting, travelling long distances to attend meetings put on by Rodney Howard Browne and other proponents of the "revival". This is their testimony. It was written on 2nd June 1995.

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Here is our account of the meetings we attended with RHB; Elim at Prestatyn, and David Carr/Randy Clark at Solihull Conference Centre.

As agreed beforehand, we ventured to the Aston Villa Leisure Centre on Friday April 21st, to give out anti-Toronto leaflets - ones we'd photocopied from the Bournemouth Branch of the Adullam Register.

On arrival we were "greeted" by Media Ministries people (Mike Price - Harbourne, Birmingham) as stewards, or more correctly, henchman (as it turned out). They appeared not too pleased to see us there handing out anti-TE leaflets. Having confirmed with the local police as to our rights, we proceeded to hand out leaflets to the drivers or passengers of the cars as they approached the entrance.

We were then moved upon by the stewards, sometimes acting with physical force, to restrain us from giving out the leaflets. At one point, one of our team was set upon, grabbed by the collar of his shirt and told that, if the steward knew where he lived he would throw a brick through his windows. One of our ladies stepped in to prevent any further aggression, only to find this same steward telling her he would not hesitate to hit her, or any of us, given the chance.(The steward in question belonged to the RHB ministries).

The stewards got quite uptight at our being there, and told us to leave, or they would call the police. They then did this, only to find that the police told both parties they would be arrested should a breach of the peace occur. The police confirmed our right to be there and to hand out literature. At this, the stewards backed down.

The next day we again arrived for the evening meeting, to find the stewards less aggressive. However at one point, a vehicle drove into the Leisure Centre recklessly and nearly knocked one of us down. On the whole, we handed out quite a lot of tracts and had some replies sent to our Box Number.

### PRESTATYN

Following this meeting, we discussed going to Prestatyn. It was suggested we use posters with scriptures on, and stand at one entrance giving out leaflets. On the Friday prior to the opening day of the Conference, our Pastor received a phone call from Wynne Lewis (Elim Superintendent) and he asked to arrange a meeting. He agreed to do this and said he would therefore have to "veto"

the arranged Conference protest, but would attend the Randy Clark meeting in Solihull, Birmingham on Saturday May 27th.

We felt it necessary to go to Prestatyn anyway, to give out the leaflets, as we were concerned about the people attending the conference being sucked into the deception, knowing full well that Elim endorses this madness and that Wynne Lewis would not back down in dialogue with our Pastor.

The meetings taking place at the time were in the Ballroom and in a Marquee. Three of us went to the Ballroom, to find all the seats taken, and a lot of people sitting in the surrounding areas. We thought it best to look around outside as to where to place the leaflets.

After this, we returned to the Ballroom. By this time, the meeting was closing, and the usual "altar call" commenced. Standing fairly close to the front of the stage, but outside the official "area" we noticed a minister we recognised, David Carr of Solihull Renewal Centre. At first my colleague noticed him walking with a limp. This we put down to some accident. However, on closer inspection, as he got nearer to us, our worst fears were confirmed - he was "drunk in the spirit". As we had heard and seen so much of this, to see a minister we knew in this condition was a real sadness to our spirits. I could have cried for this man, who was once so used of God, seeing him stagger around helplessly - and to think he believes this "an anointing from God". Later we heard he rejoices in having a permanent "limp in the spirit".

In fact, it only confirmed to us how much we needed to get these leaflets into people's hands, to warn them of this delusion. After lunch, we set about our task. Four of us put leaflets under car windscreen wipers, whilst the other three put the leaflets in the bookshop.

Later, we found out we had been "rumbled" and overheard a security guard say "It's ----'s followers" (our Pastor!) Two of us were then told not to give out the leaflets, and we were asked to leave the campsite. Another two were also told the same thing.

The three remaining went straight to the people, and gave them out on a one-to-one basis. By now it was getting late, and we decided we'd done all we could, and so went to meet our colleagues at the other end of the conference car park. Yet again we were brought into conversation with some people, only to find that we were told we had no right behaving in this way - the Hotel for the Conference Executive was only fifty yards away, so it was Colin Dye and Wynne Lewis themselves in person, and a couple of security guards who came to tell us this.

Wynne Lewis told us we should have contacted them first for permission to give out the leaflets. This would have been a waste of time, as even they acknowledged they would not have given permission!

By this time, feelings were running high and Wynne Lewis was hot under the collar. He told us we had ten minutes to get off the campsite, and not to disrupt the Conference. One of my friends replied "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof..." to which Wynne Lewis replied, "not the Elim Conference ground!".

We then had eight minutes left, according to Wynne Lewis, to leave the car park. He told us that, should we try to come to the evening meeting, he - Wynne Lewis - would put an end to any "hanky panky". Just after this, a burly security guard passed a comment that should we turn up for the

evening meeting, we'd meet up with some people we would rather not meet! This was clearly a physical threat, by his attitude at the time.

## SOLIHULL

During various conversations, some people thought our leaflets were put out by Banner Ministries!! Since seeing you (Tricia) on Thursday night at Crich Baptist, we have been to the Solihull Conference Centre where David Carr of the Renewal Christian Centre held a meeting with Randy Clark speaking.

We arrived at 7.10pm on Saturday night and handed out leaflets to the people as they queued up to enter. After half an hour or so, people came out as there was no more room. The place holds up to 900 seated. Around 7.30 David Carr came out himself to speak to us. In fact, he had a confrontation with our Pastor and told him, that should he print anything further in his newsletter about him (Carr) that may prove derogatory, he would, unlike Wynne Lewis, have no hesitation in suing him.

One of our group quickly reminded him of the Corinthian church's attitude towards their brothers and sisters, where the scripture tells us not to take such action. He replied that we were the unrighteous ones, in giving out these leaflets, and we would be better off just praying for the people if we felt they were being deceived.

Eventually he returned to his meeting and we were left talking to people as we could. What amazed me was the ignorance in the Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical churches about the Word-Faith movement behind RHB and the TE.

On the Sunday, we arrived at 5.30pm to be confronted again by David Carr himself. By this time he was incensed that we were "acting unrighteously" by passing out literature outside his church. I commented that the plaque on the wall called it the "Solihull Conference Centre", and was not in fact "his Church" - but he said I was nit-picking.

Previous to this, I had unknowingly been talking to Randy Clark! He also told me that this is a move of God as stated in Acts 2, and people are drunk in the Spirit as they were then. He also said how God blessed them in Canada with the Missions. People are having more love for Jesus, a greater hunger for the Word, and a greater desire to witness to the lost. This "experience" is proof positive that it is a "move of God" as "by their fruit you shall know them".

One noticeable result (fruit) of people who have "got it", however, is that they are very arrogant, aggressive and rude towards you when you take them back to the Word and tell them they are being deceived, and tell them about the last days deception.

During the meeting itself on Monday night, we were told by people who "braved it" that David Carr wore black trousers, an open black shirt and a medallion! Later they danced the conga and had an erotic dancer on stage. And David Carr did his "John Travolta" impression. Randy Clark told people in order to receive the blessing all they had to do was not pray, as it hindered the blessing.

There is much more we could say but space prevents. One thing that does come to mind is that at Prestatyn we heard somebody from Wesley Owen Bookshops (national chain of Christian bookstores) greet a friend with the phrase "did you have a good laugh last night?" How sad to see

the flippancy of people in this delusion!

May the Lord bless you in keep you in his protection

Yours in Christ Jesus

J & Y J. Wallsall.

## "Mainstream" Summer 1994 (Part 1) - Is It Revival? (Rodney Howard Browne)

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### IS IT REVIVAL ?

Revival is breaking out at last - so they say. Whether or not you agree, depends on your belief system and gullibility. For example, the much-vaunted Hinkle event on the 9th of June passed without notice for some. For John Hinkle, however, there was ample confirmation that the spiritual veil that blinds people to the gospel has been ripped apart, as promised.

How could he tell? Clearly not by the dramatic descent of "the glory" as he had predicted, but by an outbreak of what he calls "a new spirit and presence" filling many churches that have contacted him. In a letter to his supporters at TBN, (Trinity Broadcasting Network, USA - Paul and Jan Crouch) Hinkle says that "the world has received a new baptism of love". What he describes may be wishful thinking, or it may be true. If the latter, then it gives great cause for concern. (See my front-page article, Spring issue of Mainstream.)

Taken in isolation, the Hinkle event could be dismissed as yet another fiasco on the fringes of the Pentecostal fraternity. However, there are now clear signs that an outpouring of spiritual power IS taking place!

**\*\*FOR NEW READERS\*\*** [John Hinkle, a Los Angeles Pastor, last year heard an audible voice telling him that on June 9th 1994, "I will rip all evil from the earth". Basing his prediction for that day on Isaiah 25, Hinkle claimed that the veil of covering would be ripped aside and revival would break out, as Jesus was "revealed" to mankind. (He did not claim that this was the Second Coming or Rapture.) This prophecy was widely publicised and also promoted by TBN, the most influential TV network in the States. Although discerning Christians did not expect the events as predicted, there was concern, because of the nature and contents of the prophecy, that June 9th marked some kind of turning point in the spirit realm.]

I want to share with you another so-called prophecy, again promoted by TBN and coming from Kim Clement, a guest on the show. Paul Crouch and his son, Matthew, said they were "nearly lifted out of their chairs" by the power and anointing upon this word. This is an indication that powerful forces are at work, and it is not wise to dismiss entirely what is being said.

Although I rarely pay any heed to these kinds of "prophecies", and certainly do not endorse them, I do file them away in a drawer in my mind, because - in accumulation - these words have an ongoing demonic logic. They reveal part of the plan that satan has for this world and its inhabitants. Through the fog of lies, false promises and triumphalistic fantasies, there emerges a core of intent. This example extends and adds to the theme:

"The Spirit of the Lord says, I will raise up a brand new and a fresh and powerful anointing that is going to destroy and expose hidden works of darkness...this is the beginning of the tremor, the beginning of the shaking, but even though the ground is shaken beneath you, God says, there will

be liberty and freedom. It shall go forth from this nation (USA) to others. Therefore, thus says the Lord, get ready; for even as the enemy tries to destroy and bring addictions and witchcraft upon the nation, so liberty and revival is about to take place like you have never seen. For this is the final move of my Spirit. This is the final thing that I am preparing for your hearts to do. Therefore, get ready, says the Lord, I am about to change you with my power and anointing...Surely I am about to judge from the very top, says the Lord, and this judgement had already begun, and will not go by June before it is absolutely done, says the Lord. I am about to bring a flame of fire that will reach out, not only to this nation, but it shall go beyond the borders. Yea, there shall be an economic breakthrough that will take place as a result of this...therefore, take it now, take my word and rejoice, for I will bring about the greatest move of the Spirit that this nation has ever seen..." (April 1994)

### STRONG DELUSION

At this present time in history, we know that a powerful spiritual delusion will come upon all unguarded minds and souls. We also know that these days are "as the days of Noah" when not only were men and women living in open sin, reviling the word of the Lord, and oblivious to the coming wrath - but also there was an interaction with spiritual powers hinted at in verse 4 of Genesis Chapter 6: "And there were giants (HEB = Nephilim) on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men."

In addition, there is the possibility of being seduced by "another spirit" who is not the Holy Spirit of God, (2 Cor 11:4), and of accepting its teachings. (1 Timothy 4:1)

Are we seeing the activity of "seducing spirits" right now? I believe we are!

Satan wants to counterfeit all that belongs to God. He has his 'holy' spirit, his 'anointings', and his 'gifts'. He is promoting the idea of a "Second Pentecost" that will sweep the world into his new ecumenical religion. Notice in the "prophecy" above that it is a "brand-new" anointing that is promised. Whatever that means, it cannot mean the Holy Spirit. He is no stranger to believers.

When we realise that apparitions of "Mary" around the world are also promising these things, our suspicions intensify. For, she has promised:

"With the Second Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will render His perfect witness to the Son and will bring upon the earth His glorious reign of love."

"Only the spirit of love can renew the whole world; only the spirit of love can form the new heavens and earth; only the spirit of love can prepare hearts, souls, the church and all humanity to receive Jesus who will return to you in glory".

"You are now living in decisive times, which are bringing you into the new era. You are in MY times."

"You must now understand that my work is not centred on only one small area of the world, rather it includes the conversion and salvation of all humanity."

"I desire that the Catholic Church should be the catalyst to unite all faithful souls under one roof..."

"The victory of my Immaculate Heart will certainly be achieved, bringing the Lord's Kingdom into this world..."

"The Kingdom of Christ the King shall establish itself through the reign of the Mother of God..."

(Quotes taken from Marian Update, Spring 1994, Pittsburgh Centre for Peace. From apparitions in Switzerland, Italy, Kentucky, Arizona, and the Ukraine, 1987-1994.)

So, when she later urges her followers to "allow the Spirit to work in you, open your hearts that he may fill you - if you say yes to him, he will fill you with his Spirit and will do great things through you."; we have to wonder just WHAT spirit they will receive!

There are now people who make it their ministry to persuade Christians to contact spiritual powers. Techniques such as inner healing, visualisation, meditation, ecstatic prayer and trances-states all lead to demonic experiences for the unwary.

Other Ministers present the Holy Spirit Himself as a spirit-guide, and encourage Christians to encounter him as a presence that manifests itself tangibly or audibly. People are hungry for signs and wonders, for spiritual experiences, for goose-bump feelings. There is a spirit who will give them all this and more, if they open themselves to him.

But what else is on the menu? Does satan intend to play games with Christians, introducing supernatural counterfeits, but then failing to press home his advantage? Hardly!

This is a preparation stage. When people have come to accept bogus, unbiblical supernatural signs and wonders as "from God", when the process of indoctrination is over, then the real work can begin - that of filling these hungry people with spiritual forces that will empower them to "bring in the kingdom"!

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#### RODNEY HOWARD-BROWNE: THE LAUGHING REVIVAL

When I reported in the latest News Update tape (June 1994) that Rodney Howard-Browne was a man to watch out for, little did I know that his influence had already reached this country. But it had to happen sooner or later.

TBN, ever quick to jump on a bandwagon, said in their October 1993 newsletter that, "Many churches are beginning to explode with REVIVAL. God is sending missionaries from other lands to America, including Reinhard Bonnke from Germany and Rodney Howard-Browne from Sth Africa. Thanks to these and many others, a fresh wave of revival and a new joy of the Lord is sweeping the land".

Unfortunately, he is right! What Rodney Howard-Browne's interviewer describes as the "missing link" in the Church today, happiness, is being poured out powerfully on whole congregations so that they yell, scream, howl and bang their heads on the wall in uncontrollable emotional displays.

The "revival" sparked off by Browne's preaching is spreading like wildfire. There are reports from Argentina, Canada, and New England that massive crowds are gathering at meetings where "holy laughter" and other manifestations break out.

Now, London too is caught in the spell. At a recent meeting organised for Oasis and held at The Stable, High Barnet (led by Hugo and Sharon Anson), participants were encouraged to let go and receive whatever manifestation occurred, having been assured by the leaders that it was "of God". The source was the same - Rodney Howard Browne and his supporters. English Christians have been travelling to the States to get themselves "anointed for revival" and are coming back with a spiritual power that, when released, causes pandemonium to break out in meetings.

In Argentina, people become "so drunk with the spirit that they cannot drive home" and during the long services (some last six hours), it is common-place for people to fall over, laugh or weep. Beginning in Buenos Aires, the phenomenon has spread to "hundreds of pentecostal and charismatic churches throughout Argentina" (Renewal Magazine, April 1994) The Pastor who began it all, Claudio Freidzon, initially travelled to the States after reading a book by Benny Hinn. There he met with the author. On his return, the congregation noticed a change, and the manifestations began to occur.

In Toronto, Christians of all denominations are flocking to a small charismatic church, Airport Vineyard Fellowship, where "revival" has broken out. God is "seen, felt and experienced" said one participant. On a typical evening, people can be found lying or rolling on the floor, many of them laughing uncontrollably. Up to a thousand people gather for the nightly meetings. The revival began after a Vineyard Pastor from St. Louis, friend to the Toronto Pastor, attended meetings led by Rodney Howard-Browne. The Airport Vineyard Pastor himself, John Arnott, had already begun a "quest for a fresh spiritual anointing" after witnessing the Argentine revival and attending Benny Hinn's meetings in 1993. (Charisma, June 94)

In New England, Pastor Mona Johnian is convinced her church, the Christian Teaching and Worship Centre of Boston, has entered a period of "supernatural revival". She and her husband attended meetings led by Rodney Howard-Browne in November 1993, and since then signs and wonders have been occurring in the church, including "holy laughter".

In July, Rodney Howard-Browne is due to lead a major conference in Louisville, Kentucky. He will host the fourth "Signs and Wonders Campmeeting". Last year, ten thousand people attended this meeting. Browne's influence will gather momentum through such meetings.

In the UK, "revival" is breaking out all over! Hysterical laughter, rolling on the floor and other manifestations are occurring in many charismatic churches around the country. Even the national newspapers are picking up on it. With publicity from national media, there is sure to be a snowball effect. Spiritually hungry people, whether saved or not, are bound to flock to these meetings. Somehow, we have to be ready to meet this challenge!

A couple of testimonies already received give a flavour of what is going on:

"I have just returned from a Conference in London ("Learning to Lead at the Grass Roots" Training Conference, Wes Sutton, John Adlington, Hugo & Sharon Anson & Ron Atkinson) and it was here that I first heard about this "new move" of the Spirit which is seen very much as a form of "revival". We were told that it had its origins in America when a certain minister was praying for the Spirit to come upon the congregation. Apparently, a member of the congregation thought it would be funny to go up and blow on the Minister. When he did this, the Minister broke out into uncontrollable laughter - a spirit of mockery, perhaps? I spent the second evening of the Conference scouring the

scriptures in the hope of affirming that this phenomenon came from the Holy Spirit, but kept coming up against the fact that the Holy Spirit is one of control not of disorder. I should mention at this point that at every meeting, people at the Grass Roots conference experienced this "laughing in the spirit". This was not just a giggling fit, but full-blown guffawing with people stamping their feet, banging walls and even shouting. I questioned some of these people afterwards about their experience, and with the exception of Wes Sutton they all said that they were unable to stop - one man even said that he had been unable to walk home and had had to be carried. Very few experienced any feelings of love or peace - only exhaustion. I questioned the leadership about the disruptive nature of this phenomenon in the meetings and was met with the reply "disruptive to whom, you or God?" How does one reply to such a statement? I also noted that the phenomenon (with one exception) was passed on by the people who had previously experienced it. The one exception had received it whilst praying for someone else. The other thing I feel I should mention is that one of the leaders (Hugo Anson) did admit that at times a "spirit of self-indulgence" could be seen to be at work whilst people were laughing in the spirit. Unfortunately, I was unable to query whether the Holy Spirit and a spirit of self-indulgence could both be at work simultaneously in a person. Just one more thing, all the leaders admitted that there seemed "very little theology to support it. But whether we understand it or not, it seems to be from God, so just go with it..."

A few distinguishing features of the new move emerge from this letter. Before looking at them in more detail, here is another testimony from a reader:

"I was interested in what you said on your June Update tape about what is called "laughing in the spirit" - but what spirit? I have come across it in the past, but not very often. Recently, a lot more so. About three months ago, I went to Hollybush with another group of Christians in a mini-bus. I was told about this good preacher who would be speaking there. The only word we heard was a few verses which had been picked out mentioning laughter. Then he went on to tell us about this so-called revival which is spreading round this country, and how he was literally stuck to the floor and just laughed uncontrollably - and no matter how he tried, he could not get up. The meeting went on for about two hours and I don't need to tell you how it finished! I felt like a fish out of water, with people laid all over the floor laughing and crawling about under chairs. Also, another group of people have been to Hull - they are called the Camerons, from Peterhead in Scotland - they are going round the country with the same message of so-called revival of laughter in the spirit. I have seen a video of one of them preaching, or trying to preach. I say, trying, because every time this women opened her mouth to speak she just broke out in laughter."

This shows the poverty of theology behind the new move. In order to receive these manifestations, people have to let go of doctrine, clear their minds of biblical objections, and simply "let it happen".

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[To remind you of the differences between godly and demonic manifestation, I have reprinted below the relevant section from the Spring issue of "Mainstream".] **HOW TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!**

The Word of God: Nothing of God contradicts scripture. If man or angel comes preaching what is not strictly according to the Bible, you can know it is counterfeit. Let the Word of God be final judge of every experience, not your feelings, hopes, wishes or desires.

Beware of physical sensations: We know and hear God in the inward parts, in the spirit. By contrast, demonic experiences take place outwardly, forcefully manipulating the body, mind or emotions. God's love is not a goose-bump feeling that leaves our character unchanged. Nor does God's love always soothe and comfort. Often the love of God, working in co-operation with our minds, will humble us in order to help us grow. Demonic "love" however is nothing more than an enjoyable sensation.

Compulsion is of the Devil: God does not compel - He draws, woos and entreats, but never overpowers us with irresistible force. God seeks our co-operation, whereas demons seeks to control us. Any spiritual experience that is compulsive, that urges haste, that denies us the use of our reasoning faculties but insists on instant obedience, is of the devil.

A passive mind or body is open to deception: God provided us with our intellectual powers, and he makes his appeal to our reason. God's guidance never requires us to empty our minds. Satan, however, commands us to surrender our minds and bodies so that they become inactive. Then demons can implant suggestions or manipulate our bodies at will. Visions, voices and all kinds of supernatural occurrences happen to people while they are in a passive state.

Test the Spirits: Any spiritual manifestation must be tested, to see if it is of God. Demons are very subtle, however, and the test should be completely unambiguous. If any feeling or sensation begins to occur, it should be challenged in this sort of way: "if this is not of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of every Principality and Power, and if this is not in accordance with the Covenant in His Blood, then I reject it in His name and command it to flee from me".

Learn to be humble: Demonic manifestations appeal to the flesh - they are sensational, and awe-inspiring. They minister to our pride - promising us fame or runaway success. They also appeal greatly to our innermost longings and desires, those things we keep hidden from others and even from God. So, if you have such weak areas (and who doesn't?), offer them up to God. Let your Heavenly Father heal you and humble you in these areas until you recognise the danger of gratifying self. Refuse to be drawn along by your own feelings; learn to humble your flesh and refer everything back to God.

Spiritual Armour: We have been given spiritual armour (Ephesians 6:13) - let's use it! When under pressure to receive false spirits or to give in to powerful sensations, we must fight back, using the shield of faith in Christ, and wielding the sword of the Word of God. Use the Name of Jesus to rebuke overpowering sensations that threaten your spiritual stability. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10)

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At the outset, in examining this phenomenon and its implications doctrinally, I want to make it plain that my intention is not to criticise or condemn anyone involved.

I am just sad that many are being deceived and have little interest in testing the spirits, as God commanded. If what I say can warn them of danger, and cause others to search the scriptures to "see if these things be of God" then I have fulfilled my commission from God.

Secondly, I want to quash right away the thought that I - and others like me - object to every spiritual manifestation simply because we are "against the Spirit". I am myself a charismatic

believer. I do recognise that the Holy Spirit can work in mysterious ways. I do believe He can move powerfully and dramatically in a person's life. I even believe that laughter CAN be a gift of the Spirit on occasion, for I have witnessed it in others and experienced it myself (once!) But that laughter was not uncontrollable, disruptive or selfish. In my own case, I was alone, had not been prayed for by anyone, and was not "overpowered" by the Spirit.

## BROWNE INTERVIEWED

I have recently watched a two-hour video of Browne and his wife, taped from American TV. They appeared on "The Good Life" (Channel 22, Florida) interviewed by Bob & Molly D'Andrea. Howard-Browne is a South African, and there he worked with Ray McCauley in the Rhema Word-of-Faith network. In 1987, he moved to the States. Since then, he has spread his message of revival widely.

## JUST LET GO

Many important doctrinal points were raised during the interview, and I would like to introduce one or two of them.

Browne's wife, Andronica, told of her own experience with "holy laughter" and related phenomena. At first, she said, she was offended by the disruption going on the services. When she heard her husband say to others, "I command you to laugh!" she would cringe.

While she was in control of herself and guarded, nothing happened to her. Eventually, though, when visiting another church not their own, she let down her guard. "Because I LET GO", she says, "I felt a bubbling come up from my belly. I started to analyse it, but I heard the Lord say "Don't think, just let me do it"". So she shut off her head, she says, and let it come over her. She stepped into "another dimension" and ceased to be conscious of other people, and no longer cared what they thought. Now, when people refuse to give in to the laughter, she finds it very funny, and laughs all the louder because of them.

It is important to know that those who are new to the experience always go through this initial stage of scepticism. It is only when they "let go", blank out the objections and give in to physical sensations that the barriers to their subconscious breaks down. But this is the very hallmark of demonic interference! (See panel). There is nothing God-given that requires us to abandon all reason and blank off the critical faculties of our minds.

## HUMILITY

A second point raised by Andronica is that she used to weep when touched by the Spirit. She now reasons, why is it all right to weep, but not to laugh? This sounds reasonable until we give it some thought. Weeping is often associated in the Bible with repentance (Peter wept after he denied the Lord), with humility, and with awe. Jesus himself wept and groaned within himself (John 11:35) before he called Lazarus back from the dead. Weeping denotes a wordless expression of spiritual longing before the Lord. It is even possible to weep for joy.

But where in the Bible is laughter associated with reverence towards God, with service, with humility - or with any kind of ministry? On the contrary, of the few references to laughter in the Bible, almost ALL are negative ones. Laughter is arrogant and scornful - the very opposite of

humility.

Luke 6:25-26: Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

James 4:8-10: Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Laughter in the Bible is nearly always derisory. The very word in Hebrew means "to deride, scorn, mock". When Sarah laughed [WITHIN HERSELF] in response to God's promise that she would bear a child in her old age, God rebuked her. (Gen 18)

## DISORDERLY

On the tape, Browne tries to justify his position by referring to instances in Jesus' and the disciples' ministries that led to outbreaks of what he calls "pandemonium". One such instance he says is found in Mark 2:1-4, when a palsied man was lowered down to Jesus through the tiles of a roof. But what indication is there, in that scripture, of pandemonium such as we now find in charismatic churches, where howling, head-banging, stomping and shouting are going on?

Surely, Christian worship and ministry ought to be conducted in an orderly and reverent manner? Having said that, people will criticise us for being so tight-laced and staid that we never let God do anything with us. Not so! Speaking for myself, I have attended many loud, boisterous and joyful meetings, when people "let their hair down", but none of them was disorderly. There was no loss of control. The Holy Spirit, when He is allowed to take charge of our worship, will sometimes lead us to be exuberant, (Psalm 47:1) but He will never possess our bodies, causing unreasonable and uncontrollable physical reactions to occur.

Another point that needs to be made about Christian worship is that, in the Holy Spirit, we are drawn together and bonded in love and unity. True worship moves us all together, as one body. The sort of manifestations that are now occurring are causing disruption, not unity. The very private reactions of numbers of people who, like Adonica, "enter another dimension" where they are no longer aware of others, do not bond believers together, but drives them apart. Love is cast aside in a purely selfish desire to enjoy physical sensations.

In South Africa, Browne says, one man started ripping off his clothes, oblivious to everyone around him. Loud shouting, laughing, immobility and other occurrences do not help the Body to concentrate on the Lord or the preaching of the Word. There is disruption.

Almost every evangelistic revival was criticised because people wept loudly, cried out for mercy, or even fell to the ground in awe before a holy God. But these people were responding to the Word of God - they were under conviction. The current new move is different. It is rare to hear the Word preached, and (as explained in the letter above) a few scriptures pulled out of context is all that is needed to "start them off".

There is much talk of "Christian joy" as if that justifies the raucous laughter heard at these meetings. But joy comes as a result of active belief in the Word of God, or as a response to God's

grace. It always has a basis in rational circumstances. Romans 15:13: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

People today are after cheap thrills, and easy emotional satisfaction. They have been taught that the world owes them a living, and that God is there to serve them. Thus, their concept of Christian joy is the same as the world's idea of happiness - shallow feelings of elation with no regard to others; a self-indulgent "happy-trip" with no price to pay.

But in the Word of God, joy is more often associated with suffering than anything else. Joy is born out of endurance. It is an interior peace of mind that rests on the knowledge that God's love is dependable. Very seldom will it erupt into an outward show of emotion - though it can! Yes, a touch from God can bring an outflowing of joy, with laughter. But that comes from a deep acquaintance with God, and through trusting Him in all circumstances. 2 Cor 8:2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 1Thes 1:6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, James 1:2-3 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

## DISSENTERS

How does Browne treat dissenters? Is he loving and amenable towards them? On the tape I heard, certainly not. He was scornful of anyone so "po-faced" as to reject what was happening. Such people are "in the flesh" he thinks. Usually, he says with relief, the religious deadheads (as he calls them) leave before too long. These kill-joys really quench the Spirit! He mocks them, and finds their disapproval hilarious.

Their problem is, Browne thinks, they won't surrender to the power that is available. It is all to do with YIELDING, he says. We must not interfere with what is going on, but let the Spirit move as he will. His wife adds to this thought by saying that many times a tangible presence comes upon the meeting and the physical body then has to give way. Those who resist it, have NO CHOICE but to give in.

Clips are shown, on the video, of meetings in which men and women are struck dumb, roasted as if on a fire, paralysed, made incoherent or stuck to the floor, unable to move even if they try. The TV host's wife, Molly, testifies that she has been struck dumb on various occasions. At times, she says, she can think, but cannot open her mouth and at other times she cannot even think - her mind is a blank. What a fertile breeding ground for satan's delusions!

The ministry, such as it is, on this video is very shallow. It consists of scriptures about the Holy Spirit plus laying on of hands, with commands such as "I release God" and "I loose the anointing". A baptismal ceremony is shown where line after line of people stand in the water, hands raised, waiting for Browne to give the command. As he says "not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord" they all tumble backwards into the water!

Browne's idea of evangelism seems to consist largely of zapping people with "the anointing" until they give in. He proudly says that he lines up on the stage a row of hippies with their mohican haircuts and earrings, and then goes down the line laying hands on them and making them fall

over, again and again, until they "accept the Lord".

Browne is fond of comparing these manifestations to a state of "spiritual drunkenness". He justifies the excesses by scriptures such as Ephesians 5:18. Which says: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit". To say that this describes a lack of control, slurred speech and being unable to walk home (as is the experience of some under the power of "revival") is to ignore the verses that follow it. They read:

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

There is no hint of lack of control or irreverence here!

Another of Browne's favourite scriptures is 2 Cor 5:13 "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause". This, he says, proves that Paul was beside himself, or raving, like the people in his meetings.

But, when they accused Jesus of being "beside himself" did they mean he was mumbling incoherently, crawling on the ground and making a public spectacle of himself? No, rather that His preaching and open ministry of healing was a cause of great astonishment to human minds.

Mark 3:10-11;20-21

For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.... And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. (Because they could not understand that Jesus kept on giving Himself in love.)

The Greek word for "beside yourself" (existemi) actually carries the meaning of "astonishment" or "amazement". It is used in this scripture:

Mark 6:50-51

For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

How can these scriptures in any way justify the sort of ludicrous physical manifestations that are seen at Howard-Browne's meeting? Things such as gibbering, muttering, bodily paralysis and rolling on the floor?

## FEELINGS

When people are asked "what is the result of your experience" the response most often given is "I have got a love for Jesus". But this has to do with the emotional warm-glow sensation that I spoke of in the Spring issue. It is a feeling, not a conviction. The love of God humbles and awes us; it convicts us; it breaks our flesh. It does an inner work of sanctification over a period of time. If the love of God does not result in a change for the better in our lives or personalities, then it is invalid.

In the meetings depicted on this video, I saw little talk of repentance or holiness and there was no reverence of God. People were "zapped" no matter what their lifestyles or circumstances, no matter if they were saved or not. The Spirit of God is not indiscriminate. Satan is!

Another result was "a new zeal for evangelism". This sounds good, until we realise it means a zeal to draw other people into the "anointing". The power is being passed on from one person to another rather like a spiritual version of AIDS. It has to be caught, passed on through contacts. The UK manifestations did not start spontaneously - English folk travelled out to America to "get it". Does this sound like a move of the Holy Spirit?

## DOCTRINAL BASIS

As for the doctrinal base, there is none! Gerald Coates, reported in the "Alpha" magazine (July 94), says that some things are neither biblical or unbiblical, but NON-biblical. When the Spirit moves, he says, non-biblical things occur - they are not bad things; they just don't have a proof text. This is just not good enough! Surely worldwide revival and massive outpourings of power, if genuine, are significant enough to be grounded in scripture?

If people are being so profoundly touched and used of God, as the leaders claim, surely their activities ought to "have a proof text". If not, just where do we draw the line? As well as that, what happened to the inward witness of the Spirit? Some speak of having received the inner "alarm-bell warning" from the Lord about these manifestations. Others had to overcome profound unease and scepticism, before giving in. Does this indicate that what is taking place is neutral, as Gerald Coates claims?

After examining the scriptures on this subject, I had to come to the conclusion that such manifestations were, biblically speaking, works of the flesh - if not of the Devil. Drunken-type behaviour, partying in the Spirit and lack of self-control (such as raucous, unrestrained laughter or shouting) are of the flesh, not the Spirit.

Ecclesiastes 2:1: I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also was vanity.

Romans 13:12-14: The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness...but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.

Galatians 5:19-26: Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are:... drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

2 Tim 3:1-5: This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Galatians 5:22-24: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law

2 Pet 1:5-7: ...add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

## Major Split at Brownsville - News Report

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School founder dismissed in dispute over denominational accountability.

A major rift has emerged at the heart of the Brownsville revival, which has drawn thousands of visitors since a dynamic move of God began on Father's Day 1995. The leader of the school founded to train others for service has been removed in what is believed to be a dispute over denominational accountability.

Dr. Michael Brown, the founder and president of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry (BRSM) in Pensacola, Fla., was voted out by the board earlier this week. He intends to launch a similar new school in the city.

Details of the dismissal were given in an official statement, subsequently removed, at the BRSM Web site. It said that Brown was "released" as president after failure to agree on an "acceptable means of accountability."

The conflict centers on the school's relationship to the Assemblies of God (AG). It began when the denomination, which had made a "sizeable loan" to BRSM at the request of Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick to purchase its current campus, asked for "some form of simple accountability... to represent their interests." It was suggested that Brown hold Assemblies of God credentials while president of the school, but he felt that would be a compromise, said the statement.

An alternative solution in which Kilpatrick would be named executive president with "very limited involvement" that would yet establish accountability was agreed upon after "strong and vigorous resistance," said the statement. But later Brown expressed concern at the agreement and asked that the school be released to him.

That request was denied as "not being in the best interest of either the church and its members nor of BRSM." Because by this time "a trust factor" had arisen, another suggestion was proposed, said the statement -- that Brown take a sabbatical to "give time to re-establish a proper working relationship." After this was also rejected, the BRSM board "determined unanimously to release Dr. Brown as president of BRSM."

The statement said that the director and Kilpatrick "refuse to take an adversarial position as regards these matters." No faculty members had been sent letters of dismissal and had been invited to continue with the school.

In his statement to graduates and students, Brown said that he had been "shocked and saddened" to read the board's statement. It presented "a totally misleading picture of me, my character and my relationship to the school board and pastor Kilpatrick." But he would not reply in detail, as to do so would "force me to cause further division and pain."

Brown said he would "rather live with false accusations than bite and devour and divide." Despite his sadness, he said, "I bless the board of directors and continue to love them deeply, recognizing

their desire to please the Lord."

Speaking to the Charisma News Service yesterday, Brown said that eight out of 10 faculty had resigned. Many students had expressed a desire to continue their studies under his leadership, and a new school location should be announced soon. He said that the statement posted at the BRSM Web site had not been the one he had previously agreed upon with the board.

A notice at the BRSM Web site today said that the board of directors was "redrafting an official statement concerning the recent changes in leadership" at BRSM, which would be posted as soon as it was available. No one could be contacted by telephone for comment today at the offices of either the church or AG headquarters.

Located on a 50-acre campus in West Pensacola, BRSM was founded in 1997 to "equip qualified, radical laborers, grounded in the Word... ablaze with revival fire." The student body is currently around 1,000.

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Dr. Brown's Final Statement

RELATIVE TO HIS DISMISSAL

FROM BRSM (December 30, 2000)

After four years of laboring together in the Brownsville Revival, it is the verdict of the Board of the Brownsville Assembly of God that my "implementation of the vision" of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry, shared by much of the faculty, is now "incompatible" with that of the church, the differences being "irreconcilable." (The words in quotes come directly from the Board's gracious letter of dismissal, dated December 20, 2000.)

Although it has been my fervent desire to continue to work in close unity with Brownsville Assembly, I accept the decision of the Board and, by God's grace, will continue to pursue the vision that has burned in my heart for many years: to raise up a holy army of uncompromising, Spirit-filled radicals who will shake an entire generation with the gospel of Jesus-by life or by death.

To that end, I, along with eight core faculty members, have established the F.I.R.E. School of Ministry. (F.I.R.E. is the acronym for the Fellowship for International Revival and Evangelism, a movement devoted to fostering New Testament discipleship, church planting, world missions, and spiritual awakening.) Since my dismissal came in the middle of a school year, and because of our many commitments made to the BRSM student body, the leadership of the F.I.R.E. School of Ministry felt strongly led to begin classes immediately, without missing a semester, right here in Pensacola. We are open to the possibility of relocating the school at a future date. (For information on the school, go to [www.fire-school.org](http://www.fire-school.org).)

I know that many questions have been asked and much has been said. After all, the eyes of the world have been on Brownsville! However, I believe it is best now to simply bless one another and move on. If questions remain, take them to the Lord. He "will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts" (1 Cor 4:5b).

Despite what has happened in recent days, the reality of the Brownsville Revival and its ripple effects around the world are undeniable; the lasting fruit that has come out of the revival is undeniable; and the power of God that transformed so many lives in these last five years is undeniable.

Now it seems that the Lord is moving me - and a number of my co-workers - into something new. Perhaps in our diversity even greater unity can be found. The Body of Christ is big enough to handle it all! And so, with all my heart:

I bless Pastor John Kilpatrick for his years of sacrificial labor in the Brownsville Revival, watching out for the sheep and jealously guarding the reputation of Jesus.

I bless the church Board, pastoral staff, and church workers for their devotion to the Lord, their selfless labors, and their faithfulness.

I bless all those who have poured themselves out for the students and grads of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry.

I bless the Assemblies of God for the tremendous impact they have had in helping to fulfill the Great Commission, touching millions around the world over the last 90 years.

I bless those of you who differ with me at the present time, questioning my motives or judging my heart. May the peace and joy and goodness and grace of the Lord overflow you, and may He cause His will to be done in all of our lives - for His glory, and His glory alone.

And to one and all I say: On with it! Everything Satan has meant for evil can be turned for good, and 2001 can be the year of our dreams.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

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[Click Here for a transcript of Dr. Brown's statement to graduates, students, friends, and supporters of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry.](#)

[Click Here for questions and answers concerning what occurred, accountability issues AND a letter from Dr. Brown's Pastor.](#)

[Click Here for of Dr. Brown's response to the BRSM Board's statement.](#)

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Questions and Answers

Why are you starting a new school in Pensacola? And have you done it with the approval of the BRSM board?

We are not really starting a new school in Pensacola. Rather, we are honoring the commitment we made to our current students to finish what we started with them and to continue with the vision that was established. We are a family, not just a school, and it was unthinkable to me as a father to the student body, I would simply abandon them. How could I walk away from students who have openly wept in my arms, asking me not to leave? How could I simply say, "Don't worry. Someone

else will take over the school now" - especially when I was not being dismissed because of sin, but rather, in the words expressed to me by the Board of Directors the night of my firing, I was dismissed because of differences in the implementation of school vision?

Eight of the ten full-time faculty members felt compelled to stand with me after my firing. All of them were willing to risk their livelihoods to continue on with a new school in Pensacola, rather than abandon the students who made it clear that they wanted to be taught and trained by us. To our student body we say: The best is yet to come!

On December 17th, the school Board offered to release me to begin a new school in Pensacola if I would resign on the spot, rather than be fired. This I could not do, and I was fired. The school staff was then informed by the Board Chairman Monday morning, December 18th, that I had been released to begin a new school. While this language does not appear in the Board's originally posted official statement, I am pleased to note that they have chosen not to oppose us.

Since the news got out about my firing, we have been flooded with e-mails - literally, hundreds in the first week - from students, parents, graduates, pastors, and Christian leaders urging us to go on with the work right here and now, and thanking me and the faculty for our loyalty to Jesus and the student body. We could do no other.

"Wasn't there any way to avoid all this, especially in the middle of the school year?"

The fact that this happened in such a manner and at such a time has made life terribly difficult for many innocent people, and I find it inexcusable - as well as shameful for the name of Jesus. I extend my heartfelt apologies to the extended BRSM family, including parents who have entrusted their children to us.

I shed many tears before the Lord to stop this from happening, experiencing deep emotional agony over potential damage to the student body - spiritual sons and daughters to me. So many lives would be hurt. So many innocent people would be scarred. So much reproach would come on the Brownsville name. I repeatedly protested to the Board that it was unjustifiable and unethical to fire me (or force me to resign) in such a manner - without notice, between semesters, and while the students were away - but they felt it was right and necessary, based on their perception of the situation, and certainly with all sincerity on their part.

Before God, I did all that was in my power to avert this, but it happened nonetheless, despite much prayer and fasting. I am trusting Him to turn it for the good!

The Lord is my witness that my reputation is not an issue, nor am I concerned about the rumors and slander for my sake. But I hurt deeply for the students and grads, and I am so sorry that I could not have done more to avert this from happening. Yet I still believe with all my heart that God is at work in the midst of this, and that something of much greater good will come out of it all.

This is what I wrote to the board of Directors about this very issue in response to their ultimatum that resign on the spot or be fired on December 17, 2000:

December 18, 2000

Dear Brothers,

Since God has called me to lead the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry and has not released me from that calling; since the school's Constitution and By-Laws indicate that a director (in this case, the president) can only be removed if it is in best interest of the school and there are not sufficient grounds for such removal; since the Board has not clearly stated [in writing, at the Board Meeting of December 17, 2000] that the issue is NOT one of sin but rather of a difference of vision; and since I believe it is unethical and unjustifiable to force me to resign or fire me in between semesters with no prior notice given to the student body, I cannot in good conscience resign.

I would once again urge the Board to reconsider their present position, and I affirm once more the will and desire of the faculty to attempt to work through the issues of miscommunication and misunderstanding, continuing under the arrangement agreed upon at our previous Board meeting (held November 9, 2000) until May. Anything less than that would produce much needless heartache for hundreds, if not thousands, of lives, and since the Board alone has the power to reverse its decision, I would urge each of you to step back and slow down this whole process, working a smooth and sane transition through May.

As I stated repeatedly at the meeting last night [December 17], there is no justification for this move to be made at this time, I urge you to reconsider - not for my sake - but for the sake of the kingdom, for the sake of the reputation of Jesus, for the sake of the name of Brownsville, for the sake of the student body, for the sake of our faculty and staff, and for the sake of the body of Christ worldwide. There IS a better way.

In Him,

Michael L. Brown

The amazing thing about this whole situation is that, given the suddenness with which everything occurred, the faculty, the staff, (many former staff members are transitioning with us), along with an army of students and grads are coming together to mobilize and transition in a matter of days. It is a wonderful sight to behold.

So... on with it!

Do you believe in the importance of submission to authority and accountability?

Of course! I have always taught that if you are going to do anything radical for the Lord, you must have a proven track record of submission to authority. Otherwise, what you call radical might simply be rebellion. This is something I have drilled home to students and readers for years, and it is something I firmly embrace in my personal life. God does not need a bunch of independent mavericks. He needs an army under command. I believe this with all my heart!

In my own life, I have several lines of accountability. For the last four years, John Kilpatrick has been my pastor, and I gladly and fully submitted

to his leadership during these years. The question of my submission to his authority never came up once until he gave me an ultimatum to join the Assemblies of God or be fired. Despite my great appreciation for the Lord's work through the Assemblies and my deep desire to honor Pastor Kilpatrick, the Lord clearly spoke to me about this matter and did not allow me to become credentialed by the Assemblies. Ultimately, this is an example of having to obey God rather than man (see Acts 5:29), with all due respect to Pastor Kilpatrick as a God-fearing servant of the Lord.

Within one week of my dismissal by the Board, I contacted Ché Ahn of Harvest International Ministries in order to get information about coming under their covering of churches and ministers, since I was no longer under Pastor Kilpatrick's covering. I wanted to send out a loud and clear message that submission to authority and coming under covering has never been a problem for me. As I said earlier, I embrace it! That is why to the very last day of my tenure as President of BRSM, I affirmed in writing and orally my submission to John Kilpatrick as my senior leader. (I accept his judgment that at this time, we are not able to work together, remembering that such things happened even to men of God in the Word; see Acts 15:36-41. I should mention, however, my surprise in finding the word "accountability" mentioned repeatedly in the Board's Official Statement on the Web site. I had never before heard that word used in any of our discussions, and it was never mentioned once in the Board meeting the night I was fired. The only issue raised that night had to do with alleged "irreconcilable differences" in the implementation of the school's vision.)

There are other lines of accountability also built into my life. I am extremely accountable to my faculty, and we really function as a leadership team. They often speak into my life, and we only move forward together when we have harmony in the Lord. I am also ordained by a local church in New Jersey with whom I stay in close contact, and one of their pastors is on my

ministry board. My ordination can be removed by them for reasons of sin or doctrinal error. The board of ICN Ministries also has power to vote me out or remove me or shut down the ministry. On a more personal level, there are many leaders whom I relate to closely around the world, and I often come to them for counsel and input, asking them to be ruthlessly honest with me.

I also believe it is essential to have a proven track record of teachability, being willing to receive and submit to correction. The Word is clear on this too! For more on this, see pp. 42-46 of my book, *Let No One Deceive You: Confronting the Critics of Revival* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1997).

I would encourage all of you who want to be on the front lines of the Jesus Revolution to carefully check your hearts, ask the Lord to purge you of all rebellion and stubborn pride, and be quick to hear the voice of godly correction.

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A letter from Dr. Brown's pastor, Pastor Walter W. Healy, concerning Dr. Brown's accountability, credentials and their long-standing relationship (December 28, 2000)

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will serve to verify that Dr. Michael Brown is a fully credentialed minister of the gospel under the government of The Church of Grace and Peace, Toms River, NJ. Our relationship of approximately fifteen years has been marked by mutual respect and accountability which ultimately led to this formal licensure in which Dr. Brown is fully accountable to the church Elder Board.

Further, let it be known that Dr. Brown has our fullest respect for his past and present integrity in ministry to the Lord and His church in both spiritual and practical aspects. We recommend him as one in pursuit of the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Yours for the Truth,

Walter W. Healy

Senior Pastor

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Have you ever thought of taking legal action against Brownsville Assembly of God?

God forbid! That is completely unscriptural, according to 2 Corinthians 6:1-7. The thought of legal action has never occurred to me, and I have retained no legal counsel of any kind since my dismissal or prior to my dismissal.

When asked by the church to respond to the Board's first Official Statement for their attorney's review, I wrote that the statement as it stood was libelous, meaning simply that it contained false, defamatory information in writing. (Slander is false, defamatory information in spoken form; libel is false, defamatory information in written form.) That was not a threat, nor was it intended as a threat. (I am the son of a lawyer and a Ph.D., and I try to communicate with precision.)

As to the Board's revised statement (posted December 24th, Christmas Eve), I say this: May the Lord Jesus shine His face on my friends and co-workers at Brownsville Assembly of God, and may we bless one another as we get on with the work of world redemption. Souls are dying without the Lord, the needs are urgent, and the hour is late. Let's encourage one another and go and give the devil a black eye.

Transcript of Thursday 12/22 meeting NOW Available [CLICK HERE](#)

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A statement from Dr. Michael L. Brown to all graduates, students, friends, and supporters of the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry regarding my firing on December 17th, 2000:

I was shocked and saddened to read the "Official Statement of the Board of Directors of Brownsville Revival School of Ministry" posted on the school's website ([www.brsm.org](http://www.brsm.org)) on December 20th. In the interest of the Body of Christ, the Brownsville Assembly of God, and above all, our precious BRSM students and grads, I will not reply to this statement in detail. I will only say that it presents a totally misleading picture of me, my character, and my relationship to the school board and Pastor Kilpatrick. To say any more would force me to cause further division and pain, and I will not do that. Rather, despite my sadness over this statement, I bless the Board of Directors and continue to love them deeply, recognizing their desire to please the Lord.

I would rather live with false accusations than bite and devour and divide. It is a small price to pay on my part if it will help preserve the unity of the Body, and perhaps it will encourage those who find themselves in similar situations to respond in kind. After all, is this not the example left for us by Jesus? (See 1 Peter 2:23.)

As to misconceptions that will arise due to the board's statement, I rest confidently in the fact that God Himself knows the whole story. He was there in every meeting, He has heard every word spoken, and He knows my heart (Luke 8:17). I also take great comfort in the fact that the students and grads of BRSM know me very well. We are a close-knit family, and we have spent many hours together – praying, worshiping, laughing, crying, learning, sharing – and they can judge for themselves whether the picture painted in the official statement reflects the man they know. I will let them, along with the faculty who has labored so sacrificially with me for these many years, make their own decisions and do what is right before the Lord.

Within the next 24 hours, I will post answers to some of the many questions that have arisen in recent days ([www.icnministries.org](http://www.icnministries.org)).

To the student body looking to us to continue teaching, training, equipping and sending – to America and to the nations – I simply say this: We are here for you, we would never abandon you, and everything will continue with us as promised and expected. THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

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#### FROM THE BROWNSVILLE SITE:

The following is the updated Official Statement concerning recent events from the BRSM Board of Directors:

Many of you are waiting for and have requested the Board of Director's official explanation concerning the recent events surrounding Dr. Michael Brown. In light of the seriousness of the Board's actions and of subsequent events discussed below, the Board has carefully and prayerfully considered their official response in order to respond in a Christ like manner and not purely out of emotion.

