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PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH



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EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

A Look at Spiritual Pandemonium

The Strange Views of Rodney M. Howard-Browne

by G. Richard Fisher

Known by some as the "laughing evangelist," Rodney M. Howard-Browne calls himself a "Holy Ghost bartender" who promotes "laughing in the Spirit." This latest champion of the Charismatic movement tells a lot of jokes and rattles off one-liners before encouraging people to let the spirit flow "out of the belly" in holy laughter. Some have referred to him as a Christian Rodney Dangerfield.

So-called holy laughter is an eccentricity practiced by fringe Pentecostals such as Kathryn Kuhlman years ago. It is sometimes encouraged through a misunderstanding of the biblical passages on joy. It could be called pandemoniumism.

These spasms of laughter, which can last as long as an hour, are contagious. The South African-born Howard-Browne tells his audience: "Fill — let it bubble out your belly — Ho-ho, He-he — Fill — Ho-ho-ho, Ho-ha-ha."

Not even the consequences of a Godless eternity are immune from his laughter.

Charisma magazine reports:

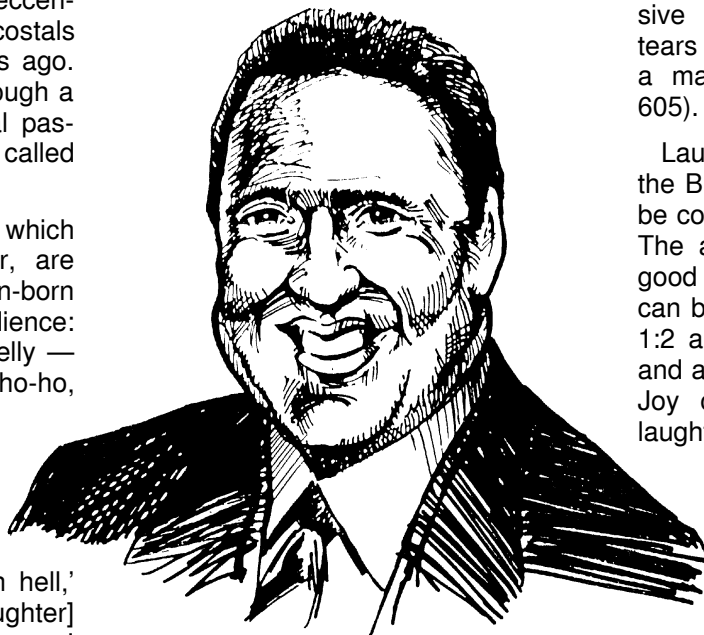
"One night I was preaching on hell," Howard-Browne says, "and [laughter] just hit the whole place. The more I

told people what hell was like, the more they laughed" (August 1994, pg. 24).

Howard-Browne's spiritual expressions and methodology are more at home in the occult than in Christianity. **The Encyclopedia Americana** states

that during the 19th century the view was developed that "all the hypnotic effects were due to hypersuggestibility." The encyclopedia further states: "Extrasensory perception was another of these earlier byproducts of mesmerism. Many observers, including [Dr. Franz A.] Mesmer himself, reported the discovery of strange phenomena of perception, such as telepathy and clairvoyance, in the course of their practice" and "With a highly responsive subject, genuine laughter and tears can be made to come and go in a matter of minutes" (Vol. 14, pg. 605).

Laughter (*galeo* in Greek) is found in the Bible in social settings. It is not to be confused with joy (*chara* in Greek). The angels did not say, "I give you good tidings of great laughter." Joy can be connected to trial as in James 1:2 and is an inner delight with God and all that He has done and is doing. Joy can be there even when the laughter is gone. We can rejoice inwardly even in tribulation. Joy in suffering is the motif in Paul's epistles. *Chara* (joy) and *galeo* (laughter) are not used interchangeably. *Chara* has to do with an inner sense



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Editorials

IS BENNY HINN BACK ON THE SAME OLD ROAD AGAIN?

Benny Hinn has demonstrated time and again the hard time he has giving up old habits. In 1991, in response to criticism of his teaching, he told **Christianity Today** writer Randy Frame: "...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're gonna look like an idiot, you know, if you get back two years later and say, 'God showed me -- showed me something different.'"

Then, following an exposé of bogus healings on the syndicated television show *Inside Edition* in early 1993, he said on Trinity Broadcasting Network's *Praise The Lord Show*:

"God used that [*Inside Edition* report] to open our eyes. How can we do it better? And so from now on, starting [at the crusade in] Cincinnati we will not say, 'She is 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 they're healed? They're telling us they're healed. So we can't speak for the people."

And then, just a few months later, Hinn told his congregation at the Orlando Christian Center in Orlando, Fla.: "Lately there's been a lot of questions about things I've taught, things I've said. Now let me clear this out.

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. 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."

Many took Hinn at his word, accepting his claim to be taking a "new road." Criticism began to wane despite his history of making similar claims. While it was hoped that Hinn would change, others adopted a "wait and see" attitude.

Adding to skepticism was the fact that while Hinn had promised new discipline and correction in his actions he failed to apologize for or explain the contradictions among the numerous stories of his conversion and kept silent about the debunking of various personal and supernatural experiences he had claimed to have.

For example, Hinn once said he converted to Christ 200-300 Arab girls and some nuns at a Catholic girls school in Jerusalem. Authorities from the school deny the claim. Hinn has said nothing.

Hinn's silence is understandable. When he has tried to respond to evidence casting doubt on his testimony, he has only spread more deceit. When he tried to respond to the debunking of the assertion that his father was the "mayor of Jaffa," Israel, during his childhood, the story got only more murky. (See further, **The Confusing World of Benny Hinn** by PFO.)

Now, events at recent Hinn Miracle Crusades indicate
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News Updates

FATE DECIDED FOR BRANCH DAVIDIANS

About 15 months after a disastrous siege at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, a U.S. district judge sentenced, on June 17, five cult members to maximum 40-year prison terms and fines ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Four federal agents along with six followers of preacher David Koresh were killed in the Feb. 28, 1993 gunbattle. Sixteen other agents also were wounded when a surprise attack by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms went awry. The botched raid led to a 51-day standoff that resulted in the death of Koresh and 78 of his followers in a fire that consumed the sect's compound.

The judge also imposed more lenient sentences of five to 20 years on three other members. An Associated Press report indicated that "None of the eight Davidians apologized for their crimes" or showed emotion when they were sentenced. Three other members were acquitted of all charges.

Earlier, on Feb. 26, nearly a year following the ATF assault, jurors, following a seven-week trial, dismissed the more serious charges of murder and murder conspiracy against the eleven defendants. The jury did convict the five members of voluntary manslaughter and the three others of weapons charges.

Judge Walter Smith, in handing down his decision, stated: "The evidence from this trial has not faded from my memory. Certain images are clear. I remember evidence the jury didn't see, evidence I ruled was too gruesome."

Bonnie Haldeman, Koresh's mother, said her late son's followers were railroaded. "That judge and those people are going to have fire and brimstone raining down on their heads one day. They'll have God to face."

—MKG

LDS PRESIDENT BENSON DIES

Ezra Taft Benson, the 13th president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, died May 30 of congestive heart failure. He was 94. According to an Associated Press report, Mr. Benson had spent the last few years under the 24-hour care of a nurse and was unable to speak or, at times, recognize close relatives.

Mr. Benson's tenure as "Prophet, Seer and Revelator" of the 164-year-old Mormon church began in 1985, when he succeeded Spencer W. Kimball. Church representa-

tives said that during his tenure, membership grew to 8.7 million people. A major emphasis of Mr. Benson's presidency was promotion of **The Book of Mormon**, one of the Latter-day Saints' four scriptural texts. He called for church members to "flood the earth with The Book of Mormon — and get out from under God's condemnation for having treated it lightly." During the past decade multimillion-dollar campaigns on television and radio and in magazines featured advertisements for a free copy of the book.

On June 5, Howard W. Hunter was installed as the LDS' 14th president. Hunter, 86, set the direction of his administration by proclaiming that the church should heal wounds, pleading for compassion, forgiveness and understanding within the church. He appealed for those who have felt alienated from the sect, because of years of denomination turmoil, should now return to fellowship with the church.

"To those who are hurt and struggling and afraid, we say let us stand with you and dry your tears," Hunter said. He further petitioned at his private meeting ordination that "those who have transgressed or been offended, we say come back. Feast at the table laid before you in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and strive to follow the Good Shepherd who has provided it."

Neither church members nor outside observers expect Hunter to implement any major changes in LDS policies or direction.

—MKG

MORMONS MARK 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDER'S DEATH

About 2,000 people gathered June 26 in Carthage, Ill., to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were shot to death by a mob June 27, 1844. The Smiths were being held in Carthage's jail on charges of treason, precipitated by their destruction of the offices of **The Expositor** newspaper. The paper's sole issue had exposed secret practices of the Mormon leaders.

Howard W. Hunter, the new president of the Mormon church, presided over the ceremony. The Mormon church acquired the building in the 1930s, added an adjoining visitors center in 1963, and subsequently completed a \$750,000 renovation of the facilities in 1989.

Blaine Whippie, LDS coordinator of the anniversary ceremonies, told the Associated Press: "The jail has a
(continues on page 19)

A Study in SMOKE & MIRRORS WILLOWS

DAKE BIBLE SALES, INC. BATTLES CRITICS

by M. Kurt Goedelman

In the wake of a decline in sales of the **Dake Annotated Reference Bible**, the family of the late Finis J. Dake has accused critics of unfair treatment and false accusations.

Criticism has come from PFO, which published an article in 1992 (see **The Quarterly Journal**, Vol. 12, No. 4), Christian Research Institute's *Bible Answer Man* radio broadcasts and a Jan. 10, 1994, article in **Christianity Today**.

CT published a "clarification" in its April 4 issue and expressed regret that its report presented interpretations and perceptions from Dake's detractors, rather than actual teachings from Dake's work. Then, the following month, Dake Bible Sales invested in a full-page advertisement in **CT** under the headline, "From the Dake Family ... Heart to Heart." This sought to further diminish the damage done by **CT's** article. More recently, the Bible publisher replied to the wave of criticism with a letter to the editor and a news article in the July 1994 issue of **Bookstore Journal**.

Yet, despite accusations against critics of the **Dake Bible**, it is members of the Dake family who have been misleading people.

For example, the ad in **CT** sought to gloss over Dake's 1937 guilty plea and six-month jail sentence for violation of the Mann Act. The ad said: "In 1935

Dake violated the Mann Act by transporting a minor across a state line. One author told us that stories like this are what people want to read. It doesn't matter that it was sixty years ago; that there was no evidence of immorality; that the girl's Catholic parents were irate that she attended Rev. Dake's Pentecostal church; that Dake lived three miles from the state line; or that the town's police, newspaper, and industries were controlled by people who disliked Pentecostals, especially Finis Dake."

