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From High Places to Heresy

Evaluating the Writings of Hannah Hurnard

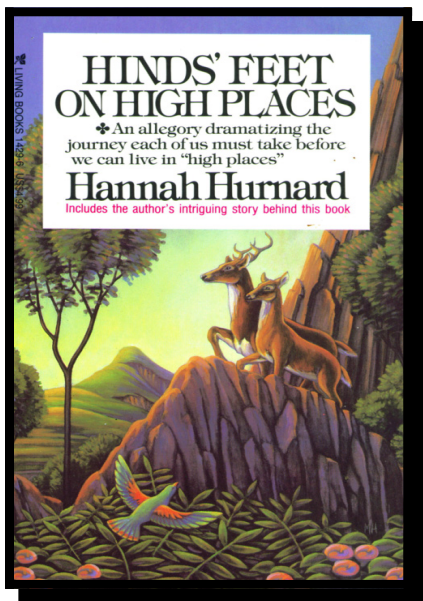
by G. Richard Fisher

A recent issue of the *Bookstore Journal* noted that “[Hannah] Hurnard’s strong individualism emerged in her later years. She liked to be the boss and usually wanted to do the talking” (December 1995, pp. 65-66).

Just like the Energizer Bunny, the sale of some Christian books never seem to abate. They just keep on going and going and going. A classic case in point is Hannah Hurnard’s partially autobiographical allegory, *Hinds’ Feet on High Places*. Hurnard has been dead since 1990, and while the volume containing her life story remains popular and continues on the best-seller list, few really know anything about her. She also has another dozen titles available. And herein is the problem.

Hurnard’s Best Offering

Her book, *Hinds’ Feet on High Places*, was written in 1955 and from all appearances is mainstream and



orthodox. It is still stocked in Christian bookstores and there are over a million copies in circulation. Amazingly, after over four decades the *Bookstore Journal*

reports *Hinds’ Feet* at the No. 11 position on the best-selling fiction list (January 1996, pg. 140). With such longevity, there is little doubt that it could be considered a “classic” in the field of Christian publications. And from that one book, no one would suspect what is contained in other of Hurnard’s writings.

Hurnard was born in England in 1905 to wealthy Quaker parents. She traces her conversion to 1916 before which she claims to have been quite backward, having a severe stutter. Her training in England was at the Ridge-lands Bible College for two years after which she traveled with the “Friends Evangelistic Band.” She became well acquainted with John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* and that influence would show up in *Hinds’ Feet* (the title being taken from Habakkuk 3).

In 1932, unable to find a missions organization to sponsor her, she launched out on her own, moving to Haifa, Israel. There she served in a clinic and eventually engaged in Bible distribution. Her connection to Israel lasted over 50 years, although in her later years she traveled back and forth between England and Israel.

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Editorials

WHO HAS THE LAST LAUGH? DIVISION IN THE VINEYARD

More than ever, Christians must distinguish whether a move in the Church is of God or not. The Apostle John warned believers: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1, NASV).

What about those who base their confidence on mere emotions and assert possession of "power evangelism" because of signs and wonders? If something is unexplainable and lacks real biblical support, can it really be a move from God? What if some practice creates chaos and frenzy, should it not be condemned on the basis of 1 Corinthians 12-14? Jesus Himself exhorted us: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24, NASV).

In 1983, John Wimber broke ranks with the fellowship of Calvary Chapel to align himself with six other churches. A few years later, in 1987, they formed officially as the Association of Vineyard Churches. (See further, *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 2.) Wimber serves as Founder and International Director of the Association.

Wimber's sect has grown worldwide to nearly 550 congregations. In recent months its most noteworthy gathering has been the Toronto Airport Vineyard. Its purported "spiritual renewal," manifested in laughing and

the utterance of animal noises, has gained the attention of Christian and secular media.

These demonstrations of "God's Spirit" have caused much controversy, so much so that last Dec. 5, the American Vineyard Board and Council ousted the Toronto Airport Vineyard at a meeting in Toronto. At the gathering, Wimber announced the decision to Airport's senior pastor, John Arnott. Among those at the meeting were Robert Fulton and Todd Hunter, American colleagues; and Gary Best, the Canadian Vineyard coordinator. The ouster became official Jan. 20.

An "open letter" for general distribution from John Arnott states that the decision came as a surprise and that "we were offered no opportunity for discussion. We were removed without due process." He indicated, however, that they "will be parting on friendly terms." Growing universal concern of "The Toronto Blessing" is said to be the reason for disengagement.

According to the February 1996 issue of *Charisma* magazine,

"The issue centers in part on the unusual animal-like behavior — such as roaring or barking — that is sometimes manifested during renewal meetings at the Toronto church. Wimber said Arnott and his staff repeatedly were warned not to promote, encourage or theologize the animal behavior and the accompanying sounds" (pg. 12).

The Charismatic periodical also noted "members of the
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News Updates

SEX ALLEGATIONS FORCE ARMSTRONG'S RESIGNATION

Charges of sexual assault against Garner Ted Armstrong have led to the televangelist's resignation as head of the Church of God International. Suerae Robertson, a licensed vocational nurse, said that Armstrong had begun to employ her in spring 1995 for massage therapy and claims that the television preacher made repeated lewd requests, grabbed and bit her, and attempted to force her into satisfying his immoral requests. She filed suit in state court in Tyler, Texas, last Nov. 22 and is seeking unspecified damages from Armstrong and his church.

According to an Associated Press report, the masseuse maintains that during two visits last summer Armstrong "insisted that he receive his therapy in complete nudity" and that she was to "concentrate her therapy on the area of his groin, lower back, inner thighs and buttocks." Robertson also claims that the televangelist informed her that "his execution of the Lord's work was so vital that any transgression would be overlooked by God."

Garner Ted, 64, is the son of Herbert W. Armstrong, the late founder of the Worldwide Church of God. In 1978, the younger Armstrong was excommunicated from the Pasadena-based sect by his father and established his own ministry, the Church of God International, now based in Tyler. His current television broadcast is aired weekly on cable and on approximately 30 other stations.

—MKG

TILTON FILES FOR DIVORCE FROM SECOND WIFE, THEN RECONCILES

Former televangelist Robert Tilton reconciled with his second wife, Leigh Valentine Tilton, just 16 days after he filed for divorce. Before their brief separation, Tilton and his wife had been married 21 months.

Tilton and his current wife, a former beauty pageant contestant, preach together at Word of Faith Family Church and World Outreach Center in Dallas. Two months before their breakup, the Tiltons, along with her 3-year-old son, had moved into a \$681,000 parsonage in the North Dallas suburb of Addison.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s Tilton and his first wife, Marte, were prominent on both religious and secular airwaves. Their *Success-N-Life* program was seen on about 200 stations and at its peak, took in \$6 million a month in

donations. In 1991, ABC's *PrimeTime Live* aired an exposé of the televangelist and his "ministry" that led to the collapse of the program and Tilton's church, whose membership plummeted from 10,000 to under less than 1,000. Tilton and his first wife were divorced in 1993, after 25 years of marriage.

Responding to the temporary split with Leigh, Tilton told reporters: "We serve a miracle-working God."

—AMG

FALSE-MEMORY THERAPY CASES REAP JUDGMENTS

"I put my parents through hell," Jane Brennan said of accusations brought forth during a case involving a "memory therapy" session. She was awarded more than \$120,000 while her therapist, Beverly Nussbaumer, was convicted with negligence by a Colorado jury. The award, handed down late last year, was a fraction of the nearly \$1 million settlement requested.

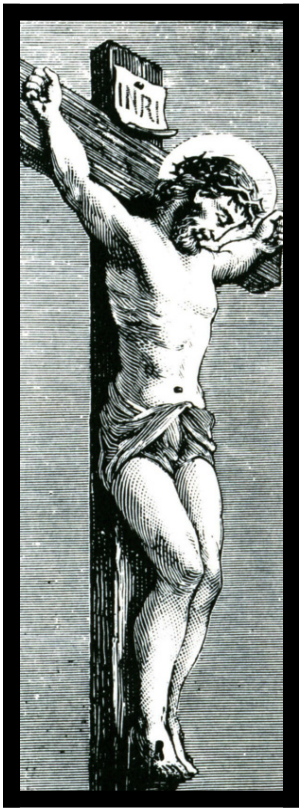
Brennan sought treatment from Nussbaumer for premenstrual syndrome in 1990. The therapy, Brennan said, resulted in the implanting of a false recollection of sexual abuse by her father. The treatment allegedly caused Brennan's physical and mental impairment and affected her ability to work. Brennan said her therapist "presented it to me as fact [not just theory]. This is really damaging especially when you go to someone because you are hurting and vulnerable and the power they have is so great." Nussbaumer's attorney, Gilbert A. Dickinson, argued to the court that Brennan was "better than she was before treatment."

Along with the anguish it has caused to her parents, Brennan said her husband and three small children have suffered. While her father is pleased that the family is back together, Brennan "feel[s] very guilty" as her father's health has been failing with strokes and confusion since the ordeal came about. She stated that, "Some don't realize the harm they [therapists] can do to people. That's why I did this."

Henry Bible, a psychiatrist also named in the lawsuit, was acquitted of the negligence charges brought against him.

In Minnesota, a Ramsey County jury awarded the former patient of a St. Paul psychiatrist a \$2.3 million settlement. Dr. Diane Humenansky was convicted of trying to persuade her patient, Elizabeth J. Carlson, into believing that she had a multiple-personality disorder. According to a report in the

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The Cross of the Matter

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Cross of Christ

by M. Kurt Goedelman

The Apostle Paul repeatedly warned of false teachers and false prophets. In his letter to the believers at Philippi, he called these false brethren "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18).

Those who follow the teachings of the Watchtower Society eventually develop a fierce antagonism for the terminology and visual representations of what they consider an "apostate" Christian Church. Clear examples include the calling of their meeting facilities "Kingdom Halls" instead of "churches" and divisions of the Bible "Hebrew and Greek Scriptures" instead of "Old and New Testaments." However, Jehovah's Witnesses despise no Christian symbol as much as the cross, which they call pagan and a phallic symbol.¹

The Watchtower's contempt for this symbol of Christ's atoning sacrifice is one of its "revised" revelations. At its inception in 1884 and for more than half a century, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society held the cross in high esteem. Many of the sect's publications during these early years contained references — some with vivid illustrations — of Christ's death upon a cross.