Originally, a concern had been presented to Pastor John Kilpatrick regarding a possible desire on the part of Dr. Michael Brown to lead BRSM to separate BRSM from its current position subordinate to the Brownsville Assembly of God Church Board. In discussion, Dr. Brown explicitly denied such intent and Pastor Kilpatrick accepted that denial as correctly representing Dr. Brown's position.

In light of that issue the Assemblies of God, who made a multimillion-dollar loan to BRSM at the request of Pastor Kilpatrick to purchase the current campus, requested some form of simple accountability for Dr. Brown to represent their interests. It was suggested that Dr. Brown hold credentials with the Assemblies of God during the time of his duties as President of the school. Pastor Kilpatrick made the request to Dr. Brown, but after subsequent discussion, Dr. Brown stated that arrangement would be a compromise for him and, therefore, unacceptable. (It should be understood that the Assemblies of God graciously came to our assistance after repeated failed attempts to secure financing from other sources.)

An alternate solution was presented to Dr Brown whereby he would remain President of BRSM, but Pastor Kilpatrick would be named Executive President, establishing the accountability sought by the Assemblies of God. Dr. Brown initially agreed to this request. Dr Brown's concerns were that the Assemblies of God would attempt to control the school. Pastor Kilpatrick explicitly denied that the Assemblies of God wanted to control the School. The Assemblies of God is looking to

Pastor Kilpatrick, not to Dr. Brown. In ensuing discussions with Dr. Brown, Pastor Kilpatrick assured him he would be protected from Assemblies of God control, but his accountability to Pastor Kilpatrick was in the best interest of all concerned. The Board of Directors passed a resolution that appointed Pastor Kilpatrick to the position of Executive President with Dr. Brown continuing as the school's President. Dr. Brown voted for this proposal.

One week later, Dr Brown protested to Pastor Kilpatrick concerning his displeasure with the resolution. At that point, he asked Pastor Kilpatrick to sell BRSM and its 4.5 million dollar campus so he could pursue a direction that he said was no longer compatible with the current Board of Directors and the Brownsville Assembly of God Church.

Pastor Kilpatrick denied that request because he believed that it was not in the best interest of the church, its members, nor of BRSM itself.

Bob Phillips, School Board Chairman, believing he was trying to find some medium of accountability for Dr. Brown, made other proposals. By this time, Rev. Phillips and Pastor Kilpatrick began to question Dr. Brown's motives. In order to give time to reestablish a proper working relationship, an unofficial proposal was made to Dr. Brown and certain faculty leaders to allow Dr. Brown to leave the campus, yet still retain his title as President and continuing to travel while representing the current theme of revolution for this nation's spiritual revival. Until May 2001, two senior faculty members of BRSM would jointly run the school, working with Pastor Kilpatrick so that the operations of BRSM could continue to run smoothly and the students could be protected. Dr. Brown and the two senior faculty members also rejected this suggestion.

Since no acceptable means of working together was found, the Board of Directors determined unanimously to release Dr. Brown as President of BRSM. Dr. Brown decided to start another school of ministry in Pensacola. While not desired, the Board would not oppose this endeavor.

The Board of Directors and Pastor Kilpatrick refuse to take an adversarial position as regards to these matters. No faculty member has been sent letters of dismissal, but some have in fact been invited and urged to continue the vision of BRSM. However, due to the soon arrival of students for the Spring 2001 semester, the School Board requested that the faculty submit their intentions to stay or leave. While the School Board desired that the faculty remain intact, if a faculty member fails to respond to the Board's request, that member will be considered to have abandoned their post of duty and BRSM will continue to move forward with continued excellence.

The Board attempted to publish its position of the events on December 20, 2000 through BRSM's web site. Shortly after the Official Statement was posted, Dr. Brown requested that it be removed because he claimed it was libelous. Since the term "libelous" is a legal term, the Board has no way of knowing whether Dr. Brown's use of this term was a legal threat or not.

While the statement was pulled from the BRSM web site, Dr. Brown posted his response to the Board's statement on ICN Ministries web site. His statement claimed that the Board's statement was a "totally misleading picture of (him), (his) character, and (his) relationship to the Board and Pastor Kilpatrick." He further states, "I would rather live with false accusations than bite and devour and divide."

Dr. Brown then called a meeting with students and others to "discuss the events." He recorded his comments concerning the events" and placed the audio recording of his version of the events on the web site for ICN Ministries. In addition, Dr. Brown's comments go far beyond the mere telling of his version of the events to include a battle cry to follow him to a new school. While espousing love for the Board and Pastor Kilpatrick, Dr. Brown also implies they have done harm to the students and their actions have been evil. During the meeting, Bob Gladstone stated that it would be immoral for him to remain at the school. That statement could possibly imply that it is immoral for students or anyone else to remain at BRSM.

It has always been the desire of the Board to handle this situation in a God honoring fashion with minimal impact to the students and Dr. Brown. While the world responds to such action in a tit-for-tat fashion, the Kingdom of Christ demands a higher standard.

There were many factors which led to the decisions of the Board. While this statement discusses certain actions that were taken during the last few weeks, no attempt has been made to include all details and discussions out of respect for the parties involved. The Board has been given the charge to conduct the operations of the school in a manner which keeps the school in line with the plan God has for the school. The Board recognizes that this charge causes them to make decisions which cannot be easily explained or understood. In addition any attempts to fully explain these events would lead to further division and angst to the Body of Christ. God calls each of us to respect those He places in authority over us individually and over the institutions He calls to fulfill His purposes. When a person reaches the point they can no longer respect or adhere to the authority God has placed over them, then Christian maturity demands that separation take place with honor and dignity to all parties. Anything less can only bring harm to the Body of Christ. The Board has endeavored that all of its actions meet this standard. As a part of this, the Board prays that Dr. Brown will continue to work good for the good of the Kingdom of Christ in whatever capacity God chooses for Him.

God has so abundantly graced BRSM with His presence and it is our belief that He is larger than any of us and will continue to accomplish His purposes at and with BRSM.

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The following letter was sent to BRSM students and alumni:

December 26, 2000

Dear Student, Alumni, Supporter or Friend of BRSM:

We hope that you are enjoying a blessed Holiday Season with family and friends. We look forward to seeing or hearing from you in the near future!

It is with deep regret that we must inform you that Dr. Michael Brown has been dismissed as President of Brownsville Revival School of Ministry. A statement from the BRSM Board of Directors has been reviewed and is posted on the BRSM website.

BRSM is destined to be strong and vibrant, producing pastors, missionaries and worship leaders until Jesus comes. We will continue in our mission to serve a critical need in this hour to equip qualified laborers who are grounded in the Word, trained in the essentials of practical ministry,

ablaze with revival fire and ready to give their lives to the Gospel. The task is clearly set before us to impact this generation with revival and raise up a powerful witness filled with the fire of God to take the Gospel to this nation and the nations of the world.

Please be assured that our vision and purpose as a non-denominational Bible school remains the same. That vision is to provide a quality, intensive two year and three year equipping curriculum to establish believers in their relationship with the Lord, call them to holiness and purity, build into them the principles of sacrifice and service, immerse them in the fires of revival, involve them in practical ministry, and then send them to the ends of the earth.

Our faculty and staff are excited to be continuing the vision. Our faculty members will be Bill Ancira, Lisa Ancira, Billy Burton, Ron Cantor, Lindell Cooley, Richard Crisco, Alvin Miranda, Bob Phillips, Carey Robertson, Lila Terhune, Newman Tye and others yet to be announced.

Our prayers are that you will continue in God's grace, peace and mercy until His coming!

In Him who alone is worthy of praise.

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A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JOHN A. KILPATRICK

TO THE STUDENTS AT BRSM

I have desperately wanted to speak to every student personally, but I have tried to pick the appropriate time. I want to express my love for you and my concern for what you must be experiencing. I can only imagine the bewilderment each of you felt when you learned of the painful changes at BRSM. My heart is deeply grieved for many reasons but most of all for the precarious place you find yourself in as you pray about your return to Pensacola. I hurt for each of you and want you to know the Brownsville Assembly of God congregation is grieving and interceding for you. I hope you can feel the prayers.

Brownsville Revival School of Ministry was birthed out of the womb of this local church, Brownsville Assembly of God, Pensacola, Florida. If it had not been for Brownsville Assembly of God or the Brownsville Revival, there would be no BRSM. From day one, it has been the vision of the leadership of the church to establish a school of ministry to help train and thoroughly equip young men and women for ministry and placement in the Body of Christ.

As I write this letter, an excellent faculty and staff are being chosen from various pentecostal backgrounds with the accompanying credentials to speak into your lives as you return for the spring session.

Because BRSM has been a non-denominational school since its inception, it shall remain non-denominational. First of all, let me say – the vision of BRSM will continue!!

Next I want to say as Senior pastor, I am determined to see a spirit of excellence prevail in every facet of the life and spirit of BRSM. My first priority is to allow Holy Spirit complete freedom to do whatever He wants – however He wants - and whenever He wants at BRSM. That has been the hallmark of the Brownsville Revival these last 5-1/2 years. Our school has been a Revival school and it shall continue to flow in what God is doing and saying in this generation.

Our strong missions emphasis will continue unabated. As a matter of fact, Rev. Larry Art has agreed to head up our Missions Department as well as serve on the faculty. His rich missions background will greatly impact our students. Larry is already planning on taking teams to the foreign fields as well as throughout the United States. It has always been the passion of BRSM to take the Gospel to a lost and dying world. This vision will only intensify in coming days.

I don't have the time to adequately cover other areas of exciting ministry that are now being planned but I want to cover one area I am tremendously excited about. Brenda and I both feel the time is right to devote more personal time to our students at BRSM. We look forward to getting to know you and to spending quality time with you. We also feel called to involve ourselves in mentoring you for the ministry. I know the value of a mentor. My Pastor devoted years to me and the things he deposited in my ministry I could not have received any other way than personal, intimate time together.

Brenda is excited about helping the young women to be thoroughly equipped for the adventures of ministry. We both feel the time is right and we can hear the call of those God is sending us so we can share our insights, experiences and victories.

Again I say, I can't cover all areas that I have on my heart at this moment but trust me when I tell you I am very optimistic. I am one that has been through many, many painful things in my life and ministry. I am no stranger to grief and pain. One thing I have concluded – change is painful but change is inevitable.

I heard a man once say, "When you're through with change, you're through."

I know we all have experienced some painful change recently but I must confess, I am not discouraged and I don't want you to be. I have fresh vision, more so than I have had in many years. We love every student – single, married or divorced makes no difference. We are committed to you! We know you have dreams and visions locked up in your hearts to work for God and we want to help you see those dreams come to pass.

I want you to return to BRSM if you feel it's right for you and only you can determine that. I would encourage you to counsel with your Pastor or parents or a trusted friend. I want you to feel no pressure in your decision. Be led by the Spirit – seek the Lord – give it time to wait on the Lord in earnest.

I'm going to see to it that BRSM will be an extension of the very spirit and essence of all Brownsville Assembly has been through these years that has made me love it so.

**KNOW THIS**

A powerful faculty will be in place January 16, 2001.

Exciting and enriching classes will convene.

I do hope you'll pray about making BRSM your home away from home.

We Love you John Kilpatrick

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Questions and Answers regarding recent events at BRSM.

The following questions and answers are those we have been asked most frequently. Obviously, not every concern of every individual has been addressed.

Q. Will BRSM become an A/G school?

A. BRSM has always been understood to be a non-denominational learning center by both Brownsville Assembly of God Church and the Assemblies of God leadership.

Q. Was the faculty dismissed?

A. No faculty member was dismissed or asked to resign. All were invited to stay on and continue the vision of BRSM.

Q. Will all faculty members be A/G?

A. BRSM is a non-denominational school of ministry. Faculty have never been required to be credentialed with the A/G and that will continue to be the policy at BRSM.

Q. Will a person who has been divorced and remarried be allowed to attend and graduate from BRSM?

A. BRSM has always accepted students who have suffered the tragedy of divorce and will continue to do so.

Q. Will F.I.R.E. and Brownsville International be continued at BRSM?

A. They are separate corporations with their own boards of directors and are not related to BRSM.

Q. How may graduating students be credentialed?

A. Each graduate who feels a call to full-time ministry will be provided an opportunity to be credentialed. No student will be unduly influenced to be credentialed by any agency. We have access to many non-denominational credentialing agencies, denominational credentialing agencies, and the Assemblies of God. Students who have divorce in their pre-Christian life will be given assistance in receiving credentials the same as any other student. A member of the faculty will be assigned to act as liaison with each credentialing agency in order to maintain a continuing relationship with our graduates.

Q. How will those called to the mission field be covered?

A. There are many opportunities for missions covering. For example, there are many reputable missions sending agencies available for missionary candidates who are non-denominational. For instance, Globe Missionary Evangelism is located adjacent to the BRSM campus. Several graduates are presently on the mission field under their covering. We anticipate our continued relationship with them and other missions agencies as well. There is also the A/G. No undue influence will be exerted on a graduate regarding what missions affiliation they may choose. Like the credentialing described above, a faculty liaison will be appointed to work with whatever agency a graduate chooses in order to maintain our continued close relationship.

Q. Will BRSM student leadership be replaced with A/G students for BRSM ushers, Friday night witnessing, etc.?

A. Student leadership that was in place last semester will remain in place this semester regardless of affiliation. Future leadership of these ministries will be filled by those best qualified, not because of A/G affiliation. The Assemblies of God is not trying to take over BRSM.

## Michael Brown's Address on leaving Brownsville

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Dr. Michael Brown's address on leaving Brownsville

Thursday night:

I'm going to have to speak as clearly as I can without the mike right now. Can you hear me in the back? Yes. Anyone who wants to come up closer, feel free to do that. We've got our [tape] running? Is it running properly? Is our backup running properly? Is our official video going? All right. [Laughter].

I want to say first that we are not here to bash anyone. We're not here to speak against anyone. There's one family that God's looking down at, one church that he's looking at. We love and bless Pastor John Kilpatrick and Brownsville Assembly.

Bless God for everything he's done through the Brownsville Revival. There are not two sides here. All of us just want to be on God's side. Amen?

If, as I'm speaking, there are any tears, I'm really not concerned about my own reputation. If you're going to be a follower of Jesus, you have to die to that right at the outset. I'm really not concerned about my own well-being, and the faculty that's standing together with us, the faculty and spouses that are here, would you just stand together with me. Just turn so everybody can see you folks. [Applause]

And I want you to know that these folks, out of their love for you and their love for truth, have said, We're going on with the commitment and the vision and the promise, with no guarantee of salary, with no guarantee of how they'll pay bills or take care of their kids, that's how much they love you, I want you to know that. If there are tears though, I just feel so bad that this had to happen to you folks and there's reproach on the name of Jesus, and that so many of you guys are getting torn up.

We've done everything in our power to prevent that from happening. We don't have any enemies. We don't have any evil people involved..

I want to give you the chronology of what's happened and then give you some great hope for tomorrow. When the school was formed, the church had been praying to raise up a school, it had been on Richard Crisco's heart, that's before I ever came here. I came in May of 1996 and when I left that week, God began to lay on my heart a vision about equipping and exporting from the revival.

A few days later he spoke to me about raising up a school of ministry in the midst of the revival and I faxed Pastor John and Steve Hill, and said, I've got this vision of doing something. I didn't know they had been praying about that very same thing, and found out that it was on their hearts as well, and when I came down in August of '96, we officially agreed that we were going to begin on this, and I was asked if I would set up a curriculum that would follow the Berean curriculum, so that folks could be ordained with the Assemblies.

And I said, listen, my understanding is that this revival is not about Brownsville or the Assemblies of God. It's bigger than that, and we need to put the new wine into some new wineskins – [I'm] not calling the Assemblies old wineskins – but just a curriculum that would reflect the new wine of revival. And the brothers agreed with that.

I wrote that letter on August 24th of '96. And from the start, one of the great things about this was that here I was, an ordained minister of the gospel, but not Assemblies of God credentialed, in [an] Assemblies of God church, leading the School of Ministry, and it was a great appeal to the Body, to speak of unity, to speak of the wideness of the revival, to show that this was not a matter of denominations, and our school was about half Assemblies of God students and half that were not, and it was a wonderful relationship.

As the school continued to grow, it was never an issue that was ever brought up to me, about becoming Assemblies, and over a period of time, questions began to rise within the school, because we were sending out so many laborers, graduates getting ready. Who was going to credential them? Many of them didn't come from Assemblies backgrounds, some because of marital situations before they were saved could not go with the Assemblies, so it was discussed with the Board of the School. It was separately incorporated. I was the President of the school, under a school Board appointed by the church Board, under John Kilpatrick. So, he was the head of the whole organization. All of you, I think knew that.

We always honored him as the Pastor of the revival. There was never any separation between the church and the school. We've always been one. No one ever heard any talk that it was anything contrary to that. It was never us and them, it was always one.

So, the school board approved of us having a separate credentialing agency, The Fellowship for International Revival and Evangelism called F.I.R.E., so that we could credential our grads, because we realized that this school was not just a school, it was becoming a movement. The revival had birthed a movement that was going out to the nations.

We also had set up something called Brownsville International with now over 80 missionaries, graduates from our school in about 16 different nations. That was also Board approved. Everything was moving on fine. There were no issues or problems of real consequence.

Most of you here were with us at The Call D.C. when we brought the message on the Jesus Revolution as we stood together that day. I came back from The Call on a Monday and the following Tuesday I was scheduled to be in Springfield, Missouri with Pastor Kilpatrick to meet with the heads of the Assemblies to discuss issues relative to the School of Ministry.

And there were just concerns [that they had], the issue of our credentialing was creating a problem for some of the Assemblies leaders who thought that the people should be going through the Assemblies. Some of our missionaries out on the field, were not working with the Assemblies contacts, because we had other contacts. We always just thought, it's a big kingdom, it's a big world, we're all working side by side. We had no conflict with it, but issues, questions were coming up that were legitimate questions in the minds of the Assemblies leaders, so what then happened was that Thomas Trask really suggested it would be a good thing if I would hold credentials with the Assemblies.

He strongly urged me to do it, he felt that it would be in the best interest of the school. You see, the Assemblies of God loaned the school three million dollars to purchase the campus and they were really behind us. We had put in about a million and half of our own money, and the rest came from the Assemblies, and they were really behind us, we were working together.

Thomas Trask felt that it would just be a good guarantee if I as the President would carry credentials with the Assemblies, and I just politely told him that God hadn't called me to that. And then after a while, Pastor John said, "Mike, I agree, I think it would be a good thing for you to carry credentials. I'd like you to pray about it," and some weeks later he met with me and just graciously said, "Mike, I insist, you have to become Assemblies, I want you to do it, it's the best thing."

And because of my love for him – and you know the love I've had for Pastor –and because of my respect for authority, you always know we've taught that and we've lived that individually as a faculty, and because I wanted to make things easier for him, I said, It's not an easy thing for me to do, just based on calling and convictions, but if we can really talk some issues through, I'm willing to do it.

And then a few days after that, after much prayer, God dealt with me that I was not to be Assemblies. It was contrary to his calling for my own life. I was to reflect something different from that. I shared that with Pastor and he then gave me an ultimatum. In his mind, it was the right thing, I don't want to speak evil. He felt that his authority had asked him to do it and now he as my authority was insisting that I do it, therefore, if I wouldn't do it, [in his mind] I was being insubordinate to him. I said, I'd do anything for you Pastor, but my conscience convicts me, I can't.

And he said, Well then, you'll be fired and you'll lose the school. And I could care less about my vision, my dream, my goal, but when I thought about the student body, when I thought about my family, my spiritual sons and daughters, and the ones who send me notes, "Dear Dad" and all that. and I thought, I can't lose the students. And just sitting in his office, I sobbed in his presence, and I left that day. I had to preach that night in revival, it was Saturday, and I just called him and said, Okay, I'll do it, I have no alternative, I can't sacrifice the school, I'll do it. It happened to be at the same time that Suzette Hattingh [from Germany] and Yesupadam [from India] were in with us and I just shared the situation with them for prayer and they said, "Well Mike, we'll really have to pray that God will speak to you and show you what to do," and I woke up that morning, Sunday morning. You know, I'm a late night person.

I went to sleep at two and got up at five [AM] to catch a flight. Little did I know that Suzette was up at four [AM] praying that God would speak to me. I woke up at five, I felt like I had resurrected, I jumped out of bed, the Spirit all over me, and God made it clear, you are not to be Assemblies.

I bless God for the Assemblies and all that they have done around the world, and I hope we can co-labor until Jesus comes. But God dealt with me for a number of reasons. I could not do it.

Out of my love for Pastor and my respect for authority, and above all out my love for you, I sought to comply with his request and told him twice I would do it, but God would not allow it. Then that precipitated a crisis. I thought everything could be talked through and worked out, but in his heart now, it was a crisis because [in his opinion] I was showing streaks of insubordination and pride because I would not comply with his request. And then he called for a Board meeting, the intent of which was to fire me.

You may remember a Sunday morning where he stood before the church and said, he made a decision and it was going to be a very hard decision. God hadn't spoken to him, but he knew what he had to do, it was clear as the nose on his face, and just to pray for him because of the decision he had to make. Many of you were there and gave him a standing ovation. That was the decision that I was going to be fired for not becoming Assemblies.

We went to prayer and fasting, and that Thursday night, we had a Board meeting. I had suggested to him, Listen if it's just to keep the Assemblies satisfied that the head of the school is in doctrinal harmony, etc., they don't know who will be there when I leave, if I ever leave, they don't know -- why don't they just give you a title, Pastor, something related to it.

The idea clicked in that board meeting, it was suggested that he become the Executive President of the School, just take on that title. I would continue to do what I was doing with no diminished authority, but he would take on that title and that would satisfy the Assemblies that always the senior leader of the school would be Assemblies.

And immediately that night, as the Executive President, he set some things in motion, one of which was that we would have to phase out F.I.R.E. and we'd no longer be able to credential. Another one was, that came up subsequently, that B.I., our missions sending agency would have to be shut down and the missionaries given over to others.

So these were very hard things. There were also some person decisions made that related to me, and they were very difficult, but I knew, just keep the peace, be submitted to the situation, and about a week and a half later, when I went to discuss some of the issues with him, he took exception to my discussing some of the issues with him. I held my ground in discussing the issues, and from that day until the day he fired me, this past Sunday, I hadn't seen his face once.

I was told that I was not in fact submitted to him as Executive President. I affirmed in writing to the Board of Directors in a letter written December 7th, that I indeed submitted to him as Executive President of the School. I reaffirmed my desire for the church and school to work together as one. It had been discussed on several occasions that perhaps the school should be released to be financially independent and that there would be a new Board that would be totally devoted to governing school, instead of it being a church appointed Board, so they could really concentrate on it.

I felt that was a good idea. Pastor would be our pastor, Brownsville would be our home church. We'd work together side by side. That's always been my desire. I continue to have that as my desire, that we work together, side by side. When I left graduation on Sunday [December 16th], I took the hand of the Chairman of the Board and prayed with him that God would enable us, the church and the school to continue to work together as one, but I was told flatly [by Pastor, at different times] that I was no longer believed in the statements that I was making.

And of course, there's always the comfort that you folks know me, and you only reproduce what you are, and we've sown a lot of tears, and the emotional agony that we went through with the thought hanging over my head and hanging over Nancy's head and different ones, that we could be cut off from you, was one of the most terrible things we ever went through.

It's been amazing to have some of you fall in our arms weeping and see that we've sown tears and we're reaping tears, and we've poured ourselves out for you and the emails that come in over and over to the point of [being] absolutely overwhelming, "We're with you, we love you, we're standing together."

Well, I became informed that there would be a meeting the day after graduation. You say, Well, why didn't you make an announcement to the student body? I wanted to protect you. I thought [to myself], If I say anything, once I've said it, the word is out and you can't take it back. What if God intervenes? We're praying, we're fasting, what if something happens? I was so jealous over the name of Brownsville and Pastor [Kilpatrick] and the Church, I thought, If I say anything and word gets out, once the students hear it and word gets out, it goes around the world. There's a blemish, an international blemish on the revival.

So we said nothing. We didn't say anything to our staff about it at the school. We had the Sunday night [Board] meeting and there was no discussion of differences, no attempt to reconcile. I had reached out every way I knew how, I had taken full responsibility for anything I knew that offended Pastor. In fact, I was planning on coming in with a bucket that night and washing his feet, but I was told by a Board member that that wouldn't be recommended. We [had] continued to pray and fast. Graduation was somewhat of a bittersweet time, and the last Friday of school, as you're lining up to talk to us [saying], "We can't wait to see you, we're looking forward to next semester, we're so excited . . ."

Some of our dearest friends just moved down here from New York, ready to start school, and we're thinking, This is unbelievable. So, the Board meeting came and I was offered four months severance pay, if I'd be -- I'd be released to start a school at least 50 miles away. And I said, Well, we can't do that. The students will be looking to me, to us, the faculty. Almost all of them [the faculty] had made it plain if I was fired, that they could not go on with the school in that setting, they could not support the decision, nor could they support the new direction -- no more credentialing, no more missions sending agency. So, I knew that we had to fulfill a sacred obligation to the student body, that you came here for us, we have to be here for you. How many of you are in the class that's about to graduate in May? I knew I -- we can't start and not finish -- we can't not be there to walk down the aisle with you and tell you we're proud of you, and pour that last semester into you.

Those that have just come to [the] third year [internship], how are we just going to say, Sorry, we're not here anymore. So, I said we can't go 50 miles away because the students can't commute that far and they live here. They have jobs, they have limited money and they can't do that. Then I was told [by the Board] that I could start a school locally, [but that] there was no severance pay in doing it. Of course, severance pay is not [an] issue.

But my only alternative was resign or be fired -- on the spot -- the only alternatives offered. It was stated there [at the Board meeting] that we had irreconcilable differences in the implementation of the vision. I said, I'd like to know what the differences are. I'd really like to know what they are so that we can see if we can reconcile, but it was done.

And at least 20 times in the board meeting, to the point of being a broken record, I said, don't do this, please don't do this, wait until May. There's never been a problem, the students don't think

there's a problem. No one knows there's an issue. Everyone is working together fine. Please don't do this. Please don't do this. Please don't do this. It's unethical. It's unjustifiable. Please don't do this. I met with Pastor Carey [Robertson] earlier in the week. I said, Please understand I'm not concerned about my reputation.

I'm a Jewish believer in Jesus, you don't get concerned about reputation. I confront critics of revival. You know, just get on the Internet and look for the latest attack on me. I don't worry about reputation. God knows the truth. Either he's supporting us, or he's not. But I said, Please, it's going to hurt the church, it's going to hurt the name [of] Brownsville, and the students. Don't do it; wait until May. We'll phase out quietly and give the students an alternative for the next year, but please don't do it [now].

It's unethical, it's unjustifiable -- you've got a whole student body coming back. They're expecting us, they're expecting the faculty, they're expecting our leadership. Please don't do it. Please don't do it.

And they are God-fearing people on the board, every one of them, but they somehow felt it had to be done now. [They thought,] If an eventual separation is coming, let's do it now. And Monday morning [December 18 th ], the staff was informed of the new direction, or I should say the new leadership structure, and I was not involved in that meeting.

I was not aware the meeting was going to happen. Somehow I missed the announcement. So the very first [time] the school staff heard that I was no longer president was from others sharing that announcement with them. And when I came in the office a little while later, I'm greeted with staff, some of our grads and other students weeping in the hallway. So, we had to put our arms around them and say, We're not going anywhere. We're not going to abandon you; don't worry, we're not leaving. My heart was this: You can fire me as being president, but you can't fire me as being father..

So, I was allowed to meet with the staff that afternoon, shared the story, took the questions, explained everything I could. Luke 8:17 reminds us that every secret thing is going to [be] spoken publicly, and I'd just love for the Lord to bring out whatever He wants to bring out, anything in my life that's displeasing in His sight, let Him bring out. And there's never been an issue of sin in this. I want you to understand that. Do you remember Pastor saying from the pulpit [several weeks ago, in reference to this situation], It's not a matter of sin. It's never been an issue, okay?

Well, there's only one problem now. The emails immediately start coming in. We [hadn't] said anything yet, we [hadn't] made any announcement. We weren't planning on it. We were waiting. We were trying to protect. The emails started coming in and the calls started coming in from students hearing what's happening and saying, We're with you. I [had] told the Board, I [had] told Pastor, It's going to happen like this because we're family, we're family.

It's not just an association, we're family. And, when I shared, as people started coming over, and students -- one man I'm looking at here with his wife from Japan, and we were pulling out of the school [driveway in our car] yesterday for lunch, and he came over crying, and said, "I don't want to lose you." He's finished his first semester, and I got out of the car and hugged him, and I said, "Man, we're not going anywhere. We're not going anywhere." Well, some of you, you're on your way out to Thailand, to India, to this country or that country, what are we going to do [on your

behalf], just say, [We] hope it works out, hope it goes well. That's not what we understand.

Now, I honestly believe that if Pastor and the Board could have fully seen your hearts and the results of what would happen, that the decision wouldn't have been made, so please don't be bitter. Don't be angry.

They didn't mean to hurt, they didn't mean to do evil, they simply cannot fully grasp what God's done in our midst. So, we only have one slight problem. We've got about a month before classes start, we've got a faculty, that's no problem.

And you know, the school – we've got an awesome staff, and they're so essential -- but the thing that's going on in the classroom every day, the school is the faculty and the students. So all we've got to do is change locations and march right on. And if all the faculty said, "Mike, Dr. Brown, we feel we're supposed to stay," and all the students said, "We feel we're supposed to stay," well, bless you. We'd miss each other dearly. But, we knew that wasn't the case. And we knew we had to go on with F.I.R.E. and with B.I. and with everything we started, and with a message of Holy Revolution. Not a revolution against authority, that's never been it. You've never heard a syllable of that. Not rebellion, you never heard that. We don't think that. We don't believe that. Not anger, not hatred, not intimidation. How many times have you heard that from us?

Revolutionaries are radically submitted to Jesus, and radically submitted to authority. We understand that. That's how we live, that's how we believe. But if you want to try to change campuses, come up with a new name and mobilize a whole student body without any staff to do it and have a month to do it, that sounds pretty revolutionary to me. So, hopefully, by tomorrow, I'm not sure yet, but hopefully by tomorrow, we will have confirmed our new location. Hopefully, we will have confirmed a new name. And let me just say this. Someone suggested still using [the initials] BRSM, and just so no one would have any fears about the direction we were taking, we would relieve those fears and just call it Brown's Revolution School of Martyrdom. [Laughter]

But seriously, we should have everything set up, and we'll be able to answer all your practical questions. Let me say again, this is not a battle between sides. All we're saying is, Hey, we're here to keep moving in the direction that we're moving in through these years. And if there's any difference, if there's somehow a separation, if somehow God was at work in something to move some things on and out, let's make sure we bless and don't bash.

I want to say this. It's so important. Listen, we are not the center of God's universe. All right. The faculty and spouses as we met last night, it was a prescheduled Christmas party, and as we met last night and talked, that theme came up over and over and over. Humility, humility, humility, humility. Be humble, not haughty, bless and don't bash. Don't think that we are "it."

Okay, and that God's measuring everything by our high and lofty standard. All we're trying to do is be obedient to Jesus. All we're trying to do is be obedient to Jesus. I've gone to different staff and said, Look, you be obedient to Jesus, and you be where He wants you to be. If you're a member of Brownsville, and you can be a blessing there and throw yourself in there, and you're welcome there, wonderful, awesome, let's go for it, let's work together. If that arrangement's acceptable to them, fine. If it's not acceptable to them, hey we bless you, we love you, let's get on.

There was an announcement posted on the school Website today that I took strong exception to. We're not going to attack it. It's been removed right now and it's being reviewed, but if you hear accusations, if you hear all kinds of things, first thing, whether it's about me or the faculty. Just first thing, say Lord, if that's true, let it come to light. If it's true, let me know that.

And the second thing, just ask, do you know us? Is that the example that we've set? Are those the people that we've been? Is this what we've taught you? We've sown into you through these years, and don't look to us to get into verbal battles.

I posted something on our ministry Web site [www.icnministries.org] which says, I'm not going to respond to the other charges. We don't want to bring disunity to the Body, we don't want to bring more pain and grief.

These things [posted in the Board's statement on the school Web site] are not an accurate representation, but we are going to follow the example of Jesus when he was reviled, he didn't speak evil. And no one's trying to do evil, they just see things differently right now, and we continue to bless them, but by the grace of God, we're moving forward. By the grace of God.

If you can remember back, how many of you were in our final Thursday night service in the Orange? I knew and the faculty knew that this was coming down, and what did we do? Mr. Cava got up and sang [his special version of a famous Christmas carol], "Satan roasting on the lake of fire;" by popular demand, I did a piano solo and a drum solo, and Mr. Gladstone played sleigh bells on his face.

And I said, [I hope] it never comes to this, I hope it never goes public, I hope this thing never comes down like this. But if it does, the students will remember how their leadership behaved on that night. Knowing what was right around the corner, and what's the message, the final word that I gave at the end.? "The best is yet to come. The best is yet to come."

Little did I know that early that morning, Charles Ciepiel woke up -- can I say anything Charles? After how many years? Six years, Charles and Jenny are about to be parents. He got up at seven that morning, he's a late night person also. We cut off email in the night at about 3:30 in the morning, and he got up in the morning and God gave him a song, The Best is Yet to Come, and that night, at the end of that message, I knew [what I had to do]: Preach faith. Preach faith. Preach faith. [I knew], 48 hours or a little bit more from now, you're going to be fired. Preach faith. Who knows what's coming next? You're going to be off this campus. There could be wholesale destruction of lives. Preach faith. Preach faith.

I want to declare to you without any question whatsoever in my spirit, before God, the best is yet to come, and we're about to make history. I'm going to ask Mr. Gladstone to just make a brief statement, followed by playing sleigh bells [laughter]. I'm going to ask you to make a brief statement. I'm then going to deal with a few questions that have been asked to us already, okay.

And then, we're going to take questions that you might have and then just worship the Lord and pray together and love on each other. I want you to know that, seeing all of you here. In fact, let's just do a quick count, if you're here raise your hand. Okay. Great. I want you to know that in the midst of some seasons of real pain, you know sometimes your faith is so strong and unshakeable and sometimes it feels like everything is getting torn away.

You just don't see it, you don't feel it, you can't take hold of it. Just you guys, just your love, just you're saying, "On with it!", and having that same heart, that same spirit. And then that first day [after I was fired], it just hit at night.

I called Nancy over to the computer. I said, "Come here, you've got to see this. You've got to see this." The thing that amazed me -- because we hadn't made any announcement, nothing had gone out except a few people were spoken to, and this is not "us against them." This is not [a fight between] enemies, this is not goodbye to the old and hello to the new..We're just being who we are in Jesus. And yet, people started saying, "We've been waiting for this." For what? I think just for this, for just saying, Hey let's just go do it.

We talk about being radical. We talk about, "By life or by death, we're going to follow Jesus." You know, New Testament [faith], let's just go for it. Hey, come on, switching from one building to another in Pensacola is hardly radical! You know. But you have no idea what strength we have because of you, and as Paul wrote and as we shared with the graduating class before last, "Now, we really live" [from 1 Thes 3:8-9]. Because to look out, to see all these faces of grads, of students and families [about 500 people were there], and to just know that you're here, not just out of curiosity, but out of love and support, to see the expression of solidarity for this extraordinary team, our faculty and spouses and other staff that's coming on. You have no idea what it means to us.

One of our dear grads was telling us yesterday over lunch, [she] said to us, "You have no idea how you guys look to us now." Nancy and I said to her, "You have no idea how you look to us!" So, if you weren't here, there's no school that we're going on with; if the faculty wasn't together with us, there's no school that's going on. This is a team, this is a family, this is a joint effort. And I believe it's what God is doing in the earth today. I believe that's the heart cry. I believe God is turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and it's real. It's real.

So, I'm going to ask my dear friend and fellow soldier, Bob Gladstone, to come and just make a brief statement. I want to answer a few questions as quickly as I can, then take a few more questions from you folks. God Bless You. Bob Gladstone:.Praise Jesus! I just want to say a few words on behalf of the faculty. That's why I'm up here. The faculty minus one or maybe two, in this situation is standing with Jesus, with Dr. Brown, and with the students to whom He's called us.

We have solidarity and unity in this, not because we've just been kind of brainwashed or have some kind of weird devotion to one another, but because we're in love with Jesus, because we know the call that He's put on us and because we wouldn't compromise that for anything.

I want you to know on behalf of the faculty of the school, we love and honor the leadership at Brownsville. I know I speak on behalf of my brothers and sisters on the faculty, that there's not a shred of animosity in our hearts toward any of them, no matter who's right or wrong anyway. That's the way it should be.

The Scriptures say to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you. And that's our hearts. We owe their leadership and their church much.

Many of us, if not most of us have gone to church there; one of my children was dedicated by Pastor. They fed us and have spoken into our lives. We love them and bless them and we'll never

think any other way about them nor speak any other way about them. That's the end of the discussion then. The reality is that there are vast differences in our perspectives. And for me and the family, the faculty who is a family, to walk away from the school now under the present structure and to go on with the thing that God will do through us is a moral choice, not a professional choice.

For me it was a matter of choosing to follow Jesus or going backward. Someone challenged me and the faculty in a meeting, someone challenged us by saying, "You know, Dr. Brown's been fired, but you guys can stay and save the students." And my response was, that not even for the students would I compromise following Jesus. And I speak for the faculty when I say that, I know. Not for Dr. Brown, my own wife and children, not for anybody, would we compromise following the path of righteousness where Jesus is leading.

Who are we to feed into students lives who are more important than us, who are the great ones that the psalmist says, the majestic ones in the earth in whom is all my delight? Who are we to lead followers of Jesus, if we are not willing to lay everything down, even them, for Jesus? So, that's where we stand, and that's why we're moving on, and I wanted you to know that it's a moral choice to us, that we're happy to risk our livelihoods and our natural futures on, because we know we're right with God. And God will take care of us. In fact, I want to say that we're confident in our hearts, that no matter what anybody says or does or thinks, it's irrelevant to us. We know that we know that we're right with God, and there's no better feeling in all the earth, in all the universe. Praise His name! Just a couple more things. Dr. Brown mentioned a couple of these things, but in light of the vast difference that exist and some comments that have been made, temporarily retracted, perhaps things will be said again, we refuse to retaliate specifically against accusations. We will only return blessing whether it seems right or wrong, we choose not to retaliate, though we may have to recount some history accurately.

We won't retaliate or defend ourselves against accusations. But we will defend our position in the Lord, simply by saying this. If we must be evaluated, if we must be judged, I just encourage you, evaluate us the way Dr. Brown said. Evaluate us on the basis of our ministry and our behavior in your midst. Even Paul went this route, when he said, Look, you know, we loved you so much, we were happy not only to impart to you our gospel, but our very lives.

Remember us along those lines, and secondly, we believe firmly that the Lord is our defense, as it says in Psalm 27. If you've really got a question, ask Jesus. Because there's going to be a lot of words, maybe just in your own head, maybe elsewhere, just ask Jesus. He's our defense. Because if we have wronged Him and if we're paying a price for doing wrong, you don't need to mess with us anyway.

But if we've done right, I really believe He'll stick up for us, and He'll defend us and we'll just leave that to be his business, and we'll just leave it at that. And finally, I just want to say that before this ever occurred, in fact, before this ever came up, God was speaking. And now that it has come up, I find God continues to speak. I can't get Him out of my head. And He has spoken specifically and clearly about the work that He's doing among this student body, this family, the faculty, the leadership. He's spoken clearly since this all came down. Clearly.

The future is extraordinarily bright, and I'm glad that I, at least up to this point, by the grace of God, not perfectly, but up to this point, by the grace of God with the beloved faculty team and Dr. Brown, up to this point, we've passed the test, and God is about to reward us. May His mercy and His grace continue upon us so that we can pass every phase of this test that's still to come and every other test so that we might be counted worthy to give glory to his name and fulfill the purposes of God in the earth, even through this cracked clay jar, in Jesus' name. God bless you guys.

## Pensacola News Journal - Report on Brownsville

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A spontaneous outpouring of Christian spirit turned a one-night revival into a 2-year phenomenon. Fervent worshippers fell limp in the aisles and spoke in tongues. The evangelist himself had been saved from heroin addiction and crime after being born again.

These were some of the stories that came out of the Brownsville Revival, the subject of more than 40 stories in the Pensacola News Journal. Executive editor Teresa Wasson said many revival supporters believe the events at Brownsville mark the beginning of the worldwide revival that will precede the second coming of Christ. "Impressed by their conviction and certain this was an important story to tell, we began a deeper examination of the revival expecting to find evidence to support what the believers were saying," Wasson said. "And we found many passionate, genuine stories of personal redemption."

Wasson said reporting also led to the other side where they found troubling claims about the money and methodology of the Brownsville Revival. "The critics urged us to do what the other news media had not: Take a harder look at the revival," Wasson said. "As we investigated their claims, we found considerable basis for what they were saying."

Wasson said this series was distinguished by the reporters asking questions about the validity of claims of the revival and not about the peculiarity of beliefs. As a result, Wasson said, the newspaper found the birth of the revival was not spontaneous but had been planned for months; the thousands of dollars collected during services were resulting in lavish lifestyles for the ministers rather than help for the needy; the evangelist had exaggerated his stories of drugs and crime, and more than \$60,000 in sales tax was owed to Florida on revival merchandise.

Wasson said the most challenging part of producing this report was dealing with the religious charities because they are not required to open their books for public access.

The news staff also learned a few journalism lessons from the series. "We have been reminded by this experience that local stories are best covered by the local newspaper," Wasson said. "We also have learned that while there are many fine feature stories about religion, there are many hard news stories that need telling as well. Newspapers need to pay attention to both."

Judges said they appreciated that writers and editor avoided "religious bashing" by not demeaning the faith of anyone involved. "All in all, the series is an example of the best in public service journalism. We can only assume that at some point, a reporter or editor looked at the Brownsville Revival and said, 'Let there be light.' And so it came to pass."

## The Brownsville Revival (by Pastor Larry Thomas)

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### Part 1: TORONTO REVISITED

Revival broke out at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, about 16 months ago and continues to this day. Or so we're told. This "sovereign move" of God is spreading like wild fire through the United States, fulfilling a heretofore unannounced prophecy given to Superchurch builder and mystical teacher David Yonggi Cho.

Scores, if not hundreds, of Assemblies of God churches are being affected by this new move. Pastors from AG churches and many other denominational backgrounds around the country are traveling to Pensacola to receive the blessing, and instruction, in order to bring this "revival" to their own churches.

This phenomenon has been positively reported in Charisma magazine (the best tool I have for tracking the great falling away) and the Pentecostal Evangel, official publication of the Assemblies of God, and several religious television programs, including Praise the Lord on the Trinity Broadcasting Network and the 700 Club. The endorsements by Charisma, TBN, and even the 700 Club are not surprising, given their history of supporting anything and everything in recent religious history. The Evangel's endorsement is not a surprise, considering its reporting and supporting of many new things in the past three years (i.e., Promise Keepers, other ecumenical movements and psychoheresy). I am, however, surprised that so few leaders in the AG who saw countless churches devastated by the "laughing revival" that was imported from Toronto are not at least a little leery about this Pensacola imitation. I'm also surprised that many pastors, AG and otherwise, who recognized the dangers of the Toronto experience, are buying this Americanized, and slightly sanitized, version.

There were, I will admit, many AG pastors who were uneasy with the Toronto thing. But they became more open to it when their superintendent Thomas Trask told them at last year's General Council that "we have always been a people of holy laughter." He also told the gathering that the AG had always accepted "dancing in the Spirit" and being "slain in the Spirit." By the way, none of these experiences has a biblical precedent, but we don't have time to deal with those issues right now. Any further reluctance to accept the new move as from God has been negated now that this phenomenon has an AG church as its home base. It is being widely supported by leadership at the national and state levels as well as by rank-and-file membership.

By the time this issue is in the mail, I will have had a chance to visit the Pensacola church. If I find things different than has been reported to me, then I will correct any misconceptions in the next issue. My observations, at this point, are based on visits to churches that have been influenced by the Brownsville move; I have talked with many pastors who have opposed this latest craze; I have also talked with church members who have had their pastors introduce the Brownsville agenda in their local church. I have read "Feast of Fire", Pastor John Kilpatrick's book about the Brownsville revival, and I have viewed video tapes of the services.

We have read and heard "good" reports coming from Brownsville. They sound similar to those we have heard from Promise Keepers advocates and Toronto adherents. (In fact, sometimes the reports are identical --- word for word. Coincidence?) As we pointed out in our August edition, fruit must be tested not merely admired. Jesus said good fruit can't come from a corrupt tree. We believe, and intend to show, that the "Brownsville revival" has its roots in the Toronto phenomenon and its originator, Rodney Howard-Browne, the self-described "Holy Ghost bartender." In fact, it wouldn't be unreasonable to call the Florida movement the Rodney Howard-Browne Revival.

The manifestations are incredibly similar. The justification for these unbiblical and abnormal phenomena are similarly flawed. The "don't question us" attitude permeates the current move like it did in Toronto and elsewhere. The literature published by the former Vineyard church in Toronto and the AG church in Florida are quite similar. The pilgrimages by "thirsty" pastors to these "rivers" of God's Spirit seem more than just coincidence. Despite efforts by the Brownsville leader-ship—and even some AG national leadership—to distance themselves from Howard-Browne and Toronto, there is a trail of substantial evidence that clearly shows the connection.

One man recently reported to me at a conference in St. Louis that his pastor and two others had visited Brownsville Assembly and that they reported seeing nothing out of line: no laughing, no falling down, etc. why they didn't, we don't know. But we know that such things are taking place because of other visitors who have talked with us, and the fact that Pastor Kilpatrick defends these manifestations in his book. We will show specifics soon. But I must ask: How can those who resisted the Toronto experience now fall for the same thing that has merely moved south? Is it because it's now an American phenomenon or an AG phenomenon? Have these pastors grown tired of standing for the truth? Are they succumbing to pressures from their peers and their pews to see something happen? Will they eventually adopt Howard-Browne's perspective: "I'd rather have the devil manifesting than be in a church where nothing is happening."

Leaders of the Pensacola revival have tried to separate themselves from the Toronto experience, but there are some clear links. For example, Kilpatrick states in his book:

"Just weeks before things began at Brownsville Assembly, my wife, Brenda, also had been touched of God after she visited a ministry in Canada. A great renewal of power and joy had fallen on God's people in Canada and I had sent Brenda to go and drink it in. I have to admit I was a little jealous of God's refreshing ... because I was feeling emotionally drained, thirsty for some of the same living water."

The Canadian ministry can only be the former Vineyard Fellowship at the Toronto airport. Nothing else has happened in recent months in Canada that could be referred to here. The evangelist, Steve Hill, also has a connection with Toronto. Again, Kilpatrick gives us some information without directly connecting Hill to Toronto:

"On his way back from Russia, Steve stopped to rest in England. While there a Spirit-filled Anglican vicar, whose church was experiencing a powerful move of God, prayed over him. Steve felt touched and empowered by the Holy Spirit in a new way. His time in England brought great personal renewal for him and he was now ready to watch God move through him. He was excited."

The Anglican minister referred to [Sandy Millar of Holy Trinity Brompton Anglican church] has helped spread the Toronto experience throughout England. A long-time friend of Hill (who disagrees with the Pensacola experience) said that Hill has visited Toronto more than once. Add to this questionable ministry history a Benny Hinn connection and you have all the ingredients for a revival characterised by mysticism and manipulation, histrionics and hype, delusion and deception.

Only those who will refuse to see would deny that there is a connection between Pensacola and Brownsville. The manifestations and teachings are quite similar as well, although the Pensacola versions has, as we said earlier, been sanitized somewhat. But how long can an experience-oriented revival like Pensacola avoid the excesses that troubled the experience-oriented Toronto movement?

To date we have had no reports of an overemphasis on laughter, although it is common and is being defended by the Pensacola leadership as a genuine manifestation of the Spirit and proof of God's blessing. Kilpatrick, in his book, equates the merry heart of Proverbs 17:22 with laughter as did the Vineyard proponents and Howard-Browne. Kilpatrick goes a little further when he says that "greater healing and wholeness comes through holy laughter." I take exception first of all to his describing what I've seen of the laughing phenomena as "holy." Secondly, can he be serious when he suggests that the "healing and wholeness" of this laughter is greater than the wholeness we receive at salvation? Is laughter more powerful than the blood?

We have no reports from Pensacola of the animal noises that became common at Toronto, but we did observe on the video tapes a considerable amount of involuntary screaming. This was common in Toronto, just prior to the outbreak of barnyard noises. Kilpatrick also defends the experience known as "slain in the Spirit." We have dealt with this at length in our books *No Laughing Matter* and *The Watchman*, but let me say quickly here that we find no biblical basis for such an experience, and absolutely no reason for believers to seek such a manifestation. Kilpatrick claims that these times of "resting in the Lord" (also called "carpet time") provide an opportunity for God to do a wide variety of things in the person's life: renewed understanding of holiness, inner healing (an unbiblical teaching), direction for life, visions. Is it necessary for God to put the person horizontal in order to minister to them? I think not.

Another manifestation is called groaning and travailing. This is key to the ministry of intercession which is widely encouraged at Pensacola. But it has taken on more than biblical connotations. The groanings and travail are likened to birth pangs and those so afflicted are said to be giving birth to manifestations and ministries. Here is how one woman described this manifestation:

"As they were slain in the spirit, they would go into a fetal position and tremble and shake. Some of the women would go into a sitting down birthing position to give birth to whatever. This was accompanied with grunts, moans and shrill screeching. Next, the ushers physically picked up the intercessors from the floor (who were still in travail in a fetal position) and carry them through the congregation to the balcony as effigies of intercession. [This was done] so that conviction and repentance would come down to the people as they passed by."