This rebuttal misdirects its readers at several points. PFO's report made no charge of immorality. However, Dake had registered at hotels in Waukegan, Bloomington and East St. Louis with the 16-year-old girl. He checked into the various hotels using the names: "C. Anderson and wife" and "Mr. and Mrs. C. Anderson." During his trial it was revealed that Dake and the girl had engaged in "petting parties" in the hotel rooms.

Additionally, the impression is presented that the girl was a member of Dake's congregation. No newspaper report, detailing the Dake's arrest, trial and conviction of the charges, ever indicated such a claim. Even Dake's wife admitted that the minister had picked up the youth as a hitch-hiker from her home town in Kenosha, Wis. At the time the youth was a former high school student and a fugitive from

the Milwaukee Industrial school. While in East St. Louis with the minister, the girl reportedly wrote to her father telling him not to worry, because "I have gotten religion."

Moreover, the attempt to neutralize his conviction on the charge of crossing the state line with the girl by saying "Dake lived three miles from the state line" is in no way a legitimate point, even if Dake had only taken the girl from Kenosha, Wis. to Waukegan, Ill. The law is the law.

Besides, Dake's did not stop just "three miles from the state line." Dake took her more than 100 miles to a hotel in Bloomington. Next, they traveled hundreds of miles to East St. Louis. Finally, they crossed a second state line when they entered St. Louis, Mo.

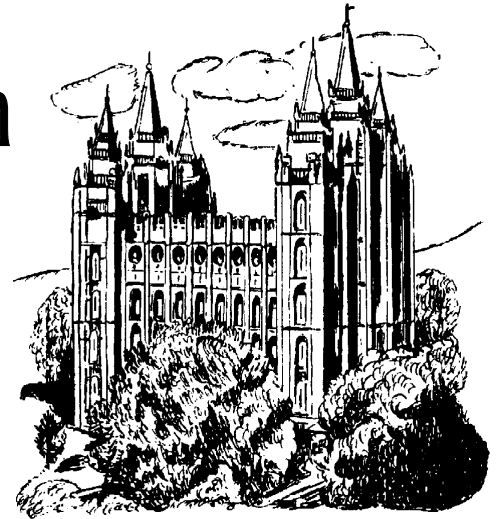
More serious than the minimizing of Dake's moral breakdown is his family's attempt to play down Dake's faulty theology. After reading the clarification, advertisement and news article one could conclude that Dake's critics have read more into his Bible notes and commentary than is there. The other impression is that any valid criticism the reviewers have expressed centers on minor and debatable points.

According to the news article in the July issue of the **Bookstore Journal**,
(continues on page 10)

Behind the Deseret Veil

Institutionalized Oppression in the Latter-day Saint Church

by Stephen F. Cannon



The Berlin Wall has fallen, the Iron Curtain of the former Soviet Union has been torn asunder, and the Bamboo Curtain of China is shaking under the weight of democratic dissidents. However, there is in the United States an oppressive barrier that reminds us, in many ways, of the above-mentioned regimes.

It has nothing to do with politics, with which many conservative Christians agree. It has to do with doctrines of a church that defines an autocratic hierarchy and restricts freedom of thought with threats of divine retribution for those who don't toe the party line.

Just as occasionally someone would escape through the Berlin Wall and recount the oppression suffered inside East Germany, so some have broken through the Deseret Veil¹ to tell of institutionalized oppression that researchers of Mormonism have known about for decades.

It happened recently with a clarity and authority that has not been seen in many years.

“Red Square on Temple Square”

In the May 22, 1994, edition of **The Arizona Republic** (pg. C1), Steve Benson, political cartoonist and grandson of the recently deceased Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, chronicled his

exodus from the church.

In an article titled “It's Become Red Square on Temple Square,” Benson and his wife, Mary Ann, told of their request to have their names removed from LDS church rolls. Their voluntary departure was accomplished “before the church's assigned executioners were able to drag us to the chopping block” (of excommunication), and they now consider themselves “... free from the choking control of Mormonism.”

While the Bensons consider themselves “fortunate to escape the current Mormon inquisition, Others have not been so lucky. In recent months, a spate of feminists, historians, intellectuals and scholars have been cut off from the church for so-called apostasy.”

This purge, they say, “has intimidated many Mormons into silence, who fear being expelled from the church on charges that they are in opposition to ‘The Brethren,’ the term for the Mormon hierarchy. ... It all reads like a chapter out of a totalitarian history book, only it's actually happening today. We would not allow ourselves to be similarly mistreated, so we left.”

Benson had the family connections and the availability of the public forum of **The Arizona Republic**. Others who didn't have those advantages are more

likely to be excommunicated.

The Bensons' reasons for leaving the church were typical. “We discovered that the Mormon Church is built on a rigid, top-down, patriarchal power structure, insulated from checks and balances and therefore vulnerable to abuse of authority,” Benson wrote.

This abuse manifested itself in a unique way to the Bensons and had to do with the dishonesty of LDS Church authorities concerning the health of Steve's grandfather:

“In the name of maintaining faith, church leaders peddled the myth that the Mormon prophet was actively at the helm when, in fact, he was incapacitated. Propping him up for photo sessions as if he were some kind of storefront mannequin was a calculated, conspiring abuse of power, not to mention disrespectful and undignified for a man we love.”

“Only later, through a press leak, did Mormons learn that total legal authority to run the church had been secretly transferred years earlier from President Benson to his counselors via his signature machine. Yet the church continued to deceptively preach that he was still in charge and only recently

admitted he is, in fact, incapable of meaningful leadership.”

While one might expect to find the above deception in the political arena, it is outrageous to see such dishonesty carried out by those supposed to be representing the Heavenly Father on Earth. The Bensons wondered what else the Mormon Church authorities were concealing.

“Further troubling to us was the pathological unwillingness of the Mormon Church to deal forthrightly with its doctrine and history. Our personal study revealed that church canon, history and scripture had been surreptitiously altered, skewed, rewritten, contradicted and deleted.”

“Examining early church documents that have been studiously hidden from the eyes of most church members, we were disturbed to discover the weakness of Mormonism’s founder, Joseph Smith, for women, drinking and money-digging. Reading Mormon Scripture, we found persuasive evidence that it was non-historical and brimming with plagiarisms.”

And, much to the chagrin of LDS leaders, that documentation is definitive. Because the founding of the LDS Church was relatively recent (1830) in historical terms, and because the LDS people kept such good records, it is possible to follow the paper trail of Mormon evolution. The Bensons followed that trail and arrived at this conclusion:

“After a lifetime of membership in the Mormon Church, we came to regard it as an institution beyond repair, its moral heart eaten out by the worms of deceit, intolerance and blind conformity.”

“And contrary to Mormonism’s claims of being a mainstream Christian sect, we discovered it clung to peculiar and offensive notions of polygamy, racial superiority, blood sacrifice, polytheism and Masonic-cult temple rituals.”

“We see Mormonism in a state of significant spiritual and intellectual decay, corrupted by the systematic and unchecked abuse of ecclesiastical authority at the expense of individual liberty, honesty and truth, and led by

men lacking in prophetic vision. It has become tyrannical in its control and authoritarian in its exercise of power; in short, it has become Red Square in Temple Square.”

The Bensons think the LDS Church “has become tyrannical in its control and authoritarian in its exercise of power.” The church has been that way since its beginning. Authoritarianism is the bedrock of Mormon Doctrine.

“When Our Leaders Speak...”

At the apex of the LDS’ hierarchical, top-down organization is the Prophet, Seer and Revelator. With his two counselors, the First Presidency is formed. Then, in descending order, comes the Council of the Twelve, the Patriarch to the Church, Assistants to the Twelve, First Council of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. These offices make up the General Authorities of the LDS Church.²

Any of these General Authorities wields great power, but it is to the Prophet, the President of the Church whom all earthly power, and the keys of the heavens are given. Apostle Bruce McConkie said, “The President of the Church is the mouthpiece of God on earth. Thus saith the Lord: ‘Thou shall give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.’ (D. & C. 21:4-5.)”³

This is Mormon doctrine and has been true from the beginning of the church. The quote from **Doctrine & Covenants** is considered a revelation from God to Joseph Smith. The investiture of authority is absolute.

In an address given in Salt Lake City on Nov. 8th, 1857, then-Counselor to the First President Heber C. Kimball stated: “In regard to our situation and circumstances in these valleys, brethren, Wake up! Wake up ye elders of Israel, and live to God and none else; and learn to do as you are told, both old and young; learn to do as you are told for the future. ... Brother Brigham [Young] is my leader: he is my Prophet, my Seer, my Revelator; and whatever he says, that is for me to do;

and it is not for me to question him one word, nor to question God a minute.”⁴

As the Mormon Church evolved, the absolute authorities became more important. Many of the embarrassing and more bizarre doctrines were discarded in favor of ones that would stand up to public scrutiny. Doctrines mentioned by the Bensons — plural marriage, personal blood atonement and certain Masonic-cult temple rituals — while not repudiated have been publicly minimized.

Problematic to church leaders was how to take doctrines that once were considered essential and relegate them to unimportance. This was exacerbated by a vivid paper trail of supposed revelations by past prophets and scriptures unique to Mormonism. Church critics became more vocal and published evidence. The church decided that something must be done.

Ezra Taft Benson came up with a solution.

On Feb. 26, 1980, then-Apostle Benson addressed the Brigham Young University Devotional Assembly and gave students “Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets.”

Among the points summarized in the May 12, 1980, **Phoenix Voice**, a Mormon newspaper, were:

“1. The Prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything. The **Doctrine & Covenants** states, ‘We are to give heed unto all his words as if from the Lord’s own mouth.’”

“2. The living Prophet is more vital to us than the standard works.⁵ In a meeting in Kirtland [Ohio], Joseph Smith said the standard works are the word of God. Then he had Brother Brigham to give his views on the living oracles and the written word. He [Brigham Young] said, ‘When compared with the living oracles, those books are nothing to me; I would rather have the living oracles than all the writings in those books.’ Joseph Smith told the congregation that ‘Brother Brigham has told you the word of the Lord and the truth.’”

If the Prophet and the Scriptures disagree, then the Prophet, the living

Prophet, takes precedence. There will be no conflict.

“3. The living Prophet is more important to us than a dead Prophet. The living Prophet has the power of TNT (Today’s News Today). The most important reading we can do is words of the Prophet contained each week in the *Church News* or the Church magazines.”

“5. The Prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time. Sometimes there are those who feel their earthly knowledge on a certain subject is superior to the heavenly knowledge which God gives on a subject. ... We encourage earthly knowledge in many areas, but remember — if there is ever a conflict between earthly knowledge and the words of the Prophet, you stand with the Prophet and you’ll be blessed, and time will vindicate you.”

“8. The Prophet is not limited by men’s reasoning. There will be times when you will have to choose between the revelations of God and the reasoning of men — between the politician or professor.”

“9. The Prophet can receive revelation on any matter — temporal or spiritual. In a meeting in Kirtland, Joseph Smith asked the elders to draw a line of demarcation between the spiritual and temporal so he could understand it. No one could do it. Then he said ‘... temporal and spiritual things are inseparably connected and ever will be.’”