The Society's early symbol, a cross

and crown, was featured on the cover of each edition of *The Watch Tower* magazine. Founder Charles Taze Russell's pyramid monument at his gravesite in Pittsburgh's Rosemont United Cemetery bears the image, a testimony to the Society's former esteem of what it now calls pagan.

How It All Changed

The *1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* explains why the Watchtower abandoned the cross in its symbolism:

"Beginning with its issue of October 15, 1931, *The Watchtower* no longer bore the cross and crown symbol on its cover. A few years later Jehovah's people first learned that Jesus Christ did not die on a T-shaped cross. On January 31, 1936, Brother Rutherford released to the Brooklyn Bethel family the new book *Riches*. Scripturally, it said, in part, on page 27: 'Jesus was crucified, not on a cross of wood, such as is exhibited in many images and pictures, and which images are made and exhibited by men; Jesus was crucified by nailing his body to a tree.'²

The following year, then-Watchtower president Joseph Rutherford again pressed the modified view in his 1937 publication, *Enemies*. Here again, on page 187, he wrote, "Jesus was not crucified on a cross."

True to Rutherford's revelation, current Watchtower publications portray Jesus on an upright stake with his hands placed over his head instead of outstretched on a horizontal beam.³ The April 1, 1965, issue of *The Watchtower* describes their version of how Jesus was killed:

"His hands being held, one upon the other, until the spike punctured and tore through the flesh to embed itself in the wood. The red of his blood beginning to stain his hands when another spike was driven through his feet. Then the stake being swung upright until his whole weight hung on these two points."⁴

The Watchtower insists that its account is rooted in Scripture, citing a more accurate interpretation of the original Greek. The Appendix of the 1985 edition of *The Kingdom Interlin-*

(continues on page 11)

A Study in EVOLVING FADISM THE CULTIC LEANINGS OF BILL GOTHARD'S TEACHINGS

by G. Richard Fisher

Religious teachers sometimes pick up on crazy fads and teach silly things that disrupt the Church. Bill Gothard's reputation in this area is tough to match. PFO repeatedly gets requests for an evaluation of Bill Gothard and his ministry.

Gothard is the founder and director of the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts. He is 61, a bachelor, graduate of Wheaton College and ordained in the LaGrange Bible Church in suburban Chicago. The Institute was founded in 1973 and while attendance at his seminars today pales when compared with two decades ago, his influence remains.

Gothard's organization is an educational road show that teaches his unique view of Scripture. His seminars offer self-help, presumably from the Bible, in the form of lists and steps to solving life's problems. He has a subjective and personal interpretive scheme and finds in God's Word what no one else has. These trends trouble even some of his followers.

Wilfred Bockelman's book, *Gothard ... The Man and His Ministry*,¹ although basically a positive, favorable treatment of Gothard's work, did point out some serious disagreements. This now out-of-print book was not widely accepted

or taken seriously because Bockelman himself is unknown. Yet the publication was measured and thoughtful. One of Bockelman's conclusions was that we should accept the good we can find at the seminars, but also "beware of some of the dangers."² These dangers were spelled out in his book.

In 1 Corinthians 1:12 Paul warned the Corinthians against seeing one teacher as the final possessor of all truth, as having the final word on everything. This practice was causing division and sinful pride in that local church. A well-balanced Christian draws from various godly men in their areas of insight and takes advantage of all legitimate ministries (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:21, 22).

Gothard tends to take uncompromising stands on issues where Christians often disagree. Consider these:

Divorce

All of Gothard's early materials make plain that he does not believe a divorce can take place for any reason whatsoever. He avoids the exception clause of Matthew 19:9 by saying Jesus is only speaking of Jewish betrothal. However, the Greek word *mnesteuo* (betrothal) is never mentioned in the chapter or

context, only marriage. Tim Crater exposed Gothard's error in his article, "Bill Gothard's View of the Exception Clause."³ He exposed serious weaknesses and fallacies in Gothard's hermeneutical system and shows how Gothard relies on subjective impressions.

Gothard refers to the "Spirit of Scripture" and speaks of views as "confirmed by spiritual discernment," which led Crater to question Gothard's leaning toward mysticism and subjectivism in interpretation. Crater's conclusion: Gothard goes beyond Scripture. Jay Adams, in his book, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*,⁴ further demonstrates why the betrothal or "Engagement Thesis" is erroneous.

Further confusion has been added by the publishing of Gothard's *Rebuilder's Guide*, in which he says, "The exception clause does refer to illegal marriages such as incest. It may also refer to immorality during the Jewish betrothal period."⁵

Gothard appeals to two pages of notes by Dr. Charles Ryrie for his subsequent inclusion of the incest statement. Yet, ironically, in the complete set of notes, which runs 17 pages and was issued by the Institute in 1981, Dr. Ryrie on page 6 dismisses the betrothal view by saying, "Porenia is nowhere

else used in the restricted sense of unchastity during the betrothal period." He goes on to state his view that incestuous marriages (forbidden in Lev. 18:6-18) give "the key to understanding ... the Matthean exception clause."⁶

Subjective Guidance System

Gothard appears to teach a system of extra-biblical guidance by "inner checks," "inner promptings" and feelings of "inner peace." A good example comes from the Institute's *Men's Manual*, where a fourfold test is given for decision making and guidance.⁷ It states: "A. The Test of Scriptural Commands." This sounds good and is a good start. "B. The Test of Scriptural Illustrations." This is more subjective and relies on the illustrations and their source. "C. The Test of Proper Counsel." Parents and husbands are mentioned as "proper" counsel, but no space is given to the issue of unsaved parents and unsaved husbands and the counsel they might give.

Point "D" undermines and negates the rest since it gives as the final test, "The Test of God's Spirit." This is based upon Colossians 3:15 and explained as follows:

"A wrong decision may look right, but if we are alert to the prompting of God's Spirit, we will *not have peace in the matter. You should have inward peace after the first three tests have been passed. Let the peace of God rule (be the umpire) in your hearts*" (emphasis added).

The context of Scripture quoted has to do with keeping peace in one's relationships with others in the church. Colossians 3:12 urges kindness and longsuffering; verse 13 urges forgiveness and condemns quarreling; verse 14 urges love in our responses and relationships; verse 15 deals with one's willingness to keep peace with others. The verse has nothing to do with guidance or decision making. The Scripture verse has been 'wrested' to prove a point.

So, in Gothard's guidance system an inner feeling of peace is the ultimate test. If we do not have that subjective feeling of peace, do we then question the objective statements of Scripture?

Feelings of peace should not supersede scriptural direction. Churches have had to carry out discipline in obedience to Christ (Matthew 18) while feeling stress, agony, turmoil and spiritual grief.

Glowing Reports to Validate Teaching

Every sect and cult has its amazing stories. Apparent miracles or successes might make a teaching sound more plausible, but don't make it true. Proper interpretation of Scripture determines truth.

Take for example Gothard's "Cabbage Patch" flap. In 1986, he taught that the highly popular Cabbage Patch Dolls were causing strange and destructive behavior in children that could only be alleviated when the dolls were removed or destroyed.

In a letter from his organization, his followers were told by representative Ginger Jones that to enter into a written agreement to love a doll was a violation of the First Commandment. The threat as seen by Gothard was that by adopting a doll, children might not want to raise up their own godly children.⁸ Children may "love" dolls as they do other toys but this does not mean they worship them.

Testimonials were included with the above letter about the awful effects of the dolls with no allowance made for other environmental and social factors in the homes. The Cabbage Patch doll became a scapegoat.

Reports, testimonials and letters are not the ultimate test of truth. PFO has received its share of negative commentary on Gothard. Consider this from a man in Oregon:

"Twenty years ago I thought Bill Gothard was great. Over the past 10 years I have come to see him as an autocrat with no tolerance for other people's views. He is the sole authority of scriptural interpretation."

Direct Consequences of Our Forefathers' Sins

In one of his alumni booklets, Gothard states, "We were in Adam and a part of his sin."⁹ The imputation of Adam's sin to the human race is stated

somewhat differently in Romans 5. That this has anything to do with the D.N.A. ladder, as Gothard goes on to state, is debatable. But Gothard's point is the extension of our solidarity with Adam. This, he believes, indicates that we and our physical children are under some kind of direct consequence, not just the social or environmental consequences, of our forefathers' acts of sinning. That being so, according to Gothard, we must agree with God about their sin and ask Him "to remove its consequences from us and from our children."

To enforce this view, Gothard cites the story of a 3-year-old girl who "did not want to believe in Jesus" until the parents realized their need to confess their sins and the sins of their forefathers. His use of Jeremiah's acknowledgment of the past and present idolatry of Israel (Jeremiah 14:20) is hardly adequate proof. His use of Exodus 20:5 demonstrates his poor exegesis. Here he fails to understand this verse in context. He makes no attempt to discuss the national consequences of Israel's idolatry or to exegete the next verse.

Gothard emphasizes sins visited "upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" and neither emphasizes nor explains the pregnant phrase, "of them that hate me." It is also regrettable that he does not properly consider verse 6 "But showing love to thousands who love me and keep my commandments." His view is novel and as far as I know cannot be found in any major commentary. Here Gothard parts company with good men. A quick glance at his materials on adopted children shows an extension of this error.¹⁰ Here he teaches that the new parents of an adopted child must research the sins of the "biological parents," confessing them and casting the consequences off the child. He says:

"Causes of Conflicts — Adopted children are affected by the sins of their natural parents, and these sins are usually very severe."

"Steps to Resolve Conflicts — If the child is too young to understand, pray for the child. Confess your sins and acknowledge the

sins of the natural parents. Ask God to rebuke Satan and free the child from any unbelief or rebellion from the lives of the parents. Pray in the name and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Then he goes on to say that if the adopted child is old enough, "Explain that just as physical weaknesses are passed down through parents, so are spiritual weaknesses such as pride, lust and rejection (see Exodus 20:5)." He then tips his hat to Exodus 20:6 and Ezekiel 18:20. But if these verses apply, what need is there of the "Step to Resolve the Conflict" in the first place? No such exorcistic ritual is ever hinted at anywhere in the Bible.

Whether ours by birth or by adoption, our children must be brought up under the consistent, continued, corrective, instructive discipline of the Word of God. There are no "quick fixes" for their sins and lapses. There are consequences of Adam's sin, but grace, salvation and progressive sanctification are the scriptural antidote. Helpful information on adoption of children, certainly more practical and reliable, can be obtained from Christian agencies working in this area of ministry.

