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# JOURNAL

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PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH



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## The Wetter the Better

### The “Wash” on Baptismal Regeneration

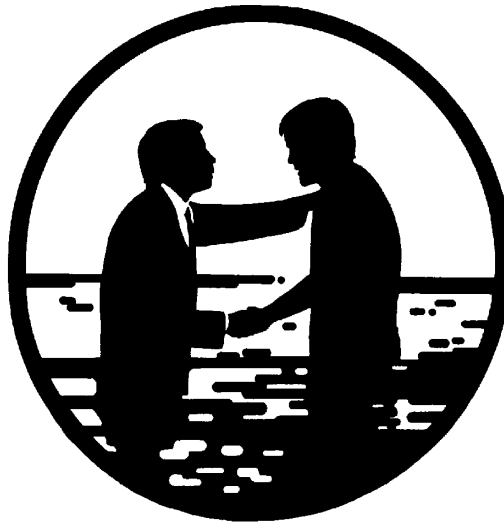
by Edgar L. Havaich

Few areas of church doctrine are as controversial as the role of water baptism in the life of the believer. Almost every aspect of it has been disputed by someone.

Even the very condition of the water into which a person is baptized has been debated. Should the water be running, such as in a stream or river, or is it permissible to baptize in standing water? Is the significance of water baptism increased or diminished by either performing it indoors or out? At what age is it appropriate? What should be said during the ceremony?

Some view baptism as an option, not a requirement. For some, it has become but a quaint ceremony.

But no baptismal controversy can match that over its role in salvation. The term that is usually applied to those who hold that baptism is essential for salvation is “baptismal regeneration.” They believe that a person is regenerated, made alive, born again, as a result of being baptized in water. However, there are those who will point out that even though water baptism is essential to salvation, the water itself saves no one. It is obedience to God’s command.



Discussion of water baptism usually results in the baptismal salvationist accusing his opponent of minimizing the act of baptism. Adherents challenge others to find scripture that says any one was saved by faith alone. Carl Brumback in his book, **God in Three Persons**, writes:

“We believe that baptism is not so much as some would make it, nor so little as others would make it. Instituted by the Lord, commanded to be administered and to be experienced, baptism is a sacred act which speaks

of our identification in His death, burial and resurrection. It should never be entered into lightly, nor ever esteemed as less than the Word presents it. Jesus Himself defined its purpose, not only for Himself but for us as well — “to fulfill all righteousness.” It is a Christian’s duty to be baptized. However, it is more; it is his joyous privilege to testify publicly by baptism that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. Nevertheless, we cannot attach the same importance to water baptism that some legalists, such as the Oneness advocates, do. We do not attempt to exclude from the Kingdom all those who have not been baptized in the precise manner which we deem scriptural. The pages of Church history are filled with the names of men whose baptism in water we may regard as incorrect, but whose lives and ministries testify to an unquestionable experience with God” (pg. 165).

The importance of baptism is also emphasized by late evangelist and pastor, John R. Rice:

“There have been two great errors in regard to baptism. Some people teach that one cannot be saved without baptism. That is a great mistake as we

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# EDITORIALS

## A NEW ROAD FOR BENNY HINN?

Evangelist Benny Hinn closed the May 30 sermon at his Orlando Christian Center by saying he was about to take his ministry and congregation "on a new road."

"Lately there's been a lot of questions about things I've taught, things I've said. Now let me also clear this out," he said. "There's been certain teachings that I taught in OCC years ago I no longer believe."

"Unless changes are made now, this ministry won't last another three years," he said. "I'm telling you what the Holy Ghost told me. Unless we make changes now, not only with what I teach, but with what we do with what God has given us."

Hinn has made some changes. He's ditched the soufflé hairdo, the Mercedes-Benz, the Rolex watch and other pricey jewelry.

Then he offered clarifications of his aberrational or heretical teachings on the Trinity, faith, healing and prosperity. He also recanted his belief that Christ had to die spiritually after dying physically on the cross at Calvary.

"Some of my friends, whom I still respect, I'm beginning to disagree with," he said.

Some have reacted positively to Hinn's recantations. Ole Anthony, of the Dallas-based Trinity Foundation, who worked with ABC's 1991 "PrimeTime Live" investigation of Robert Tilton, has applauded Hinn, saying that because of Hinn's "openness and willingness to correct mistakes ... [he] can become a model of accountability."

Some have lauded these changes as repentance, a theme Hinn has stressed at recent "miracle crusades." The media have taken notice. The Chicago Tribune's June 27 edition ran a story with a headline that read, "Turnabout: Benny Hinn repents." Charisma magazine's August issue carried a seven-page interview with Hinn in which he responded to his critics and tried to explain the changes in his ministry and teachings.

One has to wonder if those applauding Hinn's repentance are familiar with similar turnabouts the evangelist-healer has announced in the past. A careful examination of what he has said recently and in the past could prompt skepticism.

## DISSECTING HINN'S "REPENTANCE" SERMON

Hinn's May 30 sermon easily could be summarized: "I used to believe that. I used to teach that. I no longer believe that. I no longer will teach that."

By Hinn's own standard of Godly repentance, he has missed the mark. In a 1987 sermon, Hinn said: "Do you know what repentance means? Godly sorrow. Most of us don't even know what repentance means. We think, 'I'm sorry. Forgive me. Amen. Go mess up again tomorrow.' That's not repentance! Repentance is a completely changed life. It's when you break because of sin, Godly sorrow takes hold of you and you say, 'Never again.' That's repentance."

In the Charisma interview, Hinn says that while he formerly taught things such as believers being "little gods"

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## JURY STILL OUT ON MARIAN APPARITIONS

A Denver area woman's claims of being visited by the Virgin Mary have been played down after an evaluation by the local archdiocese.

The evaluation by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver found neither proof nor confirmation of the apparitions.

The evaluation is described as an "interim report" by Archbishop J. Francis Stafford. It was made in response to numerous requests for information on the matter. Stafford's statement said that the five-member commission, appointed in 1991, "is proceeding according to established ecclesiastical norms." He added that, "The situation will continue to be evaluated with prayerful vigilance."

In autumn 1991, Theresa Lopez, 32, reported seeing the Virgin Mary. She said the visits came as frequently as three times a week at her home, near the Mother Cabrini Shrine, or at church. (See further, *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2.)

Lopez said Mary called for global peace, a return to the church, spiritual renewal and openness to conversion.

A Religious News Service report said that Stafford has asked Catholics not to visit the Mother Cabrini Shrine west of Denver. However, the faithful continue to flock to the area.

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the former Yugoslavia have been discredited by a bishop there. The visitations, however, have not as yet been validated or condemned by the Vatican. (See further, *The Quarterly Journal* Vol. 10, No. 3.)

—AMG

## FORMER CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS VOICE CONCERNS

Former followers of the Christian Scientist sect are seeking outside legal aid in an effort to emphasize a desire to effect changes at Christian Science headquarters.

Dissidents are focusing on two major concerns. First, state and federal law enforcement agencies have been asked to examine the sect's multimillion-dollar losses on its cable television, newsmagazine and other commercial ventures along with suspected private use of retirement and endowment assets.

A second concern is opposition to the continued publication of Bliss Knapp's **The Destiny of The Mother Church**. The author's relatives left the church a \$100 million endowment on the condition it publish the book about Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. The dissidents said they will go to court to inhibit any agreement to continue to market the work.

In addition, the U.S. Postal Service is investigating the church. According to a Religious News Service report, the Postal Service continues to gather information on alleged use of non-profit mailing rates "outside the normal course of business."

Postal inspector Timothy J. Mahoney stated: "Part of the reason I initially investigated this was that if there was some wrongdoing, the Postal Service could be the victim. ... My job assignment as postal inspector includes investigating violations of various statutes, including the mail fraud statute."

Church officials have responded to the various allegations as "inaccurate and incomplete," and implied that the inquiry had been completed a year ago.

—AMG

## SOUTHERN BAPTISTS DEBATE FREEMASONRY

In an unprecedented move, the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston voted to accept a report on Freemasonry presented by the Home Mission Board. The report was published by the board, which had received the assignment during the 1992 convention.

