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THE RAGING RIVER OF BROWNSVILLE

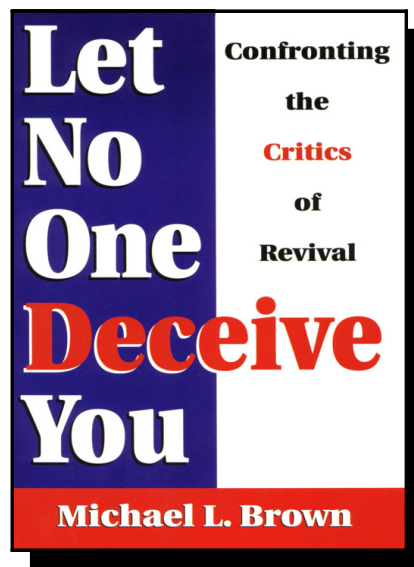
PFO Responds to Michael L. Brown's Attack of the Critics of the "Pensacola Revival"

by M. Kurt Goedelman
with G. Richard Fisher

Dr. Michael L. Brown rightly could be called the critic of the critics. His nickname of "knock 'em down Brown" (acquired a number of years ago by his ability to "slay in the Spirit") could easily be retooled to describe his response to the critics of the Pensacola-based church where he is resident theologian. He is super-critical of anyone who expresses more fault than flattery of the purported revival and its manifestations occurring at the Brownsville Assembly of God in Florida.¹

Brown's book, *Let No One Deceive You*,² is just one of the many items being promoted and marketed as a result of this "latter-day revival." In it he suggests that the doctrine and practice of the "Pensacola Outpouring" is biblical and of God. However, some of the troublesome things, like the false declarations of Pastor John Kilpatrick and Evangelist Stephen Hill and the bizarre manifestations, are conveniently passed or glossed over.

Brown is harsh and combative, to say the least, and is a mirror image of Brownsville's harsher critics. In reality, his tone far exceeds that of most



of the critics of the alleged "outpouring." Name-calling and damnation, absent from the vast majority of

revival evaluations, are readily present in Brown's writing. For example, so condemning is Brown that he asks, "Are you totally and absolutely sure that you are right in attacking the current revival? *Are you willing to wager your salvation on the fact that you are correct?*"³

Even the normally amiable reviews found in the Christian Bookseller Association's magazine, *Marketplace*, noted that "Brown's extensive defense of Brownsville is marred by sarcastic asides directed toward the revival's critics."⁴ Yet Brown himself says: "So, this book is not defensive."⁵ But, in fact, the tone is defensive, strident and at times vindictive. It conveys a spirit that would not be expected by one who claims to be revived.

His loud rhetoric and constant *ad hominem* arguments foment even more
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Editorials

REVISITING PUBLIC CRITICISM

It's a subject we examined over a decade ago in the pages of our newsletter publication. Yet it's an issue that keeps being raised. In letters, on the phone, and nearly always during radio broadcasts examining those "hot button" topics, PFO is challenged with the scriptural validity of public criticism of public teachers and teachings.

Our criticism of the heretical doctrines of such groups as Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, The Way International and other *bona fide* cults is routinely accepted by Christians without any measure of apprehension. Yet, when we apply the same criterion and evaluate the false teachings of those regarded within the mainstream of Christianity, we are sometimes questioned: "Have you contacted the brother before publication of your criticism or public comments?" The basis for their charge is always Matthew 18:15.

First, it should be noted that we see heresy as heresy, *wherever* and by *whomever* it is taught. And heresy *inside* the Church is much more lethal than heresy *outside* the Church. Moreover, false teaching within the Church is not new to the Christian body. Paul (Acts 20:28-31; Romans 16:17-18), John (1 John 4:1-3), Peter (2 Peter 2:1-3) and Jude (Jude 3) all warned against it. Believers do not become immune to Satan's deceptions immediately upon joining the body of Christ.

Now then, when examining the subject of heretical teaching in the Church, is Matthew 18 a proper method to employ? Are those who go public with criticism without first personally addressing their "brother" violating a biblical mandate? To the surprise of many, the scriptural answer is a very resounding, "No!" to both these questions.

Dr. Jay Adams, in his volume *Grist from Adams's Mill*, addresses the illegitimate use of Matthew 18 in an attempt to censure public criticism:

"Any Christian who sets himself up as a teacher in the church of Christ and publicly teaches anything thereby opens himself up for criticism by others (cf. James 3:1). If they think what he is teaching is harmful to the church, they have an obligation to point it out just as widely as it was taught. Such public warning or debate on the topic should not be considered a personal attack at all. The teacher's plea that a critic should first have come to him about his disagreement on the basis of Matthew 18:15 does not hold. This passage has to do with personal wrongs known only between the two, who should privately discuss the matter that separates them. What a critic of a public teaching does in pointing out his disagreement with that teaching has nothing to do with personal affronts or lack of reconciliation; he is simply disagreeing at the same public level as that on which the teaching was given in the first place" (pg. 69).

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NEW MORMON TEMPLES PLANNED

Gordon B. Hinckley, president and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, recently announced plans to build five more temples. Hinckley revealed the church's intention at its semiannual General Conference held in Salt Lake City in early October.

A distinction marking the announcement was that three of the five structures would be "small temples." Construction of the minified buildings will be in areas where LDS membership is slack or nearness to another temple makes building a second full-sized temple impractical. The conventional, larger temples will be built in Houston and Porto Alegre, Brazil. The smaller temples are slated for Anchorage, Alaska; Monticello, Utah; and in northern Mexico.

The downsized versions of the sacred structures will offer the complete range of the sect's peculiar temple rituals and services, including baptisms for the dead and sealing marriages for time and eternity. However, Hinckley noted that operation times may differ and be regulated "according to local demand, maybe only one or two days a week." The smaller temples will be about half the size of the full-size temples.

Currently, the LDS church operates some 50 temples worldwide with twelve previously planned structures under construction.

—MKG

IS BENNY HINN LYING AGAIN?

According to Benny Hinn, God moves in "marvelous" ways — even to the extent of calling off professional sporting events. Or does He? On the Oct. 22, 1997, installment of his daily broadcast of *This Is Your Day*, Hinn claimed divine intervention for his ministry over the Miami Panthers, the southern Florida city's National Hockey League team.

The faith healer asserted that: "The Lord spoke to me while in Miami, here the first day, and said, 'Come back here for Good Friday.' We were supposed to go somewhere else. And I said, 'Lord, open the way.' And guess what? The manager of the Miami Arena canceled the hockey game so we can have the arena for Good Friday, April 10th, 1998. And I think that's marvelous, don't you?"

Author and critic of Hinn's ministry, Yves Brault, contacted the Miami Arena concerning the alleged cancellation. His call was directed to the "special events" department of the facility and he was told that "no" hockey game was ever scheduled for April 10. Brault was informed that a game slated for April 9 between the Panthers and Philadelphia Flyers remains on the schedule.

The arena spokesperson further stated, "We can't cancel a game because the tenants take preference and the Panthers are the tenants in our building. But right after the hockey game, we'll start setting up for Benny Hinn."

The schedule of the National Hockey League is released in July. Hinn's Miami Miracle Crusade, where he claims God spoke to him concerning the Good Friday service, was held Oct. 8 and 9 at the arena.

—MKG

TILTON RETURNS TO AIRWAVES

After being driven from the airwaves because of a lack of financial support, caused by an ABC news investigation, televangelist Robert Tilton returned to television in several major metropolitan markets. Last spring, Tilton began televising his *Success-N-Life* program in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Detroit, and Nashville. In late summer, the telecast also returned to the New York area where it appears twice each day.

The previous installments of his program were canceled in fall 1993 and originated from studios in Dallas and San Diego. The revived version is produced out of a small television studio in Miami Beach. Tilton's programs are produced by his Word of Faith Church outside Dallas, where he serves as senior pastor. But according to a Broward/Palm Beach *New Times* story, the floundering church is actually pastored by the Rev. Bob Wright. "About once a month [Tilton] touches down in Dallas, the rest of the time leaving Pastor Bob Wright to rebuild the crowds. It's not working," the article reported.

Tilton's relocation to South Florida is understandable in view of comments made by his second wife, Leigh Valentine Tilton. She said the couple would go to restaurants in the Dallas area and people would make obscene gestures at them. "People would scream at us on the street. It was incredible. Bob *hated* Dallas," she told the *New Times*. Last March, the resurrected televangelist

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PROPHETIC INSIGHT OR FERTILE IMAGINATION?

by G. Richard Fisher

Every few years Christians become infatuated with some new and esoteric trend. And, if you have missed the hoopla in one of the past movements, just wait a few years and something new will surely surface. For example, in the late 1970s, Roland Buck and other Charismatic leaders captivated a segment of the Church with stories of angelic visitations. This cherubic hype lasted a few years and then diminished.

A decade later, it again revived not only within "Christian" camps (through the fables of such celebrities as Benny Hinn), but also took prominence outside the Church. In 1993, both *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines featured cover stories on the "new age" of angels. Television series and specials and Hollywood movies all championed the angelic theme. Many Christian booksellers capitalized on the craze by devoting an entire section in their stores to publications, jewelry, calendars, and other items that advanced the subject of angels.¹

FORGOTTEN SECRETS

It seems that Christians had all but forgotten Jerry Lucas's and Del Washburn's *Theomatics: God's Best Kept Secret Revealed* published 20 years ago. These erstwhile authors assigned numerical values to every letter in the Bible, calling the procedure the "mathematics of God."² They claimed even more for their alleged "secret," saying it was a "key that would unlock a whole new dimension in the

Word of God."³ Now, just two decades later, who remembers or even cares?

Mathematical schemes and "keys" to the Bible are really nothing new. They surface regularly and have been promoted by the likes of Watch Tower founder Charles T. Russell, Anglican dispensationist E.W. Bullinger, Second Coming prognosticator Harold Camping and other cultic and aberrant trendsetters.

The dramatic claims of new insights and new knowledge may help to market and sell books, but do little else. They do not bring believers into a deeper sanctification (only deeper debt). They distract us from the real purpose of God's Word by having us look for secret and esoteric meanings in Scripture. These materials help divert Christians from the truth that God has already "granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). On one hand, it is fortunate they are soon forgotten or go out of vogue. However, on the other hand, some only become antiquated when a new fad comes to the forefront. Or, some merely lay in hibernation until they are reintroduced years later to a new constituency of devotees.

NUMEROLOGY GOES HIGH-TECH

One of the latest fads in Bible numerology comes to us through the

aid of modern technology, as it took the computer to get it going. It is a pursuit of clandestine Bible prophecy called *equidistant letter sequence* or ELS. It has been popularized by Michael Drosnin's best-selling book, *The Bible Code*.⁴ Drosnin's book, published by Simon and Schuster in 1997, has found its way onto the (nonfiction) best-seller list of the *New York Times*. The book's success has also afforded Drosnin guest appearances on popular television broadcasts such as *Oprah*. Other notables within Christian circles, including Paul Crouch, Hal Lindsey and Grant Jeffrey, have also jumped on the ELS bandwagon.

Drosnin believes that the real message of the Bible is not available in the plain words on the surface:

"Criss-crossing the entire known text of the Bible, hidden under the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, is a complex network of words and phrases, a new revelation. There is a Bible beneath the Bible. The Bible is not only a book — it is a computer program. It was first chiseled in stone and handwritten on a parchment scroll, finally printed as a book, waiting for us to catch up with it by inventing a computer. Now it can be read as it was always intended to be read."⁵

So the Bible cannot really be read in the right way unless one has a com-

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THE PRESENT-DAY ILLUMINATI THEORY

The Real or Illusionary Threat of a Secret Worldwide Conspiracy

by G. Richard Fisher

"For thus the Lord spoke to me with a mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, 'You are not to say, "It is a conspiracy!" in regard to all that this people call a conspiracy. And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear. And He shall be your dread'" (Isaiah 8:11-13).

Some who have never heard the term *Illuminati* may wonder, "What in the world is it?" The literal definition of the word *Illuminati* means "the enlightened ones." It has been a term designating various groups since the mid-1700s. In this century some parts of the fundamental, evangelical and Charismatic Church have become interested in, and occasionally obsessed with, the *Illuminati* idea.

It is best to speak of the *Illuminati* as an *idea* because there are dozens of conflicting theories as to just whom the group is and what it is doing today. People who become heavily involved in the elusive pursuit of the *Illuminati* seem to fall under a deep persuasion of an "imminent takeover" and a "secret worldwide conspiracy" underlying everything happening today. Of course, the predetermined dates come and go and the takeover never takes!