Similar manifestations were reported several years ago in areas of the country where the laughing phenomena had occurred. It's not new. It's recycled. Being "drunk in the Spirit" is common. It is also being advocated and defended with the same faulty exegesis that Howard Browne and the

Toronto crowd used. Kilpatrick, following the Vineyard apologetic on this manifestation, cites Acts 2:13 and Ephesians 5:18 as proof that believers should be 'drunk in the Spirit.' Like his predecessors, he errs. On the day of Pentecost, those accused of being "filled with new wine" were not acting like drunken sailors as those at Pensacola appear. Paul, in the other passage, was not remotely suggesting an experience called be "drunk in the spirit" nor giving the church a doctrine of spiritual drunkenness.

On one video, several men and women - many identified as pastors and their wives - were in a stupor of sorts: babbling incoherently, suffering memory lapses in mid-sentence, slouching and falling down. Kilpatrick says this is normal behaviour "when you experience the Holy Spirit so strongly that normal activity is difficult." He adds this personal testimony: "For me, the many times during this revival that I have been 'drunk' in the Spirit, I have been unable to move."

His periods of paralysis are identical to the Toronto-style and Howard-Browne manifestations of being "glued to the floor." If the Spirit of God can so forcibly override a person's will and normal self-control, how is it that He is unable to force believers to do good and sinners to be saved?

#### PASTORING A REVIVAL

Kilpatrick talks at length in his book about pastoring this revival. Even after reading his explanation a couple of times, I'm still confused. How do you "pastor," lead or control a "sovereign move of God?" How do you teach other pastors and leaders to create and then pastor a sovereign move of God? I'm sure my questions sound ludicrous, yet they are the natural response to the ludicrous thought that a sovereign move of God can be controlled, manipulated and even marketed.

Yes, I said marketed. Although there may be no money changing hands, the techniques employed in Pensacola are being widely distributed. Video tapes are being sold to individuals and churches so they will know "the move of God" when it occurs in their midst (or to teach them how to ape the Pensacola manifestations). My wife and I came across some instruction sheets during a recent visit to a Kansas City area church that was preparing for the Pensacola Revival to come to their church.

The "guidelines" for prayer ministry teams, catchers and comfort attenders (none of these "ministries" are listed in Ephesians 4:11) noted that they were presented "as outlined by Brownsville Assembly in Pensacola."

The lengthy guidelines for prayer team ministry include these tips for facilitate the move of God:

"Pray only 30-45 seconds for each person. Watch your catcher for a signal if you are praying too long." [Is this somehow putting a time limit on God? Can we pray too long for each other?]

"Touch lightly with fingertips on the forehead. ...Do not hold their hands or put your hands on any part of the body." [Why is the forehead touch necessary?]

"If the individual does not get 'slain in the Spirit,' do not be concerned. Just tell them to 'bask in the Lord' or 'just rest in the Lord' or 'continue to worship.'" (Doesn't this imply that basking in God's presence, worshipping and resting in the Lord are inferior experiences.)

For "catchers":

"When you walk behind a person, gently touch the shoulders to let them know you are there in preparation to catch them. [Are they less receptive to being hit by the power of God without prior knowledge that they will be "caught?"]

Remove your hands afterwards. If the person falls, hold your hands on their back just above the waist—not under the arms. Do not touch the person while they are receiving prayer."

"Look for open areas before you begin to pray. This will avoid falling on others. If an individual is in the aisle and they are 'slain in the Spirit,' they should be laid uphill."

Comfort attenders:

"If an individual falls, quickly place a cloth over their body." [Would God be insensitive to possible embarrassment?]

"Watch for ladies that are pregnant who may need protection." [isn't God protection enough?]

A good friend of mine grew up in a Pentecostal denomination where being "slain in the Spirit" was quite common. (By the way, my friend is a veteran pastor and teacher who does not believe the phenomenon is biblical). He said in "the good ole' days, we had two tests to see if the falling out was of God. If a person fell and hurt himself we knew it wasn't God. If a woman fell and landed in an immodest position, we knew it wasn't of God." Now those two tests have been eliminated by "catchers" and "comfort attenders."

Despite these nagging questions and others, Pentecostal leaders have been swept away by the newest craze. A friend who was formerly ordained with the Church of God said that the Pensacola leaders are to meet soon with the national leadership in Cleveland, Tennessee, to help spread the revival.

Students at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, we hear, can get academic credit for attending the Brownsville revival. Rev. Thomas Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, has given his blessing to the revival. In a letter to credential holders, Trask wrote:

"First of all, one must recognize that this is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. With that knowledge one must be careful not to become critical when God chooses to work in ways we are unaccustomed; and yet, we are admonished in the Word not to be gullible but to try the spirits."

[Why is so much human effort involved and required if this is a sovereign move of the Spirit? To test the spirits is to be critical, according to the definitions of the words for discernment in Greek. If we are Bible-believing, and Bible living Christians, God's movings will not be strange to us and they will follow patterns already established in His Word.]

"Second, I want to commend Pastor Kilpatrick, his staff, and evangelist Steve Hill for having the desire to pastor this revival, not control it. Here is where wisdom is needed, and they are doing a fine job. The proof is in the fact that it is now into its 15th month. John Kilpatrick has authored a book entitled, Feast of Fire, giving the story of this revival."

[I'm still not clear on how to "pastor" a revival. Is longevity really proof of the spiritual validity of this phenomena? Toronto's been going on for three years or longer. Does that make it more spiritual? Does writing a book about a spiritual activity add to the credibility of that activity?]

"Third, there have been over 30,000 people who have been marvellously saved and are testimonies of the grace of God. True revival always results in people coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and experiencing a radical change of lifestyle. Revival is not just for blessing the saints. The saints will be revived when God is at work"

[I have already questioned these statistics. The AG's own statistics from the Decade of Harvest demonstrate that less than three percent who make a decision for Christ become incorporated into the church. Experiencing Christ is more than a radical change of lifestyle: it's life itself. A lot of people confuse conversion with lifestyle changes. A lot of self-help philosophies offer a variety of lifestyle changes. Just giving up bad habits or starting to attend church regularly are not in themselves proof of a transformed life.]

"Fourth, this move of God was birthed through more than two and a half years of intensive prayer; and, brothers and sisters, it will be prayer that will continue to carry this move of the Spirit."

"Fifth, this revival is not confined to Pensacola, Florida. We are hearing numerous reports of what God is doing. This is a time of visitation. Let us not miss what God wants to do through this church. Be assured He is no respecter of persons or places. He will hear and answer prayer, as we pray and seek His face."

[We know this excitement is not confined to Florida: But it never seems to break out in other parts of the country without someone going to Pensacola to 1) get the blessing; or 2) learn the techniques. Trask's phrase "a time of visitation" has become one of the buzz words of this spreading phenomenon. One pastor used the phrase to intimidate his congregation: "If you miss this move, you'll suffer like the Jews did when they missed their hour of visitation." To oppose this thing is tantamount to "missing the visitation.]"

"Sixth, we must walk humbly before God. The Scripture admonishes, "a proud heart and a proud person He will despise." As we continue to look to Him and are dependent upon Him, I can assure you we will hear from heaven. So, I want to encourage those of you who are in the midst of revival, walk softly and carefully. Those of you who are still praying for revival, don't give up. Continue to ask, continue to seek, and continue to knock; for there will come a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit if we remain faithful."

[Trask's warning seems to be toward those that are unconvinced by the hoopla in Florida. Yet, it is the Pensacola participants and their clones who give the impression that non-participants are spiritually challenged, to use a politically correct term.]

We have pointed out our concerns about this latest fad, but I must add a few additional words of caution before closing. This movement in Pensacola is much more dangerous than its Toronto predecessor for a several reasons.

First, it has more legitimacy because it is occurring in a more traditional and acceptable Pentecostal atmosphere—an Assemblies of God church. Although its roots are the same (Toronto, Vineyard, Kansas City Prophets, etc.), it gives the appearance of being more mainline Pentecostal.

Second, it has received the endorsement of many highly respected leaders in the church world. Toronto had some big name endorsers, but they were part of the fringe of the charismatic

movement and not traditional Pentecostals. Pensacola leaders are desperately trying to get additional endorsements, especially from those men considered to be in the "holiness camp."

Third, it is another step toward uniting all experience-oriented movements and thus leading to the all-encompassing religious system of the last days. Doctrine is denigrated; experience is exalted. Doctrine divides, but experience unites.

Fourth, there is an misleading emphasis on important spiritual matters like holiness, prayer and separation that are very appealing. The problem is that talk about these things is just a ploy to attract more mainstream followers. This is very seductive.

Fifth, the leaders disparage believers who insist on biblical precedents for spiritual manifestations. Church members are intimidated, even ex-communicated, for questioning this new move. There is no room for dialogue with these men.

Sixth, certain deceptions and misrepresentations are obvious. why must the leadership cloak the Toronto connections? Are they ashamed to admit that Pensacola has its roots in Toronto? I would hope so. But such an admission would be a major set back. If this is a sovereign move of the Holy Spirit, why must there be so much hope in the services and the promotion of the revival?

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## Part Two: Toronto Link Grows Stronger

If you mention the Pensacola Revival you better be ready to duck or pucker because people will either want to hit you or kiss you. There is no middle ground when it comes to this reported move of God in the Florida panhandle. Nothing has caused as much consternation and confusion in the church world since....uh....the Toronto Blessing.

But this is not Toronto, we're told. But more on that later.

While some say this is the greatest thing since Azusa Street or maybe even since Pentecost itself, others are saying this is more deadly to Christianity than communism was in its hey-day. One thing is obvious: everyone must decide whether they're "for it or agin it." Even the leadership of the Brownsville Assembly of God church in Pensacola says the division is necessary.

At a November meeting of the Peninsula Florida District of the Assemblies of God, Pensacola Pastor John Kilpatrick told the gathering of ministers that God asked him if He could "bring a sword into the church." Kilpatrick told the group that God wanted to separate those who were against the flow of the Spirit from those who wanted it. Those that God removed, Kilpatrick said, were "too religious." He concluded these remarks by noting that those who are standing against this revival are the religious.

## JUDGING THE JUDGES

While the leaders of the revival call their opposition judgmental, they are just as judgmental. The difference is the standard by which judgments are made. Proponents of Pensacola determine who is religious and who is spiritual by whether or not they accept the manifestations accompanying the revival." Critics of the current move, for the most part, are judging the manifestations by the Word of God and finding no biblical support whatsoever.

Art Katz, in an article titled "Some Cautionary Thoughts on the Present Revival" expresses very well some of our concerns:

"Perhaps one of the most ominous features of the hour is the note of warning sounded about those who have some reserve as being 'obstructions,' 'enemies,' or 'threats' to this outpouring of God. The invitation seems to be to abandon all restraint ('The bar is open') -- leap in, or get out of the way of others if you cannot! ... I cannot help but wonder if it is man's interests that are being so vehemently defended and that we are at the inception of what could ultimately be finalised by the warning that 'they will kill you and claim that they are doing God a service'" (John 16:2).(1)

Katz went on to quote T. Austin Sparks, who compared the Corinthian church's propensity for sensational evidences to its modern counterpart:

"We are in that kind of age today. It is becoming more and more a psychic age. It is an age of the soul just spilling over, asserting itself, taking control of everything Christian as well as outside of it—a soulish age. ... Be careful that you are not hankering for this realm again. Are you after the evidence? My, how I have seen dear Christian people just prostrating themselves, with groaning and crying, almost screaming for evidence—these 'sign' things... Christians and dear men of God, who have been greatly used, are creating an emotional, psychic situation that is involving simple Christians in things which are, sooner or later, going to be a great disillusionment and an offense. It will bring 'offendedness' with the Lord, and that is just what the devil is after." (2)

#### SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY HAPPENING

That something big is happening goes without saying. The real question is what is behind the spiritual excitement. Proponents obviously claim this is a sovereign move of God's Holy Spirit. Some critics claim the spirit operating in the church is demonic, while others are blaming the bizarre behaviour on suggestible followers who are easily manipulated by the leaders.

The Bible tells us to test the spirits to see if they be of God. But when the cautious suggest such a plan, they are called narrow-minded, pride-filled Spirit quenchers. This attack is designed, we believe, to keep the "faithful" following their leaders, and to keep them from hearing reasonable questions and biblical responses.

Before we discuss our testing of the spirits, let me share something with you. I had mentioned in our last issue of The Inkhorn that I hoped to attend a service or two at the Brownsville church during a recent trip to Florida. My schedule and the service schedule at the church did not match up, so I was unable to attend any services. I know some will quickly pounce on that and say, "You can't judge or write about something you've not experienced." We heard the same criticism when we spoke out against Toronto.

First, let me say that we have done considerable research through the writings of the revival leaders and have seen numerous video tapes of the manifestations. We have interviewed dozens of people who have been to Brownsville or to one of its clones. From our knowledge of what is happening, what is being promoted and what God's Word says about such things (and doesn't say), I believe we have sufficient evidence to draw our conclusions.

To attend a service at Brownsville just to rebuff our critics would be costly and, I believe, unnecessary. It might also be putting God to a foolish test. Many solid Bible preachers have

reported that they were skeptical of Brownsville, but attended at the urging of others and came back transformed. (Not for the better, I might add.) It seems obvious that these men, and women, have been seduced by the spirit of Brownsville.

But enough about that.

#### TORONTO CONNECTION BECOMES CLEARER

Anyone who claims that Pensacola is not merely Toronto recycled is not being totally honest. Revival historian Andrew Strom of New Zealand makes that clear:

"... the links between Toronto and Pensacola are so strong that I am surprised that they are not more widely known." (3)

Evangelist Steve Hill has acknowledged that he had spent considerable time with a leader of the Toronto movement at the Holy Trinity Brompton church in London. Pastor John Kilpatrick defended in his book the same manifestations that were prevalent at Toronto. (These things were covered in our October article.)

Charisma magazine has endorsed the Brownsville revival and made no bones about linking it with Toronto. Under the headline "Toronto Blessing Spreads Worldwide," the magazine made this observation:

"Springfield, Missouri—home to the Assemblies of God headquarters—was considered resistant to the Toronto Blessing. That began to change in June when Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick held special services at Central Assembly of God next to AG headquarters." (4)

Pro-Pensacola writer, Beth McDuffie, made the connection quickly. She wrote,

"As people went forward, they began to fall down shaking and crying, etc., just like 'Toronto' meetings everywhere." (5)

As we noted in the Issues and Insights column of our October issue, the new head of the AG Men's Ministries sees Toronto, Brownsville, Hill and Rodney-Howard Brown as all part of the same move. Only a few die-hards are trying to create a gulf between Toronto and Pensacola that just does not exist.

#### WHOLE LOTA SHAKIN' GOIN' ON

That old Jerry Lee Lewis song title seems to fit the Pensacola phenomena better than its declared anthem, "The Mercy Seat." While uncontrollable laughter was the primary manifestation at Toronto (at least at the beginning), uncontrollable shaking is the most prevalent in Pensacola. There is laughter and other Toronto-style manifestations, but the most popular is shaking. Sometimes it is more like jerking; other times it is deep bowing. The most widely seen video of this manifestation is being distributed by AG headquarters. We'll let pro-Pensacola, Charisma staff writer Lee Grady describe it for us. This is Grady's description of Alison Ward's testimony.

"As she spoke, Alison shook in a manner so awkward that a casual observer might think she suffered from cerebral palsy. Then, while trembling violently, she issued a plea so heartfelt that those in the room say they heard God speaking through her. Choking back tears she said intently:

'God is in a hurry. There's not much more time. He aches and He grieves for your spirit.' At that moment Alison fell to the floor. A deafening chorus of moaning and wailing filled the room as people were moved by an almost eerie sense of God's love for lost souls ... Alison's eight-minute testimony, which was captured on video tape, represents the defining moment of this revival." (6)

I have seen this particular video. My heart went out to the young woman—first, because I thought she suffered from a physical affliction; then because I realized the terrible delusion to which she had succumbed, and finally because she was being shamelessly used by her spiritual leaders. The lack of self-control (a fruit of the Spirit) makes it obvious that the manifestations of poor Alison are not Spirit endowed.

Strom observes:

"I'm sorry, but I just cannot go along with the idea that God wants to distort the limbs and the bodies of his children so that they look like sufferers of Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Parkinson's Disease, I cannot go along with a 'revival' that makes God's children 'jerk' for hours at a time, just like the mental patients seen in our psychiatric wards every day. And I cannot go along with a shrieking, hyena-like laughter being described as 'holy.' I have to be frank and say, it all sound too much like the devil to me." (7)

#### JERKING DISRUPTS CLASSES

Several students in Brooksville, Florida, who had attended the Pensacola revival with their youth pastor were reprimanded by high school officials after they continued to manifest the jerking and deep bowing in their classes. The manifestation was picked up at the 'revival' and the teens claimed they could not control it. This kind of behaviour brings reproach rather than honor to the name of Jesus. But the teens are merely mimicking the uncontrollable actions of their adult leaders.

At the district conference referred to earlier, Kilpatrick admitted to the assembled pastors that he has been so "drunk in the spirit" that he actually struck his youth pastor's car with his own. He said that while driving he had hit many garbage cans sitting at the curb on several occasions because he was so "drunk." He added that his wife (a visitor to Toronto, by the way) has been so drunk she couldn't cook. Sometimes, his drunken stupors are so severe that he has to be taken from the service in a wheel chair, Kilpatrick said.

In our book, 'No Laughing Matter', we discussed Toronto-style churches that had "designated drivers" for their too-drunk-to-drive parishioners. We also noted that many students from these churches missed classes because of "Holy Ghost hangovers" or disrupted classes with their laughter and other erratic behaviors. I see a strong link here. Don't you?

#### BIZARRE BEHAVIOR JUSTIFIED

These unbiblical manifestations are justified by the Pensacola leaders and their followers, either by wrenching Scripture out of context, reading between the lines of Scripture or, best of all, saying that if the Bible doesn't clearly prohibit an activity, then it is okay with God. (Again, these are the same tactics used by the Toronto leadership.)

One classic example of this is found in the winter edition of Enrichment magazine, an AG publication for ministers. Kilpatrick is being interviewed by the author about the Brownsville "outpouring." Under the subhead of "Surprises of the Spirit" Kilpatrick says:

"God is taking us from glory to glory, and this glory won't seem like the last glory. for most of what we experience I can take you to Scripture.

"On the Day of Pentecost the believers were staggering as if drunk. Peter stood up and said this was foretold by the prophet Joel. Much of what they were doing had come out of Joel's prophecy, but the one major exception—they were speaking in other tongues. Joel never mentioned it, but they were doing it even though Peter could not give chapter and verse for it. It was a surprise." (8)

Well, I'm certainly surprised. Kilpatrick, without any fear, made unwarranted additions to Joel's prophecy. He made the book of Acts say something that it clearly does not say. His is speculative theology at best and blatant misrepresentation at worst. No one to my knowledge ever interpreted that passage in Acts to mean that those who came down from the upper room were staggering around like drunken sailors on shore leave. The first time I ever heard that was from the "apologists" of Toronto.

First, let me say the context makes it clear that the mockers accused them of being drunk because they could not understand the unknown tongues in which they spoke. The unfamiliar languages, no doubt, sounded like the slurred gibberish associated with those who have had a little too much to drink. But it is a far and dangerous stretch of the facts to say those empowered by the Holy Ghost were staggering around.

Pentecostal believers traditionally have held that speaking in tongues is the first sign of believers being filled with the Holy Ghost. With that in mind, most Pentecostal scholars hold that the speaking in tongues at Pentecost was the confirmation that the Spirit had been poured out. True, Joel did not specifically say the believers would speak in tongues, but neither did he even hint that they would act like drunks at a party. Kilpatrick threw out the clear inference and interjected his own self-serving interpretation.

## THE SET UP

Kilpatrick's error was intentional, I believe. His whole purpose was to send out the message that the church doesn't need chapter and verse for manifestations of the Spirit. That speaks volumes. It is obvious that most of the manifestations at Pensacola cannot be given a biblical precedent. So, Kilpatrick says that it's not essential to have one.

This reminds me of Rodney Howard-Browne's remark that you "can't put this move of God to a theological test." The message of Pensacola is nothing more than regurgitated Toronto philosophy: "Don't think. Don't question. Just jump in. Just experience. Just believe your leadership." That whole attitude is cultic and dangerous.

I agree with A. W. Tozer who said,

"I am a Bible Christian and if an archangel with a wingspread as broad as a constellation shining like the sun were to come and offer me some new truth, I'd ask him for a reference. If he could not show me where it is found in the Bible, I would bow him out and say, 'I'm awfully sorry, you don't

bring any references with you." (9)

This is not the attitude at Pensacola. There, the preaching of the Word is minimised, trivialized and criticized. Any spiritual movement that is not based on the truth of the Word and the honest preaching of that Word must be rejected.

The Pensacola revival has created in the Pentecostal church a paradigm shift in its understand of the authority of Scripture, the work of Christ, the character of the Holy Spirit and His work in the church and the plan of God. This shift is a major one. It is laying the ground work for the next "move of God" that will make the Pensacola fiasco pale into insignificance.

## Pensacola: Latter Rain Deception (by Rev. Ron Stringfellow)

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"Those who disregard the past are bound to repeat it."-- George Santayana

In 1949 at the General Council of the Assemblies of God held in Seattle, the Council overwhelmingly approved a resolution that was prepared by a committee that dealt with the Latter Rain Movement. The resolution adopted disapproved of the following practices of the Latter Rain, and the action was made necessary as a result of the movement invading the Assembly of God churches:

1. The over-emphasis relative to imparting, identifying, bestowing, or confirming of gifts by the laying on of hands and prophecy.
2. The erroneous teaching that the Church is built on the foundation of present-day apostles and prophets.
3. The extreme teaching as advocated by the "New Order," regarding the confession of sin to man and deliverance as practiced, which claims prerogatives to human agency which belongs only to Christ.
4. The erroneous teaching concerning the impartation of the gift of languages as special equipment for missionary service.
5. The extreme and unscriptural practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by the means of the gifts of utterance.
6. Such other wrestlings and distortions of scripture interpretations which are in opposition to teachings and practices generally accepted among us.(1)

The Latter Rain featured individuals with "oil in the hands"; congregational singing of "the song of the Lord" singing in the Spirit; the emphasis on "God is doing a new thing"; the manifested sons of God teaching; the placing of experience over exposition; the branding of those who denounced the movement; getting away from what the church had been.

In a letter from the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God (April 20, 1949), these observations were given: [They are still valid today.]

"The true test of any movement is whether or not it will stand up under the light of the Word of God. We cannot depend alone upon the testimony of spiritual blessing, which many have claimed to have received under the 'new order.' When the 'Jesus Only' issue swept the country in the years 1914-1917, there was a constant testimony that this was a revelation from God accompanied by great spiritual blessing. The movement was judged, however, not on the testimony of spiritual blessings, but on its adherence to the Scriptures. When it was found that its claims did not conform to sound doctrine, its message was rejected. Dire calamities were predicted upon all who failed to 'walk in the light' of that 'revelation' but all predictions failed of fulfillment. We have heard similar predictions for failure to accept the 'new order' teaching, which we regret exceedingly."

"How shall we labor with any effect to build up the Church if we have no thorough knowledge of her history or fail to apprehend it from the proper point of observation? History is, and must ever continue to be, next to God's Word, the richest foundation of wisdom and sweet guide to all successful practical activity." Philip Schaff

It is the opinion of this Assembly of God pastor that we have once again endorsed a movement that will yet again chip away at the chink of armour once worn called Integrity. However, that is not the opinion of this pastor alone. Fully divided we now stand. Some will say that I am in wrong standing by publically speaking out on these issues; I will say I am in agreement with the stand of what was once a great denomination of godly men and women. My evidence exist in the 1949 mandate of the Assemblies of God. To my knowledge it has not been rescinded. Further, our General Secretary Woods has courageously and publically taken a stand against the so-called "laughing revival," the root of the movement of which I am to speak, which endorses many of the manifestations that take place. To substantiate such accusations I submit the following proofs:

### PENSACOLA BLESSING

#### Violation of Practice 1

Cathy Wood, reporter for Brownsville Assembly of God, states, "What started in Toronto...really is HERE too..We so appreciate Bro. Arnott for being open to God because that's where Mrs. Kilpatrick went...to his church in Toronto and the impartation (anointing) did truly follow her home to us!" (2)

and

"Our pastor's wife went to Toronto in February or March of 1994, I don't remember when for sure, but when she got back...without even telling of any of the manifestations she had seen...a few started that very Sunday she returned. She came back healed of things...so changed that Pastor was jealous of the refreshing touch God had given her! Happy, but jealous!" (2)

"Then Lindel Cooley became our new worship leader. Our other one was anointed but Lindel brought something more....He, too, had visited Toronto right before he came to Brownsville." (2)

Steve Hill has made no secret of receiving an impartation from Sandy Millar at Holy Trinity Brompton Church in England. This impartation came from Millar's "laying on of hands" upon Hill. (3)

#### The Branding of Those Who Denounced The Movement

There are many forums whereby Rev. John Kilpatrick's scorching letter addressed to Hank Hanegraaf can be found; but in the interest of brevity, we will take only certain excerpts:

"...But I don't know who called you to be the high sheriff of heaven and go around straightening everybody out. I don't know who did that, but let me tell you one thing. You may criticize other people and other moves of God and other ministries, but you had better leave you hands off this one..... And Mr. Hanegraaff, I want to say to you, before you get back on television and start spouting off at the mouth again about something of which you know nothing of, you'd better be careful because God says 'vengeance is mine saith the Lord.' And I want to say something else to

you. If you want to keep any semblance of a ministry, you had better back off from this revival and from what God is doing here. You had better back off because I am going to prophesy to you that if you don't, and you don't, and you continue to put your tongue in your mouth against this move of God, within 90 days the Holy Ghost will bring you down! I said within 90 days the Holy Ghost will bring you down! And I speak that as a man of God. I don't speak that out of vengeance, I don't speak that out of selfishness, and I don't speak it out of a hurt feeling, because my feelings are not hurt. I feel as normal today as I have ever felt. I don't have a chip on my shoulder, I don't have an axe to grind. But this is a move of God and you better leave it alone." (4)

Dr. Brown's "Scorning the Sacred" chapter is a thinly veiled attempt at silencing the critics. While he chastizes the "critics" of Brownsville and warns of the possibilities of incurring God's wrath, he has no concerns for himself as he predicts and presumes that the Brownsville "critics":

(a). First and foremost, are ignorant. (b). are foolish. (c). elevate the traditions made of men. (d). scorn the sacred things of God (e). are tragic, sad, pitiful gossips with biased opinions, spewing garbage and spreading baseless accusations, to whom nothing, absolutely nothing, not even the things of God are sacred. (f). have a pattern of acting in ignorance and unbelief.

There are as many as 26 different accusations listed. Suffice it to say this is the general spirit of them all. (5)

#### God Is Doing A NEW THING

A statement introduced by the Latter Rain Movement and later disapproved of by the 1949 General Council of the Assemblies of God that was God was "doing a new thing". I personally heard Rev. Kilpatrick say this was a "New Move of God," in Kerrville, Texas, in October 1996, a service about which I will speak more later.

[Editor's Note: There are plenty of examples on this website of references to the "new-thing" with regard to the revival. It has almost been a hallmark of the entire movement since it began, and even John Wimber labelled it "New Beginnings". This harks back to the previous century's Sonship doctrines, and also to the belief in a powerful fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the endtimes to bring the Church to "fulness".]

#### The Placing of Experience over Exposition

"THIS IS NOT A PREACHING REVIVAL," Rev. Kilpatrick went on to say, "for when men preach a good sermon, men get the credit."

In his sermon "The God-Mockers," Rev. Kilpatrick states that those who want to measure everything by the Scriptures need to know that THESE THINGS CANNOT always be measured by the Scriptures.

This information was printed and passed out at Brownsville Assembly of God to explain the manifestations that are taking place at the revival:

1. Falling on the floor (being slain in the Spirit)--Resting in the presence of God. Something tremendously important is being done within you (deep inner healing, preparation for the ministry, physical healing, receiving of visions, feeling the love of God.)

2. Laughter--The medical profession has discovered health and wholeness comes through laughter. Healing can come through laughter.

3. Shaking (head, feet, and body)--Sign of a much deeper happening. Not just body shaking, but there is a prophetic shaking. This is often a type of intercessory prayer. People who shake are often used prophetically. God will shake the status quo and our agendas, plans, complacency, and the theology that says God only works "this way." Everything built on sand will be shaken.

4. Deep bowing--The Jewish people who worship at the wailing wall do so with deep bowing. This manifestation is usually seen in intercessors.

Note: These manifestations and explanations listed were copied almost verbatim from the Toronto literature.

#### Commercialism

"1 billion served..." That's the McDonald's food chain claim and it serves as self-aggrandizement. The sign that once existed and may still exist out front of Brownsville Assembly of God says "100,000 saved" (or whatever the number is now) and does no less than McDonalds.\* The Bible warns us to avoid such. The Bible declares to us that heaven rejoices over ONE. (6)

"We had to start tickets to get into the church..." (9)

\*Since then, under scrutiny of peers, the sign has been changed to "100,000 have responded to altar calls."

#### Lies and Deception

Rev. John Kilpatrick in his letter of apology to Hank Hanegraaf dated 6/18/97 states, "When I heard our church linked with cultic deception, it caused me to feel anger and indignation....." Further stating " I was not speaking that as a prophet but as a shepherd putting something in the ears of God.....it was me speaking that and not a `thus saith the Lord.'"

Compare these statements with those made in his first PROPHECY--his words, not mine: "AND I SPEAK THAT AS A MAN OF GOD....I don't speak out of vengeance....my feelings are not hurt." (4)

On more than one occasion, Rev. Hill has repeated the story of police dropping off teenagers whom they would have otherwise taken to jail. Pensacola police department emphatically denies this stating that anyone caught doing so would have been dismissed.

On more than one occasion, Dr. Brown and other leadership have stated that the crime rate in Pensacola has drastically been affected. Pensacola Police Dept. statistics for the last five years prove differently.

Rev. Hill has stated the public schools' Christian activities and groups have grown vastly. The Pensacola School Superintendents differ with this stating emphatically that some parents had to be called because students were disrupting classes by shaking and falling on the ground.

My own personal observations:

Much of the information I have gathered has not come from the "critics" of Brownsville but out of Brownsville itself. They have damned themselves by their own words. My experience and the Word of God reveals to me this too is a trait of a proud and arrogant Satan.

I listened to Rev. Kilpatrick in Kerrville, Texas, at a meeting that our district and section leaders encouraged leadership to attend. This happened long before the "evidence that demands a verdict" begin to manifest itself. It was shortly before this that I begin to suspect that all was not well, that slewfoot was once again making himself known among the elect. When I begin to see young scholars leaving our denomination, a red flag went up. As I begin to inquire, I increasingly found that the problem was coming out of the situation in Florida.

I made mention of these concerns to my district officials before the leadership meeting. My inquiry was met with silence. The following were some of the additional concerns that I addressed in an addendum to my first correspondence:

"Rev Kilpatrick spoke for three and one-half hours without any mention of Scripture..... this statement stood out--`This is not a preaching revival.' He went on to say something to the effect that when men preach a good sermon, men get the glory. May I remind us: "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17) When Peter preached the Word, no one praised Peter. God was praised and three thousand were added that day.(9)

"And when he made the call for everybody that wants prayer come forward, there were a thousand people come rushing forward." (referring to Father's Day '95 [10]) He repeated this claim in the Pentecostal Evangel, yet the video tape I previewed (10) did not quite fit that description.

As we ALL SAW, Rev. Hill pleaded and begged for some time. It WAS NOT a spontaneous move into the altars as we are led to believe. Sometime later (after the film was edited), we were shown full altars. I understand that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit one might forget some details here and there, but that same person did not fail to notice the cleavage of, as he put it, a `well-endowed woman.' I find that quite interesting that he would notice something like that in the middle of one of the greatest revivals ever known to mankind. My board members also found a like comment made on the tape (10)--`Was her husband home?'-- rather risqué in the middle of one of the greatest revivals known to mankind."

Regarding jerking manifestations:

"....those of you who have had reservations about the manifestations of jerking need to know two things: 1) That it wouldn't save you and it wouldn't change your life..... 2) that you are trying to dictate to the Holy Spirit how He has to operate within His people. (I didn't highlight this because it is paraphrased.) Then the good Reverend turned right around and admonished his audience of CLERGY, PASTORS, and BISHOPS that there were not to be any messages in prophecies or interpretations tonight. That is not what God is doing. WHO is dictating what the Holy Spirit may or may not do?"

Brick after brick was added to the foundational belief of this being a Latter Day Deception. Still there were those proponents of Brownsville that said you cannot judge because you have not been there. In July I went. Interesting enough the greatest revival known to mankind was closed on Sunday (usually a church's main service) due to RAIN!. Thankfully the Baptists down the street

were still listening to God's Word.

I did take time to canvas the neighborhood. This was my observation: Across the street is one of the largest bingo parlors I have seen. Down the road, about two blocks is a girly strip joint and bar. Every other house and business has burglar bars on the windows. I stopped two policemen and asked, "How long have you been on the force?"

"Eighteen years," he replied.

"How is the crime rate, here?" I asked.

"You are safe as long as you are standing here with me. This is crack center U.S.A. Short of Divine intervention, nothing will help it."

Gee, I am thinking...the neighborhoods are full of poor desperate government- housing people in drastic need of revival and hope. Yet, God seemed to be held captive within the walls of Brownsville. While this is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Pensacola, the leadership lives in one of the most affluent. What is wrong with this picture?

My conviction stands firm. We are in the midst of one of the greatest LATTER DAY DECEPTIONS known to mankind. The Bible tells us that there will be a separating of the chaff and the wheat, a great shaking, a time when if it were possible the very elect will be deceived.

Rev. Ron Stringfellow, Pastor of Medina Valley Assembly of God

## Brownsville Testimony (by Shawn Paul Sauve)

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As a charismatic Christian, I have had some interest in the doctrines and practices being advocated at Brownsville. This has resulted in some on-going dialogue with staff at Brownsville. I have also listened to many Brownsville sermons that I downloaded from the internet, and read many statements made by the staff at Brownsville.

One statement that has been repeatedly made to me was, "Shawn, if you would just come and experience the 'Pensacola Outpouring,' all doubts about whether these doctrines and practices are from God would go away!" "Shawn, its about preaching holiness and people getting saved; the manifestations are peripheral!"

Not being able to afford to travel down to Brownsville, I did the next best thing. John Kilpatrick and the "Pensacola Outpouring" visited a church near me, and I went to the service to "experience first-hand" this mighty move of God. This particular service certainly put everything into perspective, and honestly, it shook me.

The rest of this article describes the service, and you will have the option to listen to audio excerpts from the service. I arrived about 30 minutes prior to the service and sat in the second row in front of the stage. As I read scripture and quietly prayed, I noticed several themes in the conversations around me.

One theme was the Kilpatrick prophesy about CRI, and how awful and outlandish Hank Hanegraaff is. The other theme was their sense of expectation for the types of manifestations that would happen that night.

The service began with a time of praise and worship. These were standard Pentecostal choruses, and I freely raised my hands and worshipped God. Nothing out of the ordinary here. As the praise and worship closed, the worship leader talked about his expectation for manifestations. The pastor of the church then gave an introduction for John Kilpatrick, again, emphasizing his expectation for manifestations. There was no need to pull out a Bible because the "sermon" was basically a string of anecdotal stories about esoteric and for the most part, undocumentable experiences.

In one case, John Kilpatrick was in school when God spoke to him audibly. When the bell rung for him to move to a different class where he states that, ". . . I got up to walk and I couldn't feel my legs at all. I couldn't feel them . . . I couldn't feel my feet or my legs moving at all. Now, I was moving . . . but it felt like I was gliding up that hall."

One interesting story was about the church that John Kilpatrick attended as a child. The church had been having a revival for six to eight weeks when the pastor shut the revival down. John Kilpatrick says that, "When he did, he raised the ire and the anger of a group of people in the church who didn't like it." During this time, Kilpatrick was at a midnight prayer meeting when a couple of angels visited the group. John Kilpatrick's description of the experience was that it was "spooky."

Then John Kilpatrick and the other members of the prayer group went down onto the floor unconscious until the following morning. According to John Kilpatrick, those in the church that wanted the revival to continue in the church were never seen again, ". . . there was never an echo heard of them ever. They never, they never came back to the church, they were just plucked up and gone. I believe it had something to do with those angels being there."

I found this story interesting for a couple of reasons. First, anyone who has talked to Brownsville staff and asked difficult questions about doctrines and practices at Brownsville will know that you are quickly labeled a "critic of revival."

One staff member at Brownsville even suggests that these "critics" may be "wager[ing their] salvation" by questioning Brownsville (See Michael Brown's "Scorning the Sacred" at <http://www.eatel.net/~wsomers/scorning.html>).

In John Kilpatrick's story he appears to stand with the pastor who opposed revival, and it was the people who wanted revival that were "plucked up and gone." My second observation was that this is yet another account being told by Brownsville staff that seems to have an intimidating effect on its audience. After all, who would want to question or test John Kilpatrick by Scripture if there is a possibility that they may lose their salvation, or that angels may come and take them out.

The anecdotal stories continued as John Kilpatrick told a story about he and his wife riding in their car when they received a ". . . kiss of Heaven. Just like God pulled us by the nape of the neck and gave us a smoocher right across our soul [kissing sound]. You know, just kissed us."

Concerning the outpouring in Brownsville, John Kilpatrick acknowledges that he ". . . lost all of our best friends that we had in this world over this move of God. We lost them all. As a matter of fact, one of our best friends said to us in my office when I was trying to calm her and her husband down, she said, 'But preacher, why do you want this Holy Spirit junk in this church' She called it Holy Spirit junk. She got so upset, she started manifesting demons. Friend, I'm telling you the truth. Is it the truth Brenda? [Note: Brenda did not respond when questioned] She started manifesting demons, these were our friends. And I had to stop three times and pray and bow my head and pray, and say 'Jesus, Lord, please Jesus, touch this woman, touch this woman Lord.' She was so violently angry, the devil was manifesting through her. She did not want a move of God. She called it Holy Spirit junk and this stuff."

A couple of questions about the account immediately jumped into my mind. If John Kilpatrick had people in his church that he knew so well, and they were not saved, why did he not minister to them the gospel message? These are best friends of his and he did not know that they were demon possessed?

If they were in fact demon possessed, why did he not minister to them by praying for them and casting the demons out of them? If you are a pastor that is hungering for revival, why not reach out to these unsaved friends in your own church? If as John Kilpatrick claims, the revival is a sovereign move of God that caught his church by surprise, why were they losing all of their best friends over the move of God before it even began?

John Kilpatrick's account of the start of the Brownsville revival indicated that it did not start with preaching of the Word of God where people were convicted. Rather, it started with Steve Hill

prancing across the stage like a gazelle repeating over and over again "

In a minute I'm going to pray for you." According to Kilpatrick, "[People] began falling like someone was gunning them down in a battlefield, they were just falling down." The distinct impression given by John Kilpatrick was that, real revival is defined as people having manifestations and falling down.

John Kilpatrick told a story from Brownsville where he "vomited" up a "word of knowledge." When he "threw-up" this word, a silver spear came out of his mouth and sailed across the church and audibly smacked a woman in the chest. She fell over backwards and John Kilpatrick thought that God had killed her because she was "scream[ing] bloody murder."

According to Kilpatrick the silver spear was the Lord's word, and that word healed her of an ailment from which she was suffering. Throughout the course of the evening the expectation and anticipation of the crowd was built up as John Kilpatrick repeatedly reminded the crowd that he was going to pray for them.

As he repeated for the sixth time in his message that he would pray for the crowd, you could literally feel and hear the sense of expectation and excitement beginning to peak in the crowd. He exhorted the crowd, "Don't miss what God is doing in these days . . . Friends, God is God. God can do what God wants to do [this is a truism that no Christian would disagree with] . . . If I'm gonna err I wanna err on the side of the Holy Spirit rather than against the Holy Spirit . . ." Earlier in the evening he had even told the congregation, "If you don't feel it fake it." After John Kilpatrick completed his anecdotal stories about manifestations, things went from bad to worse. His "speaking in tongues" for a long period without an interpretation was a red flag.

I guess that what he was doing would have been labeled "speaking in tongues," but it sounded more like an Indian chant "Oo-ee-ah-oo-ee" (with occasional "whoosh" and "shew . . . Holy Ghost" sounds made into the microphone etc.). This "chanting" went on for a period of over twenty minutes. During this time Brenda Kilpatrick was the first person in the church to "manifest." With the background of the "Indian-like chant" her hands shook as she rhythmically moved them from her side to above her head and back down again. Over and over.

John Kilpatrick prayed for Brenda first. One hand was on her head and the other reached around her back as she stood in a "cowering" position. Her legs were bent and she looked as though he were applying great force to push her down. Occasionally he would slap her back in different places. He would also wave his hand across her forehead like he was swiping something out of the bangs of her hair. He made the same swiping motion along her arms. This same style of prayer was applied to other people right in front of me. Slapping the back, swiping motions, and pressure on the head (over and over again).

John Kilpatrick even rubbed his hands all over a man's chest at one point. At the same time that he prayed for people in this fashion he would be chanting this "Indian-like chant."

He was also blowing on the people, and shouting "whoosh" or "shew" as he had earlier in the evening. People were shaking and jerking out of control, the sound of the crowd was peppered with sardonic laughter (when people say "sardonic laughter" I now have a frame of reference), and terrifying shrieking and moaning. I thought to myself, "I am no longer in what could be rightly called

a "Church." During this prayer time Brownsville praise music was played over the sound-system.

Though we sing many of the same choruses in my own church, in this environment I could not feel free to worship God (as I had freely done earlier in the evening). I needed to be extremely spiritually aware. Painfully I watched a husband and wife carry a newborn baby to the front of the church (she wasn't even one month old). I was watching them and praying for their safety, because they could very easily have been "taken out" by one of the people next to them jerking and shaking out of control. When John Kilpatrick prayed for them they surrendered their baby to strangers, and went down on the floor shaking.

I watched the baby get passed through the crowd wondering, "How does someone give up their Godly responsibility to care for and protect their children so easily?" As a new father I couldn't fathom it. I would protect my son to the point of laying down my life for him. Even when the parents got up off the floor they were shaking and clearly in no condition to hold a baby. The baby was passed back to them, but they had to surrender her to someone else because they were literally unable to hold her. More could be said, but this is getting long.

Tragically, it appears that we are moving to a new paradigm in the Church, from an age of expositional preaching to an age of esoteric experience. The gospel has been reduced to an "esoteric experience of enlightenment." As I sat in this service, I was horrified beyond what I can adequately explain in words.

I went into the service with an idea that perhaps there was a chance that those who have been speaking out about Brownsville have been wrong. I thought, maybe they are over-stating the dangers a bit. Seeing John Kilpatrick work-up and encourage bizarre manifestations only a few feet from me put those ideas to rest. "Shawn, just come and experience it, then you'll see!"

Oh yes, I've seen. "Shawn, this isn't about the experiences, they are secondary. Its about preaching the gospel, holiness, and people getting saved."

In John Kilpatrick's entire sermon not a single Scripture was referenced, the Gospel was not preached, and the bizarre manifestations appeared to be the point of the whole evening.

John Kilpatrick's description of the beginning of the Brownsville revival seemed very similar to the service that I attended. The gospel was not preached (a message was not given according to Kilpatrick), and the evidence that revival had come was not that people were saved, but because people fell down on the floor out of control.

The more I research Brownsville and ask difficult questions of Brownsville staff, the more I find myself praying with tears, "Lord have mercy on your Church. Lord, please send reformation, and begin with me.

" \* \* \* \* \*

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." -- 1 Peter 5:8

## Was Jonathan Edwards the Father of the Toronto Blessing?

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Apologists for the so-called "Toronto blessing" have often appealed to the writings of the great American theologian, Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), to give an air of respectability to the experiences and manifestations which have taken place in their gatherings. In particular, they have referred to and quoted from Edwards' *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*.

This was a treatise published by Edwards in 1741, during the remarkable revival that swept New England in 1740-42, usually known as "The Great Awakening." Edwards' concern in the *Distinguishing Marks* was to defend the authentic nature of the Awakening as (on the whole, and despite defects) a true work of the Holy Spirit.

This defence was prompted by serious criticisms which some had leveled against the movement. Critics were saying that it could not possibly be a genuine work of the Spirit, in view of certain features of the Awakening which contradicted the critics' understanding of how the Spirit worked. One of their main problems was the physical behaviour of some of those affected by the Awakening during services of worship - trembling, weeping, crying out, falling, fainting.

It was not uncommon for these physical phenomena to disturb and interrupt the service, sometimes bringing it to an abrupt conclusion.

There are obvious parallels here with the recent Toronto blessing, which has also seen religious gatherings disturbed and interrupted by outbreaks of physical phenomena, such as falling, fainting, pogo-style bouncing, running on the spot, hysterical laughter and animal noises. Critics have questioned whether such manifestations can correctly be attributed to the activity of the Holy Spirit. Various advocates of the Toronto blessing have gone to Edwards' *Distinguishing Marks*, and used his defence of the Great Awakening in order to vindicate the spiritual authenticity of modern Toronto-type phenomena[1]. So it has now become common to see Edwards being quoted by Toronto writers in their favour. Indeed, one sometimes gets the impression that Jonathan Edwards, rather than Rodney Howard-Browne, was the real founding father of the Toronto blessing!

However, this creates a severe problem for those who admire Edwards, but see little or nothing to admire in the Toronto blessing. Edwards was not only a prince among Reformed theologians, but one of the greatest, most spiritually perceptive thinkers in the entire history of Christianity. Can he really be quoted in favour of a religious movement which many regard as gravely unbalanced and dubious even at best, and at worst a destructive deception? Meanwhile, association of the name of Edwards with the Toronto blessing has lent the movement a theological credibility it might not otherwise have had.

My purpose here is to see whether the writings of Edwards, particularly his *Distinguishing Marks*, have been rightly interpreted by these Toronto apologists. My plan is simply to work through the *Distinguishing Marks*, look at what Edwards actually says about the signs of a true work of the

Spirit, examine the passages to which Toronto apologists have appealed, and also draw attention to other key passages which have not received equivalent exposure in recent Toronto literature. We will also glance at some other products of Edwards' pen, notably his *Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*, to see what light they shed on some of the issues under debate So, without further ado, let us begin.

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## Prologue

Edwards prefaced the *Distinguishing Marks* with some crucially important words about the role of Scripture in testing whether any religious movement or experience is a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. His words are,

And I would here observe, that we are to take the Scriptures as our guide in such cases. This is the great and standing rule which God has given to his children, in order to guide them in things relating to the great concerns of their souls: and it is an infallible and sufficient rule. There are undoubtedly sufficient marks given to guide the church of God in this great affair of judging of spirits, without which it would lie open to woeful delusions, and would be remedilessly exposed to be imposed on and devoured by its enemies. [2]

The central truth here is the sufficiency of Scripture. Edwards clearly believed that the Bible itself was the one and only guide in religious matters. Not only was Scripture necessary: nothing else was necessary. Therefore it is to Scripture, and Scripture alone, that Edwards bids us go if we would discern between true works of the Spirit and counterfeits. If the Bible sets its seal of approval on a religious experience, whether of an individual or a group, we can feel sure that the experience is of God. But if no such approval is forthcoming from the Bible, Edwards would have us withhold our approval also.

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## Section 1: Negative Signs

Having set out the basic standard by which he intended to test religious phenomena, Edwards then proceeded to offer nine "negative signs." By "negative signs" he meant features of a religious experience which do not prove that it is not a true work of the Holy Spirit. But by the same token, a "negative sign" also refers to features of an experience which do not prove that is a true work of the Spirit. In other words, Edwards wanted first of all to draw people's attention to various religious phenomena which are neutral as evidence: they do not show that something is not from God, but neither do they show that it is from God. Edwards' discussion of these negative signs is very helpful, because today we find people appealing to precisely such signs to show that God is at work - or that He is not.

### 1st Negative Sign: The unusual

Edwards' first negative sign was the unusual or extraordinary nature of a religious experience:

Nothing can be certainly concluded from this, That a work is carried on in a way very unusual or extraordinary; provided the variety or difference be such, as may still be comprehended within the

limits of scripture rules. What the church has been used to, is not a rule by which we are to judge; because there may be new extraordinary works of God, and he has heretofore evidently wrought in an extraordinary manner. He has brought to pass new things, strange works; and he has wrought in such a manner as to surprise both men and angels. [3]

Edwards went on to appeal to the sovereignty of God to prove that He can work in new ways not previously known in the history of His people.

The Holy Spirit is sovereign in his operation; and we know that he uses a great variety; and we cannot tell how great a variety he may use, within the compass of the rules he himself has fixed. We ought not to limit God where he has not limited himself. [4]

Some Toronto apologists have recently appealed to these words of Edwards to justify the extraordinary religious phenomena of the Toronto blessing - particularly the animal noises and behaviour experienced by many as they have "received the blessing." This, they claim, is exactly what Edwards was talking about: it is the Holy Spirit working in a new way, previously unknown in Christian history. After all, the Spirit has nowhere said in Scripture that He will not work in this way. And "we ought not to limit God where he has not limited himself."

This use of Edwards will not stand up to careful scrutiny. We need to notice that Edwards quite explicitly states that God has limited Himself by Scripture. The Spirit is free to work in extraordinary ways, Edwards argues, as long as those ways "may still be comprehended within the limits of scripture rules." And immediately before the statement that "we ought not to limit God where he has not limited himself," Edwards equally clearly states that the sovereignty of the Spirit is limited by the rules he himself has fixed." For Edwards, Scripture contains "rules", or what we today would probably call "guidelines", about how God works; and God will never step outside these guidelines in the way His Spirit operates. This is not to detract in the slightest from God's sovereignty. It is merely to say that God has sovereignly limited himself never to work outside the guidelines of Scripture. It is, therefore, a dangerously unsound use of Edwards to isolate his statement about the freedom of the Spirit to work in extraordinary ways, and to ignore his clear and crucial statement about the rules or guidelines of Scripture. From an Edwardean point of view, we would most emphatically need to ask of any religious experience: "Does it keep within the clear guidelines laid down by the Holy Spirit in Scripture concerning the true nature of the Spirit's work?"