In January, controversy erupted in which some said the report had been "whitewashed." Dr. Gary Leazer, director of the board's Interfaith Witness Department, consulted Masonic leaders on his findings, letting them have input on the report.

In a "leaked" letter between Leazer and Masonic representative T.L. Talbert, Leazer wrote: "I appreciate all of the help [in my research] that Masons have been to me." This letter was seen by some as the wolves helping to design the henhouse. *The Christian News*, an independent publication by Missouri Synod Lutherans, reported the story and reprinted Leazer's letter in full. The publicity led Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, to remove Leazer from the project.

The report was completed and prepared for presentation to the Houston convention. The "Scottish Rite Journal," a Masonic publication, devoted an entire issue to the controversy. The magazine encouraged Southern Baptist Masons to attend the convention to vote on the report.

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# TRITHEISM

## Revelation Knowledge or Revival of an Old Heresy?

by G. Richard Fisher  
and Paul R. Blizard

Heresies are like snakes. They hibernate, shed their skin, come out of hiding and bite someone.

Tritheism, dormant for centuries, appears to be the latest snake.

Deuteronomy 6:4 declares, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." Calvin Beisner reminds us: "That the New Testament is monotheistic at the core is a fact recognized generally on all sides. The shadow of the Shema, 'Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. 6:4), though never quoted in the New Testament, broods over its pages with all the weight it carried in Old Testament times, being the chief and holiest declaration of the Jewish religion. Such a monotheistic view pervades the whole outlook of Jesus" (**God In Three Persons**, pg. 26).

Belief in one God was the unequivocal commitment of the Old and New Testaments peoples. Consider the strong words of Isaiah 43:10-11, "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior." The concept of many Gods or Polytheism pervaded Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome. God's people had to be on guard lest they be corrupted by pagan systems. (See further, **Baker's Dictionary of Theology**, article, "Gods," pp. 248-252.)

Christians must adhere strictly to the biblical view of God and a biblical understanding of the Trinity lest they distort the Bible's message as to the true nature of God. To separate Father, Son and Holy Spirit into totally

distinct, independent persons lands one into tritheism.

The early Church was not exempt from attempted infiltrations of this unbiblical teaching. Phillip Schaff notes in his **History of the Christian Church**: "The Roman bishop Dionysius (A.D. 262), a Greek by birth, stood nearest the Nicene doctrine. He maintained distinctly, the controversy with Dionysius of Alexandria, at once the unity of essence and the real personal distinction of the three members of the divine triad, and avoided tritheism. ... His view has come down to us in a fragment in Athanasius, where it is said: 'Then I must declare against those who annihilate the most sacred doctrine of the church by dividing and dissolving the unity of God into three powers, separate hypostases, and three deities. This notion (some tritheistic view, not further known to us) is just the opposite of the opinion of Sabellius. For while the latter would introduce the impious doctrine, that the Son is the same as the Father, and the converse, the former teach in some sense three Gods, by dividing the sacred unity into three fully separate hypostases' (Vol. II, pp. 570-571).

One may wonder how false doctrine continues to surface in the Church, which has the Holy Spirit to guide it. Paul warned repeatedly that it would be subject to attack from within, writing: "And that from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after

them" (Acts 20:3 NASB).

One reason false teaching occurs within the church could be a prevailing attitude many have toward formal theological training. Without a sound theology of the nature of God, one is capable of veering off into heretical extremes, distorting the Bible's message and reviving heretical disputes that were settled centuries ago.

Paul wrote to Timothy: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter for it will lead to further ungodliness" (1 Timothy 2:15-16 NASB).

"Diligence" is translated in the King James Version as "study." The word denotes many meanings which can include: to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself, to endeavor, to labor, or to be zealous. The meaning is obvious, time devoted to the preparation for Christian ministry requires work, which takes great effort. Scripture exhorts those who want to be leaders, that great responsibility goes with the calling. James 3:1 states: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment" (NASB). The Bible warns that "teachers" will incur a stricter judgment because of the effect they can have on so many.

Careful, prayerful and "diligent" exegesis is the stock and trade of the true minister of the Gospel. The minister

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# Santería

## African Religion, Roman Catholicism and the Supreme Court

by G. Richard Fisher

The obscure religion of Santeria has received national attention following a June 11 Supreme Court decision to declare protected animal sacrifices for religious and ritualistic purposes.

Cult researcher Gordon Melton lumps Santeria in with Voodoo, however cult members deny the association. Santeria bears some minor similarities to voodoo, the folk religion of Haiti, mostly by virtue of their common African origin. The Santeros' denials help little since, to the casual observer, the two religions appear alike.

### THE SOURCE

Santeria arose from West Africa during the 19th century. Researcher and initiate Migene Gonzales-Wippler writes, "Santeria emerged as a struggle for cultural and ideological survival between the enslaved West African Yoruba people and the Roman Catholic Church in union with the Spanish Empire. Slaves transformed the enforced worship of the Catholic saints into the veiled worship of their spirit ancestors" (**The Santeria Experience**, foreword, pg. 10). So to continue the worship of the spirits they practiced some "holy deception" and gave the ancestral or pagan spirits saints names! While the church thought they were worshipping the Saints they, in fact, knew they were worshipping the god or spirit behind the images.

### THE STATISTICS

This system of religious magic infiltrated the Caribbean via the African slave trade and then spread to major cities in the United States and Canada through the influx of Hispanic immigrants. Santeria is well known in New

York and southern Florida. There are 70,000 devotees in Miami alone. The Supreme Court ruling struck down the sacrifice ban which originated in Hialeah, Fla. Researchers estimate that there are 5 million Santeros in the U.S. (Miami Christian College Clarion, Vol. 1 pg. 2).

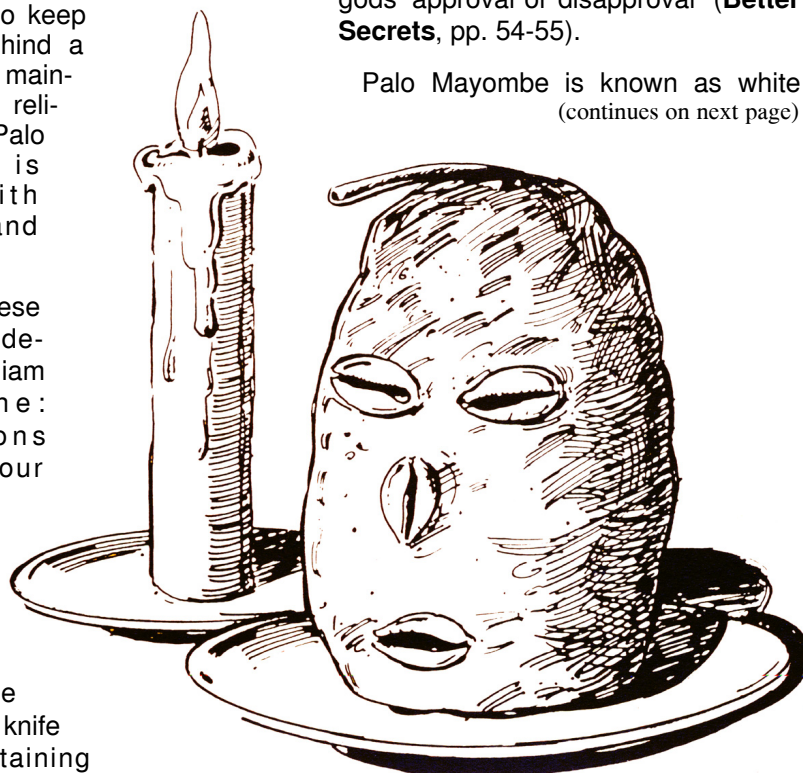
### THE SUBTLETIES

The name Santeria is Spanish for "Saint Worship." The Yoruba tribe of Nigeria mongrelized their pagan worship of spirits and gods with a veneer of Roman Catholicism. The church was fooled and the people were happy. Rather than submit to forced conversion they found a way to keep their gods behind a facade. The mainstream of the religion, called Palo Mayombe, is tinged with paganism and magic rituals.