Marilyn Willet Heavilin points out the thread of fear running through the ancestral-bondage theme. After her son was killed by a drunken driver some people, like Job's comforters of old, offered her advice:

"One well-meaning lady heard my story and suggested that we have someone pray over us to cleanse our bloodlines. Another listener suggested our family was bound by a curse of death. ... I have begun to understand that most of these comments are motivated out of fear that the same thing could happen to those that share them. If a person comes up with a reason for your trauma, they can believe if they avoid that particular pitfall, nothing similar will happen to them."¹¹

One interesting side note to this topic is the inconsistency found in the previously mentioned *Men's Manual*. In a footnote on page 55, Gothard mentions Adam Clarke. He calls the late English Methodist one of the "greatest Bible

teachers of the nineteenth century" whom God rewarded by opening his "spiritual understanding to the great themes and hidden wisdom in the Bible." It is interesting to note what Clarke says of Exodus 20:5, which is a far cry from Gothard's view.

With such a high endorsement of a man who was totally Arminian and believed in the "second blessing" teaching (as well as loss of salvation), one wonders where Bill Gothard really stands doctrinally. But as to Exodus 20:5 Clarke says:

"Visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the children. *This necessarily implies — if the children walk in the steps of their fathers; for no man can be condemned by Divine justice for a crime of which he was never guilty; see Ezekiel 18. Idolatry is however particularly intended, and visiting sins of this kind refers principally to national judgments.* By withdrawing the Divine protection the idolatrous Israelites were delivered up into the hands of their enemies, from whom the gods in whom they trusted could not deliver them. This God did to the third and fourth generations, i.e. successively; as may be seen in every part of the Jewish history. ... These national judgments thus continue from generation to generation, appear to be what are designed by the words in the text, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children"¹² (emphasis added).

Whatever one thinks of Clarke's exegesis, it is clear that it does not agree with Gothard's view. Clarke's reference to Ezekiel 18 is crucial to this issue. Ezekiel 18:20-22 says:

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live and not die. All his transgressions that

he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live."

All of this was an answer to those who were saying that sons in some way personally bore the iniquity of their fathers (v. 19). Germane as well is Jeremiah 31:29-30: "In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."

Imposing Ancient Cultural Patterns

The Bible records various kinds of family and cultural patterns. Abraham was a bedouin, David a shepherd and Gideon a farmer. In Scripture, one encounters polygamy (multiple marriages), endogamy (marriages within a family), planned marriages, large extended families (inclusion of all the immediate relatives in a home), as well as a strong emphasis on the patriarchal and patrilineal modes.

One hermeneutical principle is that not everything reported in the Bible is commanded. It is clear from materials that Gothard operates on the principle that certain cultural modes are more biblical and necessary than others. He cites examples in the Old Testament, but they are selective and purely subjective, given the variety of models. His method of choosing examples of cultural forms leaves one accepting Gothard's word for what is important since the Scripture gives no principle for the acceptance or rejection of any one cultural mode.

Gothard generally re-creates a modified extended-family concept with large doses of the patriarch model. He suggests that, unless they have parental consent, adult single children should remain at home and that married couples should exercise what seems to be excessive dependence on the counsel of their parents (even if the parents are unsaved and in spite of Psalm 1).

Extended families and a patriarchal structure are not commanded by God, no matter how many instances of them are reported in the Old Testament. Jesus

did not live at home and there is no record that He ever had to get Mary's permission to leave. Jesus' comment that the husband and wife must leave father and mother, which involves more than just physical leaving, is certainly suggestive that the neolocal and nuclear family is the New Testament model.

The relationship of adult single people to parents, as well as the continuing relationship of a married couple to parents, is quite a bit more flexible and unstructured than in Gothard's system. At best, the exact relationship of the marriage structure of the Old Testament to the Church is debatable and should not be made a test of spirituality or orthodoxy.

Gothard's views on singleness might have led to the scandal that almost wrecked his organization by way of his brother's repeated and prolonged immorality with secretarial employees, which Gothard admitted in his letter to pastors, July 18, 1980:

"For many years I have put the ministry ahead of my family and staff, especially my brother. My pride and wrong priorities resulted in encouraging him to postpone marriage because of the demands of the ministry, thus disregarding his personal needs. I have also failed others, including present and former staff members who sought to warn me of my incomplete handling of past staff problems, rejecting reproofs, and personal inconsistencies."¹³

However, he never recalled any of his materials.

Dogmatic Assertions on Arbitrary Matters

At his Advanced Seminars in 1983, Gothard introduced sex regulations based upon Old Testament commands. Under the session titled "Six Purposes, Principles, and Keys To Fulfillment In The Marriage Relationship," he told married couples to abstain from physical relations: 1. During the wife's menstrual cycle; 2. Seven days after the cycles; 3. 40 days after the birth of a son; 4. 80 days after the birth of a daughter; and 5. The evening prior to worship.¹⁴

This is Scripture twisting, legalism, an imposition of Mosaic ritual and a clear breach of 1 Corinthians 7:5. It is clear from 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, that Christians are not only under the New Covenant but that the Old Covenant of Moses has been abolished. So much of Gothard's teaching is based on an imposition of Old Testament legalism that flies in the face of Hebrews 8:7-13. His system is a subtle form and resurgence of the Ebionite error.¹⁵

Some may even find the sexual guidelines found in his 1986 volume, *Research in Principles of Life Advance Seminar Textbook*, intrusive and offensive. What most would feel is personal and private between a couple and their physician, Gothard spells out.

On pages 170-171, Gothard suggests that a man keep track of his wife's menstrual cycle and use it as a reminder of the sufferings and death of Jesus, then quotes Isaiah 53:4-5. This is unnecessary as Jesus already gave us the reminder of his suffering and death by the ordinance of The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Elaborating on the benefits of abstinence, Gothard includes the strangest testimonial about abstinence even after a woman's cycle stopped following a hysterectomy.¹⁶

Then there are testimonials how abstinence helped couples who were barren to have children and also of healthier stronger children born because of abstinence at certain times of the month.¹⁷ Other testimonials include "How Infection and Irregular Cycles Cleared Up After Proper Abstinence."¹⁸ A testimonial of "How A Persistent Bladder Infection Stopped When Abstinence Began" and how that abstinence decreases "The Danger Of Genetic Abnormalities."¹⁹ The abstinence is not total, but Gothard-directed, going by the book — his book.

In 1991, popular Christian artists, including Bill and Gloria Gaither, Dave Boyer, Sandy Patti and Michael Card became Gothard's newest scapegoat. What was destroying the youth of America was contemporary Christian music, in Gothard's mind.

The June 1990 edition of the *Book-*

store Journal noted that Gothard wanted to wipe out contemporary Christian music, believing it would undermine parent's authority and lead to a "life of sin," namely drugs and immorality.

Gothard launched his campaign against contemporary musical artists in two published booklets: *Notice of Complaint Against The Unrecognized Enemy of The Church* and *Contemporary Christian Music: Ten Reasons Why the Rock Beat is Evil In Any Form*. He again sought to bolster his point of view through a collection of witnesses who testified to the validity of his position.

Yet another vivid illustration of Gothard's authoritarianism is found in his *Men's Institute Curriculum*, where a set of notes contains a page titled, "How to Make Your Worship Service a Source of Scriptural Power." Under the subheading, "God's Order" is found:

1. Enter with praise
2. Give sermon first
3. Confirm message with singing and testimonies
4. Examine self with Communion
5. Unite in righteous prayer
6. Conclude with the offering."²⁰

There is no specific order of worship spelled out in the New Testament. Obviously all of these elements are mentioned in Scripture, but never in any particular order either by direct statement or example.

Francis Schaeffer struggled with the forms and freedoms of the local church:

"Our forefathers understood ... when they spoke of the fact that the church's authority was administrative and declarative. It meant that in the area of doctrine and the area of conduct, the church has a right to bind other people's conscience only where it could show that the principle was derived from an open exegesis of the Scripture."

"We must speak where the Scripture has spoken. But let us notice that we must also respect the silences. Within every form, there is freedom. Whether one is painting a picture, or dealing with a sociological problem, or raising a child, it is the same. The formation

of a school and the order in a school rests [sic] on the balance of form and freedom. I would suggest that where the Bible is silent, it indicates and reflects a freedom within the scriptural form."

"God could have added one more chapter to the book of Acts and given us much more detail. He did not. We surely cannot say the Bible is mistaken. We must believe not only that what is said is — by God's will and inspiration — final, but also that where there is silence we are granted freedom under the leadership of the Holy Spirit."

Schaeffer goes on:

"Community and polity stand together. But within this double form, there are freedoms in which the Holy Spirit may lead different people at different times, different congregations thereby meeting different needs."

He concludes:

"Many evangelicals and conservatives tend to be low-church people. That is, very often they speak out against those who have any formalized form of liturgy. But in reality the low-church evangelical has his own form of liturgy which often is absolutely unchangeable. It is inconceivable to move the service from 10:00 to 10:45 or from morning to afternoon, or to change the order of the service, or to consider having the pastor stand in a privileged position only once on Sunday, rather than twice — to preach on Sunday morning, but answer questions Sunday night. You have all sorts of possibilities. There should be different kinds of services at different places and different times. ... Let us be thankful there is a given form. Then let us be careful to make sure that we are not bound by unbiblical forms, by forms which we have become used to and which have no absolute place in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In regard to the polity and practice of the church, except for the clearly given bibli-

cal norms, every other detail is open to negotiation among God's people under the leadership of the Holy Spirit."²¹

To make dogmatic assertions on arbitrary matters of freedom is to fall into the errors Schaeffer is warning against. I am concerned that The Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts is no longer a parachurch organization helping Christians with some areas of Christian living, but has in fact become a system unto itself. This system covers counseling, ministry, home, family, worship, church structure, divorce, adoption, dating, even hiring a church secretary. A whole church ministry program can be set up with a minister's manual.²² Some of that system, Gothard suggests, should be introduced into the church as curriculum.²³ Gothard also instructs fathers to teach the *Men's Manual* to the family as family curriculum.²⁴

Discipleship or Shepherding?

Gothard's system began to encompass more and more of his followers' lives with his 1985, *Men's Manual* (Vol. 2). One gets the feeling that Gothard's system is much like the legal system of the Pharisees, legislating, dictating, directing and regulating just about every phase, every aspect, every move, every eventuality of life. Not much is left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, sanctified creativity or just informed choice. Most of Gothard's teaching in the *Men's Manual* again is buttressed by the Old Testament and the legal system of Moses.

