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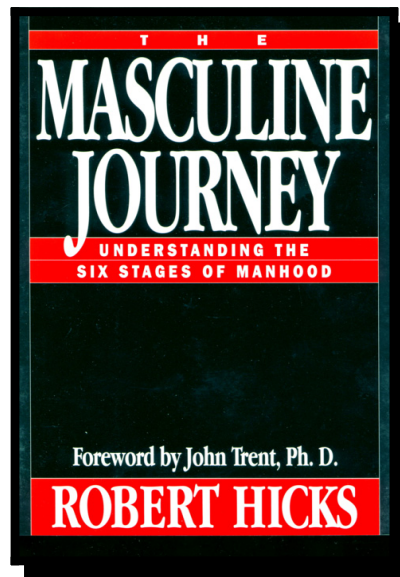
JANUARY-MARCH 1996

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

# The Masculine Journey

## An Expedition into Biblical Confusion

by W.E. Nunnally  
with G. Richard Fisher



A book that claims to present a biblical analysis of manhood and is part of the curriculum of Promise Keepers, the much-talked-about Christian men's organization, deserves a close look from believers.

Robert Hicks, the author of *The Masculine Journey*, says the book presents a "biblical framework" for the six major phases of manhood based on "six predominant Hebrew words" (*The Masculine Journey*, pp. 19-20). Hicks sets about trying to reconstruct a biblical theology of maleness (ibid., pp. 19, 20, 105) and argues that these Hebrew words describe what he calls the "normative male" (ibid., pp. 20, 22). He adds that Jesus Himself passed through each of these stages and therefore serves as the ultimate model for all who will follow Him through the phases (ibid., pp. 18, 180, 182; see also *The Masculine Journey Study Guide*, Robert Hicks with Dietrich Gruen, pg. 86).

Hicks is a professor of pastoral theol-

ogy at the Seminary of the East in Dresher, Pa. (ibid., inside dust cover, back). He attended seminary (ibid., pg.

141), and describes himself as "a biblically trained theologian" (ibid., pg. 19), "a pastoral theologian in the evangelical tradition" (ibid., pg. 18), and a "minister" (ibid., pg. 78). He says he can ground the theory of manhood of secular author Daniel Levinson firmly in Scripture by basing six stages of male development on the "six words for 'man' [he] learned in Hebrew class years earlier" (ibid., pg. 19). Further, Hicks claims to have consulted most of the authoritative Hebrew lexicons, which he says will "prove [his] arguments" to his "more critical readers" (ibid., pg. 20). Finally, having thus established his authority as an interpreter of Scripture, he moves into many other areas of faith and practice which raise additional questions. Therefore, in a book as influential as this one has become, these ideas must be considered in detail.

Hicks' own journey began on a flight to a speaking engagement. He decided that he was unhappy with his presentation on manhood, and decided to use Levinson's major-stage theory of the male life cycle. At this point, when he thought that he had to ground it in Scripture, six words came to him that he had learned years before in "Hebrew 101" (ibid., pp. 18-19). These

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# Editorials

## NOT SO NEW LIGHT?

It had to come. Some thought it had appeared over a decade ago but perhaps it was only a testing of the waters. Now, as the Watchtower Society has done so often before, its seed of change germinated.

The generation of 1914 is at the very heart of the Watchtower's gospel. *The Watchtower* magazine states: "That of Jehovah's Witnesses is really 'gospel,' or 'good news,' as of God's heavenly kingdom that was established by the enthronement of his Son Jesus Christ at the end of the Gentile Times in 1914" (May 1, 1984, pg. 17).

The Watchtower has long taught that within one generation of 1914, Armageddon would occur and the end of this present wicked system would end, ushering in a new Heaven and an earthly Paradise.

Nevertheless, the generation got older and older and older. It went from being adolescents in 1914 to infants in 1914. It saw prophetic failures for Armageddon in 1918, 1925, the 1940s and 1975. Today it has only a few still alive.

Therefore, a major adjustment to the Watchtower's prophetic scheme had to occur. Several articles in recent *Watchtower* magazines paved the way for a new understanding of "the generation of 1914." The Society has not adjusted the 1914 date; it still proclaims this date to be "the year of Jesus' enthronement in heaven as mankind's rightful King." The adjustment comes in the interpretation of the word "generation" and in its understanding of the parable

of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25.

The new interpretation moves Watchtower theology toward the idea that the separation of the sheep and goats is a future event, rather than a current one, as previously taught.

The popular Watchtower study book, *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, has become obsolete for its statements such as: "Yes, since Christ returned and sat down on his heavenly throne, all humankind has been on judgment. This present 'day of judgment' comes before the 1,000-year Judgment Day begins. During the present judgment people are being separated as 'goats' to Christ's left hand or as 'sheep' to his right. The 'goats' will be destroyed because they fail to help Christ's anointed 'brothers' in their service to God. In time, these 'goats' show themselves to be unrepentant sinners, wicked, hardened in their practice of unrighteousness. The 'sheep' on the other hand, will be blessed with life under the Kingdom rule because they support Christ's 'brothers' in every way" (pg. 183).

More recent commentary on this passage says, "Understanding the parable of the sheep and the goats in this way indicates that the rendering of judgment on the sheep and goats is future. It will take place after 'the tribulation' mentioned in Matthew 24:29-30 breaks out and the Son of man 'arrives in glory'" (*The Watchtower*, Oct. 15, 1995, pg. 23).

This change also has the Society revising the idea that Christ's sitting upon the throne in 1914 does not refer to his

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# News Updates

## PFO TO CO-SPONSOR EMNR CONFERENCE

Personal Freedom Outreach will co-sponsor Evangelical Ministries to New Religions' 1996 convention. **The Culting of Christianity, Saint Louis Conference on Biblical Discernment** will be held Sept. 12-14.

The national conference will feature renowned experts conducting plenary sessions and workshops examining charismatic extremism, shepherding and abusive sects, prominent cults, satanism and the occult, and New Age beliefs and practices.

Plenary speakers include: Don Matzat, host of the syndicated radio broadcast, *Issues, Etc.* and author of *Christ Esteem* and *The Lord Told Me So, I Think*; G. Richard Fisher, PFO director and co-author of *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*; and Dave Hunt, internationally known lecturer and author of *The Seduction of Christianity* and over 20 other titles. Workshop leaders include: Christian Research Institute Editor-in-Chief, Elliot Miller; EMNR President and author, James Bjornstad; EMNR Executive Director and author, William Alnor; and Southern Baptist Convention Interfaith Witness Department director, Philip Roberts.

First Baptist Church of Ferguson in St. Louis will host the conference. For additional information, or for a registration form, contact PFO's St. Louis office.

—MKG

## WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD LEADER DIES

The man credited with steering the Worldwide Church of God from cultic persuasions toward orthodox Christian doctrine has died. Joseph W. Tkach Sr., the Pastor General of the sect, died Sept. 23, 1995 of cancer. He was 68 years old.

In mid-May, Tkach underwent surgery to remove his gall bladder. In late May, because of severe intestinal pain, he was returned to the hospital, where surgeons discovered and removed a grapefruit-sized tumor from his intestines. During surgery, doctors diagnosed cancer and subsequently initiated chemotherapy. However, according to one report, the cancer had spread to his bones and elsewhere. The report indicated that the cause of death was probably a brain hemorrhage caused by the cancer.

Tkach received the reins of leadership of the sect following the death of founder Herbert W. Armstrong in

1986. During his administration, in addition to a shift toward mainstream Christian belief, he led the church's Ambassador University to accreditation. He was buried at Mountain View Cemetery in a grave not far from Armstrong's.

Joseph Tkach Jr. has succeeded his father becoming the third Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God. Insiders believe his strategy for the church's future will follow that begun by his father.

—MKG

## PEALE CHARGED WITH OCCULTIC PLAGIARISMS

A comparison of the writings of occult writer Florence Scovel Shinn and the father of positive thinking, Norman Vincent Peale, have led two researchers to conclude that some of Peale's affirmation theology originated with Shinn.

The Rev. John Gregory Tweed and the Rev. George D. Exoo reported on their conclusions in an article in the summer 1995 issue of the *Lutheran Quarterly*. Their investigation also received attention in the July 28 edition of *The Miami Herald*. The pair maintain that Peale's publications not only parallel ideas in Shinn's writings, but include similar or identical wording. The investigators have cited numerous examples of Peale's alleged plagiarisms.

Shinn, who derived her beliefs from mystical sources including Egyptian philosophy and Freemasonry, expressed many of her ideas in the publication, *The Game of Life and How to Play It*. She died in 1940.

John Allen, president of the board of the Peale Center and son-in-law of the late Peale, told the Miami newspaper that the research is "built pretty much on ... coincidence" and stated that both Peale and Shinn "happened to be dealing with the same subject: the art of living." He added that neither he nor Peale's widow, Ruth, knew of Florence Scovel Shinn.

Yet the newspaper notes that Peale was indeed familiar with Shinn's writings. In a reprinting of Shinn's privately published metaphysical works by Simon & Schuster, Peale wrote in the introduction that he had "long used" her teachings. In addition to the Simon & Schuster edition, the Church of Religious Science also makes the Shinn's writings available. Both printings are available in New Age bookstores.

Allen sought to offset Peale's endorsement of Shinn by maintaining that his father-in-law "did write a very nice thing on the reissue. He'd write encouraging words on any

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# All to Jesus I Surrender

## A Look at The Community of Believers

by Edgar L. Havaich  
and Don & Joy Veinot

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time of rebellion against authority and "the establishment." Many young people became involved in the "hippie" movement. They thought society was too confining and that the churches were irrelevant and dead.

Out of this anti-establishment environment grew a new kind of evangelism; indeed a new kind of church, as men of God tried to find ways to reach out to these disenchanted young people. Individuals such as Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel sought out and witnessed to the hippies on the beach. As hippies came to Jesus Christ, the "Jesus People" movement was born. In keeping with the radical times, a new radical Christianity appeared.

Groups of Jesus People roamed the country in buses painted with Jesus slogans and participated in communal living. Those who had "dropped out and turned on" to drugs now turned on to Jesus, but they did not return to traditional ways of worship as practiced by their parents.

In keeping with the simple lifestyle ideals that had gripped them before their conversion, these radical "Jesus freaks," as they were sometimes called, often glorified an austere lifestyle as more "true" to the early Christianity of the first century. As often happens with new movements, these young Christians believed that they were conforming themselves more completely to biblical practices than former generations had.