Some of these rituals are described by William Poundstone: "Small icons represent four gods of African origin: Eleggua, the trickster (a mask); Ogun, the owner of the knife (a pot containing

metal implements); Ochosi, justice (a lyre with spears instead of strings); and Oshu, the Head (a cup with a rooster head, containing beads and powders). The Babalawo and Santeros (priests) bring in four animals for sacrifice. A chicken is decapitated first and its blood is sprinkled on the image of Eleggua. The Babalawo pours honey into the neck opening, and the chicken head is placed next to Eleggua's icon. A rooster is sacrificed to Ogun. A pigeon is next, then a duck. The heads of the larger birds are severed with a knife. The babalawo cuts out the duck's tongue and a piece of vein from its neck and places them in a terrine. He lights a candle and throws the coconut dice to assess the gods' approval or disapproval" (**Better Secrets**, pp. 54-55).

Palo Mayombe is known as white  
(continues on next page)



magic because its followers try to enhance or enrich life. The Santeros report healings through various rituals. The Palo adherents claim that through white magic they break spells and oppose the curses of black magic.

The Santeros are sometime wrongly accused of harming others but the majority are law-abiding (see, **Cults That Kill**, pages 111-112). There are small offshoots, like the Congos, the Cuban Marielitos and the Mexican Brujeria, that are suspected of drug dealing, murder and human sacrifice. These are not to be confused with the mainstream Palo Mayombe.

Mainstream Santeros practice divination with shells or bone fragments and seek to develop a relationship to the gods or spirits (called orishas).

Seeking to intrude into the spirit realm while bypassing the Word of God is called divination. The practice of divination is clearly condemned in Scripture, Deuteronomy 18:9-14 being just one example. Intruding into this forbidden area can open an entrance to the demonic realm and deception by demons. Scripture is clear on this. Prayers to dead family members borders on necromancy, also forbidden by Scripture. The primary way to develop a god/spirit relationship according to Santeria, is to sacrifice an animal. The orishas are believed to partake and feed on the sacrifices and then are more amenable to granting success or wisdom. Birds, chickens and other farm animals are used in the sacrifices.

Since the Santeros sometimes eat the sacrificed animals they claim that they are doing just what the local butcher is doing. They argue that if they can be stopped from this then the government should also close down the local McDonald's.

Up until June 11, the Santeros' major problem was that they did not have licenses to butcher. But the high court's decision did away with that by giving them blanket approval for religious sacrifices. Some law enforcement agencies have mistaken the

sacrifices or sacrificial remains as evidence of direct satanic rituals. While Santeria is "of the devil" and inspired by "principalities and powers" and could be classified as "works of darkness," we cannot confuse it with pure Satanism or its ritual with purely Satanic ritual.

Police experts make the distinction as well. At ritualistic scenes, detectives note carefully the kinds of paraphernalia left behind so as to identify which groups are involved.

The practices of Santeria are not written or codified but passed down through oral tradition and may vary from group to group. Groups can vary in size from a dozen to larger groups of hundreds. There is no central organization and Santeros are very loosely knit. Rituals and ritual paraphernalia vary from group to group. The rites are not strictly secret and there are a number of sources available for research. Their babalawo, or high priest is central to their rituals. He earns large amounts for initiations. It is reported that initiations cost between \$7,000 and \$8,000, although some groups might consider that excessive and in a purist fashion only "charge" a few chickens or some other such token. Internally they are sensitive to the problem that some may seek the priesthood for money alone.

Santeria is fixated on present fortune, health, or success. It has no doctrine of sin, salvation, or a Savior from sin. It is a syncretistic dead end. It offers no eternal life since Christ in it's teachings is just another spirit not the Lord and eternal God/man. It offers a counterfeit "new birth" claiming that an encounter with the spirits in certain rituals can bring inner renewal.

Their gods or spirits are hidden under the facade of Catholic saints such as St. Peter, St. Francis, St. Barbara, St. Anthony, etc. There are also elaborate dances and invitations for the orishas to take possession of the bodies of the dancers. This clearly can be an opening for demon possession. Paraphernalia, such as rosaries, scapulars, statues, and the crucifix are

used along with voodoo dolls, beads, glasses of water, coconuts, candles, dollar bills, herbs, shells, oils, and cards. This is clearly religious syncretism of the most blatant sort.

## THE SUMMARY

Santeros may try to convince others that theirs is a benevolent and helpful religion. They may point to healings, cures and miracles. Astute Christians know that at best it can only provide a temporary panacea for emotional and physical difficulties. It does not address the basic and most profound questions of life like the need of forgiveness and the resolution of guilt. It does not point to Christ and redemption. It does not view the Bible as God's Book and therefore robs it's followers of God's divine counsel. God does not need our animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices were done away in Christ as the book of Hebrews testifies. Jesus is our all perfect sacrifice having died once for all. Jesus is our perfect and only priest.

The dangerous thing is that with the help of the Supreme Court, Santeria may start to be viewed as just another exotic folk religion. Santeria is a strange and deadly brew of paganism, voodoo, Judaism (sacrifices and priesthood) occultism, magic, mysticism and Catholicism. A priest attempts to get information "from the other side" and silently communes with the departed. There is no doubt that Santeria is another tool of Satan. It is deadly, dangerous and eternally damning.

Pastor Mike DeLaTorre, presently Pastor of Goshen Baptist Church in Glendean, Kentucky, was a Santero. He came into the movement at age 6 with his parents and practiced Santeria until age 21. He was helpful in fine tuning the above information. He wanted to go on record regarding his present views: "There is a lot of demonic power in Santeria. It is real scary stuff. It leads to demon possession. It is not group hypnosis. I saw things happen to people that cannot be explained naturally. I was there and individuals were possessed." \*

must also recognize that the Holy Spirit has been working with great thinkers and theologians over the past 1,900 years. Thus, we have available a body of historical systematic theology that is time-tested and reliable. Along with diligent personal Bible study, the minister of the Gospel needs to draw from this wealth of knowledge that has been accumulated over the centuries.

Many so-called "Bible teachers" and popular evangelists have had little or no formal training in historical theology and Church history. It is observed that much of the teachings presented by popular evangelists and teachers have not been properly thought out before being taught. Much of it seems to be off the cuff and is claimed to be "revelation knowledge."

It is also noted that if one listens carefully to those who teach questionable doctrine they will frequently make disparaging remarks against theology, theologians and seminaries as all being things which "hinder the Spirit." In fact these teachers have traded sound methods of acquiring truth about God for mystical revelations that only confuse. This method of ministry truly can open one up to subtle demonic influence, which brings with it false teaching.

Formal seminary training is not an absolute requirement for a Christian minister of the Gospel. Charles Haddon Spurgeon and D.L. Moody are examples of men greatly used of God with no formal seminary training. But one must note that they gave "diligence" to study of the Word and did not neglect the vast wealth of knowledge that exists in great commentaries. They knew that "...in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14b, KJV).

The importance of historical theology is especially true as it relates to the cornerstone of all doctrines: the Trinity. This unique doctrine has been hammered out through Church councils and Church history to the point where

believers can have an adequate understanding of the nature of the Godhead. It truly is beyond our finite understanding but the Holy Spirit has allowed us to formulate it into what we know as the doctrine of the Triune God. Simply put: God is one, one God who has revealed himself in three persons and somehow in the nature of this one God there are three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

To merge Father, Son and Holy Spirit into one being, declaring the other two as just manifestations or appearances of the one being lands one into the other extreme of either dynamic or modalistic Monarchianism. We must struggle with Scripture in trying to understand the true nature of the infinite God. We must acknowledge the Trinity to be a mystery far beyond our comprehension and yet affirm with Louis Berkhof that, "The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons" (**Systematic Theology**, pg. 88).

The concept of the tri-unity of God (missed by Tritheists) is taught without a doubt throughout the Bible. However, Tertullian was the first to use the word "trinity" in an attempt to explain the nature of the Godhead. The Westminster Confession is one of a number of orthodox historical creeds that have tried to formulate the biblical material in precise terse statements. The Westminster Confession addresses the unity of the Godhead when it says: "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit."