Linking the fifth and ninth fundamentals invests the Prophet with absolute authority on any matter.

Next comes the clincher:

“10. The Prophet may be involved in civic matters. When people are righteous, they want the best to lead them in government. Great leaders in the Book of Mormon and in church history have been involved deeply in political matters. Those who would remove prophets from politics would take God out of government.”

Finally, the one that ties it all together:

“14. The Prophet and the president — the living Prophet and the first presidency — follow them and be blessed; reject them and suffer.”

Benson laid out a doctrine of an absolute leader endowed by the Creator to be the only man on Earth to speak for Him on any matter and with whom no one can disagree. He cannot be approached on the basis of reason because he is above the reason of man. He cannot be approached on the basis of scripture or pronouncements of past prophets because he is “more dear” than any of those. This Prophet has the power to regulate not only the doctrine of his church, but can control any facet of the life of any individual in the church no matter how detailed, upon pain of excommunication.

This is no recent phenomenon. The LDS Magazine **The Improvement Era**, under the section titled “Ward Teachers” Message for June 1945, said: “It should be remembered that Lucifer has a very cunning way of convincing unsuspecting souls that the General Authorities of the Church are as likely to be wrong as they are to be right. This sort of game is Satan’s favorite pastime, and he has practiced it on believing souls since Adam. He wins a great victory when he can get members of the Church to speak against their leaders and to ‘do their own thinking.’”

“He specializes in suggesting that our leaders are in error while he plays the blinding rays of apostasy in the eyes of those whom he thus beguiles. What cunning! And to think that some of our members are deceived by this trickery.”

“When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan — it is God’s plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy. God works in no other way. To think otherwise, without immediate repentance, may cost one his faith, may destroy his testimony, and leave him a stranger to the kingdom of God.”⁶

Off With Their Heads...

While the Bensons were fortunate enough to leave the LDS “before the

church’s assigned executioners were able to drag us to the chopping block” (of excommunication), not all have been able to.

In a companion article to Benson’s piece in **The Arizona Republic**, Michael J. Barrett, a former Mormon and current assistant counsel to the Central Intelligence Agency, recounts his excommunication.

Barrett says he is still very much Mormon at heart. He states in the article, “Mormons No More”:

“I love and appreciate our [Mormon] prophets for the truths they have given us and the principles of the gospel they have shared with us. I also love them knowing they have made mistakes. These mistakes just reaffirm their humanity and the opportunity we all have to progress in light and truth.”

Barrett’s transgression was not robbery, murder, blasphemy or adultery. He disobeyed a direct order from church officials.

“I was pained to discover about 13 years ago that some church members believe it’s better to deny or conceal doctrine and history, rather than to discuss things honestly and openly. At first, I attempted to persuade church leaders that honesty was our best option. I was told that a decision already had been made by leaders such as Elder Boyd K. Packer and Elder Dallin H. Oaks. Some facts, some doctrines are embarrassing and must be concealed.”

“Only faith-inspiring facts and doctrines may be discussed. Anything that is not immediately faith-promoting is considered to be ‘advanced history’ (Packer’s term) and must be concealed with all the zeal of a corporate lawyer hiding documents that could incriminate his company.”

“I could not accept this. Not only was such an approach dishonest, but it also presumed that Mormon doctrines are foolish and cannot withstand scrutiny.”

When Barrett noticed some articles about the church in newspapers, he felt he had to answer, “So when I noticed newspaper stories about the church, I began writing letters to edi-

tors in an attempt to educate the public, appeal to our leaders' better judgment and demonstrate that we, as Mormons, are not afraid to confront our own history."

Because he was honest in addressing some of the more embarrassing former doctrines and revisionist history of Mormonism, Barrett was told by his stake president⁷ to keep these things covered up. In good conscience, he could not. "I have to confess," he wrote, "I did disobey a direct order."

That decision to be honest landed him in front of a church tribunal, "On April 17, two men in dark suits knocked at my door and delivered a letter from my stake president. The letter informed me I was 'considered to be guilty of apostasy.' The trial would be the following Sunday morning at 8."

Barrett soon found himself seated at a table in the church high-counsel room being "tried for his sin."

"The stake president, LaMar Sleight, read the charges against me: deliberately disobeying his orders by disclosing some of our unpopular doctrines in published letters to several newspapers. The truth of the statements was not in question, he said. The court would hear only evidence of my disobedience to his direct order."

"He then proceeded to tell the court of my sin. I had, he declared, disobeyed his direct order, and that of his predecessor, to conceal certain doctrines from the press and public."

"Sleight, his predecessor, and two general authorities from Salt Lake City had been clear. As they explained in a letter to me, 'Latter-day Saint scholars have no license to publish what a president of the church may have said when under a (U.S. Congress) subpoena...' And I had disobeyed."

During the trial it was disclosed that President Sleight's predecessor, "... Raul McQuivey, called me in several times and told me that members of the church didn't want to know these facts, and that I should stop writing letters to the editor. On one occasion, he called me in and he, together with Elder F. Burton Howard of the First Quorum of the Seventy, directed me to stop disclosing our doctrines and history

publicly, even though these teachings were taken from church publications, church records and public doctrines."

"Howard, a lawyer, told me the public had no business knowing what President Joseph F. Smith said in his sworn testimony to Congress about polygamy in 1904. He said that any member of the church who would reveal that Smith's testimony was false was unworthy of a temple recommend."⁸

"McQuivey immediately concurred and refused to issue me a recommend. ... This was the first time I'd been without one since I can remember. I asked how I could repent and get a new recommend. McQuivey said I would have to agree to keep certain church doctrines and historical facts secret. I refused saying I thought that would be cowardice in the eyes of Jesus Christ, and a tacit denial of those doctrines."

"And so, we came to the two issues before the court: Did I willfully disobey Sleight's order to remain silent? And, if so, why? The answer to the first question is a simple yes."

"I would answer the second by recalling [Joseph] Smith's words, as written in the **Doctrine & Covenants**, Joseph Smith's History 1:25: 'Why persecute me for telling the truth? [W]ho am I that I can withstand God? ... I knew [the truth] and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it; at least I knew by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.'"

"...I concluded my remarks and waited."

"Several of the high councilmen asked questions. One angrily announced that we have no business discussing the 'bad things' in the church. Then I was dismissed so they could begin their secret deliberations."

"Later that afternoon, two men in dark suits knocked at my door and delivered a letter from my stake president."

"I was excommunicated."

A church that spends millions of dollars a year on glossy media ads to try convincing the public that it is

"mainstream Christianity" does not take lightly the exposure by "insiders" of things that go on behind the Deseret Veil. The face the LDS Church wishes the world to see is different from what is seen from the inside. While publicly the church trumpets the virtues of honesty and integrity, behind the scenes one can — and does — get excommunicated for practicing those virtues.

Scholastic dishonesty, rewriting history, and spiritual intimidation is the order of the day behind the Deseret Veil. And, all this from the church that announces that they are "the only true and living church on the earth today."⁹

Now You See It...

It has long been known by non-Mormons that the LDS Church has edited its books of Scripture, and rewritten key historical facts while denying publicly that it has done so. We saw above that it is calculated to suppress anything negative in church history, even to the point of church leaders instructing individual members to be dishonest when investigators ask questions. This is known among Mormon researchers as "lying for the truth."

The Bensons themselves discovered, "...the pathological unwillingness of the Mormon Church to deal forthrightly with its doctrine and history. Our personal study revealed that church canon, history and scripture had been surreptitiously altered, skewed, rewritten, contradicted and deleted."

Not one of the sacred volumes of Mormonism has escaped the editor's desk.

Scripture Alteration and Rewrite:

For example, the first edition (1830) of **The Book of Mormon**, the Book of Alma (pg. 303) says, "I know that he [God] alloteth unto men, *yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable*, according to their wills..."

Yet in modern editions (Alma 29:4), the eight words in italic above have been deleted. This puts **The Book of Mormon** more in harmony with the church's stance on the continuing

evolution of doctrine, namely the current belief that God's decrees are alterable. The most recent editions have reinserted these words. Even though these words were replaced in 1981, Mormon doctrine still mandates that God's decrees are alterable.

As Joseph Smith's belief about the God of Mormonism evolved, so too did passages concerning the nature of that God. The 1830 edition (pg. 32) reads: "... and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and the Savior of the world."

However, later editions read: "...and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the *Son of the* Eternal Father and the Savior of the world." Here three words were added and the meaning was changed.

More than 3,000 changes have been made to **The Book of Mormon**. Other Mormon scriptures have been edited as well, including **Doctrine & Covenants** and the **Pearl of Great Price**. For example:

Originally, Joseph planned only to publish **The Book of Mormon**. This was attested to by a revelation written in the original **Book of Commandments** 4:2:

"...and he has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift."

By 1835, this position had changed. Between the time of the revelation (1829) and the republishing of the **Book of Commandments** as **Doctrine & Covenants** in 1835, Joseph maintained that God had given him the gift of revising the Bible and the gift of translating the **Book of Abraham**.

So, the current version can be found in D&C 5:4:

"And you have a gift to translate the plates; *and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you*; and I have commanded that you should pretend to no other gift, *until my purpose is fulfilled in this*; for I will grant *unto* you no other gift *until it is finished*."

Twenty-three words were added to the revelation to change the meaning

and give Smith the ability to practice more gifts than was originally maintained.

Rewriting History

The LDS' most assiduous rewriting of history has to do with the character and actions of founder Joseph Smith. Despite the revelation that Smith received that faithful LDS people should not partake of alcohol or tobacco, he imbibed on numerous occasions. This originally was reported in Mormon publications, but later was expunged.

In the Mormon periodical **Millennial Star** (Vol. 23, pg. 720) Smith is quoted, "Then went to John P. Greene's, and paid him and another brother \$200. Drank a glass of beer at Moessers. Called at William Clayton's while Dr. Richards..."

When this statement was reprinted in the official **History of the Church** (Vol. 6, pg. 424) seven words were left out with no indication as to why. The revision reads: "Then went to John P. Greene's, and paid him and another brother \$200. Called at William Clayton's..."

The **Millennial Star**, Vol. 24, pg. 471, reported, "Dr. Richards was taken sick, when Joseph said, 'Brother Markham, as you have a pass from the Governor to go in and out of the jail, go and get the Doctor a pipe and some tobacco to settle his stomach,' and Markham went out for them. When he had got the pipe and tobacco and was returning to jail..."

Again it was later altered in **History of the Church** to read, "Dr. Richards was taken sick, when Joseph said, 'Brother Markham, as you have a pass from the Governor to go in and out of the jail, go and get the doctor something he needs to settle his stomach,' and Markham went out for medicine. When he had got the remedies desired, and was returning to jail..."

It would take several large volumes to detail the important changes that have been made in Mormon scripture, doctrine and history. The paper trail exists and is easily accessible.