Since a very large part of the Jesus movement's appeal was the rejection of the hierarchal structure and organization of the member's former church experience, one problem that often arose was the lack of accountability and structure in the lives of individuals. "Do your own thing!" was the hippie motto, but the budding Jesus movement came to realize that such a view made for too much of "everyone doing what was right in their own eyes," a view condemned by Scripture. Concern for moral purity and biblical discipleship led to many books about the undirected and undisciplined lifestyle of those times. These books called for discipleship, shepherding, and radical commitment, not only to Jesus Christ but, in some unfortunate cases, to the group leaders, pastors and "shepherds." Many people read these works and saw a need for true discipleship and accountability, not fully realizing what evils could result from too much leadership control over the lives of the people. Many leaders within the "Jesus Movement" took these works almost as *Gospel*.

Armed as they now were with a mandate and an "apologetic" for shepherding arrangements, these radicals often displayed a zeal that seemed lacking in mainstream Churches, which led to a greater commitment to shepherding. The appeal of such a radical departure from the status quo eventu-

ally led young people to leave home and family for the "true biblical" settings of communes.

Unfortunately, with no outside "reality checks" to counterbalance the peer influence, some communal groups fell into bizarre excesses of leadership control. The elders of these communities became arbiters of the way that "true" Christians were to look and act, often going outside boundaries of Scripture. Often extreme groups teach that they have now become the true family, and members often leave their natural family behind if the group or its teachings and practices are criticized.

Therefore, the very hierarchal structure these young people had rejected in their former churches returned to the extreme within some of these groups. The freedom to have a relationship with Christ "in the Spirit," which had empowered the Jesus movement in the first place, in too many cases gave way to dead legalism.

Before moving on, PFO wishes to emphasize that it is not necessarily right or wrong to participate in Christian communal groups. Let every Christian make up his own mind on the matter. However, any such group must guard itself against the type of radical shepherding of which such groups seem especially susceptible. Of course we take issue with the most radical of these groups who teach or imply that such an arrangement is a requirement for salvation.

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# Doctrinal Ambiguity of a Wandering Star

## The Changing Views of Joyce Meyer

by G. Richard Fisher  
and Paul R. Belli

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Christians have come to presume that teachers and authors who profess to speak and write out of a calling from the Holy Spirit will present a message that is doctrinally sound and consistent from sermon to sermon and book to book. However, anyone who has watched the Christian Charismatic scene over the past several years knows that such a presumption is dangerous and often will fail to be borne out.

Joyce Meyer, a rising star on the Charismatic horizon with a weekly program on cable TV and the Trinity Broadcasting Network and a new book, *The Word, The Name, The Blood*, is the latest example.

The dust jacket of her latest book highlights her prominence and promises big things:

"Joyce Meyer is the author of the best-sellers, *Beauty for Ashes*, *The Root of Rejection* and *Battlefield of The Mind*, and has taught on emotional healing and related subjects in meetings all over the country. Her 'Life in The Word' radio broadcast is aired on 200 stations nationwide. Her thirty-minute 'Life in The Word With Joyce Meyer' television program is broadcast throughout the United States and Canada. She also travels extensively conducting Life in The Word conferences, as well as speaking in local churches."

Such prominence might suggest that Meyer has a firm grip on what she believes. However, by her own admission, her teachings are evolving. A review of her weekly program and tapes reveals that her preaching style, though folksy-sounding, is strident, authoritarian, and aggressive. There is no uncertainty in her pulpit manners, just a tone of knowing it all. An excerpt from one of her tapes goes as follows:

"You know something? I liked myself before I had started studying on this because that's something God had just worked in me the last seven years. And I didn't start out liking myself. I didn't like myself at all. But I'm telling you after I've studied this message, I'm so excited about me that I hardly know what to do."

Still, her current book reveals a startlingly different attitude:

"Several years ago I found myself completely worn out from trying to fight the devil. I learned many 'methods' of spiritual warfare; however, they did not seem to be working ... I had fallen into the trap that many Christians fall into. I had the right teaching, but the wrong order ... I was feverishly applying methods I had learned — like

fasting and prayer ... rebuking and resisting evil spirits ... empty formulas which wear us out and produce no results except maybe a sore throat" (*The Word, The Name, The Blood*, pp. 28, 32, 33).

Such uncertainty by the teacher can only foster uncertainty in any discerning student or would-be student.

### ATONEMENT AMBIGUITIES

Meyer can be classified as a Word-Faith teacher and as such has shown an inclination to waffle on major doctrines. In her 1991 booklet, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make*, an evangelistic work aimed at nonbelievers, she resounds the Word-Faith view of Christ's atonement:

"During that time He entered hell, where you and I deserved to go (legally) because of our sin. He paid the price there ... no plan was too extreme ... Jesus paid on the cross and in hell" (pg. 35, underlining in the original).

"God rose up from His throne and said to demon powers tormenting the sinless Son of God, 'Let Him go.' Then the resurrection power of Almighty God went through hell and filled Jesus ... He was resurrected from the dead — the first born-again man" (pg. 36, underlining in the original).

"His spirit went to hell because that

is where we deserved to go. Remember in the very beginning of this, I said, 'When you die, only your body dies. The rest of you, your soul and spirit, goes either to heaven or hell'" (ibid.).

"There is no hope of anyone going to heaven unless they believe this truth I am presenting. You cannot go to heaven unless you believe with all your heart that Jesus took your place in hell" (ibid.).

"Jesus went to hell for you" (pg. 38, underlining in the original).

All of the above citations are from her chapter entitled, "What Should You Believe?". The first subheading in this chapter is "What Happened on the Cross?". Those familiar with Word-Faith vernacular will recall Kenneth Copeland's 1984 tape, "What Happened From the Cross to the Throne." Copeland apparently borrowed the title and theme from E.W. Kenyon's book by the same name.

Meyer teaches the classic "Born-Again Jesus" gospel that has been taught by Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Fred Price, John Jacobs, Charles Capps, Benny Hinn and Jan Crouch, to name a few. It's usually presented under the guise of "revelation knowledge," given by the Holy Spirit and grounded in Scripture. However, this gospel does not stand up under biblical scrutiny.

Charismatics many times will make their case by saying, "Jesus went to hell. Doesn't it say so somewhere in the book of Acts?"

While it is true that Jesus went to hell (Ephesians 4:8-9; 1 Peter 3:18), attention should be focused on what He did or didn't do there. Meyer and her kind teach that Jesus went there to pay for our sins, it's the same kind of payment — or better — that He made on the cross.

The reader is asked to recall Meyer's repeated declarations: "He paid the price there ... Jesus paid on the cross and in hell ... Jesus took your place in hell ... Jesus went to hell for you."

Every cult and pseudo-Christian sect disparages the cross. An enemy of the cross is one who even suggests that Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross was insufficient for salvation. Anyone who disparages the cross is teaching another

gospel. The destiny of such teachers is destruction (Philippians 3:19). Based upon Christ's atonement for their sins, Christians are not going to hell. Therefore, no enemy of the cross can be a brother in Christ.

A pastor at whose church Meyer was to speak told her about serious concerns he had about her booklet. As a result, she has revised parts of it. Meyer's organization labeled the revised booklet "Second Printing - May, 1993" but did not mention the key theological revisions, which were limited to Chapter Four, where the previously cited passages are found. Nevertheless, the revisions leave much of the "Born-Again Jesus" doctrine intact. Apparently, she has neither tried to disavow or recall the first edition nor has she made any mention of the revisions in the second printing.

Her now-unavailable tape, "What Happened from the Cross to The Throne?" continued to teach the "Born-Again Jesus" doctrine and is a close, if not identical, copy of the Kenyon/Copeland theme and title.

In it she stated that at age 36, she received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and sometime later felt a flipping and a turning in her stomach. This, she said, led to an understanding of her justification and a deeper revelation of Jesus' spirit death in hell, where He became sin and was tormented by demons. She also states that when "God yelled down through the universe, 'That's enough. Let Him loose,'" Jesus was able to rise. She admits this understanding does not come from the Bible, saying it came from our spirit man. Most likely it came from the likes of Kenneth Copeland and Kenneth Hagin.

Meyer also declared on the tape that she no longer is a sinner:

"I'm going to tell you something folks, I didn't stop sinning until I finally got it through my thick head I wasn't a sinner anymore. And the religious world thinks that's heresy and they want to hang you for it. But the Bible says that I'm righteous and I can't be righteous and be a sinner at the same time ... All I was ever taught to say was, 'I'm a poor, miserable sinner.' I am not poor, I am not miserable and I am not a sinner. That is a lie from the pit of

hell. That is what I was and if I still am then Jesus died in vain. Amen?"

The Apostle John says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). It is Christ's righteousness imparted to us, not ours, that makes us righteous.

Meyer further adopted the grammatical subterfuge used by annihilationists in her exegesis of Luke 23:43:

"And in Luke 23:43, Jesus said unto him, 'I say unto you today you shall be in paradise with me.' There's no punctuation in the original translations of the Bible. We have punctuated it and in this particular Scripture it was punctuated wrong. They put in there: 'I say unto you comma today you shall be in paradise with me' making it appear that the minute Jesus died on the cross He went straight to paradise. No, no no. He did not. The way it should read is: 'I say unto you today comma. I'm telling you today. Today I'm telling you that you are going to be in paradise with me.' But He didn't say, 'You're going to be there today.' He said, 'I'm telling you this today'" (ibid.).

Thus Meyer has subscribed to the idea that modern Bible translations are wrong in quoting Christ: "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Meyer's reading makes way for the union to be some future event. However, there would have been no need for Christ to have said, "I say to you today," since the dying man already knew it was today.

PFO wrote to Meyer and asked if the message and theology of the cassette were still valid. PFO director Kurt Goedelman received a call from a representative of Meyer's ministry named Paula. Paula told PFO that the tape had been deleted from the ministry's catalog.

PFO was told that because of Meyer's progression in "revelation knowledge," the message is obsolete and that her latest book is an accurate reflection of her current beliefs. Paula, however, was unable to confirm or deny if Meyer still subscribed to the gospel of the "Born-Again Jesus."

#### WORD WIZARDRY

Meyer, in her new book, writes,

“Words are containers for power” (*The Name, The Word, The Blood*, pg. 37). Word-Faith teachers advocate that through speaking and positive affirmations we can create our own reality. They usually refer to Genesis 1 and show that God spoke the world into existence and extrapolate that we, too, can speak creative words and can speak reality into existence.

The fact that the premise breaks down because we are not God does not deter Meyer from saying, “Remember then, that the Word of God is both spirit and life, use wisdom and begin speaking life to your situation” (*ibid.*, pg. 38).

### NAME NONSENSE

When it comes to the “Name” of Jesus, Meyer admits that she used the “name” for many years without “results” (*ibid.*, pg. 47). This suggests we can learn how to use the “name” to obtain results. What follows is a mix of truth and error. Some of what she says about praying in the name of Jesus and about His name being a term for His authority is proper. At various points she lapses and transfers all the authority of Jesus directly to the believer.