In not affirming and emphasizing the one substance, power and eternity, the tritheist subtly lapses into polytheism. Flying in the face of the clear teaching of Scripture regarding the unity of one substance and power the neo tritheists are positing three separate Gods. This goes against more than 1900 years of orthodox teaching as well as all of the orthodox creeds of Church history.

As Loraine Boettner stated in his **Studies in Theology**: "The Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be distinguished, but they cannot be separat-

ed; for they each possess the same identical numerical substance or essence. They do not merely exist alongside of each other, as did Washington, Jefferson and Franklin, but they permeate and interpenetrate each other, are in and through each other" (pg. 109).

## THE REVIVAL OF TRITHEISM

The following information reinforces the premise that ignorance begets ignorance and that through one man's ignorance of biblical theology and Church history many millions have been led astray. It also is interesting to note that those who will be mentioned have had no formal training in classical theology but have frequently made light of formal training of ministers, of seminaries, theological schools and theologians.

One major culprit for this false teaching is Finis Dake, who had no formal training in classical theology. Dake promotes a Process view of God and an unmistakable tritheism in his **Annotated Reference Bible** and his book, **God's Plan for Man**. (See further, *The Quarterly Journal*, Oct.-Dec. 1992, "The Pentecostal Study Bible — Why Hasn't Anyone Said Anything About The Dangers Of The Dake Bible?") One man's error has spread to the point where he has begotten other teachers of error. For example, others like Benny Hinn and Jimmy Swaggart have, at times, parroted Dake's incredible heresies.

Historically, tritheism surfaced in the church off-and-on but was never able to establish a foothold. Berkhof reminds us of the past, "On the other hand there were also some who lost sight of the unity of God to such an extent that they landed into tritheism. Some of the later Monophysites such as John Ascanages and John Philoponus fell into this error. During the Middle Ages the Nominalist, Roscelinus, was accused of the same error."

The big difference now is that "Christian" publishers and "Christian" bookstores are tolerating and promoting it. Reformer John Calvin castigated professing Christians who believed in

tritheism and said it was a “figment of their own brain” (**Institutes of the Christian Religion**, Vol 1, pg. 134). The Reformers were outspoken critics of this old heresy.

It is clear that both Dake and Hinn have taught tritheism. Consider Dake’s words, “God does have a tangible body” (**God’s Plan for Man**, pg. 54). Of the Godhead Dake says, “each person (of the Godhead) has a personal body, soul and spirit as is the case with each man” (ibid.). Then on page 55 he asserts the following: “Common honesty demands that we accept one, two, three separate and distinct persons.” In other words, three Gods. Dake says that the thing which unites the three separate, distinct persons is not essence or power, as Scripture declares and the creeds affirm, but common purpose.

It is also obvious that in the past, when Hinn spoke or wrote on the doctrine of God, he parroted Dake’s errors. In the 1990 edition of **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**, Hinn writes: “Does God have a body? He certainly does” (pg. 84). During a televised sermon, Hinn said: “God the Father, ladies and gentleman, is a person; and He is a triune being by Himself, **separate from the Son and the Holy Ghost**” (Benny Hinn sermon, broadcast on TBN, October 13, 1990. Video tape on file. Emphasis added).

John 4:24 is clear: “God is Spirit.” And the Father is not separate from the Son and the Holy Spirit. Hank Hanegraaff spells out the implications of this kind of nonsense: “The assertion that each member of the Trinity has His own distinct spirit-body implies that there are *three separate and distinct beings*—in other words, *three*

*Gods*. This unbiblical view (tritheism) runs contrary to the whole of Scripture, which affirms *one God revealed in three Persons*” (**Christianity in Crisis**, pg. 124).

Ron Rhodes warns us against the twin errors of tritheism and modalism: “...it is important that we clarify what we do *not* mean by the word *Trinity*. In an attempt to understand God’s triune nature, two errors must be avoided. First, we must not conclude that the Godhead is composed of three separate and distinct individuals such as Peter, James and Paul, each with his own unique characteristics and attributes. Such a concept would lead to what is known as ‘tritheism’ — the belief that there are three Gods rather than three persons within the Godhead. Second, we must not conclude that the Godhead is *one person only* and that the triune aspect of His being is no more than three fields of interest, activities, or modes of manifestation — a view known as ‘modalism’” (**Christ Before the Manger**, pg. 23).

### THE ROOTS OF TRITHEISM

Tritheism is not a biblical concept except as it relates to the polytheism and many gods of the pagan culture surrounding Israel and the Church. One can lean toward tritheism only when there is lack of knowledge or proper teaching in regard to the Trinity. Harold Brown sees as one of the main roots of tritheistic belief a deficient view of the Trinity, “Without a coherent doctrine of the Trinity, the New Testament witness to the activity of God in Christ and in the work of the Holy Spirit will tend to force one either into modalism or a kind of tritheism” (**Heresies**, pg. 154).

Calvin Beisner defines the theological concept of tri-unity, “Here is the primary idea of a ‘tri-unity,’ ‘a Trinity in unity,’ three persons sharing equally in a single substance of deity” (**God In Three Persons**, pg. 24).

Tritheism denies this single substance and teaches, as did the pagans, Romans, Greeks and many modern cults, a form of polytheism or multiple gods. James P. Boyce in his **Abstract of Systematic Theology** sees the issues clearly: “When it is affirmed, therefore, that there is no division of nature, essence or being, all that is meant is simply that there is but one God: that such is the divine nature that it cannot be multiplied, or divided, or distributed, any more than God can be thus divided in His omnipresence with all things. The divine nature is so possessed by each of the persons of the Trinity, that neither has His own separate divine nature, but each subsists in one divine nature, common to the three. Otherwise the three persons would be three gods.”

### WHY REFUTE TRITHEISM?

Imagine that your father was a loved and well-respected minister who had spent his life in service to God and the body of Christ in a local church. You knew him as a loving, compassionate, fair and unselfish person. You have many warm and fond memories of him. Imagine that someone lied about his character, spreading information that was detrimental to his character and memory. You might very well be angry and want to stop the lies.

Christians must be determined to stop the lies being spread about their heavenly Father as well. ★

### BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

(continued from page 1)

will show. But another very great error is to teach that baptism is a matter of no importance and that we should not insist upon any particular manner or teaching about baptism” (**Bible Baptism**, pp. 4-5).

Water baptism is a command of

God. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19, KJV). Taken as a presupposition that because baptism was commanded by the Lord it makes it a requirement for salvation, then consistency would demand that every command of God must be kept, in order to be saved.

Foot washing, communion and other practices could not be ignored.

There is no statement in the Bible which says explicitly that Christians must be baptized to be saved or that people who are not baptized will go to hell. However, there are a number of passages baptismal salvationists use to make their case.

**Mark 16:16:** “He that believeth and

is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

There is an inordinate emphasis on just half of this verse, which refers to two types of people: those that believe and are baptized and those who don't believe. It first must be pointed out that the verse does not say or suggest that if a person is not baptized he is not saved. It is correct to say that the anyone who believes and is baptized is saved. It also is correct to say that anyone who believes without any reference to baptism is also declared by scripture to be saved.

In John 6:37, Jesus says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” This verse and others like it show that faith in Jesus Christ is the condition for salvation that must be met. This is borne out by additional passages in which salvation is declared to those who believe without mention of baptism (John 3:15,16,18,36; 5:24; 6:47; 11:25; 12:46; 20:31; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8,9.). Please note that the passage in Mark is speaking about one who believes and is baptized, and one who believes not. The fate of the unbeliever is mentioned, he is damned, but no mention of the fate of an unbaptized person. This is because condemnation falls on the unbeliever.

**John 3:5:** “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Some have presumed that the use of the word “water” here refers to water baptism. It does not. Equally erroneous is the interpretation that suggests that the water referred to in John 3:5 is that of the natural birth, because at birth “the water breaks.” Thus, it is argued, Jesus is making a contrast between a natural birth and a spiritual birth. This latter understanding, however, is placing a 20th-century colloquialism upon a first-century book.