Mormons often respond to stories like Benson's and Barrett's by saying,

"I'm sure that there is more to it than meets the eye," "There are probably secret sins that the church felt should not be discussed in public," or, "You have to understand that there is Mormon doctrine and then there is Mormon culture. Sometimes Mormon culture can be a bit oppressive, and too many LDS people get caught up in attempting to enforce that culture."

The deliberate attempt to enforce oppression and mandate dishonesty is not cultural, it is institutional. The testimonies given have shown that orders to conceal the truth about the history of the LDS and its changing doctrine come from the top.

Endnotes:

1. According to the late Mormon Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie in his book **Mormon Doctrine**: "Brigham Young and his followers first named their new intermountain empire the territory of Deseret after this unique Book of Mormon name" (pg. 190). According to **The Book of Mormon** (Ether 2:3) "Deseret" is the Jaredite word for honey bee.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, **Mormon Doctrine**. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966, pg. 309.
3. *ibid.*, pg. 592.
4. **Journal of Discourses**, Vol. 6, pp. 32-33. Reprint of the Original Edition, Salt Lake City, Utah: Fifth Reprint 1967.
5. The four standard works of the LDS Church in order of importance to doctrine and practice are: **Doctrine and Covenants**, **Pearl of Great Price**, **The Book of Mormon** and the Bible.
6. Photostat on file.
7. A "stake" is a geographical area of indeterminate size and is composed of several wards (or congregations) of LDS people. Each stake is presided over by a stake President.
8. A recommend is a certificate issued by the church to identify members or to certify their worthiness to receive certain ordinances or blessings. One cannot enter Mormon Temples without a recommend.
9. **The Book of Mormon** states in I Nephi 14:10: "And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth."



"The Dakes pressed **CT** to retract statements in the article they say are untrue, including assertions that Dake writings promote a Mormon-like concept of the Trinity, imply that God is dependent on a physical body, teach that resurrected saints will give birth to their own kind in heaven, and say Adam and Eve flew back and forth from the moon. A 'clarification' in April said none of these statements appears in the Dake Bible or in another Dake book, **God's Plan for Man**, nor do five other questionable statements the magazine published."

The fact is there are dangerous and heretical teachings, including all of the above statements, found throughout Dake's writings. Consider the following commentary and doctrines presented in his 1951 reference Bible and also in his 1949 work, **God's Plan for Man**, which have been denied, played down or ignored by his family's recent efforts at damage control.

In his commentary of John 4:24 ("God is a Spirit...") Dake wrote: "God is a Spirit Being... He is a person with a personal spirit body, a personal soul, and a personal spirit, like that of angels, and like that of man except His body is of spirit substance instead of flesh and bones (Job 13:8; Heb. 1:3)."

According to the Bible note, Dake concludes that God has a personal spirit body, shape, form, image and likeness of man. He has bodily parts such as, back parts, heart, hands and fingers, mouth, lips and tongue, feet, eyes, hair, head, face, arms, loins, and other bodily parts. He also has a voice, breath, and countenance. He wears clothes, eats, rests, and dwells in a mansion and in a city located on a material planet called Heaven were He sits on a throne.

Dake's view is similar to that of Mormonism. While **Heresy Hunters** author James R. Spencer writes that "the Dake commentary contains material that's helpful and enlightening" he has had to admit that "some of Dake's statements on the Trinity are off

base." Nonetheless Dake's off-base position is merely glossed over by the recent rebuttals of Dake Bible Sales, Inc.

Dake gleans his incorrect understanding from a misreading of the symbolic or typological language of Scripture where God is spoken of in human terms (anthropomorphism). God is Spirit, John 4:24 declares. No one has seen God at any time (John 1:18, 6:46). He is invisible (Colossians 1:15) and it is only in the person of Christ that the exact representation of His being is manifested (John 1:18, Hebrews 1:3).

Dake's misunderstanding is based upon the Old Testament appearances of God, which are called theophanies, temporary manifestations of God in physical form. CRI's Hank Hanegraaff says: "Nowhere does the Bible say that God is forever dependent on a body. Dake's doctrine denies the historic Christian church doctrine that God, in the Trinity, is one in essence."

Lectures in Systematic Theology, by Henry Clarence Thiessen, delineates God's nature and responds to those who ascribe a body to God:

"He is Immaterial and Incorporeal. Jesus said: 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having' (Luke 24:39). If, then, God is spirit, He must be immaterial and incorporeal. He is not even refined matter, such as the early philosophers ascribed to the soul; but He is an immaterial and incorporeal substance. But what about expressions of God having bodily parts: hands (Isa. 65:2; Heb. 1:10), feet (Gen. 3:8; Ps. 8:6), eyes (1 Kings 8:29; 2 Chron. 16:9), ears (Neh. 1:6; Ps. 34:15)? They are anthropomorphic and symbolic representations to bring the Infinite within the apprehension of the finite. They serve to make God real and to express His various interests, powers, and activities" (pg. 120).

Standard and orthodox creeds concur, as is evidenced by the Westminster Confession of Faith: "There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions..."

G.I. Williamson says of the Confession: "When we speak of God as being pure Spirit, we mean that he has not a body like men. 'God is Spirit' said Jesus (John 4:24). 'When the Scriptures, in condescension to our weakness, express the fact that God hears by saying that he has an ear, or that he exerts power by attributing to him a hand, they evidently speak metaphorically, because in the case of men spiritual faculties are exercised through bodily organs. And when they speak of his repenting, of his being grieved, or jealous, they use metaphorical language also, teaching us that he acts toward us as a man would when agitated by such passions' (A.A. Hodge). Because God is pure Spirit, he is not subject to limitations of any kind. There is no place from which God is absent" (**The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes**, pg. 24).

Another major flaw in the **Dake Bible** is the teaching that Jesus did not become the Christ until His baptism. Dake's very first study note of the New Testament says: "Gr. Christos, 'Anointed,' Used in the N.T. 577 times. Like the name 'Jesus' it has no reference to deity, but to the humanity of the Son of God, who became the Christ or the 'Anointed One' 30 years after He was born of Mary" (Note a, Matthew 1:1).

This is identical to Watchtower doctrine, which says, "Not at birth, but at thirty years of age Jesus became Christ or 'Anointed One'" (**Things In Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie**, pg. 211).

Dake's belief is the ancient heresy of Adoptionism, which teaches that Jesus received supernatural powers at his baptism and became adopted into the sphere of the Godhead (see **Baker's Dictionary of Theology**, pg. 26). Scripture rejects Dake's conviction by announcing that Jesus was at birth — not would become as an adult — both Christ and Lord. The angels in Luke 2:11 declared: "For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Another of Dake's serious theological errors that escapes his family's

attention is the promotion of Process Theology or Processianism, the belief that God's knowledge is limited, and that as the world changes, His knowledge also changes.

In **God's Plan for Man**, Dake wrote: "God does not personally do everything that is done in all acts and events, nor has He known, elected, chosen, or predestinated all the acts and events from all eternity past. ... God did not know beforehand that men would become so wicked (Gen. 6:5-7); that they would plan Babel (Gen. 11:5-7); that Sodom would be so wicked (Gen. 18:21, 26, 28-32); that Abraham would actually proceed to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22:12). God did not know whether it would take one or two or three signs to make Israel believe in Him (Ex. 4:1-12); or whether testing Israel would cause them to obey Him, or not (Dt. 8:2, 16). He did not know that Israel would backslide as far as she did (Dt. 32:19-29; Isa. 59:15-19). ... We have no statement in the entire Bible saying that God knows or even would like to know all acts and particular events of all vast creations of free moral agents from all eternity past; or that He has fixed decrees choosing and predestinating all the thoughts, acts, and deeds of free wills from all eternity past to all eternity future" (pp. 62-63).

Then there are other points of questionable theology that the Dake family claims are fabrications of the Bible's critics. They deny that Dake taught resurrected saints will reproduce their own kind in heaven in spite of his note to Mark 12:25:

"Resurrected saints will not live in marriage relationship to keep their kind in existence as when in the mortal state... hence they have no need of marriage relationship to produce their own kind" (note 'h').

Their denial that Dake taught that Adam visited the moon and other planets is also debunked by statements found in **God's Plan for Man**. On pages 140-141 he wrote: "Adam had the greatest responsibility of any man that has ever lived, outside of Christ. He was given dominion over all creation to rule for God and to be

subject to God forever. ... He no doubt was to have access to the planets and rule them for God, but he sinned and came 'short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23). In the final restitution of all things man will again have dominion and will help God administer the affairs of the universe."

And then on page 948, Dake becomes even more emphatic: "[Do you know] That men have and will in the near future be able to fly through the air without airplanes? ... In the final restitution of all things everything will again be as originally planned and men will rule the planets. Naturally, they must have access to the planets in order to rule them, so they must be able to travel to them as was originally planned."

The charge the Dake family tried hardest to refute was that of racism. Dake's daughter, Annabeth Germaine, wrote that "the notion of racism in Dake texts is unfounded."

On page 159 (NT) of the **Annotated Reference Bible**, Dake teaches racism and segregation, listing "30 reasons for segregation of races." There he pushed Old Testament Israel's religious separation from the heathen nations to an extreme and redefined the boundaries of the Church's current and eternal oneness in Christ. Consider just a few excerpts:

"1. God wills all races to be as He made them. Any violation of God's original purpose manifests insubordination to Him. ... 2. God made everything to reproduce 'after his own kind' ... Kind means type and color or He would have kept them all alike to begin with. ... 4. Miscegenation means the mixture of races, especially the black and white races, or those of outstanding type or color. The Bible even goes farther than opposing this. ... 21. All nations will remain segregated from one another in their own parts of the earth forever. ... 23. Even in heaven certain groups will not be allowed to worship together."

In **God's Plan for Man**, he wrote: "The redeemed and glorified saints, therefore, will live on the Earth in eternity and not in Heaven. They will

have access to Heaven and all other planets but their place of residence will be on Earth forever" (pp. 947-948).

Oliver Buswell points out that even when supposedly justified by scriptural arguments there is an underlying racist position in the teaching of racial segregation (see, **Slavery, Segregation and Scripture**, pg. 5).

In **Mixed Messages**, Fred and Anna Prinzing address prejudice, racism and segregation. They discuss the "evils of segregation" and see racism in an "onion" model with segregation being one of the outer layers (Chapter 7).

To teach that certain groups should not worship together because of race is not biblical. If Dake was not racist, he has inadvertently supported that cause.

Gleason Archer, a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, calls Dake's views heretical and adds: "Old deviations get new power as new people get involved in them, and if you don't stamp out a fire when it's small, it may get out of hand."

Archer's statement is validated in the example of faith-healer Benny Hinn. Not only has Hinn taken Dake's unorthodox view that each member of the Godhead possesses His own spirit, soul and body (Tritheism) and developed it into the bizarre "nine persons in the Godhead" declaration, he embarrassed himself further by expanding on Dake's belief that Adam had access to other planets by saying Adam could fly to the moon and back.