We next need to inquire what exactly Edwards had in mind when he spoke about unusual and extraordinary ways" in which the Holy Spirit might operate. We do not need to indulge in guesswork; Edwards himself tells us what he meant. He specified the following unusual things:

"an extraordinary conviction of the dreadful nature of sin, and a very uncommon sense of the misery of a Christless condition";

"extraordinary views of the certainty and glory of divine things";

"very extraordinary affections [emotions] of fear and sorrow, desire, love or joy";

"if the apparent change [conversion] be very sudden, and the work carried on with very unusual swiftness";

"the persons affected are very numerous, and many of them are very young." [5]

There is absolutely nothing in what Edwards says here to suggest that he was thinking about "unusual" spiritual phenomena in the sense of the weird, the bizarre or the ludicrous. The "unusual phenomena" Edwards had in mind were unusual degrees of intensity in the normal spiritual emotions awakened by a conversion experience. If we look at (a), (b) and (c), these factors must surely all be present in some degree in any genuine conversion. Edwards was simply arguing that their presence in an extraordinary degree, in unusual and perhaps overpowering vigour and intensity, must not be taken as a sure sign of psychological imbalance or demonic deception. It might very well be the Spirit Himself working savingly in an uncommonly mighty way. To put it in Edwards' own words:

The extraordinary and unusual degree of influence, and power of operation, if in its nature it be agreeable to the rules and marks given in scripture, is rather an argument in its favour; for by how much higher the degree which in its nature is agreeable to the rule, so much the more is there of conformity to the rule... [6]

I have italicized the words about "rules and marks given in scripture" to show how insistent Edwards was on this point. There is nothing Edwards says here that can honestly be used as an apologia for strange spiritual experiences which, by the confession of their defenders, are nowhere described, hinted at, predicted or authorized in the pages of the Bible.

Continuing his exposition of negative sign 1, Edwards criticized those in his day who said that the Great Awakening could not be of God, because such things had never happened before. Edwards countered this argument by pointing critics to the things that happened in the days of the apostles:

The work of the Spirit, then, was carried on in a manner that, in very many respects, was altogether new; such as never had been seen or heard of since the world began. [7]

Could this be Edwards justifying new and unheard-of manifestations of the Holy Spirit in our own day, comparable to the miraculous manifestations of apostolic times? Before answering this question, one must pause a moment and ask what exactly was "new" about the various manifestations of the Spirit even in the days of the apostles. Prophecies, visions, dreams and healings were not new and unheard-of; these happened in Old Testament times. The only genuinely new phenomenon seems to have been speaking in tongues. And even this was not wholly new, but a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy or typology, according to the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:21ff. The question therefore arises, what were the "altogether new" things Edwards was thinking of, which he said had happened in the days of the apostles?

Again, we do not need to guess or speculate. Edwards spelled out for us on the same page precisely what he had in mind. According to Edwards, the "altogether new" things that happened in the Pentecostal period of Church history were these:

the conversion of sinners with "more visible and remarkable power than ever";

the fact that sinners were converted "in great multitudes", greater than ever before;

the fact that these conversions were more sudden and unexpected than had ever been seen before - "a sudden alteration in towns, cities and countries";

the fact that the gospel spread with "such a swift progress."

And of course, what Edwards did not explicitly point out, these powerful, numerous and sudden conversions in apostolic times were soon mainly among Gentiles rather than Jews - certainly a thing which did not occur in the Old Testament (although the conversion of the Gentile nations was predicted there).

So we see clearly enough what Edwards meant by the new works of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, which justifies our looking for similar things today. He meant conversions. He was referring to mighty, sudden, community-wide conversions from sin to holiness, from unbelief to faith, by the preaching of the gospel. Edwards did not mean extraordinary miraculous works of the Spirit such as tongues, prophecies, visions - or any supposedly supernatural manifestations of the Spirit such as hysterical laughter or animal noises, which have so fascinated many believers today. He could not possibly have meant that we should look for such things now, because (as we shall see) Edwards did not believe that there would ever again be extraordinary supernatural works, gifts or operations of the Holy Spirit after the apostolic era had finished

Edwards went on to predict that such extraordinary works of the Spirit as he had spoken about should be expected "in the latter ages of the world", quoting Isaiah 66:8,9. He was of course referring to the "postmillennial" view of history which then reigned among English-speaking Protestants: the view that expected the national conversion of the Jews and, thereafter, the unprecedented conversion of multitudes of Gentiles, prior to Christ's second coming. (This is not the same as Latter Rain Restorationism, because Edwards did not expect the "spiritual millennium" to involve any restoration of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, concerning which he was a strict cessationist.) But this just goes to show, yet again, that Edwards was not thinking of extraordinary supernatural or miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit when he talked about "new" works of the Spirit which believers ought to expect. He was thinking of the Spirit's "ordinary" work of converting sinners, but carried on at certain points in history in an extraordinary way as far as numbers and community-wide consequences were concerned.

## 2nd Negative Sign: Bodily effects

This brings us to Edwards' second negative sign which has profound relevance to us today.

A work is not to be judged of by any effects on the bodies of men; such as tears, trembling, groans, loud outcries, agonies of body, or the failing of bodily strength. [10]

Edwards here describes the bodily effects that often occurred in the context of religious experience in the Great Awakening. To the extent that these bodily effects were truly the work of the Holy Spirit, they could happen (a) to unbelievers as the Spirit brought them under conviction of sin, and (b) to believers as they gained a new and deeper awareness of spiritual realities. But Edwards is advising us that we cannot, in fact, point to such bodily effects as proof that the Holy Spirit is genuinely at work - or as proof that He is not at work. These physical phenomena are, in the Edwardean view, neutral as evidence. He made the same point in his Treatise concerning Religious Affections where he devoted considerable space to arguing that

It is no sign that affections [emotions] have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body. [11]

Some Toronto apologists have seized on what Edwards says here, in order to ward off criticisms of the more outlandish bodily effects which many people experience in charismatic meetings today, especially the Toronto blessing. Do critics point to the hysterical laughter, animal noises and movements, and other bizarre physical manifestations of charismatic experience (e.g. bouncing like a pogo-stick), and argue that the Holy Spirit could not possibly be responsible for these strange things? The answer comes from Edwards himself: we cannot judge a religious experience by the effects it has on the body. Bodily effects are no criteria. Therefore critics are wrong to dismiss the experience on the basis of its bodily effects.

It seems plausible on a superficial reading of Edwards. But a more detailed and sensitive reading reveals that Toronto apologists have gravely misunderstood and perverted the whole thrust of Edwards' argument at this point.

We need to be clear in our minds about the kind of physical experience Edwards was talking about. He was speaking specifically about physical experiences which are the result of truth-based emotion in the soul. The primary experience Edwards had in mind was an inward and spiritual experience of truth, in the depths of the soul; this then spills over into an outward bodily effect, which is quite secondary in nature. As Edwards explains:

It is easily accounted for from the consideration of the nature of divine and eternal things, and the nature of man, and the laws of the union between soul and body, how a right influence, a true and proper sense of things, should have such effects on the body, even those that are of the most extraordinary kind, such as taking away the bodily strength, or throwing the body into great agonies, and extolling loud outcries. There are none of us but do suppose, and would have been ready at any time to say it, that the misery of hell is doubtless so dreadful, and eternity so vast, that if a person should have a clear apprehension of that misery as it is, it would be more than his feeble frame could bear, and especially if at the same time he saw himself in great danger of it, and to be utterly uncertain whether he should be delivered from it... [12]

The example Edwards uses here makes it crystal-clear what kind of bodily experiences he was talking about. The fear of hell is a truth-based emotion in the soul. The truth of God's Word concerning hell is made known to a person, it comes home to his soul in a powerful way. This experience can produce the physical effect of taking away the bodily strength, throwing the body into great agonies and loud outcries. These physical effects are accounted for by the close union between soul and body. But Edwards leaves us in no doubt that the basic and primary experience is in the soul, not the body. Eternal truth makes an impact on the mind, arousing powerful religious emotion; this truth-based religious emotion in the soul then produces a secondary outward effect of the body.

Edwards' example cited above concerns an unbeliever who comes under deep conviction of sin. But Edwards also pointed to similar experiences of a more positive nature in the believer:

So it may easily be accounted for, that a true sense of the glorious excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his wonderful dying love, and the exercise of a truly spiritual love and joy, should be such as very much to overcome the bodily strength. [13]

The Biblical truth about Who Christ is and what Christ has done for sinners can strike home into the believer's mind so powerfully, and kindle such mighty spiritual emotions, that the believer's

bodily strength can be overcome; he may, perhaps, fall on his face and worship God. Such experiences in the believer are "easily accounted for" by the principle that strong emotion in the soul can produce sympathetic effects on the body.

It is vital for us to grasp that this is the nature of the physical experience Edwards was discussing and analyzing. Edwards' mind was focused on bodily effects which are produced by the powerful impact of truth on the soul, awakening powerful truth-based emotions - some negative (fear, sorrow, etc.), some positive (love, joy, etc.). It is crucial that we understand this, if we are rightly to interpret Edwards' next point that Scripture does not need to record all the physical experiences which might happen under the Holy Spirit's influence. Again, some Toronto apologists have seized on this to enroll Edwards under their banner. What does it matter if Scripture does not explicitly record such bodily experiences as hysterical laughter, animal noises, etc.? After all, the great Edwards himself says that there are many bodily experiences not recorded in Scripture which are, nonetheless, results of the Holy Spirit's work.

It is true that Edwards does say this. But it is equally true that he has a specific type of bodily experience in mind, the type we have already seen him discussing - physical experiences which are the result of truth-based emotions in the soul. The primary experience is the overwhelming impact of divine truth on the mind and heart, which awakens powerful religious emotions. These emotions then affect the body. Edwards says that Scripture does not need to give a detailed account of all the bodily effects that might flow from various truths striking the soul and awakening various religious feelings. But this, as we will see in a moment, is not the same as saying that no Scriptural justification is necessary for bodily experiences of a different nature, where the impact of truth on the soul is not the inner motivating cause.

First, however, let us hear Edwards on why Scripture does not need to give an exhaustive account of bodily effects produced by truth-based emotions:

Some object against such extraordinary appearances, that we have no instances of them recorded in the New Testament, under the extraordinary effusions of the Spirit .. I do not know that we have any express mention in the New Testament of any person's weeping, groaning, or sighing through fear of hell, or a sense of God's anger; but is there any body so foolish as from hence to argue, that in whomsoever these things appear, their convictions are not from the Spirit of God? And the reason why we do not argue thus, is, because these are easily accounted for, from what we know of the nature of man, and terror, what the Scripture informs us in general, concerning the nature of eternal things, and the nature of the convictions of God's Spirit; so that there is no need that any thing should be said in particular, concerning these external, circumstantial effects. [14]

The reason why Scripture does not need to describe every bodily effect that might result from truth-based emotions in the soul, according to Edwards, is that Scripture has already given us the general principle. And that general principle is that these truth-based emotions can spill over into a corresponding "external, circumstantial effect" on the body.

But all this is on a fundamentally different level from the physical experiences that Toronto apologists have tried to justify by appealing to Edwards. Let us take the case of the animal noises and behaviour that have characterized the recent Toronto blessing. In HTB in Focus, the newspaper of Holy Trinity Brompton, the leading Anglican charismatic church, a member of the

church's staff by the name of Glenda Waddell gives an account of how she first "roared like a lion" through receiving the Toronto blessing. [15] It is quite clear from Ms Waddell's account that her lion-like behavior was by no means a natural bodily overflow of some primary religious emotion in her soul. It was not that Ms Waddell had some overwhelming insight into an eternal truth which awakened deep religious emotion, and the emotion then expressed itself in her bodily behaviour. On the contrary, Ms Waddell's account makes it painfully clear that she was simply "taken over" by a spiritual impulse which compelled her to roar. Her words are:

[T]o my absolute horror I just knew beyond any shadow of a doubt my hands were doing strange things and I was going to roar. I said, "Oh Lord, I'll do anything but please, please, don't make me roar. I don't mind what it is - anything - but I just can't bear it. Only the men roar, and women don't roar." But it came and I did roar quite loudly and I made a lot of awful noise and I was crawling around the floor doing terrible things and half of me was thinking, "This cannot be me." But another part of me knew that it was.

Ms Waddell's description is perfectly straightforward. She was invaded and possessed by an impulse which reduced her to bestial behaviour, crawling about and roaring. Half of her did not even recognize herself in what was happening. It was quite clearly not a case of spiritual truth impacting on the soul awakening religious emotion, which then expressed itself in a corresponding bodily effect. There was no perception of truth involved in Ms Waddell's experience whatsoever. She was simply taken over, physically and spiritually, by a controlling force.

(It is true that Ms Waddell also says, "while this was happening I felt this huge, righteous anger." So there was some emotional content to her experience. But the emotion was not primary, and did not flow out of any vision of spiritual truth. First of all came the invading and possessing spirit which took Ms Waddell over, making her roar. And then, while she was roaring and crawling about, she began to feel anger. In any case, anger does not normally make people roar like lions and crawl about on the floor!)

This is simply not the kind of experience Edwards was talking about, and nothing he says can be used to justify such experiences.

Let us probe a little deeper. Because it was not a human response to an intelligent or spiritual perception of divine truth, Ms Waddell's experience of roaring like a lion cannot be compared with weeping or trembling or fainting under conviction of sin. It would have to be compared instead with an experience like speaking in tongues, where the whole person, soul and body together, is animated by the Holy Spirit. There is an important difference between these two types of experience. In conviction of sin, the outward physical effect is caused only in an indirect way by the Spirit. The direct act of the Spirit is on the mind, illuminating it to see the truth about the nature of sin and God's judgment. This then kindles corresponding emotions of fear and sorrow, and these emotions in the soul then produce tears or trembling in the body. So the physical effect is caused only indirectly by the Spirit's work. On the contrary, in tongue-speaking, the physical effect is the direct and deliberate act of the Spirit upon and through the inspired person. The very words spoken are the Spirit's own words, chosen by Him. He acts so as deliberately to produce a physical effect.

On this basis, we could distinguish between two ways in which the Holy Spirit produces physical effects in people's behaviour:

The Spirit brings truth to bear powerfully on people's souls, kindling spiritual emotions, and these emotions then overflow into corresponding bodily effects, e.g. fear of God producing trembling. In this case, the Holy Spirit is only indirectly the cause of the bodily effect.

The Spirit takes over the whole person, and deliberately and directly causes physical behaviour: e.g., oral prophecy, speaking in tongues, the writing of inspired Scripture. Of course, I am not saying that people lost their will or reason when the Spirit worked in these ways in Biblical times. and to that extent we cannot compare these Scriptural experiences with Toronto manifestations. The point of comparison is simply that in these type (ii) works of the Spirit, the physical effect is directly and deliberately produced by the Spirit. In the writing of inspired Scripture, for example, Paul tells us that it is the Scripture itself that is God-breathed, 2 Timothy 3:16. God acted in and through the Scriptural writers in some way unknown to us, with the deliberate intention of producing a physical result, the actual writing down of specific words as authoritative Scripture. The inspired writer by no means went into a trance and lost his will or reason in this process: there was a mysterious union of divine and human agency. In Toronto hysterics and animal manifestations, by contrast, people do lose their will or reason, and to that extent one must emphasize that there is no comparison with the writing of Scripture, or oral prophecy, or tongues. The sole point of comparison is the Holy Spirit's acting through a person in such a way that He deliberately produces a physical effect.

Ms Waddell's description of her experience of lion-like behaviour, then, places it in category (ii). If we grant her assumption that the Holy Spirit was the source of her experience, He directly and deliberately caused her physical behaviour of roaring and crawling about. Therefore what Ms Waddell claims to have experienced is, in effect, an extraordinary supernatural work, gift or operation of the Spirit, comparable with speaking in tongues and prophecy: the point of comparison being that the whole person is animated and inspired, body and soul, by the Holy Spirit, Who directly and deliberately produces physical behaviour.

The problem is that Scripture nowhere mentions this supernatural Toronto work of the Spirit which Ms Waddell and her colleagues so glory in. Edwards' argument about type (i) experiences, that Scripture does not need to record them all, is valid; all Scripture needs to give us is the general principle that truth-based emotion can spill over into bodily effects. This general principle enables us to understand, assess and even predict all specific instances. But we enter new and highly dangerous territory with type (ii) experiences if we claim (as some Toronto apologists do) that Scripture does not need to give us a complete account of these. That is equivalent to saying that Scripture does not give a complete account of the extraordinary supernatural gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit. Of course, Scripture thereby becomes an insufficient guide concerning these gifts and operations. Who is going to explain to us the status, value and meaning of new spiritual gifts and operations of the Spirit about which the Bible says nothing? Ms Waddell provides an answer to this question, which we will examine in a moment. But first let us face the question squarely. Are we prepared to admit that there might be new, extraordinary, supernatural experiences of the Holy Spirit about which Scripture has kept us in the dark? What would such a belief do to the sufficiency of Scripture - a principle emphatically endorsed by Edwards? The

simple fact is that Edwards would never for a moment have accepted any new extraordinary supernatural gifts and operations of the Spirit, because (as we have already remarked) he did not believe that even those mentioned in Scripture were valid any longer. Edwards restricted extraordinary spiritual gifts to the age of the apostles. He rejected all modern-day claims to prophecy and speaking in tongues. When one tries to imagine what he would have said about an alleged new gift of "animal spirit possession", the mind boggles.

The teaching of Jonathan Edwards is, of course, not our doctrinal standard. A Christian is at liberty, under the Scriptures, to disagree with Edwards about the limitation of the Spirit's extraordinary gifts to the apostolic age. But we have surely seen enough to realize that Toronto apologists cannot honestly appeal to what Edwards says about bodily effects in order to support the "animal manifestations" of the Toronto blessing. And that is the problem: the question of honesty. A religious movement does not acquire truth, but it can acquire credibility and respectability if it can be shown that a great and admired theological teacher from the Church's past gave his approval to some of the principles which that movement now espouses. Many evangelicals, especially within the Reformed tradition, do regard Edwards as a great and admired teacher. We therefore feel compelled to ask whether Toronto apologists are being honest when they seek to associate the name of Edwards with certain aspects of their movement. If truth and honesty are valuable in Christian eyes, we cannot shrug off this question. The present writer's researches have persuaded him that the attempt to claim Edwards in support of modern Toronto phenomena is deeply dishonest, and that the credibility thus gained for the Toronto blessing is wholly spurious. If this conclusion is right (and these chapters present the evidence), truth and honesty demand that we take the formidable weapon of Jonathan Edwards' mighty teaching out of the hands of today's Toronto apologists, and return it where it rightfully belongs, in the hands of those who are convinced of the merits of traditional Reformed theology.

The teaching of Edwards regarding bodily effects found in the context of revival, then, cannot honestly be applied to the animal manifestations of the Toronto blessing. But before we move on, let us look for a moment at how Glenda Waddell of Holy Trinity Brompton tries to justify the animal manifestations. We will find it highly instructive. Roaring like a lion has been the most widely publicized of these manifestations, but it is certainly not the only one. Ms Waddell herself describes the scene in another Toronto-style meeting she attended:

That room sounded like it was a cross between a jungle and a farmyard. There were many, many lions roaring, there were bulls bellowing, there were donkeys, there was a cockerel near me, there were sort of bird songs.. . Everything you could possibly imagine. Every animal you could conceivably imagine you could hear. [16]

Clearly Ms Waddell can find no support in Scripture for this allegedly new gift of the Spirit, for Scripture's silence on the issue is deafening. So how does she explain its significance? By claiming a new private revelation from God. God gives her (she affirms) a new extra-Scriptural doctrine to explain the new extra-Scriptural work of the Spirit. This is logical; one does not see how else a new extra-Scriptural work of the Spirit could be explained. The doctrine is that God is deliberately making His people behave in a ludicrous, sub-human fashion in order to destroy their vanity. Here are the words Ms Waddell attributes to God: "What you hear is My church being stripped of its vanity - My church and My leaders being stripped of their dignity, because I hate it "

One could comment on the somewhat disturbing content of this allegedly new revelation: the Creator and Redeemer of humanity deliberately stripping away His adopted children's human dignity as those made in His image, and reducing them to the level of the beasts that perish - the temples of the Holy Spirit transformed by that same Spirit into braying donkeys and bellowing bulls. If Satan did that to a person, charismatics would once have been the first to denounce it as a degrading bondage and to call for "deliverance ministry." But it is apparently the Holy Spirit of our merciful heavenly Father Who is doing these things to His children, as a "blessing" which we are all to desire. Truly, we live in odd times.

But let us overlook the unwholesome content of Ms Waddell's supposed new revelation. Let us simply notice how the claim to a new non-Scriptural work or gift of the Spirit has led to a new non-Scriptural revelation, in order to authorize the gift's status and explain its meaning. Ms Waddell gives us, in effect, a new theological doctrine of the gift of animal spirit possession. Presumably we should staple it in the back of our Bibles. Can even the most convinced and committed Toronto advocate honestly think that Jonathan Edwards would have approved of this deep-seated betrayal of Reformation Protestantism? The sort of spirituality that meets us in Ms Waddell and those on her wavelength looks like a wild stampede from sanctified reason, into the ultra-subjective and irrational pole of the human psyche, spewing forth these strange new doctrines instead of submitting to the all-sufficient Word of God. That the name of Jonathan Edwards should have been tacked onto such a spiritually unhinged outlook can only be regarded as one of the more curious and disgusting ironies of modern theology.

Perhaps we should also, at this point, consider the hysterical laughter that has characterized the Toronto blessing (and some other forms of charismatic experience), and ask what Edwards would have made of this. After all, it could be claimed that this is the type of experience Edwards was dealing with and justifying. Could inner spiritual joy not spill over into laughter? Would this not be a case of a primary religious emotion in the soul expressing itself in a corresponding bodily effect?

Unfortunately for this line of argument, Edwards made it clear in a number of places exactly what he thought of laughter as an expression of spiritual joy. Later in the Distinguishing Marks, he compared the Great Awakening of 1740-42 in Northampton with a similar revival six years previously in 1734-5 (the earlier revival is the subject of Edwards' Narrative of Surprising Conversions). He expressed the view that the later work was higher and purer than the earlier one. Let us listen to the reason he gives:

And particularly there has been a remarkable difference in this respect, that whereas many before, in their comforts and rejoicings, did too much forget their distance from God, and were ready in their conversation together of the things of God, and of their own experiences, to talk with too much lightness; but now they seem to have no disposition that way, but rejoice with a more solemn, reverential, humble joy, as God directs (Psalm ii.11). Not because the joy is not as great, and in many instances much greater. Many among us who were wrought upon in that former season, have now had much greater communications from heaven than they had then. Their rejoicing operates in another manner; it abases them, breaks their hearts, and brings them into the dust. When they speak of their joys, it is not with laughter, but with a flood of tears. Thus those that laughed before, weep now, and yet by their united testimony, their joy is vastly purer and sweeter than that which before did more raise their animal spirits. [17]

Edwards implicitly criticized the revival of 1734-5 for a certain degree of superficiality, because some of those touched by it were rather light-headed in the way they spoke about God and spiritual things. In their joy they forgot "their distance from God", as sinful creatures before an all-holy Creator, in Whose awesome presence we must always feel a deep reverential fear. The joy of these light-headed believers, Edwards suggested, had a lot to do with "animal spirits" - i. e., natural, psychosomatic, temperamental feelings, rather than true spiritual joy from the Holy Spirit. Edwards' remarks could even be taken to mean that some actually expressed their "joy" by laughter in the 1734-5 revival. But the 1740-42 revival, he insists, was altogether a more spiritually pure and holy phenomenon. Why? Precisely because it did not have the element of lightness and superficial happiness that disfigured its predecessor. There was in fact more joy in 1740-42, but it was a true, holy, spiritual joy; and this authentic joy in those who experience it, Edwards says, "abases them, breaks their hearts, and brings them into the dust." It expresses itself "not With laughter, but with a flood of tears."

We find similar comments in Edwards' *Some Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*. Edwards gives us here a detailed account of the experience of one particular unnamed believer (probably his wife) whose spirituality was quickened and renewed in a remarkable manner during the 1740-42 revival. He presents this person to us as a model and pattern of a revived believer. It is therefore highly significant that Edwards speaks at length about his or her experience of spiritual joy:

This great rejoicing has been with trembling, i. e. attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person's own exceeding littleness and vileness. Spiritual joys in this person never were attended with the least appearance of laughter, or lightness, either of countenance or manner of speaking; but with a peculiar abhorrence of such appearances in spiritual rejoicings. [18]

The idea that true spiritual joy can be expressed by laughter, or by any kind of "lightness" (what we might call fun or clowning), has never had a more determined opponent than Jonathan Edwards. Those Toronto apologists who appeal to him to justify such modern-day phenomena are either speaking out of a profound ignorance, because they have not troubled to read Edwards at all, or are irresponsibly and deceptively misrepresenting Edwards' clear and forceful teaching on the subject. [19]

Some readers may think we are going "over the top" in suggesting that Toronto writers are guilty of deceptively misrepresenting Edwards. Consider, however, the following instance relating to the question of laughter. Bill Jackson, the author of the paper *What in the World is Happening to us?* tries to justify the hysterical laughter of the Toronto blessing by quoting a passage from Edwards' *Narrative of Surprising Conversions*:

It was very wonderful to see how persons' affections were sometimes moved when God did as it were suddenly open their eyes, and let into their minds a sense of the greatness of His grace, the fullness of Christ, and His readiness to save.... Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping. Sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration. [20]

One can only think that the use of this quotation to sanction the hysterical laughter of the Toronto blessing is a gravely irresponsible and deeply deceptive misrepresentation of Edwards. Observe the dotted lines in the quotation after "His readiness to save." What did Jackson leave out? The following passage:

. . . after having been broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss, under a sense of guilt which they were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God

The omission of this passage seriously alters the whole character of the quotation. Bill Jackson is trying to make out that Edwards was speaking of the same sort of experience as the Toronto style hysterics of professing Christians. But the fact is that Edwards was speaking of a completely different experience. He was speaking about the conversion of unbelievers. The emotional experience included deep conviction of sin and terrifying apprehensions of God's holy wrath. However, since the Toronto blessing has not been noted for bringing people into such awesomely serious, solemn, sober and devastating encounters with God's burning and consuming holiness, Jackson has edited out Edwards' references to conviction of sin and the wrath of God. The resulting censored quotation is a travesty of what Edwards actually said. Again, by editing out Edwards' description of conviction of sin and God's wrath, Jackson has obscured the important fact that Edwards is portraying the experience of conversion, not the "renewal" of believers. Where are such conversion experiences in the Toronto blessing? Notice also that Edwards does not even say that these converts did actually laugh. What he says is that they were "ready to break forth into laughter." Under the exhilarating relief of being delivered from God's holy and condemning wrath, some converts were "ready" to laugh - but what they actually did was burst into tears, intermingled with a loud noise of weeping. How such a description could be used to justify the mindless "laughing policeman" hysterics of the Toronto blessing defies all comprehension. [21] Finally, Jackson has wholly ignored the clear and explicit statements of Edwards quoted above, where he says that laughter is not a proper or wholesome expression of spiritual joy. In these circumstances, one must (reluctantly) stand by the claim that some Toronto apologists are guilty of deeply irresponsible and deceptive misrepresentation of Jonathan Edwards. Is false propaganda a fruit of the Toronto blessing? Is the Spirit of Truth behind such grave and misleading distortions of the plain facts?

Under this heading of "bodily effects", we should also deal with the falling over and fainting which was found in the Great Awakening, and is a prominent feature of many modern charismatic meetings, especially the Toronto blessing. Are they the same in character? The evidence forces us to say that the resemblance is only superficial. We can sum up the basic differences thus: When people fell down or fainted in the Great Awakening, it was in response to truth - almost always in response to Biblical preaching. (Occasionally it happened to some as they read the Bible on their own.) The doctrinal truths of Scripture so overwhelmed people's souls, that their bodies reacted by losing strength. Neither Edwards himself nor any preacher deliberately tried to induce this effect by laying hands on people. It simply happened, spontaneously. And more often than not, the reason people fell was because the awesome truths of God's holiness and wrath against their own hell-deserving sinfulness had shattered them emotionally, and robbed them of strength through sheer undiluted terror. Contrast this with the quite different spectacle in Toronto meetings. The leaders are intent on deliberately producing the bodily effect, which they call "slaying in the Spirit." They call people to walk to the front of the meeting place, where the leaders then pray for

them, and move their hands about over their bodies. Sometimes the person being "ministered to" will be pushed. In any case, those who have walked forward know that they are supposed to fall over in response to these ministrations. They have been led to believe that falling over is the sign of the Spirit's blessing. The result is (not surprisingly) that people fall over and even faint. The experience is sweet, sugary, and euphoric - "the sweet heaviness of Jesus", as the present writer heard it described by a Toronto Airport Vineyard leader. [22]

The contrast between this and the Great Awakening is simply huge. There is a great deal of deliberate human manipulation in modern Toronto meetings, all geared to getting people to fall over. The psychological pressures involved are often no different from the techniques of a stage hypnotist. And one would have to add that there is usually precious little preaching of clear Biblical truth in these meetings. This is light years away from what happened in the Great Awakening, where some people fell over purely spontaneously, under the influence of spiritual feeling aroused by mighty Biblical preaching, without being called forward, prayed over, touched pushed, or psychologically manipulated in any way. In case there is any doubt on this, listen to the explicit counsel of Edwards to people who feel themselves being physically overpowered by spiritual feeling in a religious meeting:

I think the persons thus extraordinarily moved, should endeavor to refrain from such outward manifestations, what they well can, and should refrain to their utmost, at the time of their solemn worship. [23]

Edwards declared that it was the duty of anyone "extraordinarily moved" in a religious service to "refrain to their utmost" from giving way to "outward manifestations." The lesson is crystal-clear. Where modern Toronto teachers make every effort to encourage, promote and induce physical manifestations, Edwards taught people to resist, restrain and suppress them to the utmost of their power. The only physical manifestation Edwards would tolerate was one in which Biblical truth pierced into the soul, awoke an appropriate and powerful response of religious emotion, and the emotion, despite all attempts to discipline it, expressed itself in a bodily way that distracted others (e.g. loud weeping through conviction of sin). Even so, his emphatic counsel was that people should not only not seek outward manifestations, but do their utmost to avoid and suppress them. The contrast between Edwards' views and those of present-day Toronto leaders here is like the difference between noonday and midnight. That anyone could appeal to Edwards' careful teaching to sanction the eagerly sought, deliberately induced, hypnotist-like "slaying in the Spirit" practiced by Hindu gurus, New Age therapists and some modern charismatics, is yet again a sign either of shoddy ignorance of what Edwards really said, or of willful deceitful misrepresentation of Edwards to give credibility to a discreditable cause.

Before moving on to look at Edwards' third negative sign, it is worth remembering that a "negative sign" is not only something that cannot be used to prove that an experience or movement is false and not from God, it is also something that cannot rightly be used to prove that it is true and from God. Regarding the particular kind of bodily effects Edwards has been discussing, he states:

We cannot conclude that persons are under the influence of the true Spirit because we see such effects upon their bodies, because this is not given [in Scripture] as a mark of the true Spirit. [24]

Bodily movements and behaviour which are the overflow of deep religious emotion are no proof that the Holy Spirit is truly at work. Religious emotion is not necessarily spiritual emotion. As Edwards argues at length in his Treatise concerning Religious Affections, people can be emotionally moved, touched and excited by religion without the Holy Spirit being at work. It is safe to assume that Edwards would have counselled charismatic leaders in our day in the same terms. "Do not think that the Holy Spirit is at work merely because people experience bodily effects in your meetings. If these bodily effects are generated by strong emotion, they prove only that strong emotions have been aroused. They do not prove that these emotions are from the Holy Spirit's saving activity. They may be from another source. Some other test is needed to assess the origin and nature of these emotions and experiences." How often do we hear cautions like this from Toronto apologists today? All too often, especially in grass-roots meetings for renewal, it is simply taken for granted that bodily effects such as laughing or trembling or falling over are true manifestations of the Spirit's presence. Edwards had no truck with this idea, and explicitly condemned it as false and harmful.

## Look Before You Laugh

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### Introduction

Christianity is no stranger to controversy. Christians do not always agree on all subjects. Issues of freedom, and personal preference in worship, style and order of church services are as varied as individual Christians. The issue of differences of opinion in matters of practice has provided much grist for the mill. What do we do when honest differences arise in the body of Christ? I think part of the beauty of God's design is unity in the midst of diversity. Unity in Christ is not always unity in opinion, rather it is unity in relationship (see Romans 15:5-7). Unity in the body is a fact. Christ's Body is not divided. All Christians are a part of the Body of Christ. That is the point Paul makes in Ephesians 4:3-4 when he says "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope--when you were called..", Differences of opinion should call us to the table of God's Word and the fellowship that is in Jesus Christ. Much controversy has „been generated of late by a Movement called "Holy Laughter/Toronto Blessing". Those differences should be evaluated in 'light' of God's Word.

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers..." (2 Tim. 3:1-2). Paul warned his young companion in the faith to watch out! Not everyone and everything is as it seems. He warns that so-called believers would have " .a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Tim. 3:5). False teachers and false doctrine are nothing new to the Church of Jesus Christ. Are we to assume that every "new" wind that blows into the church is a fresh move of God? A number of recent newspaper articles, magazine articles and even television have drawn attention to a strange phenomena that has been called "Holy Laughter" or the "Toronto Blessing" by different people. Though separated by 1900 plus years, we still do well to heed the compassionate plea of the beloved Apostle John: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1 ).

### The Revival of 1994?

The "Holy Laughter" Movement, and the seemingly related phenomenon known in some circles as the "Toronto Blessing", have raised a number of issues. Should we view this as a special blessing by the Holy Spirit to renew, revive and refresh the church of Jesus Christ? How are we to determine if it is a "move" of God? Should Christians seek out and give themselves to participation in this "movement"? What criteria are we to use to discern or determine its value? What Biblical or historical evidences can we examine to see if the current "Movement", the phenomena and the teachings line up with historical moves of the Spirit, revival or orthodoxy?

This report is intended to give a brief overview of Holy Laughter, The Toronto Blessing and explore whether there are dangers to those who participate in the Movement. We should all make decisions based on as much information as we can glean from credible sources. I challenge the

reader to examine all the issues in light of God's Word, including all statements included in this report.

Some may be unfamiliar with Rodney Howard-Browne or the Toronto Airport Vineyard, or some of the other "key" players in the whole "Holy Laughter" or "Toronto Blessing" (BL or TB) phenomena. For another in- depth evaluation and discussion of the movement I suggest you read the article "Toronto Blessing" Stirs Worldwide Controversy, Rocks Vineyard Movement (News Watch page 5) in Christian Research Journal (Winter 1995).

#### A Brief History

Most people look to Rodney Howard-Browne as the catalyst of the burgeoning laughter movement. He came to the United States from South Africa, where he had been associated with a Rhema Church which is affiliated with Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. There is evidence that Howard-Browne has been influenced by the teachings of the Word-Faith Movement, of which Hagin and Copeland are prime exponents. His participation in the Word-Faith Movement in South Africa was pioneered by disciples of Hagin and Copeland. Both men have had Howard-Brown at their churches for "Holy Laughter meetings". In an article by Richard M. Riss (unpublished Internet) entitled "A History of the Revival of 1994", Mr. Riss documents a series of meetings and encounters between Rodney Howard-Browne and other so called "Word-Faith" teachers.

An article in Charisma magazine (August, 1994) traces Howard Browne's first major impact to Pastor Karl Strader and Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Florida. The article bills him as the "Holy Ghost bartender", and Howard-Browne says "I just serve the new wine and invite them to drink" (ibid. p.22).

According to Howard-Browne's own testimony he was saved at the age of five and filled with the Holy Ghost at the age of eight. Being "saved" and "filled with the Holy Spirit" would seem to indicate the normative experience of every Christian. But is there something that lies beyond salvation and sanctification for the believer? Does one need "new wine" served up by a "Holy Ghost bartender" for those periods of occasional dryness? The article credits Browne's current success with an encounter he had in 1979 when he spent hours praying for a deeper experience with God. Most people desire a deeper walk and fellowship with God. But does the Bible teach that beyond salvation and sanctification there is a deeper experience that Christians should strive for?

The apostles John and Paul both indicate experiences with God of surpassing depth and richness, from seeing the heavens opened to being 'caught up into the third heaven.' Paul urged all believers to "eagerly desire the greater gifts", especially that they might prophesy, or tell forth the truth of God. But neither Paul nor John held their own experience to be normative for the Church. Neither urged Christians to seek the personal, subjective experience that they had had. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul indicates that Tongues is a minor gift and a personal, rather than corporate, experience, and that we should seek rather to edify the Body by that which is intelligible. All such "experiences" are just that, "experiences", personal and subjective. Since there is no Biblical "experience" beyond salvation and sanctification which is normative for all believers, all other "spiritual experiences" are to be in the background of our corporate expression. The attitude we find expressed by the apostles concerning such experiences is one of humility and submission to the common good. The article, however, quotes Howard-Browne as saying, "either You come

down here and touch me, or I will come up there and touch you

In all fairness to Howard-Browne, I believe he meant, "I'm going to die if I don't get a touch from God." Although I can sympathize with his desire to receive a touch from God, such an "unscriptural" prayer calls into question the subsequent experience as a work of the Holy Spirit of God. At the core of Howard-Browne's prayer is the selfish human declaration "not Thy will but my will be done". Why should we assume that the manifestation was from God? Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, also received an "experience" from a supernatural source because, he felt, the denominations of his day were apostate. The prayer of Howard Browne seems to be consistent with the whole of the Word-Faith teaching, in which bossing God around is standard fare. Indeed, Kenneth Hagin has written a pamphlet entitled "You Can Write Your Own Ticket With God". Hank Hanegraaff, in his book "Christianity in Crises", documents the dangers, pitfalls and inconsistencies in the "Word-Faith" camp.

Howard-Browne claims that his "whole body felt like it was on fire. He began to laugh uncontrollably. Then he wept and began to speak in tongues, "I was plugged into heaven's electric supply; he later wrote in his book *The Touch of God*-"And since then my desire has been to go and plug other people in" ( *Charisma*, August 1994). None of these manifestations are either proof or fruit of the Spirit, according to Galatians 5:22,23. In other words, the phenomena are not self-authenticating. In Rodney Howard-Browne's meetings many people are purported to be "slain in the Spirit" and many more heave in uncontrollable laughter. The reader should know that the widespread practice of "slaying in the spirit" is a recent Pentecostal phenomenon that was popularized by the ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman (see *Dictionary of Pentecostal Movements in America*). People who are "overcome" in some fashion, should not be taken as a "sign" that the Holy Spirit has shown up.

Some Vineyard Churches (Rick Olmstead, Fort Collins Vineyard on a local radio program) insist that Holy Laughter and the Toronto Blessing are not related to one another. Another Vineyard Pastor, James Ryle, has written; "I have never met, seen, nor heard Rodney and therefore have no comment concerning his standing with the Lord. The fact that he is associated with the Vineyard comes by way of a misunderstanding of what is taking place in the Vineyard church in Toronto. Uninformed people have decided that the Laughing Revival and the Toronto Blessing (as it is being called) are one and the same. Nothing could be further from the truth"("It's Enough to Make you Cry, received via fax, on file). Nothing could be further from the truth? Why do the Vineyard and the Howard-Browne camps not want to be confused with one another? Is the origin of the "Toronto Blessing" linked in any way to Rodney Howard-Browne?

According to John Wimber in *Vineyard Reflections* (May/June 1994), the Holy Spirit has "ebbed and flowed", suggesting periods of blessing and dryness. Characterizing the Holy Spirit as "ebbing and flowing" would seem to suggest that the Holy Spirit is some kind of "force". Those who treat the Holy Spirit like a "force" rather than the third Person of the Trinity run a great risk. The Holy Spirit is a Person we must submit to.

After a bout with cancer in 1993, Wimber said that in October (1993) the Lord had spoken to him 17 times that this would be a season of new beginnings" for the Vineyard churches. He brought this message of new beginnings to a Vineyard Board meeting in November of 1993 at Palm Springs. It was at this meeting that Happy Lehman, Midwest Regional Overseer, told John Arnott

and others about Randy Clark (VCF St. Louis), and "how the Holy Spirit had recently, powerfully renewed and refreshed him in a meeting conducted by evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne in Tulsa Oklahoma" (Vineyard Reflections p. 3).

Against his better judgment (according to Randy Clark), he attended a meeting with Howard-Browne in Tulsa. He is alleged to have had some kind of experience in the course of the meeting that "refreshed" him. He took the "blessing" to his church. Clark related how similar things (laughing, falling etc.) were beginning to happen in his church and elsewhere, and how John Arnott invited him to Toronto (Mississauga, actually, just outside of Toronto) to minister in his church. These meetings began on January 20, 1994, and "four days of meetings turned into months of almost nightly meetings in numerous locations in Ontario.

It has since poured out through those who have visited there into similar renewal meetings all over the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and even Europe" (ibid. p. 3). The evidence would seem to indicate that Rodney Howard-Browne brought the phenomena to Randy Clark, who in turn "passed it on to the Vineyard". The means for 'passing it on' seems to be the laying-on of hands, a practice in which the Vineyard and Word-Faith groups, though they may otherwise differ, are united. The biblical practice of "laying on of hands" is not here in dispute. However, the idea that the experience can be communicated, even in part, through the laying on of hands, is.

Why would the Vineyard and the Rodney Howard-Brown group want to differentiate between TB and HL? I believe each has its own distinctive errors in the manifestation of gifts and in theology, but both groups insist that this current phenomenon is a work of God. More cautious Vineyard leaders may say "the jury is out whether these are manifestations from God", yet they continue to allow the "manifestations" in their midst. In their Board Report (Sept./Oct. 1994) they highlight "Admitting 'I don't know'" about an occurrence of a phenomenon will promote more balance in the ongoing development of this renewal than focusing people on it by endorsing everything as a work of God." It is important for us to understand what that means. Does it mean, "we can't tell whether something is of God, so we will just let it happen, let the chips fall where they may, and sort out the theology later? Or does it mean that if it happens that it is not of God that will promote balance? Or ! does it mean that you can't really tell, so it just doesn't matter? The fact that the statement is unclear provides no real instruction on how to proceed with unbiblical manifestations.

The Vineyard Board Report also states "We do not necessarily equate an "experience" as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. For example, one person may have a genuine response to the presence of God which involves shaking and/or falling down. A person standing next to him or her, however, may do the same exact thing out of emotionalism or some other excess. "While there has been some excess in our meetings, questionable manifestations have not been the major part of the renewal, but have attracted a disproportionate amount of attention."

The Vineyard offers no explanation how the Holy Spirit can make you shake and fall, how your emotions can make you shake and fall or how you can tell whether it is the Holy Spirit or the flesh making you shake and fall. They admit to some excesses in their meetings, but again offer no explanation of what constitutes excess. They say that the major part of the renewal has not been the manifestations. Yet observers in Anaheim and Toronto have stated just the opposite. Hank Hanegraaff observed several meetings at the Anaheim Vineyard and reported unbelievable chaos in their special meetings. Dr. James Beverly attended numerous meetings in Toronto and wrote

"The manifestations are the focus of much time in the nightly meetings." (Ten Myths About The Toronto Blessing).

In all fairness to the Vineyard, they claim to " ...want to focus on the main/plain issues of Scripture". They further state "This way, people will find their identity in doing Scriptural work, not in experiencing phenomena" (Board Report p.2). Why then don't they evaluate, and reject the phenomena on the basis of Scripture? Their explanation is "We are willing to allow "experiences" to happen without endorsing, encouraging or stimulating them; nor should we seek to "explain" them by inappropriate "proof-texting". Biblical metaphors (similar to those concerning a lion or dove, etc.) do not justify or provide a proof-text for animal behavior".

A "Movement" with no Biblical basis, with phenomena that has no Biblical support, with activities that are not decent or orderly should be dismissed. How can they be willing to "allow" experiences that are indecent, out of order, and possibly demonic? The shepherd has the responsibility to guide as well as guard the sheep. Some Vineyard Pastors have said there is no "theology of manifestations" Such a theology (there is no theology) would provide a frame-work to evaluate manifestations that are allowed or not allowed. Howling, weeping, barking, shaking, twitching, screaming, laughing, and karate-chopping the air seem to serve no rational, or spiritual purpose. By refusing to evaluate practice in light of God's Word does not explain the manifestations, but "decency and order" seem to provide at least a framework from which to work. "Let all things be done decently and in order"(I Corinthians 14:40) must have some real meaning and interpretation and application. To s! imply ignore the text does not further an appropriate position concerning a "theology of manifestations."

One unfortunate consequence of dismissing I Corinthians 14:40, the boundaries of decency and order are blurred, and finally disappear. In atmosphere "where anything goes", anything will go. The Vineyard has yet to address the issue of decency and order that speaks to both the spirit and content of I Corinthians 14:40. They have stated;

"There are some manifestations, that while socially uncomfortable (i.e., they wouldn't seem "decent and in order" in most church contexts today), have biblical precedent" (Vineyard Board Report). They go on and cite Daniel 8:16-18, 27; 10:8-10; Mt. 17:6-7; Rev. 1:17, etc.).

This points to a kind of "double-speak" that has no discernible meaning. On the one hand the Vineyard says there are no Biblical texts that validate the current phenomena, but we shouldn't dismiss the manifestations simply because they are weird. The total chaos that marks the screaming and howling in recent "meetings" is not only 'socially uncomfortable', but indecent and out of order.

Biblical precedent includes a reference to Daniel 8:16-18. In the passage Daniel was having a vision while he was at Shushan in the citadel (verse 2). The reference the Vineyard offers is the interpretation of a dream and vision, given by God to Daniel. He was in a deep sleep with his face to the ground (v.17). What this has to do with decency and order in the context of a church service is not clear. In verse 27 Daniel "fainted and was sick for days" but then he got up and went about the king's business. Again, this verse is not precedent for the more outlandish manifestations being reported in Vineyard meetings. Daniel chapter 10 (vv8-10) finds Daniel alone where an encounter with God results in fatigue and a loss of personal vitality.

Then they make reference to Matthew 17:6-7 where the disciples are witnessing Jesus Christ's transfiguration in a preview of the future kingdom. They "hear the voice of God (v.5) and when they do they fall on their face "greatly afraid" (v.6). Their references have nothing to do with outrageous manifestations, in a church setting, which would validate the manifestations.

In the same Board Report the Vineyard leadership claims; While we listen to our critics and learn from them, we do not want to be governed by them. If they can prove to us by sound exegesis and logic that we are wrong, we will change. By the nature of our movement (renewal of the things of the Spirit) we have always had and will always have critics; let's interact with them as godly men and women without becoming reactionary, bitter, unteachable, or controlled by them" (p.2).

Praise God! If that is true, we must encourage the Vineyard Leaders and Vineyard participants, through sound exegesis and logic that they are wrong! The "change" they speak of, hopefully is change in their activity. Brothers of good conscience can disagree on style and content in matters of worship. The real issue concerns unbiblical manifestations, practices and teachings which defy Biblical support, historical support, or rational support.

### Marvellous Manifestations

I have not personally witnessed or participated in TB or HL. Without first hand experience am I qualified to write on the subject? Even though I have never witnessed or participated in the phenomena, I have read hundreds of pages from participants who both endorse and repudiate the manifestations. I have listened to audio tapes of the services. Vineyard Leaders accuse radio broadcasts of taking excerpts "out of context" that are not indicative of the service or ministry time. I would disagree. A typical description was recently found in CRI's latest journal (Winter 1995). "Some weep uncontrollably. Some laugh hysterically. Some topple over or crumple silently to the floor, while others jerk, twitch, kneel drunkenly, karate-chop the air, scream, sway, double over with abdominal spasms, roar or bark".

Even those who support the Movement, do not deny that the manifestations are "bizarre". One Vineyard Pastor told me, "There is no theology of manifestations". Does that mean anything goes? I would dispute that clucking like a chicken, barking like a dog, or howling like a wolf qualify as manifestations of a mighty move of the Holy Spirit. But are these signs and wonders from the Lord? Are they manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a new and exciting move of God? Are they the result of mass hysteria, autosuggestion (as Hank Hanegraaff suggests) or a genuine supernatural presence (like demons)? Tapes played on the Bible Answer Man Broadcast (popular CRI radio program) send chills up the spine. Instead of joyous celebration, one hears nightmarish screams of hundreds of people experiencing TB or HL. No wonder Vineyard proponents are concerned about their being aired on the radio. The average person, tuning in for the first time is "horrified". Decency and order should not generate feelings of horror for the outsider looking in.

The Vineyard's official position states "It has also proven unhelpful to describe vocal sounds as 'animal noises' (lions, chickens, dogs, etc.). In most cases, the people making the sounds are, in fact, not intentionally imitating animals, and therefore, should not be labeled as such" (Board Report Sept./ Oct. 1994; p.2).

Let's examine that statement carefully. Does it make sense? Though they are making sounds that sound like animals, they "should not be labeled" as making animal sounds, because they don't really mean that?!!! Paul wrote in I Corinthians 14:32-33 "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints". Are the spirits of the prophets subject to the prophets? Yes or No? If they are, then how are they "...(un)intentionally imitating animals? The Vineyard might state "but these are not prophets, these are people who are receiving a visit from the Holy Spirit." A visit from the Holy Spirit that results in howling, screaming, and roaring that is involuntary? How can that be, when the fruit of the Holy Spirit is "self-control"? Are they out of control? If they are out of control, how can it be the Holy Spirit? It walks like a duck, it quacks like a duck, but please don't say it! sounds like a duck, because duck sounds are not being made on purpose! The Scriptures make it clear that the Vineyard is no exception to the rule. The rules apply to "all the churches of the saints". Just because they have an emphasis on "Holy Spirit" renewal does not exempt them from Biblical guidelines.