Christians pray in Jesus’ name and have access to heaven through Jesus but it is not true that we, just by use of that name, have “authority over demons, sickness, disease, lack and every form of misery” (*ibid.*, pg. 70). It confuses the believer with Jesus and reduces His name to a magic word. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* reminds us, “The name here is His person and the belief in that name is not magical but it is an acceptance or receiving of His messianic person and mission and thereby acquiring the right to enter a new relationship with the heavenly Father, John 1:12” (Vol. IV, pg. 365).

The New Testament believers saw the name of Jesus as standing for all He is and all He accomplished. To believe in His name was to believe in Him and His messianic mission. To speak in His name was to speak with His authority but there is no hint of name magic in the New Testament.

If we presume to speak in the name of Jesus, we should be sure that we represent the name, character and attributes of that One or we surely take

His name in vain. A police officer can speak “in the name of the law.” However he cannot command what the law forbids. Anything we say or do in the name of Jesus must be regulated by the commands and directives of Scripture.

### BLOOD BALLYHOO

In Scripture, blood usually stands for life poured out. Jesus Himself said, “The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Christ’s shed blood stands for all the merits secured by His death and the riches of His grace given because of His death and resurrection. We focus on Him and the great riches of our salvation, not the red fluid.

On the other hand, Meyer’s teaching on Christ’s blood and how to “use” it is essentially a repeat of her teaching on how to “use” Jesus’ name, along with a repeat of many of the same doctrinal errors. Though Meyer says some things that are right about the blood of Christ, she lapses into a magical use of the word “blood” much like the relic system and fetish worship of the Middle Ages. For example, she writes, “One of the ways we can honor the blood is by singing about it, talking about it, studying about it and meditating on it” (pg. 100).

Consider these further statements:

“I know the devil is afraid of the blood” (*ibid.*, pg. 101).

“We must learn to ‘use’ the blood” (*ibid.*, pg. 109).

“My husband and I stay in various hotels because of our travels in ministry. Quite frequently when unpacking and settling into a hotel room I will ‘plead’ the blood or ‘put’ the blood on the room, to cleanse or remove any wrong spirits that may be there from other guests. I do this by praying, by speaking the blood in my prayer” (*ibid.*, pg. 111).

“We laid hands on the check and prayed. I went and got all of our checkbooks and my pocketbook and Dave got his wallet and we laid hands on them and put the blood on them, asking God to protect our money, to cause it to multiply and to see to it that Satan could not steal any of it from us” (*ibid.*).

“You need to start praying the

blood over your children, your car, your home, your body” (*ibid.*, emphasis in original).

“If you are sick in your body, plead the blood over your body. The life is in the blood; it can drive out the death of sickness” (*ibid.*).

First Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:5 speak of being saved by the “stripes” of Jesus, yet Meyer does not speak the stripes, which carry the same connotation of life being poured out.

Church hymnology is highly poetic and allegorical. It is understood as that whether we sing about “Beulah land,” “the name of Jesus,” or “power in the blood,” the lyrics bring theological truths of salvation and redemption into view. Hymns and even Bible passages that speak of being saved by the cross are not interpreted to say a hunk of wood has any power to save.

Most evangelical commentaries and scholars agree that the idea of Christ’s blood is the conveying of an expiatory offering, a propitiatory sacrifice (see *Barnes Notes on The New Testament*, pp. 572-573). Throughout Scripture Christ’s blood is equivalent to His death, His sacrifice, His redemption, His atonement for sin. The literal blood of Jesus that spattered on the Roman soldiers as they scourged His body and nailed His hands and feet did not magically save them.

Hebrews 9-10 clearly states that we are saved by Christ’s body, which is called His death and sacrifice. It is also true in those chapters that we are said to be saved by Christ’s blood, by Christ’s offering and by Christ’s flesh. All these words are roughly equivalent and point to the grand theme of atonement.

We do not make a fetish out of any of these words or use them in ritual incantation or in an empty, repetitive manner.

Meyer’s evolving, changing Word-Faith views are at best aberrant, confusing, misleading and unscriptural. Magic words, magic names and magic blood should be deplored and seen for what they are: superstition.

### RESPONSE TO REVIEW

The fall 1994 issue of the *Christian Sentinel*, the newsletter of Eastern Chris-

tian Outreach, reviewed the doctrine and practice of Meyer based upon her series of speaking engagements in the Philadelphia area. Jackie Alnor reported that Meyer's methodology during the visit to the city was patterned after the "laughing" spectacles of Rodney Howard-Browne.

In a cassette tape titled, "Like a Mighty Wind," Meyer responded to the *Sentinel's* criticism:

"It amazes me, and not only does it amaze me, it aggravates me. These people who think they've got a ministry of exposing what's wrong with everybody else ... Man, I just got written up in a newspaper in Philadelphia ... they mention in this one article, they mention about 5 or 6 or 7 national ministries. I got my own column. Had my own little column in there, telling how I came to the city and I manipulated the people and I did this and that and something else. Oh garbage, garbage, garbage! Why is it that people think that it's their call to go around and find out what's wrong with everybody else and print it? Do you know when people were trying to stop Jesus, finally, some very wise man said, 'Why don't you just leave us alone? If it's of God, you're not gonna stop it. And if it's not God, it

won't last too long anyway.' Hallelujah! I mean, that's just the way I feel about it."


Meyer's incorrect citation of a speech by the rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-40) is a typical Charismatic reply to evaluations directed toward extremes within the movement. Only months before, *Charisma* magazine editor Stephen Strang offered the same logic in an editorial about concerns over Rodney Howard-Browne (August 1994, pg. 102).

A recent article appearing in Banner Ministries' *Mainstream* newsletter debunked the use of Gamaliel's advice:

"[Gamaliel] concludes that a genuine work of God will succeed, but a religion of human origin will fail. Gamaliel's logic is seriously flawed because he allows for only two possible sources or explanations for these religious movements — Human or Divine. But there is a **third source** of which he is ignorant, precisely because it had most likely inspired him to make this very deduction. The Scriptures warn of **demonic or Satanic origin to much counterfeit religious belief and even miraculous phenomena**. Using Gamaliel's logic, we would have to conclude that religions such

as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and modern cults such as the Mormons, Baha'i and the Jehovah's Witnesses are all inspired by God because they have not 'failed'. Communist persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses and Islamic intolerance of the Baha'i faith did not crush them ... Gamaliel therefore is not a model of godly wisdom that Christians should emulate. His counsel, both in terms of what he advised the Sanhedrin to do and believe, was seriously flawed and most likely inspired by Satan" (Spring 1995, pg. 10, emphasis in original).

Meyer's citation of the passage also makes it sound as if Gamaliel had been a part of the early Church. Meyer says, "Finally, some very wise man said, 'Why don't you just leave us alone?'" However, the clear Word of God states: "Therefore, in the present case, I advise you: Leave *these men* alone" (Acts 5:38).

Meyer's writings and tapes continue to lack solid biblical exposition. Yet perhaps next month, next year, or the year after she will have again changed her teachings and be spreading different errors and "revelations." Scripture is clear: We are to avoid those who are devoid of sound doctrine and are like wandering stars (Jude 12-13). 

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## COMMUNITY

(continued from page 4)

### WHO IS THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS?

Radical communal groups have come and gone. However, one that remains consistent and continues to grow is the one started by Elbert (Gene) Spriggs and his wife, Marsha. *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, Third Edition, says of this group, now known as *The Community of Believers* or *Messianic Communities*<sup>1</sup>, which originated in Chattanooga, Tenn.:

"It was originally called the Vine Christian Community. The community first grew out of a ministry that developed for youth and young adults, as well as homeless adults in the area. The group, which worked in a restaurant called the Yellow

Deli, formed during the spreading Jesus People revival. Those who received the Gospel preached by these people gave up all their own possessions and moved into households together, sharing all things in common following the pattern set by the early Christian disciples as recorded in Acts 2:37-47 and 4:32-35. Eventually, six Yellow Delis emerged, and a restaurant and meeting house, the Areopagus, was opened in Chattanooga. Other centers and restaurants developed in Dalton, Ga., and several nearby communities. By 1978, there were approximately 150 members."

PFO called two Community centers. We spoke with an individual named Yonathan from the Boston community and someone who called himself Boaz in the Providence Community. Both have been involved in the group for

about 9-10 years. Boaz had been raised as a Baptist and attended Bible college in preparation for a career as an independent Baptist pastor. Both individuals were very likable and seemed to be sincere about their beliefs. Of course, sincerity is no measure of truth.

### RECRUITING PRACTICES

The Community primarily recruits at Grateful Dead Concerts and Billy Graham crusades. Members arrive in a fairly well-appointed bus, distribute magazines and talk to anyone who will listen. One of the primary attractions is the commitment members show to one another. The Community starts each day with morning services called "sacrifices" during which members pledge to lay down their lives for each other and to place each others' needs above their own desires and ambitions. This commitment appeals to people in a society obsessed with "looking out for number

one.”

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Community, like other aberrant, heretical and cult groups, fosters elitism in its membership. Community members do not call themselves “Christians,” and point out that the term was only used three times in Scripture, by nonbelievers, in a pejorative way. They prefer to be called believers or disciples. They do not have an “official” name because, according to them, the “true church” would naturally be called after the city or town in which it is. After all, didn’t the Apostolic writers address their letters to the “church in Rome,” the “church in Galatia,” etc.? There is no “Baptist Church” or “Presbyterian Church,” etc., in the Bible, which makes these only manmade institutions. Only The Community of Believers follows God and the Scriptures; therefore, they are the only true believers.

It is a common claim by members of aberrant groups that they are the only true Christians because they are the “only ones doing things the biblical way.” It is easy for any group to crown itself as such when it is the one establishing the criteria. The International Churches of Christ and many other elitist groups make this claim. How could such a thing be a criterion or a sign of true Christianity? Does the Bible list “proper name” as a fruit of the Spirit? Jehovah’s Witnesses would say that they are the only true Christians based on their pacifism and political neutrality, citing Jesus’ statement that He was “not part of this world.”

The Mormons though, lay claim to being the true Christians because they are the only ones practicing the biblically mandated — in their view — “baptism for the dead.” It’s easy for groups to play this game to their own advantage. All it takes is a Bible and the will to distort its message, elevating the unbiblical and trivial to the status of the *essential* and losing the message of God’s Grace through Christ.

The Community teaches that it is the restoration of the Nation of Israel. New members usually are given Hebrew names. It is a Sabbatarian group (keeping the Jewish Sabbath) and has adopted Messianic Judaism into twentieth-century culture. Of course the “we are the restoration of Israel” chorus is

sung by many elitist religious organizations, but this does not deter any of them from making this claim.