Despite these embarrassments, Hinn continues to bring to light the peculiar eisegesis of Dake's writings. Recently Hinn appeared on TBN's *Praise the Lord Show* to promote his forthcoming book, **Welcome, Holy Spirit**. On the broadcast, he delivered a sermon drawn from this book. His comments included a strange interpretation that could have been gleaned from the **Dake Bible**:

"You talk about watching God divide an ocean, taking the wheels off the chariots of the Egyptians. And here

this wall of ice, it was, by the way a wall of ice, if you read your Scriptures, that's right. The Hebrew word, and I can show it to you after the show Paul [Crouch]. But the Hebrew word, when God divided the Red Sea, as the walls stood, it actually froze with God's breath. So when the water came down it was ice coming that crushed the Egyptians. It's in the Word. It's in the Hebrew. You — it's not in the King James, but it's in the Hebrew and I'll show it to Paul and he can show it to you after I'm all done, maybe next week. You Hebrew scholars look me up, you'll find I'm right" (July 14, 1994).

PFO accepted Hinn's invitation to have "Hebrew scholars look me up." Dr. W.E. Nunnally, Associate Professor of Early Judaism and Christian Origins at Central Bible College and Adjunct Professor of Hebrew Language at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Mo., emphasizes that "The interpretation of Mr. Hinn is purely pneumatic exegesis at its worst." Dr. Nunnally further established that the flaw of Hinn's interpretation can be proven by no less than four compelling arguments. He told PFO:

"1) The phrase 'strong east wind' is the agent God used to accomplish the miracle. This is a well-known meteorological phenomenon of the Middle-East, both in antiquity and today. The phrase describes a fluctuation in the normal air-flow, which moves from west to east, bringing moisture and more moderate temperatures from off the Mediterranean Sea. The 'east wind,' on the other hand, describes a wind which moves east to west. Since it comes off the desert, it is unusually hot and arid. This contrast was known by the writers of Scripture and is easily seen in passages such as Gen 41:6; Ex 14:21; Job 15:2; Isa 27:8; Ezk 17:10; 19:12; Hos 13:15; and Jonah 4:8. The point here is that God would not send a hot wind to freeze anything. The passages given describe the drying, scorching, withering effect of the wind, not its cooling action. Anyone [like Hinn] who lived in Israel for 14 years experienced at least 14 of these, and should know first-hand the devastating heat it brings in its wake.

2) The term consistently used throughout the narrative is 'waters' ([Exodus] 14:22, 26, 28, 29; 15:1, 4, 5, 10, 19, 21; always plural in Hebrew). There is no indication that the actual chemical make-up of the waters changed, since the term remains the same, and the number remains in the plural (i.e., it did not become a solid block of ice). In addition, there are a number of terms which occur in the OT describing the action of freezing, following the commonly used translations, and none of these appear in the passage in question. Examples of words available to the ancient author, but unused: *davak* (II Sam 23:10), *yatsak* (Job 37:10), *lachad* (Job 38:30). In addition to the action of freezing, the term 'ice' (*kerach*) is also conspicuous in its absence. That the term was available and used in the OT, even by Moses himself is clear from its appearance in Gen 31:40; cf. Job 6:16; 37:10; 38:29; Psa 147:17; and Jer 36:30.

3) In Ex 15:4, 5, and 10, (cf. 14:26-28, 30; 15:19), the demise of the Egyptian army is described as 'drowning.' The Hebrew term *tava'* means 'to sink' or 'to sink down' (cf. Job 38:6; Psa 9:15; 69:2, 14-15; Jer 38:6, 22; Lam 2:9). Because this term is in the text in question and its meaning is abundantly clear, it is impossible to support the statement that '...it was ice coming down that crushed the Egyptians.'

4) The 'Full Counsel of God' or 'Analogy of Faith' or 'Scripture Interprets Scripture' requires that we fully investigate the testimony of the remainder of Scripture to determine what took place at the Sea. Moses, an eye-witness, describes the event in these terms, 'I will sing unto the Lord...the horse and rider he has *thrown into the sea*' (Ex 15:1; cf. v. 21). In verse 19 he states, '...the Lord brought back the *waters* of the sea upon them.' Deut 11:4 states that God '*overwhelmed them with the waters* of the Red Sea.' Joshua 24:7 notes that God '*brought the sea over them and covered them*.' Neh 9:11 adds that God '*cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into the mighty waters*' (i.e., they sank/drowned). Psa 78:13 reads, '[God] made *the waters* stand up *like a heap*.' Psa 78:35 adds

that '*the sea overwhelmed* their enemies.' Psa 106:11 reminds us that '*the waters covered* their adversaries.' Finally Heb 11:29 informs us, 'by faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but *the Egyptians*, when they attempted to do the same, *were drowned*.' The language employed by the majority of these passages is highly suggestive of death by drowning. At least two passages state it explicitly (Ex 15:4, 5, 10; Heb 11:29)."

Additionally, the first two points of Dr. Nunnally superb exegeses negates Finis Dake's conjecture, recorded in note "h" for Exodus 14:22 and note "b" for Exodus 14:27. Dake's error very likely came about by a misreading of **Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible**, which the late pastor heavily relied upon for his notes in his reference Bible. Moreover, Dr. Nunnally's commentary also calls into question the fundamental principle of interpretation Dake sets forth in the Preface of his Bible:

"Statements of fact and historical accounts are accepted as such. THE RULE OBSERVED IS: Take the Bible literally wherein it is at all possible; if symbolic, figurative or typical language is used, then look for the literal truth it intends to convey. During the author's 100,000 hours in 43 years of searching the Scriptures this all-important and fundamental principle of interpretation has been strictly and consistently followed. Novel interpretations have been rejected, and theories supported by personal opinion have been laid aside."

The **Dake Bible**, even with its continual revision of the text, remains a collection of controversial interpretations. Some of the errors are speculative and silly. Others are deadly.

In response to criticism of the **Dake Bible**, David Patton of Dake Bible Sales says, "The real crisis in Christianity today is not doctrinal. Rather, it's a lack of true brotherly love."

Criticism must be tempered with love, but not naivete. Paul and the other New Testament writers warned of false doctrine nearly 2,000 years ago. Heresy remains today. The dangers of the **Dake Bible** can not be overlooked. ❖

of blessedness. *Chara*, as well, can have many expressions, including tears (see Kittel's **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. 9, pp. 366-371).

Proverbs 17:22, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine," is a verse which has been misused to lend credence to the laughter phenomenon. The Hebrew word (*sameach*) emphasizes a rejoicing or cheerful heart. It is clearly an activity of the heart, to be happily content as opposed to a broken spirit, which is pointed out in the latter half of the verse. It has nothing to do with frenzy laughter.

The filling of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5 is connected with all kinds of practical issues of living. If genuinely filled with the Spirit, one will manifest clean speech, order time well, be filled with music and praise, treat one's spouse well and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. These are no laughing matters.

Surprisingly, even the editor and publisher of the nation's leading Charismatic magazine offers reservations about Howard-Browne's "laughing revival." Stephen Strang, in the August 1994 **Charisma**, cautions:

"But he risks trying to capitalize on the popularity of this strange phenomenon. If he or his followers insist that laughing is the hallmark of the truly spiritual among us, does that mean those who have not laughed are not as spiritual? If they press the point, they may split with other Christians as the Oneness people did in 1917 after they insisted on baptizing in the name of Jesus only. If that happens, then what may be a blessing now could become one more Pentecostal fad that ultimately discredits the Lord and hurts churches in the process. I urge Rodney Howard-Browne and others who are seeing similar manifestations to be careful, to test the spirits and to submit to godly counsel in order to keep this new revival balanced. On the other hand, we need to be aware that significant changes seem to be taking place in people's lives when the joy of

the Lord touches them" (pg. 102).

One can't help but wonder if Howard-Browne gleaned his belly quirk from a reading of Oral Roberts. In **The Holy Spirit In The Now**, Roberts wrote, "In order for me to talk to God out of the deepest depths of our being — down in our belly — we have to bypass the mind from time to time, for a few seconds each time, and let the Spirit well up from our inner being. ... You feel this flooding up in the pit of your stomach. So when you feel this, begin to worship the Lord. ... It comes up out of my belly, out of my inner being" (pp. 46, 47, 7).

The evangelist is not just into laughter, but is into hysteria and frenzy which is clearly condemned by Scripture in 1 Corinthians 14:23. Where there is chaos and disorder others will see it as hysteria, frenzy and madness.

Howard-Browne also promotes a number of other aberrant ideas.

His view of a proper worship could be expressed, "As long as something is happening it really does not matter if it is of God, of man or of the devil."

"But I'd rather be in a church where the devil and the flesh are manifesting than in a church where nothing is happening because people are too afraid to manifest anything. Every time there is a move of God, a few people will get excited, go overboard, and get in the flesh. Other believers will get upset, saying that couldn't be of God. Don't worry about it, either. Rejoice, because at least something is happening. ... If someone comes in the meeting, rolls around on the floor, laughs in the Holy Spirit, or does it in the flesh, at least he's not getting drunk or taking dope" (**The Coming Revival**, pp. 6, 8).

He speaks glowingly of Charles Parham (*ibid.*, pg. 11), apparently unaware that Parham was thrown out of the Azusa Street work in 1906 and banned from that time on. Parham spent the rest of his days denouncing W.J. Seymour and the Azusa Street revival (see Synan, **The Holiness Pentecostal Movement**, pg. 112).

He also praises William Branham

(**The Coming Revival**, pg. 13), who, after a nervous breakdown, gave false prophecies and taught such things as Satan and Eve having sexual intercourse, that he needed an angel physically present to minister, (see **The New Charismatics**, Michael Moriarity, pp. 49, 50 and 64). Branham further taught that the doctrine of the Trinity "is of the devil" (**Footprints on the Sands of Time**, pg. 606).

He also downgrades theological education. **Charisma** magazine notes: "Howard-Browne disparages those who try to apply a theological test to his methods" (August 1994, pg. 26).

The evangelist himself says: "Place your doctorate on a wheelchair patient in the Name of Jesus and see what happens. The devil's not afraid of a diploma. When you show him that piece of paper, he'll pull out his diploma and say, join the gang — you and I went to the same school! The power of God is not going to flow through those that have theory; it's going to flow through those who have revelation" (**The Coming Revival**, pg. 23).

He also promotes prophecies, occasionally getting specific and into trouble. In 1991, he predicted that during an outpouring of the Spirit, "Eyeballs will form, legs and arms will grow out... The talk-show host will scream, 'O my God I can't see! I can't see! I'm blind!' ... We will start seeing people drop dead when they lie about hidden sin" (*ibid.*, pp. 25, 27).

His stomach fetish intrudes again and again. For instance: "I've walked into a room and seen ministers wailing like a bunch of cats and dogs. I asked, what's going on here? We're interceding. Lord have mercy. I thought you were dying! ... Of course there is such a thing as genuine intercession by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit takes over in our bellies and prays through us the perfect will of God for a situation" (**The Reality Of The Person Of The Holy Spirit**, pg. 16).