The fine scholar Gordon D. Fee writing in God's Empowering Presence makes reference to I Corinthians 14:32-33. He writes; "With these words Paul lifts Christian "inspired speech" out of the category of "ecstasy" as such and offers it as a radically different thing from the mania in the cults. There is no seizure here, no loss of control; the speaker is neither frenzied or a babbler."

Those who embrace TB or HL will tell you that the manifestations are secondary. What is really important is the fruit. There is no real harm in roaring, barking, laughing, being 'glued in the Spirit', or 'frozen in the Spirit'. Where do you draw the line? How about having 'out of the body' or 'levitating in the Spirit' experiences? When you remove the restraints, anything can happen, and in an atmosphere where anything can happen, anything will happen.

Dr. James Beverley, a Baptist minister and professor at Ontario Theological Seminary has been studying the Vineyard for more than four years. In a one page fact sheet entitled Ten Myths About The Toronto Blessing he draws special attention to this issue. Myth # 5 states "Manifestations are secondary; there is no harm in roaring, barking and falling down". He goes on to say; "Vineyard leaders say constantly that the manifestations are secondary, but the actual emphasis given to them suggests that leaders are mistaken. The manifestations are the focus of much time in the nightly meetings. They are the subject of endless debate and media attention. Vineyard apologists work overtime defending them. The possible harm in the manifestations are subtle ..... An anti-intellectual attitude permeates the promotion of the manifestations." People who do not bark, scream, yell, or have a special chill go up there spine, are they "receiving" the Spirit? Are you "in the move of th! e Spirit" if you don't "feel" different?

What is the harm? If something really is happening, if there is a "power" that is not the excess of over-zealous charismatics, but "real" power of a supernatural kind, is there danger? You bet your life (or, perhaps, better, 'don't bet your soul!'). Can the TB or HL phenomena be an invitation to occultic or demonic practices? The Vineyard response is "no way!" They would say, "If you ask for bread will your heavenly Father give you a stone?" John Sandford has written, "Be alert to the touch of God--and let go. One of the major things God is accomplishing is the breaking of our fleshly controls that block Him. Trust! Don't be afraid--He will not give you a scorpion for an egg or a stone rather than true bread. There will be enough time later for testing--fruits take a while to

appear, and He can rescue us from sidetracks, as He has me so many times" (Elijah House News p. 2). Should we experience now and test later? I don't think so. The Bible says "test the spir! its", the implication is that you test before you taste. The fruit that the Vineyard, The Toronto Blessing and the Rodney Howard-Browne movements are claiming may be poisoned.

Their response is, "wait a minute, we are all Christians here! Why under the invitation to the Holy Spirit would a demonic spirit show up? These manifestations are the product of the Holy Spirit!" Are they really? Some would admit that certain charismatic groups and certain teachers (Benny Hinn, Rodney Howard-Browne) do have the ability to work the crowd. Perhaps some of the phenomena is due to suggestion. Shaking, barking, and laughing are not necessarily the result of the supernatural. However, losing control, being glued to the floor, crying and sobbing and screaming for hours on end. may indicate something demonic. Proponents and critics alike unite in asserting that "something" is happening that goes beyond suggestion. The real question we must ask is what is the "source" of the phenomena"? What spirit is bringing forth the "prophecies" and "words" and extra-biblical "revelations"?

When a person sings, laughs, prays, chants or cries for hours on end, there is the possibility of entering into an altered state of consciousness. What do I mean by altered state of consciousness? I mean a state in which your normal conscious faculties are subject to outside suggestion or where you may even be subject to demonic influence. Some people, like Tricia Tillin in Banner Ministries Newsletter, are suggesting that the "manifestations" are not limited to Christian people who attend the meetings but that unbelievers are "soaked" in the same spirit with the same manifestations. How is it that this "move" of God results in the same manifestations, to believers and unbelievers alike? The Holy Spirit "manifests" apart from the gospel, apart from repentance, apart from the accepting of Christ? Could it be that this is not the Holy Spirit, but a counterfeit spirit?

#### The Same Manifestations in the World of the Occult?

The SCP Newsletter has an excellent article by Warren Smith and a side bar article by Danny Aguirre, dealing with the subject of HL and TB. In Mr. Aguirre's side bar article he gives "Some examples of Holy Laughter in other religions" (S C P Newsletter, Vol. 19:2; Fall 1994). Examples include kundalini energy, described by New Agers as the coiled serpent in the base of the spine, linked to sexual energy and spiritual healings. Mr. Aguirre quotes Christina and Stanislav Groof's description of New Agers who experience Kundalini power. "(T)hey often emit various involuntary sounds (my emphasis see John Wimber's earlier comment in this article), and their bodies move in strange and unexpected patterns. Among the most common manifestations are unmotivated and unnatural laughter or crying, talking tongues and imitating a variety of animal sounds and movements" (page 14). He goes on and lists famous gurus and teachers who engage in the exact same manifestations described by T! B and HL victims. The list includes Bhagwhan Shree Rajneesh who helped develop and spread the use of tantric (yoga) sex and even wrote a book entitled Dance Your Way to God: "...just be joyful. God is not serious. .this world cannot fit with a theological god. .so let this be your constant reminder---that you have to dance your way to God, to laugh your way to God" (p.229) (quoted from article ibid p.14).

Other luminaries include Ramakrishna, Swami Baba Muktananda, the African Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari, and Qigong (ancient Chinese practice). This is interesting because Yan Xin, a

Chinese Qigong master, known to a billion people in China, gave a talk in San Francisco in 1991. 1700 devotees showed up and displayed the same "manifestations" typical in a Rodney Howard-Browne meeting (laughing/tongues) or the Toronto Vineyard (laughing, barking, roaring dancing etc).

"Not fair" you may say. "That is an unfair presentation. They preach the gospel. People are saved and healed. The gospel preached by Rodney Howard-Browne and the Vineyard churches are far different than the spooky services of Far eastern gurus and mystics." But what are they teaching? What prophecies have been spoken? Is the gospel of Jesus Christ being blended with a strange mixture of "Word Faith teaching (a la Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Marilyn Hickey), and the heresy that was rejected in the 1960's by the Pentecostal churches (the Assemblies of God) concerning "New Order of the Latter Rain"? Is the gospel of Jesus Christ being preached? Is there a call to "repentance from sin" and of faith towards Jesus Christ? Or is there a combination of orthodox Christianity and "new revelation ... never heard anywhere else"?

#### BACK TO THE BOARD Report

The Vineyard's official position states "we want to avoid linking the present work of the Spirit to any precise eschatological scenario (e.g. Hal Lindsey or the Latter Rain Movement etc), It would probably be wiser to maintain the loose pre-millennial views held by the vast majority, but not all--namely, that we have been in the "last days" since Pentecost and we don't know when the precise last moments of time are. Consequently, we don't know if this current renewal is "the last big one" or not" (BOARD REPORT p,2).

They may not "want" to link the so called "work of the Spirit" with the Latter Rain Movement but much of the "teaching" from their pulpits and "prophecies" are Latter Rain. Ed Tarkowski has written an unpublished article in which he outlines some of the interesting and I think aberrant teachings and prophecies emerging from the TB. He quotes Tricia Tillin, of the United Kingdom's Banner Ministries; "Very little is being said about the doctrine, origins, purpose and goal of the 'new move". She goes on and states; "It is my belief that most churches and leaders do not know those things. Some leaders, however are promising an escalation into world revival, but are cagey about how the transition will take place. Others hint at 'something being birthed in the church' and 'God is raising up an Army'.

#### The Latter Rain

So what does the Latter Rain Teach? They were a group of radical Pentecostals who evolved a teaching of extreme congregationalism that included a "restoration" of the "apostles" and "prophets" in these latter days. Some of these "apostles" and "prophets" were alleged to have the ability to "impart" spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands. The restoration of the "prophetic" included hearing from God in ways that did not necessarily include the scripture. Self-styled prophets and apostles created an atmosphere of revival that was more in line with enthusiastic mysticism.

In 1949 the Assemblies of God church rejected the teachings of the Latter Rain movement as being heretical. Six errors were specified:

The overemphasis relative to imparting, identifying, bestowing or confirming of gifts by the laying on of hands and prophecy.

The erroneous teaching that the Church is built on the foundation of present-day apostles and prophets.

The extreme teaching as advocated by the "New Order" regarding the confession of sin to man and deliverance as practised, which claims prerogatives to human agency which belong only to Christ.

The erroneous teaching concerning the imputation of the gift of languages as special equipment for missionary service.

The extreme and unscriptural practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by the means of gifts of utterance.

Such other wrestings and distortions of Scripture interpretations which are in opposition to teachings and practices generally accepted among us" (General Council minutes, 1949, pp.27-27 quoted in the article The Voices of Dissent p. 325).

Rejected fifty years ago as aberrational and heretical, many of the same manifestations have reemerged in Holy Laughter and The Toronto Blessing Movements.

The current teaching begins with a confusion over the role of Israel and the Church in the end times. The Vineyard board does not want any eschatological distinctive, but the Bible does speak to the issue of the return of Jesus Christ. The Vineyard may not like it, but people involved in the Toronto Blessing and the Holy Laughter movement are prophesying that the church must do certain things to usher in the Second Coming. One speaker in Toronto prophesied that "Like Jerusalem, Toronto will end up being a sending place". In another instance, Master Potter Ministries speaks of a worldwide revival of dry bones starting with the church, basing its prophecy on Ezekiel 37 (which speaks of Israel) and Acts 2 (which has nothing to do with dry bones). Out of the new revelations comes a kind of replacement theology where the church is Israel and Israel is the church. Do the promises of Israel belong to the church? Is the church Israel? Different people hold different positions, but I think it clear that the church is not Israel.

Many of the current prophecies refer to "Sarah's child" According to Master Potter Ministries; "God is strategically stirring the nations and changing governments of the world and the church. Just as My Finger is moving and redefining the Church to prepare you for My Bridegroom". What does that mean? Redefining the church? Does the Biblical revelation no longer fit? Has God changed the meaning of the church?

Problematic "Prophecies"

Morris Cerrullo (American evangelist), while speaking at the 1994 London School of Ministry, stated: ".God has revealed to me revelations. .of His Spirit, of His endtime, so sacred. .You never heard this word preached anywhere. It is Hot, it is sacred, it is Deep. Come away to this place where I poured out My Holy Spirit. I will make you pregnant with My reality. "

New revelations never preached before? There is an old saying. "If it's new, it's not true". Has God left something out of the Bible? Has there been some revelation left unattended?

In an interview with Pat Robertson (June 9, 1994) Judson Cornwall related that Glenn Foster had a night vision in January concerning himself and Cornwall. He saw them both pregnant. Foster said the LORD revealed: "I am now impregnating some of my mature, older ministers with truth. .I'm choosing my older men because I can trust them to carry that truth to full gestation and have the patience to raise it up once it is delivered. .I will bring forth truth that is not now being taught and YOU will be part of it."

A new revelation? Not taught anywhere else? It is not in the Bible? The church is getting ready to "manifest" something never seen? In a Rodney Howard-Browne telecast on TBN May 1994; Wallace Hickey (Marilyn Hickey's husband) said; "The Spirit in this very hour says, Don't think you've seen it all as you go in the Holy Ghost way. God is new and He's a growing person, as anything that is alive. So you don't have to work it up or try in our flesh to strive. Just let God be God in you as a child, as a child be. God would will that the whole of everyone in eternity would be like He is, never old, ever young, growing, a growing thing."

This is classic process theology where God is ever changing and growing. This is not the God of the Bible who is omnipotent, omnipresent and transcendent. This is not the immutable and incorrigible God who does not change. Are these "prophetic" words a departure from classic Christianity? Yes they are!

Another group, the "Endtime Handmaidens", prophesied in October 1994 that "Sarah is a type of the Church. The Church is 'withered', and its womb is dried up in many places, but God is sending revival of joy to awaken and renew the Church so that she can bring forth 'the man-child' of joy, even the army of overcomers who will go forth in the likeness and image of the Lord in these Last days" (taken from Ed Tarkowski, dated 2-9-95 Internet). Ed Tarkowski further states: "the stated purpose of the laughing revival is to bring forth the "man-child" of joy that will subdue the earth. National ministry leaders have now said that God would impregnate, has impregnated, has brought that impregnation to full gestation and has released the "child" into all the nations to bring about God's harvest of souls and His endtime army. But there is no mention in Scripture of such a prophetic utterance or release after the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, "God with us". Nor do es Scripture speak of a release of any other spirit but the Holy Spirit, sent ONCE AND FOR ALL (emphasis in the original). This new movement is rounded on progressive revelation, "truths" never heard or seen before, a typical mark of the Latter Rain Movement. It's no wonder, then, that "Sarah's child" sounds exactly like the Manifest Sons of God of the Latter Rain doctrines" (quoted extensively from the 2-9-95 letter of Ed Tarkowski). People must not confuse enthusiastic mysticism with past revivals that were marked by the Word of God, repentance, salvation, and empowering by the Holy Spirit.

What Does The Bible Say?

Is this movement, are these manifestations from God? Any doctrine or practice in the Christian community should be marked by two things if they are to be considered 'Biblical'.

(1) Is it in the Bible?

(2) Is it normative? What do I mean by 'normative'? Imagine someone came up to and told you that a donkey spoke to him and had a word from the Lord for you. You should be skeptical. You may even ask some serious questions about their mental health. Yet God did use a donkey to speak to someone in the Bible. Because donkey's speaking in the Bible did occur, you cannot automatically reject the possibility. If that same person says; "this is a new move of God! I am calling it the "Talking Donkey Renewal". People will come from all over to "Old Mac Donald's farm" and receive from God. Now God is speaking through the animals!" Then you must reject the statement because it is not normative. God does not speak through animals, his normal way of communicating is through his word. "God who spoke at different times and in different ways has in these last days spoken to us by His own dear Son" (Hebrews 1:1).

Is Holy Laughter in the Bible? No. No where, at any time, in any period of the church, did they worship in this way as the 'norm'. Has the church been guilty of unbiblical and socially uncomfortable things in the past? Yes. John Wesley had a fourfold test for doctrine and practice when the Scriptures did not plainly speak These four elements were Scripture, tradition, experience and reason.

What does the Bible say about Holy Laughter? Nothing. Well meaning but errant apologists have tried to make bizarre correlation's between events in Scripture and the current phenomena, but there is no sound Biblical precedent. Attempts to link laughter (galeo) and Joy (charis) have proven futile. In the N.T. the word for "laughter" (galeo) occurs to describe times of joyous celebration or for scorn. In the N.T. people in Jairus' house laugh at him out of derision (Mt.9:24). Even so weighty a reference as Kittle's New Testament Dictionary places the emphasis on judgment when Jesus pronounces a woe on those who laugh (Luke 6:25) and is also equated with the wealthy who find satisfaction in this age, and when James (4:9) demands that laughter should give place to humility before God (Kittle p.113). Interestingly enough, Kittle relates that the Greeks characterized laughter with the scornful derision of the gods who mocked puny human beings.

Does this mean Christians have no right to laugh? Of course not. Is it possible not to laugh and still be happy? Of course. "Sorrow is better than laughter, For when a face is sad a heart may be happy" (Ecc. 7:3). "Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, and the end of joy may be grief" (Prov.14:13 NIV).

Dave Hunt points out; "Nowhere does Scripture teach that laughter is a sign of a work of God in the heart; or of the infilling of the Holy Spirit; or that it is conducive to holy living. Nor is there any example of anyone producing laughter in others to a godly end" (Berean Call)

Some of the passages that deal with scorn and unbelief include, Gen. 17:17. 18:12-15; 2 Chr. 30:10; Neh. 2:19. The list of scriptures goes on and on, the bottom line being "there is no holy laughter" in the Bible.

What About Tradition, Reason and Experience?

Attempts at linking the phenomena to revivals in the past have also proven unsatisfactory. There are two issues that need to be considered. (1) What is Biblical Revival and (2) what historical revivals claimed the same phenomena?

Charisma magazine quotes Jonathan Edwards, church leader of the Great Awakening in the 1730's: "It was very wonderful to see how a person's affections were sometimes moved--when God did, as it were, suddenly open their eyes and let into their minds a sense of the greatness of His grace. Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter and tears, often at the same time, issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping. Sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice"

A1 Dager's Media Spotlight (March 1995--Special Report p.3) has an excellent analysis on the issue of precedent. "One who is convicted of sin may well laugh or cry after he has felt release from the condemnation and control of sin, which comes with confession and repentance. But there is no evidence he will bark like a dog or make other animal noises. These manifestations have historically been attributed to demonic spirits, not to the Holy Spirit".

The first Biblical revival takes place in Genesis 35. After a period of sin and gross conduct on the part of Jacob's family, God initiated a "revival" in chapter 35. God initiates the revival by telling Jacob to return to Betel (the place Jacob first met God). Real revival is often preceded by gross sin, disgrace and abundant fear. But even Vineyard leader John Wimber has publicly stated that he does not think what is taking place is revival. Rather he prefers to call it refreshing. How does one construe such manifestations as 'refreshing'? A simple study of Genesis 35 reveals that revival incorporates, (1) a Word from God (verse 1) a turning from idolatry (2) and a forsaking of all that is displeasing to God (3). There is also a corresponding return to the revealed will or word or promises of God.

In the Media Spotlight Special report, A1 Dager points out that from Rodney Howard-Browne's perspective, the issue of precedence doesn't matter. Quoting Charisma in his article "Finding this laughter in the Second Great Awakening is a non-issue to him. "Whether it was there or not, it's happening right now," he says.

If Howard-Browne doesn't wish to quibble over interpretations of revival history, then why does he bring it up by citing revival history? ".the evangelist cites certain instances of unrestrained hilarity in the history of American religion. The "indescribable joy" described by Charles Finney, he says, was actually laughter. Howard-Browne cites the famous 1801 Cane Ridge Revival in Bourbon County, Kentucky, as a foreshadowing of what he is seeing in 1994".

Al Dager goes on to say "if it's a non-issue, It should not be an issue in attempting to justify holy laughter. Yet it is an issue"

How true! Is there really historical precedent really? We do not have time to do a careful analysis, yet the weight seems to fall squarely on the shoulders of the Holy Laughter Camp to establish historical precedent.

So far so bad. No Biblical support for the phenomena, the teaching or the movement. There is no historical precedent to support the movement. There is no rational support. But there is an abundance of experiential support.

Is it happening across America, Europe and Asia. Are people experiencing something? Yes. But without Biblical, traditional, or historical support, supporters run the risk of inviting us to participate in something that is at best human, and at worse demonic.

## Discernment and Correction

Pastor James Ryle (Boulder Valley Vineyard) has written; "There is today a group of people who promote themselves as Biblical purist (sic). (Sic) the faithful remnant who alone preach the Word and who evidently possess the power to judge and criticize anyone who is not like them (emphasis in the original). This is nothing new, as any student of Scripture can attest. It was, in fact, this very kind of people who crucified Jesus Christ. They are scribes and Pharisees, religious and angry, attacking and persecuting anyone who dares to differ from their exclusive views. Here is where the plot thickens. These watchdogs of doctrinal purity--who themselves ironically violate Scripture by their ungodly attitudes, their mean spirited commentary, and their deceitful reporting---have now turned their swords against the Vineyard and its leaders. Why? Since there is no truth to their accusations one must ask why do they accuse? What motivates them to tear down another church? The answer is pride, jealousy, fear, hatred, or ignorance--take your pick. You can be sure one of these factors is at the heart of this present contention."

What does Pastor James Ryle's comments mean? Perhaps through sarcasm he is trying to make a point. Or Pastor James is being deadly serious. He refers to those who "turn their swords" on the Vineyard as liars ("their is no truth to their accusations") or ignorant and as scribes and Pharisees (perhaps because these people "write down" like scribes, and like Pharisees, investigate issues that do not line up with orthodoxy). Those who criticizes the Vineyard are "mean-spirited", and either guilty of "pride, jealousy, fear, hatred, or ignorance" and that we can be sure that "one of these factors is at the heart of the present contention". Pastor James rules out error, discernment, and correction as possible options. Even the mainstream Vineyard Leadership has publicly written that if it can be demonstrated through sound exegesis or logic they will change.

He also speaks to the hearts and motives of those who have written against the Holy Laughter and Toronto Blessing Movements as being "mean spirited". How he is able to "tell", the reader never knows. But he brings up a good point. Do we have the right to judge or criticize? On what basis can we judge? Is it always wrong to judge? Should we judge on the basis of fear of criticism?

### Danger in Not Judging

Do Christians ever have the right to "judge"? Jesus said "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matt. 7:1-2).

Does this mean that Jesus is commanding us not to judge one another? The text seems to suggest that are forbidden to engage in unjust criticism. Does the evaluation of a phenomena with no Biblical support, no historical precedent, no rational explanation, occult origins and phenomena that is supported in non Christian religions unjust? You will note that whatever "measure" you use, that same measure will be used to judge you! Do you want to be evaluated Biblically? Those supporters insist that they would like to be dealt with in a way that is Biblical. I support them in their desire to be evaluated using Biblical criteria.

Elsewhere Jesus commands the people to judge righteously. In the gospel of John (7:24), Jesus told the religious leaders of his day to evaluate him on the source and substance of his words and deeds. "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment'. You will note that Jesus did not exempt even himself from evaluation. Jesus did not criticize the Pharisees for

their eagerness to evaluate him in light of God's Word. He told them "you search the scriptures because in them you think you have life, but they are those which testify of me"(John 5: 39).

What does it mean to "judge with righteous judgment"? Whatever it may mean, it must include what the Apostle later mentioned in IJohn3:7; "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous". There must some objective standard, some objective measure whereby we can determine truth. The very fact that he commands "let no one deceive you" implies there is such a thing as deception, there is error, there are lies, and Christians are not exempt from being victims of deceit.

Lester Summerall says "The reason I have been in every move of God is because I have never criticized any ministry or work of God". (Charles and Frances Hunter, Holy Laughter p. 103). That is quite a statement. By never criticizing he has managed to be involved in every move of God? There has never been a "false" move which he was able to judge?

Al Dager in Media Spotlight argues that Christians are faced with accusations of Blaspheming The Holy Spirit, Those who criticize or resist the move of God are warned. Dager writes; "The experience- oriented religionists point to Matthew 12:31-32 to claim that those who attribute to Satan or to the flesh what they believe is the work of the Holy Spirit, has blasphemed against the Holy Spirit.

This is a serious accusation. Those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit are eternally condemned; according to Jesus' own words, they will not be forgiven in this world or the next. This should cause us to be careful in making any assessment of the supernatural (or seemingly supernatural) phenomena. Certainly we must guard our hearts to be sure we are not resisting the grace of God from impure motives" (p.6).

Contrast that with Rodney Howard-Browne who does not care if it is the flesh, or the devil since at least something is happening!

Please consider this. If we are not to judge, then why are there repeated warnings in the scripture to avoid false teachers, false teaching, false signs and false wonders ( Matt.24:23-24; Jn. 5:43; I John 4:3; Rev. 13:6,11)? Why then would Paul command the Romans to "let love be without hypocrisy, Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9). How can we abhor what is evil if we do not reject false doctrine and evil? Doesn't a Christian need to reject what is evil in order to cling to what is good? Is it "evil" to judge when our brothers are engaged in practices that are neither biblical or in keeping with purity and gentleness? If we are not to judge how are we to "bring to light the hidden things of darkness" (I Cor. 4:5)?

What objective measure, what standard can we use? Should our ability to judge be based on the emotions of others? Should our ability to judge be based on the objections of those who wish to engage in practices that are unbiblical and unhealthy? Should their accusations of being mean-spirited, critical and judgmental dissuade our right and responsibility to evaluate practices within the Body of Christ?

Young Christians in the early church took their cue from the Word of God. The Bible provides tests to "test the spirits" to see whether they are from God (I John 4:1). The very command to test the spirits implies that there are spirits that are not of God. These spirits must have some sort of

meaningful resemblance to the Holy Spirit to call for some evaluation. The measure or the standard to evaluate truth claims by spirits, prophets, teachers and self-styled evangelists has been and will always be the Word of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Could it be that simple? The Word of God provides the mechanism of correction even for behavior and practices within the church? The Greek word is epanorthosis which means either "restoration", "re-establishment", "correction" or "reformation". You will note in 2 Timothy 3:16 scripture is given for teaching, then reproof, and then epanorthosis, and then for instruction. When we are "off" Biblically we can be put back on course.

By refusing to "judge" we cripple and hinder the church in her growth in Christ. When you "judge" whether or not you will allow your children to drink poison, you are not limiting the child's growth potential, you are insuring there will be growth.

### Judge the Fruit

Leaders and proponents are saying "judge the fruit". Jesus said in Matthew 7:18 "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit". Again the Word of God becomes the only reliable test of "good fruit". John Sandford in his newsletter Elijah House News says "But all things are to be tested by their fruits, and the fruits have been blessed renewal wherever the "Toronto experience" has become a genuine desire for Jesus' presence, rather than merely a seeking for power or the phenomena of manifestations. Healings, miracles and the best fruit of all, repentance--flow in abundance where those who have attended continue to just seek him humbly."

Are healings miracles and repentance fruit? Yes. Howling, laughing, screaming, marching, crying and being frozen and glued in the "spirit" do not qualify as fruit. No one doubts God's ability to work in individual lives. No one doubts that repentance and a greater love for Jesus are great things. But do subjective experiences qualify as fruit? What indications are there that the experiences produce lasting fruit? What happens when the people leave the Holy Laughter meeting, or who stop going to Toronto and stop laughing? When the "experience" is over, what then? We have received reports of people who suffer from post laughter depression. Those who define their relationship to Jesus Christ, "by the last experience" rather than the Word of God run the risk of shipwrecking their faith! The search for greater and more glorious feelings will eventually leave a person emotionally spent and spiritually bankrupt.

### What About All The Miracles?

Again the facts do not seem to match the rhetoric. Are there amazing physical healings, miracles and large scale repentance? Dr. James Beverley writes; "Unfortunately not. There are repeated testimonies of powerful spiritual and emotional healings. Most of the miracle claims are not that dramatic. I have investigated three of the more dramatic accounts with the help of two doctors. Our preliminary research is disappointing. In one case there is no medical proof at all. In another the cancer is back. In the third, the Vineyard reports have proven inaccurate in a significant way."

Most of what is being described as the fruit are the good feelings the "experience" seems to generate. In the Inkhorn(no 5vo16 1994) we read; "A British Columbia pastor was excited that one of his parishioners 'was dancing like Elvis'. Good fruit is lasting fruit. The fruit of the Spirit in a believer's life is much more than outward manifestations and experiences. Permanent, positive changes result from the Word of God being heard and obeyed."

The article goes on to mention input from a Vineyard pastor named Jerry Steingard who told INKHORN "The enemy can counterfeit any of the signs and wonders, but the enemy can't counterfeit--and would not want to counterfeit--the fruit. Satan has no desire to see people love Jesus more and witness to people more."

Steingard is right in saying Satan would not want people to love Jesus and witness, but he errs by not taking into account the possibility that Satan would be greatly pleased to lead unsuspecting and undiscerning people to a false Jesus."

Is it possible? Are the people involved in the Toronto Blessing and the Holy Laughter worshipping a different Jesus? Paul warned in Galatians that there were false Christs and even Jesus warned about false Christs.

Is this a work of the Spirit? Whether we like it or not. the Bible says "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies," (Galatians 5:19-20).

If it can be demonstrated that the results of "holy laughter" and the "Toronto Blessing" fit into several of the categories of works of the flesh, then it is in fact at best a work of the flesh.

Special attention should be brought to the word "heresies" or "haireisis" in the Greek text. The word would often designate a school or sect within a larger body. In I Corinthians 11:18-19 the word has a sifting connotation. In 2 Peter 2:1 it has an immediate effect on the church and creates a new society alongside of the church. Haireises divides the body. "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction" (2Peter 2:1 ).

#### A Word of Warning

If the Toronto Blessing and Holy Laughter Movements promote a false division in the Church, if they engage in false teaching, and if they present a false Jesus, then they are to be rejected.

There is sufficient question concerning the origin of the Movements (Rodney Howard-Browne/Word-Faith/Vineyard ) that Christians should approach the phenomenon with extreme caution. One discernment writer intimated that this should bring up more red flags than a Raiders-Broncos football game.

The manifestations, the teachings, and the way the "Blessing" is spread should raise suspicions. The lack of Biblical, and historical support should then cement the decision.

#### Discernment Ministries

In a recent interview on my radio program Light Conversation. Bill Alnor, President of Eastern Outreach Ministries, made the startling statement that "without exception" every major 'discernment ministry' in America has evaluated the Holy Laughter/Toronto Blessing Movements and found serious problems. Such ministries as Christian Research Institute, Spiritual Counterfeit Project in Berkeley, Eastern Outreach in Philadelphia, Dave Hunt in Oregon, Personal Freedom Outreach Journal, Discernment, Banner Ministries(UK) with Tricia Tillin, all have strong suspicions about the origins, purposes and biblical content of the movement.

When I spoke to John MacArthur about this subject, and made the comment that every discernment ministry in America has presented a united chorus of concern, he commented "That's why they are called discernment ministries". Good point.

Al Dager writes; "The only defense we have against spiritual deceptions arising today are a holy life, a solid grounding in God's Word and a refusal to accept anything as being from Him that is not validated in His Word. We should heed John 4:23: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father such to worship him (Media Spotlight; special report).

## On a Collision Course - Militant Tendencies in the Church!

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### ON A COLLISION COURSE

Bible-believing Christians likely to be persecuted

In previous editions of "Mainstream" we covered progressively such topics as the false "spirit of love", the laugh-ing manifestations of Rodney Howard Browne, and then his connections to the Toronto Airport Vineyard Fellowship and its supposed renewal, followed by examples of how this teaching is becoming more and more doctrinally strange, with distinct "manifested sons" overtones.

In the Spring issue we looked at the birth that is being predicted amongst hard-core revivalists. This spiritual birth, seen in Christian circles as the formation of a new and powerful Body fit to rule the nations, is identical to the New-Age spiritual transformation through christ-consciousness.

The doctrine of transformation and the doctrine of redemption are now on a collision course. As events roll on towards their predicted end, they gather pace and make it difficult for us to catch our breath. Now, those who are new to the ideas of dominion, new-age and manifested sons are floundering because they do not understand the context in which the new doctrines are preached.

(It might be added that many who stopped their ears at the exposition of kingdom-dominion teaching in the past and who decided to stay in restoration churches, have now had a rude awakening. They begin to see where it is leading. But they have little real understanding of the false teachings and have to catch up quickly in order to grasp what is to come.)

However, God is merciful and anyone who is exercising the discernment of the Holy Spirit and is willing to know the truth will at the very least have alarm bells ringing by now. Sadly, the number of Christians listening to those warning bells is very small.

Since it is not possible to cover old ground in every new edition of Main-stream, we now have to move on to the next phase of development - the formation of the New World Order, and the emergence of the Spiritual Man.

In looking at the agenda laid down for the Christian Church, one can hardly miss seeing the similarities with secular plans. Teachings coming from other religions, from new-agers, politicians, globalists and various occult groups are almost identical to current speculation about the coming Christian revival and its effects. On the other hand, comparisons with the infallible word of God tell a different story. The God-breathed scriptures of Christianity contradict all these secular and religious ideals and present Jesus Christ alone as Saviour, Lord, Messiah and King of the coming new world.

Only the Bible stands out as unique in its message and content. It preaches man's inability to save himself or his world; the futility of good works; salvation in Christ alone; separation from the world and from error; a heavenly kingdom and a heavenly hope; and the eventual destruction of this

present earth and the judgement of all that is contrary to God's will.

The doctrine of transformation and the doctrine of redemption are now on a collision course. One proposes that man can be educated, reformed and empowered to save himself and his environment; the other teaches that man is helpless, and needs a Saviour. It is the god of this world who is seeking by man-power to preserve and transform his domain; while our omniscient Creator knows that this world's downward spiral will only be halted by His dramatic intervention.

### "THE THREE R's"

The present stage of development, (the penultimate stage before the manifestation of the "sons of god" as spiritual rulers of the restored Earth) is one that I would sum up as "The Three R's". This is not the classic three R's of reading, writing and arithmetic. It is the three R's of Christian restoration - Repentance, Reconciliation and Revival.

Already there will be howls of protest as, quite naturally, believers say "so what's wrong with THAT!?" But we must stop being so naive as to think that biblical terms are sacrosanct and cannot be degraded. Today, such terms have become a parody of their true biblical meaning, and this forces us to examine the context for their use.

Repentance in the Bible means turning away from sin towards God (Ezekiel 33:11/Acts 3:19/26:20). It is a private heart-transaction between fallen man and perfect Saviour. But today it can mean apologising to your elders for disagreeing with them, or bursting into tears publicly over your lack of self-esteem.

Reconciliation, according to the word of God, means that Jesus has reunited us with the Father, because of his perfect sacrifice on the Cross. (Hebrews 2:17) "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18). But today, instead of bringing together man and God, the ministry of reconciliation seeks to unite differing groups, nations, cultures and creeds.

Revival, according to the scriptures is a sovereign and merciful act of God in bringing to life something that was dead. Since only God gives life, this cannot be the work of man. (Habakkuk 3:2 / Isaiah 57:15) "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" Psalms 85:6.

Revival only figures in the Bible as a restoration from a state of sin and judgement. It does not appear in the New Testament at all, for Christians already have the life-giving Holy Spirit and should be walking in life as a daily experience. (1 Jn 5:12/Romans 5:17/2 Tim 1:10) "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Romans 8:10).

But today's revival, as we shall see, is not even a matter of receiving the life-giving word of the gospel and being converted. It is a spiritual force sent out to affect people's bodies and minds; influencing them to join the Church.

### REPENTANCE UNDER SCRUTINY

Let's examine the Three R's in detail. Firstly repentance which will, I believe, take centre stage in the next wave of deception, creating an aura of holiness and contrition that will be almost impossible to rebut.

Nobody likes to question repentance. Indeed, some of it may well be heartfelt and genuine. As with all deception there will be a mixture and we need to be careful not to harm those who truly repent of sin and turn to Jesus as Saviour.

The following remarks should not be taken as a blanket rejection of all modern-day repentance and confession. But we do need to be prepared to oppose the counterfeit.

As I hinted in the Winter 1994 edition of *Mainstream*, a counterfeit repentance is commanded for those who will not yield to the new anointing. If you question it, you are "in rebellion" and should "repent" of your supposed critical and judgemental attitudes.

"Unity" is the keyword. This tends to mean, in practice, an uncritical acceptance of the doctrines of the new order.

The ground of this unity is experiential, not doctrinal. We are all supposed to come together in love and harmony, forgetting doctrinal differences - but there is no love for dissenters to the plan. All who stand outside are branded hard-hearted Pharisees, old-order renegades, anti-anointing people, disruptive, divisive and a hindrance to the work of God.

When we examine new-age literature, we see the same attitude towards dissenters. They are a destructive cancer in the world Body: "The surgeon dare leave no cancer in the body when he closes up the wound after a delicate operation. We dare leave no self-centredness on Earth after the selection process...All humans whose acts, intentions and desires are primarily self-centred, those who are not able to experience their Higher Self, and those who do not love God, neighbour or self, do not evolve to the next phase of earth-life. (B. Marx-Hubbard, "Revelation" pp 231, 245).

To be ruled by self, according to the new-agers, is to be unwilling to harmonise with all peoples and all beliefs. For instance, proclaiming Jesus as the only Way of salvation would be seen as an act of hatred and division.

Individuality and independence are anathema to the engineers of the new world. The goal is all mankind thinking, moving and acting as One.

As in the world, so in the Church - UNITY is the motivating force. We must smoothe over doctrinal disagreements, brush disputes under the carpet, stop examining teaching, and simply agree to unite "for the sake of the kingdom".

Church leaders today want to "build bridges". But when they are prepared to accept unbiblical teaching and practice for the sake of unity, they have gone "a bridge too far".

#### PUBLIC CONFESSION - the dangers

One way to achieve unity and harmony is to introduce confession sessions where participants publicly announce their failures. This is a technique often used in cults. It is both a therapy for guilt-stricken members, and a useful monitoring device for the leaders.

In cults, the goal is to conform. Anyone who is having doubts is pounded with guilt-inducing ministry until they feel like a traitor to the community and its ideals. They end up convinced they have failed; they feel rejected, estranged from the community, and desperately in need of affection. At this point, to publicly admit their "failures" is a tremendous emotional release.

In today's lonely society where feelings cannot easily be shared and many Christians struggle with secret sins, public confession brings with it an emotional catharsis that is almost ecstatic.

In the book written out of the experience of the Welsh Revival, "War On the Saints" by J. Penn-Lewis in association with Evan Roberts, counterfeit confession of sin is dealt with in a paragraph titled Compulsory Confession of Sin:

"...confessions instigated by deceiving spirits may be recognised by their compulsory character. The man is forced to confess sin, and oftentimes sins which have no existence except in the accusations of the enemy. As it does not dawn on him that evil spirits will push a man to do what looks like the most meritorious thing, and which the Scriptures declare is the one condition for obtaining forgiveness, he yields to the drive upon him, simply to get relief. Herein lies the danger of widespread "confessions of sin" during times of Revival, when almost a "wave" of "confessions" passes over a community and the depths of sinful lives are exposed to the gaze of others... true confession of sin should come from deep conviction, and not compulsion and should be made only to God if the sin is one only known by God; to man personally and in private when the sin is against man; and in public only when the sin is against the public. Confession should never be made under the impulse of any compulsory emotion, but should be the deliberate act of the volition (will); choosing the right, and the putting of things right, according to the will of God." (War On The Saints, unabridged version p 133)

In the same book, there is a striking account of a evil spirit mimicking the process of confession. This illustrates just how difficult it is to spot the counterfeit; but notice how the discerning Christians had an uneasiness that alerted them to the fact that it was not the Holy Spirit at work. They were not prepared to let an evil spirit mislead them:

"I united with a number of brethren and sisters one whole week every month, in prayer to God to pour out more of His Spirit, gifts and power. After having done this for some time with great earnestness, such powerful and wonderful manifestations of God and the Holy Spirit (apparently) took place that we no longer doubted God had heard our prayer, and His Spirit had descended into our midst, and on our gathering.

"Amongst other things this spirit, which we thought to be the Holy Spirit, used a fifteen-year old girl as his instrument, through whom everyone belonging to our gathering and having any sin or burden of conscience, had it revealed to the gathering. Nobody could remain in the meeting with any burden of conscience without it being revealed to the meeting by the spirit.

"For example: A gentleman of esteem and respect from the neighbourhood came to the meeting, and all his sins were exposed in the presence of the gathering by the fifteen-year-old girl. Thereupon he took me into an adjoining room, so broken down, and admitted to me with tears that he had committed all these sins which the girl had exposed. He confessed this and all other sins known to him. Then he came again into the meeting, but hardly had he entered when the same voice said to him, "Ha! You have not confessed all yet, you have stolen 10 guilden that you have

not confessed". In consequence, he took me again into the adjoining room and said, "It is true, I have also done this" ...this man had never seen this girl in his life, neither she him.

"With such events, was it astonishing that a spirit of holy awe came over all at the meeting... And yet we had to unmask this spirit which had brought about these things - and which we took to be the Holy Ghost - as a terrible power of darkness. I had such an uneasy feeling of distrust which could not be overcome...as I made this known for the first time to an older brother and friend...he said "Brother Seltz, if you continue to foster unbelief, you can commit the sin against the Holy Ghost which will never be forgiven".

"These were terrible days and hours for me, because I did not know whether we had to do with the power of God or a disguised spirit of Satan, and only one thing was clear to me, viz. that I and this meeting should not let ourselves be led by a spirit when we did not have clear light, and confirmation whether this power was from above or below.

"Thereupon, I took the leading brethren and sisters to the uppermost room of the house and made known to them my position, and said we must all cry and pray that we might be able to prove whether it was a power of light or darkness. As we came downstairs the voice of this power said, using the 15-year old girl as his instrument "What is this rebellion in your midst? You will be sorely punished for your unbelief".

"I told this voice that it was true that we did not know with whom we had dealings. But we wanted to be in that attitude, that if it was an angel of God, or the Spirit of God, we would not sin against Him, but if it was a devil we would not be deceived by him. "If you are a power of God, you will be in accord as we handle the Word of God: 'Try the spirits whether they be of God'".

"We all knelt down and cried and prayed to God in such earnestness that He would have mercy on us and reveal to us in some manner whom we had dealings with. Through the person which he had been using as an instrument, he made such abominable and terrible grimaces and shrieked in such a piercing tone: 'Now I am found out, now I am found out...'"

#### RELEASE, BUT NOT RENEWAL

Other important questions are raised by the account (in the May 15th issue of "Christianity Today") headed "Spiritual Renewal Sweeps Schools", subtitled "Spirit of confession and joy spreads across campuses".

Reading this account gave me a deep sense of unease. While I would love to believe that true conviction from the Holy Spirit and a new walk with God is gripping university students by the thousand, I remain unconvinced for the following reasons:

The focus does not seem to have been on conviction of offending a holy God, nor on receiving the forgiveness of God. According to this report at least, it seems to have been about sharing hurts and struggles with others, in order to gain a sense of release, freedom and acceptance.

One girl says "I have never felt such freedom. I now know IT'S ALL RIGHT, that they ACCEPT ME AS I AM. People are glad to find out I am not a perfect person"

Another says "There's lots of hurt, and no place for the hurt to come out. The revival gave people the chance to say, 'THIS IS WHO I AM'"

The areas brought up for healing by confession were often psychological and students were looking for comfort from rejection, low self-esteem, and family disfunction.

The emphasis was on person-to-person reconciliation, with a picture of a rugby-scrum of students hugging each other in prayer.

The setting for confessions was always public (often by use of a microphone in front of the whole assembly), and the report began by saying one girl was unsure which was worse, harbouring the secret of her lost virginity or confessing moral failure before an audience of her peers.

One reason put forward for the struggles of students was "over-individualised" faith (just me and God) and the lack of a Church or small group in which to confess sins on a regular basis. The report says that as a result, Campus communities are now implementing plans to set up accountability groups [=shepherding].

A "new vision for the world and for the awakening of the Church" was one result of this revival according to David Howard, former director of Intervarsity's Urbana missions conventions.

However convincing these scenes of tearful repentance, let us not be moved off the solid ground of scripture. Emotional release is not the same as spiritual clean-sing. A loving hug from your classmates is not the same as the forgiveness of God. However much others are prepared to understand your failings and "accept you as you are" that is not GOD'S way. He requires a conviction of having offended Him, and a change of life.

Apart from anything else, I am particularly concerned to see the Roman understanding of Confession coming back into Protestant communities. Those who hold to a biblical faith know that confession is a private matter between the believer and God. As David says "against thee, thee only have I sinned".

Confession to others opens up the distinct possibility of a breach of confidence. If you confess your sins to another person, how sure are you that it will not be gossiped about behind your back, or used against you in the future? God is absolutely trustworthy. He would NEVER reveal your confessed sins to ANYONE. How many of your friends can you trust that absolutely? (Be honest!)

Take the example of the girl student in the above report who decided to admit her loss of virginity in front of the meeting. What could she expect from those who heard her confession? Possibly the sympathy of those who had done the same thing - they will feel relieved not to be the only ones. Then perhaps the understanding of those who feel tempted but haven't yet succumbed to the same sin. There will be some who are whispering "Oh, yes, I always thought as much!", and later these will gossip to their friends about it. Add to this the secret condemnation of people who can never accept weakness in others, and you have a mixed bag of reactions, none of which provides the biblical answer to this poor girl's sin.

Above all, those listening people are in no position to offer her forgiveness for her sin.

We are all sinners! We all have temptations! But we deal with them by a process of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. When we stumble, we take our offences to God alone. There, we receive his forgiveness and his strength to withstand sin. No human being can give you this! "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7)

Confession to a priest or other person is not scriptural. The verse commonly used to support it (James 5:16) actually refers to admitting your faults [a different Greek word entirely] to those whom you have offended.

The Rev A. Hislop in his book "The Two Babylons" (p.9) points out that the Roman system of confession actually comes from the Babylonian Mysteries.

"The clerical power of the Roman priesthood culminated in the erection of the confessional. That confessional itself was borrowed from Babylon. The confession required of the votaries of Rome is entirely different from the confession prescribed in the word of God. The dictate of scripture in regard to confession is "confess your faults one to another" (James 5:16) which implies that a priest should confess to the people, as well as the people to the priest, if either sins against the other. This could never have served the purpose of spiritual despotism; and therefore Rome, leaving the word of God, has had recourse to the Babylonian system. In that system, secret confession to the priest...was required of all who were admitted to the "Mysteries"; and until such confession had been made, no complete initiation could take place.

"....the pretense under which this auricular confession was required was that the solemnities to which the initiated were to be admitted were so high, so heavenly, so holy, that no man with guilt lying on his conscience and sin unpurged could lawfully be admitted to them. But...who can fail to see that this was nothing more than a pretense; that the grand object in requiring the candidates for initiation to make confession to the priest of all their secret faults and shortcomings and sins, was just to put them entirely in the power of those to whom the innermost feelings of their souls and their most important secrets were confided?"

## GOLDEN RULE

When in doubt, or under emotional pressure at a meeting to confess your sins, remember the golden rule as prescribed by Jessie Penn-Lewis:

if the sin is towards God alone, confess in private to God. [Ezra 10:11/ Psalms 41:4] "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest". (Psalms 51:4)

if the sin involved offending another person or persons, apologise privately to those affected. [James 5:16] "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift". (Matthew 5:23-24)

if the sin is against the general public, a public apology could be made. Even then, it should be AFTER confession is made to God and His forgiveness has been obtained. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: (Joshua

7:19-20)

We also need to ask ourselves some vital questions before launching out into public displays of repentance. Questions like:

what am I seeking most? The forgiveness of God or the acceptance and understanding of fellow-believers?

am I really seeking the cleansing that comes from God, or the relief that comes from admitting my faults?

do I want to be reconciled to God, or to my friends?

is my guilt genuine? Is it the result of the Spirit's quiet conviction in my heart, or the pressure from others to conform to an ideal of unity and personal reconciliation?

Peace with others begins with peace with God. Emotional relief is not enough to heal the wounds caused by sin: "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace". (Jeremiah 6:14)

## CORPORATE REPENTANCE

The call for national repentance blurs the edges between the sort of confession meeting described above and the concept of reconciliation, discussed in the next section.

One-to-one reconciliation (often called repentance) is required to align sheep with their shepherds and to keep order in the ranks. Unconditional unity is the driving force behind such repentance. Veteran Spring Harvest speaker, Alex Buchanan, described it as "a rehearsal for the rule and reign of Jesus on earth" and he said such reconciliation was vital "at a time when open treachery is rampant, with junior leaders often in open rebellion against their seniors" (Are you now a TRAITOR when you disagree with an elder? A traitor to whom? To what??)

He was commenting on a meeting led by evangelist Ed Silvano at Spring Harvest. "Renewal" magazine described the scenes that followed his talk as "poignant" with people of opposing nations and cultures hugging and asking forgiveness for their nation's wrongs.

Ed Silvano is a leading figure in the battle to take cities by strategic spiritual warfare. (eg, see Peter Wagner's book "Warfare prayer" pp30-31). He is also key speaker at this July's "Cities For God" meetings across the UK, with at least 60 cities already booked to participate. Silvano majors on "prayer evangelism" in order to reach whole cities for Christ, but once again he sees UNITY as vital for this scheme to succeed.

National repentance is now a important element in the plans for bringing in the kingdom. Ed Silvano says "the biblical command is for us to be reconciled with one another, person to person, family to family and country to country".

He gave no bible reference for this command. But perhaps a hint might be drawn from a statement by Dr. Ralph Davies, church relations manager of Operation Mobilisation. In an article in the same issue of Renewal (July 95) he says that the word "blessing" as it occurs "in the Genesis version of the Great Commission implies a relationship, a bringing into one family of people from every tribe

and tongue and people." The bible quotes he gives are all referring to the Abrahamic Promise: "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed". (Genesis 26:4)

This promise found its fulfillment in Christ who was the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16) thus in Christ men and women of every nation can know the blessing of Abraham. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham". (Galatians 3:7-9)

The only family created by the promise to Abraham, in this day and age, is the Family of God, consisting of born-again believers.

The Great Commission of the New Testament confirms this fact, as demonstrated in the sermon of Peter at Pentecost. (Acts 2:14-40). He preached the death and resurrection of Christ as the hope of all men and when they responded "what shall we do?" he replied "Repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." This promise was to "as many as the Lord shall call".

But individual conversion is no longer the aim. The new leadership of the Church sets its sights higher and aims to claim the whole earth, for God promised Abraham the nations as his heritage they say.

Howard Snyder, writing in "Kingdom Lifestyle" (p.30) points to Old Testament scriptures about the Promised Land. He notes that this Land was given to God's people as their inheritance, Acts 13:19. Then, in a neat twist, he says that because the Greek word for "land" and "earth" are the same (GE) the Promised Land of the Old Testament means the whole earth in the kingdom of God. Thus the promised inheritance is now this physical earth! Snyder claims that the earth has been redeemed by God from its fallen state and that we should expect to see its transformation making it an "actual physical environment" for the followers of Christ.

But Peter at Pentecost does not preach the transformation of this world. On the contrary, he says "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (verse 40) The Commission was to call "whosoever will" to become a member of the heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4)

Nevertheless, the new understanding of evangelism has more to do with blessing people than saving them!

Freedom, justice, peace, a sustainable economy, food for all, good health, housing - these are the blessings the new evangelists plan to extend to the nations of the world. None of these things is wrong in itself, and we applaud any attempt to improve living standards or to promote peace and understanding between peoples. However, they are not an alternative to the gospel of salvation in Christ!

## RECONCILIATION

We now need to examine the current interest in "reconciliation" - a word which is likewise suffering degradation.