In the publication, Gothard dogmatizes on many personal and peripheral issues. On pages 78-101 he teaches that under no circumstances are we to borrow money or buy on credit. In his use of Romans 13:7, Gothard ignores the context, which has to do with paying taxes and not withholding the "love debt" we owe others. The best that can be said about the verse is that we should pay debts on time. Anything further is misinterpretation.

Then on pages 103-115, Gothard devotes considerable space teaching on how to become sales-resistant. This is ironic, considering all that the Gothard organization sells.

From the organization one can obtain guidance from cradle to grave, complete with all the basic steps and how-to's. Gothard's home-schooling materials, issued in 1985, are called *Parent Guide, Wisdom Booklet*. In the second volume of his *Men's Manual* are instructions on making a will. There is even material on preparing shopping lists.²⁵ For the women, there is a discussion on page 172 of meal planning, dental care, and home safety.

In the *Advanced Seminar Textbook*, he provides on pages 276-281 information on how women are to select makeup and choose colors that enhance skin tone, how to choose a hair style, how to wear accessories and the place of accents on the clothing as well as how to stand (with illustrations) and why to avoid any slits in the skirt.

Gothard opposes women working outside the home.²⁶ While he cites Proverbs 31 in suggesting home business as the proper choice, a careful reading of the text would not eliminate outside work at all.

He also opposes business partnerships.²⁷ Some might consider this area within the realm of Christian liberty if one is in partnership with a Christian. What is a marriage if it is not the ultimate partnership? There can be nothing inherently wrong with a partnership since our union with Christ is designated as such. The Greek word *koinonia* which describes our union with Jesus and other believers means literally, communion, fellowship, partnership, having things in common. First Corinthians 15:33 advises that our "partnerships" be with the right kinds of people.

Beyond these materials is a large set of notes called *Advanced Training Institute of America*. In it he teaches on: self image, responsibility, conscience, rights, freedom, success, purpose, friends, engagement, finances, gratefulness and prayer. With material this extensive one can only wonder when there would be time to read the Bible.

Some of the material borders on silly. Proverbs 6:6-8 advises us to think ahead like an ant and to make proper provision for the future. The simple illustration and context are very clear.

But why leave it so simple and so easy? From the biblical illustration, Gothard develops an elaborate 20-point system (with drawings and illustrations) around ants.²⁸

One could argue that these things are simply helpful hints rather than dogmatic assertions. And as such, either of the two choices would be based upon the followers' own perceptions. Nonetheless, the publication's title, "Principles of Life," gives the impression that they are more than just helpful hints.

In addition, Gothard takes his teachings very seriously as do his followers. One ex-follower stated that the distinct impression imposed on them was that the successful use of the material was "the way to be godly."

One pastor who established his congregation on "God's Order of Worship" by way of the Gothard materials eventually left our Baptist Fellowship in protest over our lack of spirituality. So, in this writer's experience, Gothard's followers see the materials as a bit more than helpful hints.

Additionally, it appears that Gothard's teachings and methods produce in some cases feelings of exclusiveness, elitism, and isolationism. Any system producing these effects should be questioned.

The late professor of comparative religions, Walter Martin, warned that isolationism is a mark of an aberrant group and produces close-mindedness, personal antagonism, intolerance and spiritual blindness.²⁹

Division is antagonistic to Paul's prayer in Ephesians (unity of mind among Christians) and contrary to the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17.

Ambiguous Grace and Faith

Equally serious is Gothard's misunderstanding of key doctrines. *The Advanced Seminar Textbook* offers "operational definitions."³⁰ They are misleading and wrong. "The Grace of God," which is God's unmerited favor, is defined as: "The desire and power to reproduce ourselves spiritually." In this redefining and recasting of grace, Gothard does not even come close. The

source of grace is God, not ourselves. It is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Henry Thiessen defines grace as "the goodness of God manifested toward the ill-deserving."³¹

Gothard's confusion of law and grace is further demonstrated as he teaches: "The Christian can never keep the standards of the law by his own efforts. It is only as he is obedient to the Holy Spirit living within him that the principles of the law can be lived out in his life."³²

No one would dispute the need for the power and motivation of the Holy Spirit for godly living. However the Holy Spirit points us to Christ and all the principles of the New Covenant. He does not drag us back to the law. Even the law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. We are not lawless but have the framework, dictates, commands, of the New Covenant with all the empowerment of God's grace. This is the point of Paul's letter to the Galatians (see also 2 Corinthians 3).

Faith is defined by Gothard as "Visualizing what God intends to do."³³ Faith is not visualization in any sense. Faith (Greek: *pistis*) is trust in God and His Word. Faith is clinging to God and His promises (Romans 10:17). It is translated as trust in most of the Old Testament passages. It is a distortion to turn a strong biblical concept into a watered-down human endeavor of visualization.

Conclusions

When Gothard speaks where the Scripture is silent and is dogmatic on questionable interpretations, he becomes a law unto himself; thinking Christians must be aware of it and critical and discerning. Gothard would do better to stay with his strong area of basic seminars and not pontificate on every issue. He also should open his organization to independent scrutiny.

Heresy doesn't have to start with a major leap; it may begin with a leaning, a trend that moves off center just a bit. Certainly Gothard doesn't intend to confuse and divide, but we have seen his followers make areas mentioned above a test of orthodoxy and their fellowship with others has been de-

stroyed. Everyone needs to be scrutinized when he presumes to speak for God.

There is no perfect denomination or teacher. However, Jesus warned us to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matthew 16:6). This has to do with additions and the adding of human error to truth. It has to do with creating traditions and building into the texts what is not really there. It has to do with creating elaborate systems of practice that in the end are a subtle diversion from the pure Word of God and the New Covenant.

It helps to liken a denomination or a teacher to a building. Paul does so in 1 Corinthians 3. Certainly a building can still house people if the siding is peeling and a window is cracked. The building can also be somewhat safe even if a window is broken and the roof has small leaks. Even the most conscientious teacher may have a "loose tile" or a "small crack" in his foundation, so to speak. None of us have the last word on everything.

However, if a lot of windows are out, part of the roof is off, the siding is falling off, and rodents are invading, there may be a point at which that building becomes structurally unsafe. It is still a building, yes, but its quality and safety should be called into question and we would probably urge the occupants to seek a safer structure.

Gothard's "house" has so many flaws, so many questions, so many aberrational leanings, so many structural weaknesses and a foundation that is not New Testament. Its occupants may not be very safe and should move to safer quarters.

The words of Charles Bridges are filled with godly wisdom:

"The novelties of fancy, accredited by some favorite name, readily pass for the revelation of God. But here men are ready to drink any cup that is presented to them, like children, who think everything good that is sweet. Errors, never solitary, are built upon some partial, insulated, or perverted truth ... carefully ponder whom we follow. Sift the most plausible pretensions

(1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 John 4:1). Never set a great name against the Divine testimony. Admit only the one standard; like the noble Bereans, who would not believe even an Apostle's word except it was confirmed by the written testimony (Acts 17:11)."³⁴

Endnotes:

1. Wilfred Bockelman, *Gothard, the Man and His Ministry: An Evaluation* (Santa Barbara, Calif., Quill Publications, 1976).
2. *Ibid.*, pg. 83. Note: Bockelman also says on page 140: "I also feel that many of the things he says are also very close to the borderline of leading people to bondage rather than freedom."
3. Tim Crater, "Bill Gothard's View of the Exception Clause," *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (Phillipsburg, N.J., Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 5-12.
4. Jay Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible*, (Phillipsburg, N.J.; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 55-59.
5. *Rebuilder's Guide*, (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1982), pg. 58.
6. Charles Ryrie, *Biblical Teaching on Divorce and Remarriage* (Used by permission, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1981).
7. *Men's Manual*, Vol. 1, (Oak Brook, Ill.,

- Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1979, 1981), pg. 90.
8. Copy of December 8, 1986 letter on file.
9. Bill Gothard, *Supplementary Alumni Booklet, Conquering Impossible Mountains*, Vol. 9 (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1983), pg. 15.
10. Bill Gothard, *Ten Reasons Why Adopted Children Tend to Have More Conflicts* (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1982), pp. 1-2.
11. Marilyn Willet Heavilin, *Roses in December*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), pg. 21.
12. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 1, (New York-Nashville, Abingdon Press, No Date), pp. 402-403.
13. *Christianity Today*, August 8, 1980, "Bill Gothard Steps Down During Institute Shakeup," pp. 46-47.
14. Robert Sheridan, "Bill Gothard And Dispensationalism," Graduate paper, Calvary Bible College, pp. 18-19. Copy on file. See also Bill Gothard, *Research in Principles of Life Advance Seminar Textbook*, (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1986), pg. 172.
15. For more information on the Ebionites, see G.R. Fisher, "Here Come the Ebionites," *PFO Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 2, 7.
16. *Advanced Seminar Textbook*, pg. 179.
17. *Ibid.*, pg. 180.
18. *Ibid.*, pg. 182.
19. *Ibid.*, pg. 183.

20. Bill Gothard, *Men's Institute Curriculum*, (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1980), pg. 2.
21. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the 20th Century* (Downers Grove, Ill., InterVarsity Press, 1970), pp. 74-77.
22. Bill Gothard, *The Basic Church Ministry, How to Solve Perplexing Church Problems* (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1979).
23. See *Rebuilder's Guide*, pages 221 & 222, Chapter 7, "Begin Through the Church."
24. *Basic Church Ministry*, pg. 6.
25. Bill Gothard, *Men's Manual*, Vol. 2, (Oak Brook, Ill., Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1985), pp. 135-141.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 174-179.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 210-217.
28. *Men's Manual*, Vol. 2, pp. 226-229.
29. Cited by Agnes C. Lawless with John W. Lawless, *The Drift Into Deception*, (Grand Rapids, Mich., Kregel Resources, 1995), pg. 125.
30. *Advanced Seminar Textbook*, pp. 355-358.
31. Henry Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures In Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), pg. 132).
32. *Advanced Seminar Textbook*, pg. 173.
33. *Ibid.*, pg. 356.
34. Charles Bridges, *A Commentary on Proverbs*, (London, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), pg. 180.