Sometimes in the scheme presented there is an attempt to match the Antichrist to a specific person or

movement. In short, the *Illuminati* has been credited with everything from the triggering of the French and American revolutions, being the brains behind communism, controlling all the banks and money of the world, to plotting to take over the world at any moment.

Not everyone holding and promoting such ideas is viewed as a fringe extremist or cult member. Some have gained prominence and esteem within Christian camps. For example, televangelist-turned-politician, Pat Robertson, writes in his book, *The New World Order*, that the *Illuminati* is about to install **the new world order**. All in all, it is folklore and myth that just refuses to die.

Brooks Alexander, of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project, comments on the real lack of documentation for the worldwide conspiracy theory:

"Rumor and speculation fill the gaps between scanty data. A net of suggestive (but inconclusive) circumstances can be extended as far as the mind can throw it. ... Some theorists are serious and qualified scholars, but they have had to struggle uphill to establish their credibility in a field dominated by cranks, extremists, and hidden agendas. Conspiracy enthusiasts have taken spectacular speculative leaps to get 'behind

the scenes."¹

The *Illuminati* idea or concept was kept alive in the 1920s by no less than Henry Ford (with a hateful anti-Semitic thrust). In the three following decades it was perpetuated by certain men like Gerald Winrod and Myron Fagin. However, the premise did not become popular and widely accepted until the 1960s generation with the rising rejection of the government and authority and especially the widespread distribution of John Birch Society materials and the literature of the anti-Zionist Liberty Lobby. This really created a mainstreaming of the *Illuminati* mirage and an accepting of an illusive, all-seeing "big brother." The details of the takeover now were secondary, even meaningless, and only the idea seemed to matter.

Some years ago, the *Illuminati* was blamed for the energy crisis and the Watergate affair of the 1970s. They are described as being a secret underground, worshiping the devil, and have been variously traced back to the Knights Templar, gnostic cults, and Egyptian sun worshipers.

Though no two students of *Illuminology* agree totally on the details (and there is room for much speculation), one generally finds in the current *Illuminati* literature of the anti-Semitic far right, the idea of international communism and international banking interacting with Masonry, witchcraft and Satanism.

Even the fall of communism does not dampen the commitment of true "believers." They insist that international communism will rise again or just take on a new and more insidious form.

There are even some weirder strains that link the illusive Illuminati with alien beings from outer space. With the anniversary and resurrection of the claimed Roswell, New Mexico sighting and the Mars probes, UFOs are enjoying a renewed life lately and expectations will only heighten.

There are huge and growing bibliographies of just the UFO strain of conspiracy literature. The twists are endless with everything from visitations to abductions thrown in. Science fiction runs rampant. One can now browse the Internet and find hundreds and hundreds of UFO sites. *Schwa* (a Website) is set up to inform us about alien conspiracy theories and also to sell alien detector cards and defense kits.

The first real historical link claimed that can be established with any certainty is to the Bavarian Illuminati. On May 1, 1776, in Bavaria, Dr. Adam Weishaupt, a professor of canon law at Ingolstadt University and a former Jesuit, formed a secret society called the Order of the Illuminati *within* the Masonic Lodges of Germany. It was actually a secret society within a secret society.

In 1785, the Bavarian Illuminati was penetrated, broken and suppressed by the government for plotting to overthrow the kings of Europe. This scenario is agreed upon by *all* historians. The weakest link in the chain for the Illuminologist, however, is the first few links. It is alleged that the Rothschilds funded Weishaupt. It is a matter of historical record that the Rothschilds did not establish a banking firm until about 1800 which is after the demise of the original Illuminati.² Rothschilds were ghetto hawkers until then. The Rothschild-link is nonexistent here as well as later.

A claim is made that Edmond Rothschild funded Zionism (in the strain of Illuminati theory that is anti-Semitic and claims a Jewish world takeover). Rothschild did fund

early settlers in Israel, but would *have nothing to do with* the father of Zionism Theodor Herzl and early political Zionists. This can be proved from the diaries of Herzl and the massive evidence at Herzl Archive in Jerusalem.³ The other broken Rothschild-link is the claim that Adolf Hitler was funded by the Rothschilds.⁴

The house of Rothschild Banking Firm was liquidated in Germany in 1901. Their remaining properties in Germany and Austria were confiscated by Hitler in the '30s, and the family escaped with only their lives. A few family members jailed by Hitler were bargained for and bought back at great cost.

Everything prior to Weishaupt and the Bavarian Illuminati is a matter of heated speculation, mythology and controversy, with no real historical documentation.

Another document, sometimes referred to in the anti-Semitic strain of Illuminology is *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.⁵ This mythological piece, originating in Europe in the 1800s, tells of a secret meeting in a graveyard with Satan and twelve Elders of Zion. This purely straight fiction originated from the pen of Hermann Goedsch, a Prussian postal worker, in 1868. In his novel, *Biarritz*, there was a chapter, "In the Jewish Cemetery in Prague," telling of the devil's meeting and the imminent sensational Jewish takeover.

This eventually evolved into a document called the *Rabbi's Speech*. In Russia and Germany it was accepted as fact and stimulated persecutions and pogroms. In 1920, it took the name *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. Millions of copies were circulated in the 1930s and 1940s, and it was compulsory reading in German schools.⁶ So much for the Jewish world conspiracy.

Another primary source constantly quoted and misquoted, used and abused, is John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against All Religions and Governments of Europe, Carried on in the Secret Meetings of the Freemasons, Illuminati and Reading Societies*. The book, first published in 1795, is presently

called simply *Proofs of a Conspiracy*. It is interesting to read Robison and see what he is actually saying and not saying. One wonders if many who refer to him have truly read him.

Robison, a Scottish mathematician, reproduces the Weishaupt secrets. He, himself a Mason, reveals that Bavarian and German Masonry had been corrupted by Weishaupt. Robison does not mention Rothschild or a Jewish connection. His point is that the Masonry of Great Britain can stay pure by taking heed to the lessons of the Weishaupt affair and through "religion" and Parliament. Secret world takeovers must be imposed on and read into Robison's writings.

It is hard to see how one can get communism, American banking, or a Jewish takeover from anything Robison says. It's like trying to get oranges from an apple tree simply because it's a tree. But such is the historical inconsistency and lack of proof presented. The Americanist Classics admits in its republishing of Robison's book that there are no documented historical links from Robison to communism (Illuminati to them), but perhaps an ideological link.

Now it is time to look at some historical identifications of the Illuminati. Often they are based on source material from Nesta Webster. Webster, who died in 1960, was a British mystic who believed in reincarnation, fascism and a Jewish world takeover. Her life has been examined and her theories debunked by Richard Gilman in *Behind World Revolution — The Strange Career of Nesta Webster*. Yet she is used as a resource by Pat Robertson and others which shows how deeply they have thought about their ideas. Webster wove a fabric of truth and falsehood around her sympathy to Hitler's ideas.

This article cannot even attempt to deal with the many nuances and differences that exist in each of the Illuminati theories. The difficulty exists because the Illuminati is variously identified and the contenders change with each passing year. However, many of the following speculations are covered and discussed in Neal Wilgus's book, *The Illuminoids* —

Secret Societies and Political Paranoia.

1. French sociologist Jacques Ellul said the Illuminati was founded in the eleventh century by disciples of Joachim of Floris. It was vanquished in 1507.

2. *National Review* has stated Joachim's followers still exist.

3. French cabalist Eliphas Levi claimed the Illuminati was founded by Zoroaster in Persia and introduced to Europe by the Knights Templar in the twelfth century.

4. Levi also states in his *History of Magic* that the Holy Vehn (medieval Catholic version of the Ku Klux Klan) was the enforcer for the Illuminati.

5. Arkin Darual, in *History of Secret Societies*, identifies Hassan Sabbah as the founder of the Illuminati in 1092.

6. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the Illuminati was founded by Adam Weishaupt in 1776 and suppressed by the Bavarian government in 1785.

7. Magazines in the 1970s, such as *Teenset* and others, suggested that the Illuminati controlled the rock music business and were responsible for masterminding all the assassinations of recent decades.

8. *American Opinion* magazine said that American Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) was the current manifestation of the one-world conspiracy. The CFR is a top contender in much of the conspiracy literature.

9. A Chicago newspaper, in 1968, pinpointed then Mayor Daley as a member of the Illuminati and said George Washington and Weishaupt were the same man.

10. In 1969, *East Village Other* magazine named Richard Nixon, Aga Khan, Lord Omar, and Kennedy assassination theorist Mark Lane (perhaps meant to be a joke) as members of the organization.

11. The eye in the pyramid on the back of the one-dollar bill was given to Thomas Jefferson by a mysterious man in black, who disappeared. The founding fathers, not knowing what it meant, used it anyway. It is presumed

to be the seal of the Illuminati! In our bicentennial year we unwittingly celebrated the birth of Illuminati. This view is promoted by Jack Chick of Chick Publications, especially in *The Crusaders* series of Christian comic books. The United States Department of the Treasury in Washington, D.C., provides the explanation of the symbols on our money in a booklet: they identify the eye as the eye of God.

12. John Robison, eighteenth-century Mason previously mentioned, warned against the Bavarian Illuminati influence on Masonry.

13. Nesta Webster, in *World Revolution*, claimed the Illuminati controls all socialist, communist, and anarchist groups.

14. According to *High I.Q. Bulletin*, the Illuminati are invaders from the planet Venus.

15. In *Cosmic Trigger — The Final Secret of the Illuminati*, science fiction writer Robert Anton Wilson suggests that there may be E.S.P. contacts from Sirius. Wilson further speculates that these extraterrestrial contacts use human minds as receivers (interstellar neurogenetics) and may account for the origin of the idea of the Illuminati.

16. It was from the Vril Society that Hitler learned his occultism, according to *Libertarian American*. This is the political front for the Illuminati, which has as its aim, not Russian socialism, but Christian socialism.

17. The John Birch Society first mentioned the Illuminati in 1962. Their particular twist is that it is a combination of world bankers, CFR, communism, and a Jewish-Rothschild connection. The Illuminati is known as the "insiders." The most popular treatment of the Birch line was in the 1971 publication, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*. Its author, Gary Allen, gave the "takeover" year as 1976 in that book.

18. According to the *Los Angeles Free Press*, the Theosophical Society has been named as the chief front for the Illuminati.

19. Others suggest the John Birch Society.

20. The purely Jewish takeover was promoted by Gerald Winrod in the 1920s and 1930s. In his publication, *The Hidden Hand*, he promoted *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and saw the Jews as the cause of the depression. The Super Government, the world bank and the "apostate Jews" ("the hidden hand") were about to take over.⁷

21. In the *Bulletin to Restore the Constitution*, from Fort Collins, Colorado, we find the Illuminati made up of Fabianism, round table, communism, Bilderbergers, CFR, Rotary, Elks, Y.M.C.A., and B'nai B'rith.

22. Golden Dawn is yet another hot suspect. Allister Crowley originated this Satanic cult in England after the turn of the century. Calling himself Antichrist, he practiced vile rituals interlaced with immorality. Secrecy was maintained only to escape prosecution from the government. Crowley had nothing to do with plots or takeovers or politics. His cult was perpetuated in England by Margaret Murry and in America by George Gardiner in the 1950s as the "Wicca" cult of witchcraft.⁸

23. The late Alberto Rivera put forth a purely Vatican conspiracy in alleged autobiographical works published by Chick Publications.

24. Sufi writer Adries Shah says the Illuminati are sufis (Moslem offshoots).

25. John Todd's view is a combination of a few others with his own embellishments. His scenarios are still being promoted in Chick Publications' *Crusaders* comicbook series. According to Todd, the Illuminati is definitely a CFR-Masonic conspiracy with witchcraft and Mafia thrown in. Jimmy Carter was selected to be the Antichrist by the Rothschild Tribunal. Todd added a twist to the paranoia of Myron Fagin. Charles Manson was to be released in 1979 and led other released prisoners in "Helter Skelter" to kill Christians. We were to arm ourselves and stockpile food and water. There is absolutely no Jewish connection, Todd said. The rock music industry, and also the film

industry, were all involved. His takeover was predicted for October 1979.⁹

26. None of the above! Numbers 1-25 are all wrong! The Illuminati spawned the above to confuse everyone and keep themselves hidden. No one can and ever will know who they are.