## WE GAVE UP EVERYTHING!

The Community claims that its members have given up everything to follow God. For example, one of its booklets,<sup>2</sup> under the subheading “RESPONDING TO HIS LOVE,” suggests that all those in The Community collectively shared the frustration of not being able to give everything to Him. “Forsaking all to follow Messiah is indisputably a command.” Further along they write, “This community was the perfect environment for all the disciples since they had given up their lives and their possessions to be baptized into Messiah.”<sup>3</sup> It also suggests that because Peter left literally everything to follow Christ, that a would-be follower of Christ today must also literally give up every possession.<sup>4</sup>

A proof text often used by the group is Luke 14:33. The Community calls that the first essential requirement of becoming a disciple.<sup>5</sup>

It is easy to see that divesting oneself of all earthly possessions is not a requirement for salvation. Since the disciples and early church members owned possessions without being rebuked by fellow disciples or the Master, one can infer that giving up everything was different from deferring all goods to a community of believers for use by the group.

For example, Matthew 8:14 says:

“And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever” (KJV).

Peter possessed a house. Since Peter was obviously following Jesus with possessions, it is logical to conclude that either: a) Peter had not really given up everything and was not a true follower of Jesus, b) the text is wrong, therefore we can’t trust the Bible, or c) The Community’s understanding of the text is incorrect, which would mean Peter and all Christians who came after him can possess things and still fulfill the command to forsake everything to follow Christ. We believe that “c” is correct and that interpreting “forsaking everything” to mean that one cannot own any possessions, but must defer all

ownership to the group, is unscriptural.

Another example is the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter confronts Ananias, who tried to deceive the apostles. Acts 5:3-6 says,

“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him” (KJV).

Peter did not rebuke ownership or affirm that having personal possessions was out of line. Lying and self-righteous posturing were wrong, and cost Ananias his life. However, property ownership was not even mildly rebuked. Rather, Peter reinforced the idea that Ananias’ possessions were his own, and under his own discretion to keep or dispose of.

The Community declares that the Christian’s life must be unhindered, and then interprets “unhindered” to mean not having possessions or holding conventional jobs, and being “separated” from families and friends.<sup>6</sup>

Let’s look at the job aspect. If working at a conventional job is undesirable and all followers of Christ were meant to live in a “community of believers,” then John the Baptist shouldn’t have told the soldiers in Luke 3:14 to be content with their pay.

According to Yonathan, Yahshua (Jesus)<sup>7</sup> does not deal with people individually, but only as part of a nation or community. Many extremist groups practice this “organizational salvation” as well. It grants enormous power to the leadership of these groups, since God’s dealings with the group are naturally filtered through them.

Yonathan said that Evangelical Christians are sincere but divided, while The Community enjoys complete unity. The fact that they live together, hold all things common, have love for one another, and have no doctrinal divi-

sions, etc., manifests this unity. This often is mistaken for “unity” but is easy to attain when members and adherents do not have the freedom to do anything else.

### **DID THEY REALLY GIVE UP EVERYTHING?**

The statement often made by devotees that they “have given up all their possessions” is a peculiar one. They *do* have possessions, and they benefit from and enjoy them. To say that no one actually owns them is misleading, for the group owns them and controls them. Community members are part of that group and therefore have possessions. They have just deferred individual ownership to the group. They tell us that they have given up cars, furniture, and homes<sup>8</sup> and, as noted above, buttress their argument by quoting Luke 14:33, “No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his possessions.”<sup>9</sup>

Yet we note that a group of Community devotees jumped off a very attractive and comfortable bus at a Billy Graham Crusade, and then declared that they had given up everything. Like other aberrant groups, they simply take the verse out of its context and isolate it to decide for every Christian expression. Interpreting that verse in its absolute and literal form would result in Christians going naked because they had given up their clothes.

The Community also writes, “He commanded that they abandon absolutely everything that possessed them — homes, farms, parents, relatives, friends, children, brothers, sisters, jobs, and ambitions, and set out with Him on *His* mission.”<sup>10</sup> They quote Mark 10:29-30. These verses, if interpreted literally, make The Community members guilty of the very thing they accuse others of. Pictures of The Community life include one of a man holding a child and one of a woman with a child.<sup>11</sup> Bearing children requires a spouse, unless one goes outside the biblical boundaries. Members of The Community apparently haven’t given up their husbands, wives or children.

Mark 10:29-30 is not a command to give up everything. Jesus is saying that if anyone *did* give up everything, they would be compensated a hundredfold. This verse also creates a contradiction

in Community theology. Private possessions that hinder us in our relationship with God, as The Community teaches, should be given up and forgotten. Thinking that God would give them back one hundredfold is illogical if they are bad for us.

### **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?**

According to Community literature, most of the world’s ills can be blamed on the “pagan,” apostate church. Martin Luther, Adolph Hitler, Billy Graham and others are tied in as facilitators with liberals and occultists. According to The Community, these will be used to bring the Anti-Christ to power.<sup>12</sup> Those in The Community are the only true believers since they are the only ones who properly practice communal living.

The Community does believe in the Trinity and that Yahshua, as the God-Man, died for our sins and that we must receive Him by faith, yet there are strings attached. It is by faith, God’s grace *and* total obedience to the Law. Community literature says, “As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:19, ‘Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commandments is what counts.’”<sup>13</sup>

The Community teaches that the commandments we must keep are: water baptism, manifesting the sign gifts, giving up everything that *it* counts as everything, becoming part of The Community, keeping the Sabbath, observing dietary laws, and so on.

Paul said of such people in Romans 10:2-4, “they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR BAPTISM**

With its emphasis on works righteousness, The Community naturally rejects trusting in Christ alone for salvation. They have taken their communal lifestyle and have made it a spiritual mandate for the Church, going so far as to make it a requirement for baptism:

“This community was the perfect

environment for all the disciples since they had given up their lives and their possessions in order to be baptized into Messiah.”<sup>14</sup>

Nowhere does the Bible say believers must give up their possessions to be baptized, nor are any examples given of people who did.

Acts 2:37-38 does say:

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost’” (KJV).

However, it says nothing about surrendering all possessions before baptism.

Citing Acts 2 to support the doctrine of baptismal salvation is a distortion of Scripture. The listeners were not told they would receive salvation, eternal life, or similar words, but that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the promises (Acts 2:39) and the manifestation of the sign gifts as promised (Acts 2:16-21). Baptism cannot be part of the Gospel, because Paul makes a distinction between baptism and the Gospel, saying that he was sent to do one but not the other (1 Corinthians 1:17).

### **CONCLUSION**

Cults and aberrational groups are on the rise. They are all different in some respects from the others. Nevertheless, we find that whatever legalistic or peculiar dogmas that they may use to separate themselves from others, one trait is amazingly consistent within all of them: the idea of “salvation by association.” Whether the defining attribute is giving up possessions or baptizing for the dead or selling magazines door-to-door, since they are “the only ones” practicing it, they are the only *true* saints, believers, or witnesses of Jehovah, Elohim, or Yahshua. Therefore, the only people saved are those within their little group. That makes membership in their group the real qualification for salvation, doesn’t it?

Aberrant religious groups are not and

never have been passive or ashamed of what they believe. However, one notable difference is that they are coming at the Church with a renewed fervency. Many are bewildered by all of this. Some say just love them, others simply ignore them. The biblical response is to be armed with the Gospel and be ready to show them what the Bible teaches in contrast to the false message they have come to believe. This takes time, preparation, prayer and patience.

**Editor's Note:** Don Veinot is president of Midwest Christian Outreach in Lombard, Ill. He and his wife, Joy, have been involved in apologetic work since 1987.

#### Endnotes:

1. *Bringing in The New Age; Daniel's Vision—The Stone*, pg. 63.
2. This booklet has no title but has a picture of Billy Graham on the cover with the title on page 2, *Who We Are*. We will use this title to refer to this booklet.
3. *ibid.*, pg. 9.
4. *ibid.*, pg. 28. This is implied although not specifically stated.

5. *ibid.*, pg. 44.
6. *ibid.*, pg. 2.
7. The Community views the name "Jesus" a corrupt English understanding of the Lord's name. They reject the transliteration "Yehshua" but instead use the name "Yahshua" when referring to the Messiah.
8. *ibid.*, pg. 3.
9. *ibid.*, pg. 44.
10. *ibid.*, pg. 46.
11. *ibid.*, pg. 2.
12. *Bringing in The New Age*, pp. 44-57.
13. *Faith That Works*, pg. 24.
14. *Who We Are*, pg. 9.

## MASCULINE JOURNEY

(continued from page 1)

words, says Hicks, gave him a "biblical framework" that "reflect[s] the same seasonal or developmental aspects that have been demonstrated in so many of the recent men's studies" (*ibid.*, pp. 19-20).

Specific questions arise from this scenario. Can a certain set of words, eclectically strung together, reveal the Bible's intended theology of anything? Can words without context express anything clearly (cf. his own statement on pg. 174, quoted in full below)? Is it not possible that without lexical aids available, these words are simply arbitrary choices made in the middle of a plane ride? Finally, is it possible that the convergence of these words with the major stages of Levinson is more a presupposition superimposed on the Bible than the result of careful investigation? Should not biblical theology begin with an exhaustive examination of the relevant scriptures and then conclude with a comparison of biblical revelation to human theory? The only way these questions can be answered is to subject Hicks' "proof" to the careful scrutiny he invites (*ibid.*, pg. 20).

Hicks defines the first phase of the masculine journey with the word 'adam (creational man and woman). He then moves on to the *zakar* (phallic), *gibbor* (warrior), *enosh* (wounded), 'ish (mature), and *zaken* (wise) stages of manhood. Due to the constraints of time and space, 'adam will be the only phase critiqued in full. The other phases will be dealt with sufficiently to show that the same problems evident in Hicks' treatment of 'adam are also evident in the remaining five.

Much of what follows is detailed analysis, which will deal with Hebrew grammar, philology (study of words and their history), and hermeneutics (appropriate methods of biblical interpretation), because this is the level at which Hicks attempts to ground his theories in Scripture.

### 'ADAM

Hicks describes the first phase as the 'adam state, the "creational" aspect of manhood. He cites Botterweck and Ringgren's *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* as establishing the meanings "dark, red soil, and red blood." From this he concludes, "Therefore, the word depicts mankind at the most base level of flesh, blood, and dirt" (*ibid.*, pg. 32). What he does not say, however, is that these meanings are derived from two Akkadian words, not from the Hebrew word. Additionally, those are abstract definitions, not derived from the use of a word in a specific context. The meaning of words as we and all other humans use them are not determined by their derivation or by detached, abstract definitions from a dictionary. The meaning of words is defined by the contexts in which they are found. (See the excellent discussion of D.A. Carson in *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker, pp. 25-66. These methods have been rejected by all the better interpreters since the watershed work of James Barr in 1961 [*The Semantics of Biblical Language*. Oxford: Oxford University].)