The Crux of the Matter

(continued from page 4)

ear Translation of the Greek Scriptures says:

"There is no evidence that the Greek word *stau·ros'* here [Matthew 27:40] meant a cross such as the pagans used as a religious symbol for many centuries before Christ. In the classical Greek the word *stau·ros'* meant merely an upright stake, or pale, or a pile such as is used for a foundation. ... The apostles Peter and Paul also used the word *xy'lon* to refer to the torture instrument upon which Jesus was nailed, and this shows that it was an upright stake without a crossbeam, for that is what *xy'lon* in this special sense means. ... Evidence is, therefore, completely lacking that Jesus Christ was crucified on two pieces of timber placed at right angles. We

do not want to add anything to God's written Word by inserting the pagan cross-concept into the inspired Scriptures, but render *stau·ros'* and *xy'lon* according to the simplest meanings."⁵

Likewise, a recent *Watchtower* magazine said:

"The Bible shows that Jesus was not executed on a conventional cross at all but, rather, on a simple stake, or *stau·ros'*. This Greek word, appearing at Matthew 27:40, basically means a simple upright beam or pole, such as those used in building foundations. Hence, the cross never represented true Christianity."⁶

However, the *Watchtower's* solicitation of the Greek and its definition of *stau·ros'* is just another example of the verbal acrobatics Jehovah's Witnesses must go through to validate their distorted doctrine. While the word

stau·ros' primarily means an upright stake or pole, the word has an alternate meaning: cross. Therefore, the word does mean much more than what the *Watchtower* says it does.

Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* gives three meanings for *stau·ros'*. The first matches the *Watchtower's*; the others present other distinct meanings:

"The *σταυρός* [*stauros*] is an instrument of torture for serious offenses, ... In shape we find three basic forms. The cross was a vertical, pointed stake ... or it consisted of an upright with a cross-beam above it ... or it consisted of two intersecting beams of equal length."⁷

Kittel explained the particulars involved in the carrying out of the fatal punishment upon a *stau·ros'*:

"Crucifixion took place as follows. The condemned person carried the

patibulum (cross-beam) to the place of execution — the stake already erected. Then on the ground he was bound with outstretched arms to the beam by ropes, or else fixed to it by nails. The beam was then raised with the body and fastened to the upright post."⁸

Joseph H. Thayer concurs with the dual meaning of *stau-ros*:

"An upright stake, esp. a pointed one, ... a cross; a. the well-known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment, borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians; to it were affixed among the Romans, down to the time of Constantine the Great, the guiltiest criminals, particularly the basest slaves, robbers, the authors and abettors of insurrections, and occasionally in the provinces, at the arbitrary pleasure of the governors, upright and peaceable men also, and even Roman citizens themselves."⁹

Xulon (tree—rendered *xy'lon* by the Watchtower) also carries more definitions than what the Watchtower Society offers. Kittel interprets one of the renderings: "Cross. A distinctive NT use of ξύλον [*xulon*] is in the sense 'cross.'"¹⁰

British scholar W. E. Vine translates *xulon* as "wood, a piece of wood, anything made of wood" and gives its application as "of the Cross, the tree being the *stau-ros*", the upright pale or stake to which the Romans nailed those who were thus to be executed."¹¹

It has been shown that multiple definitions can be applied to the words used to describe the instrument of Jesus' death. If these were the only points of controversy, we could declare a stalemate. However, there is much more testimony available that, without doubt, removes any possibility of a hung jury on the subject. Let's consider the A-B-C's of evidence:

Archaeological Evidence

The Watchtower itself has appealed to archaeology by citing the work of a Roman Catholic scholar, Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), in an effort to support its torture stake theory. However, their use

of the 16th century writer is just another clear example of their dishonesty in trying to validate false doctrine. In the Appendix of the 1950 edition of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, one of several woodcuts is reproduced from Lipsius' *De Cruce Liber Primus*. The illustration depicts a man being impaled on an upright stake and based upon the drawing, readers are told: "This is the manner in which Jesus was impaled."¹²

However, when one inspects the actual *De Cruce Liber Primus*, which is part of the larger work, *Opera Omnia*, the Watchtower's argument evaporates. The volume, a Latin work that is difficult to find, includes several woodcut illustrations portraying impalement or crucifixion. By far most of these illustrations depict not a man on a stake, but an upright stake affixed with a crossbeam — in other words, a cross.

Adding to the deception is the fact that Lipsius' work does not state that the upright stake "is the manner in which Jesus was impaled," as the Watchtower would have its members believe. Lipsius clearly argued for a "cross" with such statements as, "the cross was inserted and the other crosswise bar is joined and inserted with the upright plank, and thus it cuts [divides] itself."¹³

Lipsius added: "When a man, hands stretched out, worships God with a pure heart (he resembles a Cross)."¹⁴ Today, although somewhat modified, the Watchtower continues to appeal to Lipsius in the latest edition of its Greek New Testament.

Archaeological evidence favoring a cross is much more convincing. Dr. Paul Maier describes evidence that the Church used the symbol of the cross as early as the first century. In his 1976 work, *First Christians*, Maier writes:

"Christians were already established at Puteoli—[the Apostle] Paul's fame had preceded him there ... It may be from this early congregation that faith expanded around the Bay of Naples, because there were Christians in nearby Herculaneum shortly afterward. One of the houses in that resort town, today liberated from its lava

burial by Mt. Vesuvius, shows the clear outlines of a metal cross that had been set in the wall over a charred *prie-dieu* in an upstairs room. The cross evidently is just as old a Christian symbol as the fish."¹⁵

On the facing page, a photograph of the upstairs room is reproduced showing the outline of the cross in the wall. The photo's caption reads:

"A primitive Christian oratory in the upper room of the so-called 'House of Bicentenary' at Herculaneum. A whitish stuccoed panel shows the imprint of a large cross, probably metallic, that had been removed or possibly used as a stamping device. Before it are the remains of a small wooden altar, charred by lava from the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D."¹⁶

Other scholars also agree with Maier's assessment that the cross was quickly adopted by the Church as a Christian symbol. Michael Green, in his book, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, states:

"Some experts doubt whether the cross became a Christian symbol so early, but the recent discoveries of the cross, the fish, the star and the plough, all well known from the second century, on ossuaries of the Judaeo-Christian community in Judea put the possibility beyond reasonable cavil."¹⁷

In 1873, French scholar Charles Clermont-Ganneau unearthed nearly 30 ossuaries southeast of Jerusalem. The small limestone burial boxes containing human bones were found at the Mount of Offense and bore Hebrew and Greek names. Some bore a cross above the name inscription. The date of the original burial is estimated to be between 70-135 A.D.¹⁸

Even more startling were the 1945 discoveries at Talpioth. Here 11 ossuaries were found and reported to be from Christian grave sites in Bethany. These burial boxes too were engraved with crosses and their burial date was estimated at 42-43 A.D. — slightly more than a decade after our Lord's death and resurrection. Some of the ossuaries

were even inscribed with the Greek monogram for Christ (☩) as a dedication, leaving no doubt as to the manner of the Savior's death and the ensuing use of the cross as a Christian symbol.¹⁹

Others, even from outside the Christian community, also indicate that the weight of the historical evidence favors the cross over a stake. In 1971, *Time* magazine reported an archaeological find that had remained secret for several months:

"Israeli archaeologists announced that they had identified the remains of the unfortunate young man and found clear evidence of his grisly execution. The Israeli scholars, who studied the find for more than two years before making their announcement, were understandably cautious. What they uncovered and authenticated is the first firm physical evidence of an actual crucifixion in the ancient Mediterranean world. ... The only previously physical evidence of crucifixion was extremely tenuous. It consisted of a few bones, excavated in Italy and Rumania containing holes in the forearms and heels that could have been made during crucifixion. ... The new archaeological evidence, a byproduct of intense excavation and building activities by the Israelis in the territories they conquered in the Six-Day War, is far more substantial."²⁰

Biblical Testimony

The most desirable witness to the traditional cross conviction is that of Scripture. While we have noted above, the debate over the alternate renderings of the words translated "cross" we will, in this section, focus on Bible passages that indirectly, yet reliably, establish the validity of the cross. The first verse considered is from John's Gospel and records the testimony of the Apostle Thomas:

"The other disciples therefore were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the

nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe'" (John 20:25, NASV).

The disciples had told Thomas they had seen the risen Christ and the apostle's response is paramount. While the Watchtower says Jesus' hands were laid one upon the other with a single spike,²¹ Thomas, an eyewitness of the crucifixion, used the plural form of the word "nail," while "imprint" is singular, indicating a separate nail punctured each hand leaving a single mark in each hand.

It is also wise to reflect upon Matthew's selective narration of the Lord's death. His account includes the information that:

"They put up above His head the charge against Him, which read, 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews'" (Matthew 27:37, NASV).

Again careful consideration must be given to the exacting description provided in God's inspired Word. The Roman governor Pontius Pilate had written the offense of which Christ was condemned and Matthew reported that the proclamation was "set up over his head." If Christ had been impaled as the Watchtower describes, the text would have to properly read: "set up over his hands."

One last Scripture reference is just as powerful in establishing the erroneous position of Jehovah's Witnesses. It contains the very words of Jesus Himself prophesying the Apostle Peter's martyrdom:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go. Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me!'" (John 21:18-19, NASV).

Christ revealed to Peter that there would come a time when he would stretch out his hands, be bound, and

led unto death. Herein we find yet another instance of the selective wording of Scripture as Jesus declared that Peter's hands would be stretched out, not raised over his head. Moreover, fulfillment of Christ's prophecy with the confirmation of Peter's crucifixion is corroborated by the early Church Fathers. *The Bible Almanac* reports:

"The early Christian apologists Tertullian and Origen state that Peter was executed by crucifixion head-downwards in Rome. They say that he was one of thousands of Christians who died under Emperor Nero's persecution."²²

The observations of the *Almanac* are reprised by Adam Clarke with his comments on above verses from John's Gospel:

"Wetstein observes that it was a custom at Rome to put the necks of those who were to be crucified into a yoke, and to stretch out their hands and fasten them to the end of it; and having thus led them through the city they were carried out to be crucified. ... Ancient writers state that, about thirty-four years after this [Christ's proclamation], Peter was crucified; and that he deemed it so glorious a thing to die for Christ that he begged to be crucified with his head downwards, not considering himself worthy to die in the same posture in which his Lord did."²³

Peter was told by his Lord that his martyrdom was to be expected. He told Peter to "Follow me." And follow Christ he did, even unto the manner of death.