Added to all this, hopeless confusion is the current strain of Christian conspiratorialists. Jack Van Impe, Charles Taylor, John Hagee, Peter and Paul Lalonde, Larry Burkett, Pat Robertson and the lunacy of Texe Marrs, perpetuate the Christian spin on the Illuminati.¹⁰

The Bible talks about apostasy and tells us what to do about it. In the mind of the conspiratorialist it is much more complicated and sinister as noted in a recent issue of *Religion in Politics*:

“The fear of a hidden conspiracy directed against Western Civilization, Christianity, and the ‘American free enterprise system’ is a recurring theme which runs through and permeates the entire Right-Wing matrix. Its being peddled by leaders in the New Right to Americans desperate for an easily understood reason as to why their European, Christian-based culture has seemingly been stripped from them by ‘secular humanists’ and replaced by what is perceived to be an ‘amoral’ multiculturalism with which few of them can easily relate. It’s most extreme expression has taken the form of the Illuminati Myth; its most moderate version is the ‘Secular-Humanist Conspiracy.’ The first version names the Jews and the Freemasons as the principal villains; the second names the liberal establishment. In both instances, Communism and Socialism are the tools through which the hidden cabal (i.e., the Jews and the Freemasons in the one instance, the secular-humanists in the other) hopes to achieve its goal of world domination. In reality, the second version is nothing more than a sanitized and less offensive version of the first — one

which has been ‘cleaned up’ to suit the sensibilities of moderate conservatives.”¹¹

The Church fights its war on many fronts with religions, cults, materialism, new age thought, mysticism and emotionalism, humanism, abortion, mounting lack of concern for any authority as well as addictions that dominate the lives of people. The feet in Daniel’s image were a mixture of iron and clay that would not mingle (Daniel 2:43). Satan is happy to work through chaos and division and really does not need a centralized, simplistic earth organization to further his agenda. The feet of iron and clay (a mixed, divided world scene) are only remedied by the falling of the great stone, which is God’s Kingdom on earth as the ultimate answer (Daniel 2:33-35, 44-45).

Doubtless there may be more theories than those mentioned as to the identity of the illusive Illuminati, and the combinations could be endless depending on the creativity of the writer. Of the above identifications of the Illuminati, some mentioned were cultic or occultic groups.

It’s easy to see that many of the Illuminati contenders are not linked in any way historically, philosophically or actually. The only common denominator is the *idea* of an Illuminati. After all, for some two hundred years the Illuminati has been portrayed as possessing all of the resources necessary for a takeover, yet no marshaling has ever occurred. There cannot be an all powerful group as is claimed for whatever exists seems sterile, ineffective, inefficient and lacking know how to get the job done.

The imminent takeover theme has been played and replayed since 1776. The Mormons, the British, and the Japanese as well, all have been candidates at different periods and were suspected as the masterminds and fulcrum of the takeover. It appears that we usually see what we want to see. No doubt those who write articles like this one will be seen as part of the Illuminati’s grand scheme!

Satan can and is using this hopeless activity of Illuminati-spotting and

Antichrist-naming as another divisive ploy to get the Church off the track. *He* has promoted the *idea* of an Illuminati to promote division, fear and hysteria. Its fruits are disruption, division, elitism, withdrawal from the world, confusion, and a denial of the sovereignty of God. When combined with the witchcraft nuance, it lapses into a fierce dualism.

To see sin and corruption in all governments and systems is truly different from seeing all history as a conspiracy. To look for the coming of Christ delivers one from the pessimism of seeing all of life heading toward takeover and destruction. First Timothy 2:1-3 still holds true today. We can see politicians affected by the power of prayer.

Yes, there are small conspiracies here, there and everywhere. The plotting of the death of Jesus was a conspiracy. One huge dominant worldwide conspiracy is hard to imagine in the face of all the ethnic divisions, racial divisions, religious divisions, cultic divisions, political divisions, and so forth. Indeed, the feet are an impossible mix of iron and clay that cannot mingle into one.

To look at all of history through conspiratorial glasses is simplistic reductionism. That is to say that it ignores the diversity and complexity in the world and reduces everything to humans just working out their nefarious plans worldwide. Putting history in this simple box leaves out God, His plan, His power, His will, and His Word.

But one might object and say, “Doesn’t the Bible speak of a takeover by the Antichrist?” Yes, but nowhere in the Bible is this presented as a secret approximating the Illuminati *idea*. Even if it were, to try to stockpile guns and food to avert it (as some conspiratorialists have), would be like trying to stop Judas from that which was the preordained plan of God.

The exact scenario of the future is something that good Christians have debated for centuries. We can debate it but should not divide over it. But again most of the above Illuminati *ideas* (which are speculation akin to

science fiction) are not even close to a biblical framework or philosophy anyhow. It would be foolhardy even if one took a literal futuristic view of the brief reign of the Antichrist to say exactly when and *how* it would all play out.

Whatever one's view of prophecy (which we can debate without dividing over), the facile *naming* of the Antichrist by some has brought ridicule and shame to the Church of Christ. If God wanted the Church to have the name of the Antichrist, He would have given it in Scripture. Think of how some in the Church throughout history have named various Caesars, various popes, Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Henry Kissinger, Jimmy Carter, and other presidents and world leaders as the Antichrist. Why do we have to repeat the obvious mistakes of the past and bring reproach on our testimony?¹²

The theories which disperse Illuminati ideas are both confusing and undocumented.¹³ Paul's words to Timothy remain relevant today:

"I wanted you to do this so that you could order certain persons to stop inventing new doctrines and to leave hoary old myths and interminable genealogies alone. Such things lead men to speculation rather than to ordered living which results from faith in God. ... You will be

doing your duty as Christ's minister if you remind your church members of these things, and you will show yourself as one who owes his strength to the truth of the faith he has absorbed and the sound teaching he has followed. But steer clear of all these stupid Godless fictions. ... if anyone tries to teach some doctrinal novelty which is not compatible with sound teaching (which we base on Christ's own words and which leads to Christ-like living), then he is a conceited idiot! His mind is a morbid jumble of disputation and argument. ... Oh Timothy, guard most carefully your divine commission. Avoid the Godless mixture of contradictory notions which is falsely known as 'knowledge' — some have followed it *and lost their faith*" (1 Timothy 1:3-4; 4:6-7; 6:3-4, 20, Phillips).

The Church should be prepared for millennial madness, date setting and the resurfacing of Illuminati *ideas* and Illuminati mania as we approach A.D. 2000. The simple fact of a four to six year discrepancy in our calendar means that we have already passed into the next millennium (it is, in fact, 2001 or 2003). This is something of which most are totally unaware.

We have a choice — the illusion of an elusive Illuminati with its dozens

of contradictory notions and theories or the reality of the Word of God.

Endnotes:

1. *Spiritual Counterfeits Project Newsletter*, Jan.-Feb. 1984, pg. 6.
2. See further, *The Rothschilds*, by Fredrich Morton.
3. See further, *Herzl*, by Amos Elon.
4. On the funding of Hitler, see James and Suzanne Pool, *Who Funded Hitler?* (New York: The Dial Press, 1978).
5. See *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion: Codebook for World Takeover or Anti-Semitic Nonsense?", pp. 4, 8.
6. See further, *Warrant for Genocide* by Norman Cohen.
7. See further, *Strong's Organized Anti-Semitism in America*.
8. See further, *Man, Myth and Magic* by Richard Cavendish.
9. For an updated report on John Todd, see *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2, "Comic Book Hero to Convict," pp. 4, 8-10. See also the older summary reports on Todd in *Spiritual Counterfeits Project Newsletter*, (P.O. Box 4308, Berkeley, CA 94704), September 1978; *Christianity Today*, Feb. 2, 1979; and *Moody Monthly*, April 1979.
10. For specific details, see Gregory Camp, *Selling Fear*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1997, pp. 169-231, 255-259.
11. *Religion in Politics*, June 15, 1997, pg. 59.
12. See *The Coming Antichrist* by Walter Price; *Armageddon Now* by Dwight Wilson; and *Conspiracy, the Fear of Subversion in American History* by Richard O. Curry and Thomas M. Brown.
13. Two works that investigate the Illuminati idea are: *The Politics of Unreason* by Seymour Lipset and Early Raab and *The Illuminoids* by Neal Wilgus.

THE BIBLE CODE

(continued from page 4)

puter and is able to read Hebrew. That effectively takes the Bible away from most people.

Drosnin admits that his system has failed him in the past because the atomic holocaust predicted for September 13, 1996 did not occur. Fortunately, he returned to the computer and dug up the word "Delayed" somewhere in and around the catastrophe prognostication.⁶

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

The idea of the Bible as a fixed understandable book with a code of

conduct to be lived out (taught throughout both Jewish and Christian history) is jettisoned by Drosnin when he says:

"We have always thought of the Bible as a book. We now know that was only its first incarnation. ... something that its original author actually designed to be interactive and ever-changing."⁷

The Bible Code idea robs people of the Bible. Its author's contention is that we must get beyond the Bible as mere words in a book, to the deeper level only reached by computer.

Drosnin wonders if we could reach even deeper levels than he already

has. He cites Dr. Eliyahu Rips, who first discovered the ELS code:

"It is almost certainly many more levels deep, but we do not yet have a powerful enough mathematical model to reach it."⁸

The deeper incarnations are given a mystical, eerie, frightening, almost godlike quality:

"The computer program that reveals the Bible code is almost certainly not the last form the Bible will take. Its next incarnation probably already exists, waiting for us to invent the machine that will reveal it. ... No one yet knows if each of us, and

all of our past and all of our future, is in some still unknown higher-level code in the Bible, if it is in fact some Book of Life. But apparently every major figure, every major event in world history, can be found with the level of encoding we already do know."⁹

MICHAEL, OPEN THE BOOK

Whether knowingly or unknowingly Drosnin aligns himself with cult mentality and makes the same suggestion that multitudes of cult leaders have made in the past. Namely, that his code is the final fulfillment of Daniel 12:4 and 9:

"But you, Daniel shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end. ... Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

Drosnin expresses his amazement: "But until this moment I never realized that the Bible code might be the secret book."¹⁰ He then lets it all hang out: "The Bible code is the secret 'sealed book.'"¹¹

ET PHONE HOME

Though Drosnin mentions God, He is not the all-powerful, eternal, all-knowing God of Scripture. Drosnin even wonders if "God" is still around and identifies God as "The long-awaited contact from another intelligence."¹² All God seems to be is a super extraterrestrial being (or beings) that locked secret codes in a book until Drosnin could discover them in 1997.

Drosnin posits a weak God who would be welcomed by process theologians when he says: "He could see the future, but he could not change it. He could only hide in the Bible a warning."¹³ Isaiah would say otherwise: "I am God, there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-10).

The message of the mighty, all-knowing God, the Messiah and redemption seem to pale considering these new and amazing discoveries.

Drosnin needs an introductory course on the doctrine of God and Christ.

Drosnin believes that the world's final outcome is uncertain and can ultimately be decided by us.¹⁴ He then puts forth this grandiose claim:

"The code seemed, instead, to be from someone good, but not all-powerful, who wanted to warn us of a terrible danger so we could prevent it ourselves. ... A warning is encoded in the Bible so that we can prevent the threatened Apocalypse."¹⁵

What an incredible thought. God can't prevent the Apocalypse, so it is up to us!

If Drosnin's ideas were not so aberrant and misleading they would almost be laughable: "What Moses actually received on Mt. Sinai was an interactive data base, which until now we could not fully access"¹⁶ and "The code suggests that even the writing of the laws on two stone tablets may have been computer-generated."¹⁷

IT WAS THERE ALL THE TIME

Drosnin's major premise is that current events and world leaders like Yitzhak Rabin, Bill Clinton and Adolph Hitler have been recorded on the pages of the Old Testament in hidden codes all along. One obvious downside is that much of what Drosnin decodes is what could be labeled as "after the fact" revelation. "Prophecies" such as the assassinations of "President Kennedy,"¹⁸ "R.F. Kennedy"¹⁹ and "Yitzhak Rabin"²⁰ are only identified after they've happened.

There are, however, alleged messages deciphered that tell of impending natural and man-induced catastrophes; great earthquakes in Los Angeles in the year 2010²¹ and one in Japan sometime between the years 2000 and 2006.²² Besides the earthquake, Japan is to suffer fire and economic collapse.²³ Drosnin is bold to say:

"But the Bible code for the first time gives us a direct line to the future. Instead of relying on prophets who see visions and interpret dreams, we can now

access by computer an ancient code hidden in the Bible."²⁴

This is not subtle at all. We no longer need the prophets or prophecies of Scripture. That is outmoded and old hat. The new more exciting, deeper level has come. What the Bible says on the surface is no longer important or needed. The hiss of the serpent (Genesis 3) can be discerned in these thoughts.