Further, this word first occurs in the biblical narrative in the exalted position of "the image of God" (Genesis 1:26), the apex of God's creative activity. Contextually speaking, this does not sound like "the word depicts man at the most base level." Further, Jesus

identifies Himself as the Son of Man (*ben 'adam*) in His *glorified* state (Matthew 26:64, which by the way, is a state which Hicks labels Jesus' 'ish [fifth] stage, pg. 182).

Finally, Hicks notes that this word represents the creational aspects men share with women (*ibid.*, pg. 32). It should be noted, however, that ample biblical evidence suggests that the term is also used to distinguish the man from Eve (Genesis 4:25; 5:1, 3, 4, etc.). Hicks further states that this is the *only* phase of man's development shared with women (*ibid.*, pg. 32). It should be noted, however, that in his most recent book, *The Feminine Journey: Understanding the Biblical Stages of a Woman's Life* (NavPress, 1994), six stages varying from roughly to exactly analogous to the male counterparts are delineated.

If Hicks' previously quoted statements about the inherent distinctness of these stages as represented by these six Hebrew words are true, there should be no overlap of usage. These words should be antonyms, not synonyms. The biblical evidence, however, clearly shows that 'adam is often used in a construction called "poetic parallelism" with the other words. What this means is that two or more of the words are used in the same passage as synonyms. An example of this is:

**Rescue** me, O LORD, from *evil men*;  
**Preserve** me . . . . from *violent men*  
(Psalm 140:1).

As can be seen, the words in bold are clearly synonyms, as are the words in italics.

Applying this to the present analysis, 'adam is used in poetic parallelism with 'ish (his fifth stage) in Proverbs 6:12.

Psalms 32:2; 84:6, 13 and Proverbs 3:13 use the "Blessed is the man" formula so well-known in Scripture. Here the word is *'adam*. In the same grammatical construction, however, the word *'ish* is used in Psalm 1:1, and in Psalm 34:9 and Jeremiah 17:7, the word is *gever* (Hicks' third stage). This means the writers of Scripture are in these instances clearly using these terms interchangeably.

The word *'adam* is often used as a collective, to refer exclusively to *males* (Ezekiel 23:42; Proverbs 20:6, where it occurs in poetic parallelism with *'ish*). Zechariah 8:10 uses the word *'ish* in a description of *'adam* (cf. also 1 Kings 8:38; 2 Chronicles 6:29). Finally, Samson describes himself to Delilah as an *'adam* (Judges 6:7, 11, 17), which clearly cannot be taken to mean both man and woman in *this* context.

Let us briefly sample the biblical evidence Hicks brings to support his arguments. Hicks cites Deuteronomy 8:3 because it uses *'adam* (ibid., pg. 33), but in verse five, *'ish* appears as its synonym. Here, both words are about Israel's need for God's provision and discipline. In citing Jeremiah 10:23 (ibid., pg. 33), Hicks fails again to note that *'adam* is used synonymously with *'ish* (stage five). Likewise, when he refers to Jeremiah 17:5, it is because he feels it supports his above-mentioned contention about the meaning and uniqueness of *'adam* (ibid., pg. 33), but again fails to observe that it appears here as a synonym of *gever* (stage three). Similarly, although Psalm 8:4 is appealed to (ibid., pg. 37), *'adam* is here synonymous with *enosh* (stage four). Finally, attempting to buttress his argument further, he appeals to Psalm 49:7, where he reproduces the text and inserts the word *'adam* where the English reads "man." In actuality, however, the Hebrew word used is *'ish*. Similar problems occur in the citations of Scripture throughout the remainder of this and the other chapters.

We may conclude that the very passages Hicks chose to support his contention that each Hebrew word represents distinct stages of the masculine journey and to support his definition of the term and stage argue against his positions. We may also conclude that he misused the lexical material found in Botterweck and Ringgren.

Finally, we may conclude that Hicks unnecessarily resorted to abstract definitions of the term, which amounts to an over-generalization which could not stand the scrutiny of biblical evidence read in context (cf. Carson, pg. 62).

### ZAKAR

The Hebrew term *zakar* describes Hicks' second stage. Similar etymological gymnastics leads him to the statement, "The Bible simply defines manhood by the phallus" (ibid., pp. 48-49). Noting that "only the male was required to bring a sacrifice" (ibid., pg. 50), he concludes, "possessing a penis places unique requirements upon men before God in how they are to worship Him. ... We are told by God to worship Him in accordance with what we are, phallic men" (ibid., pg. 51).

It is unfortunate when personal opinion determines theology, and when presuppositions take precedence over the full counsel of God. The Bible clearly teaches that women are in need of atonement as well as men. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) was equally needed and effective for all. Scripture also requires certain sacrifices specifically of women (Leviticus 12:6, 8; Luke 2:22-24). With respect to both sinfulness and redemption, worship and relationship with God, the Bible declares that there is no distinction between male and female (Romans 3:23-24; 11:32; Galatians 3:28).

### GIBBOR

For Hicks, the next stage is defined by the Hebrew term *gibbor*. He states that the warrior stage of manhood is reflected in the three-letter root g-b-r, which "forms the meaning of *all* terms associated with the male warrior" (ibid., pg. 76, emphasis added). It should be noted, however, that many other terms and phrases are synonyms of *gibbor*, which Hicks passed over: *'avir* (used 23 times, see *A New Concordance of the Bible*, by Abraham Even-Shoshan, pg. 7), *'amitz* (used six times, ibid., pg. 83), *'ish chail* (used 19 times, ibid., pp. 53-55), and *'ish milchamah* (used 41 times, ibid., pp. 53-54).

Why are these not considered? It may be because Hicks could not make such a plethora of terms conform to the stages of Levinson. It may also be

because the term *'ish* appears in some phrases, which would destroy his theory of differentiation (although our discussion of *'adam* and its synonyms have effectively accomplished this anyway). Nevertheless, we should also remember that this g-b-r root (stage three) has already been seen to be synonymous with *'adam* (stage one, cf. Jeremiah 17:5, 7), and appears in poetic parallelism with many other terms throughout Scripture as well.

### ENOSH

The fourth phase of manhood is described by Hicks as the "wounded male." Therefore, the Hebrew term he uses is *enosh*, which he states means "being weak, feeble and sometimes incurably weak or sick" (*Masculine Journey*, pg. 103). He again appeals to the lexical work of Botterweck and Ringgren. The reference in Botterweck and Ringgren, however, is again to Akkadian, not to specific examples in the Hebrew Bible. Also, Hicks fails to mention that in the same section of Botterweck and Ringgren he cites, the authors state that the clear Old Testament meaning is simply "man, mankind ... people, persons" (I: 346) and that in Ugaritic it means "to be manly ... be strong," and that it is synonymous with *'ish*, *gever*, and *'adam* (I:347). Why is this material ignored? Clearly because it contradicts the agenda.

It is interesting that the Aramaic form of this term (*enash*) is used of the exalted "Son of Man" of Daniel 7:13. Although this evidence also is in the section of Botterweck and Ringgren cited by Hicks (I:348), he could not admit it into evidence, because he states that this stage of Christ's "masculine journey" is categorized by the term *'ish* (*Masculine Journey*, pp. 182, 189).

Hicks states that the term *enosh* "is most often used in the book of Job," which has significance to him, because this book "illustrates [male] wounding in its most severe form" (ibid., pg. 103). One wishes one could express trust in such a simple statement. This is not so. The term appears 18 times in Job compared with 49 times elsewhere. However, might he not be referring to a book-to-book comparison? The term appears eight times in Isaiah, 13 times in Psalms, and 23 times in Daniel (*New Concordance*, pp. 94, 96-97 cf. Botterweck and Ringgren I:347 which estab-

lishes the synonymy of *enosh* and *enash*).

Hicks states that Jacob is a perfect example of the *enosh* stage of manhood, "If all the ideas associated with the word *enosh* could be illustrated, they might best be found in the life of the biblical patriarch Jacob (Genesis 25:19-33:20)." He continues, "Jacob illustrates a young man having been severely wounded by a dysfunctional family system" (ibid., pg. 117). Apart from the pop-psychological analysis, what is the problem with his use of Jacob in this way? Whereas Jacob has other terms applied to him in the narrative, never is the term *enosh* used of him. In fact, it is used only once in the entire Pentateuch (Deuteronomy 32:26). The truth is, that when we focus on Jacob or any other part of the narrative which is not the author's focus, we miss the intended message of both the human and the divine author of Scripture. This is true not of this passage alone, but of every passage of Scripture. This should cause all who are really interested in hearing the true message of Scripture to consider very carefully those to whom they choose to listen. It boils down to whether we are willing to settle for the word of man, or whether we will settle for nothing less than the Word of God.

### ***'ISH***

This fifth phase is supposed to show the truly mature man who has learned and healed from his *enosh* wounds. Hicks declares that the term '*ish*' is "always in contrast to the Hebrew terms *yeled* (young man), *na'ar* (youth), and *zaken* (old men)" (ibid., pg. 124). One should note that he has here introduced two Hebrew terms for which no Levinsonian stages exist. Also, his assertion cannot be proven. The opposite is true. There are multiple examples throughout the Hebrew Bible in which the term '*ish*' is used as a collective to refer to all men (and even women) of all ages. Any Hebrew concordance will establish this.

For example, in our sample study, we have already shown that the term '*ish*' is often synonymous with '*adam*' (the first stage). Judges 19:16, 17, 20; 1 Samuel 4:18; and 28:14 show that the term can also be used in concert with the *zaken* (the last stage).

In defining the term, the inevitable

result of "word loading" (piling up abstract, decontextualized definitions, cf. Carson, pg. 62) occurs. Hicks states that '*ish*' can mean both "a man of higher rank" and "a man of lower rank" (*Masculine Journey*, pg. 123). Obviously, in normal communication in any language, a word can convey only one meaning in a given context. It may not convey two or more conflicting meanings. These are the very gymnastics James Barr decried and which reputable scholars renounced almost 35 years ago.

### **ZAKEN**

Nevertheless, Hicks employs the same approach in defining his sixth stage. Here, the *zaken*, or wise old man, is supposed to be the goal of manhood, only achieved in the final phase. However, as noted above *zaken* can be connected to the fifth stage ('*ish*'), and to the third stage (*gever chakham*, Proverbs 24:5) as indicated by poetic parallelism. Like all the others it can be shown to be synonymous with the other terms when one begins to work with contextualized examples from the Hebrew Bible.

### **UNACCEPTABLE METHODOLOGY**

One can conclude that Hicks uses suspect methods for biblical study. He misrepresents his sources, misquotes Scripture, and neglects important evidence in both the Bible and secondary sources. He ignores context and simple Hebrew syntax. He is given to simple mistakes and over-generalizations. He is selective in dealing with the biblical terminology relevant to the study of manhood, preferring to conform biblical revelation to human theory.