Church History

The final body of evidence comes from the Apostolic Fathers, who in some cases sat at the feet of the Apostles receiving teaching and tradition. While their writings do not warrant the priority and allegiance required by inspired Scripture, they offer valuable insight into early days of the Church.

According to *History of the Christian Church*, "The Epistle of Barnabas has considerable historical, doctrinal, and

apologetic value." The encyclopedia further notes that "The Epistle was first cited by Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, as a work of the apostolic Barnabas, who plays so prominent a part in the early history of the church. Origen seems to rank it almost with the inspired Scriptures."²⁴ In the epistle, the author relates the numerical significance in the name Jesus:

"And because the cross in the T was to have grace, He saith also three hundred. So He revealeth Jesus in the two letters, and in the remaining one the cross."²⁵

In a subsequent verse, the writer describes an Old Testament shadow of the cross as Moses stretched out his hands:

"The Spirit saith to the heart of Moses, that he should make a type of the cross and of Him that was to suffer, that unless, saith he, they shall set their hope on Him, war shall be waged against them for ever. Moses therefore pileth arms one upon another in the midst of the encounter, and standing on higher ground than any he stretched out his hands, and so Israel was again victorious."²⁶

Ignatius was a man whose life unfolded during the Church's infancy. He was appointed as second bishop at Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas left on their missionary journey recorded in Acts 13-14. In his letter to the Ephesians, he writes:

"My spirit is made an offscouring for the Cross, which is a stumbling-block to them that are unbelievers, but to us salvation and life eternal."²⁷

And in his epistle to the Trallians, he speaks of the ungodly and says:

"These men are not the Father's planting; for if they had been, they would have been seen to be branches of the Cross, and their fruit imperishable — the Cross whereby He through His passion inviteth us, being His members."²⁸

Conclusions

Christians cherish the symbol of the

cross. Yet this reverence does not allow us to worship or idolize the image, as the Watchtower would have its followers believe. Like the second century Church Father Tertullian (c. 160-220 A.D.), we find it necessary to defend Christians against the heathen charge of worshiping the cross.²⁹ The cross is but a mere trophy to remind us of what the Lord Jesus Christ attained for sinful man. No true believer venerates a literal relic or piece of wood. The "cross," like the "blood" is a term used in Scripture to illustrate the merits of Christ. The cross points us to the very heart of the Christian Gospel message as Christ, "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24).

Paul tells believers they can experience true peace and forgiveness through the cross: "And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20, NASV; see also Ephesians 2:16).

The weight and volume of evidence invalidates the Watchtower teaching of a "torture stake." Jehovah's Witnesses' hostility toward the cross of Christ comes not from a serious study of the evidence, but from the corrupt minds of their leaders.

Philip Schaff says:

"The oldest and dearest, but also probably the most abused, of the primitive Christian symbols is the cross, the sign of redemption ... The cross was despised by the heathen Romans on account of the crucifixion, the disgraced punishment of slaves and the worst criminals."³⁰

Jehovah's Witnesses, by virtue of their scorn for the symbol of Christians' redemption, find themselves in league with "heathen Romans." Yet we should not be surprised, for Paul tells us: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Endnotes:

1. *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1964, pg. 395.
2. *1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pp. 148-149.
3. See for example, *The Watchtower*, Aug.

- 15, 1987, pg. 24; *My Book of Bible Stories*, pg. 100; and *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, pg. 141 for characterizations of the torture stake by Watchtower artists.
4. *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1965, pg. 211.
5. *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*, 1985 edition, pp. 1149, 1151. Nearly identical statements to this effect are also found in the 1969 edition of the *KIT* on pages 1155 and 1157.
6. *The Watchtower*, Nov. 15, 1992, pg. 7.
7. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. VII, pg. 572.
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 573.
9. Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, pg. 586.
10. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, Vol. V, pg. 39.
11. W.E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pg. 1165.
12. *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, 1950 edition, pg. 770. The woodcut and quotation are also found in other subsequent versions of *New World Translation*, including the 1951 edition (pp. 769-770); the 1971 large print edition (pp. 1360-1361); and *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, 1969 edition, (pp. 1155-1156).
13. Justus Lipsius, *De Cruce Liber Primus*, Chapter IX, pg. 24. Translated from Latin by Marie Shively Tseng, teaching assistant, University of Southern California. Tseng's translation was verified as accurate by Dr. J. Donato, head of the Language Department of USC.
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 25.
15. Paul Maier, *First Christians*, pg. 140.
16. *Ibid.*, pg. 141.
17. Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, pp. 214-215.
18. See further, Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, pp. 238-240.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-243.
20. *Time* magazine, Jan. 18, 1971, pg. 64.
21. *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1965, pg. 211.
22. James I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney and William White, Jr., *The Bible Almanac*, pg. 532.
23. Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, pg. 955.
24. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pp. 674-674.
25. J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, Editors, *The Apostolic Fathers*, "The Epistle of Barnabas" (9:8b), pg. 278.
26. *Ibid.*, (12:2) pp. 280-281.
27. *Ibid.*, "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians" (18:1), pg. 141.
28. *Ibid.*, "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians" (11:1-2), pp. 148-149.
29. See Schaff, *History*, Vol. II, pg. 270.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 271.

If Hurnard had only written *Hinds' Feet on High Places*, she would have made a lasting impact for good. However, the twists and turns in her thinking brought her at last to some very strange, Gnostic, unorthodox and even occultic views. Few are aware that her views changed drastically in the late 1950s. At that time, Hurnard left the "High Places" and mountains of orthodoxy and headed for the lowlands of gross error. Hurnard's life is somewhat like the tragic figure of King Saul, starting right and ending wrong.

Hurnard's Big Changes

In a 1994 biography by Isabel Anders (*Standing on High Places*), there are frank and honest admissions regarding Hurnard's shift from sound biblical doctrine. In the Introduction we read this:

"Later, I was to discover that there were numerous struggles and changes that had occurred within her. Many of us have since learned about some of her personal opinions and emphases evidenced in her later writings and her public speaking engagements, and have become concerned about what happened to her orthodox faith and her priorities."

Further in the volume, we are informed:

"The view that she strongly sets forth is one of universalism, or a belief that *all will be saved in the end*. This was an understanding that caused Hannah to reconsider all of her early evangelical zeal, as well as look with new eyes at the meaning of life and death. She shows, through fictional narrative, how she entered a new stage of belief that is troublesome to many readers of her later books, especially those holding to an orthodox Christian faith" (ibid., pp. 154-155, italic in original).

And just a few pages later, we find:

"However, her friends and family were finding it increasingly difficult to travel with Hannah down

the road she was choosing. Moving gradually toward unorthodox views, she was to find that by openly expressing her individualistic ideas about diet and spirituality, she would alienate more and more people. When she voiced other, even more questionable viewpoints in her public speaking engagements, door after door would close to her. Eventually, all invitations to speak to evangelical Christian groups virtually came to an end" (ibid., pg. 161).

Hurnard went from the high places to low places theologically.

She died on Marco Island, Fla., in 1990 refusing conventional treatment for her cancer. Before her death, her home had been open every Monday evening for those who came to hear her share her form of strict vegetarianism, reincarnation and New Age thought.

Her biographer provides this additional insight:

"In fact, in the later years of her life, Hannah herself ceased to attend church. Her lifelong conviction that God would speak to her personally, giving her deeper and deeper insights and 'light' that was to be widely shared with others, led her to believe that there could be no spiritual authority over her or her speaking and writing except the Lord Jesus Christ himself" (ibid., pg. 170).

In her most recent book, *The Inner Man* (published posthumously in 1993), her mysticism and New Age teachings are reflected clearly.

Hurnard's Blatant Heresy

In Hurnard's 1981 book, *Eagles' Wings to the Higher Places*, (Harper & Row), she announces that the love of God will ultimately deliver all men from hell. Her fictional character Aletheia discovers this higher truth from an encounter with one she assumes to be Jesus:

"Then like great waves and billows the homesick longing for the Higher Places broke over Aletheia's soul. She felt like an orphan child again, even up here

on Mountain Top City, just as she had felt when she was first led down to the school in the Low Places. To the depths of her soul she knew that she could live here no longer where there were no Higher Places in sight. No, it was not sorrow for the hopeless plight of the poor people in the dark places which caused her grief; it was anguish at the thought of the hopelessness of the only message which she had to give them. Lost forever with no hope if they rejected it! Cast off by the God who had brought them into existence, if they rejected His call now. All her unacknowledged doubts and questions arose again concerning a God who called Himself Love and who brought myriads of souls into existence without being able to prevent them from condemning themselves to an eternity of hopeless darkness and suffering, lost to Him forever. How could He possibly love them, if He let this happen to them? How could He possibly be good, if He brought them into an existence where it was possible for them to separate themselves from His love and joy and goodness forever?" (pp. 21-22)

Aletheia goes on in confusion:

"Oh, cried Aletheia's heart in an agony of despair. Oh, how terrible and hopeless to be a God who loves goodness and cannot save His own creatures from preferring evil. If he did not call Himself a God of Love it would be different. A devil might create living souls capable of tormenting themselves forever. Oh, what agony to love the souls brought into existence enough to go to the cross in a last supreme effort to save them and not be able to do so. To proclaim, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself,' and to be unable to do it! To find that the Devil is stronger than Goodness and could gloatingly and triumphantly succeed in damning at least ninety percent of God's creatures, leaving only a pitiful ten or even smaller percent to respond to

His love — a handful of souls for Him to rejoice over for ever and ever, while all the others were tormented in hell. Oh, what hopelessly bitter Bad News this was. How could she ever believe in and trust such a God again?" (ibid., pp. 22-23, italic in original).

Then, one called The Good Shepherd comes to her:

"He took her hand, saying gently, 'God is an infinite ocean of Love and Goodness. In Him there is no wrath at all. What men call His wrath and judgment is the inexorable determination of the love of the skilled surgeon to heal the sickness and suffering of a beloved son, no matter at what cost to Himself and to the son, so that no trace of anything that can hurt or harm the beloved one remains. I will lead you to a place where you will behold the higher truth which will solve completely all your sorrowful questioning'" (ibid., pg. 28).