The Bible Code warns of approaching warfare and claims we have entered the "end of days," which began in 1995-1996, Drosnin says.²⁵ Yet Drosnin's premonition is not without a measure of circumvention:

"I checked every year in the next hundred years. Only two years, 2000 and 2006, were clearly encoded with 'World War.' The same two years were also encoded with 'atomic holocaust.' They were the only two years in the next hundred encoded with both 'atomic holocaust' and 'World War.' There is no way to know whether the code is predicting a war in 2000 or 2006. The year 2000 is encoded twice, but 2006 is mathematically the best match. And there is, of course, no way to know if the danger is real. But if the Bible code is right, a third World War by the end of the century is at least possible, and a World War within the next ten years is a probability we cannot ignore."²⁶

DECODING THE BIBLE CODE

The Jerusalem Post International Edition panned Drosnin's volume by citing the very one who discovered the ELS code, Hebrew university mathematician and computer expert, Eliyahu Rips. Rips told the *Post*:

"All attempts to extract messages from Torah codes or to make predictions based on them are futile and of no value. This is not only my own opinion but that of every scientist who has been involved in serious codes research."²⁷

Dr. Brendan McKay, computer science teacher at the Australian

National University, corroborates Rips noting, "We believe that there are flaws in the mathematics and we have serious concerns about other aspects."²⁸ He further challenges the way in which Drosnin turns letters into words by establishing that the process can be done with any other writing. In his article "Tracking God's Secrets Across the Net" he shows how one can derive secret messages from the book *War and Peace*. Additionally, using Drosnin's methods, McKay found information about Microsoft magnate Bill Gates in the book of Revelation.²⁹

Dr. Ronald L. Giese, Jr., Associate Dean at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, notes that "The Bible Code" is really a skip code. That is, a letter is found and then a word or message is created by skipping across an equal number of spaces. You can go forward, backward, vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. You can skip five letters or 50 letters (or any number for that matter). It is really nothing more than a giant "Seek 'N Find" or "Word Search" puzzle with endless possibilities, given that you make up the parameter of the search as you go. If you can't find what you're looking for, just increase the boundaries by expanding the playing field with additional rows and columns. And while the technique may take thousands of hours by hand, a computer can accomplish the procedure in seconds.

Drosnin's concept is further aided by the fact that the Hebrew language is made up of consonants and no vowels. Thus "Rabin" could equally be "Robin" or "Reuben." And although Hebrew is read from right to left there are no fixed parameters with the new code game and you can go in any and all directions. Drosnin readily admits: "... you can't find anything without knowing what to look for."³⁰

Giese further shows that the so-called code can work with just about anything in writing. A telling example is his taking a statement Drosnin made about Israel's Eliyahu Rips and finding a message by doing a four-letter spacing:

"Rips explained that each code is a case of adding every fourth or twelfth or fiftieth letter to form a word."³¹

There it is — "read the code"! How could anything be clearer? Thus, we could conclude that even Drosnin's words have secret messages. And then we could stretch it even more by saying this is a "prophecy" as to the success of his book. There is no end to the foolishness. Giese reports, "I am not aware of one Hebraist or one statistician that has written a positive review of his discoveries."³²

Other critics agree. Peter T. Chattaway, in his article "The Bible Code — God's fingerprints?" points out:

"For one thing the Bible is not the only text in which computers may find coded prophecies. [Orthodox Rabbi Shlomo] Sternberg together with Australian mathematician Brendan McKay, claims to have found the names of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza encoded in the text of *Moby Dick*, overlapping such phrases as "the bloody deed" and "he was shot."³³

Chattaway further notes that according to Martin Abegg, Jr., director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute at Trinity Western University:

"... similar codes have allegedly been found in phone books, and says it is 'foolish' to place too much emphasis on such findings. 'We really should expect to see these sorts of things, even in DNA molecules or *Moby Dick*.'"³⁴

Yet Drosnin's view is that the Hebrew Bible is a big puzzle and not a clear and open unfolding of God's work and God's will for His people.

I TELL YOU A MYSTERY

Some Drosnin enthusiasts may contest, "But how about the fact that the Bible uses the word *mystery* so often?" However, even when the Bible uses the word *mystery*, the Greek word *musterion* means an open secret or new truth being given. Clearly, the immediate context in which the word *mystery* is used gives the details of

the open secret.³⁵

For instance, Colossians 1:27 tells us that the mystery of the Gospel is now manifested. And then in 1 Corinthians 15:51 Paul says, "Behold, I tell you a mystery," and then unfolds information about the resurrection and the resurrection body.

Jesus was very clear when He said in John 18:20, "I spoke openly to the world ... in secret I have said nothing." Yet some would have us believe that to really find truth we must search under the text of Scripture and string together sequences of letters from the Hebrew Bible (which must be done by computer) to find the secret meanings and prophecies long hidden.

Codifying the Bible has long been a practice of cultic and aberrant teachers. It was Herbert W. Armstrong who told his followers just a year before his death that:

"I found the Bible to be a coded book with all the paramount mysteries confronting all humanity. The revelation of these mysteries was lost, even to the Church of God, although the revelation of them has been preserved in the writings of the Bible. Why, then, has the world not clearly understood? Because the Bible was a coded book, not intended to be understood until our day in this latter half of the twentieth century."³⁶

IT'S A LONG STRETCH

What is really misleading are the illustrations of Hebrew text with boxed or circled letters giving the impression that words are found in close proximity. Cases in point are the words "Yitzhak Rabin," "assassin will assassinate" and "Amir." "Rabin" is found in Deuteronomy 2, then we must jump to Deuteronomy 4 for "assassin will assassinate" and then all the way back to Numbers 35 for the word "Amir."³⁷ It really sounds like a patch and paste method of random findings. One must know what to look for to create the messages and prophecies.

Moreover, Drosnin modifies into English what is found in Hebrew.

Ronald Hendel, expert on the Hebrew Bible and teacher at Southern Methodist University, claims:

"... that Drosnin can't even get the surface meanings of the text right. In Deuteronomy 4:42, the verse that supposedly predicts Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, the Hebrew words that Drosnin translates 'assassin that will assassinate' should, in fact, read 'murderer who murders inadvertently.' And that, says Hendel, is just one of many such mistranslations in Drosnin's book."³⁸

THE OPEN SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Christians, quite frankly, have trouble enough obeying the plain and obvious things that we do understand from Scripture without making up other things. Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds us that, "Those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, *that we may do all the words of this law.*" Scripture is there to obey, not to trifle with. Jesus commanded us to "teach them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20), not spend our days looking for secret hidden messages in random patterns of letters.

Looking for secret codes is one big detour and diversion like the backward masking craze popular a few years ago.

Apologist Hank Hanegraaff refers to ELS as "magic apologetics" and denounces esoteric methods of biblical interpretation. In a recent article, he shows that Grant Jeffrey, Paul Crouch and others embellish both the facts and statistics around ELS. Hanegraaff's weightiest point is that:

"ELS shifts the focus of biblical apologetics from the essential core of the gospel — the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4) — to esoteric speculations."³⁹

Ignoring the clear and plain message of the Bible takes us down a detour of speculation and away from the practical pursuit of obedience and growth. The speculative chasing of "Bible codes" is not something found

in historic orthodox Christianity. Seeing the "inner" meaning of Scripture as opposed to the literal and historical meaning was a mania of the Kabbalists in the 14th century. These Jewish mystics guided by Theosophy, mystical psychology, Gnosticism, myth and superstition ignored the plain, straightforward meaning of the Scripture.⁴⁰

Jesus admonished His disciples that it is not Bible codes or some secret knowledge that we need; it is not clandestine wisdom or so-called prophecies hidden in secret spacing to which we must devote our attention. He warns, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day" (John 12:48). Ignore ELS and you are the better for not wasting your time. Ignore the words of Jesus to your own eternal peril.

ELS is not prophetic insight. It is statistical probability fueled by a creative imagination. It is worthless to one who is computer illiterate or does not own a computer. It is beyond the grasp of the average person (since it is dependent on knowing Hebrew) thereby taking the Bible's allegedly juiciest morsels away from most.

The pursuit of a Bible code is not about gain in any sense but about incredible loss. There is the loss of the Bible, the loss of the true knowledge of God and the Savior of mankind. It is about the loss of Bible doctrines regarding salvation and sanctification. Losing these we fail to search the Scriptures as we should (Psalm 1) and lose the information on how to find Christ and mature in Him (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

An editorial in *The Christian News* offered the following perceptive warning:

"With Drosnin's interpretation the Bible is reduced to the level of ten psychics making predictions for the New Year's issue of the *National Enquirer*. ... Christians, beware of Drosnin's work. Any work that draws an interpretation of the Bible and doesn't lead to Christ is the work of the

devil. All Biblical interpretation, whether based on the words or the structure of the Bible, must lead to Christ."⁴¹

REINVENTING THE OUIJA BOARD

One must ask: What is the difference between this approach and the Ouija board? This is, in fact, a technological Ouija board. Rather than let our fingers do the walking, we let the computer do it for us. We scan for letters and words to tell us the future and to guide us into that future. Apparently, this is a frightening new form of occultic technology.

For centuries the Christian Church has heralded the message: Jesus saves! Drosnin's new Gospel is: "Code will save." ... It is not a promise of divine salvation. It is not a threat of inevitable doom. It is just information. The message of the Bible code is that we can save ourselves."⁴² If all we have is a personal computer/Ouija board what else do we have? The Apostle Peter says we have "all things that pertain to life and godliness" through the "precious promises" (2 Peter 1:3-4). These are available all over the pages of the Bible — no computer needed.

In his conclusion, Drosnin asks the reader to make a massive leap of faith by saying: "we must assume that the warning in the Bible code is real"⁴³ although on the same page he suggests that the Bible code may merely be giving scientific gloss to millenium fever and admits there is no way to really know. Why then should I accept his assumption?

It is sad that the Church is falling into the Athenian error of fadism and spending their time (and money) in nothing else but either to hear and tell some new thing (Acts 17:21). The issue is plain — the misleading morass of the "Bible Code" or the pursuit of just plain "Bible Compliance." Jesus again said; "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14).

Endnotes:

1. See further, *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 3, "Angels We Have Heard on High?", pp. 4, 10-12.

2. Jerry Lucas and Del Washburn, *Theomatics: God's Best Kept Secret Revealed*. New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1977, pg. 12.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Michael Drosnin, *The Bible Code*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997.
 5. Ibid., pg. 25.
 6. Ibid., pp. 158-159.
 7. Ibid., pg. 45.
 8. Ibid.
 9. Ibid., pg. 46.
 10. Ibid., pg. 90.
 11. Ibid., pg. 99.
 12. Ibid., pg. 97.
 13. Ibid., pg. 102.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Ibid., pg. 103.
 16. Ibid., pg. 98.
 17. Ibid., pg. 95.
 18. Ibid., pp. 108-110.
 19. Ibid., pg. 111.

20. Ibid., pp. 27-29.
 21. Ibid., pp. 141-142.
 22. Ibid., pg. 147.
 23. Ibid.
 24. Ibid., pg. 100.
 25. Ibid., pp. 88-89, 92-93.
 26. Ibid., pg. 123.
 27. Judy Siegel, "Torah Codes Authors Pan Book," *Jerusalem Post*, June 14, 1997, pg. 32.
 28. Dr. Brendan McKay, "Tracking God's Secrets Across the Net," *The Christian News*, Oct. 13, 1997, pg. 22.
 29. Ibid.
 30. *The Bible Code*, op. cit., pg. 29.
 31. Dr. Ronald L. Giese, Jr., "Hidden Biblical Secrets Or Modern Day Hype?," *Jerry Falwell's National Liberty Journal*, September 1997, pg. 10.
 32. Ibid., pg. 22.
 33. Peter T. Chattaway, "The Bible Code — God's fingerprints?," *Christian Info*, Octo-

ber 1997 reprinted in *The Christian News*, Oct. 27, 1997, pg. 3.
 34. Ibid.
 35. See further, "Mystery" in *The Expanded Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pp. 769-770.
 36. Herbert W. Armstrong, *Mystery of the Ages*. Pasadena, Calif.: Worldwide Church of God, 1985, pg. xii.
 37. *The Bible Code*, op. cit., pg. 29.
 38. "God's fingerprints?," op. cit.
 39. Hank Hanegraaff, "Practical Apologetics," *Christian Research Journal*, Summer 1997, pg. 55.
 40. See further, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion*, pg. 414-415.
 41. "Bible Code: A Nationwide Best Seller," *The Christian News*, Sept. 29, 1997, pg. 4.
 42. *The Bible Code*, op. cit., pg. 179.
 43. Ibid., pg. 182.