Hicks begins with presuppositions, then seeks evidence to support them, rather than allowing theories to arise out of observations made from the evidence. To establish his agenda, Hicks regularly resorts to "word loading" (cf. Carson, pg. 62). He is not above spiritualizing and allegorizing historical texts (*Masculine Journey*, pg. 118). He continues to employ the long-discredited "word-study" method (cf. Carson, pp. 25-66).

Such methodological problems can only serve to alert the informed reader to proceed with caution. And proceed we must, if we are to keep up with

Hicks. For Hicks, believing that he has established himself as an authoritative interpreter of Scripture on this subject, and has established a seemingly airtight case for his theory, does not stop with a mere explanation of his theory of male development. Rather, his imagination, perspective, and approach lead him to make statements which have broader theological implications. It is to these that we must now turn our attention.

### **THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

Given Hicks' departures from accepted methodology and loose handling of Scripture, it is not surprising that we find a considerable number of radical departures in the area of theology. Below are some examples:

1) Hicks states that as "creational" beings, man has "capabilities that are ... *divine*" (*Masculine Journey*, pg. 23, emphasis added). We had dismissed this as a slip of the pen, until we read his later statement, that after the fall, man no longer rules "in the *divine* majesty for which he was created" (ibid., pg. 41, emphasis added). This seems harmonious with his view that New Agers can also be Christian (ibid., pg. 134, quote cited in full below).

2) Hicks says that he tested the correctness of his Hebrew reconstruction of the masculine journey by listening to the comments of participants in his seminars (ibid., pp. 29, 30). However, the truth or error of teachings said to be based on Scripture cannot be determined by the reactions or comments of fallen man. Nor is it determined by feeling, intuition, or majority vote. "Scripture Interprets Scripture" according to historical Protestantism.

3) Hicks regularly adds to biblical accounts or rewrites the original author's intentions. This is the case on page 68, where he concludes that the root of Samson's failure was that "he was hopelessly controlled by his phallus." Another such statement appears in his psychoanalytic diagnosis of the home of Isaac and Rebekah as "dysfunctional" and that the angel put Jacob's hip out of place to evoke sympathy and thus effect reconciliation with Esau (ibid., pg. 118). He concludes that Elijah fled to Sinai because like most males, he could stand up to boss, king, father, etc., but could not stand up

to “an irate, verbally threatening woman” (ibid., pg. 144). He suggests that Abraham’s reason for lying about his relationship to Sarah and her resultant incorporation into the harem of Abimelech was that he was attempting “to dump Sarah for not giving him any children” (ibid., pg. 168).

4) On Scripture Hicks says, “I call the psalms of David the musings of a manic-depressive. David’s psalms are either all praise or all depression” (ibid., pg. 114). Not only are both statements incorrect, but to call the results of divine inspiration “the musings of a manic-depressive” borders on blasphemy. This is the same material Jesus quoted authoritatively and used to explain his suffering messiahship to his followers (Luke 24:44). The Psalms are part of the “all Scripture” which Paul declared is “profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Combined with the examples mentioned in “3)” above, what does this say of Hicks’ view of Scripture?

5) Hicks asserts, “The Bible simply defines manhood by the phallus...” (ibid., pg. 49) and “Possessing a penis places unique requirements upon men before God in how they are to worship Him. ... We are told by God to worship Him in accordance with what we are, phallic men” (ibid., pg. 51. See the notes on this statement above.). Consider also that we are to focus on God in worship, not ourselves. Additionally, Scripture states that we are to worship “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Externals are not the issue: service and worship of God is a matter of the heart (Romans 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:19). This only serves to point out the *anthropocentric* orientation of Hicks’ approach, whereas the biblical approach to worship and to spiritual maturity is *theocentric*. Hicks writes,

“Phallus, like all great religious symbols, points to a mysterious divine reality ... this symbol is important to religion but as an erect organ” (ibid., pp. 51-52). “Every time [a Jew] used his penis, he was making a spiritual statement about who he was and who he worshiped and why” (ibid., pg. 52). “Without proper teaching on the phallus, men will carry around in their psyches a spiritual god-hunger so mysterious and powerful that when

driven underground, it will seek spiritual fulfillment only in the secrecy of motel rooms, adult videos, and in the bragging and joking about sexual exploits in athletic locker rooms” (ibid., pg. 55). “Our sexual problems only reveal how desperate we are to express, in some perverted form, the deep compulsion to worship with our phallus” (ibid., pg. 56). “...the phallus [is] ... the symbol of God’s faithfulness and provision” (ibid.). “As men, the phallus defines our identity” (ibid., pg. 68).

Do we see this type or this degree of emphasis on the penis in Scripture? Do we hear Jeremiah or Paul speaking this way? Is this their emphasis? Was this what Jesus was all about? Let’s read on.

6) “Jesus was also very much *zakar*, phallic ... I believe Jesus was phallic with **all** the inherent phallic passions we experience as men ... He may have thought about [sex] as the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* portrays... Christ was tempted in every way as we are. That would mean not only heterosexual temptation but also homosexual temptation” (ibid., pg. 181; bold added, italics in original).

7) In light of all the above, it’s not surprising that Hicks writes, “Whether married or not, the issue of what is normative for the Christian male is *often not clear*” (ibid., pg. 174, emphasis added). This is definitely not these writers’ view of biblical revelation and its requirements for males. This same degree of ambiguity can be seen elsewhere:

“Some of my ‘counselees’ were individuals whom I once thought were logical contradictions. God brought to me Christians who were homosexuals and Marxists. I listened ... [and] was left with the conviction that they were sincere about both their faith in Christ and their views on sexuality and politics ... I have learned that the way to look at God or the world is not necessarily through the lens or categories I currently believe are the correct ones. The labels don’t matter all that much, whether they be Communist, Democrat, New Age, feminist, fundamentalist, or hookers-married-to-cross-dressing co-dependents ... this is the way Jesus

related to people, and His modeling provides me with a much richer and broader perspective on ministry” (ibid., pp. 133-134).

Such remarks are an excellent example of how what one believes eventually effects how one lives his life. Quite the opposite of “broadening” our ministry, Jesus constantly appears to sharpen and narrow our focus (Matthew 7:13-14). His way is not the way of the homosexual, the adulterer, and the idolater (1 Corinthians 6:9; Revelation 21:8, etc.). To claim that it is, is to proclaim “another Jesus” (cf. Galatians 1:6-9).

## OTHER QUESTIONABLE CONTENTS

Hicks claims that his book is a map to trace the masculine journey (ibid., pg. 14). Most Christians would say that Scripture is their map for life (2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17) and the light and lamp for their path. Suggested “maps” and “keys” to Scripture and life are usually a tipoff to a major detour.

On Hicks’ “map” there are conflicting, confusing and contradictory signposts. Is this really a map or some kind of disguised dead end? A disconcerting thing about the book (and the accompanying study guide) is the pop psychology, group therapy (with strange games) and his use of very questionable non-Christian sources. At times he does not seem to take those sources too seriously. At other times they buttress certain points that are made.

Hicks admits to his “map” not being totally a biblical map by his heavy reliance on Levinson’s book, *The Seasons of A Man’s Life*, (pp. 19, 107, 131, 133, 199, 200). In *The Masculine Journey Study Guide* (pg. 8), he affirms: “Levinson draws a developmental framework for understanding men.”

As demonstrated above, Hicks’ use of the Hebrew Old Testament is creative and contrived to fit a pre-existing scheme. It is, in fact, a reading into the Scripture of at least some of Levinson’s novelties along with his own imagining.

Levinson at the time of the writing of his book (1976) was a Professor of Psychology at Yale University. The book is based on a study of 40 men and creates a theory of adult male development. Levinson acknowledges building

on both Erik Erikson and Carl Jung, (*The Seasons of A Man's Life*, pg. 323). So in supporting any of Levinson there is credibility given obliquely to Jung.

Jung, who is also quoted directly by Hicks, was a disciple of Sigmund Freud and is known as the Father of Analytical Psychology (1875-1961). His mysticism, occultism, and unconventional ideas separated him from the professional world.

Of grave concern is Hicks' reliance on Jung, (*Masculine Journey*, pp. 100-101, 197), as if to assume that Jung is a safe and reliable source to quote. He uses Jung to buttress his "wounded male" theory.

Jung was an avowed student of the occult and claimed to have a spirit guide by the name of Philemon who accompanied him and communicated wisdom to him. The neo-gnostic Jung also believed in his own divinity. Hicks should have stated this. In any context Jung is dangerous. The distance Hicks put between himself and Jung on page 17 narrows extremely at this point.

Jung spent his entire life in an obsessive pursuit of spiritism, mysticism and black arts and is the unwitting father of the inner healing movement. (For a shocking and frightening introduction to Jung's life, see *The Serpent and the Cross* by Alan Morrison, pp. 258-266.) In light of these facts, it is amazing that so many Christian authors accept and authoritatively quote Jung, and thus pass his unbiblical emphases on to an unsuspecting, undiscerning Church. Ignorance here may not be bliss but horrible error.

Also troubling is Hicks' citing of another well-known occultist. He refers to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (*Masculine Journey*, pg. 106), which gives her credibility with the unsuspecting. PFO has documented Kübler-Ross' denial of Christian doctrines and her commitment to her "spirit guides" (see *PFO Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 2, "A Deadly View of Death and Dying"). Her blatant spiritism is well-documented in many other places. She has no place in a "Christian" book. Hard-hitting facts, documentation and refutation of Kübler-Ross can be also found in Chapter 23 of Jay Adams' work, *More Than Redemption*. It is brief and to the point and well worth a read.

Hicks also quotes Margaret Mead to

say we are "noble savages" (*Masculine Journey*, pp. 40-41). In this he is behind the times. All of Mead's "research," it was found, was based on an elaborate scam that created anthropological myths about "savages" in Samoa. Her "facts" and conclusions were proven all wrong (see *Fakes, Frauds and Other Malarkey* by Kathryn Lindskoog, pp. 202-203). The "savages," it turned out, were part of the con which played very well to tourists and the "savage" economy. However, myths die hard.

It seems contrived and forced to say that Jesus had to pass through all the stages and progressions of Hicks' "map" of life (*Masculine Journey*, pp. 180-183) but he proposes that nevertheless.

In the companion workbook, *The Masculine Journey Study Guide*, Hicks suggests the novel nonsense of playing a game called "people bingo." In group-therapy fashion, men are to find out if the other men have on bikini briefs or boxer shorts. As well, men are to divulge if they are circumcised, or had a vasectomy as part of the "game." Such "games" are never suggested by Scripture. There must be some things that are of a personal and private nature. It seems that nothing is off limits. Salvation and sanctification are serious issues, not trifling games to be played in a church basement.