The answer to her questioning is that it is all going to turn out right for everyone in the end:

"'He is the Saviour of *all* men!' (1 Tim. 4:10). The words burst forth in passionate triumph from the lips of Aletheia. 'Oh, how blind I have been! He is lifted up and nailed to the cross with us. As Jesus revealed when He hung between the two thieves and murderers, He will "draw *all* men unto Him.'" "As in Adam (poor fallen Mankind) all die, so in Christ, the Second Adam, shall *all* men be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). Oh, what a victory! The only victory truly worthy of the Great God and Creator Who "did not make anything in vain but in the end restores *all* things unto Himself" (Acts 3:21). Oh, it is the Best News possible, the only possible News, if we are truly to love and trust Him fully'" (ibid., pp. 35-36, italic in original).

Hurnard here unashamedly teaches universalism. While it is true that all in Adam die (and all are in Adam) not all are in Christ and therefore do not have

life. All in Christ are made alive but we know that this is not true of everyone. Hurnard has universalized the "all" rather than observe the context and interpret in the light of other Scriptures. All the passages about Judgment become meaningless in Hurnard's scheme of things. All the "whosoever will" passages become meaningless as well if everyone makes it anyway.

In Hurnard's "garden of Eden" man only fell from "God consciousness," so Hell turns out to be only Purgatory. This doctrine of Universalism — that hell is restorative, or as she would say, "Hell is Heaven," — has always been viewed as heresy and soundly condemned and refuted all through Church History. (See further *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 539-540 and *Death and the Afterlife* by Robert Morey, Chapter 9.) However these teachings are now on the shelves of our Christian bookstores in various Hurnard titles.

In *Eagles' Wings* it appears that Hurnard's characters believe in the eastern mystical doctrine of pantheism (God as a universal force in everything). An angel speaks to Aletheia as follows:

"'See, the little "Son of Man" is born amongst them in order to show that he represents all the birds, beasts, and other living creatures — not just the fallen sons of men. His manger cradle is on the cross created by Mankind's sins to show that whatsoever men do to each other they do to Him too; and whatever they do to the other living creatures — the birds, beasts, insects, and creeping things — *they also do to Him*. For He is the Divine Love and Life of God immanent in every living creature in the One Great Body of Creation. Now look, Aletheia, lover of the Truth. Look and behold the Truth'" (pp. 86-87, italic in original).

Further Hurnard teaches vegetarianism, not for health reasons but because she believes God is in animals and in animal flesh. This is a necessary corollary to Pantheistic belief (ibid., pp. 91-96, 117).

She suggests that human suffering atones for sin (ibid., pp. 121-122),

which really makes man his own savior. "All suffering is atoning," she says.

The capstone of her heresy is a low view of Jesus Christ. On page 124 she teaches that Jesus rose through an "angelic level of God consciousness" to a "Son of God consciousness" which is where all mankind is headed anyway. A reading of Hebrews chapter one is an antidote to this error as it shows Jesus as far superior to angels and even as the object of angelic worship.

Her Christology is no better than the Watchtower Society's. Rarely has more heresy, old and new, been compressed into one system.

In another of Hurnard's books, *Way of Healing*, a man by the name of Othniel receives a visit from Peter and Mark. On Mount Zion there is a secret (new) truth given to Othniel by the two. There is a straying from sound biblical truth and a reinterpreting and restructuring of the Gospel accounts. With vision and guided imagination her imaginary characters are transported in time travel fashion back to the time of Christ. There we find that Jesus did not turn water into wine. Hurnard has the Apostles saying that Jesus secretly waved a heavenly wand (whatever that is) and changed his listener's thoughts and attitudes so that they *thought* they were drinking wine in a kind of a mass hypnosis. Therefore, some miracles are not literal but only contain principles that Hurnard must explain.

What we are actually dealing with here is a neo-gnosticism that she calls "new consciousness" and "Holy Wonder."

But, it gets better (or worse). We are told that Jesus did not really feed the 5000. That is the old orthodox view. The real insight is that there may have been some kind of mob psychology that made selfish people actually want to take out the lunches that they were hiding and share. There is also the possibility that some bedouin showed up just in time to sell them some bread and goat cheese. The Apostles are not too concerned about the exact details and they let Othniel take his pick of either or both stories (*Way of Healing*, pp. 59-64).

In the Preface of *Way of Healing* we

have a cryptic summary of the book's teachings that would far outdo any possibility thinker or Word-Faith proponent. Under the title "The Nine Holy Miracles" we find this:

1. The miracle that transforms things:

You can change anything if you accept it with thanksgiving.

2. The miracle that opens all doors:

You can make anyone receptive if you serve them.

3. The miracle that makes all your wishes come true:

You can obtain anything if you have the right motive.

4. The miracle that supplies everything you need:

You can meet any need if you share all that you have.

5. The miracle that calms all tempests of hate:

You can destroy every wrong if you forgive it.

6. The miracle that takes you anywhere:

You can get anywhere if you risk everything.

7. The miracle that makes you invulnerable:

You can make anything harmless if you make friends with it.

8. The miracle that withers up falsities:

You can destroy falsities if you waken love for the truth.

9. The miracle that delivers from evil influence:

You can open any hell if you share it."

This mystical mishmash can mean anything someone wants it to and hence means nothing at all.

Another strange suggestion on pages 44-45 is that the miracles of Jesus, along with truth, direction and instruction can be found in fairy tales and fables. Along the way, the Apostles instruct Othniel in "Jack and the Beanstalk," "King Midas," "The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg," "Ali Baba," and "Beauty and the Beast."

In *Wayfarers in the Land*, Hurnard claims she has gone all over Israel throughout the year making a great spiritual impact. In this writer's many trips to the Holy Land, not one Church leader was found who had heard of her.

Hurnard's Befuddled End

In 1988, Harper and Row, released another biographical attempt by Hurnard, *Thou Shalt Remember — Lessons of a Lifetime*. In this volume, she "let's it all hang out." She blatantly expresses favor for such things as aura reading (pg. 148), and out-of-body experiences (pg. 180). These things are the stock in trade of spiritism and occultism, yet they sit on the shelves of Christian bookstores.

She also objects to the Old Testament sacrifices, saying that God hated them (pg. 157). This view was first put forth by the heretic Marcion in the second century and recently was revived by Carl Austin. This view, dubbed "theological anti-Semitism" by F.F. Bruce, radically reinterprets Judaism and undermines the integrity of Scripture. Jesus fully accepted and endorsed the Old Testament system with all its sacrifices, calling it God's unalterable Word (Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:34-36; Luke 24:27, 44, 45).


Hurnard reveals that after the doors of

the evangelical world closed to her she began association with what can only be called a mystical, metaphysical fringe group known as "Camps Farthest Out" (pp. 136-142). Eventually Hurnard "camped" so "far out" that even they disowned her. One sticking point was her radical vegetarianism.

Spiritually speaking, a Christian Science reading room or a Christian bookstore with a heavy emphasis on Word-Faith literature would be a dangerous place. We expect them to be. Unfortunately, the least-expected places can be dangerous nowadays. Tread with extreme caution and discernment in your local Christian bookstore. It is really hard to believe but universalism, gnosticism, relationalism, pantheism, self-atonement, defective Christology and skewed bibliology are all available at your Christian bookstore.

A major aspect of the problem is that bookstore managers are unaware of the later content in Hurnard's books, assuming all the later writings follow the line of *Hinds' Feet in High Places*. The subtle problem is that in endorsing Hurnard, one endorses all she offers.

We must stay in the highlands of our Bible. We must stay in the heights of sound theology and proper discernment. What a tragedy that one woman could start so high and end so low and influence so many so negatively.

Samson started in the "high places" of the rolling hillsides of the Shephalah but tragically ended in the lowlands of the Philistines. The sacrifices he made, bit by bit, robbed him of God's blessing and leading. Those "sad ending" stories do parallel the tragedy of any who start well but do not finish that way. 

Editorials

(continued from page 2)

board, however, [thought that] the decision to release the Toronto church was not a rash one. In September 1994, the denomination's position on the renewal was hashed out in an emergency session of the board and distributed to all Vineyard pastors. Over a 14-month period, Wimber said, the Toronto leaders repeatedly violated the guidelines contained in the position report. The 20-member board voted unanimously to release Toronto from the denomination."

With the controversial (holy laughter) "renewal" taking place in Canada, Wimber apparently has had difficulty explaining to the media this "current move of God." He became apprehensive about the manifestations of animal noises that are a part of the "blessings" in Toronto. Arnott's open letter further stated that Wimber "felt he could no longer answer questions, including innuendoes and rumours regarding the renewal services. Rather than ask us to revamp the renewal meetings, they released us to continue as we believe God is leading us. ... [Wimber] feels the AVC Board is not called to shepherd something outside the ministry model God has given them."

Although reports have circulated that other Vineyard fellowships, including ones in Pasadena and St. Louis, have resigned, it is not expected to cause a major split.

These “blessings” or “renewals” began in North America through the influence of South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne (see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4). Howard-Browne, who calls himself a “Holy Ghost bartender,” fosters a laughing revival wherever he preaches.

In 1993, Howard-Browne led a series of meetings at Kenneth Hagin’s church in Tulsa, Okla., which St. Louis Vineyard pastor Randy Clarke attended. Clarke, through a series of subsequent encounters with other Vineyard pastors, later imparted the laughing revival to the Toronto church in 1994. As a result, well over 50,000 people had visited the Airport Vineyard Church that year. These people are to bring the “blessing” back to their home church for “times of refreshing” there. In Canada, the “blessing” has become a buzzword; those who have experienced it are considered elite.

What have these events proven? What are the fruits of this movement? How are people growing in Christ? Does the Vineyard church base their confidence on merely emotions, signs and wonders or on balanced teaching and biblical truth?

In spite of ties being severed by the AVC, it is odd that John Wimber stated in the Jan. 8, 1996, issue of *Christianity Today*: “I believe that there has been an authentic visitation of the Spirit there. However, I am unable because of my own scriptural and theological convictions to any longer give an answer for, or defend the way, this particular move is being pastored and/or explained” (pg. 66).

Equally odd is Wimber’s endorsement of Arnott’s book, *The Father’s Blessing*, an autobiographical account of the “Toronto Blessing,” and other works sympathetic to the purported “renewal.”

Then there’s the National Coordinator of Vineyard Churches, Todd Hunter, who told *Christianity Today*: “Wimber’s own statements had made it clear that board members wanted the renewal in Toronto to move toward greater scriptural emphasis.”