What “water” then was Jesus speaking of? What “water” is in the historical setting of Jesus’ words? The “water” and “spirit” Jesus would be addressing was that of the new covenant spoken of in Ezekiel 36:25-26: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I

cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (KJV).

Akin to the Ezekiel passage are Paul’s words found in Titus 3:5: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Further, whenever the word water is used in doesn’t always mean literal water. For example in Ephesians 5:26 it says: “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” Here the Word of God is equated to water. Other verses that show it is the Word of God that is the agent of cleansing are James 1:18-21, 1 Peter 1:22,23.

To say that John 3:5 is saying that one must be baptized to be saved would contradict John 20:31, which says “might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name.” It would appear that John is placing the emphasis on believing, not on water baptism.

It is curious why a baptismal salvationist would choose John 3:5. When pressed about the thief on the cross, they reply that he was saved under a different dispensation. If so, then John 3:5 has nothing to do with water baptism, because it was made during the same dispensation the thief was saved under. If “born of water” means water baptism, what purpose would it be to tell someone that they must be born of water if the birth wouldn’t take effect until after the death of Christ?

**Acts 2:38:** This is probably the most commanding verse baptismal salvationists use: “Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’”

Baptismal salvationists frequently single out this verse as though it were the only one which deals with salvation. It is easy to embrace Peter’s message while denying it teaches baptismal regeneration. The following grammatical diagram from the book

**Campbellism — Its History and Heresies**, should be helpful:

“FIRST CLAUSE: ‘ye’ — subject, second person plural number.

‘repent’ — verb, second person plural number, aorist imperative active voice. SECOND CLAUSE: ‘every one of you’ — subject, third person singular number.

‘be baptized’ — verb, third person singular number, aorist passive imperative voice.

‘unto the remission of sins’ — modifying phrase.

THIRD CLAUSE: ‘ye’ — subject, second person plural number.

‘shall receive’ — verb, second person plural number, future, indicative voice.

‘the gift of the Holy Spirit’ — direct object of verb” (pg. 92).

For this verse to teach what baptismal salvationist advocates say it teaches “...the first and second clauses would have to be connected so as to allow ‘for the remission of sins’ to modify both ‘repent’ and ‘be baptized.’ However, this presents the following grammatical problem: In the first clause, the person and number of the verb ‘repent’ do not agree with the verb ‘be baptized’ in the second clause. ‘Repent’ is second person plural number; ‘be baptized’ is third person singular number” (**Acts and Baptismal Remission**, by Bob L. Ross, pg. 47).

Acts 2:38 states that the “gift of the Holy Ghost” follows the remission of sins. It should be noted that in Acts 10:45 Cornelius received the gift of the Holy Ghost before he was water baptized. Yet, according to Acts 2:38, one can’t receive the gift of the Holy Ghost unless his sins are forgiven. This would show that Acts 10 exemplifies that the remission of sins in Acts 2:38 is referring to repentance.

Baptismal salvationists also argue that the word “for” in Acts 2:38 must mean “in order to obtain.” This is not always the case. For example Luke 5:13-14 says, “And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, ‘I will: be thou clean.’ And immediately the leprosy departed from him.”

The leper was immediately healed when Jesus touched him and spoke. Note that Jesus instructed him, "... go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer **for** thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." The leper already had his cleansing. He was told by Jesus to go to the priest and bring an offering "for thy cleansing." Replacing "in order to obtain" in place of the word, "for" would not fit.

Another modern example of this is the commonly used phrase, "take two aspirins **for** a headache." No one would take two aspirins "in order to obtain" a headache. You take two aspirin because you already have a headache. Therefore Christians aren't baptized to be saved but because they already are.

**Acts 22:16:** "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." In this verse, the washing away of thy sins is integrated with "calling on the name of the Lord." This verse says that the individual who calls on the name of the Lord is the one whose sins will be washed away. Paul's conversion is an excellent example. Paul was saved the moment he submitted to the Lord's command: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Baptismal salvationists will not accept this because they say that Saul was told he would be instructed what to do: "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The context does not allow for the interpretation that Paul was going to be given instructions regarding water baptism for salvation. Rather the Lord was going to show him the things he must suffer: "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Paul was already saved at this point. How do we know? Look at Ananias' first words to Saul, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, 'Brother Saul.'" If Saul had to be baptized in order to be saved, then he was not yet Brother Saul. He was still a heathen. Even baptismal salvationists don't call pre-baptized individuals "brother." That is a term reserved for those who have been baptized.

Chapters 9, 22 and 26 of the Book of Acts gives the details of what happened with Saul and Ananias. Acts

9:17 tells why Ananias was sent to Saul. Ananias said, "...Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." The reason Ananias was sent was so Paul would receive his eyesight, being filled with the Holy Ghost. There is no reference that suggests that Ananias was sent to get him saved. Jesus never even mentioned Saul's salvation when he sent him Ananias.

**Romans 6:3:** "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

To understand this verse one needs to look closely at the words, "like" and "likeness." It is clear by the use of these words that a symbolic, not a literal, interpretation is implied. Sometimes people say: "This is like that." However, they aren't suggesting that they are the same thing. Likewise baptism is like the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It identifies believers with his death, but it is not His death or His burial or His resurrection. It is a likeness. When Christians are baptized, they symbolically identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

**Galatians 3:27:** "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Not every baptism addressed in Scripture is a water baptism! This is the case in Galatians 3:27.

The question begging for an answer is how then do Christians get "baptized into Christ?" One need only look to I Corinthians 12:13 for the answer. It states: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." This verse does not give any indication at all that it is "by water" that Christians are "baptized into one body," but rather it is "by one Spirit."

Ephesians 4:5, which also refers to the "one baptism," is related to I Corinthians 12:13, and again there is no connection with water baptism. Ephesians 4:5 is speaking about "baptism" into the body of Christ. This happens when a person "...shalt confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in his heart that God hath raised Jesus Christ from the dead." The end result of this confession is salvation. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). This occurs the moment a person places all of his trust in Jesus for his salvation.

**I Peter 3:21:** "...eight souls were saved by water. The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Baptismal salvationists often accentuate three little words, "saved by water," and isolate them. The context reveals that there were eight souls "saved" in Noah's ark. The ark has long been an illustration of Christ. This picture is showing that anyone who is in Christ is saved.

Taking the baptismal salvationist argument to its logical extreme, then the only people who come into contact with water drown. Other translations show that the eight were saved through water. **Strong's Greek and Hebrew Lexicon** renders the Greek word **dia** translated "by" in the KJV to also mean "through." The **Lexicon** defines **dia** as "a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act."

Then what does water baptism save us from? The context indicates that it saves believers from a bad conscience toward God. The word "saved" does not always mean salvation of one's soul. An example of this is James 5:15 where "the prayer of faith" shall "save" the sick. I Peter 3:21 is similar. Noah and his family were in the ark and they were dry. Those outside the ark got wet and perished. Being in Christ, not water baptism, saves the soul. \*

and Christ's spiritual death, he says "I never taught heresy."

No responsible orthodox Christian teacher subscribes to either of those doctrines. To call believers "little gods" — asking his congregation to repeat after him: "I am a God-man" — is to discount the uniqueness of Christ's incarnation. To teach that Christ didn't finish man's redemption on the cross attacks the heart of the Christian message.

Hinn tries to pass off another heresy of his as a joke. Hinn told Charisma:

"In Finis Dake's book **God's Plan for Man**, he teaches that each member of the Trinity has his own spirit, soul and body. One Sunday when I was speaking on the Trinity, I repeated that teaching. As soon as I did, I could feel tension in the congregation because people sense when you say things that aren't right. So I tried to clear the air. Jokingly, I said, 'There must be nine of them.' Well, the people laughed and I thought, Boy that was a dumb thing to say. Then I forgot about it. The next Sunday, I apologized to my congregation for saying such a thing. I told them it wasn't right for me to teach this nor was it right to joke about it. The people acted like they didn't even remember it. They had dismissed it because they know me."