It is entirely inappropriate for men to divulge all types of private information in an attempt to cause them to "open up" and thus become "accountable" to the group. It is also irrelevant and inappropriate to discuss in such a setting stories about bed wetting, first development of pubic hair, or past involvement with pornographic materials (ibid., pg. 33). Beyond inappropriate, it is unethical to discuss in such a group what happened between oneself and one's wife on the wedding night, or the details when one's first child was conceived (ibid.). Encouragement to share one's sexual fantasies in such a context (ibid., pg. 36) is also unacceptable.

Yet Hicks' study guide directs men to share these stories. Apparently nothing at all is off limits or too personal. The whole thing is disgusting and repulsive. How would one's spouse feel knowing that such intimacies have been paraded before others? What kind of thoughts might this provoke in terms of the

weakness of another man to lust and be tempted? It seems that pop psychology and novelty are immune to common sense and logic.

Ephesians 5:1-12 suggests that there are limits as to what we discuss with others. The intimate details of our past sins and the intimacies of our marriage are not open for public perusal and discussion.

Finally, bragging about conquests is never acceptable Christian behavior, in this or any other situation. It is thoroughly unacceptable for this to be encouraged here (ibid., pp. 42-43).

It is difficult to believe that both book and study guide by Hicks have full-page endorsements in each by the Promise Keepers organization. One can only ask in frustration, "What has happened to biblical discernment?"

William Spencer has noted that Hicks downplays sin and lumps sinful practices under a category of woundedness. This is also contrived and more in the realm of pop psychology (see *Christian Research Journal*, Fall 1995, pg. 7, "The Masculine Journey of Promise Keepers").

And so, using the baby and bath water analogy, how dirty is the water and would one even put a baby in a muddy mess? Any discerning believer can only express serious concern at the quotes, questionable sources, group therapy, pop psychology and games suggested by these two books. One can only wonder about those who endorse them so readily.

## CONCLUSION

We can safely conclude that Hicks did not succeed in grounding Levinson's stages of manhood in biblical theology. We can also safely conclude that Hicks' radical departures from orthodox practices in hermeneutics and theology have led to further errors in other areas.

We might also observe that when a book such as this, with all its methodological and theological problems, is promoted by a major publisher, endorsed by well-known ministries, and employed as discipleship curriculum by the largest Christian men's group in the world, discernment in the Body of Christ is at an all-time low.

Based on the evidence put forth in this review, NavPress, Promise Keepers, and other ministries would do well to rescind their endorsements of this book. Further, we hope that in the future, they will exhibit greater discernment in determining materials for use, distribution, and endorsement.


We hope that the Body of Christ will see this as another example of how far it can stray when it loses the Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura*. We are to be a people of the Book. All matters of faith and practice are to be determined from Scripture alone. Personal opinion/testimony/revelation/majority

opinion, and pop psychology all eventually lead to bondage. Yet when we know the truth, the truth revealed by Scripture, "the truth will set us free" (John 8:32).

Finally, as is evident from the technical nature of this analysis, it is important for the Church to have a leadership which is well-trained in the biblical languages, hermeneutics, and theology. This book would never have achieved the notoriety it has if only someone along the way had taken a few hours to compare its contents with biblical revelation.

It is ultimately the responsibility of

the shepherd to guard and protect the flock from that which is unhealthy and dangerous. The flock has a right to expect this from its leaders. When this takes place, the church is healthy (Acts 20:29-32). When it does not, the church is sickly (Revelation 2:14-16; cf. Ezekiel 34:1-24). May God grant us all resolve and discernment to fulfill his command to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

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## EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

becoming king, but his sitting as a judge during the future tribulation.

More important, the Watchtower, in an article titled, "A Time to Keep Awake," gives Jehovah's Witnesses their new understanding of the "generation of 1914":

"We 'bring a heart of wisdom in,' not by speculation about how many years or days make up a generation, but by thinking about how we 'count our days' in bringing joyful praise to Jehovah. ... Rather than provide a rule for measuring time, the term 'generation' as used by Jesus refers principally to contemporary people of a certain historical period, with their identifying characteristics" (Nov. 1, 1995, pg. 17).

Then, to lend authority to this idea, the magazine cites professor of history Robert Wohl in his publication, *The Generation of 1914*: "A historical generation is not defined by its chronological limits. ... It is not a zone of dates" (pg. 18).

The Watchtower also issues a scolding to those who tried to nail down the definition of the "generation of 1914": "Is anything to be gained, then, by looking for dates or by speculating about the literal lifetime of 'generation'?" (pg. 19).

Evidently the prophetic conjecture of thinking that "generation" could have meant a specific number of years is not the fault of the leadership but of the rank-and-file. The magazine says, "Eager to see the end of this evil system, Jehovah's people have at times speculated about the time when the 'great tribulation' would break out, even tying this to calculations of what is the lifetime of a generation since 1914" (pg. 17).

Thus, the magazine hints, it was presumptuous Jehovah's Witnesses who were responsible for placing too much emphasis upon what the word "generation" might signify. A novel approach to an embarrassing problem? Not at all.

Watchtower leaders have done the same thing repeatedly over the years.

For example, after repeated declarations suggesting 1925 as the year the earthly phase of the kingdom would be recognized, the Society sidestepped blame and implicated the readers themselves for the blunder: "It is expected that Satan will try to inject into the minds of the consecrated the thought that 1925 should see an end of the work, and that therefore it would be needless for them to do more" (*The Watchtower*, Sept. 1, 1925, pg. 262). The Watchtower used the same technique to explain away the speculation surrounding the 1975 prophetic failure.

However, it is the Watchtower leadership, not the membership faithful of its ranks, that is the source of such confusion. Consider these examples of Watchtower conjecture:

"Which generation did Jesus mean [Matthew 24:34]? He meant the generation of people who are living in 1914. Those persons yet remaining of that generation are now very old. However, some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. So of this we can be certain: Shortly now there will be a sudden end to all wickedness and wicked people at Armageddon" (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, pg. 154).

"Yes, you may live to see this promised New Order, along with survivors of the generation of 1914 — the generation that will not pass away" (*The Watchtower*, May 15, 1984, pg. 7).

Yet, even after dodging the blame and then reprimanding Jehovah's Witnesses for such presumptuousness, the Society's leadership continues to dangle the "Armageddon carrot" before its fold. "Does our more precise viewpoint on 'this generation' mean that Armageddon is further away than we had thought? Not at all!", the Nov. 1, 1995, *Watchtower* says on page 20. Moreover, to even a casual observer, the organization is rigid in its refusal to let members deviate from the party line.

Former head legal counselor for the Watchtower, H.C. Covington, accentuated the Society's tyrannical standard

during testimony in a 1954 court trial. He stated under oath: "If the whole organization believes one thing, even though it be erroneous, and somebody else starts on his own trying to put his ideas across, then there is disunity and trouble, there cannot be marching together. When a change comes, it should come from the proper source, the head of the organization, the governing body, not from the bottom upwards, because everybody would have ideas, and the organization would disintegrate and go into a thousand different directions. Our purpose is to have unity."

This was a unity Covington admitted would mean a dissenter would be "worthy of death." There are no Bereans allowed in this sect (Acts 17:11).

It is the leaders and writers of the Watchtower organization who are solely responsible for the many alterations in theology forced upon Jehovah's Witnesses. They are also accountable for the many revisions of history that find their way into the pages of the Society's publications. Two keen illustrations punctuate the organization's ability to metamorphose its history and teachings.

The previously cited *Watchtower* article says, "As the year 1914 drew near, God-fearing people were expecting Messiah's arrival. And arrive he did!" (Nov. 1, 1995, pg. 16).

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Those who held to the prophetic aspirations of the Watchtower during the early 1900s did not look for the Second Coming of Christ to occur in 1914. Instead they embraced the belief that Christ had already returned in 1874. The hope that they held for 1914, therefore, was that the battle of Armageddon would be fought and the new age begun by that year.

Further, the Watchtower Society has revised its longstanding statement of purpose for the *Awake!* magazine found in the masthead of the bimonthly. Before the new understanding of "generation," the Oct. 22, 1995, (and all previous issues) of the *Awake!* announced: "Most importantly, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world *before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.*"

The magazine, starting with the Nov. 8, 1995, issue, says, "this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world *that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.*"

Additionally, the Watchtower redefinition of the word "generation" conflicts with other, currently used publications. The Society's encyclopedic work, *Insights from the Scriptures*, says under the heading "Generation," although "the exact length of that time cannot be stated," its "time would fall into reasonable limits. These limits would be determined by the life span of the people of that time or of that population" (Vol. 1, pp. 917-918).

Then there's the fact that the "new light" now being imparted to Jehovah's Witnesses is really not so new after all. Well over a decade ago, a series of articles appeared in *The Watchtower* that addressed the "fast disappearing generation of 1914." The debut of the new meaning to the word "generation," which appeared in the May 15, 1984,

*Watchtower*, even cited Wohl's book, *The Generation of 1914*. As it has done of late, blended Wohl's concept into its own new teaching, originally stating: "But what did he [Jesus] mean when he spoke of a 'generation that would not pass away'? Some have interpreted 'generation' to mean a period of 30, 40, 70 or even 120 years. However, a generation is really related to people and events, rather than to a fixed number of years" (pg. 5).

The faithful leadership of the Watchtower on all levels, too, already has begun to minimize the importance of the change and the effect it will have upon its rank-and-file. Robert Johnson, a representative for the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, "denied that Witness leadership was under the pressure of an aging generation to adjust its teachings." Johnson told the *Los Angeles Times* that "there is no falling away [of members] that I know of, and we don't expect to see that." He added that the 1914 timetable, which has been a fundamental message preached door-to-door for the last half-century, "has not been a cardinal doctrine of [Jehovah's Witness] faith." Likewise, Harvey Breneman, a circuit overseer in Southern California, told the newspaper: "Nobody has raised any questions to me."

Jehovah's Witnesses continue to allow themselves to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. They will continue to let their thinking be done by the leadership because they believe God directs the changes. However, because of the literal interpretation that has for so long been placed on the term "generation," there will be some who realize they have been deceived and will leave.

Former Jehovah's Witness David Reed states that more than 1 million Jehovah's Witnesses left the Watchtower Society after the failure of the 1975 prophecy. We can only hope that the fallout for the "generation" fiasco will have the same result. For those who have the courage to leave, we are thankful. We say to them: There is life outside the Watchtower. We pray that they will not just renounce the Watchtower and its false teachings, but will embrace the true person and work of Jesus Christ.

No matter how it redefines "generation" or how long it is able to extend its boundaries, the Watchtower Society will be a false prophet.

—MKG

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## NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

book that was sent to him, and maybe read through it and pick up a few ideas. ... The rest is from the Bible."

Tweed was a Peale protégé in the Dutch Protestant Collegiate Church, a branch of the Reformed Church in America. Exoo is an ordained minister in the Unitarian Church.

For more information on the unbiblical thoughts of "positive thinker" Peale, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 4.