Hunter himself, at an October 1994 service at the Vineyard Fellowship in Mission Viejo, Calif., had members of the congregation shrieking and bellowing (one woman even squealing like a pig) while he said: “This is normal Christianity!”

It is the duty of Church authority to expose heresy as it manifests itself in the name of Christianity. Unhealthy spiritual consequences, including shipwrecked faith, will nearly always follow the rise of false teachings. Doctrine and theology should be tried and confirmed by the Word of God; our faith and trust is in Him alone. And in His unerring Word.

Despite Wimber’s proclamations, what are the roots of the Vineyard movement? Does Wimber and the Vineyard

church wish to embrace sound doctrine? “Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (Titus 1:9).

In the October 1982 issue of *Christian Life* magazine, Wimber demonstrated his indifference to sound doctrine. On page 10 a question he posed to Peter Wagner (his associate from Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth) is quoted: “Would you object if I started a Bible class in my home based on what the Bible says and then attempted to demonstrate it by doing what first century Christians did... **no theology** – just Biblical study and application?” (emphasis added).

Does the bottom line indicate that the Vineyard church wishes to promote biblical interpretation? In a church-planting seminar in 1981, Wimber said: “Calvaryites [Calvary Chapel attendees] are sometimes a little too heavily oriented to the written Word. I know that sounds a little dangerous, but frankly they’re very Pharisaical in their allegiance to the Bible. They have very little life, and growth and spontaneity in their innards. Sometimes they’re very rigid and can’t receive much of the things of the Lord.”

Does Wimber deviate from God’s Word because of an extra-biblical mind-set? Do his teachings reveal discord with that of the Bible in his theology and methodology?

Consider his words from the Vineyard ‘83 Leadership Conference, “The Five Year Plan”: “All that is in the Bible is true but not all truth is in the Bible. We integrate all truth, both Biblical and other, into our experience of living.” Also, from his 1981 Church Planting Seminar, he stated, “God is greater than His word.”

Additionally, Vineyard churches have repeatedly confirmed their fixation on experience and outward manifestations. In a paper dated April 20, 1994, and “written to help teach the Champaign [Ill.] Vineyard church body good techniques for enhancing times of ministry” with “some helpful hints” we find these “Tips for Facilitating Ministry as a Leader”:

“3. If you don’t notice any outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit, ask those who sense a strong anointing within them to come for ministry. This might manifest as a burning, tingling, or ‘knowing,’ etc.”

and

“8. Some children have even been reported as being fearful of some of the manifestations they have experienced such as being pinned to the floor.”

In the section, “Tips for Praying for People” we read:

“7a. Help them to deal with a tendency to rationalize, with their fears, or with a loss of control.”

Further, in the last section titled, “Tips for Receiving Ministry” it states:

“2. Experience it before trying to analyze it. It is something like worshipping God, which has no

rational explanation. Others have likened it to kissing, which is more emotional than analytical."

The above statements contradict Paul's exhortations to learn and follow sound doctrine. As a result, one is faced with confusion and disorder riding the emotional waves of the aberrant teachings of the Vineyard movement.

Indeed, Wimber and his associates, with their emotional guidance system, have created a "monster" that they now find hard to control. Wimber's own life-threatening battle with cancer is a forceful illustration to the deficiency of his "power evangelism." One should not place trust in subjective and supernatural encounters. Such encounters are so often of the flesh or the devil. The Word of God is our final authority and the foundation for our walk with Him. Caution is a prerequisite when dealing with those who claim to represent Christ.

—AMG

News Updates

(continued from page 3)

Jan. 25, 1996 *Metro/State* newspaper, the psychiatrist's therapy with Carlson sought "to recover repressed memories of participation in Satanic rituals and of sexual abuse by their families."

Among those testifying for Carlson were doctors, nurses, former patients and family members. The doctors felt that Humenansky should not be practicing medicine due to her method of treatment, which, they felt, did not meet accepted professional standards. Within her therapy, the psychiatrist suggested to patients that they had repressed memories of killing babies while involved with a cult.

At least eight other malpractice suits involving induced "memories" from other patients are pending against Humenansky.

—AMG

VERDICT AGAINST CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS UPHELD

The United States Supreme Court in January upheld a \$1.5 million award against four Christian Scientists. The judgment stemmed from a lawsuit against the church members whose treatment of an 11-year-old diabetic boy consisted of prayer with no conventional medical care. The child, Ian Lundmann, died in May 1989 from complications of the diabetes, including intense vomiting and prolonged urination.

The wrongful-death lawsuit first was filed in 1991 by the boy's father, Douglass G. Lundmann. The four members of the Boston-based church named in the suit included Kathleen and William McKown, the boy's mother and her husband, and Mario Tosto and Quinna Lamb, Christian

Science officials. The boy's father also sought a \$9 million judgment against the church, but a Minnesota state appeals court had earlier thrown out the award. While upholding compensatory award, the federal justices refused to reinstate the larger judgment for punitive damages against the church.

The church members charged that as a consequence of the settlement they are being punished and forced to monetarily pay for religious thought and for practicing their religion. James Kaster, Lundmann's attorney, noted that the verdict says the clear understanding "that exclusive reliance on prayer treatment instead of medical care for a seriously ill child can give rise to ... liability."

In April 1990, the McKowns and Tosto had manslaughter charges against them dropped by a Minnesota court. The judge concluded that "no criminal proceedings would be brought regardless of result as long as they practiced their religion in good faith" and claimed that the state prosecutors had misread the law in bringing the charges. (See further, *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 3, 14.)

—MKG

HOWARD-BROWNE PROMOTES A LENDING LIBRARY

A 16-page full-color insert in the January 1996 issue of *Charisma* magazine promotes the ministry of "Dr." Rodney M. Howard-Browne. The full-page supplement promotes the "laughing evangelist's" books and tapes, his upcoming winter and summer Campmeetings, and his "School of the Spirit," a five-week session of "intensive training."

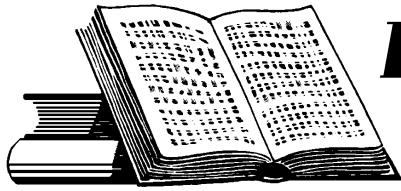
Under product listings, he promotes his "Video Lending Library," the inspiration for which, he says, came from God.

"Early in 1995 the Lord spoke to me and instructed me to put together the Revival Ministries International 'Video Lending Library,'" Howard-Browne says in the ad. The "Library" is a set of 50 videotapes from his various Campmeetings and revivals "that have not been released to the public at large."

Howard-Browne has set a goal to place 100 libraries in every country of the world. How effective will his tapes be in non-English speaking countries? Howard-Browne says he has received "many first-hand reports of the Revival breaking out among groups of people who were watching an English version of the videos who did not understand a single word that was being spoken." As a result, he says, "The anointing knows no language barriers."

Howard-Browne is soliciting financial help for his project. A \$350 gift will put a copy of his tapes in a foreign country of the donor's choice, or Howard-Browne's if the donor has no preference. Stateside, The Video Lending Library is available for \$1,000.00 per set, the advertisement states.

—MKG



Books in Review

THE DRIFT INTO DECEPTION

The Eight Characteristics of Abusive Christianity
by Agnes C. Lawless with John W. Lawless
Kregel Resources, 232 pages, \$10.99

Coming off their own experiences yet laced with much research and biblical support, Agnes and John Lawless show us the patterns of deception within even some "evangelical" fellowships and offer help to those who have been deceived to recover by laying out practical steps for the recovering.

If one wants to know how to spot an enslaving authoritarian structure, this is the book.

On page 11, in the introduction, the reader gets a hint of what's ahead: "Today we Christians are just as blind to impending danger. Hoping for exciting spiritual experiences, we join the crowd climbing aboard the 'cruise ships' of evangelical 'superstars.' As the band plays, we sing rousing choruses. We listen breathlessly as famous leaders, dressed in designer suits, promise us health, wealth, and self-fulfillment. All for a price, of course. ... Because of our experience we, learned that we can all drift into deception if we loosen our moorings and ignore the winds of false doctrines. In this book, we want to show you how vulnerable we all are."

The eight warning signs on pages 59-155 are in themselves worth the price of the book. The questions at the end of each chapter are helpful and thought-provoking and could easily be adapted to a study class.

The authors have succeeded in sounding the alarm with a very timely and helpful book.

—GRF

MASONIC RITES AND WRONGS

An Examination of Freemasonry
by Steven Tsoukalas
P&R Publishers, 241 pages, \$12.99

This volume was born out of a challenge to the teachings of Freemasonry heard by the author on a Christian radio program over a decade ago. What he learned caused him great concern. His father was a Freemason, and as he

listened to the broadcast he discovered Masonic claims were opposed to Christianity. The book is the product of his nine years of exhaustive research.

Tsoukalas' work quickly establishes Freemasonry as a religion despite the claims by adherents that it is little more than a fraternal order. The book is divided into two major sections, The Blue Lodge and The Scottish Rite. The former being the most prevalent in membership and which confers the first three degrees of the society. The latter advances the candidate through an additional thirty degrees (the last or 33rd being an honorary degree). The author examines many of these degrees and their accompanying symbols. Biblical response is also furnished in his evaluations.

The book is reader-friendly, clearly defining those terms foreign to people unfamiliar with Freemasonry. More technical information is available but wisely consigned to a wealth of endnotes. A helpful and necessary index is also included.

Masonic Rites and Wrongs, with its compelling documentation and thorough biblical exegesis, is one of the finest single volume works of the subject of Freemasonry available to the Church today.

—MKG

THE LESS TRAVELED ROAD AND THE BIBLE

**A Scriptural Critique of
the Philosophy Of M. Scott Peck**
by H. Wayne House and Richard Abanes
Horizon Books, 248 pages, \$10.99

Anyone who thinks M. Scott Peck represents Christianity in any way will be shocked and set straight by this thorough analysis of his books and system.

The authors let Peck speak for himself, quoting him extensively and revealing his subtly unorthodox views. He is ecumenical, New Age and anti-Church. His "road" leads us away from God, away from salvation, and away from the Bible.

The book is divided into sections dealing with Peck's psychology and faulty theology. This potent exposé of the open immorality Peck teaches will surprise many.

Peck's books are not the place to find truth. The authors conclude that: "Dr. Peck is constantly seeking after new ideas and hoping to uncover new ways to know what he conceives as truth" (pg. 246).

We can highly recommend this book to our readership.

—GRF

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