This heavy focus on the belly is a quirk dreamed up solely by Howard-Browne. The two Greek words for "belly," *koilia* and *gaster* can mean the womb, the heart, the whole inner man

or simply the stomach. There is never even the slightest hint in the few references where *koilia* and *gaster* are used that we are to worship God from our stomachs (see **Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, pg. 118). The idea seems grotesque and irreverent. It would be stretching it to suggest that John 7:38 has anything to do with laughter. The Living Waters flowing out of a man have to do with the Holy Spirit and His indwelling presence. He does not reside in the stomach but in the innermost being of a Christian. All commentators agree that the *koilia* of John 7:38 has to do with the heart, soul and innermost being.

Albert Barnes renders the sense of John 7:38, "out of his belly," with the following: "Out of his midst, or out of his heart. The word belly is often put for the midst of a thing, the centre, and the heart. ... It means here that from the man shall flow; that is, his piety shall be of such a nature that it shall extend its blessings to others. ... The Jews used the same figure. ... 'When a man turns himself to the Lord, he shall be as a fountain filled with living water, and his streams shall flow to all nations, lands, tribes of men'" (**Albert Barnes' Notes On The New Testament**, pp. 302-303). It might be stretching it a bit but Paul in Romans 16:18 warns against those who serve "their own belly."

New Age teaching, some of which is based on Hinduism, promotes the idea of an energy flow out of the stomach. In applied Kinesiology, the Chi force is said to be around the navel (see **The Hidden Agenda**, pp. 151-153).

Howard-Browne assures us that very soon God will begin to miraculously transport people from place to place: "How are you going to take it when God begins to transport people? If God transported some of you from one city to another, you'd scream all the way to your destination" (**The Reality of the Person Of The Holy Spirit**, pp. 31-32).

Just prior to that statement he affirms: "This is just the beginning of the mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost that will come in this day and hour"

(*ibid.*, pg. 31). He is edging toward some very dangerous teaching. Translocation or astral projection are occult phenomenon connected with voodoo and black arts (see **Occult ABC** by Kurt Koch, pp. 224-225, 249-250).

He does not talk about the Holy Spirit as a person or a member of the Godhead but as an electrical current: "I must have called out to God for about twenty minutes that day. The fire of God came on me. It started on my head and went right down to my feet. His power burned in my body and stayed like that for four days. I thought I was going to die. I thought He was going to kill me. I was plugged into heaven's electric light supply and since then, my desire has been to go and plug other people in. My body was on fire from the top of my head to the souls of my feet and out of my belly began to flow rivers of living water. I began to laugh uncontrollably and then I began to weep and speak with other tongues. This continued not for one hour only, but for hours on end. I was so intoxicated on the wine of the Holy Ghost that I was beside myself. The fire of God was coursing through my whole being and it didn't quit. One day, two days, three days and in the fourth day I couldn't bear it anymore" (**Fresh Oil From Heaven**, pg. 27).

Compare that with Jesus' description of Him as our "Comforter" in John 16. "He will reprove the world of sin" (verse 8). "He will guide you into all truth" (verse 13). "He will glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine and show it unto you" (verse 14).

Howard-Browne's view of the new birth is distorted and merged with "prosperity theology":

"But when Jesus comes inside, He cleans the house out. Your lifestyle will be affected. You start loving people. Your marriage gets turned around. Your finances get healed. Your bodies get healed. That's what the new birth does" (**What It Means To Be Born Again**, pp. 26-27).

On the same subject, he says:

"If you were raised in a home where there was a poverty mentality or a sickness mentality, most likely you

have been affected by it. You have to stand up and rebuke it. If you don't you will be like so many people who are saved but who suffer in poverty and disease — sometimes most of their lives. ... If you are a young couple just starting your married life, you need to declare the provision God has made for you. You need to say: 'Poverty will be far from us. We're not going to have it in our house. It's not going to affect our children. This is how you can set the course of your life'" (**Thoughts On Stewardship**, Volume 1, pp. 18-19).

He also believes in miracle cloths and appeals to Acts 19:11-12. He states: "The anointing of God can go into the cloth and then into an individual" (**The Touch Of God**, pg. 132). Acts 19:11-12 says, "God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul." The word special in Greek is *tuchon*, meaning literally not common, not ordinary. What Paul was doing was not common, ordinary or normative for the Church.

He cites a number of undocumented, unsubstantiated claims of miracles and healings, "God often uses me in the area of deaf ears and cancer cases. I don't know why. Many cancer cases are healed through my ministry, and sometimes arthritis. I'd rather pray for a deaf ear any day before I'd pray for a blind eye, yet I've had blind eyes opened in my meetings, too. ... One night in the Bronx I prayed for seven people who had AIDS. You have to have the power of God to meet these situations" (**Flowing in the Holy Ghost**, pp. 67, 71).

There are no names or dates given, thus no objective proof for these claims and no way to check them.

At age 12 he exhibited what can be classified as clairvoyance, or second sight, an area where the demonic and the biblical get confused. He testifies: "The voice said these words to me — words I will never forget — Your mom will not be home today. She's had a car wreck. But don't worry; she's all right. She's in the hospital" (*ibid.*, pg. 86). He reports other such occurrences and, as well, of knowing the future. He claims that if people really

have the “gift of wisdom,” they will be given “divine revelations” to be able to see “what’s going to happen one year, two years, three years in the future” (ibid., pg. 93).

Kurt Koch warns: “If one observes the development of a clairvoyant, the psychic, occult nature of his activity always becomes evident” (**Occult ABC**, pg. 38). God is not giving omniscience to His creatures. Knowing the future or such claims belongs to fortune tellers! These claims of direct, divine revelation open us up to all kinds of delusion.

On top of all the other effects he claims to have on his audiences is that of “Holy Ghost Glue.” In his booklet, **Manifesting The Holy Ghost**, he includes the following:

“Holy Ghost Glue. When this happened I noticed a woman on the floor who was laughing uncontrollably. Then she started weeping and speaking in other tongues. She was lying on her back under the power of God with her hands — lying back above her head. She was stuck to the floor.”

“... The Mack truck of God’s power is coming! She was lying there from noon until 1:30 drunk in the Spirit. At 1:30 she tried to get up. She wanted to get up. She couldn’t. All she could do was flap her hands. So she was there flapping away — flap, flap, flap, flap. She said ‘I can’t get up. I’m stuck to the floor.’”

“I was walking up and down. It was 2:30, 3:30, 4:30. She was still stuck and I was still walking. Sometimes, as in her case, we close the meeting, but the Holy Spirit is still there.”

“... At 4:30 the woman was still saying, ‘I can’t get up. I’m stuck to the floor.’ ‘I turned to the Pastor and said, ‘Look I haven’t had either breakfast or lunch. It’s 4:30. I’m not stuck and you’re not stuck. These people are going to stay here with her, so let’s go have a meal before the night service.’”

“The ushers told us later that at 6 o’clock the woman finally peeled herself off the carpet. Then it took her an hour to crawl from the center of the church auditorium to the side wall. She

had been stuck to the floor for 6 hours! ...”

“So I said, ‘Bring on the fire God! Do whatever you want to do in my meetings. Stick the people to the floor, to the roof, to the wall — whatever’” (pp. 25, 26, 27, 29).

The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements notes that Kathryn Kuhlman was the one responsible for introducing the modern phenomenon of being “slain in the Spirit.” Even the “great” heresies of the past never produced it.

There are many Kuhlman clones crisscrossing the country and Howard-Browne himself is spawning, copy cats, wannabes, and lookalikes. In the June 1994 **Charisma** magazine, an article titled “Holy Laughter Hits Boston Church” appeared on page 54.

The periodical also featured a full-color advertisement for the video, **The Laugh Heard ‘Round The World** by Ken and Nancy Curtis of Lakeland, Fla. The Curtis’ video shows where the couple have created a “laughing room” in one overseas church. People are carried off the platform and dumped in there to roll around, scream, laugh and generally be out of control.

Alan Morrison’s article, “We All Fall Down,” provides readers with a disturbing example of how sacrilegious this new wave of alleged spiritual experience can be:

“A powerful religious phenomenon appears to be sweeping through many churches across the world. So marked has this been that extensive comment has even appeared in the national press. For example, on June 18th, 1994, the **Times** newspaper carried a report headed ‘Spread of Hysteria Fad Worries Church’, in which it was stated that ‘a religious craze that originated in Canada and involves mass fainting and hysterical laughter has crossed the Atlantic to cause growing concern in the Church of England.’ In this article, it was reported that the vicar of a large church in London ‘was forced to cancel an evening service of Holy Communion... because so many in his congregation

were lying on the floor’. Apparently, the service had ‘ended in chaos... as dozens of people burst into spontaneous laughter or tears, trembled and shook or fell to the floor.’ The church’s parish newsletter then carried an article about the service under the headline ‘Holy Spirit Fever Hits London’, in which it described the phenomenon as a ‘revival’” (*The Christian News*, July 11, 1994, pg. 16).

The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements further observes that when it comes to the so-called “slain in the Spirit” experience, “It is equally unquestionable that there is no biblical evidence for the experience as normative in the Christian life” (pg. 791).

Corresponding to the **Dictionary’s** comments, Morrison writes:

“Another proof text offered is that which tells of Ezekiel having a vision of the Lord in all His glory (Ezek. 1:18). The prophet was so utterly awestruck and overcome by what he had seen — a vision too terrible to behold — that he fell forwards to the ground, prostrate in a state of abject worship. But this response of a lone man of God cannot possibly be used to support the ‘Slain in the Spirit’ experience as it is entirely different to what happens in Pentecostal-Charismatic gatherings, where a mass of people simply fall down (usually backward) in a swoon because of the loaded suggestions and triggering touch of a man, rather than as a response to the awesome power of God. It is also important to note that Ezekiel fell forward on his face. In the Bible it is only God’s enemies who fall backwards when confronted with His naked spiritual power (e.g. John 18:6; cf. Isaiah 28:13); whereas true believers in the Bible always fall on their faces in reverential adoration and worship, without a trace of the hysterical laughter or convulsions we see in so many churches today (e.g., Gen. 17:1-3; Joshua 5:13-15; Ezek. 1:28, 43:1-5; 44:4; Mt. 17:5-6; Rev.1:17; 7:11, 11:16-17)” (*The Christian News*, op. cit.).

Worst of all is Howard-Browne’s view of Jesus, whom he sees as an earthly prophet who left His Deity in

Heaven.

Orthodox Christianity has always held that Jesus on Earth was fully God and fully man. However, Howard-Browne writes:

“Nothing Jesus did was because He was the Son of God. The Bible says He laid aside His royal robes of Deity and when He walked on earth He did so as a Prophet under the Abrahamic Covenant” (**The Touch Of God**, pp. 13-14). Where does the Bible say that Jesus “laid aside His royal robes of Deity”? This is outlandish. There are numerous cults that see Jesus as only a prophet. It is unfortunate that this is taught by a “Christian” ministry. There are no verses produced by Howard-Browne even though he says, “the Bible says.”