—MKG

## **SCIENTOLOGY INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY CASE RECEIVES LOW-GEAR VERDICT**

The Church of Scientology recently received a favorable ruling by a federal judge in San Jose, Calif., but not as extensive as the one it had sought. In 1994, the church sued Dennis Erlich, who published "secret" documents on the computer Internet. The uploaded materials included selected Scientology instructional materials and transcripts of discourses against critics of the sect.

Erlich is a former Scientology minister. The church charged that he was trying to deride the sect by posting documents that were classified as "trade secrets."

In early 1995, Erlich was issued a temporary restraining order prohibiting him from publishing additional documents on the Internet. However, in a ruling made public in September, U.S. District Judge Ronald M. Whyte, rejected Scientology's "trade secret" argument and turned down its request to prevent Erlich from continued use of all church materials. Whyte's ruling did bar Erlich from large-scale reproduction of copyrighted church documents.

According to a Religious News Service report: "Erlich may publish brief excerpts of the copyrighted materials, however, to advance his criticism of the church."

Other court cases initiated by Scientology against two Internet services, which gave Erlich access to upload the material, were pending when this journal went to press.

—MKG

## **RLDS LEADER TO STEP DOWN**

Wallace B. Smith, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, has announced plans to retire as leader of the 243,000-member sect. The 66-year-old Smith said his resignation would take place this April.

Smith, who has directed the second-largest of the Mormon groups since 1978, has selected his adviser, W. Grant McMurray, to succeed him. McMurray, if approved at the church's 1996 World Conference, would be the first-ever president of the church not to be a direct descendent of Joseph Smith Jr. The current President Smith is the great-grandson of Joseph. He will be only the second leader in the church's 135-year history to resign as president. His father, W. Wallace Smith, relinquished the presidency in 1978.

During Smith's presidency, the church approved the ordination of women to the priesthood and the building of a \$75 million temple and headquarters complex in Independence, Mo.

Another transition on the horizon for the Reorganized Saints is a possible denominational name change to the "Community of Christ."

The Reorganized Church of Latter-Day Saints was established in 1860 in Amboy, Ill., under the leadership of Joseph Smith III, over a decade after Joseph Smith Jr's death. At the turn of the century, the church established its headquarters in Independence.

—MKG

## **EDDY IN WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME**

According to a news service report in the *Washington Post*, Mary Baker Eddy has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Eddy, who founded the Church of Christ, Scientist in the 19th century, was among 18 American women installed during the mid-October ceremonies in Seneca Falls, N.Y.

The news item said Eddy's selection was attributed to her being "the only American woman to found a lasting American-based denomination." The report, however, did not say what category Ellen G. White (Seventh-Day Adventist) or Aimee Semple McPherson (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel) would fall into.

Eddy began developing the tenets of her mystical theology in the 1860s, wrote *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* in 1875, and officially founded the church in 1879.

—MKG

## **SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS AMONG FASTEST GROWING CHURCHES**

Figures recently released by the world headquarters of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church reveal that it is one of the fastest-growing religious groups. A report contrasting membership numbers for 1994 and 1995 shows a nearly 5.5% annual growth rate. The sect has gained more than 650,000 new members in the past 12 months.

Archives and Statistics Director F. Donald Yost reported that the church had worldwide added a new member every 45 seconds. Yost also said that by 2006 the church should be gaining a million members annually.

The current figures are for baptized adult members only and worldwide membership of the church was put at more than 8.6 million.

—MKG

## **MASS WEDDING SETS RECORD FOR MOON**

Over 35,000 couples were recently married in South Korea during a mass ceremony performed by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church. The 1995 figure surpasses Moon's 1992 record of 20,000. Overall,

720,000 people — two-thirds of which renewed their vows — participated in the ceremony. Moon conducted the service from Seoul via TV satellite link with 545 sites in more than 100 countries.

The newly married couples had not met before the late-summer ceremony. Moon, along with his wife, matched individuals from photographs and by categorizing age and nationality. The selections, said to be done under divine inspiration, took 15 months to complete.

Couples from Japan were charged \$29,000. American couples paid \$2,000. Nearly 10,000 of those participating were American. Church officials said the money underwrites satellite expenses and the outlay for 200,000 African couples. Critics say the ceremonies have been a lucrative business for the church and have brought in \$1.3 billion to the church down through the years.

—MKG

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## BOOKS IN REVIEW

(continued from page 20)

so-called genetic “proof” for sexual orientation. The book has 55 pages of endnotes and documentation but can be grasped by scholar and layman alike.

Again, this volume is well-researched, empathetic, practical, and must reading for anyone interested in understanding and being equipped to address our times. This reviewer hopes that every believer reads this book and digests its contents.

—GRF

## DEFENDING YOUR FAITH

### How to Answer the Tough Questions

by Dan Story

Thomas Nelson Publishers, 234 pages, \$9.99

Author Dan Story writes in the introduction to his volume on apologetics that: “Today’s average Christian is easily plowed under by the arguments of skeptics, critics, and cultists.” It’s a sad but true commentary upon the Church today.

In a scholarly, yet clear and easily readable style, Story tackles several difficult assaults on the Christian faith by skeptics and critics alike. The existence of God and His triune nature, the trustworthiness and exclusiveness of the Bible, the deity and bodily resurrection of Christ, the existence of evil and the reality of eternal punishment are just some of the seventeen chapters which make up this work.

Validation of the essentials of the Christian faith are presented with logical and verifiable arguments using historical, scientific and legal evidence. It is a publication that can be read repeatedly with new insights at each reading. It will be enjoyed and appreciated by both one seasoned in defending the faith or one new to the field of apologetics.

With subjectivism, mysticism and atheism running rampant, this volume is an excellent resource for the pre-evangelism work of apologetics. It is one that will truly equip Christians to “answer the tough questions,” as the book’s subtitle indicates.

—MKG

## **Personal Freedom Outreach — Statement of Belief**

**I. The Bible as the divinely inspired, inerrant Word of God: It is in its entirety the sole authority for all matters of Christian belief and practice.**

**II. The one true God. In the one true God there exist three persons, being: The Father, The Son Jesus Christ, and The Holy Spirit.**

**III. Jesus Christ: His deity, humanity, virgin birth, sinlessness, death and bodily resurrection; who will personally and visibly return again to earth.**

**IV. The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit.**

**V. The existence and personality of Satan, his total opposition to God, and his power over the unregenerate.**

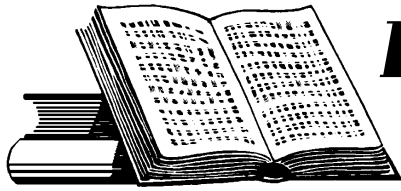
**VI. The complete and total depravity of all men which makes them hopelessly lost without the new birth obtainable through faith in Jesus Christ.**

**VII. The final estate of man: for the saved, everlasting life in the presence of God and for the unsaved, everlasting punishment because of their unbelief.**

**VIII. The Gospel by which we are saved being summed in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**IX. The Church being the Body of Christ, united in the Holy Spirit, consisting of those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior. A local church is an organized assembly of believers united for the purpose of carrying out the Great Commission of Christ.**

**X. The Great Commission of Christ being to preach the Gospel to all men, baptizing and discipling those who have believed.**



# Books in Review

## REASONING FROM THE SCRIPTURES WITH THE MORMONS

by Ron Rhodes and Marian Bodine  
Harvest House Publishers, 425 pages, \$11.99

Borrowing from the title and format of his previous work on Jehovah's Witnesses, apologist Ron Rhodes combines his efforts with Marian Bodine in a critique of the weighty theological errors of the Mormon Church.

The authors examine in great detail the Latter-day Saint concept of God and Jesus Christ, claims and problems of The Book of Mormon, the devaluation of the Bible, modern-day revelation to modern-day prophets, the Mormon priesthood, and a lengthy section on salvation in the LDS Church. Also covered is a brief historical outline of the Mormon church and suggestions for witnessing to active members and missionaries.

Mormon beliefs are thoroughly contrasted with Christian theology and thought-provoking questions are intermingled throughout the book designed to stimulate discussion with Mormons. The book can be used as an in-depth study or as a ready reference.

The volume also contains helpful subject and scripture indexes. The only thing lacking is an index of LDS scripture references which would have been equally useful.

The book has been fittingly dedicated to Jerry Bodine, the late husband of co-author Marian, who passed away shortly before the publication's release. Jerry was involved for many years as a researcher of Mormonism and in actively witnessing to its adherents.

*Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Mormons* is one of the most exhaustive and beneficial writings to come along in recent years. Its value will be far-reaching to assist Christians to better defend and share their faith with Mormons.

—MKG

## DAMAGED DISCIPLES

by Ron and Vicki Burks  
Zondervan Publishing House, 176 pages, \$8.99

Ron and Vicki Burks have experienced first-hand the spiritual abuse evidenced in the authoritarian movement

known as discipleship or shepherding. A deep desire to express their faith in God led to their involvement in the movement originally led Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Don Basham and Charles Simpson.

Ron is now the psychological assistant and research specialist at Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center in Ohio.

The Burkses describe the manipulative method of pastor-disciple relationships that holds a shepherding church together. Both major and minor decision making is placed in the hands of one's pastor, holding the follower's free will hostage and robbing him of his personhood. Those who question the pastor are suspected of disloyalty. Acceptance in the movement is based upon one's commitment to it.

A section at the end of the book deals with the subject of "forgiveness" (pp. 154-159). There are a few points in these pages that miss the mark biblically. For example, their concept of "forgiving God" suggests that God, who is our standard of righteousness, needs to be forgiven. This reviewer does not agree. (A scripturally exhaustive study on the theme of forgiveness can be found in the publication by Jay Adams, *From Forgiven to Forgiving*, Calvary Press.)

Nonetheless, *Damaged Disciples* is appropriate reading for those wanting a better understanding of the effects of the shepherding movement. It also will help those who are now out of the movement with their confusion as they struggle to re-establish their lives.

—AMG

## STRAIGHT AND NARROW Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexual Debate

by Thomas Schmidt  
InterVarsity Press, 240 pages, \$11.95

Can Christians really insist on straight behavior without being narrow-minded? This fine book examines that question from a number of perspectives. Having read many books on this topic, this reviewer finds Schmidt's to be the finest, most scholarly and most sympathetic to date.

Thomas Schmidt teaches New Testament and Greek at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, Calif., so he is qualified to address all the revisionist histories that are changing the historical biblical view of homosexuality. Many may not be aware that there are groups that are actually defending homosexual practice using the Bible or that is, careful rewritings of biblical interpretation and history. The delusion and brainwashing of this kind of revisionism is somewhat akin to cultic practice.

Schmidt has not missed a thing. He carefully works through all the pertinent scriptural passages and as well has all kinds of medical information and an analysis of the

(continues on page 19)

*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.