THE RAGING RIVER

(continued from page 1)

division and polarization. In many ways this is a harmful book. There is no bridge-building here but simply a battering ram of misleading arguments. His is a book illustrated with numerous sad and untrue characterizations such as:

- "[Critics] will watch a video of a powerful meeting attended by thousands of people and go ballistic because one person at the altar suddenly falls to the floor, totally ignoring the fact that Jesus is being preached in clarity."⁶

- "After digesting some of the critics' teachings, you feel afraid even to visit a church or listen to a minister who doesn't bear their highly selective seal of approval. 'Watch out! You may get demonized if that person who just attended the revival meeting so much as brushes up against you, and you may get influenced by an alien spirit if that preacher even shakes your hand. Careful! There are dark spirits lurking everywhere, ready to pounce on you the moment you put down your cult-watch manual.'"⁷

and

- "The critics diligently look for

demons lurking in every nook and cranny of any spiritual move in the Church, holding high the banner of 'Don't be deceived!' almost the way an exorcist would make the sign of the cross before a vampire in an old movie."⁸

Brown's tone in writing is much like his preaching style: sarcastic. During a spring 1997 meeting in southern New Jersey, the Brownsville theologian ridiculed and belittled PFO's 1997 *Journal* article on the "Pensacola outpouring." However, later in a phone conversation he admitted that had he known a PFO director was present at the session, he would have been less sarcastic and biting. Yet PFO's anonymous presence enabled us to witness and experience firsthand the unvarnished truth of Brown's response to evaluation and criticism.

SPENCER AND DeARTEAGA ALL OVER AGAIN

Brown's publication is a near *deja vu* read of James R. Spencer's *Heresy Hunters* volume of a few years back. He even paints nearly the same disparaging picture of "critics" — or "heresy hunters" as Spencer labeled them. Brown calls them "destructive critics" and describes them as being "proud, self-righteous, negative, picky, faultfinding, unthankful, unhappy, often stiff" with a "never-

satisfied attitude."⁹ He labels them as "mavericks" because they frequently "fail to respect other leaders because they are fully convinced that they alone are right" and they are "unaccountable and unsubmitive to authority."¹⁰

Brown also mirrors William DeArtega's book, *Quenching The Spirit*.¹¹ As new and more outlandish spiritual superstars surface and while the names and practices of those being evaluated change, the arguments used to respond to the criticism are unaltered. In all, there is nothing new here. Tired old canards are pulled out and paraded around.

In many other ways Brown's book is simply and equally dishonest. It is misleading historical revisionism. He sanitizes and then re-creates Brownsville in a more palatable form. Brown even quotes the likes of Charles Spurgeon, Jonathan Edwards and other avowed cessationists (those that taught the sign gifts ended with the completion of the canon of Scripture). If these men were alive today, they would brand the hysteria, chaos, and false prophecies of Brownsville at best as fleshly emotionalism. Brown, by his own criteria, would have to label them as "mavericks" who are "unaccountable and unsubmitive to authority."

AMBIVALENT GUIDELINES

Brown sets an early standard for himself and seeks to silence skeptics by announcing that the “refutation of the erroneous positions” of the critics has to be “clear and emphatic, always going back to the Word” and promises a “serious treatment of key Scriptures.”¹² This would prove to be a task which Brown could not fulfill. He later admits, “It is one thing to back up every point of *doctrine* and *faith* with specific chapters and verses from the Word. This is essential. It is another thing to try to validate every *practice* or *manifestation* with specific Scripture citation. This is not only unnecessary, it is virtually impossible.”¹³

This admission simply means you’ll never find some of the things occurring in Pensacola in Scripture. It is a very telling statement and should alarm those that revere Scripture and hold to it as the standard of doctrine and practice. It is a direct contradiction of his initial statement that he will “always go back to the Word.” Throughout the book there is a permeation of this kind of *cognitive dissonance*. This means that Brown presents and believes absolutely contradictory statements.

Perhaps Brown should have taken more seriously the advice of his own colleagues at the Brownsville church before writing his book. In a Sunday morning message, youth minister Richard Crisco used a rubber mallet to nail himself to an imaginary cross. The point of his illustration was:

“... that we are not supposed to defend ourselves from the critics of the revival and that we have to allow others to crucify us daily without defense. ... and how the resurrection power becomes powerless when Christians seek to defend themselves from the critics. ... to defend yourself from the critics was a waste of time. ... My friend, when they come with their hammers and they come with their nails just say, “Jesus forgive them, they know not what they do.” Many of them are not your enemies, friend, many

of them are your brothers and sisters in the Lord. When things happen just cry out inside yourself and say, “God forgive them, don’t allow any feelings to rise up inside of me — let me die, just let me die.””¹⁴

Perhaps Michael Brown was not in attendance that morning.

The Pensacola mind-set produces an elitist and a siege mentality, as evidenced by the tone of Brown’s book and actual occurrences at Brownsville and its “cloned” churches.

In a visit to Brownsville, PFO witnessed church security guards herding would-be “revival” seekers with bullhorns into single file lines.¹⁵ There seems to be a mania for crowd control outside the church building, only to allow just the opposite inside.

One guard even reported the near instantaneous cessation of “line ticket distribution” inaugurated in the early months of 1997 when devotees reportedly were scalping them and fighting over them. Those are things not reported in the Brownsville statistics, nor are they in Brown’s book. He has written the doctored-up and sanitized version.

Brown’s book and approach can be faulted at several key issues. As this article examines these, it is important to place the book alongside the realities at Pensacola. The book must be set against its actual context and read in the light of that context. Five crucial problems we see with the book are:

DISRESPECT FOR THOSE WITH WHOM HE DISAGREES

As noted above, *Let No One Deceive You* is saturated with insulting language. Critics are referred to in the Preface as “critical, religious, fault-finding, ministry nobodies.” Yes, there have been critics of Brownsville who are, at times, very hard, but Brown lapses into “tit for tat.” The Brownsville leadership should realize they are being held to a high standard since they are the ones claiming *this is the end-time move of God*. They, not the critics, are the ones making the extravagant claims of Holy Ghost

power and the anointing.

Brown lampoons critics by describing them as “the enlightened leaders of the Critical Intelligentsia Association (CIA), [and] the elite members of the Faultfinding Brotherhood International (FBI).”¹⁶ In other places they are labeled as “frequently self-anointed, generally self-appointed, and virtually always right,”¹⁷ “small-minded;”¹⁸ and as “Destructive critics ... often guilty of gossip and slander.”¹⁹ PFO, in particular, gets the dubious honor of being a “hairsplitter and nitpicker.”²⁰ Like boxer Mike Tyson, Brown attempts to pummel and bite his opponents. However, we think that the Christian world will, in the end, disqualify him for tactics beyond his worst critics.

In the face of all the criticism and negativity of his book, Brown further alleges, “A destructive critic feeds on negativity and fosters unbelief, suspicion and fear.”²¹ Yet the reader is asked to believe in the midst of all the name calling, threats and negativity pumped out by the Brownsville leadership²² that, “This is the day of visitation for our nation.”²³ God save us from such visitations.

Skeptics, according to Brown, are liars and slanderers who are in:

“... a cozy cocoon of criticism that feeds on itself and draws strength from its rumormongering. May God’s light penetrate this darkness, and His truth pierce these lies! This kind of junk — repeating libelous falsehoods about our brothers and maligning faithful servants of the Lord — is as far from constructive correction and godly rebuke as Death Valley is from the Arctic Circle. It not only misses the mark, but instead of shooting at the enemy’s target, it fires at its own side.”²⁴

Critics are likewise labeled as “negative brethren”²⁵ and Brown pulls out the old, well-worn and overworked threat that those who “scorn the sacred” may be bordering on “Blasphemy of the [Holy] Spirit.”²⁶ However, his “blasphemy” warning is yet another example of *cognitive*

dissonance. Early in the chapter Brown writes:

“But first I want to make something perfectly clear: *I am not saying for a moment that the Christian brothers and sisters who attack the current outpouring are guilty of blaspheming the Spirit*. I am not saying that those believers who attribute the whole revival to the devil are guilty of this sin.”²⁷

If not, then why even bring it up? Why spend an entire chapter devoted to the theme and issue such “urgent and intense” threats as:

- “you had better tread carefully with your criticism,”²⁸
- the detractors “continue to oppose Jesus Himself.”²⁹
- “Are you willing to wager your salvation on the fact that you are correct?”³⁰

and even the prophetic declaration that:

- “Soon the Lord may say to some who erroneously claim to speak for Him, ‘Silence! ... I rebuke you for speaking falsely in My name. Repent while there is still time. My kindness toward you is running thin.’”³¹

All in all, the Brownsville leadership certainly have a very high opinion of themselves when they link questioning them with so serious an issue as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. One would expect more humility coming out of genuine revival.

Nearly a half century ago, Charles Vander Ploeg, an Assemblies of God minister, carefully and thoroughly studied the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The conclusion of his thesis was that the “ignorant theories advanced as the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, are entirely inconsistent and incongruous with a proper understanding of the subject.”³² His conclusion that “This subject has to do with Israel only and never mentioned outside of the Lord’s ministry to Israel and never mentioned in Paul’s epistles”³³ is an observation that Brown and others quick to label critics as committing the unpardon-

able sin should seriously consider.

One term constantly overused by Brown (as well as all the other Brownsville leadership) is the word “friend.” Everybody is a “friend.” A friend is defined as “a person whom one knows and is fond of.” The way in which Brown threatens and castigates the opposition, they are hardly “friends.” The word is hollow and patronizing coming from them.

The suggestion, however veiled, that critics are guilty of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a straw man on Brown’s part. Reports and evaluations by PFO and others contend that the dominant force of the manifestations are dependent upon the work of the flesh, not a by-product of occultic activity. The true context of the Mark 3 passage is attributing to the devil the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, scriptural context is not always a top priority with Brown as will be demonstrated.

DISREGARD FOR THE CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Brown has a way of turning Scripture on its head. He takes a perspective and then makes the Bible conform to it. A few examples will suffice.

The first example is his appeal to a passage in Ezekiel, which he rips out of its clear context. Ezekiel 47:9 is clearly a millennial/Kingdom passage having to do with the twelve tribes of Israel (see vv. 13, 21-22). Surely, Brown believes in a future Kingdom restoration for Israel. Or does he? The passage, “where the river flows everything will live,” is applied by Brown to “this river of revival” in Pensacola. He says the critic “refuses to get in.”³⁴

For a serious student of the Word of God, this is Scripture-twisting. Many of the historic landmarks in Israel are there in Ezekiel 47. There is En Gedi (v. 10), and specific geographical landmarks like the Dead Sea (vv. 15-20). This definitely is not Pensacola, Fla. It is misleading allegory imposed on the Scriptures.

Perhaps Brown holds to a Triumphant or Dominionistic theology

and has allowed it to show through here. Just maybe, the Joel’s Army postmillennialism persuasion, prevalent within hyper-Pentecostal camps, has trickled through. Brown should clarify that.

Brown’s selective use of the passage also causes other questions to arise. What is one to do with the swamps and marshes not healed in verse 11? Possibly, they could be interpreted to be the ones scalping revival line tickets in the church parking lot or they could even be anyone who does not agree with him? How about the beached fish in verse 10? Could they be the individuals writhing on the floor at a Brownsville service? One can readily see how allegorizing the Scripture, as Brown does, can lead to a subjective morass of silliness.

Then there is his obvious mishandling of Acts 17:11, the passage regarding the Bereans. The text reads, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” Brown tries to make this say the opposite of what is intended.

This passage is clearly about the Apostle Paul’s preaching and the touchstone of the Scripture as the final authority. In myopic fashion Brown has this refer to the Brownsville happenings and suggests this passage is teaching that we should be giving him all the benefit of the doubt. His slant is as follows:

“Do the critics receive the contemporary reports of revival with openness and excitement, hoping that this might possibly be the real thing, that perhaps at last, their prayers for revival are being answered (if they’re even praying for revival), that the Lord is truly visiting His people; or do they receive such reports with suspicion and skepticism, if not deep-seated cynicism and hostility?”³⁵

Brown’s statement is a near encouragement to simply suspend judgment. Why should believers receive reports of revival with openness and excite-

ment when Brown himself admits from the start it is virtually impossible to “validate every practice or manifestation with specific Scripture.” What did the Bereans do? They brought Paul’s message to the Scripture and found it all there.

The word “searched” in Acts 17:11 is *anakrino*, and means to investigate, to judge, to examine, to discern, to search, to lay up evidence by investigation.³⁶ Moreover, Brown and his colleagues are not the Apostle Paul, which is far more reason to examine and test their message and claims with Scripture.

In context, Paul brought to the Bereans the message of the Gospel (vv. 2-3), the Bereans scrutinized it against the prophetic Scripture and it all checked out. Where do we go to check out Brownville’s messages and claims since we already know they are impossible to validate by Scripture. Do we just take their word for it all? That seems to be the real bottom line.