Hinn's recollection of the sermon differs from what is on tape:

"I feel revelation knowledge already coming on me. ... God the Father is a person, God the Son is a person, God the Holy Ghost is a person, but each of them is a triune being by himself. If I can shock you and maybe I should, there are nine of them. ... God the Father is a person with his own personal spirit, with his own personal soul and his own personal spirit body. You say, 'I never heard that.' Well, do you think you're in this church to hear things you've heard for the past 50 years? You can't argue with the Word, can you? It's all in the Word."

The videotape records no laughter from the audience.

The videotape of the following week's broadcast sermon contains no retraction or apology, although it does include the infamous "I am a God-man" chant-along.

If Christians are to forgive Hinn's heresy, he needs to report exactly what he said, admit what was heresy, take full responsibility, and exhibit Godly repentance from his ad lib theology.

### BIOGRAPHICAL PROBLEMS

Once Hinn has come clean on his doctrine, he needs to own up to the falsehoods in his biography.

PFO has in previous newsletter issues disproved claims

that Hinn's father was mayor of Jaffa, Israel, that he was divinely healed of stuttering at age 21 and that he once preached at an all-Catholic girls' school in Jerusalem resulting in the conversion of the entire student body and faculty.

PFO has examined other of Hinn's biographical anecdotes, including his own conversion story, and found several inconsistencies and contradictions.

Hinn's response to each of these challenges has been to backtrack, blame others for errors, or say he has evidence supporting the claims but not produce it on request. In doing so, Hinn often has heaped one falsehood upon another.

An example is the claim regarding his father being a mayor. It is recorded in his first two best-selling books, on an audiocassette version of his testimony and during an interview with a newspaper reporter. He says, "My father was the mayor of Jaffa during my childhood."

Faced with PFO's first challenge, Hinn first said his father was the "unofficial mayor" of Jaffa. Then he blamed his publisher, Thomas Nelson, for inserting the word "mayor" into his two books.

The original manuscript copy of **Good Morning, Holy Spirit** said, "My father was the Mayor of Jaffa during my upbringing." The sentence was published: "My father was the mayor of Jaffa during my childhood."

PFO also knows that Hinn was making this claim as early as 1987, three years before publication of **Good Morning, Holy Spirit**.

PFO research showed that Hinn's father was neither a mayor in office nor function. Hinn's ministry produced two Israeli documents in an attempt to prove the claim. Upon translation from the Hebrew, they were found simply to be copies of Costandi Hinn's Tel Aviv/Jaffa work permits.

Repeated requests to Hinn's church, publisher, ministry and Charisma magazine for documentation of the claims either have gone unanswered or have been answered unsatisfactorily.

Hinn told Charisma:

"On a recent trip to Israel, we videotaped an interview with Dany Avrahami, the director of the Jaffa municipality, who worked with my dad. We asked him bluntly, 'Was my father mayor? Did he do the work of the mayor?' He answered that, though my father did not have the title of mayor, 'his function was like a mayor of Jaffa.' He even provided me with documentation."

Both Charisma and OCC have refused to let PFO view the videotaped interview. George Parsons, OCC spokesman, told PFO over the phone that documenting the claim was "not important."

So, PFO contacted the Office of Mayor of Tel Aviv/Jaffa

and learned that: Dany Avrahami is no official, but part of a team or committee that oversees “Southern Villages” (cities). And this shared responsibility is considered low-level.

The Jerusalem Post also responded to a PFO inquiry for information on Dany Avrahami with: “Unfortunately after searching in our Archives we were unable to find any articles written on Dany Avrahami. We tried various spelling possibilities, searched in pasted copies of old archives material as well as our database, all to no avail.”

Hinn also has tried to sidestep examination of his claim that he was divinely healed of stuttering as a young man. He has said or written the following things about his condition:

“I was stricken in early childhood by a severe stutter that made oral communication unbelievably difficult, almost impossible.”

“Benny Hinn had stuttered all his life.”

“Now when I grew up, I stuttered so bad that nobody would talk with me. Because when they did, they could not make out what I was saying.”

“If I’d tried to speak, words just didn’t come out.”

“For twenty-one years of my life, for twenty-one years of my life, I stuttered. For twenty-one years of my life, I couldn’t talk.”

During the Oct. 23, 1992, broadcast of the Trinity Broadcasting Network’s “Praise The Lord” show, Hinn said: “And then people begin to say things that aren’t true, it must be addressed and we need to come and say, ‘That’s not true.’ ... One of them [PFO] said, ‘Well, he never did stutter.’ I had to produce documents to show that I did.”

PFO never questioned Hinn’s shyness or reticence as a child, only the story that he was healed of stuttering at age 21 in Canada. The sole document Hinn produced to substantiate his claim to have stuttered as a child was cited in PFO’s January-March 1993 newsletter. The article said:

“While Hinn did stutter as a child, testimony from those who knew him as a teen indicates that he must have outgrown the problem. Those people also remember him as being outgoing and social, not a recluse. None of them remembers Hinn being divinely healed of stuttering as he now says took place at Trinity Assembly in Oshawa...”

Hinn also implies that numerous affidavits are available to refute PFO’s findings. He said during the Oct. 23, 1992, “Praise The Lord” show:

“It’s really so sad that I had to get 25 students, who knew me when I was a teenager in school, to sign affidavits to say, ‘He did stutter.’”

Further, a June 1993 Charisma magazine editorial says

Hinn “has obtained numerous affidavits from the people with firsthand knowledge of his childhood.”

These “numerous affidavits” never have been produced. In a later issue of Charisma, Hinn said, “But my family will tell you that I stuttered, and many friends who knew me back then are ready to sign affidavits that I stuttered.”

In October 1992 and June 1993, Hinn claimed he had “numerous affidavits” to confirm his stuttering as a teen and young man. In August 1993, he said only that he has friends **ready** to sign affidavits.

In the face of mounting evidence against his story, Hinn has revised his tale. He told Charisma: “I did stutter right up until the Lord healed me at the age of 21. I would stutter terribly when I was asked to say something in public, or when I was in the presence of my dad or some other authority figure. The only time I didn’t stutter was when I prayed or when I was with people I was comfortable with. So maybe some acquaintances don’t remember me stuttering because I didn’t stutter in their presence.”

### HAVEN’T WE BEEN DOWN THIS NEW ROAD BEFORE?

Hinn has promised — and failed — to clean up his act before.

In 1987, after almost a decade of studying the Word-Faith doctrine until it permeated his own teaching and preaching, he said, “Like I said earlier, if I hear prosperity one more time, I’m gonna throw up. ... There’s too much today being preached that’s not gospel. And I was preaching it myself, because I honestly believed that these men whom I respect must be hearing from God and if they’re saying it, well it must be God. To then discover that the Scripture states completely the opposite.”

By 1990, he was saying things like, “And I’m sick and tired of hearing about streets of gold. I don’t need gold in heaven, I’ve got to have it now!”

He drove the prosperity message home farther on a 1990 TBN “Praise-A-Thon”:

“Poverty is a demon. God had to show me a vision of a demon literally to prove this to me. All at the same time when Oral Roberts came to tell me what he told me about believing God for my harvest. All at the same time, I had a vision in my bedroom. I was asleep and woke up and right in front of my face I saw a devil. You say, ‘You saw it?’ Yes, sir, I did. If you have troubles with it, that’s your problem. And that thing was mocking me in my bedroom. And the Lord spoke and said to me, ‘That is the demon of poverty.’ Brother, when you see demons in your room you really hear God’s voice quick and loud. And the Lord said, ‘That’s the demon of poverty.’ I didn’t think there was such a thing, Paul. And the Lord said, ‘Now, rebuke it.’ I sat up in bed and I said, ‘I rebuke you.’ The Lord stopped me and said, ‘That’s not the way you rebuke. You rebuke with My

Word.' And suddenly out of my mouth, Scriptures began flying out about the blessings of God. That demon vanished out of my sight and from that day till now, there's been blessings on my life."

Then in 1991, he told *Christianity Today* he had "repudiated many of his earlier, controversial statements and said the entire direction of his ministry is in the midst of fundamental reform." *CT* added that Hinn "acknowledged that he has made theologically erroneous statements, and that his attitude toward those who have challenged him has left a lot to be desired."