He apparently is saying that the Savior could only perform miracles because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit on His life, (ibid., pg. 14). This, of course, would make the Spirit more powerful than Jesus and reduce Jesus to being less than co-equal. His view of the Trinity is in trouble here. It is more biblical to see the Persons of the Godhead working in concert. He has no concept at all regarding the economic Trinity (see Loraine Boettner, **Studies In Theology**, pp. 116-118).

The first person in our modern era to suggest that Jesus had set aside His Deity was arch-Liberal German rationalist Johan Semler in the 18th century. Semler suggested that the *kenosis* or self-emptying of Jesus in Philippians 2:7 was a complete discarding of Deity. That is patently false because we see the Deity of Christ shining forth through all His earthly ministry. We see it in His miracles as well as in His titles and claims. He also unveils His Deity on the Mount of Transfiguration. Obviously He had not left it in heaven in any sense. Howard-Browne needs to clarify what he means by “He laid aside His royal robes of Deity.”

Both Semler and Howard-Browne are wrong. Charles Ryrie gives us a clear biblical understanding of Philippians 2:7:

“The *kenosis* (emptying) of Christ during His incarnation does not mean that He surrendered any attributes of

Deity, but that He took on the limitations of humanity. This involved a veiling of His preincarnate glory (John 17:5) and the voluntary waiving of some of His divine prerogatives during the time He was on Earth” (**The Ryrie Study Bible**, pg. 354).

Regarding the two natures of Christ, Louis Berkhof offers the following observation: “From the earliest times, and more particularly since the Council of Chalcedon, the Church confessed the Doctrine of the two natures of Christ. The Council did not solve the problem presented by a person who was at once human and divine, but only sought to ward off some of the solutions which were offered and were clearly recognized as erroneous. And the Church accepted the doctrine of two natures in one person not because it had a complete understanding of the mystery, but because it clearly saw in it a mystery revealed by the Word of God. It was and remained ever since for the Church an article of faith, far beyond human comprehension” (**Systematic Theology**, pg. 315).

That is precisely why, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was able to declare that He was the “I Am.”

Harold O.J. Brown comments on the Council of Chalcedon and its affirmation of biblical truth: “The creed of the Council of Chalcedon affirmed that each nature is complete; Jesus has a ‘reasonable soul and body,’ a complete human nature, and thus is ‘consubstantial with us’ as well as ‘consubstantial with the Father.’... The conviction that Jesus Christ has two complete natures, divine and human, deemed crucial by the Antiochene party, was reaffirmed at Chalcedon. In retrospect, at least to the orthodox Christians, the Chalcedon doctrine of the two natures of Christ seems a necessary conclusion from the New Testament witness to Him” (**Heresies**, pg. 181-182).

Baker’s Dictionary of Theology gives us the following: “In virtue of His Deity, Jesus Christ enjoys in the fullest and strictest sense the being and attributes of the divine nature; though in His incarnation He has also assumed the essence and attributes of

human nature. Hence we have the common formulation — one person and two natures, or two natures in one person” (pg. 373).

Howard-Browne also teaches that Jesus was under the Abrahamic Covenant. Jesus, by His own admission, was under the Mosaic Covenant (Matthew 5:17-19). There is a sense in which the Church is said to be under some of the spiritual benefits of the Abrahamic Covenant (Galatians 3), but Jesus was never a prophet under the Abrahamic Covenant.

Howard-Browne’s view is not derived from a serious study of the Scriptures or even from a credible Bible reference. Like his numerous aberrant contemporaries, he has apparently gleaned his theology from metaphysician and occultist E.W. Kenyon who, in his **New Creation Realities**, established the erroneous idea that Jesus had been under the Abrahamic covenant:

“But you ask, What did He mean then by ‘It is finished’? It meant that He had fulfilled the Abrahamic Covenant, of which He, you remember, was a part” (pg. 129).

Howard-Browne further limits Christ to the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4 and says Jesus was Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher (**The Touch Of God**, Chapter 4). Certainly He was all of these and more, much more. We cannot limit Jesus to a fivefold ministry. He was and is God in the flesh. He was and is Priest, King, Lamb, Savior and on and on. God incarnate cannot be limited to five offices. Ephesians 4 refers to gifted men in the Church in any event, not to Christ. (See further **100 Portraits Of Christ**, by Henry Garipey.) In limiting Christ in this way one creates a false Christ.

Christians should not have to put up with self-proclaimed Apostles and prophets. Paul wrote: “If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. ... Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:37-38, 40). ❖

that Hinn's most recent promise to mend his ways has been broken.

At his San Antonio Miracle Crusade in March, Hinn delivered a message titled "Who is This Jesus?" in which he demonstrated his imprudence in handling God's Word and his continuing habit of claiming revelation knowledge.

His eisegesis and neglect of context, and his return to esoteric assertions became clear when he said: "And one day He [Jesus] stood and said, 'I am the Way. I am the Truth. I am the Life.' You know why the Jews got angry with Him? ... I am an Israelite, I know something that most Westerners don't know. The reason they got angry with him when He said, 'I am the Way, Truth, Life' is because the tabernacle of Moses had three entrances. The gate was called 'the way,' the holy place had a door called 'the truth' and the Holy of Holies had a veil called 'the life.' When Jesus said, 'I'm the Way, Truth and Life' He was saying, 'I'm the gate of the tabernacle, the door to the holy place and the veil to the Holy of Holies.' And they got angry at Him. They said, 'How dare this man declare he's the way to the Holy of Holies where the ark is.'"

Hinn's exposition is terribly flawed. First, the confession of Christ to be the Way, Truth and Life comes from John 14 and was made to His disciples, not to the Jewish leaders. The disciples neither became "angry" at Christ's words nor questioned His claim.

Hinn's attempt at symbolism or typology is equally faulty. Despite whatever elevated understanding his being an "Israelite" might have granted him, his conclusion about the symbolism behind Christ's statement in John 14:6 is biblically untenable. There were no names for the various veils or entrances to Moses' tabernacle. Rabbi Pesach Levovitz of the Sons of Israel congregation in Lakewood, N.J., confirmed to PFO that there is no Jewish tradition that names the veils of the tabernacle entrances. They are simply referred to as "hangings."

The sole typology between Jesus and the Old Testament temple is, not from John 14:6, but from John 10:7 where He says that He is the door or gate.

In his sermon, Hinn moved from esoteric knowledge to outright "revelation knowledge" by claiming a unique insight into Scripture directly imparted from the Holy Spirit:

"And this One who is, one day saw a blind man. And He did this, He collected some mud and spit upon it and made clay and stuck it on the man's eyes. [Hinn makes 'pop-pop' sound.] See if you can do that. I thought to myself, 'Why did Jesus do that?' Why did He just not lay His hands and be healed? Why did He have to make mud and spit on it and stick it on the man's eyes? And the Holy Spirit gave me a marvelous answer. You remember when God made man and He squeezed mud

into shape and He breathed on that? And he became a living soul. The reason Jesus put mud on a guy's eyes was not because the man was blind. It's because he had no eyes and He just gave him brand new ones. [Hinn makes 'pop-pop' sound again. Audience applauds with excitement.] He is the source of creation."

Hinn told his faithful the Holy Spirit gave him this insight — an understanding of the account never before realized. It's certainly one not supported by any biblical commentary, Greek lexicon, word study or, most importantly, the scriptural text itself. The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle John to record in the biblical text the events surrounding a man born blind, not a man born without eyes:

"His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life...' Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means "sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.' 'How then were your eyes opened?' they demanded. He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. ... So I went and washed, and then I could see' (John 9:2-11).

Scripture is clear in its description of the circumstances. The man's eyes were blinded, Jesus placed mud upon his eyes and instructed him to wash them. When he did, his eyes were opened. The man's blindness was healed by our Lord, He did not have to have new eyes created out of clay and placed into empty sockets.

Hinn's declaration that the Holy Spirit told him Jesus created new eyes dishonors Paul's command in Colossians 3:9 by bearing false witness against the Holy Spirit and borders on violating the Third Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." **Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible** states: "This precept not only forbids all false oaths, but all common swearing where the name of God is used, or where He is appealed to as a Witness of the truth" (pg. 126). This latter directive would certainly encompass Hinn's "...the Holy Spirit gave me a marvelous answer" declaration.

On top of all that comes Hinn's recent exploitation of former heavyweight boxing champion Evander Holyfield.

In late April, Holyfield lost his championship belt to Michael Moorer in a 12-round decision. Reports say that during the 36-minute fight Holyfield appeared to age 10 years. Four days after the fight, he retired from boxing. He was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect, which prevented sufficient oxygen from being pumped to muscles and tissue. Holyfield's "stiff heart" condition is not life-threatening — "It was not like he was sitting on a

time bomb,” cardiologist Dr. Douglas Morris said — but it precluded him from continuing his boxing career.

Then in June, Holyfield traveled from his home in Georgia to attend Hinn’s Philadelphia Miracle Crusade. “There are a lot of people who feel I went to the crusade to be healed,” Holyfield said. “But I didn’t go to the crusade to be healed. I went to the crusade to get closer with the Lord. And I got anointed and I got closer to the Lord and got healed as well.”

“The Lord is telling me right now He is repairing Holyfield’s heart completely,” Hinn shouted to the 9,000 cheering faithful during the first evening of the crusade, according to the **Philadelphia Inquirer** (June 12, 1994, pg. B1). And so Hinn abandoned his promise to “Let the person speak for themselves.” During the subsequent services in the crusade, Hinn used Holyfield as a trophy, having him sit on the stage with his other VIPs.

And then, less than one week after Hinn claimed the Lord repaired the boxer’s heart “completely,” he and Holyfield headlined a segment of TBN’s *Praise the Lord Show*. Host Paul Crouch initiated the discussion concerning the recent claim of “healing”:

Crouch: Let me ask you one final question here. Have you been back to your doctor? Do you really have evidence yet that there is a change in your physical body?

Holyfield: I went to the doctor yesterday and I got out this morning. And the only thing the doctor could say is that I’m better. And I have recovered and so I can fight if I choose to fight, but I’m only going to move if it’s God willing.

Crouch: I see. Okay. So at this point, you’re not 100% sure then that you’re going to jump back in the ring... Is that where we’re at now?

Holyfield: You’re right. It’s God’s will if I’m going to fight. I’m not doing anything these days to glorify myself but to glorify the Lord.

It appears that Holyfield has been caught in the web of deceit of Hinn’s traveling healing show. Not only was he showcased at Hinn’s crusade, but segments of the crusade with the boxer were featured on the *PTL Show*. Hinn’s conquest even gained the attention of **Time** magazine and other publications.