Brown is even able to paraphrase the words of Christ and to bring them into an up-to-date condemnation of critics:

“To put this in terms that many believers could relate to today, Jesus could have said something like, ‘Many will say to Me on that day, “But Lord, we were baptized in Your name, and in Your name became faithful members of the local church, and in Your name prayed and saw many special things take place.”’ And yet these people never truly knew Him or served Him. That’s where the deception is found.”³⁷

A careful study of Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:21-23, reveals the extent of His warning more closely parallels the occurrences in Pensacola, rather than the activity of their critics.

DELUSION AND DISSEMBLING ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE REVIVAL

Brown alleges that the “outpouring” happening in Pensacola is not just localized, but is “sweeping the land.”³⁸ Recall his claim, “This is the day of visitation for our nation” and

add to that his declaration that “A national awakening of monumental proportions is at hand. Whatever you do, don’t be left out.”³⁹ Is this really an awakening of national proportions? Is it sweeping the land when it is obvious that the area around the church itself has not been touched and cleaned up in any significant way?

Al Dager, of *Media Spotlight*, in a firsthand report from contacts in Pensacola and the area, says that after his two years of trying to obtain documentation, the Brownville team is unable to provide doctor-confirmed healing testimonies and that there is little or no spiritual or moral impact on the immediate community.⁴⁰

Brown makes other exalted, but unsubstantiated, claims. He asserts “thousands ... are being saved every month” and “in only six months, one particular high school with 2,100 students has seen 300 converts.”⁴¹ He further boasts:

“I can fill a football field with men and women who were hardened adulterers before the current revival but are now serving God with unadulterated hearts. I can present you with a mile-long line of freed fornicators, delivered drunkards, sanctified Satanists, purified perverts, converted criminals, liberated lesbians, and homosexuals who have been made holy. I can introduce you to thousands of transformed teens and countless committed kids.”⁴²

Such claims are made throughout the book, but the facts do not match the hype or rhetoric. For the most part Brownville Assembly of God is an in-house and parochial phenomenon drawing Pentecostals and Charismatics on repeat visits. Those predisposed to such things return frequently and as such get counted into the total number repeatedly.

Time spent talking with people waiting in line confirms that many are drawn down for the show on return visits. This was borne out on our visit there recently. In other words they are preaching, for the most part, to the

choir. In our initial report, PFO cited faith healer Benny Hinn’s comments that his wife, Suzanne, had made repeated visits to Pensacola and that his daughters made a profession of faith “just to be sure.”⁴³ Secular newspaper reporters turn up no new converts, but only those who “rededicate their lives.” The Brownville marquee now more honestly expresses the statistics, changing the number of “Souls Saved” to the number of “Decisions for Christ.”

Dager also points out the phenomenon of inflated tallies, both in attendance and decision response:

“Hill wants people to come to the meetings as often as they can. ... He chides those who make a negative judgment after having come only one time. ... He will often tell people to turn to the person next to them and ask, ‘Do you need forgiveness?’ If someone responds in the affirmative he wants both the person asking and the person responding to come forward. This usually brings a few hundred to the front.”⁴⁴

Moreover, *The Holland Sentinel* reports that Pensacola is “known as the gay Riviera for its openness to homosexual tourists.”⁴⁵ It goes on to report the findings of several inquiries:

“In random interviews over a three-day period, no one said they were born again. Yes they had rededicated their lives to Christ, they said — but they were people who had previously accepted Jesus as Savior. Studies indicate that many who promise to change their lives slide back into old habits once they are away from the highly charged revival. And whether it is possible to overcome problems like alcoholism and the effects of sexual abuse in a single experience is open to question.”⁴⁶

Up close and personal, the stark reality does not live up to the hyped-up version in Brown’s book.

One must remember that the *Pentecostal Evangel* has been advertising the Pensacola Outpouring and has been a

conduit for marketing Brownsville wares and products among Assembly of God churches and individuals, nationally and internationally. This endorsement has guaranteed Kilpatrick and Hill an instant constituency of millions. Likewise, no doubt, it has fed and fueled the meetings at Pensacola.

In fact, "revival" may even hinder and cripple a church. One such church (cited in PFO's spring 1997 report), the First Assembly of God in Grand Rapids, jumped into "the river" a number of months ago and has done all it can to be a Brownsville transplant. For a number of years before the "river flowing," First Assembly had the second-largest attendance of Grand Rapids' churches. However, following the "revival" it has slipped to third.⁴⁷

For many years, a Michigan couple attended this Assembly of God church. As the church endeavored to become a Brownsville clone and advertised "the river is flowing," this couple employed caution. They were quickly recognized as "critics." They were asked to leave, ushered out, and even harassed. So much for freedom of religion and freedom in the Spirit. The fruit of the "river" revival is spoiled fruit. Paranoia reigns.

DIVERSION IN TERMS OF BIZARRE MANIFESTATIONS

Are bizarre manifestations showcased at Pensacola? As much as the Brownsville leaders may try to distance themselves from the unorthodox, the response is an unequivocal, "Yes!" At times, the envelope is pushed beyond bizarre. For example, consider the "fetal birthing" practice at Brownsville. Women go into squatting or fetal positions claiming to birth revival.⁴⁸ Fetal birthing is practiced in New Age cults and the hyper-ventilating and grunting brings excess oxygen to the brain giving sensations that are labeled as spiritual experiences. It is all physiological.

In Brown's book there seems to be a concerted attempt to hide or deny the more bizarre manifestations at Pensacola. Yet this is not altogether possible because of the abundance of such

activity. While *The Orlando Sentinel* reported, "Though Brownsville services are televised, the broadcasts are cut off before carpet time,"⁴⁹ when it comes to video sales, however, they let it all hang out.

One can easily witness the uncontrollable shaking of young Alison Ward by purchasing the brief video found in Brownsville's Revival Product Catalog.⁵⁰ Shaking, convulsing, and hysteria are showcased in many of the video presentations. Just watch them and see.

Brown alludes that this "revival" is not about manifestations, that the experiences or superficial sensationalism are not paramount and are eclipsed by the preaching of the Word:

"I can show you videos stacked as high as a New York City apartment building chronicling every service of the revival, letting you hear the simple, biblical, Christ-exalting, sin-exposing message that is preached night after night."⁵¹

That claim is false. Many of the videos sold focus on the manifestations as in the Alison Ward testimony video. In fact, this short video demonstrates just how the preaching of the Word takes a back seat to "signs and wonders." Following the jerking and shaking spectacle exhibited by Miss Ward, Evangelist Stephen Hill announces to the congregation,

"This is the message tonight. This preacher's not going to preach. This was the message tonight. This rarely happens and we're obeying God. We're obeying God tonight. ... It's never going to get any heavier than this. Trust me."

The manifestations are so much a part of the spiritual climate at Brownsville, that Hill further says, "If you can't feel what's going on in this place, you're dead. You're dead. You are a dead man if you can't feel this. You're a reprobate, friend, if you can't feel God moving right now."⁵²

As much as Miss Ward is exploited, she seems to want to be and is now making appearances around the coun-

try with other members of Brownsville's leadership team. Yet the Ward testimony video is not just the exception, but more the rule. In a June 1996 service (also available on video), Pastor John Kilpatrick calls his wife Brenda to the stage and asks her to describe what the revival means to her. Is her response one of deepening holiness or deepening in the Word of God or even a manifested repentance? Brenda begins:

"But anyway, it's just really unique some of the things God's doing. And some of the manifestations that you see in people are—are—is intercession. A lot of times when the altar call is given you'll see people stand with their arms out like Moses did when the battle was on. And then you'll see children start shaking — grown adults — different people start shaking. And uh, they—it will be violently and some are like bending over, bowing like this. And it's like they're birthing something in the Spirit. And I do that — [I'm] part of that too."⁵³

She goes on to tell how the "river" pushed her back and knocked her over. She recounts she fell back and took another woman down with her. And then further reveals:

"And I started making these noises that I do — and it was kinda hollering out. ... I would scream out. ... But anyway, I was in this stranger's lap — and I mean, I'm doing this hollering in her lap. And then I go to this deep intercession; crying and wailing in her lap; crying and I can feel the tears in her lap. And I'm saying, 'Dear God,' you know, I don't know what this is, but I know this is You.' And I knew it was something to do with the lady. I was taking on her pain and her burden."

Mrs. Kilpatrick next tells how she was knocked down and came up doing sit-ups and explains how hard that is for an overweight person.

Pastor Kilpatrick announces that "the river of God" is on the platform

and has people rise to their feet. There is a loud cacophony of voices as Kilpatrick begins to speak in tongues through the microphone. He then sings in tongues, interspersing it with singing: "He's here, folks — He's here, folks — get in — get in — get in." Evangelist Stephen Hill then "gets in" to the act by charging to the platform. The congregation is near frenzy.

Hill tells the ushers to carry all the convulsing "intercessors" up to the front to be deposited on the platform for all to see. Various shaking children are paraded on stage to give "words of knowledge" about sinners in the audience only to collapse after their utterances. This certainly is a demonstration as to the nightly reality of what the revival means. It is also the service Brown describes in his book as "a sacred night of intercession and repentance in the revival."⁵⁴

But the emotionalism does not stop with this one service. The very next week produced a great favorite found in the Revival Products catalog entitled, *Honey, Where Are We From?*⁵⁵ However, it is the least favorite video of at least one on staff at Brownsville we know. The service features several manifestations and derives its title from a pastor's wife, who at times acts drunk and cannot recall words or even the city she came from. Both the pastor and his wife become the center of attention and the crowd howls with delight and laughter. The dumber they get, the funnier it seems to the crowd. At one point the pastor's wife goes into what can only be described as a drunken chicken walk with her arms dangling above her head. When she collapses on stage the crowd goes wild.

On this same video is an interview with five people, each one becoming sillier and crazier than the one before in a "can you top this?" sequence. In one scene, a young man describes how his foot would not move and as he clumps around on stage the audience howls with glee.⁵⁶ In the "intercessors" video (recorded the previous week), shaking spastic bodies are lugged through the church and into the balcony to bring conviction of sin on others.⁵⁷

Videos of the revival services circulate with stories of people so "drunk" they could not drive and of others having to be taken home and put to bed because they were unable to function. Kilpatrick himself confesses of having to take long periods of time just to put his socks on. Are these things being held up to model and emulate?

A point *totally* missed by Brown and others is that *not every phenomenon mentioned in the Bible is to be construed as a worship tool*. Herein is the crux of the matter and the fallacy in Brown's thinking. Anything that goes on at Brownsville will be justified with an oblique or strained reference to some text of Scripture or by Brown's admission, with no Scripture at all.

It goes without saying that a Scriptural word or event *cannot be taken as an element of worship*. Scripture must dictate what elements are in our worship. For the Pentecostal believer, 1 Corinthians 14 should loom large and bold as a referencing structure. In Brownsville it does not.

In a worship context, Paul demands certain things and says, "If anyone thinks himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of God. But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant" (vv. 37-38). Paul also reminds us that "God is not the author of confusion" (v. 33), that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (v. 32), and that if there is chaos (as in Brownsville) the uninformed and unbelievers will say "you are out of your mind" (v. 23). Therefore "let all things be done decently and in order" (v. 40). Biblically, the Brownsville leadership is keeping people "ignorant" regarding the proper order of worship.

The point must be made again: *Not every biblical occurrence, event or phenomenon is to be taken in as a worship element*. The boundaries of worship are defined in 1 Corinthians 14, as well as in other passages. *Not every event or occurrence in the Bible is an accouterment to worship*. If so, we could insist that manna fall from heaven at

worship services and water come out of rocks at worship since God does not change.

Do we just make up things to do in worship because they sound like a good idea or because we feel like it or others feel like it? Dr. Michael S. Horton notes "the human temptation is to invent new forms of worship, as Israel has done at Mt. Sinai with the golden calf."⁵⁸

Following the apostolic pattern the early Church had simple, sublime, orderly and biblical worship services. Justin Martyr described in detail the services about the year 140 A.D. No one was saying, "Honey, where are we from?" or walking around in a mindless state. Scripture reading and clear exposition were the focal point. Along with the sermon there was prayer, a collection, song and communion. The decorum is evident throughout Justin Martyr's description: No one left "drunk in the Spirit" with designated chariot drivers, but were sent out to visit the sick, poor and needy.⁵⁹

There is no report by Justin Martyr of "ministry time" so that the faithful could be anointed, "slain in the Spirit" or do "carpet time." Cast against these sober accounts of first-century worship, the Brownsville antics appear even more ludicrous. Brown's hermeneutic is that if anyone can be found on the ground anywhere in the Bible it must be acceptable.⁶⁰ But is it acceptable for worship?