"I really no longer believe the faith message. I don't think it adds up," he told *CT*. "God has already begun showing me some of the things on prosperity. And I'm not about to get up and say, 'God showed me,' because my days of doing that are over. I just believe you begin preaching what you feel and believe without having to say, 'God showed me.' Because then you gonna look like an idiot, you know if you get back two years later and say, 'God showed me something different.'"

In 1992, *CT* reported: "Not long after telling *CT* that the 'faith message' (as articulated by such teachers as Kenneth Copeland) does not 'add up,' Hinn said that speaking out against Copeland was tantamount to 'attacking the very presence of God.'"

Last year, Hinn routinely verbally assaulted his critics and threatened them and their children with divine judgment.

Early this year, the television news show *Inside Edition* broadcasted an exposé of his ministry and lifestyle. During an interview he granted the show, he promised to make substantial changes in the way he runs his ministry.

One of the changes, he told viewers on a March 4, 1993, broadcast of TBN's "Praise The Lord" show, would be that neither he nor his ministry staff would make claims that individuals have been healed. "From now on," Hinn said, "starting [in] Cincinnati, we will not say, 'She's healed.' Let the person speak for themselves. Let them say it. We will not say, 'They're healed.' We will say, 'They say they're healed,' or something like this. Because how do we know that they are healed? They're telling us they're healed. So we can't speak for the people."

It would appear that Hinn's latest attempt at reformation is unraveling already. Observers at a June rally in Chicago heard Hinn announce, "A second ago, someone was healed of cancer" and "a bone condition is being healed," among other things. Observers at a Kansas City rally heard the same kinds of pronouncements.

He told the Kansas City audience that while he was praying the previous day in his hotel room, Jesus appeared to him.

In the summer issue of Benny Hinn Media Ministries' *Celebrate Jesus* magazine, an advertisement appears for

the "Sermon Notes of Pastor Benny Hinn." For a \$120.00 annual subscription the reader will receive one message each month. The ad contends: "The notes of dynamic messages by Pastor Benny Hinn on a variety of subjects. Presented is a useful format for pastors, ministers, and Christian workers. Nuggets gleaned from years of personal study, ministry experience, and divine revelation."

And the August *Charisma* magazine interview is replete with Hinn's use of the charismatic anthem, "the Lord spoke to me." Review a sampling of his comments: "God is shaking me," "He is showing me," "The Lord has been showing me," "I sensed the Lord saying," "The presence of God was so strong," "The Lord spoke to me," and "The Holy Spirit reminded me."

All of these statements come in the wake of Hinn's statement: "There have been times in the past when I have been mistaken about what I thought was a revelation. I thought I was hearing from the Lord, but I was wrong."

Moreover, Hinn attempts to attenuate present day revelation, placing it in a class by itself, when he claims: "The Bible is the only authoritative source of divine revelation. I believe God speaks today — through the inner voice of the Holy Spirit, through dreams and visions, through prophecy and other supernatural means." Yet, if God speaks today, how is it any less authoritative? If God is truly presently speaking through dreams, visions and prophecy, how can the Christian attribute a lesser magnitude or worth upon His Words?

Hinn has said, "I am re-examining my entire theology. Every bit of it is being reexamined. I'm rereading this Bible as though I've never read it before." Yet, today Hinn's faithful can, for \$120 annually, subscribe to "nuggets gleaned from years of personal study, ministry experience and **divine revelation.**"

## WORD-FAITH TEACHINGS ARE STILL THERE

Hinn has not dropped the concept of speaking out and creating reality by faith-filled words, a foundation of Word-Faith doctrine. He has simply nuanced and redefined positive confession. He now says that if we speak by the Holy Spirit, we can confess and make things happen. He still appeals to Genesis 1 and says we can, like God, speak creative words if we do it in faith through the Spirit of God.

Hinn told *Charisma*: "This goes hand in hand with Genesis 1 where the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep *before* the Lord spoke the creative word. More and more I see the importance of the Spirit's involvement before we can speak out in faith."

Has Benny Hinn begun to travel on a new road? Our prayer is that he has. Yet his "new road" appears to already be in need of repair. His previous journeys down the road to change have led him back to where he started.

Hinn has regularly reworked his testimony and teachings, replacing one falsehood with another. God issues a very strong warning for myth makers: "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping" (II Peter 2:3).

—MKG

## WARNINGS FROM WACO

### The Whys and Wherefores of Destructive Cults

On April 19, millions watched on television as the Branch Davidian compound went up in flames, incinerating most of its inhabitants, including the cult's "messiah," David Koresh.

The contrast between this paranoid, criminal, maniac "god" and the church's true Messiah is a contrast between heaven and hell.

The Waco standoff and ensuing inferno is a good lesson in the consequences of destructive cults and cult mentality. Destructive cults are marked by a leader or leadership that has absolute control over followers who turn their backs on everything they knew and had. These followers are brainwashed and lose the capacity to discern and make their own decisions (see, **Christianity in Crisis**, by Hank Hanegraaff, pg. 43).

They see the world outside their cult as the enemy or Satan. Even though Koresh forbade marriage among his followers, dissolved existing marriages and cohabited with female followers and their children, no one in the compound contested this. Food was withheld adding to a pattern that Paul would have characterized as demonic (I Timothy 4:1-3). Yet no one seemed to have the strength or moral fiber to say "no."

Newsweek (March 15, 1993) and Time (May 3, 1993) recounted the horrendous excesses at "Ranch Apocalypse." Many former members who exited years before tell mind-boggling stories reminiscent of Jonestown, Guyana.

Jay Adams writes: "Today the church is confused. Siren voices call to her from every side. False teaching and heresy abound. Many Christians fall prey simply because they do not know how to distinguish truth from error." Christians must know God's truth and be grounded in doctrine. The life you save may be your own or a loved one's. Jesus said that the truth makes us free.

Ignorance, on the other hand, binds and blinds.

Waco is a loud warning, a deafening siren, calling Christians to study their scripture, try the spirits and test all things. It reminds Christians to be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11) and search scripture to see if what others say is the truth.

Christians need to recognize the telltale marks of destructive cults. Most will have all or most of the following:

1. An unquestioning allegiance to one leader. The leader

controls thoughts, decisions and finances. There is no transformation of the followers' minds by scripture but only mind manipulation and mental slavery. The leader isolates and controls information and input.

2. An unhealthy attitude toward the world. Matthew 28 tells believers to go into the world and preach the Gospel. Christians are to be salt and light. They are to infiltrate and penetrate the world for Christ. Retreat from the world is not a sign of spirituality but of regression. Christ had an outgoing spirit with which He could touch the world without being tainted by it. "Charge" is the operative word in the life of the Christian.

3. An undefined view of doctrine. Homeless people scavenge in garbage cans for food. People seeking to be filled spiritually will accept all kinds of spiritual garbage in an attempt to fill that void inside. This is about all such cults can offer them.

4. An unbalanced view of prophecy. Cult leaders lose the broader view of Christ's grand design for the Church and the world and apply prophecy to their own lives and the circumstances of their group. They corrupt the Scriptures and force words into bizarre meanings. Koresh tried to convince others that the Book of Revelation was written about a tiny group of people on a tiny farm outside a medium-sized town in Texas.

5. Unwholesome ideas about food and family. Scripture is very, very clear in saying that no one is to stand judge over believers as far as their diet. Koresh regularly restricted the food intake of the cult members. Paul writes that God has given people good things (like food) to enjoy (I Timothy 6:17). Koresh also destroyed families by dissolving marriages and indiscriminately taking "wives." Peter lays out the characteristics of cult leaders when he says, "Having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin; enticing unstable souls. ... Promising freedom while they themselves are the slaves of corruption" (II Peter 2:14,19).

6. An unChristlike reaction to governmental authority. Koresh was a lawbreaker suspected of child abuse and of having large amounts of illegal weapons. His response to the law enforcement agencies was a gunfight. Romans 13 makes it clear that God would have Christians obey laws and respect government. Christians are to be subject to the "higher powers" who are there for "the punishment of evil." In some sense in spite of the tragic ending, those Governmental agencies can be seen as "the ministers of God" according to Romans 13. If anyone in that compound had been really reading and really understanding their Bible (especially Romans 13) the outcome would have been far different.