Reconciliation is the latest buzz word! You can hardly pick up any literature without bumping into it. Taking a rest from Christian reading, I flicked open the excellent political review "Freedom Today" and my eyes instantly fixed on the sentence "another word that seems to be obligatory for any pronouncement on the situation (in Northern Ireland) is 'reconciliation'. A number of people use the word simply to get a round of applause..."

I have counted dozens of instances of this word appearing in the Christian press. Reconciliation, along with repentance, followed by revival seem to be the words of the moment. And if a message received from a member of Rick Joyner's Morning Star prophetic movement is to be believed, the call for reconciliation has "gone forth to the Church" in the form of prophecy. Too much of the doctrine of revival is based on words from the self-ordained apostles and prophets of the latter-rain movement. That it has taken root so quickly and so universally speaks volumes about their influence in the Church.

In this same message mentioned above, alongside the prophetic call for reconciliation, (and seemingly without any awareness of the incongruity of what he is saying), the supporter of Morning Star Ministry predicts "violent division" like a tornado "tearing the Church asunder" as many church members and leaders oppose the revival to come and call it demonic. He does so on the basis of prophecies by Paul Cain, Rick Joyner and the wife of Mahesh Chavda.

So here we have the same thought that also underlies false repentance: those who are willing to set aside all differences and unite on the basis of a touchy-feely religion of "love" and "goodwill" will be reconciled to one another and dwell in harmony. On the other hand, the fate awaiting those who oppose the revival is exclusion from the Body by a violent division.

This situation is an inevitable result of adopting unbiblical beliefs about the role of reconciliation in global transformation.

#### RECONCILING ALL PEOPLES - THE STORY SO FAR:

Global Consultation on World Evangelism (GCOWE 95) organised by AD2000 and Beyond. Held in June 1995 in Seoul, Sth Korea, home of David Yonggi Cho. Statement by Luis Bush (International Director) titled "Prayer for World Evangelization":

"Prayer will be offered up for a reconciliation of God's people between countries, races, and ethnic people on behalf of a fractured world, and between Christian organizations, denominations, global movements, countries, and regions of the world".

Campus Crusade meeting held in Orlando, 5-7th December 94, for over 700 leaders including founder Bill Bright, Jack Hayford and C. Peter Wagner. Theme of repentance in order to heal the land (2 Chron 7:14). Scenes of tears, unity and reconciliation. Bill Bright asked African pastor Carlton Pearson to forgive whites for the abuses and prejudices of the past.

Spring Harvest UK. May 1995 Three-week event attended by an estimated 70,000 people. Many streamed forward after a talk by Ed Silvoso to ask forgiveness for their nation's wrongdoings.

DAWN Congress Conference, Royal Centre, Nottingham. Speaker David Yonggi Cho. Acts of repentance and reconciliation took place between many leaders - emphasis on unity. 1,000 leaders from many different denominations taking part.

Pope John Paul II plans to mark the Jubilee of the year 2000 with a joint celebration by Christian, Jew and Muslims in the Holy Land. The Pope asked for forgiveness for "wrongdoings done to non-Catholics" at a canonisation Mass in the Czech Republic in May 1995.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference, Birmingham, August 1994. Lay people repented of hurting the priests by criticising them. Fr. David Keniry then apologised on behalf of priests who hurt the people. This was followed by a surge of hugs, kisses and tears. Reconciliation and unity were the themes of the Conference, titled "Call To Glory!".

Church of Scotland Assembly in May, 1994. Cardinal Thomas Winning, the leader of Scotland's Roman Catholics, was an invited speaker. The Cardinal used reconciliation and unity as the theme of his address, holding out a vision of an assembly of all Scottish Christians and "people of goodwill" to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ.

"A Walk Of Reconciliation" to promote better understanding between Christians, Muslims and Jews. Organised by YWAM with AD2000. Identificational repentance called for in order to purge the corporate sin of Christians during the Crusades. Lynn Green states, "It is my hope and prayer that this proposed project will result in substantial reconciliation between the major monotheistic faiths".

The Healing of America's Wounds. A report in AD200 Prayer Track News: "When Jean Steffenson, President of the Native American Chapter of the Reconciliation Coalition, was talking to Kay Hiramine at the Global Harvest Ministries Office, the subject of the National Congress of American Indians came up. Jean mentioned that she was planning to attend, and Kay said, "Why not present them with a plaque asking forgiveness for our sins against them" This was done. The inscription included the words "for religious zeal without wisdom which hurt you and slandered the character of God...we offer our apology and ask for forgiveness. We believe that the peoples of earth have all been created with the purpose of worshipping the Creator uniquely".

Spirit Alive Victory Camp, which brought together native Americans from all over the States and Canada in May 1995. Bunny Hill, pastor of Yardeka Indian Baptist Church, OK, said "The US sees us just as Indians, but we see each other as separate entities. We want to bring this reconciliation message nation to nation. We want to see revival..."

## REDEEMED EARTH

Books written by such authors as Howard Snyder (major speaker at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation) and Colin Marchant, (President of the Baptist Union in 1988/89) spell out the belief in "Shalom" for the world and the coming World Sabbath or "Jubilee".

Howard Snyder in "Kingdom Lifestyle" says "in all of scripture the history of God's economy or plan is to restore a fallen creation and their total environment". This plan - God's "shalom" (peace) - he describes in terms of harmony, right relationship and the proper functioning of all the elements of the environment, as epitomised by the Garden of Eden. At heart, he says, this "shalom" is "full cosmic reconciliation" (p.19)

It is not a heavenly hope, but an earthly one, according to Snyder. "The ideal is man and woman living at home on the land (the earth) in an environment of balance, harmony and mutual dependence...God promises his people a secure, peaceful physical environment where they can

live forever" (p.29)

The shalom of the world, therefore is to be achieved in the Christian Church by "building a peaceful community and becoming agents of God's shalom in the world". Snyder teaches that Christians must work towards the goal of "one human family" across the earth where "resources are shared freely across racial and national boundaries" (p.41)

Colin Marchant in his book "Shalom My Friends" also explains Shalom as the "restoration of the conditions of Paradise", and says that "for Christians this universal Shalom has dawned in the coming of the Prince of Peace". In familiar kingdom-dominion terminology he describes the Church, as God's earthly government and rule, extending shalom to all mankind.

Christians are on "a pilgrimage" towards ultimate perfection. Hope for the future is "not escapism" he warns.(p.141) For all preachers of worldly "shalom" the transformation of this earth is the ultimate goal.

Salvation, in this teaching, is merely a stepping stone to the restoration and transformation of mankind and the earth. It is a means to an end.

Evangelism, therefore, becomes a matter of teaching peace, reconciliation and harmony on earth, that the fruits of Christ's work can be put into effect on a global scale. "God's chosen people, [are] called and empowered to a stewardship... of caring for the earth and serving as agents of reconciliation to bring all creation back to God." (Snyder "Kingdom Lifestyle" p.39) "We are his peacemakers in the world. We are to announce the peace of forgiveness and regeneration and also the peace throughout all creation which flows from the reconciling work of Jesus". (Snyder, Ibid p.23)

The fall of man and the corruption of nature are increasingly seen as REVERSIBLE. Albert M. Wolters, Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer College, Ontario, and lecturer at the Institute of Christian Studies in Toronto, is another author who points to the coming Shalom of the world.

Writing in his 1985 book, "Creation Regained - a transforming view of the world", Wolters says that "evil is not inherent in the human condition" (p.51) and therefore whatever is fallen can be restored. He teaches that God sacrificed Jesus in order to "salvage his original project" of an Edenic paradise governed by man. In Jesus, he says, man is given "another chance" - "we are reinstated as God's managers of the earth. The original good creation is to be restored." (p.58) "The only thing redemption adds that is not included in the creation is the remedy for sin, and that remedy is brought in solely for the purpose of recovering a sinless creation...the scope of redemption is "truly cosmic".. 'all things' are drawn into the mutiny of the human race and its enmity toward God, and their strained relations with the Creator must be patched up, brought once more into HARMONY with him. The scope of redemption is as great as that of the Fall: it embraces creation as a whole".(p.59)

So the concept of harmony and reconciliation, both personal and national, is taught as one step in the process of transformation. As Howard Snyder teaches "at the very center of this design is personal reconciliation...but within the circle one perceives a cosmic plan for the reconciliation of all things. If there were a formula, perhaps it would be: God in Christ reconciling the whole creation

to himself, and his action through the Church is central to his plan." (p.25 "Community of The King" 1977)

It is believed by some that this Great Commission can be completed by the year 2000. Read this statement by Peter Wagner, Co-ordinator of AD2000, possibly the most significant influence on Church evangelism today.

"The AD 2000 United Prayer Track believes that the primary battle for completing the Great Commission is a spiritual battle which is being fought in the heavenlies. Modern military strategy looks to a successful air war to open the way for the ground troops to occupy and conquer. Preceding the air war, accurate intelligence is necessary to provide the coordinates of the strategic targets. Spiritually speaking, we see strategic-level intercession as the air war, and spiritual mapping as the required espionage. No part of warfare prayer targeted toward fulfilling the Great Commission is more crucial than identificational repentance. The Prayer Track senses that the Spirit is saying to the churches that 1996 is to be a year for universal, well-informed identificational repentance throughout the Body of Christ. All of 1996, but particularly October, will see huge numbers of prayer expeditions in virtually every nation of the world, organized around the desire to say, as Nehemiah said, 'My father's house and I have sinned'." (Neh. 1;6).

#### WALK OF RECONCILIATION

"The evolution that is now occurring liberates humanity to fulfil its collective potential - to move from our feelings of separation and fear, to unity and love. From this new place, we can work together to solve the problems of the world..." (New Ager B. Marx Hubbard, Rings of Empowerment p.45)

In a proposal written by C. Lynn Green (Youth With A Mission) with an Introduction by C. Peter Wagner, AD 2000 United Prayer Track, we see an elaborate scheme for identificational repentance in a Walk of Reconciliation, which would retrace the old routes taken by the Crusaders.

C.Peter Wagner writes:

"Arguably the most massive challenge for identificational repentance for Christianity as a whole is the cumulative, corporate sin of the medieval Crusades. I join Lynn Green in the deep conviction that unless the sins of Christians committed in the Crusades are remitted through the blood of Jesus Christ, barriers to sharing the love of God with precious Muslims and Jews will remain as high as they have been throughout history."

The Prayer Track is calling 1996 the year to "Heal the Land," and Lynn Green of the European and Middle east YWAM office located in England has agreed to serve as the co-ordinator of what he is calling the 'Reconciliation Walk'.

The Walk would be inaugurated with a simple ceremony in Clermont Ferrand in France's Massif Central on November 27, 1995. This would mark the 900th anniversary of Pope Urban's first call to arms. Then, in the spring of 1996 walkers could begin to travel from Cologne, Germany up the Rhine and down the Danube, thus retracing the footsteps taken by the first Crusade exactly 900 years earlier. The geographical goal would be to reach Istanbul by the autumn of 1996. During the last quarter of that year and throughout 1997 and 1998, hundreds of small groups of followers of Jesus Christ could be encouraged to walk through Turkey, the Syria and Lebanon, retracing the

many routes taken by the Crusaders.

The culmination of this Walk of Reconciliation, writes Lynn Green, ought to be a service of Jews, Muslims and Christians within the walls of Jerusalem on July 1999.

(The Pope has also announced plans to hold meetings of the three faiths in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and on Mt Sinai in 1999. And in an identical campaign of identificational repentance, by the year 1996 he wants to publish a humble confession of the sins of his own Church over the past 2000 years, including the Inquisition.)

The YWAM Walk of Reconciliation also involves spiritual warfare to end the atmosphere of mistrust in the Middle East: "There is a spiritual dimension to this alienation of peoples. Much innocent blood has been shed...It is very likely that the current atmosphere of enmity is partly a result of the sins of the past generations. Prayers for God's forgiveness could help overcome misunderstanding and mistrust".

Lynn Green sees the sin of the Crusaders as failing to show God's love to those of other religions. "The 900th anniversary of the dreadful events of the First Crusade presents Christ's followers with an opportunity to express remorse and to explain the life and message of Jesus by other means: "love your neighbor."

"We also need to take the time to understand those who follow the teaching of the Prophet Mohammed, and to listen to their perspectives and beliefs. There was a time when many people in the western nations were desperately afraid of all communists. That fear contributed to an era of great hostility. These days, there is a very real danger that the fear of Islam could become equally a part of the greatest threat to world peace.

"As a committed Christian, my prayer is that it will also open the door for peaceful dialogue so that Christians might better understand and accept both Jews and Muslims; and that the millions of followers of Islam and Judaism might see more clearly Jesus Christ in His followers."

It is hoped that those who read this newsletter will realise how misguided such projects are. Here is a dream that we can create a climate of harmony, both in the heavenlies and on earth, such that all peoples will live in peace and unity. Sadly, the bubble of this utopian dream will soon be pricked, as the events leading to Armageddon run their inevitable course. What greater proof could there be of the futility of manmade reconciliation than the prophecies of the Book of Revelation?

### THE THIRD 'R' - REVIVAL

In the magazine "Spirit of Faith" (Jan 1991 issue) Swedish Word-of-Faith leader, Ulf Ekman, spells out for us exactly what revival means to the leaders of the new movement of transformation.

"We will stop [the spirit of the world] and will change it, and believe not just for healing but - as heirs of Abraham - we will take the blessing very concretely and physically. God told Abraham that he was an heir of the world; that his heritage was the nations. This means OUR heritage is the nations. We can believe God with heart-felt belief and absolute conviction that he will completely change the spiritual climate in our nation. That is what revival is all about.... Revival is basically the restoration of Truth, the restoration of life, of power and of order in the Church. It will produce an

absolutely changed climate in the nation where you live...the task is to change the climate in society to absolutely oppose the devil, to crush his initiative and to invade the nations with the power of God publicly! The Church of the nineties will not be a weak Church. It will be very, very strong; so strong that some people will say there is no love in it...[but there will be a love for] right order in the Church that will stop rebellion. It will be a forceful Church, a kingly Church, an influential and an attacking Church; even a military Church... we are called and created for a time like this."

Then he makes this staggering statement: "We MUST have revival or Christianity will fail!...I MUST change my nation." (my emphasis)

With such an impetus, it's no wonder that the Church is being put in a strangle-hold to produce the goods, or else!

Once again, the focus is this earth, and its transformation. Society is going to be cleaned up, they say, until the glory of the Lord covers the whole earth. "We will have a better government" says Ekman "we will have righteous people from the top to the bottom. We will have a changed spiritual climate in every city and saved people everywhere, because nothing is impossible."

How thrilling! How positive! How WRONG!

Although Ekman states that this world will grow worse and worse, he also believes that the Church will grow stronger and stronger, so that eventually the Church will gain the upper hand and the very wickedness of society will result in millions turning to God for an answer.

This is exactly the opposite of biblical truth. We are warned that wickedness will increase and that men will become totally corrupt and lawless. (2 Tim 3:1-5)

While we continue to preach the gospel in this situation, we know that ultimately the speeding train of godless humanity will plummet right off the precipice to destruction, blind to every warning signal along the way.

The preaching of men having been rejected (Revelation 11:3-10) even the worsening judgements of God (Revelation 9:20-21) and the voice of angels (Revelation 14:6-7) is insufficient to turn mankind from its folly. They continue to indulge a false spirituality, and to worship a false messiah.

Perhaps that is because they mistake these for the real thing? Perhaps the counterfeit "answer" to this world's problems is so appealing to the flesh and so intensely powerful in its spiritual manifestation that men and women everywhere turn to spiritual experiences instead of God?

#### NIGHTMARE SCENARIO

That is the nightmare scenario before us as we see the power of the Toronto experience being taken out on the streets. The renewal leaders, though openly accepting that two years of church meetings have led to nothing like a genuine revival, still teach that the "greatest revival this world has ever seen" is right around the corner, just as soon as we take the spirit of Toronto into the community.

Charles Finney described revival as a five-fold procedure of backslidden Christians coming under conviction of their sins; repenting and beginning a new walk of obedience to God; having their faith

in God and love of man renewed, along with the desire to bring others to Christ; having the charm of this world broken and a new desire for heavenly things; and finally, as a result of this, the reformation and conversion of sinners.

Revival today has a different meaning. It is no longer simply about preaching the gospel to individuals, but about changing the world's spiritual climate through spiritual warfare, marching, celebrating, "prayerwalking" and similar schemes.

Despite the failure of the major evangelistic efforts during 1994 (On Fire, Jim Challenge, Minus-to-Plus) to produce anything like the thousands of converts they predicted, the revival bandwagon rolls on! The March for Jesus organisers are now mobilising thousands to walk the streets praying for each house in Operation A to Z, believing that by so doing they can "bring about significant changes in the way people perceive the gospel". In other words, this is spiritual warfare on a street-by-street basis. (See Graham Kendrick's article in the June edition of Alpha magazine) Gerald Coates says that Operation A to Z is "part of an international prayer-movement lifting up millions of people before the Lord and asking him to bring salvation to every people group"

It might have been more effective had the organisers allowed participants to speak to house-owners about the Lord, or put evangelistic tracts through the letterboxes, but as one former participant wrote to inform me, this was specifically vetoed.

But the idea is to pray "huge, city-sized prayers", not to seek individual converts. In a similar vein, 30 million people in over 100 countries are taking part in the "Praying Through The 10/40 Window" campaign. This year it is targeting 100 "Gateway Cities" in prayer. Peter Wagner, co-ordinator of the AD2000 Prayer Track which is running the scheme, says "I believe in the 1990's the Spirit is telling the Church he wants us to win the world city by city".

Evangelism today does not need to have a scriptural content - it does not even need words! Music itself it supposed to have sufficient power to cause people to turn to God. Tapping someone on the forehead and making them fall down is now a conversion experience! It was even reported in one magazine that two Muslim girls waiting at a bus stop received the Toronto "blessing", fell down laughing and got up saved and filled with the Spirit without ever hearing the gospel of Christ!

Whether this is an accurate report or not, it does illustrate the change in thinking in the evangelical churches. It was summarised for me by one leader who, in promoting the "toronto blessing", said "God is doing something new - a new agenda - it's a totally new agenda - a totally new dimension - people getting saved in the middle of holy chaos...throw away the measuring rod; drink in! It's a new agenda for everyone".

## DESPERATION

The way the message is proclaimed says much for the desperation of today's leaders. Nothing that could offend the public is used. Rock music, drama, dance, fire-eating and juggling, mime and comedy - all this and more is used to make the Christian faith more "attractive" to the world. Numbers are important now, not "whosoever will" - and you don't draw huge crowds with plain gospel preaching.

Revival is seen as a mighty wave of blessing falling on "all flesh" before the coming of the Lord, by Keri Jones in "Covenant News" (Winter 94) "we will see a world-wide visitation of the Holy Spirit.

God said he would pour out his Spirit on all flesh - all flesh indicates both the just and unjust".

Jones describes the ultimate goal of all history as "restoration" and says that "as we experience the flow of his blessing coming down from above, we can expect the river of life to bring about the culmination of his purpose in this generation. We will see the Church filled with his glory in a greater way than anything seen previously... the Church as it lives out the word, will arise to conquer all its opposing forces, the world, the flesh and the devil."

But "first we need to unite" claims Nicky Gumbel of HTB. ("Renewal", May 95) We have to "drop" any comments unhelpful to unity and work together with all denominations. "We are seeing Roman Catholics coming now...nobody is suspicious of anybody else...People are no longer labelling themselves or others. I long for the day when we drop all these labels and just regard ourselves as Christians...a disunited Church, squabbling and criticising, makes it very hard for the world to believe."

He need have no fear on that score, for the Pope and his followers are already keen to do their bit to win the world.

Roman Catholic leader Ralph Martin, writing in "Charisma" magazine (May 95) says that the Pope has issued a strong call for a "new evangelism" in the Church. He has called upon all Catholics to repent, and then to devote all their energies to the presentation of Jesus Christ. He wants people to focus on the Word Made Flesh, how redemption was won for us and how that is made present for us in the Last Supper."

Martin is reminding us that the Roman understanding of redemption is sacramental. Entrance into faith is by baptism, and receiving Christ is accomplished by eating his Body in the Mass. In former days this would have worried non-Catholics if they had been asked to help Rome "evangelise". Not any more! Indeed, a significant proportion of the Protestant Church leadership last year signed the "Evangelicals And Catholics Together" agreement to work alongside each other to this end.

But the Pope realises, as do Protestant leaders, that you need pulling power to get people into church membership these days. Martin states: "To have a new evangelism, we need new ardour, new methods and new expressions. You cannot have renewal without a new Pentecost, and the Pope knows that the good things in the letters and documents aren't going to come to life and won't happen in people's lives otherwise."

No, the plain scriptural message is not powerful enough to attract the millions that revival demands. So this has to be augmented (or replaced) by something infinitely more exciting: spiritual experiences, power, feelings of love and peace, healing, and all manner of signs and wonders. This is what people today hunger for - and they are getting it in huge doses! But the boring old Bible is OUT!

In my paper on Toronto, I said this: "When God sends miracles, it is in confirmation of HIS WORD. (Mark 16:20) Today, however, the reading of the word is being drowned out by irrational laughter, shouting and raving."

Objecting to this, an American correspondent, Kevin Grumball says "Are you suffering from the delusion that the Bible is the WORD of God? I hate to disillusion you, but God's word is much bigger than a book. God's word is Jesus...no-one is saved by the Bible or even by preaching".

What he presumably means is that head knowledge is not enough. True! But nor are spiritual fireworks enough to explain the gospel message to a sinner! "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14)

Martin also says that God is working to bring renewal through appearances of the Virgin Mary. Visions of "Mary" are on the increase around the world, and the messages they give are almost identical: "repentance" from sins, the praying of the Rosary, devotion to the Papacy and the consecration of the Virgin as the Co-Redemptrix.

However, prophecies given by the apparitions also speak of a coming world-shaking event in which a permanent "lasting sign" will be placed at the sites as a final act of God's mercy before the Judgement falls.

"We are instructed that shortly before the "lasting sign" is erected, 'everyone in the world at the same moment, at the same time, no matter where they are, will receive from God an instant and complete and total correction of conscience'...thus speak the Garabandal mystics to their many followers. But this teaching is remarkably similar to that of new-ager Barbara Marx Hubbard who in her instructional guide "Teachings From The Inner Christ" tells us that very soon we will experience "a Planetary Pentecost" in which we will all hear in our own inner voices and in our own language the mighty words of God...millions who are prepared will realize at one instant in time a demonstrable change. The new-age channellers and the Catholic apparitions are all claiming one thing: that they only desire to lead us to Jesus - but to which Jesus are they leading us?" (T. Kauffman, SCP Journal Vol 19:3)

Here, as in Toronto and the Pope's messages, mankind is urged to look for a "new pentecost" - an outpouring of spiritual glory and power - to save the world.

This may appeal alike to Protestants, Catholics, non-christian sects and also to Muslims, who revere Mary and accept Jesus the man as a great Prophet. According to one report, Muslims are very open to messages given in dreams and visions, and it is claimed that hundreds have joined Christians churches after having visions of Jesus. ("Pulse" magazine of Evangelical Missions Information Service, Wheaton IL.)

Thus, without bothering about words, scriptural doctrine or intellectual understanding, the revival message reaches out to the desperate billions of this fallen world.

It holds out a promise of unlimited "blessing"; it offers spiritual enlightenment, power, unconditional love, healing, fulfilment, harmony, joy and success, right here and now. It promises a better world ahead, with a renewed creation and nations united in love and understanding. It claims to bring a spiritual New Jerusalem down from heaven to earth, for all to enjoy!

Only those who hold the truth dear and who are willing to set aside all personal desires will prefer to accept the biblical Jesus and the biblical way of salvation.

## Toronto Blessing: Instrument of Revival or Instrument of Deception?

By Bob Hunter

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For over a year and a half the Toronto Airport Vineyard has been capturing the attention of both Christians and non-Christians alike. Thousands have been flying to Toronto from around the world, where there has been a purported outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They have been catching IT and bringing IT back to their home churches. From there IT has been spreading throughout other churches. The outpouring has been accompanied by people being slain in the Spirit, laughing, growling, barking, and other manifestations.

The purpose of this article is to examine this phenomena and see if it really is a work of God, a work of the flesh, a work of the devil, or a combination of all of them. Because this phenomena has spread into other denominations besides the Vineyard, I will usually be referring to the movement as the Vineyard/Toronto Blessing Movement.

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### CAN WE JUDGE?

First of all we must address one key issue. Do we have the right to examine this "move of God" and determine its origin? Over and over again I see statements like these two quotes, first from Vineyard Pastor James Ryle, and second, by a Vineyard/Toronto Blessing supporter on a Christian computer conference:

1."There is today a group of people who promote themselves as Biblical purists, the faithful remnant who alone preach the Word and who evidently possess the power to judge and criticize anyone who is not like them. This is nothing new, as any student of Scripture can attest. It was, in fact, this very kind of people who crucified Jesus Christ. They are Scribes and Pharisees, religious and angry, attacking and persecuting anyone who dares to differ from their exclusive views. Here

is where the plot thickens. These watchdogs of doctrinal purity - who themselves ironically violate Scripture by their ungodly attitudes, their mean-spirited commentary, and their deceitful reporting - have now turned their swords against the Vineyard and its leaders. Why? Since there is no truth to their accusations one must ask why then do they accuse? What motivates them to tear down another church? The answer is pride, jealousy, fear, hatred, or ignorance - take your pick. You can be sure one of these factors is at the heart of this present contention." (It's Enough To Make You Cry, by Pastor James Ryle).

James Ryle is a Vineyard pastor of Bill McCartney, the founder of Promise Keepers, and Ryle is on the board of Promise Keepers. He has ministered with Paul Cain [Kansas City prophet] and John Wimber. He has said in another interview that the 300,000 Promise Keepers are the fulfillment of Joel's Army and have come for War [Jewel van der Merwe, Discernment newsletter]).

To that statement, researcher Debra Bouey has noted that James Ryle, without justification:

Likens us to those who crucified Jesus Christ.

Adjudges us to be:

Scribes and Pharisees

Religious and angry

Attacking and persecuting

In violation of Scripture

Possessed of ungodly attitudes

Issuers of mean spirited commentary

Liars ("deceitful reporting")

Accusers of the brethren

Motivated to tear down churches

Proud, jealous, fearful

Ignorant

2."I find it interesting how Satan attacks those people who are preaching/teaching the complete gospel ("good news"). What awes me even more is the fact that the worst attacks come from within the body. The biblical model states that if we have a problem with one of our brothers or sisters we are to take the problem to them first, not condemn them in the public arena: Is this not stepping in and playing God?

"It is interesting that Rodney Howard-Browne is now under attack, too. Obviously, the enemy wants these men of God stopped since they are inflicting so much damage on the enemy camp.

"I judge this way: if it doesn't build my faith, or cause me to know my God better, or doesn't help me to love and understand my brother or sister in Christ, then I don't listen to it.

"Judge Not that ye may not be judged"... (comments from an Internet user)

The last statement, in particular, is used frequently by both well-meaning Christians and non-Christians alike to defend their viewpoints. It's particularly fascinating to see non-Christians rushing to the Bible to quote from it. But has this quote been taken out of context? This passage is from Matthew 7:1, but the entire passage states:

Matthew 7:1-5 Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

Jesus condemned the hypocritical judgement by those who held others to a higher standard of judgement than they themselves were willing to live by. He was not saying that we should not judge, but that taking a speck out of a brother's eye is proper provided that you first take the plank out of your own eye.

We are also told not to judge other peoples' motives. In 1 Samuel 16:7 God told Samuel: "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Thessalonians 5:21 states: "Test everything. Hold on to the good."

Jesus said "Stop judging by mere appearances, but make a right judgment." (John 7:24)

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:15, "I speak to sensible people; judge for yourself what I say."

We are told throughout the Scriptures to be wary of false doctrine, false teachers, false prophets who would come right into the Church.

Jesus said false prophets would come as wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). Paul told the elders at Ephesus that savage wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29). "And from among your own selves," he added, "men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (v. 30.) He wrote "The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1).

We are also supposed to judge one another with regard to overt acts of sin. Paul wrote, "Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (1 Cor. 5:12-13).

Some other passages which emphasize the necessity of judging:

Proverbs 14:15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent [man] looketh well to his going.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Matthew 24:4-5 And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Romans 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own body; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the innocent.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1 Corinthians 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge.

And when he was speaking about the Bereans, Luke said in Acts 17:11, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." They were not even ready to take Paul's word for anything, but checked everything with the Scriptures, using them as the final judge of what was of God and what wasn't.

Without using judgement we would never be able to determine what was true and what wasn't. "What, can't we trust our feelings? If it feels like it's from God, then it must be, right?" Not according to Jeremiah 17:9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Even as Christians we can be deceived by our feelings. That is why we hold that Scripture is the final authority on all matters.

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#### LATTER-RAIN AND MANIFEST SONS OF GOD TEACHINGS

We need to turn at this point to a little history on the Kansas City Fellowship (KCF), based in Kansas City, Missouri. Now, what does the KCF have to do with the Vineyard/Toronto Blessing Movement? Well, those of you who are following the Vineyard/Toronto Blessing Movement will recognize some of the names mentioned. You may have even heard them speaking in your church or bought their books and tapes. That is because the Kansas City Fellowship joined forces with the Vineyard a few years ago. They are now known as the Metro Vineyard Fellowship.

The Kansas City Fellowship blended elements of the Latter-Rain movement, the Manifest Sons of God, Dominion Theology, Kingdom Now Theology, the Word-Faith Movement, the Shepherding Movement, and Restorationism.

According to J. Preston Eby:

"In 1948 -- the very year that Israel became a nation -- another great deluge fell from heaven, a mighty revival then called the 'Latter Rain.' In this Restoration Revival God did a work which far transcended the work started in the Pentecostal outpouring of more than 40 years before. All nine gifts of the Spirit, the five-fold ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, spiritual praise and worship, and the end time revelation of God's purpose to manifest his sons, a glorious church, to bring in the kingdom of God, all of this and much more was restored among God's people." (The Battle of Armageddon, Part IV, J. Preston Eby, Kingdom Bible Studies, September 1976, pg. 10; quoted in Richard M. Riss, "The Latter Rain Movement of 1948 and the Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Awakening", pg. 197, April 1979.)

William M. Menzies, in his "History of the Assemblies of God," wrote:

"In 1947, George Hatwin and Percy Hunt launched an independent Bible School in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. ... They evolved a teaching that emphasized extreme congregationalism with local authority committed to restored order of apostles, who, through receiving a special dispensation derived from the laying on of hands, could in turn dispense a variety of spiritual gifts. Their extravagant claims and their belligerent attack on existing Pentecostal groups brought open conflict. Many sincere Christians followed the new group which boasted of being a fresh revival displacing the 'apostatized Pentecostals.'" (Anointed to Serve, The Story of the Assemblies of God, William W. Menzies, Springfield Mo., Gospel Publishing House, 1971, pg. 32.)

Some of the main teachings of this "move of God" were:

1. The revelation of the dominion mandate (Genesis 1:26-29 is used to support the teaching that they are to take dominion over the earth.)
2. The revelation of the manifestation of the sons of God (using Romans 8:19 for support ["The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed."])
3. The restoration of the imparting of spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands.
4. The restoration of "the fivefold ministry" as enumerated in Ephesians 4:11, with emphasis on the offices of apostle and prophet.

The Kansas City Fellowship was founded by Mike Bickle in September 1982, when, according to Bickle, God spoke to him in Cairo, Egypt, saying:

"I am inviting you to raise up a work that will touch the ends of the earth. I have invited many people to do this thing, and many people have said yes, but very few have done my will." (The Prophetic History of Grace Ministries, Kansas City, Mo.: Grace Ministries, n.d., cassette tape.)

In 1986, Bickle started Grace Ministries. This was a "team of men committed to seeing the church restored to the glory described in God's Word ... This team is comprised of mature and proven men with apostolic and prophetic ministries in addition to including evangelists, pastors, and teachers." (Grace City Report, Fall 1989, pg. 9.)

According to the Grace City Report, Fall 1989, there are seven goals in Grace ministries:

Apostolic teams which plant churches.

City churches - Grace teaches the doctrine of localism; "The New Testament pattern is for there to be one church in a city with many congregations yet with one unified eldership governing it."

The House of Prayer - a 24 hour a day centre for intercessory prayer in Kansas City.

The Joseph Company - "Our primary goal for the Joseph Company is to help care for and feed the poor, especially in third world countries."

The Israel Mandate - It's goal is to help in the great last-days evangelical harvest among ethnic Jews.

Ministry Training Centre - a Centre to equip both full-time and lay leaders in areas of ministry.

Shiloh Ministries - "Ultimately, Shiloh will include a piece of property where a number of prophetically gifted ministries will live together as they share revelation with one another releasing a 'roundtable of the prophets' effect. This will release a greater prophetic understanding of God's purposes as they submit one to another."

Some of these goals seem worthy, like caring for and feeding the poor, but keep in mind that many non-Christian groups and cults do the same things. That in itself does not show that an organization is of God.

The visions and dreams of KCF's two main prophets (Paul Cain and Bob Jones) and others who gave prophecies, always determined the course of the Kansas City Fellowship. Scripture was then marshalled to buttress these revelations. Also, when the Bible contradicted KCF teaching, it was dismissed or reinterpreted according to the authority line. For example:

Deuteronomy 18:20, 22 states:

"But if a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." ...one can know when a prophet speaks presumptuously for what he has said will not come to pass.

However, Rick Joyner writes:

"One of the greatest hazards affecting maturing prophets is the erroneous interpretation of the Old Testament exhortation that if a prophet ever predicted something which did not come to pass he was no longer to be considered a true prophet (see Deut. 18:20-22). The warning was that if this happened, the prophet had been presumptuous and the people were not to fear him. If one predicts something in the name of the Lord and it does not come to pass, he probably has spoken presumptuously and needs to be repented of, but that does not make him a false prophet. No one could step out in the faith required to walk in his calling if he knew that a single mistake would ruin him for life." (The Prophetic Ministry, The Morning Star Prophetic Newsletter, Rick Joyner, n.d., Vol 3, No. 2, pg. 2.)

Joyner not only contradicts Scripture, but says that prophets who are less than 100 percent accurate are a necessity and for the church's own good:

"Bob (Jones) was told that the general level of prophetic revelation in the church was about 65% accurate at this time. Some are only about 10% accurate, a very few of the most mature prophets are approaching 85% to 95% accuracy. Prophecy is increasing in purity, but there is still a long way to go for those who walk in this ministry. This is actually grace for the church now, because 100% accuracy in this ministry will bring a level of accountability to the church which she is too immature to bear at this time; it would result in too many 'Ananias and Sapphiras.' That so many the (sic) prophetic ministries are still missing so much is also meant to work humility and wisdom in them so that they will be able to handle the authority and power coming in the near future." (The Prophetic Ministry, The Morning Star Prophetic Newsletter, Rick Joyner, n.d., Vol 3, No. 2, pg. 4)

Mike Bickle writes:

"There is a dimension that is coming, and now is, that we have no frame of reference for and most of us think that we do."

"... and they (apostles, prophets) do things that you have no frame of reference for understanding because, believe me, what's going to be coming down in the next twenty years you and I have no frame of reference for understanding. It is going to be so unusual you are not going to be able to look at the word for every manifestation and find one there because the Spirit of the Lord has so many manifestations that you and I know nothing about." (Divine Appointment [Introduction], Mike Bickle, 3/29/89, cassette tape)

So we are now apparently approaching an age in which we are not going to be able to appeal to the Bible as the final authority. God is going to be dealing with us outside of what He has to say in His Word. This leaves the door wide open to the introduction of false doctrine.

Mike Bickle also says on the same tape,

"At this point in time, because of the pride of the church (just like the scribes and the Pharisees) we have such a sense that we understand....when we are not even the beginning of novices." We have "...the church with absolutely no insight, judging the works of God with no understanding and missing out on the works of God."

"If the spirit of fear is given enough witness, the Spirit of God will leave completely. ... The reasoning and the debate of the western world in all of their presupposed knowledge of what God does and doesn't do is it's going to be a miracle for the Lord to use someone that's been in the Kingdom over five years. ...It's no accident that throughout the visitations of history it was always a few (in the church) and the multitudes were all the new converts because the majority of the church could not swallow the new thing coming, because they were wise in their own understanding. Great heroes of the church were ostracized by the church. The church needs an abandonment that says we really don't know anything about the realm of the spirit. We must have lowliness of mind."

Apparently he has a very low opinion of our ability to understand the Word of God! Does this "lowliness of mind" mean that we must be willing, if asked, to discard everything that we have learned of God up to now and submit ourselves to their line of authority to be in on this new move of God, the authentic Latter Rain?

Rick Joyner says,

"To be distinguished from the stumbling blocks, a great company of prophets, teachers, pastors and apostles will be raised up with the spirit of Phineas. ...Conferences of apostles, prophets, pastors, elders, etc. will be called and used greatly by the Lord, but without denominating and separating from the rest of the body." (A Vision of the Harvest, Rick Joyner, Grace City Report, op cit., pg. 3.)

"In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul said the five ministries of verse 11 would function until the church was filled with the knowledge of the Son of God." (The True Prophetic Spirit: The Simplicity and Purity of Devotion to Jesus; Mike Bickle, Grace City Report, op cit., pg. 1.)

By being "filled with the knowledge of the Son of God," Bickle means a perfected church, a church without "spot or wrinkle. This many-membered corporate body (corporate man) will take dominion over (conquer) the Earth for ultimate presentation to Christ at his second coming." (Overview of God's End Time Purpose, Mike Bickle, cassette tape, 10/7/84)

One of the Latter Rain's key doctrines is the doctrine of the Manifest Sons of God. It teaches that God will restore the offices of apostles and prophets. God will also restore the church to its intended position of power (accompanied by signs and wonders and miracles), and many people will leave their denominational churches. Once under the authority of apostolic churches, believers will start being perfected. They will mature, and unity in the Body will increase until there is a generation of believers who have matured into the full stature of Christ.

At that time the sons of God will be fully manifested on the Earth. Widespread spiritual warfare will result with the sons of God doing battle with Satan and his demons. As Joel's Army, as it will be called, conquers Satan and company, the non-Christian nations of the world will also be defeated. Once the earth has been subdued, Jesus will come back to earth and be given the Kingdom that has been won for him by this "Manchild Company."

The Manifest Sons of God doctrine teaches that these Sons will be equal to Jesus Christ: immortal, sinless, perfected sons who have partaken of the divine nature. They will have every right to be called gods and will be called gods.

Bill Britton has written a book called Jesus The Pattern Son. In it Britton writes that Jesus was the "Firstfruits among many brethren" and the pattern for many more "sons" to come. In other words, what Jesus was by birth (the Son of God) all believers can become by adoption (sons of God). The identification is total with Manifest Sons. Jesus the Pattern Son was the Anointed One, the Christ. This special group, the Manchild Company, are also anointed and they have the right to be called Christ!

Bob Jones states:

"The last day church is being birthed now out of the old church, and the old leadership is coming to an end and the new young leadership is being raised up to reign over an end time church that will bring forth the Bride. Your children, (my bank account) my grandchildren, will be the Bride. You've got to have the church first in the right foundation. That's what he (Jesus) said. 'Come back and touch those that will be the right foundation'." (Visions and Revelations, Bob Jones 1988, cassette tape. Quoted in Latter Day Prophets, Media Spotlight Special Report, Albert Dager, n.d., pg 9.)

Bob Jones gives this scenario for the preparation of the coming manifestation:

"I went and I seen the Lord, and it was like he was looking at little yellow things; little round yellow things like a Spirit of God Itself. And there were billions of them. And it was like Him and all the angels were looking through these and every once in awhile they'd say, 'Hey, here's an end time one; get it down here on the end. Here's another good one!'

"I said, 'What are you doing?'

"He said, 'Oh, we're collecting those who are foreknown and predestinated for the end times, for you see, they'll be the best of all the seed that's ever been. And we're looking through the seeds and they'll be your grandkids. This will be the end generation that is foreknown and predestinated to inherit all things. And these will be like grandchildren to you -- even those that you minister to won't be this generation; their grandchildren will be.

"You are to write into their minds as they write into the children's minds. You're to bring them to a place to allow My Spirit to rule in their life where they can begin to set the church on the proper foundations, as they will. They'll birth the church, but their children will attain levels of the Holy Spirit that they will not.

"Although their parents will reign over them and be the leaders of the last day church, their children will possess the Spirit without measure. For they are the best of all generations that have ever been upon the face of the earth. And the best of all generations are those elected seeds that will glorify Christ in the last days.

"That's the purpose so that Jesus in the last days has the seeds that will glorify Him above any generation that has ever been upon the face of the earth. They will move into things of the supernatural that no one has ever moved in before. Every miracle, sign and wonder that has ever been in the Bible, they'll move in it consistently. They'll move in the power that Christ did. Every sign and wonder and wonder that's ever been will be many times in the last days. They themselves will be that generation that's raised up to put death itself underneath their feet and to glorify Christ in every way.

"And the church that is raising up in the government will be the head and the covering for them. So that the glorious church might be revealed in the last days because the Lord Jesus is worthy to be lifted up by a church that has reached the full maturity of the God-Man!" (Visions and Revelations, Bob Jones 1988, cassette tape. Quoted in Latter Day Prophets, Media Spotlight Special Report, Albert Dager, n.d., pg 9-10.)

Mike Bickle says that he doesn't think "that there is anything higher than the revelation that what a Son of God is."... "The religious mind will always call this heresy. When the religious mind comes in contact with the revelation of what a Son of God is they will always say it is not right because it's too high."

Bickle uses Hebrews, Chapters 1 and 2, Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:26 to show that men have total dominion over the Earth. He teaches that the average Christian's view of man is so low that God is offended.

"But, through His Word, He has given us a revelation of what he intends us to be; Sons of God in the full sense of the word. And we begin to raise our understanding of what its all about".

"God said that these people were to act as God. Now, you can get kind of off base and a lot of cults would use this passage and get off base in many many wrong ways. I don't think we're gods in any weird sense of the word, but God has created and redeemed men to be gods, small "g", only by this definition -- that nothing in creation was to be over you. Everything besides God Himself was to be under you and that alone would constitute man being a god."

"Now, don't be afraid, we don't worship gods like that. We're not equal to Jesus Christ. We're not deity. We're not worshipped. We have no authority to initiate the things that only God can initiate because He alone is the head of the body, Jesus Christ says."

"My conviction is that one of the greatest transformations is when you begin to get the revelation that you are a Son of God. ... God intends us to be like gods, he intends us to be like the Son of God. ... God has conceived in His heart of a plan to make a race of men that would live like gods

on the Earth. He has conceived in His heart to have Sons that would live like His Son, the Lord Jesus lived. ... That we were to be on earth the extension and manifestation of God's life in heaven."

"When a person comes up and declares what Sonship is about, the religious community comes up and says 'blasphemy!' That's what they did to Jesus." (Glory and Dominion of Sonship, Part 2, Mike Bickle, cassette tape.)

"I believe that God is going to allow us to see and to even partake in this restoration -- this is a major statement and I want you to pay attention closely --to the restoration of the New Testament Standard... I believe that God is going to renovate the entire understanding of what Christianity is in the nations of the Earth. I believe that the way that 99% of us across the world as believers understand Christianity, in 20 years there will be a totally different understanding of what Christianity is from what it is right now. I believe the understanding of it, the standard of life and the expression of Christianity as we know it, I believe God is going to restore it and change it in the Earth in this generation." (Overview of Corporate Long Term Vision, Mike Bickle, 1/5/86, cassette tape.)

Now we're looking at a potential total renovation of Christianity as we have come to understand it. I assume we've all been wrong for the last 2000 years.

Bickle says that this mission is to be accomplished via the development of Apostolic City Churches. By apostolic he means: "churches in the full power of the Spirit of God." (Overview of Corporate Long Term Vision, Mike Bickle, 1/5/86, cassette tape.)

Kansas City Fellowship, of course, is going to be used of God to establish these.

"That is the will of God for this body of believers to establish anywhere from 20 to 30 or 40 (I have no idea the number, but its a large number) of city churches in the nations of the Earth to make impact on the rulers and kings and people of those nations right from this body of believers. ... I believe Jesus meant we shall disciple the nations. He meant it and He will not come back until it happens. ... Nations will be disciplined by the fruit of the ministry that comes forth from this people here ... by people sitting in this room!" (Overview of Corporate Long Term Vision, Mike Bickle, 1/5/86, cassette tape.)

Bob Jones says:

"There has to be a bunch of full-time leaders joined and the lay leaders have got to be ready, and a lot of them are going to be released after that time of visitation. And they have to be unified; they have to have affection for one another; they have to be grounded in unity around the principles that God has given us, and we have to be in divine order with our place in God's divine order." (Visions and Revelations, Bob Jones 1988, cassette tape. Quoted in Latter Day Prophets, Media Spotlight Special Report, Albert Dager, n.d., pg 11.)

So what about those who don't wish to go along with this "move of God"?

"Some pastors and leaders who continue to resist this tide of unity will be removed from their place. Some will be so hardened that they will become opposers and resist God to the end." (A Vision of the Harvest, Rick Joyner, Grace City Report, op cit., pg. 3.)

Remember this when we start quoting from Vineyard/Toronto Blessing sources shortly.

Bob Jones came under church discipline a few years ago and was told to limit his prophecies to within his church, but the teachings themselves have never been recanted by KCF.

KCF prophet Paul Cain stated,

"... This army is also in the New Testament. It's referred to as the man child. I know some of you's gonna disagree with this; don't you even stop to disagree. Revelation 12:25, if you disagree, just file it in 'miscellaneous' and don't bother with it. When you get to heaven we'll check it out, and you'll find out I'm right. Here it is -- this great army in the New Testament is a man child, Revelation 12:5; the overcomers, Revelation 2 and 3; the 144,000 servants, Revelation 7:3; the bride of the Lamb's wife -- see why they call me in on the carpet?...the revelation of the Lamb's wife, Revelation 19:7 and 21:9; and the white horse, Revelation 6:2; the first fruit, Revelation 14:4; the precious fruit, James 5:7; the wise virgins, Matthew 21:1-13; the manifested sons of God, Romans 8:19-23, and it's certainly a remarkable fact that none of these names are expressions applied to the saints of God at any other time in history, but all of them are in their context and promises showing undeniably that they belong to the end time. The end time, let's say the end time. They belong to the end time to this present generation, Matthew 24:34 ... this is the end time and God wants us to realize once and again, in closing, that there's gonna be a great company of overcomers prepared for this mighty ministry which I call the prize of all ages ..." (Documentation of the Aberrant Practices and Teachings of Kansas City Fellowship (Grace Ministries), Pastor Ernie Gruen, n.d., published by author, pp. 220-221.)

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## THE VINEYARD TODAY

So what is the Vineyard/Toronto Blessing teaching today when you go to one of their meetings? This section examines some of the main teachings circulating in Vineyard/Toronto Blessing circles today.

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### Deception

...A lot of times people go around, "Be careful, be careful!"

...there needs to be an understanding that the church has reacted in fear. "Be careful who lays hands on you! Be careful about going up to that Vineyard in Toronto! I don't know, I've heard some pretty far-out stories about that place. I'd be careful if I were you!" Now what does that produce in the heart of a person? Fear. Now, hands up, those that want to be deceived? I literally got a hand one day when I asked that. But we don't want to be deceived. Jesus said, you know, wolves will come in sheep's clothing, and they'll deceive many, didn't He? How do you know them? By their fruit.

...Now, if we're going to react in fear and play it safe, what is that the opposite to? Faith. Do you understand that it works by faith? If you want more from God, you have to believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (John Arnott, Toronto Airport Vineyard,

Dynamics of Receiving Spiritual Experiences, Friday, November 18, 1994, 1:30 pm Audiotape Transcript)

Jesus told the story about, you know, in Luke's gospel there, and also Matthew, that, if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your kids, you're children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him? Now, it is just, the bottom line is, what is the attitude of your heart, and who are you asking. If you'll come to your loving, heavenly father, knowing that the enemy's not going to slip in there and throw you a sucker-punch, because, after all, your Father in heaven's not going to give you a stone, is He? If you ask for an egg, will He give you a scorpion, if you ask for a fish, will He give you a snake? No, the Bible says. If you will come to Him and say, "Father, I want the bread of heaven, I want more of the Holy Spirit," what do you think He is going to give you? More.

The problem is, we have not expected what came. We used to think if people shook, shouted, flopped, rolled, etc., that it was a demonic thing manifesting and we needed to take them out of the room. That was our grid, that's what our experience had taught us, that demons could be powerful. But it never occurred to us -- I mean, it had, theologically, but not practically -- that the Holy Spirit was, you know, a million times more powerful than all the demons in hell put together. (John Arnott, Toronto Airport Vineyard, Dynamics of Receiving Spiritual Experiences, Friday, November 18, 1994, 1:30 pm Audiotape Transcript)

And so it's like, well, why would we focus, then, on "Yeah, but I don't like the way he fell and shook and got stuck to the floor and everything!" Listen! Who cares whether he did or he didn't? Who cares? If he thinks it's God and he likes it, let him enjoy it! Because you can test the fruit later. (John Arnott, Toronto Airport Vineyard, Dynamics of Receiving Spiritual Experiences, Friday, November 18, 1994, 1:30 pm Audiotape Transcript)

....[Referring to Luke 11:11] Verse 11 asks a different question, and it's dealing with an area that I am always addressing because I think the Christian church, to a large degree, is reacting in fear today. And by that I mean this; people are always saying "Oh, be careful! Be careful you don't get too emotional. Be careful you don't get too extreme. Be careful what you read. Be careful who lays hands on you. Be careful about this. Be careful about that. Be careful about the other." That's all fine, but if you play it safe with this thing, the Holy Spirit, you know what? You're never going to get anywhere. (John Arnott, Toronto Airport Vineyard, December 16, 1994)

...But, see, we need to have more faith in God's ability to bless us than Satan's ability to deceive us. (John Arnott, Toronto Airport Vineyard, December 16, 1994)

...So when you come to Him tonight asking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, I don't want you to even entertain the thought that you might get a counterfeit. You know why? Because I'm going to encourage you to come like a little child and say "Father, I really want You. I'm not going to be, you know, so preoccupied with what the devil's doing, and everything else, that I can't come to you in faith and say 'Lord Jesus, as a little child I come in simplicity. I ask You to fill me with the Holy Spirit, and that's what I'm expecting, is more of the Holy Spirit.'" (John Arnott, Toronto Airport Vineyard, December 16, 1994)

But one of the tests, I think, of our spiritual maturity as pastors, as leaders, is to the degree that we can trust the leadership of our church to the Holy Spirit. And God just operates with a lot more

grace than any of us. God's not near as worried about heresy, or noise or mess or distress than we are, and so we really indeed have passed, uh, somebody said this isn't orderly. [unintelligible] paradigm of order. We've gone from the order of the cemetery to the order of the nursery. About all you can do in cemeteries is mow the grass. (Ron Allen, From Refreshing To Power Evangelism, Toronto Airport Vineyard, October 13, 1994.)