And yet even if it is not in the Bible, Brown's logic is that there is a first time for everything. Jesus did many things for the first time and, just as the Apostles performed various miracles for the first time, so too in Brownsville. The fallacy is that Jesus and the Apostles were giving direct, divine and progressive revelation and confirming it with signs and wonders. It is a far cry from the practices of Pensacola. Brown may accuse his critics of "gall and egomania,"⁶¹ but these critics are not suggesting that they are on an apostolic or divine level.

Moreover, this is not just a *little* falling out. In meetings attended personally by PFO and in the numerous videotapes viewed, “ministry time” (the code word for physical and spiritual chaos), is promised and held out all through the meetings. It becomes all too obvious that this is what it is all about and is what people come for and wait for. They are there obviously for the “main event” and the leaders will not disappoint. As well the followers are never disappointed. The expectation is palpable.

In some of the meetings we attended, Kilpatrick and Hill charged through the congregation like bulls through the streets of Pamplona, Spain. It is the opinion of these writers that were it not for “ministry time,” there would be no “revival.” But is feel-good, get-high, really *lasting* revival? What about the physical consequences of head-snapping and head-jerking? Some have suggested possible future liability for physical damage,⁶² a fact of which the leadership at Brownsville seems unaware.

Real revival, as demonstrated in Psalm 85, is not man-centered, emotion-centered or manifestation-centered, but God-centered (v. 6). It is also centered completely on God’s Word and obedience (vv. 8-11). It is also about truth and being honest, not misleading by overstating the facts.

Brown even goes so far as to support shaking uncontrollably from passages in Isaiah 21, Jeremiah 4 and 23, and Ezekiel 12.⁶³ By use of these verses, Brown again shows his disregard for the context of Scripture. It is clear that these passages have to do with God’s catastrophic judgments on the wicked. So much for discernment and proper exegesis. Scripture is wrenched to justify holy spasms and sanctified epilepsy in worship services.

In the now infamous, “Hanegraaff Downfall Prophecy” service,⁶⁴ Kilpatrick all but invites someone to come to Brownsville to try to bomb the church. He intones that he is speaking into “the ears of God” and that if anyone shows up with a bomb it will not go off. Kilpatrick is a bomb

going off or maybe more like a loose cannon. The above behavior is immature and uncalled for.

Children are having “visions” on a regular basis and their apparitions are being passed off as a normal part of worship and a sure word from the Lord. *The Orlando Sentinel* reports further:

“Bill Bush, the Coast Guard officer, is the head usher. Elmer Melton, the former drill sergeant, is one of his assistants. How weird can a church be, after all, if the Marines and Coast Guard are on duty? The answer is pretty weird. Once a nine-year-old girl fell to the carpet during one of the Brownsville services and began making dreamy, repetitive motions, like a lazy gardener weeding a flower patch. Later the girl was brought in front of the congregation to explain what she had been doing. ‘I was pulling lost souls out of hell’ she said. ‘Then I was sending them to heaven.’ And not a moment too soon. The Spirit that rules over Brownsville is in a hurry.”⁶⁵

This “hurry” idea that God is in a rush is also repeated by teenager Alison Ward in her testimony video. Both these beg a number of questions to be answered:

- Should a nine-year-old girl be leading a worship service or any part of it? Isn’t this the Elders’ calling?

- Can a nine-year-old pull lost souls out of hell and put them in heaven? Can anyone?

and

- Is God really in a hurry?

In reading Isaiah 3, the Prophet denounces trends as people move away from God’s Word into subjectivism. God warns them that when children rule them they can fall into oppression and error (v. 12). If anything goes in worship — look out.

Dager reports: “We found that women and even children are taking prominent leadership roles in many of the churches involved in both the

Toronto and the Pensacola Revival movements.”⁶⁶

What about Brownsville’s doctrine of eternal punishment? At the very least it is a muddy mix of confusion. It can be safely said that this child was not taking people out of hell. This is something not even our Savior does. Hell is eternal.

As far as God being in a hurry — this is not a biblical perspective. Our lives and the society we live in may be in a “hurry,” but Peter reminds us that “With the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day” (2 Peter 3:7). God is not bound by our time frame and is not in a hurry. To suggest this is to be ignorant of who God is. We may miss current opportunities but there is no sense in which God is in a hurry. Isaiah warns:

“Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes, to those who say, ‘Let God hurry, let him hasten his work so we may see it. Let it approach, let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come, so we may know it’” (Isaiah 5:18-19).

Trying to rush God is sinful and has the creature trying to usurp the role of the Creator. It is very clear and amply demonstrated that Brownsville is *primarily* about manifestations in spite of Brown’s words to the contrary. It does not take a prophet to know that when the manifestations stop, the “revival” stops.

Brown tries to tone down the impact of so much being caught on tape by saying the critic:

“...views tiny excerpts of videos or disjointed snippets of teachings ... and then uses these biased, unexplained, and unrepresentative segments to form his entire view of the movement he questions. How would the critic like to be judged in this way?”⁶⁷

Brown tries to evade the fact that whole video presentations are given over to manifestations. Moreover, it is clear from the above samplings in this article that these are not tiny excerpts

and disjointed snippets and that they *are* representative of the movement. They are even more lengthy than could be presented here. Some are almost entire services.

Further, the critic *could not be judged this way* since the critic is not claiming divine origin for everything he does. The videos represent that which we are to believe is God-sent, spirit-born activity and part of a nation-shaking revival. We are right in holding these things up to the highest standard. How can they be God-sent and Spirit-engendered when we want them to be and unrepresentative snippets when we want them to be something else? Again *cognitive dissonance*.

A final point that needs to be addressed is the source of the videos. These tapes are photographed and then marketed by the Brownsville church. The footage is a product of their own hands. The questionable and embarrassing conduct depicted on them was not obtained through some covert operation with hidden cameras. They are the very materials used to evidence the Holy Ghost "outpouring." It seems the Brownsville leadership wants it both ways.

DISPENSING OF MISLEADING STATEMENTS

Brown repeats the misstatement that there are "dropping crime rates" in Pensacola because of Brownsville Assembly.⁶⁸ Maybe he thinks that just repeating an untruth will somehow make it come true. Again and again this has been shown to be patently false and he knows it. *In fact, key aspects of the Pensacola's crime rate have escalated, according to police statistics given to PFO.*⁶⁹

In reality, crime was decreasing before the revival and then began to increase through 1996 and into 1997. This was verified by Escambia County Sheriff Jim Lowman and his assistant Michael Morris. So, why does Brown try to keep the fabrication going? Why not just honestly admit that the "revival" is making no substantial impact on the realities of their community?

Dager further reports that when he personally questioned Stephen Hill to confirm his public claim that he was going into the public schools to preach the Gospel and asked Hill for names and addresses, Hill admitted he had not spoken in a school in three years.⁷⁰

During one phone conversation with Brown, PFO was told that Reformer Michael S. Horton was providing counsel to the Brownsville team and was supportive of their work and ministry. Subsequent to that claim, Horton appeared on Lutheran pastor Don Matzat's daily radio broadcast *Issues, Etc.* Matzat inquired about what PFO had been told to which Horton responded:

"I was at the Pensacola Theological Institute ... And while I was there, a Southern Baptist minister, who has been in dialogue with some of those guys at the Pensacola Revival was asked by them, if while I was in town, I could come and observe and then meet with them. And so I did. ... But when I met with them, I told them that the main issue for me wasn't the phenomena. I said, 'It's like two different religions for me. For us to even talk about the phenomena would get us off track.' The key thing for me was the message and the message was holiness Pentecostal: 'I have arrived at the place where I live above all known sin.' ... That it was really not much Gospel there to speak of."⁷¹

When Matzat sought to clarify Horton's purported counsel, he replied that the Brownsville team has "got to understand the Gospel. And the Law. The Law and the Gospel."⁷² He further commented that:

"I don't know how they could have come out of that meeting with [a feeling of endorsement on my part]. For one thing, it was certainly a congenial meeting. ... but clearly the outcome of the conversation was I don't think that the movement understands the Gospel. In fact, I told them, I said, that the greatest

danger here is creating another burned-over district just as Finney did. Because there will be a lot of people who after this movement will be ripe for walking out on the faith entirely."⁷³

Horton concluded his remarks by saying the deeper issue at hand with Brownsville is "a false gospel." In all, Horton's statements hardly seem to have come from one supportive of the movement as claimed.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of *truth*, but it seems that the Brownsville leadership have difficulty with that and are really creating a massive credibility problem for themselves with their overstatements, fabrications and embellishments.

Brown characterizes Hank Hanegraaff's volume *Counterfeit Revival* as an "ugly blemish" and then says "The revival is real." What is real is that there is "a whole lot of shaking going on" at Brownsville. But what is really real will be judged in the court of time, by truth, reality, and the Word of God. These will expose the real blemish. In the meanwhile Brown will not silence the critics with his intemperate and harsh attacks.

Endnotes:

1. See, for example, "The Murky River of Brownsville — The Strange Doctrine and Practice of the Pensacola Revival," *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 1997, pp. 1, 12-22.
2. Michael L. Brown, *Let No One Deceive You — Confronting the Critics of Revival*. Shippensburg, Pa.: Destiny Image, 1997.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, emphasis added.
4. *CBA Marketplace*, October 1997, pg. 57.
5. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., preface.
6. *Ibid.*, pg. 54.
7. *Ibid.*, pg. 56.
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 64.
9. *Ibid.*, pg. 46.
10. *Ibid.*, pg. 48.
11. See further, Stephen F. Cannon, "Quenching the Spirit — Does Exercising Spiritual Discernment Oppose the Moving of the Holy Spirit?" and "The Erroneous Scholarship of DeArteaga," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 1, 10-13.
12. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., preface.
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 81.
14. Richard Crisco, *The Remnant*, July 1997, Vol. 5, Section 6, pg. 5.
15. Visit to Brownsville Assembly of God

- by M. Kurt Goedelman, August 6, 1997. The crowd control exercised by Brownsville's security guards was also briefly shown on the October 9, 1997 installment ABC's 20/20.
16. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 5.
 17. *Ibid.*, pg. 6.
 18. *Ibid.*, pg. 37.
 19. *Ibid.*, pg. 51.
 20. *Ibid.*, pg. 52.
 21. *Ibid.*, pg. 55.
 22. In addition to Brown's volume, see books like Stephen Hill's *White Cane Religion* and *The God Mockers*.
 23. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 233.
 24. *Ibid.*, pg. 9.
 25. *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.
 26. *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.
 27. *Ibid.*, pg. 14, italic in original.
 28. *Ibid.*, pg. 17.
 29. *Ibid.*, pg. 19.
 30. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.
 31. *Ibid.*, pg. 19.
 32. Charles Vander Ploeg, *The Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost and Other Unpardonable Sins*. Los Angeles: self-published, 1951, pg. 47.
 33. *Ibid.*, pg. 48.
 34. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 38.
 35. *Ibid.*, pg. 26.
 36. See further, H.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pp. 280-281.
 37. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 70.
 38. *Ibid.*, pg. 31.
 39. *Ibid.*, pg. 74.
 40. Al Dager, "Pensacola: Revival or Reveling?", *Media Spotlight*, copyright 1997, no date or volume number, pp. 9-10.
 41. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 19.
 42. *Ibid.*, pg. 20.
 43. "The Murky River of Brownsville," op. cit., pp. 12-13.
 44. "Pensacola: Revival or Reveling?", op. cit., pg. 5.
 45. David Briggs, "A New Awakening," *The Holland Sentinel*, March 2, 1997, pg. A9.
 46. *Ibid.*, pg. A13.
 47. Charles Honey, "Where We Live: Religion," (Sidebar: "What Are The Largest Area Churches?"), *Grand Rapids Press*, May 21, 1997, pg. 33.
 48. This episode is depicted on a video *Pensacola: Impartations and Apparitions* by Pentecostal minister Joseph Chambers. Available from Paw Creek Ministries, 5110 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte, NC 28202-2516.
 49. Michael McLeod, "A Panhandle Lourdes," *The Orlando Sentinel*, Florida magazine, May 11, 1997, pg. 12.
 50. "In Times Like These," *Testimony of Alison Ward*, August 18, 1995, Brownsville Assembly of God, video tape on file.
 51. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 20.
 52. *Testimony of Alison Ward*, op. cit.
 53. *Intercessor's Service*, June 1, 1996, Brownsville Assembly of God, video tape on file.
 54. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 52.
 55. Honey, *Where Are We From?*, June 8, 1996, Brownsville Assembly of God, video tape on file.
 56. *Ibid.*
 57. *Intercessor's Service*, op. cit.
 58. Michael S. Horton, "Mysteries of God and Means of Grace," *Modern Reformation* magazine, May/June 1997, pg. 5.
 59. See further, Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1910, Vol. 2, pp. 222-241.
 60. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., see Chapter 12, "A Lot Of Fall Out Over A Little Falling Out."
 61. *Ibid.*, pg. 7.
 62. Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival*, audio cassettes. Dallas: Word Audio, 1997, tape #1, side #1.
 63. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pp. 156-157.
 64. Brownsville Assembly of God service, April 6, 1997, video tape on file. Also see, "Brownsville Pastor Confirms Non-Prophet Status," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 2, 18-19.
 65. "A Panhandle Lourdes," op. cit., pg. 14.
 66. "Pensacola: Revival or Reveling?", op. cit., pg. 23.
 67. *Let No One Deceive You*, op. cit., pg. 89.
 68. *Ibid.*, pg. 29.
 69. "Six Year Crime Comparison" from the City of Pensacola, Office of the Chief of Police, January 30, 1997.
 70. "Pensacola: Revival or Reveling?", op. cit., pg. 7.
 71. Don Matzat, host, *Issues, Etc.* KFUD radio, Saint Louis, August 28, 1997, tape on file.
 72. *Ibid.*
 73. *Ibid.*

EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

The Apostle Paul wrote that the elders of the Church "must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9). When the books, tapes and media broadcasts of "Christian" superstars begin to confuse believers and eclipse their understanding of the truth of the gospel, measures must be taken and the erroneous theology addressed. When false teaching is introduced into the Christian body, Galatians 2, not Matthew 18, should be the standard for the Church:

"When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ... The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter *in front of them all*, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to

follow Jewish customs?'" (Galatians 2:11, 13-14).