Holyfield now has had to cover for Hinn’s “revelations” of healing. While he said, “I feel good ... I’m healed,” he has told his doctors not to release specific results from recent physical tests. **The Atlanta Constitution** reported that Dr. Douglas Morris, following his examination of Holyfield, avoided a direct response to a question about the “healing.” When asked if he sanctioned the boxer’s physical condition to fight again, he stated: “I don’t know that. I’m not at liberty to say.” When pressed further about the results of Holyfield’s examination, he conceded that the improvement wasn’t unusual considering that his heart hasn’t been subject to nearly as much stress as before and during the April title fight (June 17, 1994, pg. D16).

Holyfield appears to have succumbed to the “faith-healer admiration syndrome,” an exercise in group dynamics. Not wanting to make the faith healer look bad is nothing new. Wayne A. Robinson, a former vice president of the Oral Roberts Association, addresses this phenomenon in his book, **Oral**: “But there’s a principle at work that’s often missed by the casual observer: Not only do people want to be as he says they can become; they also want to do it *for Oral*. If they’re in a wheelchair they desperately want to walk yes — but they also want to *please Oral*” (pg. 4, italics in original).

Robinson further relates the story of a blind woman who attended one of Roberts’ crusades. After prayer, Roberts asked, “Tell us what’s happening inside you.” The woman replied, “There — there was a light.” The next day the newspaper featured an eight-column spread with the woman’s picture and headline boasting: “‘There Was a Light,’ Says Blind Woman.” However, when Robinson interviewed the woman he inquired, “What happened to you up there on the platform?” “Nothing,” she responded. When asked as to why she said what she did, she responded: “I didn’t want to disappoint him” (pg. 9).

Hinn’s followers may not be aware of this phenomenon. Boxing administrators, however, were not as convinced of Holyfield’s “completely repaired heart” as were those who attended Hinn’s meetings or those viewing the *PTL Show*. Boxing officials issued a statement days after the purported healing that they would need medical proof that Holyfield was cured of his heart problem before letting him back into the ring.

Further, it appears that “God’s will” as to whether the former boxing champ will “choose to fight” again will depend solely upon boxing authorities. “I’m better” and “I have recovered” won’t cut it in the ring.

Holyfield’s assertion that “I have recovered and so I can fight if I choose to fight...” may be but wishful thinking or a “positive confession” on his part. Perhaps he may be able to “fight” in a back alley somewhere, but according to **The Atlanta Constitution**, “Leaders of the top two U.S. sanctioning bodies said Monday [June 20] that Holyfield couldn’t box in their states without undergoing more in-depth, pre-fight heart tests than the usual EKG” (June 21, 1994, pg. D1).

Moreover, Hinn has found his way into Holyfield’s bank account. A source from Hinn’s Philadelphia Miracle Crusade told PFO that donations to cover crusade expenditures were low after the initial Thursday evening service. On Friday morning, because of the poor offering the previous night, the evangelist asked people to donate \$1,000 to help with expenses. Holyfield raised his hand. Hinn then solicited the boxer for \$100,000 and when he agreed, Hinn publicly requested the full \$265,000 to completely underwrite the cost of the crusade. Holyfield agreed to donate the total amount. Hinn then prayed that God would return the blessing, and that the boxer would earn \$200 million.

PROPHET REGAINS TAX-EXEMPT STATUS AND GIVES BIRTH TO SON

Hinn asked the Lord for "another bonus" to be given to Holyfield. "Give him a wife," he petitioned, "because he's got five children that need a mother." And then the evangelist said his future wife would be found among those attending the Friday morning service of the Philadelphia crusade.

For those still believing in the sincerity of Hinn's professed reform, there's the July 28 installment of *Inside Edition*. The television news program had continued to monitor Hinn since its initial report 15 months earlier and also found his claims to have mended his ways to be exaggerated.

In one scene, Hinn claimed to have healed a mother and her two young children of AIDS. "Father, a perfect healing," he said.

However, it was learned that Hinn's organization never verified the "healing" prior to his ministry running and rerunning the spot on national television. When confronted, Hinn admitted: "If she's not healed then we have a problem. Do you know something about it that I don't know?" *Inside Edition* producers did know something Hinn apparently didn't know or care to know. The woman and her children had not been healed of AIDS. In fact, one of the children shown was not even hers.

Upon being told this, Hinn tried to justify himself: "All I know is what she said. I was praying she'd get a [miracle]. And I put it on showing me praying for someone with AIDS to give someone hope with AIDS."

Hinn continues to travel down the same old road. His detours onto the road of reformation have been shown to be but brief deviations onto the route of the mainstream. The sign on his ministry door does not read: "Closed for Renovation," but "Open for Business as Usual."

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

very special significance because of what happened here. To us, it's sacred because it's where we lost a prophet of God, killed by a mob."

Earlier in the day, church leaders also participated in a ceremony in Nauvoo, Ill. There they unveiled a large "sunstone" that was recovered from the debris of the LDS temple that was under construction at the time Smith was killed. The decorative limestone will be kept in a glass case to protect it from vandals and the weather. It is on loan to the Mormon Church from the state of Illinois.

The Nauvoo temple, completed in 1945, burned in an 1848 fire and was later hit by a tornado. Only two of the 5-foot-tall, 4,200 pound sunstones are still in existence. The other was purchased by the Smithsonian Institute in 1990 from the Historical Society of Quincy for a reported \$100,000.

—MKG

Elizabeth Claire Prophet's Church Universal and Triumphant has settled its dispute with the Internal Revenue Service and regained its tax-exempt status, which had been revoked in 1992.

The Montana-based New Age sect had lost its status after a three-year audit. It responded by suing the IRS.

Now, according to a July 9 *Washington Times* report, "the tax agency settled out of court -- giving it back the same tax exemption afforded a Baptist or Catholic group."

The 35-year-old church founded by Prophet gained notoriety over the past few years for its doomsday prophecies and as a defendant in environmental lawsuits. The sect's 24,000-acre ranch and community, deemed the nation's "largest intentional community," borders Yellowstone National Park.

Under the terms of the IRS agreement, the church admitted no mismanagement. However, it will have to transfer a restaurant, store, ranch and farm to taxable subsidiaries. Additionally, the group's "sport clubs" will not be permitted to keep guns on church property.

Concurrently, the 56-year-old spiritual leader also gave birth to a son in July. The 5-pound, 13-1/2 ounce boy was born to Mrs. Prophet and her husband, Ed Francis. Francis is vice-president of the church. Mrs. Prophet has four children from her marriage to the late Mark Prophet.

—MKG

BOOK REVIEWS

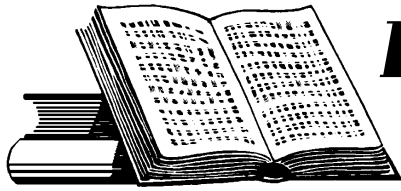
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manipulative. The author stresses that, "You are God's Sheep, Not the Pastor's" in one chapter title. He points out that, Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). A good shepherd leads, rather than controls, the flock.

Bussell has several degrees, including a B.A., an M.A. in counseling psychology and D.Min. Along with his own personal struggles and questions regarding cultic issues he has counseled many through a painful, long, emotional journey back to stability and faith in Jesus Christ. He leads the reader through Scripture to overcome these problems.

Without becoming critical people, Christians must be critical thinkers in order to discern false teachings which are leading many astray. Believers should "renew their minds" by calling on the Holy Spirit to be safeguarded against deception. This is available to us through prayer, study, faith, reflection and personal commitment to Christ's lordship. Renewed minds have protection from fraud and manipulation by cults and false teachings.

—AMG



Books in Review

INVENTING MORMONISM

H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters
Smith Research Associates, 244 pages, \$28.95

As a young man seeking to enter counter-cult ministry work, this reviewer was privileged to have as a friend and mentor the Rev. Wesley P. Walters. Within the Christian body and Mormonism itself, Rev. Walters had established himself as a leading authority on the early history of the sect founded by Joseph Smith, Jr.

It was a blessing to share a meal with him and discuss his findings about the Latter-day Saints. His powers of deduction and reasoning would have made most detectives and lawyers envious.

Rev. Walters freely shared his findings with other students of Mormon history, who in turn published their own works. While he deserved to have his efforts published in a volume of his own, he was called home by the Lord in 1990, before he could do that.

Now, however, through the efforts of his widow, Helen, and colleague, H. Michael Marquardt, his research and labor have been assembled in the book **Inventing Mormonism**. The work brings together many of the legal documents, newspaper and magazine articles, church records and testimony from Smith's family and contemporaries that Rev. Walters discovered.

The authors also methodically dissect the best arguments that the Mormon church and its apologists can present. The volume is heavily documented and meticulously endnoted. In some chapters the endnotes make up over 40% of the chapter.

The book is well worth its price. It is a fine investment and a fitting memorial to the endeavors of one of the counter-cult community's finest researchers. Its acid-free paper and cloth-bound composition ensure that it will remain a useful book in any counter-cult library for many years to come.

—MKG

CULTS AND THE OCCULT

by Edmond C. Gruss
P&R Publishers, 222 pages, \$7.99

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Christians were inundated with encyclopedic works on the cults. Then came the books giving more detailed analysis of specific

sects and their teachings.

Here in the 1990s, in the wake of many changes in cult leadership and new "revelations," many of the older, more general treatments are somewhat out-dated and lacking.

Dr. Edmond Gruss has addressed this problem with the third edition of his work, **Cults and the Occult**. It has been thoroughly revised and greatly expanded (from the second edition's 150 pages to a current oversized paperback of 222 pages).

Fresh information in the revised edition includes some of the current theological transitions of the late Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God. Even years after the founder's death, this is a difficult subject matter to handle because of this sect's frequent and continual doctrinal swings. Gruss offers the most up-to-date analysis in bound volume. Another example is that the reader is brought current with the leadership change in the Watchtower organization.

The other standard themes of Gruss' work are his reporting of the early history of the various movements and their fundamental belief structure. The book also spotlights key tenets of the major sects, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses' string of false prophecies and the terminology differences between Mormons and Christians. Gruss also examines, at some length, the debate as to whether the Seventh-Day Adventist church should receive the designation as a "cult." He looks to the evaluations of ex-SDA members and other counter-cult ministers to offer a conclusion.

This revised edition is a welcome resource for those Christians desiring contemporary data on the major cultic and occultic movements facing the Church today.

—MKG

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

How Cults Lure Christians

by Harold Bussell

McCracken Press, 224 pages, \$12.95

Many Christians can easily become blinded to characteristics revered as "spiritual," when in reality these characteristics can lead to cults and "fringe groups." The purpose of this book is to guard Christians against the attraction of the cults and aberrant religious groups.

By Hook or by Crook calls the reader's attention to doctrine, laying aside "personal experience," which is the bait many cultic groups use. Bussell states, "The gospel of experience will not keep us and deliver us on a lifelong basis. ... [people who do so] are prey to the zealous cults that promise better experiences and share greater testimonies."

While Christian terminology such as, "the Lord led me" and "God spoke to me" can sound spiritual, it also is very

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Editor's Note: The publications featured in our **Books in Review** section are available from Personal Freedom Outreach (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.50 to the price listed to cover postal 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.