A favourite claim of Vineyard/Toronto Blessing Pastors is that those who question the Toronto Blessing or tell people to stay away are reacting in fear. There's a difference between fear and caution, however. In Matthew 10:16, Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." According to Strong's concordance, the word used for "shrewd" is "phronimos; implying a cautious character." We are to be cautious, particularly about any new moves claiming to be from God which cannot be found explicitly in the Scriptures. Those who would say, in effect, forget about caution and trust that God won't let you go astray into unbiblical teaching or demonic influence, are inviting deception.

Mormons pray about The Book of Mormon, as to whether it is true, and get a burning in the bosom to confirm it. They pray to God in all sincerity, and yet they are still deceived by Satan into thinking that The Book of Mormon is true and that Mormonism, with its plural gods, is true. Why are they deceived in spite of a sincere prayer to God? Because the Bible already shows that Mormonism is wrong. The Bible makes it clear that there is only one true God, that there are no other true gods, that the Bible itself is inspired and the Word of God, etc. If those same people had compared Mormon teaching with the Scriptures, the contrasts would have been obvious. God has already told them that Mormonism isn't of Him and they have chosen not to listen.

Praying about the truth of Mormonism would be like praying and asking God if committing murder is all right. God has already answered that question. Why should He then answer that prayer? Likewise, Christians should examine the teachings and phenomena of the Vineyard/Toronto Blessing, compare it with the Scriptures, and then decide if it is of God. If they don't examine it, if they don't test all things, then they can expect to be deceived.

Mr. Arnott makes a revealing comment about how manifestations that are now considered to be from the Holy Spirit were once considered demonic. Has anyone noticed that in today's society, more and more we are seeing that things that were once considered good are now considered by our society to be evil, and things that were once considered evil are now being thought of as good? Suddenly, something that was considered to be of the devil in the Christian world is being thought of as Christian. As Larry Thomas has said:

"When Jimmy Swaggart took his crusade to South America in 198\_, was it 1986, Kevin? Late '86 or early '87, huge stadium in Argentina, 80,000 people filling the stadium every night, and during the worship service, during the preaching, there were literally hundreds of people in this congregation who would begin to laugh hysterically and throw themselves down on the ground. They would howl like dogs, they would bark like dogs, they would roar like lions, they would make all kinds of wild sounds, and when these things began to happen, the ushers went and physically restrained them, took them out of the coliseum to a tent outside, and they cast the devil out of them. But now, when you do that, it's evidence that the Holy Ghost is doing something great in your life." (Larry Thomas, No Laughing Matter, Audiotape, October 10, 1994)

Vineyard/Toronto Blessing pastors talk much about how we should learn discernment, but as will be seen time and time again, they use absolutely no discernment themselves. Take John Arnott's statement, "If he thinks it's God and he likes it, let him enjoy it! Because you can test the fruit later." That seems like a blatant disregard for using any discernment whatsoever. Supposed the person is under demonic influence. Are we to sit back and let it happen and then test the fruit later? He also said, "we need to have more faith in God's ability to bless us than Satan's ability to deceive us." That sounds very nice and godly, but the fact remains Satan does deceive people -- even Christians. Jesus explicitly warned us of a coming deception that would deceive even the elect.

Arnott also states, "So when you come to Him tonight asking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, I don't want you to even entertain the thought that you might get a counterfeit." In other words, are we to forget about the Bible's repeated warnings to be wary of counterfeits, false prophets, false doctrine, etc., trusting in God to protect us instead of trusting in the Word that He gave us to measure all teachings by? Again, that is like asking God if murder or stealing is all right when He's already told us in His Word.

Ron Allen has said, "God's not near as worried about heresy, or noise or mess or distress than we are..." No doubt He's not worried as such, but I wonder why He took so much trouble to warn us about false teachings and prophets?

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#### Discernment

..."So we invited everybody and anybody. I mean, we had them all here. I didn't care what their denominational background was. If I heard that they were Christians and they were anointed by the Spirit, we wanted them to come. Maybe we could learn something from them. We had several people here. Understand that I was impacted by Kathryn Kuhlman, I had been impacted by Benny Hinn, and certainly impacted by John Wimber... (John Arnott, Pastor of the Toronto Airport Vineyard, Pastor's Meeting, October 19, 1994)

I'm reminded of what my old Quaker uncle used to say. "Well, Ron, it's the duck test." Have you heard that? If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck! If it looks like Jesus and sounds like Jesus, it's probably Jesus! (Ron Allen, From Refreshing To Power Evangelism, Toronto Airport Vineyard, October 13, 1994.)

Now, what we have found in releasing the prophetic is this -- now, I'll give a disclaimer and then I'll say what we found. The disclaimer's this; anybody can be touched and empowered by God with or without manifestation. That's irrelevant. Manifestation is merely the byproduct of the effect of the Spirit, so you don't have to have manifestation to be touched by God. Conversely, if somebody is being touched, and that is the result, the effect, we pray and say "is this of God, is this of the flesh, is this of the devil?" If it isn't of the flesh, and it isn't of the devil, by definition, the person is being touched. So we use the effects as we use the visual effect of wind. You know, you put your sail up. Which way is the wind going? It's blowing that way. Let's go that way. I mean, it's very simple. (Wes Campbell, Pastoring The Prophetic, Catch The Fire Conference, Toronto Airport Vineyard, October 13, 1994)

Well, what about laughing? Someone says "I want God, but I don't want the laughing thing. What is that?" I said, "Well, it's laughing." "Well, what is that? What theology?" I said, "Look, here's my theology. If I was God, I would do the same thing. I would make a mandate, 'every Christian has got to laugh at least once.'" (Larry Randolph, Renewal and Revival Today, Toronto Airport Vineyard, November 18, 1994)

How about this statement as an example of how to exercise discernment, from Ron Allen? "If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck! If it looks like Jesus and sounds like Jesus, it's probably Jesus!" Does he not remember Jesus' warnings about wolves in sheep's clothing, or Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 11 about there being another Jesus, another Gospel and another Spirit?

What of Wes Campbell's advice on using discernment "Conversely, if somebody is being touched, and that is the result, the effect, we pray and say "is this of God, is this of the flesh, is this of the devil?" -- how about looking at God's Word first? -- or Larry Randolph's "Look, here's my theology. If I was God, I would do the same thing." By saying that, Larry Randolph has reduced God to our level!

Here we have several examples of a total lack of the discernment Vineyard/Toronto Blessing leaders say we, as Christians, should have. Look at John Arnott's statement about how, earlier in his ministry, he invited people to speak in his church if he even heard that they were Christians. Does he not want to know if they are Christians? Just because he's heard that they're Christians doesn't mean that they are or if they are, that they are good examples to follow.

The Vineyard/Toronto Blessing leaders often refer to William Branham and the Quakers. This in itself shows what kind of discernment these particular Vineyard/Toronto Blessing pastors are using.

William Branham was a very humble person, and there were some verifiable, genuine healings and supernatural occurrences in his ministry. Using Vineyard/Toronto Blessing discernment, this would qualify him as a genuine prophet of God. However, he claimed that he was Elijah the prophet and that he was the seventh angelic messenger to the Laodicean Church age (Footprints, page 620). He also said that if you belonged to a denomination, that you had taken the mark of the beast (Footprints, pages 627, 629, 643 and 648) and that he received divinely inspired revelations (The Revelation of the Seven Seals, Branham, Spoken Word Publication, Tucson, Ariz., n.d., pg. 19; Questions and Answers, Book 1, Branham, Spoken Word Publishers, Tucson, Ariz., 1964, pg. 60). Among these revelations was the fact that man fell when Eve had sexual relations with Satan, from which Cain was produced, resulting in a fallen race with Satan's nature (An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages, Branham, Branham Publisher, pages 98-99,101). Branham also said that "every sin that ever was on the Earth was caused by a woman....the very lowest creature on earth." (The Spoken Word, Vol. III, Nos. 12, 13, 14; Branham, Spoken Word Publications, Jefferson, Ind., 1976, pp. 81-82 quoted in The Man and His Message, Pg. 41).

There is evidence that supernatural signs did occur at Branham's meetings (A Prophet Visits, pp. 48-195). They supposedly came through an angel that was with Branham on stage and continually gave him counsel and revelations. (William Branham: His Life and Teachings, Kathie Adler, Narrow Way Ministries, Holbrook, N.Y., 1986, pages 3-5) Some researchers have suggested that

Branham practiced occult healing. (Between Christ and Satan, Kurt E. Koch, Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1971, pages 149-150).

What was his view of God? According to Branham:

What is God? God is a great Eternal. At the beginning, way back before there was a beginning, he wasn't even God. Did you know that? A god is an object of worship, and there wasn't nothing to worship him; He lived alone. And in him was attributes. What is an attribute? A thought. (The Spoken Word, Vol. III, pg. 79)

Branham also denied the doctrine of the Trinity. He pronounced it a "gross error" (The Spoken Word, pg. 79) and that "trinitarianism is of the devil." (Footprints, pg. 606)

As for the Quakers, below is some insightful information from The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions, Keith Crim, General Editor, Harper and Row Publishers, San Francisco Copyright 1981 by Abingdon. My thanks to researcher Nancy Flint from Seattle, Washington, for providing this information:

"FOX, GEORGE (Ch; 1624-1691). A Practical mystic who was the major founder and early leader of THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS; known as a great preacher, controversialist, and writer."

"FRIENDS, SOCIETY OF (ch). A form of radical Christianity that arose in England during the splintering of PURITANISM in the 1650's it is marked especially by it's belief in the divine light of Christ in all people, it's meditative form of worship or group MYSTICISM in reliance on the Holy Spirit, and it's humanitarian social witness. Known as QUAKERISM, the Society of Friends can be understood as either a radical form of PROTESTANTISM or as a third form of Western Christianity, relying on the inner light as it's main authority, instead of the Roman Catholic and Protestant reliance, respectively, on church and scripture. Some Friends, because of their belief of the universality of the inner light and Quaker opposition to creeds, see themselves as mediators between Christianity and other religions or as being identifiable more by a style of living other than beliefs.

1. HISTORY. The Society of Friends crystallized in England in the early 1650's out of the experiences of Seekers, General Baptists, Ranters, and others who began experiencing a new dispensation of the Spirit. GEORGE FOX was the preeminent leader of the new movement. It was marked by the belief that the divine light within all people brought true religion by enabling one to experience a radical rebirth and to cultivate a style of living that culminated in perfect obedience to God. It included such distinctive elements as plain speech and dress and refusal to pay tithes, take oaths, use pagan names for days and months, and engage in worldly courtesies such as doffing one's hat. Although persecuted until 1689, the English Quakers continued to grow and to establish Quaker meetings in many parts of the world, especially in the British colonies in America, where William Penn's "Holy experiment" was especially notable.

Their eschatological hopes for transforming the world having waned by 1700, the Friends began to withdraw from "the world" and to stress their distinctive attributes.

The Puritan heritage of the movement however, made it susceptible to influences from Pietism later in the eighteenth century and led some Friends to regain their Protestant moorings. The resultant clashes between those, such as Elias Hicks and John Wilbur, who emphasized the

uniqueness of Quakerism, and more evangelical Friends, such as J.J. Gurney and later revivalists and even FUNDAMENTALISTS, led to diversity and division in England and America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A variety of forces, including the American Friends Service Committee founded by Rufus Jones in 1917, produced a unification process in the twentieth century. The major groups in the United States today are the Friends United Meeting (moderately evangelical; 66,000), Friends General Conference (liberal; 26,000). And the Evangelical Friends Alliance (extremely evangelical and fundamentalist; 26,000). Of the nearly 200,000 Friends in the world in 1978, 121,000 were in the United States, 20,000 were in Great Britain, 45,000 in Africa (F.U.M. converts), and 6,000 in Latin America (E.F.A. converts).

2. BELIEFS AND PRACTICES. The central Quaker conviction is that the saving knowledge and power of God are present as divine influences in all human beings through what is variously called the inner light, the light of the eternal Christ within, or "That of God". This belief has inevitably produced distinctive approaches to, and often de-emphasis on the doctrines of the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, bondage to sin, and the uniqueness of Christianity. Although some evangelical Friends have "pastoral meetings" and Quakers rely on recorded ministers, clerks, elders and deacons, they have no ordained ministers and do not celebrate the sacraments. Belief in "That of God" in every person is also responsible for the distinctive form of Friends worship, and accounts for their general confidence in working for the kingdom of God in the world and their specific emphasis on peace, relief of suffering, abolition of slavery, and prison reform. In governance as in worship, the Friends rely on the guidance of the inner light working through the individual and bringing the whole group to a consensus. Although largely congregational in operation, the Society has a hierarchy of administrative units including monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings as well as associations linking various yearly meetings.

But according to Todd Hunter, "You don't get any more Evangelical than Quakerism. I mean that's, that's true, blue blood Evangelicalism." (Todd Hunter, Revival In Focus, Mission Vieto Vineyard, October 23, 1994)

Nancy Flint, who has had some experience with Quakerism, writes:

"Their new dispensation of the 'spirit' that culminates in a 'perfected life of complete obedience to God', is the same thing Wimber, Rodney Howard Browne, William Branham, Wes Campbell and others are promoting. (i.e. that they are being perfected into the corporate man-child, the second coming of Christ....this time spiritually, not bodily....), it's all the same thing. It is the spirit of Antichrist that denies that Jesus Christ IS come in the flesh. It denies the Father and the Son, and makes itself "God the Holy Spirit indwelling the church, the corporate indwelling of the fullness of the godhead bodily, the Christ).....no wonder they were so "tolerant" of other religions.....so non-combative, so willing to stand by and let the spirit of man replace the Spirit of God. I find it fascinating that William Penn's 'Holy experiment' sounds like the political equivalent of John Wimber's 'experiment' on the church."

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Disinformation

CRI just did a tragic article on how it really is a heresy to believe that Christians can be demonized, and that the ministry of casting out minor spirits in a Christian is really a counterfeit ministry, and it

really is a heresy.

.....come back to, specifically, Hank Hanegraaff and CRI, Christian Research Institute. And he keeps on -- I've been monitoring him... he keeps on saying that this laughing revival, "You guys can't be of the Lord, you laugh too much, you're very undignified, this barking is really bad, this barking is really, really bad." He said, "I have studied revivals, and this barking is really bad." (William DeArteaga, Toronto Airport Vineyard, October 13, 1994)

One all-too-common trait of some Vineyard/Toronto Blessing speakers is the habit of putting words in other peoples' mouths or giving false information. William DeArteaga has done both in these statements, by putting words into the mouth of Hank Hanegraaff and by giving false information about what CRI teaches. CRI has not released an article saying that the teaching that Christians can be demonized is heretical. I'm aware of the article he is probably referring to, and there isn't the slightest suggestion anywhere in the article that that teaching is heretical. As we will see later, Mr. DeArteaga teaches that all who oppose the Toronto Blessing/Revival are heretics.

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#### Drunk On New Wine

..."I've been a Baptist, served a Baptist church since 1979. We came to our first meeting February 1st. I had absolutely no frame of reference for seeing and understanding what was going on up front. The trouble was, it's one thing to sit in the meeting and observe, it's another thing to take it home. And for whatever reason my wife was as drunk as a newt. John, at one point, prayed that she'd be drunk for 48 hours, and she was. (Guy Chevreau, Toronto Airport Vineyard, Pastor's Meeting, October 19, 1994)

...I had to take her to the car, she wasn't much help in the morning, I came home at night, we had already invited guests for supper from the church that we were planting. Usually Janice is able to prepare the table and have the stuff ready so we can focus on our guests. Very undinner that night, no preparation. I went out for fish and chips, our guests arrived while I was gone. There were still no place-settings, so I put the fish and chips down, went to the cupboard for the plates, Janice is opening up the fish and chips and starts throwing the fish. [Laughter] Then she takes the french fries, dumps them on table and pushes little piles...[Laughter] (Guy Chevreau, Toronto Airport Vineyard, Pastor's Meeting, October 19, 1994)

..."Now, there is lots that I do not understand, but I can put some pieces together and we've been praying for Janice for several years that the Lord would release a spirit of play, and He did that! (Guy Chevreau, Toronto Airport Vineyard, Pastor's Meeting, October 19, 1994)

The first piece I returned to was from Hillary Appoitier. Hillary's one of the church fathers. He's writing on the Trinity, 356 A.D. He's commenting on John Chapter 7, verse 39, where Jesus is speaking about streams of living water. Hillary says "the Holy Spirit is called a river. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are made drunk. Out of us as a source, various streams of grace flow. The prophet prays that the Lord will inebriate us. The prophet wants the same persons to be made drunk and filled to all fullness with the Divine gifts so that their generation may be multiplied."

Do you hear the purpose of the outpouring? Not for our own blessing, but that our generation may be multiplied. "We who've been reborn through the sacrament of baptism," that's the context of his

writing, baptism, "We who've been reborn through the sacrament of baptism experience intense joy when we feel within us the first stirrings of the Spirit. We begin to have insight into the mysteries of faith. We are able to prophesy and to speak with wisdom. We become steadfast in hope and receive the gifts of healing. Even demons are made subject to our authority." (Guy Chevreau, Pastor's Conference, December 7, 1994, Toronto Airport Vineyard)

In March 13 of 1994, the Lord rocketed us onto this thing and we went into a prolonged set of meetings, 21 days of fasting, 35 nights of meetings. People were coming. People were being touched. Children were saying Oh, please, don't take me home at midnight. They said we want to stay and pray. Little children: Don't take me home! People were being touched. We had about 150 teenagers. Marc Dupont was there. He said it's time for the joy of the Lord. I'm telling you, they were like a swimming pool. They went into a whole swimming pool. They were laughing. I remember they were rolling, falling on each other. These teenagers, at one o'clock in the morning, they were packing up teenagers like bodies, you know, just like sacks of potatoes. Teenage girls, teenage boys, packing them into their cars, taking them home. The parents were taking them home. One girl -- Marc said, you're going to have the joy of the Lord on you -- he just pointed at her, she went ha! ha! ha! She went down. She laughed for 23 hours straight. She was a pastor's daughter. She had small fits of sleep and would wake up laughing. She went to work, and she worked at this Christian school. She laughed so much she got all the secretaries laughing. Before long, all of the students. It was breaking out in the school. They had to shut down classes at the Kelowna Christian Centre. All the kids came back. They all came back. More. I tell you, we would just take them and throw them into this area. They would hit this epicentre of power. They would laugh. They were just drunk, I mean drunk, drunker than skunks. They couldn't even walk. They were just laughing. (Wes Campbell, Toronto Airport Vineyard, October 14, 1994)

....I would like for you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 1, verse 27. It says, "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." And in 2 Corinthians he mentions that God has chosen -- Paul says he embraces weakness that he might know the strength of God, that in his weakness he knows God's strength. And there's this thing about weakness that's important, I think, for us to gather.

....Now, I'd like for you to turn with me to John Chapter 7, verse 37. How do we appropriate this peace? How do we appropriate this joy? How do we move into deeper joy? How do we get so much joy we get drunk? "These men are not drunk as you suppose. It's only nine o'clock in the morning." It wasn't their languages, it was their behaviour. How do we move into that? You get drunk by drinking. You don't get drunk on one sip. Okay?

John 7:37; "On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'if anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'" That stream is a continuous bubbling thing. It's not dependent upon the rains. It's there. And it's continuous. If you're thirsty, come, and take a drink. (Randy Clark, Let The Fire Fall Conference, Anaheim Vineyard, July 1994)

What ever happened to Jesus' words in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty."

Now, turn with me to -- for evangelicals like myself, this is one of our most pillar passages of Evangelicalism. -- 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, verse 13. [People are starting to laugh about now.] Now, the laughter may start to come, having had some experience in this, I would say that the most difficult time I ever had to preach in Toronto was when the New Yorkers came in. And they were just so out of it, and I really [felt] the Lord had given me this message, I just looked at them and said "I don't want you to quench the Holy Spirit, I don't want you to stop laughing, just please dial the decibels down a little bit." And you really have that ability to do that, and still can enter into the joy, and so I just wanted to put that out there. (Randy Clark, Let The Fire Fall Conference, Anaheim Vineyard, July 1994)

Questioner: Do you think that this is a revival for Western Society and that perhaps some of the things that are happening is to humble us and break down the barriers of pride, the walls of pride?

Randy Clark: I don't think it's for Western Society, but I do think it's to break down the walls of pride, self-sufficiency and the emphasis on what William DeArteaga talked about, the superhero within humanity. And that's where it's coming back to the depravity thing again, that we just dethrone man and put God back up on the throne and humble ourselves at His feet.

But it's not just for Western Society. We're hearing from Cambodia. The guy's getting ready to go back to Cambodia, He says "You go to Canada first before you come to Cambodia." And God's doing things. I mean, a thousand people are getting saved a day where it took hundreds of years to get the first thousand Christians saved in Cambodia, and people are being raised from the dead and temples being hit by lightning or fireballs and knocked off their things. It's all over. Germany and Africa. It's everywhere. God's doing it. It's not a western thing. (Randy Clark, Catch The Fire, Questions and Answers, Toronto Airport Vineyard, October 14, 1994)

Here we see some of the descriptions of the "Holy Spirit's" work, and how it is compared to actual, physical drunkenness.

How many have been able to find in the Bible a reference to the "spirit of play"? From the tone of the speaker's voice, this statement was said, apparently, in all seriousness.

Guy Chevreau mentions that as a result of the Holy Spirit's outpouring, even demons are made subject to our authority. Does he not realize that all Christians, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, have that authority? This is nothing new as a result of the "Toronto Blessing."

A noteworthy aspect of this movement is the fact that laughter takes place often at very inappropriate times. Rodney Howard-Browne, who started today's version of what is known as "Holy Laughter," told how "One night I was preaching on hell, and [laughter] just hit the whole place. The more I told people what hell was like, the more they laughed" (Charisma Magazine, August 1994, page 24). [Rodney also tells us that shortly God will start transporting people from place to place: "How are you going

## How Could Buddy Harrison Die of Cancer?

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How is it possible that the son-in-law of Kenneth E. Hagin, founder of Harrison House Publishers, and Head of the Faith Christian Fellowship (FCF) Word of Faith denomination could have succumbed to cancer and die the last Saturday of November, 1998?

If anyone knew the WOF teachings on divine healing, the authority of the believer, the power of the name of Jesus it was Buddy Harrison! After all, he worked with his father-in-law long before Kenneth Copeland had ever heard of the "faith" message. Buddy's company was responsible for publishing all of the WOF teachers books! Buddy himself had ordained 100's, maybe 1,000's of people into the WOF ministry . . .yet he has died.

How could Buddy die when his father-in-law alleges to have received a special healing anointing personally from the risen Christ (read I Believe In Visions)? Why couldn't this special anointing of "Dad" Hagin heal Buddy (or heal Hagin's wife or his sister who also died of cancer many years back)? I am sure that Buddy, his family, his church, and all who knew of his condition were making positive confessions. I know they were binding Satan and demons and loosing healing. I would not doubt that at some point Oral Roberts probably laid his "anointed" hands on Buddy. All to no avail, he still passed away.

What does this mean? To me this simply proves that the WOF doctrine regarding healing, confession, the believers authority, and a host of other teachings are built on sand and not the Word of God. They are unable to produce the desired and promised results when the rubber meets the road. None of the following people "got the victory" via their WOF doctrines - Ken Hagin's sister died of cancer. Mack Timberlake is fighting cancer now (through medical science). Dodie Osteen had cancer, she too sought medical attention. Betty Price (Fred Price's wife) had cancer and got medical treatment. Peggy Capps (Charles Capp's wife) had cancer, received medical treatment. Joyce Meyer had breast cancer, and was medically treated. These people did not confess their diseases away. They did not receive a miracle from the hands of Benny Hinn. Nor did they bother to tell many people about their own battles with illness (unless it was unavoidable).

(The following was obtained from the Harrison House Web Page on 12-4-98 - bold type, underlining added by ICCDM)

"If he never preached another word, he knows he would still affect the world through prayer and the printed page. Because Buddy Harrison knows who he is in Christ and God's purpose for his life, he walks with assurance, ministers with confidence and preaches with boldness and apostolic authority. Numerous times in his life, Buddy has witnessed the miraculous, supernatural power of God. (As a small boy, he was healed of polio.) He has watched God heal, restore and deliver in his life and in the lives of those he has ministered to."

Here are some of the books Buddy had written

## Petitioning God For The Impossible Petitioning God For The Impossible -

- \* How to write your own petition to God
- \* How to make certain that you petition is in line with God's will
- \* How important the different forms of prayer are and how to use them
- \* How and why you should pray for those in authority
- \* How to avoid writing a petition that won't be answered Write a petition to God today, and get the answer!

## Four Keys To Power! Fulfilling God's Vision and Plan For Your Life!

Did you know that because you are a believer, you now have dynamic power inside of you? God lives on the inside of you. He has invested in you. He has given you power to overcome every situation, every circumstance, every trial and every test. You were made to be an overcomer! You can unlock in your life the power God has given you as one of His children to fulfill all he has called you to do.

## Getting In Position To Receive

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Considering the fact that Mr. Harrison just passed away due to cancer what does that mean in regards to what he has written? Either he did not practice what he preached (which I doubt), or, what he taught simply was not true to begin with. I placed in bold type the phrases which are a stark contrast to the reality he faced.

Frankly, Mr. Harrison has a great deal to explain before our Lord. His "Harrison House" Publishing company is responsible for almost single-handedly popularizing the errors and heresies of the Word of Faith Movement on a global scale. As a minister he ordained many men and women into full-time WOF churches (I served under two couples who were both ordained personally by Buddy), thus expanding the impact of this perversion of the Gospel.

It is our sincere prayer that his death will make people ask themselves the hard questions about the teachings they have bought into. When the doctrines do not work for those who teach them, what chance does the lay person with a much lesser "anointing" have of achieving victory? NONE!

Many others have died needlessly because they tried to confess healing and bind Satan past the point of medical treatment. They died trying to activate spiritual laws and principles which they were told always produce when implemented. Parents have allowed their children to die while "calling those things which be not as though they were."

I do not rejoice over the death of any man. I am sure his family needs our prayer support and comfort. However, I cannot excuse what this man, and others like him, have done to the spiritual lives of multitudes. Countless numbers of people are on the spiritual "junk-heap" due to sincerely following what Buddy, Hagin, Copeland, and others have taught them. These people have given millions to enable Hagin, Copeland, Savelle, Dollar, and others to own private jet planes and live in mansions, while they struggled economically.

It is partly because of these casualties of the WOF movement that our ministry exists, and ICCDM counsels hurting people almost daily in one form or another. Mr. Harrison did not bless the Church, unfortunately he has left behind a legacy of deception (no matter how well intentioned), and broken lives. May our Lord have mercy upon him.

## The Counterfeit Dreams and Visions

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Kenneth E. Hagin is the acknowledged "father" of the modern Word of Faith Movement and is viewed by charismatic Christians globally as a true prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Kenneth Hagin has been active in ministry since the late 1930's and worked around the fringes of the Pentecostal healing revival of the 1940's through late 1950's.

Kenneth Hagin started out in the ministry holding evangelical meetings as a Baptist (1934-1937) and then was licensed by the Assemblies of God in 1937 and began to Pastor from 1937-1949). Beginning in 1949 brother Hagin was an itinerant evangelist and Bible teacher.

"As a result of his final vision in 1963, he set up his own office at his home in Garland, Texas, for the distribution of his tapes and books. . .Hagin founded Rhema Bible Training Center in 1974. By 1988 more than 10,000 students had graduated, and his daily radio program, "Faith Seminar of the Air," was being broadcast on more than 180 stations in thirty-nine states, with a short-wave audience in about eighty other nations. By this time more than three million of his eighty-five books and almost half a million cassette tapes of his sermons have been distributed annually.

Kenneth Hagin is a man with no formal seminary training or college education, yet his school is viewed as the premier Bible training school among charismatic believers. Rev. Hagin's teachings are accepted without question by the rank and file charismatic and many of the most popular charismatic ministers acknowledge Hagin as their spiritual father. Some of those who publicly acknowledge their debt to "Dad" Hagin include Fred Price, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Norval Hayes, Buddy Harrison, and Keith Butler, to name only a few.

One of the reasons Kenneth Hagin and his message has been so widely accepted is because of the claims he himself makes as to the origin of his teachings. His ministry since 1950 has been based upon several alleged visionary encounters with Jesus Christ.

"As a prophet, Hagin communicates revelation that is received by way of divine voice, vision, or visitation. As a teacher, he exposites the Scripture in a plain and often humorous fashion. When both office are combined, the result is a ministry that appears utterly supernatural, and yet thoroughly biblical."

Brother Hagin's ministry consists of two basic ingredients: (1) The teachings of E.W. Kenyon, whose work he intentionally or unintentionally plagiarized. (2) The revelations he supposedly received via direct communication through visions with the Lord Jesus Christ. For the purpose of this writing I will confine myself to considering the visions of Rev. Hagin and their content.

Rev. Hagin is among the most mystical preachers of international status alive today. His life as a visionary began at age 15. On April 22, 1933 at 7:40 PM Rev. Hagin died and descended to hell:

"Then the inner man rushed out of my body and left my body lying dead, with the eyes set and the flesh cold. . .I have proof that I was actually dead. My eyes were set, my heart stopped beating, and my pulse had ceased. . .Finally, far below me, I could see lights flickering on the walls of the

caverns of the damned. The lights were caused by the fires of hell. . . Upon reaching the bottom of the pit, I became conscious of some kind of spirit being by my side. . . a voice spoke from far above the blackness, above the earth, and above the heavens. I don't know if it was the voice of God, Jesus, or an angel, or who. . . I slipped back into my body as easily as a man slips into his trousers in the morning - through my mouth."

According to Hagin he died and was taken down to the very gates of hell by some creature. Upon reaching the gates of hell a loud speaks from far above in an unknown tongue and Hagin is released by the creature and he floats back up and into his body via his mouth!

If words mean anything what we have is a person who died and was the resurrected from the dead. He stated he was dead (page 5) and then was supernaturally brought back from hell into his body (page 6).

"My heart stopped beating for the second time. . . I felt the blood cease to circulate. The tips of my toes went numb - then my feet, ankles, knees, hips, stomach, and heart. I leaped out of my body and began to descend: down, down down. . . The voice spoke from heaven and again my spirit came up out of that place - back to my room and back into my body. The only difference this time was that I came up at the foot of the bed."

For the second time Rev. Hagin "dies" and leaves his body. Again, he descends into the pit, and again some voice speaks from above and Hagin is "resurrected" and re-enters his body via the foot of his bed.

Hagin upon coming back to his body this time leaves parting words for his sister and two brothers. Why parting words? Because Hagin is about to die for a third time and descend into hell.

"...my heart stopped for the third time. I could feel the circulation as it cut off again - and I leaped out of my body and began to descend. . . Thank God that voice spoke. I don't know who it was - I didn't see anybody - I just hear the voice. . . I began to pray, "O God! I come to you in the Name of Lord Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me of my sins and to cleanse me from all sin. . . That was the very hour I was born again due to the mercy of God through the prayers of my mother."

This time on his way down Hagin begins to cry out to God that he is a church member, that he has been baptized in water. . . all to no avail. Yet God spoke again and Hagin begins to rise from the gates of hell. This time Hagin repents of his sins and calls on the name of Jesus and he is saved!

I am very glad that brother Hagin was saved but I have a problem when a person says that they were saved after they had died physically. Based on what he has stated we are to believe that he (1) died, (2) went down to hell, (3) and was born again while out of his body.

I realize that Hagin has probably not thought through some of the implications, but I have considered some of them. If what Hagin is saying is in fact true, the theological implications are staggering! This means a lost person can die, and on their way to hell repent of their sins and be born again. In fact, in Hagin's case he died three times! What is important to keep in mind is that Hagin does not say that he thought he died, or that he simply left his body. No, he emphatically states that he died. "My experience of being brought back from the dead is not new. Jesus raised three people from the dead." He equates his experiences on par with those of whom Jesus raised from the dead in the Bible.

If Hagin's testimony is true then the Scriptures pertaining to the condition of lost people are wrong! How so? To begin with you have a lost man is dead in sin (Eph. 2:5) and without hope (Ephesians 2:12). In fact, the lost man does not love God nor does he seek after Him (Romans 3:10). Jesus said that He chose us, we did not chose Him (Jh 15:16).

What we see in Hagin's experience is the exact opposite to what the Scripture plainly teach. We have a lost man, thus a spiritually dead man, crying out to a God he does not know or love to save him. We have a lost man choosing Christ, a man who hates the light (Jh 1:5) and does not understand the things of the spirit (2 Cor. 2:14). We have a man whose mind and will are at enmity with God (Romans 8:7) and cannot please God . . . doing that which please God, he calls upon Him!

In this testimony brother Hagin relates a couple key ingredients of standard Word of Faith (WOF) doctrine. First, to adherents of WOF teachings, it is no problem to believe that a person can die and be born-again in hell (or in Hagin's case on the way down to hell). After all, Jesus was born-again man in the pit of hell. Hagin and all the clones after him agree with Kenyon's theology:

"You can now understand that He uttered the sentence, "It is finished." You can now understand that He did not mean that He had finished His Substitutionary work, but that He had finished the work the Father gave Him to do first. . .If Jesus paid the penalty of Sin on the cross, then Sin is but a physical act. If Hid death paid it, then every man could die for himself. Sin is in the spirit realm. His physical death was but a mean to an end. . .When Jesus died, His spirit was taken by the Adversary and carried to the place where the sinner's spirit goes when he dies. . .He is the first born out of spiritual death, the first person who was ever born again. . .His spirit absolutely became impregnated with the sin nature of the world. . .He was made to be sin."

So it is no stretch for them to accept that Hagin, like Jesus died a sinner, and was raised from the dead a righteous born-again man.

The second WOF concept is seen when Hagin states "I looked at the clock and saw it was 20 minutes before 8 o'clock. That was the very hour I was born again due to the mercy of God through the prayers of my mother." (underlining bold type added)

I was taught (and taught) that God cannot do anything in the earth unless His people pray. So yes God was merciful, but that mercy was able to be released on Kenneth Hagin's behalf because his mother prayed. If she had not prayed God would not have been able to show His mercy to Hagin. God's ability is released through our prayers, this is standard WOF teaching regarding prayer and the authority we have as humans and as believers.

Certainly God answers prayer, He uses prayer as a means to His ends, yet God is not bound or loosed by our prayers. He is totally sovereign (Is 45:22) and He moves according to His free will and He is in no way dependent upon us for anything. He is the Creator and we are the creation, this fact is sorely misunderstood by most Charismatics.

On September 1950 in Rockwall Texas Hagin is holding a tent revival. He and the participants were praying around the platform.

"I began to pray in other tongues, and I heard a voice say, "Come up hither" . . .I thought everybody heard it. "Come up hither," the voice said again. Then I looked and saw Jesus standing

about where the top of the tent would be. As I looked again, the tent had disappeared . . . God had permitted me to see into the spirit realm. Jesus was standing there, and I stood in His presence. He was holding a crown in His hands. . . It seemed as if I went with Him through the air until we came to a beautiful city. . . The Jesus turned to me and said, "Now let us go down to hell." Jesus told me, "warn men and women about this place," . . . He then brought me back to earth. I became aware I was kneeling on the platform. . . As he stood there, He talked to me about my ministry. He told me some things in general that He later explained in more detail in another vision."

"Jesus" appears to Kenneth for several reasons. First He shows him the soul winners crown. "Jesus" tells him it is for all His children, but many are too busy and because of this "souls are lost because they will not obey Me." So again, we encounter salvation depending upon man and not God. First we saw God's mercy released via his mother's prayers. Now we are told by "Jesus" not less, that souls are lost because His people do not obey Him and witness to them! Without going any further I can assure the reader fully that the being portraying himself as Jesus Christ, was not the Biblical Jesus. If this was the real Jesus, then He has changed His theology since the Holy Spirit had the Apostle John pen the following text:

John 6:37-40 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

6:37. Jesus then gave the ultimate explanation of their lack of faith: the Father works sovereignly in peoples lives. There is an election of God which is the Fathers gift to the Son. The Son has no concern that His work will be ineffective, for the Father will enable people to come to Jesus. Jesus has confidence. But people may have confidence also. (Cf. the crippled mans response to Jesus question, Do you want to get well? [5:6-9]) One who comes to Jesus for salvation will by no means be driven away (cf. {cf. confer, compare} 6:39). 6:38-39. Jesus then repeated His claim about His heavenly origin. The reason He came down from heaven was to do the will of the Father who sent Him. The Fathers will is that those whom He gives to the Son will not suffer a single loss and all will be raised to life in the resurrection (cf. vv. 40, 44, 54). This passage is strong in affirming the eternal security of the believer. 6:40. This verse repeats and reinforces the ideas of the previous verses. One who looks and believes on Jesus for salvation has his destiny secure. The divine decree has insured it (cf. Rom. 8:28-30). He has eternal life (John 6:47, 50-51, 54, 58) and will be raised at the last day (cf. vv. 39, 44, 54).

Jesus plainly taught that He would not lose one person whom the Father had given Him! So for "Jesus" to come to Hagin in 1950 and tell him that people are in hell because of their disobedience would be a direct contradiction of His own teaching. Salvation is not left up to men, but is the work of God. After this startling revelation "Jesus" takes Hagin up to see a beautiful city. They do not enter the city, just take a look. Then the being turns to Hagin and says "let us go down to hell." Hagin sees people engulfed in flames and is told to warn people about this place. Then Hagin is brought back to his revival meeting and Jesus hangs around revealing to him future aspects of his ministry. Then "Jesus" disappears. Up to this point brother Hagin wants us to believe the following:

C He leaves his body and meets Jesus in person above his revival tent

C Jesus shows him the soul winners crown and instructs him about our obligation to save the lost

C Jesus takes Hagin to some celestial city

C Jesus takes Hagin to hell

C Jesus takes Hagin back into his body

C Jesus reveals to Hagin further gnosis about his future ministry

However, Hagin goes on to tell us that the revelations did not stop there:

"About that time the Holy Spirit came upon me again. It seemed as if a wind were blowing on me, and I fell flat on my face on the platform. As I lay under the power of God, it seemed as if I were standing high on a plain somewhere in space and I could see for miles and miles around me. . .I felt so lonely. I was not conscious of my earthly surroundings. As I looked to the west, I saw what appeared to be a tiny dot on the horizon. . .Soon I could see it was a horse. . .When the horseman came to me, he pulled on the reins and stopped. . .He passed the scroll from his left hand to his right hand and handed it to me. As I unrolled the scroll, which was a roll of paper 12 or 14 inches long, he said, "Take and read." At the top of the page in big bold, black print were the words "WAR AND DESTRUCTION." I was struck dumb. He laid his right hand on my head and said, "Read, in the Name of Jesus Christ." I began to read what was written on the paper, and as the words instructed me, I looked and saw what I had just read about."

Next we are told that the Holy Spirit transports Hagin to some cosmic plain where he is alone and he sees a rider approaching from the west. The rider comes up to him and gives him a scroll which he is commanded to read. Hagin is struck dumb and needs this supernatural rider to lay hands on him and commands him to read in the Name of Jesus Christ, the revelations on the scroll. As he read the scroll he was able to see what he read coming to pass before his eyes.

"The scroll was written in the first person, and seemed as if Jesus Himself were speaking. I read, "America is receiving her last call. Some nations already have received their last call and never will receive another. . ."THE TIME OF THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND". . .Jesus also said this was the last great revival. He went on to say, "All the gifts of the Spirit will be in operation in the Church in these last days, and the Church will do greater things than even the Early Church did. It will have greater power, signs, and wonders than were recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. . . More and more miracles will be performed in the last days which are just ahead, for it is time for the gift of working of miracles to be more in prominence. . .Many of my own people will not accept the moving of my Spirit, and will turn back and will not be ready to meet Me at my coming. many will be deceived by false prophets and miracles of satanic origin. But follow the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and Me, and you will not be deceived. I am gathering my own together and am preparing them, for the time is short. " bold type added)

What is interesting to me about the message the scroll contained is that it is in complete agreement with the current doctrinal error that was sweeping Pentecostalism at that time. Percy Hunt and George Warnock had been teaching what came to be called Latter Rain Doctrines since 1947 (actually the doctrinal roots go back as far as 1910). Hagin's scroll parrots these teachings to

the letter. Latter Rain proponents emphasized the outpouring of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit on the remnant of God. These gifts would be manifest to a degree that would exceed those of the original Apostles. They also stressed that the last great revival was on (keep in mind 1950 was just about the middle of the healing revival) and that America was heading towards judgment. "Warn this generation, as did Noah his generation, for judgment is about to fall. And these sayings shall be fulfilled shortly, for I am coming soon." Jesus repeated, "This is the last great revival."

Those Christians who question, and do not accept the coming signs, wonders, and miracles apparently will not be ready to meet Jesus at His return. So according to Hagin's scroll the criteria for Christian readiness is to embrace "the moving of my Spirit." The Bible does not teach this at all!

1 John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

What prepares the believer to meet Christ is the unshifting hope we have in Him, not the embrace of present day truth or the current move of the Spirit.

It is also interesting that the scroll warns of false prophets and miracles of satanic origin. Most of the visions I have studied usually add this caveat in them, to watch out for demonic counterfeits. What amazes me is that none of those who relate their dreams and visions ever take time to consider whether or not they themselves have been blinded by an angel of light (2 Cor 11:13). Yet when you take an objective Biblical look at the content of the dreams and visions and see what is alleged to have been said by Jesus, an Angel, etc. you will find that the statements are either contra-biblical or extra-biblical.

Hagin goes on to say that people present in the tent meeting said he read from the scroll aloud for 30 minutes. When he finished reading it, he gave it back to the rider, who galloped off back to wherever he had come from. Hagin says he was then conscious of the fact that he was still flat on his face on the floor (I wonder how people could hear him read for 30 minutes in that position?). Now we can add to our list these aspects of his experience:

C Hagin is knocked on his face by the Holy Spirit

C He is taken out of his body (again)

C Hagin is transported to a flat, barren plain, devoid of all life

C Hagin sees a rider approach

C The rider gives Hagin a scroll and tells him to read

C Hagin reads and sees the events of the scroll, people present hear him "read" the scroll

C Hagin comes back to himself realizes he is still face down on the floor

The Lord isn't finished His revelatory work yet. While Hagin is face down on the floor he hears a voice say:

"Come up hither. Come up to the throne of God! Again I saw Jesus standing about where the top of the ten should be. . .When I reached Him, together we continued on to heaven. We came to the throne of God, and I beheld it in all its splendor. I was not able to look upon the face of God; I only beheld His form.

Hagin leaves his body, has a personal meeting with Jesus, returns to his body, gets taken out of his body, meets a rider on horseback, is given a prophetic scroll, reads it, is returned to his body, then "Jesus" calls Hagin out of his body again, he ascends to the throne of Almighty God. This would normally strain the credulity of most Christians, yet the average charismatic believer fully accepts his account. After the Lord explains the four phases of brother Hagin's ministry to him he is given a special anointing from the Lord of glory:

"Then the Lord said to me, "Stretch forth thine hand!" He held His own hand out before Him and I looked into them. . .Instead of scars I saw in the palms of His hands the wounds of the crucifixion - three-cornered, jagged holes. Each hole was large enough for me to have put my finger in it. . .As I looked upon the wounds in His hands. . .He laid the finger of His right hand in the palm of my right hand and then my left. The moment He did, my hands began to burn as if a coal of fire had been placed in them. Then Jesus told me to kneel down before Him. When I did, He laid His hands upon my head, saying that He had called me and had given me a special anointing to minister to the sick. He went on to instruct me that when I pray and lay hands on the sick, I was to lay one hand on each side of the body. If I felt the fire jump from hand to hand, an evil spirit or demon was present in that body causing the affliction. . .If the fire, or the anointing, in my hands did not jump from hand to hand, it was a case needing healing only. I should pray for the person in Jesus Name, and if he would believe and accept it, the anointing would leave my hands and go into that person's body, driving out the disease and bringing healing."

There is a great deal which bears scrutiny in this segment of brother Hagin's account. To begin with he sees holes in the palms of "Jesus" hands. It is a physical impossibility for a person to be nailed to a cross with the nails going through their palms. The weight of the human body could not be supported by nails in the palms. Archeologists agree that the nails used probably were placed just behind the wrists of Jesus:

But new light has been thrown on the subject by archaeological work in Judea. In the summer of 1968 a team of archaeologists under V. Tzaferis discovered four Jewish tombs at Giv'at ha-Mivtar (Ras el-Masaref), Ammunition Hill, near Jerusalem, where there was an ossuary containing the only extant bones of a (young) crucified man, dating from probably between ad{ad anno Domini} 7 and ad{ad anno Domini} 66, judging from Herodian pottery found there. Thorough research has been made into the causes and nature of his death and may throw considerable light on our Lord's form of death. The young man's arms (not his hands) were nailed to the patibulum, the cross-beam, which might indicate that Lk. 24:39; Jn. 20:20, 25, 27 should be translated 'arms'. The weight of the body was probably borne by a plank (sedecula) nailed to the simplex, the upright beam, as a support for the buttocks. The legs had been bent at the knees and twisted back so that the calves were parallel to the patibulum or cross-bar, with the ankles under the buttocks. One iron nail (still in situ) had been driven through both his heels together, with his right foot above the left. A fragment shows that the cross was of olive wood. His legs had both been broken, presumably by a forcible blow, like those of Jesus' two companions in Jn. 19:32. (Bold type added)

Brother Hagin attempts to validate his visionary experience by citing John 20:25 where Thomas says ". . .except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails. . ." What Hagin failed to realize is that the Jews considered the "hand" to be any part from the elbow down. On the physical evidence alone the being brother Hagin was speaking to could not have been the Biblical Jesus.

More astounding than the nail scarred palms is the alleged commission that Jesus gives brother Hagin. The purpose for Hagin coming up to the throne room of heaven was to be personally commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ with a special anointing to heal the sick. "Jesus" lays his hands on Hagin's head and tells him that "he" has called him to minister to the sick via a special anointing.

Whenever brother Hagin lays his hands on sick people he will (from this point on in 1950) be able to discern whether the person is sick due to (1) an evil spirit, (2) a demon, or (3) just physically ill. He will know this because the anointing fire will jump (or not jump) from hand to hand! If Hagin can get the sick person to believe this, then the anointing will flow out of Hagin's hands into the sick person and he, Hagin, will know they are healed!

The anointing given to Kenneth Hagin is so special it is not found anywhere in the Bible. He has received, personally, from the nail-pierced hands of Jesus a power not given to any of the people within the confines of the written Word. Nowhere in Scripture is such an "anointing" spoken of. Nowhere in Scripture do we read on Jesus giving anyone the ability to discern the cause of an illness by the physical sensation of fire jumping from hand to hand! Yet does anyone within the Pentecost/charismatic circle question this?

In fact, I find it interesting that during the healing revival (1940-1950's) the main healing evangelists all claimed to have been given a tangible healing anointing which was felt in their hands. Probably the two most famous healing evangelists of that time who made such claims were Oral Roberts and William Branham. With this in mind brother Hagin's claim to feel the fire jump from hand to hand was not hard for people to swallow. Bigger evangelists than he had already been making claims of that nature for almost five years prior to his being "anointed" to heal.

After this special call by "Jesus," the laying on of hands, and the imparting of this special anointing Hagin begs not to be sent into the healing ministry. Jesus rebukes him and Hagin relents and agrees to obey this divine charge:

"I'll go with you and stand by your side as you pray for the sick, and many times you will see Me. Occasionally I will open the eyes of someone in the audience and they will say, "Why, I saw Jesus standing by that man as he prayed for the sick."

"Jesus" personally commits to be with Hagin when he prays for the sick. In fact, many times Hagin will personally get to see Jesus standing by his side and Jesus will open the eyes of revival participants and allow them to see Him. After this throne room experience they head back to earth:

"Jesus then journeyed with me back to the earth, and I realized that I still lay on my face on the floor. he talked with me there a moment and then disappeared. My hands burned for three days just like I had a coal of fire in each of them. Now when I wait upon the Lord in prayer and fasting, the same anointing comes upon me again."

Brother Hagin gives no explanation why they went up to the "throne room" of heaven, or why Jesus did not commission him when He first appeared to Hagin earlier that day. Hagin does explain that this special anointing can come and go; "if the anointing leaves you, fast and pray until it comes back" . When he feels the anointing has left him all that he has to do is some fasting and praying and it will come back. There is no explanation about what would cause this anointing to leave, all we know is what Hagin must do to get it back. Before I go onto brother Hagin's next gnostic experience it is necessary to take some time and consider what the Bible has to say about the anointing and compare it to what Pentecostal and charismatics mean when they use that term.