Peter suffered a cutting rebuke by Paul "in front of them all." His false teaching and subsequent actions were public and influenced other believers. And, as such, his doctrine and practice were examined and exposed, not in the private confines dictated by Matthew 18, but in a public forum. Teachings that are harmful to the body of Christ, leading believers to not act in accordance "with the truth of the gospel," are not intended to be resolved under the "personal offenses" banner of Matthew 18.

Remember also that these teachers often inflict false teachings on the body of Christ by publishing ideas apart from the counsel of other godly leaders or teachers. For example, Harold Camping confused susceptible believers by peddling the idea that Christ would return in 1994. His teaching was imposed on the Church over the airwaves and in bookstores relentlessly. Did he not have some responsibility to check with the larger body of Christ or his radio constituency before deluging us with these unbiblical quirks? His unbiblical notion had to be fought publicly because that was the arena into which it had been introduced.

Yet does this mean that we are excused from entering into discussion with those whom we publicly disagree with theologically? Not at all. However, this dialogue is not easily realized. Nearly all of the “Christian” superstars have built virtual fortresses around their persons and ministries. It is practically impossible to meet with them in conversation. A case in point is faith healer Benny Hinn. For years, PFO has been openly critical of the erroneous claims and false teachings of the man and his ministry.

Despite our complaints, we have always been open and willing to personally discuss with Mr. Hinn the conclusions and evaluations we have offered the body of Christ concerning him. Our willingness for dialogue has never been accepted by Mr. Hinn. Rather we have been harassed and threatened by his lawyers. We have repeatedly maintained and promised that if factual data were produced showing where our judgments are untrue or false, we would hasten to publish retractions. However, despite Mr. Hinn’s public claims to have evidence to contradict our conclusions, we have yet to see the documentation. We have been waiting over six years for such validation to appear.

And then there is the problem that when we do enter into discussion with those whom we differ, our dialogue and subsequent action are meaningless. Another case in point is Brownsville Assembly of God theologian Michael L. Brown.

Brown said he was highly offended by comments made in the April-June 1997 issue of *The Quarterly Journal* that described a Brownsville “Intercessors Service” as an “orgy of voyeurism.” Brown, in a phone conversation with PFO director G. Richard Fisher, discussed his distaste for the comments and said it was an innuendo regarding the morality of some of the Brownsville staff.

Fisher assured Brown that no moral/immoral connotations were intended and that PFO would rush to press with a statement to that regard. A correction was published in the following issue of our *Journal*. Yet despite PFO’s pledge of a clarification of the remarks and its faithfulness to that promise, Brown still makes our comments a matter of debate.

In his book, *Let No One Deceive You*, published after the phone conversation, Brown takes PFO to task for the comments (pp. 52-53). Ironically, his disapproval comes just a few sentences after he rebukes critics for examining “ministries with a fine-tooth comb and calling them to account for every little comment or anecdote that has ever proceeded from their mouths.” Such a double standard — this is surely the judgment Christ spoke of in Matthew 7:1.

We have found as well that when there is private talk, the teachers with teachings published in books and broadcast over the airwaves have so many vested interests, pride and reputation issues, and financial considerations that objective interaction is hardly possible. The private meetings turn out to be, not healthy

biblical interaction, but rather a one-sided arm twisting laced with heavy-handed accusations and persuasion.

Many people are naive to think that by simply engaging in a private meeting all will be resolved. When a person has a book or books on the market, and their reputation is on the line, correction is difficult. Some individuals and ministries have even reported that in the confines of these private meetings buy-outs were offered. In other words, there were bribes offered. Shocking, but true.

Despite the shouts of Matthew 18 by sincere but uninformed people, despite the rejection of open discussions by the televangelist superstars, and despite disregard for the dialogue that does take place, PFO will continue to follow the guideline of Scripture to “Test everything, hold on to the good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

We will strive to speak the truth in a spirit of love (Ephesians 4:15). We will not entertain envy or strife against those whom we criticize. We will use Matthew 18 as it is intended for private offenses. But as long as lives are affected and destroyed by unchecked false doctrine, we will continue to publicly criticize public teachers and their public teaching.

—MKG

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

sued her for divorce after an on-again/off-again marriage. She told the Florida periodical, “I don’t know how I got myself into this mess. I mean, I’m the daughter of a surgeon! I wish I’d never heard the name Tilton.”

In a Religious News Service report, Tilton claimed, “I had to give careful consideration and prayer to past circumstances to make sure we ... have learned the lessons well. I believe we have, otherwise God would not allow us to go forward as he has.”

Tilton credits controversial charismatic pastors Sam and Jane Whaley with saving his life. The Whaleys perform “demon blasting,” a practice where a prayer circle is formed around a subject believed to be possessed and the inhabitant is shouted at for hours. Tilton claims the North Carolina couple helped him in 1993 by “casting out his own demons.”

ABC’s *PrimeTime Live* exposé in November 1991 derailed Tilton’s multimillion dollar enterprise by maintaining that mail sent to the television preacher from his supporters was processed by a banking firm. The donations were deposited while unread prayer requests were trashed. At the apex of Tilton’s popularity, the ministry purchased 5000 hours of air-time per month, broadcast into 235 television markets and acquired over \$80 million per year in contributions.

Tilton filed a lawsuit against ABC, claiming the network portrayed him in a false light. In 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Tilton's case. Earlier a lower court judge had thrown out his libel case against the network ruling the televangelist had not proven the network's charges were false.

—MKG

BORN AGAIN MORMONS?

The Latter-day Saint church's desire to be seen as just another Christian denomination has been taken to a new level as a result of a poll that shows 26 percent of its membership now claim to be "born again Christians."

The figure is based on a recent survey taken by pollster George Barna. Barna's criterion to fit the "born again" classification is to acknowledge a "personal commitment to Jesus [Christ] that is still important in my life today" and "I believe that after I die, I will go to heaven because I have confessed my sins and have accepted Jesus as my savior."

The nationwide poll interviewed over 6200 adults from various denominations and claims a margin of error of less than 1 percent. Of those surveyed, an average of 40 percent conformed to Barna's definition. In a Religious News Service article, Barna explained the implausibility of Latter-day Saints' claim to be "born again" because "most Americans are not theologically savvy."

—MKG

BOOKS IN REVIEW

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conspiracy theories. He deals with the Council on Foreign Relations, The Federal Reserve and the Bilderbergers. He further surveys the panorama of New Age conspiracy theory, and also the anti-Semitic, hate mongering strain. It is amazing how much the conspiracy theorists differ among themselves as to the parameters and promoters of the imminent world takeover. In the end it is only the *idea* of a world conspiracy and imminence of this takeover that unites them.

Nothing is missed in this fine book as Camp deals with the end time conspiracy ideas of Texe Marrs, Jack Van Impe, Hal Lindsey, Pat Robertson, Larry Burkett, Jack Chick and others. These teachers take a biblical and prophetic slant. This book is everything you wanted to know about the conspiracy view of history but didn't know where to find it.

The author pleads for discernment and caution: "Expect to see even more of this 'sign reading' in the months and years to come. You will see them in the area of economics, politics, and religion. All will tend to be highly apocalyptic; some will be conspiratorial in content and tone. Caution, again, must be the watchword for Christians" (pg. 191).

The book is heavily documented with a handy index. It is a voice of reason and sanity in the centuries' old, ever-changing, paranoid world view. *Selling Fear* is a fascinating and informative read.

—GRF

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.



Books in Review

WHEN CULTISTS ASK

by Norman L. Geisler and Ron Rhodes
Baker Book House, 365 pages, \$23.99

Two of the great Christian apologists of our day have teamed up to respond to a plethora of biblical misinterpretations by cultic and aberrant sects. From Jehovah's Witnesses to the New Age movement to Word-Faith teaching, Geisler and Rhodes tackle the abuses of Scripture by groups who appeal to the Bible as the origin and basis of their beliefs.

The pair surveys the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, singling out many predominant verses wrenched and contorted by cults. The format of the clothbound volume is common to Geisler's previous and similar works (*When Critics Ask* and *When Skeptics Ask*). A key passage used by the cult is cited, an explanation of how the verse has been misinterpreted is given, and then solid hermeneutics for a proper understanding and correction of the misinterpretation are provided. Several entries contain the address or source where the erroneous interpretation is found in the cult's own literature. Also, a handful of responses contain a referral to other Christian reference works where further commentary on the subject is found.

Beyond its systematic layout, the volume is complete with "Scripture," "Topical" and "Religious Groups" indexes making retrieval of information effortless.

Avid readers of the pair's previous individual writings will recognize echoes from their earlier works. Yet this comprehensive volume will be a tremendous asset in responding to those who irresponsibly handle the Word of God.

—MKG

SPIRIT WARS

by Peter Jones
WinePress Publishing, 331 pages, \$18.99

In 1 Chronicles 12:32, it says of the Sons of Issachar that they "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." Dr. Peter Jones demonstrates a keen understanding of our times and insight into the Gnostic

revival that permeates American society everywhere.

Anyone wishing to understand how our nation got where it is and where it is heading will want to read this book. In a large part of our culture, Gnosticism rules and reigns!

New Age spirituality did not just emerge on its own but is a present-day revival and repackaging of an ancient heresy. To understand the "Jesus Seminar," radical feminism, the drive toward goddess worship and trends toward Native American religion in contemporary society, Jones' book is essential.

American culture has become a hot house for paganism. All around us we observe a revival of witchcraft, talk of the goddess Sophia, radical feminism, and a militant homosexual agenda, all of which are based on a world view diametrically opposed to Judeo-Christian principles. Jones traces the underlying "ties that bind."

In the first section, he deals with the origins and creed of the religious left. In the much longer, second section, there are chapters such as, "The Ancient Gnostic Bible," "Gnostic Bible Study," "The God of Ancient Gnosticism," "The New Sexuality," "Gnostic Sexuality," and "Gnostic Spirituality." This book is a primer on Gnosticism and is compelling reading. It is massively documented.

Jones' volume is not all pessimism or doomspeak. He believes that the Gospel is the light, the answer, the antidote for the terrible darkness engulfing our land. He truly is a "Son of Issachar."

—GRF

SELLING FEAR

by Gregory S. Camp
Baker Book House, 287 pages, \$15.99

Gregory S. Camp subtitles his book, "conspiracy theories and end times paranoia." He is the perfect one to write on the history of conspiracy because he is an associate professor of history at Minot State University, in North Dakota. He has done advance studies in U.S. history and holds an M.A. in American History from the University of South Dakota and a Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico.

Camp starts with the illusive Illuminati in the 1700s and moves on through nineteenth and twentieth century

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Editor's Note: The publications featured in PFO's *Books in Review* section are available from **Personal Freedom Outreach** (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$1.75 to the price listed for shipping and handling. Due to occasional price changes by the publishers, the retail amounts listed are subject to change without notice. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.