7. An unbiblical commitment to a false "Christ" resulting in deception, darkness and death. Jesus warned in Matthew 24 that some would come saying, "Here is Christ," and that Christians should not follow them. Romans 1 warns that when people put a man in the place of God, their minds and morals get skewed. It says some "will serve the creature rather than the Creator" and they will become "fools" with "darkened hearts." The dire prediction is that they will end up receiving in their "own persons the penalty of their error."

—GRF

Even though the Masons were not entirely happy with the report's contents, they were satisfied with its conclusion, which said:

"In light of the fact that many tenets and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, we therefore recommend that consistent with our denomination's deep convictions regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, membership in a Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience. Therefore, we exhort Southern Baptists to prayerfully and carefully evaluate Freemasonry in light of the Lordship of Christ, the teachings of the Scripture, and the findings of this report, as led by the Holy Spirit of God."

The report sparked heated debate at the convention before being passed on a vote. Approval of the report has no effect on any Southern Baptist congregation as the convention has no such ecclesiastical authority at the local church level.

—PRB

## WITCH ON BOARD

An innovative measure has been taken by the Salem Religious Leaders Association. The township's interfaith council has inducted a professing witch as its newest member.

The newly admitted member, Shawn Poirier, is a high priest of the Rosarian Order of Wicca. The Wiccan sect is classified as "a pagan faith involving worship of the forces of nature," according to the report in the July 19, 1993, USA Today.

The Rev. Randy Wilkinson, of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, said the admittance of the 27-year-old Poirier, "means that we're recognizing it as a valid faith tradition," according to the USA Today article. Wilkinson added: It is also a way for us to atone for the tragic history of the city." The newspaper reported that some of Wicca's charitable works include, "visiting children's hospitals for Halloween."

In 1692, hysteria ran rampant in the Massachusetts community leading to the imprisonment of 150 suspected witches and the hanging execution of 19.

—MKG

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## BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 16)

every form of New Age mysticism. L'Engle admits that underneath her writings one can find her theology. This book shows as well how L'Engle quotes, endorses and promotes New Age authors and literature in glowing terms. One of L'Engle's more shocking and horrendous statements is found in her book **The Irrational Season**,

where she calls God "the Paternalistic male chauvinist pig Old Testament God." This is unbelievable blasphemy!

Scott and Smith in their preface share their deep concern and rationale for writing this book: "Despite her blatant denial of the basic tenants of the faith, Madeleine L'Engle's influence has deeply penetrated mainstream Christianity. Under the guise of 'Christian literature,' this prolific writer has been instrumental in introducing New Age/occult concepts and techniques into the church. The deception, unfortunately, has been so successful that otherwise discerning congregations and pastors have fallen into the snare that she and others have laid."

Years ago PFO addressed the undermining of Christian values by L'Engle (see PFO Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 4). This reviewer has known for sometime that L'Engle was "off," "bad," "not on track." I never dreamed to what extent. It is far worse than I ever imagined.

**Trojan Horse** is a cut above the kind of books Huntington House usually publishes. PFO urges every concerned believer to get this book and read it. Donate a copy to your church library, give a copy to your pastor. By all means, sound the alarm.

—GRF

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESS LITERATURE A Critical Guide to Watchtower Publications by David A. Reed Baker Book House, 207 pages, \$8.99

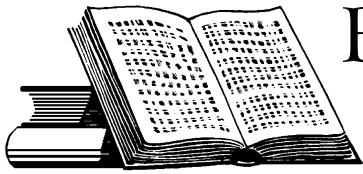
Former Jehovah's Witness David Reed again caters to cult researchers and other concerned individuals with a fine reference work. **Jehovah's Witness Literature** is an impressive bibliography of a century's worth of Watchtower books, periodicals, booklets and pamphlets.

The author examines the Watchtower literature throughout the book's eight chapters but the bulk of the analysis is in four chapters, each devoted to publications released during the reign of the four former presidents of the Watchtower organization. The review is arranged chronologically.

The prime value of the book is that it demonstrates the extensive changes made in Watchtower publications to accommodate doctrinal shifts and failed prophecies. For example, Reed notes on pages 123-124 that in 1981, after 100 million copies of "The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life" were published which suggested the Society's 1975 Armageddon prophecy, the book was revised to exclude the insinuations.

While the book is not a generalized treatment of Watchtower doctrine and practices, and may be too specific in its subject matter for some readers, it can be a tremendous aid in exposing Watchtower error.

—MKG



# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ON TRIAL** **The Testimony Of The Early Church Fathers** by Robert U. Finnerty, P&R Publishers, 164 pages, \$8.95

The Watchtower Society tries to make its teaching appealing by quoting the Church Fathers, as if those Fathers agreed with them. However, seen in their context, the Fathers uphold orthodox doctrines, especially the deity of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity. Finnerty shows that the Witnesses in fact misuse and distort the early Fathers.

Finnerty asserts: "Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be in complete harmony with the teachings of the Apostolic Church and early Christians at least until the time of the great apostasy. In recent years, and with increasing frequency, the Society has been affirming the authenticity of its doctrines by utilizing the works of the early church fathers. The validity of these claims is the focus of the following chapters."

There is a brief history of the Witnesses and a synopsis of their beliefs. Subsequent editions should correct page 15 and report the death of leader Fred W. Franz (Dec. 22, 1992). Though the copyright is 1993, the book still has Franz as President.

This is the first book-length treatment of a very important topic. We are grateful that someone has tackled this issue in such an in depth way. We recommend this book and think it needs to be in the library of every serious Bible student and cult researcher.

—GRF

## **A WAKE UP CALL** by Dr. Robert D. Culver Witness Inc. Publications, 123 pages, \$6.95

The fresh debate over the nature of our Lord's resurrection body has blazed for several years. The initial participants in the recent challenge to the orthodox faith are Dr. Murray Harris, professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Dr. Norman Geisler, one of the century's leading apologists.

Harris argues for a non-fleshly, immaterial resurrection. Geisler maintains a literal, physical and bodily resurrection. Today, the controversy has grown to include Trinity

Evangelical Divinity School supporting Harris' view and a collection of more than 100 counter-cult and apologetic ministries siding with Geisler.

For those unaware to the debate, Culver's publication provides the "hows," "whats," and "whys" of the dispute. It is a graphic and progressive account of the controversy.

Culver has over 40 years of association with the Evangelical Free Church, the sponsoring denomination of Trinity School. For many years he was a professor at the institution. Culver's book concludes that leaders at the school, who have sought to sanction Harris' resurrection theology, are guilty of promulgating, condoning and safeguarding false doctrine.

**A Wake Up Call** is a revealing work which unmasks a clear and direct violation on the central truth of the Christian message.

—MKG

## **TROJAN HORSE** **How the New Age Movement** **Infiltrates the Church** by Brenda Scott and Samantha Smith Huntington House, 207 pages, \$9.99

This is a shocking and revealing book that is long overdue. It could be subtitled, exposing Madeleine L'Engle and the New Age Movement. Samantha Smith, nationally recognized researcher, journalist and free lance writer, along with Brenda Scott show that L'Engle has radically departed from historical Christian theology and is teaching blatant occultism and New Age philosophy. The authors are true to the Scriptures and document and cite with care. L'Engle is snared by her own words. Some of the heretical teaching is woven into her fiction.

What is so confusing for the church is that L'Engle's books are sold in Christian bookstores, she is a featured speaker on Christian campuses, and has received an honorary doctorate from Wheaton College. It seems any more that if you write enough books (regardless of what they say and teach) you can get an honorary doctorate from someone!

The authors of **Trojan Horse** trace the childhood and adult life of L'Engle. They prove without question that the fantasy books of L'Engle as well as the non-fiction writings teach every form of occultism and spiritism as well as

(continues on page 15)

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**Editor's Note:** The above publications are available from Personal Freedom Outreach (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.25 to the price listed to cover postage costs. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.