The working charismatic definition of "the anointing" is an ineffable supernatural power given by the Holy Spirit to accomplish a task or ministry. The anointing is felt by the minister and can be transmitted to others through the laying on of hands. It is this tangible power flowing from the minister to the recipient which causes them to "fall under the power" when prayed for. Sometimes the anointing is described as power, heat, electricity, or fire. The anointing comes upon a minister and can lift from him. One can gain the anointing through fasting and prayer (as in Hagin's case) or it can be bestowed on a person via another "anointed" vessel.

Strong's Dictionary defines anointing as: *chrisma*, *khريس'-mah*; from Greek 5548 (*chrío*); an unguent or smearing, i.e. (figurative) the special endowment ("chrism") of the Holy Spirit :- anointing, unction. In the New Testament the term(s) for anointing are used only seven times. Four of the seven are direct references to the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry (Lk. 4:18; Acts 4:27, Acts 10:38, and Heb. 1:9).

The other three times refer to the work of the Holy Spirit in teaching us as God's children (1 Jh. 2:20, 27) and in keeping us in Christ (2 Cor. 1:21). Nowhere does the Bible speak of the anointing being felt as fire, heat, electricity, or power. Nowhere do we read of the anointing flowing out of Paul or Peter, i.e. being transmitted and people falling down under the power of the anointing. Every believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and that same Holy Spirit is the anointing (1 Jh. 2:27). Thus every believer is "anointed" with the Holy Spirit. If a believer has any of the Spirit, he must then have all of the Spirit, because God is not divisible.

Nowhere are we told how to increase this anointing, how to get more of it, how to release it, or how to transmit it to others. From a simple reading of the New Testament all of these concepts are false. Charismatic teachers have developed an entire doctrine on the anointing which separate the anointing from the Holy Spirit. The anointing to them is a power given by The Spirit versus being synonymous with the Holy Spirit. This is very important to understand. If the anointing is separate then it can be lost, increased, transmitted, etc. If however, the anointing and The Spirit are one in the same, as the Bible teaches (Acts 10:38; Luke 4:18), then obviously, these things cannot occur.

UNCTION. In its three NT{NT New Testament} occurrences, i.e. 1 Jn. 2:20, 27 (twice), Authorized Version King James, 1611 renders Greek *chrisma*, unction, and Revised Standard Version : NT, 1946; OT, 1952; Common Bible, 1973 has anointed, \*anointing. Christians who, by virtue of their unction (vv.{vv. verses}20, 27), are all able to discern schism (v.{v. verse} 19) and heresy (denial of the incarnation, v.{v. verse} 22) are exhorted to adhere to the apostolic message (v.{v. verse} 24), which led them to confess the Father and the Son. Grammatically, unction must be either (a) that which is smeared on (so B. F. Westcott, *The Epistles of John*, 1892); or (b) the act of anointing (so A. E. Brooke, *ICC{ICC International Critical Commentary}*, 1912); but in either case the word

refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit, of which baptism is the outward sign, and whose sensible reception, leading to awareness of dangers to the church, is the consequence of true incarnational faith. This exegesis is compatible with, though not necessarily proving, the belief that the anointing of the Spirit leads to spoken prophecy within the church. (Bold type added by author). Thus the majority of what Charismatic ministries teach about the anointing must be placed under the category of false teaching. The following internationally known ministries propagate erroneous concepts about the anointing:

C Kenneth E. Hagin Understanding the Anointing

C Benny Hinn The Anointing

God's Anointing for You

Understanding the Anointing

The New Anointing

Double Portion Anointing

C Creflow A. Dollar The Anointing of El Shaddai

Anointed Because of His Blood

C Lori Wilke The Costly Anointing

C Kenneth Copeland The Anointing

When a person has been taught that the anointing and the Holy Spirit are not the same it is easy to understand why people can believe that Jesus personally gave Kenneth Hagin a "special anointing" in the area of divine healing. On the other hand, when one correctly sees that the Holy Spirit and the anointing are one in the same, then you can readily see that what brother Hagin received (if he indeed received anything) did not come from the Lord Jesus. Which leads me to conclude that his experience, although a real experience, is both extra-Biblical and anti-Biblical in nature and must be rejected.

A month later at another revival meeting Jesus appears to Hagin again. In this instance Hagin is attempting to cast a demon out of a man. After laying hands on him, the man is still bound by the demon and Hagin looks over his shoulder and sees Jesus

"I saw Jesus standing there as plainly as any man I had ever seen in my life! I thought everybody saw Him, but I learned later that no one in the congregation saw or heard Him except me. The congregation heard what I said, but they did not see or hear anyone else."

Jesus rebukes Hagin for his lack of faith reminding him that He said "I said in my Name the demons will go." Hagin realizes he has been in unbelief through his confession (he had asked the man to see if he could stand up) and has the man come back. This time he lays hands on him and commands him to stand up and he does!

Jesus appears to teach Hagin that his words have power, that he was saying "if" versus commanding the result. Hagin learns no matter how many gifts a person has, or how much power,

it all works by faith, i.e. belief in the right words.

December 1952 in Broken Bow Oklahoma Hagin is staying at a Pastor's house. As he was getting on his knees to pray with the pastor, he was instantly "in the spirit."

"On this night in 1952 in the parsonage kitchen, my physical senses were suspended. At that moment I didn't know I was kneeling beside the kitchen chair. It seemed as if I was kneeling in a white cloud that enveloped me. Immediately I saw Jesus. . ."I am going to teach you concerning the devil and demons, and demon possession. . .from this night forwards, what is known in My Word as the gift of discerning of spirits will operate in your life when you are in the Spirit."

One thing that is prominent in the visions Hagin receives is the element of being personally taught by the Lord Jesus Himself. Hagin takes his understanding of Scripture to the highest point possible, being personally taught by God, mouth to mouth! Hagin's understanding of doctrine and the Bible does not come from mere man, or a seminary somewhere. No, his comes from the very lips of the risen Christ Himself! This places Hagin and his teachings on a very high plain, which possibly explains why he is so revered among Charismatics today.

The problem with this is manifold. To begin with much of what Jesus is teaching (or showing) him is simply not Biblical. Secondly, we have no record of anyone being personally taught doctrine by the risen Christ after the closing of the canon of Scripture. We know of a certainty that it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to teach us (Jh. 16:13) and that God has placed Pastor Teachers in the Body (Eph. 4:11-12). We do know that John saw Jesus and wrote down what he saw and heard. Apart from John no one else was personally taught by Christ. Paul was taken to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) although he does not say Jesus taught him anything. So Hagin's experiences place him above Paul, Peter, James, Luke, and others.

"The Lord said, "There are four divisions: (1) principalities, (2) powers, (3) rulers of the darkness of this world, (4) and wicked spirits in high places or in the heavenlies. . .The highest types of demons with which you have to deal with on earth, the rulers of the darkness of this world, rule all unsaved people, all who are in darkness. They rule over them and dominate them."

Hagin's Jesus goes on the reveal to him that people do the wicked things they do because of these spirits. This is the classic "the devil made me do it" of Flip Wilson given now divine verification! Certainly Satan is the Tempter (Matt. 4:3), but people sin because they are desperately wicked and are totally depraved. When Satan and his demons are locked up for one thousand years why does Jesus have to rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15)? Because those who survive the great tribulation and are alive when Jesus returns are still fallen people and without any external force (demons) they will sin - it is their nature. All sin cannot be laid at the feet of Satan or his demons, much of what is sinful is based within the heart of man.

Then Jesus shows Hagin (in the spirit) a woman who is a minister of the gospel, and is even used in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit (pg. 75). In the end, this woman listens to the demons speaking to her, she leaves her husband, and takes up with another man and renounces Jesus Christ.

"Lord what will happen to her?" . . She will spend eternity in the regions of the damned, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." . .And in the vision I saw her go down into the pit. I heard

her awful screams."

This is an important vision because in this one Jesus contradicts His own teaching concerning His sheep. Jesus said He would not loose any of the people given to him by the Father (Jh. 6:39). The Bible Jesus also stated that Jesus gives His sheep eternal life and they shall never perish (Jh. 10:27,28).

Hagin's Jesus now reveals to us that a person can be saved, in ministry, and then decide to reject Christ and be lost. So somehow Christians can break the seal of the Holy Spirit, and by an act of their will undo all that God has wrought in them at the moment of salvation. This being speaking with Hagin is not the True Christ of the Bible, but some clever demonic counterfeit.

Jesus goes on to reveal to Hagin the true meaning of 1 John 5:16 and that we are not to pray for those who commit such sins, i.e. the sin unto death. Now we know that the sin unto death is the sin which leads to eternal damnation. In fact, Jesus goes onto the elucidate to Hagin the five ingredients which comprise the sin unto eternal damnation:

"1. Be enlightened (or convicted) to see his lost states, and to know that there is no way for him to be saved except through Jesus Christ. 2. Taste of the heavenly gift, which is Jesus. 3. Become partaker of the Holy Spirit, or be filled with the Holy Spirit. 4. Grow enough out of the babyhood stage to have tasted of the good Word of God. 5. Have the powers of the world to come - the gifts of the Spirit - operating in his life."

Jesus gives Hagin (and us through Hagin) facts which again contradict the teaching of Scriptures. What Hagin has been taught is that a person is convicted of their lost condition and receives Jesus, the heavenly gift. They then go onto to get filled with the Holy Spirit - please understand that this for Hagin and most charismatics is a subsequent experience after salvation. This charismatic believer grows up having tasted the good Word of God (is any of It bad?) and has the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate in their lives. Then after this they willfully turn their backs on God and end up in hell!

The Bible teaches that the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). Philippians 1:6 encourages us that He, God, who began the good work of salvation, shall complete this work in us. I Thessolonians 5:23, 24 we are assured that God will keep us blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Paul assures us that the Lord who called us will do it! The text Hagin claims Jesus taught him does not apply to blood-washed Christians. Furthermore the text in First John does not teach that we are not to pray for those who have committed a sin worthy of death.

Concerning this (peri ekeines). This sin unto death. That he should make request (hina erotesei). Sub-final use of hina with the first aorist active subjunctive of erotao, used here as in John 17:15, 20 (and often) for request rather than for question. John does not forbid praying for such cases; he simply does not command prayer for them. He leaves them to God. (Bold type the authors).

During this lengthy vision brother Hagin receives further startling revelations which have become cornerstones of his ministry. Jesus continues to speak to Hagin and lo-and-behold a monkey shaped demon jumps up between them and starts causing a ruckus. Hagin can see Jesus is speaking but he cannot hear what He is saying. Hagin waits for Jesus to command the demon to

go, but He does not. Finally Hagin commands the demon to shut up and begone . . . and the demon flees in terror from him.

"I was still wondering why Jesus had not stopped this evil spirit from interfering, and of course Jesus knew what I was thinking. He said, "If you hadn't done something about that, I couldn't have."

Hagin immediately corrects Jesus by telling Him surely He meant wouldn't have. Jesus says no He could not have done anything. Hagin protests some more and Jesus tells him "sometimes your theology needs upending" (pg. 87). Then Hagin decides to get theological with Jesus and says:

"Lord, even though I am seeing You with my eyes, even though I hear your voice speaking to me as plainly as any voice I have ever heard, I cannot accept that unless You prove it to me by the Word of God. . . I will not accept any vision, I will not accept any revelation, if it cannot be proved by the Word of God."

It is obvious that for brother Hagin proving something by the Word of God consists of finding a text, regardless of its context, and thus proving the validity of a concept by mere proof-texting, which is no proof at all.

Jesus then shows Hagin texts where Jesus gave the believer authority over Satan and demons. Jesus tells Hagin no place in the New Testament are we to ask Jesus to fight Satan or demons on our behalf. The reason Almighty God cannot do anything about Satan is because He has given His authority to the Church. Unless we deal with Satan the job will not get done. Jesus has done all He is going to concerning the devil and now it is up to the Body of Christ to enforce his defeat by using our authority in Jesus name. The subject of our authority over Satan and demons became a thrust of Hagin's ministry. So much so he wrote a book entitled "The Authority of the Believer." A main problem with this book, apart from the bad theology, is the fact that he plegerized the vast majority of it.

The believer does not act autonomously in the spiritual life. Any power or ability we possess comes from God, it is in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). When the gospel is preached and people are saved - who saved them, the evangelist or the Lord? The Lord. If you do pray for the sick and they are genuinely healed by God, who healed them? The one who prayed or the Lord? The Lord. If an evil spirit is indeed cast out, who cast it out, the individual or the Lord? The Lord. In all cases, it is the Lord operating by His Spirit through His servant. He alone gets the glory. As in the other cases, what Hagin claims Jesus has taught him is at variance with the Scripture and in most cases with logic.

In 1958 in Port Natches Texas Hagin is singing in other tongues during a meeting and Jesus suddenly appears on the platform to him. This time Jesus is not alone, He has come with Hagin's angel -

"Then, pointing to the angel standing beside Him, He said, "This is your angel." " My angel?" I asked. "Yes, your angel, and if you will respond to him, he will appear to you as I will at times; and he will give your guidance and direction concerning the things of life, for angels are ministering spirits who are sent to minister for those who are heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

Obviously is Jesus is busying running some other aspect of the universe He will now have His angel come and guide brother Hagin in the affairs of life. Nowhere does the New Testament validate an experience of this type. Angels do not give individuals guidance and direction concerning the things of life. Last time I checked that ministry was reserved for the Holy Spirit alone.

We do read some warnings concerning angels however, which brother Hagin would do well to heed:

Col. 2:18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

2 Cor. 11:14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Galatians 1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

No one in the Bible is told by God that an angel will guide them in the affairs of life. Angels do minister, they do the bidding of God, but they are not personal advisors. Earlier we read where brother Hagin is given a special anointing, an anointing so special it is not found in Scripture. Next we read that he is personally doctrine by the Head of the Church. Now we read that he is given a personal guide, a spirit-guide if you will, who will guide him in the affairs of life, if he will open himself up to this spirit-being. It would seem that brother Hagin has had more supernatural experiences than all the apostles of the Bible combined!

February 1959, we find brother Hagin in the hospital with an injured elbow. Around dinner time he hears some footsteps coming towards his room and he looks up and it is Jesus!

"As I looked closer, I saw it was Jesus! It seemed as if my hair stood on end. Cold chill bumps pooped out all over my body, and I couldn't say a word. . .I am going to talk to you now about the prophets ministry. You have missed it and have only been in my permissive will because you have reversed the order, putting the teaching ministry first and the prophet's ministry second."

Brother Hagin was operating in the permissive will of God, which is why the devil was allowed to hurt his elbow. Jesus came to speed up the healing process but also to get brother Hagin on track, i.e. to get him to flow in the office of a prophet more so than that of a teacher. Jesus went on to reveal to brother Hagin that the ministry of the prophet and apostle are still for the Church today (since the late 1940's Pentecostals had accepted this erroneous belief). Jesus then defines the ministry of the prophet:

"Jesus went on the talk to me about the ministry of the prophet, explaining that a prophet is one who has visions and revelations; things revealed to him. . .Therefore the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits plus prophecy are operating in my ministry when I am in the Spirit. This constitutes the office of the prophet."

Now after almost two thousand years we have further divine revelation into what exactly makes one a prophet. All we need do is accept what brother Hagin says Jesus taught him. A prophet has visions and revelations. A prophet operates in the word of knowledge, which Pentecostals define

as the supernatural ability to know what is currently happening in a person's life or at times a city or nation. A prophet operates in the discerning of spirits, the supernatural ability to see into the realm of the spirit, literally see angels and demons at work. Lastly, they will naturally prophesy. All of which, as we have read, are active in brother Hagin's life. So obviously, he is a prophet as well as an evangelist and teacher, and pastor.

Brother Hagin is not just an ordinary run-of-the-mill preacher. He is the prophet of the Lord God and people had better listen to him . . . or else:

"He went on to say that if a Church wouldn't accept the ministry of a prophet, they wouldn't accept His Word. He added that if a pastor wouldn't accept this message, judgment would come to him. The Lord said that if He gave me a message or a revelation for a pastor, I should deliver it; and if He gave me a message for a church or an individual, I should deliver it. . .If you give a message for an individual, church, or a pastor, and they don't accept it, you will not be responsible. They will be responsible. There will be ministers who won't accept it and who will fall dead in the pulpit."

Two weeks later brother Hagin finished preaching somewhere and the pastor did not accept his message and fell dead! Naturally, writing this has caused me sleepless nights. NOT!

As before, there is nothing in the New Testament to support this concept. The Biblical Jesus did say in Mark 6:11 to shake the dust off your feet if your witness is not received. He did not say "they will die if they reject your message." In fact, Jesus rebuked John and James when they wanted to call lightning down on a town which rejected Jesus . . . like Jesus I say to brother Hagin "you do not know of what spirit you are" when you make statements like these.

## A PAGE FROM MARILYN HICKEY'S LATEST "BULLDOG" GIMMICK

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There was no doubt in our hearts and minds - this was more than a "good" idea, it was a "God idea" that required our absolute obedience and commitment. BULLDOG, FAITH moves ORDINARY PRAYER into the realm of INTENSIVE CARE! It is fervent and ferocious against every work of the enemy!

Our BULLDOG Prayer team was first assembled many years ago when one of our faithful, long-time secretaries contracted breast cancer. The doctors removed the growth, but three years later it came back into her entire body with a vengeance.

"One of our faithful long-time secretaries" - Really? What is her name? How long has she worked for MHM? How is it a "faithful" staff person even got stricken with cancer in the first place? When was this cancer discovered? What year? Why didn't she get healed the first time? What was her doctor's name? Can he verify she had breast cancer? What hospital did she receive her operation in?

This time the doctors told her (up front) that she would most likely NOT survive this attack and would soon die. Naturally, the news was devastating to this dear lady ... her husband ... and all of us in the ministry. She became so depressed and discouraged, she couldn't even come to work.

Did she receive disability pay? Was she fired? What type of medical insurance do you offer your workers? Why do you even have medical insurance, if any?

BUT THEN - SOMETHING HAPPENED. A small group on our staff decided that she was going to LIVE AND NOT DIE! Their faith was contagious as they began to speak the Word and pray fervently day and night together.

You mean to tell us (the 10,000's who go this letter) that it is up to individuals to decide whether another person is going to live or die? Why didn't someone decide Buddy Harrison was not going to die (for him) or Pastor John Osteen? This is totally unbiblical! People do not have that type of authority, never did.

They would go to her and say, "You're going to LIVE!" "You're NOT going to die!" "You're going to LIVE!" "You're NOT going to die!" and they sunk the teeth of God's Word into that situation and HELD ON WITH A FAITH that we called "BULLDOG FAITH ' ' " They became known as our "BULLDOG" Prayer Team ... and we began to conduct special BULLDOG PRAYER MEETINGS for her.

There is no mention of the cancer victim's faith, the letter implies that it was the work of these bulldog prayer team that had all the faith needed for the miracle. Which means if the reader will become a part of MHM (aka send money) and send in their bulldog prayer request form, they too can expect the same results as this unnamed miracle recipient!

OH YES ... SHE LIVED! (This was 4 years ago.) And she's still very much alive. She's a living miracle! She's a walking, talking miracle because of a determined faith in God's Word that made us HOLD ON ... and NOT GIVE UP; NOT GIVE UP; NOT GIVE UP!

Is she back at work again? Why don't you place her testimony in your monthly magazine? Why hasn't she shared this miracle on any of the various Christian television venues, which MHM is connected with? Why haven't you brought her on your television show with the BEFORE and AFTER medical records (which have to exist)?

Since that time, our BULLDOG PRAYER TEAM never really stopped. Whenever we've been hit with an emergency ministry need or crisis situation, the BULLDOG PRAYER TEAM with THEIR BULLDOG FAITH would get into action. AND WE'VE SEEN MIRACLE AFTER MIRACLE ... TIME AFTER TIME!

\* NOW - our BULLDOG PRAYER TEAM has made a solemn "BULLDOG commitment" to HOLD ON FOR YOU and WITH YOU for your toughest requests with the very same BULLDOG FAITH! This is YOUR "BULLDOG" Prayer Campaign:

We are going to set up a SPECIAL BULLDOG FAITH PRAYER BOX

If you have a special miracle need or situation that requires nothing less than INTENSIVE SPIRITUAL CARE ... we want YOUR request sheet THERE.

Every person on our BULLDOG PRAYER TEAM as well as any member of our ministry staff will have complete, DAILY access to YOUR REQUESTS

We will be designating a BULLDOG PRAYER DAY every month. We will be conducting additional BULLDOG PRAYER VIGILS all year. It doesn't matter what your need or crisis is. From money problems to marriage challenges ... from business dilemmas to physical attacks from the devil ... we're going to sink our spiritual teeth into the Word of God and clamp down on it with everything we have ... for your needs. We want to HOLD ON to God's Word (for you in this special way) until your enemy is defeated and your circumstances are permanently conquered. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

The next to last sentence sounds like a promise to me. Mum's bulldogs will pray UNTIL YOUR ENEMY IS DEFEATED. Can I take MHM to court if my "enemy" is not defeated (or my survivors)?

This is simply another one of Mrs. Hickey's MANY campaigns to raise money under the aegis of praying for people's needs. Is this attempt any more "Spirit-led" than the "miracle need carrot seeds," or the "anointed cornmeal," of the break the devil's back " campaigns to raise money under the aegis of praying for people's needs. Is this attempt any more "Spirit-led" than the "miracle need carrot seeds," or the "anointed cornmeal," of the break the devil's back "pop sickle sticks," or the "blessed" widows mite she has sent us in the past? I think not. This is simply another one of Mrs. Hickey's MANY campaigns to raise money under the aegis of praying for people's needs. Is this attempt any more "Spirit-led" than the "miracle need carrot seeds," or the "anointed cornmeal," of the break the devil's back " campaigns to raise money under the aegis of praying for people's needs. Is this attempt any more "Spirit-led" than the "miracle need carrot seeds," or the "anointed cornmeal," of the break the devil's back "pop sickle sticks," or the "blessed" widows mite she has sent us in the past? I think not. Remember Marilyn in your prayers,

she needs them very desperately.

ICCDM believes that our Lord Jesus Christ heals today. We believe He does so according to His sovereign wisdom and through His Church.

We do not believe there is such a ministry as a "healing evangelist," the Bible never speaks of such a ministry. Nor do we believe God has especially empowered any individual with the "gift(s) of healing."

## Some Facets of The Word of Faith Movement

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The Word of Faith (WOF) Movement is difficult to pinpoint as to when it formally began. Without question its main doctrines came from E.W. Kenyon's writings. Kenneth Hagin is the individual initially responsible for the propagation of Kenyon's heretical concepts. Every major WOF minister looks to Kenneth Hagin as the father of the movement.

Kenneth Hagin has been involved in Pentecostal ministry since the late 30's but the Word of Faith Movement did not take off as a discernable movement until 1967. Today "dad" Hagin's heresies reach over 450,000 homes each month via his free magazine "The Word of Faith." His Bible School Rhema Bible Training Center has spawned WOF churches globally. His disciples have also started Bible schools which in turn release more error into the Body of Christ.

Some would argue that the WOF movement is not a denomination and they are probably correct in the classic definition of a denomination. However, Buddy Harrison (Ken Hagin's son-in-law) is Pastor of Word of Faith Church in Tulsa and Buddy has ordained 100's of pastors who subsequently started Word of Faith Churches in America and around the world. These ministries are under his oversight. Our former pastor, Ellis Smith of Jubilee Christian Church in Detroit was ordained by Buddy Harrison and his church was originally called "Faith Christian Fellowship" but Ellis later broke with Buddy. Pastor Keith Butler of Detroit was ordained by Buddy Harrison and Keith's church is called "Word of Faith." Keith has also started "Word of Faith" churches in several other cities. . .all of which are under his direct control and supervision. 100's if not 1,000's of local congregations look to certain men and women as leaders. These congregations hold the exact same beliefs, and operate in the same manner as to order of worship equal a denomination. The organization cited below consists of the major leaders within the WOF movement. These men and women control what is taught in most WOF congregations: (1) they are looked upon as the revealers of God's present day truth. (2) Pastors of WOF congregations routinely teach exactly what they have received from these individuals at seminars. (3) Most WOF churches sell their books in their local church bookstores. (4) When they can afford it, they have these leaders come and speak in their churches.

International Charismatic Bible Ministries

Minister Affiliation Position in the Church

Oral Roberts Chairman of ICBM Prophet

Kenneth Copeland Secretary of ICBM Prophet/Teacher/televangelist

Charles Green Exec. Dir of ICBM

Billy Dugerty\* Vice Chairman of ICBM

Carlton Pearson Member-at-Large of ICBM Bishop/megachurch pastor/vacillates bet. WOF & Prophetic Movements

John Hagee Member of ICBM megachurch pastor/televangelist/TBN regular  
Thomas F Reid Member of ICBM Latter Rain Proponent/WOF  
Marilyn Hickey\* Member at Large Teacher/televangelist/WOF/has her own Bible school  
John Avanzini Trustee of ICBM Prosperity teacher/WOF/TBN regular  
Dick Bernal Trustee of ICBM Spiritual Warfare teacher/WOF  
Morris Cerullo Trustee of ICBM Owns on television network/WOF/televangelist  
Happy Caldwell Trustee of ICBM pastor of megachurch/WOF  
Paul Crouch Trustee of ICBM Owns TBN/WOF  
Benny Hinn Trustee of ICBM Healing Ministry/megachurch pastor/WOF/TBN regular  
Howard-Rodney Browne Trustee of ICBM Started Holy Laughter Movement/WOF/pastor  
John Mears Trustee of ICBM Bishop/ Prophetic Movement/pastor  
Earl Paulk Trustee of ICBM Bishop/Prophetic Movement/megachurch pastor  
Myles Munroe Trustee of ICBM Apostle/Prophetic Movement/teaches black dominance gospel  
Benson Idahosa Trustee of ICBM Archbishop/Prophetic Movement

This list does not include all of the cast of characters of the ICBM for that you have to surf to: <http://www.oru.edu>, where you can get the entire vision of this organization. These individuals have input into the spiritual lives of several million Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians. These individuals agree on the following WOF heretical doctrines (I am not citing all WOF doctrines, just some major points of error):

Spiritual Law

Positive Confession

Divine Healing

The Atonement

Financial Prosperity

Demonology

Infamous Quotes

Spiritual Law -

God and His creation operate according to spiritual laws. These laws cannot be violated and when properly used these spiritual laws will always produce the desired results.

"We must understand that there are laws governing every single thing in existence. Nothing is by accident. There are laws of the world of the spirit, and there are laws of the world of the natural. .We need to realize that the spiritual world and its laws are more powerful than the physical world

and its laws. Spiritual law gave birth to physical law. . .God a Spirit, created all matter. . . with the force of faith." The Laws of Prosperity" pg. 15

#### Positive Confession -

God creates by confessing what He wants. We are created in His image, thus we too have the ability to release faith-filled words and thus create what we need in life. Spiritual law generally works by confessing properly what you need. If you need physical healing you confess passages of text on prosperity. The "spiritual law" is simple (1) believe in your heart, (2) confess it with your mouth, and (3) believe you have it and you will {read Mark 11:23-24}.

"Even though God had the image inside Him and the Spirit of God was there to cause it to come to pass, it had to be released out of His mouth before any changes could take place. . .God used His words to bring the image into manifestation. He filled His words with the spiritual force of faith." "God's Image of You" Charles Capps, pg. 48

"So if we decree or affirm unwaveringly, steadfastly, we hold God by His own unalterable laws to do the establishing or fulfilling. . ." Lessons", Cady, pg. 52

Every WOF teacher has written books dealing with positive confession, which is why the WOF movement became known as "the Positive Confession Movement" or "name it and claim it." The above list of people sincerely believe we create our own realities by what we say.

#### God's Will Is Always Healing -

It is not God's will for any of His children to be sick. It is His will for all of them to be healed when (if) they do get sick. This heresy has probably caused more pain, suffering, and guilt than almost any other lie that WOF promotes. Many of the WOF ministers have had bouts with serious illness and have had to resort to using (gasp) doctors and medicine. Oral Roberts, had the lack of faith to start a medical school. Charles Capps wife suffered with cancer and was treated for it. Fred Price's wife was treated for cancer. R.W. Schambach has had heart by-pass surgery, etc. Yet, to a person, they will tell you that it is God's will to always heal the believer. Dr. Hobart Freeman taught that using doctors was a sin, as a result over 50 people died in his church, and later he himself died of a treatable ailment. Now there is a big push on diet, vitamins, herbs, and exercise among charismatic ministers (they are growing older now). Dr. Cherry is a medical doctor who has a show on TBN and many follow his medical advice . . .yet it is still God's will to always heal.

#### Jesus Died Spiritually -

I dealt with this heresy in another section, please press the button to go there (). In all fairness some WOF ministers have broken ranks and come to a more orthodox view. I have e-mailed several of the "biggies" recently and I am waiting to hear their response regarding the atonement.

#### Financial Prosperity -

Not only does God want you well, He wants you wealthy! The majority of the people in the ICBM leadership are millionaires or multimillionaires. Tracy and I attended a small WOF church on Detroit's east-side. Our congregation had at most 300 poor inner-city people (children included). Yet the Pastor made over \$60,000.00 per year and was provided a Cadillac, Lincoln Town car,

Pontiac Bonneville SSE, and lastly a fully maxed-out Conversion Van. Why? Because God's people are to (1) eat the best, (2) wear the best, and (3) drive the best. Paul Crouch holds a "Praise-A-Thon" and tens of millions will be raised in a matter of days.

"Good news to the poor is: You don't have to be poor anymore." Authority In Three Worlds", Charles Capps, pg. 21

The way to enter into financial prosperity is by giving! We were told we did not give to get, yet it was a spiritual law and when we gave it would be given back to us in greater measure. WOF churches all operate on the tithing principle of 10% of the paycheck (preferably the gross amount) was to be given each and every payday. On top of the 10% we were to give offerings. Being faithful in doing this meant that God would: (1) open the windows of heavens for us, (2) He would pour out an overflowing blessing on us, (3) He would rebuke the devourer for our sakes, (4) and our endeavors would not fail to bear good fruit (see Mal. chapter 3). The bottom line is this- tithing does not exist as a New Testament doctrine or practice. It is legalism and often abusive and manipulative. Every WOF minister has also written about and taught on financial prosperity. Most of the people teach that: (1) poverty is a curse, (2) Jesus was wealthy, (3) financial prosperity is part of the atonement, (4) you have a right to be rich, and (5) you will get rich by sowing into my (fill in the blank) ministry.

Demons -

One thing we charismaniacs know about is the Devil and his demons! We have scores of books on the devil, various ministers have seen demons (Kenneth Hagin, Norval Hayes, Robert Tilton, Lester Sumrall, Howard Pittman, etc.). Some have tapes of demons speaking (sometimes all you need to do is simply turn on TBN). Our job is to enforce Satan's defeat. Jesus has given His authority over Satan to the Church and it is up to us to use His name, His blood, His armor and conquer Satan and his forces. Most problems are relegated to satanic influence (sickness, poverty, disease, strife, and society-at-large). Prophetic Movement teachers (Myles Monroe, Earl Paulk, Rick Joyner, Paul Cain) teach that the problems in the world are the result of the Church not exercising her authority over Satan and his demons. Hagin and Sumrall both have written extensively on demons and spiritual warfare. There are now congregations that are known for their spiritual warfare (our former congregation was once such church). There is an emphasis on warfare praise, warfare prayer, prayer walks, fasting for spiritual power over principalities and powers. Jubilee Christian Church, got so far off into this they even had warfare dancing and a warfare clap.

All of the WOF ministers and ICBM supporters believe a Christian can be (1) demon possessed and or (2) demon oppressed. They agree that by the laying-on-of-hands demons are to be cast out. They agree you have to fast for some demons to leave a person. Just about everyone who does not agree with them and their doctrines has a religious spirit.

Infamous Quotes From Three of the Biggies

Word of Faith Sayings

Compiled by Jim Fox (Last updated 23/6/92)

This is a synopsis of statements made by the major Word Faith teachers; after each statement, you will find the source material listed so that you can read or hear the exact quote for yourself. It has been my intent to paraphrase these teachers as exactly as possible for the purpose of allowing you, the reader, to get an overview if you will of the Word Faith movement.

#### KENNETH COPELAND

Faith is a Force (Spirit, Soul and Body, #01-0601, Tape #1)

God did not create the world out of nothing, He used the Force of His Faith. (Spirit, Soul and Body, #01-0601, Tape #1)

Earth is a copy of the mother planet (Heaven).

God's reason for creating Adam was to reproduce Himself. (Following the Faith of Abraham, Tape #01-3001)

Adam was not subordinate to God. (Following the Faith of Abraham, Tape #01-3001)

God and Adam looked exactly alike. (The Authority of the Believer IV; Tape #01-0304)

Jesus and Adam looked, acted, and sounded exactly alike.

All of God's attributes and abilities were invested in Adam. (The Authority of the Believer IV; Tape #01-0304)

Adam was God manifested in the flesh.

(Following the Faith of Abraham, Tape #01-3001)

God made Adam the God of the earth.

(Following the Faith of Abraham; Tape #01-3001)

When Adam originally sinned he gave his god nature to Satan.

God could not intervene since He had made Adam the god of the earth. God was left on the outside looking in. (Following the Faith of Abraham; Tape #01-3001)

God is approximately 6'2" to 6'3" tall. (Spirit, Soul, and Body; Tape #01-0601)

God weighs approximately 200 lbs. Spirit, Soul, and Body; Tape #01-0601)

Jesus existed only as an image in the heart of God, until such time as the prophets of the Old

Testament could positively confess Jesus into existence through their constant prophecies. (The Power of the Tongue, pp.8-10)

Jesus death on the cross was not enough to save us. (What Happened From the Cross to the Throne, Tape #00-0303)

Jesus took on the nature of Satan when He was on the cross. (Jesus lost His divine nature). (What Happened From the Cross to the Throne, Tape #00-0303)

Jesus was dragged down into the bowels of Hell where He was beaten and bruised by Satan and his demons until Jesus could finally fight His way out of Hell 3 days later. (Believer's Voice of Victory, September 11, 1991)

(Classic Redemption, p.13)

Jesus was reborn in the pits of hell. What Happened From the Cross to the Throne, Tape #00-0303)

Jesus is in a higher position now than before He died on the cross. (What Happened From the Cross to the Throne, Tape #00-0303)

The biggest failure in the whole Bible is God. (Praise-a-thon, (TBN) recorded 1988

**BENNY HINN**

God has 9 parts (tn-theistic). 1. A. God has a body, soul and spirit. 2. B. Jesus has a body, soul and spirit. 3. C. Holy Spirit has a body, soul and spirit. (Benny Hinn broadcast, recorded 10/~3/90)

Christians are little messiahs.

Christians are little gods. (Praise-a-thon (TBN), recorded November 1990) (Our position in Christ, Tape #A03 1190-1)

Jesus at His death became one with Satan. (Benny Hinn broadcast, recorded 12/15/90)

Poverty comes from Hell.

Prosperity comes from Heaven.

Adam had complete dominion over the earth and all it contains.

4. A. Adam could fly like a bird.

5. B. Adam could swim underwater and breathe like a fish.

Adam went to the moon.

Adam walked on water.

Adam was a super being, He was the first superman that lived.

Adam had dominion over the sun, moon & stars.

Christians do not have Christ in their hearts.

Sow a big seed, when you confess it, you are activating the (Praise-a-thon (TBN), recorded November 1990)

When you don't give money, it shows that you have the devil's nature. (Praise-a-thon (TBN), recorded 4/21/91)

Wants to use Holy Ghost machine gun to kill Heresy Hunters. (Praise-a-thon (TBN), 11/8/90)

**PAUL CROUCH**

Christians are little gods. (Praise the Lord (TBN), recorded 7/7/86)

God draws no distinction between Himself and us.

God opens up the union of the very godhead (Trinity), and brings us into it. (Praise-a-thon (TBN), November 1990)

Paul Crouch will shoot heresy hunters (theology) if God doesn't (Praise-a-thon (TBN), 4/2/91)

Heresy hunters (theology) are to go to Hell. (Praise-a-thon (TBN), 4/2/91)

Does not want to see the ugly faces of heresy hunters (theology). (Praise-a-thon (TBN), 4/2/91)

I cannot emphasize strongly enough the need to read "A Different Gospel" by D.R. McConnell or "The New Charismatics" by Moriarty. Both of these books go into great detail about what the WOF ministers and followers believe.

## More Rampant Anti-intellectualism from the Anointed Gnostic - Mr. Jesse Duplantis

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Naturally, the devil tried to shut down this living, breathing Church. He wanted dry bones. He began to take the freshness of God and put Ecclesiastical dogma on it. He used theological Understanding to water down the fire. (Jesse Duplantis, Voice of the Covenant magazine, November 1997, p. 7)

Here is a prime example of the disdain that many charismatic leaders have for classical Biblical education. The devil tried to shut down the Church. How? Satan took the freshness of God and put Ecclesiastical dogma on it.

What is Ecclesiastical dogma? Ecclesiastical comes from a Greek word *ekklhsia* meaning assembly or Church. Dogma comes to us from another Greek term *dokew*, to think, to seem good. Dogma is used several times in the New Testament. In Col. 2:14 it refers to the decrees laid down by the apostles. Ecclesiastical dogma refers to the authoritative decrees given by the apostles, the early Church fathers and others.

Does Jesse Duplantis really want people to believe that Satan used the apostles and the other founding fathers of the Church to take away the freshness of God? For what purpose? Why would men (who in many cases were put to death for their unrelenting faith in Christ) want to put out the freshness of God (whatever that is)? Jesse does not explain why, he simply lays the charge out there for the readers. Then he goes on to state that Satan used Theological understanding to put out the fire of God in the Church. Is that so? Can he cite any specific examples? Upon what does he base these statements?

Somehow in the minds of most charismatic people a Biblical education is a hindrance to being used by God to His glory. The years of study and training in the areas of hermeneutics, systematic theology, Biblical counseling, and the original languages is detrimental to the work of God. In fact, Satan uses these very tools to put out the fire of God!

Most theologians don't fasten their eyes on Jesus. They fasten their eyes on the Greek and the Hebrew. There's nothing wrong with Greek and Hebrew. There's nothing wrong with study. But why should we study? To know more about Jesus. A lot of people get so involved in study that they take God out and deal with mere words. (Ibid.p. 7)

Most means the majority. I would not say that Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, or Jonathan Edwards (to name a few), did not fasten their eyes on Jesus. In fact, I know of very few theologians who did not fasten their gaze upon the Master. Again, Jesse makes a sweeping statement without citing one example.

I am glad Jesse thinks there is nothing wrong with studying Greek and Hebrew. He would find out how wonderful it is if he would take a class in it himself, something he has never done. Actually, Jesse has no formal Bible training whatsoever.

How does Mr. Duplantis expect anyone to know Jesus apart from His Word? The only accurate objective truth we have about the Lord Jesus Christ is contained in the Bible. The more in depth one studies the Bible the more they can truly appreciate Jesus. Obviously one does not have to know Hebrew or Greek to have a vibrant relationship with the Lord. . .but it does not hurt! Even if I was not called to the ministry I would still take the time to learn Greek if given the opportunity. Why? Simply because by knowing the original language I am not at the mercy of the translator(s).

It is the Biblically literate person who is a threat to the Jesse Duplantis's of the world. It is those who do know the languages, who do possess the skills in hermeneutics that can defend true Christian doctrine that give these preachers problems. Let me cite a few statements Jesse makes in the beginning of his article:

He begins by relating the account of Jesus reading from Luke 4:18 and from this text he makes the following comments (all taken from The Nov. 1997 Voice of the Covenant magazine p.5):

The very first thing on Jesus' agenda was to get rid of poverty!

Would you like to know why some people, including ministries, never get out of poverty? It's not because they aren't smart. It's not because they don't have windows of opportunity. It's because they're not anointed. If you're not anointed, poverty will follow you all the days of your life.

His first objective was to get rid of poverty.

Obviously, He considers poverty a worse problem than blind eyes.

I think I can rest my case on the need to have a solid Biblical education, especially if you are going to teach 1,000's of people! If getting rid of poverty was the first thing on Jesus' agenda then I must tell you He failed miserably! Jesus never said that was His mission. He never taught on how to get out of poverty. He did not give any keys or steps on financial freedom (like our Word of Faith ministers do). Let's consider some lexical studies on the word Jesus used in Luke 4:18.

Luke 4:18: pneuma kurivou ejp! ejme; ou| ei{neken e[crisen me eujaggelivsasqai ptwcoi', ajpevstalten me, khruvxai ajcmalwvtoi" a[fsin kai; tufloi" ajnavbleyin, ajpostei'lai teqrausmevnou" ejn ajfevsei,

Strong's Concordances Concordance:

4434 ptochos { pto-khos=} from ptosso, to crouch, akin to 4422 and the alternate of 4098; TDNT - 6:885,969; adj AV - poor 30, beggar 2, poor man 1, beggarly 1; 34.

Vine's Expository Dictionary:

1.ptomchos (ptwcoy), (4434)), for which see Beg, B, has the broad sense of Apoor, (a) literally, e.g., Matt. 11:5; 26:9, 11; Luke 21:3 (with stress on the word, >a conspicuously poor widow=); John 12:5, 6, 8; 13:29; Jas. 2:2, 3, 6; the poor are constantly the subjects of injunctions to assist them, Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 14:13, 21; 18:22; Rom. 15:26; Gal. 2:10; (b) metaphorically, Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20; Rev. 3:17.

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament:

In 4:18 preaching the gospel to the poor has thematic significance. In 14:21, which refers to the eschatological banquet, the poor are invited along with the maimed and blind, and in 14:13 it is these that one should invite to a feast. In 16:19ff. the poor man is the recipient of divine grace and the rich man, by his self-centeredness, is ineluctably alienated from God. In contrast, the rich Zacchaeus, when he meets Jesus, displays extraordinary generosity to the poor. Other passages (6:24-25; 8:14; 12:15ff.; 14:33; 16:10ff.) stress the perils of wealth. There is no primary interest here in the poor as such, but in the salvation of the rich, whom their wealth rivets to this world.

The word *ptochos* does not mean poverty, it refers to the poor as a class of people. The text does not say or imply in the slightest that Jesus came to "get rid of poverty." Jesus came to preach to the poor people, not to get rid of poverty. If Jesse did a little more study he would have seen this and hopefully not made such foolish statements.

Jesus said *Athe poor you have with you always@* (Matt. 26:11). The apostle James has the gall to say that the *Apoor are rich in faith@* (James 2:5). In Rev. 2:9 the Master reminds His people that He *Aknows their poverty@* (the same Greek root as in Luke 4:18) but reminds them that they are truly rich.

Jesse goes on to say that the reason there are poor ministers and ministries is because they are not "anointed." Somehow Jesse's concept of the "anointing" is tied into financial wealth. This too is false. To him, financial prosperity is a sign of divine favor which means that people like Robert Tilton, Oral & Richard Roberts, Peter Popoff, and W.V. Grant must be tremendously "anointed." It would also mean that Mr. Moon leader of the Unification Church cult, the President of the Mormon Church, Elizabeth Claire Prophet are also "anointed" because of their wealth. All of these people I have mentioned have gained their wealth from the pockets of their followers . . . and not God. It is also interesting to note that almost all of the books and teachings on financial prosperity have their origin in America. You will not find these type of books coming from Haiti, India, or other destitute places. However, you will find vibrant congregations filled with people who have placed their total trust in the Jesus of the Bible . . . eternal riches indeed.

Mr. Duplantis has another version of Jesus and of wealth than that presented in the Bible. I have cited just a few examples of what was on Jesus' list of priorities.

Jesus came to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Jesus came to do good and heal those oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38).

He came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:19).

He came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17).

Jesus never said "I have come to destroy poverty." Jesus never uttered one promise that He would make us rich materially. I wish Jesse would take time and truly study the Bible and get to really know the Jesus of the Bible, instead of the Americanized Jesus of the western world.

## Not "New Wine" - Hard Liquor!

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(Eyewitness Account of Spiritual Drunkenness in Toronto 1997)

My wife and I celebrated our 14 years of blissful marriage and our anniversary coincided with a week of "soaking" at "Joel's Bar" at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (TACF).

People came to get spiritually drunk and drunk they got. We witnessed women crawling out of the sanctuary on their hands and knees because they were too "drunk" to walk upright. Another woman was dragging herself along to the door by her arms because her legs seemed paralyzed (the image was one of a wheelchair bound person who had fallen out of their wheelchair and were attempting to crawl to it).

We saw people spontaneously fall down, the usual uncontrolled laughing, people roaring, making chicken sounds, loud groans and howls. Young children were manifesting all the natural signs of being drunk. 2 pre-teens were brought up on the platform to share the vision they were having of Jesus standing on the stage with John and Carol Arnott. In short the place was "live."

The speaker for the evening (8-1-97) was John Scotland, who has been drunk for the last 3 years non-stop (this is his testimony). He got up to minister (3,000 people were in attendance) and staggered around the stage, told jokes, mumbled, slurred his words and then worked his way up to reading the Bible ("for those of you who are into those kind of things"). When he tried to read the Scripture he would stop and make cackling chicken sounds (I am serious, we ordered the video of this man). In fact, each time he tried to read the Bible strange sounds proceeded from his mouth, which the audience loved. To me this was nothing more than demonic forces making a mockery of the ministry, the Bible, and a person created in the image of God.

When it became minister time I tried to video tape John and Carol Arnott laying hands on folks, I got a few minutes, then I was told to stop. Later on I began to video tape again and got a record of many strange manifestations, which we will make available to people in a few weeks.

The reason they stopped me was simple - they want to control how people see these things. They know if they can present some texts (out of context), have some background music, get some testimonies then it will appear normal. When one simply tapes it in the raw (like it happens) it comes across in a manner they do not like. Nonetheless I think I got some choice shots.

They presented this as a week of getting spiritually drunk and at the bottom on this page I have a link to a teaching regarding this aberration.

Bottom line: We visited TACF. 2 years ago, and now things have gone from bad to worse. There is far less reverence for God than earlier. During Bible reading (what little there was) people walked, talked, bought and sold books, tapes, eat food, etc. The same went on during prayer from the pulpit by the leaders! There was no reverence for God or His Word. Also, the manifestations have increased by a great degree.

Lastly, we noted they kept speaking of this great "baptism of love" how this revival had increased their passion for Jesus and people. . .but they continually spoke harshly of anyone who did not agree with them. I am e-mailing John Arnott about this obvious hypocrisy. They speak of love and yet run down everyone who questions them!

We were very grieved by what we saw and we will go into more detail on a video we are putting together. Do not think this thing is dying down, it is not. They have 4,500 registered for their October "Catch the Fire" conference. Pray like never before.

## The "River" Grand Rapids AOG

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This weekend my wife, daughter, and I went up to Grand Rapids Michigan. We went for several reasons (1) to talk to some of the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary, (2) to go to some extremely good Christian bookstores, and (3) to visit the Grand Rapids Assembly of God.

We had called ahead and were told that every Friday was "revival" night beginning at 7:00 p.m. So we drove out to the church and were astounded by the size of the building. This is the largest Assembly of God building I have ever seen. Finally after some direction we walked to the sanctuary and entered into a service in progress.

The sanctuary seated (my estimate) at least 4 to 5 thousand people and that evening there were possibly around 2,500+. People were singing as we entered in, the usual songs with themes of (1) power, (2) anointing, (3) dominion, and (4) revival.

During the singing my wife took note and pointed out several women who were in the midst of some serious spasms, jerks, and shakes. I watched these young girls (mid-teens) for the next 2 hours. They did not stop, even when they walked to the rest room. As they walked they seemed to be "hit" by a force which cause them to bend at the waist at about a 45 degree angle.

An interesting coincidence: I prayed "Lord God do not allow these Your people to be deceived, let them only have what is truly from Your hand." Immediately after I had mouthed that prayer their Pastor stood up and announced "we have not been able to break through." and called for the "intercessors" to come to altar. naturally, these young girls came up front, bobbing & weaving all the way. Then the Pastor made an astonishing statement, he said, "I don't want you to pray for souls, intercede for yourselves." Why I found (and find) that astounding is that this was a "revival" meeting, i.e. a meeting in which one hopes for the Lord to convict sinners and save them by His grace. So why not pray for "souls," i.e. lost people?

Well, after some moaning and groaning at the altar we began to sing some more rousing songs of victory and dominion. Then the guest speaker came foreword. He was a secular drummer who got saved and now goes around presenting something called "drums of fire." I did not get his name (sorry). He then told of us how God had healed and delivered folks via his drum solos! So he testified of the great RIVER he is now a part of and how God is doing the same things all over the earth. Then he played his "drums of fire" solo. Which was as fine a piece of drumming as I have heard, outside of Ina-Godda-Divita by Iron Butterfly :)

No one seemed to get healed, certainly the girls still were afflicted by spasms. Nor was anyone delivered. It was 9:00 p.m. and we wanted to get back to the hot tub, so my little tribe, quietly slipped back out of the flow, back to show and reality and back to the Holidome!

There WAS NO PREACHING FROM THE BIBLE AT ALL. Possibly 2 texts quoted during praise. I do not understand how they expect people to get truly converted apart from a clear presentation of the Gospel. People who respond to some sort of emotional call without any Gospel message

presented makes me wonder if they got saved at all.

What we gained:

1) It seems as though it is mostly women/girls who experience the spasms, jerkings, and modified duck-walking. I did not see any men doing these things. I wonder why?

2) None of the platform folks (leaders) showed any manifestations at evening, I have seen some "slain" on video, nothing too wild however. I wonder why?

3) Grand Rapids Assembly of God got this way due to a DIRECT IMPARTATION from Pensacola Assembly of God. It WAS NOT a sovereign move of God.

4) This Grand Rapids church is now considered the "regional-center" for revival according to the latest Pentecostal Evangel magazine we obtained there.

5) We will go back without our daughter next time. We will be identified as ministers and I hope to speak personally with folks who exhibit various manifestations and get some data from them.

This deception is spreading folks, big time. Please read the "Kundalini Connection" if you have not had a chance. I am very concerned for our brothers and sisters who are being massively duped by this clever counterfeit.

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